

Musical renaissance and its margins in England and India, 1874-1914

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Chapter for

Portrayal of the East: Music and the Oriental Imagination in the British Empire, 1780-1940

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1. Introduction

This chapter sketches some of the relationships between movements of musical revival and reform in England and India, and the mutual effects of their inter-penetration, concentrating on the period from 1874 to 1914. In England these years are now associated with folk song collection, national music and the ‘musical renaissance’; in India with the adoption of classical music by nationalist movements and the development of an urban, largely Hindu concert culture – also sometimes referred to as a musical renaissance. The story is one of musical worlds that resemble each other closely at times, despite the gross imbalance of political and economic power. It shows the impact of colonialism and orientalist thought on Indian and English music alike, but also the openness of some parts of the English musical establishment to the possibility of learning from others, and an ambivalent attitude to British institutions and technologies on the part of Indian music reformers.

In England over this period, the musical establishment appeared increasingly self-confident, and the fruits of a growing interest in English national musical heritage – as distinguished from the dominant German model – were felt. It was the period of Parry’s and Stanford’s maturity and the emergence of Elgar, Holst and Vaughan Williams, the continuity in the musical establishment unbroken despite the increasing openness in some parts to influences such as folk song and Indian philosophy. It was also the period in which the critic A.H. Fox Strangways and the psychologist Charles Myers, in their different ways, helped to develop comparative musicology and to introduce notes of relativism and mutual respect into musical discourse – while perhaps the greatest English composer of the age, Elgar, was seen as much more firmly allied with the prevailing colonial order. At one and the same time, then, we can see considerable support

for a stable and conservative order, as well as the emergence of quietly dissenting voices – the main ideological differences emerging in the ways the relationships between the centre and its others were imagined, whether by the latter we mean the English ‘peasants’ or the Empire’s ‘natives’.

Institutions dedicated to musical reform emerged at roughly the same time in India. A notion of an Indian (or Hindu) ‘classical’ music emerged: taking up existing discourses of nationalism, of the decadence of the (largely Muslim) court culture of India and the greatness of the more ancient Hindu culture (known, thanks to William Jones, to be linked to European classical civilisation), reformers such as the musicologist V.N. Bhatkhande sought to wrest control of the *raga* tradition from courtesans and Muslim hereditary musicians. The project of these reformers was to establish a Hindu, middle class concert culture, to increase the prestige of ‘Indian music’, and to develop the latter as a symbol of Indian cultural nationalism. Bhatkhande and others involved in the project belonged to an elite, educated in English-medium universities, and the influence of contemporary thinking in England – including its nationalism, evolutionism, and orientalism – is clear.

Setting ‘Indian music’ up as a contrasting category to Western music mirrors the gestures of many European nationalisms, including the English version, against German cultural hegemony. The parallel is a coarse one – Germany did not colonize England, and most Indian musicians did not look up to their English counterparts in anything like the way the English admired Mozart or Beethoven; also, the Indian nationalist project did not consider the role of the ‘folk’ – a factor indispensable to European musical nationalisms. They do share features however. Temperley argues that the key factor in the pre-‘renaissance’ decline of English musical self-confidence was the elitist cultivation of foreign music and musicians by the British aristocracy, something imitated in turn by the middle classes.¹ Similarly in India much of the decline in music’s status may be attributable to the alienation of Westernized elites from local musical forms.

Another shared feature is that in both cases renaissance was highly selective, and had the effect of marginalizing many musicians and their repertoires.² The English musical renaissance marginalised many

¹ Nicholas Temperley, ‘Xenophilia in British musical history’, in *Nineteenth-Century British Music Studies*, Vol. I, ed. Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999): 11-12.

² This has been well argued in the English case, and recent studies of Indian music make the same point. In the English case see for instance Georgina Boyes, *The imagined village: Culture, ideology, and the English folk revival* (Manchester

popular songs and singers not considered authentic enough by the folk song collectors, and edited song texts the collectors considered less than respectable. In India the emphasis on establishing the 'classical' pushed many to the margins: rural musicians, those not respectable enough to be considered classical (such as courtesans), and those whose music was too European in style.³ Indian nationalist reformers thus appropriated European ideologies and used them to marginalize European music in India, becoming in the process the mirror image of the English musical establishment, promoting some musical traditions while denigrating others.

As Said has argued, 'Partly because of empire, all cultures are involved in one another'.⁴ All cultural encounters have effects, and colonial encounters produce profound cultural effects on all sides, of which this story is an illustration.⁵ Said's perspective has informed recent critical and historical scholarship in other domains, but relatively little in music: as Frogley points out, 'the issue of Empire has always been given short shrift, ignored altogether, or strenuously played down by historians of the English Musical

and New York: Manchester University Press, 1993), and Dave Harker, *Fakesong: The manufacture of British 'folksong' 1700 to the present day*. (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1985). In the Indian case see for instance: Janaki Bakhle, *Two men and music: Nationalism in the making of an Indian classical tradition*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005); Lakshmi Subramanian, 'The reinvention of a tradition: Nationalism, Carnatic music and the Madras Music Academy, 1900-1947'. *The Indian Economic and Social History Review* 36/2 (1999): 131-163; Matthew H. Allen, 'Tales tunes tell : deepening the dialogue between "classical" and "non-classical" in the music of India', *Yearbook for traditional music* 30 (1998): 22-52.

³ Many Indian-born professional musicians were in fact trained on Western instruments and repertoires, and employed in institutions such as military bands, the heirs of a tradition of European-style professional musicianship dating to the early days of Portuguese expansion in the sixteenth century: See Martin Clayton, 'Rock to Raga: the many lives of the Indian guitar' in Andrew Bennett and Kevin Dawe, eds. *Guitar Cultures* (Oxford: Berg, 2001): 179-208. Bakhle, *Two men and music*, pp.7-48 discusses the exclusion of less respectable genres such as *lavani* from the new 'classical' tradition.

⁴ Edward W. Said, *Culture and imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993): xxix.

⁵ For an engaging discussion of the theme of encounter in world music history, see Philip V. Bohlman, *World music: A very short introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

Renaissance'.⁶ Jeffrey Richards's compendious *Imperialism and music* stands out as a study of English music's engagement with the idea of Empire, although his remit does not include the question of colonial influence on musical practice in Britain.⁷ Studies of music history have generally been reluctant to tackle the issue head on – although there are exceptions, such as Qureshi's critique of the complicity between Western scholarship and Hindu nationalism in the study of Indian music, and its exclusionary effects.⁸ Other recent works have begun to criticise the assumptions and prejudices of Indian musical reformers in our period, as they have the motivations of the English musical renaissance (albeit in the latter case, still with little or no reference to England's colonial presence). A shift in paradigm may be taking shape, but thus far it has had relatively little impact on Western music historiography.

This chapter is intended as a move towards a more relational view of music history, in which we may look beyond a priori divisions of the musical world associated with nation states. Historians have begun to address the problematic of their subject's organization 'on the basis of a fixed geographical referent generally congruent with a modern nation-state'.⁹ Ballantyne and others have begun to conceive 'of the British empire as a "bundle of relationships" that brought disparate regions, communities and individuals into contact through systems of mobility and exchange',¹⁰ a move which can be employed productively in the case of music history too.

Music historians and ethnomusicologists have for some time looked critically at the rhetoric of 'national' music traditions. Extending this process to the great pan-regional musical complexes such as those of India and the West and unpicking the narratives of their construction, however, is a challenge that has not yet been taken up in a concerted fashion. This chapter proposes, in effect, addressing the modern music histories of India and the West, their mutual influence, and the complicity of their discourses of difference

⁶ Alain Frogley, 'Rewriting the renaissance: History, imperialism, and British music since 1840', *Music and Letters* 84/2 (2003): 241-257. See p. 252.

⁷ Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and music: Britain 1876-1953*. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001).

⁸ Regula B. Qureshi, 'Whose music? Sources and contexts in Indic musicology', in Bruno Nettl and Philip V. Bohlman, eds, *Comparative musicology and anthropology of music* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1991).

⁹ Tony Ballantyne. *Orientalism and race: Aryanism in the British Empire*. (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 1.

¹⁰ Ballantyne. *Orientalism and race*, p. 1

and exclusion, within the wider contexts of colonialism and orientalist thought. If such a move proves to be both justified and productive, it may have the effect of destabilizing the categories ‘Indian music’ and ‘Western music’ themselves. The examples and illustrations that follow are inevitably selective: the main criterion in the selection of case studies has been a concern with relations, of each musical culture with its respective ‘others’, and thus with illustrating the processes of marginalization inherent in revival projects.

2. The English musical renaissance, nationalism and the colonial experience¹¹

Evolution, nation, folk and renaissance

The choice of 1874 as a starting point for this chapter’s material reflects the fact that the first major institution dedicated to music reform in India, the Gayan Samaj, was formed in this year. The English movement is commonly dated from around 1880, the year the charter for the new Royal College of Music was drawn up, with the intention of educating a new generation of musicians – to be ‘to England what the Berlin Conservatoire is to Germany’ in the words of Sir George Grove.¹² The following years brought England a boom in folk-song collecting and a revival of Elizabethan music, a move to pastoralism and much more, until the carnage of the 1914-1918 war – not to mention the defeat of Germany – changed the country’s musical culture as profoundly as it did any other aspect of life. During this period the number of musicians and composers working in England increased rapidly, and new institutions emerged, including the ‘Proms’ in 1895 and the Folk-song society in 1898. Meanwhile, at this high point of British colonial power, the significance of Empire often appears to have been so thoroughly naturalised as to be unremarked – although routinely celebrated in popular culture, as Jeffrey Richards points out, it was

¹¹ Parts of Section 2 of this chapter are based on material first developed for the Open University course AA314 *Studies in Music 1750-2000: Interpretation and Analysis* (Milton Keynes: Open University, 2002). Block 5 of that course, ‘English Musical Identity, c.1880-1939’, was co-authored by Fiona Richards and Martin Clayton.

¹² Temperley points out that the idea of renaissance in English music has a long history, and that specifications of its date have varied widely (Temperley, ‘Xenophilia in British musical history’, pp.6-9). The 1880 date could be argued to be somewhat arbitrary: nonetheless it was from around this time that English musicians became more aware of a conscious process of renaissance, which is the topic of this essay. Quoted in Robert A. Stradling and Meirion Hughes, *The English musical Renaissance, 1860-1940: Construction and deconstruction* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993): 24.

nonetheless strangely ignored in elite discourse on music and has been so in subsequent discussion of musical renaissance.¹³

The late eighteenth century had seen a fashion – continuing into the early nineteenth – for so-called Hindustani airs, tunes collected in India and arranged for British domestic performance.¹⁴ While it may be debatable how significant an influence of Indian musical materials and processes on British musicians this represented, it can surely be regarded as a clear acknowledgment in Britain of Indian cultural practice, and one that seems to have gradually dropped out of fashion in favour of an orientalist practice of representation.¹⁵ If there was an ongoing impact of Indian musical practice on British culture, then it seems to have generated anxiety rather than celebration, for despite the profound impact on Europe of the discovery of India's common Aryan heritage, in the later nineteenth century it was problematic for English musicians actually to look to India for inspiration.

Other factors were also becoming important in English musical life, with the sudden florescence of interest in folk song: the decade following 1903, the year when both Cecil Sharp and Ralph Vaughan Williams began collecting folk songs, was perhaps the most intensive period of collection and study English song has seen. The study of folk-song in England had taken off more slowly in England than in many parts of Europe, a fact addressed by Carl Engel in an influential book published in 1879, *The literature of national music*.¹⁶ Engel pointed out what he saw as the national basis of song, and the ability of the songs of 'the

¹³ See Richards, *Imperialism and music*.

¹⁴ See Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Ian Woodfield, 'Collecting Indian Songs in Late 18th-Century Lucknow: Problems of Transcription', *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 3 (1994): 73-88; 'The "Hindostannie Air": English Attempts to Understand Indian Music in the Late Eighteenth Century', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 119/2 (1994): 189-211. *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth-Century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).

¹⁵ The shift from Hindustani Airs to other forms of representation in English popular song is traced by Farrell, *Indian Music and the West*, pp. 77ff.

¹⁶ Carl Engel, *The literature of national music* (London: Novello Ewer & co., 1879). Engel's work is discussed in more detail in Bennett Zon, *Ethnomusicology and the Representation of Non-Western Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (forthcoming).

country-people and the lower classes of society' to reflect the distinctiveness of the nation.¹⁷ Engel's argument that the music which survives in any nation is that most suited to the national environment betrays an influence of the evolutionary theories of the time, and this forms an important subtext to many of the period's intellectual and musical developments.

Evolutionary ideas had been developed in the mid-nineteenth century by both Charles Darwin (1809–82) and Herbert Spencer (1820–1903). These theories came to be applied to many fields, including music – Spencer himself wrote on the origin of music, while Darwin addressed the topic in *The Descent of Man*.¹⁸ The idea of cultural progress – a concept more associated with Spencer's theories than with Darwin's – became important to the way music history was conceived: evolution was seen as the mechanism by which music progressed from a less-developed to a more-developed state. E.B. Tylor's Spencerian theory in *Primitive Culture* – that all societies evolve in a linear fashion from the primitive to the civilised, while nonetheless cultural practices and forms characteristic of earlier stages could survive even as the society progressed – was also to prove influential in folk-song studies and in comparative musicology.¹⁹

By the late nineteenth century, then, it was widely believed that the music of the whole of the rest of the world could be taken to represent stages in an evolutionary process. Those forms of music most similar to Western music could be regarded as more developed; other repertoires were, in effect, survivals, more primitive strains that had survived while evolution continued apace in the courts and concert halls of western Europe. These 'survivals' were not only to be found in the rest of the world, they were also to be found in Europe, amongst our own more 'primitive' people – the 'folk', backward and uneducated people who nevertheless (so it was believed) retained pure and uncontaminated 'national traits'.

One prominent English musician to be influenced by Spencer's theory of evolution was the composer Hubert Parry (1848–1918). Parry, in his book *The Evolution of the Art of Music*, laid out his theory that art

¹⁷ Engel, *The literature of national music*, p.1.

¹⁸ Herbert Spencer, 'The origin and function of music', *Fraser's Magazine* 56 (1857): 396–408; 'The origin of music', *Mind* 60 (1890): 449–68; 'On the origin of music'. *Mind* 64 (1891): 535–537. Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man and selection in relation to sex* (Rev. ed.). (New York: Merrill and Baker, 1874. Repr. London: Folio Society, 1990): 495–502.

¹⁹ Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture. Researches into the development of mythology, philosophy, religion, art, and custom*. 2 vols, (London: John Murray, 1871). See also Boyes, *The imagined village*, 7f.

music had developed from folk or primitive music.²⁰ Here he elaborated what was to become a familiar evolutionist argument: music of the different ‘races’ is more or less well developed, depending on the stage of each race’s ‘mental development’. *The Evolution of the Art of Music* was influential in the early part of the twentieth century, especially on pioneers of folk-song collection such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp. Thus English music’s renaissance was profoundly implicated in theories of the national and racial basis of culture, ideas that at least implicitly place English music within a global evolutionary context and make imperialism and Britain’s relations with her colonial subjects a crucial issue. For the remainder of this section I will concentrate in turn on three distinct but related aspects of English music’s encounter with its others. First, the work of the composer Gustav Holst, and his relationship with orientalism; second, the emergence of comparative musicology and the work of Charles Myers; and finally English-language writing on Indian music in the early twentieth century.

Gustav Holst and orientalism

Gustav Holst (1874-1934) was one of the most significant composers to emerge from the Royal College of Music (he studied under Stanford in the 1890s, and met his lifelong friend Vaughan Williams there). He is linked to the folk-song movement through his association with both Vaughan Williams and Cecil Sharp – at Sharp’s request he attempted to work English folk songs into art-music compositions in his Somerset Rhapsody (1906-07). For the purposes of this essay, he is more significant for his interest in Indian religion and philosophy – a related interest in astrology led to *The Planets*, his best-known work – to which he gave expression in several works, including a series of settings of Vedic hymns (he had learnt enough Sanskrit to be able to work on his own translations of the texts).

Holst’s friend Vaughan Williams wrote, ‘it is not the orientalism but the mysticism of the Vedic Hymns which attracted Holst, he needed some expression of the mystical point of view less materialized and less systematized than anything to be found in occidental liturgies’.²¹ Later scholars of orientalism could no doubt point out to Vaughan Williams that the idea of India as a source of mysticism, set in contrast to

²⁰ First published as C. Hubert H. Parry, *The Art of Music*, (London: Kegan Paul, 1893).

²¹ Ralph Vaughan Williams, *Some thoughts on Beethoven’s Choral Symphony with writings on other musical subjects*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1953), p.80.

anything on offer in the West, clearly suggests ‘orientalism’ in the Saidian sense of the word. Nonetheless Vaughan Williams has a point: Holst was not pretending to great scholarship in Indian language or philosophy, and there is little hard evidence that he makes reference in his composition to Indian music. As Raymond Head points out in his series of essays on Holst and India, his interest in India as a source of philosophical ideas is likely to have been at least second- or third-hand, through his appreciation of the Indophile poet Walt Whitman, although being brought up in Cheltenham – home to many retired colonial officers who had served in India – and with his stepmother interested in Theosophy, his interest in the subcontinent is not at all surprising.²² Despite this interest and the Indian themes of many of his early works, he does not comfortably fit the bill of the ‘orientalist’ composer. Rather than using conventional signifiers of the orient, whether to engage with oriental subjects or to use them as allegorical cover for matters closer to home, Holst took themes directly from Hindu mythology and tried to divest them of their local colour so that their ‘universal’ philosophical themes could be fully expressed: his approach certainly finds a place within the orientalist discourses of the period, but it is a different place to that occupied by many of his contemporaries.

Holst’s Vedic Hymns are, on the whole, examples of English composition taking inspiration of an indirect kind from ancient Indian scripture. Head contends, nonetheless, that there are instances in the Vedic hymns and elsewhere of ‘raga-like’ melodic lines, and suggests that the violinist Maud Mann may have been an influence here, both in mediating the Indian musical material and in proposing a method of harmonizing *raga* melodies using only notes from the *raga* itself.²³

It is tempting to speculate what Holst would have made of a visit to India itself, but we will never know how the philosophical ideals he had learned from Sanskrit literature would have interacted with the musical

²² Raymond Head, ‘Holst and India (I): Maya to Sita’, *Tempo* 158 (1986): 2-7; ‘Holst and India (II): The Rig Veda Hymns’, *Tempo* 160 (1987): 27-36; ‘Holst and India (III)’, *Tempo* 166 (1988): 35-40.

²³ Head, ‘Holst and India (III)’, p. 38. Mrs Maud Mann (Maud McCarthy), ‘Some Indian conceptions of music’, *Proceedings of the Musical Association*, 38th Session (1911-1912): 41-65.

life he would have encountered there.²⁴ It seems hazardous to state, as does Short's biography, that Holst never heard any Indian music: it is surely possible that he did hear some played by visiting musicians, or perhaps as performed by Mann (such as that she gave in a presentation to the Musical Association in 1912), but if so then details of such encounters and their effects are elusive.²⁵ However speculative, Head's suggestion that some of his works may reveal the influence of Indian *ragas* is more convincing than Short's comments, with their almost supernatural implication: 'Although he had never heard any Indian music, in his search for the most suitable notes to express the feeling of the words he came to use some scales which bear a resemblance to the ragas of Indian music', continuing a dozen pages later, 'something of the feeling of Indian music comes through [in *Savitri*], by what must have been an intuitive process on Holst's part'.²⁶ This comes across as an attempt to avoid at all costs acknowledging an obvious possibility, namely that one of England's finest composers was significantly influenced by Indian music.

Comparative musicology, primitive music and C.S. Myers

The early twentieth century is now regarded as the period in which a new academic field – comparative musicology – crystallized. This period does not, of course, mark the beginnings of European interest in the music of colonial subjects – several earlier works, including Sir William Jones's essay 'On the musical modes of the Hindoos', written in 1784, are still regarded as important documents.²⁷ In the late nineteenth century, however, this research – like many other academic fields – was systematized and institutionalized,

²⁴ Holst did travel to Algeria in 1908, as a result of which he incorporated a local tune into his suite *Beni Mora* (1910); perhaps an Indian sojourn would have borne a similar fruit. See Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: the man and his music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990): 86

²⁵ Short, *Gustav Holst*, p. 67.

²⁶ Short, *Gustav Holst*: pp. 67, 78

²⁷ William Jones, 'On the musical modes of the Hindoos', *Asiatick Researches* 3 (1792): 55-87; repr. in Sourindro Mohun Tagore, ed. *Hindu music from various authors*, (Calcutta: I. C. Bose & Co., 1882; repr. Delhi: Low cost publications, 1990): 125-160. For further discussion of early ethnomusicological literature see Joep Bor, 'The Rise of Ethnomusicology: Sources on Indian Music c.1780 - c.1890', *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 20 (1988): 1-73.

with the result that ‘comparative musicologists’ were now writing their reports within the walls of university departments and archives.

The development of comparative musicology’s paradigm, and its institutionalization, were pioneered in Germany. English scholars did however make a contribution to comparative musicology, notably through Alexander Ellis’s influential article ‘On the musical scales of various nations’, in which he reported some ground-breaking empirical studies.²⁸ Comparative musicology over this period displays both a combination of, and a tension between, the scientific approach exemplified by Ellis and some of the more speculative evolutionist theories and nationalist ideologies of the time. The other key figures in British comparative musicology in this period were A.H. Fox Strangways – of whom more below – and Charles Myers, whose first contributions were phonograph recordings of the music of the Torres Straits islanders, made as part of A.C. Haddon’s famous anthropological expedition of 1898.²⁹

Charles Myers was born in 1873 and studied natural sciences (under Haddon) and medicine at Cambridge, completing his studies shortly before the departure of the Torres Straits expedition. The Torres Straits expedition was to be his only significant music research trip, although he did subsequently encourage his anthropologist colleagues to make phonograph recordings on their expeditions for him to study at home. The work he pursued in music research between 1898 and 1914 nevertheless remains an impressive legacy. Myers did not visit India, and the only examples of south Asian music he worked on were collections of cylinder recordings made in Ceylon by his friends Charles and Brenda Seligman (1907-08), and in south India by Edgar Thurston and K. Rangachari (c. 1905).³⁰ The former, mostly recordings of the aboriginal Vedda people, featured extensively in his publications, for instance in a 1912 article, ‘The study of primitive music’, in which he compares the results of the Torres Straits and Vedda recordings.³¹

²⁸ Alexander Ellis, ‘On the musical scales of various nations’, *Journal of the Society of Arts* 33 (27 March 1885): 485–527.

²⁹ For more background see Zon, *Ethnomusicology and the Representation of Non-Western Music*, and Martin Clayton, ‘Ethnographic Wax Cylinders at the British Library National Sound Archive: A Brief History and Description of the Collection’, *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 5 (1996): 67-92.

³⁰ Clayton, ‘Ethnographic Wax Cylinders’, pp. 78ff.

³¹ Charles S. Myers, ‘The study of primitive music’, *The Musical Antiquary* 3 (Oct 1911-July 1912): 121–41.

Myers's significance here is not just that he advised recordists and worked on some collections of south Asian music, but that his work represents a sometimes uneasy blend between the dominant evolutionist thinking and a developing experimental method. He begins his 1912 paper by proposing 'to describe such features of the music of two primitive peoples that I have studied as are likely to add to our knowledge of musical history and development', a clear nod in the direction of evolutionary narrative that is backed up in his concluding paragraph: 'Probably the Vedda and the Miriam [Torres Straits] songs represent (in two very different forms!) the simplest primitive music that has hitherto been recorded.'³² His own parenthetical comment may however hint at diminishing faith in the evolutionary narrative – if the two most primitive examples yet recorded were so different from one another, prospects for tracing musical development back to their source must have begun to look very bleak. Myers, a contributor in 1907 to Tylor's festschrift, does not seem to have ever openly disputed the great anthropologist's theory, although his emphasis switched to questions of individual differences and cultural adaptation, and his writing on music expressed interest in identifying the innate human capacities that he felt must underlay all musical behaviour.³³ Unfortunately he did not make any new contribution to comparative musicology after 1914: had he done so, he would surely have played a more visible role in the development of modern ethnomusicology.

Three English-language publications on Indian music

By the 1880s there already existed a strong tradition of English-language scholarship on Indian music, traceable from William Jones's 1784 essay through to Raja S.M. Tagore's publications of the 1860s and 70s.³⁴ Most publications were intended for a readership either based in or otherwise concerned with India, for orientalist scholars or for local enthusiasts; a few however, Jones's essay in particular, were widely read by European scholars.³⁵ The early twentieth century seems to mark a subtle shift in English-language writing on Indian music, with the English music critic A.H. Fox Strangways's *Music of Hindostan* aimed

³² Myers, 'The study of primitive music', pp. 121, 140.

³³ See Zon, *Ethnomusicology and the Representation of Non-Western Music*, Introduction and Ch. 13.

³⁴ Most of the important texts are collected in Tagore, *Hindu music from various authors*, 125-160.

³⁵ See Bor, 'The Rise of Ethnomusicology', and Harold S. Powers, 'Indian music and the English language: A review essay', *Ethnomusicology* 9/1 (1965): 1-12.

primarily at a home audience of music lovers, explicitly staking the claim that this music deserved more attention from the English mainstream.³⁶ This work is worth considering here in its own right, and also in relation to contemporaneous works by a couple of female authors, Maud Mann and Alice Coomaraswamy. Each of these works is significant for the light it sheds on engagement with the colonial and oriental Other that was India.³⁷

A.H. Fox Strangways (1859–1948) was a music critic for *The Times* and *The Observer* newspapers, and a prominent member of the Folk-Song Society, which he joined in 1908. As a critic, he was a vociferous champion of his friend Vaughan Williams and other nationalist composers. *The Music of Hindostan*, published in 1914 and based on a period of field work in India over the winter of 1910–11, is probably the best-known contribution to comparative musicology by an Englishman between Ellis’s 1885 essay and the Second World War. It was based on rather a different approach to Myers’s however, one that is interpretative rather than analytical: it is clearly the work of a music critic rather than a scientist.³⁸

In *The Music of Hindostan* we can observe many familiar concerns, but these surface in unusual ways to produce a curious hybrid of a book. On the one hand Fox Strangways, the lover of music and classical literature, had gone in search of the ancient Sanskrit tradition which English scholars since William Jones had admired and promoted. On the other, his interest in folk music led him to spend time investigating an astonishing variety of music and musicians. He tried manfully to link the musical practice he observed to the theoretical speculation he had read, and if the disjuncture between the two is sometimes jarring, the book remains a great achievement.

Fox Strangways’s reports of music he had actually heard in a variety of situations, contained in the first two chapters of the book, reflect a concern with real people and their cultural practices. He seems to accept implicitly the prevailing evolutionary theory as well as the idea that the folk retain the most ancient cultural

³⁶ Fox Strangways, *The music of Hindostan*.

³⁷ This is an important period for writing on the topic, with several other important works, but unfortunately there is no space here to cover the full range. See Powers, ‘Indian music and the English language’, Bor, ‘The Rise of Ethnomusicology’, and Farrell, *Indian music and the West*, for more extensive discussions of the literature.

³⁸ Martin Clayton, ‘A.H. Fox Strangways and “The Music of Hindostan”: Revisiting Historical Field Recordings’, *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 124/1 (1999): 86–118.

forms of a race: the prominence he consequently gives to vernacular practice is unique, and there is no parallel in the work of Indian reformers of the period, who never accepted the notion that their most ancient music might have been preserved by the lower classes.

As noted above there are several other important English-language writers on the subject at this time, including Clements and Deval to whom we will return in the next section. For the purposes of this section two lesser-known contemporaries are of greater interest, because they were both female and practical students of Indian music: they are Maud Mann and Alice Coomaraswamy (aka Ratan Devi).³⁹ Mann (nee McCarthy, 1882-1967) was an Irish born violinist who had made an impression on the London concert stage in the 1900s (several concerts of 1905 and 1906 were reviewed very favourably in the *Musical Times*). She spent time in India, apparently adapting her musical talent to become an adept performer of Indian music: judging by the pages of the Calcutta journal the *Modern Review*, in whose pages she featured she was also an outspoken feminist (as well as an indifferent poet).⁴⁰ What little we know of her experience of Indian music comes from these pages, and from an address to the Musical Association, published in the Proceedings in 1912 under the title 'Some Indian conceptions of music'. It is clear from this address that Mann had developed a considerable knowledge of, and a deep attachment to Indian music, and the words on the printed page eloquently communicate her passion. She charted rhetorical territory at that time unheard of, suggesting to her audience that Western music had much to learn from Indian, and that the principles of *raga* and *tala* could exert an 'inspiring influence'.⁴¹ Her appeal to a common cultural heritage shared by Europe and India might appear unremarkable to us in the context of nineteenth-century philology, but was surely not what early twentieth century musicians were accustomed to hearing, and one can only guess at their reaction to her analysis of the Adagio of Beethoven's Pianoforte and Violin Sonata, Op. 30, No. 1, describing its temporal structure as identical to that of the south Indian metre *adi tala* (pp. 52-3). Even Fox Strangways, an enthusiast for comparison between Indian and Western music, would not go so far.

³⁹ For the sake of convenience I will refer to her as 'Mann' for the remainder of this article.

⁴⁰ See *Modern Review*, 1911 issues.

⁴¹ Mann, 'Some Indian conceptions of music', p.49. *Raga* is the melodic basis of Indian classical music, *tala* the metrical framework.

Towards the end of her address she made the suggestion that some ragas could be effectively harmonised without using any notes foreign to the mode, an idea which Head believed to be an influence on Holst's composition (see above). In short, while there is much that is conventional in Mann's approach, there is also a lot that would have been extremely challenging at the time: it seems that Holst's biographers have been uncomfortable, to say the least, with any suggestion that he might have learned from Indian music, and as Frogley notes, historians of British music in this period have neglected the importance of Empire to an astonishing degree.⁴² Mann may have been a significant influence on Holst, and was surely so on the English composer John Foulds (1880-1939), who married Mann and in 1935 moved to India to work for All-India Radio.⁴³

Mann was certainly a singular character, but was not unique in all respects: a female contemporary who also made a significant contribution to the study of Indian music was Alice Coomaraswamy (nee Richardson), who published a book *Thirty songs from the Punjab and Kashmir* in 1913 with her husband the art historian Ananda Coomaraswamy, which features a glowing account of her singing by the poet Rabindranath Tagore.⁴⁴ Her contribution to the book, an article in the *Modern Review*, and at least one music tour were carried out under the name Ratan Devi.⁴⁵ *Thirty Songs* is unusual for the time in its documentation of a period of apprenticeship undertaken between an English musician and an Indian teacher, in this case a singer named Abdul Rahim.⁴⁶

⁴² Frogley, 'Rewriting the renaissance'.

⁴³ It is perhaps unsurprising that Mann's one mention in Grove Online is as Foulds's wife: see Malcolm Macdonald, 'Foulds, John', in Laura Macy, ed., *Grove Online* (accessed 31 Jan 2006). See also Richards, *Imperialism and Music*, pp.159-160.

⁴⁴ *Thirty Songs from the Panjab and Kashmir: Recorded by Ratan Devi with Introduction and Translations by Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and a Foreword by Rabindranath Tagore* (London: The Authors, 1913).

⁴⁵ See Karla J. Vecchia, 'Stella Bloch Papers Relating to Ananda K. Coomaraswamy' (url: <http://libweb.princeton.edu/libraries/firestone/rbcs/aids/bloch/>, accessed 31 Jan 2006). Head incorrectly identified Devi as Coomaraswamy's first wife Ethel rather than his second wife Alice (Head, 'Holst and India (III)', p.38). R. D. [Ratan Devi], 'Some impressions of Indian music', *Modern Review* (Oct 1911): 341-4.

⁴⁶ Devi, *Thirty Songs*, p.3.

It is difficult to come to any firm conclusions when we know so little about any of the Europeans involved in Indian music in this period, and we know particularly little about these two women. We can perhaps speculate, nonetheless, that as women a different set of possibilities was available to them: although neither published a book under her own name, neither was taken seriously by the English musical establishment, and neither made a huge impact on Indian music history, they were able to engage in the practice of Indian music, themselves voicing a foreign music – in a way one might imagine Fox Strangways, for all his empathy, would have felt unbecoming. Perhaps we can see in McCarthy/Mann and Richardson/Coomaraswamy/Devi an instance of Lewis's suggestion that 'women's differential, gendered access to the positionalities of imperial discourse produced a gaze on the Orient and the Orientalized other that registered difference less pejoratively and less absolutely than was implied by Said's original formulation'.⁴⁷ It is worth noting in this regard that women had for more than a century played an important part in the encounter between Indian and Western musics, from the collections of Hindustani Aairs to Amy Woodforde-Finden is setting of Laurence Hope (Adele Florence Cory)'s 'Kashmiri song'.⁴⁸ If nothing else, these women are significant figures who, like so much in this story, have been marginalised by history.

3. The Indian musical renaissance, colonialism, and the nationalist project

Introduction: Renaissance and national consciousness

The four decades leading up to the Great War saw equally important developments in Indian musical culture, that are now described using exactly the same term as in England – 'musical renaissance'. The story is told thus by B.V. Keskar:

efforts were being made to recognise [music] as an essential part of our national culture and to revive its past glory. Music had, till then, fallen into the hands of an unimaginative and illiterate class of artistes

⁴⁷ Reina Lewis, *Gendering Orientalism : race, femininity, and representation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.4. It is clear, however, that the representation of Indian music in English sources is anything but straightforwardly perjorative: see Zon, *Ethnomusicology and the Representation of Non-Western Music*.

⁴⁸ See Farrell, *Indian music and the West*, pp.105-110.

and had become a matter of privilege and enjoyment for the limited number of rich people. The spirit of revival and reform sought to change this state of affairs.⁴⁹

The wider Indian renaissance to which Keskar refers is generally seen as both a reaction to British rule and a movement influenced by Western ideas. It is dependent on the linking of Indian nationalism with a vision of 'past glory', and – in the case of music – is premised on the need for educated Hindu reformers to take control of the art from illiterate (and mostly Muslim) performers, turning a decadent and shameful music culture into a respectable one of which the Indian elite could be proud. It was important in this context that music was seen as an art virtually untouched by the British, so that it could act as a symbol of Indian cultural identity. According to the Indian critic P. L. Deshpande, in the second half of the nineteenth century,

British ideas of etiquette and culture held sway and fluency in English became a social asset. Our literature and theatre were greatly influenced by English literature... The only art which remained completely untouched by the cataclysmic changes all around us was our music... It was in a sense a great blessing to our music that the practitioners of this art, by and large, did not come under the influence of English. There might have been an excessive clinging to traditional values... but it was this fanaticism which helped our musicians to retain the purity of their music.⁵⁰

Profound changes in Indian musical culture were inevitable after the rebellion of 1857, as changes in colonial administration led to a reduction in court patronage and forced many musicians to look for opportunities in the cities, particularly the urban centres of Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.⁵¹ Musicians faced difficulties however: there was no established culture of concert performance, and many urban Indians knew nothing of the court music and shunned its practitioners because of their perceived associations with 'dancing girls' and a decadent court culture. If the tradition were not to die away, the

⁴⁹ In S.N. Ratanjankar, *Pandit Bhatkhande* (New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1967), pp. v-vi.

⁵⁰ In B.R. Deodhar, *Pillars of Hindustani music*, translated by Ram Deshmukh (Bombay: Popular Prakashan: 1993), p.xiii.

⁵¹ See Harold S. Powers, 'Classical music, cultural roots, and colonial rule: An Indic musicologist looks at the Muslim world', *Asian Music* 12/1 (1980): 5-29, p.23. In this chapter I use the colonial names for the cities Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (Kolkata), Madras (Chennai) and Poona (Pune).

argument went, musicians needed a new image as the carriers of India's ancient heritage, a modern concert culture, and widespread musical education to foster a new class of listeners.

In retrospect the nineteenth century was a time of extraordinary vitality in Indian art music, however, in which most of the current north Indian *gharanas* (musical 'households') were formed, in which the modern *khyal* genre developed and instruments such as the sitar and tabla reached their modern form.⁵² These are not the achievements for which the reformers are acclaimed, however, having been achieved almost exclusively by the much-derided 'illiterate' Muslims and courtesans.

Publicists of the reform movement took inspiration from Western ideas, for instance in the introduction of notation as a tool in music education and standardization, and in the imitation – up to a point – of Western concert culture (in the first instance through a kind of 'variety show' format). In some cases this led to bitter argument, for instance about whether European standard notation or some form of *sargam* (letter) notation should be used – in contrast to many other former colonies, European notation lost the battle. Most paradoxically of all, the whole project depended on the idea that India's music was part of an ancient and glorious Hindu heritage, theorised millenia ago in Sanskrit treatises, but that this great culture had fallen into decay over centuries of Muslim rule. The argument, of course, is a Western orientalist one, espoused in the earliest English-language works on Indian music such as those of William Jones (1784) and Augustus Willard (1834).⁵³ Its enthusiastic adoption by Indian musical reformers led not only to a dramatic increase in popular appreciation of, and participation in, *raga* music, but also to the marginalization of many of the carriers of the tradition – the *tawaiifs* (courtesans) and the Ustads, Muslim court musicians who for the most part knew little of the Sanskrit theoretical tradition and cared less.

If the 1857 rebellion led indirectly to many of the changes now known as the Indian musical renaissance, musical reformers of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century lived and worked at a time of development of the nationalist and independence movements – the Indian National Congress from 1885, and the *Swadeshi* movement from 1905 onwards (in which British goods were boycotted and in some cases destroyed). Their work may not have always been intended as a political gesture, and the leading figures

⁵² See also Farrell, *Indian music and the West*, p.52.

⁵³ Jones, 'On the musical modes of the Hindoos' and N. Augustus Willard, 'A treatise on the music of Hindoostan' in Tagore, *Hindu music*, pp.1-122.

were not as violently anti-British as some now believe, but they did – at least from the early twentieth century – draw explicit connections between their work and aspects of the independence struggle,⁵⁴ and their names are now added to a roll call of revolutionary heroes. The rest of this section considers the work of some of the key reformers in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁵⁵

The Bengali musical renaissance and S.M. Tagore

The Indian musical renaissance developed in at least two distinct waves in this period: the first in Calcutta, Poona and Madras from the 1870s, the second spreading outwards from Maharashtra from the 1900s. The most significant developments of the earlier period were the founding of the Gayan Samaj in 1874 in Poona, with a branch in Madras, and the work of the Bengali aristocrat Sir Sourindro Mohan Tagore (1840-1914), who played an important role as patron and musicologist besides being a protagonist in the most important musical debate of the day, that over notation.

Tagore's book *Universal history of music*, originally published in 1896, draws explicitly on the European discourse of national music popularised in England by Carl Engel, and its organization seems to be influenced by Parry's *The evolution of the art of music*, first published three years earlier and almost certainly available to Tagore in Calcutta.⁵⁶ Tagore dedicates a large section to the development of Indian music through what he describes as the Hindu, Mohammedan and British periods, in clear imitation of the way Parry and his contemporaries periodized Western music history but using the current orientalist periodization of Indian history. The last few pages are dedicated to the ongoing renaissance, highlighting both Tagore's own projects such as the founding of the Bengal Music School and Bengal Academy of Music in 1881, and the work of Kshetra Mohan Goswami, the Bengali musicologist whose notation system Tagore had promoted.

Tagore, a staunch loyalist who dedicated his works to Queen Victoria and to local British officials, and praised the beneficial effects of British rule, had no time for Western notation, and – apparently in

⁵⁴ See for instance Bakhle, *Two men and music*, pp 164, 208.

⁵⁵ See Subramanian's chapter in this volume.

⁵⁶ Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *Universal history of music, compiled from divers sources* ([2d] ed.) (Varanasi: India Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1963).

accordance with the ideas of Engel and Parry – promoted what he described as a ‘national’ system, a form of letter notation.

In imitation of the original *Sanskrita* notation, we represent our modern music by means of one line, with the initials of the seven notes, and with certain signs suited for the purpose... If we were to adopt the English notation with some modifications for srutis, some more for murchchhanas and various other graces, and some more for a great variety of talas, &c., how cumbrous and complicated it would appear! Surely, it would be more difficult of comprehension than our national system.⁵⁷

The notation debate had raged for several years and occupied many Calcutta musicians, but Tagore’s chief antagonist was Charles Clarke, a schools inspector who in the course of a public argument in the 1870s published a diatribe against Goswami’s ‘national’ notation system in the *Calcutta Review*.⁵⁸ Referring to Tagore’s works employing Goswami’s system, which the author had sent him, he judged that these works ‘appear to be issued by one party, and I am told that this party is a Nationalist party who wish to have as little to do with European devices as possible’, referring to the Bengali letter system as the ‘Nationalist notation’: ‘I have in addition concluded that the Nationalist Bengali musical notation is valueless and ought to be superseded at once by the stave’.⁵⁹ Clarke may not have been aware of Tagore’s reputation as a fiercely loyal Bengali, but the mistake is understandable, as the latter consistently held to a finely balanced position in which he declared his loyalty to and appreciation for the British while using their own ideology to promote India’s ‘national’ music.

Tagore’s contemporaries at the Gayan Samaj in Poona and Madras, meanwhile, displayed a similar loyalism: the 1887 collection of documents relating to its first dozen years of existence are replete with references to correspondence with British officials and royalty – the Prince of Wales and Duke of Edinburgh became

⁵⁷ Sourindro Mohun Tagore *Six principal ragas : With a brief view of Hindu music* (Delhi: Neeraj Pub. House, 1982 [1877]): 41-42. *Sruti* (or *shruti*) refers to the ancient theory of pitch, according to which the octave was divided into 22 parts. ‘*Murchchhana*’ has various technical meanings, but seems here to refer to a type of ornament.

⁵⁸ Charles B. Clarke, ‘Bengali Music’. *Calcutta Review* 58(116) (1874): 243-266. Charles Capwell, ‘Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta as a Component in the History of a Secondary Urban Center’, *Asian Music* 18/1 (1986): 139-163 (see pp. 146ff).

⁵⁹ Clarke, ‘Bengali Music’, p. 244, p.265.

patrons in 1883 – which apparently sit comfortably with the organisation’s mission to make indigenous music respectable amongst the local elite by explicitly linking its practice with ancient Sanskrit knowledge.⁶⁰ Farrell refers to Tagore’s preface to his *Victoria-Gitika* as ‘a masterpiece of double-talk’, and the same could be said of much of his work.⁶¹ The phenomenon is not unknown to postcolonial scholarship: this generic statement of MacLeod and Codell could have been written for Tagore:

the assumptions which underlay what we call Orientalism – a broad set of attitudes towards race generating, and generated by, colonialism – could be inverted by the ‘Other’. The colonial discourse was available to all parties in the Empire and was often turned on its head. Sometimes tacit and hushed, these transpositions became more openly resistant as colonialism entered the twentieth century.⁶²

The story of this phase of the Indian musical renaissance, not least the notation debate, is fascinating as an example of both musical and political conflict.⁶³ Almost as interesting is the relative neglect of this period by Indian music historians, who for the most part prefer to focus on the later phases, especially the work of Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. To give one example amongst many, the eminent musicologist Thakur Jaidev Singh’s compendium *Indian Music* gives S.M. Tagore less than two pages of positive but fairly non-committal coverage (pp.316-7) in comparison with Bhatkhande’s 13-page hagiography (pp.335-48) and Paluskar’s 15 pages (pp.373-87).⁶⁴

The reason for this neglect is hardly a lack of material, as Tagore went to considerable expense in order to promote and popularize his work, including many publications. Bhatkhande and Paluskar established networks of music schools employing their own publications, whereas Tagore’s influence was more localised, and this is surely part of the reason. Another interpretation is that Tagore is a more ambiguous figure, and one who is harder to read and to come to terms with for some post-independence Indian

⁶⁰ *Hindu Music and the Gayan Samaj. Published in aid of the funds of The Madras Jubilee* (Bombay: Gayan Samaj, 1887).

⁶¹ Tagore, *Victoria-Gitika or Sanskrit Verses Celebrating the Deeds and the Virtues of Her Gracious Majesty The Queen Victoria*. (Calcutta: I.C. Bose, 1875). See Farrell, *Indian music and the West*, p. 65.

⁶² Dianne. S. MacLeod and Julie F. Codell, *Orientalism transposed : the impact of the colonies on British culture* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1998), p. 1

⁶³ The story is told most fully by Capwell, especially in ‘Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta’.

⁶⁴ Thakur Jaidev Singh, *Indian Music* (Calcutta: Sangeet Research Academy, 1995).

writers. What was he about? How could he promote Indian music while proclaiming his loyalty to the British? It is surely in part because he does not fit easily into post-1947 narratives of national resistance and independence that Tagore has been pushed gently to one side.

The second wave of renaissance: Bhatkhande, Paluskar and their contemporaries

In modern Indian accounts of the Indian musical renaissance two figures stand out, Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936), and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872-1931), who between them took the work of early institutions such as the Gayan Samaj to a new level.⁶⁵ Bhatkhande is renowned for numerous works of musicology; for text-books in music which are nowadays found in the homes of music students all over the country; for founding a number of music schools; for organizing national music conferences, which were forums for both music performance and discussion; and for the invention of a notation system which is now in very wide use. Paluskar's work overlapped in many respects: he founded a number of prestigious music schools; he also invented a notation system, although it has not proved as popular as that of Bhatkhande; he was well respected as a performer, and trained a number of outstanding musicians including his own son. Between them, Bhatkhande and Paluskar are regarded as the chief architects of this renaissance, at least by Maharashtrian historians: Bhatkhande is the scholar of the Indian music renaissance, Paluskar the modernizer who brought the music into the concert hall, and helped to strengthen the link between music and *bhakti* (devotional Hinduism).⁶⁶

Although, as Bakhle argues, Paluskar may have had the more profound influence on modern Indian music, Bhatkhande presents a more complex character, and his abrasive personality generated many stories of conflict with his contemporaries. One such is that of his relationship with Ernest Clements, a civil servant and musical enthusiast with whom he enjoyed a period of intense, if sometimes cooperative, rivalry.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ Bakhle, *Two men and music*, is the most extensive and critical study of their careers.

⁶⁶ This phase of musical revivalism was largely distinct from the earlier initiatives of Tagore and the Gayan Samaj, although Bhatkhande and S.M. Tagore met at least once, in Calcutta in 1907 (Ratanjankar, *Pandit Bhatkhande*, p.18). See also Powers, 'Classical music, cultural roots, and colonial rule', pp.21-27.

⁶⁷ The introduction to Clements's 1913 book *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music* (see below) ends with a fulsome acknowledgement of Bhatkhande's assistance

Clements, like many other Western students of Indian music in the twentieth century, was something of a purist. He bemoaned the influence of ‘European intonation’ and of the harmonium, and tried to build on the work of Krishna Ballal Deval in measuring intonation and reconciling modern practice with, so far as anyone understood it, ancient theory.⁶⁸ In his 1910 publication Deval took issue with Ellis, insisting that the latter’s scale measurements were wrong: his argument, and his interpretation of theory, attracted Clements’s interest.⁶⁹

Deval’s and Clements’s work was promoted through their Philharmonic Society of Western India, which by 1920 had developed an antagonistic relationship with Bhatkhande’s All-India Music Conferences:⁷⁰ according to Bhatkhande’s theory north Indian classical music was based on a gamut of 12 notes to the octave, whereas Clements’s and Deval’s understanding of the ancient *shruti* theory suggested there ought to be 22 microtones to the octave, an interpretation for which Deval claimed the support of the famous singer Abdul Karim (Ustad Abdul Karim Khan).⁷¹ Clements continued to pursue ancient ideas such as the 22-note octave with his ‘*shruti* harmonium’;⁷² Bhatkhande meanwhile, having sought correspondences between modern practice and ancient theory – as Nayar puts it, ‘to link the past and the present in an evolutionary

⁶⁸ Ernest Clements, *Introduction to the study of Indian music; an attempt to reconcile modern Hindustani music with ancient musical theory and to propound an accurate and comprehensive method of treatment of the subject of Indian musical intonation*. (London, New York [etc.]: Longmans Green, 1913), p. xiii.

⁶⁹ K.B. Deval, *The Hindu musical scale and the twenty-two shrutees*. (Poona: Krishnaji Ballal Deval, 1910): 38-9. See also Deval, *Music East and West compared* (Poona: K. B. Deval, 1908).

⁷⁰ See Ernest S. Clements and V. Natrajan, *The ragas of Tanjore, songs and hymns from the repertoire of the Karnatic singer, Natrajan, arranged in staff notation*. (London: The Dharwar Gayan Samaj, 1920): 5-6.

⁷¹ Deval, *The Hindu musical scale*, p.41 (using the spelling ‘Kareem’). See also Michael Kinnear, *Sangeet Ratna – The Jewel of Music. A bio-discography of Khan Sabib Abdul Karim Khan* (Victoria, Australia: Michael Kinnear, 2003), pp.57ff; and Bakhle, *Two men and music*, on Abdul Karim’s collaboration with Deval and his disagreements with Bhatkhande (p.235-241).

⁷² Farrell, *Indian music and the West*, pp. 54ff.

process' – came to the conclusion (like Willard before him) that it would be more useful to theorize the actual state of contemporary music.⁷³

Once again, notation acted as a lightning rod for disagreement. Bhatkhande preferred a system of letter notation sharing many features with Goswami's earlier Bengali system, as did Paluskar (although there are significant differences between the systems); Clements proposed an 'Indian staff notation', standard Western notation modified by the addition of special accidental signs for the *shrutis*. His argument was substantially different from Clarke's in the earlier dispute with Tagore: whereas Clarke's distaste for Bengali letter notation reads like a thinly-disguised attack on the music itself, Clements was an enthusiastic supporter of the music who believed that this particular European technology could be beneficial. No matter: Clements lost the battle and the Indian letter notations are widely used to this day. B.R. Deodhar's memoirs give a particular view of this battle:

[T]here was an English Collector called Clement [sic] at Ahmedabad who used to preside over the Ahmedabad Philharmonic Society. The society was to organize a music conference at Ahmedabad in order, amongst other things, to pass a resolution to adopt the Western staff notation in Indian music. Pandit Bhatkhande had hardly the backing of any powerful organization(s) behind him but he was completely against letting anyone implant staff notation into our music by force... Panditji told me about the meddlesome Clement Saab's nefarious plans and expressed hope that I, and other disciples of Pandit Vishnu Digambar [Paluskar], would write to our guru and draw his attention to the development. 'A highly placed British officer with all the power of the British Raj behind him can do practically anything he wants,' Panditji said. 'The only person in our country who is capable of foiling Clement's aims is Pandit Vishnu Digambar!'⁷⁴

We cannot know how accurately this reflects Bhatkhande's view, how much Deodhar's elaboration, but in any case the emotive tone of the recollection is instructive: by the 1950s at least (when this passage was written), Clements could be described as a 'meddlesome' British Sahib with 'nefarious' aims. (Although the story is no doubt elaborated, the political context is not all later invention: the All-India Music Conferences

⁷³ Sobhana Nayar, *Bhatkhande's contribution to music : a historical perspective*. (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1989), p. xii.

⁷⁴ Deodhar, *Pillars of Hindustani music*, p. 47.

were greatly influenced by the Indian National Congress, for instance.⁷⁵) Right or wrong – and his work is not accepted uncritically by either practising musicians or musicologists – Bhatkhande's view on notation was the right message for the time. In retrospect it is clear that the 1900s, when Bhatkhande made his famous field research trips and the Swadeshi movement encouraged boycotts of British goods, was not the time to be encouraging Indian musicians to learn to use staff notation. Bhatkhande was surely not as anti-British as Deodhar implies: he seems to have made a distinction between the concept of notation and the details of the system, acknowledging the lead of the West in the former aspect and fighting against Western influence in the latter. Thus, he fought Clements's ideas and also argued that Paluskar's version of letter notation included too many European-derived elements, while acknowledging that 'a notation system is a must and music would be easily understood if there could be a uniform system of notation throughout the country... The Western countries have realised this fact and have accepted a uniform notation system which has benefited all alike'.⁷⁶ Bhatkhande, as he hints here, also hoped that his notation system would facilitate a fusion of Hindustani and Carnatic systems into a single national music, an aim in which he was to be disappointed.

While this musical renaissance is commonly glossed as the cultural wing of the nationalist movement, it is equally commonly often in terms of a need to wrest classical music away from those who dominated performance at the time, namely hereditary Muslim musician families and courtesans (*tawaifs*). The courtesans were a moral embarrassment, while the Ustads (the Muslim masters) were vilified for being illiterate, ignorant and out of touch. Bhatkhande criticised the Ustads for repeating myths and supernatural stories, and complained of their ignorance of Sanskrit and thus of the ancient theory; he also banned *tawaifs* from attending the All-India Music Conferences.⁷⁷ While these masters had ultimately to be co-opted into the project, the *tawaifs* continued to be excluded, just as in the south the *devadasis* (female dancers) were systematically disenfranchised.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Subramanian, 'The reinvention of a tradition', p.132. Bakhle, *Two men and music*, pp. 180 ff.

⁷⁶ Translated by Nayar, *Bhatkhande's contribution to music*, p.287.

⁷⁷ See Bakhle, *Two men and music*; Ratanjankar, *Pandit Bhatkhande*, p.52-55. Subramanian, 'The reinvention of a tradition', p.73.

⁷⁸ Subramanian, 'The reinvention of a tradition', p.147-148.

The theme of India's musical decadence was familiar by this time, of course: India's cultural golden age lay several centuries in the past and was embodied in Sanskrit literature of various kinds, while later Muslim rule was essentially decadent. In other words, in the service of a nationalist project of cultural renaissance, Bhatkhande drew implicitly on the assumptions of European orientalist thought. Prakash has suggested that 'While agreeing to the notion of an India essentialized in relation to Europe, the nationalists transformed the object of knowledge – India – from passive to active, from inert to sovereign, capable of relating to History and Reason.'⁷⁹ This description applies equally well to Bhatkhande and his colleagues. As King argues, 'Orientalist discourses soon became appropriated by Indian intellectuals in the nineteenth century and applied in such a way as to undercut the colonialist agenda': as with religious and social reformers, musical reform movements too appropriated orientalist discourses.⁸⁰

As for specifically musicological influence, we have little direct evidence as to which English sources Bhatkhande had read, but he was in a position to make use of library facilities in Bombay and elsewhere, and according to Nayar made the most of the opportunity to read works of European musicology.⁸¹

Nayar's gloss on this experience stands out in the context of her enthusiastic repetition of anti-colonial rhetoric:

He was much impressed by their way of dealing with music as a subject of analysis and study. The broad-mindedness in accepting new ideas, capacity for collecting evidence and using it as rational argument for establishing a theory displayed in these books influenced him greatly.⁸²

Nayar suggests that it was this influence which encouraged Bhatkhande to try to establish the link between ancient and modern music, tracing musical evolution; in other words, the initial assumptions of the Indian

⁷⁹ Gyan Prakash, 'Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32/2 (1990): 383-408 (see p.388).

⁸⁰ Richard King, *Orientalism and religion. postcolonial theory, India and 'the mystic East'* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999): 86.

⁸¹ Nayar, *Bhatkhande's contribution to music*, p 65.

⁸² Nayar, *Bhatkhande's contribution to music*, p 65.

musical reformer Bhatkhande were not vastly different from those of his English contemporaries, because in reality they were all exposed to similar ranges of ideas.⁸³

Bhatkhande's and Paluskar's success in wresting the tradition away from the Ustads and *tawaifs* was at best partial, as many of the Ustads were able to respond to the new environment, and some courtesans were able to redefine themselves as 'respectable' artists. As Bakhle argues, what Bhatkhande and Paluskar did achieve however was to change the terms on which musical discourse was conducted in India, concluding the pioneering efforts of Tagore and of the Gayan Samaj. Far from shaking off the burden of orientalism, their own project was profoundly shaped by the orientalist tradition and by the colonial reality. They changed the way music was spoken of and the ways in which it was listened to, educated a new class of urban listener, and catalysed a change in the music's social position and symbolic power.

As far as changes in practice are concerned, however, the period still belongs to the Ustads, Abdul Karim prominent amongst them, who were in the process of significantly changing the dominant vocal style of north Indian art music, *khyal*. Abdul Karim's nephew Abdul Wahid was perhaps the key figure in this process.⁸⁴ A little later Abdul Karim's daughter Hirabai Barodekar, another fine musician, would have an equally important role in the transformation of courtesans into 'respectable' female performers, an indirect result of the reformers' efforts.⁸⁵ It would be wrong to say that Abdul Karim and Hirabai have been completely marginalized by history, but this is more due to their own efforts in adapting to change than to any accommodation on the reformers' part – and they are remembered as great musicians, not as great reformers. The struggle between those who would have excluded Muslims from the new, respectable Indian music and the Ustads and courtesans who in many cases fought to retain a place in the new order,

⁸³ The only work referred to is 'History of Music written by Dr. Burn' (p. 65), possibly a reference to Burney's *General history of music*. Bakhle argues that India's royal courts were by the 1900s highly bureaucratized under the influence of the British, and that much of the impetus for the rationalization and modernization of Indian music came from *within* such courts (such as Baroda).

⁸⁴ On the development the modern slow style of khyal singing, see Martin Clayton, *Time in Indian music* (Oxford: Clarendon, 2000), p. 51.

⁸⁵ Bakhle, *Two men and music*.

has helped to shape the complex and contradictory social and ideological complex that Indian music exhibits today.

4. Conclusions

In the forty years before the first world war, simultaneously in England and India, a range of musicians, critics and theorists grappled with issues of identity, nation and otherness. Some of their efforts are now celebrated, others forgotten. Inevitably though, all had to contend with a similar range of ideas and – albeit seen from different ends – the same colonial system. Concepts of nation, race, folk and evolutionary narrative shared the ideological stage with orientalist constructions of India and the belief that Europe was the home of the modern and the scientifically advanced: what thinkers of the period made of these ideas, though, varied according to their own positions. Parry and his followers could place Western art music comfortably at the pinnacle of a historical scheme apparently validated by recent evolutionary theory, and Sharp could lead the way back to the ‘folk’ in order to revitalize a musical culture over-dependent on Germany; Holst, in the midst of this, found inspiration in Indian philosophy, albeit filtered through layers of romantic orientalist representation. Myers tried to employ experimental methods to test evolutionary theory on actual ‘primitive’ music, with contradictory results; Fox Strangways brought the whole gamut of current ideas, from national music to folk song to orientalist philology to bear on Indian music, while musicians such as Ratan Devi and Maud Mann engaged directly and creatively with the music of India but made little impression on the mainstream of English musical culture.

In India, S.M. Tagore had applied ideas very similar to Parry’s and come up with something very different – an Indo-centric world history of music – as he tried to balance his political loyalism with his cultural nationalism; the contemporary Gayan Samaj was also conceived within an unambiguously loyalist frame of reference. A new wave of reform then took hold in the early twentieth century, its key figures often in fierce dispute with one another. Deval responded to Ellis’ heretical thesis by trying to prove the basis of modern Indian practice in the ancient *shruti* system.; Clements picked up on Deval’s work and reinvoked the spectre of Western notation that Tagore had tried to kill off. Bhatkhande initially shared the fascination of Deval and Clements with ancient theory: following an established orientalist line he looked to the authority of Sanskrit theory and denigrated the knowledge of contemporary performers, especially Muslims and courtesans. Abdul Karim, unmistakably part of the ‘decadent’ old order for Bhatkhande, not

surprisingly became his bitter opponent, but the former's collaboration with Deval shows that he was by no means simply an opponent of the project of reform and rationalisation. Finally there was Paluskar, who much more than Bhatkhande sought to sacralize Indian music performance and whose success in this respect, however partial, played an important role in the development of Indian musical performance in the twentieth century. Like it or not, all of these figures had to work within the context established by colonialism and orientalist scholarship, so it is hardly surprising that their traces can be found everywhere – they are much harder to excise than the traces of the colonial other's influence on Western music and musical thought.

It is easy enough to find contrasts, too, between the two countries: India's musical renaissance was linked, at least in the twentieth century, to movements of nationalist anti-colonial resistance, whereas England's relationship with Germany was a rivalry of near equals. Indian reformers drew inspiration from a mythical golden age and a real, if little understood, body of theoretical knowledge, while English reformers turned their attention much more to their own 'folk' (interest in folk music is conspicuously absent from the Indian musical renaissance). These and other differences cannot hide the fact, however, that English and Indian renaissance movements drew on many of the same ideas, or that there was significant overlap and mutual influence between the two.

Paradoxically, another process common to both English and Indian realities is the playing down of that mutual influence. The whole English nationalist movement might have been completely insulated from the colonial reality, to read most reports – both contemporary and more recent – and any possibility that English music might have been influenced by that of her colonial subjects was for the most part simply not entertained, although traces can perhaps nonetheless be discerned in the music. The biographical treatment of Holst's life and the bald denials that he could have heard, let alone been influenced by Indian *music*, rather than philosophy, is an example of this failure to come to terms with the effects of colonialism on English culture. In India meanwhile, the fascinating but contradictory figure of Tagore is ignored in favour of fiercely anti-British caricatures of Bhatkhande and Paluskar, whose agendas owed so much to both Western musicology and orientalist scholarship.

A central part of this process has been a process of exclusion and marginalisation: of Mann and Devi, female musicians who saw no insurmountable barrier between east and west; of Myers and the threat of testing evolutionist rhetoric with empirical and ethnographic study; and of India's Muslim and courtesan

musicians, let alone its performers of Western instruments and repertoires, all of them inconvenient for a predominantly Hindu movement of nationalist reform. When we impose master narratives on complex realities, those who fail to fit in are inevitably marginalized.

It would perhaps defeat the object of a movement of national renaissance if one were to simultaneously acknowledge how much had been learned from others (unless of course, like the English folk or India's ancient theorists, those others could be reimagined as ancestors). Nonetheless, it does present a challenge to music historians, who must consider not only the rhetoric of an age but also the realities hidden by that rhetoric, and the latter has not yet been adequately considered in studies of either English or Indian musical 'renaissance'. In order to do so it will surely be necessary to take a much more relational view of music history, and to acknowledge and reverse many of rhetorical exclusions which have distorted our interpretations to date.