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**SACRED AND  
SECULAR MUSICS**

*a postcolonial approach*

VIRINDER S. KALRA

B L O O M S B U R Y

# Sacred and Secular Musics: A Postcolonial Approach



## **Bloomsbury Studies in Religion and Popular Music**

***Series editors: Christopher Partridge and Sara Cohen***

Religion's relationship with popular music has ranged from opposition to 'the Devil's music' to an embracing of modern styles and subcultures in order to communicate its ideas and defend its values. Similarly, from jazz to reggae, gospel to heavy metal, and bhangra to qawwali, there are few genres of contemporary popular music that have not dealt with ideas and themes related to religion, spiritual and the paranormal. Whether we think of Satanism or Sufism, the liberal use of drugs or disciplined abstinence, the history of the quest for transcendence within popular music and its subcultures raises important issues for anyone interested in contemporary religion, culture and society.

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# Sacred and Secular Musics: A Postcolonial Approach

Virinder S. Kalra



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*For Surjit Singh Kalra*





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This book started life in the summer before my father, to whom the book is dedicated, suffered from a severe stroke, leaving a great orator and writer, unable to communicate. A tragedy of sorts and perhaps we all have only so many words to utter in a single life. There have been too many times in writing this text that I have wanted to check a translation or ask about a particular context from him, but have had to rely on dictionaries and draw on the reserve of knowledge that he built. As the eldest in the family, he was joined by the youngest, Eesher in hindering and helping this book's production. Thanks to my other daughter Nuvpreet (for the film editing) and my mom – Balbir Kalra – for all the noise that sounds like music to a tired mind. My daughters own music education was spurred on by Peter and Stefan, piano teachers who informally contributed to my developing understanding of Classical music.

This book is multiply authored but due to the neoliberal pressures of contemporary academia has my name on it, there is though a specific ghost writer, the native musician who made the entire project a possibility: Navtej Purewal. It was her learning music that enabled my engagement with the world of the *Classical* in the first place and then her natural talent that attracted outstanding musicians into more intimate spaces. In each of these chapters, she is singing in the background and providing the intellectual stimulus in numerous conversations and reflections. Thanks is too small a word and she is truly the coauthor of this book.

## Transcription and Music Website

This book uses many Punjabi, Urdu, Hindi, Farsi and Arabic words. Except in the case of proper nouns or words that are familiar in English, all other terms are italicised in the text. Some attempt is made to translate words on their first appearance, in parenthesis or via a footnote. No diacritic marks are used and only a simple transcription system is put into play, largely in recognition that Roman characters are used in a variety of ways to write most of the words that are deployed. For those who can understand these words, I hope these are not oversimplifications. Spellings quoted in other works have been left in their original forms, but all the translated interviews follow my transliteration schema. All translations from Punjabi are mine, unless otherwise stated.

All of the musicians in Pakistan and most in India used the English term Classical when talking about what is otherwise called North Indian classical music, but given that part of the rationale of this book is to unpack this term I will represent it with a short inflected 'e' rather than 'a' and a short 'u' in the second syllable to better articulate its pronunciation by the musicians but also to deform it, thus the spelling Clessicul. Throughout the remainder of the book Classical will stand as shorthand for Western classical music and Clessicul for South Asian classical music.

The music and interview extracts can be accessed by following the link within the document found here <http://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/sacred-and-secular-musics-9781441121325/>. These are indicated in the footnotes by the word Clip and a complete list of all the Clips is provided at the end of the book.

## *Alaap*, Introduction

*Tum ek gorakh dhanda ho  
Koi Ranjha jo kabhi khooj mein nikle teri, tum usay jhang ke bele mein rula  
daitay ho.*

You are a tricky business,<sup>1</sup>

When a Ranjha sets off on a quest for you, you send him to get lost in the  
jungles of Jhang.

Naaz Khialvi's *Tum ek gorakh dhanda ho*, as performed by  
Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Qawwal and Party

The impressive and mighty sound of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Qawwal and Party resounds through my musical engagement with South Asia. These opening lines from an Urdu poem penned by Naaz Khialvi, a presenter on Radio Pakistan from the 1960s, neatly sum up the complex puzzle, that is the relationship between religion, music and the notion of the classical in the subcontinent. Bringing these three arenas into a dialogue – creative, contentious and occasionally disjunctive – is the primary aim of this book. It was not this *qawwali* or, in fact, that musical form that marks the beginning of this journey; to some extent, the ability to recognise the articulation between the sacred and the secular – in the words *gorakh dhanda* – is only possible at the end of an intellectual and emotional journey into the world of music and musicians in the subcontinent and the United Kingdom. The conjoint nature of the sacred and the secular was made most apparent from fieldwork engagements in India and Pakistan in 2008–10, from which much of the material for this book was drawn. As part of a project looking at popular religious practices in Punjab (traversing the Indo-Pak border), I had the privilege of meeting and interviewing a number of (mostly) male musicians. Straddling the borders of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the

secular Republic of India, a consistent, though puzzling, representation of the musical performances I was witness to, part of the sponsorship of, and always participating in, emerged. In these encounters, certain modes of classification were deployed in discussions about music: first, a distinction between what was and was not classical; and second, what might be considered religious music and its relationship with the aforementioned classical (Classical).<sup>2</sup> It was these discussions that were largely responsible for the theoretical journey that begins this book, an attempt to understand and explore the relationships between religion, sacrality and classicisation, given their respective etymologies and usage in the border region of Punjab.<sup>3</sup>

Being brought up in Britain and attending school in the 1970s and 1980s, Classical music to me had a fairly normative meaning. In my own naïve (negative) assessment, it was all about orchestras, violins and harmony. Yet, this was not its most potent force in Thatcher's Britain; rather, it was the association with upper middle class and elite whiteness that ran as a strong current in my understanding and ignorance of the form. Other than being forced to listen to Classical music through music lessons and some hapless attempts at playing the trumpet, it faded into the background of musical appreciation which was, ironically, full of Classical music, but via movies such as *Star Wars* and other popular cultural appropriations. At the same time, religious music also had a firm place in the aural engagements of the son of an immigrant in urban Britain. Once-a-year carol singing in the church (and occasional hymns at the school) is music that ultimately is bound up with the Classical forms being studied and imbued in other ways. The popularity of hymn singing and its relationship with working-class communities was not on the music education syllabus at that time. The other main source of what I considered religious music was the weekly trip to the local *gurdwara*, primarily to listen to *kirtan*, but also *dhadi* and occasionally *dharmic geet*.<sup>4</sup> In these contexts, it was mostly a listener in the audience, with occasional participation in congregational singing and, at its limit, a few lessons in the *tabla* from a local *granthi*.<sup>5</sup> The boundaries between this type of religious music and church music were enforced by an insidious climate of public racism. In pre-multicultural education; *kirtan* was never on the school curriculum in religious studies, let alone in music. The *gurdwara* and the church were kept apart epistemologically, whereas in the changing morphology of urban Britain, they formed part of the palimpsest of city living. The *gurdwara* I attended was initially a rented premises from an Unitarian church and later bought from them. These financial, interfaith interactions rarely stretched over into other

facets of social life: The choir did not suddenly adopt a *raag* or seek the *tabla* as an accompaniment, and the organ did not replace the harmonium.<sup>6</sup> Though arguably the harmonium had in the late nineteenth-century Punjab already inserted *kirtan* into a symbiotic relationship with European instrumentation, but this jumps us too far ahead.<sup>7</sup>

Reading religious music so assertively into the life of a teenage boy is to give too much centrality to the above-mentioned musical forms. Pop music, in its various and variable forms, was much more significant in terms of preference for consumption. Compulsory schooling and compulsive parents were the main reasons for engaging with the church and the *gurdwara*. Any affective relationship formed with music was at most subconscious. The labels New Romantic or Alternative were much more likely to stir desire and consternation, and the finer points of musical distinctions between bands and solo performers were the source of discussion among peers. A guitar, rather than the *tabla* or the trumpet, was the instrument of choice and practice. By the time I got to the university, British bhangra had infected a newly emerging, Asian youth musical (sub)culture. Journalistic commentary, festival organisation and ultimately academic commentator were roles that seemed to merge quite seamlessly with my involvement in the British Asian dance music scene. The collective writing on this music in which I was involved was intensely concerned with the political dimensions of the subculture and less with music per se.<sup>8</sup> The lack of training in musical analysis and the absence of a readily made model to address what had in academic terms been rendered as ethnomusicological meant that it was much easier to address lyrical content or social effect rather than beat cycles and melodic formulation.<sup>9</sup> To some extent this was an accurate and adequate reflection of the moment, but the absence of musical analysis allowed for an absence of a certain type of contextualisation. If we had been more sensitive to the tunes and rhythm cycles upon which much of the innovatory bhangra was based, it would have alerted us to the training grounds of many of the performers who were involved: the *gurdwara*, the *mandir*, the *majlis*, the *dargah*, the *satsang*, the *dera*, religious stages and spaces that shared the rhythmic cycles and tunes of the bhangra fusions. In post-Rushdie Britain, the politicisation of religious identities meant that a nonsectarian, pan-South Asian identity, which was clearly articulated in the cultural politics of the new Asian dance music, overrode these other connections and intimations.<sup>10</sup> Nonetheless, it was fairly clear that the division between the secular realm of bhangra and the multiple sacred domains of musical performance had been fairly porous since the early days of migration to the United Kingdom.<sup>11</sup>



It was this relationship between what was in my comprehension the still fairly separate domains of religious and secular music that framed my first meeting with Hafeez Khan Talwandi in 2008. At that time he was teaching what he would call *dhurpad* (or *dhrupad* as it is also known) at an arts centre named *Chitrkar* in the upper-class suburb of Gulberg in Lahore.<sup>12</sup> The ostensible aim of this organisation was to preserve and promote the classical heritage of Pakistan. As primarily a vocal form, *dhurpad* has a lineage that harks back to the fifteenth century, and in historiography to a much earlier realm. It was perhaps these elements that gave meaning to applying the term classical to the centre's musical offerings, which were eclectic and included rock guitar. In contrast, Hafeez Khan during teaching was keen to emphasise the relationship between his particular school of *dhurpad*, known as the Talwandi *gharana*, and Islamic beliefs and tenets, rather than any association with classicism. Indeed, Khan oriented the whole process of his performance and teaching to this end. The initial invocation, *mangla charan*, at the opening of a performance began 'Nit loran waaren Allaah tero nam', meaning 'O Allah, Your name alone ensures success and victory', instead of 'Anant Narayan Hari Nam', referring to the God(s) during a performance in India. To Khan, the opening nonrhythmic section of the *dhurpad* performance, referred to as the *Alaap*, was a shorthand for *Allah Aap*, which is a continuation of the opening invocation in centring Allah in the textual exegesis. This analysis sits in quite sharp contrast to the way in which *dhrupad* has been represented in academic and popular literature in India and the West.<sup>13</sup> In this analysis, it is represented as Hindu temple music that became secularised through the Mughal and regional courts.<sup>14</sup> This 'Indian' explanation may be why Khan feels the need to emphasise the Islamic aspects of the music in the broader, fraught, social situation of Pakistan.

In Lahore from December 2007 to March 2009 (the period of fieldwork), there were four massive bomb blasts, all of them were targeted against state institutions, all of them tragically involved civilian deaths. In Khyber Pakhtun Kwa (then the Northwest Frontier Province), music shops were burnt, CDs publically smashed and musicians threatened with death. Hafeez Khan only taught *dhurpad* to a select few from the upper middle class in Lahore and to his own immediate descendants.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, his general earnings came not from teaching *dhurpad* but from vocal training to *qawwals* in Faisalabad – where he lived and which is the centre of *qawwali* in contemporary Pakistan. There was no state-funded institutional support for Hafeez Khan's *dhurpad*, and he was not on the international music circuit, which was in any case monopolised by the Dagar Brothers of India. Indeed, his reminiscences of childhood were of his family's

Sikh patrons and their appreciation of *dhurpad*. He was generally disparaging of Pakistani society in terms of the treatment meted out to musicians, and this was articulated quite explicitly as being a problem of the character of the state. This was clearly in contrast to the (mis)conception that state funding for musicians in India was relatively widespread and easy to access. Hafeez Khan's narrative, related to me in a performance in our temporary residence in Lahore, could be read as the musician portraying a prepartition ideal of communal harmony – an ideal world in which musicians were given respect and status – which was no longer the case in the Islamic Republic of Pakistan.<sup>16</sup> Such a reading would have chimed well with my sensibilities and perhaps reflect more on Hafeez Khan's abilities as a seasoned orator and performer than on his historic practice. The problem of Classical music in terms of its relationship with religion, from his perspective, was simply an outcome of the formation of the Indian and Pakistani nation-states. No need to continue research, the sacred-secular conundrum was resolved! This would have been the case – and life much simpler – if it were not for the fact that the outlook on music offered by Khan was also part of the discursive formation of how *dhurpad* was understood in musicological literature. These academic texts served to emphasise religious boundaries, rather than contextual enunciation, and as such seemed out of step with much of the literature on South Asian religions, which since the 1990s had systematically shown the influence of colonialism on the formation of fixed and discrete religious identities.

In a School of Oriental and Africa Studies PhD thesis, published in 1996, one of Hafeez Khan's student-patrons, Khalid Basra, had written quite extensively about his *ustad's* musical philosophy. In that text, Hafeez Khan elaborates on the Islamic basis of all music: 'All branches of knowledge created by Allah are for the education of humanity and the realisation of Him. The paths to this realisation are spiritual knowledge – *Ilm-e-ruhaniyat* and the knowledge of music – *Ilm-e-mauseeqi*.'<sup>17</sup> This interpretation is largely based on Sufi terminology with Shia tinges. This outlook is a source of consternation for Basra: 'one of my many points of respectful disagreement with Hafeez Khansahib has been his very heavy Islamic/religious interpretation of every image portrayed by his music. The images of secular beauty are given a comprehensive Islamic/non secular interpretation in his system of thought.'<sup>18</sup> In contrast to this perspective, Hafeez Khan's practices, in terms of not eating beef, expressing deep devotion to his *pir*, spiritual guide and recognising that his family's most prosperous time was under Sikh/Hindu patronage, stands alongside this Islamic discourse. These aspects are ignored as part of a secular critique, which itself becomes undone, as Basra comments most pointedly on Hafeez Khan performing *namaz* (prayer) at the

tomb of his *pir*: 'This was very shocking for me as it could clearly be interpreted as *shirk* [heresy].'<sup>19</sup> In contemporary Pakistan, these kinds of interpretations of shrine worship often take the form of accusation and have had multiple, often violent consequences for shrines and their devotees. Basra's secularism is in fact an indication of conflict and disharmony. Whereas, Hafeez Khan's interpretations are a mode of creative working designed to promote and preserve a musical tradition that has a limited audience and meagre patronage. This is not to question Basra's intentions, but rather to indicate that the easy distinction between the religious and the secular quickly produces domains of discourse in which competing theologies come to play.<sup>20</sup>

It is this normative reading that is present in a comprehensive account produced by performer Sanyal and Professor Widdess in the book *Dhrupad*, which looks at the form in India and Pakistan. They define the form 'as a sacred music, often used for ritual as well as concert performances, but with different sectarian emphases – Hindu, Muslim or Sikh – depending on local circumstances.'<sup>21</sup> This contemporary definition is tempered by the way in which *dhrupad* became increasingly associated with religion in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as the authors suggest:

A consequence of this development is that *dhrupad* becomes enmeshed to some extent in debates that are essentially political. The re-evaluation and re-creation of the Hindu cultural heritage . . . the rise of Hindu nationalism. In this situation one can readily understand the emphasis given in India to *dhrupad's* ancient (pre-Muslim period) origins and connections with Hindu religion and *śāstric* theory, even by Muslim artists . . . Conversely, the Islamic interpretation of *dhrupad* currently promoted in Pakistan . . . can be seen as a response to social, religious and political pressure . . . In the view of the late Zahiruddin Dagar, however, *dhrupad* is spiritual and sacred, but transcends all religious boundaries and is not the exclusive preserve of one religion or another.<sup>22</sup>

The contrast between the two definitions is centred in the term 'political', which works on the untainted music, creating an association with religion. The universal of sacred music can only exist once religion is transcended, but this is only possible in a secular Indian rather than an Islamic Pakistani state. In Sanyal and Widdess' work, Hafeez Khan is, once again, the religious foil against which the secular (Hindu) is contrasted and played out. Yet, the actual situation of Hafeez Khan in Pakistan and the Dagar family in India in the early postpartition years was starkly similar: hereditary musicians having to respond to a demand from the state to modernise their music (and, as I will argue, their religion).

In *Dhrupad*, the authors represent the problem as that of political influence on music. In contrast, the only authority to declare music as universal/sacred, and therefore able to contribute to peace and tolerance rather than conflict, is the neutral ethnomusicologist/native elite authors. This is not colonial ethnography, though it is empiricist, as the musicological analysis in the book actually takes place in a recording studio in SOAS, with an audience of machines and no social noise other than the absent presence of academia.<sup>23</sup> What enables this kind of analysis in the twenty-first-century humanities is a key concern for this book, explored in a great deal of detail in the next chapter. The ability for music to be perceived as nonrepresentational or politically neutral, something that can be open to manipulation, has been rightly criticised from within musicology. However, it has been largely sidestepped by those studying Classical or devotional music in South Asia, where pure music insistently appears as an alibi for asserting normative religious identities. This is even more the case on those rare occasions when music is studied across the Indo-Pak border, where the apparent stark differences in the political orders between the two nation-states becomes an ideal peg upon which to hang musical difference. It is easier to adopt the ideology of nonrepresentative music to analyse these situations as it avoids the thorny issues of religious identity formation. In bringing together the literature on the impact of colonial modernity on religion in India and that which looks at the formation of Classical music in the same period, my intention is to develop a framework that can undo the dichotomy of the sacred and the secular.

### Sacred and secular

The relationship between the sacred and the secular is more often framed in social science discourse as that between the religious and the secular, as it indicates their conceptual roots in institutional forms. Such that, the state is perceived as separate from formal religious institutions and therefore the domain of the sacred is beyond the remit of the secular state. This formula can have various inflections such as the 'model of Indian secularism' or a contrast between the republicanism of France and the monarchy of England (also the head of the church). Indeed, the slippage between the sacred and the religious is made quite often in this book and reflects the desire to avoid the problem of universalising the idea of sacred sound. This is often the case when religion and music have been explicitly researched. Guy Beck's introductory text *Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in*

*World Religion* falls precisely into the trap of equating music and religion via universalism.<sup>24</sup> Music and religion, as human activities, are intimate solely because of this assumed fact. More problematically, Beck's book follows a 'world religions' approach in which discrete religious homogeneities have associated and ascribed music. Each of these assumptions is slowly unpacked in this book while traversing the landscape of Punjab's music. A more useful but inherently Western framework is offered in the conceptualisation of theomusicology that comes out of African American studies and attempts to bring together the often-held-apart domains of the sacred, the profane and the secular.<sup>25</sup> Music is made sacred by the actions that are directed towards it and the way in which it is referred to or treated. Some might consider a particular sound sacred while others might consider it disrespectful or even actively despise it. In this way the profane is a more direct opposite to the sacred and operates as an opposite in more direct ways than perhaps the secular. The concept of the profane is not so useful for the present purpose because the connotations of profanity are profoundly Semitic in their usage relating to instances of blasphemy or some artistic use of God with negative connotation. Though the laws on blasphemy and the limits of artistic endeavour are tools that operate in South Asia in reactive and crass ways, the profane is rarely evoked as the source of discontent.<sup>26</sup> The maintenance of sacred in the title of this book is to indicate a premodern or, as the argument will unfold, a prereligious idea of something that can be considered worthy of devotion or worship. It does not necessarily refer to abstract deities but can be applied to material objects as well as abstractions such as note or rhythm. In an interview with popular singer Tufail Niyazi, recorded in the mid-1980s, the erudite Mumtaz Mufti had asked him to describe the relationship between *sur* (note) and *taal* (rhythm), to which he replied thus:

The rhythm is connected to our bodies, without it we would die, the beat of the heart, the whisper of the breath all come in time. The note is the evocation of our soul, it is the manifestation of the spirit. Together music is the source of all our devotion as it gives us life.

Music is prefigured as sacred here and not representative of any particular religious tradition. Though this is a seductive framework, it relies on transcending the secular, rather than illuminating the overlapping of the religious and the secular and is, therefore, ultimately apolitical. In considering the cauldron of colonial modernity out of which classification of music and religion emerges, the evocation of the sacred is too easy an escape out of the molten mixtures that burn into and imprint on the precolonial landscape. Though musicology does not provide the tools for this engagement, scholars working from within

religious studies have been more openly effected by postcolonial theorising and have attempted to offer a philosophical counterpoint, which has sought to dissolve the tension between the sacred and the secular by showing how these two forms of expression are necessary binaries, in that both are present when one is evoked. Often drawing on textualist sources, the insertion of the religious into the secular and vice versa is an essential element of what might be called the living practice of faith/nonfaith. Critical to this perspective is an acknowledgement that the enlightenment, rather than removing the religious from the secular reframed it as part of a renegotiation and translation of Christianity.<sup>27</sup> Removing the religious from the political was just one element of this complex process.

European colonial expansion provides comparative anthropological material for the development of a hierarchy of religions, in which Christianity represents the pinnacle of perfection against which knowledge about other forms of belief can be measured. 'The legacy of these colonial definitions was the location of "bad religion" in the East (and reasonable religion in "the West", a term that has survived the demise of its antonym).<sup>28</sup> Arvind Mandair's reading of Hegel develops this point further, arguing that the ordering and regulating of religion is based on ontotheological thinking.<sup>29</sup> This perspective foregrounds a system of classification in which theology and politics (civilisation) are ranked. For Hegel, all of history can be classified in a hierarchy that is graphically represented in terms of an epistemograph. Each step in this knowledge diagram represents a stage in civilisation progress, culminating in Germanic Christianity. When this is applied to the discourse of religion, it is only possible for 'Oriental' spirituality to become religion, if it enters into the framework of history and takes its place in the ranking system. The agents of this process are colonial elites who reform their practices to fit into a model of religion in which sacred text, rituals and crucially, a theology in which God's existence can be proven, are necessary criteria. Postwar humanities scholarship being taken under this blanket took religious difference as a granted, and therefore comparative religions became the edifice upon which the discourse of 'world religions' was placed. In returning religion to a constructed entity rather than a neutral category embedded in modes of classification and relationships of power, a relationship with music that is not banal can be made audible.

The idea of Clessicul music in India has been subject to a similar archaeology of its inception rooted in the colonial context.<sup>30</sup> An emergent historiography of South Asian music brings to the forefront the way in which the formations of secular Classical music in Europe and sacred Clessicul music in South Asia are not separate events but overlap through histories of

imperial entwining.<sup>31</sup> Importantly, the hierarchy of coloniser and colonised is played out in this cultural domain, precisely through the process of classicisation itself. Religion, therefore, emerges as the central trope to the imagining of Indian native elites' sense of self and music is tamed, most notable in the exclusion of Muslim musicians, enabling the formation of the new Hindu nation. Colonial modernity instantiates transformations in patronage and musical livelihoods as well as attempts at reforming the practice of music through introduction of notation and tempered scales. This is not a meeting of individual musicians though, where exchange, though unequal, is often productive for both parties, but rather a clash of epistemologies. In the developing hierarchy of religions, to be placed on the Hegelian epistemograph requires a transformation of the performative aspects of religious ritual, an emphasis on the written text and the complete erasure of the heterolingual/religious hereditary musician.

### Native informant/musician

Drawing on examples from *qawwali*, *kirtan* and *dharmic geet*, this book offers new empirical material to the canon of musicology as well as new insights into conceptualising religion and music.<sup>32</sup> Indeed, it is these illustrations that potentially outline a cartography of understanding South Asian music, in which the sacred/secular only exist concatenated. By necessity this type of undertaking requires what can be referred to, for purposes of shorthand, as a postcolonial approach – one that seeks to contaminate Europe's purity and to imbricate Africa and South Asia in the representative frameworks that organise musical understanding. Kofi Agawu exposes the key role of the native musician (informant) in the production of ethnomusicological knowledge about Africa for consumption in northern academia.<sup>33</sup> This role for the native informant chimes with that sung (often in Bengali) by Gayatri Spivak.<sup>34</sup> In attempting to address the various normative constructions of religion and music, the native informant is a central trope for production of authoritative and authentic accounts. Inverting this role – from being the enabler of empirical accounts to one where the native informant becomes central to the edifice of the knowledge framework being produced/deployed – is a recurring theme in this book. This centring of the native musician demands a questioning of every evocation of music as 'innocent' or neutral, a nonrepresentational form, open to the scientific analysis of wave and form. As Gayatri Spivak asserts, 'Such an approach must naively presuppose that a "disinterested" reading attempts to render transparent the interests of the



hegemonic readership.<sup>35</sup> It is the musicologists who understand the ideas of 'innocence' and 'neutrality', and it is to their 'disinterest' that these statements provide solace. These are not of relevance to the native musician for whom every musical act is embedded in some social or cultural milieu. The personal narratives that open this chapter could have led to a study similar to that made by Sanyal and Widdess of *dhrupad*. In these empirically sealed universes, lots of biographical information about musicians and technical detail about music are provided to add to the canon of musicology while evacuating the space of politics. It is this relinquishing that is most problematic, as it is the sociopolitical questions that address the condition of possibility of music in the first place. Epistemological battles become played out in sites of performance, and shifts in religious affiliation are consequential for musical style, contextualised by the unrelenting compulsion to maintain economic sustenance.

Thus, even though musician biographies and practices are central to the unfolding of this book, they are not taken as fodder for empirical embellishment, but are considered in relation to the theoretical problems they address. Indeed, it is from those interviews that the problem of the sacred and the secular arose in the first place. Despite his Islamic representation, Hafeez Khan referred Bhai Baldeep Singh, a Sikh *kirtan* revivalist, as the inheritor of the *pakhawaj* (barrel drum) style of his *gharana*.<sup>36</sup> Khan died in 2009, but his musical heritage was maintained by one of his female students (Ayesha Ali) who continued teaching *dhrupad* in Lahore as well as providing financial support to Khan's sons.<sup>37</sup> Gender restrictions, religious boundaries and performance contexts shift and change in the period of a musician's lifetime. Recording technology enables a continuity of aural appreciation and indicates traces of particular times. It is for this reason that oral testimonies from musicians, labelled as *qawwals* or *kirtanis* or folk, and their performances are crucial to this text. Discursive narration of the kind that marked Hafeez Khan is tempered by musicians' practices and musical memories. In interpreting Hafeez Khan solely through his Islamic musical philosophy, the richness of his practice and the multiple layering of his identity are reduced. In some sense, serving a political necessity to maintain the bifurcation between religious Pakistan and secular India in the divided Punjab.

## Punjab, Pakistan, India

The key tools of the epistemograph and the native informant are deployed to review the musicological literature that considers the overlaps between Britain and India in the colonial era and the research on sacred music in postcolonial



South Asia. Edward Said's Orientalism, drifting over from literature studies, is a methodological approach that some musicologists have found possible to deploy, as it can latch on to the already existing discourse of exoticism in music. Restricted to a reading of the Western classical canon, much of this literature remains within Europe, illustrating examples of exotica as reflections of Europe in the period under consideration. Drawing on the critical thrust of the new musicology, since the late 1990s a series of studies has examined the specific musical relationship between colonial India and imperial Britain.<sup>38</sup> A similar move occurred in religious studies, most cogently developed into a methodological agenda by Peter Van der Veer in the book *Imperial Encounters: The idea of a 'shared imaginary of modernity' in the nineteenth century, specifically enacted in terms of how religion and secularity are located, sidesteps the problem of the model – British modern and Indian traditional.<sup>39</sup> Though, this is precisely the binary that computes Indian music as sacred and which postcolonial analysis renders incalculable. This review is not a counter, alternative or subaltern history, but rather a critical reading of a set of specific texts in order to clear the ground to look at contemporary music making that is framed as religious.*

The general musicological and religious studies literature is substantively focused on India in colonial and postcolonial eras. This book focuses on the region of Punjab, which after 1947 straddles the newly formed nation-states of Pakistan and India. In the nineteenth century, India was imagined as sacred in contrast to Britain's secularity, whereas in the twentieth century, it was the religious identity of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan which is contrasted to the Republic of India's secularism. In the contemporary 'war on terror', this ascription of being a religious nation is a sign of danger rather than the decay ascribed to India in the nineteenth century. These historical vacillations in dominant ascriptions are relevant to the various themes that are covered in this book. British India, South Asia, India and Pakistan are all geopolitical entities that are central to framing debates about colonial modernity. The particular sociohistorical space of Punjab provides the opportunity to think outside of a social science/humanities discourse that is dominated by a methodological hierarchy that prioritises the nation-state as the basic unit of analysis.<sup>40</sup> This is not usually the case; more often, when Punjab is studied as part of 'regional' studies, there is little or no reference to the other side of the nation-state border. Depending on the starting point – East (India) or West Punjab (Pakistan), the other is left out of the analysis, even where the issue in hand may well apply across the borders.<sup>41</sup> Punjab in this book is seen as a critical aid to examine the issue of borders, and it is precisely because of straddling two states – one

constitutionally religious and the other secular – that the argument about sacred and secular music is so poignant. The grand claims over sacred, secularity and postcoloniality have to be conditioned by the specificity of the context. It is, therefore, worth being mindful, as Spivak usefully reminds us and not to take the Punjab case: ‘as representative of all countries, nations, cultures, and the like that may be invoked as the Other of Europe as Self. This caution seems all the more necessary, because, at the other end, studies of the English, French and German eighteenth century are still repeatedly adduced as *representative* of the emergence of *the* ethnical consensus.’<sup>42</sup> The parochialism of Punjab is equally matched by that of England, and it is those quite intimate interrelationships that are most productive. Of course the exchange is unequal – in the tyranny of the written word, the innumerable exegesis on a figure such as William Blake creates an intellectual weight that dwarfs the comparable discussions of Waris Shah.<sup>43</sup>

### Book arrangement

The book is broadly divided into two unmarked halves. The next two chapters are a movement through the historical literature on music and religion as it relates to colonial India and Britain. Once the theoretical themes are introduced, Chapters 4 to 6 are based on an extensive exposition on *kirtan*, *qawwali* and *dharmic geet/folk* and are based on secondary literature, interviews and performance analysis. In the concluding chapter, a number of vignettes that repeat some of the refrains are presented and highlight key issues raised in the body of the text. The next two chapters consider what emerges in the music sphere out of the encounters between the phantasms, sometimes called the West and South Asia. While there is no doubt that musicology has slowly pulled apart much of its canon, there obviously (as in all disciplines) remains a core of work that remains fastened to the ideology of music as pure form and technique. The scholarly divide between those who foreground the social significance of music and those who argue for its innocent aesthetic value is reflected in the way Classical music is sustained as a hegemonic form in societal reproduction and perhaps more distinctively in terms of state patronage and support across Europe.<sup>44</sup> In keeping with the fact that Classical music is only one of the many genres of European music and indeed a minor one in terms of the mass of listeners (at any time in its history), it is possible but naïve to assert that this form has ‘little to tell us about other cultures, time and places.’<sup>45</sup> Rather, this now minor tradition in

Europe comes in comparison to classify all musical others that stake claim to a 'classical' status. Said's preoccupation with Classical music comes alongside a recognition of its place not only as a marker of high art but, given its centrality to European self-imagination, inevitably in relation to the Orient.<sup>46</sup> It is Orientalism that provides much of the theoretical impetus to exploring the 'exotic' in Western music. A subset of this literature looks at ways in which musical cultures in India and Britain from the late eighteenth to the twentieth centuries have a relationship of mutuality. This comes under close scrutiny in Chapter 2, illustrating the theoretical tools of the native informant and the epistemograph. These critical tools bring together religion and music and emerge from poststructuralist perspectives. Where Orientalism is indebted to Foucault via Said, the exploration here owes more to the philosophical works of Derrida as it emerges through the work of Spivak and Mandair. This is only one corner of the world of postcolonial critique, but it is not necessary here to place these authors in the general perspective of that bludgeoning literature, rather the purpose is to recognise the utility of Mandair and Spivak's approaches and to illuminate how they are generative for an analysis of sacred and secular musics.

In Chapter 3, the explicit way in which religion is read out of music making in Europe in the eighteenth century, culminating in the secular canon of Western music, is posited against the way in which religion is read into the musical history of South Asia. Tracing the way in which a number of writers and colonial administrators overlap in the late eighteenth century provides the impetus for classicisation of music in London and Calcutta. Key figures in the history of Western musicology such as Charles Burney in London are shown to be intimately linked by equally significant administrators/writers such as William Jones in Calcutta. In writing the history of Classical and Clessical music, a trope of writing history is exposed in the biographies of modernist musical historians in England and colonial India. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar exert an inordinate influence on the shape in which modern institutions take forward Clessical music into postcolonial India. These early twentieth-century reformists bring music into the epistemograph conjoined with religion and thus establish the historical basis for the separation of secular and sacred music. It is at this point that the work of Classical music is done, and the mimetic form – Clessical – can exert its own influence on the lives of musicians. It is this form that is then considered in the musical terrain of Punjab, the last major territory to be

annexed before the formal imposition of the Raj in 1857. A brief survey of the limited sources on precolonial music making in Punjab concludes this chapter and opens up the score for a substantive engagement with twentieth-century music making across the Indo-Pak border.

Chapter 4 takes up the exclusions that are at the heart of the formation of the Clessicul, namely that of the Muslim *ustad*, and locates it in the specificity of Sikh *kirtan* and the changes that take place in who performs and what is performed. Historically, *rababis* or ostensibly Muslim bards – tracing their heritage from Mardana, the musician companion to Guru Nanak – sang the poetry of the *Ad Granth* in Sikh and other shrines. Their exclusion from the *Harimandir* and ultimately due to partition from East Punjab in 1947 is the most extreme outcome of the pressures exerted by the demand for religion through colonial modernity. The transformation of the heteroreligious domain of music making to specifically marked out spheres for Sikh music with Sikh performers is perhaps the most stark example of the consequences of the fusion of religion and music. Another traumatic event – the 1984 invasion of the Golden Temple complex by Indian security forces – instantiates another set of revival movements. In contrast to the colonial modernist movement of organisations such as the Singh Sabha, for whom music was a relatively peripheral concern, the 1984 crises ultimately seeded a number of cultural rejuvenations. Though the vast majority of this was simply a repeating of the colonial reform movement's requirements for a further globalisation of Sikhism, those interested in music were forced to confront the issue of the missing *rababis*. Professor Gurnam Singh of the Punjabi University and Bhai Baldeep Singh of the Anhad Foundation provide useful examples of the different strands of the musical revival. Though overlaps with the perspectives of Bhatkande and Paluskar abound, the spectre of the *rababis* provides for an interesting debate, outlined in detail in this chapter. Colonial repetition is not totalising and the actual contemporary practice of *kirtan* contains multiplicities and diversity that transcend the boundaries of this design, as revealed by a brief musical survey and musician biographies. Those who actually perform the majority of *kirtan* do not engage in the prescribed *raag* set out in the *Ad Granth*, or even Clessicul formats. A cursory survey of *kirtan* music offers a scenario that demonstrates the relatively marginal position of the revivalists. Musician biographies also reveal the extent to which *rababis* became Sikhs or trained a generation of Sikh musicians, thus revealing the extent to which formal religion's demand for identity transformed not only music but also musicians.

A relatively clear connection can be established between early twentieth-century reformist agendas and developments within Sikh *kirtan* through the colonial and postcolonial periods. Indeed, the intellectual character of postcolonial East Punjab with modern education institutions offering *kirtan* qualifications lends itself to an analysis in which colonial repetition is fairly evident. This is less of a case in Pakistan where music is relatively ignored, and while very small amounts of state patronage are available through funding to arts organisations and via radio/television, music education was never formalised. Further, colonial era Muslim reformists, while condemning Sufi shrine practices, generally were not specific about the role of music, other than in repetitions of precolonial debates about the place of poetry and music in spiritual development. Chapter 5, therefore, returns to the critique laid out in Chapter 2, in which ethnomusicologists and historians of South Asian Islam lay out the conceptual terrain of *qawwali* as sacred music. The chapter investigates these claims through a detailed examination of the vocabulary and ideas that frame *qawwali*, such as *qaul* and *sama*, and the key figures associated with the form, such as Amir Khusro and Nizammudin. The weight of history provides ethnomusicologists and musicians alike with an alibi for naming the sacred, whereas the biographies of contemporary Punjabi *qawwals* open up other routes to the past. In these interviews, becoming a *qawwali* is less worn by the textual routes offered in medieval Persian hagiographies and more akin to the emergence of Sikh *kirtan*. It is *rababis* again who appear to articulate the shift from the heteroreligious to the *qawwali*. The formation of Pakistan and the lack of musical patronage results in musicians of many hues being taken under the blanket of *qawwali*. It is the role of patrons that, as this chapter will explain, provides a critical foil against which musicians make sense of the change in their practice. There are shifting patrons from God to the state to the multinational corporation, but this relationship is central to understanding the way in which music can be produced, enjoyed and propagated.

If colonial modernity laid the seeds for religious identity to be fixed, then the postcolonial states of India and Pakistan embraced these distinctions with bravado and aggression. As Punjab was divided, so the musical traditions became increasingly linked to religious identities. The next two chapters will demonstrate the way in which *kirtan* and *qawwali* became Sikh and Muslim music, respectively, and are known as such today, despite similarity in audibility and performer overlap. If postcolonial modernity were a finished project, with no contradictions or disjunctives, then these chapters should have concluded this book or perhaps be seen as the obituary to a common Punjabi musical culture,

which was more playful with religious boundaries. Chapter 6 engages with the residues of colonial modernity, those aspects of the religious that did not quite make it onto the epistemograph – or could not enter into history. These are often framed in the literature as ‘folk religion’, that which does not come ready-made with scriptures and theology. *Gugga Pir* in East Punjab is the exemplar in this chapter – the Rajput warrior turned Sufi *pir* who has an accompanying bardic tradition associated with his shrines. This is the margins of the social order, though venerated by all, and articulated as folk religion with folk music in contrast with Sikh and Sufi music. But it is not only at the margins that one finds these common tropes; two performative aspects – that of multivocality and intertextuality – are retained in *kirtan* and *qawwali* up to the early 1980s. Paying attention to these aspects is required to identify multivocality (different voices in the song) and intertextuality of lyrics (Sufi and Guru in interaction). These two aspects, the mixing of texts from different sources and the presence of multiple melodies, have been most denigrated by the requirements of modernity. Faithfulness to textual reproduction (in the case of the *Ad Granth*) and the cult of the individual singer (in the case of *qawwali*) meant a loss in intertextual and multivocal performance styles. One may call it *dharmic geet* – those songs that accompany devotion of all sorts, in which the flexibility of music and text that was once central to the heteroreligious domain is most apparent. This is not a romantic idealism of that which is not classifiable; once again, interviews with musicians point out the boundaries, the repetition of colonial tropes that limit repertoires and censor certain types of performance.

## Coda – Conclusion

The intellectual demand for all critical scholars, but especially for those in the (un)privilege of a diasporic subjectivity, is to ‘resist a mere celebration of global hybridity . . . [and] turn that savage training to account and anthropologize the heritage of the Euro-United States more deliberately.’<sup>47</sup> This is not just about turning the gaze upon Europe in an act of mimesis, but to elaborate upon the ways in which both coloniser and colonised are related in any particular field of study. In the wake of 11 September, the then British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, was reported to be reading the Quran to ‘understand’ the mind of the Muslim ‘terrorist’, obviously driven by a (mis)understanding of religion as scripture. It may, therefore, seem innocuous in the circumstance of such large-scale political machinations, which are now enmeshed in a discourse on religion, to devote

so much energy to a musical critique. To make that connection at the level of culture, I turn inevitably to Spivak:

If the project of Imperialism is to put together the episteme that will 'mean' (for others) and 'know' (for the self) the colonial subject as history's nearly-selved other, the example . . . indicate explicitly what is always implicit: that meaning/knowledge intersect power . . . The narrative of imperialism-as-history is especially intelligible because planned; and here contrary to Foucault's suggestion, the 'model of language [*langue*] and signs' is complicit with 'that of war and battle'.<sup>48</sup>

During battle, the troubadours and balladeers sing songs of praise to raise the spirit of the warriors, whereas here the humble effort is to disturb the epistemological terrain of the sacred/secular binary with the help of musicians, the native informant and the music itself. Despite warning signs, there will be moments where this text will fall into the trap of 'the neo-colonial, anticolonialist [that] still longs for the object of a conscientious ethnography'.<sup>49</sup> In the representation of musicians and music that falls in between the lines of the sacred and the secular, it is possible that sufficient heed will not be given to the ruse of idealising resistance and overburdening the cultural domain with all social and political change. It is to critique, as one writes, to undo as one is doing, that is the impossible task presented by Spivak's approach to deconstruction: 'This impossible "no" to a structure that one critiques yet inhabits intimately is the deconstructive position, of which postcoloniality is a historical case.'<sup>50</sup> A similar point is made by Agawu in his pointed analysis of African ethnomusicology, in which location in the American academe makes possible a self-critique, which is by necessity full of 'contradictions, incongruities, anachronisms and antimonies'.<sup>51</sup> This does not mean that it is not useful or unnecessary, but neither is postcolonial critique an offer of a canon-building program for further study. Hafeez Khan may be brought into open by this book, and his previous incarnations in musicology are rallied also, but these are mere reflections of the 'garland of razors' that he used to describe the gift of music. It is in the spirit of those razors that the narrative offered here takes place.

## Postcolonial Musicological Present

In one of Lahore's affluent suburbs, from 2001 to 2011, the ground floor of an otherwise nondescript house resounded with music of various hues. This was Chitrkar founded by Shahid Mirza and Rabia Nadir as a gallery and performance space and also host to weekly classes in vocals, *tabla*, bamboo flute and guitar.<sup>1</sup> It was here that Hanif Khan, a resident musician, flutist and sound engineer, taught me the rudiments of Clessicul music. This was not the same kind of relationship that is essential to the ethnographic encounters that have produced some of the best known research in English on music in South Asia.<sup>2</sup> Though Hanif was my teacher, his payment was fixed and our lessons in groups were fairly formal. No rituals of the teacher-student, *ustad-shagird* or *guru-shiksha* took place. Over time he became a friend, and when Chitrkar closed down, at my behest, he became involved with Lok Rehas Theatre. In teaching flute, Hanif adopted a pedagogy that relied on listening, copying and most significantly producing melody rather than an emphasis on technique. After learning for about 18 months and performing at a small concert in our Lahore flat, my musical training shifted across the border to Chandigarh.<sup>3</sup> While in Chandigarh I found another teacher, Mehtaji, who taught flute at a high school and was an expert in Clessicul music. When I met him, he was astounded at my lack of knowledge of method and the flexibility with which I approached the instrument. He proceeded to fix the tonal starting point (*sa*) on my flute and for my musical education to instruct me in a range of repeated note exercises, to practice finger movement and technique. As I got to know Mehtaji better and explained my previous learning, his response was: 'That is not Clessicul music, what you need to know are the rules of *Shastri Sangeet* (music of the scriptures).'<sup>4</sup>

It is the repetitious evocation of the word Clessicul amongst the musical fraternity I was encountering that is part of the problematic that is addressed



in this chapter, in particular the way in which musicology, in its historical and ethnoframing, has come to address the routing of the concept through imperial causeways. The critical tools that underpin this book, that of the native musician and the epistemograph, are outlined in this chapter and deployed in a review of literature on South Asian musicology. Broadly speaking, the issue of non-Western music and its relationship with Western music has been considered by a number of musicologists, most notably Kofi Agawu who demonstrates the role of the native musician as crucial to the structure of the discipline. By combining these insights with those of Spivak's, the role that the native informant/musician takes in enabling an epistemological terrain from which they are written out is delineated. One of the key ways in which musicology is complicit in this process is through the ideology of pure music or an emphasis on nonrepresentational form. Even though this has been thoroughly criticised by what has been termed the 'new musicology', it still remains as one of the ultimately unique aspects of music. This ideology finds its zenith in the nineteenth-century conceptualisation of Absolute music, whereby sacralisation of music creates a secular religion for the European elite. Hegelian metaphysics (if not the actual hierarchies) provides a framework through which the ranking of music and religion can be placed, enabling the conjoining of work on Indic religions by Mandair and that on Absolute music by Daniel Chua, the epistemograph providing a mapping of and overlapping of Eurocentrism and imperialism.

The native musician and the assertion of European ascendancy, in the shape of knowledge deployment (epistemograph), are sources of critique that are then applied to a specific set of musicological accounts, which attempt to look at the musical relationship between India and Britain from the eighteenth century onwards. This does not take into account the many historical musicological studies prior to these, where the native musician has been simply translated to serve classification and exotic example. These texts take seriously the issue of co-constitution in the colonial encounter. There are, therefore, two aims in reviewing this literature. The first is to demonstrate how it relies on the native musician to provide an alibi for not dealing with issues of power and inequality. Music creates a flattening out of the coloniser/colonised relationship even though the epistemograph is obviously at play in the ways in which India is being talked about. The second point is to indicate the limitations in the extant literature to provide the ground for the discussion that is to come in the next chapter, where the co-constitution of Classical and Clessicul music is traced and illustrated.

## Mute musicology

In the triad of subject areas that have developed into the field of musicology, it is musical history and ethnomusicology, rather than music theory/analysis, that has most attempted to address the issues of Orientalism and musical encounter.<sup>5</sup> The close relationship between literature and music in the academia has led to an engagement with Edward Said's pioneering readings of the colonial canon, further complicated by his writings on music as a critic and writer.<sup>6</sup> In the wake of the new musicology that developed from feminist critique in the 1980s, a series of books and numerous articles looking at Western art music and its relationship with the non-West appeared from the mid-1990s.<sup>7</sup> Despite these studies offering some interesting intuitions into the way in which musicology maps onto the general Orientalist architecture, the impulse to retain a special place for music emerges, even in texts that demonstrate a sophisticated theoretical understanding. For example, historical musicologist Ralph Locke in the book *Musical Exoticism* made the statement: 'I also want to stress that "Orientalism" and "Orientalist" are used in this chapter, as relatively neutral labels.'<sup>8</sup> This statement comes after a considerable amount of intellectual energy has been expended discussing the relationship between Western art music and its others in the previous sections of the book. This ability to suddenly abandon the schema indicates that, to a large extent, these kinds of studies perform the same function that 'Turkish' embellishments played in Mozart's music – that of *exotica*. The same point was made more incisively by Matthew Head: 'Musicology domesticates orientalism as an area of research by folding it back into established frameworks of enquiry that ultimately render orientalism decorative.'<sup>9</sup> As a counter, the general backlash against criticism has led Jonathan Bellman to retort that postcolonial criticism produces 'propaganda', not scholarship, and is of 'no relevance' unless the relationship between musical cultures is of an exploitative kind.<sup>10</sup> The polarisation in this debate is unfortunate given the wealth of material that this research has uncovered and the new insights that have opened up in musicology.<sup>11</sup>

The standpoint in this book is drawn from musicology in terms of the relationships that are convened to analyse Britain and India in the field of music. The specificity of that particular colonial relationship and how it is inflected through music is less concerned with the construction of the Western classical canon (though the formation is relevant) in relation to India or the Orient, but rather how the idea of classical itself comes to frame and to some

extent create certain musical forms in India. In that sense musicological history conjoins with ethnomusicology in terms of the literature reviewed. A similar approach is to be found in Born and Hesmondalgh's volume *Western Music and Its Others*, which places the issue of interaction and exchange at the heart of musical analysis to an extent of collapsing the distinction between the otherness of geography and history by considering postcolonialism under the broad canvas of representation. The recognition of the social in music necessitates taking into account the uneven power relations that, though contested, are fundamental to any historical or ethnographic account. A forwarding of the performance of music and authorial intent as objects of study does not produce fixed musical meaning, rather 'music's representational meanings, lacking any denotative "back-up," need always to be established, buttressed, through other sociocultural dynamics'.<sup>12</sup> Even at its moment of origination, authorial intent does not fix the music, rather it is always created in a social field.<sup>13</sup> This is methodologically useful, as they state the necessity is to 'integrate an account of discursive formations, cultural and ideological systems, including those systems specific to music history, with an analysis of musicians' subjectivities'.<sup>14</sup> This is not to repeat the error of representing a liberal, sovereign, individual musician producing autonomous art, but to recognise the potentially subversive and cunning role that musicians can play in specific discursive terrains. Centring the musician in their social setting brings this perspective closer to that of ethnomusicology, which, given the basis of the discipline, begins from the premise that music is embedded in the social (or at least the *ethnos*), thereby avoiding the sterile debate about autonomous music. However, the assumption that ethnomusicology is more likely to engage with issues relating to power and inequality, given the field of study areas, has not been borne out.<sup>15</sup> Emerging out of comparative musicology and a close relationship with anthropology has meant ethnomusicology following many of the contours and trends of that discipline.<sup>16</sup> In the 1990s, a series of studies addressing the colonial legacy in the practice and naming of the discipline (some preferring 'world music', others simply musicology) led to calls for greater reflexivity in fieldwork and innovation in writing.<sup>17</sup> Nonetheless, perennial issues about appropriate approaches for studying non-Western music seemed to generate a similarly polemic debate to that in Western musicology about the relationship between the social and music. The (im)possibility of the native's point of view has generated quite intense antipathy among the ethnomusicological fraternity to the writings of Kofi Agawu, whose insights provide useful musical parallels to that of the native informant in the production of musical knowledge.

In the book *Representing African Music*, Agawu deconstructs the binary that delivers European and African music as opposites, through incisive readings of ethnomusicological texts as well as musical analysis. He argues that for music to be African, its distance from European forms and closeness to the 'native' is of paramount importance. For the musicologist, the native musician (informant) takes on an acute role, as they provide the key to opening up the treasure chest of aural tradition.<sup>18</sup> It is the specific engagement between the recorder and the performer that gets translated into knowledge for the edifice of ethnomusicology. An aspect of this process is the learning of instruments/singing from the native musician and further teaching/learning in northern institutions and colleges. Power inequalities, of course, mark these relationships, even though they may be temporarily suspended in the process of teaching, but the interaction between native musician and northern academic remains 'the very condition of possibility for the production of ethnomusicological knowledge'.<sup>19</sup> It is the centrality of this relationship that demands a theorisation of the native informant, one that is most usefully offered by Gayatri Spivak in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason; A History of the Vanishing Present*. The use of the figure of the 'native informant' is necessarily a caricature of its multiple and complex manifestation in Spivak's writings, where it is used in at least four ways in *Critique* alone.<sup>20</sup> Also, given that three chapters of this book are based on ethnographic engagements, the native musician takes shape in an anthropological form, perhaps more than would be allowed in the strictly deconstructive sense, in which Spivak uses/creates the figure. Nonetheless, in attempting to address the various normative constructions of religion and music, it remains a powerful tool of analysis. In Spivak's words, the attempt is

to engage the (im)possible perspective of the 'native informant', a figure who, in ethnography, can only provide data, to be interpreted by the knowing subject for reading . . . It is, strictly speaking, 'mistaken', for it attempts to transform in a reading-position the site of the 'native informant' in anthropology, a site that can only *be* read, by definition for the production of definitive descriptions.<sup>21</sup>

In ethnomusicology, the native musician plays an indispensable role in the production of authenticity and legitimacy. In its worst manifestation, the musician is 'an informant, not a theorist', with the African being unconscious of any organised content or theory behind his music.<sup>22</sup> It is not enough, as a remedy for this position, to engage in dialogue, celebrate polyphony or reify the 'natives viewpoint' all strategies adopted by various scholars.<sup>23</sup> As Spivak forcefully argues, 'there is no *historically* available authentic (*eigentlich*) Indian

point of view that can now step forth (*hervortreten*) and reclaim its rightful narrative of world history.<sup>24</sup> Hybridity, as celebration, is also complicit within this framing, as it signals the potential for restoration of the lost, native pure.<sup>25</sup> Even the attempt 'to carve out positive negotiations with the epistemic graphic of imperialism,'<sup>26</sup> which is arguably the only work that the perspective of the native informant can accomplish, has to be done with vigilance, lest it become complicit with those areas of imperialism's violence and exploitation. The forays of colonial administrator, William Jones, into musicology are too often kept at bay from the epistemic violence that his script on codifying personal law entailed. It is perhaps this need for vigilance and a recognition that a task of anthropological recovery is, as Spivak alerts us to repeatedly, impossible: 'No perspective *critical* of imperialism can turn the other into a self, because the project of imperialism has always already historically refracted what might have been an incommensurable and discontinuous other into a domesticated other that consolidates the imperialist self.'<sup>27</sup> In other words, European music is produced as absolutely different to African as a mode of consolidation; it is not possible to simply look to that which is already incorporated for a sign of alterity.<sup>28</sup> With neither the musical competence nor the intellectual interest, a critical review of South Asian musicology deploying a deconstructive technique is not the main focus of this book. Rather the ways in which the seepage that colonial modernity brings into the musical domain, always a porous entity in any case, and how this trace is absorbed into narratives of classification are examined.

The native informant is not an ethnographic figure, a musician as such, but rather that which makes possible the philosophical, literary and musical work of the European canon.<sup>29</sup> Spivak demonstrates how figures such as Kant, Hegel and Marx need the native informant to develop their insights into the various realms in which they enunciate. This making possible does not render these writers or their theories beyond the pale, rather it makes the reader alert to the mechanisms by which they rely on the native informant, without naming it as such. This requires an engagement in deconstruction of the most 'unaccusing, unexcusing, attentive, [and] situationally productive through dismantling' variety.<sup>30</sup> Though Spivak's writing on music is scarce, it is of course not that all methods insightful in the field of literature can be applied to musicology. One kind of deconstructive approach that Spivak endorses in terms of literature loses all of its criticality when applied to music, that of linking text (score) to biography (musical life).<sup>31</sup> This kind of analytic might be recognised as normative in the

world of musicology where the relationship between the individual composer and the opus is generative of a notion of musical meaning. A deconstructive stance that only concentrates on text might be a crude caricature of the type of musicology that focused solely on the relationship between tonality and form. It is precisely the abstraction of pure form that gives rise to the idea of Absolute music, resting outside of history and bequeathed to humanity as a gift from Europe (Germany), that the link between the Orient and the formation of the religious can be most potently made.

### Music, hegel, religion

It is Richard Wagner who is in the mid-nineteenth century credited with coining the term 'Absolute music' to refer to the purely nonrepresentational character of Beethoven's ninth symphony.<sup>32</sup> Carl Dahlhaus characterises Absolute music as a religion, which by the beginning of the nineteenth century attracted a language that was applying sacred mores and values to instrumental music. This notion of music as religion was developed through a process of elevation of the work through theological interpretative frameworks; artists became priests mediating the absolute for the public and concert halls of the new churches.<sup>33</sup> This new world of the secular was one in which disenchantment from the wonder of the universe led to a grounding of music in the material and scientific.<sup>34</sup> In musical terms, it is the consolidation of the 12-note equispaced tonal system that assumed domination in the late eighteenth century that symbolises scientific rationality. The universe goes from being created by music to one that is 'manufactured by instrumental reason'.<sup>35</sup> Even the previous era of the Lutheran transformation of the Christian church with its emphasis on rationality did not change the nature of music from 'grace' to 'work'.<sup>36</sup> But once music is commoditised and produced with mechanised formulas that are necessary for the harmonies demanded of symphony forms, it becomes fully free and functionless. To ground this freedom, aestheticism was bought to play, as Chua states:

Music is no longer simply a means to God – it has become a god of sorts because the sign no longer points to an outside referent but represents itself as the totality of all meaning and the zero-origin of existence. If at the turn of the nineteenth century, music loses its cult function, it is only because it has itself become cult.<sup>37</sup>

The insights Chua makes into the sacralisation of music that makes it a secular religion are pertinent; there is however no reference to imperial context or indeed to the West as such in the influential book *Absolute Music*. This is a self-contained universe, much like the critique of music that the book seeks to make; it actually only operates in a way that centres European in the name of the human; thus Chua informs that Absolute music continues: 'Because human history failed. Or rather, humanity failed to make the future it hoped for.'<sup>38</sup> This is not the failure of humanity, but of the West in its attempt to impose its image on the world, at the time of high imperialism and at the same time the failure that results from its own implosion in the First and Second World Wars.

The doctrine of Absolute music rests explicitly on an epistemological terrain in which the West is defined against the Oriental, even though not recognised by Chua, who inadvertently notes that 'the only history that absolute music recalls is the moment it transcends history as an immutable work; it is therefore not *in* history, rather it makes history from the *outside* as an epistemological structure.'<sup>39</sup> To remain outside of history, or to be unaffected by it, is only the privilege of the West, which defines 'what history is.'<sup>40</sup> This Hegelian framework is explicit as Absolute music is at the peak of the hierarchical structure against which 'the discourse on music' is measured.<sup>41</sup> There is not much on the importance of instrumental music in Hegel's texts, rather it is mostly ignored or dismissed because it is empty or void of immediately available reading. In that sense it lacks spirituality and is therefore neither art nor music.<sup>42</sup> Following his logocentric modelling, instrumental music does not feature as one of the purer forms that can represent the true spirit of the romantic period for Hegel: 'Romantic art is seen to differ from Classical art just as Christianity differs from Greek religion, not so much in the unity of the divine and human which are present in both, but the self-conscious recognition of it in Christian art.'<sup>43</sup> Just as Hegel dismissed instrumental music, he relegates Indian religion in the hierarchy of human religions. Art and music are themselves secondary to philosophy and religion, and in turn these are also subject to ranking. It is in the competition among Romantic philosophers that the disdain for instrumental music and Indian religion find some connection. As Chua states, had 'Hegel hated music as much as he hated Schlegel he would have lambasted instrumental music.'<sup>44</sup> Just as Schilling became the pole against which Hegel developed his ideas on Indian religion, so countering Schlegel enhances Hegel's dismissal of music, such that he states that instrumental music suffers from 'fancies, conceits, interruptions, ingenious freaks, deceptive agitations, surprising turns, leaps and flashes, eccentricities, and extraordinary effects' due to the composer.<sup>45</sup> Similarly, in a description of



the way in which Indian religions manifest themselves, Hegel described them as 'baroque and wild . . . horrible, repulsive, loathsome distortions'.<sup>46</sup> It is Indian religion though that poses more problems for Hegel's theorising than European instrumental music.

At the heart of Hegel's thinking about religion is the concept of ontotheology defined by Mandair as 'a way of thinking about determinate religions in terms of their classification within a particular order of civilization, a process that is entirely governed by theological-political considerations'.<sup>47</sup> Hegel historicises religion, beginning with the Oriental religions as almost the absolutely other to Germanic Christianity. Placing religion into a knowledge casing or giving it a place in history then becomes the basis for 'the translation and reception of Oriental culture *as religion*'.<sup>48</sup> In the wake of the new empirical knowledge having been gathered about the world, the particularity of Europe became universalised and secularism becomes a language that transcends theology and domesticates religion to the private sphere.<sup>49</sup> Absolute music is one of the spheres in which the universal uniqueness of Europe is demonstrated. 'So whereas in the West the proof of God's existence provides the (ontotheological) law for thinking about God/religion as the exclusion of the nothing. Oriental religions by *comparison* . . . have not sufficiently evolved or received the required "elevation" to this stage of thinking'.<sup>50</sup> Hegel's schematic can be imagined in terms of an epistemograph in which the formation of knowledge systems is placed in a hierarchy. This diagram enables a thinking pyramid in which Oriental cultures could be rendered safely outside of the unique place of Europe.

The epistemograph is a second crucial instrument by which to understand the musical frames that conjoin the religious and the Classical. As South Asian native elites in relation to colonial masters begin to reform their traditions, music can only become legitimately ritualised if it is classicised, just as the religion itself has to aspire to become a copy of evangelical Christianity, so music has to be elevated. It is this process of classicisation that a number of historians of music in South Asia, while not explicating or utilising a framework of this type, empirically demonstrate the way in which religion and music become tied in late eighteenth- and nineteenth- century India. This material will be covered in greater detail in the next chapter. The next sections scrutinise how (ethno)musicology has come to address questions of imperialism and classification. In this partial reading of the extant literature, the main intention is to demonstrate how the Hegelian epistemograph and the native informant underpin the architecture of South Asian musical historiography.



## Claims and classification

One of the key theorists of the new musicology, Richard Taruskin, riles against the fact that Classical music remains a specialist art form for the elite, closeted in universities, in the world of corporate sponsorship and reliant on public subsidy. Even in these influential settings, it remains largely irrelevant to playing an actual purpose in shaping decisions about public life. Though Beethoven accompanies all triumphs of liberal democracy, this is indicative of a decline in Classical music's relevance as it is open to appropriation by the elite, rather than reflective of social consciousness. In a similar manner to Edward Said's criticism of Classical music performances, Taruskin wishes that it were a relevant, engaged and vibrant form.<sup>51</sup> Aside from this desire among progressive thinkers, the social significance of Classical music is neither that it relates to the masses nor that it is imposed by the elite, rather it is the manner in which it is constantly relegitimated in specific social and historical contexts.<sup>52</sup> Even though in crude economic significance the Classical market remains small, it retains the status for marking what 'proper' music is and provides a benchmark of authority and value. Indeed, it is the value element that is so significant when the Classical label is adopted in contemporary South Asian musical discourse and partially why it gained currency in the colonial period.

The maintenance of this authority through time relies on processes of authenticity, which fixes the musical object as representative of the nation, of European identity or of the sacred.<sup>53</sup> It is the ideology of the pure work of art – Absolute music – that transcends history and the time of its production, which has been subject to a useful and powerful critique by the new musicologists.<sup>54</sup> Even at the most simple liberal level of engagement, the relationship between music and society changes through time, and its political and social implications should enhance the evaluation of any piece, rather than hinder it. Fixing the playing of a piece in time, in the desire to produce authenticity, means that those things that were acceptable in the past, for example, anti-Semitism in Europe, are given new life in the act of preserving the old. The solution offered by Taruskin to this issue is to allow censorship to take place, but with an explanation given to audiences of the rationale for the changes made to the music. It is the contemporary audience and market for music, this amorphous agent, that should determine what is good and bad in Classical music. Inverting the divide in which the audience is the passive recipient of the composers' work, perfectly performed and transparently received, is a key borrowing from studies of popular music and to some extent a useful critical tool.<sup>55</sup> In rescuing

Classical music in this way, there is a sense that the market can rescue it from obsolescence. The social here is reduced to a neoliberal vision of consumers/audiences and commodity/music, which ignores the weight of history that is part of the status that Classical music ascribes to itself. To produce a convincing anti-Semitic interpretation of Wagner would require European society to have rid itself of racism, rather than to provide consumers with a censored choice. Similarly, in the age of formal colonialism, the structures of economic exploitation, political coercion and civilizational superiority were all party of the constraints that framed Classical music.

The co-constitution of Classical music with imperialism, even in simple historical terms, pushes the new musicology to its limits. Critics such as Lawrence Kramer who have been resolute in forwarding the social and political significance of Classical music fail to see it outside of service to the West. For example, Beethoven is the consolation for those who suffered what are perceived as 'cataclysmic' events in the falling of the Twin Towers in New York City in 2001. Clearly articulating his own feelings and of a normative US elite psyche, than that by any empirical research, Kramer states that 'classical music provided a perhaps unexpected, perhaps momentary, but nonetheless real resource, consoling in both an emotional and something like a metaphysical sense'.<sup>56</sup> In particular, Beethoven is burdened with the enduring myths of 'liberty and freedom', thus the Berlin Philharmonic was asked to include Beethoven in its program at their appearance at the New York's Carnegie Hall in 2001.<sup>57</sup> It was also only a decade or so before that Leonard Bernstein played Beethoven's Ninth Symphony after the fall of the Berlin Wall.<sup>58</sup> What is perhaps surprising is the fact that Beethoven still maintains this symbolic stature for Western elites. Within 20 years of his death in 1847, a monument was erected in Bonn and he became what Daniel Chua describes as 'the model of death and the promise of eternity for secular humanity; he calls his followers to the glory of art-religion'.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, the British were engaging in a war to secure the last large chunk of territory, Punjab, for what was to become India.<sup>60</sup>

The founding figures of social research, Marx, Weber and Durkheim, engage differentially with this late nineteenth-century world of expansion.<sup>61</sup> Only Max Weber takes the issue of music seriously, and his oft quoted pamphlet on the issue begins with a comparative anthropology in which various musical systems but especially that of the Chinese are compared with that of Europe. The relatively sympathetic account of Oriental music is framed within his general Eurocentrism: 'Weber regards most non-Western music – precisely

because of its lack of attention to rationality-derived functional harmony – as comparatively primitive.<sup>62</sup> This is not an anthropology of Oriental music, but rather a further exemplification of the role of rationalisation in producing the uniqueness of Europe and perhaps more specifically German superiority in music making.<sup>63</sup> German music became the (European) universal through an internal colonialism over French and Italian styles, which is ultimately exported to the colonies with the pristine mask of a singular European music.<sup>64</sup> A mid-twentieth-century textbook titled *Music in Western Civilization* clearly demonstrates that the process by which the music of Germany becomes the music of the ‘world’ is due to the musicianship of Mozart and Haydn, which represent sound that is universal, timeless and valid under all circumstances. This music is not one solution or one aspect, nor is it a personal matter; it speaks to all peoples.<sup>65</sup> Beethoven is made ‘transcendent’ and ‘universal’ in much the same way as dominant nation-states colonised the weak, or European civilisation’s right to rule was seen as a natural phenomenon.<sup>66</sup> Germany, of course, comes late to the game of formal territorial acquisition, but the sense of self that Beethoven comes to embody provides the ‘alibis for the domination, exploitation, and epistemic violation entailed by the establishment of colony and empire.’<sup>67</sup> Just as Absolute music could provide a secular answer to the loss of faith in the challenges presented by evolution and scientific empiricism, empire itself also had the capacity to fulfil this gap. As Lord Curzon declared in 1907, ‘To the people of the mother state, it [empire] must be a discipline, an inspiration, a faith.’<sup>68</sup> The shift from Little England to Greater Britain required more than just a belief in the nation, but rather in an imperial mission with European high culture, its philosophical counterpoint. In literature this is best presented by Kipling and in music by Elgar. While Kipling has become one of the key figures of postcolonial critique, Elgar remains relatively marginal, even though they shared a common view on empire to the extent that Kipling’s poems were set to music by the composer.<sup>69</sup> Despite these interlinkages, imperialism’s direct impact on Classical music has not attracted much scholarly attention, whereas the alternative view – of the influence of the West on the ‘other’ – has a distinct and traceable trajectory within musicology.

### Musicological encounters

In learning flute, the knowledge generated from my engagements with Hanif and Mehta chimes with other ethnographies of postcolonial South Asia, in

which the learning of music was the starting point for investigation. That relationship between student and teacher, visitor and resident, diasporic and national subject are all issues that could have driven this writing. The problem with adopting that approach is it would require ignoring the differences and similarities in the two arenas of the learning experience. Switching from West to East Punjab, from Pakistan to India, with two different learning styles, though learning the same *raags* and *taals*, meant that the privileged conceit of neutral knowledge production was not available. (Ethno)musicology is able to successfully construct spaces of liberal exchange, even where the kinds of conflict I outlined are present, because the ideology of nonrepresentational music provides a powerful illusion. A pertinent example is Richard Farrell's book *Indian Music and the West*, which is often cited as the first to open up the arena for an inquiry into the relationship between these two overamplified creations (India and the West). Farrell's introduction states:

Because of the nature of music and the central place it holds in human activity, the history of Indian music and the West is an example of a unique cultural interplay which does not lend itself easily to the deterministic or polemical analyses of cultural theorists or the often narrow ethnographical concerns of ethnomusicologists. The ephemeral nature of music and its role as a form of cultural expression, social cohesion, and mass entertainment means that it has always held a special place in human affairs. Overarching theories about the cultural meaning of colonialism, for example, do not always apply to the details of human intercourse that takes place around music making.<sup>70</sup>

Music's 'nature' as 'ephemeral' and 'special' enables a 'unique' engagement or 'human intercourse', which is outside 'deterministic' or 'polemical' ravings of (postcolonial) theorists. Most of the assumptions of this passage have been dealt with earlier in the broader critical musicology literature, but what is insidious about this study is the service that the native informant provides, as alibi, for continuing epistemological dominance of a liberal Western perspective.<sup>71</sup> Farrell cites O. P. Kejariwal, an Indian author, to make the claim that these white men (colonial musicologists) should be praised for 'saving Indian musical history for the Indians.'<sup>72</sup> Music making is an interaction, that despite unequal social relations is individually between equals, and the neutral knowledge produced is a repository that all should welcome. In effect the native informant, now as writer rather than just provider of music, enables a rescue mission – from the clutches of postcolonial critique for the white men (and occasionally women) who drive Farrell's narrative. In that sense, my critique is aimed precisely at

those texts that intend to make a post-Orientalist – in the Saidean sense – case for encounter by forefronting the co-constitution of knowledge. This is not to denigrate the detailed historical research that enables much of this pioneering writing, but rather to indicate how the native informant and the epistemograph underpin much of this knowledge production.

Farell's book was not, unfortunately, the end of this defence, rather it is the beginning of a mission(ary) to rescue the white men of Indian musicology, which is most audaciously taken up by Bennett Zon in the book *Representing Non-Western Music in Nineteenth Century Britain*.<sup>73</sup> Though there is something appealing about this book's attempt to place music at the vanguard of an eighteenth-century anti-racist and dis-Orienting movement, it is naïve and to some extent, therefore, politically dangerous.<sup>74</sup> The opening assertion that William Jones's (a colonial judge) *On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos* (1792), the first European attempt at framing Indian music, creates the paradigmatic space of cultural exchange that sits *outside* of the power structures of colonialism is outrageous enough.<sup>75</sup> But this is also the innocent foundation for the discipline of ethnomusicology, which from the nineteenth century through to the present day provides an alternative space to the imperial project.<sup>76</sup> Considering the writings of Williard (1834) and then Day (1891), these subsequent musicological texts from the colony are not subject to the critique of Orientalist analysis or accusation of demonstrating racial superiority, because they enable subsequent pioneers of nineteenth-century musicology – Myers (1912), Fox-Strangeways (1914) – and 'by genealogical extension, for [Zon] himself as well'<sup>77</sup> to overcome Orientalism through the weapon of liberal humanism. This faith alone is not sufficient for the degree of importance that Zon places on musicologist scholarship, rather his thesis relies on the methodology of normative musicology, which considers the musical texts as autonomous. Even though Absolute music has been so thoroughly criticised and exposed by the time Zon is writing, it is this perspective on music that enables a reading of the colonial texts as transcendent of their colonial production. By uncritically making the musical findings of the white men timeless and transcendent, ethnomusicology is able to serve a universal humanism. Notation or transcription by these colonial musicologists fixes a piece of music in text, but it also releases it from the bounds of time and place. Historical musicology, following formal musical analysis, needs to then pay no attention to extramusical activities. It is for this reason that Zon can be so blatant in his defence of his white men, for it is only in the world of their writing that their commentary on music can appear as de-Orientalising or nonracial.<sup>78</sup> In using the word Dis-orient in his book and articles, it is a shame

that Zon does not refer to the introduction of the book *Dis-Orienting Rhythms*, in which the political project that 'Disorienting' requires is clearly spelt out: 'Rather more incisively, our project may pose a challenge and even a threat to white academia which persists in ethnicizing Asian communities and continues remarkably to cast its anthro-gaze in total ignorance or disavowal of Said's seminal critique of Orientalism.'<sup>79</sup> By merely asserting some tolerant, liberal sympathy with the 'other' in the cultural frame does not so easily 'Dis-Orient Orientalism', nor soften the fact that William Jones was a high court judge in the period when the East India Company was at its most staunch and rampant. Even if Jones was a dissenting voice to their activities (there is no evidence whether he was), at the epistemological level his study on music needs to be viewed in the general framework of this mode of production.<sup>80</sup> This rescuing of Jones not only indicates a poor understanding of Orientalism but also imputes a desire that musicology operates as a space of interaction and humanism rather than as part of the system of colonial knowledge production/consumption.

The most recent incursion into the rescuing white men terrain comes from Katherine Schofield who is highly critical of the notion of a radical break between understandings of music in India in the Mughal and British periods, in effect criticising the recent historiography that takes seriously epistemic shifts associated with colonial modernity.<sup>81</sup> As a corollary, the notion that 'Art music' did not exist in precolonial India is considered to be inaccurate.<sup>82</sup> Here, Art music consists of 'veneration, canonization, standardization, and systematization.'<sup>83</sup> These aspects are then applied to the Mughal distinction between *Marghi* and *Desi* music as high and low, via an analysis of Persian source texts to demonstrate a 'neutral' view of the classicization process.<sup>84</sup> In itself, the use of Persian sources to enhance understanding of musical classification would be a useful addition to a broader debate.<sup>85</sup> For example, how would Baroque music present itself under a Persian chronicler's analytical eye? But this unfortunately is not the intention. Rather, Schofield is engaging in a set of manoeuvres that seek to rescue the three white men who are seen as the architects of Clessicul musicology: Sir William Jones, Richard Johnson and Augustus Willard.<sup>86</sup> The particular strategies adopted to undertake this task is slightly different in the case of each of the protagonists, but is mainly framed in an attempt to render them out of an Orientalist critique. It is Willard who is of particular interest, because he enables a summary of the political project inherent in the article, the final line of which could perhaps be an epithet for all musicologists working in South Asia: 'Willard, in other words, should be remembered not as the first ethnographer of Hindustani music, nor as its first classicizing zealot—but as the last great Indo-Persian theorist of Indian

music history.<sup>87</sup> These remarks are justified on two levels, first because Willard is probably 'Eurasian – half white-half Indian' and also well versed in the Indo-Persian tradition. Racial positioning creates a (half) native informant who is then able to mediate knowledge systems and so can no longer be seen as a Western, white male 'classicizing zealot' but rather an Indian music historian of a previous tradition. This racial positioning is all the more pernicious given that William Jones also relied on the same text that Willard is said to have rewritten – the *Tohfah al-Hind* by Mirza Khan.<sup>88</sup> While this makes Willard a native informant, the wily Jones is able to represent academic (Western) authority and declare that because these Persian texts are not 'literal' translations of Sanskrit texts but rather interpretations (as, of course, was Jones' work), they do not need to be cited. In a footnote, Schofield essentially undermines her argument about the preclassicism of Indian music by agreeing with Jones: 'He was, in fact, correct in his observation [about literal translation]; but rather than being a shortcoming, this mixture demonstrates simply that the Mughal translators had different priorities from those of Jones: namely, highlighting contemporary practice and reception of theory.'<sup>89</sup> Clearly, if the priorities and writing of Mughal writers were different, how is it possible to bring together these two processes of classicisation? But this is not the actual intention, for William Jones' ignoring the Persian sources came out of his need to demonstrate that British rule would herald in a period of revival of the 'classical Hindu' past and a recovery from the decay brought about by Mughal rule.<sup>90</sup> In a sense it is not the precolonial history of classicisation that is at stake in Schofield's attempts at rescuing these white men but a desire to return musicology to an era where postcolonial critique and the relationship between intellectual practice and imperialism were not problems that demanded to be addressed.<sup>91</sup> In the seamless writings of one group of rulers to another, the native musician merely waits to be called into being as Classical or folk, while the neutral historian of music stands in judgement.<sup>92</sup>

### Raj (imperial) music

If the historiography of writing about music in India betrays a disavowal of postcolonial critique, the entwining of musical genres, particularly in the form of the *Air* (song), provides further evidence of the difficulty of coping with encounter. In the pithily titled *Music of the Raj*, Ian Woodfield provides a detailed construction of white musical life in Calcutta. Though this book never moves beyond the purely empiricist, the material presented lends itself well to a



postcolonial analysis.<sup>93</sup> Building upon Farrell's research into the influence of the Hindoostanee Air on musical culture in England, Woodfield usefully provides some detail on how these musical songs were collected in colonial North India:

Throughout the whole process Indian musicians seem to have been expected to adapt, as far as was possible, to European conventions. Margaret Fowke's method was to get the Indian musicians to tune to her harpsichord so that she could 'play along'. This would of course have destroyed at a stroke the intonation system . . . Texts, of course, were doubtless selected with propriety in mind, and it is interesting to *speculate* on the extent to which Indians had any responsibility for this, pre-selecting, as it were, repertoire suited to European sensibilities . . . It should be remembered that performance for transcription took place in an English context. The singers were invited to the home for the specific purpose of transcription and might therefore have simplified their material (consciously or subconsciously) in order to achieve the common purpose.<sup>94</sup>

This 'speculation' on the preselection of the music is the only sense that the native informant might have any agency in this process. Indeed, it is not very clear why, given that the starting point of any musical lesson would be for the (Muslim) *ustad* to establish the starting note for his instrument and arrange tuning accordingly, that tuning to a harpsichord would destroy 'intonation'. The relative rather than fixed scales of Indian instruments at this stage would mean that the limited notes of a harpsichord would only destroy intonation, if the musician were to choose a repertoire, that did not correspond to those the harpsichord was capable of mimicking. This would limit the tunes that the musician would present for the transcriber so that it would correspond to the scale of the harpsichord. For Woodfield to make this statement, it is actually the astuteness of the native musician that is destroyed, as it is only their active participation in the music selection process that makes this encounter possible, rather than a subconscious act. But the native musician is deemed to have no power in relation to the collector of the Airs, Margaret Fowkes (a colonial woman), in carrying out the empirical labour of music transcription. Even this position of subservience would not be new for a court musician. They were regularly having to teach a *nawab* or their offspring musical instruments for which a certain pedagogy would have developed.

Collecting Airs from India became quite fashionable in the period leading to the publication of *Oriental Miscellany* in 1789 by William Bird.<sup>95</sup> It is perhaps this circulation of Airs that most clearly illustrates the way in which the edifice of historical musicology rests upon the classification of



musical others, not as peripheral but as key to the establishment of what is classical. Gelbart demonstrates incisively in his analysis of *Air Chinois* or the Chinese Air, the process by which Europeans' aural understanding was based on epistemological frameworks dominated by self and other. The *Air Chinois* is a little excerpt from Rousseau's musical dictionary, yet it became a foundation stone in scholarly discussion of Scottish musical theory. For over a hundred years it made repeated appearances in articles and books about European music, accompanied by the assertion that it 'sounded uncannily and undeniably Scottish'.<sup>96</sup> Perhaps predictably, it is Charles Burney who first interprets the Chinese Air as a typical example of Scottish folk music. The basis for this comparison is the association of primitive with Oriental, so the Scottish are the proximate savages in intellectual terms, but also in aurality. In musicological terms, Gelbart notes that it is the use of the pentatonic scale that makes the link between Scottish and Chinese Airs (and of course Indian as well). But the point missed in this analysis (though implicit) is that the listening ear could familiarise the Chinese Air through Rousseau's notation and, therefore, the association with Scotland is purely ideological rather than aural. This misses the salient point that the process of notation itself is an act of translation. Once presented in this form as text music, it can only be heard as something that is familiar and only compared with other arrangements that can be universalised as pentatonic. This reversion to a musical universalism does in some sense create inconsistency in Gelbart's otherwise excellent thesis. In fact, the act of notation makes the music intelligible and therefore European; once it has entered into written history, its ranking on the epistemograph, if Oriental, can only be alongside other primitive such as the Scots.

Even though Woodfield recognised that 'Hindustani' music was contingent, this insight does not deform the significance nor cause irony when a single Air, titled 'Sakia', is traced through various mutations and through various manuscripts. By comparing different scores of the song *Sakia* over time, the shifts in structure, tempo and to some extent melody provide evidence for Woodfield's assertion that a gradual Europeanisation of an Indian tune takes place.<sup>97</sup> It is of course the act of staff notation that renders the 'Indian tune' to become European, and the various mutations are merely differentiations in the styles of music.<sup>98</sup> Once a notation appears, it is then subject to textual analysis and statements such as 'not Indian sounding' in its replaying, which get rearticulated as shifts in musical sound rather than as changing representation in notation. The original act of transcription and notation creates a piece of

European music as an act of epistemic violence, which can then be measured in the ranking of world music. It is for this reason that the Air Chinois once transcribed can become described as quintessentially Scottish. What is the need therefore of asserting the initial 'otherness', the naming of it as Indian music? In the post-Orientalist frame in which Woodfields' book was written, the native informant shifts from provider of evidence for the reflection of Europe as superior to a reader, or to something (almost) human. For Europe to retain its position as 'global legislator', the native musicians' output has to become translated to become musical knowledge.<sup>99</sup> This requirement maintains the liberal equilibrium of exchange, even if unequal. An acknowledgement that the natives produce music and speculatively may have agency but ultimately need the gift of staff notation to enter into history and, therefore, the ability to know their music through time.

In the changing world of the British Raj, the native informant did not change from being the absent generator of the field of knowledge production, but did have to occupy a new terrain. Absolute music centres the single white male composer, creating sacred sound in secular contexts, preserved in notated manuscript, while making peripheral folk and the Oriental. The relative purity of this philosophical eurocentrism is, of course, not applied so literally in musical practice, where imperial engagement and encounter can produce bizarre concoctions. The opening ceremony of the Colonial and Indian Exhibition on 4 May, 1886, at the Royal Albert Hall featured the British national anthem, with the second verse being sung in Sanskrit.<sup>100</sup> In terms of exhibiting imperial power, music served in whatever forms it could come. By the late nineteenth century, the *sarangi* player, no longer sitting at the feet of the white woman, is now able to know of (read) notation, perhaps play the violin. But whereas the 'margins of official Western history' might name someone like the Rani of Simur, as she is not marginal in her historic setting, the *sarangi* player or *mirdang* beater in the musicologist encounter remains unnamed.<sup>101</sup>

## Alibis

Another strategy for deflecting engagement with postcolonial critique and power relations is the forefronting of the absence of (white) women in the narrative formation of the musical canon about Indian music. As Woodfield states, 'The co-operation between Margaret Fowke and Sir William Jones is

a clear example of the fruitful interplay between the fashionable interests of women in Indian song tunes for performance, and the scientific interests of men in the theory and history of Indian music.<sup>102</sup> It is after all Margret Fowke, daughter of Joseph Fowkes, who helps to produce the *Indian Airs* book, which is the first example of staff notation being deployed to transcribe Indian music. These clarifications are entirely of an empirical nature and pay no mention of feminist musicology.<sup>103</sup> Rather it is Martin Clayton, in the book *Musical Renaissance and its Margins, 1874–1914*, who extends the project of rescuing white men, now with the addition of gender. It is the contribution of Maud Mann and Alice Coomaraswamy (aka Ratan Devi) to the musicological canon that is the ostensible rationale of this study. These two white women come to India and engaged with Indian music in ways that are considered different to the white men, because they are more sympathetic to a common musical heritage of India and Europe. This marginal position enables Clayton to make a critique of Orientalism as follows: ‘When we impose master narratives on complex realities, those who fail to fit in are inevitably marginalized.’<sup>104</sup> As race provides the alibi in Schofield, it is gender for Clayton, as white women produce a gaze that is less supremacist and hierarchical, though epistemology is of course nowhere to be found in this understanding.<sup>105</sup>

The example of Alice Coomaraswamy is worth considering in more detail, because her book co-authored by her husband Ananda Coomaraswamy, *Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir in 1913*, reflects on the twentieth century, which is the arena of concern over the next two chapters. Most importantly, Alice’s standing, much like that of Margaret Fowkes, is only as the student of the native musician, placing them in the position of the contemporary ethnomusicologist. Illustrating the changing nature of imperialism, the native musician Abdul Rahim is now named but rendered in the service of Indian nationalism and as an anachronistic figure of salvage anthropology. A short introduction is provided by Ananda Coomaraswamy (native writer) in the book, but a more detailed description is provided in his essay ‘Song Words of a Panjabi Singer.’<sup>106</sup> The narrative on Abdul Rahim reflects the conjoining of religion and nationalism that are key to the requirements of a modern figure that Rahim will never be:

A few words must be said about our *Ustad*, Abdul Rahim of Kapurthala. *Abdul Rahim*. His ancestors were Brahmans, forcibly converted in the time of Aurangzeb. Like many other Panjabi Muslims in the same case, the family retain many Hindu customs, e.g., non-remarriage of widows. Abdul Rahim’s faith

in Hindu gods is as strong as his belief in Islam and Moslem saints, and he sings with equal earnestness of Krishna or Allah, exemplifying the complete fusion of Hindu and Moslem tradition characteristic of so many parts of northern India to day. He is devout and even superstitious; he would hesitate to sing *dipak rag*, unless in very cold weather. He is foresighted and has prophetic dreams, and like his father Aliyas who served the Jodhpur court, is something of *fakir*. Slight and delicate, gentle-mannered and patient, an inveterate smoker of hookah, a first rate teacher, a great boaster, much too fond of presents and too ready to ask for them, a true artist and often unmistakably inspired, finding his art now less and less appreciated, yet conscious of the dignity of his inherited skill—such are the salient characteristics of a rather pathetic figure, not without nobility, but such as the Board school education of Indian Universities finds little use for.<sup>107</sup>

Despite the availability of this biography, Rahim remains the native musician who affords the white women their marginality. It is Alice who produces the staff notation of 30 songs to be commented upon by the native elite, who by the early part of the twentieth century are producing nationalist analysis mimicking Orientalist concerns. Clayton rightly asserts that Alice is relatively a neglected figure compared to Ananda and other anthropologists of twentieth-century Indian music. This should not, though, serve as an excuse for musicologists to use this marginality in patriarchal accounts of music, to disavow concern with the epistemic violence being carried out in accounts of musicians like Rahim.<sup>108</sup>

### Disengaged continuities

Learning *bansuri* (bamboo flute) in twenty-first-century Punjab, my teachers were keen to explain certain ideas in the language of the tempered scale, no doubt following from an appraisal of my musical history in England. Professional flute makers (in India) label all their flutes according to the note sound by closing the first three holes of the flute (*sa*) in terms of the Western scale. Though no formal transcription of music from the Indian *sargam*/solfege scale to the Western notion was ever deemed part of the learning process, there was much discussion about the usefulness of writing down scales. The rudimentary notations of the few *raags* I learnt were considered to be mnemonics rather than texts to be read to stimulate music. This epistemological gap is, of course, something that has been written out far more eloquently and elaborately than is necessary here.<sup>109</sup> Rather it indicates how the actual musical encounter between staff notation and *sargam* remains

salient even after the first written account by William Jones. This might offer the possibility of arguing that colonial repetition is at play, whereby every encounter with a South Asian musician or teacher necessitates deploying a vocabulary already steeped in imperialism's legacy. Partly this is the basis of the critique that has been deployed here, where a musicology of encounter between India and Britain, as it has developed from Farrell, has increasingly distanced itself from the social context of the production of word-text (letters, correspondence) and the music-text (notation and commentary) upon which formulations about Orientalism are generally made. Rather than reiterate the Saidien framework and its application in the field of musicology, the critical tools of the epistemograph and the native informant have been shaped to provide a comparable commentary. The unnamed, unknowable native musician is transcribed into notation and erased from the archive, reduced to a source material for a historical musicology that is premised on an 'innocent' cross-cultural exchange, hiding the violence of the process of knowledge formation. This liberal assertion would not be of much concern if the development of this analysis was not taking place during new imperial wars, new forms of exploitation and material displacements. The work enabled by the absent native informant is generative of the musicological writings reviewed, whose authors, technically highly competent analysts (and often musicians), should be forgiven for not being able to read Spivak, but could be more circumspect in their defiance of Orientalism as an analytical tool and little more self-reflexive about the defence of the liberal subject.

These relatively humble requests to the musicological fraternity arise from a recognition that the writing of ethnographic encounter is inevitably doomed to failure. The inclusion of Hanif and Mehta as flute teachers opens up this chapter to the same kind of critique that is being made of others. The limits of colonial repetition are neither some other form of pure encounter in which power relations are (temporarily) inverted, nor innovative forms of ethnography, rather it is in the explicit recognition of its continuing relevance and a determination to demonstrate that colonialism was never a totalising project. In that sense, it is the traces that remain outside of the formal engagements or the revealing of the absent native informant that becomes the quest. To end this chapter, an example (for criticism) from my *bansuri* practice of colonial repetition and its limitation is offered. While learning the flute from Hanif in Lahore, the first *raag* he taught me was *Malkauns*, a five-note (pentatonic) scale, which he began from the fourth hole from the top of the flute. This meant that I did not have to make any difficult finger

adjustments on the flute to achieve the desired *raag*. On playing this for Mehta, my new teacher, he was fairly astonished that I would play this *raag* from that position. He then taught me another pentatonic, *Bupali*, which began from the third hole (the correct position of *sa* according to the rules of *Shastri Sangeet*). At this time I had no knowledge of the classicisation process that had taken hold of Clessicul music in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, but I was very clearly puzzled by the insistence on fixing the *sa* in a situation where in other circumstances this would be quite dependant on a vocalist or stringed instrument player. When I got the opportunity to return to Lahore, I questioned Hanif about this insistence on fixing the *sa*. In response, he admitted that those are the rules as they have developed in India, but as no one has formal teaching in Pakistan, they are not so relevant. Rather for Hanif, being able to make the music was more important than the rules and techniques. This difference in approach was mirrored by a profoundly similar attitude towards music, as primarily a secular form, which was utilised by religions to attract followers. Mehta himself often sang a *raag* to the tune of the evening prayers emerging from the *gurdwara* that was behind his flat in Mohali. Similarly, Hanif would often play the *raag* from the ubiquitous call for prayer (*azaan*) in Lahore, which often punctuated our lessons. The Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Secular Republic of India produced differences in terms of learning epistemologies or even what the Clessicul could mean, but not in relation to the distinction between sacred and secular music.



## Sacred-Classical-Clessicul

Sarang Lok is an arts and cultural centre in the township of Mohali, East Punjab, established by Dr Rama Rattan in memory of her father Gyani Mohinder Singh Rattan. Fully operational since 2008, the centre offers classes in music and theatre, holds summer camps for children and organises literary and cultural seminars. Retired Professor of English, B. S. Rattan also supports his sister in maintaining and supporting the centre, along with pursuing his own passion, which is the completion of an exegesis of the *Ad Granth* (*Gurbani*) begun by his father.<sup>1</sup> Since 2006, a series of volumes organised according to *raag*, beginning with *Sarang*, has been published by Sarang Lok. In the opening volume, B. S. Rattan provides a definition of Sikh sacred music *kirtan* as follows:

Whilst the highest achievement in any form of Classical music is to create a disembodied presence, in *Gurbani Kirtan* it goes many a step further. In *Kirtan*, music must transcend itself. **Bani**, also is not poetry, though it uses many poetic means. Unlike poetry it is absolutely free from any temporal, contingent concerns. It addresses values and meanings which are primordial, cosmic and unchanging. Hence, its singing shapes cannot be those of 'geet' or 'birhara' (songs of meeting or parting). It is a mode of singing endowed with 'brahm-bichar' (expression of the quint-essential abstract principles that govern the shape of things). It is by shedding all the grossness of materiality that music enters into a symbiotic relationship with *Gurbani*. This liberation from all pragmatic constraints is achieved in music not by dilution but through a process of intensification. In this rarefied state, emptied of all intents that habitually go with musical expression, music naturally melts into shapes of resonance that the words of *Gurbani* evoke. *Gurbani* itself tells the way to achieve this state of oneness (*abhedta*). The sacredness of music, thus achieved, becomes more of an offering than a form of artistic expression [original emphasis].<sup>2</sup>



By beginning with a definition of 'classical' music as transcendental, in its intention and producing an opposition of the sacred sound with other forms of song, B. S. Rattan reproduces a relationship between religion, music and classicisation that emerged out of colonial modernity. It is the combination of a belief in the eternal, pure and essential form of the sacred text, as enunciated in musical performance that resonates with debates about Absolute music in Europe. A recent review of the relationship between the emergence of Western Art and Indian Classical music provides a useful comparative musicology.<sup>3</sup> It is not, therefore, necessary to rehearse the etymological debates, rather my interest is to show how the ways in which writing about the formations of the Classical and Clessicul reflect a bifurcation of India as a land steeped in religion and England as the pinnacle of secular, capitalist, modernity.<sup>4</sup> A timeless static place (India) is augmented by interaction with the modern West (England) and able to be heard in history through the efforts of Orientalists such as William Jones (1746–94), and on another register apparent in the scholarship on European culture by German intellectuals such as Johann Herder (1744–1803).<sup>5</sup> Colonial occupation does not unite these two, but their interest in music has far-reaching implications for the formation of the Classical and Clessicul. British Orientalists and German philosophers interpolate colonial modernity into the terrain of music. A detailed historical reading is not the aim of this chapter, rather the attempt is to bring together a series of episodes in the discursive formations of Classical and Clessicul music, in order to demonstrate convergence and divergence around the issue of religion.

The debate in South Asian religious studies between those who emphasise the role of colonial modernity in forming the discrete bounded entities, of Hindu and Muslim, and those believers for whom these extant identities are eternal and pure is fraught, frantic and conflict-ridden.<sup>6</sup> Colonial modernity shaped the transformation of a common pluralistic terrain of religious practice, marked by heteroreligious practice and heterolinguistic engagements, through the establishment of fixed monolingual religious boundaries.<sup>7</sup> Rationalising bureaucratic procedures that fixed identity, such as the census, led to the demarcation of religious identities out of what were seen as 'unruly' sets of pagan practices.<sup>8</sup> These identities were subsequently deployed by the postcolonial states of India and Pakistan that maintained the recording of religion in terms of singular categorisations: Hindu, Muslim, Christian, etc. Bounded religious communities were not only tied to state practices but were also maintained through religious societies and institutions. In colonial Punjab, the late nineteenth-century religious societies such as the Singh

Sabha and the Arya Samaj were central to reformulating and propagating these identities.<sup>9</sup> This chapter outlines the formation of Clessicul and Classical music in the colony and the metropole, delineating how, in this process, Europe is marked as superior and India as inferior. In the need to revive the golden past of India, British Orientalists need to make certain exclusions, of the Muslim *ustad* and of the lived practice of music in the eighteenth century. This focus on the music of the past chimes well with the same need for revival being proffered by the same elite in England, in the formation of organisations such as the Ancient Music Society. Religious music is slowly being pushed to the side in this process in England, whereas in India it is by making music religious, against the unruly heterolingual/heteroreligious social field, that Clessicul emerges. The Muslim *ustad* and Mughal patronage incarnate the moment of historical decay, against which colonial modernity can articulate and produce revival. Two strategies are deployed by native elites in music reform, that of religious revival and of secular modernising. These are represented in the figures of Paluskar and Bhatkhande who emerge as two opposing camps in colonial modernity, but whose ideas are underpinned by the same logic. It is their ideas that ultimately come to frame postcolonial institutional reproduction of religion/music, and this is briefly addressed in the context of Punjab at the end of the chapter.

### Forming the Clessicul

The postcolonial framework developed in the previous chapter in relationship to music is further amplified in terms of a perspective on religion in South Asia. The separate problematics of religion and music in postcolonial South Asia comes together in the performance of what is deemed sacred music, in what are respectively deemed the Sikh, Hindu and Muslim religious traditions. How this process of 'being deemed' occurs has become the subject of extensive critique. Most usefully, Mandair asserts that for every encounter with religion that is undertaken in the South Asian context, there is a repetition of the colonial encounter. Religion is the native informant, an *aporia* upon which the social and cultural landscapes are formed and understood. This is best illustrated by the fact that in precolonial times there is no equivalent for the term 'religion' or even for its referents in European thought. After colonialism (and during it) there is a de facto acceptance of long historical narratives of Indian religion. Further, the demand for religion is articulated by the enunciation 'I am Hindu' or 'I am

Muslim.<sup>10</sup> Mandair furnishes the general formula for classicisation in relation to religion, out of which Clessicul music is equally refracted:

The second idiom – the ‘classical Indian’ – was derived from the precolonial tradition of the colonized. It was deliberately constructed through a collaboration between indigenous elites and colonial scholars (Orientalists), for the purpose of legitimating the (then) contemporary Hindu restructuring of socio-political and religious discourse by reducing the multiplicity of classical tradition on the subcontinent to a unifying tradition, which for ideological purposes amounted to the Aryan-Hindu.<sup>11</sup>

In the field of religion, this relationship between indigenous elites and colonial scholars has been well examined, and recent historical musicological accounts have covered the same terrain.<sup>12</sup> It is the issue of religion that has not been so well considered in this musicological literature and which will be forefronted here. Once separate religious identities have been established, the formulation of an Indian golden age of music derived from Sanskrit (Hindu) theoretical texts is facilitated. Music is seen to fall into abeyance due to the incursions of Muslim invaders. It is the colonial state that can rescue this music and provide the necessary epistemology to enable a revival. For this to occur a change from ‘a precolonial ease with heterogeneity and multiplicity . . . to what might be called a *dis*-ease with the very same constitutive heterogeneity or multiplicity’<sup>13</sup> was necessary. The native musician/informant is unable to respond to the demand for ordered narration of the music or of his religious identity. William Jones, in his capacity as a Judge, expressed frustration at his local native informants for their blending of tongues, resulting in ‘insincerity’, ‘infidelity’ and a high frequency of perjury in the native speech. The ‘oath of a low native’ had little value, for they committed perjury ‘with as a little remorse as if were proof of ingenuity, or even a merit.’<sup>14</sup> This attitude applies to the native musician who was equally not reliable when it came to music, for their lack of knowledge of the Sanskrit texts from which Jones was constructing the ‘golden age’ of Hinduism.

If the Hegelian epistemograph underpins Jones’ framework, it is not as an aside to the common contrasts that exist between English Orientalism and the more philosophical German Orientalism. The common distinctions that come to be deployed between British/German such as empiricism/idealism and secular/religious are overcome, as Mandair notes: ‘not so much by the need for an exchange of ideas but by much deeper and overriding religious concerns, which prompted the forging of political solidarity based on a Euro-Christian civilizational unity in relation to its Oriental and African others.’<sup>15</sup> It is this

epistemological unity that enables Jones' perspective to coincide with that of Herder, as articulated by Mandair: 'Each *Volk* has its own way of being human. It was therefore considered justifiable to view Oriental culture as autonomous entities in their own right and, because of their greater antiquity, as the source of European's historical being.'<sup>16</sup> In this way, Scotland's musical past coincides with that of the Orient (as was illustrated in the previous chapter when looking at the Air Chinois) and forms the teleological beginnings for a history of Western music. It is Herder who provides a link to folk music (as the nation's song), and indubitably Hegel for religion. These German scholars, some working in India, others in Europe, produced a rethinking of philosophy, religion and consequently Indology between 1790s and 1840s. It is the same late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries that become the arena out of which what is known as Western Art music, being referred to here as Classical, asserts itself. Shorn of a primary association with church or state, this detached object is imbued with the ideology of Absolute music, the key features being that the music is divinely inspired, exists outside of space and time and reflects a perfect, universal order and truth.<sup>17</sup> This sacralisation of music, in the circumstances of a secularising society, underpins a set of philosophical gestures that come to be constituted as Romanticism, only to be usurped by liberal individualism, of which Beethoven becomes the iconic figure. This ground has been partly covered in the previous chapter from within the domain of musicology, but here the focus is how religion seeps into the cartography of Classical music. It is still the interaction between European centre and colonised periphery that is of concern, but the relationship is now viewed through the prism of religion. In simple terms, this chapter (over) states the way in which Classical music relies on the expulsion of God in Europe, while demonstrating how Clessicul music is created through the arrival of God in colonial India.

## Religion and nation

There's a nineteenth-century silhouette drawing which shows the great composers lining up in heaven to pay homage to their acknowledged master, Beethoven. The scene is eternal. It would be much the same if drawn today, only the queue would be longer. Imagine the conversation which passes between them as they wait. Beethoven has accepted the honour with a mixture of satisfied self-esteem and humility, for he protests with complete sincerity that 'Handel is the greatest of us all' . . . Bach, on the other hand, has rejected his

own nomination by . . . on the grounds that all he did was to the greater glory of God and no man should usurp God's honour . . . Then a strange figure enters; nobody's quite sure who he is . . . 'Let me tell you, I incline more and more to the admission that there is something very odd indeed about this music of yours. A manifestation of the highest energy – not at all abstract, but without an object, energy in a void, pure ether – where else in the universe does such a thing appear . . . I call your attention to the fact' – he looks around him with a devilish grin on his face – 'that this is almost a definition of God. *Imitatio Dei* – I am surprised it is not forbidden'.<sup>18</sup>

In these opening lines from a populist book on Classical music, Michael Chanan provides us with an amusing insight into the status Beethoven was elevated to in the nineteenth century as a secular substitute for the sacred. A discussion among dead white male musicians about who can enter the gates of heaven is perhaps metonymic of the discourse on Classical music. In twenty-first-century Europe, Classical or Art music has something of the status of the Christian religion,<sup>19</sup> an entity that was important in a previous age, but now is increasingly less relevant, reflecting a closed world with its own rituals and norms. Where it becomes significant, religion like Classical music is embedded in other often overlapping aspects of life – deaths, births and marriages for the former and movies and advertising for the latter.<sup>20</sup> Nonetheless, the religious in the twenty-first century has become a keenly debated topic, partly inspired by the activities of various groups engaged in political action, often of a violent kind, but also through a recognition that sacralised rituals still remain, even in those settings where formal institutional religion is on the decline.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, European states still spend a considerable proportion of their cultural expenditure on maintenance and promotion of Classical music. In the United Kingdom, there are two national radio stations devoted to the form, as well as two television channels.<sup>22</sup> Perhaps more significantly this form of music is supported by the state through the Arts Council and other publicly funded and supported institutions.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the state rather than the church is now the largest patron of Classical music, and this contemporary secular patronage to a large extent mirrors the historical formation of the genre in the first place.

The emergence of Classical music in the eighteenth century offers a conceptual framework for understanding certain arrangements of sound and text.<sup>24</sup> Most useful of these for my argument is the historical musicology of William Weber, who successfully demonstrates the relationship between the emerging bourgeoisie in an urbanising and secularising late eighteenth-century England and musical change. Weber brings together the histories of

a number of separate groups, organising performances of 'ancient music'; the culmination of their distinct efforts is a concert in 1784 to commemorate Handel 25 years after his death. Thus the idea of music as canonical, as 'timeless' and therefore a representation of the values of the emergent bourgeoisie takes hold. The intellectual impetus for this is based in the evolving ideas of empiricism coming from Scottish and English intellectuals.<sup>25</sup> Though there are shifts in the way in which Classical music is envisioned in the nineteenth century, specifically the idea of individual genius and the aspiration for classical status in a composer's lifetime, most explicitly linked to Beethoven, the Ancient Music Society and its concerts inaugurate the Classical music paradigm.<sup>26</sup> It becomes an aspiration for composers and musicians to take a place in a teleological framework of time that provides continuity with eighteenth- and nineteenth-century framings of Classical music. Artistic transcendence dominates romantic thought, which allows music to mask its social history in the ideal of nonrepresentation.<sup>27</sup>

There are two aspects of Weber's thesis that require further consideration. The first point is the neglect of the empire or the world outside of Europe in the specific responses of the members of the Ancient Music Society. The second is the role of the Protestant church and more generally sacred music in the formation and framing of the ancient music canon. It is clear from Weber's texts that the protagonists involved in the music society were responding to the changing environment of London, to an ensuing modernity, by looking for anchors in the past.<sup>28</sup> Weber is extremely conscious of crises as an impetus to musical change. Indeed, he neatly presents the consolidation of the English state as the political environment in which music also coalesces around the idea of a stable ancient nation. This is an exercise in looking at internal dilemmas, increased urbanisation, emerging consumer classes and general economic change that are ushering in the need and capacity for cultural reflection, which in this era inevitably is in relation to what are considered arts. It is this looking to the past that culminates in two major books on the history of music by John Hawkins and Charles Burney. The only external event worthy of mention by Weber is the American war of independence, which due to its intense impact on English confidence provides the rationale for the Handel commemoration of 1784, which can be seen as an event promoting national renewal.

Weber provides a contrast between the first two histories of music written in English by Hawkins and Burney. By the late 1700s, the word 'classical' began being used in a distinctly musical sense, as was to become the norm by about 1820,<sup>29</sup> and it is in the books of these two men that the association of ancient

music with a conception of authority and power would reside. However, the perspectives from which these two men approached music also serve to provide an example of the separate strands of thinking in the late eighteenth century. This is evident from a contrast between Hawkins, who was from a Protestant, church-based musical tradition, and Burney, who represented an emergent secular, almost 'anti-cleric' musical background. Hawkins came from a lower-middle-class background and was a singer in the Madrigal Society in London. His five-volume treatise on the *General History and Science of Music* was published in 1776.<sup>30</sup> There are a number of distinctions that Hawkins established, which are of lasting concern. The first is the criticism of music present under the 'awesome authority of the canon.'<sup>31</sup> Allied to this is a disdain for novelty in music. Second, he made a clear distinction between serious music, which was meant for 'higher moral and intellectual pleasures',<sup>32</sup> and that which was for mere amusement, which was not considered worthy of consideration. Third, he attempts to bring the depth of sixteenth-century sacred music into the secular music of the eighteenth century by using a constructed aesthetic of that era as a tool of differentiation. According to Schueller, Hawkins was probably one of the few writers after 1750 to insist that religious music leads the soul to God.<sup>33</sup>

Charles Burney, in contrast, came from a more secure class background – 'a family with higher social standing and considerably more cosmopolitan manners.'<sup>34</sup> His primary source of income was that of a music teacher to the aristocracy. Though he was aware of the significance of church music, this was not considered the basis of what he thought were the standards of taste in his era. He was relatively dismissive of the need to trace music back to ancient roots, firmly believing in the 'science' of music and the linear progress of music through history to his present time. Burney is represented as 'cosmopolitan' in his musical taste due to his acquaintance with Italian and French music through travel and correspondence.<sup>35</sup> This was also reflected in his perspective on church music, which 'with all its arcane polyphony, should be kept in church and not imposed upon audience.'<sup>36</sup> It was Burney's book that sold much better in its time and reached a far wider audience, due in part to its accessibility and the author's knowledge of his market. Crucially, Hawkins predicts the musical values of the nineteenth century, as his volumes were subsequently reprinted in that era, whereas Burney was not.<sup>37</sup> The contrast between these two authors is ultimately laid to rest in their common interest to, first, determine who the proper authority is for defining musical taste and, second, agreeing that it is the emerging bourgeoisie who possess the necessary musical skills to define musical taste.<sup>38</sup>



It is quite disappointing to find that Weber's scholarship spans the period 1989–92, coinciding with the internal critiques in musicology outlined in the previous chapter, despite which there is no mention in his book of British imperial expansion. Handel's commemoration is dealt with in some detail, but the only external factor worthy of mention is the loss of the American colony rather than the securing of the Indian one.<sup>39</sup> It is not my area of expertise to be able to reread the archive to tease out the links with the empire that frame the changes in England that cause the need to turn to ancient music. To some extent the theoretical ground for this has already been laid in the impressive book *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'* by Matthew Gelbart. Rather than posit the development of Classical music to a functional outcome of social transformation, he delineates its emergence in relationship to that of folk music. In particular, he contrasts the way in which Scotland is made the locus of folk music in contrast to Germany as the centre of Classical music. Scotland is of specific importance because it is the 'primitive' that is close to home, as Gelbart states: 'That is certainly not to say that Scotland provided the first exotic musical fixation in Western Europe. The point is rather that the idea of the "folk" posited a primitive Other that was in fact a stratum within European society.'<sup>40</sup> Scotland provided the basis for musical continuities with the ancient world and the contemporary Orient. Indeed, the key player in making the link between Scottish and Oriental music was Charles Burney. The imagination of the ancient and Oriental worlds was intrinsic others to the music historicism that Burney (and Hawkins) enacted.<sup>41</sup> It is the Hegelian epistemograph underpinning the construction of musical knowledge that Gelbart so eloquently demonstrates: 'Hawkins, Burney, and Forkel all felt compelled to deal with the "primitive" roots of music, in order to understand the foundation of "advanced", modern practice; and we encounter in the first part of each of their chapters dealing with the "infancy" of the musical art – chapters that group cognitively the ancients, the Orientals, and the savages.'<sup>42</sup> That the history that was being constructed worked on the basis of a scientific notion of advance and progress even as it was validating and constructing a past is not the issue in question, rather it is changes in England's imperial role that is of interest. It is no coincidence that Charles Burney is thanked in the first book in English on Indian music by Sir William Jones.

Calcutta was part of the same social space, in which aesthetic and taste was being formed in late eighteenth-century England and by implication Europe. Consequently, the musical life of the city was fairly in tune with that of a section of London society. Significantly, the intellectual ambience in which Jones,



sitting in Calcutta, is writing his treatise on Indian music is well established by Burney and Hawkins.<sup>43</sup> The theoretician Jones is a fan of Burney, dedicating the opening of the *Musical Modes of the Hindoos* to the man whose book has been so well-read and distributed in Calcutta. Burney also has links with India, personal and musical.<sup>44</sup> Clearly Jones is influenced by the issues of an intrusive urban modernity in England, but equally he is interested in maintaining and promoting the imperial project.<sup>45</sup> It should be clear by now that the processes of classicisation of music through the processes of writing history in the late eighteenth century are taking place among a specific group of men who are in overlapping social circles. In Jones' case, the clearest musical influence is Charles Burney, but it is harder to trace the conjoining of religion and music in Jones'. Burney was relatively secular in his understanding of music relative to the conservative and religious Hawkins. The music practitioner Joseph Fowke – father of Margaret Fowke, collector of Indian Airs and provider of transcriptions to Jones – is much more akin to Hawkins in his musical opinions. As Woodfield notes, 'For those like Joseph, who viewed the decline in musical taste as a reflection of a perceived decline in religious belief, "ancient" music was held to be morally superior in some way to the productions of modern composers.'<sup>46</sup> This conservative perspective was not shared by Jones, who while it seemed had a general disposition to Christianity considered religion to be a personal matter rather than something that should be proselytised.<sup>47</sup>

The ideal of ancient music also circulated in Calcutta but as part of a one-way flow, as Woodfield comments: 'Transplanted into an Indian setting, however, "ancient" music acquired a distinctive function. Items from its standard vocal repertoire were found to contain colourful expressions of imperial values, some of obvious relevance to the turbulent events of Calcutta's recent history . . . as was the identification of this taste with "male" values.'<sup>48</sup> The unmarked male is of course white, but more than that even a superficial understanding would lead to the conclusion that 'ancient music' was constitutive of as well as being constituted by the British/European presence in the city. Indeed, the cosmopolitan nature of Calcutta, a European and Asian confluence has been well recognised, but in musical terms it is perceived by Woodfield only as the equivalent of a provincial English city rather than as part of an imperial space in which it was one of the most significant nodes (certainly as far as expropriation of profit is concerned!). Therefore, the conclusion to *Music of the Raj* reveals that, just as Oriental music was considered ornamental, the whole of Calcutta can be rendered similarly.<sup>49</sup> What is required here is a postcolonial reading of the musical archive that is presented by Woodfield and Weber, though that is out of my remit, interest and

skill set, but it is long overdue if musicology and music history is to escape the (all too easy) criticism of 'empiricism as imperialism'.<sup>50</sup>

The late eighteenth century is often contrasted to the high imperialism of the Raj. Thus, musicologists note Jones' sympathetic attitude in contrast to later disparaging comments on Indian music. This difference between Orientalists (benign) and Anglicists (malign) that spans this time period makes sense only in terms of the manner of implementation of the civilising mission, rather than its epistemological foundations. Any interaction, rather than being neutral or benign in the late eighteenth century, is already prefigured through an understanding of the native as fallen and in need of rescue through translation, with the normative setting for music being notation. The intentions of the colonial authors are not at stake; in the diversity of their various positions on music it is not simply possible to map a singular reading of race/religion onto their writings. Rather it is the primacy of method and epistemology that leads to particular forms of knowledge generation, rendering individual purpose or biography obsolete. Indeed, it is the method and value that native elites imbue and absorb, even while maintaining distance from colonial notions of civilisational superiority, to ultimately reshape and reform their own traditions. It is for this reason that the formation of Clessicul music, which though historically enunciated in the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries, can be traced to this earlier era.

### Clessicul disclosures and enclosures

The formation of Clessicul music relies on the critical (re)appraisal by a number of historians in the twenty-first century. The seminal text *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* by Janaki Bakhle actually places William Jones at the beginning of a colonial modernising project that fixates upon 'nation, notation and religion' as the key features of 'Indian Classical Music'.<sup>51</sup> Subsequent colonial writing by Johnson and Willard shows a variety of opinions about music, but remains focused on these themes. It is not coloniser narratives that are Bakhle's main concern, but there is a clear understanding that the epistemic framing they provide are taken up by the native elite, and it is the historiographies of two such late nineteenth-century key figures – Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar – who are the book's focus. It is difficult to overestimate the overarching influence that these two men have in the institutionalisation and intellectual propagation of Clessicul music in late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century India. Bhatkhande

was born into a wealthy Brahmin, business household in Bombay. Music was received as part of the required cultivation demanded of a child of his social class, a mimicry of late Victorian values and a piercing contrast to Brahminical views of hereditary musicians.<sup>52</sup> A lawyer by training, he turned to serious study of music only at the beginning of the twentieth century. Commenting on his impact, Bakhle states: 'Bhatkhande's musicology, typology, and pedagogical publications gave Indian music its classical history . . . His achievement was to create for India a bona fide national classical music, with historical pedigree, theoretical complexity, and a system of notation.'<sup>53</sup> Bhatkhande deemed Clessical music a necessary criterion for belonging to the category of 'nation'. This did not mean it needed ancient or, in the Indian case, even Vedic authority. Indeed, the music he collected and recorded in his many publications was contemporary (in a pure time sense), but in need of modernising – a process that could be enacted only by creating a musical practice that would be informed by a theory of music, which conveniently he was himself constructing. For Bhatkhande, classicisation meant at least two things: system, order, discipline and theory, on the one hand, and antiquity of national origin, on the other. Of course, these requirements equally define the very character of modern music. This was a theoretical exercise, as the existing practices of all musicians that he encountered were left wanting due to lack of consensus and connection between system and practice. In effect this meant that the Muslim *ustad* was cited as the main cause of the decline in standards and quality.<sup>54</sup> There is no contradiction with his avidly secular perspective, in that he saw no role for religion and spirituality in the teaching and playing of modern music, as he wrote: 'I consider faith and music to be separate subjects. I believe that in the twentieth century they should stay separate. If that is not done, it will amount to a disrespect for music.'<sup>55</sup>

Paluskar, in contrast, was born into a family of musicians who earned a meagre income from playing at the court of a minor Raja in South Maharashtra.<sup>56</sup> As an accomplished vocalist, rather than taking up the route into a life of courtly patronage, he responded to the changing conditions in the world of music and the new opportunities that were opening up (by the actions of people like Bhatkhande and the urban music societies). It is said that on the advice of a wandering saint he put on a public performance in Gwalior, printing and selling the tickets himself.<sup>57</sup> He made his first base in Lahore, where he set up a music school and propagated his own notation system. Paluskar shared a common understanding with Bhatkhande that Hindustani music had fallen due to the malpractice of Muslim musicians. However, their rationale for targeting Muslims were different – for Bhatkhande it was because

of their lack of knowledge of musical theory; for Paluskar it was simply because they were Muslims. To return to the 'true and only faith of the land', music was needed to labour as an active force.<sup>58</sup> Paluskar not only publicised his faith as the expression of a personal relationship with the divine, but it became the basis for his musical pedagogy and propagation. Coinciding with the modern fashioning of Indic heteroreligiosity to a form of Bhakti as Hinduism, Paluskar's agenda was to make music Clessicul through an intimate association with reformed rituals and rites.<sup>59</sup> This allowed him to cleanse his own history as a court musician and pertinently the association with dancing women (courtesans) and homosocial spaces. In this process, middle-class women were also allowed into the public domain of music making for the first time.<sup>60</sup> This inclusion was based on the exclusion of Muslim musicians who, while respected by Paluskar as musicians, were not able to enter into the narrative of the new 'Hindu nation'. Bakhle is fairly scathing of Paluskar's agenda of religiosity and is sympathetic to Bhatkhande because his secularism countered that of the colonial requirement for religion and music to be conjoined. Crucially, Bakhle notes: 'If native writers were to persuade colonial administrators that their music was music per se, they had to do so in the language of a Christianized religion and declare that Indian music was indeed fundamentally religious.'<sup>61</sup> This conjoining is precisely the reason that contemporary music in Northwest South Asia (Punjab) becomes most authentically religious when it is bound to the Clessicul. In making the same error that separates Jones' approach to music from later writers, Bakhle indicates that Bhatkhande's secular perspective is critical of the colonial perspective that Paluskar is adopting. Despite these differences, Bakhle ultimately recognises that:

The similarity between the two men of music in the end is a negative one. Neither of their visions could structurally accommodate minorities, aside from those who were willing to assimilate (the Parsis or the Hinduized Muslims) or behave merely as docile bodies of difference (women). Yet both genuinely believed that their programs were inclusive and nationalist in the best and most enlightened ways. Perhaps this places the liberal secular and the religious conservative understanding of music on equal footing. My point here, however, has been to show that any easy condemnation of the first must be rendered far more complicated in light of the latter, as both are equally implicated in the contradictions of colonial modernity. While this recognition precludes the comfortable celebration of either, it is important to recognize that, at least in the sphere of music, Paluskar was far more successful, and influential, than Bhatkhande. And therein lies the rub.<sup>62</sup>

This echoes Weber's understanding of Hawkins' success over Burney in anticipating the nature of evangelical Christianity in the nineteenth century. Bakhle constructs Bhatkhande and Paluskar in terms of a dichotomy between the secular and the religious in a similar way to Hawkins and Burney though not in the crude manner that Dipesh Chakrabarty (rightly) problematises of Indian history writing as mimicry of Europe's past.<sup>63</sup> Bakhle's historicism does not only signify a repetition, it also alerts us to a requirement of such a move, that is to make the space of Europe stable.<sup>64</sup> To paraphrase Spivak from the previous chapter, it is not possible for Bhatkhande to provide alterity when his epistemological framework is already contained within the bounds of imperialism. Similarly, debates over the meaning of authority and aesthetics in the eighteenth century were received into India through various commentators and writers and became the trope of colonial musical modernity; in this case 'nation, notation and religion' also played a role in the formation of Classical music, though differentially inflected. It is the colony that affords stability to the histories that are being created by Hawkins and Burney in the context of turmoil and change in London.

It is in addressing the question of religion that music offers an alternative space, or an alternative secularism in Bakhle's terms. This is not represented by Bhatkhande and Paluskar, but by the minor player (though not the native informant) in the book, Abdul Karim Khan, who along with his daughter, Hirabai, carried the burden of the 'ideal' of secularism.<sup>65</sup> But in so doing, Bakhle ends up narrating a history that, by necessity, repeats the charge of historicism in terms of the imagination of a political modernity that is possible for postcolonial India.<sup>66</sup> It is only by excluding the religious (as in Paluskar) that musical modernity as a corollary to Indian modernity is possible. The failed project of Bhatkhande's Classical music is to be regretted in the face of Paluskar's Clessicul. It is this formulation in which religion, created by the same forces of colonial modernity that shape the Clessicul, somehow retains a stability that can be rejected in the hope of a secular modernity, represented ultimately by Hirabai. Ironically, between the two men it is Bhatkhande, the secularist, who is most impacted by the Hegelian epistemograph, as he is looking for a music for the nation, a modern rational form that will give India its place in history. Removing religion from the equation is similar to removing Muslim musicians (or musicians all together) as they are a hindrance to the proper construction of the Clessicul. Mandair puts this quite succinctly in terms of religion: 'For in reforming Hinduism, the Brahmo Samaj and other reformist groups were not simply returning to and

thus reclaiming a lost origin . . . but, ironically in reclaiming the notion of the One taught by Vedanta, the reformists were approximating toward Christian doctrines of unity. Hence the only possible end for Hindus was to become *like* Christians – but of course never the same!<sup>67</sup> It is this type of reformist agenda that motivates Bhatkhande's research, whereby Indian music can only become Clessicul in mimesis and in that sense his 'failure' was premised on the theoretical impossibility of what he was setting out to do. The resistance and antipathy of musicians to Bhatkhande also reflects an epistemological battle that was never as intense with Paluskar, again partly accounting for his relative success. Musicians were more able to deal with Paluskar's religiosity than Bhatkhande's secularism, because at least in that framework they retained their status as performers. Though Hirabai in becoming a middle-class Hindu woman is able to enter the domain of the modern state, this does not offer an alternative model of secularism but rather indicates the expulsion of her own Muslim hereditary musician background. This erasure of the heteroreligious musician is metonymic for the emergent Indian nation, and in Punjab, partition results in their literal removal from the land.

## Punjab syncopation

The story of the emergence of a classicised music has found histories in South, West and recently East India.<sup>68</sup> Each of these important scholarly contributions has produced a narrative that links colonial modernity with postcolonial India in the formation, framing and ultimately production and consumption of what when conjoined with religion is termed Clessicul music. It would be appropriate for the same kind of account to be produced about Punjab, given the centrality of Delhi and Lahore in Mughal court culture and subsequently in colonial India. But the presence of Lahore complicates the story; Bakhle's study relies and implies the formation of a singular India (nation-state), which is therefore overtly influenced by Paluskar rather than Bhatkhande.<sup>69</sup> In relation to Punjab, two nation-states emerged out of the region and during the colonial period; while religious identities were increasingly polarising and often framing violence, music at places like the *Harimandir* in Amritsar or at Bulleh Shah's shrine in Kasur continued to play on with Muslim musicians performing alongside, and indeed, for Sikhs and Hindus (as they were all by this time identified). Indeed, the fact that two nation-states emerged out of Punjab demands a different kind

of musical history, one that cannot so simply ignore religion or relegate it to the failed project of postcolonial secular modernity.<sup>70</sup>

There is only scant research on precolonial musical cultures in Punjab, but what is certain is that while musical encounters with the British in the long eighteenth century was taking place, in Punjab in the same period there were multiple independent courts and at the apex, that of Ranjit Singh (1780–1839). This is not to argue for an isolated precolonial space of Punjab, but certainly the Lahore court is a source of patronage of musicians in North India outside of the purview of British rule.<sup>71</sup> Ranjit Singh himself is famed for his fondness of dancing girls and of associated music and in his contemplative moments listened to the flute playing of Attar Khan.<sup>72</sup> Other musicians at the court are cited by Balbir Singh Kanwal in the book *Punjab de Parsedh Ragi te Rababi*: ‘The great names of *shastri sangeet* in Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s court included: Mian Irshad Ali (grandfather of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan), another singer from Kasur, Imam Baksh, other great *kirtan* singers: Bhai Ameer Baksh, Bhai Ghulab, Bhai Bhaag, Mansha Singh Ragi and Bhai Attra (who was out of Bhai Satta Balwand’s family).<sup>73</sup> His court is also linked into the wider circuit traversed by musicians of repute, as Bahram Khan, a noted performer of the Dagarbani *dhrupad* tradition, was employed by the Lahore court in 1801 before he took up employment in Alwar, Jaipur, and ultimately at the Mughal emperor’s court in Delhi.<sup>74</sup> He was reputed to have been generously honoured by Ranjit Singh, and the only visual image of him with white turban and shawl was said to be from this period.<sup>75</sup> The patronage of the Lahore court is clearly central to understanding the musical culture of precolonial Punjab; nonetheless, the *gharanas* that developed in the nineteenth century come out of smaller courts or even rural areas. This in some sense further confirms the formation of *gharanas* as a feature of colonial rather than precolonial conditions.<sup>76</sup> The stories offered by musicians in Punjab seem to have little to do with Lahore and more with smaller principalities and even villages.<sup>77</sup> For example, the courts of Patiala and Kapurthala, which though ruled by Sikh Rajas, were in alliance with the British from 1806 and 1809, respectively, and featured prominently in the Punjabi musical oral narrative. Furthermore, the Talwandi *gharana* of *dhrupad* that Hafeez Khan promoted as a separate Punjabi lineage is geographically related to a small village rather than a fort with a court. Similarly, another Classical music *gharana* of Punjab – Sham Chaurasi – relates again to a rural area in contemporary Hoshiarpur district. Partly this is indicative of the mobile nature of musicians, moving from court



to court but also of the other sources of patronage for music in Punjab, most significantly *gurdwaras* and shrines. Indeed, it is these sites that have attracted the most scholarship as the next two chapters will demonstrate.

Ranjit Singh's death brings a period of disorder, in which British influence slowly exerts itself in the region, culminating in the annexation of Punjab into the East India Company in 1847.<sup>78</sup> Indology in the region, in its religious frame, is led by German scholars, infamously Max Arthur Macauliffe and Ernest Trumpp, armed with the tools of history and committed to a Euro-Christian standpoint but in the guise of a secular historicism. During Ranjit Singh's kingdom, the Company was kept at bay despite sending spies, emissaries and missionaries into Punjab.<sup>79</sup> In these accounts, the large territorial empire becomes the 'Sikh' kingdom.<sup>80</sup> It is, therefore, Sikhs who became subject to scrutiny, and the first division of the Punjabi society into distinct religious groups took theoretical shape. As Mandair succinctly states, 'This is a standpoint in which theology (the standpoint of divinity) and anthropology (the standpoint of historicism) coincide in translating other culture according to an onto-theo-logical – i.e. metaphysical – mode of thinking.'<sup>81</sup> This moment is one in which the domain of the heteroreligious and heterolingual is disaggregated, so that discrete entities can be ranked and ordered. Even where scholars such as Max Muller produced accounts of Hinduism that emphasise the notion of universal religion and brotherhood, the historicist underpinnings and the evolutionary tendency rendered Indian religion as an example from the historical record (ossified and preserved) and German/British Christianity its culmination.<sup>82</sup> For Oriental religions to be recognised, they have to engage in a reform that is essentially mimesis. The expulsion of the Muslim *ustad* from music making, which Paluskar was intimately linking to Hindu revivalism, becomes an essential cleansing ritual. The Ur-texts of the Mahabharata and the Ramayana became the foundation for a Hindu nationalism as books like the *Ad Granth* does for Sikhs.<sup>83</sup> However, for these to become holy texts, their aural and performative transmission has to be standardised and follow the formulation of a singular identity. Thus, those musicians who were defined as Muslims had to be erased or at least incorporated. In that way, as religious traditions purified themselves of their performative heritage, the interpretation of the text so central to its performance became sidelined in favour of its fixity as written word.

It is the emergent civil society in mid-nineteenth-century Punjab that is at the forefront of a religious reform that overlaps with the emergence of Clessicul music in multiple ways. Groups such as the Arya Samaj, the Singh Sabha and



the Anjuman-i-Islamiya begin to mobilise around issues of moral and social education.<sup>84</sup> Paluskar, perhaps sensing a positive climate for his own religious outlook, sets up his first music school in Lahore, the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, a name chosen by Pandit Din Dayal Sharma, leader of the Sanatan Dharma Sabha (1890), a group that arose in response to the activities of the Arya Samaj (1878). Indeed, Din Dayal Sharma was the first featured speaker at the opening ceremony of the school. Some of his remarks, as reported in a contemporary newspaper, are as follows: 'The learned and eloquent Pundit referred to the deplorable decline in the "divine art" in this Province [Punjab], and observed how it was now solely practiced by low caste people to the great detriment to the cause of pure music. The Pundit also pointed to the elevating and spiritualizing effect of good music. He hoped that Hindu and Mussulmans would help unitedly in the work taken up by Professor Vishnu Digambar' (*Tribune*, 5 July, 1901).<sup>85</sup> It is worth noting how the exclusionary principle from the school was not religion, but 'low castes' that was a guise for referring to hereditary musicians who were by this time ostensibly affiliating with Islam. In reality there were few Muslim students in the school, and in fact the majority were Maharashtrian and Bengali Hindus settled in the city.<sup>86</sup> The intimate connection with revivalist associations and Paluskar's musical school is due to the shared similar ideal of classicisation, and this was a result of the way in which native elites were responding to colonial modernity, as Mandair succinctly indicates:

It seems clear that one cannot simply speak of self/other polarizations such as indigenous/colonized versus foreign/colonizer. Rather, one must speak, on the one hand, of the self's relationship to the self, or how traditionalist and reformists each negotiated between themselves as to what constituted the indigenous, authentic, or self: and on the other of the self's relationship to the other, or how traditionalists and reformists each negotiated what constitutes the alien/other.<sup>87</sup>

The crucial insight is, of course, that even without the actual presence of the coloniser the debate of 'self's relationship to self' continues, and this is well illustrated in postcolonial Punjab. But what unifies the traditionalists and reformists and indeed collapses them in my account is their opposition to popular religious practice. It is the 'low caste' performers who are most adept at performing for any of the religious traditions or for those who have none at all, and it is their exclusion that is necessary for Hindu and Sikh musical identity to form. Just as Paluskar (traditionalist) and Bhatkhande (reformist) have different positions in relationship to each other, they agree on the exclusion of the heteroreligious musician.

## Performing exclusion

It is the conjoining of religious reform with the formation of Clessicul music in terms of an ontotheological framework that is well illustrated by Paluskar's activities. Another example of this process, and one that overlaps with Paluskar's presence in Punjab, is the Harivallabh *Sangeet Samellan*, which is a winter festival of Clessicul music held in Jalandhar, East Punjab. The festival's origins are associated with the celebration of the death of Swami Harivallabh, who was known as a proponent of *dhrupad*, neatly coinciding with Hindu revivalism's interest in the form in other parts of India from the mid nineteenth century.<sup>88</sup> In 1876–77 upon Harivallabh's death, his inheritor, Tolo Ram, took upon himself to instigate the annual gathering. The site itself is also steeped in the heteroreligious landscape of Punjab and it originally encompassed a Sufi shrine and a water tank, which was revered as a sacred *sakti-peeth*, called the Devi Talab. The hagiography of the site maintains that it was 'reclaimed' during Ranjit Singh's era from the Sufis and taken over by Swami Himgiri, guru of Swami Harivallabh.<sup>89</sup> It is not clear whether the musical gathering that began in 1875 upon the death of Harivallabh was merely a continuation of the urs celebrations of the Sufi saint, but given that the first set of musicians to perform were mostly Muslims, the process of Hinduisation of the shrine is a microcosm of the shifting trends in music from the first gathering in 1875 right through to the loss of Muslim musicians some 70 years later in 1947. Up to the 1920s, the death anniversary was a *mela*, in the same format that constitutes a central aspect of shrine culture in Punjab (regardless of religious affiliation), with *Mahant* Tolo Ram organising the event and the local people contributing funds. In the emerging public sphere of 1920s' Punjab, on the death of the *Mahant*, a committee of the 'good and great' took control of the festival and so began a process of aligning and orienting the event towards the Clessicul, as it was being fashioned in the shape of the Indian nation. Part of this process was the removal of the multiple, locally sponsored musical and demotic elements, which incidentally also meant exclusion of Muslim musicians to a focus on non-Punjabi, pan-Indian performers. It was in this climate that Paluskar discovered and patronised the festival. By the time of the partition of Punjab, the festival was well on the way to representing a pristine place for the new nation in the high arts. In the 1950s it was declared a national festival by the Indian Department of Tourism. Radha Kapuria, in an insightful and detailed historical analysis of the Harivallabh musical event, demonstrates how in postliberalisation 1990s' India two trends of politicisation and Hinduisation have marked the festival. State funding of the event is accompanied by the

presence of politicians who often disrupt the three-day proceedings in terms of their requirements in relation to those of the musicians. A recent trend noted by Kapuria has been the way in which the opening of the event is marked by the singing of *bhajans* and the Saraswati Vandana *only* by groups of college-going young women – the aspirant future hope of the heteronormative nation.

Another example, but this time of an Islamisation process, can be found at the shrine of Golra Sharif. The piety of the site is framed during the rule of Ranjit Singh through a confrontation between the local Sikh *jagirdar* and the pious Syed family who were relatives of the founder of the shrine, *Pir* Mehar Ali Shah.<sup>90</sup> The importance of the site and shrine is amplified through the creation of a railway station in Golra in 1882 and the British colonial patronage of *Pir* Mehar Ali Shah through the endowment of land grants. His subsequent successors Babuji and Lallaji indicated continuity with precolonial naming of spiritual figures, in that their names did not indicate religious identity, but this did not belie their activities in the emergent Muslim public sphere.<sup>91</sup> From Mehar Ali's time, this line of *pirs* has been famous for poetry and patronising of *qawwali*, as well as being vehemently opposed to the followers of Mirza Ghulam Mohammed, another nineteenth-century reformist.<sup>92</sup> Opposition to the group currently known as Ahmaddiyas is, in its hard-lined version, more often associated with reformists who are equally opposed to music and other such activities.<sup>93</sup> The shrine's popularity in postcolonial Pakistan has seen a gradual process of Islamisation, with its present head *Pir* Syed Ghulam Qutb-ul-Haq Gilani, who though not a poet still maintains the daily musical performances. Perhaps, more significantly, its popularity as a shrine also grew in Pakistan due first to its location close to the cantonment town of Rawalpindi and then with the creation of the new capital Islamabad (1965) – its proximity to the seat of political power enhanced its fortunes.

In both the cases of Harivallabh and Golra, it is the precolonial era of Ranjit Singh's kingdom that is cited as the point at which there is a decision against Muslims in favour of local Sikhs or Hindus and vice versa. These hagiographies pick up directly on the colonial literature in which Ranjit Singh is seen to favour Sikhs and Hindus over Muslims,<sup>94</sup> even though much of his rule (like the Mughals before him) is contingent and politically expedient, rather than based on issues of religious identity. This writing of singular/monolithic religious identity into the heteroreligious and heterolingual past is, of course, at the heart of the argument about colonial repetition. In which case, the ability of the colonial subject to exist in history is possible only through mimesis. This is, however, only part of the story; *kirtan* and *qawwali* were subject to precisely

these kinds of processes and provide exemplary cases of the continuation of colonial modernity; nevertheless, at the margins of the interviews with musicians there are indications of a counternarrative, which belies a totalising discourse. Just as Babuji and Lallaji can be maintained as names for spiritual figures through partition and into postcolonial Pakistan, musical cultures also retain notes of a precommunal era. This is not to argue for multiplicity in encounter, as the dominant discourse of colonial repetition is still sustained, but rather to indicate how modes of transmission of musical knowledge leave traces of the heterolingual and heteroreligious domain, despite the postcolonial demand for a singular religious identity. These remnants speckle the next two chapters on *kirtan* and *qawwali* and become audible in Chapter 6, which surveys *dharmic geet*.

## Cadence

Tonal music is ossified and dead, long live the modernists, God is long dead, his aura is now to be found in the mass production of art.<sup>95</sup> Leaving the story of Classical music in the mid- nineteenth century before the advent of the British Raj and indeed only a few years into the colonisation of Punjab may draw a valid criticism that those trends of atonal music and commercialism that frame European discourses in the twentieth century should be equally considered. But that would be the case if the purpose of these interactions was to provide a neat historical narrative, rather than outline the epistemological basis from which to understand the relationships that emerge between the sacred and the secular in Punjab's religiomusical landscape in the nineteenth century. In forefronting religious antiquity as one of the key features of Indian society and musical practices as fallen from the 'Hindu golden age', native elites mimic their colonial master's classicisation process. As colonialism encompasses Punjab, the initial administration of the province is drawn from all over North India, and Lahore, by the 1880s, is home to a myriad of societies that are promoting particular religious identities and subsequently engaged in social and cultural reform. Increasingly hostile intergroup reactions in the political arena in the first half of the twentieth century signify a colonial repetition that ultimately results in partition of the region along the lines of religious identity.

It is only with the formation of the nation-state that the unfinished business of conjoining religion with the Clessicul finds fresh impetus serving definite

national projects. The postcolonial states of India and Pakistan ultimately realise these projects of music modernisation through state institutions (education and broadcast) in the former and neglect in the latter. Nonetheless, the 'nation' that Paluskar and Bhatkhande both (differentially) imagined did not emerge in the postcolonial states of India, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Myanmar. Rather, it remains a project that is still being struggled over particularly in postcolonial India. After independence, the main centres for the promotion, circulation and promulgation of the Clessicul remained in India notwithstanding the presence of exalted musicians in Lahore and Karachi. College courses, All India Radio, state patronage of the arts (at the local and national levels) and corporate sponsorship collaborated with a vibrant international market sustaining what is marketed as 'Indian classical' or Art music. This is not the case in Pakistan, where the state has no formal provision of support for musicians, where the Punjab University offers a degree in music, but students are not allowed to practice on campus due to the fear of reprisal from the Jamiaat (a well-organised Islamist student group), and the idea of Pakistani Classical music has little purchase on the world music scene.<sup>96</sup> In both nation-states, religious music is confined to shrines and does not receive formal state patronage.<sup>97</sup> Neither Paluskar's Hindu nor Bhatkhande's secular nation mirrors the patterns of reproduction, promulgation and circulation of contemporary Clessicul music. Rather, it is in the religious institutions that come to manage music in shrines that their vision still has persistence. In East Punjab, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee can usefully be viewed as a patron of music, and this is clearly illustrated by the huge influence it has over the way in which *kirtan* has been produced and received since the inception of the organisation in the 1920s. At key stages it has intervened to promote or erase certain aspects of the heterogeneous form that is sacred music in Sikh performance sites. Similarly, in West Punjab, the department of religions formed in the 1950s is called the Auqaf board and plays the role of patron for *qawwals*, organising Thursday evening performances at shrines under their control, making payments and managing the larger annual *urs*/fairs in which multiple groups perform. The SGPC and Auqaf play an ideological role in framing *kirtan* and *qawwali* as religious in line with their broader remit and indicate the continuities across the border.

Historicism displaces religion in postcolonial secular critique, which is largely the problematic with the new historiography of Clessicul music.<sup>98</sup> In this line of thinking, the failure of the secular project, in essence a transition to European modernity, is represented in the religiosity associated with music.<sup>99</sup> Reading religion into the framing of the emergence of Classical/Clessicul music,

ultimately, makes this a critique of a certain kind of historiography, rather than a collapsing of the distinction between the sacred and the secular. In the next two chapters, the musical practices of *kirtan* and *qawwali* undergo transformations that are exemplary of the modernising of music along the lines of religious boundaries. Sikh reformists in particular are at the forefront of creating a new class of musicians utilising a range of modern institutions, illustrating the work of the epistemograph. Musician's biographies, on the other hand, hint at and show traces of the heteroreligious, that which is slowly being eroded through the twentieth century, thereby demonstrating the limits of the power of colonial modernity. Indeed, it is this retention of a precolonial memory in the aural and oral traditions that prevents foreclosure and irrupts in lyrics and music, as the opening to the next chapter will demonstrate.





## Crafting *Kirtan*

In the spring of 2008, the Human Rights Commission of Pakistan hosted the Vaisakh Festival in its Lahore auditorium in Gulberg. Ostensibly, the aim of the event was to revive the secular tradition of harvest festivities, which had all but disappeared in Islamic Pakistan. The theatre was full, and after the usual dose of speeches a few poets performed. Next on stage was a musical performance, with a small, grey-haired, bearded man sitting centre stage accompanied by the *tabla*, violin and *sarangi*.<sup>1</sup> As the instruments warmed up, there was no suggestion of what was to follow, other than perhaps recital of a *ghazal* or a *khayal*. Instead, in a melodious voice, Bhai Ghulam Mohammad Chand recited the opening lines of the *Mool Mantar*, which has been called the root or key to the entire Sikh scriptures – the *Ad Granth*<sup>2</sup> – and makes up the opening 12 lines of the book. In singing this text, Bhai Chand added the epithet *Allah* after each line:

*Ik Onkar – Allah*

*Sat Nam – Allah*

*Akal Purakh – Allah*<sup>3</sup>

He then proceeded to give an exegesis (*pharmaan*) of why it was appropriate to add Allah to the end of each line, as each was a different name of God. In post-General Zia Pakistan, this was probably the most appropriate – indeed safest – way to sing what were the words of Nanak, claimed to be the founder of the Sikh faith. Following this beginning, the *shabad* (poetic hymn) that followed was *Aval Allah noor upaya, Kudrat ke sab bande* by Kabir, a fifteenth-century figure of liminal status in fixed religious classificatory regimes, whose poems are manifestly present in the *Ad Granth*. This public recital by Bhai Chand was one of the few in Pakistan since his family arrived there from Amritsar in 1947. Indeed, it was only in the late 1990s, 50 years after the last



performance his family gave at the Golden Temple in Amritsar, that he began singing *kirtan* from the *Ad Granth* again.<sup>4</sup> Bhai Chand's family comes from a line of singers who have since the time of Guru Nanak been associated with singing the poetry of Sikh gurus. It was at partition in 1947 that the hundred or so families of these ostensibly Muslim musicians, known collectively as *rababis* who performed at Sikh shrines, lost a source of patronage and use for generations of accumulated musical knowledge. However, Bhai Chand demonstrates the power of oral memory even though he is probably the last of his generation in Pakistan.

The lineage of the *rababis* haunts much of the contemporary discourse on *kirtan* revival, for it is these musicians who are repositories of the lost 'tradition' that provided the material for contemporary Sikh performers of *kirtan* who eventually take up the absences of 1947. In his first visit to India in 2004, Bhai Chand was not allowed to perform at the *Harimandir* (Golden Temple) in Amritsar. The rationale for this decision by the Sikh Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (the organisation that manages historic Sikh shrines in East Punjab) was that the *Sikh Rehat Maryada*, the code of conduct established in 1931 and finalised in 1950, explicitly stated that only a Sikh can perform *kirtan* in a congregation. This did not stop Bhai Ghulam's uncle and namesake, Bhai Chand, playing there until 1947. The closure around an authentic assertion of Sikhism depends on a sacralising of textual authority and boundary marking of performers, most acutely felt at the *Harimandir* site. What is more remarkable is that history and extant tradition were not available to provide unconditional support for the exclusion of the *rababis*. Rather, colonial repetition working through the power of the reformist agenda and the requirement to create a bounded Sikh identity, for political representation, was the main motivation. *Kirtan*, perhaps an unlikely site for this contestation, has nonetheless become embroiled in wider debates about Sikh identity and community.<sup>5</sup>

The first section of this chapter describes how *kirtan* becomes Sikh through the exclusion of the *rababis* from first playing at *gurdwaras* and ultimately by their departure to Pakistan. A series of events in late colonial Punjab, such as the formation of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabhandak Committee (SGPC) that institutes the collective, formal management of most central Sikh shrines, as well as the diversity in sources of potential income for musicians, coalesces in a reformist discourse. This essentially refines and defines the space of music making from a heteroreligious one to a demarcation of Sikhism. Musicians in this situation demonstrate the outcome of colonial repetition as they are forced to

choose a religious identity, as well as the limits to this discourse, as reverberations of the heteroreligious remain to perturb the postcolonial *kirtan* revival. The second aspect of reformist thinking is to bring the *Ad Granth* into the purview of a religion of the 'book'. This entails a diminishment of the performative aspects of it reading to an emphasis on its textual status. Indeed, this is one of the requirements for Sikhism to be taken seriously as one of the family of world religions.<sup>6</sup> This reformist agenda's attitude towards music is negligent rather than purifying. It is after the crises of 1984 that the postcolonial revivalists approach *kirtan* from the perspective of conjoining it with the discourse on Clessicul music outlined in the previous chapter. This revival takes two forms, though comes out of the same group of intellectual and musical practitioners. The first works within the structures of the SGPC and attempts to shift performance practice to be aligned more closely with the prescriptions for *raag* given in the *Ad Granth*. The second, a philosophical approach, brings together ideas of the Clessicul with the affective mode of spiritual experience. This is much closer to the ideas pronounced by Paluskar, almost articulating a Sikh theomusicology and is most associated with Bhai Baldeep Singh. In this perspective, colonial repetition codifies caste into an elitist (re)formation of sacred Sikh music. Of course, these are too neat as formulations and the lived world of *kirtan* contains multiplicities and diversity that transcend the boundaries of this design, as a brief musical survey and musician biographies will reveal. Those who actually perform the majority of *kirtan* do not engage in the prescribed *raag* or even Clessicul formats. A cursory survey of *kirtan* music available on the internet provides quite a different picture from that developed by the revivalists. The rationale for this disconnect between practitioners and revivalists is developed in the last two sections of the chapter. First, the issue of modern music education is briefly considered, and second, the more significant role for patrons summarises and highlights the relative lack of agency that musicians have.

### *Kirtan* contestations

The term *kirtan* is accorded to a whole range of music that is associated with devotion in North India. Anna Schultz delineates the term thus: 'The varieties of *kirtan* include music and are grounded in the bhakti movement, a diverse set of devotional traditions promoting religious knowledge and experience in vernacular languages and expressive forms.'<sup>7</sup> Out of this diversity and multiplicity, Sikh reformers in the 1920s defined a particular form of *kirtan*

with specific rules and regulations. These were codified in the 1931 – *Sikh Rehat Maryada* – where the regulations for *kirtan* are given as:

- a. In the *Sangat* (congregation), *Kirtan* can only be done by a Sikh.
- b. *Kirtan* means singing *Gurbani* in traditional raga measures.
- c. In the *sangat*, *Kirtan* only of *Gurbani* [Guru Granth's or Guru Gobind Singh's hymns] and, for its elaboration, of the compositions of Bhai Gurdas and Bhai Nand Lal may be performed.
- d. It is improper, while singing hymns to rhythmic folk tunes or to traditional raga measures, or in team singing, to induct into them improvised and extraneous refrains. Only a line from *shabad* should be made a refrain.<sup>8</sup>

This set of regulations is targeted to distinguish Sikh *kirtan* from the much broader bhakti musical forms that usually come under the term. This formalisation found its institutional manifestation in the *gurdwaras* that came under SGPC control in the 1920s.<sup>9</sup> The emerging public sphere of urban, educated Sikhs found its voice in publications and pamphlets, most notable of which was Bhai Vir Singh's *Khalsa Samachar*.<sup>10</sup> It is in this atmosphere that a series of stories inserted Sikhs, more specifically Gursikhs – those who were ordained according to the developing code of conduct<sup>11</sup> – into the historiography of *kirtan*:

Bhai Satta and Balwand, . . . had been the main performers of *kirtan* in Guru Arjan's *darbar* [1563–1660]. They are said to have demanded more remuneration for their talent, skill and popular demand. Guru Arjan is said to have decided that they would not sing in the Guru's *darbar* and should have their payment settled before departing. Subsequent to this, it is said that Guru Arjan directed the *sangat* [congregation] to learn *kirtan* themselves in order to no longer to be reliant on the *rababis*.<sup>12</sup>

This popular story does not give a bearing as to who in the congregation should take up this call, but the implication is that it was open to anyone. By the twentieth century, there is active and often hostile competition between *rababis* and *ragis* (those who sing in *raag*, but generically referring to Sikh performers). Even after the partition of Punjab and the formal implementation of *Rehat Maryada*, barring non-Sikhs from performing at the *Harimandir*, the musical competition continued. In 1989, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Qawwal and Party performed *kirtan* at the Ramgharia Sikh Temple in Slough, near London. After their concert, *ragi* brothers, Dilbagh and Gulbagh Singh, took the stage and, according to journalist and cultural commentator Balbir Kanwal, astounded

the crowd with dazzling renditions of *kirtan*, inspired by the style of the Patiala *gharana*.<sup>13</sup>

This competition was sharpened in the cauldron of late colonial Punjab where religious identities were becoming increasingly polarised. At the *Harimandir* there were no formally mixed groups of performers; *rababis* performed with their own kinsman and Gursikhs did the same. As noted in various hagiographical accounts and also in an interview with Bhai Ghulam Chand, after the SGPC takeover of *gurdwaras* there was pressure on the *rababis* to either take on the Sikh identity or to not perform. Bhai Chand, the last of the renowned *rababis*, was forced to sign a resignation statement, which barred him from playing at the *Harimandir*.<sup>14</sup> This was part of a general process of vilification in which *rababis* were ultimately seen as paid musicians rather than committed to the teachings of the gurus whose words they sang. This attitude of 'at the end of the day they are Muslims'<sup>15</sup> comes strongly through the oral tradition. An interview with Gyani Dyal Singh, a *ragi* of the period who moved to Delhi after partition, is illustrative and disturbing: 'Bhai Lal, the cream of the crop of the *rababis* of his day, after singing *Gurbani*, would quietly rinse his mouth to cleanse it, having sung the unclean verses of the infidels.'<sup>16</sup> The veracity of this claim is not as important as the fact it was made by someone who was an active archivist of *rababi* compositions. Rather it is indicative of the sealing and closing of religious boundaries throughout the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup>

In a reading of the declining relationship of Gursikhs and *rababis* in the field of *kirtan*, Jagir Singh counters the arguments of religious difference by offering an approach that considers the changing political economy of late colonial Punjab.<sup>18</sup> The stories of *rababis* only seeing *kirtan* as employment rather than a service, and of having no attachment to the sacred text, emerged in the context of the changing market for Sikh *kirtan* in the early twentieth century.<sup>19</sup> As the Singh Sabha was formalising rituals around the *Ad Granth*, there was a new demand for *kirtan jathas* (groups) at births, deaths and wedding parties. It was the competition in this new market place that led to the emergence of a discourse of commercialisation outside of the older feudal relations that characterised musician/patron clients in precolonial India.<sup>20</sup> To capture more of this new lucrative market, *rababis* were presented as 'only' interested in music, not in the Sikh religion, and even this musical interest was primarily for economic gain. This is undoubtedly a Sikh-centric view as there were plenty of patrons for *rababis* as they were being excluded from SGPC-controlled *gurdwaras*. Bhai Chand himself worked for a *sant* (spiritual figure) up until partition, and there were many other Udasi shrines and other patrons

who appreciated the sung words of the gurus. While Jagir Singh's intention is correct, it relies on representing the *rababis* as representative of a pristine past in which the guru's musicians were extensions of the message rather than active agents. In reality, *rababis* in undivided Punjab did perform the role of generic musicians. Alongside playing at the *Harimandir*, they would perform at the Durgiana Mandir in Amritsar as well as on radio and in the newly forming film industry.<sup>21</sup> The musical world of Amritsar was one in which the boundaries of the *Harimandir* were porous. Those performing at the Udaisi shrines, which were in the vicinity of the *Harimandir*, and those coming from other centres of performance were all part of an engagement in which a critical community of musicians attempted to excel in a particular genre. *Rababis'* ostensibly Shia affiliations and possible participation in musical events at Sufi shrines are not mentioned by most commentators.<sup>22</sup> The emerging film industry, music conferences and the colonial state opened up a range of new opportunities for hereditary musicians. The *rababis* went into the multiple arenas that colonial modernity opened up, not least into the recording of long play records (LP or *thavve*).<sup>23</sup> But even here, the first recording of *kirtan* on an LP, simply titled 'Amritsar *Rababis*', consisted of the (unnamed) performers of what was known as the Guru Ram Das *Jatha* (group), probably consisting of Bhai Taaba, Desa, Mullo, Gama, Jhandu, Fakir and Nasira.<sup>24</sup> It is only a few decades later that the *rababis* were permanently excluded from playing at the *Harimandir*.

The formation of the nation-states of India and Pakistan left Bengal, Kashmir and Punjab truncated. In Punjab, the shift of populations was accompanied by violence and a legacy that left a bitterness reflected in the accounts already mentioned. The immediate impact was the loss of *rababi* families from the many *gurdwaras* in villages throughout East Punjab, the loss of a congregation at the birth place of Guru Nanak (Nanakana Sahib) and the multitude of other places associated with the Sikhs in West Punjab.<sup>25</sup> To some extent the story of the *rababis* who settled in Pakistan will be taken up in the next two chapters. For some, the climate of the 1930s and 1940s meant that they adopted a Gursikh identity and continued to perform.<sup>26</sup> Others remained and entered into the world of popular music, leaving the formal religious institutions. It would be a misnomer to represent the border between India and Pakistan as immediately permanent after 1947, at least in terms of people's ability to traverse it. It was only after the 1965 war between India and Pakistan over Kashmir that restriction on peoples' movement took on a more hardened form. In the early 1950s, Bhai Tabba would regularly come to Amritsar from Lahore to meet with his students and to perform. He was also an essential informant for the first book of notated

*rababi* compositions that was undertaken by Gian Singh Abbotabad and then taken up by Gyani Dyal Singh of the Delhi-based Rakab Ganj, *Kirtan Vidyalyay*. Abbotabad's work was published in 1961 under the title *Gurbani Sangeet* and utilised Bhatkande's notation system. Gyani Dyal Singh himself published four volumes of notated compositions.<sup>27</sup> Bhai Tabba would go from Lahore to Delhi for extended visits until he died in 1963. His death was timely, given that the 1965 war between India and Pakistan initiated the first phase of hardening the border. The memory of the *rababis* closely informs debates and dialogues about *kirtan* among musicians and general thespians. Indeed *rababis* haunt the musical legacy that revivalists have engaged in since the events of 1984, their presence refuting the bounded authenticity so central to identity fixing. Another aspect of this revival, enabled by the absencing of *rababis*, was an understanding of the scripture of the Sikhs as a fixed text, abstracted from its aural and performed tradition.

### Textual hegemony

In a strident critique of the state of academic scholarship on Punjab in postcolonial Indian universities, Surinder Singh and Ishwar Gaur describe it as 'Sikh-centric', the result of which is a 'dispensation [that] refuses to conceive Punjab as a region which experienced a specific socio-cultural evolution. It views the eighteenth century as a Sikh-Muslim (religious) conflict'.<sup>28</sup> A student of medieval Punjab in these circumstances would have little to no knowledge of the role of Sufis in the making of the social and cultural order. This follows the logic of colonial conflation of religion with language and culture, the formula being Urdu-Muslim-Pakistan, Hindi-Hindu-India and Punjabi-Sikh-Punjab. A pertinent example of this is provided by an account of the contents of the *Ad Granth* given by G. S. Maan in the short book *The Making of Sikh Scripture*:

The *Adi Granth* consists of approximately 3,000 hymns of *carefully recorded authorship* [my emphasis]. Over 2,400 of these hymns were written by the six Sikh gurus who lived between 1469 and 1675 in the Punjab. The remaining hymns are attributed to fifteen or so bards associated with the sixteenth-century Sikh court in the Punjab and fifteen non-Sikh saint-poets known in Sikh tradition as the *bhagats* (literally, "devotees"), who lived between the twelfth and the sixteenth centuries in the northern and northwestern regions of the Indian subcontinent.<sup>29</sup>

Perhaps the 'carefully recorded authorship' is not so necessary for the academic author, who only in the footnotes mentions the authors who are not gurus, *bhagats* or Sufis, and are named Mardana, Satta, Balwand and Sundar. They are then described as musicians who 'came from the lower rungs of the social hierarchy but were elevated to a special status when their hymns were incorporated into the Sikh scriptural text'.<sup>30</sup> This elevation of those who were ostensibly *mirasis* (hereditary musicians) but who remained outside of the Sikh fold is contrasted to the compositions of the *bhats* who are deemed to be upper-caste Hindu bards. Though this distinction is not given in any textual or historical source, a large portion of the contemporary Sikh *kirtan* and popular music scene certainly trace an ancestry to the *bhats*, but in terms of genealogy the *bhatras*, as these musicians are also known, are treated the same as *mirasis*. These issues are not of interest for Maan who asserts a textual analysis divorced from performative context. Indeed he is critical of the intimate relations drawn between the poetry of *Ad Granth* and music, arguing that the method by which the text is recited is secondary to the significant of its message. This is an important strand in scholarship on the *Ad Granth*, in which the text takes primacy over its performative aspects.<sup>31</sup> Here the act of understanding or interpretation is rendered transparent rather than being viewed as processual or contingent. This is an acute example of the kind of reformist readings that render Sikhs as people of the book and thus sufficiently globalatinised to be allowed into the family of world religions.<sup>32</sup>

This is an extreme position, given that *kirtan* is such a preeminent part of ritual practice in everyday Sikh living. What is more common is to repeat the exclusion of *rababis*. Thus, where the recital of the *Ad Granth* is concerned, certain scholars find it necessary to only produce ideal accounts in which non-Sikh elements are removed. For example, Pashaura Singh succinctly outlines the performance structures of sacred music at the *Harimandir Sahib* from the time of Guru Arjan and only mentions the presence of *rababis* in a passing footnote. Even though Mardana and Satta-Balwand have *shabads* ascribed to them in the *Ad Granth*, their role in the construction of the performative traditions at the *Harimandir* are

sidelined or ignored. This is all the more remarkable given that *rababis* were performing at the shrine up to the middle of the twentieth century. The development of musical practice at the *Harimandir* reflects an increasing institutionalisation and regularisation rather than any distinct relationship with a single tradition. There is a developing musical tradition from Guru Nanak, when there are two sittings or *chaunkis*, to Guru Arjan, when this has increased



to five, which parallels the textual evolution of the *Ad Granth*. As the body of the text is divided into chapters that follow *raag* headings, there is a logic to various sittings relating to a particular *raag*. The initial format related to a particular *raag* and set of *shabads* at a particular time of day. By the twentieth century the number of sittings had increased to 12, reflecting the increasing importance of the *Harimandir* as a site of Sikh authority and performative culture. Nonetheless, apart from the *Asa Di Var*, which is the morning *chaunki*, the remainder of the *kirtan* sung at the *Harimandir* in the twenty-first century no longer follows any specific *raag* or time setting.<sup>33</sup> Even though, *raags* associated with the months are still sung on the first day of the lunar Punjabi calendar.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there were 12 *chaunkis* at the *Harimandir*, six performed by *Gursikhs* and the rest by the *rababis*. Oral accounts of some of these figures have been recently gathered and, indeed, a renewed interest in the contribution of the *rababis* to Sikh *kirtan* and to the development of music in Pakistan has been documented.<sup>34</sup> Our encounter with this tradition came not so much from these accounts but from a sustained engagement with Bhai Mohammed Ghulam Chand (known as Bhai Gyan) who was the nephew of Bhai Chand, an esteemed figure in twentieth-century *kirtan* and the son of Bhai Sunder, also a performer at the *Harimandir*. Bhai Chand was known for his *pharmaan* style of *kirtan* in which a particular line of a *shabad* or the entire meaning of the *shabad* is explained via the interjection of couplets (*sloks*) from other *shabads*, or from Bhai Gurdas or Nand Lal Goya. This intertextual style of presentation also occurs, as the next chapter will demonstrate, in *qawwali*. After 1947, Ghulam Mohammed found himself performing in *qawwals*, as there was no more work in Pakistan for *rababis*.<sup>35</sup>

Medieval North India is replete with a certain kind of writing: texts that mix languages, idiom and thought, representing the heterolinguistic and heteroreligious ambience out of which they are seeded.<sup>36</sup> These are not chaotic postmodern texts, but rather rooted in various forms of particularity and multifariousness. Literary analysis classifies these texts as Sufi, Bhakti and Sikh and delineates separate linguistic and theological registers, but when these are inevitably performed, as this is the primary means of their circulation, they are not so neatly categorised.<sup>37</sup> In medieval Punjab, for example, Shah Hussain and Guru Nanak share a particular language (and arguably philosophical outlook), set their words to poetry with an indication of the *raag* they are meant to be sung in. But one is compiled into the sacred text of the Sikhs, while the other is retained through the oral tradition.<sup>38</sup> Even then the *Ad Granth* itself is a compilation of the gurus' writing all penned under the name Nanak and including other



poet-saints, not only as ideological support for their message but also as a base for critical commentary. In that sense, the *Ad Granth* does embody the intertextual nature of the performative context, in which skilled musicians could draw from a range of sources to develop and embellish a particular point. Performance ensures that the text remains alive and relevant to the present time, as it is being constantly interpreted through reference to other narratives. The role of bards like the *rababis* would be crucial in maintaining this aspect of the text and it is this freedom that Bhai Ghulam Mohammed Chand has in Lahore when he interjects the word Allah into the *Mool mantar*, which is a pertinent but rare example. In the environment of post-Zia Lahore, the words of Guru Nanak become relevant and enlivened by this interjection, rather than ossified and stuck outside of time (as in the ontotheological rendering by Maan) as representing the religion of Sikhism. In this way the removal of *rababis* and the project of making Sikhism a religion of the book coincide and coalesce. Retuning this cacophony of colonial modernity only occurs after another crisis in the Sikh body politic.

### Revival post-1984

Though partition was a musical severing, it expedited the formation of a Sikh-majority area in the truncated geography of East Punjab. In 1967, a new state of the Indian Union was formed with ostensibly the rationale of serving the needs of the Punjabi-speaking community of the North. It was in this newly formed region, which Sikh claims to a sovereign nation-state, that culminated in a clash with the Indian state, which resulted in the invasion and ransacking of the Golden Temple complex in Amritsar in 1984. In this process many relics and items related to the Gurus were destroyed, including a number of musical instruments. In the aftermath of these events, there was an understanding at multiple and various levels of the need to engage in heritage and preservation. One aspect of this was a reconsideration of the state of *kirtan* and in particular its routine performance at the *Harimandir*. The *kirtan jathas* who had taken over from the *rababi* and who were to a large extent trained within that tradition had adopted (as previous generations) the harmonium to the neglect of stringed instruments and the *tabla* rather than the *jori-pakhawaj*.<sup>39</sup> These innovations, combined with the use of melodies derived from popular film songs (even though often in the same *raag* as may have been prescribed in the *Ad Granth*), were seen as symptoms of a decline in standards. This resonates with the previous

period of reform where the position of *rababis* as musicians was the cause of decline, but here the focus was first on musical quality and second on musicians themselves.

In 1991, a group of academics and musical practitioners gathered at the behest of Sant Sucha Singh at *Jawaddi Taksal* near the industrial city of Ludhiana. The aim of the meeting was to standardise the *raags* as they appeared in the *Ad Granth*. Though no consensus was reached among the members of the Raga Nirnayak Committee (RNC), the outcome was to produce a guide to the *raags*, a series of publications about the history of *kirtan* and an annual celebration of *kirtan* at Jawaadi. One of the key members of the committee and the subsequent chair in *Gurmat Sangeet* at Punjabi University, Professor Gurnam Singh, has been one of the key propagators of the system developed in Ludhiana.<sup>40</sup> Working within the auspices of the committee set up by the SGPC for looking at the development of *Gurmat* (the teachings of the Gurus), the impact of this group was to get an edict passed that *kirtan* at the *Harimandir* would be accompanied by *tanti saaz* or the stringed instruments used at the time of the Gurus. This movement for revivalism has been quite forthrightly linked to the Singh Sabha's effort for reform in the early part of the twentieth century and framed in terms of the encounter with colonial modernity.<sup>41</sup> A theoretically nuanced account of this process is provided by Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa who labels the efforts of Professor Gurnam Singh and others who follow the systems laid out by Bhatkande and Paluskar in terms of 'the need for *Gurmat Sangeet* to be scientifically studied and viewed as an independent tradition reflects a similar discursive ideology espoused by Singh Sabha religious reformists during the Enlightenment episteme'.<sup>42</sup> These critiques are based on an epistemological continuity of the Singh Sabhas into postcolonial Punjab, rather than on any scrutiny of the very small number of texts about *kirtan* itself. Bhai Vir Singh's short writings or Kahn Singh Nabha's many entries in *Mahan Kosh* seem conspicuous by their absence in these assertions.<sup>43</sup> The fact that *rababis* were present in the *Harimandir* up to partition and were otherwise performing *kirtan* in multiple other arenas – for *sants* and non-SGPC-controlled *gurdwaras* – is ignored. Up to partition, the Singh Sabha attention was focused on formulating the text of the *Ad Granth* into a religious book in much the same way as the Hegelian epistemograph would require. Music in this schema needed to be regulated and relegated, rather than authenticated. *Rababis* were fine as long as they became *Gursikhs*; the actual neglect of the musical tradition was as much an aspect of reformist praxis as was the rejection of women's popular spiritual rituals.<sup>44</sup> Whereas those involved in the *Jawaddi Taksal* meeting were actually

interested in reinstating musical excellence to the heart of the Sikh project, a revivalism no doubt, but one in which music had a different role to play to that of the Singh Sabha reformers.<sup>45</sup>

In postpartition Punjab, the SGPC continued behaving like a neglectful patron, letting musicians decide on the course of *kirtan*, while it got on with the job of managing the *gurdwaras* in its control. These institutions served as models and centres of authority, but the SGPC had no direct control of the thousands of other Sikh shrines that existed in Punjab and in which some cases had kept back *rababis* from migrating to Pakistan. It is more useful to see the Singh Sabha reformists and the subsequent SGPC as a minority discourse on Punjab's landscape in which a modern Sikh identity becomes hegemonised through the institutional forms of the state and the postcolonial political successes and failures of the Sikh political party, the Akali Dal. It is the rupture caused by the events of 1984 that are as much a challenge to the hegemony of the SGPC as to the Indian state, which leads to the current revival of Sikh *kirtan*. The meetings in *Jawaddi Taksal* came to the table with a common understanding of a relationship between text and music that worked outside of a crude colonial modernity, though no doubt adopting the tools of the Clessicual mode. The members of the RNC were in very broad agreement that the affective nature of the poetry in the *Ad Granth* works through the *raags* that are given in the text and most meaningfully that it is through music that they are most potent in conveying a message. In this way, the struggle to reinstate a specific form of *kirtan* was against a textual hegemony maintained by the SGPC through its main *kirtan*-learning institution, the Amritsar-based Shaheedi Missionary College. An indication of this marginality can be gleaned from the fact that the *Jawaddi Taksal* meeting took place in 1991, but it was not until 1999 that the SGPC announced that there would be a gradual introduction of traditional stringed instruments at the *Harimandir* and phased withdrawal of the harmonium (which by 2013 had still not occurred). Two trends emerged from the *Jawaddi Taksal* meeting, the first which can be conveniently labelled as the pursuit of Gurmat Sangeet and the other of Gurbani Kirtan. Gurmat Sangeet points to the role of music (*sangeet*) in enhancing the teaching of the Gurus (*gurmat*). This has broadly worked within the existing structure of the SGPC; for example, in 1999, Professor Kartar Singh, a Clessicully trained college teacher and one of the RNC members, was made the Director of the SGPC-funded Gurmat Sangeet Academy based at Anandpur Sahib.<sup>46</sup> This institution had a specific remit to train a new generation of *kirtanis* in stringed instruments, *jori-pakhawaj*, and specified *raags* that were assigned in the *Ad Granth*. By the mid-2000s the *Jathedar* (leader) of the Akal Takht, Avtar

Singh Makkar, had become a firm supporter of the *Gurmat Sangeet* program as it was being institutionalised by Professor Gurnam Singh at Punjabi University. However, this process was not smooth. In 2002, at a conference in Patiala, Gurnam Singh himself was highly critical of both the standard of music being performed at the *Harimandir* and of the SGPC's continued negligence.<sup>47</sup> His solution to this was the establishment of a degree program in *Gurmat Sangeet* at the university and to train students independently.<sup>48</sup>

### *Gurbani Kirtan*

Another strand of revivalism, but one that attempts to distinguish itself from the modernising impulses of the Singh Sabha, posits the tradition of *Gurbani kirtan*.<sup>49</sup> This refers to those forms of *kirtan* that have come through the oral tradition, either transmitted in families or through *sants*, which are able to move away from the:

search for an anachronistic Sikh musical identity or an originary authentic 'sacred sound' substance . . . instead [to] investigate the affective process of *Gurbani Kirtan* which manifests an intentionality based on an ego-less space of spiritual expression that allows for the experience of a unique Sikh subjectivity.<sup>50</sup>

This perspective no longer seeks to ground itself in the history of music, but rather in the affective states that can be achieved through its enactment following a particular pedagogy. Though there is acknowledgement that this is not solely the property of *Gursikhs*, but rather there has always been multiplicity in those that have sung *Gurbani kirtan*, such as (Muslim) *rababis*, Nirmallas, Udasis and Namdharis.<sup>51</sup> The commonality among these emerges in the music and its message, rather than in their particular identities. The transmission of this therefore requires access to the oral transmission of *reets* or compositions, because there is no sufficient information in the *Ad Granth* to glean the correct relationship between text and presentation. Undeniably, the aim of this pedagogy is to create the conditions in the learner to approach the music in such a way that the word of the Guru can be evoked. This is a Sikh theomusicology:

This approach will elucidate the symbiotic relationship between musical proficiency and spiritual insight, as gained through and expressed by the transformative medium of *Gurbani Kirtan*. In doing so, it will not limit Sikh musical identity to orthodox rigidity but instead will open it up to a diversity of spiritual expression.<sup>52</sup>

To gain access, however, requires a teacher who is from the oral tradition or trained in its methods. One of the key proponents of this approach is Bhai Baldeep Singh who traces his ancestry through his uncle to the court of the fifth Guru, Arjan. Yet, like so many families of musicians, Bhai Baldeep Singh was not in the tradition, but rather was pursuing a career in aviation, when the events of 1984 moved him to devote his life to the preservation of one aspect of the Sikh tradition.<sup>53</sup> Though the perspective developed by Bhai Baldeep is different from that of Professor Gurnam Singh, the family tradition he cites, that of Jawala Singh and Bhai Avtar Singh, is deeply engaged in the Singh Sabha and the SGPC, respectively.<sup>54</sup> By the end of his career, Bhai Avtar Singh himself was no longer playing *tanti saz*, and the documentation of the *reets* held in their family had been published by Punjabi University in a set of two volumes in the late 1970s.<sup>55</sup>

Perhaps more interesting than this concatenation with the Singh Sabha is the musicological knowledge that Bhai Baldeep Singh brings to the revival of *kirtan*.<sup>56</sup> In arguing for *Gurbani*, it is in essence an argument for the inclusion of Sikh music into the four Vani(bani)s of *dhrupad* that constitute the base of the Clessicual tradition.<sup>57</sup> It is the *Dagar bani* that is closest to the style of singing adopted by Bhai Baldeep, but it is not clear how this influenced the *rababis* or *kirtanis* at Amritsar. Rather, it is the Talwandi *dhrupad* tradition, which sings the *kandar bani*, that is far more frequently cited as a source of musical knowledge associated with the performers at the *Harimandir*.<sup>58</sup> In combination with a pedagogy that values oral transmission, Bhai Baldeep echoes how Hafeez Khan Talwandi would tell his students that only members of his family would ever truly be able to perform *dhrupad*.<sup>59</sup> This elitist conception was challenged in colonial modernity and arguably at the time of Guru Arjan, when the *sangat* was encouraged to perform *kirtan* to overcome Balwand and Satta's arrogance. It is precisely this discriminatory conceptualisation that is at the centre of the *Gurbani kirtan* revival. As Khalsa notes, the 'process of institutionalization has reformed Sikh musical identity from being *highly specialized and nuanced* [my emphasis] into a normative and more accessible format for public consumption, as was seen during Indian national reform.'<sup>60</sup> Baldeep Singh himself questions the hagiography in which the *Gursikhs* take on a role. *Kirtan* for him 'was first an individual spiritual performance or a practice and then a congregational one. I would rather say that a congregational gathering was incidental simply.'<sup>61</sup> Colonial modernity via the Singh Sabha reformers, therefore, dilutes this secret knowledge and makes it open to 'include lower castes, non-hereditary, and female musicians.'<sup>62</sup> It is precisely members of these groups, rendered marginal and

outside of the authentic in this account, who are the main performers of *kirtan* in its multiple and diverse modes. While refuting the modernist impulse and critical of the role Bhatkhande has played in influencing *kirtan*, Baldeep Singh adopts many of the same tactics when conducting his own research into *kirtan* and displays the same contemptuous relationship with the living exponents of Sikh *kirtan* that Bhatkhande had with performing musicians. For example, Bhai Baldeep Singh states, 'But, even after I recited some texts . . . it was evident that not much attention had been paid to these vital aspects so crucial to *kirtan*.'<sup>63</sup> This only serves to exemplify the kind of training and approach that is required for this version of *kirtan*. As an advert for those wishing to engage with the *gharana*, Bhai Baldeep Singh sets out a learning process: 'first an aspirant had to become proficient in drum playing (*pakhawaj/mridang* and/or *jori*), then in the strings (*rabab, saranda, vina* or *taus*), before being formally exposed to vocal training and, finally, to learning the *shabad-reet* repertoire.'<sup>64</sup> Once again this is not too different from the exacting training that *gharanas* state as their standards.<sup>65</sup> What is problematic is that any recourse to lineage through the oral tradition also ties the understanding of music into what Mandair has called the vedic economy, in which orality is tied to caste and therefore ultimately to a brahminical model of salvation. This is something that would be contradictory to the teachings of the Gurus. I quote at length from Mandair to make the point:

Since the entire aim of the oral-aural tradition is to 'imprint' sameness or ideality of the original sound on all minds that are attuned to hear this sound (those who possess the correct *dharma*), such proximity reinforced the boundaries of the listening community . . . the continuity has been maintained though the rigorous institution of caste denominations . . . those not privileged with correct birth/*dharma* cannot pollute the *dharma* of those privileged with the eternal sound.<sup>66</sup>

Sacred sound in this formulation would go against the principle of all castes having access to devotion and access to God, a widely accepted tenet of Sikhism. Yet this elitist framing is central to revivalists' claim for a link between the Clessicul and *kirtan* as the authentic form of expressing the poetry of the *Ad Granth*.

In representing the debates over the authentic form of *kirtan* as a struggle against the SGPC by revivalists, some taking accommodating strategies with others adopting a more conflictual approach, there is in the same period another group that is attempting to change the shape of *kirtan* in the *Harimandir Sahib*. In the literature lamenting the decline in the quality of *kirtan* and the authenticity

of the sacred, which has gained some prominence in academic discourse in India and the United States, there is no mention of the struggle by a group of women to gain access to the performative space of the *Harimandir Sahib*. These are the native musicians, not the *rababis*, and their demand to be included in the narration of *kirtan* signals a historic as well as contemporary role. The debate about lineage and authenticity relies on gender as an organising principle that is central to the reproduction of caste/*gharana*. As music becomes more sacred and pure, women as musical performers become rarer. From *dhrupads* to the *rababis* to the *Gursikhs*, it is genealogies of male performers who are held up as the bearers of tradition and the repositories of original tunes. It is poignant that just as Bhai Ghulam Mohammed Chand is not allowed to sing *kirtan* in the *Harimandir Sahib* because he is not Sikh, he also comments that 'Our women don't sing'.<sup>67</sup>

This perspective was most forthrightly challenged in 2003, when two *amritdhari* (baptised) and turban-wearing women attempted to perform the morning ritual at the *Harimandir Sahib* and were restricted by the men present. Mejinderpal Kaur and Lakhbir Kaur then went on to lead a campaign for equal access for women to all the rituals associated with *Harimandir Sahib*, including the performance of *kirtan*, citing that the SGPC of 1940 had already passed an edict allowing *amritdhari* women to perform *kirtan* at the site. However, the edict had not been instituted and was actually restated in 2005, when the first female head of the SGPC, Bibi Jagir Kaur, announced that women would be allowed to perform at the *Harimandir Sahib*. Nevertheless, once again the proclamation was not implemented into practice. Even though the changes in performance of *kirtan* in terms of changing instrumentation and a return to the *raag* have been accepted and resulted in partial change, the existing male-dominated patriarchal structures were unmoving when it came to this issue.<sup>68</sup> Colonial repetition codifies caste into the elitist (re)formation of sacred Sikh music and excludes women. Of course this is too closed a formulation and the lived world of *kirtan* contains multiplicities and diversity that transcend these boundaries, as a brief musical survey and musician biographies will reveal.

### Performed *Kirtan*

The discourse on *kirtan* revival was partly an intellectual response to what was seen as a decline and commercialisation of the form. A set of stereotypes exemplifies the features of this notion of decay, central to which are male



musicians trained only in the playing of simple *taals* on the *tabla*, easy *raags* on the harmonium and with voices that mimic popular *ghazal* or *filmi* music playback singers. Given music's low status, males with few other options end up in the trade, with the main motivation being steady employment at one of the *gurdwaras* under SGPC control. Furthermore, since the 1970s, it is patronage networks rather than musical quality that gain access to these secure jobs. In addition, the advent of cassettes and live broadcasting means that extra work for weddings, funerals and other occasions can be secured through self-promotion via the market. Music that is palpable, linked to popular tunes and with simplified verses, gains greater acceptability in the commercial world, which brings with it greater economic gain.<sup>69</sup> It was to counter these trends that the group at *Jawaddi Taksal* gathered, and it is worth testing whether there has been much impact on existing *kirtan* recordings of these revivalists' efforts. This is best measured by the impact on professional paid *kirtan jathas* as this is most easy to access. Though the advent of YouTube does give some insight into private performances, the target of the public revivalist discourse has been institutional change and the habits of paid *kirtanis*. A simple schema was evolved to consider the contemporary state of *kirtan* in terms of its relationship with the issues of musical authenticity. By considering a *shabad* in *raag* Gauri, a sample of how it has been sung by a range of *kirtanis*, as present on SikhNet and YouTube, was analysed in terms of affiliation to the settings of the *raag* given in Abbatobad's *Gurbani Sangeet* and Bhai Sukhwant Singh's *Guru Nanak Pathri Granth*, which follows the RNC system.<sup>70</sup>

*Raag Gauri* is the most prominently used in the *Ad Granth* and has 22 varieties. The one considered here is *Shud Gauri*, which is the *raag* in its most simplest form. The *shabad* under consideration is *Thir Ghar Behsau*.<sup>71</sup>

Gauree, Fifth Mehl:

*Thir ghar bhaiso har jan pyare*

Remain contemplative, God beloved

*Satgur tumra kaaj savaare.* ||1|| raho

The True Guru creates resolution. ||1|| Pause

*Dusat dut pamesar mare*

The transcendent has struck down the wicked and the evil.

*Jan kee paij rakhee kartare.* ||1||

The creator has protected your honour. ||1||

*Badishah sah sabh vas kar dheene.*



The kings and emperors are all under his power;

*Amrit naam maha ras peene.* ||2||

He drinks deeply of the most sublime essence of the ambrosial naam. ||2||

*Nirbhao hoe bhajahu bhagvaan.*

Meditate fearlessly on God.

*Sadhsangat mil keeno daan.* ||3||

Joining the company of the holy, this gift is given. ||3||

*Saraṅ pare parabh antarjami.*

Nanak has entered the sanctuary of God;

*Nanak ot pakree parabh suaamee.* ||4||108||

He grasps the support of God. ||4||108||

As with all of the hymns in the *Ad Granth*, the opening line gives details of the *raag*, in this case Gauri and the author Fifth Mehl indicating the fifth Guru, Arjan. This is the most simplest appellation and there are other details provided with other *shabads*.<sup>72</sup> In the volume *Gurbani Sangeet* that utilises the Bhatkande system of notation and is gathered from the *rababi* oral tradition, Gauri is described as being part of the Bhairo family (*taat*) of *raags* with its most frequently used note being *Re komal* (flat), followed by *Pa*.<sup>73</sup> As the notes ascend in a composition using this *raag*, they should show *sa, Re (komal), Ga, Re (komal), Ma, Pa, Sa* and then as they descend *Sa, Ni, Dha (komal), Pa, Ma, Ga, Re (komal), ni, sa*. These broad outlines provide the shape in which the composition can be created, but also specify the rules by which the *raag* can be recognised. A similar musical notation is given by Bhai Sukhwant Singh, but with the additional commentary that Gauri is a serious and contemplative *raag* in which the Gurus have addressed issues such as the mind, death, the soul, and enlightenment.<sup>74</sup> This is the central rationale given by revivalists in arguing for the close relationship between the *raag* and the text. The words of the *shabad* are enhanced by the musical arrangement in terms of conveying meaning. In an insightful examination, Lallie et al. establish through an empirical exploration of *raag Sri* (the opening *raag* of the *Ad Granth*) a number of problems with solely ascribing a single emotion to a raga – in this setting a mood of seriousness associated with *raag Gauri*.<sup>75</sup> Two issues are raised by this research. First, there are many cases where there is no agreement over the form that *Sri* and many other *raags* in the *Ad Granth* should take, for example, between the RCN and other compilers of *raag* structure. Given this lack of musicological agreement, it is difficult to assign a musical effect to different musical structures. Second,

**Table 4.1** Artist and performance style of *shabad*: *Thir ghar behsau*

Artist Name	Performance Style
Professor Harchand Singh, Bhai Balbir Singh, Bhai Avtar Singh	<i>Raag Gauri</i>
Bhai Harjinder Singh, Master Darshan Singh, Bhai Sarbjit Singh (Hazoori), Bhai Dalbir Singh (Hazoori), Bhai Gurkirat Singh, Bhai Jaswant Singh, Bhai Bagga Singh, Bhai Niranjana Singh (Jawaddi Taksal), Bhai Arvinder Singh Noor, Bhai Sinder Pal Singh	General <i>raag</i> – popular tunes (often film-related)
Benton <i>kirtan Jatha</i> (amateur), Harkirat Kaur, J. S. Thind	Related <i>raag</i> (Bhairon)
Bhai Gurdev Singh, Dhadrinwale, Bhai Kamaljeet Singh, Bhai Gurpreet Singh Mohali, Bhai Damodar Singh, Jaspinder Narula, Bhai Kashmir Singh	Folk tune

by doing a textual analysis of the many *shabads* given under *raag Sri*, the poetry itself is not reducible to a single emotional state.<sup>76</sup> Therefore, the specificity of music to a particular emotional state is dependant on the musician's understanding of the text and its relationship with the *raag* in question, rather than from any structural point of view. This is a perfectly valid argument, but it assumes that the vast majority of *kirtan* is performed in the *raags* prescribed in the *Ad Granth*. When considering 32 performances of the *shabad, Thir Ghar Bhaiso*, as shown in Table 4.1, this is clearly not the case. Even though the classification adopted here is musically simplistic, it nonetheless provides an assessment of the status of Clessicul revivalism in the practice of Sikh *kirtan* in the twenty-first century.

Table 4.1 clearly demonstrates that the vast majority of those performing the *shabad* were doing so either in a *raag* that was completely unrelated to Gauri or utilising folk melodies. Two amateur performances, one at a *kirtan* competition in Malaysia and the other at a private function, were the only others that made some attempt to perform Gauri in the prescribed manner. Of the three professional *kirtanis* who sang the recommended notes for the *raag*, there was variety. One of these, Professor Harchand Singh, actually provides the notation to the *shabad, Thir ghar bhaiso* in the manual authored by Bhai Sukhwant Singh of *Jawaadi Taksal*.<sup>77</sup> Though this rendition follows the notes given in the ascending and descending of the *raag*, this rendition does not make any attempt at showing the *Re (komal)* or *Pa*, which are the signature notes for displaying the *raag*. It was only Bhai Avtar Singh, granduncle of

Bhai Baldeep Singh, who displayed the correct form as given in the written texts. What is undoubtedly most surprising is that the performance cited by the *Jawaddi Taksal* manual was not in performance following the prescribed pattern. In musicological terms, much weight can be given to Bhai Baldeep's laments about the state of *Gurbani kirtan*, but this analysis is primarily coming from the perspective of the revivalist.

It is worth emphasising that the popular forms of *kirtan* that have not been thoroughly explored, other than as the foil against which decline is measured, still occupy the mainstream of Sikh music. One could argue that the advent of new media technologies and satellite television, with live 24-hour broadcasting from the *Harimandir* Sahib, has meant a greater pull towards popular musical formats, rather than one informed by older more esoteric forms, such as *khayal* and *dhrupad*. This popular demand has not been overly affected by the push for more traditional forms, other than for those *kirtan jathas* that were already well known but had some training in *raag/taal* and were able to position themselves in the marketplace to satisfy the new requirement of traditional forms while maintaining their popular following. A crude set of empirical inquiries using a number of web-based archives as well as YouTube reveals the overwhelming use of popular folk or film-based melodies in the performance of most *shabad kirtan*. The most popular *kirtan jatha* is that of Bhai Harjinder Singh, who has been trained in *raag/taal*, but generally sings in *raags* that are considered uplifting.<sup>78</sup> He performed *Thir Ghar Bhaiso* in what would be best described as a major scale rather than in any identifiable *raag*.<sup>79</sup> As Table 4.2 indicates, he is by a significant margin the most popular *ragi* in the virtual world. This to a large extent can be correlated to the fact that he has also released over 100 *shabad kirtan* CDs.

Along with Bhai Harjinder Singh, Bhai Ravinder Singh who performs at the *Harimandir* Sahib clearly comes out as the most popular *kirtanis*. Their style of performance is largely based on popular melodies and rhythms, though both are trained and versed in the *raag/taal* forms specific to Sikh *kirtan*. Hans Raj Hans and Jagjit Singh are generic, though hugely well-known musicians of respectively folk and *ghazal* forms. But as with most musicians who mainly perform in nonreligious venues, they have produced albums of *kirtan*. The hits on YouTube, for their usual musical offerings, run into hundreds of thousands, which provides a source to appraise the *kirtan* revival. The representatives of the Classical revival, such as Bhai Baldeep Singh, Avtar Singh, Kartar Singh and Gurnam Singh, all feature much lower in this quantitative ranking. Two female professional *kirtanis* are also featured who are much at the same par

**Table 4.2** *Kirtan* popularity<sup>a</sup>

	SikhNet <sup>b</sup> (number of hits)	YouTube <sup>c</sup> (number of hits)
Bhai Harjinder Singh	20,808	796,782
Bhai Baldeep Singh	1,547	21,974
Bhai Avtar Singh	2,643	19,312
Bhai Ravinder Singh (Hazoori <i>Ragi</i> ) <sup>d</sup>	13,477	94,039
Dya Singh	12,666	13,140
Baljeet Singh and Gurmeet Singh (Namdhari)	4,409	17,416
Bibi Kamaljit Kaur	2,226	9,223
Bibi Satnam Kaur	2,470	11,715
Hans Raj Hans	2,966	225,348
Jagjit Singh	8,506	28,739
Sant Anoop Singh	7,133	48,068
Bhai Jeevan Singh (AKJ)	966	21,327
Professor Gurnam Singh	1,465	7,925
Professor Kartar Singh	672	2,017

<sup>a</sup> There are multiple problems with adopting this quantitative methodology, perhaps the most significant is that the choice of listening is also somewhat determined by *shabad*, with certain texts carrying weight in and of themselves. *Toon mera pita, lakh kushiyan pathshaya* are examples.

<sup>b</sup> SikhNet provides a list of all the audio recordings on its site and the number of bits by artist. For the recordings of Gurnam Singh, see <http://www.sikhnet.com/gurbani/artist/8175/audio>.

<sup>c</sup> YouTube is a notoriously difficult medium from which to carry out meaningful statistical analysis, as length of time of posting makes a big difference to the number of hits; also many videos are carried on multiple sites and each view does not represent an individual's response. However, as a qualitative indication it serves a purpose.

<sup>d</sup> *Hazoori Raagi* is an appellation for a group that plays at the *Harimandir* or one of the other four *takhts* or seats of Sikh authority. These are Anandpur Sahib, Paunta Sahib, Keshgarh Sahib and Hazur Sahib.

Source: Data taken from YouTube and SikhNet (accessed August 18, 2013 and August 20, 2013).

in terms of popularity as the Clessicul group – Bibi Kamaljit and Bibi Satnam Kaur.

The prevalence of women-only *kirtan* groups, *Istri Satsang*,<sup>80</sup> is hardly documented but refers to performances that are outside of the usual fixed patterns of worship in a *gurdwara* and commercial presentations on cassettes and VCDs. Taking place in exclusively women-only spaces, this has been represented as a common practice, before the commoditisation and professionalisation of *kirtan*, as the music of the *sangat* (congregation). Most notably in diasporic spaces, such as East Africa, the lack of professionally trained musicians would mean that women would learn and perform in the *gurdwara*, in a much more prominent

way than in Punjab.<sup>81</sup> The continuation of these women-only performances have been accompanied with the emergence of professional women *kirtan* groups. Even though they are barred from performing at the *Harimandir Sahib*, they do sing *kirtan* at other *gurdwaras* and there are relatively a small number of commercial recordings as well. Though, even in this context they remain outside of the mainstream education and inculcation of male *kirtanis*.<sup>82</sup>

### *Kirtan* education

Bhai Harjinder Singh's popularity is closely tied to an aesthetic appreciation of his sweet and melodious voice and to the simple arrangements of the *shabads* that his *jatha* performs.<sup>83</sup> He is often praised for clearly vocalising words of the *shabad* in an uplifting way. The vast majority of his recordings do not follow the principle of following the *raag* prescribed to the particular *shabad*. This is not an issue of training as the formal musical education of *kirtanis* is based on twentieth-century notions of the Classical. The advent of modern music education came to the *kirtanis* in 1927, with the opening of the Shaheed (martyrs) Sikh Missionary College. This was an institution that was central to breaking the monopoly the *rababis* held in imparting musical education through the oral tradition. Sikh reformists founded the college with the expressed aim of training people to work in the newly taken-over *gurdwaras*.<sup>84</sup> By the end of the twentieth century, there were six such institutes dotted around North India. These institutions offer accredited courses in *Gurmat Sangeet*, and a certificate is issued upon completion of what is the equivalent of a degree in music. It was in the Shaheed Sikh Missionary College that Bhai Harjinder Singh received his musical training even though he mainly performed in Srinagar, Kashmir. These mechanisms serve to illustrate the extent to which the training of the *kirtan* musician shifted in the twentieth century from hereditary to standardised knowledge. Bhai Harcharan Singh is a contemporary performer at the *Harimandir* in Amritsar and from a rural, nonmusical background. This interview describes how he became involved in *kirtan*:

I am from Batala district, from a small village. The SGPC elected man in our area was Master Chanchal Singh who was on the *Dharam Parchar* committee and lived in our village. There were always *dhadi*, *kavishree*, and people who sang *dharmic geet* in our village. I first learn from *ragi* Puran Singh at the *Damdami taksal*. He said to me I should go to the Shaheed Sikh Missionary College in

Amritsar and do the course there and get the certificate. That would help me. So after metric I went there. I learnt from Professor Avtar Singh Naaz, who has taught so many of the *kirtanis* . . . it was a three year course . . . My family were not happy about me doing *kirtan* . . . it was always seen as a job for those who could not find anything better to do!<sup>85</sup>

Just as the Sikh colleges and religious institutions (*taksals*) provided *kirtan* training, the proliferation of degree colleges after the formation of the Punjabi state in 1967 meant that secular music education was also a route into *kirtan*. These educational institutions did not take into account lineage, being organised according to formal bureaucratic rules and procedures. Thus new entrants were treated the same as those with some heritage in music. For example, Bhai Inderjit Singh states:

My father was a *ragi* at Nankana Sahib, when we came to India we stayed at a village near Rajpura, Patiala. My father died when I was very young and we were bought up by my mother and the *Gurdwara*! I learnt from a lot of people, but my most inspiring teacher was Professor Tara Singh, who taught in the Womens College and then Punjabi University. He was a student of Fayyaz Khan, Delhi *gharana* . . . I learnt on *Tanpura* so when it came to *kirtan*, I had to learn the harmonium.<sup>86</sup>

Gurmeet Singh, a *hazoori* (played at the *Harimandir*) *kirtani*, also received training from a number of teachers in Clessicul music:

I learnt music from my father, who was a village *dhadi* (bard) in Faridkot (Bhai Santokh Singh, *sarangi* player and lecturer). My father played at many places . . . he was not attached to one *Gurdwara* . . . We are four brothers and we all do *kirtan*, with one performing in the UK. I learnt from other teachers, such as Inayat Khan from Delhi, Pandit Jagdish Mohan, from the Moradabad *gharana*. I learnt on the harmonium. I know mostly light music and a bit of Clessicul.<sup>87</sup>

In the interviews carried out with *kirtanis*, it became clear that the music syllabus of the standardised education included a basic training in *raag* and *taal*, and certainly in the Sikh institutions, knowledge of the *Ad Granth* was also compulsory. Standardisation of practice through formal education should have led to greater attention being paid to ascribed *raags*, but this is starkly not manifest in the practice of *kirtan*. If it is not the training or the knowledge of the

musicians that has led to popularisation, then it is perhaps necessary to take into account the role of audience and patrons.

### Status, audience, patrons

If it is modern musical education and the entry of those who were not connected to the tradition that has led to a dilution of *kirtan*, the fact that musicians were never given status is equally as important. Bhai Balbir Singh (b. 1930s), the last of a generation of prepartition *kirtanis*, comes from a family that traces its musical history to the *darbar* of Guru Arjan. Despite this and the fact that his father was a paid employee of the Khalsa Pracharak Vidyalay established in 1906 in Tarn Taran, his treatment in early childhood is instructive:

We lost our mother when we were young and our father would go on long tours to do *kirtan* . . . so we were always hungry. In the *Gurdwara*, in Tarn Taran, when we would go for *langar* [free food], they would lock the doors and say: 'who are these *mirasis* and *bhatre* . . . we only had a dirty tunic to cover us, our head and legs were bare . . . those were difficult days . . . After hearing me sing *kirtan*, the same man who kicked me out of the *langar* hall beckoned me to eat with him and to call my brothers . . . they offered me fresh *daal*, with *ghee* and an onion and as many *rotis* as I could eat . . . I thought, thanks to Guru Arjan, there is so much power in *kirtan*!<sup>88</sup>

This treatment of musicians, even to those from hereditary families, was not ameliorated by the formation of modern institutions. Balbir Singh was shouted at as a boy with the taunt *mirasi/bhatra*, both groups of musicians associated with the Sikh Gurus for centuries. This association had not increased their status; colonial modernity created new institutions that bought new groups into the fold of *kirtan*, but these were also from the margins of male society. Orphans and the blind were trained in music as a means of earning a livelihood. In particular, the Central Khalsa Orphanage in Amritsar produced a whole host of *kirtanis* from 1904 onwards. It is through these institutions that the *rababis* also passed on their knowledge to Sikhs. It was at the orphanage that *rababi* Saeen Ditta taught from 1914–32. Bhai Gyan's (Ghulam Mohammed Chand) father, Bhai Sunder, opened a school in Lahore to teach *kirtan*. In breaking out of the traditional families that played music, the other more major boundary of gender was also crossed.<sup>89</sup> The reformist targeting of women closed down spaces for popular practices but opened up the learning of music. Bibi Jaswinder Kaur

learnt from Bhai Taaba and continued to perform in Delhi until her death in 2012.<sup>90</sup>

In 1936, Soorma Singh Ashram (home for blind boys) was set up within the Central Khalsa Orphanage in Amritsar. This home produced a large crop of musicians. Bhai Gurmej Singh relates his own story:

I was 8 when I contracted small pox and by the time I was ten, I was blind. *Baba Dal Singh* from Lassara village advised my parents to send me to the Central Khalsa Orphanage in Amritsar . . . There is a Soorma Singh Ashram inside that, it was established by Bhai Vir Singh to teach *kirtan* and other skills to blind children. I learnt braille and it was the first time I heard '*Ik onkar*'. From 1950 until 1958 I stayed there and then at the age of 18 you have to leave. But they would get you work in other *gurdwaras*, they looked after us . . . In 1969 at the anniversary *Gurpurab* (Guru celebration) of Guru Nanak, I organised the publishing of the *Sukhmani sahib* in braille, this was the first time *Gurbani* had been published in braille.<sup>91</sup>

Though at one level socially progressive, the association of blind men with *kirtan* became so strong that anyone who was blind would automatically attract the nickname *ragi*, irrespective of their profession!<sup>92</sup> These issues of status directly impact on the ability of a *kirtani* to determine the music they play. Regardless of their own tradition or training, the audience determines the *kirtanis'* livelihood and in that sense what kind of music is played. This point is made by Gyani Santokh Singh in his somewhat rambling defence of the playing of *filmi* (Bollywood) tunes to accompany *shabads*:

It is not clear why people are opposed to *filmi* tunes, when these are popular and popularise the words of the Gurus. The Gurus also included popular folk *raags* in the *Ad Granth*. *Raag* and *taal* requires learning and status and that has not been given to *kirtanis*, historically. The insistence on banning film tunes, creates perverse situations in which people will use popular tunes from Bengal or other parts of India so that the Punjabi audience cannot follow that they are *filmi* tunes. It is the audience who puts pressure on us for these kind of tunes. However, with the increase in education about *Gurmat Sangeet* and the increase in status of the *kirtanis*, there will be a change, but for those who cannot access this education, then singing in whatever way they can is better than nothing.<sup>93</sup>

Gurmeet Singh, a hazoori *kirtani*, also placed emphasis on the audience:

The work he [Professor Kartar Singh] is doing is very good. They are going back into the tradition. The old *shabad reets*. Now there are stringed instruments



playing with us. But the problem is that people don't understand the old *raag*s. They are too difficult for the normal public, they don't like them. When we play them, they ask us to be less serious.

Patronage for music in precolonial Punjab centred on various types of *darbars* (courts) – the Mughal state, Nawabs, large landowners with their own *havelis* and forts mimicking the culture and climate of the larger courts. Musicians alongside other artisanal classes were as much a symbol of status and power as a source of leisure and pleasure. A similar discourse emerges in late twentieth-century reformist accounts of the decline in *kirtan* due to its increasingly commercialised form. Nostalgia for an era in which music was performed for a knowledgeable (i.e. elite) audience that understood quality and had the ability to reward it is a central discourse in research on Classical musicians in South Asia.<sup>94</sup> Financial security is not so much at stake in feudal relations, which were always precarious, but rather patriarchal lineages marked both the landowner's status and that of the musician. When musical practise relies on oral transmission through generations of male musicians, it is clear that the exploitative nature of the patron-client relationship is ameliorated by recourse to a discourse of mutuality or common service to a higher good.

Alongside this domain were the other *darbars*, those of the spiritual men, the Sufis, Gurus, *Bhagats*, *Sants* and myriads of others. A sufficiently well-endowed shrine *darbar* could afford to keep musicians in residence, whose identity overtime would become associated with a particular musical form, such as *qawwal* or *rababi* or *kirtani* or *nayak*. However, this type of *darbar* was few and far between. More often a group of singers would have multiple patrons with whom they had a *pagri* or a bond of performance. This would mostly be to attend and perform at the annual fairs that were synonymous with all shrines. Current lines of *kirtanis* ascribe their move to music as a direct result of an order (*hukam*) from the Guru.<sup>95</sup> A popular story is told of how Guru Har Gobind was hunting near the village of Bodla, near his residence in Kartarpur (Jalandhar). Sitting under a tree he called the *choor mirasi* of the village and said that he should do *kirtan* and gave him a rabab. In this way, the musicians of that village were introduced to *kirtan*. Bhai Dilbagh Singh and Gulabh Singh who came from the village of Bodla trace their lineage to this genesis story.<sup>96</sup>

The colonial order, alongside disrupting the power and finance of the Mughal *darbar* system, also created a range of new opportunities for musicians. A variety of new patrons came on to the scene; in urban areas, wealthy individuals who could afford to display status by access to music

largely maintained the same kind of precolonial relationships. But much more consequentially, modern education systems and the association of musical education with class status provided at least urban musicians with opportunities for self-sustaining livelihoods. New forms of entertainment in the film industry and the advents of recording coupled with the opening of All India Radio made the early part of the twentieth century a veritable feast of new opportunities for musicians. In this climate, the shrine was forced to compete with these new avenues. In some senses the attractions of Bombay and Calcutta, financially as well as musically, is one of the main reasons for their being so disparaged by those musicians left behind.

Into this frame, the SGPC, as previously stated, was a relatively disinterested patron, more concerned with securing state power through the vestiges of the Akali Dal; it was left to independent institutions such as the Sikh Missionary College to take up the training of musicians. Payment for this new class of *kirtanis* was delegated to an administrative functionary and musical competence to a committee. Once the Punjabi Suba (Punjab state in the Indian union), was secured and the SGPC and Akali Dal became increasingly entwined, political patronage required financial revenue, and jobs in *gurdwaras* were seen as second to that of the local state, but nonetheless relatively secure sources of income. In this way, gaining access to singing at the *Harimandir* became not only a question of passing a test set by a committee of musicians and *Gurbani* specialists but also mobilising connections and networks. This is quite a common critique from within the establishment, as Professor Kartar Singh, the Director of the Gurmat Sangeet Academy in Anandpur, stated in an interview:

The main problem are the existing *kirtan jathas* . . . they are resistive to change. Also the selection process for playing at the *Harimandir*, rather than being based on merit works through a complicated system of patronage, in which the Jathedar, the appointed executive head, ends up making decisions based on returning favours, rather than any consideration of the music. Even though there is a subcommittee, the Dharam Parchar committee which is the body that is supposed to make appropriate appointments.<sup>97</sup>

A succinct example of the procedure by which entry to the *Harimandir* was gained is provided by Bhai Haracharan Singh, one of the *hazoori ragis*:

In 2003 and 2005 we passed the test to work at the *Darbar Sahib [Harimandir]*. Actually the second time the committee said: 'Why have you come again?' . . . We told them we were waiting for the letter of appointment to come, so they told us well we will pass you again, so you should get your letter

then . . . Another few years passed and then in 2008 we went to see Avtar Singh Makkar (*Jathedar*) and he knew us from Ludhiana and he asked if would come and perform at Model Town *Gurdwara*. But we told him we wanted to perform at *Darbar Sahib*. He asked if we had passed the test and if we had done the Sikh Missionary College course. We told him we had done the test twice. He told me to get and get our file from the clerk and bring it to him. Then after meeting him, we got the file passed and the letter of appointment came.<sup>98</sup>

The bureaucratic entanglements and the palpable relevance of a ‘letter’ of appointment point to a mode of estrangement that is visible in most aspects of engagement with structures of the Indian state. This repetition in the management of a religious institution and in particular that part that is related to one of its key public roles provides much evidence to those who point to the structures of colonial modernity, enunciating a decline amidst the reformist zeal. What was interesting about the two previous interviews was that there was no malice or frustration towards the institutions, rather it was the problem of individuals and their implementation of the existing structures. The *Harimandir* remains the epicentre of any *kirtanis* aspirations, and this is based in the satisfaction of sacred and secular desires. Bureaucratic hurdles, rather than causing disillusionment with the process, instead enhances the sense of privilege when selected.

### *Kirtan sohila* – The time for sleep

Referring to the last prayers before sleeping in daily Sikh rituals, *kirtan sohila* is a collection of five *shabads* for recitation, though each carries its own *raag* heading: Gauri Dipaki, Asa, Dhanasri and Gauri Purbi. These are not sung but recited and form part of the daily prayers that are outlined in the *Sikh Rehat Maryada*. Returning to this document is crucial to this chapter, as it is the central motif of the Sikh reformist agenda and it brings Sikhism into line with the aspiration to appear in history and be ranked by the epistemograph. Clearly, the example of the *kirtan sohila* highlights the priority given to text over music in the understanding of the *Ad Granth*. This of course is a central way of barricading the domain of the sacred from the overwhelming declassifying pressure of music. In presenting an account of *kirtan*, in which the religious had found refuge in the ostensible precision and rule-bound framing of Clessical music, the marginality of this position in relation to actual performance should not belie its influence. Even though popular *kirtan* represents a far more

extensive and broad listenership, it remains as the commercial and belittled other to the 'pure' form. This has also been an account that begins at the centre rather than the margins of musical practice. The *Namdharis* and the *Akhand Kirtani Jatha* are groups that have followed and promoted particular forms of *kirtan* that are textually located within the *Ad Granth*, but draw different inspirations musically and theologically.<sup>99</sup>

By offering an archaeology of Sikh *kirtan* through the twentieth century, the series of exclusions – *rababis*, women and the congregation, which are necessary for the Clessicul to conjoin with religion – is not sufficient to complete colonial repetition. Multiple and ongoing repetition is required to keep out that which irrupts in the popular domain, and this is a consistent theme in postcolonial India. The intense bureaucratisation of access to singing at the *Harimandir* reflects the changing requirements for musicians – to have passed exams, to have access to patronage networks and to be able to perform. *Rababis* and hereditary musicians in general are not as able to compete in this environment, and their story will be taken up in Chapter 7. Though, it is *rababis* who also provide the human link between this and the next chapter. Those who migrated to West Punjab found themselves in a musical landscape in which *kirtan* was no longer practically manifest or ideologically acceptable. Rather, the overlapping world of *qawwali* or music textually affiliated to Sufis and a shrine culture in which the role of music was not as central became their new sources of patronage.



## Saying *Qaul*, Being *Qawwal*, Singing *Qawwali*

On a pleasant November evening, an inky-dark sky speckled with stars provided the canopy for the courtyard of the National College of Arts, Lahore. The occasion was a conference on Islamic architecture. The crowd consisted of students, academics and some of Lahore's well-known thespians of culture. The Mayo School of Industrial Art was established in 1872 to provide skills to the artisans of Punjab. By 2008 when this conference was being held, the college had turned into a training ground for Pakistan's small art fraternity. Fraught and contested are all terrains that tread on the ground of culture and religion in Pakistan, and none more so than music. As the day's proceedings were over and the buffet dinner consumed, the stage was set for the evening entertainment, to be provided by Fareed Ayaaz *qawwal*, son of the famous Munshi Raziuddin. Tracing their lineage back to the founding fathers of the genre, it was the *gharana* of *qawwal bhachon* (children of *qawwal*) of Nizamuddin tomb in Delhi.<sup>1</sup> At the time of the division of British India, Munshi Raziuddin adopted Karachi as his new home and his *qawwal* group was renowned as the best of the 'Hindustani' *qawwals* of Pakistan. Opening their performance, the lead of the ten-strong troupe, Fareed Ayaaz, explained (for the partially international audience) and presumably in the ambience of an Islamic conference the origin of *qawwali*:

Amir Khusrau is the founder [of *qawwali*] . . . gives the base to, Islamic Music(ology), the existing music was changed from art to knowledge to science. He gave the name to that music, *qawwali*, and it is pure Islamic thought, that of the sayings of Allah, those of his prophet, of the elders, their teachings.<sup>2</sup>

Following this short discourse, the musical opening of the concert was a rendition of *Man Kunto Maula* penned by Amir Khusrau (1253–1352) and is the first clue to the musical historiography that qualifies *qawwals* to cite a 700-year lineage. Closely related to the *Chishti* branch of Sufis in South

Asia, all of their major shrines play host to music, beginning with Moinuddin Chishti (1141–1236) at Ajmer in Rajasthan, moving to *Baba Farid* (1188–1280) at Pakpattan in Punjab and then to Nizamuddin (1238–1325) in Delhi.<sup>3</sup> Each of these personages and sites holds a powerful nodal attraction for the hagiography of *qawwals*. Fareed Ayaaz group's use of harmoniums and powerful electronic amplification systems brings the *qawwali* performance firmly into the twenty-first century, but the discourse resonates with the sounds of tradition. A performer of great stature, Fareed Ayaaz's signature is an almost guttural expression of joy, a peal of laughter in response to a line of poetry or musical passage.<sup>4</sup> Despite being in the open air, every part of the courtyard of the National College of Arts was filled with waves of music. As the night proceeded, the crowd had thinned, but even by 3 a.m., when a chill had come into the air and the concert approached its end, a contingent of appreciators crowded around the performers, showering them with praise rather than rupees, which would be more common at a shrine or less self-consciously artistic gathering.<sup>5</sup>

Fareed Ayaaz's narrative about Islamic music was something of a surprise to me, as the first time I heard his group perform was earlier on in the same year in a documentary film made by Shabnum Virmani, called *Had Anahad: Journeys with Ram and Kabir*.<sup>6</sup> In this visually and aurally beautiful film, Virmani interviews Ayaaz and documents the *qawwali* group singing Kabir. In his inimitable style, Ayaaz takes ownership of Kabir integrating him into the patrilineal line, as a part of his father – Munshi ji – and forefathers' repertoire. In this narrative by Ayaaz, music was the universal, where 'Ram and Rahim' were no longer of relevance. Virmani's search for Kabir across the Indo-Pak border and demand for an interlocutor who could help promote the message of musical transience and harmony gave Ayaaz a perfect role. Indeed, his performance at the Islamic architecture conference also fits well into the contingent necessity to frame *qawwali* as Islamic music in Islamic Pakistan, made more urgent given the tensions generated not just by music but Sufi shrine culture in general. In that sense, Fareed Ayaaz's shifting of perspectives to suit an audience and a specific patron is neither unusual nor troubling. Performative genres, even in the age of recording, are constitutive and reflective of audiences and circumstances. In a similar manner to Hafeez Khan, as discussed in the introduction to this book, Fareed Ayaaz plays with the sacred and the secular, the nation and the region, the lover and the beloved. This fluid context-specific enunciation is not, however, the way in which *qawwali* has come to be understood in academic discourse on the subject.

Perhaps even more than the case of *kirtan* as it unfolded in the previous chapter, the mechanisms by which the sacred *qawwali* sound is established relies on Orientalist readings of Persian textual sources that coincide with colonial modernity, but provide an entry into history from a previous era. The continuities here are less with the native elites rereading of their own tradition, but with ethnomusicologists and South Asian Islam historians' engagement with *qawwali*, which is subject here to the same kind of critique made in general terms in Chapter 2. This distinction between the religious and the nonreligious, the sacred and the secular is played out in different ways in the literature on *qawwali*.<sup>7</sup> The establishment of a musical format or genre classification erects a boundary that facilitates the formulation of a connection not only with religion but also with a particular historiography that ties in with the much broader literature on South Asian Islam. Thus, *qawwali* is Islamic music created by Muslims, and in contemporary Pakistan for Muslims. It is the static nature of this formulation that is of most concern, as it is clear from Ayaaz Fareed's practice that depending on audience and environment, he actually undoes this formula, even while sometimes restating it.<sup>8</sup> Authorised academic texts are less open to this kind of fluid existence without the help of deconstruction. The native informant is the music of the *qawwal*, the *ragini* which along with the *sarangi* has become silenced in the coalescence around a sacred form.

There are a number of strategies deployed in the academic framing of *qawwali*.<sup>9</sup> In its most basic form, a dichotomy is established between the rules and regulations of 'proper' *qawwali*, in contrast to the more commercial forms of what could be generically called 'Muslim devotional music'. The historiography of *qawwali* is presented here, juxtaposed with interviews carried out with musicians from 2010–13 in Lahore, Gujranwala and Faisalabad. Beginning with a consideration of the idea of *qaul* an Arabic term that is used as a verb to indicate the poetry that comes to be sung in *qawwali*, an etymology is drawn that links to the historiography of the genre. Amir Khusro is central to the apocryphal origin story of *qawwali*, and rather than questioning the factuality of this role (as others have done), it is those aspects of the hagiography of Khusro that enable an understanding of the conjoining of religion with music that are most relevant. This is further amplified by a discussion of performance through the concept of *sama*, another Arabic term that comes to signify the stage or site in which *qaul* is recited or sung. For *sama* and *qaul*, Persian textual sources and oral testimony engage in theoretical debate about the applicability of these practices to Islamic devotion. In these discussions, the main absence is a consideration of the style or aesthetic quality of accompanying music. Once music enters the



domain, the neat boundaries that textual considerations impute begin to fray and a considerable amount of flexibility and diversity in music performance emerges. When the specificity of Punjabi language *qawwali* is forefronted, there is further decomposition of the sturdy structures of *qaul* and *sama*. Interviews with Punjabi *qawwals* open up a different set of trajectories in which *rababis* and other hereditary musicians come to associate themselves with the genre through the twentieth century. Once partition occurs, it is to *qawwali* that many musicians in newly formed Pakistan turn to maintain a livelihood. Just as musician biographies puncture the historiography of authentic *qawwals*, a brief analysis of the resonance between text and sound quickly leads to a deconstruction of the idea that Persian language and Classical music signify a more 'spiritual sound'. Having established the fluidity of the form, the role that patrons and audiences play in the management of musician agency concludes the chapter.

### *Qaul* – sayings

Muslim reformers in colonial Punjab were only concerned with *qawwali* as an ancillary to practices at Sufi shrines, which were being condemned and transformed.<sup>10</sup> No central authority to manage Sufi shrines appears in colonial Punjab that is equivalent to the SGPC. This is largely due to the multiple and competing modernist movements, ranging from those totally opposed to shrine practices (a tiny minority) to those seeking radical reform, such as the Deobandis and other multiple reform movements from within the Sufi fold, which are more concerned with rejuvenation and revitalisation.<sup>11</sup> Crucially, this multiplicity of organisations is not able to institute a single organisation to manage the Muslim shrines. Rather it is with the formation of Pakistan (and then only in the mid-1950s) that the state establishes the Auqaf board, a department of the government that nationalises the larger shrines. The lack of a central authority in the colonial period meant that the same processes of exclusion that come to mark the experience of the *rababis* in the lead up to partition are not evident in terms of male *qawwali* groups. Nonetheless, reformism relies on the same logic, and the fact that the Punjab legislator was able to pass 'The Music in Muslim Shrines Act' in 1942<sup>12</sup> reflects the extent to which political and religious Muslim identity was consolidated in the lead up to partition. The Act itself was targeted at the exclusion of women from participating in shrine music and dance, the same 'exclusion for purification', logic that removes *rababis* from the *Harimandir*. The Law is not though the most influential force on *qawwali* in Pakistan; from the

1970s onwards, it was the Auqaf board that took upon itself a process of reform, enacted with zeal in the Zia period of the 1980s.<sup>13</sup> It is this discourse that is most apparent in discussions with contemporary *qawwals*.

Almost all of the *qawwals* interviewed in twenty-first-century Pakistan responded with a narrative to define the genre, which can be summed as:

*Qawwali* is basically the *qaul* (sayings) of the *bazurgan* (elders), in which the elders refer to the *auliya* or 'friends of God' [which has often been translated as saints].<sup>14</sup>

Allah gave the Quran, Mohammed gave the *Hadith* and the *bazurg* give the *qaul*. These sayings, in the form of poetry, were put to music in order to spread the *din* (path of faith) in India. Moinuddin Chishti is the first of the *auliya* to engage in producing *qaul*, and it is Ajmer which is the spiritual centre of the *Chishti* order of Sufis. A *qawwal* is someone who sings the *qaul* and spreads the message of the *bazurg*.<sup>15</sup>

This oral history chimes with historical musicological and South Asian historical readings of extant Persian sources. In this literature, the term *qawwali*, specifically referring to a genre of music, only appears after 1750, whereas the term *qaul* predates this, denoting those that sing it as *qawwals*.<sup>16</sup> This history from textual sources also indicates that the *qaul* is most closely linked with Amir Khusro with an accompanying musical style, that of *tarana*.<sup>17</sup> It is here that oral and textual histories depart, as the *qaul*, while referring generically to 'saying' in texts, also refers to a crucial poetic-musical definition that *qawwals* make in the recitation of *Man Kunto Maula, Fa-Ali Un Maula*.<sup>18</sup> This poem's authorship is ascribed to Amir Khusro, who is a seminal figure in hagiographical and oral testimonies. In shrine settings it is either sung at the beginning or the end of a performance.

The position of the *qawwal* in relation to the spiritual figure (*auliya*, *bazurg* or *pir*) is hierarchical and (assumed) subservient – a spiritual hierarchy in which the original *bazurg* passes on his powers of intercession through the space of the shrine (and its accompanying rituals). This is done through direct living relations, who take up the role of the *pir*, ostensibly defining the relationship between not just musical servants but also the many others who tend the *dargah/darbar* (court).<sup>19</sup> The overlapping language that defines the court of man and the court of God is indicative of the fluidity between the two. While some Sufis distance themselves from the material world, others such as the Suharwardy order were the ruling family of Multan. There is a recognition in the historical literature of a constant state of negotiation and movement between major shrines

and rulers.<sup>20</sup> This same fluidity is not maintained when it comes to commenting upon those who are in service of the *pir* or king. Sacredness acts to fix these relationships in a static form where the flow from *pir* to servant is one way rather than mutual and imbricated. In theological terms, the power of the *pir* derives from their closeness to God, demonstrated by their austerity, enactment of miracles and broad learning. These aspects are eulogized in the songs sung by the *qawwals*, as Qureshi notes that *qawwals* 'connect the Sufi listener with saints through intensification of the individual listener's spiritual connectivity (*nubat*) with the living, present *sheikh* [*pir*] who ritually embodies the saint and his lineage'.<sup>21</sup> In accentuating the role of the *pir*, the agency of the *qawwals* who are part of the attraction for the audience with their musical tributes is diminished. This is problematic given that the written poetry of the Sufis remained mostly an internal matter, in languages (Persian, Arabic) inaccessible to the layperson, and it was left to the musicians to provide audiences with an understandable message. This in turn conferred recognition that ultimately gave the *pir* his social power. The role of the audience is further demonstrated by the fact that devotees shifted allegiances, partly explaining change and development in Sufi orders and multiplicity of shrine practices.<sup>22</sup> This inversion of the hierarchical ordering, though, is not in the *qawwal's* interest as it is the *pir* and the shrine that provides legitimacy and performance space. Rather, the projection and protection of an authentic form of *darbari qawwal* (attached to a particular shrine), the group of musicians as devotees, is sustained by *pir* and musician alike. Sanctity of the hierarchy is maintained even while it is contested, a point which will be examined in greater detail in the section on audiences.

Just as Moinuddin Chishti is seen as the founder of the *Chishti* Sufi order and Nizamuddin as one of the most popular *auliya* of North India, the twelfth-century figure of Amir Khusro (1253–1325) provides a parallel line of historical descent for the musicians. The *qawwal bachche* (children of *qawwal*), whose descendants still play at Nizamuddin's shrine and who are always in some way implicated in the lineages of *qawwali* groups, either as kinfolk or as teachers, trace their own patriarchal lineage to Amir Khusro himself. In oral tradition, the *bachche* are the original musicians trained by Khusro. He, as the ultimate devotee of Nizamuddin, produces poetry and music for this beloved master, his *shaikh*, his *pir*. The hierarchy that operates between the *pir* and the musicians, the *pir* and the *murid*, the master and the follower pervades the discourse on *qawwali*. The musicians' own agency is only refracted through their ability to fulfil their patrons' needs and duties. This conception, however, belies the actual status of

Amir Khusro, who was a court poet of the Delhi Sultanates, employed by at

least five of them, the last being Ghiyas al-Din Tughluq, father of Muhammad Tughluq. But this was no ordinary court, as these were the erstwhile rulers of India. This clearly placed Khusro in a world of court music and musicians. Not only credited with the authorship of the *qaul* 'Man Kunto Maula' – the opening invocation of the ritual *qawwali* performance – but also with the invention of the *tabla* and *sitar*, Khusro is certainly the *pir* of musicians. His tomb is also in the Nizamuddin complex providing further indication of his eminence.<sup>23</sup> Khusro was unquestionably the most beloved of Nizamuddin's followers, in that their relationship is seen as reciprocal and hierarchical. There is also no doubt that the poetry that *qawwals* perform under the name of Khusro is devotional to Nizamuddin. Nonetheless, the vast majority of Khusro's writing output, which is still extant, consists of eulogising poetry for his courtly masters and Persian literary standards, as would be expected from his royal patrons. Historical research has also established that Khusro was probably not the musical founder of *qawwali*.<sup>24</sup> If this is the case, then why is he so central to the discursive production of the form? Is it because the general lowly status of musicians in the caste hierarchy is inverted by this beloved of Nizamuddin and poet of the royal court? But if this were the case then surely it would be the emotive power of Khusro's music, the *raags* he invented, that would be highlighted. Indeed, it is known that the beauty of his poetry was something to aspire to, but the *qawwals* do not emphasise this aspect in citing Khusro. Another argument could focus on the fact that Khusro is not of the spiritual kin line of Nizamuddin but is still buried in the same place and ultimately given similar stature, which would at least offer the possibility of moving outside of patrilineality and caste. This is also not given due regard, rather the dominant discourse emphasises kinship through the notion of *bachche*. Heritage and lineage, rather than performative ability or poetic prowess, are being protected by this narration. In Mandair's frame, a repetition of the *vedic* economy takes place, in which the oral tradition, emphasising the inheritance of Khusro in terms of authenticity and sanctity, relies on caste for its perpetuation.<sup>25</sup> The dissolution of the boundaries between lover and beloved, so often the themes of Khusro's poetry, is reinscribed into a hierarchical relationship of *ustad* and student/child.

The Punjabi *qawwals* interviewed actually came from a variety of musical backgrounds. In fact, none of them were from the family of the *qawwal bacheche*.<sup>26</sup> Their musical association with that lineage was often accounted for by the arrival of Tan Ras Khan from Delhi to the court of the Maharaja of Patiala, sometime in the late eighteenth century.<sup>27</sup> As M. Hassan of the Wehranwale *qawwals* relates: 'Our family are not hereditary *qawwals*. It's not in our blood, but we

have still been performing music for five to six generations. We learnt *khayal* from Tan Ras Khan of the Patiala *gharana* and then from Manzur Kaniyasi we learnt *qawwali*.<sup>28</sup> This distinction between *qawwali* and *khayal* is notable and is further enhanced by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan when describing his family's musical lineage: 'Our family is close to *dhrupad*, that we learnt from Behram Khan [who was in Ranjit Singh's court in the early nineteenth century] and we learnt *khayal* from the *qawwal bachche*.<sup>29</sup> These oral histories also indicate a much broader musical agenda than solely *qawwali*. As one of the Salamat family explains:

My *dada* [paternal grandfather] was called Sandhee Khan, and he used to teach the [Ad] *Granth*. He was a *rababi*, in his village: he would teach the children *Gurmukhi*, he would teach the *raag* with the *shabad*. We were too small to remember. Even those who had done a few classes at school they knew *Gurmukhi*. But my father knew it properly. That was the area in which we lived. This was what we all did. The village was in Kapurthala. Our village was two miles from the town.

Though the date is indeterminate, it seems that in the 1930s the family decided to shift from the village shrine to becoming *qawwals*:

Our father's *mamaji* [maternal uncle] started singing *qawwali*. There is a village called Khaira near Khojokee station. *Baba Rurra Khan* was a renowned *qawwal* there, as were *Baba Dina Khan Jalandhari*, *Baba Pir Dad Khan* (Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's maternal grandfather), and *Miah Maula Baksh*, *Baba Mistry Khan*. Our *dada* and father's *nana* [maternal grandfather] became involved with them and *Maula Baksh* was their *ustad*. My father took training, but our *dada* died when we were very young and so we were raised by our maternal family, which was where we got into *qawwali*.

This period coincides with reformists taking control of shrines and delineating them into discrete religious and legislative management structures: Sikhs with the SGPC and Muslims with the Waqf legislation, and in Pakistan the Auqaf board. After partition, the family moved to Faisalabad and became completely focused on *qawwali*. Though there is a specific concentration of hereditary musicians in precolonial Punjab, in what are now Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur districts, this conversion to *qawwali* also occurs in families that were resident in West Punjab. Arif Feroz from Gujranwala also traces a similar path in narrating his musical history:

Our grandfather was the *maulvi* [leader of prayers in the mosque], in the village. Sikh, Hindu and Muslim children used to come and learn from him. In our

family there were *rababis* who used to play in the *mandirs* and *gurdwaras*. He was the *ustad*, in village Saall, in Gujranwala. He used to teach *Gurmukhi* to the Sikh children, Mira Baksh was my *dada's* [paternal grandfather] name. He would teach Arabic to the Muslim children . . . He knew Urdu, Farsi, Hindi and *Gurmukhi*, but he didn't know English! These things were passed from my *dada* to my *abba* [father] from whom I have heard about them, and we had some books with Guru Gobind Singh's writings.

These memories of a prepartition Punjab reflect the slow process of musical-religious narrowing that was suddenly collapsed by partition, where hereditary musicians made a choice of moving to the newly formed Pakistan (those who did not move will be discussed in Chapter 6). In that process, a whole variety of performers found themselves needing to perform *qawwali*, who were no longer available or capable of providing sustenance. Contemporary, well-respected *qawwals* Sher Ali and Mehar Ali express the impact of partition in this interview:

Our elders were Clessicul musicians in the Sangrur/Barnala district. Our village was Seraan near Philaur but we then moved to Patiala *riyasat*. Our family were *shagirds* [students/disciples] of the Talwandi *gharana* and we have been associated with them for the last 4–5 generations. Our father's *ustad* was Mehar Ali Khan – Lyallpur – Nakodar. He is a relative of Hafeez Khan, from the same lineage. Much of the Talwandi *gharana* is no longer playing music. Since the time of Maulana Daad Khan we have been their *shagirds* (students). Our *ustad* was Ghulam Rasool Khan. Our father worked for the nephew of Maharaja Bhupinder in a small court which was part of the Patiala *riyasat*. My forefathers sang *dhrupad*, but we learnt *qawwali*. But if you know Clessicul then you can sing any style and go into any field. When we came to Pakistan, my father opened up a shop because there were no more *maharajas* to patronise the music . . . Over time people got to know that he was a singer, so people asked him to perform. That's why my elder brother learnt *tabla* to accompany him . . . My father saw that there was no market for Clessicul and that *qawwali* was more Islamic, so he said we should do that.<sup>30</sup>

This interview reflects the extent to which Jalandhar and Patiala were areas with institutions and families that could support a broader musical culture. As an elder from the Salamat family of *qawwal's* relates,

In that time [pre-partition], the established people in the area [Jalandhar] had a love of music. This place [Lahore, West Punjab], was a place of wrestlers with few musicians. In those times this was *baar*, which meant there was no

development here. And what was Lahore? – just twelve gates. Also in that time people appreciated *sur* [tone]. Now they have become *besura* [atonal].

Partition provides a certain kind of impetus to enter into *qawwali* for those from other musical traditions, but it also pinpoints the fact that musicians can become *qawwals* outside of a lineage that relates to Nizammudin. This possibility continues to exist in postcolonial East and West Punjab whereby young men, sometimes from hereditary musical families other times not, take up *qawwali*. In the following example from Gujranwala, the calling of the *pir* to do *qawwali* dovetails with a material predicament:

Music is in our family, though I worked in a factory from a young age. But when I got to the age of 14, I got into a fight with a supervisor and I hit him on the head and had to leave the job and run away from home . . . Then one night I had a dream and the *Pir* came to me and I was singing at the lead of a *qawwali* group . . . our elders did not want me to sing. . .but then, the first time I performed, the crowd were so happy we got about seven to eight thousand rupees and my father then said 'you carry on doing this!' that was about 15 years ago (Qamar Manzoor *qawwal*).<sup>31</sup>

In an interview in 2003 by filmmaker Ajay Bhardwaj in a shrine in Hoshiarpur, B. S. Bally talks about the formation of his group:

My father was a daily labourer. We are first generation *qawwals*. Our group's name is BS Bally *Qawwal*, Paslewale. It was with the grace of Sarkar Daata Braham Dass ji, we liked sitting with him and listening to his talks about Hazrat *Baba* Male Shah and Ajmer Sharif and Kaliyar. I had a little interest in singing and he would ask me to sing. We couldn't come here too often, because it is far from our village. In Rurka, near our village, there was a *mast fakir* (ecstatic holy man) who could not speak, but we would sing for him and he borrowed a harmonium for us. Then there was Khan sahib, who the *fakir* also got to teach us . . . he had learnt from Pandit Gurdasji from the Gwalior *gharana*, who was honoured at Harivallubh. With the blessing of the *fakir* and the teaching of the Khan . . . It was hard for us, we would work all day and then practice at night . . . then the *fakirs* put us on the *qawwali* line.

This role of the spiritual figure in these stories, one from West and the other from East Punjab, returns us to the opening of this section. These stories do not point to a historically justified, static, hierarchical relationship, rather the entwining of material need, musical training and the performative site of the shrine establishes a bond, less determined by a religiously sanctioned ordering.



Nonetheless, reproductive lineage remains central, even where authenticity is drawn from the *pir* as the response that we are ‘first-generation *qawwals*’ indicates.

Predictably, it is the boundary of gender that almost all *qawwals* are willing to agree on, and this is pointedly remarked upon by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in an interview with a female presenter at *Lok Virsa*: ‘Women do *qawwali* [in film songs] and this is totally wrong. It has been specifically said that women should not perform *qawwali*. They should not even listen to it. They should not take part in it, because this is *mazbi* [religious].<sup>32</sup> Though women have long participated in shrine music, Nusrat is here referring to the normative tradition of all male Sufi gatherings in which the *pir* controls the proceedings. Countering this viewpoint with ethnographic finesse, the pioneering research of Kelly Pemberton brings women back into the framework of Sufism at the empirical level.<sup>33</sup> Among Sufi and non-Sufi elites in the Indo-Pakistan subcontinent, the pilgrimage of women to saints’ shrines, their participation in mixed-gender assemblies, their observance of rituals involving possession, and their practice of making vows to a deceased saint have often been seen as evidence of either a general decline in Sufi practice or the illegitimacy of a particular order of Sufis.<sup>34</sup> Women *qawwals* and Sufi saints are the native informant (the subaltern woman) in the narrative of shrine cultures. It is their absence that permits a history of Islamic music that is linear and teleological.<sup>35</sup> The rationale for this decline is the ontotheological construction of religion, from which gender offers a distance from the male God and the female devotee, a distance that can never be traversed. From this viewpoint, the role of women, just like that of *qawwali* performativity, disrupts the bounds of religion, asserting time and the lived (postcolonial) present.

### *Sama* – spaces

Another description of *qawwali* derived from interview material and textual sources moves from word-based to the spatial, through the idea of *Sama*. This is an Arabic word that literally means ‘listening’ but has in Sufi textual sources become tied in with listening to poetry and music in order to attain mystical states. The historical etymology of religious shrine music, as *qawwali* implicates the *mehfil-e-sama* (gathering to listen) as the site to achieve spiritual enhancement. Controversial in the litany of theological discussion, *sama* usually implies a particular form of performance at Sufi shrines.<sup>36</sup> This has a resonance throughout the Muslim world, from North Africa to Indonesia, with various



forms and inflexions.<sup>37</sup> To universalise *sama* in this way requires it to encompass such a wide variety of practices, such that the whirling dervishes in Istanbul and the one-stringed Sain Zahoor in Lahore come to be placed in its remit.<sup>38</sup> This level of variation also exists in the many things that *sama* comes to stand for just within South Asia. Wasim Frembgen describes at least 20 different forms of musical ensemble and styles that come under *sama*.<sup>39</sup> In recognising this conundrum, he translates *sama* as concert, or the site of performance (not necessarily a shrine) and, therefore, opens up the possibilities for this multiplicity.<sup>40</sup> This is in direct contrast to the hierarchical orientation in the interpretation of the concept presented by scholars of South Asian Islam and ethnomusicologists. In that literature, the study of *sama* follows a ranked ordering that begins at an apex of textualist scholarship that presents the debates about the relationship of music and poetry with spiritual development and ends with the actual performance of music.<sup>41</sup> The debate among medieval Sufi scholars is primarily about the role of poetry (and as an ancillary music) to the spiritual path. The conclusion of these arguments leads to the establishment of *sama* as a legitimate practice, particularly followed by those of the *Chishti* Sufi order. Within the writings of *Chishti* Sufis, there is a further debate about the nature of the listening event. This is almost entirely concerned with the condition of the listener and the kinds of states that might be achieved, through the reception of poetry and music. Here the listener is sometimes also a performer, as the question of permissibility of dancing is a subject of further debate. Once lost in a mystical state of ecstasy (*hal*, *wajd*), it is possible that the listener is so overwhelmed that spontaneous dancing occurs, as poetically noted in Ernst: 'Every limb has a portion and pleasure in *sama*. The portion of the eye is weeping, the portion of the tongue is crying out, the portion of the hand is striking the garment, and the portion of the foot is dancing.'<sup>42</sup> This is a rare description of an embodied practice, whereas mostly the textual sources dwell on poetic/musical impact on states of spiritual awareness. In that regard, the *Chishti* Sufis developed elaborate rules for the listener in the *sama*, but these listeners were of an elite variety, in that they would be *pirs* or novices enrolled on the Sufi path. These were not rituals for the common devotee who constituted the audience for shrine music.

Regula Qureshi notes that at the shrine of Nizamuddin, the hagiographical birthplace of *qawwali*, the performances for the public and those held in private were marked by different sets of rules and engagements.<sup>43</sup> Public *qawwali* was seen by musicians and *pirs* alike in a somewhat disparaging light compared to the structured and formalized world of the shrine's inner sanctums in Delhi of the 1970s.<sup>44</sup> The textual debates about the 'proper' assembly, setting and procedure

for a *mehfil-e-sama* are brought to life in the descriptions offered by Qureshi. Led by the Sufi masters of the shrine, determined by them and indeed for their own spiritual elevation, the *qawwali* event and performance exist in a world of high culture, evoking and reevoking the weight of seven hundred years of tradition. This is a structuralist model and one of much elegance and detail. Of course the only modern technology deployed in the performances recorded by Qureshi are her video camera and tape recorder. But on closer scrutiny, the most powerful modern technique being mobilised is that of order and classification. The point of critique here is not to dispute the veracity of connections between *Chishti* Sufi thought and practice as manifest in the shrine of Nizamuddin, rather it is the manner in which this has become the principal and governing model for understanding the broad and diverse spectrum of *qawwali*. Indeed, 'proper' listening is only possible in the 'proper' space, created and governed by the *pir*. It is precisely at the limits of permissibility that the issue of propriety is itself exposed as contingent and constructed for boundary marking, rather than its ostensible aim. Pemberton's ethnography of women performing *qawwali* at the shrine of Gudri Shah in Ajmer clearly exposes the problematics.<sup>45</sup> Though generally seen as impermissible, women singing at this shrine (an arguable norm in the precolonial period) are still subject to rules and regulations of decorum. As such, it is implied that women's performance at smaller shrines or in closed-off private spaces is tolerated, but only in the presence of the 'spiritually enlightened' who are deemed capable of seeing through the temptations of the female form. It is these same places, though, where the descriptions of Qureshi indicate that only men are allowed as audience. Pemberton pithily notes that 'the question of occasion often elided with the question of place, and with the question of the authority of the *pir* who presides over the occasion.'<sup>46</sup> This 'elision' is precisely the space at which the sacred/secular concatenate, contradiction arises due to fixing a transcendental space of spirituality (religion) in contrast to the porous nature of these boundaries.

Another example can be found in pioneering research by Hiromi Sakata, who analyses the performances of over 20 concerts that Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's group gave in a variety of Pakistani and diasporic spaces.<sup>47</sup> The puzzle for the music professor is presented by the extent to which *qawwali* can be seen as a spiritual music, even though what might convey this religious element is often not clear from sites of performance or the often ambiguous lyrical content. In breaking down sites of performance into either the sacred or the secular, Sakata concludes that it is not evident from the setting which behaviour might match the distinction established by Qureshi, between religious and commercial

*qawwali*.<sup>48</sup> Rather, as Sakata argues, Nusrat's performance in the sacred setting of the *urs* of Data Sahib in Lahore is more demotic and carnivalesque than at the secular state-sponsored Lok Virsa institute in Islamabad. It is the audience that determines the mood, the most sober and attentive of which was that at the Washington University, where the concert attenders were the most mixed in terms of religion, ethnicity and gender. In a sense, the Western auditorium proves to be the most religious location (where sobriety is defined as religious) and the Lahori shrine, the most demotic. In an in-depth interview, Nusrat himself presents the music as the main appeal to non-South Asian audiences, which is logical given that they would not understand the texts and that it is the emotions present in the music that is the attraction *and* the message.<sup>49</sup> It is this approach to the music that provides the consistency across the various milieus in which he performs, rather than any identification of the sacred and the secular. It is this difficulty of classification, perhaps, which accounts for his absence in accounts of Sufi music or in historiographies of *qawwali*.<sup>50</sup>

Following the bounded logic of *qawwali*/shrine/Muslim music, it would be expected that the musicians at Nizamuddin shrine, carrying the weight of seven hundred years of tradition and asserting their lineage, would only maintain their practice within the strictures of the sacred music frame. Palpably, the performance space at the shrine in 2013 was still in front of the saint's tomb and the music was delivered without electronic amplification. However, recent interviews with the *qawwal bache* also show the pressure of earning income for ever-demanding and growing family members means that other forms of work are not refused.<sup>51</sup> Yet this would be just as authentic as the practice of Khusro, but is not drawn upon as a narrative for justification. Rather, the demands of neoliberal-capitalist existence in India mean that there is a need to have income outside of the shrine's offerings. Part of this demand arises from the popularity *qawwali* enjoys in metropolitan India, due in part to the international recognition of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. Even though the shrine-based *qawwals* have not directly benefited from the interest in Sufi music (as it has been marketed), it has provided an entry into *qawwali* for those interested.<sup>52</sup> Part of the self-identity of the *qawwal bache* is to create a space of authenticity from which these kinds of new trends in music can be criticized as being commercial and not true to the spiritual content of the music. Certainly, this is matched by the academic literature that has hitherto been focused on *Chishti* shrines and associated hereditary musicians.<sup>53</sup>

Playing at weddings, private *mehfils* and in contemporary Pakistan for TV channels is as much part of the life of *qawwals* in India and Pakistan as the continuing engagements at shrines and annual fairs for *auliya*. Throughout the twentieth century, the Bombay and Lahore film industries have cannibalised

the genre, just as they have with almost every other musical form on the planet.<sup>54</sup> *Qawwal bache* have often been instrumental in producing or at least aiding in the production of *filmi qawwali*.<sup>55</sup> Two sites of corruption emerge from these analyses: the first is the secular space of the auditorium or of the film set, and the second is the process of commodification. From this standpoint, audiences are represented as only being appreciative of music rather than the (sacred) lyrics. As Katherine Hagedorn ventriloquizes, 'In secularized *qawwali* concerts, the audience generally claps and sings along with the chorus, thus expressing its own spiritual needs and mimicking the interaction between the musicians and the congregants at a *sama*.'<sup>56</sup> The populous incapable of evaluating or appreciating the event can only mimic another more spiritually aware audience at the *sama*; another researcher makes a similar point: 'This popular form of *qawwali*, where the song texts switch to more worldly themes, has had an impact on religious *qawwali* all over India. Lovers of religious *qawwali* often complain that the best *qawwals* have deserted the *dargahs* [shrines].'<sup>57</sup> The implication here again is that the shift from shrine to commercial comes with a loss of religiosity. A focus on music, rather than on text, therefore belies the requirements of *sama* as arousing a state of mystical elevation. The arousal of the senses through music becomes entertainment once the locale of the shrine and the presence of the *pir* is removed. A related second aspect is the commodification of the form via electronic reproduction and sale initially via cassettes and now VCDs and data sticks. The disembodied *qawwali* may still transmit a message if the text is clear enough, but cannot generate the performance space of the *sama*. This type of versioning of authentic versus popular, shrine versus auditorium rests upon the sacred/secular divide, which, with only a superficial glance at the music's production and reception, is rather difficult to sustain. The tourist traffic from US ambassadors to Bangladeshi pilgrimages and the maze of small shops that crowd the route into Nizammudin evidence a long history of commodification and circulation. From the inception of the form, the music of the court and that of the shrine have long entwined as has the poetry and the participants. The lack of amplification in the *qawwali* at Nizammudin does not deter the sophisticated recording of the performances and their wide circulation through the internet. What is most important about Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is not that he represents a move to an inauthentic *qawwali*, shorn of its spiritual roots and legacy, rather that when agency is given to the musician outside of the patron purview (of Sufi shrine or Mughal court), then they are able to be versatile, respond to the market and retain a narrative about their tradition. But that is not the tradition of the Sufis and of textual authenticity, but rather of music as a changing conveyor of a distinct aesthetic.

## Musical absences

The dominant historical account of *qawwali* as an Islamic musical form, with textual sources at the basis of its authentication, entails a sleight of hand. Beginning with the *qaul* and *sama*, the medieval debates make no mention of musical form, genre, style or even musicians.<sup>58</sup> Rather, the relationship of concern is between poetry and spiritual contemplation, with the addition of music as an enhancement of the poetry. This discussion is generally theoretical and at its most basic level is a debate in Islamic legal jurisprudence about the legitimacy of *sama* as a form of contemplation, rather than a description of the poetic/music aesthetic. Once *sama* is demonstrated to be valid, there is a series of further debates, often between and among *Chishti* Sufis, about the role of *sama* in mystical practice, accompanied by a codification and set of rules for establishing the proper conduct of the *mehfil-e-sama*, but even here no mention is made of specific musical type, other than perhaps to denote generic notions of seriousness and against frivolity.<sup>59</sup> It is to twentieth-century practice that notions of musico-textual authenticity become issues of concern. Unlike *kirtan*, where Singh Sabha reformists pay some attention to its performance, it seems that *qawwali* is packaged with all those activities associated with shrines by reformists.<sup>60</sup> Though the issue of *sama* is defended by *Chishtis* throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, it follows the format of the previous debates.<sup>61</sup>

The issue of colonial modernity then comes in the form *qawwali's* narration in ethnomusicology, rather than among native elites. Qureshi's studies and interviews with *qawwals* provide an indication of the format of the *sama* in the language of religious reform. Most evident is the primacy given to text rather than music style in determining the authenticity/sanctity of the *qawwali*. Proximity to Arabic/Persian poetry reflects the status of a performance; the high tradition of 'proper' *qawwali* is performed at a shrine of a historically verifiable Sufi, to a set pattern beginning with the evocation *Man Kunto Maula*. Persian is the preferred language of these genuine *qawwalis*, and attention is paid to the form and presentation style. This is more 'ethnos' than musicology as the social status attributed to a language is not translated into aspects of format. Where issues of musical format make an appearance, it is inevitably association with the Classical that makes for the highest status. As Qureshi notes, the classification of *qawwali* musically ranges 'from near classical melody pattern[s] . . . that carry most status [to] distinctly popular tunes or film (*filmi*) tunes [that] carry the least'.<sup>62</sup> Amir Khusro's repute as the inventor of the *sitar* and *tabla* and with the development

of a number of *raags* that fuse Persian and Indic styles is a stock narrative in the Hindustani *qawwals'* stories of origins, as Ayaaz Fareed nicely demonstrates in the opening to this chapter. In this way, *qawwali* is placed at the origins of North Indian Clessicul music as it is practiced (rather than theorised in Sanskrit texts). Though there is clearly much reference to music in Khusro's literary output, it is not clear how much of this is translated into practice, especially when it comes to the issues of instrument development and musical innovation.<sup>63</sup> It is more likely that as the spiritual legend of Nizamuddin grows, so does the influence of Khusro on the developing world of music. As it is only in the later Mughal period that Khusro emerges in the Persian chronicles as the inventor of new *raags* and instruments.<sup>64</sup> The oral hagiographies seem to have played little part on actual development of musical practice in terms of instrumentation or *raag*. Almost all contemporary *qawwals* adopt the harmonium and *tabla* as their choice of instrumentation, rather than the *sitar* or *dilruba*, even though these arrive with colonial modernity and are of the same era as the development of the *filmi* tunes that are considered of low status.

Instrumentation seems to play no part in the maintenance of the spiritual hierarchy. The shift from *sarangi* and *shenhai* to violin and clarinet through the twentieth century to the increasing dominance of the harmonium suggests that by the twenty-first century this is the sole melodic instrument in *qawwali*. In these rapid changes, the impact on the Clessicul/religious conundrum seems to be left untouched. The decrease in use of the *sarangi*, with its link to courtesans and feminine sensuality/sexuality, seems to mirror a need for music to be seen as serious, for it to be religious and respectable. At the same time, *sarangi* players themselves are seen as inferior in the musical social hierarchy due to accompanying courtesans.<sup>65</sup> Nonetheless, for the maintenance of certain elements of Clessicul music, the presence of a *sarangi* and *shenhai* would lend authenticity and enable the singing of *raags* that contain nontempered tunings or melodies that require sliding (*meend*). Only one of the *qawwals* interviewed was cognizant of the changes in instrumentation:

My *dada* and father sang *dhrupad*. That was true music; that was the gift of Allah. There was great depth in their voices, in their songs. Today it is not there. My father would sing with the *sarangi* and the *dilruba*, these are the instruments that are related to the actual tradition of *qawwali*. The *dhama* was much bigger than now; the singing slower (*Salamaat baba*).

This acute reflection can be usefully contrasted with the relatively (formally) educated spokesman for Zahoor Ahmed, Maqbool Ahmed *qawwal*, who

articulated that the musicians in the family were still uneducated, whereas he understood the true meaning of *qawwali*. This knowledge led him to assert:

There is no other instruments for *qawwali* apart from the *tabla* and the harmonium, everything else directs attention away from the words it is just for decoration.

This statement not only reflects a modern viewpoint, it also indicates how this incorporates musical amnesia, a forgetting that opens up the space for a more religiously acceptable textual domination in analysis of *qawwali*. Even Qureshi, when commenting on the instrumentation in a 1971 recording of Ghulam Farid Sabri, is able to remarkably state: 'they range from the traditional harmonium and *dholak* for items of orthodox religiosity'.<sup>66</sup> The use of the term 'orthodox' is no doubt an accurate reflection of the textual content of the *qawwali* under consideration. But to define the harmonium as 'traditional' and therefore appropriate refutes the previous distinction between Clessicual musical instrumentation and popular music (here *filmi*). The kinds of contradictory moves become necessary to maintain a hierarchical structure of the understanding of *qawwali*, which in fact flows both from the historicist reading of the form and from a requirement to maintain its religious boundaries.<sup>67</sup> The multiplicity of musical *qawwali* played at weddings or in films is recognised by Qureshi and usefully classified under the generic label 'Muslim devotional' music. Burney Abbas deploys the category of 'Sufiana Kalam' to relate the history of other performers 'who sing the words of vernacular and local Sufi poets in a folk idiom'.<sup>68</sup> But these constructions, rather than situating the shrine-based forms in a broader setting, institute dichotomies between the 'pure' of tradition and the 'corruption' of the demotic. The apex of the hierarchy from which the *sama* can flow is set at the level of authored, written sources. 'Serious' *qawwali* is closer to an identifiable message of a historically verifiable Sufi. More recently, Newell in an otherwise lucid account of *qawwali* in Maharashtra juxtaposes a global pop *qawwali* against the *mehfil-e-sama* of a shrine, with Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan as a foil. This dichotomy serves to support a purist form of the sacred in contrast to the 'worldly' and capitalist. All musical forms that come outside of the *Chishti* core of *qawwali*, centred on Nizamuddin's shrine, are an imitation and to some extent a fall from grace, a shift from the sacred, textually oriented disciplined world to the chaos of the secular. Gender provides another link into the popular, such that the hugely successful commercial artist Abida Parveen can only have developed her musical style as 'imitation' rather than in relation to another stream of shrine music.<sup>69</sup>



## *Qawwali* sounds

Different musical styles accompany the broad distinctions in *qawwali* that reflect development through time. There are those that are ostensibly more oriented towards devotional themes, such as *naats*, which are in unambiguous praise of the Prophet Mohammed, through to more ecstatic *malang* and *fakir*-oriented arrangements.<sup>70</sup> These are often characterised in terms of the distinction between Persian or Purbi language *qawwali*, in which the mood is more sombre or more associated with a prescribed *raag/taal*, in contrast to the more folk-inspired tunes with stronger drum rhythms mostly in *kherva* taal (8-beat cycle) of the Punjabi *qawwali*. Before considering these issues empirically, it is also worth highlighting the one musical continuity that *qawwals* maintain and that is in the tune accompanying the lyrics *Man Kunto Maula*, which, according to Qureshi, is based on the *raag* Shudh Kalyan, which is given as follows:

*Aroh: sa Re Ga Pa Sa Da Sa*

*Avaroh: Sa Ni Da Pa Ma Ga Re sa*

*Man kunto maula: Pa Ma Da Pa Ga Re Ga Ma (tivar) Ga Re Sa Sa Sa Da Sa Re Ga*

This transcription of *Man Kunto Maula*, given in Western notation by Qureshi, when transcribed back into some form of Indian notation actually is more accurately described as Yaman Kalyan, as the *madhyam* (*Ma*) is performed in both *tivar* (sharpened) and *shud* (natural) forms. In fact, this is the description of the *raag* given by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in his performance while in residence at Washington University's musicological program.<sup>71</sup> In this rendition, Nusrat also refers to the *taal* as *sitarkhane* (16 beats). In considering this tune among the leading Punjabi *qawwals*, with only some embellishment rather than major alteration, all of the 20 groups sampled performed the same opening of the *qaul*. The only recorded exception I came across is by Rasheed Ahmed Fareedi *qawwal*, who in the opening to his version argues that Amir Khusro gave instructions about the correct *raag* and *taal* and that most *qawwals* do not play the *qaul* in the correct *raag*, which should be Bhupali.<sup>72</sup> This is a *raag* of five notes, *Sa, Re, Ga, Pa, Da*, and is actually very similar to Shudh Kalyan, in that both share the same notes in the ascension. But the addition of the *Ma* on the descent does make quite a difference in listening to the two versions.

Broadening the scope, only one recording by Aziz Mian was found that actually included the instrument that Khusro is said to have invented: the *sitar*.<sup>73</sup>



The second half of the *qaul* is called the *tarana*, which translates to song from Persian, but has come to represent a style of North Indian singing, in which syllables rather than words are used. In the *qaul* these are *Dara dil-e dara dil-e dar-e daani. Hum tum tanana nana, nana nana ray, Yalali yalali yala, yala ray*. Whether these were actual words at some stage is not possible to assume, but the use of *tarana* generally refers to singing syllables without specific meaning. The place afforded to *Man Kunto Maula* does not stretch to other Persian language (Farsi) *qawwali*. If we take the often recorded *Chashme maste ajabe*, another text by Amir Khusro, the setting transcribed by Qureshi is in *raag Kaafi*. Though the multiple recorded versions of the song have been performed in various *raags*, the same can be heard in the other often-sung Persian poets such as Rumi, Hafez and Jami. The question then arises is whether there is any difference in the musical arrangement that might make a Farsi text more closely aligned to the Classical. A comparison between a number of Punjabi and Farsi text *qawwals* reveals a general similarity in the musical continuities, in terms of the use of *raags* or folk tunes and fairly common rhythmic cycles. A list of artists and performances is not offered here because the diversity and variety in each performance make comparison very difficult.<sup>74</sup> This is in contrast to the *kirtan* performances in the last chapter, where adherence to a textual standard provides stability and homogeneity.

The greater musical differences between Farsi and Punjabi *qawwalis* arise due to changing instrumentation, availability and use of echo effects through amplifiers and a general increase in the speed of delivery. Contemporary Punjabi *qawwals*, ironically, suffer from the overt success of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and attempt to copy his incredible delivery of *taans* (improvisation on the solfege syllables). This has resulted in a flattening out of the various styles that different *qawwali* lineages had developed. A pertinent example and one that demonstrates the complete absence of a link between musical style, lyrical content and religiosity is the track *Kadee saday des vi aa dola* (Sometimes come and visit our land, my love) by Mubarak Ali Makha and Niaz Ali, joined in the video by Majeed Faridee, a demonstration of the relative openness of these groups in the 1980s, when the recording took place.<sup>75</sup> Of particular note is the violin and clarinet, which play a role of accompaniment as well as providing additional melody lines. Here the multiple interpretation that the text invokes (sacred/secular) is also present in the format as the lead singer's voice is never singular, but part of a shifting multivocality in which instruments and other singers play a critical role.

Though there is clearly a lead singer, in total five of the party take turns to sing. The *qawwali* lasts nearly half-an-hour, which allows for a series of moments of musical intensity followed by lulls. This contrasts with the linear formats of much contemporary *qawwali*, where a slow start is quickly taken over by fast rhythms and slurred lyrics to a single climax, a format that fits better to the demands of the market place and impatient audiences. Mubarak Ali Makha, *Baba* Kibriya, Maulvi Hassan Wehranwale and Santoo Khan represent the last vestiges of a prepartition Punjabi *qawwali* with their own musical style and approach.<sup>76</sup> The next generations of these families have inevitably veered towards a homogenous repetition of the tunes that Nusrat made popular and also the primacy of the individual musician.

### Textual turns

If sacrility and sanctity present in *qawwali* is not maintained by the musical arrangement, is it then sustained by fidelity to an authenticated set of texts? This emphasis on textual authority was most notable in the last chapter when it came to the singing of *kirtan*. Amir Khusro retains a central place as one of the *bazurgs* who are sung by *qawwals*, but the lyrics of his songs are themselves open to an interpretation that can place the beloved in the role of God, or in the role of a young boy or a pretty maiden. An example out of many is:

*Ziehal-e miskeen makun taghaful, duraye naina banaye batiyan;  
ki taab-e hijran nadaram ay jaan, na leho kaahe lagaye chatiyan.*

Do not overlook my misery, by the blandish of your eyes,  
and weaving tales; My patience has over-brimmed,

O sweetheart, why do you not take me to your bosom?<sup>77</sup>

Indeed, there is a great deal of flexibility in terms of what type of poetry is sung and the range of poets who are sung. *Kalam* (poetry) of the *bazurg* can refer to the poetry of a school teacher or an educated person who would often provide lyrics to the *qawwals* we interviewed.<sup>78</sup> These poets of the day would at some point refer to a specific figure, often Bulleh Shah, in their Punjabi poetry as a marker of inspiration rather than as the source of the poetry. *Qawwals* themselves would write poetry to their own musical compositions and were certainly the authors of couplets that would be inserted into the main

text (*girha*). The definition of *bazurg* itself was open to those not considered ostensibly 'Muslim' as the following interview with Zahoor Ahmed Maqbool Ahmed *qawwal* describes:

It does not matter where they come from. We are concerned with those who believe in oneness of God (*tawheed*).<sup>79</sup> Those who follow this we sing their words, so we sing Kabir, we sing Nanak it is all in the same direction.<sup>80</sup>

This interview took place in 2013, and the founder of this group, Zahoor Ahmed, also wrote poetry that the group-sung. For this generation of his grandchildren, he also represents a *bazurg*, but in this sense it is as an elder of their own family. The flexibility and openness that the articulation of *bazurg* enables means that Nanak and Kabir can be incorporated, and in precolonial Punjab, a range of other writers who would not be straightforwardly categorised as Sufi also fall under the remit. In singing Nanak, the rationale of *qawwali* as a means of attracting followers to Islam, as outlined in the first section of this chapter, is also held in tension.<sup>81</sup>

A further problem with attempting to maintain an idea of textual authority is that the *qawwali* format is performed at a level of intertextuality. Thus where *qawwali* texts are read to provide evidence for religious knowledge, they have to be squeezed into a framework driven by concerns about authenticity. The distinction between *mal'fuzat* literature ascribed to the words of the Sufi and *tazkiras* as 'biographical dictionaries or anthologies' of these figures made by Farooq Hamid, in his analysis of *qawwali* texts at the *urs* of Shiekh Farid in Pakpattan, is somewhat spurious when looking at *qawwali* performance.<sup>82</sup> *Mal'fuzat* are somehow given much greater sanctity, whereas *tazkiras* are more open to interpretation.<sup>83</sup> Though the basis of his analysis is formally correct, in that the performances contribute to the continuing creation of hagiographical accounts of *Baba Farid*, by distinguishing between the canonised words of the Sufi and the performative aspects, the distinction between *mal'fuzat* and *tazkira* takes on the shape of fixed and fluid. This is unsustainable as an analysis of the song *Farida, Turiya, Turiya Ja* (Farida, walk on, keep on walking) is shown in the article as not authored, whereas it is drawn from *Baba Farid's sloks* (couplets) as they are presented in the *Ad Granth*.<sup>84</sup> These words of Farid, as they have been written (since at least the late sixteenth century), have become source material for *qawwals* and modified accordingly.<sup>85</sup> This is not to argue that there are no textual continuities in the *mal'fuzat* writing tradition, but once these texts enter into the domain of the performative, they also become open to interpretation and to intertextual revision.

It is not the acts of changing texts though that is of concern here, rather it is the innovation of the musician responding to the local conditions. A recent example can be found in Ayaaz Farid's rendition of Kabir, in which Farid changes the ordering of words and in fact the meaning in the middle of his singing – going from 'There are many wells to which people go and draw water, the water is still the same' to 'There is one well and many people come to it'.<sup>86</sup> In postcolonial Pakistan, this assertion of a monotheism over a pantheism (one well over many) reflects Fareed's position in the new Islamic world in which he makes his living. Nonetheless, the *qaul* of the *bazurg* is demonstrated as being equally open to inflection. This technique is a systematic part of the *qawwali* genre and is referred to as *girah*.<sup>87</sup> Arif Fairoz *qawwal* from Gujranwala was patently eloquent about the *girah*:

The *girah* is there to add a sharper dimension to the lyric, that is already being emphasised or repeated. If it does not have that impact, it is not appropriate. This method of working is justified because all of the texts *qawwals* get from the Sufis are themselves interpretation, in their own languages, of the words of the Quran. Translation and therefore interpretation is at the heart of the process . . . but people do not think, so even with *Man Kunto Maula*, you would have to find the *girha* that fits with it. Everyone sings *Ali Imam mana masto . . . Ali* [Ali is my Imam and I am his servant] and then Man Kunto starts after that. But this makes Mohammed the servant of the *Maula* not the other way round, so this is not right. When we start this, we change this to, *Al gharas shahi, mimber gahee . . . bad sab ali mera*, If they don't know the appropriate *girha* then why bother.<sup>88</sup>

This emphatic summary justifying the appropriateness of the *girah* does not limit the poetic source, as Fairoz was also keen to emphasise. He would equally use Nanak, Mira Bhikh and Kabir in projecting the message he wanted to get across. Perhaps more significantly, the *girah* shifts agency away from the poet/writer/*pir*/Sufi/*bazurg* to the performer. Thus, while Bulleh Shah might be referred to as giving authority to the text, Maulvi Ahmed Hassan Wehranwale provides a rich vein of inserting his own interpretations into the midst, in which humour, sectarianism and politics can all feature:

Sunday *raat ko nikla hum*, it was rain *ke chum, chum, chum*, leg my *phisla, ghir*  
payah hum, uper umbrella, neech hum, vicho gal samaj lai

I walked out on a Sunday night

It was raining, chum, chum, chum

My leg slipped and I fell down  
Up went my umbrella and down went me

From the humorous, to the sectarian:

*Ik paase mere rain Barelvi, ik paase Deobandi, age piche shia, sunni, dadhi firqa bandee, ik mohalla ath maseetan, kis dee karan pabandi, vich vichaala sadee kotee, sadee kismat mandee! Gal samaj lai.*

On one side of my house live Barelvis, on the other Deobandis  
In front are Shia and behind are Sunnis  
So strong is this sectarianism that in one mohalla, there are eight mosques  
In the middle, is our house  
Which one shouldn't I visit?  
Our fate is bad!

And then if to finally bring the text into the postcolonial world:

On the one side Barelvi on the other Deobandi  
On one side India on the other Pakistan  
Four walls in one house all facing each other  
What have you done my beloved?  
(Maulvi Ahmad Hassan Wehranwale)<sup>89</sup>

These texts and their commentary reflect Maulvi Ahmad's reputation as a expert on taking *ayyat* (couplets from the Quran) and explaining them through *girah* in Farsi, Urdu and Punjabi. Intertextuality also resonates with the heterolingual domain, in which poetic and aesthetic requirements were perhaps equally as important as the message being conveyed. Arif Fairoz also makes this point: 'We also use the *girah* to give some entertainment to the audience, if they like a couplet or some phrase then we sing it faster with greater emphasis, with *takrar* (musical embellishment) and then look for other *girah* that will accompany it.' The question of textual authority as the key to authenticating *qawwali* becomes inverted when the living author is part of a symbiotic music-poetic relationship with the *qawwal*, or the group itself contains a writer.

The Punjabi poets such as Khaki, Nijami and Ranjha who wrote many of the still well-known *qawwalis* such as *Ni mai jana jogi de naal* and *Shaama pe geya* have no published books in their name. It is only in the interviews of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and other *qawwals'* memories that they have some life, indicative

that their relationship with the *qawwal* community seemed fairly intimate, as the following interview with Mohammed Jameel illustrates:

We were very close to Khaki Sahib he would stay with us in Lahore. He wrote the song 'Why have you not come *Ranjha*?' sitting here in this courtyard. He asked us to put the tune to the words. We have sung Khaki at Data Sahib and Ganj Baskh. His son lives in Faisalabad and may be collating a book of this writings.

Unlike the Sufi or *pir* who is immortalised through the bricks and marble of the shrine, these poets seem to slip through the gaps. In contrast the *pirs* of Golra Sharif, who have also penned to very popular Punjabi *qawwalis* such as *Sade nehre vas ve dholan yaar* and *Sik chaj koy yaar*, are known due to the shrine rather than this musical contribution.<sup>90</sup>

This is not to say that historical poetry is not important in the contemporary repertoire. The Punjabi *qawwals* take the epic love story *Hir Ranjha* by Waris Shah and its interpretation in *kafis* by Bulleh Shah as key motifs in their performances. These are most open to interpretation and poetic rendition, powerfully illustrated by the track *Jogi nachiya te ishq ne nachaya* (the *jogi* danced and it is love that made him dance) written by Zahoor Ahmed *qawwal*. The song begins with an opening spoken scene setter in which *Ranjha*, disguised as a *jogi* (follower of the Nath sect) comes to the Khaira's village to see *Hir* and is there confronted by *Saidee* (*Hir's* friend). The song continues in the form of an ongoing dialogue, with *Saidee* questioning *Ranjha* about who he was and the reason for his dance. His response was that love had caused him to dance. The song proceeds with *Ranjha* explaining the circumstances in which dancing was appropriate. Dancing for money or for fame or for pleasure or even to incite others to dance was not acceptable. However, dancing for the love of your beloved, the friend or the partner is within the bounds of acceptability. *Saidee* still does not believe this account and the song then proceeds to list those who have danced:<sup>91</sup>

Who says that only Bullah Danced?

Gabriel danced, the sky danced . . . Pure Mohammed came and saw the scene

Allah started dancing, so what if the *Jogi* danced . . .

This is a long story and time is short, so let me finish

No prophet has come without dancing

124 000 friends of God [*auliya*] have all come dancing

Pure Mohammed finished his *haj* and started dancing  
 Shah Mansoor, full of love, climbed onto the gallows and danced  
 Hussain's head was on the spear and his body was dancing  
 Hussain carrying the dead body of his son was dancing  
 The *Jogi* danced.<sup>92</sup>

Various figures from Muslim history are drawn into a narrative of dance, perhaps most potently in the scene of the Karbala where the macabre scenes of death are drawn into a dance as if to accentuate the serious nature of the enterprise.<sup>93</sup> This text rendered sometime in the mid-1970s to some extent represents what could be called an ecstatic form of devotion in which all boundaries are dissolved.<sup>94</sup> It is not a surprise that those who have studied South Asian Islam from the standpoint of textual poetic sources keep away from the *qawwals*.

Zahoor Ahmed is pushing to the limits the bounds of Islamic theology, but the *qawwals* are also able to incorporate texts from whatever source is deemed appropriate. For example, this couplet from Bhai Gurdas, one of the key commentators on the Sikh gurus and a writer sung by *kirtanis*, was often quoted by *qawwals* to me:

*Jaahar peeru jagatu gur baabaa ||4||*  
 Such a grand Guru (Nanak) is the manifest  
 spiritual teacher of the whole world.

This has been taken up in association with other verses to show Nanak's affiliation with Hussein:

The Guru of the world is Hussain  
 There is not Guru like him  
 What he did  
 When the world hears it cries (as rendered by Arif Fairoz).

Another take on one of Bhai Gurdas' verses, though this time accredited to Chandu Khan, father of *Baba Kibriya*, and attributed to Nanak by Arif Fairoz at the time of his death:

Hindus say I am theirs,  
 Neither am I of the Muslims,  
 I am a puppet of five senses and Nanak is my name<sup>95</sup>

This type of intertextual rendition has diminished with the absence of sources and audiences to sustain it, though the internet and musical cross-fertilisation across the Indo-Pak border remains significant. The migration and settlement of Punjabi communities since 1947 in the United Kingdom and North America has opened up a space for this repertoire to be performed. Santoo Khan *qawwal's* family narrative quite neatly sums up these multiple trends:

Santoo Khan lived in Chaula Sahib, in district Amritsar, in pre-partition Punjab. The family were hereditary musicians, but Maula Baksh (*urf* Santoo Khan) spent time in China before returning to his village. While there he learnt music from the family friend and well known *rababi*, Bhai Lal. He started to work at the *gurdwara* in Chaula Sahib and he was named, Sant Khan, reflecting his knowledge of the scriptures [*Ad Granth* and Sufi]. After partition the family moved to Lahore and the party was renamed as Santoo Khan to reflect the changes in post-partition Punjab. Manzoor Santoo Khan carried on with the family tradition and the troupe were known famously for the accompanying clarinet playing. Subsequently, the next generation of Santoo family *qawwals* became transnational, with Asif Ali Santoo Khan shifting to South Africa and engaging in a fusion of western music with *qawwali*. Sarfaraz Santoo Khan now heads the family in Lahore. He reflects on his grandfather's practice and their contemporary demands: 'My grandfather (Santoo Khan) sang Nanak and Kabir, but no one wants that now. When we went to England we had a mehfil in which there were mostly Sikhs and my father sang, *Gur bin gyan nay, gur kee baat batay re*; and they were very happy with us. These are mystical poems. We say Allah, they say *bhagwan*, there is no difference, but if we do this here [in Lahore] then they think we are talking of Hindus. They don't understand and so it stops us and there is nowhere to sing that kalam here.

The interviews cited here took place between 2010–13 and indicate that the memory of living *qawwals* contains examples from different textual sources. This is in contrast to the *qawwali* in the market place of cassettes and MP3's in West Punjab, which has become increasingly bifurcated in terms of the singing of *naat* or what will be described in further detail in the next chapter as folk. Indeed, the most popular *qawwali* texts circulating at the time of this research were *Chirriyaan boldeean, data dee galee vich* (the sparrows are singing in the lane where the giver-*pir* lives) by Sher Miandad *qawwal* and the source of much consternation for those interviewed. This type of lyric from a famous lineage of *qawwals* was considered by other *qawwals* and audiences as symptomatic of a decline in the form, but this sensibility reflects a relationship between performers, patrons and audiences that warrants further exploration.



## Performers, patrons and audiences

Placing *qawwali* in a narrative of sacred music requires fixing a number of relationships in a hierarchical manner. Ultimately God is at the top of this pyramid with his friends, the *auliya*, representing him in the world through their bases at shrines. These *pirs* or *sants* (each with a different inflection, but occupying a similar place in the hierarchy) teach those who are close to them and may go on to attain an exalted space (in itself an act of piety for the server). Those who give their service to the *pir*, if they come from an artisanal class (such as the builders of shrines) or the propagators of the *pir's* word (such as poets and *qawwals*), have better status than those who come to make food or keep the premises clean (this is also a gendered division). In this social construction, the *pir* controls the space of performance, the text and the type of music that is to be performed.<sup>96</sup> The narrative of decline in the genre is, therefore, blamed on the *qawwals* by the *pir* and his followers (*murid*) and the reverse also holds true. The wider audience is always a common foil against which both groups can lay blame for falling standards. Robert Rozenhal, in his analysis of *qawwali* among the *Chishti-Sabri* sect of Sufis based on fieldwork carried out in 2000–1, follows a standard narrative about the proper setting, the appropriate music and the requirements from *qawwals*. Interviews with disciples also produce a normative response about the problem of *qawwals*: ‘Their [disciples] criticism of popular *qawwali* is that it reduces mass-produced music to a form of commercialized entertainment that is often insensitive to the Sufi tradition.’<sup>97</sup> This is taken one step further, with reference to who is patronised by the order, as Rozenhal comments: ‘I was told, for instance, that throughout the 1970s Shaykh Shahidullah Faridi [shrine caretaker] pointedly refused to allow either the Sabri Brothers or Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan to perform at the annual *urs* in Pakpattan.’<sup>98</sup> This was ostensible because they were too commercial; however, this exact issue is presented from the *qawwal's* side in a biography of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. In this account, the reason for the family not performing there is due to a prior conflict, as Rubi notes: ‘One such *mazaar* [shrine] was at Pakpattan, of *Baba Farid Shakar Gunj*. When the government wanted to take it under its control, *Ustad Fateh Ali Khan*, the father of Nusrat, was in favour of the measure and this angered the *Mutawwali*, the keeper of the *mazaar*, *Dewan Sahib Fateh Ali Khan* who sang on the *mazaar* was not invited after that and he did not go there to perform his *qawwali*.’<sup>99</sup> These competing narratives are further complicated by the fact that in the 1980s Nusrat certainly

performed at the shrine and his family defined their affiliation to the *Chishti-Sabris*. This is not to dispute the veracity of the claims made by Rozenhal and the attitude of the *pirs* and their followers, rather it demonstrates that, in the face of the textual-theological arguments they assert, the voice of the *qawwals* is delegitimized and silenced.<sup>100</sup>

In our discussions with *qawwals*, the relationship with the *pir* oscillated between those who were appreciated for giving good patronage and deprecation for those who do not. Patronage is not only financial but also relates to an understanding of the aesthetic form, resulting in a request for good quality music. The following two interviews reverse the criticism made of the *qawwals*, by locating perceived decline of standards in *pir's* ignorance:

To save *qawwali* we have to sacrifice money and stand up for our principles. I went to a *darbar* and the *pir* said, 'sing some Sohni'. That was before we even opened the harmonium. Then I started to do the *qaul* and he said, 'sing Sassi, if you don't know Sohni' . . . then he said 'sing something for Ghaus Pak' . . . They don't even know that Amir Khusro is the granddaddy of Ghaus Pak . . . And look, the *pir's* themselves, they don't know Farsi and they just want something to keep their followers happy. Even the new generation of *qawwals* don't know a words of Farsi, so what do you expect? (Ijaz *qawwal*)

If we sing good poetry and they [the *pir* and followers] don't understand it, they will take it badly. They have no depth and they are interested in either money or keeping their followers happy. (Akhtar Sharif Aroojwale)

This simple reversal still evokes an authentic genre in perennial decline; it is just that the blame lies in the patron rather than the musician. The political economy of the relationship though is never too far from the surface, as the following statements illustrate:

We sing what the *pir* wants and the audience want, that way we get 20 000 Rs and survive. (Qamar *qawwal*)

The good poets have gone and we are not selling *desi ghee* [pure clarified butter] which is our fault. People want to make quick money, without doing the work. We just follow the audience and are looking to make quick money. We don't show what we have. (Rehmat Ali *qawwal*)

This final quote, though remorseful, also indicates the way in which the notion of deterioration is based in the amorphous object of the audience. Ultimately, it is the listener who decides what is performed or not, by not giving money or just walking away from the performance. In that sense, the decline thesis itself is

a rhetorical device, from which to assert a place in the social hierarchy, a point pithily made by Jameel *qawwal*:

So when the Auqaf president at Data Sahib or *Baba Fareed* [shrines] says there can be no *filmi* tunes performed there, they only do it to maintain their own reputation. The public wants us to sing those tunes and so we do it. There is no earning without it. And now the *darbar* is all that is left. In Lahore there used to be much more opportunities to perform at weddings and private *mehfils*. Now there are very few.<sup>101</sup>

Here the audience is the ultimate arbiter of what is sung and what is not. Akhtar Sharif, who is a seasoned musician, was quite sanguine about the state of *qawwali*:

The audience demands a kind of *kalaam* (poetry) and those guys who sing it are doing it for entertainment or for money and they sing for a small amount of money or even a lot and people are willing to pay for it. Here is an example:

*Data dee gallee vich makan hona chayda*

*Naal chota jiya hamam hona chayda*

*Naan thaun da intezaam hona chayda.*

*I want a house in the Data's [pir's] lane*

*With a bath and a drain*

*Cleaning inside is such a gain*

So there is no harm in that. Even if we criticise them, what difference will it make? The audience is still there . . . There are probably 50 parties in Pakistan who are able to carry on with the *kalaam*. And the audience for good quality in my time has increased . . . we get invited to sing *kalaam*. Recently in Haveli Lakha we performed 4 hours of Farsi and actually the *pir* did not ask, but the people we were with, wanted more popular tunes.

Akhtar Sharif's wise and witty repost was due to the popularity of the previously mentioned song 'the birds are singing in the lane of the *pir*'. But the more serious point relates to the way in which he articulates the role that audiences play in the type of performance that is given; this point is developed in more detail by one of the elders from the Salaamat family:

There's a difference between performing for one or a few people and performing for 500, to keep those people happy requires a different approach. You have to make sure that people understand what you are singing, whereas when you see someone who is an appreciator or even a crowd that is known, then you perform

Farsi for them or different styles . . . But the audiences is no longer educated to understand the knowledge of the *babas*, this Lahore even, the people here only have book knowledge. They don't have an understanding of the knowledge of the *fakir* or the *darvesh* . . . so they don't appreciate it or patronise it and in fact they call music un-Islamic and turn towards *naats* which don't require any deep understanding, but are simply good praise of the prophet. (Salaamat *Baba*)

All of the interviews with *qawwals* repeated the normative notion that linked depth with Farsi, but recognised that each performance is a delicate negotiation of the social relations between performer, patron and audience. Rather than a predetermined agenda completely controlled by the *pir* and his disciples, an assessment, appreciation and understanding of the social milieu in which the performance is taking place is at the roots of any performance. This is the cusp of the sacred and the secular, where the demands and requirements of context, space and time shape the contours of a *qawwals* repertoire and how it is received and developed. Trapping it within the requirements of 'religion' is, therefore, to contain the heteroreligious elements of the form and put it to the service of a repetition of colonial modernity.

### *Dua* (Concluding supplication)

In framing a reformist agenda, Muslim elites in colonial India seemed more concerned with the land and property attached to Sufi shrines, rather than the musical and other ritual practices that were part of their living culture.<sup>102</sup> With the exception of constraints on gender and the barring of women dancing, shrine practices were largely left to themselves. The Pakistani state continues with this neglect, and to a large extent *qawwals* are left to fend for themselves in a marketplace that is confined to shrines, which are also subject to state patronage via the Auqaf board. It is the academic study of *qawwali* and Sufism more generally, deploying a humanities framework that takes religion as a transparent category that has been critiqued in this chapter. A one-dimensional view of *qawwali* as quintessentially religious and intrinsically Islamic has come to shape the understanding in much of the extant literature. This is in part due to the intellectual dominance of a particular brand of Sufism – the *Chishtis* – who are most associated with the *qawwali* form and who have attracted the most scholarship. Delhi is discernible as the ostensible birthplace of *qawwali*, and the shrine of Nizamuddin as the site of hereditary musicianship produces a powerful nexus drawing musicians, scholars,

devotees, tourists and commentators alike.<sup>103</sup> At the heart of this construction of *qawwali* is the mobilisation of history and ethnography to produce sacred sound. The multiplicity of shrine music, the easy blending into the domain of folk, popular and other forms of music momentarily surrenders to the discourse and debate framed by textual and religious scholarship. Reading the margins and footnotes of the literature on *qawwali*, the boundaries begin to blur in terms of musicians' practices that overlap with the domains of secular wedding and patron-sponsored events. It is too hard to maintain the purist stance towards the form and be true to its practitioners and myriad practice. The hermetic seal of *qawwali* scholarship should have been well and truly fissured by the emergence of the artist who brought *qawwali* in a commoditised and repackaged form to the West: Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, a spectacular musician who was consummately able to 'play' both the historical narrative of *qawwali* as well as any other genre he chose to. But his life and canon have been sorely neglected by academic scholarship from either an ethnomusicological or South Asian Islam religious specialist perspective. Nusrat's musical journeys open up the space for the role of *qawwals* as textual interpreters rather than solely as musical functionaries to the *pir* and patron.

*Mirasis* and *rababis* embody the heteroreligious, heterolinguistic terrain of precolonial Punjab sometimes, though rarely becoming solely associated with a shrine and becoming *qawwals* or to a *gurdwara* and becoming *kirtanis*. The interviews with Punjabi *qawwals* describe the processes of distinction and closure in which an already existing local tradition (*qawwal bachche*) is universalized and stands for religion/nation. This process presents opportunities for some musicians (Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's family) and loss for others (Sher Ali and Mehar Ali's family). It is also enforced through the formation of the nation-states of India and Pakistan, where secular India valorises its credentials as a nonpartisan (in religious terms) state by offering up cultural diversity in the form of *qawwali* as Muslim music. In Pakistan, the state neglects the arts and plays no part in formal sponsorship of music, but through the creation of the Auqaf department provides a source of patronage, which leaves *qawwals* to their own practices. Just as the SGPC is a neglectful patron, so the Auqaf proves itself to pay little attention to music, rather financial management and control remain central to its remit. *Qawwali* in West Punjab is not as moulded in the cauldron of colonial modernity as *kirtan* is, largely due to the failure of the Pakistani state to provide basic amenities to its people. The intact feudal structures of West Punjab support a vibrant rural shrine culture that provides

sustenance to *qawwals* outside of the remit of the state. Marginality helps to maintain the traces of a heterolingual and heteroreligious dimension to *qawwali* practice in West Punjab, while the normative discourses of religious music slowly transform the genre. In *kirtan* and *qawwali*, the (r)ejection of those elements of the genres that do not neatly fit into the classification of 'religious' end up in the residual category of folk music.





## Drumming Devotion

*One can consider the great achievement of Punjabi balladic art to be its blend of *ishq majazi* and *ishq haqiqi* – the worldly and the spiritual.<sup>1</sup>*

A winter's late night in 2009, in the courtyard behind the few shops that make up the hamlet of Rurki Kasba, near Punjabi University. A ramshackle tent had been erected. Inside, the floor was covered with a red carpet, and performing to a small group of about 15 men and a few women was the Rajpura *Baba*, head donned with a white turban and a *sarangi* in his arms. Accompanying him were two men on percussion instruments, one with the *dhad* and the other with a *dholki*. On entering the tent, I was guided to a makeshift shrine with a picture of *Gugga Jawahar Pir* sitting on a horse, in a frame surrounded by peacock feathers. I made an offering to the picture and sat down to listen. The *baba* proceeded to convey the power of the 'horse *pir*', combining story telling with truncated song sequences. With a raspy voice and a glint in his eye, the *baba's* white beard hid a youthful demeanour and charismatic performance bravura. As the night proceeded, some people came and others left, the listeners never growing to any great number. A few hours later, at about 3 a.m. the music came to an end and the last stragglers departed.

All across the Malwa belt of Punjab and North Rajasthan, singing at the *marri* (tomb) of *Gugga Pir* is a monthly event, peaking in August (*bhado*), when there are multiple festivals celebrating *Gugga's* death anniversary. Performing in the *dhadi* style, now so fused with the Sikh tradition, this *baba* did not arise from any musical background or any particular training. Four months later, when he was interviewed, this is how he described his entry into the world of performance:

For twenty seven years, I was a farmer, I sowed fields, here in Rajpura. Then there was a natural miracle. They say *Nanak mile achanak*: You meet your Guru suddenly . . . After 27 years of farming, it was lunch time and when you meet the



Guru, it can be wherever, he came into the field . . . I am uneducated, but I know the history, I learn it from the 'tongue and mouth' . . . Guru Maharaj said to me: What you are doing is not your way, you were a *sadhu* [holy man] in the last life, but what you are doing is not bad . . . but I can get you a government job, leave this . . . so I did lots of jobs . . . then when I had my last job, Guru Maharaj said, what are you doing? . . . *Gugga Rana* is who you should serve.<sup>2</sup>

Mysterious, bizarre, unusual and extraordinary are the terms that come to categorise the way in which any analysis of the many ways in which Hinduism and Islam come to overlay, merge, interface and blend in the environment of North India and beyond.<sup>3</sup> *Gugga* is a protean mystery, as the colonial ethnographers would put it, because we view religion through the lens of the hegemonic forms, Brahminism and Sharia Islam. It is labelled as folk or culture or 'cults' to further evoke another status, outside the norms of colonial and postcolonial classificatory schemes. How is it possible to talk of these forms as if they are the normal figures to which Punjabi worshippers are drawn or the most elevated and pure forms of actual practice, rather than a corruption? Here is the case of *Gugga Pir*, the Rajput Chauhan turned *pir* at the hands of the equally amorphous *Baba/Hajji* Rattan of Bhatinda.<sup>4</sup> At the level of social affiliation, the shrines of *Gugga Pir* are made and managed by those excluded from the framework of Brahminism or Jatism that comes to encompass and control the more formal religious sites of East Punjab. The opening quote to this chapter is from Hardial Thuhi, a collector of life stories of performers he calls 'folk *dhadi*' who sing at these shrines. Their ballads are the songs of the 'folk' religion and provide an ambient sound to institutionalised genres such as *kirtan* or *qawwali*. This does not imply that 'folk ballads' should be read as a 'kind of counter-narrative of Punjabi composite culture' against the influence of politics and religion, because, as Nijhawan rightly points out, of the intimate relationship between 'text, religion and politics'.<sup>5</sup> In the parlance of this book, there is no escape from colonial modernity, but it is not a totalising schema. Rather, those categorised as folk are excluded from the religious and Clessicual domains, retaining traces of the heteroreligious.

Discourse on folk religion prefigures the music that is performed at shrines to Durga and the various other Goddesses (Chintpurni, Mata Devi, Naina Devi) and to *Gugga* and various other *Goraknath* shrines throughout East Punjab.<sup>6</sup> The parallel discourse in West Punjab is that of folk Islam, encompassing shrines of the Imam Barri – the naked *fakir*, Shah Daula and Sehwan – the flying *pir*.<sup>7</sup> If classicisation takes shape through evacuating the space of the popular or reducing it to vulgar commercialism (*filmi*) or to folk (regional and linguistically specific), then it is precisely this premise against religious

Classical music is formed. In the previous chapter, there was an indication that *qawwali* in Pakistan had assumed many of the roles of folk music, as it was legitimated by an Islamic discourse, rather than connected to an Indic past. A similar process took place in the early part of the twentieth century with ballad singing, whereby the *dhadi* tradition went from a heteroreligious form to being closely concomitant with Sikhs. For performers, the transition from the realm of heteroreligious musical practice to a postpartition bifurcated world does not necessarily follow the course of reproducing colonial modernity in an echo of reformist concerns.<sup>8</sup> It is in those genres that have been excluded, folk and commercial music, that a whisper countering the decibels of colonial identity is vaguely audible. In East Punjab, the proliferation of commercial pop music, most notably through the globalisation of bhangra, has led to the creation of pop artists in their own right. These performers, nonetheless, engage with religious institutions and musical forms such as *kirtan* or Sufi music as part of their practice and output. Indeed, the route from religious performer to popular singer is welltrodden, as is the reverse.

It is the discourse on folk music and postcolonial popular music that provides the substantial area of inquiry in this chapter. Though these are subject to the same political influences and constraints as *kirtan* and *qawwali*, the significant difference is the lack of a connection with institutional forms of religion. Even where *qawwals* such as Maqbool Ahmed take the metaphor of dancing to an extreme, in their lyrical expressions there is still a recognisable association with Islamic historiography. What is on show in this chapter are musical idioms in which textual and musical evocation does not immediately lend itself to formal bounded religions. This is the mode in which popular music provides an underlying set of tunes and rhythms that can only contingently be understood as relating to a sacred site or person. Compositions and arrangements of music that transcend the political boundaries of India and Pakistan merge the religious traditions of Hindu, Sikh, Christian and Muslim, and play with abandon the terms sacred and secular. There is no historiography or textual debate that roots these narratives in a reformist setting. Rather this is the residue of colonial modernity, that which was excluded or not even considered worthy of alteration. Outside of studies of folk, much of the music that accompanies worship of the Goddesses or of *Gugga* or Sakhī Sarwar remains peripheral to formal academic consideration.<sup>9</sup> This is perhaps because it is mainly in the realm of music and an overlapping poetic tradition that mischievousness with religion is allowed or indeed tolerated. Religious identity has become an increasingly polarised and violently policed arena in South Asia where culture has become a site of inordinate tension.<sup>10</sup> The space

that musical practice opens up in questioning and melting fixed boundaries is in some sense odd given the relationship of musical production to capitalism and modernity more generally in South Asia. The trends identified in the previous chapters are more understandable as a reflection of dominant ideas.<sup>11</sup> However, at the margins of those genres and in what is defined as folk, remnants of a heteroreligious music are audible.

\* \* \*

Beginning with an insertion of the category folk into the topology of music that emerges out of colonial modernity, the lack of distinction, though certainly difference in register, between Clessicul and folk is demonstrated. This is made more explicit with the trajectories that folk follows in postcolonial East and West Punjab. It is East Punjab, with the state infrastructure of universities and formal cultural policy that develops the concept of folk music, resting on the secularisation of Sufi texts and the resituating of *rababis* from temple to folk musicians. Academic constructions of folk attempt to distinguish sacred and secular domains, but instead end up caught in webs of contradiction. Folk becomes the residue that which fails to be classified as religious. In India, folk is the form that needs preserving in the face of economic modernity and is contrasted to the high arts of the elite characterised by Clessicul music. In Pakistan in contrast all forms of music are outside of the purview of state patronage. It is the commercial market for music that actually enables the proliferation of music and it is in this arena that the genre of folk is most firmly established alongside, by the 1970s an emerging popular music, based in studio recordings and built upon cheap cassettes. Though not in any progressive way, popular music begins to unravel the gender, nation and caste boundaries that were foundational to the framing of folk/Clessicul music. Musician biographies again serve to illustrate the multiplicity and criss-crossing aspect of classification and categorisation. It is from these that the routes by which musicians become devotional singers and writers of devotional songs are exposed. This inverts the hierarchy and flow from the religious institution/text to the people via intermediaries to one in which the musician takes centre stage.

## Folk and Clessicul

As noted in Chapter Two, the category of Classical music in Northern Europe developed through a contrast to folk music. The definitions are inextricably

entwined and it is through the past music of European folk that a tie to the exotic was made.<sup>12</sup> The processes of forming the Clessicul, as Bakhle and other commentators demonstrate, is based partly on the exclusion of Muslim musicians or an opposition to the music they produce, rather than an antagonism to folk music. Though there is a connection between hereditary musicians (often Muslim) and the notion of folk, but this was not established by the colonial musicologists previously cited, as they were more interested in what Clessicul music should be. Much recent musicology shows the links between what is defined as folk melody and form and the *raag/taal* system as it has become instituted as Clessicul.<sup>13</sup> By briefly outlining the coeval terrain between hereditary musicians and the idea of folk, the intention is to validate the dichotomy of Clessicul/religious: folk/heteroreligious. The ejection of the heteroreligious from the religious is the same process by which Clessicul music maintains its distance from folk (and commercial/popular forms). There is an uneasy recognition that these conjunctions are somehow intimate, but a set of mechanisms and institutions are in place which keep them apart. Once the native musician (heteroreligious folk) are expelled, the religious and Clessicul can appear on the epistemograph, take their place in history, and mimic their superiors on the world stage.

The study of what became labelled folk music was always an ancillary to colonial administrators and ethnographers studies of tribes and castes. As outlined in Chapter Two, the debates about music up to the twentieth century were fixated with the fall from a high tradition, while the collection of folk tunes and lyrics was left to missionaries and administrators.<sup>14</sup> There is no distinction of relevance between those who do anthropology of folk music and those considering theoretical texts, as the ear to harmonise and civilise is all encompassing.<sup>15</sup> Farrell, ever obsessed with saving Indian music from the natives, cites a colonial administrator's rationale for collecting folk tunes '[to] relay back to Indians in schools, authentic aspects of their own culture, rather than impose an artificial idea of Indian musical culture derived from classical sources.'<sup>16</sup> Colonial modernity shaped and crafted designs of the folk just as it did for the Clessicul, but the lack of a direct link with a national project,<sup>17</sup> meant that after partition, an Indian Clessicul music was able to service the new nation, while folk remained the local residual and thus steeped in colonial terminology. Farina Mir usefully outlines the classificatory regime, based upon caste, drawn from district gazetteers and colonial ethnographies, that encompasses those involved in musical performance in early colonial Punjab, as follows:

*mirasis* . . . served a broader public through performances at popular venues such as fairs . . . *dhadis* – Sikh musicians and singers who performed at

*Gurdwaras* and as entertainers at large (there are also Sufi *dhadis*); *dums* – musicians and dancers, *bhirains* – drummers; *pernas* – known for their female singers; *qalanders* – . . . playing popular tunes, sometimes on bagpipes . . . *na't khwans* – who sang songs in praise of the prophet Muhammad; and *dastangohs* and *qissa khwans* – both groups of storytellers.<sup>18</sup>

This list might be usefully compared with that given by eighteenth-century writer, Waris Shah in the *qissa*, love poem, *Hir Ranjah*, a text which is rendered as folk poetry in post-colonial East Punjab and as Sufi mystical poetry, in the West. Though not specifically referred to in musical terms, one of the stanzas in *Hir Ranjah*, lists the feminine caste names of groups sitting around the well, including performers:

*malzadiyaan*, courtesans; *bhatetiyaan*, mistrels wives, *mirzadiyaan* (wives of *mirasis*),<sup>19</sup> *ramjatiyaan*, temple dancers, *bazigarniyan* (peripatetic singers),<sup>20</sup> *natniyaan* (theatrical dancer/singer), *raamjanetiyaan* (dancers for Ram), *paraiyaan* (*dhol* players), *peerniyaan* (peripatetic dancers), *sarsiyaan* (singers in praise of Sarswati).<sup>21</sup>

Though there are overlaps with the colonial list, there are others who do not feature, perhaps because Waris is listing those occupations that women as well as men do. The colonial lists' exclusion of women performers is because by the time the administration enters Punjab, Victorian values render any women musician as a courtesan/prostitute rather than the multiple social spaces that Waris evokes. Colonial elites reverberate these tropes, through the exclusion of women's spiritual practices, especially dancing and playing.<sup>22</sup> The mixing of women from 'high caste' with 'scavengers' and musicians in rituals at shrines such as that of *Gugga Pir* were seen as particularly antithetical to the new moral order that was being created.<sup>23</sup> Births, deaths and marriages were all times for *mirasans* (female hereditary musicians) to go into rural households to perform rituals accompanied by song.<sup>24</sup> These events became targets for reformists in the first half of the twentieth-century. In postcolonial India, these same songs, now excluded from the domain of religious ritual, are performed by male musicians, in public contexts, and get reframed as folk. It the native musician, the *mirasan*, who is rendered invisible, economically disenfranchised and ultimately rendered as the non-singing, reproducer of male lineages. In West Punjab, those very songs that are connected with women's rural activities, such as toiling at the spinning wheel or grinding grain reappear in the poetic and written texts of Sufis and *sants*.<sup>25</sup> Pioneering research on women's oral traditions have emphasised how these songs can be read as mechanisms for cathartic release from the strictures

of patriarchal society.<sup>26</sup> In Punjab, those songs that are labelled as longing or *birha geet* and marriage songs are incorporated into the masculine religious realm and acceded to the male authors of Punjabi spiritual music (Sufi *kalaam* and *Gurbani*).<sup>27</sup> The shift from women's spaces for collective singing to male performers in religious institutions is also constitutive of the boundary that had been erected between the secular and the sacred. It is not the *rabab* player who is the native musician to the Gurus and the *pirs*, but the women singing collective songs.<sup>28</sup>

### Folk residues

As reformists make exclusion on the basis of gender, there is also the creation of new categories, so precolonial accounts rarely utilise the terminology of *qawwal*, *kirtanis* or *ragis*, essentially the vocabulary that has framed the previous two chapters. It should be apparent that it is through the exclusion of hereditary groups (*dhadis*, *mirasis*) that the transformed religious tradition coalesces with the Classical. Thus the *rababis* are excluded (as Muslim *mirasis*, as defined in the colonial literature) to enable the formation of *Gurbani Kirtan* and *qawwali* reduced to an interpretation of the Koran, in the name of a modernising Islam.<sup>29</sup> These 'folk performers and ritual specialists' are seen by Oberoi in terms of representatives of 'a static rural culture that can be traced back in time'.<sup>30</sup> They are then characterised as either a factor 'preventing social transformation and religious reform'<sup>31</sup> or in the case of the Sikh *dhadi* as open to appropriate by the Sikh elite to transmit the reformist message, just as *qawwals* were part of the development of *Iqbaliat* songs.<sup>32</sup> Partition provided a concretisation of the processes that began in colonial Punjab. Musicians with broad repertoires began to restrict themselves in the face of a narrowing of patronage. The remaining *rababis* in East Punjab no longer found patronage in *gurdwaras* and had to engage in the emerging state-sponsored folk art, with an emphasis on Sufi texts that were seen as part of a distant folk culture. Similarly, Sikh performers began to almost entirely focus on the repertoire developed by religious reformers of the early twentieth century. As Nijhawan notes, in his detailed study of *dhadi* in East Punjab: 'Partition thus led to a redistribution of performative styles and repertoires',<sup>33</sup> with a stronger emphasis on religious content. In East Punjab this meant a bifurcation between the religious realm and a folk music that would ultimately be central to the popular (non-*filmi*) music of the 1970s and 1980s. Whereas in West Punjab, the lack of state sponsorship of the arts and

the continuation of individual patron-client relations in music, meant a greater blurring of the boundaries between religious, folk and popular. In both contexts the critical role of religion as a demarcation of genre boundaries, nevertheless became more salient.

In postcolonial India, state policy for the promotion of folk music was taken up through the creation of linguistic states, with their associated universities and cultural agendas. This unity-in-diversity approach operated alongside a nationalist project that emphasised Hindi as the national language with Classical music as a symbol of the nation.<sup>34</sup> The contestation over the reorganisation of Punjab along linguistic lines meant that the formation of the East Punjab state only took place in 1966, even though the Punjabi University, which had an express mandate to research the language and culture was founded in 1962.<sup>35</sup> In terms of folklore and music, it was only in the 1970s, under the pioneering research of Dr Nahar Singh that collections of lyrics and community ethnographies of musicians were written. In the 1990s, Professor Gurnam Singh (whom we have already met in the chapter on *kirtan*) organised a series of folk music labs in which performers came to the university and were recorded, which were then subsequently transcribed and produced in notation.<sup>36</sup> In contrast, in Pakistan, the fragile nature of the postcolonial state and a fraught compatibility with music meant that only one national institution, Lok Virsa, which was instituted in 1974, had the remit to collect and sponsor folk music, literature and art. It has taken a leading role in archiving and documenting the leading performers of the four regions of Pakistan, but lacking in resources and political support, it is a relatively minor effort compared to the large numbers of hereditary musicians.

It is in secular India that the folk-religion dichotomy was most incisively established and still maintained. University based education in East Punjab offers a musical landscape in which various traditions are extant and the distinctions between various genres has been codified. Though the overlaps in rhythm, *raag* and instrumentation is present between Classical (*shastri sangeet*) and folk (*lok sangeet*) these are the exceptions out of which boundaries can be drawn. In the two-volume set, *Punjabi Lok Sangeet Virasat*, which literally translated means 'Punjabi peoples music tradition', but is equivalent to folk music, Prof. Gurnam Singh draws a distinction between folk and what he labels *Gurmat sangeet* and Sufi *sangeet*. In all of these cases there are musical overlaps, the *Ad Granth* makes use of forms such as *ghori* and *mandavani*, while Sufi poets incorporate *raag* Kafi, Bheirvee and Sarang which are considered part of the folk repertoire. However,



Singh betrays his location in East Punjab, when the texts that are considered central to the folk tradition begin with *Mirza Sahiba* and *Hir Ranjha*.<sup>37</sup> In West Punjab, these are considered Sufi texts and would fall under the label of *Arfiana Kalaam* (the words of the friends of God, the *arif*). Most of the poetry that falls under the classification of literature in East Punjab are seen as sacred texts in West Punjab.<sup>38</sup> A less didactic approach to classification, but one which ultimately rests on colonial codification is offered in a special edition of the *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, titled: 'Music and Musicians in Punjab', which adopts a framework in which the secular (amateur and professional) is kept separate from the sacred and subsequently is mainly focused on hereditary musician communities. The editor of the collection, Gibb Schreffler, retains an empiricist focus and therefore recognises the fuzzy nature of the boundary that the collection of essays is premised on:

Just as rhythm 'n' blues and gospel songs may be nearly the same except for the stated motive of their performance, performances in the Sacred World of Punjabi culture may resemble other types of performance musically while allowing for very different standards of participation, professionalism, and context. While the Amateur performers perform for themselves and their community, and the Professional performers perform for an outside audience, Sacred performers perform, on anyone's behalf, for the Divinity.<sup>39</sup>

Though 'standards of participation, professionalism and context' are cited ultimately the boundary around 'amateur, professional and sacred' performers is framed in terms of respective patrons: 'the "community", "public" and "God"', the agency of the musician is made secondary and thus the need for distinction is rendered unnecessary. The formulation is that the musicians themselves are an amorphous mass only waiting to be shaped by context and patron. This perspective is then directly contradicted by Schreffler who further maintains:

The performer knows he must consider what the audience *thinks* they want, and though he may give that, he remains conscious of the gesture, and the potential difference from his own preferences. It is the performer who controls the show, no matter how much the audience may feel satisfied that they have elicited a performance according to their standards.<sup>40</sup>

It is the issue of religion that gives rise to this incongruity in Schreffler's understanding. Once God is out of the way, the musician is allowed to have a



cunning agency, which sidesteps the social order in which they are rendered as a class of performers who are seen as providing a 'service' to patrons, in what is a hierarchically ordered, caste based social structure.<sup>41</sup> Folk music illustrates how musicians retain their agency in a situation in which patrons see themselves as the producers of music. A more complex relationship arises when the patron is a religious institution, such as the SGPC or a *pir*, where the musicians express their agency, as clarified in the previous two chapters, by either a close affiliation with a shrine or through a reading of audience demand. This is not so much conflict as it is accommodation and this is due to the low status of hereditary musicians.

Nijhawan insightfully notes, 'Popular imagination of Punjabi folk culture has sustained a broadly defined category of the *dhadi* [folk] singer that encompasses forms of non-religious bardic expression,<sup>42</sup> essentially rendering them as low-caste and subject to their patrons demands. Affiliation to a spiritual leader or religious institutions is used by musicians to resist this caste-based, audience demand. Colonial repetition is not exerted solely through exclusion but also enables inclusion. Rather than performers being created or simply performing in multiple settings, the *mela* (rural fair) musician becomes a secular folk singer and the *gurdwara* musician a sacred *kirtani*. The active agency of affiliating with a specific religious institution results in an increase in their status, however marginally.<sup>43</sup> By equating the amorphous audience with that of the patron, the distinction that reformed religion acquires in colonial modernity is effaced.<sup>44</sup> Once affiliation with a particular religious institution, either as a *qawwal* or a *kirtani* takes place, public expression of a heteroreligious musical repertoire is more difficult to sustain. In contemporary East Punjab, the life of a musician labelled as a *kirtani* is relatively more secure than that of someone labelled as a folk artist, though perhaps not as lucrative. While a SGPC-controlled *gurdwara* will pay a fixed salary, it will also take a proportion of any earnings from private religious events (marriages, births, deaths). The commercial music market in terms of CDs, VCDs and music videos all operate in this field, but these outputs generate reputation, rather than revenue for the singer/musician. Similarly, a folk artist may gain income through the state, via All India Radio, or through the national folk events which are held all over India. Their main source of income would be through performing at private functions, particularly marriages. It is apparent that the circuits are overlapping and the primary method for understanding the inclusionary and exclusionary basis is that of reformed religion. This is perhaps best illustrated through a number of musician biographies.

## Becoming folk

In the previous two chapters, *rababis* and other hereditary musician groups found themselves out of place in the rapidly modulating landscape of colonial Punjab. Not all of these performers entered into the terrain of religious music, the other more fragile option was that of the emerging stage for folk music, though even here some compulsion in terms of religious identity was present, as *sarangi* player Des Raj exemplifies:

Des Raj was born at the time of Partition in village Lachkani (dist. Patiala) to father Madho and mother Bachni. Regarding his background, he says that they come from the ‘Mardānā’ community: ‘My first name used to be Taj Muhammad. Our older folk, instead of leaving their homeland and for self-preservation, changed their religious affiliation here and so gave me the name Des Raj.’ Des Raj was weaned on music. His father used to play dholak to accompany the *kirtan* of Mahant Dharam Singh Kharaudh and Chhota Singh Kharaudh at the *Gurdwara* in nearby village Lang. Des Raj actually received his initial education in the village primary school. He was accepted into 6th grade in Patiala, but he quit school before starting. Under the influence of the songs of Yamla Jatt and the *kalis* of Amar Singh Shaunki, he gravitated towards balladry, for which he satisfied his interest by singing with *tūmbī*.<sup>45</sup>

Out of the group of musicians that are affiliated with ‘Mardana’, those that we previously called *rababi*, some become folk artists in the newly commercial cassette culture which will be considered in the next section. In contrast, musicians like Des Raj remain marginal to that circuit and eke out a meagre existence at rural *melas* and state sponsored ‘folk’ events. Not only is the instrumentation an issue, as the *sarangi* becomes abandoned in favour of the harmonium, but also the repertoire of these musicians comes into question. The following interview with another *sarangi* player, Balbir Singh, indicates the shifting nature of musical practice. Resident in village Bhagrana (formerly Patiala district) whose father was called Puran Singh and grandfather was called Idu. It was only with the formation of independent India that their repertoire changed, even though the family adopted Sikh names before this, as he states:<sup>46</sup>

We used to sing *Hir Ranjha*, *Puran Bhagat* and *baitan* [praise of the Goddess] and Krishan songs, we sung mostly in weddings. My father played the *sarangi*, then I played the *dhad* (small kettle drum). At the time of partition, my *mama* went to Pakistan, but we all stayed here. Forty houses of the *tehi* [oil pressers] stayed and then our houses stayed here. Some became Sikhs and left the village.

In the village, our ancestors played the *dhol* and welcomed people this was *praiya* work . . . The *Lala vaala* [Sakhi sarvar] shrine was built by my mother, but the original shrine collapsed, at around partition, then it was closed for about a year. Then everyone got together and rebuilt it . . . Everyone comes to the shrine.

Neither of Balbir's two sons play *sarangi*, instead they play *dhol* at weddings and are involved in the Punjabi bhangra/pop scene centred in nearby Mohali. Des Raj and Balbir Singh could be categorised, in the Indian context, with detailed descriptions of ethnographic caste categories, in the kind of schema that Schreffler provides. In contrast, Lowall Lyberger's research in Lahore, rather than deploying caste as community, categorises on the basis of craft disaggregation, thus urban Clessical performers are distinct from rural 'less sophisticated' groups. This is a division drawn from fieldwork, but clearly reflects the postcolonial settlement around terminological and social acceptability. Schreffler and Lyberger succumb to the normativities, set by the national boundaries in which their research is being carried out for understanding the social, thus in India, caste is an acceptable category whereas in Pakistan it is not and therefore the more prevailing distinction between rural and urban is deployed. A more interesting approach might have noted the disjuncture and commonality in performance, melody or texts, but that may have taken away much of this chapters rationale! It is not a fair comparison to place Tufail Niazi alongside Balbir Singh and Des Raj, not only because of his enormous popularity in postcolonial Pakistan, but also due to the nature of his musical upbringing in united Punjab. The rationale for his biography being present here is because he did not become a *qawwal* or occupy the marginal site of Clessical musicians, but became representative of folk music in Pakistan. Indeed, the reason for the detailed exposition of this life offered here is precisely because it exposes the residual nature of the 'folk' classification.

Spanning much of the twentieth century, Tufail's life captures many of the themes that this book has attempted to wrestle with and elucidate. Born in 1916, in the village of Madeiran in current Hoshiarpur district, not far from Sham Chaurasi. His paternal family were descended from a line of *pakhawajis* (players of the kettle drum) and thus trained in the *dhrupad* tradition, while his maternal family were *rababis* serving in temples throughout the region. In an interview carried out in the early 1980s by Mumtaz Mufti, the head of Lok Virsa, Tufail recognises that *dhrupad* and *pakhawaj* were on the decline:

We are from a *pakhawaj gharana*. They [elders] wanted me to play as well. But I always like singing. We are *dhurpadi*, and in that you would have two singers

and two players and that is how we were. *Baba Kammi Khan, Baba Himmi Khan, Baba Bholas, Baba Maula Baksh, Baba Sandee, Baba Bhopa*, the last is my uncle, Karam Din and then Pakhawaj has finished . . .' It was therefore, singing *kirtan* at a *Gurdwara* in Bheni sahib, Amritsar district with his *nana* that he first cut his cloth.<sup>47</sup> This was the first in a series of experiences which traverse the gamut of colonial Punjab's musical soundscape. After a few years, he moved with his father, Haji Raheem Buksh to Goindwal, an area closely affiliated with Guru Amar Das and near the larger town of Tarn Taran. Here he joined a *Gaushala* singing party, articulating the Hindu reformist message of cow protection.<sup>48</sup> Tufail talks of his schooling in Goindwal: 'My school master was very fond of music, so he made me sing, he used to go to the little Harballabh festival in Goindwal. It was because of him I did not get a school education!' Though his musical education was received at the hands of Mian Wali Mohammed Khan of Kapurthala, and Pandit Amar Nath of Batala both well versed in *dhrupad* and *khayal*.

Tufail's exceptionality comes from the fact that he was not bound by a particular institution and his performances bear witness to his totality as a performer and this is due to his engagement with theatre. It was after leaving school that he became involved with some *raasdhari*, who practice a particular form of circle theatre in which music, dance and acting are combined. These performances were prevalent throughout rural Punjab in the precolonial period and gradually became more and more confined to the rural, all but disappearing by the 1960s. Usually they drew their inspiration from a range of sources, such as the Ramayana (performed as Ram Lila), or from *Hir Ranjha* and the other Punjabi *qissas*. To some extent this form was replaced by the more formal *Nautanki* or travelling theatre that was cultivated in urban areas then travelled to the rural. It was in one such company that Tufail perfected his skills as an actor-musician-singer. At this time, he was known as Tufail Nutt, short for *Nautanki* and the fairs at shrines, were the main sites where he would perform, *Puran Bhagat, Laila Majhnu, Sassi Pannu* and the other popular Punjabi *qissas*.

Tufail's move to newly formed Pakistan is similar to the story of the *rababis*, in that he ended up running a milk shop in Multan, in the absence of the patrons that had sustained him and his family. As the new state stabilised, opportunities for employment opened up and he initially became a singer on Radio Pakistan and was the first artist to perform on the inauguration of Pakistan Television in 1964. It was at this point he was renamed Tufail Niazi (after his *pir* Hazrat *Pir Niaz Ali Shah*) and also reframed as a folk artist. The appellation of Pakistan's

greatest folk artist is the title of the book from which much of this narrative about Tufail's life is drawn. It seems inevitable that an artist like Tufail, who was not able or willing to engage in *qawwali*, would find himself performing to the requirements of an elite looking to forge a national identity. Working alongside Aksee Mufti in the formation of Lok Virsa (the National Institute for Folk Heritage) and leading on the broadcast of the television show, Lok Tamasha, in which a variety of musics were given airtime, it is not surprising that he received the Presidential Pride of Performance Award in 1983.<sup>49</sup> The power of borders in defining and exposing the postcolonial regimes of classification is poignantly portrayed by Tufail's reception, in his visit to India in 1981. There he was heralded as a great Clessicual performer, an inheritor of the court culture of Kapurthala and awarded the *Ustad* Amir Khan award by *sitar* maestro, *Ustad* Vilayet Khan. Perhaps, it is not possible for the postcolonial Indian state to valorise Tufail as a folk musician, as that would imply he had some link with a pre-partition Punjab, or with the folk of that region. But this would be a conspiratorial perspective and belie the brilliance of the musician who could perform across the recently created boundaries of Clessicual and folk.

Tufail's ability to retain his repertoire is largely due to his involvement with Lok Virsa, and this is partly why he was read as a folk musician, in the few references to him in newspapers in Pakistan. In his travels to India he was lauded as a Clessicual musician. The two nation-states ability to reward musicians is differentiated by what each is valuing and promoting at any particular time. An analysis of one of his performances with his son, recorded by Lok Virsa, provides sufficient evidence that each of these interpretations as a folk artist of Clessicual music is a reduction and partial reading, functioning as an aspect of the process of classification, rather than based in any analysis of Tufail's unique talents.<sup>50</sup> The song, *Mehra sohna sajjan ghar ayyaa*, is attributed to the fifteenth-century poet Shah Hussain:

*Mera sohna sajjan ghar aaya ni, mera sohna sajjan ghar aaya ni*

*Rall mil dayo ni mubarakañ, refrain*

*Jis saajan nu main dhoondi saan mai,*

*So saajan ghar ayya, refrain*

*Vehda mera bheya sohana,*

*Mathe noor sohaya ni, refrain*

*Kahe Hussain fakeer nimana*

*Murshid yaar milaya ni, refrain*

My beautiful friend has come home  
 Get together my girlfriends and celebrate with me  
 That friend I was looking for, he has come home  
 Says Hussain, the humblest of the humble  
 My master has bought me my friend

This performance demonstrates precisely the extent to which classifications of musical genres leads to their refinement as closed entities and thus achieves the epistemological framings seeded in colonial modernity. The piece opens with Tufail singing in a *dhrupad* style that evokes a period when the division of Carnatic and North Indian in vocal enunciation is not distinct.<sup>51</sup> As the song develops, he moves to adding embellishments drawn from *khayal* singing, shifting where his voice is generated from and the complexity of the *bols* and *taans*. All of this takes place only to the lyrics of the refrain. Once he begins singing the verses he resorts to a folk style, in which the emphasis is on the pathos of the words. This is further enhanced by the dramatic movements of his eyes and hands. This haunting simple melody is accompanied by Shaukat Hussain on *tabla* and Tufail's son on vocals. His own performativity is deeply theatrical, with the use of eyes, neck movements and hands to punctuate and enhance the musical gestures. In a *kherva taal* (8 beats) that follows a qawwali style, the beat ranges from single to triple speed. Breaking the boundaries between formal styles is indicative of a certain type of musicians that are now increasingly absent in Punjab.<sup>52</sup> Tufail's paramount significance is that he is one of the few recorded artists, who sings out of the heteroreligious sphere of Punjabi spiritual music, and teases the limits of colonial repetition, as it slips into postcolonial modernity.<sup>53</sup>

The biography of Tufail Niazi stands to some extent as a metonym for a whole gamut of singers that Thuhi defines as having:

a reverent attitude towards both the Prophet Muhammad and the paraphernalia of gods and goddesses. For them, Puran Bhagat, Kaulan Bhagatni, Raja Harishchandra, Shah Dahood, and Shah Bahiram are all equal. In fact, they are adherents of catholicity. Many among them got their initial training at the shrines of saints and the camps of holy men, alongside of education in folk culture and religious and prescriptive texts.<sup>54</sup>

This representation of musicians, in secular India, almost repeats what Neuman articulates when interviewing Classical musicians in Delhi in the early 1980s: 'all musicians . . . agree that one's personal religion has no effect on the

performance of music. One musician, a Hindu, went so far as to say that all musicians have one religion, music, and that a religious man cannot also be a musician. What he meant by this rather enigmatic statement is that if one is a religious Muslim or a religious Hindu, one will be blinded (or deafened) to a perception of Supreme Being through music.<sup>55</sup> This discourse is not sustainable in postcolonial Pakistan where music has a fraught role in the framework of a contested nation-state identity. Rather all musicians play on the sale of the *ishq haqiqi* (true love), even where the context, text and performance itself may be considered more akin to *ishq-e-majaji* (material love). It is this ability to maintain the oscillation, even while the state is keen on fixing on the sacred and the secular that enables music to modulate at the cusp of these forces. This does not mean that music has the power to let Des Raj stay as Taj Muhammed or ensure that Tufail Niazi singing *kirtan* after partition is recorded, but it does sustain their ontologies as heteroreligious performers.

### Commercial, *filmi*, popular

With the advent of film, audio recording technology, and urban markets, the twentieth century heralded in popular music, which was pitched in contrast to, but cannibalising of folk and Classical music. In the European context, 'popular' was defined as a demotic expression of the working class, opposite to the meaningful and authentic music of a now conflated Classical/folk music.<sup>56</sup> The sociology of music developed in the mid-twentieth century and the role that popular music had in subduing, inspiring or representing oppressed groups has since occupied academic and popular literature.<sup>57</sup> In late colonial and subsequently bifurcated Punjab, the formation of commercial, commoditised music had a different inflection, but the linking of esteem (social class in Northern Europe) with particular types of music is similar. The criticism of singing *filmi* tunes levelled at *qawwals* and *kirtanis* is an example of how popular music, seen in terms of its commerciality and appeal to the masses, represents low status. It is religion that provides the value base from which the critique is made rather than the enlightenment (as it would be for Adorno).<sup>58</sup> In India, the newly formed nation-state defends the Classical and localised folk, against the tide of commercial music by emphasising their bounded nature and association with the nation. Arts represent the high culture of the Indian elite, while folk music requires preservation in the face of state-sponsored economic modernisation. Tradition becomes framed



through the tropes of *gharana*/caste; musical continuity through patrilineal lineage and a pedagogy of *guru-shiksha*. In Pakistan, the national project has no need for the Clessicul (now rendered as Hindu) and pays little attention to music in its folk forms.<sup>59</sup> Attention and negligence make for different musical cultures and this is reflected most notably in the Clessicul music scene which is relatively mute in Pakistan when compared to India. In contrast, the popular/commercial music industry, since the advent of cheap audio cassettes in the 1970s, completely dominates the production and circulation of music, to the extent that it renders the otherwise overly policed nation-state boundaries somewhat redundant.

Those hereditary musicians who did not move to Pakistan and did not become *kirtanis* were able to capitalise on the newly emerging market for Punjabi folk in the 1970s. The advent of cassettes led to the proliferation of micro-music, and regions in Punjab such as Malwa were able to be represented in the musical marketplace.<sup>60</sup> Ultimately, the multiple local musical styles and modulations were conflated, become homogenised and commoditised under the generic label folk. The lengthy bardic genres of *Sohna Zehnee*, *Roop Basant* and *Shah Beraam*, do not fit into the pre-digital formats, constrained by the physical capacity of analogue recording mediums.<sup>61</sup> Rather they were truncated and fixed as folk music from a previous era. Local poetic forms, such as *kali* or *baint* or *saad*, which apply specific rules of metre and rhyme, become signifiers of a certain kind of authenticity, even as they lost form. This process though did not begin immediately after partition and those Muslim singers who stayed struggled to eke out an existence, but were able to tap into the fading *nautanki* and *Ram Lila* theatre. Mohammed Siddique's story in some ways parallels that of Tufail Niazi, but one generation on and in post-partition India:

[At the time of partition]. There was a lot of tension at that time. I was about eight years old. There were quite a lot of Muslims in our village. In our village there was a historical *gurdwara* in which a *sant* called Bhagvan Singh lived. He was well respected in the area and my grandfather Maghar Khan did *kirtan* with him . . . When the violence began, the *sant* told the village *panchayat* if anything happens to Maghar Khan, I will leave your village. We stayed in the *gurdwara* for a night and then went to Malerkotla . . . In the end we went to my *mama's* village and I was bought up there.<sup>62</sup> . . . My first job was working as a singer in a *natak mandli*, we would perform all the popular Punjabi plays, Puran Bhagat, Sarvan Kumar, Harish Chandar, Laila Majnu . . . At that time I would act sometimes as well.



At a particular performance, Siddique was heard by a senior government official, who seeing his poverty, but appreciating his talents offered him a job in the public relations department of the Punjab government. Alongside regular employment he was signed by HMV records and produced his first *tavva* or LP record in 1962. By 1966 he was sufficiently well known to give up his government job and take up a full-time career in music. Mohammed Siddique's fame was, in part, due to his duets with Ranjit Kaur, which brought to the forefront of music the kinds of dialogues that would be part of the *nautanki* and *raasdhari* theatre.<sup>63</sup> The texts of these male-female banterers would often be sexually suggestive and in that sense popular music in the cassette stretched a range of social norms.<sup>64</sup> Another performer from the same background as Siddique, but born a decade or so later and much more responsive to the demands of the postcolonial Indian state was Kuldip Manak (1951–2011). Manak, became the standard bearer, of the newly formed Punjabi folk scene in the 1970s and 1980s. His biography alerts us to the demands placed on hereditary performers in the Sikh/Hindu landscape of East Punjab:

I was born in 1951 . . . in our little house, my father Nikha Khan or Nikha Singh and my mother Bachan Kaur . . . it was a Thursday which is the day of the *pir*'s and the *pir* have looked after me . . . My parents gave me the name Mohammed Latif and my nick name was Ladha . . . At school, after I sang, they gave me the name Mohammed Latif Manaka . . . then one day I performed at school and the Chief Minister Pratap Singh Kairon heard me and he said that I should not be called Manaka, but that '*kul' de 'deep' lid vichon ik manak nikliya*' [out of the wax of the candle of his lineage a ruby has come]. The principle then said from that day I would be known as Kuldip Manak . . . My elders also worked as singers and musicians. They were the great *kirtanis* of the state of Nabha. My uncle, was called with great respect Bhai Sooba, he did *kirtan* very well . . . we who are from the line of Mardana, have the most respect for *Gurbani* . . . When I was young I also did *kirtan* and prayer . . . I took on the appearance of a Sikh and my householders started calling me Nihang [warrior ascetic] . . . When my prayers were ruined by a Sant, then I decided to become a folk singer and I am still doing that and will in the future.<sup>65</sup>

While Nijahawan is correct to bifurcate the identity of Sikh and Sufi *dhadi*, if only in terms of textual sources represented by the two forms, the practices of actual musicians, as he himself also reveals, serve to show the fluid and contingent nature of these boundaries.<sup>66</sup> Kuldip Manak's narrative of his life and his actual musical output bear witness to this ability to cross these borders.

His recorded musical output consisted of 47 *dharmic geet*, 50 duets, and 220 folk songs (which include his renditions of the Punjabi *qissas*). Of note are the *dharmic geet* which are mostly songs about the Sikh Gurus with a few devoted to *mata* (mother-God), though these are not significant in terms of his reputation as a folk artist. Rather, his association with the Malva poetic form *kali* which consists of four verse couplets, set to a particular metre provided him with an authenticity in the state-sponsored musical circuits. Most potently though his success relies on and substantiates further the power of cassettes in the spreading of local forms to regional levels.<sup>67</sup> It is the emerging Punjabi folk scene in post-1967 Punjab that Manak is able to tap into and that allows him to emphatically leave behind the *kirtan* of his families practice.<sup>68</sup> Ladha becomes Nihang and then Kuldip, in a set of transformations that would be facile if placed in the literature on religious conversion, rather this is a creative response to the conditions that Manak found himself confronting. To become 'Kuldip' could be conveniently analysed as the only possible route for any *rababi* singer in an East Punjab, in which the memory of partition had left scars that were explicitly anti-Muslim.<sup>69</sup> This trend is of course apparent (as in the case of Des Raj and Balbir Singh previously mentioned), but this would imply that religious identities are fixed rather than fluid and that partition signified an absolute divide. Singers such as Mohammed Siddique, Master Salim, the Waddali brothers, Sardool Sikander and numerous others who play substantive roles in contemporary East Punjabi popular music belie this fact. The emergence of a Punjabi popular music scene in Pakistan, since the 1990s has also seen Sikh performers projected in the public sphere. Jassi Singh Lailpuria, a Pakistani Sikh, the band Josh (Canadian) and the singer Manjeet Singh (UK), have all had significant acclaim and success in the Islamic Republic.

Commercial folk music, not only deformed religious identities, it also had an impact on gender and caste relations as they relate to music. A pertinent example is Surinder Kaur (the nightingale of Punjab), who is best known for her 'folk' songs beginning in the 1960s. Yet she was already a recording artist in Lahore in the 1940s film industry and it was the loss of this centre that also led to a resurgence of folk in East Punjab. In some senses, Surinder Kaur paved the way for a legitimation of women singing folk in the public space, by bringing wedding songs and other 'women' Punjabi songs into the recording domain. Surinder Kaur's life clearly parallels the trends identified by Bakhle (in Chapter Two) in the early part of the twentieth century, where music was becoming part of urban, middle-class respectability. Surinder Kaur struggles with her family to take this one step further and to sing in public, but nonetheless achieves this

aim. Reformed religion plays a role here, as it becomes respectable for women to sing bhakti or Clessicul by removing its association with courtesans. Almost a century later, women performing *dhadi*, in Sikh religious institutions, completely subvert the gender rules governing that genre.<sup>70</sup>

Commercial recordings distribute and popularise these various new forms, in which gender and caste become relatively malleable. It is the popular music industry along with secular education that allows performers from nonhereditary backgrounds to emerge in the twentieth century. In the 1960s, Lal Chand Yamla Jat began recording what would become iconic songs of Punjabi folk. Just as partition created a climate in which Muslims became Sikhs, so cassettes (like urbanisation before it) enabled shifts in caste: so Lal Chand went from *Chamar* (dalit) to *Jat* (landowner) in his recording name and pre-dated the actual movement of Jats into the music business. New genres and new entrants into the vibrant East Punjab rested to some extent upon the old classification systems, but now in a confusing and confounding mode. Gurdas Maan, possibly the most successful post-partition, all Punjab folk artist, who was propelled to fame in the 1980s, is described by Schreffler thus: 'Mann is a Sikh *Jatt* who nonetheless has cultivated for himself a "Sufi" image . . . From the Hindu *Chamar* community, Hans Raj has also cultivated a "Sufi" image that transcends the barriers of community.'<sup>71</sup> The separation here of Jat and Chamaar via Sikh and Hindu from Sufi is of course just a repetition of the moment of partition and reflects an East Punjabi sensibility which relates Islam to the departed Muslims. The image of 'Sufi' as separate from Punjabi is underpinned by a particular kind of colonial repetition which iterates caste, religion and gender into an immutable social hierarchy. In the secular republic of India, these boundaries have become more codified and under capitalist musical production converted into genres or commodities for niche markets.

The limits to the market as a mechanism for inclusion, was most prominently confirmed in East Punjab in the 1980s, when the Sikh militant movement was involved in a protracted often violent conflict with the Indian state. Though this was primarily a political movement, it was partially fought on the terrain of culture, with the Punjab countryside particularly effected. Drawing on a form of religious reform, as colonial repletion that aggravates through exclusion, the new folk music that represented certain aspects of rural social life, valorised via the market and closely related to popular spiritual practices, was deemed unacceptable.<sup>72</sup> In the late 1980s, those singers who fell outside of what was considered morally acceptable would be targeted,

sometimes violently. The lives of Chamkila a singer from a *dalit* background and his wife (from another caste) Amarjot, makes this point most poignantly. Though primarily a poet, Chamkila took to the stage in 1977, where his lyrics delved into the gritty social problems of rural Punjab, addressing taboo topics such as premarital sex, alcoholism and drug abuse.<sup>73</sup> In 1988, Chamkila and Amarjot along with their band members were shot dead by unknown assailants on their way to a performance. Though never admitted to, nor proved, the deaths were blamed on Sikh militants. Ostensibly, Chamkila's style and public exposure of what would be seen as a decaying lifestyle would lend itself to this explanation. In the same year, communist poet Pash, was also murdered by Sikh militants, yet this was an explicitly political engagement. Pash's activities and poetry were explicitly anticomunal and antithetical to the militants cause. Chamkila on the other hand was not so obviously engaged, he had released three albums of *dharmic geet* and he was not publically vocal in his opposition to the militants. Other narratives of Chamkila's death place it more firmly into a public sphere in which violence due to vendetta and financial matters is relatively common.<sup>74</sup> Cheap reproduction technologies revolutionised and restructured music circulation in East Punjab. This impact was not as extensive in West Punjab due to the rise of the religious right and trends in the cultural terrain towards conservatism.<sup>75</sup>

### Becoming devotional

Just as folk exists as one commercial music genre, so general devotional, *kirtan*, *qawwali*, *dharmic geet*, *mata de geet* and more recently *Sufi geet*, are all niche products in the East Punjabi market place.<sup>76</sup> The musicians involved in the production of these various forms can also overlap and crucially might be engaged, institutionally, with multiple patrons. Thus someone may be a folk singer for the purposes of a state festival and a bhangra artist when it comes to commercial output. In that way there is an imbrication of the state through institutions such as universities and colleges with the commercial sector and shrines. A situation that existed previously, as evidenced in the biographies of Tufail Niazi and Mohammed Siddique. In East Punjab, formal state sponsorship through the Northern Area Cultural Zone and grants awarded, were mostly concerned with practices and practitioners who represent traditions that are seen to be in decline. In a formal sense, the Punjabi University has been involved in archiving folk music, particularly from Malwa, since the 1990s and

offering an outlet for musicians, mirroring and putting forward artists for state prizes.<sup>77</sup> In contrast, commercial recording houses and the education sector play a substantive role in promoting new musicians. Colleges and universities provide opportunities for young people, from all backgrounds, to engage in musical training and performance. The formal documentation of folk music feeds into this as it provides the base for live music and for innovation. For example, students and teachers were at the forefront of the creation of the 'folk orchestra' which combines instruments, usually played as accompaniment, into a group sound. While commercial, contemporary folk forms and texts rely on homogenisation, the folk archiving project emphasises specifics and particularities (though still following a format of colonial classification). It is college education and competitions which provides the training ground for many of the performers in the Punjabi commercial scene. The Punjabi University's role in this process and the absence of a similar process in West Punjab, highlights the continuing role of state institutions in creating/supporting folk music.

Commercial and public institutions functioned as patrons in their support of music, though at a distance and in mostly abstract terms. Shrines, oriented to individual spiritual figures, also provide a source of patronage for musicians, perhaps the main source in West Punjab. Whereas, in East Punjab, apart from the *gurdwaras* run by the SGPC, shrines form part of an overlapping domain of commercial and educational institution patronage. The Kadri group,<sup>78</sup> whose organiser is called Jaswinder Jogi, is an apt example of the interaction between state involvement with reproduction of folk music and the salience of post-partition shrine sites. Jaswinder is employed in one of the lowest ranked jobs (*peon*), in the Punjabi University, a job with a humble salary, but with the advantage of being relatively secure. As the founder of the Kadri group, he drew upon the resource of the university to bring together a band that varied between five and seven members, drawing on the innovation that the university music department created musically, namely, the folk orchestra. A range of instruments which are broadly not used in commercial recordings of Punjabi folk and are part of what could be called a revival are bought to play in the Kadri group. Jaswinder makes this quite clear in their performance on a cold night in February 2010, at the shrine of *Lalan Shah* in Bhagrana village at the time of the annual *mela/urs*.<sup>79</sup> As he states: 'We will sing the "*babe de kalaam*" – the poetry of the elders. You all know that we have started this [musical] work that is away from the noise and bravado of today's music. So people living in the village, people who understand the lyrics, so that they can hear them.' The aim of the

event was thus expressed by Jaswinder, to the audience of about sixty families. A group of seven performers, mostly drawn from the music department of the university with a singer from Anandpur Sahib, who is trained in *kirtan* and had already released a cassette in that market, were assembled under a makeshift canopy, adjacent to the small shrine. The performance started at about 9pm and finished at 1am, with the group utilising speakers, microphones and some electronic instrumentation including: *algoza*, harmonium, electric banjo, *dhol*, *gharra*, *daf*, and *chimta*. Given this impressive line up and the relatively small space of the performance, the music certainly drowned out the lyrics, which were also derived from a common pool of familiar sources that smoothly blend the categories of devotional and folk music.

Performances at shrines of this ilk have ironically been criticised by Kuldip Manak, who in response to a question about the multiple events, in the names of *pirs* and *fakirs* that had sprung up in twenty-first-century East Punjab, responded:

I can't say anything about those people, but I am surprised at one thing. I had never heard of so many *pir's* before, how did so many come about in such a few years. My only thoughts are that five to six village boys get together, they put a green flag on a piece of earth on the roadside and then start preaching that some *Shah* was born here. That's how so many have come about in such a short amount of time and now they are just selling the name of the *pir*. It's nothing more than that.

These sentiments echo the perspective of travel journalist, Salman Rashid, whose books on Pakistan are peppered with accounts of the formation of *pir's* shrines.<sup>80</sup> Though this standpoint might be expected from the liberal, modernist tendencies of Rashid, it is surprising to hear a similar critique from Manak, who himself is fashioned by the revival of interest in folk music and the projection of the *kali* on to a larger frame. Perhaps it is the vexed question of religion that is the problem, the selling of the 'name of the *pir*' is somehow disingenuous to the music, as well as to those Sufis who exist in history. The invention of a religious site, without the benefit of history makes it less sacred and therefore open to popular rituals. The Kadri group were performing at the shrine that Balbir Singh's mother had constructed in the early part of the twentieth century and that after partition had been rebuilt by the villagers. It consists of a tomb surrounded by colour images, some framed, others transferred onto the wall tiles, including Sakhi Sarvar [*Lalla valla pir*], Guru Nanak and Shivaji presented visually side-by-side. This popular visual representation, though, has

no value in the epistemograph that ranks what is religious in comparison to institutionalised, hierarchical formulae.

Just as the planting of a green flag can make a shrine, so a singer can be made through the blessing of a living *sant* or *pir*. Perhaps it is the relative ease with which new musicians can enter the market place, rather than coming from hereditary backgrounds, which is the source of Manak's discontent. A contemporary example, though one which also resonates with those who shift in identity, Baljinder Singh, also known as Ghulam Ali, relates his musical journey:

My village is Poonia in Jalandhar it is near Shahkot where Master Salim and Puran Shahkoti are from . . . Alongside studying I was part of a few drama shows in my village, so we would fit words around old music. I learnt music from Master Gulzar Singh, who was a Christian. I was about 20 and I learn from him for a few months. When I was learning music, I was performing for a wedding band, when I practiced harmonium at home, my daddy was not happy. He was wondering where this came from. He had a dry cleaning shop. When I started doing *kirtan*, he was happy then.

I was part of the congregation . . . but was never serious about it . . . In 1990 I was singing in the *dera* [where the spiritual leader resided] . . . Then the next day the *babaji* said to me, is it okay if we keep you here with us in the *darbar*, to do *shabad-kirtan*. I had never thought of this. I was married by then. I didn't ask anyone. Not my parents or wife, I just said yes. When I first sat with *babaji* in the *sat sang* [congregational gathering] he would make me sing in the morning at the *darbar* and then in the *sat sangat* when we went out and then in the *mushaira* [poetry evening] sometimes till 5am I would be singing. I would do *kirtan*, all this time and no *tabla* player would sit with me because they could not keep up. The rest of the guys doing *kirtan* would tease me and say '*too vadda Ghulam Ali baniya hoya*' [you've become like a famous musician] and then one day *babaji* heard them saying this and he also started to call me that. First I did not like it, I thought why is this happening, they are teasing me. But then I realised when I came to the congregation, that when the *babaji* changes your name that is like giving you a new life [or that one of the lives that you will have to be reincarnated through has been taken off].<sup>81</sup>

This narrative reveals how a performer can become affiliated and transformed through a spiritual patron. Just as with the Kadri group's members multiple collaborations, it is perhaps the freedom of being associated with a singular spiritual figure, with a relatively fluid institutional set up that meant Baljinder



Singh was also able to produce music for a number of Hindi films and released a book of his musical lyrics, in Hindi. These songs were mostly of the devotional kind, but in a form in which the boundaries between the spiritual and material lover were diffused.<sup>82</sup> Composing new lyrics in the devotional mode is something that distinguishes Sikh *kirtan* from *qawwali* and *dharmic geet*, but it is these texts, along with common rhythms and beats that indicate the overlapping nature of popular devotional music with folk, ultimately dissipating those classifications.

### Shifting texts and religious fixity

In reflecting on the process by which *dhadi* became congealed with Sikhism, through the twentieth century, Nijawahan emphasises the role of lyrics writer, Sohan Singh Seetal, who wrote reformist epic poetry.<sup>83</sup> In some senses Seetal is the paradigmatic example of the forces of modernity that create closure around religion. In the first half of the twentieth century, *kavishris* (poet performers) were also writing and publishing texts that were reworking classic stories in the emerging religious climate, as Thuhi notes:

Another distinction of these poets is the way they have contributed a *Puranic* basis to widely known tales. When narrating the traditional love stories they have adopted Indian mythic tales. In Ran Singh's *Hir, Ranjha* was Dev Raj Indar's son, a Jain, in an earlier birth and *Hir* was Karam Pari's daughter, Bhag Pari. Both used to love one another [in their previous lives]. Due to Inder's curse, they were born as mortals. In Ganga Singh Bhoondar's *Hir, Ranjha* is described meeting not Guru Gorakh Nath or Khwaja *Pir*, but rather Guru Nanak Dev.<sup>84</sup>

This only represents one trend (though, perhaps the dominant one) in colonial Punjab. Another, more eclectic (though not heteroreligious) approach to epic poetry is found in Rajab Ali's writings. This poet is fondly remembered in the Malwa region and is a central motif in Ajay Bhardwaj's moving and insightful documentary, *Milange Baba Rattan de Mele te* (Let's meet at Baba Rattan's fair).<sup>85</sup> Born in 1894 to a landowner, Rajab Ali earned the title *Babu*, because he became an overseer and contractor for the colonial state.<sup>86</sup> Educated and literate in Farsi, Urdu and English, it is the intimate bonds with his village Saho and the Malwa region that inspired his Punjabi poetry. After partition he maintained a close communication, via letters with his close acquaintances in the village. In contrast



to Seetal his poetry spanned a wide range of subjects, including a long *var* on Guru Gobind Singh, various songs to Saraswati and a rendition of the *Gugga* story. Alongside his own renditions of the *qissas*: *Hir*, *Mirza*, *Sohni and Sassi*.<sup>87</sup> His prolific output, narrativisation of his own life in verse and deep affection for his village, means that his poetry is still sung by *Kavishris* in the area, despite his departure to Pakistan and death in 1979.

Rajab Ali's poetry like the singing of many contemporary musicians in East Punjab, who are labelled as 'folk' artists, crosses multiple devotional sites and genres. Sardool Sikander has been singing since the 1980s and an approximate breakdown of his prolific output by genre as identified by him is presented in Table 6.1.

What is clear from this list is the continued salience of various forms of devotional music as a niche market for live and recorded performances. When asked in an interview about any difference between these various genres, Sikander responded:

There is a lot of difference between these different devotional songs. Mata songs are different from *bhajans* in a *mandir*, in a *gurdwara* it is different. We have to be careful about the words we sing in the *Gurdwara* and be careful about our actions. In a *mandir* and *gurdwara*, we can't talk about *Hir*, whereas at a *pir's* shrine, anybody can get ecstatic and start dancing. In fact *Hir* represent the soul, which is separated from its lover, from its God. But you can't say this in a *gurdwara* or *mandir* because it is not allowed. In the *shabad*, *Mitar Pyare Noon*, Guru Gobind Singh refers to *Hir*. It is the same *Hir* and we can sing that, but not other songs.<sup>88</sup>

Though articulating a difference, between different sites for singing, Sikander ends by articulating the continuing resonance of the precolonial text *Hir Ranjah*, the colonial repetition of religious difference always marks discursive enunciation, but also in the process becomes unravelled.

**Table 6.1** Sardool Sikander audiography

Genre	Number of songs/cassettes
<i>Mata</i> songs	13 cassettes <i>Pir</i>
songs	25 cassettes
Sikh songs	4 cassettes
<i>Gurbani kirtan</i>	3 cassettes
Qawwali	For a few films
Folk, pop, bhangra	35 cassettes

Despite these textual anomalies, the musical base for the performances is the same, according to Sikander, who comes from a family lineage directly related to the Patiala *gharana*, though he himself was not trained in Clessicul singing.<sup>89</sup> Any cursory survey of these various devotional genres, reveals that the rhythms and language are common, often only differing by the substitution of the words, *mata* for *pir*. There are a number of mutual themes that cross shrines and traverse the border between East and West Punjab. The journey to the shrine in particular attracts similar lyrical content, for example:

Let's go to Naina Devi's door;  
 I'm going to the *Baba*;  
 Let's get together and go to *Gugga Marri*;  
 We're off, we're off to *Baba Farid*.

In this genre the mixing of the truck driver song with the pilgrim is particularly salient: Stop the bus driver, we want to go *Balak Nath* or We want to go to Pak Pattan, move the bus, driver. *Gadi tor ve driveran* applies to any vehicle and any poor driver carrying the pilgrims and any shrine/goddess/*sant/pir*.<sup>90</sup> These songs are distributed via VCD and increasingly in these vehicles via data sticks, which are inserted into specially modified vehicle music players. In places like Pak Pattan, the site of *Baba Farid's* shrine, the record company that produces and distributes this kind of music is situated in the bazaar that is attached to the shrine. It is the small shacks and stalls that are outside the shrines that sell VCDs, which are often produced to coincide with monthly or annual fairs and special occasions.

Even though there are musical and textual commonalities, the interviews with musicians in East Punjab (paralleling those with the *qawwals*) reveal that the boundaries around these devotional sites are often maintained by custodians and audiences. Kulwinder Khinda is an un-recorded artist who lives in a shrine in Nakodar and performs at various village fairs:

I sing the songs of Sufi-sant Bibi Gurbaksh Kaur. Madho Shah, Chistee, Bulle Shah and Mansoor ji's songs. For someone with knowledge there is no difference. But for someone without understanding then there is a problem. We have to be very careful when singing *Gurbani Shabad*. Sometimes you say the words wrong. That is why I practice a lot. One time I started singing a *bhajan* (praise of Krishna/Ram) at an event for *mata* and people started to tell me off, even though it is all in praise of God . . . People try and join music with religion, whereas the meanings of the Sufi, is unity, seeing everyone the same.

Musicians who earn their living from multiple shrine sites may themselves cross boundaries but this does not mean the devotees are as open in their practices. This seems less the case where a *sant/pir* or living spiritual figure is available, as they become the source of the devotion. The Radha Soamis are a relatively institutionalised and numerically large group who follow a living *sant*. In their publications and gatherings they engage in an eclectic intertextual conversation across the Sufi, *bhagat* and guru's writings.<sup>91</sup> Previously referred to Baljinder Singh also indicated this fluid approach in his practice:

We sing from *Gurbani*, we sing our own, we read from *babaji* (and his family), from their *bani* that they have written, whatever is related to *parmatma* (God). Mostly these are the things that we read, from the Gita, or from *Gurbani*, wherever we see God we get inspiration.

Musicians own abilities to cross boundaries seems dependant on their talents, vocal ability and perceived success. Once a singer is established in a single devotional arena, they can then move into other genres and are invited to do so by recording companies and sponsors. One aspect across the interviews and perhaps summed up neatly by another young relatively unknown artist is the issue of singing lyrics that are vulgar:

I sing praises of the mother goddess (*bhait*), on the all night singing (*jagratan*). I started singing at the court of the mother. I also sing devotional, cultural, Sufi, *pir baba* and *bhagat* songs . . . In reality the true singing's foundation is in Pakistan. For us *mirasis*, we have blessings from God . . . The main thing is I don't sing songs which are lascivious and lewd. Otherwise, 'whatever your country, that is your clothing'. So at the *jagratan* I sing songs to *mata*, I don't sing about *pir's* there as it is not appropriate. (Gurpreet Sidhu, a student of Durga Rangila)

It seems that it is vulgar commercial music that becomes the other to the devotional song and this pushes the lyrical middle ground of human love and love for God into a territory in which lust and desire are at the forefront of the music. This has become a specific source of concern with the advent of cheap video recordings on CDs and satellite music channels that demand visuals. Perhaps as an extreme case, but pertinent in the present discussion, Honey Singh, a young singer and producer of Bhangra music was arrested in 2013 for a song which allegedly promoted rape.<sup>92</sup> Numerous newspaper articles commenting on the vulgarity of videos and lyrics and the need for the

industry to control this output seem to have had little impact on producers or the buying public. As a caveat to these debates, the TV channel, PTC which broadcasts many of these contentious videos also disseminates live *kirtan* from the *Harimandir* Sahib, on a daily basis, and is owned by the leader of the Sikh political party, the Akali Dal. Contrasting the secular and the sacred seems increasingly meaningless in the era of instant digital reproduction and demand for seamless broadcasting.

## Recoveries

Being bought up in a Sikh household in Birmingham, England, meant a weekly visit to the local *gurdwara*, which in the early 1970s was a hall rented from the local church. Each week the incomprehensible (to my ears) language of the sermon was punctuated by the sounds of *kirtan*. On special occasions a *dhadi jatha* would arrive and the volume of the sound would increase, followed by a general decrease in musical quality. On reflection this training in listening to the sounds of the *tabla*, harmonium, *chimta*, *dholki* and *sarangi* provided a basis for future music appreciation and direction. It was a decade or so later when I began writing about British Asian dance music and specifically about the Bhangra scene (through a publication called *Ghazal and Beat*) that it became clear that the *gurdwara* was a site where many of the future bhangra musicians and subsequently DJs received their aural training. In the 1960s and 1970s this was also the place where the early wedding bhangra groups, such as Bhujungi would perform, what are generically called *dharmic geet*. It is this slide between *dharmic geet* and *shabad kirtan* which became a contested site as part of the revival described in the previous chapters.

British Bhangra was premised on a secular distance from the religious, partly due to the changes that were taking place in South Asia. In the 1980s, General Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan oversaw a series of cultural policies that resulted in a turn to a more austere, Arab inspired society. In East Punjab, the Khalistan movement produced a similar turn to a more conservative and narrow definition of what came under the remit of religious. In this way, the 1980s heralded a period of hardening, religious boundaries in Punjab and this had multiple ramifications for the ways in which music was produced and conceived. This period has been folded into the logic of colonial modernity as it can be argued that processes already in play were merely intensified in these

periods. Violence has accompanied this increasing antipathy toward musical cultures but this has not led to abandonment, rather there has been change and transformation. More crucially, this chapter has indicated more than any of the others, those spaces, places and performative tropes that show the limits of colonial repetition. It has attempted to express those few notes that slipped through the grinding mill, somehow, untouched.



## Finale

In embarking on a fairly complex and long journey from precolonial Punjab through English musical history via German classicisation and bhangra pop, it is not possible to succinctly summarise the multiple and criss-crossing arguments in anything other than a minor caricature. If this book has destabilised and challenged some of the presuppositions about Clessicul music and prodded the academic musicological canon, then it is partially successful in its intention. By showing how the formation of Clessicul music follows a similar course to that outlined for religion through colonial modernity, it is native elites who become national elites and extend the processes of religiosity/classicization.<sup>1</sup> Classical and Clessicul music emerges in relation to the same issues of crises in religion, secularity and the nation. It is through colonial repetition that the idea of the Clessicul gets conjoined with the religious and the national, such that it becomes a symbol of colonial India's aspiration to nationhood, as demonstrated in the works of Paluskar and Bhatkhande. In practice, the actual music performed under the name religious or Clessicul remained resistive to attempts of standardisation and sacralisation, far outside the attempts of moulding it during colonial modernity, ultimately to service the needs of the postcolonial states of India and Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> This is perhaps because the concepts of religion and music were not as 'cross-cultural and generalizable', in other words of the same mutually stable meaning for the coloniser and native elites.<sup>3</sup> Musical practice and even religious identity, which has been far more normatively adopted in the social and political domain, particularly in the service of nationalism, still produces sites that illustrate the continuation of multiplicity, heterogeneity and heteropraxy.

Though the arguments presented by way of critique in Chapters 2 and 3 emphasise the power of colonial repetition, it is not totalising and this is perhaps where music as a subject area is so important. No doubt, Sikh *kirtan* has been

subject to the most systematic onslaught by colonial modernity, but even here, as a performative genre, it exceeds those limits, even as demonstrating them. In that sense, music is one of the few remaining cultural domains in a subcontinent that is increasingly surpassing the tight boundaries established by colonial modernity, with violent policing of religion and suppression of heterodoxy, where the heteroreligious is still to be found. This conclusion continues with this excavation through an examination of the same themes, but not via a reiteration of previous examples. Rather, three vignettes drawn from the twenty-first century, but which encapsulate many of the questions raised by the book, serve as an open-ending.

### Pandits and pundits

Having spent two and a half years in Punjab, researching the material for this book, the return to England in 2010 was initially relatively musically quiet. This was deliberately interrupted by the visit of *Pandit* Yashpal, a former Professor of Music at Punjab University (the sister of the original in Lahore), the last doyenne of the Agra *gharana* in East Punjab and in his retirement a vocal teacher. This was his second visit to England, and as part of the trip, he gave a lecture to the Punjab Research Group at Coventry University, from which this extract outlining his musical philosophy is expressed:

I am happy that I have a relationship with Punjab, not just one side, but the place as a whole. It is our bad fate, that a vibrant living was partitioned, our language is one, our living one, our relationships one, our socialising one, our thinking one, our food the same, looking after each other, the same . . . My Gurus, who I learnt music from, they are Muslims, they are my God. In school when I studied, even then they were, Shah's, the teachers. When there was Eid we did it together as well as Diwali. We are now split from that life.

Religious music has been well developed in the Punjab, the ten Gurus made a contribution to Punjab's music . . . it is one thing, to read about music; there is something else to sing it. You can read *Hir* and you can sing it, these are different things. Or you can read a *shabad* from the *Ad Granth* or you can sing it. With the addition of the *sur*, you get a different impact. Any religious music without the *sur* does not create the affect that it is meant to. The secular thing is the *sur*. In the religion, the sacred language, poetic material is sung, it does not matter which religion it is, but for the soul to be touched there has to be the *sur*. This does not belong to anyone but becomes everyone's. The

*sur* is the most secular thing. The only element in the religious music that is secular . . . In Clessicul music there is no religious issue, whoever wants to give it respect can do so, because the *raag* of Clessicul music they are the same for all, for whichever religious text you sing it, there is no change.<sup>4</sup>

Postpartition, urban migrants like Yashpal did not find any of the older cities of East Punjab, with their own embedded elites too welcoming. Chandigarh, built from the early 1960s onwards, became a congregating ground, especially after Punjab University was moved there.<sup>5</sup> It was the University and other state-sponsored local institutions, such as the Tagore Theatre and Kala Kendra Academy, that made the city a locus of Clessicul music activity. Chandigarh, the homage to urban modernity, was designed by French architect Le Corbusier and is perhaps as far as one can get from the lanes of colonial-designed Lyallpur/Faislabad where Hafeez Khan lived after moving from East to West Punjab.<sup>6</sup> This contrast between dwellings is equally present in a superficial comparison of their perspectives on music. Hafeez Khan saw Allah at the roots of his musical expression, whereas for Yashpal it was secularism (and to some extent an undivided Indian nation) that was at the heart of his understanding of music. However, as this book has demonstrated, the divide between sacred and secular music is not so easy to hold onto without other props for support. For Yashpal, it is the Indian state (of which he was an employee while working at Punjab University), and ultimately a Bhatkhande-inspired secular modernity that buttressed his outlook. This is, as was demonstrated in Chapter 3, simply the obverse of Hafeez Khan's interpretation of the same conditions of formation. Defining Clessicul music in Indian secular terms or Pakistani religious terms only serves to expose the ways in which these various domains were conjoined in colonial modernity. What is perhaps more surprising is that Yashpal's secularism, based on the exclusion of religion, was a far more rigid framework than the contingent enunciations of Hafeez Khan. The project of colonial modernity proved most successful in India, where the patronising of music through state institutions enhanced its subjection to the demands of religious identity. The relative neglect of music by the state in Pakistan has meant that *qawwali* remains a more open domain, as demonstrated by the musical memories and practices of those interviewed in Chapter 5. Ironically, it is in the Islamic republic that formal religious music retains the audible qualities of the heteroreligious. In postcolonial India, modern educational institutions and state cultural bodies have formalised and codified musical genres in an attempt to disaggregate the sacred and the secular. So even those elements of a heteroreligious past are presented as folk music/religion in the



present. This process is not as apparent in Pakistan, where a weak state and a strand of Islamic ideology maintains a distance from music. Paradoxically, it is in West Punjab where the techniques and technologies of modernity ignore musical practice, that the conjoin of the sacred and the secular is still most readily heard.

## Minor music

Throughout this book the *qissa* of *Hir Ranjha* has cropped up to symbolise a heteroreligious space, often as it is closing or reopening, in multiple examples from precolonial to postcolonial Punjab. Though the story of *Hir* and *Ranjha* is best known through its rendition in the late eighteenth century by Waris Shah, it is the figure of *Hir* in the poems of Bulleh Shah from the same period that actually penetrates various borders – of nation, musical genre and text. Bulleh Shah's poetry has been described as 'portable', in which it can be interpreted as belonging to any of the major religious factions of Punjab.<sup>7</sup> The textual analysis of Bulleh Shah oscillates between presenting him as a Vedantist or a Sufi, with each interpretation finding much to support their position in his extant poems (*kafis*).<sup>8</sup> Described as a heterodox figure in religious parlance, his persistent and pervasive circulation in the genres of folk, sufi and pop in Punjab makes him a symbol, that is evoked in manifold settings where the author of the poem is looking to assert a certain type of perspective. In Chapter 4, Zahoor Ahmed's lyrics that refer to the *Jogi* dancing cite Bulleh Shah's name, and further on in the song, an episode from his hagiography is also evoked, even though the song was penned by the *qawwal* himself. Any number of Punjabi *qawwalis* that deliver a message in which a singular religious boundary is transcended take the name of Bulleh as legitimacy as well as signal for the philosophical outlook being adopted. In East Punjab, Bulleh Shah's name is associated with only a few key lines of poetry, which are then embellished and transformed into contemporary settings.<sup>9</sup> These are found in all of the popular commercial music genres such as *filmi* and bhangra.

Bulleh Shah's influence on lyrics is evident, but the performative culture associated with his shrine in Kasur, near Lahore, demonstrates the coexistence of the modernising forces repeating colonial closure and musical practices that trace to a heteroreligious period. Though the shrine in Kasur is ascribed as his burial site, there are numerous shrines to him in East Punjab, and he features in many of the *Gugga Pir* shrines as one of the *Panj Pir* (five spiritual figures)

who are represented through miniature tombs. An ethnography (though not as privileged account) of the Kasur shrine in which poetry ascribed to Bulleh is performed daily (rather than circulated in commodity form via the digital deluge) illustrates this coexistence:

On a Thursday evening in particular, but on most days of the week, Bulleh Shah's burial site, resounds with the singing of his poems (*kafi*). This is a large complex with a courtyard that has a number of other graves in it and in one corner the tomb of Bulleh himself. Paved with marble the whole complex is overlooked in the corner by the tall tower of an imposing minaret, which signifies the presence of a mosque attached to the shrine. It is the minaret in fact which is the only signal of the shrine as it is in the heart of a busy bazaar on the outskirts of the old city of Kasur.<sup>10</sup> Everyday a group of musicians, without microphones or speakers come and play in front of the entrance to the tomb and under a tree. They are accompanied by another group of men, dressed in the clothes of the courtesan dancers of the Mughal court, engaging in dance (*dhamaal*).<sup>11</sup> These performances begin at dusk and end late in the night.<sup>12</sup> The genealogy of this music and dance is traced (by the musicians) to one of the narratives of Bulleh Shah's hagiography and the contemporary is mixed with history in a potent manner. The hereditary musicians take central place in front of the tomb entrance. It is here that the regular *akharas* (organised groups) of *dhamaal* performers are also to be found. They dance to the aural performance of a changing number of performers from a single *biraderi*/ family unit. This group is composed of a harmonium player accompanied by a *dholki* player and someone on a water pitcher, metal based and played with rings. Sometimes only a *dholki* provides accompaniment to the singer. The dancers wear anklet bells sometime wrapped around the arms as well as the feet, to add to the rhythm. They articulate their presence in the shrine:

Our forefathers travelled with *Babaji* when he went to Gwalior, when he learnt how to dance from the *Bibi*, they came here and settled with him in Kasur, it is their graves behind us.

When Shah Inayat was upset with Bulleh Shah, it is said he went to Gwalior to the house of a courtesan where Bulleh learnt *Kathak*. These musicians trace their lineage to that courtesan's musicians who played for Bulleh. Those dancing in front of the tomb, also iterate their performance through this story, clothed in the dress of the dancing courtesans of Lucknow, with bells on their feet.

Well today sarkar has made us a *conjuri* (courtesan) and we have become one. We have the *ishq* (love) of *Baba* Bulleh Shah in us and that

is why we do the *dhamaal* . . . he was making up with his *yaar* (beloved) and we try to win him over.

This is an activity of the marginal in society. All of the *dhamaalis* (dancers) were local daily waged labour and for most of them this was an act of transgression inspired by the *Ishq*, the fire of love, that love which demands action. It would be a romantic and probably incorrect statement to create this scene as something unbroken from the 18th century.<sup>13</sup> Even though the musicians and the *dhamaalis* play without recourse to electrical aids, mics or speakers. The main singer of the troupe, Mohammed also painted a time when there were other patrons:

My father used to play *tabla* in the *gurdwara* near here, he would do that in the morning and then he would come and sing here . . . Now our family is split between those boys and us [those playing with amplification].

The graves behind where the group played were also pointed to as providing evidence of their ancestors close connection with the shrine.

Bulleh Shah is said to have lived up to the middle of the eighteenth century, whereas Waris Shah spans up to the beginning of the nineteenth century. By the time of Bulleh Shah's death, the British had secured Bengal, and by Waris Shah's demise, William Jones had published *On the Musical Mode of the Hindoos*. Punjab would have to wait another 50 years before it came under the canopy of colonial modernity, but Bulleh Shah does not escape the consequences of this impact, not only in the presence of the imposing minaret that casts a long shadow over the shrine's courtyard, but also the fact that it is managed and organised by the Pakistani state in the shape of the Auqaf board. Officials of the Auqaf take the donations made at the shrine, make payments to the musicians and organise the annual *mela/urs* where income for performers rises considerably.<sup>14</sup> Inevitably the music presented is also subject to change – on the other side of the courtyard a little distance from the tomb, electricity permitting, a more contemporary-looking *qawwali* group sets up with microphones and speakers, a harmonium and *tabla*. This group sings copies of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan renditions of Bulleh Shah's texts. This second group of performers belongs to the same family as the musicians opposite the shrine, but they have visiting cards and play at weddings and other shrines. Cassettes, VCDs and now download culture have meant a much greater circulation of musical texts, but has led to a standardisation of tune and form. So while the traditional musicians freely improvise and sing verses that are handed down through the oral tradition, the musical repertoires of the *qawwali* group are limited to what they can easily copy. Digitisation has further enhanced access so that live performances quickly enter into the domain of reproducible and repeatable recordings.

## Digital disintegration

The interviews that form the bulk of this book were all conducted in the twenty-first century, when digitisation of music and the advent of distribution platforms such as YouTube and Gaana.com, alongside rampant free circulation of music, mean that the availability and access to all genres of music has become unprecedented. It may, therefore, seem anachronistic and unnecessary to point out the boundaries that are created between sacred and secular music, when there is so much fluidity in the distribution and production of music. Recording studios have been reduced to archives of digital sound over which vocals are layered with music producers arranging existing melodies into new formats.<sup>15</sup> Digitisation has seen the demise of cassettes, in favour of MP3 CDs (containing up to 200 tracks) and increasingly data sticks with thousands of tracks. Each of these will find a place in the musical players notably in trucks and taxis. Mobile phones have also played a role in creating virtual libraries (for a price) of music. It is no longer necessary to attend the *Harimandir* to hear the daily recital of *kirtan*, as it is now broadcast via satellite television and the internet. The impact of digitisation on the economic value of music has meant a reduction of the price to zero.<sup>16</sup> This has become more the case with the availability of YouTube (though this is banned in Pakistan at the time of writing). Even though the value of a piece of music was not usually accounted for during the period of cassette culture, the requirement to produce an actual physical commodity also created scarcity and a competitive market. In the age of digital reproduction, it is only intellectual property, oligopolistic production and state control that enables value to be assigned to a piece of cultural production, be this music, film or text.

Speculating about these changes also intimates the possibility of digital reproduction of pilgrim spots that are usually difficult to be accessed by elders; sites such as Vaishno Devi, Hemkunt Sahib or Sehwan Sharif are now readily available for virtual pilgrimage through a VCD. Increased distribution and availability of music has perversely meant greater dependence of musicians on patrons and live performances. The digital production, therefore, serves the purpose of providing promotional material for live performances for artists, which generates the actual revenue. In the case of sacred music, why is this required? The shrines themselves still provide a source of income. Why do *Hazoori Ragis* need to release VCDs (often paid for by themselves) when they are employees of the SGPC? The answer is the lucrative world of private religious functions and, of course, wedding and death rite rituals, all of which are accompanied by

music. For *ragis*, these bookings often involve some payment to the *gurdwara* they work for, but this is a set amount and anything above that can be kept by the *ragi*. This is also a way for an aspiring *ragi jathas* to make their name and gain employment at one of the SGPC *gurdwaras*. Maintaining a public profile, through the release of CDs and VCDs, is another strategy for *qawwals* engaging in this market (though to a much lesser extent than in East Punjab), as this feeds into the bookings they receive from the Auqaf department and more significantly from shrines still in the control of *pirs* and their followers. Maintenance of genre boundaries is closely related to carving out particular presence in these various markets for live music. Satellite media itself has become one of the main ways in which artists can market themselves in each of these genres. Just as it maintains a distance between the sacred and the secular, it also exposes the impossibility, playing sacred music in the morning and commercial music in the evening on the same channel.

Musical border crossings overcoming the Radcliffe line, with examples of Rahat Fateh Ali Khan in Mumbai and the rapturous response to Daler Mehndi in Lahore, is another case of the contemporary market melting old enmities. Indeed, this book also provides some evidence of the continuing crossing-over of tunes and artists between Punjabs. This musical mobility relies on a constant repackaging, which involves inclusions and exclusions, often repeating the colonial formulations that enabled discrete religious genres in the first place. The emergence of the genre of Sufi music in India in the twenty-first century is a pertinent example, with those previously labelled folk artists like Hans Raj Hans establishing *qawwali* groups and attempting mimicry of Nusrat. This is part of a wider trend that, Peter Manuel argues, is led by Indian cosmopolitan artists as a counter to the virulent anti-Muslim rhetoric of Hindutva.<sup>17</sup> This is a somewhat strange assertion and is most clearly articulated by Madan Gopal Singh, a leading Delhi intellectual and singer of some repute, in which the reason for the emergence of the new Sufi sound is because Muslim hereditary musicians lack willingness to respond to changing musical conditions.<sup>18</sup> In contrast, Mohammed Siddique is quite scathing of the new Sufi music: 'I do not know what this is . . . Folk style, Clessicul style, *dhrupad* style are all different forms. But these Sufi singing fellowships, awards and praise its all lies and fraud. There is Sufi poetry but no Sufi singing style.'<sup>19</sup> This echoes Kuldip Manak and Sardool Sikander who also expressed unease with the promotion of this new commercial entity.<sup>20</sup> An urban commercial music market, centred in Mumbai and Delhi, can choose to ignore those artists who have already been marginalised by partition. *Rababis* can become folk musicians, supported by the nostalgic state, but can

never be sufficiently modern for the metropole. Indeed, it is only possible for this commercial Sufi genre to emerge, just as Sikh *kirtan* a century or so before in urban India, through acts of exclusion. Social marginality and lack of economic mobility restricts Muslim musicians (still playing at Nizamuddin's and multiple other shrines) to enter into modernity. Following the logic of partition, these Muslims who were left behind are still subject to the demands of an Indian nationness that requires reinforcing and maintaining through erasure.<sup>21</sup> The market, even as creating opportunities for breaking borders, is equally liable in acts of colonial repetition. The strangeness of Madan Gopal's assertion is further confusing, because he is all too aware that artists such as Nusrat Fateh Ali Khans or initiatives such as Coke Studio in Pakistan demonstrate hereditary musicians' ability to adapt, as was also shown in the beginning of the twentieth century with *rababis* responding to the new opportunities opened up by recordings. Coke Studio, which began in 2008, initially brought together Pakistani rock and pop artists with *qawwals* and folk singers, is produced by Rohail Hyatt of the 1990s' band Vital Signs and sponsored by Coca-Cola.<sup>22</sup> The format proved to be so successful that it was exported to several other countries, and the 2012 and 2013 seasons featured predominantly international artists working in collaboration with Pakistani musicians. Coke Studio, to a large extent, relies on the musical subjugation of the Pakistani artists to tonal harmony and rhythms, but it also provides a commercial platform projected onto an international stage, which is otherwise absent.<sup>23</sup> As demonstrated in Chapter 6, the market works to its own cycles and rhythms and is disrespectful of borders, but fearful of unmanageable conflict. Coke Studio's success is in taming some of the more ecstatic elements in *qawwali* and Punjabi folk and thus making it palatable for an urbane consumer. A *rababi* singing *kirtan* would not be found in a Pakistani Coke Studio remix or an East Punjabi singer who specialises in praises of the Goddess would also not be found on an Indian Coke Studio stage.<sup>24</sup>

## Reprise

Borders and boundaries are central to how Punjab pertains to be understood; the shift from colonial to postcolonial created a region divided between India and Pakistan. In one sense, music is something that has always transcended this increasingly hardening border; initially radio waves and now the internet enable flows of sounds in a relatively unhindered manner.<sup>25</sup> Cassettes and CDs have always found their way from Lahore to Amritsar and vice versa.

This carries on despite increasing hardening physical borders and political sabre rattling. Perhaps only music is able, in the absence of cross-border transnational, political or social movements and institutions, to provide an example of another possibility of a refusal to endorse and promote the outcomes of colonial modernity. Even though, this is only a minor chord in the hugely amplified soundscape that is invested in the continuation of the boundaries between religions. It is one that is worth straining for and making the effort to hear.

When thinking about the nation-states of Pakistan/India in 2008–10, writing a book about music may seem anachronistic given the state of crises that announced itself in explicit acts of violence and multiple human violations. All aspects of social life are wrapped into the fabric of those events, which in a book about music can be called imperialism without elaborate justification.<sup>26</sup> This terrain is in any case well-worn when the issue of music is raised in the Pakistani environment; it is often to expose the intolerance of Islamists or the many-headed Taliban, but rarely to intimate a relationship with imperialism. Indeed, one of the indicators of 'peace' returning to occupied Iraq was the reestablishment of the Classical music orchestra that had closed due to the war. In the absence of an anti-imperialist bloc, in which writing can provide organic service, the turn to music is to signal that which inspires, gives hope and perhaps romantically indicates a moment of resistance to epistemological tyranny.

# Music Clip List

All clips available on YouTube Channel Sacred and Secular Music: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCSDnRPvzhJCM8rB0LLUWQ1A>

- Clip 1 – *Tum Ek Ghorak Dhanda Ho* by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan.
- Clip 2 – Hafeez Khan Talwandi, with his students at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), 2009.
- Clip 3 – Hanif Khan with his students at LUMS, 2009.
- Clip 4 – Bhai Mohammed Ghulam Chand singing *Aval Allah* at LUMS, 2008.
- Clip 5 – Performance of *Thir ghar behsau* by Harchand Singh.
- Clip 6 – Performance of *Thir ghar behsau* by Harjinder Singh Srinagar Wale.
- Clip 7 – Performance of *Thir ghar behsau* by Bhai Avtar Singh.
- Clip 8 – Fareed Ayaaz in Concert at NCA, 2008.
- Clip 9 – Mohammed Afzal Sacchhari *qawwal* in interview.
- Clip 10 – Maulvi Hassan Ahmad Wehranwale *Qawwal*, Faisalabad, 2010.
- Clip 11 – Sher Ali and Mehr Ali's in their house in Faisalabad, 2010.
- Clip 12 – Qamar Manzoor *qawwal* in their practice room in Gujranwala, 2010.
- Clip 13 – Mubarak Ali, Niaz Ali *qawwal*, *Kadey sade des vee aa dola*.
- Clip 14 – Baba Ghulam Kibriya Abdul Rauf *qawwal*, *Asee aashiq hazar naazar de* (We are the lovers of those who are present and visible).
- Clip 15 – Zahoor Ahmed *qawwal* family singing couplets, Faisalabad, 2013.
- Clip 16 – Interview with Baba Kibriya's grandson, Faisalabad 2013.
- Clip 17 – Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan and Party, *Turia*, *turia ja Fareeda* (Keep on keep on walking Fareed).
- Clip 18 – *Murr Ke Jogian Ne Kherri Naiyo* (The Jogi will not come to the Khair's village again), *Sara Jag Sohna Ain* (The whole world is beautiful) – Vol 5, Ahmed Hassan Bheranwale, Oriental Star Agencies (no year).
- Clip 19 – *Jogi Nachiya Te Ishq Ne Nachaya* (The jogi danced and it is love that made him dance) Zahoor Ahmed Maqbool Ahmed *qawwal*.
- Clip 20 – *Urs* at *Noorie Boorie Shrine*, Lahore, March 2010.
- Clip 21 – Rajpura *baba* who sings *Gugga Pir*, in interview, April 2010.



Clip 22 – Interview with Balbir Singh, in village Bhagrana.

Clip 23 – Tufail Niazi, *Sohna Sajjan Ghar Ayya*.

Clip 24 – Kadri Group mix of couplets, February 2010.

Clip 25 – Pandit Yashpal in concert in Manchester, July 2010, the *Alaap* is presented here.



# Notes

## Chapter 1

- 1 'A complex puzzle' is the usual translation of the term *Ghorak Dhandā*; by replacing it with 'tricky business' the intention is to indicate purposeful complexity and an active engagement, rather than just a preformed problem with a single solution that a puzzle infers. A full version of the song is available in Clip 1.
- 2 All of the musicians in Pakistan and most in India use the English term 'classical' when talking about what is otherwise called North Indian Classical music or *shastri sangeet*, but given that a part of the rationale of this book is to unpack this term, I will represent it with a short inflected *e* rather than *a* and a short *u* in the second syllable to better articulate its pronunciation by the musicians, but also to deform it, thus the spelling 'Clessicul'. Similarly, when referring to Western Classical music, a capital C will be used to indicate the absence of the word Western, thus, Classical.
- 3 In the withdrawal from British India, the states of India and Pakistan were newly formed through the truncation of Punjab, Bengal and Kashmir. India and Pakistan, subsequently, fought three wars over Kashmir. Punjab remains a divided region. See Jalal and Bose, *Modern South Asia* (London: Routledge, 2011), for an introductory text.
- 4 Different musical styles and genres played in Punjab, particularly in the Sikh tradition.
- 5 These men were paid employees who ran the *gurdwara*, read the *Ad Granth*, sang *kirtan* and carried out other duties. They often lived in the *gurdwara* premises.
- 6 Though other churches in Britain, with the arrival of Christian Punjab, is certainly did feature the *tabla/dholki* and the harmonium.
- 7 See Matt Rahaim, 'That Ban (e) of Indian Music: Hearing Politics in the Harmonium,' *Journal of Asian Studies*, 70 (2011), pp. 657–82.
- 8 Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk and Ashwani Sharma, *Dis-orienting Rhythms: Politics of the New Asian Dance Music*. This initial work led to the formulation of the term BrAsian, most cogently developed in Nasreen Ali, Virinder S. Kalra and Salman Sayyid, *A Postcolonial People: South Asians in Britain* (London: C. Hurst & Co, 2006).
- 9 Though there have been a number of studies in Indian Punjab of folk song texts, very few focus on musicological analysis other than Gibb S. Schreffler, 'Signs

- of Separation: Dhol in Punjabi Culture' (unpublished PhD dissertation, Santa Barbara: University of California, 2010).
- 10 The publication of Salman Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses* in 1988 was greeted globally by protests, and in Britain this led to a climate in which religious identities, particularly those of Muslims, became a major part of public expression.
  - 11 Subsequent research by Rajinder Dudrah and others has highlighted the ways in which the early bhangra groups like *Bhujungy* would play *dharmic geet* at *gurdwaras* and *mandirs* while developing bhangra tunes at weddings. See Rajinder K. Dudrah, 'Drum'n'dhol: British Bhangra Music and Diasporic South Asian Identity Formation,' *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 5 (2002), pp. 363–83.
  - 12 Hafeez Khan passed away on 18 March, 2009.
  - 13 Note the spelling of *dhurpad* as Hafeez Khan pronounced the word and *dhruwad* as it is used in India and the colonial context.
  - 14 See Ritwik Sanyal and D. Richard Widdess, *Dhruwad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2004), for a thorough analysis of the form and these parallel narratives.
  - 15 Indeed the transmission of the musical heritage to his own male offspring was in contrast to his Lahore students who were predominantly women. Gender as much as religion framed the process of teaching and transmission.
  - 16 Clip 2 – Hafeez Khan Talwandi with his students at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, 2009.
  - 17 Khalid Manzoor Basra, "A Garland of Razors": The Life of a Traditional Musician in Contemporary Pakistan' (unpublished PhD dissertation, School of Oriental and African Studies, 1996), p. 339.
  - 18 *Ibid.*, pp. 25–6.
  - 19 *Ibid.*, p. 186. This comment actually reflects Basra's own elite class position, given that most Punjabi Muslims engage in some form of *pir* (spiritual figure who acts as an intercessionary between man and God) devotion, whereas reformists are drawn more from the upper classes who value a more austere, text-based religiosity.
  - 20 An unpublished PhD thesis does not circulate or make an impact that a professorially authored book might, and Basra's account of Hafeez Khan should be read as a labour of love for an *ustad* by his pupil, most poignantly demonstrated in the title 'A Garland of Razors', which is Hafeez Khan's own description of his musical legacy/burden. But the dissertation does provide the base for representing Hafeez Khan in the more academically authoritative account of *Dhruwad* by Sanyal and Widdess.
  - 21 Sanyal and Widdess, *Dhruwad*, p. 2.
  - 22 *Ibid.*, p. 300.
  - 23 The book also presents pictograms of waveforms as part of its analysis, if only to emphasise the neutrality of scientific empiricism.

- 24 Guy L. Beck (ed.) *Sacred Sound: Experiencing Music in World Religions* (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2006).
- 25 Theomusicology was coined by Jon Michael Spencer in the mid-1980s, but has not received widespread use or criticism. It is of particular interest in attempting to undo the boundaries that commercial African American music has been suspended in, since commercial recordings began. See Jon Michael Spencer, *Theological Music: Introduction to Theomusicology* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1991).
- 26 In the banning of the book *The Hindus* in February 2014, the words 'objectionable, illegal, obnoxious, incorrect, heresies, factual inaccuracies' were deployed. The word profane was not used at all.
- 27 Talal Asad, *Genealogies of Religion: Discipline and Reasons of Power in Christianity and Islam* (Baltimore, MD: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1993). See also his *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- 28 Nile Green and Mary Searle-Chatterjee (eds), *Religion, Language, and Power* (*Routledge Studies in Religion*) London: Routledge Press, 2008), p. 7.
- 29 Arvind-Pal S. Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality, and the Politics of Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 See Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005); Amanda J. Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); Sharmadip Basu, 'Tuning Modernity: Musical Knowledge and Subjectivities in Colonial India, c. 1780s – c. 1900', *Social Science Dissertations*, Paper 176 (2011); Katherine Butler Brown, 'The Social Liminality of Musicians: Case Studies from Mughal India and beyond', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 3 (2007), pp. 13–49; Katherine Butler Schofield, 'Reviving the Golden Age again: "Classicization", Hindustani Music, and the Mughals', *Ethnomusicology*, 54 (2010), pp. 484–517.
- 32 I am aware that there are various disciplinary boundaries in the study of music, most significantly between formal musical analysis and music history, further divided into Western musicology and the ethnomusicology of the rest. This is examined in more detail in Chapter 2. However, given the general interloping nature of this book, the term musicology is used for all fields of the discipline.
- 33 Victor Kofi Agawu, *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (London: Routledge, 2003).
- 34 Judith P. Butler and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?* (New York: Seagull Books, 2007).

- 35 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), p. 137.
- 36 Bhai Baldeep Singh is a key actor in the revival of *Gurbani Sangeet* and went to Pakistan after Hafeez Khan's death solely to pay his condolences. See Chapter 4.
- 37 One of the owners/managers of Chitrkar, Shahid Mirza, was also quite animated about Hafeez Khan's musicological approach.
- 38 Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995); and Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings: Music, Gender, and Sexuality* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1991).
- 39 Peter Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters: Religion and Modernity in India and Britain* (Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press, 2001), pp. 7–8.
- 40 Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller, 'Methodological Nationalism and beyond: Nation–State Building, Migration and the Social Sciences,' *Global Networks*, 2 (2002), pp. 301–34.
- 41 This is also the case in diaspora studies where 'Punjabi' often stands as a misnomer for 'Sikh'.
- 42 Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, p. 209.
- 43 Though one should give Waris Shah his due, his long poem *Hir Ranjha* is probably recited more than Blake and definitely sung more!
- 44 The dire debates about the support of multicultural art practices in the public domain dwarf the normative claims made by the Classical music fraternity on public resources. It is the funding of opera, symphony orchestras and art music programs that reflects the continuing hegemony of Classical music, which is reflected in the academic texts that maintain the importance of pure form over historical context. Bizarrely, the discourse of multiculturalism is criticised for not representing 'whites' (those without culture), yet of course compared to any budget spent on diverse arts, that for the classics is dwarfing.
- 45 Peter J. Martin, *Sounds and Society: Themes in the Sociology of Music* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), p. viii.
- 46 Though most musicologists take great delight in noting the separation between Said's musical works and his formal analysis of Orientalism. These same commentators, unfortunately, pale behind Said's incisive musical criticism. The deeply political nature of engagements with music are surely the basis of continuity in both domains. See Edward W. Said, *Music at the Limits: Three Decades of Essays and Articles on Music* (London: Bloomsbury, 2008).
- 47 Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, p. 157.
- 48 Ibid., p. 215.
- 49 Ibid., p. 191.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 Agawu, *Representing African Music*, p. 222.

## Chapter 2

- 1 From Chitrkar's brochure: 'The prime aim of Lahore Chitrkar music classes is to renew link with our immeasurably rich musical heritage. Classical music, both vocal and instrumental is taught under the guidance of senior music practitioners.'
- 2 See Amanda J. Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006); and Daniel Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).
- 3 Clip 3 – Hanif Khan with his students at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, 2009.
- 4 *Shastri Sangeet* is often translated unproblematically as Classical music.
- 5 Though the constructions of West and non-West or North and South signal a fraught cartography rather than a specific geography, they are useful indicators where binary thinking clears the ground for further analysis. It is impossible when talking about music to ignore the way in which Classical music, with no prefix, is a proxy for the Universal European subject that does not need to be named as Western. As this text narrows to the specific field of Britain/England and India/Punjab, these problems do not dissipate, but present themselves on a different scale.
- 6 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978); see also his *Music at the Limits* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).
- 7 The key texts being Jonathan Bellman (ed.), *The Exotic in Western Music* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998); Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (eds), *Western Music and its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Timothy D. Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007); and Ralph P. Locke, *Musical Exoticism: Images and Reflections* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).
- 8 Locke, *Musical Exoticism*, p. 177.
- 9 Matthew Head, 'Musicology on Safari: Orientalism and the Spectre of Postcolonial Theory,' *Music Analysis*, 22 (2003), p. 217.
- 10 Jonathan D. Bellman, 'Musical Voyages and their Baggage: Orientalism in Music and Critical Musicology,' *Musical Quarterly*, 94 (Fall 2011), p. 432. It is not worth going into a detailed response to the deeply ingrained liberal bias of Bellman's argument. It is sufficient to note that writing in 2011, while the United States was still occupying Afghanistan, a Professor in an American University can have the temerity to argue that the question of colonialism seems 'quaintly out of date'.
- 11 See especially Taruskin, *Text and Act*.
- 12 Born and Hesmondhalgh, *Western Music and its Others*, p. 46.

- 13 Roland Barthes, 'The Death of the Author,' *Aspen*, 5 (1967), accessed from <http://www.ubu.com/aspen/aspen5and6/index.html> on 12 March, 2014, at 00:13 hours. Born and Hesmondalgh, to a certain extent, hold on to some notion of music as inherently containing no meaning; this is largely due to their sophisticated accounts not taking conflict fully into account. It is as if music in itself has to embody beauty and the refineries of life. This then entirely depends on the listening public. For example, as the trains were taking Jews to be gassed in the camps, the Berlin philharmonic orchestra, whose concert hall is in viewing distance of the tracks, played on with a civilised audience accepting the ongoing travesty!
- 14 Born and Hesmondalgh, *Western Music and its Others*, p. 46.
- 15 Wong notes how ethnomusicology has been relatively slow in adopting many of the insights emerging from anthropology. See Deborah Wong, 'Ethnomusicology and Difference,' *Ethnomusicology*, 50 (2006), pp. 259–79. Agawu is also fairly scathing of the self-image of ethnomusicologists as the 'egalitarians' of musical study. See Agawu, *Representing African Music*.
- 16 For a good perspective on the relationship between ethnomusicology and anthropology, see Philip Bohlman, 'Ethnomusicology's Challenge,' in K. Bergeron and P. Bohlman (eds), *Disciplining Music* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp. 116–37.
- 17 Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman (eds), *Comparative Musicology and Anthropology of Music: Essays on the History of Ethnomusicology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); Stephen Blum, Philip V. Bohlman and Daniel Neuman (eds), *Ethnomusicology and Modern Music History* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1991); Gregory F. Barz and Timothy J. Cooley, *Shadows in the Field: New Perspectives for Fieldwork in Ethnomusicology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); and Wong, 'Ethnomusicology and Difference.'
- 18 Agawu, *Representing African Music*.
- 19 *Ibid.*, p. 155. In the space of the actual engagement between ethnomusicologist and musician, multiple dimensions come into play that can alter the power between the two individuals, not least gender but also the subversion of the pedagogic process: for example, Hafeez Khan would often stake the claim to authenticity through blood line, something that training and practice could not teach.
- 20 See the book review of Spivak's *A Critique* by Sukalpa Bhattacharjee in *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36 (April 2001), pp. 1194–98.
- 21 Spivak, *A Critique*, p. 49.
- 22 Agawu, *Representing African Music*, p. 63.
- 23 *Ibid.*, p. 68.
- 24 Spivak, *A Critique*, p. 65.

- 25 See Virinder Kalra, Raminder Kaur and John Hutnyk, *Diaspora & Hybridity* (London: Sage Publications, 2005).
- 26 Spivak, A *Critique*, p. 65.
- 27 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 28 Agawu takes quite the radical position on this: 'there is ultimately no difference between European knowledge and African knowledge. All talk of an insider's point of view, a native point of view, a distinct African mode of hearing, or of knowledge organisation is a lie, and wicked one at that'. Agawu, *Representing African Music*, p. 180.
- 29 In my opening engagements with my two teachers, neither is a native informant for the knowledge that is being produced in this book. Rather the technologies that render one as a Muslim hereditary musician and the other as a Hindu urban educated musician in the absence of a heteroreligious, heteromusical subject are what is under consideration.
- 30 Spivak, A *Critique*, p. 82.
- 31 In distorting Spivak's words, a recognisable norm of musicology emerges: 'one kind of deconstructive critical approach would loosen the binding of the score, undo the opposition between musical performance and the biography of the named subject "Beethoven", and set the two as each other's "scene of writing". In such a reading, the life that writes itself as "my life" is as much a production of the psychosocial space . . . as the music that is written by the holder of the named life – a music that is then consigned to what is most often recognized as genuinely "social": the world of publication and distribution.' *Ibid.*, p. 115.
- 32 Carl Dahlhaus, *Ludwig Van Beethoven: Approaches to His Music* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991).
- 33 Carl Dahlhaus, trans. R. Lustig, *The Idea of Absolute Music* (London and Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1989).
- 34 Daniel K. L. Chua, *Absolute Music and the Construction of Meaning, New Perspectives in Music History and Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
- 35 *Ibid.*, p. 15.
- 36 *Ibid.*, p. 44 from Goer, *The Musical Work*.
- 37 *Ibid.*, p. 176.
- 38 *Ibid.*, p. 8.
- 39 *Ibid.*, p. 240.
- 40 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 139.
- 41 *Ibid.*, p. 223.
- 42 Chua, *Absolute Music*, p. 261.
- 43 *Ibid.*
- 44 *Ibid.*



- 45 Ibid., p. 223.
- 46 G. W. F. Hegel, trans. E. B. Spiers and J. B. Sanderson, *Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion*, vol. II (London: Kegan Paul, 1895).
- 47 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 128.
- 48 Ibid., p. 134.
- 49 Talal Asad, *Formations of the Secular: Christianity, Islam, Modernity* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2003).
- 50 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 150.
- 51 Said, *Music at the Limits*.
- 52 Peter J. Martin, *Music and the Sociological Gaze: Art Worlds and Cultural Production* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2006).
- 53 Taruskin, *Text and Act*.
- 54 In particular, McClarey and Taruskin.
- 55 This perspective on the audience is very useful when considering the relationship between religion and music as will be demonstrated in chapters 4–6.
- 56 Lawrence Kramer, *Why Classical Music Still Matters* (California: University of California Press, 2007), p. 16. The assumption is that all of the 90 nationalities represented in the loss of life of the 11 September attacks would have something to relate to in Beethoven. This claim for the universal is made without irony by Kramer.
- 57 Sanna Pederson, 'Beethoven and Freedom: Historicizing the Political Connection,' *Beethoven Forum* (2005), p. 1.
- 58 Ibid., p. 12. Another example is the 2010 Nexus Institute seminar titled 'What's Next for the West: Superman Meets Beethoven,' subsequently a collection of mostly aged, white men who discussed the importance of Classical music to an audience, no doubt of the same ilk, faced with the possibility that the United States is not acknowledging the importance of European culture in its new civilising missions.
- 59 Chua, *Absolute Music*, p. 240.
- 60 By 1849, Punjab was part of the East India Company's domain and a formal relationship between that region and the imperial motherland was to begin.
- 61 See Gurinder K. Bhambra, *Rethinking Modernity: Postcolonialism and the Sociological Imagination* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2007), for detailed discussions.
- 62 James Wierzbicki, 'Max Weber and Musicology: Dancing on Shaky Foundations,' *The Musical Quarterly*, 93 (2010), p. 270.
- 63 As a corrective to much sociology, which rarely acknowledges this aspect of this work, Andrew Zimmerman makes the claim that Weber was 'an imperialist, a racist, and a Social Darwinistic nationalist'. See Andrew Zimmerman, 'Decolonizing Weber,' *Postcolonial Studies*, 9 (2006), pp. 41, 53–79.

- 64 Richard Taruskin, *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (California: University of California Press, 2009).
- 65 Richard Taruskin, *Oxford History of Western Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), p. 819.
- 66 The post-2008 financial crisis in Europe demonstrates a much more reluctant Germany, when it comes to taking control of Europe's finances, though no doubt Beethoven is playing at the multiple conferences in which this new hegemony is being asserted.
- 67 Spivak, *A Critique*, p. 6.
- 68 Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain, 1876–1953*, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001, p. 54.
- 69 *Ibid.*, chapter 3.
- 70 Farrell, *Indian Music*, p. 5.
- 71 It might be possible to forgive a musicologist for not reading Homi Babha, *The Location of Culture*, but to ignore McClary or Taruskin is poor scholarship.
- 72 Farrell, *Indian Music*, p. 4.
- 73 Zon's interests in musicology and much of his writings pepper this book, but unfortunately mostly by way of a critique. Nonetheless, he is one of the few authors who address the complex relationships that come to play when looking at music and religion.
- 74 Written in 2007, the book is a good example of a renewed civilisation mission on the back of the imperial adventures in Afghanistan.
- 75 There is a tradition of defending Jones from Sirah Ahmed; Cannon notes, 'If all colonial European administrators had been like Jones and his most productive followers, the unsavoury quality of European political and cultural exploitation might never have developed' ('Oriental Jones: Scholarship, Literature, Multiculturalism, and Humankind,' in Cannon and Brine (eds), *Objects of Enquiry*, p. 48). See also Macfie, *Orientalism*, p. 58; Robert Irwin, *For Lust of Knowing: The Orientalists and their Enemies* (London: Allen Lane, 2006), p. 293; and even Gyan Prakash: 'the genuine respect and love for the Orient of William Jones gave way to the cold utilitarian scrutiny of James Mill' ('Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography,' *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 32(1990), p. 386.
- 76 Bennett, *Representing Non-Western Music in Nineteenth Century Britain*.
- 77 Sharmadip Basu, 'Tuning Modernity: Musical Knowledge and Subjectivities in Colonial India, c. 1780s – c. 1900,' *Social Science Dissertations*, Paper 176 (2011), p. 52.
- 78 To a large extent, this section would not be possible without the doctoral work of Sharmadip Basu, who in his thesis 'Tuning Modernity' provides a relatively straightforward Saidian critique of ethnomusicological writings on colonial India.

Though our problematics are slightly different, his close reading of a Sir William Jones opens up the space for thinking about religion in these discourses. Basu is critical of the historicism that pervades the writings on India from musicologists and in particular for the assumption of the possibility of a post-Saidian framework, which emerges from a firm belief in musical humanism that pervades the texts he analyses (and of Schofield's work). This is, of course, a subtext of the nonrepresentational argument about music and the social.

- 79 See Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk and Ash Sharma, *Dis-Orienting Rhythms: The Politics of the New Asian Dance Music* (London: Zed Books, 1999), p. 10.
- 80 This point is made succinctly by Basu: 'Hence, in my view, the post-Saidian position adumbrated by the likes of Farrell and Zon appears hastily conceived and somewhat naïve in their understanding of the colonial encounter and the many forms of violence that attended it' ('Tuning Modernity', p. 98).
- 81 Generally the targets of this criticism are Weidman and Subramanian, but especially Bakhle.
- 82 Certainly Schofield correctly notes that Bakhle engages in a number of subtle misreadings of Sir William Jones to make her arguments. Though, this does not render the overall thesis invalid. For example, Jones' text is taken in isolation from the formation of Classical music in England, which by 1784 was relatively advanced but not settled as an issue. This allows Bakhle to make statements such as 'nor is it apparent that he was well schooled in Western classical music' (p. 9). However, it is clear that Jones is part of the elite that is framing these terms in England. Schofield's critique is limited to Bakhle and she does not make the same criticism of Weber for ignoring the impact of the colonies.
- 83 Schofield, 'Reviving the Golden,' p. 489.
- 84 Though one could easily argue, pace Gelbart, that these are not the high and low that come to mark 'Art and folk' in the eighteenth century in Europe and India. Rather the translation of *Marghi* and *Desi* in this way perversely demonstrates a reading through a colonial modern lens.
- 85 Actually it would be fascinating to see how Persian literature maintained the 'heterogeneous, heterotopic, fuzzy and fluid system of musical performance and creation' (Schofield, 'Reviving the Golden,' p. 481), rather than the categorisations that Schofield proposes in the article under review.
- 86 All three also appear in Zon's work.
- 87 Schofield, 'Reviving the Golden,' p. 509.
- 88 As Basu notes, 'clearly, it would not have been possible for Jones to write the "Musical Modes" without the active, contributive presence of the *Tuhfat* in it' ('Tuning Modernity,' p. 82).
- 89 Schofield, p. 511.
- 90 Basu, 'Tuning Modernity,' p. 95.

- 91 Schofield's scholarship like that of Zon's is spread throughout this book, but its empiricist underpinnings are what is most problematic. Bringing out the Persian record on music is, of course, valuable in its own right, but to analyse that without recourse to Orientalist critique renders it disingenuous.
- 92 Though I am deeply indebted to Sharmadip Basu for confirming my understanding of the contemporary ethnomusicological landscape as it refers to India, there is also perhaps just a need for his analysis to also turn on the *bhadralok* (elite) of Bengal. While he is clear that the main protagonists, Dwarkanath Tagore and Sourindramohan, are formed out of the epistemic violence of the colonial encounter, they are also represented as offering a counter to European understanding of India. In each of these cases, the native informant, the erased Muslim *ustad*, performs the same kind of role that he does in the ethnomusicological texts that he so correctly criticises. In the encounter with Max Muller, Dwarkanath plays some music that is truly 'Indian' but not to Muller's taste. Basu surmises that this would be a Bengali *dhrupad*, though noting only the language would be indicative of its Indian nature, as Muller would have had no opportunity of hearing other forms of music in an age before recordings. Dwarkanath's reluctance to perform this may have been less about hearing than of the difficulty of playing *dhrupad* on a keyboard instrument; the native informant as absent Muslim *ustad* evokes the direct opposite of the civilizational argument that Dwarkanath makes to Muller. Yet without his presence *dhrupad* would not have entered Calcutta even at the later stages of its development. As Spivak reminds us, there is no safe recourse in the polarity of colonised and coloniser or European and other. To talk of the engagements between Sourindramohan and Clarke as a 'civilizational encounter' implies a debate of difference rather than of a gentlemanly argument among differentially located (even hierarchically and racially) co-civilisationists. For the Muslim *ustad*, the *bhadralok* and the British ultimately play the same game of exclusion.
- 93 Woodfield purposefully avoids any engagement with postcolonial ideas, most notable is the presence of Said's *Orientalism* in the bibliography, though there is no reference to the book in the text and the ideas have no bearing on the narrative or analysis. See Ian Woodfield, *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in the Late-Eighteenth Century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- 94 Woodfield, *Music of the Raj*, p. 161. The fact that a 'home' in India in the eighteenth century can be conceived as an 'English context' begs incredulity. I wonder if the homes were cold and damp as the English context would presume.
- 95 See Farrell and Woodfield. In that sense Bird's publication of *Oriental Miscellany* in 1789 marks the same kind of moment for the formation of Classical music as Jones' 1792 publication for Clessical music.

- 96 Matthew Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music': Emerging Categories from Ossian to Wagner* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 112. It also comes to serve as representational of Chinese music, which only adds further weight to the connection between the Orient and Scotland in European elite imagination.
- 97 *Ibid.*, pp. 162–8.
- 98 This would have been an interesting intellectual project if Woodfield were able to see it.
- 99 Spivak, *A Critique*, p. 33.
- 100 Richards, *Imperialism*, p. 27.
- 101 I am referring here to Spivak's quest for the Rani of Sirmur through the colonial archive and into the present (see Spivak, *A Critique*, pp. 201–68). It offers a provocative method to look for the named musicians who provide text and music, for books such as *30 Songs of the Punjab*. But as Spivak herself notes, the Rani is no ordinary woman; she appears in the colonial archive and in the contemporary because of her status. The musicians who played for Margaret Fowkes are unnamed and unknowable and thus most accurately are positioned as native informants.
- 102 *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- 103 See McClary, *Feminine Endings*.
- 104 Clayton in Bennett Zon and Martin Clayton (eds), *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire: Portrayal of the East, 1780s-1940s* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007), p. 93.
- 105 *Ibid.*
- 106 Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, *Art and Swadeshi* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1994).
- 107 Coomaraswamy, *Thirty Songs*, p. 3.
- 108 Just as women have been used to justify imperialist war in 2001.
- 109 See Bonnie C. Wade, *Khyāl: Creativity within North India's Classical Music Tradition* (CUP Archive, 1984); and Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, *The Rāgs of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution* (New Delhi: Popular Prakashan, 1995).

### Chapter 3

- 1 In fact this exegesis was begun by Bhai Vir Singh, the doyen of the Singh Sabha movement, a reformist of prolific written output and, in some sense, the epitome of the impact of colonial modernity on the native elite. See Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, for greater detail and analysis.

- 2 B. S. Rattan, *Gurbani Shabad Soorat, Raag Sarang*, (Mohali: Sahit Rang Gathan, 2006), p. iii (all the emphasis are from the original text, which is in English).
- 3 See Katherine Butler Schofield, 'Reviving the Golden Age Again: "Classicization," Hindustani Music, and the Mughals,' *Ethnomusicology*, 54 (2010), pp. 484–517.
- 4 Van der Veer, *Imperial*, p. 4.
- 5 Spivak, *Critique*, p. 8.
- 6 Books by some academics – such as Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity, and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1994); and Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus AnAlternative History* (New York: Penguin, 2009) – have resulted in death threats to the authors.
- 7 Richard King, *Orientalism and Religion: Postcolonial Theory, India and 'the Mystic East'* (London: Routledge, 1999); Harjot Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*; and Gyanendra Pandey, *The Construction of Communalism in Colonial North India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1990). Harjot Oberoi, 'The Making of a Religious Paradox,' in David Lorenzen (ed.), *Bhakti Religion in North India: Community Identity and Political Action* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1994).
- 8 See Denzil Ibbetson, 'The Races, Castes and Tribes of the People,' in *The Report on the Panjab Census of 1881* (New Delhi: Low Price Publications, 2008), p. 154.
- 9 Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*.
- 10 An engagement with Islam is absent from Mandair's theorisation and to a large extent, as the next chapter will reveal, it is Sikh music that is most apposite when analysing the spectre of religion. The narratives of musician biographies in this and the next two chapters, however, indicate the extent to which colonial repetition is not totalising.
- 11 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 61.
- 12 See Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*; Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern*; and Basu, 'Tuning Modernity'.
- 13 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 73.
- 14 *Ibid.*, p. 87.
- 15 *Ibid.*, p. 117.
- 16 *Ibid.*, p. 122.
- 17 *Ibid.*, p. 14.
- 18 Michael Chanan, *Musica Practica: The Social Practice of Western from Gregorian Chant to Postmodernism* (London: Verso, 1996), pp. 4–5.
- 19 Julian Johnson, *Who Needs Classical Music? Cultural Choice and Musical Value* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 7.
- 20 Johnson's plea for a return to a culture that values contemplation as a rationale for the relevance of classical music and religion is fairly typical of those who cling on

- to a high art notion of music and in contrast to Taruskin in the previous chapter. See Taruskin, *Text and Act*, p. 122.
- 21 L. Woodhead, 'Real Religion, Fuzzy Spirituality? Taking Sides in the Sociology of Religion,' in S. Aupers and D. Houtman (eds), *Religions of Modernity: Relocating the Sacred to the Self and the Digital* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), pp. 31–48.
  - 22 BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. BBC Four and Sky Arts 1 on Television.
  - 23 Opera alone receives 15 percent of the £1.9 billion Arts Council budget in the United Kingdom.
  - 24 Carl Dahlhaus, *Foundations of Music History*, trans. J. B. Robinson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, [1967] 1983); Lydia Goehr, *The Imagined Museum of Musical Works: An Essay in the Philosophy of Music* (Oxford: Clarendon University Press, 1992); Richard Taruskin, *Text and Act: Essays on Music and Performance* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).
  - 25 See William Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics in Eighteenth-Century England: A Study in Canon, Ritual, and Ideology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992).
  - 26 Tia De Nora, *Beethoven*.
  - 27 Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*.
  - 28 A neat summary of the various groups looking to the past for stability is given in Gelbart, p. 192, fn. 4.
  - 29 *Ibid.*, p. 201.
  - 30 He was also a friend of Samuel Johnson, who was involved with Jones in the Literary Society. David Hunter, 'Patronizing Handel, Inventing Audiences: The Intersections of Class, Money, Music and History,' *Early Music* (2000), pp. 33–49.
  - 31 Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*, p. 210.
  - 32 *Ibid.*, p. 211.
  - 33 Herbert M. Schueller, 'The Use and Decorum of Music as Described in British Literature, 1700 to 1780,' *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 13 (January 1952), pp. 73–93, especially p. 79.
  - 34 Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, p. 214.
  - 35 Weber, of course, uses the term 'cosmopolitan' entirely consistently with his neglect of the role of the world outside of Europe. Perhaps this is because, as Zon notes, the brief mention of non-European music in Burney and Hawkins's histories is only negative: 'Despite his experience in India, Burney considered non-Western music to be noise and jargon.' Hawkins likened it to 'hideous and astonishing sounds.' See Bennett Zon (ed.), *Music and Performance Culture in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Temperley* (Farnham: Ashgate Publishing, 2012), p. 7 and pp. 14–15.
  - 36 Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, p. 219.
  - 37 Though arguable, Burney's intellectual influence in the field of music was much more pervasive; see Irving, *Ancients and Moderns*, for a detailed analysis of this impact on the work of William Crotch.

- 38 Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*.
- 39 This is a good example of what Van der Veer coins as 'Little England-ish' history writing; see Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, p. 8. Also see William Weber, 'The 1784 Handel Commemoration as Political Ritual', *Journal of British Studies*, 28 (Jan 1989), pp. 43–69.
- 40 Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*, p. 11.
- 41 As Gelbart states, 'Whereas until the eighteenth century, Western theory had viewed "Eastern" music as un-natural and abhorrent compared to the European system, the rise of Orientalism alongside the other anthropological disciplines led to the recasting of Eastern musics (like "ancient music") in the typical new role of primitive Other – and connections were drawn to show these musics as united in their "natural" qualities.' *Ibid.*, p. 24. In France a tradition was established linking ancient Greek music to Chinese music, and Burney was familiar with its most important writings. *Ibid.*, p. 25 and p. 57.
- 42 *Ibid.*, p. 59.
- 43 Despite his experience in India, Burney's statement on classical music is worth reproducing here: 'There is a degree of refinement, delicacy and invention', he says, 'which lovers of a simple and common music can no more comprehend than the Asiatics harmony'. Weber, *The Rise of Musical Classics*, p. 215. Jones is represented, in contrast to Burney and Hawkins, as a sympathetic Orientalist.
- 44 Ian Woodfield, *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in the Late-Eighteenth Century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 219.
- 45 As Gelbart, *The Invention of 'Folk Music' and 'Art Music'*, states, 'Additionally, when they turned to music, the early Orientalist philologists and explorers, such as William Jones and the brothers Gore and William Ouseley, relied on Rousseau, Burney, and John Wallis for their understanding of "ancient" music in general' (p. 77). But this is a misreading in terms of projects as Basu clearly explains: 'Thus, in Jones and Burney we see two quite different narratives unfolding, two different Argonaut narratives that complement each other: one colonial/imperial, and the other metropolitan/nationalist; one concerned with the external Other, justifying Europe's civilized Self and its civilizing missions in distant lands, and the other concerned with demarcating national-cultural differences and selfhood internal to Europe' ('Tuning Modernity', p. 97).
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- 47 Weber, *Rise of Musical Classics*, p. 268.
- 48 *Ibid.*, p. 130.
- 49 An example of Woodfield's, *Music of the Raj*, 'Little-Englandism': 'It is true that the practicalities of music-making in Calcutta were dominated by the circumstances of Indian life, the heat, the humidity, and the distance from London, but there is very little evidence that in matters of style, genre, aesthetics, and performance



- practice Anglo-Indians made music any differently from their contemporaries back in England. The Music of the Raj is thus best characterized as an example of provincial English culture, albeit one transplanted into a remote and exotic location, and one with unusually complex organizational requirements' (p. 236). There is no mention of imperial domination or governance or the wealth that these individuals were accumulating. This again is a deeply pernicious work, in the guise of liberal engagement. Will historians writing two hundred years hence focus on music making in the green zone in Iraq in this way, one speculates?
- 50 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter*.
- 51 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*, p. 10.
- 52 The low social status of hereditary musicians is covered well in the special issue on 'Music and Musicians of Punjab' in the *International Journal of Punjab Studies* (vol. 18), edited by Gibb S. Schreffler.
- 53 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*, p. 259.
- 54 Bhatkhande thus continues with Jones' perspective on the fall from a 'Golden age of Indian music' and the consequential marginalising of the Muslim musician.
- 55 Bhatkhande quoted in Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*, p. 198.
- 56 Though Bonnie Wade notes that his English language education must have indicated some material wealth. See Wade, *Khayal*, p. 98.
- 57 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*, p. 144. This resonates with Mozart's attempts to earn a living in Vienna.
- 58 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*, p. 138. This faith is of course Hindu, but as illustrated in the previous chapter, this religious object is itself being created as it is iterated in the context of music.
- 59 See Vasudha Dalmia, *The Nationalization of Hindu Traditions: Bhārtendu Haris Chandra and Nineteenth Century Banaras* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1997).
- 60 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*.
- 61 *Ibid.*, p. 95.
- 62 *Ibid.*, p. 179.
- 63 Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* is a text in Bakhle's bibliography, but unfortunately does not feature in the text. Indeed, this is perhaps the disease of musical historians, as demonstrated in the previous chapter with Woodfield and Said.
- 64 Not to labour the point, but the respectability afforded to middle-class urban women in terms of the new music is a point made by William Weber in his second book on music, *Music and the Middle Class: The Social Structure of Concert Life in London, Paris and Vienna between 1830 and 1848*, vol. 3 (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 30.
- 65 Bakhle is making this point for absolutely sound and correct political reasons and the story of Hirabai is perhaps the most interesting and persuasive in the book. Nonetheless, it renders thinking of political futures into fairly narrow frames.

- 66 Chakrabarty's approach is summed as: 'It may be possible to hold together both secularist-historicist and non-secularist and non-historicist takes on the world by engaging seriously the question of diverse ways of "being-in-the-world"'. See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincialising Europe. Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), p. 22.
- 67 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 169.
- 68 See Bakhle (2005) on West India, Weidman (2006) on South India and Basu (2012) on Bengal and East India.
- 69 Bakhle makes this point for the politically laudable aims of rescuing classical music from the Hindu right and its use as an exemplar of the 'golden' pristine past before Muslim invasions. But it has the effect of excluding Pakistan and precisely the trajectories of Muslim musicians who attempt to maintain a musical tradition.
- 70 Just as India is imagined in terms of the sacred in the colonial imagination, it is Pakistan that is rendered in this fashion by postcolonial Indian elites, mimicking the same opposition and reflecting their position in global power hierarchies.
- 71 This is as much political, with various Rajas looking (mostly unsuccessfully) to Ranjit Singh to support them against the British. Ranjit Singh also employed around 22 European officers into his army and it is possible that they even patronised European music.
- 72 Herbert Garrett and Gulshan Lall Chopra (eds), *Events at the Court of Ranjit Singh, 1810–1817*, No. 17 (Patiala: Punjab Languages Department, 1970).
- 73 Kanwal, *Punjab de parsedh Raagi te Rababi*, p. 90.
- 74 Ritwik Sanyal and D. Richard Widdess, *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music* (London: Ashgate Publishing, 2004), p. 99.
- 75 Ibid., p. 101.
- 76 The emergence of *gharanas* as a nineteenth-century phenomenon is noted by Neumann, *The Social Life*. The main Punjab *gharanas* are Talwandi, Sham Churasi, Patiala, Kapurthala, Naushera Nangli and Kasur.
- 77 These will be presented in the next three chapters.
- 78 See Indu Banga and J. S. Grewal, *Maharaja Ranjit Singh: The State and Society* (Amritsar: Guru Nanak Dev University Press, 2001).
- 79 For a classic hagiography, see Fakir Syed Waheeduddin, *The Real Ranjit Singh* (Patiala: Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, 2001). These roles would often overlap and dependent on paymaster the collection of missionaries, travellers, military men, and spies were a motley bunch.
- 80 See Paramjit Singh and A. S. Madra, *Sicques, Tigers, or Thieves: Eyewitness Accounts of the Sikhs (1606–1809)* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004).
- 81 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 164.
- 82 In a succinct bringing together of Europe and India, Van der Veer argues that the relationship that German Indologists drew between a common Indo-German

- heritage (thus the swastika as symbol of the Nazi party) and Hindu nationalism achieves greater intimacy when the common enemy is the Semite: the Jew and the Muslim.
- 83 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 132.
- 84 The Lahore Gazetteer of 1894 lists nine main organisations under the general heading 'Social and educational', a separate section from 'religious organisations' reflecting the civil society character. Though, in description they are mostly aligned to the promotion of the interests of a particular religious group.
- 85 Michael David Rosse, 'The Movement for the Revitalization of "Hindu" Music in Northern India, 1860–1930' (unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1995). In some sense, this complicates the kind of revivalism that Paluskar was interested in, as clearly the support of the Maharashtra-based Arya Samaj is not as important as mobilising the local elite, which Paluskar did quite successfully. The school secured grants from the Maharaja of Kashmir and Kapurthala, for example. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
- 86 See Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*, p. 151, for an exact breakdown of student numbers. This is not to say that no Muslim students were present. G. A. Farooq (1911–74), a leading vocalist in Pakistan, was trained in the Gandharv Mahavidyala in 1928 having graduated from Islamia College, Lahore. See Saeed Malik, *Lahore and its Melodic Culture* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel Publications, 1998).
- 87 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 59.
- 88 Though there are obviously local traditions of *dhrupad* in Punjab, the Harivallabh festival is at the very least historically coterminous with the revivalist period.
- 89 Radha Kapuria, 'A Muse for Music: The Harballabh "Musicians' Fair" of Punjab, 1947–2003' (unpublished MPhil dissertation, Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, 2012). Much of this discussion is based on a reading of this exhaustive dissertation. Kapuria's work was preceded by what is perhaps the first scholarly article on the Harivallabh festival by Naresh Kumar. See Naresh Kumar, *Festival of Music in the City of Sports: Harballabh Sangit Mela of Jalandhar* (CSDS-Sarai Project Report, Independent Research Fellowship, 2006).
- 90 See Muhammad Fadil Khan, *Mihr-e-Munir, Biography of Hadrat Syed Pir Meher Ali Shah* (Islamabad: Golra Sharif Trust, 1998).
- 91 There is no indication of religious identity in the generic names Babu and Lalla.
- 92 On the Ahmaddiya in the context of the nineteenth century, see Simon Ross Valentine, *Islam and the Ahmadiyya Jama'at* (London: Hurst Publishers, 2008).
- 93 Though it would be crude to define this as traditionalist versus reformist, it does indicate an internal debate.
- 94 A particularly good example of a communal version of Ranjit Singh's era is Latif, *History of the Punjab from the Remotest Antiquity to the Present Time* (Lahore: Progressive Books, 1984).

- 95 These slogans indicate the late nineteenth-century trends in Western classical music of atonality and the emergence of commercial music. This also refers to Adorno and Benjamin in a circuitous manner.
- 96 Though Radio Pakistan and PTV (Pakistan Television) have extensive music archives.
- 97 Even though All India Radio broadcasts various specific shows on what is termed 'devotional' music.
- 98 Though it is clearly a positive development on the musicological accounts of the previous chapter, where a universal empiricism can define the process of classicisation.
- 99 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, chapter 4.

## Chapter 4

- 1 Riaz was on *tabla*, a quality young player who was closely associated with Clessicual music in Lahore and patronised at the time by Bibi Samina (one of Lahore's thespians of music and culture). On the violin was Nadeem, Bhai Chand's son-in-law and a full-time player in the policemen string orchestra. One of the few remaining relics of Lahore's colonial past, the band was kept fairly busy with performances at state functions and the occasional wedding or private party. The *sarangi* player had died at the time of writing, and I was not able to find his details.
- 2 See Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, pp. 216–7.
- 3 See Clip 4; this is the text as sung by Bhai Chand in the flat we were staying at when in Lahore in May 2008. At the beginning, Bhai Chand says: 'I've been asked to play *kirtan* in the true way'. He then half laughs, half sighs. This sound haunts me, as it was my naivety and arrogance that had asked him to play in that way; his generous response was a laugh of poignancy and irony. For Bhai Chand, his family embodies true *kirtan*; there was no other form they could play as it was his ancestors who made it possible. This ironic laugh was not a taunting one because it also contained the poignancy of the fact that this legacy was damaged by colonial modernity and forgotten in postcolonial acts of erasure.
- 4 This was at the behest of Najam Hussain Syed and the *Sangat* reading group who were looking for someone to sing the words of Nanak that were being read at the Friday evening group in Lahore. See Navtej Purewal, 'Sikh/Muslim Bhai-Bhai?: Towards a Social History of the *Rababi* Tradition of *Shabad*', *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*, 7 (2011), pp. 365–82, for a full account of Bhai Chand's life.
- 5 These controversial debates about religion oscillate between what is often called theological and historical accounts. These controversies are outlined in Nile Green and Mary Searle-Chatterjee (eds), *Religion, Language, and Power* (Routledge

- Studies in Religion*) (London: Routledge Press, 2008) and in the specific Sikh context in Arvind-pal Mandair, 'Thinking Differently about Religion and History: Issues for Sikh Studies,' in Christopher Shackle, Gurharpal Singh and Arvind-Pal Mandair (eds), *Sikh Religion, Culture and Ethnicity* (Richmond: Curzon Press, 2001).
- 6 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*.
  - 7 Anna C. Schultz, *Singing a Hindu Nation: Marathi Devotional Performance and Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), p. 308.
  - 8 [http://SGPC.net/rehat\\_maryada/section\\_three\\_chap\\_five.html](http://SGPC.net/rehat_maryada/section_three_chap_five.html); Sikh Rehat Maryada: Chapter V, Article VI as cited in N. K. Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance: Reviving Musical Memory, Reforming Sikh Identity,' *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*, 8 (2012), pp. 199–229.
  - 9 Virinder Kalra, 'Secular and Religious (Miri/Piri) Domains in Sikhism,' in Pashaura Singh and Louis E. Fenech (eds), *The Oxford Handbook of Sikh Studies* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014).
  - 10 Bob Van der Linden, *Moral Languages from Colonial Punjab: The Singh Sabha, Arya Samaj and Ahmadiyahs* (Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2008).
  - 11 The terminology is quite confusing here, but in essence the term Gursikh is a distinction from the Khalsa, who were ordained according to the *Amrit* ceremony and were instructed to wear the five symbols of unshorn hair, a sword, a steel bangle, boxer shorts and a small comb (*kara, kesh, kanga, kirpan, kacchera*). Male Gursikhs would also wear these symbols, but the emphasis would be on unshorn hair and the wearing of the turban in 1920s' reformist Punjab. The main rationale for this contrast was a distinction from the multiple groups who took Guru Nanak as their spiritual leader, ranging from *Nanakpanthis*, *Sindhis* through to many Muslims also!
  - 12 Navtej Purewal, 'Sikh/Muslim Bhai-Bhai?,' p. 374.
  - 13 See Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*, p. 286. This story was also relayed to me by Manjeet Singh, a close associate of the brothers. Indeed, the brothers also portrayed in an oil painting by Liverpool-based artists The Singh Twins.
  - 14 Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*, p. 251.
  - 15 Jagir Singh, 'The Place of *Rababi Kirtan* in Gurmat Sangeet,' in A.S. Grewal, G. Singh and B. Singh B. (eds), *Gurmat Sangeet* (Ludhiana: Jawaddi Taksal, 1992), p. 48.
  - 16 This interview is carried out by Sarbpreet Singh, the founder of [www.gurmatsangeetproject.com](http://www.gurmatsangeetproject.com) who is perhaps one of the foremost activists in reviving *Gurbani kirtan* in North America. I am indebted to this web site for introducing me to the music of Dharm Singh Zakhmi and other musically gifted *kirtan jathas* (groups). Sarbpreet Singh, 'Our Own Bhatkhande,' <http://gurmatsangeet.blogspot.co.uk/2007/05/our-own-bhatkhande.html> (accessed 9 January, 2013).

- 17 There are many more stories of competition between Sikh *kirtanis* and *Rababis* throughout the 1920s and 1930s. These are given in Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*.
- 18 Jagir Singh, *The Place of Rababi Kirtan in Gurnat Sangeet*, pp. 45–48. Jagir Singh is the brother of Prof. Gurnam Singh and the publisher of the excellent monthly pamphlet *Amrit Kirtan* (<http://amritkirtan.com/magazine.html>).
- 19 Jagir Singh goes as far to say that even the story of Satta and Balwand only came into circulation in this period as part of the general rise in anti-Muslim sentiment. *Ibid.*, p. 46.
- 20 For a detailed discussion, see Qureshi, 'Mode of Production and Musical Production,' in *Music and Marx*.
- 21 Sharan Arora, 'Guru Nanak Dev ji and the *Rababi* tradition,' *Journal of Sikh Studies*, 24 (2000), pp. 161–76. Bhai Desa and Bhai Taaba often gave musical performances together and were fond of *shabad*, *ghazal*, *geet*, etc. 'He used to sing to the accompaniment of Tanpura. He sang mirza (a genre of folk music) for Panjabi Film. He used to sing at the Raga Sabha of the Durgiana Mandir also.' *Ibid.*, p. 170.
- 22 Perhaps the most apt example of this can be found in the recording made by Bhai Rurrha (a vocalist at the *Harimandir* in 1928) where he announces who he is in this manner: 'Bhai Rurrha, a renowned vocalist of Punjab . . . His knowledge of music has got everyone in awe all the way to Kabul . . . This record is an example of his brilliance . . . The sacrifices of those who died at the Karbala, who pulled a knife across Hazrat Ismail's throat . . . a hardened heart will melt . . . Listen to this record and you will see.' See Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*, pp. 172–3.
- 23 *Thavva* literally translates as circular metal plate, which is used for cooking *chapattis* and is of similar size, colour and shape to a long play record!
- 24 Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*, p. 24.
- 25 Indeed, this loss is constantly enunciated in the Sikh supplication, *the Ardas*, in which open access to the *gurdwaras* in Pakistan (mostly in a decrepit state by the end of the twentieth century) is prayed for. See Iqbal Qaiser, *Sikh Shrines in Pakistan* (Lahore: Punjabi History Board, 1998).
- 26 Forced migration took place from West to East Punjab as well. Bhai Pal Singh, Jaswant Singh and Bhai Gurmukh Singh Bhai Sarmukh Singh Fakkar of Nankana Sahib were *rababis* who had become Gursikhs in the early part of the twentieth century. At partition they moved to Patiala and were employed in the local *gurdwaras*. They were impoverished by the move and were never acknowledged as hereditary musicians. Their descendants, Bhai Prithipal Singh and Bhai Mohan Pal Singh, also performed *kirtan* but were never recognised and again died in relative poverty. However, their families continue to practice, and indeed, it was

- these ex-*rababis* who performed together in various *jathas*, including that of the Zakhmi family. See Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*, p. 259.
- 27 Gian Singh Abbotabad, *Gurbāñī Sangūt* (Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, 1961), and Gyani Dyal Singh, *Gurmat Sangeet Sagar* (4 vols.) (New Delhi: Guru Nanak Vidya Bhandar Trust, 1988).
- 28 Surinder Singh and Ishwar Dayal Gaur (eds), *Sufism in Punjab: Mystics, Literature and Shrines* (Delhi: Akaar Books, 2009), p. 33.
- 29 Gurinder Singh Mann and Kundan Kaur Kapany, *The Making of Sikh Scripture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), p.4.
- 30 *Ibid.*, p. 138.
- 31 The strongest argument in favour of this interpretation is that the *Japji Sahib* written by Guru Nanak is not allocated any particular *raag* or *taal*. This is one of the philosophical cornerstones of the *Ad Granth*, and in that sense the remainder can be seen as an exposition of themes presented therein. However, this is a piece of poetry and as such has a rhythm, and some would argue that it has an associated method for recitation that involves musical intonation (in conversation with B. S. Rattan).
- 32 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*.
- 33 Janice Protopapas, 'Kīrtan Chauṅkī: Affect, Embodiment and Memory,' *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*, 7 (2011), pp. 339–64. Though this article is a well-detailed and accurate account of the *Asa di var chaunki*, it fails to mention that this is the only time when the prescribed format for a *chaunki* performance is actually followed. Even the format for the performance outside of the *raag* and *taal* has fallen into abeyance.
- 34 See Sharan Arora, 'Guru Nanak Dev ji and the *Rababi* tradition'; for some oral histories, see Lowell H. Lybarger, 'Hereditary Musician Groups of Pakistani Punjab,' *Journal of Punjab Studies*, 19 (2011), p. 97.
- 35 In Nanakana Sahib, Bhai Lal, belonging to another *rababi* lineage, performed on special occasions, but after partition in 1947, the *gurdwara* was run by the SGPC via two custodians.
- 36 Parashuram Chaturvedi, *Kabir Sahitya ki Parakh* (Allahabad: Bharati Bhandar, 1964), pp. 280–90, and John Stratton Hawley, 'The Music in Faith and Morality,' *Journal of American Academy of Religions*, 52 (1984), pp. 243–62.
- 37 In textual terms, this is demonstrated by Oberoi, in his comparison of the Fatehpur manuscript and the *Ad Granth*: 'Both collections similarly draw on the works of people from a wide range of social backgrounds ranging from Brahmins to Untouchables, also note the *ragas* in which the verses should be sung.' See Oberoi, *The Making of Religious Boundaries*, p. 40. Though even here the presence of Muslim bards or of Sufi poets is not worthy of mention. Indeed, Oberoi's pioneering book is notable for the absence of discussion on Punjabi Muslims.



- 38 According to Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha's *Mahan Kosh*, written in the 1920s, Shah Hussain asked Guru Arjan to include his writings in the *Ad Granth*, but he was refused due to their ecstatic nature. Bhai Kahan Singh, *Mahan Kosh, Encyclopedia of Sikh Literature* (Patiala: Language Board Punjab, 1981), p. 176.
- 39 The creation of which is often attributed to the gurus themselves, such as the *sarhinda* and the *taus*.
- 40 Gurnam Singh, *Gurmat Sangīt Parbandh te Pāsār* (Patiala: Punjabi University, 2000) in which the rationale for *raag* choices made by the committee out of existing practice is given.
- 41 Bob van der Linden, 'Sikh Sacred Music, Empire and World Music,' *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*, 7 (2011), pp. 383–97: 'From a historical long-term perspective, the canonization, commodification and professionalization of Sikh *kirtan* is the result of the Singh Sabha effort' (p. 398).
- 42 Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance,' pp. 199–229; see especially p. 209.
- 43 See *Khalsa Samachar* for Bhai Vir Singh's writings, 16 May, 1906. Also *Amrit Kirtan*, October 2011, pp. 6–9, for other writings on *kirtan* from *Khalsa Samachar*.
- 44 See Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities*.
- 45 This distinction underlines the argument between Bhai Baldeep Singh and Bob Van der Linden played out in the journal *Sikh Formations*; unfortunately neither escapes the logic of colonial modernity. Bhai Baldeep Singh, 'What Is *Kirtan*? Observations, Interventions and Personal Reflections,' *Sikh Formations*, 7 (2011), pp. 245–95. Bob van der Linden, 'History versus Tradition Again? A Response to Bhai Baldeep Singh, *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*,' 8 (2012), pp. 247–51. The final outcome of this is in Linden's chapter on Sikh music in the book *Music and Empire in Britain and India: Identity, Internationalism, and Cross-cultural Communication* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2013). This book covers much of the same empirical material as this chapter (but entirely within the colonial period), though takes the extant categories as normative.
- 46 Kartar Singh's story is typical of the changing climate in the 1930s' Punjab, where Gursikhs from nonhereditary backgrounds influenced by the Singh Sabha were taking up music. He is also the author of a range of teaching books for Gurmat Sangeet such as *Gurbani Sangeet Darpan*, *Gurmat Sangeet Darpan Parts 1, 2, 3* and *Guru Angad Dev Sangeet Darpan*. These books have been published by the SGPC.
- 47 Gurnam Singh, 'Sikh Music, Challenges Ahead,' Punjabi University, 18 January, 2002. In a personal correspondence in 2010, Prof. Gurnam Singh expressed his profound difficulties in working with the SGPC in making changes to the way that music was performed and taught at the academies under their control.
- 48 <http://www.gurmatsangeetpup.com/main.html>.



- 49 This is most clearly articulated by Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance,' and Bhai Baldeep Singh.
- 50 Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance,' p. 202.
- 51 Though, the great increase in publications on *kirtan* has not led to any academic research solely devoted to the contribution of any of these groups. It is only the Namdharis who have attracted any attention and this is due to their association with the music revival via Maharaja Bir Singh. See Janice Protopapas, 'Verses of Attack: Nāmdhārī Sikh Services of Halē dā divān as Sonic Weapons,' *Journal of Popular Music Studies*, 24 (2012), pp. 554–77.
- 52 Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance,' p. 220.
- 53 Bhai Baldeep Singh articulates his own perspective and story in far more detail and eloquence than I can paraphrase in 'What is *Kirtan*?', *Sikh Formations*, 2011.
- 54 The dialogue between Bob Van der Linden and Bhai Baldeep Singh in the journal *Sikh Formations* in the article titled 'History versus Tradition Again' would be more usefully titled the 'Tradition of History versus the Tradition of Theology' as each author grounds his claims in different sources. For Linden, written sources and musical notation are the only basis for claim making about the past, whereas for Baldeep, the musical aesthetic, that is Sikh spirituality, comes out of the oral tradition.
- 55 Bhai Avtar Singh and Bhai Gurcharan Singh, *Gurbani Sangeet: Pracheen Reet Ratnavali*, vols. 1 and 2 (Patiala: Punjabi University Publication Bureau, 1978/1979).
- 56 The Indian context in which Bhai Baldeep Singh has set up his institute – the Anhad Conservatory in Sultanpur, Lodhi – requires a defensive stance in the context of the Classical music establishment and a close engagement with the political forces in Punjab, which in reality means the Akali Dal, which is an organisation in symbiotic relationship with the SGPC. See 'Spectrum: When Music Meets History,' *TheTribune.com* <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2011/20110424/spectrum/main2.htm> (accessed 4 January, 2013).
- 57 This is indeed the critique that Bhai Baldeep Singh makes of Sanyal and Widdess.
- 58 See Kanwal, *Punjab de Parseedh Raagi te Rababi*. None of the twentieth-century *rababis* or *kirtanis* are associated with the Dagar Bani. Most are cited as being trained by the Talwandi *gharana* and by Tan Ras Khan via the Patiala *gharana* in the nuances of *Khayal*. It is only Behram Khan who spends some time at Ranjit Singh's court, which is the only clue for some link of the *Dagarbani* with Punjab. See Sanyal and Widdess, *Dhrupad*, for more on Behram Khan.
- 59 When discussing the traits of older hereditary musicians in his 1983 pioneering study of Classical musicians in Delhi, Neuman notes the decline in 'the sense of ownership and secrecy of musical knowledge' that was a central characteristic of the *gharana* system. See Daniel Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990).

- 60 Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance,' p. 220.
- 61 Bhai Baldeep Singh, 'What Is Kirtan?' p. 266.
- 62 Khalsa, 'Gurbani Kirtan Renaissance,' p. 204. This comment is all the more remarkable as it carries multiple connotations of marginality that counter all that is known about, for example, the history of *kirtankars* who are mostly from *mirasi* and artisanal castes. All are native informants for the newly formed *Gurbani kirtan*.
- 63 Bhai Baldeep Singh, 'What Is Kirtan?' p. 265.
- 64 Ibid., p. 278.
- 65 It is also clear that Bhai Baldeep Singh himself has undergone this level of training, and therefore the veracity of his claims are not in doubt. Problematic, of course, is that this is represented as the unique tradition of Sikh *kirtan*, answered in his own question 'What is Kirtan?' Certainly this is one methodology, but to argue that it is closest to the *guru's* own music and most illuminative of their teachings is, as I have shown above, problematic. See Sanyal and Widdess, *Dhruvad*, for more details.
- 66 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*, p. 351.
- 67 The reality is of course something different; it is women in the *rababi* houses who are just as important in the maintenance of *kirtan* that cannot be sung in an Islamicising public sphere in Pakistan, where music is increasingly less tolerated.
- 68 A detailed account is given in Doris R. Jakobsh, 'Sikhism, Interfaith Dialogue, and Women: Transformation and Identity,' *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, 21 ((2006), pp. 183–99.
- 69 These insights are gained from the magazine *Amrit Kirtan* and the general media discourse about contemporary *kirtan*. See *Daily Ajit*, a religious magazine on Tuesdays (<http://www.ajitjalandhar.com/>).
- 70 SikhNet runs out of the United States, which has an extensive and well-managed library of *kirtan* recordings. See <https://www.sikhnet.com/>.
- 71 The transliteration is from [srigranth.org](http://srigranth.org), p. 201 of the *Ad Granth*.
- 72 See Harjinder Singh Lallie, Sandeep Kaur and Keerat Singh, 'Emotion in Sikh Musicology,' *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*, 8 (2012), pp. 171–98.
- 73 *Abbatobad*, this edition 2002 (Amritsar: SGPC; 1st ed. 1951), p. 16.
- 74 Bhai Sukhwant Singh, 'Guru Nanak Sangeet Padati Granth,' *Vismad Naad* (Ludhiana: Jawaadi Taksal, 1997), p. 7.
- 75 Lallie et al., 'Emotion in Sikh Musicology,' *Sikh Formations: Religion, Culture, Theory*, 8 (2012), pp. 171–98.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 'Raag Gauri,' Jawaadi Taksal Ludhiana, <http://www.jawadditaksal.org/index.php/General/raag-gauri.html> (accessed 7 July, 2012), for the *raag* notation. See Clip 5 for the performance by Harchand Singh. Clip 6 is set to a popular melody

- by Harjinder Singh. Clip 7 by Bhai Avtar Singh is the only rendition that follows the prescription of the *raag* as set out by the RNC.
- 78 The conceptual terrain of the popular will be considered in more detail in the next chapter.
- 79 I am hugely indebted to Rajveer Singh for his musical ear and knowledge and equal generosity. He is the coauthor of this section.
- 80 Inderjit Kaur, 'Sikh *Shabad Kīrtan* and *Gurmat Sangīt*: What's in the Name?,' *Journal of Punjab Studies*, 18 (2011), pp. 251–78.
- 81 Navtej Purewal and Harjinder Lallie, 'Sikh *Kirtan* in the Diaspora: Identity, Innovation and Revivalism,' in Michael Hawley (ed.), *Sikh Diaspora: Theory, Agency and Experience* (Leiden: Brill Publishers, 2013), pp. 381–404.
- 82 There are two institutions that promote women's *kirtan*, the Baru Sahib and Akal Academies, in which girls and young women play a central role in singing and playing instruments. See [akalacademy.org](http://akalacademy.org). Similarly, though with a less public face, the Namdhari sect also gives equal weight to women learning *kirtan*. See <http://sribhainisahib.com/>.
- 83 Many thanks to Gagun Chhina for carrying out a vox pop at a Manchester *Gurdwara* to clarify reasons for Harjinder Singh's popularity and also for an early reading of this chapter.
- 84 The college is now run by the Dharam Parchar Committee of the SGPC, which is also the examining authority. The curriculum includes Sikh texts, philosophy, history and music. There are three diploma courses, each of two years' duration, which are offered with a view to training *granthis* (scripture readers) and *ragis* (musicians).
- 85 Interview from Sikh Channel, 14 October, 2013, <http://www.sikhchannel.tv/>
- 86 Sikh Channel interview, 24 June, 2013.
- 87 Interview conducted in March 2010 at the *Harimandir* complex.
- 88 Interview for Gurmat Sangeet Training, Punjabi University, 2011. See <http://www.gurmatangeetpup.com/santsuchsingharchivesofmusic/index.html> (accessed 3 February, 2014).
- 89 In a similar manner to Bakhle describing the formation of the new respectable middle-class urban female, musical training was considered learning.
- 90 Anad Foundation, [www.anadfoundation.org](http://www.anadfoundation.org).
- 91 Interview with Bhai Gurmej Singh, 5 May, 2012, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aR1GmEaC3y8> (accessed 8 May, 2013).
- 92 Gyani Santokh Singh, *Amrit Kirtan*, 17–21 September, 2012, pp. 12–15.
- 93 *Ibid.*, p. 18.
- 94 See Neuman, *The Life of Music*.
- 95 This is the basis of the various lineages of *rababis*; seven are cited in Kanwal, *Punjab de Parsedh Raagi te Rababi*.

- 96 Out of the population of Punjabis who dealt with jobs that were considered outside of the caste system, what are politically referred to as dalits, there also emerged a group of musicians. These are sometimes referred to as *Mazhabi* Sikhs or sometimes as *Bhatras*.
- 97 Personal interview carried out in February 2010.
- 98 Interview on Sikh Channel, 14 October, 2013.
- 99 Bhai Randhir Singh (1878–1960) was a reformer and founder of a group called the *Akhand Kirtani Jatha* (unending *kirtan* group). Founded in the early twentieth century, this group propagated the *sangat* carrying out *kirtan*, rather than paying musicians. These *kirtan* sessions also were long (*akhand*), going on through the night into the early hours, ending with the *Asa di War*. This is currently the case with followers of the AKJ ([www.akj.org](http://www.akj.org)). The group also specialised in a form of *kirtan* in which intertextuality was the norm, taking one theme from a *shabad* (poem) and joining it to other couplets and so on. In this way the *kirtan* was also unending rather than shaped by the *shabad* itself. Randhir Singh makes a strong critique of emphasising the *raag* (music in this context) articulating a position that this is secondary to the message and that actually even this is not as important as doing *naam simran* (recitation of the word 'Waheguru' or other mantras).

## Chapter 5

- 1 The juxtaposition of founding father with child demonstrates the centrality of patrilineal heritage in musical reproduction.
- 2 This is an extract from an audio recording made by the author. The speech was in Urdu.
- 3 These dates come from Annemarie Schimmel, *Mystical Dimensions of Islam* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975). But these are meant to be more indicative of lineage than an accurate indication of birth and death.
- 4 This is demonstrated in Clip 8.
- 5 Of course, money would be much more central at performances such as weddings, but a very common, prepartition practice of Hindustani Muslim elite families would be to have *qawwals* play in these circumstances.
- 6 *Had Anhad, Bounded Boundless, Journeys with Ram and Kabir*, directed by Shabnum Virmani (Bangalore: The Kabir Project, 2009). See <http://www.kabirproject.org/> for details of the film and other outputs from the project.
- 7 This mostly involves tying *qawwali* to extramusical contexts, such as the ritual of performance at a shrine in front of a *pir* or alternatively to the medieval literature on *sama*.

- 8 My presence in the concert in NCA is itself reflective of this practice. When Fareed spotted me, he dedicated his rendition of Bulleh Shah's poetry to 'Sardarji'.
- 9 Most scholarship on *qawwali* is derived from the seminal corpus of work produced by Regula Quershi, who is a foil against which much of this chapter is written. Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 'Qawwali: Making the Music Happen in the Sufi Assembly,' *Asian Music*, 18 (Spring-Summer 1987), p. 125; Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Context and Meaning in Qawwâlî* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986, 1995); Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 'Musical Sound and Contextual Input: A Performance Model for Musical Analysis,' *Ethnomusicology*, 31 (1987), pp. 56–86; Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 'Musical Gesture and Extra-musical Meaning: Words and Music,' *Urdu Ghazal*, 43 (1990), pp. 457–97; Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 'Exploring Time Cross-culturally: Ideology and Performance of Time in the Sufi qawwâlî,' *Journal of Musicology*, 12 (1994), pp. 491–528; Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 'Confronting the Social: Mode of Production and the Sublime for (Indian) Art Music,' *Ethnomusicology*, 44 (2000), pp. 15–38.
- 10 B. Ingram, 'Sufis, Scholars and Scapegoats: Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (d. 1905) and the Deobandi Critique of Sufism,' *Muslim World: A Quarterly Review of History, Culture, Religions & the Christian Mission in Islamdom*, 99 (2009), pp. 478–501.
- 11 For Deobandis, see Barbara Daly Metcalf, *Islamic Revival in British India; Deoband, 1860–1900* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). For comparative details, see R. Michael Feener, *Islam in World Cultures: Comparative Perspectives* (Connecticut: ABC-CLIO Inc., 2004), pp.189–90. For reformists within the Sufi fold, see Arthus F. Beuhler, *The Indian Naqshbandiyya and the Rise of the Mediating Sufi Shaykh* (California: University of California Press, 1998).
- 12 'If any woman or girl sings to the accompaniment of a musical instrument or dances with or without a musical instrument in a Muslim Shrine, she shall be guilty of an offence under this Act and shall be liable on conviction to be punished with fine not exceeding five hundred rupees or with imprisonment of either description for a term not exceeding six months or with both such fine and imprisonment.' Music in Muslim Shrines Act, 1942. This passed onto the postcolonialPaksitani state laws after partition, but no one has ever been convicted. Also see Purewal and Kalra, 'Women's Popular Practices as Critique: Vernacular Religion in Indian and Pakistani Punjab,' *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33 (2010), pp. 383–89, and Umber Ibad, 'The State and Shrines in the Post-Colonial Central Punjab (1947–2007)' (unpublished PhD thesis, Government College University, Lahore, 2014).
- 13 See Malik S. Jamal, 'Waqf in Pakistan: Change in Traditional Institutions,' *Die Welt des Islams*, 30 (1990), pp. 63–97.

- 14 The translation of Sufi into Saint is problematic given the centralising structures that have emerged in the Catholic church to denote sainthood. In this book, the word *pir* or *bazurg* is used as these are the most popular vernacular terms.
- 15 See Clip 9 for the interview with Mohammed Afzal Sacchari *qawwal* from which this is drawn.
- 16 See Katherine Butler Brown, 'The Origins and Early Development of *khayal*,' in J. Bor, F. Delvoye, J. Harvey and E. te Nijenhuis (eds), *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2010), p. 162; Brown's work would be totally appropriate if it were not for the explicit logocentrism and by extension an implicit complicity with colonial epistemology. Instead, placing the textual scholarship in creative tension with oral histories would produce more rounded accounts, rather than the 'truth' value given to the Indo-Persian written texts.
- 17 Ibid.
- 18 For an exposition of this, see Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India*, pp. 20–21.
- 19 Regula Qureshi, 'Lineage, Shrine, *qawwali* and Study Circle: Spiritual Kinship in Transnational Sufism,' *Religious Studies and Theology*, 22 (2003), pp. 63–84.
- 20 Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden: Mysticism, History, and Politics at a South Asian Sufi Center* (New York: SUNY Press, 1992).
- 21 Qureshi, *Religious Studies and Theology*, p. 68.
- 22 The waning and waxing of the *Chishti* order is never considered in terms of audience but rather as part of large-scale social and political change.
- 23 Khusro is said to have died of heartache after Nizamuddin passed away.
- 24 Dileep Karanth systematically shows that much of the association of Khusrau with music comes about 200 to 300 years after his death. This is further demonstrated by the review of the Mughal court literature on music given by Katherine Butler Brown. See Dileep Karanth, 'Amir Khusrau's Contributions to Indian Music: A Preliminary Survey,' *Sangeet Natak*, 42 (2008); and Katherine Butler Brown, 'The Origins and Early Development of *Khayal*,' in J. Bor, F. N. Delvoye, J. Harvey and E. T. Nijenhuis (eds), *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers and Distributors, 2010), pp. 159–96.
- 25 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*.
- 26 In Pakistan, the main Hindustani *qawwals* are Ayaaz Fareed and the Sabri Brothers. These groups never made an impact outside of urban Punjabi centres and catered to the mainly *mohajir* communities. See Mohammad Waseem, 'Ethnic Conflict in Pakistan: The Case of MQM,' *The Pakistan Development Review*, 35 (1996), pp. 617–29.
- 27 Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan 1995*, p. 99, and Daniel Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India*, p. 152.
- 28 See Clip 10 from Maulvi Hassan Weheranwale's front sitting room, Faisalabad, 2010.

- 29 Nusrat, interview with Lok Virsa on YouTube: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA4ImJgu3Xg> (accessed 9 January, 2012).
- 30 Clip 11, Sher Ali and Mehr Ali in their house in Faisalabad, 2010.
- 31 Clip 12, Qamar Manzoor *qawwal* in their practice room in Gujranwala.
- 32 Lok Virsa interview. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tA4ImJgu3Xg> (accessed 15 January, 2012).
- 33 Pemberton notes, 'Bibi Fatima Sam, whose tomb now lies in obscurity in the old Indraprastha section of Delhi but was at one time frequented by such notables as the fourteenth-century *Chishti* shaikh Nizamuddin' (p. 2) and 'Bai Tilokdi, the daughter of Tansen, the famed musician of Emperor Akbar's court. In 1651 a mosque was erected in Ajmer for Bai Tilokdi. It is located today opposite the police station in the main bazaar' (p. 109). Kelly Pemberton, *Women Mystics and Sufi Shrines in India* (South Carolina, University of South Carolina Press, 2010).
- 34 *Ibid.*, p. 9.
- 35 Most starkly notable in the homosocial universe gazed upon by Magnus Marsden, in which the possibility of women's performance does not come into view. Magnus Marsden, 'All-Male Sonic Gatherings, Islamic Reform, and Masculinity in Northern Pakistan,' *American Ethnologist*, 34 (2007), pp. 473–90.
- 36 The controversy is over the place of music within particular strands of Islamic thought. A useful summary of the debate can be found in Carl W. Ernst, *Eternal Garden*.
- 37 In the Arabic-speaking world, see Kenneth S. Avery, *A Psychology of Early Sufi sama. Listening and Altered States* (London: Routledge Curzon, 2004). On Turkey, see Jean During's *Musique et Extase, laudition mystique dans la tradition soufie* (Paris: Albin Michel 1988), p. 282.
- 38 This universalization is itself problematic, but nonetheless is a reflection of the current state of the literature in this area and part of a much broader debate about the relationship between local Islams and theological Islam.
- 39 Jürgen Wasim Frembgen, *Journey to God: Sufis and Dervishes in Islam* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2008).
- 40 This definition of *sama* is not done in relation to any of the extent literature unfortunately and in considering the actual use of the term in the literature is probably hard to justify.
- 41 Annemarie Schimmel, *Islam in the Indian subcontinent* (Netherlands: E. J. Brill, 1980); Ernst, *Eternal Garden*; Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound Context and Meaning in Qawwali*. Vol. 1 (CUP, 1986).
- 42 Foreword by Annemarie Schimmel in C. W. Ernst, 2nd ed. (New York : SUNY, 2004), p. 380.
- 43 Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound Context and Meaning in Qawwali* (CUP, 1986), p. 45.



- 44 Where Qureshi's primary fieldwork takes place and where all researchers on *qawwali* at some point find themselves.
- 45 Pemberton, *Women Mystics and Sufi Shrines in India*.
- 46 *Ibid.*, p. 126.
- 47 Sakata played an instrumental role in organising a residency at the University of Washington ethnomusicology department for Nusrat. Hiromi Lorraine Sakata, 'Spiritual Music and Dance in Pakistan,' *Etnofoor*, 10(1997), pp. 165–73.
- 48 For those not familiar with the texts of *qawwali*, those that do not explicitly refer to the Prophet (and would therefore be called *naat*) are in their best form focused on love, which is ambiguously positioned between the sacred and the secular. See Nikky Guninder-Kaur Singh, *Of Sacred and Secular Desire: An Anthology of Lyrical Writings from the Punjab* (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 2012).
- 49 <http://www.nusratfan.com/an-exclusive-interview-with-the-legend-nusrat-fateh-ali-khan/>(accessed 9 January, 2012).
- 50 See Virinder S. Kalra, 'Punjabiyyat and the Music of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan,' *South Asian Diaspora*, 5 (2014), pp. 44–64.
- 51 Christopher Paul Holland, 'Rethinking *qawwali*: Perspectives of Sufism, Music, and Devotion in North India' (unpublished PhD thesis, University of Texas, 2010).
- 52 The issue of the commercial form of Sufi music that has emerged in India since 2001 will be taken up in the next two chapters. See Peter Manuel, 'North Indian Sufi Popular Music in the Age of Hindu and Muslim Fundamentalism,' *Ethnomusicology*, 52 (2008), pp. 378–400.
- 53 To a large extent, the knowledge on *qawwali* in English is a byproduct of the intellectual traditions that have engaged in studying the form; ethnomusicology, textualist religious studies and anthropology all converge on a form that is most easily translatable. *Chishti sama* provides all the ingredients for an academic engaged in a study – historical narrative, textual sources as well as contemporary performance. Indeed, the most popular *qawwal* in India and Pakistan of the past 20 years, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, has not been subject to any consistent or serious academic engagement. Just as the *qawwal bachche* defend their sacred space, so it seems do critics and commentators.
- 54 See Rachel Dwyer, 'I am Crazy about the Lord: The Muslim Devotional Genre in Hindi Film,' *Third Text*, 24 (2010), pp. 123–34.
- 55 Regula Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*.
- 56 Katherine Hagedorn, 'From This One Song Alone, I Consider Him to be a Holy Man: Ecstatic Religion, MusicaAffect, and the Global Consumer,' *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 45 (2006), pp. 489–96.
- 57 Newell, 'Experiencing *Qawwali*: Sound as Spiritual Power in Sufi India,' (unpublished PhD thesis, Vanderbilt, 2007, p. 125.



- 58 It is only in the later Persian court records that musicological terminology makes an appearance. See Katherine Butler Brown, 'Hindustani Music in the Time of Aurangzeb' (unpublished PhD thesis, London University, 2003).
- 59 Bruce B. Lawrence, 'The early *Chishti* Approach to Sama,' in Milron Israel and N. K. Wagle (eds), *Islamic Society and Culture: Essays in Honour of Professor Aziz Ahmad* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1983), p. 89.
- 60 Gregory C. Kozlowski, *Muslim Endowments and Society in British India* (Cambridge: CUP Archive, 1985), p. 78.
- 61 Most notably by the *pirs* of Golra Sharif.
- 62 Regula Qureshi, 'Musical Sound and Contextual Input: A Performance Model for Musical Analysis,' *Ethnomusicology*, 31 (1987), p. 125.
- 63 Sunil Sharma, *Amir Khusrau: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis* (Oxford: Oneworld Publications, 2005). Though there is no doubt a person in Khusro's social position would have relationships with musicians in the court setting and could have been involved in instrument development.
- 64 Karanth, 'Amir Khusrau's Contributions to Indian Music.'
- 65 Just as gendered religious practices are considered too fluid for emerging bounded religious groups in colonial Punjab (Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identity*), so the unacceptable courtesan gives way to the emergence of acceptable (upper-caste) women musicians (Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*).
- 66 Regula Qureshi, 'Recorded Sound and Religious Music,' in Babb and Wadley (eds), *Media and the Transformation of Religion in South Asia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1995), p. 156.
- 67 Despite producing the key musicological text on *qawwali*, Qureshi herself gives primacy to the written word: 'The conceptualization of religious music as chant or recitation rather than music or song reflects a fundamental Muslim belief in the supremacy of the word as the basis of all religious communication, starting from the revealed word of the Quran itself which constitutes the very foundation of Islam.' (1972, p. 16). Regula Qureshi, 'Indo-Muslim Religious Music, An Overview,' *Asian Music*, 3 (1972), pp. 15–22.
- 68 Shemeem Burney Abbas, *The Female Voice in Sufi Ritual: Devotional Practices of Pakistan and India* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), p. 9.
- 69 Qureshi states, 'Abida Parvin being the most famous example, have developed their musical style in imitation of *qawwali*.' (2006, p. 38). Regula Burckhardt Qureshi, 'When Women Recite: Music and Islamic Immigrant Experience,' in Philip V. Bohlman, Edith L. Blumhofer, and Maria M. Chow (eds), *Music in American Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 23–42.
- 70 Qureshi identifies five different forms of song text. See Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*, p. 20.

- 71 This was in 1993, see [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w\\_HmZF-tK3c](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=w_HmZF-tK3c)
- 72 Available at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UsDUMbfp1Gs>, but also thanks to Musab, whose wonderfully named 'Tangled up in Blue' blog has been a tremendous source of music and analysis: <http://lalioutloud.blogspot.co.uk>
- 73 This is available on a 1979 EMI (Pakistan) recording titled 'Aziz Mian *qawwal* and others'.
- 74 Musab does offer comparisons of recordings of various well-known Farsi and Urdu *qawwali* and an attempt at analysis. The musical comparisons were made of two YouTube archives of *qawwali*. The first by Sayan Qamar: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDyHODBgk7kfDMWza2Bit\\_w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCDyHODBgk7kfDMWza2Bit_w) and the second only titled as 77khudgharz: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCBcHiMoeZ4TLmWnmiOeG0iQ>. This is in addition to fieldwork recordings and my own personal collection.
- 75 See Clip 13, Mubarak Ali, Niaz Ali *qawwal*, *Kadey sade des vee aa dola* (Why not come to our country sometime, my beloved?).
- 76 Another example and from the Wehrenwale village also is Baba Ghulam Kibriya Abdul Rauf *qawwal*, see Clip 14. These YouTube recordings have been posted by Sayyan Qamar and express a diasporic story that has not been told in this book to any great extent. Shalimar Music Centre in East London was perhaps the site and definitely the producer of these VHS. A similar debt is owed to Oriental Star Agencies in Birmingham for preserving a style of *qawwali* that has become rare in twenty-first-century performances.
- 77 As Sharma notes, 'Love is treated in ghazals in such an ambiguous way that the object of affection could be a beloved of any sex, since the Persian language does not indicate gender, and the setting for the feelings described could be earthly I courtly or mystical sufi.' Sunil Sharma, *Amir Khusraw :The Poet of Sultans and Sufis*, p. 40.
- 78 Thanks to Idries and Hanif for carrying out interviews and accompanying on others.
- 79 *Tawheed* can be interpreted to mean monotheism or to mean unity of difference into oneness, which is often how it is associated with certain Sufi philosophies and clearly is the way it is being used in the interview as it is encompassing the differences that are signalled by Nanak and Kabir into a unity.
- 80 Interview in Faislabad by Hanif Khan. Clip 15 is an example of *qawwals* retaining precolonial memories of the lyrics of Nanak and Kabir.
- 81 Clip 16 is an interview with Baba Kibriya's grandson. This young man born and bought up in Pakistan, as was his father, is still able to end this rendition with a selection from the *Ad Granth*: '*too maat pita, tum. . .*' There is no place to perform this text in the Pakistani public sphere, other than within musicians' own private gatherings.

- 82 Hamid Farooq, 'The Hagiographic Process: The Case of Medieval *Chishti* Sufi Fareed al-Din Masūd Ganj-i Shakar (d. 664/1265); *The Muslim World*, 90 (2000): pp. 421–38.
- 83 No date is given for the recordings that Hamid analyses, but given that Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan is named I assume they are before 1998.
- 84 Out of generosity one might assume that Hamid had no access to this text in postcolonial Pakistan, but perhaps a more critical analysis would also note how its presence undermines the argument that is being put forward.
- 85 In the *Ad Granth*, they do not appear in the same format as the rendition by Nusrat. See Clip 17.
- 86 See Ayaaz Fareed, *Bhala hua mere gagri tutee* (It's good my clay pot has broken), as performed in the film *Ad Anhad* by Shabnum Tejwani.
- 87 Qureshi defines *girah* as simply 'amplification' of the text. Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan*, p. 68.
- 88 This emphasis may also arise from the fact that Arif Farooq is a *Naushayi qawwal*, which is particularly associated with Shia'ism. Indeed, he greeted those entering his *dera* with *Ya Ali Madad*, rather than *Salaam-Alekum*.
- 89 See Clip 18.
- 90 Though this is perhaps a little unfair on Golra Sharif at which there is a daily *qawwali* recital, which is rare in contemporary Pakistan. An archive of music is also available at <http://www.tajdaregolra.com/Qawali-Sama-mp3-download-Pir-Naseer-ud-din-Naseer-Golra-Sharif.html> (accessed 4 April, 2014).
- 91 For the full *qawwali*, see Clip 19.
- 92 Perhaps the best living example of a *pir* who might still support this kind of music is to be found at the Noorie Boorie shrine in greater Lahore. See Clip 20 from the *urs* of the shrine in 2010. This was taken at 1 p.m.. In subsequent YouTube clips, this shrine has drawn severe criticism for the fact that men and women are dancing together.
- 93 Other examples of this kind of lyrical excess, though none quite as poignant as this, can be found by Baba Kibriya *qawwal*: *Ashiq Hazar Nazar de* and *La Illah de murlee*. Clips 21 and 22.
- 94 Allah dancing here lends itself to the dancing Shiva, which some have argued is the basis of much of the Sufi culture of the subcontinent. See Kamran Ahmed, *Roots of Religious Tolerance in India and Pakistan* (Lahore: Vanguard Books, 2008).
- 95 See Clip 15 for these lyrics being sung.
- 96 This is the social order that is reflected in Qureshi's and others' model of *qawwali*. This perspective is also fully developed in R. Rozehnal, 'A "Proving Ground" for Spiritual Mastery: The *Chishti* Sabiri Musical Assembly; *The Muslim World*, 97 (2007), pp. 657–77.

- 97 Rozenhal, *ibid.*, p. 664. This is an interesting mimicking as it fairly well summarises Rozenhal's own point of view in the article.
- 98 *Ibid.*, p. 671.
- 99 Rubi, *Nusrat*, p. 61.
- 100 Rozenhal's article does not at any point contest any of the points made by the interviewees, rather they are used in a somewhat spurious methodology to confirm continuity between the theoretical writings of the Sufis and the perceptions of the disciples.
- 101 My own experience of the Auqaf at the *urs* of Mian Mir in 2009 in Lahore is an example of this kind of attrition. After the Auqaf official announced (at around 1 a.m.) that there will be no more *filmi* song tunes, the next *qawwal* group broke into a song mimicking the well-known *Do dil toote* tune from the 1970's Bollywood film *Hir Ranjha*.
- 102 Umber Ibad, *The State and Shrines in the Post-Colonial Central Punjab (1947–2007)* (unpublished PhD thesis, Government College University, Lahore, 2014).
- 103 This has been questioned by Katherine Butler Brown, 'The Origins and Early Development of *Khayal*.'

## Chapter 6

- 1 Hardial Thuhi, 'The Folk *Dhadi* Genre,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 18 (Spring–Fall 2011); Special issue on *Music and Musicians in Punjab*, Gibb S. Schreffler (ed.), p. 150. *Haqiqi* and *Majaji* have multiple potentials for translation. I have left those by the translator Schreffler, rather than my own translation, which would be sacred and secular. Though using them as a binary is one of the most common forms, they can also be seen as steps, from metaphor to reality, or from illusion to reality.
- 2 The first part of this interview was recorded on video (Clip 21), in which he did not talk about himself at all, but related the story of *Gugga Pir*. It was after the tea came that he requested I switch off the video. Then he proceeded to tell me that he did not do recordings. Even though he had many offers from producers in Jalandhar and TV stations, he only did live music. The reason for this was because he says that his Guru has put a stop to this. That he can only do things that will please his Guru and so the time is not right to fulfil that duty. Though one day he would do it and when he did: 'The reel will make people come out of their corporeal bodies.'
- 3 See Veronique Bouillier and Dominique-Sila Khan, 'Hajji Ratan or Baba Ratan's Multiple Identities,' *Journal of Indian Philosophy*, 37 (2009), pp. 559–95.

- 4 This relationship is brilliantly explored by Ajay Bhardwaj in the film *Milange Babe Rattan de Mele Te* (2013).
- 5 Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar*, p. 126.
- 6 Véronique Bouillier, 'Religion Compass: A Survey of Current Researches on India's Nāth Yogīs,' *Religion Compass*, 7 (2013), pp. 157–68.
- 7 This is a huge subject and beyond the remit of this chapter and book. A useful summary is provided by Sean McLoughlin, 'Islam (s) in Context: Orientalism and the Anthropology of Muslim Societies and Cultures,' *Journal of Beliefs & Values*, 28 (2007), pp. 273–96.
- 8 This is the process described by Nijhawan in his description of Sohan Singh Seetal's influence on *dhadi*. Seetal creates the image of the Sikh *dhadi* and also provides textual narratives for performance which coincides with the reformist agenda of the Singh Sabhas.
- 9 Though these figures have all been subject to academic analysis from a folk religion perspective, but the associated music has been neglected.
- 10 There are multiple examples of this from the banning of the novel *The Satanic Verses* in the 1990s to the academic text, *The Hindus* in the twenty-first century. Each accompanied by protests. Also see Virinder S. Kalra, 'Rupturing the Religious Past in the Postcolonial Present,' *Religions of South Asia*, 4 (2011), pp. 181–87.
- 11 I am also aware of the way in which music has been used in India in particular by the Hindu right. See Anna Schultz, *Singing a Hindu Nation*.
- 12 See Gelbart, *The Invention of Folk and Art Music*, p. 7.
- 13 See Komal Kothari, *Bards, Ballads and Boundaries: An Ethnographic Atlas of Music Traditions in West Rajasthan*, Daniel M. Neuman and Shubha Chaudhuri (eds) (Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2006). This book makes many of the same arguments as Kothari's book, with more theoretical implication, and less musical analysis. This close connection will be illustrated later on by an analysis of a song by Tufail Niazi, for whom the demarcations between Classical and folk are difficult to sustain.
- 14 See Farrell, *Indian Music and the West*, p. 60.
- 15 This is the reason why the literature on folk is not considered in Chapters 2 and 3.
- 16 Farrell, *Indian Music and the West*, p. 64.
- 17 It was difficult to conceptualise a national folk music in the midst of India's hyperdiversity.
- 18 Mir, *The Social Space of Language*, p. 118.
- 19 'The Saint of the *mirasis* is the Devil Himself,' in *Qissa, Hir Waris Shah* (Jalandhar: Punjabi Sath, 2006), p. 150.
- 20 Sherchand, *Dhole Valuram Bazigar De – Songs of Valuram Bazigar* (Chandigarh: Lokgeet Prakashan, 2009).
- 21 From *Qissa, Hir Waris Shah* (Jalandhar: Punjabi Sath, 2006), pp. 141–2.

- 22 Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Identities*.
- 23 Ibid., pp. 181–82.
- 24 This is well illustrated in the documentary *Mirasans of Punjab* (Delhi: INCA, 2005).
- 25 On women's song and Sufis, see Richard M. Eaton, 'Sufi Folk Literature and the Expansion of Indian Islam,' *History of Religions* (1974), pp. 117–27.
- 26 Gloria Raheja and Ann Gold, *Listen to the Heron's Words: Reimagining Gender and Kinship in North India* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994), and Kiran Narayan, 'Singing from Separation: Women's Voices in and About Kangra Folksongs,' in Gloria Raheja (ed.), *Language, Gender and Subaltern Subjectivity* (New Delhi: Kali for Women, 2002), pp. 1–31.
- 27 The female voice is then misvalorised. See Burney, *Sufi*, in the context of female foeticide and rampant gender injustice. See Navtej K. Purewal, *Son Preference: Sex Selection, Gender and Culture in South Asia*.
- 28 This divide seems somewhat precarious when shrine cultures themselves are so imbued with gender dynamics. See Navtej K. Purewal and Virinder S. Kalra, 'Women's 'popular' Practices as Critique: Vernacular Religion in Indian and Pakistani Punjab,' *Women's Studies International Forum*, 33 (2010), pp. 383–89. Exclusion from *kirtan* at the *Harimandir* or from playing *qawwali* does not preclude a whole range of *ad hoc* and women only singing spaces. These are not unfortunately considered here.
- 29 Referring to East Punjab, Nijhawan states: 'In pre-partition Punjab there were a large group of "Muslim and low-caste performers" who have been "more or less erased from historical consciousness":' *Dhadi Darbar*, p. 7.
- 30 Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*, p. 79.
- 31 Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar*, p. 88.
- 32 Iqbaliat refers to songs that were inspired by Allama Iqbal's poetry, and created to support the political campaigning of the Muslim League. See Regula Qureshi, 'Muslim Devotional: Popular Religious Music and Muslim Identity under British, Indian and Pakistani Hegemony,' *Asian Music*, 24 (Autumn 1992 – Winter 1993), pp. 111–21.
- 33 Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar*, p. 181.
- 34 Stefan Fiol, 'All India Radio and the Genealogies of Folk Music in Uttarakhand,' *South Asian Popular Culture*, 10 (2012), pp. 24–53.
- 35 See Paul R. Brass, *Language, Religion and Politics in North India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1974), and Virinder S. Kalra and Waqas M. Butt, 'In One Hand a Pen in the Other a Gun: Punjabi Language Radicalism in Punjab, Pakistan,' *South Asian History and Culture*, 4 (2013), pp. 538–53.
- 36 Gurnam Singh, *Punjabi Lok Sangeet Virasat*, Part 1 and 2 (Patiala: Publications Bureau, Punjabi University, 2005).

- 37 Ibid.
- 38 It is for this reason that Najam Hussain Syed's *Sangat* in Lahore is a unique event, as the writings of Nanak and the subsequent Gurus are considered as literature, alongside other Punjabi writers.
- 39 Gibb S. Schreffler, 'Music and Musicians in Punjab: An Introduction to the Special Issue,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 18 (Spring–Fall 2011). Special issue on *Music and Musicians in Punjab*, Gibb S. Schreffler (ed.), p. 7.
- 40 Ibid., p. 4. This is of course a statement of pure anthropological mimicry, with no footnote or explanation of how this view was arrived at or derived. The white male simply universalises his position as a musician to tell us how it is!
- 41 In an impassioned but naïve statement, Schreffler says: 'I do not believe that the agrarian system is totally hegemonic—not in all spheres of life. Indeed, music is one cultural sphere where, in my observation, non-agrarian communities may feel little or no oppression from the agrarian communities. Nor does imitation necessarily indicate a hegemonic relationship.' Schreffler, 'Music and Musicians in Punjab: An Introduction to the Special Issue,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies* (2011), p. 32. This impressionistic statement belies the complex social relationships that underpin the hierarchical social structure of Punjab. Yet it at least frames the marginality of music in relationship to the modes of production that sustain musical communities and performance, albeit with little reference or understanding of the role of the state.
- 42 Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar*, p. 193.
- 43 This is of course the lesson of Nijhawan's path-breaking study of the transformation of *dhadi*, from a heteroreligious bardic culture, to one associated primarily with the Sikh tradition. Despite this affiliation musicians still remained relatively marginal in terms of the SGPC.
- 44 It seems important to make a distinction between audience and patron even under the condition of democratic franchise, within Sikh authority institutions such as the SGPC. See Kalra, *Secular and Religious Domains in Sikhism*.
- 45 Hardial Thuhi, *Lok Dhadi Kala*, p. 163, translated by Schreffler in *International Journal of Punjab Studies*. See Hardial Thuhi, 'The Folk *Dhadi* Genre,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 18 (Spring–Fall 2011); Special issue on *Music and Musicians in Punjab*, Gibb S. Schreffler (ed.), pp. 131–68.
- 46 A short extract (Clip 22) from the interview with Balbir Singh is given just to emphasise that though his practices have what would be categorised as Muslim elements, his appearance and name is that of a Sikh, for want of better heteroreligious classification. Balbir Singh's family along with the *tehi* and *ghumiyar* of the village bury their dead, whereas the *zamindars* burn theirs (evoking Bulleh Shah). Yet, this is a point to show the common relations in the village, rather than any difference. As Balbir Singh states, 'The way we look is Sikh and lots of our living is common. But they also believe in *Lalan Wallah*, we all come to pray there.'

- There are a few *telis* who know *namaz*, but a few villages down they have built a mosque, but we are 'behind in these matters'.
- 47 For the interview, see <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QG-1xLyBhNw> (accessed 5 December, 2013).
- 48 In the previously cited clip, Tufail articulates the message: 'We take milk and butter from the cows and then we make boots from them, so their condition is not good. I would sing these types of songs.'
- 49 Perhaps most ironically from General Zia who was the antithesis of what Tufail's music represented!
- 50 See Clip 23 for the full song.
- 51 This is evidenced by him adopting what would now be inflections that belong to Carnatic singing. See Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern*.
- 52 It is pointed and depressing that Tufail's son is performing with him, but is incapable of keeping up with his father in the performance and ultimately is reduced to living on his father's name. The brothers Javaid and Babar Niazi have been able to sustain themselves as popular musicians in Pakistan.
- 53 Arguably, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan also played this role in the 1990s, but his recognition was mediated entirely by the commercial recording industry in India, whereas Tufail was patronised by the Clessicul music fraternity, which by the 1980s was increasingly reliant on state patronage.
- 54 Thuhi, 'The Tumba-Algoza Ballad Tradition,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 18 (Spring–Fall 2011); Special issue on *Music and Musicians in Punjab*, Gibb S. Schreffler (ed.), p. 180.
- 55 Neuman, *Life of Music*, pp. 60–1.
- 56 Gelbart, *The Invention of Folk and Art Music*, p. 257. Though this model is highly specific to Northern Europe in the way it is mobilised by Gelbart, it does provide a useful tool for delineating the continuities between folk and Clessicul, as well as a contrast to the popular.
- 57 Indeed, the importance of the Frankfurt School and the debates between Adorno and Benjamin still inform much of the studies on music that emerge from the academy. The brief interlude of cultural studies pushed the boundaries of music research but with the demise of that arena, the scope has become delimited.
- 58 Though given the Hegelian influence on both of these constructs the distinction is fuzzy rather than binary.
- 59 The constructing and working out of what the Pakistani nation is does not have a specific problem with music, rather it is part of the general problematic of culture.
- 60 Peter Manuel, 'Popular Music and Media Culture in South Asia: Prefatory Considerations,' *Asian Music*, 24 (Autumn 1992–Winter 1993), pp. 91–100.
- 61 Dr Sherchand, *Dhole Valuram Bazigar De – Songs of Valuram Bazigar* (Chandigarh: Lokgeet Prakashan, 2009).



- 62 Gulzar Singh Shaunkee, interview in *Evergreen Singer, Mohammed Saddique (Life and Songs)* (Patiala: Sangam Publications, 2009), pp. 42–3.
- 63 Though men would be dressed as women in the *raasdhari*, by the time of the *nautanki*, women were also performing.
- 64 For full explanations of these shifts, see Roy, *Bhangra Moves*; and Nicola Mooney, *Rural Nostalgias and Transnational Dreams: Identity and Modernity Among Jat Sikhs* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011).
- 65 Gulzar Singh Shonki, *Punjabi lok gayaki da shenshah, Kuldip Manak* (Patiala: Sangam Publications, 2012), pp. 15, 17, 29.
- 66 Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar*.
- 67 Further fillet to Manuel's pioneering thesis: *Cassette Culture*.
- 68 For Manak's projection onto the global stage via the Punjabi diaspora see Roy, *Bhangra Moves*.
- 69 Though by the time of Bhardwaj's 2005 film, *Rabba Hun Kee kariye*, there is remorse over the violence and loss of neighbours.
- 70 See Nijahwan, *Dhadi Darbar*.
- 71 Schreffler, 'Introduction,' p. 34.
- 72 See Kalra, 'Rupturing the Religious Past in the Postcolonial Present'.
- 73 See Schreffler, 'Introduction'.
- 74 This is expressed by the main archivist of Chamkila, Gulzar Singh Shaunki in his work *Awaaz Mardee Nahee, Amar Singh Chamkila dee jeeveni* (Patiala: Sangam Publications, 2004).
- 75 Though this should not belie the incredible output of local music from Jhang and Putohar enabled by cassettes. Rehmat Music House in Faisalabad also produced an incredible variety of local music in the 1970s and 1980s, as well as Faisalabad's *qawwals*.
- 76 Most of these are collapsed into *qawwali*, *qisse* and folk music in West Punjab. In both there are wedding and pop songs, but these are quite differentiated.
- 77 See <http://www.gurmatsangeetpup.com/santsuchsingharchievesofmusic/index.html> for access to the archive.
- 78 Clip 24 is of the Kadri group playing live at the *Lallan valla* shrine in February 2010. Kadri is obviously a play on the usually spelt *Qadri*, signifying the Sufi order.
- 79 This is the popular name for Sakhi Sarwar, perhaps the most popular and prevalent, "Sufi" in East Punjab. These shrines are dotted in many villages throughout Malwa. For the hagiography of Sakhi Sarwar, see Harjot Singh Oberoi, 'The worship of Pir Sakhi Sarwar: Illness, Healing and Popular Culture in the Punjab,' *Studies in History*, 3 (1987), pp. 29–55.
- 80 See his *Riders on the Wind* (Lahore: Sang-e-Meel, 2005) and <http://odysseuslahori.blogspot.co.uk/2013/01/travel-writer-salman-rashid.html> for a full list of his publications.

- 81 Thanks to Kavita Bhanot for conducting this interview.
- 82 Ghulam Ali, *Bairaghi Geeta* (Delhi: Sachkhand Nanak Dham, 2012).
- 83 See Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar*.
- 84 Thuhi, translated by Schreffler, 'The Folk *Dhadi* Genre,' *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 18 (Spring–Fall 2011); Special issue on *Music and Musicians in Punjab*, Gibb S. Schreffler (ed.), p. 160.
- 85 See <http://kafila.org/2013/01/18/lets-meet-on-ajay-bharadwajs-milange-babey-ratan-de-mele-te-virinder-s-kalra/> for a review of the film.
- 86 This is the same name of the Golra *pir* cited in Chapter 3.
- 87 Sukhwinder Singh Suintantar, *Babu Raja Ali de kisse* (Patiala: Sangam Publications, 2009).
- 88 Interview carried out by Kirpal Singh, Fategarh Sahib, 2014.
- 89 As Sikander himself states, 'My great, great-grandfather was Karim Baksh, then Karam Baksh, Rale Khan, then my father Sagar Mastana.'
- 90 These music videos are ubiquitous on YouTube and therefore belie any specific examples. Searching on the name of a particular shrine is the most efficient method. Balak Nath, Naina Devi, Baba Fareed, etc.
- 91 <http://www.rssb.org/> (accessed 25 February, 2014). The Radha Soami web site provides a full breakdown of their publications.
- 92 <http://www.hindustantimes.com/punjab/jalandhar/honey-singh-booked-for-obscenity/article1-1061484.aspx> (accessed 25 March, 2014).

## Chapter 7

- 1 Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*; Weidman, *Singing the Classical*; Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court*.
- 2 Though these are different for each nation-state.
- 3 Mandair, *Religion and the Specter of the West*.
- 4 At the Punjab Research Group meeting held in June 2010, at Coventry University. See Clip 25 for an example of Pandit Yashpal's singing.
- 5 Nicely vocalised in the song by Sartinder Sartaj, *PU di mitee* (the soil of Punjab University), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c5o3z5F6c3U> (accessed 7 July, 2013).
- 6 This city was founded by the British in the 1880s and was planned to the design of a Union Jack, with a clock tower at the centre and eight roads leading off it. Though Faisalabad is now a sprawling metropolis of over three million people, the original design is still apparent in the old city area.
- 7 Robin Rinehart, 'The Portable Bullhe Shah: Biography, Categorization, and Authorship in the Study of Punjabi Sufi Poetry,' *Numen*, 46 (1999), pp. 53–87.
- 8 Ibid.

- 9 See the Nooran Sisters who are the granddaughters of Swarn Noora, a singer of *Hir*. These young women have become very popular for singing the new 'sufi' genre and reflect the same kind of poetic moves of the *qawwals* of Faisalabad presented in Chapter 5. See <http://www.nooransisters.com/website/#/videos>.
- 10 Bulleh was not buried in the walls of the old city as he was considered a heterodox and therefore no *Maulvi* agreed to bury him.
- 11 Richard K. Wolf, 'The Poetics of "Sufi" Practice: Drumming, Dancing, and Complex Agency at Madho Lāl Husain (and Beyond),' *American Ethnologist*, 33 (2006), pp. 246–68.
- 12 Though this varies with season and officialdom. Since 2012, the music has stopped after 8 p.m., due to 'security risks', though outside the precincts of the shrine, the singing and drumming continues.
- 13 Bulleh Shah's shrine also plays host to those who just wish to come and sing, wandering *malangs* and *fakirs*, random family groups. The lame, the maligned, the mad and the pained all gain refuge in the shrine complex. It is also the sight where visitors from India seek to come and pay homage to a figure that represents a symbolic unity, in the face of religious division.
- 14 Though without access to the official figures. A *Dawn* newspaper report of 20 August, 2008, a few days after the *urs*, highlights complaints by poets and writers about the awful conditions they faced while attending the conference in honour of Bulleh Shah. Here the newspaper states unsourced figures that the annual income is 7.7 million rupees in contrast to the only 1 lakh rupees being spent on the *urs* activities. Whatever the correct figure for the income, it is certainly substantial and in that sense the homogenisation of *qawwali*, that is represented by the younger generation emulating NFAK, is also encouraged by the patrons.
- 15 Schreffler (2012) argues that mass media resulted in the conflation and homogenisation of certain categories of distinct folk music, whereas commodification works on the basis of both differentiation and homogenisation. What is flattened is the relationship between consumer and producer and here only at the point of exchange. Interpretation by both audience and performers continued in either case.
- 16 This works on the simple economic model that price is set by scarcity; digital reproduction enables an infinite number of copies to be made without any loss, so effectively there is infinite supply, in which case the price goes to zero.
- 17 Peter Manuel, 'North Indian Sufi Popular Music in the Age of Hindu and Muslim Fundamentalism,' *Ethnomusicology*, 52 (Fall 2008), pp. 378–400.
- 18 In India, the Sufi music genre opens up a space that was occluded by the advent of Hindu and Sikh authenticity quests, which shut down the intertextual renderings that were also normative in their musical traditions. As Manuel correctly points out, *qawwali* itself is subject to rules and regulations (as highlighted in Chapter 4), but the ability to be so liberal with its use is precisely because of the lack of a

Muslim political voice. In defending a metropolitan elite positionality around music, that is ultimately cosmopolitan in the neoliberal sense, an anti-Hindutva politics is possible, but not one in which Muslims can formally exist. Ironically then, the advent of the new Sufi music, as an attempt to counter Hindutva politics, relies on the silencing of a certain kind of Muslim voice, that might take offence at the kinds of 'freedoms' being taken with the text and sound. It also draws criticisms from artists from hereditary Muslim backgrounds who have been singing 'Sufi' songs, but are no longer included in the new definition.

- 19 Gulzar Singh Shaunkee, *Evergreen Singer Mohammed Saddique*.
- 20 See interview in Chapter 6.
- 21 This is literally the case in incidents like the Gujarat pogroms of 2002.
- 22 This is in contrast to Junaid Jamshed of the same pop band who became an active prosthelyser for Tabliq-e-Jamaat.
- 23 Karen A. Collier, 'A Case Study on Corporate Peace: The Coca-Cola Company: Coke Studio Pakistan,' *Business, Peace and Sustainable Development*, 20 (2014), pp. 75–94, projects an unusual amount of progressive political energy into the Coke Studio phenomenon, almost as much as Manuel does in terms of Sufi music's potential. This is a misreading as the genre repeats the logic of religious inclusion and occlusion.
- 24 Though there has been a competition for the best upcoming *kirtan* jatha run on one of the Punjab TV channels in 2012, ironically judged over by Sukhwinder Singh of the *Jawaddi Taksal*.
- 25 Virinder S. Kalra and N. K. Purewal, 'The Strut of the Peacocks: Partition, Travel and the Indo-Pak Border,' in *Travel Worlds: Journeys in Contemporary Cultural Politics* (London: Verso, 1999), pp. 54–68, and Virinder S. Kalra, Umber Ibad and Navtej K. Purewal, 'Diasporic Shrines: Transnational Networks Linking South Asia through Pilgrimage and Welfare Development,' in *Diaspora Engagement and Development in South Asia* (London: Palgrave, 2013), pp. 176–98.
- 26 'If imperialism is not only an economic practice but also a political and cultural one – and one requiring a holistic approach in the anthropological sense – historical interactions must be studied across the globe, with special attention paid to the conceptual frameworks that develop in these interactions and become the unquestioned categories of historiography.' Peter Van der Veer, *Imperial Encounters*, p. 11.



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# Glossary

In a book so obsessed with classification and categorisation, it may seem strange to provide a glossary, but there is a large amount of assumed knowledge in this text and if this glossary provides some access to the arenas under consideration, then that is the spirit in which these definitions should be taken. They are indicative of fields of inquiry rather than definitive and an aid for those whose native tongues are not Punjabi, Urdu or Hindi.

**Ad granth** original book – the Sikh scripture, also known as the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

**Akal takhat** throne of the eternal – seat of the temporal authority of the Guru, located on the premises of the *Darbar Sahib, Harimandir*, Golden Temple and where contemporary communal decisions are announced by the head of the institution, known as the *jathedar*.

**Alaap** opening improvised exploration of a *raag*.

**Algoza** bamboo double flute.

**Bazurg** the ancestors; deceased spiritual masters.

**Bhagat** devotee – someone who carries out *bhakti* or devotion. This refers to a wide range of poets also, some of whom are referred to in *Ad Granth*.

**Bhai** brother – a title applied to someone of acknowledged learning and piety.

**Bhakti** loving devotion to a personal or impersonal divine.

**Chief Khalsa Diwan** a reformist Sikh institution formed in 1902 in Amritsar.

**Chimta** large tongs with bells on, played as an accompaniment.

**Daf** circular frame drum.

**Darbar** court, referring to both sacred and secular sites, used interchangeably for Sufi, Sikh and Bhakti shrines.

**Dargah** term for a tomb, grave, or shrine of a holy person.

**Darvesh** mendicant, wandering person, especially one who claims to be or is perceived as descendants of the original grantee

**Dhol** large double-sided barrel drum, played with sticks.

**Dholki** small double-sided drum, played with the hands.

**Dua** an informal prayer (as opposed to the prescribed prayers, *namaz*), usually of from the beloved

**Gharana** a stylistic school of music and/or members of that school.

**Gharra** clay pot, played as a percussion instrument with the hands.

**Ghazal** love poem of specific metre and form.

- Granthi** keeper of the *Ad Granth* – the official who is in charge of the *gurdwara*.
- Gurbani** utterances of the Gurus.
- Gurdwara** guru's door – the Sikh place of worship.
- Gurmukhi** from the mouth of the guru – script in which the compositions of the gurus were first written. It has become the script in which Punjabi is most written.
- Gyani** a learned man – a scholar well-versed in scriptures.
- Hal** a spiritual state that is said to descend upon the believer during moments of ecstasy.
- Jathedar** group leader – the title is applied to the head custodian of a Gurdwara.
- Jogi** practitioners of ascetic *Shaivism*, which would involve shaving the head, wearing earrings and a loin cloth, a very influential group in precolonial Punjab.
- Laila Majnu – qissa** that was widely performed in precolonial Punjab.
- Langar** community kitchen – attached to every shrine in Punjab, most formalised at *Gurdwaras*.
- Mahant** custodian – title traditionally used for custodians of shrines in precolonial Punjab.
- Maulvi** a Sunni scholar – one who has attained competence in a field of Islamic learning.
- Mela** fair associated with sacred and secular contexts.
- Milad un-nabi** the celebration of the Prophet's birthday.
- Mool mantar** the root phrase – the verses that open the *Ad Granth*.
- Murid** the disciple of a Sufi *shaikh* or *pir*.
- Murshid- pir** spiritual guide.
- Nach** (sometimes written in English as *nautch*) – singing and dancing performances.
- Pir** spiritual figure – who spreads the message of a Sufi school or order.
- Pirani** a female *pir*, the wife of a *pir* (also *pirain*).
- Puran Bhagat – qissa** that was widely performed in precolonial Punjab.
- Qissa** epic love poem derived from the Persian poetic form.
- Sant** spiritual figure – someone who has achieved inner balance and spreads the message through *bhakti* or *gurbani*.
- Sarangi** multi-stringed, fretless, bow instrument.
- Sargam** solfege.
- Sassi Pannu – qissa** that was widely performed in precolonial Punjab.
- Shabad** word – verse(s) of poetry from the *Ad Granth*.
- Shahmukhi** from the mouth of the Shah/pir – script in which Punjabi was first written and spiritual figure, also referred to as a *mela*.
- Sufi** a Muslim mystic – usually worshipped at a tomb or *khanqah*, *dargah*.
- Sur** note.
- Tabla** often used to denote two drums, but actually a single drum accompanied with the *duggi*.
- Tariqah** the Sufi way or path; a method of spiritual discipline; term used for Sufi order.
- Tawaif** a courtesan, particularly one who is highly trained in the arts.

**Tawiz** an amulet inscribed with magic formulas or the hidden names of God.

**Tazkirah** a biographical memoir.

**Thumri** a romantic vocal form that often explores themes of  
*viraha*, the pain of separation.

**Urs** wedding; the death-day anniversary celebration held in honour of a deceased  
Sufi or *sant*.

**Waqf** Arrangements for land inheritance and property rights of shrines.





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