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Indian Music and the West

*To Jane*

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Gerry Farrell

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### Preface to the paperback edition

Three years have elapsed since the hardback edition of this book was published in 1997. Historical materials are continually coming to light which have a bearing on many of the observations and conclusions in the first edition. The contemporary story of Indian music and the West is in a continual state of change and development.

There has been, for example, a remarkable upsurge in the popularity of South Asian popular music worldwide and particularly in Britain. A few years can seem like an eternity in the world of popular music and many of the observations made about the British South Asian music scene in Chapter 7 of *Indian Music and the West* already feel as much part of history as does the material of earlier chapters. In recent years British musicians such as Cornershop, Asian Dub Foundation, Bally Sagoo, and others have had unprecedented mainstream commercial success. Not only does their music synthesize a number of musical languages from the West and the Indian sub-continent, their influence on popular music in India is also significant. We are beginning to see, perhaps for the first time on any appreciable scale, a process of re-exportation of South Asian Diaspora music to their India sub-continent.

In Europe and the United States the institutionalization of Indian classical music has continued to expand. Several of the world's greatest Indian musicians are now resident in the West and teach an ever-increasing number of Western students. Slowly, but surely, Indian classical music is becoming an important facet of Western music education systems.

The process of writing a study such as this is necessarily one of selection from a vast amount of historical and musical data. The result can never be either comprehensive or definitive, and indeed is not intended to be. My observation in the final sentence of the hardback edition to the effect that many other histories of Indian music and the West remain to be written appears even more apposite in the light of recent musical developments, and the continuing, increasingly complex, historical re-evaluation of the West's musical and cultural encounter with India.

GERRY FARRELL, LONDON, 1999.



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Various drafts of this work have been read by John Baily of Goldsmiths' College. I wish to thank him for his advice, encouragement, and constructive criticism at all stages of the preparation of this book. Early drafts of several chapters were read by Cyril Ehrlich. His advice on how to handle historical material has been invaluable. Without his help the book might not have been written at all. I am extremely grateful for the time he spent with me and the supportive interest he has shown in my work. My thanks go too to Richard Widdess of the School of Oriental and African Studies for helpful comments on an earlier version of Chapter 4, and John Marr for telling me about the place of Western music in South Indian traditions. Neil Sorrell of York University and Joep Bor of the Rotterdam Conservatoire made invaluable comments on various aspects of this work, which clarified for me many historical and musical points. In the early stages, Bruce Phillips of Oxford University Press put me in touch with Ian Woodfield at Queen's University, Belfast, who was also working on material related to Hindustani Airs. This contact proved to be fruitful, and I would like to thank Ian for bringing to my attention Sophia Plowden's collection of Indian songs in the Fitzwilliam Museum, and showing me drafts of his work-in-progress, *Musicians of the Raj*. My thanks to Bruce also for the interest he has shown in my work throughout the preparation of this book, and to Helen Foster for expert guidance in the final stages. On the subject of Hindustani Airs I am indebted as well to Peter Cooke of the School of Scottish Studies, Edinburgh University, for alerting me to the Torloisk Manuscripts, in which there were several versions of Indian songs. Again on the subject of Hindustani Airs my thanks to Usha

Sethi, who translated some of the song titles from the original, rather difficult transliterations.

As this book is based primarily on library and archival material, research has been made possible by the help of many people at different institutions. I extend my thanks to the staff of the British Library India Office and British Library Music Reading Room who tirelessly dealt with my numerous, often obscure, enquiries. Particular thanks are due to Michael Pollock, librarian of the Royal Asiatic Society, who made available to me an essential article from nineteenth-century Calcutta. Max Tyler of the British Music Hall Society was of great assistance in finding information on how India was represented in popular culture in the nineteenth century, as were the staff of the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden, who searched out reviews and playbills for nineteenth-century productions with Indian themes. My thanks to them all.

Materials from the EMI Music Archives have been central to my research. As this archive is not open to the general public, I was privileged to have access to this material. For this I thank Ruth Edge, chief archivist at EMI, and also Sarah Hobbs and Jenny Keen, who helped with my many enquiries. At EMI I also met Michael Kinnear, who generously shared with me his many insights into Indian music and his encyclopaedic knowledge of the history of Indian recordings. Conversations with Mike helped to put many of my original thoughts on this subject into a wider perspective. My thanks also to Norman McBeath who photographed illustrations from the archive. Plates 15 are reproduced with permission of the archive. Maggie Giraud and Lucy Bartlett of the Dartington Hall archive provided invaluable assistance, particularly for material in Chapter 5.

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with Najma were crucial in helping me to understand the direction which Indian music in the West may take in the future.

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#### Note on transliteration

I have transliterated Indian-language words with full diacritical marks throughout the text. However, I have occasionally left transliterations of original titles in the interest of historical accuracy for example, in the names of Indian songs by early compilers.

## Introduction

In 1911, when Inayat Khan and the Royal Musicians of Hindustan were astonished that Western audiences enthusiastically applauded them after they had tuned their instruments, mistaking this for a performance of Indian music, they were facing a misunderstanding that already had a long and complex history. By the time Ravi Shankar had the same experience some 60 years later, the West had been encountering, but never really knowing, Indian music for almost two centuries.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Indian music had been a picturesque pastime for Europeans far from home, a charming, but nevertheless puzzling cultural experience. Later it would become the setting for romantic songs in nineteenth-century London, the centre of debate between Indian and Western academics, a symbol for Hindu nationalism, and the backdrop for exotic fantasies on Western stages or sexual transgressions at the height of the British Raj. In the twentieth century, it became a gigantic new market for Western recording technology, a vehicle for Indian gurus preaching in the West, a fashionable adjunct to mass consumerism, a part of Western popular music, a fresh sound for avant-garde composers, and the voice of South Asian youth in the West.

In the process, Indian music has passed through the musical and cultural filter of the West in a number of ways. It has been distanced from its source by the strait-jacket of staff notation, twisted out of shape by the imposition of harmony, reduced to a few musical 'tags' in opera and parlour song, and formally altered in the recording studio. And yet, in some essential manner, Indian music has continued to be unknown in the West, and is continually being 'discovered' over and over, as if for the first time.

Because music does not exist in a social vacuum, the story of Indian music and the West takes place within a complex matrix of historical and cultural reference points. When India was discovered as a cultural entity by orientalists in the late eighteenth century, the study of music, like language, had to suit their project of discovering and reconstructing a pristine Hindu past, free

from Muslim influences. Hence the 'dead' music of Sanskrit texts was more revered than the living Indo-Islamic tradition. Later, the attitude of colonial officials to Indian music during the British Raj differed from that of musicologists or gramophone executives during the same period. Each of these groups, representing Western interest in the music of India, had their own political, intellectual, and economic agendas. For the bureaucrat in his role of colonial ruler, it was to foster vernacular education for the natives. For Western musicologists in their roles as intellectual power brokers, it was to 'scientifically' control and define the intervals of Indian scales, or reduce Indian melodies to staff notation. For the gramophone executives it was the financial pressure to understand the market for a music of which they had little or no understanding. And again, when Indian music became part of Western popular culture in the 1960s, it was viewed through the Western prism of a consumerist, quasi-mystical counter-culture, which had little or nothing to do with the music or its traditions.

The story of Indian music and the West is therefore not simply about how Western musicians have used elements of a non-Western music to give piquancy to their own creations; rather, it is about a wider issue how one culture perceives and apprehends the cultural products of another. Music, that most enigmatic form of human expression, is a suitable subject for the discussion of such a complex cultural encounter. There is also a case for claiming that the relationship between the West and Indian music is a unique one. No other oriental culture has had as much influence on the West as that of India, whether in the realms of academia or the romantic imagination. The passage of Indian music to the West has been one facet of this lasting influence.

#### Historical, Cultural, and Theoretical Perspectives

Any study of the West's attitudes to Indian music cannot concentrate solely on how the technical or aesthetic aspects of that music were perceived by Western musicians or audiences, but must also address wider cultural and social issues. It is only through looking at a diverse range of historical material that music can be contextualized as part of the wider cultural interaction between India and the West in the last 250 years.

Recent works in the field of historical and cultural studies have focused on various aspects of human activity as contested cultural domains within the sphere of colonialism; for example, Said (1993) on literature, Hyam (1990) on sexuality, and Mitchell (1988, 1992) on the exhibition of empire. There now exists a substantial literature concerned with orientalist and colonialist perceptions of non-Western culture. Re-evaluation of the colonial experience has been a significant dimension of recent cultural and historical writing, both in the West and in India, and many of the issues raised in this literature are germane to the study of Indian music and the West.

Major studies of orientalism, notably Raymond Schwab's seminal *La Renaissance orientale* (1950) and Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1979) have addressed the West's view of the East in both historical and critical terms. Said's work has been massively influential, and has done much to challenge the accepted scientific and intellectual paradigms which underlie the Western study of the Orient and which still tangentially inform disciplines such as anthropology and ethnomusicology. Said's work is polemical in essence, attacking orientalism and its academic structures as intellectual adjuncts to the economic and political domination of East by West. For Said, orientalism was (and still is) a necessary intellectual justification for the colonial enterprise, rather than merely being the objective pursuit of knowledge and scholarship. Said's penetrating study, like his later *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) is mainly concerned with the critical deconstruction of orientalist literature and scholarly texts. Yet, despite the fact that Said himself is an accomplished musician, he makes little reference to music in his works on orientalism and imperialism.<sup>1</sup>

In the present study certain of Said's perspectives are brought to bear on the relationship between Indian music and the West. In particular, his contention that the Orient was 'almost a European invention, and had been since antiquity a place of romance, exotic beings, haunting memories and landscapes, remarkable experiences'<sup>2</sup> is apt, as Indian music in the West has so often functioned as the backdrop for exotic and romantic fantasies. On the other hand, Said also argues that the West has sought to control and create the Orient intellectually as well as economically and politically. This can be seen as

<sup>1</sup> See, however, Said's views of Verdi's *Aida* (1993: 13757).

<sup>2</sup> Said 1991b: 1.

having extended to orientalist enquiries into music. For example, debates between Indian and Western musicologists in the nineteenth century were essentially about who would exert control over traditional musical theory through concepts of notation and intonation.

As a contrast to Said's work, it is instructive, and necessary, to consider Kejariwal's study of the Asiatic Society of Bengal (1988), in which he argues that far from being an adjunct to British colonial expansionism, the work of William Jones, Henry Colebrooke, and others actually preserved information about India's past from oblivion. According to Kejariwal, it was through the efforts of such scholars that the history of India was saved for Indians as well as for the West, and such studies, although lauded in public by the British rulers, were rarely funded by them. Kejariwal paints a picture of untiring enthusiasts spurred on by a thirst for knowledge, and intellectually independent of the economic and political trajectory of colonialism. Rocher (1993), on the other hand, has underlined the ambiguities inherent in the positions of both Said and Kejariwal, and has shown that the connection between intellectual pursuits and government exigencies was more complex.

In the recent literature of ethnomusicology there has also been an increasing interest in historical data: for example, in the works of Bohlman (1987, 1988), Bor (1988), Nettl and Bohlman (1991), and Blum, Bohlman, and Neuman (1993). In part, this interest derives from ethnomusicologists' ongoing dialogue among themselves about the nature of their discipline; but it also points to a reappraisal of earlier European textual sources on non-Western music once dismissed as grossly misrepresentative or ethnocentric. Such accounts, by colonial administrators, amateur musicians and musicologists, and others, have been attacked and debunked by succeeding generations of ethnomusicologists, often by way of justification for the existence of their own discipline:

Older travelogues up to 1900 present us with queer and often foolish descriptions of primitive music and often ridicule what to the natives is their most sacred expression. One of the oldest comprehensive books in our field, Wallaschek's *Primitive Music*, teems with quotations of this kind. Matters have changed, luckily.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Sachs 1962: 6.



Wallaschek's work was published in 1893, approximately 100 years after W. Jones's 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus' (1792), 60 years after Willard's 'Treatise on the Music of Hindustan' (1834), and contemporary with C. R. Day's *Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan* (1891). In the light of these and other works, such as Fowke (1788), Paterson (1882), and Gover (1871), for example, and the lesser-known works of Raj officials such as S. W. Fallon and the anthropological depth of census materials such the Luard MS, it seems odd that Sachs should have identified the turn of the twentieth century as the advent of serious, sympathetic scholarship on the music of other cultures. Perhaps Sachs's comments had more to do with academic flag waving for the burgeoning discipline of ethnomusicology than with any serious or historically grounded reading of the existing sources and literature. However, within the sphere of ethnomusicology, this position is now being reassessed. Recent works by Capwell (1986, 1991), Babiracki (1991), Qureshi (1991), and others have underscored the contributions of figures marginal to the history of comparative musicology and ethnomusicology, such as Indian musicologists and colonial officials.

Although these works provide a necessary historical, theoretical, and conceptual framework for the present book, it is not my intention to enter into detailed critiques of the existing literature on the East's encounters with the West, musical or otherwise. Rather, I have attempted to trace in detail a particular cultural interaction from both historical and musical perspectives. Because of the nature of music and the central place it holds in human activity, the history of Indian music and the West is an example of a unique cultural interplay which does not lend itself easily to the deterministic or polemical analyses of cultural theorists or the often narrow ethnographical concerns of ethnomusicologists. The ephemeral nature of music and its role as a form of cultural expression, social cohesion, and mass entertainment means that it has always held a special place in human affairs. Overarching theories about the cultural meaning of colonialism, for example, do not always apply to the details of human intercourse that takes place around music making. In the history of Indian music and the West, the genre of the 'Hindustani Air', for example, is an illustration of the way in which music functioned as a bridge between cultures, an aesthetic realm that operated outside wider political and economic structures.

In essence, then, this is a historical study, and detailed analysis of musical materials is included only when it illuminates the historical points under discussion. Therefore, there is no extensive musical analysis of Hindustani *Airs*, parlour songs, or large samples of Indian or Western gramophone recordings. A detailed musical analysis of any one of these aspects of Indian music and the West would constitute a separate study on its own. The purpose of the present work is to bring together and discuss in a critical manner a large body of historical material pertaining to Indian music and the West gathered from a variety of sources: unpublished manuscripts and private papers, recordings, sheet music, interviews, the proceedings of music and scholarly societies, newspapers, and published books and articles. Although I have endeavoured to bring a chronological coherence to these materials, I have not attempted a comprehensive survey. Such a task would be almost impossible and would certainly go beyond the scope of a single book. So there are some deliberate omissions in my discussion of the West's encounter with Indian music.

For example, I have not discussed in detail the influence of Western music on Indian pop music, particularly *filmi* song, although I do refer to this topic in Chapter 7. I realize that the ways in which Western music has influenced Indian popular music provide insights into the development of syncretic music forms, but I am also aware that this is a vast topic, and would constitute a separate study. The history and musical structure of Indian film music has been treated in detail by Arnold (1988) and Manuel (1988a), and the reader is referred to their work for further sources on this topic. Nor do I discuss in detail the Indian-influenced work of Western composers of art music such as Roussel, Holst, Messiaen, and others, although there is passing reference to it in Chapter 5.4 The reason is that the first impetus for this book came from research I did into Indian music in jazz and popular music in the 1960s.<sup>5</sup> Subsequently, in the course of further research, I became fascinated by the way in which Indian music has so often come to the West through the channels of what may be broadly termed 'popular culture', rather than through the conscious reworking of Indian elements by Western classical composers. From Hindustani *Airs* to the songs of the Beatles there is a tradi-

4 See Ringo 1958 and Austin 1966 for discussions on the influence of exotic music on Western classical composers.

5 See Farrell 1988.

tion of elements of Indian music being used in lighter forms of Western music. As I progressed with the book, this popular connection became a major focus, not least because it presented an interesting paradox. Why was a 'classical' musician particular, Hindustani art music so often represented in popular manifestations in the West?

It appears that the answer to this question may lie in various differing aspects of the passage of India's music to the West. In the case of early examples, such as Hindustani Airs, the collection of Indian songs was essentially an amateur pursuit, designed for players of modest technical ability. Simply harmonized arrangements of Indian songs made good light salon music, even though these arrangements would later come to be viewed as authentic transcriptions of Indian music for example, in the work of Crotch (1821). India also became part of the Western romantic imagination in the nineteenth century, and imagery from India, along with certain aspects of the musical language for example, scale passages in Amy Woodforde-Finden's musical settings of poems by Laurence Hope (1910) became the stuff of romantic parlour songs, music-hall acts, operas, and dramas. In the twentieth century, sound recording, the paramount technology of popular music, also played an important role, particularly in the 1960s, when Indian music briefly became a fashionable part of popular music. These and other aspects of the manner in which Indian music has been adopted in the context of Western music have led me to make the connection with popular music central to this book.

#### Concepts of 'Representation' and 'Discovery' in the West's Attitude to Indian Music

Two concepts, those of 'representation' and 'discovery', have an important resonance throughout this book. The concept of representation is complex, and has come to have a range of meanings, especially in the field of cultural studies. To represent means to 'call up in the mind by description or portrayal or imagination, place likeness of before mind or senses, serve to be meant as likeness of'.<sup>6</sup> The resulting representation is therefore distanced in some way from its source, and may to some extent be an invention, a complex amalgam

<sup>6</sup> Sykes 1976: 952.

of the remembered, the imagined, and the reconstructed. It is within this semantic range that the term is used in the context of cultural studies, and in particular in relation to the West's view of the Orient.

When Western scholars and musicians first tried to comprehend Indian music, a musical system so different from their own, they had to bring the materials of the music into a form of representation that would be coherent and could be understood within the theory and procedures of Western music, because the structures and theory of Indian music were obscure to them. This is one of the main reasons why Indian music, and other non-Western musics, did not occupy a central place in the work of early orientalist; it was precisely the problem of representation. Whereas Sanskrit documents and, to a large extent, spoken languages could be apprehended and rendered as text, music posed unique problems of documentation. It was for this reason that Western scholars and musicians from the eighteenth century through to the twentieth were continually grappling with problems of notation, intonation, and tuning. The structure of Indian music and the sonic world it inhabited defied precise depiction in staff notation and tempered tuning. Notations and theories of pitch did exist in Indian music, but they could not always be interpreted as guides to performance practice, especially in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. For example, when music does appear in the works of eighteenth-century orientalists, notably in William Jones's 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus' (1792), the discussion centres on the analysis of texts about music, rather than on contemporary performance practice.

The tools at the disposal of early Western musicologists, staff notation and mathematical schemata for measuring musical intervals, were musical manifestations of a scientific and rationalistic world-view, embodied in the Enlightenment. In the late eighteenth century, European powers, especially Britain, were poised on the brink of colonial expansion on a scale never before seen. A decade into the nineteenth century, the West would be exporting its culture, religion, morality, and economy to the East by all possible means, not least through force of arms and under the banner of scientific enquiry. The meeting of Indian music and the West, on occasion, throws into sharp relief the ways in which a colonial power encountered and tried to represent one facet of another culture. That Western forms were inadequate to the task of representing Indian music accurately, although there was a cultural impera-

tive to do so, meant that the seemingly abstract world of music became embroiled in power struggles at the cultural heart of India, an issue of both nationalism and Westernization.

One result of the search for adequate modes of representation for Indian music in the West was that it was continually being discovered and rediscovered by orientalists, musicologists, gramophone executives, parlour song composers, and singers of popular music. The discovery of Indian music in the West has taken many forms: discovery of ancient musical systems, discovery of exotic living musical traditions, discovery by colonial officials for bureaucratic purposes, discovery of gigantic potential markets by Western entrepreneurs, discovery of new romantic images and locations for dramatic creations, and discovery by rich Western intellectuals all the way from Dartington Hall to New York. These discoveries were in turn made by Indians themselves in the construction of Hindu nationalism, by jazz and popular musicians, and by Asian youth in the UK at the end of the twentieth century. Other discoveries took place in the world of salon music, parlour songs, light operettas, and twentieth-century mass media entertainment, as elements of Indian music have been used and recycled by the West for academic and popular consumption. At the very core of Western attitudes to Indian music is the idea that it is in some way deeply unknowable. And whereas modern ethnomusicology may lay claim to an understanding of the history, structure, and processes of Indian musical genres in an ever-increasing literature, East continues to meet West as if for the first time in compositions and on numerous concert platforms. It appears as if the West has a cultural investment in never meeting the East musically, as if the East and all its works have to remain mysterious in order to retain artistic validity. If the idea of discovery looms large in the present study, it is precisely because Indian music continues to be rediscovered some 200 years after its first appearance in the academic and popular consciousness of the West. As the source of Indian music in the West becomes more remote, through repeated cultural filtration, the possibilities for new discoveries of the original multiply. The idea of discovery is a cultural myth which has deep historical roots in the West.<sup>8</sup>

All these facets of the West's discovery of Indian music show how Western perceptions of Indian music have sometimes paralleled changing economic, social, and cultural attitudes during the historical period under discussion.

The changing reactions are linked with wider attitudes of the West to India, from trading outpost to economic engine of the Raj and the emergent nation-state. India was also a mystical and sensual wonderland, framed by music and drama, a place for the West to dream spiritual and sensual fantasies, whether amid the moral ambiguities of Victorian England or in the hedonistic playground of the late twentieth century.

Chapter 1 deals with the late eighteenth century. Two main topics are examined: the orientalist background to the discovery of Indian music and the genre of 'Hindustani Airs', collections of Indian music by British residents, arranged for Western instruments. Although my study begins in the late eighteenth century, I am aware that there was a certain amount of musical intercourse between the West and India preceding this period. This sometimes took the form of musical gifts, such as the virginal presented to the Moghul emperor Jahangir in 1616. This 'keyboard diplomacy' has been documented by Ian Woodfield (1990). However, there is a strong argument for starting our story in the late eighteenth century. This period marks not only the beginning of the consolidation of British colonial rule in the Indian subcontinent, but also the rapid acceleration of the cultural discovery of India by the West. From this point on, the culture of India influenced the West in a variety of ways. Sanskrit became as much part of the West's intellectual spectrum as Latin and Greek. Indian classics such as *Sakuntala* informed the romantic imagination of the West from Goethe to Thoreau. The 'picturesque' aesthetic in painting which depicted highly romanticized images of the Orient, and especially India, developed into a major artistic genre. By the mid-nineteenth century, Indian culture was reflected in the West from the façades of public buildings to wallpaper design. The appearance of transcriptions and arrangements of Indian music for Western instruments by European residents in India also dates from this time, and represents the beginning of Indian music as part of Western musical consciousness on a practical, documented level. The work of scholars like William Jones also reveals the contemporary bifurcation of tendencies in the West's view of Indian music. On the one hand, living mementoes of Indian music were collected by Europeans, and noted down in staff notation. On the other hand, it was the music described in Sanskrit texts that was considered by oriental scholars to be the 'real' music of India.

Chapter 2 deals with investigations of Indian music by Western scholars in the nineteenth century, and also examines the place of music in the wider context of the British Raj. The historical background to this period is rich and complex. The trickle of information about Indian culture coming West in the eighteenth century became a torrent in the nineteenth. Although exquisite images of Indian life and architecture abound during this period, contemporary colonial practices also leave other, less palatable visions. This was the great era of collection and documentation, a turning-point in global history, when the dominant colonial position of the West allowed it to view the world and its peoples as a type of laboratory, a proving ground for Western scientism. This led to the belief that humans, especially subject races, could and should be objectified and classified like flora and fauna.

Any study of Indian music and the West must take heed of such a historical context, because after the first fascination of discovery in the eighteenth century, music also became the object of scientific observation and experimentation. Chapter 2, therefore, has a number of strands: a discussion of musicological texts on Indian music, ranging from Willard's 1834 treatise to, later in the century, the work of Clements, Deval, and the Philharmonic Society of Western India; of Indian musicologists Sourindro Mohun Tagore and A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar; and of material from the records of the colonial administration on how music functioned as a facet of vernacular education.

In Chapter 3 I return to the connections between Indian music and Western popular culture which had been set in motion by the genre of Hindustani *Airs*. I discuss the way in which the original vogue for these *airs* migrated into the wider world of popular music in Britain, and examine several further collections of Indian songs which were published in the early part of the century and how this material found its way into other musical forms, such as light opera. I also explore the non-musical references to India found in operas, parlour songs, and ballets. Plots, libretti, and lyrics were one way of commenting upon, and distancing, the colonial experience, whether in the depiction of seductive dancing-girls or abandoned *bibis* (native wives), both of whom are recurring figures in popular operas and songs about India at the time. This was a way of packaging the East for Western consumption, and blurring the hard edges of the imperial enterprise. Exhibitions displaying

facets of the Empire, which became popular public attractions at the time, also served this purpose. Similarly, depictions of Indians on the stage of music-halls were far removed from the reality of the increasing South Asian population in British cities in the late nineteenth century.

For two reasons the twentieth century is a turning-point in this study. First, it marks the advent of the recording industry in India, and second, the beginning of journeys to the West by Indian musicians as conscious artistic ambassadors with a mission to educate the West about Indian culture. It is the first years of the recording industry that I address in Chapter 4.

I discuss the first decade of recording in India mainly with reference to materials in the EMI Archives. I focus on the cultural and social context of the recordings, the strategies employed by the executives of Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. (GTL) to sell their product, the pictures in publicity catalogues, and the musical products themselves, which are examples of extended Indian musical forms condensed onto discs of only a few minutes' duration.

Recordings by gramophone companies in India at the turn of the century constitute a different body of material from those made by comparative musicologists during the same period. The recording industry was a purely commercial enterprise, and, as the correspondence of GTL shows, its interest in India was primarily about cornering lucrative markets, through lawsuits if necessary. These were not field recordings gathered for the purpose of transcription or analysis, or to collect or preserve the music of India, but rather, commercial creations, whose only reason for existence was their saleability. Indeed, during the forward-planning phase for Fred Gaisberg's first recording 'expedition' to India in 1902, Jack Hawd, the company's agent in Calcutta, was unequivocal about the purpose of such ventures. On 17 June 1902 he wrote to the London office: 'the native music is to me worse than Turkish but as long as it suits them and sells what do we care.' It did sell, and ushered in a new and important era in the history of Indian music, not least because it brought the music of the *kotha* (courtesan's salon) to the mass market. Yet this is an era that has received little attention in the literature of ethnomusicology.<sup>7</sup> In this book I intend to discuss only a small portion of the history of the

<sup>7</sup> The most substantial account is Kinnear 1994. However, this is primarily a work of historical discography, rather than ethnomusicology.



gramophone industry in India, placing it in the wider context of the West's changing relationship to Indian music.

It is well known that Indian music became, albeit briefly, part of Western popular music and culture in the 1960s. Ravi Shankar was, and still is, the only Indian musician to have become a household name in the West. His influence on the West's perception of Indian music has been important and lasting. But he was not the first Indian musician to make the journey West, even if he did prove to be the most spectacularly successful. In Chapter 5 I discuss three other journeys to the West, those of Ravi's brother Uday and, earlier, Hazrat Inayat Khan and The Royal Musicians of Hindustan, and the great Bengali poet and musician Rabindranath Tagore.

All these journeys show the social, cultural, and economic difficulties and misunderstandings that were encountered by Indian musicians when they brought their music and dance to the West. When they arrived, they found that a powerful image of India and Indian music had preceded them. Drawing on a variety of sources, including archival material from Dartington Hall, I discuss the ways in which performances of Indian music were received by Western audiences and also the contexts in which the musicians performed. Again, the connection of Indian music with popular culture is evident in the visits of these artists. Inayat Khan performed with Ruth St Denis and Mata Hari. Uday Shankar had to plan his programmes for Western audiences in a way that condensed traditional forms and adhered to Western conceptions of dance performance.

In Chapter 6 I discuss the appearance of elements of Indian music in popular music and jazz, particularly in the 1960s. The adoption of the sitar and Indian imagery and philosophy in popular songs is a unique example of how elements of music from one culture may be used in another, quite different musical context. Again, Ravi Shankar is a central figure. For the discussion in Chapter 6 I draw on the popular music press of the time to chart the brief rise and fall of interest in Indian music in the world of pop. It is the language of the popular press that reveals the way in which Indian music and culture were able to become a fashionable adjunct to popular music, and how the term 'raga' was effortlessly combined with 'rock'. The Beatles were prime movers in this trend, and I discuss the way in which they used Indian features in their songs. I also address the musical elements that made such a meeting possible:

issues of tuning, mode, and instrumentation. At the same time, jazz musicians were experimenting with Indian musical forms. However, because of the nature of their own musical language, they approached Indian music in a quite different manner. The contrast between the ways in which jazz and pop musicians approached Indian music is yet another example of how Indian music was viewed through different Western musical filters.

I conclude this study by discussing a more recent manifestation of Indian music in the West: the development of syncretic South Asian musical forms in the UK. Such musics as *bhangra* and various types of so-called Indipop have drawn on both Indian and Western popular musics in the development of their musical languages. They are the expression of urban South Asian youth in the West, and represent a new phase in the process of India's musical journey to the West. At the same time as these musics have been developing, the popular music market has once again discovered music from other cultures, this time as 'World Music', a movement that has become a multi-million-dollar industry within the span of less than a decade. Although Indian music has not been as central to World Music as genres from Africa and Latin America, one style, *qawwali*, a form of Muslim devotional song from Pakistan, has been notable for its success in the West, mainly due to the charismatic figure of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.

In the wake of interest in World Music, the sitar has once again found favour in Western popular music. A recent dance hit, 'Mathar', from a band led by the guitarist Paul Weller, had several mixes of the same track on the compact disc. The track was essentially a solo instrumental piece for the sitar. After participating in this recording session myself, it seemed to me that the story of Indian music's passage to the West was far from over. Not surprisingly, one of the tracks on Weller's disc is entitled 'The Discovery of India Mix'.

## Chapter 1

## Europeans and Indian Music in the Late Eighteenth Century

*'Wild but pleasing when understood'*<sup>1</sup>

In 1786 two musicians, Jivan Shah and Francis Fowke, worked together in the North Indian city of Benares, testing the pitches of a *bin* against those of a harpsichord. As Fowke would later write: 'I would not depend upon my ear, but had the *Been* tuned to the harpsichord, and compared the instruments carefully, note by note, more than once.'<sup>2</sup> This information was dispatched to the great orientalist Sir William Jones, president of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. It was another small descriptive morsel in the English language about the music of India. At this time there existed no theory, discipline, or academic framework to give this type of study respectability or intellectual credence. Everything had to be constructed from scratch. Nothing could be assumed, not even the validity of the knowledge. Further social and cultural complexities existed. These two musicians and their instruments did not stand in a relationship of equality with each other. The Englishman represented an ascendant power, the Indian a civilization in decline. The Englishman was seeking to uncover the glory of an Indian past which was no longer a reality. Ultimately, this was the intellectual framework within which the information would be presented to European scholars: the reconstruction of antiquity from living debris.

Far away in Europe, Haydn and Mozart were in full flow, with Beethoven waiting in the wings. In this distant place called India, a vast continent that would become a colony, the discovery of Indian music by the West rated little mention in the history of music at the time. Even down-river in Calcutta, English ladies were dancing till dawn to the sounds of Martini, Corelli, and

<sup>1</sup> Bird 1789: introduction.

<sup>2</sup> Fowke 1788: 1934.

Giordani. In the Western mind (and feet) the musics of the non-European world were still veiled in obscurity. They had no cultural resonance beyond the status of curiosities. They certainly had no commercial potential, no place in the engine that would drive economic and colonial expansion. Occasionally they saw the light of day in the service of Enlightenment philosophy, as products of the 'noble savage'; but otherwise they languished on the outer limits of Western experience, aesthetically and even morally dubious. Discovery was slow, confused, piecemeal, and repetitive.

These discoveries took place in the interstices of wider musical activity. Many examples of this type of music making were inconspicuous, almost invisible in the general history of music. Yet such discoveries were about the interplay of complex cultural and musical systems, a meeting played out against the backdrop of sweeping movements in history: colonialism, the Industrial Revolution, and the rise of technology and the mass media. The facts of this interchange only attain relevance, and perhaps importance, when music history is viewed from a different perspective, and light is brought to bear on other areas of cultural activity, previously hidden. Forgotten names begin to emerge from diaries, letters, newspaper reviews, and arcane journals: people involved in musical creation and investigation on the margins of history, engaged in investigations that often seem to have no place or lasting significance in their own time, but in microcosm reflect the confusing, complex meeting of two cultures.

#### Western Perceptions of Indian Culture in the Eighteenth Century

The story begins in late eighteenth-century Calcutta. It was at this time that India was 'discovered' by the West, not as a geographical location, but as a cultural entity, an *idea*. Since the early seventeenth century, India as a place had been well known to the East India Company men who had made their fortunes through the lucrative spice trade, after which (if they survived) they returned to live out their lives on vast English country estates.

Economically, there were rich pickings to be had in India, but for a European the price was high. In midsummer the heat was relentless, only to be followed by torrential rains and flooding. The land was infested with a multitude of unnameable diseases borne by insects and drinking water.

Dysentery, malaria, and dehydration were stubborn companions. The food was exotic and enticing, but lethal when consumed in large quantities combined with copious draughts of claret, as was the habit of Europeans. The physical vastness of India made travel both time-consuming and dangerous. Despite nominal Moghul rule, many areas were little more than fiefdoms of local chiefs, who might or might not be friendly to Europeans. In short, it was a good place for the European adventurer with an eye to the main financial chance and equipped with reliable weaponry.

By the end of the eighteenth century, however, the British were well established, particularly on the east coast in a swathe stretching from Calcutta in the north to Madras in the south; and having defeated the French, their great colonial rivals, at the Battle of Plassey in 1757, were ready to step into the power vacuum left by the rapidly declining Moghul empire. The British transported their culture and social mores to Calcutta and Madras, to replicate life back home, impervious to the local climate or culture. William Hickey's diaries record the often sumptuous, decadent life of East India Company employees a seemingly continual round of drinking, eating, whoring, brawling, making money, and dealing with occasional insurrections by the natives. The latest fashions and the acquisition of visible status symbols were as important as life-and-death encounters with the Indians, such as this skirmish at the Fort William court-house recorded by the prolific Hickey: 'the mob armed with *tulwars* (scimitars) had forced the sentries, and were in vast body rushing up the principle staircase.' One, William Chambers, who was 'well acquainted with the dispositions of the natives', assured Hickey that they would all be put to death. However, when the attack was finally turned back, Hickey's main concern was over the demolishing of 'a palakeen which cost me three hundred rupees'.<sup>3</sup> Such outbursts appeared to halt the endless parties and accumulation of wealth only momentarily.<sup>4</sup>

Culturally, India must have seemed a fascinating but perplexing place to the Europeans. There was the splendour and civilization of the Moghul courts, with centres of learning such as Delhi and Lucknow, which exemplified the

3 Quennel 1975: 2478.

4 The impression given by Hickey of the East India Company man may be rather one-sided. It seems that not everybody had a high time and made a fortune in the process. Life was often hard for East India Company employees: many died during their stay in India, and others returned to England just as poor, or poorer, than when they set out (see Marshall 1976).

essence of high Persian culture. Then there was the ancient Hindu culture: a complex, polytheistic religion, the deities androgynous, half-human, half-animal; the tangle of erotic encounters spiralling up temple edifices; the multitude of intricate laws, rites, and rituals. What with the overlay of Islam and other creeds, the topography of Indian thought and culture was infinitely more obscure to the Europeans than the deserts, mountains, and jungles of that vast land.

Throughout the seventeenth and most of the eighteenth centuries it was economic, political, and territorial exigencies, rather than cultural investigation, that occupied Europeans in India. It is towards the close of the eighteenth century, when the Moghuls were in terminal decline and British economic and political momentum was unstoppable, that the detailed study of Indian culture began. The West started to reconstruct the history and culture of India, and to explain India to itself:

On the acquisition of India to the Europeans, it was generally believed to have been in a semi-barbarous state. The generous attempts made by Sir William Jones and Dr. Gilchrist, together with the elegant acquirements of Mr H. H. Wilson, have proved it to be an inexhaustible mine, pregnant with the most luxuriant ores of literature.<sup>5</sup>

The West set out to possess India intellectually as well as economically. The scope and depth of the intense scholarly interest by the West in India was unprecedented. India became, with Greece, Rome, and Egypt, an ancient civilization to be studied, discussed, and dissected in detail, an Asian adjunct to the classicism that was a basic tenet of European philosophical and artistic thought. But, unlike the other great civilizations of the past, India was a living culture, even though, as will become apparent in relation to music, its living manifestations were seldom the focus of Western scholarly attention.

The study of Indian culture was an important dimension of orientalism, and India was as crucial to the British in forging their nineteenth-century world-view as Egypt was to France. Several key areas were the focus of attention: languages, religion, architecture, landscape painting, textiles, and design. Every study had many functions and rationales. For example, Sanskrit quickly became part of the scholarly fabric of the West. Charles Wilkins had translated the *Bhagavad Gita* in 1785, and in 1786 William Jones's studies in philology

<sup>5</sup> Willard 1834: 8.

had led to his discovery of the link between Sanskrit and European languages, or the Indo-European family of languages. The Asiatic Society of Bengal, founded by Jones in 1784, became the primary organization for disseminating historical and comparative research on Indian history, archaeology, and culture. Sanskrit became institutionalized in the universities of the West through the work of Jones, Colebrooke, Bopp, Grimm, Muller, and others.

Familiarity with the spoken languages of the Indian subcontinent was an important and necessary project for the colonialists, crucial for trade and pragmatic for government. There was also financial assistance for East India Company writers to take an active interest in the local language. In 1790 the company decided that:

with a view to encourage the acquisition of the native languages, such of the Honourable Company's writers as are so disposed be allowed, during the period of their writership the sum of sicca [sic] Rs.30 per month for a master to teach them and that it is the intention of the government to withdraw the allowance from those [who] shall be found not to have made a reasonable proficiency therein.<sup>6</sup>

However, the study of Sanskrit, an unspoken legal and literary language, similar in function to Latin in Europe, had other cultural resonances. The Western veneration of India's Hindu past was an important dimension of orientalism. The task that Western scholars set themselves was to rediscover, preserve, and interpret the greatness of this past, and on numerous occasions contrast it with the 'muddy rivulets' of Muslim thought.<sup>7</sup>

The scholarly interest in Sanskrit was intense, specialized, and sustained. Sanskrit studies became as much part of the spectrum of Western intellectual endeavour as Greek and Latin, so much so that Jones would write in an address to the Asiatic Society that it was: 'more perfect than the Greek, more copious than the Latin and more exquisitely refined than either'.<sup>8</sup> But was the classical past of India really a cultural entity that could be rediscovered? Was it really lost in the first place, and if so to whom? Although this orientalist perspective of Indian history was a crucial *raison d'être* for Western research at the time, it did little, perhaps not surprisingly, to explicate certain aspects of Indian culture, notably music.

<sup>6</sup>*Proceedings of Governor General in Council*, 10 Sept. 1790, pp. 289.

<sup>7</sup> W. Jones 1792: 136.

<sup>8</sup> Kejariwal 1988: 47.

On the other hand, living India, far removed from dusty manuscripts and crumbling stone, was a fertile ground for Western artists, who travelled there to document the landscapes, ways of life, and architecture. The genre of the 'picturesque' was exemplified by the work of William Hodges, and his paintings were of central importance in forming the West's aesthetic conception of India.<sup>9</sup> Some of Hodges's, images such as his painting of the Taj Mahal, remain fixed in the Western mind as quintessential examples of the exoticism, mystery, and beauty of India. The genre ranged from this type of image to realist representations, such as Hodges's *View of Benares* (c. 1781) and Prinsep's water-colour of village life (c. 1820).<sup>10</sup> In the days before photography, such pictures were enormously powerful in forming a Western notion of India and 'Indianness'.

Another significant dimension of painting at the time was the depiction of European residents in India, as representatives of the ascendant political and economic power. The late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries are rich in such pictures for example, in the work of Johann Zoffany (1733-1810) and Francesco Renaldi (1755-c. 1799). Such paintings were highly valued, and made their creators rich men. It is recorded that Zoffany had commissions in India totalling some £66,000.<sup>11</sup> Musical symbolism often features in these paintings, with harpsichord and viol used as props to signify the civilized lifestyle of the sitters.

Europeans were also avid collectors of Indian art, and Indian artists learned to paint in the European style.<sup>12</sup> Zoffany had at least one Indian pupil, Hulas Lal.<sup>13</sup> The cultural exchange between India and the West in art would be paralleled in music with the genre of the 'Hindustani Air', Indian songs collected by Europeans, mainly women, and arranged for Western instruments.<sup>14</sup>

In the West, then, the encounter with India generated enormous intellectual and aesthetic excitement. The discovery of Indian culture opened up a rich vein of comparative studies in languages and religions. Throughout this period, in a variety of forms and media, India was in the process of being described and, in a sense, reinvented in the West. The numerous deities of Hinduism ceased to be the avatars of a dark, threatening cult, and became representatives of a complex, refined religion with a pantheon fit to take its

9 Tillotson 1990.

10 Ibid. 202, 206.

11 Leppert 1987: 67.

12 Archer 1955.

13 Archer and Falk 1989: 38.

14 See Woodfield 1994a, 1994b, and forthcoming.



place next to those of Greece and Rome. Works in Sanskrit not only attained worth as literature, but provided pointers to the structure of European languages. India had become inextricably part of the Western imagination. Such a cultural explosion offered endless opportunities for attempts at fusion and assimilation back home in England in the fields of architecture and the decorative arts. On George Dance's 1788 design for the south face of the Guildhall, Raymond Head writes:

[it] affords a striking artistic parallel to the then current political idea about British relations with India and elsewhere which was encapsulated in the remarks of Lord Grenville in 1789 that the object of the British government was 'to assimilate their constitutions[s] to that of Great Britain a nearly as differences would admit'.<sup>15</sup>

India was reflected in the edifices of colonial administration down through the complete gamut of cultural imagery to fabrics and wallpaper design.<sup>16</sup>

However, the discovery of Indian music by Europeans was greeted with less enthusiasm than were other art-forms. That Indian music was ancient, with its own complex grammar and structure, scholars did not doubt; but they felt that the true 'Hindu' music tradition had been lost in obscurity. The performance practices that did exist were considered to be mere manifestations of an art corrupted by Muhammadan influences. That a distinctive Indo-Islamic style of music had developed in India by the late eighteenth century was apparently of little interest to the early scholars. It was not congruent with their search for antiquity.

In another important sense too, music did not fit comfortably into the general exploration of things Indian. The very nature of Indian music presented difficulties of documentation and analysis. Unlike languages, literature, and architecture, Indian music did not exist in a manner that allowed the same level of detailed examination, especially within the existing paradigms and theoretical framework of Western music, with its emphasis on staff notation and formal compositional procedures. Treatises on Indian music in Indian languages had existed for centuries, but their value for studying contemporary performance practices was minimal. Notation was also used in Indian music, but mainly as a type of shorthand, which could not be compared in use or concept to staff notation. Notated pieces did not represent a repertoire, still

<sup>15</sup> Head 1985*b*: 24.

<sup>16</sup> See also O. Jones 1856.

less a canon of Indian music, which in its various forms was still essentially aural in transmission and extemporized in performance.

The problem faced by Western musicians when confronted with a music not circumscribed by notation was outlined by Ousley in his 1797 essay:

A considerable difficulty is found in setting to music the Raugs and Rauginees, as our system does not supply notes or signs sufficiently expressive of the almost imperceptible elevations and depressions of the voice in these melodies; of which time is broken and irregular, the modulations frequent and very wild.<sup>17</sup>

This was a problem that resisted easy solution by Western musicologists. Nearly 40 years later Willard would write: 'But the practice of so fleeting and perishable a science as that of a succession of sounds, without a knowledge of the theory to keep it alive, or any mode to record it on paper, dies with the professor.'<sup>18</sup> Almost a century would pass before Indian music could be packaged as sound and apprehended like other cultural artefacts. Then, sound recording transformed Western perceptions, and another type of discovery was set in motion.

Another central reason for the neglect of Indian music was that it did not immediately appeal aesthetically to Western tastes, as did the exquisite embroidery, inlay, exotic landscapes, miniatures, temples, colourful legends, and elegant structures of Sanskrit grammar. Indian music presented aesthetic difficulties and challenges, having an altogether more complex cultural ambience, alien to Western ears. As often as not, in anecdotal accounts by Europeans, it was characterized as little more than a caterwauling row:

They [the singers] possess such admirable lungs that they are able to continue without diminution through a long night; their screeching notes break in upon all conversation, and come upon the sense with so little harmony, that it is difficult to avoid rushing into the street with both hands to your ears an action which I detected myself performing much more frequently than my politeness justified.<sup>19</sup>

Captain Skinner's tortured reaction was probably fairly typical. In numerous descriptions of the *nautch*, or dance, performances put on for the Westerners, the accompanying music is characterized as the least appealing aspect of the entertainment. However, it would be wrong, and simplistic, to characterize

<sup>17</sup> Ousley 1797: 165.

<sup>18</sup> Willard 1834: 121.

<sup>19</sup> Skinner 1832: 74.

all Europeans as ethnocentric bores with closed ears. Some, albeit grudgingly on occasion, came to enjoy the Indian sounds: 'At first I hated the very sight, much more the sound of them; next tolerated, and finally liked their simple music.'<sup>20</sup> Others, like Marianne Postans, had moments of real insight into the living heart and structure of the music:

A Hindu musician uses his gamut, like the figures of a Chinese puzzle, or the beads of a kaleidoscope, shifting them into the most singular positions, yet every change bearing a most fraternal resemblance to the rest. A transition is seldom made from the original key, although they possess a great variety of modes; and their skill seems to be displayed in the exercise of peculiar ingenuity.<sup>21</sup>

As a thumb-nail sketch of the internal dynamics of an Indian performance, Mrs Postans's description has rarely been bettered. Some Europeans went so far as to set themselves the task of learning Indian instruments, even if their efforts were not appreciated by their peers.<sup>22</sup>

#### William Jones and the Orientalist View of Indian Music

The scholarly discovery of Indian music by orientalists and the everyday discovery by European residents moved in separate, but overlapping orbits. The obvious landmark to begin a detailed discussion of Indian music and the West is Sir William Jones's (1792), monograph 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindus' (OMMH), the first major English-language treatise on the music of India.

The Asiatic Society of Bengal had been founded in Calcutta in 1784, and William Jones, the foremost oriental scholar of his day, was the society's president. Jones had studied at Oxford; a formidable linguist, he claimed to know twenty-eight languages, thirteen thoroughly.

Jones went to India in 1783, where he took up a post as a high court judge in Calcutta, dying in 1794 without ever having returned to England. During his time in India, Jones wrote prolifically on all aspects of Indian life and culture. He is perhaps best known for his translations of Persian poetry, his philological work on Sanskrit, and his theories on the Indo-European family of languages. Music was only one of Jones's many interests, and in comparison

<sup>20</sup> Mundy 1832: i. 3489.

<sup>21</sup> Postans 1839: 183.

<sup>22</sup> Parks 1850: 1.

to his encyclopaedic knowledge in other areas, his involvement with it might seem almost peripheral. However, Jones considered music to be a branch of science and a close relative of poetry, his first love.<sup>23</sup>

It is apparent from this letter to Charles Wilkins that, soon after his arrival in India, Jones became interested in Indian music:

My present pursuit is in the Indian system of music, which is comprised I am told, in a book called Sangheit Derpen, or Mirror of Melody a little tract called 'the prosody of music' enabled me yesterday to discover that the Hindu scale 'saregamapadany' consists of two tetrachords exactly equal, and differing only in the sixth and seventh notes from our major scale I find, also, that the Indians have not only semitones but even an enharmonic kind of thirds and fourths of notes.<sup>24</sup>

In this paragraph are several indications of issues that would exercise the minds of Western musicologists well into the next century and beyond: in particular, the nature of *'srutis* or microtonal divisions of the Indian scale. The measurement of these intervals and debates about their very existence as musical phenomena became central points of contention between Indian and Western musicologists.<sup>25</sup>

Although Jones expressed an interest in the practical side of playing Indian music, it seems that he was discouraged from pursuing this by environmental factors, finding the Indian climate not conducive to keeping instruments in tune. 'I therefore content myself with theory,' he wrote.<sup>26</sup> Jones seemed to be suggesting that he wished to play Indian music on Western instruments. This would have been in keeping with his contemporaries in the European community, such as Margaret and Francis Fowke, Sophia Plowden, William Hamilton Bird, and the harpsichordist 'Mr Shore' referred to by Jones.<sup>27</sup> There is no indication in OMMH or elsewhere that Jones tried to learn Indian instruments, although, as we will see later, he did enlist the help of Indian musicians in his explorations of music theory, and some of his contemporaries in the European community, with whom he collaborated, were avid collectors of Indian songs.

<sup>23</sup> W. Jones 1772.

<sup>24</sup> Cannon 1970: 647.

<sup>25</sup> See e.g. S. M. Tagore 1882; Deval 1910; Clements 1913; Sarkes 1915.

<sup>26</sup> Cannon 1970: 759.

<sup>27</sup> 'Mr Shore' is John Shore, who later in the nineteenth century, as Lord Teignmouth, compiled a collection of Jones's work for publication (Tolley 1992: 528).

OMMH begins with a philosophical discourse on the nature of musical aesthetics and the physical effects of music on the phenomenal world. Jones repeats some well-known Indian legends concerning the magical effects of music on wild beasts: for example, wild deer coming from the forest enchanted by the sound of the *vind*, as in the Indian miniature painting *ragmala Todi*. However, and rather charmingly for such a heavyweight scholar, Jones assures the reader that he had this story confirmed by 'a credible eyewitness'.<sup>28</sup> This leads to a discussion of such effects in European music and the relationship to Greek music theory. Jones continues by discussing modes in the Indian, Persian, and Greek theories, but cautions against any analysis of music which is too mathematical in emphasis. He criticizes both Greek and Persian works in this respect, but praises Indian writers, 'who leave arithmetic and geometry to their astrologers and properly discourse on music as an art confined to the pleasures of the imagination'.<sup>29</sup>

The main body of Jones's paper is devoted to a detailed discussion of the *rag* and *ragini* systems, as represented in several theoretical texts, but primarily the *Raga Vibodha* of Somnatha (1610) and the *Sangita Darpana* of Damadora Mishra (1625). Jones includes one transcription in staff notation of a melody from the *Raga Vibodha*.

There is no need to analyse or repeat here in detail the contents of OMMH. In the light of later studies, much of what Jones writes is redundant; but his speculations on the nature of ancient Hindu music still make fascinating reading, and the general tenor of the paper is of relevance to any consideration of the West's discovery of Indian music.<sup>30</sup>

Several observations can be made about OMMH which are germane to the present discussion. Although Jones was clearly aware of contemporary practice in Indian music, he denies the massive contribution of Persian culture to the development of North Indian classical music in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He cites texts the most recent of which was 160 years old, making no distinction between the northern and southern systems of music that had developed at the time. The texts which Jones referred to display what Widdess has called 'an archaizing didactic intent', which had little relevance to contemporary practice.<sup>31</sup> Jones's work reflected that archaizing intent in

<sup>28</sup> W. Jones 1792: 128.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 135.

<sup>30</sup> See Powers 1965: 1.

<sup>31</sup> Widdess 1985: 136.

order to support the cultural view of India current in the West. OMMH is written in the spirit of the times, with Europeans in the act of discovering the 'real' culture of India, embodied in Sanskrit texts and Hindu thought, unsullied by the 'Musslemen writers on India', but deriving from 'the pure fountain of Hindu learning'.<sup>32</sup> Soon after reaching India, he wrote to Earl Spencer: 'I have many discoveries to make in the music of India. In the reign of Veramaditya near 2000 years ago, the art flourished in this country, but, since Mohammedan conquest it has declined, and is now almost lost in Bengal.'<sup>33</sup> This was a view that would inform Western musicological thinking well into the nineteenth century.

Yet one incident described in OMMH gives a glimpse of other forms of musical and cultural intercourse:

I tried in vain to discover any difference in the practice between the Indian scale, and that of our own; but knowing my ear to be very insufficiently exercised, I requested a German professor of music to accompany with his violin a Hindu lutanist, who sung by note some popular airs on the loves of CRISNA and RADHA; he assured me that the scales were the same; and Mr Shore afterwards informed me, that, when the voice of a native singer was in tune with the harpsichord he found the Hindu series of seven notes to ascend, like ours by a sharp third.<sup>34</sup>

It would be intriguing to know more about Jones's 'field-work' approach to Indian music. Who were the musicians involved? What pieces did they play? Did the collaboration go any further than checking scales? Although further information about this particular encounter, is lacking, it is known that Jones also played a role in the collection of Hindustani Airs, as a translator of Indian languages, and that some European residents did experiment with Indian instruments, on occasion performing with Indian musicians.<sup>35</sup> It is possible that the *vina* player in Jones's experiment was Jiwan Shah, who is mentioned in Francis Fowke's paper on the *vina* (1788), and was referred to at the beginning of this chapter. Fowke sent the paper to Jones, and it was duly published in *Asiatic Researches*. Jiwan Shah, a renowned exponent of the North Indian *bin* (the *vina* is in fact a different instrument, from South India), was a musician from Benares, where Fowke was the Resident. Fowke's paper possibly influenced Jones's revision of his 1784 version of OMMH.

32 W. Jones 1792: 136.

33 Cannon 1970: 75960.

34 W. Jones 1792: 1412.

35 Woodfield 1994*b*: 204; 1994*a*: 75.

Fowke's article 'On the Vina or Indian Lyre' is short, and is mainly concerned with the construction and tuning of the instrument. He includes a detailed diagram of it and a drawing of Jiwan Shah playing it. However, the accompanying musicians are absent, because 'the draughtsman was not equal to the perspective of this: he would have run all the figures one into the other'.<sup>36</sup> Fowke also tested the tuning of the instrument against the harpsichord, since 'I would not depend upon my ear'.<sup>37</sup> The tuning of the harpsichord doubtless helped his ear to rationalize the more elusive tones of the *bin*, rather than to ascertain the true pitches, which might have fallen into the aural spaces between the harpsichord keys.

Although Fowke's essay is detailed on the construction, tuning, and playing technique of the instrument he says little about the actual music that Jiwan Shah performed. Indeed, the form of the music seemed to escape him: 'I could hardly ever discover any regular air or subject', he wrote, although the style of the music was 'in general that of great execution'.<sup>38</sup> Fowke, like his sister Margaret, clearly had an intuitive empathy with Indian music, even if its subtleties escaped him. But the last sentence of his essay is the most telling of all:

Were there any other circumstances, respecting the Indian music, which lead to suppose that it has, at some period been much superior to the present practice, the style, scale and antiquity of this instrument, would, I think greatly confirm the supposition.<sup>39</sup>

In the early days of Western scholarship on Indian music, the search was for an understanding of how it was in the past, rather than actual performing practice. This was the paradigm that informed other research in India at the time, but it was inadequate for music, which, although seeped in tradition, was an art essentially recreated anew in every performance.

Francis Fowke, like his father Joseph and sister Margaret, was a player of music, as well as a theoretician. It was only a matter of time before attempts were made to transfer Indian music to European instruments and European forms. Although still informed by the cultural world-view of Jones and other scholars, such experiments initiated another kind of interplay between Indian music and the West. The main manifestation of this in the late eighteenth

36 Fowke 1788: 193.

37 Ibid. 1934.

38 Ibid. 197.

39 Ibid. 197.

century was the genre of the Hindustani Air (sometimes spelt 'Hindostanee'), arrangements of Indian music for European instruments. Such arrangements functioned as exotic mementoes of a culture far from home; but they also represented the first serious attempts to transcribe Indian music, and the first tangible evidence of how Europeans viewed and understood, or misunderstood, the living sound of Indian music.

### The Hindustani Air

There was a lively European music scene in late eighteenth-century Calcutta. Instruments and musicians had been shipped to India in the 1760s, followed by the formation of a Harmonic Society and later the Catch Club.<sup>40</sup> By the 1780s, music shops selling, tuning, and repairing European instruments had been established. Concerts took place on a regular basis at both private residences and public balls. The calendar of the European community was marked by musical events. A typical programme from 1789 is of a ball that took place to celebrate the King's recovery from a recent illness. That night the following pieces were performed:

Grand overtureMartini

Concerts. The 8th Corelli duetto concerto, violin.

Giordani, Grand Sinfonia, Hayden [sic] and the Coronation Anthem.<sup>41</sup>

The press of the time also shows regular advertisements for various subscription concerts.

Of course, music events were also opportunities for dancing, the favourite pastime of the Europeans. Even though the climate did not suit energetic dancing, a Mr Mackrabie noted that this did not stifle the ardour of the ladies:

If splendour accompanied heat, a ball in India ought to be uncommonly splendid. The appearance of the ladies, even before the country dances, was rather ardent than luminous. The zeal and activity with which they exert themselves in the country dances is exercise enough for the spectators. By dint of motion these children of the sun in a very few minutes get as hot as their father, then it is not safe to approach

<sup>40</sup> Head 1985a: 549.

<sup>41</sup> Seton-Karr 1865: 221.



them. In this agitation they continue, literally swimming through the dance, until he comes himself and reminds them of the hour.<sup>42</sup>

But by 1789 the *Calcutta Gazette* was lamenting a decline of interest in this activity, especially among women: 'It has been alleged that the ardour for dancing has diminished of late, and observed in proof that no instances now occur of ladies dancing till day-break, and then driving round the course.'<sup>43</sup> Perhaps they were simply exhausted. Apart from the heat, there would have been no shortage of male partners lining up, since in Bengal at this time European men outnumbered European women by sixteen to one.<sup>44</sup> Advertisements for subscription concerts also show that, perhaps as a form of encouragement, as well as chivalry, ladies were admitted without tickets.<sup>45</sup> Dance as a form of entertainment plays a central role in the story of Indian music and the West, because it was performances of Indian dance, or *nautch*, that Europeans were generally exposed to, and, through these, to the music which accompanied it. From the early days of the European community in India, Indian dance had been a regular form of entertainment at private parties.<sup>46</sup> There are numerous eyewitness accounts of *nautchs* by Europeans from the late eighteenth century and throughout the period of the British Raj in the nineteenth.<sup>47</sup> As would be expected, such accounts vary as regards understanding and aesthetic appreciation. It would be difficult to find two more contrasting dance forms than the European and Indian styles of that time.

Dancing in European society was considered an essential accomplishment for well-bred men and women, and dance teaching was a lucrative, if slightly *risqué* occupation.<sup>48</sup> Popular forms of dance, notably the minuet, promoted a particular kind of agility, grace, and control, which displayed social accomplishment and a knowledge of relative status between the dancers. It was above all a social activity in which both sexes participated. By comparison, the dances that Europeans witnessed in India must have seemed perplexing indeed, to say nothing of the accompanying music.

Most of the early accounts of Indian dance by Europeans come from North India, and the dances are often *kathak*, a type of performance that included mime, story telling, singing, and intricate rhythmic improvisations with the

42 Busted 1908: 144.

43 Seton-Karr 1865: 199.

44 Williamson 1810: 51.

45 *Calcutta Gazette*, 10 Sept. 1789.

46 Busted 1908: 144.

47 Dyson 1978: 33656.

48 Leppert 1988: 718.

feet. *Kathak* has a strong erotic undertow, as it typically depicts the amorous exploits of Krishna and his consort Radha, and is closely related to earlier forms of dance such as *dombika*, *ras*, and *carcari*.<sup>49</sup> *Kathak* was, and still is, danced by both men and women; however, the development of modern *kathak* is generally ascribed to a male lineage, notably to Bindadadin Maharaj (1836-1917), who was at the court of Lucknow.<sup>50</sup> Yet the *nautch* performances described by Europeans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries are invariably by women dancers, who both sing and dance simultaneously.

There are ample accounts of the puzzled reactions of Europeans to this type of performance, notably to the concentration and economy of movement employed:

[T]he performance consists chiefly in a continual removing of the shawl, first over the head, then off again; extending one hand, then the other; the feet are likewise moved, though a yard of ground would be sufficient for the whole performance.<sup>51</sup>

Another observer noted that: 'their steps are not so mazy [sic] or active as ours, but much more interesting'.<sup>52</sup> And from the opposite perspective:

I asked one of the nautch girls, who was peering through the window, what she thought of the English ladies' dancing; and the nutbrown disciple of Terpsichore replied, that 'they nautched very well, only they jumped too high'.<sup>53</sup>

The music that accompanied *kathak* would also have appeared curious and monotonous to European ears. Although the dancers themselves sang, a practice that is less common in modern times, the instrumental melodic accompaniment was (and still is) confined to a repeated melodic line known as a *nagma* or *lahra*, played on a *sarangi* or other instrument, the main purpose of which was to delineate the rhythmic cycle that was being used for the dance. This melody was unvarying, adjusting in tempo only to the dancer. The rhythmic accompaniment, on the other hand, was complex and intricate, and the *tabla* player had rhythmic 'conversations' of dazzling speed and virtuosity with the dancer. *Bols*, the mnemonic drum language of the *tabla*, were also used in *kathak* as a facet of performance, spoken by the dancer. In many European accounts of *nautch* performances, the music is described as repetit-

49 Manuel 1988b: 401.

50 Ibid. 645.

51 Kindersley 1777: 2312.

52 Forbes 1813: 81.

53 Mundy 1832: i. 3489.

ive, dull, or monotonous, simply because the function of the accompanying music was not understood, and the rhythmic aspects appeared strange and convoluted. By contrast, the melodies sung by the dancers themselves are often described as sweet, melodious, and charming. Significantly, it was these melodies, heard at dance performances, rather than solo instrumental or solo vocal performances, that provided the material that formed the basis for collections of Hindustani Airs.

Hindustani Airs were collected by European residents from various sources, but even at the height of interest in them during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, they constituted a relatively small body of material, consisting of half a dozen published collections and one major unpublished source. But the genre of Hindustani Airs is an important turning-point in the story of Indian music and the West, because the collection of Indian songs by Europeans initiated another level of interplay between Western and Indian music. For the first time Indian music was written down in staff notation for performance on Western instruments. These arrangements, although inevitably inaccurate in many respects, were taken down from actual performances; they came into existence from the living tradition of Indian music, rather than from Sanskrit texts. Collections of Indian songs were obviously in fashion at the time as picturesque mementoes of the Orient, but they also represented a popular genre of European song that would have resonances into the nineteenth century and beyond.

Several central figures were involved in collecting and arranging Indian music at the close of the eighteenth century. The Fowke family were active participants in the musical life of the European residents in Calcutta, and were typical of educated amateur musicians. Joseph, the father, was a violin player, Margaret a keyboard player, and Francis, author of the paper on the *bin*, a violinist. The Fowke's interest in Indian music is well documented through the family correspondence now held in the British Library India Office. Their letters reveal not only their interest in collecting Hindustani Airs, but also their general role in the musical life of Calcutta at the time.<sup>54</sup> Another important figure was Sophia Plowden, a friend of Margaret Fowke, who was responsible for the collection of the largest unpublished source of

<sup>54</sup> See also Head 1985*a*; Bor 1988; and Woodfield 1994*a*, 1994*b*, and forthcoming.

songs when she was at the court of Lucknow in 1786. This source comprises seventy-seven songs collected by Plowden and written out by John Braganza, and now held in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge.<sup>55</sup> The other central figure in the story was William Hamilton Bird, a Calcutta-based musician who also collected songs in Lucknow at the same time as Plowden, and who was the composer of the first published collection, *The Oriental Miscellany*, in 1789.

The appearance of *The Oriental Miscellany* (*OM*) is an insignificant, almost invisible, event in the history of European music, but an important landmark in the history of Indian music and the West. Although Plowden's collection contains over twice the number of songs, *OM* reached a wider public, and became the basis for subsequent collections in the nineteenth century. Its importance as a published source on Indian music is indicated by the fact that it was referred to by European music historians such as Fétis and Ambros, and 100 years later was included in the bibliography of C. R. Day's *The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan* (1891). Other lesser-known works such as Emil Naumann's five-volume *The History of Music* (c. 1860) include harmonized versions of Indian melodies, following 'the system adopted by Sir William Jones, Ambros, Bird and others'.<sup>56</sup> Such references indicate that Bird's collection had become a standard reference on Indian music in the nineteenth century, and that his versions of Indian songs were taken to be faithful records of the originals.

Bird himself was an obscure figure, who does not rate an entry in the majority of music dictionaries and biographies, and when he does, his dates are not given.<sup>57</sup> However, he was an active figure in the Calcutta music scene, and is recorded in the press of the time as a tireless organizer of subscription concerts at the Old Court House and other venues, where he performed on the pianoforte and directed works by Haydn, Corelli, and Pleyel. Bird's dedication to music and his position as a cultural figure in Calcutta's European community are indicated by the fact that even when he had not received the necessary 100 subscriptions for a concert, he footed the bill out of his own pocket because 'his wishes to amuse are (and always will be) much more predominant than those of emolument'.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 380.

<sup>56</sup> Naumann c. 1860: 25.

<sup>57</sup> Brown and Stratton 1897: 48.

<sup>58</sup> *Calcutta Gazette*, 25 June 1789.

Certainly there was no lack of subscribers to *The Oriental Miscellany*, and the list at the beginning of the collection is a veritable Who's Who of all the worthies of late eighteenth-century Calcutta society, including everyone from Bird's fellow song-collector Sophia Plowden to Earl Cornwallis, the East India Company's chief administrator in Bengal.<sup>59</sup> That the fashion for collecting Hindustani Airs was approved at the highest levels of European society in India is also indicated by Warren Hasting's interest in this genre.<sup>60</sup>

Bird's introduction to *OM* provides a fascinating glimpse of eighteenth-century European attitudes to Indian music, as well as details of the genres from which the arrangements are derived. He begins by apologizing for the original material:

The compiler of the following airs heartily regrets the great insipidity which must attend the frequent repetition of subject, and their want of variety; and he fears the variations will but poorly compensate. He has strictly adhered to the original compositions though it has cost him great pains to bring them into any form as to TIME, which the music of Hindostan is extremely deficient in.<sup>61</sup>

As a gesture to the superiority of European culture and music, such a disclaimer is to be expected. However, Bird's comments about time are a bit puzzling. Although he may not have understood the nature of metrical organization in Indian music, Indian songs, even on a superficial level, *sound* rhythmic. Is Bird perhaps referring here to the *alap*, or unmetred, section of some performances? Or is he referring to the rhythmic subtleties that singers employ across the basic beat? Or is it merely the case that Bird was determined to fit the material into European time signatures, not understanding the additive nature of the rhythmic structures that underlie most Indian music? The answer to these questions lies partly in the kind of musical genres that Bird's and Plowden's collections are derived from: primarily lighter song forms, which typically use rhythmic cycles such as *dadra*, six beats divided 3 + 3, and *kaharva*, eight beats divided 4 + 4, perhaps accounting for the proliferation of 6/8 and 4/4 time signatures in the arrangements.

Bird states that the material in *OM* comes from four main styles of Indian music: '*Rekhtahs, Teranas, Tuppahs, and Raagnies*'.<sup>62</sup> These genres, with the

<sup>59</sup> Bird 1789: list of subscribers.

<sup>60</sup> Woodfield 1994*b*: 1923.

<sup>61</sup> Bird 1789: introduction.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, Bird's transliteration.

addition of *ghazal*, also form the basis for Plowden's collection. All these forms are specifically vocal genres, except for *raginis*, which is a generic term of classification for melodic types, and means literally a female species of *rag*. *Rekhti*, of which there are several examples in *OM*, was a specifically female genre of singing, common among courtesans in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and is stylistically connected to *ghazal* and *thumri*, a later popular form of light classical vocal music. The lyrics of *rekhti* were composed by men, but from the female point of view. This perhaps accounts for the *risqué* nature of some of the lyrics, which seem to portray quintessentially male sexual fantasies rather than women's.<sup>63</sup> As Bird does not include lyrics in his collection, the subject-matter of his songs is left to speculation; however, the titles given suggest that he may have selected rather more demure examples 'It is the season of spring', 'Joyful music, be happy', 'A broken mirror (my heart)'. Bird considered *rekhtis* to be 'the most admired because they are comprehensible and exceed all others in form and regularity'.<sup>64</sup>

*Tarana* is a type of composition which employs vocables, such as 'ta', 'na', 'de', 're', which have no semantic meaning, but are used as a vehicle for displaying vocal virtuosity. A *tarana* often comes at the end of a performance of *khyal*.<sup>65</sup> *Tuppahs (tappa)* are love-songs characterized by profuse, intricate ornamentation. This form is said to have originated from camel drivers' songs, which supposedly accounts for its distinctive rhythmic lilt. The lyrics would have been in Punjabi.<sup>66</sup> To Bird, these songs were 'wild but pleasing when understood', a phrase that perhaps, more than any, sums up the attitudes of Europeans to their early encounters with Indian music.

Bird included only one *ragini* in his collection, as he found their lack of recognizable form too difficult to work with: 'to put a Raagnie into form, it will resemble, in too forcible a manner, a style not its own they appear to be the efforts of men enraptured by words, to which they have added notes as their fancy and amorous flights have dictated.'<sup>67</sup>

Although Bird does not say how or where he collected these songs, there is

<sup>63</sup> Manuel notes that subjects for *rekhti* were 'occasional portrayal of domestic lesbianism and its frequent dwelling on female undergarments' (1989: 58). Kanda (1992) uses the term *rekhti* to refer in a more general way to the poetry of the *ghazal* form, whereas Kippen (1988: 14) notes that the term refers to a dialect of Urdu spoken by women in Lucknow.

<sup>64</sup> Bird 1789: introduction.

<sup>65</sup> M. H. Khan 1988: 64.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 64.

<sup>67</sup> Bird 1789: introduction.

ample evidence from Sophia Plowden's diaries that the main body of the songs were collected in Lucknow, at the same time as the Fitzwilliam MS.<sup>68</sup> Also, the titles of the tunes are written in Farsi script, in a particular dialect of the Awadh region. However, Bird's transliterations, some of which are reproduced here, were evidently inaccurate, as noted by the grammarian John Gilchrist: 'It is matter of just regret that he [Bird] was so completely ignorant of the Hindustanee language, as this has subjected his valuable Collection of Songs to the grossest blunder of words in every tune.'<sup>69</sup> The location for the collection of Hindustani Airs is important, as Lucknow had become a cultural meeting ground between the British and Indians, unlike anywhere else in India at that time. The history of late eighteenth-century Lucknow is closely linked to the decline of Moghul power centred in Delhi. Lucknow was the main city in the semi-autonomous region of Awadh, encompassing Allahabad to the south, Rampur to the west, the borders of present-day Nepal to the north, and Patna to the east (the whole of this area is now in the modern state of Uttar Pradesh).<sup>70</sup> In his collection Bird also mentions songs from Rohilkhand, an area north-east of Delhi. Under British protection from East India Company troops in the late eighteenth century, Awadh, with its ruler Nawab Asaf-ud-daula and its capital Lucknow, was in in effect a powerful, separate state, economically and culturally distinct from the Moghul rule in Delhi.

Lucknow was to be the site of many cultural meetings between the British and Indians. Asaf-ud-daula (ruled 1775-97) was known for his spectacular, lavish, decadent life-style. This attracted East India Company men and women well used to enjoying similar luxuries in Calcutta. The cultural life of Lucknow came to exemplify the amalgamation of two cultures in a number of areas, including architecture, painting, and music. By the end of the eighteenth century Lucknow was a 'splendid city with a stimulating mixture of Islamic and European styles'.<sup>71</sup> Such painters as Zoffany and Renaldi worked there, and Europeans like Colonel Anthony Polier were central figures in Lucknow society. Polier was an engineer and architect to the nawab, who 'went native' collecting Indian art and music. Some of Plowden's collection of prints and songs came from Polier.<sup>72</sup> Asaf-ud-daula himself was a great

<sup>68</sup> British Library India Office, MSS. Eur.F.127/94.

<sup>69</sup> Gilchrist, quoted in Bor 1988: 57.

<sup>70</sup> Kippen 1988: 24.

<sup>71</sup> Archer 1979: 141.

<sup>72</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 380.

patron of music, and Plowden collected songs from him personally, and on occasion performed for him.<sup>73</sup> The main form of Indian entertainment for Europeans was the *nautch*, and Plowden's diaries are peppered with references to attending such performances and meeting the famous singers at the court, such as Dilsook, Chanam (who was painted by Zoffany), and others, to collect and transcribe songs.<sup>74</sup>

The area of Awadh would have encompassed a number of musical influences, both Hindu and Muslim. Within Awadh there were also other important centres for Indian classical music, notably Rampur. The courtesans of Lucknow were prized for their skill in vocal genres such as *tappa*, *rehkti*, *ghazal*, and the dance form *kathak*. This accounts for the number of pieces derived from these genres in both Plowden's and Bird's collections, and why, furthermore, they represented the Indo-Islamic style of music prevalent in North India at the time, rather than the ancient Sanskrit traditions of Hindu music written about by Jones and others. Although based in Calcutta, Bird included only four tunes in his collection which were of Bengali origin.

It is clear from extant collections that Hindustani Airs were essentially collections of songs; yet the original lyrics rarely appear with the music, although later, English words were added in some collections (see Chapter 3). In Plowden's collection some couplets of Persian poetry were included with a set of prints of Indian musicians and instruments she had commissioned, but it is difficult to link them to the transcribed songs.<sup>75</sup> In *The Oriental Miscellany* the songs are presented as instrumental pieces, both for harpsichord and flute and guitar, with harmonies and variations added. Similarly, collections by Trinks (1795) and Walckiers (n.d.) are also instrumental keyboard arrangements, although apparently some of Trinks's arrangements had words.<sup>76</sup>

Ian Woodfield, drawing on private letters and diaries of the time, has charted the manner in which Hindustani Airs were collected. What emerges from these sources is a picture of an amateur musical pursuit that was particularly popular among English women, and a process by which *munshis*, or native translators, were employed to translate or help with the pronunciation of lyrics. Sometimes the lyrics, although in Hindi dialects like Braj Bhasha, were written down in Persian script by English scholars. As noted above,

<sup>73</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 380.

<sup>74</sup> Woodfield 1994*b*: 20911.

<sup>75</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 380 and accompanying prints.

<sup>76</sup> Head 1985*a*: 552.



there is a reference to William Jones being involved in this process. The music was collected at live *nautch* performances and through specially arranged meetings with singers. Hindustani Airs were undoubtedly fashionable in the European community, and there is even an account of English men and women dressing up as Indian musicians, complete with instruments, for a fancy dress party, and pretending to perform Indian music.<sup>77</sup>

So it was against a rich background of cultural intercourse that the main body of Hindustani Airs were collected. But what of the transformations the Indian songs went through on their way into manuscripts and published collections?

From a musical point of view, collections of Hindustani Airs are of interest from several perspectives. On the one hand, they show how Western musicians tried to rationalize on paper what they heard from Indian performers, and in this sense they are about a process of adaptation and transformation between two musics. They also reveal the type of Indian music to which Europeans were exposed, and give indications of musical genres that were in current practice in Indian courts at the time. But, most important, they show how musical material changes when it crosses divides between cultures, and how the logic of one musical system is drawn into, and finally submerged by, the paradigms and demands of another.

Bird's and Plowden's collections differ in many respects, despite the fact that they were collected at the same time and in the same location. This has much to do with the processes of musical arrangement that they went through after collection. John Braganza, Plowden's scribe, appears to have been a less accomplished musician than Bird; but his arrangements are perhaps closer to the originals, as Bird's are clouded by more elaborate harmonization. Unlike Bird in his introduction to *OM*, very little information is given in Plowden's collection about the Indian music genres that the songs are derived from. Only eight of the seventy-seven songs are headed with titles by song type for example, *ghazal*, *rekhti*, and *tappa*.

However, any search for traces of the original Indian sources in the extant arrangements is fraught with difficulties. Harmonization apart, although some of the melodic contours may be recognizably linked to Indian *thats*

<sup>77</sup> Woodfield 1994a: 88.



In terms of the keys used, D, A, and F predominate, but this gives little clue as to the pitch of the original tonic. The tonic note in Indian music, SA, is flexible, and varies from singer to singer, and the accompanying instruments are adjusted to suit. It is possible to speculate that on Western keyboards of the time, A would have been tuned to 415 rather than 440. This would make D in effect  $C\sharp$  a not uncommon tonic in Indian music. But it is more likely that Braganza arranged the songs to keys that suited his ear or that were practical on the keyboard.

Although most of the stepwise scalar structures of the majority of the songs give no hint of Indian originals, and sound rather more like Scottish folk-songs, occasionally the scalar ambiguities of Indian music break through (see Chapter 3 for a discussion of the similarity in the genres of Hindustani *Airs* and Scotch songs). One such example is number 10 in the manuscript, where Braganza writes an  $F\sharp$  and a  $B\flat$  in the key signature (see Ex. 1.3). This is a curious example, and invites further examination for a number of reasons. The tonic of this piece is D, and the tonality D minor. The scale on which the piece is based is shown in Ex. 1.4. This is the *Asavri that* in North Indian music, which serves as the basis for a number of *rags* (its counterpart in Western music is the Aeolian mode). However, the melodic contours of the piece show none of the patterns characteristic of Indian melody where certain notes may be omitted in ascending and descending patterns (see Ex. 1.5).

Moderato

etc.

Ex. 1.3



Ex. 1.4

Rāg Āsāvṛī

Rāg Jaunpurī

Rāg Devgandhar

Ex. 1.5

There are several points to be made about this. This is a case where no indication is given of the genre from which the arrangement derives; but it is likely to be a *tappa*, *rekhti*, or *ghazal*, as these form the basis of both Bird's and Plowden's collections. All these genres are considered 'light' classical forms. This concept requires some explanation in relation to Indian music. Basically, lighter forms such as *tappa*, *ghazal*, and *thumri* employ scalar patterns in a freer manner than more classical forms like *dhrupad* and *khyal*.<sup>78</sup> This freedom is also shown in the tendency to use chromatic intervals and phraseology, utilizing both flat and natural thirds, sixths, and sevenths. *Tappa*, for example, is known for its detailed ornamentation, which may have a free chromatic dimension.<sup>79</sup> In such genres the melodic contours of *rags* would not be found in their purest forms. In the present example (Ex. 1.6) the lighter nature of the tune is indicated by the use of  $B\flat$  in the second section of the melody. Although this interval does not appear in *Asavri that* in its pure form, several lighter *rags* which are based on this scale, such as *Khat*, *Jangla*, and *Sindh Bhairvi*, employ it.<sup>80</sup> Again, in the example (Ex. 1.7) Braganza has used repeated Ds in the bass to indicate a background drone. Here, as in other cases, the larger structural shape of the melody, the A and B sections, cor-

<sup>78</sup> Pingle 1898: 545.

<sup>79</sup> See Fox-Strangways 1914: 18890.

<sup>80</sup> Kaufmann 1984: 46397.



Moderato

Dādā Tāl: X | 1 2 3 | 4 5 6 |

Ex. 1.7

in the main melody, it is heard as part of the trills in bars 22 and 23. Again, this scale falls within *Asavri that*, and the inclusion of the natural third and seventh is also found in some *rags* that fall within this scale type in both ascending and descending phrases for example, *Devchandhar* and *Khat*. The latter *rag* indeed contains a number of phrases which are common in other *rags* like *Bhairav* and *Mallar*, as well as *Asavri*.<sup>81</sup> Such freedom with intervals and ascending and descending patterns would be typical in this kind of song.

Bird's harmony is sparse, and mainly in thirds. The note A often functions as a drone in the middle of the harmonic texture, as in bars 1520, and sometimes as the lowest note, as in the closing bars. Here the sound-world of Indian music breaks through the smooth working of the four-part harmony.

With the very first act of transcription, Europeans started to change the music they heard to fit the written page, and the few remaining hints of the original Indian melodies occur only in the general melodic contour and occasionally in the intervals used. The rhythmic framework was regularized, as Bird himself states in his introduction. The transformation was unstoppable: such was the power of staff notation to discipline a music that was generally viewed as unruly and formless, albeit charming, by Europeans.

Because the collection of Hindustani Airs was as much a process of composition as transcription, the existing arrangements tell little or nothing about the originals. This was a one-way process, and as the airs were returned to England in manuscript and published form, they were changed again and again, with each incarnation moving further away from the original Indian source.

The genre of Hindustani Airs, however, is of great interest for other reasons. It represents the first substantial record of how the West heard Indian

<sup>81</sup> Kaufmann 1984: 485.

R E K H T A H.



ShuDa's myri bear,

herodes,

*S:*  
*fa*  
*Adagio.*  
*S:*

*Fin.* *Pavil.* *Fin.*

*f* *f* *f* *f*

*fa* *fa* *fa* *fa*

*f* *f* *f* *f*

*S:*

*S:*

Ex. 1.8





## Chapter 2

## Indian Music, Notation, and Nationalism in the Nineteenth Century

*'In short almost everything Oriental appears to better advantage in European garb'*<sup>1</sup>

The nineteenth century was the century of the collector. As a dusty testimony to a period in which Europe consumed the world, the basements of Western museums are still choked with treasures and bric-à-brac of that century, pillaged from every corner of the globe the paraphernalia, the trinkets, of Empire. Just as the eighteenth century had brought a flood of travel writing from the boundaries of the expanding European colonies, so the nineteenth was to become a century of classification against the backdrop of consolidated economic and political power. As an adjunct to Empire, the colonies needed to be described and tabulated in all their minutiae. But the colonial eye made little distinction between plants, cultural artefacts, and human beings. This vast body of colonial representations of the globe ranges from delicate, exquisite illustrations of the flora and fauna of a captured world to macabre, disturbing anthropometric photographic studies of different racial types.

It was in this 'laboratory of mankind'<sup>2</sup> that the hand of Western scientism sought to reveal the order and structure of human diversity in India. It was also through such endeavours that the ignorant, arrogant hand of colonialism was most clearly shown. At one proposed exhibition in Calcutta, live specimens of different Indian races were to be displayed, each in 'his own stall', each of whom 'should submit to be[ing] photographed, painted, taken off in casts and otherwise reasonably dealt with in the interests of science'.<sup>3</sup> Similarly, photographs of Indians using the Lamprey grid as a background measurement show humans trapped like laboratory specimens, their heads held in place by the type of equipment usually reserved for test-tubes and

1 Mudaliyar 1893: introduction.

2 Pinney 1990: 252.

3 Ibid. 255.

retorts, their eyes often turned suspiciously even fearfully towards the cold lens of Western science.<sup>4</sup> The two-inch silk squares of the grid framing the individuality of the human form seem to represent how far the colonialists had managed to distance themselves from their fellow men and women, through science and 'objective' forms of measurement.

A flavour of the kind of language that was employed to discuss the culture and people of other races may be gleaned from this review in *The Times* of July 1886 of the Ceylon Exhibition, which included 'four score natives of Ceylon, together with a number of Ceylon working elephants and various breeds of cattle'. This travelling exhibition organized by one, Herr Hagenbeck, had already toured Germany, Austria, and Hungary.

The Cingalese men are well-looking and well-made, though somewhat slender and of low stature. The women are by no means comely, and very diminutive. The Tamils or natives of the Malabar coast, are a race of larger and more powerful physique and of darker complexion. Both the Cingalese and the Tamils appear in their native dress, which in the case of the former is the scantiest. About forty members of the troupe divided into several groups, appear as dancers, play actors, conjurors, snake-charmers, and performers on the peculiar Cingalese instruments.<sup>5</sup>

By the mid-nineteenth century the outcome of such exhibitions and the overarching venture of classification that had brought them into existence was to reinvent the non-Western world for Western understanding: 'When it came to what lay beyond metropolitan Europe, the arts and the disciplines of representation depended on the powers of Europe to bring the non-European world into representations, the better to be able to see it, to master it and, above all, to hold it.'<sup>6</sup>

Christian missionaries also played a central role in trying to control and reshape the hearts and minds of subject races. Even when they were part of an exhibition in a foreign land, the Indians were not free from missionary pressures. Joseph Salter, a London missionary, was a frequent visitor to colonial exhibitions, and a keen worker among 'Asiatics' in London. In 1876 he visited 'Indian Villages in London' at the Royal Albert Palace in Battersea: 'Here were extemporized shops and artisans at work in the open window. Very convenient for conversation and reading a portion of the

<sup>4</sup> Pinney 1990: 252.

<sup>5</sup> *The Times*, 22 July 1886.

<sup>6</sup> Said 1993: 119.

word.<sup>7</sup> He even made contact with jugglers, snake-charmers, and *nautch* girls, handing out copies of the Gospel as he went. For the Indians there was no escape from the pressures of Western culture, either at home or abroad.

It is against this background, one of colonial control at all levels, that the ways in which the West viewed Indian music in the nineteenth century must be discussed, and similarly how Indians received this interest, and, in turn, related to European music. This period is of pivotal importance in the story of Indian music and the West, for it was at this time that representations of Indian music in the West diverged into two main forms. One, the scholarly investigation that was closely linked to British hegemony in the Indian subcontinent, was, in a very real way, a facet of the intellectual wing of colonialism. The other, the recycling of the sounds and images of India in the realms of popular song, ballet, and opera, will be discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

#### Indian and Western Musical Scholarship in Nineteenth-Century India

The main historical focus of the present chapter is the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is the period, post-Indian rebellion, when the British Raj consolidated its bureaucratic power over many aspects of Indian life, and also the time when the English-educated Indian élite, with its particular brand of Hindu nationalism, was beginning to agitate for independence from Britain. Indian music was examined and researched as part of the scientific description of India, through both the mapping of traditional Indian culture for political and bureaucratic purposes and the continuing scholarly investigation of Indian music by Western musicologists. Music played a role as a symbol of Indian culture for the incipient nationalist movement, and it was within this sphere of activity that some of the most trenchant debates about the nature of Indian and Western music took place. Western music was also being adopted by Indians, notably in the world of princely patronage, where the presence of a European orchestra or professor was a sign of progress, modernization, and prestige. The maharaja of Mysore, Nalvadi Krishnaraja Wodeyar, for example, maintained a Western wind band, string orchestra, and full orchestra under the direction of a European bandmaster

<sup>7</sup> Salter 1895: 1445.

named Defris. The maharaja also sent some of his musical staff to learn piano tuning and to take music exams at Trinity College in London.<sup>8</sup>

Although the advent of photography in the mid-nineteenth century expanded the horizons of the colonial eye and transformed the frozen image into a tool of power and control, music still had to be recorded by more abstract forms of representation. Historically, as the vogue for Hindustani Airs as a form of amateur music making within the European community receded, and the social separation between the British and Indians became institutionalized, the interface between Indian music and the West was increasingly an issue of representation, particularly in the realms of scientific enquiry and education. Indian music was now to be collected not for curiosity's sake, as a picturesque memento of past travels, a symbol of cultural intercourse, or a pastime in European salons, but as a scientific, ethnographic, bureaucratic enterprise, a facet of the scientific spectacle of Empire.

Such enquiries were undertaken within a different cultural, economic, and political situation from those of Jones, Fowke, Plowden, Bird, and others in the eighteenth century; as a consequence, the musical concerns of the Europeans had also changed. Selective aspects of Indian culture were still collectable items in the West, and at this time the exotic became established as part of Western popular culture in music, as in other forms of cultural activity. But in the act of collection those same elements of Indian culture were also reshaped and redefined to suit wider social, economic, and political agendas.

The balance of power between the races had shifted dramatically. This was a project no longer driven merely by scholarly enthusiasm or a pursuit of exotic mementoes, but also by ideas of control and representation through theories of notation, intonation, and the role of Indian music in a progressive, modernizing India. The scientific study of Indian music by the West in the nineteenth century became as much a facet of the 'maintenance of prestige [which] had now become a dominant factor of policy'<sup>9</sup> as other scientific and ethnographic pursuits. What Pinney has observed about colonial photography and museology, and the continual need to bring the life of 'the other' into visualization, may equally be applied to the Western study of Indian

<sup>8</sup> See Vedavalli 1992.

<sup>9</sup> Spear 1963: 139.

music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, particularly in connection with notation, intonation, and the applicability (or not) of harmony to Indian music. One hundred years previously the decision to write down an Indian song and harmonize it at the keyboard was merely a musical decision, stemming from a need to bring an unfamiliar musical system into the sphere of Western understanding; by the end of the nineteenth century, it was an ideological statement for both Europeans and Indians.

Staff notation and its relation to Indian music in the nineteenth century will play a focal role throughout this discussion. Notation, as a means of reproducing or representing sounds on paper, was the only way by which Indian music could be apprehended and placed in conceptual display cases alongside other artefacts. Western musicology in the nineteenth century was not only about the collection and comparative analysis of non-Western musics, but also about the conceptual means through which the unfamiliar could be captured as scientific fact and made coherent to the Western eye and ear. As Bosanquet, writing in 1877, put it:

The point of the present paper, so far as it relates to Hindu music, is, that until we have a general means of producing and controlling such systems as are likely to be met with on instruments with fixed tones (e.g. the harmonium), and of thus comparing such systems with actual facts we can have no certainty of the results.<sup>10</sup>

The close connection between the concepts of analysis and control is no coincidence here, likewise the telling phrase 'actual facts'.

Apart from a uniform system of notation, the other facet of Indian music that particularly exercised the minds of Western scholars was intonation, and in particular the existence and substance of *śrutis*, microtonal intervals used in Indian scales. Again, this was a musical phenomenon that was perfect for measurement in scientific terms, and in much of the English-language writing on Indian music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, this is treated as a topic of central importance.<sup>11</sup>

A review of the literature shows that the 'actual facts' of Indian music were still unclear to Europeans at the turn of the nineteenth century, and that

<sup>10</sup> Bosanquet 1882: 320.

<sup>11</sup> See e.g. Clark 1874; S. M. Tagore 1882; Helmholtz 1885; Pingle 1898; Deval 1910; Clements 1913; Sarkes 1915; Levy 1902.

Indians themselves were busy rewriting those facts to suit new political, religious, and social groupings. Following on from William Jones's ground-breaking work, other monographs on Indian music appeared, the most important of which was Augustus N. Willard's *A Treatise on the Music of Hindustan* (1834). This work has been praised as a forerunner of twentieth-century ethnomusicology, due to Willard's emphasis on gathering information from performing musicians, rather than relying on textual sources, a procedure for which he criticizes Jones. It has also been suggested that Captain Willard, who was in the employment of the Nawab of Banda, was a Eurasian with first-hand knowledge of playing Indian instruments.<sup>12</sup>

Willard's observations are often acute, and he is particularly accurate when it comes to enumerating the various genres of song that were current in North Indian music at the time. All the genres that are cited by the collectors of Hindustani Airs, like *tappa*, *ghazal*, and *rekhti*, are noted here.<sup>13</sup> Willard also tabulates species of *rag* and *tal*. Bor notes that Willard was ahead of his time, and that his work was badly received by his contemporaries, although he bases this observation on one comment from an otherwise favourable review.<sup>14</sup> However, C. R. Day was also critical of Willard's work, stating that it was 'in places rather vague and apt to be misleading to those who have not studied the subject'.<sup>15</sup> Whatever the merits of Willard's monograph, it was certainly not typical of its time as regards Western writing on Indian music. Western musicologists were still concerned with unravelling the ancient basis of Indian music and describing the construction of instruments, rather than understanding the nature of contemporary performance practice, as an 1882 collection of English-language writing on Indian music, *Hindu Music from Various Authors* by Sourindro Mohun Tagore, testifies. The title of this work also reveals another trend in the discussion of Indian music that became increasingly important as the century progressed, the tendency to talk about 'Hindu' rather than 'Indian' or 'Hindustani' music.

Such a distinction may at first glance appear trivial, but it speaks volumes for the way in which music functioned not only as an aesthetic concept, but also as a social symbol in nineteenth-century India. Hindu music was not simply Indian music; it was Indian music that had returned to the imagined

<sup>12</sup> Willard 1834: pp. vivii. See also Bor 1988: 589.

<sup>13</sup> Willard 1834: 1017.

<sup>14</sup> Bor 1988: 59.

<sup>15</sup> Day 1891: 160.

purity of its Sanskrit sources. The need to understand sources and origins and the marriage of the two élite worlds of English and Sanskrit culture constituted a powerful moving force in nineteenth-century Indian musicology.

By the close of the century, Western musicologists too were referring to such sources as a way of understanding Indian music. Ernest Clements, an English civil servant, was the founder of the Philharmonic Society of Western India and the author of several works on Indian music (1913, 1920, 1923). The stated objects of the society summarized many of the concerns of Western musicologists on the cusp of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and they are worth quoting in full.

1. To examine and formulate an opinion regarding the scales forming the basis of ancient text books and those in use in the present day.
2. To devise and popularize a uniform system of notation.
3. To interpret and explain the ancient works on Indian music such as Sangit Ratnakara, Ragavibhoda and others to make them more accessible to the musical public.
4. To reduce to notation and preserve the best musical compositions at present sung by celebrated musicians.
5. To conduct and encourage researches into the nature, history and condition of Indian Ragas.
6. To consider the desirability of introducing such improvements as are possible in the present musical instrument [sic] in the light of modern scientific methods.
7. To hold conferences at which papers will be read on musical subjects and if funds permit, to publish a journal devoted to music.
8. To give concerts and demonstrations, when necessary.<sup>16</sup>

Items 1, 2, 4, and 6 in this list are of interest because, as at all levels, they purport to exert a kind of control of the materials of Indian music, in order to regularize them and hence be able to disseminate them in a unified form. They also suggest the intervention of scientism and technology into the realms of musicological research, not so much as tools for understanding what already exists, but rather as catalysts for change. Many Western musicologists and their followers among Indian scholars saw it as their duty not only to describe and analyse Indian music, but also to save it from a perceived decline and,

16 Clements 1923: iii. p. v.

above all, to modernize it. The list of aims for the first All India Music Conference in Baroda in 1916, the brain-child of V.N. Bhatkhande, perhaps the most influential Indian musicologist of the twentieth century, are almost identical to those of the Philharmonic Society of Western India, even though the two organizations were often publicly at loggerheads.<sup>17</sup> Indeed, Bhatkhande was trying to reform Indian music from within, without recourse to Western models, although he still saw it as in need of 'saving'. That musicologists, Indian and Western, should place such emphasis on the recourse to ancient treatises as a means of modernization is one of the more curious ambiguities of the Western encounter with Indian music.

But which music were Bhatkhande, Clements, Deval, Tagore, and others setting out to save? Was Indian music really in decline in the nineteenth century? If the words of both Western and Indian musicologists at the turn of the twentieth century are to be believed, its condition was terminal:

There are only a few competent teachers in the whole of India; they are mostly illiterate, and not seldom train up their children to other more lucrative or what are considered more honourable professions; as each singer dies, the danger to Indian music becomes more imminent. Theory is practically non-existent. Correct intonation is only to be found practised by a few professionals and they cannot impart their secrets, except by example.<sup>18</sup>

Our Hindoo religion which is so comprehensive to life as to hardly leave any subject outside the sphere of its influence, has done not a little, in fact has done the utmost, by means of numerous rites and ceremonials which embody music as part of their programme, to preserve, cultivate and develop this Art [music]. All these attempts are surely commendable, but looking to the slow and steady decline of this Art in recent times, it must be recognised that they are insufficient for the purpose in view.<sup>19</sup>

Yet such views must be placed against the reality of performing musicians in India at that time, who provided a flourishing urban music with a wide variety of styles and genres of performance. This diversity was documented in the first commercial recordings by Western gramophone companies at the very time that Deval and Clements were writing, yet it finds no place in their work. I will discuss the recording industry in detail in Chapter 4; it is sufficient to note here that this vast body of material, far from representing a

<sup>17</sup> Clements 1920: 6; Nayar 1989: 2745.

<sup>18</sup> Clements 1920: 5.

<sup>19</sup> Deval 1910: 42.



musical culture in decline, displayed music and musicians adapting to far-reaching social and technological change. So what musical situation were Clements, Deval, and others referring to?

It is important to realize that much of the musicological writing about Indian music in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was about how that music had been in the past and how it should be in the future, rather than how it existed in the present. Even though Deval worked with such eminent contemporary musicians as Abdul Kareem Khan, he did so only to support his own views on 'the theory of the Hindu Musical Scale as propounded by the old Sanskrit writers',<sup>20</sup> for he was determined 'to swerve not an inch from the old theory'.<sup>21</sup> Looking forward to a bright, notated future for the musics of the world, the South Indian musicologist A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar was trying to 'reduce the music of the land [India] to staff notation', because 'almost everything Oriental appears to better advantage in European garb'<sup>22</sup>

It is doubtful whether such views had much currency among musicians in the salons of Bombay and Calcutta; yet Indian music was supposed to be dying, because ideas about standard notation and the purity of the Hindu gamut were not being adhered to. In addition, music had become a vehicle for Hindu nationalism and means whereby the Islamic contribution to Indian culture could be denied. As Rama Row, addressing the Madras Gayan Samaj in 1887, bluntly put it: 'Wherever Mohamedans went in India music became a degraded employment, an accomplishment fit only for the stroller and the dancing girl.'<sup>23</sup> Many of these so-called dancing-girls, like Zohrabai and Gauharjan, went on to become some of the most celebrated classical vocalists of the early twentieth century, and at the time when Row was speaking were performing musical genres such as *khyal* and *thumri*.

Debates in musicological circles in India at this time must therefore be placed squarely within the realms of cultural, political, and national representation. Western musicologists and Indians like Tagore, Mudaliyar, Deval, Pingle, Bhatkhande, and others were discussing music at a time when the power struggle between colonizer and colonized was about to reach its peak, and music as a cultural form was caught up in this, if merely as a side-show to the main action. Like language and literature, music had a role to play for

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 41.

<sup>21</sup> Clements 1923: iii. 14.

<sup>22</sup> Mudaliyar 1893: introduction.

<sup>23</sup> *Madras Mail*, 15 Feb. 1887.

the upper middle-class Indians who would become the rulers when the British finally departed. It was a form that could be presented as a pure product of Hindu culture, and hence a vehicle for modernizing, progressive nationalists. Above all, Hindu music was not the same as the music that was performed by dancing-girls and their accompanists, which was considered lewd, sensual, and degenerate. Hindu music was an invention, a product of other social forces, that denied to a large extent the dynamic of change that was a continual feature of Indian music. In the meantime the *actual* performance of Indian music was developing and adapting as it would throughout the century, largely impervious to such debates. Simultaneously, the All India Music Conference was organizing competitions and gradings in which respectable young women could pit themselves musically against one and other in safety, and contribute to turning music into an acceptable middle-class pursuit.<sup>24</sup>

The very tools of music making employed by performing musicians also came under attack, from both European and Indian conservatives alike. The small hand-pumped harmonium, wrested from missionaries, which had become increasingly popular in North Indian classical music throughout the nineteenth century, was particularly vilified: 'it is only the equipment of central European beggars the most sinister influence in Eastern music today,'<sup>25</sup> 'a cancerous growth in the body of Hindu music',<sup>26</sup> and 'that bane of Indian music'<sup>27</sup> The supposed reason for the damaging effects of this innocuous instrument was that, because it had a tempered scale, it removed the microtonal subtleties from melodies when used as an accompaniment, unlike the traditional *tanpura* or *sarangi*. However, a scientific solution was soon proposed by Western theorists.

As already noted, the acoustics of music and the intervals of scales were a central preoccupation of Western musicologists at the end of the nineteenth century. In particular, Alexander J. Ellis, who published 'On the Musical Scales of Various Nations' in 1885, was a pioneer in measuring and comparing intervals and scales, and is sometimes cited as the founding father of comparative musicology.<sup>28</sup> It was the ideas of Ellis, Helmholtz, and others that led to the manufacture of a *śruti* harmonium, a harmonium with a keyboard

24 A.U. Music Conference, 1939.

25 Cousins 1935: 28.

26 Rudhyar 1928: 13.

27 R. Tagore 1961: 4.

28 Netti 1983: 86.

tuned to the Indian scale of microtones. This curious instrument, which was manufactured by Moore & Moore of Oxford St, London, and distributed by Rose & Co. in Bombay, did not appear to catch on with Indian musicians, but the interest among Indian and Western musicologists was sustained. Clements gave details of the tuning system at the Philharmonic Society of Western India in September 1923 (see Figs. 2.1, 2.2). He proposed this as a 'Universal tuning for all keyed instruments in general use', and proposed modifications for use in infant schools.<sup>29</sup> Clements also warned about temperament and tempered notation, 'both of which are equally destructive' to the spirit of Indian music, and pleaded for 'support from the Government and the public to a dying art'.<sup>30</sup> The meeting of 23 September concluded with illustrations of popular music education, with performances of Indian, Greek, and Irish music.<sup>31</sup>

Despite the fact that Clements's calculations of microtones may have been accurate acoustically, the *śruti* harmonium never caught on either in Indian or Western music, and it remained a curiosity rather than a living music instrument. As Sarkes noted, 'It was built five years ago and I am informed on the best authority that there has been no enquiry whatever for it, much less demand.'<sup>31</sup> In this case, as in so many others. Western attempts to save Indian musicians from themselves went largely unheeded. Musicians continued to adapt and change in their own ways and with the instruments of their choice, though the harmonium still faced bans on All India Radio (AIR) well into the twentieth century.<sup>33</sup>

Although the musicological literature of the time gives a particular impression of the concerns of Indian and Western musicologists in the nineteenth century, it is necessary to dig deeper to find other musical issues of concern to the British rulers, beyond the efficacy of staff notation and the measurement of intervals, and in particular the way in which music featured as a facet of a more general mapping of Indian life and culture during the Raj.

The literature of musicology in nineteenth-century India is concerned mainly with the material of the classical or art traditions of Indian music, as was the reforming zeal of Hindu musicians; but buried in the reports of British officials and administrators are occasionally vivid descriptions of other

<sup>29</sup> Clements 1923: iii. 4.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 12.

<sup>32</sup> Sarkes 1915: 25.

<sup>33</sup> Neuman 1990: 1846.

Tuning Method of the Philharmonic Society's Organ.

Pitch C is taken as first white-left centre of key-board. Black keys when mentioned below are distinguished by black type, as 3.

1 c# 250	2 e 284 1/2	3 g 350 1/2	4 a 375 1/2	5 b 420 1/2	1 c# 500	2 e 568 1/2
1 c# 40	2 d 63 1/2	3 e 80	4 f 90	5 g 100	6 a 110	7 b 120
1 c# 480	2 d 533 1/2	3 e 600	4 f 660	5 g 720	6 a 780	7 b 840

From pitch C (1 left of centre) tune without beats :-

- 5 (3), 4 (3), 6 (3), 3 (3).
- From 5 - 7 (3).
- From 4 - 2 (3), 5 (3).
- From 6 - 1 (3).
- From 2 - 3 (3).
- From 5 - 2 (3).
- From 2 - 4 (3).

Guide to Ragas in Volume II Ragas of Hindustan.

- Bagesri-1, 4 (ri 3).
- Adana Bahar-(with ri 3) 4; (with ri 3) 1.
- Bhairav-(approx.) with ri, dha 1 2.  
Scale = 2, 3, 3, 4, 5, 7, 2, 2  
(with ri 3 (tattivra), ri, dha 3, ga 3) 6.
- Bhairavi-6, 2 (2, 2, 4, 3, 6, 5, 1, 2).
- Blampalasi-1.
- Bhop-(with dha 3) 4, 5 (5, 1, 2, 4, 3, 5).  
(with dha 3) 5 (5, 1, 2, 4, 5, 5).
- Bihag-5, 2 (ga is 3).
- Bilaval-5 (dha is 3) 4.
- Desh-4.
- Deshkar-1, 4 (4, 3, 6, 1, 2, 4).
- Dev Gandhar-2 (2, 2, 4, 3, 6, 5, 1, or 1, 2).
- Dhanasri-1, 4 (ri is 3).
- Hamir-5, 2 (ga is 3).
- Hindol-5, 2 (2, 3, 6, 1, 2).
- Jivanpuri-6, 2, (ma is 3).
- Kanod. Yamankalyan-same as Bibag.
- Kanada-1.
- Kafi-1, 4 (ri is 3).
- Kedar-5 (dha is 3).
- Khamsaj, Khamravati Malhar-same as Bilaval.

- Lalit-5, (ri is too low).
- Malkaus-6, 2 (ma is 3).
- Marva-5 (5, 7, 2, 3, 3, 6, 5).
- Megh Malhar-5 (approx).
- Miya Malhar-4.
- Multani-2 (ma is too high).
- Paraj-2 approx. (2, 3, 3, 4, or 6, 5, 7, 2, 2)
- Puriya-2 or 5 (ri is too low).
- Purvi-Same as Paraj.
- Rankali-2 (see Bhairav).
- Sankara-5, 1, 2 (ga is 3), 4.
- Sarang-5, 4.
- Gaud Sarang-2.
- Sring-Same as Purvi (2, 3, 3, 6, 5, 7, 2, 2).
- Todi-6, 2, 3, (all approx.)
- Note-3 in the case of ga, ma, ni is the old 3 (tivra).  
2 in the case of ri, dha is the old 2 (madhya or shuddh tivra).  
4 in the case of ga, ma, ni, is the old 4 (tattivra).  
5 in the case of ri, dha is the old 5 (tivra).
- These changes have been introduced by the Universal Notation.

Figure 2.1.

The precise measurement of intervals was a topic that preoccupied both Indian and Western musicologists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is a diagram of the tuning system of the Philharmonic Society of Western India's organ.

types of musical activity that owed little to classical musicology, Western or Indian. It is this Western description of music, which may be viewed as a type of undergrowth to the more public debates, that I will discuss next, because it forms a contrast to the scholarly debates on Indian music and music education that constitute the other main strand of discussion in this chapter.

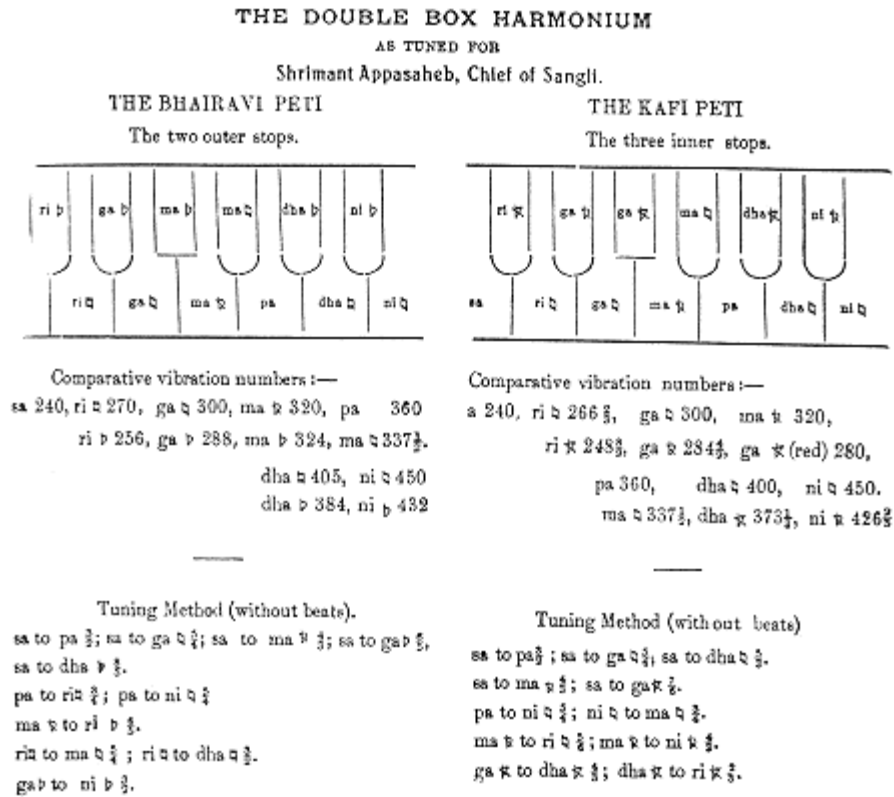


Figure 2.2.  
The tuning system for a double box harmonium belonging to Shrimant Appasaheb,  
Chief of Sangli, showing microtonal alterations for two Indian scale-types.

Traditional Musical Culture and Colonial Administration

Although it is obvious that the British needed to understand India on a day-to-day basis in order to rule effectively, the sheer volume of official documents chronicling the Indian way of life is staggering. This documentation ranges from the ethnographies of specific areas written by individual officials in the colonial hierarchy to detailed, month-by-month reports submitted by studious civil servants in regional governments on every practical aspect of

administration, from transport and sewage systems to schools. But for the present discussion what is of interest in this documentation is the way in which the British authorities deliberated on the nature of traditional Indian life and culture in order to frame the best laws through which to administer it. These were documents written by the British for the British, in their ongoing project concerning the most effective ways to rule India.

A flavour of the bureaucratization of traditional Indian culture is given in government proceedings from the late nineteenth century. For example, perhaps paradoxically, the place of indigenous languages was important to the British at a time when they were trying to remodel the Indian education system in their own image, as this passage suggests:

A sound knowledge is of importance to the maintenance and purity of the Bengali language, and some degree of acquaintance with it may be considered essential to the training of an educated Bengali gentleman [and] in the interests of philological learning, of national sentiments, and of liberal education.<sup>34</sup>

Such statements tell us much about the attempts of the British to create an educated Indian *élite* that would be a loyal but malleable tier of colonial government. The concepts of tradition, cultural purity, and 'national sentiment' had a part to play in this process; yet the control and promotion of such ideals lay firmly in the hands of the rulers. The move towards 'vernacular' education, which was given official approval in the 1854 dispatch by Sir Charles Wood, President of the Board of Control, had always been a corner-stone of missionary policy, in order to promulgate 'the permanent moral and social elevation of the natives of India'.<sup>35</sup> By 1876 the scriptures which Joseph Salter was distributing to Indians in London were written in native languages. Apart from their rationale within the local matrix of colonial control, such efforts were also part of an intellectual overview in the West which sought to explain the Orient to itself.

The documentation of colonial rule shows that the British felt it was up to them, and them alone, to decide which aspects of traditional Indian culture were fit for consumption by the Indians themselves; and that on some deeper level they assumed that they understood India and Indian culture better than

<sup>34</sup>*Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department*, Jan. 1876, p. 195.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*, Mar. 1873, p. 164.

the indigenous population. It was this complex mixture of paternalism and authoritarianism, finally embedded in the very foundations of the Indian education system, that the Indian independence movement would find so difficult to crack in the struggles that lay ahead.

Music makes only an occasional appearance in this mass of colonial paperwork. Although music was not considered a central facet of educational policy, it was still viewed as a laudable influence, and earned the occasional acknowledgement in government reports, usually little more than 'It is noticed that music and singing have been successfully introduced in the Dacca adult female school as a regular part of the school routine'.<sup>36</sup> Music lessons, formal or informal, did not seem to play a great part in school education in India at the time. For example, in the Bombay presidency in 1855 there were only four singing schools in Poona, catering for thirty-five boys, and only two schools containing five boys in 1869.<sup>37</sup> Music as a performing art was still taught and learned within the *gharana* system, or the courts of India; but this was considered by both Western and Indian educationalists to be a milieu of music making that was the province of a degenerate, immoral, and illiterate class. The courts were already in decline by the late nineteenth century, and the new, aspiring, Western-educated Indian *álites* in cities like Bombay, Calcutta, and Madras looked upon them as anti-progressive, even though they were wont to call upon the vast wealth of nawabs and maharajas as patrons of Hindu music. Important Indian musical theorists in the nineteenth century, such as Tagore and Mudaliyar, came from this urban milieu, as did later central figures in the story of Indian music and the West, like Rabindranath Tagore and Uday and Ravi Shankar. The observation of Margaret Cousins on the first woman music graduate from an Indian university in 1926, that 'it has raised to university honours the degraded subject of music', was fairly typical.<sup>38</sup> This same view is echoed in an 1893 letter from the Secretary of the Board of Revenue to Mudaliyar:

I shall be happy to pay rupees 10 or 12 per measem [sic] to any respectable female whom you can find to teach my daughters to play Hindu airs on the harmonium or any other instrument I am sure if the matter becomes known, many a respectable Hindu home will go in for music at once.<sup>39</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., Jan. 1876, p. 197.

<sup>37</sup> Kanolkar 1965: 20.

<sup>38</sup> Cousins 1935: 171.

<sup>39</sup> Mudaliyar 1893, in section of reactions from the press.

However, some colonial officials recognized the importance of music not merely as a scholarly curiosity, but as part of the knowledge they must gain in order to understand Indians better and hence rule more effectively. Even in published collections of songs like Charles Gover's *Folk Songs of Southern India* (1871), the central importance of song collecting to the colonial enterprise was underlined:

It is indisputable that there can scarcely be a more serious and interesting question than that which would enquire of the true character and position of the subject nation the contents of the following pages will give samples of almost every kind of song that thus catch the public ear and dwell in the national heart.<sup>40</sup>

Gover emphasizes the missionary contribution to song collecting, with reference to works by the Revds A. J. O'Leyle, S. Dalzell, T. Hodson, J. Stephenson, and others, who were responsible for major collections of Indian songs during this period, some of which appeared in the *Journal of the German Oriental Society*; but he also suggests that in such collections the material was reshaped to suit Western tastes.<sup>41</sup> A later example of this process is seen in *Sangit Kusum*, a collection of harmonized Bengali airs by I. W. Johory, which appeared in 1908. This collection was of songs sung by Christians in Bengali churches, and the introduction indicates the importance of mission in the collection of songs. However, the process of adaptation is also clear: 'Local variations have not been attempted as they are cumbersome and will be useless after the tunes get fixed. Shakes and turns have been mostly avoided as they are often used at the discretion of the professional singer.'<sup>42</sup> An interesting connection between Indian and Western ways of learning is also noted here, as many of the tunes were collected by Johory's brother, who was a member of the Tonic Solfa College in London, 'from whom he obtained many tunes in solfa-renderings'.<sup>43</sup>

However, there were also extra-musical problems that Western song collectors had to grapple with. Despite Gover's distaste for Christian and Brahmin 'mutilation' of Indian songs and poems and his claims to be comprehensive, he too stopped short of offending Victorian morality by excluding erotic lyrics 'which I dare not translate'.<sup>44</sup> He had been forewarned of the

40 Gover 1871: pp. xxi.

41 Ibid.

42 Johory 1908: p. iii.

43 Ibid.

44 Gover 1871: p. xix.



consequences: 'A learned and estimable missionary has been publicly condemned because he would faithfully translate a noble poem and was therefore compelled to commit the awful crime of likening a woman's bosom to a pomegranate.'<sup>45</sup> Indeed, as we will see in Chapter 3, Indian sexuality and music would eventually become intertwined in the realm of popular song. Music, dance, and literature would be the conduit for expressing the moral contradictions that confronted Europeans in India, especially in the realm of sexual relations, where colonial officialdom and moral cant held no sway.

Gover's approach to Indian music is a long way from the concerns of Western and Hindu musicologists. The curious mixture of colonial administration and folklorism which his work displays had within it the seeds of a musical anthropology conspicuously absent in other debates about Indian music at the time. It also underscored the bifurcation of studies of Indian music into classical and folk in the nineteenth century.<sup>46</sup>

Other materials collected by British officials were clearly gems of anthropological field-work, although they existed only for purely administrative purposes. One example is the contents of the Luard MS.<sup>47</sup> This document was compiled for census purposes at the beginning of the twentieth century (c. 1901/11) by Lt.-Col. Charles Eckford Lewis, and took in the central Indian areas of Bhopal, Gwalior, Warsinghar, and Rajgara. Several people were involved in this undertaking. Indian and British officials collaborated, so entries are in Hindi, transliterated into Roman script and translated into English. This document contains a mass of lyrics from songs, proverbs, prayers, and riddles, which cover the entire life cycle from the cradle to the grave. Lengthy interviews with various members of the village hierarchies, including priests, about the different ceremonies surrounding birth, death, and marriage are also included. Discussions of astrology, cooking, circumcision, moving house, and a multitude of other topics are laid out in pages which are neatly divided down the middle for questions and answers.

The Luard MS constitutes a major anthropological source for late nineteenth-century village life in India, but, unfortunately for the musicologist, none of the songs was transcribed either in staff notation or in Indian *sargam*. Nevertheless, the manuscript is of great interest, because it indicates the

45 Ibid. p. xxi.

46 See also Babiracki 1991.

47 British Library India Office, MS. Eur.E.138.

extent to which a knowledge of such materials was valued by the British administration, and how song collection, albeit only the lyrics, was part of the process of government. One attempt to introduce such materials in an active manner into music education in Indian schools appears in a detailed report submitted to the Bengal government by S. W. Fallon in 1873. Fallon, inspector of schools for Bihar, North India, based at Dinapore (Patna), wrote to the state government to request funds (1,800 rupees) for 'the collection of adequate materials for the compilation of suitable books in the mother tongue of the natives of Behar'.<sup>48</sup> Fallon's plans were wide-ranging, and were clearly based on an in-depth knowledge of local culture. He intended that the compilation would consist of

proverbs, songs, bhajans (hymns), chants, plays (swang, natak, khyal, chabolas of Holi, ras lila, hans tasik & c) pahelis (riddles), epigrams, witticisms, street cries & c. which are in the mouths of the people or are habitually chanted by men women and children, in their homes, in the streets and on festive occasions.<sup>49</sup>

The scale of Fallon's proposal was underlined by a list of some seventy song types which he appended. He appeared to view this enterprise as a democratizing process, which would free the music of the people from 'the corrupt legends and teaching of the priestcraft', because 'emphatically the people are not as their gods'.<sup>50</sup>

Although he was obviously very knowledgeable about Indian music, the tone of Fallon's report is quite different from that of contemporary musicological writing of Western scholars on Indian music. Even though his proposal suggests that he too was driven by a reforming zeal, and that music was a vehicle for this, he was not looking to the past for inspiration. To Fallon, the music of 'living speech' existed in contrast to 'the mystic symbols now borrowed from dead languages which the people do not understand'<sup>51</sup> in other words, the very stuff of both Hindu and Western musicologies. By stepping away from theories of music and performance based on Sanskrit or Hindu sources, he also seemed to be hoping to introduce Indian folk-music into schools as a symbol of liberal, universalist aspirations: 'They [the songs]

<sup>48</sup>*Proceedings of the Government of Bengal in the Education Department*, June 1873, 42234.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 422.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 4245.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 422.

express naturally and well all those emotions of sentient beings in their domestic and social relations which we especially admire in all languages.'<sup>52</sup>

Fallon's comments are not unfamiliar in light of the interest in folk-music that sprang up all over Europe towards the end of the nineteenth century, and are consistent with other ethnographical studies of Indian life that derived from colonial administration.<sup>53</sup> However, what is of interest is the way in which he suggests a distinction between ancient Indian musical procedures, as embodied in the learning of pandits, and the general ebb and flow of the musical life of the people. Further, his tone is interventionist, suggesting how such material might be utilized in an educational context as away of both distancing it from the supposed degeneracy of the religious tradition and at the same time preserving its cultural validity. Above all, Fallon's ideas stemmed from observation in the field, and he wished to relay back to Indians in schools authentic aspects of their own culture, rather than impose an artificial idea of Indian musical culture derived from classical sources. This is in contrast to Clements's later plans for infant education, which stressed purity of intonation in singing and adherence to ancient ideas of mode and interval.<sup>54</sup> It is not recorded whether Fallon's populist schemes came to fruition or not, but he retired soon after proposing them.

Both the Luard MS and Fallon's proposal indicate the way in which, even at the height of the Raj, the British were sensitive to, and mindful of, the role which music and other cultural forms played in everyday life. The detail of such reports is in contrast to other pictures that have been drawn of British disdain for all things Indian, and the distance they sought to put between themselves and the natives. The depth of the interest in Indian culture shown by the writers was far in excess of their duties as cogs in the colonial machine. Fallon's proposal was one of several initiatives to institutionalize music education in India at the time, and in the last decades of the nineteenth century the music college was fast becoming a feature of musical life for educated Indians. The forms which these institutions took owed much to the political situation in the late nineteenth century, and they functioned, paradoxically, as symbols of both Indian nationalism and loyalty to the British authorities. It was this peculiar mix of sentiments that was encouraged by both Western and Indian musicologists.

52 Ibid.

53 Babiracki 1991: 7980.

54 Clements 1923: iii. 4.

२६३ भिक्वेटोरिया-गीतिका।

चै० सी० नि० घे० प० प० नि० घे० प०  
 च नु जे चं न सु० + वि च

मे० गी० गी० मे० गी० चै० चै० सी० सी० ॥  
 थं० स य भा क शाग् रु तं । २२ ।

त्रिशांरिदी ।

जिनोःसोभामुदो विपुलवधमाली वज्रधन-  
 सुव्यथ भावद्वारादावनिवमदुर्गं परमिन् ।  
 तथा दिशोःसु महानिवसने सुगुरता  
 सधेनाभिमंशा समरजयमुता विभवरा । २३ ।

रागिणी बागीश्वरी ।

मे० मे० मे० मे० गी० चै० गी० चै० गी०  
 जि नो यो ध्या भू० यो वि तु

मे० मे० पे० मे० गी० चै० चै० चै० सी०  
 स व स मा ली व ज्ञ ध न

THE HOUSE OF GUELPHS. २६७

pa da ra ya, ta ya - du pa  
 ya - ra pa na tra ut hi ta (32.)

(33.)

THOU hast beaten the mighty and Kobera-like-wealthy  
 king of Gode, and humbled the pride of the king of Hydrabad;  
 and having routed the adherents of the Emperor by means of  
 thy own forces, hast re-established thy supremacy over Delhi—a  
 supremacy which has added much to thy wealth and glory.

RĀGINI BĀGISHVARI.

ji to ya dya ta - po hi pa  
 la la la ek || to lu du na,

Ex. 2.1

## Hindu Nationalism, Musicology, and Music Education

In 1875 the Bengali musicologist Sir Sourindro Mohun Tagore (1840-1914) published a curious book entitled *Victoria-Gitika or Sanskrit Verses Celebrating the Deeds and the Virtues of Her Gracious Majesty The Queen Victoria*. This is a work which graphically demonstrates the strange assortment of conflicting national loyalties and admixtures of languages, musical systems, and theories which characterizes the meeting between Indian music and the West in nineteenth-century India. Tagore's preface is a masterpiece of double-talk about, on the one hand, the greatness of British dominion over India and elsewhere and, on the other, the importance and national singularity of Hindu music.

In writing the following hymns, the object of the author has been to celebrate the glory of Her Most Gracious majesty QUEEN VICTORIA, and her renowned predecessors Conscious as he is of his inability to do justice to the task, the author could not help giving expressions to his strong feeling of loyalty To impart to Englishmen an insight into the nature of our *Rags* and *Raginis* these pieces have been set to Hindu music Hindu musical graces have been omitted, partly because of the peculiar nature of European instruments, and partly of the absence of their proper signs and symbols in English music; this rendering it impossible to note them down in English notation Notwithstanding this the character of Hindu music is all but completely represented in the following notation.<sup>55</sup>

The gushing poetry that follows, and the music settings, are given in parallel, in Sanskrit and English, with both Bengali and staff notation (see Ex. 2.1). Not only is the format of the book clear, but so is Tagore's apparent approval of Queen Victoria's domination of India, in what is surely a reference to the Indian mutiny. A year later he published a follow-up to this work entitled *Victoria-Samrajyan* (1876), consisting of Sanskrit stanzas on 'the various dependencies of the British crown', to celebrate Victoria's assumption of the title 'Empress of India'. In this book Tagore cast himself as a loyal musical spokesman for all the peoples of the Empire, by setting the stanzas to airs from each country. Consequently, 'Auld Langsyne' makes an appearance alongside melodies from Africa, New Zealand, Canada, and elsewhere.<sup>56</sup> The

55 S. M. Tagore 1875: preface.

56 S. M. Tagore 1876: pp. xi-xii.

language in this publication is, if anything, even more effusive than in *Victoria-Gitika*:

oppressed by some powerful Mahomedans, India pined for having fallen from her moral eminence, and for having been deprived of her own religion. O mother! at present having thee on the throne thee who standest pre-eminent over all, and who art possessed of calm, benign temperament, and endowed with exquisite virtues, she is lost in overpowering ecstasy.<sup>57</sup>

This goes well beyond the grudging loyalty given by a subject to a ruler, becoming openly sycophantic. Does this mean that Tagore was merely a rabid royalist out of touch with his Indian roots and the current political trends in nineteenth-century Calcutta?

Hardly. Tagore is a complex figure in the history of Indian musicology; and his role as a 'marginal man' and a symbol of the confused Indian response to the British Raj has been discussed by Capwell (1991). In tandem with his loyalty to Queen Victoria, Tagore was also an outspoken Hindu nationalist.

Tagore came from a rich Calcutta family that had close economic and social ties with the British. His education included Western as well as Indian music, and Sanskrit alongside Bengali and English.<sup>58</sup> Given his deep involvement with both cultures, it is not surprising that he should have produced the kind of work he did, which was a striking and often perplexing amalgam of Western and Indian music theory. Although Capwell notes that 'Bengal is out of the mainstream of the development of Hindustani music',<sup>59</sup> Tagore was not an isolated figure in Indian musicology at that time, even if he was certainly one of the most prolific. He published dozens of works, all at his own expense. Other musicians and scholars all over India were ploughing similar furrows, and creating similar hybrid works which sought to marry East and West for example, A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar (1893), and the writers of the Madras and Poona Gayan Samaj (1887).

What Tagore had in common with other Indian musicologists of the time was an intense interest in the creation of a national music, a belief in the purity of Hindu music as handed down in Sanskrit sources and the degradation of music at the hands of the Muslims, an ambivalent, not to say confused, attitude to Western music and musical procedures, a desire to find the most

<sup>57</sup> S. M. Tagore 1876: 13.

<sup>58</sup> Rosse 1980: 5256.

<sup>59</sup> Capwell 1991: 228.

appropriate notations for Indian music coupled with a belief that a uniform system was necessary for progress, an interest in establishing institutionalized music education, and a publicly stated loyalty to the British authorities.

An examination of this list suggests that it was Western values that were at the forefront of the musical agenda in late nineteenth-century India. The superiority of Sanskrit sources on music over modern performing practices had been established by eighteenth-century orientalist; the institutionalization of vernacular culture was an important part of British colonial policy; and staff notation was the musical tool *par excellence* for spreading the structures and paradigms of Western musical systems through standardizing representations of pitch and rhythm. That the nationalists should fight the British on their own ground, and try to match their music with a Hindu version based on scientific and rational principles, exemplifies one reaction of the colonized to the colonizer: the acceptance of a struggle, the parameters of which are always defined by the ruler.<sup>60</sup>

Tagore was at the centre of many debates about the clash between Western and Indian music, and wrote frequently about the differences between Western and Indian music and the applicability of harmony to Hindu music. He was a tireless music educator, and founded the Bengal Music School and Bengal Academy of Music. He was also a benefactor of other schools, providing books and other materials at his own cost.<sup>61</sup>

One of the most public fracas in which he was a central figure concerned the type of music notation to be used in Bengali schools: Bengali or staff notation. Charles Capwell has written about this debate in some detail,<sup>62</sup> but I wish to revisit it briefly here, and unpack it a little further, because it illustrates so well the confusions and ambiguities that existed between the British and the Indians on the subject of music, and also how such conflicts replicated wider political and social struggles.

The question of how Indian music should be written down for educational purposes became the centre of debate after several works were sent for approval to Charles Baron Clark, then inspector of schools in Bengal. Although one of these books was by Tagore, according to Clark, he had only been asked officially to give his comments on the ancient Sanskrit treatise on

<sup>60</sup> Nandy 1983; Capwell 1991.

<sup>61</sup> Rosse 1980: 5256.

<sup>62</sup> Capwell 1986, 1991.

music, the *sangitaratnakara*.<sup>63</sup> One of Clark's main conclusions was that staff notation would be the best medium for instruction, rather than the various types of Indian notation then in use. He published an article on the subject in the *Calcutta Review* of 1874. There followed counterblasts from various Bengali musicians for or against the use of staff notation. Tagore was among the most vocal, and published a long criticism of Clark in the *Hindu Patriot*, and later reproduced this article in *Hindu Music from Various Authors* (1882).

The debate centred on the by now familiar concerns regarding the nature of microtonal intervals and how these should be represented in notation. The bulk of Clark's article was an attempt to show the mathematical basis for the Western division of the octave, as opposed to the Hindu version. But he also let his liking for Bengali folk-music be known:

I may add that the boatmen often sing very nicely in tune although their voices may be rough and their style uncultured, so that, whatever the value of their melodies may be they gain much in the performance as compared with the performance of Bengali professional singers.<sup>64</sup>

He also reproduced an example of 'God Save the Queen' in Bengali notation from Tagore's *Ackatana*: (see Ex. 2.2). Clark made the following comment:

It is unnecessary to comment on the crudeness of this scheme of musical notation. The occasional flats and sharps have to be marked above the uppermost line as well as the various slurs and wobbles which are so freely employed in Bengali tunes.<sup>65</sup>

He added that this notation which was being vigorously promoted by nationalists was 'not *the* Bengali notation, but an invention of four years age taken up by a small but rich party in Calcutta'. It seems that Clark, in his own pompous way, may have been on the verge of exposing the fiction of ancient Hindu music that was being dressed up in contemporary representational systems: 'the amount of musical science that lies behind the cloud of words and prolix antiquarianism is very small.'<sup>66</sup>

But Tagore was not convinced: 'We admire Mr Clarke's boldness in venturing upon the merits of Hindu music with, as it appears, scarcely any knowledge

<sup>63</sup> Clark 1874: 243.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 264.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid. 257.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid. 264.



God save our gra-cious Queen, Long live our no-ble Queen, God save the Queen. Send her vic-torious, Happy and glo-rious, Long to reign O-ver us God save the Queen.

Ex. 2.2  
God Save the Queen

of its elementary principles.<sup>67</sup> Much of this debate was carried out in the pages of the *Hindu Patriot*, a nineteenth-century Calcutta newspaper which printed a mixture of loyalist and nationalist articles. In an editorial Clark was thanked for starting the debate, and in the same number a long counterblast by Tagore was published.<sup>68</sup> The editorial concluded, however,

<sup>67</sup> S. M. Tagore 1882: 343.

<sup>68</sup> *Hindu Patriot*, 7 Sept. 1874.

that Clark's views were fatally flawed, because in 'giving his preference to the native boatman's music he has done a harm to his reputation as a musical critic which reams of mathematical disputations will not repair'.<sup>69</sup> By contrast, the *Hindu Patriot* was fulsome in its praise of Tagore and his newly formed Bengal Music School: 'he may be considered the originator of the revival of Hindu music on a rational and scientific basis.'<sup>70</sup> As in Fallon's reports, the dissonance between the living music of the people and the reconstruction of Hindu music was pointed up by the comments of a British administrator and amateur musician.

Tagore also had his Indian critics, and one implacable foe was Krishna Dhana Banerjea, a fellow musician whose tutor for sitar was also one of the books sent to Clark. Banerjea had a history of promoting the efficacy of staff notation in Indian music, and had published his own collections of Indian tunes arranged for piano.<sup>71</sup> Banerjea's long letter in the *Hindu Patriot* of 21 December 1874 was a sustained attack on Tagore's criticisms of Clark and the promotion of Hindu music in the name of nationalism. He questioned Tagore's knowledge of Sanskrit sources and also his motivation in criticizing Clark so vehemently. Above all, he concurred with Clark on notation:

The symbolic appearance of that [staff] notation may frighten a learner at the first sight, but no sooner its principles are explained to him which is done by a few words than he understands the whole system no matter how illiterate he may be.<sup>72</sup>

He also notes that 'It has been a fashion in Bengal at the present time to preach and palm off many egregious nonsenses under the garb of nationalism'.<sup>73</sup>

This altercation shows how music was a central ingredient in the political life of Bengal and also the nature of the competing ideas on the manner in which music should be represented. However, these concerns were not unique to Bengal, but were being aired in different ways throughout India; and sometimes their public manifestation was equally acrimonious.

While the Indian musicologists and the British authorities slugged it out in the columns of the Calcutta press, far away in Poona, western India, on 3 October 1874, the Gayan Samaj was formed. This institution, which also

<sup>69</sup>*Hindu Patriot*, 7 Sept. 1874.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> Capwell 1986: 147.

<sup>72</sup>*Hindu Patriot*, 21 Dec. 1874.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

started a branch in Madras in 1883, became a focus for research and performance in both the Hindustani (North Indian) and the Carnatic (South Indian) systems of music, which differed from each other in many respects. A feature of this organization that can be gleaned from proceedings and reports in the press was that it was more closely tied to princely patronage than its counterparts in Bengal, although the mix of Indian nationalism and loyalty to the Crown expressed in its activities is similar. The founders were sure that the Gayan Samaj would be 'instrumental in preserving our nationality in the sense of our possessing an indigenous art of singing, which, unlike English music, has challenged all attempts at its being reduced to writing'.<sup>74</sup>

The Gayan Samaj actively canvassed the support of members of the British community, and in so doing, was drawn into debates about notation. The founders had asked Lt.-Gov. Mark Kerr to join them in this project. Although Kerr was honoured to support the new organization, his reply shows that he also felt he knew the best way for Indian music to be represented:

I very seriously invite you to do what, against your opinion is very possible, namely put on paper put into writing all the quaint and melodious airs that I have heard sung by your children, Mhotuallas, and others. Let this be arranged with grace and good taste, and, I repeat put into writing what has hitherto defied you. I assure you that this is a bugbear that has challenged you. It would vanish before your perseverance.<sup>75</sup>

The tone of Kerr's advice becomes increasingly familiar in the press and literature of the time. Notation was a solution that would work a kind of alchemy on the degraded state of Indian music. As long as music could be seen, and captured as artefact, it would attain validity as an art-form. It is not too far-fetched to view notation as symbol of the wider objectification that India was subjected to by the scientific rationale of colonial rule. Staff notation was like a musical Lamprey grid through which errant sounds could be captured, preserved, and measured, in the same way as the physical features of the Indian people had been classified by photography.

Whereas such opinions would have had little import for performing musicians, they did matter to middle-class organizations like the Gayan Samaj, which hoped to show the British that Hindu music was indeed respectable,

<sup>74</sup> Gayan Samaj 1887: 34.

<sup>75</sup> *The Times of India*, 25 Oct. 1876.

scientific, and worthy of their approval, and, by extension, that Indians were the social and intellectual equals of the British. Other observers were more cynical about the aims of the Gayan Samaj, and this extract from *The Times of India* touches on both the general prejudice about Indian music held by the British and the artificial nature of the music promoted by the Gayan Samaj in contrast to music happening on the streets.

Bombay, as we all know, is chiefly famous for 'music and ladders', and here by night the sound of the tom-tom and the plaintive refrain of 'Taza-ba-taza nalbaznaz' is never missing: but we have not yet attained the full-blown glory of a 'Gayan Samaj'. So, though we know how miserable we are, we cannot tell, with this terrible example before us, how miserable we may be. Probably the commissioner of police would in our city be the right patron to fill the post with which Mr Mark Kerr is dallying at Poona.<sup>76</sup>

This passage mercilessly points up the view that music was merely a profession of the low life in Indian cities. As Kerr would say in reply to *The Times of Bombay*, the writer had tried to reduce Indian music 'to the level of the disgusting street "tom tom" and the still more disgusting songs sung by the low caste'.<sup>77</sup> It was exactly this image which Hindu musicians were trying to throw off in seeking the support of the British, never mind that the 'tom tom' was probably the tabla, and the 'disgusting songs' anything from *khyal* to *thumri*. It is equally telling to see a reference 100 years later to the song 'Taza-ba-taza', which had been translated by William Jones and was a popular Hindustani Air. No doubt this song, which had made its way into Western popular culture, was the only one that the writer knew, and had come to represent the supposedly parlous state of Indian music.

Nevertheless, the Gayan Samaj flourished, and its regular events were reported with approval by the press. It became a significant force in music education, founding music schools for both boys and girls with the express aim of making music 'an accomplishment worthy of every household in India'.<sup>78</sup> Regular performances by children playing on Indian and Western instruments were given for mixed European and Indian audiences. Each event, however, had an overtly loyalist flavour, and versions of 'God Save the

<sup>76</sup> Gayan Samaj 1887: 36.

<sup>77</sup>*The Times of India*, 18 Jan. 1877.

<sup>78</sup> Gayan Samaj 1887: 45.

Queen' and Tennyson's 'Jubilee Ode' in Sanskrit were included as signs of unswerving devotion to the Crown.<sup>79</sup>

The question of the use of staff notation for Indian music is a recurrent theme in all the proceedings; but the organization also began to research further into other points of contact between Indian and Western music. Indeed, other musics started to make their way into the performances, as in a concert by Mr Surinarayana Shashtri, who played 'English, Scotch, and Irish airs with so much skill that it has almost brought one again to one's country'.<sup>80</sup> Another interested party, one Sir Herbert Oakley, had earlier presented a harmonized, orchestrated version of an Indian song, which, 'Not founded on choral harmony is simply a number of string instruments tuned to a chord played throughout in quavers, the drum beating the 3/4th time in quavers'.<sup>81</sup> Although the results of this particular experiment are not extant, by comparison with Hindustani Airs, Oakley seems to have been employing a decidedly imaginative, if minimalist, approach.

The Gayan Samaj was also investigating the state of play between Indian and Western music in the courts of South India. A moving force behind these enquiries was the English musicologist Charles Russell Day (1860-1900), a military bandman who during his career was stationed at Bangalore, Bengal, and Bombay, and was the author in 1891 of *Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan*.<sup>82</sup> In 1883, apparently at the request of Day, the Gayan Samaj wrote to the Maharaja of Travancore with a series of questions about the notations used by his musicians and whether English melodies were included in their repertoire. Like several rulers at the time, the maharaja maintained both Western and Indian musical ensembles to play at court. In particular, the Gayan Samaj requested notated versions of the different sections of a Carnatic musical performance, the *pallavi* and *annupallavi*.<sup>83</sup>

The maharaja's replies are interesting, for several reasons. He pointed out the difficulty of notating some sections of a performance as opposed to others, such as the *ragam* equivalent of the North Indian *alap*, because of its free, non-metrical structure and the microtonal intervals that were sometimes employed. This distinction between different sections of a performance with regard to notation is a point that was very rarely raised in debates about Indian

<sup>79</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>80</sup> *Madras Mail*, 15 Feb. 1887.

<sup>81</sup> *Bombay Gazette*, 17 Aug. 1878.

<sup>82</sup> See Farrell 1986: 22.

<sup>83</sup> Gayan Samaj 1887: 27.

music at the time; yet it is crucial. Some aspects of Indian music, such as fixed melodies like *gats* and *kritis* which have regular metrical shapes, *could* be adequately represented in staff notation; but with other aspects of performance it was a pointless exercise, as they depended on musical material being reshaped anew in each performance. The maharaja went on to say that he would try to notate some of the simpler melodies with the help of 'the English bandmaster of the Nayar brigade [and] some of the best Hindu musicians now available here'.<sup>84</sup>

It appears that musical experiments in Travancore did not extend to the European band playing Indian music or the Indian band playing European music, as at the court of Mysore. In Mysore, for example, Chamraja Wodeyar had started a Western orchestra under a European bandmaster, Defris, who taught Western music to Indian musicians and arranged Indian melodies for Western instruments. In Mysore there was also a strong interest in Hindustani, or North Indian, music.<sup>85</sup>

The proceedings of the Gayan Samaj present a vivid picture of the way in which Indians were trying to construct a national music, and the part that Western influences played in this process. They also show, in many respects, the confusion that abounded in the attempt to re-create Indian music in a Western image. This was a movement that would gain momentum as the century came to a close, resulting in, among others, the collaborations of Deval and Clements, the Philharmonic Society of Western India, and A. M. Chinnaswami Mudaliyar's grandiose project *Oriental Music in European Notation* (1893), which he flagged as the 'Golden Wedding of Eastern and Western Music'.

Mudaliyar had an MA in Latin and music from Madras University. He originally conceived *Oriental Music in European Notation* as a monthly journal that would contain 'a complete record in staff notation of the whole of the musical products of the East, from the most classical styles to the commonest descriptions of popular reels and jigs', to perpetuate 'in monuments more durable than bronze the exceedingly artistic and scientific music of the land which is fading fast into decay'.<sup>86</sup> As well as Indian music, he wished to include melodies from Arabia, Persia, Ceylon, Burma, Japan, and China, all

<sup>84</sup> Gayan Samaj 1887: 27.

<sup>85</sup> Vedavalli 1992: 27, 30.

<sup>86</sup> Mudaliyar 1893: introduction.

harmonized 'in strict accordance with the recognised principles of European as well as Indian music'.<sup>87</sup>

Although the language of this publication is by now familiar from the many other statements of reforming Indian musicians in the nineteenth century, Mudaliyar's methods of promotion were more those of a circus ringmaster than a musicologist:

to enable the public to discern how far the present attempts to reduce Oriental music to European notation have been successful,

(i) *Periodic Entertainments* will be given in the Town Hall, Pachaiyappas Hall &c. and endeavours made to bring out prominently the comparative advantages of monodic and polyodic styles of musical composition.

(ii) Grand panoramic exhibitions with magic lanterns & c. will be added to enhance the attractiveness of these entertainments, which will be varied by comical interludes, musical farces and so on.<sup>88</sup>

Although Mudaliyar, like many of his contemporaries, did not succeed in changing the face of Indian music, he should at least go down in history for attempting to make arcane musicology fun.

Promoting staff notation as a universal language along the lines of English, Mudaliyar produced a collection of South and North Indian melodies, including many by the famous South Indian composer Tyagaraja. He included lyrics in Telegu, and included hints on harmonization. In a published version of this work it seems that only one issue ever appeared. Mudaliyar included a compilation of reactions to his ambitious project from the press, as well as letters from individuals. These reactions give an insight into how such material was being received over a wide spectrum of Indian and Western intellectual thought. Most of the letters and reviews were positive, praising Mudaliyar as a saviour of Hindu music, through the medium of staff notation. However, there were a few dissenting voices, like this one from the *Indian Journal of Education* of January 1894: 'Oriental music must lose by being chained down to a fixed notation, while we hope we may be pardoned for saying we think European music will gain little by the addition thus made to its literature.'<sup>89</sup> Similarly, Lawrence Philips, of the recently formed Royal College of Music in London, was not impressed: 'I do not think the monthly periodical

<sup>87</sup> Ibid.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

"Oriental Music" is likely to become popular in Europe.<sup>90</sup> A letter to the *Eastern Guardian* in August 1893 from one, A. Govinda Charlu, also made a telling point: 'He [Mudaliyar] has only been able to get 50 subscribers most of whom are *European* so far you see a national native cause has not received support from natives themselves what apathy is displayed.'<sup>91</sup> But of course Sourindro Mohun Tagore sent his support from Calcutta: 'The publication promises to be one of colossal proportions and when completed will certainly stand as a monument of your industry, research, and above all, Patriotism.'<sup>92</sup> Tagore also apologized for not being able to offer Mudaliyar any financial assistance with this project, and added gloomily that musicology was not a very lucrative trade in India.

The attempts to change and modernize Indian music through Western models were ultimately doomed to failure, and the most successful advocates of reform in Indian music in the twentieth century, such as V. D. Paluskar and V. N. Bhatkhande, did not carry a banner for Western notation or harmony, although Bhatkhande did propose a uniform system of notation for the whole country, based on *sargam*. After extensive field-work throughout North India, Bhatkhande not only succeeded in codifying the multitude of *rags* into a comprehensible system of *thats*, or scale types, but also, by drawing on existing Indian notations, ancient and modern, produced a system that is widely used to this day, and was a major contribution to music education in India. In the process, he showed that he realized that Indian music was a developing and changing art-form capable of renewing itself from within.<sup>93</sup>

The Indian music of musicologists and Raj officials was not the same Indian music that made its way into the realms of popular culture. As conflicting groups in India argued about the minutiae of Sanskrit texts and the efficacy of different forms of notation, Indian music was already taking on a different identity in Europe.

<sup>90</sup> Mudaliyar 1893: introduction.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> Nayar 1989: 28896.



Chapter 3  
India in Western Popular Song

*'My naïve heart'*<sup>1</sup>

In 1866 Captain Meadow Taylor thought it appropriate to include a harmonized version of a romantic Indian air 'Kurna na pae bat' ('Now vainly I cry') at the end of a scholarly evaluation of Colonel P. T. French's collection of Indian instruments, which had been presented to the Royal Irish Academy. Captain Taylor's ostensible reason for including this melody was that it was 'a plaintive Hindu air of the most ancient class', as opposed to the 'common tunes picked up from ordinary singing men and women at nautches [which are] the only specimens of Indian music now available for reference or comparison'.<sup>2</sup> That Taylor's own paraphrased translation of the words with four-part harmony accompaniment by his daughter should be presented as an example of 'ancient' Indian music was surely a sign of the times, when the educated, as well as the popular, imagination was suffused with India and all things Indian.

Despite the remoteness from its original source, the addition of such a piece may also have been in response to a truly curious musical event reported in the same presentation and worth reproducing in full here. It once again underlines the *ad hoc* manner in which Indian music passed to the West, and vice versa, through the hands of amateur musicians with a healthy disregard for purity and correctness in musical form. This particular cultural meeting is recounted in a section dealing with the South Indian *vina*.

I have occasionally met with some very learned and accomplished performers, principally from Mysore and the South of India. One of these men, after playing many Hindu airs and variations changed the key of the instrument, and began a piece which was familiar to me but from *him* unaccountable; it was in fact a great portion of Beethoven's Sonata in A; and he explained that, having once taught an English lady

<sup>1</sup> Name of a popular Hindustani Air from Bird's *The Oriental Miscellany* of 1789.

<sup>2</sup> Taylor, in S.M. Tagore 1882: 269.

a good deal of his music, which she played upon the piano, she in turn had taught him this Sonata, which he preferred, he said, above all other 'English Music', and his version of it, considering the defects of his instrument, was really very beautiful.<sup>3</sup>

Taylor's inclusion of a Hindustani Air in his presentation and his willingness to accept a version of Beethoven's music on the *vina* show that the exotic and picturesque even extended into the staid, bookish domain of the Royal Irish Academy. India was a powerful romantic symbol in European minds, and academic rigour was not always a protection against the captivating fantasy it conjured up.

The link between Indian music and Western popular culture emerges as a consistent theme in the chronicle of Indian music and the West. In the passage of musical material from India westwards there is a thread that connects the vogue for Hindustani Airs in the eighteenth century to the appearance of elements of Indian music in Western pop music in the 1960s. The popular Western interest in Indian music moves in a different musical orbit from the scholarly interest, and presents a different image of Indian culture, although, as can be seen from the above, they do cross and intersect at points. Essentially, in the popular sphere, this image was established by a process of transformation whereby certain surface features of Indian music came to represent India and the Orient in general, through the repetition of well-defined musical gestures, clichés, and subject-matter which were integrated into the Western popular imagination.

Tracing this process back to collections of Indian songs in the eighteenth century, through glees, operas, and parlour songs in the nineteenth, to mass media pop music in the twentieth, the way in which elements of Indian music and images of India are expressed is continually modified and transmuted. As the power relationships between the West and India re-position themselves and change over this period, so do the manifestations of Indian music in the West, as a popular dimension of orientalism, a reified romantic evocation of the mysterious East, a mystical appendage to mass consumerism.

By the late nineteenth century a standardized musical orientalism had been created, in which the cultural and musical distinctions between Africa, Arabia, Indonesia, and India blurred into one sensual, colourful, fantastic

<sup>3</sup> Taylor, in S.M. Tagore 1882: 256.

representation of the East. This chimerical world of the Western imagination was a realm populated by dusky dancing-girls, sweet but poisonous flora, treacherous oriental villains, demon lovers, noble savages, and heart-breaking partings, usually between upright, chivalrous Western men and beautiful, unattainable Eastern women. India became part of popular culture in the form of dangerous seductresses and music-hall buffoons. One of the features of this process was the way in which such representations sometimes crossed artistic and intellectual boundaries, straddling the popular and the highbrow, from little-known collections of glees and parlour songs to grand opera like Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine*, sometimes incorporating third-rate lyrics, images from classical Persian poetry, rehashed oriental myths, and distorted history. Even great composers like Debussy were apt to suspend their critical faculties when confronted with the mysterious sounds of the East, in this case the Javanese gamelan.

There were and still are, despite the evils of civilization, some delightful native peoples for whom music is as natural as breathing. Their conservatoires are the eternal rhythm of the sea, the wind among the leaves and the thousand sounds of nature which they understand without consulting an arbitrary treatise.<sup>4</sup>

So, at the same time that scholars were debating the measurement of intervals and the efficacy of different notations, the naïve musical heart of the West became entranced by the Orient.

#### The Hindustani Air Becomes a Popular Song

Even as the first interest in Indian music by Europeans in the eighteenth century was starting to fade, their transcriptions of Indian songs were being recycled in other musical forms. It was a comparatively small selection of Hindustani Airs about a dozen in total that formed the basis of most subsequent arrangements as songs, keyboard pieces, and numbers in operas. Furthermore, almost all of them came from William Hamilton Bird's collection.

In 1800 selections from *The Oriental Miscellany* were published in new arrangements by Edward Smith Biggs (c. 1750-1820), a London music teacher

<sup>4</sup> Debussy, quoted in Sorrell 1990: 2.

who also published collections of Sicilian and Welsh airs. This curious collection shows the way in which musical material originally collected by European residents in India was already being reshaped and absorbed back home in Britain. Music that had its origins as an offshoot of orientalism in the Anglo-Indian community now found its way into the world of the English glee. Published by Rt. Birchall's 'Musical Circulating Library', the full title of Biggs's collection was *Twelve Hindoo Airs with English Words Adapted to them by Mrs. Opie and Harmonized for One, Two and Three Voices*. This collection must have been something of a luxury item at the price of 10s. 6d., a substantial amount of money at the time, and subsequently would not have a wide distribution. All the songs derive from *The Oriental Miscellany* except one, 'An Indostan Girl's Song'. This song, to which I will return, is of special interest as a popular depiction of changing social relationships between Indians and British in the nineteenth century.

In his introduction, Biggs acknowledges Bird as his source, and is at great pains to stress his concern for authenticity, a tone that would be struck again and again by composers in subsequent collections:

It has been the endeavour of the editor of this collection, to give the melodies with all their simplicity, and not to obscure them by the introduction of extraneous harmonies. The inequality of the metre, in some instances, may possibly be objected to, but it was unavoidable, as the melodies were to continue in their original state.<sup>5</sup>

However, because all harmonies are ultimately extraneous in Indian music, the final effect is even less like the original than Bird's arrangements. Examples of *rekhtis* and *tappas* are transformed into strange new settings for four voices in uncompromising triadic harmony. More curious still is the change wrought by the addition of English lyrics which bear no resemblance to the subjects of the original titles. The *rekhti* 'Sakia, fusul bararust' ('Cupbearer, it is the season of Spring') becomes 'Crazy Sally', with the lyric:

Hark what sound fills yonder valley,  
'Tis the tone of woe,  
Ha! the voice I know  
Sure 'tis crazy Sally singing.

5 Biggs 1800: introduction.

Similarly, 'Kia kam keea dil ne' ('What has my heart done') becomes 'How still the hamlet'.

The melodies have merely become vehicles for recomposition as popular songs. Any faint hints of the originals which were still traceable in the collections by Bird, Plowden, and others have all but disappeared in Biggs's arrangements. The new lyrics, apart from 'An Indostan Girl's Song', do not even refer to India as such; nor is there any attempt to reproduce Indian melodic material accurately. Biggs's remarks in the introduction are little more than window-dressing for the venture of redefining the material in a recognizably English form. It was through this process that new forms of Westernized Indian songs were created, each having an ever more distant and reified connection to its predecessor.

However, 'An Indostan Girl's Song', the one song that does not derive from *The Oriental Miscellany*, is a good example of a type of song that would become popular as the century progressed: songs about Indian or Oriental subjects, which make no attempt to reproduce Indian music in any authentic manner. In the context of the present discussion, these arrangements are of interest not as transcriptions of Indian songs, but as popular representations of the changing relationships between India and the West. The themes of death, love, and parting became common in parlour songs, both in arrangements of Indian melodies and in original compositions. 'An Indostan Girl's Song' is an early example of this genre.

The song has a curious note of explanation appended to it:

The melody of this plaintive air, is but little known among the Hindus and is said to have originated very lately from the following circumstance:

An [sic] European, previous to his departure for England being desirous of restoring to her parents an Hindoo girl who had lived for some years in his family, sent her to them in a palanquin, some days journey up the country. The girl was extremely attached to her master, that, according to the relation of the bearers of the palanquin, she could not be prevailed on to receive any sustenance during the journey, and was incessantly singing this melody (which they were able to retain) to words expressive of her attachment; which are here so well imitated by Mrs Opie.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 8.

There are several interesting layers to this anecdote and the rather unexceptional song which it accompanies, which invite further examination.

Despite the veiled language of the note, the Indian girl was certainly more than an *ayah*, or maid, in the Englishman's household; she was probably his *bibi*, or native wife. Miscegenation was common in India before the nineteenth century, and many East India Company men had Indian wives or mistresses as well as, in some cases, European spouses. It has been suggested by historians that a serious social split occurred between the British and the Indians when English women came out to India in large numbers in the early nineteenth century, effectively ending intermarriage. This change in social relations is often cited as an important component of the long-term isolation that developed between the British and Indian communities during the subsequent period of the Raj. Hyam has characterized this process as having three stages: 'The erosion of *respect*, which took place roughly between 1790 and 1840, was followed by the erosion of *sympathy* and the growth of prejudice, which mainly occurred between the mid-1850s and the late 1860s.'<sup>7</sup>

One of the abiding concerns of popular culture as manifest in music is to sentimentalize, romanticize, and distance the everyday reality of human emotions, especially love. Although the subject-matter of 'An Indostan Girl's Song' is the universal theme of love and parting, it is nevertheless a popular representation of an essentially colonial phenomenon. As it was usual for an Englishman to return home after having amassed a fortune through his employment with the East India Company, the circumstances depicted in the song were not uncommon. That the tale is most likely an amalgam or distillation of other popular stories about such incidents is hinted at by the appearance of certain durable Indian symbols throughout the fabric of the story. One culturally potent image is that of the palanquin in which the girl is returned to her parents. Journeys by palanquin are recurring themes in Indian lyrics, from classical Urdu poetry to contemporary film songs. The palanquin is a powerful omen of change, and appears in both marriage and funeral ceremonies.<sup>8</sup>

For example, in the 1990 hit song by Lata Mangeshkar, 'Sunio ji ek araji' ('Listen [father] to my appeal'), from the film 'Lekin ' ('But '), the

<sup>7</sup> Hyam 1992: 200.

<sup>8</sup> Manuel 1989: 20.

palanquin is still moving through the dreams and longings of present-day India, symbolizing an idealized return to a simpler life:

You have sent me to a foreign land  
And forgotten me  
Now call me back father  
By sending a palanquin  
And four bearers.<sup>9</sup>

The 'Indostan Girl' is part of a long tradition of poor creatures being borne away to exile, marriage, death, or a mixture of all these fates: 'How fast from thee they bear me, faster still shall death pursue.'<sup>10</sup> As in Mangeshkar's song, the palanquin also symbolizes tradition. For the Indian girl it is a return to a traditional way of life after her love-affair with the white foreigner. The palanquin bears its occupants between cultural as well as temporal worlds.

Biggs's suggestion that the melody 'originated very lately' is also curious. The idea conveyed here is presumably that the bearers memorized it and sang it to the returning Englishman, who wrote it down, so that it eventually passed into the hands of Biggs. Such a story, though attractive, is unlikely, and has probably been added merely to give the arrangement (or composition) a hint of authenticity. Certainly, from a purely musical point of view, the rhythmic and diatonic solidity of the melody give no hint of an Indian original; the few melodic tensions imposed by unusual scalar movement, as seen in some of Bird's examples, have disappeared. Although it is possible that it may be a version of some other Indian air that was circulating at the time, it is not the music but the lyrics that refer to India, and to a particular social occurrence, the forsaken *bibi*. This type of song is of more interest as a social document than as a Western representation of Indian music. Mrs Opie's lyrics are quite unambiguous about the relationship between the Indian girl and the Englishman:

Tis' thy will and I must leave thee  
O' then best beloved farewell  
I forbear lest I should grieve thee  
Half my heartfelt pangs to tell

<sup>9</sup> Quoted in Farrell 1992: 18.

<sup>10</sup> Biggs 1800: 9.

Soon a British fair shall charm thee  
Thou alas, her smiles must woo  
But tho' she to rapture warm thee  
Don't forget thy poor Hindoo.<sup>11</sup>

The heart-strings of many a returning East India Company man must have been tugged by such images, not to mention the aroused suspicions of their new English spouses.

But the story of English men and Indian women is ultimately sanitized and distanced through the filter of popular romanticism, and the more complicated implications of colonial sexual practices are neutralized by popular song. Here there is no hint of sexual exploitation of the East by the West, of racist attitudes towards native women by the colonists, or the imperial organization of prostitution networks to service the white rulers.<sup>12</sup> It has long been the role of popular song to falsify the relationship between India and the West on a multitude of levels, whether musically by the imposition of harmony and inappropriate time signatures on Indian music, through the romanticization of colonialist ills in nineteenth-century songs, or, in the twentieth century, by turning India into a mystical wonderland for Western consumption. This tradition has been some 200 years in the making.

It is also necessary, however, to contextualize this type of song within the wider popular musical currents and fashions of the time. The vogue for Indian melodies at the turn of the nineteenth century was not an isolated phenomenon, but part of a larger interest in 'National Airs' which portrayed idealized versions of folk culture, and, as Nicholas Temperley has succinctly put it, 'in such productions it is difficult to say where adaptations ended and composition began'.<sup>13</sup>

Contemporaneous with Biggs's, other collections of melodies from around the world appeared, notably those of Edward Jones, the Welsh harpist and self-styled bard to the Prince of Wales, and of William Crotch. Crotch was a child prodigy and music theorist, had the chair of music at Oxford, and was the first principal of the Royal Academy of Music.<sup>14</sup>

Jones's collection, *Lyric Airs* (1804), included examples from Greece, Turkey, India, and elsewhere. Interestingly, two of the Indian melodies were given to Jones by Francis Fowke, revealing the manner in which some

<sup>11</sup> Biggs 1800: 9.

<sup>12</sup> See Hyam 1992: 145.

<sup>13</sup> Temperley 1981: 124.

<sup>14</sup> Ehrlich 1988: 357.



unpublished Hindustani Airs made their way back to Britain.<sup>15</sup> *Lyric Airs* also shows how all music outside the canon of European art music tended to be lumped together as one musical entity and reduced to staff notation, obscuring individual musical identities, a tendency of Western composers that has persisted to the present day.<sup>16</sup>

Crotch's work, *Specimens of Various Styles of Music* (1821), is more academic in tone, but for his Indian examples he draws on all the major collections of Hindustani Airs, published and unpublished, including those of Bird, Plowden, Metcalf, and Cornish.<sup>17</sup> He cites the *tarana* 'La Yawn, La Yawn' from *The Oriental Miscellany* as 'perhaps the finest of the East Indian tunes'.<sup>18</sup> The works of both Jones and Crotch show that interest in national airs was not only popular and fashionable, but also had a dimension of academic respectability, and that such airs were considered worthy of attention in the highest circles of the musical establishment of the time.

The most famous manifestation of this fashion for national airs derived from much nearer home. This was the 'Scotch Song', a genre which enjoyed great popularity in England and abroad from the eighteenth century into the early part of the nineteenth. The Scotch Song was widely available in harmonized keyboard arrangements, and was popular in polite English and European society as parlour entertainment suitable for amateur keyboard players and singers. As a popular representation of an unfamiliar music, the genre of Hindustani Airs shares many features with that of the Scotch Song, even though the latter had a vastly wider distribution, claiming the attention of eminent classical composers of the day such as Haydn and Beethoven.<sup>19</sup>

Both Scotland and India were definitely foreign cultures to the English:

Until the second half of the eighteenth century the English crossed the border very seldom. One reason was the dreadful roads but suspicion and indifference also played their part. Lack of contact made the English ignorant about their neighbours.<sup>20</sup>

15 E. Jones 1804: 25.

16 As recently as 1994, contemporary music concerts have featured 'East meets West' type of ensembles, in which instruments from Africa, India, and Japan are put together, with little attention paid to their traditional musical functions and for no apparent reason other than that they are all non-Western and therefore fall into the same category. For example, a concert by Priti Paintal's ensemble Shiva Nova, which included African and Indian instruments, was advertised by the composer as a 'feast of spicy sounds!', with no apparent hint of irony or awareness of the neo-colonialist connotations of such a statement (*New Notes*, Dec. 1994, p. 7).

17 Crotch 1821: 13.

18 Ibid.

19 See Fiske 1983.

20 Ibid. 1.

Fiske also notes a theatre manager from York writing that Scotland was 'a dreary place, distance [sic] almost as the West Indies'.<sup>21</sup> Whether countries are located hundreds or thousands of miles apart, it is conceptual distances that allow cultural myths to grow, and popular music, above all, deals in cultural myths. The music of both Scotland and India had novelty value by virtue of its 'otherness' and through its 'strangeness and crudity in musical idiom'.<sup>22</sup> Both musics were collected as elements of folk culture, and were cleaned up or reconstructed musically to suit particular foreign aesthetic tastes and musical expertise, either professional or amateur. In both cases modal melodies were subjected to the organization of harmony, for social as well as musical reasons. The keyboard, and the pianoforte in particular, had long represented 'evidence of gentility' and 'a new commercialization of leisure'.<sup>23</sup> There quickly came into existence an inexhaustible market for keyboard arrangements of songs suitable for those with modest performing skills. The lyrics of both Scotch and Indian songs were quickly replaced by inventions which came to represent the original culture rather than attempt to depict it in an authentic manner. New lyrics both distanced the songs from their source and created romanticized products which were more palatable, and hence saleable.

A further insight into this strange musical conflation of India and Scotland may be gleaned from the Torloisk manuscripts, which are collections of songs compiled by Margaret Douglas Maclean Clephane and Jane Douglas Maclean Clephane, who lived on the Hebridean island of Mull at the turn of the nineteenth century. Copies of songs in their own hand include several Hindustani Airs, including 'Kia kam kee a dil ne' which appears in Bird's and Biggs's collections, alongside other songs such as 'Lochinvar' and various Scottish, Welsh, and Irish airs. The notebook the sisters used for their collection was from Rt. Birchall, the publishers of Biggs's collection.<sup>24</sup> Other Scottish manuscripts from the time also include Hindustani Airs, showing not only that the genre was popular as a facet of interest in national airs, but also that the distribution of the published collections was widespread in Britain, and not confined to those who had lived in India. One possible source for the Torloisk songs could have been a second edition of Bird's

<sup>21</sup> See Fiske 1.

<sup>22</sup> Temperley 1981: 124.

<sup>23</sup> Ehrlich 1976: 17.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Cooke, personal communication, 1994.

*Oriental Miscellany* which was published by Gow & Shepherd in Edinburgh in 1805. Another small detail about Bird is gleaned here, as it is indicated in this copy that he had died by the time of publication.<sup>25</sup>

Hindustani Airs and Scotch Songs displayed a similar commercial durability, soon making the move from the printed arrangement to the stage in operas and plays. Despite their vastly differing cultural roots, both genres of song were also subject to similar processes of the musical imagination. As with the Hindustani Airs, Fiske notes that the repertoire of Scotch Songs derived mainly from one main source, the collection by William Thomson: 'The best of his tunes were constantly being reprinted, altered, given variations for performance by violin and flute, and eventually they were even being orchestrated.'<sup>26</sup>

An infamous incident in the history of the Scotch Song, underlining the creative nature of musical representations of other cultures, which applied as much to Scotland as to India, is that of James McPherson's Ossian poems. These were supposed to be ancient Gaelic epic ballads, which he claimed to have reconstructed from manuscripts. They were immensely popular in Europe, were translated into several languages, and became the subject of operas. However, they turned out to be mainly of his own invention.<sup>27</sup> The success of McPherson's fraud shows the need that existed to give a scholarly basis to the mythical romanticization of Scottish culture. It has a curious resonance with another major collection of Indian songs, published by Charles Edward Horn in 1813.

Horn (1786-1849) is a rather more substantial figure in music history than either Bird or Biggs, evinced by his entry comprising eleven pages in the British Library catalogue of printed music, even though his main claim to fame seems to have been his numerous arrangements of the song 'Cherry Ripe'. But he also made excursions to the Orient with 'The Moorish Maid' and 'Lalla Rookh', the latter from the poem by Thomas Moore about the Indian princess Lalla Roukh journeying to Kashmir to meet her lover, a plot which later became the subject of several operas, by David (1862), Rubinstein (1863), and Stanford (1877).

All the tunes in Horn's collection are from *The Oriental Miscellany*, although neither Bird nor Biggs are credited in the collection, suggesting that such

<sup>25</sup> Bird 1805: frontispiece.

<sup>26</sup> Fiske 1983: 16.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 3154.

favourites as 'Rewannah Kisty' and 'Dil ne da lee re' had by this time entered general circulation as genuine Indian songs rather than the work of a previous composer.

Horn's introduction includes the by now familiar comments about the difficulty of transcribing Indian music: 'the airs are altogether so wild, and sometimes so intricate, that it would be impossible, without extreme labour to reduce them into time or to reconcile the diversities of their meaning'.<sup>28</sup> But Horn is also at pains to express the hidden depths of this strange, unruly music:

I became early convinced that the music of Hindustan was of value far beyond that which has been affixed to it by the reports of Europeans in general. Sir William Jones had noticed it slightly, but in terms of approbation, and that was encouragement sufficient to encourage me to proceed.<sup>29</sup>

He is also the first arranger to cast doubts on the accuracy of the original collectors:

Many of them [the tunes] have been communicated to me in a form so irregular and confused (interspersed, indeed, with passages utterly foreign to the key) that I suspect them to have been committed to paper by some unskilled hand, so as to have deviated from the native melody: for it is observable, that the human ear, in its less cultivated state, though addicted to wildness, is yet peculiarly offended by any dissonance, or consistency in the frame or symmetry of the air.<sup>30</sup>

What sources can Horn be referring to? By this time, Western composers, including Horn himself, were making no attempt to reproduce Indian melodies faithfully, and his comment about dissonance already assumes that the universal ear aspires to the diatonic certainties of the West. In fact, the dissonances referred to may indeed have been accurately transcribed, but it is clear that they would never have slipped through the process of recomposition, just as Scottish melodies were adapted so that they would begin and end neatly on the tonic.<sup>31</sup> Furthermore, all the songs in Biggs's collection stem from *The Oriental Miscellany*, and none of those arrangements could be characterized as particularly 'irregular and confused'.

In Horn's collection, only the lyrics refer to India or the Orient, the melodies having already been ironed out by several incarnations in published

<sup>28</sup> Horn 1813: preface.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Fiske 1983: 19.

collections. This process can be seen by looking at three examples of 'Dil ne danne lea re' ('My naïve heart') from the collections of Bird, Biggs, and Horn (Ex. 3.1). The most striking feature of Bird's version is the use of a  $D\sharp$  ornament in the fifth bar (Ex. 3.2). This note is foreign to the key of A minor in which the piece is set, and gives a hint of the ambiguous tonal world of the original. In Biggs's version this feature has disappeared, along with the other ornamentations present in Bird's melody (Ex. 3.3). In Horn's version these features have also been omitted, and it has been further altered by a key change to F minor and a rhythmic structure adapted to suit the lyrics (Ex. 3.4). In the B section of Bird's melody a move from  $C\sharp$  to D to  $C\flat$  has similarly been omitted in subsequent versions. Although the melody lines of Biggs and Horn are increasingly bland, the accompaniment, by contrast, becomes ever more elaborate, from a simple bass line harmonized with thirds in Bird, through full, harmonized chords in Biggs, to arpeggios in Horn. Here is a process in which melodic identity is sacrificed to harmonic sophistication, illustrating graphically the different musical priorities of India and the West and the relentless manner in which Indian material was continually being distanced from its source and its musical character altered.

Horn's collection comes with a further set of new lyrics, this time by the poet William Reader. These verses are in contrast to Mrs Opie's, in that Reader lays claim to oriental literature such as the 'Songs of Hafez' for his inspiration. This is a reference to Hafiz, Shams ud-din Muhammad (c. 1326c. 1390), Persian poet and composer of *ghazals*, rhyming couplets on the themes of wine, love, and mystical ecstasy associated with Sufism, which were later to develop into an important Urdu-language musical genre in North India. Several *ghazals* were included in Sophia Plowden's collection of Hindustani airs.<sup>32</sup> The work of Hafiz inspired Goethe, and became a symbol in the West of the mystery and sensuality of the Orient.<sup>33</sup> The song 'Taza ba Taza' translated by William Jones was taken from Hafiz's poems, and was a popular concert item in eighteenth-century Calcutta.<sup>34</sup>

Reader's familiarity with oriental sources is also shown by his references to the Sanskrit classic *Sakuntala* by Kalidasa, which William Jones had translated, and by 'paraphrased passages from the Arabic poems, taken from the

<sup>32</sup> Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS 380.

<sup>33</sup> Said 1991*b*: 168.

<sup>34</sup> See e.g. a concert review in the *Calcutta Gazette*, 6 May 1790.

The image shows a musical score for a piece titled "Dill ne danus terra re, R E K H T A H." The score is written for voice and piano. It consists of several systems of music. The first system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line begins with the lyrics "Dill ne danus terra re," followed by the letters "R E K H T A H." The piano accompaniment is marked "Andante." The second system continues the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The fourth system shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The fifth system is labeled "Variation III." and shows the vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano accompaniment is marked "Piu Andante." The score is written in a standard musical notation with a treble clef for the vocal line and a grand staff for the piano accompaniment.

Ex. 3.1

# REKHTAH.

Dill ne danne leea re

Patan

*Fill the Bowl, and let's be joyous.*

## Air VI.

Andantino

Soprano 1<sup>mo</sup>

Soprano 2<sup>do</sup>

Basso

Piano Forte

Fill the bowl, and let's be joyous, Time and Youth are

Fill the bowl, and let's be joyous, Time and Youth are

Fill the bowl, and let's be joyous, Time and Youth are

Andantino

flying, why should anxious care annoy us. what's the use of sighing;

flying, why should anxious care annoy us. what's the use of sighing.

flying, why should anxious care annoy us. what's the use of sighing.

N. B. The Music in the *Miserere*, has been added to this Air.

Ex. 3.1  
cont.

# Hark the Song.

*How's*  
*Allegretto*

Hark! the song of the

moan-ing ves-per gale, Thro' the wild fern wav-ing;

Bill- lows tinged with the moon-beam clear and pale. Scarce the beach are

Ex. 3.1  
cont.





Ex. 3.2



Ex. 3.3



Ex. 3.4

temple of Mecca'.<sup>35</sup> Showing the fashionable connection with Scotch Songs, Reader was also stylistically 'assisted by the much neglected but inconceivably grand traditions of Ossian',<sup>36</sup> despite the fact that McPherson's fraud was widely known by this time. Reader's curious soup of folklore, fake lore, and orientalism shows the way in which Indian musical material was developing as it was recycled again and again for popular consumption, leaving any connection with its origins as North Indian court music far behind in the process. Indeed, the Orient was already becoming a kind of musical playground for composers and writers, in which all types of hybrid cultural amalgams were acceptable.

<sup>35</sup> Horn 1813: preface.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid.

However, the poems of Reader do not seem to reflect 'grand traditions', but rather, are examples of quasi-Omar Khayyám orientalist kitsch:

Bring me the wine the goblet give  
Let me at length begin to live  
Let the red juice in my cup swim  
And not a sigh sully its brim.<sup>37</sup>

Nor are the subtle ambiguities of the classical *ghazal* evident in this piece entitled 'The Arab':

How true the spot my soul remembers  
Here, here she dwelt  
Here have I knelt  
It fans my spirits fainting embers  
My breathless charger hot and spent  
Each night I spurred to gain her tent.<sup>38</sup>

And so on. It is strange to find the spirit of Rudolf Valentino already haunting orientalist imagery 100 years before he actually galloped on to the scene.

The original fund of Hindustani Airs formed the basis of increasingly reified representations of the Orient, which inevitably found their way on to the stage in operas. As the century progressed, stage productions with Eastern themes became increasingly popular in Britain and on the Continent.

#### Sweet Scents and Deadly Flowers: India on the Stage

In 1802 the song 'Dil me danne lea re' ('My naïve heart') was featured in an opera by Charles Smith, *A Trip to Bengal*, 'forming the central moment in a nautch party in Act 2'.<sup>39</sup> Apparently it was never performed in London.<sup>40</sup> An opera that *was* performed and included two songs from *The Oriental Miscellany* was *Englishmen in India* by the well-known composer Henry Bishop. Bishop composed over sixty operas, and in 1842 was the first British musician to be honoured with a knighthood. He also adapted works by other composers, and was 'responsible for vandalized versions of *Don Giovanni*, *The Barber of Seville*

<sup>37</sup> Horn 1813: 24.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. 31.

<sup>39</sup> Head 1985a: 552.

<sup>40</sup> Theatre Museum, Covent Garden, London, personal communication, 1993.

and *Fidelio*.<sup>41</sup> Judging by this, he was just the person to take on India as it was gradually being turned into an invention of the Western popular imagination.

The playbill for *Englishmen in India* shows that it was performed at the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, on 21 January 1827, along with another light opera, *The Man in the Moon* by W. Barrymore. Two Indian songs, 'Sakia, fusul beharust' and 'Rewannah kisty', appeared in the play.<sup>42</sup> Books of the songs were 'to be had at the theatre price 10d.'<sup>43</sup>

For reasons that are obscure, but may relate to Bishop's reputation for changing the works of other composers in his productions and ongoing professional feuds in the nineteenth-century London theatre world, a reviewer cast doubt on the authorship of *Englishmen in India*:

Englishmen in India has been assigned to various people; to Mr T. Hook for the sake of exciting expectation; and to Mr Soane for the sake of lowering it; and finally to a Mr Wallace, for the purpose perhaps of securing a lenient judgement on the first sling of his muse.<sup>44</sup>

But despite this sarcasm, the reviewer goes on to say that the opera represents 'something rather better in this department' than some of its contemporaries.<sup>45</sup> It appears that the story-line of the opera was taken from Byron's *Don Juan* and *Siege of Ismael*.

The plot of *Englishmen in India* would become typical of such productions. A young Indian girl is given into the care of an Englishman during a period of social unrest and rebellion. She grows up into a beautiful young woman, and falls in love with her English protector, much to the dismay of her Indian lover, who, nevertheless, eventually and like a truly noble savage gives up all claims to her, recognizing that her love for the Englishman is greater. (Was she, alas, destined to become an abandoned *bibi*, borne away into the sunset on a palanquin?) The action of the opera involves lost love-letters, identity swaps, noble and ignoble Indians, absurd and upright English. As a critic remarked drily at the time, 'The plot is twofold comic and serious: the comic is laughable, and the serious interesting.'<sup>46</sup> Musically, the opera has little to say about India, and is firmly in the light operatic style of the time,

<sup>41</sup> Westrup and Harrison 1987: 74.

<sup>42</sup> Head 1985a: 552.

<sup>43</sup> Theatre Museum, playbill from 1827.

<sup>44</sup> Theatre Museum, review from *The Times*, 1827.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

although a Hindustani tune is used in the overture to give it a light, naïve air (Ex. 3.5). What is more interesting, however, is the plot. Here are many of the stock Indian figures who would recur in later operas: the beautiful girl, the handsome English officer, the dark-skinned villain, the noble savage.

According to Head,<sup>47</sup> operas with Indian themes became something of an 'English craze' in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Examples included Michael Arne's *The Choice of Harlequin or The Indian Chief* (1781), *Indian Nuptials* by Rochfort, which went on-stage at the Theatre Royal in February 1815, having moved from the opera-house in Paris. Operas with Indian subject-matter continued to appear throughout the century. In lighter forms, however, the depiction of Indians became increasingly racist and stereotyped, as in Solomon's *The Nautch Girl or The Rajah of Chutneypore* (1891). Nevertheless, the Indian girls remained alluring and desirable, even if the male characters descended into oriental evil, duplicity, or buffoonery.

More substantial evidence of the abiding themes of such works and the increasingly reified representations of Indian music that appeared in them is provided in Meyerbeer's *L'Africaine* (1864) and Delibes's *Lakmé* (1883). In *L'Africaine*, Vasco da Gama's voyage to India is dramatized and romanticized. The love interest comes in the shape of Selika, an East Indian princess with an Arabic name who marries da Gama according to Indian rites. The fourth act includes an Indian march and ballet. But the lovers must part, and Selika dies through inhaling the odours of the macanilla tree. As she dies, she watches da Gama's ship sail off into the sunset. The oriental concoction of this piece has all the ingredients that have become familiar in operas dealing with India, and are in themselves metaphors for the ambiguities of colonial power and rule. Here the Orient, in the shape of a beautiful woman, a mixture of Arabia and India, is both infinitely attractive and dangerously unattainable. The Orient itself is a place of seductive perfumes that, no matter how sweet, can poison and kill. It can be visited, indulged in, but never controlled; the natives are particularly unpredictable, childlike, and savage by turns. It is a domain in which the rationality of the West is given its sternest

47 Head 1985a.

*Andante espressivo* (From a Hindustanee Melody)

Op. Englishmen in India. 4 Violins Solo *pp* *Segue*

Ex. 3.5

test. In literature this fantasy had its counterpart in the work of Rider-Haggard and others, where the comradeship of upright Englishmen was continually being undermined by various Oriental species of *femme fatale*.<sup>48</sup>

In *Lakmé*, which is based on a poem, *Le Mariage de Loti*, by Gondinet, the heroine, who is the daughter of Nilakatana, a fanatical Brahmin priest, falls in love with a British officer. Of course the love is doomed, for transgressing colonial sexual codes and Indian strictures of religion and caste. Much of the action takes place in the garden of a temple, where Lakmé has been praying, and where two English officers, English girls, and a governess trespass, even though they have been warned that the scents of the flowers are dangerous there. Indeed they are, leading eventually to Gerald, one of the officers, falling in love with Lakmé, almost being murdered because of it, and Lakmé herself dying after eating the leaf of a datura tree. India a perilous place to fall in love, and an even more dangerous place to draw a random breath in a fecund garden.

Musically the Orient was reduced to a few durable clichés, mainly characterized by languidly rising and falling sequential melodies, as in the famous duet from *Lakmé*, 'Dome épais le Jasmin'. Here there is no question of including a Hindustani melody for a hint of authenticity. It is the subject-matter, the suggestion, the scent of the Orient, that has become all. Although some composers, like Verdi with *Aida*, did consult musicological texts on non-Western music, it was merely to relay this scent, or ambience rather than to integrate the musical systems in any real manner.<sup>49</sup> Indeed, such musical oriental inventions would in turn come to represent authentic oriental music. Later, in the twentieth century, the American dancer Ruth St Denis would use the music from *Lakmé* as an accompaniment to her exotic routines, with real Indian musicians on-stage as little more than living props.<sup>50</sup>

Away from the stage, with its elaborate representations of the mysterious East, the parlour song also had its share of Indian and oriental imagery. This musical form became 'the comfortable home base from which one can afford to take trips into the exotic'.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> The heroines of *She* (1887) and *Allan Quatermain* (1887) are classic examples, ranging from good loyal native girls to treacherous she-devils. The adventures are always played out against exotic tropical backgrounds, and the Western heroes are often oriental scholars of some kind.

<sup>49</sup> Said 1993: 1467.

<sup>50</sup> See St Denis 1939.

<sup>51</sup> Temperley 1981: 131.

Numerous popular songs with Indian subject-matter appeared in the last decades of the nineteenth century and at the beginning of the twentieth. There were Hindu love-songs, Hindu cradle-songs, Hindu rain songs, lots of Hindu maidens, the odd Hindu widow and Hindu wife, Hindu serenades, the Hindu's paradise, Hindu river chants, Hindu laments, Hindu honey, and, later, Hindu head-hunters and a Hindu rag (a classic, if unintended, *double entendre*). All these had little or nothing to do with Indian music, but everything to do with the gradual reconstruction of Indian themes and images for Western consumption. Nice English girls even dressed up in ethnic costumes, and performed *Hindoo Maidens*, 'A song, dance and tableaux for 16 girls', in front of the Lord Mayor at the Guildhall in 1900. This was published with music, words, and full choreography, so that it could be performed in schools and halls throughout the country.<sup>52</sup> This quasi-Indian dance and the respectable circumstances in which it was performed suggest that the *risqué* reputation of the Indian *nautch* girl was already starting to be softened through the lens of popular culture. Now English girls could pretend to be Indian dancers in safety, and without innuendo:

We are maidens from India you know,  
Those that are light on the fantastic toe,  
Graceful our movements like birds on the wing,  
Ready when called on to dance and sing.<sup>53</sup>

Not a hint of deadly or sensuous scents hovered over this particular performance.

Added to this were various Bengalis wandering through the pages of Western popular song, such as 'The Bengali Baboo'. This song was sung by music-hall performer C. Chauriya in 1870 'with immense success'.<sup>54</sup> In the guise of a humorous ditty, it reveals the attitudes of the British to Indians in the nineteenth century, attitudes that at least one Indian performer was prepared to reinforce on the stage. The Bengali baboo portrayed by Chauriya was an avaricious, salacious, and deferential buffoon. Here is a figure with an eccentric grasp of the English language and an inane concern to show his financial status in the West, his interest in English women, and his loyalty to the Queen:

<sup>52</sup> Turner *et al.* 1900.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> Chauriya 1870.

I have a fine house in Chowringee  
All Calcutta know me well  
That old baboo much rupee  
Plenty Europe sahibs tell

I find this London much large place  
In all Bazaar much boberee  
Plenty madam with pretty face  
Make turn round and look at me

I want to see Maharanee Queen  
All tell me very proper Ma'am  
I hear she very seldom seen  
I sorry I want to make salaam.<sup>55</sup>

These verses are interspersed with a chorus to nonsense syllables, 'Tan nan nan nan nan na', a mockery of the very sound of Indian languages, and also perhaps a reference to the mnemonics, or *bols*, which are so much part of the structure of Indian music, but which sound like gibberish to Western listeners. The song presented Indians as comical, hopelessly unsophisticated, and ultimately inferior. 'The Bengali baboo' was a musical version of the image of educated Indians that was current in nineteenth-century England. They were considered figures of fun, and were regularly mocked in the realms of popular culture.<sup>56</sup>

Racial stereotyping in popular music is well known, and it would continue with Indian music into the 1960s. Perhaps the best-known examples are the Black and White Minstrels, with their ludicrous, overblown representations of Black Americans. But what is striking about 'The Bengali baboo' is that this is an instance of an Indian parodying himself for the amusement of English audiences. The performance is an exercise in self-denigration, masked by comedy. His act is a cruder manifestation of the cringing loyalty displayed by Indian musicologists that was discussed in the previous chapter. Once again, this time in the sphere of popular culture, music became a conduit for expressing the power relations between Britain and India.

At the other extreme, the music-hall singer Leo Dryden would dress up as an Indian to show what loyal chaps they really were when the chips were down. On the cover of the sheet music of 'India's Reply' he is shown, suit-

<sup>55</sup> Chauriya 1870.

<sup>56</sup> Kiernan 1969: 49; 'Anstey' 1897.



ably darkened, in an Indian soldier's outfit, drawing a sabre, with a determined look in his eye. At the top of the page is an Indian scene of minarets, palm-trees, and Windsor Castle, linked by the head of Queen Victoria. Inset is a recommendation from 'Dagonet' of 'The Referee':

The idea of popularising the soldiers of other races and creeds who serve under our banner with the English people first occurred [sic] to me as I sat last Saturday evening at the Canterbury Music Hall, and listened to the mighty cheer which greeted Mr. Leo Dryden, when dressed as an Indian soldier, he sang 'India's Reply.' There was no 'Perish, India,' sentiment among the thousands of Spectators who sat packed like herrings in a barrel in every part of the popular place of amusement.

They cheered themselves hoarse for India and the brave natives who fight beneath her flag and I have heard no song greeted with such honest and genuine and patriotic enthusiasm since the great days of the 'The Russians shall not have Constantinople'.<sup>57</sup>

Obviously 40 years had been enough to erase, or at least temper, memories of Indian mutiny in the minds of the audience. Or perhaps it was merely that fake Indian soldiers in music-halls were much more acceptable than the real thing. The lyrics underline the point:

'Tis true that we in bygone days at enmity have been  
With you we now so proudly serve, and carnage marred the scene;  
But all is o'er, we're friends again, forgotten is the past,  
For India and England stand in friendship firm and fast.<sup>58</sup>

That such sentiments were expressed by an Englishman dressed up as an Indian is not surprising. It was a confection designed to reassure the British about their place in the world, and show that the sepoy was no longer the raping, pillaging figure of the past. But the reality was that, although the Empire was at its zenith, in four short decades it would be all but gone. Music was a vehicle for propaganda about India, as well as exotic entertainment.

Yet real Indians were not a rarity in London at the time that Chauriya and Dryden were performing. Although little is known about Chauriya's social or musical background, there was a growing Indian population, drawn from opposite ends of the Indian social spectrum. Following the upheavals in Indian states in the mid- to late nineteenth century, several maharajas and

<sup>57</sup> Harrington and Le Brunn 1895.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 5.

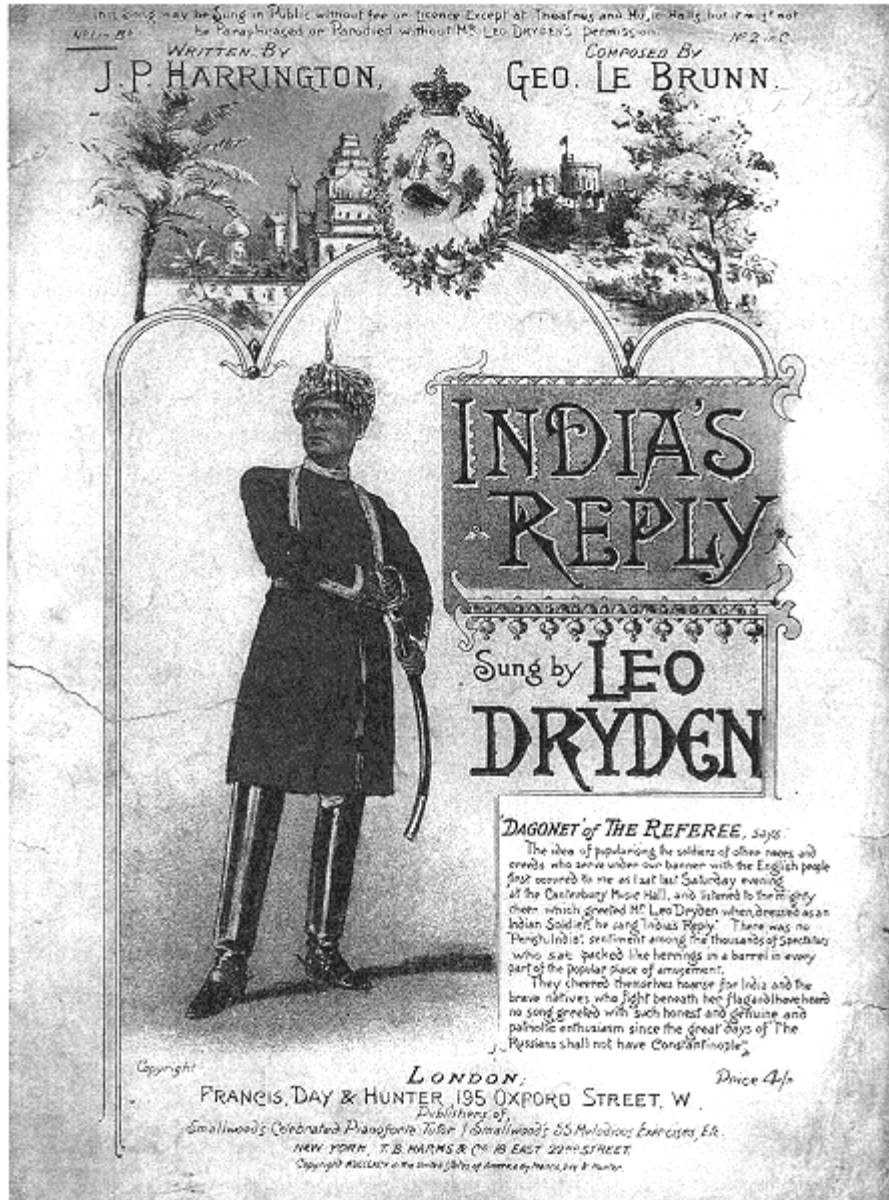


Figure 3.1.  
The heroic and loyal Indian soldier as portrayed in nineteenth-century popular song.  
(British Music Hall Society.)

nawabs had settled in London, including the Nawab of Surat, Nawab Jan Nazim of Bengal, the Raja of Patiala, and Maharaja Duleep Singh, a favourite at Queen Victoria's court. At the other end of the scale, the East End of London was home to many poor Indian sailors, Lascars who had jumped ship at the docks and were living in squalor in the Whitechapel, Shadwell, and Bluegate Fields areas.<sup>59</sup>

The figure of the missionary Joseph Salter has already been mentioned, as a proselytizer at Indian exhibitions. He was also active in the East End, and has left some fascinating accounts of Indians and Indian music in London at the time. They stand in stark contrast to the romantic orientalism of the stage, the music-hall buffoonery of 'The Bengali baboo', and the kitsch patriotism of 'India's Reply'. Salter's impressions are worth relating here, as a realistic adjunct to the Indian fantasy that was usually projected in popular songs.

Salter worked in an area of London where 'unspeakable shamelessness abounded everywhere', a sink of opium dens, random violence, thievery, prostitution, and slum housing.<sup>60</sup> Here, within this London low life, was a shifting population of Indians, whom Salter moved amongst, giving them shelter and trying to convert them to Christianity. The Asiatic population had grown so much that

great barracks were erected in the east of London on a common ground which has now lost its name and identity through being all built upon. Here an Indian colony might have been seen, transplanted from the Ganges to the Thames, with language, religion, habits and customs intact.<sup>61</sup>

Similarly in Bluegate Fields:

Asiatics are to be seen in every direction, passing from house to house, from court to court, all seemingly acquainted with the locality. Some are carrying their noisy tum-tums with them to play for the amusement of others.<sup>62</sup>

The Indians had various professions, from selling 'curry powder to gentlefolks in the suburbs' to playing music in the street for money:

a well-known character was a professional player on the native tum-tum. He was a spare mana Hinduin native garb with his noisy instrument suspended from his

<sup>59</sup> See Visram 1986 for a fuller discussion of this topic.

<sup>60</sup> Salter 1895: 38.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid. 17.

<sup>62</sup> Salter 1872: 199.

neck. When he received any encouragement for his Eastern melody, he seemed to catch the inspiration of a dancing Dervish. His bony fingers would wriggle over the parchment of the drum, and his skinny legs spinning round and round, would perform all the antics which only Asiatic exhilaration can produce.<sup>63</sup>

Perhaps this image of a man lost in his own music in a foreign, inhospitable country could stand to represent the gulf that existed between the Indian music of Western nineteenth-century fantasy and the real thing. The main locus of Indian performance in the East End seemed to be a 'dilapidated skittle ground at back of the Royal Sovereign' in Shadwell. Salter gives his most detailed description of an Indian music performance after a visit to this venue: 'The chief attraction was round a turbaned musician who with his sitar was chanting an eastern melody in which his hearers seemed much interested.'<sup>64</sup>

Another performer was:

a tall meagre half-dressed native, with his tum-tum suspended by his neck with a string standing erect and endeavouring to bring all the noise he can from his monotonous instrument with the furious raps he gives it with his fingers while he shouts out an Indian melody through his nose and mouth, spins round, and tosses up his heels and toes in questionable time, if there be any in his music.<sup>65</sup>

Although Salter did not understand this music, found the player's gestures ludicrous, and thought the whole scene a suitable subject for Hogarth or Cruikshank, he has nevertheless left a vivid picture of Indian music in the West which has nothing to do with scholarly investigation or popular reification. This was happening in London at the same time that Chauriya was making a fool of himself, Leo Dryden was dressing up a loyal Indian soldier, and beautiful Indian girls were falling in love with Englishmen on the stage and dying from poisoned flowers.

However, this strange pub music in the East End was, and would continue to be, marginalized. Popular song typically remained a repository not for racialism, but for exotic fantasies about India, both sensual and sexual. If the separation between the races had become institutionalized by the midnineteenth century, it was in song that forbidden liaisons could still be explored, or at least hinted at. Romance between Indian women and English

<sup>63</sup> Salter 1895: 38.

<sup>64</sup> Salter 1895: 21.

<sup>65</sup> Salter 1872: 200.

men may have been the standard, acceptable fare of operas, but a greater taboo surrounded relations between English women and Indian men. During the Indian mutiny, English women had been portrayed as the plucky, but ultimately helpless victims of the vicious, sexually voracious Indians.<sup>66</sup> That English women might have sexual relations with Indian men by choice rather than coercion was unthinkable; so it is appropriate that one of the truly great Indian popular ballads, 'Kashmiri Song', was devoted to this very subject.

'Pale hands I loved'

An acme of romantic musical exoticism was surely reached in Amy Woodforde-Finden's 1902 setting of 'Four Indian Love Lyrics' from *The Garden of Kama* by Laurence Hope, a pseudonym of a 'hopelessly romantic' memsahib, Adele Florence Cory.<sup>67</sup> Woodforde-Finden was a specialist in musical settings of Eastern exotica, and her other works included 'To the Hills' (Hope), 'Stars of the Desert' (Hope), 'The Pagoda of Flowers' (Fredrick John Fraser), and 'Five Little Japanese Songs' (Hanson Towne).

*The Garden of Kama* is a classic example of the reified emotional responses of the British in India to the uncomfortable fact of sexual attraction between the races. The title is a reference to various erotic Eastern texts which were published in English translation at the end of the nineteenth century, notably *The Kama Sutra* of Vatsyayana and *The Perfumed Garden* of Sheik Nefzaoui. Not only were Burton and Arbuthnot's translations of these works a major contribution to oriental studies; they were also used as sexual instruction books in Victorian society.<sup>68</sup> The sexual opportunities for white men in India were plentiful, and, as has already been noted, intermarriage between English men and Indian women was common in the eighteenth century. The arrival of white women in the nineteenth century is often cited as the main cause for the decline in racial intermarriage and, by implication, was a blow to race relations. However, this view has been revised, or at least moderated, in recent historical studies.<sup>69</sup>

Less has been written about sexual relations between memsahibs and Indian men, and it is mostly in the realm of fiction Forster (1985), Scott

<sup>66</sup> For an example see Bayly 1990: 241.

<sup>67</sup> MacMillan 1988: 166.

<sup>68</sup> Archer 1980: 38.

<sup>69</sup> Hyam 1992: 2079.

(1977), and Jhabvala (1975) that such relationships have been scrutinized. However, in the hands of the writers mentioned, this was not the stuff of romantic fantasy, but the vehicle for more trenchant explorations of the power relations between Britain and India. In common with literature, song has also been an arena in which such forbidden liaisons can be explored. *The Garden of Kama* is a classic example.

The world of the *The Garden of Kama* is one in which love is doomed to wilt under the glare of the same relentless heat that has ignited it. But the story of 'Kashmiri Song', the best-known piece in this collection, is not fictional, and is based upon Cory's real-life love for the son of an Indian raja.<sup>70</sup> Cory was married to a British army officer, adding a further dimension to her transgression. Hence it is only by masquerading as a man, 'Laurence Hope', that Cory felt able to tell her story. So here is the work of a man who is really a married woman describing a forbidden interracial love-affair at the height of Empire surely an explosive mix of subject-matter for any song. And the lyrics do not disappoint.

Cory's words, with their barely veiled metaphors for sexual abandonment pervaded by the approach of physical extinction, are reminiscent of various European music traditions, all the way from medieval courtly love to elevated love-deaths as in *Tristan und Isolde*. In 'Kashmiri Song' the same 'pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar' readily turn into instruments of death: 'I would rather have felt you round my throat, crushing out life, than waving me farewell.'<sup>71</sup> Such overheated imagery continually verges on parody, but there is no evidence of any irony here.

The action of 'Kashmiri Song' takes place in an Indian garden 'beside the Shalimar', the only place where the forbidden lovers can meet in safety. Shielded from prying eyes, the passions flow freely like the waters in the garden. The reiteration of 'pale hands' that are 'pink-tipped like lotus buds that float' underlines the proscribed nature of this meeting. It is told through the eyes of a man, an Indian man yearning for his pale-skinned memsahib. Such transgressions, real or imagined, were part of the ambiguous cultural world inhabited by colonizer and colonized. The India of the romantic imagination is a place where actions take place that would be unthinkable back in middle

<sup>70</sup> Lax and Smith 1989: 294.

<sup>71</sup> Hope 1902: 14, 16.

England. Cory's breathless paeans and an army officer's afternoon indulgence in an Indian *kotha* (salon) are part of the same continuum. For the British, not only was India a colony with a subject race; it was a location, real or imagined, that disturbed the moral and spiritual equilibrium of the rulers. Sexual attraction was a great leveller, despite certainties about racial superiority. This dangerous but appealing cultural ambience was just the thing to send girdled hearts racing within the safety of a parlour song.

What of the musical setting for this memsahib's intercultural longings? The musical representation of the East in early twentieth-century parlour songs had moved on a long way from the days of Hindustani Airs, and Woodforde-Finden's setting is a classic of Indian-tinged Western music. No longer a clumsily harmonized version of an Indian melody, 'Kashmiri Song' is a musical package combining nineteenth-century chromatic harmony with instantly recognizable melodic gestures and clichés symbolizing the Orient in all its sensual mystery. The opening of 'Kashmiri Song' is a model of musical orientalism, with its gradually rising and falling scale, filled with pauses which give a free, improvised feel (Ex. 3.6). This type of ascending modal passage, which mimics the sound of sympathetic strings on Indian instruments or the mellifluous quality of Indian vocal music, would continue to find its way into many popular musical representations of the East for decades to come. It features in numerous film scores, advertisements, popular songs, and Indian film songs, from George Harrison's songs in the 1960s to Sheila Chandra's band, Monsoon, in the mid-1980s. Such a musical figure has become an unmistakable cue: the following piece has an oriental flavour.

Woodforde-Finden's opening to 'Kashmiri Song' is based on the scale shown in Ex. 3.7. This, coincidentally or otherwise, is the scale of *rag Bhairvi*, one of the most famous and popular *rags* in Indian music and the basis of a multitude of popular and classical compositions. However, there was some consciousness on the part of the composer of the particular Indian quality of this scale. The song is in the key of D, but the opening starts from A, the dominant, climbing first in A-E octaves, before introducing flat seconds and thirds ( $B\flat$  and  $C\sharp$ ) and flat sixths and sevenths (F and  $G\sharp$ ), although the phrase eventually resolves into an A major triad before settling into the D major tonality of the main part of the song. The modal opening is a deliberate evocation of non-Western scale systems. The same modal material does not occur

# Kashmiri Song.

Words by  
LAURENCE HOPE.

Music by  
AMY WOODFORDE-FINDEN

Moderato assai, con molto sentimento.

VOICE.

PIANO.

Pale hands I loved be .

side the Shali . mar,..... Where are you now? Who lies be .neath your spell?

© Garden.

Copyright, 1902, by Mrs Woodforde-Finden.  
New Edition, Copyright, 1908, by Boosey & Co.

H. 2821.

Ex. 3.6





Ex. 3.7

### The Temple Bells.

Words by  
LAURENCE HOPE.

Music by  
AMY WOODFORDE-FINDEN.

Allegretto.

PIANO.

Copyright, 1902, by Max Woodforde-Finden.  
New Edition, Copyright, 1903, by Bossey & Co.

H. 3821

Ex. 3.8

elsewhere in the song. The opening is like an oriental tag for the song that follows, a gesture without which the Indian ambience of the song would not come through, despite the subject-matter of the lyrics.

Elsewhere in the collection this same polished orientalism is evident. The song 'The Temple Bells' is in the key of E minor, and includes several oriental musical tags, such as the drone-like E pedal in the bass, the appoggiaturas, and the modal, stepwise quality of the melody line (Ex. 3.8). The insistence of the repeated chords and the rising and falling sighs of the melody match the equally hot lyrics, which come with the usual oriental symbols: 'And her beauty makes me swoon, as the Moghra trees at noon intoxicate the hot and quivering air.'<sup>72</sup>

'Kashmiri Song' went on to become one of the most popular parlour songs of the early twentieth century. It was performed and recorded both as a song and as an instrumental piece by, among others, Yehudi Menuhin, Xavier Cugat, Maggie Teyte, John McCormack, and (of course) Rudolf Valentino.<sup>73</sup> It was a work that crossed the classical/popular divide, and became a symbol of romantic and forbidden love in the Raj, as well as a musical evocation of the mysterious East.

In some of Woodforde-Finden's other settings, notably of Towne's 'A Lover in Damascus', it can also be seen that although the oriental song had changed musically, the same imagery is still being employed as that used by William Reader 100 years earlier:

Far across the desert sands  
I hear the camel bells  
Merchants have come from alien lands  
With stuffs and gems and silken bands  
Back where their old love dwells.<sup>74</sup>

The Western imagination would continue to trek across the romantic sands of the Orient, transported by song, well into the next century. At the same time, Indian music was about to be discovered by the West back in India, and in a very different way.

<sup>72</sup> Hope 1902: 4.

<sup>73</sup> Cohen-Stratner 1988: 201.

<sup>74</sup> Towne 1904: 14.

## Chapter 4 The Gramophone Comes to India

*'This talking machine is the marvel of the twentieth century'<sup>1</sup>*

In a photograph in a 1906 publicity catalogue, a woman stands cradling the gleaming horn of a gramophone. She is bedecked in her finery, silk, bangles, pearls, and ear-rings, and the folds of her sari are finely pressed. Closer inspection shows the garish varnish on her nails. She gazes away from the camera, lending a stilted, almost wooden look to her posture. Clearly she had been told to stand this way. Is the gramophone or the woman the centre, the focus, of this image? The gramophone sits grandly on a Victorian table. Its horn and winding handle evoke none of the comical resonances that they would in the present day; this is not some clumsy contraption for the reproduction of crackling nostalgia; this machine is the acme of Western inventiveness, the almost miraculous purveyor of sound on small black discs, a commodity loaded with potent technological and cultural power. The gramophone is a symbol of affluence, of the advent of the twentieth century, and before the cinema and TV, the first manifestation of a musical mass medium.

The woman is Gauhar Jan. She was a *tawa'if* (courtesan) from Calcutta and a well-known exponent of classical and light classical vocal music. She was also one of the first major recording artists in India. At the turn of the twentieth century, Gauhar Jan and other musicians like her found themselves standing at the intersection of two worlds, both musically and culturally.

By the twentieth century, older forms of musical patronage at the courts of rajas and nawabs were disappearing fast. Such patronage had been in decline throughout the nineteenth century, due to the political and social changes wrought by the British Raj, and by the twentieth century it had all but disappeared. The demise of courtly benefaction was accompanied by the slow, but inexorable, drift of populations from the country to the city. The vast railway

<sup>1</sup> Advertisement for gramophones by Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. in the first decade of the twentieth century.

network which had been established by the British in the 1850s played a crucial role in economic, demographic, and cultural change. It also had an effect on music and musical styles. The railways brought new mobility for performers, and led to a greater cross-fertilization of styles and genres. Neuman has also suggested another important musical outcome of the social effects of railways and other forms of mass communication such as the telegraph: the establishment of *gharanas* (households), guild-like organizations representing the style and performing characteristics of particular musicians and their disciples. In various ways the *gharana* system set the mould for many important musical styles in the twentieth century. Above all, they provided a cultural legitimacy for music after the demise of the courts.<sup>2</sup>

The new patrons of music were the urban middle classes, and the locus of musical activity shifted from the courts to large urban centres such as Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta, and Madras. Within the span of one generation, Indian musicians could look back to a vanishing world of princely patronage, and forward to a new commercial environment fraught with economic and artistic uncertainty. The place of work was no longer the rarefied court, with its legendary wealth and sumptuous luxury, where 'common men were not allowed in',<sup>3</sup> but the urban *kotha*, theatre, recording studio, concert stage, or one of the many Western-style music schools that were being established at the time.

The early days of the gramophone industry in India marked a new phase in the story of Indian music and the West. It is a period that throws into sharp relief the meeting of technology and traditional music. Historically, this is a fascinating period, because the gestation of a musical mass medium and the cultural as well as the economic complexities involved can be observed on an almost day-to-day basis through the correspondence and marketing publicity of Gramophone and Typewriter Ltd. (GTL). Here is a music market in the process of being created from scratch, based on a music and culture that Western executives did not understand. Consequently, the music on early recordings is as much a creation of Western technology as a representation of traditional music genres. Similarly, the illustrations in publicity catalogues show how the West thought India could be sold back to itself. In the early days

<sup>2</sup> Neuman 1990: 168.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid. 170.

of the gramophone, Indian music was, in a sense, re-created to fit Western ideas of marketing.

For the first time Indian musicians entered the world of Western media. They were no longer curiosities written about by a few eighteenth- or nineteenth-century enthusiasts, who either collected songs as memorabilia or concentrated on Sanskrit texts that no longer had any relevance for performing musicians; nor were they simply the subjects of early ethnomusicological enquiry. Indeed, prominent musicologists and folklorists of the time, like A. H. Fox-Strangways, were scathing about the use of commercial gramophone recordings and other Western musical imports, as they appeared to threaten their colonial role as self-appointed guardians of the world's musics. As Fox-Strangways lamented in 1914:

if only the clerk in a government office understood the indignity he was putting on a song by buying a gramophone which grinds it out to him after a day's labour, if the Mohammedan 'star' singer knew that the harmonium with which he accompanies himself was ruining his chief asset, his musical ear, and if the girl who learns the pianoforte could see that all the progress she made was as sure a step towards her own denationalization they would pause before they laid such sacrilegious hands on Saraswati.<sup>4</sup>

Writing some decades later, Curt Sachs, describing the development of the Berlin Phonogram-Archiv and the use of sound recording in the history of ethnomusicology, does not mention the vast wealth of commercial recordings that were already in existence by that time.<sup>5</sup>

The first gramophone recordings of Indian music may have become, in retrospect, of interest to ethnomusicologists (although to this day they have received little attention in the literature), but musicological study was not a reason why the recording industry descended upon India. Despite the complex, difficult cultural circumstances in which they were produced, these recordings were not 'field' recordings, but the Asian vanguard of a massive commercial enterprise which was already well established in America and Europe, a business concerned with cornering lucrative, untapped markets.

The twin media of photography and recorded sound turned Indian music and musicians into saleable commodities. Through the coming of Western

<sup>4</sup> Fox-Strangways 1914: 16.

<sup>5</sup> Sachs 1962: 1314.

technology, the financial and economic potential of musicians within India changed radically. In the social realm, recorded sound brought many forms of classical music out of the obscurity of performance milieus such as the *cakla* (courtesan quarters of cities), with all their social stigmas, on to the mass market and into middle-class homes. The gramophone, and later film and radioall inventions of the Westirrevocably altered Indian music in the twentieth century.

Yet it is telling that early recording trips to India were termed 'expeditions'. Commercial concerns or not, the recording companies were still exploring a dark continent of musical experience. Through the medium of recording, Indian music was discovered by the West once again, just as it had been by orientalist and compilers of Hindustani Airs, and would continue to be, throughout the twentieth century, in ever-changing commercial and cultural contexts.

#### The Social and Musical Context of Fred Gaisberg's First Recordings in India

The first recordings of Indian music by GTL were made in London in 1899 at their Maiden Lane studios. The artists were a Captain Bholonath, a Dr Harnadas, and someone identified only as 'Ahmed'. These recordings included examples of singing and recitation, and their commercial potential could not have been great.<sup>6</sup>

When Fred Gaisberg went to India in 1902 with Thomas Dowe Addis and George Dilnutt of GTL to make recordings, there were already local operators importing gramophones and doing rudimentary recordings, and by the middle of the decade several other European operators would be working in the Indian market.<sup>7</sup> Gaisberg's trip followed successful recording trips to Germany, Hungary, Spain, Italy (where he recorded Caruso), and Russia. For the Indian trip Gaisberg designed 'portable' recording equipment which used a weight-driven motor.<sup>8</sup> His expedition was in response to the growing market for gramophones in India, and to consolidate GTL's interests there and throughout Asia. In the same period Gaisberg went to China and Japan

<sup>6</sup> Kinnear 1994: 37.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid. 910; Gronow 1981: 2512.

<sup>8</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 52.

to record. Correspondence in the EMI archive reveals the forward planning and logistical problems encountered during the period leading up to Fred Gaisberg's first Indian recordings in 1902. GTL's agent in Calcutta was John Watson Hawd. Hawd was aware of the potential of recording 'native' musicians, and was constantly urging the London office to send an expedition, because he knew that they must move quickly to gain a secure foothold in the market and head off other operators.<sup>9</sup> In February 1902 Hawd wrote: 'There will be a big business here when we have goods enough and it is best to own the territory then we know it is well worked.'<sup>10</sup> But in April he cautioned: 'The country is so large that it will take a long time to cover it and as yet we have no dealers to speak of.'<sup>11</sup> Indeed, much of the correspondence of 1902 is concerned with establishing markets, trade marks, and franchises through lawsuits. The nature of the music to be recorded is rarely mentioned, and when it is, it is clear that Hawd's knowledge and interest in Indian music operated on a purely business level.

However, GTL did not send Gaisberg as quickly as it might have wished. In January 1902 the London office wrote to Hawd:

I am planning to send out Gaisberg to you on the first of February to make records in your vicinity I am going to have him make haste to go there direct and to do work thoroughly and well, and I predict as a result getting a very large business. We will now take up the Indian business on thoroughly business lines and put it on a firm and good foundation.<sup>12</sup>

But by June of the same year, Gaisberg had still not set out, and Hawd wrote in exasperation:

Is he [Gaisberg] really coming? of course I don't care only I had made arrangements with artists which are now cancelled and I am not going to trouble again until he has really landed for by the time he arrives the pooja [religious feast, devotion] will have commenced and nothing can be done till after December.<sup>13</sup>

Hawd also adds, darkly: 'About 12 to 14,000 people are dying in this territory weekly now of plague.' Perhaps not the best circumstances in which to launch a recording industry! Nevertheless, Hawd had promised his local clients native recordings by December.

<sup>9</sup> Kinnear 1994: 1011.

<sup>10</sup> EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, 13 Feb. 1902.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid. 13 Apr. 1902.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 1 Jan. 1902.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid. 3 June 1902.

Hawd's letters also provide glimpses of the way in which artists were recruited, the manner in which the ebb and flow of Indian cultural life interfered with business plans, and the burgeoning status of the gramophone among the Indian upper classes:

We are, however, arranging for a room for record making and if it is possible we shall get some native singers, but as this pooja lasts for two months, yet we are not sure we will be able to succeed. We have several wealthy rajas who are interested in the gramophone that have volunteered to help us in every way possible.<sup>14</sup>

The expedition finally arrived in Calcutta at the end of October 1902. Gaisberg himself describes their arrival and first recordings in India in *Music on Record* (1942), which consists largely of reproductions from his diaries. His account conveys a sense of the difficult logistics involved and the culture shock experienced now that they had finally arrived in India:

It took us three days to unload our thirty heavy cases and pass the customs officers. Our agent, Jack Hawd, had arranged a location and had assembled a collection of artists, who watched us curiously as we prepared our studio for recording. It was the first time the talking machine had come into their lives and they regarded it with awe and wonderment.<sup>15</sup>

It was also the first time that Indian music had come into Gaisberg's life, and it seemed no less awesome and traumatic to him than the effects of the gramophone on the Indians: 'We entered a new world of musical and artistic values. One had to erase all memories of European opera houses: the very foundations of my musical training were undermined.'<sup>16</sup> Also, his contact with Indian music set him apart from other Europeans on the subcontinent: 'I soon discovered that the English, whom we contacted and who were acting as our agents and factors, might be living on another planet for all the interest they took in Indian music.'<sup>17</sup>

The first musicians whom Gaisberg recorded were contracted with the help of two proprietors of local theatres, Amarendra Nath Dutt and Jamshedji Framji Madan.<sup>18</sup> As the Westerners knew nothing about Indian music or musical genres, they had to take what was on offer. Thus the early recordings

<sup>14</sup> EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, 16 Nov. 1902.

<sup>15</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 54.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Kinnear 1994: 11, 1520.



were musically arbitrary everything from classical vocal music to 'Bengali Comic Talk'. The first recordings of Indian musicians, made on Saturday, 8 November 1902, were of two *nautch* girls called Soshi Mukhi and Fani Bala, of the Classic Theatre. They recorded extracts from popular shows of the time such as *Sri Krishna*, *Dole Lila*, *Pramode Ranjan*, and *Alibaba*.<sup>19</sup> According to Gaisberg, they had 'miserable voices'. Elsewhere he describes his general dismay at the theatre music he heard in venues around the Harrison Road area of Calcutta:

Our first visit was to the 'Classic theatre' where a performance of *Romeo and Juliet* in a most unconventional form was being given. Quite arbitrarily, there was introduced a chorus of young Nautch girls heavily bleached with rice powder and dressed in transparent gauze. They sang 'And Her Golden Hair Was Hanging Down Her Back' accompanied by fourteen brass instruments all playing in unison. I had yet to learn that the oriental ear was unappreciative of chords and harmonic treatment, and only demanded the rhythmic beat of the accompaniment of the drums. At this point we left.<sup>20</sup>

This paragraph encapsulates a wealth of misconceptions about Indian music by Westerners and Western music by Indians. Perhaps the rendition of the ballad 'And her Golden Hair was Hanging Down her Back' with brass accompaniment was set up especially for the important Western visitors; but the two musical cultures failed to connect. Expecting Indian music, Gaisberg heard a bad arrangement of a Western song, and the Indian band did not know how to score for brass. It is an example of cross-cultural misfirings on every level, and is a classic anecdote in the chronicle of Indian music and the West. Above all, Gaisberg had no idea what he was looking for in Indian music, and was doubtless at the mercy of local entrepreneurs anxious to get to the rich Westerners and their lucrative new talking machine. As Hawd had warned head office in London earlier that year about the locals that he had business dealings with, 'the baboos here are slick'.<sup>21</sup>

However, following hard upon his experience at the Classic Theatre, Gaisberg was ushered into a different world of Indian music. He was taken to the home of a 'wealthy *babu*', where he heard, among others, Gauhar Jan, the

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 1011.

<sup>20</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 545.

<sup>21</sup> EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, 19 June 1902.

vocalist: 'an Armenian Jewess who could sing in twenty languages and dialects'.<sup>22</sup> Through hearing Gauhar Jan, Gaisberg came into the mainstream of classical and light classical music performance in India, but in surroundings he would not have been familiar with in Europe or America: 'We elbowed our way through an unsavoury alley jostled by fakirs and unwholesome sacred cows, to a pretentious entrance. No native women were present excepting the Nautch girls, who had lost caste.'<sup>23</sup> That Gaisberg found the subsequent performance 'long and boring', and was offended by the betel-stained teeth of the musicians, did not blunt his business acumen. Gauhar Jan was clearly a find. That night she sang 'Silver Threads amongst the Gold' for the wealthy Western visitors. So, at the end of an 'unsavoury alley', Gaisberg had stumbled upon the source for the twentieth century's first commercial recordings of Indian music.

Gauhar Jan (c. 1875-1930), doyenne of the Calcutta *kothas*, was to become GTL's first major Indian recording artist. She recorded scores of songs, which were still in GTL's catalogues in the 1930s, when she was listed as 'The Late Gauhar Jan'. She was already well known among *aficionados* of Indian music, and through the medium of the gramophone she became an immensely popular artist, later appearing in silent films miming to her own recordings and foreshadowing 'playback', in which film stars mimed to sound-tracks of singers, later in the century.<sup>24</sup> Gauhar Jan was an appropriate figure to play a role which bridged tradition and modernity, India and the West. She was born to Eurasian parents William Robert Yeoward and Allen [sic] Victoria Hemming, but was brought up in Benares by her mother, who had converted to Islam after the break-up of the marriage.<sup>25</sup> Gauhar Jan was multilingual, glamorous, flamboyant, and fully aware of the potential of the new medium.

Through coming into contact with her, Gaisberg entered a different musical world from that of the *nautch* girls of the Classic Theatre, although in his diaries he called Gauhar Jan a 'rather fat dancing girl' who 'terminated each song with a most cleverly executed muscle-dance'.<sup>26</sup> (His memory of her seems to have mellowed by the time *Music on Record* was written.)

Gauhar Jan was a trained singer of *khyal*, *thumri*, and other classical vocal forms. She is also reputed to have performed the more austere forms *dhrupad*

<sup>22</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 55.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Michael Kinnear, personal communication, 1992.

<sup>25</sup> Misra 1990: 97.

<sup>26</sup> Moore 1976: 80.

and *sadra*.<sup>27</sup> She was a student of Bhaya Saheb Ganpat Rao (1852-1920), considered to be one of the most important figures in the nineteenth-century development of the vocal form *thumri*.<sup>28</sup> This gave Gauhar Jan a direct stylistic and historical link to the world of courtly musical patronage. Bhaya Saheb also taught other fine singers of the day, such as Ghafur Khan and Malkajan.<sup>29</sup>

Gauhar Jan was clearly an imposing personality, as well as a fine singer, and she was not intimidated by the new Western technology or the commercial wheeling and dealing associated with it. As Gaisberg noted:

When she came to record, her suite of musicians and attendants appeared even more imposing than those who used to accompany Melba and Calvé. As the proud heiress of immemorial folk music traditions she bore herself with becoming dignity. She knew her own market value as we found to our cost when we negotiated with her.<sup>30</sup>

It appears that not only Gauhar Jan, but other famous Indian singers in the first decade of recording, like Jankibai, charged enormous fees; Gauhar Jan charged 1,000 rupees for a recording session, and Jankibai 3,000.<sup>31</sup> Gauhar Jan's almost legendary status is underlined by a curious story related by Gaisberg (and elsewhere in slightly differing versions) about her throwing a party for her cat which cost 20,000 rupees!<sup>32</sup> It seems that such tall tales, her extravagant and provocative appearance 'delicate black gauze draperies embroidered with real gold lace, arranged so as to present a tempting view of a bare leg and a naked navel'<sup>33</sup> and her habit of riding through Calcutta in a carriage and pair created an ambience which made it easier for her to drive a hard bargain with Gaisberg when it came to fees.

Gauhar Jan quickly became a gramophone celebrity, appearing in numerous catalogues peering demurely into the camera or cradling a gramophone horn to her bosom. In her first recordings for Gaisberg, she recorded songs in Hindustani, English, Arabic, Kutchi, Turki, Sanskrit, Bengali, and Pushtu. Represented in this body of work were many of the classical and light vocal styles current in North India at that time: *thumri*, *khyal*, *dadra*, *ghazal*, *kajari*, with compositions in a variety of *rags* usually associated with lighter classical forms: *Pilu*, *Jinjhota*, *Bhupali*, *Khamaj*, *Pahari*, and *Ghara*. However, among her first recordings are also examples of more 'serious' *rags*, such as *Malhar*, and

<sup>27</sup> Misra 1990: 96.

<sup>28</sup> Manuel 1989: 745.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 75.

<sup>30</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 56.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid. 57; Misra 1990: 99.

<sup>32</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 56.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

rarer ones, like *Dhani* and *Jangla*.<sup>34</sup> Nevertheless, Gaisberg's understanding of her musical accomplishments was rudimentary: 'The Mohammedan girl could lay considerable claim to a coloratura voice. She performed with some ease some very difficult vocalising such as scales & a sort of guttural trill which drew our attention to herself.'<sup>35</sup> Even though Gauhar Jan was a renowned, respected performer of classical music, with a large repertoire of traditional compositions, the novelty value of the gramophone did not escape her notice.

One of her 1902 recordings is an English-language version of 'My Love is Like a Little Bird'. An extant recording of this song seems to have been recorded at too slow a tempo (in fact, the speed, and therefore the pitch, varies considerably on many of the recordings of both Indian and Western singers), adding a curious high-pitched edge to Gauhar Jan's voice, which exaggerates the nursery-rhyme quality of the lyrics:

My love is like a little bird  
That flies from tree to tree.

The accompanying musicians carry on regardless of the curious musical setting in which they find themselves, adjusting the Indian *tal kaharva* (8 beats) and the mellifluous flow of the *sarangi* to fit the four-square melody. Even when, midway through, Gauhar Jan forgets the lyrics, no one is perturbed, and the rhythm is picked up when she re-starts.

However, her celebrity status and her accomplishments as a singer, preserved for ever on those early recordings, tell us little about the social status of women musicians in turn-of-the-century India. Gaisberg hints at it: 'All female singers were of course from the caste of public women, and in those days it was practically impossible to record the voice of a respectable woman.'<sup>36</sup> At the time of Gauhar Jan, Indian classical music and the musicians who performed it occupied an ambivalent place in Indian society. As noted in Chapter 2, the public performance of music was considered by Indians and Westerners alike to be a degenerate art. At the beginning of the twentieth century, it was still considered a low-status activity, despite the revival of 'Hindu' music in upper middle-class society, and was yet to attain

<sup>34</sup> See Kaufmann 1984 and Manuel 1989 for details of these *rags*.

<sup>35</sup> Moore 1976: 80.

<sup>36</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 57.

its image in the West, or in India, as a quintessential symbol of Indian high culture. For women it was considered a particularly disreputable profession, only one step away from undisguised prostitution.

Musical activity in the cities centred on the *kothas* situated in *caklas*, where *tawa'ifs* performed music and dance to an audience of music *aficionados*, pleasure-seekers, and fellow musicians. The male musicians, particularly *sarangiyas* (*sarangi* players), had a complex musical and social role in relation to the women performers. They acted as both teachers and accompanists, and it has been suggested that in some situations as pimps or procurers. This latter, unsavoury reputation, whether deserved or not, persisted up until modern times, even when the *sarangi* had become established as a concert instrument.<sup>37</sup>

Such musical venues as salons were linked in the minds of the incipient Indian bourgeoisie with the loose, degenerate living previously associated with the courts; but it was within this milieu that many of the stylistic innovations of twentieth-century Indian classical music took place. Male professional musicians frequented the salons, and were influenced stylistically by the women, a dimension of Indian music history that has only recently been acknowledged.<sup>38</sup> Gaisberg himself noted that the first two male singers he recorded had 'high-pitched effeminate voices', perhaps a result of the female influence.<sup>39</sup> Lalchand (L. C.) Boral was a particularly popular artist in the early days of recording. His vocal delivery is notably high-pitched. Manuel also notes how some of the greatest male vocalists of the century for example, Faiyaz Khan emulated the performance practices of the *tawa'ifs*.<sup>40</sup> Female musicians and the musical environment they inhabited were clearly of great significance at the turn of the century, yet a photograph of a gathering of Indian musicians at a conference in Nepal in 1900 shows not a single woman.<sup>41</sup>

At this point it is perhaps necessary to clarify the meaning of the term 'courtesan' in relation to women musicians and dancers. In former times the term referred specifically to women who performed music and dance at the

37 Sorrell and Narayan 1980: 65; Joep Bor, personal communication, 1996.

38 Daniel Neuman, personal communication at the *Women Music-Makers of India* conference in New Delhi, 1984.

39 Gaisberg 1942: 56.

40 Manuel 1989: 723.

41 Neuman 1990: 19.

courts of nawabs and maharajas, this was closely associated with *devadasis*, or women who danced in temples, taking part in religious rites.<sup>42</sup> However, as this patronage declined in the twentieth century, the musical skills of the courtesans were transferred to urban centres and salons. Thus, it is not strictly accurate to term Gauhar Jan a courtesan, although she apparently performed at the court of the Maharaja of Darbangha at one point in her life,<sup>43</sup> and even less a 'dancing-girl', with all the pejorative connotations that such a designation carries in India. She was certainly heir to that tradition, and performed in the musical contexts that succeeded the courts. The musical and dancing skills she had acquired were those of a courtesan, but she represented a distinct, and emerging stratum of professional urban musicians at the turn of the century.

The entertainment in the salons was a mixture of music, dance, and sensual indulgence. One of the courtesan's skills was to entice and seduce, through suggestive lyrics, tone of voice, and gestures. The *kotha* was not merely a brothel (although it certainly functioned on occasion as that as well); it was also a venue where highly skilled musicians and dancers performed and listened, a place of relaxation, gossip, and musical appreciation, as well as vengery. Echoing Gaisberg's perceptions, McMunn gives further background regarding the social status of the twentieth-century courtesan:

the mass of them come from the lowest of the depressed classes and untouchables and from outcast tribes. The dancers have matriarchal descent for many generations perhaps, for though all dancers are courtesans, not all courtesans are dancers. The recruiting of the dancer class comes also from one more source, the unwanted daughter. The unwanted daughter may be sold, given to, or stolen by a gipsy tribe and sold on to some duenna of dancing girls, herself retired from the craft of keeping houses of ill fame.<sup>44</sup>

Neuman has suggested that kidnapping as a form of recruitment to the salons may also have had an effect on the intermingling of musical styles, as some girls were brought from outside India another instance of the social shaping the musical.<sup>45</sup>

Courtesan-musicians constituted a distinct stratum of Indian society, and were often identified by their names having the suffix '*bai*', a practice which

<sup>42</sup> Post 1989: 989.

<sup>43</sup> Misra 1990: 97.

<sup>44</sup> McMunn 1931: 801.

<sup>45</sup> Neuman, personal communication, 1984.

dates back to the time of the Moghul emperor Aurangzeb, who ruled 1658-1707.<sup>46</sup> The term *bai* (dame, lady) has many connotations, being both honorific, *baiji*, and stigmatizing: honorific because it acknowledges the artistic achievements of the woman so named, stigmatizing because it links her directly to the courtesan tradition.<sup>47</sup> Some of the most famous female vocalists of the twentieth century, many of whom were recorded in the early part of the century, still bore this suffix in their names, such as Jankibai, Zohrabai, Hirabai Barodekar, and Keserbai Kerkar, to name but a few.

In the courtesan's performance, dance was clearly as important as music. It is apparent that the two skills were closely integrated, with the performer singing and dancing simultaneously on occasion, a dramatic style of performance known as *abhinaya*. I have already noted the importance of dance in the story of Indian music and the West, and it is descriptions of music in the context of dance that form the bulk of European eyewitness accounts of Indian music in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Europeans, unless they were musicologists or were deeply interested and immersed in Indian culture, seemed mainly to be exposed to music only within the context of dance entertainments. The image of the dancing-girl, with all its mysterious and lewd connotations, had become a central artistic representation of the East in the West in ballets and operas. McMunn, a retired army officer from India, gives an interesting description of what took place in Hamesha Behar's *kotha*, and shows that Western fascination with this kind of performance, an attitude laced with exoticism, romanticism, and prurience, carried over into the twentieth century.

From the large chamber within the darkened lattices there comes the luring throb of the little drum Within one of the inner rooms where the velvety cushions are super-velvety, Azizun the dancer taps the floor quietly with her embroidered crimson and green shoe to supple the sinews you can see every muscle under the soft olive skin of the bare abdomens and the transparent muslin of the dancers ankle and bosom moving to the pipe, now in softness, now in frenzy.<sup>48</sup>

And all this under the watchful eye of a portrait of King Edward. But, like some tabloid journalist of the present day, McMunn soberly takes his leave before 'some lured by soft arms and eyes retire behind the heavy curtains,

<sup>46</sup> Manuel 1989: 4950.

<sup>47</sup> See also Neuman 1990: 100.

<sup>48</sup> McMunn 1931: 849.

amid the smell of musk and sandalwood', wistfully noting that 'It is in the scents perhaps that the allure lies strongest on the imagination'.<sup>49</sup>

Nevertheless, despite the languid, dream-like sensuality of McMunn's description, there is also valuable information about the type of music and performance which took place in this particular *kotha*. He notes the ankle bells of the dancers, suggesting that the dance form is *kathak*. The ankle bells, which are considered sacred by the *kathak* dancer, are used in performance to accentuate the rhythms of the footwork, and are an indispensable part of the performance. The accompanying instruments in McMunn's description are tabla, (two-hand drums) and perhaps a *dhol* (a double-headed drum), a *shenai* (a double-reed wind instrument), and a 'zither' probably a *tanpura* (a plucked lute which is played as a continuous drone or ostinato). As was typical of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century practice, the musicians stood up to play, behind the dancers. Photographs from the time show musicians with slings in which they carried their instruments.<sup>50</sup>

Dance forms such as *kathak* and vocal genres like *thumri* are now accepted as vital elements of mainstream Indian classical culture, both in India and in the West. Yet in Gaisberg and McMunn's time, 'Outside police circles they would be unknown to the Western world in India.'<sup>51</sup> The music and dance of the *kotha* would also have been unfamiliar to the majority of the Indian population. It is part of the story of Indian music and the West that, as the twentieth century progressed, music and musicians stigmatized as immoral and degenerate by large sections of the population, including, as noted in Chapter 2, academic musicians, came to gain status as carriers of classical musical culture. The gramophone industry played an important role in this process. With the first recordings, the music of the *kotha* was to move from a world of obscurity on to the mass market. Unwittingly, Gaisberg and other Western sound recordists were preserving in sound a crucial era in the history of Indian music and examples of a unique stratum of women's music making. From then on, *tawa'ifs* could be listened to in the respectability of middle-class Indian homes, through the neutral (and unscented) channel of the gramophone.

Nevertheless, on early discs women often had 'amateur' printed after their

49 McMunn 1931: 89.

50 Moore 1976: 106.

51 McMunn 1931: 82.



names, to show that they were respectable, even though their music may have told a different story.

GTL now had the music and the discs, but how did they sell it to that vast, complex population that was the Indian public?

'The marvel of the twentieth century': Marketing the Gramophone in India

The executives of GTL quickly realized that, in India, they were sitting on a potentially huge market for their new product. Thomas Addis took over from Hawd in 1903 as GTL's agent in Calcutta, and was an energetic and tireless promoter of its Indian market, including the native, or 'vernacular', lists. Hawd left GTL under a cloud, and went off to free-lance in the Indian gramophone market, becoming something of a thorn in the flesh of his previous employers but that is another story. GTL correspondence for the years 1903-5 shows not only the growth of the Indian market, but also some of the difficulties Addis encountered convincing his bosses back home of the commercial potential of local recordings and the cultural, linguistic, and logistical complexities of selling their product in India. In December 1903, a year after Gaisberg's first recording expedition, Addis wrote to London, analysing the market for recordings of Indian music and making some shrewd observations:

India is a peculiar country in regard to language as if you go 300 miles out of Calcutta you would find a different dialect altogether which would not be understood here and so on through every state and presidency. Each particular district has its own local and popular singers male and female, beside which there are a few amateur singers whose records would sell freely. Now it is this class of work that the better and middle class natives, who have the money enquire for and we are creditably informed the present sales are largely due to the excellent results obtained from the instruments [gramophones] alone, and that it is not the records themselves that are inducing the public to buy instruments.<sup>52</sup>

Addis was making a point that provides an important historical window on the meaning of the gramophone in Indian society in the first years of the

52 EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, 23 Dec. 1903.

twentieth century. To the Indian middle classes who could afford one, the gramophone was a technological novelty and a status symbol in itself, quite aside from the music being played on it a concept that would be exploited in later publicity material.

That the gramophone was also a status symbol with the really wealthy is underlined by correspondence in 1905 concerning requests from a 'wealthy Nawab' and the 'Maharaja Kumar of Cutch Behar' for custom-built gramophones. The nawab wanted:

something he could give from Rs. 8,000/- to Rs. 10,000/-, and feel that no one else could purchase such an instrument. He also enquires what it would cost to make for him one thousand special Records, and whether we would be prepared to send a man out for this purpose.<sup>53</sup>

The maharaja was after something even more elaborate: two special machines that would allow him to play twelve to fifteen records without rewinding, with coats of arms on the front of each machine.<sup>54</sup> Despite the large sums on offer, GTL was unable to oblige.

Addis realized that the industry could not run on novelty value indefinitely, and he was astute about the potential of regional language-based music as part of GTL's marketing strategy.

When arrangements were made for the next recording expedition, the regional diversity of Indian music was duly acknowledged, and South India was included on the itinerary. Addis had written: 'I should like to mention casually that the whole of South India has been untouched by us.'<sup>55</sup> The London office instructed Addis to extend the catalogue by 2,500 records, broken down by language as follows: 'Bengali 300, Hindustani 500, Gujarati 300, Mahratti 150, Tamil 300, Telegu 250, Canarese 200, Cingalese [sic] 200, Bhutian Nepaulese Thibetan [sic] 120, Sanscrit, Persian 120, Beluchi 60'.<sup>56</sup> Yet, two years after his earlier communication about this issue, he was still trying to convince the London office. This time he had done his research to back up the point:

We have taken records in various vernaculars, but we have not, in my opinion gone far enough into this matter. Permit me to fall back on figures to show the immense field there is to be developed in India:

53 EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, 8 June 1905.

54 Ibid. 3 Aug. 1905.

55 Ibid. 6 June 1904.

56 Ibid. 6 Dec. 1904.

India. Total population (1901) 287,000,000

There are 147 vernaculars of extraordinary variety

Hindi spoke by	60,000,000
Bengali do	44,000,000
Bihari do	47,000,000
Telegu do	20,000,000
Mahrati do	18,000,000

after which come Rajastani, Kanarese, Gujarati, Oriya, Burmese, Tamil, Malayalam, Pustu, pure Urdu etc, etc. The above figures convey, no doubt the enormous diversity under the name 'India'.<sup>57</sup>

The attention given to the regional nature of Indian music by Addis is of interest in the wider historical context of the development of popular music forms in India in the twentieth century. By the middle of the 1950s and through to the 1970s the Indian popular music market would come to be dominated by *filmi* songs, songs from films, which were almost exclusively in Hindi or Urdu, and were 'an important expression and vehicle for a pan-ethnic urban social identity'.<sup>58</sup> It was a new recording technology, the cassette tape, that would break the hegemony of the Hindi pop song, and once again lead to a proliferation of recordings of regional styles and genres.<sup>59</sup>

Back in 1903 the fact that there was no record-pressing plant in India was also giving Addis problems. Records had to be pressed in Europe. He was continually running out of stocks of Indian records, and had to fight an ongoing battle to convince the London office to send more copies and dispatch another recording expedition to both increase the list and record more and better artists. In September 1903 he wrote:

We are rather dissatisfied [sic] at the native records coming through so slowly especially when you consider that you have had the original records made here since the beginning of January last We have only a few Bengali records and people are beginning to lose faith saying that they do not believe they are coming at all. The same thing will happen regarding Japanese, Chinese and other records it will be quite another year before we shall be in a position to make a big move in the 'Eastern Trade'.<sup>60</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 23 Dec. 1904.

<sup>58</sup> Manuel 1988a: 158.

<sup>59</sup> Manuel 1993.

<sup>60</sup> EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, Sept. 1903.

As an illustration of the popularity of Indian recordings, Addis wrote on the 8 June 1905 that all 300 copies of L. C. Boral's recordings were sold 'within half an hour of the time they were opened'. Elsewhere he notes a turnover of 4,000 native records in one day.<sup>61</sup>

Another major headache for Addis was the piracy by other Indian dealers of GTL trade marks, notably the term 'gramophone' and the famous 'His Master's Voice' picture showing a dog listening to a gramophone. An advertisement in the Calcutta *Morning Post* of February 1903 showed a Calcutta firm, the 'International Gramophone Depot' of Dhuromtalla Street, using a picture of the music-loving dog (with a slightly rabid look about him) to sell a variety of imported gramophones and accessories, 'All at American prices'. Such infringements led to many lawsuits, through which GTL established sole ownership of the now world-famous image.<sup>62</sup> In 1906, GTL catalogues were offering 'Genuine Gramophone Needles in coloured boxes bearing our Famous Copyright Picture "His Master's Voice"'.<sup>63</sup>

Between this and typewriter platens melting in the heat, shelves erected by an unreliable Chinaman crashing down and destroying large amounts of his stock, and 'No societyno amusements and scarcely a breath of cool air from one month end to another',<sup>63</sup> these were not easy days for Addis. It is little wonder that he was ill and absent for long periods by the middle of the decade.

During the first five years of the century, GTL's native list began to take shape, reflecting the regional and linguistic heterogeneity of India. The catalogues were published in all the major languages of the area, including Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Bengali, Tamil, Telegu, and Malayalam. The list had also increased, due to a second more extensive recording expedition in 1904. During this tour, led by William Sinkler Darby, recordings were made throughout India, rather than just in the Calcutta area.

As the list increased, the question of publicity became of utmost importance. There were teething problems with the first catalogues, mainly due to the numbers of scripts and languages being employed:

<sup>61</sup> EMI Music Archives, Indian correspondence, 8 June 1904.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. 9 May 1905.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. 1 June 1904.

It frequently happens that we submit the matter for a catalogue to a supposedly reliable man for correct translation, and then, when we submit the same matter to a second party, he discovers great errors. This is due no doubt to the great difference that exists in methods of writing the various vernaculars.<sup>64</sup>

The spelling in the early catalogues is often a confused mix of Indian words and phonetic translations of English into Indian scripts. Nevertheless, Addis was aware of the business that could be gained by the production of properly translated catalogues with appropriate illustrations. Photographs in early catalogues show the big-selling celebrities such as Gauhar Jan, Malka Jan, and L. C. Boral, but it is the specially commissioned artwork in gramophone catalogues that are of particular interest, as they incorporate the history, religion, and social mores of Indian life in a striking manner. They are also an example of how the West tried to sell images of India to Indians.

The question of illustrations for GTL catalogues is first raised by Addis in a letter to London dated 19 January 1905. Apparently he had a small picture 'painted by a local artist here, and which we propose to use on the cover of our new Indian catalogue', but a Mr Wortman who had been visiting had taken the picture away by mistake, much to Addis's consternation. The picture in question was in three separate colours, and was to have appeared in a catalogue for 10-inch records in lots of 100,000. This latter figure indicates the way in which trade was increasing and the urgent demand for publicity with suitable pictures. It is difficult to ascertain exactly what picture Addis was alluding to, for several interesting paintings by local artists appear in catalogues during the years 1906-7. He could be referring to the one entitled 'The Gramophone in the Court of Jahangier the Magnificent' by one, Fred C. Rogers. (This curious concoction of past and present is discussed in detail below.) Or perhaps it was the picture of the goddess Sarasvati, complete with gramophone, by G. N. Mukherji, which appears fronting a 1906 catalogue.

These and other paintings show the way in which GTL tried to target its Indian customers by mixing ancient and modern, by projecting the talking machine as an almost miraculous phenomenon worthy of taking its place in the realm of emperors and goddesses, or simply as an adjunct to social status and progress.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 7 May 1904.

In a 1907 catalogue the ubiquitous 'His Master's Voice' hound is pictured sitting in front of a new gramophone in a comfortable middle-class Indian household (Plate 1). The text is in Bengali, but the décor of the room and the dress of its inhabitants are a mix of Western and Indian. The gramophone is the focus, the centre-piece of the room. The status of the gramophone is reflected by the man of the house, who stands, arm outstretched, presumably extolling the wonders and virtues of the new technology, and presenting it proudly to his family and relatives. His wife stands at the other side of the table clearly delighted with this new acquisition. The couple's children, a boy and a girl, listen attentively, the boy leaning forward anxiously to catch the sounds of the wondrous machine. An elderly man, father or grandfather, sits to listen with a younger relative or friend; even a servant has been invited in to listen. The latter crouches on the floor wearing only a dhoti. The HMV dog sits beneath the gramophone, a corporate trade mark come to life in an Indian domestic scene. This is a dog which is welcome indoors, unlike most dogs in India, which are considered unclean and are rarely kept as domestic pets.

This picture is packed with social and cultural messages. The gramophone is an object, a possession, that represents a bridge between two cultural domains, the West and India, and as such is a symbol of the aspirations of the burgeoning Indian middle classes at the turn of the century. It is also a technological innovation that crosses generations. The pride of the up-and-coming couple in their new acquisition is evident. Their son, leaning forward, is moving towards a mass-mediated future. The grandfather spans the generations, and has lived to see the world change through the medium of recorded sound, even though his face is creased in amusement, perhaps at the younger ones and their fascination with this new toy. But relative status is maintained by the presence of the servant, who sits on the floor while the others sit in chairs, who is half-dressed, whose skin is noticeably darker than that of the others, and whose back is to the viewer. Technology democratizes, but not completely.<sup>65</sup>

The inextricable link in India between religion and everyday life also did not escape the eye of the publicists. In one particularly striking image from

<sup>65</sup> See also Ehrlich 1976: 967 for a similar image used to sell pianos in the 1870s.



Plate 1.

The marvels of the gramophone come to a middle-class Indian household. (EMI Music Archives, 1907.)

1906 (Plate 2), Sarasvati, the Hindu goddess of arts and learning, is depicted in a rural idyll, perched on a lotus in the middle of a lake. On her knees is a *bīn*, a traditional stringed instrument, but rising from the water next to her, balanced on another huge lotus and seeming to merge with the neck of the instrument to replace the second gourd, is a gramophone. With one hand resting on the frets of her instrument, she places the needle on a disc with the other. Nearby flowers contain neat piles of discs ready to be selected and played. Fishes, crocodiles, frogs, tortoises, serpents, and a beautiful swan also listen.

This picture deftly incorporates the gramophone into a panoply of ancient symbols associated with Sarasvati. Sarasvati is the consort of Brahma, and 'the goddess of wisdom, knowledge, science, art, learning and eloquence, the patroness of music and inventor of the Sanscrit language and Devanagari letters'.<sup>66</sup> She is also closely associated with flowing water (the River Sarasvati

<sup>66</sup> Garrett 1990: 559.



Plate 2.

The goddess Sarasvati discovers a new medium of sound in the gramophone.  
(EMI Music Archives, 1906.)

is in the present-day Indian state of Uttar Pradesh.) She is traditionally depicted as fair-skinned, four-limbed, often holding a stringed instrument or a drum and a book of palm leaves to symbolize her love of knowledge. Her vehicle is a swan, symbol of 'the whiteness or purity of learning and the power of discrimination, which is the essential quality for the acquisition of saving knowledge'.<sup>67</sup> Sarasvati usually appears in a vernal scene, due to her association with the beginning of spring. But she also has a particular relationship with sound and hearing. One mythological account has a special resonance for the coming of the gramophone:

In the Santiparva it is related that when the Brahmarshis were performing austerities, prior to the creation of the universe, 'a voice derived from Brahma entered into the ears of them all; the celestial Sarasvati was then produced from the heavens'.<sup>68</sup>

Thus the gramophone enters the aural universe of Indian mythology, bringing music to the masses of India, or at least that part of the masses that could afford it, at anything up to 250 rupees a machine.

<sup>67</sup> Morgan 1987: 106.

<sup>68</sup> Garrett 1990: 559; emphasis added.





Plate 3.

The goddess Durga uses the magical properties of the gramophone to subdue wild beasts. (EMI Music Archives, 1907.)

Sarasvati was not the only goddess to feature in the catalogues. An illustration from 1907 (Plate 3) shows the goddess Durga surrounded by wild beasts—tigers, lions, and pythons—that have been subdued by the music of the gramophone. Durga, the consort of Siva, is a terrifying figure in the Hindu pantheon, often depicted as the goddess of destruction in her incarnation as Kali. The image of Kali was also invoked as a ferocious symbol of religious nationalism during the first decades of the twentieth century.<sup>69</sup>

But Durga also has a virtuous side, which is on display in the company of the gramophone. The many beasts that surround her appear to be tamed by the music of the gramophone. The lion is traditionally the *vahana* (vehicle) of Durga, and symbolizes her strength in the continuing battle between good and evil. The tiger is associated with the goddess Katyani, and the deer with Vayu, the wind god.<sup>70</sup> Durga leans her arm on the serpent, which is crushed under the gramophone, showing that she is impervious to this powerful, dangerous beast.

<sup>69</sup> Heehs 1993.

<sup>70</sup> Morgan 1987: 1045.

Traditionally this type of image also appears in the iconography of Indian music, and is associated with the *ragmala* (miniature painting) depicting the *rasa* (mood or flavour) of the *ragini Tori*, who through her beauty and skill on the *vina* has charmed the animals out of the forest to listen. A deer is always prominent in this representation.<sup>71</sup> This timeless image has been cleverly transposed to suit the new technology of the gramophone.

Sometimes the publicity images for the gramophone company in India move into the realms of the surreal. A truly curious example of this is found in the 1905 catalogue, with the heading 'The Gramophone in the Court of Jahangir the Magnificent' (Plate 4). The Moghul emperor Jahangir reigned between 1605 and 1627, a period when European contact with India was on the increase. This illustration shows the splendour of the Moghul court, complete with attendants and concubines enraptured by the presence of a gramophone. The meeting has the look of a *darbar*, or official meeting, in the presence of the Emperor. Such events were noted for their lavish, luxurious shows of wealth. In 1902 Hawd had written that he hoped to display gramophones at the Delhi Durbar.<sup>72</sup> But who has presented this wonderful gift for the delectation of a monarch in the seventeenth century? No supplicant is visible, but only an armed guard, who stands grimly by the machine. It would appear that the gramophone has arrived of its own volition not only a talking machine, but also a time machine.

In this picture the marvellous nature of the gramophone has allowed it to skip centuries into a period in which Indian history is penetrated by Western technology. The message is clear: if these machines had been around at that time, even Jahangir would have wanted one. Curiously, perhaps, Jahangir is credited with being the first Indian emperor to have a Western instrument at his court. In 1616 he received a virginal as a gift from King James. It is doubtful whether the 1906 picture is a direct reference to that incident; rather, it is an odd example of historical coincidence. However, it is recorded that Jahangir soon became bored with the virginal.<sup>73</sup> Would the same fate have awaited the time-travelling gramophone?

<sup>71</sup> Deneck 1967: 39.

<sup>72</sup> EMI Music Archives. Indian correspondence, 6 Nov. 1902.

<sup>73</sup> Foster 1926: 48, 76.



Plate 4.

The gramophone travels in time a suitable gift for a Moghul emperor. (EMI Music Archives, 1905.)

By the end of the decade, Gramophone & Typewriter Ltd. had established a pressing plant in Calcutta, and was well on the way to becoming the dominant recording company on the Indian subcontinent well into the middle of the twentieth century and beyond. The correspondence and publicity of those years offer a rare glimpse of the logistics and cultural complexities involved in the gestation of a mass medium.

But what of Indian music and the new technology? How did musicians mould their performances to suit the time span of a disc? It is to this dimension of the early days of the gramophone in India that I finally turn.

#### Musical Form on Early Indian Recordings

Writing in 1942 Fred Gaisberg observed:

Thirty years have elapsed since my first visit to India. We found music there static and after a few years there was very little traditional music left to record. Songs for

festivals and weddings were already in our catalogue and new artists were learning their repertoire from gramophone records.<sup>74</sup>

No doubt Gaisberg had little appreciation or understanding of Indian music to back up his claim that the music was static; indeed, all other evidence points to the fact that the early twentieth century was a time of great change in Indian music, with many forms moving from the court to the concert platform or into the university classroom. However, his final comment is intriguing. As a way of disseminating musical material, the gramophone was unprecedented, and it was inevitable that artists would copy songs from records. In fact, recording was the perfect tool for such endeavours. The record could be played repeatedly and copied, without recourse to a teacher or notation. But what exactly was being copied, in terms of musical form? And how did recorded versions of *khyal*, *thumri*, and other traditional genres relate to live performances? Were the recordings in fact 'constructions', rather than 'reproductions', of Indian music? Or, put another way, was the music that appeared on discs the creature of recording technology, rather than a representation of traditional Indian music performances?

Manuel has noted that throughout the history of recording in India, certain forms of music have been neglected because of the limited time on discs. He cites genres such as Braj *dhola* and Budelkhandi *Alha*, whose extended ballad forms were unsuitable for recording.<sup>75</sup> Many of the forms that did appear in the first recordings of Indian music were also unsuitable for rendition in two or three minutes, notably the vocal genre *khyal*, of which Gauhar Jan recorded several examples.

In the present day a performance of *khyal* is likely to involve extensive, elaborate improvisation, and there is little evidence to suggest that live performances of *khyal* and other genres differed, at least in terms of duration, at the turn of the century. Nevertheless, it should also be borne in mind that the stamina and creative powers of Indian musicians have always been exaggerated at an anecdotal level. For example, it is reported that performances of *batana*, a mixture of singing, usually *thumri*, and dance, performed by courtesans could last up to three hours on a single piece.<sup>76</sup> Similarly, the practice regimes of Indian musicians are given epic qualities, which include reports of regular

<sup>74</sup> Gaisberg 1942: 58.

<sup>75</sup> Manuel 1993: 39.

<sup>76</sup> Misra 1990: 98.

14- and 16-hour stints and other marathons of endurance.<sup>77</sup> Such tales are told to inspire students and instil in them respect for their gurus.

But, exaggeration apart, live performances of Indian music at the turn of the century were open-ended in duration, as witnessed by this quote from Fox-Strangways about the performance of an *ustad* that he heard during his 6-month period of field-work in India during the first decade of the twentieth century:

The phrases are finished off and fit so well into their place, there is so much variety and so much telling gesture, that the time goes quickly by, although you may find that he has sung for at least half an hour continuously.<sup>78</sup>

There are also eyewitness accounts of Gauhar Jan, Malka Jan, and others giving extensive live performances of *khyal* and *thumri*.<sup>79</sup>

Following the first recordings, Indian music performance existed in two worlds: the extended live performance and the two- or three-minute duration of the disc. It has been suggested that this represented a further distinction between performance practice at the courts and that in the urban milieu of musical entertainment.<sup>80</sup> However, that the short duration of the discs caused problems for musicians is indicated by the fact that in the early days many performers of Indian music refused to be recorded, because they found it contrary to the spirit of their art. Fox-Strangways reports one such incident with the singer Chandra Prabhu:

She compelled respect at once by refusing on any account to be phonographed; perhaps she thought, amongst other things, that if she committed her soul to a mere piece of wax it might get broken in the train. She sang for an hour, three songs.<sup>81</sup>

Here, both the musician's aesthetic feelings about recording and the disparity in time duration are underlined.<sup>82</sup> Feedback from a live audience is also an important ingredient of Indian music performances. As the performance unfolds, listeners interject exclamations of approval and astonishment at virtuoso passages. Such crucial interplay was absent in the recording situation,

<sup>77</sup> Neuman 1990: 33; Shankar 1968: 51.

<sup>78</sup> Fox-Strangways 1914: 8990.

<sup>79</sup> Misra 1990: 99100.

<sup>80</sup> Kinnear, personal communication, 1992.

<sup>81</sup> Fox-Strangways 1914: 90.

<sup>82</sup> This was also the response of some Western musicians in the early days of recording, e.g. the pianist Artur Schnabel.

especially in India at the turn of the century, when the only audience present consisted of Western sound recordists who did not appreciate or understand what was going on. An important source of musical inspiration and affirmation was thus denied the performers. Even in the present day, when musicians are used to studios, Manuel notes how canned exclamations such as 'Wah! Wah!' are dubbed on to recordings of popular *ghazals* to reproduce the excitement and immediacy of live performances.<sup>83</sup>

In one sense the early recordings were no more than snapshots of particular genres and styles of performance. But they provide clues as to how musicians dealt with the short amount of time available, as well as insights into the way in which Indian musical form was adapted to suit the new technology. On disc, time constraints throw the essential structural features of Indian music into sharp relief. Musical procedures which usually involve detailed extemporization and exploration in live performance are poured through the sieve of recording technology and time limitation until only the essentials remain.

In order to illustrate some features of this process, I will look in more detail at one example, a *khyal* by Gauhar Jan from 1907, 'Etne Yauwan Daman Na Kariye', ('I can no longer contain my youthful exuberance'), in the pentatonic *rag Bhupali*. On this recording Gauhar Jan was accompanied by a *sarangi* and a *tabla*. The *sarangi* has an important role in *khyal*, as a support to the vocal line, shadowing every subtle nuance and inflection of the voice.

In general, *khyal* is considered to be a more abstract and classical genre than *thumri*, although the latter shows the influence of the former. In *khyal* the sound and syllables of the words are used as vehicles for abstract vocalizing, with the literal meaning of the text, which is usually on a romantic or religious theme, of secondary importance. The lyrics in a *khyal* are usually heard only once in their complete form, thereafter becoming the source for improvisation. This is not to say that no improvisation with syllables takes place in *thumri* and other vocal genres; it does, but there is more emphasis on the meaning of the words, rather than the sound. In this sense *thumris* are more like 'songs' than *khyal*.

The term *khyal* comes from the Urdu word meaning 'thought' or 'imagination'. By the turn of the twentieth century, *khyal* had become the most

<sup>83</sup> Manuel 1993: 98.

widely performed classical genre of vocal music in northern India, supplanting the older, austere vocal form called *dhrupad*. *Khyal* is thought to be a synthesis of vocal forms such as *dhrupad* and *qawwali*, the latter a type of Sufi devotional song.<sup>84</sup> *Khyal* developed into a distinctive genre of performance characterized by virtuosic vocal extemporization and dramatic bravura passages, both musically and visually gripping.

A live performance of *khyal* falls into several sections: a slow, composed section as *bara* (large) and a faster composed section called *chota* (small). These can be set to various *tals*, but a common format is slow, *ektaal* (12 beats), and fast, *tintal* (16 beats). In *khyal* there are no extended *alaps* (slow unmetred preludes) as in *dhrupad* or instrumental music, although detailed *alap*-like improvisation takes place at the beginning of the slow section, albeit with a metrical accompaniment. This is often performed to a very slow basic beat known stylistically as *ati-vilambit*. The performance opens with a few phrases of the *rag* sung in *alap* style, then moves directly to the composed sections. Extemporization takes the form of slow explorations of the syllables of words and fast melodic passages called *tans* using either pitch names (SA, RE, GA, etc.) or *akar* (using the vocable 'a'). There is also great cross-rhythmic interplay, known as *laykari*. An extended performance of *khyal* is open-ended in duration.

How is it possible to perform such music as this in 3 minutes? Gauhar Jan's recording offers some insight.

'Etne Yauwan Daman Na Kariye', which is an example of a *chota khyal* in *tintal*, lasts approximately 2 minutes and 23 seconds. Typical of Indian melodies, this example is in two main parts: a non-metrical opening, the *mukhra* of the composition, and a *ciz* or *bandi*'s (composition), which is the fixed part of the composition, in *tal*, and is in two sections, *sthai* and *antara*, which are followed by sections of improvisation based on the *sthai* part of the *ciz*.

There is a clear sense of balance and shape in the way in which Gauhar Jan fits the form of *khyal* into the short time span of this disc. The *alap* takes the form of a single sounding of the tonic note SA, followed by the opening phrase, the *mukhra*, of the *sthai*. The *sthai* is the most important part of the

84 Wade 1979: 169.

composition, as it delineates the metre of the piece and forms the basis for subsequent improvisations. Gauhar Jan sings the *sthai* three times before giving a brief rendition of the *antara*, once only, before repeating the *sthai*. In total, the fixed composition takes 1 minute, or almost half the total recording time.

The improvisations take the form of *tans* (sweeping melodic phrases), with a return to the *mukhra* at the end of each phrase. In Gauhar Jan's recording the longest improvised break spans two whole cycles of sixteen beats, returning to a compressed version of the *mukhra* at the end of each phrase. After two such improvisations, forming the central part of the recording, the improvisations shorten to one cycle before returning to the *sthai*.

However, it seems that Gauhar Jan was caught out on this particular occasion, as the disc ends half-way through a cycle rather than on the first beat, as would be typical in Indian music, leaving her a few seconds to announce (in English with flirtatious flair) 'My name is Gauhar Jan'. Such announcements are a feature of early Indian recordings. It has been suggested that this practice was purely for reasons of novelty;<sup>85</sup> but it may also have been a form of advertising. The announcements are not always in English, and on one recording, Malka Jan announces not only her name but also her address!

How is the form of *khyal* reconciled on Gauhar Jan's recording? Within its own terms it is a perfectly balanced performance, giving equal weight, in time, to composed and improvised parts. However, the time demands unbalance the traditional performance practices associated with *khyal*. Rendition of the *sthai* and *antara* would never take up half the performance of live *khyal*. Indeed, they might be sung in their entirety only once or twice in an extended performance. Extemporization of various kinds would take up something like 90% of performance time.

The analysis of performance in terms of proportions of composed and improvised sections is particularly apt in the context of recording, where the musician has to decide what to include or leave out. Such decisions have a different meaning in the unfolding of a temporally open-ended live performance. Although I do not wish to generalize too much from one example, I suggest that one possible effect of the short duration of early recordings was to lead artists to give greater weight to the composed, or fixed, parts of the

<sup>85</sup> Joshi 1988: 148.



performance, at the expense of of more developmental forms of improvisation.

Nevertheless, the flexibility of Indian musical form undoubtedly helped in its transition to the medium of records, though early instrumental records, in particular, sound fragmented. For example, 1904 records of the great sitar player Imdad Khan, grandfather of Vilayat Khan, suffer from lack of time; and what we are left with are tantalizing glimpses of complete sitar performances, sectionalized and taken out of contextan *alap*, a *jor*, but without the overarching coherence of a complete performance. In this case the recording cannot contain the form.

Later, especially in recordings of instrumental music, Indian musicians found other ways to work around the time constraints in keeping with Indian musical form, especially after the introduction of two-sided discs. Sitar players performed *alap* with *surbahar* (bass sitar) on one side of the disc, and a *gat* (fixed composition) with sitar on the other side. But even though this pointed up the different movements of the *rag* there was still not enough time to give a detailed rendition.

Much research remains to be done on the formal effects of recording on Indian music performances, but general observations suggest that Indian musicians readily adapted their recorded performances as the technology changed. The advent of LPs in the 1960s led to longer performances, and it is now not uncommon to hear extended performances of one or two *rags* for 70 or 80 minutes on compact discs.

The early days of the gramophone industry in India were important for musicians. This period is in many ways unique, as it represents a musical culture in transitioncrossing over from a world of patronage to one of global mass media. That moment is captured in sound by the early recordings of the Gramophone Company. Therefore they occupy a central place in the study of Indian music and the West, although, even now, they have received little attention in the literature of ethnomusicology. Not only is there a wealth of historical and cultural material to be explored, but also a large body of extant recordings by prominent Indian musicians of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The recordings mark the beginning of one of the largest recording industries in the world. From then on records would be used for



Plate 5.

Dancing girls, the quintessential symbol of the sensual and mysterious East, emerge from the horn of a gramophone. (EMI Music Archives, 1907.)

every purpose, from entertainment to the mass dissemination of information on health and hygiene, and in politics as part of the Swadeshi movement during the struggle for independence from Britain. The advent of the recording industry in India proved to be a musical and social phenomenon of enormous significance.

It seems appropriate to end this chapter with one final illustration from those early days. In a 1907 catalogue the HMV hound tilts his head in that quizzical way as two dancing-girls, complete with ankle bells, emerge from the horn of a gramophone to spin on the rotating disc (Plate 5). Surely there could be no more fitting symbol of Indian music's emergence into the twentieth century through the medium of recorded sound.

Chapter 5  
Three Journeys to the West

*'Pomegranates with fingerboards added'*<sup>1</sup>

At the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, audiences across the United States were enjoying a strange, exotic spectacle. A contemporary dancer was performing a series of concerts to the music of Delibes's *Lakmé*, but with oriental dances of her own eccentric creation. On-stage, to add authenticity, like living props, sat a group of Indian musicians who played an array of unusual-looking instruments. The dancer was Ruth St Denis, and the Royal Musicians of Hindustan were led by Inayat Khan, *vina* player and Sufi. It was an unlikely combination, St Denis, 'an exotic barefoot dancer from the Himalayas of New Jersey', who had no training in Indian dance, appearing on-stage with a group of highly trained court musicians from central India.<sup>2</sup> The incongruity of such meetings was a feature of Indian music's passage to the West. This type of encounter would become increasingly bizarre, and later the same musicians would find themselves in Parisian salons accompanying Mata Hari, sometime spy, 'artistic' remover of seven veils, and all-purpose *femme fatale*.<sup>3</sup>

For the Indian musicians, all this was not so much a descent into Western degeneracy or fakery as a journey around the West's oriental chimera, which, by the twentieth century, had become fully formed, with a vibrant life and logic of its own. It was a journey made by Indian musicians to the West, only to find that the East had already arrived, but not in a form that they recognized. In relation to the Orient, the Western distinction between the real and the imagined had become terminally blurred. The East and the philosophy, images, and cultural ambience associated with it, for a long time the intellectual preserve of orientalism, had now become part of the entertainment and fashion industry, albeit a quasi-spiritual and slightly *risqué* part. Inayat Khan

1 From a review of a performance by Uday Shankar's dance troupe in *Western Independent*, 21 Nov. 1937.

2 St Denis 1939: 66.

3 Keesing 1980: 778.

had wanted to unite the East and West through music. However, Westerners already had other ideas.

In this chapter I will discuss three journeys to the West by Indian musicians and dancers in the first half of the twentieth century: those of Hazrat Inayat Khan, Rabindranath Tagore, and Uday Shankar. Of course, these were not the first passages West by Indian musicians. Indian musicians had been present in the West throughout the nineteenth century, either as exhibits in the great show of Empire, as the odd student or music-hall artist, or as street musicians who had jumped ship in the East End of London. But the journeys of Inayat Khan, Tagore, and Shankar were different. All these figures shared a sense of mission. Each in his own way perceived himself as an ambassador from an ancient, complex culture that was largely misunderstood by the West. Each saw it as his role to interpret and explain this culture, to create bridges and synthesis through the media of music and dance in other words, to educate the West about Indian art and philosophy. They themselves came from contrasting musical, social, and intellectual backgrounds, and each of their journeys West had a different outcome.

These journeys to the West were also mediated by external economic, political, and social forces that made the experiences of Inayat Khan, Tagore, and Uday Shankar differ from each other in many important respects. Inayat Khan had to confront the materialism of the West, which was in opposition to his Sufi beliefs and his creed about the mystical powers of music. His music was sometimes well received in universities and among classical musicians, influencing the likes of Debussy and Scriabin; but in order to survive, he had to work within the ambit of popular culture, whether with fake Indian dancers like Ruth St Denis or in 'Maxim's' night-club in Moscow.<sup>4</sup> Tagore, on the other hand, had to square his English education and involvement with European culture with the nationalist struggle for independence in India, and in his own work mixed traditional and modernizing facets of Indian culture. Although he performed and appreciated Western music, he ultimately concluded that it and Indian music 'do not gain entry into the heart through the self-same door'.<sup>5</sup> The influence of his journeys to the West is manifest in the music he composed when he returned to India, rather than in performances

<sup>4</sup> Ibid. 85.

<sup>5</sup> R. Tagore 1961: 6.

he gave in the West. Uday Shankar wished to reform and modernize Indian dance, but he needed the financial support of rich Western intellectuals in order to achieve his aim. By gaining the recognition and approval of Western patrons, he was able to return to India and set up an institute of Indian dance in Almora.

Whether they had to endure the freezing winds of a New York winter or enjoy the verdant English idyll of Dartington Hall, the passage of Indian musicians to the West was fraught with confusions and contradictions. Each of these figures in his own way exemplifies different but equally important aspects of the story of Indian music and the West. They were visiting and working at a time when the power relations between India and the West were shifting once again.

The Nationalist movement was gaining ground in the first decades of the century, and the surge towards independence was unstoppable. Following the achievement of British economic and political hegemony on the Indian subcontinent, both Western and Indian intellectuals were agitating for freedom in India, and in the process acknowledging its cultural heritage in a new way. Once Western orientalist intellectual control over the perception of Indian history and culture in the nineteenth century had been grasped, new, resurgent forms of Indian art and literature were used to criticize and de-stabilize colonialism. This led to complex artistic movements, mainly stemming from what has become known as the 'Bengal Renaissance', in which conflicting views of how Indian culture should be represented were explored.<sup>6</sup>

Movements in music did not share the radicalism of those in the visual arts. In the writings of Inayat Khan and Rabindranath Tagore, the familiar questions about Indian and Western music recurred: How should Indian music be notated? How could Western harmony be applied to it? What was the role of orchestration? How could the spread of the harmonium be halted? These debates had been running in various forms for half a century. The conflict that existed between the concepts of tradition and innovation, and how this was dealt with by Indian musicians, are exemplified in the work of Inayat Khan, Tagore, and Shankar. Only when Ravi Shankar, Uday's younger brother, returned to the West in the 1950s, would these questions become

<sup>6</sup> See Mittar 1990.

irrelevant; for he was one artist who found no conflict between different musics and the integrity of their respective forms. Shankar, almost single-handedly, initiated a new form of intercourse between Indian music and Western audiences.

The lives of these figures and their artistic achievements and contributions to Indian culture in the twentieth century have been discussed in detail in a number of places.<sup>7</sup> It is not my intention merely to repeat these details, but rather to focus on specific issues regarding their journeys which are relevant to the wider story of Indian music and the West.

### Hazrat Inayat Khan

Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927) (not to be confused with the sitarist of the same name and father of Vilayat Khan), was a Sufi from a family of musicians who were employed in the princely courts of central India.<sup>8</sup> He was a performer on the *vina* and the sitar, as well as being an accomplished vocalist, and his repertoire mixed Hindustani and Carnatic material. In many respects he represented a world of musical patronage that was already in irreversible decline by the beginning of the twentieth century. Also at this time, ideas about music and music education in India were entering a period of change. The old certainties of patronage and the role of the musician in Indian society were being undermined as a result of urbanization and the influence of Western educational ideas.

Inayat Khan grew up in a rich musical environment. His grandfather was the renowned *bin* player Maula Baksh, who founded the Baroda *Gayanshala*, and his father Rahemat Khan was a singer of *dhrupad*.<sup>9</sup> His family had close connections with the West and Western music. Khan's uncle, Alauddin Khan, had gone to England to study Western music at the Royal Academy in London. Baksh had been invited to perform at the World Exhibition in Chicago in 1893.<sup>10</sup> When he returned, Alauddin (now Dr A. M. Pathan) was completely converted to Western music, and set up an orchestra at the *Gayanshala*:

<sup>7</sup> See e.g. Sangeet Natak Akademi 1961; Devi 1961; Shankar 1968; M. M. Khan 1971; Ghose 1978; Keesing 1980; van Beek 1983; Ghosh 1983; Bor, 1996.

<sup>8</sup> M. M. Khan 1971; Keesing 1980.

<sup>9</sup> Keesing 1980: 4.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 12.

For some time all the nephews were under Dr Pathan's influence. He dressed them in European suits, without headgear, and taught them Western music. Chhotamiyan [Inayat Khan] learned to play the harmonium and the violin, and even wrote manuals for these instruments.<sup>11</sup>

A photograph of musicians from the *Gayanshala* at the time indicates how they mixed various musical forms. It shows them performing on a variety of Indian and Western instruments, including what appear to be two large upright harmoniums.

Apart from his eclectic musical training, it is also important to consider the type of religious context that Inayat Khan came from, in order to understand the motivation for his journey to the West. The Sufi sect of Islam encompasses a wide range of complex and hybrid beliefs. Sufism has always placed great emphasis on various types of physical activity, such as breathing exercises, chanting, music, and dance as ways of attaining personal enlightenment and awareness of Allah. In this regard, it is rather different from other Islamic sects, and at various times in its history Sufism has been persecuted within Islam for its devotional practices.<sup>12</sup> The essence of Sufism is 'direct knowledge or personal religious experience of God's presence', which can be reached 'by means of a series of stages and states'.<sup>13</sup> Sufism is also a belief system which espouses action in the world through education, good works, and proselytizing. It is this missionary aspect of Sufism that is most evident in Inayat Khan's journey to the West, and he eventually gave up performing music to devote himself entirely to this spiritual work. His primary aim was to convert Westerners to Sufism, but he viewed music as a universal language and a powerful vehicle for his mission.

Inayat Khan devoted the second volume of his teachings on Sufism to music and the nature of sound (1960). He never considered himself to be merely a performer of music, and believed that 'India's music may be summed up in a few words as the attainment of spiritual perfection, either through devotion or self-realisation'.<sup>14</sup> But like so many other Indian music theorists of that period, he also felt that Indian music was in a degenerate state, and that the great musicians were 'dying out because of lack of appreciation' although he mused that 'Maybe one day the Western world will

<sup>11</sup> Keesing 1980: 17.

<sup>12</sup> Esposito 1991: 109; Horrie and Chippendale 1991: 140.

<sup>13</sup> Esposito 1991: 109.

<sup>14</sup> I. Khan 1916: 43.



awaken to India's music as now the West is awakening to the poetry of the East and beginning to appreciate such works as those of Rabindranath Tagore'.<sup>15</sup> He was convinced that when this awakening finally occurred, it would lead to the demise of such musical aberrations as jazz, which he felt was destroying 'the delicacy of sense' of people in the West.<sup>16</sup> Undoubtedly it would have come as something of a shock to Inayat Khan if he could have seen five decades ahead: when Ravi Shankar finally achieved his goal of bringing Indian music to the West, he worked with jazz musicians, and praised their understanding of certain aspects of Indian music.

As well as travelling within various musical and cultural worlds, North and South Indian, Indian and Western, Inayat Khan was also an early example of another type of phenomenon that would gather pace later in the century—the Eastern guru going to the West to point out its spiritual bankruptcy—"The street lights were burning bright, but the light of the soul was burning dim"<sup>17</sup> and gather Western followers in the process. In the West this close connection between Indian music and religion would persist up to and beyond the massive success of Ravi Shankar in the mid-twentieth century. The West still needed the East to be mysterious and at the same time spiritually pure. Given a developed mass medium with which to work, Inayat Khan might well have become as famous and wealthy as other twentieth-century gurus who travelled to the West and connected with the lucrative channels of popular culture, like the maharishi Mahesh Yogi, Sai Baba, or Rajneesh. However, the West was not so kind to Khan, and he was not above needing to earn money during his years in the West. Later he would write:

Poverty proved to be my bitterest enemy. For it always put me in a position that gave my adversaries every facility they desired to cause me harm. If there are any pages in the book of my life which I would rather be closed than open, they are my narrative of my lack of means.<sup>18</sup>

This is perhaps a curious, though poignant, statement from a man who was wont to point out the illusory nature of the material world to his followers.

Yet, in going to the West, Inayat Khan was not entering an entirely hostile environment, either socially or intellectually. He had connections in the United States through one, T. R. Pandya, who was at Columbia University in

15 I. Khan 1960: 1045.

16 Ibid.

17 van Beek 1983: 95.

18 I. Khan 1979: 185.

New York. His Indian employer, the Gaekwar of Baroda, had also visited New York, in 1905.<sup>19</sup> The Theosophical Society had been formed in the United States in 1875, and there was a growing interest in Eastern religions, and a belief that the arrival of a 'world-teacher' was imminent.<sup>20</sup> So there already existed a small but growing community of interest in Indian music and culture in America, into which Inayat Khan could gain entry. In 1910 he set sail for New York with other members of his family, where they would subsequently perform as 'The Royal Musicians of Hindustan'.

Their first engagements were in the academic world of music at Columbia University, where the head of music, Dr Rybner, was impressed by their performance of Indian music, not only for its emotional content, but also for 'the thorough, systematic and scientific way in which tone and pitch relationships were worked out'.<sup>21</sup> The dancer Ruth St Denis also heard the Royal Musicians of Hindustan at Columbia, and it was not long before they joined her troupe. In doing this, Inayat Khan moved away from the world of academic musical appreciation into the realm of popular orientalism.

There are few better illustrations of the process of cultural and artistic reification that took place between India and the West than in the work of the American dancer Ruth St Denis. She tells how her initial interest in the Orient was sparked by two events: seeing an advertisement in New York for Turkish cigarettes which depicted the Egyptian goddess Isis and visiting an exhibition about India at the Hippodrome on Coney Island, the famous New York beach resort, which included a reconstruction of an East Indian village.<sup>22</sup> From both these sources St Denis derived material for two of her most famous dances, 'Egypta' and 'Radha'. Although she was aware of receiving these cultures at second hand, this did not deter her. 'The seated image of Isis, a superficial commercial drawing for a cigarette company, opened to me in that moment the story that was Egypt.'<sup>23</sup> And after visiting the Hippodrome, she wrote:

for the first time I saw snake charmers and holymen and nautch dancers and something of the fascination of India caught hold of me. When I reached home I had determined to create one or two nautch dances in imitation of these whirling skirted damsels, and possibly a Japanese number.<sup>24</sup>

19 Keesing 1980: 58; St Denis 1939: 589.

20 I. Khan 1979: 553, 585.

21 Keesing 1980: 62.

22 St Denis 1939: 4255.

23 Ibid. 42.

24 Ibid. 55.

St Denis 'saturated' herself in the atmosphere of the Orient, and began to build a successful career as an oriental dancer with pieces such as 'Nautch', 'Incense', and 'The Dance of the Five Senses'. In the process she brought together a number of Indians resident in New York, who 'drummed for me to dance'.<sup>25</sup> She had performed for the Gaekwar of Baroda when he visited New York, and through this had many contacts in the Indian community, as we have seen.<sup>26</sup> At this time she was using music from Delibes's *Lakmé* to accompany her dances. However, circumstances eventually brought her into contact with Inayat Khan, an exponent of real Indian music.

In her autobiography St Denis has nothing to say about Inayat Khan and his music or how she integrated it into her act. She merely refers to the 'Royal Musicians of Hindustan', affectionately, as 'the boys'. Indeed, it seems that they were in the company primarily for the purpose of 'lending colour' to St Denis's routines.<sup>27</sup> However, they were given small parts in programmes when they performed Indian music. Keesing relates a story which has become something of a legend (or urban myth) in relation to Western audiences and their reception of Indian music:

The first time the brothers performed they unhurriedly began to tune up. When they paused for a moment and wanted to begin an even longer warm up, the audience applauded. They did not have the remotest idea of Indian music and took the tuning for an actual raga.<sup>28</sup>

Sixty years later, Ravi Shankar would have the same experience at the 'Concert for Bangladesh', when the West's pop and rock stars performed to raise money for Bangladeshi refugees during the war with Pakistan. This time the Western audience's response, and Shankar's gentle correction, were caught on record.

Inayat Khan stayed with St Denis for only a short time, and after one tour they parted company, apparently because the American had requested a certificate of proficiency in Indian dance from Professor Khan, which he refused.<sup>29</sup> Having been welcomed at Columbia University, where his music was listened to with seriousness and respect, the subsequent foray into popular orientalism has been puzzling for the Indian musicians. As Inayat's

25 Ibid. 56.

26 Ibid. 589.

27 Ibid. 62.

28 Keesing 1980: 64.

29 Ibid. 65.

brother Musharaff Moulamia would later observe, 'Our home education as children was never concerned with any commercial object or ideas and the whole of our teaching in music was bound up with the training of character.'<sup>30</sup> Inayat Khan was clear about their role in Ruth St Denis's act: he describes her as having 'invented Indian dances of her own for whom our music became as a colour and fragrance to an imitation flower'. On the other hand, he found her 'an inventive genius', and seemed to admire her ability to switch from one culture to another in her dances. When he later visited her, all the trappings of India had been removed from her apartment, and been replaced by Japanese artefacts.<sup>31</sup>

But a telling story in this chronicle of fake orientalism comes again from St Denis's autobiography. Some years after her encounter with Khan, she visited India for the first time. She describes a visit to the bathing *ghats* of Benares and her feelings afterwards:

[When] we arrived back at the hotel I sat for an hour without moving; for it seemed to me, in spite of all I could summon up of spiritual realization, and the knowledge that this was in the very highest analysis but a horrid dream, that god had forsaken this world, and nothing remained but horrible, broken bodies and piteous eyes If twenty years before I had seen any such sight there would have been no Radha, and perhaps no career.<sup>32</sup>

In the whole history of Western orientalism, there is perhaps no clearer testimony to the disjunction between the reality of India and its imagined reconstruction in the West. One can imagine Inayat Khan nodding his head sagely at the knowledge the exotic dancer had finally attained.

After their work with Ruth St Denis, the Royal Musicians of Hindustan went to Europe, in 1912, where they received approbation from the classical music world in London and particularly in Moscow and Paris. There are indications from this period, however, that Inayat Khan was starting to lose patience with Western musicians' attitudes to Indian music, and even their academic interest in it:

We went to see the London Conservatory of Music There we met Mr Fox-Strangways who was then writing a book on Indian music, whom I told that it is not much use writing books on Indian music. What would be really worthwhile would

30 I. Khan 1971: 123.

31 I. Khan 1979: 124.

32 St Denis 1939: 2856.

be to practise and get a fuller insight into Indian music, only by this could one give the true benefit of the music of the East to the West.<sup>33</sup>

Rabindranath Tagore was also in London at the time, and introduced Khan to various intellectuals interested in Indian culture. However, it appears that Khan was not too well received in England, where he found 'little response' to his music; so he decided, at the suggestion of Fox-trangways, to try his luck in France.<sup>34</sup>

Paris at the beginning of the twentieth century was an ideal place for Inayat Khan to work. Orientalism was fashionable in music, dance, and the decorative arts. Immediately the Royal Musicians of Hindustan found themselves working with theatre and opera companies in productions like *Kismet* and Delibes's *Lakmé*. This was also the time that Inayat Khan would perform with another renowned fake oriental dancer, Mata Hari. In her performances she 'Swayed to the right, then to the left, then she stood still for a bit. And all the bald gentlemen on the little gold chairs would exclaim "Ah, c'est charmant".'<sup>35</sup> But Inayat Khan also met Debussy, who showed a deep interest in Indian music, and later brought Indian ideas into his compositions, particularly the sonata for flute, viola, and harp.<sup>36</sup>

In Russia Inayat Khan encountered similar enthusiasm for his music from Scriabin and other composers. He found Russia and the Russians to be sympathetic to his message, and put this down to Russia being more 'Eastern' in temperament and outlook than other European countries:

I so much liked their language which seems so near to Hindustani and on enquiring into the subject I found that it came from Sanskrit. I saw in the people of Russia religion, devotion, the idealistic temperament they are gifted in art, inclined to mysticism, seekers of philosophy.<sup>37</sup>

During this period Inayat Khan was also experimenting with Western music. He collaborated with Sergei Tolstoy in writing out Indian music with harmony, and his brother, Maheboob Khan, learned composition with Edmond Bailly. Inayat's cousin Ali Khan had been learning Western singing, and Maheboob followed suit, learning a repertoire of European songs and

33 I. Khan 1979: 128.

34 Ibid. 129.

35 Keesing 1980: 778.

36 van Beek 1983: 109.

37 I. Khan 1979: 139.

developing 'a fine tenor voice'.<sup>38</sup> Inayat Khan's son, Hidayat, would also go on to become a composer in the Western idiom.<sup>39</sup>

However, Khan's musical encounter with the West had ultimately been a salutary experience. In an article written for a music conference at Baroda in 1916, he would write:

The most trying experience that an artiste has to face is an up-to-date party. He is often obliged to sing while a band is playing close by, and the guests, in bad imitation of Europeans, keep up a running conversation. The beauty of his song is thus completely lost.<sup>40</sup>

These are the words of an Indian musician who has plied his trade in the West only to discover that initial wonder and interest are soon replaced by familiarity and indifference, and finally to discover the same process happening at home. In the same article he set out his personal creed regarding Indian music, its purpose, its historical roots, the causes of its degeneracy, and the urgent remedies required to save it. These remedies are not unfamiliar: a standard notation based on the Western model, the application of harmony, the standardization of teaching methods, and the denial of popular music in favour of classical. Inayat Khan, a devout Muslim, had gone to the West to bring it Indian music and the doctrines of Sufism; but despite some genuine interest in his art, he had also found himself playing in night-clubs and accompanying 'exotic' dancers in order to make a living. His journey to the West reveals much about the ways in which India and Indian music were perceived at the turn of the century, and the different levels on which it functioned in Western societies. It is little wonder, then, that Inayat Khan later comes over as a conservative in his writings, seeking to control the spread of classical music within strict boundaries of taste and education.

It is difficult to assess whether Inayat Khan's musical pilgrimage to the West had any lasting effect. From 1920 until his death seven years later, Khan virtually gave up performing Indian music in public, devoting his time to spiritual work. The small community of interest in Indian music in the West that had existed among intellectuals and composers did not appear to have been expanded by Khan's visit. Neither did the use of elements taken from Indian

38 I. Khan 1979: 351.

39 Massey and Massey 1993: 85.

40 I. Khan 1916: 48.

music or general 'exoticism' in the work of Holst, Debussy, Scriabin, Roussel, and others radically change the course of Western classical music.

However, had there been a mass medium and a developed recording industry for Inayat Khan to work with, the story might well have been different.<sup>41</sup> He was clearly a charismatic figure with a flare for self-publicity and a willingness to play in almost any musical context in order to be heard. The image he presents to the world in his numerous photographs is that of a highly developed Eastern mystic and musician. He peers at the camera with a benign, vulnerable, or challenging expression. He poses with the *vina* with the far-away look of a holy man or the upright pride of a royal court musician. Inayat Khan seemed to understand that the world of appearances, despite all its trickery and illusions, was a realm that a musician in the West must inhabit if he were to be successful.

### Rabindranath Tagore

Rabindranath Tagore (1861-1941), although also a religious man, came from one of the richest families in Calcutta, where he had both a Western and an Indian education. He became famous in Western literary circles for such works as *Gitanjali*, and was knighted and awarded a Nobel prize. He was also politically active, and a large part of his life was dedicated to the project of ejecting the British from India. He had a complex, ambivalent attitude to the West and Western culture. He visited Europe and America many times during his career, and part of his early education took place in England.

Tagore was a prolific painter, writer, and musician, composing over 2,000 songs, collectively known as *Rabindrasangit* (literally, Rabindra music). These songs were a synthesis of Indian and Western music, and sometimes included Irish and Scots folk melodies. The songs used Indian rhythmic and scalar concepts, but were just as likely to be accompanied by piano as by *tanpura*, or sung in unison by large choral groups as by solo performers. Tagore invented new *tals*, and mixed different *rags* in his songs, and they developed into a distinctive genre of Indian music.

<sup>41</sup> Inayat Khan did make a number of recordings in 1909. These have recently been released by EMI (1994): 'Inayat Khan. The Complete Recordings of 1909', CD NF 15012930, with discography and sleeve notes by Michael Kinnear, H.J. Witteveen, Joep Bor, and Jane Harvey.

Photographs of Tagore, as of Inayat Khan, present a typical picture of an Indian guru and holy man. Physically, he was an imposing figure, tall with the long white beard and flowing robes of an Old Testament prophet and the piercing eyes of a mystic. Recordings indicate that he spoke in a kind of heightened speech, somewhere between speaking and singing, and his voice has a rich, resonant, declamatory tone. To this day his ashram in Shantiniketan, West Bengal, is a shrine to the personality cult that built up around him during his life. Parties of schoolchildren and tourists daily wander around the palatial (at least by Indian standards) houses, and peer into glass display cases exhibiting his shoes, clothes, and other everyday objects, preserved for ever like holy relics. In Shantiniketan he is still spoken of simply as *Gurudev*. This god-like image, his hybrid artistic creations, and his connections with rich Western patrons of the arts, such as William Rothenstein and Leonard Elmhirst, made him a perfect representative of Indian culture in the West.

When Inayat Khan met Tagore in London in 1912, the latter had come to the West not as a pilgrim-musician but as an already established figure in the world of literature, fêted by Western intellectuals, and considered to be the authentic artistic voice of radical India.<sup>42</sup> Nor was it his first visit; he had come to England two decades earlier. In *The Music of Hindustan* by A. H. Fox-Strangways, published in 1914, a drawing of Tagore by William Rothenstein was included as its frontispiece. Fox-Strangways commented:

The appearance there of one [Tagore] who, more than any other may be said to personify Indian music in its broadest sense, may serve to remind us of what is surely the truth, that music does not reside in those designs and devices which can be imprisoned in symbols and committed to paper, but that it comes and goes only upon the lips or the fingers of men who are able to feel it and create it.<sup>43</sup>

That Tagore had come to embody the essence of India and Indian music in West is not surprising, given his great fame at that time. Yet his musical style and compositions were highly unusual in Indian terms, combining elements of both North and South Indian classical music, various genres of Bengali folk- and religious music, and Western music.

<sup>42</sup> Mittar 1990: 366.

<sup>43</sup> Fox-Strangways 1914: p. vii.



Tagore's early musical experiences were closely linked to the Hindustani classical tradition of music, but Western music and instruments also played an important role. His father, Debendranath, was a musician, and his brother, Jyotindra, played the piano and practised Indian music on it, 're-fashioning the classical melodic forms at his pleasure'.<sup>44</sup> Other members of the family also composed in the Western style, harmonizing Indian songs.<sup>45</sup> Tagore had first come to London in 1880, and it was there that he began to learn Western music at first hand. When he returned to India, he frequently performed Western songs, as Indira Debi Chaudurani recalled:

He possessed a fine tenor voice, which was much admired when he began to learn and sing English songs such as 'Won't you tell me Molly darling', 'Goodbye Sweetheart, Goodbye' I used to accompany him often on the piano and his repertoire of European music was also gradually enlarged.<sup>46</sup>

With this eclectic musical knowledge, which ranged from the Indian classical repertoire to Victorian ballads, it is not surprising that Tagore had clear views on the relative merits of the two musics. In England he had gone to hear opera, and was impressed by the command the singers had over voice production. He compared this seemingly effortless mode of performance with its Indian equivalent: 'Even our best singers cannot hide their sense of effort for the same reason they [the audience] do not mind any harshness of voice or uncouthness of gesture in the exponent of a perfectly formed melody.'<sup>47</sup> He was also impressed by the fact that Western musicians tuned up before coming on-stage, unlike their Indian counterparts, 'Because all that comes in front must be faultless'.<sup>48</sup> It was also during his first visits to the West that Tagore became acquainted with English, Scottish, and Irish folk-music. This was an interest that would inform his own compositions.

During Tagore's many sojourns in the West, comparison of Western and Indian music was a favourite topic of discussion with his many interviewers. Tagore often expressed cogent views on the differences and similarities of the two musics, while at the same time expressing uncharacteristic prejudice and ignorance regarding other Asian musics:

44 R. Tagore 1961: 9.

45 Chaudurani 1961: 43.

46 Ibid.

47 R. Tagore 1961: 6.

48 Ibid.

There is no reason whatever why each civilization should not understand the best of the culture of the other without necessarily relinquishing its own. With many of the Oriental races the acquiring of occidental culture has resulted in the abandonment of their own. The Japanese are an example of this. The Japanese have forsaken their own music because it is not great in itself.<sup>49</sup>

Elsewhere he wrote that Japan was 'not a land of music', and that its music 'can't be called music, it is only making sounds in tune [Japanese] music is as immature as it can be.'<sup>50</sup> In these kinds of statement there seems to be an implicit assumption on Tagore's part that there are really only two great musical cultures in the world, those of the West and India.<sup>51</sup> The similarities Tagore perceived between the two musics, particularly in folk idioms, allowed him to let Western influences into his compositions.

Fox-Strangways visited Tagore in Shantiniketan when he was researching *The Music of Hindustan*. As well as transcribing several Tagore songs,<sup>52</sup> he also observed how Tagore's compositions differed from other forms of Hindustani music he heard. He noted that

The rhythm of Indian song is more fluid than that of European. It seems to cost us more, so to say, to be perpetually altering the accent; it produces a certain instability which has to be made up for in other ways. But there is no feeling of instability in these [Tagore] songs [they] show a securer balance and stronger sense of rhythmical proportion than many Hindostani songs, and without doing violence to the principles of the music, bind it in a closer grip.<sup>53</sup>

Tagore had, in effect, created a new type of Indian music, which, although drawing upon classical *rags* and *tals*, had regularized the rhythmical delivery of the melody, removing detailed, florid ornamentation and the rhythmical ambiguity which is so much part of a classical vocal performance. Here Western influence was at work, leading Tagore to turn compositions in different *rags* into fixed songs, rather than vehicles for extemporization (see Ex. 5.1).

Choral performance of Tagore's songs became commonplace, particularly in Bengal, and this further served to fix the melodies. But there is also

<sup>49</sup> Devi 1961:102.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. 1023.

<sup>51</sup> See also Nettl 1985: 423 on present-day attitudes to Western music in South India.

<sup>52</sup> Fox-Strangways 1914: 929.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid. 99.

Rag Khambāj, Tāl Ektāla

Āmār kara tomāra binā

♩ = 60 Andante

Ā - ma - r(a) ka - ra to - mā - r(a) bi - - nā - - la - ha go la - ha tu -  
 le. Ā - mā - r(a) ka - ra to - mā - r(a) bi - - nā.  
 U - thi - be bā - ji tan - tri tan - tri rā - ji Mo - ha - na an - gu -  
 le. Ā - ma - r(a) ka - ra to - mā - r(a) bi - - nā.  
 Ko - ma - la ta - ba ka - ma - la ka - re pa - ra - sa ka - ro pa - rā - na - pa - re.  
 U - thi - be hi - yā gun - ja - rī - yā ta - ba sra - va - na mu - le  
 Ā - mā - r(a) ka - ra to - mā - r(a) bi - - nā. Ka - kha - na  
 su - khe ka - kha na - du - khe kān - dī - be cha - hi to - mā - ri - mu - khe  
 Cha - ra - nā pa - rhi ra - be ni - ra - be ra - hi - be ja - be bhu - lo.  
 Ke - ho - nā jā - ne ki na - ba tā - - ne

Ex. 5.1



Ex. 5.1 cont.

Make me thy *vina*; lift me in thine arms. All the strings of my heart will break out at thy finger-touch. With thy tender hands touch my life, and my heart will murmur her secrets in thine ears. In happiness and in sorrow she will gaze on thy face, and cry; and shouldst thou neglect her she will remain silent at thy feet. None knows in what new strains her songs will rise up to the heavens and send a message of joy to the shore of the infinite.

evidence that Tagore, like so many Western-educated musicians of his generation, felt the need to have his music written down in staff notation. In 1923 he invited the Scottish musician Arthur Geddes to come to Shantiniketan for that very purpose: 'to recall them [the songs] in permanent form in staff notation as an international notation'.<sup>54</sup> He also wanted Geddes to translate the lyrics of his songs into English.<sup>55</sup> Geddes recalled how Tagore was delighted by the similarity between Scots and Indian melodies:

Tagore and his friends would often make me play (and sing to the violin) songs I later translated in 'The Songs of the Crag and the Peak' saying, 'Why those are Indian melodies' and conversely after I had played 'March Alone' [a Tagore song; see Ex. 5.2] to a group of Scots they exclaimed, 'But that's a scottish bagpipe march with a Scottish snap and beat' Although the Bard [Tagore] and others were interested when I played Italianate 'Themes and Variations' for violin and compared these to their own classical forms, Gaelic melodies were the best loved.<sup>56</sup>

Geddes was not the only Western musician to transcribe Tagore's music in staff notation. The Dutch musicologist A. A. Bake, who studied with Tagore in the 1920s, also produced a volume.<sup>57</sup> Bake would later remark: 'It is remarkable how in him [Tagore] the three currents Western music, art music and folk music meet and how the former two are gradually absorbed and assimilated by the latter.'<sup>58</sup> The regularity of Tagore's compositions facilitated

<sup>54</sup>Dartington Hall Archive, LKE Tagore 8 B. Music.

<sup>55</sup>Ibid.

<sup>56</sup>*Scotsman*, 13 May 1961.

<sup>57</sup>Bake 1928.

<sup>58</sup>Quoted in Devi 1961: 111.

### MARCH ALONE! STAND ALONE! Akla Chelo Re!

*March Time*  
*Chorus*

*1st Time*

Even al-tho' none come when thou call up on them march a-lone! march! Even al-tho'

*2nd Time*

march! Stand with courage, march with courage, Stand with courage, boldly step out lone! Al- tho'

*Verse*

none dare answer thy calling Tho' they turn their faces in fear,

turn their faces in fear, Yet open thy heart and cry out clear Truth, the Truth! tho' a-lone, Yet O

cry out, O cry the Truth, O cry out, O cry out, O cry the Truth, tho' a-

*Chorus*

lone thou stand a-lone, Even altho'

*Del Segno* *f*

O-o even though all should leave thee.  
 Leave thee lone, to face the forest—  
 Lone, unlucky one, leave thee—!  
 O break through the thickets of jungle, jaggy.  
 Break, with blood-reddened feet.  
 Tho' with blood-reddened feet! Still cleaving.  
 O tread out, O tread out, still tread out thy track!  
 Still tread thy way, alone!

*Refrain (with 'March').*

And when, in darkness and tempest,  
 Doors are barred and lamps are hidden—  
 Lamps are darkened and hidden—  
 Lightning flash, with thunder crashing,  
 Strike and burn thy body,  
 Thy spirit shall flame within,  
 Till spirit and body, a brazier, burning,  
 Shall light thy way, alone!

*Refrain (with 'March').*

Ex. 5.2

their smooth transcription into notation of various kinds. Volumes of Tagore's music also exist written in *akar-matrik*, a modified *sargam*. The easy access to Tagore's repertoire through written notation sets it aside from the mainstream of Hindustani classical music, and has added to its efficacy in music education. That Tagore's music took the form it did was a direct consequence of his contact with Western music.

Tagore's reputation in the West was not built on his competence as a musician, even though his often florid philosophical musings on the subject of music feature in many accounts of his visits.<sup>60</sup> When in the West he rarely missed an opportunity to promote the 'greatness' of Indian music. His contact with the West also had other, more practical, outcomes for the way in which Indian music was received there.

In the spring of 1921 Tagore met the young Englishman Leonard Elmhirst in New York. Elmhirst subsequently worked on a rural regeneration project for three years in Sriniketan, near Shantiniketan in West Bengal. Elmhirst was strongly influenced by Tagore's educational ideas, embodied in his school and university at Shantiniketan. This was a philosophy that sought to integrate music, dance, drama, art, physical exercise, and academic studies to provide a well-rounded education for children. A feature of Shantiniketan was that lessons were, when possible, held outside in the open air, with children seated in a circle beneath the trees. This is still the case in Shantiniketan to the present day.

Through this contact with Tagore, Elmhirst developed his own ideas of rural regeneration, which he applied back in England with his wife Dorothy at Dartington Hall, their sybaritic home deep in the English countryside of South Devon. The basic idea behind Dartington, which was modelled on Shantiniketan, was the establishment of a creative community of people working in the arts and on the land. A school, college, and theatre were established, and Dartington quickly became a centre for innovation in both the arts and education. Due to the connection with Tagore, Dartington also developed as an important centre for Indian arts and culture in the West. For many years Dartington was one of the few educational institutions in Britain where Indian music could be studied. Many Indian musicians and artists visited and

59M. H. Khan 1988: 935.

60Devi 1961: 99112.

performed there, and Indian music was taught as part of a general degree in music until the early 1990s.

Tagore's influence in the West as a representative of Indian culture was more far-reaching and lasting than that of Inayat Khan. From the 1930s onwards, interest in Indian music and culture among Western intellectuals, artists, and musicians would increase. Tagore was a central figure in this process. Also his songs represent the most established genre of Indian music (with the exception of Indian film song) to have been significantly influenced by Western music.

### Uday Shankar

Uday Shankar (1900-77) came from a family with close links to the West, and much of his formal education took place in Europe.<sup>61</sup> Shankar's father, Shyam, had gone to England in 1911, where he studied law. Uday went to London in 1920, to study art. Slawek notes how Shyam Shankar became known in England for organizing shows for wounded Indian soldiers during the First World War.<sup>62</sup> It seems that Inayat Khan and his musicians also performed at one of these events in November 1915.<sup>63</sup> Shyam also put on an Indian ballet in London in 1924 in which Uday danced. Anna Pavlova saw him in this production, and thus began a collaboration between them, during which they created dances that mixed Indian classical forms and Western ballet, one of the most famous of which was their *Radha Krishna Duet*.<sup>64</sup>

Uday Shankar was a unique figure in the history of Indian dance. He was not trained in traditional forms, but became interested in them through his work as a visual artist, particularly movement and dance depicted in Hindu sculptures.<sup>65</sup> When he returned to India in 1929, after working with Pavlova's company and touring the United States Uday decided to put together an Indian dance company with which to return to the West. This was to include a number of dancers and musicians, and would incorporate several different genres of Indian dance.<sup>66</sup>

In creating this troupe, Uday was already aware of what would constitute a

<sup>61</sup> Shankar 1968: 667.

<sup>62</sup> Slawek 1993: 164.

<sup>63</sup> I. Khan 1979: 373.

<sup>64</sup> Shankar 1968: 63; Massey and Massey 1993: 86.

<sup>65</sup> Shankar 1968: 63.

<sup>66</sup> Ibid.

successful image of India on Western stages. After all, he had worked with Pavlova for several years, and understood the expectations of Western audiences and impresarios. He was creating a type of Indian dance that, although based on traditional Indian forms such as *kathak*, *kathakali*, and *manipuri*, was moulded and designed to suit Western audiences. In many ways the image of India that Uday Shankar portrayed in his dances was one that Western audiences could readily understand and enjoy. It was as much a product of Western orientalist expectations as of traditional Indian culture.

The troupe, which included Uday's younger brother, Ravi, who both danced and performed on a variety of instruments, moved to Paris in 1930. Reviews of performances in New York in 1932 show that the new troupe was well received, and aspects of the musical accompaniment by Timir Baran on *sarod* and Vishnu Das Shirali on *tabla tarang* were particularly singled out for praise. One reviewer remarked that it 'was enough to arouse the envy of any instrumental soloist now evoking applause from the assembled throngs in the halls of song'.<sup>67</sup> Shankar had developed a successful format for his performances, which incorporated various elements of Indian music and dance into a complete, self-contained package. A more detailed discussion of one his performances will show how he achieved this.

On 22 July 1936 Uday Shankar and his troupe performed at Dartington Hall. Although nearly 4 years after their performance in New York, many of the items featured were the same. The programme for that concert is an interesting document, because it shows not only the structure and content of Shankar's shows, but also the way in which various facets of Indian music and dance were presented to Western audiences.

On that evening there were fifteen items on the programme, ranging from instrumental renditions of North Indian classical *rags* to extracts from classical dance forms, such as *kathak* and *kathakali* folk dances, and specially composed works based on Indian themes. What was striking about this performance was not the number of items, unusual in any kind of Indian concert, but the way in which these items were mixed. Here was a wide spectrum of Indian culture packaged for a two-hour performance in the West, as much an exhibition of Indian culture as a concert.

*67 New York Sun, 27 Dec. 1932.*



Performing that night was the *sarod* virtuoso Ustad Allaudin Khan (not the same person as Inayat Khan's uncle), a famous figure in Hindustani music, who would later become Ravi Shankar's guru.<sup>68</sup> He was known as a purist and a strict disciplinarian, who had been brought up in a traditional lineage of court musicians. A concert with fifteen items drawn from all parts of India therefore seems a strange context for a man like Allaudin Khan to appear in. But the incongruity of his presence speaks volumes about the way in which Indian musicians were presented when they first performed in the West. There was no context in which they could play their music in an authentic manner, exploring in detail one or two *rags* in the course of a performance. In this concert, music was used to provide prologues and interludes, as well as accompaniment to dances. The structure of Uday Shankar's performances resulted in Indian music appearing more through-composed than it typically was, and arranged in order to fit the schedule of the programme, in the process rendering it more palatable to Western audiences. The programme shows that the music that evening was arranged and composed by Vishnudas Shirali, with Allaudin Khan as soloist.<sup>69</sup> Ravi Shankar recalls how his brother's approach to music for dance was in many ways unorthodox:

Uday invented an entire new dimension in both concept and sound by using all sorts of classical, folk, and tribal drums, cymbals, gongs, and little finger symbols like castanets made of metal or wood, and by devising new ways to play traditional instruments, playing the *tamboura* with two sticks, for instance.<sup>70</sup>

These experiments were a long way from the traditional procedures of Indian dance or the rigours of the classical *rag* system. However, there were precedents for why Indian culture had to be portrayed in this fashion in order to be successful on stages in the West. India had been exhibited in the West since the nineteenth century, when whole villages, streets, and quarters of cities had been transported to European cities with a cast of humans and animals who acted out their daily routines under the gaze of amazed audiences. Westerners were used to viewing Indian culture as consisting of various standard ingredients: a *nautch* girl, a snake-charmer, a holy man, a bustling street scene. As well as being entertainment for transient onlookers who could view the sights

<sup>68</sup> Shankar 1968: 6972.

<sup>69</sup> Dartington Hall Archive, DWE Arts 8 A. Uday Shankar.

<sup>70</sup> Shankar 1968:65.

and sounds of their Empire in comfort, this also served intellectual purposes, and professors from Oxford were just as likely to treat Indians as entertaining exhibits as the crowds at the stands in London, Berlin, or Paris.<sup>71</sup>

It was to be expected, then, that Indian music and dance in the concert-hall would, to an extent, follow the format of an exhibition. The niche was already there, and the West, after all, had come to regard India, and the whole of the Orient, as a show—furthermore, a show the contents of which they controlled. The purpose of that show was to package something recognizably Indian for Western consumption, no matter how incongruous the constituents of the package might appear by comparison with the actual diversity of Indian art, music, religion, and life or the contexts of traditional performance. That Uday Shankar's shows also took this format is evidence of the way in which Indian artists, despite their original intentions, had to adapt in order to promote their culture in the West.

The connection with Dartington proved to be important to Uday Shankar's future career. He had first come into contact with Dorothy and Leonard Elmhirst in 1933 through Margaret Barr, who was a dance teacher at Dartington.<sup>72</sup> He was invited to the hall, and became a regular performer and teacher there. Beatrice Straight, Dorothy's eldest daughter by her first marriage, became Shankar's student, and it was through her that the Elmhirsts came to support Shankar in founding a school of dance in India. The Elmhirsts had connections in Almora, which was in northern Uttar Pradesh at the foot of the Himalayas, and this eventually became the site for the<sup>73</sup> In 1939 the Elmhirsts opened an account with American Express in the name of the Uday Shankar India Culture Trust.<sup>74</sup>

This school had been something of a dream for Shankar, as he had now come to see himself (like so many Indian musicians who had encountered the West before him) as a saviour of Indian's traditional dance forms. As Gertrude Emerson Sen would later write about his work:

Gradually the Indian tradition took on a new and vital dignity, and he began to think seriously of the need to revive and strengthen this tradition in India, so that in turn India might share her treasures of culture with the rest of the world. Not for some

<sup>71</sup> Mitchell 1992: 2912.

<sup>72</sup> Dartington Hall Archive, DWE Arts 8 A. Uday Shankar.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Dartington Hall Archive, LKE India 19 A.

years, however, and then thanks to generosity of English and American well-wishers was the dream to become a reality.<sup>75</sup>

The school was a large, complicated undertaking, constructed on 'twenty acres of land with built-in stages, costume rooms, workshops and rehearsal halls'.<sup>76</sup> However, despite its optimistic launch, it soon ran into financial troubles, and was closed in 1944 amid a certain amount of acrimony. The financial support of the Elmhursts was withdrawn,<sup>77</sup> but, as a report to the Dartington Hall Trust noted: 'Despite its apparent failure, the Almora, venture did much to pioneer the revival of interest in native arts, particularly dancing and through this it played a notable part in the movement for the emancipation of women in India.'<sup>78</sup> After the closure of the school at Almora, until his death in 1977, Uday Shankar continued to be a central figure in the development of modern Indian dance and an important cultural ambassador for India abroad.<sup>79</sup> His journey to the West was crucial in his development as an artist, and had it not been for Western influences, he might never have become a professional dancer at all. The unique language of dance invented by Shankar was as much a result of Western as Indian culture.

In their different ways, Inayat Khan, Rabindranath Tagore, and Uday Shankar made singular contributions to the understanding of Indian music and dance in the West. Yet all their stories reveal the kind of musical and artistic compromises that had to be made in order to make Indian music palatable to Western tastes and successful on Western stages. As so often in this chronicle, it was the cultural and musical filter of the West that defined how the work of Khan, Tagore, and Shankar was received on its journey away from home.

Even stranger, more complex encounters awaited Indian music when it connected with Western mass consumerism and popular culture later in the century.

<sup>75</sup> G. E. Sen 1941: 690.

<sup>76</sup> Shankar 1968: 65.

<sup>77</sup> Dartington Hall Archive, Arts 8. Vol. 11.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> See Ghosh 1983.

## Chapter 6

## Indian Elements in Popular Music and Jazz

*'We'll be able to get plastic sitars in our cornflakes soon'1*

For a brief period in the 1960s, through the channels of popular music and jazz, Indian music became part of Western popular culture. Not only did Indian instruments like the sitar and tabla feature on recordings by pop stars, but the sound-world of Indian music and the images of Indian culture evoked by them acted as a mystical backdrop to 1960s popular consumerism, the counter-culture, and hippyism. By the end of that decade, Ravi Shankar would perform alongside the rock stars of the day to massive, adulatory crowds at the Monterey Festival in California.

Perhaps there is no better illustration in recent history of the dizzying speed with which mass media can absorb, distort, consume, and redefine elements from another musical culture than that of Indian music in 1960s pop music. It was in many respects an incongruous meeting, which produced memorable and forgettable music in equal measures. In the story of Indian music and the West, however, this period has particular significance. In cultural terms it demonstrates the processes whereby the music of another culture is filtered through Western popular mass media. In musical terms it shows how surface elements of Indian music were used and redefined by pop musicians. Despite the distortions and misrepresentations of Indian music and culture that resulted from fusions with pop, in many ways the Indian-flavoured music of the Sixties was a truly syncretic form, which enabled pop musicians to 'identify those elements in [a] new culture with similar elements in an old one, enabling the persons experiencing the contact to move from one to the other with psychological ease'<sup>2</sup> However, the sitar did not

1 Steve Marriot, pop singer, quoted in *Melody Maker*, 4 June 1966.

2 Herskovits, quoted in Waterman 1990: 9.

come alone as a musical sound; it also brought with it an ambience, a pseudo-philosophy, that was a central ingredient of the 'magical, mythical mix which combined Indian religion and culture and objects with hallucinogenic drugs', and which became an integral part of youth culture in the 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

The flirtation of pop music with Indian music may be viewed in several different ways. On the one hand, it was part of a historical continuum, and had links with the popular orientalism of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But it was also the result of the particular creative endeavours of one group, the Beatles, and their profile as trend-setters in the media of that time. The advances of recording technology in the 1960s also played a part. Bands and sound technicians were hungry for new sounds, as multi-tracking became the norm. The sitar was not the only exotic sound to be dragged into the service of pop. By the mid-1960s, bagpipes, harpsichords, Gregorian chant, kotos, tuned glasses of water, and tape-loops could all be heard in mainstream pop.

In this chapter I will discuss Indian elements in 1960s popular music from three perspectives. First is the social and historical context of what Ravi Shankar came to term the 'great sitar explosion'.<sup>4</sup> For this background I draw on the popular music press of the time, for it is the language used there, for all its sloganizing and hyperbole, that best gives the flavour of this strange conflation of musical cultures. This is also the language of the popular music market, where the term 'raga', despite its specific, ancient meanings, was just as easily used and discarded as any other fashionable label. Secondly, I will examine the musical elements of pop and Indian music that allowed the cross-over to take place.. These are issues to do with instrumentation and scalar patternstechnical aspects of the two musicsas much as cultural or aesthetic reference points.

Thirdly, and in contrast, I will discuss Indian music in jazz in the 1960s and 1970s. Jazz musicians' interest in Indian music pre-dated that of pop musicians. Because of surface similarities between the structures of Indian music and jazz, the connection between the two forms had more complex musical and cultural roots. Indian music was manifested in jazz in a quite different manner from how it was manifested in pop music.

<sup>3</sup> Reck 1985: 94.

<sup>4</sup> Shankar 1968: 92.

The central figure in the sudden interest in Indian music in the 1960s was the sitarist Ravi Shankar, the younger brother of Uday. Shankar had come to Europe with his brother's troupe in the 1930s, when he had performed both as a musician and as a dancer. His family had been well acquainted with the West for several decades, but Ravi Shankar's success in the West in the mid-twentieth century would be greater than that of any Indian musician who had preceded him. It is no exaggeration to say that Indian music finally became fully visible in the West only through the work of Ravi Shankar.

Shankar had met many Western musicians in his youth in Paris, including Andrés Segovia and Yehudi Menuhin. The latter met Shankar again in 1951 in Delhi. They became friends, and collaborated and performed together on several occasions. Menuhin also became an important figure in promoting Indian music as a serious classical music worthy of attention in the West. In his introduction to Shankar's autobiography, Menuhin writes of Indian music being 'an exalted expression of union with the infinite' which 'Few modern composers in the West have achieved'.<sup>5</sup>

After his visits to the West in the 1930s, Shankar returned again in 1956. From that point on, he appeared on Western stages with increasing frequency and growing success, particularly in the United States, where he set up a music school in Los Angeles in 1967.<sup>6</sup> Shankar's approach to performing for Western audiences emphasized his wish to make the music more comprehensible to a wider spectrum of listeners:

I didn't just perform and go away but I always tried to train the listeners in the sense that I gave illustrations just before starting a piece, introducing the ragas, the talas, whatever notes they used, their ascending-descending structures, or how the rhythmic cycle of seven is divided, how we beat and divide within the tala framework, these were very important things for the people to know thus I have been able to create a large group of audience who became ready not only to listen to the music but also appreciate [it].<sup>7</sup>

By the mid-1960s Shankar had established himself as the major representative of Indian music in the West, and his presence had far-reaching effects on both popular and classical musicians. He would go on to compose and perform sitar concertos, score music for films, influence the music of the

<sup>5</sup> Menuhin, quoted in Shankar 1968: 7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. 89.

<sup>7</sup> Ravi Shankar, personal communication, 1994.

Beatles, and work with some of the finest jazz musicians of the day. He was at the centre of Indian music's passage to the West in the middle of the twentieth century, as the most important figure in that process.

### The 'Great Sitar Explosion'

In 1965 the Beatles released the album *Rubber Soul*. Then at the zenith of their popularity, they were increasingly experimenting with different sounds and instruments, a process that would come to fruition in 1967 with *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, acknowledged as the Beatles' masterpiece and one of the most innovative works of popular music in the twentieth century.

By the mid-1960s the Beatles had become a cultural phenomenon playing across the globe in vast auditoriums packed with hysterical fans and turning out instant 'number ones' and million-selling albums. They had also become a kind of spirit-level for trends in popular music, and were widely imitated in dress, attitude, and musical style. Only the Rolling Stones, with their particular brand of English rhythm and blues and their 'dirty' image, a dark shadow to the clean-cut boys from Liverpool (another pop myth), aspired to the same god-like adulation. The media had an unquenchable thirst for all the Beatles' activities, musical or otherwise. Their pronouncements on drugs, sexuality, politics, and religion were received like the words of philosophers or seers, no matter how casual the comments. This was the period when John Lennon would infamously remark that the Beatles were more popular than Jesus Christ, causing an immediate storm in the press and the media and resulting in an anti-Beatles campaign in the United States.

It was into this febrile atmosphere of hero-worship and near-idolatry that the sitar was first introduced in a Beatles song. In retrospect it was inevitable that it would unleash an avalanche of such experiments in the pop world, as other bands tried to follow in the slip-stream of their heroes; but, significantly, the Beatles would still be experimenting with Indian music long after the fad had passed in the rest of pop, suggesting that at least George Harrison's (the band's lead guitarist) involvement with Indian music went much further than ephemeral fashion.

The first appearance of a sitar in Western pop music was innocuous enough. George Harrison played it on 'Norwegian Wood', one of the tracks

on *Rubber Soul*. This folksy song in 12/8 does not sound Indian as such, and the sitar is used as a substitute guitar. Indeed, the soft attack of the notes suggests that Harrison may have been using a guitar plectrum rather than the wire *mizrab* customarily used to pluck the strings of the sitar. The overall acoustic sound of the song is far removed from the heavy back-beat and driving bass associated with the Beatles. But the group also reflected the influence of the folk revival current at the time and the preference in that genre for acoustic over electric instruments. The sitar is employed in a purely colouristic manner, and the atmosphere of the song is that of European folk-song rather than Indian music. Nor is there any reference to India in the lyrics. The striking modal quality of the song allows the sitar to function effectively within the general musical texture. I will return to the use of modes in other Beatles' Indian songs, as this later became an important connection with Indian musical forms.

But how did a classical Indian instrument come to be on a pop recording in the first place? There are various stories, the most likely of which is that Harrison came across the sitar when it was being used as a prop on the set of *Help*, the Beatles' second feature film, and that he liked the sound, and decided to include it in a future album. However, as the fad for Indian music in pop, and particularly the sitar, progressed, many musicians claimed to be the first to break the new ground. In May 1966, under the headline 'Byrds go for Bach, Ragas, Coltrane', the *Melody Maker* reported:

The Byrds, says a recent memo from Columbia records, are now flying with the latest 'in' (sic) sound in pop music, a form identified as 'raga-rock' 'an abstraction' of John Coltrane's sax, Bach's organ music and a taste of the sitar sound made popular by the renowned high priest of classical and pop Ravi Shankar.<sup>8</sup>

The jumble of musical styles referred to here is typical of pop at the time, when differences in musical form were no protection against the popular music world's voracious appetite for unusual sounds. Later in the same article, Dave Crosby, a member of the Byrds, a band that was widely perceived at the time as a type of American Beatles, claims to have introduced Harrison to Ravi Shankar's music and to have 'turned him on'.<sup>9</sup> In an earlier article, Jimmy Page, the session guitarist, member of the Yardbirds, and, later, Led

<sup>8</sup>*Melody Maker*, 28 May 1966.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.



Zeppelin noted: 'I was about the first one to get one [a sitar] in this country.'<sup>10</sup> Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones was also playing the sitar at this time. But it is the short article in which Page is featured, under the heading 'How about a Tune on the Old Sitar?', that reveals most about rock musicians' attitudes to the instrument at the time, which displayed a mixture of inventiveness, curiosity, respect, and fashion consciousness:

The sympathetic strings vibrate when the main strings are played, giving an answering drone. Its rather like switching to feedback to sustain a note on the guitar, except that it's in tune I think at the moment its rather a status thing. A lot of people say they've got sitars and they sit together and have sessions, but as yet nobody has produced any evidence. Probably everyone will end up playing them like guitars it depends if they use them with taste. Like Harrison's thing. He could have got the same sound out of a banjo but he showed more taste using a sitar.<sup>11</sup>

Page concludes that as long as musicians are careful about how they use the sitar, then 'the instrument won't be abused'. Page's concern for technique, the mechanics of the instrument, and its careful, discriminating use was probably not wholly typical, and many other bands were content to use the sitar just as a fashionable accessory to their image. In an article entitled 'Soundmania! Now You're Never Alone with a Sitar But How Far Can the Poppers Go?', members of long-forgotten groups such as the Fenmen posed, still wearing their desert boots, with *tanpuras*, sitar, and tabla, the latter described as a 'sort of Indian conga drum'.<sup>12</sup> In the same article it is reported that a group from Birmingham, the Move, had 'recently shocked the Marquee patrons when they played a ten-minute "Brum-raga" while sitting cross-legged on the Marquee stage'.<sup>13</sup>

Meanwhile, the Rolling Stones had followed the Beatles in producing a hit song with Indian sounds: 'Paint it Black'. *Melody Maker* led with the headline 'Stones' raga-rocker most original yet', accompanied by a photograph of Mick Jagger, the Stones' lead singer, with the line 'JAGGER: accent gets progressively more curried'.<sup>14</sup> Similarly, the *New Musical Express* declared: 'Storming Eastern-Style Stones'.<sup>15</sup> The *Melody Maker's* reviewer, however, took a distinctly tongue-in-cheek attitude to this latest raga hit, lacing his words with a large dose of racial stereotyping:

<sup>10</sup>*Melody Maker*, 7 May 1966.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>*Melody Maker*, 28 May 1966.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup>*Melody Maker*, 14 May 1966.

<sup>15</sup>*New Musical Express*, 13 May 1966.

Mick Jagger and the Bombay Beauties! A glorious Indian raga-rock riot that will send the Stones back to number one and probably give pop its biggest punch up the Punjab since Peter Sellers met Sophia Loren with Charlie's driving tom tom drumming, sitar sound, and Mick's special Indian lament voice Oh yes, very pleasing, very pleasing indeed!<sup>16</sup>

The *New Musical Express* was more restrained: 'Highlight of the routine is the use of the sitar, and Mick and Keith have written a song with a strong Eastern slant the fascinating Oriental flavour will haunt you.'<sup>17</sup> No style of music was immune, and by August of the same year even Tamla Motown, that Black American bastion of soul and dance music, had succumbed, with the *New Musical Express* announcing: 'Four Tops Go Indian!'<sup>18</sup>

But there were also dissenting voices within the pop fraternity, who viewed the coming of Indian sounds as little more than a tawdry fad. Steve Marriot, of the Small Faces, seemed determined to nail the trend down to its consumerist roots:

[raga rock] most ridiculous term I've ever heard used its all over-blown and inflated. The point is if it doesn't let up soon we'll be able to get plastic sitars in our cornflakes soon the same will happen to Indian music that happened to folk.<sup>19</sup>

Another dissenting voice was that of Paul Jones, the blues musician and singer with 'Manfred Mann': 'It takes years to learn the sitar, but its only taken a few months to destroy it.'<sup>20</sup> Jones also noted the different ways in which jazz and pop musicians approached the music:

Our trumpet player, Henry Lowther, knows about Indian music, and knows that the interval of a 4th means a sunrise, in successive ragas. He can recognise that. But these blokes making hits aren't interested in anything except making hits.<sup>21</sup>

Although it sounds as if Lowther was tapping into particularly arcane (not to say dubious) theory with this knowledge, Jones was making the point that there were hidden depths to the sitar and its music beyond its mimicking of the sounds of an electric guitar, and that such depths were accessible only to 'real' musicians who had the ears and skill to hear it in this case, jazz players.

<sup>16</sup>*Melody Maker*, 14 May 1966.

<sup>17</sup>*New Musical Express*, 13 May 1966.

<sup>18</sup>*New Musical Express*, 26 Aug. 1966.

<sup>19</sup>*Melody Maker*, 4 June 1966.

<sup>20</sup>*Melody Maker*, 2 July 1966.

<sup>21</sup>Ibid.

Indian music was also widely perceived as a type of folk-music, albeit a folk-music with mystical connotations. Folk-music in general was becoming part of popular music by the mid-1960s. This was largely due to American influences, notably that of Bob Dylan, who, like the Beatles, spawned a legion of imitators, including a British version, the singer Donovan. A home-grown folk revival was thriving in Britain, and the coffee-houses and pubs of London were ringing with the sounds of innovative musicians like Bert Jansch, John Renbourn, and Davy Graham, who were experimenting with a wide variety of musics, from blues to old English and Middle Eastern genres. In turn, many forms of British folk-music were given new leases of life as saleable hits.

Folk- and 'protest' songs had become a visible popular manifestation of the counter-culture, allied to tangible, all-too-real struggles, such as the civil rights and anti-Vietnam War movements in the United States, in the work of Peter, Paul, and Mary; Pete Seeger; Phil Ochs, and others, and to more ephemeral notions of freedom and authenticity, symbolizing a retreat from all-encroaching consumerism and an intellectual response to the ills of mid-twentieth-century capitalism.

Of course, like other aspects of protest movements in the Sixties, folk-music soon became a consumer good, along with the ever-changing diet of pop groups. To folk purists, this was symbolized by the incursion of electric instruments into folk. Pioneered by Dylan, this trend was soon taken up by various bands that had folk roots, such as Pentangle and Fairport Convention. Traditional songs were now performed on-stage in front of stacks of Marshall amplification, coils of wire, and forests of microphones. Folk-music became both a popular music and an experimental or, in the parlance of the time, 'progressive' music. In other words, it had found a commercial niche.

This transformation of folk music in the 1960s shares features with the appearance of Indian music in popular culture at that time, and for a brief period they shared the same platforms, venues, and albums.<sup>22</sup> As in the nineteenth century, there were also cross-overs between the scholarly and the popular in the field of Indian music. For example, in 1967 the eminent ethnomusicologist and scholar of Indian music Nazir Jairazbhoy played sitar on

<sup>22</sup> For a discussion of Indian musical influences on folk in the 1960s, see Ford (1995) on the music of the Incredible String Band.

one album by the Incredible String Band, a popular mystical/flower-power folk ensemble which mixed Western and Eastern musics.<sup>23</sup> However, the whole presentation of Indian music in performance was ultimately antithetical to the smoky, boozy, and bohemian atmosphere of the folk-club, as this extract from the *Melody Maker* in 1966 indicates:

It'll seem strange at The Fox this Thursday to sit without a pint of beer for sitar player Ravi Shankar has asked that people don't drink while he's playing. To fit in with his wishes he will appear for the first half of the evening.<sup>24</sup>

Later that week, Shankar appeared at another folk venue, the Singer's Club, sharing the bill with A. L. Lloyd, the well-known folklorist and song collector.<sup>25</sup>

Shankar's plea for serious attention from his audience was a typical appeal of musicians from India who visited at this time, and points up one of the basic cultural and social misunderstandings that existed between Indian musicians and Western audiences. When Indian musicians first started to perform in the West in larger numbers in the 1960s, they were perplexed by the attitude of their new audiences, mainly the young, who slouched around smoking, stoned, drunk, or generally drifting in semi-consciousness to the music. As Ravi Shankar noted:

I found many young people who were 'high'; sitting in the front rows of the hall carrying on indecently with their girl friends or boy friends. Their conduct disgusted me, for too many people in a dazed stupor send out bad vibrations that are extremely upsetting.<sup>26</sup>

One eminent tabla player from Delhi speculated that the music itself must appear extremely dull if allowed to flow over the listener in this seemingly non-participatory manner, as all the subtle changes of melody and rhythm could not be perceived.<sup>27</sup> From the start, Shankar was unequivocal: he was to be listened to with concentration and respect, whether in a folk-club or a concert-hall. 'I started my own rebellion against these rebellious youths', he wrote.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Hardy and Laing 1990: 382.

<sup>24</sup> *Melody Maker*, 11 June 1966.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Shankar 1968: 96.

<sup>27</sup> Latif Ahmed Khan, personal communication, 1981.

<sup>28</sup> Shankar 1968: 96.

By the mid-1960s the popular incarnation of Indian music in the West was beginning to manifest itself in a number of different even contradictory musical and social contexts. In the same period that Shankar was performing in folk-clubs, he also played at the Royal Festival Hall in London, the centre for large-scale concerts from the Western classical repertoire and the venue for stars from the world of popular entertainment. Indian music was also influencing the intellectual avant-garde in classical and improvised music.<sup>29</sup> Indian music appeared to cut across many social spheres and currents of musical activity, and in turn pointed up a number of cultural and musical ambiguities.

Shankar, as a professional musician, was characteristically level-headed about this sudden upsurge of interest in a music to which he had dedicated the greater part of his life. A gentle, tolerant man, he nevertheless vented his frustration when one of his concerts in New York was billed with the comment 'Take a peek at the primitive folk sounds of India'. 'I do not play folk or primitive songs. This is classical music,' he retorted.<sup>30</sup> At the height of the sitar explosion, in an article in the *Melody Maker* by Bob Houston with the title 'RAVI SHANKAR: Doubts about East ever Meeting West', Shankar aired his thoughts on it all. He noted that the affinity between jazz and Indian music 'is very superficial and it is only the improvisational aspect that might be similar'. On George Harrison and the sitar in pop, he wrote: 'It is good if it is going to encourage a serious interest in Indian music. But if it is going to be like so many things, just a passing fancy, then it is not going to be much good.' And, 'I am frightened that people who don't really understand the sitar will cash in on the sudden interest in it here.'<sup>31</sup>

The interest was indeed sudden, largely short-lived, and generally indulged in by musicians who had little or no understanding of Indian music. Although some bands would continue to use the sitar in their songs for a few years to come, like Pentangle or Traffic in 1967 with 'Paper Sun', a review of the music press of the time shows that the 'great sitar explosion', as a topic of interest to pop fans, had its zenith in a short period of some 5 months between May and September 1966. This period also coincided with Ravi

<sup>29</sup> At this time Indian music and philosophy also influenced the work of composers as diverse as Stockhausen and Reich.

<sup>30</sup> Goldstein, 1967.

<sup>31</sup> *Melody Maker*, 11 June 1966.

Shankar's visit to Britain. By 17 September *Melody Maker* was already reporting:

The pop world's flirtation with Indian sounds seems to be slowing up. However, the leaders and main instigator's in Britain [the Beatles] include three Indian tracks on their L.P. 'Revolver' mainly through the enthusiasm and ingenuity of George Harrison.<sup>32</sup>

It is noteworthy that Harrison would continue to experiment with Indian music until 1970, when the Beatles disbanded, and beyond, using Indian ideas in solo albums and film sound-tracks.<sup>33</sup> For him, Indian music was clearly more than a fad; it had made its way into his musical language on a deeper level.

Although Slawek is correct in noting that scholarly interest in Indian music in the 1960s, especially in the United States, had preceded the 'great sitar explosion' in pop,<sup>34</sup> there are many other issues to be taken into account with regard to this musical encounter. In terms of popular culture, it was indeed a classic example of the use of a non-Western culture as an easily disposable fashion accessory (a fate that African culture and music would suffer two decades later); but on a musical level, it cannot so easily be discounted as a fad that 'passed as quickly as it had started, leaving behind the carcasses of sitars and tablas and the incongruous products of musical ideas in popular compositions'.<sup>35</sup> Incongruous though some of these pop experiments may have been, they once again revealed the nature of the musical filter through which Indian music was passed on its journey west. The Indian-flavoured pop songs of the Sixties are the musical successors to the Hindustani Airs and oriental parlour songs of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. However, they are a very different species of musical invention, both historically and technically. For this reason it is worth exploring rather more closely some of the products of the 'sitar explosion', in both pop and jazz, in order to clarify the musical processes that took place in the creation of such works.

<sup>32</sup>*Melody Maker*, 17 Sept. 1966.

<sup>33</sup> Reck 1985.

<sup>34</sup> Slawek 1993: 166.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

## Indian Music in Pop: Sounds, Scales, and Fragments of Form

In pop, unlike Hindustani Aairs, the evidence of experiments with Indian music exists primarily in sound, not in notation. With pop there was no question of 'polishing' or 'cleaning up' Indian musical material to fit the parameters of staff notation and harmony. The Indian sounds arrived on vinyl in their raw state, even if the musical settings were unfamiliar. For this reason alone the pop encounter with Indian music differed from all antecedents. Staff notation had little currency in the recording studio, and although the Beatles, for example, provided the basic musical material for their later compositions, it was a practitioner from another musical world, George Martin, who wrote the notes down when they had to be played by session musicians.

It was possible, therefore, to bring a tabla or a sitar into a studio and implant it in a pop song, with all the essentials of its timbre and sound unchanged. Neither was tuning a problem, as the sitar could, theoretically if not always practically, be tuned to the pitch of Western instruments. The resonance of a sitar could appear in a pop song intact, and immediately conjure up all the exotic references that had been established through nearly 200 years of musical encounter between India and the West.

Other musical features allowed the cross-over to take place in a uniquely different way from other Western meetings with Indian music. The sitar, albeit remotely, was similar in construction and playing technique to the guitar, and the latter had become the pop instrument *par excellence* since the mid-1950s. Furthermore, the sound of the sitar mixed that of the acoustic and the electric guitar in one instrument. As Jimmy Page noted, the resonances of the sympathetic strings sounded like electronic feedback, and the strings could also be laterally deflected (a technique known as *mind* in Indian music) to produce a glissando and heighten the pitch, a ubiquitous technique in blues and rock guitar playing.

The sitar easily functioned as another, or substitute, lead guitar with a mysterious, exotic sound. This is the role that it played in the majority of pop records on which it appeared. Its closeness to the guitar seemed too strong for musicians to escape, and although it was used occasionally to double melody lines or fill out the texture with drones, as on the Stones' 'Paint it Black' or Traffic's 'Hole in my Shoe', nevertheless, it was utilized conceptually as a

strange kind of lead guitar. Similarly, the tabla was played as an extension of the standard drum kit. Sitar and tabla did not seem a big step away from guitar and drums, the musical backbone of pop in the Sixties.<sup>36</sup>

Maybe such surface similarities with the guitar would have been enough to ensure the smooth passage of the sitar into Western pop anyway, but there were other, more abstract, affinities between the two musics. The modal character of popular music has been noted by van der Merwe, and also the way in which certain melodic hallmarks of the popular style, such as the 'blue seventh', are shared with non-Western musical systems, including Arabic and Indian music.<sup>37</sup> Both David Reck and Wilfrid Mellers have observed that much of the uniqueness of the Beatles' sound in general derived precisely from their use of the medieval modes and pentatonic and heptatonic scales as a basis for their songs, rather than the major-minor system of Western functional harmony.<sup>38</sup>

In 'Norwegian Wood', the first Beatles song to include the sitar (indeed, the first pop song ever), the modal qualities of the melody are evident. The song is based on the Mixolydian mode (transposed to C), or *Khamaj that* in Indian music (Ex 6.1). The modal quality is enhanced by an E pedal drone and an ostinato-like accompaniment. With its lilting 12/8 metre the overall effect is folksy, far removed from the electric sound of pop at the time. Although Reck's view that 'Norwegian Wood' was 'related to sound, if not in complexity to an Indian *raga* performance',<sup>39</sup> seems rather far-fetched in relation to this particular song, it was certainly not a long way from this kind of composition to the more conscious use of Indian scales in later works.

But whereas there were certain superficial similarities between instrumentation and melodic contour in pop and Indian music, form was a different matter. Pop was unable to accommodate the overall form of an instrumental performance of Indian music. It is necessary at this point to outline the structure of such a performance, as it would have been heard by pop musicians in the 1960s.

The performance of a *rag* is a detailed exploration of a particular musical mode in a sectionalized manner, in free time, with regular pulse and with metre. Each *rag* is identified by characteristic ascending and descending

36 See also Reck 1985: 94.

37 van der Merwe 1989: 1723.

38 Reck 1985: 100; Mellers 1973: 27.

39 Beck 1985: 100.





Ex. 6.1

orders of notes, phrases, important melodic centres, and an aesthetic dimension which relates to specific expressions of emotions, times of the day, and seasons. The various intervallic relationships in a *rag* are heard against the fixed, repeated ostinato, or drone, on a *tanpura* or some other instrument, such as a harmonium. Indian stringed instruments like the sitar have their own drones. The function of the drone is not only to provide a soothing, hypnotic background (a function it tended to perform in pop); it is also an important musical device through which a singer or instrumentalist can pitch his or her intervals and work with the inherent tension between the static nature of the drone and the elaborate, ever-changing unfolding of the melody. As Kaufmann put it:

The Oriental emphasis upon horizontal extension of music has created an art exceedingly rich in scales, motives, melodic formulas and subtle refinements. This remarkable art can best be observed in the enormous wealth of *Rags*, the multitude of scales, formulas and ornaments, in the microtonal alterations of certain tones and intervals and in the manifold rhythmic modes.<sup>40</sup>

All this was well outside the scope of pop musicians to copy or emulate. Even if pop music did have modal qualities, it was based on chord changes, rather than on the subtle exploration of linear melody.

Repetition is also an important facet of the performance of any *rag*, but not exact repetition. Repetition functions to reveal gradual, subtle changes and *barhat* (growth, expansion) in the musical discourse. Exact repetition would be considered shallow or boring in a performance of Indian music.

So, the main sections in a performance of Indian music may be represented schematically thus:

Slow introduction in free time, during which the melodic material of the *rag* is *alap*: outlined and established.

*chor* Regular pulse introduced. Density of improvisations increases.

<sup>40</sup> Kaufmann 1984: 1.

Metre (*tal*) introduced (with entry of *tabla*). All improvisation subject to metrical organization. Rhythmic interplay between melody instrument and *tabla* becomes a

*Gat*: prominent feature.

Focus becomes primarily rhythmic. Fast acceleration to climatic finish on first beat

*jhala*: of *tal*.

It was not within the technique or aesthetic of pop musicians to work with such a structure, so the elements of Indian music that appeared in pop were fragmented, their musical meaning changed through being out of context. There were time constraints too. Pop songs are short in duration, typically 34 minutes, and rely for their impact on easily recognizable, repeatable tunes and steady driving beats which are easy to dance to. The open-ended and intricate exploration of an Indian *rag* could have no structural place within the parameters of a pop song.

It was, then, only a certain number of well-defined features of Indian music that tended to appear in pop songs, added as textures and ear-catching timbres, rather than used as structural devices. They may be summarized as follows:

- 1 Drones, on *sitar*, and sometimes *tanpura*.
- 2 Partial use of specific Indian sounds, such as the *taraf* or sympathetic strings of the *sitar* being stroked in a descending scale.
- 3 Mimicking of certain types of vocal delivery perceived to be Indian in stylee.g. flat tone, with slides, slurs, etc.
- 4 The occasional use of additive rhythmic ideas based on *tals*.
- 5 Melodies based on modes which correspond to *thats* or Indian scale types.
- 6 Imitative questions and answers between instruments, like the *saval-javab* sections of Indian performances.
- 7 Instruments shadowing vocal lines in unison.
- 8 Mystical or quasi-religious lyrics.

In two songs by George Harrison, 'Love You To' (*Revolver*, 1966) and 'Within You, Without You' (*Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*, 1967), it can be observed how he introduced many of the elements listed above, and, in contrast to other Indian-flavoured pop, tried to interpolate ideas from Indian music structure. Harrison's deeper involvement with the *sitar* and Indian

music meant that he took Indian influences in pop to the limit, producing some striking fusions in the process.

In 1966 Harrison met Ravi Shankar, and began taking sitar lessons from him.<sup>41</sup> Shankar found him to be a sincere, serious student, and continued to give him lessons in England, India, and the United States.<sup>42</sup> The benefit of Shankar's lessons can be heard in 'Love You To'. This song was quite different in intent and form from 'Norwegian Wood' of a year earlier. It was designed to sound specifically like North Indian classical music. To this end Harrison employed tabla and *tanpura* as well as sitar, the latter played by Harrison himself.<sup>43</sup> The *Melody Maker* was enthusiastic:

George goes the whole Indian hog. Virtually straight Indian sound, complete with tabla drummer, and tremendous sitar part by George. Fascinating mixture of minor melody with Indian accompaniment. One of the most striking tracks.<sup>44</sup>

What did this 'whole Indian hog' entail?

The piece outlines, in a rudimentary fashion, the typical performance sequence of a *rag* in North Indian classical instrumental music, as shown above. The melodic material (apart from the appearance of a raised fourth) is derived from the *Kafi that* of North Indian music (Ex. 6.2). Reck is unequivocal in his praise for this piece:



Ex. 6.2

After the introductory 'alap' in free time, the tabla enters establishing a driving metrical pulse in four beat units corresponding to the introduction of the *tala* in an Indian performance. Harrison's vocal line is sung in a flat voice similar to that of Indian vocalists. One cannot emphasize how absolutely unprecedented this piece is in the history of popular music. For the first time an Asian music was not parodied utilizing familiar stereotypes and misconceptions, but rather transferred in toto into its new environment with sympathy and rare understanding.<sup>45</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Shankar 1968: 92.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. 923.

<sup>43</sup> O'Grady (1983) suggests that it is not Harrison playing the sitar on this track, as the technique is too sophisticated for a player with his skills. That Harrison did indeed play sitar on this track is confirmed by Lewisohn (1988: 72).

<sup>44</sup> *Melody Maker*, 30 July 1966.

<sup>45</sup> Reck 1985: 102.

Reck concludes that 'Love You To' represents a successful attempt to condense the complex, detailed form of an Indian *rag* performance: 'all this in a three minute song'.<sup>46</sup>

Nevertheless, there are many aspects of this song which are well within the tradition of Western misunderstanding of Indian music, even if the setting was unprecedented for a popular song. The out-of-tune sound of the sitar unfortunately adds to the impression that if this is not a downright parody of Indian music, it is at least a poor imitation. But perhaps the greatest misunderstanding comes in the vocal delivery, which reflects the notion that to sound Indian, one must sing flat and with a nasal tone, rather than fluently and expressively. In terms of structure, Harrison's song undoubtedly gives a simple sketch of the larger-scale structure of an Indian performance, but introduces various techniques from Indian performance which are rendered meaningless without the detail. Once again, an Asian music has been abridged to a few in this case Indian-sounding formulae, despite Harrison's attempts to push the pop song in a new direction. His interest in Indian music was clearly genuine, but his technique and knowledge at this time did not allow him to explore fully the structural possibilities. This splintered use of Indian musical form is typical of how it would subsequently appear in pop, even into the 1980s.<sup>47</sup>

However, Harrison took his explorations of Indian music a stage further on the album *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Heart's Club Band*. This album is acknowledged to be the Beatles' masterpiece, and includes some of their most imaginative, innovatory compositions. It is a complex collage of numerous musical influences, of which Indian music is only one.

'Within You, Without You' utilizes a mixed group of Western and Indian instruments: a *dilruba* (a bowed stringed instrument), sitar, tabla, *tanpura*, and *svaramandal* (a strummed, zither-like instrument sometimes used by Indian vocalists to accompany themselves). Within the space of five minutes Harrison makes reference to an assortment of Indian musical genres: the *dilruba* is used to shadow the vocal line, a function the *sarangi* fulfils in *khyal* (a vocal genre); there is a *saval-javab* between sitar and strings, as in an instru-

46 Reck 1985: 102.

47 e.g. 'Every So Lonely' (1982), by the band Monsoon, where elements from Indian music are used in a similar fashion.

mental performance on sitar and tabla; the spiritual sentiments of the lyrics are reminiscent of *bhajan* and other devotional music genres; and the string arrangement has shades of the scoring in Indian *filmi* music; throughout there is the constant background drone of *tanpuras*. George Martin scored the strings for 'Within You, Without You': 'this meant that in scoring for that track I had to make the string players play very much like Indian musicians, bending the notes, and with slurs between one note and the next.'<sup>48</sup> Martin also gives a vivid account of the musical difficulties he encountered, and how the presence of Indian musicians changed the atmosphere of the studio. They spread a carpet on the floor, and put hangings on the wall, and 'suddenly we had colour, life and warmth in our normally cold and featureless surroundings'.<sup>49</sup>

Harrison himself says of this piece:

I was continually playing Indian music lessons which are called sargams the bases of different ragas. That's why around this time I couldn't help writing tunes like this which were based upon unusual scales. The best part for me was the instrumental solo in the middle which is in 5/4 time, the first of the strange rhythmic cycles I caught onto, 12,123,12,123.<sup>50</sup>

The melodic material of this piece derives from the *Khamaj* and *Kafi thats* of North Indian music. Two *tals* are employed: *tintal* (16 beats) and *jhaptal* (10 beats):

	X			2				0					3									
<i>Tintā:</i>		1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12		13	14	15	16		
		X			2			0		3												
<i>Jhāptāl:</i>		1	2		3	4	5		6	7		8	9	10								

The manner in which these music elements are manipulated in 'Within You, Without You' is more sophisticated than it is in 'Love You To', no doubt a reflection of Harrison's increasing knowledge of Indian musical forms and structures. The overall effect is of several disparate strands of Indian music being woven together to create a new form. All the musical ingredients listed earlier appear in this piece. It is a quintessential fusion of pop and Indian

<sup>48</sup> Martin 1979: 203.

<sup>49</sup> Martin 1994: 127.

<sup>50</sup> G. Harrison 1980: 112.

music. Yet, despite the surface impression of Indian music that this song gives, an analysis of its musical constituents shows that in terms of structure it owes little to Indian musical forms.

The fixed drone background on *tanpuras* sets the modality of the piece, and there is none of the chordal movement typical of pop music. At the opening the melodic contours of the song are outlined by a *dilruba* solo, like an *aocar alap*, or brief *alap*, in Indian music (Ex. 6.3). The *svarmandal* plays a pentatonic scale, the notes being left to ring openly, creating the characteristic wash of sound heard at the beginning of Indian instrumental pieces when the sympathetic strings of sitars and other instruments are stroked to introduce the notes of the *rag*. Then the tabla enters with a brief flourish, as in Indian music, before settling into a medium-paced *theka* (stroke pattern) in *tintal*. The voice enters on the fifteenth *matra* (beat) of the first complete cycle (Ex. 6.4). However, structurally, this melody is not constructed around *tintal* in the manner of Indian vocal or instrumental compositions, which are known as *ciz*, *bandi's*, or *gat*. The second verse begins on the seventh beat of *tintal* (Ex. 6.5). The *tal* is also cut abruptly in mid-cycle before the beginning of the middle section, when a new time cycle, 5/4, is introduced. This section, an instrumental interlude, has a question-answer sequence between strings and sitar. The interlude ends with a *tihai*, a thrice-repeated cadential formula common in Indian music, and used to bring sections of improvisation to a close. When the original melody returns, it is now on the third beat of *tintal*.



Ex. 6.3

The use of *tal* in this piece serves no structural purpose, as the melody is not shaped around the cycle of beats. Rather, it functions like a straight 4/4 time signature, with the melody entering each time on the third beat of the bar. The structural elements of Indian music have taken on a new meaning in the context of a pop song. *Tintal* has become a rhythmic texture on tabla,

Musical notation for Ex. 6.4. It features a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes on the staff. Above the staff, fret numbers are indicated: 'X' above the first measure, '1 2 3 4' above the second, '2' above the third, '0' above the fourth, '3' above the fifth, and 'X 1 2 3 4' above the sixth. The lyrics 'We were talk - ing etc.' are written below the staff.

Ex. 6.5

Musical notation for Ex. 6.5. It features a treble clef, a key signature of three flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes. Above the staff, fret numbers are indicated: 'X' above the first measure, and '1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16' above the second measure. The lyrics 'We were talk - ing a etc.' are written below the staff.

Ex. 6.4

Musical notation for Ex. 6.5. It features a treble clef, a key signature of three flats, and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of quarter notes. Above the staff, fret numbers are indicated: 'X' above the first measure, and '1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16' above the second measure. The lyrics 'We were talk - ing a etc.' are written below the staff.

Ex. 6.5

rather than a metrical device for ordering the melodic flow. A *tihai* is not a spontaneous manipulation of beats to end an improvisation, but a dramatic device to bring to a close a tightly scored instrumental section. The questionanswer sequence has lost its immediacy, and become a carefully composed interweaving of instrumental colours. The free-sounding *alap* does not fulfil the function of exploring in detail the intervallic relationships of the notes of the *rag*, but is there only because all Indian music seems to commence with a dreamy, drifting, seemingly directionless flow of sound. The Western strings slur and slide because this is what appears to happen in Indian music; so the sliding becomes a timbral device, rather than illuminating the movement to, and creating tensions between, one note and the next, as in Indian music. The sitar takes breaks like an electric guitar, so its function becomes fragmented in a way it would never be in Indian classical music (although it is used this way in Indian *filmi* music). The lyrics are a naïve mixture of various strands of Eastern and Western religious and philosophical thought, which can be heard as either charmingly simple or irritatingly superior, as in this reference to the Gospel of St Mark: 'the people who gain the world and lose their soul, they can't see, they don't know, are you one of them?'<sup>51</sup> However, it would be wrong to criticize Harrison's song on the grounds that it does not conform strictly to the grammar of Indian classical music. It was not his intention to do this, even though he borrows from the sound-world of Indian music to create something new. What results is a kind of patchwork of Indian musical styles and techniques. Harrison has created a

51 Beatles 1970: 203.

hybrid form, neither entirely Indian nor entirely pop. He has taken the use of Indian elements in pop well beyond the fad for sitars in 1966. As the trend for Indian music in pop declined, Harrison's understanding and respect seemed only to deepen. By the end of 1967 he seemed quite clear about the distinction between the two musical worlds which he inhabited:

With pop music the more you listen to it the more you get to know it, the more you see through it and the less satisfaction it gives you, whereas with Indian music and Ravi Shankar as a person its exactly the opposite because the more you're able to understand the music the more you see there is to appreciate. The more you get back out of it. You can have just one record of Indian music and play it for the rest of your life and you probably still never see all the subtleties in it.<sup>52</sup>

It is a mark of Harrison's sincere involvement with Indian music that, nearly 30 years on, the Beatles' 'Indian' songs remain among the most imaginative and successful examples of this type of fusion for example, 'Blue Jay Way' and 'The Inner Light'.

Beyond the explicit experiments with Indian music by the Beatles and others, the influence of Indian music was also reflected in the wider popular music field, particularly in the changing performance styles in rock at that time. In so-called acid-rock, long, temporally open-ended improvisations on modal musical material often derived from blues became the hallmark of several famous artists, including the Grateful Dead, Jefferson Airplane, Jimi Hendrix, Cream, and others.<sup>53</sup> However, the translation of Indian performance practices into rock as conducive to drug experiences was again a misinterpretation; drug taking was not common among Indian musicians.

During the same period, jazz musicians were also exploring Indian music, but with quite different rationales and approaches from their counterparts in pop and rock. It is useful to look at Indian music in jazz, as a contrast to the way in which it was manifest in pop.

#### Indian Music and Jazz: Reflections of Form

The interest of jazz musicians in Indian music was not an offshoot of the trend in pop, as Reck has suggested. Rather than a brief flurry with the oblig-

<sup>52</sup>*Melody Maker*, 16 Dec. 1967.

<sup>53</sup> Small 1977: 1734; Reck 1985: 95.



atory pre-performance sojourn in Calcutta or Bombay, Sanskritic titles for tunes, scat singers in saris',<sup>54</sup> the connection between jazz and Indian music had deeper conceptual roots, which had to do with concepts of solo expression and the links between composition and improvisation. Once again, as in pop, Shankar is the central figure. In 1961, long before Indian music became fashionable in pop (no *rags* for Elvis, Buddy, Cliff, and the rest), he was working and recording with jazz musicians on the west coast of America. The result of this collaboration with flautist Bud Shank and others was the album *Improvisations*.

The album contained traditional *rags*, as well as specially composed pieces for jazz and Indian ensembles, including the theme music for *Pather Panchali* from Satyajit Ray's famous film trilogy *The World of Apu*. The collaboration had been suggested by Richard Bock of World Pacific Records when Shankar was in Los Angeles during the early 1960s.<sup>55</sup> The piece for jazz ensemble, 'Firenight', was so named because of brushfires in the area at the time. Shankar found no difficulty in working with the musicians or in getting his ideas over to them. Indeed, he felt that jazz musicians were quick to grasp the rhythmic subtleties of Indian music, in ways that pop and classical musicians were not.<sup>56</sup> Although Shankar would become an influence on, and work with, important jazz musicians such as Eric Dolphy, John Coltrane, John Handy, and later Don Ellis, Collin Wallcot, and many others, he nevertheless, at the time, maintained a dignified distance from such experiments, as he had with pop. 'From what we hear jazz has only borrowed a flavour. I like it, but truthfully we think it very childish.'<sup>57</sup>

Despite Shankar's reservations, elements of Indian music would continue to appear in the work of musicians as diverse as Miles Davis and Yusef Lateef. The interest in Indian music by jazz musicians had strong cultural, as well as musical, links, which pre-dated the 1960s:

The Arab and Indian cultures and musics have held a special fascination [for jazz musicians]. There have been Islamic tendencies among Afro-Americans since the mid-forties, in other words, when modern jazz originated. It was only a small step from religious conversions to Islam to a growing interest in Islamic music.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Reck 1985: 95.

<sup>55</sup> Shankar, personal communication, 1994.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> *Melody Maker*, 11 June 1966.

<sup>58</sup> Berendt 1981: 31.

Jazz musicians were also fascinated by the form of Indian music and how it worked as a model of improvisation, the skill that lay at the heart of their own art. In addition, there was a shared dedication to the practice and the perfection of instrumental technique, a pursuit that is highly valued by jazz musicians, and elevated to almost mystical proportions by Indian musicians.<sup>59</sup>

Throughout the Forties and Fifties jazz musicians had been particularly concerned with the idea of form and the creation of new forms. Although the theme/improvisation/theme format still tended to underpin most jazz performances, the ways of working within it became increasingly complex. The breakneck virtuosity and harmonic gymnastics of bebop gave way in the late Fifties to a different style of playing, which increasingly used modes rather than chord changes as the basis for improvisation. One of the great icons of this genre is *Kind of Blue* (1959) by Miles Davis, with a sextet that included John Coltrane in its line-up. This album created a stir in jazz circles, because of Davis's new approach to melodic structure, and hence the shape of the improvisations: 'The advantages of improvising with modal scales centred around the fact that the soloist was no longer responsible for meeting the deadline of chord changes.'<sup>60</sup> The music became concerned with linear expansion, rather than the vertical shape of moving chords.

For one player in Davis's band, John Coltrane, the use of modes, Western and non-Western, became a hallmark of his brilliant, individualistic performances. As Coltrane's awareness of the African connection in Black American jazz grew and became central to his artistic and spiritual development, he began to develop a world-view of music in all its manifestations through the exploration of scale types, methods of improvisation, rhythmic systems, tunings, timbres, and philosophical backgrounds. By the early Sixties, the music of India had found its ways into his compositions, not as an exotic flavour, but subtly embedded in the structure:

'Naima' was one of Trane's first well-known works this was Trane's description of the piece: 'The tune is built on suspended chords over an  $E\flat$  pedal tone on the outside. On the inside the channel the chords are suspended over a  $B\flat$  pedal tone.' The tonic and dominant are used in the drone from which improvisations are developed, just as in the music of India.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>59</sup> See Shankar 1968: 724; Neuman 1990: 3043.

<sup>60</sup> Budds 1978: 45.

<sup>61</sup> Cole 1976: 110.

Apart from his purely structural use of Indian musical elements, Coltrane also had a deep interest in Indian philosophy and religion. One of his famous pieces is simply called 'Om', the sound that represents the reverberations of all creation in Hinduism. He also composed a piece entitled 'India', in which he plays soprano saxophone, with lines like those of an Indian *shenai*. Coltrane took facets of Indian music not merely as affectations, as Budds has suggested,<sup>62</sup> but as a musical reference point in artistic consciousness that also worked freely with influences from Africa and the Middle East, as well as blues, folk, and Western classical music. His seriousness about Indian music is reflected in the lessons he took with Shankar in the 1960s.

Shankar was introduced to Coltrane in 1964 in New York, through Richard Bock. Bock had told Shankar that Coltrane had recently reformed his way of living, giving up drugs and drink and turning vegetarian, and was becoming increasingly interested in Indian religious thought through studying the works of Ramakrishnan.<sup>63</sup> Coltrane explained to Shankar that he had been listening to his recordings, and was very interested in learning more about Indian music. So Shankar began to give him lessons.

He used to come and spend time with me. I would either sing or on the sitar show the basic things of our music like what a raga is, the melody form on which our whole music is based and also the development of different talas, the rhythmic cycles. He would ask me questions and I would answer him. I could give just bare beginning and main things about Indian music and he became more and more interested.<sup>64</sup>

Coltrane had planned to learn Indian music properly by taking six months free of all commitments in 1967 so that he could study with Shankar at his school in Los Angeles, but he died shortly before.<sup>65</sup> It is tantalizing to speculate about what direction Coltrane's music might have taken, had he pursued his studies of Indian music as he had wished. Coltrane was a crucial influence on other jazz musicians of the day, not least in his role as prime mover in throwing open the doors to cognizance of World Music in jazz. Indian music was a crucial element in this process, and an important element in the musical language of one of the acknowledged masters of contemporary jazz.

Other jazz musicians were also working with Indian music, trying to fuse

<sup>62</sup> Budds 1978: 52.

<sup>63</sup> Shankar, personal communication, 1994.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

it with jazz in a more overt fashion, by putting ensembles of Indian and jazz musicians together. Two such bands were Indo-Jazz Fusions, led by the composer John Mayer in the United Kingdom, and Harihar Rao and Don Ellis's Hindustani Jazz Sextet in the United States. Both bands were operating in the mid-1960s, and the former lasted, with changing personnel, into the 1970s, and has been re-formed for concerts as recently as 1992.<sup>66</sup> When jazz musicians attempted to join with Indian musicians in this way, the results usually took a similar form: the sound of jazz instruments was contrasted with that of Indian instruments, and the musical materials were based on Indian scalar and rhythmic ideas, but reconfigured to suit both Indian and jazz methods of improvisation.

In such experiments it was Indian musical form that exerted the greatest pull in the fusion, as a reviewer noted of Indo-Jazz Fusions' first album in 1966 and Ravi Shankar's album *Portrait of a Genius*, which included the jazz flautist Paul Horn: 'The worlds of jazz and Indian art music are far from incompatible as both these albums testify, although in both cases the jazzmen involved find themselves having to move distinctly eastwards to find common ground.'<sup>67</sup> On *Indo-Jazz Suite* (1966) Mayer uses two groups of five instruments: alto sax, trumpet, piano, bass, and drums, and sitar, tabla, *tanpura*, flute, and harpsichord. Mayer contrasts these two quintets, using the flute and the harpsichord as timbral links between the Indian and jazz ensembles. The musical materials of the compositions are based on several Indian *rags* *Megha* and *Gaud-Sarangand tals* including *kaharva* (8 beats) and *jhaptal* (10 beats). Each composition is introduced by drones on *tanpura* and short *alap*-like sections on flute or sitar. Bass or piano play ostinato figures which outline the important notes of the *rag* and work in syncopation around the *tal*. The melody is carried on flute, trumpet, and sax, and sometimes on piano doubling in unison with the harpsichord. After themes have been stated, instruments take solos in turn, as in jazz.

What is noticeable in these pieces is the marked difference between Indian and jazz instruments when it comes to improvisation. The sitar plays lines that are idiomatic to Indian classical music, while the jazz musicians stick to

<sup>66</sup> A re-formed Indo-Jazz Fusions, still led by John Mayer, performed at the Ealing Jazz Festival in London with the author playing sitar.

<sup>67</sup> *Melody Maker*, 23 Apr. 1966.

jazz phraseology. The only instrument that manages to cross the divide consistently is the flute. This instrument exists in different forms in both musical cultures, and the flexibility of its tone allows it to move stylistically between the two types of music. Although the pieces are based upon particular ascent/descent patterns of *rags*, which are often delineated in the accompanying ostinato patterns, the outlines are sometimes abandoned in solos by the jazz players. It is interesting that Mayer himself was not a jazz musician as such, but was trained in Western classical music and Indian music. It was EMI who approached him to put together the band, and Mayer tended to see the project more in terms of composition than from the perspective of jazz.<sup>68</sup>

Ian Carr, writing the sleeve notes for *Indo-Jazz Fusions II* (1968), makes some pertinent observations regarding how Mayer tried to reconcile the structure of jazz and Indian music in his compositions. In composing his pieces, Mayer always felt that a primary concern was the scale or mode chosen for the jazz players to improvise on. Carr comments on how this is realized on the track 'Mishra Blues' (the term *mishra* means 'mixed', thus *mishra rags* have mixed scalar material). On this track Mayer constructs a scale which includes all the intervals of the three basic blues chords, thereby allowing the jazz musicians to improvise upon the blues structure and the Indian musicians on the *mishra rag*.<sup>69</sup>

Carr also comments on the way in which the additive and divisive rhythmic concepts in Indian music and jazz respectively are interlocked:

Purvi variations is a very good example of rhythmic fusion and of how John Mayer simplifies the rhythms for the convenience of the jazz soloist the piece starts with twelve beats divided 3,2,3,4, a division not natural to Europeans, but when the jazz solos begin J. Dougan plays a strong  $\frac{3}{4}$  and the tabla weaves his complex patterns around that basic beat.<sup>70</sup>

Similar structural concerns were evident in the work of the Hindustani Jazz Sextet led by Harihar Rao, sitarist and pupil of Ravi Shankar. In the 1960s Rao recorded with several jazz and other musicians, including Don Ellis, as well as recording an album, *Raga Rock*, with three guitarists: Herb Ellis, Howard Roberts, and Dennis Budimir. He also recorded with the country music star Chet Atkins.<sup>71</sup> Speaking as a working, therefore practical, musician, Rao

<sup>68</sup> John Mayer, personal communication, 1985.

<sup>69</sup> Carr 1968.

<sup>70</sup> Ibid.

<sup>71</sup> *Melody Maker*, 17 Sept. 1966.

commented: 'My initial reaction to groups like the Rolling Stones using the sitar was horror. But now I'm not totally disapproving and anyway my belief is that if you can't beat them join them.'<sup>72</sup> Like Shankar, Rao was cautious about how far the fusion between jazz and Indian music could go, but he saw structural/musical areas where they might meet and collaborate:

I do believe the fusion of Indian music with pop and jazz is possible in a very elementary way. The problem is that our melodic constructions are more sophisticated than anything jazz or pop will be able to think [sic] for a lot more years yet there is a basis for using elementary Indian rhythmic ideas in jazz time signatures like 7/4 may sound formidable but they swing just as much as the conventional ones.<sup>73</sup>

Don Ellis, Rao's fellow group member, took his work with Indian ideas a step further, and constructed pieces from ever longer additive rhythmic principles, such as by dividing a nineteen-beat cycle  $3 + 3 + 2 + 2 + 2 + 1 + 2 + 2 + 2$  'this was the one that swung the most' and even longer cycles of eighty-five beats.<sup>74</sup>

The examples of Coltrane, Indo-Jazz Fusions, the Hindustani Jazz Sextet, and others show that Indian and jazz musicians were encountering each other on quite different territory from that of pop musicians. The points of crossover lay not in the use of ear-catching textures or the similarity between guitar and sitar, but on the level of structural affinities, the way in which the forms of the two musics could be reconciled, although some of the results may have sounded self-conscious or over-composed. One reviewer felt that Indo-Jazz Fusions worked best when the jazz players 'blow holes right through the rather formal framework'.<sup>75</sup> They nevertheless tried to work with Indian and jazz elements in imaginative ways, using concepts of composition and improvisation stemming from both musics. Also, this was not a passing fad, as it had been in pop. Musical ideas and structures from Indian music which first appeared in jazz in the late 1950s remained at the cutting-edge of jazz well into the 1970s. One striking example of this is the work of guitarist John McLaughlin and the band Shakti. This was a fusion like no other before it. In McLaughlin's work, not only are jazz and Indian music crossed, but so too are northern and southern traditions of Indian

<sup>72</sup>*Melody Maker*, 17 Sept. 1966.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Berendt 1981: 416.

<sup>75</sup>*Melody Maker*, 17 Sept. 1966.

music and instruments. In addition, McLaughlin had his guitar redesigned in order to play Indian music on it.

McLaughlin is a musician known for crossing many musical boundaries in his work: jazz/rock, acoustic/electric, composed/improvised. He has worked with musicians from the field of blues, jazz, classical, flamenco, and Indian music, constantly exploring new sounds and musical combinations to express his ideas. He was also a moving force in the jazz-rock fusion in the early Seventies, a type of music that Carr has called 'the last coherent radical jazz movement'.<sup>76</sup>

McLaughlin's interest in both Indian music and Indian religion goes back to the late Sixties, when he became a disciple of Sri Chimnoy, an Indian guru resident in the United States.<sup>77</sup> He was also learning the *vina* at the time.<sup>78</sup> His music began to take a more overtly Indian turn with the album *My Goal's Beyond* (1971), which featured McLaughlin playing acoustic guitar with a jazz ensemble that included *tanpura* and *tabla*. His next venture was the Mahavishnu Orchestra, the name of which was suggested by Chimnoy.<sup>79</sup> Although this was a five-piece band which did not include Indian instruments or musicians, many of the melodic and metrical ideas used in music by the group are derived from Indian music. A number of additive rhythmic cycles are employed, such as 7/4 grouped 3 + 2 + 2 and 10/8 grouped in various manners 3 + 3 + 3 + 1 or 3 + 3 + 2 + 2, and 18/8 grouped 5 + 5 + 5 + 3. In his introduction to the published scores of the Mahavishnu Orchestra, McLaughlin includes a list of modes that should be used when improvising on the pieces. The absence of chord progressions in all but a few of the pieces and the long unison passages for the lead instruments underline the modal nature of the music. An example from the album *Birds of Fire* (1973), 'One Word', shows how McLaughlin integrated the Indian ideas seamlessly into the composition.

The central solos in this piece utilize the form of 'trading' that is, swapping improvised phrases on set numbers of bars between soloists, a feature common to many jazz performances. This is similar to the idea of *saval-javab* in Indian performance. The rhythmic structure of these sequences is often planned in advance, in both jazz and Indian music, as dramatic improvised set

<sup>76</sup> Carr 1995: 55.

<sup>77</sup> Berendt 1981: 12940.

<sup>78</sup> Santoro 1991: 10.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

pieces in the performance.<sup>80</sup> In 'One Word' McLaughlin adopts a structure commonly used in Indian music of gradually shortening the phrases, in the sequence 4 bars, 2 bars, 1 bar, ½ bar. After a drum solo and bridge passage a long cadence is played in 13/8 time (Ex. 6.6).<sup>81</sup> This is based upon the concept of *tihai*, or rhythmic cadence (although it is not a strict *tihai* in the Indian usage of the term). Such long and complex cadences are commonly heard at the climax of improvisations in both North and South Indian music, and also at the end of performances. By the judicious choice of musical elements from Indian music, jazz, and rock which have structural affinities with each other, McLaughlin was able to redefine those elements in creating a new music that was neither self-consciously jazz or Indian, but a clever fusion of both.

In 1975 the Mahavishnu Orchestra was followed by Shakti. McLaughlin had been studying Indian music in the Seventies with various teachers, including Ravi Shankar.<sup>82</sup> The group was formed with L. Shankar, a South Indian violinist; the tabla player Zakir Hussein, son of Alla Rakha, Ravi Shankar's accompanist; and the South Indian percussionist T. H. Vinayakram. Shakti was a remarkable fusion in many ways. McLaughlin played a modified guitar, with a scalloped neck and raised frets, like the South Indian *vina*, and sympathetic strings under the main strings, running diagonally across the sound-board. The modified fret-board allowed him to make subtle melodic nuances and inflections by depressing the string between the frets, a technique used on the *vina*. The guitar had standard tuning, and McLaughlin played complex, *bol*-like patterns with a plectrum.

Although at first hearing the sound of Shakti seems completely Indian, a closer examination shows the deft manner in which several musical systems are moulded together. The percussion does not always play in *tal*, but moves effortlessly between Indian and Western rhythmic concepts; the guitar plays long *alap* sections (lower tones being obtained by manipulating the tuning keys of the instrument), crisp single-line *tans* (fast melodic passages), and syncopated jazz chords; the violin moves stylistically between South Indian classical music, North Indian *sarangi*, and riffs reminiscent of jazz/rock players like 'Sugarcane' Harris and John Luc Ponty. There are original compositions and traditional Indian melodies, both Hindustani and Carnatic. For

<sup>80</sup> See Berliner 1994: 2934.

<sup>81</sup> McLaughlin 1976: 889.

<sup>82</sup> Berendt 1981: 136.



example, in one piece, 'Isis', from *A Handful of Beauty* (1977), a traditional *gat* in *rag Bhairvi* is used alongside an original theme. Such is the flexibility of these musical cross-references that the overall effect sounds quite unlike a conscious attempt to fuse two disparate musics. On the contrary, the music is one at all times, and in this sense is quite different from the Indian-jazz fusions that preceded it. The musicians understood each other's musical systems well enough to allow a new form to emerge, an actual synthesis. McLaughlin's work is a striking example of how one jazz musician has used elements of Indian music to redefine the very language of jazz.

There were many other jazz musicians who worked with Indian music, notably Ralph Towner, the late Colin Walcott of the group Oregon, the flautist Paul Horn, and saxophonist Charlie Mariano. All had their own contributions to make and their own ways of working with the elements of Indian music. The influence of Indian music on jazz has been more lasting and far-reaching than it has on pop. It was more than a fad. The coming of Indian music to the West in the 1950s and 1960s coincided with a period when jazz musicians were moving away from older, accepted structures and modes of expression, and consequently Indian music made its way into the work of jazz musicians on a structural level, rather than merely as something superficially ear-catching.

Fashion is fickle, and at thirty years' remove the antics of pop stars in relation to Indian music may seem ridiculous or embarrassing. This period exemplifies some of the worst aspects of Western cultural consumerism, a fashionable offshoot of Western ethnocentricity. During the few months in 1966 when pop musicians 'went Indian', it was largely out of a desire to keep up with quickly changing musical trends, rather than any desire to work with the materials of Indian music in any profound or meaningful way. Other reasons for the trend were almost accidental, such as the perceived similarities between the guitar and the sitar, the presence of Ravi Shankar on the concert circuit at the time, and the misunderstanding of Indian religion and philosophy which would become linked to the use of hallucinogens like LSD which were coming into common use among the young.

The *musical* outcomes of this fad, however, are rather more interesting and far-reaching than they first appear. As noted above, other instruments for

[E] Seven times

Enter 3rd time

Enter 3rd time

The musical score is written for guitar in 12/8 time. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a treble clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 12/8. The melody is written in eighth notes. Below the treble staff is a bass clef staff with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a common time signature of 12/8. The bass line consists of chords and single notes. The second system is similar to the first but includes guitar-specific notation: 'x' marks above notes indicating natural harmonics, and '7' marks above notes indicating barre positions. The score is divided into sections by repeat signs and includes instructions such as 'Enter 3rd time'.

The image displays a musical score for a five-piece band, labeled 'Ex.6.6'. The score is arranged in two systems, each containing five staves. The instruments are: Guitar (Gtr.), Violin (Vln.), Electric Piano (Elec. Pno.), Bass (Bass), and Drums (Dr.). The notation includes various musical symbols such as notes, rests, and dynamic markings. The first system shows a continuous melodic line for the guitar and violin, a steady bass line for the electric piano and bass, and a complex drum pattern. The second system shows a similar arrangement but with some instruments (Guitar, Violin, and Electric Piano) ending with a double bar line, suggesting a conclusion to a section.

Ex.6.6

example, the bagpipes and the Japanese koto had been used on some pop records, without starting any fashionable explosion of Scottish or Japanese elements in pop music. This suggests that the musicians themselves may not have been aware that the sitar represented anything more in Western music than just another strange-sounding instrument.

But although surface similarities between the musical languages of jazz, pop, and Indian music helped to promote the 'great sitar explosion, there was also a historical dimension, which tends to become submerged in the hyped-up, fast-moving world of the mass media. As previous chapters have shown, there had been a sustained interest in Indian music in the West, particularly Britain, for some 200 years, and this interest had many scholarly and popular manifestations. The appearance of Indian music in pop in the 1960s was just one of the latest echoes of that tradition; and in keeping with the pace of the century, it was one of the shortest, yet also one of the most widely disseminated.

Nevertheless, it remains one of the great incongruities of modern music history that the classical systems of Indian music should have found their biggest audience in the West not through thoughtful experiments in classical music or jazz, but through the channels of the pop songshort, catchy, and ultimately ephemeral.

## Chapter 7

## World Music and South Asian Music in the West

*'Listen to the story of an Asian Man'1*

The 1980s marked a new development in the awareness of world popular musics in the West. The term 'World Music' was coined in 1987 as a blanket description for non-Western popular musics, apparently by a group of record distributors in a pub in North London, in response to the increasing interest in African popular music forms.<sup>2</sup> The sudden popularity of African music in the mid-1980s may be compared, in some respects, to that of Indian music in the 1960s. Both musics came not only as a sound, but also as a fashion accessory, whether manifested in kaftans, beads, and incense or batik fabrics, shoulder bags, and T-shirts extolling African political causes. Western popular culture discovered Africa in the 1980s, the way India and the Orient had been discovered during the previous 200 years.

However, unlike the popular fad for Indian music in the 1960s, the interest in African musical genres generated a wider market for popular musics, from around the globe, notably Latin American popular dance musics such as *salsa*, which quickly became an integral part of Western popular culture.<sup>3</sup> World Music as it has developed so far is primarily about popular music that functions as a backdrop to Western exotic consumerism. This is no longer the world of Ravi Shankar requesting his audiences to stop smoking or lounging about and pay attention. There is no quasi-spiritual quest involved for the consumers. World Music is about a product that can fit neatly into the mass tastes of Western pop fans. World Music quickly became an industrial,

1 From 'Countryman' by Fun-da-mental (Nation Records, 1993).

2 Sweeney 1991: p. ix. However, the term 'World Music' had been used previously in ethnomusicology (John Baily, personal communication, 1995). See also the way in which the term is used in Nettl, 1985.

3 See Manuel 1988*b*: 4650.

marketing category, rather than just a description of a particular genre, style, or attitude towards music.

Above all, World Music is about being able to divide the world into discrete areas which can be easily categorized in record stores.<sup>4</sup> Rather than the *ad hoc* route by which Indian music found its way into pop in the 1960s, World Music is driven by a clear marketing strategy. Very much a product of 1980s business awareness, this music has no existence in Western popular culture unless it is packaged properly and sold efficiently. In many ways the idea of World Music is also the antithesis of the procedures and methodology of ethnomusicology, the discipline which studies the world's musics. The gap between World Music and ethnomusicology may be characterized thus: World Music is fun, colourful, sexy, and saleable, whereas ethnomusicology is serious, rigorous, dull, and academic. The fans of World Music may dip into the music of cultures as they pass through current fashions, for this is where music and the travelogue coalesce. World Music is about a product filled with local colour, exotic and authentic. In many ways the proliferation of World Music represents the aural equivalent of the package holiday. The compact disc or cassette purchased from foreign parts is now part of the experience of tourism. These far-away places, whether in the vastness of Africa or the clubs of Havana, are now well established within the ambit of Western tourism. So, at a superficial level, World Music is about impressions of foreign places; the scents, sounds, and sights that linger in the mind after a holiday away from the West. On the other hand, World Music may be a way to travel to distant parts in the musical imagination, rather like the exotic parlour song of the nineteenth century a kind of musical travelogue. Sometimes the air of musical tourism is palpable in writing about World Music:

At night, when the dust settles from the pot-holed streets, the fires for cooking are extinguished, and the air is transparent and soft, Bamako resounds to the voices of a host of Malian singers played through a thousand ghetto-blasters and taxi cassette decks. Malians love their own music more than anything, and for sheer beauty of melody, few traditional musics rival it.<sup>5</sup>

*In World Music: The Rough Guide*, a huge 700-page volume which surveys this new market for popular music, glossaries relating to various musics are appropriately marked with a jumbo-jet logo.

4 Broughton *et al.* 1994: introduction

5 Duran, in *ibid.* 243.

Meanwhile, as World Music paints the pop market in local colour, ethnomusicologists continue on their way, studying the cognitive basis of musical thinking or analysing 'micromusics of the West'.<sup>6</sup> In short, World Music and ethnomusicology do not mix. Yet here are the very materials of ethnomusicology being touted and consumed greedily in the world's record stores. Ethnomusicology is often perceived to be the heir of orientalism and colonialism, whereas World Music owes nothing (ostensibly) to the Imperial past of Western nations. Wholesale co-opting of other cultures has a long history in the West, and World Music, if not exactly a new product, is at least an old one decked out in bright new (ethnic) clothes. Nevertheless, the distinction between popular and classical is also clear in World Music, and the overlap between classical and popular styles in the World Music market is highly selective. Although some classical musics from various cultures are occasionally heard at World Music festivals such as WOMAD (World of Music and Dance), others are dispatched ruthlessly, as non-starters in the language of World Music. Hence Japanese classical music: 'Except for kangen, most music is monophonic. Sometimes it sounds like cats being tortured, sometimes it is melodic and meditative.'<sup>7</sup>

But where does Indian music fit into World Music? Has Indian music become a World Music in the same sense that African music has? The answer to this question is complex. Some facets of Indian music have travelled down the World Music road. For example, the sound of the tabla is heard in jazz, pop, and rock with increasing frequency, either live or sampled, and the sitar is occasionally used in rock, usually as a retrospective reference to the 1960s, which the (now middle-aged) media ceaselessly promote as a golden age of popular music and culture. There have been many collaborations between Indian and Western musicians, mixing jazz and rock with Indian music. Some Indian musicians, such as the South Indian violinist L. Shankar and the tabla virtuoso Zakir Hussein, have become central figures in fusion music.

But India's own pop music, *filmi* song, or songs from films, although massively popular throughout the South Asian diaspora, does not have the same place in the World Music industry as some other non-Western popular musical forms. Following the introduction of the gramophone at the turn of the

<sup>6</sup> Slobin 1992.

<sup>7</sup> Broughton *et al.* 1994: 466.

century, a huge popular music market developed in India. The most significant genre to emerge from this was Indian film music, which took shape as a major popular form in the 1930s. Drawing on a variety of traditional musical forms, it was also, from its inception, a syncretic form. As well as including traditional Indian musical principles derived from *rag* and *tal*, Indian instruments, and elements from vocal genres such as *khyal*, *thumri*, and *ghazal*, there were also clarinets, cellos, violins, and Western-style choruses. By the 1940s *filmi* songs were just as likely to have the lilt of a tango as that of an Indian rhythmic cycle. The roots of this music lie in a complex mixture of Indian stage music, light classical genres, and fashionable Western popular musics that were current at the time. Throughout the course of its development, Indian film song has continued to draw on Western trends in popular music—for example, cover versions, or 'parodies', of Western pop singers, ranging from Abba to Michael Jackson, are now common.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, despite a history of Western influences, *filmi* song has retained an essentially Indian identity. This identity has, in part, to do with particular elements of the sound which are quintessentially Indian. The most immediately striking aspect of this is the vocal quality. The voice of Lata Mangeshkar, the doyenne of Indian film song, is high-pitched, sweet, and for ever young; the ornamentation in phrasing is typical of light classical genres such as *thumri* and *ghazal*; the music may include chords and harmonies, but its predominant musical character is always modal; prominent features of the music, like its driving rhythm, are played on traditional percussion instruments such as the *tabla* and the *dholak*, and even when Western percussion is also included, the sound of the traditional instruments is to the fore, underpinning the overall sound and structure. Certain formal aspects of Indian classical music such as *alap*, the opening of a *rag* performance, are often heard, in shortened form, in film song, as are passages sung in *sargam*. Melodically, the music may refer to particular popular *rags*, or folk melodies. Because of the importance of such musical elements in *filmi* song, Western influences never swamp the overall sound-world, which remains Indian.

Despite its popularity in South Asia, where more than 700 films per year are produced, each including about ten songs, and the lives and loves of the

<sup>8</sup> See Manuel 1993: 2978. See also Manuel 1988b and Kabir and Snell 1994 for a fuller discussion of the history of film music in India.



film stars support a huge print industry (much of it in English), Indian film music has never become a popular music of the West, except amongst South Asian communities. There are many reasons for this, perhaps the most obvious being the language of the Indian songs, which is predominantly Hindi or Urdu. But there are aesthetic reasons too. The sound of Indian film music does not lie within the Western continuum of popular music as it has developed since the mid-1950s; it moves in a different musical orbit from the Afro-American forms which have come to dominate Western popular music since the 1950s. When Indian elements appeared in Western popular music in the 1960s, it was only specific musical elements, like the sound of the sitar, which made the cross-over; and apart from some experiments by George Harrison, it was aspects of classical Indian music, rather than film song, that were adopted by Western musicians. The musical character of Western popular music was essentially left unchanged by its meeting with Indian music. Although Indian film music is part of the soundscape of many Western cities (particularly in Indian restaurants), it is not part of the wider pop market, and remains the province of South Asian communities, where, relatively, it has large sales, and is the single most popular South Asian music in the West.

Similarly, in the World Music market, Indian film music has not had the same impact as African or Latin American popular musics. The many influences of Afro-American music on Western popular music in general accounts, to a large extent, for the increased interest in African and Latin musics. Elements of rhythm, instrumentation, and emotional content are familiar to Western consumers, in a way that Indian film song is not. However, one music from South Asia, *qawwali*, a form of Sufi devotional song, has become a popular music in the West through the channels of the World Music industry. In the story of Indian music and the West, the upsurge of interest in *qawwali*, particularly in the 1980s, is an interesting phenomenon which bears closer discussion.

#### QawwaliThe Religious Mystic as Superstar

The world's leading purveyor of twelfth-century Islamic soul music is in town. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan from Pakistan sings Qawwali, a traditional form which has been passed down his family for 600 years. Which might make it sound only of

interest to students of musical arcana, except that this music is surprisingly accessible due to the back line of percussionists who provide a shuffling, driving beat, aided by hand-pumped harmoniums.<sup>9</sup>

In this brief review, many of the musical elements that have allowed *qawwali* to become popular in the West are located. All the prerequisites for entry into the aural universe of Western popular culture are there: it sounds like something else which is recognizable in this case soul music (the sitar sounded like an electric guitar to pop musicians and fans in the 1960s) and yet it retains some oriental distance, making it ultimately unknowable and hence attractive (ancient tradition, mystical overtones); even so, the Western audience can impose its own cultural values on it it is good to move to ('back line of percussionists shuffling, driving beat').

On the face of it, *qawwali* was an unlikely candidate to cross the divide between Western and Eastern popular culture. and, as the reviewer notes, might well have remained of interest only to ethnomusicologists. The term *qawwali* means 'utterance', and it is sung in Urdu. The lyrics are of the utmost importance, and are usually in praise of Allah or his Prophets. The texts are poetic, ambiguous, complex, and mystical, filled with ecstatic exhortations to achieve union with the divine. *Qawwali* has been present in India since the beginning of the Islamic presence there, and like so many other facets of North Indian music, its invention is attributed to Amir Khusrau, a fourteenth-century poet and musician. *Qawwali* is now popular across the Indian subcontinent, and particularly in Pakistan. It has also been featured in films since the 1930s.<sup>10</sup>

The musical constituents of *qawwali* are complex. The modes used are closely related to Hindustani *rags*, and although special *tals* are played which are associated only with *qawwali*, there are close connections with the standard *tals* of North Indian classical music.<sup>11</sup> The ensemble usually includes one or two lead singers (always male), a chorus of anything up to ten or more other singers, a harmonium, a *dholak* and/or *tabla*, and rhythmic hand clapping. A common metre in *qawwali* is *kaharva*, an eight-beat *tal* divided 4 + 4. The hand claps come on the off-beat. It is this rhythmic element and the

<sup>9</sup>*City Limits*, 9 Feb. 1988.

<sup>10</sup> See Wade 1979: 169; M. H. Khan 1988: 65; Manuel 1993: 1237.

<sup>11</sup> See Qureshi 1993 for a detailed discussion of the complex musical roots of *qawwali*, its learning process, and cultural context.

obvious intensity of the performance that endear *qawwali* to Western listeners. The syncopated rhythm set up by the hand clapping is so close in feel to the ubiquitous rock 'back-beat' that Western audiences immediately feel at home. This connection is important, because the majority of Western audiences cannot understand the lyrics, traditionally the most important aspect of the performance. However, they can dance to the music. It is not surprising, then, that one reviewer of a 1988 Queen Elizabeth Hall concert by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan compared the ecstatic delivery and rhythmic energy of the music to that of James Brown,<sup>12</sup> or that another at WOMAD in 1985 termed it 'A sort of scappella [sic] Persian jazz that moved many of the audience to tears of joy',<sup>13</sup> or that a Welsh critic noted its 'cajun-style energy' with 'ancient scales that went westwards from the same areas and ended up as Irish reels'.<sup>14</sup>

The emergence of *qawwali* as a popular World Music in the West is a development full of interesting ambiguities and contradictions. The ambivalent position of music in general in Islam means that any musical activity that is sanctioned has to be undertaken only as a way to praise Allah and to increase awareness of Allah in both performer and listener. It should never be solely for personal or sensual gratification. The complexity of the lyrics in *qawwali* attest to the seriousness of this purpose. By adhering to a rigid code of practice in treating the rendition of sacred texts and poems, the *qawwal*: 'is likened by Sufis to a mere bearer of gifts from above: a medium, not an agent'.<sup>15</sup> Traditionally, *qawwali* is also performed at specific Muslim shrines, particularly those of Hazrat Khawaja Moin-ud-Din Chisti, a famous thirteenth-century Islamic saint. By any standards, it is a long way from this religious and cultural milieu to huge concert-halls in the West.

Although *qawwali* has long been popular in South Asian communities in the West, and could be heard at a variety of social occasions, it was Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan who was mainly responsible for bringing it to the ears of Western audiences in the mid-1980s. As in so many other cases, like the journeys West of Inayat Khan, Uday Shankar, and Ravi Shankar, it was one person who stepped beyond the traditional bounds of South Asian musical culture to make contact in the West. Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is a charismatic, as well as a physically imposing, figure. As with Ravi Shankar, when Nusrat

<sup>12</sup>*Folk Roots*, Feb. 1988.

<sup>13</sup>*Folk Roots*, Sept. 1985.

<sup>14</sup>*South Wales Echo* 12 Feb. 1988.

<sup>15</sup> Qureshi 1991: 110.

Fateh Ali Khan first appeared on the Western music scene, the press was hungry for details not only about the music he performed, but also about his personal spiritual quest. The trials and tribulations of an individual, followed by discovery of the path of music, is a favourite ingredient in the myth of Indian music in the West. Such tales suit jaded Western palates, and appear to be the opposite of the prosaic lives of musicians in the West.

One much-repeated story relates that Khan's inspiration came to him in a dream. Although coming from a family of musicians, Khan had wished to become a doctor rather than a *qawwal*. However, he experienced a recurring dream about singing within the Chisti shrine at Ajmer, something no other *qawwal* had ever done. This converted him to the path of music, and indeed, in 1979 he sang in the Ajmer shrine.<sup>16</sup>

Given the mixture of virtuoso performance, driving rhythms, and mystical ecstasy, *qawwali* did in fact have all the classic ingredients to make it a successful Eastern musical export to the West. Other Indian music vocal genres for example, *khyal*, which is similarly expressive and bravura in performance did not become familiar to Western audiences. There are many reasons for this, the most obvious being that the *tals* used in *khyal* are unfamiliar, and the rhythmic shape is more hidden. Overall, the sound of *khyal* and the structure of its performance are more complex.

But there are other reasons for regarding *qawwali's* rise to popularity in the West at this particular time as unusual. On the global stage, fundamentalist Islam was rapidly replacing communism as the main perceived ideological threat to Western capitalism. The rule of Khomeini in Iran, the two Gulf wars, airplane hijackings, the Lebanon hostage crisis, and the *fatwah* against Salman Rushdie had all led to Islam becoming increasingly demonized in the Western media. Very little distinction was made between the different sects in Islam, or their various complex belief systems and political stances. Yet it was at this time that an Islamic devotional music became popular on the world stage, the most visible and popular musical export from the Indian subcontinent to the West since the great sitar explosion of the 1960s.

*Qawwali's* success lay in the ability of Western audiences to receive only the surface elements of the music and to detach its meaning from its form,

16*The Daily Jang* 11 Feb. 1988.

lyrical content, and cultural context. This is similar to the reception of elements of Indian classical music by pop musicians in the 1960s. In fact, *qawwali* could not be identified with Islam, either negatively or positively, because its religious roots and cultural milieu were not understood by Western audiences. It was a spectacular performance art with a catchy beat that communicated directly in sight and sound. The vague overtones of Eastern mysticism were an added bonus when *qawwali* was discovered by the West, even though the roots of that mysticism and its cultural meaning were not comprehended.

In turn, the music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan has been influenced by the West. In recent recordings, perhaps reflecting the eclectic modes of musical expression that are possible within the ambit of Sufism (Inayat Khan comes to mind), Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan has expanded the range of instrumentation for his devotional songs. Recent recordings have introduced rock guitar, female chorus, synthesizers, drum machines, and influences from *filmi* song, while still expressing the same mystical and ecstatic emotions in the lyrics.<sup>17</sup>

The final part of the story of Indian music and the West, however, is not about journeys from the East to the West; nor is it about consumer mysticism. It is about the way in which South Asian musical forms have grown and developed away from the Indian subcontinent in South Asian communities in Britain and elsewhere. In their development, they stand in sharp contrast to the World Music industry (although they do play some part in it), and their existence owes little to previous manifestations of Indian music in the West.

Indipop, Bhangra, and Jazz-Ghazals

In 1982 a British band called Monsoon had a top-ten hit with the song 'Ever So Lonely'. The line-up included sitar and tabla, and the lead singer, Sheila Chandra, was of South Asian origin. This was the first time that the sounds of Indian music had penetrated the pop charts for nearly two decades, and even though many of the elements of Indian music in 'Ever So Lonely' appeared in a similar manner to how they had in that earlier phase of Indian-flavoured pop, the song did mark the beginning of the emergence of South Asian popular music forms in Britain in a new and unique way.

<sup>17</sup> Hear, e.g., *Dam Mast Mast*, Real World, 1991.

At first this new music was termed 'Indipop'. But this label and the band Monsoon did not last. It disbanded soon after the first hit, and Chandra went on to pursue a solo, and musically experimental, career. However, this excursion of an Asian artist into the mainstream of Western pop prefigured further developments in South Asian music in Britain later in the decade. The term 'Indipop' would soon be an inadequate label for the forms of music that emerged. What would make musics like *bhangra* or Najma Akhtar's jazz-*ghazals* different from other manifestations of Indian music in the West was that they grew directly from the experience of South Asian youth born and brought up in the West, and although drawing on traditional Indian culture and music for inspiration and direction, the sounds were not imported from another culture, distorted, or out of context in Western music.

As noted in Chapter 2, Indian musicians had been living and performing in the West since at least the mid-nineteenth century, but it was only after 1945 that the present South Asian community in Britain became established. It was mainly immigrants from the northern part of the Indian subcontinent—Pakistan, India, and Bangladesh—who came to settle in Britain from the mid-1950s onwards.<sup>18</sup> This resulted in North Indian genres of music being prevalent in the South Asian community in the UK. The range of traditional musics performed and taught within the community is wide, and includes North Indian or Hindustani classical music, various religious genres such as *bhajan*, *qawwali*, and *kirtan*, and genres which are region- or language-specific such as Bengali *Rabindrasangit*, Punjabi *bhangra*, and Urdu *ghazal*.<sup>19</sup> Although South Indian, or Carnatic, music is performed in the UK, it has a relatively narrower distribution and community of interest. The main popular music in the South Asian community, until recent years, has been *filmi* song. The presence of a growing South Asian community in Britain and elsewhere has also meant that there is now a wider audience in the West for musicians coming from India. This has led to the rise of impresarios within the community who regularly organize tours for visiting musicians. South Asian musicians and dancers have also started national

<sup>18</sup> Commission for Racial Equality 1986: 1.

<sup>19</sup> See also Farrell 1994*b* for details of genres of South Asian music in Britain and teaching in the context of formal music education in London schools.

organizations to promote their interests, with funding from bodies such as the Arts Council.<sup>20</sup>

By the mid-1980s a new sound had started to dominate popular music in the South Asian community *bhangra*. *Bhangra*, a folk-music genre from the Punjab, is performed at the Sikh festival of *bhasaki*.<sup>21</sup> Its character is joyful, unrestrained, and highly rhythmic. According to Baumann, amateur *bhangra* bands had been performing at weddings and other social occasions in the London Punjabi community since the 1960s, but it was not until the late 1970s and early 1980s that a distinctive, commercial form of *bhangra* started to emerge.<sup>22</sup>

The new incarnation of *bhangra* retained some of the traditional music elements of its folk forerunner, such as the use of the *dholak* drum and the characteristic syncopated eight-beat rhythmic cycle *kaharva*, but musical elements from Western pop, such as electric keyboards, drums, bass, guitars, and saxophones were added. *Bhangra* also drew on the sounds and arrangements of Indian film music. However, the sound of *bhangra* was neither as elaborate or as hybrid as that of film songs. It was essentially a dance music, where the driving beat was the central musical focus. The new sound quickly became popular, and bands such as Alaap (often cited as the founders of modern *bhangra*) and Heera became immensely popular among youth within the South Asian community, leading to the social phenomenon of daytime discos filled with Asian youth playing truant from school.<sup>23</sup>

What is of interest in the history of *bhangra* is the way in which this new sound, despite being slick, well produced, and highly commercial in its presentation, did not cross over into the mainstream of Western pop. No doubt there was a language barrier, as most *bhangra* was sung in Punjabi, but it also had to do with the nature of recording distribution networks in the South Asian community, which were not connected to the wider popular music industry; also the music's origins and the types of social experiences that were related in the songs were unique in terms of wider currents in popular music at the time. *Bhangra* had quickly become a cultural expression of South Asian youth in Britain, particularly London it was also known as 'The Southall

<sup>20</sup> See Turner 1991 and Shanovitch 1993 for discussions of the contemporary profiles of South Asian music and dance in Britain.

<sup>21</sup> Banerji 1988: 208; Baumann 1990: 81.

<sup>22</sup> Baumann 1990: 84.

<sup>23</sup> Banerji 1988: 212.

Beat' after the West London suburb which is home to the largest Punjabi community in Britain. A flavour of the subject-matter of the songs can be gleaned from the lyrics of 'Munda Southall Da' ('The Boy from Southall'), by the band Sitara:

Hey girl, hey girl,  
You have fallen in love with a boy from Southall  
And yet you come from the Midlands.

You have come from the Midlands all tarted up  
Wearing tight jeans, looking like an English woman  
I feel like holding hands with you like the English do  
Keep on coming to Southall and walk on the Broadway and sing my song.<sup>24</sup>

This type of imagery distanced *bhangra* from the world of Indian *Filmi* song, which, until this time, had been the dominant pop music of the South Asian community. Baumann has also noted how the emergence of a home-grown South Asian popular music functioned as symbol of unity and identity for a community the composition of which was, in reality, very disparate.<sup>25</sup> The music also cut across the often acrimonious barriers of religion within the community. The mid-1980s saw Sikh separatists in India agitating for an independent state of 'Khalistan', a movement which had a small caucus of support in Western South Asian communities. In 1984 the Indian army stormed the Golden Temple in Amritsar, the holiest shrine of Sikhism, badly damaging it and killing hundreds of Sikh rebels who had taken up positions inside. The incident was one of the most traumatic political and social events in the history of modern India, and as a result, the Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi, was assassinated later the same year by her Sikh bodyguards. The repercussions of this upheaval spread beyond the Punjab, and the Indian Government made it known publicly that they felt financial support for the rebels had come from Punjabi communities in Britain and Canada, with the knowledge of the respective governments in those countries.

Some of the players of *bhangra* were consciously aware that music was a powerful cultural force for uniting people from different countries and religions:

<sup>24</sup> Farrell 1992: 19, trans. Jaspal Bhogal, from the album *Love Affair with Sitara*, EMI, 1988.

<sup>25</sup> Baumann 1990: 84.



Chunni, Alaap's leader and lead singer sees music as an olive branch, then between religions, now between cultures; the line-up of his band Punjabi, Gujarati and Pakistani, Hindu, Muslim and Sikh bears out this philosophy.<sup>26</sup>

Although *bhangra* increased in popularity throughout the 1980s, it never broke into the mainstream of Western popular music despite many predictions that it would become the first Asian pop music to do so; this was despite large record sales, probably enough to have put a band like Alaap into the mainstream charts.<sup>27</sup>

Other types of South Asian popular music were also taking shape in the UK during this period. One of the most striking manifestations of these new currents is the work of Najma Akhtar. Najma's music took a new direction, working the traditional form of the *ghazal* towards fusions with jazz and incorporating elements from Indian classical and film music. The story of how Najma arrived at her unique synthesis of sounds is a fascinating example of how aspects of different musics can come together, and how this meeting is mediated by cultural and musical influences. It also shows the importance of recording technology in this process, and how the possibilities offered by the recording studio are as much a component in shaping and creating a new music as the complex matrix of cultural influences that underlie and inform that music.<sup>28</sup>

Najma did not come from a family of musicians. She was born in England, although her family had many business connections on the Indian subcontinent, including contacts in the Indian film industry.<sup>29</sup> This would prove to be a crucial connection in her musical development, and the sound of *filmi* songs, and particularly the voices of Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle, were early formative influences:

I grew up on a dosage of Indian film music, especially the old black and white films. In those days I couldn't really speak Urdu at all because English was my first language and there weren't very many Asians [at school]. but I used to imitate Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle that's where I developed a sense of singing.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Banerji 1988: 208.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 21213.

<sup>28</sup> Banerji (ibid. 2089) notes how the unique sound of *bhangra* came into being partly because of producer Deepak Khazanchi's idea of adding synthesizers and drum machines to Alaap's traditional songs at a recording session.

<sup>29</sup> Najma Akhtar, personal communication, 1993.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

Without knowing the meaning of the lyrics, by merely imitating the sounds of Urdu and Hindi, Najma had begun to sing Indian music. Later, after overhearing her sing, her father wrote down the correct words for her, and after a nine-month stay in India, she began to speak Urdu properly.

Najma never intended to become a musician, and completed a degree in science before taking up singing professionally. Although she had continued to listen to film music, her interest had been sparked by the work of Jagjit and Chitra Singh, an Indian husband and wife duo who had popularized a new type of *ghazal* using Western instruments and arrangements. Najma sees the appeal of this type of music as a direct reaction to the increasing Westernization of film music and the élitist distance of classical music. It was the work of Jagjit and Chitra that set Najma on the road to singing *ghazal*.<sup>31</sup>

Najma's first major break was to win an Asian song contest in the UK in 1984. She then recorded an album in India, and received an offer to work in the movies there, which she declined. By now she was on her way to becoming a professional musician, despite the misgivings of her parents. Music has never been a respectable profession for a woman in India.

However, Najma's Indian album sparked some interest in the UK and she was approached by Triple Earth Records to make an album of *ghazals* which would appeal to a wider market than just the South Asian community. After hearing Najma improvise on some of the songs, they suggested adding jazz instruments and arrangements to the basic line-up of voice, tabla, and violin. This was how the album *Qareeb* came about. It was the first album to incorporate the sound of jazz with *ghazal*, and it set the mould for Najma's distinctive sound.

Najma was not familiar with jazz or its structures, and at first the jazz musicians over-dubbed their parts on to existing songs. Najma says that her knowledge of Indian classical music at this time was also still sketchy, but that this proved an advantage when it came to incorporating different elements into the music. She could work without worrying about the purity of *rags*, and allow the jazz influences to work alongside what she had already recorded. But even then, she had misgivings about some of the results: 'For me as someone who hadn't at that point listened to jazz at all it was sounding very

<sup>31</sup> Najma Akhtar, personal communication, 1993.

obscure, and at points it just didn't fit, and to me it wasn't sounding very pleasant.'<sup>32</sup> In particular, Najma was unsure about the way in which the sax player modulated within solos and the density of his playing. Modulation is foreign to Indian classical music and, to a large extent, Indian film music. Also, it was suggested that she add harmonies and counter-melodies to her vocal line. All this was new territory, and Najma had to negotiate it using only her ears and her musical sensitivity. It was through this process of trying and discarding possibilities, musical trial and error, that the new fusion was arrived at.

Although the album was well received in the British press,<sup>33</sup> other *ghazal* singers resident in the UK were, for purist reasons, critical. In particular, they did not like the new musical arrangements of traditional material. In general, other Indian musicians were not sympathetic to Najma's experiments. As an Asian woman singing in public, there were also cultural problems about how she appeared to other members of the community.

The stigma of being a singer is still attached to you and you still have to work with male musicians and you still have to meet people that are from narrow-minded backgrounds and people who are perfectionists in the Urdu language and people somehow expect me to be really knowledgeable in Urdu because I sing in Urdu but the fact is my first language is still English. So I have to meet those people and sometimes it's difficult to talk to them because they have culture, religion and language as a barrier.<sup>34</sup>

Further musical changes awaited Najma when it was suggested that she perform the songs from *Qareeb* live. This involved using sound monitors on-stage, working with the different energy and volume level of jazz players, and standing up to sing, all of which were new to her. But Najma's performances were successful, and she went on to perform at such famous jazz venues as the Jazz Café and Ronnie Scott's. With regard to the latter, Najma relates with some amusement how her family were very dubious about her performing in a jazz club at all, because of the connotations that clubs had with low life in India and the consumption of alcohol that would take place there. However, Triple Earth brought the whole family along to the club so that they could see

32 Ibid.

33 See e.g. *The Observer*, Nov. 1987.

34 Akhtar, personal communication, 1993.

for themselves.<sup>35</sup> Subsequently Najma has established a world-wide reputation, performing throughout Europe and in Japan and the United States.

The story of Najma's rise to prominence as a singer of Eastern-Western fusion music provides a vivid picture of the way in which such musics come into being. In particular, it illustrates how, at least at the beginning, there was not necessarily a mutual musical meeting point between *ghazals* and jazz. The studio and producer were the mediators in this process, allowing sounds from a different musical world to be grafted on to existing versions of Indian traditional songs. Also, the marketing idea behind the recording was to distance the music from South Asian popular music in general through this process. It was aimed at a Western audience, even though it could not understand Urdu, the language of the *ghazal*. The sounds of jazz were considered to be a sufficient musical bridge between the two cultures. Her story also illustrates how traditional attitudes in Indian musical culture still have a resonance for South Asian performers in the West: the stigma attached to a woman who performs music in public and the need to protect tradition against the onslaught of Western influences.

Interestingly, however, the fusion that Najma created did not distance her from her own musical roots, but rather brought her closer to them. As her professional career as a musician advanced, she felt a need to know more about Indian classical music, its grammar and techniques. On the album *Pukar* she included melodies that were based on classical *rags*, including *Bhupali* and *Bhimpalasi*. She also practises more with the *tanpura*, rather than with the harmonium. Using the former instrument is more demanding for a singer, and demands greater accuracy in pitching the voice.

The South Asian music scene in Britain has continued to diversify, with artists like Apache Indian and Fundamental fusing Black (particularly rap) and Indian styles of music to produce commercial, and often highly politicized music. No longer content to be contained within a minority community or within any particular aesthetic of South Asian music, the voice of Asian youth, speaking out against racism and discrimination, is increasingly heard through the channels of popular music.

35 Akhtar, personal communication, 1993.

Both musically and politically, these new musics owe much to developments in Black music in the United States, and display an eclectic, not to say confused, mixture of various left-wing and fundamentalist causes. In the music of Fun-da-Mental, a Bradford-based Asian band, the views of Black supremacists like Louis Farrakhan coexist with anti-racist rhetoric and demands for religious tolerance and respect for women. While condemning racial violence and intolerance, the band also made public its dislike of Salman Rushdie and *The Satanic Verses*. As the following review of a gig by Fun-da-mental shows, this admixture of ideological stances is matched by the complexity of musical influences and imagery in their stage presentation:

The MC introduces them [Fun-da-mental] saying that their aim is to unite Asian, Afro-Caribbean and White. The man at the front giving the Black Power salute is wearing a 'Black Revolutionary Run Tings' tee-shirt and full Palestinian headscarf so that only his eyes show. Minister Farrakhan shouts sampled fire, and the rest of them arrive. Weird looking bunch all in long cassock things like Middle Eastern priests. One of the priests in black does fast ragga chat. Swirling, wailing, eerie Eastern and Asian moods drift in and out of the picture from inside the sampler.<sup>36</sup>

Fun-da-Mental's music draws on contemporary currents in rap and dance music, and deftly mixes sampled and live sounds from various genres of Indian music, including film song. Their lyrics veer between angry denunciations of the lot of Asians in white society to a curious romanticism about the East. The latter attitude is, in its way, a kind of postmodern exoticism. The land they depict in 'Countryman' is almost as unreal as that of 'Kashmiri Song' or other earlier representations of India in song. It is an idyllic place where there appears to be no conflict or strife indeed, almost a paradise:

My country is a land where the sun is yellow,  
And the moon in my village is very mellow,  
Fresh water cascades from the mountain tops,  
Many colourful birds together they flock,  
Young children reading the evening prayers,  
Aged parents enjoying life without a care.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup>*Melody Maker*, 7 Sept. 1991.

<sup>37</sup> From 'Countryman', by H. N. Qureshi, I. L. S. Mathura, and A. Ali (Nation Records, QFM/Chappell Music).

This cultural ideal contrasts with the harsh realities of racism, unemployment, and crime in Britain's contemporary inner cities. By juxtaposing these two sets of images, with the over-dubbed voice of a white racist decrying the 'pollution' of his county by Asians, Fun-da-Mental makes a raw, but powerful and moving, statement.

It remains to be seen what the musical and social outcomes of such creations will be; but it appears that the rise of distinctive forms of music in the South Asian diaspora marks a turning-point in the story of Indian music and the West. These musics are not about an exotic flavour borrowed by the West from the East; and on present evidence, neither are they ephemeral contributions to the world of Western music. Nor are they a 'World Music'. On the contrary, they represent a new music, a Western music, in which Indian music and imagery play an integral and increasingly complex role.

## Conclusion

In his introductory article to a 1988 issue of *Popular Music* devoted to connections between South Asian and Western music, Paul Oliver wrote: 'We are happy to stake out the new territory with landmarksGeorge Harrison's sitar, Indo-Jazz Fusions, and the like. But the web of routes that led to it remain to be charted.'<sup>1</sup> The purpose of this book has been to begin the mapping of such routes and to show that Western consciousness of Indian music did not begin with the advent of mass media popular music in the 1950s and 1960s, but rather that such manifestations, far from being isolated instances, are part of a much longer, more complex continuum of historical and musical events. In particular, it becomes apparent that the ways in which Indian music has been perceived in the West have reflected wider social and cultural movements in the history of the West's relationship with India.

The period of Western colonial hegemony in India is probably still too recent to gain any objective perspective on its many ramifications for both Western and Indian culture. It is a period that is in a continual state of reappraisal by both Western and South Asian historians. In the field of music this is particularly evident. Although ethnomusicologists are no longer accomplices in trying to create a pure 'Hindu' music, as were Western musicologists in the nineteenth century, the study of certain aspects of Indian music has predominated over othersclassical as opposed to popular, for exampleserving to distort the history of Indian music portrayed by the West. One purpose of this book has been to contribute to a re-examination of musical material pertaining to India's encounter with the West which has previously been overlooked or dealt with in a cursory manner.

From the beginning of the West's encounter with Indian music, there have been cultural confusions and misunderstandings. In the view of the West, Indian music did not conform to the 'rationality' of time signatures, staff notation, and tempered tuning. It was the province of mystics, holy men, and

<sup>1</sup> Oliver 1988: 120.

dancing-girls. Indian music was a symbol of the greatness of Hindu culture, as opposed to the corrupting influence of Islam. It was also the marker of a sensual wonderland, a place of dangerous but irresistible transgressions, conjured up merely by a few oriental-sounding scales. In other words, Indian music was the incidental music to the colonial re-creation of India. This was a mysterious, unpredictable, unknowable place, composed of opposites which were defined by the foreign rulers; not a geographical location, but a place in the Western imagination. When colonialism started to disintegrate in the mid-twentieth century, it did not mean that such creations disappeared with it. On the contrary, they took on new, even more complex connotations, particularly in the realm of popular culture. This is why Indian music in popular culture has emerged as a central theme in this book.

There now exists a voluminous literature on Indian music in a variety of Western languages. It is possible to study Indian music at institutions in North America and Europe. There is a growing community of Indian musicians resident in the West, and concert seasons in Western cities often include music from India. South Asian musicians work with jazz musicians and rap artists. There now exist concertos for sitar and orchestra and contemporary compositions for Indian instruments. At the close of the twentieth century, Indian music is manifested everywhere in the West, in a range of increasingly complex ways. More time needs to elapse for a wider critical perspective to emerge on this new phase of Indian music in the West, and to assess how it will relate to the wider history of the West's cultural encounter with India. Doubtless, much still remains to be discovered, and other histories of Indian music and the West to be written.



## Appendix

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