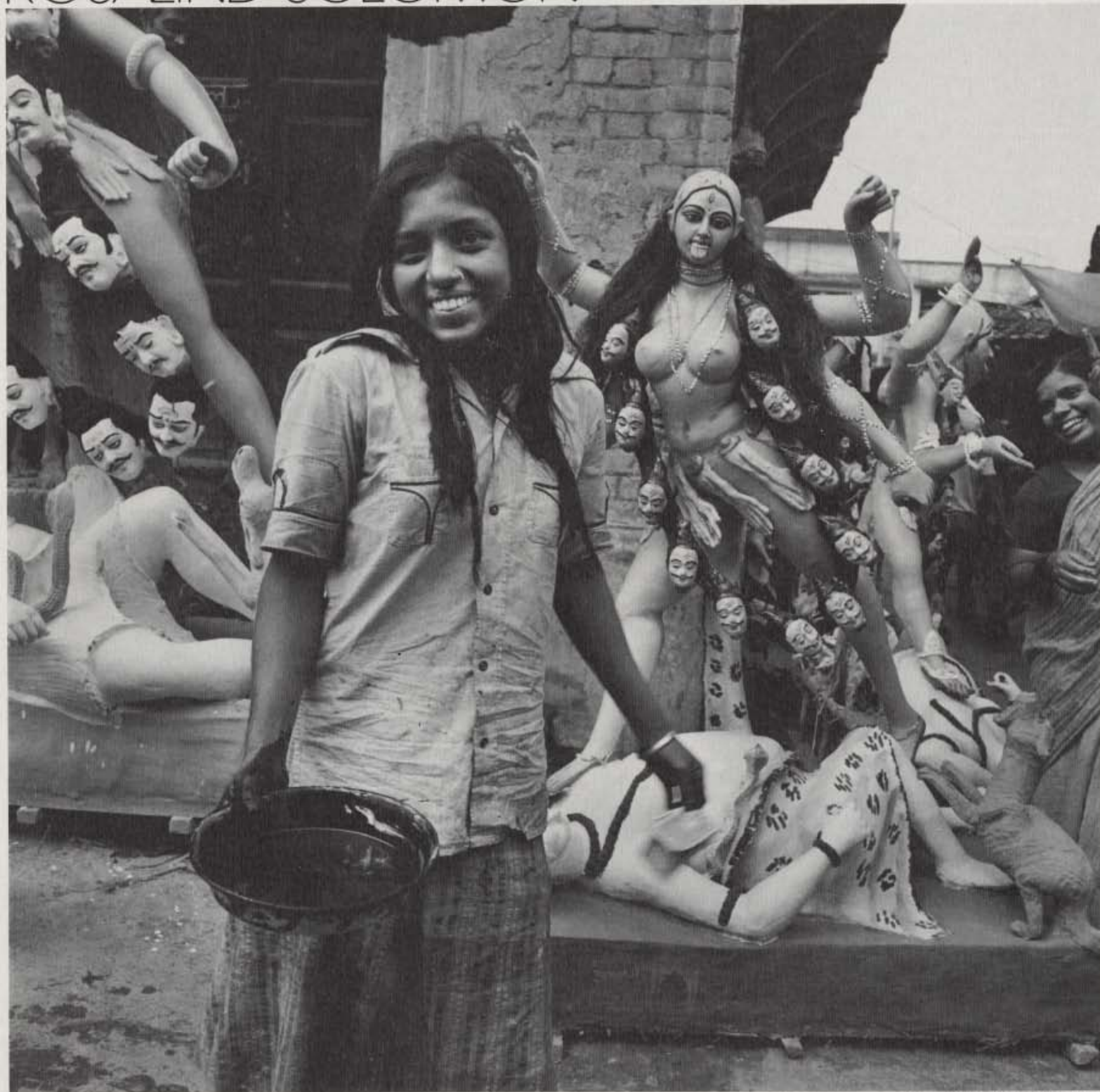


INDIAN LOVE RITES

Durga Puja and Kali Puja in Calcutta

Songs and Sounds recorded by
ROSALIND SOLOMON

ETHNIC FOLKWAYS RECORDS FE 4349



BEFORE KALI PUJA

PHOTOGRAPH BY ROSALIND SOLOMON ©

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One American's conception of the excitement and complexity of the Hindu Puja season in Calcutta.

Rhythmic drums and melodic songs portray a city alive with excitement during this special season when all cares are abandoned in a frenzy of celebration. Featured on this album are Bengali songs of the followers of Swami Shivananda Giri to the Goddess Kali; a mesmerizing truck ride and Kali Puja parade to the ghats; English commentary by Bengalis on the festivals and a myriad of street sounds and celebrations.

The booklet accompanying this album contains notes on the festivals and features Rosalind Solomon's photographs taken while the artist worked in Calcutta during the Puja seasons in 1981-1983, under fellowships awarded by the American Institute of Indian Studies. Her photographs have been exhibited widely both here and in India.

An exhibition, "Rosalind Solomon: India", curated by Marianne Fulton and circulated by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, travelled to the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History in summer, 1985 as part of the Festival of India celebration. She was granted a Guggenheim Fellowship in Photography for her work in Latin America. Solomon's first Folkways album, *Corazon*, with songs in Spanish, was recorded in Peru in 1981.

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DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

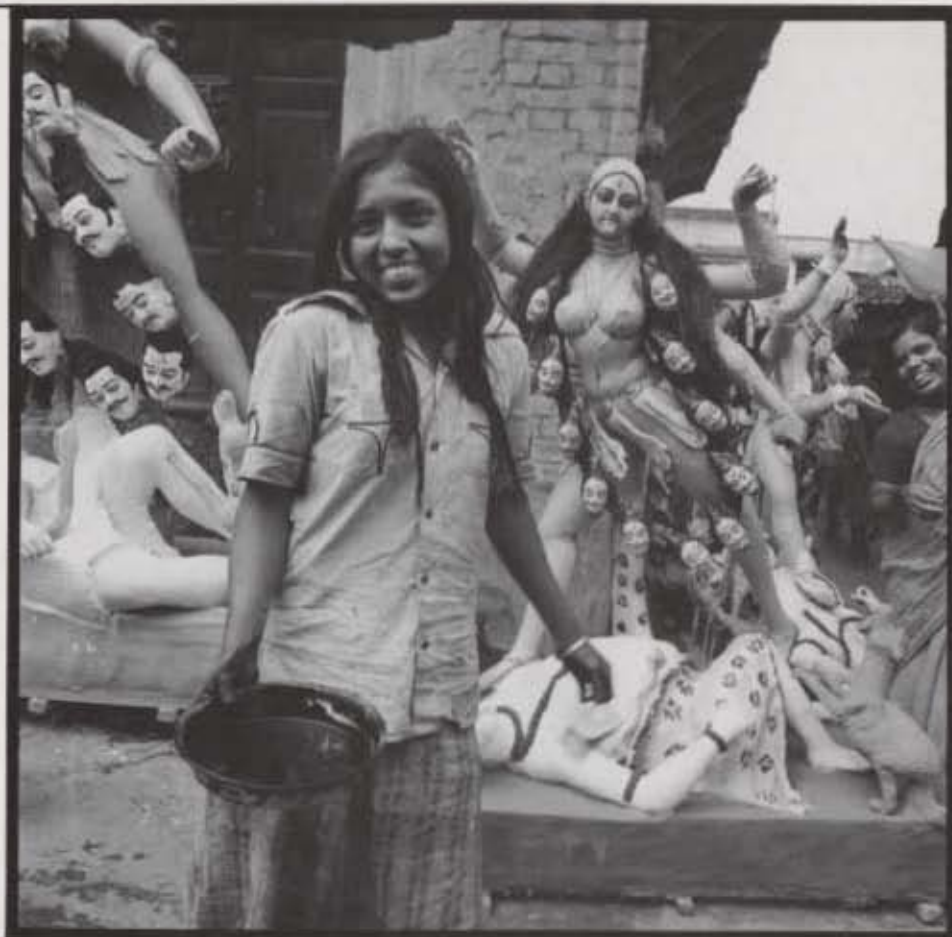
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INDIAN LOVE RITES

Durga Puja and
Kali Puja in Calcutta

Songs and Sounds
Recorded by Rosalind Solomon



INDIAN LOVE RITES is artist Rosalind Solomon's response to the excitement and complexity of sounds and music during two ritual celebrations, Durga Puja and Kali Puja, as witnessed in Calcutta, India.

Calcutta is a city of many influences, and these are given full voice in the music that accompanies the frenzied festivals. Bengali and English themes, bagpipes and conch shells, traditional chants and modern rhythms weave a tapestry of sound that is part of the fabric of this multi-natured city.

INDIAN LOVE RITES captures fragments of a world both familiar and exotic to Western ears. Although Bengalis throughout India celebrate the festivals of Durga Puja and Kali Puja, nothing in the country matches the intensity and catharsis that accompany these holy days in Calcutta, held in September and October.

The puja (worship) begins in the evenings of dates that have been determined to be propitious by the astrologers, and by nightfall the city has reached a crescendo of thundering drums, blaring bands and crackling fireworks. Two groups of drummers have assembled in locations on either side of the city and are furiously competing to be

hired as participants in the worship rituals to come.

In the sculptors' communities of Kumartuli and Patua Para, men arrive in the waning light on foot, by rickshaw, by flatbed truck to pick up the statues ordered weeks before. Here, too, the drummers are present, beating their rhythms to accompany the Goddess' images as they are carried through the streets to homes or community shrines.

Having arrived safely at their destination, the images are symbolically brought to life by priests, and the worship begins. Families and friends gather in homes to celebrate together, while others join the rites in temporary bamboo shrines known as pandels.

The worship ends, and the images are once again shouldered to be carried to their final farewell. Thousands of the faithful amidst singing, crowd the streets carrying smaller images of their own as they join the procession to the banks of the Hoogley River. At the ghats, as the steps of the river bank are known, the final rites are performed to bid the Goddess farewell and, one by one, the images are immersed in the waters. From this place, her spirit is said to return to her home in the Himalayas, again to return the following year.



Drummer Waiting to be Hired

ROSALIND SOLOMON traveled to India beginning in 1981 under fellowships from the American Institute of Indian Studies to photograph these two celebrations of the Mother Goddess, Durga Puja and Kali Puja. The photos have circulated widely in both the United States and India. An exhibition, under the curatorship of Marianne Fulton and entitled, "Rosalind Solomon: India," was sponsored by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House. Among the show's stops was the Smithsonian Institution's Museum of Natural History. In 1986, the Museum of Photographic Arts exhibited "Rosalind Solomon: Earthrites" which included a segment of her Indian work.

India was the latest challenge for Solomon, who has photographed extensively in the United States and Latin America. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship in Photography for her work in Latin America, and in 1981 she recorded her first Folkways' album, CORAZON, featuring the Spanish songs she taped while in Peru.

NOTES ON THE ALBUM

SIDE A, PART ONE—DURGA PUJA

BAND ONE

Traffic and Drums

The ancient and the modern meet as ritual drummers compete among themselves and with the traffic to earn a place in the rites.

BAND TWO

Drummers Welcoming Durga

This traditional welcome, recorded in the courtyard of a home in North Calcutta, is performed by musicians from Choto Khela Village in Midnapur.

BAND THREE

The Bathing of Durga

Mr. Pranab Nag describes the rites as they are performed by incanting priests at the family shrine in Hoogley District. The entire village has been invited to join the ceremony. The Nag family travels from Calcutta each year to celebrate Durga Puja in their ancestral home.

BAND FOUR

The Sacrifice for Durga

The sacrifice is a symbolic means of purification and is a traditional part of Durga Puja. Goats, fruits and vegetables are the usual offerings. This ceremony was recorded in Hoogley District.

BAND FIVE

Drummers at a Pandal

Rhythms fill the bamboo shrine as drummers play for the Goddess.

SIDE A, PART TWO—KALI PUJA

BAND SIX

The Blue Kali

Mr. Chorgoban Mitra, against a background of street sound, discusses his family's giant blue image of the goddess Kali. It is evening and a quiet moment in the ceremonies of Kali Puja at his sprawling, joint-family home.

BAND SEVEN

Lalite

Baul music, sung and danced on a stage in front of a home in North Calcutta. Bauls are wandering minstrels of Bengal. In this song, a woman assumes the role of Rhada, Krishna's consort, and sings to her friend Lalite who is acting as a go-between for the two lovers:

Oh naughty Krishna, why have you gone?
I am waiting for you with a flower garland
Which I made myself.
Oh Lalite, Oh Lalite, what will I do?

BAND EIGHT

Ai Ma, Jui Ma - Hail Mother

This is a Bengali song of victory for the goddess Kali, destroyer and protector, as performed during worship services at the ashram of Swami Shivananda Giri.



*Worship of a Young Girl
at the Goddess Durga*

SIDE B

Farewell to Kali

This side of the album begins with another Bengali song to Kali, "Jai Ma," sung in the ashram of Swami Shivananda Giri. It is followed by ritual drums that announce the departure of Kali from the shrine. As the statue is loaded onto a flatbed truck amidst the popping of firecrackers near and far, a taped version of "Jai Ma" begins to play.

The singing on the crowded truck never stops as it inches its way through the city. "Hare Krishna", sung to purify mind and body is sometimes drowned out by the music of celebration from other trucks or nearby shrines. Women and girls, a harmonium, speakers and a tape player surround the image of Kali, which stands in the back. Behind the truck, the men, led by the Swami, run on foot.

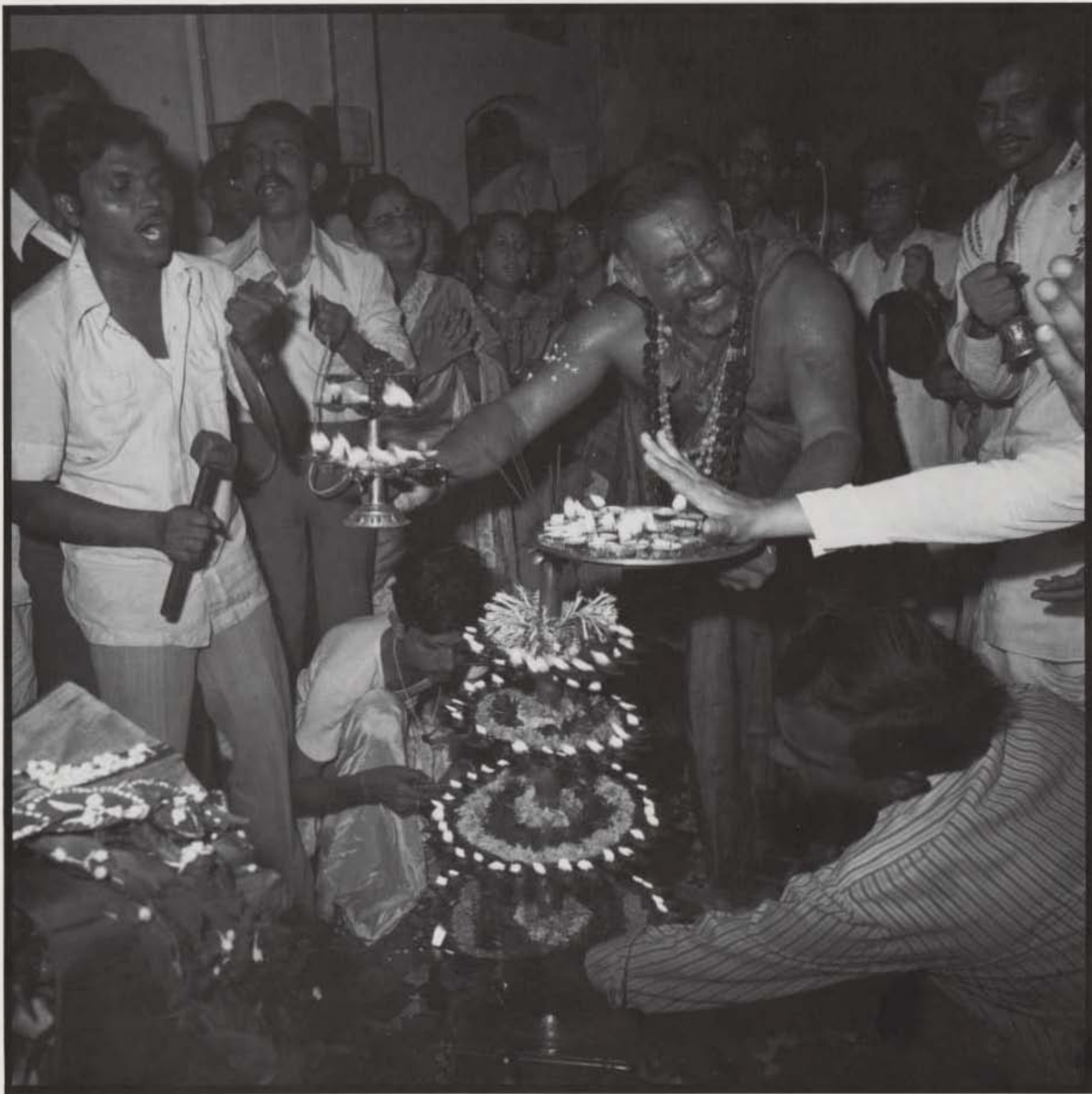
A Kali Puja parade in South Calcutta makes its way to the ghats. Trucks carry immense images of the goddess. These are preceded by groups of musicians who share bits of Calcutta's history as they play bagpipes, military marches and chant ancient songs that remain a part of the ritual's modern interpretation.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND TEXT
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SOUND MIX: VAL PETERS

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*Before the immersion of
the Goddess Durga*



*Swami Shivananda Giri
at Kali Puja*