Networks of Music and History:
Vilayat Khan and the Emerging Sitar

Dissertation

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

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The Ohio State University
2011

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Abstract

My dissertation explores the sitar’s rise and significance in post-independence India (1947-2009), primarily through the Imdad Khan Gharana and Vilayat Khan. Pioneering sitarists such as Ravi Shankar and Ustad Vilayat Khan were vitally important in forging India’s cultural modern identity. By studying critically the role of individual creativity in the re-imagining of tradition, my dissertation investigates how contesting cultural heritages found expression in new artistic mediums that challenged and reached new audiences. In order to create a “non-linear” history of the sitar it is conceptualized as a “quasi-object” using the semiotic-material schema found in Latour’s Actor Network Theory (Latour 2008). Musical analysis is informed by a Deleuzian approach for the perception of multiple “truths,” exploring performance as the interpenetration of the virtual and actual in assemblages.
Dedication

Dedicated to my family and Vivek
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing a dissertation is ultimately a collective endeavor. The efforts of many people, generously offering their personal time, to provide information, comments, and suggestions made this work possible. In addition, several organizations including The Ohio State University with its many departments and scholarly facilities provided the necessary infrastructure and logistical support for this endeavor. Everyone I will mention assisted me greatly, and I am forever indebted to all of my benefactors.

I was first encouraged to go to India as an undergrad by Prof. Phillip Lutgendorf at the University of Iowa. He piqued my interest in the subcontinent after writing my name in Hindi, indicating that it means “northern swan” in Hindi. He helped me establish contacts at the Landour Language School and at the Benares Hindu University. My first sitar guru, Pandit Raj Ban Singh, gave me confidence to pursue the intricacies of Hindustani music, and provided an overview of the raga, tala, and performance protocols.

Ustad Shujaat Khan has been a great mentor both as a sitar instructor and as a guide to the world of professional music and life as a musician. Shujaat’s instruction revealed the musical universe of the Imdad Khan gharana to me, and he has always been generous with his time and responses to my myriad questions.
Without his acceptance of me as a disciple, I am certain that this dissertation would never have taken place. Hidayat Khan has been extremely generous with his time and knowledge, allowing me access to his archive of printed materials and his collection of instruments dating back to the nineteenth century. Hidayat answered many questions about his father's playing style, and gave me great insight to both the man and musician, as well as demonstrating answers to my questions regarding *alap*, *tans*, and *talim*.

Pandit Arvind Parikh was an invaluable source of detailed insight into the music and life of Ustad Vilayat Khan. Pandit-ji is a highly accomplished musician and scholar, and his analytical skills and depth of musical understanding clarified many of my questions, and opened up the seminal era of the 1950s and 1960s through his first-hand accounts of this period.

Prof. Francoise ‘Nalini’ Delvoye of the Sorbonne was of great assistance during my archival research in India, and introduced me to many important scholars and resources, especially the Rampur Reza Archive in North India. Her scholarship, especially in the areas of Persian, Urdu, and Sanskrit manuscripts, has been a great inspiration.

In India, many musicians such as Pandit Indra Lal Dandra, Ustad Ballu Khan Warsi, Prabhe Arte, Akram Khan, Ustad Iqbal Khan, Malashree Prasad, and Nawab Ali have been instrumental in providing a platform for performance, and also in assisting my research.

Ravi Mataur of the ITC SRA provided lodging and access to the wonderful musicians and many resources of Calcutta's Sangeet Research Academy, which
proved to be essential for my work. Amy Maleschiki provided a letter of introduction to Ravi, for which I am grateful. I also must thank Amar Mishra who first gave me a taste of the world of the Hindustani music collector, offering me numerous rare recordings of Ustad Vilayat Khan. His passion for music is inspirational. The entire staff at the ITC SRA was extremely helpful, and did their best to provide all assistance I required.

Ustad Mushtaq Ali Khan and his brother allowed me several detailed interviews and unique insights into the Kirana-Imdad Khan gharana connection. He allowed me observe his practice and instruction techniques, and shared many stories of Vilayat Khan’s early years in Saranpur.

Dr. Allyn Miner’s work has been a tremendous inspiration for me, and she has been very helpful during our meetings at several SEM conferences. Dr. Steven Slawek has been extremely encouraging for my work, and his pioneering scholarship has also been a great influence. Dr. Jim Kippen was always a legendary figure to me, and when I finally was able to meet with him, he provided a variety of insights into the historical aspects of this work. Dr. Wim van de Meer’s invitation to attend the Indian Musicological Society conference in 2008 gave me access to the work of many important scholars working on South Asian music. Dr. Daniel Neuman is one of the great figures in the study of gharana, and he was as helpful in real life as in his written works. His son, Dard, who is also my guru-bhai, is a tremendous scholar and a musician, and he encouraged me to pursue the academic path by his example.
The staff at Delhi University assisted me greatly with my historical research, and also allowed me to participate in several conferences held on their campus. Both Dr. Chandra Shekar, translator of the *Muraqqa-e-Delhi*, and Dr. Sunnera Katwah, allowed me access to the library as well as to rare manuscripts related to this sitar. Numerous other institutions in India have been vital to this work, including the ICCR (Indian Council of Cultural Relations), the Sangeet Natak Academy in New Delhi, the Indira National Open University, and the Persian department at JNU.

The Ohio State University has provided the funding for my graduate studies, and the accomplished faculty has guided me on the path of a scholar. I would like to thank Dr. Ron Emoff, Dr. Graham Boone, Dr. Fosler-Lussier, Dr. Lois Rosow, as well as the students and librarians at the school of music. Dr. William Conable has been a great inspiration to my work as well.

The Near Eastern Language and Culture Department (NELC), as well as the Middle East Studies Center (MESC), has provided generous educational and financial support for my work. I would like to especially thank Dr. Dick Davis, probably the most accomplished Persian translator of the past century, Dr. Margaret Mills, Melinda Wightman, and Dr. Alam Payind, director of the MESC, for their immense contributions to my work.

My advisor Dr. Margarita Mazo is central to this work, through her encouragement to tackle difficult topics, her revisions and comments on my work, and also her high standards that constantly pushed me to exceed my own
limitations. She has adeptly guided me in this process, and without her years of help, I would not be where I am today.

Finally, I would like to thank my parents, Don and Miriam Utter, for encouraging me to pursue the path of scholarship, and for reading through my early drafts. Their support, encouragement, and astute comments were a great inspiration.
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Fields of Study

Major Field: Music
Minor Field: Ethnomusicology
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The sound of sitar echoes through the cavernous arena. Accompanied by drum set, piano, and electronica, the music entrances the elite audience. Multicolored lights synchronized with the music illuminate the flamboyantly attired female sitarist. The event thoroughly violates traditional concert protocol, yet the audience response is overwhelmingly positive. The music is thoroughly raga-based, and features an equal measure of North and South Indian elements. No neophyte to the concert stage, the performer represents one of India’s most prestigious musical lineages: her father is Ravi Shankar. (field notes, New Delhi, August 2009)

One of India’s most accomplished young sitarists, Niladri Kumar, has begun a high-profile concert tour. His father, Kartik Kumar, has trained him thoroughly in the intricacies of Hindustani music. His astonishing left-hand technique has raised the bar for the up-and-coming generation of sitarists. Plugged into a Marshall amplifier, his electric sitar recalls Eddie Van Halen or Jimi Hendrix more than Vilayat Khan or Ravi Shankar. However, the group he touring with is even more surprising: Foreigner, a dinosaur rock band from the 1970s. (field notes, Mumbai, February 2011)

In the former residence of Tipu Sultan, handpicked musicians drawn from all over the subcontinent spend up to twenty years studying with top Pandits and Ustads hailing from prominent and well-established gharanas. There are no tuition fees; each musician is groomed from as earliest age as possible. The institution, the ITC Sangeet Research Academy, has brought the traditional gurukul into the 20th century. (field notes, Kolkata, February 2011)

These three examples reflect radically differing constructions of the past and future of Indian music. In the first example the music remains traditional, but the performance is thoroughly modern; in the second the sitar is translated into the
domain of hard rock; in the third, centuries of tradition are rigidly adhered to. Defying my preconceived notions of Indian classical music, these situations call into question everything I had learned about Indian tradition, and raised new questions about the relationship between music, history, and society. The complex cultural space of contemporary India requires a critical reevaluation of the sitar’s evolution in modern India.

In this tumult of possibilities, the impact of globalization\(^1\) on local and translocal societies is undeniable. Yet, can theoretical positions, compelled by the complexities of globalization, Marxist paradigms, post-colonial thought, or contemporary critiques of the fundamental assumptions of Western philosophic inquiry be applied to contemporary India and early historical developments? Can the examination of a single musical instrument trace the complexities of India’s multifaceted culture? These two questions and the answers are the primary impetus for this work.

This dissertation examines the sitar’s rise and significance in post-independence India (1947-2011). One of India’s most popular instruments, the sitar has made the transition from a limited accompaniment instrument used in northern India’s regional courts to the pinnacle of the Indian classical music world. Important both as an instrument and a cultural symbol, the sitar mirrors India’s complexity. The sitar’s story encapsulates the contesting social narratives, Hindu and Muslim

\(^1\) Globalization is a contested term in current scholarly literature. I am defining it as processes of international flows of capital, culture, and populations that problematize definitions of the local, trans-local, regional, and national boundaries (see Pietrese 2004).
cultural heritages, and the distinctive musical styles that reflect and contribute to the diverse religious, class, and caste identities of modern India.

By exploring how post-independence India’s societal transformations propelled the sitar from obscurity to an international cultural icon, I hope to illuminate the relationship between music and larger socio-cultural processes. This study is the first analysis of the parallel developments of the sitar and the social, cultural, and economic streams that shaped post-independence India. Specific case studies will be used to demonstrate the sitar’s role in the performance of cultural identities, and to examine the adaptive strategies of musicians to India’s post-1947 cultural landscape.

The time period 1947-2011 is significant for two primary reasons. First, the events of this period required musicians to reinvent tradition to remain relevant, a process that illuminates the evolution of previous historical trends. The social, political and economic trauma resulting from the dismantling of the Mughal Empire (1855-1857), the British Raj (1858-1947), Indian independence and the partition of Pakistan (1947) had a cumulative effect on the cultural foundations of Indian society and its musical traditions. The demise of feudal patronage structures, the decline of the gharana (hereditary music lineages similar to a guild), and musicians’ changing social roles fostered a challenging new environment. Musicians struggled to remain relevant, confronting a stark choice: adapt or perish.

Second, the multiple processes invoked by nationalism aligned the sitar with contesting agendas and narratives, and clarifies the role of revolutionary musicians in rise of the sitar. For nation-builders such as Nehru, music was an easy way to
construct a new national identity both domestically and internationally, a task hampered by India’s many class, ethnic, and religious divisions. The sitar was an ideal venue to negotiate new cultural identities. Its relative obscurity left it untainted by the British-influenced social stigma that equated Indian classical music with social decadence, while its novelty appealed to wider post-Independence audiences. In the early 1950s, Ravi Shankar (1920-) and Vilayat Khan (1927-2004) dramatically expanded the sitar’s popularity, musical range and cultural significance. By the early 1960s, they established the sitar as India’s preeminent instrument and an icon of Indian culture.

Shankar and Khan’s lives embody two distinct cultural heritages. Ravi Shankar’s association with the Beatles made him synonymous with Indian music in the West. Born into a wealthy elite Hindu family, Shankar began as a dancer in Europe and only switched to sitar in 1938. Vilayat Khan’s family, the Imdad Khan gharana, was an unbroken five-generation line of hereditary Muslim musicians. His early years, beset with poverty and struggle, fueled a burning ambition to be counted among the immortals of music. For Shankar the sitar reflected ancient Hindu tradition; for Khan it evoked the heritage of Mughal India. Shankar’s artistic achievements and roles in contemporary Indian culture are well studied, but Khan’s significance and music have not been critically evaluated in depth. My dissertation will fill this gap, showing how Khan revolutionized Indian instrumental music, electrifying diverse audiences with his unparalleled virtuosity and innovations.

My work also seeks to answer the following broader questions. Can one explicate the connections between music and historical processes? How does
musical performance reflect and/or shape cultural narratives? What are the roots of the sitar’s rise to prominence? Does the sitar still reflect contemporary social and cultural identities? In a search for answers, I have collected and analyzed many relevant sources including theoretical and scholarly works on Hindustani music, globalization, Indian nationalism, and contemporary philosophy, field and commercial recordings, ethnographic work, interviews, archival documents, and popular press.

The dissertation’s multi-disciplinary research strategy is four-pronged. First, I develop a historical perspective on the impact of social, economic, and political change on music to situate current trends. From this perspective, the development of the sitar (1700-1920) will be contextualized in contemporaneous economic, political, and social structures. An analysis of the Imdad Khan gharana will illuminate the central importance of socio-cultural milieu of Bengal. In addition to major events mentioned above, I also consider Bhatkhande and Paluskar’s reform of music education and patronage in the early twentieth century, and the Indian government’s post-1947 cultural agenda. Sources for my research on this reform include archival records, oral histories, and the historical research of Habib (1995) and Ali (2006) among others.

Second, I examine the sitar’s pre-1955 development through Persian and Urdu manuscripts such as Ma’dan al-Musiqi (1857) and the Muraqqa-e-Delhi, my transcriptions and analysis of early sitarists through music recordings, focusing on the Imdad Khan gharana. I will draw on previous scholarship, including Miner’s (1997) pre-1920 history of the sitar.
Third, I pursue an in-depth case study of a single musician, the sitarist Ustad Vilayat Khan, examining aesthetic dimensions, social and cultural considerations, and a detailed analysis of his mature style. I will explore how Khan’s life and art illustrate the interplay of musical performance with historical processes, embodying and responding to independent India’s paradoxes and new possibilities. Both charismatic and controversial, Khan was as famous as the era’s film stars, yet he maintained an elitist attitude towards the new bourgeois culture. For Khan, his music represented the high culture of the Mughal era, which had been marginalized by colonial rule and nationalism. Reflecting to contradictions of his times, his rigorous classicism was accessible to only the most sophisticated listeners, he achieved mass popularity. He viewed himself as a strict traditionalist, yet he fused multiple genres into a revolutionary combination of vocal and instrumental styles, and redesigned the sitar to accommodate these technical innovations.

Contesting cultural narratives are explored through Khan’s contentious relationship with the Indian government, illustrated by his refusal of the nation’s highest honors. He rejected the traditional status of musicians, refusing to pander to patrons, demanding the highest fees and aristocratic treatment. I will demonstrate how Khan linked the Mughal era to the social landscape of modern India by simultaneously preserving and reinventing tradition. Materials and methods utilized to answer these questions include the analysis of rare concert recordings from 1950-2003, oral histories collected in India, unpublished interviews with Khan, Arvind Parikh’s (2009) introduction to the Imdad Khan gharana, and audiovisual documents.
Fourth, I examine contemporary musical performances as interactive systems that allow new expressions of cultural identities and historical layers through music, using non-linear models, assemblage theory and actor-network-theory based on Giles Deleuze (1987), Bruno Latour (2005), and Manuel De Landa (1997 and 2006). The complex interactions of globalization and Hindustani music culture will be examined through four specific case studies based on my field research in India from 2005 to 2011.

My fieldwork and my background as a professional sitarist have prepared me for the articulation of these broad and complex themes. Shujaat Khan (1960- ), the son of Vilayat Khan, initiated me into the Imdad Khan gharana in 1997. This association facilitated an access to unpublished documents, recordings, interviews, and extensive oral histories. As a professional sitarist living in India for several years, I have direct insight into the economic and social realities of the contemporary Indian music world.

While there have been many studies on both North Indian classical music and India’s historical development, none have shown the interconnections between this music and the complexity of contemporary Indian society. The dissertation explores the sitar’s multiple meanings in India’s diverse society by demonstrating, for the first time, how Vilayat Khan reinvented the tradition and artists’ societal roles while challenging the new nation’s dominant socio-cultural narratives and institutions. It will fill major gaps in ethnomusicological literature on Vilayat Khan and the Imdad Khan gharana, presenting the only detailed analysis of this music.
The explication of this complex and multi-faceted material combines methodologies drawn from major ethnomusicological works, as well as the new ethnographic and conceptual possibilities engendered by the theoretical and philosophical insights of Deleuze and Guattari, Latour, and Graham Harman. Each line of inquiry provides a mode of comprehension that converges to form the axis upon which the intricate interplay of the sitar, the performer and the place rests.

**ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AND ASSEMBLAGE**

A review of relevant literature (see appendix A) covers ancient to early medieval Sanskrit texts, Persian and Urdu theoretical texts on Indian music, biographical and first person narratives, historical studies, globalization, cultural studies, philosophy, and critical theory. Four ethnomusicological works most relevant for this dissertation are Allyn Miner’s (1993) history of the sitar and sarod, Daniel Neuman’s (1980) and Bonnie Wade’s (1997) works on gharanas, and Deepak Raja’s (2005) examination of India’s contemporary music culture. These works utilize historical, analytical, ethnographic and economic approaches, and have provided useful information, methods, and perspectives for this study.

*Allyn Miner’s Sitar and Sarod Music in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (1993) is the most comprehensive account of the development of the sitar and sarod to date. Miner employs a wide variety of textual sources, as well as interviews with musicians, to create an accurate depiction of the performance practices, organology, and major musicians over a period of two centuries.
Bonnie Wade’s *Khyał: Creativity within North India’s Classical Music Tradition* (1997) is a detailed analysis of the historical evolution and stylistic characteristics of the major *khyał gharanas* of North India. Wade also provides a detailed and accurate system of transcription, employing both Western five-line staff and a modified version of *sargam* notation to create one of the most accurate notational methods to date for Hindustani music. Inspired by her work, I have utilized a combination of notational systems and transcriptions methods, including computer-assisted waveform and spectral analysis. The combination of historical information, oral history, and transcription make Wade’s a formidable study.

Daniel Neuman’s work *The Life of Music in North India* (1980) examines performance practices, patronage, the influence of technology, and *gharanas*. This work was one of the most important and comprehensive of its time, and remains one of the landmark studies of North Indian music. Neuman’s anthropological approach gives insight into the contemporary survival strategies of musicians, and provides ample space for recounting the musicians’ own perspectives on their art. It also provides detailed information on All India Radio (AIR), at a time when it was still a major force in Indian culture. This work is an important record of the time when North Indian classical music had evolved away from traditional modes of patronage, yet still received major state support.

*Hindustani Music: A Tradition in Transition*, by Deepak Raja (2005) is an up-to-date study of the contemporary landscape of Hindustani music and patronage in modern India. He discusses contemporary market-based sponsorship and its influence on performance practices, and also highlights the importance of recorded
music for the reinvigoration of Hindustani music—a tradition he feels is in decline. He describes some of the strategies adopted by artists to conform to the expectations of a new middle class audience. This work contains a valuable overview of all the major instrumental and vocal genres in contemporary Hindustani music.

I draw on Miner’s extensive historical research to formulate an accurate description of the sitar’s evolution. Wade’s use of detailed transcription to support her historical analysis of stylistic differences between gharanas and her classification of various techniques has inspired my transcriptions. Neuman’s anthropological methods and ecological perspectives have given valuable historical perspectives, and inspired my fieldwork. Finally, Raja’s articulation of economic factors on the contemporary Hindustani music scene has clarified the importance of patronage structures, and influenced my inclusion of economic factors throughout this work.

The multilayered goal of this dissertation that traces the unfolding of the modern sitar in light of globalization processes—specifically through Ustad Vilayat Khan and the Imdad Khan gharana—calls for a synthesis of diverse methodologies. Interwoven with traditional methods of historical and ethnographic research and music transcription and analysis, theoretical models of the philosophers Deleuze and Guattari, Latour, and Harman became part of the conceptual framework for this dissertation. Inspired by Bruno Latour’s *Actor Network Theory*, it moves beyond the subject/object duality common in much of Western thinking from the time of Kant toward understanding polyvocality and multiplicity of meaning. I thus examine the
sitar’s evolution and new roles through the analysis of multiple networks, including those of energy and power relations (economic and political), socio-cultural networks (class, religion, and the gharana), and aesthetic/perceptual (performance). Understanding each of the categories as inhabiting a particular space, or a relational plane, facilitates the clarification of their interconnections and protean recombination into new assemblages.

Assemblages, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari (1981), are networks of heterogeneous elements, characterized by relations of exteriority that allow for the autonomy of separate elements, and “guarantee that assemblages may be taken apart while at the same time allowing that the interactions between parts may result in a true synthesis” (De Landa 2006: 11). Assemblages allow for the inclusion of diverse points of reference, multiple planes of manifestation, and the explication of linkages between the virtual and actual.

In Deleuze’s philosophy, the assemblage is a concept linked with his broader philosophical system, the application of which can offer new directions within ethnomusicology. The anthropologists Joao Biehl and Peter Locke (2009) discuss the implications of Deleuze’s philosophy to ethnographic research, including the merging of microanalysis of the “immanent field” of daily life with that of institutional structures and power configurations:

In emphasizing the powers and potentials of desire (both creative and destructive), the ways in which social fields ceaselessly leak and transform (power and knowledge notwithstanding), and the in-between, plastic, and ever-unfinished nature of a life, Deleuze lends himself to inspiring ethnographic efforts to illuminate the dynamism of the everyday and the literality and singularity of human becomings. (Biehl and Locke: 318)
Applying their work to ethnomusicology, the focus shifts to human becomings, through which the linkage between music, individuals, and the social is viewed as a process in constant transformation. This counteracts the tendency to subsume the complexity of ethnographic data into a theoretical straitjacket:

In their relentless drive to theorize, anthropologists run the danger of caricaturing complex realities, neglecting key realms of experience, and missing lived ironies and singularities that might complicate and enrich analytics. People are missing, in multiple senses; Deleuze, we want to suggest, opens up paths to allowing them their due value and force within the core of anthropological work. (ibid.: 319)

It is suggested in the current work that by moving away from the limitations of theoretical impositions on lived experience, the ethnomusicologist can also combine multiple vantage points into what George Marcus calls “multi-sited ethnography” to “examine the circulation of cultural meanings, objects, and identities in diffuse space-time,” (Marcus: 96) that both acknowledges “macrotheoretical concepts and narratives of the world system,” but does impose them arbitrarily as “the contextual architecture framing the set of subject” (96). Thus, established models of ethnographic research and musical analysis are not rejected in this present work, but enter into a dialogic relationship with the researcher and the field of lived experience. The complexity of Hindustani music and its long historical evolution present particular ethnographic problems of location, post-colonial power configurations, and a multiplicity of contradictory narratives, which can be addressed by application of a Deleuzian approach that merges micro- and macro-analytic frames.
The Sitar as Assemblage

A musical instrument and material object of contested origins, the sitar extends from wood, wires, and ivory into complex social and cultural networks. The sitar is a space of potentiality, as Echard remarks, “actual things are actualizations of virtual objects, which are themselves immanent to actualities. Being, which is becoming, is the continual process by which virtualities are actualized in new lines of development” (8). The phenomenological perception of an object is, at root, an expression of intentionality, the a priori is not that of space-time, but that of being, “The a priori part of perception is the deeper layer of categories that a phenomenon relies on without openly expressing them” (Harman 2007: 40). This question of being was ignored in Husserl’s primacy of subjective perception that reduces objects to essences. According to Heidegger the neglect of being is the fundamental error of western philosophy, creating a schism between the individual and the world that he describes as the fallenness of Dansein (being) (ibid.: 44). Latour revitalizes the object, the thing, by embracing its contested nature:

Long before designating an object thrown out of the political sphere and standing there objectively and independently, the Ding or Thing has for many centuries meant the issue that brings people together because it divides them. (Latour 2005: 13)

He rejects the dualism between subject and object, the privileged access of the Cartesian subject. As Harman writes,

Latour rejects this model of access; in so doing, he offers possibly the most refreshing philosophy of the present day. In Latour’s cosmos, the universe is not a single mournful chasm between human beings and some real or imagined otherworld. Instead, it is a radical democracy of objects, a duel of
human and inhuman actors coupling or uncoupling their forces from various networks. (Harman 2007: 3)

Viewed in this way, the sitar is both a product and a narrative of cultural dislocations, individual artists, and diverse temporalities; it defies attempts to limit its constantly rupturing borders with imposed cognitive frames. Once the sitar is understood as a thoroughly hybrid instrument whose development parallels varied cultural transformations its study offers a path through the complex vicissitudes of India's history. The sitar, as object, cannot be reduced to either an empirical or phenomenological entity, but stands within the swirling potentialities of networks as something both virtual and actual, illuminated by the tracing the complex mosaic of the lines of force projected by individual and collective actants.

In the same way, this dissertation is an assemblage, a mapping of historical flows, new streams of philosophy, and previous scholarship. Following what Latour terms “compositionism”, set in opposition to Kantian criticism, recent developments in philosophy are amalgamated, adjusted and modified as required. Latour defines the aims of compositionism as follows:

Compositionism takes up the task of searching for universality but without believing that this universality is already there, waiting to be unveiled and discovered. It is thus as far from relativism (in the papal sense of the word) as it is from universalism (in the modernist meaning of the word [...] From universalism it takes up the task of building a common world; from relativism, the certainty that this common world has to be built from utterly heterogeneous parts that will never make a whole, but at best a fragile, revisable and diverse composite material. (Latour 2010: 17)

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2 The term “hybrid” is utilized throughout this work in Latour's sense of quasi-objects, which operate as actants in complex networks, merging representation, utility, and trajectory (becomings) (Latour 1993: 81). Other definitions of “hybridity” are discussed in Ch. 3.
The philosophical stance of “compositionism” justifies the inclusion of multiple theoretical frames in order to construct a model of relationality, as opposed to a monolithic view. It facilitates the intersection of multiple vantage points in a convergence that outlines the edges of a non-linear apprehension of linearity, in the interest of “relational” but not “relative” truth(s).

A non-reductionist approach to the themes in this dissertation entails examination of a spectrum that ranges from broad swaths of history to detailed musical analysis, in order to articulate the hybrid networks of the Hindustani music world. The foundation for this description will draw upon Harman’s object-oriented ontology, Latour’s theories of networks and actants, and the assemblages of Deleuze (Harman: 2002, Latour: 1993, Deleuze: 2003), who all attempt to redefine the boundaries of thought beyond the perceived limitations of structuralism, modernism, existentialism, post-modernism and the artificial boundaries separating science, art, and multiple academic disciplines. Lived human experience, with its polytemporality and multivocality, demands as much.

The theoretical dimensions of this work demand a flexibility of interpretation, shown through the application of multiple philosophic frames, following Deleuze’s admonition that his work should be used as a “tool box,” Massumi writes in the preface to *A Thousand Plateaus*, “He calls his kind of philosophy ‘pragmatics’ because its goal is the invention of concepts that do not add up to a system of belief [...] but instead pack a potential in the way a crowbar in a willing hand envelops the energy of prying” (Deleuze 1987: ixv). I posit that these varied perceptual and analytical modalities can be utilized in various combinations, illuminating facets of
larger assemblages, which embody the contradictory impulses that are linked in networks. While Deleuze’s philosophy is the primary theoretical basis for this work, the networks of Latour and his concept of quasi-objects provide my work with a more concise explanation of evolutionary processes.

**RETHINKING INDIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY**

In a study of a primarily oral culture like India, the survival of modes of expression, embodied practices, and conceptual systems throughout centuries and even millennia cannot be discounted. To gain a clear understanding of a system of this complexity we must step outside the box of teleological and linear models of history. Many of the insights offered through Marxist and post-colonial critiques are efficacious and illuminate Hindustani music culture, but each should be understood in terms of its analytical strengths and weaknesses. A brief survey of these critiques follows.³

The effect of British colonial rule on Hindustani music has been a major focus of ethnomusicological literature for over two decades. Pioneered by Peter Manuel (1989, 1993), Vinayak Purohit (1988), and Regula Qureshi (2002), the first major forays into this territory drew from Marxist political and economic theory, contending that dominant economic structures (feudalism and capitalism) were the primary agents of social and musical change. The Marxist model focuses on the relations between modes of production and consumption and the hegemony of new

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³ See Max Katz’s dissertation *Hindustani Music and the Politics of Theory* for a detailed discussion of history and Indian ethnomusicology.
class structures that transformed social relations and the arts. The rise of bourgeois patrons and their ascendancy over traditional feudal aristocracy are central to this Marxist interpretation of modernity and the post-colonial landscape. Regula Qureshi summarizes a range of Marxist approaches in *Music and Marx: Ideas, Practice, Politics* (2002). However, a growing number of scholars, including Prakash (1990) and Pandey (1991) reject the Marxist paradigm, contending that it is both Eurocentric and reductionist, compressing complex, non-Western societies into a grand narrative of development.

The shift into post-Marxist analysis took many directions, giving rise to a new body of post-colonial scholarship. In the Indian subcontinent, the most prominent and influential movement was termed "subaltern studies," which aimed to give a voice to marginalized social groups in India. This movement was greatly influenced by the work of Antonio Gramsci, who posited that marginalized were the true agents of social change: “It is the conception of the subaltern social group, deprived of historical initiative [...] which remains below the level of possession by the State [...] which alone permits a certain organic equilibrium in the development of the intellectual group [revolutionary organization]” (Gramsci: 351). This movement, championed by Ranajit Guha (1994), Gyanendra Pandey (1995), Gyan Prakash (1990), and Dipesh Chakrabarty (2002), among others, brought a new emphasis on resistance, identity, and non-dominant narratives, focusing on lower castes, tribes, and other loci of resistance below the radar of state hegemony.

Influenced by these trends, a number of scholars in South Asian ethnomusicology began rethinking the post-colonial era, posing questions about the
foundations of India’s musical tradition. Primarily focusing on nationalism, the social construction of culture, and Hindu/Muslim identity, many of these scholars were strongly influenced by Anderson’s seminal *Imagined Communities* (1983), subaltern studies, and Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1979). These scholars include Gerry Farrell (1997) and Subramanian (2002). With her first book, *Two Men in Music* (2005), the historian Janaki Bakhle became the most controversial and influential of these post-Marxist scholars.

While Bakhle’s historical research on Bhatkhande and Paluskar is outstanding, I find her conclusions that British orientalist constructions of music were adopted completely by the early twentieth century reformers Bhatkhande and Paluskar, and that Hindustani music is totally dominated by Hindu-centric ideologies and performance practices in the present to be problematic (Bakhle: 255). She asserts that Abdul Karim Khan’s affiliation with Hindu culture and society to be motivated solely by economic motives and neglects many other important factors, including his devotion to Shirdi Sai Baba. Stephen Slawek (2007) presents a compelling critique of Bakhle’s work on the grounds of its reductionism, simplicity, focus on communalism, and fundamental misunderstandings of Hindustani music (Slawek: 506-612). Bakhle’s work has been well received in many circles, and is currently influential among a number of scholars, but her assertion of a polemical position without taking into account the work of many other South Asian scholars that contradict her findings weakens her arguments.

In this work, I use my ethnographic field research, case studies, historical research, and previous scholarship to examine Vilayat Khan’s process of “becoming”
a musician in post-colonial India—a microanalysis that outlines the convergence of broader historical processes and power configurations with individual choices. While the Marxist and post-colonial positions offer many valuable insights, these paradigms often reduce the complexity of the subject to artificially constructed categories. In my opinion, rejecting Kantian critiques and embracing Latour’s call for a “compositionist” turn is a way forward. I believe that some major trends in Western philosophical enquiry of the past several centuries have limitations in such complicated situations, and that by adopting Deleuze and Latour’s perspectives, new possibilities will unfold. Instead of resolving apparent contradictions between these analyses, I let them stand, allowing the play of forces between them to coalesce into the skeletal outlines of subterranean networks. This work does not focus exclusively on post-colonial India but uses the sitar as a fulcrum to present the juxtaposition of multiple forces that coalesced during this period through the specific narratives of Vilayat Khan and Ravi Shankar.

**New Perspectives: Deleuze and Latour**

Globalization has fractured the comfortable maps of enlightenment rationalism. Indian history can be viewed from at least two vantage points: continuity and rupture. Both of these positions are supported by substantial evidence, but they are inherently contradictory, reflecting the paradoxical relations

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4 I use “comfortable maps” as a counterpoint to the “problem of representation” that has informed the post-modernist movement (see Nercessian 2002).
between history, memory, the present, and identity in Hindustani music. The work of Deleuze offers tantalizing clues for a new perspective:

The essential point is that simultaneity and contemporaneity of all the divergent series, the fact that all coexist. From the point of view of the presents which pass in representation, the series are certainly successive, one “before” and the other “after” [...] We have encountered several times the paradox of presents which succeed one another, or series which succeed one another in reality but coexist symbolically in relation to the pure past or the virtual object. (Deleuze 1997 (1968): 151)

History, in this light, cannot be reduced to a linear or non-linear model, but is in fact a dialogue between two coexistent states and the planes of actuality and virtuality.

The Kantian basis for an entire stream of philosophy, according to Deleuze, originates in Plato: “From Plato to the post-Kantians, philosophy has defined the movement of thought as a certain type of passage from the hypothetical to the apodictic. Even the Cartesian movement from doubt to certainty is a movement of this passage” (Deleuze 1997 (1968): 246). Deleuze offers another direction, “suppose we say the movement goes not from the hypothetical to the apodictic but from the problematic to the questionable: at first the different seems very slight” (ibid.: 247). This is not a minor difference -Deleuze contends that it allows an entirely distinct spectrum of inquiry, “at issue in this difference is the whole distribution, determination, destination, and exercise of the faculties within a general doctrine” (ibid.: 247). Deleuze’s interpretation of inquiry foregrounds the relation of “repetition” to the process of questioning, in which the problem is constantly reconfigured in new ideas; the core of the problem serves to illuminate, not a solution (the apodictic), but a continual stream of aleatoric possibilities that
form resonant networks of affirmations that outline structures and multiplicities, interrelationships and intensities (ibid.: 250).

Binary oppositions are a hallmark of Hindustani music from its very inception. These binaries include desi/marga (folk and classical), Hindu/Muslim, moksha and bhoga (spiritual/worldly), male/female, written/oral, purity/corruption, and theory/practice and the like. The fields of attraction and repulsion between these binaries create multiplicities, determined through the resonance and synthesis of the poles. Resonance, according to Deleuze, “constitutes the truth of the problem as such, in which the imperative is tested, even though the problem itself is born out of the imperative” (ibid.: 248-249). These polarities are not merely abstract conceptual categories, but have been powerful forces in reshaping Hindustani music. Their repetitions form the “problematic” that does not offer a single solution, but instead are constantly reconfigured over time in relation to divergent assemblages, creating a concomitant refraction of virtual potentialities into specific arrays of the actual.

The narrative of India’s history can be mapped through the resonances of these binaries, through historical ruptures and continuities, and through the networks created from these interactions. All these layers converge to generate ideas, which, according to Deleuze are “complexes of coexistence. In a certain sense all ideas coexist, but they do so at points, on the edges, and under glimmerings which never have the uniformity of natural light” (ibid.: 235). The various invasions

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5 De Landa defines multiplicities as “a nested set of vector fields related to each other by symmetry-breaking bifurcations, together with the distribution of attractors which define each of its embedded levels” (De Landa 2006: 30).
of India created a contending mixture of temporalities, which are culturally specific, and have repercussions on all levels of a culture. Indian concepts of time are cyclical, positing a continual passage from stability to chaos, and a subsequent annihilation of the universe followed by another cosmogonic event and a repetition of the same process. Islam is a teleological religion; however, many Shi’á and certain Sufi sects posit a type of cyclical temporality, in which events can be echoes of an a-temporal dimension. The British colonial view of time was fundamentally teleological, imposing an alien paradigm of causality and historical evolution on the colonized nation. These models condition divergent definitions of music as written or oral, as process or product. In order to map the broader field of Hindustani music in a historical context, all of these temporalities, which function as concept, ideology, and phenomenological space must be grasped as occurring in simultaneity, informing discrete, yet interpenetrating social and conceptual assemblages that form “multiple ideal connections” with the constant repetition of binaries as both relational fields and imperatives, manifesting as “a system of multiple, non-localizable connections between differential elements which is incarnated in real relations and actual terms” (ibid.: 231).

The multiple theoretical frames outlined above inform both the analysis and the structure of this work, following Latour’s dictum that “The knowledge of the whole needs the whole, not the few” (italics in original) (Latour 1999: 229). For this reason, I move between historical eras and themes throughout the chapters. The overall congruency is demonstrated in the poly-linear weaving themes together throughout the work. The basic movement of this dissertation is from general to
specific, beginning from an overview of India’s history in the second chapter, culminating in an analysis of a single piece of music in the seventh chapter. Each change in the scale of the analysis retains resonance with the four aims of the dissertation listed in this introduction. The series of interconnected circles used to explain the multiple layers of Khan’s gayaki ang in Chapter 7 are analogues of the superstructure of this work. While this might seem contradictory and cyclical to the reader, it is founded in Latour’s conception of linear and sedimentary time, which, Latour contends (and I concur), is a fundamentally realist view (Latour 1999: 172-173). A cyclical view of temporality is central to Indian cosmology, music, and religion; Latour’s model of time allows for the inclusion of both linear and cyclical time and this concepts informs the structure of this work.

In the following section, important terms used in Indian music and throughout this document will be explained and defined. It aims to help the reader unfamiliar with Indian culture understand the religious and philosophical overtones of Hindustani music.

**ELEMENTS OF INDIAN MUSIC**

The term “Hindustani music” encompasses all genres of art music in North India, and serves to differentiate it from South Indian Carnatic music. Both North and South Indian classical music (sastria sangeet) share a common origin, but the impact of Islam on North India over a period of several centuries eventually caused substantial differences between the music systems: Hindustani music is a syncretic
product of Hindu and Islamic cultures, while Carnatic music has remained relatively untouched by external influences.

*Raga* is the basic melodic form of both Hindustani and Carnatic music. The nuances of the word require three categories of definition: empirical, philosophical, and subjective. On the empirical level, *raga* is a melodic configuration that creates a specific emotional affect through both psycho-acoustic and culturally conditioned referential processes. The etymology of the word *raga* derives from the word *anuraga*, which means to attract, as well as the word *ranjana*: to color, to generate a subjective response (Raja: 2005, 125-129).

The philosophical dimensions of *raga* evolved from Vedic cosmology. Sound (*nada*) is considered to be the progenitor of the physical universe; the primordial sound *Nada Brahma* is the genitor of form out of nothingness. As such, manifest sound (*hata*) in the physical world can act as a bridge to subtle or unmanifest sound (*anahata*), which exists on the *akhasaic* (etheric) plane, “Akasha is an intermediary stage between Brahma the creator…and earth. It is described as *setu* (a bridge) or ‘transformer’ of energies […] between […] the coarse physical world and the unmanifest, the world’s subtle and causal nature” (McIntosh: 12). This is roughly equivalent to Pythagorean and Platonic cosmological systems.

The subjective response to *raga* in enculturated audiences is based on several layers of associative or meta-musical meaning. These layers include *raga* time theory, linking *ragas* with times of the day, seasonal associations, specific visualizations of narratives and scenarios, and finally personified as an immanent, divine being. Raja states that a performer uses an “auto-suggestive” process with the
above-mentioned elements to work themselves “into the appropriate emotional state” (Raja 2005: 127). Past performances of a given raga lay the groundwork of expectation, but the raga must be brought to life anew at each performance. Thus, the raga is experienced in the shared attentional field between performer and audience. The manifestation of raga occurs on the parallel planes of structure and grammar (musical characteristics which define its identity) and the intra-subjective nodes of shared emotional response and present-moment manifestation.

Indian classical music is based on rhythmic cycles, known as talas. The tala is fundamentally distinct from Western temporal conceptions in that it is grounded in a cyclical conception of time and historical processes. The tala is divided into sonically demarcated sections, the most important being the sam (first beat), and the khali (empty beat). Musical compositions are set in talas in variety of ways, but generally function to create counter-tensions between the rhythmic cycle and the structural elements of the composition. The talas also mirror Hinduism’s cyclical temporal cosmology, in which the universe moves through four eras of increasing entropy (a period of several million years), and is finally annihilated and then reborn for another round.

Within the composition, improvisations are continuously developed, increasing complexity and duration. These improvisations are in fact miniature compositional forms and range from short, generally pre-composed interjections (tans or todas), to extensive improvisations utilizing distinct embellishments and extended motivic development. The nature of improvisation differs between genres of vocal and instrumental music, as well as among gharanas.
The notational form commonly used in India, designated as *sargam*, uses a range of solfege syllables similar to the Western do, re, mi, etc. The notes are named as follows: *sadja* (tonic), *rishav* (second), *gandhar* (third), *madhyam* (fourth), *pancham* (fifth), *dhayvat* (sixth), and *nishab* (seventh). In this work, I utilize an abbreviated form for each note, S, R, G, M, P, D, N, and S’ correspond to the seven tones of the Western heptatonic scale. For the designation of alternations of pitch and octave demarcations, I employ the following system: an underlined note (e.g. R) indicates a flat pitch; the use of a plus sign (M+) indicates an augmented or sharp pitch; an apostrophe (S’) indicates the upper octave; and a period (G.) indicates the lower octave. All Hindustani vocal and instrumental music has a drone pitch (the base S), and generally follows the natural three-octave range of the voice.

**Style, Baj, and Andaz**

In order to unpack the application of the English terms *style* and *technique*, it is necessary to define their Hindi/Urdu equivalents. When I utilize the term ‘style’ it serves as a loose translation of several terms: *ang*, *baj*, and *andaz*. The latter term, *andaz*, correlates most directly with “style.” Its range of meanings encompasses the semantic field of artistic and personal expression. *Andaz* implies expression of individual temperament, ranging from habitude, comportment, and etiquette (*tazib*). *Andaz* can also allude to personal charisma, a way of being in the world. The term *ang* refers to a broad array of expressive techniques, aesthetic goals, and repertoire. Examples of *ang* include *Purab ang*, literally Eastern style, which is a school of *thumri* singing based upon varied expression of text through musical interpretation.
Ang is a broad term, indicative of a regionally and historically defined musical genre, as well as improvisational practices. The final term, baj, which literally translates as ‘play,’ refers to a body of technique used in any instrumental genre, both as an individual style or an entire gharana.

POLYVOCALITY AND REFLEXIVITY

My intellectual journey has been marked by constant shifts from insider to outsider status, sometimes involuntarily and sometimes necessitated by the rigors of scholarship. When I began my study of sitar in India in 1997, I came from a thoroughly Western music background. My desire to learn sitar compelled me to study Hindi and Urdu and to immerse myself in the culture. One of the challenges of this work has been balance cultural immersion with the objectivity of scholarship. In the last several years I have begun performing in India, and found that I was again an “outsider” and had to prove myself as a musician and a performer to be accepted on the concert stage. These constant shifts have certainly been psychologically dislocating, but have also provided the advantage of multi-perspectival reference points, influencing the theoretical and philosophical perspectives of this work.

The background of my ethnographic approach is founded on many years of study in various environments, ranging from the university to formal lessons with a guru, from informal encounters with mirasi musicians to picking up compositions informally from established artists. All of these experiences have informed my work, especially the line of demarcation that occurred when my intentions shifted from being a musician to becoming a scholar. This process has taught me a great deal
about the complexity of Hindustani music, and the interconnected social networks and myriad of unspoken rules that are only revealed when they are violated.

The realization of polyvocality and changing viewpoints during my fieldwork is also reflected in the writing of this dissertation: originally intended primarily as a history, the vistas opened up by Deleuze and others provided a way to merge the past and the present, to shift between multiple perspectives to observe the streams of Indian history from within it and from a detached vantage point. A point of frustration in writing this document has been a lack of space to use even a fraction of the material I have collected from field research and archival work. However, my hope is that some of my original intention is conveyed in what follows.

I have chosen to keep myself out of the picture as much as possible, and thus there is only limited reflexivity in the pages that follow. However, my primary focus is on the Imdad Khan gharana, and this forms the dominant narrative in this work. This is not intended to diminish the importance of other musical traditions or versions of Hindustani music history. One thing I have learned is to let people speak in their own voice. The world of Hindustani music is a rich tapestry of stories, legends, and mythologies: a world of myriad contradictions. These contradictions can exist side-by-side in an individual or social group. Of this I am certain, witnessed by the multitude of voices and viewpoints within myself.

OUTLINE OF DISSERTATION CHAPTERS

Chapter 2 presents an overview of the historical foundations of this work, covering topics ranging from ancient India and Muslim invasions to the Colonial
impact on Indian music. These discussions provide background to the more specific material that follows.

New theoretical models necessitated by the problems posed by globalization are examined in Chapter 3. An outline of problems of locality and cultural hybridity as discussed in globalization theory and ethnomusicology sets the stage for an examination of Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of this model. Their model of the assemblage, the rhizome, and the principles of “nomad thought” are applied to the analysis of several contemporary performances, and serve to highlight the counterpoint between history, memory, and performance throughout the work.

Chapter 4 focuses specifically on the development of sitar during the past two centuries and examines its evolution within the context of this era’s sweeping political, social, and economic changes. Encapsulating the reinterpretation of Indian cultural history from colonialism to nationalism, the sitar’s evolution is analyzed as a product of discourse, power, and economic networks. Each section of the chapter will link these networks into a comprehensive model. The distinct discourses of colonial, Muslim, and Hindu interpretations of history will demonstrate the polyvocal and hybrid nature of the sitar.

Chapter 5 focuses on the Imdad Khan gharana, tracing the sitar’s new position as a highly professional and virtuosic instrument in cultural topology of post-1857 India. The discussion highlights psychological, economic, and cultural adaptive strategies compelled by colonial rule and contending interpretations of Hindustani music. The gharana is examined as a network and mode of emplacement, as an adaptive strategy and a narrative. The chapter concludes with a discussion of
Imdad and Inayat Khan, the twentieth-century legacy of the Senia *gharana* and *dhrupad*-based sitar, and the early music of Vilayat Khan.

Chapter 6 examines Vilayat Khan’s artistic development in the context of the historical, political, and economic consequences of India’s independence. Traditional (*khandani*) musicians’ adaptive responses to social/culture ruptures, changing models of performance, mass media, and new performance settings are examined through contesting social narratives. Khan’s life and music is discussed in light of nationalism and changing forms of patronage. Ravi Shankar’s musical evolution and relation to these factors re-trace the themes of Chapter 4 in the new social realm of post-Independence India. Vilayat Khan was a site of resistance to the eradication of aristocratic culture; at the same time, he adeptly utilized the new avenues of success available in India. Embodying these contradictions, this chapter demonstrates how Khan linked the Mughal past to the social landscape of modern India by simultaneously preserving and reinventing tradition.

Chapter 7 explores Vilayat Khan’s mature musical style, the *gayaki ang*, in depth. I first review Khan’s unique personality and talent, then examine the *gayaki ang* through Deleuze’s assemblage theory. This discussion is prefaced by an overview of the *gayaki ang* and its origins in the *khyal* tradition, followed by an examination of the conceptual (virtual) dimensions of Khan’s style. The second part of the chapter consists of a detailed analysis of an *alap* performance, based on my transcriptions of a 1967 concert recording. This analysis illuminates the polyvocality of Khan’s music. An overview of the techniques, repertoire, and structural elements of a *raga* are assessed here in light of the broader theoretical
considerations of this work. The twofold goals of this chapter are to illustrate and demonstrate the existence of the gayaki ang as a radically new reconfiguration of Hindustani instrumental tradition, and to expand the theoretical dimensions of the analysis of Hindustani music in general.

Chapter 8 summarizes the main arguments and findings of this dissertation and suggests certain paths for future research.

It is my hope that this study of music's roles in post-Independence India sheds light on the how artistic expression serves the project of nation-building, while at the same time expressing counter-narratives, thus contributing to the body of scholarship on South Asia. This work contributes to the understanding of the role of individuals and innovation for students of other cultures in the face of new socio-cultural configurations.
Chapter 2: Historical Overview

The brief outline of India’s complex history that follows will cover a period from 200 BCE to the early 1900s, highlighting cultural, historical, and political trends pertinent to the discussion of Hindustani music in this dissertation. Hindustani music’s development occurred during periods of tremendous political and social upheaval, in a continual process of rupture and reintegration. These ruptures are juxtaposed and merge with processes of continuity, reflected in cultural practices such as music, multiplicities of shared and private memories, and virtual/actual histories of mourning and reconciliation. Each of these ruptures shattered unified historical narratives, sometimes allowing creative possibilities and new futures even in the midst of psychological and geographical dislocations.

The following historical sketches outline a series of long-range processes that impacted Hindustani music’s development, vectors of cultural transmission, and social positioning. Each of these processes will reappear throughout this work in various guises: emerging as continuities, exploding into vacuums unleashed by new ruptures, or forming the core of personal and collective narratives.
Ancient Indian Music (c.200 BCE-700 CE)

The first records of Indian music occur in the ancient religious texts known as the *Vedas*. The *Gandharva Veda* dealt exclusively with music, but unfortunately this work has not survived. The *Gandharva Veda* covered all use of sounds, including music, magic, medicinal uses, and physics (Danielou: 3). Bharata’s *Natya Shastra* is considered to be the oldest extant text (between 200 BCE and 200 CE) and the least corrupt. The earliest legacy of Indian art music is to be found in the chants of the *Rig Veda*, known as *sama*. Although the exact date of their origin is difficult to pinpoint, there is a great deal of evidence that the chants and melodies employed in Vedic rites have been transmitted with relative consistency for several thousand years. *Sama* chants were originally based one to three notes in the beginning, but eventually developed into a full seven note scale (Sharma: 5). While it is a common claim among many indigenous scholars that *raga* evolved from Vedic chant, (Sharma 1993; Ranade 1997; Goswami 1996), there is little concrete evidence to support this claim.

From these early sources, little or nothing of the actual musical systems survives, but many of theoretical concepts and terms retain their importance even today. The names of the notes, *sadja, rishav, gandhar, madhyam, pancham, dhayvat,* and *nishad* are still the basic terms for the seven notes of the Indian melodic system. The theory of the *rasas* (various emotional states created through the arts) is still quite prevalent, as is the discredited but still popular theory of the 22 *shruties* (Jairazbhoy 1995).
The distinction between the great tradition, classical (marga), and the local, folk, or little tradition (desi) first appears in Matanga Mani’s Brdhaddesi (ninth century CE), which also contains the first use of the term raga (Widdess: 11). The concept of raga was developed in detail in Sarangadeva’s Sangita Ratnakara (early thirteenth century CE). The Sangita Ratnakara mentions two hundred and sixty four ragas and other melodic forms based on the earlier jati system of modes linked with specific tonics; it is difficult to ascertain which melodic forms were in practice, and which were remnants of earlier eras and no longer performed. The discursive conflict over ancient theory versus contemporary practice was common over 1000 years ago. An example of this is the Sarasvatihrdayalamkara of Nanyadeva (1097-1147), which attempts to relate contemporary practices with those found in the Natya Shastra (ibid.: 11).

This period of relative stability extended approximately 800 years (200 BCE to 200 CE) and is considered by many historians to be the golden age of Indian history (Widdess: 22). After this period, increasing cultural fragmentation, political instability, and frequent invasions created a much more diffused culture, although India was eventually stabilized during the Mughal era. The golden age of Indian culture has been a touchstone for later generations, but the development of Hindustani music is a polyvocal product of the increasing influence of folk forms, cross-cultural contact, the diffusion of the egalitarian Sufi and Bhakti cults, and the regional development fostered in specific autonomous or semi-autonomous kingdoms. The series of Muslim invasions constitutes the first major rupture we will consider.
Muslim Invasions and the Sufi Legacy (700-1350 CE)

The initial contacts of India and Islam began during the rapid expansion of the caliphate; the initial forays met with little success, however, by 711 CE the Sind province had been incorporated into the Umayyad caliphate (Ahmad: 4). The conquest of Northern India, and the incorporation of India into the Islamic world took place under Sultan Mahmud (d. 1030), part of the Turkic Ghaznavid empire (Sharma 2005: 7, Spear: 799). The Ghaznavids were heirs of the Persian Samanid dynasty, and brought with them a highly developed Persianate culture. Lahore became a thriving cultural center, home to such luminaries as the poet Abu Al-Faraj Rumi (d. 1102) and the Sufi Ali al-Hujwiri (Data Ganj Bakhsh) (d. 1071) (Sharma 2005: 8). By 1192, Islam had penetrated deeply into Northern India after the capture of Delhi by Muhammad Ghori, and after twenty years extended to the Bay of Bengal (Spear: 799-800).

The conquest of India continued until 1340 under Sultan Muhammad bin Tughluq, at which point twenty-four provinces were under the control of the Delhi Sultanate (Spear: 232). The Mongol invasions of Central Asia and Iran generated a flow of migration that included many scholars, poets, and religious figures. Delhi became a place of refuge for these migrants, known as the Dome of Islam (qubbat al-Islam) (Sharma: 9). The early invaders of India were generally not as predisposed to accept the indigenous culture, as were the dynasties of the Turkic ‘slave rulers’ beginning with Qutb-ud-Din Ibak and extending to Muiz-ud-din Qaiqabdad (d. 1290). During this period, Delhi became one of the great cosmopolitan cities of the
world, and the inception of the hybrid Hindu/Muslim culture is attested to by the writings of Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) a great poet, philosopher, musician and Sufi. This period saw a great intermingling of multiple cultures from both South Asia and the Islamic worlds, and formed the basis for the development of later dynasties, including the great emperor Muhammad Jalal-ud-Din Akbar. In some ways, the unique development of Indo-Islamic culture can also be traced to the relative isolation of India from the dar-al Islam (greater Islamic world) during the time of the Mongols. There was an ambivalent relationship between the Muslim rulers in India and the universal caliphate (unified Islamic political and religious rule), as revealed through numismatic evidence (Ahmad: 3-11).

Three factors contributed to the development and transmission of Hindustani music during this period: the Sufi religious traditions, cross-cultural fertilization, and established systems of royal patronage that allowed for the concentrated development of usually patrilineal lineages of artistic transmission. These processes were aided by the interest of many rulers in the indigenous traditions, which resulted in the translation of many Sanskrit works on music, philosophy and religion into Persian and Arabic. The development of cultural hybridity can also be traced through the growth of Indo-Islamic architectural styles, which saw their flowering in such masterpieces as the Taj Mahal. The process of cultural amalgamation is clearly demonstrated in the writing of Amir Khusrau, who fused mysticism, aesthetics and music, and whose influence continues to this day. It is the twin strands of Sufism and the translation of Sanskrit literature into Persian and Arabic that laid the ground for the great syncretic cultures of the Mughal
emperors such as Akbar. During the time of Muslim rule, various elements competed in complex economic and social relationships; the development and transmission of music mirrors these interrelationships. The factors involved can be parsed as religious (ranging from vigorous promotion of music to systematic attempts to destroy it), feudal economic, and political systems that formed the backbone of the patronage system.

The importance of the Sufi legacy in shaping Indo-Islamic culture cannot be underestimated. The history of Sufism can be traced to the inception of Islam and its spread around the Muslim world during the seventh to the ninth centuries (Rizvi: 17). As opposed to more fundamentalist interpretations of the Koran, music was and continues to be of great importance to many Sufi sects. The Sufi khanaqah (hospice) was an important culture center through the Middle East, South-East Asia, Central Asia, and Iran.

One of the pillars of all Sufism is the belief in the immanence of god (Wahdatul Wujud), which values inner practices and devotion over outward expressions of faith, such as the observance of namaz (five times daily prayer) (Swarup: 23). Sufism is not a rigid, hierarchical system, but instead allows for many paths to the direct experience of divinity, and thus paves the way for an egalitarian and inclusive culture. Sufism is transmitted through the silsilah system by successive lineages of the khalifas and pirs, which preserve the continuity of knowledge (Rizvi: 98). The Sufi khanaqahs of various silsilahs served as important centers of refuge during times of political upheavals, and were supported through the patronage of both merchants and rulers (Rizvi: 100). The khanaqah as a cultural and social
institution is quite significant, as its relative autonomy from the political sphere allowed for the preservation of specific musical practices opposed by certain rulers.

The most important Sufi order, and one that can be described as indigenously Indian, was that of Khwaja Mu'inuddin Chisti (d. 1235), a lineage that continues to the present day (Abidi: 33). For the Chisti order, the use of ritualized music in the sama' and zikir ceremonies is of great importance. The connection between this silsilah and the world of classical music begins from Amir Khusrau, and extends to the many musicians who were followers of Nanhe Miya, including Allahuddin Khan, Hafiz Ali Khan, Mushtaq Hussain Khan, Ahmed Jan Thirakwa, and many others (Abidi: 39).

The Chisti order is intimately connected with the religious use of music (sama' and qawwali) and also has a long association with classical music, beginning from the time of Amir Khusrau. Nizamudin Auliya was an extremely influential sheik (religious leader) in many ways. He expanded the reach of the Chisti order by opening the doors of the khanaqah to anyone willing to listen to his discourses, and he was respected and revered by all strata of society, rich and poor, young and old, Hindu or Muslim. Many contemporary classical musicians (including my own teacher, Shujaat Khan) regard him as a source of inspiration for their own creative and spiritual life. Nizamudin Auliya transformed Sufism from an individual, esoteric and ascetic path to devotional practices accessible to the common man. This created a mass spiritual movement that resulted in the proliferation of khanaqahs throughout India. His discourses and literature focused on concrete conditions of
spiritual life, instead of more abstract discussions of mysticism. His langar (free public feasts) were open to Hindus and Muslims (Rizvi: 186).

Nizamudin Auliya, while often sought out by the rulers of Delhi, vigorously maintained his independence, stating famously “My house has two doors – if the Sultan enters by one I will make my exit by the other” (Lawrence: 34). His regular use of music during sama’ ceremonies was a matter of some controversy; during the reign of Ghiyath ad-din Tughluq, restrictions were placed on the use of music in religious ceremonies, stemming from pressure from conservative ‘ulma. However, Nizamudin Auliya was undaunted and continued as before with his popular musical gatherings (Lawrence: 7). Other Sufi orders, such as the Suhrawardiyya were opposed to the use of music, and contentious debates on this subject were frequent; however, the Suhrawardiyya Sheik Hamidu’d Din eventually became a proponent of sama’, against the opposition of the powerful ulma (Rizvi: 196).

For Nizamudin Auliya, sama’ (audition) was a central feature of the spiritual life. Mystical ecstasy was only a part of Nizamudin Auliya’s spiritual practices, which also emphasized service, poverty, and extensive learning. Unlike many earlier Sufis, Nizamudin Auliya personally supervised the collection of his discourses, the Fawa’id al-Fu’ad, which is the first undisputed compilation of Sufi discourses preserved on the Indian sub-continent (Lawrence: 66). From this text, one can ascertain the Sheik’s views on music. When a disciple questioned the Sheik regarding his lack of passion for daily devotional practices (salat, etc.) and his experience of ecstasy while listening to music, Nizamudin Auliya replied “’Sama’ is of two kinds,’ he remarked ’One is invasive, the other is noninvasive. The former invades the body.
For instance, on hearing a line of poetry, one experiences a great agitation [...] As for noninvasive sama’ it happens like this: When one hears a verse, one links that verse to another realm, whether to God, or to one’s spiritual master” (Lawrence: 212). In Nizamudin Auliya’s view, music is clearly separable between secular and sacred. It is worth quoting Nizamudin Auliya’s defense of sama’ during the period when forces were pushing for its prohibition:

> When certain conditions are met one can listen to sama’. Each of these must be right: the singer, what is sung, the listener, and also the musical instrument. The one summoned to sing must be a man, a mature man. The singer cannot be a woman or a boy. Similarly, what is sung cannot be something lewd or ludicrous. As for the listener, it must be someone who listens to God and is filled with remembrance of Him. As for the instrument of music, one must use the harp or lute or viol or similar instruments. When these conditions have been observed, sama’ becomes permissible.”(Lawrence: 354)

The definition of specific categories of listeners and performers helped to preserve the music. Nizamudin Auliya’s defense of music and the influence of the many Chisti khanaqah were instrumental in the transmission and preservation of music during the period of Muslim rule in India. He emphasized the importance of music as a natural function of devotion.

_Sama’_ is a voice. Why should rhythm be forbidden? And that which is spoken is a word. Why should the comprehension of its meaning be forbidden? _Sama’_ is also movement of the heart. If that movement is due to remembering God, it is beneficial, but if the heart is full of corruption, then sama’ is forbidden. (Lawrence: 356)

Nizamudin Auliya was instrument in the wide acceptance of music within various Sufi orders.
The Sufi *khanaqah*, while often receiving support from kings and nobility, generally maintained its independence from external political influence. In addition to creating an inclusive environment that allowed participation from all segments of society, both religious and social, the *khanaqah* allowed for the development of music in a non-secular environment, away from the pressures and competition faced by musicians in the courts. The network of *khanaqahs* facilitated the transmission and preservation of classical styles to wider audiences, encouraging a dialogue between different regional styles and leading to many new developments. The integration of music into religious practices through the *sama‘* ritual provided legitimacy for music, and a measure of protection against fundamentalist opposition.

**From the Khanaqah to the Court (1350-1750)**

During the fourteenth to the nineteenth centuries, shifting patronage structures had a tremendous influence on the development of Hindustani music. The competitive environment of the courts required both continual development of skills as well as an adaptive and effective mode of cultural transmission, which eventually evolved into the *gharana* system. Concomitant with this process, many rulers and noblemen were also scholars of music, commissioning translations of Sanskrit treatises on music, new works based on contemporary performance practice, and even authoring scholarly texts on music. Sultan Sikandar Lodi of Delhi (1489-1517) commissioned one of the earliest Persian texts on music, the *Lahjat-I Sikandar Shahi* (Jairazbhoy: 18).
The work of Amir Khusrau (1253-1325) is invaluable in many respects, and assists in dispelling some of the misconceptions concerning the “purity” of Hindustani music found in Colonial era literature (see chapter 4). His descriptions of occasions when music was performed reveal the centrality of music to the court and provide insights into performance practices in medieval India. The distinct bias in the court towards Central Asian and Persian instruments is evident in his writing. Khusrau also describes other performances including poetry recitations and music in his Nur Sipihr, “The expert and highly skilled musicians are involved in playing and singing like a bulbul (nightingale) sings in the spring/this is the time to compose a tune and to revive the dead with the resonance of this melody” (393). He stresses the independence and vitality of Indian music, while acknowledging foreign influences (Sharma: 72). His life and work clarify the connections and divergences between secular and sacred musical practices, and the importance of the khanaqah for the development and maintenance of musical and poetic traditions.

For many rulers, religious devotion did not necessarily preclude making and listening to music; certainly the case for Sultan Muhammad Tughlaq (1325-1351). According to the traveler Ibn Batuta, the Sultan had 1,200 professional musicians and an additional 1,000 slave musicians (Jairazbhoy: 18), and over 2,000 musicians would perform for the king every evening (Sarmadee: xxxvi). Many other rulers, both in Delhi and other provinces, were famous for their arts patronage. These include Sharqi of Janpur (1401-1440), Sultan Zain-ul-‘Abidin (1416-1467) of Kashmir and Husayn Shah Sharqi (1486-1516), considered the greatest musician of his age, second only to Amir Khusrau in his importance (Jairazbhoy: 18).
The Sultans of the Lodi dynasty (1450-1526) are examples of arts patronage within the context of religious fundamentalism. Sultan Sikandar Lodi commissioned the second Persian text on music, *Lahjat-I-Sikandar Shahi*, based primarily on Sanskrit sources (Jairazbhoy: 18). At that time, Sanskrit texts were not familiar to most musicians, Hindu or Muslim, because knowledge of Sanskrit was the province of the Brahmins and the most learned scholars. During the Lodi dynasty, a new style of architecture, unique to India, also became prominent (Spear: 262-264).

The text *Ghunyatu’l Munya*, translated by Shahab Sarmadee, is one of the earliest known manuscripts on Hindustani music written in Persian. Malik Shamsu’d-din Ibrahim Hasan Abu Raja commissioned the text around the year 1374-1375. The anonymous author gathered many of the leading musicians and scholars of the day, as well as the Sanskrit texts of *Sangita Ratnakara*, *Sangita Ratnavali*, *Sangita Vinoda*, *Sangita Mudra*, and *Ragarnava*. The text compares Sanskrit music theory with contemporary performance practices; the author analyzes critically the question of the 22 shruties. His critique of the shruti is especially interesting because he argues in favor of equal-tempered intervals based on the production of notes within the human throat. He also provides a list of shruties not found in the *Natya Shastra* and the *Sangita Ratnakara*, which he claims were in vogue with contemporary performers. This paradigm also finds its way into the description of dance forms, some of which deviate substantially from forms described in the *Natya Shastra*. As a work of cultural history, the *Ghunyatu’l Munya* presents the intellectual background for musical performance during this time and describes in great detail the arrangement, decorum, and construction of concert
halls. The aesthetic frame of reference is used to critically evaluate vocalists, instrumentalists, music directors (*Mu'arrif* or *Gandharpa*), and dancers (Sarmadee: 9-133). Both the confluences and disjunctions between performance traditions presented in Sanskrit texts and contemporary courts are apparent in this work. The passionate interest of the Muslim rulers in music, as well as their appreciation of indigenous culture is also underscored in this, as well as in other texts of that time.

It is during the Mughal Empire (1526-1857) that arts patronage reached its apotheosis. With the exception of Aurangzeb (1659-1707), a puritan who outlawed music, the Mughal period is notable for exceptional cultural tolerance and intensive cultivation of the arts. In the court of Muhammad Jalal-ud-Din Akbar (1556-1605), religious tolerance and the cultivation of greatest talents of the age were merged with the egalitarian outlook of the Chisti lineage. Akbar expanded the Mughal Empire to include most of Northern India, Afghanistan, Bengal, Assam, and Berar (Spear: 355). Even with continual wars of conquest, Akbar found time to devote to the study of many subjects, including comparative religion, music, poetry, architecture and engineering. His religious tolerance was such that he abolished the tax on Hindus (a substantial loss of revenue), and held regular discussions between exponents of various religious traditions. In Akbar's court many Hindus held prominent positions, and he even participated in some Hindu religious observances (Ahmad: 176).

The *Ain-i-Akbari*, the third book of the *Akbar-nama*, is an encyclopedic work written by Abu'l Fazl, containing history, statistical information, description of the court, and pithy sayings of Akbar: in short, it contains a comprehensive view of all
aspects of life in India during the reign of Akbar. Of particular interest to scholars of Hindustani music are the descriptions of the musical instruments and melodies performed daily during the Naqahkhana, including the damana (Kuwarga), naqara, duhul, karna, surna, nafir, sing, and sang, which are either aerophones or percussion instruments (membranophones and idiophones). The Emperor Akbar’s proficiency at both musical composition and performance is highlighted. The sequence of the seven types of music performed on a daily basis is described in detail. At the end of the second book, there is a listing of the prominent imperial musicians, including their area of specialization. In this listing, most of the performers listed by name are vocalists, highlighting the higher status accorded them during this time. The wide variety of instruments performed by imperial musicians includes the bin, karna, ghichak, rubab, surna, qubuz, qanun, ney, and surmandal: a mixture of Indian, Arabic, Turkish, and Persian instruments. The ethnicity and place of origin of the musicians is also mentioned: Hindus, Iranians, Turkomans, and Kashmiris. A number of prominent nobles are described as being skilled in music, clearly delineating the importance of music to daily life at court, and the status accrued from musical skill (Ahmad 1965: 40-65).

In the fourth book, a comprehensive survey of Hindu learning is presented that includes a brief chapter on music. This chapter first describes the vital airs (pranas) which form the basis of musical sound production through the voice, and the relation of the seven main intervals to the sounds of various animals (shadja from the peacock, nishad from the elephant). It should be noted that the 22 shruties are absent from this discussion; instead the human body is said to contain 22 chords
(which perhaps refer to vocal chords) from which notes are derived. Following this, Abu’l-Fazl expounds upon the derivation of the various *ragas* from Shiva and Parvati. The primary ragas are *raag*-Shri, Vasanta, Bhairava, Pancham, Megha, Nata Narayana, which in turn have six variants. Songs are divided into two categories, *marga* (those songs performed by great Rishis and Sages), and *desi* (songs deriving from a particular place). The structure of *dhrupad* compositions are described in some detail, followed by descriptions of instruments in the four categories. In these categories, the instruments include many of Persian and Central Asian origin; for example *daf, nai-amban, rabab, and quanun*, as well as specifically Indian instruments such as the *vina*, the *yantra, pakhawaj*, and *dhol* (Blockman and Jarret: 99-104).

The musical chapters in the *Ain-i- Akbari* are similar to the *Ghunyatu'l Munya* in that Sanskrit music theory is compared with contemporary performance practices. The listing of various vocal performance styles popular at the time is of great interest, as is the lack of division between folk, devotional, and classical singers. Vocal performances often included acrobatics and elaborate costumes. While ostensibly presenting Hindu musical knowledge, the confluence of Persianate musical styles with indigenous Indian traditions are clear in Abu’l Fazl’s text. The fusion of Hindu and Muslim practices is also evident, something that was common to a number of Sufi lineages. During Akbar’s reign, the legendary musician Tansen developed Hindustani music to a pinnacle of excellence. Yet, like Khusrau and Nizamuddin before him, the divide between the secular and sacred worlds of music was manifested in the relationship between Tansen and his guru Swami Haridas.
Tansen considered Swami Haridas to be a superior musician, and like Nizamuddin, Swami Haridas refused to perform at court, believing that music should be reserved for God and not the king (Neuman: 85).

The extensive patronage of music continued under subsequent Mughal rulers, and reached its apex during the reign of Shah Jahan (1628-1658). Yet, even during the subsequent decline of the Mughals, culminating in the overthrow and imprisonment of Bahadur Shah Zafar by the British, music continued to develop and receive substantial patronage. The persistence of a vibrant cultural life in the midst of political and economic turmoil is evident in the work *Muraqqa-e-Delhi* (1741), which also contains the first recorded mention of the sitar.

**The Impact of British Colonization on Indian Music**

Another major rupture occurred with the growing power of the East India Company; initially, the impact of colonization was a gradual and insidious process, but like Aurangzeb, the Mutiny of 1857 was a singular event with dramatic consequences.

In 1786, one of the first encounters of the West with the Hindustani musical system occurred in Benares. In this seminal meeting, Jiwan Shah compared the notes of his *bin* with the notes produced on a harpsichord by Francis Fowke. At this time, no framework of comparison existed in which to verify or correlate the results; nevertheless the meeting was symbolic of the relationship between eastern music and the West over the next 150 years (Farrell: 15).
Concurrent with the discovery of Indian music was the encounter with the Sanskrit language. The discovery of this ancient language became an important intellectual pursuit for the British. They sought to “rediscover, preserve and interpret the greatness of this past, and on numerous occasions contrast it with the muddy rivulets of Muslim thought” (Farrell: 19). In 1792, William Jones produced the first treatise on the music of Northern India, entitled “On the Musical Modes of the Hindus.” This book was influential in a number of ways. It relied solely on archaic texts, and denied the strong Islamic influence on Hindustani music (ibid.: 23). The book contained short passages of raga in staff notation, taken from source texts in Sanskrit. For Jones, the contemporary Hindustani music was a completely corrupt version of the original described in the texts. This line of thinking continues to the present. Bishan Swarup stated in 1933, “The number of tunes in Hindustani music at present in use is near about 200. We could not expect anything better after centuries of neglect of the art by the intelligentsia, which art, since the later Mohammedan period till very recently, has been entirely in the hands of illiterate professionals” (Swarup: 25).

In 1789, the first collection of transcribed music was published, entitled The Oriental Miscellany. This collection of ‘Hindustani Airs’ was considered a benchmark of authentic music, and was still referred to 100 years later (Farrell: 32). The “Hindustani Air” became a novelty genre, perfect for novice piano players in a parlor setting. The author of the text, Bird, apologizes for the lack of variety and the “insipid” simplicity of the melodies. By notating the compositions, the author asserted the Western ability to understand and recreate the music of the Other, thus
demonstrating the cultural superiority of the colonizers. Indian music became an exotic souvenir from the Orient, to be enjoyed in the parlors of Europe. In this period we see musical essentialism and exoticism in full swing. Hindustani music was reduced to a few exotic tropes such as an ostinato bass line imitating the tambora, and use of a few melodic devices that symbolized the exotic nature of the Orient.

During the 1850's, the balance of power within colonized India began shifting. The function and importance of musical notation also changed during the period. In this 'century of the collector', the “hand of Western scientism sought to reveal the order and structure of human diversity in India” (Farrell: 45). A more exacting method of mapping Indian music was called for, in order to display it in the vast “commodity spectacle”, to “bring the non-European world into representations, the better to be able to see it and, above all, to hold it” (Said: 119). The domination and dissemination of native culture was the goal, “for the enterprise of empire depends upon the idea of having an empire [...] and all kinds of preparation are made for it within a culture; then in turn imperialism acquires a kind of coherence, a set of experiences, and a presence of ruler and ruled alike within the culture” (Said: 11).

Concurrently with this, the English-educated native elite began to work from within to reform Indian music and save it from the corrupting influences of the Islamic invaders. It is apparent that the native elite internalized the orientalist notions of the colonizers, both in the goal of returning to a “pure” form of music, and the project of notating the music. In the late nineteenth century, various
organizations were formed to collect, analyze, notate, disseminate, and “save” Hindustani music. Organizations such as the Philharmonic Society of Western India (a British group) and the Gayan Samaj (an Indian group) worked from much the same premises. Encoded within these organizations were the beginnings of the nationalist struggle, wherein music could be seen as a “pure product of Hindu culture, and hence a vehicle for modernizing, progressive nationalists” (Farrell: 54). It was a race, sifting through the wreckage of a once-great culture, to see who would hold the reins of cultural and political power. The hereditary musicians were viewed as low-caste (which many were) and illiterate. The upper-caste elite identified themselves with the idealized form of music represented in ancient texts. The dichotomy between the spiritual aspects of raga (moksha) and the sensual (bhoga) took on a new coloration of caste conflict.

As the British consolidated control over the subcontinent, understanding indigenous cultural forms gained importance. The British project to remodel the educational system in their own image required detailed knowledge of the culture that they were trying to shape. In 1874, S. W. Fallon, a school administrator, proposed a vast compendium of all the existing musical forms in order to sift through them and create a comprehensive system of education for the Indian youth. The decadent or corrupt forms could be discarded, and only the “pure” and “traditional” elements passed on (Farrell: 60-64). This fit with the larger rubric of the British as cultural arbitrators. Coinciding with this project was the discussion of which system of notation to use. Both sides were involved in this heated discussion, but many Hindus took the side of Western staff notation. Mudaliyar, an Indian
musicologist, set before himself the project of creating a “complete record in staff notation of the whole of the musical projects of the East” (ibid.: 74). Both colonizer and colonized were in agreement about the degraded state of current musical production and the urgency of reform.

Reformers, Nationalism, and the Locus of Cultural Control

The programs to categorize, compartmentalize, and modernize Indian music and its performance struck at the foundations of traditional Indian society. One of the central features of the gharana system is the possession of specialized knowledge. In the post-1857 social engineering project of the British, the control of culture became extremely important. The Sepoy Mutiny in 1857 resulted in the final destruction of the Mughals; the last Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar was deposed and exiled to Burma. In one of the great tragedies of history, the culmination of over eleven hundred years of Indo-Islamic cultural fusion was decimated by the systematic efforts of the British Raj. Yet, the legacy of this era survives in various forms until the present day. Both Bahadur Shah Zafar and Wajid Ali Shah were accomplished patrons of the arts, Sufis and poets. Bahadur Shah Zafar’s poetry is still recited on the sub-continent, and Wajid Ali Shah’s influence on both kathak dance and thumri is still felt today. Lucknow became the site of Bhatkhande’s first music college, indicating that the city was still considered important by the reformers (Misra: xiii).

In the minds of reformers, notation provided permanence for this most ephemeral of the arts, thus elevating it to the level of Western art music. Music was
moved from the hegemonic control of the guru, who would often demand years of
service to learn the rudiments of musical performance. With the use of notation and
Western style music schools, music could be disseminated through the Westernized
systems of the university and music schools following a specified curriculum. Music
could be plucked from the unseemly world of brothels, salons, and the decaying
Mughal courts into the bright and sunny world of the middle class and “modern”
society.

The great irony is that the project of modernization relied on ancient
Sanskrit texts with hardly any discernible relationship to current musical practice.
The lines of class conflict were clearly drawn here, for music as a profession was
decidedly low caste. The thought of a Brahmin male, much less a high-caste female,
becoming a professional musician was unthinkable. The use of a purely Western
model for music notation and pedagogy never found great success, but two high-
caste men were able to successfully transform the music from within: V. N.
Bhatkhande and D. V. Paluskar. They both set to work on the problem of creating a
national music.

V. N. Bhatkhande was born in 1860 and lived until 1937. He had an early
interest in music and the Vedic texts concerning it. By 1908 he created a system of
music notation and raga classification that would have a profound effect. Prior to
Bhatkhande, scholars and artists widely disagreed about raga classification,
structure, and performance practices. The most commonly used system existed
classified the ragas as male, female, or eunuch but there was no consensus
(Bandoypadhyaya: 12). Ragas were not necessarily described the same way between gharanas. Disputes were common.

Bhatkhande divided the ragas into parent scales known as thats. There are 10 major thats in Bhatkhande’s system. Most of the major ragas can be characterized as belonging to one of these groups. The first that, Bilawal, is equivalent to the Western major scale, a choice doubtlessly influenced by the British. There are 35 ragas classified under this that, and eight of them are considered major ragas. (Bandoypadhyaya: 10). Bhatkhande’s system of musical notation allowed for a universal system that could express the basic notes of a composition, whether the notes were flat or sharp, and the rhythmic pattern in which these notes fell. The notation, however, cannot express the embellishments that are essential to the performance of a raga, or the subtle use of microtonal shadings that are used to bring out the nuances of the emotional colors of particular notes. Even with these limitations, the notational innovation allowed a set curriculum to be developed for usage in university settings, including written testing on the material. The development of written notation allowed students to learn music without a guru. The secrecy surrounding compositions ceased to be a barrier for those interested in learning, as Bhatkhande received hundreds of compositions from members of the Gwalior gharana, notated in his many books.

Vishnu Digambar Paluskar was instrumental in bringing Hindustani music into the public sphere. V. D. Paluskar was a Hindu of high caste. Due to a childhood accident he was unable to enter any profession that required reading, so he began to study music from an early age. It was decided that he would take instruction from
Balkrisna Buwa, a well-known khyal artist (Wade: 43). The difference in social status between him and his guru was discomfiting, later inspiring him to create his music schools. He began to give concerts that were open to the public for the first time, as opposed to a small select audience in a mehfil or rich person’s house. An admission fee was charged for performances. The effect of this on Hindustani music was immense, opening up the music to a much wider audience than before, and freed artists from dependence on the patronage of the nobility.

Paluskar was a tireless evangelist for Hindustani music as a force for national unification. In 1901, He founded a system of schools across India, called the Gandharva Mahavidyalya, which had a standardized curriculum and received public funding rather than royal patronage. Through his style of dress and general demeanor he worked to raise the low social standing of artists. His female students, who were largely members of the middle and upper classes, helped to remove the stigma of professional courtesans from music by performing publicly. He insisted that musicians start concerts on time and follow a disciplined life style. Music as an avocation, and even as a vocation, became palatable for members of the middle class. Paluskar helped to create the system of government patronage that exists today, instilling in people a pride about their own traditions. Because of Bhatkhande and Paluskar music became an important part of the country’s public life, and millions more were exposed to the music than ever before. Music became a more respectable profession, as its study of music was opened up to the higher castes. No longer stigmatized, it even became fashionable in elite circles (Wade 1997:43-44).
The British were able to produce a new “class consciousness” which exploited existing prejudices inherent within the caste system (M. Hasan: 184-208). By employing a rigorous system of indoctrination in Western ideology, combined with a meticulous structure of punishment and reward, serious divisions arose between Hindu and Muslim factions. The political strategy of “divide and conquer” denied the high culture of the Mughals and Islamic influence, a rewriting of history that still causes controversy.
Sedimentary Time, Rupture, and Continuity

Fig. 2.1 below shows a model of how the processes described above can be seen as forming an interlocking field of memory, practices, and processes that inform the dialogue between the past and present.

![Figure 2.1 Sedimentary Time 1000 CE-1920](image)

In figure 2.1, the vertical axis (y) contains the time range, and the horizontal axis (x) represents socio-cultural forces, while the diagonal axis (z) represent specifically musical phenomena. The colors represent the non-linear interactions of all of these elements. While all of these historical processes (assemblages) can be seen as part of a teleological trajectory across a linear temporal and evolutionary
range, they can also be understood as layer of what Latour terms sedimentary time (Latour 1999: 170-171), or *stratum* (see Ch. 3) in Deleuze’s terminology. Latour articulates these two temporal dimensions as follows:

Time’s arrow is the resultant of two dimensions, not one: the first dimension, the linear succession of time, always moves forward (1865 is *after* 1864); the second one, sedimentary succession, moves backwards (1865 occurs *before* 1864) [...] this, however, implies no idealism or backward causation, since time’s arrow always moves irreversibly forward. (Latour 1999: 171)

Latour’s conception of these two temporal dimensions describes the extension of the present into the past, the continuous process of reconfiguring of what has gone before in the present, a fundamentally relational view which layers the constant dialogue of self, memory, and culture against the irreversible arrow of time. The sedimentary dimension of time intersects with the literal and phenomenological experience of place, creating, in Eric Sheppard’s terms “positionality” (Sheppard 2002).

Just as ruptures and traumas reconfigure the past and the future for individuals and societies, the layers of sedimentary time are constantly reinterpreted in the present to form new continuities. This mediation between continuity and change inform the subjective time of music, “there is indeed a sense in which text and art engender a time particular to themselves [...] empower a multitudinous range of “times” (Steiner: 72), which can be experienced as “parallel temporal structures” (De Landa 2002: 115).

These structures are not abstractions, but are in fact embedded into places (temples, mosques, and forts), language (Sanskrit, Hindi, Urdu, and Persian),
embodied cultural practices (religious rituals, music, modes of livelihood—subsistence farming and computer programming), political discourse (Hindu/Muslim communalism), and educational structures (madrassa, modern universities, and guru/shisya parampara). At the same time, alignments of social groups or individuals with particular definitions of history are important components of identity formation. In certain Hindu and Muslim sects, historical figures are accessible through direct experience, in dreams, religious experiences, or even in physical encounters. The underpinnings of the belief in reincarnation and the illusory nature of time undergird belief systems that are radically different from Western conceptions of time and space. When I walk from the Delhi metro into Nizamudin’s shrine in Delhi, I have an immediate sense of temporal/spatial dislocation from the “modern world” and I think that to ascribe this to the merely phenomenological or affective dimensions of experience is to neglect the resonance of this location with the past and the a-temporal aspect of the dargah, wherein both Amir Khusrau and Hazrat Nizamudin are felt by the believers to manifest as immanent presence. In India, the past forms a virtual plane with the present, impacting the actualization of sound and self in complex and subtle ways. Therefore, to neglect this dimension of experience is to neglect a fundamental stratum of lived experience, which I believe should inform ethnographic practice in India.

The preceding swift journey through Indian history clarifies the complex interaction of the opposing binaries and the importance of rupture, continuity, and reintegration. The following chapter will examine new theoretical models in light of the problems posed by globalization. Deleuze and Guattari’s assemblage theory, and
the principles of “nomad thought” will be applied to the analysis of several contemporary musical performances, revealing that the events and historical processes, described in this chapter, can function as components in networks and assemblages that connect with the present in non-linear trajectories.
Chapter 3: From Hybridity To Rhizome: Mapping Performance Sites

India is in a process of re-imagining itself and simultaneously being re-imagined by the world. The increasing economic, political, and cultural interconnections within the globalized world are creating new configurations within local Indian society and the diaspora. As shown in chapter 2, India's cultural forms have amazing resilience and resistance to external invasions.

The current time, however, is distinguished by the sheer scale and rapidity of cultural change. Charles Taylor uses the term “the great disembedding” to describe the dislocation and disembodiment of cultural practice (Taylor 2007: 146-158). This disembedding is clearly reflected in contemporary performances of Hindustani music, apparent the music itself and the locus of meaning defined in a cultural context. The process of becoming part of a globalized world has affected Hindustani music on multiple levels, ranging from specific musical practices to the social configuration of performance settings, patronage, and reception of Indian classical music.

GLOBALIZATION: THEORIES, MODELS, DILEMMAS

The following discussion of globalization’s definitions and impacts, and an overview of three major theoretical paradigms will provide the necessary context
for clarifying the particular dilemmas globalization poses to many foundational conceptions in ethnomusicology, including tradition, authenticity, commodification, and economic power structures (Stokes 2004; Frith 1989; Nercessian 2002). I will situate globalization in a specific historical context and analyze the impact of economic forces on established local cultures, highlighting new insights into the music/culture complex obtained from the study of globalization.

Globalization impels fundamental shifts in the speed of cross-cultural communication, the widespread dissemination of mass-mediated images and ideologies, and the blurring of national boundaries. According to Benedict Anderson, the creation of what he calls “imagined communities”¹ (1991) was an important social force during the age of print capitalism and nationalist projects. Imagined communities have expanded in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries through the Internet, film, television, and the global music business, creating a vast, interconnected network of floating signifiers² and images that reshape traditional social, cultural and economic structures in a myriad of ways. Pratha Chatterjee criticizes Anderson’s concept of “imagined communities” as exaggerating the importance of Western and European cultures to the “world historical narrative” ignoring the nuances of specific cultures and their own anti-colonial nationalisms, as

¹ Anderson used this term to define a nation as a socially constructed community. Anderson’s nation "is imagined because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion." (Anderson: 224)
² A Claude Lévi-Strauss’ term, commonly used in semiotics to designate a signifier with vague or even non-existent signified, thus allowing its meaning be defined by each interpreter at will.
well as constructing the nation as a “modular text” and neglecting the importance of multiple and contesting historiographies (P. Chatterjee 1993).

The term globalization designates the multiplex constructions of current political, economic and cultural landscapes, the analysis of which can blur boundaries between diverse scholarly fields. The processes have been described extensively in the growing body of literature on globalization (cf. Held and McGrew 2007). Certain modes of inquiry, especially in economics and political science, have tended towards a reductionist approach, exemplified by Samuel Huntington (1996). In contrast, sociologists have generally employed a broader field of inquiry, examining multiple agents and interacting systems (Pieterse 2004: 10-15).

The term globalization itself is also contested. Much of the debate centers around the nature and scope of the current transformations, power differentials between local, state, and trans-national actors, and its historical scope, either as a new phenomenon or a continuation of cultural interconnections stretching back millennia (Scholte: 10). A particular issue posed by globalization is the deconstruction of culture, analogous to the post-modern deconstruction of historical master-narratives, as found in Perry (1998). Pieterse’s summary of globalization literature assists in contextualizing these debates in coherent categories.

Pieterse classifies the divergent interpretations of globalization into three broad paradigms of difference, convergence, and mixing (hybridity). The first paradigm, difference, or cultural differentialism, emphasizes the immutable differences between cultures and posits a strategic and economic interplay of fundamentally separate cultures (Pieterse: 54-55). Cultural difference is exemplified
by Huntington’s now famous declaration of the “clash of civilizations,” which is the central determinant for progress and change (Mott: 40). The two civilizations in question for Huntington are those of Western capitalism and Islam, and he is especially wary of an axis between China and Islamic countries (Pieterse: 43). This model has deep roots in earlier evolutionary models of anthropology, and looks at geographic, cultural, and political boundaries as the basis for perpetual war. This thesis has been taken up by many other theorists of globalization including Wallerstein (1991) and King (1991) who focus on culture as a battleground of ideologies, and also the “end of history” posited by Fukuyama (1992). It also has parallels with the Marxist conception of the rise of global markets and the continual exploitation of the poor by powerful, global capitalistic forces. This idea has numerous problems, not the least of which is the conception of culture and ethnic identities as solid, defined entities. It also neglects the wide cultural interpenetration between societies, and the complex layers of diverging identities within cultures. This parallels the evolutionary model of the nineteenth and early twentieth century field of comparative musicology.

The second paradigm, convergence, emphasizes increasing cultural homogenization as the locus of globalization’s impact. Many scholars use this paradigm to map the impacts of American cultural and political hegemony, believing that the wide diffusion and popularity of American culture externally and internally erodes traditional culture and identities, resulting in both cultural fragmentation and increasing political and religious fundamentalism. Ritzer (1993) coined the term “McDonaldization” to describe this process. Mott describes the creation of
“McWorld” as the reordering of production and consumption for economic benefit with the concomitant effect of social and culture conformity. In McWorld, “the ultimate efficiency is the elimination of interpersonal relationships [...] technology creates a culture of distance and indifference by insulating customers from each other and suppliers” (Mott: 200). This paradigm has its roots in the anthropological concept of culture diffusion and evolution and is paralleled by Weber’s conception of the rise of rationalism as a process of cultural evolution (Swingewood: 28). Feld’s writings on world beat and world music employ this paradigm, as does Alan Lomax (1968) who describes the graying out of local styles. This anxiety is especially clear in works by ethnomusicologists who lament the decline of traditional music cultures (see de Leeuw et al.: 1974).

Other scholars contest the analogy of McWorld as being tautological and contradicted by ethnographic evidence. Pieterse states that, “rather than cultural homogenization ...western fast food restaurants usher in difference and variety, giving rise to and reflecting new, mixed social forms.” (51) Appadurai describes the current status of American cultural hegemony: “the United States is no longer the puppeteer of a world system of images but is only one node in a transnational construction of imaginary landscapes” (1996: 31). Talbott (1995) contests McDonaldization through her ethnography of McDonalds in Moscow. She contends that the very paragon of cultural homogeneity, McDonalds, is reconfigured into Russian society, transforming efficiency into long hours in line, and affordability into food prices that were a third of a Russian worker’s daily wages (Pieterse: 50). McDonald’s in India also took on specific characteristics that reflect Indian cultural
values; it was, until recently, an elite restaurant, extremely expensive, and served only lamb, as the consumption of beef is forbidden to Hindus. Other scholars have contested the paradigm of convergence as simplifying the uneven and complex processes of globalization, including Frith (1991), Garofalo (1993), Shuker (1994), Hesmondhalgh (2002), and Biddle and Knights (2007).

Pieterse’s third paradigm, hybridity, is fundamentally opposed to the previous paradigms as it emphasizes border crossings, the permeable boundaries of ethnic and national identities, and destabilizes the notion of cultural authenticity. The concept of hybridity has been important to many world music scholars, including Taylor (1997), Hamm (1989) and Murphy (2007). However, most of the works on hybridity have emphasized the context of global popular music cultures, and it has yet to be determined whether these same arguments apply to traditional classical music cultures such as Hindustani music.

Globalization directly impacts the local, calling into question previous analytical models from anthropology and folklore that consider the local to be the center of culture: “the idea of a culture implicitly connects meaning construction and particularity with location” (Tomlinson: 150). The understanding of tradition, when uprooted from both physical and imaginal space, requires the reformulation of the local in a global context.
Between the Local to Global

The formulation of the local/translocal binary within the context of globalization requires the relative positioning of cultural agency within processes of commodification and global capital flows, cultural homogenization and hybridity, and the relation of diasporic and imagined communities with constructions of the local. The definitions and implications of the local/translocal axis are contested in contemporary ethnomusicology (Murphy 2007). This debate between earlier models that privilege the local, and newer models with a global perspective centers on issues of agency, the process of denationalization, cultural authenticity vs. hybridity, and the relative importance of the global flow of capital, information, and products (of which music is an important component). This debate is also informed the contrast between the post-colonial emphasis on “semiotics” of culture as the primary vector of globalization, or the privileging of economic factors found in Marxist analysis and many contemporary economists (Krishnaswamy: 106).

During the 1990s, ethnomusicology was not far behind the anthropology and general theoretical works on globalization; in the early 1990’s, a divisive debate between the two prominent ethnomusicologists Mark Slobin and Veit Erlmann was conducted in *Ethnomusicology* (Slobin 1992; Erlmann 1993). Erlmann’s stance towards globalization, based on a Marxist critique of the new global order of transnational capitalism, drew on post-colonial theory contending that the colonial project created imagined representations of the “other” which influence the mimetic characteristics of contemporary world music (Stokes: 49). Erlmann contended that the production of spectacle was the fundamental mode of capitalism from the
nineteenth to the mid-twentieth centuries, which has evolved into late-stage capitalist post-modern culture. Slobin, on the other hand, viewed globalization as a process of self-liberation from the colonial project, which offers local cultures a wide range of choices. Slobin and Erlmann’s positions are strongly influenced by their diagnoses of contemporary culture’s condition. Erlmann agrees with the Marxist political theorist Fredric Jameson’s critique of post-modernism and contention that globalization has dissolved the barriers between cultural and economic flows. Jameson (1991) describes the post-modern condition as “the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture,” an event which has explosive force:

A prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life— from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself —can be said to have become “cultural” in some original and yet untheorized sense. (Jameson: 52)

For Erlmann, the dissolution of the autonomous sphere of culture in the post-modern era creates contradictory processes of resistance and reification. Globalization, while grounded in the nineteenth century’s colonial project, has generated a non-Eurocentric resistance. Yet, this resistance is “caught up in the commodification of everyday life under late capitalism” (Erlmann 1999: 178).

Erlmann interrogates conceptions of the local and the aesthetic which inform ethnography, as such conceptions are often situated in particular Western frames of reference and constructions of the other: “The ethnographic project in particular has been complicit with the production of locality in rather ambiguous ways, lending itself to schemes of domination [...] and to alternative strategies of resistance” (Erlmann 1998: 12). Slobin, on the other hand, views globalization as a
much more localized process, and rejects the possibility of vast, systemic forces (Stokes: 50). He employs Appadurai’s concept of the “scapes,” and models the processes of globalization in a multi-scalar, interconnected hierarchy (Slobin 1993).

For Slobin, globalization has freed local cultures from the hegemonic machine of colonial domination.

These two approaches can be summarized as top-down (Erlmann) and bottom-up (Slobin) perspectives on globalization. According to Stokes, much of the current literature represents mediation between these two viewpoints (Stokes 2004: 50-51). Slobin’s and Appadurai’s argument that consumer choices create new avenues of agency, allowing distinct identities within the fold of the larger global market places contradicts Erlmann’s contention that globalization creates a “post-modern space littered with semiotic debris without any reference to authenticity” (1994: 176).

The positions of Slobin and Erlmann are well supported; the complexity of globalization necessitates a balancing of these outlooks, as well as a case-by-case application of specific models. Cultural production is essentially polyvocal, representing a multiplicity of individual and collective identities through simultaneous and occasionally contesting narratives.

These two opposing positions are merged in O’Shea’s research on the transnational circulation of Bharata Natyam dance (2007). She describes this process as propelled by the creation of new imagined communities, serving diasporic communities’ need for the “reiteration of their homeland’s culture in diaspora” (O’Shea: 3). Bharata Natyam operates as a new, globalized art form on the
world stage and is thus a polyvocal cultural signifier, containing a multiplicity of perspectives including gender, nationalism and region, tradition and authenticity, and post-colonial issues of cultural change. For O’ Shea, the process of change is a crucial component of Bharata Natyam’s continued development, and is, in fact, a fundamental property of this form, notwithstanding the “trope” of primordialism that is common among performers and scholars (ibid.: 26-69). Reflecting Erlmann’s critical stance, she examines the construction of Bharata Natyam as an intertwined processes of colonial influence, nationalism, regional, and gender divisions, each of which define the art form in accordance with contesting political and social agendas.

The destabilization and re-imagining of the local is reflected through musical change, which is then further modified by the process of translation into multiple fields of representation and transmission. Location and place are no longer geographically definable in a globalized world, wherein the boundaries between the actual and virtual are blurred. Appadurai offers a solution to the positioning of local in globalization, defining global cultural flows as five “scapes”- ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes, and ideoscape. (Appadurai 1996: 33). These are fundamentally perspectival, not based on an objective reality, but situated and constructed through individual, corporate, nation-state, and ethnic actors. The use of the term ‘scape indicates that they are formulated through both the placement of a group or individual within the particular field (as in an landscape), and their relative relation to it. For Appadurai, these ‘scapes constitute the building blocks of “imagined worlds, that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe”
These imagined worlds often link the local with diasporic and other translocal communities.

Appadurai describes the process of “indigenization” wherein the signifiers of a globalized world are reinterpreted and re-inscribed into the local. This sense of place is the construction of a narrative with permeable boundaries that simultaneously encompass, supersede and transform previous religious, political, ethnic and cultural frames. The interaction of new forms of “imagined communities” with embodied and constructed traditions are often contradictory and incongruous, yet this incongruity is by and large invisible to the participants (Appadurai 1996). From these works, we can conclude that cultural production is no longer easily definable as traditional, authentic, and local as these terms often posit modes of consciousness and place that are gradually eroding. Whether alternatively defined as indigenized, inauthentic, or mimetic, at root these cultural products are complex hybrids.

Hybridity, Authenticity, and Tradition

The concept of hybridity has been an important and contested concept in both musicology and the general literature on globalization. Hybridity, both as a process and a mixed cultural product, has been designated by numerous labels, including syncretism, creolization, indigenization, localization and multiculturalism (Sullivan: 165; Pieterese: 90). Hybridity is often at the center of debates about tradition, authenticity, and the validity of world music. The term, hybridity, originally coming from agriculture, means the mixture of various genetic strands of
plant life. Hybridization has obviously been a crucial component in the development of many musical styles, and is often marginalized in the “invented traditions” of many nascent states. This is visible throughout the world, but especially in areas of contested identity, such as Turkey, the Balkans, and Central Asia (Stokes 1989). Hybridity is essentially opposed to the concept of the authentic as the “true” or “original” culture, discussed in Feld (1996).

Hybridity is influenced by trans-local economic factors, such as internationally funded local developments, migration, and diasporic identity, and the self-reflexivity of the global animus. The nature of hybridity is complicated by the increasing influence of diasporic identities on local music production. This is especially apparent in the cross-circulating conceptions of identity that are found between the centers and peripheries of globalization, and erode and complicate clear distinctions between tradition, locality, and ethnic identities.

The problem of hybridity is contested in ethnomusicology. For Stokes, the either-or stance of hybridity versus authenticity is a simplistic construction that often “loads onto the authentic complex tasks of resistance, which may be entirely inappropriate to describe basic conditions of production, listening and circulation” (Stokes: 61). For Fisk (1989), hybridity is essentially positive, and enables a cross-cultural circulation of musical ideas and self-created identities, which are essentially opposed to traditional culture and any need for preservation. On the other side of this debate is the desire to preserve traditional music. Ton de Leeuw describes the situation faced by traditional music as “disastrous,” but contends that it can be preserved through a dialogue with the “serious” music of the West, that is, art music.
(de Leeuw: 15). When this concern is echoed in India, it often provokes intense debates between musicians, scholars, and listeners. This issue has come up repeatedly throughout my field work, and is exemplified by the ITC’s Sangeet Research Academy attempts to preserve traditional modes of transmission, and the desultory statements by many musicians that Hindustani music is dying art form.

In the context of Hindustani music, tradition encompasses a very real set of physical actions, knowledge, social practices, and hierarchical relationships that are generally transmitted through the multiple avenues of acculturation, oral and written transmission, and embodied experience. Certainly, traditions and communities can be imagined, but in the case of a traditional music that is part of a living chain of cross-temporal cultural transmission, the embodied aspects of the tradition react with the process of hybridity on multiple levels, transforming musical sound, performance contexts, cultural transmission, and patronage structures.

Hybridity and authenticity can be seen as two closely related rhetorical poles that are deeply intertwined in reality—this condition of mutual alterity is a dialogic process, as defined by Bakhtin, whose “concept of the self is profoundly reflexive, for everything which is experienced internally is turned outwards” (Swinegood: 115). The dialogic model of Bakhtin allows for a relationally recreated and polysemic self that parallels culture; he “rejected the idea that culture has its own ‘inner territory’ which can be identified, categorized and finalized” (Swinegood: 116). This dialogic process is apparent in the polysemic nature of music: participants (both performers
and listeners) are constantly redefining their conceptions of self and other, and the categories of traditional, authentic, and musical change.

Pieterse’s contention that globalization is composed of multiple levels of hybridity parallels Appadurai’s scapes (Pieterse: 63). These levels of hybridity include structural hybridity: “what globalization means in structural terms, then, is the increase in the available modes of organization: transnational, international, regional, national, micro-regional, municipal, local” (italics in original) (ibid.: 66); economic hybridity, in which, “the articulation of modes of production follows a principle of hybridization”; hybrid spaces, such as those found in cities like New Delhi, where feudal/pre-capitalistic economic and social systems exist next to transnational corporations, and historical hybridity. For Pieterse, all these modes of hybridity operate simultaneously, and none has primacy over the other; “multiple identities and the de-centering of the social subject are grounded in the ability of individuals to avail themselves of several organizational options at the same time... thus globalization is the framework for the diversification and amplification of the “sources of the self” (ibid.: 68).

The paradigm of hybridity is applicable to the wider field of globalization itself; there are in fact many “globalizations” occurring on technological, political, economic and cultural levels: “these varied dimensions all point to the inherent fluidity, indeterminacy, and open-endedness of globalizations.” (Pieterse: 60) Hybridity, however, is so all-encompassing as to prove unwieldy when attempting to outline the interplay of forces in specific instances and instead proliferates into
endless streams of variegated “hybridites” that can obscure the very phenomena that it is meant to clarify.

By analyzing globalization as a multidimensional and complex process, however, it is possible find a model that can take into account the uneven and varied transformations that are occurring in Hindustani music today. In India, the multiplicity of identities, both local and translocal that intersect and are negotiated both between and within individuals, societies, and economic structures are important components in the negotiation of identity through music. These many identities are constantly in play in the multiple interacting fields inhabited by the individual and collective social, cultural, economic, and imagined spaces, a constant process of creating, defining, and dissolving boundaries.

All of these models of hybridity are still grounded in the subject/object dichotomy, Kant’s enduring legacy. While Appadurai’s concept of the “scapes” approaches the threshold of this boundary, the perspectival nature of his framework is grounded in the phenomenological vantage point of individual perception and the “imagined” nature of these positions. Kant’s rejection of metaphysics locks all inquiry into the prison of human thought, and informs the ontological rejection at heart of “imagined” or “spectacular” worlds. Deleuze and Guattari’s “nomad thought” sets out from the citadel of the Cartesian subject into the open spaces of multiplicities that arise and fall on the shores of becoming. For Deleuze and Guitarri’s, hybrids are not wholes composed of separate elements, but are fields of difference joined into what they term multiplicities. Latourian hybrids are the
interaction of material/semiotic dimensions within diverse networks of actants (see ch. 4).

**DELEUZIAN THEORITICAL PERSPECTIVES**

Deleuze and Guattari take on the fundamentally dualistic models of much Western thought, which they define as “State Philosophy,” through a non-hierarchical model based on “difference” instead of identity. Deleuze describes this philosophical stance in his major work *Difference and Repetition* (1968), a critique of the underpinnings of Western thought in the last two centuries from Kant to Chomsky.

In order to understand the rhizome and assemblage theory, it is necessary to consider Deleuze and Guattari’s thought in some depth. Deleuze’s work is a frontal assault on State Philosophy. State Philosophy, from Plato onward, is based on the dual resemblance of identity posited by the thinking subject and the subject’s conceptual framework, “the subject, its concepts, and also the objects in the world to which the concepts are applied have a shared, internal essence: the self resemblance at the basis of identity” (Deleuze and Guattari: xi). In State Philosophy, representational thought functions by means of analogy: it aims to “establish a correspondence between the symmetrically structured domains” (ibid.: xi). This conceptual paradigm is presided over by the “policeman of analogy” and creates an ordered, striated space that presents the values of truth, order, justice, and so on. This model is destabilized by Deleuze and Guattari, who reject the basic grounding
of identity and form their conceptual model on difference – tracing the vectors of force and action on interconnected multiplicities – articulating the act of living through the immanence and irreducibility of reality to fixed conceptual spaces. In place of State Philosophy’s ordered and striated space, Deleuze introduces the remarkably different model of “nomad thought,” inhabiting a smooth space of intersections, multiplicities and openness.

Deleuze and Guattari use the book as metaphor to describe nomad thought and its terrain, organizational principles, potentialities for movements, and distinction from the gridded, striated space of State Philosophy:

In a book, as in all things, there are lines of articulation or segmentarity, strata and territories; but also lines of flight, movements of deterritorialization and destratification. Comparative rates of flow on these lines produce phenomena of relative slowness and viscosity, or on the contrary, of acceleration and rupture. All this, lines and measurable speeds, constitutes an assemblage (emphasis added) (Deleuze and Guattari: 3-4).

From the strata (fixed or marked territories) intensities (energy flows) create new assemblages that are governed by their own rules, logic, and potentialities. This process is clearly visible in the entirely new spaces opened up by globalization and re-interpretation of earlier modes of cultural signification into entirely new matrixes, or rhizomes. As Deleuzian “nomad thought” is a radical break with generally accepted models of thought and epistemology, it is necessary to

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3 Striated space is ordered, homogeneous, and guided by linear and rigid restrictions of one movement.
define the concept of the rhizome and the intellectual framework in which it operates.

Deleuze’s concept of the rhizome facilitates the juxtaposition of elements in non-hierarchical, interconnected multiplicities. The metaphor is drawn from biology, contrasting with Chomsky’s hierarchic language tree. The rhizome is a model of interactive networks comprising heterogeneous elements. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe the rhizome as follows: “semiotic chains of every nature are connected to very diverse modes of coding (biological, political, economic, etc.) that bring into play not only different regimes of signs but also states of things with different status” (Deleuze and Guattari: 7).

Deleuze and Guattari outline six principles of the rhizome as follows. Principles 1 and 2: “principles of connection and heterogeneity: any point of the rhizome can be connected to anything other, and must be” (ibid.). These interconnections of multiple layers, including political, social, economic, and semiotic, are brought together in the forms of rhizomic assemblages; the rhizome establishes connections between semiotic chains, in constant patterns of converging and separating. “Collective assemblages of enunciation function directly within *machinic assemblages*; it is not possible to make a radical break between regimes of signs and their objects” (italics in original) (ibid.). Principle 3: the multiplicity is treated as a substantive, no longer retaining a relationship to the One; “a multiplicity has neither subject nor object, only determinations, magnitudes and dimensions that cannot increase in number without the multiplicity changing in nature” (8).

Principle 4: asignifying rupture, rhizomes constantly compel “lines of flight,” new
combinations, a constant process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization, “the book is not an image of the world. It forms a rhizome with the world, there is a parallel evolution of the book and the world: the book assures the deterritorialization of the world, but the world effects a reterritorialization of the book” (ibid.: 11). Principles 5 and 6: cartography and decalcomania, a rhizome is a map and not a tracing. “The map is open and connectable in all its dimensions; it is detachable, reversible [...] The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged “competence” (ibid.:12-13).

Although predating the proliferation of the Internet by at least a decade, the description of acentered networks is quite prescient: “acentered systems, finite networks of automata in which communication runs from any neighbor to any other, the stems of channels do not preexist, and all individuals are interchangeable, defined by their state at a given moment- such that the local operations are coordinated and the final, global result synchronized without a central agency” (ibid.:17). Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of acentered networks, assemblages, and rhizomes do not require grand narratives, central hegemonic powers, or dichotomies of local/global and authentic/hybrid. Yet, these concepts are not precluded either and can be components of unique assemblages, which in turn can generate a myriad of new assemblages.

By dispensing with the search for essences and the pervasive dualities that undergird much of philosophy and other disciplines, Deleuze and Guattari offer a conceptual model that cuts across interdisciplinary boundaries, dissolves the Cartesian cleavage between body and mind, and thereby permits analysis of
seemingly disparate phenomena in an assemblage. The Deleuzian conceptual system offers significant possibilities for musical analysis; music itself is often presented as an example of the “smooth space” of nomad thought through his work.

Chapters 10 and 11 in A Thousand Plateaus are crucial for the understanding of Deleuze and Guattari conception of music within the broader space of their philosophical system. Central to their conception of music is the refrain, a repetition of rhythm that serves to demarcate space, to territorialize, and to form a network of relations between an individual and their environment (Bogue: 95). Music is the process of deterritorializing the refrain, of taking the fixed boundaries of musical systems (“machinic assemblages”) and creating new lines of flight which generate new becomings that are actualization of virtual potentialities. For Deleuze and Guattari, music is integral to the cosmos itself, and human-produced music is a component or a reflection of under-arching musicality of all existence —“every milieu is vibratory, in other words, a block of space time constituted by the periodic repetition of the components”— music links the macrocosm with the microcosm, “the molecular has the capacity to make the elementary communicate with the cosmic” (Deleuze and Guattari: 313). Music engages with the plane of the virtual, which Deleuze terms the body without organs or the plane of consistency, the total potential space of becoming within a particular entity that is constantly made actual. Music transmits intensities through its relation with repeated grounding of the refrain, machinic assemblages, and the field of immanent potentialities:

One side of a machinic assemblage faces the strata, which doubtless makes it a kind of organism, or signifying totality, or determination attributable to a
subject; it also has a side facing a \textit{body without organs}, which is continually dismantling the organism, causing asignifying particles or pure intensities to pass or circulate, and attributing to itself subjects that leave it with nothing more than a trace of an intensity (Deleuze and Guattari: 3-4).

The density of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of music, only briefly outlined above, does not preclude an array of applications of their model to the study of music. In \textit{Deleuze and Music} (ed. Buchanan and Swiboda: 2004), the flexibility and creative applications of Deleuze's theory are demonstrated in each chapter. Each author applies a different range of concepts derived from Deleuze, including "nomad thought" in Eugene Holland's \textit{Studies in Applied Nomadology: Jazz Improvisation and Post-Capitalist Markets} (ibid.: 20-36), which examines both the relationship between Jazz improvisation as a model for new social configurations in a post-capitalist world; "assemblage theory" in Phillip Turetsky's \textit{Rhythm: Assemblage and Event} (ibid.: 140-158) analyzes rhythm as a temporal, embodied, and virtual assemblage, and, most relevant for this study, Jeremy Gilbert's examination of Indian classical music's rhizomic relation to the proliferating experimentation and interchange between classical, Jazz, and experimental music in the 1960s and 70s. For Gilbert, Deleuze's theory allows for access to Indian classical music's distinctly non-Western configuration of \textit{raga} and improvisation. Unlike Western classical music, the Indian tradition is constantly creating new "lines of flight" away from the grounding of the "refrain" (the process of territorialization"), and its structural elements "contain within themselves deliberately open spaces for the insertion of 'cutting edges': the machinic interventions of the performers and their instruments are enabled, eased, welcomed and intensified," allows a constant process of reinvention within
traditional performance systems (Gilbert: 133). Indian music, for Gilbert, is fundamentally rhizomic, and developed in a completely different direction than Western music; these distinct qualities have created numerous rhizomic interactions with the exploratory work of composers and improvisers, including Derek Bailey, John Cale, John Coltrane, and a variety of rock and techno musicians (Gilbert: 132-133). Gilbert’s four-page study is the only application of Deleuze’s theory to Indian music. While not written by an ethnomusicologist, it demonstrates the potential applications of this theory.

In fact, the very nature of this philosophical system allows for diverse streams of interpretation and for the articulation of topics that are difficult to analyze with the conventional methods, such as music as performed processes, improvisation, and the connection between virtual and symbolic spaces with articulated sound. All the authors in this book are from the fields of cultural studies and philosophy; no ethnomusicologists are represented. Unlike the studies in Deleuze and Music and other texts I am aware of, I apply Deleuze’s theory to combined problems of musical analysis and ethnography central to ethnomusicology.

I will now demonstrate the applicability of Deleuze and Guattari’s work to my dissertation research through four case studies observed during my fieldwork in India, 2007-2011, modeling each one as an assemblage of heterogeneous singularities affected in distinct ways by intensities ranging from global flows of capital and culture, to the reemergence of subaltern histories, and the paradoxes of Indian nationalism. I find that the metaphor of the “net of jewels” found in
Buddhism and Hinduism illustrates the interpenetration and mutual clarification of these temporally contemporaneous yet musically and semantically diverse examples. The net of jewels offers an image of the dependent origination and interpenetration of all phenomena through an infinite web on which separate jewels are suspended on each vertex, each of which is unique, yet also reflects the other jewels’ glittering facets. Analogously, the following case studies are mutually illuminating, revealing distinct facets of the ways in which globalization, tradition, and music itself are inscribed on the temporally bounded, cognitively situated, and culturally constructed canvas of performance. These studies are not intended to substitute for a complete study of contemporary India’s musical environment, but show the applicability of microanalysis to utilize several sites of research that can mutually inform each other through their differences.

The first case study, “Jahan-e-Khusrau and Deterritorialization,” demonstrates concepts of deterritorialization through the Jahan-e-Khusrau concert series in Delhi and illustrates how local history can be reconstructed through a cosmopolitan lens. The second example, “Overcoding and Invasive Sponsorship,” observes how a local-based transnational media corporation fuses Hindustani music with advertising. The third example, “The Performance of Heterogeneous Singularities,” examines the incongruous intersection of medicine and nationalism through a Hindustani vocal concert. The final example, “The Electric Sitar and Planes of Consistency” portrays the development of a new, hybrid instrument—the electric sitar, highlighting the fluid boundaries of tradition and authenticity. The development of rock music in India will illustrate Deleuze’s concept of strata and
substrata, and its connections to Hindustani classical tradition. I designate each example as a “hybrid performance site,” a localization of globalization in unique spatio-temporal matrixes. The site itself is a body without organs (BwO), a plane of potentialities, circulating energies, and becomings.

In these case studies, Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts of lines of flight, assemblage, rhizome, and deterritorization provide ways of modeling new relational fields of music and culture that are distinct from previous modes of assemblage, even if the elements (ragas, historical references, musical styles, and so on) are the same. The multiplicities, created through the combination of ideological, commercial, and aesthetic coding systems generate unique “sites of performance,” as demonstrated by the four examples provided here. I interpret each site of performance as a rhizome: an assemblage of heterogeneous and interconnected elements that mirror the complex relationship between music and society.

*Jahan-e-Khusrau* and Deterritorialization

The interaction of Hindu and Islamic culture in India has influenced Hindustani music, the Urdu language, and indigenous forms of Sufi religious practices; its importance to music is evident in Sufism’s subterranean connection with the sitar and *khyal* (1300-1900). In contemporary India, Sufi music has experienced a tremendous burst of popularity, crossing religious, linguistic, and national boundaries, spearheaded by the *quwwali* singer’s Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s international popularity in the 1990’s. The following example focuses on the efforts of one man, Muzaffar Ali, to revitalize Sufi music and spiritual culture in India.
through an annual three-day music festival under the moniker *Jahan-e-Khusrau*,
which simultaneously reasserts the syncretic and tolerant Mughal era and reflects
the outlook of Delhi’s cosmopolitan elite.

Muzaffar Ali’s annual event in Delhi, *Jahan-e-Khusrau*, draws on Mughal
history, Sufi religious imagery, Bollywood glitz and capitalism. Muzaffar Ali is a
movie director, fashion mogul, and celebrity impresario. The event is co-sponsored
by the India Tourism Authority and receives funds from a variety of governmental
agencies and corporations. However, unlike most concerts in Delhi, *Jahan-e-
Khusrau*’s admission fee probably exceeds the budget of most Delhi residents. The
event is described on a New Delhi tourist website as follows:

This 3-day festival is the brainchild of Muzaffar Ali, the famous movie
director and artist. The performers of Sufi composition from all over
the world come here to give their performances. Composers from as
far as Bukhara, Shiraz and Constantinople have given their
performances in the previous version of this festival. Just attend this
festival once and we promise that you will be mesmerized with the
effect of something as sublime as Sufi music. The main attraction of
this festival is the performance by Begum Abida Parveen, the Frank
Sinatra of Sufi Music. Her style of singing is unique and sublime. It
leaves you in the state of trance. The festival is conducted in the
sprawling campus of historic Humayun Tomb. The ambience of this
festival is perfect. Lights, acoustics and sitting arrangements, all are
arranged to suit the mood of the audience and performers.


One of the rationales for the festival is to commemorate the urs of the famous
twelfth-century poet, musician, and composer Amir Khusrau. By including Sufi
artists from throughout the Islamic world in fusion performances, the festival
constructs a pan-Islamic identity, as well as an exotic version of Delhi’s Indo-Persian
heritage. The concert has taken place at several important historical monuments,
including Humuyun’s tomb and the Qutob Minar, linking it with Delhi’s musical heritage as described in the *Murraqa-e-Delhi* (1739-41). However, unlike Mughal-era performances, these concert events feature modern innovations such as dramatic lighting, video screens, and comfortable seating. Muzaffar Ali is skilled in creating spectacles, given his background in Bollywood and the fashion world. Finally, the festival seeks to bring the phenomena of trance and religious ecstasy into the global marketplace.

I attended *Jahan-e-Khusrau* Festival in March 2007, and was struck at first by the size of the undertaking. I have never seen something on the scale and scope of the *Jahan-e-Khusrau* in India. Shuttle buses were provided to take audience members from parking areas to the festival site. The food available was not traditional Mughal cuisine. An upscale and exorbitant Italian restaurant had been set up in the shadow of a fifteenth century mosque, complete with white table clothes, candles, and tuxedo-clad waiters, perhaps influenced by the mysterious Abida Parveen - Frank Sinatra connection promoted in the New Delhi tourism website. Muzaffar Ali was prominent on stage during the festival. With his flowing long hair, elaborate *kurta* (traditional Indian garb), and Islamic prayer beads, he looked the part of the archetypal Sufi celebrity.

The cosmopolitan audience was well-dressed and well-heeled. Outside the concert, a variety of audio and video recordings and memorabilia of previous festivals were offered for sale. The control on recording is partially due to the fact that the sale and merchandising of the festival provides another large revenue stream for Muzaffar-Ali. Regulations against video and audio recording were strict.
Several members of the press were forcibly ejected by security, which led to physical altercations. After the concert, I observed an impromptu press conference. Muzaffar Ali defended the conduct of his security guards, evading questions with the aplomb of a White House press secretary. He riffed that the concert was about the “universal peace and harmony of Sufi culture.”

The musicians featured during the 2007 festival included the headliner Abida Parveen, the traditional quwali of the Nizami brothers, two American artists Wendy Jehlen and Sussan Deyhim, and the Sanskrit School (Jahan-e-Khusrau program notes, March 23, 2007). All performances featured dramatic lighting and highly professional camera work, projected on multiple screens. Most of the performances, with the exception of the Nizami brothers, were examples of fusion. Abida Parveen included musicians from Iran, Tunisia, Central Asia, and Pakistan in her troupe, with the mixed success common to many fusion performances. The American dancer Wendy Jehlen interpreted Sufi themes through the medium of modern dance, accompanied by recorded music. Perhaps the most interesting performances were the Sanskrit School’s Religion of Love, and that of the mime and comedian Javan Jaaferi.

The fluid boundaries of the term Sufi were exemplified by Wendy Jehlen’s “Sufi” dance entitled “Moth,” a hybrid of African and modern dance moves, sprinkled with a bit of South Indian Bharat Natyam choreography. Although Sufi themes predominated, the music and performances veered sharply from function of music in religious ceremonies (see chapter 2). The filmmaker and author Yosuf Saeed’s
review of the 2001 festival expresses the consternation of many traditionalists with the festival:

One can hope that in the future festivals of this kind, as promised by the Delhi’s chief minister Sheila Dikshit and Muzaffar Ali, one would be able to hear these traditional forms of music in their more original versions rather than these experimental renderings. And most importantly, one prays that the ordinary devotees (like me) who visit the shrine of Hazrat Amir Khsura and Nizamuddin Aulia (across the road), would become rich enough one day to buy the tickets for Jahan-e Khusrau. (highlighted in original) (http://www.ektaramusic.com/ak/jahan.html)

Yosuf has spent several decades producing documentaries on the life of Amir Khusrau, and the living music culture supported in his shrine by the donations of pilgrims. His frustration expresses both the dire financial condition of many traditional quwali singers and Muzaffar Ali’s appropriation of this legacy for financial and political gain. Ironically, directly across the street from this musical festival the tradition of Khusrau’s music continues, as it has since the time of Nizamudin, and as this living legacy continues to decline due to lack of patronage, the wealthy elite of Delhi experience a reconstruction of a past that is still living. The ticket prices to the event also serve to exclude many who would like to attend, and thus insures that ordinary people who worship at the shrine and participate at the musical ceremonies are excluded.

Jahan-e-Khusrau’s “realm of the heart” relocates Sufi music and Mughal performance traditions into the field of commerce and spectacle. The semiotic and

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4 Jahan-e-Khusrau is a play on words and means both “the world of Khusrau” and “the realm of the heart.”
affective dimensions of Sufi culture are deterritorialized from their historic and cultural moorings and reterritorialized into the stream of mobile and interchangeable cultural products of the post-capitalist world. Indo-Persian culture is resituated as a tourist destination permitting the nouveau riche to feel good about themselves as they participate in the re-imagination of an idealized past that glosses over serious religious and economic conflicts. The cultural divide is healed here not by serious examination but through an invented pan-Islamic tradition that promises ecstasy and excitement for all, as long as they can pay the price of admission. Using Deleuze’s model, the musical and cultural strata of the festival are composed of the Sufic musical and poetic traditions and Mughal era history, and specific rhizomic assemblages of music, festival, and audience are created by the deterritorialization the strata and reterritorialization into new configurations. One must be careful not to ascribe the influence of “hegemonic” Western culture to this example, which is thoroughly grounded in the cultural milieu of Delhi’s cosmopolitan elite, and also reflects the complex interaction of Delhi’s historical sites with new forms of traditional music.

**Overcoding and Invasive Sponsorship**

The second case study will examine the intersection of a classical sitar performance with transnational capitalism and advertising. Corporations have been important sponsors of Hindustani music in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. It is necessary, however, to distinguish between the forms of corporate sponsorship, exemplified by the Indian Tobacco Corporation (ITC), and what I will describe here
as “invasive sponsorship.” Invasive designates the marketing techniques and agendas that supersede music performance considerations: the sponsors intrude their non-musical agendas into affective and aesthetic space of the music and performance environment. This kind of sponsorship uses music as “cultural capital,”

Amar Mishra, a retired ITC executive, has an extensive library of recordings, numbering in the thousands. He sees his work as a means of sustaining the Hindustani tradition and enriching the lives of neophyte listeners (Amar Mishra, personal interview, June 15, 2004). ITC has been instrumental in funding the most prestigious, and arguably the most successful music education project in modern India. The ITC Sangeet Research Academy, founded in 1978, provides a unique environment based on the *gurukul* traditions of ancient India, wherein a selected group of musicians live and study with some of India's top *gharanidar* musicians. ([http://www.itcsra.org/sra_story/sra_story_index.html](http://www.itcsra.org/sra_story/sra_story_index.html)). In February 2011, I was a guest of the institute and observed the rigid adherence to tradition and the exacting standards of the institute.

The newer model of corporate sponsorship, as described to me by a young marketing executive, aims to sell specific demographics to businesses, and to attach the “cultural capital” of Hindustani music to various brands (name withdrawn interviewee’s request, personal interview, November 14, 2007). The marketing executive confessed an almost total ignorance of *raag dari* music, preferring American musicians like Kenny Rogers and Toto. However, he was cognizant of

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5 In his usage of the word “demographic,” it means that he can provide the audience according to how it is defined by the marketers for a particular event.
demographic preferences for specific styles and knew all the “top shelf” celebrities. Star performers, like Shiv Kumar Sharma, Zakir Hussain, and Hari Prasad Chaurasia, are the most highly prized, as they have the most prestige and attract the largest audiences.

This is distinguished from the example of Jahan-e-Khusrau festival because in that case the marketing aspects were concerned with the music performance, and music and setting appealed directly to the tastes of the target audience. In invasive sponsorship, music is reduced to a floating signifier that can be attached to product or marketing campaign, and is generally indicative of ignorance of, and/or insensitivity to the music. Examples of invasive sponsorship include a 2006 New Delhi thumri concert in conjunction with the rollout of a fashion line based on modified versions of Banarasi saris, as well as Muzaffar Ali’s use of quwwali music for his “Sufi fashion line.” The contradictions between the world of high fashion and Islamic devotional music are obvious, but not necessarily understood in Muzaffar Ali’s endeavor. I was hired to perform sitar for an audience of South Asian doctors in Cleveland by the manufactures of the anti-depressant drug Paxil, and my stage was gaily festooned with gigantic pill-shaped “Paxil” balloons. In the last example both the cultural origins of the music, and association of the sitar with relaxation and New Age music were utilized by a marketing team to, hopefully, entice the doctors to prescribe the drug to patients. Only the symbolic or referential meaning of the
performance was significant; the actual music was treated as a necessary annoyance.\textsuperscript{6}

A 2007 performance of Ustad Nishat Khan\textsuperscript{7} at the Shri Fort in New Delhi merged marketing with music in an extreme manner (field notes, New Delhi, February 2007). While the above-mentioned concerts were advertised as promotional events, this concert was marketed as a traditional Hindustani sitar concert. Two large video screens flanked the stage. As the audience entered, the screens displayed a promotional video for the brand imaging company that had sponsored the event. After a long delay, the companies’ spokeswoman came on stage to introduce the event. Unlike the generally brief introductions given to musicians, the emcee launched into an extensive list of Nishat Khan’s accomplishments, listing over thirty performances, all of the countries he had played in, and popular albums he had released. She emphasized that Nishat Khan represented the best of Indian culture and had successfully bridged the gap between east and west in his brilliant career. In an abrupt segue, the emcee stated “Just as Nishat Khan creates a personal brand that is recognized throughout the world, our company can give you international brand recognition,” after which followed a lengthy description of the company. However, the performance was marred by a terrible sound system, which caused Nishat to stop several times and lament the

\textsuperscript{6} The reason for my assertion emanates from the attitude of the organizers towards myself; I was required to continually move my stage, and even to perform in the nursery for the children of the attendees. After this, I told the organizer that I would probably require a prescription for Paxil after this event. He replied, with no irony, “I’m sure one of the doctors here can give you a sample; but remember, it takes two weeks to become effective.”

\textsuperscript{7} Nishat Khan is the son of Imrat Khan, Vilayat Khan’s brother. He is a highly-accomplished sitarist.
incompetence of the engineers. The performance was quite short, around forty-five minutes, and the artist left the stage with very little fanfare.

In this performance, Hindustani music became a floating signifier of cultural excellence, which can be seen through Erlmann’s description of the commodification of everyday life, and also Jameson’s contention of the dissolution of an autonomous cultural space. The concert was an awkward meeting of two different worlds of a traditional sitar concert and a video marketing display. The marketing specialist told me that a key consideration is the relative economic affluence of the potential audience, and that he not interested in the music, except as means to attract the right audience. In this case, the importance of the music was subsumed into their marketing agenda, as evident in both the shoddy sound system and the elaborate video presentations of the company.

In this concert the music was traditional (unlike the Jahan-e-Khusrau), but the semantic space was reformulated. Like language, Hindustani music is a regime of signs, and a “collective assemblage” (Deleuze and Guattari: 85). The space of a prestigious concert hall, the Shri Fort auditorium, became part of a new rhizomic assemblage, a produced by the overcoding of semiotic series consisting of the music, performance space, and audience. Overcoding is the process of applying new meanings from one field to another, and often is part of hegemonic agendas of dominant power structures (Deleuze and Guattari: 260). Deleuze defines overcoding as the process of a “power takeover in the multiplicity by a signifier” that inhabits “an empty dimension supplementary to that of the system considered,” and thereby reduces the affective power of the multiplicity (in this case music) (ibid.:8). These
examples of invasive sponsorship are examples of new arrays of music and marketing in contemporary India. The process of overcoding flows into current redefinitions of the cultural space of music, and are indicators of the loosening or softening (deterritorialization) of previous aesthetic and spiritual valuations and categories associated with Hindustani music since the 1950’s. While these examples have focused on the impact of capitalism on music, these have been chosen for the sake of illustrating how assemblages of music can form rhizomatic interactions with other systems.

The Performance of Heterogeneous Singularities

The third case study I will discuss combined several disjunctive elements. The concert took place at Indian Habitat Center in Delhi, sponsored by the arts organization Swar Rang in honor of Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, a central figure in the nationalist reform of music in the early to mid-twentieth century. The concert also aimed, in the words that evening’s master-of-ceremonies Ustad Amjad Ali Khan to “give a smile to the disappointed faces of kidney patients.”

The concert began with an interminable and graphic power-point presentation on kidney transplant surgery, given by an Indian doctor residing in New York. The concert programs contained forms for kidney donation. The doctor mentioned that “in the case of any of you getting in a near-fatal accident on the way home, you can be sure that your kidney will be in good hands.” Perhaps due to the audience and the occasion, the concert broke with tradition in several respects. The vocalist, Chitranjin Joshi, began

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8 One of India’s most accomplished and senior sarod artists.
with a short vilambit item in raag Malkouns, followed by an extended tarana. This was followed by a ten-minute rendition of “Vande Mataram,” India’s national anthem, during which the artist requested the audience to stand. At this point, I went back stage. The thumri singer Savita Devi, on hearing this composition, instantly decided to change her intended program. She began with a South Indian bhajan (Hindu devotional song), the “Ganesha Vandana” in raag Hamsa Dhvani, which aligned her music explicitly with the Hindu religious tradition, a common trope in nationalist discourses on music (see chapter 2), instead of her forte, the erotically charged thumri genre. A Calcutta native who sat next to me lamented the violation of traditional rules for concerts, blatant Hindu nationalism, and Savita Devi’s stylistically awkward performance of the bhajan. He told me, “This display would never be tolerated in Calcutta,” a thinly veiled barb at Delhi audiences. In this concert, the performers modified their musical output because of perceived audience expectations, in the context of Hindu-centric cultural-historic narratives, and the enlistment of new organ donors.

The assemblage of Hindu nationalism and music merges with images of surgery, creating a unique rhizomic space for both performers and audience. The organization was not seeking contributions of money, but contributions of living organs. The combinations of the heterogeneous elements into an existing assemblage is described by Deleuze and Guattari as an insertion of a machine into an assemblage, creating deterritorialization: “a machine is like a series of cutting edges that insert themselves into the assemblage undergoing deterritorialization, and draw variations and mutations of it” (ibid., 333). In this concert, nationalism as
expressed through musical choices and audience reactions, and requests for
donation of organs (giving blood for your country) created a unique assemblage of
heterogeneous elements. Viewing these case studies as assemblages allows a new
understanding of the widespread process of deterritorialization and its diverse
repercussions in multiple performance sites.

**The Electric Sitar and Planes of Consistency**

The three previous case studies have illustrated how assemblages form
unique *multiplicities* in relation to a particular stratum\(^9\) defined in this case as the
Hindustani tradition (inclusive of classical and Sufi music forms). *Strata*, for
Deleuze and Guattari, are “forms of articulation that select matter and form it into
substances (first articulation) and then encode it in such a way that it can serve as
the basis of further articulation,” that do not require redefining or explanation
(Buchanan and Swiboda: 9). The following case study is an inversion of the previous
examples, a photographic negative: it is more than an alteration, mutation, or
rhizome, but is a system-wide translation. It can be likened to a parallel universe in
the Extension Theory of physics (Smythies: 188), containing features that are totally
divergent, but tied umbilically to the same network of roots. Unlike the case studies
of performances, the evolution of this new instrument, the electric sitar, is
illustrative of more far reaching process than an assemblage, or rhizome.

\(^9\) Following with Deleuze’s injunction to employ his philosophy as a “tool kit” (see ch. 1), I
use the term strata to encompass the music-culture complex of North India, a narrowing of
the range of Deleuze and Guattari three major strata — physiochemical, organic, and
anthropomorphic (502). I believe that the complex historical range and multidimensionality
of this music supports this.
The electric sitar and rock music in India form what Deleuze and Guattari define as a *substratum* between the strata of Hindustani music, “The strata are extremely mobile. One stratum is always capable of serving as the *substratum* of another, or of colliding with another, independently of any evolutionary order [...]. Between two strata or between two stratic divisions, there are *interstratic* phenomena: transcodings and passages between milieus, intermixings” (Delueze and Guattari: 502). The electric sitar is a collision, a transcoding of the Hindustani tradition that reflects, but also obscures any one-to-one causal relationship to globalization as such.

Rock music and Hindustani classical music are radically distinct aurally, culturally, and performatively. Concepts of “authenticity” and “tradition” are directly confronted by the indigenous evolution of the electric sitar. Its late development in the twenty-first century, decades after the sitar’s immense popularity with rock audiences in the 1960’s, indicates that the process is more complicated than it appears on the surface.

The sitar has been a prominent aural signifier in rock music since the mid-1960s, when the Beatles brought India to the West. Yet, the reconfiguration of the instrument into the sonic terrain of rock in the hands of Indian musicians has occurred only in past few years. The two primary factors in this process are technological and the cultural shifts. In this case, the technological dimension is a product of *transcoding* more than an evolutionary process.
The amplification of the electric sitar is only secondary to this phenomenon; the distinguishing feature is the use of distortion\textsuperscript{10} and other electronic effects on the tone production of the sitar. Ravi Shankar was an early pioneer in fusion music; however, he maintained traditional compositional, \textit{raga} (melodic), and timbral conventions, even in combinations with Western art music or South Indian music. While Hindustani musicians often performed on the same programs as rock musicians during the 1960s and 70s, the most famous being Ravi Shankar’s performance at Monterey Pop in 1967, the demarcations between the musical genres were an impassable edifice because of differences in status accorded Indian classical music to that of rock. Shankar often expressed his disdain at the profligate life style of his hippie fans (Shankar 1969), and other musicians generally maintained a distance from rock’s distorted and highly amplified sonic domain. While scores of Indian rock musicians happily strummed out-of-tune sitars throughout the 1960s and 1970s, most classical musicians of any stature refused to cross the sonic divide between Hindustani music and rock, even with the increased market share that this larger audience provided. It was not until the twenty-first century that a \textit{khandani} musician would cross this threshold.

A foreshadowing of this development was boldly announced in the May 1999 issue of \textit{Raga to Rock} magazine, with the provocative title “Welcome to the World of Capitalist Music.” Under the headline, its main thesis is provocatively presented:

\textsuperscript{10} Distortion refers here to specific processes of electronically compressing the tone of an instrument and changing it overtone series. This is common to most rock music, and ranges from the warm fuzz-tone of a tube amp to the piercing squall found in some heavy metal.
It doesn’t take a wizard to see that the Indian music scene is, technologically, a highly backward one, characterized by antiquated equipment. Is there a reason for this? And are we poised for an electrification of our instruments, leading to a new, ‘electric’ Indian music form? (Author unknown, Raga to Rock, May 1999: 28)

The writer portrays Indian classical music as a product of slow economic development:

Ever wonder why you can’t walk into a shop and buy an Electric Sitar or for that matter...Electric Tablas? It’s because vast parts of our country are still without electricity, the basic ingredient for the playing of electric instruments. Since there is no electricity, acoustic instruments have become a way of life for our musicians, merging into that nebulous entity called “Indian traditional music” (ibid.: 28).

In Raga to Rock, economic, cultural, and technological backwardness are directly reflected in “Indian traditional music” (the author’s term for Indian classical music); the West’s superior development stems from economic prosperity:

The economic prosperity of the European countries and the US had a ripple effect on the entire cultures of those countries. The most important were ideas of ‘Liberalism’ and ‘Democracy’. Everybody was allowed to think and do anything they wanted, so long as they didn’t harm other citizens. And their new-found prosperity [...] enabled them to buy the best of goods. Consequently, even musicians- and the makers of music instruments- were emboldened to innovate and offer new instruments which had features that made them better than the older instruments. (ibid.: 29)

The author contends that the backwardness of traditional performers and instrument manufacturers will have to face the inevitable electric revolution:

“Change, however, is inevitable and is always powered by economic development. Money talks. Traditionalists fail to realize that their traditions are the way they are because of simple economic circumstances” (ibid.: 29). Finally, the audience itself
will demand new music, and the author concludes with the alternatively chilling or liberating ultimatum: “Welcome to the world of capitalist music!” (ibid.: 29). The author appears to be an adherent Development Theory, which has been thoroughly discredited in the past twenty years (see Leys 2005).

This viewpoint should not be understood as a “fringe” attitude, as the magazine is primarily a trade publication. Rather, it reflects a common attitude among younger musicians and concertgoers. The pursuit of more commercially viable fusion music is common among the younger generation of gharanidar artists. Aman and Ayaan Bangash, the sons of Amjad Ali Khan, have moved away from the classical repertoire and into the hybrid soundscape of fusion. Amjad Ali Khan is the son of the influential sarod maestro Hafiz Ali Khan, and considers himself to be part of the Senia gharana. His sons, while accomplished musicians, are also models and hosted the popular television show Sa Re Ga Ma, giving them a “star factor” above and beyond their music. A 2005 article in the Pioneer magazine, entitled “With fusion mantra, they make dad proud”, reflects Aman and Ayaan’s current musical trajectory, “Experimenting fusion music with international stars and players in not blasphemous for them. In fact, they enjoy the variations art can adopt” (Pioneer, New Delhi, November 31, 2005). Aman and Ayaan’s creation of fusion music is not seen as dismantling the tradition, but according to the author, “also helps them propagate their ancient gharana instrument.” Their success is presented as deriving from their experimentation:

In their case, it is clear that the invitations from recording studios are in direct proportion to the good rapport with the market. The brothers are thus prepared for the latest unconventional marketing techniques and have
proved true to their times by encouraging the technicalities of the world outside their music room. (ibid.)

Within the range of styles and genres encompassed within fusion, the instruments themselves remain unmodified, and the basic material is still that of raga, tala, and bandish.

The development of a solid body electric sitar around 2004 by Rikhi Ram and Sons, designated the “studio sitar” or “travel sitar,” made it possible to play the sitar directly through an amplifier. I witnessed the first appearance of this instrument when I was in Delhi. However, there are now multiple companies producing similar instruments. Two brothers, Ajay and Sanjay, are currently carrying on the manufacture of this instrument, both of them claim to have invented it. The sitar is a quiet instrument, and attempting this process with an acoustic sitar is doomed to failure, or at least loud squalls of feedback. Many accomplished sitarists, including my guru Shujaat Khan, began using the electric sitar in the studio and certain concerts; the electric sitar was performed without distortion but utilized for convenience, as its direct input into a PA system circumvented the persistent problems of making the instrument.

These practices and unspoken protocols changed radically with the advent of Niladri Kumar. Niladri’s career evolved quickly from his early acclaim as a sitar virtuoso from an illustrious lineage, to his current popularity and controversial innovations. His conversion from classical artist to musical maverick began with his seemingly innocuous modification of Rikhi Ram’s electric sitar with the inclusion of an extra string. He christened his instrument the “zitar.” His first album to feature
this instrument was entitled *Zitar*, released in 2008, but he had utilized it in session work several years before. Niladri believes that his music is the wave of the future, stating that “the youth like my brand of fusion, which comes from a knowledge of both Indian and Western music, unlike most of fusion today” ([http://www.screenindia.com/news/zitar-power/367847/](http://www.screenindia.com/news/zitar-power/367847/)). He aims to “touch the soul of the listener and aspire for a fine harmony between tradition and modernity that is in sync with the sensibilities of a global audience” (emphasis added, HU) ([http://www.screenindia.com/news/zitar-power/367847/](http://www.screenindia.com/news/zitar-power/367847/)).

Besides his prominent use of techno, lounge, and rock backing tracks, Niladri has radically changed the sonic referents of the instrument. This is evident in his solo in “Bheegi Bheegi” from the film *Gangster* (2006), which is indistinguishable from the music of any number of accomplished rock guitarist, like Joe Satriani and Carlos Santana. The heavily distorted tone and use of numerous rock phrases have removed any aural connection to Hindustani music or the sitar. While the zitar still retains the visual appearance of a sitar, and the traditional seated posture (*bhaithak*) remains intact, the cultural location of the music is difficult to assess.

If the zitar is a product of “hegemonic” Western culture, as defined by the convergence paradigm (pp.57-58), why did it not develop in the 1960’s? The technology was certainly available in the 1960s-1980s, but why the invention of an instrument like the zitar obviously did not interest musicians or instrument makers until the previous decade? We shall map the cultural space inhabited by the electric

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11 Lounge a more relaxed and slow-tempo electronic music form, designed for listening rather than dancing.
sitar, and for that we should investigate the cultural topology inhabited by rock in India.

Rock music’s signification in India embodies the contradictions and conciliations between a rapidly changing economy and traditional modes of life, the hallmark of modern urban India: extreme wealth juxtaposed with extreme poverty, tenacious traditions side-by-side with a wholesale rejection of anything Indian by the youth, the growing class of wealthy IT professionals along with property speculators, and investors matched by a rapidly proliferating underclass (field notes, New Delhi, Banaras, Agra, Calcutta, Lucknow, Madras, Bangalore, Chandigarh, Gurdaspur, Guwahati, Mumbai, Pune, Rampur, Jaipur: 2001-2011).

For Indian audiences and performers, rock represents particular values that sets them apart from traditional modes of cultural expression and connects them with a modern world. In its translation from the West to India, from global to local, rock music has undergone changes in signification in India that parallel the semiotic and class space previously inhabited by the elite musical tradition of Hindustani music. This process indicates the formation of a new substratum in Indian culture. Whether this is a primarily a result of globalization is questionable: rock is not new to Asia, and completely dominates the popular music of other neighboring countries like Thailand. In fact, rock in India is notable for its lack of popularity. In contrast, rock in India has taken on a host of characteristics which parallel the Hindustani classical music tradition. The relationship of mass media to mass culture in contemporary India will help to shed light on this process.
For decades, the Indian government exerted a strong control over culture, fearing that an onslaught of Americanized culture would destroy traditional values. This control extended from the radio, to film and television. After the long-dreaded opening of Indian culture in 1990’s, an onslaught of American culture never occurred in India; instead a variety of local and regional programming began to compete for advertising (Kohil-Khandekar: 2006). With a population over 1 billion, India is one of the largest consumers of music in the world. Rock music is not even considered as a category, with sales around .5% (Subash Ghal: 82). Rock music has very limited exposure on television and film and has yet to break into mass consciousness in India, except for a limited audience in the larger metropolitan cities. Unlike other symbols of Westernized consumer culture like shopping malls, cars, and designer clothing, rock retains an underground status.

The rock audience in India, elite in both financial and educational status, could have been among the sponsors and aficionados of Hindustani music a generation ago. The exclusivity of rock in contemporary India, comprised of small, dedicated audiences who value their connoisseur reminds the exclusivity of Hindustani music in pre-Independence India. A move towards rock is visible among children of established musicians. Shubha Mudgal’s son has opted away from the heaviness of khyal to heavy metal; the son of one of India’s finest sitarists is a rock guitarist. 12

Understanding rock music in India presents particular challenges in order to formulate the cultural vectors it intersects with, unless we see it as part of

12 Shubha Mudgal is a top khyal and thumri vocalist.
substratum which retains “the unity of composition [...] defined at the levels of materials and energy [...] bonds and reactions”, with the strata, but is differentiated by “a variety of different molecules, substances, forms” (Deleuze and Guattari: 45). Such unity of composition allows distinct forms of cultural expression to share commonalities in their relational interactions with larger social assemblages, as well as parallel functions of reterritorialization. This process of transcoding is directly indicated by the change in nomenclature- not merely an electric sitar, but a zitar. At the same time, zitar music, while it sounds like rock, is not rock, at least as defined by the marketing, which aligns Niladri primarily with the Indipop audience, in which he is distinguished by being one of the few successful instrumentalists in a genre dominated by vocal stars.

By changing the nomenclature of an existing instrument Niladri is implying that he no longer fits established genre categories, also reflected in his marketing and image, which is similar to that of classical artist. Whether his decisions stem from artist preference or business savvy, he has demarcated his musical terrain as outside the bounds of tradition, which, seemingly ironically, he still claims to embrace (www.nilardikumar.com).

The negative reactions to Niladri’s music from established Hindustani musicians illuminate that he has crossed musical boundaries far outside the accepted range of fusion; his perceived negation of tradition is revealed in his rejection by many of his fellow Hindustani musicians—he has been made an outcaste, excommunicated from the shared cultural space of the Hindustani classical music world. A distinguished sitarist told me:
Niladri is not playing Hindustani music anymore. Even his classical concerts are not classical music. I’m not sure what he is doing, but I would hesitate to call it music. Niladri wants to have fun and make money. He should not be considered an artist or a serious musician by any measure. (anonymous, telephone interview, September, 17, 2010)

Niladri still performs classical music concerts using a traditional acoustic instrument, pushing the boundaries in this area as well, but his new incarnation, both personally and through his *zitar*, appears difficult to accept within the contemporary Hindustani music world, even in its permissive climate. Fusion is common among many musicians, and it is safe to say that musicians who avoid fusion are the exception. During a 2008 concert in Banaras, I witnessed him include quotations from Bach and Western popular music during a rendition of *raag Bhairavi*. To my knowledge, this practice is unheard of—a number of audience members left the auditorium during this concert. At the same time, the musical space he articulates has incorporated his identification with a Hindustani “tradition” that extends outside the geographically defined space of India into a globally defined positionality that encompasses India and the West in a shared and mutually reflective expression.

The performance site of the electric sitar is no longer constrained by its situatedness in Hindustani music’s collective cultural narrative; through Niladri the structural and genre boundaries of “traditional referentiality” (Foley 1991) are exploded. The journey of the sitar to the West in the 1960’s has become circular; no longer is the allure of the exotic central to this music, but the sitar, as the *zitar*, has

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13 Due to the politics of the Indian music world, I cannot include the name of this musician.
become “other” in the world of Hindustani music. The traditionally defined, linear evolution of the instrument has been ruptured, and continues to its logical conclusion in a new stratum, the outlines of which were glimpsed in *Raga to Rock* magazine. Niladri’s stated intention for his 2008 album *Priority*, which he describes as "an attempt to obliterate the boundaries between East and West,"14 perhaps an artistic journey towards the final stage of globalization, wherein “images detached from every aspect of life fuse in a common stream in which the unity of this life can no longer be established” (Debord 1967: 1). Niladri’s *zitar* is simultaneously Indian and not Indian; a mimesis of rock that claims not to be rock; a merging of the sitar, through asignifiying rupture, into its photographic negative: alterity as identity. The quadrants of local and global, of tradition and hybridity no longer apply to this territory. This process articulates not only the deterritorialization of culture (which is obvious), but also the beginnings of a shift into new strata—new planes of immanence— that destabilize the cultural basis of Hindustani music through internalizing it.

Niladri’s music is now indistinguishable from much of Western rock music, but has a much broader popular appeal than I-Rock (Indian rock); it is among youth that his music finds the greatest acceptance and reflects their identification with the global as defined and experienced locally. The *zitar*’s popularity is grounded in a substratum of Hindustani music culture that “constitute[s] an exterior milieu for the elements and compounds of the stratum under consideration, but they are not


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exterior to the strata,” that new field of potentialities (ibid.: 49). Niladri’s transformation of the sitar into zitar is certainly a new development and, at the same time, a remapping of the Hindustani music into the immanent possibilities of the unknown.

The impact of globalization and transnational culture flows have created a “new threshold of deterritorialization” (ibid.: 453). Each instance of the rhizomic performance sites discussed here reflects a unique reordering of signs, embodied practices, and place into diverse assemblages that are interactive nodes in broader cultural systems.

The following chapter examines the historical development of the sitar, bringing into play another facet of this work’s theoretical assemblage, the network analysis of Latour. The processes of economy, power, and discourse in the following discussion will augment the interlocked binaries and interpenetrating networks and demonstrate the impact of these elements on the sitar’s evolution.
Encapsulating the reinterpretation of Indian cultural history from colonialism to nationalism, the sitar’s evolution is a product of discourse, power, and economic transitions. I will draw upon Bruno Latour’s theories of networks and actants (Latour 1993) in order to explicate the parallel and interconnected network flows of commerce, individual and collective identities, and semantic categories of art in fluid and changing processes. Conceptualizations of time and energy are manifested in economic systems and structures of social organization, and the creation of art can work in parallel or conflict with social and economic networks. The sitar as assembly (a Latourian quasi object) is itself a network that encompasses practices, contesting narratives, and socially mediated energy flows (economy).

The anthropologist, sociologist and philosopher Bruno Latour reminds us of the etymology of the word “thing” which originally meant an assembly in Old English (Latour 2005). One of Latour’s major contributions is Actor Network Theory. “In the simplest but also in its deepest sense, the notion of a network is of use whenever action is to be redistributed” (Latour 2010: 121). The action of networks creates time; imbedded in a single object are a multitude of histories:
Take any object: at first it looks contained within itself with well delineated edges and limits; then something happens, a strike, an accident, a catastrophe, and suddenly you discover swarms of entities that seem to have been there all along but were not visible before and that appear in retrospect necessary for its sustenance. You thought that the Columbia shuttle was an object ready to fly in the sky and then suddenly after the dramatic 2002 explosion, you realize that it needed NASA and its complex organizational body to fly safely in the sky [...] The action of flying a technical object has been redistributed throughout a highly composite network where bureaucratic routines are just as important as equations and material resistance. Yes, it is a strange space that of a shuttle that is just as much in the sky as inside NASA, but that’s precisely the space – hard to describe and even harder to draw – that has been made visible by the deployment of networks in my sense of the word. (Latour 2010: 121)

The developmental processes described in the following pages use Latour’s ideas to examine specific intersections of complex flows of energy, discourse, and culture. These spatially and temporally localized nodes of intersection require the mapping of the larger networks which overlap, merge, and transform into new assemblages, which in turn interact with other forces in a continuing process. In this process, the sitar exists as a material object, as a conception, and as an instrument of action. The following pages present the conceptual framework for the chapter, consisting of models of history, networks, and flows.

Figures 4.1 and 4.2 are models I have constructed to map the multiple and entangled processes visually. Figure 4.1 is a timeline which shows the temporal interrelationships of shifting political power, seminal texts on Hindustani music, and evolving cultural organizations. Figure 4.2 shows the array of three networks: economy, power, and, discourse, that will be examined throughout the chapter.
Economic, Political, and Cultural Developments
1000 ACE – 1947

A. Willard
A Treatise on the Music of Hindoostan (ca. 1834)

Mirza Khan
Tuhfat al-Hind (ca. 1675)

William Jones
On the musical Modes of the Hindus (ca. 1784)

I. Khan Ma'dan al-Musiqi (ca. 1857)

V. N. Bhatkhande
Musical Survey of Upper India (ca. 1919)

1st All India Music Conference Baroda, 1916

1st Music College, Bengal, 1871

Amir Khusrau, 1218-1310

British East India Company, 1600

British Education System Sponsored, 1835

Sepoy Mutiny Delhi, 1857

Union of Akbar 1556-1605

Bombay Acquired, 1661

Divide and Rule policies implemented 1850's to 1930's

Pre Maghal era (1000-1520)

Mughal Empire 1526-1858

British Raj 1858-1947

India's Independence 1947
The events shown in figure 4.1 represent some of the major political and cultural events that impacted music and eventually the sitar in the time period 1000 CE to 1947, the year of India’s independence. Some will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter, but a brief overview of their importance and intertwined effects will supplement the discussion. The music texts, listed in the top tier of the timeline, are important markers of seminal shifts in the conceptualization of music, ranging from Persian translations of Sanskrit texts (*Tuhfat al Hind* ca. 1675) to the Bhatkhande’s reform and reclassification of the entirety of Hindustani music.

Amir Khusrau (1218-1310) was a great Sufi poet, author and musician, who wrote in both Persian and Hindavi (Sunil Sharma 2005), and his contributions to the future development of Hindustani music are inestimable. He was an important musical innovator during the period of cultural plurality of the Delhi Sultanate prior to the Mughals, and his music compositions are still performed today. He was considered the inventor of the sitar and is still cited by many (primarily Muslim) musicians. The Mughal Empire under Akbar followed a similar road, making Persian the official language of the court. Mirza Khan’s treatise of 1675, *Tuhfat al-Hind*, was a compendium of ancient Hindu music, dance, prose, and many other topics, written at royal request.

The period of Muslim dominance called the Mughal Empire is shown in Figure 4.1 spanning the years from 1526 until 1857. The British, tantalized by the wealth of the subcontinent, founded the first multinational corporation, the British East India Company in 1600, acquiring Bombay in 1661 from a royal marriage. Their foothold on the continent grew by trade, wars, and treaties with princely states,
ending with increasing political and military power over the next two centuries. The eighteenth century and the Enlightenment gave impetus to curiosity about other civilizations, and Jones’s treatise on Indian music introduced the topic to European thinkers, and helped to construct the powerful meme of a pure, ancient Hindu music that had been debased by Muslim influences. The British model of education, introduced in 1835, influenced Indian culture by introducing western models of education, thought, and classification, and dramatically increased the use of the English language among the educated classes. Willard’s work in 1834 was a detailed examination of current musical practice, with an opinion that musical decline began with the Muslim invasions.

The year 1857 is a pivotal point. British authorities in their drive to absolute dominance pushed to divide the Hindu and Muslim populations. Hindu society was controlled by the idea of caste, with domestic boundaries set by the idea of purity, but with fluid social limits, as seen by the syncretic Indo-Muslim cultural life. Delhi, the Mughal capital, was the center of that life, and it was there that Imam Khan wrote his 1857 book on music, *Ma’dan al-Musiqi*, which captures the last breath of a fading society. But British insensitivity to caste and religion in the army, plus a growing sense of impotence on the part of Indian population, brought about the cataclysm of the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857. The Sepoys were native British troops, made up of both Muslims and Hindus. The revolt was unsuccessful, and Britain’s bloody recriminations were followed by repressive policies that deposed the emperor and moved the capital to Calcutta.
The British during their Raj (reign in Hindi) implemented their Divide and Rule policies, which helped to awaken the nascent Indian nationalist movement. This led to a reawakened interest in the Indian past, resulting in the first music college in Bengal, 1871, the new center of economic and political life, the first All India Music Conference in 1916, and Bhatkhande’s *Musical Survey of Upper India* in 1919.

The shifting geographic centers of power in India during the ascendancy of the Raj, the British colonial period, paralleled the move from a feudal economic system to capitalism, and the concomitant redefinitions of art in relation to society. However, much as with globalization today, these processes are uneven and contain hybrid combinations of new and old forms. At the grounding of the forms are the modes of energy flows (economic systems), discursive representations, and power-relations, all of which are not isolated systems but are interactive networks,
Figure 4.2 Three fields (networks)

Figure 4.2 illustrates the interconnections among networks of economy, power, and discourse. Discourse encompasses a range from modalities of cultural transmission to the valuation of music within specific segments of society, and is greatly influenced by political power and economic systems. Economic systems, and their positioning in the local or international flow of trade, influence the flow of ideas and culture, as well as patronage systems. Power is represented on a range from national political systems to class and caste hierarchies.

The interconnection of networks and flows between economy, power, and discourse are evident in the feudal worldview. M. N. Srinivas, quoted in Purohit
(223), clarifies the hierarchic nature of the feudal worldview and its supporting economic and social systems:

Two features of Indian culture and society which seem to be crucial are hierarchy and its overall rural character [...] Indians live in a hierarchical universe. It is not only human beings who are arranged into higher and lower groups and categories, but everything associated with them, diet, clothing, house styles, speech, manners, morals, and occupation... In the first place hierarchical differences are based on differential rights, in land, the ownership of arable land being a source of wealth, power, status, and mobility. In traditional society, the landowners come from the higher castes (including the dominant, peasant caste) with the landless laborers came from amongst the Harijans or others slightly above. Traditionally, land was not sold to the lower castes, as that would have upset the power and status structure. The laboring artisan and servicing castes are economically and socially dependent on the landowning castes and this was symbolized by the customary, annual payment of grain to the former. Arable land was the monopoly of the high caste [...] a complex code backed by religious sanctions underlay the social structure. The idea of hierarchy is articulated by the caste system” (italics in original) (Purohit: 223).

The centrality of the guru (Ustad) in the dissemination and control of musical knowledge, and the complete subservience demanded of students, is directly linked with a hierarchical worldview.

The feudal economic system supported the princely states and privileged specific discursive modes—oral transmission of musical knowledge through hereditary lineages of specialist musicians (gharanas). The rise of capitalism replaced the old feudal economy and changed the parameters of the network flows. This economic system, in conjunction with the shift in to the British Raj, led to the demise of the princely states and the consequent loss of patronage to court musicians. The ensuing shift of local power to a new, western educated middle class, brought about reforms of music and religion, resulted in new authorities on music, a
western educational model, and increased systemization of notion, \textit{ragas}, and performance paradigms.

These three modes, economy, power, and discourse, represent three distinct yet overlapping analytical frames. The evolution of these networks does not occur evenly: they merge and reinforce, or clash and negate each other in different times and localities, and the interaction of these networks form particular assemblages, which can create new networks, and so on. The interaction of these networks are flows, described in higher-dimensional mathematical systems, “as we move to higher dimensions, the systems are often not maps but \textbf{flows}: a map is a function that takes one value of X and returns the next value of X, while a flow provides the velocity of X for any point in the state space” (Smith: 65). The modeling of historical transitions during which the sitar developed as resultants of network flows clarifies the importance of interaction and \textit{process}, between the “links and knots” (Latour’s term for conceptual content (1999: 99)), that translate and mediate between actants, objects, and networks.

The polyvocality of these networks must be taken into account. As Latour states, “Is it our fault that the networks are \textit{simultaneously real, like nature, narrated, like discourse, and collective, like society}?” (Latour, 1993: 6). In the following discussion, the positioning of different nodes of power, cultural and capital flows, and social structures will be examined in turn through the early evolution of the sitar.
TECHNICAL AND MUSICAL EVOLUTION OF THE SITAR (1300-1850)

The sitar's early development occurred during the cultural blending of Hinduism and Islam in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Several theories have been advanced about the geographic and cultural origins of the instrument. Evidence of the existence and importance of stringed instruments in India, especially the vina, dates back to the third century BCE (Widdess: 169-172). There are many iconographic representations of long-necked lutes found in ninth and tenth century Hindu temple sculptures, but they disappear from the scene and perhaps have no bearing on the sitar's development (Miner 27). Other long-necked lutes were popular throughout Central Asia and Persia during the medieval era and included the do-tar, tambur, seetar, and ek-tar, and were performed in Indian courts by the thirteenth century. During the period from tenth to the seventeenth centuries, there was constant contact between Central Asian, Persian, and Indian music (Mahajan: 8-17). The tambur is still commonly used in the music of Central Asia, Iran, and Afghanistan, and is similar to the sitar in its construction, chordal accompaniment strings, and utilization of a steel plectrum (mizrab) (field research, Tajikistan 2006-2007).

Two conflicting theories credit either a Hindu or Muslim origin for the instrument. One theory credits the origin of the sitar to Amir Khusrau in the thirteenth century CE. This theory is common among many Muslim musicians and general listeners. Vilayat Khan was a proponent of this theory (see ch. 6). The other theory, based on India’s long history of stringed instruments, seeks to deny any Muslim influence, and refers back to temple art and Sanskrit texts. This view was
propagated by Ravi Shankar, and is often connected with nationalistic narratives that seek a Hindu origin for Hindustani music and instruments (see Shankar 1969). However, most contemporary musicologists support the Central or West Asia theory (Miner: 18).

The first recorded mention of the sitar occurs in the eighteenth-century travelogue entitled the *Muraqqa-e-Delhi*, mentioning the performance of the sitar by Na‘mat Khan’s nephew (D. Q. Khan: 76). Since the sitar is not mentioned by name in texts, or seen in any iconographic evidence prior to the eighteenth century, it is safe to assume that the sitar evolved during the late Mughal period.

A brief digression on basic musical terms related to the sitar is necessary here. The term bol (literally word) is applied to the right hand technique of the sitar, using the specific syllables Da for outstroke, Ra for an upstroke, and Diri for faster combinations of both. The Hindustani vocal and instrumental genres important for the sitar are (1) *dhrupad*, the oldest form of Hindustani music, containing vocal and instrumental styles, generally considered the most “serious” of Hindustani genres, and emphasizes formal structures and text; (2) *khyal* vocal form, a seventeenth century development that is distinguished from *dhrupad* by the inclusion of more improvisation and greater latitude for individuality; (3) *thumri*, considered a form of light classical music that developed in nineteenth century Lucknow that developed first as *bandish-ki-thumri*, a highly rhythmical and up-tempo form.

Important innovations in the content and style of the sitar repertoire occurred during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. This includes the migration of techniques from other instruments, such as the *bin* (Hindustani version
of the vina), to the sitar, and the migration of stylistic conventions from vocal music to instruments. Chief among the innovators were two seminal figures, Masit Khan of Delhi, and Reza Khan of Lucknow, both court musicians. Many innovations were passed down through the khandani and gharana oral traditions; other documentation of this period appears in the sitar manuals of the mid to late nineteenth century.

Masit Khan probably lived from the mid-eighteenth century until the first quarter of the nineteenth century in Delhi (Miner: 93). He is considered by many to be a direct descendant of Tansen’s son Tanras (Sen: 33; Miner: 92). Masit Khan was credited with taking dhrupad compositions from the bin or vocal music and adapting them for sitar (Sen: 33). Masit Khan’s compositions followed the four basic sections of traditional dhrupad compositions: Sthayi, Antara, Sanchari, and Abhog (Sen: 33).

The masitkhani style did not contain a separate alap section, but instead focused the entire range of an artist’s techniques in the elaboration of the composition.

The rezakhani gat was developed by the sitarist Reza Khan during the reign of Wajid Ali Shah in Lucknow (ca.1850). Like the masitkhani gats, this compositional framework follows a fixed pattern of bols, and systematic elaborations through todas. This particular style of gat was also known as the Purbi (Eastern style), which is a reference to the thumri compositions from Lucknow that influenced it.

The following sections will examine the sitar from the vantage point of the outsider (European and British records) and from the vantage point of the indigenous culture. However, the native perspective is certainly not monolithic, as
will be demonstrated in debates between Delhi and Lucknow’s political and cultural status.

Colonial and Mughal Representations of the Sitar (1799-1880)

The twin narratives of the sitar that follow—one of a decadent and decaying culture, influenced by the cultural forces set in motion by British colonial rule, the other an idealized vision of the Mughal past that still lives in the stories of contemporary musicians and in the popular imagination—place the sitar at the center of a matrix of political transformations, the crossroads between feudal and capitalist economies.

There is little information regarding the earliest repertoire of the sitar, but from both pictorial and written evidence, it is possible to draw some conclusions regarding its evolution and performance contexts. The 1799 work of Belgian artist, F. Balthazar Solvyns depicts one of the earliest visual representations of the sitar, with a wide neck and six strings, shown in figure 4.3 below. The sitars depicted in Solvyns’ drawings vary in size and playing technique.
A number of paintings and lithographs from 1830s show the sitar used as part of group accompaniment for dancing girls (nautch), and part of an ensemble consisting of dholak, tabla, sarangi and bansuri (flute). A painting entitled “A concert ensemble in Kampur” shows the sitar being performed in an ensemble consisting of several sitars of differing sizes and fret positions, one of which is quite similar to the sitar depicted in Solvyns’ folio, thus demonstrating that the sitar appears to have evolved in tandem with folk variants. The sitar is not shown as a solo instrument, but as part of a dance ensemble, thus linking it with the music and lifestyle of courtesans.

1. a).151. “A Sittar” (pp.242-44) Calcutta: Sec, XI, No.4.,
2. (b). 151. “A Sittara, or Guittar” (pp.242-44). Orme: 48.,
3. (c).148. “ A Tumboora” (pp.338) Calcutta: Sec, XI, No.3.,
Several records by British travelers demonstrate the use of the sitar in these types of musical ensembles. This is from an account of Mrs. J. Kindersley describing a dance performance:

The girl sings, while she is dancing, some Persian or Hindostan song; some of them are really pleasing to the ear, but are almost entirely drowned by the accompaniments: several black fellows stand behind, who likewise sing with all the strength of voice they are masters of, making, at the same time, the most ridiculous grimaces; some of them playing upon a sitar, which is something like a guitar, but greatly inferior even to that trifling instrument [...] But all this, loud as it is, is drowned by those who play with two pieces of bell-metal, which they work between their fingers. (Dyson 1978:336)

Another description by the artist Solvyns attests to the apparent low status of the sitar at this time:

The Sittar is now seldom used in India; Perhaps the better sort of Hindoos have taken it in aversion since the Loutchias, or people of dissolute manners, have taken to playing it for money, and have chosen this music to accompany their obscene songs and other immoral practices. At their feasts, the Nautch, a dance ... is sometimes performed to the sound of the Sittar, and some tolerable musicians, or rather mere players upon it, may be heard. (Solvyns 1808-II: 2)

Other descriptions by travelers at this time indicate that the sitar was primarily used in a light, or more entertainment-oriented style. Captain Robert Smith describes the sitar in a travelogue written between 1828 and 1833:

These nautch girls accompany the recitative with slow and graceful movements, beating time with their feet, on which little silver bells are hung to the music of the saringee and sitar.

In a separate description, Smith elaborates another performance:
On the same night of the nautch [sic][...] we were entertained with a concert [...] At the concert... there were five performers; the principal one and he was considered first rate played on the sitar an instrument resembling the guitar but strung entirely with wire, in which respect it may with propriety be likened to that Italian instrument the mandolin; it was played principally with the forefinger armed with a piece of wire passing over the top and round a little above the first joint [...] [One] beat time with his fingers on a small soft toned drum ‘[...] there were two other performers in the rear all sitting on the carpet who seemed to take very subordinate parts. The first musician displayed uncommon execution and had he possessed an instrument of greater power and more harmonious tone, would have effectually removed the prejudice of the company; as it was several of us were delighted with the performance the airs being wild and plaintive and forcibly reminding us of the Scotch and Irish (Smith: 1915 (c.1833) in Miner: 38)

Other descriptions around this period show the sitar in the context of vocal accompaniment by female performers. Mrs. Meer Hassan Ali describes a three-stringed sitar (Miner: 39).

Captain Willard gives a very detailed description of the sitar around the same time, showing the playing techniques, construction, and also the various social positions inhabited by the instrument.

It resembles the last mentioned instrument [the tumboora], but is made a good deal smaller, and has movable frets of silver, brass, or other materials, which are fastened with catgut or silk. Seventeen frets are generally used, and as they are moveable they answer every purpose required. The shifting of these to their proper places requires a delicate ear [...] The instrument derives its name from si, signifying in Persian three, and tar, a string, as that number is commonly used. More modern players have made several additions [...] Of the three wires, one is steel and the other is brass. These last are tuned in unison, and are called Khuruj from their sound, and the other is a perfect fourth to it. The fingers of the left hand slide over the frets on the fingerboard, and stop the notes in the same manner as the guitar, and the wires are struck with the forefinger of the right, to which is fitted a kind of a plectrum or instrument called a Mizrab, made of a piece of wire curiously twisted, to facilitate the various motions of the finger [...] The Sitar is very much admired both by professional men and amateurs, and is really a very
pleasing toned instrument in the hands of an expert performer. (Willard 1965 [1834]:98 in Miner: 39)

The examples above show that the sitar was associated with lower status music and activities. However, from these descriptions it is difficult to ascertain whether the solo music of the sitar was closer to “light music,” other types of folk music, or was able to recreate the classical repertoire. The instrument continued to change over time, but by the mid-nineteenth century, Imam Khan's *Ma’dan al-Musiqi* (1856) describes a sitar which is similar to the modern sitar in a variety of ways, including the metal frets, which are called *parda*, and the addition of drone strings, tuned to a higher octave, known as the *chikari* strings. Both of these terms, and many others, are still in use today. As noted above, the sitar began to take on the techniques of the *bin* (a tube zither with two gourd resonators at either end), which allowed for wider scope in performance repertoire.

The sitar is also linked with amateur musicians in Willard’s example. In the *Muraqqa-e-Delhi*, discussed below, the complex musical environment of Delhi is presented as one in which religious, classical, and *nautch* music are closely intertwined, so the descriptions of the low status of music must be understood within a particular class and caste, as well as a moral framework, which reached its apotheosis in the so-called decadent musical and cultural life of Lucknow (Misra: 1-23). The sitar is thus an excellent example of Latourian networks.

In contrast with the Colonial depictions of the sitar and its *milieu*, a very different portrayal of the instrument emerges from Islamic travelogues. An excellent source for pre-1857 musical life is the text *Muraqqa-e-Delhi*, which gives a detailed
portrait of musical life in Delhi in 1739-1741. Dargah Quli Khan, a young nobleman, describes a vibrant musical scene in which “high” and “low” culture intersected, blurring the boundaries of social and economic classes. Poets, saints, dancing girls, prostitutes, vocalists and instrumentalist intersect in a context that blurs the lines between the sacred and the profane. D. Q. Khan’s work is unique in that it was a personal diary, and thus provided the author with a degree of freedom of expression not common in works commissioned by royal patronage.

This is apparent in the description of the Urs (death anniversary) of Khuld Manzil, shifts between poetic and spiritual depictions of the event and environment, to earthy depictions of the attendees:

The Urs of Khuld Manzil is celebrated on the 23rd day of the [sacrifice month Muharram-ul-Ihram [...] When the place is fully lighted it dazzles like sunlight and overshadows the moon. The sun realizing its unimportance sets and does not show its face before dawn. (D. Q. Khan: 17)

Juxtaposed with this are descriptions of the people in attendance:

Hand in hand the lovers roam the streets while the debauched and the drunken, unmindful of the muhatsib [police], revel in all kinds of perversities. Groups of winsome lads and novices violate the faith of the believers through their unappreciated acts which are sufficient to shake the very roots of piety. There are beautiful faces as far as the eye can see. All around prevails a world of impiety and immorality in different hues. The whores and lads entice more and more people to this atmosphere of lasciviousness. Nobles can be seen in every nook and corner while the singers, qawwals and beggars outnumber even the flies and the mosquitoes. In short, both the nobles and the plebeians quench the thirst of their lust here. But however, it is in one’s welfare and prudence to ignore these immodesties. (ibid.: 17-18)

This description shows the interaction of social classes at the time, and illustrates that a religious event could easily serve as an excuse to indulge the pleasures of the
senses. Religious music is performed side-by-side with secular music and the enticements of prostitutes.

A similar depiction occurs in a passage describing the memorial and grave of the Sufi saint Hazrat Nizamudin Auliya. The locale is filled with great beauty, as “varieties of blooming flowers spread their breeze and fragrance all over the road” (ibid.: 19). Instead of leading to pious meditations, the garden “makes people yearn for wine and when they are enraptured they begin to sing and dance” (ibid.: 17).

D.Q. Khan describes a party organized for the death anniversary (urs) of Mir Musharraf by his son Mir Kallu,

Mir Kallu celebrates the urs [of his father] with great pomp and show and adorns the place with beauty and imagination. The field is arranged with flowerbeds and the cottages are illuminated with candles and lanterns. The lovely, illuminated domes stand on the broad bank of the canal. The nobles of the court and artists are invited. Mir Kallu is a young man familiar with the dandy nobles and their ways. They [the nobles] bring their lovers and entertainers and setting their tents on the bank of the canal and under the shade of the trees amuse themselves with wine and liquor. Delicious food and other requisites are sent in accordance with the rank of those present and the festivities of dance and entertainment go on all night. The night is celebrated as joyously as the Shab-e-barat [the fifteenth night of the Arabic month of Sha’ban], and the dawn brings happiness akin to the morning of ‘Id-ul-Fitr’ [...] The carpets are spread and the masnads have been places and the arrangement for the reception is made. Dancers and singers are displaying their talents amongst the hosts and the guests. Even the beggars and saints are mesmerized in the environment while the wealthy people rejoice. At the height of these celebrations all hesitations are overcome and the people indulge in their desires and enjoy themselves. (ibid.: 19-20)

The mixture of spiritual devotion and pleasure are juxtaposed throughout the description of various events. Music was often a central component of these events. The system of patronage seems to include both the nobles and commoners,
especially during festivals. It is in this milieu that the development of the sitar should be understood.

In the *Muraqqa-e-Delhi*, the descriptions of musicians are grouped together in the category of *Arbab-e-Tarab*, “people who amuse,” which includes artists, singers, dancers, musicians, and actors. Poets are given a separate section, indicating their higher place within the social hierarchy. D. Q. Khan’s knowledge and appreciation of music are important to scholars of music, as they provide detailed accounts of many of the famous musicians of Delhi at the time. The description of the famous *bin* player Ne’mat Khan Bin Nawaz is one of the most lengthy in the text, perhaps showing the high regard in which he was held:

His [Ne’mat Khan Bin Nawaz] existence in *Hindustan* is a blessed gift. He is renowned for his compositions of new musical notes and notations and is on par with the *nayaks* of bygone days. He innovated a variety of beautiful *khayyals* [sic]. The works of [Ne’mat Khan Bin Nawaz] are in different languages and he is considered the master of all contemporary musicians of Delhi. His personal contentment makes him bow only before the *Badshah*. During the reign of Shah Muhammad Mui’zud-din Ne’amat Khan was a highly honored and respected [person]. He takes part in the ceremony of the *urs* of the saints and himself performs the celebrations of the 11th day [of the death anniversary]. There is a musical gathering at his residence on the 11th day of every month when a large section of the population [including the nobles of high rank and elites] of Delhi gather. Since the place gets extremely crowded, people start arriving from morning […] The *mehfil* lasts to the break of dawn, when it is culminated with *raag* Vibhas. (ibid.: 75)

The high social status of Ne’mat Khan comes forth from the statement that “he bows only before the *Badshah*” (the emperor) and that he plays on the “11th day of *urs*” ceremonies, which is the most sacred and honored position. The wide range of society present at his performances at home indicates that, at this time, classical music appealed to a broad section of the population. It is also clear that Ne’mat Khan
was a musical innovator. D. Q. Khan’s portrayal of Ne’mat Khan’s musical skills presents him as a truly great artist:

His expertise in the art of playing the *bin* has no parallel in this world [...] Felicitous is that *bin* player, whose mere placing of the *bin* on the shoulder emanated the harmonious sounds and exhilarated the people. The gourd of his *bin* is intoxicating as wine, and the touch of the fingernails on the strings animates the people. The music of the *bin* makes the people listless with ecstasy and the sounds of appreciation rent the air. His playing of a new musical note [*raag*] elicits a similar response. It is possible that the people would not have seen and heard an exquisite *bin* player as Ne’mat Khan. (ibid.: 75-76)

Ne’mat Khan’s influence appears to extend to the first textual mentioning of a sitar player, his nephew Ada Rang. Given the familial nature of music transmission in India, it is logical that Ada Rang would have received *talim* from his uncle.

A nephew of Ne’mat Khan [Ada Rang] is skilled in playing the sitar and composes new notations. He also plays notations on the sitar usually played on other instruments. In the world of music he is incomparable. The author [of this book] has attended his musical gatherings many times and regards him with respect. Endowed as he is with this unique talent, his *mehfils* are popular, and carry on all night. In spite of the instability [caused by the invasion of Nadir Shah] the spirit of revelry is extant [and continues] till pre-dawn darkness. He still accepts the invitations to offer entertainment. (ibid.: 76)

It is clear from this passage that the sitar was not a ‘new’ instrument, at least to the author at this time. Ada Rang was applying musical techniques from other instruments, most likely the *bin*, and possibly performing in both *dhrupad* and *khyal* styles. However, it is not possible to say with certainty the nature of the sitar upon which Ada Rang performed, as well as the nature of his accompaniment. It appears that it was used as a solo instrument in a classical style, however. D. Q. Khan’s last statement, “he still accepts the invitations to offer entertainment,” is not clear, but it
would seem that Ada Rang performed for parties, perhaps similar to those described in the passages above. This is the only mention of the sitar in the text, but many other string instruments appear with regularity, including the tambur, rebab, sarangi, and bin. It is not clear whether there were other adept performers of the sitar at this time, as the development of the sitar into a respected solo instrument occurred later in the century through Masit Khan and others, whose contributions are described in the next section. More primary sources are required to clarify this period of the sitar’s history. We will now examine the position of music and the sitar during the period of the ascendancy of the raj and the last Mughals.

TIME OF TRANSITION: PATRONAGE, POWER AND PROPAGANDA, 1857-1900

The period from 1750 to 1900 was a time of political and cultural flux; there is direct alignment between centers of political power and cultural influence. The lines are clearly visible from the decline of Delhi after 1857 with the end of the Mughals and the concomitant decline of dhrupad, to the rise of Lucknow and the growth of thumri, and finally the monumental impact on the arts as Bengal became the new political and cultural capital of India under British influence. The development of these genres was influenced by these shifting centers of power and cultural development.
Twilight of the Mughals: Delhi and Lucknow

The centers of Delhi and especially Lucknow (Oudh) were looked upon as the last bastions of a decaying and decadent culture by the new British colonials. The fate of Wajid Ali Shah, a great patron of music and dance, is perhaps archetypal of the betrayals suffered by the last dynasties of the Mughal princes (nawabs). As the British moved in and consolidated control, the last Mughals were increasingly powerless and so devoted more and more time to the pursuit of art, music, and literature. It is during this period that the sitar was refined, and moved out of the circles of the nautch into the orbit of more classical and elevated styles such as dhrupad. The sitar was deployed in a different network, one which associated the instrument with the urbane

Lucknow by the early nineteenth century had ceased to pay tribute to the Mughal emperor. It began to attract many musicians, artists, painters, and poets as it became known as a center for the Urdu language, and new expressions of art, poetry, music and dance. It was not bound by the constricting traditions of Delhi, and the nobility was flush with cash from the outlying provinces (Hasan: 3-5). During the Nawabi period (1722-1856), the aristocracy was preoccupied with entertainment. The nawabs of Lucknow aligned themselves with the British in 1812, becoming an independent state, which ultimately came under the control of British East India Company. Wajid Ali Shah (1822-1877), the last Nawab of Oudh, contributed to the final decline of Muslim influence in India. His excessive preoccupation with the arts prevented him from counteracting the growing British power and political manipulations (Misra: 74-76).
Wajid Ali Shah was no dilettante. He was a composer, scholar, and author of over one hundred books, currently preserved in the library of Dr. Masood Hassan (Misra: 77). Nawab Wajid Ali Shah was trained in the Senia gharana by Ustad Basat Khan, Ustad Pyar Khan, and Ustad Jaffar Khan, and studied kathak\(^4\) under Thakur Prasadji and Durga Prasadji (Misra: 77). In a sense, he personified the cultural integration that represented the flowering of the Mughal Empire. The Nawab was fascinated by the Ras Lila, a depiction of the love-dalliance between Krishna and the gopis with erotic undertones. He composed numerous operas based on Hindu themes, and is considered the father of Urdu theater (Misra: 76). The development of forms such as thumri and ghazal, Urdu poetry, as well as the kathak form of dance, reached their apotheosis in Lucknow. The Nawab was a prolific composer of various vocal genres including dhrupad, dhamar, dadra, tappa, khyal, and sawan. His court was sponsor to a wide variety of musicians, and soon eclipsed Delhi as the musical center of India (Hassan: 110-112).

The royal patronage of sitar in Lucknow extended to the Nawab himself, who became a shagird of the sitarist Ustad Sitar Nawaz Kutub Ali Khan. Wajid Ali Shah claims in his text Mahalkhane Shahi that he became very proficient at the sitar:

I became such an expert on the sitar that I could make those who weep, laugh. My Ustad was pleased with my progress that he often used to kiss my fingers with appreciation. Later on, although our guru-shisya relationship continued, we became more like friends. Every day he used to teach me in the second and third ‘prahar’.\(^5\) (Misra: 91)

\(^4\) North Indian classical dance form.
\(^5\) The 2\(^{nd}\) and 3\(^{rd}\) prahar is time period from 7 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Wajid Ali Shah established a music school that taught many sitarists within Lucknow, including Jaffar Khan and Haidar Khan (Misra: 91). The use of Hindu terms in Shah’s recollection, “guru-shisya” and “prahar,” indicates a definite alignment with Hindu philosophical and conceptual systems.

However, the Nawab was not without his critics, especially because of his preference for “light” musical forms, in addition to his supposed administrative incompetence. The affinity of the last Mughal rulers should be emphasized in light of the Hindu-Muslim divide fomented by the British. The colonial social engineering program effectively played on pre-existing prejudices. These prejudices were soon interiorized by musicologists and performers such as Bhatkhande and Paluskar and continue into the twenty-first century. For example, the author Susheela Misra describes the problems that Wajid Ali Shah created for Hindustani music, which had to be “saved” by Bhatkhande and Paluskar:

But the gradual concentration of the arts in the hands of uneducated, close-fisted professional ustads, and various grades of “professional songstresses” brought a stigma to the arts for boys and girls from cultured and educated families [...] Thanks to the arrival of musical messiahs such as Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, respectability was restored to the musical arts because they instilled a sense of history and pride in our rich artistic heritage. (Misra: 71)

This particular model certainly implies a reconstructed past, indicated in the map of sedimentary time (fig. 1), and clearly expressed through in the phrase “instilled a sense of history.” However, Bhatkhande’s work of collecting music and creation of musical schools filled an important role for Hindustani music because he helped to preserve a culture under attack from outside
forces. It is only through his neglect of the hybrid culture and real tolerance of Mughal era, common in the nationalist movement, that his work had negative repercussions. We will now move our attention to another important center for the sitar, Delhi, and briefly examine the city’s cultural life during the last years of the Mughal Empire.

A passage from William Dalrymple’s *The Last Mughal* gives a sense of late Mughal culture in the former capital of the Mughal Empire, Delhi. Like Wajid Ali Shah, Bahadur Shah Zafar was deeply interested in the arts, especially poetry. He, like Wajid Ali Shah, was an accomplished artist, but Zafar’s chosen art was poetry. His court, while deeply embattled and economically troubled, sponsored the arts on a lavish scale. Zafar’s attitude towards Hinduism was open-minded and tolerant. The renowned poet, Mizra Asad Ali Khan Ghalib stated that he was happy to become a Hindu, and dwell on the banks of the Ganges in Banaras.

This was an attitude to Hinduism that Zafar, and many of his Mughal forebears, shared. It is clear that Zafar consciously saw his role as a protector of his Hindu subjects, and a moderator of extreme Muslim demands and the chilling Puritanism of many of the ‘ulma.’ One of Zafar’s verses says explicitly that Hinduism and Islam “share the same essence,” and his court lived out this syncretic philosophy, and both celebrated and embodied this composite Hindu-Muslim Indo-Islamic civilization at every level. The Hindu elite of Delhi went to the Sufi shrine of Nizamuddin, could quote Hafiz and were fond of Persian poetry. Their children—especially those of the administrative Khattri and Kayasth castes—studied under *maulis* and attended the more liberal *madrasas*, bringing offerings of food for their teachers on Hindu festivals. For their part, Muslims followed the Emperor in showing honor to Hindu holy men, while many in the court [...] drank only Ganges water. (Dalrymple: 79)

Like Wajid Ali Shah, Zafar celebrated many Hindu festivals, including the festival of Holi, in which Zafar and his courtiers and family would fling colored
powder at each other in a celebration of the god Krishna and spring. He distributed his weight in gold to the poor during the Hindu festival of Diwali, and enjoyed the re-enactment of the story of the Ramayana during the festival of Dussera (Dalrymple: 78). The tolerant and syncretic practices of the Sufis formed a bridge between Hindu and Muslim religiosity, but the rising Muslim merchant class felt excluded from the court’s high culture which included Sufism, poetry, and music. This class became supporters of reform-minded fundamentalist movements, which was a harbinger of changes to come.

These two cities fell rapidly after the 1857 Sepoy mutiny. Bahadur Shah Zafar’s forces were defeated, the city sacked, and he was exiled to Burma. In Lucknow, Wajid Ali Shah was deposed in 1856 for maladministration and poor government. Many musicians were forced to seek work with other courts throughout India. The musical innovations created during the reigns of these last Mughals soon found their way into both khyal and instrumental music. The Imdad Khan gharana, discussed in greater detail in the next chapter, gained much from these innovations, as many musicians shifted their base of operations to Bengal in the aftermath of 1857.

**Evolution of the Modern Sitar 1750-1850**

The contributions of both Masit Khan and Reza Khan can be understood more clearly in light of the syncretic culture of Lucknow and Delhi. As Lucknow eclipsed Delhi as the center of Urdu poetry, music, dance, and adab (culture), the
followers of the Senia gharana taught dhrupad-based music on ‘light’ instruments such as the sitar (Miner: 109).

The time period from 1750 to 1850 was highly fertile for North Indian music, and sowed the seeds for future change. The sitar as an instrument continued to evolve, as did the content and style of the repertoire. During this time the sitar began its journey of acceptance and respectability as an amateur and professional instrument. It also offered an opportunity for musicians such as Masit Khan, Reza Khan and others to become innovators of style, composition and performance. It is also apparent in the Urdu and Persian performance manuals for the sitar, and the inclusion of the sitar in texts dealing with established musical styles such as dhrupad and khyal. The turmoil engendered by the dying Mughal Empire, along with the increased power of the British bureaucracy created the environment for talented musical innovators such as Imdad Khan.

**Masit Khan and Masitkhani Gat**

Masit Khan is the influential, yet obscure figure who made a central contribution to the sitar’s role in Hindustani music by developing the masitkhani gat, thereby raising the instrument into the respectable world of dhrupad. Delhi was in great political turmoil in the late eighteenth century, and it appears that Masit Khan’s creativity flourished in spite of the unrest in the city, and perhaps without royal patronage.

*Masitkhani gats* are performed in vilambit (slow) tempo. The same *bol* pattern is utilized in most compositions. The basic pattern of the *masitkhani gat*
begins on the twelfth beat of the sixteen beat rhythmic cycle of *teen tal*, and consists of two symmetrical subdivisions of five and three (see ch. 5). Masit Khan developed this *gat* from the techniques of the *binkar* (performers of *bin*) *gharanas* (Slawek 2000: 17-18), which were rarely shared with outsiders, as they viewed themselves as the custodians of Tansen’s musical legacy, and the high art tradition of Akbar’s court.

The contribution of the *masitkhani gat* structure is found in the subdivision of the beats into specific functional grids within the *tala*. Even the most modern *gats* still retain this basic temporal structure. The influence of *dhrupad* on this *gat* tradition is visible in the slow speed of the *gat*, the methodical elaboration of the composition’s movements, and strict format for improvised sections (*todas*). The *todas* are clearly designated as specific types, and follow the *dhrupad* pattern of sequential elaboration of the melodic and ornamental range. A detailed analysis of *dhrupad* style sitar is found in ch. 5.

**Reza Khan and Rezakhani Gat**

Reza Khan’s musical performance and his lifestyle in Lucknow were somewhat controversial among his contemporaries (Imam: 1857). His compositions emphasized rhythmic complexity and speed, as opposed to the methodical and semantically rigorous elaborations of the *dhrupad*-influenced *masitkhani gats*. Lucknow was a center of light music styles such as *thumri*, and musicians in Delhi and other traditionalists viewed both the musical and decadent social milieu in
Lucknow with suspicion and contempt. Karam Imam described Reza Khan in the following manner:

The *gats* in teen tal are composed in the style of thumri. His *ragini* and *dhun* are incomplete, hence I was not impressed. Undoubtedly, Ghulam Reza [Reza Khan] has a sweet touch. The followers of his style are enamored of it. But there is not room in this style for *tonk* and *jhala*, nor is there any scope for *raga* except for one or two. Ustads are adverse to his style and the connoisseurs are ashamed of it. Ghulam Reza developed this style only for the noblemen of Lucknow. (Imam: 23)

The development of the *rezakhani baj* must be seen in the context of the larger cultural forces at work during this period. After the brutal reign of the puritanical Aurangzeb (1658 -1707), Delhi’s prominence as the musical capital of North India waned. Many musicians migrated to regional courts, and newer styles began to develop. Not only had *khyal* gained ascendancy over *dhrupad*, but also *thumri* and *ghazal* were gaining great popularity in the courts of Lucknow. Connoisseurs viewed with extreme distaste the liberties taken within traditional *raga* structures by *thumri* singers and the erotic content of the lyrics. Underlying this attitude was the perceived “femininity” of the *thumri* genre, and its connection with courtesan culture was considered beyond the pale by a new, westernized middle class.

At the same time, foreign as well as indigenous critics derided the contemporary productions of music as a decadent manifestation of Muslim-influenced traditional culture. These particular ideologies and interpretations were and still are extremely persistent. I see such interpretations as the result of practices half-understood by observers and scholars from outside, but they provided ample
fodder for reformists such as Bhatkhande and Paluskar, who must be understood in the context of colonialism, class, and gender, and not merely as a religious conflict.

Reza Khan’s importance stems from the fact that he helped shift sitar away from the *dhrupad ang* and towards the newer forms of *bandish ki thumri* and *chota khyal*. He represented “the voice of new” by bringing the more contemporary style of *thumri* and *khyal* into the sitar. However, both *rezakhani* and *masitkhani gats* were still locked into a fixed rhythmic and improvisational frame, the primary difference between them being one of tempo.

The possible connections between Reza Khan and Masit Khan are highlighted in a story, which is probably apocryphal, about Masit Khan. Khan, after a disagreement with his senior disciple, refused to teach him *drut gats*. Out of spite, he passed this knowledge only to his pupil in Lucknow, Reza Khan (Sen: 39). Although the story is highly unlikely, its intention is clearly to legitimatize the *rezakhani* style within the context of the *dhrupad*-influenced *masitkhani baj*, removing the ‘taint’ of *thumri*. Perhaps there was a need for musicians to justify the inclusion of the *rezakhani gat* within a concert performance context, and this story is certainly indicative of the synthesis of Delhi and Lucknow’s music cultures. The shifting locus of the binary of purity/impurity is evident in the valuation of the *masitkhani* and the *rezakhani gats*, as is the transition of power from the Mughal throne in Delhi to the *Nawabi* (princely) rule of Lucknow.

The increased decentralization of India’s music culture after the fall of the Mughal Empire brought these styles into proximity, and later became established as the basic template for sitar performance: slow composition (generally a slow *teen-*
tal composition known as a masitkhani gat, followed by a faster gat (typically a rezakhani gat). The rezakhani gat shows the growing influence of khyal and thumri on sitar music, while the masitkhani gat reflects its dhrupad origins. This format is accepted by all contemporary gharanas including the Imdad Khan gharana, Maihar gharana, and Senia-affiliated traditions.

**British Cultural Hegemony and the New Elite 1857-1920**

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a time of great turmoil and transition in Indian cultural, social, and political history, with far-reaching effects on musical performers and performance. The Mughal Empire continued its slow disintegration, as the East India Company during the eighteenth and early nineteenth century continued its plundering of the subcontinent, especially Bengal. The British Parliament, seeking to control the corruption of the East India Company, began imposing more bureaucratic controls and regulations on the Company's activities (Wolpert: 47-48).

The new bureaucrats did not have the same appreciation for Indian culture as the fortune-seeking colonials. Also, the arrival of English missionaries in 1813, formerly banned from proselytizing, increased the distaste for the “heathen” practices of both Muslims and Hindus. The balance of power between Lucknow, Delhi, and the British shifted almost overnight as the East India Company moved from an economic force to become the rulers of the land. While these forces had been in place for many years, the British reaction to the Sepoy Mutiny (1857-1858) transformed the cultural and social landscape of India.
The cataclysm of the Sepoy Mutiny changed everything. Incensed by increasing British arrogance and greed, the Bengal Sepoy Army revolted, and a hate-filled military campaign began that led to the British Crown taking over the administration of India in 1858 (Wolpert: 53-55). After the British victory, most of the Mughal arts, including architecture, poetry, and painting never regained their creative position. In compensation for their loss, many of the young intelligentsia were increasingly attracted by British and European culture. The old adab (culture) of the Mughal era was seen as anachronistic and irrelevant to modern life. At the same time, many Muslims moved towards an anti-Western fundamentalism, the beginning of today's ultra-conservative madrassas, or moved in the direction of an embrace of the West (Aziz Ahmad 1964: 263-273). A new India began its emergence from the ashes of the old.

The new urban centers of Calcutta and Bombay, founded by Westerners, became centers of the growing mercantile class, as well as new groups of elites distinct from the former Mughal and Muslim upper classes. They were enclaves of European trade functions. Wealth was distributed unequally, but it also allowed for a new middle class with the leisure time to pursue music and other leisure activities. At the same time, the previous openness to Indian culture that had marked the early Raj eroded:

Muslims and Hindus were beginning to feel increasingly alarmed by the degree to which the British were starting to use their new power to curb what had previously been regarded as legitimate religious activities, and instead to aggressively and insensitively promote Christianity. (Dalrymple: 66)
This policy was coupled with aggressive missionary activity, as well as the general promotion of Western culture including literature, art and music. Dalrymple describes the change in the British mindset:

For the first time there was a feeling that technologically, economically and politically, as well as culturally, the British had nothing to learn from India and much to teach; it did not take long for imperial arrogance to set in. This arrogance, when combined with aspects of Evangelical Christianity, soon began to affect all aspects of relations between the British and the Indians. (Dalrymple: 68)

At the same time, the centers of education, which had primarily been liberal madrassas, were converted into a British system of education that sought to “uplift” the “uneducated and half-barbarous people of India”, a great contrast to earlier orientalists and “White Mughals” who were respectful of ancient Indian culture. An example of this is found in the 1835 Minute on Indian Education of Thomas Babington Macaulay, who was in charge of educational reform for the East India Company:

The historical information which has been collected from all the books written in the Sanskrit [sic] language is less valuable than what may be found in the most paltry abridgments used at preparatory schools in England [...] The languages of Western Europe civilized Russia. I cannot doubt that they will do for the Hindoo [sic] what they have done for the Tartar (Dalrymple: 68-69).

English language education and the British academic system were being used as an overt means for religious conversion, which was part of a broader agenda of social, political, and economic control. Thus, the upper classes in Bengal, many of whom were ardent Angophiles, began to take interest in their own culture, and their efforts at purification and preservation, while modeled on Western systems, were
also strong political statements against the heavy-handed tactics and growing insensitivity of the Raj (Corbridge and Harriss: 6-9).

Bengal became a center for the reform of both Hinduism and music; these two movements were closely connected not only with an internalization of British ideas, especially regarding the decadence and corruption of religion and music, but also with the aim to preserve and celebrate Indian culture. Bengal, as a major center for the Raj, also became a focus for the founding of many new colleges and universities throughout the region. This created a new class of English-educated elites, who would eventually form the backbone for the Bengali renaissance, a new nationalism, and the explosion in amateur musicians and scholars. These changes are reflected in a new discursive modality for the sitar: performance manuals. The influence of the Western power is translated here into a different network: the discursive domain of India, reflecting an internal shift from oral to written transmission, and a shift from the domain of the professional to that of the amateur.

**Sitar Performance Manuals**

The later nineteenth century brought other major innovations in sitar performance and repertory, some of which were described in the performance manuals written for amateurs as the sitar gained in popularity. This indicates the growing reach of Hindustani music on both a national and regional level, and the influence of the British with amateur parlor music (Ranade: 128-129). Important texts produced at this time include the 1866 *Sitar Siksa*, written by Krishnadhan Bandyopadhyaya and Sourindro Mohun Tagore’s *Kshetra Dipika*. These works were...
influenced by the growing Hindu and Bengali cultural renaissance, and scholars believe they were also highly influenced by the English (Miner: 44). The *Sitar Siksa* contains western staff notation and marks a new stage in the socio-cultural evolution of the sitar. These texts correlate with growth of English educational systems and the 1834 publication of Willard’s *A Treatise on the Music of Hindoostan* which can be contextualized through the timeline in figure 4.2. Tagore propagated the theory that the sitar evolved from the *vina*, which indicates the impact of British scholarship on the new Hindu elites of Bengal.

Muhammad Safdar Hussain Khan’s Urdu text *Qanun-i-Sitar* (1873) is a relatively complete manual on sitar performance techniques, construction, and the theory of *raga*. The sitar described in this book has six strings, including two *joras* (Sa) strings. The text contains detailed notations for sitar compositions in various *ragas*, including the right hand *bols*. Along with other books of the period, *Qanun-i-Sitar* also contains descriptions of the deities depicted in the *ragas* (known through *rag mala* paintings). Other important performance manuals include the *Tashil al-sitar*, by Rahim Beg (1874), and the *Sarmaya-i ‘ishrat* or *Qanun-i musiqi* by Sadiq Ali Khan (Miner: 47). Most of these works were written in Urdu, but were eventually translated into Hindi and Bengali by the 1890s.

A solo performance style for sitar, known as “*gat-toda,*” emerged during this period. The *gat-toda* style further developed the right-hand patterns (*bols*) found in the *masitkhani* and *rezakhani gats* which allowed for several varieties of improvised passages. Another innovation was the use of *mind* by pulling the string laterally

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6 An original manuscript is housed in the Delhi University Music Library.
away from the sitar neck. The development of the *chikari* strings allowed for the fast, virtuosic passages known as *jhala*. The modern sitar however was still a work in progress, and many different variations existed through both experimentation and ornamentation. Various combinations of strings were also found, some including two *joras* (Sa) notes, and even the lower Sa (tonic), an invention generally attributed to Ravi Shankar (Miner: 43). It appears from iconographic evidence that the *chikari* strings were not present on every sitar, even though today they are central to *jhala* performances.

*Gat-toda* was the beginning of a unique sitar genre that combines features of *dhrupad*, *khyal*, and *thumri*. The new musical genre coevolved with the technical improvements of the instrument, as well as a growing acceptance of the sitar beyond accompaniment and use by wandering mendicants. This led to the innovations of Imdad Khan on solo sitar performance, setting the stage for the modern sitar.

**Time of Transition: Patronage and Performance 1857-1920**

The latter half of the nineteenth century was a time of great turmoil and transition in Indian cultural, social, and political history, with far-reaching effects on musical performers and performance. The protean economic, political, and socio-cultural networks during the sitar’s formative period were influential in transforming the relationship of professional musicians to society at large. Patronage by wealthy princes had been the economic lifeline for many well-known musicians during the days of the Empire. However, during the mid-nineteenth
century, some of the restrictions governing musicians’ attachment to a particular patron became less strict, allowing for a freelance lifestyle. This flexibility was necessary due to the declining power base of the Mughals. The changing model of patronage structures can also be seen in the context of capital flow and the move from feudalism to capitalism. Independence for musicians became the norm with the final decline of royal patronage by the mid-twentieth century. The following account is given by Dipali Nag about Ustad Ghulam Abbas (1835?-1934), the grandfather of the renowned Agra gharana vocalist Ustad Faiyaz Khan:

Ghulam Abbas was not a musician belonging to a court or a Durbar. He had a different lifestyle. He visited each State where he was known and highly thought of. He performed at the court there. He accepted invitations of patrons who were fond of his music during his travels. In these tours he always took young Faiyaz along to accompany him. These exposures did a world of good to young Faiyaz. Endowed with exceptional receptivity and keen aesthetic sense, the young boy looked around, appreciated the beautiful atmosphere, the valuable objects, the food, the clothes, and absorbed the manners of the hosts (Nag: 14).

Ustad Faiyaz Khan (1880-1950) went on to become the foremost exponent of the khyal vocal style of the Agra gharana. Unlike his grandfather, he spent most of his career as a court musician in Baroda. Until the official dissolution of India’s princely states in 1947, many musicians had the option of working throughout the country as a freelance musician, or taking secure employment at a regional court.

The complex musical and cultural tapestry described above belies the notion that Hindustani music was on the decline during this period. To the contrary, this era was a time of great innovation and artistic fertility, as well as interactions between all segments of society. Political and economic changes brought more
independence for artists during this period (Raja: 74). Under the British Raj, nawabs, zamindars, and members of the feudal aristocracy were able to provide lifetime employment for a select few musicians. This helped to maintain a high level of artistic competence, which privileged hereditary musicians. The stage however was being set for a clash of cultures, as a changing social order, with its new prejudices, was imposing a new interpretation on Indian cultural history.

Outside the rarified atmosphere of the courts, an alternate vision of Hindustani music was being propagated in authors such as Jones and Willard. It should be noted that many hereditary musicians were illiterate; their primary education was being groomed in the arts, and therefore they were unable to take part in the growing debates surrounding the music (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, February 20, 2011). The following passage, from Captain Willard’s *A Treatise on the Music of Hindoostan* illustrates this different interpretation:

> In Hindoostan music arrived at its greatest height during the flourishing period of the native princes, just a little before the Mahomedan conquest, and its subsequent depravity and decline since then, closed the scene with the usual catastrophe [...] At present most native performers of this noble science are the most immoral set of men on earth, and the term is another word for all that is abominable, synonymous with that of the most abandoned and profligate exercises under the sun. (Willard 1965:28-29 (1834) in Miner: 101)

Willard’s interpretation is infused with the reconstruction of history that combines the ideas of decadence and decay, a nostalgia for an idealized past, and a denigration of the Islamic impact on Hindustani music.

The blurring of cultural boundaries, combined with Victorian era prudishness, was a potent combination that certainly disturbed the sensibilities of
the English, as mentioned in chapter 3. William Jones (1746-1794), one of the most important early scholars on Indian music, rejected the Persian influence on Hindustani music: “although the Sanskrit books have preserved the theory of their musical composition, the practice of it seems almost wholly lost” (Jones: 1999: 83). Jones’s rejection of Persian sources was an important legacy that later contributed to views of many Indian musicologists like Bhatkhande and Paluskar. At the same time, the growth of the middle class and the acceptance of Victorian values by many reform-minded Hindus, colored the understanding and appreciation of the complex, hybrid nature of Hindustani music.

In the preceding discussions I have demonstrated that the sitar is a cultural hybrid, in Latour’s terms a quasi-object, produced from Hindu, Islamic, colonial, and regional networks of power, economy, and discourse. Unlike other instruments which have either a clearly Hindu origin (the vina), Islamic (the sarod’s evolution from the rabab), or syncretic (the tabla), the sitar is unique in its contested history and fusion of genres and styles. Latour’s call to “retie the Gordian knot” of complexity severed through the modernist project of “purification” provides a perfect framework for the examination of the sitar as a “quasi-object”, entities which are both actual and virtual, and are linked to human and non-human networks. Considering entities, Latour writes:

On the one hand they are contextualized by the objects with which they are fused; on the other, they have retreated into their own dark inner natures and are never fully measured by the networks in which they are involved at any given moment. (Quoted by Harman: 80-81)
ECONOMY, DISCOURSE AND POWER

In the final section of this chapter, I will draw together the threads of the preceding discussions in light of the networks depicted in Fig. 4.2, showing the interplay between the parallel and interconnected network flows resulting from the sweeping political, social, and economic changes of the previous two centuries that culminated in India’s independence in 1947. The connection of discourse to economics and power is clearly articulated in the highly developed philosophical and economic justification for colonialism, which also underlay the intellectual paradigm in which the social engineering of post-Mughal India took place.

Philosophy and economics created a momentum that justified the subjugation of India by an assumption of European cultural superiority. For Hegel, it was India’s world-historical destiny to be plundered, and the Raj represented natural heirs of this legacy, as well as the embodiment of the “world-spirit’s” evolutionary dialectic, “the English, or rather the East India Company, are the lords of the land; for it is the necessary fate of Asiatic Empires to be subjected to Europeans” (Hegel: 142-143). Hegel espoused the view of India as an essentially supplicant culture, which had not contributed to the world, but was an easy mark for conquest and needed the guiding hand of European rulers,

On the whole, the diffusion of Indian culture is only a dumb, deedless expansion; that is, it presents no political action. The people of India have achieved no foreign conquests, but have been on every occasion vanquished themselves. And as in this silent way, Northern India has been a centre of emigration, productive of merely physical diffusion, India as a Land of Desire forms an essential element in General History (Hegel: 141-142).
The economist James Mill described the inability of India to fend off conquest in 1818:

Of all the results of civilization, that of forming a combination of different states, and directing their powers to one common object, seems to be one of the least consistent with the mental habits and attainments of the Hindus. It is the want of this power of combination which had rendered India so easy a conquest to all invaders; and enables us to retain, so easily that dominion over it which we have acquired. Where is there any vestige in India of that deliberative assembly of princes, which in Germany was known by the diet? (History of British India II: 141)

Both caste and language were linked as determinate factors for India’s inability for self-determination. For the colonialists, Indians were essentially socially determined through caste, and caste permeated all aspects of Indian life. Inden describes the colonial construction of

Caste, then, is assumed to be the ‘essence’ of Indian civilization. People in India are not even partially autonomous agents; they do not shape and reshape the world. Rather, they are the patients of that which makes them Indians- the social, material reality of caste. The people of India are not the makers of their own history. A hidden, substantialized Agent, Caste, is the Maker of it (Inden: 428).

According to Inden, the discovery of the Indo-Persian language families was used to reverse cause and effect “by making the Indian’s essential conquerability the cause of the arrival of the speakers of that language and not the effect of their presence (Inden: 424).

The newly constructed Bengali middle class was thoroughly indoctrinated into these interpretations of social history, which eventually influenced the internal reformation of Indian culture. The new middle class was a creation of the Raj’s policies that involved economic and educational incentives. After the fall of the
Mughal Empire, Calcutta became the seat of the Viceroy, and the Raj became increasingly uninterested in the governing of municipal regions, indicated in the local/international category shown under the “economy” heading in Fig.4.2.

The process of establishing and reforming educational institutions was part of a broad strategy to create indigenous classes of loyal economic administrators, to counter Muslim influence by empowering Hindu classes of administrators, and to function as a type of social control mechanism. Persian was supplanted by English as the language of the high courts and the government in 1839 (Toynbee: 46). The Charter Act of 1813 encouraged all higher education to be conducted in English and the content solely western knowledge (Spear: 588). In 1900 all indigenous schools were closed in Calcutta. The basic structure of the universities was slanted towards the model of London University, and all courses were taught in English (Spear: 717-721). The study of any “Indian” philosophy, science, literature, and the Persian and Sanskrit languages was forbidden.

The British strategy of domination had evolved over many decades. The creation of new urban centers based on social and economic relationships of capitalism such as those found in England, and new social classes of English-educated babus7 was part of a long-term strategy for complete hegemony over India, based not just on the acquisition of political and economic control, but also upon the internal subjugation of culture through what Gramsci termed “hegemony”.

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7 The term babu (meaning brother in Bengali) as used as a term to describe Bengali’s who worked in administrative positions in the Raj.
The British colonial strategy worked with existing networks, through the inversion of previous power relationships, offering a system of reward and punishment for the remaining princely states and new middle class, rewarding those who supported the British with lavish lifestyles. Absentee landlords, usually living in Europe, collected revenue from the newly formed overseer class, who received economic and social rewards, and also served as buffers between the increasingly exploited lower classes and landlords. Others served as solders in the British Indian Army, a path to secure employment.

The massive success of this strategy was visible in culture, language, and social mores. The narrative of cultural decay worked within existing class and caste hierarchies, and translated the binary of purity/impurity from the Hindu religious domain into the realm of culture and music. This interpretation of India’s history and a conservative morality based on Victorian strictures formed a new narrative that appealed to conservative Hindus.

The British strategy of social engineering still reverberates in India today. Yet, that is only one layer of the whole. The paradoxes of the White Mughals of British origin and the syncretism of Wajid Ali Shah and Zafar Shah complicate the reduction of everything to a “Hindu vs. Muslim” conflict. Bhatkhande, while certainly a Hindu-chauvinist, was also waging a campaign for the dissemination of knowledge, of translating music from the oral to the written form, from the hidden to accessible.

This construction of history was belied by Urdu and Persian nineteenth century music manuals. They contained ‘Hindu’ visualizations of the *ragas* and
‘Hindu’ descriptions of the deities associated with the *ragas*, e.g. *Qanun-i-Sitar* (1873) and *Israr-i-Karamat* (1908). The very publication of these texts in Urdu makes it logical to think that they were intended for an audience that was either Muslim and Urdu speaking, or Hindus educated in the elite environment of the liberal madrassas.

Texts like the Persian manual with Hindu visualizations of *raga* are assemblages of culture, social, and musical formulations within larger narratives. By the late nineteenth century, these same books were translated into Hindu, Bengali, and other languages, indicating the shifting coordinates of power. Even examined chronologically, the production of texts in a primarily oral music culture aligns with important events and power transitions (figure 4.1-4.2). The text functions an integral part of these networks, and is itself a Latourian network, “Social is *nowhere* in particular as a thing among things but may circulate *everywhere* as a movement connecting non-social things” (Latour 2005: 107). The feudal economic system also served as part of the circulatory networks.

A purely materialist interpretation of the feudal economy neglects the unique position of musicians in this system. The following anecdote from Kumar Prasad Mukherji describes the largesse of a maharaja in the late nineteenth century, and raises questions about the valuation of music:

The Maharaja of Datia in Rajasthan had heard the famous dhrupad Dagarbani8 singers Shadi Khan and Murad Khan and invited them to his court. A bed of one-and-a-quarter lakh of silver rupees was made with silk carpet piled on top[…] An elephant was ordered by the Maharaja to carry

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8 Dagarbani indicates their position in the Dagar *gharana*. The term *bani* was used prior to the introduction of the concept of *gharana*.
them and the money to the guest house, at some distance from the palace [...] Shadi Khan thanked him profusely and mounted the elephant. On the way there he threw away fistfuls of silver coins to the crowd following him... The Maharaja was so impressed that he made a present of another ten thousand rupees to Shadi and Murad Khan. (Mukherji: 45-46)

Hindustani music served as a cultural counterpoint to British imperial and expansions. I believe that this resistance, while not necessarily a conscious strategy, is articulated through the preservation of culturally specific modes of economic and social structures in which Hindustani music developed. The feudal system’s imprint on Hindustani music was so strong, however, that its residual elements can be found even now, at least among traditional gharanidar musicians (Neuman: 1989).

This hypothesis is supported by an interview I conducted with Ustad Mashkoor Khan, the grandson of Abdul Wahid Khan, “Our knowledge of music is our wealth, even one million rupees would not be sufficient payment for it. This is our property (zamin)” (Mashkoor Khan, personal interview, February 9, 2011). The use of the word zamin (land or property) links musical knowledge directly with the feudal systems—this inheritance, although an intangible property, is no less valuable than landholdings.

The valuation of Hindustani music within the feudal economic systems transcends the capitalist systems of financial transactions and commodification. Mashkoor Ali Khan told me “Music brings a unique happiness that transcends material wealth. Even through many musicians were poor, they were happy because of their music. Even the wealthiest found something lacking in their lives, and sought for great musicians to enrich their lives” (Mashkoor Ali Khan, personal
Music is an escape from the cycle of necessity, and aligns with Bataille's description of the “gift”, "An article of exchange, in these practices, was not a commodity; it was not reduced to the inertia, the lifelessness of the profane world. The gift that one made of it was a sign of glory, and the object itself had the radiance of glory. By giving one exhibited one's wealth and one's good fortune (one's power)" (Bataille: 62). Marcel Mauss (1923) uses the idea of the gift in order to positions economic transactions within the social.

The circulation between the three network categories, economy, power, and discourse, are products and processes of energy flows which include the “non-linear” dynamics between social and religious groups in Mughal India, the fluid boundaries between secular and sacred spaces, and a gift economy, based on pre-capitalist economic structures. These forces were on the fringes of the social control mechanisms of the East India Company.

The Western domination over local historical consciousness allows for the imposition of top-down models of both commerce and social interaction. At the same time interactions that flourished in India contradict the capitalist system’s restrictive flows that I summarize as the reduction of all means of exchange and relationship into quantifiable and reducible properties, whether they are units of time, money, or power. The sitar, as a quasi-object or assemblage cuts a trans-linear axis through these polarities, and bridged the musical and cultural environment of Mughals with the new cultural center of Bengal.

In the histories discussed throughout the chapter the sitar appears as an apparition and portent for its modern incarnations. The threads of this tale are
woven from the last effulgence of Delhi and Lucknow, the pyrrhic trauma of 1857, and the discursive construction of memory’s domain from the ruins of the past. The narratives of performances drawn from the days of the Mughal Empire still resonant in the present, attested to by twentieth-century Bollywood films that recreate this era and its music in a romantic fashion, including Mughal-e-Azam, Baiju Bawra, Komal Gandhar, and the contemporary legacy of Bhatkhande in cultural institutions.

In summary, the evolution of the sitar took place during a particularly dynamic period of Indian history, straddling India’s passage from growing colonial influence to the Raj and finally to independence. From a relatively marginalized instrument, associated with nauch and other “decadent” behavior, to a highly professionalized and virtuosic instrument, the sitar has come for many inside India and especially in the West to symbolize India’s ancient heritage, spirituality, and advanced musicianship.
Chapter 5: Place and Network: The Imdad Khan Gharana (1858-1940)

The aftermath of the 1857 mutiny, especially for Muslim musicians, created a landscape filled with localities stripped of the symbolic, historical, and agential dimensions that inscribe and create the sense of meaningfully experienced place (see Chapter 2). In Bengal, the new elites simultaneously embraced and resisted the Raj, and their re-imagining and reform of both religion and Hindustani music arose from an interaction of compliance and resistance to the colonial present and the Mughal past.

Both displaced Muslim musicians and elite Bengalis were faced with a new cultural, social, and political landscape, and their process of adjusting to this new topology can be described as emplacement—the grounding of self and society in a meaningful geographic, psychologically, and historically situated place. Place is at once imagined and real; it can be experienced as an inner state of emplacement, constructed from symbolic, narrative, and imagined elements, and the physical, social, and economic dimensions of daily life. For many Muslims, there was a literal physical dislocation, but also a psychic unmooring from the Mughal era’s feudal economy, highly developed social world, and patronage structures.

Imdad Khan rose to prominence straddling two worlds, the old Muslim court heritage represented by Delhi and Lucknow, and the new post-1857 environment
exemplified by West Bengal. During this period, the development of mass media, beginning with print and then transitioning to radio and commercially available recordings, coincided with the dislocation of traditional patronage systems, the rise of nationalism, and the growing dominance of western educational models. The creation of new musical identities that reflected this complex social matrix encouraged the development of post-*dhrupad* musical styles, which incorporated *khyal, thumri*, and the foundational structures of *dhrupad*. After the fall of the Mughal dynasty, the cultural environment of West Bengal provided new means of livelihood for displaced musicians.

Since the 1820s, the increasing affluence and educational levels of West Bengal helped to foster a cultural movement known as the “Bengali Renaissance,” which prompted both the rediscovery and reformation of music, literature, and religion. With the ascendancy of the Raj, Calcutta became the capital of India. As the new capital, it offered a wide range of employment for musicians, including the opportunities offered by the Bengali theater revival, numerous private estates which supported music, and teaching opportunities provided by the increasing interest of the new class of Bengali *babus*. The exile of Wajid Ali Shah to Calcutta attracted many accomplished musicians; at the same time, many Bengali elites began pursuing music with a singular passion.

In Calcutta, a vibrant new class of highly educated bourgeoisie worked as bureaucrats, *zamindars* (landlords), or held important administrative and legislative positions in the newly established Raj. As patronage shifted to the new middle and elite classes in Bengal, the music culture and patronage system of the Mughal era
was reinterpreted. Many princely states survived the aftermath of the British takeover. However, the rulers of these princely states were often separated by cultural, social, and ideological lines from the new Hindu and Bengali-dominated middle and upper classes. In this environment, the sitar increased in popularity and scope.

**West Bengal and the New Sitar**

Post-1858 Bengal became a major center of sitar for several reasons, a major one being the dispersal of musicians from the fallen Mughal courts of Wajid Ali Shah and Zafar Shah and regional courts whose rulers had sided against the British. As the popularity of the sitar increased, more hereditary musicians began to pursue it seriously. The sitar’s melodic and technical range expanded as dhrupad waned in popularity, supplanted by khyal, tappa, and thumri vocal genres. The sitar soon became one of the most popular instruments among the Bengali elites. Judging by the number of manuals published for amateur usea, it is clear that the sitar had moved out in the wider social world at this time. The anglophile elites of Bengal incorporated many practices of the English into their own culture.

The sitar began to take on the function of a parlor instrument, something that was alien to Indian culture, but was a perfect cultural transportation of British and Western social mores into Indian culture. The music expressed through the “parlor” was a controlled and regulated version of that provided by the professional musicians on the social fringes. The sitar became the perfect indigenous version of this practice for the new English-educated middle class and can be seen clearly in
visual representations of the sitar in paintings in the late nineteenth century. That armies of highly skilled master musicians suddenly became available to landowners in Bengal was an accident of history that served as a cornerstone in the evolution of the sitar.

Other factors contributed to the sitar's popularity. First, the sitar was relatively easy to play, unlike the bin, which was also strongly connected with the rigorous dhrupad tradition. Second, the sitar did not come with the cultural baggage associated with ghazal, thumri and even khyal after the fall of the “decadent” and “corrupt” late Mughals. Even though the sitar had been connected with dancing girls and other forms of questionable entertainment, the sitar was a relatively new instrument, and as such, did not possess the long-term stigma linked with vocal music and dance, and the instruments used to accompany these forms, such as tabla and sarangi. Third, the sitar was acceptable for both male and female performance, and allowed for popular and light numbers, which, while sometimes based on thumri, did not have the strong associations with the Mughal past. Fourth, the existence of popular manuals for sitar performance indicates that it must have been, at the very least, fashionable among the upper classes. The sitar became a perfect instrument for the amateur performer, and a socially acceptable means of musical and creative expression. The sitar’s newness (modernity) allowed for the construction of a new identity for the instrument. A new class of landed gentry embraced music as amateurs, scholars, and occasionally professionals.

A disciple of sitarist Sajjad Muhammad Khan, Raja Sir Sourindro Mohan Tagore (1840-1914), was both an accomplished scholar and performer. He wrote a
number of books about music in both English and Bengali, primarily aimed at the promotion and reformation of music, which was often considered disreputable among the elites of Bengal (Sharma, A. D.: 47). His elder brother, Jatindra Mohan Tagore, was the patron of Sajjid Khan and Imdad Khan, as well as a musician in his own right. S. M. Tagore established two music colleges, aimed at promoting music among the elite class in Bengal and restoring the reputation of music. These institutions were the Banga Sangeet Vidyalaya (1871) and the Bengal Academy of Music (1881). S. M. Tagore enjoyed a stellar reputation in the Western academic world, earning honorary doctorates from the University of Pennsylvania and Oxford University, and was knighted by Queen Victoria in 1884 (Sharma, A. D.: 47). S. M. Tagore is an example of the fusion of Western education and an interest in Indian cultural heritage that made Bengal into a major center of patronage. He used Western notation and systems of pedagogy, yet defended Indian music against critical attacks of British. His fluency with Western classical music gave him added credibility in his endeavors.

Tagore’s school offered training in a variety of forms, as did the availability of performance manuals (Miner: 148-149). Wealthy landowners were able to study under great masters such as Sajjid Khan and Imdad Khan, and sponsored top musicians through providing lodging, stipends, and concert opportunities. It is an irony of history that the education system implemented by the British that aimed at creating a class of pro-British bureaucrats and administrators also fomented new leaders and champions of indigenous culture. The translation of sitar to a new environment created new patrons for musicians, a market which was exploited by
Imdad Khan and his sons Inayat Khan and Wahid Khan. These social and pedagogical transformations of the sitar laid the groundwork for the worldwide popularity of sitar that developed from the 1960s to present.

**Foundations of the Imdad Khan Gharana, 1830-1940**

The Imdad Khan *gharana*, in the span of three generations, brought together the new musical possibilities of the post-*dhrupad* era through an extensive legacy of training in vocal music, the Senia instrumental tradition, light music such as *thumri*, and technical and performance innovations. In fact, the combination of these multiple streams contradicts the generally held opinion that *gharanas* should follow a uniform developmental paradigm. The musical roots of this *gharana* will be examined, as well as the use of new social configurations, media, and a spiritual philosophy of music grounded in the Sufi tradition. These multiple threads are still being reinterpreted in the first decades of the twenty-first century, as components of macrohistory and microhistory are re-imagined by individual artists into new hybridic combinations; “the difference between macrohistory and microhistory has nothing to do with the length of durations envisioned, long or short, but rather concerns distinct systems of reference” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 221). Although I employ the terminology “Imdad Khan *gharana*” throughout this discussion, it is important to keep in mind that both Imdad Khan and Inayat Khan did not consider themselves as part of a *gharana*; rather, they were members of a patrilineal musical legacy known as a *khandan* (Dard Neuman: 252). The ramifications of the process of *gharana* formation will be detailed later in this chapter.
The founder of what would come to be known as the Imdad Khan *gharana* was Thakur Sujan Singh, a *dhrupad* vocalist who was also a *jagirdar* of Naogaon, located in present-day Bangladesh (Parikh: 23) (see figure 5.1). His son Turab Khan settled in Agra, and Imdad Khan’s father, Sahabdad Khan, moved to the nearby village of Etawah.¹ Sahabdad Khan diversified the family line, being known as a vocalist, *sarangi* performer, *jaltarangia*, and as an amateur sitarist.² His focus on the *surbahar* instead of the lower-status *sarangi* is seen as an adaptive strategy employed by *mirasi* musicians to improve their status (Neuman: 1978: 212). Sahabdad Khan is credited by members of the Imdad Khan *gharana* with inventing the *surbahar* and adding the *tarab* strings to the sitar (see Rahn: 126-145). However, credit for these is often given to Ghulam Muhammad, for which there is some evidence (Miner: 152). Figure 5.1 shows the family tree of the Imdad Khan *gharana*.

¹ There appears to be little reliable information on Sujan Singh. Further research needs to be conducted on this subject.
² The *jaltarang* is a rare instrument which uses mallets and china bowls of water.
Imdad Khan Gharana

Thakur Sujan Singh (vocal, dhrupad)

Ustad Turab Khan

Sahabdad Khan (*surbahar*, sitar)

Imdad Khan
1848-1920

Inayat Khan
1895-1938

Vilayat Khan
1928-2004

Shujaat Khan
1960 -

Hidayat Khan
1975 -

Wahid Khan

Imrat Khan
1935 -

1. Nishat Khan
2. Irshad Khan
3. Walahat Khan
4. Shafaatullah Khan

Aziz Khan
composer

Shahid Parvez

Figure 5.1 Imdad Khan *gharana* family tree
Sahabdad Khan is said to have received *talim* from two prominent vocalists of the Gwalior *gharana*, Hassu and Haddu Khan, as well as the instrumentalist Nirmal Shah of the Senia *gharana* (Sharma, A.D.: 222; Roy 1975: 202). These two streams of influence, the vocal *khyal* and Senia instrumental tradition, would continue to be developed by members of the *gharana*, and formed a common heritage and knowledge base. Yet, vocal music was not utilized in instrumental performances, partially due to the higher status accorded to strictly vocal lineages (*kalavant*).

It is important to note the Sahabdad Khan was also considered an accomplished *sarangia* (*sarangi* player) during his time. One of the requirements for a *sarangi* player, both then and now, is competency, fluency, and knowledge of all the styles of the major *gharanas*. The *sarangia* Indra Lal Dandra told me that many *sarangias* were crucial, if often not acknowledged instructors for vocalists, especially in the *thumri* and *khyal* genres, and often have a depth of knowledge that is not found among other instrumentalists (Indra Lal Dandra, personal interview, February 3, 2008). A *sarangi* player must be able to instantly and accurately recreate any phrase executed by a vocalist, and even to anticipate the musical direction of a phrase, *tan*, *gamak*, or *raga vistar*. Traditional lineages of accompanists, especially *mirasi* tabla players, had knowledge of many of the “tricks of the trade” which were sometimes not clearly explained to students (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, February 15, 2011). Therefore, it is possible that Sahabdad Khan received training both as an instrumentalist and as a vocalist, and that this training, especially in the Gwalior *gharana* vocal style became part of the
family heritage of musical knowledge, which was merged, along with traditional and innovative instrumental techniques, in Vilayat Khan's gayaki ang. Khan transcended traditional boundaries between vocal and instrumental music, opening an array of new possibilities for musicians.

**Khyal and the Early Imdad Khan Gharana**

Various streams of music merged in the nascent Imdad Khan gharana, including the techniques and repertoire of the vocalists Hassu and Haddu Khan. Hassu and Haddu Khan were the disciples and grandsons of Naththan Peer Baksh (Sharma, A. D.: 79). Hassu and Haddu Khan of the Gwalior gharana had a direct line of descent from Ghulam Rasool of Lucknow, through Sakar Khan and Ahmed Khan (Wade: 37). Hassu (d.1859) and Haddu (d.1875) Khan were considered two of the most accomplished vocalists of their age, and instructed many musicians. They were known for very specialized and difficult types of tans, for example *kadak bijlee* (lightning and thunder), *nangaa talwaar* (naked sword), and *hathee chingar tan*, which can summon elephants (Mukherji: 58). There are several stories regarding the early death of Hassu Khan from performing extremely vigorous tans:

Once, Hassu, was singing a duet with his brother Haddu Khan in the darbar, and took up the terrible *hathee chingar taan*, with frightening *gamaks*. In the middle of the long *tan* he stopped and spat blood. Naththan Peer Baksh left his seat, came over and wiped his grandson’s face with his shawl and said, *'Marna hai to beta taan poore karke maro* (die if you must but finish tan first’)! (Mukherji: 58).
According to A. D. Sharma, Hassu Khan died during his performance of the *kadak bijli taan* (81). Haddu Khan often took Hindu Brahmin disciples, because Muslim disciples were considered *namak-haram*4, meaning that they would take *talim* from an Ustad but then claim that they had learned from their own family (Mukherji: 72). This practice continues to the present day, and includes musicians who have studied with students of Inayat Khan, but claim that their *talim* came from within their family (Deepak Raja, personal interview, February 20, 2011).

The links to the Gwalior *gharana* and later the Kirana *gharana* in the early days of the Imdad Khan *gharana* continued through the noted *binkar* Bande Ali Khan’s instruction of Imdad Khan. Ustad Bande Ali Khan (1830-1895), the son of Ghulam Zafar Khan, is considered to be the founder of the instrumental and vocal tradition of the Kirana *gharana* (Sharma, A. D.: 134). Bande Ali Khan was known for his mastery of *dhrupad* styles, and also his knowledge of *khyal* that he received from Haddu Khan himself. He married Haddu Khan’s daughter, and was initiated into the Gwalior *gharana*. According to Miner, the earliest influence of *khyal*-style *tans* on the sitar can be seen in the Senia *gharana* sitarists Rahimsen and Amritsen, contemporaries of Hassu and Haddu Khan: “there is little doubt that Haddu-Hassu Khan’s most well-known innovations, varieties of fast speed *tans*, had an impact on

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3 Literally, lightning *tan*. The use of particular types of *tans* based on a re-creation or mirroring of natural phenomena is also found in Vilayat Khan in a recording of *raga Bageshree* from late 1967. Vilayat Khan describes a particular difficult *tan* as ‘*helicopter ke chalana tan*’ (the sound or movement of a helicopter).

4 Literally “forbidden salt”, meaning that you have eaten in someone’s house and not acknowledged them, which implies dishonesty.
Senia sitar music, despite the prevalent modern view that fast tan playing was instituted in the early twentieth century” (Miner: 109).

The Senia gharana soon disavowed the connection with khyal, thumri, and other light forms music, focusing instead on the rigorous adherence to a dhrupad-based instrumental form. That torch was passed to the Imdad Khan gharana. The designation of the Senia gharana musicians with the deeper and more austere traditions continued into the twentieth century.5

Imdad Khan

Imdad Khan was born in 1848 in Etawah, a small town outside of Agra, located in the North Indian state of Uttar Pradesh. While his father, Sahabdad Khan, changed the emphasis of the family tradition from vocal to instrumental music, Imdad Khan increased the musical vocabulary range of the sitar and surbahar, developing new techniques and performance paradigms which became known as the “Imdad Khani baj.” At this time, most sitar instrumental music was influenced by dhrupad, but Imdad Khan included elements of khyal and thumri in his style.

Imdad Khan was a court musician in Mysore, Hyderabad, and Indore (Parikh: 32). He was eventually invited to Calcutta by Jatindra Mohan Tagore, and following Tagore’s death in 1908, he was hired by the estate of Tara Prasad Ghosh, a wealthy

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5 Comparisons between Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan are still common (dhrupad vs. khyal). Shankar is known for his ‘rag-dari’, and traditionalism, while Vilayat Khan is known for his speed and appealing, lighter music.
landowner (Miner: 151). During his time in Calcutta, Imdad Khan gained a great deal of fame, performed for Queen Victoria in Delhi, and eventually returned to Indore at the end of his life (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, December 14, 2009). He toured the country frequently, and was a forerunner of contemporary musicians, for whom the entire country of India and indeed the world, are performance venues, as opposed to remaining in a single region, under a single patron.

Imdad Khan received rigorous talim from his father from an early age. In Indore, as per his father's instructions, Imdad Khan studied with Bande Ali Khan. Imdad Khan absorbed a variety of genres, including elements of the thumri genre in Benares that developed during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Joshi in Miner: 151), the Jaipur/Rampur baj of Rajab Ali Khan, and the Senia gharana instrumental tradition through Sajjad Muhammad Khan (Sharma, A. D.: 222-223).

Sajjad Muhammad, under the patronage of Jatindra Mohan Tagore at the same time as Imdad Khan, probably instructed him in both dhrupad and Purab ang styles (Miner: 152). Sajjad Muhammad traced his lineage from his father Ghulam Muhammad Khan of Lucknow to the acclaimed binkar (player of the bin) Umrao Khan, his father’s Ustad who hailed from the Senia lineage of Nirmal Khan, a direct descendant of Tansen’s daughter Saraswati (Sharma, A. D. 74-75; Miner: 151).

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6 As very few written sources existed, it is difficult to ascertain the exact dates for the events in Imdad Khan's life.
7 The family connection was solidified in the marriage of his granddaughters (children of his daughter Begum Bibi) to Majid and Latif Khan, disciples of Bande Ali Khan (Miner: 153; Sharma: 222).
Sajjid Khan’s influence on Imdad Khan can be seen in several ways. One of the most prominent is that of performing dhrupad-style alap on the surbahar, followed by a Purab ang fast composition. According to S. N. Chakravarty, this formed the basis of the Imdad Khan performance paradigm until the advent of Vilayat Khan. S. N. Chakravarty told me, “prior to Vilayat Khan, the sitar was used for fast-compositions, for the display of virtuosic tans in the style of the chota khyal, followed by jhala. The more serious alap and dhrupad elements were reserved for the surbahar” (S. N. Chakravarty, personal interview, February 7, 2009). Sajjad Muhammad also excelled in the use of krintans, embellishments in which the right hand hammers on notes. The unique development of this technique can be heard in Imdad Khan all the way to contemporary artists such as Ustad Shujaat Khan and Ustad Shahid Parvez. According to Sharma, Imdad Khan was also employed for a brief time in Nawab Ali Shah's Lucknow, unlikely unless he was there in his early teens. However, this belief acknowledges the influence of Purab ang on his sitar playing and the importance of thumri for his style (Sharma, A. D.: 223).

**Imdad Khan’s Legacy**

By the early twentieth century Imdad Khan’s rigorous practice and technical innovations had linked the family heritage exclusively with the surbahar and sitar. Imdad Khan forged a new direction in sitar, fusing Kirana and Gwalior vocalism and Senia gharana instrumental techniques. Imdad Khan’s legacy formed a solid base for his descendants Inayat Khan and Vilayat Khan.
Imdad Khan is credited with increasing the scope, range, and expressive qualities of mind and kirntan. He drew on the repertoire of thumri and khyal embellishments bringing murki, khatka, and zamzama to the sitar. Both Vilayat Khan and his son Shujaat Khan have contended that Imdad Khan’s purity of sur and the unerring accuracy in mind set a standard that they strive for, but have been unable to attain (Shujaat Khan, personal interview, May 21, 2007). Imdad Khan’s articulation of sur reached the center of a tone instantly, like an arrow hitting the center of a target. Imdad Khan also developed the jhala section with complicated rhythmic combinations and specific tans.

Inayat Khan (1894-1938) and his brother Wahid Khan (1896-1961) were the two sons of Imdad Khan. Like Vilayat Khan and his brother Imrat Khan, each brother specialized on sitar and surbahar, respectively. Of the two, Inayat Khan gained far greater fame, even though he died much earlier than his younger brother. Inayat Khan continued the training in multiple gharanas, receiving talim from his father, Alladiya Khan, Bande Khan and Zakiruddin Khan (Sharma, A. D: 223). Inayat Khan was a court musician in Indore, and later became a court musician in Gouripur, Bengal, under the patronage of Raja Brajendra Kishore Roy Chowdhury (ibid.: 223).

8 The choice of sitar could have been influenced by the reluctance of binkars to disseminate this knowledge except to select students. According to Manuel, the sitar was higher status than the sarangi and adopting the sitar was a strategy to raise status and increase the earning potential of mirasi musicians, and claims that Sahabdad Khan was a “mirasi sarangia” (167). But according to family genealogy, they are descended from Sujan Singh, a Rajput Brahmin. Certainly, members of this family see themselves as distinct from the relatively low-caste mirasi- there is also a long tradition of Brahmin sarangias in Rajasthan. The primarily oral tradition of Muslim gharanas makes it difficult to separate fact from creative embellishment, which is also evident in the reconstructions of those outside the gharana. Until accurate genealogical materials are discovered, there is no way to establish the veracity of claims on either side.
Inayat Khan was a popular musician in his day and toured throughout India. His historical legacy continues through his many students, many of whom became prominent sitarists in India (figure 5.2).

While his father, Ustad Sahabad Khan, moved the family tradition from vocal music to instrumental music, Imdad Khan focused his attention on the sitar, certainly influenced by the instrument’s popularity among Bengali elites. Imdad Khan incorporated the highly developed *talim* of the *dhrupad* system into a sitar idiom that helped to propel the sitar from an amateur instrument to a respected place in the hierarchy of the Hindustani music world. In the hands of Imdad Khan, the sitar became a hybrid of both *khyal* and *dhrupad* genres, and reflected his position in the social matrix of post-Mughal India.

Imdad Khan embodied the paradoxes of the new era. The elites of Bengal created a new culture that drew upon the Mughal Court’s patronage practices, a new respect for amateur music-making that was influenced by British ideology, and a rediscovery and reformation of Hinduism. At the same time, Imdad Khan’s dedication elevated sitar music out of the reach of amateur performers into the realm of high technical virtuosity. This apparent conflict between Bhatkhande’s efforts to make Hindustani music acceptable and accessible to middle-class society and the highly developed and competitive world of the Ustads, who jealously guarded their knowledge as a family inheritance, was resolved through Imdad Khan and his son Inayat Khan’s extensive instruction of non-hereditary musicians in Bengal (figure 5.2). They concurrently raised the sitar’s technical requirements so
that its mastery required intensive practice and knowledge, which could only be attained through life-long dedication and/or instruction from early childhood.

The secrets of the *khandan* became simultaneously available in a way they never been before, and still out of reach for most non-hereditary musicians. Yet, both Imdad and Inayat Khan’s legacy formed the foundation for many prominent performers and instructors. Although none of the disciples listed in figure 5.2. came from traditional *gharanidar* backgrounds, those with sufficient talent and dedication were able rise into the professional music world. Many of these disciples helped to expand the music audience through scholarship, performance, and instruction. It was only the students of Inayat Khan who began referring to the tradition as a *gharana*, indicating that they considered themselves the third generation. Dard Neuman (2004) makes the important point that a *gharana*, unlike the *khandan*, is open to outsiders who are not blood relations. Inayat Khan’s instruction helped make Bengal a center of sitar, and many important instructors, scholars and performers continue this legacy, shown below in figure 5.2.
In summary, the early history of the sitar and its proponents (Ch. 4) shows a clear line of development from *khyaal*, *dhrupad*, and *thumri* styles that created a new direction for the instrument at the hands of Imdad Khan and his followers and disciples. At the same time, the established Senia *gharana* became more conservative, emphasizing the *dhrupad*-based origins of their styles. This emphasis...
represented a different construction of Hindustani music’s narrative, and continues to this day. Social, economic and political trends that resulted in the new class of educated middle-class administrators, plus the relative newness of the sitar, gave it a status that was certainly higher than the *sarangi*. It also carried an appealing aura of modernity that was not found in the more difficult and traditional *bin*. As the nouveau riche were prompted to emulate the previous sponsorship of the courts, the availability of musicians made this social transformation possible. Imdad Khan gained his greatest fame while patronized by Jatindra Mohan Tagore in Calcutta.

Thus the sitar represented a new field of possibility for artists who wished to raise their social status and earning potential, and a cultural signifier for a new middle-class who sought to reform Indian culture from the inside out. This coincided with the birth of the recording industry, as well as newly created music festivals that made this music available to an entirely new audience. It also made *thumri* compositions available for instrumental performance without the cultural baggage associated with “decadent” courts of Lucknow and Delhi. New compositions for the sitar were in styles clearly reminiscent of the guitar, using guitar techniques and were easily mastered by amateur musicians, increasing the instrument’s appeal.

Both Imdad and Inayat Khan were able to exploit the new, popular audience for Hindustani music and were able to thrive during the upheavals of the early twentieth century. They were able to merge popular and elite culture to attract a new audience and retain the interest of knowledgeable connoisseurs. For example, the choice of lighter *ragas* and emphasis on the appealing and exciting *jhala*
portions attracted an audience who might have been bored or misunderstood the complexities and slow development of dhrupad style sitar.

The creation of music that could both excite the connoisseur and still achieve broad appeal with the masses has continued to the present, from Vilayat Khan to his son and my guru Ustad Shujaat Khan. Shujaat told me that “One thing our family understands is that music is a business. You must have the grounding in tradition, but if you don’t understand ‘music as business’ you will go nowhere” (Shujaat Khan, personal interview, November 18, 2003). Although this belies the ideal of art-for-art’s-sake, the understanding of this reality has helped the most prominent artists in this gharana to achieve high levels of artistic mastery as well as great financial success. Imdad Khan’s and Inayat Khan’s musical integrity and insight into the changing world of post-Mughal era has helped justify the formation of the gharana and maintain its distinct tradition until the present era.

A gharana requires three generations of musicians; before Imdad Khan, there was no distinctive identity for the khandani legacy. In addition to his musical accomplishments, Imdad Khan possessed the personality, charisma, authority, and gravitas necessary to compel others to follow the new musical directions associated with particular individuals, and to self-identify with this lineage. Imdad Khan, through his unique personality and self-discipline, gave a foundation to the gharana.

Imdad Khan’s Chillakashi Riyaz and Sufism

For Imdad Khan, intense practice, known as riyaz, formed the core of his musical life. He was famed for his riyaz, when, according to oral tradition, he
underwent *chilla* for twelve years during his youth. *Chilla* is a regime of exhaustive practice over a period of forty days, during which food is provided for the musician. It is believed this forty-day practice develops musical ability on a deep level, facilitating a spiritual connection with both musical ancestors and God. The practice of *chilla* developed in ascetic *Sufi* schools and was later utilized by *khandani* musicians. Imrat Khan describes the famed practice routine of Imdad Khan as follows:

His father Ustad Sahabdad Khan moved the gharana from Agra where it had been for previous generations to Etawah, a peaceful village in the outskirts of bustling Agra. From this time, the gharana has come to be known as the Etawah gharana. Ustad Sahabdad Khan moved his gharana for the sole reason of exclusively teaching his only son to become a great master of music. His dream was to train his son to keep up with a legendary Pakhawaj player who was so fast that his drums would become airborne in the middle of his performances. Etawah was a serene village and it is here that Imdad Khan received chilla from his father. Chilla is the law, under which a disciple may only sleep, wash, eat, meditate and practice his music without leaving the house. Ustad Imdad Khan lived in this state for twelve years. It is of little wonder after dedicating his life so seriously to music that Ustad Imdad Khan emerged as the greatest musician of his generation.

(www.imratkhan.com/gharana.php?page=3)

Imdad Khan’s practice was such that he named his house in Calcutta *riyaz*, and instilled the virtues of intensive practice to successive generations. More details on the practice-methods of this *gharana* will be provided in later chapters. Undertaking *chilla* for sitar during this era was somewhat unusual, as the instrument was

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9 A spiritual retreat for a period of forty days is common in the Old Testament, the Koran, and in Hindu practices, for both worldly and sacred goals. However, *chillas* appear relatively rare in the present day, at least in my fieldwork experience. Undertaking *chilla* is often discussed in the past tense, as something great musicians of the past practiced, but that is either no longer feasible or necessary in the present day. Further research into this topic is required.
generally linked with light music, and was popular among amateurs, unlike the weightier *dhrupad* *ang bin* and *surbahar* traditions. The importance of *chilla* to Imdad Khan *gharana*’s oral history can be found through their connection with *Sufism*.

The Sufi elements of the Imdad Khan *gharana* have been practiced within the family, and rarely discussed in public. This particular thread appears to have a strong connection with the musical/spiritual practices of Bande Ali Khan. Shams-ud-din Farid, a cousin of Vilayat Khan, details this practice in a 2004 interview:

> An important part of our music is the link between our spiritual beliefs and pursuit of music. We belong to the Qadri sect of Sufism, which regards music as a path to the realization of God. The fountainhead of our gharana, Ustad Bande Ali Khan is reported to offered penance at the shrine of the Sufi saint, Khwaja Garib Nawaz of Ajmer, and obtained a boon that he and his heirs would have the power to make people laugh or cry at will. It is that boon that inspires our music (italics in original; Raja: 2004 liner notes IAM).

Imdad Khan’s *chillakashi riyaz*\(^1\), while difficult to verify outside oral traditions, has substantial significance for the establishment or *emplacement* of the *gharana*, alternatively designated by his name or birthplace, Etawah. The practice of *chilla* can be undertaken for the manifestation of worldly desires, the attainment of otherworldly musical abilities, and for attainment of spiritual stations (*maqamat*).

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\(^1\) With the growing popularity of Sufi music, many contemporary descendants of Imdad Khan, including Shujaat Khan, Hidayat Khan, and Zila Khan are now recording and performing Sufi-related vocal and instrumental music. However, this is influenced by social and market forces (Chapter 3).

\(^1\) *Chillakashi riyaz* means unique, significant, and special *chilla riyaz*, and designates Imdad Khan’s twelve-year practice period.
in Sufism. In the Sufi tradition, the aspirant must overcome a series of escalating trials and temptations along the journey to higher and higher celestial realms, described in detail by ‘Ibn Arabi in his work *Journey to the Lord of Power* (c 1200s). The period of twelve years is numerologically significant, associated with the Twelve Imams, multiple scriptural references, and periods of retreat undertaken by many Sufi saints including Rumi. The period of twelve years within a *chilla* practice is symbolically linked to the *mir’aj*, an account of the prophet Mohammad's night journey to heaven (Badock: 23-27).

Discourse on Imdad Khan's *chillakashi riyaz* is the living center of the gharana's etiological narratives, which warrants a brief investigation of its numerological and affective/symbolic elements. First, we must briefly outline several possible functions to the narrative. The narrative contains Islamic, “mythological,” and socio-historical components. The strong religious undercurrents of young Imdad’s musical practice are culturally Islamic; presenting a “mythological” origin of the future gharana as a mystical manifestation of a (potential) future actualized through intense trials and tribulations. Mythological origins are common to many gharanas and the Vedic cosmogony of music. Since the *chilla* is often

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12 The number and qualities of Sufi stations differ greatly between Sufi schools. These are designated as psychophysical states located in the breast (*sadr*), the heart (*qalb*), the inner hear (*fa’ud*), and the intellect (*lubb*) (Freil: 1). The stations are also emotional/actional, ranging from detachment from the world (*zuhd*), patience (*sabr*), and gratitude (*shukr*). The higher stations are different esoteric dimensions of reality that become manifest for the aspirant, “In the station of *fana*, there is complete lack of consciousness of object or ego...In the station of *baqa* the mind reawakens to the phenomenal world, but now these forms and images are objective forms in which the Divine Essence manifests itself” (Bakhtiar: 90). The Arabic word for station, *maqam* also means musical scale. A detailed study of the Sufic dimensions of Hindustani music is outside the range of the study; however, these concepts are certainly relevant.
undertaken to seek divine blessings, attaching a superhuman aura to Imdad’s
technique defines and legitimatized the formation of the *gharana*.

**Gharana: Place, Network, and Value**

For instrumental traditions, associated historically with a lower status
(Neuman 1978), to belong to a *gharana* was also a subtle mode of raising one’s
status, as *gharanas* were traditionally the exclusive domain of higher-status *khyal*
and *dhrupad* vocalists. Thus, to belong to the Imdad Khan *gharana* affirmed both the
instrumental tradition and oneself as a musician. A *gharana* is also a narrative, and a
dialogue with the past in which one places oneself. At the same time, a *gharana* is a
complex social network (Neuman 1990), a hierarchical system of knowledge and
access, with distinct protocols and implicit/explicit rules. Neuman’s definition of
*gharana* is still the most succinct and accurate:

> Although *gharanas* connote many things to many people, the concept may be
said to include, minimally, a lineage of hereditary musicians, their disciples,
and the particular musical style they represent. One has constantly to keep in
mind that *gharanas* are essentially abstract categories. The closest analogues
I can think of in the West are loosely structured European intellectual circles
[...] They differ from *gharanas* in that their structural cores are non-familial
[...] whereas the structural core of a *gharana* is a lineage of hereditary
musicians. What binds all such groups is style – formulated, shared, and
represented by the membership. (Neuman 1980: 150)

The Hindi word *ghar* is the root of *gharana*, which is derived from the
Sanskrit root *ghri*. *Ghar* is a home, a domicile, but it is also a place, a center from
which to engage the world. In India, a family home is often kept for generations, and
is both a physical and mental reflection of a deeper psychic grounding in a physical
location inscribed with meaning. In the *Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary*, under the word *ghar*, over one hundred definitions and compound words using *ghar* are listed. *Ghar* is not only a material structure, but is a center of meaningful action, a point of commencing and completion of action, in short a *place*. For instrumental traditions, with the exception of the established Senia *gharana*, to be a member of a newly formed *gharana* was to locate oneself in an embodied, yet non-localized lineage that created a place without a place. Many tabla lineages did not ascribe themselves to a particular *gharana* until the 1970s (Neuman 1978). The trauma and cultural dislocation that followed in the wake of the 1857 mutiny required the construction of place.

The word *khandan* comes from the Persian root of *khana* which means a house, a hive, anything belonging to house, an inn, a shop, an exchange, a station (Steingass: 443), while the definitions of *khandan* consist of “a family; house; household; the court, king’s household; of noble blood; the master of a family” (ibid.: 443). *Khandan* or *khandani* (from a hereditary family) contains within it the supposition of nobility, a place of agency or action (economy), and that of station, a Sufi term referring to a level of spiritual progress that transforms the existential state of the aspirant, not merely experiential but inscribed in one’s being.

The term *gharana*, first applied to *khyal gharanas*, was necessitated by the dispersal of musicians throughout India following the purges of Aurangzeb (1658-1707) in order to maintain a distinct musical identity (Gautam: 93). Unlike *khandan*, *gharana* is linked with dislocation, a means to define oneself as belonging to a particular vocal style in the midst of geographic and social rupture and redefinition.
To link oneself to a gharana was a mode of self-definition in both virtual and actual space and place.

The topological model offered by J. E. Malpas emphasizes the importance of both space and place as the basic ground in which human agency and understanding are possible. This topological model looks at individual and collective experience holistically, examining the multiple planes of culture, memory, space, and time as interacting and mutually dependent nodes in a broader continuum. Subjectivity is grounded in both “an articulation of a system of mental states” (Malpas: 34) and a direct connection with action. Individual and collective narratives are necessary for both individuals and social networks to project actions and goals from the past and present into the future and, “it is in relation to the ‘locality’ established in action that the unity and integration of mental states is established and maintained” (Malpas: 98). Establishing oneself as belonging to a gharana is a mode of defining self and agency, “The idea of subjectivity is itself tied to the notion of located, embodied agency and so any subject, whether oneself or another, must be grasped as spatially located and embodied” (139).

A gharana creates emplacement in space, time and practice. It is a historical narrative, linking musicians from past ancestors to future descendants. Returning to the narrative of Imdad Khan’s chillakashi riyaz, the linking of lineage to both person and place (Imdad Khan and Etawah) creates a site of agency and meaning. Etawah has little significance musically, as it was a small village, with no major musical activity or patronage. However, it is inscribed with symbolic meaning through the embodied action of Imdad Khan (riyaz) and through the symbolic referents of the
place itself. Etawah was an important site of rebel resistance during the 1857 mutiny, where Firoz Shah overcame the British forces in 1858 (Spear: 671). Etawah is home to several important Sufi shrines, including the shrine of Sayeed Baba which is directly adjacent to the Hindu Kalka Devi temple, unique in India as Hindu and Muslim devotees worship at both locations, and is considered to be a model for communal harmony.\textsuperscript{13} The Devi shrine has twelve sides (www.kalkadevi.com). A number of important Sufi saints were born there, including Hassan Sahib Warisi who fasted in Etawah for twelve years in the 1890s (Hayat-e-Warsi: 81); Etawah hosts an important Islamic festival that celebrates the birth of the twelfth Imam. Without over-emphasizing the cultural significance of Etawah, it is clear that the choice of the location for Imdad Khan’s musical grooming was not predicated on economic or musical factors. As a site of religious significance and resistance to the Raj, Etawah defies the reconstructions of Hindustani music, and articulates strong connections to the syncretic past. The location also affirms the Shia heritage of the family.

To use Foucault’s terms, the Imdad Khan gharana functions as both archive and repertoire. It functions as an archive in that it contains, through its living members, an oral history of compositions and stories; it is a repertoire manifest in the act of performance, which inscribes the past onto the present, through the tradition of riyaz and the continued evolution of Imdad Khani baj in modern

\textsuperscript{13} A recent newscast on this phenomena can be seen here: http://videosfromindia.smashits.com/view/15814/goddess-temple-and-muslim-saints-mausoleum-adjacent-to-each-other&page=1&viewtype=&category=mr
performers. Imrat Khan describes the trans-temporal aspects of this tradition while describing a specific performance of raag Miya Ki Todi:

> Our music is not the music of the present. Our music is past, present, and future. Although I am playing Miya Ki Todi, it is past, because it is being handed down to us from past generations, present because I am playing with my own intonation of that rag and keeping what has been taught me in the past in my mind. And I’m trying to give something to the future also – that which I worked hard on, my technical additions, my technical views, my interpretation. So I am handing it over to the next generation. So the music is actually not me, or listen to me. It’s not me. It’s what had been before, and what will be. Where I will want the music to go that day. (Rahn and Khan: 139)

Imrat Khan articulates how the gharana is both location and becoming, a linkage of the past, present, and future unfolding of new creative possibilities. Thus, the gharana is emplaced through narrative, discourse, and performance, as place and action, and as symbol and memory. It offers a site of resistance to cultural dislocation and bridges the ruptures of Indian’s past with the modern world.

We will now shift from a general discussion of gharana to examining more concrete ways in which its musical legacy has transformed through the medium of recordings, a site of memory that physically embodies the creativity of the gharana.

**The Imdad Khani Baj (1918-1950)**

The advent of audio recordings in India revolutionized the world of Hindustani music. Suddenly, one could hear musicians who were formerly inaccessible due to geographical distance or social barriers; artists were able to study the music of the past. No longer did this music exist solely through the
memories of listeners, traditional repertoire, and anecdotes. Using the available oeuvre of Imdad Khan, Inayat Khan, Mushtaq Ali Khan, and pre-gayaki ang Vilayat Khan, I will examine the evolution of instrumental music into the post-dhrupad era by transcribing their recordings, highlighting important musical elements through a comparative analysis.

The choice of sitar performance style (ang) reflected family heritage, historical interpretation, and socially predicated valuations of music. The challenging vision of instrumental music as inclusive of khyal and thumri faced opposition from the highly developed and more prestigious dhrupad instrumental traditions. Unlike khyal and thumri, dhrupad had been developed for many centuries as an instrumental art form; khyal and thumri were strictly vocal forms, requiring the formulation of new techniques and translation of the superior expressive range of voice into a new medium. The following analysis utilizes recordings to demonstrate how the musical choices made by these four artists are conscious alignments of musical style with personal and gharana identities.

**Imdad Khan’s Recordings**

The traditional court culture (seventeenth to mid-nineteenth centuries) had provided patronage for Imdad Khan’s predecessors, but as he came of age that world was in decline. However, by exploiting brand-new recording technology, Imdad Khan was able to gain wide popularity throughout India. His technical mastery of the sitar, as much as can be heard on his 78 rpm recordings, still stands
the test of time. The influence of his right-hand work is audible in the playing of contemporary sitarists, especially in the clarity and speed of his diri strokes.

Around 1918, Imdad Khan made records for the kings of Mysore that are considered the first of the sitar (www.shiyadparvez.com). These recordings give a sense of Imdad Khan's style, although the 78 rpm format limits the exposition drastically. This factor may have modified the nature of raga presentation, as there are no vilambit compositions, and alap is limited, with the exception of his surbahar recordings. His surbahar alap style followed dhrupad structure, but also included khyal elements (S. N. Chakravarty, personal interview, December 14, 2010). The ragas included on these recordings are Kafi, Yemen, Sohini, Khamaj, Jaunpuri Todi, Jaunpuri, Darbari Kanada, Bihag, and Bhairav. The performances feature the virtuosic right hand technique, and frequent use of the diri bol. The use of extended minds and complex khyal embellishments is apparent only on the surbahar recordings. The lack of extended minds on the sitar is not due to lack of competence, but because of the distinction at that time between surbahar and sitar. The surbahar performed the alap portions of the performance, and the sitar was reserved for faster compositions. Another factor is sitar construction, as many older sitars, even those dating from the 1960s, do not allow longer minds.

Imdad Khan’s early twentieth century recordings, the first in history, enable an analysis of the evolutionary progress from Imdad Khan to his son Inayat Khan,

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14 Manuel (1978) states that these recordings show the persistence of the diriri tans, which “have largely been replaced by gayaki idiosyncrasies” (169). However, these tans are still commonly performed in jhala sections within this style, and I have learned many tans of this style from Shujaat Khan.
and culminating in his grandson Vilayat Khan. The sitar recordings feature only *drut* compositions and *jhala*; there are no extant recordings of *vilambit gats*. The recordings all have a clearly formulaic structuring of development and *tans*, regardless of the *raga*. A likely explanation for this is the brevity of the recording format, which demanded extreme concision. Demonstrating the *raga* in three minutes most likely required prior planning.

Imdad Khan’s *rezakhani gats* are in the Purab *ang*, influenced by the *thumri*-derived style of Reza Khan, distinct from the *dhrupad*-influenced *gats* of Pyar Khan and Basat Khan (Miner: 217-218). In order to clarify exactly the distinctions between the *Imdad Khani baj* and other *rezakhani gats*, it is helpful to compare notated versions from this era with Imdad Khan’s recordings. The evolution from Imdad Khan to Inayat Khan shows their process of forging a unique *gharana* style, demonstrated through the continuity of their innovations in contemporary sitarists in this *gharana*.¹⁵ Imdad Khan’s recordings show the inclusion of *krintans* and *mind* into the compositions, but certainly not to the extent that would typify the *gayaki ang*. To demonstrate salient features in Imdad Khan’s *baj*, I describe below a *drut gat* in *raag* Kafi (HMV CMC 882507), a solo performance in *raag* Yemen, a light piece in *raag* Khamaj, and conclude with two *surbahar* recordings of Jaunpuri Todi (HMV CMC 882507) and Jaunpuri (HMV CMC 882507).

¹⁵ The modern fragmentation of distinct *gharana* styles and the increasingly common practice of learning from recordings, and then claiming direct *talim* will be discussed in later chapters. The absence of the “traditional” or older elements is a common feature in non-*gharana* musicians, and is generally not noticed or taken into account by the general public.
Khan’s recording of Kafi demonstrates the basic template found in all his drut rezakhani performances. The inflections of the diri strokes are often slightly delayed, giving the compositions a syncopated feeling. The tans primarily consist of diri bols and simpler elaborations of three and four note melodic phrases. The composition is played twice, followed by the antra.

In raag Kafi, the first tan pattern is reminiscent of a nagma: a simple, repeated melodic pattern performed during the jhala section: P-M P-M, G-M G-M, G-R G-R. This pattern is repeated starting from the upper-Sa, a variety of tan patterns found in todas. The next tan pattern is based on the diri bol, in an ascending/descending melodic movement known as aroh-avroh tans. Then, the composition is repeated. Beginning at 1:15 jhala patterns commence, interspersed with fast diri strokes on a single note. The jhala briefly outlines the alap, concluding with a half-time tan leading into last line of the composition. Some khyal elements are heard in the jhala section, but in general, the performance is in line with contemporary sitar work, as heard in the recordings of Kaukab Khan, Waliullah Khan, Shafiquallah Khan, and others (Miner: 230). However, Imdad Khan employs longer tans from the beginning, and does not replace four to eight bar phrases in the composition with todas in the initial exposition as was common at the time; this deviation from convention shows that Imdad Khan was moving away from established protocols.  

16 Evidence for the use of todas during this period is found in sitar manuals from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and confirmed by oral histories of sitarists from this era (Miner:93, 103,106,108).
Imdad Khan's *raag* Yemen is not accompanied by *tabla*; he elaborates the *raga* in a jor-like presentation. Vilayat Khan also recorded this composition in 1967, but dispensed with some of the *diri bols*, perhaps to reflect vocal music.\(^{17}\) The composition is played twice, followed by *gamak*-inflected *diri bols* on single notes. Following this are several complex combinations of *diri* strokes and *jhala* patterns, followed by *laykari* (temporal variations) patterns on repeated melodic sequences. These patterns showcase Imdad Khan's innovations, and demonstrate the influence of *tabla* compositions and *bols* in his *jhala*. Fast ascending *tans* employing the *diri bols* punctuate restatements of the composition.\(^{18}\)

The recording of *raag* Khamaj (HMV CMC 882507) displays more *khyal* and *thumri* elements than the previously mentioned recordings. Khamaj is a central *raag* in the *thumri* genre, and is generally considered a ‘light *raga*’. The composition is rhythmically complicated, with two *sams* and an unorthodox *antra*. The first series of *tans* follow traditional *diri* patterns, including accented single notes, and ascending/descending phrases. However, at 1:25 into the performance, Imdad Khan deploys single-note *mind*-based *tans*, followed by extended *sapat* *tans*, and *tans* employing *gamaks*. This moment shows a clear break from the earlier performance styles, further demonstrated by the inclusion of *mind*-based and *khyal*-influenced

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\(^{17}\) SN Chakravarty told me (personal interview, November 17, 2008) that the reason for this was that Vilayat Khan was preserving this traditional composition from the “masses.” Whether or not this is accurate depends on the motivation of Vilayat Khan, as well as the availability of the recording. However, it was common for Ustads to not play entire compositions on recordings, and to obscure or entirely leave out *antaras*. Chakravarty told me that “if you know the *antra* then it proves you have received proper *talim*. This statement is interesting in the light of Shujaat Khan’s statement to me, that “I generally don’t teach *antaras*.” I was encouraged to create my own *antaras*.

\(^{18}\) Some of these exact *tans* can be heard on Vilayat Khan’s Yemen recording.
passages is also heard on the recording of Sohini, in which the antra contains several tar saptak mind phrases.

Imdad Khan’s surbahar repertoire is featured on his recordings of alap and jor in Jaunpuri Todi and Jaunpuri. These recordings are firmly in the dhrupad ang, demonstrated by straight ascending and descending lines, with little or no khyal elements. There is a strong stamp of the Senia gharana in his surbahar techniques, structure, and aesthetic choices, as shown by the compositions, tans, and right-hand work.

Analyses of these recordings reveal that the khyal and thumri elements, which would later characterize the gayaki ang, are fleetingly visible in Imdad Khan’s recordings. Imdad’s jhala and diri tans are still heard today, rooted in the Purab ang. Imdad Khan’s alap is only dhrupad based. Yet, the brief flirtations with khyal and thumri elements set the stage for the unique path taken by this gharana. Imdad Khan is a transitional figure, bridging the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

**Recordings of Inayat Khan (1894-1938)**

Inayat Khan’s recorded oeuvre, completed less than a decade after his father’s, feature both sitar and surbahar, and contain no vilambit gats. Inayat Khan moved further away from dhrupad and Purab ang gats in his compositions and tans, continuing the evolution into a khyal-based style. His compositions also serve a pedagogical purpose, still used today to teach right hand techniques and improvisational patterns. The gradual transition from the instrumental dhrupad ang to khyal is evident in both his sitar and surbahar recordings.
Inayat Khan’s Bageshree (HMV CMC 882507) recording show clear differences from his father’s surbahar alap: his extended mind passages are embellished with *murkis* (inflections above and below central pitches), while Imdad Khan's are unadorned. Inayat occasionally uses *khyal* derived embellishments, such as S R G, S R G, R G S R G. Overall, there is greater musical density, and an exploration of the expressive potentialities of *khyal* embellishments. However, the *dhrupad ang* is still prominent.

Inayat Khan's 1920 recording of Bhairavi (HMV CMC 882507) contains the first recorded example of *thumri* and *khyal*-influenced alap on sitar, a clear stylistic evolution from Imdad Khan. The sonic referents of *khyal* include the use of *murkis* (slight scoops/inflections) in a three-note range, recreating vocal phrases on the sitar (for example: P DN. / P DN. / P DN. /). The revolutionary nature of this alap is evident through comparison with his contemporaries. This reflects the aesthetic distinction between *dhrupad* and *khyal*, which Shujaat Khan describes as: “In *khyal* style, our style of playing, the notes are constantly moving. Notes that are played straight, in a *dhrupad* style, are only used occasionally, for effect. The *khyal* style, all the notes have subtle embellishments” (Shujaat Khan, personal interview, February 14, 2008).

The remainder of this recording is a *drut gat* and *jhala* in the *rezakhani* template, based on right hand *bol* patterns: da diri da ra da ra –da, da diri diri diri da-ra-da ra da. The *tans* stay within the *tantrakar ang* (instrumental genre), including short melodic patterns (*nagma*) punctuated by *diri tans*, and punctuated by frequent restatements of the composition. The only reference to *khyal* occurs
with a single *sapat* tan: NS’R’G’M’ P’ M’ GRS’ NDPMGRS., which stands out dramatically, like a flash of lightening. This recording shows a definite evolution of sitar in Inayat’s conscious move towards *thumri/khyal* in *alap*, while still grounded in the *tantrakar ang*.

Inayat Khan’s Bihari (HMV CMC 882507) breaks new ground with the inclusion of demanding *khyal* tans. These *tans prakars* (varieties), *aroh- avroh, sapat, chut,* and *mind-based tans* were unknown in instrumental music at the time. The distinguishing features of the *tans* include the use of single strokes per note (opposed to the double or quadruple strokes per note with *diri tans*), and extended phrases using at least two octaves. This *aroh- avroh* (ascent/descent) *tan* demonstrates both of these features: N R’ G’ M’ P’ M’ G’ R’ S’ N D P M G R S. Even more striking is a combination of two of the *tan prakars mind* and *chut* (jumping): N. R G M P M G R S N. S/ G M P D N S. N D P M G R S/. These *tans* employ three-note *minds* and are still used in the *gharana* today. They start from G extending up to P, D to the upper octave S, and *tar saptak* (upper octave) G to P. Another hybrid *tan* combines a *chut tan* with a *teehai*: N R’ G’ M’ P’ M’ G’ R’/ N R G M P G R S/ G M D N S’ S’/ G M D N S’ S’ S’, G M D N S’ S’ S’. Inayat’s Bihari provides clear evidence that a move towards a post-*dhrupad* sitar style was already underway in the early years of the twentieth century. These *tan prakars* were radically new at the time and pushed the technical limits of the sitar; the fact that they are still used today demonstrates the importance of these early recordings.

Imdad and Inayat Khan’s music can be seen as a liminal phase between *tantrakar* and *dhrupad* on the one hand, and *khyal* and *thumri* on the other. Still,
*dhrupad* instrumental styles and *rezakhani gats* (based on *bandish ki thumri*) dominate the majority of their recorded oeuvre. The distinguishing feature between Imdad and Inayat Khan is the latter’s move away from the *dhrupad* aesthetic in *alap.* I believe that Inayat’s aesthetic decision was as much stylistic as political, as the *dhrupad ang* dominated sitar music at that time. More importantly, these recordings show that a fusion of Kirana *gharana khyal, dhrupad, thumri,* tabla-derived rhythmic complexity, and the Lucknow *baj* were being combined into a distinctly recognizable sound. The limitations of the *tantrakar ang* were not shattered; rather the threshold that would eventually be crossed by Vilayat Khan was outlined. However, Inayat’s early death put this nascent *gharana’s* future in doubt, as the Senia *gharana* reclaimed the dominant position.

As we have shown here, both Imdad and Inayat Khan were masters of *tantrakar* and *dhrupad*-based instrumental genres; their innovations, while strikingly new for the time, still moved within the orbit of tradition. For the sitar to be taken seriously as an instrument demanded either an adherence to traditional guidelines or the demonstration of an extremely high level of musical ability. These new directions in sitar were easily silenced after the death of Inayat Khan. The nationalist fervor in the 1920s and 1930s favored tradition over innovation; this period is crucial to understand the revolution in instrumental music from the 1950s that swept India (and later the world).

We will now examine Mushtaq Ali Khan, a master of the established and prestigious *dhrupad ang,* in order to situate Imdad and Inayat Khan in the wider
music culture of the time. This discussion will serve the secondary purpose of explicating the important features of dhrupad instrumental music.

Mushtaq Ali Khan and the Dhrupad Ang

Mushtaq Ali Khan (1911-1989) was the most prominent sitarist and surbahar performer in India after the death of Inayat Khan in 1932 (Farrell 2002). He was the foremost exponent of the Senia gharana during his lifetime, and maintained this venerable instrumental tradition until late into the twentieth century. His vision of music was fundamentally conservative, reaching back to the origins of Hindustani music through a line of descent from the legendary musician Tansen (1600s), through Masit Khan (chapter 4) and into the twentieth century. It should be noted that many other artists claim connection to this lineage, assertions sometimes not supported by historical fact. Mushtaq Ali Khan’s pedigree and musicianship are undeniable. Mushtaq Ali Khan was a purist throughout his life, strictly maintaining traditional performance practices. In a world dominated by the search for innovation, Khan prided himself on the replication of tradition, maintaining this rigorous discipline throughout his lifetime, which led to a decline of his popularity in the changing musical and social environment of the 1950s. According to Buddhadev Das Gupta, “the Ustad was a firm believer in tradition and up to his last performance, never departed an inch from his principles, stubbornly refusing to compromise his ideals for the sake of easy popularity” (http://www.ragascape.com/sources.html, September 2, 2011).
Mushtaq Ali Khan was thoroughly trained in all aspects of the Senia gharana by his father Ashiq Ali Khan. His training included sitar, surbahar, dhrupad vocal repertories, and pakhawaj (a two sided membranophone utilized exclusively for dhrupad music). Ashiq Ali Khan put him on a fourteen-hour daily practice regime; his father’s comprehensive talim made him a living repository of Senia vocal and instrumental traditions, including numerous rare compositions directly from his forefather Masit Khan. He adhered to the traditional performance model, reserving alap for the surbahar, and sitar for drut gat and jhala.

Mushtaq Ali Khan’s music will be analyzed in the following sections, beginning with underlying forms of the Senia gharana: alap, masitkhani gat, and the rezakhani gat, followed by the exegesis of a complete performance.

**Dhrupad alap Foundations**

Mushtaq Ali Khan adhered to a complex and rigid alap structure derived from the vanis (structural categories) of dhrupad bin alap (see figure 5.3), as was claimed by Mushtaq’s students and admirers, including Debu Chaudhury (2009) and Sen (1994). Due to the lack of recorded evidence, I cannot make a definitive

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19 Mushtaq Ali Khan’s only commercial recording was his 1934 performance of raags Ananda and Bhairavi.
statement either way. Traditional Senia bin alap is divided into two separate categories, elaboration and articulation, each with four divisions (Sen: 47), which are shown below in Fig. 5.2. The four modes of elaboration can be utilized in sequence or separately: (1) **aochar alap**: short exposition of the raga consisting of small clusters of notes; (2) **bandhan alap**: long and elaborate phrases in a tan style; (3) **kaid alap**: step-by-step, gradual elaboration; (4) **vistar alap**: free and broad ranging elaboration of the raga's entire scope. The four modes of articulation can be utilized with the above mode of elaboration: (1) **dagur vani**: unadorned and emphasis on simplicity (2) **govarhar vani**: fast style built on groups of two notes inflected; (3) **nauhar vani** leaping from note to note; (4) **khandhara vani** features heavy gamaks. (Sen: 7-9)

![Diagram of Dhrupad alap vanis](image)

**Figure 5.3 Dhrupad alap vanis**

These modes of elaboration and articulation are interchangeable, but must follow a strict developmental sequence derived from the alap's duration and tempo.

These formal characteristics must be strictly adhered to in *dhrupad bin* performance and the traditional Senia style of *surbahar*; Mushtaq Ali Khan was the last living exponent of a “pure” Senia style.

*Masitkhani and Rezakhani Gats*

Outlining the basic features of *masitkhani* and *rezakhani gats* will provide a clear picture of the Senia *gharana* sitar performance practices. Mushtaq Ali Khan adhered to strictly traditional renditions of the *masitkhani gat*. As an artist who traced his linage directly to Masit Khan, this reflected his training and personal pride in his heritage. However, he generally favored *rezakhani gats*, reserving *masitkhani* renditions for selected recitals.

The articulation and elaboration of a *masitkhani gat* is grounded on right-hand patterns (*bols*), and a simplified version of *dhrupad bin* elaborative frameworks. The basic *bol* pattern (right hand strokes) for the *masitkhani gat* is shown below (figure 5.4). Open and closed brackets indicate the beginning and end of the composition, and numbers indicate the positioning of the *bols* in the sixteen-beat rhythmic cycle *teen tal*. 

196
The *dhrupad* schema of four movements, consisting of *sthayi*, *antara*, *sanchari* and *abhog*, are central to the structure of Senia *masitkhani gats* (Sen: 33). After the four sections of composition are performed, the *sthayi* is elaborated in two subsequent movements, *gat-vistara* and *gat-upaj*. In the late nineteenth century, short tans were introduced into the concluding section of a *masitkhani* performance, designated as *fiqra-bandī* and *kulfis*. A correct performance of a traditional Senia *masitkhani gat* requires strict adherence to the *dhrupad*-based structure of the composition and its elaborations, as well as the underlying *bol* framework (Fig 5.4).

The three distinguishing characteristics of the traditional *masitkhani gat* are: (1) careful reproduction of the composition, including all movements, with a minimum of embellishment; (2) subtle variations of the main *gat* theme; and (3) brief, generally pre-composed figures, based on set *bol* patterns. While the structural elements are derived from *dhrupad*, the scope and complexity found in *dhrupad bin* performances are notably absent. Thus, a *masitkhani gat* is analogous to a miniature *dhrupad* rendition. The accurate reproduction of pre-composed material is the vehicle for the expression of raga; improvisation is limited in scope and duration. The composition is a distillation of the essential features of the raga, and requires that the artist maintain the *gat’s bol* patterns and note-sequences, with
little latitude for individual creativity. The exactitude of rendition and proper articulation of the gat’s subtle nuances demonstrates the performer’s artistry and pedigree. *Masitkhani* gats are like prized treasures, and knowledge of complete compositions is often kept from students. The following quotation gives Mushtaq’s position on the *masitkhani* gat:

If it [Masitkhani gat] continues to be in vogue, it may suffer distortion and diversion owing to the tremendous urge of the common people for novelty and quickly charming things which gives short lived pleasure and may be conceived easily without making any hard attempt to go to the depth. (Mustaq Ali Khan, quoted by Debu Chaudhuri 1993: 26)

Although Mushtaq Ali Khan had an extensive repertoire of *masitkhani* compositions, he generally preferred *rezakhani* gats in performance, even occasionally modifying *masitkhani* gats in order to perform them in the *drut tempo*. Within the framework of *drut* (fast) or *madhya lay* (medium tempo) *teen tal*, a *rezakhani* gat must follow a pre-composed bol pattern. The most common variations are derived from the *rezakhani* bol pattern. The first pattern, shown below in Fig. 5.5, is most commonly heard, and begins from the ninth beat, indicated by the numbers below all of the examples (each box contains four beats). Variations 1, 2, and 4 start from *sam*, the first beat, and the third variation begins from the seventh beat. The placement of the bols within the tala, and the pattern of accents give each variation a different rhythmic feeling, achieved through the tension and release

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20 There are several other bol patterns, but these are some of the most common.
movements of the composition in juxtaposition with the *tala*. All of the variations end with a da stroke on the first beat (*sam*).

*Basic pattern*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Da ra diri diri</th>
<th>Da- r da- ra da</th>
<th>Da diri da - ra</th>
<th>Da da ra -</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Variation 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Da diri diri diri</th>
<th>Da - rada - ra da</th>
<th>[Da rda da da]</th>
<th>rDa da da ra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Variation 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Da diri da ra</th>
<th>Da da ra --</th>
<th>[Da diri da ra]</th>
<th>- rda da ra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Variation 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Da - rada - ra diri</th>
<th>Da diri da ra</th>
<th>Da -- da ra</th>
<th>-- --</th>
<th>[diri diri]</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Variation 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Da diri da ra</th>
<th>- r Da da ra</th>
<th>[Da - r da ra]</th>
<th>Da ra da ra</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

9 13 1 5

**Figure 5.5 Common rezakhani bol patterns**

As with *masitkhani gats*, the *bols* are a central component of a correct rezakhani rendition. However, while the *bols* serve a structural function in the *masitkhani gat*, rezakhani *gat bols* demand clarity and rhythmic nuance for the musical and emotional impact of the composition. Particular sets of *bols* serve as a vehicle for improvisation. From the binary template of the da-ra strokes, several variations in note grouping, different tones, and accents are achieved by varying the
angle of the right hand and employing differing muscle groups. For example, the
stroke rda is differentiated from ra da because the ra stroke is forcefully articulated
and immediately followed by a da stroke with a softer accent. The ra stroke is
rhythmically placed in between a quarter and sixteenth note subdivision.

Commonly designated under the moniker “stroke-craft,” the articulation of
various bol patterns with correct timbral quality and rhythmic articulation requires
both diligent practice and proper talim. While stroke-craft is a dying art among the
upcoming generation of sitar players, it still remains a fundamental and essential
component in traditional sitar talim. This aspect of the Senia tradition is evident in
the playing of Imdad, Inayat, and Vilayat Khan.

We will now turn to a recording in order to understand the features of the
Senia gharana in performance. Even among artists of widely divergent and
competing traditions, Mushtaq Ali’s adherence to rigid standards is held up as an
exemplar and sometimes as a means to critique contemporary styles (Miner: 1997;
Sen: 1996; Chaudhuri: 1993: Farrell: 2002). Finally, although his recorded output is
limited in comparison to other musicians, all of the available recordings attest to his
unwavering commitment to the Senia tradition.

Mushtaq Ali Khan’s Recordings

Mushtaq Ali’s sitar style will be analyzed in a private recording of raag
Multani (ca.1948). Multani is an afternoon raag (figure 5.6), and is classified in the

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21 The recording, from a private collection, is dated circa 1947-49. The exact date was not
known by the collector.
*Todi that* (figure 5.6); its proximity to *raag* Todi necessitates a careful exposition of the *chalan* (primary movements of the *raga*) in order to maintain the *raag* correctly. Multani requires that tonic (S) is taken with a grace note linking it to the flat 2nd (R), the flat 3rd (G) is always inflected by the sharp 4th (M+), and that symmetry is maintained between the microtonal inflections of R and M+. The bar lines in Fig. 5.6 and 5.7 indicate the tetrachordal division of the *that* and *raga*’s basic notes.

![Figure 5.6 Todi That](image)

![Figure 5.7 Multani avroh](image)

In this recording, *alap* is performed in an austere *dhrupad* style on the *surbahar*, excluding any trace of *khyal*. *Minds* are used sparingly in the range of a minor third. The majority of passages are played on the *parda* (frets), as shown in figure 5.8 (*mind* is indicated by grace notes). In Fig. 5.8, the bar lines designate separate phrases, showing the terse melodic statements which predominate the recording and delineate the *raag*’s basic melodic contour (*chalan*).

![Figure 5.8 Multani phrase 3](image)

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22 Multani requires that tonic (S) is taken with a grace note linking it to the flat 2nd (R), and that the flat 3rd is linked with the sharp 4th degree, which changes the microtonal inflections of both the 2nd and 4th.

23 I employ staff notation for the notes of a *raaga* for the purpose of clarity.
In this *alap*, Mushtaq's adherence to *dhrupad ang* is reflected in articulation, style, and structure. The articulation of *mind* emphasizes sustained glissandos between stable pitches, without the constant pitch movements found in *khyal*. These *minds* require a careful modulation between *shrutis*, achieved by varying the velocity of the bend to accent particular microtones and obscure *vivadi swaras* (enemy notes) (Shujaat Khan, personal interview, November 4, 2003). Stylistically, the linear narrative of the *raga* unfolds through the stacking of multiple terse phrases of no more than two or three notes. The structure of the performance strictly maintains the rules of the *raga* (*rag-dari*), which allows for little individual interpretation.

The *jor* follows: a string of *alap* phrases over a steady four-beat rhythm, using *chikari* strings to mark temporal divisions. At 2:45 into the recording, a *jhala* section commences, similar to the *jhala* performed with the tabla. The first string is always played on the beat, following the patterns of da–ra-ra-ra and da-ra ra/ da-ra-ra/ da ra, and the ra stroke is always sounded on the *chikari* strings. At the conclusion of the *jor*, Mushtaq continues in the *dhrupad* model by performing *tans* with increasing density of notes and right-hand strokes, commencing with 8th notes and culminating in a flurry of 32nd and occasional 64th notes. In this recording, Mushtaq Ali Khan follows an abbreviated version of a full *alap* and *jor*, but still maintains the necessary order and components in his exposition.

Mushtaq follows with a rendition of a *rezakhani gat*. Figure 5.9 is a transcription of *rezakhani gat* on this recording, with the notes written in the upper
set of boxes, and the *tala* below. The parentheses around the notes indicate that they appear to be optional, at least in this rendition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>N.</th>
<th>SS</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>M’</th>
<th>P</th>
<th>(P)</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>M’M’</th>
<th>PP</th>
<th>M’M’</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>GR</th>
<th>-R</th>
<th>Sa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Da</td>
<td>diri</td>
<td>da</td>
<td>ra</td>
<td>D</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>d</td>
<td>r</td>
<td>Da</td>
<td>diri</td>
<td>diri</td>
<td>diri</td>
<td>Da-</td>
<td>rad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.9 Multani rezakhani gat**

The first four *avartons* (complete rhythmic cycles) are repetitions of the basic compositions (figure 5.9), followed by a sequential elaboration of the basic structure. The first series, known as *gat vistar* (minor variations) consist of (1) rhythmic deflection of the notes of the composition; (2) adding an embellishing *mind* to the minor third (G) on the tenth beat; (3) connecting the notes on the fourth to sixth beats with descending *minds*; (4) increasing the duration, prevalence and directionality of the *minds* from the fourth to the sixteenth beats. Following the *gat vistar*, the *manja* and *antra* sections of the composition are performed. Next, a brief exposition of *gat upaj* utilizes the *gat* for improvisation, in this case the first phrase of the *antra* is expanded, /G'M'M’ PP N/, in an *alap*-like manner, followed by the phrase /G'M'M’ PP M’M’/. In the next section, brief improvisations (*fiqras*)
extending no more than four to eight beats are presented. Figure 5.10 is an example of Mushtaq's *fiqra tans.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>G M’ P M’</th>
<th>G M’ g r S</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Figure 5.10 fiqra tan in Multani**

The next *avarton* features short *todas* which transition into *kulfidar tans*, which are passages covering one or more octaves (Sen: 49).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>dP M’P NN DP</th>
<th>M’P GM’ PM’</th>
<th>dN SS Nd PM’</th>
<th>gM PM gr Sa</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 5.11 Kulfidar tan in Multani**

Mushtaq's *tans* are generally short groupings of two to four notes which are transposed in various regions of the octave, and outline the *raga*’s important centers. The *tans* are performed on the *parda*, without *mind, krintan, khatka, murki,* or *gamak.* As the composition gains in speed, *diri tans* begin, concluding with *jhala.*

I will now summarize the Senia tradition based on scholarly literature (Miner: 1997; Sen: 1996; Chaudhuri: 1993: Farrell: 2002) and my musical analysis. (1) The composition is the central feature of all performances, a means of expressing the *raga,* and demonstrating the Senia *gharana*’s historical legacy, and the performer’s pedigree and *talim*; (2) Right hand *bols* patterns are strictly maintained, and form
the backbone of all improvisation; (3) *Dhrupad* embellishments are used exclusively, with a resultant avoidance of *khyal* and *thumri* influenced embellishments; (4) Strict exposition of the raga in *alap* and *jor* movements, emphasizing the clear articulation of the *raaga*; (5) Limited use of left hand *minds*; (6) Use of the 17-fret sitar, as opposed to the current 20 to 22 fret instrument.

Following the aesthetic and formal discipline of the *tantra karn* and *dhrupad ang*, Mushtaq Ali Khan refrains from personalized explorations, and avoids any embellishments that are not required for the *raag*’s correct exposition. The emotional character of the *raaga* is a byproduct of the articulation of its architecture: structural interconnections, primary melodic phrases, and the balance of central and tertiary notes. Even among those artists who claim the Senia *gharana* as their heritage, their discourse is often contradicted by their music. In this sense, Mushtaq Ali Khan’s legacy is a purity of style and musical discipline that is difficult, if not impossible, to maintain in the modern world. This legacy illuminates the contradictory worlds that intersected in post-Independence India: *dhrupad* lost popularity, but gained in symbolic stature as the music of “ancient India,” at the same time, the ambiguous relationship between tradition and innovation in modern India is revealed by the fading of away of the pure Senia style, but an increase of musicians citing this as their musical heritage and foundation.

That many contemporary musicians claim adherence to this system, but do not perform it publicly, indicates possible commercial pressure, time limitations, and the audience’s lack of education in this system. These practices are artifacts from another era when patrons and listeners prided themselves on being highly
knowledgeable regarding the system’s intricacies and had the time and patience to listen for several hours to the same raga. Sitar styles based on either dhrupad or khyal assumed a new importance in post-Independence India, sometimes articulating the dual interpretations of history (see Chap. 4), and the artist’s emplacement within this stream.

**Pre-gayaki ang Vilayat Khan (1927 to ca. 1959)**

The following examination of Vilayat Khan’s early music will allow for the clarification of early his music within the continuum of Mushtaq Ali Khan, Imdad, and Inayat Khan. Vilayat Khan’s evolution from tantrakar baj to the gayaki ang is clear in his commercially available recorded output. By comparing his early 78 rpm recordings (1936-1958) with his later work (1959-2004), his abrupt transition into the gayaki ang, an instrumental style grounded in vocal music, is apparent in a 1959 recording of raag Pilu and Rageshree.24 Yet, his 1958 78 rpm recordings of the ragas Panchamese Pilu and Bhankar (HMV) are still clearly in the tantrakar baj of Imdad Khan.

According to Arvind Parikh, the gayaki ang developed during the 1960s to 1970s, and fully evolved into maturity in the 1980s (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, December 12, 2010). However, a live concert recording of raag Puryia, dated October 12, 1952 by Deepak Raja, is a technically stunning display of tan

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24 According to Deepak Raja, this is the first LP recording in India, made by an independent sponsor in Calcutta (Deepak Raja, personal correspondence: May 10, 2010).
prakar (categories of tans) derived from khyal, which ranks with Khan’s peak years (1965-1973).

Vilayat Khan’s earliest recording is a 1937 rendition of Miyaki Todi, featuring Inayat on the A side. Recorded when he was merely nine years old, the performance features a medium-tempo jhala in a straight four beat rhythm in teen tal. His minds are very short (one or two semi tones), but the preternatural speed of his right hand is evident in a series of diri tans. His grooming in the techniques and idioms of the Imdad Khan gharana is demonstrated in this recording.

In the later (1955-58) 78 rpm recordings of Shudha Sarang, Lalit, Mishra Khamaj, Chandrakauns, and Madhuvanti25, Vilayat Khan replicates the salient features of Inayat Khan’s style, making it difficult to distinguish Vilayat’s playing from his father on these recordings. I will examine Vilayat Khan’s 1955 Chandrakauns (ICD085) to elucidate central facets of his playing at this time. The recording is titled “Jalad.” a traditional form of rezakhani gat performed in a fast tempo, which immediately precedes jhala. Vilayat Khan’s composition is firmly grounded in the traditional bol patterns, as seen in Fig. 5.12 below.

25 Vilayat Khan is often credited with the invention of this raga; however, without concrete evidence it is difficult to state unequivocally that this is correct.
The composition and raga presentation shares many features with Mushtaq Ali Khan’s Multani, shown in Fig 5.9. The bol follows Senia rezakhani patterns. Vilayat Khan’s first initial tans follow tantrakar ang conventions, beginning with short fiqra tans, and then small alap phrases, executed over four to eight beats of the tala. These alap phrases consist of embellished single notes played on the parda, and are easily distinguished from the extended khyal phrases which later became his trademark.26

Prior to the jhala in the Chandrakauns recordings, faster passages include khyal-derived tans, which extend Inayat Khan’s initial forays into vocal-style sapat tans. The first tan of this nature occurs immediately after the conclusion of the alap phrases, and follows Abdul Wahid Khan’s merukhand patterns through a series of permutations of a core phrase, utilizing a series of odd and even rhythmic groupings.

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26 According to Landsberg, Vilayat Khan and Mushtaq Ali frequently performed together in Calcutta at house concerts. It is possible Mushtaq Ali had some impact on Vilayat Khan’s music. At the same time, one could hypothesize that this style was in vogue during this period (1940s-50s), as Mushtaq Ali Khan was considered the top performing sitarist in India.
The next tan is also derived from the vocal tan prakar known as a chut tan. These tans feature a leaping motion between pitches, ranging from a fifth to an entire octave. Vilayat Khan would later become renowned for his unique and highly complex chut tans, but this early recording shows the initial stages of development of this technique. Vilayat Khan’s other recordings in this series are firmly in the style of Inayat Khan and Imdad Khan, and are notable for the relative simplicity of minds and an overall adherence to the Imdad khani baj and tantrakar conventions. At this early stage, Vilayat Khan’s playing is thoroughly grounded in the tantrakar ang. It is possible that he would have continued along these lines if his father had remained alive, because of pressures on the eldest son of a khandan or gharana to uphold the family tradition.

These early recordings demonstrate his mastery of the nuances of traditional stroke-craft technique and systematic development of improvisation within the gat. These basic elements formed an important component of Vilayat Khan’s style throughout his life. According to his son, Hidayat Khan, “My father had technically mastered the instrument by age seventeen or so. He often told me that this base had lasted him a lifetime, and his work since that point was on a musical level” (Hidayat Khan, personal interview, November 18, 2010).

During his later fame and revolutionary musical developments, many critics were not aware of his firm grounding in the tantrakar ang. Khan himself, however,

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27 Merukhand are a series of systematic and mathematically derived variations of note patterns, ranging from four to eight notes, with a total of 5040 possible combinations. Before Abdul Wahid Khan, they were used solely as practice patterns. The difficulty with merukhand is the maintenance of raga structure and musicality within such a highly mathematically system.
maintained that these techniques were the basis for all sitar performance. In a 1993 interview he stated, “These strokes are the basis of sitar- da diri da ra /da diri diri diri /da- rda –ra da. Most musicians in this present generation don’t understand this, and it makes their music foolish [lit. *bilkuf ke kam* - the work of fools]. In order to create meaningful musical expression, they should be played like this...”

He then recites the same *bols* with the proper expression, including greater rhythmic expression and clarity of enunciation. The difference is remarkable. This is a direct barb at younger musicians who attempted to emulate his *gayaki ang* style without a mastery of the tradition and perhaps he also implicated senior musicians who claim a Senia *dhrupad* lineage.

As the sitar became more prominent in India and throughout the world, identifying with *khyal* or *dhrupad* reflected differing interpretations of Indian history and its cultural identity as a Hindu, Muslim, or hybrid nation. Mushtaq Ali Khan dominated instrumental music until the 1950s, until he was supplanted by Pt. Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan. Through his musical innovations, Vilayat Khan represented India’s Mughal heritage, and his family legacy, while Ravi Shankar allied himself with an ancient Hindu past (see Ch. 6). The controversy surrounding Vilayat Khan often centers on the Senia *gharana*’s claim to be the innovators and sole authentic representatives of Hindustani sitar; Khan’s innovations, however, were also thoroughly grounded in a long evolutionary process.

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28 Recorded interview courtesy of Deepak Raja. Translation by the author.
The next chapter will look at Vilayat Khan’s musical impact, nationalism, the formulation of contesting identities through music, and changing modes of patronage through Vilayat Khan’s life and innovations.
Chapter 6: Vilayat Khan and Post-Independence India

The forces set in motion during the reign of the Raj culminated in the 1947 partition of India and Pakistan. This rupture, not less profound than the 1857 mutiny, was simultaneously the birth of a new nation, and a geopolitical concretizing of intra-societal fractures. Post-independence India was also a vibrant field of entirely new possibilities for reconstructing personal and collective identity.

This chapter will examine the life and music of Vilayat Khan, whose drive to recreate the sitar was compelled by artistic vision, economic survival, and pride in his khandani legacy. Khan’s music was a site of resistance to the eradication of aristocratic culture; at the same time, he adeptly exploited the new avenues of success available in India. Another sitarist faced a similar struggle and gained unprecedented worldwide acclaim—Ravi Shankar. Each of these musicians reinvented the sitar to create a vision of tradition that resonated with the pulse of new nation. To set the stage for the detailed study of Khan, I will first examine the intertwined threads of nationalism, communalism, and the impact of mass media in years before and after India’s Independence.
Nationalism and Historical Consciousness

The Indian nationalist movement officially began in 1885 with the formation of the Indian National Congress (INC), an outgrowth of the Hindu revivalist movement. The INC was thoroughly Hindu and bourgeois in its composition and objectives, and differed in ideology and objectives from the mosaic of resistance to the Raj in tribal areas and among Muslims (Corbridge and Harris: 13). It was only under the guiding hand of M. K. Gandhi that a unified movement encompassed Hindus and Muslims, as well as the dispossessed rural poor and low-caste untouchables (Bonner: 17-27). The two factions of the Indian National Congress party and the Muslim League, joined under the charismatic leadership of Gandhi, were soon rent apart by internal dissension and British machinations. These divisions were exacerbated by conflicting versions of India’s past and future, a legacy of British social engineering.

The construction of a unified historical narrative around a nationalist Hindu ideology was as central to the position of the Congress party, as a pan-Islamic narrative was to the Muslim League. The consolidation of a reconstructed history into a compelling narrative of national identity was built on the simplification and obfuscation of numerous ambiguities and previous communal harmony, “All nationalist movements have reinvented the past to justify an ideological present. India’s freedom movement coined the phrase ‘unity in diversity’ to project the image of a nationalist culture” (Bonner: 44). This facade could not obscure the fact that the multiple constructions of India’s history and the complexity of Indian society were
incompatible with an artificially constructed nationalist narrative. The formulation of Independent India in the nationalist movement required a unified narrative of India’s past. Pandey states:

The *historical* character of communalism (or nationalism) must come after the *historical* character of the past has been established. The past is historical not only in the obvious sense that the past makes up history. It is historical also in the sense that ‘history’ itself – the ‘past’ recalled - is constructed. The modern history of India, in this sense was first written in colonial times and by colonialists. It was colonial writers who established the pattern of the Indian past pretty much as we know it today. And in that past, sectarian strife was an important motif (Pandey: 22).

The British policy of discrimination against Islam was largely incorporated into Hindu nationalist movements that often collaborated with British imperialism against the poor and Muslim minorities (Purohit: 463). This collaboration fueled nationalist and separatist movements within the Islamic community. Conservative elements gained ascendancy in certain areas, following a similar trajectory to that of Hindu nationalism. Elements within the Congress party began to favor partition, and voiced support for separatist Muslim factions. This included B.R. Ambedkar, the most prominent spokesman for the oppressed and lower castes, who wrote in 1940:

The delay in discovering the philosophical justification for Pakistan is due to the fact that the Muslim leaders had become habituated to speaking of Muslims as a community and as a minority. The use of this terminology took them in a false direction and brought them to a dead end. As they acknowledged themselves to be a minority community, they felt there was nothing open to them but to ask for safeguards[...] That Muslim position should have run a parallel course and should never have merged in the Hindu current of politics is a strange fact of modern Indian history. In so segregating themselves the Muslims were influenced by some mysterious feeling which they could not define, and guided by a hidden hand which they could not see but which was all the same directing them to keep apart from Hindus. This mysterious feeling and this hidden hand was no other
than their pre-appointed destiny, symbolized by Pakistan, which unknown to them, was working within them. (Ambedkar: 331-334).

Ambedkar’s writing reveals the influence of Hegelian world historical model, indicated by his emphasis on the “hidden hand” and “pre-appointed destiny” of an inevitable India/Pakistan partition (see Ch. 4).

That this sectarian strife was due in large measure to British influence was not lost on all voices. Gandhi’s vision of a unified India became increasingly untenable during the 1940s; in light of partition, the words of his 1924 speech in Belgaum have a lingering sense of tragedy:

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question for the necessity of this for Swaraj [self-rule] is almost universally accepted... Economic and political causes have been brought together for the sake of fomenting trouble. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the government. (Gandhi: 172)

The nationalist leader, Subhas Chandra Bose, spoke before the Indian National Congress in 1938 in an attempt to prevent the coming schism: “Every empire is based on the policy of divide and rule. But I doubt if any empire in the world practiced this policy so skillfully, systematically, and ruthlessly as Great Britain. An internal partition is necessary in order to neutralize the transference of power. The same principal of partition appears in a different form in the new Indian constitution” (Bose: 313).

The partition of India and Pakistan in 1947 resulted in massive bloodshed; communal riots have been a hallmark of modern India since the early 1960s. The roots of communalism (regional, ethnic, and religious identities which supersede...
the national), are often found in economic disparities; the translation of unrest from
the economic to the communal is a common ploy among politicians. Musicians were
often caught in the middle of political conflicts, yet music remained (and remains)
an important unifying force within India.

Nationalism, Music, and Media

Cultural production was important for the nationalist narrative, and seen as a
viable method to construct, or at least simulate, “unity in diversity” both within and
outside of India. Subhas Chandra Bose described this policy in a 1938 speech before
the Indian National Congress:

We should therefore aim at developing a nucleus of men and women in every
country who feel sympathetic to India. To create such a nucleus, propaganda
through the foreign press, through Indian-made films, and through art
exhibitions should be helpful. If we could send out cultural and educational
films made in India, I am sure India and her culture would become known
and appreciated by people abroad. (Bose: 317)

The State would not intervene in the arts until 1957, which created a difficult
economic period for musicians, support reappeared on the agenda shortly after
independence. The project of a unified national culture became a high priority, and
fostered the development of a state support system and a concomitant
bureaucratization of the arts from 1957 until 1986. This period was a high point in
the development of Indian classical music, exemplified by such artists as Vilayat
Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar, and Amir Khan, as well as the growing
international popularity of Hindustani music, which peaked during the late 1970s.
New technological developments would prove highly efficient for the national project.

Radio, for instance, played a significant role in this process. Radio got off to a slow start in India, but soon became immensely popular. The British attempts in the 1920s to create a national radio service in India were unsuccessful; the earliest broadcasts in India were by private groups, amateur clubs, and princely states. During the 1930s, the Indian government made several unsuccessful attempts to consolidate and control radio broadcasting. All India Radio was formed on June 8, 1936 (Goswami: 36). Until 1947, several princely states maintained private broadcasting facilities including Mysore, Baroda, Hyderabad, Aurangabad, and Trivandrum. Following independence, all broadcasting facilities came under the control of the Indian government. Radio began to grow rapidly; the number of licenses grew issued by All India Radio grew from 10,872 in 1933 to 248,000 in 1947 (Chatterji: 45). The radio influenced numerous cultural and social changes. To begin with, time was standardized around India in 1936, designated as IST (India Standard Time), and was nationally implemented in 1947 (Goswami: 41). The broadcast of a standard time via the radio resulted in a degree of temporal unity never before experienced in India. The exclusive use of Hindi and English in national radio broadcasts also promoted linguistic standardization.

The state-sponsored All India Radio (AIR) functioned as both a patron and arbiter of culture. Pre-independence radio catered to an elite audience, focusing on Western and Indian classical music. A 1935 official report from the office of broadcasting stated:
Broadcasting in most countries does not base its policy exclusively on pleasing majority (sic). It is to the advantage of broadcasting to widen, if it can, the scope of the listeners' taste [...] Thus we find in most broadcasting organizations the Classical Music gains a place which a majority vote would not actually give it and it is undoubtedly true that the taste for classical music has in many countries been considerably strengthened by this policy. (Goswami: 42)

The history of radio in India reflects the government's attempt to bulwark high culture against the rising tide of film music that began in the 1940s (Goswami 1996).

AIR's policies included both the dissemination and the modernization of Indian classical music, based on the model of Western classical music. AIR introduced a grading system of the artists, from A to C, with the intention of standardizing musical ability through specific, “objective,” artistic standards. AIR promoted Western classical music as well. Attempts were made in the 1940s to teach staff artists the Western five-line staff notation, but were unsuccessful. John Foulds, the Director of Western Music at Delhi, attempted to add harmony and orchestration to Indian ragas, with mixed degrees of success, yet at the same time, he was one of the strongest voices for the banning of the harmonium, an instrument he termed “Un-Indian” and “Un-musical” (Goswami: 51). From 1940-1971, the instrument was banned from all broadcasts, and radio stations were required to dispose of their harmoniums. This attempt had little effect on the continuing popularity of harmonium with performers, as did AIR's attempts to promote classical music amidst the growing popularity of film music.
Like the radio, the recording industry contributed to transformation of India’s cultural landscape. The early recording industry was dominated by the British-owned Gramophone Company of India (GCI), which later used the appellation His Master’s Voice (HMV) for the marketing of recordings after 1910. HMV maintained market dominance until the 1960s, a monopoly that enabled them to pay artists poorly and control musical content. The recording industry served to popularize certain format types, including light music genres such as khyal, ghazal, bhajan and thumri, as well as instrumental music (Manuel: 37-38). The catalogue of HMV was targeted at an upper and upper middle class audience, as the cost of recordings was out of reach for many in India. However, small shopkeepers who owned record players often helped to popularize many artists to a broader audience.

The growing film industry provided financial security for many hereditary musicians, which was not feasible through radio, recordings, and concerts. The film industry allowed artists exposure, for the first time, to a mass audience. Many classical performers worked in cinema, including Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Amir Khan, Shiv Kumar Sharma, Ravi Shankar, and Vilayat Khan. Film music began to dominate India’s music market in 1931 (Manuel: 41), and continues to be the most popular music genre today (Kholi-Khandekar: 143).

Cinema was far more successful in promoting Hindustani music to the general public than radio or the recording industry. Films such as Mughal-e-Azam, Baiju-Bawra, and many others romanticized the Mughal era, and their nostalgia for an idealized past and the foregrounding of classical music reverberated like echoes
of a collective dream, shattered by the trauma of partition. Purohit sees the promotion of classical music themes as a function of State propaganda, exercised through financial incentives and the Central Board of Film Censors (Purohit: 1096).

Until the advent of private channels in the 1980, the majority of cultural production in India was controlled and censored by the State media promotion. The promotion of classical music often aligned with governmental interests.

The growth of radio, recordings, film, and television helped to formulate an “imagined community” that brought together geographically and culturally disparate regions of India. The radio functioned (and still functions, to a lesser extent) to provide at least some income to musicians. Through the medium of films and recordings, a select number of artists became “stars,” reaching beyond the general audience for Indian classical music. However, the complex forces of nationalism and communalism remained a divisive force; government policies just as often alienated large swaths of the community as unifying them.

Music and Identity in Post-Independence India

The search for a national identity paralleled the broader social and cultural destabilizations of post-Independence India. Individuals and communities found themselves in a strange new world, where traditional scripts no longer applied. The changing cultural environment presented challenges for Hindustani musicians; the music had to appeal to a new audience whose expectations and preferences were greatly different from both Mughal era and post-Independence audiences. The semantic grounding of this music had become unstable; Purohit states:
When a social order is disintegrating, the associative communication channels get scrambled. Because of its slow evolution over many feudal centuries in India, our music in the past carried precise connotations to the audience. Everyone in those days knew how in music religiosity was to be expressed, how homage could be paid to the occupant of the palace, and knew the technique by which the courtesan could mulct her patron[...] To the rising bourgeois zamindar, the industrial bourgeois, the professional careerist[...] The precise nuances of the “sounded” tribute fell flat. (Purohit: 837)

The impact of these social changes on traditional musicians was immense. Forces that had been building for over a century exploded into the vacuum of a nation searching for its identity. Western classical music and jazz increasingly attracted the English-speaking elite; string quartets and orchestras proliferated in major cities, and radio disseminated this music among the masses (Gautam: 88). After Independence, the market for film music expanded over the length and breadth of the continent. Film composers, educated in Western music, utilized the ranks of newly unemployed hotel and society musicians, and created a fusion of jazz, Western classical, and Indian folk that soon captured the Indian imagination (ibid.: 88).

The last vestiges of feudal patronage evaporated with the British-mandated dissolution of the remaining 562 princely states, and their incorporation into either India or Pakistan. As reflected in the growing polarization between Hindu and Muslim culture, these ruptures shattered the fragile national unity that the struggle for Independence engendered. Hindustani musicians faced an uncertain future, and it appeared that unless the State intervened, social instability and market driven economy would force classical musicians into penury and obscurity.
Despite the odds against them, some musicians were able to overcome these difficulties and obtain a level of success that would have seemed unthinkable in the wake of Independence.

**Vilayat Khan and His Times**

We will now examine the life and music of one such musician, Vilayat Khan, who embodied the contradictory impulses of post-Independence India. Through Khan’s career, we can trace the social, cultural, and musical development of the sitar through this period. The rapid expansion of the sitar and of instrumental music as a whole, and the gradual decline in popularity of vocal music, especially *dhrupad*, reflected the changing tastes and audiences for North Indian classical music. Vilayat Khan maintained a rigorous traditionalism, but he was worked in the film industry, and became one of the youngest and most glamorous stars of Hindustani music in the early 1950s. At the same time, his technical innovations dramatically expanded the expressive range of the sitar.

Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan, both of whom are revolutionary, charismatic, and extraordinarily influential artists, provide an apt counterpoint for examining the sitar’s role in post-Independence India. While many books have examined Ravi Shankar’s seminal contributions to Hindustani music, little has been written on Khan, who can provide an alternative perspective on this era. Both artists represent distinct interpretations of India’s history, and both navigated the cultural environment of post-Independence India in distinct ways. The following examination of Khan’s life and art illuminates the tensions between Hindu and
Islamic culture, elite and democratic art, and tradition versus state patronage of the arts.

I parse Vilayat Khan’ lifetime into three stages based on his musical development. I designated the first stage, 1927-1945, as **formative**, focusing on the topics of *talim*, early struggles, and the Inayat Khan-baj. The second stage, 1945-1958, **innovations**, examines the development of his *gayaki ang* style, and navigation of new audiences and patronage systems. The third period, from 1958-1980, **musical mastery**, describes Khan’s mature musical style and his status as a mature artist. I will examine each period in turn, focusing on his performance style, biographical data, and the historical context in which they occurred.

**1927-1945: Formative Years**

Vilayat Khan was born in 1927 into a musical environment, surrounded by many of the great musicians of his day. His father, Inayat Khan, was a court musician in Bengal, in the village of Gouripur. Vilayat Khan was born in Gouripur, but raised in Calcutta. A child prodigy, he made a 78 rpm recordings of *rag Todi* at the age of nine (see Chapter 5). In 1934, Vilayat Khan was accepted as a formal disciple by his father in a *ghanda-band* (tying of the sacred thread) ceremony. His first stage performance took place in 1936, accompanied by the legendary *tabla* player Ahmad Jan Thirakwa. Vilayat Khan’s early *talim* included *dhrupad ang* (taught on *surbahar*) and *tantrakar ang*. He was also instructed in his father’s innovations, described in ch. 5.
Vilayat Khan’s rigorous early training, great musical aptitude, and photographic aural memory enabled him to fuse a variety of musical influences. His natural inclination towards romanticism found expression in the vocal styles of thumri and khyal. According to his autobiography, his early training involved not only technique, but also the recognition of ragas and movement between them. He describes how his father would play a certain raga, then modulate between different ragas, and expect his son and pupil to be able to recognize how to change certain swaras and shift between ragas (Khan: 15-20).

His precocity is revealed in an anecdote he recounts of an early meeting with the seminal poet, musician and intellectual Rabindranath Tagore. Walking past Tagore’s house at the age of six, the young Vilayat was fascinated by a picture that Tagore had painted of the raga Bhairav, depicting the Hindu god Shiva. He became so fascinated with the picture that he waited outside the door, and finally wandered into the house. Tagore found him staring at the picture. When his father arrived, he insisted Vilayat tell them why he was standing in Tagore’s living room. Vilayat told them that the third eye in the painting represented the komal rishab (R) in raag Bhairav. Tagore was duly impressed and told Inayat Khan, “Take good care of this boy, he is a special child” (Khan: 25).

Vilayat describes his early talim as part of a tradition (silsilah)\(^1\) that is fundamentally distinct from learning in a school. He states, “These days, you can find

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\(^1\) The term silsilah, a Persian word common in Urdu, is most often used to describe the religious traditions of various Sufi orders, and refers not only to inter-generational cultural transmission, but also to a living, spiritual essence that is available through initiation into a
music schools on every street corner, in my time it was not like this [... ] the masters say 'sit, learn this tan and this rag, memorize it, and if you cannot remember we will do it again, now go home.' In my home music infused every moment of life, riyaz was continuous. You would learn a technique, and you would keep practicing it. When my father or grandfather sits to teach, you would not learn tan, raga, teehai formally. You would repeat, and eventually you would understand only later. This is how I learned music"(Khan: 26). The student was simply a vessel for what the guru taught. Questioning was not allowed –the emphasis was on replicating the movements, and naming and classifying was not part of this process.

The tragic early death of his father in 1938 cut short his talim, and many of his father’s students refused to continue his training (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, February 20, 2011). He continued his training through his mother Bashirn Bibi (Sharma: 224), and expressed the desire to leave the sitar and pursue vocal music. However, his mother forbade him, as vocal music was considered his matrilineal heritage, and she insisted that he continue the patrilineal instrumental lineage. Because of the conservatism of gharana culture at this time, it was impossible for him to be trained in instrumental music by musicians of other gharanas (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, December 20, 2009). These adverse circumstances compelled to create his own musical voice.

At age sixteen, he left his family’s home in Calcutta, distressed at the betrayal of his father’s students, and journeyed to Nahan in Punjab, the home of Bande type of trans-temporal network wherein the living essence of previous masters is accessible in the present moment.
Hussain Khan (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, December 20, 2009) (Raja 2004: 15). The period immediately following his father’s death had the greatest impact on his musicianship, as he practiced fourteen hours a day, taking time out only for eating and sleeping (Khan: 21).

This period was one of extreme poverty for Vilayat. An oft-repeated tale recounts that he arrived at the offices of All India Radio in Delhi, a disheveled and impoverished youth. The director was about to turn him away, until Vilayat took out his sitar and performed an impassioned rendition of *raag* Bhairavi. The director immediately hired him as an artist, and he worked in Delhi and Baroda for several years, until he settled in Mumbai (Deepak Raja, personal interview, February 19, 2011). Vilayat also states that he worked as a vocalist during this period, but no recordings of his vocal performances survive.

During this time period, Dr. Z. A. Bukari, Director General of All India Radio was an important benefactor of the young artist (Parikh 2009: 50). Khan was able to interact and learn from many of the prominent vocalists of the era, and at the same time he intensively studied and memorized many of the classic 78 rpm recordings of the great vocalist, and instrumentalists from the previous era. His photographic memory retained all of this music, which he drew on throughout his career, making his performances resonate with the collective musical memory of his audience (see chapter 7).

Vilayat came under the spell of several Kirana *gharana* masters, including Abdul Kareem Khan and Abdul Wahid Khan. During this time, Vilayat Khan’s gurus also included the 78 rpm recordings of Abdul Kareem Khan, whom he had only
heard a few times in childhood. Vilayat memorized every recording of Abdul Kareem Khan, and could still perform them note-for-note in his seventies. In his autobiography, he recalls the strong impression made on him by Abdul Kareem Khan’s recordings:

When Abdul Kareem Khan sang raag Jhinjoti, Bharivi, Vasant, in only three minutes he included a complete rendition of the raga with variations and tans, which is impossible for most artists in three hours. (Khan: 43)

Vilayat Khan drew on a variety of vocalists as he developed his methodology of raag exposition. Parikh recalls that Khan “interpreted Abdul Kareem Khan and Abdul Wahid Khan of the Kirana gharana in the alap, Faiyyaz Khan of the Agra gharana in the jod, and Amir Khan and Rajab Ali Khan, both of the Indore gharana, in the tanas” (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, December 20, 2009).

Vilayat Khan’s continued exposure to the music of Abdul Wahid Khan was facilitated through the vocalist Amir Khan, who had learned (supposedly by listening to Abdul Wahid Khan’s practice surreptitiously) from Abdul Wahid Khan. Amir Khan was a major force in twentieth century Hindustani vocal music through his strong commitment to innovation, use of merukhand (systemic elaboration of scalar patterns), and his adherence to extremely slow talas (ati-vilambit). Amir and Vilayat Khan lived together in Delhi and Saharanpur, and often practiced together and shared compositions. Khan recalls, “We lived together in the same house, with only a thin wall between us, and listened to each other practice,” and that Amir encouraged Vilayat’s early and innovative compositions. Both of them were struggling musicians: “We lived through a period in which we had very little money
for food. Some days he would treat me for meals, and some days I would offer him biscuits and tea” (Khan: 35). According to Vilayat, even after a later falling out, they always would see each other’s concerts: “Amir Khan was always in the front row when I was playing” (Khan: 35). The influence of Amir Khan and Abdul Wahid Khan is evident in Vilayat’s use of the merukhand patterns in both tans and alap phrases, something unheard of in sitar music prior to this point.

Khan commuted regularly to Punjab during this time (early 1940s) to take instruction from his maternal grandfather Ustad Bande Hussain Khan, and his maternal uncle Ustad Zinda Hussain Khan (Parikh: 2009, 51; Parikh, Raja, Chakravarty, Oct. 2008 -Jan.2009). According to Mashkoor Ali Khan, Vilayat’s extended family and members of the Kirana gharana lived side-by-side in Saranpur, sharing music and leisure activities, and were practically part of the same family (Mashkoor Ali Khan, personal interview, January 10, 2011). During this period he recorded as a vocalist for AIR. Vilayat was uncertain about his maternal grandfather’s gharana affiliations, however, according to Arvind Parikh (Parikh, personal interviews, 2009-2010; Raja 2004: 15) Bande Hussain Khan was firmly in the Agra gharana tradition, “Bande Hussain Khan was a big-built man, with a powerful voice, and a robust, aggressive style of singing, broadly similar to mid-twentieth century Agra gharana vocalism” (Raja 2004: 15). This early training was fundamental for Vilayat’s musical developments.

Bande Hussain Khan taught him a variety of styles, including khyal, chaiti, thumri, dadra, dhrupad, dhamar, tarana, and sadra. According to S. N. Chakravarty the training Vilayat received from Zinde Hussain Khan gave him a deep insight into
light classical forms like *thumri* and *dadra*, as well as grounding in the fundamentals of *dhrupad* and *khyal* (S.N. Chakravarty, personal interview, December 10, 2009). While many claim that Vilayat’s performance of *thumri*, *ghazal*, and folk forms at the end of concerts was due to changing tastes of post-Independence bourgeois audiences, we should not forget that these forms were deeply connected with his early training, and it is not unreasonable to assume that he employed these genres in performance due to his own predilections at least as much as audience demands. His uncompromising attitude is apparent in his refusal to perform any type of fusion throughout his career, unlike the majority of his contemporaries and followers.

### 1945-1958: Innovations

Vilayat’s ascent from abject poverty to fame and fortune began when he stunned audiences during a 1944 performance at the Vikramaditya Music Conference. A year before, Khan had settled in Mumbai, with little money and few immediate prospects. Parikh describes his first visit to Khan’s apartment as follows:

> When I met Khan Sahib for the first time at the end of 1943, he was staying in an unbelievably small room in Colaba [neighborhood in Mumbai], no more than a hundred square feet. There was an old sofa on which Khan Sahib was sitting when my father and I had both gone to see him [...] Between the sofa and the folding chairs, there was not even enough space for our feet. (Parikh 2002:22)

Even given these difficulties, Khan pursued music like an obsessive passion. My sources have been unanimous in contending that Khan felt he was destined to revolutionize the sitar. Parikh recollects,
It was not an easy time for him, but I could see the determination of the man. He was not a defeatist and was supremely aware that he had talent, and belonged to a great musical family. Even his mother would teach him, and knew lots of compositions. (ibid.: 22)

Khan had the good fortune that his first disciple, Arvind Parikh, was from a moneyed family of Gujarat. Parikh was a great support to Khan in his early years, giving him both monetary and logistical support. Arvind worked during the day at the family business, but was a dedicated student of the sitar, practicing every night for four to five hours after a day at the office.

From the mid-1940s on, Khan began to modify the sitar and radically change the sitar’s repertoire and technique. He took surbahar talim from his uncle Ustad Wahid Khan while in Mumbai, which certainly influenced the development of the gayaki ang and possibly his modifications of sitar construction (Parikh: 50).

**The Gayaki Ang: Organology, Technique, and Ergonomic Changes**

Arvind Parikh witnessed Khan's gradual modification of the sitar's structure first-hand, and is the best source for the crucial period of the mid-to late 1940s. Parikh became Khan's disciple in 1944, and was present, several years later, when Vilayat modified the sitar itself, sitting posture (baithak), right hand techniques, and expanded the role of the left hand to encompass the most advanced vocal techniques (see ch. 7).

According to Parikh, this process was both empirical and intuitive. One of Khan’s most important changes was to remove the lower two brass strings, tuned to P and S respectively, and replace them with a single string, tuned as an additional
chikari string. This transformed the sitar’s acoustic ambiance, bringing out the fundamental pitches of a particular raga through the chikari. Prior to this, the chikari strings were always tuned to both tonics and the fifth (P S S’), a practice which continues in most sitar gharanas. With the addition of the extra string, Vilayat Kahn made possible specific tunings for each raga, including (M D S S’) for Rageshree and Bageshree, (G D S S’) for Todi, and (G P S S’) for ragas such as Yemen, Khamaj, and Jhinjoti. He also modified the configuration of the tarab (resonant) strings according to the intervallic configurations of a raga’s structure. The two-fold impact of these changes was to bring the sitar away from the tantrakar ang towards a mimesis of khyal accompaniment instruments of khyal (tambora and sur-mandal), and to create a raga-specific tuning, the combination of both formed the unique aural identity of his sitar. Parikh describes Vilayat’s process as follows:

I observed the second flowering of Vilayat Khan from close quarters. It was during this period that he changed the tuning system of the sitar. This change, and associated technique of plucking and filling the silences dramatically altered the acoustic features of the instrument. This new sound became, over the years, easily identifiable as the Vilayat Khani sitar. Along with the acoustic changes came the stylistic flowerings, which moved his lyrical style closer to vocalism. In my humble opinion, the tuning of the strings was a revolutionary change. I cannot recall the number of times I requested Khan Sahib for the logic of this change. His answers were always evasive. My persistence paid off only recently, when one day he said: “Arvind Bhai, frankly, I did it intuitively.” And as we all know, intuition is the voice of God within us. If this is not divine grace, what else might we call it? (Parikh 2004: 27)

Vilayat Khan’s remodeling of the instrument aimed at the instantaneous reproduction of musical ideas with the effortlessness of singing, so that the instrument presented no barriers to direct musical expression. This required
efficiency in all aspects of sound production. His fundamental principle was that the body should be completely relaxed and natural during performance, the movement of the hands should be natural and without effort, and the spine should be straight.

**Figure 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, 6.4 differing sitar postures**

To this end, he changed the basic sitting posture and raised the angle of the sitar to an exact 45° angle. In figure 6.1 and 6.2 show the angle of sitar from a contemporary Senia sitarist (Debu Chaudhury) and a nineteenth century illustration at 57° and 55° degrees, respectively. In figure 6.4, Inayat Khan holds the sitar at a 40° angle; figure 6.3 shows Vilayat Khan’s sitar at a 45° angle. This seemingly minor shift dramatically affects sitar performance by allowing the sitar to balance on the knee, removing the necessity of support from right and left hands, freeing the spine from any tension, and freeing the hands to direct all power into the strokes.

In order to accommodate this change, the right leg must cross the left at an exact point to allow for the placement of thigh to support the instrument. The right hand rests on the *tumba* (gourd) supported by the sitar, and not vice-versa. For this
change, the size of the tumba must be optimized for each musician to allow the proper angle for right hand and to facilitate the muscular configuration for Vilayat Khan’s right hand stroke. The right thumb rests approximately three to four centimeters below the neck.

The spatial configuration of the body allowed his other technical innovations, always with total relaxation and natural movement. The 45° angle allowed freedom for the left hand, permitting new types of tans based upon vocal music such as sapat and chut tans, and a level of speed that was unparalleled at the time by any instrumentalist, and even exceeding many vocalists. Vilayat Khan stated that the left hand should be placed on the neck of the sitar as if you had just raised it from the floor. This allowed the maximum speed with the most efficient use of the arm and shoulder joints. The support of the instrument by the right leg allowed the left hand to glide at will at any range of the instrument.

For Vilayat Khan, the baithak (seated posture) of the sitar should also reflect beauty and symmetry; hence, his emphasis on the exact angle at which the sitar should be held. Even the sitarist’s facial expression was a component of a larger esthetic conception. Raja quotes Khan as often stating to Arvind Parikh, “Of course, you should play beautiful music. But, on stage, you should also be a pleasing sight” (Raja, 2004: 22). My guru, Shujaat Khan, has brought other facets of his father’s aesthetics to my attention, reminding me that the frets must be placed an exact 90° angle to the neck (frets are often moved when changing between ragas), stating that “If you go on stage, you should be pleasing to the eye −any element out of alignment
will detract from your performance” (Shujaat Khan, personal interview, July 7, 2005).

The freedom of the torso from any support role allowed the addition of a new, and sometimes controversial visual element to sitar performance. Vilayat Khan, especially during the performance of lighter genres such as thumri, often added expressive facial and body movements to long mind passages, and the rendition of the bandish. Many critics considered this to be a populist concession, serving to hold the interest of mass audiences. However, a little known fact about Vilayat Khan (and one he rarely admitted to) is that he worked as a theatrical actor in Calcutta until his mother forced him to quit due to the social stigma (Deepak Raja, personal interview December 18, 2009). From the mid-nineteenth century female thumri singers employed a variety techniques and aesthetics derived from natak (Indian theatrical traditions) and kathak dance in the practice of abhinaya. Abhinaya utilizes a combination of facial expressions, gestures, and movement to create complex, multilayered dialogue between the song text, tonal and rhythmic elements, and facial expression and gestures. However, abhinaya was (and is) almost exclusively the domain of female singers, and was common among courtesans in Lucknow and other Mughal cities. Thus, Vilayat Khan's inclusion of expressive gestures and movements in conjunction with the already suspect practice of singing thumri violated multiple norms, including that of gender and genre boundaries.
Vilayat Khan developed a new right hand technique that greatly increased the power of the stroke, the speed, and also added a complex range of new timbral inflections, which also mirrored the timbral range of vocalists. Raja states “The right hand grip was almost certainly his own ‘discovery,’ remained unique to him, and might explain the magic of his stroke craft” (Raja 2004: 22). With the thumb joint of the right hand resting lightly on neck of the sitar, the entire power of the hand and forearm muscles became available. At the same time, different joints of the right hand were used, focusing primary on the middle joints, and the hand was loosened from his father’s grip style, allowing much greater degree of control over the timbre of the stroke, and increasing the dexterity and control over various strings. This transformed right-hand technique also utilized the natural shift of weight on the forearm to produce distinct inflections on the chikari strings, and enable his virtuosic ulta-jhala (reverse jhala) and jhala.

An important component of the right hand technique was also the mizrab (metal plectrum). Vilayat extended the length of the mizrab, and changed the placement of the mizrab closer to the joint of the finger. The increased length of the mizrab allowed a variety of tone colors ranging from extremely delicate alap phrases to blisteringly fast tans and a vastly expanded range of rhythmic permutations involving the chikari strings. The naturalness of the ergonomic

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2 In order to accomplish his artistic objectives, a combination of technical innovations and redesigning the sitar were required. For this reason, I discuss both of the facets as overlapping components of a unified process.
configuration also permitted the internalization of this expanded range into an effortless recreation of musical ideas (see chapter 7).

**Left Hand**

The reproduction of *khyal* required (1) increased speed, (2) greater sensitivity to left and right hand inflections, (3) longer sustains of plucked notes, and (4) increased range of *mind*. Vilayat Khan’s most dramatic innovation was increasing *mind* range from a minor third to a minor sixth, allowing *minds*, *tans*, and *gamaks* drawn directly from vocal music. This required transforming left hand technique, the sitar’s structure, material components, and bridge.

Khan took into account the new acoustic environment of sitar: the use of microphones on the concert stage, on the radio, and in recording sessions meant that an instrument designed for unamplified performance would not be able to take full advantage of amplification. Prior to Khan times, a very limited portion of melismatic passages would be audible given the constraints of the instrument and the depth and range of timbres and tone quality would often clash with amplification.

Longer *minds* required a re-engineering of the support structure of the first string in relation to the other strings, the ratio between the string height from the bridge to the neck, and between the edge of the *parda* and the rest-position of the string, to allow a wide radius of string deflection. Inayat Khan and all other previous contemporary sitarists only played two to three notes *minds* on the sitar because the necessary distance for a five-note *mind* would cause all of the other strings to go out
of tune (Raja 2004: 22). To strengthen the support structure, Vilayat Khan increased the density of the tabli (the wooden cover over the thumba). The tar-grahan (the covering of the fret board) was thickened, to prevent warping of the neck. At the same time, the joint between the neck and tumba was reinforced with steel rods (Raja 2004: 23). The size of the tumba was increased to allow for a longer sustain and increased sensitivity to subtle inflections.

Even with this increased support structure, the traditional parda (frets) and neck size limited the range of mind. The traditional Inayat Khani sitar had a narrow neck, flat frets, and very small distance between the strings and the frets. Vilayat Khan broadened the neck of the sitar and increased the arch of the frets in a particular ratio wherein the greatest curve occurred over the chikari strings, with a concomitant flattening out of this curve over the distance from the playing string to the edge of the parda. Khan changed the metallurgic composition of the frets from brass to a particular alloy that he developed by combining several different metals to produce an acoustically superior tone and greater ease of movement (Parikh, personal interview, December 20, 2009).

A narrow timbral range and an acoustically focused tone were necessary to mirror the inflections of vocal music, and the mirrored shift from right hand to a left hand dominated idiom. This tone is often described as a “bandh-jawari” as opposed to a “chola-jawari,” which reflects the number of harmonic partials. A Vilayat Khani sitar is less timbrally diffuse than a Ravi Shankar sitar. This sonal dimension is a product both of the instrument structure and the curvature of the bridge, known as
jawari. Ustad Shujaat Khan has further modified the jawari and the size of the tumba, producing a tone closer to the spectral range of the guitar.

Along with the enlargement of the tumba, Vilayat Khan dispensed with the second tumba attached to the neck (still employed by many contemporary sitarists including Ravi Shankar), that increased volume but also dissipated the tone. The removal of the extra tumba allowed the hollow neck of the instrument to function as a column resonator. The final change implemented was a redesign of the bridge, including the materials used (Vilayat Khan continually experimented with the bridge materials), the slope at which it was cut (jawari) and also the height, width, and angle at which it was mounted. Vilayat Khan's innovations produced a darker tone and smoother attack, as well as an increased range of timbre. Certain modifications of right hand technique were required to produce correctly articulated strokes on this new bridge.

The angle and muscle groups utilized in left hand playing were modified to increase the speed, duration, and precision of minds. The left thumb was placed at the center of the neck, as opposed to cupping the neck with palm. This allowed the thumb to function as fulcrum, and a combination of finger, wrist, and forearms muscles to operate simultaneously, increasing the overall power available, and also allowing for subtle inflections (often employing only the first finger) and rapid minds, which used the fulcrum point of the thumb to create a spring-like effect, using both the natural reflexes of the hand and the natural contours of string tension. Particular nodes of tension (minds of a certain interval, such as a major fourth) are stabilized as rest points, around which rapid and subtle microtonal embellishments
are articulated in a spring-like motion. For example, a *mind* of a minor third results in the creation of both a tonal center of gravity and a parallel, stabilized point of muscular tension, from which embellishments can be produced with flexibility and speed. This involves a complex interaction of the wrist, palm, and finger muscles, wherein the wrist acts as the primary pivot point, and the finger and palm muscles work inside this range.

There are parallels between the use of larynx muscles in vocal *khyal* and *thumri*, wherein a center pitch is held in the throat, and small muscle groups are used for embellishments. Vilayat Khan’s extensive training as a vocalist perhaps influenced his development of left hand technique. A comparative study of the neurophysiology of sitar and vocal music would help to clarify this hypothesis.

**Post-Independence Development of Mumbai**

Vilayat Khan’s ascendancy to fame in Mumbai parallels the development of the city into the main center for the economic and cultural life of modern India. Mumbai became a city of immigrants beginning in the early 1940s until the 1970s; during the years 1941-1971, two-thirds of the city’s residents were non-native (Patel: 8). Immigrants from Punjab, Bengal, Pakistan, and other areas formed the backbone of the burgeoning film and music industries. Mumbai’s traditionally dominant textile industries declined during in the post-partition years, and were replaced by massive increases in government funding for new industrial, manufacturing, and export businesses (Patel: 10). Mumbai soon developed into India’s leading financial center.
Mumbai was the center for the images and sounds that helped to construct the new nation’s cultural identity. The prevalence of immigrants and the absence of deeply embedded cultural, social, and regional forces found in other urban centers such as Delhi, Calcutta, and Lucknow, allowed for a greater degree of social freedom, reflecting the reconfiguration of individual and social identities.

Mumbai offered access to new forms of patronage, increasingly necessary with the decline of feudal patronage. By the early to mid-1950s, the Indian government had yet to implement the full range of programs and institutions for patronage. The young Arvind Parikh represented a new type of patron, he hailed from a family of internationally connected wealthy industrialists. Parikh had both the financial means and the cultural awareness to become a central patron, as well as an important student, and later scholar and historian. With Parikh’s support and promotion, Vilayat Khan was able to devote himself to the development of his style.

Mumbai was an international gateway, the center of India’s international trade relationships. The city’s cosmopolitan character drew many musicians, including Ravi Shankar, Amir Khan, and many others. Then, as today, it was an important place for aspiring musicians to make their mark on the larger domestic and international music market. At the same time, certain savvy musicians, such as Vilayat Khan and Ravi Shankar, were able to capitalize on the publicity machinery of stardom in Mumbai. Amrit Gangar describes the early growth of the “star-system” in Mumbai.

In quite early times, the Bombay film producers began to employ Hollywood methods of publicity and ‘star manufacture’. Film journalists also helped acquaint film fans with intimate details and incidents in the lives of their
favorite stars. Posters and booklets were displayed and sold to film lovers. By the late 1930s, however, the stars grabbed public attention and became the center of film production. (Gangar: 274)

Before discussing Khan’s confrontational relationship to the Indian musical establishment, it is necessary to briefly discuss Ravi Shankar. Shankar and Khan were instrumental in establishing the sitar as the most popular instrument in post-Independence India. Both artists gained their first exposure to wider popularity in Mumbai. At the same time, both artists were beneficiaries of multiple streams of musical influences, the implementation of which was facilitated by freedom from the constraints of the *gharana* system. Khan’s background and personal predilections took him in a different direction from Shankar’s, yet both shared the spotlight during a truly momentous time in India’s cultural and social history.

**Ravi Shankar’s Innovations**

Pt. Ravi Shankar gained international in the late 1960s, and remains the most famous contemporary Indian classical musician. His popularity crosses the boundaries of class and nation, as well as the popular/high-culture divide. A contemporary of Vilayat Khan, he forged new directions in sitar playing that had great popular appeal. His formative years provided the basis for his unorthodox artistic evolution. Shankar’s guru, Allahuddin Khan, was a sarod player, which compelled Shankar to develop his own technical approach to the instrument. Shankar’s cosmopolitan background exposed him to jazz, Western art music, and popular music culture.
Shankar’s unique tone and inclusion of Carnatic influenced embellishments gave him an immediately recognizable sound. His sitar playing emphasizes rapid movements of note clusters, unique embellishments and a subtle right-hand stroke. The fundamental basis of his tone and speed is his unique right-hand technique. Shankar employed his index finger as primary locus of the right-hand stroke, and these delicate finger movements gave his strokes a great deal of speed, as well as a ‘gentle’ sound. This diverged from the emphasis on the stroke-craft found in the Senia and Imdad Khan gharanas tantrakar baj, which employs the entire hand and occasionally the forearm muscles. His technique allowed for the inflection of only the main playing string, centering the focus on the notes being played instead of the bols.

Ravi Shankar’s left hand technique was also central to his unique approach. His emphasis on krintans (notes produced by deflecting the second finger left hand off the string) was influenced by Carnatic music. Highly rhythmic and compact embellishment patterns, combining krintans and minds, and fixed ornamental patterns, general between one to three semi tones created an exciting and broadly appealing style, situated on a continuum between dhrupad, Carnatic music, and khyal.

Ravi Shankar’s combination of dhrupad-based alap with innovative melodic and rhythmic practices attracted new audiences to the sitar. The addition of a lower-octave S string to the sitar bridged the gap between sitar and surbahar, and facilitated slow, meditative alap. He began to use many Carnatic ragas, such as Kirvani, Charukeshi, and Vaschipati, which, although controversial with
traditionalists, are quite popular with both performers and audiences, both Indian and international. As a result of Shankar’s advocacy, several of these ragas are now accepted as part of the Hindustani repertoire.

Shankar’s inclusion of several rhythmically-based improvisational structures is certainly his most controversial and influential legacy. Ravi Shankar’s background as a professional dancer may have influenced his utilization of lay kari (literally playing with time) and extensive use of teehais (a phrase played three times which resolves on either the sam or the mukra of the composition). Ravi Shankar featured teehais in his performances, which are popular with general audiences, and have become staples for most performers. Ravi Shankar pioneered the use of teehais with great adeptness and musicality. However, the current use of teehais is controversial among some purists, however, because other artists employ them without Shankar’s artistry. Both of these practices are central to North and South Indian dance forms, but were not extensively featured in instrumental music.

He popularized compositions in many different talas, diverging from the traditional basis towards teental. He also introduced the practice of sawal-javab (question and answer), a rhythmic question and answer between the sitar and tabla player, certainly influenced by the practice of trading-fours in Jazz. His sawab-javal was extremely popular among Western audiences. Among many instrumentalists, the sawab-javal has become an essential feature in a concert program. Imdad Khan

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3 Deepak Raja “Tee-hies and Rape of Melody” (2004) is an example of a contemporary critique.
4 The systematic and complex overlay of rhythmic subdivisions is an important feature in the Carnatic percussion traditions, as are teehais.
gharana musicians, however, scrupulously avoid it. We will now return to Vilayat Khan and the city of Mumbai to trace his rise to fame.

1955-1980: Musical Mastery and Controversy

The next twenty-five years of Vilayat Khan's life saw a tremendous increase in his reputation and acclaim, personal wealth, and the full development of his musical vision. After he settled in Mumbai, his stylistic innovations received a mixed reception from critics and audiences, but he began to gain celebrity status in Mumbai, which he described as "I was featured on the front pages of the newspapers in articles about my lifestyle, my clothing, and my cars." However, after a few years of this, he felt that he should focus himself on his art. The shadow of Inayat Khan still loomed large in over Vilayat, and as late as 1958 S.K. Chaubey writes,

I must say that he [Vilayat Khan] lacks the magic touch of his father whose style with all its Homeric simplicity and emotional appeal had no devious paths to follow. (Chauby 1958 in D. Neuman 1997)

One of Khan's stated aims was to attain both fame and material success. Arvind Parikh described to me what he saw as a defining moment: “Khan Sahib [honorific title for Vilayat Khan] was waiting for the bus to travel to a concert performance, and he saw a young man drive by in a new Rolls Royce, wearing gold and diamond cuff links and buttons. He said to me at this time- 'I will have all of that and more soon'” (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, December 20, 2009).

Vilayat Khan's first big break came with his London performance in 1951. This was the first performance of any post-Independence Indian artist in England.
From this event, he received a great deal of press, and began to obtain some material success. He describes this time:

> When I came back from The Festival of Britain in 1951, I was the man in Bombay. I bought a Jaguar. In Bombay I was playboy, like a film star. I used to dress like a film star, wearing French shirts adorned with red stripes and stars, as I drove around town in my two-seater Jaguar. I was very happy because of my playboy looks, and not my sitar playing. Now days, this is very common for artists. Then, musicians were known through their art, but at the time I became famous for my looks and image.... But sitar was never far from me, sitar has always been my body and soul. (Khan: 59)

Vilayat Khan began both and conduct orchestras compose for a variety of Art films and conduct the orchestra, beginning with Satyajit Ray's *Jalsaghar* (1958). Vilayat Khan composed music for a number of other films, including *The Guru*, *Kadambari*, and more recent films such as *Kama Sutra* (1998). These forays into the world of film were relatively infrequent in Khan's career. His primary focus was Hindustani classical music. His refusal to compromise his artistic and personal integrity often put him at odds with the musical establishment.

**Elite versus Democratic Art**

Vilayat Khan believed in the aristocracy of high art, and deeply resented the State’s intrusion in the world as an arbiter of culture value. The *tazib* of high Mughal culture remained within throughout his life, and set him apart from the broader trends in Indian society:

> His aloofness and elitism were an integral part of the feudal values acquired in early childhood. He had grown up amongst the nobility, and valued their cultivation in the arts, and also their standard of propriety and decorous conduct. As a corollary, he had only contempt for the credentials of the democratic state as a patron of the arts, and for the crassness of the culture
nourished by bourgeois capitalism after Independence. He stuck steadfastly and paid the price for doing so. (Raja 2004: 15)

Yet, in his live concerts he sometimes blurred the distinction between high and low art by including *thumri, ghazal, and simple folk songs*. This did not imply, however, that Khan saw light music as denying or subverting the classical tradition; rather, in Khan's aesthetic, these forms were part of Hindustani music's broad spectrum. Parikh relates an incident where Khan heard a homeless woman singing an improvised melody while begging. He gave her a meal, and later included her tune in his concert that evening (Parikh, personal interview, February 15, 2011). Parikh demonstrated a radical interpretation of *raag Bhairavi* for me, and shocked me by recounting that Khan had taken these musical ideas from a film song he had heard earlier that afternoon (personal interview, February 15, 2011). All of these musical genres and diverse influences, however, were always interpreted in accordance with *khyal* aesthetics.

There is sufficient evidence to argue that Vilayat Khan's emotionally charged and painstaking renditions of *thumri, ghazal, and koli* reflected his own tastes as well as his audience, and were not simply a means of compelling a mass audience to sit through intellectually demanding classical renditions. His inclusions of these light genres was sometimes disparaged by critics, a judgment indicative of persistent elite class identification with classical styles, which could reflect a coping mechanism for the cognitive dissonance created by Vilayat Khan's catholic tastes. In
fact, even a highly educated Marxist like Vinayak Purohit dismisses Vilayat Khan’s inclusion of light music as an integral component of his concert repertoire,

Vilayat Khan, in sheer competitive excess, tried to translate the *thumri ang* on the sitar. Without the support of a literary text, this enterprise was bound to prove futile, and in fact, only succeeded in disturbing the *raga* form with embellishments that lacked rhyme or reason. Quite often Vilayat Khan recited the *cheeja* [song text] and interrupted his instrumental performance with indifferent singing. (Purohit: 908)

Purohit’s disdain for Khan’s music criticizes not only his motivation, playing and singing *thumri* from “sheer competitive excess,” but also his singing ability, and, according to Purohit, Khan’s severe shortcomings in his knowledge of *thumri* itself. Criticisms of this nature occurred throughout Khan’s life, but he appears to have completely ignored them, at least judging by his musical output.

In order to better understand Khan’s musical choices in this complex cultural milieu, we will now turn to Ravi Shankar and examine his forays into fusion, illuminating the dynamic cultural environment of this time. Ravi Shankar experimented with a variety of Western styles, including composing for orchestra and creating many fusion albums bringing together a variety of musical traditions. His early work with Yehudi Menuhin brought Hindustani music and Shankar to the attention of classical music composers and listeners, while his influence on the Beatles’ guitar player George Harrison helped to transform the 1960s popular music soundscape. His legacy continues through his daughter, Anushka Shankar, who has achieved international popularity with her fusion music (see Ch.1).
Khan’s refusal to perform any type of fusion throughout his life made him somewhat of an anomaly in his lifetime, as it became common practice among many instrumentalists, and Shankar’s tremendous success in this area removed any stigma attached to this practice. In fact, Shankar’s fusion was widely viewed as raising the status of Hindustani music among the Western classical music audience, and was viewed by the Indian government as a resounding diplomatic success. Khan positioned himself as an outsider in the new world that had opened up for Hindustani music. In order to more fully understand the complexity of Khan’s relationship to post-Independence India’s national identity, we will examine his relationship to a broader cultural spectrum, beginning with film.

Vilayat Khan’s composed his first film soundtrack for the noted art-film director Satyajit Ray’s critically acclaimed 1959 film *Jalsaghar* (The Music Room). Like Khan, Ray was known exclusively as an art film director, receiving numerous domestic and international awards. Ray eventually gave up film making because of his lack of commercial success in India. The themes of *Jalsaghar* will serve as an analogy for the place of feudal culture in post-Independence India. The film featured Hindustani music as a central element of the plot, and gave Khan a great deal of scope. The protagonist of the film is a music loving zamindar (landlord) whose declining fortunes only increase his love for music. During the film, three concerts serve as temporal and emotional signifiers for the landlord and the changing environment of music, as well as the sense of mourning and social dislocation which occurred in post-partition India. The first concert is a flashback to the landlord’s
former glory years, prompted by his neighbor’s loud music. He remembers a sumptuous concert that featured one of the era’s top performers in his music room, and he recounts to his wife that he would spend his last penny on such music. The second concert takes place on a stormy evening in the present, as he awaits the return of his wife and son, traveling by boat from her mother’s house. However, his wife and son die in the storm, and ravaged by grief he closes the music room. At the end of the film, the protagonist holds a final concert, disturbed by his neighbor’s ostentation and poor taste in music. He spends all of his resources on the event, and afterwards enjoys the memories in the late evening sharing anecdotes of his ancestors with a servant. A final candle burns in the music room, and he is convinced that he must leave before it is extinguished. He rides off on a horse, and is thrown violently to ground, expiring instantly.

This plot resonates with Vilayat Khan’s nostalgia for his own upbringing in the estates of wealthy Bengali landlords and the end of the era of aristocratic and cultured patrons. Purohit describes Ray as a “zamindar-type” filmmaker, promoting an ideological agenda that pits the old India against the new Westernized nation (Purohit: 1032). The zamindars were well aware of their precarious position in the 1930s. Jalsaghar and other films highlight this sense of foreboding. This film reflects cultural mourning in the socially and culturally dislocated world of post-Independence India, “cinematic traces are indexical of acts of cultural mourning” (Sarkar: 2). It is part of the larger narrative of India’s partition, “partition marks a moment of rupture, a historical realization of the structural lack endemic to all bourgeois formations” (ibid.: 4).
Music in this film is both a metaphor of rupture and mourning, and a visceral expression of this lost world through Vilayat Khan’s soundtrack. Vilayat Khan constantly recalled the musical life of his childhood in onstage dialogues, in conversations, interviews, and most importantly through music. The contradictory aspect of his personality, as a “radical musical revolutionary” and an “uncompromising classicist” are mediated through his constant allusions to the past, whether ghostly refrains of early 78 rpm recordings onstage, or lovingly recreated traditional compositions of his grandfather. Jalsaghar is a meditation on the emptying of social and cultural space inhabited by the past, leaving a void that cannot be filled except by remembrance. Khan held firmly to the elite and aristocratic world of his past, and was able to fashion himself a similar social status and affluence through his music. He was able to recreate himself in this lost world, not as a servant to the royalty, but as royalty himself; his early desire for material success and symbols of status, I suggest, reflect his desire to personify and preserve the high culture of nineteenth- and early twentieth-century India. Yet, his burning ambition did not temper his disdain for other forms of media.

By the mid-1960 Khan became very successful, and lived a lifestyle comparable to Indian film stars. After several years, however, he became disenchanted with the film industry, mass adulation, and the Indian media in general. His confrontational relationship with the press, television, and concert promoters was legendary. He expressed this disdain for both the tastes of the masses, and the new Indian “culture industry” in several ways. Vilayat Khan expressed this sentiment by ceasing to perform on the radio by 1952. In a 1966
interview Vilayat describes his reasons for retiring from the radio: “I stopped playing
the radio, because every artist receives the same rate, every artist is measured with
the same scale,5 and the honor and respect that an artist deserves is not given”
(Sangeet Magazine, May 1966). He also expressed indignation that those accorded
the honor of judging the qualifications of artists were not skilled enough to do so.
Vilayat Khan also refused any television performances until the late 1990s. When
requested to perform on television, he stipulated the following requirements:

I want to play for radio and TV, but only according to my principles. First of all, the presentation should be very appropriate. When I sit to perform I will tell them that I am acting in the role of a cloud. That very moment the screen behind me will project a cluster of clouds. Slowly the clouds will transform into man holding a sitar. This sitar will shower melodies like a rainstorm. Then I will be submerged in water, and the music will manifest visually through vibrations in the water. Then, in the next hour, I will be flying in the clouds. Drops of water falling on leaves will be give life to my melodies [...] If they pay me 500,000 to 800,000 rupees I will consider doing a performance on television. (Khan: 50-51)

These requirements were difficult to fulfill, and reflect Khan’s disdain for
mass media. His demanding attitude towards the media and the politics of the music
world cost him dearly, but he remained adamant. He states in the same interview:

I did not get popularity through radio and television. Is it only my sorrow, and my fault, or is it also the fault of radio and television producers. They only like to publish my sad stories?6 The real problems caused to music by politicians such as Lalu Prasad are never discussed (Khan: 51).

5 The rating system for artists was often politically motivated, and did not allow a measure for the truly exceptional. There was a certain bias, in the early radio, against artists from traditional artistic families (predominantly Muslim), and also reflected particular cultural agendas and power struggles in post-Independence India.
6 He is referring here to the tendency of the press to publicize negative and controversial aspects of his life.
Khan’s reference to Lalu Prasad alludes here to the Hindu far right’s use of communal tension for political gain, thereby increasing rifts between Hindus and Muslim in the music world. His actions, motivated by the aristocratic values of a bygone era, reflect his pride, but also offer a meta-commentary on India’s social landscape. Shankar embraced the modern world, and has enjoyed a stellar reputation throughout his life; he promotes the ancient culture of India, yet embraces modern developments. The contradictions between Khan and Shankar’s musical choices and relationship to the media arise from their self-identification with two divergent streams of history, influencing not only their relationship to the past, but also their embrace or rejection of modernity.

Khan and State Sponsorship of Art

Vilayat Khan’s refusal of the highest honors of the Indian government is legendary. He refused the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in 1962, and later the highest civilian awards Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, and the Padma Vibhushan. He described his reasons for doing so in a heated exchange published in the Hindu newspaper:

This is an insult to me. If there is any award for sitar in India, I must get it first,” he said alleging that the Sangeet Natak Academy had been influenced by lobby, politics and favoritism while deciding the awardees. “There has always been a story of wrong time, wrong person and wrong award in this country,” a visibly enraged Khan said at a crowded press meet here. Pointing out that sitar and its ‘Parampara’ had seen the longest ever tradition in his family and his ancestors had chiseled the ‘Gayaki Ang’, crucial to the playing of the instrument, Khan said no other ‘gharana’ was older than his in this arena. “For generations, both from my paternal and maternal sides, have made sitar their religion and today the entire nation is copying our
In 1966, he recounted similar reasons for refusing the Sangeet Natak Academy Award in *Sangeet Magazine*: “This award is given out in a ‘left handed manner’ [dishonest], recipients are chosen because of politics. My work was not recognized at the time due to these factors. Now, for these reasons I don’t want to accept it” (Sangeet: 1966). In contrast, Ravi Shankar was awarded the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1962, and became a fellow of the academy in 1975. He also received the three highest national civil honors of India: Padma Bhushan, in 1967, Padma Vibhushan, in 1981, and Bharat Ratna, in 1999. Vilayat Khan refused the Padma Shri in 1964, the Padma Bushan in 1968, and the Padma Vibushan in 2000; he was never offered the Bharat Ratna. The reasons for Vilayat Khan’s refusal, while easy to discount to sour grapes, are manifestations of the overall cultural politics in post-Independence India, and are linked to deeper issues of the locus of control of India’s cultural narrative (discussed above in relation to Amir Khusrau). Khan states:

I am not angry with the government alone, it is also with the people who are taking the award too quickly. You said after Ravi Shankar received the Bharat Ratna award, he said that it should also be offered to Vilayat Khan. If this was the case, then why did he accept the award? My anger is more with Ravi Shankar than the government. Today I can speak, and will speak directly. In his mind and heart, Ravi Shankar knows that I am better and senior artist than him. He also knows that I play better than him and my gharana is far more prestigious than his. He knows that I have done a great deal to transform and develop the sitar. I am senior to Ravi; in Indian music culture,

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seniority always comes first, you must first give respect to elders. (Khan: 52-53)

The tension between tradition and modernity, and elite versus democratic art runs through Vilayat Khan’s discourse, as does the locus of cultural control. His confrontational attitude did not win many to his side who were not already predisposed to him. The reality of cultural politics in India was something that goes to the very foundation of the new, secular Indian State, and the historical narratives that developed out of British colonialism and formed the backdrop for the nationalist movements, “That colonial history, developed primarily to sustain and ratify British rule, quickly became the ground for contradictory and limited yet powerful assertions of patriotism is well known” (Sarkar: 19). Components of the colonial historical narrative became foundational for the new state’s narratives, and played out clearly in the formulation of state-sponsored cultural institutions, “the thought that British rule was a great improvement on medieval Muslim tyranny could provide considerable solace as well as a safe and distant site for locating a largely imaginary history of Hindu prowess against - not British, but Muslim-invaders” (ibid.: 19).

While Vilayat Khan does not mention this particular aspect of the narrative in his discussion of the refusal of the awards, framing it in terms of etiquette and “adab” from a more intelligible world, the visceral reaction that many experienced with his words actually results from his questioning of fundamental beliefs promoted in the “new India,” and the deep wounds stemming from partition. Vilayat Khan, when discussing this issue, continually uses the words “dukh” and “gham”
which mean sorrow, emotional pain, and loss, which I think reflect his increasing disillusionment with the promises of an independent India, and the role of the State in sponsoring particular ideological and sectarian identities. Chatterjee describes this process as being influenced by the weakness of the bourgeoisie in post-Independence India:

In any situation where an emergent bourgeoisie lacks the social conditions for establishing complete hegemony over the new nation, it resorts to a ‘passive revolution’, by attempting a ‘molecular transformation’ of the old dominant classes into partners in a new historical bloc and only a partial appropriation of the popular masses, in order to first create a state as the necessary preconditions for the establishment of capitalism as the dominant mode of production. (1986:60)

In the Indian national consciousness, the Mughal era was represented as an idealized vision of an unattainable past, but often the living representatives of this culture were marginalized.

As described in the *Music Room*, the ending of both patronage from previous aristocracies and cultured zamindars resulted in the imposition of a capitalist model on modes of musical production and consumption. To see music as outside quantitative modes of valuation is central to the traditional beliefs of Hindustani music culture. For example, to pay for lessons demeans both the pupil and the teacher, if it is the full talim or knowledge which is being communicated, because the music itself is valued on an entirely different axis than that of the produced objects in the capitalist economic system. Vilayat Khan states that he, as of 2001, had not touched money for 15 years (Khan: 57). Of course, he had the means to have others handle his finances, but the underlying thought is that art is above the
marketplace, and that the machinations of the marketplace ultimately distort the true meaning of music and its ability to transcend the world of *samsara*, the cycles of history, in which music allows access to an archetypal realm of ideal forms.

**World’s Apart: Khan and Shankar**

It can be postulated that Vilayat Khan’s changes to the sitar were part of a complex dynamic, including personal innovation, historical factors that include larger processes of music development, life circumstances, changing social and cultural environments, and technological advances. I consider several elements central to this process: first, The new role of the artist in post-Independence India with the final demise of the feudal patronage system in 1947 created a new socio-cultural context for artists, requiring a national audience as opposed to competing princely states. To be successful, musicians had to present themselves as relevant to the new India. This was incredibly dislocating for traditionally grounded artists, but it allowed artists such as Vilayat Khan and Ravi Shankar to literally recreate themselves as public personae in a new space. Both Ravi Shankar’s and Vilayat Khan’s personal circumstances gave them more freedom in this regard. Ravi Shankar was from an upper class Brahmin family that had very little involvement in music, and probably would not have pursued this line had he been born a few decades earlier. Likewise, it is unlikely that Vilayat Khan would have been able to pursue his musical and technical innovations with the same zeal had his father survived. He would have been bound to uphold tradition, and his innovations might or might not have been welcomed by his father.
Second, Hindu-Muslim identity: This is still a controversial subject in India, for musical tastes sometimes reflect covert religious biases. Vilayat Khan emphasized the Islamic heritage of his music, and his redesign of the instrument reflected an Islamic identity in several facets. First, regardless of the acoustic realm, the removal of the *tumba* brought the instrument closer to the Persian *setar*, further from the Hindu *bin*. This can be clearly contrasted with Ravi Shankar’s enlargement of the second *tumba*, and his clearly articulated position that the sitar was a derivation of the *vina*, and that *dhrupad*, not *khyal*, was the proper foundation for sitar music. Secondly, Vilayat Khan simplified the ornamentation of the sitar itself, dispensing with the floral and sometimes religious decoration, and substituted repeating geometric forms and shapes, based on the abstract patterns central to Islamic art. Perhaps most telling is the form where the *parda* meets the nut, designed in the easily recognizable contours of the prayer alcoves found in mosques.

A superficial understanding of religious conflict obscures the real power dynamic between social relevance and artistic control. Many superior Muslim musicians were discriminated against in concert venues, government sponsored international performances, awards, radio, and recording industry. These practices continue today, and are also common in some American and European diasporic concert circuits wherein sponsors tend to favor artists from their own region.

The emphasis on the Islamic character of Hindustani music is clearly a defensive posture, necessitated by decades of pressure from Hindu-centric cultural narratives, educational institutions, and other practices, which culminated in the newly formed Indian government’s cultural policies, beginning in the late 1940s.
Examples of the assertion of their Islamic heritage include the Islamic motifs on Vilayat Khan’s sitar and the etiological role he and many other prominent Muslim musicians (most notably Ustad Amir Khan) assigned to the twelfth century poet and musician Amir Khusrau. While Amir Khusrau’s development of tabla, sitar and vocal genres such as *khyal* is disputed, this belief functions asserts the Islamic origins of Hindustani music and links music to Sufic religious practices with the trans-temporal *silsilah*. In this view, music is a bridge between the mundane and the spiritual realms – ephemeral musical sound has a counterpart in eternity – is derived from the Neo-platonic steams of thought found in Sufism. Khan clarifies his connection with this belief system in a 1995 interview: “Even in the 10th, 11th, and 12th centuries Sufis and swamis started analyzing the colors and the connection with the waters of the seven seas, the seven planets, and the seven stones” (Strauss and Khan, November 15, 1995). That this is an alternative, or subaltern history, is indicated clearly by Shankar’s self-positioning on a different axis.

Ravi Shankar’s music also arose in the contested space between tradition and innovation in post-Independence India. Ravi Shankar fused elements drawn from a diverse stream into an immediately recognizable sitar style, yet described his music as part of the ancient Hindu tradition, rooted in the *dhrupad ang*. His music was ideally suited for a broad new audience, offering an exciting and vivacious alternative to the tradition-bound and highly intellectual *dhrupad*-based Senia style, yet still affirming a link to ancient India’s spiritual legacy.

Ravi Shankar has expressed his Hindu interpretation of North Indian classical music in numerous interviews, concert dialogues, and in his 1972
biography *My Music My Life*, where he repeats and amplifies the positions dating back to nineteen century orientalists like William Jones. Shankar describes Khusrau’s invention of the complex *khyal* form *tarana* during a singing contest between Khusrau and a Hindu musician, during which Khusrau, ignorant of Sanskrit, “immediately mimicked the sounds of the words, using nonsense syllables he made up as he went along [...] and from this clever trick of Amir Khusru, the *tarana* style [...] was born” (Shankar 1969: 33). Shankar describes the birth of *khyal* as part of this legacy of degeneration:

> Then *khyal* took over, along with sitar, sarod, sarangi, and tabla. Slowly the whole aspect of purity of the raga, the sanctity of the raga, the rasa...was gone [...]Some only used vilambit tempo, very peaceful, but that’s all. Some only took simple words and juggled them. And most of the maharajas were either drunkards or had their concubines sitting with them, and they would throw golden coins at the musicians...they were having money thrown at them like a cockfight. That became the biggest thing in our music in the 19th century. (Shankar in Lavezzoli: 422)

Some scholarship on Hindu/Muslim conflict in Hindustani music unfortunately simplifies the complex nuances of this issue in reductionist terms that betray a Western cultural bias (perhaps unconscious) that neglects the true complexity of India’s cultural matrix. It is perhaps hard for most Westerners to comprehend the relative “truth” that operates between situational and hierarchical levels of social interactions –which in practice means that individuals can hold multiple, apparently contradictory beliefs simultaneously, without cognitive dissonance or duplicity. A dichotomizing tendency betrays certain ethno-centric bias. In the case of Vilayat Khan, the division between Hindu and Muslim communal polarities is blurred.
It should not be assumed that Vilayat Khan was in any way a religious chauvinist. He often stated that raags were living deities, especially citing Bhairav and Bhairavi as vehicles to connect with the living energies of male and female deities Shiva and Parvati (see ch. 7). I have found that many traditional Muslim musicians close to Vilayat Khan’s age have respect for Hindu deities. The dhrupad vocalist Dagar described his art to me in terms of Hindu spiritual practice of kundalini yoga, relating different notes and ragas to chakras (physio-spiritual energy centers in the physical body, found in Hinduism, Buddhism and Jain traditions) and deities. This deep affinity for Hindu culture among Muslim musicians is often neglected, or presented as “selling out” to the dominant culture (see Bahkle 2005).

For both Shankar and Khan, music was a performative act of identification of one’s self, and one’s vision of Indian history. Their construction and design of their instruments was a physical representation of two alternate, yet intertwined histories. Both were central figures in the rise of instrumental music from a socially stigmatized and aesthetically limited position. Shankar certainly had more influence internationally, and remains the most recognizable name in Hindustani music today. Khan’s marginalization from the widespread support and acclaim accorded Shankar made his art and life a narrative of resistance. The articulation of these narratives contradicts the widely held opinion that Hindustani music today is a force for unity; while it certainly has this potential, an accurate portrayal of contemporary Hindustani music must come to grips with deeply ingrained biases that have troubled India since the 1857 mutiny.
The ruptures and continuities of India’s history form assemblages of conceptual content, embodied practices, and the core of diverging historical narratives. The resonance between these polarities forms the unresolvable questions, the repetition of which produces endless becomings. Khan positioned himself between vocal/instrumental divide, and transformed sitar and twentieth century Hindustani music.

In the matrix of resonance between these polarities, fields of agency, creativity, and *emplacement* are generated. Shankar and can s, while Khan’s relationship to music and the world is deeply informed by the 1857 Munity and the final demise of the feudal world. Yet, both of the great artists have woven multiple strands of the past into a new field of vast creative potentialities, and their innovations still stand as edge of possibility for the sitar.
Chapter 7: The *Gayaki Ang*: Lines of Flight and Virtual Singularities

Vilayat Khan’s music is a constant dialogue between tradition, creation and memory, enhanced by his wide-ranging and diverse repertoire, performance structure, and technical innovations. The broad scope of available material, including commercial recordings, live performances and interviews, demands a selective interpretation and analysis, with the hope of illuminating the foundational elements of the *gayaki ang*.

This chapter shows that the *gayaki ang*’s unique contribution to Hindustani music lies in the freedom it gives a musician to access entire ranges of repertoire, expression, and technique, and to compel individual vision. I contend that the *gayaki ang* is the first truly “modern” instrumental style, and transcends Hindustani instrumental genres through its reflexivity and networks of referential meaning.

**Psychological Considerations**

As shown in chapter 6, Vilayat Khan’s familial support structures were torn away in his early childhood. That loss appears to have affected his personal and musical life and influence his willingness to transcend traditional boundaries and explore new musical worlds. His quest for an individual, yet traditionally grounded voice can be conceptualized through Deleuze’s thoughts on freedom in music:
In order for music to free itself, it will have to pass over to the other side - there where territories tremble, where the structures collapse, where the ethos get mixed up, where a powerful song of the earth is unleashed, the great ritornello that transmutes all the airs it carries away and makes return. (Deleuze 1997: 104)

Innate talent and psychological pressures seem to precipitate Khan’s development of the gayaki ang, which resulted in a reconfiguration of the possible. If the traditional canon and techniques of sitar are viewed as assemblages, then Khan’s developments can be seen as the rupture of the stratified through deterritorialization, also defined in Deleuze and Guattari’s terminology as lines of flight: “Music has always sent out lines of flight, like so many ‘transformative multiplicities’, even overturning the very codes that structure or arborify it” (Deleuze and Guattari: 11). Specific extra-musical factors in Khan’s life will illuminate why the gayaki ang became necessary for his artistic expression.

Khan’s desire to be a vocalist, and his frustration at not being allowed to pursue this dream directly led him to redesign the sitar and articulate his personal distillation of the great masters of the past. In his autobiography he states, “I pray that in my next lifetime I will be reborn as a vocalist, and then through music I will be able to obtain moksha [liberation from the cycle of birth and death]” (Khan: 72). Khan attempted to recreate exactly all of the musical, semantic, and technical aspects of vocal music in the entirely different medium of instrumental music, a radical move for the day. One of the most frequent criticisms of Khan’s gayaki ang is
that all of his Hindustani music ultimately derives from vocal music. I posit, however, that based on empirical data, that Khan distilled the vast body of Hindustani vocal music into a coherent and aesthetically pleasing whole, thereby transcending the sitar’s physical limitations, and giving it a new and unique position in the musical firmament.

After describing Khan’s background and musical influences, Kumar Prasad Mukherji contends:

All this, however, does not explain the astonishing command he developed over the instrument, unmatched by any sitar player before or since. It was amazing that a bowless string could reproduce the vocalism of the Kirana gharana, especially the elaborate vistar radically different from the classical dhrupad alap of the binkar of yesteryear that has been glamorized by Pandit Ravi Shankar. (Mukherji: 1730)

According to Dan Neumann, in order to understand Khan from the Western standpoint he should be viewed as a combination of Heifetz and Mozart, as both virtuoso and creator. Khan’s life story has been recounted in Chapter 6, but other personal attributes must be considered before delving into his music.

**Khan’s Musical Memory**

A major element in Khan’s amazing career is his total recall of all the music he ever heard in his life, and his ability to access these memories in an instant and articulate them in performance. He has described this ability as being able to hear the music as it unfolds, and to see it in its totality. One of Mozart’s letters alludes to a

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1 Shankar posits that his music is also gayaki in its basis, but differs from Khan’s music in its foundation in dhrupad ang. (Manuel 1990: 170)
similar ability. Mozart describes how musical ideas, which come to him unbidden, are developed into full compositions:

All this fires my soul, and, provided I am not disturbed, my subject enlarges itself, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though it be long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind, so that I can survey it, like a fine picture or a beautiful statue, at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination all the parts successively, but I hear them, as it were all at once (gleich alles zusammen). (Holmes: 44-45)

Khan’s statement in his autobiography is confirmed by students and family, one must “see with your ears and hear with your eyes” (Hidayat Khan, personal interview, November 7, 2010). ³

Khan’s memory allowed him to transpose recordings and musical events he had heard in his youth directly into a performance. His live performances can be seen as translations of a vast range of musical experience, with concomitant emotional, historical, and musical referents, into the frame of any particular present performance environment. His great artistic freedom allowed him to continually redefine his playing, influenced by his mood and audience. Deepak Raja describes this process as follows:

An important part of Vilayat Khan’s vocalized idiom comes from his photographic memory. He had memorized so many khyal renditions of the departed masters that echoes of their recordings- firmly etched in the memories of his audience- are easily discernable in the Ustad’s phrasing. His renditions thus acquired a haunting quality that often rendered his admirers sleepless after a concert. As recently as October 1991, at a concert in Los

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³ Clues to the neuropsychology underlying this phenomenon are found in the cross-modal activation of the superior temporal and occipital regions, in which auditory stimuli activate the retinotopic visual cortex. (See Cate AD, Herron TJ, Yund EW, Stecker GC, Rinne T, et al. 2009 Auditory Attention Activates Peripheral Visual Cortex. PLoS ONE 4(2): e4645. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0004645)
Angeles, he reproduced a rendering of Zohrabai Agrawali (*Paani bhareri* in Gara) from a 78 rpm disc recorded more than a century ago, accompanying his sitar rendering with his own voice. (Raja 2004: 20 *Sruti Magazine*).

Finally, Khan firmly believed that music was not separate from the personality and life experiences of an artist, but part of a single continuum. He states in his autobiography that "You must discover, learn, and present [sic] in your behavior. Your personality must be full of music and full of love" (Khan: 115), and "to be a colorful musician you must be a colorful person" (Khan: 76). Both of Khan's sons, Shujaat and Hidayat, have commented on Khan's injunction to go out and experience life, expose yourself to every influence and bring it into music. Khan often stressed that a balanced person of diverse interests can create balanced and interesting music; a musician obsessed with only will create music that lacks vitality (Hidayat Khan, personal interview, November 7, 2010; Shujaat Khan, telephone interview, September 7, 2009).

Khan's meticulous and passionate nature was evident in many areas of his life. Whether he was preparing for a concert, taking apart and rebuilding the engine of one of his Mercedes, or adding to his collection of rare perfumes, Khan studied every facet of the endeavor, applying enormous concentration. Parikh's reminiscence of Khan illustrates this point clearly:

He was a superb billiards player and an excellent ballroom dancer... Whatever he did, he did with meticulous attention. Once he started studying cars, he could open up the engine of a car and put it back together. Also, he is an authority on French perfumes. Once, I found myself with him in a perfume shop in Paris, and he swept the owner off his feet with his knowledge about the technicalities of perfumes [...] Even in matters unrelated to music, he was almost obsessive about precision and order – Once, I remember watching him arrange these small glass animals inside a showcase [...] not wanting to be
disturbed until he finished [...] He has had the same approach towards everything in his life—whether it was music, food, or his clothes. His hallmark is attention to detail until he achieves a level of stunning excellence and perfection. He set the standard for concert dressing with his stylish use of the India dress, the *churidar-kurta* (Parikh 2002: 22-23).

These psychophysical aspects will be discussed in relation to the aspects of Khan's music, and will be augmented as required by the topic under discussion.

**Defining the *Gayaki Ang***

In order to fully appreciate Khan's achievement, a fuller understanding of *gayaki ang*, or vocal style, is essential. *Gayaki*, as a term, is inclusive of all vocal genres within Hindustani music (Gautam 1980). *Gayaki ang*, in Khan's usage, is a complex term, encompassing compositions, *tans*, and vocal-influenced *alap gayaki ang*. It is the collective assemblage of the virtual and manifest which uses the sitar to articulate multiple genres and stylistic features of individual artists into an ever-changing musical and socio-cultural landscape. The *gayaki ang* represents the distillation of generations of musicians through the unique vision of a single artist, and can be conceived as a “multiplicity” in Deleuze's terminology.

The term *ang* informs several semantic levels which contain in the term *gayaki ang*. *Ang* transcends *gharana*, and contains within it a body of techniques, an artistic philosophy, and compositional and improvisational structures. As described in chapters 4 and 5, *dhrupad ang* informs multiple genres, and is a foundational approach to music articulated through performance, as well as a defining of an individual artist's connection to the continuum of music history. To personally claim
to create a new ang is rather audacious, as it ascribes to an individual the power to create an entirely new realm of musical meaning.

Khan insisted that the sitar was simply a vehicle for the expression of vocal music, “I become a part of the instrument, and therefore I do not need to concentrate on playing. It is as if the sitar is my hand, raga is my mind, and the range of vocal styles [gayaki] is my heart. Whenever I sat for any performance on the stage, I visualize the entirety of the sitar baj [playing] as a vocal performance” (Khan: 44).

The model in figure 7.1 represents the interlocking elements that are the foundation to the gayaki ang. In the center is voice production, informing tone production on the instrument, compositions, and tans. Performance elements include concert structure as well as methods of improvisation and raga development. Thumri and khyal vocal genres inform Khan’s broadly defined aesthetic, dhrupad provides structural elements, and thumri and ghazal influences the romantic interpretations of raga, as well as his occasional approach to song text in performance. Each circle is a separate plane, but can interact with any of the others and inform new assemblages. These spheres for virtual planes of potentiality, which Deleuze describes as an ontological category, they exist in the actual as transcendental as immanent, creating spaces of potential creativity that are not static spaces, but as William Echard states “being, which is becoming, is the continual process by which virtualities are actualized in new lines of development” (Echard: 8).

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Figure 7.1 Conceptual foundation of *gayaki ang*

Figure 7.2 represents the multiple intersecting deep structures that are manifest through various levels of music and performance aesthetics. The outer circle contains the vehicles for the manifestation of these deep structures in sound. This model should be imagined as a three-dimensional space, wherein the outer circle forms new networks of connections within and between the various levels of the deep structures. The final sphere, *gayaki ang* is the totality of these elements as they are manifested in real-time performance situations through the left and right hand and basic musical forms.
Figure 7.2 Intersection of performer, technique, repertoire, and vocal music systems

Figure 7.2 represents the intersection of the virtual with the body and the formal and technical aspects of Hindustani instrumental music. Echard describes the intersection of body, instrument and music:

A body can be subject to instruments and to music: transformed over long years of practice to a state of proficient compliance. Or, an instrument can be subject to music and to bodies: designed, refined and produced to satisfy aesthetic and biomechanical specifications. Or, both can be subject to music, and vice versa. The becomings of all three are entwined yet distinct. They cooperate and struggle, diverge and converge. (Echard: 7)

In order to clarify these multiple intersections, the following analysis will move between the elements in figure 7.2 and the conceptual system of raga as articulated in Hindustani music. This model provides a means to gradually illuminate facets of
this network so that the multi-dimensional processes within this complex system
are perceptible as simultaneity/linearity and process/product. My intention is to
elucidate this phenomenon as an unfolding network of processes in the space-time
continuum of performance.

Deleuze designates networks as “multiplicities.” Multiplicities are
combinations that can exhibit synergistic emergent properties distinct from additive
combinations. Constituent elements are termed singularities.

We may, perhaps, determine certain minimal conditions for a structure
[assemblage] in general: 1) There must be at least two heterogeneous series,
one of which shall be determined as “signifying” the other and the other as a
“signified” (a single series never suffices to form a structure). 2) Each of these
series is constituted by terms which exist only through the relation they
maintain with each other. To these relations, or rather to the value of these
relations, there correspond very particular events, that is singularities which
are assignable within the structure […] 3) The two heterogeneous series
converge toward a paradoxical element, which is their “differentiator”. This
is the principle of the emission of singularities. This element belongs to no
series, or rather, it belongs to both series at once and never ceases to
circulate throughout them. (Deleuze: The Logic of Sense: pg. 50-51)

In light of this theory, Vilayat Khan’s gayaki ang contains at least four
heterogeneous series of signifiers (content) and signified (expressions): raga,
conceptual supra/infra-structure, sitar technique, and musical-historical-culture
resonances. These series are articulated as both structure and function in
performance, which can be conceived of as “events” in Deleuze’s terms: “It is
imprecise to oppose structure and event: the structure includes a register of ideal
events, that is an entire history internal to it” (ibid.: 50). On the taut surface of the
ideal (virtual), the suspended intersection of performance (manifestation) and
structure form the necessary tension of creative action in the field of space/time. Thus each performance is an assemblage, defined as “wholes characterized by relations of exteriority. These relations imply, first of all, that a component part of an assemblage may be detached from in and plugged in a different assemblage in which its interactions are different” (De Landa 2002: 10).

The Gayaki ang’s components will be clarified by modeling some specific categories that will provide a superstructure for the detailed analysis to follow. For the analytical theory underlying this process, I turn to Deleuze’s assemblage theory, which provides an analytical frame for articulating the interaction of multiple systems of coding into networks. Thus, the gayaki ang can be seen as a series of choices that determine what is played, how it is played, and a musician’s conceptual design. It thus operates on both manifest and virtual levels, meaning that music making is articulated through performance and the intentional/conceptual mindset of the musician. Gayaki ang as assemblage consists of the following strata: (1) instrument construction and tone production; (2) khyal-based alap; (3) jor; (4) bandish (vilambit and drut); (5) tan prakar; (6) imaginal and conceptual frameworks (the virtual).

The following sections will present a detailed examination of the gayaki ang. I will first delineate the conceptual and aesthetic dimensions of the gayaki ang derived from khyal vocalism and Khan’s interpretation of raga, followed by the elucidation of specific right and left hand techniques. The second part of this chapter will analyze several recorded performances to demonstrate the operation of the gayaki ang assemblage.
CONCEPTUAL AND VIRTUAL FOUNDATIONS: KHYAL AND RAGA

The bedrock of the gayaki ang is the translation of khyal vocal music to the sitar. The process requires a comprehensive understanding of the various elements that comprise the stylistic and structural features of each gharana, as well the facets and techniques of individual artists. However, it must be understood the gayaki ang is a constantly unfolding dialogue between paradigms of structure, elaboration, and individual phrases colored by specific artists, expressed through Khan’s creativity in the moment of performance.

A brief discussion of khyal\(^4\) will help to differentiate its overall approach to raga from dhrupad styles. Modern khyal developed from the mid-eighteenth century until the twentieth century, and was a major departure from dhrupad aesthetics. Khyal literally means “imagination” and allowed individual artists a great deal of creative freedom, contrasting with the rigorous formal strictures of dhrupad. Although the presentation of ragas differed greatly between various khyal gharanas, the overall distinction from dhrupad is found in the primacy of emotional expression over formal, intellectual elements. The song text, the core of dhrupad presentations, was reduced in duration and importance in khyal, and often served simply as scaffolding for the performer’s improvisations.

Khyal first appeared in the mid-fifteenth century, and reached maturity during the eighteenth century in numerous princely courts throughout India. Muslim rulers were the primary patrons of khyal and most early khyal performers

\(^4\) A detailed discussion of khyal gharanas can be found in Wade (1999) and Raja (2009).
were Muslims, trained in diverse gharanas (Wade: 2). Khyal differs from other Hindustani music genres in its wide range of improvisational techniques, including some forms derived from dhrupad and thumri. Khyal’s improvisational categories include alap, tan, bol-tan, bolbant, sargam, and dhrupad (Wade: 11-17). Unlike dhrupad, alap in khyal vocal performance occurs during the vilambit tala in conjunction with the composition.

Each khyal gharana developed specializations in ragas, tans, talas, and types of compositions, and its emphasis on rhythm or melody reflected its relationship to dhrupad. For example, the Agra gharana is widely considered to be closest to dhrupad, as it retained the nom-tom alap and some aesthetic and structural features of dhrupad. On the other hand, the Patiala gharana, exemplified by Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, emphasized romanticism and virtuosity, and moved away from rigorous adherence to structure (Raja 2004: 226-227; Wade: 276-277).

Wade adopts the following criteria for distinguishing the various khyal gharanas, which can also be applied to individual artists (Raja: 213):
### Vocal Technique Quality Range Ornamentation

| Choice of ragas | | | |
| Choice of talas | | | |
| Repertoire | | | |
| Performance | Level | Acceleration | |
| speed | | | |
| General emphasis | | | |
| Structure of bada | pre-ciz alap, | initial presentation of ciz | |
| khyal | | | |
| Improvisation | nom-tom | Bolbant | Sargam | Tan |
| Miscellaneous | | | |

**Figure 7.3 Khyal gharana distinguishing criteria (based on Wade: 276-277)**

Fig. 7.3 shows the major categories that distinguish *gharanas*. The first column indicates each category and the vertically lines are enumerations their features. The first is choice of *ragas*, as certain *gharanas* generally have a specific number of *ragas* they employ. This choice of *ragas* is influenced by aesthetics of the *gharana*, for example, certain *ragas* are not conducive to meditative explorations and complex elaborations, and would generally be avoided by the *dhrupad* based *Agra gharana*. The choice of *talas* is another important factor; for example, Vilayat Khan performed classical compositions almost exclusively in *teen tal*, and Ravi Shankar and Shahid Parvez use many odd-metered *talas*. The category listed as
"structure of bada khyal" indicates the modes of elaboration of the gat, and would apply here to vilambit gats in instrumental music. The types of improvisation differentiate gharanas through their use of dhrupad-derived nom-tom alap (used by Khan in the jor alap section), and other forms of tans, as well as the use of both text and the sargam syllables This schema can be applied to not only Khan's overall style, but to single performances, and even between phrases. The articulation of instrumental and vocal techniques occurs in a rapidly changing, kaleidoscopic interaction of these elements.

As shown in chapter 6, the Kirana gharana was certainly the most important to Khan, and it is evident in his alap vistar, tans, and compositions. The distinctive features of this gharana include slow, expressive singing, individualized use of tans, and use of established ragas (Wade: 184-211). Faiyaz Khan of the Agra gharana was also influential on Khan's jor alap. Khan's connections to the Kirana gharana were influenced by his personal preferences, and his khandani legacy. The impact of this gharana on the gayaki ang will be detailed in part two of this chapter.

**Memory and Fragrance: Khyal vocalism**

One facet of Vilayat Khan’s alap is aural recollection of his father, grandfather and other vocalists performed in his music. Note combinations, timbral dimensions, the style (andaz) of articulation, and emotional emphasis (rasa) are combined to create a musical image of specific artists. The duration of these imagined zones can range from a single phrase to large segments of a given movement. Khan would
occasionally call to mind several musicians in a single phrase, with each repetition reflecting a different vocalist.

The vocalist Mashkoor Ali Khan of the Kirana gharana confirmed my interpretation of this practice. Mashkoor knew Khan from childhood, and has detailed knowledge of his music. He described the khyal influences on Khan’s music, and discussed the musical impact of this practice.

I have seen many sitarists, many great sitarists, but none was like Vilayat Khan-sahib. The sitar became his slave (ghulam)\(^5\), and anything he wanted to say [musically], he did so without effort, he said “What I desire, I create”. All of the great sitarists, in their own place (apana jagah pey), were great artists, I am not critiquing any of the great musicians [...] Vilayat Khan was not only a great sitarist, he was a great vocalist. All the great vocalists of the era [1940s -1960s] were unanimous in their view that “The sitar was created for Vilayat Khan and Vilayat Khan was created for the sitar.” His mind, his sont [sliding on the frets between pitches] heard in the vilambit ghat, done so perfectly and so beautifully, was rooted [grounded and articulated through] in the Kirana gharana. Every sur [note] was taken with a different andaz [style or manner], demonstrating so many possibilities in a single phrase. When he elaborated the raga all the great musicians [buzarg log] that he was seeing, that came within his gaze were manifest in his music. For example, in beginning Rag Darbari, he would bring the music of Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan to the mind of the listener, as if he [Abdul Wahid Khan] was singing before you, his singing [presence] was completely inside the music and Vilayat Khan. After some time, I saw, after coming to a new place, [a new melodic section of the raga], a different color was created. This time, you experienced the fragrance of Ustad Faiyaz Khan, expressed by demonstrating Faiyaz Khan’s methods of elaboration. Then, another color was displayed, this time the karun rasa of Abdul Wahid Khan. [demonstrates a single phrase, elaborated in the mode of Abdul Wahid Khan.] I heard this performance in Lucknow, which I will never forget. (Mashkoor Ali Khan, personal interview, February 10, 2011)

\(^5\) The meaning of this term, ghulam, is often used in the sense of a devotee is Sufism, e.g. Ghulam Ali- servant of Ali, but the literally meaning is slave. Mashkoor is implying that the sitar was completely dominated by Vilayat Khan, and that the structural limitations of the instrument did not impede or color his expression.
Mashkoor’s depiction reveals the importance of a shared, intersubjective experience between listener and audience. He also describes what he believes is Khan’s inner experience, “When he elaborated the raga all the great musicians that he was seeing, that came within his gaze were manifest in his music” (ibid.). The actual word used for sight is ankhon (eyes), referring to Khan’s imagination. This alludes to a visual experience wherein Khan experienced the presence of particular vocalist as immanence, similar to visionary states described in Sufi literature.6 His response to the music is depicted in sensory-related adjectives such as color, rasa, and fragrance. This depicts this process, not as an intellectual exercise, but as the summoning of presence, a model that informs Khan’s interpretation of raga.

**Dimensions of Raga and Khan**

In a 2003 televised interview, Khan stated that “raga requires three elements: rasa (emotion), rang (color), and rupa (form); without this, there is no reason to perform raga”.7 These elements can be described in purely musical terms: raga rupa is the basic ascending and descending scalar structure; raga rang, the raga’s personality, expressed by embellishments, octave emphasis, relative speed of performance, and the treatment of particular notes through mind; the rasa

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7 Interview with Subroto Roy Chowdhury, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inElNJh6at0, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MBcDnEJS_g, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LD6Ns79mOyw
(emotion) of the raga is achieved through the articulation of its musical requirements, and the personality of the artist.

These categories also allude to a meta-musical experience of raga, employing multiple perceptual modalities including visualization. The perception of raga in dual aspects of sonic and visual is described in the medieval manuscript Sangeet Darpan, translated into Persian under the title Shams-ul-Aswat, ca. 1670-1690 (N. Ahmad: 36). These dual perceptual modes exist side-by-side as audible sound-form (nada-maya rupa) and as visual image-form (devata-maya rupa) (Gangoly: 96). The philosophical basis of this interpretation is found in the primal noetic of Hinduism.

It is believed that each raga, or ragini has its peculiar psychic form corresponding to its sonal, over which the former presided as the nymph, deity or the devata (presiding genius or god) of that particular melody. This deity, or image-formed [sic] dwells in the super-terrestrial regions [...] from which it can be invoked and induced to descend to earth through the prayers of the musical performer with the aid of a definite symphonic formula particular to each melody. (Gangoly: 96)

A successful performance requires the articulation of the body of the raga, its sonal form, and the invocation of the soul, its presiding deity or the imaginal form. The rasa of the raga are formed of these binary, merging subjective emotional states and trans-personal or archetypal experiences. The raga thus must be understood as a totality, in which all distinct elements merge into a holographic experience. Even experienced performers are not always able to reach this ideal.

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Vilayat Khan often described his intention in performance as the invocation of a three-dimensional visual image of the raga itself (Hidayat Khan, personal interview, November 10, 2010). This parallels the tradition of raga-mala paintings, miniature paintings of raga visualizations, and the Hindu concept of darshan (seeing). Raga mala paintings were popular during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and are discussed in mid-nineteenth century sitar performance manuals.

9 The particular visualizations associated with ragas (dhyana) began appearing in the thirteenth century (the earliest known text is the Sangit Ratnakara) and were later translated into a popular genre of Mughal miniature paintings. An example of the dhyana for raag Bhairava will give a sense of this practice:

Contemplation of Bhairava: The sea of notes microtones, with the nectar of all varieties of rhythm and time-measures, the fulfillment of desire of the worship of Shiva, with the body always besmeared with ashes, decked with matted locks, with the shine of moon, with skulls as decorations, I adore Bhairava, the skillful dancer (Raga-Sagara, 445: translation in Gangoly: 107).

Khan describes his own interpretation and relationship to the ragas Bhairav (related to the male god Shiva) and Bhairavi in a 1997 interview with Deepak Raja:

**Question:** What are your views on your own forte? Which are the ragas which, you feel, you have charged with the entire power of your soul?

**Answer:** I try to give each raga the same quality of effort, spending at least two weeks preparing every raga for a concert. By the third or fourth day, the

Raga starts revealing its deepest secrets to me. By the time I am ready to go on stage, I feel the same degree of intimacy with any raga.

**Question:** Some of your ragas have a very special appeal for us. But, we might fail to notice when, and in which ragas, you approach a state of ecstatic involvement. Please help me understand.

**Answer:** If you wish to look at it this way, I am born on Janmashtami (the birth-date of Lord Krishna, one of the ten incarnations of Lord Vishnu, the Preserver of the universe). Therefore, judging from the constellation under which I was born, I ought to possess the characteristics of Lord Krishna (a divine Casanova, an astute politician, and a worldly philosopher). As a supplicant before a deity, I am immensely attracted to Bhairav [Lord Shiva, the destroyer of the universe, the eternal ascetic who presides over the occult sciences, music and dance]. And, as a lover, I am obsessed with Bhairavi [Godess Parvati, Lord Shiva's divine consort, High Priestess of the Shakti cult].

**Question:** Bhairav and Bhairavi, as Shiva (Male power) and Shakti (Female Power) are two facets of the same spiritual entity, aren’t they?

**Answer:** [Evades a categorical answer]. The average Hindu is conditioned by the caricature of Bhairav [Lord Shiva, as portrayed in the temples and in popular art]. I wish I, a devout Muslim, could describe to him my vision of Bhairav's infinite form and awesome power! I would say the same for Bhairavi (Parvati). How many different facets of her persona I have experienced! Oh Allah! By how many different names, and in how many different forms, you manifest yourself to the seeker! It is we who give You different names, according to our [limited] capacity to understand You. All of them are names in praise of Your Glory. You are masculine; You are also feminine. You are the Lover; You are also the Beloved. You are the Ascetic; and you are also the Emperor.

Sitting in this room, you and I talk glibly about my recording of one raga, or another recording of another raga, as landmarks. But, all this reflects our limited understanding. Nothing limits Him [the Almighty]. (Interview transcript, January 3, 1997, changed parenthesis to brackets)

From this interview, it is clear that Khan views ragas as encompassing imaginal, spiritual, and philosophical dimensions.

The term *darshan* literally means “seeing”, but contains within it a complex set of philosophical and phenomenological codes, a detailed description of which is...
found in *Darshan: Seeing the Divine in India*, Diane L. Eck, Columbia University Press, 1998. In this conceptual system, the visual image is both an external stimulus pattern and a mental representation which inhabit different dimensions of consciousness. *Darshan* is a bridge between external and internal worlds, often described as flows of vibrational energies (frequencies.) While Khan did not explicitly use the terms *dhyana* and *darshan* himself, he used their conceptual frame as a common descriptor of his aesthetic goals in performance.

Vilayat Khan contended that the image of the *raga* should appear in the listener’s mind with opening phrase, or even just from the manner in which the tonic is intoned. He states, “When I perform a complete exposition of *raag*, I first spread [expand] the *raag* as a picture in front of my eyes [...] and I see the image [*shakal* – literally “visage”] of the music with the eye of my soul (*mand ke ankhon*) (Khan: 44).

He also described a *raga’s rasa* in terms of colors: “I performed Tilak Kamod, Bihag, Desh, Khamaj, etc., with the colors of sadness, tears, and *dard* (pain)” (Khan: 41). These emotional colors are derived from both the *raga* and personal experience: “I experienced much sorrow in my life from my friends, relatives, brother, sister, and disciples, and these sorrows were manifest through my music. The audience used to cry hearing my music, and I cried while I performed. The notes of the sitar and weeping blossom from the same space” (Khan: 42).

The emotional impact of the *raga* is derived from detailed study of all its movements. Before a concert, Khan would meticulously practice the key phrases of
raga hundreds of times. Only this discipline and attention to detail would allow the spontaneous creativity for which Vilayat Khan was renowned (Deepak Raja, email correspondence, February 12, 2010). This resulted in an internalization of the raga, which could be described as a “state of being.” His son, Hidayat, contends that when “Abba (father) would sit on stage, and you would feel the presence of the raga before he played a single note. That is the power of a great artist; they are so much in touch with their subconscious that they can affect large audiences by their very being” (Hidayat Khan, personal interview, November 9, 2010).

**Right Hand and Timbre**

The next step in a performance, after the mental and emotional state of the performer is focused and poised to begin playing, is the transmission through the body of that state to the audience. The following sections will examine Khan’s technique, and then analyze the actual notes and sounds as produced in a performance. The right hand, with its intricate finger movements and mizrab use, is an integral and essential part of the musical experience. In order to create the varied timbres and sustain the melodic range of the voice, the modification of the sitar’s structure and playing techniques were merged with the overall mental “frame” of singing through the sitar. The translation of breath patterns, vowel sounds, and physical origin of the voice required a re-conceptualization of basic sitar techniques, including the sitar’s jawari, the use of the mizrab, and the chikari strings, as a model or analog to the act of singing.
Jawari is the foundation for a sitar’s tone, achieved by the intricate shaving of the bridge to create the instrument’s overall sound. Jawari forms the tone on a range from khula (open) to band (closed), as well as the string tension, intonation, and dynamic range. For Khan, jawari was extremely personal, and he would often spend days at a time with sitar makers in order to find the right tone. He articulated the importance of jawari in a televised interview; “Each man has to find their own voice, every sound of your voice should come from yourself, describe your feelings, and touch the audience. The sitar’s jawari should have a tone like that. It has taken me forty years to get these correct measurements from instrument makers” (Chowdhury interview: 2003, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MBcDnEJS_g).

Another step in reproducing vocal qualities on the sitar lies in the use of the mizrab. Each khyal gharana and individual vocalists use a variety of techniques, where each phrase, or even portion of a phrase, depends upon a particular voice timbre, ranging from bright, open vowels, to a darker chest voice. Integral parts of any vocal performance, these inflections are extremely subtle and only musicians or highly educated aficionados are conscious of them. For Khan, these nuances were integral to all aspects of the gayaki ang, and were often juxtaposed or merged with traditional stroke-craft of the tantra-kar ang.

Khan attempted to recreate vocal timbres by varying the location of the strokes on the string and along the range of the mizrab. In figure 7.4, the range of string length and mizrab segments utilized for timbral variations are indicated. He divided the length of the mizrab into three segments, and utilized two directional quadrants, left/right and up/down, which are indicated in the second box of Fig. 7.4.
The placement of the stroke along the length of the string in combination with the *mizrab* formed the possible range of timbral articulations. Khan remarks, “The combination of these strokes creates the differing timbral qualities within a single phrase. When you sit to play, this should be in your mind” (Chowdhury, televised interview, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inElNh6at0](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=inElNh6at0))

![Figure 7.4 Schema of timbral inflections](image)

Two other components of a vocal performance are reflected in the use of the *jor* and *chikari* stings. The *chikari* strings mirror the intake of breath by the vocalist. The *jor* is meant to mimic the sound of the *tambora* in vocal music. The sound of the *chikari* used in *alap* is distinct from its tone in the *jor alap* and *bandish* segments.

According to Parikh, the use of the *chikari* in the *alap* must be softer and of a different timbral quality than other movements, so as not to overshadow the notes, and to mimic the pauses found in vocal *alap* from inhalation. In order to accomplish this, Vilayat Khan instructed: “When you play *chikari* in *alap*, you must intend not to play the top string [high Sa], and instead focus your intention on the middle three strings. This will bring you the proper tone” (Parikh, personal interview, December
However, as Parikh admitted, it is nearly physically impossible to leave out one of the chikari strings, due to their physical proximity. In this case, however, the mental intention, along with the visualization or auralization of the sound does in fact produce a change in the chikari timbre, which, if practiced and kept in awareness, will eventually lead to the correct stroke. The use of visualization and intention in Vilayat Khan’s playing can make the seemingly impossible possible on the instrument. The subconscious mind makes extremely subtle physical changes that the conscious mind cannot, or if it could, would require so much concentration as to diminish the other aspects of the performance. This occurs at the level of intentionality, and corresponds to the circle “voice” in figures 7.1 and 7.2.

**Left Hand Technique and Embellishment**

We will now examine specific examples of vocal-influenced elements produced in the left hand. Common vocal embellishments were recreated by Khan through combinations of multiple left-hand techniques, included *mind* (deflection of the string), *ghasit/sont* (sliding between pitches on the *parda*), *gamak* (rapid alteration between notes), and *krintan* (hammering-on notes using the first and second fingers.) The primary vocal embellishments that form the basis of Khan’s *khyal*-based musical vocabulary are listed in figure 7.6.
| (1) Mind | Pulling from one pitch to another, which can be articulated in a variety of tempi and shruti inflections |
| (2) Karn | Employing the coloration of one pitch into another, literally “fraction”. Structural feature of all ragas. Generally employed as an embellishment in thumri. |
| (3) Murki | Rapid movement around a central pitch, which usually contains three to five notes, e.g., M’ P D P M’ P M’ G. Common in thumri, which can contain longer clusters of notes. Subtle and gentle. |
| (4) Zamzama | Rapid inflection of two adjacent notes, distinct from gamak in the clear distinction of notes. Found in light music, especially tappa and thumri. |
| (6) Gamak | Forceful movement between notes. Can range in tempo, distance (up to a fifth), and direction. |
| (7) Kampan | Slight embellishment of a single note an adjacent pitch. Close to vibrato |
| (8) Khatka | A rapid and vigorous descending arc between two notes or more notes. E.g. P M G M |
| (9) Geetkiri | Ascending or descending note clusters, around a central pitch. E.g. G M’ D P M’ P |
| (10) Andolan | Literally “agitation”, the slow oscillation of a note, articulating specific shrutis. Andolans are raga specific, and the speed and shrutis are not interchangeable. |

These various embellishments are found throughout all aspects of Khan’s performances, including alap, bandish, tans, and jhala. Vocally influenced string deflections, like mind, are occasionally combined with instrumental techniques such as sont and krintan. There is no set format for recreating vocal embellishments, and it is an aesthetic choice that constantly shifts in performance. However, each raga has a particular character, which can preclude the use of either thumri-influenced

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10 The term khatka and geetkiri can be interchangeable. I am using the system I learned from Shujaat Khan.
11 This table is derived from my studies with various musicians as well as from Raja (2004: 216), and the online resource from the ITC Sangeet Research Academy (http://www.itcsra.org/alankar/alankar.html)
embellishments like *murki*, or more intense embellishments such as *gamak*. Tans generally focus on specific embellishments, while complex mixtures are common to alap.

To illustrate his use of vocal embellishments, I will now analyze the distinctive characteristics of Khan’s phrasing and inventiveness, using a sample taken from his 1968 recording of *Raag Yemen* (EMI CDNF 1 50142) to illustrate his use of vocal embellishments. This recording remains a definitive statement of the *gayaki ang* to this day, and is considered by many connoisseurs to be one of Khan’s finest studio recordings. The opening phrase heard on this recording has become a trademark of the Imdad Khan *gharana*, and is an aural signifier of pedigree and proper *talim*. Khan’s distinctive opening phrases radically reconfigure the simple *minds* found in traditional sitar styles into phrases built from elaborate *minds*, containing five to sixteen notes per *mizrab* stroke. Because of its immediacy, the opening phrase is one of the most technically demanding segments of a *gayaki ang* presentation.

For this analysis, I employ *sargam* notation and computer assisted graphic analysis of the pitch curve because neither the Western staff notation nor Indian *sargam* notation can render subtle nuances and microtonal inflections. The analysis, utilizing *Praat* software, renders the subtleties of Khan’s opening phrase. The basic notes of Yemen’s opening phrase are D. S N. G R N. D. S. Multiple techniques are often combined in a single phrase; this opening phrase is no exception.
Elaborating the basic opening phrase of Yemen (N. D. S), Khan packs multiple khyal-derived features into a few seconds of music. Along with mind, common to all Hindustani instrumental gharanas, other khyal-specific embellishments are employed. The complexity and use of exclusively vocal embellishments immediately distinguish Khan’s music from other sitar gharanas and dhrupad. In this example, the initial chikari stroke, mimicking a short inhalation, blends into the tonic (Sa), which is instantly pulled to the lower octave Dha. From this base, a brief flurry of embellishments leads an ascent to the major 2\textsuperscript{nd} (R), and then touches several microtones above the actual pitch (between the major 2\textsuperscript{nd} and minor 3\textsuperscript{rd}). This segment uses the technique of ghasit (dragging or stretching a note), in conjunction
with *karn*. He mirrors a defining *gayaki* technique of the Kirana *gharana*. The second segment, beginning from 6.24 seconds, includes a sweeping descent to the lower octave D, utilizing a *khatka* vocal embellishment. The rapid indicate in the phrase N S N S N R S is an example of *geetkiri*, similar to *murki*, but with fewer circular movements between notes.

### Allusions to Kirana

The opening phrase is similar to the singer Amir Khan’s trademark opening phrase, sung immediately before the beginning of the composition (the *mukhada*). Amir Khan, one of the most influential and highly regarded twentieth century *khyal* vocalists, developed a unique style based on Abdul Wahid Khan and the Kirana *gharana*. Wade describes Amir Khan’s opening phrase construction in detail:

> The first important pitch of this phrase is approached from below (or above, or around) by a fast vibrato-like *gamak* (*murki*), then that first important pitch is sustained, then it gives way to one or more ‘units’ of sustained pitch followed by more active descent-ascent melodic configuration. That sudden, fast *gamak* on a pitch in an otherwise reposeful melodic context was frequently employed by Amir to ‘announce’ the beginning of the *mukhada*. (Wade: 269)

Wade’s description offers almost an exact correspondence for Vilayat Khan’s opening phrase heard in numerous performances. While Vilayat Khan often denied any direct influence of Amir Khan on his playing, this particular gesture may have been internalized by Vilayat, as Amir and Vilayat were roommates during Khan’s formative years in the 1940s. It may also have been derived from Abdul Wahid
Khan’s music; in any case, this alien phrase is now included in the body of sitar performance practice.

In Hindustani music culture, tradition-bound and generally conservative, Vilayat Khan immediately marks himself out as an individual artist and innovator from the first chikari stroke and unique and unorthodox tuning of the tarab strings. Vilayat Khan’s opening phrase also unequivocally aligns the music with khyal, signaling to the informed listener that sitar has moved beyond the strictures of dhrupad. It immediately displays Vilayat Khan’s mastery of the complex and intricate minds, murkis, and khatkas required for khyal. The use of murkis is forbidden in dhrupad, but from the very first seconds of a given performance, Vilayat Khan makes a powerful musical and cultural statement that the listener will be exposed to new musical terrain, and this phrase also announces that it is possible to reproduce the feeling, structures, and aesthetics of khyal gayaki on the sitar.

PART II: ANALYSIS OF ALAP AND RAGA

The magnitude of Khan’s break with traditional styles can be examined only through a note by note analysis that will incorporate technical and aesthetic dimensions of musical choices he made within performance settings, and to clarify Khan’s continuing dialogue with the great musicians of the past. The first example presented is Khan’s alap, a non-metered presentation of a raga’s basic structures, melodic phrases, and schema.

In both khyal and dhrupad, successful alap reveals the musician’s understanding of a raag, manifesting both the rasa (emotion) and the rupa (form).
through the lens of the artist’s personality and creativity. *Alap* is often considered the spiritual core of Hindustani music, a meditation on the meaning of *raga*. The invocation of the *raga* has connotations of summoning a deity, bringing to life a musical entity transcending the limitations of space and time by accessing an archetypal dimension. Ideally, *alap* is an aesthetic experience requiring equal measures of intellect, emotion, and spirit.

*Alap* paradoxically requires a musician to submit to a pre-defined form, and simultaneously illumine a unique personal emotional landscape. In *alap*, an artist must avoid phrases from similar *ragas*, place proper emphasis on primary notes of a given *raga*, and bring forth the character of the *raga* through embellishments, *pradhan* (octave emphasis), and defining melodic characteristics. Intellectual demands are high for both listeners and performers. *Dhrupad alap* follows a well-defined process that articulates the building blocks of *raga* in their most primal and coherent forms. *Khyal*, on the other hand, allows for greater latitude in elaborative processes, and therefore contains many pitfalls for unwary musicians.

**Khan’s Alap**

Vilayat Khan’s *alap* required new sitar techniques, in addition to those already existing, to replicate the range of *khyal*-based vocal styles. His synthesis of several vocal *gharanas* and his own personal aesthetic temperament was the guiding principle in this process, complicated as it was because *khyal* did not have a pre-existing vocabulary of techniques or structures for instrumental performance. This was the basis for the initial skepticism toward Khan’s music.
Vilayat Khan is often surprising and unorthodox in his *alap*, but just as often traditional. A survey of over one hundred fifty live and commercial recordings reveals that his playing is notable for the tremendous variety among performances. His overall structural complexity is quite comparable to the *dhrupad* tradition but his penchant for experimentation and personal creativity extended beyond the rigid protocol-bound *dhrupad* styles, instrumental forms, and even *khyal* protocols. Hidayat Khan described how Vilayat Khan could apply *dhrupad*, *khyal*, and *thumri* angs to the same phrase in the same Raag Yemen (Hidayat Khan, personal interview, October 11, 2010). Khan’s *alap* took its primary impetus from the *badhat/vistar* (systematic elaboration of each note) of the Kirana gharana, initially developed by Abdul Wahid Khan and Abdul Karim Khan in the early twentieth century (Parikh, personal interview, February 15, 2011). The *vistar* of the Kirana style transformed *alap* from the domain of *dhrupad* to *khyal*; prior to this, *alap* was performed in the *dhrupad* ang, if at all.

Although Khan used several versions of alap in his performance, I will use traditional *dhrupad* 4-part *alap*, which will be designated as “dba” for the purpose of analysis, as it is the most complete statement of his artistic vision. *Dhrupad*-based *alap* (dba) macro-structures do not include *dhrupad*-based phrasal articulation, embellishments, or aesthetic considerations. Also, the designation of “*dhrupad*-based” *alap* refers only to the overall macro-structure structure, and excludes phrasal-topology, embellishments, and improvisation, which are *khyal*-derived. *Dba* is a full exegesis of the *raag*. It necessitates a *raga* of sufficient scope to warrant a
detailed interpretation, sufficient time in the concert or recording environment for the exposition, and the artist’s preference. Khan rarely seemed bound by the requirements of tradition, and would often vary the structure of a performance, following what Raja terms the “romantic tendency” to privilege emotional expression of the moment over formal rules (Raja 2003).

Vilayat Khan’s **dba** consists of four sections: (1) *sthayi*, phrases ranging from the low Pa (5th) or Ga (3rd) to the middle octave Pa (5th); (2) *antara*, development from middle Pa (5th) to the upper Sa (tonic); (3) *sanchari*, a wide ranging and free expression of the raga which moves in between all of the octaves; and (4) *abhog*, a winding down from the upper octave, back down to the base Sa. The duration spent in each section is predicated by the octave-designation of the raga (*uttar ang*, *madhya ang*, and *muladhar ang*), the desired elaboration permissible in the time span, and character of the raga.

In figures 7.7-7.10 the basic pitch ranges of these sections are indicated, along with additional notes often included, which are written as eighth notes written as eighth notes.
Within these basic pitch ranges, specific melodic and temporal features further differentiate these sections, creating an overarching narrative structure. According to Parikh, Khan did not use these specific terms to describe his approach to *alap*, but very conscientiously employed their inherent structural features (Parikh, personal interview, February 23, 2011). Parikh described the articulation of this narrative/structural model in great detail,
In *dhrupad*, olden *dhrupads*, not current, they had four sections *sthayi, antara, sanchari*, and *abhog*. Now, *khyal* people have abandoned *sanchari* and *abhog*, and I’m not sure why. Now, what is *sanchari* and what *abhog*? [...] What you have done, in playing *sthayi* and *antara*, you have introduced the entire scale of the *raga*, treating each note with great affection and care. You have displayed the entire canvas of the *raga* in the two and a half, three octave scale. The *maidan* (literally field, used for both sports and battle fields) is open now. The word *sanchar* means to move freely – now you have explored the whole *maidan*, and now you can move freely within it. What I was taught by Khan-sahib is in the *sanchari* there are sweeps [he sings, gliding from one note to another] S--N D M M G R S, N. G, N. M, N. D. P. P, M’ G R S. This is found among *dhrupad* musicians. (Parikh, personal interview, February 23, 2011)

Parikh list two other features, unique to Vilayat Khan’s *sanchari*: (1) complete phrases that contain a complete design, and a resolution of the phrase (self-contained units);¹² (2) a faster tempo than the *sthayi* and *antara*, but below that of the *jor*.

All of these structures create an overarching narrative form, which Parikh likens to “story-telling *alap*.” The narrative concludes with the *abhog*, the winding down of the *alap*.

You have unfolded the *raga*, now, from melodic center to melodic center, you fold it back. So, our musical journey which has started from the *sthayi*, to the *antara* and *sanchari* has reached a state of contentment. All of our music is very circular, as you know. You return from the place your journey began. (Arvind Parikh, personal interview, February 23, 2011)

All of these features constitute the *singularities* set into motion in the assemblage of performance; the assemblage will now examined in a specific performance in the following section.

¹² Parikh described this as similar to the practice of *chair-char*, where a musician warms up before a concert by playing complete phrases throughout the range of the *raga*. 

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DETAILED ANALYSIS: RAAG BAGESHREE 1967

I will now analyze a performance of Raag Bageshree, in order to illustrate the interaction of the singularities in the assemblage of performance (see figure 7.3). The recording I used, here called [BAG_1], is recording of a 1967 private concert from the private collection of Amar Mishra. The duration of the total alap of BAG_1 is 43:39 and the unmetered alap is 24:09. I have transcribed it into sargam notation and electronic form, making it reproducible in performance by others. The analysis will consist of five sections: (1) macro structure units; (2) pitch relationships, (3) phrase development; (4) architectural parity; (5) tempo variations; (6) use of embellishments. I will examine the performances both as a temporally unfolding narrative, and as a static architectural whole.

Raag Bageshree

Bageshree is an evening raag, classified in the Kafi that in Bhatkhande’s system. The primary notes in the aroh (ascending), avroh (descending) are S G M D N S’/ S’ N D M P D G R S. The major notes of the raag are G and N, with the primary resting points being the lower and upper tonics and the fourth (madhyam). The proper employment of the fifth is necessary to bring out the character of the raag. It can be treated as a serious raag and also utilized for lighter pieces such as

13 Bhatkhande’s system of that evolved from the categorization of frets on string instruments, and was also influenced by the South Indian melakarta system. Each that is analogous to a Western mode, but many ragas do not fit within this system. Nonetheless, it is currently the dominant taxonomic system in North Indian Universities. Jairazbhoy presents an alternative system of classification in The Ragas of North India.
tarana. The emotional contours of the raag range from romanticism, pathos, mysticism, and even the erotic. It is suited for both meditative and virtuosic explorations. Several examples of the swar-vistar (basic melodic movements) of Bageshree as described by Bhatkhande in his Kramik Pustak Malika are listed below:


Vilayat Khan created a distinct aural ambience for Bageshree through his note usage, and sitar tuning, which creates an immediate atmospheric impact. Shown in fig. 7.11, in the case of Bageshree, the chikari strings are tuned to the fourth and the sixth, creating a suspended harmonic texture. Traditionally, the sitar would be tuned to the fifth, which is a rarely employed note in the raga. Jairazbhoy analyzes the overtone series generated by a S-M drone, which indicates that the fourth and sixth scale degrees work as resolution points, creating a degree of dissonance for the fifth scale degree (Jairazbhoy: 65-71). The unique tuning of the tarab strings adds to this spectral texture.

Figure 7.11 a. chikari and b. tarab tuning (S=d natural)

14 (Bhatkhande 2002: 661).


**Macro-structural Features**

The architecture of the movements is a template for coherent explication of the *raga*, and mirrors the cyclical structure of an entire performance (*alap, jor, atijor, vilambit gat, drut gat, jhala*). The elucidation of the macro-structural features in the *alap* (*sthayi, antara, sanchari, and abhog*) requires the examination of three primary features. The first is a musical figure known as *mohra*, which serves several functions. The basic pattern of the *mohra* is the sounding of the main tonic with three *chikari* strokes for three repetitions, followed by a brief musical phrase which returns to the tonic. The *mohra* functions primarily as a musical paragraph break, separating each complete musical statement. Secondly, the *mohra* also foreshadows the tempo of the *jor* section, and is used in the *jor* to act as a *sam*. Finally, the third function of the *mohra*, according to Parikh (personal interview, February 12, 2011), is to create a pseudo-*sam*, implying the circular motion of a rhythmic cycle within the rubato and a-temporal *alap*. Khan utilizes multiple variations of the *mohra* in this recording, featuring tempo variations and syncopation, and occasional use of the *tarab* strings, plucked with the pinkie, as an added layer of rhythmic and timbre.

The second macro-structural feature is the melodic range encompassed by each groups of phrases, which articulates the traditional range of each movement within the protocols of the *raga* (figures 7.5–7.8). The third, and most subjective feature, is the directionality, speed, and structure of phrases, which assists in determining the *sanchari* and *abhog*.

Each one of these features is reinterpreted by Khan, which complicates the exact determination of each movement. For example, the *mohra* can mark
subsections within the sthayi, and antara, and also demarcate movements. However, Khan’s use of mohra is not fixed, and calls for careful observation. The concluding summary of this analysis will examine the polyvocality of these musical signifiers.

Based upon the above-mentioned criteria, the subdivisions and tonal ranges of the movements shown in the Fig. 7.12:
### Table: Macro-structural elements of BAG_1 *alap*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-3.27</td>
<td>Sthayi</td>
<td>Establish base Sa (D. to R w/slight inflection on G)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:27-</td>
<td>[mohra</td>
<td>Lower octave G to S, followed by elaboration of S. to N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:14</td>
<td>3:55-4:05]</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15-</td>
<td></td>
<td>G established in relation to S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:48</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:48-</td>
<td>[mohra</td>
<td>M established in relation to S and G [range G. to M]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:03</td>
<td>7:48-7:57]</td>
<td>(descending and ascending phrases in full lower range)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:04-</td>
<td></td>
<td>M as center in relation to D and S (base in upper tetra chord) [range D. to D]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:33-</td>
<td></td>
<td>D as center in relation to M (touches on N and S’) [range D. to S’] (preparation for antara)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:33-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:14-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:01</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:02-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:16-</td>
<td>(Antara)</td>
<td>D is transitional point to S’, series of ascending phrases leading [range M. to N]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:00-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ascending phrases, ending on lower octave S (delaying of S’)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:40-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:44-</td>
<td>mohra</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:50-</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:00</td>
<td>Antara</td>
<td>N as transitional point to S’. Recapitulation of phrases showing P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:04-</td>
<td></td>
<td>S’ as center. Step by step ascending phrases [range S to R’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:49-</td>
<td></td>
<td>R’ as pivot to G’ (parallel of 6:15- 7:48 G. to S)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:44-</td>
<td></td>
<td>G’ transitions to M’ (descending phrases) [range D to M’ touching on D’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:31-</td>
<td>Sanchari</td>
<td>M’ as center [range D to D’]</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:41</td>
<td>(merges w/ antara)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:42-</td>
<td></td>
<td>Octave displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:11-</td>
<td>Abhóg</td>
<td>Descending phrases returning to S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:02</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:08</td>
<td>mohra</td>
<td>Final <em>mohra</em> directly transitions to <em>jor</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Following the schematic depicted in figure 7.12, we can see that the *mohra* is utilized four times. The first two instances (3:55-4:05 and 7:48-7:57) subdivide the *sthayi*, the third demarcates the *sthayi* and *antara*, and the fourth concludes the
entire alap, merging directly into the jor. While the mohra serves as a semantic marker of a complete musical expression, it also creates tension between the phrases, both alluding to and subtly subverting the alap’s macro-structure. This is most evident in the third mohra, which occurs after the apparent commencement of the antara (16:16-17:00).

The mohra creates structure and anti-structure simultaneously. Compared with most performers in the Imdad Khan gharana and from outside, this use of the mohra presents some serious deviations from the established formal rules of alap. However, as I hope to demonstrate, Khan violates traditional rules in order to create a poly-linear and self-referential musical statement, contradicting his “romantic” moniker, demonstrating affinity with modernist Western art music and literature that explored new possibilities within canonical texts and forms.

The melodic range in each movement generally follows traditional protocols. However, the transitions between sections are occasionally blurred, most obviously in the sanchari’s transition from the antara (22:31-22:41). The cross-movement symmetry is further expanded when the slightly truncated exposition of the sanchari reemerges in the jor.

Vilayat Khan’s use of structure serves both to stabilize and destabilize traditional form, a process of deconstruction and reconfiguration into a radically new musical terrain. Within the broad outlines of sthayi, antara, sanchari, and abhog, distinct polarities are created between specific notes within the span of the section. The musical and emotional impact of specific notes is influenced by the directionality of a particular movement (or sub-movement) as well as their
positioning along the trajectory of extended phrases. This is most evident in the appearance of an *andolan komal gandhar* (flat third) at 14:14-15:01, as this single note serves to reorient the broader pitch and phrasal relations of the *raga* onto another axis entirely.

Beyond the obvious demarcations of structure and continuity, the use of timbral effects, specialized *minds*, silence, and repeated phrases creates a meta-structural dialogue that simultaneously reinforces and implodes the boundaries of the movements. This performance is a merging of structure and anti-structure, where one end wraps around another beginning. The logic is apparent only when considering the displaced weight of various centers of gravity. The forms implode and reconfigure in distinct networks displacing lines of force between multiple centers. The *raga* is engulfed by the performer, yet emerges fully present.

**Polycentric Binary Pitch Relationships**

The *vadi* and *samvadi* notes are commonly utilized to explicate the relational properties between notes and phrases within a *raga* (Jairazbhoy 1995). However, this framework has serious limitations, at least in Vilayat Khan’s case. In the course of my studies, my guru Shujaat Khan never mentioned *vadi* and *samvadi*, except to reinforce the dictum that one must practice compositions, *tans*, and *alap* in order to understand *raga*, criticizing the basic intellectual framework found in universities
and instructional manuals.\textsuperscript{15} Without this formal schema, a student must model the raga based upon phrases, and hope that with practice the deep structures of the raga will become visible. However, even with practice, the freedom to explore the raga is hindered by a reliance on stock phrases. This analysis revealed that particular notes are configured in a polar relationship, analogous to the gravitational force between planetary bodies and satellites. Parikh explained the use of a secondary center, serving as a counterpoint to the tonic S in the course of performing alap in Raag Jhinjoti, and his comment served to illuminate a complex, underlying relational phenomenon that I believe is truly central to raga. (Parikh, personal interview, February 12, 2011). I cannot state with certainty if this is unconscious or enculturated knowledge, or is a khandani trade secret, but it certainly is a definitive feature of Vilayat Khan’s music.

I designate this phenomenon as “polycentric binary pitch relations.” The definition is as follows: “Polycentric” refers to multiple possible pitch centers within a given raga; “binary” indicates that these relations consist of two primary notes; and “pitch relations” designates the relational quality between the two notes and with a configuration of other pitches in the matrix. This technique must follow the constraints of the raga at hand.

In order to visualize this process, figure 7.13 is constructed as a map of the main notes of Raag Bageshree which serve as resting points (resolution points of

\textsuperscript{15} The ineffectiveness of the vadi/samvadi template has been reconfirmed in several interviews with members of the Imdad Khan gharana (Hidayat Khan, November 12, 2010; Shujaat Khan, August 20, 2010, Arvind Parikh, February 20 2011).
phrases) within the sthayi, and the secondary notes which are transitional pitches. These transitional pitches also serve to articulate counterpoints which change the emotional impact of the resting tones, and vice versa.

![Diagram of interrelationships of rest and transitional notes](image)

**Figure 7.13 Interrelationships of rest and transitional notes (polycentric binary pitch relationships). Parenthesis indicates transitional pitches**

The relational space between two or more resting pitches and transitional notes serves multiple purposes: (1) provides a developmental framework of the raga’s primary phrases and outline; (2) facilitates differential interpretations of individual notes, depending on their placement in the relational space; (3) increases the tension (anticipation) within the developmental process; (4) increases the variety of improvisational possibilities. The arrows in figure 7.13 show the directional relation between specific pitches which move in relationship to
resolution and tension. Fig. 7.13 shows how these relationships form an underlying substructure for the articulation of the *raga*, as it is formulated in “sedimentary time,” the performance of which occurs in linear time.

My analysis of several major *ragas*, including Yemen, Jhinjoti, and Bhairavi has shown that each *raga* has its own combinations of these systems. These distinctions and interrelations must be maintained in a *Raag*-specific manner. My research supports the hypothesis that a musician’s understanding of these relationships can create a more aesthetically pleasing and emotionally powerful performance.\(^\text{16}\) Re-interpreting these relationships can create distinctive performances of the same *raga*.

For a performance to transcend the intellectual dimensions of the *raga*, I believe an artist must internalize the map of these interrelationships as both emotional states and kinesthetically perceived gravitational centers. Khan’s mastery of these systems allowed him tremendous flexibility in *raga* interpretation. While this model does not yet appear in available scholarship, my experience as a performer supports the concept, and discussions regarding the varied emotional interpretations of a given *Raag* also provide confirmation.\(^\text{17}\) This process is outside the constraints of conventional *raga* analysis, but its usefulness will be demonstrated in the following section.

\(^\text{16}\) The full transcriptions and data to support these conclusions are outside the scope of this dissertation. I have completed full analyses of several *alap* and plan to use them in future publications.
\(^\text{17}\) R.C. Mehta, personal interview, January 18 2008, Shujaat Khan, telephone interview, October 12, 2010)
Sthayi Analysis

A detailed analysis of the first five phrases will demonstrate methods of elaboration employed in this performance, clarify the implications of the mapping in figure 7.13, and reveal specific embellishments and other important features. In this performance, not only is the foundation of the primary tonic set, but also significant features are introduced which are developed throughout the entirety of the performance.

According to Shujaat Khan, the first five alap phrases should focus on the primary tonic (S) (personal interview, July 15, 2005). Vilayat Khan described this as setting “sa ka zamin”, the ground or foundation of S (Parikh, personal interview, February 24, 2011). The initial phrases establish the mood of the raga and will remain the musical base throughout the alap. The Penguin Dictionary of Indian Classical Music defines zamin as “the ground or the basic structure and paradigm of the raga under elaboration” (Menon 1995: 172). In the case of this performance, the first group of phrases establishes both the primary tonic pitch and specific features which are unique to this performance. As far as I am aware, this is a component of Khan’s playing which has not been discussed in the existing literature.

The first three minutes and forty-three seconds of the alap are transcribed below. Parenthesis indicates an extended mind with no mizrab stroke; lower case letters indicate grace notes. The sargam notation only represents the basic outline.

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18 Indian sargam notation will be employed throughout, except in instances where particular microtonal and/or elongated minds are portrayed. Five-line staff notation doesn’t allow for accurate portrayal of Hindustani music, and can distort the results on occasion.
of the phrases; detailed descriptions will be provided through computer-assisted analysis.

(1) \[ S (N. S N. S N. S N.) D., n-D. s-N. r-S R, (N. S N. S R) S S [0-0.7] \]

(2) \[ D. (N. r g S) (N. r S) D. N., D., N. R, N. S, R S [0.13-0.21] \]


\[ 0.30-1.07 \]

(4) \[ D. R (r s r) S N., S (n. s n. s) N. D., (D s n. s n. s) D N. R S N., N. G (g r g r) S, D N., R S N., D. R N. D. R N., R, N. S [1:09-1:34] \]

(5) \[ D. n. S R N. D. N. R S, S S S \]

**Figure 7.14 Alap phrases.**

In contrast with most commonly used introductory phrases in Bageshree, Khan immediately descends to D., creating two musical centers of gravity. It is not until the last sequence of the third phrase that the traditional opening is performed. The preliminary centering on D. serves to destabilize the conventional expectations for Bageshree. It also appears to create a more serious and somber mood than is generally found in most renditions, which emphasize the *shringar rasa* (romantic mood). In the first phrase, the emphasis is on the melodic, not the structural, as the base tonic is not emphasized until the end of the phrase.

The second phrase introduces a series of long, sweeping *minds*, which employ microtonal subtlety beyond *shruti* into *karns*. *Karns* were notably used by
the vocalist Abdul Karim Khan, one of the founders of the Kirana gharana, and cited by Vilayat Khan as one of his major influences. Wade quotes Deshpande regarding the use of karns:

“As explained by Deshpande, karns are ‘note particles’ above or below the precise swara line, subtler even than srutis or microtones, but belonging to a specific region within a pitch. In Despande’s opinion there is a direct relationship between karns and the emotional content of music” (Wade 1997: 197).

The second phrase employs karns in long, sweeping minds which vary in velocity between phrases, indicated below in figure 7.15, a computer-assisted audio analysis. The use of karns centering around the pitch R create a sense of tension as the pitch is not fully reached until the third repetition of the mind sequence. The final ascent to the base S occurs at eighteen to nineteen seconds. This slow, direct ascent from N to S adds another element in the elaboration of the alap’s first segment. This mind is extended in duration throughout the performance.

Figure 7.15 Alap phrase 2 (analysis derived from Digital Performer).
Contrasting with the normal *alap* procedure, the base S, while strongly articulated, is placed in a constant juxtaposition between two poles, that of D. and R, and is not until the end of the third phrase that S is positioned as the central pitch. Within the first two phrases, several elements are introduced which will be developed through both sequential elaboration and elongated *minds*, and timbral effects.

The third phrase centers on D., introducing an *andolan N.*, and a bi-directional movement, which contrasts between the ascending motion towards S, and the descent towards the *mandra sapat*. An almost subliminal sweep towards the lower M foreshadows the elaboration of the lower octave and the M/D axis, a core relationship in Bageshree. In the third phrase, the sequence in figure 7.15 is repeated, this time ascending above the R and touching on the G (figure 7.16).
In the fourth phrase, the separate elements found in the first three phrases are fully articulated, augmented with the addition of a direct articulation of R in the context of a descending sequence of phrases. These two descending phrases (R S N, G S N) are followed by a merging of both ascending and descending motions in a single phrase, repeated three times, followed by a short reiteration of the sequences shown in figures 7.15 and 7.16. Finally, the slow and direct ascent from N to S is fully revealed, which will serve several important functions throughout the alap. This particular mind ranges in duration from .5 seconds to 1.34 seconds in the performance.
In the opening sequence of phrase 4, a new effect is introduced, drawing on the Kirana *gharana alap* techniques. A single note is intoned several times, with differing tonal qualities derived from the specific placement of the *mizrab* strokes, followed by a descending arc created through solely through the left hand, which mimics the effect of the voice falling after a sustained note into a gradual silence.¹⁹ Throughout this *alap* there are a number of phrases which are almost inaudible, and are sometimes quite complex and nuanced. Shujaat Khan and Hidayat Khan stated the *raga* should work on the listener's subconscious mind (personal interview, November 9, 2010). This is a possible intention of such musical gestures.

![Figure 7.17 Alap phrase 4 (Ascending and descending sequences)](image)

¹⁹ My analysis software was unable to detect these phrases, except as a harmonic in two octaves above the fundamental.
Figure 7.17 shows the ascending and descending sequences in the fourth phrase. The vertical access shows pitch in hertz, the time range is listed on the top right and left corners. This phrase, along with material from phrases two and three (figures 7.15 and 7.16) are sequentially elaborated in through the first three minutes and forty-three seconds of the sthayi.

The fifth phrase returns to traditional alap conventions, grounding the previous musical explorations within the structural constraints of Bageshree and conventional alap protocols. Following this, Khan employs the N. as secondary point of emphasis between the musical material developed earlier and the primary pitches of D. and S. At the conclusion of the phrase, a new timbre is introduced (3.06-3.22). The mizrab is played very close to the neck of the instrument, giving the tone a sharp and plaintive timbre that resembles the vocal timbre produced by constricting the throat. Figure 7.18 and 7.19 offer a comparison of the spectral differences introduced by this technique. In figure 7.18, the increased timbral density is shown when the technique is employed; figure 7.19 shows the normal articulation of the mizrab.
Concluding this passage, the long, ascending mind to S is extended to G, which creates a dramatic effect, as previous use of the mind ascended only to S. The long mind at the conclusion of the first section of the sthayi is shown below in figure 7.20.
To summarize, several important features are discernable through the analysis of this short passage at the beginning of the *alap.* (1) The use of *minds,* silence, and the directionality of each phrase creates a complex, polyvocal dialogue, juxtaposing structural complexity and simplicity; (2) The establishment of the S occurs in a non-traditional paradigm that utilizes other resting notes (in this case D.) to create tension and release, expanding the conventional expressive range of the *raga;* (3) The use of sequences forms a layer of deep structure which links the

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20 While the pitch is continuous, part of the *mind* was undetectable by Praat.
entire *alap* (and *jor*) in an extended meta-structure, transcending the four *alap* movements.

**Unorthodox Technique and Metastructure**

I will now examine the development of each movement, based upon the linear progression of central pitches and non-linear structural continuities. A gamut of techniques, including temporal variations, *mind, parda* playing, and timbral effects serve localized and meta-structural functions. While the analysis of *raga* structure is highly developed in the literature, e.g. Jairazbhoy (1995), Moutal (1991), and Wade (2001), little has been done on this structure as articulated in performance. I will emphasize Khan’s interpolation of *jor* and differing vocal-based embellishments to create interlinked substructures, unifying diverse elements into a compositional whole. This process both destabilizes the four traditional *alap* movements, and creates deep structures that synthesize *dhrupad* and *khyal* elements in a multilayered narrative process.

Several other distinctive, sometime unorthodox techniques are employed throughout the *alap*, and return throughout the entire performance (jor, vilambit and *drut gats*). The first technique examined is the use of open strings in the lower register of the sitar. Following the first *mohra*, the central pitch moves from S to D. (3:55- 6:14). While D. is the focal point, it forms an axis with M., around which the flat seventh and minor third are elaborated (N. and G.). Khan uses the resonance of open strings to create a timbral atmosphere entirely distinct from the prior *mind*-intensive playing. A mimesis of arpeggiated chords on a guitar or a piano is
produced using the resonance of open strings, fretted notes and chikari strings. The first phrase in this sequence begins $G, M, D, N, D$, wherein $G$ is held on the second string, $M$ is played on the chikari and $D$ and $N$ are held on the first string. The sequence continues with systematic combinations of these notes, similar to merukhand techniques: $G, M, D, N, D, M, D, G, N, M, N, D, G, M, D, N, M, D, M, N, D$.

These passages utilize a distinct rhythmic pulse, which foreshadows the jor. The same technique opens the jor section, creating an architectural unity between the alap and jor.

The second unorthodox technique is extended phrases played exclusively on the parda, appearing at several important junctures in the alap. The first use of this technique occurs at eight minutes and ten seconds. A series of phrases ranging from $M$ to $G$ ascend and descend in a zigzag fashion, centered on krintan embellishments, augmented and diminished in turn. A distinct pulse is articulated, the tempo proximate to madhya jor. The sequence outlines the range of pitches covered thus far, and leads to the establishment of $M$ as the center pitch. While most performers in the Vilayat Khan style contend that this is simply to break the monotony of alap, the strategic placement of rapid sequences of notes appear to have wider implications, establishing a strong pulse which is brief hinted at throughout the performance. My analysis of these temporal variations indicates that three distinct temporal levels are constantly intertwined, and merge in the mohra. The three

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21 Shujaat Khan, personal interview, August 12, 2004; Arvind Parikh, personal interview, February 11, 2011; Deepak Raja, personal interview, February 17, 2011
temporal levels are (1) rubato, non-metered, (2) strong quarter-note pulse, parallel
to the first section of the jor, (3) eighth-note pulse, parallel to the madhya jor.

The third feature of the alap are ascending and descending sequences that
occurs at key junctures throughout, and create another tier of architectural
congruity. The germinal material for these sequences is contained in two core
patterns found in the five opening phrases. These sequences are merged into a
single, modulating sequence which is performed in the liminal threshold between
the sthayi and antara (16.16 to 18.40). The pattern, performed on the parda, and
juxtaposed with mind covers the entire range of the raga until N. Highlight this
sequence, and its centrality to the performance, Khan reduces it to its basic
components, and sings the passage as he plays. The sequence is G M D N, S G M D, N,
S G M, D S G M, M, D, N, S. Although it is simple, the revelation of this core element
has tremendous musical impact, as it links what has gone before with the final
resolution of antara on the upper tonic. The ascending phrases, played in a step-by-
step descending sequence reveal the underlying logic of the entire edifice. Singing
during the alap is a violation of convention, and serves to position this passage as a
meta-commentary on the alap.

Figure 7.21 indicates the temporal placement of the above-mentioned
features. These elements, while serving musical and structural functions within the
time sequence of their appearance, create an underlying architecture that unifies
the alap on several separate planes. In figure 7.21, the interpolation of ascending
and descending phrases and the extended minds from the sthayi and into the antara
are presented in a general outline. In order to graph the entirety of these elements
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would require the inclusion of the three temporal levels, *parda* phrases, and timbral variations, among other features.

| *sthayi* | *antara* |

**Figure 7.21** *Mind, direction phrases, and combinations* (Curved arrows indicate *mind*, up and down arrows indicate directional phrases, and crossing of two arrows indicate combination of these techniques)

**Figure 7.22** depicts the use of particular effects, including *parda* playing, extended *minds*, and the use of polycentric binary pitches throughout the *alap*. The first element of note is the usage of extended *minds*, which are gradually introduced and then are combined at 3:40-3:51. The second element, the use of *parda* phrases, occurs with increasing duration and intensity until the climax beginning at 16:22. Finally, the use of polycentric binary pitches can be observed throughout the performance, and eventually extend in range over several octaves, creating a complex and compositionally integrated topology of the *raga*. These centers are
gradually returned, in a systematic manner, to the tonic. These centers are listed under the *abhog* section of figure 7.22
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>SECTION</th>
<th>DESCRIPTION</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-</td>
<td>Sthayi</td>
<td>Establish base Sa (D. to R)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0.11-34</td>
<td></td>
<td>Introductory phrase, D. to S (touch of R) establish SA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.34</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Parallel center introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:18-1:31</td>
<td></td>
<td>Descending phrase structure introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1:33</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>to S elongated mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Elongated mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:03</td>
<td></td>
<td>Timbral variations (sharp crying w/mind)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:27</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower octave ga to Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:40-3:51</td>
<td></td>
<td>Phrase w/mind</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3:55-4:05</td>
<td></td>
<td>mohra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:12</td>
<td></td>
<td>Lower octave N to G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4:44</td>
<td></td>
<td>Open strings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pakad 5th introduced</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5:32</td>
<td></td>
<td>Key phrase w/ timbre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6:15-7:48</td>
<td></td>
<td>G established in relation to Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7:48</td>
<td></td>
<td>mohra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:12-8:24</td>
<td></td>
<td>Parda w/ tempo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8:46-10:50</td>
<td></td>
<td>G as center, still falling back to Sa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9:22-11:03</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended phrase w/ parda G up to N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Ma appears w/ touch of D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:33</td>
<td></td>
<td>Da enters range</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:33-13:52</td>
<td></td>
<td>Meditative mood G becomes tragic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:08</td>
<td></td>
<td>N and G</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14:37</td>
<td></td>
<td>Pakad phrases (pancham)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15:47</td>
<td></td>
<td>Octave echoes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:01-16:22</td>
<td></td>
<td>Established on D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16:22-16:48</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended phrase on parda</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17:09</td>
<td></td>
<td>Reach toward S, hitting lower S instead of S'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:42</td>
<td>Antara</td>
<td>Mohra</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18:42-20:00</td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended reach to upper S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:09</td>
<td></td>
<td>Upper Sa as base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20:49-20:53</td>
<td></td>
<td>Main phrase played in upper octave</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21:52</td>
<td></td>
<td>Range S to S'</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td></td>
<td>G', articulated</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22:41</td>
<td></td>
<td>Sanchari Octave displacement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Abhog</td>
<td>Up to N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:15</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abhog S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23:26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Abhog N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24:02</td>
<td></td>
<td>Back to Sa</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Figure 7.22 Detailed alap timeline**
The above analysis merely scratches the surface of the alap performance, and while the general elements of raga structure have been ignored as obvious, I hope that a sense of the complexity and structural integrity of Khan’s alap has been conveyed. Because of his flawless performance, the truly radical nature of his alap is often overlooked, yet, while defying basic conventions of Hindustani music, his performance is ultimately coherent and compelling.

**Assemblage theory and alap**

This alap presents a wide field for possible interpretation. From historical research on Vilayat Khan’s personality, and interviews with his students Arvind Parikh and Deepak Raja, and from my analyses, it is clear that there is a strong intellectual and analytical component to Khan’s playing. Until undertaking this analysis, I was not aware of the possibilities of the meta-structural features which I have outlined above. The gayaki ang is not simply the transference of vocal technique and repertoire into an instrumental genre. The gayak ang, as articulated in singular performances, is a complex field of unique potentialities, described by Deleuze and Guitarri as “abstract machines.” We already know that a fuller understanding of the gayaki ang must include the domain of the virtual, described in the discussion on raga and Khan’s recreation of specific vocalists. These virtual singularities are combined in unique performances through the “mechanisms of immanence” which explain “the existence, relative power, and genetic power of the virtual” (De Landa 2005: 123). The virtual serves to “generate the multiplicities by extracting them from actual intensive processes.” (ibid.: 123)
In the alap I have been analyzing, features are abstracted and translated into new relational fields, reflecting De Landa’s position that “the question of the emergence of metric or extensive properties should be treated as a single process in which a continuous virtual space time progressively differentiates into actual discontinuous spatio-temporal structures operating at different scales” (ibid., 122).

As an example, I point to the use of the extended mind from N. to S forms a distinct entity which exists as an actual phenomenon and as an abstraction simultaneously, “a process through which a fully formed being may cease to be what it is to become something else, in association with something heterogeneous on the outside” (ibid., 122 italics in original). At the same time, the multiple temporal scales in this alap create separately operating assemblages which are analogous to continuous virtual and discontinuous actual spatio-temporal structures. “In a Deleuzian ontology one must emphasize that the regularities displayed by the different possible trajectories are a consequence of the singularities that shape the vector field” (ibid., 33). In this alap, we see separate fields of cyclic and intracyclic repetitions, clearly demonstrated by the pseudo-sam of the mohra, and the totality of the performance is experienced as the total state produced in the interactive field containing both temporal orientations.

The gayaki ang, as an assemblage, is a combination of the virtual and actual in heterogeneous networks of singularities that form the potential ground of immanence, a field of possible and actual states that moves from potentiality to actuality in performance. These singularities can be divided by their intensive and extensive properties “a multiple ideal connection, a differential relation must be
actualized in diverse spatio-temporal relationships, at the same time its elements are actually incarnated in a variety of terms and forms” (Deleuze and Guattari: 231).

Through the gayaki ang, Khan opened up the entire field of Hindustani music to a single performer, and moved beyond the limitations of genres to create an integrated meditation on these complex networks. The use of the binary pitches reaches beyond music and into the core of Indian philosophy, and evident from his interview (p. 57), he was conscious of binaries resolved in the unknowable.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

In this dissertation, I have examined the sitar’s emergence and significance in post-Independence India using the combined methodologies of historical research, ethnography and musical analysis. Specific case studies, with a focus on the Imdad Khan gharana and Vilayat Khan, were examined in detail from the theoretical frames of interconnecting networks, assemblages, and strata to show the relationship between North Indian classical music as performed on the sitar and the complexity of contemporary Indian society. While I employ three distinct frames of enquiry—phenomenological, ontological, and empirical—the fundamental conceit of this work is to blend and merge these conceptual dimensions in order to represent music’s interpenetration with culture.

The case I make in this dissertation, laid out in the Introduction, is based on a 15-year study of Indian history, culture, politics, languages, religions and music. My choice of performers is based on personal experience and a desire to fill a gap in the literature. The main figure is Vilayat Khan, whose life and work was formed by the social, political, economic and historical trends of middle and late twentieth century India. A search of major scholarly databases finds very few references to Vilayat Khan in English. As Farrell states in the New Grove Dictionary of Music and
Musicians, “[He] is a major figure in the world of music with a reputation as one of the greatest exponents of sitar performance in the 20th century.” Because of a lack of scholarly work on Vilayat Khan this dissertation has relied for the most part on primary source materials that I collected and analyzed, including field and commercial recordings, ethnographic work, interviews, archival documents, and popular press. I have attempted to balance historical research, theoretical explorations, and music analysis throughout this process, with the aim of viewing these topics, not as discrete elements, but as distinct facets of interconnected networks and assemblages.

I approached the changing roles of the modern sitar from its inception in the 1750s to today through the lens of Latour’s model of linear and sedimentary time, illuminating the connections between music and broad historical processes. I approach history as an immanent presence that is simultaneously lived, remembered, and re-imagined. This model was referenced throughout the work to demonstrate the continuous processes of interaction between music and memory. I demonstrate that Hindustani music developed through a myriad of social, political, and economic networks, and was constructed in mediations between diverse historical narratives.

I find that this interactive historical framework helped reveal the resonant relationship between the historical development of the sitar—and for that matter any musical instrument—and contemporary musicians and performance. As the sitar was re-imagined during the last 250 years, it took on new, contesting semiotic
valuations between the two centers, Delhi and Lucknow, linked with musical styles (*dhrupad* and *thumri*), but also the shifting power differentials between Lucknow’s cultural renaissance and Delhi’s fading glory. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, the connections between music and the social became part of a national building agenda, which transformed Hindustani classical music, moving it the purview of princely courts and wealthy noble patrons into the mainstream culture of the rising middle class.

By viewing the sitar as a Latourian object, it can be aligned on a semiotic-material axis formed by the interactions of migrations and innovative artists, constructed in visual and written accounts, and contested in the alternate historiographies. The implications of this theoretical framework require an object’s irreducibility to either material or intentional categories, allowing suspension of a linear evolutionary narrative of the sitar, and reconfiguration of its unfolding through the processes of rupture and continuity, hybrid and network, assemblage and line of flight. This permits a new understanding of the sitar within the social milieu of post-Independence India.

To examine a selection of current sitar performances in contemporary India, I have employed Deleuze’s model of the assemblage and the rhizome. Each performance is linked with the multiple strands found in the cultural framework, and I show how the individual events reflect and shape the cultural narrative and musical practice. On one hand, the Sufi performance directly correlates with a long and sometimes subterranean history of several centuries, and re-creates this legacy
in current times, with differing objectives. On the other hand, the electric sitar’s appearance encapsulates some of the radical changes brought about by technology and also links directly with possible future changes in the sitar. This shows the ongoing relevance and vitality of the sitar and its players to the present musical scene, as it connects to the past and projects forward. I demonstrate how assemblage theory can be applied to complex problems of cultural hybridity, in the Deleuzian sense and that each performance is unique, a singularity woven of strands of time and expression.

The dissertation describes the formation of the Imdad Khan gharana to show the connection between musical and historical processes. I show how the adaptive strategies and aesthetic choices of Imdad Khan and Inayat Khan informed a musical style aligned with their times, and how the social and conceptual space of gharana functions as a network between tradition and performance. This expands previous understanding of the definitions of gharana by linking tradition with the process of emplacement through transmission of musical knowledge and the construction of personal identity through a shared historical and geographic narrative.

I describe the life and legacy of Vilayat Khan as an example of the Imdad Khan gharana’s musical persona. Within the boundaries of Hindustani music, as it existed in the twentieth century and in the present day, Khan maintained the basic structures of raga, tala, and bandish, but, in deviation from the traditional forms, drew from the virtual, technical, and structural elements of khyal, thumri, and dhrupad to follow his imagination and aesthetic preferences in the exploration of
Khan pushed the sitar’s technical limitations to their edge during his time and thus opened a broader range of musical expression for the sitar.

My discussion of Khan also shows his life as part of an ongoing cultural dialog between India’s Hindu and Muslim heritage. For example, his redesign of the using Islamic motifs reflects another facet of the material-semiotic axis. His world-famous contemporary, Ravi Shankar, serves as a Hindu counterpoint to Khan’s Muslim heritage, as both dominated Hindustani music and the sitar, yet both pursued distinct musical directions. Their musical lives represent the ongoing Hindu-Muslim dialogue in modern India’s ongoing self-definition Khan embodied an alternative position to the dominant national identity and music’s role in it.

Finally, I analyze Khan’s music as a synthesis of a wide range of musical history and genres and an individual musical attempt at reintegration, but at the same time a deconstruction of traditional structures within music. I combined multiple modalities of musical analysis, including Deleuze’s assemblage theory, to formulate the complex architecture and performative aspects of the gayaki ang. My theory of “polycentric binary pitches” is both a musical model, and a mapping of the configuration of the entire work.

This work stems from Deleuze’s invocation that to think is to experiment (Deleuze and Guattari: 99-111), and therefore this work is presented as a thought experiment, an application of a Deleuzian framework on the subjects of Hindustani music and the sitar. Serving both as a point of departure and a point of arrival, the
validity and potential for musical studies inherent in Deleuze’s work were hopefully
demonstrated through their application to this work’s thematic content.

I believe that Deleuze’s work has particular relevance to ethnomusicology,
and that by applying, not only the concepts, but also the broader conceptual frame
offered by his post-structuralist breakthroughs, new understandings of Hindustani
music and its relation to Indian history and society are possible. As Eugene Holland
explicates, “rather than designate a single determinate phenomena, they create a
meshwork of selective references, both internal (that is, to the other concepts) and
external (to other phenomena)” (Holland: 20). In the same way, the internal and
external relationship of concepts, historical events, and musical phenomena are
continuously juxtaposed throughout this work.

**Further Research**

The life and music of Vilayat Khan remains relatively unexamined; the
comprehensive analysis that I had intended for this work proved to be impossible.
The analysis of his music, utilizing methods derived from historical musicology,
ethnomusicology, and computer-assisted analysis can open new interpretations that
can provide many valuable insights, opportunities for further research.

The rethinking of Kantian metaphysics and other post-structuralist terms
opens up a new vista of philosophical and methodological possibilities. This work
touched on the work of Deleuze, Latour, Harman, and Malpas. Each of these
thinkers, and others grouped under the “Speculative Realism” umbrella, can offer an
entire toolkit for ethnomusicologists. The bridging of empirical and speculative is
ideally suited to a hybrid discipline such as ethnomusicology. Latour’s call for “compositionism” provides scholars new freedom construct models that match the phenomena, thereby escaping the limitations of rigid adherence to a particular system.

One of my primary goals in the dissertation was to explore the possibilities offered by new theoretical systems for ethnomusicology, and I hope this work demonstrates the possibility of a new path. The theoretical explorations of this work were impelled by my desire to reflect the complexity of this music and the multiple worlds it inhabits. To inscribe multiplicity onto the linear pages of a text is perhaps impossible. It calls to mind Robinson Jeffer’s meditation on the limits of human understanding in his poem *Rock and Hawk:*

*Mysticism of stone*  
*Which failure cannot cast down*  
*Nor success make proud*

It is a call to see the world as fundamentally mysterious and unknowable, yet also inscribed on the fleeting pages of memory and experience that ground the human experience.
Glossary

adab  culture

akhasaic  etheric plane

alap  is a non-metered presentation of a raga’s basic structures, melodic phrases, and schema. Alap is often considered the spiritual core of Hindustani music, a meditation on the meaning of raga.

anahata  unmanifest sound

andaz  correlates most directly with “style.” Its range of meanings encompasses the semantic field of artistic and personal expression. Andaz implies expression of individual temperament, ranging from habitude, comportment, and etiquette. Andaz can also allude to personal charisma, a way of being in the world.

ang  the term ang refers to a broad array of expressive techniques, aesthetic goals, and repertoire. Examples of ang include Purab ang, literally Eastern'style, which is a school of thumri singing based upon varied expression of text through musical interpretation. Ang is a broad term, indicative of a regionally and historically defined musical genre, as well as improvisational practice

avroh  ascending scale in raga

avrohie  descending scale in raga

awaz  sound, voice

baj  which literally translates as ‘play’, refers to a body of technique used in any instrumental genre, both as an individual style or an entire gharana.

bandh  closed

bandish  a composition or fixed musical piece

bhajan  a Hindu devotional song

bharata natyam  South Indian Classical dance form

baithak  to sit, manner of sitting; the traditional seated posture for playing the sitar
bhoga  sensual aspects of life, literally sensual enjoyment

bin  a stringed instrument, about 4 feet long, with a large resonate gourd at each end

binkar  one who plays the bin

bol  words making up a vocal composition; mnemonic syllabi of tabla

bolbant  to play with words; a style of khyal that improvises with the words of the composition

carnatic  classical music of South India

chaiti  a North Indian folk genre related to spring.

chalan  primary movements of the raga

chikari strings  drone strings, tuned to a higher octave; mirror the intake of breath by the vocalist

chilla  Exhaustive music practice routine conducted over a period of 40 days, during which food is provided for the musician. It is also used for Sufi spiritual practices.

churidar-kurta  concert dressing with his stylish use of the Indian dress

dadra  a semi classical North Indian genre of vocal music set in dadra (six beats rhythm) tala

dard  pain

darshan  literally means “seeing”, but contains within it a complex set of philosophical and phenomenological codes. In this conceptual system, the visual image is both an external stimulus pattern and a mental representation which inhabit different dimensions of consciousness. Darshan is a bridge between external and internal worlds, often described as flows of vibrational energies

darvish  a wandering mendicant

dba  dhrupad based alap

desi  songs deriving from a particular place; folk/regional

dhrupad  the oldest surviving form of Indian Classical music and traces its origin to Vedic chants and mantras. Though a highly developed classical art with complex and elaborate grammar and aesthetics, it is also primarily a form of worship, in which offerings are made to the divine through sound. It has a more rigid structure than khyal. Dhrupad alap follows a well-defined process
that articulates the building blocks of raga in their most primal and coherent forms. Khyal, on the other hand, allows for greater latitude in elaborative processes, and therefore contains many pitfalls for unwary musicians. There are four basic sections of dhrupad: sthayi, antara, sanchari, and avoga

ding - German word for thing
diri strokes on strings
drut fast tempo compositions
gamak rapid alteration between notes
gat theme of an instrumental performance
gat-toda a solo performance genre for sitar
gayaki ang, in Vilayat Khan’s usage, is a complex term, encompassing compositions, tans, and vocal-influenced alap gayaki ang is the collective assemblage of the virtual and manifest which uses the sitar to articulate multiple genres and stylistic features of individual artists into an ever-changing musical and socio-cultural landscape. The gayaki ang represents the distillation of generations of musicians through the unique vision of a single artist, and can be conceived as a “multiplicity” in Deleuze’s terminology
gayaki as a term, is inclusive of all vocal genres within Hindustani music
gandharvas celestial minstrels
ghar is a home, a domicile, but it is also a place, a center from which to engage the world. In India, a family home is often kept for generations, and is both a physical and mental reflection of a deeper psychic grounding in a physical location inscribed with meaning. In the Oxford Hindi-English Dictionary, under the word ghar, over one hundred definitions and compound words using ghar are listed. Ghar is not only a material structure, but is a center of meaningful action, a point of commencing and completion of action, in short a place

gharana a lineage of hereditary musicians, their disciples, and the particular musical style they represent. They are like a guild. Gharana, unlike the khandan, is open to outsiders who are not blood relations

gharanidar musicians belonging to a gharana; also, knowledge which is the domain of a particular gharana

ghasit dragging or stretching a note

ghazal lyric poem in Urdu, set to music and sung in a distinctive style
**gurukul**  traditions of ancient India, wherein a selected group of musicians live and study with some of India’s top **gharanidar** musicians

**hata**  manifest sound

**hindustani**  classical (North Indian) music was developed in Northern India

**jagir**  revenue from land

**jagirdar**  land owner

**jalatarang**  a traditional North Indian Classical instrument, classified under idiophone category

**jalatarangie**  performer of **jalatarang**

**jawari**  is the foundation for a sitar’s tone, achieved by the intricate shaving of the bridge to create the instrument’s overall sound. **Jawari** forms the tone on a range from **kula** (open) to **band** (closed), as well as the string tension, intonation, and dynamic range

**jhala**  the fast, virtuosic passages or performances

**jor**  is a formal section of composition in the long elaboration (alap) of a raga that forms the beginning of a performance. **Jor** is the instrumental equivalent of **nomtom** in the **dhrupad** vocal style of Indian music. Both have a simple pulse but no well-defined rhythmic cycle. It meant to mimic the sound of the **tambora** in vocal music

**joras**  (Sa) strings, notes from the strings

**khandan**  hereditary musical family; contains within it the supposition of nobility, a place of agency or action (economy), and that of station, a Sufi term referring to a level of spiritual progress that transforms the existential state of the aspirant, not merely experiential but inscribed in one’s being

**kathak**  North Indian Classical dance form

**Khatka**  a musical embellishment consisting of three or more notes employed quickly, forcefully, and successively. It is used in many forms of semi-classical vocal music

**khyal**  a highly improvised vocal genre that followed **dhrupad**; literally “imagination, subjectivity, individuality”

**krintrans**  embellishments in which the right hand hammers on note

**mansabdars**  elites under Muslim rule whose revenue was drawn from tribute extracted from territories under their control
marga  classical

masitkhani gat  structure of sitar performance still today reflects this; a slow composition (generally a slow teen-tal composition known as a masitkhani gat)

mehfil  is a musical gathering at a place, often a residence. It lasts to the break of dawn, when it is culminated with raga

merukhand  a type of sargam singing with varied permutation and combination of kaleidoscopic swara (note) patterns.

mind  pulling the string laterally away from the sitar neck

mizrab  a steel plectrum, a small piece of metal on the finger for strumming strings

mirasi  families of hereditary Muslim musician, generally instrumentalist

moksha  liberation from the cycle of birth and death; spiritual aspects of raga

mukhada  opening phrase, sung immediately before the beginning of the composition

murkis  inflections above and below central pitches

nautch  a dance, dancing girls


parda  the metal frets on a stringed instrument

Praat software  a free program to analyze speech and wave forms in music

pradhan  octave emphasis

qawwali  a Sufi devotional vocal genre

raag  refers to a specific raga, e.g. Raag Yemen

raga  on the empirical level, raga is a melodic configuration which creates a specific emotional affect through both psycho-acoustic and culturally conditioned referential processes. The subjective response to raga in enculturated audiences is based on several layers of associative or meta-musical meaning. These layers include raga time theory, linking ragas with times of the day, seasonal associations, specific visualizations of narratives and scenarios, and finally personified as an immanent, divine being. Past performances of a given raga lay the groundwork of expectation, but the raga must be brought to life anew at each performance. Thus, the raga is experienced in the shared attentional field between performer and audience.

rang  color, colorful
rasas various emotional states created through the arts

rezakhani gat was developed by the sitarist Reza Khan during the reign of Wahid Ali Shah in Lucknow (ca.1850). Like the masitkhani gats, this compositional framework follows a fixed pattern of bols, and systematic elaborations through todas. This particular style of gat was also known as the Purbi (Eastern style), which is a reference to the thumri compositions from Lucknow that influenced it.

riyaz intense practice. See chilla

rupa form

sam first beat of a cycle

sarangi stringed instrument played with a bow

saraswati goddess of music and learning

sargam notation using the syllables of Indian music, e.g. Sa Re Ga, etc.

sarod stringed instrument played with a plectrum, originally from the Afgani rabab.

setu (a bridge) or ‘transformer’ of energies...between...the coarse physical world and the unmanifest, the world’s subtle and causal nature

shagird student, follower

shakal literally “visage”

surbahar sometimes known as the base sitar; plucked string instrument

tabla a north Indian drum set

tal rhythm, appears as a modifier of various beat patterns

talim 1) education  2) a body of pedagogic material

tambora the four-to-five string drone instrument found throughout North and South India

tan an improvised vocal or instrumental musical phrase. A run of musical notes (i.e., a melodic lick)

tans improvised passages in vocal or instrumental music

tappa a semi-classical North Indian classical vocal genre. It believed to be derived from folk song and tune sung by the camel riders of Punjab.

tarab sympathetic resonant strings
**tarana** a fast composition based on *bols* derived from percussion or instrumental music. Sometimes contains an *antra* in Persian; considered by some to have a mystical effect through the meaningless, but potent sound of the *bols*

**thumri** a semi-classical North Indian vocal genre. Thumri is based on the romantic-devotional literature inspired by the Radha-Krishna’ love theme

**todas** improvised sections, generally pre-composed, reserved for instrumental music, primarily sitar and sarod


**veena** older form of the *bin*, generally played in South Indian Carnatic music

**vilambit** slow tempo

**zamindars** served as the intermediaries between the *mansabdars* and the people and were allotted a salary of a percent of land revenue
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**Periodicals**

*Daily Excelsior*

*Dainik Hindustan*

*Hindustan Times*

*Indian Express*

*Jansatta*

*Mid day*

*Pioneer*

*Raga to Rock*

*Telegraph*

*The Hindu*

*Times of India*

*Today*

*Statesman*

*Sruti*
Appendix A: Literature Review

This appendix presents a review of relevant literature for this dissertation, encompassing ancient to early medieval Sanskrit texts, Persian and Urdu theoretical texts on Indian music, biographical and first-person narratives, historical studies, globalization, cultural studies, philosophy, and critical theory.

Texts on Indian Music

This review of literature on Hindustani music is reflective of various metaframes, including the interest of Islamic rulers in the indigenous culture of India, the work of Western scholars and orientalists, beginning with Sir William Jones’ 1799 *On the Musical Modes of the Hindus*, and the work of reformers and nationalists in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries such as V. K. Bhatkhande.

Several categories of literature consulted in my dissertation research are presented here. The categories include performance manuals, theoretical texts, and periodicals. The first category consists of works in Sanskrit and Hindi, as well as regional languages, divided into ancient to early medieval, medieval to mid-nineteenth centuries, and nineteenth century to the present. The second category is that of Indo-Persian sources, and the final category are works in English, ranging from Jones to the contemporary texts of Western and Indian scholars.
Ancient To Early Medieval Sanskrit Texts

The Natya Shastra is the earliest extant text about Indian classical music, dated between 200 BCE to 200 ACE. The Natya Shastra is primarily a dramaturgic text, but contains a separate chapter on music. Many theoretical terms found in the Natya Shastra survive today, but there is much evidence that contemporary musical practices have little or nothing in common with the musical systems of the Natya Shastra. Nevertheless, it continues to be an important text for musicians and scholars who wish to link ancient Indian classical music with contemporary performance practices.

The Natya Shastra describes a modal system of music based on the jati system of modes, derived from two parent scales, the Sa-grama and the Ma-grama. The range of the octave is divided into 22 micro-intervals known as shruti.

According to Widdess (7), several features of the music described in the Natya Shastra distinguish it from present structure of Indian classical music. These features include: no evidence of a drone, indications that scales can be transposed, and different notes can function as the final or predominant; the principal instrument of this time was a seven or nine string harp, which has subsequently disappeared; the music described in the Natya Shastra is composed, and there is no evidence of improvisation, a central feature of contemporary North Indian music.

The origins of music are described as divine: the god Brahma created the arts of music and dance. According to Widdess (9) it is doubtful that the grama-jati system survived much beyond the middle of the first millennium. The Natya Shastra
continued to have considerable influence on many works produced after it, perhaps
due to its status as Veda, or divinely revealed text.

Prior to the Muslim invasions of the subcontinent, several important works
on music were written, including Matanga Muni’s Brdhaddesi (ninth century ACE)
and Sarngadeva’s Sangitaratnakari (thirteenth century ACE). In these texts, the
term raga first appears, which indicates a break from the system described in the
Natya Shastra. In the Sangitaratnakari, over 264 ragas are listed (Jaraizbhoj: 16).
The Sangitaratnakari was a seminal work, and the author attempted to summarize
and synthesize all the previous work on music. It has remained influential in both
the South Indian Karantic music system and dhrupad.

Persian Theoretical Texts On Indian Music

As the cultural impact of Muslim rule grew over India, many texts were
translated from Sanskrit into Persian, Arabic, or Turkish. These texts indicate the
cultural confluence that occurred during this period. However, there is still a great
deal of separation from actual performance and the texts. Several important Persian
texts include Rag Darpan, Gunyat’al Munya, Lahjat-I Sikander Sahahi and others.
Most of these texts were based on Sanskrit sources and were primarily theoretical
in their intent.

Tuftah al’ Hind, “Bab Pancham,” The fifth chapter of a comprehensive work
on India, Tuftah al’Hind, was composed under the patronage of Azam Shah by Mizra
Khan. This work presents material gathered from three Sanskrit texts, Ragarnava,
Ragdarpana, and Sabhavinoda. Of particular interest in this text is how Sanskrit
terms are translated into Persian equivalents: the use of terms for the science of music employs both Sanskrit and Arabic synonyms. For example, *sangeet* and *moseeqe* are compared. A broad comparison of *ragas* and the Arabic *maqam* system is included, as well as a list of new ragas created by fusing these musical systems, such as Muhaiyar, Sazgiri, Yaman, Usshaq, Muafiq, Farodast and others. The author lists contemporary musicians, describes rhythmic cycles (62). He mentions Amir Khusrau and the ragas he invented, and includes contemporary classifications of vocalists.

*Resalah moseqe az imam aurazaqe*, this text concerns (in the first section) the nature of sound (*awaz*) its connection to nature, lists of important musicians and scholars of music, reactions to correctly performed melodies, and so on. It also describes the connections of the different *maqams* with different regions in the Middle and Near East, and in the second section describes the ragas of India.

*Madon A'la'moseqee*, This nineteenth century Urdu and Persian text has many interesting observations, including the profusion of poetry in the text (from Hafiz, Jami and others), lists of many famous musicians of the time, complex descriptions of the *parda* system (a system of classifying modes), the generation of Indian rhythmic cycles using the principle rhythmic structures of poetry, an extensive chapter on Amir Khusrau and his inventions of various new modes and performance styles, and the principles of dividing strings to get specific pitches. The text includes many tabla compositions.

While most Indo-Persian texts offer summaries of previous Sanskrit works, the text *Ghunyatu'l Munya* (1374-1375) offers important commentary regarding
the occasional discrepancies between theory and practice during the fourteenth century. The author of this text consulted the noted theoreticians and musicians of his age, “band after band of Sazindas and Goyindas of Sarud, and players of instruments of rhythm and string of each kind and every variety. All these came from near and far”. (Sarmadee: I). In this work, the behaviors of audiences and performers are classified, as are the requirements for a proper performance space. It is also provides a glimpse of Indian music before the split between Hindustani (North Indian) and Carnatic (South Indian) music. The complex descriptions of performance practice are of special relevance to this study.

**Gharanas**

The development of *gharanas* occurred after Aurangzeb’s pogrom against music in the capital of Delhi, which caused many musicians to seek work with smaller kingdoms. Each of these regions developed individual styles, and the lineage of a *gharana* is an important signifier of musical competence and authenticity to this day.

V. N. Bhatkhande, Indian musicologist, was a seminal figure for Indian classical music history in the early twentieth century; his monumental works, *Hindustani Sangita-paddhati* (4 vols., 1910-1932) and *Kramik Pustak Malika* (6 vols., 1913-1937), were of seminal importance in the shift from the feudal system of patronage and cultural transmission to one based on Western models of education and public patronage via concert halls. This work continues to dominate the curriculum of most music colleges in India. Bhatkhande transcribed multiple
compositions from many *khandani* and *gharana* musicians, and developed a system of notation that is still the most prevalent within India. His works are also important as a cultural document of the growing power of the middle class and the conflict between the traditional holders of cultural knowledge. In this case, the work is as much a political statement as a pedagogical document, because it represents dispersal of cultural capital and a move from a somewhat marginalized minority (hereditary Muslim musicians) to middle-class accessibility and fixed curricula.

*Musical Heritage of India* (1980) by M.R. Gautam, gives a brief history and genealogies of various *khayal gharanas* from the fifteenth to the twentieth century. V. H. Deshpande’s *Indian Musical Tradition: An Aesthetic Study of the Gharanas in Hindustani Music* (1973) explicates the stylistic characteristics of the various *gharanas*. Bonnie Wade’s (1997) *Khyal: Creativity within North India’s Classical Music Tradition* is a detailed analysis of the historical components and stylistic characteristics of the major *khayal gharanas* of North India. Wade also provides a detailed and accurate system of transcription, which employs both Western five-line staff and a modified version of *sargam* notation. This is one of the most accurate notational methods employed to date for Hindustani music. The combination of historical information, oral history, and transcription make this a formidable study.

Daniel Neuman’s work *The Life of Music in North India* (1980) examines performance practices, patronage, the influence of technology, and *gharanas*. This work was one of the most important and comprehensive of its time, and remains one of the landmark studies of North Indian music. Neuman’s anthropological approach gives insight into the contemporary survival strategies of musicians, and
provides ample space for recounting the musician’s own perspectives on their art. It also provides detailed information on All India Radio (AIR), at a time when it was still a major force in Indian culture. This work is an important record of the time when North Indian classical music had evolved away from traditional modes of patronage, yet still received major state support.

Allyn Miner’s *Sitar and Sarod Music in the 18th and 19th Centuries* (1993) is the most comprehensive account of the development of the sitar and sarod to date. Miner employs a wide variety of textual sources, as well as interviews with musicians, to create an accurate depiction of the performance practices, organology, and major musicians over a period of two centuries.

*Musicians of India: Past and Present: Gharanas of Hindustani Music and Genealogies* by Amal Das Sharma (1995) provides genealogies and histories of all of the major *gharanas* in North Indian music. Family histories as well as links between various styles are explicated. Sharma also provides a reasonably comprehensive history of the development of North Indian music, along with a review of the most important textual resources. The clear explication of musical lineages is important given the tendency of musicians to link themselves with particular *gharanas* and historical figures without any basis in fact.

*Hindustani Music: A Tradition in Transition*, by Deepak Raja (2005) is an up-to-date study of the current topology of the musical arts and arts patronage in modern India. He discusses the influence of market-based sponsorship and its influence on performance practices. He also notes the importance of recorded music as the basis for a re-invigoration of Hindustani music, a tradition he feels is in
decline. He describes, though not in detail, some of the strategies adopted by artists to conform to the expectations of a new middle-class audience. In this work, emphasis is given to instrumental styles.

*At Home in the World: Bharat Natyam on the Global Stage* (2007,) by Janet O'Shea, looks at the impact of the global audience on Bharat Natyam, one of the most popular styles of India dance. This work traces the re-imagining of the dance during the nationalist area of the early twentieth century, and the competing definitions of dance during this period. This is an important work, as it clearly demonstrates the impact of the new value systems of Western-influenced Indian elites, as well as the constructed nature of the classical tradition within India. She delineates the impact of diasporic cultures on the development of artistic traditions within India and the occasionally controversial reception of new developments.

**Biographical and First-person Narratives**

Other important sources are first-person accounts of life by both musicians and aficionados. In these works, many important anecdotes, legends, and oral histories are preserved. Oral histories are a central component to North India music, often functioning as demonstrations of particular belief systems, especially in regards to topics such as transmission, patronage, and *riyaz* (practice). These texts also provide insights into how artists construct their identity in relationship to society and the musician subculture.

Shankar’s account of his personal development as a musician and an international
celebrity. The description of music show how Indian music was presented to the
West during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The instruction manual is still one of
the best for beginning sitar students, and the book itself generated a great deal of
interest among Western students to learn Indian music. It also reveals the way in
which successful performers were able to craft a musical and cultural identity that
appealed to occidental markets.

_**Ustad Faiyaz Khan**_ by Dipali Nag (1985) is a biography of the legendary
vocalist by one of his students. The book gives a detailed look at the technical and
aesthetic element of the Ustad’s _gayaki_. The author’s close connection with the
vocalist provides many details of the performance circumstances during the early
twentieth century. These details include the construction of the concert halls, the
types of audiences attending, and the sometimes whimsical requests of the Ustad’s
patrons. The complex social dynamics between the highly acclaimed artist and the
nobility is documented, providing a window on the shifting social status of the
artists during the twentieth century.

_**Maa Siddheshwari**_ by Savita Devi (2000) is a biography containing many
first-person reminiscences of the important _thumri_ vocalist Siddheshwari Devi. As
the author is her daughter, the account sometimes borders on hagiography, but it
also provides direct information on the difficulties faced by her mother during her
musical education, and the stigmatization faced by traditional female vocalists who
were associated with the decadence of the Mughal court during the growth of
middle-class value systems in the musical field. It gives detailed accounts of the
nature of patronage as it transitioned from the feudal/noble system to a more state-sponsored system. It also traces the eventual social acceptance of performers from the bhai-ji/courtesan backgrounds in the middle-class social milieu. The highly religious outlook of Siddheshwari Devi is emphasized.

Pt. Mallikarjun Mansur’s autobiography *Rasa Yatra: My Journey in Music* (2005) describes in detail the environment in which he learned music, the small village of Mansur, and his education in the styles of two major vocal *gharanas*, Gwalior and Jaipur-Atrauli. It is a record of both the teaching styles during that period (the early twentieth century) and the changes in opportunities for musicians through the radio and film. It also details his quest to create a uniquely personal *gayaki* by combining the styles of two different *gharanas*.

Sheila Dhar’s *Raga’n Josh* (2005) is a collection of autobiographical reminiscences by a dedicated music student who was also part of India’s political elite. The book contains many accounts of important artists, including music, personal, and biographical detail. The work is especially important as it provides the perspective from the patron’s side, and details the changes in performance styles which occurred during the decline of the feudal patronage system and the growth of the middle class. She gives her opinions about the decline of Indian music due to the loss of the proper environment for teaching and learning, and the decline in influence of an educated, elite audience.

*An Unheard Melody: Annapurna Devi- an Authorized Biography* by Swapan Kumar Bondyopadhyay (2005) is a recounting of the life and contemporary existence of the enigmatic and highly influential Annapurna Devi. As the daughter of
the seminal guru and musician Baba Allauddin Khan, Annapurna Devi was one of the most accomplished sitarists and surbaharists of her day. Yet, due to somewhat murky circumstances, she has not performed or left her house since the late 1950s. Annapurna Devi is important as a guru, but also as a symbolic referent to the ideal of the “musician as saint”. The book is a scathing indictment of Pt. Ravi Shankar, her ex-husband, portraying him a highly ambitious, opportunistic, and ruthless competitor in the field of music.

*Komal Ghandhar: Ustad Vilayat Khan* (2005), by Mena Bannerji, is a collection of wide ranging interviews with the sitarist Vilayat Khan. The book provides an in-depth account of how Ustad (honorific title) Vilayat Khan developed his unique style, ranging from his early *talim* with his father, the influence of various vocalists after his father’s death, and his struggles and eventual triumph in the Indian music world. The text also contains detailed descriptions of his playing style, his critiques and praise of his contemporaries, and the artist’s philosophy of music. It also addresses the Ustad’s sometimes contentious relationship with the Indian government’s music agencies, and the Ustad’s larger-than life personality.

*The Lost World of Hindustani Music* by Kumar Prasad Mukherji (2006) is similar to Dhar’s text *Raga’n Josh* as an autobiographical account of a highly dedicated music student who was also a member of India’s cultural and economic elite. The book is filled with anecdotes regarding the vast sums of money paid to performers during the feudal era, the author’s belief in the decline of music, and detailed descriptions of performance practices. The many anecdotes of artists, a
number of which are still circulated among musicians, provide a glimpse of the complex oral histories which are still central to traditional musicians in North India.

**Historical Studies**

The historical studies on India that have informed this work range from general histories, to descriptions of specific eras, and studies of the broad impact of new technologies.

The impact of the colonial era on North Indian classical music is discussed in depth in Gerry Farrell’s *Indian Music and the West* (1997). The book traces the interest and re-creation of Indian classical music from the earlier Orientalist explorations of William Jones in the eighteenth century, the impact of Western notational systems on Indian music, and the use of culture in the colonial agenda. The importance of music in the Indian nationalist movement is discussed in depth, and the impact of such figures as Mohun Tagore (1840-1914) who was both an anglophile and an ardent nationalist. He covers the movement of Indian classical music to the Western concert stage during the 1960s, as spearheaded by Ravi Shankar and Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, and the development of institutions teaching Indian classical music in the West. Overall, the work is primarily a historical survey, and presents the complex cross-cultural dialogue that has influenced both occidental and oriental (South Asian) music.

*Essays in Indian History: Towards a Marxist Perception* by Irfan Habib (2005) is an analysis of Indian history from the Mughal era to the twentieth century, using economic, social, and political data from a variety of sources. While the author
employs a number of components from Marxist theory, he does so very critically, and uses Marxist ideas without subsuming the observed facts. The book includes a wealth of statistical data, which makes it useful, regardless of the validity of the Marxist theoretical framework. The book traces capital accumulation from the feudal/aristocratic state to the beginnings of colonial and post-colonial capitalist industry.

William Dalrymple’s *The Last Mughal* (2007) is a chronicle of the last days of the Mughal Empire in Delhi, following the bloody Sepoy mutiny. This event, according to Dalrymple, was the dividing line between the sophisticated and tolerant culture of the Mughal era, and a systemic process of “divide and rule” between Hindus and Muslims as practiced by the British. The book gives an impression of the final, decadent days of the Mughal Empire, and the flourishing of the arts that occurred during this period.

Vinayak Purohit’s two-volume study *Arts of Transitional India: Twentieth Century* (1988) is an ambitious and highly detailed work examining all the arts of India from the feudal era to the late twentieth century. While much of the focus concerns the visual arts, theater, and architecture, substantial portions of the text examine music, both classical and popular. The author is a committed Marxist, and this perspective forms the basis of his cultural analysis of Indian society. The book traces the impact of feudal economic systems, the British Raj, and the nationalist/corporate era on the development of all the arts. By providing a perspective on all forms of artistic production, along with extensive statistical data, a holistic perspective of the relationship between arts, economy, state power, and
individual/social identity, makes this work important simply as a reference work. The strong Marxist orientation requires either acceptance, or a highly critical reading.

Peter Manuel’s *Cassette Culture* (1993) examines the impact of technological and socioeconomic development on a variety of musical genres through the decentralization and localized production provided by the cassette tape. For Manuel, the growth of the cassette industry, while providing a type of cultural autonomy for many rural and urban poor, has unfortunately led to growing fragmentation and occasional fomenting of religious bigotry, and has influenced regional styles to move in a commercial direction. Manuel examines the complex relationship between mass media, popular culture, and ‘micro-media’ in the growth of democratic and participatory culture in India, using the context of the historical expansion of popular and mass culture. He specifically critiques the *ghazal* form as an example of the watering down of traditional musical forms, which transforms Urdu high culture into ‘commercial kitsch’. Overall, Manuel is disappointed that the potential of popular media has been subverted into a lowest-common denominator commercial culture.

B.N. Goswami’s *Broadcasting: The New Patron of Indian Music* (1996) is a study of the importance of radio and television for North Indian artists from the 1950s until the 1990s. This work provides details of government sponsorship and the importance of the radio as a new *mehfil* for artists during this time period. It also shows how the new performance spaces influenced artistic production during this time period. Goswami examines many controversial issues including the banning of
the harmonium, and various types of experimentation including fusion, *jugalbandies*, and orchestration of Hindustani music.

A number of books have appeared in recent years which discuss the changes in Indian society after independence. Many of the books are highly critical of the sectarian politics and the growth of a highly stratified economic system. These books include V. S. Naipaul’s *India: A Million Mutinies Now* (1992), Pankaj Udas’s *Butter Chicken in Ludhiana* (2006) and *Temptations of the West: How to be Modern in India, Pakistan, Tibet and Beyond* (2007), as well as the highly critical essays of Arundanti Roy. The Nobel-prize winning economist Amartya Sen takes a more positive perspective on globalization in *The Argumentative Indian: Writings in Indian History, Culture, and Identity* (2005), but is firmly against the partisan politics practiced by the BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) and other groups. On the other side, there are many texts by economists, scholars, and political figures which are highly positive about the processes of globalization. These texts include *India’s New Economy* (2009) by Jati Sengupta and Chiranjib Neogi, *India Arriving: How This Economic Powerhouse is Redefining Global Business* by Rafiq Dossini (2009), and *Think India* by William Simon (2007). *Sociology of Globalisation: Perspectives from India* edited by Sakarama Somayaji and Ganesha Somayaji (2006) is a collection of essays which deal with a variety of issues connected with globalization and its influence on politics, religion, and development issues.

Globalization
Globalization, a contested term, given to multiple interpretations and definitions, has been the subject of an extensive body of literature. The term “globalization” designates the many possible constructions of the current political, economic and cultural landscape, and is open to inquiry by many scholarly fields. Certain modes of inquiry, especially in economics and political science have tended towards a reductionist approach, for example Samuel Huntington’s *The Clash of Civilizations* (1996). Sociology has generally employed a much broader field of inquiry, examining with multiple agents and interacting systems, as found in the work of Pieterse.

*Cultural Theory and the Problem of Modernity*, by Alan Swinegood (1998), is a comprehensive account of sociological theories of culture, ranging from Marx, the Frankfurt School, Weber, Durkheim, Simmel and Parsons, to the dialogism of Bakhtin, and several post-modern perspectives on culture. The book offers a critique of much of postmodern analysis of culture as lacking a solid contextualization of historical processes. He also emphasizes the importance of functional theories of agency and self in any theory of culture, and critiques Marxist theories for shortcomings in this area. This book is valuable because it compares theories of cultures, and delineates the historical forces which influenced the development of these theories. The author highlights the conflicts between some post-modern discourse and Adorno’s theory of mass society.

Margaret Rose’s *The Post-Modern and the Post-Industrial: A Critical Analysis* (1991) traces the development of the postmodern through history, literature, and sociology. She focuses on the development of a rigorous concept of
the postmodern to the prefabricated homes designed by Joseph Hudnut. Rose’s conception of postmodern and postindustrial society is linked to the development of mass-produced goods and cultural products, and mass-produced consciousness of mass popular culture.

*Orientalism, Postmodernism, and Globalism* by Bryan S. Turner (1994) looks at the growth of Islam during an era of increased global interconnections, and the problems raised for theories of orientalism and postmodernism by this occurrence. The problematic place of non-Western societies, especially Islam, in relation to modernity, reflects the dangers of applying Western theory to non-Western cultures.

William H. Mott’s *Globalization: People, Perspectives, and Progress* (2004), looks at globalization in a cultural, historical, and philosophical perspective, beginning with the Enlightenment, and various paradigms of knowledge and representation. He examines globalization from the position of a multi-perspectival space, juxtaposing competing ideologies and analyses of globalization. Several political perspectives on globalization are outlined, including that of increasing fragmentation, growth of global governance, and transformations of the public sphere. It is important to note that Mott supports the conjecture that globalization is a long, historical process, and that the contemporary landscape is an evolution of complex historical, social, and economic forces. He examines cultural globalization using Marshall McLuhan’s concept of the “global village”, and how this affects region, personal, and religious identities.
Jan Nederveen Pieterse’s *Globalization and Culture* (2004), makes a strong case for a particular model of globalization, hybridity. Pieterse compares three main paradigms of globalization: difference, convergence, and hybridity. The first paradigm emphasizes the immutable differences between cultures and posits a strategic and economic conflict of fundamentally separate cultures, and has its roots in evolutionary models of anthropology. The second paradigm focuses on the erosion of traditional cultures and identities through the implementation of a global monoculture. This paradigm is rooted in the anthropological theories of cultural diffusion, and is similar to Weber’s theory of the rise of rationalism as a process of cultural evolution. Hybridity, the third model, posits a complex interaction of cultural and economic forces, which emphasize border crossing, the permeable boundaries of ethnic and national identities, and a destabilized notion of cultural authenticity.

*Metaphors of Globalization: Magicians, Mirrors and Mutinies* (2008), edited by Markus Kornprobst, Vincent Pouliot, Nisha Shah and Ruben Zaiotti, is a collection of essays that examine the debates on globalization from a variety of ideational perspectives. The volume attempts to counter the emphasis on globalization as primarily a material, economic and political phenomena, by focusing on the metaphoric and ideational aspects of this process. Globalization is seen as a process of mind as much as a material process. The book uses three main metaphors to examine specific issues in globalization. Each of these elucidates the metaphoric process of globalization, an often unacknowledged frame of reference which leads to political and economic actions, and as a mode of understanding.
which can free the observer from limiting and/or dogmatic perspectives. Sian Sullivan's article “Conceptualizing Global Organization: From Rhizome to E=Mc2 in Becoming Post-Human” uses Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of rhizome as a means to map the interpenetrating and non-linear processes of globalization.

*Hyperreality and Global Culture* by Nick Perry (1998) and *Planet TV: A Global Television Reader* edited by Lisa Parks and Shanti Kumar (2003) look at the processes of the media and other modes of representing reality on the development of new modes of consciousness and identity in a globalized world. The concept of “hyperreality” deals with a world that is represented by copies without originals, and the increasing combination and recombination of cultural symbols throughout the world. The influence of American television programming is discussed in detail in both texts, as is the increasing perceptual and cultural fragmentation brought about by the constant flow of visual images and increasingly mediated consciousness. *Planet TV* also discuss the important issue of television and national identity: how television is central to the construction of the “imagined communities” of nation-states, and the process of blurring the boundaries of nations through homogenized visions of social reality. *Planet TV* contains Arjun Appadurai’s important essay “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Economy”, which will be discussed later.

*Music in a Changing World* (1974), published by UNESCO, presents an earlier paradigm with regards to globalization: traditional cultures are threatened and need to be preserved against the encroachments of internal and external processes of cultural change. One theme of the book’s essays is the breakdown of
traditional modes of cultural transmission, and the social frameworks in which they operate. This breakdown is noted in a variety of cultures throughout the world, including India. Narayana Menon’s essay “Music and Cultural Change in India” details specific changes occurring in the music culture, at least around the early 1970s. Unlike the majority of the essays included in this text, the author takes the perspective that changes in performance settings, technology, and innovations bode well for the future of music, and represent a natural process of cultural evolution.

*Postmodernism and Globalization in Ethnomusicology: An Epistemological Problem* by Andy Nercessian (2002) argues that cultural relativism is an outmoded theory which is limiting ethnomusicology's ability to adequately analyze and theorize music in a globalized world. For Nercessian, the theory of cultural relativism reflects the *etic-emic* dichotomy, which binds the observer to a dualistic perspective that is no longer valid in an era of increasingly interconnected and blurred cultural boundaries. The author takes on the classical ethnomusicology truism of the importance of context to provide meaning to music, stating that music has multiple levels of meaning, some of which are implicit in the sound itself, some of which are related to the particular local cultural system, and some of which exist outside of the framework of cultural interpretation. Music can gain and lose layers of meaning as it travels between cultures, time and social groups.

*Musical Migrations; Transnationalism and Cultural Hybridity in Latin/o America, vol. 1*, by Frances Aparicio and Candida Jaquez (2003), examines the transformations and influence of Latin music throughout the Western hemisphere.
The cross-cultural migrations of Latin music are examined through the framework of transnational movements, and the necessity to imagine a collective social and cultural identity as expressed through a shared musical language. Through these musical migrations, the West is exposed to a particular interpretation of Latin identity, and Latin identity itself is transformed. The authors stress that cultural hybridity, as seen in salsa, for example, is an opening of the monolithic and hegemonic colonial authority to difference. Hybridity is defined as a bi-directional movement: “(1) the mutual transculturation of the traditional by the forces of modernity and new technologies and (2) the infusion of traditional arts and cultures into the spaces of modernity” (6). The authors recommend that music and the cultural/performative/social space that it inhabits should be analyzed as a discursive space, open to multiple interpretations and constructions, and not as a fixed/static ‘cultural site’.

*World Music, Politics and Social Change*, edited by Simon Frith (1989) looks at the growth of popular music(s) throughout the world. The influence of popular culture is taken as a new avenue for growth and exploration, as forms that can be locally re-interpreted to suit a variety of agendas, including reasserting traditional identities, political resistance, and the development of new social possibilities. The influence of various genres on local cultures, including that of Beatle mania and rock genres, produce new hybrid cultural productions which, while influenced by the West, in fact create new cultural spaces which generate new forms of autonomy and agency, as opposed to being a reflection of a hegemonic global “mono-culture”.

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Cultural Studies, Philosophy, And Theory

In order to model the social topologies in an interconnected and often virtual world, the work of Benedict Anderson in *Imagined Communities* (1983) has been useful for many scholars. The creation of “imagined communities” as described by Anderson, focuses on the development of newspapers, which created a shared, virtual consciousness for socially and geographically separated individuals. The changing modes of interaction, and increased speed of cultural change have led to several different theories.

The sociologist Arjun Appadurai attempts to link complex global cultural, economic and ideational flows into a unified system. This works draws on Jameson’s post-Marxists theory, and takes it to another level of complexity which is relevant to the processes of globalization. In order to formulate the complex, multi-level processes at work in globalization, Appadurai describes the separate fields of the complex interacting elements of global cultural flows as five “scapes” - *ethnoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, financescapes*, and *ideascape* (Appadurai 1996: 33). These are fundamentally perspectival, influenced and constructed by individual, corporate, nation-state and ethnic actors. For Appadurai, these ‘scapes constitute the building blocks of “imagined worlds”, that is, the multiple worlds that are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and groups spread around the globe” (33). These imagined worlds link the local with diasporic groups, transnational media and other influences, which interact in a complex choreography of memory, imagination, and identity.
Place and Experience: A Philosophical Topography by J. E. Malpas (1999) uses the work of Martin Heidegger and others to delineate the importance of place for human agency, memory, and cultural transmission. For Malpas, place is central to meaningful human experience, and forms the basis of human thought; it is the grounding in ‘place’ that makes possible the very essence of what can be termed as culture. This work provides a philosophical backdrop with which to examine the effect of globalization on local contexts. Heidegger’s Topology (2006) is a more in-depth look at Heidegger’s philosophy of place, and also provides an analysis of the uses of this concept in a variety of fields. Both of these works provide a philosophical framework which can ground the study of culture and music in the fundamental conceptual frame of “emplacement”.

Anti-Oedipus (1972) and A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia (1980, trans. 1987) by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari are a complex and radically new philosophical interpretation of the world and society, published in two volumes. The works reflect the potentialities of non-linear (‘nomad’) thought, which breaks free from the straight-jacket of “state-philosophy.” One of the central concepts of Capitalism and Schizophrenia, is that of the rhizome, which appears in volume in A Thousand Plateaus. The rhizome is a plant structure that is connected in complex underground systems of roots, which is a metaphor for free ranging cultural, social, economic, and imaginal interconnections. The rhizome is contrasted with the arborescent or hierarchical linear systems of much of philosophy and social theory. The rhizome allows for interconnected assemblages which create systems particular to the combinations of interacting elements, as
opposed to a search of essences. Deleuze’s theory is found in some recent works on the sociology of cyber culture, and in some contemporary education theory. *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* by Brian Massumi (1992) elaborates and clarifies some of the important themes in Deleuze and Guattari’s work, including “lines of flight”, “force”, “intensities”, and “multiplicity”. This work follows Deleuze’s pattern of embedding meaning in style, which can create sometimes complex and/or contradictory prose.

Manuel De Landa’s *A New Philosophy of Society: Assemblage Theory and Social Complexity* (2009) applies Deleuze’s concept of the assemblage (as opposed to ‘totalities’) to the analysis of social systems. The work focuses on social ontology, and provides a philosophical framework in which to work with divergent social groups. The author moves from the micro-level (individual) to the macro-level of nation-states, thereby showing the relevance of this particular theory to sociological analysis. One of the most compelling features of this work is its clarification and utilization of Deleuze’s sometimes opaque and self-contradictory writings.

The application of Deleuzian philosophical constructs to historical development is attempted in Manuel De Landa’s *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History* (1997). The text is a critique of the linear history promoted by Darwinism and classical thermodynamics, both of which posit a teleological trajectory to a point of stabilization, analogous to the Marxist conception of the “end of history” (also an important tenet to much neo-liberal economic philosophy). For De Landa, the complex interactions of non-linear energy and biological systems can also be discerned in historical processes; the crossing of historical thresholds can be
understood not as stages of linear, evolutionary processes, but as "the crossing of critical thresholds (bifurcations)." (15) Using this model, it is possible that multiple layers of history exist simultaneously, much as water can exist in multiple states such as liquid, gaseous and solid. De Landa thus provides a theoretical modeling for historical development that examines events as strata in complex, interactive systems through the ‘emergent properties’ of combined elements which are more than the sum of their parts, as opposed to an analytical model which deconstructs processes into separate elements.


Graham Harman’s *Heidegger Explained* (2007) distils Heidegger’s work to the fundamental concepts of “tool” and “broken tool”, which forms the bedrock for Harman’s own “object oriented ontology.” Harman’s critique of Kantian metaphysics is clarified in his 2010 work *Towards Speculative Realism: Essays and Lectures*, which outlines the field of inquiry and tenets of the new movement in continental philosophy, speculative realism.
Performance Studies

Performance studies pose the question: how is any performance effective, that is, how does it achieve its end? A political speech attempts to convince, a shamanic ritual attempts to heal, a salesman attempts to sell a product. A Hindustani concert is a ritual indexing cultural and social content, including cosmological systems. The analysis of a performance is removed from interpretive constraints regarding the veracity of the action and the efficacy of a performance. Performance is fundamentally a type of experience, placing symbolic categories in a living, fluid relationship, mediated between the performance, the audience, and the cultural system (Turner 1982: 15-17). Thus, performance can be the site of the negotiation and transformation of the self and society.

Milton Singer’s *When a Great Tradition Modernizes: An Anthropological Approach to Indian Civilization* (1972) introduced the important concept of cultural performance, an event composed of discrete, performative units which encapsulate and display culture, both to those within and those external to a particular culture. The categories of events considered to be ‘cultural performances’ by Singer encompass religious rituals, plays, concerts, recitations, festivals, and even meetings of professional groups. These discrete units of cultural performance are presented in temporally, spatially, and thematically bounded units; “each one had a definitely limited time span (or at least a beginning and an end), an organized program of activity, a set of performers, an audience, and a place and occasion of performance” (71). The cultural performance consists of specific types of cultural media, including texts, films, and spoken language, cultural specialists (individuals
who excel in particular types of cultural performances), and the ‘cultural stage’
(culturally and socially performative space.)

*Dancing the Self: Personhood and Performance in the Pandav Lila of Garhwal* by William Sax (2002) uses a performance-studies approach to analyze the relation between performance and the construction of identity, “to show how the *pandav lila* does not merely reflect the “selves” of those who participate in it but actually creates them” (5). For Sax, performance reflects, models, and recreates the hierarchical cultural relations, between castes, genders, and economic groups.

Regula Qureshi, in her work *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound Context and Meaning in Qawwali*, developed a comprehensive model to account for musical variations in qawwali. In asking the question, “how does musical sound become meaningful outside of itself?” (Qureshi 1986: 57), she utilized native cognitive categories (indigenous concepts of music theory) combined with observation of musical events. The balance of etic and emic categories is of crucial importance in the generation of accurate descriptions of performance events. In her analytic model of performance, she also employs categories such as ideological systems, symbolic systems, socio-economic settings, performer’s identity, and performer’s vantage point, along with video and audio analysis of the performance event (Qureshi 1987: 56-65).

The importance of musical performance is that it can entrain the physiologies of the participants and performers though a shared response to an aural (and visual) stimulus; the act of performance can negotiate and even reconstruct personal and social identity, but paradoxically can simultaneously act to reinforce
social conditioning. Stokes in *Ethnicity, Identity and Music* (1994) emphasizes the fact that “music and dance ...do not simply reflect. Rather, they provide the means by which the hierarchies of place are negotiated and transformed.” For Stokes, “music does not then simply provide a marker in a pre-structured social space, but the means by which this space can be transformed” (Stokes: 4).

In Pierre Nora’s *From Lieux de Memoire to Realms of Memory* (1996), Nora’s conception of the binary of the lieux de memorie and the site de memorie describe the difference between a cultural performance which is direct manifestation or outgrowth of an embodied, living cultural system (the repertoire) and a performance which is the reconstruction of an imagined past (the archive). These terms provide a framework to look at the ways in which performances interact with memory, imagination and history, but I think that this binary can be better visualized as a multimodal interaction occurring in the perspectival space of the participants and performers, encompassing cognitive, represented, and embodied modalities.