THE ARCHITECTURE OF SONGS AND MUSIC: 
Soundmarks of Bollywood, a Popular Form and its 
Emergent Texts

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Abstract

This article provides detailed historical context for contemporary Bollywood melodramas, including a handful of feature films shot in Australia. It draws on interactions between technologies and media industries, and popular culture. The first section introduces the uses of music in Hindi films between 1930s and 1960s. Anna Morcom’s (2007) discussions emphasising the ‘eclecticism’ of Hindi film music, dominant tendencies, and modes through which these films deploy certain sounds and songs to produce a recognizable soundtrack are problematised. The second section of this article discusses two major shifts that occur in the patterns of production and consumption of music during the 1970s and 1980s, followed by the formation of ‘brand Bollywood’ in the 1990s. Referring to M. Madhava Prasad’s (1998) formulations, the problem of industrial, and formal ‘mobilisation’ is revisited through screen sound. While Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti (2008) study the popularity of Bollywood music, the author presents a more complicated mapping by investigating older musical exchanges. In this section, specific films like Disco Dancer (Babbar Subhash, 1982), as well as films situated in Australia—specifically Dil Chahta Hai (Farhan Akhtar, 2001) and Salaam Namaste (Siddharth Anand, 2005)—are analysed in relation to the musical designs of contemporary Bollywood films. This article locates the soundmarks of a popular form and historicises its new routes. In this context, Bollywood films appear like a productive model that enables us to more generally recognise the function of songs and music in cinema.

Keywords

Bollywood, soundtrack, melodrama, Hindi film music, cinema in Australia

Introduction

This article shows the complex processes through which Indian films deploy disparate types of song and sound patterns to produce a recognizable structure. While the mise-en-scène of Indian melodramas has been debated at length, little scholarly analysis has focused on the soundtrack, despite the fact that music is an integral part of the melodramatic mode. In this study, I reconsider popular films and the significance of music in them in an attempt to examine the morphology of

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1 I am particularly referring to the wealth of articles included in the Ravi Vasudevan’s (2002) anthology, and his mammoth work published in 2010, as well as Prasad’s (2001) seminal article.
screen sound. Hindi film music may be taken as a model to understand the function of soundtrack and songs in the larger cinematic contexts insofar as the creative extremes, as well as the uniqueness of the Hindi film soundtrack illustrate the ways in which cinema may use music to narrate the complexities of the plot. In addition, an exhaustive inquiry into the composite structures of Hindi film music facilitates an understanding of how cinema draws upon different forms, and shows its complicated correlation with distinct industries and cultural practices.

Building on this contextualisation, the second section of this article addresses two major shifts that occurred in the patterns of production and consumption of music during 1970s and 1980s as well as later with the formation and global acceptance of ‘brand Bollywood’ after the 1990s. Reconsidering M. Madhava Prasad’s (1998) formulations where he categorises 1970s Hindi films according to the “aesthetic of mobilization”, I re-read this problem of industrial and formal ‘mobilisation’ through the soundtrack to show the network of practices within which a cultural form like cinema is located. Within this framework, on one hand, I comment on the emergent cassette cultures of the period; on the other, I study the deployments of sound and music in Disco Dancer (Babbar Subhash, 1982) to make meaning of new musical transactions. Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti’s (2008) anthology on Bollywood music examines its historical significance and its acceptance beyond India. I propose a more elaborate mapping by investigating the customs of musical flows reaching further back into the history of Hindi film music. This context enables a deeper and denser understanding of the changes in Hindi film music and its global communications. This reconstruction of the soundscape of Hindi cinema may be studied through specific texts like Dil Chahta Hai (Farhan Akhtar, 2001) and Salaam Namaste (Siddharth Anand, 2005) in terms of ‘brand Bollywood’ and the structural design of Bollywood films shot in Australia. Ultimately, this article locates the ‘soundmarks’ of a popular form and historicises its new routes. Using this framework and background, the architecture of Bollywood music appears as a productive model that facilitates us to recognise the significance of songs, sounds, and music in cinema in general. The following section discusses melodrama in Hindi cinema arising from other media’s emphasis on songs.

I: The Architecture of a Popular Form: Compositions, Patterns, and Variations

A Short Overview of the Musical Triad in India

One of the significant aspects of early Indian talkies was their connection with the gramophone industry. In the 1920s, gramophone records and film music largely

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2 Singin’ in the Rain (Gene Kelly and Stanley Donen, 1952—US release) remains a benchmark film that, on the one hand narrates the transformation from the silent era (during which stunt movies were a popular genre) to synchronised sound (when musicals became widely accepted); on the other hand, the film also performs various theatrical influences that are drawn into cinema.

3 All films mentioned here are Indian releases. As well, all films, except those specified otherwise, are in Hindi.

4 With reference to the early influences, it is important to consider an indigenous painting from the 1880s (now housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London [ref. no. IS 534-1950/Canto 18]) that depicts Lord Krishna disguised as a woman playing the violin—and not his iconic flute—to entertain his consort Radha.

5 I use ‘soundmarks’ with reference to the Soundscape Vancouver Project (1996) that meticulously recorded (over twenty years) the changes in the environment of the bourgeoning city. The physical attribute (‘marks’) ascribed towards understanding abstract ideas like sound and noise of the city becomes a crucial method that makes changes ‘audible’. The notion of ‘soundmarks’ helps to map the variegated sounds and music deployed in Hindi popular cinema.
operated independently of each other. However, at a later stage in the 1930s, with film studios beginning to control the production-distribution-exhibition networks, gramophone companies became involved with film productions. The wide acceptance of both gramophone records and film music in India became momentous in the 1950s post-colonial period with the intervention of radio, which played a crucial role in popularising film songs beyond cinematic boundaries. Gerry Farrell’s (1993) study of gramophone records illustrates their function for urban middle classes and the ways in which musical activities became fashionable in big cities like Bombay and Calcutta via the availability of records (see Fig 1).6 A new commercial milieu was perceptible as public spaces including the kotha (saloon) and the theatre became sites for musical performance.7 The technological as well as industrial conditions of gramophone recordings opened up new pathways for dynamic exchanges between Indian classical structures and Western instrumentations. By and large, the gramophone industry brought within the public domain new modes of singing, musical patterns and locations of consumption.

Figure 1: Advertisement for ‘Broadcast Long-Playing Records’, published in the daily Amrita Bazar Patrika, Wednesday, February 6, 1935, p4.

With the mass acceptance of the talkies (a popular name for synchronised sound films) it became fairly common to record songs in the His Masters Voice (HMV) studios, and then record them again on the production studio’s disc cutter. Booth observes,

6 Bombay and Calcutta are same as Mumbai and Kolkata, respectively.
7 While Gerry Farrell’s (1993) article explains this condition, a plethora of narratives (cinematic, literary, and theatrical) depicted the new urban milieu (of decadence), focusing on the kotha as a part of the narratives and presenting the (female) performer as one of the main characters. Films like Devdas (P.C. Barua, 1935), Admi (V. Shantaram, 1939), Pyasa (Guru Dutt, 1957) etc, display such conditions.
Two years after HMV released its first film song recording, the industrial and cultural dynamics among the film and music industries and their audience changed significantly. Those developments led to the gradual emergence during the late 1930s and 1940s of a distinct form: the film song...

The talkie system popularised a new film form—‘all taking, all singing, all dancing’ films—and completely altered the structures of narrative cinema. Advertisements from the 1930s show the ways in which talkies were promoted as well as their economic and cultural implications. For instance, an advertisement for Alam Ara (“India’s first talkie drama”, 1931), published in Filmland (June 1931, v2 n66: 15) describes it as 100 per cent “talking, singing, dancing”, emphasising the ‘talkiness’ of the synchronised sound film (Fig 2). Moreover, the transitional aspect of the period appears to be one of the key elements in these advertisements, as they illustrate the manner in which the talkies were gaining popularity. By the 1940s it was common for films to release songs on gramophone records. With the availability of 78rpm and 45rpm records, the public bought songs as autonomous objects. While HMV maintained a monopoly through this period, nevertheless, in the 1980s, it was through the emergence of cassette-culture and the proliferation of the T-series Company that the mass character of the film soundtrack became evident.

Figure 2: Note the contents of the Grihalaxmi advertisement (from Filmland, v 2 n65, June 6, 1931, 14).

Initially known as the ‘Indian Broadcasting Company’, All India Radio (AIR) played an important role in this period. After its inception in the 1920s, AIR eventually became a mouthpiece of the British Government. In the post-colonial period one of the major concerns of the Indian Government was to popularise Hindustani classical music through AIR, to produce a form of (highbrow) ‘culture’ and ‘taste’, which resulted in the banning of Hindi film songs that were considered too populist.

8 One Indian film that truly invested in the soundtrack was Sholay (Ramesh Sippy, 1975). Besides its eerie background score, the film’s dialogue became a big hit via the popularity of 78rpm recordings. Also see Booth (2008).
in style and lyrics. The then Information and Broadcasting Minister, in his attempt to ‘cleanse’ the national mass culture, first decreased the airtime for Hindi film songs and then stopped the naming of the films. However, such endeavours failed miserably as Radio Ceylon (of Sri Lanka) began to broadcast Hindi film songs, and one of its programmes—the Binaca Geet Mala presented by Ameen Sahani—became massively popular. Indeed, radio had far greater reach than cinema, especially in the rural and suburban areas of the sub-continent. In time, Hindi film songs became a part of the everyday and left soundmarks on a vast landscape. By 1957, AIR had to reintroduce broadcasts of Hindi film songs, which were aired through the Vividh Bharati (a new channel for popular music). Effectively, it was the radio that produced a larger constituency for Hindi films as well as popularised the notion that spectacular songs and dances could be consumed as independent units. Moreover, by implication, radio also demonstrated that songs were a dominant aspect of popular Hindi cinema. Thus, an overview of the connections between the ‘musical triad’ becomes a practical backdrop against which the popularity of contemporary film music (as well as the mass character of film music that became dominant later) may be studied.

Music, Songs, and Early Frameworks

The morphology of Hindi melodramas and their uses of music reveal how a popular form consistently borrows from co-existing practices. From its onset, cinema in India (like Hollywood musicals that developed from earlier forms including vaudeville and burlesque) shared boundaries with widely accepted heterogeneous forms like the Parsi Theatre and other popular modes including contemporary theatre, as well as various urban and folk cultures, like Nautanki, Tamasha, Marathi Theatre, and Bengali Jyatra. In short, cinema drew from urban-folk cultures while also changing existing styles of narration and performance. By the late thirties the melodramatic mise-en-scène was marked with prototypes of lighting, movement, as well as overall conventions of studio settings, with ideas of romantic spaces and interiors, acting styles, bodily gestures, etc. Spectacular performance sequences (including songs and dances), extraneous characters not adding to the main plot, comic sequences, rhetorical dialogue, coincidences, non-linear narrative styles, and other kinds of (visual and aural) ‘excesses’ characterised melodrama. Melodrama tackled emotional fervour as well as moral polarities, extreme villainy and resolution of conflict, resulting in the triumph over antagonists by the narrative closure. Ravi Vasudevan discusses how, in melodrama, “a shifting discursive field incorporating philosophical and ethical expressions, emotional excess, comedy, song and dance” (1989: 30) became effective.

Madhava Prasad (1998) states that initially the Hindi film industry adopted a “heterogeneous form of manufacture” (1998: 42) akin to the production of watch

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9 Note that, in the 1980s, every Wednesday, the national TV network would also broadcast a programme of film songs named ‘Chitrahaar’ (or ‘a garland/string of images’). Eventually, it played a crucial role in popularising Hindi film music.

10 See Gupt (2005). Note that ‘Nautanki’ and ‘Tamasha’ are contemporary North Indian folk forms with specific styles of performances and uses of ‘loud’ music. ‘Marathi Theatre’ and the ‘Bengali Jyatra’ are regional forms. While ‘Marathi Theatre’ is well-known for its set design, the ‘Bengali Jyatra’s’ forte lies in the exploitation of the stage (with the audience sitting on three sides), and characterisation. All these theatrical forms, which deploy music in defined ways, travel from rural to sub-urban areas, and have been popular across disparate times-spaces. Also see Rajadhyaksha (1987).
making. Building on this, I argue that a ‘heterogeneous form’ of film production in effect produced a ‘composite narrative mode’. To quote Prasad,

Thus, there are an infinite variety of songs, many extremely talented musicians with a tremendous capacity for blending different traditions of music and creating a seemingly endless supply of catchy tunes... (1998:44)

If we are to suggest that, by the late thirties and early forties a vibrant melodramatic form had become the popular mode of address, then, besides the iconic meaning of images, frontal address and a mixed form of narration, the deployment of music in song form and as background score, along with the uses of some sound effects, became a successful narrative device. Indeed, the song and dance sequences effectively became the most commonly accepted narrative tool. In addition, in the Indian context, the idea of background score and songs often overlapped to produce the distinctive style of popular soundtracks.11

While sound patterns were being produced, experienced musicians were lured away from the professional stage and radio. For instance, before Rai Chand (or R. C.) Boral joined the New Theatres Ltd., he was with the ‘Indian Broadcasting Company’. Boral was trained in North Indian styles of music and worked with classical patterns as well as disparate Bengali folk music and kirtans (Radha-Krishna devotional songs). He introduced the lyrical Ghazal (North Indian) style of singing to the Bengali music scene. Moreover, his handling of string instruments along with the shehnai (Indian ‘oboe’) and the bamboo flute created the unique music of Chandidas (Bengali, Debaki Bose, 1932).12 Biswarup Sen commented,

Raichand Boral brought western instruments such as organ and the piano into the film orchestra and was responsible for introducing new music techniques – his score for the Vidyapati (Bose, 1937) is the very first instance of the use of chords and of western harmonic principles. (2010: 92)

With increasing popularity of the talkies’ ‘singing-dancing’, songs, sound effects, and music were used as score to emphasise the meaning of film storylines. For Indian cinemas, the background music often transformed into song-sequences and, at times, vice-versa. For instance, when in love or while suffering, the heroine (or the hero) would commonly sing a song to enunciate her/his feelings. In such situations, songs would also be performed as the background score, which was a convention in the traditional and popular theatrical forms like Jyatra.13 More importantly in this context, while much of the deployment of songs emerged out of the local theatrical practices, when it came to the uses of background music per se, Indian filmmakers often borrowed Hollywood generic conventions, even though innovations were recurrent and often outstanding. For example, Chandidas applies

11 In his essay on sound, eminent filmmaker Ritwik Kumar Ghatak locates five elements of the sound track, which are incidental noise (ambient), effect sound, dialogue, music, and silence (republished in the [uncredited] Bengali collection [2007] Chalachitra Manush Ebong Aro Kichu [Films, People and Something More’], Calcutta: Dey’s Publishing).

12 Also made in Hindi by the same house in 1934.

13 The Jyatra form employs a particular character prototype referred to as the ‘Bibek’ or ‘conscience’, which enters the stage at crucial junctures and conveys through song the emotional quotient of the moment. In Devdas (P.C. Barua, 1935) the blind singer K.C. Dey functions like ‘Bibek’. In my documentary (2002) titled Jyatra: A journey into the lives of the people’, made for the national TV network, I look into processes through which Jyatra becomes a popular cultural form.
the staccato sound (on a cello) to produce laughter, though at the same time the composer applies kirtan to establish the plot. In this approach, the film exposition is notable. We observe Rami (the female protagonist) busily washing a sari and singing aloud. As Rami looks intently at Chandidas (the male protagonist) and poses in various ways (both to the viewer and to Chandidas who is often outside the frame), Kankanmala (her friend and sister-in-law) enters the scene. Kankanmala voices obvious social concerns about a lower-caste widow being in love with an upper-caste priest. Rami’s responses to this question existing social structures and reduce Kankan’s retreat into a comic gesture. The standard staccato music (regularly used for comic interjections) adds on to this. This uneasy juxtapositioning of the sacred and the profane, or kirtan and genre-music, is also evident towards the end of the film when the song ‘Cholo phire apono ghore’ (‘Let us return to our homes’) in raga malkauns (a serious, meditative raga generally in lower octaves), performed soulfully by the blind singer (K. C. Dey), is followed by ‘concert’ music or a typical musical pattern used in Jyatra. As evident from such examples, R. C. Boral and the director of the film mobilised various cultural signs.

In the early thirties, while at times musical experiments in cinema would mean the complete avoidance of background music, on other occasions, music directors would deploy intricate musical arrangements and orchestrations. They mixed not only Hollywood musical compositions with Hindustani classical ragas (as discussed by Morcom [2007] and others) but also combined indigenous urban as well as folk styles. Thus, the first sequence of Vidyapati (Debaki Bose, 1937) depicting Vasant Utsav (Spring Festival) employs an elaborate scheme. It not only demonstrates different musical modes, but meticulously features the different instruments on screen, just as the images are inspired by the medieval miniatures paintings along with the popular Bazaar art to represent poignant moments of love and celebration.14 Composer R.C. Boral also borrowed the style of the padavalis (ballads) of the medieval poet Vidyapati (on whom the film is based), and deployed myths and ballads as he composed for the film, drawing on a large repertoire of music modes as well as instrumentation.

Broadly, comic scenes involving physicality or horrifying moments suggesting fear often incorporated conventions of genre films. Hence staccato and pizzicato were used for comedy, while high-pitched, fast-paced violin and cello were deployed to suggest apprehension. Similarly, while joy was often associated with the sitar (plucked string instrument) and certain set ragas, surprise, or grief would be suggested through a loud sound, randomly struck piano chords or strident cello notes.15 Besides cinematic references, film music was also making use of another popular style, that is, band music (for instance the Maihar Band) created by distinguished musicians like Alauddin Khan and others.16 This meant new kinds of sound, as well as a new pool of music, became available for modern urban entertainment. In time, what came to be recognised as ‘Hindi film music’ were exceptional kinds of musical compositions (that may be traced through multiple musical cultures), which both subverted established musical practices as well as exploited elements of it. Thus, an in-depth research of Hindi film music illustrates the ways in which a popular form grew out of contemporary practices of

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14 See Guha-Thakurata (1992) and Davis (ed) (2007) for discussions on popular Bazaar art.


16 I detail this in my 2007 article (see: http://www.jmionline.org/jmi6_3.html)
mechanical reproductions and created new domains for musical interfaces with audiences.

Articles in journals of the thirties and advertisements for records suggest that the public in India (as a colonised country) was familiar with popular Hollywood modes. In the context of colonisation, western classical music was a familiar style, particularly for the English-educated populations in Calcutta and Bombay. By the 1940s, songs were composed in jazz styles, as well as in waltzes, Latin American styles and other popular genres. Music directors were experimenting with western instruments, harmony and orchestration. Popular melodrama used such forms enthusiastically and often employed caricatures of such syncretic forms in a somewhat self-reflexive way. A film like *Griha lakshmi* (Bengali, Gunamaya Bandyapadhyay, 1944) for instance, includes an elaborate sequence by showing on screen the various instruments that were used (including *sitar*, *shehnai*, piano, guitar, *tabla* [percussion], harmonium, etc.) for the scene as well as highlighting the different musical forms, singing styles and modes of performances. Furthermore, a social-reformist film like *Kunku* (Marathi, V. Shantaram, 1937) uses ambient sounds as an accompaniment to the songs. The film represents Nira (the female protagonist) as a modern individual who seeks her rights, and enjoys singing along with an entire orchestra that is shown playing on the gramophone record. Developed through a number of sequences, this culminates in her performing with an English song being played on the gramophone. *Kunku* underscores the complexities of cultural practices during the colonial period as well as the patterns by which filmmakers addressed and negotiated it (Fig 3).

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17 Published in journals like *Batayan* (Bengali) 1932; *Bioscope* (Bengali) 1930; *Cinema Sansar* (Hindi) 1932-33; *Chitra Lekha* (Bengali) 1930-31; *Dipali* (Bengali) 1931-1932; *Film Land* 1931-32; *Film World* 1934; *Kheyali* (Bengali) 1932; *Nach Ghar* (Bengali) 1926-27 and so on, housed in local libraries as well as in NFAI, Pune and BFI, London.

18 Satyajit Ray’s *Charulata* (Bengali, 1964) is an appropriate example of such transformations during the colonial period. Also see Chatterjee (2002).

19 Note that this is not the same film as shown in Figure 2: ‘Grihalakshmi/Grihalaxmi’ or the ‘goddess like wife’ pitted against a philandering husband was a popular trope in Indian films.

20 Music composed by Himanshu Dutta. The film was also made in Hindi.

21 Also made in Hindi as *Duniya na Maane*, music by Kesavrao Bhole. See advertisement cited here.
By the late 1940s and early fifties, while the *film-geet* (film song) became an independent spectacular ‘song and dance item’, and functioned in parallel to the story, some elements of the Hindi film orchestration had a cinematic (or specific generic) connections as well. Thus, the exploits of the sound of violin, which dominated classical Hollywood cinemas, became a norm for mainstream Indian films. By and large, in scenes dealing with ‘sad’ moments (presenting for instance death or separation), the melodramatic affect would commonly be produced using violin music. Moreover, by the forties, a recognisable pattern for the Hindi film song was established. It deployed first, *alaap* (prelude), followed by *Gaaut and taan* (refrain-verse), along with instrumental interludes. Anna Morcom (2007) after Alison Arnold (1988) analyses the ‘eclectic’ tendency of this pattern. For instance, Morcom discusses particular films including the groundbreaking *Mother India* (Mehboob Khan, 1957) in detail. She examines the climax of the film, where Radha (the mother) sings ‘O mere lal a ja’ (‘O my son come to me…’) for her son Birju. The lyrics as well as the visuals demonstrate the intense love of the mother for her fugitive son, and her powerlessness to protect him. The song is a mix of several *ragas* (or what was popularly referred to as mixed-classical). Morcom illustrates how, in the last refrain, the song moves into a ‘coda’ and there is a structural shift in the tone. While this kind of mixing of North Indian classical and Western musical patterns was common in several films (including another landmark film *Mughal-e-Azam* (K. Asif, 1960), Morcom disregards other scenes from *Mother India*

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22 For instance (as communicated personally by the eminent film historian Ashish Rajadhyaksha), the well-known re-recordist of Hindi cinema, the late Mangesh Desai had said that, “every time a woman says that ‘main ma banne wali hoon’ [I am pregnant] I add eight frames of a sound that goes ‘dhaaang’”.

23 Music by Naushad Ali.
that deploy disparate indigenous musical practices, including the shehnai (often played during marriage) in scenes of separation and desolation. Such scenes emphasise the fact that there is not only a mixing of ragas and Hollywood style music, but also the presence of a more complicated deployment of sound influenced by multiple local and international references. Thus, the Holi (festival of colours) sequence in Mother India is elaborate, visually displaying instruments (like dhol/drums) then moving on to the song-dance sequence, which also involves Radha’s memory (thus, a flashback/dream sequence is inscribed). While this song includes diverse singing styles, and draws on semi-classical as well as Radha-Krishna love songs, it also narrates Birju’s story and ends with a fight with sticks. Clearly, Hindi film songs serve manifold purposes, which include narration of the plot and the establishment of the mood.

For the background track, chromatic flutes, moving strings, or the romantic sound of the piano, indigenous instruments, accompanied by female-chorus were utilised regularly. Morcom discusses how, around the 1950s, the film song orchestration expanded. As in Hollywood films, the chorus was chiefly used to produce a sense of large scale. In short, a sense of epic grandeur was produced through the music, just as the mise-en-scène of the major films attempted such a style. Nevertheless, a particular sequence of the epic Mughal-e-Azam deploys an extraordinary rendition of the raga Sohini (Sohini generally uses higher octaves, and is associated with sensuality; it is rendered at pre-dawn) by the eminent classical exponent, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, in the scene where Anarkali (the female protagonist) meets Salim (the male protagonist) in his chamber. This startlingly languid sequence, devoid of any activity as such, frames striking silhouettes of the character of Mian Tansen (the court musician of Emperor Akbar) singing almost to himself and juxtaposes those with images of the falling petals from the ‘Anarkali’ branches (the pomegranate tree), to evoke a dreamlike sense of love and longing. Thus, the architecture of the Hindi film music, as mapped through certain well-known films, demonstrates the multiple layers of a grand soundscape. Additionally, this varied, mixed, and mutated condition of the early frameworks shows the basis on which the music in the era of transnational flows is fabricated.

The Dominant Structures of Music and Melodrama

Writing about the melodramatic mode and Awaara (Raj Kapoor, 1951), Ravi Vasudevan (2002) examines the iconic function of the female protagonist through the role of (young) Rita’s photograph in the narrative. A film about a young man’s (Raj) claims for his legitimate rights through his illegal modes of operation, Awaara remains a signpost of the social-melodramas and was popular across Europe (see Fig 4). In the critical scene, Rita’s photo hangs as a moral peg in Raj’s shanty room (and also recurs in the final confrontation scene with the father). In this scene, Raj arrives from ‘abroad’ (in reality, jail) and he explains to his mother how he is involved with an ‘export-import’ business. However, he confesses before the image of the young girl, and the iconic framing of Raj looking at Rita’s photo underlines this. Later, as Raj rushes out, his mother is shocked to find a gun in his suitcase.

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24 Note that an earlier film like Devdas (P. C. Barua, 1935) uses shehnai to connect disparate scenes of separation and desperation.

25 Also note that, playing and moving in circles with small colourful sticks is a West Indian dance form (garba).

26 Music by Naushad Ali.
The camera tracks from the mother (Leela) to Rita’s photograph to underline the journey from innocence to crime, which then dissolves into a cabaret. Such mixing of codes, generic and emotional elements, make the social films of the 1950s ‘an imaginary space’. However, for the history of popular films, the uses of sounds in this scene become crucial. For instance, the cabaret music precedes the image, and overlaps with the mother’s face to emphasise the theme of criminality as well as Leela’s part in this ‘plot’ of crime and punishment, which comes to light only towards the end of the ‘narrative’. Therefore, music acts as a forceful tool within the narrative and predicts the dénouement right from the outset. Indeed, one of the most significant melodramatic moments of Awaara is the scene where (on a rainy night) heavily pregnant and helpless Leela lies alone in bed. Judge Raghunath (her husband) returns home reeling under the suspicion that the unborn child (Raj) is not his. Later, Leela is thrown out of the house and this is conveyed via a series of (low angle) iconic images shot in high contrast. Added to this, the powerful sound of the strings produces deep a sense of fear and loss. This moment of acute vulnerability and injustice is furthered highlighted when the images of the rain-drenched streets are juxtaposed with the song of the labourers (singing about the plight of mythical Sita from Ramayana). The Ramayana trope in Awaara (as evident in the court-room scenes as well), along with the epic dimension of the mother’s suffering, are effectively explored through the unique deployment of music.

Figure 4: The iconic publicity image of Awaara, cover page, Film India, October, 1950.

An earlier film like Barsaat (Raj Kapoor, 1949) becomes important in this context for three reasons. First, in a self-conscious manner, the film exploits the violin (as opposed to sitar) as the ‘sonic signifier’ of romance and love. Thus, every time the hero plays the violin in an enigmatic style, the heroine is magically drawn towards

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27 Music by the Raj Kapoor Films regular, Shankar Jaikishan.
him. In effect, it is the violin that produces the intensity of longing and desire. Second, Kapoor narrativises this design and creates three sequences to make meaning of the music. Consequently, the heroine suffers in love and expresses joy every time the violin is played. Clarifying that it is a violin and not a _sitar_, Pran (played by Kapoor) admits it is not his tune, but a cluster of notes that he has picked up from a nightclub. Eventually, Kapoor reveals the actual violin player (Joe Menezes, a Goan musician) thereby indicating multiple musical influences. Third, in a poignant moment, Reshma (the female protagonist), after hearing the music, rushes towards Pran and embraces him passionately. This shot attains historical impact because it is the very moment when the well-known RK Films logo or the emblem of Raj Kapoor’s productions is figuratively formed within the film. More important perhaps, post-_Barsaat_ playback singers like Lata Mangeshkar and others, emerged out of anonymity to receive their due recognition and become legends in their own times. In summary, post-_Barsaat_ musical narratives within melodramas and the deployment of sound and music—including songs—were transformed.

In one of the crucial sequences, when Reshma’s marriage is being fixed to someone other than Pran, she pines for him. As she lies on the upper bunk of the bed (with her father sleeping on the lower bunk), the camera tracks in for closer shot, just as the strings (played by Pran from outside) sound more intense. This juxtapositioning of close-ups (shot in high contrast, while the characters are placed in a setting that uses value-laden objects/props) along with the strident string chords produce one of the most memorable scenes of Indian cinema. In this scene, as for previous occasions, upon hearing the tune Reshma rushes out. Pran is seen (in a shot that uses doors to create the sense of frame within frame) playing a variation of a Franz Liszt _Hungarian Rhapsody_, while the lights reflected back from the waters highlight the unease. Reframed by a series of doorways, Reshma darts in and embraces Pran passionately. A sharp cut to a closer shot is supported by music, which stops abruptly to underscore (through its absence) the unique seductive quality of the composition. This iconic image of Pran, holding the violin in one hand and Reshma on the other, is later taken up and its abstract form eventually became the logo of the company for its later films (Fig 5).

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28 Visit http://www.oup.com/us/behindthecurtain for revelatory interviews with musicians. Note that Goa was a Portuguese colony and became part of India in the early 1960s. Portuguese influences on Goan architecture, food, culture, and music make it somewhat distinct from the English impact in other parts of the country.

29 Note that the iconic RK Films logo is a part of popular cinema-myth, and has been quoted in a film like _Saawariya_ (S. L. Bhansali, 2007). However, this logo does not figure in _Barsaat_ (or earlier); instead it is visually formed within the narrative of the film.

30 The film itself does not give any credit to the singers like Lata Mangeshkar, who did playback singing for the heroine. I have discussed the subject of playback singing in Indian contexts in my 2010 article.

31 In _Barsaat_ only the words ‘R K Films’ appear on the screen, instead of the above discussed symbol.
Further important in this context is Kapoor’s reworking of the Hungarian Rhapsodies in this and in other films. The sequences involving the introduction of love (where Pran explains the tune as well as makes the distinction between a sitar and a violin), and the recognition of desire and its intensity through music, followed by separation as well as mis-recognition (where Reshma confuses the actual violin player, who is playing in the dark, as Pran), demonstrate the significance of music in melodrama. While Kapoor applies the score as a narrative element, Barsaat also illustrates the self-reflexive trope in popular melodramas. Kapoor takes a popular Western composition and treats it within a specific Indian context (as well, describes it to Reshma and consequently to the audience) to underline the function of music in cinema (by presenting Joe Menezes in the climax).

Besides such massively popular films it is essential to consider numerous other important films that utilise sound and songs in engaging ways, though somewhat differently from the normative frameworks. For instance, while the orchestration of Hindi popular cinema often produces a sense of largeness or greatness (as described by Morcom, 2007) there are a host of other instances where there is restraint, as in films like Pyaasa (Guru Dutt, 1957) or Bandini (Bimal Roy, 1963). Bandini, in its climactic (murder) sequence, simply treats ambient (mechanical) noises to create melodrama and emphasise suspense, grief, trauma, and loss. As the suffering female protagonist, Kalyani discovers the truth about her lover, and her silhouette is juxtaposed with the screeching noise of the machine (coming from outside) that becomes dominant (Fig 6). Kalyani encounters a series of doubts before (somewhat unwittingly) deciding to kill the woman who is now her ex-lover’s wife. This point (or the premise of the film) is presented through a dialogue-less

32 Apparently reworked in Mera Naam Joker (1970) and Bobby (1973) as well.
33 ‘Mis-recognition’ is a significant trope of melodrama, and the ‘mis-recognition’ of the tune as well as the character becomes a fundamental intervention of Barsaat.
34 Music for both the films was composed by S. D. Burman.
35 The film has a rather elaborate plot spread out over disparate spaces and times. At this point, Kalyani, eventually arrives to the city after the death of her own father (having waited for her revolutionary lover’s return to the village for long). While working as a nurse in the city hospital, she discovers that the angry woman she is caring for is in reality her lover’s
sequence and the unprecedented association of silhouettes (close-ups) with noise. In short, despite a set pattern being conventionally deployed to express emotions (such as using song melody in romantic and emotional scenes), there were remarkable variations that defied standard codes. Moreover, complicated instrumentation, inclusion of tabla or other drums, bamboo flute and brass instruments, as well as large string arrangements that integrated violins, cellos, sitar, sarod (string instrument) and guitar, created a complex soundscape of Hindi musicals.

Figure 6: A frame from Bandini highlighting Kalyani’s silhouette juxtaposed with mechanically produced sound.

II: Transformations of the Sonic Paradigm: Technologies and Cultures

Writing about the modes of representation of the 1950s, Ravi Vasudevan shows how

[T]he codes of American continuity cinema are also used in the Hindi cinema of the period... In fact, these codes are not absent, but they are unsystematically deployed... (2002: 105-6)

Vasudevan’s analysis of the nine shots of Andaz (Mehboob Khan, 1949) demonstrates the mixing of the iconic, tableaux and continuity shots.36 I wish to use this ‘method of visual analysis’ to study the ‘melodramatic soundtrack’ and the interface between disparate sounds. Andaz is regarded as the pivotal film through which the different aspects of Hindi melodrama may be examined. As described by Kishore Valicha (in Willemen, 1993) Andaz was one of the early films that negotiated new demands for representation of urban sophistication, including activities like playing the piano, riding horses and playing badminton. While Andaz popularised the love-triangle plot, at the centre of its narrative lay the question of family in the post-colonial period.

wife. Later, she somewhat unconsciously poisons her to death. The film narrates Kalyani’s life in flashback after she has been jailed for her crimes.

36 Music composed by Naushad Ali.
Returning to the shot-by-shot analysis of a particular sequence, it is engaging to read the curious combination of music and sounds in it. For instance, we observe Nina’s (the female protagonist) friend dancing to musical compositions produced by instruments of Central-Asian origin. These shots are iconic and are largely outside the diegetic flow of film. These are then followed by shots and reverse-shots of Dilip (the second lead) playing the piano and singing ‘Tu Kahe Agar’ (‘If you insist’). Curiously, while various string instruments and drums are audible, what remains elusive to the ear is the sound of piano. This structure is evident in other songs as well. Willemen (1993: 59) writes, “Dilip Kumar plays the piano and a whole orchestra can be heard striking upon the soundtrack, but no piano”. The moot point is that the ‘mixing of codes’ and the said discordance are discernible on the soundtrack as well. Additionally, such mixing of sound codes effectively produces the noises and unease of our post-colonial modernity. 37

Thus in Andaz piano becomes a principal property within the mise-en-scène; moreover, if Andaz is a story of emergent urban cultures, and Dilip is presented as the social climber without any aristocratic background, then piano appears like a significant sign that represents this social (dis)order. Dilip appears to be charming because he plays the piano, and therefore a number of sequences underline this. Yet, oddly in the above-mentioned sequence, while Dilip sings his heart out, and while the sitar, tabla and other instruments, play joyously in the background, the piano returns only in the interludes. While such a musical approach becomes a conspicuous example of uneasiness regarding urban practices, it also becomes a dominant paradigm for other Hindi films, where the piano has a tremendous visual meaning, suggesting modernity, youth, romance, grandeur, elitism and thus is a crucial thing to be seen. Yet it is rarely audible along with the romantic melodies.38

Figure 7: Publicity still from the film Andaz.

37 For discussion on India politics and its uneven modernity, see Chatterjee (1997).
Intriguingly, the object of desire shifts from piano to the electric guitar in the 1970s. Thus (the white) piano of Hindi films almost disappears from the mise-en-scène, to be replaced by the string instrument associated with youth. This certainly is a crucial turn if we consider the images of the enigmatic flute as the ethereal love symbol (used by mythical Krishna), and thereafter the uses of violin in Barsaat, followed by deployment of piano as the sign of modernity. Therefore, the exploits of the electric guitar must be seen as a paradigm shift because of the kinds of sounds it produces and the visuals it creates. It came to represent a specific kind of contemporariness that is relevant until today. Furthermore, with the introduction of electronic keyboards, sequencers, and synthesizers, the sound graph of Hindi films, and the processes through which music was produced, was completely transformed. In a later phase too, ‘samplers’ recreated the sound of traditional strings and percussions. To quote accordionist Sumit Mitra,

_Samplers... changed everything. They started using keyboards to cover everything, and acoustic instruments became much less. The violins, cellos, all those things were replaced slowly, slowly._ (cited in Booth, 2008: 250)

While it may be argued that it was R. D. Burman’s music (often borrowing African percussions and Latin American strings) that expressed the “radical new versions of pleasure, sexuality, and desire” of the seventies (Sen, 2010: 95), then the music of _Disco Dancer_ (1982) by Bappi Lahiri in reality underscored the “vast network of inflows and outflows” (Sen, 2010: 88) of Indian popular music as well as the growing cassette culture. Within this framework, one needs to connect issues of musical modes to its industrial aspects and analyse histories of transformations of both the soundscape and modes of consumption. For instance, in _Disco Dancer_ the hero fights his rich opponent to become a successful singer and the specific uses of the guitar within the narrative show the mobilisation of the dispossessed. Moreover, perhaps for the first time in the history of popular Indian cinemas, a choreographed and stylised fight sequence was edited to the musical beats, just as a song-less number showcased the new ‘disco’ sounds. Clearly, ‘disco’ became the defining sound of the 1980s, and independent ‘disco’ moments in the film (outside the narrative logic) show the shifts from sweet melodies to abstract (and mechanically) produced sounds. Nevertheless, in the climax of the film, the mother is (accidentally) electrocuted by the new sound machine, indicating apprehensions about emergent sound technologies. Disco music, the lights, the mirror ball, the electric guitar, and Mithun Chakraborty, the dancing star of the film, suggest violent ruptures within existing designs, which seem to be deeply connected to the dystopic (post-emergency) political scenario, as well as to youth, exuberance, anger, and the burgeoning cassette industry.

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39 Within the traditional (though disparate) Indian modes of performances, one is supposed to sit and perform (as in _sadhana_ or worship). So when singers stood and played the (electric) guitar, it signified a major break within Indian cultures of performance.

40 _Guddi_ (Hrishikesh Mukhejee, 1971) provides a scathing critique of the industrial structure as well as such playback singing and non-sync use of music.

41 While within the schema of this paper there is no scope to elaborate on R.D. Burman’s music, nevertheless, is must be noted that songs like ‘Dum Maro Dum’ (‘inhale [marijuana]’) in the film _Hare Rama Hare Krishna_ (Dev Anand, 1971) were extremely popular and opened up new routes for Hindi film music; just as the image of the female star Zeenat Aman strumming the guitar in the film _Yaadon Ki Baaraat_ (Nasir Hussain, 1973), produced its own resonances. Quickly, lengthy musical competitions (as shown in films like _Hum Kaise Kama Naheen_ (Nasir Hussain, 1977) as well as in _Karz_ (Subhash Ghai, 1980) etc.) became important aspects of Hindi film narratives.
Writing about the ideology of Hindi cinema, Prasad (1998) describes the films of 1970-1980s along the lines of an ‘aesthetic of mobilization’. Part II of the book addresses the progress in the film industry during the period of political turmoil from late-sixties to mid-seventies. While Prasad shows how this led to the formation of middle-class parallel cinemas, he suggests that popular cinema “went through a phase of uncertainty before regrouping around a figure of mobilization, a charismatic political-ideological entity embodied in the star persona of Amitabh Bachchan” (1998: 24). Prasad reads the star identity of Bachchan as an outsider with proletariat traits and leadership qualities. The Bachchan figure, which was identified with a primordial anger, displayed populist leadership qualities.42

This reconstitution of the industry appears to be an interesting backdrop against which a film like Disco Dancer may be read. Note that, in 1982, colour TV was introduced to the Indian public. More important, during the 1980s rapid changes took place as Bachchan became a Member of the Parliament after Prime Minister Indira Gandhi’s assassination, while his popularity as a star began to decline. After a decade of unprecedented success, his films fared poorly. Moreover, by and large it was a weak decade for popular cinema before it reorganised itself as a global product in the post-liberalisation era in the 1990s. In addition to this, as shown by Peter Manuel (1993) this period was marked by the changes within the music industry with the introduction of cassette tapes, which assisted the mass distribution of music and bolstered the music industry. Manuel writes how the economic policies of the late 1970s led to the phenomenal growth of the cassette industry in India. The Indian consumer-electronics industry burgeoned during this time. Manuel writes that, “Sales of recorded music - almost entirely cassettes by late 1980s - went from [USD] $1.2 million in 1980 to $12 million in 1986...” (1993: 62) Indeed, cassette technology enabled the successful reorganisation of the music industry in India. In the early 1980s ‘two-in-ones’ (recorder cum player) were a ‘craze’ just as the album Disco Deewane (1981, music by Biddu—see Fig 8) ensured that what constituted the idea of music in the sub-continent would now be understood differently (as electronically produced sounds). With the arrival of cassettes, ‘music’ became available in the local grocery shops. Thus a film like Dance Dance (Babbar Subhash, 1987) not only used the star value of Chakraborty, but also narrated the super-success of T-series Cassettes Company and its proprietor Gulshan Kumar.43

42 I have discussed elsewhere (2002) the meaning of the star persona of Bachchan.

43 See Ashish Rajadhyaksha (2007) for a critical reading of such industrial shifts.
Moreover, the sound (as well as cries and noises) of this ‘aesthetic of mobilization’ becomes crucial in this context. The piano used in the films of the 1950s and sixties gives way to electric guitar in the 1970s and eighties, thereby producing new images and re-presenting ‘the dispossessed’ through sound design. It was a period of intense political and ideological shifts beginning from the mid-sixties. Since an authoritarian and populist government oversaw this situation, the reorganisation happened in a somewhat disaggregated form in what Prasad describes as the “moment of desegregation” (through chapter 5). The political system was able to either assimilate or marginalise radical challenges through a populist mobilisation. Such developments, to summarise Prasad (1998), were made possible by a combination of a widespread politicisation of cinema audience.

In effect, Disco Dancer reproduces the ‘plot’ of Bachchan cult film Deewar (Yash Chopra, 1975) by bringing together issues of mass discontent and by contemporising it. Deewar addressed existing topics of social inequity in the context of confusions and disillusionment of the post-Independence era. In Deewar, Vijay (the protagonist) is posited as an archetypal social outsider. Deewar became symptomatic of the nation gearing up for emergency (1975), while the tattooed body of Vijay was an index of the physical as well as psychological distress of the masses. While the wounded body ‘embodied’ the social history of the nation, the film recounted the post-independence frustrations in familial terms. As in Deewar, Jimmy (the protagonist) in Disco Dancer lives with his mother who has been jailed for crimes she has never committed. Jimmy is traumatised by this childhood memory of his mother being misrepresented as a chor (thief) and waits for the opportune moment to take his revenge. Since the offenders of his mother’s honour come to control the music industry, Jimmy’s battle is eventually played out on the musical stage. This appears like the mobilisation of the music aesthetic as well, since the dispossessed returns with vengeance, however, the anger is displaced onto the new musical terrain, and is enacted through the deployment of particular kinds of electronic sounds (such as the sharp sound of electric guitar), as well as the overall restructuring of the mise-en-scène.

44 There are other plot elements like the ‘absentee father’ along with the presence of a ‘father figure’ that recur in Disco Dancer. As well, the memory trope that haunts Vijay (‘mera baap chor hain’ or ‘my father is a thief’) seems to return to Jimmy with a certain degree of difference (as he imagines the neighbours crying, ‘ma chor, beta chor’ or ‘the mother is a thief, the son is a thief’).
The core question is: how is the plot element, which is narrated through the mise-en-scène in *Deewar*, re-enunciated through music in *Disco Dancer*? First, one needs to consider the fact that, in the eighties, the film industry as a system had become fragile. Second, it was the moment when the circulation of B-Movies increased on the mass scale, and disparate mass cultures represented through television and cassettes became extremely popular.\(^{45}\) Within this changed scenario of reception, *Disco Dancer*’s resources are not invested in more elaborate set designs (like the interiors spaces of *Deewar*) or even character development, memorable dialogue and major stars. Instead, it exploits the new and easily available sounds to make meaning of the political discordance. For example, beginning with the story of the alleged theft of a toy guitar, the film narrates the plot of the swift rise of a street singer/dancer. In its attempt to displace the revenge story onto the musical site, the film introduces new cinematic modes (for example, repeated shots of the feet of the actors/dancers as opposed to the usually dominant close-ups of faces) and innovative editing norms (such as repeatedly cutting along with the musical beats instead of dialogue cues). Thus, in the sequence where Jimmy goes for his first big performance, on his way he is stopped by his rivals. As the goons circle him, they snap their fingers and count the beats (like sixteen, which are then multiplied by two and at the point of spiky tension divided by two or four). Initially Jimmy protests meekly, however, after his guitar is smashed, he rises (underlined through slow motion shots) and starts snapping his fingers. Thereafter, he gradually starts counting the beats (emphasised by echo-effect) and eventually beats up the rogues before he proceeds into the performance. While the entire scene is edited according to the beats, the use of starburst filters (to enhance the lighting) creates the impression of disco on the streets.\(^{46}\)

This choreographed action-sequence mirrors the dance sequence that follows. The film also demonstrates the emergent mass cultures through scenes showing Jimmy’s star-value via related consumer merchandise such as Jimmy ice-cream, tee-shirts, fabric, perfume and so on. Chakraborty’s star persona, labelled ‘poor man’s Bachchan’ by the popular press (and also India’s Michael Jackson because of his dark skin and dancing skills), was like the black singer who was attempting to disrupt the social injustice plot through music.\(^{47}\) Thus the architecture of the soundtrack in *Disco Dancer* and *Dance Dance* become significant examples of the crucial changes within the cultural industries, mass media, broader political agendas, as well as issues of music aesthetics and its many trajectories.\(^{48}\)

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\(^{45}\) Also see Valentina Vitali (2011) for a discussion on B/Horror movies in the 1980s.

\(^{46}\) Another instance of ‘disco’ on the streets comes up in the film *Saheb* (Anil Ganguly, 1985), in which Bappi Lahiri mixes disco with Bengali folk music to produce a popular number.

\(^{47}\) Considered a trilogy, the third film in the series, *Kasam Paida Karne Wale Ki* (Babbar Subhash, 1984) features a song ‘Jeena Bhi Kya Jeena’ (‘How do I live’) that was apparently modelled on Michael Jackson’s video ‘Thriller’.

\(^{48}\) In recent times, musical elements from Chakraborty’s films, created by Lahiri, have been sampled in popular American music. For instance, in 1988 Devo, a United States musical group, produced the song ‘Disco Dancer’ after being inspired by the song ‘I Am a Disco Dancer’ from the film. A British-Sri Lankan musician has also reworked the song ‘Jimmy, Jimmy, Jimmy’ in 2007.
The Sound of South: Emergent Codes and Global tracks

Sangita Gopal and Sujata Moorti (2010) introduce their book on the travels of Hindi song and dance by noting how the elements of song and dance in Hindi films are “the single most enduring feature of Hindi cinema…” (ibid: 1). Furthermore,

*Bollywood cinema survives for its viewers as a song or as fragments of a song, so we hear of the guide at the Great Wall who hums a tune from Disco Dancer... or the taxi-driver in Athens who connects with an Indian passenger over the title song of Awaara... (2010: 3)*

While *Bhangra* beats have travelled over many northern hemisphere countries, in 1990s India, when the popularity of satellite TV soared, it ushered in an era of exceptional re-mixes of Bappi Lahiri songs, accompanied with kitschy videos. It is within such contested contexts that the term ‘Bollywood’ has been theorized in disparate ways, illustrating Hindi films’ global turn in the era of economic liberalisation. However, the circuits of its songs, which are national, sub-national, as well as trans-national, require further elaboration. The dissemination of Hindi film songs and dances, along with food and clothes, operating according to different aspects of globalization become important in understanding the new forms of Hindi films and global modes of consumption. Certainly, even when the renowned filmmaker Satyajit Ray put it somewhat sarcastically that Hindi film music embraced “classical folk, Negro, Greek, Punjabi, Cha-Cha, or anything...” (1976: 75), this conveys the formal openness of film songs and its possible travels across the globe.

49 Indeed, my own encounter with a guide (an old lady) at the Blue Mosque, Istanbul in 2008, was as follows. Speaking in Turkish, she inquired about my nationality. Having being told that I was Indian, she started humming ‘Awaara Hoon...’ [I am a vagabond]. When I asked her why they loved *Awaara* as much, the lady replied, “because it makes us cry”.


51 See Rajadhyaksha (2009).
While the term Bollywood has circulated within the public domain for some time, scholars of Indian cinema study it as a specific shift within the Hindi film industry during post-liberalisation. Thus, Rajadhyaksha's (2002) description of 'the Bollywoodization of the Indian cinema' is in fact the corporatisation of the film industry in its attempts to re-integrate finance, production, and distribution, along with the music industry. Prasad suggests that, "successful commodification of Indian cinema as Bollywood in the International market is based on the idea of an unchanging essence that distinguishes it from Hollywood" (2008: 49). Films like Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (Aditya Chopra, 1995) and Kuch Kuch Hota Hai (Karan Johar, 1998) have been studied as crucial points through which the trademark Bollywood emerges and presents its global imaginaire. Among other films, it was Dil Se (Mani Ratnam, 1998) that appeared on the Top 10 British film list while Taal (Subhash Ghai, 1999) was on the US Top 20 chart. Moreover, Daya Kishan Thussu illustrates how Subhash Ghai’s Yaadein (2001) was screened at the British Academy of Film and TV in London, and entered the UK Top Ten in “just one weekend” (2008: 103). Films like Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham’s (Karan Johar, 2001) attracted gross box office income of (UK) £2.50 million, and was released in 41 theatres, while Veer Zaara (Yash Chopra, 2004) earned £2.01 million, and was released in 60 theatres across UK.

Bollywood’s international acceptance (and scholarly analysis) is perhaps related to the ways in which it has negotiated the subject of diaspora and larger problems of migration. Indeed, the conditions after the Second World War forced a mass exodus from South Asian countries to the North, which eventually produced new kinds of publics, spaces, and cultures in those countries. Jigna Desai discusses the “flow of capital, cultural productions, and [the ways in which] people cross state borders in mass migration” (2004: 14). Curiously, the beginning of the film Salaam Namaste underlines such travels by showing how the hero and heroine as well as other characters (who belong to suburban India) have moved away to perform their ‘global selves’ in Australia.

Clearly, travel is one of the key aspects of such films where a diasporic population returns to India (largely metaphorically) to relocate its hesitant self. Caren Kaplan

52 Kaarsholam (2002), Kaur and Sinha (2005) as well as Rajadhyaksha (2009) refer to the ‘Indian Summer’ festival in London 2002, as an important point from which Bollywood becomes acceptable globally, and is represented as something that is ‘kitschy and cool’. The ‘Indian Summer’ festival in London 2002 showcased a variety of Hindi popular films, along with Satyajit Ray’s films. It also launched music-composer AR Rahman’s and Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical Bombay Dreams in London’s upmarket theatres. Similarly, the Victoria and Albert Museum presented Hindi film posters in their exhibition titled Cinema India: The Art of Bollywood. As well, it was the ways in which Moulin Rouge (Baz Luhrmann, 2001) quoted a popular Hindi film song (‘Chamma, Chamma…’) that gave Bollywood this global appeal beyond ‘curry and sari’ stereotypes. Likewise, Lagaan’s (Gowariker, 2001) Oscar nomination relocated Indian popular cinema on the international map. Moreover, the astounding success of Slumdog Millionaire (Danny Boyle, 2008) underscores how Bollywood is now big business, and the manner by which certain stereotypical themes (like brothers and lovers being separated, and later being united) and narrative styles (like abrupt song and dance sequences, and ‘Jay Ho’ in the end, or episodic narration) may be appropriated by a pre-eminent canon.

53 As cited by Rajadhyaksha, where he further elaborates how, Released simultaneously on 44 theatres in North America, Taal has set a record for Bollywood releases abroad by notching the highest first three-day collections… Taal’s initial collections have even surpassed that of Hollywood blockbuster like Haunting, The Blair Witch Project and Eyes Wide Shut [f]. (The Economic Times, 1999) (2002: 94, 95).

54 Sources Screen Digest, June, 2005 and UK Film Council, 2006. For production details, see Daya Kishan Thussu (2008, 97-113).

55 I have discussed this in detail in (2009) (see: http://www.jmionline.org/jmi8_5.htm).
(1996) writes about the significance of diasporic displacements and travels. Return and journey (as a quest for identity) seem like recurring themes in these films. Nevertheless, such movements are not without excitement, surprise, sexual exuberance, permissiveness, transgression, fun, exploration of new places and customs, consumer goods and so on. Within this context, consumption acquires a new dimension and emerges as a way of being. Hence, the recent Bollywood films offer audiences indices of ‘western-style’ glamour, clothes, locations, wealth, and liberty within the structures of its neo-traditional views that overlap with the anxieties of migration. This holds true for a film like *Dil Chahta Hai*, which in the second part transports its lead protagonists to Sydney, Australia, for work and leisure. While Europe has been particularly popularised by filmmakers like Yash Chopra in the recent times, *Dil Chahta Hai* posits itself as the evolving urban culture (as depicted in the song ‘Tujhe Dhundta Hoon...’/‘In search of you’) and self-consciously produces a visual and sonic trajectory to highlight the major shifts within Hindi cinemas. Moreover, it relocates itself within a relatively unexplored territory by showcasing Australia as the new land for consumption. A story of three young men, the first half of *Dil Chahta Hai* is shot in Bombay and in the exotic landscape of Goa, while the second half shows the urban and metallic-dominant built cityscape of Sydney with its flyovers, underground trains, restaurants, cinemas, parks and so on. According to Ranjani Majumdar,

> Air travel, car travel, leisure, art, discos, music, fashion, style, attitude, grace, love, and desire - DCH is a combination of all these, perfected through a play with the interior... (2007: 142)

After its release, *Dil Chahta Hai* attracted a cult following and prefigured certain fashions attending to notions of leisure, friendship, love, work, living spaces, clothes, hairstyles, and other lifestyle objects. In short, *Dil Chahta Hai* represents a hyper-reality that can only be realised in terms of sounds and images. Consequently, the film introduced specific instrumentation and electronic sounds to the Hindi film soundtrack oeuvre. Moreover, a film like *Dil Chahta Hai* also marked a notable decline in the deployment of several conventional Indian instruments including the *tabla*, *harmonium*, *sitar*, and bamboo flutes. Furthermore, in a particular scene, Shalini (the female protagonist) takes Akash (the male protagonist) to the iconic Sydney Opera House (to an operatic performance of the Troilus and Cressida tragedy). In her attempt to make him understand the meaning of love, she translates the entire performance to the reluctant hero (and audiences). This curious translation of a ‘high’ cultural performance as well as a novel musical form and the assimilation of it as a part of

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56 I investigate the question of travel through *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* in my book chapter in Gera Roy and Beng Chuat (2012).

57 For further elaboration see my article with Manas Ray (2002).

58 Popularity of these instruments declined by the 1970s and 1980s, however, a traditional Qawwali would still be heard in the 1980s, but totally disappears from the music scene in 1990s, except where quoted by directors like Farah Khan in her films.

59 A recent film *Zindagi Na Milegi Dobara* (Zoya Akhtar, 2011), which presents the problems of corporate lives intercepted by luxury travel and tours in Spain, may be read as a sequel to *Dil Chahta Hai* in the sense that it continues with a similar ethos and explores newer terrains, adding fresh sound elements to the oeuvre of Hindi cinema.
Indian (and diasporic) everyday makes *Dil Chahta Hai* a landmark film that effectively signalled the transformation of Hindi cinema as global Bollywood.\(^{60}\)

Shot in Melbourne, *Salaam Namaste* takes a step further by producing an identifiable soundtrack associated with particular locations (like the beach) and thereafter connecting certain kinds of sound with specific images of Australia.\(^{61}\) For Bollywood films audiences, then, the sound of *Salaam Namaste* would in due course signify the ‘sound of Australia’. Moreover, it produced particular instances of urban fantasies including visits to shopping malls, savouring a particular brand of ice-cream, and enjoying exotic beaches. Through these means, *Salaam Namaste* offered a lifestyle that to an extent was unavailable in India at the time it was produced.

Interestingly, the sound travels many zones of aspiration in one of the early sequences of *Salaam Namaste*. In this particularly lengthy sequence, Nick (Saif Ali Khan), an engineer and a cook, wakes up to discover that Amber (Preity Zinta), a doctor and radio presenter, is demanding a public apology from him over the radio. The scene cuts to Nick driving a car and explaining the situation to his boss over the mobile phone. This dialogue-scene is then intercepted by a longish introduction

\(^{60}\) Note that in a particular sequence in *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* there is a reference to operatic singing in which the characters ridicule the high-pitched style of the singer, and thereafter, burst into a Hindi song.

\(^{61}\) *Kal Ho Naa Ho* (Nikhil Advani, 2003) acted out by the same pair (Priety Zinta and Saif Ali Khan) is set in New York. In the film, to quote Ravi Vasudevan, the

\begin{quote}

sense of the city is more engaged, at a street level, in terms of participation in crowded pedestrian movement and shooting inside buses, railway stations, and inducting iconic features of street life such as food vendors into the mise-en-scène of the sequence. (2010: 380)
\end{quote}

Similarly, with reference to the mise-en-scène as well as the soundscape of *Salaam Namaste*, one may argue that the sense of Australia is remarkably more engaging here, especially in the songs like ‘My Dil [heart] Goes Mmmm’, where they travel across the city and are involved with the Melbourne street life.
to Nick’s friend (a lawyer), which is followed by Nick (now driving again) calling Amber’s radio station to threaten her. As Nick speaks to Amber’s boss and threatens to sue them, the boss puts the call through to Amber and their conversation is broadcast live. Cut to: we see Amber in a petrol station and as she takes the call, the verbal clash begins. As Amber enters the station shop (fig 10) and hears their own conversation on the radio, her reaction is inter-cut with shots of people listening to their tête-à-tête. As this brawl continues, Amber and Nick drive past each other unknowingly (since they are heading to the same location), and the sprawling Melbourne landscape and attractive beaches are revealed. Salaam Namaste demonstrates the multiple modes through which music may be consumed in contemporary times and its shifting relationship to locations of consumption. In the process the film provides a virtual soundscape of Australia.

In summary, if Dil Chahta Hai introduced the idea of urban leisure to the Indian scene, Salaam Namaste went a step further by showcasing the problems of diasporic life, along with its highs and lows. Thus, to use Rick Altman’s words, what makes this history of music and sound “worthy of our attention” (2007: 6) is not just that it adds to the existing literature on screen sound or on Hindi films. In addition, the “fundamental interdisciplinary nature of sound” (ibid: 7) facilitates us to re-visit our social histories, approaches to history writing, and tools of critical practices. In effect, this becomes a crucial point of departure as we study popular Hindi cinema through its soundtrack, and posits it as an alternative model (as distinct from Hollywood musicals for instance). In a specific way, Bollywood film music enables us to comprehend the meaning of our global (and liminal) everyday, which is marked with disparate sounds, songs and music, cutting across genres as well as diverse film practices. In addition, the sounds, music, and songs map the processes through which the history of Hindi cinema has evolved via several intersecting factors. These include shifts in the economic and political conditions, film production practices, popular culture as well as media convergence and the emergence of new consuming citizens. Indeed, the altered soundscape of Hindi melodramas effectively reflects the ways in which contemporary Bollywood encompasses significant socio-historical factors such as diasporic migration and population movements while also building on a significant history of music, sound, and songs in popular cinema.

Acknowledgements:
I wish thank Jyoti Chowkhani for personally providing the films of Sree Bharat Laxmi Pictures. This is a unique addition to our collection of films from the 1930s and 1940s. As well, images from the thirties are taken from the Media Lab digital archive, Jadavpur University. The publicity image of Andaz comes from my work done with Sarai, CSDC, Delhi.

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