

## A Review of Music in Popular films

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**Abstract:** *The article reviewed various research works that have been done in the field of music in popular films. Besides tracing the inception of musical films in the Hindi film industry, it examined how important music became for the music composers to connect with their audience. It foregrounded how music became an important part of the commercial film market. The article reviewed how music has impacted largely the culture of the Indian audience. People from various communities worked together and kept the idea of cross-culturalism flourishing. Additionally, this article explored the difference in the use of music in the eastern and the western film industries.*

**Key Words:** *Music, Culture, Audience, Market.*

Since the inception of the world of movies, music has been an indispensable part of film exhibition, performance, and experience. When movies took on talking in the late 1920s, it signaled a turning point in the technical revolution that guided to the actual fusion of music and images. Musical dimensions became an important instrument for the makers to communicate with their audience. It began to be used as a semiotic structure to determine the customs of the society for the production of the film. Film music literature is a crossbreed that exists in oblivion from the main anatomy of both its progenitors: film music was neglected by film studies and musicology concurrently but has continued to outcry even in derelict. Therefore, it can be proclaimed that film music is cautiously proceeding into the field of musicology.

The use of music in Western and Indian culture is noticeable and can be distinguished by the historical growth of the discrete film industries and its use in two different traditions. William O. Beeman in his article, "The use of Music in Popular Film: East and West" discussed how music is used differently in two varied cultures. Music in the west exists as a separate entity within the range of artistic forms. When the musical form overlaps with other musical forms it becomes a different trail of expression in comparison to the other art forms it was combined with. The article addresses the difficulties faced by the entrepreneurs while showing a film to the public for entertainment. The installation of the projectors in the same room as the spectators disturbed the movie patrons. On the other hand, the audience was also very noisy and restive. As a solution to the pre discussed problem, music was introduced. The easiest solution provided was to employ the talents of a single pianist who would complement the moods presented on the screen with his piano. He served as a man who played snippets of music that were printed or from his memory. Beeman's article is divided into sections to have a comprehensive idea of the use of music in sound film in the East and the West. Vitaphone Symphony Orchestra provided some sound effects that accompanied Don Juan in August 1926 which signaled the era of the sound film. With the first appearance of talkie in the 1920s the silent film was completely obsolete. The function of music was primarily designed to lift the visual materials on screen. Beeman accurately pointed out the change in the musical style since the period. He gave examples of Dmitri Tiomkin's score for the film *Lost Horizon* which gathered praises from the film director who upon hearing the score for the first time wrote that the score not only apprehended the mood but captured the audience also. In other words, the film scores must blend with the expectations of the audience perfectly besides the action of the film. Therefore, the recent film scores are marked for the audience. The amalgamation of sound and images on the screen has helped the viewers to correlate between fiction and reality. The use of music in popular films was a way for promoting and quickly identifying a film. Film Musical is used as an instrument of comparison between the Indian and Western films. Sound films that appeared earlier had loose plots against which musicals and dance were played. Musical were played to distract the audience from the Depression of the 1930s. With the presentation of *My Fair Lady*, there were many inventions made in this genre. Musical gathered a lot of sophistication but never dominated the motion picture industry. Instead of getting recognized on the screen, musicals were greatly acknowledged on Broadway. Music became the supreme part of a musical and acting and the plot was considered secondary.

Beeman on the other hand made a sharp distinction between Indian musical film the Western tradition. Music played an equal role to that of the other cinematic elements in any film. In India, silent films also got along with various acts which involved music. The involvement of folk theatrical forms with music in India is a contrast to western traditions. Music in Indian film has not just enhanced the cinematic production and responded to popular tastes but has

completely altered the look of the Indian musical scene. It was through the medium of films that western influences were introduced into Indian music. Adding to the argument of William O. Beeman, an article by The Times of India, "The Talkie Revolution, 1931, and the rise of 'Indian' Cinema" briefly discussed the arrival of sound films in the Indian Cinema. The premiere of the first Indian talkie *Alam Ara* in the 1930s marked the advent of sound films in Indian cinema. Even though the production of the sound films was expensive but its popularity among the audience was huge. By the latter half of the 1930s, the film industries in Bengal and Bombay advanced themselves to produce talkies. Hindi and Urdu became the language of the talkie. The language of "shairi" or Urdu was favoured for the extensive use of song and dance in the early talkies. The second musical film which made a huge success with the songstress Jihan Ara Kajja was *Shirin Farhad* (1931). With the release of more musical films over the years, talkie studios brought a new class of people and introduced them to the world of musicals. Professional dialogue writers, music composers, and other technical people who made the complexities of the talkie look smooth and easy advanced the Indian talkie film industry from the era of silent films.

The eclectic nature of music is another aspect of Hindi film songs that plays an important role in the appeal of popular music. Alison Arnold in her article "Popular film song in India: a case of mass-market musical eclecticism" beautifully gave an insight of the role that music has in Indian society. Thereby, contributing a better apprehension of the role that popular music plays in the non-western and developing countries. Hindi cinema plays an influential role in Indian society. The article talks about the duality that existed in the popular film songs in the feature films. It served as film songs and popular songs for the Indian audience. With the advent of the first Indian talkie, the songs were indistinguishable from Indian stage songs. With time, these songs fused with different musical elements to develop their musical style and form. The combination of the musical element was necessary for the success of this popular music. The sources vary from Eastern to Western music. The infusion of the music base sometimes depends on the situation, time, and the audience as to how they would receive and make it successful. Alison Arnold in her article made the nature of eclecticism clear by giving suitable examples. Her examples range from songs using an Indian classical music base to adapting foreign music in songs. Popular film songs were influenced by Chinese musicals thereby giving a different touch to the format of Hindi songs. Film songs constitute a heterogenous musical compound whose nature expands from Hindi feature film to a wide Indian audience. The music composers of the 1940s and 1950s were open with opportunities to initiate musical styles with western and non-western instruments. The origination of Western musical recordings in film songs broadened the idea of the composers which converted the film market.

Musicians were from theatre houses from large film-producing cities- Calcutta, Bombay, and Pune. Therefore, regional musical backgrounds were added to the films. By the 1940s, Bombay became the center of the musicians who came with various knowledge and experience in music. The songs were produced was to draw the attention of the Indian audience. When popular Hindi film songs were making their way to the hearts of the audience, the government made a ban on broadcasting the film songs. The motto of this action was to popularize classical music but lost the majority of its listeners. Many observers tried to explain that the mass population preferred film music over classical music by analyzing film music as a continuation of folk tradition. To win back its audience, they re-introduced broadcasting film songs. The Indian market was so influenced by musical eclecticism that they favoured the modernization of popular music. Popular music became more relevant and relatable to the Indian audience and therefore the genre received massive love.

The commercial marketing network of cinema, television, and radio played a major role to help the Hindi popular film songs to reach to its audience at a greater speed. Thus, the language of music became a dialect that unified everyone together. The assimilation of cultural traditions and musical styles has helped gather listeners. In the twentieth century, the Indian society has remodeled with the advancement of foreign influences. The purpose of this article was to exhibit the different ways the popular film songs in India made a huge musical market. In agreement with Beeman, Indian cinema sought popularity on a countryside scale. Music and dance became such an integral part of Indian film production that six songs and three dances were requisite. Indian film posed a direct challenge to the classical heritage. It was the popular songs that are always identified with the films they materialize. On the other hand, music in the west was written in a musical style and helped in the scores for years.

Critics argue that there is an absence of memorable melody and lyrics in contemporary Hindi film songs. Composers investigated the past for inspiration to bring soul to Hindi film songs. One such example was the songs of *Veer- Zaara* (2004). The songs were inspired by the unheard music director Madan Mohan, a composer of "evergreen" Hindi film songs. It was promoted as a gift with soulful and lyrical roots of Hindi films. The musicals of *Veer-Zaara* were placed as a contrast between the old and the new film songs. With roaring success, the musicals became a popular memory of the year 2004. But the journey from the evergreen songs to its remixes is compelling. There are certain disagreements on the fact that remixing is unoriginal and destroys the cultural heritage and there is a ratio of people who

thinks it necessary to make old songs relevant to the young peer group. If the old classics Hindi songs were not remixed, they would have been long forgotten. The article "Evergreen to Remixes: Hindi Film songs and India's Popular Music Heritage" by Jayson Beaster- Jones discusses the use and reuse of film songs in various economic and social terms. It is considered that the modernization of Indian society has destroyed the classic songs through remixes which is more profitable for the music companies. The paper focuses on the oppositional relationship between popular music and media. Hindi film songs are taking the place of folk and the classical tradition. So there has a commodity status of the film songs which is contesting the classical songs in new musical forms. Hindi film songs in their evergreen or remixed forms reflect the apprehensions about the cultural consequences of the Indian market. Contemporary film songs are suggestive of the commodification of the culture by artists and music labels. Over the years, Hindi films were graced in theatres abroad. This happened more when the "diasporic Indians" settled abroad and wished to enjoy watching their cultural heritage represented in films. The visuals or the picturization of the Hindi film songs are appreciated when it embodies a set of conventions that align with the future of Indian cultural history. Visualization has been a constant element in the era of sound films and fulfills a variety of narrative functions within an individual film. The article describes that the songs are written to fit the locational and narrative demands portrayed in the film. The songs are the musical amalgamation of local and global musical styles that are common. Certain films are styled to get recognized by the Indian audience.

Songs are often correlated with the presentation of the actors. Whilst the listeners are aware of the fact that the actors lip-sync with the singer, the representation of the song in the film on-screen cohere to the song. Hindi film songs are often characterized by the dominance of the human voice. Earlier, songs or lyrics were derived from classical traditions of Urdu poetic language but with the advancement of technology the concept of "playback singing" qualified a new set of professional singers which made film songs more distinct than the classical roots. Present-day singers have the slightest knowledge or training in Indian music, and they have adapted styles of international popular musicians. The late 1990s and 2000s are marked by the increased use of international music which became the stylistic component of film songs. According to Jayson Beaster- Jones "It is a belief that Hindi film songs are a shared past, a collective memory that is sacred and should remain untouched by contemporary capitalism." The film songs are made to make a profit in the market. The "Remix Generation" highly doubts the originality of the songs and the cultural heritage. Old classic songs make the older generation nostalgic of their lived past, so the melody of the songs gets lost for them on hearing the remix. In an editorial column of Times of India, Santosh Desai mentions, "the remix is an interesting metaphor for our times; we use the remix not to relive the past but to divest it of its moral authority. The old song is stripped of its nostalgia content. It becomes something old; it loses the power to evoke the past." (Desai 2007: 9) Therefore, remixes dilute the power of nostalgia of the cultural memory.

In accordance with Bhattacharya and Mehta (2010: 105), "The Bollywood soundtracks, in particular, emergent technologies of music have acquired the power to call into question that national form of belonging, without which the Indian state cannot do." By the term "Bollywood", it is understood that it is referred to Hindi film industry but is a "more diffuse cultural conglomeration involving a range of distribution and consumption of activities from websites to music cassettes, from cable to radio." (Bhattacharya and Mehta 2010: 105) It is studied that the complicity of songs in a film is more important than the emotions that led to melodrama in Indian cinema. Bollywood musicals can be divided into native music and cross-cultural music. Native music is developed from the mythological and folk traditions based on classical oral history. Cross-cultural music, on the other hand, has derived from light music to western beats in the post-independence era. Native musicals were influential to the audience which helped them in the struggle against colonial rule. Later, the folk musical films helped the Indian community to overcome the religious barriers by spreading them to different corners of India. Therefore, Bollywood musicals would be credible for the emergence of cross-cultural migration of music and its national integration. Oinam Bedajit Meitei's doctoral paper "Influence of cross-cultural flows on national integration through Bollywood musicals, an analyst" discusses this study by the method of triangulation. According to Lindlof and Taylor (2002) "Triangulation" involves the comparison of two or more forms of evidence for an object of research interest. In his paper he talks about the inclusion of dance from traditional or folk, therefore, extending the realm of the study on cross-cultural communication and national integration. He writes, "The combination of awards such as male or female singers and music directors has thus brought the music maestros and nightingales of different regions to the national forefront as the songs and their music keep echoing in all regions throughout the country."

Besides the Hindi musical scores, there is a huge contribution of Tamil and Telegu scores from the Southern film industry. They were based on Carnatic traditions. A critic like Murthy (2013) has proved that the southern film industry has more to provide in the cross-cultural and hybridity in music than any other film industry. Their contribution to musicals has impacted largely on Hindi cinema. He has categorized his study into themes for which the films were awarded. Through the study of Levi-Strauss's binary oppositions, he introduced the cultural symbols across the gamut

of all films. He divided the films that fit into the themes as religious, feminist, romantic, Marxist, and many others. Films such as Adi Shankaracharya provided songs/ slokas that echoed in every South Indian house. Therefore, offering a message through cultural symbols. Giving feminist views to films like *Anuradha* (1964), *Charulata* (1964), *Unishe April* (1994), he portrayed dimensions of women and their views of the social practices and norms. The singers' directors who came from different Indian corners recorded songs in different languages. Besides winning the hearts of their audience, they also earned several awards. The analysis of songs has empowered us to substantiate that unique pattern called "genre" in the composition of musicals. Therefore, his study aimed to elucidate the "hybridity" in these characters in the musical compositions as "cross-cultural" in two ways. Firstly, by connecting Northern and Southern India. Secondly, by acknowledging the intercultural flows and different Indian cultures. Music is an instrument that teaches us to express emotions, respect cultures, and conveys feelings musically. The domain of Indian folk music and melodies has had specific roles and identities. Marcus (1993) tried to identify the role of Indian musicals concerning the specific cultural artifacts. Hence, this wide range of music scores that Bollywood musicals have offered transcended every consideration of politics, societies, and geographical boundaries. The task of scrutinizing the music in films by regarding the cultural values attached to the music has been undertaken by several authors. According to Frederic Silber's popular music adds to the content of the films and asserts "to grudgingly accept a film score that embraces contemporary music simply because it works well within the film, as such music were not worthy enough to be discussed critically."

Music brings new opportunities, hope, and serves as a healing parameter to every individual. Through decades as it has earned commercial success, it has succeeded in winning the hearts of millions of audiences. Music on the screen can help intensify the imagination of the characters and can help take the narrative forward or slow down the process. Music, therefore, makes a connection between the onscreen and the audience. Articles have been written to highlight how music has been a part of the film market. Much has been written on how popular songs are used for promotional purposes. The marketing of music has undergone a major change. The industry witnessed a shift from the physical distribution of music to digital distribution. It has helped create a virtual world into which movie buffs can plunge. As Arnold (1992) correctly pointed out that early music composers believed in "cultural and commercial benefits to be gained by continuing ancient Indian dramatic tradition through a combination of song, dance, and drama." Film places music in a very aesthetic environment that offers musical listening gives a hierarchical structure or provides a formal or tonal organization. Film music has been used as an element of storytelling, consciously chosen, and placed within the film's context. Therefore, helping the directors to create a world in which they can tell their stories. Professor Scott Lipscomb and David Tolchinsky of Northwestern University in their study "The role of Music Communication in Cinema" state "(Music), in its typical role, serves to reinforce, alter and/or augment the emotional content of a cinematic narrative." To look into the recent scenario of the industry, the new generation of singers are keen to develop their careers outside the movie business through concerts. Popular movies are now remembered solely for their songs. Even during the golden years of Bollywood, there were instances where music and dances were more inspiring and influential than the films. Most importantly, Hindi film songs have been a mark of "Indianness." Arnold (1992) voiced the fact that Hindi film songs provided every Indian with national and modern music which they could identify the Indian nation and national identity was striving for. Film songs could pervade class, creed, thus, making it a language of most Indians. It has dominated the satellites channels and then turned into ringtones and popped up on the Internet. To conclude, Indian film music is statistically, commercially, and aesthetically the most popular musical genre.

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