

FROM CLASSICAL TO FUSION:
CHANGES IN HINDUSTANI SITAR MUSIC IN MALAYSIA
AS EXEMPLIFIED IN THE WORKS OF
ORM MAHESWARAN AND SAMUEL J. DASS

PRAVINA A/P MANOHARAN

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by

PRAVINA A/P MANOHARAN

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LIST OF SYMBOLS



Pitch slightly higher than notated.



Pitch slightly lower than notated



Chikari Strings Played one octave lower.

M

Meend Lateral deflection of the strings

VM

Viloma Meend Descending Meend



Gamak Oscillation between two different pitches of sound

A

Andolan Slight wavering of pitch, either sharper or flatter than the original pitch.

Z

Zamzama Hammering of the string with the middle finger of the left hand, after the string is struck once by the *mizrab*.

K

Krintan Plucking of the string by the middle finger of the left hand, after sticking the *mizrab* only once.

-

Ghasit Sliding of the notes on the frets from the lower octave to higher octave.

-

Murki Vocal ornamentation

T

Tarab Strings Striking of Tarab Strings



Chikari Strings -



Chikari Strings Striking of Chikari Strings

**DARI KLASIK KE FUSION:
PERUBAHAN DALAM MUZIK SITAR HINDUSTANI DI MALAYSIA
SEPERTI YANG DIPAMERKAN DALAM KARYA
ORM MAHESWARAN DAN SAMUEL J. DASS**

ABSTRAK

Raag and Taal merupakan unsur-unsur asas dalam persembahan muzik *Hindustani*. Pada zaman kini, walaupun sebuah persembahan *Sitar* mengekalkan kebanyakan daripada bentuk-bentuk dan cara permainan yang asal, pemuzik-pemuzik tempatan seperti Samuel J. Dass telah mula mengeksperimentasi dengan idia-idia baru. Dengan menggabungkan unsur-unsur dan elemen-elemen muzik *Hindustani* dengan harmoni, alat muzik dan genre, mereka sedang menghasilkan sebuah gabungan muzik yang dikenali sebagai 'muzik fusion'.

Dengan menganalisa hasil gubahan Orm Maheswaran dan Samuel J. Dass, kajian ini akan menganalisa perubahan-perubahan dalam muzik *Sitar* Hindustani di Malaysia. Terdapat perubahan yang ketara dalam ciri-ciri *Raag* dan *Taal* serta bentuk-bentuk klasik *Hindustani* apabila ia disertakan dalam gubahan fusion. Dalam *Life Breath*, skel *Bhairavi*, *Malkauns* dan *Nandkauns* telah diubahsuai untuk mengikut kod-kod dalam nada G Major. Dalam *Vibrations*, kebanyakan daripada unsur-unsur penting dalam *Raag Pahadi* dan *Bageshri* telah dikecualikan. Dalam *Prana Express*, walaupun unsur *Taal* memainkan peranan dalam mengekalkan irama, tetapi ia masih kekurangan ciri-ciri penting yang membezakan *Taal Keherwa* daripada *Taal-taal* yang lain.

Ia adalah agak susah untuk menerokai kesemua bentuk klasik dalam gubahan fusion kerana perlu adanya keseimbangan dalam elemen-elemen dan bentuk-bentuk yang digabungkan. *Alap* fusion dalam gubahan *Life Breath* dan *Vibrations* adalah

permulaan lagu semata-mata kerana ia adalah terlalu pendek tanpa sebarang perkembangan *swara* dalam setiap oktaf dan ia juga tidak mempunyai kebanyakan daripada ciri-ciri *alap* klasik.

Perbezaan juga berlaku diantara cara permainan dan teknik *Sitar* modern dan *Sitar* klasik. Dalam fusion, gaya dan teknik persembahan yang susah tidak boleh disertakan kerana pemain *Sitar* perlu mengikuti gaya dan genre lagu yang dipersembahkan. Dalam *Damascus* dan *Bombay Bossa Nova*, Dass mengurangkan penggunaan *alankara* klasik yang akan menonjolkan bunyi *Sitar* sebagai sebuah alay muzik Hindustani. Dalam *Brickfields Blues*, *Damascus* dan *Chinese Song*, Dass cuba menonjolkan versatility *Sitar* dengan memainkan corak melodi yang berunsur *Blues*, *Arab* dan *China*.

Sebuah persembahan fusion dapat menarik lebih banyak penonton dari berbingan kaum dan bangsa berbanding dengan persembahan klasik. Persembahan fusion lebih mudah difahami oleh kumpulan etnik yang berbeza di Malaysia kerana persembahan ini tidak terikat kepada peraturan-peraturan klasik *Raag* dan *Taal*. Pengenalan bunyi alat muzik yang berbeza dalam lagu *Chinese Song* dan penggunaan irama Latin dalam lagu *Bombay Bossa Nova* dapat menarik lebih banyak penonton dari latar belakang yang berbeza.

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ABSTRACT

Raag (melody) and *Taal* (rhythm) are the fundamental elements that govern a Hindustani piece. Today in Malaysia, while a classical *Sitar* recital still retains many of its original forms and practices, local musicians like Samuel J. Dass, are experimenting with new musical ideas. By combining Hindustani musical elements and forms with harmony, new timbres and genres, they produce a blend of music known as ‘fusion music’.

By closely analyzing the works of Orm Maheswaran and Samuel J. Dass, this thesis aims to study the changes in Hindustani *Sitar* music in Malaysia. There is a substantial amount of change in the characteristics of the *Raag* and *Taal* and the different classical forms when they are incorporated in fusion music. In *Life Breath*, the scales of *Raags Bhairavi*, *Malkauns* and *Nandkauns*, have been tailored to conform to the chords in G Major. In *Vibrations*, many of the important characteristics present in *Raags Pahadi* and *Bageshri* have been omitted. In *Prana Express*, although the *Taal* maintains its role in sustaining the rhythm, it lacks all the different intricate details that distinguish the *Keherwa Taal* from other *Taal* cycles.

It is not possible to explore all the characteristics of the classical forms in fusion pieces as there needs to be a balance between all the musical elements and forms that are being fused. The fusion *alaps* in *Life Breath* and *Vibrations*, are merely expositions as they are too short with no *swara* development in the different octaves and lack many of the characteristics of a classical *alap*.

Differences also occur in the playing styles and techniques of the modern *Sitar* and classical *Sitar*. In fusion, elaborate styles and techniques cannot be incorporated as the sitarist needs to conform to the style and genre of the piece. In *Damascus* and *Bombay Bossa Nova*, Dass minimizes the use of classical *alankaras* that will highlight the *Sitar's* timbre as a Hindustani classical instrument. In *Brickfields Blues*, *Damascus* and *Chinese Song*, Dass tries to highlight the versatility of the *Sitar* by playing melody lines that have Blues, Arabian and Chinese influences.

A fusion performance reaches a wider audience of mixed ethnicity when compared to a classical performance. Fusion performances are more easily understood by the different ethnic groups in Malaysia as they are not bound by the rules of the classical *Raag* and *Taal*. The introduction of different timbres in *Chinese Song* and the use of Latin rhythms in *Bombay Bossa Nova* attract the attention of audiences from different ethnic and age groups.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction

Malaysia is a multiracial and multicultural society that has a rich and diverse cultural and musical heritage. The Indians in Malaysia represent the third largest population in this country. The classical music practiced by the Malaysian Indians is based on an ancient traditional system that originated in India.

Indian classical music refers to both the South Indian Carnatic and North Indian Hindustani systems from India. Hindustani and Carnatic music share a common ancient musical heritage as both systems are built upon highly complex and elaborate melodic structures called *Raag*, and both employ a system of rhythm and meter that falls under the rubric of *Taal* (time cycle). Both systems were brought into Malaysia by the early Indian and Sri Lankan settlers.

Hindustani music should not be confused with Hindustani film music popularly known as Bollywood music. The term 'Hindustani music' refers to the classical form of music which is built upon highly complex and intricate systems of *Raag* and *Taal*.

Hindustani music in Malaysia was popularized through the *Sitar*. The instrument played an important role in propagating and spreading Hindustani music to many Malaysians. Over the years, this musical system has stayed true to its classical form due to the *guru shisya parampara* (teacher disciple tradition) where this art is passed down orally from teacher to disciple.

One of the current changes that is taking place here in Malaysia is fusion music, especially in the area of Hindustani *Sitar* music. Hindustani *Sitar* music, while still conforming to the characteristics of *Raag* and *Taal*, is slowly breaking away from its traditional form. A number of local musicians namely sitarists are experimenting with the idea of fusion music which involves synthesis and cross cultural musical exchange between Hindustani *Sitar* music and musical elements, genres and styles from different cultures within Malaysia and around the world.

1.1 Research Focus

The primary focus of this research is to study the changes and evolution of Hindustani *Sitar* music in Malaysia, from its original classical form of *Raag* and *Taal* to fusion music. The scope of discussion for this research begins from the time the instrument was introduced as a solo classical instrument in this country during the mid 1970's up till the time of this research, where the *Sitar* is used to play in a variety of genres and styles.

I will first present a thorough discussion on the different musical elements and forms of a classical *Sitar* performance. An entire chapter is dedicated to a detailed discussion on the important characteristics of the Hindustani *Raag* and *Taal* and the general flow of a classical *Sitar* recital. These characteristics of a classical *Sitar* performance will later be compared in a fusion performance that has incorporated different elements and forms of a classical *Sitar* performance in its composition.

The comparison between the classical pieces and fusion pieces will be analyzed based on the works and contributions of Orm Maheswaran and Samuel J. Dass. I will

draw attention to Orm Maheshwaran's classical background as a classical sitarist and Samuel J. Dass's contribution as a fusion musician. I have chosen to only focus on these two musicians because both Maheswaran and Dass are two prominent local sitarists who have been instrumental in the introduction and evolution of Hindustani *Sitar* music in Malaysia. I will focus on the playing styles and tuning methods of these two sitarists in relation to the tuning methods and playing styles and techniques of their *Gurus*, namely Ravi Shankar and Vilayat Khan.

Orm Maheswaran is amongst the pioneering sitarists in Malaysia to promote the *Sitar* as a solo classical instrument in this country. The classical section of the research will focus on his works and contributions. To date, Orm Maheswaran is the only disciple of Ravi Shankar in the South East Asian region.

Conversely, Samuel J. Dass is one of the first classical sitarists in the country to debut a solo career as a professional musician. His contributions as a fusion musician will be discussed in greater detail in later chapters. Important to note, Samuel J. Dass to date is the only sitarist in the country to produce an instrumental fusion album with the *Sitar* as a main instrument. The fusion ensemble by Dass is called *Varna* which means colour in Sanskrit. This band was formerly known as *Prana*, but recently changed its name to *Varna* since there was an existing underground rock band with the same name. *Varna* consists of five local musicians. The analysis of the fusion pieces in this research is focused on the compositions by *Varna* because at present, *Varna* is the only instrumental fusion ensemble in the country that features the *Sitar*.

By analyzing the works of Maheswaran and Dass, this research aims to show how the musical elements and classical forms of Hindustani *Sitar* music have changed when incorporated in fusion music. How are the characteristics of the Hindustani *Raag* and *Taal* modified and tailored to suit the harmonic and rhythmic structures of the fusion pieces? Finally, I ask if fusion Hindustani classical music can be still considered ‘Indian’? Based on these research questions, I aim to show the changes in the musical elements of the Hindustani *Raag* and *Taal* and also the changes in the different classical forms (eg; *alap*, *gat*, *tihai*) of a *Sitar* performance when incorporated in fusion compositions.

What is fusion? The terms Fusion Music, World Music, World Beat, World Fusion and Ethnic Fusion, are amongst the many popular labels used by musicians and even recording companies to promote a new genre of music. Different musicians and academicians tend to use different terms and labels to differentiate their music or their research from others. This genre often referred to as ‘fusion’, involves the synthesis of musical elements, structures, styles and even instruments from one musical system (eg; Hindustani music) with musical elements, styles, and instruments from different musical systems (eg, Latin Chinese and Arabian music).

The research will also answer questions like, ‘What is the purpose of fusion music in Malaysia’? Why is there a need for musicians to localize Hindustani music through fusion music? One of the main aims of fusion musicians in this country is to popularize and localize Hindustani music and the *Sitar*. A fusion performance reaches a wider audience of mixed ethnicity when compared to a classical *Sitar*

performance. This is due to a number of factors which will be explained in greater detail in Chapter 3.

In this research, the term ‘fusion’ and ‘fusion music’ is used interchangeably to refer to the synthesis of Hindustani *Sitar* musical elements, forms and instruments with musical elements and styles from different musical systems from around the world. The synthesis that I intend to study focuses on Samuel Dass’s fusion of classical Hindustani *Raag* and *Taal*, with different musical elements such as harmony, the Chinese pentatonic scale, Arabian *Maqam* (mode), Malay melodies and Latin rhythms.

For example, when analyzing the fusion piece *Bombay Bossa Nova*, I will answer questions like: How does the rhythmic structure of the Hindustani *Taal* system change when this *Taal* is fused with a rhythmic pattern that has influences of Bossa Novan rhythms? The analysis of this piece will show the changes in the characteristics of the *Keherwa Taal* rhythmic cycle (eight beat cycle), when fused with a Bossa Novan rhythmic pattern.

The research will also focus on the influences of harmony on the fusion pieces by *Varna*. Under the subheading *Raag* in Chapter 5, I will highlight the significant role harmony plays in fusion pieces. For example, how are the scale structures and notes of a *Raag* modified and tailored to suit the harmonic structures of the fusion piece? The research will show that even though a fusion composition is based on a *Raag*, often the notes of the *Raag* are tailored to suit the chordal structure and harmony of the piece.

Besides the change in musical elements and forms, the research also focuses on the different playing styles and techniques of the *Sitar*. How does the sitarist change his playing styles and techniques in the fusion pieces that are composed using different genres and styles? The research hence aims at analyzing how the various classical playing techniques employed by a sitarist to play classical *Raags* differ from those used in a fusion performance.

1.2 Literature Review

The literature review in this research encompasses four main sections. The first section covers the historical background of the music in India. The second section is on the development of Hindustani music in India. The third section of the literature review is on Hindustani *Sitar* music and the final section is on fusion music. The literature reviewed is based on documented material such as theses, books, articles from journals and articles from the websites taken from the University Science Malaysia Library.

1.2.1 Indian Music

Indian classical music has been in existence for almost three thousand years and can trace its roots to the *Vedas* (ancient scriptures of the Hindus). The *Vedas* are the four ancient books of the Hindu religion which are written in Sanskrit (White, 1971:7).

In his book *Music of the South-Asian Peoples* (1979), Swami Prajnanananda gives a detailed explanation on how Indian music originated from the *Vedas* and evolved into a highly developed musical system during the Vedic period. He explains that in the beginning of civilization, music evolved with only one to two notes and from

then on the music developed into a musical system that has retained its classical form for centuries. The following few chapters in his book discusses the divergence in the two systems of India's music. Carnatic music developed in the south, while Hindustani music developed in the north. Swami Prajnanananda explains that both traditions share a common ancient musical heritage that is built upon a melodic structure called *Raag* and a rhythmic cycle called *Taal*.

In chapter one of his book *The Story of Indian Music and its Instruments* (1970), Ethel Rosenthal gives a thorough and comprehensive account on the origins and history of Indian classical music. He clearly states that the origins of Indian music are to be found in myths and legends and that the art of music, drama and dance was created by the great Hindu *Lord Siva* from the *Vedas*. B. Chaitanya Deva is of the same opinion as he verifies Rosenthal's explanation on the origins of Indian classical music in his book *An Introduction to Indian Music* (1973). He writes that "God Himself is a musical sound and therefore the origins of Indian music are considered divine. Music originated from the *Vedas* and Bhramma the Supreme Reality is said to be the author of the four *Vedas*".

In their book *The Music of India* (1976), Massey and Massey assert that Indian music in its classical form is one of the most ancient types still surviving. The book focuses on the evolution of Indian music and the different stages of influences this musical system underwent from the Muslims, British and the West. The first few chapters of the book gives a comprehensive account on the history of Indian classical music during India's earliest cities in Mohenjo Daro and Harappa in the Indus valley, and how India entered the Vedic period of her history with the coming of the Aryans

around 2000 B.C. The authors claim that music and musical instruments were already present during the Mohenjo Daro and Harappa civilization.

The majority of authors and scholars believe that the music in India originated from the *Vedas*. There are however, various contradicting views by different authors and scholars on the onset of the Vedic period. In his book *The origin of Raga: a concise history of the evolution, growth and the treatment of Raga from the age of Bharatamuni to Bhatkhande* (1977), Shripada Bandyopadhyaya claims that the chanting of *Vedas* had been prevalent in India even before 2400BC and remained so until the first century of the Christian era. Massey & Massey (1976) however assert that around 2000BC, the Aryans came to the subcontinent (of India) through the North-West and with their coming, India entered the Vedic period of her history.

Emmons E. White, presents a different argument. In his book *Appreciating India's Music. An Introduction, with an Emphasis on the Music of South India* (1971), he writes that the *Vedas* were already written when the Aryan tribes began to invade India from the North-West between 2000BC and 1000BC. He also draws a connection between music and religion, as he explains that the Hindus believe that the art of music is especially patronized by the goddess Saraswati who is often pictured seated upon a lotus flower, playing a veena (south Indian stringed instrument like a lute)

A single underlining thread that can be drawn from these observations is that different authors have different opinions and explanation about the beginning of India's Vedic period, which extends back to more than 3000 years. They all

however, agree that the music in India was closely associated with religion and had been in existence from around the time of the Aryan invasion. The majority of scholars claim that citations of India's music can be found in as early as in the *Vedas*.

There are also many contradicting views on the origins of the earliest documentation of Indian classical music. Many academicians however, agree that the *Natya Shastra* (a treatise on the dramatic arts) is one of the earliest and oldest documentations of Indian classical music written entirely in Sanskrit.

The book *An Introduction to Tabla* (1980), by David R. Courtney is solely on the *tabla*. The chapters cover the various *tabla* schools in India, the instrument's playing styles and techniques, and also the key *tabla* players around the world. There is one chapter in the book however, that discusses the history of Indian music. In this chapter, Courtney explains that the *Natya Shastra* is the oldest surviving text on stage craft and is believed to be written by Bharata Murni between 200BC and 200AD (a precise date is unknown). He also states that the *Natya Shastra* covers a wide area in the field of arts like stage-design, music, dance, makeup and virtually every aspect of stagecraft. The *Natya Shastra* is of very high regard to musicians because it is among the only text which gives a thorough and comprehensive discussion about the music and musical instruments of India.

In his book *The Story of Indian Music and its Instrument* (1970), Ethel Rosenthal covers the history and development of Indian music and its instruments. He states that the *Natya Shastra* is an important work in which the theory of music is explained

in detail. He further explains, that the *Natya Shastra* was written by the sage Bharata who is regarded as the founder of the present system of Indian music.

The *Sangita Ratnakara* written by Sarangaveda during the early 13th century is considered to be the next most important work on music, after Bharatha's *Natya Shastra*. In the book *Hindustani Music Its Physics And Aesthetics* (1971) by G. H. Ranade, there is a chapter that gives a clear description of the *Sangita Ratnakara*. Here, Ranade explains that the *Sangita Ratnakar* by Sarangadeva in the early 13th century is an authoritative work on music. The next couple of paragraphs in this chapter discusses the important role the *Sangita Ratnakara* plays, in describing the characteristics of the various *Ragas*, and how this treatise deals in great length about all the three traditional aspects of music; which is vocal, instrumental and dance.

In his book *Nad – Understanding Raga Music* (1998), Sandeep Bagchee covers a wide area of study on the subject of Hindustani music and Instrumental music. Under the chapter *The Raga*, the author highlights the contributions of Sarangadeva especially for producing the *Sangita Ratnakara*. Bagchee gives a brief overview of the contents in the famous treatise written in the 13th century, which covers various aspects of music, theory and the prevalent musical forms and compositions in Indian music.

In his book *The Raags of North Indian Music* (1971), Jairazbhoy mentions that the *Sangita Ratnakar* by Sarangadeva is an important work written on the different performing arts in India. According to Jairazbhoy, this treatise was written shortly before the Muslim conquest and therefore to a large extent is free from Islamic

influence. The treatise covers the different performing arts in India which includes dance, vocal and instrumental music of the sole Indian musical system which was yet to be divided into Hindustani and Carnatic music.

There are many differing views on the origins of Indian classical music. The literature in this section however, shows that it has been widely agreed by many scholars and academicians that Indian music is one of the oldest, unbroken, living traditions in the world. It is also clear that the music of India is based on an ancient tradition that originated from the *Vedas*. The traditional form of this music which is built upon highly elaborate systems of *Raag* and *Taal* is mentioned in great detail in both the ancient treatise; namely, Bharatha's *Natya Shastra* and Sarangadeva's *Sangita Ratnakar*. According to Orm Maheswaran, both Carnatic and Hindustani musicians in India refer to the *Natya Shastra* and the *Sangita Ratnakar* as their primary sources of reference since these two writings are among the earliest major works written in such detail about the music and instruments of India.

1.2.2 Hindustani Music in India

Only one system of music prevailed throughout India until the late 13th century. It was the music that was based on the traditional Hindu scriptures of the *Vedas* mentioned in 1.2.1. It has been stated in many books and scholarly articles that India's music underwent tremendous development and transformation during the Muslim invasion in the late 13th century.

In his book *A Treatise on Ancient Hindu Music* (1978), Arun Bhattacharya gives a thorough explanation on how the Muslim conquest in the late 13th century divided

India's music into Hindustani music and Carnatic music. Hindustani music began to develop extensively in the north during the 14th century, while Carnatic music developed in the south and retained its traditional form that originated from the *Vedas*, thus being mostly devotional. Bhattacharya further explains how Hindustani music while still maintaining its traditional form from India, carries in it influences of Arabian and Persian music due to the Muslim invasion.

Massey & Massey (1976), give a detailed account on how “the once sole musical system in India began to experience change with the coming of the Muslims”. They explain how the music from Persia and Arab greatly influenced the music in India and eventually brought about the development of Hindustani music in the north. They explain that due to the influences from Persia (now Iran) and Arabia, Hindustani music is more free and experimental in nature while Carnatic music in the south continues to retain its respect for the sanctity of the past, as this system is less hybridized and less influenced by Islamic music and other traditions.

In the first chapter of his book *Indian Classical Music* (1990), Sunil Bose gives a general overview of the classical music of India and its instruments. The book also discusses the works and contributions of a select few prominent musicians in India. Bose states that the Muslim invasion in India through the north had a greater impact on the musicians in that part of the region. He continues to explain how the music of the Muslim world influenced the music in India and brought about the development of two different musical systems.

All the literature reviewed in this section point towards one conclusion, that is, the once sole musical system of India began to diverge in the late 13th century after the Muslim invasion. From then on two very different musical systems began to develop in the north and south of India. Through the musical exchange between the Muslims and Indians, Hindustani music developed in the north and literature shows that this musical system carries in it influences of Arabian and Persian music.

1.2.3 Hindustani Instrumental Music in India

Hindustani music in India can be divided into three main art forms that is instrumental, vocal and dance. All three forms carry in it influences of Arabian and Persian music. Vocals are often regarded as the supreme medium for performing music. According to Orm Maheswaran, most instruments in India are built to emulate the human voice as the first ever instrument available to man was his voice.

Hindustani instrumental music of the north developed quite differently from the Carnatic system that flourished in the South. The Hindustani instruments and its instrumental music have different forms and structures when compared to the south Indian system. According to Orm Maheswaran, the emergence of well known Hindustani instruments like the *Sitar*, *Sarod*, *Santoor* and *Tabla* are a result of intercultural and musical exchange between the Indian classical instruments and the instruments from the Middle East (Arab, Persia and Turkey). Most of the North Indian instruments have either Arabian, Persian or Turkish influences.

The Sitar, The Instrument and its Techniques (2001) by Manfred M. Junius is a very informative book on the *Sitar*. The book covers a wide area of study from the

instruments historical development, construction, its different playing techniques, tuning system and the various ornamentations (*alangkaram*) employed. The book also discusses the performance structure of a *Sitar* recital. Very few books cover the entire performance structure of a *Sitar* recital. In this book, Junius gives a detailed description of the different forms within a *Sitar* recital which include the *alap*, *jod* *jhala* and finally the *gat* performance. An entire chapter in this book is dedicated to the definitions and descriptions of the various *alankaras* that are employed on the *Sitar*.

In his book *Nad - Understanding Raga Music* (1998), Sandeep Bagchee devotes an entire chapter on instrumental music. This chapter discusses the instrumental music of the *Sitar* and *Sarod* beginning with the instrument's different playing style. He then presents a systematic overview on the different forms of a *Sitar* recital beginning with the different subdivisions within the *alap*, followed by the *jod*, then the introduction of the fast paced *jhala* and finally the *gat*, where the *tabla* is introduced for the first time in the performance. (A detailed discussion on the flow of an *alap*, *jod*, *jhala* and *gat* will be discussed in Chapter 4 under the subheading 4.4).

In her book *Sitar and Sarod in the 18th and 19th Century* (1997), Allyn Miner examines the historical development of two of the most popular stringed instruments in India, the *Sitar* and *Sarod* and a few related instruments like the *Rabab* and *Surbahar*. The author presents a thorough research on the instrument's historical development, the famous innovators for the instruments and the kind of music played on these instruments. There is a chapter in this book that discusses about the instrumental music of the *Sitar*. Miner provides an extensive overview on the

techniques and the different instrumental compositions played on this instrument. She describes how *dhrupad*, *khayal* and *thumri* which are all vocal styles of north India have influences of Arabian and Persian music. These vocal styles greatly influenced instrumental music of north India.

In his book *Musical Instruments of India, The History and Development* (1978), B. Chaitanya Deva gives a thorough and comprehensive explanation of the history and development of musical instruments in India, mainly Hindustani musical instrumental. The book covers the organology of the various instruments in India. The section on the *Sitar* describes in detail the instrument's historical origin, its make and the various playing techniques that are employed on the *Sitar*. The chapter on musical instruments in the book *An Introduction to Indian Music* (1973), by the same author, gives a detailed explanation with picture illustrations of the various instruments and their classifications. Both books present very concise and detailed material on the construction of the *Sitar* and various instruments. The books however, do not discuss the music that is played on these instruments. The different forms within a Hindustani instrumental performance are not discussed in both books.

In her book *Music of India: the Classical Traditions* (1979), Bonnie C. Wade gives examples of Hindustani instruments and their direct comparison in the Carnatic system. She explains how these instruments differ in construction, playing style and tuning method. There is a section in the book that focuses on the different forms within an instrumental performance. This section gives examples of the proper sequence in an instrumental performance beginning with the *alap*, *jod*, *jhala* and *gat*. She also explains how instruments in India are classified. She indicates that there are

four main classifications of Indian instruments. The instruments are divided into *Tata Vadya* (Chordophones), *Sushira Vadya* (Aerophones), *Ghana Vadya* (Idiophones) and *Avanaddha Vadya* (Membranophones). She

In this section of the literature (1.2.3), I reviewed various books on Hindustani instrumental music in India. All the literature confirms that the music of the Middle Eastern world had a great impact on the music of north India. During the Muslim conquest, the music of India began to diverge, resulting in the development of two different systems in the north and south of India. Instrumental music has a definite form and structure that must be adhered to during a performance. A number of books have presented a thorough description of the general flow of an instrumental performance.

After a thorough discussion on Hindustani music and its instruments, the following section of the literature will review books and articles that discuss the various terms used to define fusion music. This is in line with my focus as the second phase of my research focuses on the changes in Hindustani *Sitar* music when it is fused with different musical elements styles and genres. The following section of this research will therefore review various literature that attempt to define fusion music.

1.2.4 Fusion Music

This section of the literature is divided into two parts. The first part will review different books and articles that attempt to define the different terms used to describe the synthesis of two or more musical elements from different cultures. The second section of the review will look at various books and articles that present two different

views on fusion music. The reviews in the second section are based mainly on studies conducted in the area of musical change.

1.2.4.1 Review of Books and Articles that define Fusion Music

This section of the literature review will look at books and various scholarly articles that attempt to define the terms ‘fusion music’, ‘world music’, ‘ethnic fusion’ and other generic terms used to describe a genre of music that synthesizes musical elements from one musical system with another. What do these terms mean? These terms have been loosely used by musicians to describe a style or genre of music that fuses different musical forms and elements from different musical cultures from around the world.

In her article *Negotiating Identities Reconstructing the ‘Local’ in Malaysia through ‘World Beat’* published in *Perfect Beat* v5 n4 (January, 2002), Tan Sooi Beng states that “‘World Beat’ in the United States or ‘World Music’ in Europe are marketing terms describing popular music that synthesizes musical elements from the West (ie North America and Western Europe) and ‘the rest’ (primarily Africa and the Caribbean),” The author talks about how ‘World Beat’ has influenced the music of a number of local Malaysian pop musicians. These musicians have fused local and ethnic musical ideas (that is; Malay, Chinese and Indian instruments, forms and musical elements) with modern sounds (like; saxophone, keyboard, drum and synthesizer). According to Tan, the exposure to ‘World Beat’ and ‘World Music’ in this country has helped highlight the sounds of traditional instruments of various ethnic groups in the country. Amongst other things, ‘World Beat’ in Malaysia has helped revoke the Malay and Chinese identities amongst Malaysians.

In his article *Studying Musics of the Worlds Culture* from the book *Excursions in World Music* (1992), Bruno Nettl uses the term 'World Music' to describe the music from cultures outside the West. The article focuses on the music from different cultures from around the world. He describes music as if it were a language and since every culture has its own language for communication, therefore people of the same culture respond to their music with the same kind of common understanding as they would with their language. Hence while language borrows words from each other, music also influences each other.

In his book, *Ancient Traditions - Future Possibilities: Rhythmic Training Through the Traditions of Africa, Bali and India* (1985), Matthew Montfort the leader of the world fusion music ensemble 'Ancient Future', uses the term 'world fusion music' to describe the music that combines ideas from many of the earth's traditions. The book covers a wide area of study of ancient rhythmic traditions coupled with a series of exercises that require no instruments to perform.

In his article *Mixing up the World's Beat* published in *Mother Jones* (July/August 2002), David Hutcheon explains that "the globalization¹ of music, sometimes dubbed world fusion, is about the free trade of ideas as well as sounds". The term 'Globalization of music' by Hutcheon, refers to the musical exchange of ideas between cultures, from around the world. The author explains that this trend of music is not entirely new, because music has been crossing geographical boundaries since the days of slavery. He gives examples of how Elvis Presley attempted fusion music when he fused blues with country and how Ravi Shankar (renowned sitarist) became

¹ The term 'Globalization' refers to a process involving the transcending of national borders and the internationalization of the production and consumption of commodities (Walters, 1995).

the ‘godfather’ of world music when he took George Harrison (from the 70s pop band Beatles) under his discipleship.

All the literature presented above are from books and articles that have provided definitions to the various terms used to define fusion music. The authors have presented various key words like ‘World Fusion’, ‘Fusion Music’, ‘World Beat’, ‘Globalization of Music’ and ‘World Fusion Music’ to define the synthesis of musical ideas from different musical system and cultures from around the world. As mentioned earlier, all these key words are terms used interchangeably by many recording labels, companies and even musicians to promote a genre of music that is broadly labeled as ‘fusion’.

The following section will review scholarly material of research conducted in the area of musical change around the world. There has always been a debate between the purists who insist on preserving their musical traditions and the younger generation of musicians who are eager to experiment with the different musical genres from different cultures. The younger generations of musicians believe that music regardless of its roots should be enjoyed and appreciated by everyone (Dass, 12.12.2005).

1.2.4.2 The Debate between the Elders (Purists) and Younger Generation

(Fusion musicians).

David Hutcheon (2002), argues that “musicians who venture into fusion music do so with utmost pride and respect for their own traditional music and roots”. He explains that these musicians are trained in their respective fields of traditional music before

they even attempt to venture into fusion music. His article discusses the effects of globalization on music and how through the breaking down of geographical boundaries we are introduced and exposed to different musical styles from different cultures around the world.

In her article *Changing Traditions: South Asian Americans and Cultural / Communal Politics* from the *Massachusetts Review* (Spring 2002), Ketu H. Katrak conducted a research in the arena of cultural change in America. Her research focused on how *bhangra*, a Punjabi folk form of music and dance from North India performed by second-generation Punjabi youths in America established a new cultural tradition that enabled community formation for the youths themselves. This new tradition however, provoked criticism and rejection by elders in the Punjabi community. The new form of *bhangra* also referred to as '*bhangra rap*' fuses Punjabi lyrics and a few English words with raggae, hip-hop and rap rhythms which the elders refuse to acknowledge as *bhangra*. Her discussion develops related issues such as the generational debate over 'authenticity' of a cultural tradition, and how the new form of *bhangra* is both unifying and diverse for the community.

Katrak mentions how immigrants in a foreign country often take on a collective task of 'preserving' the expressions of certain traditions. This task is often undertaken by members of different generations and class backgrounds to avoid losing their traditions completely in a foreign country. Katrak discusses how the cultural expression of the modern *bhangra*, popularized by the second-generation Punjabi youth provokes criticism and rejection by elders in the Punjabi community. The elders object to a modernized *bhangra* because they wish to preserve the traditional

style of *bhangra*. They regard fusion attempts as betraying their cultural values. They want their *bhangra* sounds ‘unpolluted’ by western influences and for their music and dance to remain as pure as their memories when they themselves may have performed it in India.

According to Katrak, ironically in the conflict between the elders and youth about this new *bhangra*, both generations claim tradition as part of their agenda although very differently defined. The elders object to the modernized *bhangra* because they wish to preserve the traditional style. The younger generation however, claims that this modernized *bhangra* that fuses traditional *bhangra* lyrics along with more modern rhythms is their attempt to reclaim their tradition and to create a distinctive South Asian identity in a foreign land.

Hence according to Katrak, a commonly-posed question is: “Is fusion music such as traditional *bhangra* rhythms blended with reggae, rap, techno still ‘Indian’?” I pose a similar question in this research, as I intend to analyze, how much of the traditional aspect of the *Raag* and *Taal* of Hindustani *Sitar* music is preserved or altered when these musical elements are fused with different musical elements, styles and forms from different musical systems.

In an article entitled *Tradition and Modernity: Misplaced Polarities in the Study of Social Change*, published in *The American Journal of Sociology* (1967), Joseph R. Gusfield explains, that the capacity for old and new cultures and structures to exist without conflict and with mutual adaptations is a frequent phenomenon of social change whereby, the old is not necessarily replaced by the new. The author explains

that it is possible for the two traditions to derive a degree of support from each other rather than to have a clash of opposites. The same can be said for fusion music and classical music, for it is not the intention of fusion musicians to replace the classical form of music with fusion, but rather they intend for both musical systems to coexist and bring about a symbiotic relationship.

An interesting argument on the reasons behind the increased development of fusion music can be found in the article by Yoshitaka Terada entitled *Fusion Music in South India: Globalization and the Predicament of Classical Music* (2004) presented in the 9th Conference of the Asia Pacific Society for Ethnomusicology. The reasons given by Terada are very much in line with the intentions and motivations behind the fusion of Hindustani music in Malaysia.

In his paper, Terada focuses on the reasons behind the growing trend of fusion music and the changing dynamics of music culture in South India. According to Terada, the motivation behind fusion is mainly to attract the Indian youths. Fusion musicians in India criticize the overly devotional nature of classical music as one of the reasons why classical music is not reaching out to the younger generation. They want to create non-religious music based on a classical system and for their music to reach out to a wider global audience.

Terada concludes that fusion music is a musical experimentation that has been part of classical music for centuries. He states that the popularity of this genre will help bring aspects of classical music to a wider audience.

In his article *Desi Music Vibes: The Performance of Indian Youth Culture in Chicago* published in the *Asian Music Journal* (Winter/Fall 1999/2000), Gregory Diethrich talks about how Indian – American youths are trying to retain their cultural heritage by introducing traditional musical elements in Western songs. The article states that the second generation youths in Chicago have contemporized traditional Indian music and Hindi Film songs by introducing elements of Western music, hip-hop, dance club rhythms and techno music in their traditional Indian music. This has occurred because the second generation youths do not want to lose their cultural and traditional heritage practiced by their forefathers. They are therefore, strengthening their traditional and cultural ties by introducing Indian culture in their daily lives and music.

This article by Diethrich only goes to prove that fusion attempts by the younger generation is not always done as an act of betrayal towards the traditional form of music. The fusion of traditional musical elements with modern sounds and rhythms by the youths is their way of trying to strike a balance between what they inherited from their parents and the prevailing musical system in their current culture.

In her book *Indian Music A Vast Ocean of Promise* (1972), Peggy Holroyde asserts that Indian music is so vibrant and full of individuality that it certainly does not have to fear the process of change. She explains that there is bound to be confusion at first because we all tend to judge any artistic experience by the standards of taste and criticism we already possess. She aptly concludes that “We understand what we know”. This sentence holds true, especially for the purists of Hindustani music, in

trying to understand fusion music because they hold true to a musical tradition they have learnt and practiced for many years.

Based on the literature in this section, it is clear that there are contradicting views amongst purists and fusion musicians on the topic of fusion music. Here in Malaysia, purists of Indian classical music present the same argument as many purists around the world when regarding fusion music. The purists in Malaysia fear that the future generation may begin to recognize fusion music as their traditional music and fail to appreciate the essence of *Raag* and *Taal* which are the underlining elements of Indian classical music. Purists are concerned that in time, Hindustani music will be replaced by fusion music. This is because every time a *Raag* is fused with musical elements and forms from different musical systems, the characteristics and purity of a *Raag* are compromised to suit the melodic structure of the fusion piece. According to Orm Maheswaran, purists fear that the *Raag* will lose its defining characteristics when constantly fused with foreign musical elements. Most importantly, the purists fear of losing the traditional form of classical Hindustani music to fusion music.

Ironically, fusion musicians also claim tradition as the motivation behind the establishment of fusion ensembles. According to fusion musician Samuel J. Dass, the younger generation and the Malaysian public needs to be exposed to the classical form of Hindustani music as many of them lack interest in this field. He believes that fusion music provides a good platform to introduce Hindustani music in a more contemporary manner. He argues that the preservation of the *Sitar* and its music by the purists will eventually be the main reason for the instrument and its music to fade away, in a musical world that is constantly changing and growing with time.