



Arrival: South India

South India has been less influenced by outside cultures over the centuries than the northern region, which was more affected by foreign peoples who invaded or established trade routes through the area. Primarily Hindu, southern India is thought to preserve what remains of India's earliest civilization, that of the Dravidians. The sophisticated music of South India, called Carnatic (also Karnatak) music, is closely associated with Hinduism, though not specifically with temple rituals. There is a greater emphasis on vocal performance, though many instruments, such as the Sarasvati vina, are distinctive to the region. Many Carnatic music enthusiasts claim that the music of the south is more "pure" than that of northern India due to its historical insulation from outside influence.

Site 2: Carnatic Classical (Vocal) *Kriti*

First Impressions. Our example begins with a sustained drone, after which a rich toned male vocalist begins to sing in free rhythm, as a drum is briefly heard warming up in the background. The opening section seems also to be a "warm-up" for the singer as he improvises on a few non-lexical syllables. As he improvises his phrases, another instrument—a bowed instrument that sounds like a violin—shadows him. After a brief pause, the vocalist initiates a metered section, that prompts the drummer to join the performance with accented pulses and short flourishes of rhythmic vibrancy. Listening closely, it is evident that the singer is repeating the same lyric with each vocal phrase, decorating his performance with a fascinating display of ornamentation and seeming improvisation. Compared to the previous track (Hindustani *raga*), the rhythm and meter are clearly articulated by strong drum beats, giving it an almost march-like feeling.

KRITI

A South Indian genre of devotional songs using Hindu poetry.

Aural Analysis. The most important difference between the classical music of North and South India is that whereas Hindustani music is mostly improvised, Carnatic music is based on fixed compositions. Improvisation occurs only after the composition has been fully presented, and even the highly patterned ornamentation performed by the singer is part of the composition. Carnatic music's most important compositional form is a type of devotional song called *kriti*, which is based on a genre of devotional Hindu poetry of the same name. While the lyrics could speak of devotion to God, they can also be religious, love, or historical stories. The composer of a *kriti* normally writes both the poetry and the melody, the former being written in one of several South Indian languages, each with its own script (e.g., Telugu, Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil). Pitches are written in one of the many local notational systems; only the main pitches are indicated, ornamentation being determined by oral tradition, highly patterned, but not freely improvised. Vocalists usually perform an improvised introduction called *alapana* before launching into the *kriti* itself, though these can be extremely brief in some cases. This serves to ready the vocalist for the more demanding vocal feats of the ensuing performance and helps to prepare the audience as well.

The enclosed example is "Manasā! Etulorttune" ("O unworthy Mind!"), a *kriti* by Sri (usually translated as "saint") Tyāgarāja (1767–1847), South India's most famous composer. The language is Telegu but the title is Sanskrit. *Kriti* texts are typically in three sections. The first, called *pallavi*, consists of one or two lines of text which reappear throughout a



A Carnatic (South Indian) classical singer performs a *kriti* devotional song, accompanied (left to right) by a *mridangam* drum, *kanjira* hand drum, *tambura* lute, and violin (N. Scott Robinson)

performance, a kind of refrain. This *kriti*'s text begins with the words "O unworthy Mind! How long can I put up with you, if you do not listen to my counsel!" (translation by T.K. Govinda Rao, *Compositions of Tyāgarāja*. Chennai, Tamil Nadu: Gānamandir Publications, 2009, p. 136). The *pallavi* is followed by a second section, called *anupallavi*, which begins "Follow my advice. Spend your time in singing the glory of Śrī Rāma, the jewel of the solar race with humility and devotion." The final section of the text, called *charanam*, is longer than the others and is followed by the *pallavi* text, giving it a "rounded form." Improvisation, if present, follows the *charanam*, but the work will always conclude with a restatement of the *pallavi*. Regarding the overall form, where improvisation loosely based on the *pallavi* melody occurs, some describe the form as resembling "theme and variations." The enclosed track only goes through the beginning of the *anupallavi*, but the complete *raga* performance is included in the website that accompanies this book.

South Indian *ragas*, whether they are *kritis* or other musical forms, operate on principles similar to the *ragas* of North India—but the specifics are quite different. The Carnatic system is, at least on the surface, unusually extensive because there are so many theoretically possible scales. If you allow for all possible arrangements of the seven pitches (some pitches are available in two variants as well), there are seventy-two possible scale forms. When you factor in other variables, such as ornamentation and pillar pitches, there are theoretically some 36,000 possible *ragas*. In practice, only a small number of *ragas* are commonly used. Our example is *Raga Malayamārutam*, whose pitches in ascending order are C#, D, F, G#, A#, and B (if sounded on a Western instrument such as piano). Expressed in solfège, the *raga* is Sa, Ri, Ga, Pa Dha, Ni, Sa; the *raga* then has six tones, the fourth pitch (Ma) being omitted.

South Indian drum cycles, like those in the North, are also called *tala* but follow a different set of operating principles. As with the *raga* system, the Carnatic *tala* system also allows for far more cycles than are actually used. In practice, the system is actually fairly simple, but like so much of Indian music, it can be confusing to beginners because of its extensive terminology.

A Carnatic *tala* consists of three variable elements, called *anudrutam*, *drutam*, and *laghu*. As in the North, South Indian music uses a system of hand gestures to symbolize *tala* patterns. The *anudrutam* is signed as a one-beat clap; the *drutam* is a clap followed by a wave gesture of the right hand; the *laghu*, which consists of a variable number of beats, is signed as a clap followed by right-hand finger counts. South Indian audience members often “keep the *tala*” on their hands during a performance, and sometimes a singer will also use the gestures as s/he performs. Each *tala* has a name that combines two elements: a *tala* name and a *jati* name, with the latter representing a variable number of beats in the *laghu*. The most commonly used *tala* in Carnatic music is properly called *triputa* (*tala* name) *chaturasra* (*jati* name), consisting of a four-beat *laghu* (clap and three counts) and two *drutam* (each a clap and wave). The full cycle of eight beats, then, is “clap, count, count, count, clap, wave, clap, wave.” Because the name *triputa chaturasra* does not roll off the tongue so easily, the nickname *adi tala* (“ancient” *tala*) is commonly used. It is unlikely that you could ever attend a Carnatic music concert and not hear *adi tala*. The selected track, however, is an exception, using a much shorter *tala* called *rūpakam*, which consists of only three beats, consisting of an *anudrutam* and a *drutam*, with no *laghu*; it is signed as “clap, clap, wave.” But because the cycle is so short, the performers have combined four repetitions into an overarching twelve beat cycle (3+3+3+3).



South Indian
mridangam
drummer plays
during a concert
surrounded by six
more drums
(N. Scott Robinson)

The most commonly used drum in Carnatic music is called *mridangam*; it is a two-headed barrel drum with leather strap lacing, and heads that are weighted (tuned) with a mixture of cooked rice mixed with iron filings and perhaps ash; this pasty mixture adds weight to the drum head, thereby lowering the pitch. Players use their hands to strike each head. Many players also wrap the body of the drum in cloth. The recording also includes a *kanjira*, a small frame drum consisting of a jackfruit frame, a single head usually of monitor (lizard) skin, and a single hole in the frame into which three or four thin metal discs or old coins are placed to rattle when the drum is struck by the player's hand. The *kanjira* is essentially the same as what Westerners know as the "tambourine." This instrument only became common in classical playing in the 1930s.

The first sounds heard in our example, those of the drone, could be the *tambura*, the same drone chordophone found in Hindustani music, but in this performance the musicians employ a small "black box" called a *sruti box* that emits continuous drone pitches electronically. As in the North, the drone reinforces the basic pitches of the *raga*. The bowed instrument that shadows the singer is a European violin—but one that is held in a way that no Western violinist would ever employ: it is placed between the chest and right foot of a player seated on the floor. The violin, like the harmonium, was introduced into India by British colonialists but completely transformed into an Indian instrument. Its function in Carnatic music is to closely follow and imitate the singer. Thanks to the way that the instrument is held, players can easily slide their left hand along the neck to create any of the twenty-three named ornaments found in both the instrumental and the vocal music of South India.

LISTENING GUIDE



CD 1.6 (4'14")

Chapter 5: Site 2

India: Carnatic Classical (Vocal) *Kriti*

Voice: Single male

Instruments: Violin (bowed lute), *sruti box* (electronic drone), *mridangam* (barrel-shaped drum)

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	<i>Sruti box</i> (drone) begins. (Tonal center = C [#]). Note the violin tuning and <i>mridangam</i> (drum) warming up in background.
0'09"	[<i>Alapana</i>] Voice begins with highly melismatic improvisation in free rhythm.
0'14"	Listen for the violin "imitating" the melodic contour of the vocalist. Note this exchange of voice followed by violin throughout the opening section of the performance.
2'59"	Applause signals the end of the opening section.
3'04"	[<i>Pallavi</i> section] Vocalist begins the "composed" section of the performance. Note that the violin (3'06") no longer "imitates," but plays along with the same melody as the vocalist.

Line 1 (first half): *Manasa! Etulorttune*

("O Unworthy Mind! How long can I put up with you,")

Repeats a total of five times before the second half of the line begins.

3'10" *Mridangam* enters.

3'24" Line 1 (second half): *Manavi Cekonave*

("if you do not listen to my counsel.")

3'28 Return to beginning of line 1 and sung three times.

3'51" Return to first half of line 1.

3'56" Vocalist sings on syllable "O!"

4'04" Drums signal end of the *pallavi* section.

4'07" Second section [*anupallavi*] begins just before the excerpt fades. Though brief, listen for the change in text.

Line 2: *Dinakarakula Bhushununi*

("Follow my advice.")

Source: "Manasā! Etulōrttunē" *Raga Malayamārutam, Rūpakam Tala*, composed by Śrī Tyāgarāja and performed by Śrī V. Ramachandran, vocal; Śrī S. Varadharajan, violin; Ramnad Śrī Raghavan, *mridangam*; Śrī R. Balasubramaniam, *kanjira*; recorded at the 2002 St. Thyagaraja Festival by the Thyagaraja Aradhana Committee, Cleveland, Ohio, 2002. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 1.6): Mimic the vocal melody, along with the violin part, during the introduction (*alapana*). Also, sing along and memorize the melody of the composed section (*pallavi*) as if you were a student of this musician.

ARADHANA
A South Indian
festival.

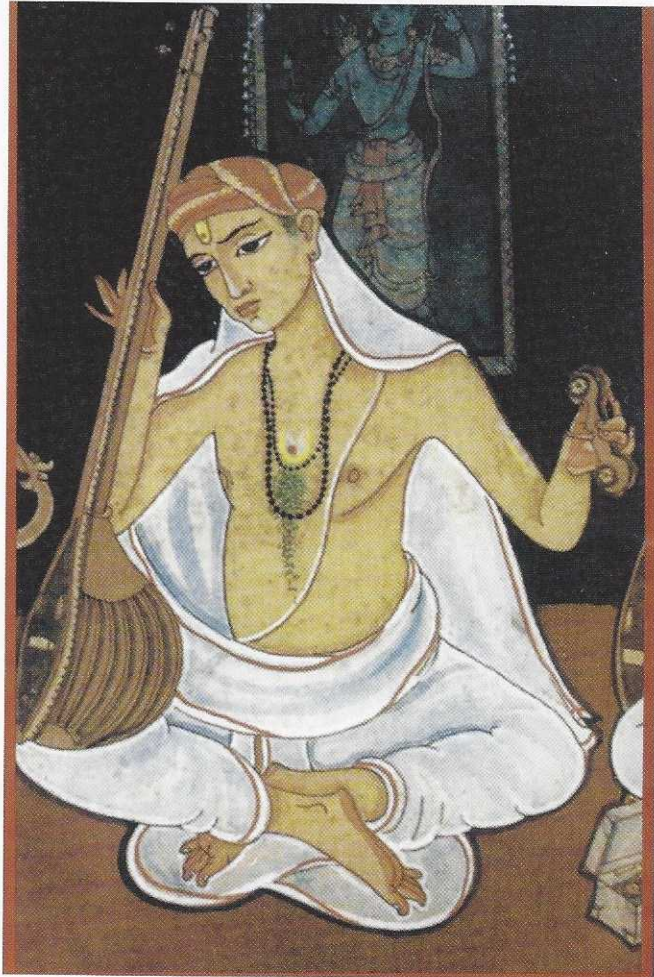
Cultural Considerations. Whereas Hindustani music is primarily improvised, albeit with a pre-composed *gat* or *chiz* serving as a skeletal framework in the metrical portion of the performance, Carnatic music is primarily composed in song form, though with the expectation that the performer will add typical (and codified) ornaments to the main notes. Consequently, South India has, like Europe, a small pantheon of saint-like composers, of whom Tyāgarāja (1767–1847) is the most famous. Other renowned composers include Muttusvami Dikshitar (1776–1835), Syama Sastri (1762–1827), and Svati Tirunal (1813–1846), all contemporaries of Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin, and others from early nineteenth-century Europe. Tyāgarāja, a man who prophesied his own death and is therefore called "Saint" in English, is celebrated in an annual *aradhana* (festival), originally held in Tamil Nadu state but now observed in many parts of the world, including the United States. Since 1907 the festival has included, in addition to *puja* (worship), performances of Tyāgarāja's compositions by both amateurs and professionals. One of the largest festivals is held each year in Cleveland, Ohio, when the local community brings in major singers and instrumentalists from India.



A South Indian violinist plays during a St. [Sri] Tyāgarāja Festival in Cleveland, Ohio. Note how he holds the instrument between his chest and right foot, making it easier to play the ornamentation required in this music

While they predominate, *kṛiti* are not the only vocal form found in South Indian classical music. Vocalists sometimes improvise extensive *alapana*, together with a violinist who imitates entire phrases following the main performer's rendition. Carnatic repertory also includes other song genres, including the *varnam*, *ragamtanam-pallavi*, and *tillana*. Some are secular, even erotic, and may include extended melismatic passages in which the performer shows off his or her mastery of improvisatory techniques. Carnatic dance is typically accompanied by vocal performance, especially the widespread *Bharata Naatyam* dance tradition.

Sri Tyāgarāja (1767–1847) is South India's most famous composer, whose music is still celebrated in festivals throughout the world (Aradhana Committee, Cleveland, Ohio)



SARASVATI VINA

A plucked lute from South India, often associated with the Hindu goddess Sarasvati.

NAGASVARAM

A double-reed aerophone from South India.

TAVIL

A pair of drums from South India, often used to accompany the *nagasvaram*.

The instruments of South India are fewer than those of North India, but several are worthy of mention. The most important is a plucked lute called *sarasvati vina* (or *veena*). Held horizontally or even placed on the floor, this instrument has up to nine strings for playing melody and rhythm but generally no sympathetic strings. Players may use plectra or their bare fingertips. The most memorable South Indian instrument is a long, black double-reed called *nagasvaram*, usually played in pairs and enthusiastically accompanied by a pair of short barrel drums called *tavil*. One may also encounter performers using the *venu* (flute) or the *dilruba* (fretted bowed lute). In recent years, several new Western instruments have been adapted into Carnatic music, most prominently the mandolin, made famous by one player, the youthful U. Srinivas. Other Western imports include the violoncello (or 'cello), the viola, the alto saxophone, and the clarinet; the latter's reeds and mouthpiece have been altered to allow for greater ornamentation and tone-bending. In South India, instrumental music consists primarily of vocal compositions performed without words, though the original melody is generally elaborated on through improvised passages requiring great virtuosity.



The *sarasvati vina*
lute of South India

Explore More

Kathakali

Attending a performance of Indian *Kathakali* dance drama, whether in India or a touring group, is an unforgettable



Kathakali performance: two drums on left, two actors in middle, two gong players on right

experience. Perhaps you will not recall the musical accompaniment (drums, percussion, singing), but you cannot have ignored the actors' make-up or costumes. Going beyond the fascinating visual aspects, however, requires the detailed study of all the aspects appreciated by connoisseurs: gestures, make-up codes, facial expressions, dance movements, and the accompanying music, including the meaning of the sung words and their role in telling the story. Although it originated in the extreme southern state of Kerala, *Kathakali* is considered particular to that state alone but has come to the notice of audiences not just throughout India but worldwide. But understanding the words, which are in a southern language called Malayalam, sometimes mixed with Sanskrit, is near impossible for people living elsewhere. Fortunately, most of the clips of *Kathakali* available on the Internet include subtitles. None of the actors, whose facial colors indicate

character (e.g., green indicates a noble character), speaks or sings, this being done by off-stage performers, because the actors' gestures, expressions, and dance are so complicated. But the musicians are clearly seen on stage: one or two drummers (a horizontal drum played with the hands (*maddalam*) and one vertical played with sticks (*chenda*)) on the viewer's left, and two players who strike small gongs with wooden beaters on the right.

Traditionally sacred in character, though never part of Hindu temple rituals, the 101 classical stories derive from many sources, especially the epic tale called the *Mahabharata*. In earlier times a performance lasted the entire night, but today's performances are shortened to three or four hours (although on-tour performances are much shorter). In addition to the old stories, writers have created new stories, such as from the Bible, from Shakespeare's dramas, and even from Goethe's *Faust*. Learning to perform *Kathakali* requires up to ten years just to appear on stage followed by a lifetime of continuing effort, including the study of Kerala-style martial arts. Because arts such as *Kathakali* are so "deep," serious connoisseurs also grow over time, coming to see and hear more with every new performance. This inherent allure to appeal to both novice and veteran audiences makes the *Kathakali* one of the most memorable of Indian theatrical genres.



Kathakali dancer (Wikimedia Commons)

BHAJAN

Hindu devotional songs from India.

Site 3: Hindu *Bhajan* Devotional Song

First Impressions. Along with a reed instrument and pair of drums, a male vocalist sings a short line, which is answered by a group of singers, both male and female, who sound more like a congregation of ordinary people at worship than professional singers. The melody they sing is rather simple, repetitive, and easy to imitate with the melodic instrument providing the pitch outline of the vocal phrases. A metallic instrument joins the group, adding a steady rhythmic element like the sound of a model train chugging along to the beat.

Aural Analysis. The reedy sound of the melodic instrument is a *harmonium*, a free-reed pump organ originally from France. Full-sized harmoniums became popular parlor instruments in "better" American and European homes during the nineteenth century, and many families today still preserve one as a treasured heirloom. These domestic instruments were fairly large, often had extensive wood carvings as decorations, had a keyboard, a bank of pull stops, and were pumped by two pedals.

Portable versions of the harmonium became popular by mid-century and were quite compact with a small keyboard and a hand-pumped bellows at the rear of the case. This type of harmonium was originally designed for missionaries and other traveling religious leaders, who used them to accompany hymn singing. Many British missionaries went to India, taking the harmonium with them—though they certainly did not anticipate that Indians would embrace the instrument so enthusiastically and blend it into their traditional music. In *bhajans* today the harmonium player often provides just a steady drone, but can also play the lead melody to support the vocal line, as with our audio example.

In addition to a harmonium, a drum (or, more properly, two drums) is often heard in *bhajan* performance. The sound should seem familiar, as it is a *tabla*, an instrument heard earlier in the Hindustani *raga* (see above). Unlike the *tala* patterns heard in classical performances of Hindustani *raga*, the one rhythm here is simple and regular, alternating between a four- and an eight-beat cycle. The metallic instrument that is also heard is peculiar to the overseas Indian community in Trinidad and Tobago, called a *dandtal* (or *dental*), and consists of a steel rod struck from within a horseshoe-shaped beater. In this example, it plays a short-short-long pattern throughout.

Bhajan singing typically follows a call-and-response format in which a leader (in this case male) sings a phrase that is then sung by the group. This pattern differs from call-and-response performance in most traditions, because normally a group completes a vocal line



A man sings while playing a hand-pumped harmonium at a temple in Kathmandu, Nepal

sung by its leader, rather than simply repeating it. Therefore, *bhajan* practice is closer to antiphonal singing, in which leader and group alternate. Practically speaking, the leader in *bhajan* performances is also prompting the singers, who might not know the words otherwise. The vocal lines are very simple melodically and are repeated. In our example, there are basically two phrases, both of which use a pentatonic scale. The five tones could be described as 5, 6, 1, 2, 3, with 5 and 1 as the most important and 1 as the fundamental pitch. Because the term *bhajan* denotes a great range of devotional songs sung by members of virtually any of India's faiths (though they are most prominent in Hinduism), and because they are normally sung by lay people, the texts can be in whatever local or national language is preferred.

GURU

A teacher or spiritual guide, primarily associated with Hindu traditions from India.

The text of our example was written for the Hindu sect that follows the great *guru* (teacher) Sai Baba, and begins (in translation) with these exhortations: "Lord Ganesha, son of mother Parvati and Lord Shiva. You are ever pure. Protect me O Blissful Lord. You confer auspiciousness."

LISTENING GUIDE



CD 1.7 (1'36")

Chapter 5: Site 3

India: Hindu *Bhajan* Devotional Song

Voice: Male vocal lead and mixed-group response

Instruments: Harmonium (keyed aerophone), *tabla* (pair of hand drums), *dandtal* (idiophone)

TIME	LISTENING FOCUS
0'00"	<i>Tabla</i> and harmonium enter.
0'02"	Lead vocal enters with first verse. Line 1: <i>Parvati Nandana Gajanana</i> (Translation: Lord Ganesha, son of mother Parvati and Lord Shiva.)
0'07"	Congregation responds with repetition of the first line.
0'13"	Lead vocal, then congregation, repeats first line.
0'18"	<i>Dandtal</i> enters with a consistent short-short-long rhythm.
0'25"	Lead vocal enters with second verse. Line 2: <i>Pashupati Nandana Niranjana</i> (Translation: You are ever pure.)
0'31"	Congregation responds with repetition of the second line.
0'37"	Lead vocal, then congregation, repeats second line.

0'48" Lead vocal, then congregation, sings first line again. (Repeated.)

1'11" Lead vocal enters with third line.

Line 3: *Pahī Prabho Mam Pahī Prasanna*

(Translation: Protect me O Blissful Lord. You confer auspiciousness.)

1'16" Congregation responds with repetition of the third line.

1'22" Lead vocal, then congregation, repeats third line.

Source: "Parvati Nandana Gajanana," recorded by Terry E. Miller at the Sai Baba Temple, Longdenville, Trinidad, 1985. Used by permission.

ETHNO-CHALLENGE (CD 1.7): Sing along, as if you were a member of the congregation. Additionally, clap the *dandtal* rhythmic pattern throughout the example. For an additional experience, watch one or more *bhajans* on YouTube and ascertain as much as you can about the visuals that accompany it.



Swaminarayan
Akshardham
Temple in Delhi,
the world's largest
Hindu temple
(N. Scott
Robinson)



Bhajan performance at Hindu temple near Chaguanas, Trinidad, West Indies. Accompaniment is provided by drum, harmonium, and *dandtal*



The *dandtal* is a metal rod struck with a horseshoe-shaped metal beater used to accompany *bhajans*

Cultural Considerations. *Bhajans* are devotional songs sung by lay people for many occasions, both formal and informal, at home or in a temple, accompanied or unaccompanied. They can be traditional songs, homemade ones, or a blend of traditional and popular music styles. In a sense they parallel Protestant hymns in the Christian tradition. Indeed, some Indian Christians have adopted *bhajans* to their own faith. *Bhajan* meetings, predominantly associated with Hindus, are often held during the week, and anyone in the congregation can lead a song.

If Hindu, services usually begin with the chanting of *om*, the fundamental sacred sound of Hinduism. *Bhajan* texts can be sung in any language and may consist of nothing more than a repetition of the names of God, because God is believed to have many incarnations. Other texts express the devotees' love for God, and offer praise and devotion.

Bhajans can be heard throughout India, Nepal, the Tamil parts of Sri Lanka, and anywhere else where there are Indian or Hindu communities, such as South America and the Caribbean, particularly Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago. Among the Hindu spiritual teachers who have attracted followings outside India is Sai Baba, originally from the Indian states of Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. *Bhajan* singing typically takes place in Sai Baba temples on Thursday or Sunday. The *bhajan* selected for inclusion here was recorded in a Sai Baba temple in Chaguanas, a town in central Trinidad, where there is a concentration of Hindus. (Around 40 percent of Trinidadians are descendants of Indians brought to the country as indentured workers after slavery ended.) *Bhajan* singing is a major aspect of Sai Baba worship but is also found among Hare Krishna devotees, another sect that has also established congregations and temples worldwide.

BOLLYWOOD

An informal name for India's film industry, combining "Bombay" and "Hollywood."

Explore More

Indian *Filmi Git* (Film Song)

While Indian film songs, or *filmi*, are clearly not part of the classical *raga* tradition, many film directors and performers were trained in Indian classical music, and as a result *filmi* retains some classical characteristics. Most films are laden with musical productions that break away from the basic plot and encourage an escapist experience for the audience. Though atypical in modern cinema, historical film buffs will recall that many American films from the 1930s to the 1960s also included numerous songs. Just as *The Sound of Music* (1965) or *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) would be unremarkable without musical performance, so, too, would the hundreds of similarly produced film-musicals found in Indian cinemas and abroad today. While the song-film format fell out of favor in the West long ago, it has not in India, a country where millions toil every day in the heat for little reward. Movies that help to transport people from the grinding poverty of their own lives into fantasies of love, adventure, or exceptional religious devotion is clearly valued by its primary audience.

The Indian film industry, colloquially referred to as "**Bollywood**" (a combination of the words "Bombay" and "Hollywood"), has become the world's number-one producer of films, releasing more than 2000 films per year. Hindustani artists traditionally dominated the Indian film industry, and as a result for many years mainstream *filmi git* were also generally Hindustani. Eventually, the South developed its own style of film songs, and in recent years these have gained popularity throughout India and abroad.

The first Indian "talkie" was released in 1931. Early films required the actors themselves to sing songs derived from "light classical" Indian music into a "single-system" camera. By the 1940s, however, when sound and image could be recorded separately, producers began using "playback singers," individuals who recorded the songs in a studio; the songs were then played back to the actors who lip-synched



A dance scene typical of Indian film with actress singing a *filmi* song (Shutterstock)

the words on the film set. Because of India's diverse population and languages, songs were frequently recorded in more than one of India's major languages. Film producers hired music directors who, with a team of writers and musicians, created, performed, and recorded all the music for a given film. To this end, studios had to retain a great many musicians playing primarily Western orchestral instruments plus a few Indian instruments, especially for "traditional" scenes.

Today's film music, however, makes greater use of synthesizers. Certain of the film music producers became major figures in their own right, and most of them were musicians themselves. The "playback" singers who have performed most songs since the late 1930s are far fewer in number than the actors and actresses they sing for, meaning that audiences often hear the same voices doing the songs in film after film, regardless of who is being seen on-screen.

Two figures have tended to dominate the genre, either personally or by setting the style. Male actor-singer Kundan Lal Saigal set the standard early on with his warm voice, which recorded well with the early microphones. But a single female singer, Lata Mangeshkar, dominated the industry for