Chitra, Pata, and Sangeet in India:
An Aesthetic Appraisal

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1

Indian cinematic music has been criticized by many authorities, nationally and internationally. Even government and semi-government bodies have come down on it heavily. Different objections to it, when brought together, impress one as a veritable charge-sheet! In brief, the objections are:

1. There are too many songs.
2. Any character is seen to sing—*and* at any point of time.
3. The majority of the characters have the same singing voices.
4. Instrumental music, especially the background music, is unrealistic and misdirected.
5. Dances are indiscriminately inserted.
6. Non-Indian music, particularly Western music, is distorted, and suffers the indignity of clumsy use.
7. The present-day cinematic music displays melodic poverty.
8. Most of Indian film music is confusingly similar. The manufacturing formula seems to follow the technique of creating multiple musical images.
9. Musical plagiarism has become the order of the day.
10. All kinds of music from all categories is employed tastelessly, resulting in an overall lowering of standards.
11. Evolution of Indian cinema as an art has been hindered by its music.

Some of the objections listed above, or other similar objections, are tackled elsewhere in this paper. It seems pointless to try to refute the charges till the category of music which cinematic music represents—namely, popular music—is properly understood. It is also fair to say that all cultural efforts are judged best by specimens of their use and not abuse.

2

The protagonists of Indian musico-cinematic endeavour do not lag behind. They argue that film music succeeds in creating its own characteristic forms because it satisfies some genuine socio-cultural needs. The following points are often made in defence of film music:

1. It is truly modern and keeps pace with the times.
2. Expression of 'escapist' protest is one of its major functions.
3. No other music can rival it in an alert accommodation of recreational modes coming into vogue at different points of time.
4. It attempts to accord high aesthetic status to the criteria of attractiveness and sweetness.
5. Special mention must be made of its achievement in creating a pan-Indian musical identity by bringing into greater circulation various regional musics through the mass media.
6. It represents an ambitious undertaking to legitimatize a music of descriptive content by a bold recourse to non-Indian systems of music.
7. Cinematic music moves to structure tonal expression in such a way that music gets a scope for parallel and independent operations though the initial visual modality has impetus as well as overall control.
8. It evokes, however unconsciously, the age-old musico-dramatic stereotypes. For example, the dramatic-song situations allocated to the song category known as *dhruva* in Bharata's *Natyashastra* are: i. entry, ii. exit, iii. courting/declaration of amorous intent, iv. separation, v. grief, vi. communal festivities, vii. singing for the hero, viii. to conceive together dance, instrument-playing, and singing, ix. to express sentiments associated with the eight types of heroines.
9. No musical expression other than film music goes hand in hand with the verbalized, linguistic formulation/content.

3

The foregoing discussion clearly suggests that the cinema-music relationship in India has not been examined with adequate intellectual rigour. In particular, the changing compulsions behind the relationship have been largely ignored. As a consequence, it has been uncritically assumed that the coming together of music and cinema has always been prompted by musical and musico-aesthetic considerations. The reality, however, is different. Perhaps a factor that has complicated the situation requires special

mention. Indian cinematic culture has undergone many changes, rather rapidly, during a period of about 75 years, and the individual critical phases of the culture have enjoyed shorter life-spans than in other life-areas. On the other hand, the Indian musical tradition goes back to the hoary past and the pace of changes has been less dramatic. The difference in the dynamics of the two arts therefore becomes vital in analyzing the musico-cinematic continuum. Once these complexities are appreciated and the logic is divined, it becomes difficult to accept generalizations such as 'Indian movies always have had an abundance of music' or 'Indian film music means songs that are scattered all over the film'.

What is essential is a minute examination of the critical changes in Indian music to be followed by an exercise undertaken to determine the critical phases in the evolution of cinematic music. A very important principle of cultural musicology requires to be remembered for its illuminating relevance in every study of the performing arts. Music is the last art to accept change. Further, it does so with remarkable reluctance when an alien culture is involved. The following observations are made to highlight this aspect of musico-cultural reasoning:

1. All major film centres in India have also been bastions of art music (e.g., Pune, Bombay, Lahore, Madras, Calcutta). The people and institutions operating from these places resorted to art music and mythology naturally when a pan-Indian appeal was their goal. The situation was unambiguously so till Bombay became an assertive metropolitan city around the 1950s.

2. By the time Indian cinema completed the transformation from an overtly artistic medium to a communicative industry, it created four musical landmarks. The emergence of producers, music directors, star artists and playback singers as separate institutions is to be noted in this context. This quartet is indicative of the changing, comprehensive, and cultural response in the audio-visual life-areas.

3. It is an oversimplification to say that Indian cinema has always been full of songs. Four turns had to be completed before the advent of what is today recognized as a film song. The turns are represented by the musico-literary organizations identifiable as rhythmic prose, recitation, pada, and a simpler art-composition.

Music touches various spheres of life, assuming in the process many forms. Problems as to its precise connotation are therefore inevitable. To comprehend music as a phenomenon, it becomes necessary to study and understand a number of arts as well as disciplines. One of the major arts to

be studied ·in this context is that of cinema (etymologically explainable today as the art of graphically noting movement on strips coated with film).

The study of cinema is urgently called for in contemporary Indian conditions because all other arts are influenced cinematically in one way or the other. No other medium is so deeply entrenched in the popular psyche. In this sense, the cinema is the dominant medium—a medium in terms of which the greatest number of life-messages are formulated, communicated, and received today. It is also true that Indian cinematic music impresses by its magnitude, variety, and quality. The genre throws an enjoyable challenge to students of Indian music.

To study is necessarily to go beyond personal preferences. Judgements of taste and value are the main aims. The basic concepts acquire a centrality. However, the exercise may prove futile if the abstract and philosophical concepts are not correlated with the actual, living experience. And that is not the full story! All abstract principles along with the related concretizations (or illustrations) get their magnetic power from the cultural context. The framework of the human audio-visual experience, the relevant cultural experience in India, and the specific phenomenon of cinematic music thus provide the basis. Each deserves special and intensive examination. However, even an attempt to establish the linkage is worthwhile.

1. The human visual and auditory organs differ considerably in their respective construction, location, and inherent mobility—with an inevitable influence on their respective perceptions.

2. The audio-visual centres are adjacent to each other in the brain. This is important to note because synesthetic experiences are usually received through operations of the paired.

3. Every culture does not accord equal status to the audio and visual senses. In fact, the same culture may value the audio and the visual differently in different historical periods.

4. The cinema presents a case of audio-visual communication in which the concerned channels are processed in a particular way. However, the same audio-visual channels are also used profusely in other, non-art segments of life. Factors controlling the ordinary human audio-visual operations will naturally have an effect on the cinema. Those thousands of non-art audio-visual activities we daily engage in are bound to have some effect on our receptivity. This will have to be borne in mind while examining the relationship between cinema and music.

5. To discuss cinema and music as art is to distance ourselves from all life in the raw. Art, though directly related to life, is not life. Further, the cinema also passed through a silent phase before becoming a 'talkie'.

6. Cinematic music belongs to the category of popular music. It may not be possible to assess the strengths and weaknesses of cinematic music unless the parent category is considered. Popular music is a category which renders application of purely musical criteria both unnatural and unrealistic.

4

At this point it will be helpful to gain some terminological insights.

Many Indian languages would accept the explanation of cinematic music as *chitra* plus *pata* plus *sangeet*. Needless to say, a similar attention to the linguistic and literary aspect would add to the expressive armoury of the phenomenon. However, the intention here is to draw attention to the original thrusts of the terms.

The first term is *pata.* It means (as a noun): 1. a tablet, plate, or a piece of cloth for writing or painting upon; 2. anything well-made or polished. As a verb, it means 'to go or move, to string or weave'.

The second term is *chitra.* It means: 1. a picture, painting, delineation; 2. surprise, wonder.

The third related term encountered frequently in cinematic discussion is 'image', with *pratima* as the Indian equivalent. The meanings are: an image, a likeness, statue, figure, idol.

It may help to note some auxillary terms:

Pratiman: Resemblance, similitude, often in composition in the sense of 'like', 'similar' or 'equal to'.

Image: "An optically formed duplicate, counterpart, or other representative reproduction of an object, esp.an optical reproduction of an object by a mirror or lens." *(Webster II,* p. 610)

Imagery: 1. a mental picture of images; 2. (i) the use of vivid descriptions or figures of speech in speaking or writing to produce mental images, 2. (ii) a metaphoric representation, as in music, art or drama; 3. The art of making such images.

The next term to engage our attention is *sangeet.* It means performance of the sung, the danced and the played.

Terms are indicative of the stabilized concepts based on precepts received and found suitable to the genius of a culture. The purpose of noting down these details of terminological usage is to get a glimpse into the psyche of a culture which has obviously arrived at some decisions and choices. Because

of the particular nature of the performing arts, the 'performing' terminology enjoys two possibilities. Firstly, these terms do not lose the capacity to emit the original core meanings even if their current meaning shows changes in semantic thrusts. Secondly, performing terms bring to notice their original meanings while generating terminological clusters of meanings related to them. Therefore one has to be aware of the total semantic field of the entire terminological cluster to get to the core meaning of a term. Performing terms can in fact be compared to instruments with resonating strings! Their distinctive and total sound is a combined product of the main string (actually plucked/bowed) and those vibrating in sympathy, though unstruck themselves! It is therefore beneficial to grasp the aura of a term suggested by the totality of the term-cluster.

In the present context the terms suggest that *pratima*, the image which is created through a *chitra*, is not visual alone. Consequently, cinema cannot be reduced to a medium explored merely to offer a visual aesthetic experience. The Indian reality consists of a major reliance on the aural in order to create images. This has been one of the reasons for the rise of an all-embracing oral tradition. The terminological cluster clearly testifies to the process initiated to create imagery through audio-visual combinations. It suggests that we have pictures, pictorial series, movement, verbalization (to comment), employment of music to evoke the non-verbal significance—all brought together in various ways to bring into being the *chitrapata*. In respect of *sangeet*, too, the tradition is to conceive together the three separables—namely, the sung, the danced, and the played. Also to be noted is the fact that vocal music enjoys primacy because of the paramount natural capacity of the human voice to produce a sustained sound. A song, i.e., a *geet*, is essentially a tone that can go on and on!

To think fundamentally about cinema is to keep *chitra* as distinguished from a picture at the centre. *Chitra*, as noted earlier, is not merely a delineation of lines and/or colours but a completer visual experience able to create effects of surprise and wonder. It is of interest to note that Jean Cocteau used to appeal to any cinematic venture by saying "Astonish me!", while Eisenstein reportedly exclaimed in a similar vein with the words "Shock through attraction!" The second step is to appreciate that while pictures are isolated, the *pata* bestows on them quality because the units of a *pata* are not merely brought together. They are woven into a garland. This naturally leads to the seminal aesthetic concepts of sequence, internal dynamics, and movement. Of no less importance is the virtuality of the image. I believe these explanations will be useful to understand not only the cinematic contexts of musical endeavours but also the cultural framework of Indian cinema as a totality.

SAIGAL
in
STREET SINGER

Above: Kanan Devi and K.L. Saigal in the New Theatres musical Street Singer, *1938. Below: Bharat Bhushan and Nutan in a song sequence from Sadiq Productions'* Shabab. *Courtesy: Narayan Mulani, Raju Bharatan.*

5

To combine picture-play and music need not be considered an exclusive and sudden accomplishment of the 20th century. Bringing together different media to impart an arresting, total, and qualitative experience has an aesthetic inevitability about it. All cultures tend to stumble on the aesthetic truth at one time or the other. In the process, they give rise to many combinations and sometimes to forms. It is natural that some forms are strong enough to create a tradition while others prove short-lived. India is no exception.

It may be stated that at least five clear phases are discernible as antecedents of the present-day *avatara* of cinematic music. The phases and their Indian manifestations are briefly described:

1. During the first phase, 'still' delineations were so made that viewers got a feel of movement through a series of 'stills'. There was no insistence on an accompanying narration. The combining of the audio and the visual was also optional.

The first phase is well brought out by the delineations of Shubrai Maharaj (1750–1820). Born in Malur (Madras), he held high posts in Sultan Tipu's court before retiring in 1785 to settle in Solapur. Well versed in music, dance, and literature, Shubhrai was deeply interested in Adhyatma. During his Solapur days he prepared picture frames of 6″ x 14″ (or 18″) on paper strips. The way the drawings are made, the successive frames suggest a sequence of movements. In some frames he appears to have moved a step further in creating an illusion. In such frames, human figures, etc. are apparently pasted later against the natural background drawn earlier. The technique results in producing a three-dimensional effect of figures in relief. He tapped the perennial sources of the *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Gita-govinda*, etc. The reds, blues, and yellows he used were herbal dyes.

2. In the second phase still delineations, pictures, or their series were moved mechanically or manually. The presentation includes narration/ singing to accompany the visuals.

The second phase reminds one of the *pat* traditions current in different parts of the country. Yamapat, Pabuji ka Pad, Jadupat, or the Chitrakathis, etc. have a common core. For example, take the Chitrakathis of Maharashtra. They find an early mention in the *Manasollasa* of Som-eshwara (1131 A.D.). The Chitrakathis are professional story-tellers operating with the help of picture-sets. (Each Kathi is expected to maintain a set of his own.) The pictures are often bound together and depict mythological tales. According to the requirements of the story, a peacock

feather is used to direct the attention of the viewers to the relevant picture during the presentation. Two accompanists (on Dholki and Ektari) participate in the narration. Versification, recitation, singing, and dialogue are employed in the presentation, which exhibits stylization as well as improvization.

Yet another tradition current in Andhra Pradesh confirms the pattern. The depicted picture scrolls can be vertical or horizontal, even though the former are in greater vogue. The delineations are in a downward sequence. Every frame is separated by a decorative border. The scroll is hung on the wall or from two bamboos. The scroll is rolled downwards and care is taken to ensure that the required frame is in view of the spectators. All the members of the narrator's family are involved in the presentation. Prose, verse, recitation, as well as singing are pressed into service for telling the story. A group of four or five persons provides vocal and instrumental support. Female members, if they participate, sing. Reportedly, the earliest extant *pata* dates back to 1625! In this *pata*, the story is of the sage Markandeya. However, there is a noticeable slant introduced to elevate certain castes and personalities. Some authorities suggest that the right to offer patronage to these shows was confined to certain castes.

3. The third phase was achieved when still pictures were *projected* in sequence and consecutively, though the narration and/or singing remained unaltered.

The third phase of combining image and music was realized through an imaginative use of the once-popular projecting mechanism known as magic lantern. One should remember in this context the attempts of Madhavrao Patwardhan of Kalyan (Bombay). He began making slides around 1890. By 1894 he had perfected a technique for multiple and simultaneous projection of slide strips. Patwardhan employed three projectors: one projected the background scenery while the other two concentrated on the main event. His shows travelled all over Maharashtra and Gujarat, attracting full houses. Patwardhan was the producer as well as the projectionist. He had a number of mythological tales in his repertoire and had prepared about a thousand slides. The presentation also included a running commentary, dialogue, and live music. Describing the apparatus and the programme as 'Shambarik Kharolika', the Patwardhans performed till about 1910.

4. Events were recorded on processed films to be projected later. A controlled manifestation of the sound material was presented through live performers.

The fourth phase consisted of live music supplied by musicians sitting in front of the screen during the silent era. In Bombay, one Mr Seymour conducted an orchestra to carry out the task (1896). In 1920 Debaki Bose

conducted music for the silent films of the British Dominion Company.

5. Finally, as today, images, the intra-image movement, and the accompanying acoustic material was pre-recorded separately to be synchronized with the visual material for later projection. The fifth phase began with *Alam Ara* in 1931.

Against this background, some general observations about image-music interrelationships are possible:

a. The later the phase, the less virtual is the movement of the images. On the other hand, the earlier the phase, the more deliberate is the effort to convey movement through non-visual ways and means.

b. The 'live' audio was greater in proportion and more meaningful in function to the extent the image movement was created through illusion. In other words, the inherent absence of movement in the virtual image was to be offset by the tempo and dynamics of sound. Obviously, an interchange of experience at the sensory level was attempted.

c. One of the main virtues of any communicative medium is its experimental continuousness. It was to this end that sound was so insistently employed. When other means of introducing movement in the image became available, the qualitative role of sound changed. Then a more purposeful arrangement of the sound of music was expected to reinforce the meaning/significance of images or to put forward alternative interpretations.

d. Some patterns of combining music with the moving image had been well stabilized during the pre-talkie days. Indian cinematic culture exhibits the far-reaching influence of these 'reverberating' patterns. It is as if the patterns were received and respected as *sutras*, and commentaries were added later to facilitate further development. What is important to note is that all *sutras*, having emerged as responses to the related socio-cultural reality, do not remain constant (at least they ought not!). Consequently, if any of the three basic components—namely, image, movement, and sound—undergoes a qualitative change, the remaining two display corresponding or correlated changes. If this response is not forthcoming, the communicative medium in question fails functionally! Applied specifically to the theme under discussion, this general truth means that the connotation of the term 'music' continued to suggest a sustained tone production while the movement of images remained virtual. However, when the said movement became more real, music began becoming more and more 'musical' (though the fundamental musical characteristic of being a sustained tone retained its place). The promise music held through the sustained tone was upgraded when internal tonal dynamics and language

joined forces with the fundamental continuity. Thus the ultimate aim of the cinematic music through the evolutionary process becomes clear: to create parallel, autonomous, and correlated structures in sound, silence, and performance in response to the structures realized through image, movement, and projection.

6

At this juncture it is perhaps advisable to take a closer look at the elements of music as they are to be the correlates to (the visual fundamentals of) image, movement, and projection. In this context, one must consider sound and silence first. How does Indian musicology understand and value these? The following points are worth noting:

1. Silence is an important musicological entity. It plays an aesthetico-grammatical role which is both positive and significant. For example, the concept of *tala* (fundamental to all categories of Indian music) includes *kriya* as one of the ten important characteristics (*dashaprana*) of *tala*. Significantly, four kinds of silences are brought into operation to execute the *kriya*.

2. And yet it is instructive to note that the *Amarakosha*, the earliest thesaurus in the world, has four stanzas devoted to sound, while silence does not find a place in it. Silence undoubtedly carries out aesthetic functions as important as those of sound and yet Indian languages have to depend on a composite word, with a negative prefix, to connote silence. Probably we owe this to our cultural preference for sound over silence!

3. However, Indian culture pays minute attention to the phenomenon of sound. In brief, it can be stated that the fundamental manifestation of sound is indicated by the term *shabda*, defined as 'that which is an experience of the hearing and a property of the *akasha*'. *Nada*, the first differentiation of *shabda*, has two varieties: *anahata* and *ahata*. Next in line is *dhvani*, defined specifically as being a product of musical instruments. Finally, musical *shabda* is known as *swara* while that employed in language is described as *varna*. It is also significant that an important theory in Sanskrit poetics, based on the suggestivity of the literary word, is described as the *dhvani* theory. Add to that the primacy accorded to vocal expression in India, and the stage is prepared for song—an aesthetic monad. On the other hand, song has also proceeded to include in *sangeet* the sung, the played, as well as the danced. Needless to say, the Indian musicological position thus stated seems specially conducive to the abundance of songs or

geetas (a phenomenon commonly noticed with reference to Indian cinema).

4. A factor likely to be overlooked is that in India music constitutes only one of the number of oral traditions flowing side by side. These different oral traditions have influenced each other, a fact to be kept in mind.

7

When two arts come together, two possibilities emerge: both of them hold a balance or one rules over the other. When music is used in cinema, it is the latter which controls the former. So far no cases are reported where cinema is used in music! However, when music is the theme of a cinematic endeavour, music may be identified as the controlling entity. Whenever questions are raised about the cinematic functions of music, this basic premise about the inter-art relationship needs to be taken into consideration.

Music was employed as an agent to mask the unwanted sound of the projector when the chief cinematic function was to create a convincing illusion. It was also employed to convey the temporal aspect when the silent cinema attempted projection of sequential events or a narrated story. Yet another function, soon tagged on, was reinforcement of the mood, etc. created through visual means. Music used to create anticipation is also of the same kind. In case an event is intrinsically connected with music, the use of the latter is inevitable (unless one subscribes to different, mainly non-realistic tenets).

Apparently three human cycles are music-related ritualistically. Hence birth-death, day-night, and the seasonal cycle are accompanied by music almost without an exception.

Finally, cinematic music can have an abstract application. There are those non-classifiable emotions or shades of psychological states difficult to express adequately through visual means. Music is harnessed to suggest them. Obviously, experience at this level and of this kind is ambiguous. Under the circumstances, sound becomes truly symbolic (and this is not merely confined to its musical use). Multiple suggestion, some kind of culture-transcending power, and a unique depth to the experience are the possible symbological strengths of judiciously explored music.

The cinema-maker, it would be seen, is the authority to determine the kind, placement, proportion, and intensity of the musical input admitted. In other words, his first choice determines the aesthetic logic the musical components are to follow. In concrete terms, his initial aesthetic decision affects the cinematic role allowed to silence, sound, melody, and tempo.

Left: Leela Chitnis, Ashok Kumar, and V.H. Desai (standing) in Bombay Talkies' Jhoola, *1941. Courtesy: Narayan Mulani.*

Below: 'Ai chand zara chhup ja'—*Shammi Kapoor and Nutan in the song sequence from* Laat Saheb. *Courtesy: Raju Bharatan.*
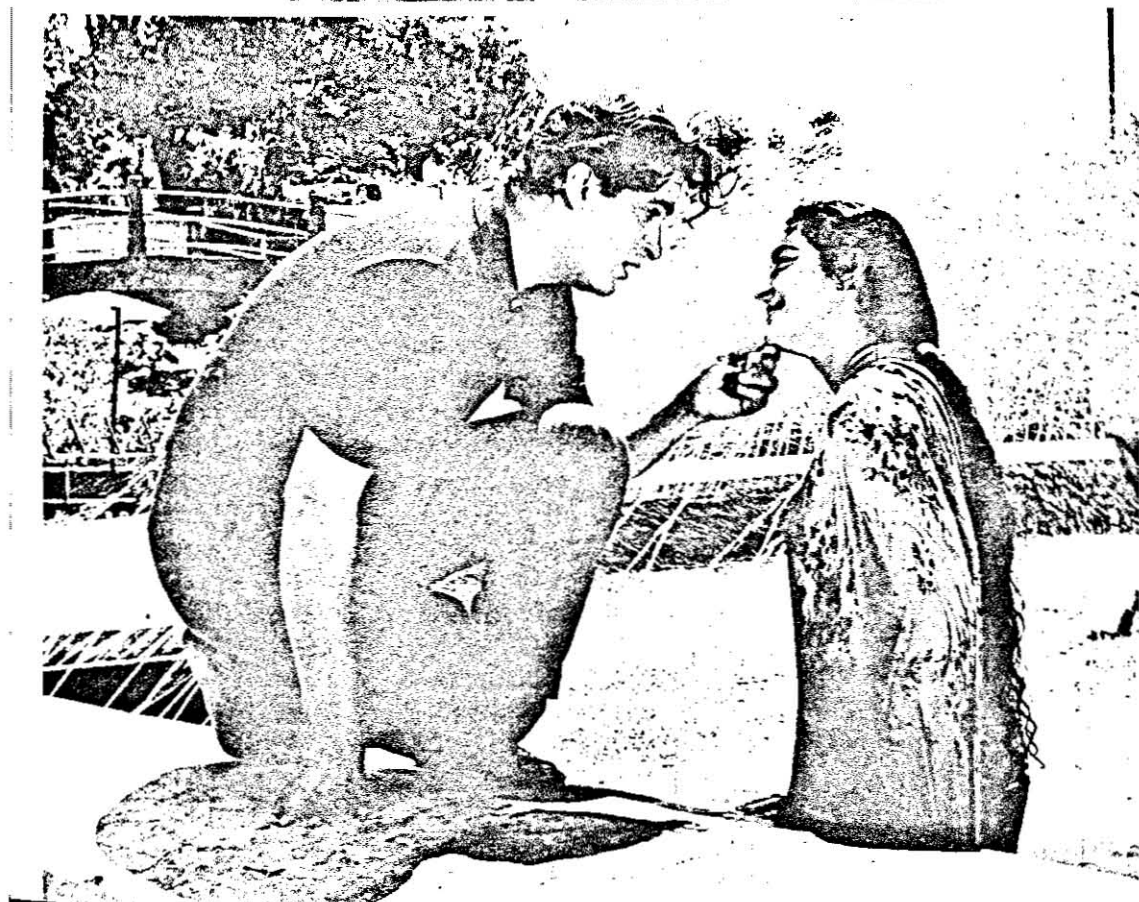
The quartet explores the temporal dimension in the main. In this context, the chain runs from *shabda* to *swara* through *nada* and *dhvani*. As described earlier, language too is a processed version of sound, but it has its own internal logic. In this case the chain is: *shabda-nada-varna*. Cinematic music becomes specially complex because it is an intricate and tightly knit design of two sound-inspired manifestations further combined with the visual. The marriage of temporality and aurality with spatiality and movement presents immense possibilities as well as challenges to creativity. How does a cinema-maker meet the challenge?

On most occasions the problem is posed as: 'What music is to be used for a particular situation?', or 'What should music try to achieve in a particular situation?' Usually the doctrine of realism is invoked. We are all aware of the ingenuities practised to find a realistic justification for music when definite events, localities, characters, etc. are involved. However, a subtle difference in the invocation of the doctrine deserves to be noted. The criteria to select the actual music itself can hardly be described as realistic, though attempts to provide a realistic motivation for the use of music are not lacking.

However, it is common knowledge that there are many who see no reason why a cinema-maker should be bound by the shackles imposed by the philosophy of realism. A strong contention is that the art of cinema aims creatively at moving away from reality in order to transform it into a virtual, 'truer' reality. To those who hold this view, music is expected to carry out an altogether different function. Music, for them, operates to comment on cinematic message or experience.

The third strategy also has an aesthetic orientation, but music is explored in it for taking a close look at structure and construction. The insistence is to identify musical components and organizations reponsive to the structural elements of cinema. Frames, the shots constructed within; the seeds of montage as well as their development in the shots; the dynamics, the tempo, and the rhythms realized through editing; the damming and release of the image-flow, and such other structural features are to be matched musically.

8

The Indian cinematic endeavour *vis-à-vis* music is to be appreciated against the backdrop provided by the foregoing conceptual discussion. This is not to suggest that Indian cinematic music has followed all the contours of the conceptual map. Which cultural force operates without deviations?

However, is it not true that all deviations are understood as such *because* of the frameworks erected by theoretical deliberations? Many pleasant or unpleasant features of cinematic music are explained when a reference is made to the relevant theoretical structure. In fact, very often, revolutions are made possible because theories exist! Rebellions can be imagined with ease if grammatical fortifications are visible.

There is an additional factor that makes conceptual discussion and theoretical formulations relevant in any cinematic thinking. Admittedly, conceptualizations and theorizations have exerted the maximum influence on the art of cinema. Firstly because it is the youngest of the arts. It came of age in a universe peopled with theories of art. Secondly, those who pioneered in cinematic development have often been keen students of other disciplines (because of the inherent multi-disciplinary nature of the art). The history of cinema has therefore reflected the contemporary literary isms and controversies, features of the antecedent dramatic performing traditions, and the prevailing audience-patron relationship. Against this backdrop is to be appreciated the tripartite nature of Indian cinematic music. The commercial Hindi, regional, and 'new wave' or art cinema are the three traditions. In spite of the usual overlaps, the triad will be seen to generate varied motivation as well as the final cinematic and musical products. The Hindi tradition is usually regarded as the most wide-ranging, accessible, and influential. Yet, it is significant to note that the total Indian cinematic output consists of only 30 per cent of Hindi films. On the other hand, regional cinema has often been adjudged as representative Indian expression at national as well as international critical forums. In other words, discussion focussed on the Hindi stream may have to be qualified in view of the significant achievements in the two other streams. Musically analyzed, the situation throws up interesting and supporting crystallizations:

a. Till about 1940 the studios used to appoint 'tune-setters' on the staff. These musicians had strong regional, linguistic, and musical leanings. The early studios were run on a 'proprietor-as-father' principle, and this too contributed to the stabilization of certain musical formulae.

b. The two pioneering centres of cinematic subculture (namely, Pune and Calcutta) were also major centres of regional cultures. Both Maharashtra and Bengal enjoy rich traditions of art music. Further, they displayed the capacity to explore new avenues of music-making (e.g., stage music in Maharashtra and Rabindrasangeet in Bengal). As a consequence, both the centres created cinematic music with the rich contribution of regional flavours.

c. Many composers (Vasant Desai, Naushad, S.D. Burman, Salil Chowdhury. *et al*) produced distinctive music on account of their close acquaintance with regional musics even after cinema had become a Bombay-based industry. Occasions are not lacking when composers have lifted their own tunes from regional films and transplanted them in Hindi films—and the songs have thrived!

d. From about 1950 gramophone records of songs began to be brought out before the release of a film. This fact clearly underscores the independent existence of film music irrespective of its filmic framework.

Is the time ripe to pass a judgement on Indian cinematic music? Do we have the sophisticated conceptual framework necessary to place this complex socio-cultural phenomenon in perspective? The advent in recent years of two new combinations of music and image has complicated the situation further. Pending audience research, documentation of regional achievements, and a better understanding of our multiple oral and linguistic traditions, studies in Indian cinematic music are likely to remain attempts to understand Hindi film songs! □