# Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema

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consumption of film songs, film songs are viewed more in their entirety, so gaps at the audio or lyrical level matter less.

To successfully describe film song style without being faced with endless exceptions, general and vague categories, or the conclusion that they are a kind of senseless hotchpotch involves taking both the popular music role and the cinematic role of film music into account and understanding the complex blending of the two. Contrary to Prasad's outline of film songs as a component of the Hindi film text varying according to their own tradition rather than the demands of any particular film narrative, film songs need to be seen as multi-media, musico-dramatic entities as well as popular songs in order to make sense of both individual songs and the development of the genre as a whole. As is argued in the next chapter, the cinematic context as well as the popular music role extends also into the borrowing of Western music and the adaptation of indigenous music in Hindi film songs and backing scores.

Chapter 4

# Music, Narrative and Meaning in Hindi Films[1]

As the examination of the production process of Hindi film songs in chapter two shows, songs are intentionally composed to musically and lyrically express particular cinematic situations, incorporating details of the film story and the characters, drama, visuals (locations, cinematography), as well as the action and timing of the song situation. As described in chapter three, what can be identified as the basic musical and lyrical stylistic parameters of film song are always adapted to some degree to a particular situation and parent film in a given film song, and may even be abandoned if the director feels the situation demands this. Some of these basic parameters can themselves be seen as cinematic and in the style of Hindi films, such as the use of orchestras, the 'degree of unauthenticity', and the instrumental interludes.

Although songs are composed prior to shooting, they are arguably as geared around narrative meaning as is the background music (which is composed after shooting), and they stylistically overlap considerably with background scores. Songs often change style according to shot changes or scene changes in their picturizations, as would a background score, thereby disregarding and leaving 'gaps' in their established song idiom. Many of these 'gaps' involve music that is in a background score style rather than the song's style, using distinctive techniques derived from Hollywood. Such sections, which serve the visuals rather than the song as such, are sometimes deleted from the audio version of the song that is released on cassette and CD, thereby making it sound more like 'a song', or 'plain music'[2] and less cinematically and dramatically representational. Whilst the songs use background score style music, the background scores themselves often use and adapt material from songs, and some of the background music is sometimes included on the published audio recording. Songs and background scores of Hindi films are further linked by the fact that song composers can and do compose background scores too, although as they become more famous and hence expensive, many compose the (less

[1] A version of this chapter was first published in 2001/2 as 'An understanding between Hollywood and Bollywood? The meaning of Hollywood-style music in Hindi films' in *Music and meaning*, special issue of *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* (vol. 10, part 1): 63-84. I am particularly grateful for Martin Clayton, the editor of the special issue, for his input in pulling the arguments together.

[2] Music director Lalit Pandit commented that 'a song should be a song' (7th January 1999, recording session for *Dil Kya Kare* (1999)), and music director Utpal Biswas that film songs were often 'not plain music' (interview, 3 March 2000). Of course, there is no such thing as 'plain music' or a song that is not a song, but this clearly refers to film songs that contain material that is singularly related to visual, narrative and cinematic factors.

high-profile) background scores only for bigger releases. As music that is clearly intended to be a part of narrative meaning, Hindi film songs as well as background scores are a fertile area for the study of music and meaning. This chapter explores some aspects of the use of Western music in Hindi films from the point of view of narrative meaning. Firstly, it investigates the use of various Western musical techniques and styles in Hindi films, and addresses the question of their intelligibility to Indian audiences. Secondly, it examines how music of Western and Indian origins has come to be used in Hindi films, and what the reasons behind this are. The use of 'Western' music in Hindi films can be attributed to the global phenomena of Westernization and modernization, and also to the hegemony of Hollywood in world cinema. However, there are certain biases and patterns in the use of traditional/Indian and non-traditional/Western or Westernized music in Hindi films that suggest that there are more specific forces at work as well.

An exploration of both these points will lead to a better understanding of why and how Western music is used in Hindi films, and of the role of narrative in Hindi film music style. It will also contribute to wider questions of music and meaning and music and narrative within (ethno)musicology and film studies.

## An understanding between Bollywood and Hollywood?

Around 1950, the quantity and scale of background music in Hindi films significantly increased, with many aspects of Hollywood scoring entering Hindi films, such as large symphony style orchestras. This is easily traceable to direct Hollywood influence,[3] and also to technological advances around 1950 that made the recording of large ensembles more feasible (interviews with Mr Damle, son of recording engineer of Prabhat studios, 4 April 2000, and record collectors Narayan Mulani and Suresh Chandravankar, 6 March 2000). Recordings of popular styles such as jazz, rock and roll, disco etc. were and still are easily available to Hindi film composers. From the point of view of meaning, this usage of Western music in Hindi films raises several questions. Firstly, is this music used in the same way (i.e. are the same techniques used in the same dramatic situations to create the same effects) as it is in Hollywood films? Secondly, if it is, then how is this possible if music is a culture-specific semiological system rather than a universal language? In addressing these questions, this section returns to an old debate concerning musical meaning, which has revolved around the poles of musical meaning being inherent in the sounds versus it being culturally learned and arbitrary.[4]

The assessment of musical meaning in Hindi films will be carried out through an interpretation of the narrative context. This is not without problems. Music itself is active in the creation of narrative meaning rather than just supporting it (Gorbmann

[3] Many composers have been and are interested in Hollywood film music and Western orchestras, such as Keshavrao Bhole (1964), Naushad (interviews, 15 November 1998 and 20 April 1999), and Jatin Pandit, of music director duo Jatin–Lalit (interview 4 November 1998) to name just a few. See Dwyer (2000: 106) and Vasudevan (1993) about various aspects of Hollywood influence on Hindi films.

[4] See Shepherd and Wicke 1997, chapter 1.



1987: 14-18; Kalinak 1992: 20-39; Cook 1998), and therefore interpreting musical meaning from narrative context is prone to circularity. I have tried to minimize this risk by focusing on scenes exemplifying emotional extremes or 'monopathic emotion' (Brooks 1991: 58), which are very much a feature of the melodrama of Hindi films (Vasudevan 1989; Thomas 1995). Furthermore, I have tried to focus on interview material from composers and directors and observations of music making in the Hindi film industry carried out during nine months of fieldwork in Bombay between 1998 and 2000. Unfortunately, formal audience research was beyond the scope of this project, although it would certainly contribute usefully to this topic. Due to space considerations, only a small number of examples are discussed in detail here. However, this research draws on the viewing and hearing of hundreds of Hindi films and film songs.

### *Western and Hollywood music in Hindi films – some examples*

The first example of distinctly Hollywood music in a Hindi film is from a scene from *Mother India* (1957), possibly the most successful film in the history of Indian cinema.[5] The story takes place in a pre-partition, pre-modern village and follows the life of Radha (Nargis), who arrives there as a young bride. Her mother-in-law has taken a loan from the evil and cunning Sukhilal, which plunges the family into a desperate struggle for survival, made even worse when Radha's husband dies. Her younger son Birju grows up rebellious, full of anger at Sukhilal and thirsting for revenge, and Radha struggles to keep him out of trouble. Eventually, Birju goes too far and assaults Sukhilal. He is wounded in the attempt and hides from the furious villagers. Radha tries to save Birju but gets in trouble herself, at which point Birju saves her. When out of danger, he leaves her and runs off. She runs after him, and starts to sing, *O mere lāl ā jā...*, 'O come to me my darling, I'll embrace you, I'll hide you in my heart' (the lyrics of the refrain). Both the lyrics and visuals of the song express the intense love of the mother for the son and her desire to protect him from harm. This song is not based on any particular rag, but is *rāg*-like and Indian in style, possibly a mixture of several *rāgs*.

After the last refrain, the song moves into a coda where there is a drastic change of mood. Although Birju was running away from his mother during the song, he kept looking back, apparently responding to her words, and appeared vulnerable, clutching his wounded shoulder. In the coda however, he stops looking back. As the coda begins there is a shot of Birju running along a road towards the camera, having shaken off his mother. As he reaches close up, he looks up slowly, glowering. We then see him grab a gun, mount a horse and ride off with a group of young men. We see the wedding procession of Rupa, Sukhilal's daughter whom Birju loathes and plans to abduct as revenge. Birju rides down to where the procession is passing and

[5] As ticket prices increase, recent hits keep 'breaking all box office records', but in real terms, few films can rival the commercial success of *Mother India* or its status of all-time classic in Hindi cinema. The only possible contenders are *Kismet* (1943), *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), *Sholay* (1975), *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!* (1994), *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), and possibly *Gadar - Ek Prem Katha* (July 2001).

draws up to the palanquin where she is seated. The coda ends here. Whilst the song is an expression of the mother's love for her son, the coda shows an outright rejection of this love and a giving way to rage, and is profoundly disturbing. In turning away from his mother, the archetype of goodness in the moral universe of the Hindi film (Thomas 1995: 165-168), Birju is seen to be rejecting the most fundamental kind of love and moral goodness and heading for certain disaster.

The coda is very much in Hollywood style. It uses a large symphony style orchestra with strings, woodwind and trumpets. It is played in a loud and heavily accented style. There is liberal use of violin tremolos in bars 11-12, 20-23 and 27-28. Extensive chromatic movement is found in the musical lines and sequences in bars 14-18 and 26, and heavy use of the diminished seventh in bars 13 and 20-24. There is also metrical ambiguity, with the section wavering between a 6/8, 3/8 and in bar 26, an 8/8 feel. The musical line is mostly chromatic, full of large leaps, and unmelodic, in the sense of melody as 'an extended series of notes played in an order which is memorable and recognizable as a discrete unit (hummable, if you will)', (Kalinak 1992: 5). The end of the refrain and the coda are transcribed in example 4.1. In this example, C = G (a fifth above).

A further example of Hollywood style music in a Hindi film is a scene from another all-time classic of Hindi cinema, *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), a historical romance telling the tragic story of the love of Emperor Akbar's son Salim (Dilip Kumar) for the maid Anarkali (Madhubhala). In this scene where Anarkali first meets Salim, a gift of a statue is presented to Akbar. Because the statue was not finished in time, Anarkali had to take its place. Salim unveils what he believes to be a statue by shooting an arrow at the clasp that fastens its covering. This moment is filled with fear, alarm and suspense as we see an arrow heading towards the flesh and blood heroine. During this moment, the classical sitār music which has been playing softly in the background throughout the scene suddenly changes into a loud, heavily accented phrase built around the whole tone scale, played in brass, clarinet, bass clarinet and tremolo strings. There is also a prominent tritone leap between bars 4 and 5 in the clarinet and bass clarinet, and metrical ambiguity in the move from 4/4 to 5/4 time in bar 3. This is transcribed in example 4.2. In this example, C = B flat (a tone below).



**Example 4.1 Final refrain and coda of *O mere lāl ā jā*, Mother India**

Figure 4.1 The statue scene, *Mughal-e-Azam* © DVD still



Clarinet
Bass Clarinet
Trumpets
Strings

Cl.
B. Cl.
Tpts

**Example 4.2 The statue scene, *Mughal-e-Azam***

Such music is also found in modern Hindi films, such as in the scenes from *Raja Hindustani* (1996) where the villains, having engineered a bitter fight between Raja, the hero (Aamir Khan) and Aarti, the heroine (Karisma Kapoor), then present each of them in turn with forged divorce papers to try to split them up permanently. This is a terrible moment in the film. Having seen Aarti, the rich Bombay girl, and Raja, the small-town taxi driver fall in love and get married against all odds, their separation and worse still (particularly in the Indian context) the possibility of divorce, seems to be going against what is destined and what is right in the moral universe of the Hindi film. As Aarti reads the papers a look of shock and horror comes over her face. This is accompanied by a highly unmelodic line played loudly in the violins, with semitone intervals and leaps of major and minor sevenths covering three octaves in two bars. It then turns into diminished seventh and dominant seventh arpeggios. This is transcribed in example 4.3. This example is transcribed at original pitch.

Strings
Strings

**Example 4.3 Aarti's reaction to the divorce papers, *Raja Hindustani***

These techniques of heavy chromaticism, diminished sevenths, augmented scales, tritones, unmelodic lines with large, awkward leaps, tremolo strings, and loud, accented playing in brass are typical of the scoring for strongly disturbing scenes in commercial Hindi films since around 1950.[6] Ostinatos, or repeated motifs, are often used alongside these other techniques. What in Hollywood are termed 'stingers' – sudden, loud, accented chords – are also used to express sudden shock, such as when a character hears some appalling news (Gorbmann 1987: 88-89). Many unmusical sound effects such as screeches and crashes are also used in scenes of terror and horror in Hindi films, especially since the 1970s. Combinations of these techniques have come almost exclusively to constitute the musical vocabulary of scenes such as these in all kinds of commercial Hindi films.

Another particularly distinctive Western musical sound that is found in Hindi films is that of the large symphony orchestra, large string ensembles, and 'Western' (as opposed to Indian) choruses.[7] Like in Hollywood films, they seem to be used to create a feeling of largeness, grandeur, uplift, and epic feeling: 'In tandem with the visual film narrative, [lushly scored late romantic music] elevates the individuality of the represented characters to universal significance, makes them bigger than life, [and] suggests transcendence, destiny' (Gorbman 1987: 81-82). This is the case with the scores of *Mother India* and *Mughal-e-Azam*, both epic films, which use the symphony orchestra and choruses extensively.[8] The big orchestral sound and/or choruses are found in most Hindi films in uplifting scenes, such as the final victorious moments of Hindi films, where evil is defeated or love triumphs. This is the case with the end of *Nahīṁ honā thā* from *Pardes* (1997) discussed in chapter 3 above, when the theme song *Mere mahabūbā* returned with a large string and chorus arrangement, as Arjun beat Rajiv, the villain, to a pulp. The sound of the symphony orchestra, the violin section and choruses is also key to the larger- and more-glamorous-than-life, and melodramatic style of Hindi films, summed up in the adjective *filmī*.

[6] There are some earlier films which use aspects of this style, but only in a limited way. Before 1950, backing music was very sparse. A very early example of extended chromaticism and an unmelodic motif is in a scene from *Devdas* (1935). Devdas (K. L. Saigal) is in mental torment, torn between his love for his sweetheart Paro (Jamuna), who is socially below him, and the desire to please his family, who want him to leave her and go to Calcutta. A slow ascending chromatic scale accompanies Devdas as he holds his head in agony, trying to decide what to do.

[7] Both what are termed Indian and Western choruses are used in Hindi film music. The Indian choruses are used mostly in songs that traditionally use group singing, such as wedding songs, devotional songs, and seasonal songs. The Western choruses are used extensively in songs and background scores, often singing to 'ah' and singing in harmony. The Western choruses in the film industry mostly comprise local Christian singers and Anglo-Indians.

[8] Naushad, composer of *Mother India* (1957) and *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960), and Shankar–Jaikishen are usually seen as being the music directors who introduced a large orchestral sound to Hindi film music around the early 1950s. *Awara* (1951) used a large orchestral in the famous dream sequence. Naushad is said to be the first composer to have used a 100-piece orchestra for the fantasy, epic film *Aan* (1952).



The sound of massed strings playing melodic lines, another Hollywood favourite, is also found ubiquitously in Hindi films. As in Hollywood, it is commonly used as a way of signifying romance. However, this is only part of the vocabularies of both Hollywood and Hindi films for romance. For romantic scenes in Hindi films, melody, often in the form of a song, is used alongside many instruments other than massed strings, such as *sitār*, *sarod*, Indian flute and guitar, and in a variety of more or less hybridized styles ranging from Indian classical, light classical and folk, to Western pop or symphonic. Although there are crossovers in the use of massed strings alongside what we can term 'melody' or 'song' in romantic scenes in Hindi and Hollywood films, the subtleties of style are immense, and would mostly have very different associations in both contexts. For example, major and minor would not necessarily signify happy and sad romance in India, and instruments like sitār or *sarod*, Indian melodies, and Indian singing styles would tend to signify the orient, or exoticism in the Western world, unless carefully used. The subtle associations of different *rāgs*, different regional songs, and different life-cycle or festival songs (birth, marriage, the spring festival Holi and so on), would virtually all be lost in the Western context.

Various Western instruments and instrumental styles are used in Hindi films. For example, soloistic piano was used widely in early Hindi film songs, particularly from the late 1940s till the 1960s. In films like *Andaz* (1949), the piano is often heard playing in a pianistic, late romantic style. The piano is usually heard playing in this soloistic way when it is picturized and therefore playing diegetically. In *Andaz*, the heroine is shown to be very wealthy and highly Westernized, and the piano in the drawing room and in the soundtrack is a symbol of this. The story is about how her free, Western ways lead to her making friends with a man who is not her fiancé, resulting in misunderstanding and ultimately disaster. Although the sound of such piano playing may be found in Hollywood movies of that era, it would not have these same connotations. Rippling, romantic style piano music may connote love, classical music and high culture in Western films, but not the sense of an urban, Westernized elite as it has done in Hindi movies.

In more recent Hindi films, the use of bluesy saxophone music is used to accompany 'unvirtuous' women, another of Hollywood's favourite clichés (Kalinak 1992: 120-122; Gorbmann 1987: 80-81 & 83). Such music is used in *Raja Hindustani* when Aarti buys herself a skin-tight red sequined mini dress and appears at the shop door pouting at Raja. Of course, Aarti is not a vamp, she is the heroine, but she looks like a vamp in this dress, which is underlined by the music. That this outfit is unsuitable for a girl like Aarti is very clearly expressed to us by Raja's disapproval of the dress, and then by a group of unsavoury characters who take Aarti for a vamp and harass her, whom Raja then fights to protect her. The use of this musical cliché is very similar to that in Hollywood films.

Various Western dance or song styles, such as jazz, rock and roll, waltzes, disco, reggae and so on, are also used in Hindi films of various eras. Arnold discusses the use of such diverse musical styles as musical eclecticism, a chance for music directors to experiment and bring novelty to film songs and to help make them appealing to a national rather than a regional audience (1988). Although such eclectic use of Western song and dance styles has much to do with the popular music aspect of film

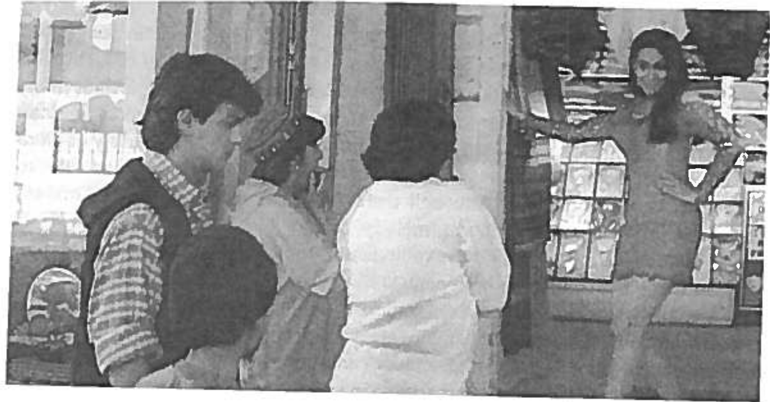

**Figure 4.2** **Aarti in red dress, *Raja Hindustani* © DVD still**

song and global fashions, when eclectic styles are foregrounded in songs, they are usually used dramatically in urban situations or connected with urban or modern characters, and bring a sense of Westernization and modernity to the scene. For example, *Bābū jī dhīre calnā*, 'Go slowly mister!' from *Aar Par* (1955), based on a Mexican popular song, is sung in a bar. *Pyār kar liyā to kyā*, 'So what if I've fallen in love', a rock and roll style song, is sung by the younger generation in *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976), whose modern values are contrasted to those of the elder generation. Such songs could not be used in films like *Mother India*, *Mughal-e-Azam*, *Pakeezah* (1971) or *Gadar - Ek Prem Katha* (2001), all set in traditional surroundings. Whilst these eclectic styles seem to add a general sense of modernity, Westernization and even urban-ness when used in Hindi films, in the West, each of these styles is distinct and has its own specific history, sub-culture and associations, and would most likely be used in connection with these.

*Musical Universals?*

Although not exhaustive, these few examples illustrate a degree of crossover in the use of Hollywood music in Hindi and Hollywood films, which can be seen particularly in scenes of disturbance, discomfort, trauma, fear and evil. The use of chromaticism, diminished sevenths, accents, unmelodic motifs, tritones, ostinatos, 'stingers' and so on in these scenes is so similar to Hollywood films that it would be possible for Hollywood and Bombay composers to score for these scenes in either location.[9] This is certainly not the case for other scenes, such as romantic scenes (whether happy, sad or erotic), celebratory scenes such as festivals or weddings, or

[9] Comic scenes also share many conventions in Hindi and Hollywood films, such as staccato and pizzicato. However, an investigation of these conventions is beyond the scope of this study.



devotional scenes. The use of the symphony orchestra and choruses for big canvas, epic sound is also common to both traditions, as is the use of the bluesy saxophone music for 'bad' women. Other types of Western music have different associations when used in Hindi films from when used in Hollywood films, such as the rippling, late-romantic piano and the Western popular rhythms and song styles, such as jazz, rock and roll, disco and so on.

Such a convergence of meaning is intriguing in these two contexts. How is this Hollywood music able to communicate apparently successfully to the Indian audience? European and American culture has little to do with Indian music, and although Western pop and rock music has some following in India, particularly since cable TV brought music channels like MTV to India in the 1990s, the 19th Century romantic, symphonic music upon which such Hollywood music is based has an extremely limited popularity there. Before jumping to any conclusions about universality, it is necessary to investigate how these Hollywood clichés may be creating their effects in both contexts. The Hollywood/Western context is taken here to be tonal music. For the Indian context, I have been guided by interview material, work by other scholars, and also material from classical *rāg* theory, which many film composers, even contemporary ones, referred to in discussions. Although classical *rāg* music is only one part of Indian music, it is the only one that has provided a body of theory, which makes it useful in the discussion of even contemporary film music. The aspects of *rāg* theory drawn on in the discussion below relate to some of the broader melodic properties of *rāgs*, which is applicable to much folk music melody, and more importantly, to the 'Indian', modal melodies (Arnold 1991: 139-141, 166-168, 173-175 & 188-189), or even the hybrid and Western melodies used in film music.

The use of the bluesy saxophone music in both Hindi and Hollywood films to mark a woman as unvirtuous is almost certainly a convention learned from Hollywood. In Hollywood films, it may be seen as originating in the context of American society in the early decades of sound film, where this type of music carried for many 'implications of indecency and promiscuity through its association with so-called decadent forms such as jazz, the blues, and ragtime' (Kalinak 1992: 120). There is no reason why these musical forms should carry such connotations in the Indian context. In Hindi films, the bluesy saxophone may partly evoke loose sexual morals through being clearly Western in origin. However, a lot of other classical or popular Western music is used in Hindi films without this association.

The use of large ensembles like the symphony orchestra, large string sections, and choruses for largeness, grandeur and epic feeling appears to be based on an iconic association or homology between the largeness of the ensemble and the scale of the sound (many instruments and instrumental timbres, and a wide range of dynamic contrasts[10]) and the largeness and hence grandeur of the effect (Feld 1988: 92-94; Turino 1999: 226-227). Keshavrao Bhole described his reactions to seeing

[10] The dramatic contrasts possible in the symphony orchestra through the range of instrumental timbres and dynamics available, and its appeal for Hindi films is discussed below, pp. 159–172.

the Western symphony orchestra in a tone of wonder, marvelling at its sheer size and the quantity of instruments that contributed towards one sound:

> Between 1919 and 1930 I had seen several excellent silent films at the Capitol, the old West End and the Opera House. At Capitol and Opera House the theater had an orchestra pit in which was seated a full-scale English orchestra which would play while the film went on and would elaborate the emotions portrayed with its myriad combinations and sound volumes. … The tonalities, the particular timbre of each instrument and how they could come together so magnificently engaged my mind. I was baffled by the way they could play different *swaras* [notes] in different scales and yet not make a mistake, not sound flat. Those lined sheets of music before them, the way some instruments were silenced while others were introduced, and their combination, sometimes so soft and then so grand, evoking such sentiments. When we played or sang our music in groups everyone played the same *swara* (*Maze Sangeet* from Ranade 1991b: 50-51).

Music director Naushad explained to me how doubling or tripling a melodic line in different octaves would bring grandeur to it: 'this is a single melody in one octave, and if you divide it into three octaves then a feeling of greater grandeur will certainly come.' He went on to also explain the reasoning behind the use of bigger ensembles in film music in terms of their effect of grandeur:

> 'Previously everything used to be in one octave. Then in order to bring a feeling of greater grandeur to [the music], the films started gradually using more instruments. They took piano – piano isn't an Indian instrument – they took sitār together with the piano, the mandolin too. And not just that, they took the Spanish guitar too ….' (Interview, 20 April 1999).[11]

Contemporary director and producer Anil Sharma also commented on the association of the big Western orchestra with grandeur and largeness of effect, and therefore its importance to the style of commercial Hindi cinema. When I inquired whether it would be possible to make a commercial film without using a large orchestra and a symphonic style, like Satyajit Ray has done in his films, he replied that it would of course be possible, but they would not do it because

> These [commercial] films are very big, the visuals are very big and with just those sounds, without symphony, these visuals cannot match. Those dramatic effects cannot match. In Satyajit Ray, the visuals were not big, and the dramatic effect, the scenes were such they were having their own dramatic effect, you did not need to have a background music to enhance them to have those kind of a background music. … But these kind of films what I am making, because they are big canvas films so you have to have symphonies and those kind of things to enhance the effects in background and song (Interview, 15 April 1999).[12]

Also inherent in the use of big ensembles for grandeur in Hindi films is the iconic association of a large ensemble with a large budget, economic power, and hence a grandiose scale. Arnold notes how in Hindi film music, 'orchestral size not only indicated musical choice or financial well-being but became a status symbol for the music director' (1991: 175). The growth of the symphony orchestra in the West followed a similar logic.[13] Indian wedding bands also illustrate this correlation of size of ensemble with wealth and status (Booth 1990: 246).

The iconic relationship behind the connotation of the symphony orchestra, a large string section and choruses, with an effect of largeness and grandeur, is not arbitrary or *just* learned through exposure, since the 'sign is related to its object through some type of resemblance between them' (Turino 1999: 226). However, this does not make it universal. For example, even though the in-sync and out of phase, 'lift-up-over-sounding' style of singing of the Kaluli of Papua New Guinea is iconically related to their environment and egalitarian social structure, the local missionary could not understand their inability/reluctance to sing in unison (Feld 1988: 94-96). To a Kaluli, or an outsider who has been taught the concept of 'lift-up-over-sounding', the not singing in unison seems perfectly natural, right and obvious, but to someone who has not understood or had the chance to understand, it is not. That the Western symphony orchestra can effectively connote largeness and grandeur in Hindi films is related to the fact that scale, wealth, excess and grandeur are readily recognized in India (as in many cultures), where rich people have bigger houses, bigger and more cars, cars rather than bicycles or donkeys, more possessions, and so on. This relationship is also 'explained' in the course of Hindi films, where these large ensembles are used alongside other manifestations of scale, wealth and grandeur (such as lush and glittery costumes, houses the size of football pitches, and larger-than-life emotions and characters).

Although the symphony orchestra is of Western origin, unlike the popular styles such as disco, rock and roll and so on, its use in Hindi films does not necessarily connote the West, but may just augment and make grander the effect already present. Naushad, for example, asserted that his scoring and even harmonizing of *O jānewālo*, 'You who are going' in orchestra and chorus in *Mother India* did not make it Western, because the orchestra and chorus are in *rāg* Megh. The chordal arrangement also use the notes of the *rāg* (interview, 20 April 1999). This is why the symphony orchestra may be used in traditional contexts in Hindi films whereas a disco style song cannot. This different use in film drama of the Western symphony orchestra and Western popular song styles reflects melody and melodic style as core features in Indian music, as they are in many cultures, and the instrumental or vocal arrangement as less important to its identity.[14]

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[11] *'Single melody hai, ek octave par, aur usko tīn octave meṅ āp agar divide kareṅge to grandeur zyādā ā jāegā', and 'Pahle single melody hot thī Filmoṅ ne phir usmeṅ, usko zyādā grandeur lāne ke lie, zyādā instrument kā dhīre dhīre istemāl śurū kiyā. Piano bhī lāyā, piano to Indian instrument nahīṅ hai, sitār ke sāth piano bhī lāyā, mandolin bhī lāyā. Phir* [illegible] *bhī lāyā.'*

[12] He also said that the ear of the Indian public was so tuned to Western music now, that they would not accept a commercial film or film songs without any Western music.

[13] See Spitzer and Zaslaw 2001: 530.

[14] Arnold isolates Indian melody as a core feature of film song (1991: 183). See Nettl 1983: 353-354 for a discussion of 'certain traits' as essential to the identity of a musical style.

films? In the context of Western tonal music, sounds that upset tonality or cause tonal ambiguity can cause discomfort and have unpleasant associations such as fear, suspense, evil and so on. Rhythmic ambiguity can also have a parallel disturbing effect (Brown 1994: 8). Herrmann's music for Hitchcock films plays with the sense of tonality, thereby creating the feeling of discomfort, irrationality and suspense that is characteristic of these films (Brown 1994: 150; see also Kalinak 1992: 3-19). There are many ways of upsetting tonal stability in Western music. Extensive chromatic movement, whole tone scales and diminished sevenths all upset tonal music's means of providing stability by creating and fulfilling expectations. The extreme dissonance and association with evil of the tritone in the Western system can be explained by its ability to create tonal ambiguity: 'The tritone creates much of its dissonant effect by providing symmetry: dividing the scale into two equal halves, the tritone more or less floats freely, defying resolution precisely because it sits outside the unequal, hierarchical divisions of the tonal scale' (Brown 1994: 7).[15] Dissonance is also created by intervals that strongly need to resolve, such as the minor second and major seventh (ibid.: 7). The longer they remain unresolved, the greater the effect is of dissonance and discomfort. However, all these techniques can be, and are, used within tonal music to provide desirable (and resolvable) tension.

Extensive chromatic movement, whole tone scales and diminished sevenths all upset tonality in the context of Western tonal music, but what effect do they have in the context of Indian music? The first important point to note is that these features do not exist in any Indian musical system. The music director Naushad Ali explained and demonstrated how the whole tone scale is completely outside the *rāg* system: 'No *rāg* can be made in [the whole tone scale]', and it is only when you add a half note interval to the whole tone scale that a *rāg* can be formed.[16] He also described the whole tone scale to me as being *āpkā*, 'yours', originating in Western and not Indian music. When I inquired how this whole tone scale felt to listen to, he replied that it was always used for 'effect', that these notes are played in places 'where there is some distortion, ... mental destruction ....'[17] (interview, 20 April 1999). It is used for exactly this purpose in the example of the statue scene from *Mughal-e-Azam* described above. Because the whole tone scale is alien to the *rāg* system and also to common genres such as film song, devotional song, and wedding song, it can evoke discomfort or disturbance. This is a different, though parallel, reason why it can evoke discomfort in Western tonal music by providing tonal ambiguity. This quality of disturbance or distortion is not universal, as proved by the fact that the whole tone

See pp. 157–159 for further discussion of these issues in relation to the use of Western music in Hindi films.

[15] It must be noted that this explanation is not universally accepted, with some considering the tritone's associations to be purely conventional. See also Tagg 1998 on the history of tritonal associations in Western classical music and jazz, and the use of tritones in detective music in TV and film.

[16] . *'Ismeṅ koī rāg nahīṅ ban saktā jab tak half note nahīṅ milāeṅge āp.'*

[17] *'Yah aksar effect ke lie istemāl karte haiṅ ... jahāṅ distortion hai kuch, ... mental destruction...'*



scale appears extensively in the context of music by Debussy and other early 20th Century French composers, which is not normally considered to be disturbing.

Extended chromatic movement is also 'foreign' to the North Indian *rāga* system (Jairazbhoy 1971: 48). The Hindustani gamut is theorized as comprising seven scale degrees, which occur as the 'natural' (*śuddh*) notes (*swaras*), four 'flattened' (*komal*) notes, and one 'sharp' (*tīvra*) note. In Indian *solfège*, this is represented as:

Sa, *komal* Re, *śuddh* Re, *komal* Ga, *śuddh* Ga, Ma, *tīvra* Ma, Pa, *komal* Dha, *śuddh* Dha, *komal* Ni, *śuddh* Ni

This can be represented in Western terms as:[18]

C, D-flat, D, E-flat, E, F, F-sharp, G, A-flat, A, B-flat, B; or:

I, I-sharp/II-flat, II, II-sharp/III-flat, III, IV, IV-sharp/V-flat, V, V-sharp/VI-flat, VI, VI-sharp/VII-flat, VII

Altogether, this produces twelve *swarasthāns*, or 'note positions', which are theoretically a semitone apart, although in practice intonation varies and is significant to the character of *rāgs*.[19] However, although the twelve *swarasthāns* are theoretically equivalent to the chromatic scale of Western music, notes are not conceived in this way in Indian music. They are not laid out in theoretical works as a chromatic scale, but as the seven notes and their flattened and sharpened variants. The chromatic scale appears in no *rāg* and in no common technical exercise either. Direct chromatic movement is very limited in Indian music. Whilst *rāgs* do use both flat and natural or natural and sharp versions of the *swaras* or notes, they normally do so with crooked (*vakra*) motion rather than direct motion. For example, while it would be possible to have A, B-flat, A, B, C in a phrase of a *rāg*, it would not normally be possible to have A, B-flat, B, C. The normal maximum direct chromatic movement possible would be of two semitone intervals in a row, such as B, C, D-flat, for example. An exception to this is Miyāṅ kī Malhār, which can be performed with both *komal* and *śuddh* Ni (B-flat, B) in succession. This stretches the rules, and Miyāṅ kī Malhār is considered to be one of the most 'difficult' and heavy *rāgs* of Hindustani music, partly because of this chromaticism.[20]

Extending Naushad's example of the whole tone scale, it can also be understood why direct chromatic movement can evoke disturbance and discomfort in the Indian

[18] Sa is the base or tonic note, and its absolute pitch is fixed according to the instrument or to the singer's comfort. Where absolute pitch is not relevant, to represent Sa as C is convenient because the *śuddh*, *komal* and *tīvra swaras* translate neatly into the natural, flat and sharp notes.

[19] This system of twelve theoretically equal semitones to the octave goes back at least as far as the 15th century in Indian music, and possibly as far back as the 8th or even the 6th century (Widdess 1995, chapter 8).

[20] There are more *rāgs* in the South Indian system that use substantial chromaticism. These *rāgs* resulted from Ventakatamakhin's theorization of the *Melā* system in the seventeenth century, where all the theoretically possible scales were formulated. At that time, only 19 of the 72 theoretically possible scales were actually in practical use, and it was not until Tyagaraja (1767-1847) began to compose in the new scales that they became a practical part of South Indian music (Kaufman 1976: xviii-xxii). These *rāgs* still remain rare and are considered difficult to perform or to listen to.

context, because it violates the normal logic of the *rāg* system, and is also not a part of the melody of film songs, wedding songs, devotional songs, seasonal songs or other regional repertoires.

Several writers have pointed out that scales of equal intervals, such as the whole tone or chromatic scales, are rarely found as a basis for music (the Thai scale, which divides the octave into seven equally spaced notes, and the use of the whole tone scale in the music of Debussy are two notable exceptions). Sloboda suggests that unequal intervals may therefore serve 'some psychological purpose', such as allowing a listener to 'get tonal bearings' (1985: 254-255). This is certainly the case with Western tonal music, where unequal intervals allow for the creation of 'motion or rest, tension and resolution, or, in short, the underlying dynamisms of tonal music' (Shepherd 1992, quoted in Sloboda 1985: 255). However, it is less easy to see this as a factor in Indian classical music, because tonal reference points are continually sounded in the drones, so it is easy to know where you are even when singing on a chromatic or whole tone scale. The disturbing effect of extended chromaticism and whole tone movement in the Indian context is more likely to be because they happen to lie outside the scope of Indian musical genres rather than due to any universal quality.

Diminished seventh arpeggios are a well-worn way of evoking fear or dread in Western tonal music. They consist of equal intervals, four minor thirds, have no root and therefore have ambiguous resolution. Again, like the whole tone scale and extended chromatic movement, they are alien to the *rāg* system. Like the whole tone scale, the diminished seventh arpeggio C, E-flat, F-sharp, A, contains neither the natural fourth nor natural fifth degree of the scale. Its four notes also form two tritones, C to F-sharp and E-flat to A, making it highly dissonant (see below). Whilst there are *rāgs* that contain the notes of the diminished seventh arpeggio, these notes in isolation do not form any *rāg* or any other kind of Indian melody.

There is much evidence that the tritone is a dissonant interval in Indian music. Jairazhboy refers to the interval of the tritone as dissonant, 'The half-way point of the twelve semitones of the octave is Ma# (IV#), but the dissonance of this note to the ground-note should preclude its use as the end and beginning of a register' (1975: 76). The tritone interval found in every diatonic scale also disrupts tetrachordal equivalence, the ability to repeat a phrase in either tetrachord, which is an important symmetry in Indian music caused by the accompanying drones. Jairazbhoy argues that the negotiation and balancing of this dissonance is a central dynamic in the evolution and characteristic movement of *rāgs* (ibid.). Very few *rāgs* use prominent tritone steps. One such *rāg* is Śrī, in which the interval of *komal* Re to Pa, (D-flat to G) is very prominent. This is considered a difficult, heavy *rāg*, and is associated by some with the emotion of disgust.

A musical line which is not melodic, or 'unhummable', with lots of large, especially dissonant intervals, can be a source of discomfort in the context of Western tonal music and is used in this way in Western film music (Kalinak 1992: 5-6). Melody is an even greater focal point in Indian music than it is in Western music. In classical music, *rāg* itself embodies melody. Folk music, such as wedding songs, seasonal songs, and devotional songs, is also melody based, as is film song, however Western or hybrid the tune. The use of only a few notes, very large leaps,



and the emphasis on dissonant intervals, or extended chromaticism, as shown in the examples from *Mother India* and *Raja Hindustani*, will take a musical line out of the scope of *rāg* and also out of the scope of folk melodies or film melodies. In this way, we can see why unmelodic lines can evoke disturbance in the Indian context.

The tremolo is a classic means of evoking fear and suspense in Western music. Fear, anger and upset cause the speaking and singing voice to tremble, and so a trembling note can iconically refer to a trembling voice and evoke these feelings. Interestingly, just as the Italian term 'tremolo' means 'trembling', the Hindi equivalent *kampan* also means shaking or trembling (from fear or cold). Ravi Shankar notes that 'fury or excited anger' (*raudra rasa*) as in the fury of nature 'can be shown in music through many fast, "trembling" ornaments, producing a scary, vibrating effect in the low notes' (1969: 26). However, whilst *kampan* and other unsteady notes evidently *can* be used for negative effect in the Indian context, this is not by any means their only possible effect. Tremolos are used extensively in the fast *jhālā* section of instrumental classical music, for example, which is not normally found to be disturbing.

Kalinak sees ostinatos as evoking discomfort 'through sheer accumulation, a kind of musical Chinese water torture' (1992: 93). The most famous example is the shark theme in *Jaws* (1975), which relentlessly alternates between the same two notes. Although Chinese water torture presumably has the same effect on any human being, it is not possible, without extensive research, to comment on the effects of its musical version. Ostinatos are a part of much Western, African and African-American music, where they are not necessarily considered disturbing, although a single motif would rarely be repeated indefinitely in isolation in any of these styles, but would more usually form a part of an overall musical texture, perhaps including dance. At this stage, it is not possible to assess whether the use of ostinatos in Hindi films for suspense is simply learned from Hollywood, or may have a deeper, physiological reason behind it, and indeed, if its use in Hollywood is anything more than an arbitrary cultural code.

The use of the 'stinger' or sudden, accented loud chord/sound for shock or alarm in Hollywood and Hindi films apparently works through an identifiable physiological mechanism. Whatever the chord or note played, it is the suddenness and the loudness that provides a shock, in the same way that any sudden unexpected, especially loud, noise can make someone jump. This seems to parallel the startle response, which is 'an invariant response in humans to a sudden, intense stimulus, such as a loud noise like a revolver shot'. This response is found 'in humans from infancy to old age, and in primates as well as many other mammals' (Robinson 1995: 55). The ability to evoke shock or alarm through a sudden and loud sound, whether a chord or not, appears to be related to the involuntary and pre-cognitive startle response.

Various writers have discussed the relationship of musical affect to the body. Kivy has argued that an aspect of music is able to express a particular feeling because 'it has the same "contour" as expressive human behaviour of some kind and thus is "heard as expressive of something or other because heard as appropriate to the expression of something or other"', or else, because it is conventionally associated with that feeling (Robinson 1994: 13 quoting Kivy 1980). Middleton has argued somewhat similarly for processes of both primary and secondary signification

in music, of gesture and connotation. The level of gesture in music and musical expression is linked to the body and somatic states: 'how we feel and how we understand musical sounds is organized through processual shapes which seem to be analogous to physical gestures' (1993: 177). He further writes that 'my own feeling is that musical gestures ... are underlaid with still deeper generating "gestures": kinetic patterns, cognitive maps, affective movements' (1993: 178).

Tagg suggests that certain general areas of connotation which are 'in a bio-acoustic relationship' to musical parameters may constitute 'cross-cultural similarities of relationship' or 'musical universals'. These relationships are: 'between (a) musical tempo (pulse) and (b) heart beat, breathing pace, walking or running speed etc. (nobody sleeps in a hurry or hurries while sleeping)'; 'between (a) musical loudness and timbre (especially attack, envelope, decay) and (b) certain types of physical activity (Nobody caresses by striking, nobody yells jerky lullabies at breakneck speed, nobody uses *legato* phrasing and soft or rounded timbres for hunting or war situations)'; 'between (a) speed and loudness of tone beats and (b) the acoustic setting...'; 'between musical phrase lengths and the capacity of the human lung...' (1993: 21). Crossovers in the use of tempo and volume for effect in Hindi and Hollywood movies are probably related to bio-acoustical connotations. For example, fast versus slow often connotes happy versus sad (slow, sad, sometimes sobbed versions of happy songs after tragedy has struck are common in Hindi films, such as *Rote hue* 'crying', from *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar* (1978) or *Yah dostī* 'this friendship', from *Sholay* (1975)). Slow bodily movement can imply depression, sadness, sickness and lethargy. The use of loud playing (often with the louder brass instruments prominent) for disturbing scenes may be because it can evoke shouting or screaming rather than speaking, and violence, anger and fighting rather than peace. However, Tagg also adds that although 'these bio-acoustic connotations may well be universal ... this does not mean that emotional attitudes towards such phenomena as ... hunting (exhilarating or cruel?) or hurrying (good or bad?) will also be the same even inside one and the same culture, let alone between cultures' (ibid.: 21-22).

Middleton also argues that a physiological aspect or basis to the means of a particular musical expression does not necessarily mean that it will have a universal applicability. He continues that gestures are not cross cultural phenomena, they are 'deep structures or principles which give unity to a music culture', and that even the deeper generating 'gestures' are 'probably specific to a culture too: people seem to learn to emote, to order experience, even to move their bodies, through locally acquired conventions', and that according to 'modern genetic theory ... it is impossible to find, or to conceive of finding, even the smallest, the most embryonic bit of human nature which is not already nurtured. Human nature is always already encultured' (1993: 178).

Another reason why physiological or bio-acoustic connotations in music are not necessarily universal is that, as Turino points out, 'any musical unit is comprised of a number of components including: pitch, scale type, timbre, rhythmic motion tempo, melodic shape, meter, dynamics, harmony (where applicable), specific melodies, quotes, genres – all sounding simultaneously' (1999: 236). All of these constitute signs, which will vary in effect, whether they are bio-acoustic or not, depending on how they are combined, and of course, who is listening and how they are listening,



so musical meaning is always prone to be complex, ambiguous and dense (ibid.: 237).

Even with musical signs with a clear bio-acoustic aspect, the problem of encoding and decoding also affects the possibility of universality. Even though 'nobody yells jerky lullabies at breakneck speed', it is not always possible for a listener to tell if a quiet and gentle song someone is singing is a lullaby or a sad song, or any other kind of song that may warrant this kind of performance.

However, although there can be no assumption that a given musical element or gesture can communicate universally even if it has a physiological basis, it does seem probable that a musical effect is more likely to be applicable to a wider range of cultures or contexts if its expression is rooted in a physiological response, and the more basic the physiological response is, the more universal its potential is likely to be. For example, it would surely be easier for any human being to learn a sudden, loud chord/note as a code for shock rather than *rāg* Bahār as 'expressing the natural beauty and joy of the spring season' (Bor 1999: 28). In a parallel argument, Hughes claims that 'certain acoustic-phonetic features of vowels and consonants lead to similar systems of mnemonics existing independently in widely separated cultures' (2000: 93), and that such mnemonic systems are 'useful precisely because they are "natural"' (ibid.: 116).

It must be emphasized that the above discussion of musical features is meant to indicate how and why these techniques *can* produce these effects, that is their *potential* to produce these effects, not that they must *necessarily* do so. There are no hard and fast rules about what effects certain aspects of music produce. Even a technique with a probable physiological, bio-acoustic basis like the 'stinger' does not have an automatic effect of shock, since there are always other factors in the musical, cultural and performance contexts that govern a listener's reaction, and which may well be more significant than its physiological effect. However, it is also to be noted that sounds are often used in a particularly stark and exaggerated way in film music in order to produce relatively unambiguous effects, which is further multiplied by using several techniques at once. This is even more the case in the music of melodramatic films, where emotions tend to be portrayed in an extreme and 'monopathic' form, musically as well as through narrative. In the example from *Mother India* above, there is not just a hint of chromaticism, the diminished seventh, tremolo and unmelodic motifs, but an extended and unrelenting use of all these techniques, which hones in on, exploits and multiplies their individual potentials to produce an effect of disturbance, distortion or disaster within the Indian context.

Hollywood techniques can be seen to be working in Hindi films through a range of mechanisms. Some, like the bluesy saxophone music to mark a woman as vampish and sexually available, appear to be arbitrary, learned conventions. There is no logical reason why this cliché should work within the Indian system. It is a foreign code learned through exposure. Others involve non-arbitrary, iconic signs, such as the use of the symphony orchestra and large choruses for grandeur, or the tremolo for fear and suspense. These particular examples may have a potential for application in a range of cultures, because the association of size and scale with wealth and grandeur is very widespread, and because that of an unsteady note with a wavering voice and hence fear has bio-acoustic properties. There are a number of

... such as the stinger, tremolo, ostinatos, and various ways of manipulating pitch, tempo and volume that are related to physiological gestures or bio-acoustic relationships in their communication. These may well constitute relatively easy codes for a human being to learn, but cultural codes and the effects of the musical and performance contexts will still be at work. It is impossible at this stage to more than speculate on their use in both Hindi and Hollywood films. Many musical techniques – such as extended chromaticism, the whole tone scale, diminished sevenths, tritones and unmelodic lines – are able to work similarly in both Indian and Western contexts due to coincidental reference points or compatibilities in the logic of both musical systems. Their meanings are neither universal nor arbitrary. In the Indian context, these techniques are either recognized as dissonances within the *rāga* system or they generate discomfort by being outside the *rāga* system or other forms of Indian melody altogether. Why this should necessarily be disturbing is discussed below.

### *Some remarks on music and meaning*

As well as examining the particular case of the use of various Hollywood techniques in Hindi films, this discussion also provides some food for thought on wider questions of music and meaning. The amount of overlap in musical meaning in Hindi and Hollywood films is surprising. Ethnomusicology tends to emphasize the aspects of music that are culture specific. Anahid Kassabin, for example, writes in her discussion of how film music communicates to audiences:

> The skill that generates consistency in encodings and decodings of film music is 'competence'. Clearly, competence in this sense can only function for speakers (and listeners) of the same language (or musical genre), and the consistency will vary according to fluency (extent of experience in the genre), personal history, etc. Competence is a culturally acquired skill possessed to varying degrees in varying genres by all hearing people in a given culture (2001: 20).

If this was the case, then how could the competence of Indian music directors, and presumably audiences, in these many aspects of Western music be explained? How is competence acquired in a foreign 'language' if it is a 'culturally acquired skill'? It appears that there are non-arbitrary ways by which aspects of a musical system are able to communicate effectively in a foreign context without the learning of conventions and arbitrary signs. This highlights another difference between music and language. Such a level of coincidental intelligibility between two musical cultures is surprising, especially in the case of the Indian and Western musical systems, which are usually thought of as being very different or even contrasting. In the case of two languages, however, it would be impossible, as Nettl points out: 'There are musical systems, there are musics, but they are more readily connected, more readily understood at least in some respects by the novice, than are true languages' (1983: 43). The evidence of Hindi and Hollywood film music suggests that there is far more potential for mutual intelligibility in music than there is in language. The direct relationship of many musical signs with feeling, experience and somatic



states (Turino 1999) may be one reason why music has a greater potential for mutual understanding than language, whose signs are more highly mediated.

## Beyond Hollywood hegemony

The above discussion addresses the question of how various types of non-indigenous music may be conveying narrative meaning to indigenous audiences. However, it has not explained why this music is present in Hindi films in the first place. Is the use of these musical features in Hindi films just a case of Hollywood or Western hegemony and modernization?

According to music directors, music is used in Hindi films in a way that is appropriate to the scene. Music and songs should fit the scene, i.e. they should have a logical connection to the scene. It would be inappropriate, for example, to have a song with a contemporary dance beat in a historical or traditional setting, or for a character from the Punjab to be singing a Bengali style song. The music of *Mother India* can be seen to be a part of the traditional rural setting of the film in its use of folk and *rāg* based tunes, and folk and other indigenous instruments.[21] However, although the music has been clearly tailored to the scenes and settings in these ways, some of it sounds highly Western. Much of this is due to the heavy use of the symphony orchestra, choruses, and even chordal accompaniments to tunes, which, as discussed above, are not conceived (at least by the composer) as Western but rather as augmenting devices. A grander, epic effect appropriate to the scale of the story, its themes and the cinematic medium is created, but the music retains its traditional identity. However, there are times when the music is in an undeniably Western idiom, such as the ending section of *O mere lāl ā jā* with its heavy chromaticism and diminished sevenths, and clear borrowing of Hollywood scoring techniques. Although this kind of music, as discussed above, is intelligible in the Indian context, it would surely have been more appropriate to use a more Indian idiom in such scenes as this, as is used in other places in the film. Is there a reason behind this sudden switching to a musical idiom that is apparently out of place and out of time in the context of this film?

### *Patterns in the use of Western music in Hindi films*

The first observation to be made about the use of Western music in Hindi films is that it tends to be compartmentalized, and occur in the instrumental rather than the vocal sections. In his discussion of Westernization, Nettl introduces the idea that 'a style is comprised of certain traits essential to its identity and others that are more expendable' (1983: 353). Arnold identifies an Indian basis in the form of an Indian melody as a central trait of film music, and something that is key to a film song's success (1991: 183). Although this has becomes less pronounced in modern film music, where Western melodies are more widely adopted, it is commonly pointed out

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[21] Although the music, mostly in a UP idiom, is not consistent with the dress, which is Gujarati, or the language, which is Hindi/Urdu. This mixing of regional cultures is probably a conscious means of evoking a non-regional, pan-Indian ethos

that the biggest hits in recent times are songs that use 'Indian melody', not necessarily a *rāg*, but something with a modal melodic structure and an 'Indian feel' (interview with V. K. Doobey 20 March 2000 and Harish Dayani 15 June 1999).[22] Arnold sees the compartmentalizing of Westernization in instrumental sections of songs, such as the coda of *O mere lāl ā jā* (example 4.1), as being a way for composers to 'maintain a certain Indian quality in a song while grafting on, rather than assimilating, foreign elements.' She sees these Westernized sections, that more commonly come at the beginning of songs, as 'extended musical hooks' that catch the listener's attention, but do not spoil the all-important Indian character of the song (1991: 185-186).

Nettl also discusses the idea of compatibility as key to the extent to which foreign elements will be assimilated into a given musical system (1983: 346). Arnold argues along these lines that the amount of Western influence in the form of harmony has been limited or retarded in Hindi film music due to the incompatibility of Western harmony and Indian melody (1991: 187-191). Harmonizing Indian melodies is problematic in many ways, and is deeply at odds with the fixed tonic that is the basis of Indian music.

The compartmentalization of Western music in film songs is inarguably involved with vocal style and melody as core features of Indian music, and the musical incompatibility of harmony and Indian melody. However, the findings of the previous chapter suggest that sudden changes in style usually have some kind of narrative motivation behind them. It therefore seems worthwhile to look to the narrative of *O mere lāl ā jā* and the coda to see if there are narrative reasons that may be involved in this seemingly inappropriate switch from an Indian to a Western music idiom.

As discussed above, this song sequence sees a shift from an expression of love in the Indian style song, as the mother sings of her love for the son, to a highly disturbing scene in the Western style coda, where the son turns away from this love and goodness. During the song, the lyrics and the visuals express the intense love between mother and son. Radha runs after Birju, singing with her arms open. There are many close-ups of her face and its expression of intense love. Although Birju is running from her, he keeps stopping and looking back towards his mother, responding to her words, his face vulnerable and full of pain from his wound. However, at the point when the coda starts, he stops looking back towards his mother and his face no longer expresses love or vulnerability. The first shot is a close up of him glowering with rage. The next series of shots show him beginning to carry out his plan of revenge that we know will take him away forever from what is right in the moral universe of the Hindi film, and that will dishonour and ultimately destroy him.

In addition to encapsulating a shift from a mood of love to a highly disturbing scene, this song sequence also moves from narrative stasis to linear action. The same emotional situation of the mother's love for the son and her attempt to control him and save him from danger, and the son's struggle between his love for his mother and his thirst for revenge, is stretched out over the approximately three minute long song. There is no narrative change or progression during the song. However, during

[22] V.K. Doobey was Vice President of A&R at HMV from the 1950s to around 1995/6, and Harish Dayani was Vice President of Marketing at HMV in 1999.

the coda, there is a series of actions that move the narrative forward. We see Birju turning against his mother, resolving on his path of revenge, and making necessary preparations. He grabs a gun, mounts a horse and rides off with a group of young men. We see the wedding procession of Rupa, whom Birju plans to abduct, and then see Birju ride down and draw up to the palanquin in which she is seated.

This preliminary analysis of *O mere lāl ā jā* suggests the following patterns of use of Indian and Western music in the Hindi film, which will now be explored in more detail:

1. An association of Indian music and vocal melody with scenes of narrative stasis and an association of Western music with scenes of action and plot progression.
2. An association of Western music or un-Indian music with scenes of disturbance.

*Narrative stasis versus progression in Hindi film music.*

*Rāg* is at the heart of Indian music. Musically, *rāg* has been described as a set of pitches with certain characteristic ways of using them, such as patterns of ascending (*āroh*) and descending (*avroh*), emphasized notes (*vādī* and *samvādī*) and particular motifs ( *pakaṛ*), so that many different *rāgs* can share the same scalar structure. However, *rāgs* are not just musical phenomena or combinations of notes – they are also aesthetic categories. 'Two factors characterize the concept of *rāg*: unique musical structure, and unique aesthetic ethos' (Widdess 1995: 40). A performance of a 'piece' of Indian classical music is generally a performance of a particular *rāg*, and involves the rendition of essentially the same musical structure for as long as the 'piece' lasts, normally from a few minutes to over half an hour, or as long as the performer and audience wish. The performance of the 'piece' also involves the concentration and intensification of the particular aesthetic ethos of that *rāg*, its particular range of moods and emotions. A move to a different aesthetic ethos would involve breaking that *rāg*, and in theory, could only come about through changing the musical structure and moving in to another *rāg*, since the aesthetic association of each *rāg* depends on its musical structure. *Rāgs* change over time, and new ones emerge from the mixing of existing ones, but 'each *rāga* is treated in principle as an invariable entity' (ibid.: 369). Ravi Shankar sees new *rāgs* emerging through discovery 'as a biologist might discover a new species' rather than through invention (1969: 20). There is a sense, then, of *rāg* as something absolute, something that embodies a unique aesthetic ethos, a particular range and balance of emotions and moods, and something that therefore embodies stasis.

*Rāg* is not the only aspect of Indian music that embodies stasis. *Tāl*, the rhythmic component of Indian music, can also be seen as conveying a sense of stasis through its cyclical nature. The drone in Indian music also strongly contributes to a sense of stasis. In Indian music, unlike Western music, the tonal centre is constant and is moreover sounded throughout the performance. A performance of a given *rāg* is also arranged cyclically into a series of sections that return to the same point, marked by a particular phrase of the refrain or the composition, the *mukhṛā*.

Indian music is, however, not completely cyclical or stasis orientated in performance style, and includes several linear and progressive aspects. For example,

... through several stages. Although the *rāg* is introduced in a cyclical fashion, with each section returning to the tonic and the *mukhṛā*, each section explores a progressively greater range of that *rāg*. This process can be of any length, and it is up to the performer how long or short to make it. However, once it is complete, a more rhythmic style of improvisation will ensue. Indian music also increases in tempo as the performance proceeds. Although theoretically a performance of Indian music can be of any length, it is usually possible to get a sense of when a performance is drawing to a close, because all the stages of the format of the particular style being performed will have been completed, and the singing or playing will have reached maximum tempo. However, even if one particular composition in a *rāg* is finished, it is always possible to go on to another in another style, such as from a *baṛā khyāl* to a *choṭā khyāl* or a *choṭā khyāl* to a *tarānā*, for example. Furthermore, a given performance is not something complete in itself, but is just one part of or manifestation of the given *rāg*, which is infinite. Although there are goal orientated and linear aspects of a given performance of Indian music, these are relatively few compared to the constancy of melodic structure, tonality, and emotional ethos.

Western music is far less commonly associated with stasis. In 'Stasis in music', Rowell explores the ways by which some music is able to express stasis rather than appear to be 'dynamic passage through time' (1987: 181). He points out that all music involves passage through time, but in some music this is apparent, whilst in others it is barely so (ibid.: 181-182). In Western music

> The strongest temporal force … is the principle of tonality, as communicated through the dimension of pitch – not rhythm or any of the durational/accentual properties of music. Without the intricate set of tonal relationships, probabilities, and priorities in the music of Bach, Beethoven, and Brahms – and, to a degree, in the music of Bartok and other twentieth-century composers – the temporal structure of music lacks the propelling force that compels us to perceive it as 'dynamic passage' (ibid: 183).

This is in contrast to the use of one musical mode or *rāg*, no 'key change' or modulation, and a constant tonic drone in a performance of Indian music.

Another aspect of Western tonal music that underplays a sense of stasis is the importance of contrast. A work as a whole – an opera, a symphony, a sonata etc. – tends to involve a variety of different moods. Certain sections of the work may focus on particular emotions, but contrasts usually exist in the overall work. The expression of individual emotions often involves highlighting them through contrast with other moods and emotions. Western music has developed many ways of musically expressing contrast, such as juxtaposing different instrumental timbres through orchestration. The development of the large symphony orchestra in the 19th century in particular allows for strong contrasts to be drawn through the large dynamic range available, from one solo instrument to the full ensemble of over a hundred players, and also through the use of many different instrumental timbres. The key system also allows for contrast to be created through key change, involving a shift in tonic, a move from major to minor, or a startling key change to an unrelated key. In many ways, Western music has developed to highlight contrasts and juxtapositions, and in this way expresses transition and apparent movement.



In a performance of Indian music, however, one 'piece' normally remains wi[t] one *rāg* and therefore one field of mood or emotion. There are changes, sudde[n] gestures, but the overall aesthetic ethos still remains that of the *rāg*. On occasion[s] different *rāgs* are presented one after the other in a *rāgmālā*, thus providing a string o[f] different moods and emotions. However, this is seen as something of a cheap option as Neuman writes: 'performing a *rāgmālā* … is considered a virtual desecration b[y] some older orthodox musicians ("like mixing castes")' (1980: 226). This highlights the aesthetic preference for the concentration on a single ethos, for stasis on a single emotional field in Indian music rather than a progression through many. Ravi Shankar comments on this difference between Indian and Western music: 'whereas a Western composition may be based on many moods and tonal colors, often sharply contrasting, the Indian melody concentrates on only one principal mood or emotion throughout, dwelling on it, expanding, elaborating. Thus the effect becomes intense and hypnotic and often magical' (1968: 17-18). The association of the expressiveness of *rāgs* with static scenes is also attested to by the tradition of their pictorial depiction in paintings known as *rāgmālās* (Gangoly 1948).[23]

I asked contemporary music director Uttam Singh about the possible use of a single *rāg* across contrasting moods in film music. He said that a single *rāg* such as Bihāg could be used across a change of mood by changing the speed, the volume or the orchestration. He went on to say that with a solo instrument like a *sitār*, a change of mood from the typically romantic mood of Bihāg to one of villainy could be brought about by changing to a different sitār, with differently tuned *tarab* strings. However, with the *same* solo *sitār* playing Bihāg, he claimed the effect would just be romantic. He also commented that Western music is full of change and contrast, and indicated the role of the large orchestra with many parts and many instruments in this, saying that in a Western orchestra 'there are a hundred players. We have one melody line, Western orchestra has twenty-two' (interview, 6 April 2000).

Vanraj Bhatia, a composer of Hindi film songs and background scores who is highly trained in Western classical music, also discusses the stasis and the progression that Indian and Western music respectively tend to evoke. In an interview with musicologist Ashok Ranade, when asked which feature of Western music he is most attracted to, his reply was:

> The dynamism. I have often compared Indian music to a lion in a cage. He paces his enclosure from one end to the other, knocks his head against the bars, and goes right back to the wall. In Western music it is as if the cage has a window and the lion jumps out! Into a territory where there are no rules except self-made rules (Ranade 1991c: 14).

This association of Indian music with stasis and of Western music with progression and 'dynamic passage' is clearly manifested in *O mere lāl ā jā*. As the narrative moves out of the section of stasis and into the scene of change and progression, it is indeed as if the 'lion' leaps out of his 'cage', abandoning the constancy of the melodic structure, rhythmic structure, and instrumental timbre and tonality of the

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[23] The term *rāgmālā*, 'collection of *rāgs*' (-*mālā* as a collection, such as books in a series, (McGregor 1995)) refers to both the performance of a medley of *rāgs* and a series of paintings of various *rāgs*.

song. Up until the strings come in bar 14, the notes of the song melody are used, but in a radically different way. However, after that, the mode of the song is lost, and extensive chromaticism and diminished sevenths blur the sense of the tonic. The rhythmic pulse also becomes ambiguous from bar 16 and especially in bar 26, and fast changes in orchestration give a further sense of instability, transition, and continuous transformation. As this change occurs, the music moves from sounding very Indian to sounding highly Western.

Many song sequences display this kind of association of Indian music with narrative stasis and Western musical techniques with narrative progression. For example, consider *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye* from *Mughal-e-Azam* (1960). By this stage of the film, Salim (the son of emperor Akbar) and Anarkali (the palace maid) have fallen in love and are planning to marry. Akbar has found out about this and has thrown Anarkali into the dungeon. Salim is furious, and issues an ultimatum to his father in the form of a written scroll to his father, which he leaves with the Queen, his mother, and then exits. The introduction to this song begins as Akbar enters. He descends the staircase to the hall, picks up the scroll, reads it, tears it up, tosses it aside and glowers furiously. In narrative terms, this sequence involves a series of actions that advance the plot. We move from the glimmer of a hope that Akbar may accept Anarkali to the certainty that this will never happen, and that Akbar is ready to go to war with his son rather than see him marry a maid. This section of the song is in a Westernized idiom, using a symphony style orchestra of strings, woodwind, brass, a cymbal, and also cluster chords. It also has a very Hollywood flavour to it, for example, using techniques such as tremolo and tritone clashes for suspense in the shot where Akbar is reading the scroll in bars 14-20. The music uses contrasting style and orchestration for different shots and actions. This section is based on the scale of a *rāg*, Darbārī, and during bars 10-12, the actual *rāg* Darbārī emerges in its characteristic form.[24] However, the form of the *rāg* is mostly purposely broken through the use of effects like tritone clusters, repeated motifs and harmonization, and only the basic scale is used.

This section finishes with Akbar glowering furiously, and we then move scene to the dungeon. As this change of scene takes place, there is a change from the Westernized, heavily orchestrated and mostly broken *rāg* Darbārī to a much more authentic rendition of the *rāg* in solo *sāraṅgī*. During this *sāraṅgī* phrase, the camera pans across the dungeon floor until Anarkali comes into view, tied up in chains, at which point she starts singing of her sorrow at the false story of love.[25] The song is also in a close-to-authentically rendered *rāg* Darbārī, accompanied with *tablā* and strings following the melody. The song takes place during a scene of narrative stasis. The narrative remains with this scene of pathos, with Anarkali in the dungeon tied up in chains and lamenting her love and her life for the duration of the song. The

[24] See below for a discussion of the significance of the use of this particular *rāg*.

[25] The song lyrics in English translation are: refrain: 'I weep on the false story of love, I have been wounded badly, I weep on my youth'; first verse: 'I didn't think or understand, I didn't consider the consequences, my desire for you killed me, I weep on the kindness of your love'; and second verse: 'How could I know that I had to seal my lips, hiding my love, I had to keep living. Though I am alive, I weep on my life'.



introduction and the first refrain of this song are transcribed in example 4.4, and in figure 4.4, the musical and visual interaction is shown. In this example, transcribed C = E flat (minor 3rd above).

**Figure 4.3 Scene change from Akbar's rage to Anarkali's sorrow in song from *Mughal-e-Azam* © DVD stills**

**Example 4.4** **The introduction and first refrain of *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye*, *Mughal-e-Azam***



| INSTRUMENTAL INTRODUCTION | |
|---|---|
| Rising orchestral phrase. Pitch gets higher and higher until… | Akbar appears at the top of the staircase and walks down. Walks across to where the Queen is standing. |
| Reaches sustained high note at the top of the phrase (cymbal crash) | Seizes the scroll which she is holding |
| Descending phrase (in *rāg* Darbārī) | Unravels it |
| Tremolo chords in orchestra | Reads it |
| Rest | Rips it up |
| Loud chords in orchestra | Tosses it aside |
| SARANGI INTRODUCTION AND SONG | |
| Sāraṅgī (*ālāp* in *rāg* Darbārī) | Scene switches to a view of the dungeon floor, camera pans across until… |
| Refrain | Anarkali comes into view as she starts singing the refrain |
| … | … |

**Figure 4.4** **Musical and visual interaction in *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye***

There is a clear and stark contrast between a Westernized idiom and a heavily adapted and broken *rāg* for the scene involving plot progression, and the use of the more-or-less authentic form of that *rāg* in a far more Indian idiom for the scene of emotional stasis. This is exactly the same patterning as in *O mere lāl ā jā* from *Mother India*. However, here there is a more precise relationship between the music and the narrative. The song scene is not just one of stasis but consists of what is known as a tableau. The tableau itself is seen as a static visual narrative code where 'characters' attitudes and gestures, compositionally arranged for a moment, give, like an illustrative painting, a visual summary of the emotional situation' (Brooks 1985: 48 quoted by Vasudevan 1993: 61). The tableau 'presumes an underlying narrative structure', working with the characters and their emotions as we know them from the narrative (Vasudevan 1993: 61). In *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye*, an image is presented of Anarkali alone and helpless in the dungeon, tied up in chains, which itself encapsulates the pathos of the situation. During the song, this tableau is extended, with this same image being presented again and again from different angles, with long shots, close ups and so on, instead of appearing just for a moment, thus creating a scene of stasis of just over three minutes.

Rather than the non-specific modal and '*rāg*-like' melody of *O mere lāl ā jā*, the music of this song is based on an actual *rāg*, Darbārī. Darbārī is a grandiose and a serious rag. It literally means the *rāg* of the court or *darbār*, and is commonly attributed to the most renowned musician of Akbar's court, Tansen.[26] The use of this *rāg* with the entry of Akbar at the beginning of this song sequence is therefore very fitting. The orchestration and intermittent breaking of the *rāg* are used to

[26] Tansen makes two appearances in *Mughal-e-Azam*, with Bade Ghulam Ali Khan singing for him.

express the fury of Akbar.[27] The use of the *rāg* with Anarkali in the dungeon is more unusual. Salim has promised to marry Anarkali and to make her Queen of India, where she would be seated in a grand *darbār*, but instead she is tied up in chains in the castle dungeon, the antithesis of the *darbār*, and is prisoner rather than daughter-in-law of the Emperor. The use of Darbārī here is therefore ironic, and in this scene gives a strong feeling of pathos rather than grandeur.

A structural parallel can be seen between the extended tableau and the *rāg*. In the tradition of *rāgmālā* painting, *rāgs* are depicted pictorially through a particular scene and image, which encapsulate the aesthetic and emotional ethos of that *rāg*. This is similar to the visual expression of a particular emotional state through the static narrative form of the tableau. The use of the extended tableau and a *rāg* together is similar to what can be described as a cinematic *rāgmālā* or a multimedia *rāg*, something a *rāgmālā* painter might have produced if they had had the cinematic apparatus at their disposal. However, there are differences. Like the cinematic tableau, this cinematic *rāgmālā* works only in this narrative context. If we did not know that this girl in chains in the dungeon was Anarkali, who has been put there by Emperor Akbar because she and his only son and heir to the throne are in love, then we might find the use of Darbārī in such a scene of pathos puzzling. Within Indian culture as a whole, the ethos of an actual *rāg* is largely independent of any individual context, and a *rāgmālā* painting too should express the aesthetic mood of a *rāg* through images that are more stable and culturally unified in meaning and less context dependent. We cannot therefore call such a scene a true cinematic *rāgmālā* or multimedia *rāg*, although a profound identification between the *rāg* and the extended tableau can be seen in terms of structure and meaning. Such discrepancies, as well as the musical liberties film composers take with *rāgs*, are an inevitable result of the very different functions of *rāgmālā* paintings and film songs. Whereas in a film song, the *rāg* is used to express the drama of the scene, in a *rāgmālā*, the scene is used to express the ethos of the *rāg*.

Issues of narrative stasis and progression appear closely related to the use of Indian *rāg* and Western music in old Hindi film songs. With its embodiment of stasis and its tradition of pictorial representation, *rāg* or *rāg*-like melodies are easily seen as highly compatible partners for scenes of stasis in Hindi films, particularly extended tableaux. The progression and dynamism that the orchestration and contrasts of Western music express can similarly be seen as appropriate to scenes of narrative progression, action or transition. It also must be emphasised that beyond such structural parallels as these, there are more popular notions of what is Indian and what is Western that are almost certainly involved in the choices of Western and Indian music in Hindi films, such as essentialist clichés (current in India as well as the West) of India as representing the eternal, the unchanging, the mythical and so on, and the West as representing progress and modernity.

However, narrative progression and narrative stasis are not just a matter of Western and Indian music respectively. It is not just Indian music that tends to be associated with a break in the narrative flow, as illustrated by the fact that the use of song in Western films also necessitates a pause in the narrative. A breaking of the

[27] See pp. 172–178.



normal narrative flow during a song and the use of spectacle and visual modes rather than continuity modes (Vasudevan 1993) is also found in Hollywood musicals and films, as noted by Mulvey (1975: 11), Gorbman (1987: 19-20) and Altman (1987).[28] Gorbman describes how in songs with lyrics, 'the action necessarily freezes for the duration of the song. Songs require narrative to cede to spectacle, for it seems that lyrics and action compete for attention' (1987: 20). Even in the case of background songs, there is still a pause in narrative action: 'Rather than participating in the action … songs behave somewhat like a Greek chorus, commenting on a narrative temporarily frozen into spectacle' (ibid.: 20).

In modern Hindi film songs *rāg* is rarely used, and song melodies often employ popular Western styles and some harmony. With a song that uses a Western tune, there is no longer a distinction between Indian style music for stasis and Western style music for progression or action, as is common in old songs. Either Indian or Western music may embody stasis through the use of song melody, though Indian melody or *rāg* may be seen to do this at a deeper structural level. However, the distribution of action or plot progression in new, Westernized songs is similar to that in old songs that used Indian melody or *rāg*. The song melody usually covers a static scene, and if there is any action or plot progression in the song sequence, it happens in an instrumental part of the song, just like in the older songs discussed above. However, although the melody may or may not be identifiable as 'Indian' or 'Western', the sections of action, progression or transition usually involve more Western techniques such as juxtaposition of orchestration and style, harmonic sequences, and usually a larger ensemble. These sections usually contrast with the rest of the song. For example, in the song sequence *Yah dostī* from *Sholay* (1975), the song melody is neither particularly Indian nor particularly Western in character. It is a duet between the two heroes who together sing of their friendship: 'We'll never break this friendship, even if I'm gasping my last breath, I'll never leave your side.'[29] The sung parts of the song, and the introduction and coda that use the song melody, are effectively static. The sequence sees them riding in a motorbike and sidecar through the Indian countryside as they sing in celebration of their friendship. However, during two long interludes of 1: 25 minutes and 1: 53 minutes respectively, Jai and Veeru get involved in various pranks, which are scored using a variety of instruments, styles and sound effects, which contrast with the song melody. In interlude 1, they pass a man sleeping by the roadside, plot something, and then return to snatch his cap. This sequence changes instruments from mouth organ, to trumpet, to electric guitar and finally to violins, marking the different stages of this particular prank. After this is over, they continue singing, and we see them from a variety of angles.

In interlude 2, 'trouble' appears in the form of a pretty woman, and the music changes abruptly to a repetitive phrase built around two tritones played in a rough

[28] Anahid Kassabin queried this assertion, giving the example of pop videos that are not necessarily static in their narrative, but use one song (personal communication, November 2000).

[29] *Yah dostī ham nahīṁ toṛeṅge, toṛeṅge dam magar, terā sāth na choṛeṅge*, the lyrics of the refrain.

synthesizer sound as she smiles flirtatiously at them (transcribed in figure 4.5, C = A flat, major 3rd below). This phrase uses the tritone to signify the potential threat to their friendship, and indeed, Jai and Veeru start arguing over her. However, the cartoonish narrative context makes it clear that this tritone is to be heard in a humorous light. Jai and Veeru toss a coin, which lands on its side, indicating that neither will have her, and they are meant to stick together. The woman sees that there is nothing to be gained from either of these two and scuttles off in fast motion to the strumming of high piano string glissandos. This is sound effect rather than song, and along with much of this interlude that is there solely for the sake of the visual sequence rather than the song, is deleted from the version of the song released on audio. Jai and Veeru then lose control of their vehicle, which starts to skid around. As this happens, the violins begin to play fast and chromatic 'dizzy' phrases. Again, the narrative context makes it clear that this chromatic disturbance is to be seen humorously. The situation worsens as they enter a crowded street, and a trumpet takes over with similar music. As they struggle to keep control of their vehicle, the trumpet playing gets more and more frenzied, and a drum roll begins. At this point the unthinkable happens, the two are separated as the sidecar becomes detached from the motorcycle and spins off down a side street, leaving Jai looking all around him in panic, trying to find his friend. The music then calms down, and as we lead back into the song melody of the second verse, Veeru appears miraculously behind Jai on the motorcycle. The second verse and final refrain see them driving through the countryside as before.

Electric guitar

El. gtr

**Example 4.5** **'Trouble' for Jai and Veeru in *Yah dostī, Sholay***

The link of song melody with narrative stasis is made even stronger by the fact that most songs that are used in American or Hindi films employ a strophic structure, one with a refrain. The use of a refrain tends to link the song with one idea or mood through the recurrence of the same melody, and also through the lyrics. It is difficult to use a strophic song to cover significant narrative change, since it is likely that after the narrative has moved on, the song lyrics will no longer be relevant, and the linking to the previous scene through the song melody will also be inappropriate. It is probably for this reason that in most song sequences that cover drastic narrative change, the change occurs either at the beginning or the end of the song, as in *O mere lāl ā jā* and *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye*. In *Yah dostī*, there was a change of mood and a different kind of activity in the interludes, but a return to the same idea and mood of the celebration of the friendship, so that the song still made sense. Song sequences that employ real narrative change in the middle of the song



often have to adapt the idiom of the song to accommodate this change. An example of this is *Intahā ho gaī intazār kī* 'Waiting is at an end' from *Sharābi* (1984). In this sequence, it is Vikki's (Amitabh Bachchan) birthday party. He has been waiting for hours for his girlfriend Meena (Jaya Prada) to come, but she still hasn't shown up, and he is in a mood of profound dejection. He starts to sing a sad song in slow and heavy tempo in which he ponders this situation: 'Waiting is at an end, but still no news has come of my love. I'm still sure she's not unfaithful, but then what's the reason for this waiting?'[30] This song begins in typical fashion with the singing of the refrain, a verse and another refrain. It would be expected that this song would include another verse and refrain after this. However, after the second refrain, Meena arrives, and there is a total mood change from dejection and disappointment to jubilation and celebration. The slow, heavy, gloomy song no longer fits the scene, since the narrative has moved on. The song therefore has to adapt. In effect, a new song begins, one that is fast, dancey and celebratory, and the two of them dance and sing a refrain, a verse and another refrain of this fast and happy song. This song sequence can therefore be seen as consisting of one half of two different songs for the two different emotional states the narrative goes through.

Another example of a song being adapted to accommodate narrative change is *Kabūtar jā jā jā* from *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989). This is a long song sequence covering the crucial part of the narrative when Prem (Salman Khan) and Suman (Bhagyashree) declare their love for each other. Prem and Suman have argued, and Prem has left for a party. However, he leaves a letter for her telling her that he has fallen in love with her. As she reads this letter, she is overjoyed. She writes a reply saying that she too loves him. But she is dejected, because she cannot get the letter to him. She then catches sight of her pet pigeon[31] and the song starts, as she realizes that there is a way of delivering the letter. She asks the pigeon to take the letter to Prem, and sings as the refrain 'Go pigeon! Give [my] first love letter of [my] first love to my sweetheart', the words of the *mukhṛā*, the catch line of the refrain, being 'Go pigeon!' During the first verse, she tells the pigeon to tell Prem she feels lost etc. without him. The pigeon then flies off. She then sings of her love for Prem in the second verse. The pigeon, hitching a lift in a car, arrives at the party and gives the note to Prem, who reads it. In the third verse, he sings of how he is unhappy apart from her, and tells the pigeon to fly back to Suman and to tell her he's on his way. At this stage, although there has been a change in the narrative (since Prem has received the reciprocation of love from Suman), the song still fits the scene. Prem tells the pigeon to return to Suman and tell her he's coming, so the words of the *mukhṛā* 'Go pigeon!' are still relevant. The music of the *mukhṛā* has also been associated with the pigeon through the exact coordination or 'mickey mousing' of the pigeon's movements with a musical motif. Prem and Suman meet and embrace, and sing of their love for each other in a final duet verse. By this stage of the song, the narrative has changed too much for the refrain to be relevant, as there is nothing

[30] *Intahā ho gaī intazār kī, āyī na kuch khabar mere yār kī, phir hameṅ hai yaqīn, bewafā woh nahīṅ, phir vajah kyā huī intazār kī*, the lyrics of the refrain.

[31] This pigeon owes her a favour after she saved it previously from being shot by the vamp in a cruel game.

more for the pigeon to do, and so it no longer makes sense to sing 'Go pigeon!' or have music associated with the pigeon. Instead of ending with a refrain as would be expected, this song ends straight after the final verse.

**Figure 4.5 Suman and pigeon, *Maine Pyar Kiya* © Kamat Foto Flash**

With the association of any kind of vocal melody with stasis, most Hindi film song sequences are picturized with a scene of stasis during the song melody, and with any action occurring during instrumental sections, whether the song melody is Indian or Western in style. Whilst the scene of stasis may be accompanied by an Indian or Western melody, sections of action and plot progression usually involve Western



techniques such as harmonic sequences and juxtaposition of orchestral timbre or style. This is the case whether Westernized music has a logical place in the film or not. Although both old and new songs follow this pattern, the contrast is far more stark in the older songs, where the melodies are usually highly Indian in character or actually *rāg*-based and therefore associated with stasis on a more profound level than Western style melodies. In these, the narrative stasis is in turn far more complete, with the song usually taking place in one scene and one location.

Apart from issues of core features and compatibility, the phenomenon of compartmentalized sections of Western music in instrumental sections of film songs appears also to be involved with these factors of musical and narrative meaning and structure. This particularly appears to be the case when we see Western music being used in films like *Mother India* or *Mughal-e-Azam*, even though it is strictly speaking out of place in their narrative contexts. Vanraj Bhatia goes so far as to say that Indian music is 'lacking' in dynamism or range of instruments to be used in scenes of action, narrative progression and transition, implying that Western music is necessary for these parts of Hindi films. He continues from his statement that 'In Western music, it is as if the cage has a window and the lion jumps out! Into a territory where there are no rules except self-made rules' to say:

> This freedom and dynamism are lacking in Indian music. After all, why is it that nobody uses Indian music with climax scenes in films? In the very early movies – even before Prabhat – the harmonium, Tabla, Sarangi, clarinet, and violin were the standard instruments used, with the occasional Sitār and Jaltarang thrown in. The music directors found this combination to be totally inadequate for climactic situations or fight sequences. For example, in the 'fearless Nadia' movies,[32] you hear the piano all the time! Not Indian music (Ranade 1991c: 14).

It is inarguable that the use of Western music in a particular scene will give a *different* effect than if Indian music were used, and there are structural reasons why it is arguable and interpretable that the use of certain Western techniques rather than Indian music can give a sense of increased dynamism, change, progression and so on, although Indian music has progressive features and Western music can evoke stasis. However, Indian music has been used to accompany scenes of progression in traditional Indian drama for centuries, and has apparently been deemed adequate. For example, in *Nauṭaṅkī*,[33] a traditional North Indian theatrical form, there are three types of sung text: recitative, dialogue and lyric, or song. During the song and dance sections 'the action virtually stops' (Hansen 1992: 217), and the 'narrative and dialogue carry the forward movement of the story' (ibid.: 213). Although narrative stasis and narrative progression are distinguished musically in *Nauṭaṅkī*, with the action virtually stopping in the song scenes like in Hindi films, *Nauṭaṅkī* has apparently found no need to resort to Western music for the sections of narrative progression, and uses a different but still indigenous style of sung recitative or

[32] Stunt movies of the 1930s and 1940s.

[33] Unfortunately, there is little detailed information on the use of music in other traditional theatrical forms, so it is not possible to include a wider discussion of the use of traditional music in drama.

dialogue for them. It would also certainly have been possible to adapt Indian music for shot sequences of narrative advancing action without necessarily borrowing from Western music, by focusing on the progressive features of Indian music. The introduction to *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye* gives an idea of how a *rāg* can be adapted and even broken to work around a series of shots, though this sequence is at least partially Hollywood inspired.

It is implausible that Indian music or *rāg* was really 'inadequate' for use in action scenes in Hindi films. However, besides other factors such as the ready availability of Western and Hollywood music, Western music's particular emphasis on the sense of 'dynamic passage through time' may have made it especially attractive to music directors. That Indian music is strongly identified with stasis but less so with transition and progression – whether at the level of structure or popular essentialist notions of the 'mythical', 'eternal' nature of India – would lead to more borrowing of Western music in Hindi movies in scenes of progression than in scenes of stasis. These conceptions can perhaps be seen as factors justifying the use of music heavily laden with Western techniques in highly Indian scenes and contexts, given that Western music was and is anyway fashionable and one of the unique selling points of Hindi films, especially in the early days.

### *Scenes of disturbance and distortion*

Two observations on the patterning of use of Indian and Western music were noted from the preliminary analysis of the narrative of *O mere lāl ā jā*. The first was the association of Western music with narrative progression and Indian music with narrative stasis, and the second was the association of Western music with scenes of disturbance. Whilst the song, which expressed the mother's love for the son, was based on a *rāg*-like tune performed in an Indian vocal style, the coda, which accompanied the disturbing rejection of the mother's love by the son, rapidly abandoned the modal scale structure and Indian musical logic altogether.

This observation of music use from *O mere lāl ā jā* can be supported by several of the other examples already discussed. In the statue scene from *Mughal-e-Azam*, when the arrow is shot, the classical sitār music that is playing is superseded by the motif built around the whole tone scale. When the tension and fear of the unveiling is over and the festive atmosphere is restored, sitār music again begins to play in the background.

In *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye* from *Mughal-e-Azam*, the heavily Westernized introduction, with a mostly broken use of *rāg* Darbārī, accompanies the scene where Emperor Akbar is shown to be clearly determined to thwart his son's love for Anarkali, as he reads and rejects Salim's ultimatum. As the scene changes to one of pathos, with Anarkali in the dungeon singing of the false nature of love, the music changes to a more authentic rendition of the *rāg* in a more Indian idiom, with solo *sārangi*, and then voice accompanied by *tablā* and strings discretely following the melody.

The example from *Raja Hindustani* is similar. When Raja is presented with the divorce papers, after venting his fury his dialogue then turns to one of the strongest positive ideologies of Hindi cinema as he announces that he will never give Aarti a divorce because for him, marriage is for life. Aarti, after the initial shock, also ultimately announces that she will never divorce Raja even if he wants her to, because for her, marriage is forever. By the time Aarti as well as Raja have been shown to hold such an unwavering belief in love and marriage, there is an overwhelming sense that love and goodness will triumph and villainy will be thwarted. All traces of diminished sevenths, semitones, and unmelodic motifs vanish, and the intensely catchy song and theme tune of the film comes in, *Pardesī pardesī* 'You who are going away'.



This pattern in music use is also clearly to be seen in Ravi Shankar's score for Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali* (1955), a non-commercial film which uses only Indian music in the soundtrack. Any scenes of revulsion, fear, ruin or disaster are accompanied by silence. For example, there is no music accompanying the long scene where the little girl Durga falls ill and dies. Music returns as pathos takes over and the family grieves the loss. In a commercial Hindi film that places little importance on realism, these scenes would have almost certainly been scored using the sort of devices mostly from Western music described above.

Hindi movies virtually never use *rāg* or any other kind of Indian melody including folk or film melody, in scenes of disturbance. Moreover, it has been noted above that many of the Western sounding techniques for creating disturbance, extensive chromatic movement, whole tone scales, diminished sevenths, and unmelodic motifs, apparently do so by virtue of being altogether out of the musical logic of any kind of Indian melody. But why are *rāg* or other types of Indian music or song not used in scenes of disturbance or discomfort in Hindi films? And why is moving out of the field of *rāg*, folk or film melody necessarily disturbing?

Whilst the use of a Western idiom in *Raja Hindustani* is justifiable as it is set in the modern era, we may well ask what it is doing in films like *Mughal-e-Azam* or *Mother India*, especially when the composer is an avowed traditionalist. Although Naushad insisted that Indian melody or *rāg* should be the base of film music, he admitted that there were places where it was necessary to break a *rāg* or move out of the scale (*thāṭh*) entirely. When I inquired why the introduction of *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye* was not in a more-or-less authentic *rāg* Darbārī, like the song, he explained how in a situation where background style music[34] is used for an effect alongside a song in a *rāg*, 'we put the *rāg* aside for a while, and we forget the scale of the *rāg* and its emphasised notes for a short while because we want an effect there.'[35] The idea that pure *rāg* and Indian classical music is not suitable for scenes of disturbance was also implicit in Naushad's views on modern Hindi movies: the move to violence-based films 'has affected music, because if you make such a [violent] subject … then where can *rāg* Darbārī or *rāg* Bhopalī come?'[36] (interview, 20 April 1999).

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[34] The introduction to *Muhabbat kī jhūṭhī kahānī pe roye* is part of the song, but also similar to background music in terms of style and may have been composed prior to shooting.

[35] '*Wah rāg ke un suroṅ thoṛī der sāmne rakhte hue, rāg kā ṭhāṭh, vādī, samvādī jo hotī, vah usko thoṛī der ke lie bhulā dete haiṅ islie ki vahāṅ effect cahie*'.

[36] '*Lekin vahī kuch asar music meṅ bhī ā gaī hai islie ki iah subject …*

The music director Vishal Bharadwaj also expressed the opinion that pure *rāg* and Indian music were not usually appropriate for deeply disturbing/unpleasant scenes. He said that the playing of solo instruments like *sitār* and *sarod* was 'so sweet' and couldn't give a really bad effect. He later said that a disturbing effect through Indian music could be possible, especially with use of percussion instruments or some of the 'odd scales' (for instance those that are non-diatonic, using augmented seconds and a higher degree of chromaticism), but it was easier through Western symphonic style music: 'nasty things and the fear and this, it's very easy to do through Western music' (interview, 16 March 2000).[37] The mention of the 'odd scales' of classical music to evoke disturbance is interesting. Whilst these are a part of classical music, film songs are now virtually never written in these scales. As film music has moved further away from classical music, these scales have become increasingly marginal, and hence potentially able to evoke disturbance in the context of Hindi films. An older music director may have seen this differently.

Ravi Shankar, who has scored music for several Indian films, though not commercial Hindi films, also touches upon this point in a discussion of the nine sentiments or *rasas*. *Bhayānak rasa* (the fearful), he writes, 'is difficult to express in music through one instrument (though a symphony orchestra could do it easily), unless there is a song text to bring out its exact meaning.' *Bībhatsa rasa* (the disgusting), he continues, 'is also difficult to show through music.' *Bībhatsa* and *Bhayānak rasas* 'are used more for drama than music' (1964: 26). It is the *rasas* of *Śānta, Karuṇa*, and *Śṛṅgāra* (the peaceful, pathetic and romantic), however, whose 'gentle and subtle qualities are especially well suited to our music, because of their spirituality' (1964: 27).

Shiv Kumar Sharma is another renowned classical musician who has composed music for films – in his case, commercial Hindi films. He also said that in the *rāg* system, the unpleasant, disturbing emotions are not usually expressed: 'we take *soft rasa* in *rāg* system, and most of the *rāgs* are expressing soft moods like romance, spiritual meditative mood, happy mood, sad mood, not anger and repulsive mood' and that when performing music 'normally we go there to give happiness and good feeling.' However, in drama it is necessary to evoke all the moods. He explained that this could be done with Indian music by taking several notes out of a *rāg* or mixing several *rāgs* and creating discord. He gave the example of a South Indian *rāg* Makispallī that has the notes Sa, *tīvra*-Ma, *komal* Ni (C F-sharp, B-flat or I, IV-sharp, VII-flat) in it. In the rag, 'the notes are used in such a way they don't sound discord.... Now if you just take just these three notes ... this is discord. ... [A] *rāg* must have 5 notes. So if you just pick up [a] few notes from a *rāg* and play [them] on different instruments, you will create repulsiveness' (interview, 26 March 2000). This is a similar technique to Naushad's of 'forgetting' the *rāg*'s structure in order to create an effect.

The music director Uttam Singh also said it was possible to create a feel of, say villainy with a typically sweet, romantic *rāg* like Bihāg, by using clusters of notes from the *rāg* rather than the *rāg* in its proper form (interview, 6 April 2000). He also said that lots of percussion could be used to produce a disturbing effect.

Lewis Rowell discusses *rasa* and the expression of emotion in Indian music in *Music and Musical Thought in Early India*. He comments along similar lines to Ravi Shankar that

> We may legitimately contend that music is not expected to cover as wide an emotional universe as the theatre, apart from the theatre: despite the specification of the *rasas Bībhatsa* or *Hāsya* for certain *rāgas*, which rests more on tradition than on any specific connection between the dominant emotion and the musical features of the *rāga*, I have never heard a performance where a sense of disgust or farce arose purposely (1992: 330).

Although *rāgs* can be adapted to express disturbance, disaster etc., it is outside their usual treatment and they would not normally be performed in this way. However, this has not always been the case. In the *Nāṭyaśāstra*, the first extant treatise on Indian music and drama dating from the second half of the first millennium AD, the author Bharata lists a range of situations, emotions and moods where songs known as *dhruvās* could be sung during the performance of ancient Indian drama. Lath comments how 'there seems to be hardly any shade of human feeling or nuance of a sentiment where a *dhruvā* could not be used. ... They could be sung in situations pregnant with turbulent emotions, whether of the pleasant or unpleasant sort....' (1975: 95). Bharata also links *jātis*, pre-*rāg* early modal forms of Indian music, to different *rasas* according to their predominant notes, thus linking some *jātis* with *Bībhatsa* (disgusting), *Bhayānak* (terrifying) and *Raudra* (angry) *rasas* (Widdess 1995: 39). This indicates that melodic forms were believed to express all the *rasas*.

Until around the end of the first millennium, *jātis* and *rāgs* were primarily associated with dramatic performance, where they presumably were used for portraying all shades of emotion present in the drama. In a later treatise, Matanga's *Bṛhad-deśī*, dating from late first millennium AD (Widdess 1995: x), *rāgs* are linked with 'specific dramatic moods, characters and situations.' However, *rāgs* later began to be given 'more esoteric or religious associations, for example, with a specific time of day, astronomical constellation, or presiding deity' (ibid.: 44). Modern classical Indian music is most strongly associated with *Bhaktī* devotion, and the link with drama has become quite obscure. Classical song texts deal overwhelmingly with romantic themes, devotional themes, such as the praise of certain gods (*dev stutī*) in the case of *dhrupad* texts, or most commonly a combination of the two with the parallel of romantic love for love of God according to the *Bhaktī* devotional tradition. The association with spiritual themes is emphasised still further in popular, post-colonial conceptions of Indian classical music, essentializing Indian culture and music as spiritual, peaceful and amorous.

[37] Although the expression of such emotions is a part of Western music, it is something that aestheticians have struggled with. It is taken that music is listened to for pleasure, so why people enjoy listening to music that evokes emotions such as sorrow, suspense, unrequited love and so on, let alone fear and horror, is problematic. In an article entitled 'Music and negative emotion', Levinson explores this question of why 'one can be on the musical rack – one can hear the screws turn – and yet like it' (1982: 329).

Although classical Indian music has lost its primary association with drama, it has remained associated with certain dramatic forms. Nineteenth Century Marathi drama, for example, based its music mostly on classical *rāg*s, but also drew from various light classical, devotional and folk styles (Ranade 1986). Whilst Ranade does not discuss the issue of music and dramatic mood in detail, he mentions, with reference to Balgandharva, one of the greatest Marathi stage singers, that 'it is known that his contemporaries set high value in intense emotionalism in music and realized their aim chiefly through displaying two primary colours of musical pathos and aggression' (Ranade 1986: 69). This seems to indicate that disturbing scenes were expressed in song (there was no backing music in Marathi drama until the 1930s, when it appeared through the influence of films (Ranade 1986: 85-87)). Perhaps *rāg*s not normally used to express disturbing feelings in non-dramatic music could be used to do so in drama with the help of 'a song text to bring out [the] exact meaning', as Ravi Shankar mentioned with reference to *Bhayānak rasa* in music (1964: 26).

In *Nauṭaṅkī*, all types of situation must be expressed through music (light-classical, popular and folk genres), acting and lyrics since this dramatic genre uses sung expression throughout (Hansen 1992: 213-220). However, again, there is not enough detail on this aspect of music in published works on *Nauṭaṅkī* to comment on the role of music, and whether, for example, light-classical, folk or popular genres are adapted from non-dramatic uses in order to express disturbing scenes.

The memoirs of Keshavrao Bhole, the Marathi theatre and film music composer, also indicate the use and adaptation of Indian *rāg*s for disturbing scenes in early Indian films. He describes the use of *rāg* Hiṇḍol in the chant from the opening scene of *Amritmanthan* (1934), a film which tells of the overthrowing by the rationalist King Krantivarma of a Goddess cult that feeds on human and animal sacrifices (Rajadhyaksha and Willemen 1999: 258). The film 'begins in an atmosphere of fear. There is a hideous statue of the goddess, the Priest [a "villain"] and his men gather in the dark: the Priest standing in the middle swathed in shadow. "Killer of demons, the victorious Goddess Chandika," goes the prayer in slow, ominous chant' (Ranade 1991b: 53). Bhole composed this chant in *rāg* Hiṇḍol, but also orchestrated the instruments 'to emphasize the sombre and fearsome mood' (Ranade 1991b: 53). The music for the scene where the high priest and his men plot to kill the king is composed in *rāgs* Hiṇḍol and Lalit, but is played 'on the harsh sound of a steel-stringed Sarangi' (ibid.: 53). However, background music was rare in Hindi films until the late 1940s, when a much more Western idiom began to be used.

It is perhaps the distancing of classical music from drama and its close association with *Bhaktī* devotionalism, together with popular essentialist notions of 'spiritual Indian culture', that has caused classical music and *rāg* to be mostly dissociated from emotions or moods such as fear, fury, horror, discomfort etc. in a modern cultural form like Hindi films. In Hindi films, it is rather the antithesis of *rāga*, music that falls outside the field of *rāg*, that usually evokes these kinds of emotional and dramatic states. If *rāg* evokes the sacred and love, then moving out of the field of *rāg* can evoke disturbance, distortion, disruption or damage to that sacred, to the proper moral universe and love. It is not possible to say more specifically what any particular piece of music that violates the field of *rāg* expresses without some kind of context. We can understand that it expresses 'some distortion … mental destruction', but whether this is the 'distortion' of a son breaking away from his mother and goodness, a threat to the life of the heroine, or a threat to the union of hero and heroine, is specified in the context of the scene and the film alone. It is possible to tell whether we are in or out of the field of *rāg*, but nothing more specific can be said in emotional terms.



Although this discussion has referred to classical *rāg*, since 1970, classical music has been used very little in Hindi films. In later films in particular, the distinction between *rāg* and the antithesis of *rāg* can more meaningfully be seen as one between the melodic and the unmelodic. Techniques such as extended chromaticism, tritones, whole tone scales and diminished sevenths, together with a lot of large leaps, such as in the example from *Raja Hindustani*, disrupt not just *rāg* and classical melody, but folk melody, and film song melody too, whether Indian in character, hybrid, or highly Western. In the context of folk music, melody and song is not usually associated with impending disaster, evil, destruction of good, and so on, but with devotion, festivals, weddings and life cycle rituals. In the context of Hindi films, songs and melodies (in the background score or song sequences) tend to accompany romantic scenes, or victorious scenes, where good is winning or fighting back, as well as the same devotional, life-cycle ritual and festival contexts as folk music. I have never seen a character singing a song that solely expresses some kind of evil, and rarely one that expresses anger, terror, horror or violence.[38] If these emotions form part of a song sequence, then they will be expressed during the instrumental sections of the song rather than as a part of the vocal melody. Furthermore, most of the singing in Hindi films is done by the hero and heroine, the characters most associated with goodness and upholding the moral universe. The characters most associated with the destruction of goodness, the villains, do not sing at all.[39] When I inquired why a villain such as Gabbar Singh from *Sholay* (1975), one of the most evil and sadistic characters of Hindi cinema, did not sing, most people found the idea ludicrous. Milind (of music director duo Anand–Milind) commented that 'The terror of Gabbar will go off if he sings' (interview, 3 March 2000). Music director Uttam Singh similarly said 'he's a bad guy, he can't sing' and that if he did, he wouldn't seem so bad (interview, 6 April 2000). With this coding of melody and song in folk

[38] *Jāne woh kaisā cor thā*, 'Who knows what kind of a thief it was' from *Yaraana* (1995) might be considered one example. This song apparently evokes largely anger and resentment, as the heroine sings of how her love and happiness has been spoiled by her evil, sadistic husband. The song is sung on a 'difficult', non-diatonic scale, and has a highly percussive accompaniment, with some chromatic effects too. It culminates in the heroine stabbing her husband, when the music responds with loud, dissonant brass, and a crashing sequence in full strings. Although this song is violent and expresses anger, it is ultimately a righting of the moral universe, as the evil element is killed – Hindi films do not preach a philosophy of peace and non-violence.

[39] Anti-heroes sing, but they are not evil like villains. They are often fighting against established society but helping the under-dog. Their behaviour is always mitigated by tragic circumstances that have led them astray, and most importantly by the fact that they are never completely alienated from their mothers, who are the embodiment of moral goodness in Hindi films (Thomas 1995: 172).

music and in Hindi films, it is possible to see why something that is the antithesis of melody and unsingable can evoke disturbance, distortion and the destruction of all the positive associations of melody and song. Again, it is only the context that can explain what kind of distortion or destruction is being expressed, or even if it is to be taken seriously, as in the example from *Raja Hindustani*, or humorously as in *Yah dostī* from *Sholay*.

This coding of *rāg* and melody also perhaps explains how Indian percussion music can be used for disturbing scenes, something many music directors mentioned, because of the absence of *rāg* and melody. Indian percussion (*tablā*) is used in *Pardes* (1997) in the climax scene where the hero fights with the villain. This, however, is still unusual for a commercial film. It is more common in art films, which are realist in style, and not concerned with the ethos of 'big screen entertainment'.

## Concluding remarks

This chapter's initial examination of the use of Hollywood techniques in Hindi films found a considerable amount of mutual compatibility between the usage of certain musical techniques in both Indian and Western film music. This might be considered surprising, considering that Indian and Western musics are usually thought of as very different or even contrasting. Many of the 'Hollywood' techniques most commonly found in Hindi films conveniently constitute an antithesis of *rāg* and classical melody, and also of film and folk song melody, which are associated to a greater or lesser degree with the sacred, love, romance, and celebration. They can therefore be used as a powerful means to express the distortion, destruction and disturbance of these qualities in a range of dramatic situations. It is not the fact that this music is mostly Western in origin that makes it negative in this way, but rather that it is profoundly at odds with the strongly positively coded phenomenon of *rāg* or melody. Although the West, as opposed to India, tends to imply a threat to the moral universe in Hindi films, there are many Western techniques such as large ensembles, harmony and popular styles that are used without such associations in Hindi films. The use of Western music in Hindi films is not consistent in any straightforward way with the moral coding of the West in its meaning. Other aspects of Western music, such as harmony, modulation and orchestration draw attention to music's nature as 'dynamic passage through time', and are effective in the expression of contrast and of narrative change and progression.

Although dramatic forms before sound film must have used or adapted *rāg* and other forms of Indian music to express disturbance and distortion or narrative progression, apparently Western and Hollywood inspired techniques have mostly taken over. Why modern composers usually switch into a Western sounding idiom in such contexts, borrowing from Hollywood rather than using or adapting traditional resources, is not entirely clear. It is probably a combination of several factors. Whilst there is a vast repertoire of classical music, folk genres and film song melodies for expressing any shade of love, devotion, and the happiness and joy of many traditional celebrations such as weddings, festivals, or the birth of a son, contemporary Indian music and song deals little with distortion and disturbance.



Certain Hollywood clichés, however, are a highly effective means of expressing disturbance and distortion in the Indian context. Similarly, whilst vocal melody, especially strophic melodies (which virtually all Indian songs are), and in particular *rāg*, can be seen to profoundly identify with scenes of narrative stasis, and hence serve as an effective means for their expression, they less obviously express narrative progression. Certain areas of Western music, on the other hand, focus intensively on contrast, dynamism and change, making them effective in scenes of narrative progression. As well as being appealing to music directors because of these dramatic potentials, these various aspects of Western and Hollywood music also have the added advantage of evoking grandeur when used in a big ensemble. It is also important to note that there is no restriction on using Western music in film music (interview with Uttam Singh, 6 April 2000); to the contrary, the quality of modernity and newness that Western music can represent is desirable. Also, all these techniques were illustrated in scenes from Hollywood films and easily copied, especially given that a considerable number of musicians available in Mumbai (including Parsis and Goan Christians) were capable of playing such music.

Most Hindi films have always been in the melodramatic mode, involving emotional and moral polarities, large-scale emotions and big contrasts. The adaptation of Indian music with orchestration, big ensembles, Western/Hollywood clichés for evoking disturbance, and Western harmony, has given Hindi films a very rich musical repertoire for the expression of emotion and narrative. Music for all shades of emotion from the devotional and joyous to the profoundly disturbing, for narrative stasis and progression, for simplicity and grandeur, and for huge contrasts and juxtapositions, is available to the Hindi film composer, thereby adding to Hindi films a *musical* expression of melodrama.

Whilst Western or Hollywood cultural hegemony and issues of core features and musical compatibility are certainly factors in the borrowing of Western music in Hindi film songs and background scores, the nature and content of the accompanying narrative is also important. This investigation into the use of Western music in Hindi films from the point of view of narrative also shows how profoundly film songs are affected by their cinematic context, and that they are as much dramatically motivated film background music as an independent popular song tradition.