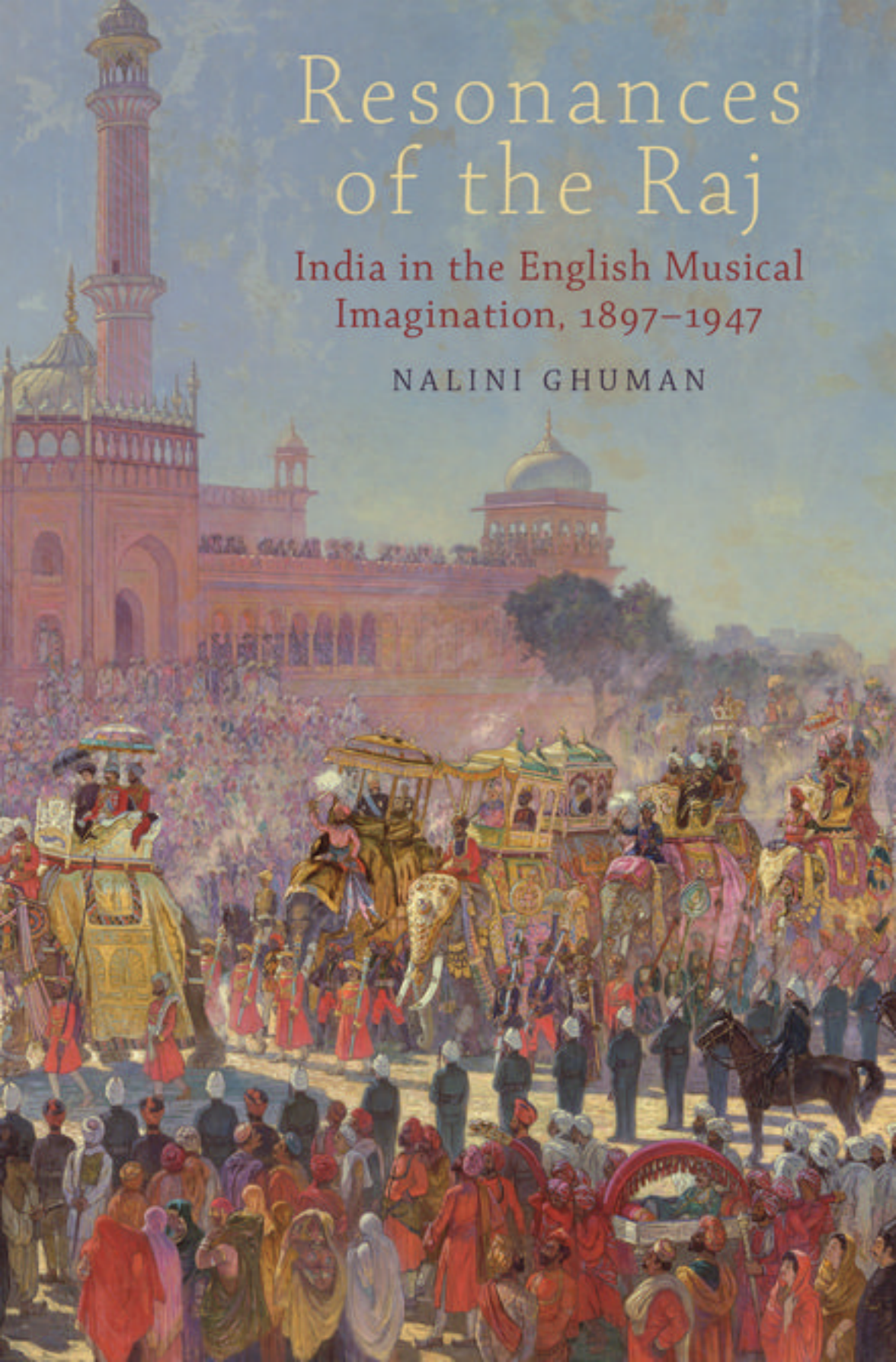


# Resonances of the Raj

India in the English Musical  
Imagination, 1897–1947

NALINI GHUMAN



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1897–1947*



Nalini Ghuman

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India has reached the English imagination by different routes. . . . With the twentieth century begins a new interpretation. It comes from many sources, which have only this in common: they are unofficial. A new conception of the country has come to us in consequence. She may be puzzling, but we cannot now ignore her. Her culture, or rather cultures, have been re-interpreted.

—E. M. Forster, ‘The Indian Boom’ (1915)

The Eastern point of view is unmistakably getting a hold of them. This could be shown by an analysis of contemporary western compositions—a matter too technical to enter into here, but which deserves the attention of all who would hear the music of West and East, harmony and melody, combined in sweet concord.

—Maud MacCarthy, ‘Is Indian Music Appreciated in the West?’ (1912)

By the late nineteenth century . . . India had a massive influence on British life, in commerce and trade, industry and politics, ideology and war, culture and the life of imagination.

—Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (1994)

Musical meaning is vague, mutable. . . . Still, even if history can never tell us exactly what music means, music can tell us something about history.

—Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise* (2007)



# CONTENTS

|   |                |
|---|----------------|
| <i>List of Figures</i>  | <i>ix</i>      |
| <i>Acknowledgements</i>   | <i>xiii</i>    |
| <i>Note on Spelling and Pronunciation</i>   | <i>xvii</i>    |
| <i>About the Companion Website</i>  | <i>xix</i>     |
| <br>Introduction  | <br><i>1</i>   |
| <br>1. A Subtle and Exquisite Spirit: Maud MacCarthy and Indian Music in Britain      | <br><i>11</i>  |
| True Practice   | <i>11</i>      |
| Real Proof  | <i>20</i>      |
| Fusty Bookology   | <i>29</i>      |
| An Equal Music  | <i>35</i>      |
| <br>2. Elephants and Mughals, Contraltos and G-Strings: How Elgar Got His Englishness | <br><i>53</i>  |
| Vandalism Rectified (The Delhi <i>Darbār</i> )  | <i>53</i>      |
| Masking the <i>Darbār</i>   | <i>57</i>      |
| The Composer's Burden   | <i>60</i>      |
| East is East and West is West   | <i>62</i>      |
| The Jewel in <i>The Crown of India</i>  | <i>70</i>      |
| East is West (or, Angular Saxon)  | <i>76</i>      |
| Can the Mughals March?  | <i>82</i>      |
| Elgar the Barbarian   | <i>89</i>      |
| <br>3. From India to the Planet Mars: Gustav Holst                                    | <br><i>105</i> |
| Why not Learn Sanskrit?   | <i>105</i>     |
| As if Improvising   | <i>108</i>     |
| A Little More Context   | <i>111</i>     |
| Between Life and Death  | <i>116</i>     |
| A Complicated Rhythmical Figure   | <i>123</i>     |
| Archaic Avant-Garde   | <i>130</i>     |
| But a Passing Phase   | <i>137</i>     |
| From India to the Planet Mars   | <i>139</i>     |

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| To Another World  | 143 |
| Figure of Our Time  | 151 |
| 4. Songs that Moved the World: Amy Woodforde-Finden's                     |     |
| <i>Indian Love Lyrics</i>   | 168 |
| Women Hold their Own  | 168 |
| A Taste for the Forbidden   | 169 |
| Orientalities   | 170 |
| Paradise on Earth   | 184 |
| Sincerity Rather than Poetry  | 189 |
| Myths and Manifestations  | 196 |
| Sapphic Stories   | 200 |
| A Map of Longings   | 204 |
| 5. Persian Composer-Pianist Baffles: Kaikhosru Sorabji                    |     |
| Marginal Exotic   | 217 |
| Himalayan Hermitage   | 220 |
| Colour Matters  | 223 |
| Modernist   | 226 |
| Schéhérazade-Kaikhosru  | 229 |
| Rāga, Jangal, and Chakra  | 234 |
| Melancholy Moth   | 245 |
| 6. Modes, Mantras, and <i>Gandharvas</i> : John Foulds's Passage to India |     |
| No Little Englander   | 261 |
| Oh! The Poor Conductor!   | 271 |
| Orpheus Abroad: A Controversial Subject                                   | 282 |
| The Travesty of Translation   | 287 |
| A Sordid Story  | 294 |
| Voices from the Beyond  | 295 |
| Breathtaking and New  | 299 |
| <i>Music Credits</i>  | 315 |
| <i>Selected Bibliography</i>  | 317 |
| <i>Index</i>  | 325 |

## LIST OF FIGURES

- 1.1 ‘Teaching *Tāla*’: Maud MacCarthy learning in Adyar with Ramanujāchārya, c.1907 15
- 1.2 Urdu song, *Man lāg rayho, man*: a rare example of notation from MacCarthy’s field notes 16
- 1.3a Idioms of *Rāga Kedar* in MacCarthy’s hand, c.1908 17
- 1.3b Text of Urdu *Khyāl* by Bahadur Shah Zafar, *Sakal ban gagan pawan chalat purva* 18
- 1.4a Muttuswami Dikshitar’s *Kriti, Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati* in *Rāga Kalāvati*: MacCarthy’s rendition in John Foulds’s transcription 22
- 1.4b Muttuswami Dikshitar’s *Kriti, Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati*: The transliterated text and the ārohana of *Rāga Kalāvati* in MacCarthy’s hand 23
- 1.5 MacCarthy–Foulds’s interpretation of Tyāgarāja’s *Kriti, ‘Bhava Nutha’*, no. 1 of *Indian Suite, pallavi* 23
- 1.6 Patnam Subramanya Iyer, *Manasu karugademi*: MacCarthy’s typescript of the text as given to her by W. A. Krishnamachari in Chennai 24
- 1.7 Hazrat Inayat Khan’s Royal Musicians of Hindustan in London, c.1912 31
- 1.8 ‘Some Indian Conceptions of Music’: advertisement for one of MacCarthy’s series of lecture-recitals 33
- 1.9 Maud MacCarthy with her *saraswati vīna* from Thanjāvūr, c.1920 37
- 2.1 ‘The Durbar Ceremony, Delhi, 1912 [*sic*]’. Kinemacolor catalogue, 1912 54
- 2.2 ‘Vandalism! Or, the Partition of Bengal!’. *Hindi Punch*, July 1905 56
- 2.3 ‘Ave Imperator!’: concluding scene from Elgar’s *Crown of India* masque. India, from the steps of the throne, hails the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress 58
- 2.4 Lutchman Pershad carrying the Viceroy and Vicereine (Lord and Lady Curzon) into Delhi at the *Darbār* of 1903 87
- 2.5 ‘India’, part of ‘Greater Britain’. *The Sketch*, 21 April 1897 88
- 3.1 *Tambūrā* figurations in Holst’s ‘To the Dawn’ and ‘Hymn of the Travellers’: *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 3 128
- 3.2 Idiomatic harp figuration in Holst’s ‘To the Waters’: *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 3, no. 2 130

- 3.3 'A Celestial Musician: Holst and His *Planets*'. *Musician*, December 1920 140
- 4.1 Amy Woodforde-Finden's *Four Indian Love Lyrics*, cover illustration, Boosey & Co. Ltd. 171
- 4.2 Woodforde-Finden's 'Kashmiri Song', publisher's advertisement featuring first verse in full 174
- 4.3 'Shikara in Munshi Bagh, Srinagar' from the Brandreth Collection: *Views in Simla, Cashmere and the Punjaub* [sic]. Samuel Bourne, 1860s 186
- 4.4 'Shalimar Bagh, Kashmir': watercolour by Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart, c.1912 187
- 4.5 'The Garden of Kama', frontispiece of *The Garden of Kama and other Love Lyrics from India arranged in verse by Laurence Hope and illustrated by Byam Shaw* (London: William Heinemann, 1914) 189
- 4.6 'Delights of Summer in the Vale of Cashmere: Music for a Houseboat Party on Jhelum River'. Stereoscopic photograph, James Ricalton, c.1903 191
- 4.7a 'Farewell, Zahiruddin': Colour plate in *The Garden of Kama*. Byam Shaw 197
- 4.7b 'Less than the Dust': Louise Brooks in *Motion Picture Classic*, February 1928 198
- 4.8 Whittall's Anglo-Persian Orchestra, 1926 200
- 5.1 Kaikhosru Sorabji, c.1919 218
- 5.2 Shapurji Sorabji, the composer's father 220
- 5.3 Madeline Matilda Worthy, the composer's mother 221
- 5.4 Sorabji, *Arabesque*, opening phrase, manuscript 232
- 5.5 Sorabji, *Quasi Tambura*, Variation 53, Movement IX of *Opus Clavicembalisticum* 235
- 5.6 Sorabji, *Viśuddha*, Movement V of Symphony No. 1, *Tāntrik*, for Piano Alone (1938–9) 244
- 5.7 Kaikhosru Sorabji aged 96, a few months before his death in 1988 246
- 6.1 John Foulds, c.1915 263
- 6.2 MacCarthy and Foulds, during 'those wonderful...holy...days at Landsdowne Road' (c.1919) 264
- 6.3 Programme of music for Annie Besant's birthday celebration, 1915 265
- 6.4 *Gandharvas*. Detail from sculpture of Shiva and Pārvatī. Orissa, thirteenth century 266
- 6.5 'Mantra (of Bliss) and Vision of Celestial Avatars', no. 2 of *Three Mantras*, op. 61b: 'of Gandharvas'. John Foulds's autograph short score 267
- 6.6 *Karnātic mēlakartas* excerpted from the table published in Foulds's *Essays in the Modes* (Paris: Senart, 1928) 272
- 6.7 Ravana and the Rakshasas, detail of painting from the *Ramayana*, book 6: *Yuddhakanda*, 1652. Sahib Din of Udaipur 275

- 6.8 'Mantra (of Will) and Vision of Cosmic Avatars', no. 3 of *Three Mantras*, Foulds's autograph sketch of opening 277
- 6.9 John Foulds with the nucleus of his 'Indo-European Orchestra', Delhi, 1937 285
- 6.10 MacCarthy–Foulds, *Song of Ram Dass*, concluding bars in Foulds's autograph short score 286
- 6.11 *Kashmiri Wedding Tune*, Dilruba part in Foulds's hand 287
- 6.12 Foulds directing his ensemble at All India Radio, Delhi, c.1938 291
- 6.13 *Pahari Tune*, conductor's in-studio lead-sheet 292
- 6.14 Station distribution and transmission map, All India Radio. *The Indian Listener*, 22 December 1937 294
- 6.15a John Foulds, 'Lento quieto', mvt 3 of String Quartet no. 10, *Quartetto geniale*, op. 97: opening bars of the composer's autograph score 296
- 6.15b 'Lento quieto': Chorale, composer's autograph score 297
- 6.15c 'Lento quieto': Coda, composer's autograph score 298



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Oakland, California  
November, 2013



## NOTE ON SPELLING AND PRONUNCIATION

Jawāharlāl Nehru told an amusing story of a diplomat who, when introduced, kept on ‘ha-ha-ha-ing’ too long because he had not checked the pronunciation and did not know how many *a-a-a*’s there were! To accurately transliterate Indian languages, diacritics are added above and below most letters to indicate correct pronunciation. However, a script peppered pedantically with dots, dashes, and squiggles can be distracting so I have taken a pragmatic approach to their use. Where a sound is close to the English, or a word is likely to be pronounced correctly quite naturally by an English speaker I have left them out; where the sound can be approximated by the addition of a second letter, I have done so. Those guttural, retroflex, and aspirated consonants with no equivalent sound in English are often considered to be difficult to master without years of practice: thus the use of diacritics here would be pedantic and I have departed from the convention. I have not felt it necessary to use diacritics on the many words so familiar from the long interaction of colonialism that their regular use has made them almost part of the English language, although it is disappointing to note that *darbār* and *Panjāb* are still obstinately ‘doorbar’ and ‘Poonjab’, so I have added the macron to these words. Otherwise, I have indicated pronunciation usually on a word’s first appearances.

As Nehru’s anecdote suggests, it is the vowel which gives the stress pattern: the long *ā* is the ‘a’ of *car* while the short one is a neutral ‘a’; the long *ī* is the ‘ee’ in *see*, while the short one is the ‘i’ of *sit* (not the pronoun ‘I’). The third vowel, transliterated *u*, also has a short sound, as in *put*, and a long sound as in the French *boule*. In the case of my own family name, Ghuman, the ‘u’ is neither the English Gooman nor, worse, the ‘u’ of human: it is a simple, short ‘u’ (followed by the neutral ‘a’) as in *woman*.



## ABOUT THE COMPANION WEBSITE

**<http://www.oup.com/us/resonancesoftheraj>**

This book has a password-protected companion website which complements the text. Most of the halftone images found in these pages, along with other pertinent ones, are featured there in their original colours—such as the exquisite watercolour of the Shalimar gardens in chapter 4 and the vivid painting of Ravana and his demonic Rakshasas in chapter 6. You will find audio samples of the music discussed in this book organized by chapter, along with specially prepared clips which illustrate analytical points made. A complete bibliography of archival sources, music manuscripts and scores, books, articles, and non-print sources cited in the book is included there, along with recommended recordings and an iTunes playlist.

Readers may access the site using username Music1 and password Book5983. Please note that these are case-sensitive.



## Resonances of the Raj



# Introduction

As I was growing up in Wales in the 1980s, my father was pioneering research into the cross-cultural challenges faced by South Asians in the United Kingdom and other parts of the Western world. While his work focused on the acculturation of second-generation adolescents, it also highlighted the impact of South Asian communities on schools and modes of education more broadly in Britain. One outcome was the introduction of the first multicultural option in Honours degree education in the United Kingdom.<sup>1</sup> The interdependent histories and ‘conjoined’ geographies of India and Britain were thus shown to be connected by a grand, two-way, trunk road.<sup>2</sup> At that time, one of the LPs on our record shelf at home was a *West Meets East* album of 1966 by Yehudi Menuhin and Ravi Shankar—seemingly the perfect musical embodiment of Kipling’s ‘two strong men standing face to face, tho’ they come from the ends of the earth’ for whom ‘there is neither East nor West, Border, nor Breed, nor Birth’.<sup>3</sup> Yet, in the liner notes, I recall a telling remark by Menuhin to the effect that if there was one field in which India could learn from the West it was music, thereby invoking the colonial idea of evolutionary progress up the (musical) ladder.

Over the course of my research I have found that the one-way ‘East is East and West is West’ is only one part of the story, an offshoot of the orthodox narrative of the British *Raj* (that is, *rule*) and its impact on India. Like my father in his field, I have found that Indian–British encounters have ‘acculturated’ this island nation musically—and long before the West was popularly believed to have ‘discovered’ Indian classical music. The colonial archive reveals a rich and complex history of cross-cultural musical imagining and intermingling that is not only fascinating but which also provides a cultural explanation for ‘the great *sitar* explosion’ of the 1960s when everyone seemed suddenly to become interested in India and Indian music. It was not so much a postcolonial explosion as the continuation of an often overlooked tradition that had been enabled by the fact of colonialism itself.

Two decades ago, in his book *Culture and Imperialism*, Edward Said questioned why contemporary historians had not so readily read the development of English culture and history ‘in terms of the British reign in India’ since India had exerted a ‘massive influence’ on English culture and ‘the life of the imagination’.<sup>4</sup> The relation between culture and imperialism became the subject of strenuous (and ongoing) debate, with historians and cultural commentators taking the lead in investigations into how the British Raj—from the imposition of direct rule in 1858 to its last days in 1947—had a formative influence on English culture.<sup>5</sup> Yet, the ‘specific realm of the fine arts’

has, as cultural critic Kobena Mercer notes, been left 'relatively untouched' in scholarly studies of colonial encounters, particularly 'during the broad historical period of modernism between the 1890s and the 1980s'.<sup>6</sup> Indeed, a central part of British modernist culture, music, has rarely been discussed in the context of empire generally, and of the British Raj in particular, even though it did not remain impervious to colonial influences, and the musicians active at the time were far from indifferent towards colonial encounters.<sup>7</sup> As the art historian Tim Barringer has argued, 'the case for reintegrating music into a general, cultural history of empire is a pressing one'.<sup>8</sup> Moreover, although much recent scholarship has encouraged a new focus on how empire was constitutive to the making of Britain, there still remains, as the literary activist Susheila Nasta notes, 'a surprising *disconnect* in the availability of a body of historically contextualized and materially grounded interpretative work to shift the orthodoxies of the disciplinary changes such directives ideally imply'.<sup>9</sup> Even though two major projects led by Nasta culminated in a fine volume, *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858–1950*, which sought to fill the lacuna, British music of the period has yet to be considered in this context. In this book, I examine the musical ramifications of the 'intertwined and overlapping histories' of Britain and India in the last fifty years of the Raj, and trace the effects of the Indo-British colonial encounter on the English musical imagination.<sup>10</sup>

The familiar story of this period of British music history—the so-called English musical renaissance—encapsulates the notion that English composers dug deep into their cultural past and fashioned an authentic national style by way of indigenous folk song and a 'return' to (reinvented) Tudor traditions.<sup>11</sup> This view led to the misleading generalization that pre-1945 British music is either 'pomp and circumstance' or pastoral, and gave rise to such dismissive attitudes as those expressed in the subtitle of a well-known book, *A Study of Music in Decline*, and in Elisabeth Lutyens' infamous remark about 'the cow-pat school' of composing.<sup>12</sup> As a growing body of revisionist scholarship attests, such a traditional concept was only one aspect of 'Englishness' in music. This historical period is one of remarkable variety and continued significance in the development of the musical culture of Britain and the process of revising the myth of a homogeneous and home-grown renaissance is well under way.<sup>13</sup> An important aspect of the period has, however, too often been kept out of sight, from either incomprehension or shame: empire. As Alain Frogley, scholar of twentieth-century English music, puts it, 'empire has always been given short shrift, ignored altogether or strenuously played down by historians of the English Musical Renaissance'.<sup>14</sup> By the turn of the twentieth century, one of Britain's main preoccupations, no less among writers and composers than politicians, was with 'the great show of empire'. Scholars, travellers, and novelists brought the sounds and tales of distant lands ever-closer to home at a time when England, dubbed 'Das Land ohne Musik', was only beginning to 'discover' its native cultural mythology and folk traditions.<sup>15</sup> It is hardly surprising, then, that the colonies (from Ireland to India) became a source of musical inspiration. Yet, as the Imperial enterprise faltered, and the reality of its violence and exploitation was exposed by historians and cultural commentators, so it became critical fashion to assume that it had little effect on 'Englishness' and other vague conceptions in the arts. Consideration of imperialism is, as Frogley has

argued, a necessary part of challenging 'the prevailing orthodoxies of British music historiography' and is vital to a fuller understanding of the music, and consequently the cultural history, of this period.<sup>16</sup> Contrary to the traditional view of the 'solid and self-evident' nature of English music in the first half of the twentieth century, and even revisionist perspectives which have shored up European connections, the research I present demonstrates that the music, like the English language with its significant Anglo-Indian content, reveals what Salman Rushdie describes in another context as 'hybridity, impurity, intermingling, the transformation that comes of new and unexpected combinations of human beings, cultures, ideas'—interactions, specifically, with India and its peoples.<sup>17</sup>

But, as the fourth epigraph to this book by Alex Ross suggests, music is famously difficult to engage with in these critical ways.<sup>18</sup> Even Said found a safe place in music where he could escape from the cultural and political dynamics he exposed and examined so brilliantly in other cultural forms.<sup>19</sup> I draw on insights and approaches from a variety of disciplines to examine the music I have chosen with the result that this book is not only for the specialist in music (and, I hope, in history and cultural studies too) but also for the general reader in whose life music plays an important part. I have followed, for instance, the approach of such historians as Janaki Bakhle and Jeffrey Richards in their illuminations of the intersection of music with, respectively, nationalism in India and imperialism in Britain.<sup>20</sup> As the second epigraph to this book by Maud MacCarthy presciently suggests though, the acculturation of English music becomes, at times, most readily apparent through close listening or what she described as the 'technical matter' of analysis.<sup>21</sup> Since the music's influences were the result of a complex interplay of factors, such analysis is always grounded in the social, cultural, and political history of the period. In this regard, I draw on the work of a mighty handful of musicologists, among them Jann Pasler, James Parakilas, and Richard Taruskin, who have engaged with orientalism in music in particularly productive ways, connecting discernible signs of exoticism in French, Spanish, and Russian repertoires to vital cultural and political history, often with particular emphasis on the enmeshment of music in the dynamics of empire and nation.<sup>22</sup>

Despite its overwhelming influence, eloquently expressed by Said in the third epigraph to this book, the Raj remains one of the most elusive forces of the period.<sup>23</sup> For, although as Raymond Williams explained, empire in its political sense was 'the larger context within which every idea and image'—and, I hasten to add, sound—'was consciously and unconsciously affected', its effects on 'the English imagination have gone deeper than can easily be traced'.<sup>24</sup> The question is where to look, where to concentrate one's attention in order to distinguish its form and details. Since neither a comprehensive survey nor concentration on one figure will secure the proper perspective, I have chosen to focus on musical case studies involving six figures who, I believe, are both representative of the era and significant in their own right, and who, collectively, cross traditional boundaries of ethnicity and colour, class, gender, and musical type. Chronologically and in spirit their music and its changing reception sets the period's limits. I have chosen two composers whose well-known, but very different, music is often considered to be representative of the 'renaissance', Edward Elgar (1857–1934) and Gustav Holst (1874–1934); two whose little-known music

has largely been relegated to a marginal position in the musical life of this period, Kaikhosru Sorabji (1892–1988) and John Foulds (1880–1939); an immensely popular composer, Amy Woodforde-Finden (1860–1919), whose *Indian Love Lyrics* became ‘world famous’; and an ethnomusicologist and performer, Maud MacCarthy (1882–1967), whose work in interpreting Indian music in Britain, brought into focus here for the first time from a hitherto unconsidered private family archive, lies at the very heart of British–Indian musical interstices and provides a tangible geographical dimension to the transmission of musical ideas between India and Britain. Thus, while the chapters collectively tell the larger story of how the Indo-British colonial encounter permeated the English musical imagination, each one is designed to be free-standing.

The book is bounded on one end by an expression of the Raj at its height—the diamond jubilee of June 1897 that celebrated the sixtieth year of the reign of Victoria, Empress of India, and, on the other, by the Raj’s dissolution—the midnight hour in August 1947 when India awoke to freedom, to keep a tryst with destiny pledged many years before. Huge changes took place within Britain and the Raj during the period covered in this book. The spirit of optimism of the new century, when people were still willing, indeed eager, to escape into the realms of fantasy and imagination, is brilliantly captured in the *Indian Love Lyrics* of 1902 and Elgar’s *Crown of India* of 1912. For, although the twentieth century saw the advent of the recording industry in India, few recordings of Indian music found their way back to the metropole, and even fewer circulated outside the private collections of ethnomusicologists (then called comparative musicologists). A milestone in the British interpretation of Indian cultural forms comes in 1910; the ethos of the ‘new’ era which ensues is captured in the first epigraph to this book by E. M. Forster and defined musically by MacCarthy’s lecture recitals and Holst’s *Hymns from the Rig Veda*.<sup>25</sup>

The optimism of the 1900s and early 1910s was brought to an end by The Great War of 1914–18, in which some 1.5 million Indian troops had fought and died on Britain’s behalf, suffering some 114,000 casualties. In 1919, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, in which at least 1,000 people gathered on *Vaisakhi* Festival Day in the public gardens in Amritsar were killed or wounded, had a profound effect on Indian–British relations.<sup>26</sup> The Bengali polymath Rabindranath Tagore set the tone in artistic circles by renouncing his Nobel Prize for literature in protest. By the 1920s the winds of change were sweeping through almost every sphere of British life, particularly the lives of women (who cast off their corsets and cut their hair; they were smoking, dancing the Charleston, driving fast cars), and in the arts and culture. For the first time popular music and culture became accessible to the masses with the advent of the affordable gramophone (the wind-up Gilbert, at six guineas) and the founding of BBC Radio, both in 1922.<sup>27</sup> At the same time cinema-going took off with Hollywood turning out its greatest-ever number of films for the heyday of the movie palace. As economic and cultural uncertainty grew in the 1930s, and the ‘unhealthy’ political situation between India and Britain intensified, imperial power began to wane, and the definition of Englishness in culture began to narrow.

Sorabji, Foulds, and the indomitable MacCarthy all belong to this interwar era and in some ways represent it. Sorabji’s construction of a multifaceted identity,

elements of which are self-consciously figured in fleeting moments within complex piano works and whose modality is often defensive, reflects the human impact of an increasingly contested realm of the Raj itself in the interwar decades. Foulds's energetic embrace of Indian music in a uniquely profound way—through the first-hand practical knowledge of his second wife, MacCarthy—led to transcriptions and arrangements of Indian classical music, and a series of modernist works based on Indian sources, among them *Essays in the Modes* and *Three Mantras from Avatara*, which failed to resonate with the English National Vibration whose tone was set by the BBC.<sup>28</sup> Conversely, MacCarthy's work in the 1920s began to reach the popular imagination precisely through the advent of radio and film. As the cracks widened in the edifice of the British Raj, the tumult of anti-colonial nationalism is very much in evidence when we pick up MacCarthy and Foulds in India in the mid- and late 1930s.

Repositioning figures like MacCarthy, Woodforde-Finden, Foulds, and Sorabji within the last century's music history involves a reconsideration of that history. In this emergent historiography, the faces of more familiar composers like Holst and Elgar must also be redrawn, for their music remains largely absent from the cultural consciousness of many audiences of Western 'classical' music outside England.<sup>29</sup> Concomitantly, English music in the first half of the twentieth century, in spite of Britain's leading role in empire itself, has remained marginal to musicological discourse surrounding Western music's relation to its former colonial 'Others', and to critical studies of music in terms of race and empire.<sup>30</sup> If even those composers of the period like Elgar and Holst—whose music lies, for some, at the heart of English culture—have been deemed almost irrelevant to much of today's world and relegated to insular consumption, then it is because narrow and nostalgic notions of Englishness perpetuated in both academic and performance traditions have until recently kept the music at a safe distance from the defining dynamics of the period—race, class, nation, and empire—dynamics with which the music is inextricably linked and with which the world today reverberates.<sup>31</sup> Through the lens of decolonization, we can see—and hear—how all the music-making examined in this book participates in sometimes troubling, but always profoundly illuminating, ways in the conjoined histories of Britain and India during the period of British rule.

There is a growing interest in the music discussed in these pages: the brilliance of Foulds's work is finally beginning to be recognized; performances emphasizing the Indian context of Holst's music have attracted new listeners on at least two continents;<sup>32</sup> and the first complete edition and recording of Elgar's *Crown of India* masque are both now available. Given the burgeoning interest in Sorabji in the form of recordings, scholarly editions, and a state-of-the-art online archive, it is no longer possible to dismiss even perhaps the strangest figure in the British musical scene as merely a curiosity. Woodforde-Finden's 'Kashmiri Song' is still widely known today; besides being a feature of every second-hand bookstore, it is available in a new edition, and a prominent British pianist has recorded his own solo arrangement and even a new setting of it. MacCarthy too, has attracted attention, albeit (in the absence of the new archival source which is the basis of this book's first chapter) primarily as the woman behind the better-known man, Foulds, or as a disciple of occult cosmology, 'functioning on astral levels, [her] oversoul, mahamahatma'.<sup>33</sup> But the focus of this book is

ultimately not only on six personae who figured India in their musical work, it is also on British people who listened to the music and interacted with these figures, and who themselves imagined India in the music they heard. In this context, it becomes clear that Indo-British interaction has been central not only to the genesis of the creative work of the six figures themselves, but also, crucially, to its changing reception.

Research into how the influence of the music, culture, and philosophy of the subcontinent has altered the landscape of British and, more broadly, Western, musical traditions has often focused on the later, post-independence period thereby unwittingly privileging nationalist narratives from both Britain and India alike.<sup>34</sup> For those with postcolonial vision, it has been appealing to see the late Ravi Shankar as ‘The Godfather’ of East–West fusion music, as the musician who created a deep bond of Anglo-Indian cultural intimacy, and to gloss over any colonial era music-making (either in India or in Britain) that may have presaged his work.<sup>35</sup> For those with imperialist vision, it has been convenient to overlook evidence that the ‘incoherent’ music of a people ‘of inferior intellectual power’ could possibly have interacted in a meaningful, productive way with English music and musicians.<sup>36</sup> The colonial musical interactions examined here have not fitted comfortably with the orthodox view of the British Raj as it was constructed in the late nineteenth century. As William Dalrymple explains, ‘it is as if the Victorians succeeded in colonizing not only India but also, more permanently, our imaginations, to the exclusion of all other images of the Indo-British encounter’.<sup>37</sup> The stories I present reveal some unexpected mingling of peoples, musics, and ideas: cultural collisions in the ‘topsy-turvy world’ of the Raj that raise questions about ‘Englishness’ (itself a construct which arose to counter the schisms and dissent bred by British imperial expansion), about the nature of empire, and about the fixedness of identity.<sup>38</sup>

Ultimately, what the six chapters that follow show is that, when the music of this period is reintegrated into the cultural context of the British rule in India, a much more capacious definition of Englishness is demanded than the one traditionally ascribed to it in the vested interests of imperialist historiography. New archival sources, and the reinterpretation of music in the light of postcolonial thought and new approaches in related disciplines, enable us to recast the England of the last period of empire and of the Raj in particular as far from musically isolated, or beholden only to the acceptable Teutonic musical influences, but rather as part of a networked culture in multi-voiced conversation with the peoples under colonial rule. Even though, or precisely because, the British ruled India, some of their most interesting musical ideas and creations of the period—along with their audiences then and now—were shaped in enduring ways by interactions with the culture and sounds of the subcontinent and its people.

## NOTES

1. Paul Avtar Singh Ghuman, D Litt, Professor Emeritus of Education, University of Wales at Aberystwyth; Fellow of the International Academy for Inter-Cultural Research, of the Royal Society of Arts, and of the British Psychological Society. Among the books which represent his interest in acculturation is *Double Loyalties: South Asian*

- Adolescents in the West* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003), for which I conducted field research. For an overview of Ghuman's work, see Martyn Barrett, 'The Wisdom of Culture', *The Psychologist* 17 no. 8 (August 2004): 436–7.
2. The term 'conjoined' is from Simon Gikandi, *Maps of Englishness: Writing Identity in the Culture of Colonialism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), p. xii and 139.
  3. Rudyard Kipling, 'The Ballad of East and West', in *Gunga Din and Other Favorite Poems*, Dover Thrift Editions (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1990), 6–9.
  4. Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 39 and 160.
  5. See, for instance, the work of John MacKenzie, Bernard Porter, Tim Barringer, and Raymond Head (referred to in this book). While use of the term 'English' to refer to the contemporary nation-state of the United Kingdom is problematic, I argue for its retention in relation to the historical period covered by this book. Moreover, the two terms are not, as Gargi Bhattacharyya explains, altogether distinct: "'Britishness' is largely a reworking of English national identity", and 'English culture remains the dominant term within the idea of the British nation'. Thus, as Robert J. C. Young notes, the 'dutiful use' of 'British' rather than 'English' 'misses the point that in terms of power relations there is no difference between them': 'British' was imposed by the English on the non-English. Although I will use the terms 'English' and 'England' predominantly, there are occasions when I use 'British' and 'Britain'. Gargi Bhattacharyya, 'Cultural Education in Britain', *Oxford Literary Review* 13, 1991, 4–19, 19 n.; Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (London: Routledge, 1995), 1–29, esp. 3. See also Krishnan Kumar, 'English or British? The Question of English National Identity', in his book, *The Making of English National Identity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1–17.
  6. Kobena Mercer, in the introduction to his edited volume, *Cosmopolitan Modernisms: Annotating Art's Histories: Cross-Cultural Perspectives in the Visual Arts* (London: MIT Press, 2005), 8.
  7. The notable exception is Jeffrey Richards's ground-breaking book *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001). A volume whose purview is more general, but which includes pertinent essays is *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire 1780s–1940s: Portrayal of the East*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007).
  8. Tim Barringer, 'Sonic Spectacles: The Audio-Visual Nexus, Delhi–London, 1911–12', in *Sensible Objects: Material Culture, the Senses, Colonialism, Museums*, ed. E. Edwards et al. (London: Berg, 2006), 169–70.
  9. Susheila Nasta, in the introduction to her edited volume *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections* (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 1. The 400-year long historical sweep of Indian and British interactions in general (as opposed to the period of British rule known as the *Raj* which is the focus of both my work and Nasta's) has attracted a great deal of attention in recent decades. See, for instance, Rosina Visram, *Asians in Britain: 400 Years of History* (London: Pluto Press, 2002); Michael J. Franklin, ed., *Romantic Representations of India* (London: Routledge, 2006); and Priya Joshi, *Colonialism, Culture, and the English Novel in India* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002). In music, Ian Woodfield has focused on the British in India in the period of East India Company (that is, *pace* the book's title, before the advent of the *Raj*); *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late 18th-Century Anglo-Indian Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000); see also Richard Leppert, 'Music, Domestic Life and Cultural Chauvinism: Images of British Subjects at Home in India', in *Music and Society: The Politics of Composition, Performance, and Reception*, ed. Richard Leppert and Susan McClary (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 63–104. More broadly, Gerry Farrell demonstrated that traces of Indian

- music had been known to the West in general for several centuries and revealed some fascinating interplay in the realm of post-1950s popular music (*Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997)).
10. The quoted phrase is Said's in *Culture and Imperialism*, 19. I would like to point out that although 'South Asian' is a suitable designation of the contemporary reality of India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, the peoples and cultures of the subcontinent were known as 'Indian' during the historical period covered by this book, and before Partition, and I will therefore use this term.
  11. The three main books of this type were Peter J. Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (New York: Gollancz, 1979); Frank Howes, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Secker and Warburg, 1966); and Michael Trend, *The Music Makers: The English Musical Renaissance from Elgar to Britten* (London: Wiedenfeld & Nicholson, 1985). Alun Howkins has traced the 'extraordinarily powerful', 'firmly rural', and thoroughly English construction at this time of the period of the Welsh Tudor dynasty (1485–1603) in 'The Discovery of Rural England', in *Englishness: Politics and Culture*, ed. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London: Croom Helm, 1986), esp. 69–72.
  12. Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* (1934; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1948), see esp. 'Nationalism and Democracy', 141–54. Lutyens used the quoted phrase in a lecture she gave at Dartington Summer School of Music in the 1950s (cited in Meirion Harries and Susie Harries, *A Pilgrim Soul—the Life and Work of Elisabeth Lutyens* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), 303).
  13. Several major revisionist studies are among the books and essays referred to in the pages of this book.
  14. Alain Frogley, 'Rewriting the Renaissance: History, Imperialism, and British Music since 1840', *Music and Letters* 84, no. 2 (May 2003): 241–57.
  15. The quotation comes from the title of a book first published in 1904 by Oskar Schmitz: *Das Land ohne Musik—Englische Gesellschaftsprobleme* (Munich: G. Müller, 1914). The origins of the quotation extend further back—to at least 1866 (the year of Arthur Sullivan's *Irish Symphony*)—when this belief was expressed by, among others, Carl Engel, a music critic residing in London; see his book, *An Introduction to the Study of National Music* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1866).
  16. Frogley, 'Rewriting the Renaissance', 252.
  17. Salman Rushdie, 'In Good Faith', in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* (London: Granta Books, 1991), 394. I borrow the phrase 'solid and self-evident' from Tim Whitmarsh's discussion of traditional conceptions of Greek culture in his introduction to *The Romance between Greece and the East*, ed. Tim Whitmarsh and Stuart Thompson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013); preview excerpt in *Guardian Weekly*, 2 August 2013, 28.
  18. The fourth epigraph is drawn from Alex Ross's preface to *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), p. xvii.
  19. Although Said did suggest that music's varied roles in Western society should be critically examined and that music should be situated 'in a social and cultural setting', he considered music to be the 'most inward' and 'private' of the arts, and it is 'the ideal purity of the individual experience' of music, as he termed it, which seems to predominate in his writing (quotations are from *Musical Elaborations* (London: Vintage, 1992), pp. x and xii). The notion of music's 'autonomy as an art' and that it 'is not denotative' or discursive underlies his initiative to found, with conductor Daniel Barenboim, the avowedly non-political West-Eastern Divan Orchestra in 1999; see their book, *Parallels and Paradoxes: Explorations in Music and Society* (New York: Vintage, 2004), 7–8; and *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward Said*, interviews by David

- Barsamian (Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2003), 26; (quotations are *Musical Elaborations*, 16 and 40). For a penetrating examination of how music is figured in Said's work as seemingly autonomous but also as an 'elaboration' of Western civil society, see Rokus de Groot, 'Edward Said and Polyphony', in *Edward Said: A Legacy of Emancipation and Representation*, ed. Adel Iskander and Hakem Rustom (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2010), 204–26.
20. Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005); Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953*.
  21. The second epigraph to this book is drawn from a letter Maud MacCarthy wrote to the editor of *The Leader* (Allahabad), 29 August 1912.
  22. Jann Pasler, 'Race, Orientalism, and Distinction in the Wake of the Yellow Peril', *Western Music and its Others*, ed. Georgina Born and Dave Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 86–118; James Parakilas, 'How Spain Got a Soul', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, ed. Jonathan Bellman (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1998), 137–93; Richard Taruskin, '“Entoiling the Falconet”: Russian Musical Orientalism in Context', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, 194–217. See also the work of Ralph Locke and Timothy Taylor.
  23. The third epigraph to this book is drawn from Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 160.
  24. Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973), 281.
  25. The first epigraph to this book is drawn from E. M. Forster, 'The Indian Boom', *Daily News and Leader*, 2 February 1915, 10.
  26. For a contemporary perspective on the continued significance of this atrocity in British-Indian relations, see Srijana Mitra Das, 'Jallianwala Bagh Massacre: David Cameron's Apology That Wasn't', *Times of India*, 21 February 2013.
  27. My mother's recollection of using the Gilbert wind-up cabinet from the home of her grandfather, choir master, music teacher, and organist in Welshpool, in the 1940s and 1950s was that 'it was extremely robust and made listening to a record an event, I can tell you'.
  28. 'English National Vibration' comes from John Foulds's book, *Music To-Day: Its Heritage from the Past, and Legacy to the Future* (Opus 92) (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1934), 224.
  29. For more on this point, especially Elgar's absence from the cultural consciousness of the United States, see Nalini Ghuman, 'The Third “E”—Elgar and Englishness', *Elgar Society Journal* (November 2007): 5–12.
  30. I am thinking of the otherwise excellent volumes, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* Tim Taylor (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); *Western Music and Its Others: Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music*, ed. Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000); and *The Exotic in Western Music*. The award-winning volume, *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007) includes a chapter by this author which focuses on British music of the period. Nineteenth-century British music has, in contrast, been the subject of several such studies; see, for instance, Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton, eds., *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British Music* (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006); and Bennett Zon, *Representing Non-Western Music in Nineteenth-Century Britain* (Rochester, NY: University of Rochester Press, 2007).
  31. Of particular relevance here is Richard Taruskin's discussion of how music perceived as 'nationalist' is often uncritically celebrated and thus rendered 'barren of

- intellectual interest' and irrelevant to today's world. The consequent 'ossification' of the 'repertory and attitudes' of classical music, he writes, reflects nostalgia 'for an imagined prelapsarian age preceding World War I, the original nationalist disaster'. "Nationalism": Colonialism in Disguise?', first published in *The New York Times*, 22 August 1993; repr. in *The Dangers of Music and other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 25. The conductor Sakari Oramo makes specific claims about the way in which the legacy of British performing traditions has confined appreciation of Elgar's music to Britain ('Stand Up for the Maestro', *Guardian*, 25 May 2007, 3).
32. In its centenary year, 2013, Holst's early symphonic poem, *Indra*, was programmed at the BBC Proms alongside the first Sitar Concerto of Nishat Khan, son of Ustad Imrat Khan and disciple of one of India's renowned musical *gharanas*; a production of Holst's chamber opera, *Sāvitrī*, alongside his *Hymns from the Rig Veda* at Mills College, Oakland, California in 2004, with an emphasis on the Indian context in costumes, programme notes, and publicity, attracted many Indians to the capacity audience; the 2012 Cheltenham Music Festival celebrated several of Holst's 'Indian' works.
  33. The quotation is from Stephen Dedalus's musing about the language of theosophy in the ninth chapter of James Joyce's *Ulysses*.
  34. See, for instance, Jonathan Bellman, 'Indian Resonances in the British Invasion, 1965–1968', in *The Exotic in Western Music*, 292–306.
  35. 'The Godfather' comes from Timothy White's article, 'Ravi Shankar: Godfather of World Music', *Billboard*, 18 March 1995, 1. Peter Lavezzoli's often fascinating book, *The Dawn of Indian Music in the West: The Story of the Musical Merging of East and West* (New York: Continuum, 2007), exemplifies the approach, informing readers that the dawn broke with Menuhin and Shankar in the 1950s: 'It is this moment [1955] that can accurately be considered the dawn of Indian classical music in the West'; and again later, 'If 1955 was the year when the seed was planted for Indian music in the West, then 1967 was the annus mirabilis when many of those kernels bore fruit'. He skips from 'the Orientalism of the 19th century' to the 1960s (3 and 6). 'Anglo-Indian cultural intimacy' is Sunil Khilnani's phrase: *The Idea of India* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1998), 23.
  36. The quotations are from Hubert Hastings Parry, *The Evolution of the Art of Music*, 9th ed. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. Ltd, 1925), 58–9.
  37. William Dalrymple, 'Introduction', in *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (New York: Penguin Books, 2002), p. xlv.
  38. The quoted phrase comes from Jawaharlal Nehru, letter to Lionel Fielden, written from Allahabad, 3 January 1937: '[does not the problem lie] in the unhealthy relation between India and England, in the topsy-turvy world itself?' Lionel Fielden, *The Natural Bent* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1960), 198.

## CHAPTER 1



# A Subtle and Exquisite Spirit

## *Maud MacCarthy and Indian Music in Britain*

### True Practice

A grainy old photograph taken more than a century ago in Adyar, South Chennai, opens a revelatory window onto Indian–British musical interactions. In the picture, a group of five male musicians is seated on the grass under a tree singing and playing *saraswati vīna* and *mrdangam*; among them, sitting cross-legged, is a slight, dark-haired young woman wearing a sari.<sup>1</sup> The musicians' expressions convey, variously, concentration, interaction, and joy. The woman's face is not visible because, although she seems to be singing, her head is bent over some manuscript paper upon which she has notated the Telugu words to the *kṛiti* that they are performing and some pointers about its mode and metre. On her right, the main singer who is her guru is marking time by tapping out the music's rhythmic cycle or *tāla* on his thigh.<sup>2</sup>

It was to the lone woman pictured in the photograph, Maud MacCarthy, that E. M. Forster (using her first married name, Mann) attributed the musical component of the 'Indian Boom' which is the subject of this book's first epigraph. 'India has reached the English imagination by different routes,' wrote Forster in 1915:

In religion Mrs Besant has shown us that Hinduism has a meaning, even for the West. In music, Mrs Mann has unlocked a subtle and exquisite spirit. In art, Dr Coomaraswamy has revealed the beauty of the Rajput miniature, Mrs Herringham has worked among the frescoes of Ajanta, Mr Havell has celebrated forgotten sculptures and buildings, many of them admirable. And in literature India has told her own heart, through the mouth of Rabindranath Tagore.<sup>3</sup>

The idea of 'knowing' India was not new. That pursuit had both enabled and supported the British Raj (meaning 'British rule') in the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> But the relationship was rarely a sympathetic one. The 'much despised' art of Indian music,

for instance, was 'one which the Christian in his deafness often calls primitive or even barbaric'.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the music of India, even more than its literature and visual arts, had remained largely 'an unknown territory for the British', as historian David Lelyveld notes, 'the object of a few well-scattered studies by conscientious British scholars, set against a perpetual drone of disparaging remarks by witty British travellers'.<sup>6</sup> Incomprehension was also characteristic of Indian reactions to Western European music. Imogen Holst (daughter of the composer) recalled that students at Tagore's University, Shantiniketan, in West Bengal where she taught briefly in 1942, found gramophone records of Beethoven's symphonies 'disturbing and undisciplined'.<sup>7</sup> In a 1937 broadcast from Delhi, John Foulds told All India Radio listeners that most 'average Indian lovers of music' heard European orchestral and choral music as 'a jumble of discords and meaningless sounds'.<sup>8</sup> 'It is best', he said, 'to recognize this mutual lack of appreciation.'<sup>9</sup> Yet, the situation was not entirely parallel: the juggernaut of colonial knowledge, constructed on the basis of a belief in the differences between a superior 'Occident' and an inferior 'Orient', shaped the way in which the British perceived every aspect of the heterogeneous societies and cultures of the Indian subcontinent, including music. This 'orientalist' way of seeing the world was central to the imposition and perpetuation of imperial rule by Britain over the Indian subcontinent which lasted nearly a century (from 1858 to 1947).<sup>10</sup> Thus, the perception that Indian music was 'chaotic and incoherent' to English ears might be best understood in terms of the larger musical 'verdict' on India's musical traditions: that they had 'failed' to 'discover' the science of harmony or to 'develop a system of notation'.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the notion, which undermined their artistic or literary merits, that Indian arts and literature were feminine, ornamental, and decorative, as opposed to 'vigorous' and 'manly', extended to perceptions of Indian music.<sup>12</sup> In *The Evolution of the Art of Music* of 1893, Sir Hubert Hastings Parry, remembered for his revitalizing influence on English music as a composer, scholar, and teacher, wrote:

With genuine Orientals [exemplified by Indians] the love of unmeaning decorative ornamentation is excessive in every department of mental activity, whether literature, art, or music. This is generally a sign that the technical or manipulatory skill is far in excess of the power of intellectual concentration... the human creative who is blessed with [such] facility of execution expends his powers in profusion of superfluous flourishes... the truth is of wide application, and need not be confined merely to music; for it is noticeable that people who delight in excess of ornament and decoration are almost always of inferior intellectual power and organization.<sup>13</sup>

Such armchair derision aside, British scholars had of course travelled to India in search of music before MacCarthy. Since the beginnings of empire in the late eighteenth century, knowledge about foreign cultures had been routinely transmitted by texts and, as ethnomusicologist Helen Myers has noted, the roster of British colonial writing on Indian music, beginning with Sir William Jones's study *On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos* of 1792, is 'particularly distinguished'.<sup>14</sup> Indian music had been systematized and catalogued in a way which corresponds to the orientalist acquisition of knowledge described by Edward Said. Its modes, rhythmic cycles, and instruments

were identified and the (now vigorously contested) myth of a pure Hindu history stretching back to a pre-Mughal Golden Age of the *Vedas* expounded. In this way, Indian music became central to the rise of the academic discipline of comparative musicology itself and held particular antiquarian interest for those researching the origins of music.<sup>15</sup> But no musician had made the journey with the express intention of learning, not about Indian music in quasi-scientific theoretical terms, but *the practice* of its contemporary traditions: ‘the reality and living power of the *rāgās* and *tālās*’ as MacCarthy put it.<sup>16</sup> Forster was right to point to the emergence of a new conception of India—especially its music—in the early decades of the twentieth century.<sup>17</sup> While the invidious context of imperialism remained ever-present, and the old orthodoxy persisted well into the 1940s and beyond, fresh attitudes and independent approaches define this era.<sup>18</sup> The new spirit captured in that old photograph of musicians in Adyar involved participatory learning through oral transmission by exponents of Indian music. It could only be achieved by a musician sitting among musicians.

Yet, unlike the better-known figures with whom Forster associated the Indian boom and who have received considerable scholarly attention, MacCarthy and her significance was, following the upheaval of her long-term return to India in 1935, subsequently forgotten.<sup>19</sup> Some of what we know is gleaned from the archival materials from her late son Major Patrick Foulds, now held at the University of York, and from her late daughter Marybride Watt, now in private hands.<sup>20</sup> But it is only now, through the extensive family collection preserved by her granddaughter that we are able to record and analyse for the first time, in detail and more accurately, her ethnomusicological activities and their significance in British musical life.<sup>21</sup> Maud MacCarthy’s story—of how an independent, professional musician made her way alone to India in the early years of the century, absorbed the music through immersion and practice, and returned to take on a new, albeit unofficial, role at the centre of the English musical establishment—is one that challenges conventional images of the Indo-British colonial encounter, of women in twentieth-century music, and of the history of British music itself. The chapter of MacCarthy’s story we will focus on here illuminates the intersection between the new spirit of the twentieth century and the social and imperial orthodoxies of the previous one. Her very gender presented an immediate challenge not only to imperial prerogatives but also to those of Indian performance traditions. At the time she arrived in South India it was unheard of for women outside of one particular social community—the *dēvadāsīs* (servants of god), each married to the god of a particular Hindu temple—to practice *Karnātic* music in public. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the traditional systems of royal patronage of the *dēvadāsīs* had declined with the result that many musicians lost their livelihoods and homes and some were forced to turn to prostitution.<sup>22</sup> MacCarthy wrote, ‘When I began this work [in 1910–11] no respectable woman in India would touch music.’<sup>23</sup>

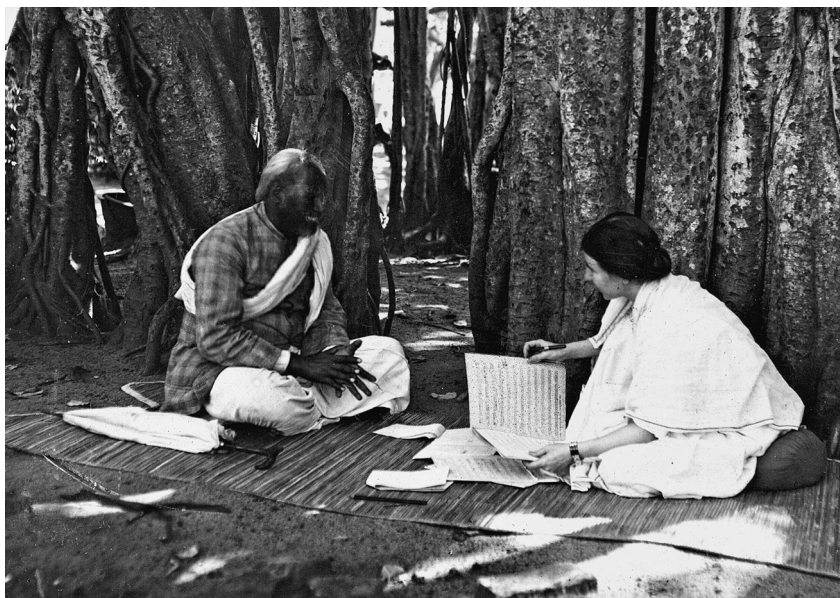
MacCarthy was a musician of the highest calibre and her background undoubtedly helped her in her new endeavour. She had been a child prodigy on the violin and developed into a performer of extraordinary abilities prior to her Indian sojourn. Gifted with flawless technique and a prodigious memory, the *Athenaeum* proclaimed her

'the legitimate successor to [virtuoso violinist Joseph] Joachim', and critical acclaim greeted her performances in Britain (including Ireland, her place of birth), Australia (where she was brought up), and the United States. A demanding schedule, set by her (in today's parlance) 'tiger mother', found her playing Beethoven's 'Kreutzer' Sonata in London with Donald Francis Tovey at the piano one day and Brahms's D-minor Sonata in Oxford with Percy Grainger the next; in the following fortnight it was the Mendelssohn violin concerto at Carnegie Hall, the Brahms with the Boston Symphony, and, back home, the Beethoven with the London Symphony Orchestra under Emil Steinbach at the Queen's Hall.<sup>24</sup> In 1906, she was lauded for the 'ease and vigour' with which she handled one of the most demanding pieces in the violin repertoire, the second movement of Bach's unaccompanied Sonata in C: a fugue of such stupendous difficulty that even the usually unflappable Jascha Heifetz used to 'break out in a cold sweat and suffer nervous bow-shakes' when playing it.<sup>25</sup> As a string player, she had developed a fine sense of tuning that included the spaces between the equally tempered pitches of a piano which enabled her to hear the microtones of Indian music and to sing them accurately.<sup>26</sup> Even though her rigorous solo career had come to an end as a result of problems with her arms, she continued to play and took her violin with her to India; since it is an instrument of great repute in the South Indian, *Karnātic*, tradition, she may well have learned some music on it.<sup>27</sup> English and Indian musicians alike acknowledged MacCarthy's uncommon talents. Rabindranath Tagore, himself a singer and composer of over 2,000 songs, wrote that 'with her great natural gifts and high attainments both in Western and Eastern music, Miss MacCarthy is so eminently fitted to introduce Indian music to a Western audience';<sup>28</sup> while the musicologist Edward J. Dent recalled in 1917:

Some years ago I listened to a lecture on Indian music given by Mrs Mann who . . . sang illustrations of Indian music and its minute intervals in a voice that . . . was under the most perfect control. . . . It was a lesson to any singer, for this reason . . . her standards of intonation and phrasing were not those of a singer but of a first-rate violinist.<sup>29</sup>

Equipped with exceptional musical skills and, by all accounts, a personality to match, MacCarthy quite literally dislodged the positional superiority of even the most unassuming Orientalist. This is vividly captured in a photograph taken 1907, also in Adyar, which embodies the spirit—but emphatically not the letter—of Kipling's famous maxim about two strong men standing face to face I mentioned earlier. Here is a young, Irish (read 'dark'), female musician sitting in traditional style on the ground in Indian garb, learning contemporary music by ear. Despite the crease which obscures part of Ramanujāchārya's face, the joyful interaction between guru and student is evident (figure 1.1).

Alongside these photographs, reams of hitherto unseen field notes dating back over a century, carefully preserved by MacCarthy's granddaughter, enable us to place her work firmly in the field of ethnomusicology; that term suggests, at its most basic definition, an approach which considers music as an expression of culture and involves learning some of the music-making that is at the heart of a culture.<sup>30</sup>



**Figure 1.1**

‘Teaching *Tāla*’: Maud MacCarthy learning in Adyar with Ramanujāchārya, c.1907

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

Upon looking through MacCarthy’s notes, though, I was at first disappointed to find little actual ‘music’. Where were the manuscript transcriptions that she so promisingly holds in the photograph? She did collect notated songs, but the bundle of pages she kept from the Bengali *Gita Sūtra Sār* by Bandyopadhyaya of 1885, for instance, remains untouched and unsung. Meticulous notes pertaining to provenance, *rāga*, *tālā*, text, pronunciation, and translation abound, but she rarely seemed to notate the music she learned. When she did, she generally used *sargam* (Indian pitch syllables) and invented her own symbols for details such as relative length of notes. A few pages like the one shown in figure 1.2 do include notation, however, and these contain the key—not only to my conundrum, but, more importantly, to the new spirit identified by Forster.

Even a glance at the neatly scripted notation reveals that this is not the transcription-friendly ‘Hindoostanee Air’ of nineteenth-century encounters, or what Tagore derided as ‘the cheap kind [of music] that can easily adapt itself for the uninformed taste of any hasty foreign traveller, satisfying his shallow curiosity’.<sup>31</sup> Singing the notated pitches will not bring *Rāga Shri* to life, nor will it approximate the two parts, *sthayi* and *antara*, of the Urdu song *Man lāg rayho, man* (‘I have set my heart on the lotus-eyed girl’). This is ‘the outline’ of *Rāga Shri*, ‘exactly’ as her Panjābi friend Moyed Din sang this ‘king of the *rāgās*’ to her, and from which she could properly unfold the *rāga* in phrases of improvisation that followed strict *Rāgaic* rules.<sup>32</sup> At the top of the page is the mode or *mēlakarta* from which *Rāga Shri* is derived, its seven pitches in ascending scale form include a lowered second degree, a raised fourth, a

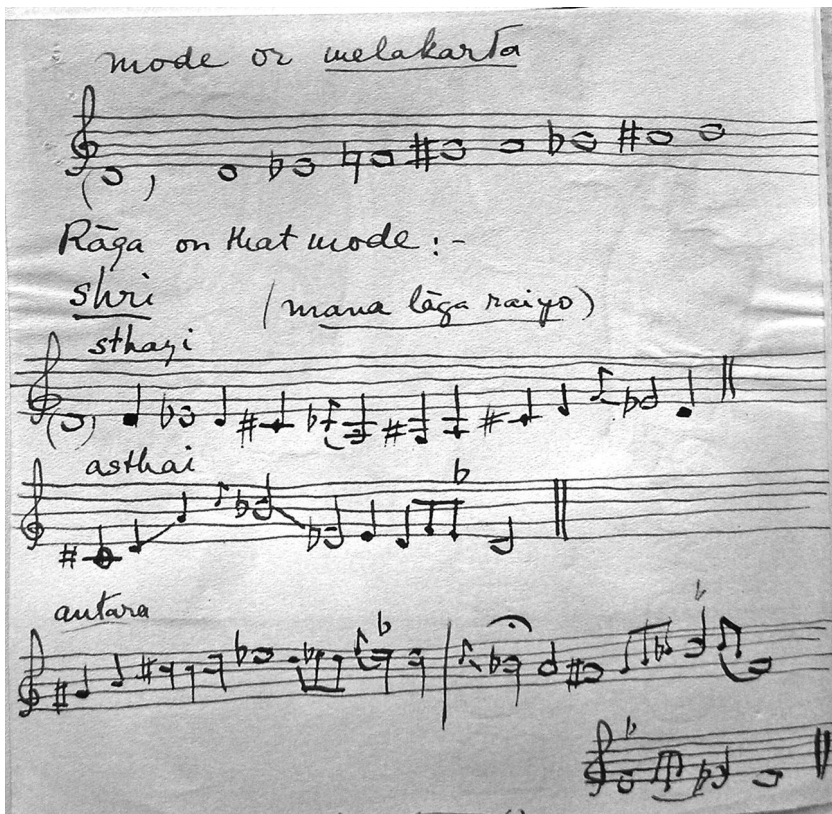


Figure 1.2

Urdu song, *Man lāg rayho, man*: A rare example of notation from MacCarthy's field notes

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

lowered sixth, and a raised seventh. Here then is a notated glimpse into what a reviewer for *The Times* (most likely the Indian music expert Arthur H. Fox Strangways) described as 'the true practice' that he believed MacCarthy to have 'absorbed during her stay'.<sup>33</sup> That true practice of the *rāgas* she was learning cannot be fully written down. Instead, verbal explanations with music examples abound. Page after page gives a myriad of details—how some notes should be lingered on, some have graces or *gamaka* attached to them, some must run down two or three steps while others must run up; how the characteristic phrases are shaped in ascent and descent; nuances of phrasing and register; the *thekas* of *tālas*; and the texts and translations.<sup>34</sup>

Figure 1.3a presents a section of her idiomatic notes on *Rāga Kedar* complete with illustrative music examples. Although the details are necessarily technical, a close look provides insight into the complex framework within which she was learning to unfold the oblique melodic movements of this *rāga* in performance and thereby bring out the typical mood of *Kedar*. At the top is given, in *Devanāgarī* script, the most prominent note of the *rāga*, म, or *shuddha ma*, the fourth scale degree which is A♭ in

Figure 1.3a

Idioms of Rāga Kedar in MacCarthy's hand

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

this context where the tonic note, or *sa*, is Eb. Underneath, she notes that *ma*, the raised fourth, A natural, is also used. The middle of the excerpt tells us that *ni* (the flattened seventh, D $\flat$ ) is not generally followed by *sa*, while the accompanying notation gives its characteristic appearance between two *dha*'s (C–D $\flat$ –C). In the lowest part we find information on the proper use both of *tivra ma* (it should appear between two *pa*'s, that is the fifth degree, B $\flat$ ), and of *ga* (the third, G) with an accompanying example showing both idioms.<sup>35</sup>

MacCarthy's careful approach to transliteration is evident in figure 1.3b. Here is the text of an Urdu *khyāl* by Bahadur Shah Zafar whose subject is encapsulated in its second and third lines: 'springtime is come and flowers abound, on every branch of the mango tree the cry of the *koyalīa* (Indian blackbird) is heard'.<sup>36</sup> The attention to accuracy, achieved by using diacriticals to indicate correct stress patterns, vowel lengths, and retroflex consonants, reflects not only language skills but also sympathy, and contrasts with the predominance of often risible contemporary transliterations (such as the spelling *Hindoo* or the pronunciation *Poonjab*).<sup>37</sup> Underneath is her outline of the *ārohana* (ascent) and *avarohana* (descent) of the *rāga* as she was taught it, showing both *tivra ma* (the sharpened fourth degree, here C $\sharp$ ) and, in an idiomatic descending gesture, also *shuddha ma* (C $\natural$ ).

From these pages alone, it will be evident that she stored much of 'the music' in her head. These are 'lead sheets' for complex music that could not easily be freeze-dried into 'clumsy and wholly inadequate' notation, as she later explained:

Oral tradition is essential to Indian music. The beauty of that music consists in its spontaneity, its exquisite *sruti* (microtones), its roulades and graces, the improvisational essays of the performers. Take these away, and one gets the rather banal little tunes which have been recorded in Western musical notation by Fox-Strangways and others... notation kills Indian music.<sup>38</sup>

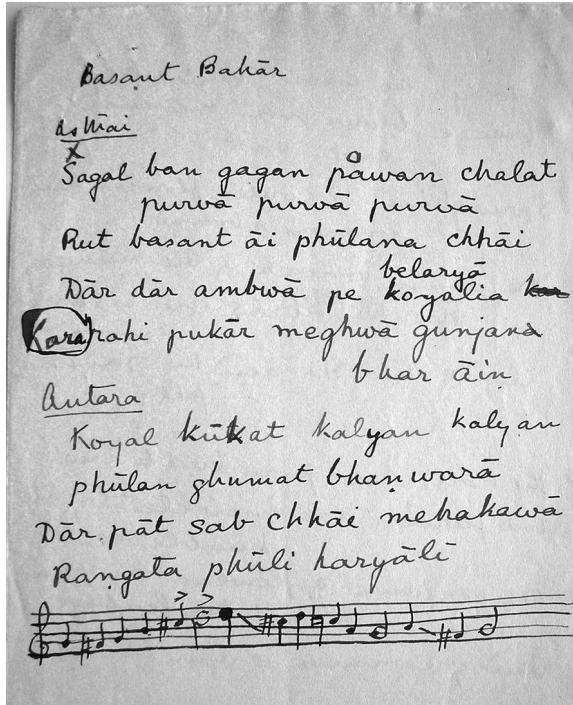


Figure 1.3b

Text of the Urdu Khyāl, *Sagal ban gagan pawan chalat purvā*, followed by the outline of the ārohana (ascent) and avarohana (descent) of the rāga

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

It was precisely Fox Strangways who pinpointed the difference in approach which he perceived in MacCarthy: '[these tunes] must be heard in their birthplace; but to hear them truly, even there, demands the ready sympathy and the quick imagination of the people who made them'.<sup>39</sup> Others remarked on it too. 'Few Europeans have studied more intensely and more sympathetically the music of the East... Miss MacCarthy creates a new interest in India wherever she goes,' declared *The Indian Mirror* of Kolkata.<sup>40</sup>

Indeed, empathy, an approach combining performance with the ability to convey pertinent details to listeners, and humility, were at the heart of this reinterpretation of Indian music. 'I do not proclaim proficiency in the art; but only in the art of loving it,' MacCarthy told her audiences.<sup>41</sup>

What music, then, did MacCarthy study so intensely in India from late 1907 to the end of July 1909? We know that she spent time learning in Chennai and that she studied the rāgas and kritis of Karnātic music 'under the late Panchapagesa Bhagavathar of Tanjore', a renowned exponent of one of the two musical lineages which carried on Tyāgarāja's tradition.<sup>42</sup> She also travelled—north to Varanasi (Benares), then Lahore—and learned music from across the subcontinent, and not only that of the two great classical traditions of North and South, but a great variety

of music from sources which she describes in remarkable and evocative detail at the end of a lecture-recital:

Just a few words before I close, about the sources from which I have gathered the information I have tried to give to-night. They are mainly personal. Many Indian friends from different parts of the country have sung to me, played to me, patiently explained their traditions and submitted to my questionings. I have hung about the gates of the Central Hindu College in Benares listening to old men who used to sing in a niche in the wall—I have lain awake at night listening to the people coming home singing from the temples, in Madras and elsewhere, or drumming in the bazaars. I have attended concerts, listened to water-carriers, boatmen, women grinding wheat, or guarding fruit from monkeys—I have listened to wood-carriers on the hills and urchins in the towns. Indian friends used to bring musicians to me so that I might note and compare different styles, and ask questions.<sup>43</sup>

In the company of ordinary people and trained musicians she learned, *inter alia*, the *Rāgas Malkauns, Todi*, and *Kedar*,<sup>44</sup> a *Varnam* in *Rāga Kamboji*, *Taruni ninnu bāsi*, by Fiddle Ponnuswamy; a modern *bhajan* from Varanasi with words and music by Leela Devi, sister of the Bengali playwright Niranjan Pāl; an early morning song in Gujarati by the poet-saint Narsinh Mehta; a Kashmiri lullaby; a *ghazal* from Agra; five Panjābi songs from Lahore including *Tu hai Mohammad Shah*; Hindustani *thumri* and Urdu *khyāl*; *Tomari gehe* and other *Rabindra sangit* (songs by Tagore); Madras *tānam* (studies) for *vīna*; several Hindustani and *Karnātic tālas* on the *tablā*; and a couple of Panjābi sitar studies. Alongside the classical *rāgas* and *kritis*, the wood-carriers and women grinding wheat themselves come alive in the pages of her century-old field notes through idiomatic translations of their songs. MacCarthy's work represents a significant addition to the burgeoning field of British ethnomusicology at that time since few scholars or travellers had studied the music of the *Karnātic* tradition, south of Hyderabad and Dravidian in culture, and even fewer were independent musicians or scholars not associated with the Royal Asiatic Society.<sup>45</sup>

The nature and breadth of her lively musical encounters with people across India indicates how fundamentally her approach differed from that of both British orientalists and Hindu nationalists whose scholarship emphasized the music's sacred, Vedic origins and its putative demise since Mughal times. Indian music, MacCarthy said, 'is not based on some vague theories and mythological notions': it is 'a living art in India to-day . . . the art of music, as you may still hear it practised in India to-day, is in itself beautiful and convincing.'<sup>46</sup> At the same time, men such as V. N. Bhatkande and V. D. Palushkar believed that their task was to wrest 'their' ancient music back from those Muslims who had 'desecrated' it since the time of Akbar.<sup>47</sup> Contemporary English scholars, too, recounted this narrative which had already been shaped by Sir Williams Jones in the eighteenth century: Indian music should revert to its 'pure' Hindu origins, he wrote, for there was nothing to be learned from the 'muddy rivulets of Mussalman' thought.<sup>48</sup> By the early years of the twentieth century, 'Hindu', in the lexicon of Indian nationalism and British colonialism (whose divisive agendas had significant points of contact), had become synonymous with, even a metonymic

substitution for, 'Indian'.<sup>49</sup> MacCarthy explained to English audiences that she would use 'the term *Indian* instead of 'Hindu' to denote the sum total of musical influences which find their home in the land of modern India', and performed *ghazals*, and *khyāls*, along with Panjābi and Kashmiri songs, all in Urdu.<sup>50</sup>

She herself had no illusions about her position as an outsider to Indian musical traditions, even though she learned Hindi and Urdu, sang to her own *tambūrā* in several additional languages such as Bengali and Tamil, and learned to play *tābla* and *vīna*: 'I do not pretend to be an Indian musician. I am only a very humble interpreter . . . if an Indian musician [had come] into the room he would have shrivelled me up!'<sup>51</sup> As it happens, she did give a lecture-recital for the Society of Indian Musicians in London and it was the reactions of audiences at such events that the *Times of India* deemed 'real proof—if proof were necessary—of the genuine beauty of the performances'.<sup>52</sup>

### Real Proof

I was sitting on the verandah with a group of four or five musicians in Madras some years ago, when suddenly I was 'taken worse with a song' [a family expression]. I started in, improvising. Within a few seconds the band was with me to a man—playing away as if they had been orchestral musicians whose noses were glued to their notes!<sup>53</sup>

This little story, recalled by MacCarthy in an article entitled 'The Art of Improvisation', gets to the heart of Indian musical traditions. Its veracity is confirmed in her field notes and presentation scripts, alongside press reviews, which span the period from 1910 to 1926 (when she left for Paris), and personal letters from Indian musicians and other experts, Tagore and Fox Strangways among them. Creative musical extemporization was a noted feature of her lecture-recitals: the 'vocal improvisations showing the potency of mode-atmosphere or "rāga" . . . simply held the audience spell-bound' reported *The Indian Magazine and Review* in 1913.<sup>54</sup> Her mastery of related elements, central to the performance of Indian music, was also noted: 'Her renderings of Indian ragas', declared the *Pioneer Mail* of Allahabad, display 'power and technique, deep poetic feeling, faultless intonation of the microtones of Indian music, and the improvisation which is indispensable in Indian songs'.<sup>55</sup> 'It is all very well', wrote another reviewer, 'to read about the subtle melodic Indian scales'; 'but', he continued:

It is difficult—almost impossible, in fact—for us folk, brought up on the equal tempered twelve tone scale, to realise, for instance a scale in which the octave is divided into twenty-two . . . but Miss MacCarthy actually sang this scale . . . I imagined it would sound like a *portamento* slur, but no, every division was clear and clean! Her execution, too of some Indian tunes, put a good many of the great coloratura singers in the shade.<sup>56</sup>

This reference to virtuoso, coloratura, singing suggests her ability to improvise lightning fast *taans* using *sargam* (pitch syllables), a characteristic of skilled vocalists, such as *khyāl* singers in the Hindustani tradition.

Beyond these materials, we can even hear the resonance of some of her fine qualities in a remarkable musical document, the closest we have to a recording of MacCarthy herself: the *Indian Suite* by her second husband, John Foulds, which is a set of five orchestral arrangements of music that she had learned in India. The suite, completed on board ship at Port Said during the family's passage to India in 1935, opens with a detailed preface:

It is not possible to copy accurately upon our instruments the 'microtones' (as Maud MacCarthy named them years ago) and other extra-ordinarily subtle vocal embellishments which are used by Indian musicians. Apart from these details however, the melodies are presented exactly as taken down from fine Indian artists.

As to their instrumental form: the transcriber has not *imitated* the Indian instrumental sounds or layout. We have no instruments so curiously pervasive as Tambura and Vina, so subtle as Saranghī and Tablā. His aim has been so to paraphrase them by means of our Western instruments and musical technique as to convey to the listener something of the *effect* which these beautiful and characteristic melodies have made upon him.<sup>57</sup>

Foulds's reference to himself as 'the transcriber' of MacCarthy's Indian music renditions is intriguing. Years ago, among Foulds's notes, I had come across a few transcriptions of *kritis* (three-part classical compositions, central to *Karnātic* performance tradition)—rather incongruously, it seemed, given that he had settled in North India—in finely notated manuscripts which stood out from his often chaotic compositional sketches. Now, in another century and on another continent, I have found that each transcription has its corresponding text, translation, and mode, all neatly penned, among MacCarthy's field notes in the family's collection. Foulds had, indeed, transcribed several of his wife's renditions.

These carefully scripted *kritis* in their classical forms and *rāgas* are fascinating records of MacCarthy's studies in Thanjāvūr and Chennai that we can find nowhere else: every nuance that can be notated is contained in their pages. Her rendition of Muthuswami Dikshitar's *kriti* invoking Saraswati, the goddess of Learning, *Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati* ('O Bestower of blessings, seated on the Lotus'), is shown in Foulds's transcription in figure 1.4a; her own script of the text, preceded by the mode or *mēlakarta* from which *Rāga Kalāvati* is derived, is seen in figure 1.4b. The *mēlakarta*'s distinctive outline, with augmented seconds between both first and second degrees, C–D#, and seventh and eighth degrees, Bb–C, along with a lowered sixth degree (Ab), accounts for the unusual key signature which Foulds uses.

This is precisely the process which defines the genesis of the *Indian Suite*. Each movement is a transcription by Foulds of music which MacCarthy had learned (at least a decade earlier) in India and which she performed in Britain. There is a Panjābi benediction in the region's popular rhythmic cycle, *char tāl*; a lyrical *thumri* whose *Brij Bhasa* poetry unfolds a Krishna and Radha love song, both learned from Dr Prabhyu Dutt Shastri; and a spirited folk song 'from Bombay district', in which Śrī Ganpati (Ganēsh) is sung of as 'dancing in heaven, whilst Brahma Himself beats time and

Shiva-Gauri looks on'.<sup>58</sup> Framing the suite are two *kīrtanam* or *kritis* like *Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati*, which MacCarthy often programmed in lecture-recitals.<sup>59</sup> The first, *Bhava Nutha* in *Rāga Mohanam*, is by the great composer Tyāgarāja whose hundreds of devotional songs are all in praise of his chosen deity, Rāma: 'O Sri Rama, the Beloved of Hanuman', reads MacCarthy's prose translation, 'do thou sport in my heart and thus be relieved from the fatigue of wanderings in the forest (in search of Sita).'<sup>60</sup> Figure 1.5 shows the opening of the suite in Foulds's autograph short score in which the melodic refrain, or *pallavi*, played by violin and flute, is notated on the upper stave through two cycles of the eight-beat *tāla*, *adi tāla*.

The *kṛiti* or *kīrtanam* which concludes the suite is a rendition of *Manasu Karugademi* by the nineteenth-century composer Patnam Subrāmanya Iyer.<sup>61</sup> So faithful are these outer movements to their classical sources as represented in historical and contemporary performances that a *Karnātic* music connoisseur or *rasika* would certainly recognize them.<sup>62</sup> Foulds followed exactly the forms, modes, and melodies of each of these two *kritis* as he heard them from MacCarthy.<sup>63</sup> A close look at the final movement, *Manasu Karagathemi*, will demonstrate something of MacCarthy's strong grasp of the



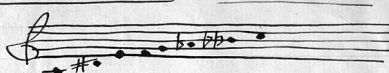
Figure 1.4a

Muttuswami Dikshitar's *Kṛiti*, *Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati* ('O Bestower of Blessings, seated on the Lotus') in *Rāga Kalāvati*: MacCarthy's rendition in Foulds's transcription

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection, held in trust by Malcolm MacDonald.

①

Kalāvati Kamalāsana R. Kalāvati



Pallavi  
 Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati  
 Kalyāṇam kalayatu Sarasvati

Anupallavi  
 Kalā balāmantrāna rūpini  
 Bhārati mātrikā śaririni  
 Mālari vidārini Vāgvāni  
 Madhukara vēni Vināyāni

Charanam  
 Sarajyotsnā subhrākārā  
 Śaṣivadana Kāṣmīravahārā  
 Varā Śaradā Parankuśadhārā  
 Varadābha yapaṣapustakakārā  
 Surārachitapadām bijā Śobhanā  
 Svētā pankajāsana Suradana  
 Purāṇi gurugūha hridaya ranjanī  
 Murārishukhā kāmiraṇjanī

Figure 1.4b

Muttuswami Dikshitar's *Kṛiti*, *Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati* ('O Bestower of Blessings, seated on the Lotus'): The transliterated text and the *ārohana* (ascent) of *rāga* *Kalāvati* in MacCarthy's hand.

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

INDIAN SUITE

Based on authentic Indian Melodies from the Collection of Maud MacCarthy.

I. Bhavanūthā. (A Joyful Song to Shri Rāma)

PIANO CONDUCTOR

Transcribed & Orchestrated by JOHN FOULDS.

Moderato Gioioso (♩ = 92)




Figure 1.5

MacCarthy-Foulds's interpretation of Tyāgarāja's *Kṛiti*, 'Bhava Nutha', no. 1 of *Indian Suite*, *pallavi*.

Source: Foulds's autograph short score. Hatton & Rose Publishers.

central performance genre of the *Karnātic* tradition and how well she interpreted the repertoire for her British audiences. She had learned this fine *kṛiti* in Chennai in 1909 from Ramanujāchārya: the Telugu text, a word for word translation, and the prose meaning of each section, *pallavi*, *anupallavi*, and *charanam*, all given to her by

W. A. Krishnamachari, cover three meticulously typed pages of a large, handmade book (with sewn binding) containing eleven *Karnātic* songs she learned in Chennai. Figure 1.6 presents the first of these pages which includes the prose translation of the *pallavi*: *Why dost not your mind relent, O thou beloved of Lakshmi!*<sup>64</sup>

Although she sang *Manasu Karagathemi* in lecture-recitals, such as one at the University of Birmingham in 1915, no musical transcription is extant in the notes of either MacCarthy or Foulds.<sup>65</sup> But, fortuitously, we do have one of roughly the same period, taken down from the *Karnātic* singer Vaidyanatha Iyer, which shows the melodic outline in *hansadhvani*, a pentatonic *rāga*, and in *rūpaka tāla* (which, in *Karnātic* music, is a three-beat cycle) (Example 1.1).<sup>66</sup>

The exactness of the MacCarthy-Foulds melodic interpretation, transmitted orally from Ramanujāchārya and not via transcription, is astonishing. The three-part classical structure of *pallavi*–*anupallavi*–*charanam* is followed, each section with its distinctive melodic contours in the original *tāla* and *mēlakarta* (now pitched on A).<sup>67</sup> Even more remarkable, however, is the close relation it bears to a contemporary performance by violin duo Lalgudi G. J. R. Krishnan and his sister Vijayalakshmi whose Chennai-based family musical lineage (*sisya parampara*) traces itself back to Tyāgarāja.<sup>68</sup> The improvisation which envelops the presentation of the *pallavi* (the main melodic refrain) in the Ramanujāchārya-MacCarthy-Foulds version is very similar to that of the Lalgudi siblings: the *pallavi* returns are idiomatically rendered with increasing intricacy and ornamental flourish. In both versions, each reprise is

22

X.

Hamsathwani Ragam - Athi Thalam

---

A. Manasu karagathēmi - Sri - mānini - mānchara - nēē - manasu (Pallavi)

B. Vanaaja bhavāthi vinutha - gēerwānarini - brōchina - nēē manasu (Anu pallavi)

(1) Aramara - yētikī - nēē kula biruthunu thalachi zoodumu

(2) Charananina degakai - thana sarīramunu - kōsi ichchina

(3) Karuna karudagu - sibhi bhūvarudu - nēethu thāthagatha

(4) Maruchithivō - yēmō - sri - Varada Venkateswara - nēē - manasu

Charanam

| <u>Meaning word for word</u> |                          | <u>Prose Order</u>           |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Manasu                       | mind                     |                              |
| Karagathemi                  | Why does (it) not melt ? |                              |
| Sri manini                   | Lakshmi's                | A. Why does not your mind    |
| Manchara                     | Beloved                  | relent O thou the Beloved of |
| Nēē                          | your                     | Lakshmi !                    |
| Manasu                       | mind                     |                              |

**Figure 1.6**

Patnam Subramanya Iyer, *Manasu karugademi*. MacCarthy's typescript of the text as given to her by W. A. Krishnamachari in Chennai, and below it the words and prose meaning of the first section, the *pallavi*.

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

**Example 1.1**

Patnam Subramanya Iyer, *Manasu karugademi, pallavi and anupallavi*

Source: Author's Facsimile from *The Rāgas of Tanjore: Songs and Hymns from the Répertoire of the Karnatic Singer* [Vaidyanatha Iyer], *Natrajan, Arranged in Staff Notation*, ed. Sir Ernest Clements (London: The Dharwar gayan samaj, 1920).

HANDSHAVANI (Mela 29).

Talarūpaka.  
M = ♩ = 192

Patnam Subramani Iyer.

*Pallavi.*

Ma - na - su ka - ru - ga - de - mi Srī - - mā - ni - nī - ma -

*Anupallavi.*

no - ha - ra ni. - - Va - na - ja bha - vā - di vi - nu - ta gir -

vā - nā - - du - la. - - bro - chi - na ni, - - ma - na - su ka - ru - ga -

de - mi Srī - - mā - ni - nī - ma no - ha - ra - ni. - -

imbued with fresh energy as the *pallavi* melody is altered in a specific way—that is, its range is expanded upwards in increasingly elaborate phrases (Example 1.2a).

Ramanujāchārya's interpretation, in MacCarthy's transmission, has a distinctive feature which is also seen in the transcription of Iyer's performance: the *pallavi* elaborations emphasize the distinctive seventh scale degree, *ni* (G#), on the way back up to *sa* (A). Finally, at the climax of the movement, the *pallavi*'s head motive is presented in a series of exciting and elaborate reiterations whose cross-rhythms and subsequent *brilliant* triplet embellishments bear relation to the spirit and even the figuration of the Lalgudis' climactic statements (Example 1.2b).

MacCarthy's focus on improvised elaboration while remaining faithful to the *kṛitī*'s melody and form captures the ethos of the *Karnātic* tradition which involves a balance between improvisation and fixed composition. 'As far as I could tell', she recalled, 'I never altered one note... unless where improvisation or free treatment were the custom, but rendered them faithfully as to notes, microtonal nuances, tempi, and *tāla*.'<sup>69</sup> To gain a little perspective on this achievement and how it resulted in a new interpretation of Indian music for British ears, it is worth noting that it was precisely this musical genre, with its clear structure and ornamented *pallavi* returns that Parry had uncomprehendingly decried as displaying 'excess of ornament and decoration': 'the Indians of the Orient... [are] too backward to grasp a design of any intricacy... [they] contrive to make long passages of melody; but the order of the

### Example 1.2a

Ramanujāchārya-MacCarthy-Foulds, 'Manasu karagathemi', no. 5 of *Indian Suite*: returns of the *pallavi*, mm. 5–12, 13–20, and 25–32

pallavi (first statement)

1st violin

5 *f* *mf*

8 *f*

11 (second statement) *f*

14

17

20 etc..

(fourth statement)

25 *f*

28 *ff*

31

**Example 1.2b**

Ramanujāchārya-MacCarthy-Foulds, 'Manasu karagathemi': *pallavi*'s climatic cross-rhythms and triplet embellishments near the close, mm. 106–11

The musical score consists of three systems, each with two staves labeled 'vl. 1' and 'vl. 2'. The key signature is two sharps (F# and C#). The first system (mm. 106-107) features a strong (*sf*) dynamic. The second system (mm. 108-109) also features a strong (*sf*) dynamic. The third system (mm. 110-111) features a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic with 'Brillante' markings and triplet embellishments.

recurrence of the characteristic figures is very frequently incoherent.<sup>70</sup> The outer movements of the *Indian Suite* uniquely give us a glimpse into MacCarthy's idiomatic interpretation of the 'design' and 'decoration' central to the performance tradition of the *kritis* she learned (though they are not among Foulds's most effective pieces in performance, due to the thickness of their scoring).

Although MacCarthy was dismissive of her skills on the North Indian *tablā* which (along with *tambūrā* and *vīna*) she had brought back to Britain, her demonstrations of several of the *tālas* of both North and South Indian music drew the attention of English listeners for their rhythmic and timbral complexities.<sup>71</sup> Sometimes she introduced 'the barest theoretical outline tapped out without mastery of drumming'; more often she used *solakkattu*, 'the language of *tāla* for the different parts of the rhythm'.<sup>72</sup> Foulds's transcriptions of the two *Indian Suite kritis* bear some traces of their respective *tālas*. The *solakkattu* of *ādi tāl*, an eight-beat cycle grouped into 4 + 2 + 2, and its elaboration in performance, informs the changing accents and rhythmic energy of the tenor drum in the MacCarthy-Foulds version of Tyāgarāja's *Bhava Nutha: ta ka*

*di mi ta ka jo nu*. Example 1.3 shows the lively rhythmic interplay between drum and melody in the first four rhythmic cycles of third section, the *charanam*.

### Example 1.3

MacCarthy-Foulds, 'Bhava Nutha', no. 1 of *Indian Suite: charanam*, tenor drum emulates *tablā*, mm. 105–19

(14) (*charanam*)

105

Bassoons

*mf*

Tenor drum (tabla)

8 beat cycle (4+2+2)

violins

+ winds

etc...

The level of rhythmic intricacy here is, however, somewhat curious since MacCarthy never felt she had learned the language fully ('life is too short, and Indian drumming is too long!') and she could hardly have performed with such dexterity while at the same time singing (not to mention also strumming a *tambūrā*). The key lies in a 1922 London theatre project, a production of Niranjan Pāl's play *The Goddess*, for which MacCarthy, as the music director, initiated perhaps the earliest instance of creative interaction between Indian and British music and musicians. For the play's music, 'the director has used Indian rhythms or *tālas*'.<sup>73</sup> 'One of the most effective pieces', noted a reviewer, was *Bhava Nutha*, 'arranged by Foulds for Western chamber orchestra', with Mr J. N. Meighoo playing 'Indian drums' which he 'used so effectively'.<sup>74</sup> It is not surprising that MacCarthy had sought out a *tablā* player to join the Western instruments.<sup>75</sup> 'Indian drums excel the Western in every way,' she wrote, 'We have nothing to approach them in the West, and no technique of drumming to come near to that of the Indian expert.'<sup>76</sup> It was Meighoo-ji's playing that shaped the intricate drumming of *Bhava Nutha* in the *Indian Suite*. Yet, Foulds's tenor drum fails to capture what MacCarthy aptly described as 'the rhythmic strong accent and sub-accent and sub-accentual tonal contrasts which can be produced, by fingering alone on these instruments [*tablā* and *bayan*]', and which would bring clarity to the *tāla*. Instead, the line, tapped on the tenor drum with sticks, sounds in performance somewhat over-determined and has the effect of obfuscating the texture. His attempt to notate Meighoo's playing had a 'deadening' effect.<sup>77</sup> Neither Foulds nor MacCarthy ever heard the movement in Foulds's scoring and no doubt a reversion to the *tablā* which inspired the part, along with the original chamber scoring, would revitalize *Bhava Nutha* in the Ramanujāchārya-MacCarthy-Meighoo-Foulds version. Nevertheless, the *Indian Suite* transcriptions comprise a fascinating, albeit flawed, musical record of MacCarthy's otherwise ephemeral performances, which likely constitute the earliest interpretations of Indian music in Britain and the earliest instances of Indo-British musical exchange.

### Fusty Bookology

In the wake of Forster's proclamation of the 'Boom', a review article entitled 'The Basis of Indian Music' appeared in the *Musical Times*. The seven publications under consideration were 'a sign', wrote the author, 'of the awakening of the West to a better understanding of the spirit of the East'.<sup>78</sup> Alongside Captain C. R. Day of the Oxford Light Infantry, whose study, *The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan* of 1891, had already achieved renown, and Sir Ernest Clements of the Indian Civil Service, Maud MacCarthy was represented by a paper she had read before the Musical Association in 1912, and from which 'we get into closer touch perhaps with the true spirit of Indian music'.<sup>79</sup> A volume of transcriptions of *Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir* by Dr Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and his second wife Ratan Devi was also considered. Devi, the assumed name of Alice Richardson, had followed somewhat in MacCarthy's footsteps when she joined Coomaraswamy on a trip to India in 1911 and studied singing with Abdul Rahim of Kapurthāla (while Coomaraswamy researched *Rajput* painting in northern India).<sup>80</sup> Once back in

London, she performed recitals which were often introduced by a lecture given by her husband.<sup>81</sup> Much of the review article was, however, taken up with an impressive new study entitled *The Music of Hindostan* (1914). We have already encountered its author from an important review of MacCarthy he likely penned in *The Times*, but it is time for a brief consideration of his own work in the context of the new interpretation of Indian music we have been tracing.

Arthur Fox Strangways (1859–1948) became a prominent figure in both English and Indian music. Well before he became music critic of *The Times* and later of *The Observer*, and prior to founding *Music and Letters* in 1920, he developed a passion for Indian music second only to ‘riding to hounds’, as composer and fellow Old Wellingtonian, George Dyson, recalled.<sup>82</sup> His brother, Maurice, spent thirty-one years in Panjāb, and Arthur himself had visited the subcontinent for the first time in 1904 when he wrote his first paper, entitled ‘The Hindu Scale’.<sup>83</sup> Later, while doing field research for his book in 1910–11, Fox Strangways visited Tagore in Shantiniketan in rural west Bengal, transcribed several *Rabindra sangit* into European notation and made cylinder recordings of music from many parts of the subcontinent. In his role as secretary of the India Society, he played a significant part, alongside the artist Sir William Rothenstein, in fostering Tagore’s literary career in Britain.<sup>84</sup>

At exactly the time that Fox Strangways was writing up his Indian music research back home, British people were experiencing the sights and sounds of the Indian Boom. The renowned *vīna* player, singer, composer, and Sufi teacher Hazrat Inayat Khan arrived in London with his Royal Musicians of Hindustan in 1912 (figure 1.7). The ensemble was distinctive in both sound and image. Elegantly attired in turbans and silk *jamās* decorated with silver-gilt thread, the youthful Muslim musicians played bowed strings, notably the elaborate peacock-shaped *mayuri vīna* (derived from the *esraj*, it has sixteen frets, four melody strings, and fifteen sympathetic strings), alongside the plucked *sitar* and *saraswati vīna*. Far from having had what has been dismissed an ‘almost nonexistent’ impact, Khan, with his ‘astonishing suppleness of voice’ performed often with his family ensemble, and on occasion to critical acclaim at the Albert Hall with the Indian Art and Dramatic Society, a group founded in 1912 by the Bengali writer Kedar Nath Das Gupta with the aim of ‘promoting a closer understanding between India and Great Britain’.<sup>85</sup>

Inayat Khan recalled meeting the busy writer at the ‘London Conservatory of Music’ [*sic*]:

There we met Mr Fox Strangways who was then writing a book on Indian music, whom I told that it is not much use writing books on Indian music. What would be really worthwhile would be to practise and get a fuller insight into Indian music, only by this could one give the true benefit of the music of the East to the West.<sup>86</sup>

Unlike MacCarthy, however, Fox Strangways was not a practitioner. Yet he was keen to strive for ‘fuller insight’, as his interactions with MacCarthy prior to his departure



**Figure 1.7**

The Royal Musicians of Hindustan in London, c.1912. (From the left) Ali Khan, *dilruba*, Hazrat Inayat Khan, *saraswati vina*, Musharaff Khan, *sitar*, Maheboob Khan, peacock-shaped *mayuri*  
 Source: International Headquarters of the Sufi Movement, Den Haag, The Netherlands.

for India in October 1910 suggest. 'He heard me in London and was very enthusiastic,' she recalled:

He wrote me several times—letters of vivid enthusiasm for the art and about my work for it. He visited me at my studio in Chelsea, and took notes from me, and various hints about 'how to proceed' in his collection of facts about Indian music, in his forthcoming visit to India.<sup>87</sup>

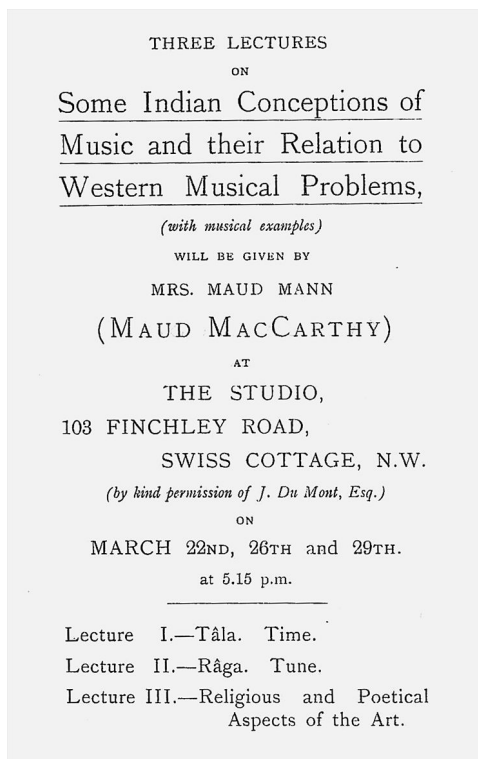
Fox Strangways took copious notes at MacCarthy's lecture-recitals, often interspersing hand-drawn staves to take down *mēlakartas* and even phrases from an *ālāp* or fixed composition. One page shows the opening of a traditional version of Ganesh's sacred dance, *Tandava Nritya Kari*, a melody which Foulds later scored for solo horn in the fourth movement of the *Indian Suite* (a brilliantly evocative transcription which, like its counterparts in the suite, is so close to its original as to be instantly recognizable).<sup>88</sup> These notes, which evoke the experience of being in MacCarthy's audience, were enclosed in letters from Fox Strangways to MacCarthy in which he chided her for being 'much too modest' and wished her all the best for her 'future Indian-musicianhood'.<sup>89</sup> When Fox Strangways's book finally appeared, however, 'with quite a flourish of trumpets', Inayat Khan's gloomy prediction was, in MacCarthy's view, confirmed:

It is not thought much of by Indian students of the art. Somehow he missed the spirit of the thing—and so missed the way to teach others how to *practice*—which, after all, is the main thing in an art, and especially in music. Yet his book has become a kind of text-book in Europe. . . . [I think that] publishers' . . . only standard [of selection] in such matters seems to be fusty with bookology and crabbed by pseudo-science.<sup>90</sup>

It was not only Indian music students for whom practice rather than theory embodied the spirit of Indian music. British musicians and composers, even bookish ones like Gustav Holst, as we will see, along with writers and academics, were far more drawn to MacCarthy's work than they were to the theory and history books published at the time. Rutland Boughton, in the year he mounted the first Glastonbury festival, wrote an enthusiastic preview to drum up support for her visit to Glastonbury Town Hall (he urged people to attend, since it would 'help a few to realise how much we Western artists and musicians have to learn from them').<sup>91</sup> The Society of Women Musicians hosted a well-attended lecture-recital in London. Percy Grainger wrote to MacCarthy: 'I should *adore* to hear your Indian instruments and music more than I can say.'<sup>92</sup> Professor Granville Bantock chaired her lecture-recital at the Birmingham and Midland Institute, supported another held at the University, and hosted her at his home, all some years after he had penned his own Indian-themed compositions (about which more in chapter 3). Among a 'keen audience at Eton College Library', one of the foremost music academicians, Donald Francis Tovey, was 'almost dancing with joy in a corner behind the platform'—a noteworthy reaction from a former suitor for her hand in marriage who had considered her career change to have been 'a tragic aberration'.<sup>93</sup> Francis Galpin, collector of and authority on musical instruments, rose to his feet to express public admiration at a London presentation, exclaiming, 'It was not they who had to learn from us, but rather we who had to learn from them.'<sup>94</sup> Undoubtedly her practical and unusually interactive style contributed to such musicians' comprehension: an audience in Hampstead was 'so keenly interested that after the concert the singer was kept answering questions and giving further demonstrations until a late hour'.<sup>95</sup>

At her [Royal] Musical Association lecture in 1912, MacCarthy spoke before 'Western musicians and composers, all of whom are keenly interested in, and some of whom are actually creating, the conditions of modern Western music'.<sup>96</sup> And a series of lectures held on Finchley Road had an intriguingly composer-oriented title (figure 1.8).

'Tradition', she told such audiences, 'is living, but convention, a dead, thing', urging musicians to develop cross-cultural techniques of composition.<sup>97</sup> The tonal capacities of *tablā*, she enthused, could be drawn into British composition—though, she noted, 'the purists will hold up their hands in horror' at the inauthentic techniques she demonstrated.<sup>98</sup> On other occasions she encouraged composers to strive for 'a real fusion' by dwelling on a particular *mēlakarta* 'until he hears harmonies swelling out of those very notes. . . the harmonies must not include any notes other than those of the *rāga*, else the Indian quality will be destroyed.'<sup>99</sup> (This was a technique of composition that, as we will see, attracted both Holst and Foulds.) Years later, a music specialist writing for the *Wireless Times* remarked that the transformative impact of hearing a recital by MacCarthy could never be achieved from books: 'I have read a good deal about Indian music, but I never before realised that, though



**Figure 1.8**

'Some Indian Conceptions of Music': advertisement for one of MacCarthy's series of lecture-recitals

Source: Reproduced from an original in the Borthwick Institute, University of York. MCF 5/2/2/2 (2).

entirely different in every way to the music of the West, it is quite as highly developed an art.<sup>100</sup> Bantock's personal secretary, Orsmond Anderton, put the matter (of 'pseudo-scientific' books versus lecture-recitals) succinctly, 'We urge all who have the opportunity to go and hear one of Mrs Mann's performances, from which more idea of the spirit of eastern music can be gained in an hour than from books alone in a year.'<sup>101</sup> Nevertheless, it was Fox Strangways's work, with its comparative methodology, theoretical framework, and transcription-based discourse, which made, and left, its official mark on the era.<sup>102</sup>

From around the year 1935 onwards, possibly to mark her departure for a new life in India, MacCarthy wrote commentaries in the margins and unused pages of the large hardback books of press clippings, correspondence, and photographs that she and her family had meticulously kept since childhood.<sup>103</sup> The extensive and engaging annotations include critical and contextual reflections on her musical interactions and activities which are captured in the various letters and press clippings from her earlier life. Read together, these fragments of self-reflection and revelation amount, in scope and nature, to private memoirs and as such suggest a rather different outlook

from the formal, revisionist autobiographical tracts whose published pages emphasize strands of occult thought that had risen to a high level of importance to her when she wrote them later in life under her new name, Omananda Puri: *The Boy and the Brothers* and *Towards the Mysteries*.<sup>104</sup> Riveting though her 'memoir' annotations are, a literary hand was never applied to them, as it was to the later autobiographies, for they were not intended for publication. It is precisely the unofficial, fragmentary nature and frank tone of these hitherto unconsidered memoirs which makes them so valuable, for they are a less measured, more perceptive, and selective account of her life. They provide a critical perspective on several highly speculative notions, such as the assumption of MacCarthy's (and, by association, of Foulds's) inextricable link with theosophy, a pervasive strand of contemporary Anglo-Indian discourse which had become what the scholar Gauri Viswanathan has described as 'the favorite sport of Britain's leisured classes'.<sup>105</sup> Within occult thought, Indian music was romanticized as 'mantramistic and trance-inducing', to quote theosophy's musical prophet in Britain, Cyril Scott, the bibliography of whose book, *Music: Its Secret Influence through the Ages*, reads like an inventory of contemporary occult sources.<sup>106</sup>

MacCarthy had initially been drawn to theosophy through Annie Besant, a social reformer and outspoken opponent of the Raj, who popularized the movement in Britain. The press made a great deal of it when the celebrated 21-year-old violinist terminated her performance career (actually because of crippling problems with her arms resulting from their over-use from an early age) to go to India in 1907: 'Drops Violin, takes up Theosophy' was the sensationalist headline from Dublin to Perth.<sup>107</sup> Besant was an important contact for MacCarthy during her Indian sojourn and would address affectionate letters to 'dear little Devi of Music', but MacCarthy journeyed to India alone and, as we have seen, her time on the subcontinent—even at Adyar which housed the headquarters of the Theosophical Society—was largely taken up with musical rather than theosophical encounters.<sup>108</sup> During a conversation with Besant in India in 1909, she realized that she was 'already far from them in spirit, albeit still among them'.<sup>109</sup> Subsequently, although she maintained a life-long interest in occult matters, she held theosophists (except Besant) in unreserved contempt ('duds, narrow, irrational') and left the Theosophical Society in disillusionment and disgust in 1916 at what she perceived to be its paucity of vision, lack of interest in fine arts, rampant corruption, and petty political rivalries: 'I had a bitter awakening.'<sup>110</sup>

Maud MacCarthy's meticulously detailed 'memoirs' open a window which had remained closed for nearly a century. Through it we can look into the very heart of the rich and varied musical interaction and cross-cultural exchange between India and Britain during the period, and gain innumerable intimate glimpses of a fascinating variety of perceptions of Indian music in Britain, of the breadth of interest in Indian music, and of the range of musical arenas in which Indian music was presented. Her significance in terms of disseminating knowledge about Indian music cannot be overstated. Moreover, in the light of the memoirs, her remarkable influence on the composers Holst and Foulds can now be conceived in sharper focus and is examined in succeeding chapters.<sup>111</sup> But the impact of the new spirit reached far wider than these two composers, and it is through responses to MacCarthy's work that we can discern that impact most keenly.

### An Equal Music

On a crisp evening in early February 1912, MacCarthy presented a paper before the Oxford Folk Music Society at the University Musical Club. The *Oxford Magazine* gave a favourable review, with a touch of local colour:

She discoursed very learnedly and in a charmingly informal and enthusiastic fashion; every one present must have been impressed with the skill with which she handled amazingly complex rhythms on the native instruments, and managed, even to the insistent accompaniment of the Christ Church bell, to sing in perfect tune scales containing twenty-two microtones to the octave.<sup>112</sup>

While virtually everyone may have been impressed, one distinguished member of the audience, under whom she had regularly played as a violinist, was not:

Dr Hugh Allen—later Sir Hugh, official adviser to Prince of Wales, Principal of the Royal College of Music, London, etc—sat in the front row. At a certain point he rose abruptly and noisily, and muttering loudly about “refusing to sit out this theatrical, barbarous stuff” walked noisily down the centre aisle from the platform right to the back of the hall, where he left. . . Dr Allen was certainly in a minority, but his name had “weight.”<sup>113</sup>

Tempting as it may be to contextualize this troubling occurrence as part of a broader British negativity towards Indian music generally and MacCarthy, in particular, that would not reflect the reality that the majority of audience members, including critics at events by MacCarthy, Devi, or Khan, responded enthusiastically. The sheer weight of evidence, gleaned from press reviews and editorials, personal letters, and testimonies, suggests that we must resist drawing overarching conclusions that fit comfortably with orthodox narratives of negative British reactions to Indian culture, MacCarthy’s own reflection on what she termed ‘the Hugh Allen episode’ notwithstanding: “I had to put up with a good deal of this kind of thing in these pioneer days. On another occasion, Frank Bridge, a well-known English composer, rose protesting audibly and left the room whilst I was singing.”<sup>114</sup> These startlingly discourteous actions by Allen and Bridge are illuminating of the prejudices of English imperial society.<sup>115</sup> We might consider what we already know of MacCarthy’s sympathetic and practical approach to her subject which violated the rule, metaphorically written over the imposing doors of elite English institutions, that music should be seen and not heard. But what of the presentation itself?

‘Attired in graceful Indian classical garb’, MacCarthy sat cross-legged before her instruments and spoke to a hall ‘packed with the elite of Oxford’ with Professor L. P. Jacks in the Chair.<sup>116</sup> The emphasis of the presentation, she explained, would be on demonstration and performance: ‘I wish to lay stress upon the practical aspect of our subject, because although much has already been achieved along theoretical lines—notably by Captain Day, in his splendid book on South Indian music, we have hitherto neglected the practice.’<sup>117</sup> Different *tālas* were tapped out on her *tablā* while the language of drumming was spoken, and a wide variety of music was introduced.

The singing, accompanied with her own drone lute, involved improvised hand gestures which made dynamic, three-dimensional shapes out of the vocal lines—what she called the ‘fine art of musical gesticulation’—an idiomatic practise which may have appeared ‘theatrical’ to Allen, but which makes up what Indian music scholar Matthew Rahaim has termed the ‘musicking body’.<sup>118</sup> Performances included a Panjābi folk song *Khedane De din*; a spirited Gujarati song by Narasinha Menetā—‘Get up! Descendant of Yadu, Krishna the Cowherd! Who will eat curds and *ghi* and drink boiled milk, if not yourself?; a ‘very complex’ *kṛiti* by Iyer in *Rāga Bilahari*; a *vīna* study; and a folk dance by *Dalit* or ‘*Panchama* [‘fifth class’] girls in Madras’. Of this last, MacCarthy explained, without apology at the affront to the glorious image of Hinduism that familiar texts on Indian music had constructed: ‘These girls belong to the lowest dregs of society. They are outcasts. One girl sang solos, and the others joined in the chorus, and the time or *Tāla* was done by clapping hands.’<sup>119</sup> On another occasion, after a particularly poetic folk-song text, MacCarthy reflected:

The singer who imaginatively addresses his own body in musical tones as strongly beautiful as are these words, seems to me to be indistinguishable from the cultured artist—nay, often, listening to these men, I have thought that [if we have much to teach,] we [also] have much to learn from them.<sup>120</sup>

Although the square brackets indicate her last-minute penned additions, the original typescript (emphasized, perhaps, in her delivery) leaves no doubt as to who needed to learn from whom.

People of Dr Allen’s stature had previously taken heed of scholarly discourse on an imaginary museum of classical (‘highbrow’) Indian music. But anyone expecting a suit-and-tie to expound theoretical points about a Hindu Golden Age from behind a lectern may, when faced with a musicking body presenting modern music from different castes, religions, and regions of the subcontinent, have experienced something akin to the well-documented disappointment of the Orientalist upon coming into contact with ‘the Orient’ itself. Moreover, William Dalrymple is right I think, when he says that while East–West cross-fertilization of cultures does not surprise us, the reverse still does: that a European should voluntarily choose to cross over—and ‘turn Turk’ as the Elizabethans first put it, or ‘go native’—is still something which has the capacity to take us aback, and no doubt did in the 1910s.<sup>121</sup> ‘Go native’ is just what MacCarthy did (figure 1.9).

Here was MacCarthy, exquisite in image and accomplished in sound, dressed in a golden silk sari and playing her superb Thanjāvūr *vīna*, ‘the replica of a model said to be 5,000 years old’.<sup>122</sup> Although she had, in her own estimation, only coarse skills at the *vīna*, she could play (with the small but strong fingers of a virtuoso violinist) several of the ‘forty Madras studies’ which she had notated with their attendant fingerings. Descriptions of listeners being ‘captivated’ and ‘spell-bound’ conjure a Saraswati-like image (though her playing position can be compared with that of the legendary Veena Dhanammal as opposed to the more fanciful iconography of the Hindu goddess of learning, Saraswati, always depicted with a *vīna* in painting and sculpture<sup>123</sup>). ‘Her art’,



**Figure 1.9**

Maud MacCarthy with her *saraswati vīna* from Thanjavūr, c.1920

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

marvelled one music critic, 'is of that rare, refined quality which does not pall.'<sup>124</sup> The transformative effect of sound and image is well captured in this review:

There was a low platform on which her slight figure, in its soft robes of drapery, crouched before a *vinā* and a native drum; and as she sang her strange Indian songs, with their intermingling of three rhythms (giving a wonderful lithe suppleness), the walls of the room seemed to melt away, - we were sitting on the verandah of an Indian bungalow and in the compound was an Indian singer playing the *tambura* and the *vin ā* and singing in the magical light of an Indian landscape.<sup>125</sup>

Ultimately, though, 'the Hugh Allen Episode' was not only about the tenor of the presentation but also, crucially, about the main thrust of the argument that shook imperial assumptions about both race and class which lay at the heart of 'Englishness' itself. The whole idea of the Oxford *Folk Music Society* hosting her lecture on Indian music reinforced British imperial notions of where such music sat on the evolutionary ladder constructed by anthropological thought. If the subject had been 'folk art', perceived as simple and lowly, it would have allowed the unsuspecting Allen to

practise his well-honed patronizing skills. Among her demonstrations was 'high art' in all its complexity and, even more problematic, high art whose traditions pre-dated anything British by centuries, as her pithy riposte to a remark about her *vīna*'s beautiful bridge being the 'last word in Western modernity' elucidated: 'Not so... such bridges were in use in India when we were still living in the wild wood caves.'<sup>126</sup> What MacCarthy tried to show was that music is a horizontal continuum of different but equal musics, not a vertical, hierarchical plane of superior–inferior. The evolutionary theory of music expounded by Parry and others, upon whose claim to superiority the ideology of empire itself ultimately depended, was effectively subverted. Allen had most certainly left the hall by the time MacCarthy reached her concluding remarks which presented the biggest methodological challenge of all to the conventional study of Indian culture:

It is difficult to study Indian music apart from her people, but if we make them our friends, we find that hospitality is an Indian virtue. . . . Those of you who may care to pursue the study further, [consider] that for every forward step you may take—if it is taken with real sympathy—you will find Indians who will take two steps to meet you.<sup>127</sup>

This was not the only time MacCarthy presented to the literary and musical elite. For two decades, from 1910 to 1930, driven by a commitment to bridging the colonial divide and 'the colour bar' as she termed it, MacCarthy tirelessly gave lecture-recitals, across Britain and in Paris, earning the acclaim, as well as the friendship and respect of Indian, British, and French luminaries. 'Eastern culture', reported the *Indian Magazine and Review* following a lecture-recital at the Ash Tree Studio in Hampstead, 'is now attracting considerable attention in Europe, and a number of people, prominent in artistic and literary circles, were delighted thus to make further acquaintance with the East through its music.' Thus, the reviewer continued:

A large audience gathered... to hear Mrs Maud Mann's lecture-recital on Indian music. . . . They listened with keen appreciation to the numerous examples and many styles of Indian melodies rendered by Mrs Mann, among them songs in Telugu, Bengali, Sanskrit, Hindi, Brij Bhasha etc.<sup>128</sup>

In the educational sphere, a specially designed series of five teaching sessions was integrated into the London County Council Schools; extramural lectures were given at Cambridge University; and '[her] Illustrations of Indian Classical Music are now used by Professors of the London Academy in their lectures'.<sup>129</sup>

But it was not only the privileged and educated who were touched. It is here that a focus on MacCarthy's work and reception provides compelling evidence of the impact of the Raj, particularly in terms of music, on ordinary people at the time. MacCarthy had long been driven by egalitarian socialist ideals which she expressed in articles and in her memoirs. By 1906, she had grown tired of her mother's drive for her to play in the great concert halls:

I had a great longing to play to audiences of poor working folk . . . there was no Radio then . . . West End prices were beyond them . . . We were living in Battersea, and I got someone to arrange a popular concert in the Town Hall there. I longed to go out to the masses and help them . . . In 1914–15, I arranged many concerts of good music in the poor parts of London, which were packed and immensely appreciated.<sup>130</sup>

A review in the *Clapham Observer* of 12 May 1906, which stated that ‘the crowded attendance was sufficient to show that the people of Battersea and the surrounding neighbourhood are not slow to come and listen to and appreciate good music when they can get it near at hand’, corroborates her testimony. Picking up with the *vīna* where she left off with the violin, her presentations reached well outside academic and artistic circles. A 1913 review verifies her description that her ‘Brighton audience—for instance, was a popular one’.<sup>131</sup> A lecture-recital at Cambridge’s Guildhall in February 1914 was so keenly attended by townspeople ‘that many were unable to gain admittance’.<sup>132</sup> On another occasion she presented for an audience of ‘simple, lower-middle class folk’, hosted by the Birmingham University Workers Educational Association.<sup>133</sup> This populism, driven by a strongly activist approach, became central to her creative work during and after the First World War. It was advertised that the proceeds of her lecture-recital in Glastonbury ‘will be remitted to The Indian Soldiers’ Fund’ in recognition of ‘the war debt to our Indian brothers’.<sup>134</sup> This is a poignant reminder of the thousands of combatants, from what the reigning King-Emperor termed ‘My Indian Empire’, who had fought and died in the mud and gore of northern France during the First World War.<sup>135</sup> Quite aware of the ‘awful prejudice’ that some of her Indian friends suffered, and which I examine in chapter 5, she wrote: ‘I had another reason for “devoting” myself to Indian music. I wished to contribute something to breaking down the colour-bar.’<sup>136</sup> She noted suffering and going hungry for the work she felt so passionate about.<sup>137</sup>

In the wake of the Jallianwala Bagh Massacre of 1919 (which led Tagore to renounce his Nobel Prize for literature), Inayat Khan left for Paris, and Devi and Coomaraswamy emigrated to the United States.<sup>138</sup> Nevertheless, given the Indian networks which had by now been established, interpretations of Indian culture still permeated artistic circles in Britain. In 1920, the Rajasthani dancer Uday Shankar joined his barrister father in London and took up studies at the Royal College of Art under Rothenstein.<sup>139</sup> His famous ‘Radha-Krishna Duet’, the second of two *Hindu Miniatures* forming Parts II and III of Anna Pavlova’s ballet *Oriental Impressions* was presented at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden in September 1923. The ballet’s music was composed by Comalata Bannerji, daughter of Albion R. Bannerji the *diwan* of Mysore, for an orchestra of ‘some eighty hands’ as Shankar’s biographer, Mohan Khokar puts it.<sup>140</sup> In the same year, Bannerji gave a piano recital in Steinway (now Wigmore) Hall in which she played her own compositions.<sup>141</sup> The singer, composer, and scholar, Surya Sena (1899–1981) and his wife Nelun Devi gave recitals and lectures such as the one in December 1932 at Grotrian Hall in Wigmore Street, which featured songs they had collected together in travels through their native Sri Lanka.<sup>142</sup>

In the summer of 1922, as mentioned earlier, MacCarthy directed the ‘intensely interesting’ music for Niranjana Pāl’s play *The Goddess*, which was produced at the Ambassador Theatre by The Indian Players, a group who had taken up the pioneering efforts of Das Gupta’s thespian group (renamed the Union of East and West).<sup>143</sup> John Foulds had, through his wife’s connections, already written music for Das Gupta’s version of the great Kālidāsa epic, *Śakuntala*, produced at the Alhambra Theatre in 1918 and for Tagore’s play *Sacrifice* at the Prince of Wales Theatre in 1920.<sup>144</sup> With *The Goddess*, though, MacCarthy’s own field research was presented, thereby reaching a new audience:

Miss MacCarthy and her husband had a very keen wish to arrange... music in *The Goddess* which should prove as near the real thing as it is possible to have without the actual Indian instruments.... Some of the tunes have been composed by Mr Foulds, based on the methods of the far East [*sic*], and others are from the collection Miss MacCarthy made when in India.... The music of “the Goddess” is, to my mind, alone worth going to hear, and going to hear more than once.<sup>145</sup>

Alongside Tyāgarāja’s *kṛiti*, *Bhavanuta*, which became the first movement of the *Indian Suite*, MacCarthy performed ‘such gems’ as an overture on an Agra *ghazāl*, and ‘a song in Bengali Style’ whose ‘vital and telling’ melody was in a style suggested to her by Tagore’s singing when he visited her some years earlier.<sup>146</sup> This last, entitled ‘Song of Ram Das’, MacCarthy ‘wrote herself’, and it survives among the manuscripts which her husband scripted in India in 1935: in Foulds’s orchestrated version, it is called *The Song of Ram Dass* [*sic*] with a ‘tune by M. MacCarthy’.<sup>147</sup>

But theatre and dance were being eclipsed by the rise of new technologies in the 1920s.<sup>148</sup> With the growth of cinema and the advent of radio, MacCarthy’s work in Indian music was catapulted into the homes and the imaginations of thousands of people. The tremendous impact of these phenomena on the dissemination of culture and politics played a role in maintaining imperial fervour right through this post-war decade and into the early 1930s. MacCarthy understood how the radio and other media would transform musical transmission. In January 1926, the immensely popular imperialist film *India To-Day* was given a revival at the Polytechnic Cinema Theatre in Regent Street. For three weeks, thrice daily, MacCarthy gave a lecture-recital in the interval, drawing the attention of newspapers, thousands of people, and of the BBC.<sup>149</sup> *The Nation and the Athenaeum* declared it to be ‘by far the most interesting item in the showing of the film. She has a voice of remarkable flexibility, and a very uncommon accuracy of ear, which, combined, enable her to sing songs which would baffle many European singers by their complexity of rhythm and scale. Some of the songs she sings are extremely beautiful.’<sup>150</sup> Later the same month, she gave the first known broadcast of Indian music in Europe from 2LO to an audience, according to one, perhaps somewhat generous, estimate, of millions.<sup>151</sup> *The Wireless Times* found the presentation revelatory and remarked that it was ‘not only one of the most interesting musical talks I have heard, but one of the cleverest as well’.<sup>152</sup> Subsequent broadcasts, including those on Empire Day from 1926 to 1928, were given enthusiastic mentions in newspapers and magazines across the country, one remarking on her ‘rare sense of humour’.<sup>153</sup>

Before the family left for India she wrote an impassioned 'defence' of her ambition and efforts to build a musical bridge between India and Britain and its great personal cost, which may account for the hint of regret in her memoir: 'I was burning with the ardour of an inner quest; I did not care if I missed my footing in the University so long as I held it in the living reality of experience. . . . I drifted among the people, uncertain as to livelihood and worldly position, but garnering a rich harvest of experience, inner and outer. I lived, anyway.' Ill health, family responsibilities, and a lack of financial stability all conspired against the book MacCarthy had planned and which would have ensured her a place in the historiography of Indian music studies in the West. Nevertheless, her 'charmingly informal and enthusiastic' deconstructions of imperialist discourse had the effect of challenging widely held assumptions about Indian music's inferiority, and shoring up, among at least some of her 'stolid' English audiences, interest in the Indian people whose musical traditions she was practising.<sup>154</sup>

There has been much scholarly debate about whether the empire had an impact on ordinary British people.<sup>155</sup> MacCarthy's creative work—characterized by its humility, and which sought to humanize not to patronize, to initiate creative interactions rather than to preserve 'pure' musical traditions, to emphasize the overlapping musical experience of Indians and British—certainly did. Though at times met with hostility, it was through her work, sophisticated in technique and informal in tone, that the interpretation of Indian music in Britain overcame numerous racial, cultural, and social obstacles. The extent of the achievement might be glimpsed in a remark that closes the Indian music 'chapters' of her memoir:

All my audiences for lecture-recitals of Indian music were genuinely enthusiastic; which proves that the saying 'East is East, and West is West' only applies superficially.<sup>156</sup>

Indeed, it may well be that the most enduring influence on the era can be traced not so much in the 'fusty book-lore' but in the more ephemeral lecture-recitals and articles of Maud MacCarthy. Her influence on the interpretation of Indian music in the West continued through her husband, the self-taught Mancunian composer John Foulds, and beyond—into the early years of Indian independence and, later, the West-East fusion of the 1960s—which is the story of the last chapter of this book. Ultimately, her work suggests a far less exclusionary frame for Indian music study than has generally characterized the colonial encounter, and provides evidence of a rich engagement with the lived experience of people, Indians and British, past and present.

## NOTES

1. *Mrdangam* is a double-headed, barrel-shaped wooden drum predominant in the *Karnātic* music of South India; *saraswati vīna*, fretted, with four main playing strings, is the primary stringed instrument in South India.
2. *Kṛiti*, a three-part compositional form, is the central genre in the *Karnātic* music tradition. The photograph is clipped from an old newspaper article that, to my regret, cannot be reproduced successfully, but I have included it on the website which accompanies this book. It is an extraordinary scene for the times—a lone European woman

amid a group of men, and sitting on the ground dressed in a sari. Maud MacCarthy Papers, Private Family Collection (hereinafter MM Papers).

3. E. M. Forster, 'The Indian Boom', *Daily News and Leader*, 2 February 1915, 10.
4. The intimate connection between scholarly knowledge and the practicalities of colonial rule is illustrated in the address which Lord Curzon (1859–1925), former Viceroy of India, gave to the House of Lords in 1909: 'our familiarity, not merely with the languages of the people of the East but with their customs, their feelings, their traditions, their history and religion... is the sole basis upon which we are likely to be able to maintain in the future the position we have won.' Curzon went on to assert that such knowledge would enable Britain to secure imperial control of territories not yet won. Quoted in John Walter de Gruchy, *Orientalism, Japonism, and the Creation of Japanese Literature in English* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2003), 67–8.
5. First quotation is from Captain C. R. Day, 'Notes on Indian Music', in *Proceedings of the Music Association*, 20th session 1893–4 (London: Novello, Ewer & Co, 1894), 45–66, 65: 'Such, then, is a rapid sketch of Indian music... If, however, I have been able, by this paper, to show that the much-despised Indian music is really an Art, and an intricate and difficult Art, worthy of serious study and research, I shall feel more than amply repaid.' The second is from an Editorial in the *Royal College of Music Magazine* 10 (1913): 35. In his memoirs of the Gramophone Company's recording project in India from 1902, Fred Gaisberg recalled that the English who encountered Indian music found it static and displeasing (*Music on Record* (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1947), esp. ch. 4, 'The Gramophone Goes East (1902)', 53–65).
6. David Lelyveld, 'Upon the Subdominant: Administering Music on All-India Radio', *Social Text* 39 (Summer 1994): 111–27, 113.
7. Imogen Holst, *Tune* (1st ed. 1962; London: Faber and Faber, 2008), 55; see also 49 where Holst refers to her 'good fortune to be sent to Santiniketan as a pupil-teacher' in order for the students 'to learn something about Western music'.
8. John Foulds, 'Is the Gulf between Eastern and Western Music Unbridgeable?' *Orpheus Abroad*, talk no. 1 (broadcast from All India Radio in Delhi on 6 March 1937); MM Papers.
9. *Ibid.*
10. See Edward Said's groundbreaking study of the colonization and representation by Europe of 'the Orient' in which he defines Orientalism as a 'system of knowledge about the Orient, and accepted grid for filtering through the Orient into Western consciousness' (*Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (1978); reprinted with a new Afterword (London: Penguin Books, 1995), esp. 6). In the field of India studies, Ursula Sharma has shown how the West generated orientalist discourse and information about the 'Orient' which made it palatable for, and compliant with, colonial power interests and forms of administrative domination (*Caste* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), esp. 5–30).
11. The first quotation ('chaotic and incoherent') is from 'Musical Association', *Musical Times* 35, no. 613 (1 March 1894): 174; the second is from the title of an infamous travelogue (whose pronouncements on Indian music we will return to in ch. 5) by Beverley Nichols, *Verdict on India* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1944); the last three are from Lelyveld, 'Upon the Subdominant', 113.
12. As Robert Colls and Philip Dodd write: "Vigorous, manly, and English" was the popular collocation. The identification of the English with the masculine could even determine matters of literary style... The dominant English licensed to other groups and to other nationalities those "female" qualities which it did not acknowledge itself to possess. As recently as 1973 Professor William Walsh could write in his book *Commonwealth Literature* that Indians do not write in a "direct, masculine way," but

with “Indian tenderness” (*Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920* (London: Croon Helm, 1986), 6).

13. Hubert Parry, *The Evolution of the Art of Music* (first published in 1893, and in its 10th edition by 1931; London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Trübner, 1925), 57–9. The evaluation of Parry is that of Jeremy Dibble, ‘Parry, Sir Hubert’, *Grove Music Online*. *Oxford Music Online*, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/20949>>.

The start of the ‘English musical renaissance’ itself is associated with the premiere either of Parry’s cantata *Prometheus Unbound* in 1880 or of his *Blest Pair of Sirens* in 1887. Parry’s family was distinguished: his father, Thomas Gambier Parry, was a director of the East India Company; Thomas’s great-uncle, Lord Gambier, was Admiral of the Fleet. Toward the end of his life, Parry was honoured with a knighthood and a baronetcy. Parry’s judgements about Indian music, it should be noted, have no scholarly or theoretical basis.

14. Helen Myers, ‘Great Britain’, in *Ethnomusicology: Historical and Regional Studies*, ed. Helen Myers (Basingstoke, UK: Macmillan Press, 1993), 129–47, 139. Sourindro Mohun Tagore edited a collection of British studies of Indian music: *Hindu Music from Various Authors* (1875; Varanasi: Chowkhanba Sanskrit Series Office, 1965).
15. See Lelyveld, ‘Upon the Subdominant’, 113; Joep Bor, ‘The Rise of Ethnomusicology: Sources on Indian Music c.1780–1890’, *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 20 (1988): 51–73; and Bor’s review of Gerry Farrell’s *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford University Press, 1997), *Asian Music* 29, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1998): 129–38, 134.
16. MacCarthy, Lecture III, London, typescript; MM Papers.
17. Given Forster’s remarks about MacCarthy having unlocked the ‘subtle and exquisite spirit’ of Indian music, the episode in which Professor Godbole sings in *A Passage to India* may not be as obviously imperialist as some commentators have deemed it (see, for instance, Lelyveld, ‘Upon the Subdominant’, 111–12): ‘But the ear, baffled repeatedly, soon lost any clue, and wandered in a maze of noises, none harsh or unpleasant, none intelligible.’ It seems to me that what Forster presents here is not his description of the professor’s song but, rather, and with the accuracy of a historical novelist, the bemused reactions of his British listeners. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924; London: Marshall Cavendish Ltd, 1988), 71–2.
18. Parry’s book, for instance, appeared in its 10th edition in 1931. Mark Slobin writes: ‘The study of world musics moved out of what would nowadays be called an orientalist stance only in the 1960s. Till then, few people seriously questioned the notion that beyond the Western classical tradition there were three kinds of music to be studied: Oriental, folk and primitive’ (*Subcultural Sounds: Micromusics of the West* (Hanover, NH: Wesleyan University Press, 1993; 2nd printing, 2000), 4).
19. It is worth noting that several figures have been the subject of examination through the critical lenses of orientalism and elitism.
20. Foulds’s biographer Malcolm MacDonald touched on biographical points about MacCarthy as they intersected with his subject’s work on the basis of archival materials given to him to hold in trust by Marybride Watt; see *John Foulds and His Music: An Introduction* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1989), esp. 20–21. Using the archival materials now at York, ethnomusicologist Neil Sorrell began to rehabilitate her achievements; see ‘From “Harm-omnium” to Harmonia Omnium: Assessing Maud MacCarthy’s Influence on John Foulds and the Globalization of Indian Music’, *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society* 40 (1 January 2010): 110–130; and ‘Early Western Pioneers: John

- Foulds and Maud MacCarthy', in *Hindustani Music: Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Joep Bor et al. (New Delhi: Manohar, 2010), 511–20.
21. Nalini Ghuman, 'MacCarthy, Maud', in *Grove Music Online. Oxford Music Online*. Oxford University Press (forthcoming).
  22. T. Viswanathan and Matthew Harp Allen, *Music in South India* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 70–74. These authors further explain that 'social attitudes of the time discouraged women from performance of improvised music and from mannerisms considered male, such as the keeping of tāla on the thighs'. One of MacCarthy's photographs, which she entitled 'teaching tāla' captures exactly this.
  23. MacCarthy, Green Book, 11; MM Papers. In the family collection are large, hardback books covering the main chapters, or 'acts' as she called them, of her life: hereinafter, I refer to them in the manner which she did: Small Blue, Green, and Large Blue.
  24. *Athenaeum*, quotation included on MacCarthy's press packet in the Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York (hereinafter Borthwick Archive). A list of music she played along with programmes and reviews is in the private family collection. Donald Francis Tovey (1875–1940) was a musicologist, composer, conductor, and pianist. See also, 'Miss MacCarthy's Concerts', *Musical Times*, 1 March 1905, 188.
  25. Small Blue Book, esp. 44–5. Heifetz anecdote is from Blair Johnston, 'Sonata for solo violin No. 3 in C major, BWV 1005', <<http://www.allmusic.com/composition/sonata-for-solo-violin-no-3-in-c-major-bwv-1005-mc0002365748>>.
  26. Her highly developed musical memory may have also been helpful, although she acknowledged that it was of a different kind from the one required to learn Indian music in the traditional manner.
  27. MacCarthy wrote to Annie Besant explaining that financial need would mean she had to sell it; Besant replied, roundly rejecting the idea and, indeed, she sailed back to Britain with the precious violin a few months prior to Maud's own departure in late summer 1909; letters, Borthwick Archive.
  28. The remarks of Bengali polymath Rabindranath Tagore are published in MacCarthy's press packet, Borthwick Archive.
  29. Edward J. Dent, 'The Alleged Stupidity of Singers', *Musical Times* 58, no. 896 (1 October 1917): 443–5, 444. Dent (1876–1957), professor of music at Cambridge from 1926 to 1941, was the first British musicologist of international standing.
  30. I purposely use the term 'ethnomusicology', although the relatively new discipline was called comparative musicology at the time. In the absence of any knowledge of the archival sources in the family collection which include, *inter alia*, MacCarthy's field notes, Jaime Jones speculated that MacCarthy was probably not an ethnomusicologist in the way we understand the term today (Karishmeh Felfeli, 'From Clonmel to Calcutta: The Untold Story of Maud MacCarthy', radio docu-drama, Dublin City FM, 18 July 2012).
  31. Tagore, foreword to *Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir*, recorded by Ratan Devi and Ananda K. Coomaraswamy (London: Kahn & Averill Ltd., 1913). Most of the 'Hindustanee Airs' known to the British in the nineteenth century came from William Hamilton Bird's collection, *The Oriental Miscellany: being a collection of the most favourite Airs of Hindoostan, compiled and adapted for the Harpsichord* (Calcutta, 1789; Edinburgh, 1805).
  32. MacCarthy, script for a lecture-recital given at the Salle du Guide in Paris, 9 March 1928, 19; MM Papers.
  33. Review, *The Times* (London), 4 April 1912. Green Book, 24. Arthur Fox Strangways was music critic for *The Times*, 1911–25; chief music critic of *The Observer*, 1925–39; and, in 1920, founder of the academic journal *Music and Letters* (an Oxford University Press quarterly).

34. Some descriptions are paraphrased from MacCarthy's article, 'The Art of Improvisation', *Sunday Statesman* (Delhi and Calcutta), 22 September 1935.
35. For a recent interpretation of the outline and *ālāp* of *Rāga Kedar*, see Joep Bor, ed., *The Raga Guide: A Survey of 74 Hindustani Ragas* (Wyastone: Nimbus Records, 2002), 92 and disk 3.
36. The translation I have used is based on MacCarthy's own.
37. For example, the macron used in the word *phūlana* (flowers) accurately transliterates the long vowel in the first syllable फूल (flower).
38. First quotation is from the report of her lecture given at the Musical Association in London in 1912; the longer quotation is from MacCarthy, 'Harmony and the Orchestra', in the series 'The Ideals of Indian Music', *Sunday Statesman* (Calcutta and Delhi), 6 October 1935.
39. Review, *The Times*, 4 April 1912. Green Book, 24.
40. MacCarthy, Press packet; MM Papers.
41. MacCarthy, cited in a review of her lecture-recital series in the *Hindu* (Madras), January 1912.
42. Cited in K. V. R., 'Books in Brief', *Hindu*, 26 June 1938, 6. The *Peria Katchi*, one of the two 'factions' of disciples that carried on Tyāgarāja's tradition after his death, was led by Narasimha Bhagavathar and supported by Panchapagesa Bhagavathar.
43. MacCarthy, Manuscript of Lecture to Oxford Folk Song Society, 16; MM Papers.
44. It takes many years to master these *rāgas* since they are complex entities; but being so musically precocious and dedicated, she certainly seems to have learned to sing them convincingly.
45. MacCarthy was unofficial and travelled alone; she was neither married to nor connected with a distinguished figure; she was also empathetic and a performer, not connected with any association or educational establishment. In her fine survey of the historical field of ethnomusicology in Britain, Myers makes the point about the lack of British studies of *Karnātic* music, citing Ernest Clements's work as one of the exceptions. Like many others, Myers clearly did not know of MacCarthy. Myers also mentions the affiliation of British writers on Indian music with the Royal Asiatic Society ('Great Britain', 141). The scope and extent of MacCarthy's work may demand a re-evaluation of the history of modern ethnomusicology in Britain; I am preparing a monograph on MacCarthy and her musical work.
46. MacCarthy, Lecture III, London, undated, typescript by William Mann; MM Papers.
47. See Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism and the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), particularly 51, 59, 66, and 206–7. Ethnomusicologist Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy has noted that Arthur Fox Strangways's 'discussions of ancient Indian music' (contemporary with MacCarthy's) 'must be viewed with caution' (*The Rāgs of North India: Their Structure and Evolution* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd, 1995), 23).
48. Sir William Jones, 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos', *Asiatick Researches* 3 (1784), repr. in S. M. Tagore, ed., *Hindu Music*, 136.
49. Rabindranath Tagore's 1916 novel *The Home and the World*, dramatized in Satyajit Ray's film *Ghar Baire* of 1984, brilliantly captures how the divisive nature of the growing nationalist movement in Bengal in the aftermath of the 1905 partition (which is discussed in detail in ch. 2) coincided with the British policy of divide and rule. Nikhilesh is as disturbed by the aggressive Hindu nationalism underlying the radicalism of his friend, Sandip, as he is by British colonial atrocities.
50. Maud Mann [MacCarthy], 'Some Indian Conceptions of Music', a paper read before the Musical Association, London, 16 January 1912; rev. and repr. from the Proceedings

- of the Association, with a preface and some additional notes (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1913).
51. MacCarthy, quoted in the *Hindu*, 26 January 1912. *Tambūrā* is a long-necked unfretted lute; it has four wire strings which are all plucked open and together to create the drone in Indian classical music. Called *tambūrā* in the South, it is more commonly known as *tānpūra* in the North.
  52. 'Indian Music', *Times of India*, 16 September 1925. She also gave talks to Indian Students in February and April 1912, manuscripts in private family collection.
  53. MacCarthy, 'The Ideals of Indian Music II: The Art of Improvisation', *Sunday Statesman*, 22 September 1935.
  54. *Indian Magazine and Review* (London, n.d.), Green Book, 31. *Musical Standard*: 'The most telling part of her work is her improvisation of Indian music,' press packet, Green Book.
  55. Quotation from 'Anglo-Indian Press' section of MacCarthy's press packet, Borthwick Archive.
  56. Anon., 'Indian Music', *Wireless Times*, February 1926, 741.
  57. Preface to the *Indian Suite*, autograph score (courtesy of Graham Hatton).
  58. MacCarthy's 'Krishnamachari Collection' (1909); MM Papers.
  59. *Kirtan* is broadly speaking a synonym for *kṛiti* (see n. 2), although it is sometimes used to refer to more devotional examples of the genre.
  60. MacCarthy, 'Krishnamachari's Collection' (1909), prose translation of the first *charanam*, 17; MM Papers.
  61. Patnam Subramaniya Iyer (1845–1902), following Tyāgarāja, wrote almost one hundred compositions, among them *kṛitis* or *kirtanams* like this one in praise of his Lord Venkateswara, a form of the god Vishnu. Foulds used the spelling 'Manasu Karagathemi' for the transliterated title, rather than the more typical 'Manasu Karugademi'. I use Foulds's spelling only when referring to his arrangement's title.
  62. For comparison, listen, for instance, to the 1965 recording of *Bhavanutha* by the legendary violinist M. S. Gopalakrishnan (1931–2013).
  63. These movements capture the performance style of the *Karnātic* tradition which involves a unique balance between improvisation and fixed compositions, many of them by the 'trinity' of composers, Tyāgarāja, Dikshitar, and Śāstri, whose eighteenth- and nineteenth-century classical *kṛitis* were carefully learned; their body of compositions continues to this day to be a central part of concert music-making.
  64. MacCarthy, prose meaning of the *pallavi* as learned from W. A. Krishnamachari. 'Krishnamachari's Collection', 23; MM Papers.
  65. MacCarthy, handwritten script of lecture-recital given at Birmingham University, 8 December 1915, 9; Borthwick Archive.
  66. *The Rāgas of Tanjore: Songs and Hymns from the Répertoire of the Karnatic Singer* [Vaidyanatha Iyer], *Natrajan, Arranged in Staff Notation*, ed. E. Clements (London: The Dharwar gayan samaj, 1920), 73.
  67. The fact that the movement begins straight away with the *pallavi* without a preceding *ālāp* probably reflects Foulds's practical approach to notating a piece for orchestra.
  68. Violinist siblings Lalgudi G. J. R. Krishnan and Lalgudi J. Vijayalakshmi from Chennai in a performance of *Manasu Karugademo* (*Sarēgāma*, 2004).
  69. MacCarthy, Green Book, 34.
  70. Parry included music examples in his discussion which, I believe, illustrate *pallavi* returns in an unidentified *kṛiti* (*The Evolution of the Art of Music*, 58).

71. Although she learned *Karnātic tālas* in Thanjāvūr, it was the North Indian *tablā* which she had brought back that she played on in Britain. Her drumming was remarked on in, for instance, a review of her lecture-recital for the Oxford Folk Music Society, *Oxford Magazine*, 1912; Green Book, 20.
72. MacCarthy, lecture script for a presentation at the Salle du Guide, Paris, 9 March 1928; MM Papers.
73. Julia Chatterton, 'Indian Music'—review of *The Goddess*, informed by an interview with MacCarthy, *Musical Standard*, 12 August 1922, 57.
74. Ibid.
75. Even though the South Indian *mrdangam* would have traditionally been used in this *Karnātic kriti*, we know that Mr Meighoo was in fact a *tablā* player because of the reference to drums in the plural: that is, the *tablā* and *bayan*, commonly referred to simply as *tablā*.
76. MacCarthy, 'Indian Musical Education', *Modern Review* (Calcutta), June, 1911, 2–3.
77. Ibid.
78. Kathleen Schlesinger, 'The Basis of Indian Music', *Musical Times* 56, no. 868 (1 June 1915): 335–9, 339.
79. Ibid, 336. Captain C. R. Day, *The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan* (London: Novello, 1891); Sir Ernest Clements, *Introduction of the Study of Indian Music* (London: Longmans & Co., 1913, 1913); Mann [MacCarthy], 'Some Indian Conceptions of Music'.
80. Coomaraswamy's first wife, Ethel (née Partridge), returned alone from India in 1910 after he took up with Alice Richardson. Tanya Harrod, 'Ananda Coomaraswamy', *Crafts* 143 (November/December 1996): 20–3.
81. See, for instance, F. A. Hadland, 'Indian Music: Ratan Devi's Recital' [at Aeolian Hall] *Musical Times* 57 (1 January 1916): 27–8. Coomaraswamy, *The Dance of Śiva: Fourteen Indian Essays* (New York: The Sunwise Turn, Inc., 1918), 74.
82. Obituary: 'A. H. Fox Strangways (1859–1948)' by Eric Blom, Richard Capell, Hester C. Colles, George Dyson, Maud Karpeles, et al., in *Music & Letters* 29, no. 3 (July 1948): 229–37, 233.
83. Mary Lago, *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore 1911–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 39.
84. Ibid., 8.
85. See, for instance, a review of a performance at the Albert Hall in *The Times*, 31 July 1912, p. 5, col. 6, from which the quotation about Khan's solo singing is taken. The second quotation comes from Colin Chambers, '“A Flute of Praise”: Indian Theatre in Britain in the Early Twentieth Century', in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections*, ed. Susheila Nasta (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 153. The Society, based in Regent's Park, was renamed The Union of East and West in 1914. Peter Lavezzoli has dismissed Khan's impact in terms of Indian classical music in the West as almost non-existent, and even suggests that this may be because he did not have 'a globally revered Western musician like Yehudi Menuhin by his side' (*The Dawn of Indian Music in the West: The Story of the Musical Merging of East and West* (New York: Continuum, 2007), 6). For more information about the activities of Inayat Khan (1882–1927) in Britain and Europe, see Regina Miriam Bloch, *The Confessions of Inayat Khan* (London: The Sufi Publishing Society Ltd, 1915), 49; Inayat Khan, *The Mysticism of Sound* (Sufi Movement, London, 1923; reprint Ektasis Editions Canada, 2003), 11; and Susheela Misra, 'Sufi Inayat Khan', in Misra's *Great Masters of Hindustani Music* (New Delhi: Hem Publishers, 1981).

86. Khan, *Biography of Pir-o-Murshid Inayat Khan* (London: East-West Publications, 1979), 128.
87. MacCarthy, Green Book. His letters to MacCarthy are indeed enthusiastic; Borthwick Archive and MM Papers. MacCarthy was living in Chelsea in 1909–10 after her return from India.
88. The page is reproduced on this book's companion website.
89. Fox Strangways, letters to MacCarthy with enclosed notes from her lecture-recitals: 21 October 1910 from Bombay following her lecture earlier that month, and from Britain, 29 March 1912. First letter and note, Borthwick Archive; second letter and note, MM Papers.
90. MacCarthy, Green Book, 24.
91. Rutland Boughton writing in a local, Glastonbury Newspaper in 1914; clipped and kept in the Green Book.
92. Quoted in MacCarthy, 'Is Hindu Music Appreciated in the West?' letter in *The Leader* (Allahabad), 29 August 1912.
93. MacCarthy, Green Book, 30.
94. *Indian Mirror* (Calcutta), 20 February 1912. Francis Galpin (1858–1945) was a musicologist and organologist. He arranged an important exhibition at the Crystal Palace (1900) and arranged and described the Crosby Brown Collection for the Metropolitan Museum of New York (1902) and the collection of the Musikhistoriska Museet, Stockholm (1903).
95. *Indian Magazine and Review* (London, n.d.), Green Book, 31.
96. Mann [MacCarthy], 'Some Indian Conceptions of Music'.
97. MacCarthy, 'Indian Music Education', *Modern Review* (Calcutta), June 1911, 1–6, 2–3.
98. MacCarthy, 'The Indo-European Orchestra', *Civil and Military Gazette* (CMG), 2 September 1938.
99. *Ibid.*
100. 'Indian Music', *Wireless Times*.
101. Ormond Anderton, 'Passing Notes' by an 'Onlooker', *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review*; Green Book, 32; MM Papers.
102. For more on Fox Strangways and his book, see Martin Clayton, 'A. H. Fox Strangways and "The Music of Hindostan": Revisiting Historical Field Recordings', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 124, no. 1 (1999): 86–118.
103. As mentioned earlier, these are large, hardback books covering the main chapters, or 'acts' as she called them, of her life (see note 23).
104. Swami Omananda Puri [Maud MacCarthy], *The Boy and the Brothers* (London: Gollancz, 1959) and *Towards the Mysteries: Being Some Teachings of the Brothers of the Holy Hierarchy Given through 'the Boy'* (London: N. Spearman, 1968).
105. Gauri Viswanathan, 'The Ordinary Business of Occultism', *Critical Inquiry* 27 (Autumn 2000): 1. The disproportionate weight accorded theosophy in the lives of both MacCarthy and Foulds is a result of the fact that the archival materials publicly available (at the University of York) contain none of MacCarthy's work as an ethnomusicologist, the role which, I believe, defined the second period (or 'act' as she called it) of her life (ca. 1907 to the 1920s). A scholarly focus on one of the few published scores by Foulds, *The World Requiem*, which was a creative collaboration between Foulds and MacCarthy, has also fuelled the theosophical angle. See, for instance, Bob van der Lindern, 'Music, Theosophical Spirituality and Empire: The British Modernist Composers Cyril Scott and John Foulds', *Journal of Global History* 3, no. 2 (2008): 163–82; James G. Mansell 'outlined Foulds' indebtedness to Theosophy's world-view', in his article, 'Music and the Borders of

- Rationality: Discourses of Place in the Work of John Foulds', in *Internationalism and the Arts in Britain and Europe at the Fin de Siècle*, ed. Grace Brockington (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009), 49–75. Mansell quotes from MacCarthy's writings (especially her two books of 1959 and 1968), as 'evidence' of Foulds's compositional debt to theosophy in the realm of quarter tones and modes. In fact, Foulds had not yet met MacCarthy or come across theosophy when he used quarter tones in 1898, nor in 1912 (when he wrote his *Music Pictures, Group 3*). Moreover, theosophy has nothing to do with the modes evident in his post-1915 music which are South Indian *mēlakartas*.
106. Cyril Scott, *Music: Its Secret Influence through the Ages* (1933; rev. ed., London: Rider & Co., 1958); dedicated to Master Koot Homi, the bibliography includes the *Upanishads*, the *Bhagavad Gita*, writings by Swami Vivekananda, Rama Prasad, Besant, and sections on yoga philosophy, religions, and occultism; quotation, 165.
  107. MacCarthy, Small Blue Book, 81; also p. 44, where she describes how, by March 1906, 'my arms and hands were so crippled that *I could not close either of my hands!*'
  108. Annie Besant, letters to MacCarthy; Borthwick Archive.
  109. She also discusses how she came 'under the influence' of some of the leaders; Small Blue Book, 74.
  110. Small Blue Book, 78. She notes the same in the Green Book, 167, adding that she left in 1916 'disgusted with their methods'.
  111. Martin Clayton remarked a few years ago on how little we knew of both MacCarthy and the interest of British people in the field of Indian music during this period: 'Musical Renaissance and its Margins, 1874–1914', in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire 1780s–1940s: Portrayal of the East*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 71–93.
  112. Review of MacCarthy's lecture for the Oxford Folk Music Society, 1912; *Oxford Magazine*, Green Book, 20.
  113. MacCarthy's commentary on the lecture given at the Oxford Folk Music Society, Green Book, 20; she played under Allen at the Public Classical Concerts, Oxford, and also at Balliol 'nearly every year from about ten years to [19]25', 'memoir' annotation, 'Career' folder; MM Papers.
  114. MacCarthy, Green Book, 20.
  115. Frank Bridge (1879–1941) set two translated texts by Tagore in 1924, 'Day after Day' and 'Speak to Me, My Love', which do not appear to have been influenced by any part of MacCarthy's lecture-recital which he may have heard prior to leaving the room.
  116. First quotation from press review, second from MacCarthy's annotation, Green Book, 20.
  117. Lecture-recital script, Oxford Folk Music Society, 13; MM Papers.
  118. Matthew Rahaim, *Musiking Bodies: Gesture and Voice in Hindustani Music* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 2012). A particularly expansive hand gesture is captured in an arresting photograph of MacCarthy in the *Graphic* (30 January 1926). MacCarthy discussed the musical significance of such gestures and their possible application in Western music in lectures and published articles, and expressed her hope 'to see the day Indian *mudras* or hand postures would be used in the Queen's Hall' ('Lectures on Indian Music', *The Hindu* (Madras) 18 January 1912, MM Papers).
  119. MacCarthy, Lecture script, 13; MM Papers.
  120. Lecture script, 14.

121. William Dalrymple, Introduction, in *White Mughals: Love and Betrayal in Eighteenth-Century India* (New York: Penguin Books, 2004), p. xlvii.
122. The quotation comes from a report in the *Daily Telegraph*, 5 January 1926, 'Some Press Opinions—India To-Day Film'; MM Papers. MacCarthy revered her *vina*: her son, the late Patrick Foulds, even kept the remaining pieces of the ornamental dragon's head or *yali* (Neil Sorrell, personal correspondence).
123. A fine photograph of Veena Dhanammal is printed in R. R. Ayyangar's *History of South Indian (Carnatic) Music from Vedic Times to the Present* (Madras: Rangaramanuja Ayyangar, 1972). Fanciful iconography abounds such as, for instance, the painting of the Goddess Saraswati (1896) by Raja Ravi Varma (Maharaja Fateh Singh Museum, Lakshmi Vilas Palace, Vadodara, Gujarat).
124. Julia Chatterton, 'Miss MacCarthy on Indian Music', *The Musical Standard*, 5 June 1926, MM Papers.
125. Anderton, 'Passing Notes'. In subsequent years Ratan Devi evoked a similar response: 'squatting down in Indian fashion [she] took up the *tambura* on her lap... and I forgot for a moment that I was in a London drawing-room' (Tagore, foreword to *Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir*).
126. Green Book, 12; MM Papers. Made in several regions in South India, those made by makers from Thanjavur in the South Indian state of Tamil Nadu are often considered the most sophisticated.
127. MacCarthy, Lecture-Script, 17; MM Papers.
128. *Indian Magazine and Review* (London, n.d.), Green Book, 31.
129. Quotation from E. B. Havell, 'Indian Music in Europe', *Pioneer Mail* (Allahabad, n.d.), Green Book, 98. An application to enrol in the lecture series in the London County Council Schools via the Dalston Literary Institute is clipped and kept in the Green Book, as is the Syllabus of Local Lectures, University of Cambridge, 1926; pp. 82 and 19, respectively.
130. MacCarthy, Small Blue Book, 48.
131. *Brighton Herald*, 25 October 1913; MacCarthy, Green Book, 30.
132. 'The Spirit of Indian Music', *Indian Magazine and Review* 519 (March 1914).
133. MacCarthy's annotation, Green Book, 29.
134. Boughton, preview article in a local Glastonbury newspaper, 1914, clipping in the Green Book; MM Papers.
135. Quoted in Santanu Das, 'India, Great Britain and the First World War', in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections*, 32. MacCarthy, memoir, Green Book; MM Papers.
136. MacCarthy, Green Book, 30.
137. MacCarthy, Green Book, 11.
138. Hidayat Inayat-Khan (Khan's son, born in London in 1917), 'About the Family', <[http://www.hidayat-inayat-khan.com/about\\_pages/family\\_history2.html](http://www.hidayat-inayat-khan.com/about_pages/family_history2.html)>.
139. For critical studies of Shankar's work in London, see Joan L. Erdman, 'Performance as Translation: Uday Shankar in the West', *Drama Review* 31 (1987): 64–88; and Nilanjana Bhattacharjya, 'Uday Shankar and Locating Modernity', in her Ph.D. dissertation, 'Aesthetic Fusions: British Asian Music and Diaspora Culture' (Cornell University, 2007).
140. Mohan Khokar, *A Portrait of Uday Shankar* (New Delhi: Himalayan Books, 1983), 30.
141. *The Graphic* reviewed the recital (23 June 1923) and concluded that 'the realm of Indian music is...one in which misconception and misunderstanding are rife from lack of knowledge indispensable to adequate appreciation' (quoted in

- Kusoom Vadgama, *India in Britain: The Indian Contribution to the British Way of Life* (London: Royce, 1984), 190–192).
142. A poster for Sena's recital given on 15 December 1932, along with press clippings from recitals given in November 1932, is held in the Papers of Arnold and Cornelia Bake (indologists, scholars, and performers of Indian music), at the British Library. Mss Eur F191/72.
  143. The quotation is from Julia Chatterton's review, *Musical Standard*, 29 July 1922, 43. *The Goddess* had a successful run in London: it was first produced at the Duke of York's Theatre on 6 and 7 June 1922, then at the Ambassador's Theatre, and finally at the Aldwych Theatre in July 1922.
  144. Chambers, 'A Flute of Praise', 157.
  145. Chatterton, 'Indian Music', *Musical Standard*, 29 July and 12 August 1922, respectively 43 and 57.
  146. Chatterton reported this information following an interview with MacCarthy: the piece is referred to first as a 'Song in Bengali Style' and, in the subsequent article as 'Song of Ram Das'. This is the earliest mention of what became Foulds's orchestral piece of 1935, *The Song of Ram Dass* (he added the extra 's').
  147. Foulds indicates on the manuscript score of *The Song of Ram Dass* that MacCarthy composed the melody (Manuscript score, collection of Graham Hatton).
  148. For more on the playwright Niranjan Pāl (who himself became a leading figure in Indian cinema), on *The Goddess*, and on the decline of Indian theatre in London in the 1920s and 1930s, see Chambers, 'A Flute of Praise', 157–61.
  149. MacCarthy relays the story of how disbelieving (male) elements at the BBC had sent a second reporter to investigate her interval lecture-recital in order to verify (or cast doubts on) the overwhelmingly positive opinion which the first had reported; Green Book.
  150. *The Nation and the Athenaeum* (London), 23 January 1926; Green Book, 78. A personal letter of congratulation reads: 'You ought to do it at some the leading "Halls" like the Coliseum and Victoria's Place!' MM Papers.
  151. Newspaper coverage of the broadcast was broad; MacCarthy clipped and kept many previews and reviews in the Green Book. The listener estimate comes from James Cousins, 'Maud MacCarthy', *Sunday Statesman*, Delhi and Calcutta, 13 October 1935. The BBC had nearly two million radio licence holders in 1926.
  152. 'Indian Music', *Wireless Times*.
  153. Broadcast dates are given in a letter from Mary Hodgson, Written Archives Officer at the BBC to Miss Sprigge, 24 August 1973: Empire Day Broadcast in 1927 is also documented in the Green Book, 87; MM Papers. 'Indian Music and the Music of the Future', *Sussex Daily News*, 21 October 1913; quotation from press packet, Green Book. Reviews appeared in, *inter alia*, the following newspapers and journals: *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Evening News*, *Star*, *Irish News* (Belfast), *Glasgow Bulletin*, *Liverpool Courier*, *Daily Mirror* (London), *Nottingham Journal*, *Women's Pictorial*, and the *Sussex Daily News*. See, for instance, the photograph of MacCarthy printed in *Women's Pictorial* (London), 20 February 1926.
  154. 'Stolid' is MacCarthy's description, Green Book, 30.
  155. I am thinking here of the debates which have arisen surrounding the 'New Imperial History', a path paved by John M. MacKenzie who demonstrated that popular imperialism permeated British culture in both the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; see, for instance, John M. MacKenzie, ed., *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986). His approach has been followed in many of the one hundred books in his 'Studies in Imperialism' series

for Manchester University Press. Opposing views include, most notably, those of Bernard Porter; see *The Absent-Minded Imperialists: Empire, Society, and Culture in Britain*, new ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006). For an overview of the debates, see Thomas Hajkowski, *The BBC and National Identity in Britain, 1922–53* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2010), esp. 20–22.

156. MacCarthy, *Green Book*, 30.

## CHAPTER 2



# Elephants and Mughals, Contraltos and G-Strings

## *How Elgar Got His Englishness*

Sir Edward Elgar touches us home by his declared intention to write a ‘musick masque’ on the theme of the ‘Crown of India’, and make it celebrate the ‘pomp and circumstance’ of the Imperial Coronation Durbar... India has lavished her arts of splendour on the Royal visit, and it is only fitting that a great master in the West should spend the wealth and range of his powers on interpreting for us ‘the kingdom, the power, and the glory’ of the highest manifestation of empire that the world has seen.

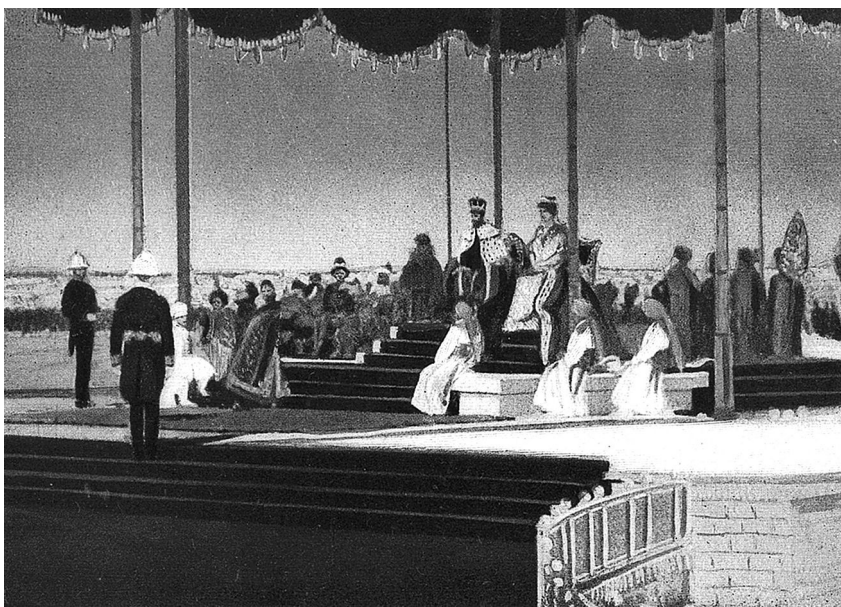
*Pall Mall Gazette*, 9 January 1912

### **Vandalism Rectified (The Delhi *Darbār*)**

In January 1912, at the height of its imperial fervour, the British public eagerly devoured colourful newspaper reports of King George V’s visit to India the previous month.<sup>1</sup> This royal visit represented the first time a ruling British monarch had set foot on the subcontinent, and the purpose was to celebrate the king’s assumption of the title ‘Emperor of India’, bestowed upon him during his coronation in Westminster Abbey on 22 June 1911. Rabindranath Tagore had been approached by the Congress to compose a song to be performed in the king’s honour (although the result, *Jana gana mana*, effectively bypassed the British monarch, with its allusion to *Bhagya Vidhata* or the God of India’s destiny). The focus of the new king’s Indian sojourn was the Delhi *Darbār*, the ceremonial court held in his honour in December 1911 which drew on a tradition established centuries earlier by the Mughal emperors.<sup>2</sup> The *darbār* had been resurrected to create parallels between the glories of the Mughal Empire and those of the British Raj, first in 1877 (after Disraeli had proclaimed Queen Victoria Empress of India the previous year) and, most spectacularly,

on New Year's Day 1903 when a *darbār* was held to mark the accession to the throne of Edward VII.<sup>3</sup> Although the king-emperor had refused to come to India for the ceremony, the Viceroy, Lord Curzon, decided to go ahead and stage a display of magnificence which surpassed all records, culminating as it did in an enormous procession of Indian princes on two hundred 'noble elephants' from every state in the land, 'almost buried under trappings worth uncounted millions of dollars'.<sup>4</sup>

That lavish spectacle was followed—though not eclipsed, as we will see later on—by the *darbār* of December 1911; lasting some ten days, and attracting over 300,000 people including over 16,000 British and 32,000 Indian officials, the *darbār* featured all the Indian maharajahs and princes giving obeisance to their rulers. An Australian visitor marvelled at 'the pomp and solemnity of it all; the gorgeous hues...the rhythmic march of regiments; the masses of white-robed, keen-eyed natives; the blended colours where East and West met...the thousand sights seen beneath the glamour of that old Indian sun'.<sup>5</sup> Another remarked on 'the massed band...of over 1,600 players drawn from seventeen British and twenty-six Indian regiments [which] played selections of popular and patriotic music'.<sup>6</sup> The event was widely reported and attracted praise from all corners of the empire. In February 1912, a spectacular two-and-a-half hour Kinemacolor film of the royal visit by the motion picture pioneer Charles Urban was premiered to packed London picture houses against a stage setting of the Taj Mahal.<sup>7</sup> The film was an enormous success, drawing many to see motion pictures for the first time, and reaching millions of people worldwide. Images from the film, reproduced as painted colour illustrations in the catalogue, give us a glimpse of the *darbār*'s magnificence (figure 2.1).<sup>8</sup>



**Figure 2.1**

'The Durbar Ceremony, Delhi, 1912 [*sic*]'. Kinemacolor catalogue, 1912

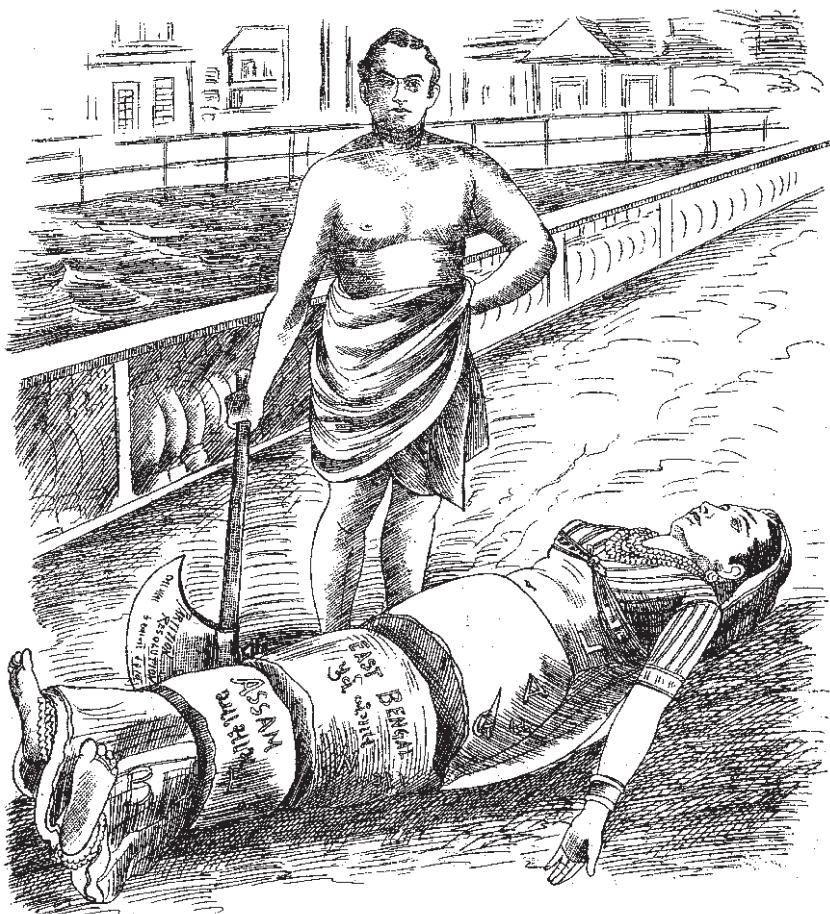
Source: Courtesy of Luke McKernan, curator of Moving Image Collections, British Library.

Contrary to appearances and popular belief, however, the *darbār* was more than a 'pageant of splendour', as one spectator put it.<sup>9</sup> Its 'indescribable magnificence and splendour' afforded an opportunity for the king-emperor to announce some crucial measures to bolster Britain's weakening hold on India. The first, the shift of the Imperial capital from Calcutta (now Kolkata) to Delhi had been the subject of a long debate, during which the merits of the claims of other cities to the title had been considered.<sup>10</sup> The king-emperor's second announcement was, in the words of an American spectator, 'surely the best kept secret in history... it literally took away the breath of India'.<sup>11</sup> He announced the reunification of Bengal, repealing Curzon's 1905 partition of the region which had been enacted as part of the British 'divide and rule' policy. The partition repeal was, reportedly, 'fraught with such vast import', that the king's announcement left 'astonishment and incredulity on every face'.<sup>12</sup>

In 1905 Curzon had made a political decision to split Bengal down the middle to create two states—fifteen poor eastern districts including Chittagong, Rajshahi, and the capital, Dacca (now Dhaka), would become the state of Eastern Bengal and Assam with a slight Muslim majority; the more powerful and wealthier districts including Bihar and Orissa would constitute West Bengal, with Calcutta as the capital of an overwhelmingly Hindu State. West Bengal would be larger, richer, and better developed: its population of 54 million almost 5:1 in favour of the Hindus. The new province of Eastern Bengal and Assam would be smaller, poorer, and undeveloped, with poor and difficult communications; its smaller population of 31 million would be only 3:2 in favour of the Muslims.

*Hindi Punch* sought to convey the gravity of Curzon's partition in a cartoon entitled 'Vandalism! Or, The Partition of Bengal!' that depicted a woman (representing Bengal) chopped into pieces (West Bengal, Assam, and East Bengal) (figure 2.2).<sup>13</sup> This arbitrary division caused seven years of communal violence and bloodshed between the Hindus and Muslims of Bengal, along with a sharp rise in anti-colonial activity (seditious papers, boycott, the *Swadeshi* or 'home-rule' movement, armed struggle against the British) and general political anarchy. 'Our opposition to the division of Bengal was fierce', recalled Nirad Chaudhuri in his autobiographical memoir.<sup>14</sup> Songs of defiance and protest were a powerful means of galvanizing people. The taunting tone and rhythmic energy of Tagore's *Bidhir Badhan Kathe Tumi* ('Will you upset God's ordinance'), for instance, resounded through the streets of Calcutta in a huge procession led by the composer (Example 2.1).<sup>15</sup>

The tumult surrounding the partition had marred George V's earlier reception in India as Prince of Wales in 1905 and led him to conclude that the decision, and the maintenance of the policy by secretary of state for India, John Morley, and the new viceroy, Lord Minto, had been serious political errors. The repeal, advocated by King George himself, was agreed upon after a year of secretive debate concerning 'the partition crisis', as the home secretary put it, in which British officials 'surveyed the widening cracks in the wall of British authority as a consequence of five years of chaos'.<sup>16</sup> The Delhi *Darbār* thus provided what the home secretary described as 'a unique occasion for rectifying what is regarded by Bengalis as a grievous wrong'.<sup>17</sup> But the repeal also signalled the beginning of imperial disintegration, for the partition decision had provided the needed catalyst for effective Indian resistance.<sup>18</sup>



### VANDALISM!

#### OR, THE PARTITION OF BENGAL!

[A resolution on the partition of Bengal has been published. Bengal will be divided and a new province will be created which will be entitled Eastern Bengal and Assam. Well may the Bengal papers go into mourning.]

[Hindi Punch, July, 1905.]

Figure 2.2

'Vandalism! Or, the Partition of Bengal!' from *Hindi Punch*, July 1905

Source: © The British Library Board. PP3800.ed.

**Example 2.1**

Tagore, *Bidhir Bandhan Katbe Tumi* (anti-colonial song of resistance): 'Will you upset God's ordinance'

Bid - hir \_\_\_ ban - dhan kat - be tu - mi? \_\_\_ em - mon shak - ti - man, tu - mi ki,

em - ni shak - ti - man! Bid - hir \_\_\_ ban - dhan kat - be tu - mi? \_\_\_

em - mon shak - ti - man, tu - mi - ki, em - ni shak - ti - man! A - ma - der

bhan - ga go - ra to - mar haat - E, e - mon ob - hi - man to - ma - der,

em - ni ob - hi - maan. \_\_\_

You can break the bonds of destiny, can you?  
 You are all-powerful, are you!  
 You think our fate is in your hands, you egoists,  
 You can break the bonds of destiny, can you?

### Masking the *Darbār*

The Durbar, whose Indian memorial will be the buildings of the new capital, is to be commemorated in England by a masque composed by Sir Edward Elgar.

*The Globe*, 9 January 1912

To mark the occasion of the *Darbār*, Elgar collaborated with Henry Hamilton in an Imperial Masque, produced by Oswald Stoll at the London Coliseum and performed within a mixed music hall program that opened on 11 March 1912.<sup>19</sup> *The Crown of India* was advertised by *The Times* as 'a project which will evoke extraordinary interest, and will, no doubt, prove, under Sir Edward Elgar's treatment, worthy of the historic event that it is designed to commemorate in so graceful a fashion'.<sup>20</sup> Not only graceful but also elaborate: production costs exceeded £3,000, a huge sum at the time (some £250,000 today), with ornate costumes and lavish settings by Percy Anderson. After all, the *Daily Telegraph* remarked, 'so vast and



**Figure 2.3**

'Ave Imperator!', the concluding scene from the *Crown of India* masque. India, from the steps of the throne, hails the king-emperor and queen-empress

Source: *Daily Graphic*, 12 March 1912. © The British Library Board.

dazzling a subject cannot, obviously, be treated in the spirit of parsimony'.<sup>21</sup> And the *Eastern Daily Press* assured readers that 'no effort is being spared to imbue the spectacular symbols of the durbar with all the glowing, gorgeous colour of the Orient'.<sup>22</sup> Photographs of scenes from *The Crown of India* show the lavishness of the spectacle and reveal an effort to simulate scenes from the *darbār* itself as they were represented in published illustrations, photographs, and Kinemacolor catalogue images (figure 2.3).<sup>23</sup>

Press reviews claimed that the masque 'put the events of the Durbar in front of the British public in an attractive and concrete form' and that it was 'a reconstitution of the scene of the Durbar'.<sup>24</sup> Yet the masque staged only portions of the *darbār*. The first tableau was dominated by a dispute between the cities of India as to whether Delhi or Calcutta should become the new imperial capital, while the second featured India and all her cities assembling with the East India Company and St George to do honour to England and the British Raj. That the masque represented (in great detail) transfer of the capital to Delhi is unsurprising, since the move was calculated to guarantee the continuance of British supremacy in the face of ever-increasing Indian demands for political power: Delhi had a long history as the site of India's imperial throne and had particular significance as the site of the final defeat of the anti-colonial strugglers in the First War of Independence, 1857–8 (known in the English lexicon as 'The [Indian] Mutiny' or 'The Rebellion').<sup>25</sup> As *The Times* put it, 'no city in the Empire has more poignant or more glorious associations for Englishmen'.<sup>26</sup> Yet the central moment of the *darbār*, the reunification of Bengal, found no mention in *The Crown of India*, despite the king's dramatic announcement which reportedly 'made history and

geography at once', and which might have seemed ideal material for the Coliseum masque.<sup>27</sup> The reunification could not be represented because it alluded to a spectacular policy failure and also suggested the narrowing limits of imperial authority. Thus a selective view of the *darbār*, achieved by ignoring successful resistance to the Raj that led to the partition repeal, served British interests.

*The Crown of India* was, accordingly, a tool for manipulating popular consciousness.<sup>28</sup> The public was assured by *The Times* that the masque's 'politics are all right . . . it has been announced that the "book" has received Royal sanction'.<sup>29</sup> With its pomp and ceremony, *The Crown of India* kept a powerful, honourable face on the British Empire which was, by this time, the main focus of English national identity. India's personification in the masque, a vivid depiction of how the British spoke for India and represented its people, determined both what could be said about India and what could count as truth. The words put into the mouth of India parrot the sentiments, beliefs, and ideology that the British used both to justify their reign and to make it palatable for themselves.<sup>30</sup>

Each man reclines in peace beneath his palm,  
 Brahman and Buddhist, Hindu with Islam,  
 Into one nation welded by the West,  
 That in the Pax Britannica is blest  
 . . .  
 Oh, happy India, now at one, at last;  
 Not sundered each for self as in the past!  
 Happy the people blest with Monarch just!  
 Happy the Monarch whom His People trust!  
 And happy Britain—that above all lands  
 Still where she conquers counsels not commands!  
 See wide and wider yet her rule extend  
 Who of a foe defeated makes a friend,  
 Who spreads her Empire not to get but give  
 And free herself, bids others free to live.<sup>31</sup>

Having the figure of India express such uncontested judgements about the subcontinent and its rulers allowed Hamilton and Elgar to demonstrate to their audiences that Indians accept British rule because it is 'mild and beneficent', 'just and equitable', 'but firm and fearless'.<sup>32</sup> This has historically always been the way that European imperialism represented its enterprise, for, as Edward Said has argued, nothing could be better for imperialism's self-image than 'native subjects who express assent to the outsider's knowledge and power, implicitly accepting European judgment on the undeveloped, backward, or degenerative nature of native society'.<sup>33</sup> Moreover, by studiously omitting any reference to the partition repeal and excluding the all-too-present challenges to British rule, Hamilton and Elgar showed only one world and eliminated any chance of showing two worlds in conflict. *The Crown of India*, masquerading as a colourful depiction of the Delhi *Darbār*, was carefully inscribed with its creators' considered beliefs and suppressions.

### The Composer's Burden

Edward Elgar had a personal connection with the ventures of the British in India. His father-in-law, Major-General Sir Henry Gee Roberts KCB (1800–61) had launched a distinguished military career when he joined the East India Company in 1818. During the First War of Independence, he commanded the Rajputana Field Force that succeeded in capturing the town of Kota in March 1858.<sup>34</sup> Later, he was honoured in a parliamentary motion of thanks for the skill 'by which the late Insurrection has been effectively suppressed'.<sup>35</sup> Caroline Alice, Sir Henry Roberts's daughter, who was born in October 1848 in the Residency at Bhooj in Gujarat, married Elgar in 1889, and they lived in a house decorated with Indian artefacts collected by her father.<sup>36</sup> Following in the footsteps of his father-in-law, Elgar himself was knighted in 1904 but at the lowest level of the Royal Victorian Order (VO) with no letters after his name, though he did get them in July 1911 on his admission to the Order of Merit (OM), which outranked the late General in the British Order of Precedence.<sup>37</sup> He waited thirty years for internal promotion to the highest level of Knight Grand Cross, when his title became 'Sir Edward Elgar Bt OM GCVO'—the very pinnacle indeed.

The family's links with the British Raj can be seen in the larger context of the extraordinary presence of 'India' and things Indian which permeated British life. After Queen Victoria was crowned Empress of India in 1876, displays of the glories of British rule in India became immensely popular. The 1886 Colonial and Indian Exhibition in South Kensington, which featured a stunning gate paid for by the Maharajah of Jaipur and constructed by Indian craftsmen, and a paean to empire by Tennyson set to music by Arthur Sullivan, attracted some 5.5 million visitors.<sup>38</sup> Colonial Exhibitions were hosted by Glasgow in 1888, 1901, and 1911, and by London's White City almost every year from 1908 to 1914.<sup>39</sup> The 1895 Indian Empire Exhibition and the 1896 India and Ceylon Exhibition, both at Earl's Court, together with the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition held at the 'White City' in Shepherd's Bush (with its Court of Honour in an invented 'Mohammedan-Hindoo' style), were renowned for their displays of the arts, music, architecture, crafts, and 'tribes' of India, all of which were exhibited before the British as cameos to illustrate the riches of their possessions and their power over them in the larger imperial domain.<sup>40</sup>

Representations of India became favourite subjects for musical spectacles on the British stage, such as *The Grand Moghul* (1884), *The Nautch Girl* (The Savoy, 1891), *The Cingalee* (Daly's, 1904), and Henry Arthur Jones's *Carnac Sahib* (1899), which featured a jewelled palace at (the fictional) Fyzapore and suitably evocative music (including 'a Hindu march' and excerpts from Delibes's 'Indian' opera, *Lakmé*).<sup>41</sup> Most striking of all was the grand pageant, *India*, produced by Imre Kiralfy, director-general of international exhibitions after 1890.<sup>42</sup> Staged, with music by Angelo Venanzi, at the 1895 Earl's Court Indian Exhibition, Kiralfy's 'historical play' affirmed the righteousness of British rule. It presented a selective account of Indian history that led naturally from the 'Fall of Somnath—The Muhammadan Conquest' in 1024 through the 1877 *Darbār* which celebrated Queen Victoria's assumption of the title of Empress of India

in 1876, and culminated in a 'Grand Apotheosis' in 1895 when 'Britannia crowns Her Majesty the Goddess of India'.<sup>43</sup>

Goddess of India was almost appropriate as an appellation for Victoria's deification at the Diamond Jubilee two years later when, in June 1897, imperial frenzy culminated in a celebration of the sixtieth year of the queen-empress's reign. This event, when colonial premiers and troops from around the world were brought to parade in the procession, was, as David Cannadine has argued, a defining moment in perceptions of the monarchy: now, 'every great royal occasion was also an *imperial* occasion'.<sup>44</sup> It was at the Jubilee celebrations that Elgar became known as an imperial bard, a composer whose music glorified colonial policy. He certainly took up 'The Composer's Burden' with all the gusto that Rudyard Kipling could have wished the White Man to show, composing music for many of the greatest imperial and national occasions for decades.<sup>45</sup> His contribution to the Jubilee celebrations included the *Imperial March* played by vast wind bands at the Crystal Palace early in 1897, and two cantatas: *The Banner of St George*, whose grand finale glorified the Union Jack (not St George's banner) and *Caractacus*, its ancient context (about a Celtic hero) encompassing the fall of the Roman Empire and prophesying the rise of the British.<sup>46</sup>

Five years later, in October 1902, Elgar composed the *Coronation Ode* to commemorate the accession of Edward VII and his crowning as Emperor of India. At the king's suggestion, the *Ode* included the choral setting of the broad melody of *Pomp and Circumstance* March no. 1, a tune that would, in Elgar's words, 'knock 'em flat', and which became known throughout the world (with words by A. C. Benson) as 'Land of Hope and Glory', the anthem of British Imperialism.<sup>47</sup> In the same year, Henry Wood gave the London premieres of Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* in D major and A minor; of the former he recalled: 'The people simply rose and yelled. I had to play it again—with the same result... Merely to restore order, I played the march a third time.'<sup>48</sup> Charles Villiers Stanford remarked that 'they both came off like blazes and are uncommon fine stuff' that 'translated Master Kipling into Music'.<sup>49</sup>

Although many still hold the view that Victoria's Diamond Jubilee and Edward's Coronation mark 'the high noon' of imperial confidence, Cannadine notes that others, following the mood of Kipling's poem *Recessional*, regard them in a different light—as 'an assertion of... bombast and bravado at a time when real power was already on the wane'.<sup>50</sup> The manner in which Elgar was drawn on musically to popularize such shows of grandeur does suggest that an underlying anxiety in official circles could be, for the public and the world at large, smothered by amplified (musical) rhetoric. At the second Festival of Empire at the Crystal Palace, which ran from May to July, 1911, and exhibited every corner of the empire, Elgar framed the program with his arrangement of the National Anthem, the Epilogue and March, 'It comes from the misty ages' from *The Banner of St George*, and 'Land of Hope and Glory', performed by Clara Butt and the vast Empire choir. Yet, as we have inferred from the policies announced at the Delhi *Darbār* in December of the same year, the second British Empire Festival marked a high point in the public face, but not the power, of the British Empire in general, and of the Raj in particular.

A staunch supporter of the Raj, Tarak Nath Biswas, prefaced his 1911 study of 'their Gracious Majesties the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress of India', by emphasizing how far Indo-British relations had deteriorated:

The present peculiar situation of India demands a popular exposition of the bright side of the British rule, for the shade of discontent that one unfortunately notices in the country, can only be removed by a better understanding of our rulers and their beneficent and well-meaning administration.<sup>51</sup>

'The shade of discontent' is an oblique reference to the seven years of horrors unleashed by the Bengal partition.<sup>52</sup> 'The bright side of British rule' masks the fact that Bengali nationalists and other 'enemies of empire' were being sent to an infamous prison of death, 'the point of no return', on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal.<sup>53</sup> While *The Crown of India* boasted of Britain's 'beneficent and well-meaning administration' to a packed Coliseum during March 1912, English officials were hanging and exiling Indian dissidents in a desperate attempt to avoid a full-scale uprising.

### East Is East and West Is West

Remarks by Elgar during the masque's composition indicate his enthusiasm for the project. His earliest thoughts were outlined to Alfred Littleton of Novello, his publisher, on 8 January 1912: 'The masque is going to be very gorgeous and patriotic.'<sup>54</sup> By 3 February, the *Daily Telegraph* reported that Elgar had 'expressed the keenest satisfaction with Mr Hamilton's work'.<sup>55</sup> Later that month the composer declined an invitation from friends, explaining, 'I must finish the Masque—which interests and amuses me very much'.<sup>56</sup> Elgar divided Hamilton's elaborate reconstruction of the *Darbār* into two tableaux comprising some twenty musical numbers together with passages of *mélodrame*. The cast was headed by 'India' (played by Nancy Price), followed by twelve of her most important cities of whom Delhi, Agra, Calcutta, and Benares (now Varanasi) were female singing roles; in addition, the masque featured St George, Mughal emperors, the king-emperor and queen-empress, and a herald called Lotus.

At rehearsals Elgar told the press he found the work hard but 'absorbing, interesting'.<sup>57</sup> The composer himself conducted the masque twice a day for the first two weeks of its successful run, often running rehearsals between performances.<sup>58</sup> His dedication paid off, not least financially: 'God Bless the Music Hall!' he exclaimed to a friend, Francis Colvin, at the thought of his emolument.<sup>59</sup> The masque—and particularly its 'gorgeous and patriotic' music, which 'casts a powerful spell over the whole production'—proved enormously popular with audiences and critics alike.<sup>60</sup> In the production's fourth week it was still, the *Daily Telegraph* reported, 'a case of "standing room only" at the Coliseum... for both the afternoon and evening performances'.<sup>61</sup> England's populist daily paper, the *Daily Express*, trumpeted Elgar's 'great triumph at the Coliseum', declaring that 'the call was for Elgar at the fall of the curtain... Truly, *The Masque of India* is the production of the year'.<sup>62</sup>

The success of Elgar's music was due at least in part to the manner in which the score drew on representations of India and its music that were then all the rage in popular culture. *The Times* told readers that 'the score contains ideas drawn from Oriental sources', pointing to inclusion of 'a new gong' (the most un-Indian of instruments) contrived by Elgar 'for his special purpose'.<sup>63</sup> A 'native musician with tom-tom' and a pair of 'snake-charmers with pipes' also figured in the opening scene, the former by way of the tenor drum, the latter by oboes.<sup>64</sup> These touches suggest that Elgar must have absorbed the manner in which Indian music was routinely represented at Exhibitions, to wit by 'snake-charmers... dancers, musicians, jugglers, and beautiful Nautch girls'.<sup>65</sup> Nothing in *The Crown of India* would have been recognizable as Indian music to any Indian—but for British audiences caught up in the celebrations of the Delhi *Darbār*, and with exhibition entertainments ringing in their ears, these allusions were more than sufficient to establish the proper atmosphere.

After completing the score Elgar explained that 'the subject of the Masque is appropriate to this special period in English history, and I have endeavoured to make the music illustrate and illuminate the subject'.<sup>66</sup> Indeed, he created a score of characteristic skill and inspiration in which a series of recurring musical motives, introduced in the second number, 'India Greets Her Cities', represent the Indian elements of the masque, such as the main motive associated with the Mughal emperors and the swirling filigree of the city of Agra. A perceptive review in the *Referee* addressed the difficulties of representing the *darbār* musically:

When Sir Edward Elgar undertook to write music for a masque dealing with historical events in India for the Coliseum he was faced by several problems not easy to solve harmoniously. It was essential that the patriotic note should be made prominent. It was also distinctly necessary to suggest the mystery of the East, and obviously John Bull's directness of expression and the flowery diction of India possess nothing in common. Sir Edward might have made use of the Indian scales... and, by contrasting the two systems of music, reflected in his score the difference of Indian and British outlook. Mr. Hamilton's libretto, however, mainly regards India from a British standpoint. ... The result is that while his music illustrating the Indian portion of the libretto appeals to musicians who will distinguish with pleasure the hand of a master in subtleties of tone-colour and cross rhythms, the chief effect on the ordinary listener is almost entirely confined to the song, 'The Rule of England'. This, with its diatonic refrain, sounds the imperial note of popular patriotism.<sup>67</sup>

Audiences did indeed delight in St George's song: critics described it as 'a patriotic song of honest ring', found it 'very stirring', and prophesied it was 'destined to be heard for many a day outside the Coliseum walls'.<sup>68</sup>

For this rousing solo, Elgar drew on several popular idioms of the day. The chorus's rousing four-square melody and marching bass, along with the text's imperialist call to arms (Example 2.2a), is akin to the 'crusader' hymn tradition as exemplified, for example, by Arthur Sullivan's 'Onward, Christian Soldiers', or Sidney Nicholson's later hymn of 1916, 'Lift High the Cross'.<sup>69</sup>

### Example 2.2a

Elgar, St George's song, "The Rule of England", tableau I, no. 6 of *The Crown of India*: chorus, mm. 8–19

Baritone soloist *f* *cantabile*

Lift a - loft the Flag of Eng - land! Hers it is to

*quasi staccato*

Sop I & II  
(Chorus, *unis.*)

lead the Light, — Ours to keep her yet the King-land, Keep her an - cient

hon - our bright, — Her Man - hood ev - er glo - rious, Her va - lour etc...

Tenors & Basses

Lift a - loft the Flag of Eng - land, Lift a - loft the flag of

*sf*

**Example 2.2b**

St George's song, 'The Rule of England', quoting 'Land of Hope and Glory', mm. 79–83

79 *mf* *rit.* *p allarg.*

forge. Still be your blades for Eng - land worn, Dear

*colla parte* *allarg.*

*espress.* *rit.* *lento*

Land that hath no like! And for her

The militaristic idiom and lofty imperialism expressed in such hymns and patriotic songs had been caricatured in Gilbert and Sullivan's operettas to great acclaim at the Savoy Theatre since the 1870s. Elgar knew these productions well since he had either played in or conducted many of Sullivan's works in the 1880s and 1890s.<sup>70</sup> Ironically, or perhaps with original irony intact and intended, echoes of Sullivan's imperialist spoof, 'He is an Englishman' (*HMS Pinafore*), can be heard in the male chorus section of St George's song while the *risoluto* section appears to have strayed out of Lord Mountararat's song with chorus: 'When Britain really ruled the waves...in good King George's glorious days.'<sup>71</sup> In the final, climactic verse, the tenor entreates the knights of St George:

'Still be your blades for England worn.  
Dear Land that hath no like!  
And for her Fame and in her Name unsheath the sword and strike!

Here Elgar quotes the opening phrase of his own 'Land of Hope and Glory' in the accompaniment to the second line—an imperial 'in-joke' whose impact, a tug at the national heartstrings, the composer maximized by indicating a broadening (*allargando*) of the music (Example 2.2b).

In contrast to this popular patriotism, the 'Dance of the Nautch Girls' is one of the pieces 'illustrating the Indian portion of the libretto...[displaying] subtleties

of tone-colour and cross rhythms'. In writing a nautch girl's dance, Elgar was tapping into one of the most pervasive cultural signifiers of India at the time. From the early days of the East India Company, Indian dance had been a popular form of entertainment for English men. Yet, familiar with such dances as the polka and the waltz, the colonizers tended to misunderstand the Indian dance they came across most often: *kathak*, the North Indian performance genre that is often erotic in character since it depicts the amorous exploits of Krishna with his consort Radha. *Kathak* includes gesture and mime, singing, accompanying music (usually *tablā* and *sarangi*), and complex rhythmic improvisations in which the feet are in dialogue with virtuoso *tablā* sequences. Although traditional *kathak* dates back to the progressive *Bhakti* movement of medieval times and was later danced by both skilled courtesans or *tawā'ifs* at the royal courts and male descendants of the renowned Bindadin *gharāna* of Lucknow, it had, by the turn of the twentieth century, become synonymous with what foreigners termed 'nautch' dancing (from Hindi *nach*, meaning dance), a derogatory term associated with prostitution.<sup>72</sup>

Nautch songs and dances in various musical and dramatic guises became all the rage.<sup>73</sup> In June 1891 when Edward Solomon's opera *The Nautch Girl* began a successful run at the Savoy, the London populace became privy to her secrets. As Hollee Beebee, the principal dancer, explained in tantalizing detail:

First you take a shapely maiden.. .  
 Eyes with hidden mischief laden, Limbs that move with lissome [*sic*] grace,  
 Then you robe this charming creature, so her beauty to enhance:  
 Thus attired you may teach her all the movements of dance.. .  
 Shape the toe, point it so, hang the head, arms out spread  
 Give the wrist graceful twist, eyes half closed now you're posed.. .  
 Slowly twirling, creeping, curling... gently stooping, sweeping, drooping  
 Slyly counting one, two, three.. .  
 Bye and bye this shapely creature will have learned the nautch girl's art,  
 And her eyes... throwing artful, furtive glances.. .  
 Wringing heartstrings as she dances, making conquests all along.<sup>74</sup>

In his 'Dance of the Nautch Girls', Elgar evoked the (imagined) intricacies of *kathak* dance (as filtered through such representations) in a pointillistic sequence of musical gestures suggestive—to his Coliseum audiences, at least—of the perceived eroticism of the dancing girl's hand, head, and eye movements ('Limbs that move with lissome [*sic*] grace... Slowly twirling, creeping, curling... Eyes with hidden mischief laden') (Example 2.3a).

Later, in the 'Allegro Molto', the relentless pulsating of Elgar's 'Indian' drum ('tomtoms'), along with fortissimo parallel fifths and a swirling sixteenth-note figure in the flutes and piccolo, evoke the perceived primitive or barbarous nature of the nautch as described by one onlooker in the late 1870s: 'She wriggled her sides with all the grace of a Punjaub [*sic*] bear, and uttering shrill cries which resemble nothing but the death-shriek of a wild cat' (Example 2.3b).<sup>75</sup>

Following the London premier of *The Crown of India* Suite, a critic described the effect of hearing the 'Menuetto' after the 'Dance of the Nautch Girls':

'Dance of the Nautch Girls', tableau I, no. 2 of *The Crown of India*: opening

[illegible]

**Example 2.3b**  
 'Dance of the Nautch Girls', mm. 62-77

7 **Allegro molto**  
 Tomtoms (Indian Drum)

62

*p* *f* *p*

strings, brass,  
 some winds

*ff* *ff* *p*

*p* *ff*

cymbals

*p*  
*cresc.*

winds

*f*

*f* *mf* *f*

bass drum  
 and cymbals

*ff* *dim.* *p*

*ff* *dim.* *p*

+ violas

*ff* *dim.* *p*

with timpani

*ff* *dim.* *p*

This movement follows as if to illustrate the statement that ‘East is East and West is West’ in the dance as in other matters. Nothing could be in more effective contrast to the tempestuous conclusion of the Nautch Dance than this quiet and majestic old-world Minuet.<sup>76</sup>

Beyond the irony that the minuet could be considered ‘old world’ in comparison with the centuries-old tradition of *kathak*, the critic’s reference to Kipling’s ‘Ballad of East and West’ lends perspective to our understanding of *The Crown of India*’s music.<sup>77</sup> In the masque, the stately E-flat-major minuet, titled ‘The entrance of John Company’, heralded the highest officials of ‘the Honourable East India Company’ including Clive of India, Lord Wellesley, and Warren Hastings, as well as several, British, ‘heroes of the 1857 Rebellion’ (Sirs Henry Lawrence, Colin Campbell, and Henry Havelock). Written in the *stilo antico* (old style), its trills and dotted rhythmic gestures conjure up the social hierarchy of courtly eighteenth-century European aristocracy in which the minuet expressed a particular kind of elegance and skill (Example 2.4). The minuet exemplified the European idea of dancing as a formal social activity in which both men and women

#### Example 2.4

‘The Entrance of John Company’, tableau I, no. 5 of *The Crown of India* masque/ Menuetto, no. 3 of Suite op. 66: opening

**Moderato** (*maestoso e dolce, stilo antico*)

*sostenuto*

The musical score is written for piano and bass. It begins with a piano introduction in the bass staff, marked *sostenuto* and *cresc.* The piano staff has a *p* (piano) dynamic. The second system shows the piano melody with trills (*tr.*) and a dynamic shift to *p*. The bass staff has a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic. The third system continues the piano melody with trills and a dynamic shift to *p*, with the bass providing harmonic support with *sf* (sforzando) accents.

participated. Elgar could not have chosen two more contrasting dance forms to represent the characters in his masque than these European and 'Indian' styles.

### **The Jewel in *The Crown of India***

Elgar's most exotic composition in the masque, and arguably in his entire output, is Agra's aria 'Hail Immemorial Ind!' Since this substantial piece has received barely a mention in over a century of scholarship on the composer, it is worth dwelling at some length on its intricacies.<sup>78</sup> The song unfolds in the form of a historical mythology of India's glories from ancient times to British rule and is, as the figure of Benares explains, essentially an homage to India:

O Mother! Maharanee! Mighty One!..  
Thy daughters bless thee and their voices blend  
With that unceasing song...<sup>79</sup>

Written for contralto solo and an orchestra scored to depict the mysterious delights of the distant land of its text, Agra's aria recalls Elgar's earlier set of songs for alto and orchestra, the well-known *Sea Pictures* (1897–9). The sea—Shakespeare's realm of 'strange sounds and sweet aires'—inspired a timbrally and harmonically evocative musical language from Elgar (as it did from other composers including Debussy, Ravel, and later, Respighi and Britten).

While Elgar used these earlier songs as a touchstone for Agra's aria, the imagery of Hamilton's verse evidently suggested to him an extended and even more richly nuanced vocabulary of musical expression with which he evokes every detail of Agra's historical paean to India. A four-bar instrumental theme in D minor draws the listener into the Indian setting by way of harp arpeggios and swelling clarinet tones, undulating sequences, exotic intervals, a touch of Neapolitan harmony and the avoidance of the leading tone (Example 2.5a).

Agra's opening *ritornello* is in fact based on music heard during what the composer called his 'first touch with Asia' while on a Mediterranean cruise in 1905.<sup>80</sup> In his diary, he described arriving in Smyrna (now Izmir), Turkey on *Al Juma'a*, the day of assembly and prayer, when he would have heard the defining sound of a Muslim country: the *muezzin's* call to prayer which, in Turkey, is traditionally and to this day elaborate and full of vocal melismas and sequences.<sup>81</sup> On Sunday, he heard the sound of 'the Mosque of dancing dervishes... music by five or six people very strange and some of it quite beautiful—incessant drums & cymbals (small) through the quick movements'.<sup>82</sup> Seven years prior to composing 'Hail Immemorial Ind!', he had used transcriptions of this 'mosque music' for an intimate piano miniature, *In Smyrna* (1905), initially subtitled 'In the Mosque' (Example 2.5b).<sup>83</sup>

This 'quite beautiful' mosque theme from *In Smyrna* permeates Agra's aria, returning later in the masque to represent Delhi and, finally, India herself, thereby fitting neatly into typical orientalist discourse in which any part of 'the Orient' can represent any other part or, indeed, the whole. Despite the theme's lack of Indian origin, however, the manner in which Elgar puts it to work raises it above the level

**Example 2.5a**

Agra's aria, tableau I, no. 3 of *The Crown of India*: opening theme and later variant with altered rhythm, mm. 1–5 and 11–14

Andante

*p*

*a tempo*

*lento*

*pp*

*sf*

of routine recycling of exotica. Evocatively scored, the theme is woven throughout the instrumental texture of 'Hail,' and Agra herself is inspired by it to shape vocal melismas expressive of the textual imagery (Example 2.5c).

**Example 2.5b**

*In Smyrna*: mosque theme and later variant, mm. 42–43 and 48–50

Piano

*p*

*dim. molto*

*a tempo, più lento*

*molto rit.*

*molto espress.*

*pp*

*con Ped.*

*ppp*

*dim.*

*Ped.*

### Example 2.5c

Agra's mosque-theme melisma, second stanza, mm. 28–37

**Allegretto** ( $\text{♩} = \text{♩}$ )

*mf* 28

May ev' - - - ry wind to

fan thy brow that blows

*pp*

*pp dolce*

*rit.* *a tempo* *cresc.*

Or far or near, from

*colla parte* *a tempo*

Him - a - lay - an snows,

**Example 2.6**

Agra's refrain, mm. 6–10

AGRA.

Hail, Im - me - mo - rial Ind! \_\_\_\_\_

*pp*

*p*

+ bass drum

Thus, the music which Elgar heard in Izmir takes on a new musical importance in its colouristic scoring in Agra's aria and its re-use might even suggest a significance beyond the vaguely 'oriental' character which its arabesques embody. The *muezzin's* call to prayer and the mystic music of Islam in the form cultivated by the whirling Sufi *darvish* which Elgar heard was performed in both Turkey and Mughal India.<sup>84</sup> Agra was the former capital of the Mughal Empire and is the location of world-renowned Islamic architectural wonders, including Emperor Akbar's rose-pink city Fatehpūr Sikri, the Red Fort, and Shah Jahān's legendary Taj Mahal (the latter served as Agra's backdrop at the Coliseum).<sup>85</sup> In this context, the theme carries with it an Islamic ethos.

Agra's rich contralto—timbrally redolent, for an audience brought up on nineteenth-century exotica, of the feminized East—begins her narrative with a refrain whose melodic contour derives from the Islamic theme's descending sequence, strikingly coloured by an insistent augmented triad (A–C#–F) (Example 2.6).<sup>86</sup> Elgar had written a similar refrain for his alto in 'Sabbath Morning at Sea' (*Sea Pictures* no. 3) which depicts the 'darkness on the deep'. While Agra's refrain recalls the earlier passage, the Asian location's 'extraordinary colour' (as Elgar put it) inspired a prolongation of the augmented sonority throughout the phrase.<sup>87</sup> The refrain closes with a distinctive suspended ninth that resolves downward in the lowest regions of the orchestra (bass tuba, basses, bass drum). This gesture, derived from the word setting of *Ind*, musically suggests (in Agra's description) the 'dark' depths of 'immemorial' India. Perhaps this is the passage *The Times* critic had in mind when he remarked that Elgar 'has been so respectful to the words that he has tried to find his tunes in them, instead of forcing them to his tunes'.<sup>88</sup>

Agra's first stanza, a *quasi recitative*, is tintured by the tritone, an interval whose symbolism is clarified when the words 'the Orient' are sung to a rising G#–D (Example 2.7a). Her evocative descriptions of 'Himalayan snows' and 'roses of Kashmir' are brought to life by an attendant orchestra of shimmering strings (trembling divided violins, pizzicato viola, two solo celli), woodwinds, harp, horn,

**Example 2.7a**

Agra's narrative, mm. 13–19

AGRA  
*Quasi recit.*

*p* O'er all the O - rient throned, *f*

*pp* strings

harp

That long thy sway hath owned,

Who shall thy rule re - scind?

and glockenspiel. This exotic band orchestrates more of the 'mosque music' from *In Smyrna*—the *quasi-cadenza* passage (Example 2.7b), leading its chromatic lines and diminished-seventh arpeggios (now in the harp) through a harmonic sequence (shown in example 2.7a). This exquisitely scored passage places Agra's aria in a lineage of modernist works depicting bewitching or exotic figures, notably operas by Rimsky-Korsakov and by Elgar's ardent admirer, Richard Strauss.

Elgar's captivating setting not only reveals how inspired the composer must have been by the masque's subject, but it also conveys a musical respect for the idea

## Example 2.7b

In Smyrna, quasi-cadenza passage, mm. 44–47

The musical score for Example 2.7b, 'In Smyrna, quasi-cadenza passage, mm. 44–47', is presented in four systems. The key signature is G major (one sharp) and the time signature is 2/4. The score is for piano accompaniment.

- System 1 (mm. 44-45):** Marked *ad lib.* and *f*. The right hand features a complex melodic line with many accidentals, while the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.
- System 2 (mm. 46-47):** Marked *ppp* and *subito*. The right hand continues the melodic line, and the left hand has a more active role.
- System 3 (mm. 48-49):** Marked *poco cresc.* and *sf*. The right hand has a more active role, and the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.
- System 4 (mm. 50-51):** Marked *ten.*, *rit.*, and *sf*. The right hand has a more active role, and the left hand provides a steady accompaniment.

of India—its great (Mughal) cities, enchanting landscape, and its ancient civilization. Yet if we hear Agra's song only as a rich and musically detailed narrative of Indian history, we would not be hearing the aria that Hamilton and Elgar created, for it unabashedly privileges the asymmetry of power inherent in the colonial encounter: 'when East [is] to West attuned', sings an impassioned Agra, *fortissimo*—words shaped in this instance as much by Elgar as by Hamilton.<sup>89</sup> Agra's aria has, along with St George's Song and the rest of the 75-minute masque, largely been condemned to the obscurity its colonialist premise might seem to deserve.<sup>90</sup> The masque

has sprung to life in the new millennium, however: in 2004, the Elgar Society issued a new edition by Robert Anderson, and Chandos has released the first complete recording in a new orchestration by composer Anthony Payne.<sup>91</sup> The reappearance of the masque coincides with strenuous debate on how to interpret British colonial history—the very subject of Elgar’s work. Significantly, the recording has elicited some negative commentary, such as this one by Andrew Clements:

The CDs contain two versions of *The Crown of India*, one with the text complete, in all its awfulness, the other with judicious cuts in Hamilton’s contribution by the conductor Andrew Davis. No one really needs either.<sup>92</sup>

Knowledge of Agra’s song alone reveals both this dismissal of the masque on an aesthetic level, and the division between text and music (Hamilton’s contribution versus Elgar’s contribution), to be too absolute. I am not suggesting that the ‘artistic excellence’ and ‘beautiful form’ of Agra’s aria ‘redeems’ the ‘objectionable content’.<sup>93</sup> Rather, Elgar’s imperial masque, written to celebrate British rule in India, is acutely, even painfully, of its time, and its reception (particularly that of St George’s song) by Coliseum audiences tells us a great deal about public imperial fervour. Thus, it stands in contrast to romantic revisionist portrayals of the Raj that have permeated over a century of British culture, and which gained momentum in the 1980s with what Salman Rushdie has termed ‘Raj Revivalism’—a rash of films and novels that restored the prestige (if not the power) of empire.<sup>94</sup> It is precisely for this reason that *The Crown of India* demands attention: it is a historical document in sound. Moreover, no matter how much some would like to forget the masque, its music and spirit live on today in an eponymous orchestral suite. How far, then, do memories of the masque inform our hearing of that suite in the concert hall today?

### East Is West (or, Angular Saxon)

In September 1912, six months after the successful run of his imperial masque, Elgar conducted the premiere of his Suite, op. 66, *The Crown of India*, comprising five movements from the masque: Introduction, Dance of the Nautch Girls, Menuetto, Warriors’ Dance, Intermezzo, and March of the Mogul Emperors.<sup>95</sup> Reviewing the London premiere, a critic for the *Pall Mall Gazette* confessed to ‘a measure of dissatisfaction... with the music’, since

the subject, perhaps, was against the truest inclinations of the composer whose style is so reflective and personal; somehow one did not feel him at his best when endeavouring to obtain vivid Oriental colouring... *But only in one, the intermezzo, does the real Elgar come out.*<sup>96</sup>

The Suite’s music, in other words, remained imbued with (that is, cheapened by) its occasional inspiration. Only the generically titled ‘Intermezzo’ in D minor—entitled ‘Interlude’ in the masque—rose above the Suite’s perceived imperial rubble to embody ‘the real Elgar’.

Musicians in our own time concur with this assessment: the Interlude/Intermezzo, scored for violin solo and orchestra, has been singled out of both masque and suite as ‘exquisite’; it has been recorded alongside the Violin Concerto; and its beauty is thought, by an eminent Elgarian, ‘to embed the music deep in the English countryside’.<sup>97</sup> It has even been claimed that Elgar composed the movement especially for the orchestral suite and that it has nothing to do with the masque.<sup>98</sup> The Intermezzo does reveal several of the composer’s most recognizable musical traits—the melancholy lyricism of the solo violin’s opening melody, the spacious and impassioned string theme marked *largamente*, the evocative scoring of the *più lento*, and the rich timbre of the violin’s alto-range motif which appears later. These are features that characterize Elgar’s most celebrated works, such as the violin and cello concertos, the ‘Enigma’ Variations, *Introduction and Allegro*, and the Violin Sonata. Moreover, in the ‘Intermezzo’, the solo violin’s poignant falling sevenths recall the passionate sevenths in the main theme of the Violin Concerto, and the *espressivo* Aeolian sighs of the violins in the chamber work, *Sospiri* (Examples 2.8a, b, and c). It is these very

**Example 2.8**  
Elgarian sevenths

a. Intermezzo, no. 4 of Suite op. 66 (Interlude, tableau I, no. 7 of *The Crown of India* masque): main theme as heard in closing bars, mm. 29–32



b. Violin Concerto, main theme and later development, mm. 70–75 and 223–227

9 Violino molto largamente  
IV nobilmente  
f

più tranquillo,  
quasi Recit.  
ten.  
dim. p

223 ten.  
a tempo  
più lento  
pp dolce

27 IV Rall.  
ff dim. dim.

più lento  
tranquillo  
3 3 3

**Example 2.8** (Continued)c. *Sospiri*: the violins' expressive 'sighs', mm. 20–27④ **Come prima**

First violins IV *sonoramente*

*mp* *ten.* *ten.* *lento* *dim.* *p*

d. 'Enigma' Variations, theme

**Andante** *legato e sostenuto*

*p molto espress.* *ten.* *pp* *cresc.* *dim.* *pp* *etc.*

sevenths that make up what the composer's biographer Michael Kennedy terms 'Elgar's signature' in the theme (shown in Example 2.8d) of that quintessentially Elgarian piece, the 'Enigma' Variations and which inspired a witty musician to comment 'Eh bien! Il est vraiment un "Angular Saxon", n'est ce pas?'<sup>99</sup>

But the Intermezzo also reveals an intimate relation to 'Hail Immemorial Ind!'—in fact, all but two bars are lifted directly from it. Throughout, Agra's exotic contralto is transformed into the kind of expressive string writing, long celebrated as Elgarian, that embodies 'the real Elgar'. The solo violin's opening melody, with its falling seventh and undulating accompaniment, is taken from Agra's haunting *L'istesso tempo* in which she sings of India as a seductively veiled woman (Examples 2.9a and b). The Intermezzo's largamente was originally the climax of Agra's aria, a reverential invocation of the Hindu Gods of creation and destruction—'Brahma divine arise and S[h]iva dread...'—for which Elgar doubled the vocal line with *nobilmente* strings in a descending harmonic sequence (Example 2.9c). Agra's second stanza, with its vocal melismas based on the mosque theme (shown in example 2.5c), takes its place as the Intermezzo's *più lento* section (Example 2.9d). As if to confirm the relation between the two pieces, Elgar directs the solo violinist, just before the reprise of the Intermezzo's main theme, to play on the G string (*sul G*), which effectively calls for a deep, rich timbre—redolent of Agra's own sultry voice.

Intermezzo borrowings from Agra's 'Hail Immemorial Ind!' Intermezzo, no. 4 of Suite op. 66, *The Crown of India*: opening

56

From out what

*p*

*Con Ped.*

Dark thy Dawn a - rose None knows: Be - hind thy veil close drawn Im-

meshed of gos-sa-mer and gold.

*allargando*

*8va*

*8va*

### Example 2.9b

Intermezzo borrowings from Agra's 'Hail Immemorial Ind!'

Agra's aria, *L'istesso* tempo, mm. 56–69

Andantino

*pp*

*Con*

Violin Solo.  
*espress.*

*p*

Clar. *8va* *pp*

*dim.*

### Example 2.9c

Intermezzo borrowings from Agra's 'Hail Immemorial Ind!'

Intermezzo: *largamente*, mm. 14–17, with Agra's words superimposed

Brah - ma di-vine\_\_\_\_, Brah - ma, a - rise, and

*largamente*

*f*

Shi - - - - va dread\_\_\_\_.

*rit.* *dim.* *a tempo*

*pp*

**Example 2.9d**

Intermezzo borrowings from Agra's 'Hail Immemorial Ind!'.

Intermezzo: *più lento*, mm. 21–23, Agra's words superimposed

**Più lento**

The musical score is for a section titled 'Più lento' in 6/8 time. It features three staves: Violin solo, a vocal line (contralto), and Orchestra. The Violin solo part begins at measure 21 with a *pp* dynamic, followed by a crescendo to *p*. The vocal line has lyrics: 'May ev' - ry wind to fan thy brow that'. The Orchestra part starts with a *p* dynamic. The score includes trills (*tr*) and a ritardando (*rit.*) marking. The bottom system shows a 'Mosque theme' with lyrics 'blows' and 'or (far or near, from Himalayan snows, etc...)' and a *pp* dynamic.

The purportedly abstract musical heart of the orchestral suite, then, remains thoroughly infused with the spirit and substance of the orientalist masque. Moreover, the relation between the Intermezzo and Agra's aria highlights a general relationship that is discernible between the composer's cherished 'English' string sound and his penchant for the contralto voice. Elgar rarely wrote for the lyric or coloratura soprano soloist preferred by Strauss, favouring instead the contralto for all his major solo work and songs, several of which were written for specific singers, Clara Butt and Muriel Foster in particular. The range and richness of the low female voice featured in such pieces as *Sea Pictures* (Butt), *The Dream of Gerontius* with its numinous Angel, *The Crown of India*, and the self-referential work premiered in the masque's wake, *The Music Makers* (Foster), correspond with the kind of writing for strings that characterizes Elgar's celebrated instrumental works which we glanced at earlier. Were it not unfashionable to sing of British India today, Agra's song would be celebrated for those very qualities of beauty and contemplation that have long been associated with Elgar's better-known music: what the *Pall Mall Gazette* termed the 'real' Elgar's

‘personal and reflective’ style. As one critic put it in 1912, ‘in the way of sheer beauty, in a contemplative vein, there is perhaps nothing to equal Agra’s song.’<sup>100</sup>

### Can the Mughals March?

Martial music, in a decidedly Indian vein.

*The Daily Sketch*, 12 March 1912

The finale of *The Crown of India* Suite is the ‘March of the Mogul Emperors’. Praised as one of Elgar’s exemplary marches, it was favoured by its composer, who chose to record it several times, the last being with the Gramophone Company (later known as HMV from its trademark) in 1930.<sup>101</sup> These recordings were made to the delight and approval of the composer, who declared ‘Mogul Emperors’ to be ‘a terrific! record’.<sup>102</sup> The following year, Alan Webb recalled his first meeting with Elgar: ‘It at once became evident that most of the evening would be taken up with listening to records. . . . I was fascinated by his choice. . . . we had “March of the Mogul Emperors” from *The Crown of India*, the new “Pomp and Circumstance” March no. 5, and the opening and close of the *First Symphony*’.<sup>103</sup> The ‘Mughal Emperors’ quickly became a popular choice for patriotic and imperial occasions. A fine example of the former is the ‘great patriotic concert’ held at the Royal Albert Hall in April 1915, which involved more than four hundred performers drawn from army recruiting bands, from which all proceeds went to the Professional Classes War Relief Council and the Lord Mayor’s Recruiting Bands.<sup>104</sup> At the concert, the ‘March of the Mogul Emperors’ was featured alongside ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ and such favourites as ‘Tipperary’ and ‘Your King and Country Need You’. Nearly a decade later, the ‘Mughal March’ was performed as part of the pageant *The Early Days of India* at the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley in 1924, which also featured Elgar’s ‘Indian Dawn’ (a choral setting of poetry by Alfred Noyes) specially written for the occasion.<sup>105</sup>

Elgar’s flair for writing marches has long been eulogized, and the ‘Mughal Emperors’ in particular has elicited commentaries from critics in Elgar’s time as in our own. Michael Kennedy, for instance, refers to it as ‘a fine piece of Elgarian imperialism which requires no apology’.<sup>106</sup> Its title suggests allegiance with the legions of Anglo-Indian marches that had become favourite signifiers of the Raj by the late nineteenth century (the ranks included ‘Royal Indian March’, ‘Indian Wedding March’, ‘Oriental March of Victory’ and even ‘General Roberts’ Indian March’ of 1879, whose title refers to Elgar’s father-in-law<sup>107</sup>).

At first glance the stately *moderato maestoso* of the ‘Mughal March’ with its *marziale* and *pomposo* sections scored for a vast orchestra with full percussion battery (including, as already noted, Elgar’s specially prepared ‘Indian’ gong), does seem to be an unequivocal instance of English musical imperialism. A closer listen, however, with attention to the specific events that occasioned the music, reveals a rather different inheritance and musical effect. In the masque, this music had accompanied the emperors Akbar, Jahāngir, Shah Jahān, and Aurangzeb onto the Coliseum stage, heralded by Delhi: ‘Four names whose splendours nothing shall annul . . . Come, oh ye mighty ones from out the Past.’<sup>108</sup> The first sounds we hear hint at the unconventional character

**Example 2.10**

'March of the Mogul Emperors', tableau I, no. 4b of *The Crown of India* masque / no. 5 of Suite op. 66: opening

**Moderato maestoso**

The musical score is for the opening of 'March of the Mogul Emperors' by Elgar. It is in 3/2 time and consists of three systems of staves. The first system includes a bass drum part (labeled 'bass drum' and 'pp'), a side drum part (labeled 'side drum' and 'p'), and a melodic line in the treble clef (labeled 'p'). The second system includes a bass drum and cymbals part (labeled 'bass drum and cymbals' and 'pp'), a melodic line with a trill (labeled 'tr'), and a bass line. The third system includes a side drum part (labeled 'side drum' and 'f'), a melodic line with a trill and a crescendo (labeled '+ timpani roll and cresc.' and 'f'), and a bass line. The score features various musical notations including accents, slurs, and dynamic markings.

of the music. The piece begins not, as we have come to expect from the genre, with consonant affirming triads (like its predecessor, Kiralfy's 'Grand March of the Moghul Court'), but with pungent dissonances (an accented diminished seventh, E#-D; a diminished octave, E#-E; and then a dissonant tritone, D-G# / G#-D) (Example 2.10).

Unusually for a march, the music is cast in  $\frac{3}{2}$  with a distinctly triple-meter feel—lest we forget Kipling's rejoinder that it was, after all, 'well for the world' only if the 'White Men tread their highway side by side', marching in  $\frac{2}{4}$  or  $\frac{4}{4}$  naturally!<sup>109</sup> But

**Example 2.11**

'March of the Mogul Emperors' as 'Mughal Polonaise', mm. 71–80

side drum and timpani

71

*mf*

*ff*

*sostenuto*

the title *March* is a clever little foil: the Mughals do not march at all. Rather, they *process* to a (thinly disguised) polonaise, with all its ceremonial associations, just as Rimsky-Korsakov's Nobles famously did in the opera-ballet *Mlada* (1892).<sup>110</sup> Elgar's three swaggering beats divided by two, second-beat accents, eighth-note fanfare figures, and the appearance of the aptly named 'polonaise' rhythm popularized in pieces by Chopin, Glinka, and Chaikovsky reveal *this* march to be a polonaise. Example 2.11, a rare passage of thematic development, shows the polonaise rhythm that permeates the final section.<sup>111</sup>

For these courtly Mughals who had, historically, never marched like foot soldiers, Elgar drew on the polonaise's history in nineteenth-century Russian art music as a stately processional associated with the imperial court; in this guise the polonaise often replaced the march where official pomp and circumstance was desired.<sup>112</sup> While the 'Mughal Polonaise' emulates the particular style of Rimsky-Korsakov's grand *maestoso* with its brassy fanfares and prominent timpani, it also reveals allegiance to the 'parade-ceremonial' polonaises of Borodin, in the opening choral pageant of *Prince Igor*, and Chaikovsky, in *Yevgeny Onegin*, and the third Orchestral Suite.<sup>113</sup>

Through the generic resonance of the polonaise, and with the help of several orchestral effects designed specifically for his mounted Mughal depiction, Elgar invokes the sound of what was, for British people in 1911, the most enduring image of any Delhi *Darbār*: the Great Elephant Procession of 1903, described by *The Times* as that 'most unique example of Oriental display' and whose details were vividly recalled in the press in the months leading up to George V's imperial crowning in 1911:

The incomparable feature of the 1903 Durbar . . . was the State entry into Delhi. . . . It was the elephant procession that made it so unique. [The Viceroy] Lord Curzon elected, like Lord Lytton [in the first Delhi *Darbār* of 1877], to enter the Imperial city upon a gigantic elephant, and all the princes of India, similarly mounted, followed in his train. . . .<sup>114</sup>

Undoubtedly the most thrilling sight for European eyes at Delhi was the procession of gigantic elephants . . . [they] saluted by trumpeting and throwing their trunks in the air.<sup>115</sup>

The spectacle had inspired invocations of the glory of the Mughal Empire itself:

That howdah just being borne around the corner at the left is solid silver, a marvel of fine chasing and relief work splendid enough for one of the great Mogul emperors who used to rule here in Delhi.<sup>116</sup>

The orchestral effects which Elgar conjures up confirm the representation. A motif introduced early on (see Example 2.10, bb. 5–8) is extended upward in a series of trills and pseudo-glissandi, mimicking the trumpeting of elephants.<sup>117</sup> When trumpets, muted for effect rather than volume, repeat the phrase *portamento* (with slides) and *fortisissimo*, this 'trumpeting' is particularly striking. It is underscored by the full weight of the low end of the orchestra (bass tuba, trombones, bass clarinet, contra-bassoon, double-bass, timpani, tam-tam, and bass drum) playing second-beat accents (à la polonaise) suggestive of the measured tread of 'these superb creatures' (Example 2.12).<sup>118</sup>

A series of articles published in *The Times* on Empire Day in 1911 provided a vivid description of the 'Great Elephant Procession' from eyewitness accounts:

The Viceroy and Lady Curzon [processed into Delhi] on an elephant bearing a howdah covered with silver inlaid with gold. The huge saddle-cloth or *jhoor* was stiff and heavy with gold embroidery. . . .

Then came the retinue of Princes, whose share in the pageant was thus described at the time: "The whole road, right away to the walls of the Fort, was flashing with precious

**Example 2.12**

Elephant aspects in the 'Mughal Polonaise': 'trumpeting' motif, and second-beat elephant steps, mm. 28–33

28 *tambourine*  
*ff*

*bass drum*  
*tam-tam (gong)* *ff*

*muted trumpet*  
(+ winds 8ve higher) *ff* *portamento*

*bassoons, horns, violas and cellos*  
*ff*

*low brass, ff*  
*low strings, timpani*

*cymbals* *ff*

*sf*

metals aflame in the sunlight. ... [There was] not a *jhoor* that was not decked in gleaming gold and silver. ... Who shall recount the splendour of their attire, the indescribable array of silks and satins and velvets, their glittering jewels, their ropes of pearls and necklaces of diamonds and rubies and emeralds, the splendid aigrettes in their turbans?"<sup>119</sup>

These details are manifest in visual depictions. Just as the Mughal emperors and princes had been pictured riding magnificent elephants in processions and *darbārs* in the illustrative miniatures of the Mughal court chronicles, so too were the



**Figure 2.4**

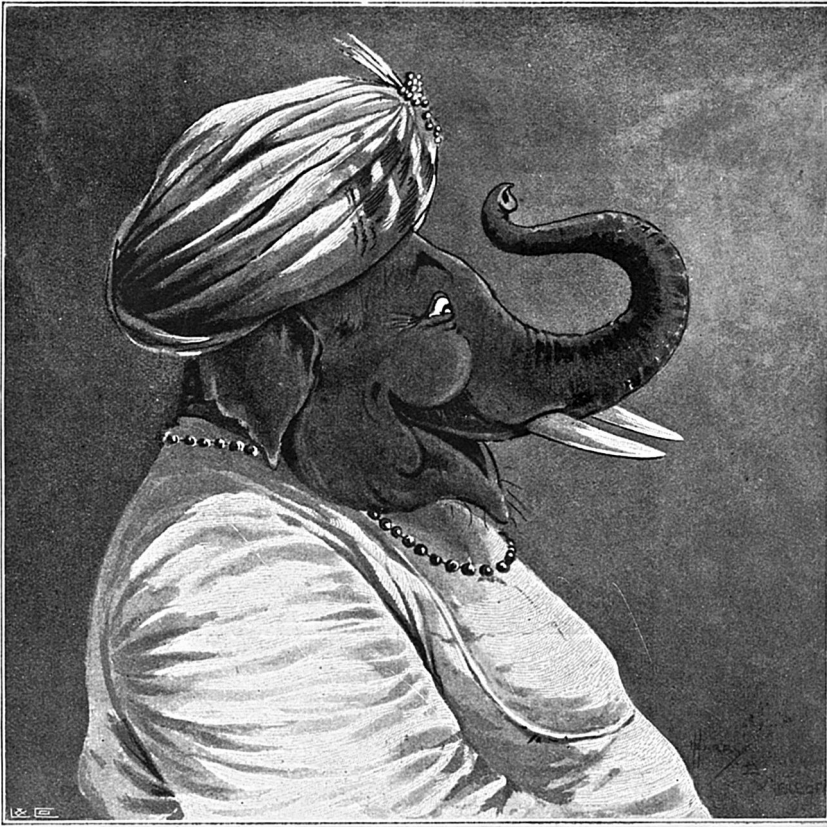
Lutchman Pershad carrying the viceroy and vicereine (Lord and Lady Curzon) into Delhi at the *Darbār* of 1903

Source: © The British Library Board. Photo 430/78(23).

contemporary (British) emperors and Indian princes depicted in drawings, paintings, and photographs by their modern-day chroniclers (figure 2.4).<sup>120</sup>

The superb oil on canvas, conceived on a grand scale by Roderick MacKenzie in 1907, which appears on the cover of this book brings to life every detail of the Great Elephant Procession as it passes the *Jama Masjid*, including, memorably, ‘the crowd of dark skinned, turbaned bystanders . . . itself picturesque enough to western eyes’ which draws the viewer into the spectacle.<sup>121</sup>

Elgar’s ‘Mughal Polonaise’ is, then, an imaginative musical representation of the most magnificent State Entry into Delhi anyone could remember and, as such, it brilliantly intermingled the former glory of the great Mughals with the present glories of the British Raj. The colourful percussion, richly resonant scoring, and trumpet trills become sonic manifestations of aristocratic Indian ornamentalism (opulent



INDIA.

**Figure 2.5**  
 'India', part of 'Greater Britain'

Source: *The Sketch* 17, no. 221, 21 April 1897, p. 556. Courtesy of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. pfA8:18 ES F5 1897 no. 221.

Mughal/Rajput fabrics and turbans, precious gems and jewellery, lavishly decorated elephants, and so on). A series of illustrations of 'Greater Britain' published in the *Sketch*, a popular weekly newspaper, demonstrates how the Mughal emperors, Indian princes, and the elephants Elgar depicted processing in the Polonaise served, at the time, as symbols of India itself (figure 2.5). India, for the British, in Elgar's Mughal Polonaise as in the *Sketch*'s illustration, is represented as a bejewelled, hedonistic and trumpeting elephant-emperor, an allegory of wealth and self-indulgence (complete with 'necklace of pearls' and 'splendid aigrette in the turban').<sup>122</sup>

Elgar's marches, like most examples of the genre (and famously on account of 'Pomp and Circumstance' no. 1), contain a central trio section of a less martial, more lyrical or *nobilmente* character. Yet the 'Mughal Polonaise' has no such trio to interrupt the procession. Instead, the 'trumpeting' motif, together with the polonaise rhythm played by timpani and side drum, and the heavy second-beat polonaise-style

elephant steps dominate, effectively conjuring up the sound and image of the massive *darbār* procession itself: 'It was a barbaric display' an onlooker marvelled, 'but it epitomized the wealth and magnificence of the immemorial East. On they [the native princes] came till one almost fancied that the heavy tramp of the elephants shook the ground. The bells hanging from the howdahs clanged like cathedral chimes.'<sup>123</sup> Elgar's magnificent polonaise, with its cymbal-crashing, 'Indian' gong-ringing conclusion (ending on an open fifth, no third) had captured something of the *darbār* that press reports declared 'can never be reproduced again': a musical depiction of the 200-strong procession of elephants who had walked to Delhi from all over India.<sup>124</sup> It was no wonder that Elgar had chosen to depict the 1903 *Dārbar*: George V's decision to enter Delhi on horseback in 1911 resulted in confusion among the crowds who failed to recognize him and *The Times* reported the lack of elephants at the state entrance with disappointment.<sup>125</sup> The magnificence of elephants had been eclipsed by the Rolls-Royce motor cars, aptly described as 'mechanical elephants' by historian Sharada Dwivedi. Rolls-Royce shipped out eight ornate 'Silver Ghosts' for the king-emperor and his senior officials to display at the 1911 *darbār*, thereby drawing the attention of the assembled princes and maharajahs who in turn purchased their own vehicles in great numbers.<sup>126</sup>

### Elgar the Barbarian

The 'magnificent barbaric turmoil', as the *Musical Times* put it, of the 'Mughal March' came to embody the acme of Elgarian imperialism for the musical intelligentsia after the First World War.<sup>127</sup> In *A Survey of Contemporary Music* in 1924, the Scottish critic and composer Cecil Gray established what was to become an enduring interpretation of Elgar: a distinction between 'the composer of the symphonies' and 'the self-appointed Musician Laureate of the British Empire'.<sup>128</sup> Concluding that 'the one is a musician of merit; the other is only a barbarian', Gray denounced all of Elgar's marches, Odes, and other occasional pieces, particularly *The Crown of India*—which he found 'undoubtedly the worst of the lot'—as 'perfect specimens' of jingoism.<sup>129</sup> By 1931, F. H. Shera, professor of music at the University of Sheffield, reported that the offending masque had been 'allowed to fade into deserved oblivion'.<sup>130</sup> While these dismissals reveal the contemporary attitudes of many critics, including A. J. Sheldon and Frank Howes (it was the latter who formulated the 'two Elgars' theory in the 1930s), they tell us little about the music's continuing popularity with the British public.<sup>131</sup> Not only were his imperial works in general among the most regularly broadcast on BBC stations, but of them—apart from the countless broadcasts of 'Land of Hope and Glory' and 'Pomp and Circumstance' March no. 1—*The Crown of India* Suite was heard most frequently: more than a hundred times between 1922 and 1934.<sup>132</sup>

The central position accorded *The Crown of India* by Gray, Shera, and others in their censure of Elgar's imperialist music coincides with significant changes in Anglo-Indian colonial relations and policies.<sup>133</sup> In his Salt Satyagraha of 1930, Mahatma Gandhi and hundreds of thousands of Indians, of whom some 80,000 were arrested, broke the 1882 British Salt Laws (which forbade people from making their

own salt from sea-water because the unjust taxes levied on salt enriched the Raj's coffers by 8% of its revenue) thereby setting in motion a series of civil actions against the British authorities. The Independence Movement gained momentum and that year also saw the first of three Round Table Conferences in London, convened by the British to consider new constitutional reforms leading towards more autonomy. Anti-colonial sentiments from English liberals intensified in the face of negligible native participation in the drafting of the constitution (the third Round Table had no Indian member), and even more in 1932 when the Indian Congress was declared illegal and Gandhi was arrested. In the midst of ever-deteriorating relations with an increasingly resistant India, the Government of India Act was passed in 1935: it would be the last pre-independence constitution of the British Raj. The 1935 Act gave some measure of autonomy to the Indian provinces, increased the franchise from seven to thirty-five million (of a population of some 300 million) by way of direct elections, and led to the establishment of an Indian Federation. In other words, it signalled the beginning of the end of the colonization of India.

It was precisely at this time, as Jeremy Crump has demonstrated, that pastoral imagery began to dominate interpretations of Elgar.<sup>134</sup> Associations of empire and war were dismissed from the music in favour of the imagined virtues of a preindustrial rural Britain that many sought (and, indeed, still seek). Writers often emphasized the music's English spirit, asserting its power to 'express the very soul of our race', as Ernest Newman put it after Elgar's death in February 1934, or likened the composer's exploitation of the musical idiom of 'the people' to the use of the vernacular by Burns and Shakespeare.<sup>135</sup>

One of the strategies used to distance this intangibly English Elgar from the imperial enterprise has been to appeal to the 'two Elgars' theory of Frank Howes and largely to ignore his imperialist works (except at graduation time or at the Last Night of the Proms). Lovers of his music since the 1930s have regularly tried to save the composer from himself by nurturing a potent nexus of nationalistic myths (pastoral, spiritual, nostalgic, racial) which have shaped the Elgar canon, dominated interpretations, and even influenced performances, forming the basis of the composer's revival in the 1960s.<sup>136</sup> Historian Jeffrey Richards has noted that the pillars of this revival, Ken Russell's BBC documentary *Elgar* (1962) and Michael Kennedy's *Portrait of Elgar* (1968), 'seriously distort the picture' because of a desire to 'exculpate Elgar from imperialism'.<sup>137</sup> Yet even Richards, in his fascinating book *Imperialism and Music*, seeks, like those he criticizes, to exonerate Elgar. His strategy is to exculpate imperialism from its principal driving force—profit—and to claim that it was 'the noble vision at the heart of British imperialism', that of the pax Britannica, that inspired the composer:

The problem is that people have misunderstood the meaning of imperialism, equating it with jingoism and exploitation. To apply the term 'jingoistic' to Elgar's work is to misunderstand his view entirely. His critics should have had more confidence in Sir Edward. Elgar's vision of Empire was clearly set out at the end of *Caractacus*: it is a vision of justice, peace, freedom and equality, of the pax Britannica—and of the fulfillment by Britain of its trusteeship mission, to see the countries in its charge brought safely and in due course to independence—a far from ignoble dream.<sup>138</sup>

Thus, imperialism's oldest alibi—the civilizing mission—is invoked, along with the pillars of arguments that were constructed to support the colonial enterprise ('a vision of justice, peace, freedom and equality'), and which have been laid bare by a generation of postcolonial scholars.<sup>139</sup> Nevertheless, in the last decade, landmark scholarship has done much to unravel the historiographical distortions surrounding the composer and his music with the result, as one Elgarian put it in 2007 (alas, prematurely), that 'the days of the "Malvern Hills" kind of commentary would appear to be numbered'.<sup>140</sup>

Yet, it seems that the question of what is at stake in illuminating Elgar's music not only in terms of the pleasure of listening, but in relation to the imperial enterprise still remains a difficult one. Thus, while a re-evaluation of Elgar is well underway, *The Crown of India* has generally—unless its 'external trappings' are explained away—either been put off limits ('awful... no one really needs either version'), uncritically celebrated ('a fine piece of Elgarian imperialism which requires no apology'), or freeze-dried into impoverished musical propaganda ('an expression of the common Orientalist tropes'... 'which leaves no doubt as to his complicity with the dominant imperialist ideologies'<sup>141</sup>). Yet, as we have seen, listening insightfully to Elgar's music with attention to its political subtext can tell us far more about the music and its times than abstract notions of imperialism. These judgements reinscribe the 'two Elgars' theory, and keep not only Elgar's imperial works at arm's length from his 'abstract' compositions but also the realities of the Raj at a safe distance from us. One of the main justifications for dividing Elgar's output has been to imply that the symphonies and string pieces demonstrate greater artistic excellence or beauty than do the marches and occasional pieces. Yet a close listen to either Agra's aria or the 'Mughal Polonaise' seriously undermines such assertions. Moreover, if we understand that there was only one Elgar and that his musical output cannot in all sincerity be divided and one part held to be more 'real' than the other, then we must accept that the symphonies, concerti, and string works were shaped by similar creative impulses that resulted in the imperial masque: our identification of the roots of the D-minor Intermezzo in 'Hail, Immemorial Ind!' demonstrates this point. Does recognition of this fact make it more difficult to enjoy the symphonies and concerti unconditionally, in the knowledge that woven into their tonal and thematic narratives are subtexts imbued at least indirectly with imperialism? Can these views be reconciled by implying that musical beauty or 'artistic excellence' redeems or even, as Richard Taruskin puts it in a different context, 'excuses' any content that may be unpalatable?<sup>142</sup> Finally, following Taruskin, how ethical is it to entitle musicians and music lovers 'by virtue of their artistic commitment' to practise 'moral indifference'—indifference, here, to colonial history, and particularly to the Raj and its impact on Britain itself?

In this interpretation, *The Crown of India* is, like Kipling's *Kim* (1901), central to the high point of the Raj and in some ways represents it. The masque is a fascinating work of imperialism. Historically illuminating and often musically rich, it is a significant contribution to the orientalized India of the English imagination.<sup>143</sup> We might hear it, in some ways, as the realization of British imperialism's cumulative process: the control and subjugation of India's peoples combined with a fascination for the beauty of its landscapes and an inability to acknowledge that it was Indians

who were responsible for its glorious architecture, the richness of its culture, and its legacy in mathematics and astronomy. Moreover, as its emphases and omissions suggest, underneath its pageantry, *The Crown of India* reflected not the success of the British Raj but the beginnings of its failure. Its Mughal Polonaise represents a tradition begun during the Mughal Empire long before European domination and culminating in the Great Elephant Procession of 1903. And it is no small irony that the Mughal Polonaise, like the music of the *naubat khānā* at the Mughal courts, is more sophisticated and compelling than the ‘popular and patriotic’ music for brass and wind band that was performed at the Delhi *Darbār* of 1911 itself.<sup>144</sup>

The works of ‘the real Elgar’ have, for the most part, been received as powerful artistic statements from the pioneer of English musical nationalism. Yet the critical obsession with identifying in his music an essential Englishness, while ostensibly intended as an affirmation of its worth, has often served to confine it largely within the nation’s boundaries (performances of ‘Enigma’ notwithstanding).<sup>145</sup> Sir Edward is, of course, no innocent victim of these nationalist interpretations: he clearly cultivated the character and outdoor pursuits of the perfect English gentleman, enjoyed the official honours bestowed upon him, and, as we have seen, enthusiastically took up ‘The Composer’s Burden’. Could he have imagined, though, that nostalgic perceptions of ‘this benighted country’, as he called it, would be so rigidly inscribed in his music to its detriment a century later?<sup>146</sup>

Elgar’s style reveals a wide inspiration with roots in a variety of traditions—and not just the acceptable Teutonic one. *The Crown of India* alone features a ravishing aria of Islamic inspiration and a brilliantly conceived Russian-style polonaise. Listening to Elgar’s masque in relation to the Delhi *Darbār* of 1911 not only contributes to the task of unravelling that ‘third E’—‘Englishness’—from Sir Edward’s music but also takes part in reintegrating British music into the cultural history of empire in general and of the Raj in particular. In doing so, we can, I think, enrich our understanding of both the music of this period and the socio-cultural history with which it is inextricably linked.

## NOTES

An earlier version of a portion of this chapter appeared as ‘Elgar and the British Raj: Can the Mughals March?’, pp. 249–85, in *Elgar and His World*, ed. Byron Adams. © Princeton University Press, 2007. Reprinted with permission.

1. The article in the *Pall Mall Gazette* (January 1912) from which this chapter’s epigraph was drawn was found in the cuttings files, Elgar Birthplace Museum, Lower Broadheath, Worcester, vol. 7 (June 1911–June 1914) Ref. 1332 (hereinafter, EBM Cuttings), 9.
2. *Darbār* is the Persian term for ‘court’. Exquisite paintings depict the Mughal *darbārs*: see e.g. Bonnie C. Wade, *Imaging Sound: An Ethnomusicological Study of Music, Art and Culture in Mughal India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), esp. fig. 132, from a looseleaf Mughal manuscript, c.1600, showing the *darbār* of Shah Jahān.
3. Tim Barringer discusses the Mughal origins of the 1911 *Darbār* in his illuminating article, ‘Sonic Spectacles: The Audio-Visual Nexus, Delhi–London, 1911–12’, in *Sensible Objects: Material Culture, the Senses, Colonialism, Museums*, ed. E. Edwards et al. (London: Berg, 2006), esp. 175–7.

4. Quotation is from the description on the reverse of a stereoscopic photograph entitled 'Marvels of Richness and Grandeur—the Great Durbar Procession, Delhi, India' (New York: Underwood and Underwood, 1903).
5. N. D. Barton, 'The Durbar Ceremonials', in *At the Delhi Durbar 1911: Being the impressions of the Head Master and a party of fourteen Boys of the King's School, Parramatta, New South Wales, who had the good fortune to be present (March 1912)*, ed. Stacy Waddy, British Library, India Office: ORW 1989, A.2237, 22–8.
6. *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India 1911*; compiled from the official records, with illustrations (London: John Murray, 1914), 217.
7. The Kinemacolor film, titled *With Our King and Queen through India*, was Charles Urban's greatest success. It was premiered at the Scala Theatre in London on 2 February 1912 and subsequently shown around the world. See Luke McKernan, 'The Modern Elixir of Life': Kinemacolor, Royalty and the Delhi Durbar', *Film History: An International Journal* 21, no. 2 (2009): 122–36. See also the scholarly website, created by McKernan (Curator of Moving Image Collections at the British Library) on the Delhi *Darbār*, <[http://www.charlesurban.com/documents\\_durbar.html](http://www.charlesurban.com/documents_durbar.html)>. For reports of the *Darbār*, see E. A. Philp, *With the King to India, 1911–12* (Plymouth, UK: Western Morning News Co., 1912); *The Historical Record of the Imperial Visit to India, 1911*; and John Fortescue, *Narrative of the Visit to India of their Majesties King George V and Queen Mary and of the Coronation Durbar held at Delhi 12 December 1911* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912). The 'Programme of ceremonies' is included in *The Delhi Durbar Medal 1911 to the British Army*, compiled by Peter Duckers (Shrewsbury, UK: Squirrel Publishing, 1998).
8. Illustration courtesy of McKernan. As noted in the catalogue, it was impossible to reproduce the Kinemacolor effect in print because it only existed in projection: 'It should be clearly understood that the illustrations throughout this Catalogue are not actual Kinemacolor pictures, but scenes from the various films enlarged, colored by an artist, and reproduced by the three-color printing process.'
9. Barton, 'The Durbar Ceremonials', 71.
10. I purposely use the old colonial names for Indian cities throughout this chapter since several cities are actually personified as singing roles in Elgar's masque. For a discussion of the motivation behind the transfer of the capital, see Richard Paul Cronin, *British Policy and Administration in Bengal, 1905–1912: Partition and the New Province of Eastern Bengal and Assam* (Calcutta: Firma KLM Private Ltd, 1977), 217.
11. Shelland Bradley, *An American Girl at the Durbar* (London: John Lane, 1912), 162–3.
12. *Ibid.*
13. Barjorjee Nowroosjee, ed., *Cartoons from the 'Hindi Punch' 1905* (Bombay: Bombay Samachar Press, 1905), 57. Nirad Chaudhuri recalled, 'I still remember a cartoon in a Bengali newspaper in those far off anti-partition days which showed Lord Curzon sawing a live woman.' 'Enter Nationalism', in his book, *The Autobiography of an Unknown Indian* (1952); repr. in *Modern India: An Interpretive Anthology*, ed. Thomas Metcalf (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Ltd, 1994), 304.
14. Chaudhuri, 'Enter Nationalism', 303–22.
15. For more details, see Aurobindo Mazumdar, *Vande Mataram and Islam* (Delhi: Mittal Publications, 2007), 12. As Nirad Chaudhuri recalled, however, *Swadeshi* as a movement of Hindu revival became extremist and divisive. People began to sing songs from 'the orthodox Hindu school' which 'we thought [to be] very much better than the Tagore songs we formerly used to sing' ('Enter Nationalism', 308–9).
16. Cronin, *British Policy and Administration in Bengal*, 207–13.
17. *Ibid.*, 441.

18. For further analysis of the implications of the partition and its repeal, see Cronin's 'Introduction', to his *British Policy and Administration in Bengal*.
19. The Coliseum program for the opening week (commencing 11 March 1912) of the masque is in the British Library: London Playbills (1908–13), ref. 74/436. Two copies are also held at the Elgar Birthplace Museum: Concert Programmes (January–July 1912), ref. no. 1126.
20. *The Times*, 9 January 1912, p. 6, col. a.
21. *Daily Telegraph*, 4 March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 16.
22. *Eastern Daily Press*, 24 February 1912, EBM Cuttings, 16.
23. Three photographs from the masque appeared in the *Daily Sketch*, 12 March 1912, 8–9. Illustrations and photographs of the *darbār* abound: see John Peeps Finnemore, *Delhi and the Durbar with Twelve Full-Page Illustrations in Colour by Mortimer Menpes* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1912); Sir Stanley Reed, KBE, *The King and Queen in India: A Record of the Visit of Their Imperial Majesties to India, from December 2nd 1911 to January 10th 1912* (Bombay: Bennet, Coleman & Co, 1912); *The Great Delhi Durbar of 1911*, written to accompany a series of lantern slides (1912), BL: 010056.g.26.
24. *The Standard*, 1 March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 16.
25. The First War of Independence (also known as the Rebellion or the Mutiny) was the defining event of the Anglo-Indian relationship in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The uprising began in Meerut on 10 May 1857; by the next day the Indian soldiers had captured Delhi. The ensuing siege of Delhi is perhaps the seminal event in the history of Empire and it saw thousands die in fighting on both sides. It was 1859 before the British forces, with the Sikhs and Gurkhas, finally regained the now ruined city and put the movement down with extreme brutality, leaving no Indian soldier alive (tens of thousands of Indians were executed). It was celebrated as a great victory over native resistance. An enormous amount of writing, British and Indian, covers the Rebellion; it has been acknowledged as having provided a clear demarcation for Indian and for British history. For a superbly nuanced perspective drawn from 20,000 'rebel' documents in Urdu and Persian which survive from the sepoy camp and palace in Delhi (all of which were found in the National Archives), see William Dalrymple (who researched the documents alongside the Urdu scholar Mahmoud Farooqi), *The Last Mughal: The Fall of Delhi, 1857* (London: Bloomsbury, 2006). Although there is no universally agreed upon name, Indian sources more often use Rebellion or First War of Independence (although the latter has been criticized by some historians of South Asia) than 'The [Indian] Mutiny' which diminishes the event's significance.
26. *India and the Durbar: A Reprint of Indian Articles in the 'Empire Day' Edition of The Times, May 24th, 1911* (London, 1911), 49.
27. Waddy, *At the Delhi Durbar 1911*, 75.
28. Such interpretation of pageants, masques, and other imperial entertainments as pieces of popular propaganda dates as far back as J. A. Hobson, *The Psychology of Jingoism* (London: G. Richards, 1901). For more recent examples of this general view, see John MacKenzie's *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion 1880–1960* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984) and his edited volume, *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1986).
29. *The Times*, 12 March 1912, p. 8, col. c.
30. For detailed analyses of the belief systems that justified Indian colonialism, see Thomas Metcalf, *Ideologies of the Raj* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); and Bernard S. Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1996).
31. Hamilton, *Crown of India*, libretto, 7 and 18.

32. This was how the *Illustrated London News* described Victoria, Empress of India's rule of India during the 1886 Indian and Colonial exhibition, 8 May 1886; quoted in Kusoom Vadgama, *India in Britain: The India Contribution to the British Way of Life* (London: R. Royce, 1984), 61. In the masque, these sentiments are echoed by India as she pays homage at the feet of the king-emperor and queen-empress (Hamilton, *Crown of India*, libretto, 22).
33. Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London: Vintage, 1994), 180.
34. This, and other information in this section, comes from Robert Anderson's fine article, 'Elgar's Passage to India', *Elgar Society Journal* 9, no. 1 (March 1995): 15–16.
35. Robert Anderson, *Elgar* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1993), 16–17.
36. Anderson, 'Elgar's Passage to India', 16 and 19. In addition, Elgar would have come to know of the opulence of Indian arts and crafts from his mother, Ann. She kept a scrapbook of cuttings that included articles on Indian art.
37. Elgar clipped and kept the following announcement in *The Bystander*: 'Sir Edward Elgar, strongest and most individual of all English composers, has, by assuming the Order [of Merit], redeemed knighthood from being the charter of mediocrity in music' (15 November 1911, EBM Cuttings, 1).
38. Julie F. Cordell, 'International Exhibitions', in *A Companion to British Art: 1600 to the Present*, ed. Dana Arnold and David Peters Corbett (Chichester, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2013), 233. H. Trueman Wood, ed., *Colonial and Indian Exhibition Reports* (London: William Clowes & Sons, Ltd, 1887). Arthur Sullivan, 'Ode...for opening of Colonial and Indian Exhibition' (words by A. Tennyson), performed at the Royal Albert Hall, 4 May 1886.
39. The attendance figure for the 1901 Exhibition, for example, was 11,497,220. Admission was one shilling, season tickets were one guinea; profit: £39,000 (pub. figure of 1905). Free music was a big selling point for the Exhibition. Perilla Kinchin and Juliet Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions* (White Cockade, Bicester, 1988), 15 and 87–8.
40. Cordell, 'International Exhibitions', 232; Raymond Head, *The Indian Style* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1986), 128–9 and 141–2. *Franco-British Exhibition Official Guide* (London: Bemrose & Sons Ltd., 1908). F. G. Dumas, *Franco-British Exhibition Illustrated Review* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), esp. 295. *The Illustrated London News*, 15 June 1901. See also Imre Kiralfy's notes for his *India and Ceylon Exhibition* (1896), 37–40: BL India Office, V 26652.
41. John MacKenzie discusses these productions in *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995), 191–6, 196. See also Heidi Holder, 'Melodrama, Realism and Empire on the British Stage', in *Acts of Supremacy: The British Empire and the Stage, 1790–1930*, ed. Jacqueline S. Bratton et al. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1991), 129–49.
42. Imre Kiralfy, *India* (1895), BL 11779. K.6 (5). A preview article, entitled 'Imre Kiralfy's Latest Show: The Ambitious Exposition of the Empire of India Which Is to be Opened in London Next May', appeared in the *New York Times*, 26 February 1895.
43. Kiralfy, *India*, 41. For more on such spectacles of empire, see Breandan Gregory, 'Staging British India', in *Acts of Supremacy*, 150–178.
44. David Cannadine, 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition" c.1820–1977', in *The Invention of Tradition*, ed. Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 101–64, 124.
45. The reference is to Rudyard Kipling's poem, 'The White Man's Burden: The United States & Philippine Islands, 1899', which begins 'Take up the White man's burden / send forth the best ye reed', in *Rudyard Kipling's Verse: Definitive Edition* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1929).

46. Anderson, *Elgar*, 39. Performances of the *Imperial March* during the Jubilee year—at the Albert and Queen's Halls, at a royal garden party and a state concert, as well as at the Three Choirs Festival—placed Elgar in the position of laureate for imperial Britain. Anderson relates that the Crystal Palace hosted yet another grand occasion that year when Elgar's *Characteristic Dances* were premiered and at which 'Ethnological Groups' including life-like and life-sized groups of 'Indians, Bushmen, Zulu Kaffirs, Mexican Indians, Hindoos [*sic*], Tibetans', were put on display in the south transept (*Elgar*, 36). See also Crystal Palace Programme and Guide to the Entertainments, 1901. BL Miscellaneous programmes 1898–1923 Shelfmark 341, no. 4.
47. Anderson surmises that it was probably Clara Butt (rather than Edward VII) who suggested the use of the trio tune from *Pomp and Circumstance* March no. 1 (see *Elgar*, 53).
48. Sir Henry Wood, *My Life of Music* (London: Gollancz, 1946), 154; he also recalled the historic Promenade Concert held at the Queen's Hall at which the D major march was premiered and 'accorded a double encore' (154).
49. Quoted in Anderson, *Elgar*, 49–50.
50. Cannadine (who discusses the strategic use of aggrandizing ceremonial as the 'real power' of the British empire declined), 'The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual: The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition" c.1820–1977', esp. 114 and 125. For an example of each interpretation, see Jan Morris, *Pax Britannica: The Climax of an Empire* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, 1968) and Samuel Hynes, *Edwardian Turn of Mind* (London: Oxford University Press, 1968), 19–20.
51. Tarak Nath Biswas, *Emperor George and Empress Mary: The Early Lives of Their Gracious Majesties the King-Emperor and Queen-Empress of India* (1911), rev. Panchanon Neogi, 4th ed. (Calcutta: Nalini Mohan Biswas, 1921).
52. Tagore's contributions to the resistance almost certainly led to his rejection as a candidate for an honorary degree by the University of Oxford in 1912, for it was Lord Curzon, just returned from India, who had become Chancellor of the University (see Mary M. Lago, *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore 1911–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 38–9).
53. See R. V. R. Murthy, *Andaman and Nicobar Islands: A Saga of Freedom Struggle* (Delhi: Kalpaz Publications, 2011), esp. 10–11. Also Cathy Scott-Clark and Adrian Levy, 'Survivors of our Hell', *Guardian Weekend*, 23 June 2001, 30–36; *Kala Pani: A Forgotten History*, presented by Selma Chalabi, 21 April 2010, on BBC Radio 4; and see Chalabi's article, 'Casting Light on a Dark Part of Britain's History', <<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/8632310.stm>>.
54. Quoted in Anderson, 'Elgar's Passage to India', 16.
55. *Daily Telegraph*, 3 February 1912, EBM Cuttings, 11.
56. Letter (January 1912), reproduced in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 242. As both Corissa Gould and Deborah Heckert have noted, Elgar turned down commissions he did not feel committed to, either musically or ideologically. Gould, 'Edward Elgar, *The Crown of India* and the Image of Empire', *Elgar Society Journal* 13, no. 1 (March 2003): 25–35, 29; and Heckert, 'Working the Crowd: Elgar, Class, and Reformation of Popular Culture', in *Edward Elgar and His World*, ed. Byron Adams (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 287–316, esp. 294–5. Heckert further notes that 'Elgar and his wife enjoyed the Coliseum' and that the evidence we have from letters and so on, 'strongly conflicts with the notion that either Edward or Alice was embarrassed by the composer's involvement with the Coliseum' (*ibid.*).

57. From a report in *The Standard*, 1 March 1912; quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 629. See also EBM Cuttings, vol. 7.
58. Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 630.
59. Cited in *ibid.*
60. *Eastern Daily Press*, 24 February 1912, EBM Cuttings, 16.
61. *Daily Telegraph*, 9 April 1912, EBM Cuttings, 23.
62. *Daily Express*, 12 March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 18.
63. *The Times*, March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 15.
64. For more details of the sets, see Anderson, *Elgar*, 264–5.
65. Franco-British Exhibition held at Shepherd's Bush, London, 1908. *Official Guide*, 47–8.
66. *The Standard*, 1 March 1912; quoted in Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 629.
67. *The Referee*, 17 March 1912; EBM Cuttings.
68. Excerpts from reviews in the *Morning Post* (12 March), and the *Daily Telegraph* (24 February and 12 March) respectively; EBM Cuttings, 17.
69. 'Stand up, stand up for Jesus' is another such hymn popular at the time. *Hymns Ancient and Modern Revised* (London: William Clowes and Sons, Ltd, 1950), 872–3.
70. Raymond Monk, ed., *Elgar Studies* (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1990), appendices 1 and 4, 16–33.
71. Historian Jeffrey Richards brilliantly invokes J. B. Priestley's point that it is characteristic of the English to laugh at what they love most. Moreover, this may be an instance of a type of song which, as Richards puts it, 'starts out as satire, and ends up as celebration' (*Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 34).
72. Due to the impact of the anti-naught movement in 1892, the courtesans who danced traditional *Kathak* were stigmatized as the 'infamous nautch'. Although *Kathak* was in fact danced by both men and women, travellers' descriptions only refer to female 'nautch' dancers. Gerry Farrell discusses European and, later, Hindu nationalist, reactions to *Kathak* in his *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 29–31, and 53–4.
73. These included the ballet *La Bayadère* by Marius Petipa and Ludwig Minkus which features two opposing ballerinas, the beautiful temple dancer, Nikiya, and her jealous rival, Gamzatti (first performed at the Bolshoi Theatre in 1877, it remains popular in Europe and North America to this day); and Venzani's 'Dance of the Bayadères' in Kiralfy's *India*; Walter Henry Lonsdale's 'Nautch Dance' for piano (London: Alphonse Cary, 1896); Frederick H. Cowen's 'The Nautch Girl's Song' (London: Joseph Williams, 1898), a setting of words by the well-known authority on Indian literature, Sir Edwin Arnold; and, in the year of *The Crown of India*, Herbert Oliver's 'The Nautch Girl' from *Songs of the Orient* (London: J. H. Larway, 1912).
74. Edward Solomon, *The Nautch Girl*, comic opera in two acts (London: Chappell & Co., 1891).
75. Richard Burton, *Sindh Revisited: In Two Volumes* (Karachi: Department of Culture and Tourism, Gov. of Sindh, 1993), vol. 2, 53.
76. Unidentified review of *The Crown of India* suite performed at the Proms on 7 September 1912, EBM Cuttings, 41.
77. Kipling, 'The Ballad of East and West' which begins: 'Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet', in *Gunga Din and Other Favorite Poems*, Dover Thrift Editions (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1990), 6–9.
78. Corissa Gould's chapter, '“Behind Thy Veil Close-drawn”: Elgar, *The Crown of India*, and the Feminine Other', in *Europe, Empire, and Spectacle in Nineteenth-Century British*

- Music*, ed. Rachel Cowgill and Julian Rushton (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2006), 203–20, in which she discusses the feminine imagery of the text, is a notable exception.
79. *The Crown of India: An Imperial Masque*, libretto by Henry Hamilton (London: Enoch & Sons, 1912), 5.
  80. Elgar's written description of the Mediterranean cruise in his diary, September/October 1905: 30 September; Birmingham University Special Collections: EE 1/1/3.
  81. Elgar wrote in his diary on Friday, 29 September 1905: 'Arrived at Smyrna... went to the bazaar. Much finer sight than Constantinople. Colour; movement; & camels—100s—led by a donkey through the bazaar. This was my first touch with Asia, & I was quite overcome. The endless camels made the scene more *real* than in Stamboul—the extraordinary colour & movement, light & shade were intoxicating.' I recorded the elaborate and highly melismatic call to prayer on *Al Juma'a* from the mosque on the main square in Izmir (located at the site of the special Friday bazaar which Elgar visited and which continues to this day) in April 2013.
  82. 'peculiar feeling of intense heat & wind... drove to the Mosque of dancing dervishes' (Elgar, diary entry, Sunday, 1 October 1905).
  83. Elgar, *In Smyrna* (Borough Green: Novello & Co. Ltd, 1976). In his introduction to the Novello edition of *In Smyrna*, Moore notes that Elgar wrote, 'In Smyrna (In the Mosque)', in his sketchbook beside an early idea for the music. See also *Letters of Edward Elgar*, ed. P. M. Young (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), 156–8.
  84. Mughal paintings depict the *darvish*: see, for instance, Wade, *Imaging Sound*, figs. 113 and 117.
  85. Scene description for *Tableau I, Crown of India*, libretto, 3. The Taj Mahal had also been used as the backdrop in the Picture Theatre for Urban's Kinemacolor film of the Delhi *Darbār* a few months earlier.
  86. Elgar inherited the tradition established in nineteenth-century opera of the contralto taking on the voice of the sensual and feminized East, such as Saint-Saëns's Delilah.
  87. Elgar penned the description in his diary (30 September 1905), see Moore's 'Introduction' to *In Smyrna*.
  88. *The Times*, 16 March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 19.
  89. The phrase 'when East [is] to West attuned' was Elgar's: he altered Hamilton's more egalitarian notion, 'when East and West [are] attuned'. While much has been made of the fact that Elgar made judicious cuts to Hamilton's libretto in order to remove some of the imperialist rhetoric, moments which point to the composer's desire to emphasize colonial power have attracted little comment. For example, also in Agra's song, Elgar cut Hamilton's historical details 'beheld the legions Alexander led, when rose Patala on the shores of Sind', thereby leaving the Coliseum audience to understand the Aryan conquest as being the later British one (rather than the one led by Alexander the Great in 326 B.C.).
  90. The complete music from the masque was published in vocal score by Enoch & Sons in 1912, but only the well-known orchestral suite, published separately by Hawkes & Son is now extant in score and parts owing to the demise of the Enoch firm in the 1920s. In 1975, when the conductor Leslie Head wished to perform the masque, only two movements were extant (Lewis Foreman, notes to recording of excerpts from *The Crown of India* on Classico CD 334 (Olufsen Records, 2000), 4; a 1912 recording of the *Crown of India March* by the Black Diamonds Band was released by The Elgar Society in 1997: CDAX 8019).
  91. The new edition includes: Henry Hamilton's libretto, the orchestral suite of five numbers arranged by the composer, the vocal score (of the masque), and two numbers reconstructed from the extant orchestral parts: Agra's 'Hail, Immemorial Ind!' and 'The Crown of India March'. Robert Anderson, ed., *The Crown of India*, Elgar Society

- Edition, Series III: Vol. 18 (London: Elgar Society Edition Ltd in association with Novello and Company Ltd, 2004). Chandos: CHAN10570 (2) (2009) Elgar: Crown of India, Op. 66.
92. Andrew Clements, CD review—Elgar: *The Crown of India*, etc., BBCPO/Davis; *Guardian*, 6 November 2009, p. 13 of the film and music section.
  93. Quotations are from Richard Taruskin's discussion of musical ethics in 'Stravinsky and Us', in *The Danger of Music and Other Anti-Utopian Essays* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009), 441.
  94. Salman Rushdie has argued that the vogue for 'Raj revivalism' which occurred in the 1980s is characterized by such films as *A Passage to India* and *Gandhi*, and by the televised serialization of M. M. Kaye's *The Far Pavilions* and Paul Scott's *Raj Quartet*; see Rushdie, 'Outside the Whale', *Granta* 11 (1984), 125–38; repr. in *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981–1991* (New York: Granta Books, 1991), 87–101.
  95. Elgar conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in the suite's premiere at the Three Choirs Festival, Hereford, on 11 September 1912 (program at the Elgar Birthplace Museum, ref. 1037). Elgar used the Anglicized spelling, 'Mogul', rather than 'Mughal'. I use 'Mogul' only in direct quotations and in the title of the piece.
  96. 'The New Elgar Suite—London Premiere Last Night at Queen's Hall', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 18 September 1912; EBM Cuttings, 40 (emphasis added).
  97. Sir Andrew Davies, who conducted the recent *Crown of India* for Chandos, remarked on the 'exquisite' Interlude; the movement has been recorded by Tasmin Little and issued on a disc with Elgar's Violin Concerto: Chandos 2010: CHSA 5083. The 'English countryside' description comes from the notes accompanying the Chandos recording of the masque by Andrew Neill, former president of The Elgar Society, 17.
  98. The Elgar Society's webpage on *The Crown of India* incorrectly states that 'Elgar added an intermezzo for solo violin to form a suite' <<http://www.elgar.org/3crown.htm>>. This misinformation is duplicated on a number of web pages relating to Elgar.
  99. John Foulds relates the French remark, made by a distinguished musician after playing through some of Elgar's melodies on the piano, in his book *Music To-Day* (London: Ivor Nicholson and Watson, 1934), 233 n. 2. Michael Kennedy writes, 'the falling thirds and sevenths of the G minor section of the original theme... pervade the whole work as clearly as if they were Elgar's signature' (CD notes Deutsche Grammophon CD 413 490–2 (1982)).
  100. *Daily Telegraph*, 12 March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 17.
  101. See Elgar's letter (13 August 1930), quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar on Record: The Composer and the Gramophone* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), 113. The recordings were made during 15–18 September with the London Symphony Orchestra in the Kingsway Hall. 'Mogul Emperors' was recorded, as was the 'Minuet', and the 'Warrior's Dance'. These were transferred from shellac by A. C. Griffith for LP: RLS 713. The 'Introduction' and 'Dance of the Nautch Girls' were also recorded. For further details, see Moore, *Elgar on Record*, 114–15; see also the letter from Gaisberg to Elgar (16 October 1930), in Moore, *Elgar on Record*, 117.
  102. Letter from Elgar to Gaisberg (15 October 1930), in Moore, *Elgar on Record*, 116.
  103. Quoted in Moore, *Elgar on Record*, 128.
  104. Jeremy Crump, 'The Identity of English Music: The Reception of Elgar 1898–1935', in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920*, ed. Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London: Croom Helm, 1986), 173.
  105. British Empire Exhibition pamphlet no.7: Pageant of Empire Programme—Part II Jul. 21–Aug. 30 1924 (printed & published by Fleetway Press Ltd, London), (programme at the Elgar Birthplace Museum: Concert Programmes 1912, Ref. 1126: 5). For more on 'Indian Dawn' and Elgar's other contributions to the Pageant

- at Wembley, see Nalini Ghuman, 'Elgar's *Pageant of Empire*, 1924: an Imperial *Leitmotiv*', in *Exhibiting the Empire: Cultures of Display and the British Empire*, ed. John McAleer and John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming).
106. Kennedy, liner notes to CD Hamburg Deutsche Grammophon 413 490-2 (1982). Corissa Gould finds it to be 'a musical expression of the common Orientalist tropes'—a reading which Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon conclude, 'leaves no doubt as to his [Elgar's] complicity with the dominant imperialist ideologies of his day'; Gould, 'An Inoffensive Thing: Edward Elgar, *The Crown of India* and Empire', in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire, 1780s-1940s*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot, UK: Ashgate, 2007), 157; and Zon and Clayton, 'Introduction', *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire*, 5. See also 'Elgar's New Masque', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 February 1912, EBM Cuttings, 15; 'Sir Edward Elgar's Masque', *The Times*, 12 June 1912; Morris, *Pax Britannica*, 340-341; and Diana McVeagh's article on Elgar in *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., vol. 8, 125.
  107. E.g. William Smallwood, *The Indian March* (London [n.p.], 1879); Thomas Boatwright, *Indian March: The Diamond Jubilee* (London: Klene & Co., 1898); Richard F. Harvey, *The Royal Indian March for piano* (London: Francis Day & Hunter, 1901); John Pridham's *The Battle March arranged for piano* (London: W. H. Broome, 1904).
  108. Quote from Delhi's speech, First Tableau, libretto, 12-13. Several descendants from the not-so-distant past were not 'invited', most notably Bahādur Shah II, the last great Mughal emperor, deposed by the British and exiled to Burma in 1858 at the age of 83, after he had been forced to witness the execution of two of his sons and to receive their severed heads (see Dalrymple, *The Last Mughal*).
  109. The full Kipling quote is 'Oh, well for the world when the White Men tread / Their highway side by side!' in *Verse* (New York: Garden City, 1954), 280. Much later, in 1954, Vaughan Williams wrote an 'Oriental March of the Three Kings' in his *Hodie*. In it, an accented basso ostinato creates the effect of triple meter across the bar-line.
  110. A five-movement orchestral suite was extracted from *Mlada* in 1903 and published the next year. It concludes with the grand 'Procession of the Nobles'.
  111. The main thematic material seen in the example derives from a motif heard in the D Minor Interlude.
  112. For a detailed tracing of the history of the polonaise in Russia, see Richard Taruskin, *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 281-91. For an artistic and political study of Mughal court culture, see Wade, *Imaging Sound*. Considered in its appropriate historical and musical context, the Mughal polonaise is quite the opposite of Gould's description of it as 'a musical joke' representing the Mughal Emperors being wrong-footed ('An Inoffensive Thing', 154).
  113. Elgar certainly knew Rimsky-Korsakov's music: he had conducted the *Fantasia on Serbian Themes*, and the suite from *The Snow Maiden* in 1899; Monk, ed., *Elgar Studies*, appendix 2, 25. Taruskin demonstrates how the beginnings of Chaikovsky's imperial style can be precisely located in the orchestral suites, how the third suite in particular was bound up with his feelings about his country, and how all this culminates in the final polonaise of the third suite which brought its St Petersburg audience to its feet (*Defining Russia Musically*, 278-80).
  114. *India and the Durbar: A Reprint of Indian Articles in the 'Empire Day' Edition of The Times, May 24th, 1911* (London, 1911), 42. The event was referred to in the press as The Great Elephant Procession. *The Sphere*, for instance, included a supplement on the *Darbār* with its issue of 24 January 1903; pp. ii-iii feature a magnificent painting under the heading 'The Great Elephant Procession'. The procession actually took place on 29 December 1902.

115. 'The Great Elephant Procession', *Sphere*.
116. Ibid.
117. The motif introduced in bars 5–8, in essence a transitional figure characterized by a falling interval decorated with trills, bears an unmistakable relation to the two-bar interpolation marked *sul G* in the D Minor Intermezzo, especially in its guise as a waltz later in the masque. With the violin's falling seventh narrowed to an open fifth and its rhythmic undulations straightened out, the once-supple 6/8 motif, now reinterpreted in simple triple time, takes on a processional guise.
118. Quotation from the reverse of the stereoscopic photograph entitled 'Marvels of Richness and Grandeur—the great Durbar Procession, Delhi, India' (New York: Underwood and Underwood, 1902). Gould's misreading of these effects as 'an exercise in exaggeration for comic effect' reveals a lack of knowledge of the events of the *Darbārs* themselves, and a misunderstanding of the way in which the Great Mughal tradition of the *Darbār* was invoked by the British (Gould, 'An Inoffensive Thing', 156).
119. *India and the Durbar: A Reprint of Indian Articles in the 'Empire Day' Edition of The Times, May 24th, 1911* (London, 1911), 42–3.
120. For examples of such Mughal paintings, see Wade, *Imaging Sound*. Fig. 7 shows princes riding elephants in procession, c.1575–80, accompanied by musicians playing drums and *sūrna*, instruments from the court ensemble, the *naqqāra khāna*; in fig. 132, an ornate elephant appears in the foreground of the painting of Shah Jahān's *darbār*. Depictions of the 1903 procession abound: another fine photograph in the Curzon collection shows elephants in the great procession, with jewels, cloths of gold, and silver howdahs, processing past the Viceregal dais in the State Entry to Delhi; BL Photo 430/78 (1). *The Sphere* featured a striking double-page reproduction of detail from a drawing by Sheldon Williams entitled 'The Great Elephant Procession at the Delhi Durbar', 24 January 1903, pp. ii–iii.
121. The quoted description is from the reverse of the stereoscopic photograph, 'Marvels of Richness and Grandeur' mentioned earlier. Roderick MacKenzie (1865–1941) was a British artist living in India at the time of the *Darbār*. He was commissioned by Curzon to paint the ceremonial procession of British officials and Indian maharajas as they entered the *Darbār* grounds on elephants, passing the *Jama Masjid*. The procession was led by Lutchman Pershad carrying the Viceroy and Vicereine; following Lutchman came the Duke and Duchess of Connaught, representing the British royal family, and the Indian rulers, headed by the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja of Mysore. That first painting is in the Victoria Memorial Hall in Kolkata, India. MacKenzie then painted the same scene on a huge canvas for Lord Roberts (who had served in India from 1851 to 1877): it is this painting, housed in the Bristol Museum and Art Gallery, which appears on this book's cover and on the companion website.
122. Vivid descriptions abound: 'The beast in the right foreground wears a blanket stiff with embroideries of gold and silver; do you see the bands of gold around his tusks and the ropes of huge silver beads about his huge ankles? The jewels worn by a single one of these maharajahs themselves are in many cases worth \$100,000—sometimes even more' (quotation from the reverse of the stereoscopic photograph, 'Marvels of Richness and Grandeur'). *The Sketch's* caricature represents a fanciful conflation of the Mughals with Ganesh.
123. *India and the Durbar*, 43.
124. *The Times* quoted the figure of 200 elephants; repr. in *India and the Durbar*, 43.
125. Many lamented the lack of elephants at the state entrance, including John Fortescue; *The Times* even expressed reservations before the event at how the decision to enter

- on horseback would 'deprive the coming durbar of a most impressive spectacle' (repr. in *India and the Durbar*, 42).
126. Sharada Dwivedi, contributor to the BBC documentary, *The Maharajas' Motor Car: The Story of the Rolls-Royce in India*, July 2011. From 1908 to 1948 Rolls Royce sold eight hundred of these peerless vehicles in India. For the 1911 *Darbār*, the Standard Motor Car Company also supplied seventy specially designed vehicles for the Royal party, with the Royal crown on the side panels and a crown mascot on the bonnet.
  127. *Musical Times* 53, no. 836 (1 October 1912): 665–66; *The Referee* similarly spoke of 'a touch of the barbaric appropriate to the situation' in the 'March of the Moghul Emperors', 17 March 1912, EBM Cuttings, 19.
  128. Cecil Gray, *A Survey of Contemporary Music* (London: Oxford University Press: 1924), 78–9. For further analysis of Elgar criticism in this period, see Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953*, 72–7.
  129. Ibid.
  130. F. H. Shera, *Elgar: Instrumental Works* (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), 6.
  131. A. J. Sheldon declared that 'political ideas can never inspire the artist in the same way, or to a like extent, as poetical ideas can' and called for Elgar's entire output of imperialist works to 'be buried soon; at present it is a clog on the endearing place Elgar holds in our estimation' (Sheldon, *Edward Elgar* with an introduction by Havergal Brian (London: Office of 'Musical Opinion', 1932), 16). Frank Howes claimed that 'the two Elgars may be roughly described as the Elgar who writes for strings and the Elgar who writes for brass' ('The Two Elgars', *Music and Letters* 15, no. 1 (January 1935), 26–9).
  132. Ronald Taylor, 'Music in the Air: Elgar and the BBC', in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, ed. Raymond Monk (Aldershot, UK: Scolar Press, 1993), 336–7.
  133. Alex Cohen, in the spirit of fervent support for the Raj, accorded the suite a central position for entirely different reasons ('Elgar: Poetic Visions and Patriotic Vigour', *Radio Times*, 2 December 1932, 669).
  134. Crump, 'The Identity of English Music', esp. 184.
  135. Ernest Newman, *Sunday Times*, 25 February 1934; and Ralph Vaughan Williams, quoted in Crump, 'The Identity of English Music', 180–1.
  136. One manifestation of this is Roger Scruton's *England: An Elegy* (London: Chatto and Windus, 2000), which, as its title suggests, mourns the loss of 'traditional values' associated with Victorianism while celebrating 'the virtues of England' (preface). Elgar's music (along with that of other supposed purveyors of English pastoralism) is called on as a witness of the now-lost Golden Age: 'Hardy, Housman and Edward Thomas; Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Holst, offer the last united invocations of a regional England, in which people were united by the history that divided them... theirs was a country of varied agriculture and localised building types, of regional accent and folk song, of local fairs and markets and shows' (183). The conductor Sakari Oramo directs listeners to recordings of Elgar conducting his own music which are 'revelatory'—'fleet and flowing... subtle in colours, impulsive and elusive'—and from which a different picture of the music emerges from the traditional one shaped by British conductors who have let their own personalities override his music—'Sargent's heavy sentimentality', 'Boult's stoic stodginess', or 'Barbirolli's operatic fury' ('Stand Up for the Maestro', *Guardian*, 25 May 2007, 3).
  137. Jeffrey Richards, 'Elgar's Empire', in *Imperialism and Music*, 45. In a similar vein, historian Bernard Porter, in his chapter 'Elgar and Empire: Music, Nationalism and the War', in *'Oh My Horses!': Elgar and the Great War*, ed. Lewis Forman

- (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2001), 133–73, 162, concludes that ‘Imperialism was a veneer’, not only for Elgar but, he suggests, also for Britain in general (an interpretation which has been vigorously refuted by the historian John MacKenzie). In 1976, Yehudi Menuhin recognized ‘the collective soul of a race, set in its own climate and landscape’ in the ‘Enigma’ Variations (‘Foreword’, in Monk, ed., *Elgar Studies*, p. xv). The composer’s sesquicentennial inspired the claim that ‘we all acknowledge that there is something essentially English in Elgar’ (Nicholas Kenyon, Introduction, in *Elgar: An Anniversary Portrait* (London: Continuum, 2007), p. vii).
138. Richards, ‘Elgar’s Empire’, 84, 51, and 53.
  139. Moreover, far from Britain ‘bringing [them] safely and in due course to independence’, colonized peoples have fought for their independence, many for over half a century and with considerable loss of life, before forcing the British to leave (this is particularly true for India, which fought for over fifty years for its freedom). The tendency to uncritically celebrate imperialism and its Orientalist works is visible in the work of a number of writers including James Day, David Cannadine, and Roger Scruton. In his book *‘Englishness’ in Music: From Elizabethan Times to Elgar, Tippett and Britten* (London: Thames Publishing, 1999), Day celebrates the ‘noble’ empire he hears in Elgar’s music; Cannadine attempts to erase race from the imperial equation in his book *Ornamentation: How the British Saw Their Empire* (London: Allen Lane, 2001); and Scruton, who, in his article ‘Islam and Orientalism’, claims that ‘we’ should acknowledge that ‘Eastern cultures owe a debt to . . . those noble orientalist [who undertook] the task of rescuing a culture other than their own’ (*The American Spectator* (May 2006): 10–12).
  140. Yet viewers of John Bridcut’s recent film, *Elgar: The Man behind the Mask* (2010), are told in friendly words that ‘the Marches [brilliant though they are] . . . merely ring at the door’ of the ‘real’ Elgar, and the film closes with the familiar (but fanciful) image of the composer riding away into the sunset over the Malvern Hills on a white pony (Elgar often cycled, and sometimes walked, but did not ride through The Malverns). The quotation comes from Relf Clark, book review, *The Elgar Society Journal* (March 2007). The most recent volumes to contribute to the revisionist Elgar-bild are: *Elgar and His World*, ed. Byron Adams (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007); *Elgar Studies*, ed. J. P. E. Harper-Scott and Julian Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, ed. Daniel Grimley and Julian Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), see especially the editors’ ‘Introduction’, 1–14. See also the two books edited by Raymond Monk: *Elgar Studies* and *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*; Charles Edward McGuire, ‘Functional Music: Imperialism, the Great War, and Elgar as Popular Composer’, in *Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, 214–24; Stephen Banfield, ‘Three of a Kind: Elgar’s Counterpoint’, *Musical Times* 140 (Summer 1999): 29–37; Michael Allis, ‘Elgar and the Art of Retrospective Narrative’, *Journal of Musicological Research* 19, no. 4 (2000): 289–328; Jeremy Crump, ‘The Identity of English Music: The Reception of Elgar’; and John Gardiner, ‘The Reception of Sir Edward Elgar, 1918–1934: A Reassessment’, *Twentieth-Century British History* 9 (1998): 370–395.
  141. The quotations are from, respectively, Clements, Kennedy, Gould, and the editors’ summary of Gould’s chapter, ‘An Inoffensive Thing’, in their Introduction to *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire*, 5.
  142. Taruskin, ‘Stravinsky and Us’, 441 (all quotations in the paragraph).
  143. Francis G. Hutchins analysed the orientalizing of India in *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press,

- 1967). I follow here Edward Said's reading of *Kim* in his 'Introduction' to Kipling's *Kim* (London: Penguin Classics, 2000), 45.
144. For more information on the music played at the *Dārbar*, see Barringer, 'Sonic Spectacles: The Audio-Visual Nexus, Delhi-London, 1911-12', 169-96.
  145. For more on this topic, see Nalini Ghuman, 'The Third "E": Elgar and Englishness', *Elgar Society Journal* 15, no. 3 (November 2007): 5-12. See also Richard Smith's *Elgar in America: Elgar's American Connections between 1895 and 1934* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2005), which mentions the decline in the general presence of Elgar's music in the United States after the First World War. The dearth of interest in Elgar outside England is lamented by Michael Kennedy: 'Shakespeare's reputation is world-wide; Elgar's is not... his reputation abroad has been tenuous... celebrations on the weekend of his anniversary are an English phenomenon' ('Elgar's Magic Formula', *The Daily Telegraph*, 12 May 2007). See also Donald Mitchell, 'Some Thoughts on Elgar (1857-1934)', *Music and Letters* 38, no. 2 (April 1957): 119; and Norman Lebrecht, 'Who Says He's Elgar the Great?' 11 April 11 2007, in *The Lebrecht Weekly*, <<http://www.scena.org/columns/lebrecht/070411-NL-elgar.html>>.
  146. Elgar, letter to August Jaeger, 3 January 1902, in Jerrold Northrop Moore, ed., *Elgar and His Publishers: Letters of a Creative Life*, Vol. 1: 1885-1903 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 323. It may not have surprised his publisher and friend, August Jaeger, though, who warned Elgar that 'England ruins all artists'; Jaeger, letter to Elgar, 8 January 1905, quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 452.

## CHAPTER 3



# From India to the Planet Mars

*Gustav Holst*

### Why Not Learn Sanskrit?

Sometime in 1899, a young trombonist and aspiring composer walked into the British Museum's Reading Room, requested several books, and waited in anticipation. He had come to peruse the ancient *Rigveda*, works by the fifth-century classical poet and dramatist Kālidāsa—*Meghadūta* and *Abhijñānaśākuntala*, and the great Hindu epics, *Rāmāyana* and *Mahābhārata*.<sup>1</sup> These works had, in translation, appealed to him so strongly that he wanted to set some of the hymns and texts to music, but he found the words of the available English versions stilted and unnatural. He had, in recent years, gathered up all the translations he could find and attempted paraphrases to set to music. But he had found it an unsatisfactory method and was looking forward to getting a better—truer—sense of these texts by going directly to the sources. As he glanced around the room, he saw several venerable scholars deep in their studies of 'Oriental' languages. The attendant staggered in with a huge pile of volumes for him but, to his dismay, they were all in the original Devanāgarī script. He crept out of the room, feeling, as he later recounted to his daughter, more of a fool than he had ever felt in his life.<sup>2</sup>

The aspiring composer was 25-year-old Gustav von Holst who was by this time, according to his friend Edwin Evans, 'so fired by enthusiasm that difficulties only spurred him on, and he set to work to study Sanskrit'.<sup>3</sup> His biographer, Michael Short, describes how, in spite of a gruelling touring schedule with the Carl Rosa Opera Company, he devoted as much time as he could to his Sanskrit language and literature studies.<sup>4</sup> He began to learn the Devanāgarī script and to read Sanskrit literature at the School of Oriental Languages in London with Dr Mabel Bode.<sup>5</sup> 'I used to study Sanskrit in the train' he recalled (although, given his legendary capacity for walking, notably the 97 miles from Cheltenham to London, this element of his language learning may not have been too substantial).<sup>6</sup> His bookshelves filled up with epic

Indian stories, poems, hymns, and philosophical tracts, often in several editions: the *Bhagavad-Gita*, *Rigveda*, and the *Upanishads*, all of which, judging from the copious annotations and page-wear, he read and studied closely.<sup>7</sup> Pencilled marginalia and titles of several pieces written in Devanāgarī script, along with an annotated copy of the *Meghadūta* in Sanskrit, reveal that he was well on his way to a working knowledge of the language. He later recalled: 'As a rule I only study things that suggest music to me. That's why I worried at Sanskrit.'<sup>8</sup>

All this Indic study did indeed suggest a great deal of music to him. In 1899, he became preoccupied with the idea of writing an epic opera whose subject would be drawn from Indian mythology. The result was *Sita*, for which he enlisted the help of the distinguished historian Romesh Chunder Dutt sometime after Dutt's presentation of 'a very interesting Lecture' in London on the *Mahābhārata*.<sup>9</sup> With advice from Dutt, he wrote a libretto based in part on his own attempts at translating an episode from the *Rāmāyana*, and in (larger) part on published translations by the renowned scholar Ralph T. H. Griffith (author of, *inter alia*, *Scenes from the Ramayan* and *The Rāmāyana of Vālmiki*).<sup>10</sup> *Sita* was finally completed in 1906, but he was not happy with the musical language and later referred to it as a bout of 'good old Wagnerian bawling'.<sup>11</sup> It was then that Holst turned his attentions, for the better part of the next six years, to the *Rigveda*. During this period, he also composed a chamber opera entitled *Sāvitrī*, based on an episode from the *Mahābhārata*, and two settings of poetry by Kālidāsa. *The Cloud Messenger* (1909–10), based on the much-admired lyric poem, *Meghadūta*, is the largest choral work of his 'Sanskrit period'. 'Including translation,' he recalled, 'it took me seven years—7 happy years of course.'<sup>12</sup>

Holst's attraction to the Vedas, Hindu literature, and Sanskrit language relates to the larger European phenomenon of Orientalism.<sup>13</sup> Indian musical, literary, and philosophical traditions were considered especially attractive because of their ancient pedigree. European scholars were quite prepared to acknowledge that Indians had achieved great things in ancient times, but that they were no longer doing so. They portrayed the subcontinent as having passed through a Golden Age from which it had fallen into decay, a point of view which made the whole colonial enterprise seem more palatable. The notion, closely associated with Sir William Jones's philological studies, of an ancient Indo-Aryan Sanskrit heritage, led scholars to a study of the *Vedas*. Literally meaning 'knowledge', the four *Vedas* are hymns, chants, and rituals (considered to have been sacred revelations) composed towards the end of the second millennium B.C.E. by people known now as Indo-European who settled in the north-west of the subcontinent.<sup>14</sup> They were particularly attractive to music scholars and comparative musicologists interested in the quest for the origins of music. Some, like Captain C. R. Day, drew attention to the *Samaveda*. In a paper on South Indian music read before the Music Association in 1894, Day spoke of 'the sacred chants' therein 'which contain... probably the most ancient of all music in India'.<sup>15</sup> Others focused on the oldest of the four, the *Rigveda*, a collection of over a thousand hymns invoking the pantheon of Hindu gods, believed by some to contain what Dr Ananda K. Coomaraswamy described as 'the earliest records of Indian music'.<sup>16</sup>

Holst's Indophilia, however, entailed something that distinguished him from many Orientalists of his time—he was also intensely interested in living (contemporary)

Indian music in both theory and practice. He was, according to the Indian music expert Maud MacCarthy, 'studying all he could of Oriental musical theory'.<sup>17</sup> This was quite unusual for the period, since it predates the Indian music studies of such scholars as Sir Ernest Clements and Arthur H. Fox Strangways. When Coomaraswamy penned his foreword to Clements's *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music* in 1913, he could claim 'That English Orientalists and educationists have so long ignored this music, is the measure of their misunderstanding of India.'<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, for a composer drawn to Indian musical culture in the 1890s and early 1900s, London was the place to be.

In January 1894, the year after Holst began his studies at the Royal College of Music, 'by far the largest meeting this season' of the Musical Association gathered to hear Captain Day read his paper on the theory of Indian music which included a complete listing of the *Karnātic mēlakartas* (South Indian scales), and an exposition of the notation and performance conventions of *Samaveda* chants.<sup>19</sup> During the lecture, 'examples of the various Indian compositions were played in a masterly manner upon the Vina'.<sup>20</sup> The performer, a son of the renowned musician-scholar Maula Bakhsh (1833–96) and an uncle of Inayat Khan, was Dr Alauddin Maulabukhsh Pathan, who had himself just begun his studies at the Royal Academy of Music.<sup>21</sup> Four years later, the Royal Academy of Music hosted a 'series of three lectures of exceptional interest' on Indian Music presented by 'Mr E. F. Jacques' and reviewed in the *Musical Times*. The first, a detailed explanation of the *mēlakartas*, and the concepts of *rāga* and *tāla*, was illustrated with classical *kritis* by the South Indian composer Tyāgarāja, several of which were 'admirably' rendered by singers while others were played on the violin.<sup>22</sup>

Reviews and concert listings detail performances given by a small network of Indian musicians such as Dr Pheroze K. Kabraji, a well-known Parsi singer who wrote occasional articles on Indian music, and Leila Roy, a violinist.<sup>23</sup> 'Fine renderings' of Vedic Hymns by Mr N. C. Bannerji, such as the ones heard at Caxton Hall in April 1910, were, according to the *Indian Magazine and Review* 'always a pleasure' to hear.<sup>24</sup> With the advent of recording, a small amount of Indian music became available for listening in Britain and Europe too.<sup>25</sup> The first disc recordings with non-roman script appeared in 1899 and consisted of 'twenty records in Persian, fifteen in Hindi, five in Urdu (Hindustani) [*sic*], five in Sikh (Gurmukhi) and two in Arabic'.<sup>26</sup> This series was advertised in explicitly imperialist terms: 'These Hindustani Records are probably the best proof of the far-reaching properties of the Gramophone, and they must be of especial interest to all loyal Englishmen, as being representative of our large Eastern possessions.'<sup>27</sup> Although most of the early commercial recordings of Indian music (10,000 titles by 1908) were marketed exclusively in India, scattered advertisements and catalogue listings give evidence of a few in British circulation.<sup>28</sup> Soundy and Co., the musical instrument dealers of Mumbai, sent cylinder recordings of Kabraji to Britain as examples of Indian Music, and a few 12-inch single-sided Neophone discs featuring Kabraji's singing in Gujarati were possibly recorded in London.<sup>29</sup> Two private collections of music cylinders were especially rich in their variety. One, in the possession of Fox Strangways, consisted of some 84 cylinders of music from all over India that he had made during his research trip of 1910–11. The other consisted of 137 cylinder records recorded by Edgar Thurston and his assistant K. Rangachari

which were transferred from Chennai to Britain sometime around 1910. Both included substantial records of Vedic chanting.<sup>30</sup>

Colonial exhibitions afforded opportunities to hear live Indian music, courtesy of the British Empire which regularly transported and displayed its imperial subjects for the delight of the public. Exhibitions featuring ‘free music’ (after admission) were held at London’s White City, for instance, almost every year between 1908 and 1914. Earl’s Court hosted two major Indian exhibitions in 1895 and 1896 which displayed arts and crafts from the subcontinent. A striking photograph from the second of these, the India and Ceylon Exhibition, shows the ‘Bombay Theatre of Varieties’ which included two *sarangi* players and a *mrdangam* or *pakhawaj* player alongside a variety of entertainers, notably a contortionist and a *hijra*—the infamous ‘Oriental eunuch’.<sup>31</sup> At the 1908 Franco-British Exhibition at White City, India was represented by ‘snake-charmers... musicians, jugglers, and beautiful Nautch [dancing] girls’.<sup>32</sup> Although in this context of outlandish entertainment Indian music often drew negative criticism such as ‘primitive’ or ‘a comical, monotonous twang’, for those with open ears these exhibitions afforded the opportunity to listen regularly to singers and instrumentalists from the subcontinent.<sup>33</sup> Holst apparently heard Indian musicians at the Glasgow International Exhibition in 1901.<sup>34</sup> At that time, he was based in Scotland earning his living as a trombonist with the Scottish Orchestra and frequented the Exhibition’s Indian pavilion and theatre where a group of musicians played every day.<sup>35</sup>

### As If Improvising

The emblematic works of Holst’s ‘Sanskrit period’ are his solo and choral settings of hymns from the *Rigveda*. After *Sita*’s completion, the composer immersed himself in the study, translation, and setting of some twenty-eight of the Vedic Hymns. Fourteen hymns for voice and piano were completed in 1907–08 and fourteen choral settings followed between 1908 and 1912.<sup>36</sup> Scholars have noted that it is in these various hymns that all the most characteristic elements of the composer’s musical language first appear.<sup>37</sup> Yet, as Stephen Banfield notes of the solo *Vedic Hymns*, they ‘generally owe nothing to the English song tradition... [or] to continental traditions’.<sup>38</sup> It is, I believe, to Indian musical traditions that we might fruitfully turn for several key elements of their stylistic heritage.

Holst’s novel approach to harmony, texture, and mode is first heard in the solo *Vedic Hymn*, ‘Vārūna’. Example 3.1a shows the opening with its modal vocal line, static bass pedal tone, and oscillating piano chords with roots a third apart. These elements constitute three distinct layers which are maintained throughout.

A number of musical signs in the outer layers reveal an Indian inspiration. The opening vocal phrase has roots in the unmetred *ālāp* of classical Indian music in which the singer introduces each note or phrase of the *rāga* over a constant drone, a quiet reinforcement of the tonal centre. Here, the piano sustains a quiet tonic pedal while above it the singer unfolds his modal phrases ‘as if improvising’. Each pitch of the melody relates to its neighbours and to the drone, rather than to any harmonic

**Example 3.1a**Holst, 'Vāruna I', no. 2 of *Vedic Hymns*, op. 24, opening

**Lento** *p* (as if improvising)

O thou great judge, Va - ru-na,

Day af - ter day we break thy ho - ly laws. Oh let us not be yield-ed up to

Death — to be de-stry - èd, To be de-stry - èd in thy wrath.

progression, before the voice comes back to rest on the tonic. Holst's suspension of the god's name, Varuna, over the bar-line derives from his sensitivity to the Sanskrit pronunciation, 'Vāruna', rather than the anglicized version, 'Varūna'.<sup>39</sup> In preserving the stress on the first syllable, he imbues the melody with a distinctive suspension of the flattened second degree (*komal re*) above the tonic drone that is characteristic of certain rāgas in performance: those rāgas, that is, which strike the un-acclimated

ear as fundamentally different from the Western diatonic (major-minor) system with its whole-step between the first and second scale degrees.<sup>40</sup> Add to this lowered second degree the raised fourth (*tivra ma*)—a pitch particularly shunned in the Western tonal system—and the opening pentachord (five note sequence) of the piece (C–D $\flat$ –E–F $\sharp$ –G), ‘improvised’ over the tonic drone, speaks a foreign language.

This ‘*rāga-ālāp*’ phrase returns three times:

Oh thou great judge, Vāruna (1)

To gain forgiveness, Vāruna (2)

Thou knowest all, Vāruna (3)

But each stanza ends inconclusively with a whole-tone phrase (its half-steplessness achieved by an enharmonic respelling of the third and fourth degrees of the mode) underscored by a disquieting tritone, B $\flat$ –F $\sharp$  (see bb. 10–11: ‘to be destroyed in thy wrath’). A brief coda sounds the resolution: ‘He doth appear! My cry is answered!’ The second scale degree, so firmly lowered to intone the god’s name before, is now raised for the final *sotto voce* whisper: ‘I am delivered from my sin.’ It is the whole-tone phrase, but now it comes to rest, for the first time, on the third of the piano’s chordal drone (Example 3.1b).

This is one of the composer’s first essays in a linear, stripped-down style, without ornamentation or counterpoint of any kind. Instead of the goal-directed harmonic and motivic development characteristic of his earlier *Sita*, the music has a new modal and cyclical quality unhindered by cadences. If it was, as Imogen Holst believed, in ‘Vāruna’ that Holst was ‘learning to free his harmonies’ from ‘the overpowering influence of Wagner’s music’, then it was in a specifically Indian context, inspired by the modalities of *rāga-ālāp* unfolding over a drone in an improvisatory framework.<sup>41</sup>

Edward J. Dent pointed out the connection. Holst’s ‘new’ music, he said, involved a ‘devotion to Oriental subjects, which he [does not] treat...in the costumier’s

### Example 3.1b

Vāruna I, no. 2 of *Vedic Hymns*, op. 24, coda, mm. 33–37

33 *pp* *sotto voce* *rall.*

He doth ap-pear! My cry is an-swered! I am de-li-vered from my sin.

*pp*

fashion of Professor Bantock'.<sup>42</sup> Dent's remark invites an illuminating comparison, for Granville Bantock had himself composed a song to a Hindu god, 'Prayer to Vishnu', one of his *Songs of India*, which, like 'Varuna', opens with *pesante* piano chords of 'great solemnity' that return to punctuate the vocal stanzas. The text by Helen F. Schweitzer (soon to be the composer's wife) is among the many she wrote for Bantock's series of *Songs of the East* which depict imaginary goings-on from Arabia to China. The second stanza describes "'The Inherent Cruelty of Things" in the ancient land of Vishnu':<sup>43</sup>

From the hand of fate, And the eye of hate, Preserve us, O Vishnu, preserve!  
 From the raging flood, And the curse of blood,  
 From death by the power of iron or wood, Preserve us, O Vishnu, preserve!

To emphasize the text's drama of 'Oriental' despotism, Bantock organizes the vocal line in the second half of each stanza around a chromatic descent which culminates in an undulation on an augmented second (C#–B–C#), the interval, for Western ears, most evocative of the 'Orient'.<sup>44</sup> This is overlaid by a theatrical tremolo in the piano shot through with diminished seventh harmonies (Example 3.1c).

The piano accompaniment becomes ever more pictorial. In the second stanza, the left hand, which had initially played in minims, undulates in semi-quavers, *con fuoco*, to depict 'the raging flood'. By the third stanza, it rushes up and down an 'exotic' chromatic pass between B and E in semi-quaver septuplets, conjuring 'the toils of sin, as they writhe within'. In contrast to all this romantic exoticism, the directness and unadorned simplicity of 'Vāruna' convey a devotional mood appropriate for the Vedic text whose translation the composer 'worried at'.<sup>45</sup>

### A Little More Context

'Prayer to Vishnu' is one of a number of contemporaneous British 'Indian' works, notably additional ones of Bantock, who left the Royal College the year Holst arrived, and several by Cyril Scott, follower of the Higher Occultism.<sup>46</sup> The titles of these pieces reveal a remarkable consistency of 'Indian' themes. Scott's *Indian Suite for piano* of 1922 consists of movements entitled The Snake Charmer, Juggernaut, Indian Serenade, and Dancing Girls. Bantock's *Songs of India* depict fakirs and dancing girls while his two orchestral poems based on Robert Southey's *The Curse of Kehama* are entitled *Jaga-Naut* (1895–1901) and *Processional* (1894). The second of these depicts the funeral procession of Arvalan, rapist son of the cruel Rajah Kehama, and his wives, among them 'young Azla, young Nealliny', who follow the palanquin and are forced to commit *suttee* rather than endure the misery of widowhood (Hindus are allowed to marry only once).<sup>47</sup>

These subjects are among the 'jumble of notions, distorted and queer' which George Franklin Atkinson described as 'an Englishman's Indian impressions' in his popular series of vignettes on Anglo-Indian life, *Curry and Rice (on Forty Plates)*:

### Example 3.1c

Granville Bantock, 'Prayer to Vishnu', no. 2 of *Songs of India*, opening

With great solemnity (M.M.  $\text{♩} = 80$ )

The musical score is presented in four systems, each with a vocal line (treble clef) and a piano accompaniment (grand staff). The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 2/2. The tempo is marked 'With great solemnity' with a metronome marking of quarter note = 80.

**System 1:** The vocal line begins with a whole rest, followed by the lyrics 'From the night of'. The piano accompaniment starts with a forte (*f*) 'pesante' texture, marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic at the end of the system.

**System 2:** The vocal line continues with 'fear, When Si - va is near, Pre - serve us, O Vish - nu, pre -'. The piano accompaniment features a *dim.* (diminuendo) marking, followed by a *pp* (pianissimo) section and a *cresc.* (crescendo) section. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3'.

**System 3:** The vocal line continues with 'serve! When the night - winds cry, as they wan - der by, And the'. The piano accompaniment features a piano (*p*) dynamic, followed by a *pp* section, and a *mf* (mezzo-forte) section with a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3'.

**System 4:** The vocal line continues with 'voice of the thun - der is heard in the sky, Pre - etc...'. The piano accompaniment features a *mf* section with a triplet of eighth notes marked with a '3'.

First a sun, fierce and glaring, that scorches and bakes;  
 Palankeens, perspiration, and worry;  
 Mosquitoes, thugs, cocoanuts, Brahmins, and snakes,  
 With elephants, tigers, and curry.

Then Juggernaut, punkahs, tanks, buffaloes, forts,  
 With bangles, mosques, nautches, and dhingees;  
 A mixture of temples, Mahomedans, ghats,  
 With scorpions, Hindoos, and Feringhees.

Then jungles, fakeers, dancing-girls, prickly heat,  
 Shawls, idols, durbars, brandy-pawny; [etc] <sup>48</sup>

His verses depend largely on juxtaposing words (like jungle, thug, tank, and, later, pyjama) which were transformed from their Indian origins and became part of the English language. Other words (like palankeens, nautches, and brandy-pawnee) are part of the now defunct 'Anglo-Indian' language whose memorial is *Hobson-Jobson*, the Dictionary of British India. It is a language that the scholar Sunil Khilnani has termed 'an elaborate and sonorous mongrel jargon'.<sup>49</sup> 'Juggernaut,' for instance, was a corruption of the Sanskrit *Jagannātha*, 'Lord of the Universe,' one of the 108 names of Krishna worshipped as Vishnu whose effigy was annually carried in procession on a huge cart under which people occasionally flung themselves. More obviously distorted is 'Hobson-Jobson', the term used by the British to refer to public festivals, especially the mourning processions of Muharram, which derives from the repeated cries of Shia Muslims: 'Yā Hassan! Yā Hussain!' (and which became Hosseen Gosseen, Hossy Gossy, Hossein Jossen, and finally Hobson-Jobson).

The 'Indian' pieces of Bantock and Scott are the musical equivalent of this 'sonorous mongrel jargon'. Their language depends on a lexicon of musical elements derived not from real Indian music, but from the often distorted version of the orientalist imagination, such as static drones, formulaic augmented seconds and chromatic passes, and elaborate vocal arabesques and melismas. While Bantock's music belongs to a long tradition of nineteenth-century exoticism, Scott's breathes the air of the twentieth century. Lauded as 'the Greatest English Composer' in 1911, Scott is perhaps best known for his piano piece of 1905, *Lotus Land*.<sup>50</sup> In it, a cluster of musical elements, among them the repeating ostinato bass and arching melodic arabesques, converges to connote, for contemporary English ears, the erotic (feminine), narcotic East—as one critic put it, the 'hypnotic [and] the dreamy melancholy of his *Lotus Land*' (Example 3.2a).<sup>51</sup>

Some of these gestures bear close relation to the language of Debussy's piano pieces, *Estampes*, themselves inspired by a different musical tradition (Javanese) he heard at the Exposition Universelle in Paris in 1889. By the 1920s Scott's piano piece had become a model of what the *Daily Mail* described as 'vague, hypnotic music [that] surely breathes of the legendary land of the lotus-eaters and their perpetual afternoon'.<sup>52</sup> In later pieces Scott drew on his vocabulary of 'the Orient' to depict a variety of Indian images. Elements of the first movement of his *Indian Suite*, 'The Snake Charmer', will be familiar from *Lotus Land* (the drone bass, jaunty arabesque

**Example 3.2a**Cyril Scott, *Lotus Land*, op. 47, no. 1, opening

The musical score for the opening of 'Lotus Land' by Cyril Scott is presented in four systems. The first system is marked 'Andante languido' and 'Piano'. It features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The second system continues the melodic line with a 'simile' instruction. The third system includes 'stringendo', 'a tempo', and 'stringendo' markings, along with a 'son.' (sonorous) marking. The fourth system continues the melodic line with 'a tempo' and 'son.' markings. The score includes various musical notations such as dynamics (p, espress.), articulation (accents), and performance instructions (con pedale, simile, stringendo, a tempo, son.).

figure, and the melismatic, rhythmically fluid melody), but they are now part of a language distant from Debussy and more akin to Bartók, whose own *Suite for Piano* had appeared in 1916 and who, in the 1920s, had travelled across Britain by train giving piano recitals of his own music. Here, shifting metres, an ostinato drone, and slithery chromaticism invoke the snake charmer playing his reed instrument (Example 3.2b). Ten years later, Scott penned absurd assumptions about the music of India and its people in terms that are strikingly close to those used (albeit approvingly) by critics to describe his own music ('dreamy', 'languorous', 'vague', 'hypnotic'):

Indian music... does not progress. Because it lacked... those more energising elements of our Western music, we find that the people of India lack those elements

**Example 3.2b**Scott, 'The Snake Charmer', no. 1 of *Indian Suite*, opening

Andante

Piano

*p*

*simile*

also... Inasmuch as their music lacked variety, lacked energy, lacked power, so have the Indians themselves as a race remained one-sided, inert and unequally balanced in character... the bulk of the people are dreamy, meditative, and given over in excess to the things of the spirit... if we admit [the effects of their music] we shall understand the characteristic lethargy of the Indian people.<sup>53</sup>

The musical pictorializations of lotus eaters, snake charmers, and juggernauts, replete with their static drone fifths, melismas, and chromatic passes, had actually come to replace (for Scott as for some of his listeners) Indian music and even India itself. 'The languorousness of the Orient', wrote one critic, 'is often mirrored in the music of Cyril Scott'.<sup>54</sup>

This is not to disparage the pretty *Lotus Land*, its composer, or its devotees—and there were many, among them Fritz Kreisler, who recorded his own arrangement for violin and piano. For the British listener, however, Scott's and Bantock's pieces had 'colonized' India musically—or rather, they had colonized the British imagination to the exclusion of other musical sounds of India. In contrast to the consistency of the musical exoticism practiced by Scott and Bantock, Holst's *Vedic Hymns*, with their bona fide Indian texts, subjects, and musical roots, seemed decidedly 'un-Indian' to

some ears. ‘They do not suggest a point further East than Leicester-square’ declared the *Daily Telegraph*; the *Manchester Guardian* agreed, adding that ‘many real Eastern musical ideas are frankly ugly and uninteresting’.<sup>55</sup> All this is not to suggest that Holst’s Indian pieces are more ‘authentic’, whatever that may mean, than those of his contemporaries. Identifying or locating authenticity is neither possible nor desirable. But it is to show that Holst’s music reveals a different level of engagement with Indian culture than that of romanticism and its modernist offshoots.<sup>56</sup> It was not an approach that appealed to everybody: ‘Holst’, one critic cautioned, ‘is likely, provided he leaves Orientalism to Mr. Granville Bantock, to write some very good music in the future.’<sup>57</sup>

### Between Life and Death

By 1908, Holst’s language and literature studies were progressing apace. He acquired *A Sanskrit Primer* from Luzac & Company (the ‘Oriental’ booksellers and publishers located opposite the British Museum) and, judging from his pencil markings, worked through some eighty pages of it, up to the end of Lesson 19.<sup>58</sup> It was at this time that he selected an episode from the *Mahābhārata* for his one-act opera *Sāvitrī*. It is an Indian, feminist, Orpheus story (a prototype, since it predates Greek mythology by several centuries), which the composer freely adapted in his own translation. A young bride Sāvitrī (soprano) finds her woodcutter husband Satyavān (tenor) under the spell of *Māyā* (illusion) and he is taken away by *Yama*, the god of Death (baritone). Despite her grief, Sāvitrī welcomes Death as ‘the Just One’ and he is so moved by her lyrical colloquy that he grants her a boon. When he agrees to Sāvitrī’s desire for life in all its fullness, she triumphantly proves that life is nothing without Satyavān. Defeated, Death returns to his Kingdom and Satyavān is restored to ‘his loving Sāvitrī’. ‘The veil of *māyā* (illusion)’, as the theosophist Annie Besant described it in a lecture on occultism given in London in 1898, is not part of the original story of *Sāvitrī*—it is Holst’s own addition, drawn from its wide usage by orientalist and theosophists around the turn of the century.<sup>59</sup> And it is *Māyā*, conveyed largely by unseen musical forces, which is the driving force behind much of the drama that unfolds on the stage.

Lasting just thirty-five minutes in performance with neither curtain nor overture, *Sāvitrī* is scored for three solo singers and twelve instruments—two string quartets, an English horn, two flutes, and a double bass. In scoring and style it presaged the slender trappings, if not the back-to-Bach ideology, of post-war neoclassicism.<sup>60</sup> At its first (private) performance in 1916, critics had found the opera ‘too austere, too declamatory... a work of extreme difficulty’.<sup>61</sup> Just as Dent and others had claimed in relation to the hymns, the opera’s modernity was perceived to be linked to its Indian inspiration: ‘Based on Indian music, it is austere yet flowing.’<sup>62</sup> The score does not, however, contain any Indian-influenced music that would be recognizable as such to a knowledgeable listener or *rasika*. Yet the opera is not entirely indebted to English inspiration (folk song and Purcell) either. Rarely do the melodies or themes in *Sāvitrī* come out of the straightforward modality of English folk music or its home-grown

artistic adaptations.<sup>63</sup> Equally, the dramatic action is articulated by very different harmonies and textures from those of contemporary English opera or oratorio.<sup>64</sup>

Taken out of the context of the Indian studies and Vedic hymn settings which surround *Sāvitrī*'s composition, the opera's subject and idiom have been seen as 'ec-centric', or 'unexpectedly ... oriental'.<sup>65</sup> Yet the organizing principles of the score—linearity, sparse scoring, unembellished simplicity—will be familiar from our close look at 'Vāruna'. Particular elements are also recognizable from the hymn, such as the quiet bass pedals over which modal phrases unfold, pairs of oscillating chords whose roots are a third apart, and the close relationship between translated words and vocal lines. Of the latter, the composer commented, 'in *Sāvitrī* the words and music really grew together'.<sup>66</sup> And, as in 'Vāruna', the slightest of musical gestures acquires great significance as we will see in a consideration of the opera's musical and dramatic threads.

The opening is deeply arresting. A disembodied voice calls out from the silent darkness: 'Sāvitrī, I am Death.' But it is not *sui generis*: it has a precursor in another of the solo *Vedic Hymns* written the previous year, the 'Hymn of Creation', which highlights the mystery of creation through a series of ruminations on the origins of life and death. The hymn opens with an unaccompanied declamation in  $\frac{7}{4}$ , one of the asymmetrical metres favoured by Holst (a stylistic trait whose use in these early hymns, particularly in cyclical *ostinati*, suggests an Indian music inheritance—*tālas* or rhythmic cycles of fives and sevens such as *rupak*, a North Indian cycle of seven beats). Raymond Head has described how Holst's translation of the hymn's opening lines corresponds perfectly to the syllabic rhythm of the original Sanskrit.<sup>67</sup> *Nasad Asin! Nosad Asit!*, translated by Ralph Griffith as 'Then was not non-existent nor existent', becomes, in Holst's version, 'Then life was not! Non-life was not!' (Example 3.3a).<sup>68</sup> As Griffith explained in his translations which sat well-thumbed on Holst's shelf, the traditional manner of singing the *Rig Veda* hymns was largely determined by the rules governing accented and non-accented syllables. In his translation,

### Example 3.3a

'Creation', no. 8 of *Vedic Hymns*, op. 24, opening

**Molto Adagio**  $\text{♩} = 69$  (Voice unaccompanied)

Then, Life was not! Non-life was not! No vast ex-panse of air, Nor

vas - ter realm of sky that lies be - yond. Was wa - ter there, the

deep a - byss of o - cean?

Holst evidently wanted to preserve the rhythmic and pitch gestures inherent in the original Sanskrit, gestures that were suggestive of a particular rhythmic and melodic contour. A glance at Death's opening soliloquy reveals its relation to the syllabic setting and pitch contours of the cosmogonic 'Hymn of Creation' (Example 3.3b).

But Death wrests the Vedic recitation from the earlier Hymn and imbues it with a mystical power befitting his status as the god, *Yama*. His first utterances—'Sāvitrī! I am Death. I am the law that no man breaketh'—outline the key of A minor, while his subsequent phrase, 'I am he who leadeth men onward', suggests quite a different one, F minor. This opening soliloquy, in which Death explains his unwelcome mission, 'I draw nigh to fulfil my work, I come for thy husband', is almost entirely generated by the A/F alternation. This is not so much bitonality, but the linear unfolding of a harmonic juxtaposition derived from a series of six pitches called a hexatonic collection. The result is an undermining of the boundary between consonance and dissonance, for the ear reinterprets the A $\flat$  as a leading tone, G $\sharp$ , which thus sounds dissonant (an augmented second) with F, not as consonant (a minor third). This sleight of harmony led some to hear Death's 'declamatory vocal passages' as specifically Indian, 'with their appropriate and very difficult Oriental inflections'.<sup>69</sup> In fact, this harmonic progression is metaphorically figured in early twentieth-century European music theory as the boundary between life and death.<sup>70</sup> Composers from Wagner to Strauss and Mahler used variants of it in their operas and programme music to depict uncanny phenomena, specifically, the passing from life to death, or from death to life, or the space in between. Death's invocation of the harmonic alternation between A and F thus imbues his voice with a semantic power which will permeate the opera as the opening theme takes on the role of a *leitmotif*, detached from words and woven through the orchestral fabric.

### Example 3.3b

*Sāvitrī*, op. 25, opening

**Andante moderato**

DEATH (unseen)

*mf*

Sa - vi - trī! Sa - vi - trī! I am Death. I am the law that

no man break-eth, I am he that lead-eth men on-ward, I am the road that

each must tra-vel, I am the gate that o - pens for all,

In *Sāvitrī*, the A/F juxtaposition becomes a musical embodiment of the liminal (and, as Holst perceived it, specifically Hindu) state of being between life and death which is at the heart of the opera's dramatic action. Following Yama's visitation, Satyavān returns from his work in the forest to find his wife 'pale and trembling', mumbling:

The forest is to me a mirror wherein I see another world.. .  
where all is nameless, unknown, all sick with fear.

The woodcutter's hushed explanation is one of the strangest passages in the opera:

It is Māyā! Dost thou not know her?  
Illusion, dreams, phantoms.. .  
But to the Wise, Māyā is more,  
Look around—All that thou see'st  
Trees and shrubs, The grass at thy feet,  
All that walks or creeps, All that flies from tree to tree,  
All is unreal, All is Māyā  
Our bodies, our limbs, our very thoughts,  
We ourselves are slaves to Māyā.

The uncanny effect of this passage is the result not only of the sentiments expressed, but also of the presence of an odd background sound, like an electrical current. It is a disembodied chorus of women alternating between two quiet and perfectly consonant triads—F and A, one on each of Satyavān's phrases—and a group of muted upper strings trembling, almost imperceptibly, on all six pitches of the two triads simultaneously (Examples 3.4a and b).<sup>71</sup>

To evoke Māyā, Holst calls forth the harmonic juxtaposition central to Death's linear soliloquy, with a small but significant alteration: Death's A minor becomes A major, thereby enabling true *hexatonic poles*. That is, the two oscillating triads, F minor and A major, lack any common pitch and so they divide the source hexachord (the collection of six pitches, heard in the trembling strings, from which the harmonic poles are derived) into two complementary triads. The 'uncanny' result, for the acculturated listener, is explained by music theorist Richard Cohn: 'Quintessentially familiar harmonies become defamiliarized liminal phenomena that hover between consonance and dissonance, thereby embodying the characteristics they are called upon by composers to depict.'<sup>72</sup> The effect of these alternating poles can be overwhelming, for, as Cohn writes:

a commitment to either version of reality—the consonant triad or its consonant pole—may at any moment leave listeners vulnerable to reversal into an alternative reality for which they are unprepared. The prudent listener may remain frozen at the boundary between reality and illusion.<sup>73</sup>

**Example 3.4a**

*Sāvitrī*, Satyavān's explanation, mm. 107–109

Satyavān *ad lib. senza misura*  
(The scene darkens.) *pp parlante*

It is Mā-yā! Dost thou not know her? Il - lu - sion, dreams, phan - toms,

Chorus *pp* **colla voce**  
Uh. \_\_\_\_\_

Strings (con sordino) *legato*  
*ppp* **colla voce**

But to the wise, Mā-yā is more, Look a-round All that thou see'-st Trees and shrubs, The grass at thy feet,

**Example 3.4b**

The hexatonic collection of Death's opening soliloquy and of *Māyā*

Death / *Māyā* hexatonic collection

Death - harmonic juxtaposition

*Māyā*- true hexatonic poles

This is exactly the predicament in which Satyavān finds himself: he is vulnerable to the reversal of reality caused by his perception that 'all is *Māyā* (illusion)'. His failure to recognize reality leads him into Death's realm. *Sāvitrī*, though, is immune to this predicament. We know this because, when she speaks of *Māyā*, no strange trembling or illusory hexachordal haze accompanies her:

Once I knew Māyā, Now she is forgot,  
 Mine eyes are open, would they were shut.  
 I see the heart of every tree, pale with terror . . .  
 Dost thou not feel?  
 Ah, Canst thou not see?

Thus the opposing forces of love and death, reality and illusion, are musically delineated. Sāvitrī, we learn, embodies love while, as Yama himself is ultimately forced to admit, 'even Death is Māyā!'

The next time we hear the female chorus, they function as Māyā's nemesis: reality. It is the moment when Sāvitrī welcomes Death after Satyavān has been claimed by him:

Welcome Lord, Thou art called the Just One.  
 Thou rulest all by Thy decree, Thou callest men together,  
 Thou showest the path that leads to thine abode, our only sure possession.  
 Methinks even now thou hast led me thither  
 Round me I see gentle faces, I hear voices, the air is holy.

These hidden voices, along with the gentle faces and holy air which she senses, are all part of an aura 'of holiness' which surrounds her: the air, Yama tells Sāvitrī, 'is made holy by thy love'.<sup>74</sup> Her aura is made audible by the chorus, whose luminous music bears no trace of the 'illusory' alternating Māyā chords which hovered above Satyavān's words. Here all is calm, serene, and 'real' (consonant): overlapping voices, joined later by a solo flute, unfold in diatonic counterpoint over a low bass pedal (Example 3.5).

Sāvitrī's welcome is so musically pure that Death is drawn into her sonic world. 'Thine is the holiness' he croons, in a voice initially imbued with a harmonic polarity of E-flat minor and G major but which quickly takes a diatonic turn as it is covered by a halo of Sāvitrī's contrapuntal voices and rooted by a low pedal.

In the opera's penultimate scene the chorus again embodies these opposing forces of illusion and reality to striking dramatic effect. Sāvitrī's 'welcome, Death' idiom returns, just as Yama 'shrinks back' from the world of the living, and the Māyā music returns too. As Satyavān returns to life, he mumbles something about it all having been 'but a dream, Yea so too was my weariness. Māyā had seized me. I was her slave, Now hath she fled.' But what we hear informs us that he may not be quite right, for Māyā's power still hovers above his voice. Disembodied voices alternate triads while muted strings tremble on their source hexachord.<sup>75</sup> Satyavān hears it too and wearily submits: 'Thou alone art free from Māyā, Thou alone art real' he tells his wife. What we have heard affirms this claim. Sāvitrī greeted her husband's return to life with a song musically free from Māyā, and whose flattened seconds and low drone on C will be familiar from 'Vārūna': 'Loneliness and pain are ended, waken once more to home and wife' (Example 3.6).

The central point of these musical considerations is a dramatic one. Ultimately, it is Sāvitrī's ability to negotiate the dangerous space between reality and illusion

**Example 3.5**  
Sāvitrī welcomes Death, mm. 214–220

214 Sāvitrī *pp dolce*

Wel - come Lord, Thou art cal - led the

wordless women's chorus (hidden)

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

cello and bass

*ppp*

Just One, Thou ru-lest all by Thy de-cree, Thou cal-lest men to-ge-ther, Thou

Just One, Thou ru-lest all by Thy de-cree, Thou cal-lest men to-ge-ther, Thou

**Example 3.6**Sāvitrī, free from *Māya*, mm. 473–476

**Allegro moderato**  
(bending over Satyavān)

473

*pp* Lone - li-ness and pain are end - ed Wa - ken once more to home and wife

cello

Far thou jour-neyed in the dark - ness, Fierce - ly a-round thee raged the strife,

that enables her to reclaim Satyavān from his ‘journey into darkness’, the boundary between life and death. This is affirmed in the opera’s final scene as Death ‘wendeth alone’ back to his kingdom, reflecting on his defeat: ‘One hath conquer’d him, One knowing life, One free from *Māyā*.’ Tellingly, although his ruminations resemble the motivic outline of his opening soliloquy, the harmonic juxtaposition which had once lent his voice such signifying power is vanquished.

The opera received its first public performances in June 1921. On the first night the applause was so enthusiastic that the composer was called to the stage several times. *The Times* called it ‘a perfect little masterpiece of its kind, and we can think of nothing else which belongs to the same kind’, while the *Musical Times* delighted in the music’s ‘new flavour in modernism—delicate, *only half earthly*, recalling nothing else, and mixed with no bitter spices’.<sup>76</sup>

### A Complicated Rhythmical Figure

The year 1910 was particularly important in the history of Indian art, literature, and music in Britain. Scholars have identified it as, variously, the start of ‘the cultural chain reaction’ which brought Rabindranath Tagore to the attention of readers—and, I would add, composers—in Britain; the beginning of a ‘taxonomic shift’ in the perception of Indian religious images; and the moment when the ‘much maligned monsters’ of Indian art began to be appreciated anew.<sup>77</sup> Nineteen-ten also marks a transformation in the British interpretation of ‘the much despised’ art of Indian music as we have already seen in chapter 1.<sup>78</sup> This was when Maud MacCarthy, fresh from life-changing field research and practical studies in India in 1907–9, began

to give lecture-recitals for schools, distinguished societies, and informal gatherings in London drawing rooms. 'I began this work as a pioneer in 1910–11' she recalled, 'all my work in the English Universities etc for Indian music was absolutely pioneer work'.<sup>79</sup> Others too, were, at precisely this time, taking a keen interest in Indian music, among them Fox Strangways, Ratan Devi (the second wife of Ananda Coomaraswamy), and Holst himself.

This 'Indian Boom' or 'cultural metamorphosis' of Indian arts in Britain was generated in large part by a particular network of artists, musicians, and scholars, some of whom founded, others formed around, the India Society.<sup>80</sup> The story of its formation is as illuminating of the shift in cultural perceptions as it is fascinating. The late Mary Lago, scholar of British-Indian literary intersections, relates that on 13 January 1910, Ernest B. Havell, former principal of the Government School of Art in Kolkata and Keeper of the Art Gallery there, read a paper before the Indian Section of the Royal Society of Arts. In it, he linked the British administrative policy relating to the arts then prevailing in Indian schools back to Lord Thomas Macaulay's view 'of the worthlessness of all Indian culture'. 'I shall not cease', Havell concluded, 'to protest against... this propaganda as long as I live.'<sup>81</sup> The Chairman, Sir George Birdwood, responded superciliously: there was, he declared, no such thing as 'fine art' in India. And then he turned his attention to the traditional figure of the Buddha: 'This senseless similitude... is nothing more than an uninspired brazen image... A boiled suet pudding would serve equally well as a symbol of passionless purity and serenity of soul!'<sup>82</sup> Sir William Rothenstein and Coomaraswamy were among the few who rose to the defence both of Havell and of India's fine arts. 'The English and Anglo-Indian mind', Coomaraswamy railed, is 'not only ignorant of Indian art and music, but determined that Indians themselves should remain in equal ignorance.'<sup>83</sup> Rothenstein was 'so disgusted' by the suet pudding simile that he wished 'there and then... [that] we should found an India Society'.<sup>84</sup>

The India Society was founded the following month by Abanindranath Tagore (Rabindranath Tagore's nephew and President of the Indian Society of Oriental Art in Kolkata), Rothenstein, Coomaraswamy, and Sir Ratanji Tata, heir to India's largest privately owned steel company (run by the eminent Parsi Tata family of industrialists and philanthropists).<sup>85</sup> Fox Strangways was also involved in the founding and became its first Secretary. *The Times* announced that the Society

desires to promote the study and appreciation of Indian culture in its aesthetic aspects, believing that in Indian sculpture, architecture, and painting, as well as in Indian literature and music, there is a vast unexplored field, the investigation of which will bring about a better understanding of Indian ideals and aspirations, both in this country and in India.<sup>86</sup>

This worthy goal attracted a great deal of attention. Kolkata's English-language journal, the *Modern Review* sounded an optimistic tone: 'It may be that at last we are to have in England a society non-official and non-political for the study of Indian art and culture.'<sup>87</sup> By the spring of 1911, the membership, drawn from Britain, India, and the United States, had reached 193.<sup>88</sup> Prominent members of the society's network,

notably Havell, R. Tagore, and Fox Strangways, championed MacCarthy's musical presentations, while Coomaraswamy provided assistance with song translations.<sup>89</sup> Havell, in an article entitled 'Indian Music in Europe' which appeared in Allahabad's *Pioneer Mail*, described her 'as an incomparable exponent of Indian music'. 'She is', he said, 'the best living interpreter of classical Indian music in Europe.'<sup>90</sup>

At the India Society's second meeting in South Kensington, MacCarthy gave a presentation described by the *Indian Magazine and Review* as a 'delightful lecture-talk on the theory of Indian music'.<sup>91</sup> Afterwards, 'the lights were lowered, and Miss MacCarthy, dimly shining through the fire-lit dusk in her yellow sari and her garland of flowers, sang several songs to the accompaniment of the tambouri [*sic*].'<sup>92</sup> Learning how that instrument, the *tambūrā*, functions within the music's texture was transformative for the audience: 'the stringed instrument... weave[s] another and harmonious time-pattern... so that the complication is comparable to what we in the West produce by harmony of tones, but is in a field entirely new to us.'<sup>93</sup> It was through such events, concluded the reviewer, that 'we may begin to appreciate its [music's] fine art'. Fox Strangways wrote an enthusiastic letter to MacCarthy afterwards ('sang up the 22 *srutis*—wonderful performance') in which he ruminated on her advocacy for meaningful musical exchange between India and Britain, quoting his own notes verbatim:

Didn't understand altogether *what* rapprochement she desired between East and West. Surely we *don't* want to model *our* music on *theirs*; and must suppose that they have no intention of modelling or modifying theirs in *our* direction.<sup>94</sup>

Just down the road in Hammersmith, Holst, now Director of Music at St Paul's School for Girls, was becoming quite well-known (some would say notorious) for his interest in modelling his music 'on *theirs*': 'There is some danger at present', warned one writer, 'of his being popularly regarded as a specialist in that direction'; another opined that 'the cult of the East... has been with him something of an obsession'.<sup>95</sup> As a student and (by now) close friend of Mabel Bode, whose own former Sanskrit professor T. W. Rhys Davids was the president of the India Society, Holst had a connection to the Society which presented MacCarthy's lecture-recital.<sup>96</sup> Moreover, he and MacCarthy had mutual connections, several of whom were also keenly interested in her 'Indian musician-hood', among them Clifford Bax (brother of the composer, Arnold), the composer Percy Grainger, and the editor of Sanskrit stories, R. W. Frazer.<sup>97</sup> Holst sought out MacCarthy for some of 'their' music. She recalled: 'I remember that fine composer, the late Gustav Holst, coming to me years ago for 'Indian scales'.<sup>98</sup>

He was, at this time, busy with two Vedic hymn projects: 'क' (*Ka*, as he referred to his hymn 'To the Unknown God' in his notebook), which I will return to later, and the third group of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*.<sup>99</sup> While his previous choral *Rig Veda* hymns had been scored for orchestra, this set uniquely features an accompanying instrument—the harp—which, more than any other, can emulate the range and resonance of the *tambūrā* (or *tānpurā*), the long-necked plucked lute of Indian music. The *tambūrā*'s function—to provide a constant drone—is at once essential and

unassuming. MacCarthy had brought one back with her from South India and used it to accompany her own singing.<sup>100</sup> Of course, any classical Indian performance would have involved the instrument. Kabraji, an associate of MacCarthy, would have sung with one, and Tagore mentions Ratan Devi singing with 'a *tambura* on her lap'.<sup>101</sup> The harp was particularly suited to emulate MacCarthy's timbre and playing which was said to have 'a tone... of fine delicacy and softness'.<sup>102</sup> The distinctive over-tone-rich buzzing sound characteristic of the *tambūrā*, created by putting thread under each string at particular points along the curved bridge, is not mentioned by her listeners.<sup>103</sup>

Drones were hardly new in British or European music: they had been used routinely to depict any inert far-off land from Spain to Japan (or, indeed, folk or peasant music at home, as in Schubert's 'hurdy-gurdy' at the end of *Winterreise*) through the 'long' nineteenth century. Bantock's 'Nautch Girl' which opens his *Songs of India* provides a fine illustration (Example 3.7). The piano's left hand is occupied with a repetitive tonic-dominant figure, tintured by an augmented fourth acciaccatura, which both conjures and caricatures 'the droning music' described in Schweitzer's verse. Graceful at first, the dance intensifies in the second stanza: 'fierce and wild the tom-toms beat'. The fact that Elgar's depiction of a 'wild' nautch dance which we looked at in the previous chapter is built of similar elements (beaten out on his own 'Indian Drum') highlights the internal consistency of the British version of 'Indian' music.

Yet, as MacCarthy explained, Indian music does not involve a static drone but, rather, a recurring figure plucked on the *tambūrā* which reinforces the tonal centre. From a note included in a transcription of her Music Association lecture, it is clear that she played in the characteristic manner—the open strings tuned to the tonic (*sa*) and the dominant (*pa*) in several registers (*saptaks*) and rhythmically strummed (*pa-sa-sa-sa*) to anchor the *rāga*'s melodic outline.<sup>104</sup> Orsmond Anderton, later to become Bantock's biographer, described hearing 'a complicated rhythmical figure' on the drone lute as she sang.<sup>105</sup> By far the most evocative contemporary British impression of the instrument's effect is found in a little talk which John Foulds gave on All India Radio in the 1930s. He spoke of the 'unforgettable experience when first I heard an entirely unfamiliar tone-colour: an Indian instrument, one of the humbler ones, used as accompaniment and background to the human voice. This was the *tambura*.' His description of hearing MacCarthy, who would become his second wife, singing with her *tambūrā* in London in the 1910s, is worth quoting at length:

I still have to meet an instrument anywhere, in any country, more provocative to the singer or more apt in bringing the human voice into happy demonstration... when the *tambura*, accurately tuned, spins its curiously persuasive web of sound with its pregnant bass-notes and their harmonic resultant overtones, like gossamer filaments floating in the ether. This is the sound of the *tambura*.<sup>106</sup>

Holst's emulation of the instrument's subtle figuration and natural resonance defines the sonority of the pieces which frame the third set of hymns, 'To the Dawn', and 'Hymn of the Travellers'. In the first, a rhythmic ostinato rises from a low bass string through four octaves and is joined by the right hand playing the opposite cycle (dominant-tonic). The simple interaction between the two hands in this recurring

**Example 3.7**Bantock, 'Nautch Girl', no. 1 of *Songs of India*, drone, mm. 22–31

The musical score is for the song 'Nautch Girl' by Gustav Holst, from the collection *Songs of India*. It is in 2/4 time and B-flat major. The score consists of three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The piano part features a continuous drone pattern in the bass, which is a characteristic feature of Indian music. The vocal line is in English and describes a nautch girl. The piano part includes dynamic markings: *p* (piano) in the first system, *dim.* (diminuendo) in the second system, and *p* (piano) and *cresc.* (crescendo) in the third system. The score is numbered 22 at the beginning of the first system.

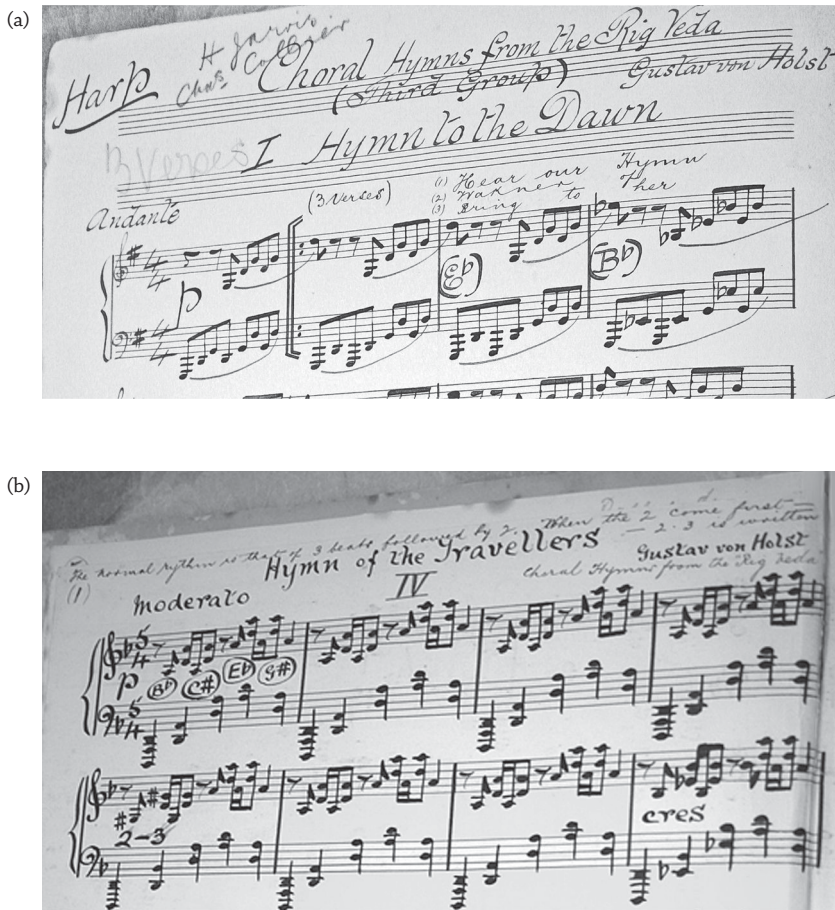
Love - ly \_\_\_ limbs so lithe and sweet, \_\_\_\_\_ while the

dron - ing mu - sic \_\_\_ plays, \_\_\_\_\_

Grace - ful - ly her bo - dy sways, \_\_\_\_\_

*dim.* *p* *cresc.*

pattern 'spins' a 'curiously persuasive web of sound' (figure 3.1a). In the last hymn ('of the Travellers'), the asymmetrical  $\frac{5}{4}$  ostinato suggests the cyclical pattern of the *tambūrā* as it moves independently of both melody and *tāla*, weaving 'another harmonious time-pattern'. Here, the figure is set in motion by the harp's highly resonant penultimate bass string. These finely etched *tambūrā* figurations are particularly well suited to the harp, with its 'pregnant bass-notes and resultant harmonic overtones', an instrument which was rarely heard alone in this way in contemporary choral music (figure 3.1b).



**Figure 3.1**

*Tambūrā* figurations in *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 3.

a. 'To the Dawn'

b. 'Hymn of the Travellers'

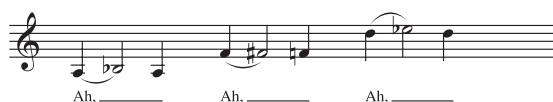
Source: Copyist's score © Holst Birthplace Museum/Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

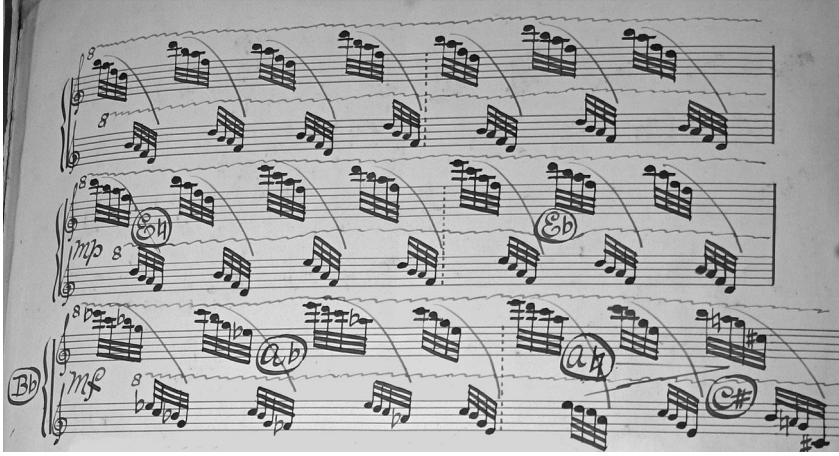
Holst suggested 'Hymn of the Travellers' as a possible prelude to *Sāvitrī*.<sup>107</sup> It has often been assumed that the suggestion was purely for reasons of subject matter—since the hymn invokes Pushan, 'the Guide of travellers along the roads leading between this world and the next'—and that it is 'musically... irrelevant'.<sup>108</sup> There is, however, a significant little musical connection between the opera and its 'overture'. For this invocation of the god of departed souls, Holst drew on the oscillating harmony of the *Māyā* music with its resulting melodic semitone. In between the  $\frac{5}{4}$  harp-*tambūrā* and the main vocal melody, a wordless semi-chorus alternates between two semitones. In the final stanza, this *Māyā* chorus, its semitone motion now in the top voice, evokes the life-death boundary through an alternation of two triads, D minor

**Example 3.8**

'Hymn of the Travellers', no. 4 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 3, mm. 30–32  
Māyā motives

Māyā motives





**Figure 3.2**

Idiomatic harp figuration in 'To the Waters', no. 2 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, group 3.

Source: Copyist's score © Holst Birthplace Museum/Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum.

inert 'Orient'—the drone, in its various guises as 'wild' caricature (à la Bantock and Elgar) and as 'mystic' static bass pedal (as in his own, earlier, 'Vāruna')—into dynamic and 'complicated rhythmical figures'. This is nothing short of a sea-change—a musical metaphor, perhaps, for the contemporary 'metamorphosis' of Indian fine arts in Britain. The harp-tambūrā's gossamer filaments are harbingers, as we will see, of later Indo-British musical interactions.

### Archaic Avant-Garde

In June 1909, Lahore's *Civil and Military Gazette* reported news of the composer's recent performance of his own solo *Vedic Hymns* at the Royal Asiatic Society in London and noted that 'Mr von Holst is so anxious to interpret truly the spirit of the Hymns that he is studying Sanskrit in order to grasp the rhythm and sound of the original words'.<sup>110</sup> This observation of how the composer shaped his word-setting in sympathetic response to the Sanskrit hymns he was studying and translating is worth looking into, since it has often been assumed that it is the Purcell-inspired musical idiom of the English language. His sensitivity to textural rhythm is evident in 'क' (*Ka*), 'To the Unknown God', the other Vedic hymn completed in 1910. The hymn was singled out by Edmund Rubbra as illustrative of 'free recitative revolving around a central pivot note' and by Edwin Evans who described how 'words and setting were so interwoven from their inception'.<sup>111</sup> These remarks are especially interesting in view of what Holst knew of the rhythmic recitation of Vedic Hymns. In the first volume of Griffith's *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, one of Holst's most thoroughly thumbbed and annotated books, the composer would have come across a lengthy analysis of the metres of the hymns. Each *Rigveda* hymn has a metre all its own which

Griffith preserved in his translations.<sup>112</sup> Syllabic declamation in sometimes jaunty, dotted rhythms, alternates with vowels stretched out over several pitches (melismas) giving each line its own pattern. As Griffith explained, the momentum of the chanting—so distinctive to the uninitiated ear—follows the cadences of the Sanskrit language, coming to rest at points of verbal punctuation and creating a sense of inevitable, almost hypnotic flow. These effects are achieved by undulating around a single pitch, using intervals of seconds (minor and major) and sometimes thirds above and below that pitch for accented syllables and melismas on vowels.<sup>113</sup>

Instead of the chant of *Ka* being smoothed out into foursquare rhythms and harmonized, it moves freely across the bar lines in an unaccompanied, *parlante*, unison; flexible rhythmic figures follow the natural accents of the words and lend a sense of onward momentum; at each moment of verbal punctuation the voices come to rest on the main pitch, E. But the connections extend beyond these general points. Holst chooses a narrow pitch range, involving only the 'Vedic intervals' of seconds and thirds above and below the main pitch. The varied rhythmic motifs, unconstrained by the common time signature, outline several gestures characteristic of Vedic recitation, particularly the jaunty syllabic setting of 'begotten in mystery' with its syncope and dotted figure, and the broad melismatic triplet at 'Lord of created things'.

As the chant trails off, there is a radical harmonic break: cellos and basses quietly pluck the seven pitches of a novel scale in descent. This modal bass line procession unfolds the descending form (*avarohana*) of the fiftieth of the Karnātic *mēlakartas* called *namanarayani*, made up of a distinctive series of intervals: the lowered second, raised third and fourth, and lowered sixth and seventh scale degrees. With the *avarohana* of *namanarayani*, the cultural context of the vocal chanting is confirmed. Its augmented second, the F–G♯ of 'begotten', the interval for Western ears most evocative of 'the East', is now established as an integral part of the mode. This descending octave bass line, a characteristically Holstian ostinato, variants of which are so prominent in the *Hymn of Jesus* and in 'Saturn', is heard here in an unmistakably Indian context (Example 3.9).<sup>114</sup>

It was specifically for *mēlakartas* and *rāgas* that Holst had approached MacCarthy.<sup>115</sup> Her knowledge of them certainly gained her reputation. *The Hindu* reported that she 'showed the distinction between *mēlas* or modes and *rāgas* or melody forms derived from modes'.<sup>116</sup> Using specific examples, she drew attention to what she called 'the idioms of *rāga*' and stressed that, to the Indian musician or listener, a *rāga* is a world of melodic invention, encompassing both mood and atmosphere, whereas a *mēlakarta*, or *thaat* in Hindustani music, is a scale—a collection of seven pitches from which a number of different *rāgas* take their characteristic shapes: '*Mēla* is only the *raga* resolved into its component tones for the purposes of classification and analysis'.<sup>117</sup> In addition to her demonstrations at lecture-recitals like the one hosted by the India Society, she introduced the Karnātic *mēlakartas* to John Foulds and he used them as the basis for several important pieces of the 1920s (see chapter 6). Years before MacCarthy's demonstrations, the complete list of *mēlakartas* had been presented by Captain Day to the Music Association in a paper to which, even in the nineteen-tens, 'composers... anxious to see what the Ragas are like' were exhorted to consult in order to 'find all the Raga scales set out with the precise intervals, so that one can study them, and if desired, write them down in our notation and compose to their order of intervals'.<sup>118</sup>

**Example 3.9**

'To the Unknown God' (ॐ Ka), no. 2 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*,  
op. 26, group 1, opening

**Adagio**

S&A *pp parlante*

He, the Pri-mal one, Be-get-ter of the u-ni-verse,

Be-got-ten in my-ste-ry, Lord of cre-a-ted things,

Be-got-ten in my-ste-ry, Lord of cre-a-ted things,

Lord of heav'n and earth.

Lord of heav'n and earth. *pp pizz.*

etc.

Since there are seventy-two *mēlakartas*, many scales may be related to them, including the Western diatonic (major and minor) forms and the old church modes. Yet the rules governing the *mēlakartas* preclude any symmetrical (whole-tone or octatonic) or pentatonic scales which were in vogue with contemporary modernists like Igor Stravinsky and Claude Debussy, or any chromatic scales.<sup>119</sup> The rules also preclude many of the one hundred or more modes advocated by Feruccio Busoni in his revolutionary tract of 1907, and the juxtaposition of two keys at once (or the use of none at all—atonality) which interested Charles Ives in the United States at the time. We understand how Béla Bartók's use of the raised 'Lydian' fourth came out

of his Transylvanian field research and how, in Britain, as the Gloucestershire composer C. W. Orr described it, ‘young composers diligently flattened their sevenths and modalised their tunes’ when folk-tunes became ‘all the rage’.<sup>120</sup> Just so, now—in the knowledge that Holst not only heard Indian music, but was ‘studying all he could’ of its theory, and actively seeking ‘Indian ragas’—rather than resorting to almost supernatural theories of how he intuitively ‘*came to use some scales which bear a resemblance to the ragas of Indian music*’, the provenance of these modes (such as those which include the flattened second and the raised fourth, for instance) can at last be acknowledged.<sup>121</sup>

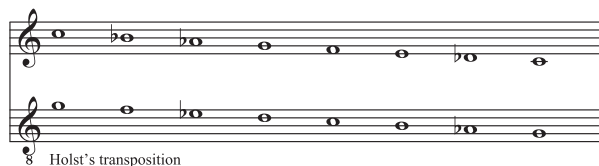
While the appearance of *namanarayani* in a piece of Edwardian choral music is in itself remarkable, it is not the authenticity of the source which is ultimately musically significant, but the way the *mēlakarta* gains semantic weight in the hymn and how it shapes every element. A brief glance at the ‘Hymn to Soma’ (from the fourth group of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* of 1912) will be illuminating here. The principal theme of the male voices is an unaccompanied melody shaped from a *mēlakarta* called *Vakulabharanam*, equally distinct from any Western scales with its lowered second, sixth, and seventh degrees (Example 3.10).

A cheerful refrain follows: ‘Flow on Indu, Flow ye on, O holy stream, We pour thee for Indra.’ As the men harmonize this over a string bass *Habanera* vamp, the piece takes on the feel of a ‘drinking song’—the libation being Soma, here referred to as ‘Indu—the juice of a herb used in sacrifice’.<sup>122</sup> In their joviality, the men move freely between *vakulabharanam* and, for the refrain, an old church mode with a lowered seventh—mixolydian. At first the mixolydian is anchored on G but, as the men become

### Example 3.10

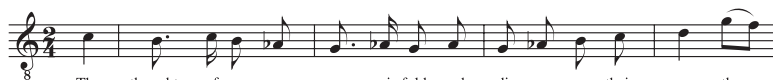
‘Hymn to Soma’, no. 2 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 4

Karnatic *mēlakarta* no. 14, *Vakulabharanam*

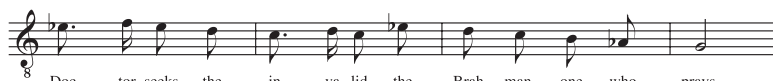


8 Holst's transposition

Opening melody



8 The thoughts of men are ma - ni - fold and di - verse are their ways, the —



8 Doc - tor seeks the in - va - lid the Brah - man, one who prays.

inebriated, it lurches up a semi-tone to G#. Finally, as they sink back again to G, there is no trace of the lowered scale degrees of the *mēlakarta* which generated the main melody.

In 'Hymn to the Unknown God', *namanarayani* is not used merely as an exotic colour for the descending ostinato or for the chanting. Its presence is more fundamental since it generates all of the hymn's pitch material (both voices and instruments). The unfolding of the *avarohana* of *namanarayani* is full of dramatic import whose significance is suggested both by the text of the hymn and by the ostinato's embryonic musical *topos*, that of a procession. Its distinctive sound world, a combination of *mēlakarta*, pizzicato strings, and gong, lends the hymn an ancient, primal air. The chanting, meanwhile, invokes, in a repeating refrain, the ritual of sacrifice central to Vedic orthodoxy: 'Who is He? How shall we name Him when we offer sacrifice?'<sup>123</sup> *Namanarayani*'s raised fourth is first introduced in this sacrificial refrain and the tritone it creates against the tonic (E–A#) sounds an aptly disquieting tone (Example 3.11a).

### Example 3.11a

'Hymn to the Unknown God' (क Ka), no. 2 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 1, first refrain, mm. 11–16

The musical score for Example 3.11a consists of three systems. The first system (mm. 11–16) features two vocal parts (Soprano and Bass) and a cello/bass line. The vocal parts are marked *pp cantabile* and sing the lyrics: "Who is He? How shall we name Him when we of - fer". The cello/bass line is marked *pizz. pp* and plays a descending ostinato. The second system continues the vocal parts with the lyrics "sac - ri - fice?" and the cello/bass line. The third system continues the vocal parts with the lyrics "sac - ri - fice?" and the cello/bass line.

11 *pp cantabile*

Who is He? How shall we name Him when we of - fer

Who is He? How shall we name Him when we of - fer

cellos and basses

*pizz. pp*

sac - ri - fice? \_\_\_\_\_

sac - ri - fice? \_\_\_\_\_

As the chanting draws nearer, sopranos and tenors break ranks with the altos and basses. In rhythm and pitch, they enact an intense contrapuntal *stretto* whose musical complexity generates a sense of urgency.

This imposing musical setting, driven by the ritual of sacrifice, seems incongruous with the domestic concerns of the parochial god Prajāpati invoked in this hymn. Holst was evidently drawn to the dramatic reinterpretation of both the sacrificial ritual and this particular god found in philosophical commentaries on the Vedas such as the *Upanishads*.<sup>124</sup> The scholar Walter O. Kälber explains that in this *Vedānta* literature (which followed the *Rigveda*), the prestige of sacrifice began to overshadow the very gods it ostensibly served:

the growing significance of the ritual was dramatically reflected in the growing length and complexity of the ritual procedure. The comparatively simple sacrifice of the *Rg Veda* became in the Brāhmanas a 'supernal mystery' of cosmic proportion.<sup>125</sup>

Consequently, some of the *Rigveda* gods grew to ever increasing importance, Agni in particular, while Soma became the central offering (Holst wrote hymns to both). But, as Kälber elaborates:

it was the 'unknown god', the Lord of Beings, Prajāpati, who celebrated a truly cosmic triumph. . . . He embodied its [the sacrificial ritual's] mystery, its majesty, its generative vitality, and its paradigmatic power. As personification of the entire sacrificial endeavor this one-time parochial and domestic deity attained his ultimate apotheosis.<sup>126</sup>

This ultimate apotheosis of the unknown god defines the whole ethos of Holst's setting: it is a thrilling enactment of the supernal mystery and majesty of sacrifice embodied by the god *Ka*. The quiet *namanarayani* is indeed a procession, heard first from a distance, pianissimo and pizzicato on its root pitch E (see Example 3.11a). As the procession draws nearer, the strings, now *mezzo-forte*, take their bows to the *mēlakarta* (arco). Here, in a musical embodiment of the Doppler effect (the change in frequency of a sound wave for an observer moving relative to its source), the ostinato's pitch shifts upwards by a third (enharmonically to A♭). The mode's intervallic structure remains intact while the pitch rises to sonically depict the unfolding ritual. The dramatic effect of the approaching procession is intensified as the string bass, now *forte* and doubled by tuba, shifts *namanarayani* up by another third, to C. The sacrificial refrain is taken over by the 'majestic' brass and, in this guise, above the processing ostinato and punctuated by trumpet and timpani flourishes, it is transformed into a ceremonial fanfare. Above it, the chanters intone their creed (Example 3.11b).

As trumpet and timpani figures become more insistent, the full weight of the fanfare's generic function is harnessed, garnering the listener's attention for the sacrificial ceremony. Anticipation mounts. It is an awesome moment. With the procession's arrival the brass wrests the ostinato from the strings and shifts it to its highest, fever, pitch—up another third to E, reaching a full octave above the distant opening. The chanters summon all their vocal strength: 'Lord of Death, Whose path is life

**Example 3.11b**

‘Hymn to the Unknown God’, chant and fanfare, mm. 39–45

39 S&A *f* He \_\_\_\_\_ whose word is e - ter - nal

T&B *f* He \_\_\_\_\_ whose word is e - ter - nal

brass *maestoso e ben tenuto*

*f* low strings and tuba *f*

3 Gi - ver of breath \_\_\_\_\_ and life \_\_\_\_\_ and power.

3 Gi - ver of breath \_\_\_\_\_ and life \_\_\_\_\_ and power.

trumpets and timpani

immortal!’ Now, as the procession passes by and recedes, the pitch correspondingly sinks back down. The ancient chant resumes, the supernal mystery ungrasped: ‘Thou alone canst fathom Thy mystery; There is none beside Thee.’ Almost imperceptibly, a trombone fanfare sounds over the *mēlakarta*, now far away in the lowest possible octave, and the sacrificial procession disappears into the distance (Example 3.11c).

The hymn’s mysticism is thus conveyed through multiple means: unison ‘Vedic’ chanting with its characteristic pitch and rhythmic gestures, the descending *namana-rayani* ostinato; dark hued, sparse orchestration (brass, low strings, percussion); a sacrificial refrain which becomes a ceremonial fanfare; and the intervallic outline of the *mēlakarta* which shapes chant, fanfare-refrain, and ostinato. The combination of these elements creates a ritualistic ethos which invokes not only the generic resonance of Vedic chanting but also enacts the ‘supernal mystery’ of the sacrifice particular to this hymn in its later, Vedānta, interpretations. No wonder Edgar Bainton

**Example 3.11c**

'Hymn to the Unknown God', closing procession and fanfare, mm. 73–79

The musical score is written in bass clef and consists of three staves. The top staff is labeled 'trombones' and the middle staff is labeled 'double basses'. The bottom staff is labeled 'gong'. The music is marked *pppp* (pianissimo). The trombone part begins with a series of chords and a final fanfare. The double bass part is a continuous, rhythmic pattern. The gong part is a single, sustained note.

opined in 1911 that 'the Hymns from the Rig Veda alone would suffice to stamp him as one of the most individual figures in contemporary musical life'.<sup>127</sup> For Holst, the sound and meaning of the Vedas became in this hymn a kind of archaic avant-garde through which he could circumvent nineteenth-century conventions of harmony and form.<sup>128</sup> This is at once a sonic representation of an ancient ritual and a strikingly original, modern composition—vintage 1910.

### But a Passing Phase

Despite several successful performances and enthusiastic reviews, Holst was unable to interest any publisher in his solo or choral hymns and eventually, against all advice, published them at his own expense.<sup>129</sup> Although on one level, these works participated in a recognizable orientalist tradition which glorified an ancient Hindu India enshrined in Sanskrit texts, the musical style confounded traditional British approaches to Indian subject matter. Moreover, they appeared at a time when English culture was increasingly preoccupied with its own, home-grown musical 'renaissance'.

The renaissance had been associated with the Royal College since it was first touted by George Grove in the 1880s. In a campaign for state funding of the College in 1882, the Duke of Connaught claimed that 'our objects are not metropolitan... but national and imperial', to which the Prince of Wales, the future Edward VII, later added: 'By inspiring among our fellow-subjects in every part of the Empire these emotions of patriotism which national music is calculated to evoke... Music can benefit and provide for the leisure hours... strengthen[ing] a common love of country'.<sup>130</sup>

In other words, by the end of the nineteenth century, the official voice of empire was demanding a music that could evoke the image of 'England's Green and Pleasant Land'; the musical establishment was doing its best to oblige, nurturing within its colleges music that displayed racial and spiritual links with England. The pioneers of the renaissance were Charles Villiers Stanford (professor at the Royal College of Music), Hubert Parry, and Holst's close friend, Vaughan Williams. Vaughan Williams and Holst became recognized as, respectively, 'heirs and rebels' of the official 'renaissance'. For although both had studied at the Royal College, the institution that had nurtured the renaissance ideals, Holst's music assimilated elements even within the Western tradition from such divergent sources as Wagner, Musorgsky, Debussy, and Stravinsky. *The Chesterian* pointed to 'the irony' of Holst's having been a pupil of Stanford; 'is it not extraordinary', the author continued, 'that so severe a master should have produced so impertinent a freelance?'<sup>131</sup> Holst's position in regard to the prevailing musical atmosphere of the Royal College of Music from whence he had hatched (and before he dropped the 'Von' from his name) was explained by a critic in 1909:

The Royal College is identified with the more conservative elements, and it has the usual vice of such organisations, which is the tendency to mould its pupils on one pattern.... Great stress is laid on the model which the taste of the authorities has enthroned, and the official musical creed is professed by all save a very few of its students.... Von Holst is almost an anarchist... it is very difficult to associate his music with the Royal College.<sup>132</sup>

Holst was, in fact, also an active participant in the renaissance. He had joined Vaughan Williams in a series of folk-song collecting trips in East Anglia and the South West which resulted in works with titles displaying the music's regional origins, such as the *Cotswold Symphony* (1900), *Somerset Rhapsody* (1906–7, dedicated to Cecil Sharp), and *Sixteen Folk Songs from Hampshire* (1906–8).<sup>133</sup> But it was Vaughan Williams who, through his writings, music, teaching, and the timely incorporation of English folk-songs (many discovered by Cecil Sharp), positioned himself as the authentic voice of England and 'supplied... the self-conscious, militant national idea'.<sup>134</sup> His approach was clearly expressed in a set of lectures given at Bryn Mawr in 1932, and later published as 'National Music', in which he exhorted composers to write music based on native folk music that would have an unashamedly provincial and parochial appeal.<sup>135</sup> Ten years later, he warned that 'broad-mindedness', associated with an international outlook, is tantamount to 'moral cowardice'.<sup>136</sup>

In this context, it is hardly surprising that Holst's music was drawn into the nationalist cause, as the following review from 1914 illustrates: 'there is no question that his music is not merely home-made in the limited geographical sense, but intimately affected by his insular surroundings.... Despite his name, Von Holst is a far more truly British composer than any Smith, Brown, or Robinson writing music according to a tradition accepted without question from Leipzig'.<sup>137</sup> Reactions to the Indian basis of his *Hymns* were far from unanimous and, indeed, offer a fascinating glimpse into colonial attitudes. 'Sound firm impressions of the East from a

sane Western perspective' declared a reviewer in the *Musical Times*.<sup>138</sup> Yet some heard 'semi-barbaric rhythms and wild Oriental cadences', or found them 'duly weird and difficult in their Oriental strangeness'.<sup>139</sup> Others believed that 'these Eastern influences are but a passing phase in the development of the composer'.<sup>140</sup> The Indian influence proved durable, however, as Vaughan Williams acknowledged in his remark that it was on the Vedic Hymns that 'so much of his music is based'.<sup>141</sup> While a great deal of Holst's music, notably the pieces for military band, the choral folk songs (among them 'I Love My Love'), and suites for strings (among them *St Paul's Suite*), undeniably has deep roots in English traditions, it was through his intense engagement with Indian culture that his modernist, highly personal voice took shape. Our journey now is on to the solar system to consider this voice in the composer's celebrated orchestral suite, *The Planets* (1914–16).

### From India to the Planet Mars

In Vidhu Vinod Chopra's film, *1942: A Love-Story* (1994), set in the context of the anti-colonial 'Quit India' movement, the insistent strains of Holst's 'Mars' accompany the belligerence of Raj officials as they order the killing of Indian strugglers for independence.<sup>142</sup> The music is first heard against the backdrop of a full-screen Union Jack blowing in the wind at Dalhousie, a sequence which culminates in a close-up of General Douglas giving the order to hang the freedom fighter Naren Singh (played by Anil Kapoor), who defiantly chants the slogan, '*Karenge ya Marenge*' (do or die). 'Mars' thereafter takes on the character of a *leitmotiv* which conveys the mercilessness of the British and which, chillingly, becomes complicit in the colonial oppression.<sup>143</sup>

On the face of it, the choice of *The Planets* to represent the Raj musically might seem appropriate.<sup>144</sup> After all, no self-respecting collection of British music would be complete without at least one 'planet' (and no self-respecting Englishman would be unable to hum that noble 'Jupiter' tune).<sup>145</sup> Once the words 'I vow to thee my country' had been attached to the *andante maestoso* of 'Jupiter' it quickly began to vie with 'Land of Hope and Glory' for the place of a second national anthem with which to hymn imperial England.<sup>146</sup> In 1925 it was officially adopted as the hymn tune 'Thaxted', thereby acquiring all the English country associations (among them Morris dancing, farmers' markets, and country fairs) of that ancient Essex village.<sup>147</sup> The composer's daughter aptly describes how, at the moment the strings begin that *maestoso* theme, 'an aura of patriotism' hovers over the concert hall—backs straighten and minds come to attention in 'an appropriate state of reverence'.<sup>148</sup> Yet a close listen to the suite—including the Jupiter tune itself—in the context of Holst's Indian works reveals a rather different ethos.

In 1924, the French author Georges Jean-Aubry claimed for the orchestral suite an 'occult foundation [which] can, from its very nature, never appeal to the public at large'.<sup>149</sup> Holst had based his suite on *The Art of Synthesis* (1912) by the prominent astrologist Alan Leo who had twice travelled to India to learn about Vedic astrology.<sup>150</sup> Leo's manuals fascinated Holst and in his copy of one of them, *A Thousand and One*

*Notable Nativities: The Astrologer's Who's Who* (1911) (now in the Birthplace Museum in Cheltenham), he made annotations next to the planetary positions and cuspal degrees of certain people, Wagner and Kipling among them.<sup>151</sup>

It was Clifford Bax who stimulated Holst's interest in astrology during a visit to Spain in 1913.<sup>152</sup> 'Recently', the composer told a friend, 'the character of each planet suggested lots [of music] to me, and I have been studying astrology fairly closely.'<sup>153</sup> Rubbra recalled that the casting of friends' horoscopes around this time was what Holst called 'my pet vice'.<sup>154</sup> A lasting friendship with the astrologer Vivian E. Robson led to a gift of two books inscribed from the author, one of which, *A Beginner's Guide to Practical Astrology*, bears the inscription, 'To Gustav Holst the inspirer of this book with kindest regards'.<sup>155</sup> For the titles of his *Planets*, Holst took on the style of Leo's chapter headings from *The Art of Synthesis* so that Leo's 'Mars—the Energiser' became 'Mars—the bringer of war' and so on (figure 3.3).<sup>156</sup>

Yet, in a letter of 1918 to Adrian Boult (who would conduct the work's premiere in the following year), Holst evaded discussion of any programmatic dimension, stating that 'there is nothing in any of the planets (*my planets I mean*) that can be expressed in words'.<sup>157</sup> 'Seven Pieces for Large Orchestra' is the generic title (recalling Schoenberg's *Five*, which he heard in 1914) to be found on the manuscript full



**Figure 3.3**  
'A Celestial Musician'

Source: *Musician*, December 1920, p. 74. © The British Library Board. P.P.1947.fac.

score (held in the Bodleian Library, Oxford), and the individual movements have only their present subtitles, 'The bringer of war', 'The bringer of peace' and so on, so that the word *planets* or any reference to heavenly bodies is entirely absent.<sup>158</sup>

It is not surprising that Holst retreated into 'the music itself'. Jean-Aubry was right about public acceptance of the suite's occult inspiration, and the composer knew it too. The 'old and despised art of astrology' was treated with 'scorn' by a sceptical public. In 1914, Leo had been arrested and acquitted under the infamous Vagrancy Act, which classified astrologers with 'rogues and vagabonds'. He was prosecuted again in 1917, fined £30, and died later that year.<sup>159</sup> Thus, the suite's astrological basis was replaced, variously, by patriotic or fanciful ones. In a public lecture given nearly a decade later, in 1926, Holst described his *Planets* as 'a series of mood pictures',<sup>160</sup> Richard Capell's notes for the Holst Festival performance in Cheltenham the following year included picturesque descriptions of each movement which were later printed in the *Radio Times*.<sup>161</sup> Other writers made spurious connections to Greek and Roman Gods. Holst returned the proofs of an article Edwin Evans had sent him in the early 1920s, complaining that 'the Greek and Roman legends about the Gods have nothing to do with the planets and I was a bit annoyed by certain critics dragging in details about Zeus... As a matter of fact I think Zeus and Co. a very poor feeble lot compared with Brahma and his show'.<sup>162</sup> No wonder Holst felt ambivalent about the success of his *Planets*: By 1930 (the year of Pluto's 'discovery'), the music had been impoverished by the willed amnesia of its cultural and musical resonance.<sup>163</sup> Although Holst himself claimed that his *Planets* 'had nothing to do with either' Zeus and Co. or Brahma and his show, elements of the suite's musical language can be traced—in both style and meaning—to the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* and to *Sāvitri*.

'Mars, the bringer of War' is introduced by two main elements: a  $\frac{5}{4}$  rhythmic ostinato and, sounding above it, a horn motif that descends a semi-tone. An obvious precursor is the 'Hymn to Agni', God of Fire (second group of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*), which is driven by an *allegro*  $\frac{5}{4}$  ostinato so fiery that the composer declared he could never manage to conduct it properly.<sup>164</sup> But the whole ethos of 'Mars', created by way of its ostinato and semi-tonal motif, is drawn from the earlier 'Battle Hymn' (first group of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*). The hymn invokes Indra, god of sky and storm, and his attendant storm-clouds, the *Maruts*:

King of the earth and ruler of heav'n  
Greatest of helpers, fearfulest of foes.  
Indra and Maruts fight for us!

Ye too O storm-clouds follow his path  
Comrades in glory, Conquerors in fight!  
Indra and Maruts fight for us!

The insistent orchestral ostinato of this hymn, with its accented fourth beat, is the prototype of the Martian ostinato; overlaid above it is a vocal refrain, 'Indra and

Maruts fight for us', set to a motto theme whose descending semi-tone in parallel fifths confirms the relation (Example 3.12a and b).

Indra's presence is keenly felt in that most 'English' of planets, too: 'Jupiter', whose patriotic melody conjures images of, in the words of one music critic, 'hardy Brits after a cricket match lifting mugs of ale, troops parading in patriotic triumph, and nostalgic episodes of country life in the Cotswolds'.<sup>165</sup> Holst had noted in a fly-leaf inside the cover of Griffith's first volume of *Rig Veda Hymns* that there were 100 hymns in praise of Indra.<sup>166</sup> The composer carried the Vedic weight afforded Indra into his own works by way of an early, eponymous symphonic poem and several hymns. One of these settings, a solo hymn to Indra of 1907, opens with the line, 'Noblest of songs for the noblest of Gods!' set to a *moderato maestoso* melody. This 'Indra' melody has been identified as the precursor of the famous *andante maestoso* melody of *Jupiter*.<sup>167</sup>

### Example 3.12a

'Battle Hymn', no. 1 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 1, mm. 12–16

12 T&B *p*

Chief of the strong ones ter-ri-ble in wrath! \_\_\_\_\_

*p*

S&A *f* *dim.*

In - dra and Ma - ruts fight for us! \_\_\_\_\_

T&B *mf* *f*

— In - dra and Ma - ruts fight for us! \_\_\_\_\_

*p*



To those whose souls are born of fire,  
 The poets of a thousand songs,  
 The Holy Ones who guard the Sun, unto the Fathers,  
 May he go forth!

The contrapuntal texture of overlapping female voices over a static bass will be familiar from Sāvitrī's welcome to Death. Here, three spatially separated groups of voices alternate, in close imitation, a pentatonic line of floating sixths with the refrain, 'may he go forth', which rises through a tritone. Underneath, a 'Vedic' descending procession, here a 'Dorian' mode on A, traverses two octaves in slow motion (augmentation) over twenty-five bars. A sense of motion toward *devachan* is created by the three elements—the pentatonic motive whose undulations suggest the slow turning of a wheel, the rising tritone echoed by one group after another, and the inexorable bass procession (all of which finally disappear into the distance—an almost inaudible *pianississimo*) (Example 3.13).

Holst's evocation of *devachan* finds expression in 'Saturn, the bringer of old age', the planet which, the composer noted unhappily, 'people seem to dislike'.<sup>169</sup> The music captures the unforgiving ethos of this planet which Leo had explained in *The Art of Synthesis*: 'none can neglect duty and escape the hard fate which Saturn imposes'.<sup>170</sup> (A member of the audience at an early performance at the Queen's Hall recalled that 'quite a number of old ladies in our neighbourhood were seen to rise from their seat, stagger for an instant, and then feel their way, feebly but with evident determination, towards the exit'.<sup>171</sup>) A 'quite dead' flute and harp ostinato alternates two disturbingly dissonant parallel chords comprising a ninth and a tritone; underneath, double-basses play an embryonic theme outlining a tritone whose semi-tonal sighing Holst wished to be 'as emotional as possible' (Example 3.14).<sup>172</sup>

In the midst of this disquiet a new musical *topos* appears: a quiet procession heard as if from a distance, the footsteps clearly defined by a descending ostinato plucked by low strings. Beginning on E, then moving up a third to A $\flat$ , it telescopes the seven-note descent of *namanarayani* in 'Hymn to the Unknown God' and the first of its 'Doppler effect' transpositions. Above it, a fanfare played by a trio of trombones confirms the allusion to the hymn's sacrificial procession towards the 'Lord of Death, whose path is life immortal' (Example 3.15a).

As the procession draws nearer to its fatal conclusion, Saturn's dissonant opening ostinato returns to terrifying effect in a full orchestral *animato*; underneath the bass theme erupts, *fortississimo*. But towards the end of the movement, the music is transformed as all dissonance and chromaticism is purged and the key shifts down to reach complete musical calm: this is 'white-note' music whose organizing principles will be familiar from our tracing of Holst's death-themed Sanskrit music. Here, the layered, diatonic contrapuntal texture is created by three hushed pairs of horns overlapping a four-note motif, while flutes and harps play a heterophonic dialogue with them (Example 3.15b).

Holst was ultimately moved to express 'his planets' in a few carefully chosen words to Boult after an early performance. Of 'Saturn', he wrote that one part 'must begin from another world and gradually overwhelm this one. That is the nearest verbal

### Example 3.13

'Funeral Chant', no. 3 of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*, op. 26, group 2, mm. 9-17: layering

1st Group. *mf* *sempre dim. poco a poco al fine*

9 Treble.  
Alto.

2nd Group. To those for whom the meath is poured, *mf* For whom the ho - ly

Treble.  
Alto.

3rd Group. To those for whom the meath is *mf*

Treble.  
Alto.

*mf* *sempre dim. poco a poco al fine* To those for

cellos  
basses

wine doth flow, May he go forth!

poured, For whom the ho - ly wine doth flow, May

whom the meath is poured, For whom the ho - ly wine doth flow, —

Yea un - to - them whose fie - ry zeal Hath burned a path to

he go forth! — Yea un - to them whose fie - ry

— May he go forth! Yea un - to

### Example 3.14

'Saturn, The Bringer of Old Age', no. 5 of *The Planets*, opening

**Adagio**

*p*  
flutes and harps

*p*  
doublebasses  
8vb-----

(8vb)-----

### Example 3.15a

'Saturn', fanfare and procession, mm. 28–39

**1 Poco Animato**

28

trombones  
*p*

cellos and basses  
pizz. *p*

+ trumpets

tpts.  
*p*

horn and clarinet  
*p*  
arco non legato

8vb-----

**Example 3.15b**

‘Saturn’, mm. 125–126: layered diatonic counterpoint

VI

125 Fl. *pp*

Bass Fl. *pp*

Hrn. 1

Hrn. 2 (*sempre pp*)

Hrn. 3 (*sempre pp*)

Bells soft felt striker *pp*

Hp. 1 *pp*

8<sup>va</sup> *pp*

Hp. 2

violins v.c.  
c.b. cbsn. *pp* con sord.

suggestion I can give you.<sup>173</sup> The conclusion of ‘Saturn’, in this interpretation, concerns the theme he had developed with such musical consistency in his Indian works, the passage from this life to the next. The music, and Saturn itself, relents, freeing the traveller to be guided into the afterlife.<sup>174</sup> Death is welcomed in archaic counterpoint.

The ‘Funeral Chant’, charting the Vedic transition of the soul journey to ‘the blissful state’ of *devachan* provides not only an antecedent of the layering found in Saturn but also an early version of that elusive ending of ‘Neptune’, the last of the planets, described

by scholar Richard Greene as ‘a mystical serenity’.<sup>175</sup> There is a close relation between the elements of the famous fade-out when (for the first time in musical history), disembodied women’s voices are ‘lost in the distance’, and those of Sāvitrī’s ‘Welcome Lord’, ‘Hymn of the Travellers’, and the ‘Funeral Chant’: offstage voices, ‘dead-tone’ flutes, oscillating motifs, diatonic counterpoint, and overlapping voices rising in endless echoes.<sup>176</sup> Bax’s remark, that ‘Neptune was an adumbration of the music which he expected to hear after death’, is corroborated by these musical resources (Example 3.16).<sup>177</sup>

### Example 3.16

‘Neptune, The Mystic’, no. 7 of *The Planets*, mm. 70–77: layering of wordless chorus

VI

70 wordless chorus 1 (offstage)

*pp*

A

*pp*

wordless chorus 2 (offstage)

*pp*

A

*pp*

+ ‘dead tone’ flutes 8va

harp

*pp*

Neptune, in Leo's formulation, could help sensitive people 'tune-in' to vibrations from another world.<sup>178</sup> The opening, a *pianissimo* duet for flutes and bass flute, establishes the mystical atmosphere. Beginning with G, E, D#, the music proceeds to add the remaining tones of the G-sharp-minor triad, so that in retrospect the ear reinterprets the first pitch, G, as a leading-tone, F\*, which thus sounds dissonant (an augmented second) with E, not as consonant (a minor third). Holst's juxtaposition of two triads, here E minor and G-sharp minor, familiar from *Sāvitrī*, evokes Neptune's ethos by undermining the boundary between consonance and dissonance. As the flutes prepare to resume their theme, an uncanny oscillation starts up. High above, two harps tremble, almost imperceptibly, on one of the triads (G-sharp minor) of the flutes' theme in an emulation of the hexachordal haze of trembling strings heard above Satyavān's hushed explanation of Māyā to Sāvitrī. These moments where Holst's music seems to *become* the mystical material of its subtexts, are, in their rich intertextuality, among the most moving in all of his work (Example 3.17).

**Example 3.17**  
'Neptune'

Opening

**Andante**

oboes and piccolo

*pp*

flutes

*pp*

bass flute

*pp*

trombones

*pp*

*trem.*

harp 1 and 2

flutes and bass flute

Neptune Poles

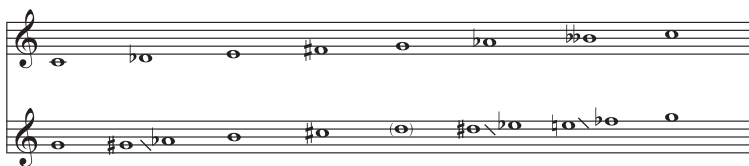
The effect of this triadic juxtaposition was, for some, too powerful, unsettling even. Boult recalled that on the evening before the first complete performance of *The Planets* which he was to conduct in September 1918 ('Neptune' had yet to be performed), the composer dined with him, Henry Balfour Gardiner, and a few friends at the Savile Club. As they discussed various points in the score, Geoffrey Toye pointed to the passage in 'Neptune' where the brass play chords of E minor and G# minor together, saying, 'I'm sorry Gustav, but I can't help thinking that's going to sound frightful.' To which Holst replied, 'Yes, I know; it made me shudder when I wrote it down, but what are you to do when they come like that?'<sup>179</sup>

The opening reveals another, not altogether unexpected, musical component. 'Neptune' was the only movement in *The Planets* for which Holst took Leo's chapter heading unchanged for his subtitle, 'the mystic', and, in doing so, he confirmed the connection with his Indian works.<sup>180</sup> The theme and its trembling harp halo are generated from the *Karnātic mēlakarta Dhavalambari*, which is made up of a lowered second degree, a raised fourth, and, in each of its tetrachords, an augmented second.<sup>181</sup> There is, in the opening phrases of 'Neptune', a connection between this *mēlakarta* and the hexachord from which Holst draws his 'mystic' triads.<sup>182</sup> Instead of completing the hexachord with a C natural at the end of bar one, he uses a C#, a tone dictated by the structure of the *mēlakarta*: C# is the raised fourth integral to the *dhavalambari*. The only pitch of the *mēlakarta* which does not also belong to the hexatonic collection, that is the fifth degree, D, is also avoided. In this way, Holst emphasizes only the subset of the mode that intersects with the hexatonic collection, and only the subset of the hexachord that evokes the *mēlakarta*. The opening evokes Neptune's mysticism not only by virtue of evoking the limina through the hexatonic collection but also by shoring up an Indian ethos through *dhavalambari* (Example 3.18). 'Neptune', in other words, speaks a distinctly Indian form of early twentieth-century musical modernism.

### Example 3.18

Intersection of *mēlakarta* and hexatonic collection in 'Neptune'

Karnatic melakarta 49, Dhavalambari



Holst's transposition

Hexatonic collection



### Figure of Our Time

The notion that there might be something either ‘modern’ or ‘Indian’ about Holst was lost after the composer’s death (just two months after Elgar’s) in 1934. Contemporary perceptions of the music’s modernity being bound up with its ‘Indianness’, like those of Dent, were treated with an attitude approaching scorn. Richard Capell told readers of the *Radio Times* in 1935 that ‘it was a misapprehension of twenty-five years ago to put the strangeness of the musical style down to Oriental influences’. ‘So far as the spirit of the music went’, he declared, ‘the *Rig Veda* hymns might almost as well have belonged to prehistoric Gloucestershire as to the valley of the Indus.’<sup>183</sup> Writing on Holst began to explain away the possibility of Indian elements like *mēlakartas* being discernible in his music, ascribing them to coincidence, ‘intuition’, or ‘instinct’. Even Rubbra, who identified specific ‘rāgas’ in Holst’s works, dismissed the possibility of the composer’s knowing any Indian music, claiming that his inclination was towards ‘Oriental’ scales.<sup>184</sup> Holst, it was claimed, had never heard any Indian music.<sup>185</sup> The myth of a home-grown style was perpetuated by the default authority on the composer, his daughter Imogen Holst, and later by scholars in the 1970s, who emphasized that ‘the recognition of Purcell, together with Tudor and Elizabethan music, and of English folksong was of crucial importance...in [Holst’s] rediscovering an English tradition’...*from this sprang everything that is most valuable and original in his idiom*.<sup>186</sup> Holst’s biographers of the 1990s and 2000s both invoked Capell’s claim to confirm (their singular confluence of opinion) that the composer’s works neither contain ‘pseudo-oriental effects’ nor ‘were [they] influenced by Indian music...in spite of their titles’.<sup>187</sup> Ethnomusicologist Martin Clayton has ascribed this pervasive trope in Holst scholarship to a more general anxiety about the influence of the Raj on the cultural life of Britain:

The biographical treatment of Holst’s life and the bald denials that he could have...been influenced by Indian *music*...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... [This] is an example of th[e] failure to come to terms with the effects of colonialism on English culture.<sup>188</sup>

Stripping away the Indian component and context of Holst’s work had implications for its perceived modernity. His music ceased to have any relevance in the progressive march of the twentieth century. Kaikhosru Sorabji set the tone in his obituary notice: ‘The inadequacy of the man to grapple with the vast and mighty conceptions that, for want of a better word, one must say “inspired” him, was at times pitiful to the point of painfulness... Over all his work... was a general nondescriptness.’<sup>189</sup> An article of 1936 entitled ‘Holst in Perspective’ lamented that ‘his works are as rarely heard as Parry’s or Stanford’s’; two more years on and they were languishing in ‘total oblivion’.<sup>190</sup> In the post-war era of the European avant-garde, critics and composers dismissed Holst (alongside Vaughan Williams), as a representative of what Elisabeth Lutyens referred to as ‘the cow-pat school’ of composing; British interest in his music sank to a low point.<sup>191</sup> In his study of early twentieth-century

English music in 1979, Peter Pirie declared that Holst's influence had largely been 'on amateurs': his style, he concluded 'died with him'.<sup>192</sup> Surveys of twentieth-century music barely mentioned him at all. If they did (or indeed do), he appears merely as a peripheral figure, a one-hit wonder (*The Planets* became one of the best-known works in the recorded repertoire), or even just a 'folkish composer'.<sup>193</sup> A recent revisionist study of the 'renaissance' reduces him to 'little more than a minor hanger-on of the pastoral movement'.<sup>194</sup>

In the second half of the twentieth century, the politics of style began to change in Holst's favour.<sup>195</sup> His personal brand of the archaic avant-garde came to be understood, at least by a generation of English composers, as an early harbinger of post-war modernism. Michael Tippett, who kept a wary distance from the 'pomp and circumstance or pastoral' traditions which he had inherited, wrote a signal essay entitled 'Holst: Figure of our Time'.<sup>196</sup> Benjamin Britten, a keen editor of his music, kept a photograph of the young Gustav in his music room and confessed: 'I owe him more than I can tell you'.<sup>197</sup> *Sāvitri*, with Peter Pears as Satyavān, was mounted at the 1956 Aldeburgh Festival and revived again in 1974. In its directness of expression and economy of gesture and means, it generated the style of Britten's church parables of the 1960s.<sup>198</sup> Scholars also began to pay heed to Holst's personal (modern, Indian) style. In 1988 Raymond Head wrote three articles entitled 'Holst and India' which surveyed all the works based on Indian subjects and speculated that some of his music revealed the influence of *rāgas*.<sup>199</sup> A new sketch began to take shape in which Holst was understood to have inspired some of the defining music of his own era—that of Vaughan Williams. Short points to the Sixth Symphony of 1948 whose pianissimo Finale ends with a 'Neptune'-like alternation of two chords. Greene has shown how Vaughan Williams used the opening of *Sāvitri* as a model for setting the Irish libretto of *Riders to the Sea* with a perfect textual nuance.<sup>200</sup> And his *Magnificat*, which begins with an oscillating ostinato of a tritone and a ninth, pays direct homage to 'Saturn'.<sup>201</sup>

As space exploration expanded in the 1950s and 1960s, *The Planets* gained in popularity among a new generation of rock, film, and classical music audiences. The band King Crimson based their second album, *movement for movement*, on Holst's orchestral suite. New Hampshire composer Bruce Craigmiles, *alter ego* of the adolescent John Adams, wrote an orchestral tone poem based on the astral constellations 'in the manner of' Holst's *Planets*.<sup>202</sup> A virtuoso, electronically generated version for Moog synthesizer (whose distribution in the United Kingdom Imogen Holst worked hard to prevent) was created by Isao Tomita in 1976.<sup>203</sup> Colin Matthews was commissioned to compose an additional movement for Holst's suite to reflect Pluto's elevation to planetary status (it was subsequently demoted) in 2000. And, in 2010, the Houston Symphony premiered *The Planets—an HD Odyssey*, a collaboration with NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory under producer Duncan Copp who choreographed stunning footage of the solar system from the Mars Rovers and the Hubble Space Telescope to Holst's music.

In recent decades the politics of British culture has also changed. Since the 1960s, initially in the work of the late Ravi Shankar, English music was faced with a refracted version of Indian Orientalism. Shankar's *Concerto for Sitar and Orchestra*, dedicated

to Ustad Allaiddin Khan, was performed with the London Symphony Orchestra in the Royal Festival Hall in 1970.<sup>204</sup> In it, Shankar translated Indian music in terms of the symphony orchestra. *Tablā* was replaced by bongos and the *tambūrā*'s function was assigned, at least initially, to two harps à la Holst. Musical engagement with India in the Holstian tradition came into sharp focus in the works of two composers born in 1939, five years after Holst's death: the late Jonathan Harvey, and Naresh Sohal from Panjāb, who has worked in the United Kingdom since 1962. Harvey used *Rigveda* hymns as 'keys to a transcendent consciousness' in his work *Bhakti*, a computer-age electro-acoustic mystical exploration of the Sanskrit hymns composed at the Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/Musique in Paris in 1982. Sohal wrote a chamber opera in 1998 entitled *Maya*, based on Indian mythology and with a cast of just three singers, soprano, tenor, and baritone. The final words of the piece are 'All, All, All is Maya!'<sup>205</sup>

Contrary to histories that proceed from the subsequent fame of a work rather than from the historical situation at the time of its writing, we might trace a trajectory of Holst's career that sees its high point not in *The Planets*, but in the *Hymns from the Rig Veda* and *Sāvitrī*. Published at his own expense, performed by schoolgirls and professionals alike, and heard by a wide variety of cross-cultural listeners, Holst's Vedic Hymns and *Sāvitrī* were participants in the new interpretation of Indian music and culture begun in 1910. Although he never identified a single *pukka* Indian element in his work, Holst's engagement with Indian musical culture was unprecedented at that time in British music. Alone among his contemporaries, his Sanskrit works—at once the most modern and the most firmly based on traditional Indian sources—provide compelling musical evidence of English music's 'acculturation' during the height of the Raj.

## NOTES

1. In referring to these texts, I would have preferred to follow Indian style omitting the definite article except where it occurs in the title of a work. However, as I wrote it became clear that its omission in English prose seems odd, so I include it where I feel necessary with apologies to my Indian readers. As Sujit Mukherjee explains: 'the original *Mahabharat* and *Ramayan* and other such primary texts are . . . unique enough not to need the additional distinction of a definite article. I suspect that because there is no ancient text in the English language nor can any be claimed as native to England's culture, English speakers and writers through the ages have unthinkingly been appending the definite article to all foreign (especially, ancient) texts' (Buddhadeva Bose, *The Book of Yudhisthir: A Study of the Mahabharat of Vyas*, trans. Sujit Mukherjee (Calcutta: Orient Longman Ltd, 1986), p. ix).
2. This is a paraphrase of the story recalled by his daughter, Imogen Holst, in her book, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*, 2nd ed. (London: Oxford University Press, 1969), 21–2; the subheading for this section also comes from there.
3. Edwin Evans, 'Modern British Composers: VI. Gustav Holst', *Musical Times* 60, no. 921 (1 November 1919): 588–92, 590. The composer did not drop the 'von' of his name (reflecting his German ancestry) until the autumn of 1918 when he worked as music organizer for demobilized troops in Salonica and Constantinople.

4. Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 37.
5. Ibid.; see also Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*, 22. Bode was a Lecturer (in the Indian School) at University College London between 1909 and 1917.
6. Quaintance Eaton, interview with Holst, 'Gustav Holst, on America Visit Approves Our Ways', *Musical America* 52, no. 3 (10 February 1932): 6; the walking anecdote is recounted by Ralph Vaughan Williams, 'Gustav Holst: I', *Music & Letters* 1, no. 3 (July 1920): 181–90, 186; and by Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 22.
7. Many of Holst's books were given to the Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum by I. Holst, including editions of: *Hymns from the Rig Veda*; *Śakuntala*; *Meghadūta* (*The Cloud Messenger*); *The Bhagavad-Gita*; and *The Upanishads*. Other books are kept in the Holst Room at the St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith, London, notably Ralph T. H. Griffith, *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, 2 vols. (1889–92; 2nd ed., Benares: E. J. Lazarus & Co., 1896) and an edition of Kālidāsa's *Meghadutam* by Pandit Nabin Chandra Vidyaratna (Calcutta: Bhattacharjya, 1901).
8. Holst, writing in 1914, quoted in Imogen Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst* (3rd rev. ed.); and, *Holst's Music Reconsidered* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), 32.
9. Dutt taught Indian history and literature from 1898 to 1904 at University College London. He gave 'a concise sketch of this great Sanskrit epic [*Mahābhārata*]... [and] has made an English translation of 2000 couplets, from which he partly read' (*Indian Magazine and Review* 343 (July 1899): 183). On 17 January 1901, Dutt wrote to Holst: 'I rejoice to learn that you are writing an Opera on the Ramayana story... I shall be very happy to look over it, and to let you have any hints and suggestions that I can' (letter held in the Holst Foundation).
10. In the meantime, he had composed a symphonic poem, *Indra* (1903), and two lighter pieces—*Māyā* for violin and piano, and 'Invocation to the Dawn'. For a survey of Holst's works on Indian subjects, see Raymond Head's three articles on 'Holst and India', *Tempo* 158 (September 1986): 2–7; 160 (March 1987): 27–37; 166 (September 1988): 35–40. Repr. as *Gustav Holst and India* [self-published pamphlet] (Chipping Norton: Sky Dance Press, 2012).
11. Quoted by Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 16. The manuscript of *Sita* is in the BL: Add Mss 47821-3.
12. Letter, Holst to Mary Lediard, n.d., at the Holst Foundation. The second of the Kālidāsa settings was the *Two Eastern Pictures* for female chorus and harp of 1911.
13. See Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1978; reprinted with a new Afterword, 1995), esp. 78–9 and 98–9.
14. The four Vedas consist of a body of hymns (*Rigveda*), sacrificial formulas (*Yajurveda*), chants (*Samaveda*), and magical formulas (*Atharvaveda*).
15. Captain C. R. Day, 'Notes on Indian Music', in *Proceedings of the Music Association 20th session, 1893–4* (London: Novello, Ewer & Co, 1894), 45–66, 57.
16. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, 'Indian Music', in his *Essays in National Idealism* (London: Probsthain, 1911), 166. It is now believed that the origins of Indian music lie in the *Samaveda*, in which the chant was performed more musically than that of the *Rig Veda*; see J. F. Staal, 'The Four Vedas', liner notes (Asch Records 1968), Album no. AHM 4126: 2. Coomaraswamy, as mentioned in the first chapter of this book, was a historian of Sinhalese art, a philosopher, and an interpreter of Indian art in the West.
17. Maud MacCarthy, 'Ideals of Indian Music I', *Sunday Statesman* (front page spread, Magazine section), 15 September 1935.

18. Ananda K. Coomaraswamy, Foreword to E. Clements, *Introduction to the Study of Indian Music* (London: Longmans, Green, and Co., 1913), p. v.
19. 'Musical Association', *Musical Times* 35, no. 613 (1 March 1894): 174.
20. Day, 'Notes on Indian Music', 65 n.; see also 'Musical Association', 174.
21. He was one of the first Indian musicians to study music in Europe; Day, 'Notes on Indian Music', 65 n.; See also Suresh Chaudvankar, 'Inayat Khan—The Complete Recordings of 1909', *The Record News* 23 (July 1996): 11–15.
22. 'Royal Academy of Music', *Musical Times* 39 (1 February 1898): 100–101; the second lecture featured a selection of tunes 'by Rajah Surindo Tagore'.
23. References found in *Eastern Daily Mail and Straits Morning Advertiser*, 16 November 1907, 2; and 'The Indian Women's Education Fund', *Indian Magazine and Review*, new series 149, no. 473 (May 1910): 137.
24. 'The Indian Women's Education Fund', 137.
25. It is known that Maurice Delage collected recordings in India before 1914 which were listened to by Stravinsky. See Raymond Head's review of *Indian Music and the West* by Gerry Farrell, *Tempo* 203 (January 1998): 44–5.
26. The records were all sung or recited by one Captain Bholanath, a Dr Harnamdas (Harnam Das), and an otherwise unidentified Ahmed. These were the 'London Recordings—1899: the 10000 Series'; Michael Kinnear, *The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings 1899–1908* (New Delhi: Sangam Books, 1994), 6; see also the listing on 73–4.
27. Quoted in Kinnear, *The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings*, 8.
28. See Fred Gaisberg, *Music on Record* (London: Robert Hale Ltd, 1947), esp. 53–65. See also Joep Bor's review of *Indian Music and the West* by Gerry Farrell, *Asian Music* 29, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1998): 132. *Talking Machine News (and Journal of Amusements)* 1 (1908) (Journal of the Society of Indian Record Collectors); also cited by Kinnear in his article in *Record News* (1992): 'Beka Records' advert for Indian Records being placed on the English Market.
29. Kinnear, *The Gramophone Company's First Indian Recordings*, 41.
30. Both collections are now held in the International Music Collection of the National Sound Archive in London: the Fox Strangways is cylinder number C 72, the Thurston is C 624. For more information on the collections and their transference from India to England, see Amitabha Gosh, 'The Pre-Commercial Era of Wax Cylinder Recordings in India', *Record News*, annual (1999): 90; repr. in *Music and Modernity: North Indian Classical Music in an Age of Mechanical Reproduction*, ed. Amlan Das Gupta (Kolkata: Thema, 2007). According to Fox Strangways, the Thurston-Rangachari collection later became the property of Charles S. Myers, the prominent English psychologist; A. H. Fox Strangways, *The Music of Hindostan* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1914), 48 n. 1.
31. Photo collection ref. 888 (41 and 42), BL—India Office Print Room. *Sarangi*, a bowed lute-type stringed instrument with sympathetic strings; *mrdangam*, a double-headed, barrel-shaped wooden drum predominant in South Indian music; *pakhawaj* is the North Indian equivalent.
32. Franco-British Exhibition held at The White City, London, 1908, *Official Guide* (London: Bemrose & Sons Ltd., 1908), 47–8.
33. The quotations come from a letter by Queen Victoria: 'After lunch [was] an interesting reception connected with the Colonial and Indian Exhibition. The Indians came first... two of the Indians asked to sing, which they did sitting down and sang with most comical monotonous twang' (Windsor, 8 July 1886); quoted in Kusoom Vadgama, *India in Britain: The Indian Contribution to the British Way of Life* (London: R.

- Royce, 1984), 65–6. For the trope of primitivity, see Imre Kiralfy's notes for his India and Ceylon Exhibition 1896, *Libretto of India*, 37–40: BL India Office, V 26652.
34. The 1901 Exhibition ran from May to November; it covered some 73 acres in Kelvingrove Park. Admission was one shilling, season tickets were one guinea; music was a big selling point for the Exhibition; attendance figures were 11,497,220; profit was £39,000 (pub. figure of 1905); Perilla Kinchin and Juliet Kinchin, *Glasgow's Great Exhibitions* (Bicester: White Cockade, 1988), 15 and 87–8. Photographs from that Exhibition show 'Hindoo jugglers' with folk musicians holding the instruments *dholak* and *nagaswaram*. *Dholak* is a barrel-shaped double-headed wooden drum used in folk music and in Hindustani *qawwali*; *nagaswaram* is a South Indian double-reed wind instrument. Photographs from the Glasgow Industrial Exhibition in *Illustrated London News* (15 June 1901). The University of Glasgow's Special Collections has the official guide and daily programmes (Mu 25-a.29), such as the latter for September 14, when the Indian Theatre could be visited between 12 noon and 9pm for sixpence.
  35. Paul Holmes states that 'Holst heard genuine Indian musicians playing their intricate 'ragas' on sitars, tablas and other indigenous instruments... it made a deep impression on him' (Holst: *His Life and Times* (London: Omnibus Press, 1997), 27).
  36. Nine of these were published in 1919 as his *Vedic Hymns*, op. 24 for solo voice and piano: *Ushas* (Dawn), *Varuna I* (Sky), *Maruts* (Stormclouds), *Indra* (God of Storm and Battle), *Varuna II* (The Waters), *Song of the Frogs*, *Vac* (Speech), *Creation*, and *Faith*. The *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* were published in four groups, all but the third scored for orchestral accompaniment: *Battle Hymn, To the Unknown God ॐ (Ka)*, and *Funeral Hymn* (first group, 1908–10, scored for mixed voices and orchestra); *To Varuna, To Agni, and Funeral Chant* (second group, 1909, for female voices and orchestra); *Hymn to the Dawn, Hymn to the Waters, Hymn to Vena, and Hymn of the Travellers* (third group, 1910, for female voices and harp); and *Hymn to Agni, Hymn to Soma, Hymn to Manas, and Hymn to Indra* (fourth group, 1912, for male voices and orchestra).
  37. Edmund Rubbra, *Gustav Holst* (Monaco: The Lyrebird Press, 1947), 16–18; Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, esp. 85; Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 22.
  38. Stephen Banfield, 'Postscript', *Sensibility and English Song* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1985), 334.
  39. He indicated the correct pronunciation in the later choral hymn 'To Varuna' (second group of *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda*).
  40. Five of the ten *Hindustani Thāts* or scale types, suggested by Bhatkhande, include *komal Re* (Bhairav, Pūrvi, Mārvā, Āsāvāri, Bhairavi, and Todi). Thirty-six of the 72 *melakartas* include *shuddha ri*.
  41. Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 5. For a discussion of the influence of Wagner on Holst, see Christopher Scheer's doctoral dissertation 'Fin-de-Siècle Britain: Imperialism and Wagner in the Music of Gustav Holst' (University of Michigan, 2007).
  42. Edward J. Dent, as noted in the first chapter of this book, was professor of music at Cambridge from 1926 to 1941 and was the first British musicologist of international standing. *Nation and the Athenaeum* (1921), cited in *Concert Programmes and Press-cuttings*, microfilm, Cheltenham Art Gallery and Museum (hereinafter *Press-cuttings*), vol. 7 (1919–22), 100.
  43. The quoted phrase comes from a contemporary description of India in general (Edith M. Thomas, 'India's Love Lyrics', *Critic* 40 (1902), 549).
  44. The augmented second, an interval encompassing three semi-tones (half steps), has often been used by Western composers between pitches 2 and 3, and again between 6 and 7, of a scale, to suggest 'exotic' people or places (anywhere from Spain to Japan)

- in a manner which corresponds to Said's analysis of 'Orientalism'. The sustained use of both augmented seconds and chromaticism (which each establish a musical 'difference' from the diatonic scales of the Western tradition) in the nineteenth century for such depictions led to strongly 'exotic' connotations.
45. Holst's contemporary in France, Albert Roussel, created a devotional tone in the third movement of his *Evocations* completed after his visit to India in 1909–10. In the middle section he sets for baritone solo a fakir's melody which he had transcribed; see Jann Pasler, 'Race, Orientalism, and Distinction in the Wake of the Yellow Peril', in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 96–8.
  46. See the survey of Bantock's orientalist music by Fiona Richards, 'Granville Bantock and the Orient in the Midlands', in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire 1780s–1940s: Portrayal of the East*, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 129–46.
  47. H. Orsmond Anderton, *Granville Bantock* (New York: John Lane, 1915), 23–4.
  48. G. F. Atkinson, *Curry and Rice on Forty Plates or the Ingredients of Social Life at 'Our Station' in India* (1859; 5th ed. London: Thacker & Co., 1911), title vignette.
  49. The description comes from Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998), 22. In over a thousand pages the authors of *Hobson-Jobson* trace the history of 2,000 words from Indian languages that took their place in the English language. They provide the etymologies for words still in use today, such as 'tank' which has Gujarati and Marathi origins, and for those no longer understood, like 'Hobson-Jobson'. Henry Yule and A. C. Burnell, *Hobson-Jobson: A Glossary of Colloquial Anglo-Indian Words and Phrases, and of Kindred Terms, Etymological, Historical, Geographical and Discursive* (1886, new ed. 1903; repr. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985; new facsimile of 2nd ed., Asian Educational Services, India, 2007).
  50. Quotation from Blaike W. G. Murdoch, *The Renaissance of the Nineties* (London: Moring, 1911), 81.
  51. The description is included in a review of 'Holst's *The Cloud Messenger*', *The Northerner* (The Magazine of Armstrong College) (1914): 79–82.
  52. 'Lotusland Music', *Daily Mail*, 30 January 1920. Gustav Holst, *Press-cuttings*, vol. 7, 11.
  53. Cyril Scott, *Music: Its Secret Influence through the Ages* (1933; rev. ed., London: Rider & Co., 1958), 164–7.
  54. Review of the music of Scott and Holst, *The Northerner* (The Magazine of Armstrong College, 1914): 79–82.
  55. Review, *Daily Telegraph*, 26 October 1912, *Press-cuttings*, vol. 4, 96. 'Balfour Gardiner Concerts,' *Manchester Guardian*, 2 May 1912; Press Clippings, Programmes 1912, Holst Birthplace Museum.
  56. Holst's concern, for instance, with the context and meaning of the *Rigveda* hymns was evident from an invitation to Dr Bode to give a pre-concert talk at a performance of the second group of his choral hymns in 1917 (which was conducted by Adrian Boult); report in *Morley College Magazine* 26 (6 May 1917): 89–90. Moreover, he prefaced several hymns with brief details of the gods invoked, along with a guide to pronunciation of their Sanskrit names.
  57. Francis Toye, 'A Week of English Music', *Vanity Fair*, 29 March 1912; Press Clippings, Programmes 1912, Holst Birthplace Museum.
  58. A *Sanskrit Primer* by Edward Delevan Perry (Boston: Ginn & Company, 1885); the copy, held at the Holst room, St Paul's Girls' School, is inscribed by Holst with the date 'July 08.'

59. Annie Besant, 'Occultism, Semi-Occultism and Pseudo-Occultism', Lecture Delivered to the Blavatsky Lodge, London (30 June 1898) (Madras: Theosophical Publishing House, 1912; rep. 1920), 4. *Māyā* is also discussed by the scholars Edwin Arnold and Ralph T. H. Griffith. Holst had used the term as the title of an early piece for violin and piano of 1901, and may have encountered it in R. W. Frazer's *Silent Gods and Sun-Steeped Lands* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1896), whose frontispiece features a quotation from Walt Whitman: 'Have you no thought, O Dreamer, that it may be all *Maya*, illusion.' The quotation is also used as the epigraph to a story, 'The Dream of Life', within Frazer's volume, and is contextualized by a quotation from Paul Deussen's *Philosophy of the Vedānta*: 'all the world is *Māyā*, is illusion' (168). Richard Greene states that Holst does not draw on theosophic notions in the opera, and that he chose to 'strip away everything except the three characters' ('"As for opera I'm bewildered": Gustav Holst on the Fringe of European Opera', in *Art and Ideology in European Opera: Essays in Honour of Julian Rushton*, ed. Rachel Cowgill, David Cooper, and Clive Brown (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2010), 128).
60. For a critical overview of neoclassicism, see Richard Taruskin, 'Back to Whom: Neoclassicism as Ideology', *19th-Century Music* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1993): 286–302.
61. The reviewer further states that 'the vocal music [of Sāvitrī], mainly declamatory, is written in an Oriental style. It is atmospheric, extremely difficult, and often very beautiful' (*Globe*, 6 December 1916, *Press-cuttings*, vol. 6 (1914–1919), 54).
62. 'Delighted Audience': review from the Theatre Royal, Glasgow, *Glasgow Bulletin* (November 1923): 25.
63. Sāvitrī's song 'I am with thee' at Fig. 9 in the published score is a notable exception, since it is a straightforward Dorian melody.
64. Such as Elgar's *The Kingdom* or Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* which both appeared in 1906, or Bantock's *Omar Khayyam* (1906–9).
65. The quotations are from Greene, 'As for opera I'm bewildered', 130; and Colin Matthews, 'Holst, Gustav.' *Oxford Music Online*, <<http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/subscriber/article/grove/music/13252>>.
66. Quoted in Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 136.
67. Head, 'Holst and India', 19.
68. Hymn CXXIX 'Creation', in *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, Tenth Book, 2nd ed., trans. Ralph T. H. Griffith (Kotagiri, Nilgiri, 1896), 421.
69. *Daily Telegraph*, 6 December 1916, *Press-cuttings*, vol. 6 (1914–1919), 53.
70. Richard Cohn, 'Uncanny Resemblances: Tonal Signification in the Freudian Age', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 57, no. 2 (Summer 2004): 285–323; see also Cohn's 'Hexatonic Poles and the Uncanny in *Parsifal*', *Opera Quarterly* 22, no. 2 (2006): 230–248.
71. Holst's instruction on the score is that the chorus sing on the vowel 'u' of sun throughout.
72. Cohn, 'Uncanny Resemblances', 323.
73. *Ibid.*, 319.
74. In his ecstatic response to Sāvitrī's 'Welcome, Lord' (bb. 232–48), Death explains that the holy air, gentle faces, and sweet voices which she senses around her are all part of her aura: 'Thine is the holiness / Thou art enshrouded in thyself / The faces are the sufferers thou hast comforted, / The voices are the sweet words thou has spoken'.
75. Here the hexatonic collection is: D–E $\sharp$ /F–F $\sharp$ /G $\flat$ –A–A $\sharp$ /B $\flat$ –C $\sharp$ /D $\flat$  and the *māyā* chorus sing the triads D minor and F-sharp minor, the latter spelled enharmonically as G-flat minor.

76. 'Savitri', *The Times*, 24 June 1921, 13; and William McNaught, 'Savitri', *Musical Times* 62, no. 942 (1 August 1921): 570 (emphasis added).
77. Mary M. Lago, *Imperfect Encounter: Letters of William Rothenstein and Rabindranath Tagore 1911–1941* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), 2; Richard Davis, *The Lives of Indian Images* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), esp. 177; Partha Mitter's study of Western reactions to Indian art is entitled *Much Maligned Monsters: A History of European Reactions to Indian Art* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1977), esp. 270. See also Raymond Head, 'The Flute and the Harp: Rabindranath Tagore and Western Composers', in *Rabindranath Tagore: Perspectives in Time*, ed. Mary Lago and Ronald Warwick (London: Macmillan, 1989), 122–40; and Suddhasell Sen, 'The Art Song and Tagore: Settings by Western Composers', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 77, no. 4 (2008): 1110–1132.
78. The quotation comes from Day's paper, 'Notes on Indian Music', 65.
79. MacCarthy mentions 1910 as the start of her pioneering work in Britain, Green Book, 11, Maud MacCarthy Papers, Private Family Collection (hereinafter MM Papers). The details given in a letter she received from Bhagwan Das confirms that she left India at the end of July 1909 (dated 12 July 1909); Borthwick Archive.
80. Forster's description of 'The Indian Boom' includes all the main figures associated with the India Society (see the first epigraph to this book); Lago shows how important the India Society's formation was to Tagore's acceptance in Britain (*Imperfect Encounter*, esp. 1–24). The phrase 'cultural metamorphosis', and how it relates to this moment in terms of Indian arts in Britain and the India Society, comes from Sarah Victoria Turner, 'Crafting Connections: The India Society and the Formation of an Imperial Artistic Network in Early Twentieth-Century Britain', in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections, 1858–1950*, ed. Susheila Nasta (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 97.
81. Lago, *Imperfect Encounter*, 3–4.
82. Quoted in Lago, *Imperfect Encounter*, 5. Beyond the intended insult, suet (beef fat) is a particularly unfortunate choice in relation to India.
83. 'Proceedings of the Society: Indian Section', 290, quoted in Turner, 'Crafting Connections', 106.
84. Lago, *Imperfect Encounter*, 7.
85. Michael Collins, 'History and the Postcolonial: Rabindranath Tagore's Reception in London 1912–1913', *International Journal of the Humanities* 4, no. 9 (2007): 71–83, 73.
86. 'The India Society', *The Times*, 11 June 1910, 18.
87. Editorial, 'The India Society', *Modern Review: A Monthly Review and Miscellany* (Kolkata), 8 (1910): 161–3.
88. Lago, *Imperfect Encounter*, 8.
89. Letters, lecture scripts, and song texts, MM Papers.
90. Havell, 'Indian Music in Europe', *Pioneer Mail*, Allahabad, clipped in MacCarthy's Green Book, along with details of the letter from Havell, 34 and 45. MM Papers.
91. J. D. W., 'The India Society', *Indian Magazine and Review*, new series, 156 (December 1910): 331–3.
92. *Ibid.*, 333. *Tamboori* is a folk version of *tānpurā/tambūrā* which is used to provide the drone in Indian classical music. It was the latter which MacCarthy had brought back from Thanjavūr.
93. *Ibid.*, 332.
94. Fox Strangways, handwritten notes taken during her lecture-recital, October 1910 and enclosed in his letter to MacCarthy of 21 October 1910. Borthwick Archive.

95. The first quotation is from the article, 'New Music (Stainer and Bell Ltd)', in *Daily Telegraph*, 7 June 1913, 49; the second is from Edwin Evans, 'Gustav Holst', *The Outlook* 21 March 1914, *Press-cuttings*, vol. 6, 4.
96. Mable Bode was also a friend and fellow Pali scholar of Caroline Foley who had married Rhys Davids in 1894. In 1910, she wrote a tribute to both of them. See Susan Thach Dean, 'Decadence, Evolution, and Will: Caroline Rhys Davids' "Original" Buddhism', in *Women's Theology in Nineteenth-Century Britain: Transfiguring the Faith of their Fathers*, ed. Julie Melnyk (New York: Garland Publishing, 1998), 213–14. His associations also intersected with other 'Indianist' networks such as the Quest, a theosophical guild which drew the attention of Coomaraswamy, Havell, and W. B. Yeats, and the Royal Asiatic Society, of which he was, according to the *Civil and Military Gazette* (5 June 1909), a member.
97. 'Indian musician-hood' is the affectionate term Fox Strangways coined to describe MacCarthy's new vocation (letter to MacCarthy, MM Papers). Letters reveal that MacCarthy and Bax (Holst's friend) were intimates; they founded the Arts Movement in the Theosophical Society together, had been lovers prior to her Indian sojourn in 1907, and corresponded during her absence. Bax, letter to MacCarthy, 30 April 1909, Borthwick Archive; MacCarthy and Grainger had played violin and piano recitals together (such as one at Oxford in 1906), and they maintained a warm connection and correspondence: MM Papers—program of Oxford recital with Grainger in scrapbook; also concert review from 1906: 'Miss Maud MacCarthy and Mr Percy Grainger... a Veritable Triumph of Technique', *Observer*, 24 February 1906, Borthwick Archive. Grainger wrote to MacCarthy around 1910, 'I should adore to hear your Indian instruments and music more than I can say', quoted in the *Leader*, Allahabad, 29 August 1912. As to Holst's connection with Grainger, his biographer, Short, reports that in 1909, he 'was sometimes to be seen at 31a King's Road, Chelsea, where Percy Grainger and his mother held regular gatherings during which new works by young composers would be tried out' (Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 85). MacCarthy acknowledged Frazer's assistance in her early lecture-recitals (MacCarthy, 'Impressions of Indian Music', MM Papers). It was Frazer's anthology of Sanskrit literature, *Silent Gods and Sun-Steeped Lands*, which first sparked Holst's interest in the 1890s (Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 37). See also Holmes, *Holst: His Life and Times*, 23. Holst himself mentions this book in his acknowledgment to Frazer on the programme for the first performance of *The Cloud Messenger* (see Imogen Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music* (London: Faber Music Limited, 1974), 106).
98. MacCarthy, 'Ideals of Indian Music I'; see also, Tandra Devi [Maud MacCarthy], 'The Indo-European Orchestra', *Civil and Military Gazette*, 2 September 1938, where she wrote: 'Years ago... Gustav Holst asked me in London for Indian ragas.'
99. This is how Holst wrote the hymn's title in his 'List of Compositions' which he kept in a notebook from 1895 to 1933, filling in the title of each new work as soon as he had written it ('Holst's Catalogue of his Compositions'. Gustav Holst Collection (Part II), vol. 1: 'List of Compositions'. BL Add MS 57863). 'To the Unknown God' was the only hymn of the second group to be composed in 1910 (the companion pieces had already been completed). Composition dates come from Holst's 'List of Compositions' and are cross-referenced with those indicated by Imogen Holst (*A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music*, 86–93 and 125). Holst recalled that 'The 3rd Vedas were written in 1910 for Frank Duckworth and his ladies' choir at Blackburn who were the first musical executants to take me seriously as a composer', quoted in Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 89.

100. As mentioned in the first chapter, the string instrument with four wire strings which are plucked open and together to create the drone in Indian classical music is called the *tānpurā* in the North and the *tambūrā* in the South. Since MacCarthy's studies were based in the South (in the *Karnatic* tradition) and her instrument was from Thanjavūr, she always referred to it as *tambūrā*, as do I in this chapter. In several lectures given during 1911–12 she explained that 'my own tambura is not at present available' and that she had tuned her *vīna* in such a way that by 'doing away with three of its strings... the effect thus obtained is similar to the *tambura*' (Lecture scripts, MM Papers).
101. Rabindranath Tagore, foreword to *Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir, recorded by Ratan Devi [and] Ananda K. Coomaraswamy* (London: Kahn & Averill, Ltd., 1913). Devi was in India until at least 1911.
102. 'Charm of Indian Music—Lecture by Mrs William Mann', *Brighton Herald*, 25 October 1913. Green Book, 29, MM Papers.
103. The threads, known as *jīvā* ('life'), create the brighter tone heard from the plucked string once the thread has been correctly positioned. This process is known as adjusting the *jāvārī*.
104. Maud Mann [MacCarthy], 'Some Indian Conceptions of Music', a paper read before the Musical Association, London, 16 January 1912; rev. and repr. from the Proceedings of the Association, with a preface and some additional notes (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1913); the footnote on p. 61 provides the exact rhythm and pitch of 'the drone' in her singing.
105. Anderton, 'Passing Notes', *Musical Opinion and Music Trade Review*, December 1913, clipped in the Green Book, MM Papers. Richards notes that Bantock's 'Oriental [*sic*] works... were produced mainly before 1910'—that is, before he heard and hosted MacCarthy in Birmingham ('Granville Bantock and the Orient in the Midlands', 137).
106. John Foulds, 'Indian Instruments', talk no. 9, *Orpheus Abroad*, All India Radio, Delhi, 1937, MM Papers.
107. Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 24–5.
108. As, for example, by A. E. F. Dickinson, who states that Holst suggested it, 'owing, I suppose, to its 'pilgrim' or other-worldly overtones... Musically it is as irrelevant as most overtures' (*Holst's Music: A Guide* (London: Thames Publishing, 1995), 13).
109. However, for practical reasons, the composer specified simplified figuration if the piano were used instead of the harp.
110. Review of the *Vedic Hymns* in *Civil and Military Gazette*, 5 June 1909.
111. Rubbra, *Gustav Holst*, 17; Edwin Evans, 'Modern British Composers: VI. Gustav Holst', *Musical Times* 60, no. 920 (1 October 1919): 524–8, 527. I. Holst's remarks on the hymn are in a similar vein (the unintended contradiction of her claim notwithstanding): 'the natural freedom of the words has an underlying pulse from which there can be no escape' (*The Music of Gustav Holst*, 22).
112. Ralph T. H. Griffith, *Hymns from the Rig Veda*, 2 vols. (1889–92; 2nd ed., Benares: E. J. Lazarus & Co., 1896). Holst may also have attended the performances of Vedic hymns given by Mr N. C. Bannerji and reported in *Indian Magazine and Review*, new series, 149, no. 473 (May 1910): 137. The collections of cylinder recordings by Fox Strangways and Edgar Thurston included chanting from the *Sāmaveda* and Vedic recitation. British Library Sound Archive: Fox Strangways' cylinder nos. C72/13 (1 and 2); Thurston cylinder nos. 159 and 161.
113. The pitch variations are such that an accented syllable (*udatta*) is sung to the main (middle) pitch of the chant, with the previous syllable (*anudatta*) at a lower pitch, and the following one (*svārīta*) either higher or at the main pitch.

114. In the choral hymn, 'To Vāruna' (second group, completed earlier than *Ka*, in 1909), the descending bass makes a brief, seven-bar, appearance at Fig. I in the published score, intoned pianissimo by the harp. It is a whole-tone scale on B, unrelated to a *mēlakarta*.
115. MacCarthy, 'Ideals of Indian Music I'; and Devi, 'The Indo-European Orchestra'.
116. 'Indian Music', *Hindu* (16 January 1912), 8.
117. MacCarthy, Preface, 'Some Indian Conceptions of Music', Lecture (October 1913), 1.
118. Dr Southgate, Proceedings of the Music Association, 64.
119. The whole-tone scale consisting of six equal steps and drawn from mid-nineteenth-century Russian musical exoticism was one of Debussy's trademarks, although he also used diatonic systems including church modes, the 'acoustic scale' (also favoured by Bartók), and octatonicism; the octatonic scale, alternating whole and half steps, was favoured by Stravinsky (who learned it from Rimsky-Korsakov). Pentatonic is the five-note scale heard in many musical traditions across the world.
120. C. W. Orr, 'Elgar and the Public,' *Musical Times* (January 1931): 17–18.
121. The quotation is from Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 67 (emphasis added). Martin Clayton describes Short's assertions as having 'almost supernatural implications' ('Musical Renaissance and its Margins, 1874–1914', in Clayton and Zon, eds., *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire*, 93).
122. Holst's note in the published score.
123. Ralph T. H. Griffith's translation (and another by Max Müller) features a similar 'sacrificial' refrain: 'Who is the God to whom we shall offer sacrifice?'
124. He owned G. R. S. Mead and J. C. Chattopadhyaya, *The Theosophy of the Vedas: The Upanishads*, Vols. I and II (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1896). He had become friends with Mead in his twenties; in 1908, Mead began giving public lectures in Westminster on the *Vedas* and the *Upanishads*. For more information, see Raymond Head, 'Holst–Astrology and Modernism in "The Planets"', *Tempo*, new series, no. 187 (December 1993): 17. Commentaries on the *Vedas*, such as the *Upanishads* and *Brāhmanas*, are collectively called *Vedānta*.
125. Walter O. Kälber, *Tapta Mārga: Asceticism and Initiation in Vedic India* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 6–7.
126. Ibid.
127. Quoted in Richard Capell, 'Gustav Holst: Notes for a Biography (II)', *Musical Times* 68 (January 1927): 18.
128. The phrase 'archaic avant-garde' comes from Alex Ross who uses it in relation to Bartók and folk music (*The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 89).
129. Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 79–80.
130. George Grove, *The Royal College of Music* (London: Clowes, 1883), 38–9 and 41–2.
131. L. Dunton Green, 'Gustav Holst', *Chesterian*, new series, 8 (June 1920): 226–8.
132. Anon, 'The Younger British Composers', *Academy* (21 August 1909), *Press-cuttings*, vol. 5, 55.
133. One of these pieces, Holst's *Songs of the West* (based on folk songs of Devon and Cornwall) was performed in Bombay on 8 October 1909 by the Governor's Band, conducted by Edward Behr (Michael Short, *Gustav Holst: A Centenary Documentation* (London: White Lion Publishers Ltd, 1974), 129). The uneasiness of the appropriation of folk music in the service of art music is made explicit in this extract from an article in the *Observer* of 1911 which Holst clipped and kept: 'On a certain celebrated occasion, Mr. Joe Rocks, when pressed by his friends to relinquish

- a plain and humble part of his attire, refused to do so because (he said) “they’ll worry it, they’ll worry it.” We have a somewhat similar dislike to seeing our plain and primitive folk-songs taken and treated in much the same way...deprived of its smock-frock...[the folk-song] is hardly recognisable as a folk-song at all” (‘Folk Songs, “Plain or Coloured”’, *Observer*, 21 May 1911; Holst’s *Press-cuttings*, vol. 4, 28).
134. The quotation is from Donald Mitchell, ‘Contemporary Chronicle: Revaluations: Vaughan Williams’, *Musical Opinion* 78 (April/May 1955): 409–11 and 471. Vaughan Williams’s writings include the preface to *The English Hymnal* in 1906 (which he co-edited), lectures on folksong published in *The Music Student*, articles including ‘British Music in the Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries’, ‘British Music of the Tudor Period’, ‘The Age of Purcell’, and ‘Dance Tunes’. After 1918 he contributed a few articles to the *Journal of the English Folk Song Society*. The title essay in his *National Music* was first given as a series of lectures (The Mary Flexner lectures) at Bryn Mawr College, Pennsylvania, in October and November 1932.
  135. *National Music* (1934; new edition, London: Oxford University Press, 1963), see for instance, 2, 27, 39, and 64.
  136. Vaughan Williams, ‘Nationalism and Internationalism’ (1942), reprinted in *National Music*, 158–9. Since this is by no means a complete picture of Vaughan Williams’s views and opinions, and this is not the occasion to discuss them, I refer readers to *Vaughan Williams Studies*, ed. Alain Frogley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996) and to *The Cambridge Companion to Vaughan Williams*, ed. Alain Frogley and Aidan J. Thomson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).
  137. Evans, ‘Gustav Holst’. Despite the author’s hostility (voiced later in the review) to the fact that ‘the Orient’ was providing inspiration for Holst’s music, on the eve of World War I, even India was preferable to Germany as a musical inspiration for Smiths or Robinsons.
  138. [H. C. F.], *Musical Times* 64, no. 962 (1 April 1923): 283.
  139. ‘Gustav Holst: An Appreciation by Frederic H. Wood’, *Blackburn Daily Telegraph* (15 March 1913); *Press-cuttings*, vol. 5, 1913–14, 30. Review of the *Hymns* in the *Morning Post*, 23 May 1911; *Press-cuttings*, vol. 4, 8.
  140. ‘Choral Society Music’, *Northerner* ([possibly April] 1917): 34–5; in *Press-cuttings*, vol. 6, 62–3.
  141. Williams, ‘Gustav Holst: I’, 186.
  142. Vidhu Vinod Chopra’s film *1942 A Love Story* (in Hindi), 1994, nominated for Filmfare’s ‘Best Director’ Award in 1995. This section’s subheading (along with the chapter title) is drawn from Théodore Flournoy, *From India to the Planet Mars*, trans. Daniel B. Vermilye (London: Harper & Brothers, 1900).
  143. In a musical contrast which underscores the colonizer/colonized portrayal, the film ends, after the destruction of the Raj’s facade at Dalhousie and the murder of Douglas, with Tagore’s *Jana Gana Mana*, India’s national anthem, overlaid with cries of *Jai Hind!* (‘Victory to India’).
  144. The choice of the Holst was probably that of Manohari Singh and Rablo Chakrobarty who were responsible for the score.
  145. Representative of the large body of collections is: *Spirit of England II*, a 4 CD set that includes the complete *Planets* (Nimbus: NI 5450/3, 1995); *Rule Britannia*, 2 CD set that includes ‘Jupiter’ (Nimbus: NI 7067/8, 1998); and *The Sceptred Isle*, a 2 CD set that includes ‘Mars’ (BBC: WMEF0051-2, 1996).
  146. The words are by Cecil Spring-Rice from *The Two Fatherlands*, written in January 1918 while he was British Ambassador in Washington. Holst himself fitted

- the words to his Jupiter theme—he was, according to Imogen Holst, so overworked and exhausted when he was asked to set the words that he felt relieved to discover that they ‘fitted’ the tune. Original song version published with tonic sol-fa notation (London: Goodwin & Tabb Ltd, 1921). The far right-wing British National Party declare it their ‘duty to learn... [the hymn] off by heart and sing it instead of the National Anthem.’ <<http://www.thegreenarrow.co.uk/writers/arrow-straight/1021-i-vow-to-thee-my-country>>.
147. The tune was published in *Songs of Praise* under ‘Thaxted’ (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1925), hymn no. 188. Thaxted is the picturesque, millennium-old Essex town where Holst lived for many years. It was the home of Morris dancing (the Thaxted Morris Men were formed in 1911), farmers’ markets, and country fairs. It has a large and beautiful parish church dating from 1510, a working windmill dating from 1804, medieval English houses, and even two Almshouses. It was highly praised by William White in his *History, Gazetteer, and Directory of the County of Essex* (Sheffield: W. White, 1848–63). Richard Capell told readers of *Music & Letters* that Jupiter was like an ‘overture for an English country festival’, ‘Gustav Holst—III’, *Music & Letters* 8, no.1 (January 1927): 73–82. This ‘quintessentially English town’ appears in an article on ‘Britain’s Top 10 country towns’, in the *Daily Telegraph*, 12 January 2008 <<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/property/3360150/Property-market-Britains-top-10-country-towns.html>>.
  148. Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 160 n. 9.
  149. Georges Jean-Aubry, *Gustav Holst*, Miniature Essays Series (London: J. & W. Chester Ltd, 1924), 6. Georges Jean-Aubry was the pen name of Jean-Frédéric-Emile Aubry (1882–1950).
  150. Alan Leo [pseud. Frederick William Allan] (1860–1917) founded the Astrological Lodge in London in 1915; Margaret E. Hone, *The Modern Text-Book of Astrology*, rev. ed. (London: Random House, 2004), 295. Bessie Leo, *The Life and Work of Alan Leo, Theosophist, Astrologer, Mason*, with a foreword by Annie Besant (London: Modern Astrology Office, 1919). For more on the influence of Leo’s book on Holst’s suite, see Head, ‘Holst—Astrology and Modernism in “The Planets”’ esp. 18–19.
  151. *A Thousand and One Notable Nativities: The Astrologer’s Who’s Who* compiled by the sub-editor of ‘Modern Astrology.’ No. 11 of Alan Leo’s Astrological Manuals (London: L. N. Fowler & Co., 1911); Wagner appears on p. 94, Kipling on p. 98. Holst had bought one of Leo’s books earlier too, *How to Judge a Nativity*, also in the Holst Birthplace Museum, Cheltenham.
  152. Clifford Bax recalled that it was he who had introduced Holst to ‘the elements of astrology’ during a journey to Spain (‘Recollections of Gustav Holst’, *Music & Letters* 20, no. 1 (January 1939): 2).
  153. Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst’s Music*, 125.
  154. Rubbra, *Gustav Holst*, 21.
  155. Both of Vivian E. Robson’s books are in the Birthplace Museum collection. *A Student’s Text-Book of Astrology* (London, 1922) and *A Beginner’s Guide to Practical Astrology* (London, 1931). Holst owned *The Mysterious Universe* by astronomer and cosmogoner, Sir James Hopwood Jeans. Inside, Imogen has inscribed ‘This was one of Holst’s favourite books’.
  156. Alan Leo, *The Art of Synthesis* (1912; repr. Barzun Press, 2008). Leo’s chapters are headed ‘Venus the Unifier’ etc. Holst took ‘Neptune the Mystic’ for his own; He may also have attended the course of public lectures Leo gave at the Astrological Society in 1915 on ‘Mars: the War Lord’, ‘Saturn: the Reaper’.

157. Letter from Holst to Boulton (14 November 1918), in *Music and Friends: Seven Decades of Letters to Adrian Boulton from Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Holst, Bruno Walter, Yehudi Menuhin and Other Friends*, ed. Adrian Boulton and Jerrold Northrop Moore (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1979), 35.
158. The manuscript full score is in Bodleian Library, Oxford: Ms Mus b.18.
159. Jean Louis Brau, Helen Weaver, and Allan Edmunds, *Larousse Encyclopedia of Astrology* (New York: New American Library, 1980), 21.
160. Report of Holst's eighth lecture at Glasgow University, in 'Mood Pictures: Mr Holst's Analysis of *The Planets*', *Glasgow Herald* 144, 8 February 1926, 13.
161. Capell, program note, Holst festival at Cheltenham (22 March 1927), quoted in Head, 'Holst—Astrology and Modernism in "The Planets"', 21–2. Capell, 'The Music of the Spheres', *Radio Times* 30, 6 February 1931, 295 and 328.
162. Quoted in Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music*, 125.
163. The phrase 'willed amnesia' comes from Richard Taruskin, 'Stravinsky and Us', Inaugural Proms lecture, London Promenade Concerts, August 1996; published in *The Cambridge Companion to Stravinsky*, ed. Jonathan Cross (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 265.
164. Holst, *Gustav Holst: A Biography*, 37–8.
165. The quotation comes from an article by Anthony Tommasini, 'The Symphony as a Vessel to View Other Worlds', *New York Times*, 30 January 2010, <[http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/30/arts/music/30symphony.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2010/01/30/arts/music/30symphony.html?_r=2)>.
166. Held in the Holst Room at the St Paul's Girls' School, Hammersmith.
167. Head, 'Holst and India', 13–14. Head notes that at the opening of the choral 'Battle Hymn' too, completed in the same year, male voices hymn Indra as 'King of the Earth and Ruler of Heav'n' with a remarkably similar melody.
168. Bax, 'Recollections of Gustav Holst', 2. Madame Blavatsky wrote about the state of *devachan*; see her *Collected Writings IV* (Madras: Theosophical Publishing, 1993), 443–5. Holst was familiar with theosophical ideas through, amongst other things, his childhood and his friendship with Mead (who had acted as secretary to Madame Blavatsky, Founder of the Theosophical Society). Holst's stepmother had held theosophical meetings in the family home in Cheltenham from the time Holst was 11 (Head, "Holst—Astrology and Modernism in "The Planets"', esp. 15 and 17).
169. Holst, letter to his wife, quoted in Holst, *A Thematic Catalogue of Gustav Holst's Music*, 121.
170. Quoted in Head, 'Holst—Astrology and Modernism in "The Planets"', 20.
171. R. O. Morris, quoted in Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 130.
172. The quoted descriptions are Holst's own: letter to Boulton, quoted in Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 130.
173. Ibid.
174. Holst once told Capell that he 'saw Saturn relent' (Capell, 'Gustav Holst III', *Music & Letters* (January 1927): 77).
175. The quoted *devachan* description comes from Leo, *The Art of Synthesis*, 259; Greene, Holst: *The Planets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 67; see also Holst, *The Music of Gustav Holst*, 41.
176. Holst's indication on the score reads as follows: 'The Chorus is to be placed in an adjoining room, the door of which is to be left open until the last bar of the piece, when it is to be slowly and silently closed.'
177. Bax, 'Recollections of Gustav Holst', 2.
178. Leo, quoted in Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 122.

179. Adrian Boulton, 'Gustav Holst: The Man and His Work', *Radio Times*, 15 June 1934, 819.
180. In the year of Holst's death, Anthony Tudor choreographed *The Planets*. For the final scene, 'Neptune, the Mystic', he created expressive dance images for Kyra Nijinska (daughter of Vaslav Nijinsky), involving movements derived from Indian *hasta-mudras* (which he had seen in Uday Shankar's London choreography) in which she danced with her arms poised (unusually on the Western ballet stage) over her head. See Mohan Khokar, *His Dance, His Life: A Portrait of Uday Shankar* (New Delhi: Himalayan Books, 1983), 154.
181. MacCarthy demonstrated *Kalavali* which features the unusual intervallic outline of the second tetrachord also heard in *Dhavalambari*: it is derived from *Mela* 31 (D#–A–B $\flat$ ); and *māyāmālavagoula*, which includes the flattened second and flattened sixth; she also sang in *Rāga Todi* whose pitch outline is C–D $\flat$ –E $\flat$ –F#–G–A $\flat$ –B–C.
182. I am grateful to Richard Cohn for pointing me to this triadic alternation and its possible interface with the *mēlakarta* following a lecture I gave at Yale University in October 2010.
183. Capell, 'Death Comes to Satyavan', in *Radio Times*, 18 October 1935, 15.
184. Rubbra, *Gustav Holst*, 17–18.
185. Michael Kennedy, 'Savitri', in the *New Grove Dictionary of Opera*, Vol. 4, ed. Stanley Sadie (London: Macmillan, 1992), 194. See also Short: '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'. Later, he states that 'something of the feeling of Indian music comes through [in *Savitri*] by what must be an intuitive process on Holst's part' (*Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 67 and 78).
186. Imogen Holst, in a radio programme recorded on 27 April 1967 and broadcast on 30 April: BBC Sound Archive, London (T31307). Subsequent claims about her father's entirely English inspiration and influence, made in a recorded interview from the late 1970s, are reported in Tony Palmer's 2011 film about Holst, *In the Bleak Midwinter*. The quotation comes from John Warrack, 'Holst and the Linear Principle', *Musical Times* 115 (September 1974): 732. Scheer challenged Imogen Holst's interpretations of her father's music in his doctoral dissertation, 'Fin-de-Siècle Britain' (see note 41).
187. Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 67 and 78–9; and Jon C. Mitchell, echoing Short, they 'contain no attempts at pseudo-eastern effects' (*A Comprehensive Biography of Composer Gustav Holst with Correspondence and Diary Excerpts* (Lewiston, NY: E. Mellen Press, 2001), 23 and 85). Historians Robert Stradling and Meirion Hughes glossed over Holst's orientalism as being merely a passing fad (*The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music*, 2nd ed. (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2001), 141).
188. Clayton, 'Musical Renaissance and its Margins, 1874–1914', 78 and 93.
189. Sorabji, 'Music', *New English Weekly* 5, no. 9 (14 June 1934): 208–9.
190. First quotation by Gerald Abraham, 'Holst in Perspective', *Listener* 15, no. 388 (17 June 1936): 1179–80; second quotation by Ralph W. Wood, 'The Riddle of Holst', *Musical Opinion* 61, no. 725 (February): 401–2; both quoted in Short, *Gustav Holst: The Man and his Music*, 332.
191. Lutyens used the phrase in a lecture she gave at Dartington Summer School of Music in 1950s; Meirion Harries and Susie Harries, *A Pilgrim Soul—the Life and Work of Elisabeth Lutyens* (London: Michael Joseph, 1989), 303. Even Holst's friend, the composer Balfour Gardiner, dismissed one of his characteristic harmonic moves,

- the Neptunian alternation of two chords as 'a most terrible habit... it ruins all his music' (Gardiner in conversation with Percy Grainger in 1949, quoted in Malcolm Gillies, ed., *Self-Portrait of Percy Grainger* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 249). See also dismissive remarks on pre-1945 music by Constant Lambert, *Music Ho! A Study of Music in Decline* (1934; repr. London: Penguin Books, 1948), esp. 'Nationalism and Democracy', 141–54.
192. Peter John Pirie, *The English Musical Renaissance* (London: Gollancz, 1979).
  193. 'Folkish composer' comes from Ross, *The Rest is Noise*, 101.
  194. The study is by Stradling and Hughes (*The English Musical Renaissance, 1840–1940: Constructing a National Music*). The quotation is from Alain Frogley's review-article of the book in which he states that Stradling and Hughes's belief in the dominance of the 'historical-pastoral' style in Holst's career led them to ignore or virtually dismiss most of his music that does not conform to that style ('Rewriting the Renaissance: History, Imperialism, and British music since 1840', *Music & Letters* 84, no. 2 (May 2003): 248).
  195. The phrase, 'politics of style' comes from Ross, who in turn cites the critic Bernard Holland as its source (*The Rest is Noise*, 118–19).
  196. Michael Tippett, 'Holst: Figure of Our Time', *Listener* 60 (1958): 800.
  197. Tony Palmer, 'The Inner Orbit of Gustav Holst', *Guardian*, 21 April 2011, <<http://www.guardian.co.uk/music/2011/apr/21/gustav-holst-tony-palmer>>.
  198. Mervyn Cooke, *Britten and the Far East: Asian Influences in the Music of Benjamin Britten* (Woodbridge: Boydell and Brewer, 1998), 14.
  199. Head, 'Holst and India', Parts I–III; repr. as 'Holst and India', a study 'concerned with Indian literature and its [sic] effects on Gustav Holst's life and art' ('Foreword').
  200. Greene, 'As for opera I'm bewildered', 129–30.
  201. The off-stage double-choir of women's voices which fades in and out at the conclusion of Vaughan Williams's one-act 'pastoral episode', *The Shepherds of the Delectable Mountains* of 1921, is reminiscent of the 'Funeral Chant' and 'Neptune'.
  202. John Adams, *Hallelujah Junction: Composing an American Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2008), 19.
  203. *The Tomita Planets*, electronically created by Isao Tomita, recorded 1976; re-released 1991 (RCA Victor: BMG 60518); released on DVD-A (2003). In 1993 a video featuring the *Tomita Planets*, entitled *Patrick Stewart narrates The Planets*, was released by BMG and became a best-seller. By 1999 it was in use by 2,500 school systems and more than 300 colleges and universities.
  204. In 1982 La Monte Young and Marian Zazeela recorded *The Tamburas of Pandit Pran Nath* (nearly an hour and a quarter of *tambūrā* strumming in homage to Nath, who used two *tambūrās*); released in 1999.
  205. In its centenary year, 2013, Holst's early symphonic poem, *Indra*, was programmed at the BBC Proms alongside the first Sitar Concerto of Nishat Khan, son of Ustad Imrat Khan and disciple of one of India's renowned musical *gharānas*.

## CHAPTER 4



# Songs that Moved the World

## *Amy Woodforde-Finden's Indian Love Lyrics*

### Women Hold Their Own

One of the last great displays of the heyday of English imperialism—The British Empire Exhibition—was held at Wembley in the summer of 1924 and it was visited by 27 million people.<sup>1</sup> The Indian section covered five acres and encompassed, it was claimed, every aspect of the manifold activities of ‘The Brightest Jewel in the Imperial Crown’.<sup>2</sup> Each colony was represented by elaborate pageants repeatedly staged in the specially constructed stadium over a six-week period, and for which the Masters of Music had taken ‘the greatest possible care . . . in selecting the music’.<sup>3</sup> ‘Elephants, llamas [*sic!*] and bulls’ were ‘shipped from India’ for the Indian pageant, *The Early Days of India*, which had been ‘compiled from the historical notes of Sir Charles Oman, KBE, MP, *et al*, by the Pageant Master in Chief’.<sup>4</sup> The spectacle featured Elgar’s ‘March of the Mogul Emperors’ and other excerpts from *The Crown of India*, scenes from Liza Lehmann’s *In a Persian Garden*, *Old Indian Dances* by ‘Shandar’ (actually Uday Shankar), and ‘*Indian Love Lyrics*’ by ‘A. Woodforde-Finden’.<sup>5</sup>

It is remarkable that, of this selection of music that best represented India for the English public, a significant portion was composed by women. In 1924, this was unusual, particularly since men had the musical hold over the other colonies at Wembley. Yet these musical choices reflected the reality that, for over two decades, India and its orientalist projection, Indo-Persia, had been popularized to great appeal by Amy Woodforde-Finden (1860–1919) and Liza Lehmann (1862–1918), respectively. The *Radio Times* told readers in 1925 that ‘one only needs to remember . . . the *Indian Love Lyrics* of Amy Woodforde-Finden and many of the works by Liza Lehmann to realize that women can more than hold their own with men as composers of the first rank’.<sup>6</sup> Although these composers—especially Woodforde-Finden—have long been absent from scholarly discourse, it is their apparently transitory texts that offer the social historian a glimpse of popular beliefs concerning nation, empire, and India

in the last period of the British Raj.<sup>7</sup> In particular, the images of India portrayed in Woodforde-Finden's *Indian Love Lyrics* were pervasive and are, in some ways, alive and well today. For Woodforde-Finden and her devotees, India could be no more vividly evoked than by the erotic, exotic gestures of these songs.

Paradoxically, little remains of Woodforde-Finden or the reception of her *Indian Love Lyrics* in conventional historiographical sources, even though the songs were much more popular than any of the other music discussed in this book. Yet traces of the songs and their enormous appeal can be found embedded in the cultural world in which the images, themes, and music of the songs resonated, as well as in their projections in popular culture. Given the ephemeral nature of the subject, I find myself in a different relation to the materials I present from that in other chapters. My examination of the songs' Indo-British cultural milieu takes its part in a tracing of the 'social life' of their sounds as they were reinterpreted in changing contexts and times. The attraction of the *Indian Love Lyrics* for researchers today rests in their history as popular entertainment for, as the many interpretations of their images and themes suggest, the connotations attached to their musical representations are correspondingly more flexible, unfixed, and also perhaps more aesthetically and discursively fertile, than those of canonized music or of the visual and literary arts.

### A Taste for the Forbidden

'The Story of *The Indian Love Lyrics*', as told by the *Radio Times* coincided with the 'India' pageant's run at the Wembley Exhibition. In an article entitled 'Songs that Moved the World', A. B. Cooper declared:

It is almost as certain as anything can be that all doubts... as to the song which can claim to have proved the 'best-seller'... have been set to rest by a song cycle published over twenty years ago. If sales are any criterion of popularity, the most popular songs ever published in the history of music are the 'Indian Love Lyrics'.<sup>8</sup>

The songs, Cooper concluded, are 'heard, certainly, wherever the English Language is spoken, and in very many countries where it is not... [they] will suffice to keep her memory green as long as there is a music-lover left to sing her songs or a band to play them'.<sup>9</sup>

Woodforde-Finden (née Amelia Ward) was born in Chile and brought up in London where she studied piano with Amy Horrocks and Adolph Schloesser. Moving to India in the early 1890s, she spent three years there during which she also travelled in Kashmir. In 1894, she married Lieutenant-Colonel Woodforde-Finden of the Bengal Medical Service, who had recently served on the North-West frontier with the 2nd Gurkhas.<sup>10</sup> She composed the *Four Indian Love Lyrics* in 1901 after returning to England 'with the music of the East still ringing in her ears', as the Boosey catalogue put it.<sup>11</sup> Yet she had so much trouble getting the songs accepted by a publisher that they were initially printed at her own expense in 1902. After the obvious appeal of the songs became apparent, however, they were issued by Boosey & Co. in 1903.

Woodforde-Finden had chosen to set four poems from the collection *The Garden of Kama* (1901) by Laurence Hope, a poet described in the *St James's Gazette* as 'refreshingly virile': 'Kashmiri Song,' 'Less than the Dust,' 'Valgovind's Song in the Spring' (later 'The Temple Bells'), and 'Till I Wake'. Given the collection's title, *The Garden of Kama*, along with the subtitle *Love Lyrics from India Arranged in Verse*, Hope implied that the poems were based on erotic Indian and Persian texts, such as *The Kama Sutra* by Vātsyāyana and *The Perfumed Garden of Sensual Delight* by Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Nafzawi. These love manuals had been in much demand in Victorian society since translations had appeared through Richard Burton's *Kama Shastra* society in the 1880s.<sup>12</sup>

Hope's 'arrangements' provoked mixed reactions, including attacks on their morally outrageous content as well as scepticism about their status as translations. One (English) critic warned of 'matter in this volume that will make the respectable squirm in holy disgust', while the *Asiatic Quarterly* complained that many of the poems 'are so *outré* as to be unworthy of publication'.<sup>13</sup> The Indian critic for the *Calcutta Review* condemned the collection as the product of an over-sexed and deviant Orientalist imagination:

[Hope is one of those] who indulge a taste for the forbidden, and indecent, by sheltering behind a misrepresentation of a country their knowledge of which may be summed up in the bare fact that it is the home of elemental passion... The glorious Eastern night... suggests nothing [to Hope] as a rule, but the licentious, the illicit, unlawful loves... gross are the details, ugly the images.<sup>14</sup>

Several critics, however (all of them English), were passionate in their praise of the poems, celebrating them as genuinely Indian. 'Mr. Hope has caught admirably the dominant notes of this Indian love poetry', remarked one writer, 'its delirious absorption in the instant... Slender brown limbs stir silently in the garden... [and] in the hot jasmine-scented jungle'.<sup>15</sup>

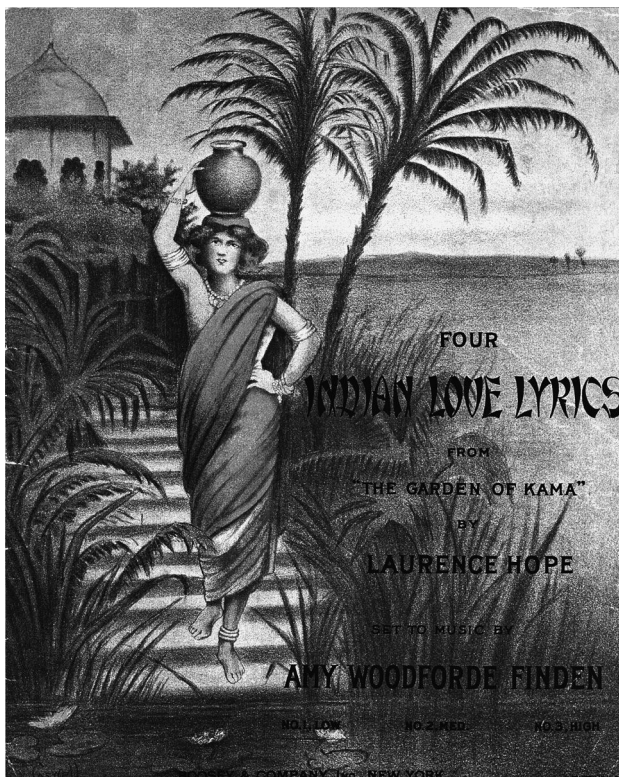
## Orientalities

Kama is the Eros of Indian mythology.

His garden signifies the tremulous, irrecoverable deliciousness of young passion.<sup>16</sup>

Editions of Woodforde-Finden's settings drew on the poems' highly charged 'exotic' associations in their cover art (figure 4.1), and the songs became an instant success. One in particular, 'Kashmiri Song', caught the public's attention: it is a recollection of requited (if melancholy) passions:

Pale Hands I loved beside the Shalimar  
Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell?  
Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway far?  
Before you agonise them in farewell?  
Pale Hands I loved beside the Shalimar  
Where are you now? Where are you now?



**Figure 4.1**

Amy Woodforde-Finden's *Four Indian Love Lyrics*, cover illustration

Source: Boosey & Co. Ltd. (n.d.)

Pale Hands, pink tipped, like Lotus buds that float  
 On those cool waters where we used to dwell,  
 I would have rather felt you round my throat,  
 Crushing out life, than waving me farewell!  
 Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar,  
 Where are you now? Where are you now?

Woodforde-Finden omitted Hope's second verse which refers, in vivid terms, to the Kashmiri lovers' engagement in sexual submission and domination:

Oh, pale dispensers of my Joys and Pains,  
 Holding the doors of Heaven and of Hell,  
 How the hot blood rushed wildly through the veins  
 Beneath your touch, until you waved farewell.<sup>17</sup>

While the words would have fitted well with the strophic melody, it was undoubtedly the licentiousness (alluded to by Hope's critics) of this verse that prompted

Woodforde-Finden to abandon it. Woodforde-Finden thus transformed Hope's poem into the nostalgic unfolding of an intimate and passionately erotic affair that takes place in the Shalimar gardens. The singer's reiteration of 'pale hands' suggests a forbidden relationship in the context of the British Raj.

Woodforde-Finden gave this risqué poem a new lease of life in a musical setting whose 'rare beauty', Boosey claimed, 'has attracted universal attention'.<sup>18</sup> 'Kashmiri Song' is imbued with far less of the language of exoticism than its three companion Love Lyrics, making no pretence at authenticity: while the body of the song reveals few conventionally exotic gestures, Woodforde-Finden creates an unusually adventurous form of Orientalism that, as we shall see, enhances our experience of the poem's reminiscence. To contemporary English ears responsive to nineteenth-century musical exoticism, the song's opening would have seemed, as the *Radio Times* put it, 'like the magical echo of the music of the mysterious East', an effect created by the piano's bare octaves, modal melody, and the fluid triplet rhythms and fermatas lending an improvisatory feel (Example 4.1a).<sup>19</sup> The opening would also have conjured up the proper atmosphere for the singer's erotic recollections, for its gestures—melody suspended over the beat and dissolving into a chromatic melisma, modality (here flattened seconds and sevenths), undulation around a single pitch—evoked for contemporaries not just 'the East' but the seductive East. It is perhaps no coincidence that three years later Cyril Scott began *Lotus Land* with a remarkably similar cluster of musical gestures (Example 4.1b).

#### Example 4.1a

Exotic musical gestures: Woodforde-Finden, 'Kashmiri Song', no. 3 of *Four Indian Love Lyrics*, piano opening

Moderato assai, con molto sentimento

The musical score for the piano opening of 'Kashmiri Song' is presented in two systems. The first system shows a piano introduction with a treble and bass staff. The treble staff features a melodic line with triplets and fermatas, while the bass staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with triplets. The second system continues the melodic and harmonic development. The tempo and mood are indicated as 'Moderato assai, con molto sentimento'.

**Example 4.1b**Exotic musical gestures: Cyril Scott, *Lotus Land*, opening melody

As we saw in the previous chapter, listeners heard these gestures in Scott's piece as evocative of the languor and dreamy melancholy of the Orient; perhaps they carried with them something of the 'Kashmiri Song' prelude's quality of reminiscence, along with the singer's memory of 'floating lotus buds'. Indeed, even twenty years on, as *The Times's* obituary of Woodforde-Finden attests, the prelude of 'Kashmiri Song' was heard as expressive of an authentic experience: '[It] is the kind of song which expresses the feelings of the European when he comes in contact with the real native music.'<sup>20</sup> Early twentieth-century writers are not alone in perceiving Indian music reflections, however inauthentic, for the song's opening has also been heard by Derek Scott and the late Gerry Farrell as corresponding to an Indian *rāga*—but, implausibly, not the same one: while Farrell chose *Bhairavi*, Scott suggests *Multani*.<sup>21</sup>

Ultimately though, while the 'exotic' prelude has been the focus of most scholarly attention, it was the main body of the song—its melody, harmonies, and poetry—which held enduring appeal. One of Boosey's advertisements even omitted the prelude, while presenting the first verse in its entirety (figure 4.2).

For the song's verses, Woodforde-Finden wrote in a romantic parlour style to be performed with 'great feeling', an instruction aided by indications to push (*accelerando*) and pull (*ritardando*) the tempo for emotional effect. In the absence of recognizably exotic gestures, the 'enchanted melody' (as Boosey described it) drew expressive force from a *verismo* technique, used by Giacomo Puccini to intense emotive affect in his operas, of doubling the voice part in the octave below.<sup>22</sup> Woodforde-Finden had first used this texture in 'The Song of the Lotus-Lily' (1898), a setting of words from *Ziska* by Marie Corelli (the best-selling author of the *Sorrows of Satan*) to be sung 'very smoothly and dreamily'. In that earlier song the doubling, reminiscent of Debussy's *Clair de Lune*, enhances the moonlit evocation of the lotus-lily, 'bared to the moon on the waters dark and chilly'. For 'Kashmiri Song' (whose sexy lotus-bud hands are far from Corelli's frigid lotus-lily), the effect of the piano doubling the voice is intensified by colourful harmonies positioned on the words 'loved', 'Shalimar', and (in the second verse) 'pink-tipped', as well as a flattened-sixth touch for the wistful question, 'where are you now?', which ends each verse. These expressive harmonies draw additional force from the presence of a pedal tone which is often implied or hidden within the chordal texture, such as when the C-sharp-major triad on *loved* is heard over an implied pedal D (Example 4.2).

While the harmonic language of 'Kashmiri Song' owes much to contemporary parlour songs, its graceful, fluent melodic style reveals an allegiance to Sir Paolo Tosti's

THIS ENCHANTING MELODY IS ONE OF  
THE WORLD-FAMOUS FOUR INDIAN LOVE LYRICS

SPECIALLY FEATURED IN "THE SHEIK" MOVING PICTURE  
under the Title of

PALE HANDS I LOVED  
ITS RARE BEAUTY ATTRACTED UNIVERSAL ATTENTION

# KASHMIRI SONG

Words by LAURENCE HOPE No.1 in B<sup>b</sup> No.2 in C No.3 in D No.4 in F Music by AMY WOODFORDE-FINDEN

*Mod<sup>to</sup> assai con molto sentimento*

*p* Pale hands I loved be - side the Sha - li - mar,<sup>2</sup> Where are you now? Who lies be -

*cresc.* neath your spell? Whom do you lead on Rapture's roadway, far, Be-fore you a - go -

*f accel.* nise them in fare-well, Be-fore you a - go - nise them in fare-well?

*dim. rall.*

*a tempo* Pale hands I loved be - side the Sha - li - mar, Where are you now? Where are you now?

*a tempo rall. e dim. pp*

\* Gardens. Copyright, 1902, by Mrs. Woodforde - Finden. New Edition, Copyright, 1903, by Boosey & Co.

**Boosey & Co. - The House of Song Fame**

Figure 4.2

'Kashmiri Song', publisher's advertisement featuring first verse in full

Source: Boosey & Co. Ltd. (n.d.)

vocal albums which were popular with performers of drawing-room songs and ballads. But how very different is the song's subject matter. As one female listener put it, the song was 'simply delicious': it suggests how a woman might enjoy erotic love, for what one could not do in cold, grey England, one could do (at least in the imagination) in the colourful warmth of India, a locale in which everything seemed

**Example 4.2**  
'Kashmiri Song', opening and close of first verse: mm. 1–6 and 16–18

(Moderato assai con molto sentimento)

*p*

*p*

*p*

Pale hands I loved be - side the Sha - li - mar,\* \_\_\_\_\_

*cresc.*

Where are you now? Who lies be - neath your spell?

*cresc.*

\* Gardens

(Continued)

## Example 4.2 (Continued)

16 *rall. e dim.* *pp*

Where are you now? Where are \_\_\_\_\_ you

*rall. e dim.* *pp*

now?

*molto rall.* *f* *a tempo*

possible.<sup>23</sup> We might hear the disjunction between the free-flowing modal triplets of the 'exotic' prelude and the strophic body of the song as a neat packaging of the poem's forbidden dreams, thereby keeping the space inhabited by the impassioned lyrics and the sensuousness of the voice that sings them as far as possible from the reality of urban England.

'The Temple Bells', the first of the set, demonstrates a more sustained interest in local colour in both text and music. It tells of Valgovind's anticipation of his young bride-to-be, his 'rose with jasmin breath':

The Temple Bells are ringing,  
 The young green corn is springing,  
 And the marriage month is drawing very near;  
 I lie hidden in the grass,  
 And I count the moments pass,  
 For the month of marriages is drawing near.

The music participates throughout in Hope's fictitious tale of Indian desire, from the prelude's appoggiaturas that decorate the all-purpose drone fifth piano ostinato, to the word-painting in the second stanza, whose text is shot through with 'exotic' detail:

And her beauty makes me swoon,  
As the Moghra trees at noon  
intoxicate the hot and quiv'ring air.<sup>24</sup>

Several musical gestures converge on these lines: in the accompaniment, a crude descending sequence of parallel fifths is adorned with appoggiaturas; this is followed by the voice's chromatic ascent through the raised fourth at 'intoxicate', and an audible ornamental 'quiver' (Example 4.3a). At the song's end, Valgovind (now 'weary unto death') collapses into a series of wordless melismas familiar from previous 'Indian' portrayals such as *Lakmé* (Example 4.3b). So conventionally 'Oriental' are the song's musical gestures that Woodforde-Finden recycled them a year later

#### Example 4.3a

'The Temple Bells', no. 1 of *Four Indian Love Lyrics*: End of second stanza, mm. 21–25

The musical score for 'The Temple Bells' (no. 1 of *Four Indian Love Lyrics*) shows the end of the second stanza, measures 21–25. The key signature is one sharp (F#), and the time signature is 2/4. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a *mf* dynamic and a fermata over measure 21. The lyrics are: 'And her beau - ty makes me swoon, As the Mogh - ra trees at noon In -'. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) begins with a *mf* dynamic and features a descending sequence of parallel fifths adorned with appoggiaturas. The vocal line continues with a chromatic ascent through the raised fourth at 'intoxicate' and an ornamental 'quiver' at the end. The piano accompaniment continues with the same descending sequence of parallel fifths.

**Example 4.3b**

'The Temple Bells': Valgovind's wordless melismas, mm. 35–42

The musical score is divided into three systems. The first system (measures 35-38) begins with a vocal line marked *f* and a piano line marked *f*. The vocal line has a melisma 'Ah!' followed by a series of eighth notes. The piano line features a steady eighth-note pattern in the right hand and a more complex, syncopated pattern in the left hand. The second system (measures 39-42) continues the vocal line with another 'Ah!' and the piano line with a similar pattern. The third system (measures 43-46) shows the vocal line with a final 'Ah!' and the piano line with a final melisma marked *ppp*.

to depict 'Ojira's Song to her Lover'. In this remarkably similar 'Indian Desert Song' (words by Hope), Ojira waits 'faint with love and longing', not in the grass, but on the sands.

Unlike the innocent desires of Valgovind, the hapless (female) singer of 'Less than the Dust' reveals something of the 'deviant' sexual longings that critics denounced as immoral in the *Garden of Kama*:

Less than the dust beneath thy chariot wheel  
 Less than the rust that never stained thy sword,  
 Less than the trust thou hast in me, my Lord,  
 Even less than these!

Less than the weed that grows beside thy door,  
 Less than the speed of hours spent far from thee,  
 Less than the need thou hast in life of me,  
 Even less am I.

Since I, my Lord, am nothing unto thee,  
 See here thy sword, I make it keen and bright,  
 Love's last reward—Death comes to me tonight,  
 Farewell, Zahirudin.

The piano's syncopated chordal ostinato, suggestive of the motion of the chariot wheel, drives the singer's word-setting and creates a cinematic effect (Example 4.4).

Two distinctive gestures bring the poem's scenario of dangerous Eastern love into sharp musical focus: the melody of the phrase 'Even less than these!' with its 'exotic' undulation (including an implied augmented second), and the descending chromatic line of the piano interlude with its internal pedal tone, both signifiers, for contemporary English listeners, of the erotic feminine East (Example 4.5a). A suicidal phrase, 'Death comes to me tonight', leads the singer to a climactic high A flat at 'Farewell Zahirud[d]in' (Example 4.5b).

#### Example 4.4

'Less than the Dust', no. 2 of *Four Indian Love Lyrics*: syncopated piano ostinato which drives the piece, mm. 11–14

The musical score for 'Less than the Dust' (mm. 11–14) is presented in two systems. The key signature is two flats (B-flat major), and the time signature is 3/4. The vocal line (treble clef) begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a melodic phrase with an implied augmented second. The piano accompaniment (grand staff) features a syncopated chordal ostinato in the right hand and a descending chromatic line in the left hand, both marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The lyrics are: 'Less than the dust beneath thy chariot wheel,'.

The masochistic longings and overheated passion expressed in this song were widely enjoyed by contemporaries as authentically Indian, as this comment from *Academy and Literature* in 1902 suggests: 'the passionate self-surrender of this Hindoo love is well seen in *Less than the Dust* . . . [which] has both the abandonment and the tragic note of this Hindoo eroticism'.<sup>25</sup> Delight in the morally suspect *Indian Love Lyrics* involved an Orientalist projection onto Indians of desire unacceptable to, or feared by, the English. In the hill station or Club in India, or back in the drawing room at home, men and women would have been applauding and thereby sharing in the performance by one of their own kind of songs hinting at sexual acts they might have performed but could never admit to in this, the era of 'lie back and think of England'! These erotic fantasies, however, could be displaced onto an Indian persona who, of course, bore no relation to any real Indian.

#### Example 4.5a

'Less than the Dust': Orientalist gestures, mm. 24–30

The musical score for 'Less than the Dust' (Example 4.5a) spans measures 24 to 30. It is written in 3/4 time and the key of B-flat major. The vocal line begins at measure 24 with the lyrics 'these, e - ven less than these!'. Above the vocal line, there are melisma marks (^) and a 'poco rall.' marking. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The right hand features a 'poco rall.' marking and a 'mf a tempo' marking. The left hand features a 'p' marking and a 'descending chromatic line' annotation. The score concludes with the lyrics 'Less than the'.

**Example 4.5b**

'Less than the Dust': Suicidal climax, mm. 61–69

61 *f* *rall.* - - - - -

Fare - - - - well, Za - hir - u -

*f* *rall.* - - - - -

*p* *rall.* - - - - -

din,\* Za - - - hir - u - din.

*p* *rall.* - - - - -

\*Zahir ud-Din a name meaning servant of the faith...

Even the semblance of authenticity in either poetry or music was unnecessary, undesirable even, for Indian musical depictions. After all, settings by both Lehmann and Woodforde-Finden of *The Golden Threshold*, a collection of poetry published in Britain in 1905 by the celebrated Indian nationalist and feminist Sarojini Naidu, would have been ideal for inclusion in the 'India' Pageant at Wembley (not

to mention more geographically appropriate than *In a Persian Garden*).<sup>26</sup> Dr Pheroze Kabraji, the London-based Parsi singer, remarked on the ‘distinctly Indian’ melody in Lehmann’s ‘Snake Charmer’ and ‘Cradle Song’, for instance.<sup>27</sup> Both of these Naidu settings depict common scenes in Indian village life (such as harvesting, weaving, and palanquin-bearing). The literary scholar Ashok Kumar Bachchan has described Naidu’s ‘Snake Charmer’, in its mystical presentation of the titular art, as ‘charming as well as authentic’.<sup>28</sup> Lehmann’s setting for soprano, flute *obbligato*, and orchestra befits the artistry of the poem; it must have been the opening solo flute melody, followed by the singer’s unaccompanied phrase ‘Whither dost thou hide from the magic of my flute call?’, that Kabraji heard as Indian in quality (Example 4.6a).

When the opening melody returns for the last stanza, it leads directly to the song’s climactic entreaty, ‘Come, subtle bride of my mellifluous wooing, Come, thou silver-breasted moonbeam of desire!’, which sets up a playful dialogue between soprano and flute inspired by early nineteenth-century *bel canto* opera. Far from being the lustful expression of passionate embrace in the Shalimar gardens,

#### Example 4.6a

Liza Lehmann, ‘The Snake Charmer’, no. 6 from *The Golden Threshold*, words by Sarojini Naidu: Opening melody

Voice      Più mosso,      Moderato senza lentezza.

Flute

*mf molto rubato*

Whith - er dost thou hide from the ma - gic of my flute call? In what

moon-light tan-gled mesh - es of per - fume?

**Example 4.6b**

Liza Lehmann, 'The Snake Charmer', no. 6 from *The Golden Threshold*, words by Sarojini Naidu; mm. 37–47

This musical score is for measures 37-47 of 'The Snake Charmer' by Liza Lehmann. It is written for voice, piano, and flute. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems.

**System 1 (Measures 37-40):** The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The lyrics are: "Come, sub-tle bride of my mel-li-flous woo-ing, Come, — thou sil-ver breast-ed". The piano accompaniment also starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The flute part is silent in this system.

**System 2 (Measures 41-44):** The vocal line continues with the lyrics: "moon - beam of de - sire...". The piano accompaniment continues. The flute part enters in measure 41 with a melodic line. In measure 44, the piano accompaniment has a forte (*f*) dynamic marking.

**System 3 (Measures 45-47):** The vocal line has a fermata over measure 45, followed by the exclamation "Ah!". The piano accompaniment is marked *pp* (pianissimo) in measure 45. The flute part has trills (*tr*) in measures 45 and 46.

this is Lehmann's skilful depiction of the snake charmer, flute in hand, wooing his professional pet with love, dulcet tones, milk and wild red honey, and the sweet perfume of jasmine and *keora*! In keeping with the affectionate view of the serpent in Indian mythology, Naidu's snake is not the feared, deadly object of the Western imagination but, in Bachchan's words, 'a lovely, glittering bride' (Example 4.6b).<sup>29</sup>

Few attending the empire exhibition would have warmed to a snake, though, over the 'pale hands' of 'Kashmiri Song'. Indeed, upon discovering Naidu's collection, *A Golden Threshold*, some critics lamented that although the author was 'a Hindoo woman of pure blood' she had written 'nothing specially Hindoo', and that Laurence Hope's poetry was more authentically, innately Indian than Naidu's verses.<sup>30</sup>

### Paradise on Earth

If ever there is Paradise on Earth  
It is here! It is here! It is here!

Amir Khusrau (1253–1325 C.E.)

From the start, Amy Woodforde-Finden's *Indian Love Lyrics* provoked extraordinary public interest. Harold Simpson noted in 1910 that 'the composer received numberless letters of congratulation from all parts of the world'.<sup>31</sup> The baritone Hamilton Earle 'liked them immensely' and sang them 'everywhere in the provinces' where they were very well received.<sup>32</sup> The songs were also performed in the two most characteristic social contexts of British India: the all-male, all-white, 'Club'; and (after a large port) in the drawing room after a memsahib's evening dinner party.<sup>33</sup> They were taken up by some of Britain's best-known singers, translated into French, arranged for a variety of instrumental and vocal combinations (an arrangement for a trio of women's voices was published as late as 1955), and were followed in 1911 by *Four More Indian Love Lyrics* (also Hope settings).<sup>34</sup> By the 1920s Boosey was advertising 'The World Famous Indian Love Lyrics'.<sup>35</sup> Their composer has even been immortalized by an unusual memorial monument: in Hampsthwaite (near Harrogate) a recumbent effigy of Woodforde-Finden in white marble with bas-reliefs of scenes representing her songs (including the *Indian Love Lyrics*) on the sides lies in the parish church of St Thomas a Beckett where she is buried.

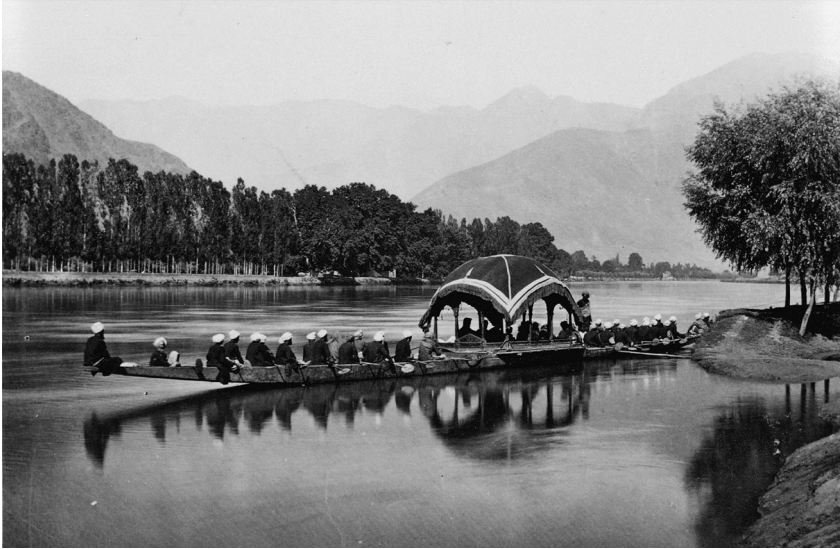
Writers usually explain the popularity of the *Indian Love Lyrics* in general and of 'Kashmiri Song' in particular, as being part of 'the Edwardian obsession with the East'.<sup>36</sup> Yet this indisputable fact does not explain why the *Indian Love Lyrics* held vastly more appeal than Woodforde-Finden's later Indian evocations such as *On Jhelum River*. Nor does it account for the lack of a similar appeal of any number of songs from the early 1900s invoking the East or of Woodforde-Finden's other, wide-ranging, exotic musical forays in the decade before 1914, such as those to Egypt (*A Dream of Egypt*), Burma (*The Pagoda of Flowers*), Syria (*A Lover in Damascus*), Japan (*Five Little Japanese Songs*), Persia ('The Eyes of Firozée', 'the words suggested by a

Persian Romance'), and to the East generally (*Aziza: Three Oriental Songs*). In other words, the Victorian and Edwardian interest in all things Eastern cannot explain the special appeal of the *Indian Love Lyrics* in their time, nor does it account for the enduring popularity of the songs, especially 'Kashmiri Song', in the decades following their composition.

How, then, did the *Indian Love Lyrics* come to be 'the most popular songs ever published in the history of music', and why did they take 'first place among [England's] song treasures'?<sup>37</sup> These questions demand investigation into the historical moment that enabled the eroticism of the poems, and especially the risqué interracial liaison of 'Kashmiri Song', to resonate with listeners. The first edition of the *Indian Love Lyrics* appeared in 1902: it was a significant moment in English imperialism when the British were smarting from the huge losses (nearly 60,000) of the Anglo-Boer War in South Africa, the bloody consequence of Joseph Chamberlain's high-handed, September 1899 ultimatum to the *boers*, demanding full equality for the English *uitlanders* who had settled in the Dutch Cape (itself taken from its indigenous inhabitants in the seventeenth century). While Africa was exploding in colonial conflict and violence, two generations on from the victory of the British (with Sikhs and Gurkhas) over the Indian Resistance in 1857–59, India was now perceived as a comparatively tame colony. As Francis Hutchins puts it in *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India*, by the late nineteenth century: '[an] India of the imagination was created which contained no elements of either social change or political menace. Orientalization was the result of this effort to conceive of Indian society as devoid of elements hostile to the perpetuation of British rule.'<sup>38</sup> The *Indian Love Lyrics* were an important contribution to this orientalized India of the imagination. Woodforde-Finden's songs depicted not the inscrutable or despotic Other of the 'savage East', now feared as a violent enemy, but a friendly, romanticized Orient. The youthful Valgovind is hiding in the grass only to catch (a glimpse of) his pretty prospective bride. Thus, the *Indian Love Lyrics*' exploration of the romance of India, of the titillating dreams of 'Hindoo' love, was opportune. The timing of the Boosey edition may have proved a further catalyst for sales, for it coincided with the great Coronation *Darbār* of Queen Victoria's successor held in Delhi in 1903. Colourful newspaper reports and lavish commemorative volumes meant that India was all the rage; and, with the accession of the good-humoured playboy and philanderer Edward VII, the staid and starchy atmosphere of Victorian England was infused with an interest in *fin-de-siècle* sensuality and decadence, fed by the availability of Burton's translations of 'erotic Eastern' texts.<sup>39</sup>

'Kashmiri Song', in particular, drew on the peculiar mystique and romance of Kashmir held by Europeans and captured by generations of travellers in poetry, prose, and image (see figure 4.3). English delight in the romance of Shalimar and Kashmir dates back to *Lalla Rookh* (1817), which brought unprecedented literary fame to its author Thomas Moore (author of *Irish Melodies* 1807–34).<sup>40</sup> Although Moore never visited Kashmir, his evocative projections caught the English imagination for over a century:

Who has not heard of the Vale of Cashmere  
With its roses the brightest the earth ever gave?<sup>41</sup>



**Figure 4.3**

‘Shikara in Munshi Bagh, Srinagar’ from the Brandreth Collection: *Views in Simla, Cashmere and the Punjaub [sic]*, Samuel Bourne, 1860s

Source: © The British Library Board. Photo 211/1(71).

He wove an amorous scenario around Lake *Dal* in moonlight:

When maids began to lift their heads,  
 Refresh'd from their embroidered beds...  
 Oh best of delights as it everywhere is,  
 To be near the lov'd One,—what a rapture is his,  
 Who in moonlight and music thus sweetly may glide  
 O'er the Lake of Cashmere with that *One* by his side!  
 If Woman can make the worst wilderness dear,  
 Think, think what a Heav'n she must make of Cashmere!<sup>42</sup>

In 1665, long before Moore's armchair voyage, François Bernier, the French physician who accompanied the retinue of the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb (father of the fictional 'Lalla Rookh' in Moore's romance) had described Kashmir as 'the Terrestrial Paradise of the Indies', a phrase used by the Mughals themselves.<sup>43</sup> Indeed, the word *paradise* itself derives from the Old Persian word, *pairidaeza* (which referred to a walled garden).<sup>44</sup> Bernier's writings, published in English translation in 1891 and again in a second edition in 1916, include descriptions of the picturesque pleasure gardens that the Mughals had created—especially '*Chah-limar*... the most beautiful of all'.<sup>45</sup> Bernier was 'charmed' by Kashmir and found that what he saw 'surpasses in beauty all that my warm imagination had anticipated'. The Shalimar Bagh, created by Emperor Jahangir in 1619 and perfected by his son Shah Jahān, is one of the

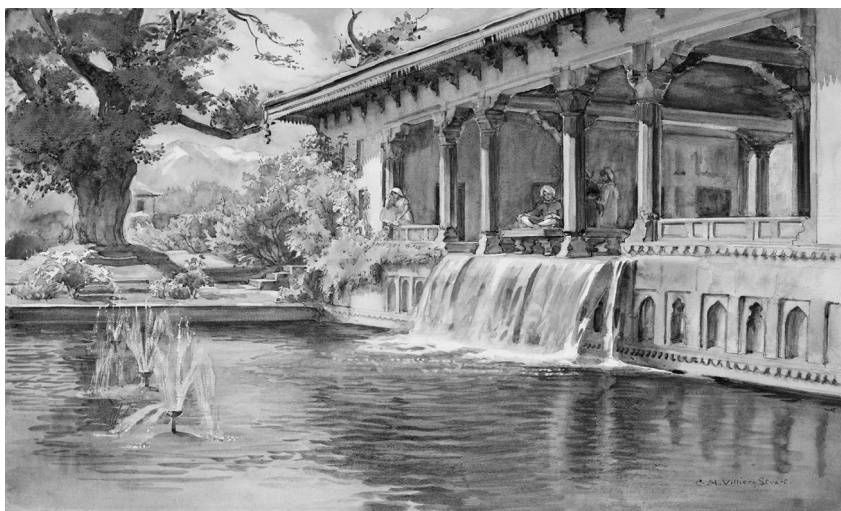
two great terraced water gardens at Srinagar and is probably, as scholar Elizabeth Moynihan puts it, 'the most fabled garden in the world'.<sup>46</sup> Jahangir himself had been enchanted and, in his memoirs, full of praise: 'Kashmir is a garden of eternal spring... Its pleasant meads and enchanting cascades are beyond all description'.<sup>47</sup> In 1913, Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart's full-length study of the *Gardens of the Great Mughals* appeared, illustrated by the author's own beautiful watercolours, including one of Shalimar Bagh (figure 4.4).<sup>48</sup>

The Vicomte Robert d'Humiers' recollection of an evening at Shalimar at the turn of the century gives a detailed description of the garden:

a kiosk with black marble columns, in the middle of a square bason. From three sides of the square fell three cascades, whose sheet of mobile crystal was illumined by lamps set behind them in recesses... We were surrounded by the splashing, by the efficient coolness of the heavenly water, the glory of the consoling water, the feast and the apotheosis of water.<sup>49</sup>

The contrast with the English Country Garden could not have been greater. In the words of Percy Grainger, the composer who popularized the Anglo variety in music: 'The typical English country garden is not often used to grow flowers in; it is more likely to be a vegetable plot. So you can think of turnips as I play [my piece]'.<sup>50</sup>

Shalimar's gardens, on the banks of the lotus-adorned Lake *Dal*, were associated with sensuality and secrecy, as Laeeq Futehally explains: 'Every detail was designed to extract the last ounce of sensuous pleasure from the surroundings... even the

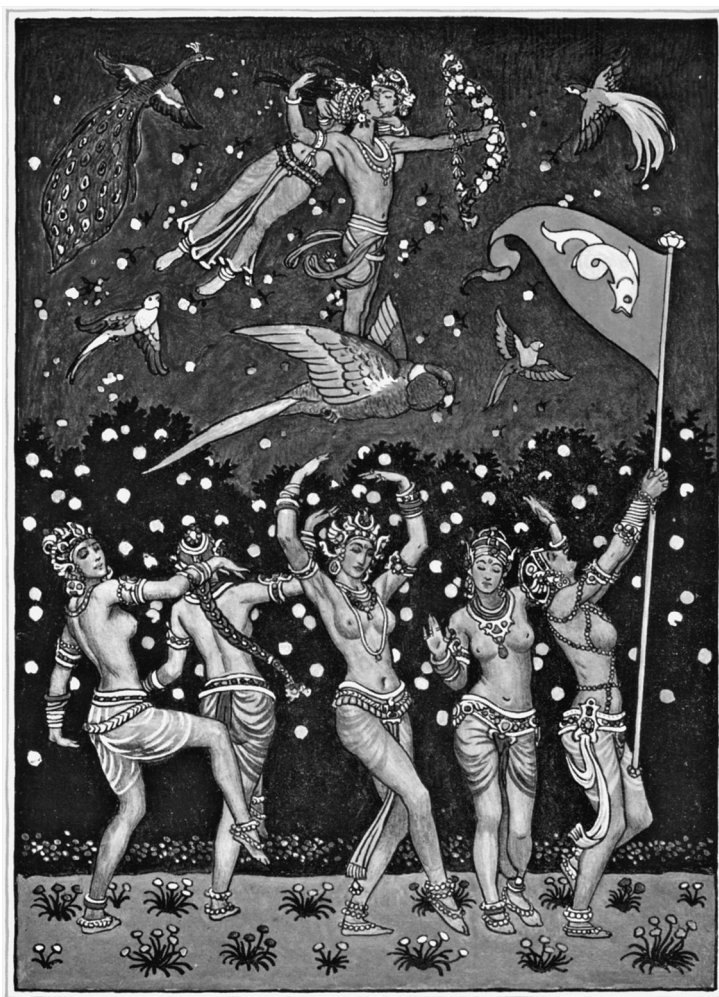


**Figure 4.4**  
'Shalimar Bagh, Kashmir': watercolour by Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart, c.1912  
Source: © The British Library Board. WD 3211.

entrance was by water—for you approached it in a *shikara* across the lake.<sup>51</sup> They therefore became the ideal background for emotive art and poetry in Persian, Urdu, and English, and attracted travellers through the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. In 1860, an Englishman, Lieutenant-Colonel Torrens, was dazzled by a performance in the illuminated Shalimar Gardens given by ‘queens of dance and song’ and exclaimed: ‘those songs ne’er so sweetly sound as from a young Kashmirian’s mouth’.<sup>52</sup> One William Simpson was so charmed by a similar event that he compared it to a scene from *Lalla Rookh*: ‘the sweet delusions of a never to be forgotten night . . . the Peris of Paradise . . . were not a matter of doubt; they were realities before us’.<sup>53</sup> British men were not alone in their attraction to Kashmiris who, because of their Aryan origins, have pale skin and chiselled features. ‘The people of *Kachemire*’, Bernier had noted, ‘are proverbial for their clear complexions and fine forms. The women are especially handsome; and it is from this country that nearly every individual, when first admitted to the court of the *Great Mogul*, selects wives or concubines, that his children may be whiter than the *Indians*.’<sup>54</sup>

In the 1850s, images of Shalimar’s sensuous beauty were intertwined with those of sexy Kashmiri dancing girls (regarded by the English as whores) in William Carpenter’s famous paintings of his Kashmiri visit.<sup>55</sup> His depictions included ‘Pavilion in Shalimar Bagh’, ‘Kashmiri girl gathering water lilies’, and ‘Kashmiri nautch girls seated on a verandah overlooking the Lake and Mountains’. This cluster of Shalimar images was drawn on by the Indian-born English artist Byam Shaw in his *Garden of Kama* colour frontispiece that appeared in the deluxe edition of Hope’s poems in 1914. The titular illustration depicts a night of bliss in the Garden: lovers kiss among peacocks and falling rose petals; semi-naked *nautch* girls dance and sing, adorned from head to foot with ornaments, their pale skin and ‘handsome’ Kashmiri features drawn from travellers’ descriptions (figure 4.5).<sup>56</sup>

Just a year before the *Indian Love Lyrics*, and after nearly ninety years of popularity, a lavishly illustrated edition of *Lalla Rookh* was published in 1901 with over a hundred designs contributed by twenty artists. For those privy to the late nineteenth-century English enchantment with Kashmir in general and with Shalimar in particular, the locale of ‘Kashmiri Song’ would have been saturated with the sensual imagery of the private Shalimar Gardens on the banks of Dal Lake. Musically too, Moore’s epic Kashmiri romance was brought to life, and in a variety of genres, beginning with the ‘exotic oriental operetta’ *Lalla Rookh* written in 1817 at the behest of Longman and an operatic version by Michael O’Sullivan which ran for a hundred nights at Crow Street the following year.<sup>57</sup> By the 1890s, Moore’s romance had been turned into burlesques (such as William Brough’s *Lalla Rookh—or, the Prince, the Peri, and the Troubadour* of 1858); an ‘Oriental Extravaganza’ (by Jacques Offenbach), operas by Félicien David (*Lalla-Roukh*), Anton Rubenstein (*Feramors*), and Charles Villiers Stanford (*The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan*, produced at Covent Garden in 1893); and cantatas by Robert Schumann (*Das Paradies und die Peri*, revived at the 1877 Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester), and Frederick Clay (*Lalla Rookh*, premiered, with its enduringly popular number ‘T’ll sing thee songs of Araby’, at the Brighton Festival).<sup>58</sup>



**Figure 4.5**  
 'The Garden of Kama' (watercolour), frontispiece of *The Garden of Kama and Other Love Lyrics from India arranged in Verse* by Laurence Hope and Illustrated by Byam Shaw (London: William Heinemann, 1914)

### Sincerity Rather than Poetry

Yet, while 'Kashmiri Song' drew on the romantic and erotic images of Shalimar begun in the seventeenth century and continuing through Moore's *Lalla Rookh* and its later manifestations, Nicolson's and Woodforde-Finden's song marked an exciting departure. It seems to me that the peculiar fervour generated by the *Indian Love Lyrics* might be explained by the fact that they were the work of two young women who had journeyed independently to India where each had lived and, it seems, visited Kashmir prior to their respective marriages. For, although the poet had used the pseudonym

'Laurence Hope', by the time Woodforde-Finden's *Indian Love Lyrics* appeared in 1902 the secret was out—the 'virile' Mr Hope was the attractive Violet Nicolson, the wife of a serving Indian Army General some twenty years her senior.<sup>59</sup>

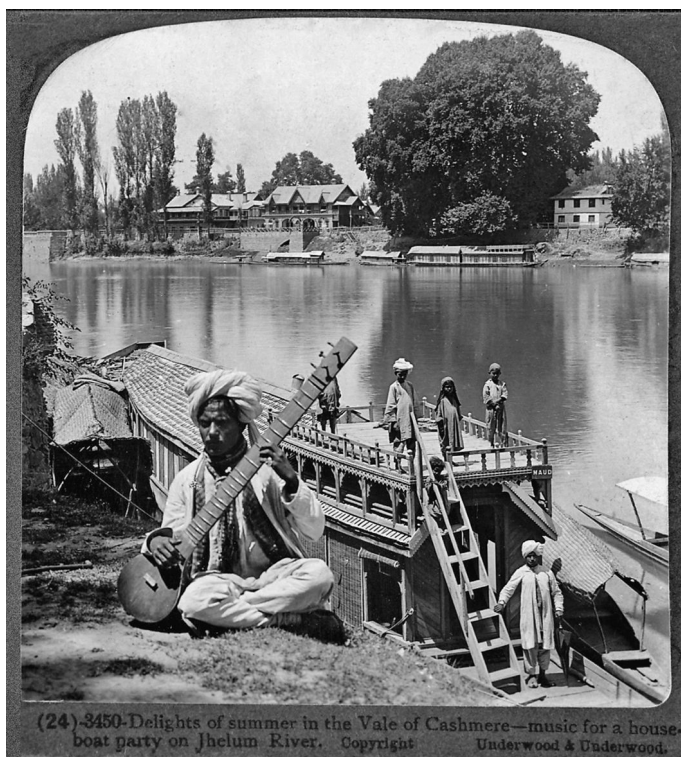
Violet Nicolson (née Adela Florence Cory, 1865–1904), born in the same year as Kipling, was the daughter of an officer in the Indian Army who edited the *Civil and Military Gazette* in Lahore. After leaving India briefly the family returned, this time to Karachi where Colonel Cory took up the editorship of the *Sind Gazette* (his former position in Lahore having been filled by Kipling). Adela, with excellent Hindi and Urdu, assisted her father with the newspaper. In 1889, she married Colonel Malcolm Nicolson of the Bombay Army, commander of a native regiment, also an expert linguist. Violet Nicolson was undoubtedly the most unconventional of the 'unconventional women' of the Raj described by Margaret Macmillan.<sup>60</sup> In the disguise of a Pathan boy, she would accompany her husband during his years of duty and adventure in the North-West Frontier of India in the early 1890s.<sup>61</sup> It was shortly after they returned to Britain together that the *Garden of Kama* (her first collection of verse) was published. She was, by all accounts, devoted to all things Indian having spent her later teens growing up there: she ate the food, wore saris, read Indian poetry, and, upon her second return to India with her husband in 1904, expressed her fondness in a poem:

These are my people, and this is my land . . .  
This is the life that I understand.<sup>62</sup>

In the same year, following the death of her husband during a surgical operation, she swallowed perchloride of mercury (infamous for its corrosive properties) in Madras (now Chennai). The scholar Edward Marx suggests that the dedication of her posthumous collection, *Indian Love* of 1905, to her late husband in 'a poetic suicide note' invited readers to view her death, at the tragically early age of 39, as a kind of *sati*, the act of widow martyrdom held by the British to exemplify the 'degenerate and barbaric' social customs of the Indian people.<sup>63</sup>

Could Woodforde-Finden, during her travels, possibly have taken in the 'delights of summer in the vale of Cashmere' as portrayed in an exquisite series of a hundred stereoscopic photographs, taken by James Ricalton? One of them, exactly contemporary with 'Kashmiri Song', is shown in figure 4.6.<sup>64</sup> The composer's set of six songs entitled *On Jhelum River* which appeared in 1906 seemed to confirm the possibility: 'Swiftly the light shikara glides . . . through maze of lotus, the lacquered paddle guides: Ah, Jhelum River' (Example 4.7).

Whether Nicolson's or Woodforde-Finden's Indian experiences affected, or are reflected in, the imagery, poetry, or music of their songs is unimportant. The very possibility would have been exciting enough to contemporaries. In 1902 the *Asiatic Quarterly* surmised that Nicolson's poems, especially 'Kashmiri Song', 'appear to describe personal adventures'.<sup>65</sup> James Elroy Flecker described the poems as 'literal and personal transcriptions' of the author's experiences 'in the throes of despair and passion'; he found Nicolson's 'crude verses' to 'ring true', and pronounced *The Garden of Kama* to be 'sincerity rather than poetry'.<sup>66</sup> 'Poor Laurence



**Figure 4.6**

'Delights of Summer in the Vale of Cashmere: Music for a Houseboat Party on Jhelum River', stereoscopic photograph, James Ricalton, c.1903

Source: © The British Library Board. Photo 181/(24).

Hope!' exclaimed Stephen in Lilly Adams Beck's *The Interpreter: A Romance of the East* of 1922: 'How she knew and loved this India!... *Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar*... That is the song every one remembers here.'<sup>67</sup> For both the English at home and, especially, the expatriate colonial community in India, the idea that either or both of these two respectable English women might, in their travels across India and Kashmir, have experienced (or even imagined) the forbidden interracial and erotic happenings lurking in the *Indian Love Lyrics* must have been an irresistibly 'terrible' one.<sup>68</sup> The possibilities of such liaisons were suggested by rumours about Eurasian (Anglo-Indian) and lower-class European women in India, with whom English men admitted to behaving 'very badly'. Radclyffe Sidebottom, who served in the Bengal Pilot Service before the Second World War, looked back on the summer months in Calcutta, when most respectable white women had gone to the hills, with nostalgia: 'The weather was hot and passions were high and you behaved in quite a different way... the Eurasians and the "poor whites" were absolutely riddled with sex.'<sup>69</sup> The 'hot blood' was often explained away as the result of too long an exposure to India.<sup>70</sup>

### Example 4.7

Woodforde-Finden, 'Jhelum Boat Song', no. 1 of *On Jhelum River*, words by Frederick John Fraser, mm. 17–23

The musical score is presented in three systems, each with a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The tempo and dynamics markings are *cresc. e accel.* for the first two systems and *f* for the third.

**System 1 (Measures 17-19):** The vocal line begins with a treble clef and a key signature of three flats. The lyrics are "Swift - ly the light shi - ka - - - - ra \_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment consists of a right hand with a steady eighth-note pattern and a left hand with a similar pattern, both marked *cresc. e accel.*

**System 2 (Measures 20-22):** The vocal line continues with the lyrics "From sun - ny Bij - be - ha - - - - ra,". The piano accompaniment continues with the same rhythmic patterns, maintaining the *cresc. e accel.* marking.

**System 3 (Measures 23-25):** The vocal line begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and the lyrics "Ah! \_\_\_\_ Jhe - lum Ri - - - - - ver. \_\_\_\_". The piano accompaniment also begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and continues with the same rhythmic patterns.

'Strangely enough', the *Radio Times* mused over two decades after the appearance of 'Kashmiri Song', 'both words and music were written by women, both of whom knew India intimately'.<sup>71</sup> It was this intimacy of knowledge of India attributed to Woodforde-Finden and Nicolson that made the authorship so uniquely thrilling, for most English women living in India generally had only superficial contact with India and its people, beyond the obvious master/servant capacity in which women managed their native household workers. That, at least until the early twentieth century, the Raj was an overwhelmingly male enterprise in which women were almost invisible is reflected in Rudyard Kipling's extraordinarily popular novel *Kim* of 1901. Like contemporary novels by H. Rider Haggard (dedicated, as one is 'to all the big and little boys'<sup>72</sup>), *Kim* is a story in which women are insignificant to the larger adventures of Imperialism—here, the Great Game (between British and Russian intelligence in Central Asia, especially Afghanistan). Not only is the world of *Kim* a masculine one dominated by travel, trade, and adventure, but it is also a celibate one.

The *Indian Love Lyrics*, appearing in its wake, could not have been more different: they aroused contemporary anxieties and preoccupations about race and sex which were shored up by women writers of the Raj between the 1890s and 1920s.<sup>73</sup> In Hilda Swabey's 1912 novel *The Chief Commissioner*, the full lips of the wicked Rajah are said to denote 'the sensuous disposition of his race', while Maud Diver warned her readers of *The Englishwoman in India* (1909) that they must expect their Indian servants to have lots of children 'for celibacy is an outcome of civilization'.<sup>74</sup> Hindus were 'particularly shocking': not only were their Gods lascivious, with objects of worship including the phallic *lingam* and the concave *yoni*, but their temples were 'decorated with atrociously seductive carvings' so erotic that sightseeing *memsahibs* were 'carefully steered away from them by their escorts'.<sup>75</sup> Hope/Nicolson addressed this transgressive delight unblinkingly in her poetry:

Strange, weird things that no man can say,  
 Things Humanity hides away;—  
 Secretly done,—  
 Catch the light of the living day,  
 Smile in the sun.  
 Cruel things that man may not name,  
 Naked here, without fear or shame,  
 Laughed in the carven stone.<sup>76</sup>

The idea that women, as irrational, passionate creatures, had affinities with all this perceived Eastern sensuality had, indeed, long been part of the feminization of the colonies themselves (Haggard made this clear in having the male party in *King Solomon's Mines* follow an explicitly sexualised colonial treasure map drawn in the shape of a spread-eagled, truncated woman, lying head down, which runs through 'Sheba's Breasts' and the navel, straight on to the pubic mound—'mouth of treasure cave'—where the diamonds, gold, and ivory are buried deep inside<sup>77</sup>).

Nicolson's female mind was, one critic remarked, naturally able to capture 'the utter self-abandonment to the rush of passion... [of] Hindoo Love Poems':

Perhaps it needed a woman to interpret the emotional abandonment of the songs of India. It is no Western love which they breathe... the belief that love is a power fatal and beyond resistance, the entire throwing one's self under the feet of the beloved—especially on the part of women; these things are of the East wholly, and exotic to the Western mind... A flame of flax, hot, sudden, and suddenly gone, is the love of *The Garden of Kama*. And always there broods over it the menace of tragedy.<sup>78</sup>

The subject of British-Indian interracial relations, implied in autobiographical readings of Nicolson's verses, was assiduously avoided in popular culture and polite conversation alike. At the time, as Ann Stoler has argued, '*metisage* (interracial unions)... represented the paramount danger to racial purity and cultural identity in all its forms'.<sup>79</sup> Since the Great Revolt or First War of Independence in 1857 (in the English lexicon, the 'Indian Mutiny') such unions had been forbidden, especially those between English women and Indian men. Yet, it was 'largely taken for granted', MacMillan writes, 'that all Indian men lusted after European women'.<sup>80</sup> The perceived sexual threat to English women was one that both attracted and repelled the Raj's writers, as MacMillan explains. Authors titillated readers with the possibility of a villainous Indian scheming to get his hands on a pure English girl. In the novel *Sahib-log* of 1910, a memsahib shudders at 'the fate of white women in India, if the balance of power left the Englishman's hands even temporarily'.<sup>81</sup> Years later, the subject of interracial attraction would be treated by both E. M. Forster, who visited India first in 1912-13 and wrote *A Passage to India* in 1924, and Paul Scott who experienced the dying years of the Raj between 1943 and 1946 and whose *Raj Quartet*, later dramatized by Granada Television as *The Jewel in the Crown*, appeared between 1966 and 1975.<sup>82</sup> But Violet Nicolson's own sister, Annie Sophie Cory writing as Victoria Cross, had tackled the subject of a mixed-race affair in British India in her hugely-popular novel *Anna Lombard* a year before the *Indian Love Lyrics* appeared.<sup>83</sup> The story concerns Anna's passionate affair with one of her servants (a Pathan) after her engagement to a British army officer. Anna greatly enjoys sexual liaisons with her Muslim lover, yet, after her marriage, she and her husband abstain from any sex and, by the end of the novel, they still have not consummated the marriage. The 'disastrous consequences' of the interracial union suggested in 'Kashmiri Song', are all too real in Cory's novel:<sup>84</sup> Anna gives birth to a baby whom she suffocates and, after spending a period of time in penance, she is forgiven by her husband and they go on with married life.

While all of this women's fiction of the Raj which demarcates racial and sexual boundaries is absolutely central to 'Pale Hands I Loved', the song's most intriguing aspect, it seems to me, is the obscuring of these orthodox colonial categories of race and gender. For the song, rather than the poem, reveals a profoundly ambiguous subject position: the dangerous love it recalls leaves the listener uncertain of the singer's identity. The song has often been interpreted in terms of the story told by the lyrics which, presumably on account of the phrase 'pale hands I loved', has been thought

to represent an Indian man singing of an English woman (as I, too, had suggested earlier).<sup>85</sup> This reading gains emphasis from comparison with another of Nicolson's *Garden of Kama* poems in which Indian and English lovers are identified by way of similarly 'marked' features:

Upon the City Ramparts, lit up by sunset gleam,  
The Blue eyes that conquer, meet the Darker eyes that dream . . .  
East and West so gaily blending, for a little space . . .  
But time o' love is overpast, East and West must part.<sup>86</sup>

What is neglected in the interpretation of the song's subject persona as it is represented in the lyrics (as an Indian man) is the musical voice of the poet-singer. Unlike 'The Temple Bells' and 'Less than the Dust', 'Kashmiri Song' (from the moment the voice enters) has none of the close ornaments, augmented seconds, or wordless melismas that mark those songs as 'Eastern' and which present an Indian persona. Once the Eastern locale is conjured up by the piano, the distinctly nineteenth-century parlour style of the musical reminiscence that follows indicates that Woodforde-Finden's imagined poet-singer was in fact an English woman—a mirror image of her creators.

Signs in the poem itself emphasize this hearing of the subject's musical voice. Unlike the eyes of Hope's lovers 'upon the city ramparts' which are clearly associated with East and West, with conqueror and dreamer, the Kashmiri lover's hands have no further qualifying characteristics other than that they are 'Pale hands, pink-tipped, like Lotus buds'. From these descriptions alone race, gender, and nationality are all undefined.<sup>87</sup> In Kipling's 'Beyond the Pale' (1888), the Englishman Trejago marvels at his Indian lover's 'rose-leaf hands' for, even though Bisesa describes herself as 'only a black girl', Trejago finds her 'fairer than bar-gold in the Mint'.<sup>88</sup> And, in Shaw's *Garden of Kama* illustrations, both men and women have 'pink-tipped' lotus hands (and feet). Moreover, as already mentioned, it was well known that Kashmiris are fair-skinned. 'Pale hands', then, might have indicated to contemporaries the most desirable lover of all, a Kashmiri. Moreover, as Sophie Fuller has suggested, the poem's final couplet ('I would have rather felt you round my throat, crushing out life than waving me farewell') brings to mind a woman singing of a man since such 'masochistic longing' is 'more easily marked female than male'.<sup>89</sup> For, even if Bengalis and the cultured Muslim Nawabs of Oudh were considered effeminate by the English, no such stigma was attached to Kashmiri men.

The cover of the Boosey edition of *Indian Love Lyrics* must have invited further speculation with its depiction of a distinctly English-looking woman (white-skinned, rosy-cheeked, with pursed lips and flowers in her hair) dressed in sari and bangles and carrying a water pitcher to a lake adorned with pink lotuses (figure 4.1). Whether this woman signified to singers or other consumers of the *Indian Love Lyrics* either the owner of the 'pale hands, pink-tipped', or the poet-singer wishing that she had felt 'pale hands I loved . . . crushing out life' is, however, unimportant. The very vagueness of the distinctions between 'conqueror' and 'dreamer', 'West' and 'East', white and black, male and female, in the 'Kashmiri Song' is central to the *Indian Love Lyrics*' transgressive exploration of imperial fantasies of race and gender at the highest point of imperial power.

## Myths and Manifestations

In May 1928, *Gramophone* declared that ‘The *Indian Love Lyrics* clearly have still a large band of devotees’.<sup>90</sup> Indeed, they did. In the twenty-five years since their first appearance the songs had generated record sales of editions and arrangements, frequent performances and radio broadcasts, and a growing body of recordings, along with a fascinating response in the form of films, music, novels, and cultural paraphernalia including two perfumes, *Garden of Kama* and *Shalimar*, and a nail varnish marketed under the epithet ‘pale hands pink-tipped’.<sup>91</sup> Kabraji had ‘noticed with satisfaction the popularity of the “Kashmiri Love Songs” and other compositions of a similar kind’.<sup>92</sup> This must be a reference to the plethora of ‘Indian Love Songs’ that appeared in the song’s wake, including those by Hubert Bath, who set poems by Hope in his *Three Indian Songs* (1906), Lehmann (1907), G. E. Hardy (1916), and the African American composer Henry Thacker Burleigh (1866–1949) who composed *Five Songs by Laurence Hope* in 1915 including ‘Kashmiri Song’.<sup>93</sup>

In 1916, the melodramatic ‘Less than the Dust’ inspired an eponymous film which, the *New York Times* explained, had borrowed the idea of the song—a girl who looks upon herself as less than the dust beneath the chariot wheel of her master.<sup>94</sup> But the film also imbues the subject with an interracial twist suggested perhaps by ‘Kashmiri Song’. An English army officer serving in India leaves his daughter (Mary Pickford) to a low-caste Indian sword-maker who is later found guilty of participating in a revolt against the British. The film thereby reinforced English fantasy-fears by using ‘Less than the Dust’ to connect sexual deviance (perceived in the song) with native ‘violence’ (resistance).

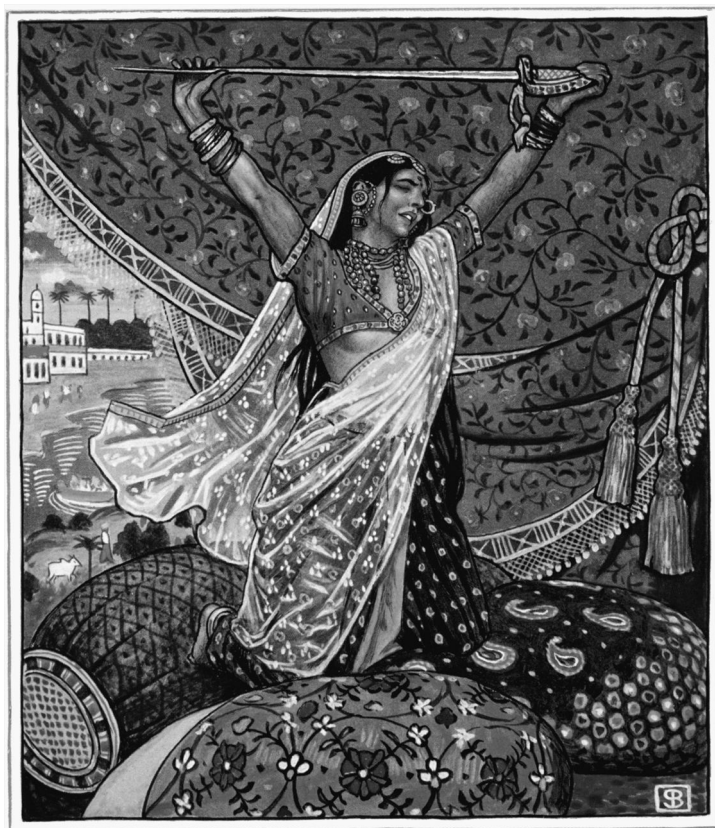
The song’s thinly veiled orientalist brand of masochism came to the fore during the highly publicized Leopold and Loeb trial of 1924 for the murder of a child. Many in Britain and the United States were fascinated by the apparently unmotivated crime by two supposedly brilliant University of Chicago students.<sup>95</sup> Extensive psychological testimony centred on Nathan Leopold’s sexual attraction to Richard Loeb in the form of a master/slave relationship which was made explicit when Leopold told the court room: ‘I feel myself less than dust beneath his feet. I am jealous of the food and water he takes because I cannot come as close to him as food and water do.’ The invocation of Woodforde-Finden’s song thus took its part in clarifying the context within which to understand Leopold’s motive for the murder of a 14-year-old child: ‘to please Dick’.<sup>96</sup> Later, in his autobiography, *Life Plus Ninety-Nine Years*, Leopold noted singing ‘Less than the Dust’ in his prison cell.<sup>97</sup>

Some four years later, *Motion Picture Classic* featured a double-page spread of photographs of silent film star Louise Brooks, along with notated music and poetry from ‘Less than the Dust’, under the epithet: ‘A tragedy of India is brought to picturesque life’. The scantily clad Brooks, chained from wrist to wrist and with curved sword in hand is the cousin of the desperate Indian woman depicted in Shaw’s 1914 colour illustration of the poem: ‘Since I, my Lord, am nothing unto thee, see here thy sword... Farewell, Zahirudin’ (figures 4.7a and b).<sup>98</sup>

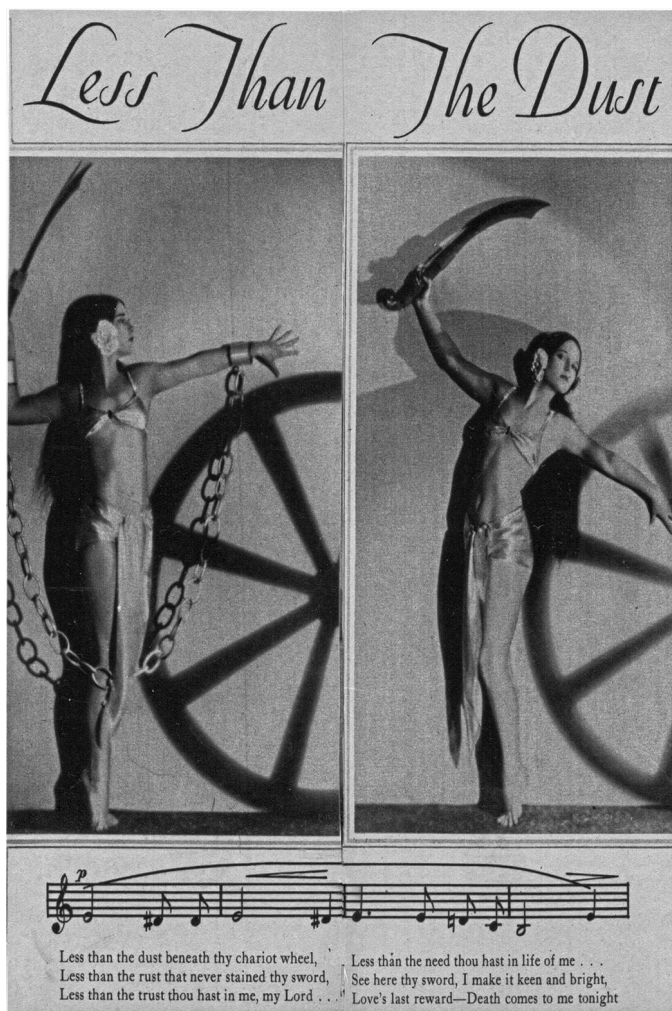
All those inscriptions of race, class, gender, and colonial position obscured in the interaction between music and text in 'Kashmiri Song' are endorsed in these projections of 'Less than the Dust'.<sup>99</sup>

By the late 1920s, though, the companion *Indian Love Lyrics* had begun to lose their appeal. The writer Yasmine Gooneratne recalls how 'The Temple Bells', sung by an impassioned Valgovind 'waiting in the grass', was performed in Sri Lanka precisely because it invoked an earlier period and sounded acutely of its time:

In the 1950s, when my sisters and I were taken calling by our parents, the Victorians were still popular, and we heard the son of the house give forth a vigorous delivery of Laurence Hope's 'Temple Bells'. The singer on this second occasion was Lankasa de Alwis, the son of Auntie Alex and Uncle Leo, and every soulful throb of his tenor voice rocked his mother's drawing-room at Samudragiri with simulated passion. . . . Nothing so explicit had ever sullied the chaste ears of an earlier generation.<sup>100</sup>



**Figure 4.7a**  
'Farewell, Zahiruddin': 'Less than the Dust' illustrations: Colour plate in *The Garden of Kama*, Byam Shaw



**Figure 4.7b**

'Farewell, Zahiruddin': 'Less than the Dust' illustrations: Colour plate in *The Garden of Kama*, Byam Shaw: 'A tragedy of India is brought to picturesque life', Louise Brooks in *Motion Picture Classic* 26, no. 6, February 1928, 38–39.

Removed from their Edwardian context, 'The Temple Bells' and 'Less than the Dust' held little interest, except for their seeming verisimilitude, an infusion of stereotyped local colour in music and lyrics that connotes little outside of their origins in colonial fantasy.

'Kashmiri Song', however, had an immense and lasting cultural impact—in spite of the contempt Kaikhosru Sorabji directed to 'that Kashmir which exists happily nowhere outside those notorious Indian Love Lyrics', and its dismissal by John Foulds as one of those 'inane "orientalities"' which are among the few things which 'can make the artist quite so quickly quite so sickly'.<sup>101</sup> In fact it was precisely the music of

'Kashmiri Song' which drew people to sing, play, and hum it in books and films, and on recordings. Its musical qualities, as much as its semantic ones, can, fascinatingly, be identified through its various incarnations (several of which I will trace in more detail shortly): the 'singable' melody made it perfect in the bathtub; expressive harmonies and shapely phrases underscored on-screen romance; its rolling accompaniment and rhetorical sequences made for fun on the player-piano; its suavity found favour on the saxophone; and it was taken seriously as a musical inspiration by a modernist composer for an opera set in Kashmir and a Piano Concerto dedicated to Ali Akbar Khan.<sup>102</sup> As to its exoticism, in 1921 the Italian actor Rudolph Valentino starred in the title role of *The Sheik* [sic], a film based on Edith Maude Hull's bestselling orientalist novel of 1919.<sup>103</sup> 'Kashmiri Song' shapes a central episode of the 'romance in the desert' story:

And as they sat silent, her thoughts far away in the desert, and his full of vain longings and regrets, a man's low voice rose in the stillness of the night. *Pale hands I loved beside the Shalimar. Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell?* he sang in a passionate, vibrating baritone... the almost indefinite slurring from note to note was strangely un-English... The voice seemed to come from the dark shadows at the end of the garden... The singer sang slowly, his voice lingering caressingly on the words... Diana lay back with a little sigh. 'The Kashmiri Song. It makes me think of India. I heard a man sing it in Kashmir last year, but not like that. What a wonderful voice! I wonder who it is?'

Hull's descriptions of the hero Sheikh Ahmed Bin Hassan's 'strangely un-English, indefinite slurring from note to note... lingering caressingly on the words' were realized in Valentino's rendering of 'Kashmiri Song', reputedly his favourite ballad, which was recorded shortly after the film's release.<sup>104</sup> Even if this was a coincidence—the result of his, naturally Italian, accent—the recording is perhaps the most intensely exotic in the song's history, so perceptibly imbued is it with Valentino's own turbaned 'Sheikh' persona (memorably pictured on the 78 rpm itself), which he deliberately distanced from the director's stereotypical drawing of the character. An equally exotic veneer was brought to the song in the recording by Whittall's Anglo-Persians directed by Louis Katzman in 1927: publicity shots of the time show the band dressed in turbans and other 'eastern' garb, sitting on the proverbial magic carpet made by their sponsor, the Whittall Rug Company (figure 4.8). Later, Xavier Cugat drew on the song's new all-purpose exoticism, recording 'Kashmiri Song' on the B side of 'In a Persian Market' by Ketèlbey.<sup>105</sup>

Contemporaneous with Valentino but with more nostalgia and drama than exoticism, are the recordings by Maggie Teyte and Clara Butt. Significantly, when Arnold Grier played all four *Indian Love Lyrics* on a grand organ in 1927, *The Gramophone* found the purely musical rendition wanting: 'however good he may be, surely Laurence Hope's words are at least half the attraction of these songs?'<sup>106</sup> This was not the case for 'Kashmiri Song', which inspired first-rate wordless arrangements. In 1925, Boosey's C-major 'Kashmiri Fox-trot' sheet music appeared (in an arrangement by M. Williams), and with it a new conception of the song as a light-hearted dance.<sup>107</sup> Jan Garber's Big Band version that followed in 1927 is also a foxtrot that retains few, if any, of the song's exotic associations. Not only have Hope's words been replaced



**Figure 4.8**  
Whittall's Anglo-Persian Orchestra, 1926

by swinging wind instruments but also, in place of the original piano prelude which was the only musical evocation of an Eastern locale, Garber emphasizes the expressive left-hand arpeggiation that precedes the singer's entry (seen in example 4.1c), assigning it to the saxophone—a voice of its own, with no hint of exoticism.

### Sapphic Stories

Neither the decline of English interest in Orientalism in the decades after the First World War, nor the crumbling of the British Raj in 1947, did anything to stop the flow of interest in 'Kashmiri Song'. Performances and recordings by Peter Dawson and Richard Tauber, popular in the 1930s, were joined by those of Nelson Eddy and John McCormack in the 1940s. Richard Addinsell's *Warsaw Concerto*, which captivated audiences at the film *Dangerous Moonlight* in 1941, took up the opening phrase of 'Kashmiri Song' complete with its distinctive harmonies (at the words *loved* and *Shalimar*) and inner descending chromatic line for the big romantic tune played first by solo piano and then taken up by the strings (Example 4.8).<sup>108</sup> Another wartime hit of 1943, *Hers to Hold*, featured 'Kashmiri Song' sung by Deanna Durbin (who thereafter appeared on the song's cover); the song also appeared in the 1949 musical romance, *Maytime in Mayfair*, starring Anna Neagle and Michael Wilding.

At the same time, Salman Rushdie implies, a generation of South Asians experienced a refracted version of the song. That is how Lila Sabarmati heard it in the defining book about India's transition from the British Raj to Independence, *Midnight's Children*: 'A pianola, Amina sister! All day I'm sitting sitting, playing God knows what-all! 'Pale Hands I Loved Beside The Shalimar'...such fun, too much, you just push the pedals!'<sup>109</sup>

**Example 4.8**

Richard Addinsell, *Warsaw Concerto*, in the solo piano arrangement by Henry Geehl: 'Shalimar' theme, mm. 118–25

The musical score for the 'Shalimar' theme from the Warsaw Concerto, measures 118–25, is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a grand staff with a treble and bass clef. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats), and the time signature is 4/4. The tempo/mood is marked 'mp' (mezzo-piano) and 'cantabile'. The melody in the right hand is characterized by a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand features a continuous triplet eighth-note accompaniment. The score is divided into three systems, each with a grand staff. The first system starts at measure 118 and ends at measure 124. The second system starts at measure 125 and ends at measure 131. The third system starts at measure 132 and ends at measure 138. The melody in the right hand is a series of chords and single notes, while the left hand features a continuous triplet eighth-note accompaniment.

The pervasive idea, already suggested, that the scenario of 'Kashmiri Song' was in some way autobiographical continued to fuel rumours and 'revelations' surrounding the *Indian Love Lyrics* and their authors. Some believed that the song was 'not fictional' and was specifically based, as Gerry Farrell put it, 'upon Cory's real-life love for the son of an Indian raja'.<sup>110</sup> Gossip surrounding Colonel and Violet Nicolson inspired one of Somerset Maugham's best-known short stories, 'The Colonel's Lady'.<sup>111</sup> A slim volume of passionate verses concerning a woman's extra-marital love affair with a man much younger than herself (but now dead) has become the talk of the town. When the pompous Colonel Peregrine finally realizes that the author is his wife, Evie, he states simply: 'I'll do nothing . . . But I'll tell you what, there is one thing I shall never understand till my dying day: What in the name of heaven did the fellow ever see in her?'.<sup>112</sup>

Perhaps the most scandalous intimations of all have to do with Nicolson's and Woodforde-Finden's relationship: that the two were lovers and may have had an illicit affair while in India. The *Indian Love Lyrics* had always attracted interpretations that focused on the poems' portrayals both of lesbian love and of Nicolson's

autobiographical experiences. Thomas Hardy attributed the poems' popularity to 'their tropical luxuriance and Sapphic fervour', while James Elroy Flecker hinted at lesbianism in a 1907 article when he claimed that 'the true cause' of the poems' attraction 'must be sought in the nature of the feminine—in the appreciation of Laurence Hope by her sex'.<sup>113</sup> Leopold and Loeb's 1924 trial brought the homosexual (and masochistic) interpretation of the *Indian Love Lyrics* squarely into the public eye, while Valentino's association with 'Kashmiri Song' may have strengthened rumours surrounding the song's portrayal of a same-sex love affair, for he was derided by the press as a 'pink powder puff' (it was alleged that he had male lovers, a libel arising from the fact that his first two wives had been in lesbian relationships).<sup>114</sup>

The intriguing possibilities of the story behind the song, together with the scarcity of letters and other biographical materials concerning Woodforde-Finden and Nicolson have invited fanciful scenarios surrounding the song's composition, the prime manifestation of which has been an interest in invoking 'evidence'—often of a strikingly dubious sort. Literary historian Terry Castle includes 'Kashmiri Song' in her anthology of lesbian literature because 'it has been rumored that [Violet Nicolson] was romantically involved [with Amy Woodforde-Finden]'.<sup>115</sup> The most detailed 'account' of 'Kashmiri Song' as 'a lesbian love song' of 'searing passion' appeared in the programme of a London revue of 'songs from the closet' covering 'all the major centres of gay life of the period 1870 to 1930'.<sup>116</sup> In a preview article, the music director explained that it was the writer Howard Bradshaw who had 'amassed the evidence for these gay interpretations' and that his 'research has produced some gripping stories, such as the sad tale of Amy Woodforde-Finden'.<sup>117</sup> 'Read on, because it's quite a story!'<sup>118</sup> Bradshaw claimed, without provenance, that Woodforde-Finden wrote the following letter to poet Laurence Hope in the autumn of 1901:

I was most moved by your verses *The Garden of Kama*, a selection of which I saw reproduced in *The Times of India*. I have taken the liberty of setting four of the poems to music under the title, *Four Indian Love Lyrics*. I enclose them for your approval with some trepidation, as I fear my talents are not worthy of your great and generous sentiments. We have, I must confess, been performing them for some weeks at concert parties here in Simla, where they have been in constant demand. I am sure that this is due in far greater extent to your poetry than to my humble notes. I am however emboldened by their reception to venture to seek a publisher, and am anxious to gain your approbation before embarking on the enterprise. Should you think my music unworthy, as I fear you may, I will of course consign the score to the flames. I await your reply with some trepidation. Sincerely, Amy Woodforde-Finden.<sup>119</sup>

Hope is alleged to have replied, telling the composer that 'the songs were enchanting' and that 'if by any chance Mrs. Woodforde-Finden should find herself in Delhi, they must meet'. According to Bradshaw they did meet and fell passionately in love:

The two women caused one of the great scandals of the Raj when they left their respective husbands and eloped together. After a brief intense affair they bowed

under the pressure of propriety and returned to their families. The tale ended in tragedy when Nicolson committed suicide two years later.<sup>120</sup>

Bradshaw's story is of course a fantasy. There is no evidence to suggest that the Nicolsons spent time in Delhi or that the two women met, either before they returned to Britain in 1901, or afterwards. It would be difficult to account for how this Woodforde-Finden letter survived when almost no other Nicolson or Woodforde-Finden correspondence has ever come to light, and even more difficult to explain how the story of their affair could have become public knowledge. Moreover, Woodforde-Finden's letter to Hope is written in a very different style from the only extant set of her letters which, significantly, reveals that she was devoted to her husband. During his prolonged illness and demise in 1914–16 she was 'so unhappy' and 'much worried', and, upon his death, wrote that 'my dear husband suffered so long and so terribly [but] the bleakness and desolation for me now is unspeakable'.<sup>121</sup> In a similar vein, when Malcolm Nicolson died during a routine prostate operation in 1904, Violet expressed her sorrow and love in a touching dedication, mentioned earlier, that prefaced her last collection of poems:

I, who of lighter love wrote many a verse,  
Made public never words inspired by thee,  
Lest strangers' lips should carelessly rehearse  
Things that were sacred and too dear to me.

Thy soul was noble; through these fifteen years  
Mine eyes familiar, found no fleck nor flaw,  
Stern to thyself, thy comrades' faults and fears  
Proved generosity thine only law.

Small joy was I to thee; before we met  
Sorrow had left thee all too sad to save.  
Useless my love—as vain as this regret  
That pours my hopeless life across thy grave.<sup>122</sup>

From existing (rather than invented) evidence, it seems that both women were devoted to their husbands and that the real tragedy for each was the loss of her life partner.

What, then, to make of this long history of speculations and revelations? To the reader confronting them for the first time, the welter of scenarios surrounding the *Indian Love Lyrics* is likely to seem as imaginary as the stories embodied in the songs themselves. In their own way the novelists, writers, musicians, and critics were, and often still are, as bewitched by the 'Kashmiri Song' story of interracial sexual relations as Nicolson and Woodforde-Finden were. Lacking almost any but the most rudimentary information about Woodforde-Finden and her life, one can neither refute nor verify the most sensationalistic claims. Even to try, however, would be beside the point at hand.

However far-fetched, if we were to accept, even for a moment, the idea that Nicolson and Woodforde-Finden may have been lesbians, then we could go as far

as reading into 'Kashmiri Song', with its inherent ambiguity of gender and subjectivity, a story of lesbian love that is literally too good to be true. How else might two repressed, married lesbians express their relationship other than through an exotic song-poem set in the Shalimar gardens?<sup>123</sup> (In this interpretation, 'Pale hands, pink-tipped' would be a perfect description.) Just as the Near and Middle East had drawn legions of Western men in search of homoerotically charged encounters unobtainable in Europe, India opened up a field of homoerotic possibilities to the English during the colonial encounter.<sup>124</sup> Although these could never be openly acknowledged at that time, literary scholar Sara Suleri has demonstrated that homoeroticism, as much as the classical Orientalist imagery of rape, was among the fantasies defining the sexual appeal of India for the English.<sup>125</sup>

In search of the 'Indian Love Poetry' that Nicolson may have translated, I came across *Rekhti*, a genre of Urdu poetry written in the female voice by male poets in Lucknow in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Twentieth-century critics labelled *Rekhti* obscene for its explicit depiction of female sexuality, especially lesbianism; it was systematically eliminated from the canon of published works of the poets concerned.<sup>126</sup> It has been suggested that such condemnation may have been connected to the strategy of Hindu nationalist movements which, in their defence of Indian culture and society, tended to condemn any sexual practices that the English had denounced as morally inferior in their justification of the imperial enterprise.<sup>127</sup> Thus, modern, educated Hindus may have condemned *Rekhti* partly because it emerged in Oudh, the site of the stiffest resistance to colonial rule and the last kingdom to be annexed before widespread rebellions against British rule broke out in 1857, and partly because of the internalization of English homophobia (fuelled by the introduction in India of a regressive law in 1861).<sup>128</sup> The vehemence of critical responses to Nicolson's poems may well have stemmed as much from moral judgments about the erotic experiences described in the poems as from disapproval of the poetry's unauthentic provenance—for both English and Indian critics alike.

### A Map of Longings

'Where are you now?'

Today, the song can be found in a wide variety of contexts—novels, web pages about Kashmir or horror-erotica, on recordings, in second-hand music stores, and in a new edition by Boosey. A renowned pianist has registered affection for 'Kashmiri Song' in two fascinating ways: a transcription for solo piano in the tradition of Liszt which (musically speaking) immortalizes the original object, and a brand new setting which combines Henry Cowell-type piano clusters (bringing new musical definition to the 'crushing out' of life) with an undulating vocal line whose augmented seconds are, according to the composer, part of an adaptation of 'the traditional Indian Bhairav scale'.<sup>129</sup> The Laurence Hope Yahoo discussion group received the following posting:

After listening to the *Kashmiri Song*, looking at the beautiful illustrations [Byam Shaw's watercolours], and reading tantalizing tid bits about Violet [Nicolson], I was

seized by an overwhelming desire for Indian culture. I drove to an Indian restaurant, sat down and enjoyed a fiery, spicy meal, all the while spying on the Indian couples enjoying romantic dinners together. I watched discreetly out of the corner of me eye, and wondered about who Violet had loved—the one who inspired her to write such words. <sigh><sup>130</sup>

Taken alongside the plethora of other interpretations of, and responses to, 'Pale Hands I Loved', this testimony suggests that the song stirs up a well-established collection of imagined ideas and images. As Edward Said has written, to the Anglo imagination, 'the Orient seems still to suggest not only fecundity but sexual promise (and threat), untiring sensuality, unlimited desire'.<sup>131</sup> India, in particular, remains an imaginative locus of a range of forbidden and desirable sexualities (one only need think of the 2,000-year-old *Kama Sutra*'s numerous illustrated editions, the popularity of Mira Nair's film *Kama Sutra*, of postcard images depicting the explicit sexual sculptures at the Chandela temples of Khajuraho, or of the craze for tantric sexual teachings in the West).<sup>132</sup>

But, ultimately, the meanings of 'Kashmiri Song' extend beyond *kama*. The 'down-fall of the British Raj' was also the moment in history when Kashmir's association with the tranquillity and romance of the Mughal *charbaghs* gardens was lost.<sup>133</sup> Beyond the disrepair into which Shalimar Bagh fell (and remained, until very recently), the region has been overwhelmed by over half a century of struggle and violence.<sup>134</sup> In 1948, the Hindu king of Kashmir decided to accede, with his predominantly (77%) Muslim subjects, to the Indian Union under notoriously disputed circumstances. Immediately after partition, the first of several wars with Pakistan erupted—over India's failure to implement UN Security Council Resolution 47 of April 1948, which promised a free and fair plebiscite to enable the people of Jammu and Kashmir to determine whether they wished to join Pakistan or India—as India enforced its claim to sovereign control of the territory by ever more disproportionate military means. For some, 'Kashmiri Song' has become a nostalgic memory, invoking that 'paradise on earth' now lost.<sup>135</sup> But there is no substance to that memory—it is, as the late Kashmiri-American poet Agha Shahid Ali figures it in an extraordinary *ghazal*—a poetic expression of the pain of loss and separation—an ineffable loss, a 'map of longings with no limit'.<sup>136</sup> Shahid created his classically formed *Ghazal* (1997) out of 'Kashmiri Song', drawing from its theme of romantic agony an evocation of the agony of violence in, and exile from, his homeland:

Where are you now? Who lies beneath your spell tonight  
Before you agonise him in farewell tonight?

Pale hands that once loved me beside the Shalimar:  
Whom else from rapture's road will you expel tonight?

I beg for haven: Prisons, let open your gates—  
A refugee from Belief seeks a cell tonight.

Mughal ceilings, let your mirrored convexities  
multiply me at once under your spell tonight.

He's freed some fire from ice in pity for Heaven.  
He's left open—for God—the doors of Hell tonight.

In the heart's veined temple, all statues have been smashed.  
No priest in saffron's left to toll its knell tonight.

And I, Shāhid, only am escaped to tell thee—  
God sobs in my arms. Call me Ishmael tonight.<sup>137</sup>

Amitav Ghosh relates how Shahid became, as a regular traveller between the United States and the Indian subcontinent, a first hand witness (*shāhid*) to the mounting violence that seized the region from the late 1980s onwards: 'It was '89, the stones were not far, signs of change everywhere (Kashmir would soon be in literal flames).'<sup>138</sup> Some years later, Shahid began to figure his homeland as, in Ghosh's words, 'a vortex of images circling around a single point of stillness: the idea of death'. In this morbid figuring, the poet himself became 'both Shāhid and Shahid, witness and martyr—his destiny inextricably linked with Kashmir's, each prefigured by the other'.<sup>139</sup> In Shahid's *Ghazal*, with its invocation of the poet as a witness in the final *makhta* (signature couplet), 'Kashmiri Song' becomes a mirror of contemporary Muslim-Kashmiri identity, of the exile's sense of loss and recovery (there is a witness left to tell his-story), of the very experience of the formerly colonized.<sup>140</sup> This is a subversive re-voicing, a poetic decolonization of 'Kashmiri Song', using a classical, Islamic form avowedly 'to save oneself from Western civilization'.<sup>141</sup>

'Kashmiri Song' is thus not only a document of its historical moment but also, in its own whimsical way, refracted through myriad interpretations, a musical space within which the marginalized voices—of Muslims, exiles, women, lesbians—of Indo-British colonial history can be heard. The moment recaptured in 'Kashmiri Song', like history itself, is ambiguous; its 'facts' are hard to establish and are capable of bearing many meanings. It is precisely the fragmentary nature of the memory and the subject's questioning of the past (*where? who? whom?*), set in motion in 1902, which lends the song its evocative power within the 'mythography' of Indo-British history, and which continues to reverberate through 1947–48, all the way to 2014 and beyond.<sup>142</sup>

## NOTES

1. The Exhibition ran from 23 April to 1 November 1924, and re-opened on 9 May 1925, running that year until 31 October. *The British Empire Exhibition Official Guide* (London: Fleetway Press, 1924).
2. Quoted in Mohan Khokar, *His Dance, His Life: A Portrait of Uday Shankar* (New Delhi: Himalayan Books, 1983), 41.
3. 'Music for Pageant', British Empire Exhibition pamphlet no. 7: Pageant of Empire Programme—Part II July 21–Aug 30 (London: Fleetway Press Ltd, 1924).
4. British Empire Exhibition pamphlet no. 7, 12.
5. 'The Programme of Music', *The Times*, 29 July 1924, p. xi. Uday Shankar's biographer, Khokar, states that it was through Lady Meherbai Dorabji Tata that Shankar got his big

- break to dance at the British Empire Exhibition. He danced Shiva and composed the music for the orchestra (Khokar, *His Dance, His Life*, 41). For more on *The Early Days of India* pageant at Wembley, especially its music, see Nalini Ghuman, 'Elgar's *Pageant of Empire*, 1924: an Imperial *Leitmotiv*', in *Exhibiting the Empire: Cultures of Display and the British Empire*, ed. John McAleer and John M. MacKenzie (Manchester: Manchester University Press, forthcoming).
6. C.T., 'Women's Work in Music', *Radio Times*, 3 April 1925, 51. Edwin Evans, writing seven years after the first performance in 1896 felt that the 'phenomenal success' of Lehmann's *In a Persian Garden* 'places it almost beyond the sphere of ordinary discussion' ('Modern British Composers: Liza Lehmann', *Musical Standard* 10 (17 October 1903), 243).
  7. Sophie Fuller has done a great deal to remedy the lack of scholarship on Lehmann, and on other British women composers of the period; see, for instance, her 'Women Composers during the British Musical Renaissance, 1880–1918' (Ph.D. diss., University of London, 1998) in which Lehmann is one of six composers considered in detail.
  8. A. B. Cooper, 'Songs that Moved the World: The Story of *The Indian Love Lyrics*', *Radio Times*, 15 August 1924, 310.
  9. *Ibid.*
  10. Obituary, 'Lieutenant-Colonel Woodforde-Finden (1845–1916)', *British Medical Journal* 1 (13 May 1916): 707. 'Lt Col Woodforde-Finden, 45 Portland Court, was the only son of the late George Corfield Finden of Gloucester-Terrace, Hyde Park.'
  11. Boosey & Hawkes catalogue of the works of Woodforde-Finden (n.d.); held in the Boosey & Hawkes Archive, London.
  12. Richard Burton founded the Kama Shastra society in 1882. It was dedicated to the publication of translations, usually by Burton himself, of the Hindu Love treatises, including the sixteenth-century *Ananga Ranga* (1885), Vatsyayana's second- to fourth-century C.E. *Kama Sutra* (1883), as well as the *Perfumed Garden* (sixteenth-century Arabic) (1886), all for private circulation only.
  13. Bliss Carman, 'Poetry of the Month', *Reader* 1, no. 1 (November 1902): 87–8; and A.R., Review of *The Garden of Kama*, *Imperial and Asiatic Quarterly Review and Oriental and Colonial Record* (January–April 1902): 415–16.
  14. Anon., 'Western Interpreters of Eastern Verse' (review of *The Garden of Kama*), *Calcutta Review* 236 (April 1904): 478 and 487.
  15. 'Recent Verse', *Athenaeum* (15 March 1902): 331.
  16. *Ibid.*
  17. Laurence Hope, 'Kashmiri Song', in *India's Love Lyrics including The Garden of Kama* (New York: Dodd Mead & Company, 1906; repr. 1927), 100.
  18. Advertisement for 1920s edition of the *Four Indian Love Lyrics* (London: Boosey & Co.).
  19. Cooper, 'Songs that Moved the World', 310.
  20. *The Times*, 14 March 1919, 7, col. a.
  21. Gerry Farrell, *Indian Music and the West* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 107; Derek Scott, however, deftly undermines his own identification by stating, 'whether this is the phrygian mode or rag multani is irrelevant, of course, to a consideration of Orientalism' (*Musical Quarterly* 82, no. 2 (Summer 1998): 321). Sophie Fuller, too, in her discussion about these scholars' 'identifications' of rāgas, suggests that the piano prelude sounds a note of authenticity and differentiates it from what she perceives to be other 'less authentic musical exoticisms' in the companion songs ('Creative Women and "Exoticism"', in *Music and Orientalism in the British Empire*,

- 1780s–1940s, ed. Martin Clayton and Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2007), 237–55, esp. 245).
22. Another *fin-de-siècle* composer, Claude Debussy, often used the technique of doubling the melodic line an octave below for evocative effect in his piano music, as for instance in *Clair de Lune* (1890).
  23. The quotation is from Harold Simpson, ‘Amy Woodforde-Finden’, in *A Century of Ballads, 1810–1910: Their Composers and Singers* (London: Mills & Boon, 1910), 319.
  24. The Chaal Moghra is a strongly scented flowering tree, a variety of jasmine—its name means jasmine—which grows directly from the bark.
  25. Francis Thompson, ‘Hindoo Love-Poems’, *Academy and Literature* (15 March 1902): 263–4.
  26. Sarojini Naidu, *The Golden Threshold* (London: Heinemann, 1905). For a discussion of Naidu’s British period, see Chandani Lokuge, ‘Dialoguing with Empire: The Literary and Political Rhetoric of Sarojini Naidu’, in *India in Britain: South Asian Networks and Connections*, ed. Susheila Nasta (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 115–33. Both Lehmann and Woodforde-Finden set Naidu’s ‘Cradle Song’; Woodforde-Finden’s setting is entitled ‘A Little Lovely Dream’ (Boosey & Co. 1907 and 1917, respectively). Woodforde-Finden’s ‘In a Latticed Balcony’ (1917) sets words from Naidu, and Lehmann’s *The Golden Threshold—An Indian Song-Garland*, all settings of Naidu, is scored for soloists, chorus, and orchestra (London: Boosey & Co, 1906). Adela Maddison (1863–1929) also set Indian poetry, notably that of Rabindranath Tagore.
  27. Pheroze Kabraji, ‘Some Impression of European and Indian Music’, *Indian Magazine and Review* 442 (October 1907): 265.
  28. Ashok Kumar Bachchan examines the themes and imagery of Naidu’s poems in detail, see ‘A Critical Estimate of Sarojini Naidu’s Folk Songs in *The Golden Threshold*’, in *Perspectives on Indian English Literature*, ed., Vinod Kumar Maheshwari (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers and Distributors, 2002), 46–57.
  29. *Ibid.*, 51–2.
  30. ‘Another Hindoo Poet’, *New Republic* 9 (30 December 1916): 247–48; quoted in Edward Marx, *The Idea of a Colony: Cross-Culturalism in Modern Poetry* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, Scholarly Publishing Division; 2nd rev. ed., 2004), 49–50.
  31. Simpson, ‘Amy Woodforde-Finden’, 318–21.
  32. *Ibid.*, 318.
  33. Philip Brett recalled that, after a performance of the songs at Cambridge, ‘a don whom I liked and who I knew had been in the Indian civil service came up to us with port on his breath and tears in his eyes. “I haven’t heard those songs since India, where they were often sung at the club”’ (‘Eros and Orientalism in Britten’s Operas’, in *Queering the Pitch: The New Gay and Lesbian Musicology*, ed. Brett et al. (New York: Routledge, 1994), 235). Margaret MacMillan writes that a guest at the regular dinners hosted by a memsahib ‘might be persuaded to sing a popular sentimental ballad, perhaps one of the “Indian Love Lyrics”’ (*Women of the Raj: The Mothers, Wives, and Daughters of the British Empire in India* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1988), 166).
  34. Kashmiri Song arr. by Victor Thorne for SSA trio (London: Boosey & Hawkes, 1955).
  35. Quotation from Boosey’s 1920s advertisement for the *Indian Love Lyrics*.
  36. See e.g. Sophie Fuller’s entry for Woodforde-Finden in the *Pandora Guide to Women Composers* (London: Pandora, 1994), 344. Also Edward Wickham’s 1994 liner notes to the CD ‘Pale Hands I Loved’ (baritone Henry Wickham and pianist Susie Allan): ‘Amy Woodforde-Finden’s “Four Indian Love Lyrics” suited precisely the popular taste in the exotic and the sentimental.’
  37. Cooper, ‘Songs that Moved the World’, 310; the second quotation comes from an article entitled ‘Which is the Most Popular Song?’ *Radio Times*, 6 February 1925, 290.

- 'Less than the Dust' appeared under the title 'Songs You Ought to Know' as one of the 'famous Indian Love Lyrics' that addressed the question; *Radio Times*, 31 July 1925, 235.
38. Francis G. Hutchins, *The Illusion of Permanence: British Imperialism in India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1967), 157.
  39. For more on Edward VII, see Jane Ridley, *Bertie: A Life of Edward VII* (London: Chatto & Windus, 2012).
  40. Thomas Moore, *Lalla Rookh: An Oriental Romance* (London: Longman, 1817)—Four narrative poems with a connecting tale in prose. The work depicts Princess Lalla Rookh's journey from Delhi to Kashmir to be married to the King of Bucharia. During the journey a young poet, Feramorz, relates the four poetical tales of the romance—but she falls in love with him. It is a happy ending as he turns out to be the king she is betrothed to!
  41. *Ibid.*, 295.
  42. *Ibid.*, 301.
  43. François Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire A.D. 1656–1668*, trans. Archibald Constable (1891); 2nd ed., rev. Vincent A. Smith (London: Humphrey Milford, Oxford University Press, 1916), 393 and 401. Bernier spent six years in the Mughal Empire, from 1658 to 1664. He described the beauties of Kashmir—both its land and people in vivid terms (393–427, 399).
  44. Elizabeth B. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden in Persia and Mughal India* (London: Scholar Press, 1980), 1.
  45. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 400 and 399.
  46. Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden*, 125. See also Bamber Gascoigne: 'The Shalimar Bagh . . . is distinguished by a series of summer pavilions standing on elegantly carved black pillars . . . surrounded by pools with seats in them which can only be reached by stepping stones' (*The Great Moghuls* (London: Constable, 1971, repr. 1998), 171–2).
  47. Henry Beveridge, ed., *The Turk-i-Jahangiri, or Memoirs of Jahangir*, trans. Alexander Rodgers (Delhi, 1968), vol. 2, 143; quoted in Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden*, 122–3.
  48. Constance Mary Villiers-Stuart, *Gardens of the Great Mughals* (London, 1913); her splendid watercolour of Shalimar Bagh can be seen in colour on this book's companion website. See also 'Indian Water Gardens', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 62 (1914): 444–67; 'Indian Garden-Palaces, The Garden-Palaces of Nishat Bagh and Shalimar Bagh and Deeg', *Country Life* 37 (1915): 827–32; 'The Indian Paradise Garden', *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 79 (1931): 794–808.
  49. Vicomte Robert d'Humieres, *Through Isle and Empire* (New York, 1905), 214–15; quoted in Moynihan, *Paradise as a Garden*, 125–6.
  50. Letter from Percy Grainger to Michael Harrington, 20 November 1937; quoted in John Bird, *Percy Grainger* (London: Elek Books Ltd., 1976), 161.
  51. Laeeq Futehally, 'Enchanted Gardens: Babur's Gift', *The Hindu Folio* online edition; *The Hindu*, 4 June 2000, <<http://www.hindu.com/folio/fo0006/00060200.htm>>. Bernier also described the approach by *shikara*—'through a spacious canal, bordered with green turf, and running between two rows of poplars [for] . . . about five hundred paces, and it leads to a large summerhouse placed in the middle of the garden' (*Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 399). John E. Richards further explains: 'The Mughal gardens made a strong appeal to all the senses . . . it was delightful in the warm Indian climate to be outdoors under shade, with moisture and the sound of water running, the many colors of the flowers, and the taste of fresh fruits. Specially designed, open-air gardens fitted with carpets and cushions . . . a voluptuous setting for aristocratic repose . . . the symmetrical gardens with their geometry touched a deeply-felt aesthetic response embedded in Timurid and Persian culture . . . Here wine could be drunk in

- companionable parties, opium consumed, delectable foods eaten, poetry heard and recited, music heard' ('The Historiography of Mughal Gardens', in *Mughal Gardens: Sources, Places, Representations, and Prospects*, ed. James L. Wescoat, Jr. and Joachim Wolschke-Bulmahn (Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks, 1996), 259–66, 262).
52. Lieutenant-Colonel Henry D'Oyley Torrens, *Travels in Ladāk, Tartary and Kashmir*, 2nd ed. (London: Saunders, Otley and Co., 1863), 259.
  53. Quoted by Pran Nevile in *Rare Glimpses of the Raj* (Mumbai: Somaiya Publications, 1998), 19.
  54. Bernier, *Travels in the Mogul Empire*, 404.
  55. William Carpenter's Kashmiri paintings, dating from c.1854 to 1855, are held at the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. They were displayed at the Royal Academy in London from 1857 to 1865, during which time many were reproduced in *The Illustrated London News* as special supplementary lithographs; 'Glimpses of South Asia before 1947'. See <<http://www.harappa.com/lith/wazir2.html>>.
  56. Byam Shaw's other illustrations depict brown-skinned women with rounder faces, as in 'The Temple Bells' or 'Less than the Dust' (*Garden of Kama and Other Love Lyrics from India*, arranged in verse by Laurence Hope, illustrated by Byam Shaw (London: William Heinemann, 1914)).
  57. Moore received £3,000 for the copyright of the former; see A. C. Partridge, *Language and Society in Anglo-Irish Literature* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan, 1984), 163.
  58. William Brough, *Lalla Rookh; or, The princess, the peri, & the troubadour: a burlesque and pantomime, in one act* (London: T. H. Lacy, 1850); also a 'Burlesque Extravaganza', *Lalla Rooke*, by Horace Lennard and P. Bucaloss which opened in March 1880 at London's Novelty Theatre and was staged every evening at 10 pm: British Library, Playbills 1870–1901 (H–O) BL 74/344; Robert Schumann's Op. 50 appeared in English translation as *Paradise and the Peri*, a cantata, words written and adapted from Moore's 'Lalla Rookh' by H. W. Dulcken (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1873); Frederic Clay, *Lalla Rookh: cantata, the subject founded on Moore's Eastern legend*, words by W. G. Wills (London: Chappell, 1877).
  59. Nicolson's identity had been revealed by several critics, including Thompson, in 'Hindoo Love-Poems', 263–4; and, as Edward Marx notes, it had also appeared in the *Critic* in 1902 ('Violet (Adela Florence) Nicolson', in *An Encyclopedia of British Women Writers*, ed. Paul Schlueter and June Schlueter (New York: Garland, 1999), 476–7). Photographs of Nicolson appeared in posthumous editions of her poetry in 1905, 1907, and 1908.
  60. In her chapter entitled 'Unconventional Women', Margaret MacMillan finds Nicolson 'perhaps the most unconventional of them all' (*Women of the Raj*, 206–7).
  61. Ibid.
  62. Hope, 'Song of the Parao', in *Complete Love Lyrics* in three volumes (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company, 1929), 397.
  63. Marx, 'Violet (Adela Florence) Nicolson', in *An Encyclopedia of British Women Writers*, 476–7. The quotation 'degenerate and barbaric' comes from Partha Chatterjee's discussion of how the moral condemnation of *sati* was a central element in the ideological justification of English colonial rule ('The Nation and its Women', in *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 116–19, 118). It should be noted, however, that Nicolson was not, culturally or by other persuasion or *force majeure*, forced into suicide.
  64. Stereoscopic cameras, those with two lenses and the ability to take two photographs at the same time, were introduced in the mid-nineteenth century. Seen through a

- viewer, the two identical photographs would create a three-dimensional effect. Photograph from The Underwood Travel Library: Stereoscopic Views of India.
65. A. R., Review of *The Garden of Kama*, 415.
  66. James Elroy Flecker, 'Laurence Hope', *Monthly Review* (June 1907): 164–8.
  67. Lily Adams Beck [pseud.], 'The Interpreter: A Romance of the East', in her collection, *The Ninth Vibration, and Other Stories* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1922), 123–5.
  68. Marx, 'Violet (Adela Florence) Nicolson', 476–7.
  69. Charles Allen, *Plain Tales from the Raj* (London: Deutsch, 1975), 124.
  70. MacMillan, *Women of the Raj*, 105–6.
  71. Cooper, 'Songs that Moved the World', 310.
  72. Dedication of H. Rider Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines* (London: Cassell & Co. 1885; new illustrated ed. 1905; repr. 1907).
  73. Novellas with an Indian setting were written by such authors as Flora Annie Steele, Maud Diver, Fanny Emily Farr Penny, Mrs Alice Perrin, Bithia Mary Croker; for a discussion of their writings, see Benita Parry, 'The Romancers: Five Lady Novelists', in id., *Delusions and Discoveries: India in the British Imagination, 1880–1930* (London: Verso, 1988), 78–126.
  74. Hilda M. Swabey, *The Chief Commissioner* (London: Methuen, 1912), 238; Maud Diver, *The Englishwoman in India* (Edinburgh: W. Blackwood, 1909), 77. Also, Trevor Pinch, former editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette*, titled the first chapter of his book on India, 'The Land of Sex-Mad Millions', in *Stark India* (London: Hutchinson & Co. Ltd., 1930); quotations and information from MacMillan, *Women of the Raj*, 104.
  75. Quotations are from Macmillan, *Women of the Raj*, 104–5; and Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*, 71. The Cambridge University philosopher, Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson, who visited India in 1912–13 on an Albert Kahn Travelling Fellowship, reported in 1914 that 'Hindu sculpture and architecture—I have examined it from North to South, and from East to West—is disquieting and terrible [in its expression of 'inexhaustible fertility'] to the Western mind' (quoted in Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*, 67).
  76. Laurence Hope, 'Reverie of Mahomed Akram at the Tamarind Tank', in *Complete Love Lyrics*, 7–8; quoted in Marx, *The Idea of a Colony*, 40.
  77. Rider Haggard, *King Solomon's Mines*. See also Anne McClintock's reading of the sexual nature of conquest outlined in both the story and the map in her *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 1–4.
  78. Thompson, 'Hindoo Love-Poems', 263–4.
  79. Ann Stoler, 'Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race, and Morality in Colonial Asia', in *Gender and the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in the Postmodern Era*, ed. Micaela di Leonardo (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1991), 78.
  80. Macmillan, *Women of the Raj*, 105.
  81. Mrs G. H. Bell [pseud. John Travers], *Sahib-log* (London: Duckworth, 1910), 161; quoted in MacMillan, *Women of the Raj*, 106.
  82. E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (London: E. Arnold & Co., 1924); Paul Scott, *The Jewel in the Crown* (London: Heinemann, 1966), which is the first book of the *Raj Quartet*.
  83. Victoria Cross, *Anna Lombard* (London: Long, 1901).
  84. The quoted phrase comes from Parry, *Delusions and Discoveries*, 78.

85. Farrell writes that the song 'is told through the eyes of . . . an Indian man yearning for his pale-skinned memsahib' (*Indian Music and the West*, 106); see also Michael Turner and Anthony Miall, *The Edwardian Song Book* (London: Methuen, 1982), 135.
86. Hope, 'On the City Wall', in *India's Love Lyrics*, 149.
87. Fuller, 'Creative Women and "Exoticism"', 245.
88. Rudyard Kipling, 'Beyond the Pale', in *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1888; new ed. by Andrew Rutherford, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 130–131.
89. Fuller, 'Creative Women and "Exoticism"', 245.
90. Advertisement for Morlais Morgan's recording with orchestra, in *Gramophone* 5, no. 12 (May 1928): 505.
91. Dubarry's *Garden of Kama* perfume was advertised in the London *Graphic* (December 1919); The Paris Perfume House of Guerlain, established in 1828, launched *Shalimar* in 1925. Today it is still advertised as 'an oriental fragrance . . . to excite and express desire. She who dares to wear it is asserting her femininity and ultra sensuality. Hers is carnal seduction—at the frontier of the forbidden. . . . Wearing Shalimar means surrendering control to the senses.' The *Shalimar* range for 2013 includes a 7.5 ml perfume at £75, and a special bottle costing \$1,500. La Cross marketed their new shades of nail varnish under the epithet 'Pale Hands pink-tipped. . . is fashion's theme song for fall'; advert, *Life* magazine, 27 September 1937.
92. Kabraji, 'Some Impression of European and Indian Music', 265.
93. G. E. Hardy, *An Indian Love Song* (London: West & Co, 1916); Liza Lehman, *Indian Love Song* (London: Boosey & Co, 1907); Hubert Bath, *Three Indian Songs*, poems by L. Hope (London: Boosey & Co, 1906). There were also poems and songs that 'borrowed' from the Indian Love Lyrics, among them the *Indian Songs of Passion* by Gladys Emanuel [pseud. Mrs John Grossman] (2nd ed. Calcutta: Thacker, Spink & Co., 1908), which include such lines as 'Pale Sweet Hands . . . Cruel sweet hands . . . love or kill . . . I am better dead.' Additionally, the Australian novelist and composer Henry Handel Richardson (the pen name of Ethel Florence Lindesay Richardson, 1870–1946) set Hope's 'Prayer' which Woodforde-Finden had set in her *Four More Indian Love Lyrics* as 'You Are All That Is Lovely'.
94. The opening day review in the *New York Times* read as follows, 'Mary Pickford starred as Radha, the little English girl who is left by her father. . . . The eastern scenes are atmospheric enough, with their swarms of dark-skinned men and women and their backgrounds of rich verdure and buildings of Oriental architecture' (6 November 1916, 9). Author Rebecca West had 'Less than the Dust' on her mind when writing a letter in 1917: 'I mean to try the Century soon—say Spring—with a shorter thing that I have a quarter written, and that I shall turn to when my story next comes to a halt. They are darlings. Their letters make me feel less than the dust beneath the Editor's chair' (*Selected Letters of Rebecca West*, ed. Bonnie Kime Scott (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000), Part 1: 1907–1923: 'Panther with a Pen').
95. Nathan Leopold, *Life Plus 99 Years* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1958).
96. In his autobiography, Leopold wrote: 'My motive [for the murder], so far as I can be said to have had one, was to please Dick. Just that—incredible as it sounds. I thought so much of the guy that I was willing to do anything—even commit murder—if he wanted it bad enough' (*Life Plus 99 Years*, 49).
97. *Ibid.*, 150.
98. *Motion Picture Classic* 26, no. 6 (February 1928), two-page centre-spread, 38–39.
99. The *Indian Love Lyrics* also inspired Stoll Pictures eponymous film of 1923. In this fictional catch-all exotic 'love story of a Prince and Princess set in Medieval India', the audience encountered Owen Nares as Prince Zahirudin (from 'Less than the Dust'),

- Malvina Longfellow as Princess Nadira, along with a number of other vaguely Eastern characters including Pino Conti as Yussef, Master of the Royal Harems, and Henry Wilson as Hakim the dwarf.
100. Yasmine Gooneratne, 'Growing Up Like Flowers', in *Relative Merits: A Personal Memoir of the Bandaranaike Family of Sri Lanka* (London: C. Hurst, 1986).
  101. Kaikhosru Sorabji, *Oriental Atmosphere in Around Music* (London: Unicorn Press, 1932), 147–8. John Foulds, quotations from 'Whither Indian Music?' *Orpheus Abroad*, no. 4, script of radio talk, held in private family collection, and *Music To-Day: Its Heritage from the Past, and Legacy to the Future* (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1934), 344–5.
  102. 'As I sat in the bath-tub, soaping a meditative foot and singing, if I remember correctly, "Pale Hands I Loved Beside the Shalimar", it would be deceiving my public to say that I was feeling booms-a-daisy' (P. G. Wodehouse, *Jeeves and the Feudal Spirit* (London: Herbert Jenkins, 1954), 1). It was the young Edmund Rubbra (1901–1986) who was inspired to write his own, modernist 'Indian' music: 'This new direction given to my thoughts had already been haltingly started by my mother's liking for Amy Woodforde-Finden's *Indian Love Lyrics*, the piano accompaniment of which I used to play for her, and was fostered by my later discovery of the work of Cyril Scott and Holst... and by my reading of Mme Blavatsky's extraordinary book, *Isis Unveiled*.... These combined stimuli remained as underlying experiences in such works as the one-act opera of 1933, *Bee-bee-bei*, the action being located in Kashmir, the first movement of the Piano Concerto (dedicated to Ali Akbar Khan) and the [raga-like] *Pezzo Ostinato* for solo harp' (quoted in Ralph Scott Grover, *The Music of Edmund Rubbra* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 6–7, 284–6, and 571–2).
  103. *The Sheik* [sic] (Famous Players-Lasky, Paramount, 1921). For a discussion of the way in which Hull's novel fuelled images of Englishwomen travelling abroad and finding romance in the desert with 'oriental' men, see Hsu-Ming Teo, 'Orientalism and the Mass Market Romance Novels in the Twentieth Century', in *Edward Said: The Legacy of Public Intellectual*, ed. Ned Curthoys and Debjani Ganguly (Carlton, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 2007), 241–62 (esp. 248–50 for more on Valentino and *The Sheik*).
  104. Shellac 78-rpm record recorded in New York on 14 May 1923 and issued after his death in 1926, with a Spanish song, 'El Reliquario', on the reverse. <<http://www.rudolph-valentino.com/rv-voice.htm>>.
  105. Columbia C158: (rhumba) side A: 'In a Persian Market', side B 'Kashmiri Song'; Cugat and his Waldorf-Astoria Orchestra.
  106. *Gramophone* 5, no. 3 (August 1927): 108.
  107. 'Kashmiri Foxtrot', arr. by M. Williams (London: Boosey & Co. 1925).
  108. The *Warsaw Concerto* (as it became known) has, since 1941, been featured in over a hundred separate recordings with sales in excess of three million. Philip Lane, notes to Naxos CD 8.554323 (1995), 2.
  109. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (New York: Penguin Books Ltd., 1991), 113. Neil ten Kortenaar describes the song in the context of Sabarmati's remark as 'an anthem of colonial mimetic desire' (*Self, Nation, Text in Salman Rushdie's Midnight's Children* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2003), 169).
  110. Farrell, *Indian Music and the West*, 106.
  111. First published in *Good Housekeeping* magazine, the story was included in *Creatures of Circumstance* (1947). Other fictional stories include: Ted Malone 'The Secret Life of Laurence Hope', in *Ted Malone's Favorite Stories* (New York: Doubleday,

- 1950), and Mary Talbot Cross [pseud. of Jennifer Carter], *Fate Knows No Tears* (Melbourne: Shalimar Press, 1996).
112. W. Somerset Maugham, 'The Colonel's Lady', *Collected Short Stories*, vol. 2 (1951, repr. New York: Penguin Books, 1992), 220–35, 235. The classic 1948 movie omnibus based on four of Maugham's short stories including 'The Colonel's Lady' featured Cecil Parker and Nora Swinburne in the lead roles as Colonel and Mrs Peregrine.
  113. Hardy, quoted in Marx, 'Laurence Hope'. Flecker, 'Laurence Hope', 164–8. That Flecker was a homosexual whose own exotic poetry later contained veiled references to homosexual love (and that a novel was written portraying the relation between Flecker and T. E. Lawrence 'of Arabia' during their travels in the Middle East), suggest that his attraction to the *Indian Love Lyrics* was sparked by his own personal and literary interest in homosexuality (as well as in sado-masochism).
  114. John Kenrick, 'Our Love Is Here To Stay IV, 1900–1940: On Screen', <<http://www.musicals101.com/gay4.htm>>.
  115. Terry Castle, *The Literature of Lesbianism: A Historical Anthology from Ariosto to Stonewall* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2003), 614. When, in 2011, pianist Stephen Hough composed his own setting of 'Kashmiri Song' for inclusion in his cycle of *Other Love Songs* which 'explore other kinds of love' than that 'between a man and a woman', he explained that Hope's poem was 'a lesbian love song [of] searing passion' (Hough, 'Singing about Love of Various Kinds... but not between a Man and a Woman', *Telegraph*, 19 May 2011, <<http://blogs.telegraph.co.uk/culture/stephenhough/100053501/singing-about-love-of-various-kinds-but-not-between-a-man-and-a-woman/>>; See also his notes on *Other Love Songs* (The Prince Consort, Linn Records: CKD 382, 2011), <<http://www.linnrecords.com/recording-other-love-songs.aspx>>).
  116. *Somebody Bin Usin' that Thing*, directed by Warwick Thompson, played at the Rosemary Brank Theatre, London N1 in March 2001. See Thompson's exploration of 'the subversion hidden in the old music hall', 'Have a Gay Old Time', *Guardian Unlimited* online, 9 March 2001, <[http://www.guardian.co.uk/friday\\_review/story/0,3605,448635,00.html](http://www.guardian.co.uk/friday_review/story/0,3605,448635,00.html)>. Quoted description of 'Kashmiri Song' comes from Hough, 'Singing about Love of Various Kinds'.
  117. Thompson, 'Have a Gay Old Time'.
  118. The story of 'Kashmiri Song' that appeared in the London program was reproduced in the service of selling the score of the *Indian Love Lyrics* sheet music on ebay in 2002: eBay Item # 850306557. The quotation comes from that advertisement.
  119. Ibid.
  120. Thompson 'Have a Gay Old Time'.
  121. Letter to Miss Fletcher, 1 June 1916; The Woodforde-Finden manuscript: seven letters 1914–17. The letters are primarily concerned with her husband, his serious illness and death on April 27, 1916. Manuscripts Department, Lilly Library, Indiana University (Bloomington).
  122. Hope, 'Dedication to Malcolm Nicolson', in *Indian Love* (London: Heinemann, 1905).
  123. Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928) (sometimes referred to as 'the bible of lesbianism') was, shortly after its release in 1928, pronounced obscene in Britain following a sensational trial and banned until 1949.
  124. Joseph A. Boone, 'Vacation Cruises: or, The Homoeroticism of Orientalism', in *Postcolonial, Queer: Theoretical Intersections*, ed. John C. Hawley (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001), 43–78, esp. 43–4.
  125. Sara Suleri, *The Rhetoric of English India* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), esp. 16–17, 77. Joseph A. Boone has examined homoeroticizing strands of

- colonialist discourse through a discussion of Western male writers whose representations of the Near and Middle East, he argues, cannot be disentangled from their imagined and real encounters abroad with male homosexuality; see 'Vacation Cruises: or, The Homoeroticism of Orientalism'.
126. See e.g. T. Graham Bailey, *A History of Urdu Literature* (Calcutta: Association Press Y.M.C.A., 1932); see also Ali Jawad Zaidi, *A History of Urdu Literature* (New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1993).
  127. See *Same-Sex Love in India—Readings from Literature and History*, ed., Ruth Vanita and Saleem Kidwai (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2000), esp. IV/2: 'Rekhti Poetry: Love between Women'.
  128. The British anti-sodomy law of 1860 was introduced in India in 1861 as section 377 of the Indian Penal Code and remains in place today.
  129. The Anglo-Indian writer Ruskin Bond weaves his story 'When Darkness Falls' (set at the hill station of Dehra Dun) around the song (*When Darkness Falls and Other Stories* (New Delhi: Penguin, 2001)). The transcription and new setting are both by Stephen Hough: the transcription (along with those of the other *Indian Love Lyrics*) is included on his disc, *The Piano Album* (Virgin Classics: Catalog #: 61498, 1998); his new setting of 'Kashmiri Song' is one of his *Other Love Songs* recorded by the Prince Consort. The quotation comes from Hough's notes on the recording (The Prince Consort, Linn Records: CKD 382, 2011): <<http://www.linnrecords.com/recording-other-love-songs.aspx>>.
  130. Celia Strother, 'Calling All Pianists, Vocalists', 21 March 2001. <<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/LaurenceHope/message/67>>.
  131. Edward Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin Books, 1995), 188.
  132. *The Times of India* recently reported that the *Kama Sutra* 'has been sexed up for a 21st century audience with a new app that enables couples to study its poses in 3D...using state of the art technology...when viewed through a smartphone or tablet' (16 April 2013). The subject of sexuality in India also has a venerable history of sophisticated inquiry: *sringararasa*—the erotic *rasa*, or flavour—is one of the nine *rasas* comprising the Hindu system of aesthetics. And the *Rig Veda* itself begins its myth with the creation of *kama*—sexual desire. See William Dalrymple, 'Pleasure Palace', *Guardian*, 20 June 2009, 16.
  133. The quotation is from Lionel Fielden's autobiography and continues: 'And downfall it was: don't let anyone make the mistake of thinking that Attlee or Mountbatten or England made a great and noble gesture of renunciation. We got out of India because we ruled it so ineffectively that we were forced out—and also, of course, because we had neither the troops nor the money, after the 1939 war, to hold it by force. No credit is due to England for the events of 1946 and 1947. It was not, as Lawrence had hoped, a noble gesture: it was a feeble one' (*The Natural Bent* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1960), 191).
  134. Moynihan noted that extensive mountain deforestation caused severe soil erosion, resulting in poor water retention and a lowering of the water table, exacerbated by a decrease in annual precipitation which left the gardens without flowing water (*Paradise as a Garden*, 125–7). However, the gardens have now been beautifully restored for a concert which Zubin Mehta directed there in September 2013, and the fountains are once again flowing with clear water (Gargi Gupta, 'Kashmir Ki Kali: Srinagar's famed Shalimar Bagh has been restored to what it was in Jehangir's time—Farah Baksh [the delightful]', *dnaindia.com*, 20 October 2013).

135. In a recollection of his first journalistic assignment to the territory in 1989, William Dalrymple explained that the 'extraordinary, almost unearthly beauty of the Kashmir valley made it a strange conflict to cover' ('Kashmir: The Scarred and the Beautiful', *New York Review of Books*, May 2008, <<http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/2008/may/01/kashmir-the-scarred-and-the-beautiful/?page=1>>).
136. The quoted phrase comes from Agha Shahid Ali (1949–2001), 'The Country Without a Post Office', from *The Country Without a Post Office* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997), 48–51. Shahid's father's family, from Srinagar, were Shi'ah (a minority amongst the Muslims of Kashmir).
137. 'Ghazal', from *The Country Without a Post Office*, by Agha Shahid Ali. Copyright © 1997 by Agha Shahid Ali. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. One of the ten self-contained couplets (*sher*) of his *ghazal* invokes Hope's middle verse, omitted by Woodforde-Finden: 'He's freed some fire from ice, in pity for Heaven; / he's left open—for God—the doors of Hell tonight'. Shahid explains his passion for the *ghazal* as a verse form, noting that: 'Some rules of the *ghazal* are clear and classically stringent. The opening couplet (*matla*) sets up a scheme of rhyme (*qafia*) and refrain (*radif*) by having it occur in both lines—the rhyme *immediately* preceding the refrain—and then this scheme occurs only in the second line of each succeeding couplet' ('Introduction' to *Ravishing Disunities: Real Ghazals in English*, ed. Agha Shahid Ali (Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 2000), 3).
138. Agha Shahid Ali, 'Summers of Translation', in *Rooms Are Never Finished* (Norton, 2001), quoted in Amitav Ghosh's eloquent essay, "'The Ghat of the Only World": Agha Shahid Ali in Brooklyn', 1 January 2002, <<http://www.amitavghosh.com/aghahashahidali.html>>.
139. The quoted phrases are from Ghosh, "'The Ghat of the Only World"'.  
 140. For an analysis of Shahid's poetry in this context, see Lawrence Needham, "'The sorrows of a broken time": Agha Shahid Ali and the Poetry of Loss and Recovery', in *Reworlding: The Literature of the Indian Diaspora*, ed. Emmanuel S. Nelson (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992).
141. Shahid, 'Introduction', in *Ravishing Disunities*, 13.
142. Ashis Nandy coined the phrase 'mythography of history' (*The Intimate Enemy: Loss and Recovery of Self under Colonialism* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. ix).

## CHAPTER 5



# Persian Composer-Pianist Baffles

## *Kaikhosru Sorabji*

What earthly connection does the good Mr. Frank Denyer think I have with 'British' Music? I, with no drop of British blood in me... with no contact with a 'musical' group and disliking musicians in general? That I am a British citizen is nothing to the point—in such matters nationality is nothing... race and blood on the other hand are all-important, and mercifully unalterable.

—Kaikhosru Sorabji, *Dorset*

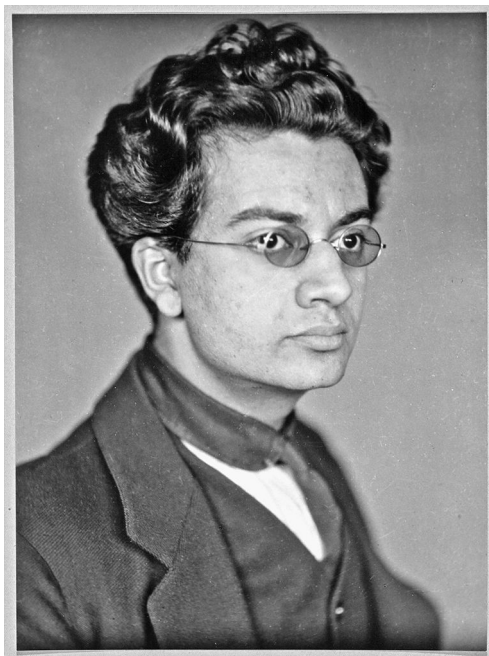
Sorabji turns out to be an Indian.... A fine, unusual person, in spite of his ugly music. A primeval forest with many weeds and briars, but strange and voluptuous.

—Ferruccio Busoni

## Marginal Exotic

The musical and critical works of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji (1892–1988) have, like the man himself, long been seen as wilfully unintelligible, idiosyncratic, and elitist. On account of his Parsi-Indian ancestry, he has often been regarded as in some way outside the Western musical tradition, as a 'marginal exotic' who 'has expressed an Oriental mind in modern European musical technique'.<sup>1</sup> Just as his assumed racial characteristics have often been mapped onto his music, so his first collection of essays was introduced by an influential editor of two weekly newspapers as the product of 'an essentially Oriental mind expressing itself in the European technique of written criticism'.<sup>2</sup> Some readers dismissed his reviews in outraged letters of 'disgust... at the ignorant articles by that foreigner Sorabji'.<sup>3</sup>

Yet his creative work attracted a number of followers in his lifetime, including those who considered him to be a brilliant pianist and composer, and a kind, intense, and highly intelligent man (figure 5.1). In 1932, the composer Havergal Brian (1876–1972) told readers of *Musical Opinion*: 'I consider Sorabji to have miraculous



**Figure 5.1**

Kaikhosru Sorabji. Alvin Langdon Coburn, c.1919

Source: © George Eastman House, International Museum of Photography and Film.

gifts...as was said of William Blake and his Prophetic Books, he is the medium through which angels in spheres far away speak to men.<sup>4</sup>

Sorabji was a prolific composer of music in the European tradition, much of it for solo piano, whose 'bewildering pages' make, in the words of one writer, 'demonic technical demands' on the performer.<sup>5</sup> In *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, renowned as one of the longest piano compositions in existence, the formidably complex writing is spread across multiple staves covering 253 landscape-format pages and lasting some four hours in performance.<sup>6</sup> The work occupies a central position in his career, written at what can now be seen as the high point of his life, in 1929–30, when he was a performing musician, and when interest was being shown in his work. 'This *Opus Clavicembalisticum*', Brian wrote, 'is a phenomenon, quite as much as [Wagner's opera] *Tristan* ever was: and musicians will appreciate its composer's uncanny cleverness when they learn that he writes out his enormous piano works and orchestral works direct into full score, and with never an emendation.'<sup>7</sup> Yet this music, along with most of his output, has largely been denied serious discussion by musicologists and historians.<sup>8</sup> This is not least because, while he was a strong critic of the music of other composers, he shielded his own from public scrutiny for decades. Moreover, he seems to be remembered as much for his intolerance of ignorance, stupidity, and those with whom he did not agree, as he is for his music.<sup>9</sup> As a writer, he has been called 'a critic with a hundred axes to grind'.<sup>10</sup> The proud and frequently arrogant persona revealed in the angry, often sneering, tirades of his published criticism and

his private letters can be deeply repellent.<sup>11</sup> He certainly made his likes and, equally, his intense dislikes, apparent in his witty, erudite, and acerbic writings which include two volumes of collected essays, *Around Music* (1932) and *Mi Contra Fa: The Immoralisings of a Machiavellian Musician* (1947); contributions to symposia on the art historian Dr Ananda Coomaraswamy and the composer Nicolas Medtner; hundreds of reviews, letters-to-the-editor, and articles on musical and political subjects for weekly newspapers and journals.<sup>12</sup>

In recent decades, there has been a surge of interest in Sorabji and his music: manuscripts have been prepared for publication, performers regularly (if infrequently) perform and record his works, and his biography and music have received some degree of scholarly attention.<sup>13</sup> In this context of what one writer has termed ‘cumulative fervour’ for Sorabji’s work, the vague notion, put forward by the composer himself, that his music is in part a natural product of his ‘Oriental mind’, remains surprisingly durable.<sup>14</sup> Studies have stopped short of examining exactly what it is in his music which is ‘Indian’ or ‘Eastern’, or indeed what is meant by labelling elements of his music ‘Oriental’. This is, in part, the result of treating his words not as testimony, but as an oracle.<sup>15</sup> But it is also because one of the most fascinating and I believe illuminating areas of study relating to the composer, consideration of his creative work and its reception in relation to the Indo-British cultural milieu of which he was a part, has yet to be considered. His relationship with India was formed not by choice as is the case with the other musicians considered here but, rather, by paternal roots. (Indeed, Kaikhosru Sorabji might even have been outwardly incensed at being included in this study at all, so antagonistic was his relation to the Indian sub-continent—not to mention to Britain.) Research by psychologists, sociologists, and educationists has demonstrated both that South Asians growing up in the West consider ethnicity to be a central identity concern and also that, for them, self-identity is closely aligned to ethnic identity.<sup>16</sup> More specifically, the racial discrimination and exclusion faced by South Asians growing up in Britain has, according to multicultural psychologist P. A. Singh Ghuman, led them even in recent decades ‘to learn to employ a variety of psychological mechanisms and social strategies to cope with this disadvantage’.<sup>17</sup> As a result, Ghuman identifies ‘the construction of dual or multiple personal and social identities’ to be common among South Asians born in the West.<sup>18</sup>

Using the composer’s personal letters as a touchstone, and in the context of the contested terrain upon which Parsis, the earliest community of Indians in Britain, negotiated the colonial relation, I trace intersections between Sorabji’s views of his own identity and the style and form of his writings and music penned during the interwar years.<sup>19</sup> This was a time when the relationship between the British and Indian peoples was changing; their interdependent history, in which resistance and animosity, though ostensibly keeping them apart, occasionally brought people—like Sorabji’s parents—together.<sup>20</sup> The music and writings I examine here illuminate a part of that history, and compel us to attend to the often overlooked intersections of British music and race in this period. Thus, while biographical details may seem irrelevant to a study of this kind, it is through a critical examination of particular aspects of Sorabji’s personal experiences and musical influences that, I believe, his work might be better understood. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that perceptions (including self-perceptions) of his ethnic identity have influenced

the creation of his music, the tenor of his writing, and the reception of his work. In this chapter, I venture into an unusual corner of Arundhati Roy's 'History House', what I take to mean a metaphorical archive of the Indo-British colonial encounter, in an effort to listen to the hitherto baffling 'whispers' that can be heard therein.<sup>21</sup>

### Himalayan Hermitage

The English (the stupidest race in Europe, Kayserling called them) call anyone who comes FROM India but not OF it...INDIAN...as who should call a kitten emerging from a dog kennel a puppy?<sup>22</sup>

Leon Dudley Sorabji was born in Chingford, Essex (Greater London) on 14 August 1892. His father, Shapurji Sorabji (1863–1932), was a wealthy Parsi engineer from Mumbai who had taken over ownership of the Bombay Foundry and Engine Works from his father (figure 5.2) and established it as the leading importer of British machinery. His business brought him to Britain on several occasions, and



**Figure 5.2**  
Shapurji Sorabji, the composer's father  
Source: © The Sorabji Archive.

it was during one of these visits that he met Madeline Matilda Worthy (1866–1959), whom he married in 1892 after they had conceived a son (the composer). By 1896, however, Shapurji had returned to Mumbai where he enjoyed an increasingly prestigious career and thereafter seldom spent time with his wife and son in Britain, although he continued to support them financially.<sup>23</sup>

While he did not see much of his father, Sorabji had a very close and lasting relationship with his mother (figure 5.3), a gifted soprano from whom he gained his love of music, his knowledge of the voice, and his early skills at the piano, an instrument for which he was to develop astonishing ability and life-long affinity.<sup>24</sup> Although the composer (and, subsequently, almost all commentators) claimed his mother had Spanish-Sicilian ancestry, it is now known, both from her parentage and the given names of her seven siblings, that she was, in fact, of West Country, 'English' extraction.<sup>25</sup>

Sorabji began his musical studies at the age of 6 and was, for the most part, educated privately. A precocious child, with a thirst for contemporary music, it is said that at the age of 13 he travelled alone to Essen to hear Mahler conducting the première of his Sixth Symphony.<sup>26</sup> He was not a child prodigy, though, and started



**Figure 5.3**  
Madeline Matilda Worthy, the composer's mother  
Source: © The Sorabji Archive.

professional life as a music critic for *The New Age* and *The New English Weekly*, only later realizing his true vocation when he gained an inheritance from a trust fund established after his father's death (in unknown circumstances) in Germany in 1932. This sum was large enough to enable him to focus entirely on composition for the rest of his life, although he continued to write on music and other matters for many years.<sup>27</sup> His earliest extant pieces, whose publication was funded by his father, date from 1914; thereafter, he wrote approximately 120 works right into his ninetieth year, among them eight piano concertos, five piano sonatas, a series of six symphonies for solo piano, and a cycle of atmospheric piano nocturnes.

Alongside his studies and *oeuvre* in the Western art music tradition, Sorabji cultivated a keen interest in Indian music. He had no assistance in this endeavour from his father, not least because Parsi allegiance, no less in music than other areas, generally tends towards the West.<sup>28</sup> As Mumbai-based musician Namita Devidayal has observed, 'most Parsis... loyalties [lie] with Bach and Zubin Mehta... Parsi homes generally feature grandfather clocks, grand pianos and, almost always, a wedding portrait of the queen of England.'<sup>29</sup> Moreover, although Shapurji was not unmusical, he had reservations about his son becoming any kind of musician. Sorabji recalled a particular incident when Madeline Matilda, frustrated at having been prevented from continuing her own career in singing because of Shapurji's disapproval (which stemmed from the widely held view in India at the time that female singers were courtesans or 'fallen women'), exclaimed, 'You ruined my musical career; I won't have you ruining his!!'<sup>30</sup> Sorabji seems, therefore, to have received no formal instruction in Indian music. He did, however, attend concerts and lectures for decades in London (and later in Mumbai), including those given by Ratan Devi, whom he considered to be 'one of the best living exponents of the classic music or Rāgas of India'.<sup>31</sup> He also studied the writings of Coomaraswamy, including his 'very excellent' pamphlet *Indian Music*, and of Arthur Fox Strangways, particularly his 'masterly treatise' *The Music of Hindostan*, which (in contrast to the opinions of Maud MacCarthy and Inayat Khan discussed in the first chapter) the composer greatly admired for its scholarly detail and lack of condescension.<sup>32</sup> During his sojourn in India in 1932–3, he listened to daily broadcasts of singers from the Mumbai station. Through informed listening and study, then, he gained what he called a 'trained ear' for the 'delicate, subtle and ancient art' of Indian music, publishing essays on the subject, and weaving significant traces of his knowledge into his own music.<sup>33</sup> Works of explicitly Indian inspiration include *Chaleur* (c.1916–17), a poem for orchestra set in 'Tropical India', two variations for piano entitled *Quasi Tambura* and *Quasi Rāg Indiana* from separate multi-movement works dating from 1930 and from 1935–7, and the *Tāntrik Symphony for solo piano* (1938–9) whose seven movements' titles are the Sanskrit terms for bodily centres and functions basic to tantric and shaktic yoga.<sup>34</sup> Alongside his published writings on European music, he wrote informed essays about Indian music, history, society, and politics.<sup>35</sup> Consistently high standards of criticism were applied to music written 'in Holborn or Hyderabad' as he put it, and he found much to admire and to admonish in both Western and Indian traditions: 'A wretched flaccid melody without either vitality of invention nor fine draughtsman-ship is just what it is, whether it comes from Birmingham or Benares; a stale flat platitude is that and nothing more, whether it comes from Paris or Pataluputra.'<sup>36</sup>

As a young man, and into his late forties, Sorabji gave occasional performances of his piano music in public which earned him mixed reviews and a small, enthusiastic following. Especially valuable were the efforts of his friend Erik Chisholm, the founder, in 1929, of the Active Society for the Propagation of Contemporary Music which drew, amongst others, Hindemith, Bartók, Berg, Szymanowski, Medtner, and Walton, to Scotland for concerts and lectures: Chisholm's society hosted four successful performances by Sorabji.<sup>37</sup> In April 1930, Delius wrote an enthusiastic letter to the composer after hearing him perform his own nocturne, *Le Jardin parfumé*, on BBC radio.<sup>38</sup> By the late 1930s, however, owing to his dissatisfaction with the concert-giving scene and with those critical of his music, Sorabji made up his mind never again to give public recitals. More significantly, after hearing a notoriously incompetent performance of part of *Opus Clavicembalisticum* in 1936, he withdrew his music from public performance (unless with his consent), declaring that 'no performance at all is better than an obscene travesty'.<sup>39</sup> This 'ban' lasted for some forty years. Sorabji subsequently went into almost complete retirement from society, retreating to 'The Eye', his house in a Dorset village, and seeing only those of whom he approved or those who had made an appointment. This self-imposed withdrawal may seem to have been the result of a whim, the irrational action of an eccentric, a reputation which has had an enduring effect on perceptions of his music. However, it may also be seen as a reaction against intolerance and ignorance.

### Colour Matters

Sorabji's Parsi-Indian ancestry meant that he was subjected to a substantial amount of racist abuse which he described in a Letter to the Editor of 1915:

The English nation . . . is persistently nasty to foreigners . . . pre-eminently to Indians. Their attitude towards us is one of carefully-studied and calculated hatefulness, *here as well as in India* . . . If we go in the train, the 'bus, the street, we are greeted with rude, insolent stares. Insulting and offensive remarks are passed about us in loud tones, we are ridiculed and laughed at to our very faces. They make no attempt of concealing their behaviour. Oh, dear, no, that would never do, for it would fail in its design of wounding, offending and hurting us if they did so.<sup>40</sup>

He recalled one particular incident in his early teens:

Ma and I were in a firstclass Underground (Met) carriage. . . . Opposite us was a gaitered dignitary of the C. of E. [Church of England] complete with typical cod-fish-in-the-mouth droop. . . . After staring long, rudely and offensively at Ma then at me . . . boomed [to the woman at his side] 'A BLACK BOY!'<sup>41</sup>

Throughout his life, Sorabji kept a file of newspaper clippings and correspondence marked 'Colour Matters'; he also wrote of the misconception that 'nationality' was interchangeable with 'race' and 'citizenship'.<sup>42</sup> Written and verbal attacks, racist

in nature, were not uncommon responses to his music criticism, and on several occasions he was not invited, or even refused admission, to concerts.<sup>43</sup> His differences and separation from society became a source of strength and he came to see himself as superior to those who despised him, vehemently rejecting attempts to label him English or British: 'I am BY NO MANNER OF MEANS NOR IN ANY WAY ENGLISH... my racial, ancestral and cultural roots are in civilisations with more millennia behind them than Anglo-Saxondom has centuries.'<sup>44</sup>

As he became more informed, Sorabji's opinion of his own racial identification and background changed—although he remained steadfast in one belief: 'I *will not* be called a *British* composer.'<sup>45</sup> In 1916, he wrote to his friend Philip Heseltine (the composer Peter Warlock): 'Heart mind body and soul I am Indian and would wish to be nothing else... "avec un peu d'Espagne autour!"'<sup>46</sup> But later a contradictory run of postcards was printed especially to inform recipients that 'Mr Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji wishes it to be known that he emphatically contradicts and repudiates certain completely inaccurate and objectionable public references to himself as an "Indian" composer.'<sup>47</sup> Over a decade later, in a letter to the composer Bernard Van Dieren written from Mumbai in 1932, he referred to 'our own people, the Parsis, who thank God are not "Indians"'.<sup>48</sup> The discovery that his father had married bigamously in India some years after abandoning him and his mother (though all the while supporting them financially), naturally had a profound impact on his changing sense of identity. This became especially apparent when, after his father's death in 1932, '[h]is Indian whore and a set of rascally Indian lawyers rooked me and my beloved mother of what should have been ours'.<sup>49</sup> Although his father had flouted the Parsi Marriage and Divorce Act of 1865 which allowed Parsis to have only one wife or husband during the lifetime of the spouse, under English law Sorabji was legally entitled to his seemingly substantial inheritance and had, indeed, been cheated of it.<sup>50</sup> In a television appearance in 1977, he told viewers that his father had been 'the worst human [being] in Bombay' and went on to identify himself as half-Sicilian 'and much more than that temperamentally and psychologically. Much more my beloved mother's son than my father's'.<sup>51</sup> In these later years, Sorabji came to denounce India as 'that beastly place'.<sup>52</sup> Nevertheless, he did maintain active connections in India, some of them familial; the postman who worked from the late 1960s onward in the Dorset village of Corfe Castle where Sorabji lived recalled that letters would regularly arrive for him from India right up until his death (and the postmen of Old England always knew a family's affairs before they did).<sup>53</sup>

These changes in attitude were not mere vacillations but important stages in the process of the composer's self-definition. Sometime during the First World War, he was received into the Zarathushtrian Parsi community and it was then that he changed his forenames to Kaikhosru Shapurji, perhaps to avoid the incongruity of bearing the 'foolishly English' forenames of Leon Dudley uncomfortably 'yoked' to the unmistakably Indian family name Sorabji which might elicit 'the disbelieving, and hence undermining, reaction': Leon Dudley? Sorabji?<sup>54</sup> The travails of bearing such a name, familiar to many children of colonization, have been eloquently described by both Edward Said and George Alagiah.<sup>55</sup> Just as their given and family names seemed to 'symbolise the tensions that dominate so many colonised

lives...the attempt to build a bridge from one culture to another without falling into the ravine in the middle in the process', so Sorabji's name change symbolizes a resistance to bridge-building and to the unsettling sense of having multiple identities.<sup>56</sup> The names he chose were significant: Kaikhosru is associated with Kūrush, King Cyrus the Great, founder of the Iranian Empire, and Shapurji was his father's name, meaning 'Son of the King'. He became immensely proud of all that being a Parsi stood for, in particular the millennia of their artistic tradition which he saw as having provided everything worthwhile about Indian civilization. And he decried the 'slandorous and insulting' description of Zarathushtrians 'as fire-worshippers'.<sup>57</sup> Yet, while this emerging identity provided a sense of belonging, he would never be, in the eyes of many Parsis, an acceptable member of their ethno-religious community: even today some Parsi Zoroastrian priests will not perform the *Navjote* ceremony (rites of admission into the religion) for children of mixed marriages.<sup>58</sup>

From the establishment of the British Raj onwards, the Parsi community has been centred in Mumbai, the city of Shapurji Sorabji's birth. Many sought to maintain their own Zarathushtrian cultural and religious practices while recognizing themselves as nationally Indian. This position was famously espoused by Dadabhai Naoroji, who became, in the year of the composer's birth, the first Asian to occupy a seat in the British Parliament: 'Whether I am a Hindu, a Mohammedan, a Parsi, a Christian, or of any other creed, I am above all an Indian. Our country is India; our nationality is Indian.'<sup>59</sup> Other Parsis consider Zarathushtrians to be unique as a racial, as well as a religious, group, and claim consanguinity with their Iranian ancestors.<sup>60</sup> Sorabji embraced the latter point of view, and often referred to his father's (and his own) Iranian, as opposed to Indian, descent.<sup>61</sup>

The relation between Parsi and Indian identity in the first half of the century was further complicated by the fact that Parsis were closely allied with the British Raj, and, in the words of one writer, often 'regarded British rule as little less than providential'.<sup>62</sup> During the composer's adolescence, for instance, Conservative Member of Parliament (from 1895 to 1906), Mancherjee Bhownagree, opposed home rule and was so loyal to the crown that his detractors dubbed him 'bow and agree'.<sup>63</sup> Several decades later, the Parsi barrister Cornelia Sorabji (1866–1954) was well-known for being 'wedded to Imperialism'.<sup>64</sup> She offered moral support to US author Katherine Mayo in the controversy that followed the publication in 1927 of Mayo's infamous book *Mother India*, a polemical attack against Indian self-rule (a book to which the composer himself voiced his opposition).<sup>65</sup> Parsis, though, were still often regarded with suspicion by the English and when Naoroji ran for parliament, Sir Lepel Griffin, Chairman of the East India Association, wrote in *The Times*: 'He is a Parsee, a member of a small foreign colony, probably Semitic in origin, settled in the west of India... they are quite as much aliens to the people of India as the English rulers can possibly be.'<sup>66</sup> Thus, the composer's increasing identification as a Parsi might have emphasized his liminality in both English and Indian social circles. When Sorabji visited India for the first time in 1932, it is not surprising that it did not live up to his expectations: modern Parsis (as opposed to their cultured ancestors) seemed to have gone 'pretty rotten', none of them ever read 'an intelligent book'.<sup>67</sup> His knowledge of Indians, selected and reinterpreted through historians, poets, and authors, was challenged by the disillusioning

contact with ordinary people. Modern Hindus, 'that pestilent foul crew... (scum of the earth if ever there were!)', escaped even less easily.<sup>68</sup> Others before him had experienced a similar shock of disappointment upon meeting with the disorientations of a real (rather than textual) society.<sup>69</sup> The composer's reaction is revealing: rather than discarding his pride in the civilization to which he claimed allegiance, he attempted to keep his dream alive with a belief in a past 'Golden Age' of greatness.

Alongside, and intertwined with, ethnicity, important factors in Sorabji's self-identification were undoubtedly religion, spirituality, and, especially, sexuality. While he was knowledgeable about Zoroastrianism, or Zarathushtrianism as he more correctly called it, he did not practice the religion.<sup>70</sup> 'I am very nearly a Buddhist', he wrote in a letter to Heseltine of 1915, explaining that the high standard of the Burmese Buddhist's 'morality and personal purity is with that of my own race—the Parsis.'<sup>71</sup> He practiced Yoga, became increasingly interested in Roman Catholicism, and dabbled in the occult, astrology, Tarot, Tantrism, and numerology.<sup>72</sup> The essays 'Yoga and the Composer' and 'Metapsychic Motivation in Music' published in *Mi Contra Fa* both point to connections between Tantric and Catholic ideas, while the First Piano Symphony is based on Tantric Symbolism and the Fifth Piano Sonata on the Tarot. Although it was not commonly known until after his death, Sorabji was homosexual.<sup>73</sup> Homosexuality could not be openly discussed (even within the family) and homosexual men lived in constant fear of discovery and were always vigilant lest by a look or a gesture they should give away their 'secret'.<sup>74</sup> Nevertheless, Sorabji wrote erudite letters to editors on the subject, and identified himself as a long-time member of the British Sexological Society who had sympathy with what he termed 'unisexuality'.<sup>75</sup> In 1924, he visited the renowned author of *Sexual Inversion*, Havelock Ellis, in a meeting arranged by the composer's mother. Ellis had been among the first to argue that homosexuality was neither mental illness nor disease nor crime—and Sorabji found him 'very kind and helpful'.<sup>76</sup> Later that year he dedicated the concerto for piano and chamber orchestra, *Simorg-Anka*, 'To Dr. Havelock Ellis—in respectful admiration, homage and gratitude'.<sup>77</sup> His sexuality, therefore, set him outside the norms of society and may well have had something to do with the vehemence with which he drove away those he did not like. To those who were his friends he was warm and open, but an indiscreet indication of homosexuality could lead to malicious publicity, a high-profile court-case and prison sentence, or blackmail. (This last seems, in fact, to have happened.<sup>78</sup>) Exclusion and rejection became for Sorabji a source of strength: he came to believe that it was better to have no relationship with the imperial society into which he had been born than a lop-sided one of prejudice, superiority, and condescension. It was, ultimately, the wealth he inherited from his father which enabled him to maintain a life-long retreat in scorn and style, symbolized by his name change, from British (musical) life.<sup>79</sup>

### Modernist

There is evidence to suggest, though, that Sorabji's alienation may be understood not only as a response to racism and homophobia but also as a modernist stance.<sup>80</sup> In

an article entitled, *Il gran rifiuto*, he championed the modernist composer who 'has the stamina to turn his back' on the public world of music thereby devoting 'himself wholly to his *Dharma*'.<sup>81</sup> Arnold Schoenberg had effected a similar retreat from public concert life; his idealistic 'Society for Private Musical Performances' was set up in Vienna in 1918 precisely to avoid the kind of amateurish performance, negative reception, and critical condemnation of new, unfamiliar music that Sorabji so vehemently decried.<sup>82</sup> No matter that Sorabji's retreat was not to an ivory tower, but to a 'Tower of Granite with plentiful supplies of boiling oil and molten lead handy to tip over the battlements on to the heads of unwanted and uninvited intruders on my privacy and seclusion'.<sup>83</sup>

Sorabji's affinity for the aims of the avant-garde is clear from his early letters. In 1913, he wrote to the *Musical Times* of his 'lively sympathy with the ultra-modernist phase of contemporary music'.<sup>84</sup> A letter to Heseltine the following year reveals enthusiasm about going 'to see and hear Herr Schoenberg!' in his first appearance in London as composer-conductor.<sup>85</sup> Sorabji must have been referring to the premiere of the *Five Pieces for Orchestra* which he feared would be disrupted by an audience behaving 'like wild beasts' and even passed on a suggestion to the organizers that someone should ask 'the audience to behave themselves'.<sup>86</sup> He was unequivocal in his sympathy with 'what Schoenberg and all the others are fighting for in music, greater freedom and power of expression . . . seeking to upset [convention]'.<sup>87</sup>

It was to an unconventional trio of composer-pianists that Sorabji most firmly allied himself as a composer—Alkan, Scriabin, and Busoni, masters who had pioneered a distinctive style of virtuoso piano writing out of reach of any but the most accomplished performers and listeners.<sup>88</sup> A brief sketch of each one will suggest the points Sorabji discerned of personal and musical connection. Charles Valentin Alkan (1813–1888) was a pianist-composer who, despite having prominent friends, withdrew from public life as a result of the negative reception of his works.<sup>89</sup> An Ashkenazi Jew, he was something of an outsider in French society, and he changed his surname from Morhange probably in order to distance himself from his origins. Sorabji's identification with Alkan was thus both musical and personal.<sup>90</sup> He seems to have been reassured by the French composer's reclusive example that public acclaim had little to do with musical quality. In reviews of recitals given by the great Dutch-German pianist Egon Petri in the 1920s and 1930s, Sorabji proclaimed Alkan to be 'one of the most original, fascinating and powerful minds that has ever expressed itself by means of musical sound'.<sup>91</sup> He praised Alkan's imaginative audacity and the original appearance of his music, its technical difficulty and rhythmic ingenuity, its modulatory subtlety and its length, along with the variety and brilliance of his keyboard writing.<sup>92</sup> Sorabji's pianism has roots in all these stylistic traits and, as we will see, his music reflects the influence of what he described as Alkan's ability to create 'a sort of pianistic orchestration, orchestration in terms of the piano'.<sup>93</sup> The resulting technical difficulties, Sorabji enthused, were 'Himalayan in their magnitude' and required immense staying power to perform.<sup>94</sup> Sorabji took the complexity Alkan had pioneered further; where his predecessor occasionally required three staves of music for a solo piano composition, he usually required three and occasionally as many as five.

Until his late twenties, Sorabji held Alexander Scriabin (1872–1915) in the highest esteem and early letters to Heseltine are full of enthusiastic references to that ‘colossal genius’ and his ‘weirdly beautiful...marvellous’ music.<sup>95</sup> In 1913, he attended a performance of *Prometheus* at the Queen’s Hall (preceded by a lecture by Rosa Newmarch, the leading Anglophone authority of the time on Russian music). Afterwards, he declared that ‘no composer living or dead has written or could write music so transcendental as this: Scriabine stands absolutely alone, but *what* an isolation! *what* an eminence!!’<sup>96</sup> Years later, he acknowledged ‘the stimulus to my own harmonic sense by Scriabine’s researches into the higher dissonances, and remote derivatives of the dominant thirteenth, eleventh, and ninth’ and recalled being ‘for months...haunted by the alleged “mystic chord”’.<sup>97</sup>

Finally, the life-long esteem in which Sorabji held the pianist, composer, and theoretician-philosopher, Ferruccio Busoni (1866–1924) is seen not only in his writings, and the dedication of his second piano sonata to Busoni ‘in profound veneration’, but also in *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, a work openly modelled on ‘the form adumbrated by the immortal BUSONI in his great FANTASIA CONTRAPPUNTISTICA’.<sup>98</sup> In 1919, at the age of 27, Sorabji played the *Fantasia*, together with his own first serious work, the Piano Sonata No. 1, in a private performance for Busoni.<sup>99</sup> It was not only the originality, vast dimensions, and technical difficulties of the *Fantasia* and of Busoni’s other music that appealed but, significantly, the composer’s limited public appeal—what he called Busoni’s ‘Himalayan hermitage’.<sup>100</sup> Busoni’s national duality must have attracted Sorabji, for he was born an Italian but lived most of his life in Germany: as Busoni scholar Larry Sitsky puts it, ‘the Italians regarded him as a deserter, the Germans as an interloper’.<sup>101</sup> Beyond such fractured identity, the most significant point of contact between the two composers was their belief that music was for an educated elite, and that amateurs should neither play, nor listen to, works they could not understand.<sup>102</sup> Sorabji’s compositional philosophy owed much to Busoni’s opinion that ‘we must make the texture of our music such that no amateur can lay hands on it’.<sup>103</sup>

This ‘aesthetic of difficulty’ was very much in the air when Sorabji was a young man. He and his chosen precursors were not alone in turning musical works into ‘awe-inspiring mountains’ by complicating their texture and extending their length: as Richard Taruskin puts it in his analysis of what he terms *maximalism* (the intensification of the temporal and sonorous dimensions of music), this approach became something of an obsession in the early twentieth century.<sup>104</sup> Havergal Brian, whose admiration of *Opus Clavicembalisticum* we have already encountered at the beginning of this chapter, was at the forefront of English musical maximalism (which flourished long after the movement’s Germanic heyday in the hands of Richard Strauss and Gustav Mahler). Between 1919 and 1927, Brian worked on a symphony, the ‘Gothic’, which, according to the *Guinness Book of World Records*, may be the largest in existence, lasting over 100 minutes and requiring forces numbering some 800 performers—including 24 off-stage brass matched by the same number on-stage; a huge percussion battery augmented by chains, a thunder machine and a bird scarer; four mixed choruses; and a children’s chorus. In fact, Sorabji’s second symphony, *Jāmi* (1942–51), whose 826 pages of music would last over four-and-a-half hours in

performance, exceeds the limits of the 'Gothic', and, in doing so, suggests the 'pitfalls of maximalism'.<sup>105</sup> For, like many of Sorabji's works—particularly the symphonies for large orchestra and for solo instruments—it remains unheard, long after the lifting of the 'ban' he imposed on their performance.

### Schéhrazade-Kaikhosru

One of the reasons why Sorabji's music has been excluded from scholarly discussion is because, as mentioned earlier, it has often been seen as only superficially belonging to the Western tradition—'a great Eastern Tributary swelling the mainstream of European music'.<sup>106</sup> The entry by Cecil Gray in an important musical encyclopædia of 1930 reveals this attitude all too clearly and is worth quoting at length because it established the foundation for an approach that persists today:

In order to reveal the Oriental mind through a musical medium, a musically gifted Oriental would be needed, one who had mastered the Western musical language well enough to express his conceptions with freedom, yet free from the conventions by which Western minds are unconsciously bound. This is the phenomenon presented by the personality of Sorabji, though naturally his mental equipment does not comprise every conceivable predisposition that might be characteristic of his own race. . . . Nevertheless, there are certain European influences . . . in it . . . but these influences . . . remain superficial.<sup>107</sup>

While such descriptions of Sorabji's music were (and still are) ostensibly intended as explication of his striking musical idiom, they have only contributed to the mystification of his work. To understand the piano nocturne *Gulistān*, for instance, as 'representing the essential Persian Sorabji' is to assume an innate connection between the composer and his father's distant Zarathushtrian ancestors before they left Iran in the eighth century.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, the vague claim, partly the result of taking the composer's words at face value, that his works 'often fuse' European techniques 'with the ornamental luxuriance of Oriental art', rests on familiar, but false, 'orientalist' premises.<sup>109</sup>

Kaikhosru Sorabji did, however, actively cultivate such beliefs himself. He was an unwitting victim of the Orientalist division of the world into East and West analysed by Edward Said; his personality and music were moulded by it.<sup>110</sup> Rather than submit to his treatment as a second-class citizen, he turned to his 'roots', seeking refuge in the very origins that he was persecuted for having. By birth he had Indian ties, but he knew no Indian language; equally, he claimed Parsi and Iranian heritage, but he knew neither Pahlavi nor Farsi. He felt out of place in the land in which he was born, educated, and lived his entire life, and equally out of place in the land(s) to which he felt some allegiance. His development of a sense of many identities, often in conflict with each other, exemplifies Said's postulate that 'human identity is not only not natural and stable, but constructed, and occasionally even invented outright'.<sup>111</sup>

In order to learn about his origins, Sorabji was reliant on texts; hence his knowledge was mediated and, to some extent, formulated, by his Orientalist precursors, especially Gustave Flaubert (1821–1880). It is not hard to see why his work, especially *The Temptation of St Antony* (all three versions of which Sorabji owned), attracted the composer, for the two artists had much in common.<sup>112</sup> Flaubert strove to identify himself with the Orient: in a letter to Louise Colet he wrote that in his early days he wished to be a ‘renegade, a Turk. Now it’s a Brahman or nothing.’<sup>113</sup> Sorabji, too, and for more compelling reasons, spoke of himself as an Oriental. In letters written to Chisholm during the composition of *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, he referred to himself first as ‘Schéhérazade-Kaikhosru’ then as ‘a Brahman’, comments that might respectively suggest his identification with Iranian and Indian traditions. More likely, though (since there is no evidence that he wished to identify himself as a fascinating princess) he used such terms as Schéhérazade (Shahrazād) in order to conjure up a general sense of being ‘oriental’.<sup>114</sup> In a letter of 1857, Flaubert wrote that what attracted him above all was religion, all religions, no more one than another.<sup>115</sup> Likewise, as mentioned earlier, Sorabji was fascinated by many religions, writing to Chisholm: ‘I have a double dose of mysticism in my Spanish-Parsi origin, and what is India but the very cradle-ground and fount of all religious mysticism—“religious” in no narrow sectarian sense but in the sense in which Vedāntic pantheism connotes it?’<sup>116</sup>

Sorabji’s fascination with ‘the Orient’ led him to absorb all that he could of the work of the great poets of Iran, and this inspired a number of pieces. The earliest is *Arabesque*, a setting of poetry by Shamsu’d-Din Ibrahim Mirza; then followed a piano concerto *Simorg-Anka*, a title in both Persian and Arabic which refers to a legendary bird of Iranian poetry.<sup>117</sup> *Trois poèmes du Gulistān de Sa’di* (1926) are settings (in French translation) for voice and piano from *Gulistān* (‘the Rose Garden’) by the Sufi poet Musharrif al-Dīn ibn Muṣliḥ al-Dīn (c.1213–91), generally known by his pen-name, Sa’di; these were followed in 1940 by the piano nocturne, *Gulistān*. From Richard Burton’s ‘translations’ of Arabic literature, Sorabji became familiar with two classics, the wondrous tales of Shahrazād in *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, and Sheik al-Nafzawi’s comprehensive sex manual with erotic stories, *The Perfumed Garden [of Sensual Delight]*. The books inspired a piano nocturne, *Le Jardin parfumé*, in 1923 and the central ‘Adagio’ of *Opus Clavicembalisticum* which, Sorabji explained to Chisholm, told ‘a very beautiful and interesting story [from *The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*] about the Sheik and his friend the handsome young prince Nureddior [sic]’.<sup>118</sup> The poet Nūruddin Abdurrahman Jāmī (1414–92) inspired two works: the piano nocturne, *Djāmī*, of 1928, and the last piece to play out his ‘Iranian-ness’, a symphony, *Jāmī* (1942–51) in which a solo baritone sings words from the poem *Yusef and Zuleykha*.<sup>119</sup>

The subjects of these musical works suggest that Sorabji was enthralled not only by the civilization and glamour of ‘the East’ but also the exotic, mystical, sensuous Orient of Flaubert and Burton. Intellectually, his view of the Orient, and (paradoxically) of himself, is an essentially Western conception. He wished to be seen as an exile who, by virtue of his birth, possessed certain qualities lacking in Occidentals. It was only later that he understood the crudity and Eurocentricity of the term ‘Oriental’

in general, and the assimilation of Parsis and Indians in particular. In a defence of Futurist paintings, for instance, he told Heseltine in 1915: 'I have all the Orientals' colour-sense, in which Englishmen are lacking, and I feel quite at ease and at home in juxtapositions.' A few years later, he proclaimed a 'considerable degree of inner vision and marked supernormal receptiveness' which is inherent in 'Indians . . . by right of birth'.<sup>120</sup> In 1959, at the age of 65, he penned the following unequivocal personal statement: 'Why do I write as I do? Why did and do the artists-craftsmen of Iran, India, China, Byzantine-Arabic Sicily (in the first and last of which are my own ancestral roots) produce the sort of elaborate highly wrought work they did? That was their way. It is also mine.'<sup>121</sup>

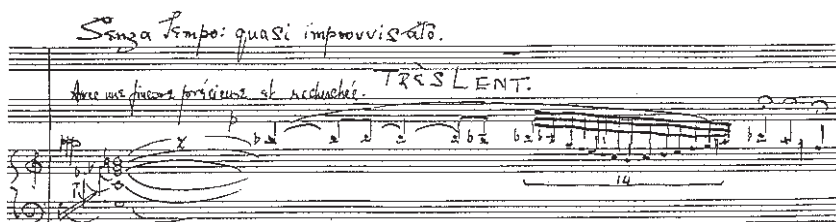
Yet, his series of 'Iranian' works, conceived over a period of thirty years, bear the influence of the Western composers whose musical exoticism he championed in essays and reviews written during the same period. Debussy's best qualities were, he believed, the result of 'Asiatic affinities'.<sup>122</sup> Likewise he was impressed with Ravel's use of Malayan verse form in his Piano Trio (1914), Bernard van Dieren's 'absorption' of Chinese 'inspiration', the 'Indian inspiration' of Maurice Delage and Albert Roussel, and Delius' use of arabesque, much later dedicating his own 'Tapestry of Arabesques', *Il Tessuto d'arabeschi* (1979), to Delius' memory.<sup>123</sup> He admired above all Szymanowski's third symphony which was inspired by the Iranian poet popularly known as Mowlānā, but in the English-speaking world simply as Rūmi ('the Roman'). It was, he wrote, 'a work saturated with the voluptuous and passionate languor of a Persian night, richly suggestive and evocative, permeated with that spirit of transcendental, exalted pessimism which is of the East eastern [*sic*].'<sup>124</sup> It was, then, not the use of any single source of inspiration that he respected, but the attempt to break free from what he saw as the tyranny of the Germanic tradition. Thus, he praised these 'good' Western orientalisks for creating music that possessed 'rhythmic intricacy', 'richness and efflorescence of elaborate detail', 'abundant, intricate arabesque', 'melodic lines which, without imitating, suggest by their contours relationship with melodies of Oriental types'.<sup>125</sup>

An examination of an early work will be illuminating in this context. The *Arabesque* of 1920 is a setting for voice and piano of a fragment of Persian poetry by Shamsu'd-Din Ibrahim Mirza, in French translation:

*Une petite arabesque de flute se déploie,  
Triste et nostalgique,  
Étalant dans ses courbes subtiles,  
Des désirs sans nom et des voluptés dangereuses.*<sup>126</sup>

(A little flute arabesque unfolds, sad and nostalgic, setting out in its subtle curves an array of nameless desires and dangerous, sensual pleasures.)

This slight piece (one of the shortest of the composer's output, only two pages in length and lasting just one, very quiet, minute), resembles the kind of writing that Sorabji admired in the impressionist pieces of Debussy (*L'après-midi d'un faune*), Delius (*En Arabesk*), and others at the time.<sup>127</sup> The piano plays a single melodic line over hushed

**Figure 5.4***Arabesque, KSS24, opening phrase*

Source: © The Sorabji Archive.

**Example 5.1**Sorabji, *Arabesque, KSS24*

Nameless desires

'désirs' chord sequence

chords for much of the piece, representing, no doubt, the 'little flute arabesque... sad and nostalgic' which sets out 'nameless desires' and 'dangerous, sensual pleasures' in figuration that recalls the flute of Debussy's faun. The unusually (for Sorabji) sparse texture is thus explained by the poetic imagery of the flute (figure 5.4).<sup>128</sup>

Beyond the impressionism of the lines, the *quasi improvvisato* melodic arabesques and fluid rhythmic figures are, following Busoni, unfettered by bar lines or time signature, while the colouristic harmonies, unanchored by tonality, are drawn from Scriabin's harmony of ecstasy and desire. At the moment where the singer reaches

the second syllable of the word *désirs* the piano sounds a sonority which recalls Scriabin's mystic chord (Example 5.1).

The mystic chord is itself an inversion of the *extase* chord (the most characteristic harmony of *Poème de l'extase*) with which Scriabin ends his *poème* for piano, *Désir*, a piece which Sorabji played and recalled in his piano fragment *Désir éperdu* of 1917.<sup>129</sup> While Sorabji had greater reason to learn about, and embrace, non-Western music than Debussy or Ravel—for him it was more than a dalliance—he was just as thoroughly schooled as they were in the Western tradition and came to non-Western music equally as a novice. During a visit to Mumbai in 1932, dispatches home suggest that he was more disappointed than inspired by the music he heard, even though there were great performers teaching and singing *mehfils* in the city at that time, among them Alladiya Khan, a legend of Hindustani classical music and founder of the Jaipur *gharāna*.<sup>130</sup> Addressing 'oriental' music as a largely homogeneous body in essays, he more often likened pieces of orientalist music to scenes, painting, embroidery, or poetry from 'the East' than to any Persian or Indian music.<sup>131</sup> Although he appears to have chosen the classical music of India as representative of what he termed 'Oriental music at its best'—while believing that it owed its best qualities to 'Persia'—he does not give a single example.<sup>132</sup> Yet the most characteristic elements of his music, like those seen in embryonic form in the little *Arabesque*—unmetred, 'improvisatory' passages and melodic arabesques—have been ascribed to his racial heritage, and 'the East', 'India', or 'Persia' have been located in them.<sup>133</sup> His music's 'profusion of detail', for instance, has been related to 'the elaborate ornamentation of eastern art, music included'.<sup>134</sup> Excessive ornamentation has often been perceived (by those outside the traditions) to be an essential element of Indian music.<sup>135</sup> Although Sorabji did find 'rich and elaborate detail in the arts of Asia' (believing, quite unlike Hubert Parry, that its apprehension required considerable intellectual effort), precedents for his highly decorated melodic lines are more obviously found in the piano music of Busoni; the works of Szymanowski, Delage, and Delius;<sup>136</sup> and the *fioritura* vocal lines he admired in Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* and especially Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel* which he found 'fascinating, exotic', and possessing of an 'Arabian Night quality'.<sup>137</sup>

The 'free form' movements of *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, which are similar in style to his piano nocturnes, *Le Jardin parfumé*, *Gulistān*, and *Djāmī*, have been likened to 'written-out improvisations' suggestive of 'Eastern' music.<sup>138</sup> Sorabji's ambiguous tonality, novel harmonies, unmetred rhythms, and highly ornamented melodic lines do indeed create the impression of the pianist-composer improvising at the keyboard. Yet while improvisation is an important element in Indian music, Sorabji's opinions on improvisation in music were somewhat complicated. He was drawn to composer-performers like Busoni, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, and Rachmaninoff, 'all of them wonderful improvisors [*sic*]'.<sup>139</sup> But he was strongly opposed to the idea of anyone taking liberties either with their written music, or with his own.<sup>140</sup> In his essay, 'Reflections on Indian music', he found improvisation to be one of the 'inherent defects that prevent it from ever becoming an Art comparable in importance with that of Europe'.<sup>141</sup> For Sorabji, Indian music's consequent 'lack of architecture... lack of form-sense' was its 'prevailing weakness'.<sup>142</sup> This attitude to improvisation resonates with the conclusions drawn by

the English novelist and journalist, Beverley Nichols, in his imperialist *Verdict on India*, written on return from a long visit to the subcontinent during the Second World War.<sup>143</sup> Nichols denied Indian classical music, whose secret ‘lies in the word “improvisation”’, the status of an art because ‘Art is not...a matter of improvisation’.<sup>144</sup> Moreover, in his multi-movement works for piano Sorabji followed the complex polyphonic procedures and elaborate structures characteristic of the German tradition (the very tradition whose rhythmic confines he was trying to escape). This is exemplified by *Opus Clavicembalisticum*: with its twelve movements structured around two huge sets of variations, and four massive fugues each with up to four different subjects that are variously combined and treated to canonic cancrizans and inversions of all kinds, it demonstrates not so much an allegiance to Indian classical traditions as a commitment to what Sorabji called ‘the architectonic skill’ and contrapuntal techniques of composers stretching back through his avowed models Busoni and Max Reger, to Bach.<sup>145</sup>

The composer’s best-known—even notorious—stylistic trait, a ‘predilection for the enormous’, has been attributed to his (innate) connection with Indian and Iranian music, even though he seems to have had no knowledge of the latter.<sup>146</sup> While the length of pieces like *Opus Clavicembalisticum* may relate to his interest in *rāga* performance, it is more likely to result from his conviction, following Busoni in his *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, that content should organically mould its own form.<sup>147</sup> Indeed, Sorabji bemoaned the inability of the modern Indian musician to get ‘any organic growth out of his material’, while at the same time celebrating ‘organic technique’ in the largest works of such composers as Bach, Berlioz, and Mahler.<sup>148</sup> In a revealing remark about *Opus Clavicembalisticum*’s length made towards the end of the work’s composition, he allied himself with elite (Western) musical modernism: ‘the musical necessities and not the convenience or comfort of the audience are what matters in these high regions of Brahman manifesting as Art’.<sup>149</sup>

### Rāga, Jangal, and Chakra

Sorabji’s ambivalence towards India and Indian music can, however, be heard in his music. The ninth movement of *Opus Clavicembalisticum* is a complete work in itself—a Passacaglia with eighty-one variations. Among them is an explicitly ‘Indian’ variation, the fifty-third, entitled *Quasi Tambura* which is one of the most striking musical moments in the whole work. The *tāmbūra*, as discussed in chapter 3, is a lute whose constant drone creates the basis of the distinctive texture of *rāga* performance—a texture which Sorabji characterized as melodic. Harmony, he continued, ‘only aris[es] as a very subsidiary by-product from the clashes of the curve of an instrumental or vocal melody with the accompanimental background supplied by a continuously thrummed string instrument [*tāmbūra*] tuned in open fifths’.<sup>150</sup> Given the variation’s title, we can assume the B–F#–B ostinato to be suggestive of the *tāmbūra*’s role, while the melodic turns function to evoke the unfolding of a *rāga*, each note ornamented from above or below.<sup>151</sup> As each phrase comes to rest, the melody interacts—‘clashes’—rhythmically and harmonically with the ostinato, dwelling on the lowered second and sixth degrees. Unlike the related pedal figures of Sorabji’s



Figure 5.5

*Quasi Tambura*, Variation 53, Movement IX, 'Interludium alterum (Toccata, Adagio, Passacaglia cum LXXXI variationibus)', of *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, KSS50

Source: © The Sorabji Archive.

### Example 5.2

Passacaglia theme



piano nocturnes, such as *Le Jardin parfumé*, which were inspired by the left-hand accompaniments of Chopin, Liszt, and Busoni, this 'tāmbūra-ostinato' outlining open fifths and spanning five octaves is inspired by an extension of the traditional tāmbūra figure into an idiomatic gesture for piano, shared in virtuoso style between the hands. Visually, the variation is striking too, as the phrase-markings correspond with the rise and fall of the tāmbūra figuration (see figure 5.5).

Apart from the obvious creation of an Indian style, what is striking about the variation is that it is the first in which Sorabji chose to convert the Passacaglia's ground bass, shown in Example 5.2, into the melody. The passacaglia, a type of Baroque variation form based on a repeating bass theme, is one of the structured variation forms which he favoured throughout his life. Originally associated with the composer-keyboardist inventing a series of variations on a given theme, it is an effective vehicle for creating and recreating a variety of different characters or identities. In Sorabji's works, variations entitled *Quasi Alkan*, *Quasi Tambura*, *The Garden of Iran*, and *Tango Habanera* show the composer to be donning different musical hats (modernist, Indian, Iranian, Spanish).

Variation form thus enabled him to perform his many identities. Here, by way of an effective transference of the ground bass into the melody, Sorabji dressed up his Bach-like passacaglia theme in Indian clothes, using irregularly grouped chromatic undulations to decorate the theme's pitches, and accompanied it with a *tāmbūra*-ostinato.<sup>152</sup> The idea of taking a fixed series of generally stepwise pitches, unbound by a time signature (the passacaglia theme), and unfolding them with ornaments and fluid figuration to the accompaniment of an open-fifth ostinato, resembles more closely than any other Western musical form the structure of *rāga* performance, particularly the opening unmetred *ālāp* in which the *rāga* unfolds over the *tāmbūra* drone. Since the principle of variation form maintains a historical association with improvisation, Sorabji avoids improvisation *per se*, while effectively invoking it through the passacaglia form.

If the musical texture and form suggest a self-conscious invocation of Indian music, Sorabji's indications to the pianist, *nostalgico, morbidissimo e ipnotico* (nostalgic, softly, and hypnotic), point to an idea of India that has little if anything to do with any *rasa* (mood) traditionally associated with particular *rāgas*. These markings (part of the variation's title, but most likely a communication to the performer only) might be interpreted in the context of his earlier interest in Scriabin's performance directions, such as *molto languido* and *très parfumé* on the score of *Poème de l'extase* of 1908 (a work to which he refers in a letter). But *Quasi Tambura*'s expressive indications connect the variation's music more directly to the ethos of an early work, *Chaleur* ('Heat', c.1916–17). This 'Poem for Orchestra', which remains unperformed and unpublished, is the only piece for which Sorabji wrote a programmatic preface:

It is midday in a grove of Tropical India. The sun does not succeed in piercing the thick roof of leaves overhead, its rays being transformed into a green mysterious twilight. The whole life of the grove seems suspended in the tense quivering heat: not a sound to be heard but the hum of countless insects. Occasionally the subtle evil head of a krait hovers for a moment above the dense undergrowth and vanishes with a venomous hiss. The air is heavy with the narcotic perfume of rare exotics and the languid voluptuous extasy [*sic*] of tropical heat pervades all things.<sup>153</sup>

The ominous Indian jungle of *Chaleur*'s programme was a well-known European image in early twentieth-century Europe. The word *jungle* itself was derived from the Hindi, *jāngal* (Sanskrit: *jāngala*). In 1892, the Theosophical Society published Madame Blavatsky's travel writings under the title *From the caves and jungles of Hindostan, 1883–1886*.<sup>154</sup> Two years later Rudyard Kipling's *Jungle Book* popularized images of the Indian jungle and became the basis for a number of musical settings. Cyril Scott portrayed parts of Kipling's story in a piano suite of 1912 which includes such movements as 'The Jungle' and 'Morning in the Jungle'; from 1899, Charles Koechlin was occupied for over forty years with *The Jungle Book*, an epic cycle of symphonic poems (including *The Law of the Jungle*) and songs; and Percy Grainger worked on an extraordinary *Jungle Book* cycle (for mixed chorus and chamber orchestra) during forty-nine of the fifty years covered in this book (1898–1947).<sup>155</sup>

For the composers of these and other 'Indian' settings, particularly those English ones we looked at in chapter 2 who sought an 'oriental atmosphere' in their music, Sorabji reserved his most acerbic criticism: 'It is really time that a league was started

for the artistic protection of the East against this kind of indecent assault by half-baked European dilettantes [like Holst].<sup>156</sup> 'The less said', he wrote on another occasion from his assumed position of authorial wisdom as 'an Oriental' from which he could pass judgment on his contemporaries, 'of the theosophicated purveyors of musical *papier Asie*... the better'.<sup>157</sup> This was an oblique reference to, among others, Cyril Scott and the Birmingham-based Granville Bantock, whose music, he lamented, 'underneath its trumpery finery of ninths, elevenths, added sixths, joss-sticks... and pinchbeck Brummagem-Benares nick-nackery, oozes with glutinous commonplace'.<sup>158</sup>

Yet *Chaleur* seems to strive for just such an 'oriental' atmosphere. Its programme outlines several familiar themes of the colonial imagination that might explain the meaning of the terms *nostalgic* and *hypnotic* in relation not only to Sorabji's Indian variation but also to a relatively large part of his musical output: the idea of a languid, inert land which sedates and hypnotizes those who are drawn into it with its 'narcotic perfume' and cloying heat; the evocation of India as an untrodden tropical landscape which corresponds to 'imperialist nostalgia' for an imagined or invented past; and, finally, the morbidity of the vision—at once both gloomy and sinister (suffocating and deadly).<sup>159</sup> The colouristic details of *Chaleur*'s musical material seem to have been created in response to this *jungle* scenario; the resulting timbral nuances, orchestral textures and distinctive combinations of instruments recall the scores of Debussy and Ravel, while the opening harmony is akin to Stravinsky's 'Petrushka' chord with an added sixth (Example 5.3). *Pianissimo* undulating strings divided into twelve rhythmically varied parts play 'in a heated sonority' (*dans un Sonorité châteureuse*), while oboes, clarinets, alto flute, and muted horns set in relief a languid chromatic motif. The whole piece proceeds thus at a dangerously low dynamic level, and is, like the grove of the programme itself, 'suspended in the tense quivering heat'.

Sorabji made an explicit connection between the atmosphere of *Chaleur* and his piano nocturnes which depict the lush gardens (rose, perfumed) of Persian and Arab poetry: *Gulistan*, for example, is marked 'languid... in a tropical and perfumed ambience, rather nostalgic', while *Le Jardin parfumé* is 'enveloped in a hot and voluptuous languour'.<sup>160</sup> These piano works share some of the stylistic traits of *Quasi Tambura*, whose own expressive indications invoke the Indian *jungle* atmosphere. Just as Sorabji's persuasive self-identification contributed to perceptions of his music as 'Eastern', his musical evocations of 'tropical' vegetation have influenced the very language of those perceptions. After hearing the composer play his own first piano sonata in 1919, Busoni wrote of 'tropical ornamentation [and] luxuriant foliage' and, some seventy years on, the pianist Charles Hopkins described *Gulistan* as a 'heavily perfumed atmosphere of sub-tropical vegetation... [a] hypnotic world... [of] rich, exotic ornamentation'.<sup>161</sup> Such descriptions reflect an imagined 'Orient' in the musical imagination of critics, composers, and pianists.

Let us turn now to two works whose 'whispers' have yet to be heard. Sorabji's largest opus is the three-volume *Symphonic Variations for Piano* (1935–7) which would last some eight hours in performance (it remains unpublished and unperformed).<sup>162</sup> Among the pages of this behemoth of a work, is a variation, number thirty-four, entitled *Quasi Rāg Indiana*, which bears familiar markings: 'nostalgic, languid, and always very soft'.<sup>163</sup> The theme upon which this variation elaborates is presented at the opening of the *Symphonic Variations* in an inner voice surrounded by sonorous

**Example 5.3**  
*Chaleur—Poème*, KSS15, opening

**Très Lent Dans une longueur d'extrême chaleur**

$\text{♩} = 35-40$  environ

+ clarinets

*Très languide*

*pochiss.*

\* 4  
CORS  
in F

*ppp*

*pp*

*ppp*

VLNS

*ppp*

*ppp*

VLNS

*ppp*

*ppp*

VLA

*ppp*

*ppp*

VCL

*ppp*

*ppp*

\* All instruments notated at concert pitch

Example 5.3 (Continued)

This musical score is for a piano and harp ensemble. It begins with a melodic line in the right hand, featuring a five-measure phrase marked with a *p* (piano) dynamic, followed by a three-measure phrase marked with a *ppp* (pianissimo) dynamic. The phrase concludes with the instruction *presque rien* (almost nothing). The left hand provides a steady accompaniment, starting with a *ppp* dynamic. The score is organized into systems, each containing staves for the right hand, a grand staff (treble and bass clefs), and a separate staff for the contrabasses and harp. The right hand accompaniment consists of sixteenth-note chords, with fingerings of 6, 12, and 5 indicated. The grand staff features dense sixteenth-note textures in both hands. The contrabasses and harp part at the bottom includes a few notes and rests, with the label *contrabasses and harp* above it.

chords (see Example 5.4a). Like the Passacaglia theme we looked at earlier, it consists (mainly) of stepwise pitches unhindered by a fixed time signature. Here, the theme is more extensive, divided into three large phrases, and traversing the chordal texture—at times in the middle, at times on the top—while the surrounding harmonies are often pungently dissonant. As in *Quasi Tambura*, Sorabji invoked the structural resemblance to *rāga-ālāp*: he extracted only the theme's outline from its harmonic surroundings and unfolded each of its pitches in a series of embellished phrases that emphasize linearity (one of the characteristics of Holst's 'Indian' style) as a musical principal (see Example 5.4b). The generic resonance of variation form again suggests a sense of improvisation which is emphasized by the direction to the player: *molto libero in tempo*.

Within this *rāga-ālāp* structure, Sorabji creates an extended piece of pianistic virtuosity. A tanpura-ostinato, outlining B and F#, similar in pitch and shape to that of *Quasi Tambura*, is maintained (with only one interruption) at the lowest dynamic level for nine, *lento*, landscape-format pages. The highly wrought melodic lines span a vast range and are replete with chromatic passages, trills, wide leaps, and florid, cadenza-like passages in sixths and sequential figures suggestive, given the piece's title, of the tonal and rhythmic inflections of an instrumental *ālāp*.<sup>164</sup> Moreover, they effectively disguise what the composer called 'Occidental equal temperament', conjuring up a more complex tuning system: he had advocated (after Busoni) the introduction of instruments with 'say, 22 notes to the octave as the Hindūs have'.<sup>165</sup> However these elaborate lines are conceptualized, they have as little to do with easy-listening orientalist pastiche as they do with the *rāga* of the variation's title; the melodic lines are difficult both to play and for the ear to grasp, so unhindered are they either in range, phrase-length, or by key, mode, tempo, or metre. Like *Quasi Tambura*, *Quasi Rāg Indiana* is a self-conscious performance of 'Indianness'; together, they provide compelling evidence of a parallel between Sorabji's views of his own identity as expressed in his personal letters and published writings, and the manner and form of his music.

The last of Sorabji's compositions bearing an explicitly Indian inspiration is another vast, solo work, the *Tāntrik Symphony for Piano Alone* (1938–9). Sorabji had been drawn to the work of Arthur Avalon, the pen name of Sir John Woodroffe (1865–1936), whose 'mastery of, and insight into, the extremely abstruse and recondite Tantrik scriptures', the composer explained, represented the first serious consideration of Tantra by a Western scholar.<sup>166</sup> Avalon, Sorabji wrote, had 'astonished the orientlists of Europe with a series of sovereignly masterly treatises upon Tantrik Hinduism tearing utterly to shreds and tatters... the fable of Tantra as a compendium of 'filth... orgies of... indescribable oriental vice... and so on *ad hilaritatem et infinitum*'.<sup>167</sup> Each of the seven movements of the piano symphony bears the name of the correspondingly numbered *chakra*, or bodily point, through which, according to Tantrik Hinduism, the divine power that flows through the universe can be channelled so as to attain purposeful goals.<sup>168</sup> The fifth movement reveals a direct correspondence between the music and the particular *chakra* being evoked, or (to put it in the spirit of Tantric teachings) 'opened' to channel energy: that of *Viśuddha*, the fifth, from which the movement gets its name. *Viśuddha*, in Avalon's description, is 'the abode of the Devi of speech' located 'at the lower end of the throat'.<sup>169</sup> To reach

### Example 5.4a

*Symphonic Variations* (for piano alone), KSS59: First phrase of opening theme

Thema: Quasi adagio e legatissimo sempre

The musical score is written for piano and consists of four systems of staves. The first system features a treble staff and two bass staves. The second system features two treble staves and one bass staff. The third system features one treble staff and two bass staves. The fourth system features one treble staff and one bass staff. The music is in G major and 3/4 time, marked 'Quasi adagio e legatissimo sempre'. The first system begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The melody is primarily in the treble staff, with the bass staves providing harmonic support. The second system continues the melody in the treble staff, with the bass staff providing a steady accompaniment. The third system features a more complex harmonic structure with multiple chords in the treble and bass staves. The fourth system concludes the phrase with a final chord in the treble staff and a sustained bass line.

**Example 5.4b**  
*Symphonic Variations* (for piano alone), KSS59: *Quasi R g Indiana*, Variation 34, mm. 2 -4

Nostalgico languido e morbissimo sempre

The musical score is written for piano and consists of three systems of staves. The first system has a treble and bass staff. The second system has a grand staff (treble, middle, and bass staves). The third system also has a grand staff. The tempo/mood is 'Nostalgico languido e morbissimo sempre'. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The first system includes a dynamic marking of *pppp* and an *8va* marking with an upward arrow. The second system includes a dynamic marking of *p* and a *9:7* marking. The third system includes *8va* markings with both upward and downward arrows, and rhythmic markings of *6*, *7:4*, and *3*. The score features various musical notations including notes, rests, slurs, and articulation marks.

Example 5.4b (Continued)

This musical score consists of three systems, each with three staves (treble, alto, and bass clefs). The notation includes various musical elements such as notes, rests, and articulation marks.

- System 1:** The first staff begins with a complex rhythmic figure. The second staff features a long, sweeping slur that spans across the first and second measures. The third staff contains a series of eighth notes.
- System 2:** The first staff includes a measure with an  $8^{va}$  (octave up) marking and an upward-pointing arrow. This is followed by a sixteenth-note triplet marked with a bracket and the number 6. The second staff has a long slur covering the first two measures. The third staff continues with eighth notes.
- System 3:** The first staff features two groups of sixteenth-note triplets, each marked with a bracket and the number 7. The second staff has a long slur spanning the first two measures. The third staff continues with eighth notes.



**Figure 5.6**

*Viśuddha*, Movement V of Symphony no. 1, *Tāntrik*, for Piano Alone, KSS60

Source: © The Sorabji Archive.

the goddess of speech, Sorabji opened this *chakra* with a simple, song-like melody of easy vocal range (Figure 5.6).

But the song which evokes *Viśuddha* bears no relation to the ‘Indian’, *rāga*-like texture which the composer had created so effectively in *Quasi Rag Indiana* and *Quasi Tambura*. ‘Aria’, the subtitle given on the autograph score, suggests the music’s inheritance: the expressive melody, enlivened by a canonic entry underneath, and the transparent texture, which sets the section off from the surrounding movements, allies it with Bach—of the *Goldberg* Variations, the consummate example of Baroque variation form, also written for a virtuoso solo keyboard player, which begins with an Aria. ‘Papa Bach’, as Schoenberg once put it, was the figure to whom several composers had already turned ‘back’ in the 1920s and 1930s—Stravinsky and Hindemith among them.<sup>170</sup> Bach’s apparently ‘pure’ musical world offered an escape from the cultural politics of Europe’s interwar years and constituted, for some, a reaction against a particular kind of musical modernism. Sorabji’s allegiance to Bach—as much in this aria as in the variation forms and fugues which structured his musical imagination—might also be understood in this context, particularly since the interwar years saw an intensification of the ‘unhealthy relation between England and India’ which the composer remained alert to in his writing.<sup>171</sup> Perhaps, as we redefine our understanding of what constitutes ‘radical’ in twentieth-century music, these pieces—*Quasi Rāg Indiana*, *Viśuddha*, and the larger works to which they belong—will seem to be acute reflections of the time in which it they were written.

## Melancholy Moth

The myriad impingements of the British Raj on Sorabji's consciousness are registered in his music and writings in contradictory ways. While he seemed concerned to break down the racially drawn barriers between East and West, his (admittedly non-systematic) denigration of Indian music's improvisatory style drew its logic from imperialist arguments, thereby reinforcing those barriers. Sorabji's attitude to composition was as eclectic as his approach to religion and culture: his Indian-inspired idioms took their place within a vast range of musical styles. Moreover, he performed and enacted his identity 'both ways' as a writer and a composer: sometimes Parsi, Indian, or Persian; sometimes imperialist, sometimes colonized. Just as he denounced the term 'Indian' as 'imprecise and largely meaningless' so he used it himself.<sup>172</sup> His dislike of the term, however, may not be as capricious as it may at first seem. In an article of 1962 he explained, 'there just was no such thing as "India" which, for all practical purposes was a creation of the British Raj', a sentiment echoed decades later in the work of the literary critic Gayatri Chakravarty Spivak.<sup>173</sup> Sorabji's remark, read in the context of his changing self-identity, suggests that his rejection of an Indian identity is better understood in relation to his withdrawal from the colonial representation and concomitant embrace of India, at its height when he was a young man growing up in Britain. In other words, to be a Parsi, with ancestry in Iran, was a highly effective means of escaping identification as an Indian subject of the British Raj. Iran is, after all, one of the world's oldest major civilizations, and, Sorabji noted, 'most happily for herself and her cultural integrity, has never had the misfortune to fall under European rule, has always kept free from... obsequious toadyism towards things European and especially English'.<sup>174</sup> In contrast, his father's country of birth was 'British India', an inescapable humiliation for the composer as for the majority of South Asians.<sup>175</sup> In 1944, Sorabji wrote to a friend:

It is often said to me 'well, since you detest us (The English) so much... why on earth do you live here?'... To which I reply... Does it occur to you that in order to live among you, endure the worst climate, foulest cooking and worst manners in Europe... Does it not occur to you that I must be very very fond of this country to sacrifice so much in order to live here?<sup>176</sup>

Rather than being what one scholar describes as 'an explanation of why he stayed in England', this is surely an expression of the difficulty of being a multicultural subject of the empire—a living embodiment of the British Raj.<sup>177</sup> The frequently posed question, 'why do you live here?' (with its hateful corollary: 'why don't you go "home"?'), is itself alienating: he was a British citizen, born in the UK, and had never lived anywhere else.<sup>178</sup>

The complex personality discernible in Sorabji's music and writing finds resonance in the 'studiedly dark meditations' of V. S. Naipaul who, in the words of scholar of Indian politics and history, Sunil Khilnani, was 'drawn like a melancholy moth to his grandfather's land', India, which his ancestors had left over a century ago.<sup>179</sup> In spite of an unsentimental, even cynical, view of India, he kept on returning to it in his



**Figure 5.7**

Kaikhosru Sorabji aged 96 a few months before his death in 1988

Source: Clive J. Spencer-Bentley, reproduced with kind permission.

books. The ethos of nostalgia and hypnosis which Sorabji created in his recurring musical evocations of India and Iran suggests something similar, born of nostalgia for an imagined Golden Age of Parsi civilization in Iran to which he felt he belonged, but which he could never know, and of an unhappy relation with India. Sorabji's writing is permeated with what might be viewed as hostility at his perception of being *from*, but not *of* Britain, and *of* but not *from* India or, indeed, Iran, a country of which his father had no living memory. That his sense of scornful alienation, exemplified by a withdrawal from British musical life for some forty years, seems to be indelibly marked on his face in later life, confirms the point (figure 5.7).

In the early 1930s, Sorabji made his first voyage to India, crossing what to him (given his ambivalence towards India and the unenviable task of sorting out the will of his 'late and wholly unlamented' father) must have seemed like the *kāla pāni*.<sup>180</sup> During his visit, he attended concerts and lectures, wrote dispatches for the British press, and gave several recitals for the revitalized radio station in Mumbai.<sup>181</sup> A commentary by the organist of St Thomas' cathedral in this city was quoted in the *Bombay Man's Diary*:

Sorabji's compositions are most interesting to those who know India, as they illustrate the result of combining Oriental elaboration with Western tradition. Sorabji is

an authority on modern music... Bombay, the home of the Parsis should certainly have some knowledge of his achievements.<sup>182</sup>

Sorabji drew a line next to this paragraph along with the words, 'keep this carefully', suggesting that he approved of, and took a pride in, both the perception (published in a local journal) of a European-Indian hybrid quality in his music and the sense of being embraced at last in 'the home of the Parsis'. Yet, while many listeners did hear his music broadcast on Bombay radio, the organist further noted that 'many of the local enthusiasts in the musical world did not share [in its] appreciation!'<sup>183</sup>

Sorabji admired several aspects of Indian music, yet he chose the piano, a medium fundamentally unsuited to the vocal/string nuances and the micro-tones that are characteristic of Indian music; hence he succeeded in creating music perplexing to many Westerners and artificial to many Indians.<sup>184</sup> As a result of his father's wealth, he could avoid, in his personal life, either 'building a bridge' or 'falling into the ravine' described by Alagiah between the two cultures of the British-Indian colonial encounter.<sup>185</sup> While his heritage pulled him in one direction, his independent status meant that he was not obliged to cope with 'assimilation' which pulls those of the second generation in the other. Yet, although the modality of his identity was often defensive and resistant to hybridity, by emphasizing his own culturally hybrid origins and his informed sense of musical and ethnic identity, a different picture of the composer and his music emerges from the more familiar one of legend. Rather than seeing Sorabji as occupying a singular position from which his music flowed outwards, we might see his work as representing a kind of uneasy meeting point between different traditions and cultures. One conclusion becomes insistent. It is a mistake to pigeon-hole Sorabji as either 'English' or 'Indian'. He saw the relationship between East and West as neither rigid nor one-sided and in his writings and music he can be seen to be striving towards an end: comparisons between 'Oriental' and 'Western' are a constant theme.<sup>186</sup> Understanding of Sorabji's music has been hindered by the very same arbitrary, yet enormously potent division that formed his personality. Appreciation of his work thus depends, in large measure, on how far we wish to understand his music's cultural meanings, and how sympathetic we are towards the personal circumstances that led him to attempt a reconciliation between East and West, a reconciliation that is, in many ways, as elusive today as it was when he wrote his Indian musical depictions.

## NOTES

An earlier version of a portion of this chapter was published as '“Persian Composer-Pianist Baffles”: Kaikhosru Sorabji', pp. 125–44, in *Western Music and Race*, ed. Julie Brown. © Cambridge University Press, 2007. Reprinted with permission.

1. The epigraphs are from 'Letters', *Guardian*, n.d., from Sorabji's clippings in the Sorabji Archive in Hereford, and from Ferruccio Busoni, letter to his wife, 25 November 1919, *Busoni: Briefe an seine Frau*, ed. Friedrich Schnapp (Erlenbach-Zürich and Leipzig: Rotapfel-Verlag, 1935); translated by Rosamond Ley as *Letters to His Wife* (London: Edward Arnold, 1938; repr. edn., New York: Da Capo Press, 1975), 289. Quotations in the second sentence are from Bernard Holland, 'Pianist of Delicacy as

- Well as Muscle', *New York Times*, 7 June 1997, 17; and Alfred Richard Orage in his 'Foreword' to Sorabji's first collection of essays, *Around Music* (London: Unicorn Press, 1932), pp. ix–xii. For further examples, see Paul Bechert, 'Persian Composer-Pianist Baffles', *Musical Courier*, 2 March 1922, 7 (the source of this chapter's title); and Edmund Rubbra, 'Sorabji's Enigma', *Monthly Musical Record*, September 1932, 148.
2. Orage, 'Foreword' to *Around Music*, p. xii. Both Sorabji's 'race' and his music have often been fetishized in this manner. For more on the issue of locating race on music, see Ronald Radano and Philip V. Bohlman, 'Introduction', to their *Music and the Racial Imagination* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 10.
  3. *New Age*, 36 (4 December 1924): 71.
  4. Havergal Brian, 'On the Other Hand', *Musical Opinion*, June 1932, 747–8; repr. in *Havergal Brian on Music*, ed. Malcolm MacDonald (London: Toccata Press, 1986), 310–312.
  5. The first quotation is from Harvey Grace, 'New Music: Pianoforte Music', who wrote 'After looking at these bewildering pages one can only say that the proper medium for such music is the player-piano' (*Musical Times* 65, no. 976 (1 June 1924): 520). The second is from Paul Rapoport, 'Sorabji Returns?' *Musical Times* 117 (December 1976): 995.
  6. Sorabji, *Opus Clavicembalisticum* (London: J. Curwen and Sons Ltd, 1931). Geoffrey Douglas Madge's recording lasts nearly four hours, John Ogdon's nearly four and three-quarters. Sorabji wrote: 'The work is only intended for pianist-musicians of the highest order—indeed its intellectual and technical difficulties place it beyond the reach of any others. It is a weighty and serious contribution to the literature of the piano, for serious musicians and serious listeners only.' Printed in the booklet to Ogdon's recording (Sevenoaks: Altarus AIR-CD-9075, 1989), hereinafter CD booklet, 23.
  7. Brian, quoted in MacDonald, *Havergal Brian on Music*, 312.
  8. Alex Ross broadcast *Opus Clavicembalisticum* on Harvard's student radio station WHRB in October 1988 just a few months after Sorabji's death; cited in 'Talk about Immortal Masterpieces Is Rather Ridiculous', 13 August 2012, on the Internet blog, 'On an Overgrown Path'.
  9. Sorabji, letter to Alistair Hinton, 29 March 1972, in Rapoport, *Sorabji*: he was scornful of intellectuals, whom he described as those 'educated above their intelligence and perception' (342).
  10. Scott Goddard, Review of *Around Music*, in *Music and Letters* 14 (1933): 287.
  11. I recall my first encounter with Sorabji, which was through his published criticism, as an undergraduate at Oxford; I found his considered opinions 'Against Women Instrumentalists' abhorrent.
  12. Kaikhosru Sorabji, *Mi Contra Fa: The Immoralisings of a Machiavellian Musician* (London: Porcupine Press, 1947); 'The Greatness of Medtner', in *Nicolas Medtner*, ed. R. Holt (London: Dennis Dobson, 1954), 122–32; 'The Validity of the Aristocratic Principle', in *Art and Thought*, ed. K. Bharatha Iyer (London: Luzac, 1947), 214–18. He was a frequent contributor to *The Sackbut* (ed. Peter Warlock) in its first year (1920–1921), and wrote music reviews for *The New Age* from 1924 to 1934 and for *The New English Weekly* from 1932 to 1945 (both edited at that time by Orage).
  13. The late composer's friend and heir, Alistair Hinton, founded The Sorabji Archive in 1988, and has been central to this revival. Rapoport's edited volume, *Sorabji: A Critical Celebration* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1992)—hereinafter 'Sorabji'—is an indispensable source book containing, *inter alia*, edited collections of Sorabji's correspondence and criticism and a detailed works-list and discography. Rapoport included a chapter on Sorabji in his earlier volume *Opus Est: Six Composers from Northern Europe*

- (London: Kahn & Averill, 1978). Marc-André Robèrge has prepared a number of critical editions of his music and has written 'Opus sorabjanum: The Life and Works of Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji' (pdf file available on the Internet). Sean Owen's thesis, 'Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji: An Oral Biography' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Southampton, 2006), details his family background and circle of acquaintances. Lisa Hardy includes a section on Sorabji's six piano sonatas (with a focus on the first) in her book *The British Piano Sonata, 1870–1945* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2001), 101–12.
14. David Wright, in his review of the volume, *Sorabji*, described it as a composer symposium which has a 'certain cumulative fervour about it' (*Musical Times* 134, no. 1805 (July 1993): 397).
  15. Richard Taruskin, 'Revising Revision', *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 46 (1993): 138.
  16. See e.g. Paul A. Singh Ghuman, *Double Loyalties: South Asian Adolescents in the West* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003); also Paul Ghuman, *Coping with Two Cultures: British Asian and Indo-Canadian Adolescents* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1994); and Paul Ghuman, *Asian Adolescents in the West* (Leicester: The British Psychological Society, 1999).
  17. Ghuman, *Double Loyalties*, 3–4.
  18. Ibid.
  19. See Stuart Hall, 'Who Needs Identity?' in *Questions of Cultural Identity*, ed. Paul du Gay and Stuart Hall (London: Sage, 1996), 1–17; and Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora', in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 392–403. Edward W. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient* (London: Penguin 1978; 2nd ed. 1995). For further reading on race, identity, and music, see Georgina Born and David Hesmondhalgh, 'Introduction: On Difference, Representation, and Appropriation in Music', in their edited volume *Western Music and Its Others* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2000), 1–58; and Radano and Bohlman, 'Introduction', in *Music and the Racial Imagination*, 1–53.
  20. Indeed, the presence of Indian people in Britain at the time was not large. Although no official statistics are available before 1947, the Indian National Congress conducted a survey of 'all Indians outside India' in 1932. It estimated that there were 7,128 Indians in the United Kingdom. Some idea of the numbers of Indians in England's cities can be gleaned from these figures: in 1939 the Indian population in Birmingham was about 100, which included some twenty doctors and students; by 1945 it was 1,000. Of professional-class Indians, the largest group was in the medical profession: it is estimated that before 1947 about 1,000 Indian doctors practiced throughout Britain, 200 of them in London. Three Indians were elected to the House of Commons between 1893 and 1929. Rozina Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes: Indians in Britain, 1700–1947* (London: Pluto Press, 1986), 190–194.
  21. Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (London: Flamingo, 1997), 52–5. 'We can't go in [to the History House]... because we've been locked out. And when we look in through the windows, all we see are shadows. And when we try and listen, all we hear is a whispering. And we cannot understand the whispering' (53).
  22. Sorabji, postcard to Ronald Stevenson, quoted in Stevenson's 'A Zoroastrian Musician in Dorset' (1961; rev. 1988), CD Booklet, 4. Sorabji's analysis is valid today: third or tenth generation Pakistanis, Indians, or Bangladeshis born in Britain are still often faced with the question 'yes, so you were born here, but where are you from'.
  23. Owen, *Sorabji: An Oral Biography*, 40–43; see also *Sorabji*, 68. Shapurji continued to assume financial responsibility for their well-being, including their housing in

- London, the monetary backing of Sorabji's early music publications, and, after his death in 1932, access to a trust fund worth a large lump sum of £2,756 with an additional £1,850 paid annually for the rest of Madeline's life (Owen, *Sorabji: An Oral Biography*, 43).
24. Composer and conductor, Dr Erik Chisholm, regarded Sorabji 'as one of the most remarkable performers on that instrument he has ever heard', quoted in *The Bombay Man's Diary*, clipping in The Sorabji Archive.
  25. See Owen, *Sorabji: An Oral Biography*. What it means to be 'English' is, however, not clear and continues to be the subject of scholarly and popular discussion. For an example of the latter, see, Jeremy Paxman, *A Portrait of the English* (London: Penguin, 1999).
  26. Alistair Hinton, 'Kaikhosru Sorabji and Erik Chisholm', *Jagger Journal* 10 (1989/90): 21. Sorabji refused either to deny or confirm this tale.
  27. Rapoport, *Sorabji*, 215.
  28. Well-known examples are the conductor of Western classical music, Zubin Mehta (born in Mumbai in 1936), and his father, Mehli Mehta, who was a violinist and founding conductor of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra.
  29. Namita Devidayal, *The Music Room: A Memoir* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2009), 42; Devidayal speaks of Firoz Dastur, 'who happened to be Parsi, but had transgressed and become a Hindustani classical singer' (40). See also Janaki Bakhle's discussion of the central role of Parsis in the founding of music appreciation societies in Mumbai in the second half of the nineteenth century (*Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 62–76).
  30. Sorabji, in conversation with Rapoport, 14 June 1976, in *Sorabji*, 68. At the time, it was unheard of for a Brahmin girl to be connected with music in India: musicians were *bais*, from the courtesan community who earned their living by pleasing wealthy men.
  31. *New English Weekly*, 24 November 1932, 294. Ratan Devi was Coomaraswamy's second wife. Sorabji refers to recitals attended in London in *Mi Contra Fa*, 232. He makes no reference to the lecture-recitals of Maud MacCarthy, although, intriguingly, the name, *Kaikhosan Sorabji, Esq.*, appears on a document MacCarthy drew up in 1935, entitled 'List of People Interested in Puppets', when she founded the Puppet Festival Theatre at Grove End, Chiswick. "Grove End File", Maud MacCarthy Papers, private family collection.
  32. *New English Weekly*, 2 April 1925, and 9 February 1933, 398. Sorabji made frequent reference to both authors; see, for instance, *Around Music*, 111; *Mi Contra Fa*, 230–232; *New Age*, 2 April 1925, 275; and a letter-to-the-editor entitled 'Rhythmic Music', *Gramophone* 9, no. 107 (April 1932): 132. He owned a copy of *Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir*, recorded by Devi and Coomaraswamy (London: Kahn & Averill Ltd., 1913), and quoted from the introduction in several essays, e.g. *Mi Contra Fa*, 231.
  33. His writings on Indian music include 'Indian Music and Indian and Western Musical Criticism', *Mi Contra Fa*, 229–34; 'Music', in *New English Weekly*, 24 November 1932, 136–8; and 'Music: Reflections upon Indian Music' (from where the quotation in the main text is taken), *New Age*, 9 March 1933, 223–34. Although *Mi Contra Fa* was published in 1947, it contains essays written over the previous fifteen years; it is not known when Sorabji wrote the chapter on Indian music but it seems likely that it was written in 1939, the latest date mentioned in the article.
  34. His output is so voluminous, and so much of it remains in manuscript, that there could be other explicitly Indian-influenced variations among his vast and numerous sets of Theme-and-Variations or Passacaglia-and-Variations; however, in consultation with Hinton, I have not become aware of any other pieces with Indian titles or subtitles. Late in life (1971) Sorabji wrote two *Sutra[s]* [Sanskrit: 'aphorism'] *sul*

- nome dell' amico Alexis* but, apart from the title, there does not seem to be any Indian conception.
35. See e.g. 'Jawaharlal Nehru and Soviet Russia', *The Word* (1942): 64; and 'Sanskrit Literature', *Musical Times* 60, no. 922 (1 December 1919): 698.
  36. 'Holborn to Hyderabad' comes from 'Music: Reflections upon Indian Music', 224; the longer quotation is taken from 'Indian Music and Indian and Western Musical Criticism', 232.
  37. Hinton, 'Kaikhosru Sorabji and Eric Chisholm', 21.
  38. Frederick Delius, letter to Sorabji, 23 April 1930, reference in *Sorabji*, 280.
  39. Hinton, 'Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji: An Introduction', in Rapoport, ed., *Sorabji*, 54. It was the pianist John Tobin who performed Part I of the work, apparently, 'with laboured clumsiness', taking 80–90 minutes to play some 50 minutes of music; see *Sorabji*, 20–21.
  40. Letter to the Editor, *New Age*, 15 April 1915, 653, emphasis added. The composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor (1875–1912) had, before Sorabji, suffered racial prejudice.
  41. Letter to Frank Holliday, 6 September 1958, in *Sorabji*, 68–9. Information about the 'Colour Matters' file comes from Holliday, see *Sorabji*, 215.
  42. See e.g. his letter 'Was Delius British?' *Musical Opinion*, February 1952, 297.
  43. See Nazlin Bhimani, 'Sorabji's Music Criticism', in *Sorabji*, 256–84; esp. 281–3 and 259.
  44. Letter to G. Macleod, February 1975, in *Sorabji*, 24.
  45. Letter to Philip Heseltine (Peter Warlock), 11 February 1916, in *Sorabji*, 221.
  46. *Ibid.*
  47. Several of these cards are still extant in the Sorabji Archive.
  48. The Parsis are a religious community in India (numbering about 160,000) who are based mainly in the states of Maharashtra and Gujarat, and especially in the city of Mumbai (formerly Bombay). Their ancestors migrated from Persia during the seventh and eighth centuries. Parsis use the ancient Pahlavi scriptures and adhere to the Zoroastrianism established by Zarathushtra, some 2000 years B.C.E. Sorabji's quotation is from a letter to Bernard Van Dieren, n.d. (Summer 1932 or 1933, from Bombay), in *Sorabji*, 222.
  49. Sorabji, letter to Kenneth Derus, 4 June 1983, in *Sorabji*, 215. See also Rapoport's note, 215 n. 30.
  50. The 1865 Act was based on Matrimonial Courts Act 1857 of England. Under the act, any child of an invalid (bigamous) marriage who would have been legitimate, if the marriage had been valid, shall be legitimate and therefore entitled to familial inheritance.
  51. Television appearance, 11 June 1977, quoted in *Sorabji*, 215; and letter to Derus, 21 August 1977, in *Sorabji*, 215.
  52. Letter to Derus, 27 November 1980, in *Sorabji*, 221.
  53. Bert Johnson, formerly postman for Corfe Castle, in an interview with Sean Owen, 7 April 2002, in Owen, *Sorabji: An Oral Biography*, 137. Alistair Hinton has confirmed that the composer maintained a relationship with two family members; personal correspondence, 20 October 2010. The composer also kept in his collection a photograph of his father and other family members taken in Mumbai, January 1885 (photograph at the Sorabji Archive).
  54. He had been using different versions of his and his father's names on letters to Philip Heseltine prior to changing his names to Kaikhosru Shapurji in 1917 (Owen, *Sorabji: An Oral Biography*, 44). The quotations are from Said's description, at the end of his life, of 'the travails of bearing' the name 'Edward' 'yoked forcibly' to the Arabic name Said: it took, he writes, 'about fifty years' to 'feel less uncomfortable' with it.

- Furthermore, he wrote, 'I have retained this unsettled sense of many identities... all of my life, together with an acute memory of the despairing feeling that I wish we could have been all-Arab, or all-European...and so on' (*Out of Place: A Memoir* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 3–5).
55. Said, *Out of Place*, 3–4; and George Alaghiah (b. Colombo, Sri Lanka, 1995), who explains that many Sri Lankans 'have to cope with at least one foreign name handed down by their parents in the misguided belief that it was the civilised thing to do' (*A Passage to Africa* (London: Time Warner Paperbacks, 2002), 24).
  56. Alaghiah, *A Passage to Africa*, 24.
  57. 'An Ancient Creed', *Catholic Herald*, Letter, 6 February 1959, 2.
  58. Resolution Passed by the High Priests of the Parsi Zoroastrian Community 2003: <<http://tenets.zoroastrianism.com/resolu33.html>>. The question of what it means to be a Parsi has long generated contentious debate. The Parsis are a community whose ancestors left Iran in the eighth century to settle in India (mainly Gujarat) and who amount to a tiny fraction (0.006%) of the nation's total population, never more than a 'speck of dust', according to Rustom Irani, founding president of the World Zoroastrian Organization ('Parsis: The Jews of India', *New Society* 83, no. 1306 (22 January 1988)).
  59. Dadabhai Naoroji (1825–1917), from Mumbai, founded the London Zoroastrian Association for the well-being of Parsis living in London and was its first president from 1861 to 1907. He was also one of the founders of the Indian National Congress in 1885 in Mumbai. Quoted in Om Prakash Ralhan, 'Indian National Congress', *Encyclopædia of Political Parties* (New Delhi: Anmol Publications, 2002). See also Jesse S. Palsetia, *The Parsis of India: Preservation of Identity in Bombay City* (Leiden: Brill, 2001).
  60. The debate continues: for a recent example, see Aarefa Johari, 'Parsis Debate Race vs. Religion', *Hindustan Times* (Mumbai), September 19, 2010.
  61. Sorabji, 'Music: Reflections upon Indian Music', 224. Although the anglicized name 'Persia' is often used, Sorabji generally used the more correct name Iran, the name in native use since 224 C.E., and declared the country's official name in 1935. It is, therefore, Iran and Iranians that will prevail in this chapter; see Sorabji, *Sanskrit Literature*, letter, *Musical Times* 60, no. 922 (1 December 1919): 698.
  62. Irani, 'Parsis: The Jews of India'.
  63. Ibid. Parsis began to visit Britain in 1742, but it was only after the 1850s that they arrived in any significant numbers. In 1861, the Religious Society of Zoroastrians of Europe was founded in Britain; in 1909 the name was changed to the Incorporated Parsee Association of Europe (G. M. Towler Mehta, 'Parsees in Britain', *New Community* 10, no. 2 (Winter 1982): 244–5).
  64. Lionel Fielden, First Controller of Broadcasting for All India Radio, writing in his autobiography, *The Natural Bent* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1960), 150.
  65. See the book by Cornelia's nephew, Richard Sorabji, *Opening Doors: The Untold Story of Cornelia Sorabji* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2010). Kaikhosru Sorabji made his opposition to Mayo's book clear in *The New Age*, 20 March 1930, 237.
  66. Sir Lepel Griffin (1838–1908), Chairman of the East India Association and one-time Chief Secretary in Panjāb; quoted in Visram, *Ayahs, Lascars, and Princes*, 78–79 and 85.
  67. Letter to Van Dieren, n.d. (Summer 1932 or 1933, from Bombay), in *Sorabji*, 222.
  68. Letter to Norman Pierre Gentieu, 7 September 1954, in *Sorabji*, 222. Sorabji's reaction owes much to a predominant attitude among Orientalists, noted by Said: 'the "good" Orient was invariably a classical period somewhere in long-gone India, whereas the "bad" Orient lingered in present day Asia' (*Orientalism*, 99). In an article on the caste system in India, Sorabji stated that it was not the system which was at fault, but modern Indians, see 'The Validity of the Aristocratic Principle', 214–18.

69. See e.g. the French author and traveller Gérard de Nerval, who wrote of his disappointment on losing the Orient of the texts: 'I have already lost, Kingdom after Kingdom, province after province, the more beautiful part of the universe, and soon I will know of no place in which I can find a refuge for my dreams; but it is Egypt that I most regret having driven out of my imagination, now that I have sadly placed it in my memory' (*Oeuvres*, ed. A. Béguin and J. Richer (Paris: Gallimard, 1960), vol. 1, 933; cited in translation in Said, *Orientalism* (note 20), 100).
70. A well-known book from Sorabji's time which provides the correct terms and spelling is Rastamji Edulji Dastoor Peshotan Sanjana, *Zarathushtra and Zarathushtrianism in the Avesta* (Leipzig: Otto Harrosowitz, 1904).
71. Letter to Heseltine, 6 January 1914, in *Sorabji*, 204.
72. Sorabji was a close friend of Bernard Bromage, a lecturer and writer one of whose main interests was the occult; he was also aware of the work and writings of the Order of the Golden Dawn.
73. For most of his life, that is until he was 76, any homosexual act, even between consenting adults in private, was illegal in Britain and it was not until four years after his death in 1992 that homosexuality was removed from the International Classification of Diseases, 10th revision. Homosexual men were still being subjected to barbaric 'treatments' to 'cure them', peaking in the 1960s and early 1970s, but continuing into the 1990s (Michael King, Glenn Smith and Annie Bartlett, 'Treatments of Homosexuality in Britain since the 1950s—An Oral History: 'The Experience of Patients' and 'the Experience of Professionals', *British Medical Journal* 328 (29 January 2004): 427–29 and 429–32). Michael Habermann's doctoral thesis unfortunately ascribed Sorabji's unmarried status to the fact that he was 'to some extent a misogynist' ('A Style Analysis of the Nocturnes for Solo Piano by Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji with special Emphasis on *Le jardin parfume*' (DMA, Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University, 1985), 5).
74. The trial and imprisonment, in 1895, of Oscar Wilde for homosexual activities must have profoundly affected all homosexuals in the early part of the twentieth century.
75. See e.g. 'Homosexuality', letter to the Editor, *European* (February 1956): 61–2.
76. Sorabji, Letter to Rapoport, 25 January 1975, quoted in *Sorabji*, 70.
77. Havelock Ellis's *Sexual Inversion* first appeared in 1897 (London: Wilson and Macmillan). Sorabji's dedication is quoted in *Sorabji*, 126. In 1930, during the composition of *Opus C*, Sorabji made a reference to the recently banned novel of lesbian love, *The Well of Loneliness* by 'that clever authoress Radclyffe Hall'. Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1928). Letter to Chisholm, 29 May 1930. Sorabji championed Ellis's work in letters to the editor; see e.g. 'Homosexuality', letter to the Editor, *European* (February 1956): 61–2.
78. In conversation with Holliday in August 1955, Sorabji said that he had been blackmailed over his sexuality; see *Sorabji*, 70 n. 29.
79. As mentioned earlier, after Shapurji's death, the composer had access to a trust fund of £2,756 (worth some £150,000 today) and an annual income (see n. 24) (Owen, *Sorabji: An Oral Biography*, 43).
80. Christopher Butler discusses the idea of alienation and modernism in his book, *Early Modernism: Literature, Music, and Painting in Europe, 1900–1916* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 1–4.
81. 'Reasons for Living in a Granite Tower', part three of 'Il Gran Rifiuto', in *Mi Contra Fa*, 141–8. He explained 'Dharma' as 'that subtle untranslatable word meaning at once inborn ability and the obligation, the moral duty to develop it and practise it to the fullest of one's power'.

82. See the 'Statement of Aims' for the society written by Alban Berg and reprinted in *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, compiled and annotated by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin (New York: Schirmer Books, 1994), 430–432: for instance, the removal of performance from 'the corrupting influence of publicity', from 'applause, or demonstrations of disapproval'.
83. 'Reasons for Living in a Granite Tower', 145. No doubt such descriptions contributed to the myth that the composer lived in a castle when in fact he lived in a tower-less house in the village of Corfe Castle.
84. Letter to Heseltine, c/o *Musical Times*, 3 October 1913, in *Sorabji*, 198.
85. Letter to Heseltine, 6 January 1914, in *Sorabji*, 204.
86. *Ibid.*
87. Letter to Heseltine, late February 1914, *Sorabji*, 209.
88. Sorabji's great love and knowledge of the piano and its repertoire is reflected not only in the concentration of his writings about the piano and in the bulk of his output but also in the enormous amount of time he spent discussing the piano with friends; see Hinton, 'Kaikhosru Sorabji and Erik Chisholm', 27.
89. Sorabji's writings reveal an intimate knowledge of Alkan's music, especially the piano works: articles are scattered throughout periodicals including *The Musical Times*, *The New Age*, and *The New English Weekly*; there are many references to Alkan in *Mi Contra Fa* (109, 195, 196, 203, and 204), and there is a chapter devoted to Alkan's piano works in *Around Music* (213–19). Sorabji was always keen to point out Alkan's reclusive nature, explaining that he was deeply engrossed in his composition, and that he hated publicity and the 'brouhaha of the public concert'. See, in particular, *Mi Contra Fa*, 203–4.
90. It is perhaps easy to neglect the effects of racism in leading both Alkan and Sorabji into adopting their solitary lifestyles; both composers must have had to contend with racism on a daily basis. Not long after Alkan's death in 1888, the trial of Alfred Dreyfus (in 1893–4) was to reveal the level of anti-Semitism in French society.
91. Sorabji, *New English Weekly*, 27 January 1938, 313–14; Sorabji spends a third of his article stressing Alkan's genius, individuality, and lack of public acclaim. Developing this latter observation into a positive principle, he frequently stated (probably in order to reassure himself) that public criticism and unpopularity were to be taken as a mark of worth and excellence.
92. *New English Weekly*, 27 January 1938, 313; see also *Around Music*, 213–19.
93. *Around Music*, 193–208. In his Sixth Symphony for piano of 1975–6, Sorabji wrote a movement entitled 'Quasi Alkan'.
94. *Around Music*.
95. Sorabji's letters to Heseltine, British Library, Add. MS. 57963: H1, 3 October 1913. See also the selection of letters to Heseltine published in *Sorabji*, 195–255.
96. Letter to Heseltine, 3 October 1913, in *Sorabji*, 199.
97. *New Age* 55, 19 July 1934, 141–2.
98. Sorabji, 'Shortform-Analysis of *Opus Clavicembalisticum*', CD Booklet, 22. For the composer's writings on Busoni, see *Around Music*, 21–30, and numerous 'Music' articles and reviews of Busoni's music published in *The New English Weekly* and *The New Age* during the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s. Kaikhosru Sorabji, *Sonata seconda for Piano* (London: F and B. Goodwin Ltd, 1923).
99. Marc-André Robèrge, 'Producing Evidence for the Beatification of a Composer: Sorabji's Deification of Busoni', *Music Review* 54, no. 2 (May 1993): 123–36 [publ. May 1996]; details of the meeting are given on pp. 125–6.
100. *Around Music*, 24–30; see, in particular, *Mi Contra Fa*, 213–15. Sorabji often voiced this view that music like Busoni's (and presumably his own) was above the intellectual and musical understanding of the public, hence its rejection. See e.g. *Around Music*, 24–25.

101. Larry Sitsky, *Busoni and the Piano: The Works, the Writings, and the Recordings* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1986), 3. Sorabji alludes to Busoni's position as a 'national nobody' in several articles and reviews; see, in particular, *New Age*, 21 November 1929, 32.
102. Sorabji's views on this matter can be found in many articles and reviews; see in particular, 'The Decline of Music and Musical Taste in England', in *Mi Contra Fa*, 89–107, as well as several chapters of *Around Music*, 78–92, 107–12, 152–9.
103. Cited in Bernard van Dieren, *Down among the Dead Men and Other Essays* (London: Humphrey Milford for Oxford University Press, 1935), 36 n. 1.
104. Richard Taruskin, 'Reaching for Limits', in *Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 5 (from where the quoted phrase also comes).
105. The phrase is Taruskin's (*ibid.*, 23).
106. Hugh MacDiarmid, *The Company I've Kept* (London: Hutchinson, 1996), 40.
107. Cecil Gray, 'Sorabji', in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, ed., W. Cobbett (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1930), vol. 2, 436–7.
108. Alistair Hinton, 'Kaikhosru Sorabji: An Introduction', in *Sorabji*, 53.
109. Marc-André Robèrge, 'Kaikhosru Shapurji Sorabji', in *Music of the Twentieth-Century Avant-Garde: A BioCritical Source Book*, ed. Larry Sitsky (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 2002), 487–92, 489.
110. Said, *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*.
111. *Ibid.*, 332.
112. See Sorabji, letter to Heseltine, 11 February 1916, in *Sorabji*, 222. Sorabji bought a copy of Flaubert's book containing all three versions; his declared intention of setting it to (or in) music does not appear to have been achieved.
113. Gustave Flaubert, *Correspondance*, ed. Jean Bruneau (Paris: Gallimard, 1973), vol. 1, 433.
114. Letters to Chisholm, 29 May and 11/12 June 1930, in *Sorabji*, 306–7 and 308–9.
115. Flaubert, *Correspondance*, quoted in Flaubert, *The Temptation of St Antony*, trans. K. Mrosovsky (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1983), 3.
116. Letter to Chisholm, 18 April 1930, in *Sorabji*, 63.
117. The *Simurgh* is a huge white mythical bird—the Roc of the Thousand and One Nights stories, which itself is related to the Garuda, a birdlike creature found in Hindu stories, including the *Mahābhārata*, dating back thousands of years. Both birds are said to prey on giant snakes and elephants suggesting the stories share a common origin. The *Aanqa* is the legendary Phoenix.
118. Sorabji expressed great admiration for Burton's translation of *A Thousand Nights and a Night*; see *Sorabji*, 325.
119. Sorabji used the French transliterative spelling *Djâmi* on the manuscript of his piano nocturne, just as he used the French spelling, 'Scheherezade' in his correspondence.
120. Letters to Heseltine of 14 April 1914 and June 1917; quoted in *Sorabji*, 213 and 229. It was only later that he understood the crudity of the term 'Oriental' in general, and objected to the assimilation of Parsis and Indians in particular. See Sorabji, 'The Validity of the Aristocratic Principle', 214–18.
121. Sorabji, 'A Personal Statement', 19 October 1959, manuscript in the Sorabji Archive. Also quoted in MacDiarmid, *The Company I've Kept*, 39. His contemporary, John Foulds, had long before been taken in: Sorabji's recent 'diatribe against simplicity', he wrote in 1935, 'betrays the Oriental's natural tendency toward extraordinary elaboration of detail' (*Music To-Day: Its Heritage from the Past, and Legacy to the Future* (Opus 92) (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1934), 341).

122. Sorabji was aware that Debussy was deeply interested in Japanese visual art, had chosen to decorate the cover of *La Mer* with Hokusai's painting 'The Wave', and, it is said, bought more Japanese paintings than he could afford. Sorabji wrote of *L'Île joyeuse* as 'the magnificent piano piece... [with] a suppleness of rhythm, a richness and delicacy of colouring, and a flexibility of melodic line that shows very plainly [its] Asiatic affinities and sympathies' ('Oriental Atmosphere', 148–9).
123. 'Oriental Atmosphere', 149–50; *New English Weekly*, 22 April 1937, 35.
124. Sorabji, 'Oriental Atmosphere', 150. See also his chapter on Szymanowski in *Mi Contra Fa*, 178–87.
125. 'Oriental Atmosphere', 148.
126. *Arabesque*, manuscript, reproduced with kind permission of The Sorabji Archive. The song has been recorded by Elizabeth Farnum (soprano) and Margaret Kampmeier (piano): Centaur CRC 2613 (2003).
127. Sorabji wrote of Delius's *En Arabesk* (1911): 'It is surely one of the most astonishing evocations in sound of poisonous, perverse, tuberoses-like beauty that exists. It is indescribably insinuating and haunting, and the mood of the subtly beautiful poem, with its deadly perfume, "the poisonous lily's blinding chalice," is expressed with miraculous insight and power' (*New Age* 46, 7 November 1929, 8–9).
128. All music examples are reproduced with permission from The Sorabji Archive.
129. Holliday recalls Sorabji playing Scriabin's *Désir* and commenting that the piece was 'just that!' (quoted in *Sorabji*, 199); see Sorabji, letter to Heseltine, 27 August 1916, in *Sorabji*, 229. Taruskin traces the evolution of the 'mystic chord' from *Poème de l'extase* and *Désir*; he demonstrates the operations of inversion and transposition which Scriabin evidently performed to arrive at the 'mystic chord'; see 'Scriabin and the Superhuman', in *Defining Russia Musically* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1997), 336–42. More generally, Sorabji knew Scriabin's piano music well. Sorabji's letter to Heseltine: 'do you think my interpretations of Scriabine are good? ... I put my *whole heart and soul* into them and I feel every note as few people can' (27 August 1916, in *Sorabji*, 229). Scriabin's late piano sonatas, which Sorabji admired for their 'quality of sensitive and delicate insight into the nature of the piano and keyboard resources', seem to have inspired the resonant writing of the non-fugal parts of *Opus Clavicembalisticum*—low bass chords (often in fifths and octaves) underpinning rapid chordal figuration in the upper registers (*Around Music*, 62–3). In 1934, in what might be best understood as a display of 'anxiety of influence', Sorabji rejected Scriabin publicly, claiming that 'of great art [his music] has not the smallest trace, of coherent conception, of form of design, less than nothing' (*New Age*, 19 July 1934, 141–2). It was only forty years later that he returned to his former admiration, acknowledging the error of his judgement.
130. He proclaimed that 'even in the case of really experienced singers in India, their methods of singing are so atrocious and the quality of their voices so horrible... that it is almost impossible adequately to appreciate the music' (*New English Weekly*, 24 November 1932, 137). Note also the title of another essay: 'Music: [On Sorabji's thirst for good music while in India]', *New Age* (22 December 1932), 92.
131. See e.g. van Dieren's music being likened to a 'priceless piece of Chinese embroidery' (*New English Weekly*, 22 April 1937, 35); Szymanowski's music described as 'permeated with the very essence of the choicest and rarest specimens of Iranian art... like a Persian painting or silk rug' (*Mi Contra Fa*, 183–4); Busoni's music likened to 'the gorgeous rich dark glow of colours on some priceless old Chinese or Persian silk carpet' (*Around Music*, 2; see also 51).
132. *Around Music*, 147. Sorabji, 'Music: Reflections upon Indian Music', *The New Age*, 9 March 1933, 223–4: 'Persia—whence came all the best in India's civilisation

- probably'. It may be that Sorabji is here referring to the belief of some scholars that Amir Khusrau, the musician-philosopher and writer of Persian poetry, introduced many important elements (styles and instruments) into Hindustani classical music during the period of the Khilji dynasty (c. thirteenth to fourteenth centuries C.E.). Rabindranath Tagore noted the close resemblances between the two musical traditions during his travels in Iran; see Satyajit Ray, 'Tagore and Music Research', *Journal of the Indian Musical Society* 23 (January–December 1992): 70–73.
133. Hardy attributes all three elements to 'Eastern' or 'Indian' music in a single paragraph, concluding that the result is 'a blend of Western and Indian influences' (*The British Piano Sonata*, 109). Stevenson likens the opening phrase of *Opus Clavicembalisticum* to 'an Indian *rāga*' ('Opus Clavicembalisticum—A Critical Analysis', CD Booklet, 32); yet its function, contour, and declamatory nature have more in common with the brass calls Sorabji admired at the opening of certain movements of Mahler's fifth and seventh symphonies (*Around Music*, 188–9). Charles Hopkins discussed the piano nocturne *Gulistan* in relation to Sufi mysticism, although there is no evidence that Sorabji studied Sufism. He writes, 'It is only when one encounters the music of Sorabji himself that it is possible to experience the essence of true spiritual and cultural miscegenation' ('Love and Mysticism: Sorabji, Sa'di, and the Sufic Tradition', linear notes to his recording of *Gulistan* (Altarus: AIR-CD-9036, 1995)). Habermann writes: 'Sorabji's art is equally influenced by Eastern and Western concepts, the former reflecting his heritage, the latter his domicile. But Sorabji's 'exoticism' has nothing to do with the showy and superficial orientalism in works of composers of the 19th century. Eastern elements are an integral part of his music' ('Sorabji's Piano Music', in *Sorabji*, 339–40).
  134. Rapoport, *Opus Est*, 166; Hardy, *The British Piano Sonata*, 109.
  135. One might recall Hubert Parry's remarks, quoted in the first chapter, about how 'the love of unmeaning decorative ornamentation is excessive' in the music of 'genuine Orientals' (particularly Indians). *The Evolution of the Art of Music* (first published in 1893, and in its tenth edition by 1931) (London: Kegan Paul, Trench & Trübner, 1925), 57–9.
  136. *Around Music*, 116–17. Parry's remarks, discussed in the first chapter, include the following: 'it is noticeable that people who delight in excess of ornament and decoration are almost always of inferior intellectual power and organization' (*Evolution of the Art of Music*, 57–9).
  137. Sorabji, 'On the Misuse of the Term "Coloratura"', in *Around Music*, 47–51, 50.
  138. See Rapoport, *Opus Est*, 173; Hardy, *The British Piano Sonata*, 109.
  139. *Mi Contra Fa*, 231.
  140. *New English Weekly*, November 1932, 136: Sorabji states that there is no necessity 'for having recourse to such outrageous tricks as taking liberties with the composer's written intentions'.
  141. 'Reflections on Indian Music', 223.
  142. *Ibid.*
  143. Beverley Nichols, *Verdict on India* (London: Jonathan Cape and Bombay: Thacker, 1944), 122–36.
  144. *Ibid.*, esp. 111 and 134.
  145. *Around Music*, 26–7.
  146. See Rapoport, 'Sorabji Returns?' 995 and *Opus Est*, 166; also Habermann, 'Sorabji's Piano Music', 340; Hardy, *The British Piano Sonata*, 109.
  147. Ferruccio Busoni, *Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music*, trans. T. Baker; repr. in *Three Classics in the Aesthetic of Music* (New York: Dover Publications, 1962), 78–80. For Sorabji's views on form, see *Mi Contra Fa*, 51–2.

148. 'Reflections upon Indian Music', 224. Sorabji wrote of 'organic' form and technique in *Mi Contra Fa*, 51–2. See *Around Music*, 178–90, for Sorabji's admiration for Mahler's symphonies.
149. Sorabji, letter to Chisholm, 11/12 June 1930, in *Sorabji*, 308–9. MacDiarmid, *The Company I've Kept*, 42 and 54. MacDiarmid advised Sorabji not to write a shorter work in order to satisfy public opinion (not that Sorabji was intending to do such a thing); see also Sorabji's letters to Chisholm during the work's composition, *Sorabji*, 300–311.
150. 'Indian Music and Indian and Western Musical Criticism', 230.
151. In figure 5.5 the E natural that ends the third group of sextuplets in the ostinato is likely to be an error in the score and should be F#. As Hardy notes, there are many errors in the published scores of Sorabji's works (*The British Piano Sonata*, 112).
152. We might even hear this variation as an example of the composer's penchant for caricature evident in his 1922 piano pastiches of Bizet's 'Habanera' and Rimsky-Korsakov's 'Hindu Merchant's Song', or in the later *Malicious and Perverse Variation on Åse's Death by Grieg*. Yet the humour in these pastiches bears little relation to the subtle tone of the *Quasi Tāmbūra* variation.
153. Chaleur, copyist's manuscript, The Sorabji Archive. Sorabji provided an explanatory note that the krait is 'the deadliest serpent known... said to be responsible for from 50–75,000 deaths annually in India'.
154. H. P. Blavatsky, *From the Caves and Jungles of Hindostan 1883–1886*, trans. by the author (London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1892).
155. When Romain Rolland asked Freud's opinion of the Indian approach to the self to use in his biography of Sri Ramakrishna, Freud replied using the jungle as a metaphor: 'I shall now try... to penetrate into the Indian jungle' (H. Hesse and R. Rolland, *Correspondence, Diary Entries 1915–1940* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1978), quoted in Jeffrey Paine, *Father India: Westerners under the Spell of an Ancient Culture* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1999), 102).
156. *New English Weekly*, 11 April 1935, 538. This charge was laid against Holst among other composers; Sorabji particularly detested Holst's music and his reviews were consistently negative; see *Sorabji*, 276–8. For other instances, see 'Oriental Atmosphere', in *Around Music*, 147–51.
157. *Around Music*, 151.
158. *Around Music*, 151 and 63. 'Brummagem' is the local colloquial name for Birmingham. Sorabji was equally critical of what he perceived to be mediocrity in Indian musical traditions; his criticisms resonated with those made by both Tagore and Coomaraswamy, particularly about singers.
159. Such nostalgia is often associated with domination—mourning the passing of that which colonialism itself has transformed (here an imaginary tropical, pre-industrial India). R. Rosaldo, 'Imperialist Nostalgia', in *Culture and Truth* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1989), 68–87.
160. *Gulistan*, markings quoted in *Sorabji*, 148. *Le Jardin parfumé* (London: J. Curwen and Sons Ltd, 1927), 3. *Chaleur's* programme itself draws on markings he gave to the second movement of his first piano concerto: 'Toujours envelope d'une atmosphère de chaleur tropicale et languoureuse'. The connection between these expressive markings and a particular kind of piano writing associated with his 'Persian' nocturnes can be discerned in other pieces: e.g. in the third part of his Sixth Symphony for Piano, the first section is an Arabesque-Nocturne marked 'Smooth and soft throughout. All to be played with languorous and tropical sentiment (*Legatissimo e morbido sempre. Il tutto nel sentimento languoroso e tropicale*)', quoted in *Sorabji*, 170. Sorabji also used the jungle as a metaphor to describe the arts of Asia, all of which he

- considered 'remarkable for the lush intricacy and complexity, things symptomatic of an exuberantly rich and tropically fertile imagination... [and a] teeming abundance of invention' (*Around Music*, 116).
161. Busoni, letter to Emil Hertzka, quoted in *Sorabji*, 254 (see also the second epigraph to this chapter). Hopkins, 'Love and Mysticism: Sorabji, Sa'di, and the Sufic Tradition', linear notes to his recording of *Gulistan* (Altarus: AIR-CD-9036, 1995). Chisholm drew on the term 'poisonous sweetness' (used by Sorabji to describe Delius's music) to describe the nocturnes *Le Jardin parfumé*, *Djâmi*, and *Gulistan*, which share the inert and sultry low dynamic level of *Chaleur*; quoted in notes to Yonty Solomon's Altarus CD of *Le Jardin parfumé*, AIR-CD-9037. Paul Griffiths invokes a more domesticated jungle in his article, 'Wandering through a Recluse's Personal Garden', *New York Times*, 18 November 2002, 2. Reinier van Houdt and René van Peer use *Chaleur*'s program itself as an epilogue to their essay on his music and suggest that it can be applied to his music in general ('Finding One's Way through an Immense Building of Music', on the Sorabji Archive's website: <[http://www.sorabji-archive.co.uk/articles/vanhoudt\\_vanpeer\\_1.php](http://www.sorabji-archive.co.uk/articles/vanhoudt_vanpeer_1.php)>).
162. The original title on the manuscript is *Symphonic Variations for Piano and Orchestra*, but it is scored only for piano solo throughout and forms a complete piano work. Sorabji completed an orchestral version of Vol. 1 of this work: that work bears the identical title and was completed in 1956.
163. 'Nostalgico, languido e morbidissimo sempre'. Variation thirty-four, *Symphonic Variations for Piano Solo*, manuscript copy, Sorabji Archive.
164. Sorabji conjectured optimistically about future temperings of the piano scale (a fifty-five note octave) and enthused about the experimental keyboards (some containing eighty-one notes to the octave) seen in the Science Museum, South Kensington, which he termed 'marvels of ingenuity'. M. Benson, 'The Opus Clavicembalisticum' (DMA, The American Conservatory of Music, 1987), 5; and *Around Music*, 206.
165. Letter to Heseltine, 11 January 1915, in *Sorabji*, 216. Busoni discussed similar divisions of the octave in his *Sketch of a New Esthetic*, 89–95. The figuration might also bear distant relation to Liszt's piano works (in which, as Sorabji noted, decoration takes its part in the melodic structure), or to the *fioritura* ('florid arabesque vocal music') which the composer admired in Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Golden Cockerel* and Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos* (Sorabji, 'On the Misuse of the Term "Coloratura"', in *Around Music*, 47–51).
166. 'Metapsychic Motivation in Music', 200–201.
167. *Ibid.*, 200.
168. Score courtesy of the Sorabji Archive; the movements' subtitles use the transliterations found in *Tantra of the Great Liberation (Mahānirvāna Tantra)*. A translation from the Sanskrit, with introduction and commentary, by Arthur Avalon (London: Luzac & Co., 1913).
169. *Ibid.*, 39.
170. Schoenberg, *Drei Satiren*, Op. 28, in *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, selected and annotated by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Schirmer, 2008), 394–5.
171. The quotation is from Jawaharlal Nehru, letter to Lionel Fielden, written from Allahabad, 3 January 1937: '[Does not the problem lie] in the unhealthy relation between India and England, in the topsy-turvy world itself?' (Fielden, *The Natural Bent*, 198).
172. Sorabji, *The Validity of the Aristocratic Principle*, 214. See, for instance, *New English Weekly*, 24 November 1932.
173. 'Goa: Twofold Motive', *Catholic Herald*, 5 January 1962. India 'is not really a place with which [I] can form a national identity because it has always been an artificial

- construct...Indian-ness is not a thing that exists' (Gayatri Chakrovarty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic* (New York and London, 1990), 39). In the last sentence of the paragraph from which this quotation is taken, Spivak does, however, refer to 'we Indians'.
174. 'Indian Music', letter, March 1937, *Musical Times*, 258.
  175. The birth certificate of the lead singer of the British rock band *Queen*, the late Freddie Mercury (born Farrokh Bulsara in 1946), records his parents details as follows: 'Nationality: British Indian' and 'Race: Parsee'.
  176. Sorabji, letter to Cecil Gray, 15 April 1944, BL ADD MS 57786 (75).
  177. Rapoport describes the letter to Gray in these terms (Sorabji, 223).
  178. Sorabji's remark can be understood in the context of Said's analysis of 'the process of challenge, recognition, and exposure' experienced by those who are perceived to be 'out of place', to have more than a single ethnic or national identity (*Out of Place*, 5–6).
  179. Sunil Khilnani, *The Idea of India* (New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 1998), 1. Similarly, in his music, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor seems to have yearned for Africa, the homeland of a father he never knew. Naipaul was born in a foreign land, Trinidad, where his forebears, indentured labourers, had been transported as the brutally treated replacement for African slaves, and his work is permeated with what has been interpreted as an anger and hostility at being from, but not of Trinidad, and of, but not from India, a country of which his family had no living memory—indeed suffering psychologically in some ways like Sorabji. *An Area of Darkness* (London: Deutsch, 1964), written after Naipaul's first encounter with India, is, according to Jeffrey Paine in a perceptive commentary, 'the narrative of a young man not finding the India he expected and not liking the India he finds... [in it] Naipaul blamed India for not living up to his father's vision... A decade, several trips, and one book [*India: A Wounded Civilization* (London: Deutsch, 1977)] later, Naipaul was still compiling the same indictment' ('Head of Darkness,' in *Father India*, 147–76).
  180. The composer's description of his father is quoted in Sorabji, 215. *Kāla pāni*—the tabooed 'dark water' crossed by Indian expatriates who left for Britain, by indentured servants of the British who somehow survived the 'Middle Passage' voyage to the Caribbean, and by freedom fighters imprisoned by the British on the Andaman Islands.
  181. The recitals took place on 19 October and 7 December 1932; 'Mr. Kaikhasroo Shapurji Sorabji', *Indian Radio Times*, December 1932, 2118. C. B. Sethna who was in charge of VUB radio in the early 1930s, recalled that Soraji broadcast a recital in 1933 as well (Anon., *Bombay Man's Diary*, n.d., Sorabji Archive). The Indian Broadcasting Corporation went into Liquidation in February 1930. Thereafter, Indian broadcasting was transferred to government control and was known, between 1930 and 1935, as the Indian State Broadcasting Service (with the call letters VUB). H. R. Luthra, *Indian Broadcasting* (New Delhi: Publications Division Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Government of India, 1986), 50–67.
  182. *The Bombay Man's Diary*.
  183. Ibid.
  184. Rabindranath Tagore refused to use the piano as he thought it too restricting (B. C. Deva, *An Introduction to Indian Music* (New Delhi: Publications Division, 1973), 115).
  185. Alagiah, *A Passage to Africa*, 24.
  186. See e.g. Sorabji's article on Uday Shankar, *New English Weekly*, 2 November 1933, 65–6, in which he draws comparisons between the music of India and that of Mahler and Szymanowski, commenting: 'I do want to hear Mr. Shankar's superb drummer in that unwritten Szymanowski work'; see also 'Music', *New English Weekly*, 17 May 1934, 110–12.

## CHAPTER 6



# Modes, Mantras, and *Gandharvas*

## *John Foulds's Passage to India*

No little Englander for me, nor bland cosmopolitanism.

—John Foulds

### No Little Englander

In the early summer of 1935 composer John Foulds and his family set sail for India, 'the unknown', as his wife Maud MacCarthy later put it, where (in her published recollection) they had been ordered to go by the Brothers, spiritual beings whose voices were channelled through a young man the two had become close to in London, and who was always known as 'The Boy'.<sup>1</sup> On a more practical level, it was an expedient time for John to leave Britain. He had secured a contract with Ivor Nicholson & Watson to write a book on Indian music and was looking forward to studying musics of the subcontinent at first-hand.<sup>2</sup> During the voyage, he wrote out the *Indian Suite*, which he completed at Port Sa'ïd. As they approached Bombay, MacCarthy recalled that 'dream-India seemed to assail me'. Reality soon hit:

The heat was terrific. We had arrived in the hottest days of the hot season—days most dreaded throughout India—just before the rains. No one, except those who can travel in air-conditioned compartments, would elect to cross India by train—especially long stretches of desert—in a second-class compartment, during those horrible days; or, having arrived at a lower Himalayan Hill Station, to proceed thence into the mountains in a narrow, wooden-seated, rattling, packed lorry, scarcely protected from the sun. But thus we travelled. The journey... took two nights and three days... the children weathered it; but my husband and I more or less collapsed, over and over again... Probably our self-constituted exile added to the strain (for we two Western artists hardly belonged here)... Well, there we were. London was behind

us; India before us [and] we possessed not a rupee between us!... We had to start our new life from zero.<sup>3</sup>

They stayed for quite some time in a bungalow on a tea estate in Panjāb's Kangra Valley: without fans, sun-blinds, mosquito nets, or clean water—"The locals, British included, laughed at us."<sup>4</sup> In spite of all this hardship, John Foulds, now in his fifties, would begin a new chapter of his life, some pages of which reveal immense creativity; others are beset by struggle and loneliness. He travelled, learned a great deal about Indian music, and within eighteen months had taken a job in Delhi because of the family's 'impossible' financial situation. Thereafter, the rest of the family moved to Kashmir and spent winters in Lahore; Foulds visited whenever he could.

But Foulds's passage to India began long before their ship cast off in 1935—it properly began in London in 1915 when, on April 3, he wrote to Mrs Maud Mann, the wife of William Mann as she was then, about joining the Brotherhood of Arts, Crafts and Industries. Mrs Mann, formerly the virtuoso violinist Maud MacCarthy, had gained considerable renown for her lecture-recitals on Indian music; Foulds was gaining a reputation as a composer (in spite of being an 'outsider' from Manchester) with, in particular, a popular *Keltic Lament*, and the *Variazoni ed Improvvisati* for piano (1905) which drew praise from fellow composer Joseph Holbrooke for its 'volcanic life', and which Elgar's publisher, A. H. Jaeger, sent to Havergal Brian who had asked if he knew of any other composer of Elgar's originality.<sup>5</sup> A self-taught composer like Berlioz, Musorgsky, and Satie, Foulds was intensely interested in musical developments on the continent. He had travelled to the Musicians' Festival (Tonkünstler-Fest) of the General German Music Association (Allgemeiner Deutschen Musikvereins) in Essen in 1906 where he met Richard Strauss, and to Frankfurt in 1910 where he met Mahler who was then 'in the throes of the production of his colossal *Eighth Symphony*'.<sup>6</sup> Two years later Foulds's own captivating *Music Pictures* for orchestra were premiered under Sir Henry Wood at the Queen's Hall Proms—a decade before Ravel would orchestrate Musorgsky's *Pictures* and several years prior to the appearance of Holst's *Planets*. In 1911, his cello concerto was premiered by the Hallé orchestra, an occasion for which Hans Richter handed John (then a cellist in the orchestra) the baton (figure 6.1).

MacCarthy and Foulds met in the spring of 1915 and it is clear from her letter of 28th April that they fell immediately in love.<sup>7</sup> She recalled later that 'I entered with my [new] husband into another existence'.<sup>8</sup> For John, it was the defining relationship of his life. He was now uniquely placed in terms of learning Indian music first-hand and he did not waste his opportunity. In the coming years, as we will see, he would base several of his most ambitious compositions on Indian themes, ideas, and music. The two musicians began to collaborate on numerous projects, among them original scores and transcriptions of MacCarthy's interpretations of Indian music for theatre productions by Kedar Nath Das Gupta's Union of East and West.<sup>9</sup> These theatrical projects uniquely involved both European and Indian instruments such as a chamber orchestra arrangement with *tablā*, and a pair of songs with *tānpūra*.<sup>10</sup> In 1925 he began a concerto for voice and orchestra especially for Maud: entitled *Lyra Celtica*, its vocal line is shaped from the microtonal nuances for which she was renowned.



**Figure 6.1**

John Foulds, c.1915

Source: Reproduced from an original in the Borthwick Institute, University of York. MCF 3/2/5/2(1).

One passage features ascending scales of 22 *srutis* to the octave, her singing of which had been singled out for particular praise, as mentioned in the first chapter.<sup>11</sup> They lived and breathed music together. Decades later, in nostalgic letters written from Delhi which MacCarthy read in her ashram in Śrinagar, he spoke of ‘those wonderful... holy... days at Lansdowne Road’ (figure 6.2).<sup>12</sup>

On the first of October 1915, the pair appeared in one of their earliest collaborations. It was the sixty-fifth birthday of theosophist and anti-colonial activist, Annie Besant, and they had prepared a musical celebration. The programme was offered ‘to the great teacher who has inspired us... as the first fruits of our investigations in new fields of musical composition’ (figure 6.3).

Indeed, although Foulds and MacCarthy would leave the Theosophical Society within months of this concert, deeply disillusioned with the organization, the programme represents subjects that would preoccupy the two musicians for years to come: improvisation, a skill for which they both had flair, contemporary Indian music, ancient Greek music (imagined, not real), and ‘nature music’. This last lay behind the most intriguing item, *Gandharva-Music*, a piece ‘clairaudiently heard’ and ‘taken down’.<sup>13</sup> Foulds’s private recollection was that they had heard the music together in a magical moment in an orchard on Darvill’s Hill, Buckinghamshire, in



**Figure 6.2**

MacCarthy and Foulds, during 'those wonderful... holy... days at Landsdowne Road' (c.1919)

Source: Maud MacCarthy Papers: Private Family Collection.

September.<sup>14</sup> MacCarthy explained the piece's title and genesis in intriguing detail in a lecture given at Birmingham University the following month:

There is music going on around us all the time—a music which belongs to cosmic nature. Some, more sensitive than others, can hear something of this nature-music today. This friends, is no dreamer's idle talk. A slight psychic development of the hearing—enables the musical person to hear earthly sounds—of wind and wave, of flower and tree—sounds which in Hindu musical mythology are said to be made by the *gandharvas*, or angels whose very nature is music. I myself have often heard nature-music, and I have copied music directly from what I have heard; and I know of several fellow-musicians, Eastern and Western, who have had a similar experience.<sup>15</sup>

*Gandharva-Music*, then, is a piano transcription of this 'nature music' created by music angels, *gandharvas*, who grace the upper corners of centuries of Indian paintings and sculpture (figure 6.4). Its essence is simplicity itself: an ostinato bass, a swirling melodic line suggestive of the winged *gandharvas*, and a distinctive inner voice of falling fourths, all 'remote' and barely audible, and which eventually disappear into

P R O G R A M M E   O F   M U S I C.  
MRS. BESANT'S BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION,  
October 1st, 1915.

The following music is offered by the composers to the great teacher who has inspired them, as the first fruits of their investigations in new fields of musical composition.

1. PRELUDE FOR VOICES AND ORGAN. Improvisations on a deva theme by Maud Mann and J. H. Foulds.
2. TWO SONGS IN INDIAN STYLE. J. H. Foulds  
(words translated from Kabir)
  - (a) Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale.  
From what land do you come, O Swan? to what shore  
will you fly?  
Where would you take your rest, O Swan, and what do you seek?  
  
Even this morning, O Swan, awake, arise, follow me!  
There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule:  
where the terror of Death is no more.  
There the woods of spring are a-bloom, and the fragrant  
scent is borne on the wind:  
There the bed of the heart is deeply immersed, and desires  
no other joy.
  - (b) My beloved Lord is within.  
Within this eastern vessel are bowers and groves, and within  
it is the Creator.  
Within this vessel are the seven oceans and the unnumbered  
stars.  
The touchstone and the jewel-appraiser are within;  
And within this vessel the Eternal soundeth, and the spring  
wells up.  
Listen to me, my friend! My beloved Lord is within.
3. (a) GANDHARVA MUSIC \* Taken down by J. H. Foulds.  
(approximately rendered on the pianoforte.)  
(b) IMPROVISATION. Maud Mann and J. H. Foulds.
4. GREEK PROCESSIONAL. J. H. Foulds.  
(in the Phrygian mode.)

\* Gandharvas are beings whose nature is music: they are concerned with musical evolution, and with the inner worlds of musical art. Their music is sometimes simple and sometimes very complex. This is an example of the simple kind, and expresses a mood of serene happiness and simple contentment amid surroundings of natural beauty.

Artists: Maud Mann and J. H. Foulds.

Figure 6.3

Programme of music for Annie Besant's birthday celebration, 1915.

Source: Reproduced from an original in the Borthwick Institute. MCF 5/3/1/9 (16).

silence. Foulds himself would later describe the piece as being 'of a *naïveté* almost incredible from a purely intellectual point of view' (Example 6.1).<sup>16</sup>

Four years later, Foulds began sketching a three-act opera, *Avatara*, whose Sanskrit title he explained as 'a descent to—incarnation in—or manifestation upon earth, of deity'.<sup>17</sup> He eventually destroyed hundreds of pages, leaving only the substantial



**Figure 6.4**

*Gandharvas*. Detail from sculpture of Shiva and Pārvati, Orissa, thirteenth century

Source: © The Trustees of the British Museum.

### Example 6.1

Foulds, *Gandharva-Music*, op. 49, mm. 24–28

*remoto*

*pppp*

orchestral preludes to the three acts, pieces which he called *Mantras*, that is, music imbued with transformative power. Letters to George Bernard Shaw and to the conductor Adrian Boult at the BBC reveal that the opera, especially the *Mantras*, had been very much a focus of Foulds' attention in the 1920s and into the early 1930s.<sup>18</sup> In his sketches, the second *Mantra*—of *Bliss and Vision of Celestial Avatars*, is entitled *Gandharvas*.<sup>19</sup> Its genesis can be traced back to the 'naïve' little *Gandharva-Music* which he and MacCarthy had heard on Darvill's Hill in 1915. Figure 6.5 shows an excerpt from Foulds's autograph short score.<sup>20</sup> Although the time signature has changed from  $\frac{6}{4}$  to  $\frac{6}{8}$ , and the harmonies are richer (simultaneous dominant and tonic triads), the organizing elements of the *Mantra*, now pitched a fifth higher, are identical to those of *Gandharva-Music*: a gently rocking bass line; an inner voice of falling fourths and a swirling 'gandharva' melodic line (the latter is joined by another voice in parallel fifths above).<sup>21</sup> Indeed, in its first, subtle appearance just a few bars earlier, *Gandharva-Music*'s ostinato bass unfolds exactly as it had in the piano version (to achieve this with the new time signature, Foulds added rests between each note and the next).

Gradually, as the texture becomes richer, the ecstatic, but always tranquil, quality of the music is intensified: the rocking ostinato bass in the lower strings, pizzicato and now in  $\frac{5}{8}$ , is mirrored in contrary motion by violas and harps; horns and tubular bells intone the distinctive inner voice of falling fourths; and the swirling *gandharva* lines, now in woodwinds, violins, and celesta, are more elaborate in pitch and range, gradually expanding outwards as the *gandharvas* fly higher and higher (Example 6.2).

Foulds thus transformed his simple piano 'transcription' into an exquisitely conceived orchestral canvas which is also tintured by a wordless chorus of women's voices—distant cousins of Debussy's *Sirènes* perhaps, but surely sisters of Holst's chorus of *Māyā* (illusion), first heard in *Sāvitri*, and which famously fade into nothing at the end of *Neptune the Mystic*, a passage which Foulds believed to reveal 'devic influences'.<sup>22</sup> Here, the voices represent the *gandharvas* themselves.



Figure 6.5

'Mantra (of Bliss) and Vision of Celestial Avatars', no. 2 of *Three Mantras*, op. 61b: 'of Gandharvas'. Foulds's autograph short score (clefs are two treble and one bass; the key signature has three sharps)

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection, held in trust by Malcolm MacDonald.

### Example 6.2

'Mantra (of Bliss) and Vision of Celestial Avatars', no. 2 of *Three Mantras from Avatara*,  
op. 61b, mm. 80–83

6

80

Flute 3. *ppp*

Clarinet bass *ppp*

2 bsn. contra *ppp*

Hrn 1, 2. in F *ppp*

Hrn. 3, 4.

Celeste *p* + clarinet 1 + clarinet 2

Campanile *pp*

VI. 1 + flute 1 *ppp*

VI. 2 + flute 2 *ppp*

Vla. + harp 1 *ppp pizz.*

Cello + harp 2 *ppp pizz.*

2 bassi soli *ppp* double stop

Tutti *ppp* pizz.

Example 6.2 (Continued)

This musical score, titled "Example 6.2 (Continued)", is written for a piano and features a complex arrangement of staves. The key signature is D major (two sharps: F# and C#), and the time signature is 4/4. The score is organized into two systems, each containing two measures.

The first system consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff containing whole rests for both measures. The middle staff is a bass clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest. The bottom staff is a bass clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest.

The second system consists of six staves. The top staff is a single treble clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest. The second staff is a single treble clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest. The third staff is a single bass clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest. The fourth staff is a single bass clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest. The fifth staff is a single bass clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest. The sixth staff is a single bass clef staff with a melodic line in the first measure, consisting of a half note D4, a half note E4, and a half note F#4, all beamed together. The second measure contains a whole rest.

Upon a second look at Besant's birthday programme, readers will notice a pair of *Songs in Indian Style*—settings of poetry by the great fifteenth-century poet Kabir (1440–1518) in Rabindranath Tagore's translation (see figure 6.3). Although these songs are not extant among the composers' manuscripts, traces of them appear in one of Foulds's later works. Around the time of the *Mantras*' sketches, MacCarthy and Foulds completed their monumental post-war work for the dead of all nations, *A World Requiem*. For the twelfth movement, 'Elysium', scored for soprano, tenor, women's voices, and orchestra, they chose the first of those Kabir poems: 'Tell me, O Swan, your ancient tale. . . . There is a land where no doubt nor sorrow have rule: where the terror of Death is no more.'<sup>23</sup> This is the poetry that takes *A World Requiem*, quite unconventionally for a requiem mass, firmly into another world—one akin to Holst's *devachan*. It is the moment in the work when, as Foulds and MacCarthy explained in the program note:

The composer departs altogether from tradition as expressed in the Requiem music of the past . . . and endeavours . . . to embody . . . life continuous beyond the earthly sphere. Here the dead live again, and are made to speak to those who are left behind, and to express something of the bliss of a transcendent state.<sup>24</sup>

The movement drew particular praise from several audience members, such as eminent actress Sybil Thorndike (later knighted as Dame Commander) who wrote to its creators after the premiere that 'The Elysium Fields was such an exquisite wondrous thing'.<sup>25</sup> Critics, however, were not so enamoured: this musical embodiment of the 'other world' was clearly among the many things about the *Requiem* they disliked.<sup>26</sup> But the imagery was not, as has long been assumed, of MacCarthy's occult imagination; it was of Kabir's mysticism.

It is, in part, because of this particular sort of 'extra-musical' significance or inspiration—the *Gandharvas* and the mystic Kabir—that John Foulds has been classified by some writers, as 'a mysterious figure who dabbled in oriental religion and Indian music', as an 'eccentric', or a 'bizarre figure' who composed 'arcane works'.<sup>27</sup> MacCarthy's pronouncements about Foulds having simply 'taken down' large sections of the second half of *A World Requiem* from nature music (and, worse, 'higher beings') have no doubt fuelled such condescension.<sup>28</sup> Foulds's ideas, however, bear closer investigation: in his book *Music To-Day*, he wrote: 'we are in fact surrounded by an ocean of unheard music . . . the power to "tune in" and thus to "hear" it at various levels is one that is just beginning to be apprehended by mankind and practiced by a few persons widely scattered over this tiny globe'. Nature, he wrote, is 'a Cosmic Symphony'.<sup>29</sup>

Tuning in to the music of nature preoccupied a number of modernist composers in the early decades of the century and Foulds's musical experiments along these lines can be fruitfully considered in this context. Debussy's alter ego Monsieur Croche urges the sceptical Claude to hear 'the music of Nature herself—to see the sun rise does one far more good than hearing only music written by practiced hands';<sup>30</sup> Amy Beach, after arriving at the MacDowell colony, believed that by attending to nature and listening to the innermost silence we 'receive communication from some source outside ourselves'.<sup>31</sup> In 1925, Ives prophesied that 'the ear will freely translate what it hears from nature and instinctively arouse and amplify the spiritual consciousness'.

‘But’, he continued, ‘that needn’t keep anyone from trying to find out how to use a few more of the myriads of sound waves nature has put around in the air for man to catch if he can.’<sup>32</sup> And Sibelius, after completion of his fifth symphony, avowedly wanted to transcribe the sounds of nature herself, rather than to write the music of his imagination. Foulds noted that ‘nature vibrations of the bleak Northland creep into a great proportion of Sibelius’ work’.<sup>33</sup> Indeed, Sibelius could hear chords in the forests and melodies from the lakes, even telling a group of students to listen to the overtone series emanating from a meadow.<sup>34</sup> Such ideas have been expressed by prominent Indian musicians and composers too, such as Hindustani singer Pandit Pran Nath who was known to practice *sargam* (pitch syllables) next to a stream in Tapkeshwar from which he could hear the subtle pitches of a *tānpūra*’s drone; and Tagore, who heard ‘a chorus of voices’ and music in the rustling leaves: ‘my songs share their seats in the heart of the world with the music of the clouds and the forests.’<sup>35</sup>

### Oh! The Poor Conductor!

In the late 1920s, Foulds spent several happy years in Paris—it was a ‘change of air’ which resulted in a series of the most modernist scores penned by any British composer of the period.<sup>36</sup> He had become particularly interested, following MacCarthy’s ideas, in composition based on *Karnātic mēlakartas* (South Indian modes). The first fruits of this new approach were a set of character pieces for piano entitled *Essays in the Modes*, each one based on a *mēlakarta*. The complete table of seventy-two *mēlakartas* (along with eighteen additional modes) appeared in a smart edition of the *Essays* issued by the Parisian publisher Senart in 1928 (figure 6.6).

These scale forms were not themselves *rāgas*, Foulds noted in the preface, but ‘the “roots” of *rāgas* and *rāginis*’.<sup>37</sup> The pieces, he wrote, ‘are harmonizations by the Western method of six out of these seventy-two modes. Each piece contains no other notes but those of the mode in which it is written. Thus following strictly upon the Indian musical theory.’<sup>38</sup> At the time that Foulds was busy with these character pieces, MacCarthy was giving lecture-recitals to capacity audiences at the Salle du Guide in Paris.<sup>39</sup> Foulds’s friend and fellow composer Georges Migot would read her scripts in translation while she gave the demonstrations and performances. So the *mēlakartas* were very much ringing in Foulds’s ears. These ‘Essays in the Indian Modes’ belong to a lineage of modernist piano pieces which present innovative theoretical ideas on a small-sized compositional canvas with roots in tradition; the composers Schoenberg, Bartók, Milhaud, and Busoni are among the genre’s more prominent exponents.<sup>40</sup>

Of these ‘contemporary masters’ as he termed them, Foulds considered Bartók to be ‘one of the very finest of living composers’ and was drawn to the manner in which he forged modalities of folk music into his own idiom.<sup>41</sup> Composed independently of Bartók, the *Essays in the Modes* (a series which Foulds had intended to expand) share something of the pedagogical conception and stylistic fusion of Bartók’s series of 153 piano pieces entitled *Mikrokosmos*, especially volumes 5 and 6 which feature technically advanced, idiomatic piano writing. The impetus for each composer was to expand the musician’s purview beyond the confines of the European tradition.<sup>42</sup> In



Figure 6.6

Karnatic *mēlakartas* excerpted from the table published in Foulds's *Essays in the Modes* (Paris: Senart, 1928)

Foulds's pieces, compositional techniques, such as counterpoint, are used in combination with the *mēlakartas* and MacCarthy's application of 'Indian musical theory' to Western composition—that is, the mode generates the piece in its entirety without recourse to any foreign notes.

Although Foulds would later dismiss these pieces as first essays in a system of composition that had no future, akin to Schoenberg's 'serial' use of all twelve tones of the chromatic scale, they comprise some of the most interesting of Western musical experiments of the inter-war years.<sup>43</sup> The first essay, entitled *Exotic*, uses the *mēlakarta* called *Senavati*, II A in the table above (un-transposed). One element that makes the music so compelling is the tonal grounding within an otherwise unfamiliar sound world that is common to the music of Alban Berg in the same period. Here Foulds draws on Indian music tradition, for, even though it continually eluded baffled foreign ears, one of the principles of Indian music is the fundamental importance of *sa*, the root of the *rāga*.<sup>44</sup> Thus the root of *Exotic*, C, takes on the role of a resting pitch throughout the piece. The mode itself has interesting properties: no 'leading tone', a lowered second degree, and three intervals of a semitone. All the notes of the mode unfold, *pianissimo* and *una corda*, simultaneously in the first four dyads of the piece: the lower voice has the lower tetrachord (four notes) and above it are the pitches of the upper tetrachord. It is a beguiling sound world, unlike anything British, but with links to French modernism. Each of the opening phrases explores the different intervallic combinations of the *mēlakarta* before returning to rest on C; all the while shifting cross-rhythms obscure the metre (Example 6.3).

**Example 6.3**'Exotic', no. 1 of *Essays in the Modes*, op. 78, mm. 1–14

**Quasi lento**

*ppp*  
una corda

*mp* *pp*  
tre corde

*mp* *sonore*

*pp* *più f*  
*p*

(Continued)

## Example 6.3 (Continued)

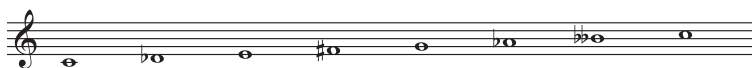
The two triads in bar four constitute a distinctive cadence which returns repeatedly. In the tonal system, the two chords would be identified as a Neapolitan sixth (built on the lowered second degree) and a tonic triad, though in tonal harmony the Neapolitan sixth would ordinarily resolve to the dominant rather than the tonic. Holst had used this modal cadence in his solo Vedic Hymn *Vārūna* which we looked at in chapter 3, which underscored the setting of the god's name to a descending flattened second degree to the tonic. Here, the resolution is yet more foreign: rather than resolving downwards to the tonic note, the root of the inverted D-flat-major chord (with an added C) moves upwards, via an augmented fourth, to the fifth degree of the mode (G), while the F falls to the tonic in the bass. Out of the cadence's strange resonance a long breathed melody makes its entrance in the lowest voice (bb. 6–9), a human presence in an unfamiliar landscape.

This method of composition using *mēlakartas* underpins some of the most adventurous of Foulds's larger orchestral canvases. In the wake of the *Essays* in 1929, he completed the *Dynamic Triptych*, a three-movement piano concerto in the tradition of the *bravura* works of Liszt and Rachmaninoff.<sup>45</sup> Its first movement, *Dynamic Mode*, is so named because it is based wholly on a *mēlakarta*, the thirty-sixth, *Chalanata*. The following year, he finished the last of his *Three Mantras*, the *Mantra of Will and Vision of Cosmic Avatars*, which is an orchestral tour-de-force, ultra-modern in its conception, and generated entirely from the seven pitches of the *mēlakarta Dhavalambari* (Example 6.4).

We have encountered this distinctive mode before, in Holst's *Neptune*, where it was pitched a perfect fifth higher (starting on G) (see Example 3.18). Foulds may well have played in a performance of the mystic planet as a cellist in the London Symphony Orchestra in the 1920s, either the one conducted by Albert Coates in November 1920 (the first time *Neptune* was heard in a public performance), or in recording sessions

**Example 6.4**

Karnātic mēlakarta no. 49, Dhavalambari



which Holst himself conducted.<sup>46</sup> A striking photograph preserved by his granddaughter shows a dapper-looking Foulds in attendance at the LSO's twenty-first anniversary dinner in 1925.<sup>47</sup> In any case, he considered *The Planets* to be 'a splendid work' that 'well stands comparison with any contemporary composition'.<sup>48</sup>

Sketches for the *Mantra of Will* bear the pencil note, 'to invoke the Rakshas[as]'. These are the forest demons of Hindu mythology who attack seers, sages, and yogis. In the *Ramayana*, they are led by their ten-headed king Ravana (figure 6.7).<sup>49</sup>

**Figure 6.7**

Ravana and the Rakshasas, detail of painting from the *Ramayana*, book 6: *Yuddhakanda*, 1652, commissioned by Jagat Singh of Mewar in Rajasthan, Sahib Din of Udaipur

Source: © The British Library Board. ADD 15297 (1) f6a.

Foulds's invocation of the *Rakshasas*, pitched solely from *Dhavalambari*, is constructed over a syncopated seven-beat rhythmic phrase that is heard throughout. In the composer's sketch shown in figure 6.8 and transcribed in Example 6.5, the repeating rhythm is visible in the upper stave in each bar (from the second onward). In the fourth bar, a second voice joins the ostinato, creating parallel fifths and tritones with the first.

In the context of the opera, this repeating phrase or ostinato constitutes a *mantra* in its own right—what Maud explained to be 'a word or song of power from the Sanskrit scriptures' capable of creating transformation.<sup>50</sup> This mantra is overlaid with distinctive melodic ideas. When a trumpet fanfare built out of tritones and in a conflicting metre strikes up, a polyrhythmic structure emerges: the fanfare "overlaps across the mantric phrase-lengths", to use a pencilled phrase from the sketch (Example 6.6a).<sup>51</sup>

Violins now stride in with the main lyrical theme on the G-string (*sul G*), again in the conflicting triple metre. The melodic contour, alternating thirds and semitones, is shaped by the intervallic outline of the *mēlakarta* itself. In terms of pitch, the connection between this theme and the opening of *Neptune* we examined in chapter 3 is very close. Both planet and mantra draw mystical power from an interface between two collections of pitches, one modernist European, the other traditional Indian (here *Neptune's* pitches are transposed down a fifth): a hexatonic collection (from which Foulds withholds only the F, Holst only the C); and *dhavalambari* (Example 6.6b, and compare with Example 3.18).<sup>52</sup> To invoke the mystical, transformative ethos of *Avatara* with its liminal invocation (the deity appearing in human form on the earth), and the *Rakshasas* themselves (menacing non-human forms), Foulds uses exactly the intersection between *mēlakarta* and hexachord that Holst had used to move to another world at the end of the *Planets*.

In the climactic section, these themes are combined in a layered texture of great complexity. Viola, cello, and percussion battery hammer out the seven-beat mantra; low brass and bass clarinet play the mystic string theme; horns and trumpets, underlined by snare drum (*tamburo piccolo*), sound the fanfare; and violins and high woodwinds play a new, frenzied, upward flourish. This is viscerally exciting music, almost violent at times in its raw energy (Example 6.6c). Foulds thus shapes a modernist musical language by way of *mēlakartas* and the concept of *mantra*, in order to musically conjure-up a particular aspect of Hindu mythology.

This invocation of Ravana's demonic *rakshasas* is far from what the critic Edward J. Dent once described as the 'atmosphere of pale cultured idealism [and] complacent Pharisaical gentlemanliness which is so characteristic of British art in the last century'.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, Foulds was well aware of his marginal position in the country (none of the *Mantras* or the *Essays* was ever performed in his lifetime, for instance, and it would be nearly sixty years before they would be premiered). Nevertheless, upon his return to Britain from continental Europe in 1930 he continued in his attempts to interest the BBC in what he considered to be his 'serious' works—scores of the *Mantras* and the *Dynamic Triptych* were submitted, among other works. In 1933 he wrote to Boulton, then the BBC's director of music:

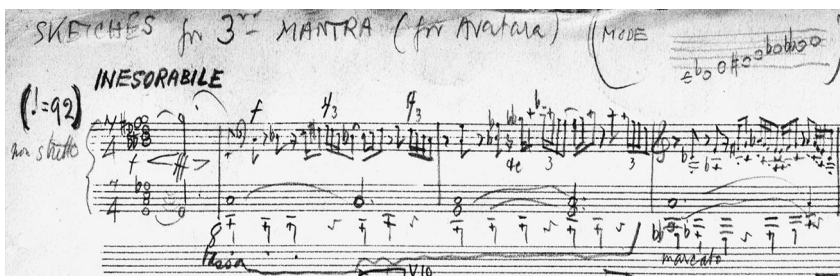


Figure 6.8

'Mantra (of Will) and Vision of Cosmic Avatars', no. 3 of *Three Mantras*, sketch of opening  
 Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection.

### Example 6.5


'Mantra (of Will) and Vision of Cosmic Avatars', no. 3 of *Three Mantras from Avatara*, opening

**Inesorabile**

'Mantra (of Will) and Vision of Cosmic Avatars', no. 3 of *Three Mantras*: Fanfare in triple time overlapping the seven-beat mantra, mm. 14–17

'Mantra (of Will) and Vision of Cosmic Avatars': 'Mystic' string theme, in triple time (seven-beat mantric phrase length indicated), mm. 18–21

2 mantric phrase lengths



The second system of musical notation consists of two measures. The first measure is marked with a circled '2' and the text 'mantric phrase lengths' above it. The notation continues with a series of notes and rests, including a measure with a '5' and a final measure with a '5'.

### Example 6.6c

Mantra (of Will) and Vision of Cosmic Avatars', no. 3 of *Three Mantras*: Climatic section, full score showing combined layers, mm. 77-78

10

77 + clarinets

Ob. 1 *ff*

Ob. 2 *ff*

Bsn. 1, 2 *ff*

Hrns. *ff*

Tpt. 1, 2 *ff marcattissimo*

3 trbns tuba *ff* + bass clarinet and contrabassoon *sostenuto*

Timp. *f* marcato staccato

Gran cassa *f* marcato staccato

Piatti, tamburo piccolo *f*

+ flutes and pice.

Vlns. *ff*

Vla. *fff pesante molto*

Vc. *fff pesante molto*

Db. *fff pesante molto*

(Continued)

Example 6.6c (Continued)

This musical score, labeled "Example 6.6c (Continued)", is a complex piece for multiple instruments, likely a piano and strings. It consists of 14 staves arranged in a system. The notation is dense, featuring a variety of rhythmic values including sixteenth, thirty-second, and sixty-fourth notes, as well as rests. Slurs and ties are used extensively to connect notes across measures. The key signature is one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 4/4. The score includes several dynamic markings, such as *p* (piano) and *f* (forte), and articulation marks like accents and staccato. A specific section of the score is marked with a dashed line and the word "8va~", indicating an octave shift. The notation is written in a standard musical format with treble and bass clefs, and the overall structure suggests a highly technical and expressive musical work.

Within the last two years I have submitted four works to the BBC. These, in my opinion, contained some of my most valuable work. In each case they were rejected by your Selection Committee. The position, therefore, is that while my principal serious works have received the approval of some of the greatest names in the musical world, and also of practical conductors, it would appear, judging from past experience, that a serious work of mine has a poor chance of winning the approval of the BBC Selection Committee.

In the meantime my light works are continually broadcast. These light works number a dozen or so, as compared with the total of 50 of my serious works. This state of affairs, I think you will agree, is rather a galling one for a serious artist.<sup>54</sup>

There was certainly a strong layer of politics underlying the music choices made at the BBC and, one way and another, as the internal memos shamefully demonstrate, Foulds did not fit in.<sup>55</sup> Nineteen thirty-two was the year of his biggest disappointment. In March, a staff member's endorsement of an all-Foulds broadcast ('it seems an interesting proposition to me') was met with condescension from the chief programme builder, Kenneth A. Wright, who had 'a steady and experienced, yet forward-looking influence' on programme planning: 'We have been worried a good deal in the past off and on by this Composer. The difficulty has always been that we think that almost all his music is very dull stuff, and the more serious it is the duller it becomes.'<sup>56</sup> In November, another member of staff put forward a proposal: 'I think we might do a Foulds programme as we so often do programmes of other English composers. I have quite enough material to make an interesting feature. I shall be glad to know what you think.'<sup>57</sup> But the idea was again vetoed from above. In a letter to Foulds, Owen Mase (recently promoted from accompanist to assistant music director) wrote simply, 'I am afraid it will not be possible for us to consider a Foulds programme.'<sup>58</sup>

The confidential committee reports of the scores are illuminating. 'It all seems to me much ado about nothing in particular' wrote H. M. Carver of the *Dynamic Triptych*: 'the composer's intense preoccupation with new modes, quarter-tones, etc is very much *vieux jeu* these days. I feel not inclined to recommend it.'<sup>59</sup> 'Is it really of any service to music?' asked Boult rhetorically—then answered: 'I do not think so.' 'The use of modes', he said, was 'futile'; 'in short the work has only scientific interest'.<sup>60</sup> While several reports cite Indian-inspired elements (modes, quarter tones) in opprobrium, others are more vague, reflecting 'the larger suspicion' with which anything 'too visionary or innovative' in contemporary British culture was viewed—especially when it involved a self-taught, 'lowbrow' composer making sophisticated, modernist use of Indian sources.<sup>61</sup> 'Rather pretentious... a deliberately intellectual structure', complained R. O. Morris; 'so much one could say against it', wrote Herbert Howells; 'utterly dull... academic', concluded Victor Hely-Hutchinson.<sup>62</sup> Of the score of the *Three Mantras*, Boult wrote: 'These are clever... But, do they really mean anything? Have they musical value? They leave a disappointing effect.' The third, *Mantra of Will*, baffled Boult into the most condescension: 'I ha'mee doots'. It does not ring true and is more like a cross-word puzzle. Before the end I fear the fire-brigade would be phoned for, to extricate everybody. Oh! The poor conductor!<sup>63</sup> R. J. F. Howgill,

who would become the BBC's Controller of Music in 1952, was even less equivocal about the piece: 'I find this work wilfully and abnormally far-fetched... themes... are worked on a background of unreasonable cacophony and one gets the impression that it is the composer's way of disguising poverty of thought.'<sup>64</sup> In 1934, the assistant music director received a letter urging reconsideration: 'I fear the BBC selection committee has made a grave blunder which, sooner or later will bring discredit on the BBC itself.' 'There is much that is novel, unusual, and new-ground-breaking in Foulds' major works, and this may partly explain, but cannot be held to excuse, the shameful neglect of his work by his contemporaries.'<sup>65</sup> The closing sentence of Boulton's response read: 'Decisions are sometimes felt [by the public] to be unjust or prejudiced, when, in point of fact, we honestly believe the opposite to be the case.'<sup>66</sup>

This was a significant blow for Foulds. None of the *Mantras* or the *Essays in the Modes*, among other serious works, was ever broadcast.<sup>67</sup> The 1930s, the height of the depression, were difficult years for any British musician. Silent film orchestras which had generated employment for freelancers had been disbanded with the advent of talkies in the late 1920s; theatre orchestras had also been hit. Benjamin Britten, just graduated from the Royal College, was forced to turn his talents to film music, a genre for which he had no training whatsoever. But among the most potent factors for composers was the wireless, whose coming, Ernest Newman noted in 1932, 'had placed the musical destiny of this country in the hands of the BBC'.<sup>68</sup> Foulds' music was not part of that destiny. At the height of his creative powers, he abandoned the 'austere, colourless London of the 1930s' for India, leaving in his wake a book, *Music To-Day*, shot through with supercilious pronouncements on his contemporaries.<sup>69</sup>

### Orpheus Abroad: A Controversial Subject

Indian musical instruments are much admired... and the day is not far off—I may safely prophesy—when some of them will be utilized by our composers.

Maud MacCarthy

In the autumn of 1936, Foulds was appointed Director of European Music at All India Radio in Delhi, a 'grand and responsible' role at the heart of Indian broadcasting.<sup>70</sup> He settled into Number 4, Bhagwan Das Road, the home of India's first (and highly controversial) Controller of Broadcasting, Lionel Fielden.<sup>71</sup> The dynamic Fielden had arrived in India just a month or so after the composer in August 1935 and kept a detailed diary of his experiences (later revised and published as his autobiography) which can, uniquely, illuminate Foulds's new situation. Both men were, Foulds confided to MacCarthy, 'artists'—aesthetes might be more apposite—and the orthodoxy of empire had no room for such men.<sup>72</sup> 'The five years which I spent in India', wrote Fielden, 'were, undoubtedly, the loneliest years of my life. The ache of loneliness was with me always.'<sup>73</sup> Foulds's 'uprooting' to India, wrote MacCarthy, had been 'the hardest of all', and, in letters to MacCarthy from Delhi he writes of the difficulties which he and Fielden each experienced.<sup>74</sup> Neither was a conventional imperialist ('I thought the British Raj rather Kiplingesquely ridiculous' wrote Fielden) and, as a

result, found little companionship with the British in India: 'There was the conglomeration of English officials and their wives—the most ignorant, insensitive, arrogant, and stupid conglomeration that the world has ever produced.'<sup>75</sup>

Indeed, Fielden had emphatically rejected Anglo-Indian imperial society when he opted to live in unofficial housing—and it was into precisely this context that Foulds arrived in Delhi.<sup>76</sup> His domestic and professional circumstances thrust him, personally and professionally, into the heart of the socio-cultural tumult of the last decade of the Raj. The composer's own documentation of his Indian years, which encompass press articles and photographs along with broadcast listings in a large scrapbook entitled *A Few Indian Records*, tell us something about his position in musical broadcasting in India.<sup>77</sup> But they do not tell us everything. Indeed, the ethos of this role would be somewhat elusive were it not for the correspondence between husband and wife during their years spent apart, and MacCarthy's 'Memoir', both of which are contained in the family's collection of archival materials drawn on here for the first time.<sup>78</sup> From these, alongside consideration of Foulds's scripts for a series of radio talks broadcast from Delhi in 1937, and close examination of his 'Indian' music sketches and manuscript materials, a more complex picture emerges than has hitherto been sketched.<sup>79</sup> His role as a music director at the powerbase of an institution designed, however obliquely, to sustain the legitimacy of British rule was in some ways the most difficult of his life.<sup>80</sup>

When Foulds arrived at the Delhi station of All India Radio (AIR), the very approach that he brought with him, via MacCarthy, ran contrary to imperial ideas. State broadcasting, its implementation proving to be expensive and technologically daunting, was considered by the British Raj to be 'at best, a strategic defence'.<sup>81</sup> Although Director of European Music, Foulds formed an ensemble made up entirely of Indian musicians playing Indian instruments which began to broadcast Indian music in his own arrangements. For, although the preface of the *Indian Suite* had promised more transcriptions for Western orchestra, upon arrival in India Foulds's approach had moved rapidly towards a new 'All Indian' focus.<sup>82</sup> He had two initial objectives: to harmonise *Rāgas* 'purely by the true inherent ragaic harmonies (not plaster the crudest 18th-century Sunday School European harmonies over the extremely subtle Indian Ragaic melodies)', and to show 'how an Indian orchestra can be built up out of purely indigenous instruments'.<sup>83</sup> A document he compiled for AIR's annual report in April 1938 refers to 'almost daily rehearsals' towards the formation of an Indo-European Orchestra. The general opinions on 'short sessions of pieces of this type already broadcast' he wrote, 'contain an encouraging proportion of approbation'.<sup>84</sup> In working towards a creative interplay with Indian musicians, Foulds expanded upon the work that he and MacCarthy had been doing together and brought to life an idea that she had envisioned decades before. When Foulds's embryonic Indian orchestra began to broadcast on air and later, in its expanded form, was featured in a prominent concert in Delhi, MacCarthy wrote: 'In 1908–9 I *heard* this orchestra. I literally heard it, not imagined.'<sup>85</sup> Back in 1919, she had said in a letter that 'John... could build up such an inter-racial orchestra as has never yet been heard'.<sup>86</sup>

Orchestral or large ensemble playing was not widely known in India: the classical traditions feature chamber music ensembles made up of one or two melody instruments or singers who lead the performance, a rhythm instrument, a drone, and an accompanying instrument (like *sarangi* or harmonium) to shadow the melody.

There were only a few isolated examples of conductor-led ensembles in the Courts of Oxbridge-educated Maharajas—such as the Baroda State orchestra, and that of the Maharaja of Mysore—other than the ubiquitous brass bands which could be found at many of the princely courts. Instrumental ensembles were, however, beginning to form by the late 1930s in Bombay's film studios and this new genre was believed by some purists to be a pernicious influence on classical Indian tradition.<sup>87</sup> There was thus opposition (from both Indian and colonial quarters) towards the musical intermingling Foulds had initiated, but he was fortunate in having a strategically placed ally in his enterprising musical endeavour: none other than Lionel Fielden, who backed him all (or most of) the way.<sup>88</sup>

In order to work effectively with the musicians Foulds got to grips with the range, timbre, and playing style of an impressive variety of instruments, among them bowed strings (*dilruba* and *sarinda*), plucked strings (*sarod* and *sitar*), bamboo flutes (*bansuri*), and percussion (*tabla* and *jaltarang*). He compiled glossaries and lists of key musical terms in Hindi and Urdu so that he could communicate in rehearsals: *sha-bash*—bravo! *Mushkil*—difficult; *Bilampath*—slowing down; *saath*—together; *ginti karo*—do count!<sup>89</sup> From sketches and broadcast notes we know the names of several of the ensemble's musicians, both Hindus and Muslims among them, including Mr Ghosh, *sarod*, Hamid Hussain, *sarinda* and *sarangi*.<sup>90</sup> Foulds also played with the ensemble, providing the drone with his *tānpūra*.<sup>91</sup> Thirty years after MacCarthy had sat down among fellow musicians in Adyar, Foulds was sitting with Indian musicians in Delhi (figure 6.9). Echoes of the same kind of bemusement that greeted MacCarthy's career change from Western violinist to Indian vocalist can be heard in English responses to Foulds's equally shocking 'cross over': 'What the devil' demanded George Bernard Shaw, 'is John Foulds doing in India?'.<sup>92</sup>

As if in reply, the cover-feature of the Hindu-Urdu journal *Awāz* (literally, the *Voice* of All India Radio), explained:

Mr John Foulds—who is in charge of our English music in which he is a specialist... is also interested in Eastern music. His great desire is to 'create a meeting ground' between the two traditions. And he is very busy with this venture.<sup>93</sup>

Indeed, he had barely enough time to complete his regular daily duties at the station, which included recruiting and programming, accompanying recitals live in studio, giving studio talks, and so on. Moreover, the 'damned hot' Delhi summers ('118° was the top note') did not leave much room for creativity.<sup>94</sup> In late 1936 and early 1937 a series of four articles appeared in *The Music Magazine*, published under the patronage of the Maharana of Dharampur. Here, Foulds presented ideas relating to 'the present and future of Music in India' which included discussions of harmony, orchestration, and notation.<sup>95</sup> Twelve lively, illustrated radio talks followed in spring 1937 under the title *Orpheus Abroad* (evocative for some, but perhaps patronizing for others).<sup>96</sup> In them, he explored the details of how various musical elements of both Indian and European tradition, like timbre, instrumentation, harmony, melody, and rhythm, might find creative ways to meet. During the fifth of these, he asked listeners to witness 'the travesty of the translation' by inviting the *vīna* player in his ensemble, Mr Ramchandra from Madras, to play a rendition of Tyāgarāja's *kṛiti*,



**Figure 6.9**

Foulds (right, with *tānpura*) with (from the right) Mr Ramchandra (*saraswati vīna*), and musicians holding *sarod* (possibly Mr Ghosh), *dilruba*, *sitar*, *bansuri*, and (front left) *sarangi* (possibly Hamid Hussain)

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection

*Bhava Nuta* (evidently still a family favourite). He followed this with an excerpt from his own arrangement (in the piano reduction shown in the first chapter) and some humility: 'I trust you enjoyed the original more than the translation.'<sup>97</sup> This concept of idiomatic translation became central to his work at All India Radio, and one which he explained thus, 'If there is anything to be said for translations of Hafiz, Omar Khayyam, Kalidasa and so on, into western languages, surely exactly the same arguments apply to this music.'<sup>98</sup>

The idea was to develop in the ears of his foreign (that is, British) listeners, an appreciation of the music of the people that they lived among. But he was encouraged by the interest he perceived in Indian musical circles for cross-cultural musical alliances.<sup>99</sup> In a letter of 1938, the eminent musician Dr Pheroze K. Kabraji of Poona (now Pune) who had known Maud and John in London wrote of how 'thrill[ed]' she was to find that Foulds had been taken on by All India Radio: 'I couldn't have wished for anyone else in charge of music in India, as it were... I am already impatient for that enriched... blend of the Indian and European in music.'<sup>100</sup> Letters to his AIR colleague at the Bombay station, Walter Kaufmann, mention 'the desire... for *orchestras* and for *instrumental music without voices*' in India, and convey optimism about his ensemble work with Indian musicians: it was exciting, he said, to be a part of musical innovations happening so swiftly 'that it could perhaps only happen in this extraordinary country'.<sup>101</sup>

Several scores for European instruments also date from his Indian years, among them *The Song of Ram Dass*, signed *Holta, India 1935*. It is based on a Bengali-style

melody which MacCarthy had been inspired to create after Tagore sang for her when he visited her in London.<sup>102</sup> Foulds provides an accompaniment of *ghungh-roo* (ankle-bells), harp, and muted strings which idiomatically approach their main pitches with grace notes. The plaintive, modal phrases of the Bengali song, given to bassoon and cor anglais, dwell, Indian style, on the space between the notes by way of *gamaka* (embellishments) and *meend* (slides) (Figure 6.10).

Alongside these compositions and a punishing schedule of duties at the AIR station, sketches and manuscripts reveal that he was, as *The Indian Listener* put it, 'immersed in his studies of Indian music [and] amassing material for a book on the subject'.<sup>103</sup> He grasped a number of *rāgas* by ear, such as *jaunpuri*, *bhairavi*, *bhopali*, and *darbari*, and wrote out their ascending (*ārōhana*) and descending (*avarōhana*) scale forms (*thāt*), as well as the time of day associated with each.<sup>104</sup> He learned several different *tālas* (rhythmic cycles), taking care to indicate the proper divisions and rhythmic accents in, for example, *jumra*. Sometimes he would transcribe a fixed composition (*bandish*) such as a *ghazāl* or *thumri*, or compose an original melody in one of the *rāgas* he had learned. In a letter to the *Musical Times* after living in India for over three years, he refers to an 'intensive study which has increased my admiration for the melody-forms, rhythms and sonorities of Indian music'.<sup>105</sup>

In some matters, however, Foulds was less unilaterally India-centred. His radio talks betray traces of an unselfconscious imperialism which was evident to some listeners, his house-mate among them. When Foulds announced in a letter to MacCarthy: 'I've composed a "Durbar March" (with a trio specially written for the Indian ensemble),' he added: 'Fielden advises not "Imperial". That word is definitely not used now.'<sup>106</sup> There were ripostes to ideas he had expounded in *The Indian Listener*, and a radio listener cautioned him not to use the term 'going forward' but rather 'adding to' when describing his ideas about orchestration and notation.<sup>107</sup> Foulds's ambivalence is manifest in his approach to the orchestra. In the *Resumé of European Musical Activities* (April 1937 to March 1938), he refers to the formation of the Indo-European Orchestra as being 'admittedly a controversial subject'. Notation in particular was, he acknowledged even before his appointment at AIR, a 'vexed question'. Indeed it was: when the Maharajah Sayajirao Gaekwad of Baroda compiled a book of rules for court performers and one of his ministers 'brandished notation' in front of musicians (thereby perpetrating 'the worst offense against music'), he drove off the great Alladiya Khan and his younger



Figure 6.10

MacCarthy–Foulds, *Song of Ram Dass*, concluding bars in Foulds' autograph short score

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection.

brother Haider. Shortly after their arrival in India, Foulds and MacCarthy each discussed the problems of notation in the pages of *The Sunday Statesman* wherein MacCarthy issued a solemn warning: 'notation kills Indian music'.<sup>108</sup> But it was indispensable for the kind of orchestral music-making Foulds was working towards. In a letter written from Delhi in July 1938 he refers to the difficulty of teaching stave notation to musicians who ordinarily read from right to left (that is to Muslims whose mother tongue, Urdu, runs from right to left), particularly because an accidental 'is almost always taken to refer to the note on its left'.<sup>109</sup> Among his manuscripts are beautifully written practice exercises for players of *dilruba*, *sitar*, and *sarangi* to become fluent with notation. Notation, he stressed, was necessary only for orchestral music in India: I hope, he wrote, that 'no-one who has read my previous articles... will accuse me of a desire to impose Western methods'.<sup>110</sup> But he could equally insist that 'the art of music in India cannot, and will not remain moribund. What India should foster and carry forward into practice, is harmonisation [and] orchestration (and consequent upon these the adoption of a widely known musical script)'.<sup>111</sup>

### The Travesty of Translation

The first fruits of his venture were regularly broadcast over the airwaves. Extant sketches and manuscript scores show that each piece began as a transcription of a tune or popular melody heard on his travels. Among them are a number of regional folk tunes—Panjabi, Afghani, Bengali, Kashmiri, Pahari—some in classical and light-classical *rāgas*. Each one was arranged, à la MacCarthy, 'only with notes belonging to the Ragas in which the various melodies are cast', and scored for an 'array of beautiful tone sources as you have in India today'.<sup>112</sup> One of the earliest pieces he 'collected, arranged, and orchestrated' was the *Kashmiri Wedding Tune* of which he said: 'The melodies incorporated into this little piece were noted by the composer in Kashmir in the spring of 1936'.<sup>113</sup> An incomplete set of instrumental parts, along with a conductor's score, all in Foulds's hand, are extant (figure 6.11 and Example 6.7).<sup>114</sup>

Here, the lilting melody is carried variously by *sarangi*, *dilruba*, and *bansuri* over repeating accompanimental figures for *sitar*, *vīna*, and *tānpūra*. Even in this simple



**Figure 6.11**

*Kashmiri Wedding Tune, dilruba part in Foulds's hand: opening*

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection.

### Example 6.7

*Kashmiri Wedding Tune*, transcription of composer's autograph short score, mm. 1–20.

Source: Original held in John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection.

§

Sarinda  
Dilruba  
Sarangi

Sitar  
Surbahar

Vina

Tanpura

5 Sarangi

9 + Dilruba

## Example 6.7 (Continued)

The musical score for Example 6.7 (Continued) consists of two systems of four staves each. The first system covers measures 13 to 16, and the second system covers measures 17 to 20. The music is written in G major (one sharp) and 2/4 time. The top staff of each system is marked with a '13' and a '17' respectively. The bottom staff of each system is marked with an '8' and a '17' respectively. The music features a mix of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some measures containing rests. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The time signature is 2/4. The score is written for a four-part ensemble.

arrangement, Foulds's characteristic harmonic palette brings touches of colour and musical interest: note, for instance, the seventh passing from C# to B against the D of the *tānpūra*'s ostinato in bar 16, a gesture familiar from his earlier orchestral suite, *Hellas*. Yet for musicians steeped in a tradition involving one or two lead instruments flexibly shaping the performance in an improvisatory framework, this sort of prescribed notation must have seemed rigid and, in the long stretches of repeating figures or rests, somewhat tedious. When, in March 1938, Foulds directed a grand concert of his own music in Delhi with a fifty-strong Indo-European orchestra courtesy of the Viceroy Lord Linlithgow—'the chief feature in the whole year's European and Indo-European musical activity in connection with Delhi Station of A.I.R.'—one reviewer noticed that the Indian musicians were 'left to mope' and looked bored. No wonder, the critic continued, because of the composer's 'reluctance to do anything more than simple *swara jaatis*'. The concert was more significant than this critique might suggest and a note in Maud's distinctive hand on the programme's decorative cover conveys it well: 'This was a history-making concert'. Such large-scale expatriate occasions, as Ian Woodfield explains in his musical study of the British in late eighteenth-century India, were traditionally musical celebrations of 'Englishness', whereas

Foulds's programme confronted the colonial community in the capital city with Indian music in various arrangements.<sup>115</sup> Nevertheless, Foulds was aware of the musical challenges and wanted to avoid 'a mere aggregation of instruments all playing the same melody'.<sup>116</sup> Instead, in pieces like the *Kashmiri Wedding Tune*, the folk melody appears like a precious stone set off by changing timbres and new backgrounds, akin to the way Bartók described a folk tune's presence in a classical composition. His work with the orchestra led him to collect a sizeable body of regional folk music: while composers like Bartók had begun using folk music early in their careers, Foulds came to it late—in his fifties. Although he alluded to the limitations of using folk music wholesale in his book, he came to understand precisely the value of an approach he had earlier disdained.<sup>117</sup> Rather than fragmenting the folk material he collected, pieces like *Kashmiri Wedding Tune* retained the human presence of those who created and played the music and connected powerfully with listeners. It is hardly surprising that these early arrangements were simple. The Indo-European orchestra was a long-term vision, a project in its early stages: these pieces were 'experiments' that he offered to listeners. As colleagues noted, Foulds did his best with limited resources to develop the repertoire and profile of his Indian ensemble.<sup>118</sup> The clearest statement of his intention and assessment of achievement is found in the twelfth and final of his *Orpheus Abroad* programmes, entitled 'East Meets West', in which he reviewed the ground covered in the preceding talks:

[Then] I came to a subject which is very near to my heart—the creation of what I call the Indo-European Orchestra. I showed what this dream might become in practice [and] illustrated at least the Indian side of the proposal. And I specially composed several little pieces which the players read from the Western notation . . . and these met with an encouraging reception, however modest they may have been, and pointed forward to the practical possibility of really establishing a properly so-called Indo-European Orchestra.

Even 'modest' pieces like the *Kashmiri Wedding Tune* proved challenging for the musicians to read: after the grand Delhi concert (which featured four such 'Indian music pictures') some of the Indian instrumentalists confessed that they 'knew the music by heart' and 'only pretended to look at the printed score really!'<sup>119</sup>

The ensemble's success also depended on the musicians' efforts and goodwill. A 'one week woe' list which Foulds jotted in the corner of a manuscript provides some insight:

Sarangi string breaks. [He's] been asking for strings  
[for] 6 days.  
Dilruba accident. Sitar summoned to Court:  
no rehearsal.  
Sarangi rude to A. A. A.<sup>120</sup>

Add to this MacCarthy's note that he 'rehearsed the Indian players for months, but they betrayed him in every possible way'.<sup>121</sup> It was undoubtedly these difficulties which fuelled Fielden's complaint, registered in his *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in*

*India*, about the indiscipline of Indian musicians and their stubborn reluctance to learn orchestration.<sup>122</sup> These musical challenges were a symptom of the time. It seems hardly likely that Indian musicians would have been receptive to having an Englishman, and a novice in terms of Indian music, ‘in charge of music in India’ (which, although not an accurate description of Foulds’s role in broadcasting, conveys very well how it was perceived), no matter how open-minded and sympathetic Foulds himself might have been as a musician.<sup>123</sup> By the 1930s, public opinion was overwhelmingly supportive of wresting India’s independence back from Britain. Popular resistance to the Raj was gaining momentum and would lead, in just a few years, to the ‘Quit India’ movement which finally ousted the British from the subcontinent. In this context, where the radio was perceived (both by nationalists and imperial conservatives) as ‘a potential weapon’ of the colonial war being fought with the Indian national movement, Foulds’s cross-cultural enterprise could not have come at a less auspicious time.<sup>124</sup> Correspondence with MacCarthy reveals that such tensions had been associated with Foulds’s work at the station from the start. ‘There is a strong feeling here in many quarters to cut out European programmes entirely’ Foulds wrote early on, ‘but Fielden is against this’.<sup>125</sup> Unlike Fielden, though, Foulds himself did not express public frustration—on the contrary, he devised new approaches to composition for the ensemble music and wrote of how refreshing he found the players’ ‘keenness, accuracy of intonation and mastery of complex rhythms’.<sup>126</sup> Yet, we know from MacCarthy’s memoir that his first attempt at forming an ensemble in 1936–7, ‘finally... had to be abandoned’. ‘However’, she wrote,



**Figure 6.12**

Foulds directing his ensemble in studio at All India Radio, Delhi, c.1938

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection.

'he stuck to the idea and a new band was formed.'<sup>127</sup> A rare studio photograph shows the new faces and instruments of the revamped ensemble (figure 6.12).<sup>128</sup>

This second ensemble broadcast regularly through late 1938 and early 1939. New instruments were recruited, such as *surbahar* (a bass sitar), and new compositional techniques were attempted, such as incorporating simple counterpoint into *rāga*-based compositions.<sup>129</sup> At least fifteen pieces survive in various reduced scorings among his manuscripts, and several more are referred to in broadcast listings. Of these, no two are alike in approach. 'A Punjabi Dance Tune' features the *sarangi* playing the lively melody supported by *sarod*, *tambūrā*, and *tablā* while a contrasting section of original music in a different *rāga* is played on the bamboo flute. In his orchestration of the popular song 'Mera Salaam Leja', *esraj* and *tablā* play the second section while 'the jaltarang adds its special tone-colour to the ensemble'.<sup>130</sup> A Punjabi Village Love Song ('Mahia') begins with an *ālāp* on *sarangi* before the melody comes in to a lively accompaniment on *tablā*. And a classical North Indian tune in *Rāga Bhopali* is a *jugulbandi* ('entwined twins') for sitar and *sarod* who trade off phrases of the melody. Foulds encountered the lively *Pahari Tune* shown in figure 6.13 while he and MacCarthy were walking in the Kangra Valley in Panjab in 1935: 'we heard mule-bells and a piper'. Foulds's score, with *bansuri* (bamboo flute) carrying the piper's tune to the accompaniment of *esraj*, *sarinda*, *sarod*, *tambūrā*, and *tablā*, retains



**Figure 6.13**  
'Pahari Tune', conductor's in-studio lead-sheet

Source: John Foulds sketches and papers: Private Family Collection.

something of the 'joyous happiness' and 'spontaneity' MacCarthy recalled of the happy encounter: 'one small roulade—over and over, like a bird'.<sup>131</sup>

These pieces, part of what Foulds referred to as 'a series of tiny demonstrations', are markedly different from the modernist scores of the 1920s which were inspired by or based on Indian sources.<sup>132</sup> A lengthy reply to Walter Kaufmann's request for advice on 'musical amalgamation' ('using... a certain scale... in a way of Polytonality... The Hindoli in different "keys" at the same time!'), is revealing of how far his approach to Indo-European-style composition had changed: 'Hindoli is not "a scale"', he wrote, 'it is a *Raga*, i.e. a melody formula built upon a scale. As *Raga absolutely depends upon Tonality* it is completely irreconcilable with *Atonality*'.<sup>133</sup> There were also, Foulds continued, larger issues to consider: 'When it comes to venturing into other people's artistic territory, i.e. dealing with Indian music, there is a vastly deeper aesthetic-ethic to consider'.<sup>134</sup> But his music-making in Delhi was far from an imagined utopia of Indo-European fusion.<sup>135</sup> During his years with All India Radio, Foulds had increasingly become 'a practical musician' to use his own words, creating music, often involving his own transcriptions, for daily rehearsal and broadcast.<sup>136</sup> He had only been working with the embryonic orchestra for a matter of months rather than years and with little financial or administrative support.<sup>137</sup> Thus, the pieces were not ends in themselves: 'If and when that time comes about', Foulds told his Indian listeners, 'you will have made great progress upon the practical side, towards taking a stand upon a common platform where East and West can and do meet'.<sup>138</sup>

The Indian reaction to broadcasts of this innovative ensemble—in newspaper reviews, learned articles, and letters from all sorts of people throughout the land—was one of enthusiasm and interest. E. Verga of Bombay complained that 'the programme was too short, Mr Foulds, we could have listened in for another 45 minutes'. From Madras, the composer Victor Paranjoti, founder in the 1950s of the Paranjoti choir which toured the United Kingdom with an Indo-European programme, wrote: 'I loved listening to your orchestra last night.' Miss Asra Haq of Jullunder requested a repeat: 'I do hope he will play the famous Umra Zia Begum tune *Mera Salam Le ja* once again.' Gunpati Rai of Pak Pattan explained: 'My younger children request you to be good enough to fix up the Orchestra on Saturdays. They are all very fond of it, but cannot sit up till 10 pm except on Saturday.' Congratulations came from Ahmed Shah of Lucknow University, S. N. Ghose from Calcutta, a Chinese shoemaker from Kanpur, and Tula Ram of the Gramophone agency. 'Your broadcasts are bound to revolutionise the future of Indian Music,' remarked a Madrasi musician, and Homi Rustomji from Kashmir wrote, 'a magnificent service for the music and musicians of my land'. Even the Boy Scouts of Delhi enquired whether 'these exquisite pieces will be available as Gramophone Records. Every item in the series is so beautiful.' Resident Europeans also enjoyed the broadcasts: Foulds 'is doing great work in helping Europeans to understand the music of the country', wrote Vera Mackie from Panjāb, 'his compositions should be recorded for broadcasting in England'.<sup>139</sup>

While the group's attractive arrangements evidently brought 'much happiness' to 'thousands of listeners', all sectors of the population were not tuned in to the broadcasts.<sup>140</sup> All India Radio, through a detailed plan issued by one of the BBC's top engineers who toured India in 1936, was designed to reach the largest concentrations of the urban



**Figure 6.14**

Station distribution and transmission map, All India Radio. *The Indian Listener* 3, no. 1, 22 December 1937

middle class, with medium-wave transmitters located in key cities (figure 6.14).<sup>141</sup> Until the eve of independence, writes historian David Lelyveld, undivided British India had stations in nine cities with about 90,000 licence holders (not counting five modest operations in the larger princely states), of which, judging from the letters received in Delhi during the 1930s, many were ordinary citizens as well as academic and social elite.<sup>142</sup> Reflecting on these figures, Fielden, on the eve of his departure from India, described the whole endeavour of Indian broadcasting as a massive failure.<sup>143</sup>

### A Sordid Story

By early 1939, Foulds increasingly found himself in a difficult position in Delhi both personally and professionally. The Fielden-Foulds home on Bhagwan Das Road was by now shrouded in suspicion because Fielden was 'bent' (homosexual). With MacCarthy and his children in Lahore and Śrinagar, Foulds's relationship

with Fielden became the object of suspicion and ridicule. From Fielden's perspective we know almost nothing, since his relationship with Foulds is one the 'frustrating silences' about the men he was close to that characterize his autobiography, *The Natural Bent*.<sup>144</sup> From the letters between Foulds and MacCarthy, however, along with MacCarthy's memoirs, a picture emerges of Foulds at the heart of social controversy in the administrative capital. On Valentine's Day in 1939, Foulds wrote to MacCarthy: 'I've actually lived in daily proximity with him for over two years, which few people could do, I can tell you. Many people would tell you this.'<sup>145</sup> The result was what Foulds described as 'sneaky wire-pulling and dirty selfishness', vibrations of which he feared had reached her in Śrinagar. MacCarthy later wrote: 'Foulds at the risk of his own reputation stood by Lionel Fielden in his hour of trial. It is a sordid story. L F is a homo-sexual, John was not. But he *allowed* himself to be tarred, and stood by L F.'<sup>146</sup> As Fielden himself became increasingly affected by betrayal and alienation, he suffered anxiety and several nervous breakdowns. For political and personal reasons he was unable to sustain his support for Foulds's Indo-European orchestra and the ground beneath Foulds's feet began to shake. Following his formation of the second, more successful Indo-European orchestra which gave regular broadcasts of his popular arrangements, opposition to his musical innovations began to mount. In the autumn of 1938, MacCarthy received word from Foulds of a possible transfer to Calcutta.<sup>147</sup> Having lost her own brother there to cholera in 1908, and knowing of the effect of the stifling summer heat on Europeans, and that Calcutta was known as the graveyard of the British in India, she dashed off a horrified response in which she refers to the fact that Foulds's 'chief interest...the work for the orchestra' in Delhi was to be put on 'hiatus' or, worse, 'scrapped'.<sup>148</sup> Ultimately, a lethal combination of hostility to the Indo-European ensemble work at the studio, controversy surrounding his relationship with Fielden, and the loss of Fielden's support, led to the composer's inauspicious departure from Delhi to Calcutta in April 1939.<sup>149</sup>

### Voices from the Beyond

Meanwhile, in these years, a handful of pieces for Western instruments had been carefully crafted by Foulds and were languishing unheard—some in Delhi, some in MacCarthy's ashram in Śrinagar. His last work, *Two Symphonic Studies for Strings* Op. 101, was sent to Mumbai in late 1938 for performance by the Bombay Symphonic Strings under Walter Kaufmann (its dedicatee). One movement was performed in March 1939, and Kaufmann subsequently hand-delivered the parts to the BBC in 1946.<sup>150</sup> But those parts, along with the score, and several other manuscripts, have since, inexplicably, been lost.<sup>151</sup> One of the few surviving works from his Indian period is part of his tenth and final string quartet, *Quartetto Geniale*. Apart from sketches and a few inked pages of the opening *Animato Assai*, all that is extant of the quartet's five movements is the third, a 'Lento Quieto'.

Sketches, made in Holta, Panjāb in August 1935 prior to his move to Delhi, indicate that 'Intimate melodies from the Beyond' were emanating from the four strings of this *Lento Quieto*, exuding the kind of unearthly serenity which MacCarthy and he had heard almost exactly twenty years before emanating from an orchard on Darvill's

Hill.<sup>152</sup> The piece begins with a lilting violin melody in A major, each phrase answered amenably by the cello. In the second sentence, the music's serenity is heightened by Lydian fourths (D#, bars 7–8) (figure 6.15a).

A distant chorale, or 'hymn fragment' as Foulds termed it in his sketch, emerges at the movement's centre, in the highest register and joined by each instrument in turn. The direction *senza espressione* harks back to a note on *Gandharva-Music* 'remote: this music does not represent human emotion' (figure 6.15b).

For Foulds, an accomplished cellist and composer of nine previous string quartets, Beethoven and his late quartets loomed large in his musical experiences. This third *lento* movement, with its alternation between two contrasting sections (lilting opening theme and chorale), together with its strong Lydian inflection, calls to mind a particular Beethoven slow movement: the third of his Op. 132, one which Foulds had recently made reference to in regard to its Lydian mode.<sup>153</sup> The musical allusion, made at this time in Foulds's life, is significant. Beethoven had written his slow movement after recovering from a serious illness and headed it 'A Convalescent's Holy Song of Thanksgiving to the Divinity, in the Lydian Mode' (*Heiliger Dankgesang eines Genesenen an die Gottheit, in der lydischen Tonart*). Foulds's chorale is also a holy song: it derives from a hymn he had sketched for the small chorus of MacCarthy's imaginative ritual, *Veils*, in September 1922, who sang 'This is the Book of God'.<sup>154</sup>

If the allusion has any bearing on Foulds's own situation, it is surely bound up with recovery from the difficulty of his 'self-constituted exile' and a renewal of his creative energy. For, at the time of writing this movement, he had several other



Figure 6.15a

'Lento quieto', movement 3 of String Quartet no. 10, *Quartetto geniale*, op. 97, Foulds's autograph score: opening, mm. 1–18

Source: John Foulds autograph manuscript scores, courtesy of Graham Hatton.



Figure 6.15b

'Lento quieto': Chorale, mm. 42–57

Source : John Foulds autograph manuscript scores, courtesy of Graham Hatton.

major works on his desk, among them *Deva Music*—a pair of orchestral pieces entitled *of Gandharvas* and *of Apsaras*, with swirling melodic lines, and a set of pieces for orchestra entitled *Pasquinades Symphoniques*. In the string quartet, the 'book of God' chorale is, like Beethoven's holy song, one of 'complete serenity'.<sup>155</sup> When it returns, it is low, *sotto voce sul tastiera* (hushed, on the fingerboard); higher and higher the instruments rise into a coda based on phrases from the opening melodies tintured by that Lydian fourth. But the coda does not close the piece in the traditional sense; it deliquesces into a visionary haze of harmonics, almost out of reach of the instruments themselves. Out of the haze, a single pizzicato sounds the Lydian fourth. Here they are, those voices from the beyond: this is a supernatural calm (figure 6.15c).

In the spring of 1939, Foulds was preparing to leave for Calcutta. A note pencilled into his book indicates that 11 April was the 28th and final broadcast of his Indo-European orchestra. His last appearance on the radio (as a recital accompanist) was on 15 April, the date upon which his transfer took effect.<sup>156</sup> In the early hours of 25 April 1939, just as Mahatma Gandhi left Bombay for Calcutta in his quest to raise nationalist consciousness, Foulds died there of cholera and was laid to rest in the European cemetery—'no friend was near him', Maud noted.<sup>157</sup> *The Indian Listener* lamented the 'severe loss to broadcasting in India'; a tribute from colleagues read:

Amongst us of All India Radio, John Foulds was always a popular and charming figure.... Though no longer quite young, he was a shining example of enthusiasm,



### **Breathtaking and New**

Two posthumous developments in the history of Indian broadcasting demonstrate how Foulds's role at AIR illuminates the intersection between the post-colonial era and the previous one of the British Raj that defines the scope of this book. The first has received a good deal of critical attention and needs only a brief summary here. During his Indian years, Foulds was vocal in the public campaign against the harmonium which had been building momentum for decades in the hands of both Indian and British writers and musicians, Ananda K. Coomaraswamy and Arthur Fox Strangways among them.<sup>161</sup> Foulds declared that the instrument, which he dubbed 'the harm-omnium', was doing 'incalculable harm' to Indian music by 'strangling vocalization [and] debauching the sensitivity of the ear'—opinions supported by Jawaharlal Nehru himself and several prominent musicians.<sup>162</sup> When a ban on its use on All India Radio took effect in early 1940, Rao Bahadur K. V. Krishnaswamy Aiyer, President of the Madras Music Academy, endorsed the decision, calling the instrument 'unfit for Indian melodic music'; Tagore wrote a public letter of support from Shantiniketan saying that it was already banished from the ashram; and a connoisseur of music, Sir Raza Ali, dismissed it as not being a musical instrument.<sup>163</sup> The ban endured under the purist classical, and Hindu nationalist, rhetoric of the Maharashtrian Dr B. V. Keskar who was Minister of Information from 1950 to 1962.<sup>164</sup> Although the effects on intonation and voice production of prolonged accompaniment by the equal-tempered harmonium have not been studied, a number of the period's greatest vocal legends sang with the instrument regularly and appeared to suffer no musical ill-effects.<sup>165</sup> Moreover, the issue that emerges, as ethnomusicologist Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy has argued, 'is whether or not those who presume to know what Indian classical music ought to be, have the right to censor musical practice'.<sup>166</sup> While he played a vocal part in the political campaign against the harmonium, however, John Foulds did not 'institute' the complete ban on its use that ensued after his death (from 1 March 1940 up to 1971 with restrictions continuing until 1980), though the rumour that he was directly responsible for the ban has been well-repeated by Indian and Western writers.<sup>167</sup>

The second development relating to Foulds's work at AIR, really a series of activities, has been mentioned only in passing, and is of immeasurably greater significance for the subject of this book. In October 1942, it was decided at the Station Directors' conference that efforts to teach staff notation to AIR's instrumentalists should continue in order to enable further experiments in orchestra and harmony along the lines of Foulds's pioneering work in the late 1930s. Notation classes were held at some of the stations, albeit with varying degrees of success.<sup>168</sup> Then, in 1948, nine years after Foulds had founded his ensemble at AIR in Delhi, something remarkable occurred. Music programmers at AIR, now operating in an independent country, saw Foulds's Indo-European orchestra through post-colonial eyes. His work provided, as historian David Lelyveld has noted, the model for Ravi Shankar when he became director of external services at AIR in Delhi.<sup>169</sup> Shankar effectively inherited the post-Foulds ensemble. Ravi-ji had toured with his elder brother's dance troupe in Europe in the 1930s, and Uday's orchestra of Indian instruments no doubt inspired

his work.<sup>170</sup> But Shankar's score-reading ensemble at Delhi consisted of almost exactly the same instruments as Foulds's—*sarod*, *sitar*, *sarangi*, *vina*, *bansuri*, *jaltarang*, *tablā*—and he wrote, like his predecessor, of his keenness to retain 'as much as possible' of their 'Indian character and quality of Indian sound'.<sup>171</sup> Moreover, his working methods and musical principles were strikingly close to those of Foulds. Shankar spoke of making arrangements of 'lively melodies' and 'a very free kind of counterpoint', while keeping the 'classical purity' of each *rāga*:

The entire composition was fixed, and the musicians followed me as I conducted. . . . The effect was altogether breathtaking and new, and it sounded as if the whole piece were being improvised, even though the musicians had a complete score in front of them. . . . I tried to take full advantage of the quality, colour, tone and range of each instrument.<sup>172</sup>

The similarity is astonishing. Moreover, Ravi-ji recalled that 'the most exciting compositions I did—the ones that got the loudest and most enthusiastic reception from audiences—were based on "the pure folk style, using regional tunes"'.<sup>173</sup> John Foulds's attractive folk music arrangements like *Kashmiri Wedding Tune*, *Panjabi Dance Tune*, and *Pahari Hill Tune* were Shankar's models and his audience's favourites.

Two years on, among the measures adopted by Keskar to increase the appeal of broadcasting was the development of 'AIR Vadya Vrinda (Instrumental Ensembles)'.<sup>174</sup> One of his goals was to rival the orchestral film music that he perceived to be taking a pernicious hold on people. Artistic arrangements of Indian music by skilled composer-musicians along the lines of Foulds's work could provide an enjoyable and worthwhile alternative. Shankar was moved to the Home Services Division in 1952 where he 'was very pleased to be able to organize a larger ensemble that was known as *Vadya Vrinda*, or National Orchestra . . . very much like the instrumental ensemble I had been working with earlier . . . the string section had been greatly augmented and now included many Western instruments'.<sup>175</sup> This Indo-European orchestra was exactly what MacCarthy had envisioned and what Foulds had begun to create. In 1958, All India Radio even sought out Foulds's 'delightful light stuff'—but, by that time, wrote MacCarthy, most of it had 'been pulped . . . it's unobtainable . . . only a few, mostly mutilated, scraps [are] left'.<sup>176</sup>

Thus, even though radio audiences remained limited through the 1930s, the innovative music-making had not been 'a flop' (to use Fielden's term for his own work at the radio<sup>177</sup>). Under Foulds's leadership, AIR successfully developed an ensemble in Delhi, ignited the idea in Calcutta, and substantially overcame numerous technical, cultural, and social obstacles. Foulds's Indo-European orchestra, nearly crushed under inauspicious circumstances, was viewed by his successors, albeit tacitly, as musically innovative. Shankar said that his work on 'creative and experimental lines' as 'composer-conductor' at AIR was significant for his artistic development.<sup>178</sup> It ultimately led him along the path to the 'historic' *West Meets East* albums of the 1960s ('East Meets West' had been the title of Foulds's final Indo-European radio talk).<sup>179</sup> More broadly, in the half century since Foulds's Indo-European orchestra, we have celebrated Indo-Western cross-cultural compositions of all kinds built from such a common platform, from the work of Timir Baran (1904–1987) and Ravi Shankar and the

Beatles to that of John Coltrane, Naresh Sohal, and A. R. Rāhmān.<sup>180</sup> Foulds left quite a legacy, even though his name was all but forgotten. Perhaps that is what was meant by his colleague's oblique reference, in an obituary, to 'a loss which may perhaps be far greater than it actually seems'.<sup>181</sup> His works—both those for Indian and for Western instruments—stood in contrast to what was conventional, but they were *avatars* of what was to come, what Kabraji had described as 'the enriched music of the future'—and they were the music that he and Maud had believed in so strongly from the start.<sup>182</sup>

Foulds went to India in 1935 'with the intention of making a thorough study of Indian music'.<sup>183</sup> He died within a few years of his voluntary 'exile' with unfinished orchestral manuscripts on his desk, among them a large-scale *Symphony of East and West* (now lost) for Western and Indian instruments, and a pioneering Indo-European project underway. On the other side of the world, a handful of composers were feeling worn-out and left-behind—haunted, as Alex Ross puts it, 'by feelings of obsolescence'.<sup>184</sup> Rachmaninoff wrote in 1939, 'I feel like a ghost wandering in a world grown alien'; Sibelius confided to his diary that he was 'like an apparition in the woods'.<sup>185</sup> Some years later an embittered Hindemith was withdrawing into a 'timeless tonal paradise' away from 'the stylistic rat-race of the twentieth century',<sup>186</sup> and Strauss declared that he had outlived himself. Neglected and forgotten after his death Foulds may have been, but while some composers were yearning for a lost world and feeling obsolete, he was moving forward, looking ahead, initiating in India the cross-cultural collaborations that MacCarthy had set in motion in Britain decades before, and bringing exciting new musical possibilities into being: 'I am not a propagandist, but a student [of Indian music]' he told radio listeners:

And the longer I study, the more deeply am I convinced of one thing: that the great gulf which many people imagine to exist between Eastern and Western music is not a reality. . . . Real music is not national—not even international—but supranational. I believe that the power of music to heal, to soothe, to stimulate and to recreate is just the same in Timbuctoo as in Kamchatka, and was the same in the time of Orpheus as it is today.<sup>187</sup>

After his death, the modernist scores like the *Three Mantras* which had travelled unheard via Thomas Cook to Bombay in 1935 were, in the hands of Foulds's daughter, caught up in the biggest migration in human history during the Partition of 1947. Decades later, long after their return across 'the black water' to the Isle of Man, they remained unheard, despite the best efforts of MacCarthy and the pianist Frank Merrick, who repeatedly approached Boult, Hely-Hutchinson, and others at the BBC (on and off for eighteen years from 1940 to 1958).<sup>188</sup> In recent years, some of those works, though most have yet to be published, have been recorded and performed—and are resonating with the increasingly multicultural tenor of the changing 'English national vibration'.<sup>189</sup> The verdict of Boult, Hely-Hutchinson, and Wright, who condemned the music (which they themselves evidently could not hear) to silence, has been overturned, and listeners may judge the music for themselves. Sakari Oramo, who has directed enthralling recordings of Foulds's music, including the *Three Mantras from Avatara*, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra writes: 'It has been hard to understand how history can have been so wrong in its judgment of his music. . . . I hope I can restore him

to his rightful place at the heart of British repertory.<sup>190</sup> To Oramo, the *Three Mantras* represent 'the peak of all British orchestral music written between the two world wars'. 'I was struck', he continues, 'by [their] elemental, visceral power, the other-worldly serenity of the second movement, Mantra of Bliss, and the virtuosic self-assurance with which the composer marshalled a multitude of ideas from Hindu mysticism, to rhythmic ecstasy, into a convincing whole.'<sup>191</sup> The courageous person who penned a letter protesting Foulds's neglect by the BBC was prescient: 'I am convinced', he had concluded, '[that] to posterity, their [the BBC's] rejection of Foulds' maturest music will be a reflection, not on the value of Foulds' work, but on their own competence.'<sup>192</sup> That a new generation of scholars and musicians has been insisting on the cultural relevance of this music hitherto excluded from nationalist memory has serious implications for twentieth-century historiography. The complex voices of John Foulds's music—the modes, mantras, and *gandharvas*—will, if our ears are open to hearing them, continue to challenge the old narratives of the British Raj's one-way impact, of 'Englishness' in music, and of the post-colonial Western 'discovery' of and fusion with Indian music, communicating fascinating evidence of the 'acculturation' of English music and musicians during the Indian–British colonial encounter.

## NOTES

1. Swami Omananda Puri [Maud MacCarthy], *The Boy and the Brothers* (London: Gollancz, 1959), 75. Epigraph from John Foulds, *Music To-Day: Its Heritage from the Past, and Legacy to the Future* (Opus 92) (London: Nicholson & Watson, 1934), 224 (hereinafter, *Music To-Day*).
2. That he was studying Indian music in order to write a book for the publishers of his first book (Nicholson & Watson) is mentioned numerous times in the press; the author of 'Music of East and West' in *The Statesman*, 6 March 1937, for instance, writes: 'He has come to India for the purpose of making a special study of Indian music'. See also 'Growth of Indian Music', *Times of India*, 16 September 1937; *The Hindustan Times*, 22 September 1937; and, in a Letter to the Editor, Manohar G. Karnik writes: 'If he [Foulds] is going to publish a book, as it is stated he intends to do very shortly, his observations promise to be good ones' (*Times of India*, 13 April 1938); all clipped and kept in Foulds's book of his Indian years, entitled *A Few Indian Records: May 1936 to May 1939*. This scrapbook is held in a private collection in trust for the family together with a myriad other archival materials (hereinafter JF Papers).
3. *The Boy and the Brothers*, 95–7. I have decided to use the old, pre-independence city names, including Bombay (now Mumbai), Calcutta (now Kolkata) to refer to the places as they were known then to the protagonists in this chapter.
4. *The Boy and the Brothers*, 99.
5. Joseph Holbrooke, *Contemporary British Composers* (London: Cecil Palmer, 1925), 215. Havergal Brian, 'The Death of John Foulds', Obituary published in *Musical Opinion* (April 1939); repr. in *Havergal Brian on Music: Selections from his Journalism*, Vol. 1: *British Music*, ed. Malcolm MacDonald (London: Toccata Press, 1986), 262.
6. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 272. Holbrooke also recounts that Foulds 'was invited in 1906 as composer to be present at the "Tonkünstler-Fest des Allgemeinen Deutschen Musikvereins" in Essen, and had the pleasure of meeting there Strauss, Humperdinck, Honegger, Mahler, and others' (*Contemporary British Composers*, 219–20).

7. MacCarthy, letter to Foulds, 28 April 1915; The Borthwick Institute for Archives, University of York (hereinafter Borthwick Archive).
8. *The Boy and the Brothers*, 12.
9. Such as *Śakuntalā* produced at the Alhambra Theatre in 1918: 'The music... specially composed by John H. Foulds and played under his direction' (Kālidāsa, Laurence Binyon, and Kedārā-Nātha Dāsa Gupta, *Śakuntalā* (London: Macmillan & Co, 1920), 152).
10. Foulds wrote music for Tagore's play *Sacrifice* at the Prince of Wales Theatre on 22 May 1920: his *Two Songs* op. 66 for female voice, violins, and *tānpuras* (or voice and string quintet) remain in manuscript and were supplied to me by Graham Hatton. Details of the music and direction by Foulds and MacCarthy of the 1922 production of *The Goddess* by Niranjan Pāl are discussed in chapter 1 of this book: the music she had learned and collected in India was arranged by Foulds for Western chamber orchestra with *tablā*; Julia Chatterton, 'Indian Music', review of *The Goddess*, *Musical Standard*, 12 August 1922, 57, and an earlier review on 29 July in the same publication, 43.
11. *Lyra Celtica*, Concerto for Voice and Orchestra (c.1925–30), facsimile of full score and piano reduction, both in Foulds's hand, provided by Graham Hatton.
12. Foulds, letter to MacCarthy, 6 December 1938. Maud MacCarthy Papers, Private family collection (hereinafter MM Papers).
13. Foulds mentions the clairaudient hearing in prefatory note to the published edition (his opus 49) of *Gandharva-Music* (London: Theosophical Publishing House Ltd, 1928).
14. Foulds, pencil annotation on his list of works in the BL Add MS 56483, 13 verso: 'A Darvill's Hill "inspiration" of 1915'; his tender recollection is written in a letter to MacCarthy from Delhi in the 1930s; MM Papers.
15. MacCarthy, 'Some World Conceptions of Music', unpublished lecture presented at Birmingham University on 8 December 1915, Borthwick Archive, 29 pages; 16–19.
16. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 288.
17. Composer's note on the title page of the autograph score. MacCarthy referred to it as 'a grand opera on the subject of Shri Krishna', in a letter to 'an Indian friend'; MM Papers.
18. Foulds to Shaw, letter, 25 April 1925; BL Add. MS. 50519 f. 224. Foulds to Boulton, letters, of 3 February 1931, 3 December 1931, 1 February 1932, 13 June 1933; Composer John Foulds, File I: 1924–1938, BBC Written Archives, Caversham (hereinafter Foulds File I).
19. Foulds, sketches of the Mantras; JF Papers. The longer title is recorded in his list of works in the BL Add Ms 56483, 15 verso.
20. Sketches and piano-conductor reductions in the composer's hand; JF Papers; manuscript full scores courtesy of Graham Hatton.
21. The relation between *Gandharva-Music* and its orchestral expansion in the second mantra point to a tempo for the piano piece that is equivalent to that of the mantra—that is, a slower tempo than that which Foulds had indicated on the score.
22. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 287.
23. In Foulds scholarship, Kabir has been erroneously labelled a sixteenth-century Hindu poet (see e.g. Malcolm MacDonald, *John Foulds and His Music: An Introduction* (London: Kahn & Averill, 1989), 28). He was a fifteenth-century poet-saint revered by Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs alike. Although his early life is shrouded in mystery and legend, there is no doubt that his early life began as a Muslim (his name means 'Great' in Arabic). 'Kabir', *Encyclopædia Britannica Online*. Web.

24. Programme of first performance, held at the Borthwick Archive. For more on *A World Requiem*, see my article, 'John Foulds' *World Requiem*: A Cenotaph in Sound' (in preparation).
25. 12 November 1923, Letter from Sybil Thorndike; Reviews and reactions to *A World Requiem*, Borthwick Archive. Also in BL Add. MS 56482.
26. Press reviews were quite negative and included a particularly scathing one by Ernest Newman: 'An Ambitious Requiem', *Manchester Guardian Weekly*, 16 November 1923; news clippings, MM Papers.
27. The quotations are from, respectively, Ivan Hewitt, 'World Requiem Comes Alive after 81-Year Wait', *Telegraph*, 12 November 2007; Jessica Duchén, 'Edward Elgar: A Maestro You can Bank on', *Independent*, 16 March 2007: 'Among [Elgar's] peers and juniors, eccentricity was certainly present, like the bizarre figures of Peter Warlock and John Foulds'; and Geoff Brown, 'A World Requiem: Review', *Times*, 13 November 2007: 'arcane Foulds works'.
28. Hearing the music that follows Elysium, in effect an ultra-modern *recitative accompagnato*, we might understand quite how small a step it was for MacCarthy to believe that this music with which Foulds so effectively conjured up the 'other world' actually came from 'the other world'—an irresistibly attractive concept (not least perhaps for an ex-Roman Catholic, ex-theosophist!). Yet, with its aggregate harmonies, whole-tone passages, modal inflections, quarter-tones and timbral ingenuity, this music is part of a modernist lineage led by Richard Strauss, Bartók, Rimsky-Korsakov, and Stravinsky in their representations of mysterious other-worldly realms in opera and ballet.
29. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 284–5. See also his prefatory note to *Gandharva-Music*: 'this music was heard 'clairaudiently', not imaginatively in the way a composer's work is usually done . . . perhaps it was the music of the breezes, the flowers and the fruit-trees at that place and time [directly transcribed]'.
30. Francois Lesure, ed., *Debussy on Music*, trans. R. I. Smith (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977), 47–8. In a similar vein, Ferruccio Busoni, in his prophetic tract of 1907, *Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music*, exhorts composers to 'grasp something of the eternal harmony . . . let us free music from architectonic, acoustic and aesthetic dogmas . . . let Music be naught else than Nature' (*Entwurf einer neuen Ästhetik der Tonkunst* (Trieste, 1907). Translated by Theodore Baker as 'Sketch of a New Aesthetic of Music' in 1911; repr. in *Three Classics in the Aesthetic of Music* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1962), 88–95).
31. Adrienne Fried Block, *Amy Beach, Passionate Victorian: The Life and Work of an American Composer* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 221.
32. Charles Ives, 'Some Quarter-Tone Impressions' (1925), in *Music in the Western World: A History in Documents*, selected and annotated by Piero Weiss and Richard Taruskin (Belmont, Calif.: Thomson Schirmer, 2008), 360–361.
33. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 321.
34. Alex Ross, *The Rest is Noise: Listening to the Twentieth Century* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007), 183.
35. Pandit Pran Nath (1918–1996) (who was a visiting professor at Mills College in the 1970s); *In Between the Notes: A Portrait of Pandit Pran Nath* (Video Documentary: Other Minds, 1986). Tagore, *Gitanjali*, verse 62, and *The Gardener*, verse 74; *The English Writings of Rabindranath Tagore*, Vol. 1: *Poems*, ed. Sisir Kumar Das (New Delhi: Sahitya Academy 1994; repr. 2004), 64 and 120. See also 'Communion with Nature', in Kalyan Sen Gupta, *The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2005), 58–9.
36. 'change of air' is from Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 225.

37. Foulds, handwritten note next to the table in the published score of *Essays in the Modes* (Paris: Senart, 1928).
38. Foulds, autograph note in the published score.
39. Posters, programmes, and lecture-scripts from Paris; MM Papers.
40. For instance, Schoenberg's Suite Op. 25 is a serial composition; Milhaud's dances in his suite *Saudades do Brasil* are polytonal experiments.
41. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 255.
42. Foulds outlines this purpose in his preface to the score.
43. Foulds discusses this system of composition in a letter to the composer Walter Kaufmann, n.d. Walter Kaufmann Archive, Indiana University, Cook Music Library, Indiana (hereinafter Kaufmann Archive).
44. Hubert Parry wrote, 'The Indians have little feeling for anything like a tonic, or for relative degrees of importance in the notes that compose the scale; and there seems little restriction as to which note in the scale may be used for the final close' (*The Evolution of The Art of Music*, 9th ed. (London: K. Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1925), 34).
45. Foulds, *Dynamic Triptych*, Op. 88 composed in Paris 1927–9. Facsimile of manuscript score from Graham Hatton.
46. 'London Concerts', *Musical Times*, December 1920, 821.
47. MM Papers.
48. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 276.
49. Foulds, Sketch of the third Mantra; on another sketch, he indicated the title of third as *Rakshasa Mantra*; JF Papers.
50. MacCarthy, typescript for lecture-recital given at Birmingham University, 20; MM Papers.
51. Foulds, note on an early sketch of the *Mantras*; JF Papers.
52. I am grateful to Richard Cohn for pointing this connection out to me after a lecture I gave at Yale University in September 2010.
53. Dent, quoted in Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 224.
54. Foulds, letter to Adrian Boult, 16 August 1933; Foulds File I (BBC WAC) (also in BL Add. MS. 56482, ff. 14–15). It is clear, from further correspondence in the same file, that Foulds had sent several scores to Boult, including the *Three Mantras*, *Dynamic Triptych*, and *April-England*.
55. Foulds File I. Foulds was not the only one: Cyril Scott, for example, had similar problems. For more on the politics of the BBC at this time, see Jennifer Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music, 1922–1936: Shaping a Nation's Tastes* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).
56. Memo from Leslie Woodgate to Kenneth Wright, 18 March 1932; Wright to Woodgate, 19 March 1932; Foulds File I. The quoted evaluation of Wright (an amateur musician) comes from Doctor, *The BBC and Ultra-Modern Music*, 80; see also 194 and 409.
57. Memo from Joseph Lewis to 'A.M.D.' [Owen Mase], 9 November 1932; Foulds File I.
58. Letter from Owen Mase to Foulds, 15 November 1932; Foulds File I.
59. H. M. Carver, report on *Dynamic Triptych*, 12 March 1946; R27/573, General Music Reports 1928–1954. Fl–Fo, BBC Written Archives, Caversham (hereinafter General Music Reports).
60. Boult, report on *Dynamic Triptych*, 5 April 1932; General Music Reports.
61. The first two quoted phrases come from Sakari Oramo, 'The Forgotten Man', *Guardian*, 28 April 2006. The internal memos reflect derision about Foulds's standing as a composer, and the charge of pretension is a recurring one. One evaluation by Howgill concluded thus: 'I doubt that any front rank composer would have the temerity to undertake the task [of arranging a Schubert quartet for orchestra]. Foulds is not, of course, in this category' (25 April 1932; General Music Reports).

Moreover, Foulds had attempted to rise above his 'lowbrow' station by writing and directing *A World Requiem*. Critics like Ernest Newman had been sure to 'take him down' publicly, while Boulton did so privately: Newmann wrote of how Foulds's 'ambitions are rather ahead, at present, of his powers... [as] a capable young English composer', and how 'The "World Requiem" would have invited less criticism had it had a less pretentious title' ('An Ambitious Requiem'). Boulton's internal report of 1932 concludes: 'One can only wonder that with all his apparent competence and ability, he has not been able to write bigger, better music. I can see no future for the work' (General Music Reports).

62. Reports on *Dynamic Triptych*: R. O. Morris, 17 April 1946; Herbert Howells, 12 March 1946; and Victor Hely-Hutchinson [March–April 1932]; General Music Reports.
63. Boulton, report on *Mantras*, 22 March 1932; General Music Reports.
64. R. J. F. Howgill, report on *Mantras*, 25 April 1932; General Music Reports.
65. A. H. Haggard to Aylmer Buesst (who had joined the music department as assistant music director in October 1933), 1 February 1934; Foulds File I.
66. Boulton to Haggard, 8 February 1934; Foulds File I.
67. A studio performance of the *Dynamic Triptych* was broadcast on 4 August 1933.
68. Ernest Newman, *Sunday Times*, 15 November 1933; quoted by Asa Briggs in *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom: Vol. 2, The Golden Age of Wireless* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), 159.
69. 'austere, colourless' comes from Joselyn Zivin, "'Bent": A Colonial Subversive and Indian Broadcasting', *Past & Present* 162 (February 1999): 204.
70. The epigraph for this section comes from a letter MacCarthy wrote to the editor of *The Leader* (Allahabad), 29 August 1912. The description of Foulds's role comes from a letter from Dr K. Kabraji in Poona to Foulds in Delhi, 7 July 1938. BL Add. MS. 56482, ff. 33–4.
71. Foulds's address is printed on various letters (to Kaufmann, to his family, and to the BBC).
72. Foulds, letter to MacCarthy; MM Papers; the notion of such men not fitting in to the Raj comes from Zivin, 'Bent', 179.
73. Lionel Fielden, *The Natural Bent* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1960), 179.
74. Foulds, letters to MacCarthy; MM Papers. Quotations from *The Boy and the Brothers*, 78.
75. Fielden, *The Natural Bent*, 176. Further evidence may be found in Fielden's summation of what he witnessed during his Indian years, extraordinary for the times, and which he painted 'in somber colours': 'But nobody, as far as I know, has ever set down these rather trivial facts: and any historian worth his salt must take them into consideration when he considers the downfall of the British Raj. And downfall it was: don't let anyone make the mistake of thinking that Attlee or Mountbatten or England made a great and noble gesture of renunciation. We got out of India because we ruled it so ineffectively that we were forced out—and also, of course, because we had neither the troops nor the money, after the 1939 war, to hold it by force. No credit is due to England for the events of 1946 and 1947. It was not, as Lawrence had hoped, a noble gesture: it was a feeble one' (*The Natural Bent*, 191).
76. The points about Fielden rejecting the British in India and opting out of official housing are made by Zivin in her excellent article, 'Bent', 196 and 213.
77. *A Few Indian Records: May 1936 to May 1939*; JF Papers.
78. MM Papers.
79. See, for instance, MacDonald's section on 'India' in his book, *John Foulds and His Music*, 81–97; and Neil Sorrell, 'Early Western Pioneers: John Foulds and Maud

- MacCarthy', in *Hindustani Music, Thirteenth to Twentieth Centuries*, ed. Joep Bor et al. (New Delhi: Codarts Manohar, 2010), 511–20.
80. The description of All India Radio's Delhi station comes from Zivin, 'Bent', 206.
81. *Ibid.*, 198.
82. This is a very different approach from that of the composer Colin McPhee who made over forty transcriptions of Gamelan music for Western instruments (particularly the piano) during his years in Bali from 1931 to 1938.
83. Foulds letter to Kaufmann, n.d. [1938–9]; Kaufmann Archive.
84. Foulds, 'A Brief Resumé of European Musical Activities at the Delhi Station, A.I.R. during the year April 1<sup>st</sup> 1937 to March 31<sup>st</sup> 1938'; JF Papers.
85. MacCarthy, Large Blue Book; MM Papers.
86. Letter dated 29 November 1919 from MacCarthy to Emmeline Pethwick Lawrence (1867–1954), a prominent suffragist and member of the Women's Social and Political Union. With her husband, she started the journal *Votes for Women* in 1907; Borthwick Archive.
87. The first 'talkie' (sound film), involving the distinctive sequences of songs and music, was *Alam Ara* in 1931 (the songs in this film were accompanied only by harmonium and *tabla*). Temple sculptures depicting groups of instrumentalists, along with descriptions in ancient treatises, suggest that ensemble playing was not new to India. Moreover, the impressive *Naubat* ensembles of the *naqqara khana* (drum house) at the Mughal courts featured up to twenty wind, brass, and percussion players.
88. MacCarthy, memoir annotation; MM Papers.
89. Foulds, sketches and manuscript materials; JF Papers.
90. This is consistent with what we know about musical life in north India in the early twentieth century: Muslims were prominent in classical music and often traced their renowned families—*gharānās*—back hundreds of years, even as far back as the sixteenth-century court of Akbar the Great where a uniquely rich culture thrived through the harmonious mixing of Hindu and Muslim peoples, instruments, and music. For an engaging overview to the religious constitution of music culture at this time, see Namita Devidayal, *The Music Room: A Memoir* (New York: Thomas Dunne, 2009).
91. There have been errors in scholarship relating to Foulds's Indian years. For instance, contrary to MacDonald's repeated assertion, Foulds never played the enormously complex *vīna* but, rather, the drone lute the *tānpura* (MacDonald, *John Foulds and his Music*, 91, 93, 95, and 96 n. 51). There are also errors in identifying the instruments in Foulds's ensemble (for instance, p. 93). In Figure 6.9, *pace* MacDonald, Foulds is not holding a *vīna* (which he did not play) but a *tānpūra* (which he did play), the instrument with which he is often pictured.
92. Postcard from Shaw which found its way to Foulds in India. In 1961 MacCarthy quoted it and noted: 'It should be among John's papers. I have handled it'; John Foulds' file, MM Papers. The postcard was also quoted in the article on Foulds's work at All India Radio (AIR), 'Indo-European Music', *Indian Listener*, 7 April 1938, 497.
93. My translation; *Awāz* 2, no. 11 (1 June 1937). The journal was started in January 1936 to provide programme information and broadcast times in Hindi and Urdu; it was split in July 1938 and published in two editions (*Akashvani*—Hindi, and *Awāz*—Urdu).
94. Foulds, letter to [J. B.] Clark at the BBC (Empire Service), 14 October 1938; Foulds File I. The stifling summer heat is also mentioned in letters to MacCarthy; MM Papers.
95. Foulds, 'The Present and Future of Music in India'. A series of articles published in the *Music Magazine* 2, nos. 1–4, as follows: I [untitled] (November 1936), 1–3;

- II 'Harmony' (December 1936), 17–18; III 'Orchestration' (January 1937), 29; IV 'Notation' (February 1937), 1–3.
96. Foulds, *Orpheus Abroad* scripts; JF Papers. The script of the first talk was reproduced in *The Indian Listener*, 7 April 1937. The series of twelve talks was broadcast from 6 March to 30 May 1937 on the following dates: 6, 13, 23, 31 March; 7, 18, 22, 28 April; 2, 14, 22, 30 May; Foulds, letter to MacCarthy; MM Papers.
  97. Foulds, 'What Indian Music Can Give the West', talk no. 5, *Orpheus Abroad*; JF Papers.
  98. Foulds: this quotation comes from a newspaper article which Foulds clipped entitled, 'Musical History at Delhi', 22 September 1938; *A Few Indian Records*. See also review in *The Statesman*, 26 March 1938.
  99. Foulds told radio listeners: 'Visualizing this Indo-European Orchestra I want to make it quite clear that there is no intention of creating just another of these hybrids... The way in which it is *done* is the all important thing' ('East Meets West' *Orpheus Abroad* 12, broadcast 14 May 1937; JF Papers).
  100. Letter from Kabraji to Foulds, 7 July 1938.
  101. Foulds, letters to Kaufmann, n.d. [1938–9]; Kaufmann Archive.
  102. MacCarthy gave Julia Chatterton this information in an interview: the piece is referred to first as a 'Song in Bengali Style' and, in the subsequent article as 'Song of Ram Das'; Chatterton, 'Indian Music', *Musical Standard*, 29 July and 12 August 1922, 57. This is the earliest mention of what we know to be Foulds's orchestral piece of 1935, *The Song of Ram Dass* (he added the extra 's').
  103. *Indian Listener*, 1 April 1938. An article entitled 'Music of East and West' in *The Statesman*, March 6 1937, reads: 'He has come to India for the purpose of making a special study of Indian music.'
  104. I have gleaned all the details about Foulds's studies from his sketches, notes, and compositions 1935–9; JF Papers.
  105. Foulds, 'An East and West Concert', *Musical Times* 79, no. 1146 (August 1938): 623.
  106. Foulds, letter to MacCarthy, n.d.; MM Papers. Back home, William Walton had no such qualms about the title for his march composed in honour of the coronation of King George VI in 1937: *Crown Imperial* (although the march's title is derived from a phrase in a fifteenth-century poem by William Dunbar, 'In Honour of the City of London', its significance in relation to the British Empire is clear).
  107. Foulds himself mentions these comments on air in his *Orpheus Abroad* talks; MM Papers.
  108. Foulds, 'East and West in Music', *Sunday Statesman*, 18 October 1935; MM Papers. MacCarthy discussed notation's 'deadly' effect on Indian music in 'Harmony and the Orchestra', in the series 'The Ideals of Indian Music', *Sunday Statesman* (Calcutta and Delhi), 6 October 1935. Both Janaki Bakhle and Namita Devidayal recount Alladiya Khan's flight from King Sayajirao's court in Baroda at the introduction of notation (Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 34–5; and Devidayal, *The Music Room*, 130–31. For more on Sayajirao's *Kalavant Khatyache Niyam* (book of rules) and its effect on court musicians, see Bakhle, 20–35.
  109. Foulds, 'An East and West Concert', *Musical Times*, 623.
  110. Foulds, 'Notation', *Music Magazine* 2, no. 4 (February 1937).
  111. Foulds, 'Modern Tendencies in Indian Music', *Indian Listener*, 7 July 1938.
  112. First quotation: Foulds, typescript for broadcast of Indo-European orchestra, 6 September 1938; JF Papers. Second quotation: Foulds, typescript, 'Indian instruments', *Orpheus Abroad*, 9.

113. Prefatory programme note on the manuscript score, courtesy of Graham Hatton. Foulds also mentioned this in a broadcast on 22 November 1937 (which must have been of his Western orchestral arrangement, since he had not yet begun broadcasting with his Indian ensemble).
114. *Kashmiri Wedding Procession* was broadcast on 11 February and 11 March 1939; *Indian Listener*; clipped in *A Few Indian Records*, Score and parts; JF Papers.
115. Anon., 'East and West Meet', 30 March 1938, press clipping, *Indian Records*. 'The chief feature' quotation comes from Foulds, 'A Brief Resumé of European Musical Activities at the Delhi Station, A.I.R.'. Foulds's studio ensemble was joined by the Viceroy's orchestra for the occasion. Favourable reviews of the Delhi concert appeared in, *inter alia*, *The Delhi Statesman*, *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), *Times of India* and *Hindustan Times*. The concert took place on 28 March 1938; annotated programme and reviews clipped in MM Papers. A newspaper article entitled 'Musical History at Delhi', which Foulds clipped states: 'Numerous comments, eulogistic and otherwise, from Indian and European alike, continue to come in with reference to the activities of the Indo-European Orchestra which broadcast from Delhi frequently' (22 September 1938, press clipping, *A Few Indian Records* and MM Papers). For more on the how such large-scale musical occasions were traditionally celebrations of 'Englishness', see Ian Woodfield, *Music of the Raj: A Social and Economic History of Music in Late Eighteenth Century Anglo-Indian Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).
116. Foulds, review 'Hindusthani Music', *Indian Listener*, April 1939, clipped in *A Few Indian Records*.
117. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 261.
118. 'John Foulds, 1880–1939', Obituary, *Indian Listener* 4, no. 10 (7 May 1939): 688.
119. H. R. Luthra, *Indian Broadcasting* (New Delhi: Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, Patiala House, 1986), 303.
120. Foulds, 'One Week Woe' jotting on manuscript paper; JF Papers.
121. MacCarthy, Large Blue Book; MM Papers.
122. *Report on the Progress of Broadcasting in India (up to the 31<sup>st</sup> March 1939)* (Simla, 1939), 21–3; according to Zivin, the report was mainly written by Fielden ('Bent', 206 and 212).
123. The quotation is from Kabraji's letter to Foulds, 7 July 1938.
124. Zivin, 'Bent', 198. With so few listeners, however, the possibility that radio could be a weapon was highly unlikely (see n. 143). Nevertheless, some, like Kabraji, believed that broadcasting in India was 'powerful and full of possibilities' (letter to Foulds, 7 July 1938).
125. Letter, Foulds to MacCarthy, 1937 (n.d.); MM Papers.
126. Foulds, 'East Meets West', *Orpheus Abroad*, 12; MM Papers. Second quotation from Foulds, 'An East and West Concert'. This is consistent with his optimism: unlike Fielden (whose emotional troubles are mentioned in Foulds's letters to MacCarthy), he did not sink into bouts of inconsolable depression; MM Papers.
127. MacCarthy, memoir annotation; MM Papers.
128. The photograph is obviously posed: the instrumentalists are not actually playing, and there are no music stands for the parts that Foulds prepared for each musician, although he is holding a conductor score in one hand. Moreover, all the musicians, except the *tabla* player, are sitting on chairs which is not only unconventional for Indian music performance but unwieldy and, in some cases, impossible.
129. In the eighth *Orpheus Abroad* talk, he laid out some possibilities of using such techniques of composition as counterpoint in an Indian context. A little illustrative

- piece which he jotted down and played on the studio piano gives some idea of the kind of simple counterpoint he used with the ensemble; MM Papers.
130. Foulds, typescript for broadcast of Indo-European orchestra, 6 September 1938; JF Papers. *Jaltarang* consists of a set of ceramic or metal bowls tuned with water. The bowls are played by striking the edge with sticks, one in each hand.
  131. MacCarthy, 'Ideals of Indian Music I—How to Listen', *Sunday Statesman*, 15 September 1935, front page, Magazine Section.
  132. Foulds letter to Kaufmann, n.d.; Kaufmann Archive.
  133. Letter from Kaufmann in Mumbai to Foulds in Delhi, n.d. BL Add. MS. 56482, f. 40. Foulds letter to Kaufmann, n.d.; Kaufmann Archive. Walter Kaufmann (1907–1984) would, much later, make his name as a scholar of Indian music after he became Professor of Music at Indiana University in Bloomington in 1957. Indiana University Press published his two 'authoritative' volumes several decades after he had left the subcontinent (*The Rāgas of North India* and *The Rāgas of South India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968 and 1976)). The fascinating correspondence between the two composers in India reveals that MacCarthy and Foulds had a formative influence on Kaufmann's Indian music studies (Nalini Ghuman, 'The Real Pioneers of Indian Music in the West', paper presented at the Society for Ethnomusicology's fifty-eighth annual meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, November 14–17, 2013).
  134. Foulds letter to Kaufmann, n.d.
  135. Foulds himself acknowledged this fact: he told listeners he was not 'a mere dreamer, an impractical theoretician'; 'East meets West', *Orpheus Abroad*, 12; JF Papers.
  136. Foulds, *Orpheus Abroad*, 1; JF Papers; this talk's script was reproduced in *The Indian Listener*, 7 April 1937, cover feature.
  137. The earlier orchestra, formed in 1937 had been abandoned. MacCarthy, Memoir, Large Blue Book; MM Papers. Foulds often referred to the pieces as experiments, such as in the typescript of his broadcast on 6 September 1938; JF Papers.
  138. 'East meets West', *Orpheus Abroad*, 12; MM Papers
  139. All quotations are from letters received at the Delhi Station and recorded in *A Few Indian Records*.
  140. MacCarthy, letter to Ralph Hawkes, 17 May 1939; quoted in MacDonald, *John Foulds and his Music*, 97.
  141. David Lelyveld, 'Upon the Subdominant: Administering Music on All-India Radio', *Social Text*, 39 (Summer 1994): 115–16.
  142. Ibid., 115–16.
  143. Fielden, *The Natural Bent*, 204. Compare the figures with the 500,000 licence holders in Britain by the end of 1923. Moreover, drawing on figures from G. C. Awasthy and Asa Briggs, Zivin states that there were fewer than 1 in 350 "domestic listeners" in India as late as 1939, 'as compared to the 73 out of 100 households with radios in England': Awasthy, *Broadcasting in India* (Bombay: Allied Publishers, 1965), 259; Briggs, *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom*, vol. 2, 235–6; quoted in Zivin, 'Bent', 196 n. 1.
  144. Zivin makes this point ('Bent', 200).
  145. Foulds, letter to MacCarthy, 14 February [1939]; MM Papers.
  146. MacCarthy, MM Papers.
  147. Foulds, letter to MacCarthy, October 1938; MM Papers.
  148. MacCarthy, letter to Foulds, 21 October 1938; MM Papers.
  149. This was never stated publicly; indeed, MacCarthy's letter to Hawkes (17 May 1939) puts a positive spin on the transfer to Calcutta to save face. It is that version which appears in MacDonald's book; *John Foulds and his Music*, 97.

150. The first movement, *Il Penseroso* was broadcast on Friday, 10 March 1939; *Indian Listener*, clipped in *A Few Indian Records*. A letter from Eric Warr to Frank Merrick, 20 June 1951, refers to Kaufmann bringing the scores to the BBC; Composer John Foulds, File II, 1940–1958, BBC Written Archives, Caversham (hereinafter Foulds File II).
151. ‘no one knew quite what to do with them [the two Symphonic Studies]...no idea where the score is...’; Foulds, File II.
152. Foulds wrote ‘Intimate Melodies from the Beyond’ as a subtitle for the movement on a sketch; JF Papers.
153. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 44 n.
154. *Veils*, An Imaginative Ritual ‘taken down by Maud MacCarthy’, Manuscript; MM Papers. Hymn fragment in sketches in JF Papers. MacDonald also made this observation (*John Foulds and his Music*, 89).
155. Foulds, pencil note on his sketch; JF Papers.
156. *A Few Indian Records*.
157. MacCarthy, letter to Hawkes, 17 May 1939.
158. ‘John Foulds, 1880–1939’, Obituary, *Indian Listener*, 7 May 1939, 688.
159. VUC ‘Radio Programmes’ listing, *Civil and Military Gazette*, 7 June 1939; clipping, MM Papers.
160. Anon. [Lionel Fielden?], ‘A Delhi Diary’, *Statesman*, 8 May 1939; clipping, MM Papers.
161. The harmonium, a western European invention and an instrument that Foulds, along with a number of scholars of Indian music, considered odious does not appear in his orchestra. He wrote several articles on the subject, such as ‘The Curse of Music in India To-Day’, in *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Calcutta), 25 August 1936, and ‘The Harm-omnium’, in *Indian Listener*, 7 July 1938. The articles drew responses in the press to which Foulds responded: e.g. Rai Sahib P. B. Joshi asked: ‘The Harmonium—And Why Not?’ *Hindustan Times*, 5 September 1938. Foulds responded with: ‘The Harmonium: A Few Reasons Why Not’, *Hindustan Times*, 19 September 1938. Foulds’s articles did generate public discourse and also led to higher remuneration for vocalists who performed with *sarangi* rather than harmonium and, in July 1938, the Station Director in Mumbai announced that the station would, ‘increase the remuneration of those musicians who will sing without the harmonium... [I hope to] discourage the use of that awful instrument’ (reported in ‘News from the Studios’, *Indian Listener*, 22 August 1938). A number of Indian music scholars agreed that the harmonium was a crutch for weaker singers and that it was damaging to the microtones of Indian music: Luthra discusses the positive responses from scholarly and musical quarters to the 30-year banning which followed in his book *Indian Broadcasting*, 303–5.
162. Foulds, ‘Whither Indian Music?’, *Orpheus Abroad*, no. 4; See also Foulds, ‘The Curse of Music in India To-Day’, 25 August 1936, newspaper clipping, and Foulds, ‘The Harm-omnium’, *Indian Listener*, clippings, ‘John Foulds’ file; MM Papers.
163. ‘AIR Ban on Use of Harmonium’, *Civil and Military Gazette* (Lahore), 6 March 1940. All information from newspaper clippings in the Large Blue Book; MM Papers.
164. For more on B. V. Keskar’s ideology, see his own book, *Indian Music: Problems and Prospects* (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1967), and Lelyveld’s discussion of Keskar as ‘the major formulator of the musical ideologies and policies’ at All India Radio (‘Upon the Subdominant’, 116–18).

165. For an excellent discussion of the politics surrounding the instrument, see Matthew Rahaim, 'That Ban(e) of Indian Music: Hearing Politics in the Harmonium', *Journal of Asian Studies* 70, no. 3 (August 2011): 657–82.
166. Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, *The Rāgs of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution* (Mumbai: Popular Prakashan Pvt. Ltd, 1995), 4–5.
167. See, for instance, K. S. Mullick, *Tangled Tapes: the Inside Story of Indian Broadcasting* (New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1974), 38–9; and Alain Danielou, *The Life of Music in North India: The Organization of an Artistic Tradition* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1990), 184. See also Rahaim, 'That Ban(e) of Indian Music', esp. 673. MacCarthy also noted that Foulds was responsible for the ban: 'Memoir', Large Blue Book; MM Papers. See also Neil Sorrell, 'From "Harm-omnium" to Harmonia Omnium: Assessing Maud MacCarthy's Influence on John Foulds and the Globalization of Indian Music', *Journal of the Indian Musicological Society*, 40 (1 January 2010): 110–30.
168. Luthra, *Indian Broadcasting*, 303; Luthra relates that Station Director at Bombay, Z. A. Bokhari, wrote frankly to the headquarters in July 1946 that none of the artists employed at his station would benefit by such lessons (303).
169. Lelyveld writes that Shankar 'took up Foulds's [sic] old idea of developing a radio orchestra' ('Upon the Subdominant', 120); see Ravi Shankar, *My Music, My Life* (San Rafael, Calif.: Mandala Publishing, 2007), 92–3.
170. When Uday Shankar returned to Europe and London in the late 1920s and 1930s, he worked with an orchestra exclusively made up of Indian instruments which was considered more 'authentic'; Joan L. Erdman, 'Performance as Translation: Uday Shankar in the West', *Drama Review* 31 (1987): 64–88, 73.
171. Shankar, *My Music, My Life*, 92–3.
172. Ibid.
173. Ibid., 93; see also Lelyveld, 'Upon the Subdominant', 120.
174. Luthra, *Indian Broadcasting*, 306.
175. Shankar, *My Music, My Life*, 92.
176. Letter of 27 January 1958 from Omananda Puri [MacCarthy] to Eric Warr at the BBC; Foulds, File II.
177. Fielden, *The Natural Bent*, 204.
178. Shankar, *My Music, My Life*, 92.
179. In this talk, Foulds told radio listeners: 'Visualizing this Indo-European Orchestra I want to make it quite clear that there is no intention of creating just another of these hybrids' ('East Meets West' script).
180. For instance, 'Perhaps we should be relieved that so many of the greatest musicians of the past 100 years [such as] Ravi Shankar and jazz giant John Coltrane, have put their music in the service of understanding between people' (*Gramophone* 84, nos. 1010–13 (2006): 31).
181. Obituary, *Indian Listener*.
182. Letter from Kabraji to Foulds, 7 July 1938.
183. Obituary, 7 May 1939, *Indian Listener*, 688.
184. Ross, *The Rest is Noise*, 174.
185. Rachmaninoff and Sibelius, both quoted in Ross, *The Rest is Noise*, 174.
186. Richard Taruskin on Paul Hindemith in *Music in the Early Twentieth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 767–69.
187. *Orpheus Abroad*, 1; JF Papers.
188. A note which MacCarthy attached to a series of sketches, together with the complete manuscript score, of the *Three Mantras*, reads: 'these notes on "Avatar" to be

preserved under cover with great care. They may be required before the “Mantras from Avatara” are performed or published. . . . They were found inside the (finished?) mss score of the Mantras after his death. Maud Foulds. Lahore, 1940.’ (JF Papers). The unflagging efforts of Frank Merrick in approaching the BBC, and the repeatedly negative responses, are recorded in the letters dated between 1940 and 1958 in Foulds File II (BBC Written Archives, Caversham).

189. Foulds, *Music To-Day*, 224.
190. Sakari Oramo, ‘The Forgotten Man’, *Guardian*, 28 April 2006. In July 2013, Oramo was asked by the BBC to select a favourite piece to be broadcast on Radio 3’s ‘Breakfast’ programme: he chose the second (‘Gandharva’) *Mantra*. ‘Proms Artists Recommend’, 12 July 2013, <<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b036j8fy/live>>.
191. Oramo, ‘The Forgotten Man’.
192. Haggard to Buesst, 1 February 1934; Foulds File I.



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# INDEX

Page numbers in **bold** refer to music examples and illustrations.

- Active Society for the Propagation of Contemporary Music, composers involved in, 223
- Adams, John (Bruce Craigmore, composer), 152
- Addinsell, Richard  
*Warsaw Concerto*, 200, **201**
- Akbar the Great (Mughal Emperor), music in the court of, 307n93
- Alagiah, George, 224, 247, 252n55
- Alam Ara* (first Indian film with music/sound), 307n90
- Ali, Agha Shahid (Kashmiri writer, poet, witness and martyr), 205–206
- Alkan, Charles Valentin (composer), Sorabji and, 227
- Allen, Hugh, 35, 37–38
- Allen, Matthew Harp, 44n22
- All India Radio (AIR)  
 Fielden and, 282–283, 300  
 Foulds and, 12, 126, 282–287, 289–294, **291**, **292**, 297–300  
 R. Shankar and, 299–300  
 station distribution and transmission map, **294**
- Anderson, Robert, 76, 96n46, 96n47
- Anderton, H. Orsmond, on MacCarthy's music making, 33, 126
- L'après-midi d'un faune* (Debussy), 231–232
- En Arabesque* (Deliuss), 231
- Arabesque* (Sorabji), 230, 231–232, **232**
- Ariadne auf Naxos* (Strauss), 233
- Around Music* (Sorabji), 219, 254n89
- 'The Art of Improvisation' (MacCarthy), 20
- The Art of Synthesis* (Alan Leo, astrologer), Holst and, 139–140, 144
- astrology, 139–141, 226
- Atkinson, George Franklin, 111–113
- Avalon, Arthur (Sir John Woodroffe, scholar of Hindu Philosophy and Yogic practices), 240
- Avatara* (Foulds), 265–266
- Aziza: Three Oriental Songs* (Woodforde-Finden), 185
- Bach, Johann Sebastian, Sorabji's *Visuddha* and, 244
- Bachchan, Ashok Kumar, 182, 184
- Bainton, Edgar, 136–137
- Bakhle, Janaki, 3, 9n20, 45n47, 250n29
- Banfield, Stephen, 108, 156n38
- Bannerji, Comalata, 39
- The Banner of St George* (Elgar), 61
- bansuri* (bamboo flute of North India), 284, 289, 292, 300
- Bantock, Granville  
 Holst and, 111  
 Indian music and, 113, 115–116  
 MacCarthy and, 32  
 Sorabji and, 237
- Bantock, Granville: compositions  
*Jaga-Naut*, 111  
*Processional*, 111  
*Songs of India*, 111, **112**, 126, **127**
- Baran, Timir (composer), 300–301
- Barringer, Tim, xiv, 2, 7n5, 7n8, 92n3, 104n144
- Bartók, Béla, 114, 132–133, 223, 271, 290
- Bartók, Béla: compositions  
*Mikrokosmos: Foulds's Essays in the Modes* and, 271–272  
*Suite for Piano*, 114

- Bath, Hubert, *Three Indian Songs*, settings of Hope's poems, 196  
 'Battle Hymn' (Holst), 141–142, **142**, 165n167  
 Bax, Clifford  
   Holst and, 140, 143  
   MacCarthy and, 125, 160n97  
*La Bayadère* Ballet (Petipa and Minkus), 97n73  
 BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)  
   Elgar and, 89  
   Foulds: rejection by, 5, 281–282, 295  
   founding of, 4  
   Holst and, 10n32  
   MacCarthy and, 40  
   Merrick and, 301  
   C. Scott's problems with, 305n55  
 BBC Confidential Committee, on Foulds's music, 281–282, 301  
 Beach, Amy (composer and pianist), music of nature and, 270  
 Beethoven, Ludwig van, 12, 233, 296–297  
*A Beginner's Guide to Practical Astrology* (Robson), 140  
 Berg, Alban, 223, 254n82, 272  
 Berlioz, Hector, 234  
 Bernier, François, 186, 188  
 Besant, Annie, 34, 44n27, 116, 263, **265**  
 'Beyond the Pale' (Kipling), 195  
*Bhakti* (Harvey), 153  
*Bhakti* movement of medieval times, 66  
 Bhatkande, V. N. (musicologist and Hindu nationalist), 19  
 Bhattacharyya, Gargi, 7n5  
*Bhava Nutha* (MacCarthy), 27, **28**, 40  
*Bhava Nutha* (Tyāgarāja), 22, **23**, 27–28, 40, 285  
 Bhowmagree, Mancherjee (Parsi Member of the British Parliament), 225  
*Bidhir Bandhan Katbe Tumi* (Tagore), *Resistance Song*, 55, **57**  
 Bizet, Georges, 258n152  
 Blavatsky, Helena, travel writings by, 236  
*Blest Pair of Sirens* (Parry), 43n13  
 Bode, Mabel, Holst and, 105, 125, 154n5  
 Bokhari, Z. A., 312n168  
 Bond, Ruskin, 215n129  
*The Book of a Thousand Nights and a Night*, Sorabji's interest in, 230  
 Boone, Joseph A., 214n124 and n125  
 Boosey & Co. (publishers), 169, 172, 184, 195, 204  
 Borodin, Alexander  
   *Prince Igor*, ceremonial polonaises, 84  
 Boughton, Rutland, MacCarthy and, 32  
 Boulton, Adrian  
   Foulds and, 267, 281–282, 306n63  
   Holst and, 140, 150  
   Merrick and, 301  
*The Boy and the Brothers* (MacCarthy), 34  
 Brett, Philip, 208n33  
 Brian, Havergal, 217–218, 228, 248n4, 262  
 Bridge, Frank, 35, 49n115  
 British Empire and imperialism, 4, 185–189, **186–187**  
 British Empire Exhibition (Wembley, 1924), 82, 168–169  
 British Sexological Society, 226  
 Britten, Benjamin, 152, 282  
 Brooks, Louise, *Less than the Dust* magazine feature (1928), 196, **198**  
 Burleigh, Henry Thacker, (African-American composer), 196  
 Burton, Richard, 97n75, 170, 207n12, 230  
 Busoni, Ferruccio  
   on modes, 132  
   on the music of nature, 304n30  
   Sorabji and, 228, 232–235, 237, 247n1, 254n98–100, 255n101, 256n131, 257n147, 259n161, 259n165  
 Butt, Dame Clara, Elgar's writing for, 61, 81, 96n47, 199  
 Cannadine, David, 61, 96n50, 103n139  
 Capell, Richard, 141, 151, 164n147  
*Caractacus* (Elgar), 61  
*Carnac Sahib* (musical comedy), 60  
 Carpenter, William (painter), 188  
 Chaikovsky, Pyotr Ilyich, ceremonial polonaises by, 84–85  
*Chalanata* (mēlakarta no. 36), Foulds's use of in *Dynamic Mode*, 274  
*Chaleur* (Sorabji), 222, 236–237, **238–239**, 258n160  
 Chandos, Elgar recordings, 76, 98n91, 99n97  
*Characteristic Dances* (Elgar), 96n46  
 Chaudhuri, Nirad K., *Autobiography of an Unknown Indian*, 55, 93n13, 93n15

- Chisholm, Erik, 223, 230, 250n24, 259n161
- Chopin, Frédéric, 84, 235
- Chopra, Vidhu Vinod (director of film *1942: A Love Story*), 139
- Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* (Holst)
- 'Battle Hymn', 141–142, **142**, 165n167
  - composition of, 125–126
  - 'To the Dawn', 126–127, **128**
  - 'Funeral Chant', 143–144, **145**, 147–148
  - 'Hymn of the Travellers', 126, 127–130, **128**, **129**, 143, 148
  - 'Hymn to Agni', 141
  - 'Hymn to Soma', 133–134, **133**
  - 'Hymn to Vena', 129
  - The Planets* and, 141
  - publication of, 156n36
  - 'To the Unknown God', 125, 130–131, **132**, 134–137, **134**, **136–137**, 144, 160n99
  - 'To Vārūna', 160n114
  - 'To the Waters', **130**
- cinema, 1920s growth of, 4, 40
- The Cingalee* (musical play), 60
- Clair de Lune* (Debussy), 173, 208n22
- Clay, Frederick (composer of the song, 'I'll sing thee songs of Araby'), 188
- Clayton, Martin, 49n111, 100n106, 151, 162n121
- Clements, Andrew, 76
- Clements, Ernest, 29, 107
- The Cloud Messenger* (Holst), 106
- Coates, Albert, 274
- Cohn, Richard, 119
- Colls, Robert, 42n12
- The Colonel's Lady* (Maugham), 201
- Colonial and Indian Exhibition (1886), 60
- colonial and empire exhibitions and pageants, 60, 82, 93n9, 108, 113, 168–169. *See also* empire and colonial exhibitions and pageants
- Commonwealth Literature* (Walsh), 42–43n12
- comparative musicology (ethnomusicology), 13, 44n30
- Connaught, Duke of, 137
- Coomaraswamy, Ananda K.
- Clements and, 107
  - R. Devi and, 29–30, 39, 47n80
  - harmonium ban and, 299
  - India Society and, 124
  - on *Rigveda*, 106
  - Sorabji and, 219, 222
- Cooper, A.B. (critic), *Indian Love lyrics* and, 169
- Corelli, Marie (writer), 173
- Coronation Ode* (Elgar), 61
- Cory, Adela Florence. *See* Hope, Laurence (Adela Florence Nicolson, née Cory)
- Cory, Colonel Arthur, 190
- Cotswold Symphony* (Holst), 138
- Cross, Victoria (Annie Sophie Cory), 194
- Crown Imperial* (Sir William Walton), 308n106
- The Crown of India* (Elgar)
- composition of, 62
  - 'Dance of the Nautch Girls', 65–66, **67–68**
  - 'The Entrance of John Company', 69, **69**
  - 'Hail, Immemorial Ind!', 70–76, **71**, **72–75**, 77–81, **79–81**, 91
  - Intermezzo, 76–81, **79–81**, 91
  - 'March of the Mogul Emperors', 82–89, **83–84**, **86**, 92, 168
  - reception of, 56, 62–63, 76, 82, 89, 91–92
  - spirit of, 4
  - St George's song, 63–65, **64–65**, 76
  - subject of, 56–59, **58**
- Crump, Jeremy, 90, 99n104
- Culture and Imperialism* (Edward Said), 1
- Curry and Rice (on Forty Plates)* (Captain G. F. Atkinson), 111–113
- The Curse of Kehama* (Southey), in Bantock's *Songs of India*, 111
- Curzon, Lord, Viceroy, 42n4, 54, 55, **87**, 96n52
- Dalrymple, William, historian, 6, 36, 216n135
- Dangerous Moonlight* (1941 film featuring Kashmiri Song), 200
- darbār*, 53–63, 85, 92n2, 93n7, 94n23, 185
- of 1877, 53, 60, 85
  - of 1903, 54, 85–86, **87**, 89, 92, 185
  - of 1911, 55, **54**, 61, 89, 92
- Das Gupta, Kedar Nath (founder, of Indian Art and Dramatic Society, later Union of East and West) 30, 40, 262
- Davies, Andrew, 99n97

- Day, C. R., 29, 106, 131
- Debussy, Claude  
     Japanese art and, 256n122  
     on the music of nature, 270  
     pentatonic scales and, 132  
     C. Scott and, 113–114  
     Sorabji and, 231–232
- Debussy, Claude: compositions  
     *L'après-midi d'un faune*, 231–232  
     *Clair de Lune*, 173, 208n22  
     *Estampes*, 113  
     *L'Île joyeuse*, 256n122  
     *La Mer*, 256n122  
     *Sirènes*, 267
- Delage, Maurice, 155n25, 231, 233
- Delibes, Léo  
     *Lakmé*, 60, 177
- Delius, Frederick, 223, 231, 233
- Dent, Edward J., 14, 110–111, 116, 151, 276
- Désir* (Scriabin), 232
- Désir éperdu* (Sorabji), 233
- devachan*, 143–147, 270
- dēvadāsis* (servants of god), 13
- Deva Music* (Foulds), 297
- Devi, Leela (musician and sister of Niranjan Pāl), MacCarthy and, 19
- Devi, Nelun (musician and wife of Surya Sena), 39
- Devi, Ratan (Alice Richardson)  
     Coomaraswamy and, 29, 39, 47n81  
     Indian music and, 124, 126, 222  
     on Tagore, 50n125
- Devi, Tandra. *See* MacCarthy, Maud (Maud Mann, Tandra Devi, Omananda Puri)
- Devidayal, Namita, on Parsis, 222
- Dhavalambari* (*mēlakarta* no. 49), Holst's use of 150, **150**  
     Foulds's use of, 274–281, **275, 277**
- dhholak* (double-headed drum), 156n34
- Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria (1897), 61
- Dickinson, A. E. F., 161n108
- Dickinson, Goldsworthy Lowes, 211n75
- Dieren, Bernard van, 224, 231
- Dikshitar, Muttuswami, 21, **22**, 46n63
- dilruba* (bowed stringed instrument), 284, 287
- Djâmi* (Sorabji), 230, 233
- Dodd, Philip, 42n12
- Dorian mode, 144, 158n63
- A Dream of Egypt* (Woodforde-Finden), 184
- The Dream of Gerontius* (Elgar), 81
- Dutt, Romesh Chunder, historian, 106
- Dynamic Triptych* (Foulds), 274, 276, 281
- Dyson, George, composer, 30
- Earle, Hamilton (baritone, sang *Indian Love Lyrics* everywhere), 184
- The Early Days of India* (pageant in 1924 Empire Exhibition), 82, 168
- Edward VII, 53–54, 61, 137, 185
- Elgar, Edward  
     BBC Documentary on, 90, 103n140  
     links with British Raj, 60  
     Queen Victoria Diamond Jubilee and, 61  
     reception of, 89–92
- Elgar, Edward: compositions  
     *The Banner of St George*, 61  
     *Caractacus*, 61  
     *Characteristic Dances*, 96n46  
     *Coronation Ode*, 61  
     *The Dream of Gerontius*, 81  
     'Enigma' Variations, 77, **78**  
     *Imperial March*, 61, 96n46  
     'Indian Dawn', 82  
     'Land of Hope and Glory', 61, 65, 89, 139  
     *The Music Makers*, 81  
     *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, 61, 82, 88, 96n47  
     *Sea Pictures*, 70, 73, 81  
     *In Smyrna*, 70, **71**, 74, **75**  
     *Sospiri*, 77, **78**  
     Violin Concerto, 77, **77**  
     *See also The Crown of India* (Elgar)
- Elgar Society, 76
- Ellis, Havelock, 226
- empire and colonial exhibitions and pageants  
     British Empire Exhibition (1924), 82, 168–169  
     Colonial and Indian Exhibition (1886), 60  
     Exposition Universelle (Paris, 1889), 113  
     Franco-British Exhibition (1908), 60, 108

- Glasgow International Exhibition (1901), 95n39, 108
- India and Ceylon Exhibition (1896), 60, 108
- Indian Empire Exhibition (1895), 60
- India* (Imre Kiralfy's grand pageant, 1895), 60–61
- The Early Days of India* (pageant at British Empire Exhibition 1924), 168
- Engel, Carl, 8n15
- English musical renaissance, 2–3, 137–139
- Enigma Variations* (Elgar), 77, **78**
- Enoch & Sons, publishers, 98n90
- esraj* (bowed stringed instrument with frets), 292
- Essays in the Modes* (Foulds), 271–274, **272–274**, 282
- Estampes* (Debussy), 113
- ethnomusicology (comparative musicology), 13, 19, 41, 44n30, 310n133
- Evans, Edwin, 105, 130, 141, 207n6
- Evocations* (Roussel), 157n45
- The Evolution of the Art of Music* (Parry), 12
- Exposition Universelle (Paris, 1889), 113
- 'The Eyes of Firozée' (Woodforde-Finden), 184–185
- The Far Pavilions* (M. M. Kaye), as example of Raj revivalism, 99n94
- Farrell, Gerry, 173, 201, 212n85
- Feramors* (Rubenstein), 188
- Festival of Empire (1911), 61
- A Few Indian Records* (Foulds), 283
- Fielden, Lionel
- at All India Radio, 282–283, 300
  - on British Raj, 215n133
  - Foulds and, 282–283, 284, 294–295, 309n126
  - homosexuality and, 294–295
- films and other media featuring
- 'Kashmiri Song'
  - Dangerous Moonlight* (RKO film, 1942), 200
  - Hers To Hold* (Universal film, 1943), 200
  - Indian Love Lyrics* (Stoll Pictures film, 1923), 212n99
  - Less than the Dust*, (Mary Pickford film, Artcraft Pictures, 1916), 196
  - Less than the Dust* (Motion Picture Classic 26, no. 6, February 1928), 196, 198
  - Maytime in Mayfair* (Imperadio film, 1948), 200
  - Ruskin Bond, *When Darkness Falls* (2001), 215n129
  - The Sheik* (Valentino film, 1921), 199
  - Warsaw concerto (1942), 200
- First War of Independence, 1857–1859, 94n25, 194. See also Great Revolt; Indian Mutiny
- Five Little Japanese Songs* (Woodforde-Finden), 184
- Five Pieces for Orchestra* (Schoenberg), 227
- Five Songs by Laurence Hope* (Burleigh), 196
- Flaubert, Gustave, Sorabji shaped by, 230
- Flecker, James Elroy, 190, 202
- Foley, Caroline, 160n96
- folk music
- British imperials notions about, 37–38, 43n18
  - embraced as central to the English musical renaissance, 2, 102n136, 133, 138, 151
  - Foulds as collector and arranger of Indian, 287, **287–289**, 289–290, 292, **292**
  - Holst, as collector and arranger of English, 138
  - MacCarthy and Indian, 21, 36
  - R. Shankar and Indian, 300
- Forster, E. M., 11, 13, 159n80, 194
- Fortescue, John, 101n125
- Foster, Muriel, Elgar's writing for, 81
- Foulds, John
- at All India Radio, 12, 126, 282–287, 289–294, **291, 292**, 297–300
  - BBC and, 5, 281–282
  - Das Gupta and, 40
  - Fielden and, 282–283, 284, 294–295
  - MacCarthy and, 5, 21–28, **22–23**, 31, 131
  - photographs of, **263, 264, 285, 291**
  - Union of East and West and, 40
  - on Woodforde-Finden, 198
- Foulds, John: compositions
- Avatara*, 265–267

- Foulds, John: compositions (*Cont.*)  
*Deva Music*, 297  
*Dynamic Triptych*, 274, 281  
*Essays in the Modes*, 271–274, **272–274**, 282  
*Gandharva–Music*, 263–265, **266**, 267, 296  
*Hellas*, 289  
*Indian Suite*, 21–28, **23–28**, 31, 40, 261, 283  
*Kashmiri Wedding Tune*, 287–290, **287–289**, 300  
*Keltic Lament*, 262  
*Lyra Celtica*, 262–263  
*Music Pictures*, 262  
*Pasquinades Symphoniques*, 297  
*Pahari Tune*, **292**, 300  
*Quartetto Geniale*, 295–297, **296–298**  
*The Song of Ram Dass*, 40, 51n147, 285–286, **286**  
*Songs in Indian Style*, 270  
*Symphony of East and West*, 301  
*Three Mantras*, 265–267, **267–269**, 274–282, **277–280**, 301–302  
*Two Symphonic Studies for Strings*, 295  
*Variazoni ed Improvvvisati*, 262  
*A World Requiem*, 48n105, 270, 306n61
- Foulds, John: writings  
*A Few Indian Records*, 283  
*Music To-Day*, 99n99, 270, 282
- Foulds, Major Patrick John, 13, 50n122
- Four Indian Love Lyrics* (Woodforde-Finden)  
 composition of, 170  
 cover illustration, **171**, 195  
 ‘Kashmiri Song’, 170–176, **172**, **174–176**, 184–186, 193, 194–195, 198–199, 204–205  
 ‘Less than the Dust’, 178–180, **179**, **180–181**, 195, 196–198, **198**  
 reception of, 168–169, 180, 184–186, 189–190, 196–200  
 spirit of, 4, 193  
 ‘The Temple Bells’, 176–178, **177–178**, 195, 197–198
- Four More Indian Love Lyrics*  
 (Woodforde-Finden), 184, 212n93
- Fox Strangways, Arthur  
 harmonium ban and, 299  
 Indian music and, 107, 124  
 MacCarthy and, 16, 18, 20, 30–32, 125  
 as Secretary of The India Society, 124–125  
 Sorabji on, 222
- Fox Strangways, Maurice, 30
- Franco-British Exhibition (1908), 60, 108
- Frazer, R. W., Sanskrit scholar, 125, 158n59
- Freud, Sigmund, 258n155
- Frogley, Alain, 2–3, 167n194
- From the caves and jungles of Hindostan* (Blavatsky), 236
- Fuller, Sophie, 195, 207n7
- ‘Funeral Chant’ (Holst), 143–144, **145**, 147–148
- Futehally, Laeeq, on the paradise which was Shalimar Bagh, 187–188
- Gaisberg, Fred, on English response to Indian music, 42n5
- Galpin, Francis (collector and authority on musical instruments), 32
- Gandharva–Music* (Foulds), 263–265, **266**, 267, 296
- gandharvas* (music angels in Hinduism), 264–267, **266**
- Gandhi, Mohandas Karamchand, 89–90, 297
- Gandhi* (1982 film), as example of Raj revivalism, 99n94
- Garber, Jan, 199–200
- The Garden of Kama* (Hope), 170–172, 188, **189**, 190, 194–195, **197**
- Gardens of the Great Mughals* (Villiers-Stuart), **187**
- Gardiner, Henry Balfour, 150, 166n191
- George V, 53, 55, 85
- Ghar Baire* (1984 film of Tagore’s *Home and The World*), 45n49
- Ghazal* (Ali), 205–206
- Ghosh, Amitav (historian of, authority and writer on colonial India), 206
- Ghuman, Paul Avtar Singh, 1, 6–7n1, 219
- ghunghroo* (North-Indian Kathak ankle-bells), 286
- Gita Sūtra Sār* (Bandyopadhyaya), 15
- Glasgow International Exhibition (1901), 95n39, 108
- Glinka, Mikhail Ivanovich, polonaise rhythm, 84

- The Goddess* (Niranjan Pāl), Foulds and MacCarthy and, 29, 40, 303n10
- The Golden Cockerel* (Rimsky-Korsakov), 233
- The Golden Threshold* (Lehmann), 181–184, **182–183**, 208n26
- The Golden Threshold* (Naidu), 181–182
- The Golden Threshold* (Woodforde-Finden), 181–182
- Gooneratne, Yasmine (writer), on Indian Love Lyrics sung in Sri Lanka, 197
- Gould, Corissa, 96n56, 100n106
- Government of India Act (1935), 90
- Grainger, Percy (composer)  
on English country gardens, 187  
MacCarthy and, 14, 32, 125, 160n97
- Grainger, Percy: compositions  
*Jungle Book*, 236
- Gramophone Company, 82
- The Grand Moghul* (musical comedy), 60
- 'Il gran rifiuto' (Sorabji), 227
- Gray, Cecil  
interpretation of 'Elgar, as a musician of merit v. Elgar the barbarian', 89  
on the Oriental mind of Sorabji, 229
- Great Elephant Procession (1903), 53, 85–86, **87**, 92
- Greene, Richard, 147–148, 152
- Griffith, Ralph T. H. (Sanskrit scholar), 106, 117–118, 130–131, 142
- Grove, George, first touted the phrase, 'English musical renaissance', 137
- Guinness Book of World Records*, Havergal Brian Symphony in, 228
- Gulistān* (Sa'di), 230
- Gulistān* (Sorabji), 229, 233, 237, 257n133
- Habermann, Michael, 253n73
- Haggard, H. Rider, sexual imagery in *King Solomon's Mines*, 193
- Hall, Radclyffe (writer on lesbianism), 214n123, 253n77
- Hamilton, Henry (Elgar's collaborator on the Imperial Masque), 57, 62, 98n89
- Hardy, Thomas, on *Indian Love Lyrics*, 202
- harmonium, 299, 307n87, 311n161–165  
AIR ban on, 311n163, 311n164  
controversy, 299, 311n161–165
- harmonic poles  
in *Savitri* (Holst), **120**, 129, **129**  
in Jupiter, 149, **149**, 150  
*See also* hexatonic collection;  
hexatonic poles
- Harvey, Jonathan, composer, 153
- Havell, Ernest B., 124–125
- Head, Raymond, 117, 152
- Hellas* (Foulds), 289
- Hers to Hold* (film, 1943), Kashmiri Song in, 200
- Heseltine, Philip (Peter Warlock), 224, 226, 227, 231
- hexatonic collection  
in 'Hymn of the Travellers' (Holst), 129  
in *Mantra of Will* (Foulds), 276  
in *Sāvitri* (Holst), 118–119, **120**, 158n75  
intersection, in 'Jupiter' (Holst) and *Mantra of Will* (Foulds), of *dhavalambari* (*melakarta*) with, 150, 276
- hexatonic poles  
in *Sāvitri* (Holst), 119, **120**  
in 'Hymn of the Travellers' 129, **129**  
in 'Jupiter' (Holst), 150
- Higher Occultism, C. Scott and, 111
- Hindemith, Paul, 223, 244, 301
- Hindu nationalist movements, 204
- Hinton, Alistair (Sorabji archivist), 248n13, 251n53
- Hobson-Jobson* (Yule and Burnell), dictionary of Indian words adopted into English, 113
- Hokusai, Katsushika, 256n122
- Holbrooke, Joseph (composer), on Foulds, 262
- Holland, Bernard (critic), 167n195
- Holmes, Paul, on Holst's exposure to 'genuine' Indian music, 156n35
- Holst, Gustav  
astrology and, 139–141  
*devachan* and, 143–147, 270  
English musical renaissance and, 137–139  
at Glasgow International Exhibition, 108  
MacCarthy and, 32, 107, 125  
reception of, 151–153  
Sanskrit language and literature studies, 105–106, 116  
Sorabji's criticism of, 236–237, 258n156

- Holst, Gustav: compositions  
*The Cloud Messenger*, 106  
*Cotswold Symphony*, 138  
*Hymn of Jesus*, 131  
*Indra*, 10n32, 154n10, 167n205  
*'Invocation to the Dawn'*, 154n10  
*Māyā*, 154n10, 158n59  
*Sita*, 106, 108, 110  
*Sixteen Folk Songs from Hampshire*, 138  
*Somerset Rhapsody*, 138  
*Songs of the West*, 162–163n133  
 See also *Choral Hymns from the Rig Veda* (Holst); *Hymns from the Rig Veda* (Vedic Hymns) (Holst); *The Planets* (Holst); *Sāvitri* (Holst)
- Holst, Imogen, 12, 110, 151, 166n186  
*The Home and the World* (Tagore), 45n49
- homosexuality  
 Fielden and, 294–295  
 Sorabji and, 226
- Hope, Laurence (Adela Florence Nicolson, née Cory)  
 in India, 189–191  
 reception of, 170, 184, 196  
 Woodforde-Finden and, invented scenario, 201–204
- Hope, Laurence: works  
*The Garden of Kama*, 170–172, 188, **189**, 190, 194–195, **197**  
*Indian Love*, 190
- Hopkins, Charles (pianist), on Sorabji's *Gulistan*, 257n133
- Houdt, Reinier van, on Sorabji, 259n161
- Hough, Stephen (pianist), 'Kashmiri Song' and, 214n115, 215n129
- Houston Symphony, 152
- Howes, Frank, 89, 90, 102n131
- How to Judge a Nativity* (Leo), 164n151
- Hughes, Meirion, 166n187, 167n194
- d'Humières, Viscount Robert, on the Shalimar Bagh paradise, 187
- Hutchins, Francis, on British imperialism, 185
- 'Hymn of Creation' (Holst), 117–118, **117**
- Hymn of Jesus* (Holst), 131
- 'Hymn of the Travellers' (Holst), 126, 127–130, **128**, **129**, 143, 148
- Hymns from the Rig Veda* (Griffith), 130–131, 142
- Hymns from the Rig Veda* (Vedic Hymns) (Holst)
- composition of, 108
- 'Hymn to Agni' (Holst), 141
- 'Hymn to Soma' (Holst), 133–134, **133**
- 'Hymn to Vena' (Holst), 129–130
- identity construction  
 Alaghia on, 224–225  
 Edward Said on, 224–225  
 Parsis and, 224–225  
 Sorabji and, 4–5, 219–220, 223–226, 229–231  
 South Asians growing up in the West and, 219
- L'Ile joyeuse* (Debussy), 256n122
- The Illusion of Permanence* (F. G. Hutchins), 185
- Imperialism and Music* (Jeffrey Richards), 7n7, 90
- Imperial March* (Elgar), 61, 96n46
- improvisation  
 Foulds's skill in, 263, **265**  
 in Hindustani music, 15–17, 289  
 Holst's invocation of, 108, **109**, 110  
 in the *Karnātic* tradition, 25, 44n22, 46n63  
 MacCarthy on the art of, 17, 20  
 MacCarthy's skill in, 15–17, 20, 24–25, 46n54  
 Nichols: verdict on Indian, 234  
 R. Shankar's invocation of, 300  
 Sorabji's invocation of, 232, **232**, 233–234, **235**, 236, 240, **242–243**  
 Sorabji's denigration of, 233  
 Woodforde-Finden's invocation of, 172, **172**
- 'In a Latticed Balcony' (Woodforde-Finden), 208n26
- In a Persian Garden* (Lehmann), 168, 207n6
- 'In a Persian Market' (Ketèlbey), 199
- Independence Movement, 90
- India* (grand pageant 1895), 60
- India and Ceylon Exhibition (1896), 60, 108
- India in Britain* (Susheila Nasta), 2

- Indian Art and Dramatic Society, 30. *See also* Union of East and West
- Indian broadcasting. *See* All India Radio (AIR)
- Indian Broadcasting Corporation, Sorabji Recital 1932, 260n181
- Indian dance, 66
- 'Indian Dawn' (Elgar), 82
- 'Indian Desert Song. Ojira's Song to her Lover' (Woodforde-Finden), 178
- Indian Empire Exhibition (1895), 60
- The Indian Listener* (AIR), **294**  
on Foulds's work, 286  
obituary and tribute to Foulds, 297–298
- Indian Love Lyrics* (Stoll Pictures film, 1923), 212n99
- Indian music  
central to the academic study of  
comparative musicology, 13  
colonial exhibitions and, 108  
English reactions to, 11–13  
'great sitar explosion' of the 1960s, 1  
improvisation in, 20  
the 'Indian boom' and, 30  
interpreted by MacCarthy, 4, 14, 19, 26–28  
Foulds's embrace of, 5, 21, 283, 284, 286  
oral tradition in, 17  
Sorabji's ambivalence towards, 222, 233–36, 245, 247  
*See also* Karnātic tradition; improvisation
- Indian Music* (Coomaraswamy), 222
- Indian reaction to European orchestral music, 12
- Indian Suite* (Foulds), 21–29, **26–27, 28**, 31, 40, 46n57, 261, 283
- India Society, establishment of, 124–125
- India To-Day* (film), MacCarthy's  
lecture-recitals at showings of, 40
- Indo-European Orchestra (Foulds),  
283–295, **285, 291**, 297, 308n102  
as the model for R. Shankar, 299–300,  
MacCarthy's vision of, 283  
reception of, 293, 308n99, 309n115
- Indra* (Holst), 10n32, 154n10, 167n205
- In Smyrna* (Elgar), 70, 71, **71**, 73, 74, **75**, 98n83
- In the Bleak Midwinter* documentary on  
Holst (2011), 166n186
- Introduction to the Study of Indian Music*  
(Clements), 107
- 'Invocation to the Dawn' (Holst), 154n10
- Ives, Charles, 132, 270–271
- Iyer, Vaidyanatha (Karnatic singer), 24
- Iyer, Patnam Subramanya (composer), 22  
*Manasu Karugademi* **24, 25**  
*Manasu Karugademi* becomes *finale* of  
Foulds's *Indian Suite*, **26–27**
- Jacks, L. P. (Principal, Manchester College,  
Oxford), 35
- Jaeger, A. H., 262
- Jaga-Naut* (Bantock), 111
- Jairazbhoy, Nazir Ali, 45n47, 299
- Jallianwala Bagh massacre (1919), 4, 39
- jaltarang* (tuned percussion instrument),  
284, 300, 310n130
- Jāmi, Nūriddin Abdurrahman (Sufi  
poet), 230
- Jāmi* (Sorabji), 228–229, 230
- Jana gana mana* (Tagore), 53, 163n143
- Le Jardin parfumé* (Sorabji), 223, 230, 233,  
235, 237
- Jean-Aubry, Georges, on the *Planets*,  
139, 141
- Jeans, James Hopwood, 164n155
- The Jewel in the Crown* (Paul Scott), 194
- Jones, Sir William (Welsh polymath), 12,  
19, 106
- journal magazine, and newspaper reports  
*Academy and Literature* (journal): on  
*Indian Love Lyrics*, 180  
*Asiatic Quarterly* (journal): on Hope's  
poems, 170, 190  
*Athenaeum* (literary magazine):  
on MacCarthy as virtuoso  
violinist, 13–14  
*Awāz* (Hindi-Urdu journal): on  
Foulds, 284  
*Bombay Man's Diary* (newspaper): on  
Sorabji's recitals, 246–247  
*Calcutta Review* (journal): on Hope, 170  
*Civil and Military Gazette* (newspaper),  
on Holst, 130  
*Clapham Observer* (newspaper): on  
MacCarthy, 39  
*Daily Express* (newspaper): on  
Elgar, 97n62  
*Daily Mail* (newspaper): on C. Scott's  
*Lotus Land*, 113  
*Daily Telegraph* (newspaper): on Elgar,  
57–58, 62

journal magazine (*Cont.*)

*Eastern Daily Press* (newspaper): on the 1911 *Darbār*, 58

*Gramophone* (magazine): on the *Indian Love Lyrics*, 196, 199

*The Graphic* (newspaper): on MacCarthy, 49n118, 50–51n141

*Hindi Punch* (magazine): on the partition of Bengal, 55, **56**

*The Hindu* (newspaper): on MacCarthy, 131

*The Indian Listener* (AIR): on Foulds's work, 286

*The Indian Magazine and Review* (journal): on MacCarthy, 20, 38, 46n54, 125

*Journal of the English Folk Song Society*: Vaughan Williams articles in, 163n134

*Modern Review* (journal): on founding of The India Society, 124

*Motion Picture Classic* (magazine): feature on 'Less Than the Dust' (1928), 196, **198**

*Musical Opinion* (magazine): Brian on Sorabji, 217–218

*Musical Times* (journal): on Elgar, 89; Foulds and, 286; on Holst, 123, 138–139; on Indian music, 29–30; on lectures on Indian music, 107; Sorabji and, 227

*Music and Letters* (journal founded by Arthur Fox Strangways), 30, 44n33

*The Music Magazine* (magazine): articles on Indian music by Foulds, 284–285 308n98

*The Nation and Athenaeum* (newspaper): on MacCarthy, 40

*The New Age* (magazine): Sorabji as music critic for, 221–222

*The New English Weekly* (magazine): Sorabji as music critic for, 221–222

*The Observer* (newspaper): Fox Strangways as music critic for, 30

*Oxford Magazine* (literary magazine): on MacCarthy lecture-recital, 35, 47n71

*Pall Mall Gazette* (magazine): on *Intermezzo* as example of 'the real Elgar', 76, 81

*Pioneer Mail* (Indian newspaper): on MacCarthy, 20

*Radio Times* (broadcasting digest): on Holst 141, 151; on Woodforde-Finden 169, 172, 193

*The Referee* (newspaper): on representing the *darbār* musically, 63, 102n127

*The Sketch* (weekly newspaper): representation of India as Elephant-Emperor, 88, **88**

*The Sphere* (newspaper): on the 1911 *Darbār*, 100n114

*The Statesman* (newspaper): obituary for Foulds, 298, 302n2

*The Times* (newspaper): letter on Dadabhai Naoroji, MP, in, 225; on the Great Elephant Procession in the 1903 *darbār*, 85; on the lack of elephants in the 1911 *darbār*, 89; on Elgar's Imperial Masque, 57, 58, 63, 73; Fox Strangways as music critic of, 30; on Holst's *Savitri*, 123; on The India Society, 124; on MacCarthy, 16; obituary of Woodforde-Finden, 173

*The Times of India* (newspaper): on MacCarthy, 20

*The Wireless Times* (newspaper): on the impact of hearing a MacCarthy recital, 32–33

*Jungle Book* (Grainger), 236

*The Jungle Book* (Kipling), 236

*The Jungle Book* (Koechlin), 236

'Jupiter' (Holst), 139, 142

Kabir (fifteenth-century poet-saint), 270, 303n23

Kabraji, Dr Pheroze K., 107, 126, 182, 196, 285–286, 301, 306n70, 309n124  
MacCarthy and, 18–25

*Kalāvati Kamalāsana yuvati* (Dikshitar), 21, **22**

Kälber, Walter O., 135

Kālidāsa (fifth-century Sanskrit poet), 105, 106

Kama Shastra Society, 170

*The Kama Sutra* (Vātsyāyana), 170, 205

*Karnātic* tradition

C. R. Day and, 107

MacCarthy and, 18–20

violin in, 14

women and, 13

- See also *kritis* (three-part classical compositions); *mēlakartas* (South Indian modes)
- Karnik, Manohar G., 302n2
- 'Kashmiri Song' (Woodforde-Finden)  
analysis of, 170–176, **172, 174–176**  
race and gender in, 194–195  
reception of, 184–185, 193, 198–199, 204–205
- Kashmiri Wedding Tune* (Foulds), 287–290, **287–289**, 300
- kathak* (Indian performance genre), 66, 69
- Kaufmann, Walter, 285, 293, 295, 305n43, 310n133
- Keltic Lament* (Foulds), 262
- Kennedy, Michael, 78, 82, 90, 104n145
- Khan, Alladiya (founder of Jaipur *Gharana*), 233
- Khan, Hazrat Inayat (Sufi musician), in London, 30, 31–32, **31**, 39
- Khilnani, Sunil, 113, 245
- Khokar, Mohan (biographer of U. Shankar), 206n5
- Khusrau, Amir (Sufi musician, poet, scholar), 256–257n132
- Khyāl* (Hindustani classical vocal genre), 17–18, **18**, 19
- Kim* (Rudyard Kipling), 91, 193
- King Crimson band, album based on Holst's *Planets*, 152
- Kipling, Rudyard, 1, 140, 190
- Kipling, Rudyard: works  
'Ballad of East and West', 69  
'Beyond the Pale', 195  
*The Jungle Book*, 236  
*Kim*, 91, 193  
*Recessional*, 61
- Kreisler, Fritz, 115
- Krishnamachari, W. A., 24
- Krishnan, Lalgudi G. J. R., 24–25
- kritis* (three-part classical compositions of the *Karnātic* tradition), 18, 19, 21–26, **22–23, 26–27**, 41n2
- Lago, Mary (Tagore scholar), 124, 159n77
- Lakmé* (Delibes), 60, 177
- Lalla Rookh*, theatrical productions based on, 185–189
- 'Land of Hope and Glory' (Elgar), 61, 63–65, 139
- Lavezzoli, Peter, 10n35, 47n85
- Lehmann, Liza, 168–169, 196
- Lehmann, Liza: compositions  
*The Golden Threshold*, 181–184, **182–183**, 208n26  
*In a Persian Garden*, 168, 207n6
- Lelyveld, David, 12, 294, 299, 311n164
- 'Lento Quieto' (Foulds), 295–298, **296–298**. See also *Quartetto Geniale* (Foulds)
- Leo, Alan (astrologer), 139–140, 141, 144, 149, 164n150
- Leopold and Loeb trial (1924), 196, 202
- lesbianism, the myth of  
Woodforde-Finden/Hope lesbian relationship, 201–204
- 'Less than the Dust' (Woodforde-Finden), 178–180, **179, 180–181**, 195, 196–198, **197–198**
- Less than the Dust* (1916 film), 196
- Life Plus Ninety-Nine Years* (Leopold), 196
- Liszt, Franz, 233, 235
- A Lover in Damascus* (Woodforde-Finden), 184
- Lutyens, Elisabeth, 2, 8n12, 151, 166n191
- Lydian mode  
Bartók's use of, 132  
Foulds use of, 296–297
- Lyra Celtica* (Foulds), 262–263
- MacCarthy, Maud (Maud Mann, Tandra Devi, Omananda Puri)  
on acculturation of British music, 3  
Das Gupta and, 40  
exponent of Tyāgarāja's music 18, 22, **23**, 27–28  
field notes, 14–18, **16, 17, 18, 23**  
Forster and, 11  
Foulds and, 5, 21–28, **22–23, 26–28**  
131, 261–263, **264**
- Fox Strangways and, 16, 18, 20, 30–32, 125
- Grainger and, 14, 32, 125, 160n97
- Holst and, 107, 124, 125, 131, 154n17
- Indian Suite* (Foulds) and, 21–28, **26–27, 28**
- India Society and, 124–125
- lecture-recitals on Indian music by, 24, 31–33, **33**, 38–41, 124–125, 126, 262, 271

- MacCarthy, Maud (*Cont.*)  
 memoirs, in private family archive,  
 33–34, 41, 283, 291, 295  
 as Omananda Puri, 33–34  
 photographs of, 11, 14, **15**, **37**, 44n22,  
 49n118, **264**  
 Panchapagesa Bhagavathar and, 18  
 Ramanujāchārya and, 23  
 reception of, 5, 40–41  
 solo violin career, 13–14  
 Sorabji and, 250n31  
 studies in India, 19–20  
 Tagore and, 14, 19, 20  
 Tovey and, 14, 32
- MacCarthy, Maud: compositions  
 ‘*Song of Ram Das*’, 40, 285–286, **286**  
*Veils*, imaginative ritual (1922), 296
- MacCarthy, Maud: renditions of  
 Indian music  
*Bhava Nutha*, 28, **29**, 40  
*Manasu Karagathemi*, 22–24  
*Tandava Nritya Kari*, 31
- MacCarthy, Maud: writings  
 ‘Ideals of Indian Music’, 45n38, 46n53,  
 310n131  
 ‘Indian Music Education’, 48n97  
 ‘The Art of Improvisation’, 20, 45n34  
 ‘The Indo-European Orchestra’, 48n98,  
 160n98, 162n115  
*The Boy and the Brothers*, 34  
*Towards the Mysteries*, 34
- MacDonald, Malcolm, 43n20, 307n91
- MacKenzie, John M. (historian of  
 imperialism), 51–52n155
- MacKenzie, Roderick (artist who worked  
 14 years in India), 87
- MacMillan, Margaret, 190, 194,  
 208n33, 210n60
- Maddison, Adela (composer), 208n26
- Madge, Geoffrey Douglas (pianist), 248n6
- Magnificat* (Vaughan Williams), influence  
 of Holst’s music on, 152
- Mahābhārata*, 105, 106, 116, 255n117
- Mahler, Gustav, 234, 260n186, 262
- Manasu Karagathemi* (MacCarthy), 22–24
- Manasu Karugademi* (Subramanya Iyer),  
 22–24, **24–25**
- Mann, Maud. *See* MacCarthy, Maud (Maud  
 Mann, Tandra Devi, Omananda Puri)
- ‘Mars’ (Holst), 139, 141–142, **143**
- Marx, Edward, 190, 210n59 and n63
- Matthews, Colin, 152
- Maugham, Somerset, 201
- maximalism, 228
- Māyā* (Holst), 154n10, 158n59
- Maya* (Sohal), 153
- Mayo, Katherine, 225
- Maytime in Mayfair* (1948 film featuring  
 ‘Kashmiri Song’), 200
- mayuri vīna* (North Indian stringed  
 instrument), 30
- McCormack, John, 200
- McPhee, Colin, 307n82
- Mead, G. R. S., theosophy and the Vedas,  
 162n124
- Medtner, Nicolas, 219, 223
- Meghadūta* (Kālidāsa), 105, 106
- Mehta, Narsinh (poet saint), 19
- Mehta, Zubin (Parsi conductor),  
 215n134, 250n28
- Meighoo, J.N., *tabaliya*, 29
- Mēlakartas* (South Indian modes), **272**  
 C. R. Day and, 107, 131  
 Foulds and, 21, 271–281  
 Holst and, 131–136, 150, **150**, 151,  
 274–275  
 MacCarthy and, 15–16, 21, 32, 131,  
 166n181  
*See also specific mēlakartas*
- Menetā, Narasinha (Gujarati  
 songwriter), 36
- Menuhin, Yehudi, 1, 102–103n137
- La Mer* (Debussy), 256n122
- Mercer, Kobena, 1–2
- Mercury, Freddie (Farrokh Bulsara),  
 260n175
- Merrick, Frank (concert pianist, tireless  
 advocate of Foulds’s music), 301
- Mi Contra Fa* (Sorabji), 219, 226, 248n12,  
 250 n32 and n33, 253n81, 254n89
- Midnight’s Children*, Kashmiri Song  
 featured in, 200
- Migot, Georges (composer and poet), 271
- Mikrokosmos* (Bartók), Foulds’s *Essays in  
 the Modes* compared with, 271–272
- Milhaud, Darius (composer), 271
- Minto, Earl (Viceroy 1905–1910.), 55
- Mirza, Shamsu’d-Din Ibrahim (Persian  
 poet, artist and calligrapher),  
 230, 231
- Mixolydian mode, in Holst’s ‘Hymn to  
 Soma’, 133–134

- Mlada* (Rimsky-Korsakov), 82, 100n110
- Modernism
- Elgar's music and, 74
  - Foulds's music and, 272, 276, 277, 281, 293, 301, 304n28
  - Holst's music and, 123, 137, 139, 150, 151, 152
  - music of nature and, 270
  - C. Scott's music and, 113–114, **114**, **115**
  - Sorabji and elite (Western) musical, 226–227, 234, 244, 253n80
- Moore, Thomas (Irish poet, author of *Lalla Rookh*), 185–186, 188
- Morley, John, 55
- Mother India* (infamous book by Mayo, dubbed 'the drain inspector' by Gandhi), 225
- Mowlānā (Persian poet, jurist, theologian, mystic known to the West as Rūmi), 231
- Moynihan, Elizabeth (writer), 186–187, 215n134
- Mrdangam* (double-headed barrel-shaped South Indian drum), 11, 47n75, 108
- Mughal Emperors
- Akbar the Great: music in the court of, 307n90
  - Aurangzeb, 82, 186
  - Bahādur Shah II, 17, 100n108
  - Jahāngir, 186–187
  - Shah Jahān, 186
- Music: Its Secret Influence Through the Ages* (C. Scott), 34
- The Music and Musical Instruments of Southern India and the Deccan* (C. R. Day), 29
- The Music Makers* (Elgar), 81
- The Music of Hindostan* (Fox Strangways), 30–33, 222
- music of nature, 263–264, 270–271, 304n30. *See also* nature music
- Music Pictures* (Foulds), 262
- Music To-Day* (Foulds), 99n99, 270, 282
- Myers, Helen, 12, 45n45
- My Life of Music* (Sir Henry Wood), 96n48
- mystic chord, 228, **232**, 232–233, 256n129
- al-Nafzawi, Sheikh Muhammad (Berber compiler of *The Perfumed Garden*), 170, 230
- nagaswaram* (long double-reed wind instrument), 156n34
- Naidu, Sarojini (Bengali writer and prominent Independence struggler), 181–182, 184
- Naipaul, Sir Vidhya S. (writer, Nobel Laureate), 245–246
- Namanarayani* (*mēlakarta* no. 50), 131, **132**, 133–135, 144
- Nandy, Ashis, 216n142
- Naoroji, Dadabhai (Indian Member of British Parliament), 225
- Nasta, Susheila (colonial and post-colonial literature), 2, 7n9
- Nath, Pandit Pran, Hindustani (singer), music of nature and, 271
- The Natural Bent* (Fielden), 295, 306n75
- nature music
- Beach and, 270
  - Busoni and, 304n30
  - Debussy and, 270
  - Foulds and: *Gandharva Music* and, 263–264
  - Ives and, 270–271
  - Nath and, 271
  - Sibelius and, 271
  - Tagore and, 271
- naubat khānā* (drum house entrance to Mughal Court), 92
- Nautch Girls (English term for North Indian courtesans)
- as depicted by Carpenter (painter), 188
  - as depicted by Elgar, 66–69, **67–68**
  - as depicted by Shaw (painter), **189**
  - at the Franco-British Exhibition (1908), 108
  - stigmatized by British 97n72
- The Nautch Girl* (comic opera), 60
- 'Nautch Girl' (Bantock), 126, **127**
- The Nautch Girl* (Solomon), 66
- nautch songs and dances, 65–66, 97n73
- Nehru, Jawaharlal, xvii, 299
- 'Neptune' (Holst), 147–150, **148–150**, 267, 274–275
- Nerval, Gérard de, on the shock of meeting the real Orient, 253n69
- Newman, Ernest, 90, 282, 304n26, 306n61
- Newmarch, Rosa (authority on Russian Music), 228
- Nichols, Beverley (writer, playwright and journalist), 233–234

- Nicholson & Watson (publisher), 261  
 Nicolson, Colonel Malcolm Hassels, 190, 201, 203  
 Nicolson, Violet. *See* Hope, Laurence (Adela Florence Nicolson, née Cory)  
 1942: *A Love-Story* (1994 Chopra film), 139  
 notation  
   Alladiya Khan: fled from, 308n108  
   Bokhari, 312n168  
   C. R. Day and, 107  
   English perceptions of Indian 'lack' of, 12  
   Foulds and, 27–28, 284, 287, 299  
   MacCarthy and, 15–17, **16–18**  
   in *The Music Magazine* (February 1937), 284, 307–308n95  
   Tagore songs transcribed into European, 30  
 Novello (music publisher), 62  
 Noyes, Alfred, 82  
 numerology, 226
- Offenbach, Jacques, 188  
 Ogdon, John (pianist),  
   performance of Sorabji's *Opus Clavicembalisticum*, 248n6  
*Old Indian Dances* (Uday Shankar), in the British Empire Exhibition of 1924, 168  
*On Jhelum River* (Woodforde-Finden), 184, 190, **192**  
*On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos* (Jones), 12  
*Opus Clavicembalisticum* (Sorabji), 218, 228  
   analysis of, 233–234, 256n129, 257n133  
   passacaglia theme in, **235**  
   performances of, 223  
   *Quasi Tambura*, 222, 234–236, **235**, 237, 240  
 Oramo, Sakari, conductor  
   on Elgar's revelatory recordings of his own music, 102n136  
   on Foulds's *Mantras* as the peak of British orchestral music, 1914–1939, 301–302  
*Oriental Impressions* (Pavlova ballet composed by Comalata Bannerji, 39  
 Orientalism  
   Bantock, Scott and, 111–116  
   British imperialism and, 60, 168, 185  
   definition of, 42n10  
   Indian music and, 12–13, 106–108 156–157n44  
   musical gesture and, 156–157n44, 172–173, **172–173**  
   Sorabji and, 229–231  
   *Vedas* and, 106–107  
   *See also* Said, Edward W.
- Orpheus Abroad* (12 Foulds radio programmes), 284, 290  
 Orr, C. W., on the use of folk tunes, 133  
 Owen, Sean, on Sorabji, 249n13
- The Pagoda of Flowers* (Woodforde-Finden), 184  
 Pāl, Niranjan (playwright), 29, 40, 303n10  
 Palmer, Tony, *In the Bleak Midwinter* (film on Holst), 166n186  
 Palushkar, V. D., (Hindustani musician and Hindu nationalist), 19  
 Parakilas, James, 3  
 Paranjoti, Victor, 293  
 Parry, Hubert Hastings  
   English musical renaissance and, 138  
   on Indian music, 12, 43n18, 46n70, 233, 257n135, 257n136, 305n44  
 Parry, Hubert Hastings: compositions  
   *Blest Pair of Sirens*, 43n13  
   *Prometheus Unbound*, 43n13  
 Parsi community, 222, 224–225, 251n48  
 Partition, and Reunification, of Bengal (1905–1912), 45n49, 55, **56**  
   omitted from Elgar's *Imperial Masque*, 58–59, 61  
 Pasler, Jann, 3  
*Pasquinades Symphoniques* (Foulds), 297  
 passacaglia, Sorabji's use of, 234–236, **235**  
*A Passage to India* (David Lean film), 99n94  
*A Passage to India* (E.M. Forster novel), 43n17, 194  
 Pathan, Alauddin Maulabukhsh (vina player), 107  
*Patrick Stewart narrates The Planets* (video), 167n203  
 Payne, Anthony, new orchestration of *The Crown of India*, 74–75  
 Peer, René van, on Sorabji, 259n161  
*The Perfumed Garden [of Sensual Delight]* (Sheikh al-Nafzawi), 170, 230  
 Petri, Egon, recitals of Alkan's music, 227

- Philosophy of the Vedānta* (Deussen), 158n59
- Pirie, Peter, on Holst, 152
- The Planets* (Holst), **140**
- ‘Jupiter’, 139, 142
- ‘Mars’, 139, 141–142, **143**
- ‘Neptune’, 147–150, **148–150**, 274–275
- Foulds on, 275
- ‘Saturn’, 131, 144, 147, **146–147**
- The Planets—an HD Odyssey* (photographic collaboration with NASA), 152
- Poème de l'extase* (Scriabin), 233, 236
- polonaise, Elgar's Mughal, 82–85, **86**, 87–89, 91–92
- Pomp and Circumstance Marches* (Elgar), 61, 88, 89
- Ponnuswamy, Fiddle (*Karnātic* composer), MacCarthy and, 19
- ‘Prayer to Vishnu’ (Bantock), 111, **112**
- Price, Nancy, played the role of ‘India’ in *The Crown of India*, 62
- Processional* (Bantock), 111
- Puccini, Giacomo, *verismo* technique and, 173
- Puri, Omananda. *See* MacCarthy, Maud (Maud Mann, Tandra Devi, Omananda Puri)
- Quartetto Geniale* (Foulds), 295–297, **296–298**. *See also* ‘Lento Quietto’ (Foulds)
- ‘Quit India’ movement and Resistance
- Besant and, 263
- British view of Resistance as violence in, 196
- Chopra's film 1942: *A Love Story* and, 139
- First War of Independence, 58, 60, 94n25
- interdependent history and, 219
- 1930s 291
- Oudh and, 204
- Partition, the catalyst for, 55, **56**, 59
- Salt Satyagraha (1930), 89
- Tagore and, 4, 49, 53, 55, **57**, 96n52
- Rachmaninoff, Sergei
- Foulds's *Dynamic Triptych* in the tradition of *bravura* works of, 274
- Sorabji drawn to, 233
- in old age, 301
- radio, 40. *See also* All India Radio (AIR); BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation)
- rāga-ālāp*, 108, 109, 110, 240, 292
- rāgas*
- Foulds and, 271–272, 283, 286, 287, 293
- Holst and, 151, 152
- Holst and MacCarthy and, 131
- MacCarthy and, 15–20, **17, 18**
- Royal Academy of Music lectures on, 107
- R. Shankar and, 300
- Sorabji and, 234
- Woodforde-Finden and, 173
- See also* *mēlakartas* (South Indian modes)
- Rahaim, Matthew, 36, 49n118
- Rahim, Abdul, Alice Richardson and, 28
- Raj Quartet* (Paul Scott), as example of Raj revivalism, 99n94, 194
- Raj Revivalism (phrase coined by Salman Rushdie), 76
- Rāmāyana*, 105, 106, 275, **275**
- Rangachari, K., cylinder recordings of Indian music and, 107–108, 155n30
- Ravel, Maurice, Malayan verse form and, 231
- Rekhti* (Urdu poetry narrated in the feminine voice), 204
- Rhys Davids, T. W. (Welsh scholar of Pali and Sanskrit), 125, 160n96
- Ricalton, James (pioneer travel photographer), 190, **191**
- Richards, Jeffrey, 3, 7n7, 90, 97n71
- Richards, John E., on the Mughal gardens of Kashmir, 209–210n51
- Richardson, Alice. *See* Devi, Ratan (Alice Richardson)
- Richter, Hans, 262
- Riders to the Sea* (Vaughan Williams), music of *Savitri* as model for, 152
- Rigveda*
- Griffith and, 130–131
- Harvey and, 153
- Holst and, 105, 106, 108, 125, 135
- myth of *kama* in, 215n132
- Orientalism, European phenomenon of, 106
- Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai Andreyevich
- Agra's aria and, 74
- Ceremonial polonaise, 84

- Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai  
Andreyevich (*Cont.*)  
Procession of the Nobles (*Mlada*) and  
Elgar's Mughal Polonaise, 84–85  
Sorabji's pastiche of, 258n152
- Rimsky-Korsakov, Nikolai Andreyevich:  
compositions  
*Fantasia on Serbian Themes*, Elgar  
conducted, 100n113  
*The Golden Cockerel*, Sorabji on, 233  
*Mlada*, 84  
*The Snow Maiden*, Elgar conducted,  
100n113
- Robèrge, Marc-André, on Sorabji,  
248–249n13
- Roberts, Caroline Alice (Elgar's wife), 60
- Roberts, Major-General Sir Henry Gee  
(Elgar's father-in-law), 60
- Robson, Vivian E. (astrologer, friend of  
Holst), 140
- Rolland, Romain, 258n155
- Rolls-Royce motor cars, eclipse the  
magnificence of elephants, 89
- Ross, Alex, 3, 162n128, 248n8, 301
- Rothenstein, Sir William (founder member  
of The India Society), 30, 124
- Roussel, Albert, 157n45, 231
- Roy, Arundhati, 'History House', 220
- Royal Academy of Music, 107
- Royal Asiatic Society, 19
- Royal College of Music  
C. R. Day's paper and, 107  
Holst as 'impertinent freelance' at, 138  
spawned the 'home-grown musical  
renaissance', 137–138
- Royal Musicians of Hindustan, 30, **31**
- Royal Society of Arts, 124
- Rubbra, Edmund, Holst and, 130, 151,  
213n102
- Rubenstein, Anton, opera *Feramors*, 188
- Rushdie, Salman, 3, 76, 99n94, 200
- Sacrifice* (Tagore), 40, 303n10
- Sa'di (Musharrif al-Din ibn Muslih  
al-Din), 230
- Said, Edward W.  
definition of Orientalism by, 42n10  
on 'good' and 'bad' Orient, 252n68  
on imperialism's self image, 59  
on Indian influence on British culture, 1  
on music as a safe place, 3  
on the burden of bearing an English  
forename, 224, 251–252n54  
on the sexual promise of the Orient, 205
- Śakuntala* (Das Gupta), 40
- Salt Laws imposed by the British on India  
(1882), 89
- Salt Satyagraha (1930), 89
- Samaveda*, 106, 107, 154n14
- sarangī* (North Indian bowed lute)  
at colonial exhibitions, 108  
Foulds and, **285**, 287, 292  
harmonium ban and, 311n161  
*kathak* and, 66  
R. Shankar and, 300
- saraswati vīna* (primary indigenous South  
Indian stringed instrument)  
Foulds and, 21, 285, **285**, 307n91  
MacCarthy and, 11, 19, 20, 36–39, **37**  
Royal Musicians of Hindustan  
and, 30, **31**  
R. Shankar and, 300
- sargam* (Indian pitch syllables), 15, 20, 271
- sarinda* (bowed stringed instrument),  
284, 292
- sarod* (North Indian plucked lute), 284,  
**285**, 292, 300
- Śastri, Syama, 46n63
- 'Saturn' (Holst), 131, 144–147, **146–147**
- Sāvitrī* (Holst)  
analysis of, 116–123, **118**, **120**,  
**122–123**  
Britten's church parables and, 152  
composition of, 106, 116  
disembodied voices in, 117, 119, 121  
first performance of, 123  
Foulds's wordless chorus of women's  
voices and, 267  
'Hymn of the Travellers' and, 128–129  
*The Planets* and, 141, 143–144, 148, 149  
reception of, 10n32, 116, 123, 152, 153
- Scheer, Christopher, 166n186
- Schoenberg, Arnold, 227, 244, 271, 272
- Schumann, Robert, cantata based on *Lalla  
Rookh*, 188
- Scott, Cyril  
BBC, problems with, 305n55  
Indian pieces, 113–115  
Kipling's *Jungle Book* and, 236  
Sorabji on his Orientalist music, 237  
theosophy's musical prophet,  
34, 49n106

- Scott, Cyril: compositions  
*Indian Suite*, 111, 113–114, **115**  
*Lotus Land*, 113–114, **114**,  
 172–173, **173**
- Scott, Derek, 173, 207n21
- Scott, Paul, *Raj Quartet* on UK Television  
 (1966–1975), 99n94, 194
- Scriabin, Alexander, Sorabji and, 227,  
 228, 232
- Scriabin, Alexander: compositions  
*Désir*, 233  
*Poème de l'extase*, 233, 236  
*Prometheus*, 228
- Scruton, Roger  
 on the loss of Victorian values, 102n136  
 on Islam and Orientalism, 103n139
- Sea Pictures* (Elgar), Agra's Aria and, 70, 73
- Sena, Surya (singer, pioneer scholar of Sri  
 Lankan folk music), 39
- Senart, Maurice (important Parisian music  
 publisher), 271
- Senavati* (mēlakarta no. 7), **272**
- Sexual Inversion* (Havelock Ellis), 226
- Shalimar Bagh (Kashmir), 186–188, **187**
- Shankar, Ravi, 1, 6, 152–153, 299–300
- Shankar, Uday (dancer and musician),  
 39, 168
- Sharma, Ursula, 42n10
- Shastri, Prabhyu Dutt, MacCarthy and, 21
- Shaw, Byam (artist), 188, **189**, 195, **197**
- Shaw, George Bernard, John Foulds and,  
 267, 284
- The Sheik* (film starring Valentino, 1921),  
 Kashmiri Song featured in, 199
- Sheldon, A. J. (critic), 89, 102n131
- Shera, F. H., on *The Crown of India*, 89
- Short, Michael (Holst's biographer), 105,  
 152, 160n97, 166n185
- Sibelius, Jean, music of nature and, 271  
 in old age, 301
- Silent Gods and Sun-Steeped Lands*  
 (Frazer), 158n59
- Simorg-Anka* (Sorabji), Concerto for Piano  
 and Orchestra, 226, 230
- Simpson, Harold (songwriter),  
 Woodforde-Finden and, 184, 208n23
- Simpson, William, on Kashmir as  
 paradise, 188
- Simurgh* (mythical bird), 255n117
- Sirènes* (Debussy), disembodied voices  
 in, 267
- Sita* (Holst), 106
- sitar*, 30, 284, 287, 300
- Sitsky, Larry (Busoni scholar), 228
- Sixteen Folk Songs from Hampshire*  
 (Holst), 138
- Sketch of a New Esthetic of Music* (Busoni),  
 234, 259n165, 304n30
- Slobin, Mark, on orientalism in the study  
 of musics, 43n18
- The Snow Maiden* (Rimsky-Korsakov),  
 conducted by Elgar, 100n113
- Society for Private Musical  
 Performances, 227
- Society of Indian Musicians, 20
- Society of Women Musicians, 32
- Sohal, Naresh, (Panjabi composer working  
 in the UK), 153
- Solomon, Edward (composer), *The Nautch  
 Girl*, 66
- Somerset Rhapsody* (Holst), embraces the  
 English musical renaissance, 138
- '*Song of Ram Das*' (MacCarthy), 40,  
 285, **286**
- The Song of Ram Dass* (Foulds), 40, 51n147,  
 285, **286**
- 'The Song of the Lotus-Lily'  
 (Woodforde-Finden), from *Ziska* by  
 Marie Corelli, 173
- Songs in Indian Style* (Foulds), settings of  
 Kabīr which can be traced traced in A  
*World Requiem*, 270
- Songs of India* (Bantock)  
 'Nautch Girl', 126, **127**  
 'Prayer to Vishnu', 111, **112**
- Songs of the West* (Holst), in the English  
 musical renaissance, 162–163n133
- Sorabji, Kaikhosru Shapurji  
 family and education, 220–222  
 identity construction and, 4–5,  
 219–220, 224–226, 229–231, 243–246  
 in India, 246–247  
 Modernism and, 226–229, 234  
 photographs of, **218**, **246**  
 reception of, 217–219, 223, 229  
 on Holst, 151  
 on Woodforde-Finden, 198  
 as writer, 218–219, 222
- Sorabji, Kaikhosru Shapurji: compositions  
*Arabesque*, 230, 231–232, **232**  
*Chaleur*, 222, 236–237, **238–239**,  
 258n160

- Sorabji, Kaikhosru Shapurji (*Cont.*)  
*Désir éperdu*, 232  
*Djāmī* (piano nocturne), 230, 233  
*Gulistān*, 229, 233, 237, 257n133  
*Jāmī* (2nd Symphony), 228–229, 230  
*Le Jardin parfumé*, 223, 230, 233, 234–235, 237  
*Simorg-Anka*, 226, 230  
*Symphonic Variations for Piano*, 222, 237, 240, **241**, **242–243**  
*Tāntrik Symphony for Piano Alone*, 222, 240, 244, **244**  
*Il Tessuto d'arabeschi*, 231  
*Trois poèmes du Gulistān de Sa'dī*, 230  
 See also *Opus Clavicembalisticum* (Sorabji)
- Sorabji, Kaikhosru Shapurji: writings  
*Around Music*, 219, 254n89  
 'Il gran rifiuto', 227  
*Mi Contra Fa*, 219, 226, 248n12, 250n33, 254n89
- Sorabji, Shapurji, 220–221, **220**, 222, 224
- Sorrell, Neil, on MacCarthy, 43–44n20
- Sospiri* (Elgar), 77, **78**
- Soundy and Co. (musical instrument dealers, Bombay), 107
- Southey, Robert, *The Curse of Kehama*, 111
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakrovarty, 245
- Stanford, Charles Villiers, 61, 138, 188
- stereoscopic cameras, 211n64
- Stoler, Ann, on *metissage*, 194
- Stoll, Oswald (impresario, created the London Coliseum), 57
- Strauss, Richard, 73, 262, 301
- Strauss, Richard: compositions  
*Ariadne auf Naxos*, 233
- A Study of Music in Decline* (Lutyens), 2
- Sufi mosque music, Elgar's impressions on hearing in Izmir, 70–74, **71–75**
- Suleri, Sara, on the sexual appeal of India for the English, 204
- Sullivan, Arthur  
 Elgar's familiarity with Gilbert and Sullivan operettas, 65  
 set Tennyson's paean to Empire, 60
- summertime sex in India, Radclyffe Sidebottom recorded by the BBC (1974), 191
- surbahar* (bass sitar), 292
- A Survey of Contemporary Music* (Gray), 89
- Symphonic Variations for Piano* (Sorabji), 237, 240, **241–243**
- Symphony of East and West* (Foulds), 301
- Szymanowski, Karol  
 active in Propagation of Contemporary Music Society, 223  
 Sorabji and, 231, 233, 256 n123 and n131, 260n186
- tablā* (pair of North Indian hand drums)  
 in *Alam Ara* (film), 307n87  
 Foulds and, 21, 262, 284, 292  
*kathak* and, 66  
 MacCarthy and, 19, 20, 27, 29, 35, 47n71, 262
- Tagore, Abanindranath, 124
- Tagore, Rabindranath  
 on Ratan Devi, 124  
 Fox Strangways and, 30  
 composing a subversive song 'for' George V, 53  
 harmonium ban and, 299  
 translation of Kabir, 270  
 MacCarthy and, 14, 19, 20, 125  
 Maddison, Adela, composer, and, 208n26  
 on the music of nature, 271  
 Nobel Prize and, 4, 39  
 musical defiance of Partition of Bengal in *Bidhir Badhan Katbe Tumi*, 55, 96n52  
 rejection of piano 260n184  
 reception of in Britain, 1910, 123
- Tagore, Rabindranath: writings  
*Bidhir Bandhan Katbe Tumi* (song of resistance), 55, **57**  
*The Home and the World* (novel on Bengal's nationalist movement), 45n49
- Jana gana mana* (subversive song commissioned to 'honour' George V), 53, 163n143
- Sacrifice*: Foulds's music for, 40, 303n10
- tālas* (rhythmic cycles)  
 Foulds and, 22, 286  
 Holst and, 117  
 MacCarthy and, 11, 13, **15**, 16, 22, 24, 27, 29, 35–36  
 Royal Academy of Music 1894 lectures on, 107

- tambura* (*tānpūra*) (long-necked drone lute)  
 Foulds and, 262, 284, 289, 292, 307n91  
 Foulds on hearing MacCarthy singing with, 126  
 harp-tambura, 128–130, 153  
 Holst and, 126, 129–130, **128**, **130**, 153  
 MacCarthy and, 46n51, 125–126, 161n100  
 R. Shankar and, 153  
 Sorabji and, 234–237, 243  
*The Tamburas of Pandit Pran Nath* (Young and Zazeela), 167n204  
*Tandava Nritya Kari* (Fox Strangways' notes on MacCarthy's performance), in Foulds's *Indian Suite*, 31  
 Tantra, 240, 244  
*Tāntrik Symphony for Piano Alone* (Sorabji), 222, 240, 244, **244**  
 Taruskin, Richard  
   on artistic excellence and moral indifference, 91  
   on Chaikovsky's imperial style, 100n112  
   on maximalism, 228  
   on mystic chord, 256n129  
   on nationalism, 9n31  
   on orientalism in music, 3  
 Tata, Ratanji, The India Society and, 124  
 'The Temple Bells' (Woodforde-Finden), 176–178, **177–178**, 197–198  
*The Temptation of St Antony* (Flaubert), Sorabji and, 230  
*Il Tessuto d'arabeschi* (Sorabji), 231  
 Teyt, Maggie, 1921 recording of *Four Indian Love Lyrics*, 199  
 theosophy, MacCarthy's rejection of, 34  
   *See also* Besant, Annie  
*Thirty Songs from the Punjab and Kashmir* (Coomaraswamy and Devi), 29, 250n31  
 Thorndike, Sybil, in praise of 'Elysium' (*A World Requiem*), 270  
*A Thousand and One Notable Nativities* (Leo), Holst's annotations in, 139–140  
*Three Mantras* (Foulds)  
   composition of, 267  
   *mēlakartas* and, **267–269**, 271, **272**, 274–277, **276–280**  
   reception of by the BBC 'selection committee', 281–282,  
   Sakari Oramo on, 301–302  
 Thurston, Edgar, cylinder recordings of  
   Indian music and, 107–108  
 Tippett, Michael, on Holst, 152  
 Tomita, Isao (electronic music composer), 152  
*The Tomita Planets* (Tomita), 167n203  
 Tosti, Paolo, melodic influence on  
   Kashmiri Song, 173–174  
 'To the Dawn' (Holst), 126–127, **128**  
 'To the Unknown God' (Holst), 125, 130–131, **132**, 134–137, **134**, **136–137**, 144, 160n99  
 'To the Waters' (Holst), harp figuration in, **130**  
 'To Vārūna' (Holst), 162n114  
 Tovey, Donald Francis, MacCarthy and, 14, 32  
*Towards the Mysteries* (MacCarthy), 34  
 tritones  
   Elgar's use of, 73, 83  
   Holst's use of, 110, 134, 144,  
   Foulds's use of, 276  
*Trois poèmes du Gulistān de Sa'di* (Sorabji), 230  
 Tudor, Anthony, choreographer of *The Planets*, 166n180  
*Two Symphonic Studies for Strings* (Foulds), score inexplicably lost in 1946 by the BBC, 295  
 Tyāgarāja, composer  
   *Bhava Nuta*: authentic version and Foulds's arrangement, 285  
   *Bhava Nuta*: becomes first movement of Foulds's *Indian Suite*, **23**, 28, **28**, 40  
   Jacques' Royal Academy lectures and, 107  
   Karnātic tradition and, 46n63  
   MacCarthy and the music of, 18, 22, **22**, **23**, 27–28, **28**  
 Union of East and West (Kedar Nath Das Gupta), 40, 47n85, 262  
*Upanishads*, Holst's studies of, 106, 135  
 Urban, Charles (motion picture pioneer at the 1911 Darbār), 54  
 Vagrancy Act, 141  
*Vakulabharanam* (*mēlakarta* no. 14), Holst's use of, 133

- Valentino, Rudolph, recording of Kashmiri Song, 199, 202  
 variation forms, in Sorabji's music, 234–236, **235**  
*Variazioni ed Improvvvisati* (Foulds), 262  
 'Vāruna I (Sky)' (Holst), 108–110, **109–110**, 117, 121, 274  
 Vātsyāyana, *Kama Sutra*, 170, 205  
 Vaughan Williams, Ralph, 138, 139, 151, 152, 163n134  
 Vedānta literature, 135. See also *Bhagavad-Gita*; *Upanishads*  
*Vedas*, Holst's interest in, 105–107  
*The Veiled Prophet of Khorassan* (Stanford), 188  
 Victoria, proclaimed Empress of India, 53, 60–61  
 Villiers-Stuart, Constance Mary (painter in India), 187, **187**  
 Violin Concerto (Elgar), 77, **77**  
*Viśuddha* (Sorabji), fifth movement of *Tantrik* Symphony, 240, 244, **244**  
 Viswanathan, T., women excluded from early 20<sup>th</sup> century Indian music, 44n22
- Walton, William, 223, 308n106  
 Warlock, Peter, (Philip Heseltine), 224  
*Warsaw Concerto* (Addinsell), theme based on Kashmiri Song, 200, **201**  
 Watt, Marybride (MacCarthy's daughter), 13  
*The Wave* (Hokusai), as cover art for *La Mer*, 256n122  
 Webb, Alan, on listening to records with Elgar, 82  
*The Well of Loneliness* (Radclyffe Hall), 214n123, 253n77  
*West Meets East* (Menuhin and Shankar), 1  
 'When Darkness Falls' (Bond, story woven around 'Kashmiri Song'), 215n129  
 Whittall's Anglo-Persian Band, 199, **200**  
 Wickham, Edward (baritone), CD of *Four Indian Love Lyrics*, 208n36  
 Williams, Raymond, effects of empire on the English imagination, 3  
*With Our King and Queen through India* (Kinemacolor film), 54, **54**, 93n7  
 women  
   composers, music of, at British Empire Exhibition, 168  
   conventional image of challenged, 13  
   Eurasian, 191  
   idea of, in feminization of the colonies, 193  
   in 1920s Britain, 4  
   in Indian music, 13, 44n22  
   Kashmiri, 188  
   lesbian relationships, 201–204  
   of the Raj, unconventional, 190–194  
   of the Raj, without contact with Indians, 193  
   women's writing set in India or about India, 191, 193–194  
   Beck, Lily Adams (Elizabeth Louisa Moresby), *The Interpreter: A Romance of the East* (1922), 191, 211n67  
   Bell Mrs G. H. (pseud. John Travers), *Sahib-log* (1910), 194, 211n81  
   Cory, Annie Sophie (pseud. Victoria Cross), *Anna Lombard* (1901), 194  
   Diver, Maud, *The Englishwoman in India* (1909), 193  
   Grossman, Mrs J. (pseud. Gladys Emanuel), *Indian Songs of Passion* (1908), 212n93  
   Hull, Edith Maude, *The Sheik* (1910), 199  
   Richardson, Ethel (pseud. Henry Handel), set Hope's 'Prayer' ('You are all That Is Lovely') in the *Indian Love Lyrics*, 212n93  
   Swabey, Hilda, *The Chief Commissioner* (1912), 193  
 Wood, Sir Henry  
   Elgar premiere, 61, 96n48  
   Foulds premiere, 262  
 Woodforde-Finden, Amy (née Amelia Ward)  
   in India, 169, 190  
   Nicolson and, 190, 201–204  
 Woodforde-Finden, Amy: compositions  
   *Aziza: Three Oriental Songs*, 185  
   *A Dream of Egypt*, 184  
   'The Eyes of Firozée', 184  
   *Five Little Japanese Songs*, 184  
   *Four More Indian Love Lyrics*, 184, 212n95  
   *Indian Love Lyrics* in the British Empire Exhibition (1924), 168  
   *The Golden Threshold* (Naidu), 181–182, 184  
   'Indian Desert Song: Ojira's Song to her Lover', 178

- On Jhelum River*, 184, 190, **191**  
*A Lover in Damascus*, 184  
*The Pagoda of Flowers*, 184  
 ‘The Song of the Lotus-Lily’, from *Ziska*  
 by Marie Corelli, 173  
 See also *Four Indian Love Lyrics*  
 (Woodforde-Finden)  
 Woodforde-Finden, Lieutenant-Colonel  
 Woodforde, 169  
*A World Requiem* (Foulds and MacCarthy),  
 48n105, 270, 306n64  
 Worthy, Madeline Matilda, Sorabji’s  
 mother, 221, **221**, 222  
*Yevgeny Onegin* (Chaikovsky), ceremonial  
 polonaises, 84–85  
 Young, La Monte and Zazeela, Marian,  
 recording of *The Tamburas of Pandit*  
*Pran Nath*, 167n204  
 Young, Robert J. C., term ‘British’ imposed  
 on the non-English, 7n5  
*Yusef and Zuleykha* (Jāmi), in Sorabji’s  
 symphony *Jāmi*, 230  
 Zarathushtra (established Zoroastrianism,  
 the religion adopted by Parsis),  
 251n48  
 Zivin, Joselyn, Indian Broadcasting and,  
 310n143  
 Zoroastrianism (Zarathushtrianism,  
 religion adopted by Parsis), 226,  
 251n48

