

GAURI DANCE
DANCE WITH LONG HORNS
SIDDIA DANCE
TABLA TARANGI
FOLK SONG (Goa),
MARTIAL SONG (Nepal),
FOLK DANCE (Sind State),
KHATIAK DANCE
CLASSICAL SONG (Pakistan),
WEDDING SONG
GEET (Kashmir).

MUSIC from SOUTH ASIA

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MUSIC from SOUTH ASIA



SIND
NEPAL
SORASTRA
PUSHTU
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PATHAN
KULU
HYDERABAD
GOA

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MUSIC from SOUTH ASIA



These selections of music from South Asia are presented as a sampling of the wide range of styles and musical traditions to be found on what is sometimes called the Indian subcontinent. The purpose of this collection is to help dissolve popular misconceptions as to the nature of Indian music. It is as difficult to speak correctly of "the" music of South Asia as it is to speak of "the" music of Europe or America. Among the so-called classical music forms of India and Pakistan there are wide differences in style and feeling, if not in basic elements. The differences between the cultivated forms and the village or country music are even more striking. And when one is confronted with the profusion of different tribal and regional musics, the problems of speaking of "the" music of the area becomes apparent even to the untutored ear. While many Indians and Pakistanis maintain that their music can-

not be divided into "classical" and "folk" categories, it is obvious that what we are dealing with is a vast reservoir of music of different types. A village folksong may be cultivated, and it may be sung with great virtuosity by an accomplished musician, so that here a distinction is difficult to make. But there are rural and tribal songs and dances that clearly cannot be regarded as "classical". They are part of a group tradition, and often stress community participation, as, for example, in the case of Long Horns from Kulu Valley, the Khatak Dance and the Siddia Dance from Hyderabad on Side I of this record. From the southern tip of India to the northern reaches of Kashmir is some two thousand miles, and it is approximately the same distance from the Assam-Burma border to the Iranian frontier. Apart from ancient tribal regional styles that have survived through the centuries, there have

been cultural intrusions from Persia, Islam, Africa and Europe. While South Asia is certainly not obligated to the outside world for its boundless treasury of music, it has here and there taken in a little of what the outside world has offered. These minor incidents, however, are only casual in the South Asian musical scene.

THE EDITOR

INTRODUCTION by HENRY COWELL

South Asia includes and is dominated by the musical culture of India. Those of us in the West who know any of the music of this region usually have heard only those bits of cultivated performances such as are openly given, not always of the best quality. Travellers rather seldom penetrate to the districts where semi-primitive music still survives, although there are many such places; and visitors also rather seldom hear pure folk music, although that, too, may be found. What is heard in larger centers sung and played by simple people is usually a mixture of elements.

There are two broad types of cultivated music in India: the older Hindu, and the more recent Moslem. Of these, the Hindu is the more developed and diversified. Its age is not exactly known, but aspects of its culture extend well into pre-Christian times. Bharata, India's early great composer and musical theorist, lived about the first century B. C. Without going into great detail, we may point out that the organization of rhythm (tala), carried out on drums, and modes (ragas) sung or played on melody instruments, is elaborate and involved; and performers, after the required years and years of study, achieve a virtuosity unequalled in these fields by Western musicians. The drumming is usually based on very rapid sixteenth-notes, with incredible syncopations, divided into measures of $4/4$, $5/4$, $7/4$, etc. and over-all form patterns in groups of from 14 to 64 measures, with the drummer always knowing exactly on which beat of which measure he is then playing, on his tuned tabla drums, (see Side 1, Band 4).

The ragas, or modes, are diversified. Most of them contain seven tones to the octave (some older ones have only five) and a total of twenty-two different pitches are drawn upon for this purpose. The tonic and dominant (fifth degree) are constant. One South India system (The Melakarta Janya-Raga System) contains seventy-two ragas alone; each musician is expected to


know five to six hundred ragas, and the complete list of them from all parts of South Asia contains several thousand varieties.

A beautiful example of classical raga singing is to be found on Side II, Band 3. The low man's voice opens calmly and without vibrato. The tonal center is given by the tambour, a plucked instrument with a long sustained tone (in this case aided by a harmonium), and the esraj, a bowed string instrument with seventeen tiny tuned strings to reresonate any bowed pitches, either imitates the voice or plays graceful interludes between the singer's phrases. Gradually the singer introduces decorations -- mordants and tiny trills (imitated by the esraj) and sometimes sliding tones -- winding up with a truly masterly vocal display of ornamentation. This raga is like a major scale, starting on C, but with sometimes B flat, and sometimes F#. The latter interchange marks it as being a northern raga, as most South India ragas are classified according to whether they do or do not possess an F#.

The second major musical culture of the sub-continent is the Islamic, brought in from Arabia between the seventh and ninth centuries A. D. In its purer form it employs eighteen different modes, and intervals of $1/3$ tones; but it is spread mostly by ear, and its cultivation has been less exact than that of the old Hindustani music. The Moslems have picked up a great deal of the Hindu musical practices, which may be found in mixed form not only in the fine-art music, but also in folk-art and even primitive-art music of these regions. An example may be found on Side II, Band 4, in which there are answering women's voices in folk style, with a basic Moslem mode (d is the tonal center; the mode rises e, f, g, and a, upward, and uses the c below) but Hindu-style drumming and vocal tone-quality.

The Geet on Side II, Band 5, is Kashmiri, and more primitive in form. There is a single drummer, who changes figures, but all are based on $2/4$ with quarter, eighth and sixteenth notes. There is a high voice with a basically tetracordal (four-note) melody, answered by a lower voice on the tetracord below.

A completely primitive music is not represented on this record, but rather primitive forms of folk singing and dancing, with talking, yelling, and animal imitations, may be heard. The first cut on Side I is a Gauri Dance from Sorashtra State. Men and women answer each other in myxolydian mode (like a major scale with the seventh tone lowered a half-tone) with sometimes the seventh tone raised. Much of the drumming

is in an irregular three: $\frac{3}{4}$  The long horns of Kulu Valley, (Side I, Band 2) produce one tone each, but with great glissandi at the end. Drums play 2/4 figures, and there are metal bells a whole step higher than the drums. Tiny sounds of reeds can be heard faintly in the distance.

The Siddia Dance of Hyderabad is performed by descendants of North-Eastern Africans brought to Hyderabad centuries ago, but the music shows this more in the instruments -- African type scraped gourds and rattles, and oboe sounds with voices -- than in the actual scales, which are drawn by ear from Indian ragas.

Side I, Band 5 is from Goa, and retains its Portuguese folk-music character. A group of mandolin-like and guitar-like plucked strings forms the background with Western chords and Iberian melodies, in major key, with an interlude in minor. The rhythm is 3/8. A Western oasis in Oriental surroundings.

The music of Side I, Band 6 is from Nepal. The scale is mostly pentatonic (five-tone). A choral group repeats the same figure over and over in a rather primitive manner. There is talking comment at times, and the drumming alternated between a dry-toned subdominant to a ringing tonic, and a ringing dominant to tonic. The drums change figures, but not the basic beat of 4/4.

Side I, Band 2 is a Khatak dance from the Northwest Frontier region. The Khataks are a nomadic herding people, noted for their horsemanship. They dance in a circle with sabres, sometimes in crouching positions, accompanied by bagpipes, small hand drums called duffs, large drums and handclapping. Their dance traditions are strikingly similar in many respects to those of the Russian Cossacks, and there are indications of a common origin.

As a whole, the music of the Khatak people, from Nepal, Kashmir, the Kulu Valley, and Sorastra is folk music of a semi-primitive nature, which has picked up by ear some characteristics of Tala rhythms and Raga modes from the fine-art music of India and Pakistan, but with these characteristics simplified and repeated rather than being heard in their more diversified high-culture forms.

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| SIDE I, Band 1: | GAURI DANCE
(Sorastra State).
Recorded by Louis Sobel. |
| SIDE I, Band 2: | DANCE WITH LONG HORNS
(Kulu Valley).
Recorded by Louis Sobel. |
| SIDE I, Band 3: | SIDDIA DANCE (Hyderabad).
Recorded by Louis Sobel. |
| SIDE I, Band 4: | TABLA TARANGI
(Central India).
From the collection of
Henry Cowell. |
| SIDE I, Band 5: | FOLK SONG (Goa).
From the collection of
Harold Courlander. |
| SIDE I, Band 6: | MARTIAL SONG (Nepal).
Recorded by Louis Sobel. |
| SIDE II, Band 1: | FOLK DANCE (Sind State).
Recorded by Radio Pakistan. |
| SIDE II, Band 2: | KHATAK DANCE
(Northwest Frontier, Pathan).
Recorded by Radio Pakistan. |
| SIDE II, Band 3: | CLASSICAL SONG (Pakistan).
Recorded by Radio Pakistan. |
| SIDE II, Band 4: | WEDDING SONG
(Pakistan Pushtu).
Recorded by Radio Pakistan. |
| SIDE II, Band 5: | GEET (Kashmir).
Recorded by Kashmir Radio. |

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