The Impact of Globalization on Sarangi Players in 21st Century India

By

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Abstract

This thesis is written from the first-hand perspective of a *khandani* or familial musician and looks at the effects of globalization on the sarangi tradition. As a professional musician, I have personally witnessed these effects first-hand and felt how they have impacted upon the Hindustani musical industry. This work focusses on the sarangi tradition in particular, looking at its early origins, its rise and fall and its unique form of adaptation in the face of contemporary and globalized forces. My personal knowledge of the sarangi tradition is coupled with practical experience of its adaptation and development in the 21st century applying an insider's perspective on critical, academic research into this area which has gone before in addition to specific data and arguments.

This study examines what globalization is and how it manifested itself in India both economically and culturally during the late 20th and early 21st centuries. The remarkable way in which this phenomenon impacted on Hindustani musicians and sarangi players is reviewed in detail though case studies, interviews and analysis of how globalization has provided networking and performance opportunities. The negative aspects of globalization are considered both in terms of musicality and the potential denigration of tradition.

Ultimately the effects of globalization on sarangi players are complex and varied. The conclusion of this thesis forms an overall view from the writer's perspective whilst posing questions for the future and the challenges which sarangi players continue to face.
Introduction

“The Impact of Globalization on Sarangi Players in 21st Century India” is a historical ethnography of the musical instrument sarangi, and sarangi players or ‘sarangiyas’ in Urdu. This thesis explores the sarangi’s musical cultivation, transmission and performance in India and abroad in the 21st century. In this thesis I examine two key subjects, firstly the history of the instrument; its rise and fall and also how sarangiyas rejuvenated the instrument’s status in Hindustani (North Indian classical) music and secondly, I analyze the effects of globalization, gentrification and multiculturalism on the sarangi and on sarangiyas. I examine how both historical events and societal attitudes have made a huge impact on the Hindustani music industry that continues to shape the entertainment industry of India.

Hindustani music has become a trademark of Indian culture and spirituality. It seemingly possesses a reach that stretches back to antiquity, extending a hoary past to a hopeful future. As such, the tradition has been historically presented since Independence in 1947, as an ideal cultural artifact. However, sarangiyas were initially somewhat excluded from this rosy view. At the turn of the twentieth century sarangiyas were largely ignored by the new national elite. The sarangi tradition was housed in the courts and was seen as a vestige of the old and tainted, a shameful remnant of an indulgent and oppressive feudal regime. Nobody wanted to go backwards into that subjugated system of class and monarchial privilege, which existed prior to British colonial rule. Instead, independent India wanted a new image in which music symbolized a sort of everlasting purity. In addition, sarangiyas were, and to a large extent still are, of
Muslim heritage\(^1\), which did nothing to stabilize their position in a post-independence, nationalist vision that was predominantly Hindu. Sarangiya were castigated as illiterate, uncouth and uncultured. After all, they were musicians who accompanied the courtesans or *twayaf*\(^2\) who sang about stories which included the prominence of female heroines and sexuality. These topics were considered by the vast majority of Indian society during that era to be distasteful, even outrageous. The sarangi’s musical tradition seemed, in short, to offer the very antithesis of a spiritual aesthetic, enmeshed as it was in courtly delights, material desires and erotic pleasures. These attitudes gradually evolved and over the course of the twentieth century, sarangiya came to carry a dual burden in middle-class imaginings, being at first disparaged as figures of disrepute and then celebrated as bastions of tradition. Sarangiya did not represent either label, but by the 1940s both attitudes had nevertheless mingled. This thesis examines both the denigration and celebration of the sarangi over time as well as the somewhat amalgamated, contemporary attitude towards the instrument. One question I ask is, how did the sarangiya make his way onto the contemporary stage in spite of the many forces against him?

This thesis focuses on how the sarangiya found and is still finding a distinguished place in 21\(^{st}\) century India. While the historical element examines how the nation came to view and eventually nurture sarangiya, the ethnographic sections explore the ways in which sarangiya practiced their craft and how they continue to adapt their traditions in order to survive against changing

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\(^1\) The one exception being musicians of the kathak community of Varanasi.

\(^2\) *Twayaf* is an Urdu word for courtesans. They were female singers who catered to the nobility as entertainers.

\(^3\) Defined in the Urdu language as *ustad*-*shagirdi* and in the Hindi language as *guru-*shishya.

\(^4\) In the physical description of the sarangi, the *chati* is termed as the neck section - see Bor 1987:24.
circumstances, which we now recognize as globalization in India. In this way, my research examines the impact of globalization on sarangi players.

**Existing Literature**

Important research has been devoted to the sarangi, sarangiyas, gharamas (musical schools or traditions), and the rigorous teacher–student tradition\(^3\) (Neuman 1980, 2015, 2017; Bor 1986; Magreil 1997; Neuman 2004; Qureshi 2007). However, the way in which sarangi players of today have channeled their fascinating ability to adapt in order to create new avenues and opportunities for themselves has received much less scholarly attention.

The role of globalization in the circulation and adaptation of global cultural traditions has received sustained scholarly attention, both as a singular theory and in correlation to music and musicians (Feld 2000; Stokes 2004; Kvetko 2005; Dupont 2011; Franko 2013; Malik 2015). This thesis is likely to be the first time a khandani (hereditary lineage) sarangi player is exploring the impact that globalization is having specifically on sarangi players.

A significant amount of research has been done on the sarangi as a subject to date. One example is that of Joep Bor’s (1986) *The Voice of Sarangi*, which is a highly detailed and scholarly account on the instrument’s history and status. Regula Qureshi’s (2007) *Master Musicians of India: Hereditary Sarangi Players Speak* is another work detailing sarangiyas and their lifestyle. Qureshi’s primary teacher was the late sarangi maestro Ustad Sabri Khan, who was my maternal grandfather. Daniel M. Neuman who also learned from my grandfather, wrote *The Life of Music in North India* (1980), which talks about the social organization of

\(^3\) Defined in the Urdu language as ustad-shaagirdi and in the Hindi language as guru-shishya.
Hindustani musicians, *gharanas* and the adaptive strategies in the Hindustani music culture. Musicologist Nicholas Magreil (1997) hosts an extensive collection of online video and audio archives of sarangi music and sarangiyas. These archives are filled with biographical and anecdotal information including over 300 videos and rare audio recordings of 52 sarangiyas, some of whom were recognized as among the greatest of their kind in the 20th century.

**Thesis Overview**

This thesis consists of the three following chapters: “Understanding the Sarangi and Sarangiyas”, “Globalization” and “The Independent Music Scene”.

Chapter one entitled “Understanding the Sarangi and Sarangiyas” is divided into two parts. The first part, “The Instrument, Its Makers and Players”, explains the physical structure of the instrument, its various tuning methods and the instrument’s playing position. Furthermore, I discuss eminent sarangi makers from the past and why they were so important. I also discuss various styles of playing the sarangi and what makes each style so different. This section concludes with a brief definition of sarangiyas and their role in Hindustani music performance practice.

"A Historical Sketch" examines the history of the sarangi. I look at the importance of both the Hindu and Muslim myths surrounding the creation of this instrument, examining ancient musical treatises such as *Sangeeta Ratnakar* written by *Sarangadeva* in the 13th century. Furthermore, I examine how the sarangi started as an instrument of sages, faqirs and saints, and then went on to enter the royal courts in 17th century India. I also discuss the informative value of ancient Mughal paintings, which depict the sarangi and the environment(s) in
which it was played. I analyze how the rise of *khayal* singing under the Mughal Emperor Jehangir in the 17th century created a path for *sarangi*yas to break into the performance repertoire of royal courts, the equivalent of today’s commercial mainstream media. During this time, *sarangi*yas became prominent accompanists for vocal artists and this practice continued for the next two hundred years. I then look at how this position was strengthened in the mid-20th century (1940–1971), when Indian nationalists and British musicologists banned the harmonium from All India Radio. This benefitted *sarangi*yas hugely and their demand as accompanists to vocal artists continued to flourish. I then discuss the era from the late 1980s to the early 2000s which saw the downfall of the *sarangi*. I look at how the stigmatization of the *sarangi* led the rising upper middle class within Hindustani music to disassociate themselves far away from this instrument and its connotation with hedonism and indulgence. I also examine the harmonium’s rise in popularity in light of these attitudes and the subsequent lifting of its ban.

Chapter two entitled, “Globalization” looks at the effects of this phenomenon on Hindustani music and in particular, how this has affected *sarangi*yas. First I briefly set out what globalization is and then go on to examine how India felt and continues to feel the effects of this huge cultural change. I discuss a brief history of India’s economy and its condition following independence. One of the most significant sources of globalization in India was the arrival of the Multi National Companies (MNCs) in the 1990s. I analyze how the arrival of these companies opened the Indian market to the private sector. Furthermore, I examine the specific ways in which globalization has infiltrated the music industry, namely gentrification and band music culture. I discuss how bands and fusion music culture positively launched collaborative and performance
opportunities for sarangiyas. To discuss how and why band culture became popular, I present examples of existing bands from New Delhi, India and examine how 1960s and 1970s rock and roll music has influenced them. I demonstrate how globalization has had a positive impact on Hindustani musicians and how it has paved the way for new avenues and opportunities within the music industry. In order to better understand what these newfound opportunities are and where are they coming from, I present a case study of an event management company who support and promote musical talent.

Chapter three entitled "The Independent Music Scene" will examine how the independent music scene in India has surfaced and developed throughout the 2000s. I show how the independent music scene is a prime example of hybridity and multiculturalism. In this chapter, I will present interviews of young musicians who belong to the traditional khandani or familial music tradition but who are simultaneously concentrating themselves onto a different path altogether and performing in major cities in India such as New Delhi which is a center for live performance in India. The city is the ideal hub for independent music as it has been through an economic boom and has an abundance of shopping malls, live venues, gentrified areas and most importantly an audience which loves variety. This chapter looks into the profiles of a few live musicians living in the city and sustaining an income from live performances. I will also showcase interviews which have been carried out with venue owners, event managers, and artist managers as part of fieldwork to support my argument that globalization has, so far, been an overall positive phenomenon for Hindustani musicians and the music scene in terms of generating performance work and collaborative opportunities. I will then link this discussion to the role social media plays in the life of
Hindustani musicians in terms of self-promotion and the development of virtual fan bases (e.g. Facebook, YouTube). In order to understand the full impact of social media on Hindustani musicians of the 21st century, I discuss both the advantages and disadvantages of social media.
Chapter 1: Understanding the Sarangi and Sarangiyas

The sarangi is a bowed, short-necked string instrument from North India, which is mainly used in Hindustani music. The instrument is celebrated for its ability to closely mimic the human voice and to express a wide range of human emotions through its unique sounds. The word sarangi itself is a combination of two Hindi words, namely, sau meaning the number one hundred and rangi meaning colors. Hence we often hear the sarangi described as “An instrument with one hundred colors.” That is certainly the description of the sarangi within my family of renowned sarangi exponents and as a musician myself, the one which I grew up hearing.

The Instrument, Its Makers, and Players

The sarangi is carved out of a single piece of hardwood, usually tun (Indian cedar). The instrument is roughly 64-67 centimeters long, with the pet (belly) hollowed out in the front and covered in goat skin (see Figure 1). The neck⁴ or chati (literal translation is chest) and maghaz (head), which consists of two pegboxes, are hollowed out from the back. Thus, a sarangi contains four separate chambers; belly, neck, head (with two peg boxes) and chest. In the partition between the belly and neck there is a large hole at the back which is approximately 35–40 millimeters in diameter, which seems to be a distinguishing feature of the sarangi. Folk sarangiyas kept their bows in this hole when moving around with the instrument slung over their shoulders.

⁴ In the physical description of the sarangi, the chati is termed as the neck section - see Bor 1987:24.
The sarangi has thirty-five to forty resonance or sympathetic strings and three heavy gut strings, which cause a tremendous tension on the body of the instrument so the walls of the instrument have to be fairly thick. The ‘butt plate’ which supports the string holder (targahan) is between 30-40 millimeters thick. The belly has an irregular shape and is much less incurved to the right side than the left, due to the extension of the neck. It is covered with khal or chamra (thin skin) from a young goat, tightly glued along the rim. The pressure from the ghuraj (bridge) forces the skin down considerably in spite of the fact that the bridge is supported by a tasma (leather belt) nailed or glued to the sides of the belly.

The resonance strings attached to the eleven frontal pegs mounted in the upper peg box pass through holes in the targahan (string holder), and are stretched over two ankheyn (table-like bridges). These are also called javari bridges forming a characteristic feature of Indian stringed instruments. The resonance strings (called tarabs) are traditionally made of either copper or brass with a diameter of 0.4 - 0.45mm, but the new vogue is to use steel strings as they are considered to work better with amplification. The copper strings are still used for the lower pitch strings. All of the tarabs (resonance strings) and the main gut strings pass through an elephant shaped bridge or ghoraj usually made of bone or ivory. The difference between the resonance strings attached to the top, those attached on the side and the ones nearest the finger board is mainly of tuning. The ones at the top and at the side are tuned to the raga and the ones near the fingerboard are tuned chromatically. The bow is known as the gaz, and is held with an underhand grip. The gaz is usually made of rosewood or ebony and is

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5Refers to the overtone-rich “buzzing” sound characteristics of classical Indian string instruments such as tanpura, sitar and veena.
considerably heavier than western violin or cello bows, which contributes to the solidity and vocal quality of the sarangi’s sound.

The sarangi is a highly advanced instrument. The technology of sympathetic strings resonating systematically, making a cohesive sound gives the sarangi a natural reverb, sustain and sometimes an almost delay like effect. The sarangi is made from materials, which physically react to their surroundings and environment. As the sarangi is covered with a goat skin which carries a high tension lying underneath thirty-five to forty sympathetic strings and three gut strings, all of which are tightly tuned and pass through a bridge made up of real animal bone, it is a highly sensitive instrument which constantly reacts to the weather and other natural surroundings. The placement and contouring of the bridges, the tension and the action of the strings, and the fitting of the pegs all contribute to the sarangi’s overall tone. Instruments like the *dilruba* and the *esraj* share some physical characteristics with the classical sarangi.
Figure 1.1 - Various features of a classical Sarangi (Bor 1987:26).

**Tuning**

The sarangi has three main playing strings, one drone string and two sets of sympathetic strings. The tuning of Sa (tonic) and lower Pa (fifth to the tonic), and low Sa, is the most basic for the playing strings. The drone string is usually tuned to Sa, but sometimes to Ma (fourth) or Pa. The large number of sympathetic strings that create the sarangi’s special sound demands an attentive and sensitive ear to achieve the correct pitch for tuning. The method of tuning the sympathetic strings usually depends on the particular raga a sarangi player decides to play. The sympathetic strings in the middle of the chest are tuned chromatically. These sympathetic strings are tuned with a tool known as a *mochna*. 
The two main methods of tuning the sarangi’s main strings are known as *charga* and *thatt*. The *charga* method of tuning entails the first gut string being tuned to Sa (tonic), the middle gut string being tuned to Pa (fifth to the tonic) and the third gut string which can be a cello or a woundless bass string in some cases, is tuned to lower Sa (tonic).

For *thatt* tuning, the first gut string is tuned to Pa (fifth to the tonic), the middle gut string is tuned to Sa (tonic) and the third gut or metal string is tuned to lower Pa (fifth to tonic). This tuning is a highly challenging one requiring expert technique in which not all sarangi players are trained. It is usually used to play while accompanying female vocalists, and also specific folk and semi classical songs such as *thumri, dadra, chaiti, kajri* and *bhajans*. Historically, sarangiyas who were trained in this tuning method were able to promote themselves as accomplished accompanists, especially to female vocalists. Other sarangiyas were
able to adapt their sonic quality more appropriately to folk music which gained them popularity in that way.

Playing Position

The sarangi is held vertically when played, with the neck uppermost. The strings are stopped just under the nail bed rather than with the fingertips. Talcum powder is routinely applied to the cuticles to facilitate ease of gliding on the fingerboard. The heavy bow (made of wood and horsehair) is held in the right hand while the left hand is used to stop the strings. This position is maintained even for left-handed players. The bow is held with the palm facing upwards and drawn across the main strings, just above the bridge.

Figure 1.3 - The technique of holding the bow and upright positioning of the instrument. Picture courtesy – Suhail Yusuf.

The fingers of the left hand note the strings. A distinctive style emerges through the fingering technique. The strings are stopped by bending the finger and
sliding the cuticle underneath the string (See figure 1.4 below). This is done by pressing and sliding the bottom of the fingernail or the cuticle against the side of the string. The third finger is used most often while playing, the middle and index fingers are also used, very occasionally so is the little pinky finger. The gliding of the cuticles along the strings creates the vocal sound and makes the sarangi one of the closest instruments to the human voice.

Figure 1.4 - Distinct uses of the cuticles on the figure board. Picture courtesy – Suhail Yusuf.

Physical Evolution of the Instrument

There is no exact known date of when the sarangi first came into existence, but the instrument has been around since the 13th century if not longer (Bor 1986:42). There are various myths about how the sarangi came to exist, but no definitive account. These myths are discussed in more detail below. We understand that the sarangi originated in Northern India and modern day Pakistan. We later see the sarangi as a prominent member of the musical ensembles in
India’s Mughal courts during the 14th century. Versions of the sarangi were also popular folk instruments across many different parts of India during this time. Initially, sarangis were much smaller in size and had only ten to fifteen sympathetic strings, as seen from 16th century paintings of the Mughal era. As the sarangi’s presence grew, sarangi players and makers kept making additions to the number of strings and to its size. For example, sarangi players (including myself) have started using a cello or bass string as the third string in the sarangi for improved low frequencies and easier maintenance in comparison to a gut string. Despite these advantages, a cello or bass string cannot create the same depth or quality of sound of a finely produced gut string.

Older sarangis did not have the top head section which we see in current versions of the instrument. When this section was added it allowed for the addition of the top sympathetic strings and led to the term do maghzi sarangi, which means sarangi with two heads. This additional head was installed so that a set of eleven to fourteen sympathetic strings could be added for better resonance and improved sound quality. It was also around this time that the hollow box or the belly of the instrument was enlarged in order to increase volume. There is no documented timescale for exactly when these changes were implemented. Gathering from 17th century paintings of this era, writers’ accounts (including Shahinda 1914) and the numerous stories I have heard from many sarangiyas, it is generally accepted that these changes were made during the early 17th century. According to Shahinda, during the 1850s the sarangi evolved from a small, folk sarangi to the larger, classical sarangi which we see today (Shahinda 1914:55).

The sarangi was seen in its earlier forms as a folk instrument and simpler versions of the instrument remain all over India today. I grew up learning about
these folk versions of the sarangi, some of which were very rare, from my teachers and many other senior sarangi players. These bowed instruments are known as follows; kamaicha, sarinda jogi sarangi, sindhi sarangi, nepali sarangi, tota, dhani sarangi, gujratan sarangi, dhadya sarangi, dedh pasli sarangi, pyaledar sarangi, chikara and ravana hastha (Bor 1986:21). These names sometimes correlate to a region in India and other times the instruments’ names are part of local folklore.

Sarangi Makers

Contemporary, classical sarangis are larger in size than folk sarangis and their production requires highly skilled, technical craftsmanship. This craft is so special, that only a handful of towns in India are reliable sources of quality made sarangis. The few craftsmen who currently make these instruments guard the secrets of doing so quite closely in order to maintain their unique niche in the music world.

We know little about the original craftsmen who made sarangis during the late 19th century. This is set out by Shahinda who writes, “Hardly anything is known about the craftsmen who specialized in making these instruments. Jaunpuri sarangis are the most famous” (Shahinda 1914:55). Another author, S. Bandyopadhyaya, informs us that sarangis made in Budaun (Uttar Pradesh) are the best (Bor 1987:22). Two of the most well-known sarangi craftsmen were Masita (1840-1920) and his deaf student Abdul Aziz Behra (unknown-1945). Both of these craftsmen belonged to Meerut, a town renowned for beautifully made sarangis. The sarangis crafted by them are much sought after because of
their superior sound and workmanship, and can be easily recognized by a sarangi connoisseur. One of their many characteristic features is a stunning hand-carved, bird-shaped head complete with intricate ivory inlay.

The son of Behra, Yassin, made sarangis, which were much lighter and had excellent timbre. Yassin then taught the profession to his own son but unfortunately after Yassin's demise, the real art of sarangi making came to an end. This was largely due to the fact that the demand for sarangis started to vanish (Bor 1987:24). The reasons for the decline in demand for the sarangi will be discussed later in some detail.

It is certainly not easy to find a good quality, old sarangi. Most antique sarangis are in a deplorable condition and badly damaged. One would need to know a sarangi player or a sarangi family who dealt in selling older instruments in order to source a good quality, antique sarangi.

In the past, I’ve tried asking a sarangi maker to make a new sarangi for me but you find that the newer instruments never sound quite as resonant as the older ones. Other sarangiyas have told me similar tales; Nicholas Magreil and Murad Ali Khan agree that new instruments just don’t produce the same sonic quality as older ones. This is a real problem for modern day sarangiyas especially given the intensity of music performances and travel. The use of the instrument has increased and that too in different weather conditions which leads to further wear and tear of the instrument. Thankfully cities like Delhi, Kolkata, Pune and Mumbai have good luthiers who work with sarangiyas, in order to help them in maintaining and repairing older, damaged sarangis. Sadly, many of the better antique sarangis now sit in drawing rooms across Europe and the USA as ornaments.
Various Styles of Playing

The classical sarangi has three prominent styles or baj practiced in India. These three styles are the Banaras baj, the Moradabad baj and the Udaipur-Sikar baj. These playing styles are examined in more detail below. The explanatory finger technique tables note the required fingers in numerical order. For example the index finger is referred to as ‘1’, the middle finger is referred to as ‘2’ and so on. ‘0’ denotes no fingers.

Banaras baj denotes the school of sarangi playing from the city of Banaras, now known as Varanasi, in the middle region of India. The style and technique of playing from this school carries an emphasis on bowing and the thumri (light classical) style from the local Purab (eastern) region. Banaras players usually tune the sarangi using the thatt method. A few well-known exponents of Banaras baj are Gopal Mishra his brother Hanuman Mishra, Ramesh Mishra, Santosh Mishra and his sons, Sandeep and Sangeet Mishra. Despite the shared surname, not all of these sarangiyas are relatives nor do they belong to the same lineage. Although, one can say they belong to a class or (biradari) brotherhood clan of performing musicians.
Moradabad *baj* denotes the school of sarangi playing traditionally belonging to the city of Moradabad in Northern India. Moradabad players specialize in both the *gaz* (bow) and *gatta* (left hand) technique of playing the sarangi. Their repertoire consists of intricate left hand techniques and thumri styles of Punjab and Purab. Moradabad players tune their sarangi in both methods of *chargah* and *thatt*. A few well-known sarangi Moradabad *baj* exponents are Ustad Sabri Khan, Kamal Sabri (my grandfather and uncle respectively), and Murad Ali Khan.

### Table of left hand finger technique in Banaras baj

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### Table of left hand finger technique in Moradabad baj

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Udaipur-Sikar baj denotes the school of folk-style sarangi playing from Rajasthan, a desert region in North West India. This technique was later developed into a contemporary classical style of playing the sarangi from the folk style. These sarangi practitioners mainly emphasize on the gatta (left hand) technique within their playing and tune the sarangi in the chargah method.

Table of left hand finger technique in Udaipur–Sikar baj

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In addition to these three main styles of sarangi playing, we find sarangi players coming from the Indian cities of Bhopal, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Dhaulpur, Calcutta, Patna, Hyderabad, Pune, and Jalandhar, and Lahore in Pakistan. However, in the past there have been unique sarangiyas such as Bundu Khan and Ram Narayan, who developed their own unique baj.
Bundu Khan (1880–1955) was from Delhi and is generally regarded as the greatest sarangi player to have ever lived. He developed his own unique style and very intricate finger techniques on the instrument (Magriel 1997).

Table of left hand finger technique developed by Bundu Khan

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Ram Narayan was born in 1927 and hailing from Rajasthan, was possibly the most famous sarangi player of the twentieth century. He made several LPs, gave solo recitals, and developed a different style of playing the sarangi. Narayan started the use of a hybrid bow, a cross between a sarangi and cello bow (Parekh 2016) which some sarangiyas continue today.

Who is a Sarangiya?

A ‘sarangiya’ is defined as one who plays the sarangi, or more simply, a sarangi player. A sarangiya usually belongs to a lineage of musicians within his family, however, there have also been a few non – hereditary sarangi players who have achieved worthy success. Looking first at the history of sarangiyas, a sarangiya’s job would usually have been as an accompanist to a vocalist, where
they were expected to follow the voice of a vocalist like a shadow and create an almost manually produced delay–effect to the singing. At the same time, a sarangiya is required to keep the performer’s style and temperament in mind and still follow the strict rules and regulations of sangat-sath (musical accompaniment). The most interesting part of a performance involving an accomplished sarangiya is that there are often few or no rehearsals involved. Sometimes there is not even any discussion prior to the concert, except confirmation of the name of the raga that is due to be played. My grandfather, Ustad Sabri Khan, was one of the most prominent and seasoned accompanists to the leading Hindustani vocalists of his time. He would often say, “it is much easier to perform a recital of your own as a soloist, but sangat-sath is a much more difficult task to master as a performer.”

Surprisingly the sarangi, this magnificent instrument and its players, suffered significantly when it entered into the realm of Hindustani music. The sarangi was initially viewed as something of a primitive instrument and one which belonged to sages and faqirs (Sufi Muslim ascetics). The sarangi was seen as a mere accompanying instrument with lower hierarchical status compared to other classical musical instruments such as the sitar, santoor, bansuri and the sarod, which tend to dominate Hindustani music. There are many reasons for this status and to some extent I would say that sarangiyas themselves have been a reason for it.

In order to examine this in detail, I would first like to draw a historical sketch of the instrument.
The Sarangi – A Historical Sketch

As set out above, it is not possible to determine the precise age of the sarangi. The fact that the instrument has evolved both aesthetically and sonically over a period of time and had different names attributed to it according to various eras and in various music treatises makes it very difficult for musicologists to trace the exact history of the instrument. There are two leading myths which shed light on this query; one comes from Hindu philosophical traditions and the other comes from Muslim sarangi players from India.

Hindu musicians believe that the mythological demon King Ravana was the inventor of the *ravanahasta* (one of the first bowing instruments) from which the sarangi has evolved. It means, Ravana’s arm, *ravana + hasta* (Sanskrit term for arm). The *ravanahasta* is still used in the folk music of Gujarat, Maharashtra and Rajasthan today and is a particular type of spike fiddle. King Ravana is said to have ripped off one of his many heads and pulled out his own intestines with which to string it. This instrument was the first known *veena* and was played to placate Lord Shiva. This myth carries through to the physicality of the sarangi today which, as set out above, uses gut strings as one of its main features (Bor 1987:48).

According to historian Shahinda, the sarangi was discovered when a *hakim* (physician doctor), travelling on foot, became worn out with heat and fatigue and stopped to rest beneath a huge tree. Whilst there, he began to hear sweet strains of music which greatly intrigued him. The *hakim* listened attentively and began searching for the source of this unique sound. Eventually, the *hakim* looked up and above his head he saw the dried skin of a dead monkey stretched between two
tree branches, entangled with the monkey’s dried guts. The hakim realized that the sound he was hearing was being created as the wind blew through this natural material. The hakim was fascinated by his discovery and carefully removed the skin and guts from the tree. These entrails were then pulled taught and fastened to a construction of wood. The myth goes on to say that the hakim continued working on the structure for years until it became the present sarangi (Shahinda 1914:55).

It is worth noting that these myths reflect an earlier time in history when raw, natural materials were much more readily used in the absence of modern technology. A similar theme is recognized in Greek mythology when Hermes creates the lyre from the shell of a tortoise, gut and reeds which he later offers to Apollo whom he has angered. This similarity has led academics to speculate as to whether it is possible that the myth about the creation of the sarangi travelled from Greece to India, or vice versa (Bor 1987:48).

It was not until the 12th century, that bowing instruments were described in detail by ancient musicologists of India. Nanyadeva (1094-1133) is probably the first writer to deal with them in his important treatise on music. A long description on pinaki veena, an ancient bowed instrument played in a sitting position with the gourd held face down between the two feet, is found in the Sanskrit musicological text, the Sangita Ratnakara, written by Sarangadeva in the 13th century. This text is an authority on Hindustani music and the title literally means, “Ocean of Music and Dance” (Bor 1987:41-42). The present sarangi has evolved from the above-mentioned bowed instruments. The association with the term veena in some of these names confirms that the sarangi belongs to the ancient veena family of stringed musical instruments from India.
Aside from these stories and legends, very little is known about the origins and early history of the sarangi. This is unlike other classical Indian instruments such as the *veena* whose origin is very well documented. Conversely, the sarangi seems to emerge suddenly, during the days of Emperor Akbar’s rule in 14th century. The *Ain-i-Akbari* (The Institutes of Akbar, 1588-89) devotes considerable attention to the music of India, amongst other subjects, and makes one of the first recorded references to the sarangi as follows, “the sarangi is smaller than the *rebab* and is played like the *ghichak*” (Bor 1987:48-49).

**Entry into the Music World**

The sarangi’s entry into the realm of music was through sages, *faqirs* (religious devotees), dervishes and other religious Saints. This can be gathered from numerous 16th and 17th century Mughal paintings reproduced by Joep Bor in his book *Voice of Sarangi* (1987).

![Figure 1.5 - 17th century Mughal painting (Bor 1987:57).](image)

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6 A Persian bowed instrument like Sarinda.
In Figure 1.5, a *faqir* is pictured on the right playing a *gujrat* sarangi-like bowing instrument, and he is accompanied by another musician playing the *dhol* (a type of drum). Bor describes this painting as follows, “it depicts a left-handed *faqir*, playing his instrument under a tree. The sarangi drawn has a box-shaped resonator with a string holder at the bottom, a long, wide neck, a pegbox with an arch-shaped opening, and a characteristic decoration at the top. It has four playing strings, six or seven resonance strings, a nut and a bridge”. It is of note that this *faqir* is holding the sarangi in the opposite hands to that which we would expect to see from a contemporary sarangiya.

![Figure 1.6 - 17th century Mughal painting (1605-27) (Bor 1987:58).](image)

Figure 1.6 from Bor’s book, illustrates a rural scene, which has been described as follows, “a Muslim saint lying in front of a hermitage while attendants prepare and offer him *bhang* (opium), and a half-naked fiddler creates a
congenial atmosphere (17th century Mughal painting, obtained from Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam). This painting shows that sarangi was part of rural culture and was a familiar sound, ingrained in local culture and in most communities. It is also interesting that no other instruments are pictured which shows that the sarangi was considered to be a focal and popular instrument in the practice of devotional music. Certainly, had the sarangi been a rare or obtuse instrument, it is unlikely that it would have made it into these paintings. Another potential reason for the sarangi’s popularity in this type of setting would have been its convenient size and diverse sound. Without much labor, a musician could carry and set up this instrument quickly and easily and still provide to provide an astounding musical sound.

Figure 1.7 - 17th century Mughal Painting (Bor 1987:52).
Bor (1987:52) describes the painting in Figure 1.7 as follows, “This painting is fascinating as it shows a singing, dancing sarangi player with a dervish, who appears to be in a state of trance. The three-stringed sarangi resembles a chikara but is lacking in fine detail. The painter seems to have forgotten to complete the instrument, since the peg box is missing (Early 17th Century Mughal painting, Musee Guimet, Paris).”

Bor goes on to note a common feature amongst these paintings as follows, “One thing that is common in these paintings is the setting. The fiddler always sings and plays in the vicinity of holy men, Muslim or Hindu. The sarangi depicted is small, light and portable, and this, combined with its expressive sound quality, makes it an ideal instrument to accompany devotional songs.” (Bor 1987:52). Unfortunately, no further information is known about the artists or the history behind these paintings.

Not all fiddlers were pious devotees of God but instead were petty criminals who used music as a distraction technique. Bor mentions an interesting account to describe the different sorts of fiddle players that were known to exist:

A traveller named Robert Coverte, was travelling overland in Afghanistan. Immediately after crossing the border of Baluchistan, he had a rather awkward experience on the first day of April, 1610: …early in the morning, and about break of day we met with ten or twelve men playing fiddles, as if they had come in friendly manner to welcome us, but indeed they were no better than thieves that intended to rob and pillage us (Bor 1987:57).

From these descriptions we learn that the sarangi or the older bowing instruments from which sarangi has supposedly evolved, were the instruments of the common man. This could be one reason why the sarangi took so long to make
it into ancient, Indian musical texts which mostly shed light upon musical instruments used by the elite classes.

**Rise of Khayal Singing**

The 17th century in India saw a rise of a new musical genre known as *khayal*. This vocal genre transformed the way in which audiences received classical music.

*Khayal* is an Urdu word meaning “imagination” and as the name suggests, this modern genre of classical singing of North India is about singing one's imagination or thought. Subsequently there is a significant emphasis on improvisation within *khayal* singing.

Ab’ul Hasan Yamin ud-Din Khusrau (1253-1325 century), better known as Amir Khusrau, was a Sufi musician, poet and a scholar, and is said to have conceptualized *khayal* singing by introducing Persian music to India. Although, the development of *khayal* singing took place much later, it is said the process started with *Khusrau*. He is also credited with introducing Persian, Arabic and Turkish elements into Indian classical music (Qureshi 1986:702-705).

The most dramatic development took place in this style of singing during the reign of Mughal emperor Jehangir (1569-1627). During this time, the subject matter within *khayal* singing shifted from the devotion of God to love and love making. Furthermore, the songs were sung in *desi* (local) language and hence this style of singing became extremely popular. This time period witnessed both lyrical and compositional innovation, renaissance and above all ‘Indianization’ within Hindustani music.
As this change was going on in *khayal* music, the sarangi also experienced a transition from rural to urban society. Bor describes this time, as something of a limbo period for the sarangi during the 17th century, “The sarangi's role in classical music was not yet clearly defined” (Bor 1987:64).

*Khayal* vocalists initially preferred the accompaniment of a *rebab* (a plucked lute). From paintings of this period, we understand that the improved version of the *rebab* maintained the traditional six gut strings but also had another six or twelve strings of copper or iron. A larger, sophisticated *rebab* is often figured in illustrations as the main instrument of a small ensemble. It is not until the next century that we see the sarangi gradually taking the *rebab's* place (Bor: 1987:64).

In the 18th century, specifically during Mughal Emperor Jehangir’s reign, *khayal* singers began to become more and more sophisticated and as such they began to prefer the sarangi as accompaniment. The sarangi was evolving and improving as an instrument and was better able to technically satisfy the singers’ range of needs (Bor 1987:65).

The Mughal dynasty was a patriarchal system and not surprisingly, the leaders enjoyed being entertained by females who were skilled in both singing and dancing. Male artists were still very much present as entertainers in the Court as evidenced by the renowned male court singers, *Adarang* and *Sadarang*, who are said to have composed numerous *khayals*. But women were also welcomed to join the arts and many became disciples of these great masters. The sarangi’s ability to mimic vocal nuances and its unique vocal-like tone suited female singers well and this led to a rise in its popularity. The sarangi players rose to the courtesans'
preference for them and seized the opportunity to break through into the royal courts and into the mainstream of that era.

Rise of Sarangiyas

The courtesan singers and dancers or twayafs liked the sublime vocal tone of the sarangi so much that they started using two sarangiyas to accompany their performances instead of one (figure 1.8) (Bor 1987:65). The senior sarangiya, who in most cases would be the singer’s tutor, would sit on the left to the vocalist, and the junior sarangiya would sit behind the singer. This development automatically increased the demand for the sarangi.

Figure 1.8 - Vocalist Janaki Bai, accompanied by two sarangiyas and a tabla player in circa 1902 (Neuman 1980:210)

Harmonium Ban

Another important event which took place between 1942–1970 and worked in favour of sarangiyas was the ban of the harmonium from All India Radio (“AIR”). At that time, Indian nationalists declared the harmonium as a foreign instrument and therefore prohibited it from use within Hindustani music.
Following various experiments, Indian musicians together with British musicologists confirmed that the harmonium's sound went against Hindustani musicality (Rahaim 2011:660). As a result of this ruling, many harmonium players who were appointed as staff artists at AIR had to take up other instruments such as the sarangi, tabla, tanpura or the esraj to save their jobs. Hence, for approximately thirty years, the harmonium was not used in AIR concerts or recordings.

In addition to AIR, the British government in India erected various radio stations all across the country of which Hindustani music was an integral part. Due to the growing popularity of sarangi and its frequent use in various types of music, the radio stations started appointing sarangiyas as staff artists and they were paid a monthly income. This played an important role in pushing the already rising popularity of the sarangi as the sound was once again imported into communities and homes on an accessible and regular basis.

**Downfall of the Sarangi**

The sarangi experienced its first significant knock under British rule when the funds of the nobility were decreased and eventually removed completely. Without the nobility as their patrons, courtesans were not able to continue their artistry and they in turn could not employ sarangiyas. The demise of the nautch (dance) girls tradition was detrimental to the general evolution and preservation of music, not just to the sarangi. In the words of sarangi maestro Late Ustad Abdul Latif Khan: “these women kept our music alive for the last four hundred years” (Magreil 1997). Twayafs or courtesans still performed in cities, but usually they performed film songs for clients lacking interest in Indian classical music. With
the end of what was once a lucrative market for sarangi playing, the prospects for sarangi players became bleak.

The second major challenge faced by sarangiyas was the lifting of the harmonium ban in the mid-1970s. It was mainly the sarangiyas who were talented or lucky enough to become employed by All India Radio who survived this period and maintained their art form, as so many Hindustani musicians turned to the harmonium for accompaniment. There were various reasons for this preference. First, vocalists began feeling a sense of competition and showmanship when performing with sarangi players as these musicians were equally, if not more knowledgeable in ragas than them. This led many vocalists to opt for performing without a sarangiya as it was not essential to have a sarangiya perform with you, simply a more desirable feature. Many vocalists began to feel that cloning their vocal output on the sarangi during performances was not necessary. Secondly, despite sarangiyas' knowledge of ragas and virtuosity in performance, the status of a sarangi player remained low compared to that of the vocalist. This was due to the sarangiyas' former association with courtesans who had become frowned upon in light of western sensibilities and Christian orthodoxy which had been introduced into society. Thirdly, sarangiyas became less and less available. Most budding music students were put off even learning to play the sarangi as it was notorious for being the most difficult instrument to learn. The rigorous training, memorisation of ragas, mastery in tuning, bowing and the musical maturity required simply put individuals off the idea of taking up this instrument and therefore the younger generation of Hindustani musicians did not include many sarangiyas. The harmonium much easier and more convenient to learn and play. More musicians took this instrument up and a singer could even play it themselves.
while singing thereby cutting yet another cost. Most of the required framework required by a vocal performance was satisfied adequately by the harmonium and it removed the burden of having another artist on stage or in rehearsals.

For all of these reasons, the popularity of the sarangi declined and by the early 1990s a lot of families who had played the sarangi for generations did not pass on their tradition. When I, at a very young age showed interest in learning the sarangi, my grandfather, Ustad Sabri Khan said, “Why do you want to learn the sarangi? Learn vocals instead, you’ll be able to find more work for yourself and the struggle would be much less comparatively.” It was not that he did not want me learn the art form, it was just that he could see how times had started to change and the challenge to sustain oneself as a sarangiya was extremely tough. Thankfully, I managed to persevere and continued down this path.

One of the most famous and most-recorded sarangiyas in India who flourished in spite of the above challenges was Pandit Ram Narayan. For years he was regarded as the foremost sarangi player of Bombay film music (Qureshi 1997:28) and he achieved this by ultimately refusing to accompany vocalists. Narayan insisted on a respectable status for the sarangi and promoted its disassociation from the courtesan tradition. In my opinion this was a great movement by Narayan and he was able to singlehandedly gain the desired status for the instrument in the solo category of performance practice in Hindustani music, up to a certain level. However, he limited the variety of his audience by only ever performing as a soloist.

Another well-known sarangiya, Sultan Khan (1940-2011) succeeded Narayan in the Bombay film music industry from the 1980s. Khan was much more open to collaboration and he is known for reviving the partnership of tabla
and sarangi which he famously did with Zakir Hussain (Qureshi 1997:29). Khan performed with ghazal singers, accompanied female thumri vocalists and recorded for electronic acts such as Thievery Corporation for their album titled *Versions* released in May 2006 (Versions 2006).

Ustad Sabri Khan (1927-2015) was also a prominent sarangiya. Khan successfully maintained the art of accompaniment as an integral facet of sarangi playing whilst still managing to collaborate in the sarangi musical field (Qureshi 1997:30).

As a sarangiya myself, I am continually striving for new and innovative ways to broaden my career prospects. I am therefore signed to record labels such as Domino and have performed at global music festivals such as Glastonbury in the United Kingdom in order to increase my potential for heightened success. I discuss the concept of global music and globalization in my next chapter.
Chapter 2: Globalization

The twenty-first century in India presents a new millennium of opportunities and new avenues for almost anyone and everyone who has a desire to fulfill their dreams. The country’s cosmopolitan cities are once again bustling with resources, ideas and the so-called corporate culture. Although India may have been a utilitarian society just after she achieved independence, this is no longer the case. Post-Independence India’s economy was understandably fragile and the country’s infrastructure was crying out for doctors, engineers, teachers and lawyers. India needed an industry on a scale that was capable of competing on the global platform. Gradually, India has lived up to this brief and in doing so, globalization has made its impact. Modern day India is the world’s fastest growing economy and this is predicted to remain the case for the next three years (Iyer 2018). Since the 1990s, India has been a wide open market for free trade.

What is Globalization?

Scholars such as Martin Stokes have defined globalization as a complex phenomenon, which implies notions of change and social transformation (Stokes 2013:47). This can be further defined as the economic process of integration that has social and cultural aspects. When we look at globalization, we see a trend of increasing interaction between people on a worldwide scale due to advances in transportation and communication technology. Economically, globalization affects and utilizes goods and services and the economic resources of capital, technology, and data (Albrow and King 1990). Globalization can also be explained as the process of rapid integration of economics across borders via
information and technology, goods and services, capital and finance, and
migration of human populations. Integration can interface several aspects – social,
cultural, political and economic. Kumar (2014:4) argues that globalization
provides an accessible system in which all things relating to a society's economy
and its public services are strengthened. However, it is important to note that
cultural and social integration can be seen to have negative implications compared
with the positive outcomes of overall economic growth.

To understand how globalization has affected Hindustani musicians in
India, I would like to summarily analyze the effect of globalization on India in
general and trace the history of the Indian economic system.

India’s economy

As mentioned above, India's economy today is among the fastest growing
in the world but as with most economies, it had experienced its share of peaks and
troughs. Kumar elaborates on this when he discusses how India is historically
regarded as the first military and economic superpower of the ancient world.
India’s economy under Mughal rule (1526-1858) was extremely prosperous
(Schimdt 2015) and at that time, India and China together accounted for 60% of
the world’s production. However, the Mughal dynasty faced inevitable decline in
the face of inter-familial and social warfare and it was at this weak moment,
during the latter half of the 18th century, that the British East India Company
gained control of the country. Although there are negative aspects of this period in
history, it is also true that the Indian economy flourished under colonial rule.
International trade and a precisely organized infrastructure paved the way for an
economic boom in India's history, the remnants of which can still be seen today (Kumar 2014:15).

Jawahar Lal Nehru, India’s first Prime Minister post-Independence, attempted to remedy the fragile economic situation during his seat to the best of this ability. However, he faced a backdrop of nationalist pride following India's independence which had previously fed on Mahatma Gandhi's movement during the 1940s based on an aversion of all things “foreign,” especially anything originating from Britain.\(^7\) There was a strong belief that India could produce everything at home and be “self-reliant” and “self-dependent.”\(^8\) This attitude popularly came to be known as the “Swadeshi” (one’s own country) movement (Kumar 2014:15). The idea behind this policy was to create new employment within India in order for the economy to recover. Foreign investment was seen as an acceptance of submission rather than growth. Multinational corporations were seen as wicked exploitative entities, greedily benefiting from cheap labor and lapping up the profits to sustain their lavish western lifestyles and therefore there was little to no international trade.

India's policy makers, effectively blinded by patriotism, were too determined to see that import substitution was proving to be economically disastrous. India’s economy suffered greatly as a result of this nationalist approach, leaving the import and export levels as low as 1% of global trade (Kumar 2014:16). The hardship experienced by this virtual “closed economy” was worsened in the 1970s when the economy experienced numerous shocks including

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\(^7\) The harmonium was banned in the same era. See Rahaim (2011:658).
\(^8\) The British exploited India's economy by exporting the raw material to England and selling the same finished manufactured product in the Indian market at an increased price. The handicraft industry was sabotaged and machine-made products prevailed.
the Indo-Pakistan war of 1971. The events of this period generated significant expense and further degradation of India's economy.

Finally, under the regime of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi (1966-1984) and her son Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi (1984-1989), more liberal economic policies emerged and India saw the economic expansion that it desperately required. The main objective of the new industrial policies was to encourage economic growth led by the private sector, with the public sector playing more and more of a subordinate role. Gradually, markets, highways and even airports were all privatized. This move proved to be beneficial for the Indian economy and according to the economic survey and official annual report of the Government of India, industrial production during 1980-1987 grew at a compound annual rate of 7.6% and during 1987-1988 at a rate of 7.5%. This was in stark contrast to a compound annual production rate of 4.2% per as seen during 1971-1980 (Kumar 2014:18).

Arrival of Multinational companies

Following four decades of tightly controlled Nehruvian socialism and a struggling economy, the middle and upper-classes both at home and abroad lobbied the government to allow greater freedom for investment and trade (Kvetko 2004:183). In 1991, India’s judiciary resolved to fully open the Indian economy to private and foreign investment, formalizing the process that became known as India's “economic liberalization.”

Thus, the decade following 1990 saw a profound shift from public to private investment and with this came a new wave of foreign trade relations. Employment and spending capabilities thrived and consumerism became the norm.
Foreign companies from all over the world began setting up premises in India, bringing successful economic benefit and employment with them. The knock on effect of these companies establishing themselves in India was that society as a whole became much more attuned to consumer needs and the average standard of living was elevated. Western products such as athletic apparel, home appliances, and recorded music were now available to ordinary families who wanted to live in tandem with the images and ideas they were receiving. These families previously could not afford this lifestyle but thanks to the increased opportunities for employment and investment, this now became a reality for many more people. This process has also been termed as the expansion of the middle class, which had hitherto been non-existent with staggering voids between the upper classes and those living in dire poverty.

Moving onto today’s economic climate, we see that foreign multinational companies (MNCs) and other corporate firms continue to choose India as a profitable option in which to expand their businesses. The current political party in power, Bhartiya Janta Party (Indian People’s Party), is firmly right wing and continues to strongly encourage international trade in spite of their deeply rooted nationalist beliefs (Banerjee 2005) – as ever, money talks. The success of international trade tasted by India throughout the 1990s has, understandably, led every future political party to continue to develop international trading methods. Now we see the Indian market increasingly operational on the global stage with foreign money flowing into the country and fueling the economy. This economic growth along with globalization in general has had various wide reaching effects across society and culture as a whole, but I wish to focus on a narrow examination
of the effects of globalization on Hindustani musicians in India, and in particular, the effects on sarangiyas.

**Gentrification**

A major effect of globalization on Hindustani musicians has been the gentrification of local neighborhoods in the metropolitan cities of India. Gentrification is a general term for the arrival of wealthier people in an existing depressed urban district leading to a related increase in rents that increases property values, resulting in changes in a district’s character and culture (Grant 2003). In India, gentrification has created more physical performance spaces in terms of venues and audiences as well as platforms for musicians.

One example of this is a very famous area in the southern zone of New Delhi known as Hauz Khas Village. The village has become completely gentrified and now provides a trendy and worthwhile platform for emerging musicians. Hauz Khas Village was originally constructed around a fourteenth century water reservoir built by the late Emperor, Allauddin Khilji (1296- 1316). The area first started as fashion designer hub in the late 1980s and early 1990s, but this was brought to an abrupt end when the Indian authorities, including the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI), stepped in to seal off this area of national pride (Bernoider 2015:6). The ASI saw any establishment or development made in the neighborhood as a threat to the preservation of the reservoir. It was thought that the area would become overly busy and damage would be caused therein. These rules were eventually relaxed and the village was ‘rediscovered’ twenty years later when low-cost housing was permitted in the area. This attracted a population of artists, musicians and writers who went on to lend Hauz Khas
Village a certain bourgeoisie and a sense of artistic freedom. This in turn drew larger crowds interested in partaking in the pleasant atmosphere and the available wares on offer. Now the village has an array of high-end boutiques, nightlife venues, and restaurants. The presence of young people living, working or frequenting the village have elevated the neighborhood’s profile and intensified capital investment (Bernoider 2016:9).

As a musician, I used to visit Hauz Khas Village on a regular basis between 2007-2009. I would often go to a venue known as The Living Room (TLR), which was a café open for musicians to jam and come up with out-of-the-box collaborations. Later many restaurants and cafes introduced similar open night jam sessions for musicians interested in new collaborations/connecting with the creative industry. These cafes and restaurants later turned into hubs and popular hangout spaces for the creative people working in the Independent music scene. The village now is a hub of multiple music venues, arts studios, restaurants, bars and hipster cafes. Hindustani musicians from the Independent music scene are now able to make a living solely by regularly performing at the village. This is a spectacular development for musicians who have never before been able to rely on such dense and regular foot traffic devoted to Independent music in one area. Furthermore, due to its niche crowd, musicians have ample networking opportunities upon frequenting the village, which in turn increases performance and employment opportunities. It is not uncommon for key figures from the mainstream industry to spot musicians performing at the village and book them for their upcoming endeavors.

It is also relevant to note that foreign workers coming to India and inhabiting metropolitan cities has contributed to gentrification. When these
international communities arrived and grew, it became apparent that they were accustomed to a corporate lifestyle of five working days followed by a two-day weekend for leisure and relaxation. In response to this and to general social demand, shopping malls and business complexes sprung up all over India to accommodate this lifestyle.

Gurgaon is an area, which is a perfect example of this. Gurgaon was especially developed from a sleepy suburb located in the neighboring state of Haryana, into a ‘Cyber City’ to cater to the rapidly growing corporate sector. Gurgaon now has a corporate park known as DLF (Delhi Land & Finance) Cyber City, which is surrounded by twenty-six malls, seven golf courses, and numerous luxury, international stores and residential neighborhoods of high rise condominiums as well as individual homes. Within these new venues are housed cafes, restaurants, and pubs, some of which host standup comedy, live music and even Broadway theatre. DLF also has an open-air amphitheater that plays host to weekend cultural art shows and rock concerts. It is these venues which are of significant importance to my research as they provided a dignified platform for bands and Independent musicians to perform. As set out above, the ever expanding middle class could now afford to indulge in leisure activities and music was a huge part of this. Musicians and artists found themselves once again in demand as people not only had the time and money to spend in this regard, but there were venues were available to showcase the upcoming talent.

Bands/ Fusion Music Culture

Bands or fusion musical outfits were a totally new beast in the Indian music scene in the 1990s. In India, the consumption of band music culture was
solely for college students or the privileged few who travelled abroad or owned expensive foreign vinyl records. For the ordinary middle and working classes, prior to the 1990s, the available popular music in India was largely commercial film music or classical music, two extremes which many people found to be either too sensational or too complex. I could liken this to only having musical theatre or Beethoven to listen to. The younger generation in India wanted something else and Hindustani music fused with western sonic elements fulfilled a new and exciting kind of musical entertainment which ticked the boxes of being relatable and still at the height of what was on trend at that time. As this happened, large companies began to seize the opportunity to engage with the younger generation through music and advertisement in order to maximize their profit and appear on trend. For instance, in the mid-1990s soda brand Coca-Cola used Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s widely successful track “Mustt Mustt” as a backdrop for their commercial for Indian audiences. The track, a remix by British trip-hop group Massive Attack was referred to by Bushman as a revolutionary shift which he notes, “was the first song in Urdu to appear on the UK pop charts” (Bushman 2015). Many other soft drink companies learned from Coca-Cola’s co-branding with international artists and sounds, and started to associate themselves with music and invested in organizing music festivals to engage with the youth. Similarly, Hindustani musician Zakir Hussain started endorsing tea brand ‘Taj Mahal Tea’ in the year 2000 (Mandal 2002.) Before this, a Hindustani musician endorsing a corporate brand was unheard of. This helped both parties to expand their reach way beyond their usual audiences. Sinojia writes about the way in which the tea brand as a product and the celebrity status of Zakir Hussain, both simultaneously fueled each other’s increasing success: “As the brand became global, the popularity of the
celebrity endorser among the targeted audience over larger geographical area became more significant” (Sinojia 2014). This shows the cross between audiences through globalization can be fruitful for both advertisers and their endorsers as both groups receive exposure which they previously may never have done.

Malik comments on the interaction between multinational companies and Hindustani music when he writes, “the other form of newness concerns the transformed strategies of the global actors to appropriate music for claiming a global presence.” In his research, Malik examines how multinational corporations like Coca Cola alongside the global Bollywood music industry display an eclectic understanding of diversity by appropriating and producing a variety of music genres in conformity with their geographically bounded or unbounded targeted group’s traditions and choices. He further states, “Coca Cola and Bollywood are reaching the individual consumers by evaluating consumer trends and market success of their content through the music posted on various social media such as YouTube” (Malik 2015:186). This examination of globalization demonstrates how large, global companies have identified the wide reach that Hindustani music has and have incorporated this into their advertising strategies.

It was not only western films and music that were on trend, but also the manner in which media was being presented in the West that became increasingly attractive. For example, the accessibility to film and music coming from the USA and the UK was something which Indian audiences admired and wanted for themselves albeit with their own content.

The above-mentioned social and economic trends led to technological changes in India’s media industry. The first private TV network to appear in mass media was known as the STAR (Satellite Television for the Asian Region)
network and this brought international programming to India. STAR channel complemented Door Darshan, which was the traditional terrestrial channel run by the Indian government. Well-known channels such as CNN, HBO, and MTV soon followed bringing news, films, and music from the USA into people’s living rooms with Channel V and MTV quickly became household names. In this way, music played using western instruments (guitars, keyboards and drums) turned into what we now know as “band music culture” and surpassed the popularity of film music amongst the youth.

The younger generation in India grew up on a diet of mainstream advertisement and privatized consumption as a consequence of this media boom which in turn nurtured a different sensibility and approach towards musical tastes and attitudes (Kvetko 2004:184). Music was no longer confined to cinemas or classical theatres and new avenues of enjoyment, such as live music in bars, cafes and popular television channels, became widely accepted. The context and places where music was performed changed dramatically.

The Influence of 1960s and 1970s Rock n’ Roll

Music recordings and performances in North India until the 1990s mainly consisted of Hindustani music, and its various sub genres such as ghazals, bhajan, thumri, lok geet (folk songs), and sufi qawwali and Bollywood film soundtracks. Musical tastes began expanding as the influence of global communities infiltrated India's economy and society in the 1990s. The burgeoning middle class wanted a slice of the western culture as it flickered through into the media.

Kvetko describes film music production from the 90s era as follows, “Hindi film composers would pick out single notes on a harmonium in order to
find a memorable melody. Later, a music arranger will fill in the background with accompanying chords, but the organization of the film song is determined by the melody and lyrics” (Kvetko 2004:185). Bollywood recordings lacked low end (instruments in the low register) in their songs during this period and the movies themselves were terribly uninspiring. As Kvetko notes, “Throughout the 1990s anyone familiar with Bollywood music is familiar with high screeching strings and stratospheric women’s voices”(Kvetko 2013:185). He further observes that Bollywood music of the 90s is was not regarded as having sonic variety, but rather is focused on high impact, often brash sounds which seemed to appeal to the masses. Many musicians practicing pop or fusion music turned to western rock music from the 1960s and 1970s for inspiration.

This influence was one of the triggers for band music culture. Bands in India mainly began as groups playing covers of artists from the West. Bands such as Parikarma and Shiva were among the first to break into the Independent music scene covering the top hits of Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd, ACDC, Jimmie Hendrix and The Doors (Parikarma.com No Date).

In the late 1990s, the concept of bands playing their own, original music developed through bands such as Indian Ocean and Euphoria. This opportunity to play one’s original music allowed classical musicians to come on board as they had formidable skills in both composition and sonic quality. Indian Ocean’s Asheem Chakrobarty was an exceptional musician, with command over both tabla and vocals. Euphoria also used traditional Indian instruments, such as tabla and dholak, alongside western instruments, such as electric guitars, bass, drums and keyboards. Another band, Mirgya, performed with their lead instrumentalist, Hindustani violinist Sharat Chandra Shrivastava. These bands were some of the
few who broadened the avenues for musicality and performance amongst Hindustani musicians stemming from their breakthrough approach in playing their own, original music. It was then only a matter of time before sarangiyas also found their way into this culture and performance space.

Advaita was one of the first major bands from the Indie scene of Delhi to include a sarangiya and to achieve global success, including the receipt of a Global Indian Music Award (GIMA) for 'Best Rock Album' in the year 2012. I was fortunate enough to be that sarangiya and as a traditional eighth generation *khandani* musician rising up through these new avenues for performance, I can confidently say that globalization really did impact Hindustani musicians and sarangiyas all over India. Sarangi players no more depended on vocalists for work. In fact, they started singing themselves and were highly appreciated.

Figure 2.1 - Advaita performing at a club (Blue Frog) in Mumbai in 2013. Picture courtesy- Advaitaonline.net (http://advaitaonline.net/photos).

Although Hindustani musicians were finding new and successful platforms in which to perform, many orthodox Hindustani musicians saw this move as
scandalous and a degradation of traditional performance methods. The above mentioned master sarangiya Ram Narayan once said in interview, “Fusion music is confusion” (Khosla 2005). However, the younger generation of classical musicians, in some cases still managed to turn these attitudes around by carefully finding ways to preserve their traditional training whilst working alongside diverse collaborative teams.

This turning point contributed to the de-stigmatization of the sarangi. The sarangi was now heard in pubs, small live gig venues and college festivals thanks to the growing Independent music scene. The newly globalized youth who previously turned their noses up at Hindustani music were now enjoying a newly defined sound, which was made possible through Independent band music culture. Hindustani music became ‘cool’ again!

This Independent music scene also created avenues for non-hereditary musicians who may have previously been disregarded as inferior musicians given their lack of familial musical background. Non-musical families had previously discouraged their children from following full time musical careers because they felt that there was no future in it. People felt that without family connections, anyone who pursued a musical career ultimately always failed having been either left fighting to fit in with seasoned classical musicians or left to join the Bollywood music industry, which was again often regarded as political and nepotistic. With the expansion of Independent music, new opportunities arose for musicians and this attracted budding students to take their musical training seriously and venture into full time musical careers.

The above-mentioned Asheem Chakravarti was not a hereditary musician and in fact, did not even have any formal training. He quit his career in
advertising, along with band mate Sushmit Sen to form Indian Ocean. (Indianoceanmusic.com 2014)

Figure 2.2 - Asheem Chakravarti from the band Indian Ocean at a performance (Picture courtesy drummerzone.com) No Date. (http://drummerszone.com/news/article/artist-news-1-7598/in-memoriam:-asheem-chakravarty)

World Music

The music marketing category “world music” can be traced back to 1987, when in London Independent record company executives and enthusiasts met to determine ways to market popular music from different parts of the world. The term “world music” was heavily promoted by the music press in the United Kingdom, and later in the United States, and eventually stuck. Billboard magazine began a world music chart and a Grammy category for world music (Stokes 2013:52). It was thanks to the more daring and alternative record labels that world music, which despite making up less than 5% of the global music industry ensured that the genre experienced a new level of success. Feld comments on the way in which record companies contributed to the success of world music as follows, “the marketplace success of world music was building more on rapid product expansion and the promotional support of both the recording and aligned
entertainment industries” (Feld 2000:150). In comparison with commercial popular music, world music did not impact many few pop stars nor did it attract major record labels. Stokes correlates globalization to the rise of world music, and explains how this genre’s development was a result of globalization’s impact on the music scene of the late 1980s (Stokes 2013:51).

This genre was strengthened when non-European and non-American musicians were promoted through recording companies and festival organizations such as WOMAD, including Youssou N’Dour, Fela Kuti, Manu Dibanu, Khaled, Aminah, and Nustrat Fateh Ali Khan. The genre of world music also incorporated rock musicians of the West such as Brian Eno, Peter Gabriel, Robert Fripp, and David Byrne, Sting, and Bjork (Stokes 2013:52).

In the 1990s, British and American born Indians were also making waves with “Asian-Underground” music. DJ and tabla player Talvin Singh and New York-based drummer/tabla player/singer Karsh Kale reached the mainstream charts with their music attracting renowned western music labels.

Singh was born and raised in London and studied the tabla under Pandit Lakshman Singh. In spite of his traditional training under a reputed master from India, British promoters of classical Indian music did not accept his tabla playing as it was felt that he incorporated western influences too strongly into his work. Singh was again rescued by the opportunities borne out of globalization and was able to turn towards fusion work to find his place. In 1993, he was recruited by Icelandic singer Bjork to be her percussionist and collaborated together on her album *Debut* (Debut 1993).
Singh went on to release his solo debut album *Ok* in 1998. The record was critically acclaimed and received the prestigious Mercury music prize\(^9\) in 1999. In 2000, Singh worked with Madonna on her album *Music* (Finn 1999). Singh also took tabla to night clubs and electronic dance music festivals which was new and innovative at that time for a classical Hindustani instrument.

![Figure 2.3 - Talvin Singh (left) performing with Bjork (right) in a music video. Picture courtesy You Tube. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-uSTXn4H5jY).](image)

Karsh Kale is an American (desi) musician, record producer, songwriter, film composer and DJ. He is considered one of the pioneering figures in defining the Asian Underground\(^{10}\) by mixing disparate genres of music such as Indian classical and folk with electronica, rock, pop and ambient music. He took an interest in drums and eventually became a tabla player. Kale studied music production and performance at New York University. In 2000, music

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\(^9\) The Mercury Prize, formerly called the Mercury Music Prize, is an annual prize awarded for the best album from the United Kingdom and Ireland.

\(^{10}\) Asian Underground is a term associated with various British Asian and South Asian Canadian musicians (mostly Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan) who blend elements of western underground dance music and the traditional Asian music of their home countries in South Asia.
producer/bass player Bill Laswell founded Tabla Beat Science and invited Kale along with Zakir Hussain, Talvin Singh, Trilok Gurtu and sarangi player Sultan Khan\textsuperscript{11} to produce *Tala Matrix*, which continues to be considered as one of the most influential Asian fusion albums to date (Kale 2011).

Singh and Kale did not come from a traditional *khandani* lineage, but rather were born to ordinary middle class Indian parents living outside India. As Singh and Kale had very limited traditional training, or none as in the case of Kale, their work was not initially accepted as Hindustani music. It was only when they gained global accolades through fusion work that they were accepted in this way. This stardom of artists like Singh and Kale, came from world music becoming a global phenomenon, and only added to the popularity of Hindustani music among the Indian youth who continued to see prominent successful Indian musicians on the international world music scene throughout the 1990s and 2000s.

The concept of fusing Indian instruments with western sounds began during the mid-1960s. The song “Norwegian Wood (The Bird Has Flown)” is a song by the Beatles from the album *Rubber Soul* released on December 5\textsuperscript{th}, 1965. Band’s lead guitarist George Harrison incorporated sitar on the song. Later, he also collaborated and studied Hindustani music with Ravi Shankar. Similar to the Beatles, the Rolling Stones released “Paint It Black” and featured sitar, from their 1966 album *Aftermath*. Both, the Beatles and the Rolling Stones became one of the first western bands to introduce ethnic sounds from India into mainstream music. Another Indo/Jazz fusion group was "Shakti" which appeared on the international music scene in 1974. Shakti consisted of an English guitarist John McLaughlin, Indian violinist L.Shankar and Indian percussionists Zakir Hussain on

\textsuperscript{11} Sultan Khan was one of the first traditional sarangi players who started collaborating with musicians involved with the world music genre. He also started singing and released an Indi pop album in 2000.
tabla and Vikku Vinayakaram on ghatam. This was the first time that the music industry had seen Hindustani music, Carnatic music and Jazz coming together in one place. The band's debut album *Shakti With John Mclaughlin* released in the year 1976, was described as a “brain blowing achievement” (Yasir 2005). Akin to this, Ravi Shankar’s collaboration with American violinist Yehudi Menhuin, *East Meets West* was released in 1967, was much later followed by his album with American composer, Philip Glass, *Passages*, released in 1990.

![Figure 2.4 - Ravi Shankar (left) giving sitar lessons to George Harrison from band The Beatles (right) in 1968, Rishikesh, India. Picture courtesy – YouTube. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxI6lH9Mvo)](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RxI6lH9Mvo)
New Avenues for Musicians

Mandar Thakur, the chief operating officer of the music label Times Music, once gave an interview about the new avenues opening for musicians. He optimistically stated, “The Indian music scene has traditionally been driven by Bollywood, but changing demographics, massive Internet exposure to global music trends and a progressive youth culture are leading to evolving tastes and this growing market is set to be much more diverse in the future” (Shrivastava 2017:2). I, for one, hope this turns out to be accurate as many of the Independent artists emerging in India are extremely talented and innovative.

One of the most important aspects of being a good musician is the ability to publicly perform well. The more a musician performs, the further their skill and musicality develops. Practice makes perfect and public performance makes you even better. Furthermore, a musician can benefit financially from performance opportunities. In India the focus on performance is even greater due to the high rate of piracy. It is impossible for a musician to earn a living from record sales alone. A music album is basically used nowadays as a business card or a dressed mannequin in a shop window in order to establish a presence in the music industry. Piracy is a huge problem in India and robs musicians/producers of the profit they would have theoretically made from legitimate sales of their work. Unfortunately, piracy cases fail to reach the prosecution stage due to a lack of stringency with India’s copyright laws. Hence, the live music sector and performance work are much more profitable ways for musicians to gain monetary benefit.

The performance options following the 2000s are not limited to pubs, bars, nightclubs and festivals. Artist and event management companies have emerged
all over India providing supportive agencies for musicians to join and to be promoted. An example of this is illustrated in the careers of the young entrepreneurs Vijay Nair and Bobby Talwar from Mumbai who in 2002 founded an artist and event management company titled Only Much Louder (OML). They call themselves “India’s first artist management form for Indie bands.” OML manages leading and upcoming bands as well as live music venues. OML are the creator and curator for the famous NH7 Weekender, which is an annual multi-city music festival in India and is described by the UK newspaper The Guardian as “India’s answer to Glastonbury.” Liquor companies such as Bacardi and Dewars also contribute funding to this festival which has a recorded annual attendance of over 100,000 people (oml.in No Date).

Fig 2.5 - Karsh Kale on tabla (left) and Anushka Shankar (centre) performing at NH7 weekender festival, Pune in the year 2016. (Picture courtesy YouTube) https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=olcil3cTVyM
Fig 2.6 - A crowd enjoying a moment of high energy at NH7 weekender festival, Pune. 2010. Picture courtesy: insider.in (https://insider.in/nh7-weekender/gallery)

Festivals like NH7 weekender and companies like OML have now expanded the gigging culture within the Independent music scene. This festival was started in 2010 in the city of Pune. The festival had multiple stages including main stages featuring world music, rock and metal, electronic dance music and pop, and several mini stages which featured singer/songwriters, solo acts and comedians. The organizers of the festival provided, accommodation, per diems (1000 Indian Rupees a day equal to $15) and a sum of 5000 Indian Rupees per artist, which is equivalent to $75. If a particular artist or band was well known then they were paid much more. For example in that particular year, Advaita were paid 100,000 Indian Rupees, approximately $1,500 for a single performance, a relatively large sum in India’s music performance economy. It is not a lot of money in comparison to few big festivals in West. But it isn’t bad either, especially for a festival, which only started out recently. Also the figures I provided are from the year 2010, festival’s debut year and since then festival is only growing.
The festival was a huge success and drew crowds from the major cities such as Mumbai, Bangalore and Delhi. This was probably the first time Indian audiences had seen a multi-staged Independent music festival happening in their own country. Although in the past many western pop acts and bands such as Michael Jackson, Sting, Iron Maiden, Roger Waters (Pink Floyd), Metallica, Deep Purple and many more have toured and performed in India, their tours were mainly organized and staged in collaboration with international music event organizers. Festivals such as NH7 provided a unique platform, which was fully organized and curated by an Indian organization and it showcased Independent music acts from India as well as abroad. It was designed on the modern day multi-genre music festivals of the West. Although mainly Independent, the festival is now held annually between October and December and travels to eight other cities in India, with the flagship event in Pune. The music performances involved in these festivals are loud and cater to large numbers which is quite different to the world of performance in Hindustani music. Some of the biggest Hindustani music festivals are Saptak (Ahmedabad) which lasts for 10 days, TanSen Sangeent Samaroh (Gwalior) which is dedicated to the great court singer Tansen, Dover Lane Music Conference (Kolkata) and Hariballabh Sangeet Festival, (Jalandhar, Punjab). These annual music festivals have been running for many years, with Hariballabh festival running for over 140 years and even making it into the Limca book of world records for being “the oldest music festival in India” (Harballabh No Date). Altogether, these festivals showcase hundreds of musicians and draw large numbers of local crowds.

OML, as a company, benefits from globalization as it has foreign investors and support from international cultural organizations, such as the British
Council, who help the festival to host UK-based acts in India. This exchange works both ways, with OML putting upcoming Indie acts forward to the British Council, who are then free to decide whether or not to promote UK tours of those artists. Advaita, along with four other Indian acts, were selected in this way in 2009 to work alongside music producer John Leckie and conduct a full UK tour. These types of event management companies and performance opportunities are direct effects of globalization. Entrepreneurs such as Nair and Talwar are putting their money where their mouth is. They worked as opportunists in the business and gave the Indie music scene exactly what it needed at the right time.

In addition to these positive effects, Stephen Feld looks at the negative side of world music and globalization. He describes this as follows, “This music participates in shaping a kind of consumer-friendly multi-culturalism, one that follows the market logic of expansion and consolidation” (Feld 2000). Feld argues that globalization can be a negative influence on local cultures, contrary to the thrust of my arguments. He states that while music borne out of the impact of globalization caters to the consumer demands, it can have negative effects for raw talent and budding artists. I agree with Feld here. Many emerging musicians have fantastic ideas and produce brilliant music, but they are not noticed because their music is not 'on trend' and global, multinational companies are not willing to invest in them.

Asthana, on the other hand argues that globalization is spreading the feeling of nationalism in new ways. He gives examples of soda companies sponsoring the Indian Cricket team and coming up with slogans such as “Dil Hai

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12 John Leckie is an English record producer and recording engineer with multiple production credits including Radiohead's *The Bends* (1995). He began his career working at Abbey Road Studios in London where he worked as a tape operator with artists such as John Lennon, George Harrison, Syd Barret and then became a balance engineer for Pink Floyd amongst other work.
“Hindustani” meaning my heart is Indian. He says “in contemporary India, these processes are increasingly visible through the entanglement of the national and global, and globalization has inflected the nation-state in a specific way leading to the reconsolidation of the hegemony of the nation-state and a construction of a new nationalism.” (2014:342). On similar lines, sitar player Shujaat Khan\(^\text{13}\) once stated, “Globalization is now pushing the younger generation, to get connected with their roots again. It is helping them find their own identity in a world of synthetic, mass produced, commoditized and hybridized products” (Parekh 2017). In the interview, Khan stresses how globalization has increased the number of performances for classical music too and it is drawing large audiences even amongst the youth. In my opinion this demonstrates a positive aspect of globalization as we see how this concept has changed attitudes and broadened the reach of classical music to alternative audiences.

Globalization and has triggered notions of change and social transformation. For this reason, sarangiya\(^s\) are continually adapting themselves to maximize these new opportunities and also to cater to the changes in the audience demand.

Alongside the success of globalization, it is also necessary to consider social and ethnographic questions. For example, is it such a good thing that sarangiya\(^s\) are adapting and do we want this? Does adaptation equate to a loss of some of the most precious and unique traditions on which sarangiya\(^s\) have mastered their artistry? If sarangiya\(^s\) refuse to adapt, could they survive? I will examine these aspects of globalization in the next chapter.

\(^{13}\) Shujaat Khan is the son and disciple of sitar legend late Ustad Vilayat Khan.
Chapter 3: The Music Scene

The Independent music scene in India is a prime example of hybridity and multiculturalism. This is mainly due to the widely accepted intercultural collaborations between western and Indian classical musicians by Indian audiences. The existence of fusion music genres, and the vast practice of experimentalism, has now become a necessity amongst Hindustani musicians in order to be a part of an Indie scene and to survive as a performing artist.

Any form of original music, which is not supported by commercial giants such as Bollywood is considered to be Independent. This form of music was initially started by rock bands, which produced music Independently, including an autonomous do it yourself approach to recording and publishing.

Independent music in India started as a small collection of bands comprising only of western musical instruments but today it is on the verge of evolving into a full scale industry. The past few years have seen a steady rise in musical events and festivals and even in managers and booking agents. I remember when I first started working in the scene in Delhi, there were just a handful of Indie artists, but now there are many more bands, singer-songwriters and electronic music acts incorporating Hindustani music in their work.

In order to understand how the Independent music scene is growing in India. I will present an interview conducted with Ms. Ritnika Nayan Srivastava (via texts in English, February 10th – 27th, 2018). Ritnika is the owner of the music and entertainment company ‘Music Gets me High’ started in Delhi in 2007. Her company’s portfolio services include artist management and bookings, festival, concert and tour planning, residencies and social media management and
consultancy services for musicians. She worked as Advaita’s\textsuperscript{14} first band manager for a few years which was when I got to work with her. Ritnika has recently released a book titled \textit{Indie 101: The Ultimate Guide to the Independent Music Industry in India}. The interviewee and the interviewer have been abbreviated as follows: Ritnika Nayan Shrivastava = RNS and Suhail Yusuf = SY.

\textbf{Interview}

SY: What is the Independent music scene of India according to you?

RNS: The Indie (abbreviated version of ‘Independent music’) scene refers to music that isn’t on the major labels. However in India, we often refer to Indie as anything that isn’t Bollywood music and this often incorporates electronic DJs, Rock, Blues, Jazz, Metal, Punk bands and even fusion music acts.

SY: In what direction do you think the music scene is headed now?

RNS: The Independent music scene in India has grown a lot, especially in the last few years. People are now considering music as a profession and large numbers of the younger generation are getting involved in the business of music, like owning booking agencies, venues and festivals. I feel the trend will continue, but we find that globally, DJs are more favored over live bands because they can get the crowd dancing and have lower set-up costs. I hope that changes soon.

\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Advaita} is a fusion octet based in Delhi. It has been regarded as one of the most prominent contemporary experimental music acts from India. I spent eleven years with the band touring, recording and producing.
SY: Do you think globalization has played a vital role in terms of creating new avenues and possibilities for Indian classical musicians?

RNS: Definitely! I feel classical musicians are definitely considered more of an asset abroad than in India and it started as early as the time of Ravi Shankar. With the spread of the Internet, access to these artists has become easier and hence more opportunities are available to them.

SY: Has having an Indian classical sonic element become a trend amongst bands, especially in Delhi?

RNS: It has and it started a while ago, for example acts like MIDIval Punditz (electronic) when they play live they collaborate with tabla player Karsh Kale. This trend has always been there as it gives a unique flair to the music and it has become quite popular. I quite often get demands from local venues in Delhi asking for a set-up which offers collaboration between a vocalist, tabla player and a DJ, to wow their audience. In my opinion this is something that has been there, done that but it seems that the crowd still wants it so the venues still ask for it. Ultimately, Indians are accustomed to the music and sounds of Indian instruments; it’s in our blood, so it always works well in Delhi (Shrivastava 2018).

In spite of the constant growth the Independent music scene is going through, Bollywood still dominates the entertainment industry in India and Independent musicians are still struggling to get noticed. Having said that, there are a few who have managed to bridge the divide between Bollywood and
Independent music scene, like Vishal Dadlani, MIDIval Punditz, Raghu Dixit and India Ocean, to name a few. As younger music directors enter the industry, the influence of rock, R&B and hip-hop in Bollywood music is growing. Independent Indian acts like Advaita, Parikarma and Nucleya are now also composing music for Bollywood films (Shrivastava 2017:2). This raises a question: Do Independent musicians have to go through Bollywood in order to gain a bigger reach to the masses?

In order to answer this we must first gain a deeper understanding of what the Independent music scene in India is from a Hindustani and contemporary musician’s point of view. In this regard, I conducted interviews with two such musicians, Salman Khan and Ujwal Nagar. My interview with Ujwal was conducted in Hindi on January 10\textsuperscript{th} 2018 in Delhi and my interview with Salman was conducted in Hindi and English or ‘Hinglish’ via a Facetime telephone call on February 24\textsuperscript{th} 2018. I audio-recorded both interviews and made the English translations below.

Salman Khan is a lead vocalist and songwriter of the multi genre Hindi fusion rock band Astitva. He belongs to a lineage of well-known Hindustani musicians from Rampur-Sahaswaan \textit{gharana} (school). His grandfather (also his teacher) was the Late Ustad Ghulam Sadiq Khan and his great grandfather was a sarangiya, the Late Ustad Ghulam Jaffar Khan. I have known Salman from my childhood days in New Delhi. Both of us lived in the same neighborhood whilst receiving training under our illustrious grandfathers and uncles. Salman’s band, Astitva is a successful commercial Hindi rock band. The band has already made a debut in Bollywood and tours across the country and beyond for performances.
Ujwal Nagar is a Hindustani music vocalist based in Delhi. He belongs to a family of illustrious musicians and learned his art form within a traditional pedagogical methodology. Ujwal is a classical vocalist by profession and is also a gifted tabla player. He holds an M.Phil in vocal music and is a recipient of the Central Government Scholarship award. As a Hindustani musician, Ujwal regularly performs both as a soloist and as a collaborator. Ujwal and I worked together in the band Advaita for several years.

Interviews

The interviewees and the interviewer have been abbreviated as follows: Salman Khan = SK, Ujwal Nagar = UN and Suhail Yusuf = SY. As I asked them similar questions, I have juxtaposed the responses of Salman and Ujwal in the text despite their not being together at the time of interview.

SY: What is the Independent music scene of Delhi according to you?

SK: Independent music means coming up with such music, which is originally yours and it is developed independently without any backing from commercial giants such as Bollywood. Before India was hit by globalization and the age of Internet, the easiest form of music accessible to ordinary people was Bollywood music.

SY: It still is.
SK: Correct. So, this genre held a monopoly over mass media by controlling TV and radio. However, since the Internet became a pocket phenomenon, it revolutionized the music industry. It now provides a platform to anyone and everyone without any industry such as Bollywood dominating it.

UN: Independent music is something which is not completely commercial, Bollywood or classical. It lies somewhere in between. It is something, which usually is a result of two, three or more musicians coming together and collaborating in a duo, trio or even in a band setting. As far as what I have understood about the Independent music scene, it has always been about making original tunes or songs. It has never been about covering bands, Bollywood or other popular acts.

SY: Is it still like that or has it changed now? In better words where do you think the scene is headed towards, now?

SK: I’d say thanks to social media, this is the best time to be an Independent artist. Even Bollywood is interested in featuring Indie artistes in their films. Indie artistes now have their own following and are creating their own niche.

UN: I can’t really say much about how it got started and where exactly it lies now. But I can say this that the Independent music scene did start from band music culture. Initially it started as bands covering music of the West and then slowly, following acts such as Indian Ocean, Mrigya and Euphoria, bands began coming up with original work. The idea of fusing western instruments with authentic and folk melodies started from these artists. Then mass media platforms
such as Channel V and MTV stepped in, making the genre even more popular and widely accepted, especially amongst youth. But I think the scene has grown immensely in the last ten years. There are an enormous number of platforms now, especially for those who want to showcase their creativity through experimenting with music. A far as I remember when our band started out we had only a few venues like Hard Rock Café and Lodhi Garden Restaurant in Delhi, Blue Frog in Mumbai. I was never regularly following the band scene anyway. Since we only had a few music venues catering to such bands, the scene had exclusivity. The good thing is that, in the last ten years, the numbers of musicians practicing Independent music has grown a lot and the tendency to collaborate and experiment has gone insane. Now, there is nothing good or bad about it, it is just how the scene has shaped up.

SY: So, basically you are saying the scene has grown much bigger in the last ten years, which means, the demand and supply of both the artistes practicing this kind of music and venues catering to them have increased?

UN: Yes! When we [Advaita] started we were eight musicians in the band and not a lot of acts were exploring this sound of mixing Eastern sounds with western. But now, for example collaboration between an electronic music producer and a Hindustani musician there are at least fifty acts practicing the same concept. So even to define something new or to come up with something absolutely fresh has become extremely challenging. Due to all that has already been done it is just getting harder and harder to make something ‘new’. What I am trying to say is – in today’s time even if you create something out of the box it will not get noticed.
instantly. There’s so much content out there already. One has to literally bombard the market with a non-stop supply of content to gain any traction from the consumers of social media.

SY: So, everything has gotten pretty dense in the independent market. It seems like sometimes there’s more supply than the demand itself. The content becomes ready very fast but then remains unnoticed.

UN: Yes, but that’s everywhere even in commercial or Bollywood music too. That’s the age we are living in.

In order to understand why the Independent music scene is growing in a city like Delhi, I would like to present a further analysis of Delhi being a center of gigging culture.

**Delhi a Centre for Live Gigs in India**

Delhi is the capital city of India and is one of the biggest and the busiest metropolis in the country. Its estimated population in the year 2018 is 19.5 million people. (indiaonlinepages.com). The city has been through an economic boom and has an abundance of shopping malls, live venues, gentrified neighborhoods, and most importantly, an audience which loves variety.

The Indian economy’s liberalization in the early 1990s saw a rise in the middle class of Delhi. Since then, spaces for consumption and entertainment have cropped up at an ever increasing rate. These spaces are mostly shopping malls, based on the American model, with large multi-level enclosed spaces, atria, and
circulation areas connecting stores. The majority of Delhiites had never seen these types of spaces before. Along with premium stores, these new malls house the trendiest restaurants, nightclubs, multiplex cinema theaters, bowling alleys, high-end beauty salons and many live venues for entertainment purposes. As spaces of concentrated consumption, they are definitely in the premium category for affluent families looking for multiple activities (Kapur 2006). The expansion of construction in the leisure sector has inevitably brought new performances spaces for musicians but it has also increased the potential for educational and community work in the music industry. These new venues thrive due to the high demand for musical entertainment whether it be from bands or individual musicians.

My interviews with Salman Khan and Ujwal Nagar also addressed the question of Delhi being a center of live performances in India.

SY: Can musicians in Delhi sustain full time musical careers nowadays?

SK: I think yes they can, there are so many new opportunities now. A musician just needs to smartly channel within the scene and create scope in itself.

UN: I think, yes. But I am not aware about the exact situation of the current Independent musicians when it comes to how lucrative the scene is for them.

SY: But Ujwal, I am asking you from the point of view of a musician who’s been a part of a successful band. This act has been monetarily successful and made a huge name for itself too.
UN: In our case yes, because our albums, tours, show, and even singles were made with a lot of thought process behind them. We as a band never came up with stuff just for the heck of it. We always had a theme, which attracted more and more fans for us. We never came up with stuff keeping just the commercial aspects in mind. That’s the reason why we could make the Independent music scene's market so lucrative for us. Also, because the acceptability towards experimentalism, collaborations, and fusion music has increased so much in the scene now, younger musicians aren’t uncomfortable being associated with these shows or even with the notion of having a serious career in a band. Now, since there are so many new avenues and opportunities the infrastructure plus the support system, which makes the gigs possible, the independent music industry is only getting better for performers. For example, there is better sound equipment available at venues along with highly skilled sound engineers. The market has opened up for almost all possible business avenues related to independent music scene. I said this before and I am going to say this again; because there is demand that is why there is supply and sometimes the supply is even greater than the demand.

SY: Ujwal, I am going to stop you there and frame another question based on the demand and supply concept which you just explained now. Let’s look at this entire picture from a wider perspective.

UN: Ok.
SY: Do you think the impact of globalization in India has played a vital role in making the market lucrative in terms of finding alternative work for Hindustani musicians?

UN: There’s no doubt that due to the impact of globalization in India the possibilities in regards to music performances have increased enormously. There is so much music happening now. Even venues and corporate shows for Hindustani music have grown much more in numbers. Although, I am not saying there was a dearth of opportunities for Hindustani musicians before Globalization had hit India in the 1990s. We still had classical music festivals, music venues, individual organizations and the Government initiated music programs. Yes, in today’s time as a Hindustani musician like you and me we have the freedom and access to non-classical music performances to make a living as a live performer. Since, there is so much exposure towards a variety of shows in the performing world. The audiences now are much more educated and classification amongst the masses has increased thoroughly.

SY: That’s a great answer. However, scholars have raised issues regarding globalization and its effect on music [see the Conclusion for references] and my thesis is a counter narrative to these mainstream ideas. Through the analysis of my thesis, I am trying to argue that globalization has also helped sarangi and sarangiyas to rise amongst the hierarchy of Hindustani musical instruments.

UN: That’s a very good analysis and I really like your thesis topic. The only challenge ahead for Hindustani musicians is staying true to themselves. Often to
become “different”, we musicians keep moving further away from our roots and we have to question whether this is a good thing. There is a difference in being a performer and a classical musician and perhaps Hindustani musicians need to be more aware of this. Again, what I am trying to say here is there is nothing right or wrong in any of the two. It is a challenge to find the right balance. In a world like today it is difficult to survive as a musician any way. Be it a performer or a Hindustani musician.

SY: What kinds of gigs are happening lately in the independent music scene of Delhi?

SK: Currently, the scene has become diluted. In the name of Independent music, bands have started playing Bollywood covers. The audiences attending these shows don’t really care about the content, they just want to have a good time. It’s like how hotel line\textsuperscript{15} musicians used to perform in restaurants at one time. The only difference is these are bands, and instead of performing at restaurants they perform at pubs and bars. Unfortunately in Delhi, people don’t want to pay for original music. People are content paying for movie tickets and other entertainment sources, but not for music. That is one big problem.

SY: Due to the growing numbers of live gigs in Delhi, do you think there is quantity over quality?

\textsuperscript{15} Hotel line’ is a term I grew up hearing in our household filled with Hindustani musicians when referring to the work of performing film songs in hotel restaurants. Many musical families turned to hotel line work when the disappearance of courtesan culture took away their trade.
SK: Yes that is true. Good quality acts do exist but then smaller venues who just want to have a live performance most nights, don’t really care much about the quality of the content. This affects the entire market in the long run and sometimes not so good content becomes well known and attracts negative publicity for itself.

Social Media and its Impact on Hindustani Musicians

Advances in technology inevitably work hand in hand with social media to provide a platform for the exposure of Hindustani music to a wider audience. Through phones, tablets, and iPads, Hindustani music can be accessed and played from MTV, in films, theatre, and even in nightclubs, pubs, and bars, in the palm of your hand. As technology progresses, social media becomes more immediate and more of a regular feature in our daily lives. People are surrounded by their gadgets so that they are constantly connected to these social networks in a much faster and potentially more compulsory way than ever before.

Hindustani musicians are no exception to this trend. As with all musicians, they lead busy lifestyles as performers, curators and educators. They are also busy projecting their image in the world of social media, making announcements of their upcoming concerts, tours, and recording sessions. Some of them have even started sharing their riyaz (practice) sessions via live streams on Facebook.

Hindustani musicians today, very often because of social media and social networking, are thriving due to their new-found ability to engage with their audience and generate economic resources for themselves. This virtual space has made the world much smaller and made connections much easier for upcoming artists who want to promote their work and advertise their product. My interview
with Salman Khan continued to further discuss the role of social media in Hindustani musicians’ lives.

**Interview**

SY: Do you think the rise of social media in India has helped Hindustani musicians to grow even beyond the classical market of performances?

SK: I think it has. But I’d like to also point this out that it is easier for Hindustani instrumentalists to break into the Indie scene using social media as compared to vocalists. The instruments don’t have any lyrics and they are flexible enough to work around with different tunings. However, social media is a great tool to keep your audience engaged and at the same time it keeps you informed about your contemporaries’ work. (Khan 2018)

This view on social media is rather optimistic in my opinion. Although I agree that social media can encourage healthy competition, I also feel that it can create unwanted rivalry and jealousy which steps away somewhat from the sense of camaraderie which was previously afforded to classical musicians. In my opinion it is crucial not to overuse social media for this reason.

**Case studies**

To further understand how Hindustani musicians are productively adapting to the possibilities of emergent Web 2.0 and mobile media technologies and leading virtual lives on social media, I would like to look into the virtual presence of two budding musicians from North India: Momin Khan a sarangi player from Jaipur, and Rishabh Seen a sitar player from Delhi.
Momin Khan

Momin Khan is a young sarangi player from the city of Jaipur in the state of Rajasthan in western India. He is the son and student of a fairly well known sarangiya from the Jaipur gharana, Ustad Moinuddin Khan. I heard about Momin in the year 2015, when someone shared a video clip of him playing on Facebook. This in itself is an example of how we often get to know about the new upcoming talents through social media in the field of Hindustani music today, which is in contrast to the olden days when one would have to wait for a particular concert or buy a newly released album to discover new musicians. By virtue of the social networking medium I was able to easily research Momin and ascertain basic facts about his background, such as that he grew up in a small town and learned the art of playing the sarangi in a traditional guru-shishya parampara (the age old Indian methodology of passing knowledge from one generation to another). Before social networking, this information would have taken months or even years to ascertain depending on whether you had managed to secure a ticket to the right concert and whom you chatted to thereafter. Multiple other factors might impact on your experience of this concert and indeed on the artist’s performance. However, thanks to social media, this budding musician has been able to forego the complications of organizing and paying for a formal concert.

While conducting digital ethnography on Momin Khan, I saw that he is quite active on social media, mostly on Facebook. Momin regularly shares his concert pictures, his jam session videos and he even live streams his riyaz sessions on Facebook. Momin maintains a high level of social media interaction with more than 10,000 ‘likes’ on his own personal fan page. This is important to note as it may explain how Momin has also started to connect with and get regular work
from ghazal\textsuperscript{16} singers and experimental musical outfits, popularly known as fusion bands. Earlier this year, Momin released a video on YouTube in which he can be seen singing and playing the sarangi. In the video, Momin performs a semi classical\textsuperscript{17} composition \textit{Yad piya ki aye}\textsuperscript{18} fused with western instruments such as guitar, and in the background one can hear synth sounds.

Unlike traditional sarangi players, Momin Khan did not start his career as an accompanist to Hindustani vocalists. Instead, through social networking, he is making industry connections and building a performance repertoire of his own. The work that he is doing is something that would have been unheard of twenty years ago for such a junior musician, and in my opinion this has been made possible because of social networking.

Figure 3.1 - Momin Khan’s Facebook page and him live streaming his work. (https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100006700065604).

\textsuperscript{16} Ghazal is a lyrical poem with a fixed number of verses and a repeated rhyme, typically on the theme of love, and normally set to music.

\textsuperscript{17} A musical composition that is intermediate in style between classical and popular music.

\textsuperscript{18} ‘\textit{Yad Piya Ki Aye’} – ‘Longing for the beloved’. Link - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hGz9GgGgs
Rishabh Seen

Rishabh, a young sitar player known as ‘Rishabh Sitar’ on his Facebook page, comes from Jalandhar, a small town in the state of Punjab, North India. He belongs to a family of musicians and learned the art form under his father Manu Seen. I met Rishabh backstage before a concert in Delhi a few years ago. Since then, we have been friends on Facebook sharing and tracking each other’s work.

Rishabh, despite belonging to a very traditional family of classical musicians, began his career by playing fusion music. Neither his personal appearance nor his musical collaborations conform to the traditional image of a Hindustani musician. However, he has managed to overcome the orthodoxy from which he started by nurturing a more diverse fan base on social networks.

Rishabh’s music caught my attention when he shared a video of himself playing sitar covering heavy metal music. It sounds quite bizarre, but it worked for him. Inevitably, not all audiences took to his music and Rishabh was thoroughly criticized by some (Rishabh 2015). However, conversely there have been significant numbers of people supporting and enjoying Rishabh’s work and his presence on social media has allowed him to easily and quickly present himself in front of new and different audiences. Rishabh managed to attract the attention of 'The Aristocrats', a band which he had covered, and was invited by them to give an opening performance at one of their concerts. Again, this is something which would have been unheard of for a junior musician years ago, but social networking has allowed these two entities to connect and collaborate much more easily.
In addition to a Facebook page, Rishabh has an Instagram account and Twitter page. While conducting digital ethnography on Rishabh, I was able to ascertain that he now plays in the band of one of Bollywood’s biggest playback singer, Arijit Singh. Rishabh does not play a traditional sitar player’s role in the band, but instead plays an electric sitar popularly known as a Zitar.

Other Hindustani musicians who have dared to be different, include Rajasthani folk musician, Kutle Khan who rose to fame by appearing on TV channels and collaborating with pop acts and sitar player Niladri Kumar who has introduced an electric version of the sitar, which he refers to as the zitar. Kutle Khan conducted himself as a rock musician on stage by jumping around and asking the audience to move along with him which was never the case amongst traditional Rajasthani folk singers. Similarly, Kumar headlines college festivals and uses highly amplified instruments in his set-up. The question in this
development is whether there is a loss of convention and sonic quality when musicians vary so widely from their traditional education. When I was a part of an electronic musical band, I used pickups on the sarangi in order to process the instrument’s sound. I would process my sarangi through laptops and an audio interphase. For a few years, I enjoyed the loud tone it gave me but then I realized my approach and my technique of playing the sarangi was completely changing from that which is regarded as traditional and this has an effect on the overall sonic quality I was producing. This is not to say the sound was necessarily worse when playing for technological advantage but I certainly was not using the techniques required for skillful acoustic performance.

This attitude is supported by the scholar Mahmood, who states, “globalization promotes a homogeneous set of values and beliefs due to the fact that ethnic communities are losing their identity and individualism” (Mohyuddin and Mahmood 2014:12132). Even with these concerns, valid to a certain extent, through my analysis, I argue that globalization has helped the sarangi and sarangiyas to rise up through the hierarchy of Hindustani musical instruments.

Benefits of Social Media Presence

Social media allows musicians to accomplish online many of the tasks that are important to them offline including staying connected with the music world, making new fans, sharing their own pictures, and exchanging ideas. The various benefits of having a social media presence are diverse have been divided into the following three, broad areas. First, musicians are provided with an equal platform to showcase their art form which breaks the culture of hierarchies. For years, Hindustani classical music has been ruled by these hierarchies and certain
musicians have dominated Hindustani musical performance. For example, an accompanist such as a sarangiya or a tabla player in spite of developing a high level of skill, could never become a soloist simple because a sarangiya was never traditionally a soloist. It has been extremely difficult for musicians in some cases to find their own place or create a niche for themselves. For example, the famous sarangiya Ram Narayan stopped accompanying vocalists to establish the sarangi as a solo instrument. However, it is of note that the first ever sarangi player to be recorded and performed as a soloist was Bundu Khan (Magriel 1997). Hence, some Hindustani musicians suffer as a result of industry or family politics. The effect of this dynamic is that many musicians remain confined to an accompanist position and are never exposed to the opportunity of solo performance. As a result, many talented Hindustani musicians previously changed professions or turned to commercial musical giants such as the Bollywood music industry in order to sustain themselves.

Having a social media presence is changing this pattern as musicians are no longer confined to the demands of traditional or commercial limitations and now have room to develop their own creativity at a much earlier stage. For example, Momin Khan has released several music videos playing fusion music even before starting a formal career in classical Hindustani music.

Secondly, social media provides the opportunity to engage with audiences directly and on a regular basis. Growing numbers of India’s population are using the Internet in spite of limitations in accessing technology and social class boundaries. Hindustani musicians can regularly be seen to receive tens of thousands of 'likes' on their social media pages which shows that audience engagement is now easier and faster than ever. The ease of a click to share or like
a musician's work has meant that music is spread more quickly and more widely now than ever before. Audiences now feel more connected to their favorite artists and arguably this makes them more likely to support their artist(s) of choice.

Thirdly, musicians can create more avenues and opportunities for themselves using social media. Given that social media is all about networking and public relations, musicians are now networking throughout different classes of people in a way which they may not have done previously. This networking eventually leads to a variety of work in addition to traditional performance and education work. Hindustani musicians now network more freely with the film, fashion and arts industries and this generates work which may not have even been planned. I can provide a personal example of this type of networking when I was approached by a major fashion label Levi Strauss & Co. The label wanted to feature me in their advertisement campaign in November 2014. As much as I might like to think so, I am no model! I am a professional musician and never expected to be contacted by a fashion label in this way. However, the company was looking for inspirational stories of artists with a ‘different’ approach to be the face of their Instagram and Facebook campaign. When I asked a public relations manager for the brand what prompted them to consider me, she replied that it was because of my strong social media presence and the fact I was making a difference in my chosen field. Once I was featured for this campaign, another local fashion brand from Delhi, “Bhane,” featured me in their advertisement campaign. This was valuable work for me, which gave me positive exposure as an upcoming artist and also led to other avenues of work and connections for me. This was only made possible because of social networking and I think many other Hindustani
musicians will be making similar pathways in other areas by virtue of the same medium.

Figure 3.3 - Social media ad campaign I was part of, curated by Levi Strauss & Company held at Delhi, November 2014. Picture courtesy – Suhail Yusuf.

Having a social media presence allows musicians to market themselves in a much more economical way. One is able to present themselves without incurring the expense of time and money which goes into a physical performance. This is a practical and valuable advantage which directly overcomes one of the main challenges faced by upcoming Hindustani musicians, namely financial limitations.
Disadvantages of Social Media Presence

The disadvantages of social media are complex and varied. The main complaints, which arise from the use of social media, ironically, are that it isolates us from others. Virtual, snappy and edited friendships are taking the place of real connections which leads us to hide our true selves and fall under pressure to present a glossy, polished image which aims at higher and higher levels of perfection. The overall effects of social media on Hindustani musicians is nuanced in certain ways. For example, it can be argued that the online accounts of lives which we present on social media is simple a false, virtual lifestyle. Similarly, sometimes a musician's profile is a false reflection on how successful he or she is. There are an abundance of aspiring musicians, writers, actors and sports persons on social media portraying a false image of how successful they are and this is no different for Hindustani musicians. This act of creating an image can distract musicians from their art form and as a result instead of devoting time on music, musicians get caught up updating and following others on social media. This can affect a musician’s career by shifting their focus and their attention but it can also cause a negative impact on their mental health. Artists can repeatedly compare themselves to others in their field and this can lead to a feeling of low self-esteem and inequality. This condition has recently been referred to as cyber addiction and is discussed in more detail below. Unfortunately, this depression is often fueled by false representations of other musicians who may have strong media teams promoting that artist's social media and designing a highly stylized image of them.

Conversely, talented musicians with little or no understanding or indeed, little or no time for social media, struggle to compete in an almost compulsory
social media sphere. Not everyone is an expert with social media or indeed with technology. Nor can all musicians afford to have a technical, media team at hand to promote them. This can mean that some exceptionally talented musicians who do not happen to have the interest, time or resources for social media are left behind in today’s world where a social media presence is considered to be so vital. This may be slightly more applicable to Hindustani musicians who unlike western musicians have started using technology as part of their art form relatively later on. Given the complex social and financial status of many Hindustani musicians of the older generation, it has not always been possible for them to afford personal internet connection, smart phones, laptops and other vessels with which to access social media. This inevitably led to a delay in the acceptance of the use of social media in traditional spheres and as such, many older musicians may not have the necessary in-depth understanding of social media to compete with the younger generation. These musicians, despite their immense talent, may be left behind or automatically discounted by audiences who increasingly expect a 'full package' product with accessible fan pages and media sources as standard. Musicians who fail to deliver these secondary features can be perceived as old fashioned and this inability to engage can alienate audiences.

The pressure of competition displayed truthfully or untruthfully online, becomes extremely difficult to bear and as a result, musicians suffer from cyber addiction and depression. Cyber addiction is a serious problem in today’s world not only for musicians but for teens and adults too. If we look honestly at our mobile phone or electronic screens, we should really remember that the virtual world isn’t real, and the majority of what we generally see on social media is an act. Most of the pictures put up on Instagram are filtered and the videos on
Facebook are edited. However, even if you tell yourself that if someone was genuinely busy having a good time, they would not have the time to put up a photo or video of the moment, the constant perfection portrayed on social media can lead to depressive thoughts. People have started believing that social media is real and feel that their own reality does not compare. This feeling has increased the sense of competition amongst musicians. Although this is positive in some regards, in some ways this is a negative outcome. Often, the competitive element is focused on the wrong things such as getting more gigs, attending social parties, looking good, or posting more provocative information about yourself. These aspects are inevitable as social media is so visual, and this distracts significantly from the musical element of a musician’s career.

When assessing the advantages, disadvantages and effects of social media of Hindustani musicians, it is important to recognize that while it may be useful to the musician to promote him or herself like this, it is entirely based upon how much and what they choose to share with their audience. For example, in a physical concert an artist cannot edit out his or her mistakes or enhance their presence as they can do on social media. On social media, short clips can seem impressive at first glance but this may lead us to forget that one of the most important features of a Hindustani musician is his or her ability to sustain dynamic range over the course of a full solo performance. A forty-five second clip of brilliance is quite different to a two hour, sustained, skilled recital, which would have formerly been the standard mark of a worthy musician. It is also considered necessary for a Hindustani musician to prove their mettle by performing well under the pressure of a live setting rather than in the comfort of their bedroom. I
therefore believe that the answer to whether social media is a positive development for Hindustani musicians is more complicated than it first seems. At the moment, glory is going to those who are showing a small fraction of the skill which would have been expected from their predecessors.
Conclusion

In this thesis I have presented the impact of globalization on sarangiyas in 21st century India, as a counter narrative to ideas put forth by various scholars, (for example, Feld 2000, Stokes 2004, Kvetko 2005, Dupont 2011, Appadurai 2013, Mohyuddin and Mahmood 2014). I would agree that globalization leads to industrialization, commodification, and hybridization by denaturalizing the “ethnic” and dominating contemporary culture. It also explains cultural shifts in the society and why a hegemonic capitalist ideology is gaining momentum and overall favor.

In my opinion, the effects of globalization have also helped promote sarangiyas’ musicality to the masses and pushed their abilities to create more opportunities for themselves. Often, we forget that current Hindustani musicians are competing in the same society as other industries, irrespective of class. Hindustani musicians are exposed to the same luxurious life style as the bourgeois and living in the same spaces of consumption as them. In correlation to that, musicians of today are developing the same aspirations, needs, and necessities, which means they face capitalist desires just as the rest of society does.

In chapter one of this thesis I showed that the sarangi and its practitioners were marginalized in the 20th century due to the instrument's stigmatization and the sarangi's low social status. The sarangi, in spite of being an advanced instrument, remained an accompaniment to the voice only.

This instrument has been somewhat neglected from the time it came into existence. The reason why it is so hard to trace the exact historical dates of the
instrument is because it was never properly recorded in the accounts of the ancient musical treatise of India, until much later.

Maybe because it was an instrument of sages, faqirs, saints and common people, the sarangi was not given the importance it deserved. Despite the lack of nurture, the different varieties of sarangis found across North India and the use of them in different forms of music allowed the instrument to survive. Also, sarangiyas’ unique ability to adapt into any space whether it be rural areas, the Mughal courts, All India Radio, courtesan houses or international concert stages meant that the instrument has been able to diversify and adapt as required.

One of the biggest reasons why the sarangi always continued to be an accompanying instrument was due to the lack of content development. No sarangiya ever composed or developed compositions that are purely sarangi oriented. Sitar players for instance, also followed the vocal style or gayaki ang in their music but in addition, sitar masters developed sitar-specific compositions such as Raza Khani and Masit Khani gat which, which are strictly designed and composed to match sitar’s playing techniques and sound.\(^1\) Conversely, sarangiyas either learnt vocal or instrumental repertoire from other instruments or duplicated this rather than developing a specific repertoire solely for sarangi playing. For this reason, sarangiyas mostly associated themselves with a vocal gharana and developed various techniques to copy the nuances of the human voice. If only practitioners had also focused on developing the sarangi's own voice, perhaps they would have carved a much more robust niche for their instrument. This doesn’t mean sarangiyas have not been talented enough. Bundu Khan, the greatest sarangiya ever, is still being studied and his style is considered to be a model to

\(^1\)Raza-Khani gat and Masit Khani gat are exclusive melodies played on sitar, named after two famed sitar players, Ahmed Raza Khan of Lucknow and Masit Khan of Delhi. The basic difference between the two styles is of speed; Masit Khani gat is played at a slower speed to Raza Khani gat.
look out for. In spite of his geniuses’ he could never gain a performance platform like the vocalists and sitar players of his era could achieve. Obviously, there were many other factors involved as well. Although It is somewhat for this reason that sarangi lineages were never able to become a gharana but continued to remain under the shadow of the term “baj.”

Another problem is that sarangi masters have always labeled the sarangi as an instrument that is very hard to master. Its reputation remained that of a serious art form, which takes years of dedicated training, and sometimes even a lifetime is too short to gain mastery over it. While this is true, the same could be said for all instruments but this is not the way to promote an instrument! In my opinion, it also depends what a student’s end goal is Do you want to become a versatile musician with command of over a hundred ragas or do you just want to play music on the instrument for your own pleasure? If the ustads (masters) scare potential students from the outset, they will put them off even trying to learn to play the sarangi. It would almost be like showing elementary school children a PhD syllabus before they reached high school. Too much too soon can lead to students deciding to abandon the art form altogether; and instead, if more is done to promote the sarangi rather than increase its notoriety perhaps more people would take it up.

While sarangiyas have managed to survive, the craftsmanship of making good quality sarangis has completely vanished after the mid-20th century. This recent challenge is a significant one and I am unsure how this will be overcome. It will mean that old sarangis will become more sought after and more valuable as they are always a preference for sarangiyas. Repair of old sarangis and extra care of existing instruments is currently the best way to ensure that good quality
sarangis are restored. It would however be fascinating if someone could document the original sarangi making process and restore this.

I am pleased that today, sarangiyas are taking control of their options and working hard to create new sounds through collaborative work which is exciting and largely proving to be a success. Sarangiyas in particular are enjoying a newly found freedom to experiment as solo artists and contribute to the production of music in a way which was not widely accepted before. This is in my view largely due to globalization and therefore I would argue that globalization has been a positive force for sarangiyas.

I am not seeking to determine whether globalization is completely positive or negative for sarangiyas; as with most phenomena there are positive and negative aspects. One could argue that one negative aspect is that sarangiyas today are speeding ahead to performance and glory without giving any preference to traditional Hindustani musical training. The end result of course can be that some of these social media posts or performances are not musically very good. I am not claiming that every collaboration or fusion music production is good; many are not, but in my opinion, this comes down to talent. If a musician is good and has a good musicality then the outcome of fusion or non-fusion work will generally be positive. It is true that proper musical training is diminished in some cases and those without any classical backing often find themselves reaching the end of their musical career sooner than expected. However, there are examples of musicians such as Kale and Singh as mentioned earlier, who have managed to succeed despite the lack of traditional training so it can be done. Therefore I do not think that globalization and the foregoing of training can alone determine one’s success.
If you are a committed musician you will still succeed irrespective of how traditional or how ‘Hindustani’ your training was.

Another positive effect of globalization on sarangiyas is the opportunity to both learn and teach all over the world. I have been fortunate enough to study at Wesleyan University by virtue of my musical background, which thirty years ago, would have been much less likely for hereditary sarangi players. Following the way which Hindustani musicians have conjured an appetite for a classical Hindustani sound in the West, educational establishments have begun to recognize and encourage education opportunities for Hindustani musicians. This is a massive advancement for Hindustani musicians and for sarangiyas which was previously unavailable.

Today’s sarangiyas are a diverse community all doing different things. A sarangiya today might juggle a traditional classical concert and an experimental music gig at a local Indie venue on one night. They can also be busy balancing an online star image and also touring globally. They can even be immersed in a library thousands of miles from India, or perhaps that is just me! However, the fact remains that sarangiyas are becoming much more diverse in their work patterns because of the rich variety of work available.

Young sarangiyas such as Momin Khan have released several music videos playing fusion music even before starting a career in Hindustani music. Sarangiyas such as Ahsan Ali lead a sarangi ensemble that carries a repertoire spanning folk music and showcasing western harmonies. Ali regularly accompanies Sonam Kalra, a non-Hindustani sufi/gospel (fusion of sufi and gospel songs) singer which is again, new and unconventional. Several Bollywood music directors such as Amit Trivedi and duo Salim/Sulaiman have made sarangi
a frequent sonic element of their Bollywood sounds. On the other hand, sarangiyas like Harsh Narayan practice purely classical music mostly as soloists rather than working as accompanists.

I think the next stage for the sarangi is the emergence of a “star” player, just as the sitar had Ravi Shankar, sarod had Ali Akbar Khan and now Amjad Ali Khan, bansuri (Indian flute) had Hariprasad Chaurasiya and tabla had Zakir Hussain. All the above-mentioned names undertook exceptional work in their respective fields by elevating their music to global audiences. Former sarangiyas, Ram Narayan and Sultan Khan missed out on the star instrumentalist status as they were not able to gain global recognition like Hussain and Shankar in spite of being well-known and recognized performers. The reasons for this could be varied such as taking an accompanist’s approach as Sultan Khan did and therefore mostly remaining behind the vocalists and collaborators and never leading a project in which the sarangi held the lime light. Ram Narayan did the opposite and promoted himself as a soloist but this led to a lack of exposure as he limited himself to solo shows.

I feel collaborative work has been one of the keys to stardom and global recognition can help to achieve this. If the collaborations done by Zakir Hussain and Ravi Shankar are anything to go by, global acceptance and success is routed through fusion work on a global scale. We have only seen the initial effects of globalization on sarangiyas and the best is yet to come.
Appendix


Figure 5 - Sarangiya Ahsan Ali (centre) performing with “sufi/gospel” project in Delhi, 2015. Picture courtesy – Ahsan Ali
Figure 6 - Vocalist Salman Khan from the band “Astitva” performing in December of 2015, at Delhi. Picture Courtesy – Salman Khan.

Figure 7 – James Yorkston (left), Jon Thorne (center), and I (right) performing at Glastonbury festival, United Kingdom in 2017. Picture courtesy – BBC. (https://www.bbc.co.uk/events/ec584f/play/a8684f/p0576kdd)
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Discography
