

**A PORTFOLIO OF ORIGINAL COMPOSITIONS  
EXPLORING SYNCRETISM BETWEEN  
INDIAN AND WESTERN MUSIC**

**THESIS**

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requirements for the degree of  
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**by**

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## ABSTRACT

In this dissertation, overviews and detailed examinations of three compositions are presented.

These compositions which constitute the portfolio of the M.MUS degree, are an attempt to explore syncretism between Indian and western music. Two of these works are written for a flute quartet (flute, violin, viola and cello) accompanied in part by a *mrdangam* (Indian percussion instrument). The third work is written for a jazz quartet (piano, saxophone, double bass and drums).

Syncretism between western and Indian music can take on a variety of forms, and while this concept is not new, there exists no suitable model or framework through which these compositions can be analysed.

The approach used in this dissertation is therefore guided solely by the compositions themselves.

The syncretism in these works lies in the use of melodic, rhythmic and timbral elements of Indian music within two ensembles which are essentially western.

This dissertation describes each of these elements in their traditional context as well as the method of incorporating them into western ensemble playing.

## CONTENTS

	Page
Preface	i
Note on transliteration	ii
Index of terms in Indian music explained during the text	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Introduction	1
Chapter I An overview of the compositions in the portfolio	5
Chapter II A detailed examination of <i>Hariji</i>	18
Chapter III A detailed examination of <i>A Suite of Six Rāgas</i>	35
Chapter IV A detailed examination of <i>Give Five</i>	47
Conclusion	52
Bibliography	56
Discography	58

## PREFACE

This mini-dissertation describes the three original compositions which constitute the portfolio of the M.MUS degree. It is an attempt at exploring syncretism between the classical music of north India and western music.

Two of these compositions are written for a flute quartet (flute, violin, viola and cello) accompanied by a *mṛdangam* (Indian percussion instrument). The third composition is written for jazz quartet (piano, saxophone, double bass and drums).

These three works were selected from a collection of syncretic works involving Indian music and western music, composed during the past five years. The collection includes two choral works written for the University of Durban Westville choir, namely: (i) *Ghanashyam*, (ii) an arrangement of an Indian folk song called *A Gujerati Folk Song*, (iii) a twelve bar melody for jazz quartet called *Kitu*, which was recorded for B & W Records, London, (iv) an arrangement of a traditional Hindu hymn written for the Natal Philharmonic Orchestra, and (v) an arrangement of the choral work *Ghanashyam* written for western flute, Indian flute, piano and *tablā*.

The syncretic effectiveness of the three works in the portfolio lies in the use of melodic, rhythmic and timbral elements of Indian music within ensembles which are essentially western. This dissertation explains and describes these elements in their traditional context, as well as the method of incorporating them into western ensemble playing.

## NOTE ON TRANSLITERATION

Diacritical markings occur in the dissertation primarily on three vowels:

ā as in art or far; ī as in pin or sit; ū as in suit or flute

These markings are used to assist the closest pronunciation in English of terms of Indian music.

=====

An explanation of terms used in Indian Music appear in the text in italics.

	<u>Page</u>
Ālāp	19
Bandīsh	27
Bhajan	39
Gat	39
Jhālā	26
Jor	23
Jūgalbandī	20
Meend	21
Mrīdangam	7
Rāga	7
Sārangī	10
Sītār	22
Taan	26
Tablā	10
Tāla	15
Tānpūra	18
Thūmrī	42
Tīhai	24

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Syncretism as defined in the Concise Oxford Dictionary is an "attempt to unify or reconcile differing schools of thought". In the portfolio of compositions presented as the major portion of this dissertation, I explore the possibility of effective syncretism, between the classical music of north India and western music, through composition. The term western music here includes popular, jazz and classical.

This endeavour has been influenced by studying north Indian music for the past eighteen years and by closely studying the work of Pandit Ravi Shankar, particularly his composition and recordings of syncretic works, involving western and Indian music.

Elements of Indian music have been used in various ways in western composition, particularly since the late fifties. Ravi Shankar, through his many concerts in the U.S.A., influenced a number of jazz musicians of the time. This period (1950s - 60s), known in jazz history as the 'free jazz period', saw a few jazz musicians incorporating elements of Indian music in their compositions. The emphasis placed on modes for their compositions rather than chord changes was characteristic of this period. John Coltrane's 1961 piece entitled *India*, on which he plays soprano saxophone, imitating an Indian oboe-like instrument called a *shenai*, bears testimony to this influence. "Coltrane was attracted to Indian musical forms as part of his greater world-music awareness in general and he incorporated Indian elements into his music in a complex and subtle manner" (Farrell : 1988,190).

Naima was of Coltrane's best known works ... This was Coltrane's description of the structure of the piece "The tune is built... on suspended chords over an E<sup>b</sup> pedal tone on the outside. On the inside - the channel - the chords are suspended over a B<sup>b</sup> pedal tone. The tonic and dominant are used in the drone from which improvisations are developed, just as in the music of India." (Cole : 1976,110).

Also in 1961 Ravi Shankar recorded the album *Improvisations* which featured four jazz musicians and three Indian musicians. This is one of his first attempts at fusing jazz and Indian music.

However, it was not until the British group The Beatles took an interest in Indian music (John Lennon and George Harrison specifically) that Indian music caught the attention of the broad public and media in the early sixties. "What I call the sitar explosion began in early 1966 ... The special attraction to the sitar suddenly came about when the Beatles and the Rolling Stones and some other pop groups used it in recordings of their songs" (Shankar : 1969, 92).

Among the many Beatles' songs using elements of Indian music, the one song that really explores a number of the characteristics of Indian music is "Within you without you" (1967). This song uses a number of Indian instruments such as the *dīlrūbā* (bowed string instrument), *sītār*, *tablā* and *tanpūrā*, along with violins and cello. A description of the song is given here by Farrell:

Within the space of five minutes Harrison makes reference to an assortment of Indian music and genres. The *dīlrūbā* is used to shadow his vocal line as is the *sārangī* (another bowed instrument) in *Khyāl* (Indian vocal style), there is a question-answer sequence between the *sītār* and strings as in instrumental performances between *sītār* and *tablā*. The spiritual sentiments of the lyrics are reminiscent of *bhajans* and other religious songs, and the treatment of strings has shades of the scoring in Hindi film music (1988, 195).

The manner in which elements of Indian music appear in other musics is as diverse as there are musics. It is difficult to examine all these 'crossovers' in an Introductory Chapter.

Many composers have used elements of Indian music in such a subtle way that it is not easily recognizable, even by an experienced ear. The first movement of Olivier

Messiaen's *Quatuor pour la fin du temps* (1940) for example, has the piano repeating a seventeen-beat *tāla* which is extremely difficult to recognise as a *tāla*. These works cannot be classified under a particular genre. However in the works of Ravi Shankar we find a fairly consistent methodology of composition, which can be referred to as a genre. The style of syncretic compositions of Shankar, in his many works involving western ensembles, came about in his early experiences with the All-India Radio Instrument Ensemble. Shankar joined the staff of All India Radio in Delhi in 1948 as Director of Music. The following is Shankar's description of his composition techniques:

One of my composing methods was to take a raga and, treating it with as much classical purity as possible, have the entire ensemble play it as if it were being improvised. For instance, I took ragas as Darbari ... or Puriya, and had the ensemble play the whole alap and jor movements as we play them on solo instruments, followed by a piece within a tala framework. The entire composition was fixed ... and it sounded as if the whole piece were being improvised ... I tried to take full advantage of the quality, color, tone and range of each instrument ... [W]hen the musicians had come to know my technique ... I would call on them one at a time ... to improvise occasionally.

Another of the techniques I experimented with at the time was composing a piece based on one of the light ragas ... such as Piloo, Khamaj, or Kafi. Keeping with the spirit of the ragas, I used them as the groundwork for romantic, bright, lilting pieces with exciting rhythms and lively melodies. Occasionally in these compositions, I even used a very free kind of counterpoint, where one group of instruments played against another, executing different phrases with any number of rhythms. Actually, this was nothing new, since this kind of 'counterpoint' is more like a very close dialogue between two artists in a recital of classical music (1969, 82 -83).

This style of composition is evident in most of Shankar's later works, including his two concertos for *sitar* and orchestra. It is Shankar's method and style that has most influenced the compositions in the portfolio.

While the fundamental concept of these compositions, which use elements of Indian music for an ensemble which are traditionally western is not new, there still exists no suitable model or framework through which they can be analysed. It is the purpose of this dissertation to attempt to develop such a framework, but without rigidity and somewhat along the lines of Tovey who was "concerned always with audibility - perceptibility without recourse to orthodoxy" (Bent: 1987, 57).

The works in the portfolio will be discussed in general in Chapter II and analyzed in detail in Chapter III. Chapter II will contain a brief background to each work and an explanation of each of the elements and formulae used in Indian music which are found in the works. These explanations will appear in italics. Chapter III will include a detailed analysis of each bar or group of bars. A translation of the elements and formulae of Indian music used within the composition will be given and explained. Where necessary, transcriptions of their use in a traditional context will be given, to provide a comparison with their incorporation within my compositions.

## CHAPTER I

## AN OVERVIEW OF THE THREE COMPOSITIONS

The portfolio consists of three compositions, of which the first two are written for a flute quartet, and the third, a jazz quartet. The compositions are entitled *Hariji*, *A Suite of Six Rāgas* and *Give Five*. An overview of each composition is presented below.

An Overview of Composition 1 : *Hariji*

The first work in the portfolio *Hariji* was sketched in 1989, but then it existed only as a melody, which is now used for the third movement bars 3 to 17:

$\text{♩} = 60$

The musical notation is handwritten and consists of four staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). Above the first staff, the tempo is indicated as  $\text{♩} = 60$ . The melody is written across four staves, with the first staff starting with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The notation includes various note values, rests, and phrasing slurs.

This melody was intended to be played at a sporting event that takes place annually in Lenasia, a suburban town thirty kilometres south of Johannesburg. The event, known as the 'Gandhi walk', comprises two long-distance walks of seven and fifteen kilometres each, and commemorates the champion of non-violent protest, Mahatma Gandhi.

The melody was to be played as the participants approached the finish line, hence the use of quadruple time and a march-like introduction:



Due to lack of funds on the part of the organizers of the 'Gandhi walk', the melody was not recorded, so they continued to use the theme music from the motion picture "Chariots of Fire". In 1990 I re-examined this melody and used it in a piece written for the *Imizwilili Quartet*<sup>1</sup>. The piece *Hariji*<sup>2</sup> as it was later called, received two rehearsals but no performances. The composition was then performed quite extensively in 1992 by a Durban-based jazz group *Mosaic*<sup>3</sup>. For them it was rewritten to incorporate jazz-type solos by a soprano saxophone and piano. A third version of the work was arranged in 1993 by *Darius Brubeck*<sup>4</sup> and myself for the group *Gathering Forces II*<sup>5</sup> and performed at the Durban Festival of Music<sup>6</sup>, where it was also recorded 'live' for B & W Records, London. In this version it was scored for piano, western flute, Indian flute, *tablā*, violin, cello, percussion and keyboards.

- 
- 1 *Imizwilili Quartet*: A Durban-based flute quartet with a varied repertoire of classical, as well as arrangements of Kwela music, the music of The Beatles, etc.
  - 2 *Hariji*: Is the shortened name of Hariprasad Chaurasia, the world-renowned exponent of north Indian classical flute; *ji* denotes respect.
  - 3 *Mosaic*: Durban-based Indo-jazz group consisting of piano, western and Indian flute, *tablā*, bass guitar and saxophone.
  - 4 *Darius Brubeck*: Well-known performer, composer and jazz educator; founder and director of the Centre for Jazz and Popular Music at the University of Natal, Durban.
  - 5 *Gathering Forces*: A group of eleven musicians led by Darius Brubeck and Deepak Ram, featuring a repertoire based on jazz and Indian music.
  - 6 *Durban International Festival of Music and Arts*: Was held at the Natal Playhouse, Durban, in September 1993, and featured many international as well as South African musicians.

The present version of the work is written for a flute quartet (flute, violin, viola and cello) in three movements, accompanied in the third movement by a *mṛdangam*. It still retains its original name *Hariji*.

#### *MRĪDANGAM*

*The most popular percussion instrument in south Indian music. It is a two-headed barrel-shaped drum, carved out of a single piece of jackwood. The right head is tuned to the tonic or SA of the instrumentalist or vocalist. The left head serves as its bass. This drum is played with the hand and fingers.*

*Hariji* is based on *Rāga Sarasvatī*: this means that a *rāga* has been used as a mode or basis for composition, but that not all the rules of improvisation governing *Rāga Sarasvatī* in its Indian context have been adhered to, in the strict or traditional sense.

#### *RĀGA*

*The basis of music emanating from the subcontinent of India is the melodic system known as rāga, which is a unique melodic structure, with infinite possibilities of variation. Each rāga has a number of its own characteristics which channel the musicians' creativity as they expose and develop them in performance. Each rāga has a name to identify it. This particular rāga is named after Sarasvatī, the Goddess of Knowledge and music in Hindu mythology. The permitted notes of a rāga are fixed, as is their hierarchy of importance and their ascending and descending contours.*

Every *rāga* has a characteristic phrase called *pakad*. This serves as a recognizable feature, especially since more than one *rāga* can share the same notes. Before examining the rules of *Rāga Sarasvatī*, it is important to explain the pitch system in Indian music.

The pitch system in Indian music is very close to the scale system in western music, and is learned in much the same way as solfa notation. Each musician chooses his own pitch according to his voice or instrument, then all other pitches relate to it. The main pitch is SA (DOH) followed by others in the ascending order equivalent to a major scale :

SA RE GA MA PA DHA NI SA. Pitch variations are as follows:

- $\overset{\cdot}{\text{SA}}$  A dot on top of the note indicates a higher octave  
 $\underset{\cdot}{\text{RE}}$  A dot below indicates a lower octave  
 $\underline{\text{NI}}$  A line beneath indicates the note is flattened  
 $\overset{|}{\text{MA}}$  A vertical line sharpens the note.

The concepts of 'flatter and sharper' are not absolutes such as semitones in equal temperament tuning, but they approximate semitones.

The laws of *Rāga Sarasvatī*

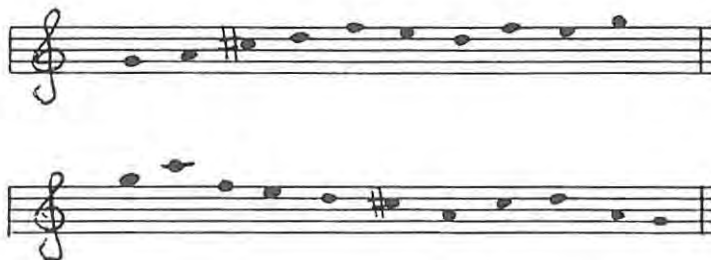
1. Notes of the *rāga*

SA RE  $\overset{|}{\text{MA}}$  PA DHA  $\underline{\text{NI}}$   $\overset{\cdot}{\text{SA}}$



*Harijī* is written in the key of G, not G major, but rather the SA or tonic is G. The fingering used to produce G on the western flute is similar to the fingering used to produce SA or the Indian flute.

2. Ascending and descending structure of *Rāga Sarasvatī*



3. Important notes of *Rāga Sarasvatī*

PA or D is the *vādī* or most important note

RE or A is the *samvādī* or second most important note.

*Vādī* and *samvādī* are sometimes described as the King and Queen notes of a *rāga*.



4. In the characteristic phrase of *Rāga Sarasvatī* the *vādī* and *samvādī* play an important role in determining its character:



Any performer of north Indian classical music would strictly adhere to these laws of the *Rāga*. The composition *Hariji* uses all the notes of *Rāga Sarasvatī*, but places importance on notes other than the prescribed *vādī* and *samvādī*; for example the 4th note or C-sharp is given prominence in the composition. As a performer of north Indian music I have translated ideas on the improvisation and composition of *rāga* performance into a more 'modern realm' and have taken the liberty to venture out of the *rāga* and override some of its rules.

Other scales have also been derived from the *rāga*, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter III.

Many styles of Indian music performance are evident in *Hariji*, partly inspired by the instrumental combination of flute, violin, viola and cello. Each of these instruments plays a number of different roles and 'represents' different Indian instruments. For example, the viola plays the role of a *sārangī* in a typical vocal performance in bars 12-19 of the first movement. In the second movement, the viola together with the violin plays the role of a soloist in a *rāga* performance. In the third movement, it imitates the *tablā*.

*SĀRANGĪ*

*The sārangī is the foremost bowed instrument in north Indian music. It is made from one single piece of wood, with a goat skin-covered sound box, it has three or four main strings. Under these main strings run a variable number of sympathetic strings, 14 to 35. It is fretless and is played by sliding the fingernails on the sides of the main strings. The sārangī is often used to accompany vocal renditions of rāga.*

*TABLĀ*

*The tablā is the most important percussion instrument in north Indian music. It comprises two tuned drums. Its main function is to maintain the rhythmic cycles in which compositions are set. The right-hand drum dāyān is tuned to the SA or doh of the vocalist or instrumentalist, and the left-hand drum bāyān is not theoretically tuned to any particular pitch, but in practice is often tuned to sound a fifth below the right-hand drum.*

**An Overview of Composition 2: Suite of Six Rāgas**

The second work in the portfolio is a *Suite of Six Rāgas*. This work has six movements and is also written for flute quartet. The title 'suite' is used here with its general definition in mind, which is an instrumental genre consisting of fairly short rotated movements. It does, however, have some resemblance to the late Baroque suite as described by Judith Nagley, consisting of: "... contrasting keys at the start of each section and occasionally of contrasting thematic material, ... increasing emphasis on development followed by repetition or recapitulation". (1983, 1771)

This piece was inspired by the similarity between the medieval church modes and the parent scales of north Indian music. In north Indian music *rāgas* are classified into groups according to scale. According to Bhatkhante (1957, 12) *rāgas* can be classified within ten parent scales called *thāts*. These *thāts* are all full octave diatonic scales and are named after prominent *rāgas*. Six of these ten *thāts* are comparable to the six ecclesiastical modes.

The following table illustrates this comparison:

Medieval Church modes

*Thāts* (Parent scales) in north Indian music transposed to C  
BĪLĀWAL

1. IONIAN



2. DORIAN

KĀFĪ



3. PHRYGIAN

BAIRAVĪ



4. LYDIAN

KALYĀN



## 5. MIXOLYDIAN



## KHAMĀJ



## 6. AEOLIAN



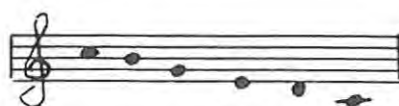
## ASĀVARĪ



The six *thāts* in the table are transposed to C, but the *rāgas* in the Suite use each successive degree of the C major scale as a ground note. Beginning with C, the first *rāga* in the *Suite of Six Rāgas* is called *Rāga Hamsādwanī* and is derived from the first parent scale *bīlāval* :

1. Notes of *Rāga Hamsādwanī*

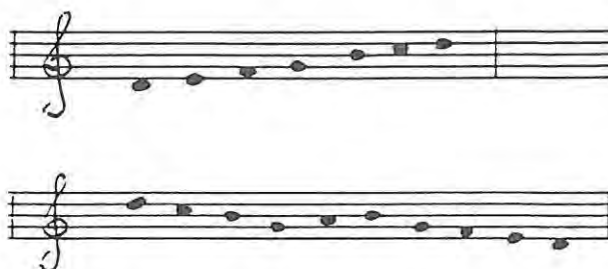
Ascending	SA RE GA PA NI ŚĀ
Descending	ŚĀ NI PA GA RE SA



2. The second *rāga* in the work, *Rāga Bāgeshrī*, is derived from the second parent scale *kāṭī* and uses D as a ground note:

Ascending SA RE GA MA DHA NI ŚĀ

Descending ŚĀ NI DHA MA PA DHA MA GA RE SA

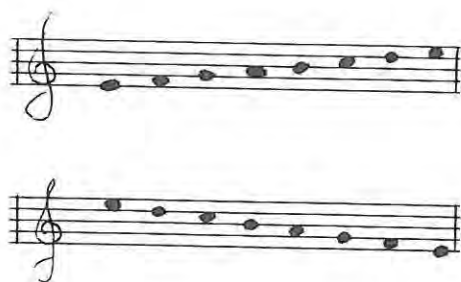


The ascending form is different from the descending form in *Rāga Bāgeshrī*, this is known as *vakra* which literally means crooked.

3. The third, *Rāga Bairavī*, uses E as a ground note:

SA RE GA MA PA DHA NI ŚĀ

ŚĀ NI DHA PA MA GA RE SA



*Rāga Bairavī* is derived from the third parent scale in the table, which is also called *bairavī*. As was mentioned before, these parent scales are named after prominent *rāgas*, *bairavī* being one of these prominent *rāgas*.

4. The fourth, *Rāga Yaman*, is from the parent scale *kalyān* and has F as its ground note.

Ascending      NI RE GA MA PA DHA NI ŚA  
 Descending    ŚA NI DHA PA MA GA RE SA



A characteristic feature of *Rāga Yaman* is that one never begins an ascending phrase with the ground note, always with the note below, in this case the note E (or NI).

5. The fifth, *Rāga Khamāj*, also shares its name with the fifth parent scale in the table *khamāj*, and uses G as its ground note.

Ascending      SA GA MA PA DHA NI ŚA  
 Descending    ŚA NI DHA PA MA GA RE SA



This *rāga* uses both the natural and flattened seventh.

6. The last, *Rāga Chandrakauns*, is not directly derived from any of the parent scales, but is closely related to a *rāga* known as *mālkauns* which is derived from the parent scale *asāvarī*.

*Rāga Chandrakauns*

Ascending SA GA MA DHA NI ŚA  
 Descending ŚA NI DHA MA GA SA

*Rāga Mālkauns*

Ascending SA GA MA DHA NI ŚA  
 Descending ŚA NI DHA MA GA SA



Indian music is generated by two broad concepts: *rāga*, the melodic framework and *tāla* the rhythmic framework. Along with different *rāgas* every movement of *Suite of Six Rāgas* is also 'somewhat' based on a particular *tāla*.

**TĀLA**

*The rhythmic aspect of Indian music is defined by the tāla system, as rāga defines the melodic system. A tāla can be described as a rhythmic cycle. "It has two principal aspects: (1) quantitative, meaning the duration of a cycle measured in terms of time units or beats (mātrā) ... (2) qualitative, meaning the distribution of stresses or accents within the cycle. These stresses occur at different levels of intensity: the principal stress at the beginning of the cycle (sam); a secondary stress within the cycle (tāli), and then there is a negation of stress (khāli) which always occurs at points where a secondary stress may be expected but it is consciously avoided" (Jairazbhoy : 1971, 29).*

Example of a *tāla* known as *Teental* - sixteen-beat cycle

	>				>							>				
Beats	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Stresses	X				2				0				3			
Mnemonic Syllables	Dhā	Dhīn	Dhīn	Dhā	Dhā	Dhīn	Dhīn	Dhā	Dhā	Tīn	Tīn	Tā	Tā	Dhīn	Dhīn	Dhā

1. X denotes the principal stress or accent, which is always on the first beat of the cycle; this is called *sam*.
2. 2 and 3 denote secondary stresses or accents.
3. 0 denotes the avoidance of an accent called *khali* which literally means empty.
4. The mnemonic syllables *dhā dhīn tā* etc., equate to the drum sounds produced by different finger and hand techniques on the *tabla*. (See pages 108 - 109 of Lucia, C. and D. Ram.)

There are many *tālas* in north Indian Music. The *tāla* used in *Suite of Six Rāgas* will be discussed in detail in Chapter III.

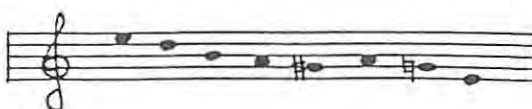
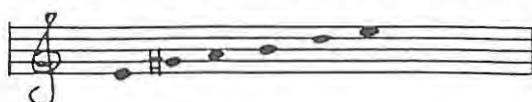
### An Overview of Composition 3: Give Five

The third work in the portfolio is written for a basic jazz quartet, namely piano, double bass, saxophone (in this case soprano) and drums.

This work is inspired by the jazz standard *Take Five* written by saxophonist Paul Desmond in 1959 and made famous by the Dave Brubeck Quartet. Like *Take Five*, *Give Five*, is in quintuple rhythm, but unlike *Take Five* it is based on a *rāga* known as *jog*.

The notes of *Rāga Jog*.

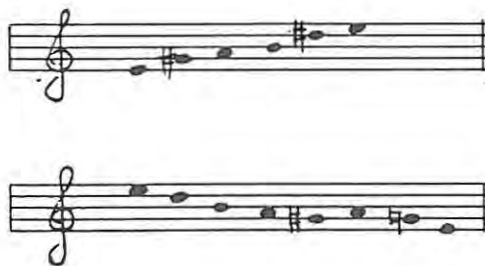
Ascending SA GA MA PA NI ŚĀ  
 Descending ŚĀ NI PA MA GA MA GA SA



Two varieties of *Rāga Jog* are currently performed in north Indian music, the first one is as the scale in the above example which uses the seventh note flattened, NI, and both natural and flattened thirds, GA and GA.

The second variety uses both the natural and flattened seventh and it is this version that *Give Five* uses

Ascending SA GA MA PA NI ŚĀ  
 Descending ŚĀ NI PA MA GA MA GA SA



The scale of *Rāga Jog* can be compared to the Blues scale.

*JOG* (ascending and descending forms combined)

SA GA GA MA PA NI NI ŚĀ



BLUES SCALE IN E



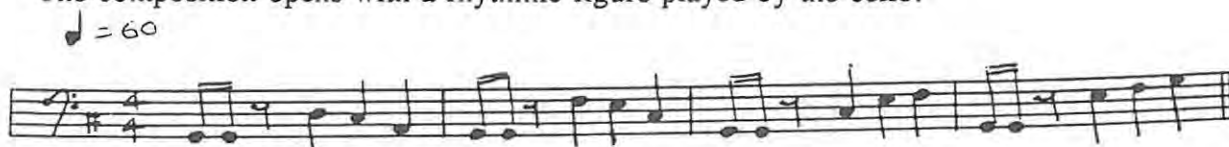
Detailed explanatory notes on *Give Five* are in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER II

### A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF *HARIJI*

#### First Movement *Ālāp*

The composition opens with a rhythmic figure played by the cello:



constant sound. Music has its source in the all-pervading sound which is *Aum*. The mantra *Aum* is chanted at the beginning of all Hindu ceremonies and is also used as a concentration point for meditation.

The *tanpūrā* is always the first sound to be heard in a performance of Indian music, and its continuous drone throughout the performance represents this omnipresent sound *Aum*.

If *Hariji* were played as a classical piece the *tanpūrā* would be tuned to:



In the absence of a *tanpūrā* the strings provide the drone in creative ways within the composition. This is done by using different techniques such as pizzicato and harmonics, thereby creating a tonal sense as well as adding different colours to the work.

The flute begins its *ālāp* in bar 6.

#### *Ālāp*

*In certain styles of music it is the beginning of a Rāga performance. It is given the highest place in Indian music. Ālāp unfolds the characteristics of a rāga and imparts phrases, important notes (vādī and samvādī) and range of instrument or voice. It has no measured rhythm and is very slow in tempo.*

Traditionally *ālāp* is not played in time, and in *Hariji* the grouping of notes are written in a way that suggests this. Here is an example of a few phrases in an *ālāp* as they would be played in a traditional Indian concert:



This is the *ālāp* played by the flute in *Hariji*:

This *ālāp* lasts for only fourteen bars, approximately fifty seconds. In a traditional concert, an *ālāp* can be played for up to an hour. The aim here is not to directly translate a traditional performance of Indian music for the flute quartet, but rather to use these elements such as an *ālāp* in the composition. However, any experienced listener or performer of Indian music would recognize this as an emulation of *ālāp*. In bars 12-20 the viola imitates the flute in its *ālāp*. This was inspired by two factors: firstly in vocal music, there is always a *sārangī* imitating the voice in an almost canon-like fashion. Secondly, while studying Indian music in the oral tradition, the student learns by imitating the teacher on the voice or instrument. As the teacher would play *ālāp* the student would try to imitate him, thereby learning all the laws of the *rāga*. It takes many years of this routine to master *ālāp*. The viola here represents something of the advanced student. In bar 21, the cello begins its *ālāp*, and the point at which it enters is typical of *jūgalbandī*.

#### JUGALBANDI

This word literally means two things that are bound together, it can also mean a marriage between two people. In a musical context, it involves two instrumentalists performing a *rāga* together.

In bars 22-25 the flute plays over the long sustained notes of the cello. In a *jūgalbandī* when two instrumentalists play *ālāp*, they normally share phrases, the length of these phrases being not fixed but extemporized. Sometimes when one instrumentalist is expressing his statement in *ālāp* the other instrumentalist would play at a much lower dynamic level, phrases that might enhance the overall performance. This again is not determined by any rules, but has become a recent trend, which is evident in many concerts and recordings of *jūgalbandī*. In bar 27 the cello "resolves" a phrase in its *ālāp* by approaching the tonic G from the note below, using a *meend*:



In many performances of *ālāp* in *rāgas* that use the seventh note, flattened or natural, phrases are resolved or return to the tonic from the seventh note as in the example above.

#### MEEND

*Meend* is an ornament used extensively in Indian music. Technically it involves sliding from one note to the next, a kind of portamento or glissando. Some instruments such as the *sārangī* are capable of producing slides of an octave's distance. Indian instruments are all designed to produce glissandi to enable them to emulate the human voice, since the voice is considered to be the ultimate instrument.

In bar 28 the violin and viola play a passage that again reveals the scale of *Rāga Sarasvatī*. This is typical of *stīr* performances. The *dha* has sympathetic strings below the main playing strings. These sympathetic strings are tuned to the scale of the *rāga* and are normally only played at the end of a phrase in *ālāp*. This sounds similar to a descending, harp-like glissando.

## SĪTĀR

This is the most popular string instrument in north Indian music. The sītār is made of seasoned gourd for its sound box and teak wood for its long fingerboard. The fingerboard consists of twenty movable frets, which are adjustable to suit the various rāgas. It has six to seven main strings, of which four carry melody, while the other three are used as drone and rhythm in fast movements. There are eleven to thirteen sympathetic strings or taraf which are tuned to the rāga being played. These sympathetic strings resonate while the main strings are played, providing a fuller and richer sound.

The cello's *ālāp* ends in bar 32 with a C-sharp, when the violin and viola begin to emulate a *tanpūrā*. The cello joins the drone in bar 33 playing the last string of the *tanpūrā*, at the same time resolving G from C-sharp.

As mentioned a *tanpūrā* can have four to six strings. The violin, viola and cello, here imitate a five-string *tanpūrā*. The violin and viola play the first four strings, and the cello plays the lowest string:



The flute is once again the solo instrument and continues to play *ālāp* from bars 33 to 48. Without the *tanpūrā* it would be easy to assume the note D to be the tonic, because of the emphasis placed on the C-sharp in bars 33, 35, 36 and 37.

The flute concludes its *ālāp* in bar 48. The strings now play the phrase that began the cello's *ālāp* in bar 21:



This phrase is repeated to suggest a feeling of recapitulation, or to create a coherent form within the *ālāp*. The violin also repeats the beginning of the flute's *ālāp* in bar 53:



The violin ends its *ālāp* statement in bar 63, when the flute and viola play a passage at an interval of a fifth.

The cello plays a closing phrase from bars 65 to 68 with the violin and viola holding a diminished fifth, and the flute plays its final statement closing both the *ālāp* and first movement of *Hariji*.

### Second Movement *Jor and Jhālā*

The main characteristic of the second movement is an elaboration of the first four notes of *Rāga Sarasvatī*. These four notes and their permutations are played by the violin and viola in an unmetered, rhythmic fashion, which is typical of *jor*.

#### *JOR*

*Jor* is an extension of *ālāp* and is sometimes considered as the second section or movement of a *rāga* performance. In *jor* the performer re-examines phrases in *ālāp*, but plays it in a rhythmic way with an increase in tempo. The rhythm here is implied and has no metre and like *ālāp*, *jor* is unaccompanied. The shape of *jor* depends on the instrument and its range and technical capabilities.

The cello begins with a pulse with the note G at  $\text{♩} = 120$  announcing the beginning of *jor* or the second movement. The violin and viola begin to explore the possibilities of the first four notes of the *rāga* SA RE MA PA OR G A C# D. In a traditional performance of *ālāp* or *jor*, the performer would extract all he can from each note before moving on to the next. Then by creating clusters of two or three notes the performer would explore many of the possible permutations, melodically and rhythmically. This

includes ornaments and manipulation of tone, and dynamics. As more notes are added, phrases become longer, eventually moving freely throughout the range of the instrument. Important notes and characteristic phrases of the *rāga* are taken into account.

The first forty bars in the second movement is an impression of *jor*. The use of only four notes in the entire forty bars was inspired by a noted flautist of India, "When improvising remember to use the notes economically" (Rao : 1977).

From bar 3-6, the cello changes from the note G to the dominating notes of the violin.

In bar 8-9 the strings play a cadence-like device known as a *tīhai*:

#### TĪHAI

*A tihā'i is a cadence-like rhythmic device, played three times. In most cases, the final beat ends on the first beat of the next cycle. "In its simplest and most skeletal form, the tīhai may be represented by a series of three evenly spaced mnemonic syllables boḷs" (Kippen : 1988, 181).*

The *tīhai* in bars 8 and 9 does not end on the first beat of bar 10, but since *jor* is not metered and does not have any rhythmic accompaniment, this would not necessarily be untraditional.

In bars 11-23 the violin and viola exchange phrases, which is something often found in performances involving two solo instruments. This is called *sawaal-jawaab* which literally translates as question-answer.

From bars 24-34 the violin plays an ostinato like figure, in quavers, while the viola accents the last three quavers, and the flute accents the last two quavers at each half-bar respectively:

24

$\text{♩} = 120$

Flute

VIOLIN

VIOLA

Cello

The cello plays melodic lines against the rhythmic pattern created in the violin, viola and flute. This is not keeping in tradition with *jor* per se; this cello line came as an afterthought.

This pattern ends with a rapid passage or *taan* played by the violin and cello in bar 35, and is repeated by the viola and violin in bar 36 and the flute and violin in bar 37. The violin plays the *taan* an octave higher each time.

The *jor* ends with a *tīhai* that is constructed over 7 bars.

#### TAAN

*Taans* are rapid passages performed during the latter part of an instrumental performance. In vocal music a *taan* also means an elongated note.



The violin begins to represent a *sītār* in bar 46, by playing what is known as *jhālā*:

#### JHĀLĀ

*Jhālā* is an extension to *ālāp* and *jor* on string instruments like the *sītār*. The *sītār* player alternates between the drone strings and the main string which carry the melody:

In *jhālā* many patterns are possible, the accent can be shifted from the strokes of the melody string to the drone strings. *Jhālā* is the final section and climax of *ālāp* performance. It is also played on other instruments. A *jhālā* may conclude the *ālāp* section of a performance or the entire performance.

The *jhālā* played by the violin differs slightly from the example given above, where three beats are given to the drone strings on the *dhā* and one beat on the main string. This

would be difficult on the violin, since the open G string represents the drone strings of the *sītār* it would be difficult to play three quavers on the open G string while alternating notes towards the middle of the *jhālā* without touching the A or D strings of the violin. The cello holds sustained notes over the violin's *jhālā* enforcing the strong notes in each bar.

In bar 61 the violin uses two given strings in its *jhālā*, G and D, the tonic and fifth of *Rāga Sarasvatī*. The *jhālā* ends with a simple *tīhai* in bar 74, and the the cello and viola play a *taan* ending the *jhālā* and second movement of *Hariji*.

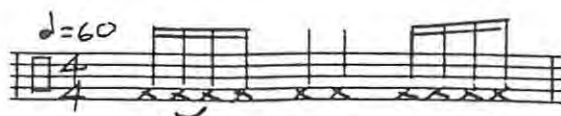
### Third Movement - *Bandīsh* and Variations

The third movement represents the third section of a *rāga* performance, which is known as *Bandīsh*:

#### *BANDISH*

*The only pre-composed section of a traditional performance. While the ālāp jor and jhālā are improvised and unaccompanied sections, the bandtsh is 'fixed' and accompanied by the tablā. The length of the bandtsh can be anything from four bars to sixteen bars in any tāla. The performer may compose the bandtsh himself or may choose from one of the many traditional bandtsh's composed by performers of the past.*

The strings here imitate a *tablā*, playing a variation of an eight beat *tāla* known as *keherwā*:



The cello plays what the *tablā* player would play on his left-hand drum *bāyān*, and the violin and viola imitate the right-hand drum *dāyān* :



The cello slides from the G to the D in the first group of semiquavers. The *tablā* player would normally slide his hand across the left drum, and would approximate an interval sounding a fifth. The right-hand drum of the *tablā* is normally tuned to the SA or tonic of the instrumentalist, therefore G in *Hariji*. The flute begins to play the *bandīsh* in bar 9 and the violin and viola begin to change the right-hand *tablā* tuning to the dominating notes of the flute *bandīsh* in each bar:

In bar 17 and 18 the flute in its melody deviates from the *rāga* by playing the notes B and B-flat. This briefly suggests another *rāga*. Performances of *rāgas* in the classical tradition do not permit the use of notes outside the scale of the *rāga*. In a light classical vocal genre known as *thūmrī* it is a common practice for performers to use 'foreign' notes and also sometimes shift the tonic or SA of the *rāga* to suggest another *rāga*. This is somewhat similar to modulation.

Modulation is not usual in Indian classical music, but a musician may suddenly shift the tonic (the *SA*) and in a flash suggest the pattern of a different *Rāga*, before coming back to the original tonic and *Rāga*. This is a feat which gives a great thrill to connoisseurs, and is known in Sanskrit as *Avīrbhava-Tirobhava* (appearance and disappearance). In the semi-classical form known as *Thūmri*, however, modulation is used quite frequently (see Discography, Shankar: 1971, 6).

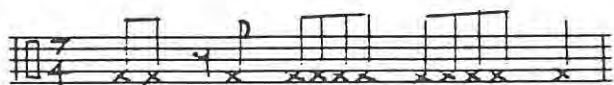
In bar 21 the strings, beginning with the foreign note B, play a phrase that leads into the melody that the flute has introduced. This time the melody is accompanied by the *mṛdangam*. The first bar is marked with the rhythmic pattern played by the strings from bar 13-20:



Thereafter the *mṛdangam* part in the score is marked *ad libitum*. In a traditional performance, the percussionist is free to play subtle variations on the *tāla* or rhythmic cycle, sometimes even following the melodic lines of the main instrument for a few cycles.

The strings play the melody from bars 25 to 40, while the flute plays 'improvised' phrases borne out of the melody:

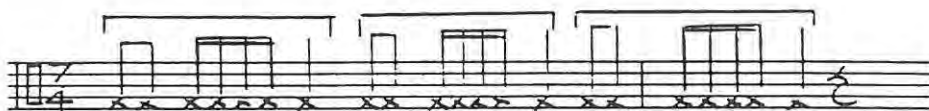
In bar 41 the time signature changes to  $\frac{7}{4}$ , equivalent to *rūpak tāla*, a seven-beat cycle. The *mṛdangam* introduces the new time signature with a pattern:



The pattern is played for two bars, then a variation of the pattern for the next two bars:



In bar 45, the *mṛdangam* plays a *tthai*, three times:



The above example is played three times with a crotched rest between them, this is known as *chakradhar tthai*. The last beat of the *tthai* which is supposed to fall on the first beat of bar 49 is deliberately avoided, to enhance the cello's entry. The cello plays the ostinato that began *Hariji* in bar 1 but this time in  $\frac{7}{4}$ :



The violin double this ostinato for eight bars to strengthen the rhythmic feel. The flute begins to play a solo from bar 53, which is written in a way to suggest an improvised section, and this ends with a *tthai* in bar 68.

53

Flute

violin

cello

The violin and viola play a melody from bar 69 - 76. The melody is repeated from bar 77-84, this time joined by the flute and cello playing the same melody in E and C respectively:

77

FLUTE

VIOLIN

VIOLA

CELLO

This was not written to suggest any form of harmony, but was motivated purely by the fact that each soloist in Indian music chooses his own *SA* or tonic to suit his instrument or voice. Instruments playing together using different *tonics* never occurs in traditional performances.

The violin and viola begin some melodic and rhythmic variations from bar 85, and are joined by the cello in bar 87 playing the same variations, but using C as a tonic. The *mṛdangam* is instructed to imitate these variations. These variations lead into the melody in bar 97, the melody which began the third movement in  $\frac{4}{4}$  time, now played in  $\frac{7}{4}$ :



The first four bars of the melody are played from bar 95 to bar 98. From bar 99 only two bars of the melody are played, allowing the flute to play rapid passages over one bar in bars 101, 103 and 105, and two bars in 110 and 111:

This format of playing half the melody and then completing the cycle by playing *taans* is derived from beginner compositions in Indian music. A beginner would play fixed compositions and variations of a *rāga* known as *sargams*, the variations are being written out by the teacher in Saregama notation. The student would learn hundreds of these *sargams* in different *rāgas* until he or she begins to improvise. These *sargams* provide material for future improvisation.

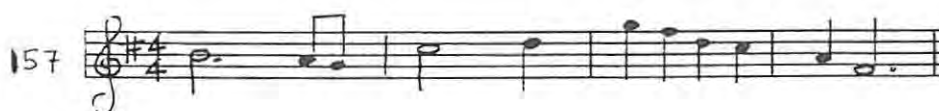
Example of a "beginner" composition in *Rāga Yaman*:

The image displays a musical score for a beginner composition in *Rāga Yaman*. The score is written on seven staves of music, all in the key of D major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as  $\text{♩} = 120$ . The notation includes a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests. The first staff shows a melodic line starting with a quarter rest, followed by a sequence of notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, B4, A4, G4, F#4, E4, D4. The subsequent staves continue the melody with more complex rhythmic structures, including triplets and sixteenth-note runs, characteristic of the *taans* mentioned in the text.

The  $\frac{7}{4}$  section ends with a *tithai* beginning with the flute at the end of its last *taan* in bar 111, then joined by the strings on the last beat of bar 113.

The time signature resumes to  $\frac{4}{4}$ . This is the last set of variations in *sawaal-jawaab*, or 'question-answer' style. This symmetrical phrasing is normally heard towards the end of a traditional performance. A dialogue between the soloist and the percussionist ensues creating a climactic ending. It is also heard when two soloists play together, in *jugalbandi*.

In this section the flute and *mrdangam* act as soloists while the strings provide the 'answer'. The first eleven bars are very rhythmic with the first eight bars of 'question-answer' and four bars of 'dialogue'. From bar 129 these phrases become quite melodic in nature, and the phrases decrease in length, from 1 bar to half in (bars 133 and 134) then to a quarter of a bar in (bars 136-137). Eventually the flute and strings 'argue' in bar 138, splitting the bar into eighths. The flute plays a *taan* in 139 and 140 that leads back to the original melody. The melody is played by the strings, while the cello recapitulates the rhythmic figure that began the first movement of *Hariji*. The flute melody follows two beats after the strings and maintains this until bar 156. The cello joins this canon-like approach of the flute in bar 145. In bar 157 the violin plays the phrase that began the melody in bar 21 of the third movement:



This ends with a C-sharp. The strings play harmonics on the note G, while the flute ends *Hariji* with the phrase that ended the first movement:



## CHAPTER III

## A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF A SUITE OF SIX RĀGAS

This work in six short movements is dedicated to my six nephews, after whom each movement is named.

First Movement *Bhavesh in Rāga Hamsādwanī:*

SA RE GA PA NI ŚĀ  
C D E G B C

The flute introduces the movement in the first five bars, which are repeated by the violin and viola from bars 6 to 10, the cello imitating the violin and viola a bar later in a canon-like fashion. This 'canon' continues from bar 7 ending with a *tīhai* in bar 25, while the flute plays a simple melody in *rūpak tāla*.

The entire piece is in  $\frac{7}{4}$ , however the feeling of *rūpak tāla* is at first more audible in the melody, then in the strings. *Rūpak tāla* is traditionally divided into 3:2:2:

*Rūpak tāla:*



Flute Melody:

Bars 11 to 25 ♩ = 145



To adhere strictly to the rules of this *tāla* would require to write the piece dividing the bars as  $\frac{3}{4} \frac{2}{4} \frac{2}{4}$ . While it is not uncommon to find  $\frac{3}{4} \frac{2}{4} \frac{2}{4}$  in twentieth century music, I have found it easier to write in  $\frac{7}{4}$ .

The flute plays the melody until bar 25, this section is then repeated. From bar 26 this arrangement is reversed, with the strings playing the melody and flute playing the rapid passages. The treatment of the melody is much more in keeping with tradition in that it makes use of the ornament *meend* or portamento in bars 29, 33 and 37.

The flute concludes the movement with a *tīthai* in bar 40 leading into the next movement, the last note of the *tīthai* being C which is the seventh note of the next *rāga*.

### Second Movement - *Ajit in Rāga Bāgeshrī*

Ascending	SA	GA	MA	DHA	<u>NI</u>	ṢA				
	D	F	G	B	C	D				
Descending	ṢA	<u>NI</u>	DHA	MA	PA	DHA	MA	<u>GA</u>	RE	SA
	D	C	B	G	A	B	G	F	E	D

The ascending note sequence differs from the descending sequence in *Rāga Bāgeshrī*. The note PA is omitted in the ascending, and is used only as an ornamented note in the descending form. This is known as a weak or *dūrbal* notes, that has to be used sparingly, in other words, the performers would not hold or place emphasis on the note.



This movement begins with the flute introducing the *rāga* from bars 1 to 5. The cello begins an ostinato in bar 5 which is in *dādrā tāla*, a six-beat rhythmic cycle. The piece is in  $\frac{3}{4}$  so the *tāla* occurs over two bars:



The cello ostinato occurs for four bars, then is joined by the viola in bar 9 and playing the same rhythmic pattern, but different notes:



different notes are not played together. Two notes that are at the same pitch or a different octave can be played together because they generate the same mood or emotion. But sounding two different frequencies together would generate a dissonant mood or two moods simultaneously and this would be traumatic for the piece (Ram : 1986, 47).

It can be argued that, in this second movement in particular, the *rāga* is clearly audible and still holds its individual mood or emotion, despite the different passages and melodies occurring at the same time. If any composition in the portfolio retains the 'spirit' of *rāga* while using many voices and notes simultaneously, it is this second movement of *A Suite of Six Rāgas*.

### Third Movement *Ishkar in Rāga Bairavī*

Notes of the *rāga*:

Ascending	SA	<u>RE</u>	<u>GA</u>	MA	PA	<u>DHA</u>	<u>NI</u>	ŠA	
	E	F	G	A	B	C	D	E	
Descending	ŠA	<u>NI</u>	<u>DHA</u>	PA	MA	RE	<u>GA</u>	SA	<u>RE</u> SA
	E	D	C	B	A	F <sup>#</sup>	G	E	F E

The dominant characteristic of this movement is that it combines a number of elements of north Indian music simultaneously. It begins with a four-bar *sītār*-like composition called *gat* played by the cello and viola. While this *gat* continues, the flute and violin play *ālāp*-like phrases above it. Although *ālāp* and *gat* are never heard simultaneously in a traditional performance, they are sometimes heard together in *jūgalbandī* when two instrumentalists reach the end of a performance. This is also heard in religious songs known as *bhajan*.

**GAT**

*A fixed theme-like composition in instrumental music, that synchronizes the rāga with tāla.*

*A gat is normally four to twelve bars in length.*

**BHAJAN**

*Popular religious song with a fixed melody set in one or many rāgas combined. It is essentially a song by Hindus expressing an emotional faith (bhakti). It is accompanied by a percussion instrument, and normally takes the form of lead singer singing a verse and a chorus repeating. It begins in slow tempo gradually increasing. Towards the end of a bhajan the chorus continues to sing the first line of the text, while the lead singer sings ālāp-like phrases, using words from the bhajan text.*

The flute plays *ālāp* phrases beginning in bar 6. The violin imitates the flute one bar later:

Two staves of music in 4/4 time. The top staff is labeled 'Flute' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Violin'. Both staves start with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The flute part begins in bar 6 with a series of notes, and the violin part begins in bar 7, imitating the flute's melody. The notation includes various note values and rests.

This continues until bar 13 when the violin stops. While the flute continues the violin re-enters in bar 19, and continues until bar 28. The flute is silent in bar 19 plays a short *taan* in bar 20, is again silent for four bars, then plays another *taan* in bar 25 and continues *ālāp* for three bars until bar 29. This represents a piece of music with no set form. The intention here is to create a composition that is not in the Indian sense 'composed'. In other words, to create a feeling of four musicians playing very freely, by creating phrases spontaneously. In bar 29 a reasonably coherent form begins to develop, with the violin and flute playing the first two bars of the *gat*, and the cello and viola

playing a *taan* in the next two bars. This is then reversed, with the cello and viola playing the first two bars of the *gat* and the violin and flute playing a *taan* over two bars. This continues until bar 41, when the cello and flute play some variations in the *rāga* suggesting a slower tempo in bars 45, 46 and 47. A *sawaal-jawaab* (question-answer) ensues in bar 49, between the violin and viola, and the cello and flute, until bar 53 where all four instruments play a phrase in fifths. The cello plays a phrase that leads into the *gat* in bar 59.

The violin drops out in bar 60, the viola in bar 62, leaving the cello to play the first two bars of the *gat* leading into the *jhālā*.

Here the *jhālā* is played by all the instruments, unlike the first piece in the portfolio, *Hariji* where the violin plays the *jhālā* in the second movement. The flute and violin imitate the *sītār*'s melodic string, while the cello and viola suggest the *sītār*'s drone string.

65

The image shows a handwritten musical score for four instruments: Flute, Violin, Viola, and Cello. The score is in 4/4 time and shows a melodic phrase in fifths across four staves. The Flute and Violin staves have a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The Viola and Cello staves have an alto clef. The Flute and Violin parts consist of quarter notes and half notes. The Viola and Cello parts consist of eighth notes and sixteenth notes, creating a drone-like texture.

The *jhālā* continues until bar 83 where the flute and violin end the third movement with a *tīhai* while the viola and cello hold the SA (*E*). The last note of the *tīhai* E becomes the leading note of the next *rāga* in the fourth movement.



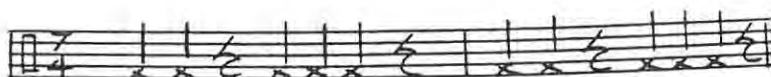
While the violin and viola continue to play the *tāla* and phrases at *Rāga Yaman* using pizzicato, the cello plays a melody starting in bar 5. The flute joins the cello in bar 13. From bar 16, the violin and viola now playing arco, beginning to play phrases against the flute and cello, but still retaining the character of *Rāga Yaman*. The violin and viola return to pizzicato in bar 28, while the flute plays *taans* in bars 29, 31, 33 and 34. The cello ends the piece in bar 35 by playing the characteristic phrase, *pakad* of *Rāga Yaman*.

### Fifth Movement *Siddhartha* in *Rāga Mīshra Khamāj*

Notes of the *rāga* :

Ascending	NI	SA	GA	MA	PA	DHA	NI	ŚA
	F#	G	B	C	D	E	F#	G
Descending	ŚA	NI	DHA	PA	MA	GA	RE	SA
	G	F#	E	D	C	B	A	G

This movement begins with a cello ostinato which is played over two bars of 7/4. This ostinato is in a fourteen-beat rhythmic cycle (*tāla*) known as *deepchandi* notated over two bars:



This *tāla* is often heard in the semi-classical form known as *thūmrī*. *Rāga Khamāj* is also used in many semi classical as well as popular compositions.

#### THŪMRĪ

*Thūmrī* is a vocal genre that is freer than other classical forms. It became popular from the mid nineteenth century. The melodies in *thūmrī* are of a very lyrical nature and sometimes combine folk melodies and different *rāgas* in one performance. The texts always express a longing for a loved one or the divine one, especially Lord Krishna.

The cello ostinato uses the tonic *SA* and fifth notes of the *rāga*:

If a *tanpūrā* were to be used in this movement, the tuning would use the same notes:



The cello here, then serves a two-fold purpose:

1. It establishes the SA (tonic) and PA (fifth) notes of the *rāga*.
2. It establishes the *tāla*, *deepchandi*.

This ostinato continues until bar 51.

In bar 5 the violin begins to play a series of *taans*. These *taans* reflect the *mīshra* nature of this *rāga*. The word *mīshra* literally means 'mixed', and is normally prefixed to the names of a few *rāgas* that are often used in semi-classical music. These particular *rāgas*, about seven in number, all have either the third note or the seventh note or both, flattened. A musician is allowed to use notes outside the prescribed set, during a performance of a *mīshra rāga*.

The *taans* of the violin from bar 5 to bar 13 do not use both notes outside of the prescribed set for *Rāga Khamāj*, but use the seventh note both flattened and natural in a straight line.

In bar 15 the violin and viola play the scale of the *rāga* at the same time emphasising the accents of the rhythmic cycle *deepchandi*:



The flute begins its melody in bar 21. This melody is repeated in from bar 26, but this time, the viola retains the rhythmic framework while emphasising the notes of the flute melody, using broken chords:



In bar 35 the violin enters, by playing a variation of the flute melody.

The flute in bar 39 to 42 plays a typical phrase in *Rāga Khamāj*, which is imitated by the violin playing a fourth higher. This phrase is then played together by the violin and viola, playing a fifth below the flute from bars 47 to 50. In bar 51, a *sawaal-jawaab* (question-answer) section begins between the flute and strings. This goes on for 10 bars until the strings play all their answer phrases together from bar 61 to 65. The flute plays a *taan* in bar 65 and a *tīhai* in bar 66.

This leads back to the cello ostinato in bar 68, the flute repeats its original melody from bar 73 and ends in bar 85.

Sixth Movement *Vibhav in Rāga Chandrakauns*

Notes of the *rāga*:

SA GA MA DHA NI ŚA  
 A C D F G# A

This short and last movement is an imitation of the first movement, but using a different *rāga*:

6

Flute

Violin

Viola

Cello

The flute introduces the work in the first five bars, which are then repeated from bar 6 by the violin and viola. The flute imitates the violin and viola passages one bar later in a canon-like way and the cello plays a melody beginning in bar 7. The opening five bars of this movement are shown below for comparison:

#### FIRST MOVEMENT

1

#### SIXTH MOVEMENT

1

It can be said that the last movement is written in the relative minor of the first movement, although both these scales are pentatonic.

In the first movement the cello imitates the violin and viola, with the flute carrying the melody. This is reversed in the sixth movement with the melody in the cello and the flute imitating the violin and viola. This movement ends with a *thai* in bar 16.

## CHAPTER IV

A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF *GIVE FIVE*

The last work in the portfolio is written for a basic jazz quartet: piano, double bass, drums and soprano saxophone.

This work opens with an *ālāp* performed by the piano. The piano begins with a pedal point in the left hand part emulating a *tanpūrā*. The right hand begins *ālāp*-like phrases in the third bar; outlining the character of *Rāga Jog*.

*Rāga Jog*

Ascending	SA	GA	MA	PA	<u>NI</u>	ṢĀ			
	E	G#	A	B	D	E			
Descending	ṢĀ	<u>NI</u>	PA	MA	GA	MA	GA	SA	
	E	D	B	A	G#	A	G	E	

The *ālāp* is played over 21 bars before the 'groove' in <sup>5</sup> begins. The double bass introduces this groove with an anacrusis allowing the first beat to fall on the SA of the *rāga* which is the note E. This bass line outlines the characteristic phrases (*pakad*) of *Rāga Jog*. Any experienced performer or listener of north Indian music will recognise the *rāga* in the bass line:



The bass line also underlines the rhythm of the jazz standard *Take Five* which inspired this piece. The piano and drums join the groove in bar 9, the piano uses two chords: E<sup>7</sup> and D<sup>9</sup>:





Each of these melody lines is played twice, AA BB. The bridge C, introduces a series of chords:



Although these chords imply a departure from the *rāga* by allowing the musician in the solo section to introduce scales, other than that of *Rāga Jog*, there is an interesting relationship between these scales and *Rāga Jog* as described below.

Experienced jazz musicians rarely think in terms of scales while improvising. However after interviewing two jazz musicians, Melvin Peters and John Fishell in 1994, and restricting them to extract one scale from each of these chords, both of them chose the mixolydian mode. The mixolydian mode is comparable to one of ten parent scales used in north Indian music known as *Khamāj* (see page 14). *Rāga Jog* is derived from this parent scale.

A variation designated D is played after the bridge, by the saxophone and piano. This variation outlines the notes of the *rāga*:

#### VARIATION D



This is followed by another variation:

#### VARIATION E



The first four bars of the above example are also played between the solos of the piano and saxophone.

The solos for both saxophone and piano are open, with guidelines to keep within the *rāga* for the first 16 bars of each 20-bar chorus, and in the last four bars to observe the chord changes. Both these solos are in the recording that accompanies this dissertation.

### Soprano Saxophone Solo

The soprano saxophone retains the spirit of the *rāga* throughout its solo. Its tone closely resembles an Indian oboe-like instrument, called *shehnai*, and this helps in sustaining an ambience associated with Indian music. The treatment of both the natural and sharpened third (G) and seventh (D), as well as the occasional emphasis on the fourth (A) keeps the solo within the laws of *Rāga Jog*.

If this solo were to be taken out of this context, it would still approximate an improvised section of a *rāga* performance.

### Piano Solo

The opening phrases of the piano solo are characteristic of Indian music. However it soon goes beyond the confines of the *rāga*. The soloist here chose the freedom provided by the chord changes to venture out of the *rāga*, to play a solo that is more akin to modern jazz. The unison octave passages do resemble an Indian approach, but it is not within *Rāga Jog*.

These two solos highlight the different approaches to improvisation in Indian music and in jazz. Improvisation in Indian music is confined to the notes and characteristic phrases dictated by the *rāga* the musician chooses. A *rāga* can therefore be easily recognized by a few phrases of improvisation in a traditional performance. In jazz, an improvised solo cannot always be associated with a particular composition or jazz standard.

The form of *Give Five* is illustrated below, showing the way the six sections A, B, C, D, E are used.

Ālāp (PIANO)  
 BASS LINE 12 BARS  
 AA  
 BB  
 C  
 DE DE  
 F  
 A  
 open solo soprano saxophone  
 DD  
 open piano solo  
 DD  
 A  
 B  
 CCC end.

The bass line is notated on page 47 and the sections A, B, C, D and E are notated on pages 48 and 49 of this dissertation.

## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, overviews and detailed examinations of three original compositions were presented. These compositions are an attempt to explore syncretism between the classical music of north India and western music.

Syncretism between these two musical cultures can take on myriad forms, as is evident in the works of many composers. My intention in these three works was to explore compositional ideas generated from elements of Indian music, by incorporating them into the 'sound-environment' of two western ensembles.

The syncretic element, therefore is largely dictated by the timbre of the western instruments, and more importantly the distribution of melodic and rhythmic material to more than one instrument.

Indian music is generated by melody and rhythm, and a traditional ensemble would consist of a melodic instrument, a percussion instrument and a drone. The melodic development is therefore confined to one voice. In these compositions the melodic development is distributed to four voices. While this is primarily a western concept, the method used is not derived from any particular style or form of western music.

The presence of 'free' harmony and counterpoint is purely incidental, and is the result of the melodic distribution to four instruments.

The levels of syncretism between Indian and western music is different in each of the three compositions, and therefore necessitates individual reviews.

In the first composition *Hariji* I have used the elements of Indian music in a very deliberate manner. Each of the three movements are dedicated to a single form of north Indian music. The first movement is confined to *ālāp*, the second movement to *jor* and

*jhālā* and the third to *bandīsh*. The succession of these forms is typical of a traditional performance.

In the first two movements of *Hariji* these forms are absorbed by the western ensemble to a greater degree than in the second composition *A Suite of Six Rāgas*. The reason for this lies in the nature of the *rāga* on which *Hariji* is based. *Rāga Sarasvatī* is easily overshadowed by virtue of its 'obscure' scale, GAC<sup>#</sup>DEFG. The absence of a constant drone makes identifying the *rāga* difficult, especially with the presence of C-sharp and the absence of the third note B. The distribution of melodic lines to four instruments contributes to the diminution of the *rāga*. While the forms *ālāp* and *jor* are discernible in this work, their aesthetic quality in the Indian music sense is not present, since this is normally measured against the framework of a *rāga*.

The elements of Indian music are therefore less dominant in the first two movements of *Hariji*, which from an Indian perspective increases the level of synthesis.

If these two movements were to be played by an ensemble of Indian instruments, it might be considered an 'avant-garde' *rāga* performance.

The third movement in *Hariji* leans more towards Indian music, because of the presence of the *mṛdangam*. The interplay between the ensemble and the *mṛdangam* highlights the rhythmic elements of Indian music.

In the second composition, *Suite of Six Rāgas* the elements of Indian music are much more prominent. The *rāgas* used in this work are easily recognizable, due to the strength of main theme melodies in each movement. These melodies are all composed strictly within the laws of each *rāga*. In the third movement, three forms of Indian music are played simultaneously, *ālāp*, *bandīsh*, and *taan*, yet they retain their identity, unlike in the first work *Hariji* where each movement is dedicated to a single form. The syncretic element of this lies in the concurrent use of many genres and forms of north Indian music, which would not normally be used concurrently. These include folk music and

Indian popular music which itself is a syncretism of Indian music and western popular music.

The third composition *Give Five* is perhaps the most syncretic work in this portfolio, because of the jazz element.

Improvisation and free interpretation of melodic and rhythmic lines are quintessential to both jazz and Indian music. It is this fundamental similarity that makes collaboration between jazz and Indian music easier. *Give Five* is based on a *rāga* that has a scale very similar to the blues scale. This common ground allows greater freedom to interpret the melodies and open solos in a style that leans either towards jazz or Indian music.

The composition itself is written with aspects of both Indian music and jazz. The underlying rhythm of the work is very close to the rhythm of the jazz standard *Take Five*. This rhythm is highlighted by the double bass playing a phrase that is characteristic of the *rāga*. The third line of the melody uses chromatic intervals within the *rāga*, and highlights the similarity with the blues scale. The soprano saxophone closely resembles an Indian instrument *shenai* and this helps in creating an ambience associated with Indian music.

The syncretic element in this work is the integration of jazz and Indian music in individual units of the composition i.e. the integration remains evident, even if one were to listen to the bass line or any of the melodic lines in isolation.

These three compositions all rely on the elements of Indian music for their structure and form. Their elements though transformed in different degrees, remain recognizable to an exponent of Indian music. The syncretic nature of these works lies in the interpretation of these elements in a new 'sound-environment'. Syncretism between Indian and western music has taken many forms during the last forty years, thus finding an appropriate methodology for analysis is difficult.

The approach used in this dissertation is therefore guided solely by the compositions themselves. It is hoped that this approach will assist future research into such compositions.

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