ROUTLEDGE MUSIC AND SCREEN MEDIA SERIES

MUSIC IN CONTEMPORARY INDIAN FILM

MEMORY, VOICE, IDENTITY

Edited by
Jayson Beaster-Jones and Natalie Sarrazin

ROUTLEDGE

Music in Contemporary Indian Film

Music in Contemporary Indian Film: Memory, Voice, Identity provides a rich and detailed look into the unique dimensions of music in Indian film. Music is at the center of Indian cinema, and India's film music industry has a far-reaching impact on popular, folk, and classical music across the subcontinent and the South Asian diaspora. In twelve essays written by an international array of scholars, this book explores the social, cultural, and musical aspects of the industry, including both the traditional center of "Bollywood" and regional film-making. Concentrating on films and songs created in contemporary, post-liberalization India, this book will appeal to classes in film studies, media studies, and world music, as well as all fans of Indian films.

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Music in Contemporary Indian Film

Memory, Voice, Identity

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Series Foreword

While the scholarly conversations about music in film and visual media have been expanding prodigiously since the last quarter of the twentieth century, a need remains for focused, specialized studies of particular films as they relate more broadly to genres. This series includes scholars from across the disciplines of music and film and media studies, of specialists in both the audible as well as the visual, who share the goal of broadening and deepening these scholarly dialogues about music in particular genres of cinema, television, videogames, and new media. Claiming a chronological arc from the birth of cinema in the 1890s to the most recent releases, the *Routledge Music and Screen Media* series offers collections of original essays written for an interdisciplinary audience of students and scholars of music, film and media studies in general, and interdisciplinary humanists who give strong attention to music. Driving the study of music here are the underlying assumptions that music together with screen media (understood broadly to accommodate rapidly developing new technologies) participates in important ways in the creation of meaning and that including music in an analysis opens up the possibility for interpretations that remain invisible when only using the eye.

The series was designed with the goal of providing a thematically unified group of supplemental essays in a single volume that can be assigned in a variety of undergraduate and graduate courses (including courses in film studies, in film music, and other interdisciplinary topics). We look forward to adding future volumes addressing emerging technologies and reflecting the growth of the academic study of screen media. Rather than attempting an exhaustive history or unified theory, these studies—persuasive explications supported by textual and contextual evidence—will pose questions of musical style, strategies of rhetoric, and critical cultural analysis as they help us to see, to hear, and ultimately to understand these texts in new ways.

Neil Lerner
Series Editor

Preface

Music in Contemporary Indian Film: Memory, Voice, Identity introduces readers to the rich and detailed world of music in Indian cinema. The essays in this compilation focus on the unique dimensions of film music through an examination of various social, cultural, and musical aspects of the industry. Although the music of Indian films has a long and complex history, with some of its most illustrious composers working in the mid-twentieth century, this volume emphasizes sounds and songs created in the post-liberalization India, roughly 1991 to present, rather than reiterating narratives of a musical "golden age" of Indian film. The significance of this time period lies in its contemporary appeal, with the high production values of the soundtracks and cinematography, coupled with narratives designed to attract Indians, India's diaspora, and audiences from fan bases in Korea, Russia, the Middle East, Africa, Europe, and beyond. The newfound availability of film- and music-making technologies in the post-liberalization period, along with the inexpensive availability of international media, among other things, created a space for the gradual transformation of the film and music industries. As such, *Music in Contemporary Indian Film: Memory, Voice, Identity* is designed to familiarize readers with the history, conventions, production practices, and meanings of many of India's contemporary film music traditions. Much of the book focuses on Hindi film songs (i.e., Bollywood songs) because they are the dominant popular music in India. Yet in order to represent the great diversity of popular music genres in India, several chapters introduce readers to the film music of other Indian regions.

The book is divided into two sections. The first section, entitled *The Hindi Hegemony*, concerns music and issues pertaining to the largest and most popular cinemas of India, those from the Hindi-language cinema popularly known as "Bollywood." The hegemony of India's film music industry and its influence on *all* forms of music in India (popular, folk, and classical) is undisputed and unparalleled. This is particularly true in terms of the far-reaching impact of film songs, which are cultural monoliths in South Asia and its diaspora. Also covered in this section are chapters on the culture and impact of awards

and TV reality shows, parts of the larger media that feed into the monolith that is the Indian film industry, but are rarely examined. The second section, *Regions and Identities*, presents only a small part of the great diversity of popular music genres in India. These chapters introduce readers to the film music of Indian regions and their musical representations, including the regions of the Himalayas, Rajasthan, Bihar, and Tamil Nadu, as well as marginalized representations of genres such as Sufi *qawwali* in its filmic transformation.

The contributors to this volume are highly established contemporary scholars on Indian film and popular music hailing from India, Europe, New Zealand, the U.K., and the U.S. Each contributor has submitted original essays that include at least one film case study as a part of an audiovisual analysis. These case studies analyze some of the most exciting song sequences in Hindi film, and will appeal equally to those unfamiliar with Indian film and to the most seasoned cinephile. In addition, the book is oriented toward those who have little, if any, experience with music or with India. And everyone from the lay reader to the film scholar will find the language (i.e., minimal academic jargon) and avoidance of music notation reader-friendly and accessible.

Our goal in producing this volume is to acquaint the reader with topics within these musical traditions by tying them directly to particular filmic narratives and discourses. While this book does not assume any previous knowledge about Indian musical or filmic traditions, fans of Indian films will become familiar with many elements of the production, marketing, and social role of songs that will help them develop critical listening skills and augment the appreciation of films they already enjoy.

Introduction

Music in Contemporary Indian Film

Jayson Beaster-Jones and Natalie Sarrazin

Music is at the heart of the Indian film story, and when one thinks of Indian film, music is most likely the very feature that first comes to mind. Audiences are well acquainted with background music, found in most commercial film traditions, which serves important functions such as signaling and enhancing emotion, introducing characters, intensifying conflict and humor, and improving the audience's general understanding and enjoyment of the film.[1] However, with the exception of Disney cartoons or old Hollywood extravaganzas from the 1950s, contemporary Hollywood audiences are rarely treated to film musicals, that is, films containing songs as diegetic foreground music. Indian films utilize music in quite a unique way. Indeed, Indian films' consistent engagement with music throughout its history is its crowning achievement, distinguishing it from every other film industry in the world. Yet despite the number of scholars writing about Bollywood and other Indian cinematic traditions, very few authors engage with the *music* of these films.

Although one might be familiar with a melody from Disney's *The Little Mermaid* (1989) or *Frozen* (2013), what Indian films create goes far beyond the occasional hit: these songs influence, in one way or another, *all* popular music in the subcontinent, and success in the film industry is required for almost any budding composer, singer, or musician. The songs from these films are not only the dominant popular music in South Asia, but their popularity extends far outside of South Asia. The almost ubiquitous inclusion of songs extends across all genres of film. Although broadly labeled as "musicals" because they include songs, Indian films are distinct from Hollywood films in that in Hollywood, the "musical" is merely a subgenre—one possible type of film—whereas in India, almost *all* films are musicals, and genres in Indian film are determined based on factors other than the presence of foregrounded songs. The technical aspects of Indian film music production are also distinct from its classic Hollywood counterpart, with song-oriented and orchestral scores created under vastly different processes, and with vastly different cultural meanings and impact. The general audience expectation of an Indian film is that a narrative is peppered with songs that, to viewers unfamiliar with Indian cinematic conventions, seem to interrupt the narrative flow (see Prasad 1998).

However, the songs do not stop the action in Indian films, but rather continue the narrative trajectory, often in creative ways that explore paths through the intertextuality of lyrics, as well as rhythm, melody, genre, timbre, vocal production, and so forth.

Indian Film Industries

The term "Bollywood" has existed for many years, yet its use to describe the Hindi-language film industry has expanded since the late-1990s. Indeed, for people living outside of India, the term "Bollywood" has come to index the entire corpus Indian filmmaking, despite the variety of films and music in other Indian languages. Bollywood is not India's only film industry: films are written and produced for many of India's twenty-two national languages, particularly Tamil and Telugu, film industries which produce as many or more films than the Hindi film industry in any given year. There are also many films made in other Indian languages, including Bengali, Bhojpuri, Kannada, Malayalam, and Marathi. Like the Hindi-language industry, films made in these regional languages regularly incorporate song sequences into their narratives. In other words, many thousands of film songs are released every year in a wide variety of Indian languages and these songs are circulated as dominant popular musics in their respective regions.

In addition, even as Bollywood typically refers to commercial Hindi-language films, it is a label that many fans and scholars resist, as the term has the negative connotation of being a cinematic derivative form—or "local" in the sense of "global-local" discourses—of American cinema. This superficial perspective elides the very long and rich history—and sets of aesthetic features—that define it as a distinct cinematic tradition. Accordingly, even though "Bollywood" has become a convenient generic label for films that are produced in India, contain songs, and follow particular narrative conventions that are distinct from the conventions of American and European films, film scholars have noted that the term entered common usage in the last two decades as Indian filmmakers began to produce films oriented to audiences outside of India who belonged to the Indian diaspora, or who were simply fascinated by the spectacular exoticism of the genre. Unfortunately, this hegemonic perspective of Bollywood as the dominant Indian film industry has been reinforced both by the Hindi film-marketing apparatus and by the fact that it is much easier to acquire subtitled films and translated song lyrics for the Hindi films than any other Indian language. Thus while most of the chapters in this volume address musical dimensions of Hindi-language cinema and its representations, other essays focus on the music of Tamil films.

Rather than address the entirety of Indian film musics, this book focuses upon the post-liberalization period of Indian political history, roughly 1991 to the present. In this period, the Indian government gradually liberalized its economic policy—e.g., reduced trade tariffs, privatized state-run industries,

reduced bureaucratic impediments to manufacturing, allowed foreign investment in industries, etc.—in order to meet the requirements of massive loans from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank and to stem a near economic collapse brought about by a combination of failures in India's "planned economy," the collapse of the Soviet Union and loss of foreign aid, and the first Gulf War (see Das 2000; Tharoor 2000). These political-economic changes, which are components of the philosophy of neoliberalism (Harvey 2005), were designed to transform India's economy from a protectionist economy to a globalized economy. In so doing, the IMF and World Bank sought to create an economic system that moved away from Gandhian ideals of austerity and self-sufficiency, to a system that created a large consumer market. At the same time, Rupert Murdoch's Star Network began broadcasting international television into India. In so doing, it effectively ended the Indian government's monopoly on television broadcasting and created new platforms for the promotion of consumer goods, films, and music. The growth of privatized television grew exponentially throughout the 1990s and into the new millennium rapidly became the single most important broadcast medium in India.

The combination of neoliberal economic policy and satellite television had significant consequences for Indian film- and music-making. Among other things, it meant that new technologies became available that dramatically improved the production values of film. In addition, the movement of the Indian diaspora, coupled with the circulation of DVD technologies, meant that many more people around the world were exposed to Indian filmmaking, which in turn grew the audience dramatically. As such, the content of films was increasingly oriented to these international audiences, and films began to grapple with the meaning of being Indian in an age of globalization (see Dwyer 2000; Ganti 2013). For film producers, satellite television became a way to advertise films, largely through channels that provided countdown shows that largely featured film songs as popular music (Juluri 2004). This approach to film promotion by way of flashy song sequences has continued into the 2010s as internet streaming on various sites. In 2016, the popularity of Indian films and songs continues unabated, even as Netflix and other services increase the availability of Indian films in India and abroad.

Writing on Indian Film

Until the turn of the new millennium, there was not a lot written about film in India, in large part because film and music scholars did not take commercial Indian cinema seriously as a genre. Part of the problem stemmed from the cosmopolitanism of a commercial cinema that had developed its own set of aesthetic conventions, even as it borrowed liberally from other film traditions. This cosmopolitanism made Indian cinema seemingly unworthy of study because it was deemed insufficiently "Indian." Thus, the early literature tended to focus on unpacking the distinct narrative conventions of Indian films,

and on the ways in which the aesthetic of conventional Hindi cinema differed from American and European films (Thomas 1985; Chakravarty 1998; Prasad 1998; Nandy 1999) and asserting the value of this aesthetic in which filmic genres were "hybrid" or "mixed." Of particular note in this literature for readers unfamiliar with the conventions of Indian films are Rachel Dwyer's *All You Want Is Money, All You Need Is Love* (2000) and *Bollywood's India* (2014), and Tejaswini Ganti's *Bollywood: A Guidebook to Popular Hindi Cinema* (2004, 2013). More recent scholarly work on Indian cinema has focused on globalization and the movement of films and songs, not only in India, but in the Indian diaspora (e.g., Desai 2003; Gera Roy 2012).

In terms of the music of Indian cinema, even less has been written. Musicologists have traditionally been much more interested in the practices of "authentic" Indian classical, folk, and religious musics. For a very long time, the only scholarly writing on music in Indian cinema came from a few sources, each of which focused primarily upon Hindi-language cinema, including William O. Beeman's (1981) and Teri Skillman's (1986) classic essays on Hindi film song, Alison Arnold's 1988 essay on musical "eclecticism" and her 1991 Ph.D. dissertation, and the opening chapters of Peter Manuel's (1993) *Cassette Culture*. These works were later joined by Neepa Majumdar's (2001) historical analysis of the female voice in film song and Anna Morcom's (2007) examination of music and films of the 1990s in *Hindi Film Songs and the Cinema*. Gregory Booth's *Behind the Curtain* (2008) was the first book to collect the oral histories of musicians working in the film industry and to provide insights into the decisions made by music directors and their assistants. These important works were followed by Natalie Sarrazin's work on film song in the post-liberalization moment (2008, 2014), and her 2009 book that places film song in the context of other modes of music production in India. More recently, Jayson Beaster-Jones has analyzed film song remixes (2009), the characteristics of *filmi* mediation (2014), and published the first book-length scholarly overview of Hindi film songs from their inception to the contemporary moment (2015).

Operating in parallel to scholarly research, there has long been a significant fan interest in film songs, which, among other things, led to the production of the five-volume *Filmi Geet Kosh* (Encyclopedia of Film Songs) that has been a vital resource for cataloging songs in films and the personnel who created them. In addition, the long-running Rec.Music.Indian.Misc (RMIM) internet billboard led to, among other things, the crowdsourced iTrans Hindi song lyrics archive (now hosted at http://smriti.com/hindi-songs/). In 2016, there are numerous sites that provide song translations, and sometimes captioned YouTube videos that provide lyric translations. Similarly, in the last ten years, there has been a long list of books that have been published about key music directors and lyricists, although these are oriented to readers who are already fans of particular music directors and/or films and provide little explanatory detail on the music or translations of the lyrics of songs.

Of course, for a national film industry that produces as many as 1000 films annually, there is quite a lot of critical and analytic writing in various Indian languages. Unfortunately, very few of these writings have been translated to English.

Conventions, Music, and Personnel of Indian Film Songs

Almost every commercial Indian film contains five to eight song sequences. Although there is no one categorization of the songs and their function in films, typically a film will have several love songs, a dance number or two, a comedic song, etc. (see Sarrazin 2008). The function of music in film is a complex issue, but one that is crucial to the structure of this book. The following section provides some context for understanding the sound, structures, and meanings of Indian film songs in order to assist readers unfamiliar with the genre.

The music of Indian film has changed dramatically over time along with changes in recording technology, style, and varying levels of inclusion of indigenous and non-indigenous forms of music such as folk (e.g., Punjabi, Tamil, Rajasthani, Bengali), religious (e.g., Sufi *qawwali*, Hindu *bhajan*), national (e.g., anthems), classical (e.g., *khayal*, *thumri*), and international sources of music (e.g., jazz, rock, Latin American and Arabic musics). As such, cosmopolitan music directors of Indian film song have been comfortable adapting many musical practices into a distinct genre of music that has undergone many changes over time. The practice of transforming diverse musical styles to suit local tastes—a practice that Beaster-Jones (2015) calls "mediation"—nevertheless leaves traces of the styles that have been transformed. Thus, insofar as any inclusion of an outside genre requires modification to fit within the film, such as changes to *qawwali* (see Zuberi and Sarrazin in this volume; Morcom 2007), *bhajan* (Booth 2000), or rock music (Beaster-Jones 2014), these film songs are frequently called *filmi*—a moniker that is used as a modifier for the genre on which it was based. For example *filmi-qawwali*, *filmi-bhajan*, *filmi*-pop, or just the standard umbrella term *filmi-geet*, meaning film song.

For a great many decades, film music also retained the Indian folk and classical emphasis on melody and rhythm. Like other dimensions of film song, music directors' approaches to melody, especially vocal melody, have drawn from manifold styles, but are primarily inflected by Indian folk styles, with a touch of light classical ornamentation. Not surprisingly, given the commercial nature of this popular music genre, the most popular songs are easily reproduced by audiences with little musical training, which has been one of the longstanding critiques of the genre (see Manuel 1993). Similarly, the rhythmic orientation of film song has drawn from a variegated fusion of practices, although for the most part the rhythmic styles and short four

and six-beat meters of Indian folk genres tend to be dominant practice. Harmony, however, is virtually absent from indigenous Indian traditions and is an imported musical concept. While harmony became popular among some music directors, and less so with others, there has been an increasing use of Western functional harmony by contemporary music directors (see Booth 2008; Beaster-Jones 2015).

Early in the film era, film songs took their form from classical music, but adopted a standardized form by the early 1940s known as the *mukhda-antara* form (or the *pallavi-caranam* form in Tamil films). Song forms derive from a fusion of Indian folk and classical music (*sthai-antara*) vocal practices, which very loosely correlates to refrain-verse. Unlike the verse-chorus from Western pop songs, Indian film songs typically begin with the opening refrain (*mukhda*), which is also usually the song title. This opening refrain is separated by a musical interlude that supports the action onscreen, then moves to a verse (*antara*) that has a melodic contour that leads back into the refrain, which is followed by another interlude. Each stanza in the body of the song is a combined unit of verse-refrain-interlude; most film songs contain two to four stanzas. The *mukhda-antara* form has many variations and has changed over time, but many songs still retain this format.[2]

In terms of personnel involved in the production of film songs, Indian film music and the supporting industry have their own unique structure, components, and culture (see Booth 2008). Since almost all films have music, they require the collaboration of music directors, music arrangers/assistants, lyricists, and musicians. Within this collaborative framework, the music director works as a combined music composer and producer, and ultimately bears the most responsibility for the final outcome of all music in the film, though his or her primary concern is the songs. Frequently, the music for the songs and the music for the background score are composed by different individuals, with greater pay and status given to the music director (song composer). In the early years, music directors had a great degree of training in Indian classical music and many music directors were known for incorporating particular regional folk musics into their compositions. Since India has a long history of expecting their musicians to be educated through established musical lineages (e.g., *gharana*) with a prominent instructor (*guru*), this expectation extends somewhat to contemporary music directors as well. That said, most contemporary music directors more often rise to visibility following demonstrated success in writing advertising jingles, rather than being apprenticed to other music directors. In addition, the rise of external classical training such as Trinity College London's music grade exams, and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), UK, provide certification through levels of exams, which has displaced the *guru-shishya* system for many rock and pop musicians.[3] Two of India's most prolific contemporary composers, Ilayaraja and A.R. Rahman, completed courses from Trinity College. Finally, most music directors compose with the aid of music

assistants, more recently called "programmers" because of their proficiency with music technologies. Assistants and programmers often compose many of the background musics, beats, countermelodies, etc. but typically only see their names listed in the film credits. By contrast, music directors are listed on the film's marquee as individuals (e.g., A.R. Rahman or R.D. Burman) or in pairs or trios (e.g., Vishal-Shekhar or Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy).

In collaboration with music directors, lyricists pen the poetry for a film's songs. The relationship between the song and the lyricist is a complex one. The film's director typically describes the scenes in which songs should be placed, and the music director writes the music to fit these scenes. Then the music director works closely with the lyricist to adjust notes and rhythms to accommodate the poetry. Historically, poetic imagery from Arabic and Persian traditions have seeped into the expectations for song lyrics, which is one reason why many fans of 1940s–70s film songs argue that the lyrics of this period are superior to songs that were written later. Other song lyrics bear the traces of genres of folk traditions or the localizable speech inflections of particular characters in the film, such as the street slang of working-class laborers in 1970s "angry young man" films, or the "Hinglish" of contemporary middle classes (see Akhtar and Kabir 2005). Many song lyrics, however, contain nuanced, love-oriented, ornamental prose brimming with allegorical forms or writing that draws from Sanskrit dramas, Sufi mysticism, and other sources that suit the needs of the romantic storyline that appears in most films.

Playback singers are probably the most distinct characteristic of Indian film songs. Actors almost never sing the songs: songs are instead performed in the studio by professional singers and "played back" for lip-syncing actors in the process of filming the song sequence. Hence these performers came to be known as "playback singers" in the 1940s. For Western audiences, this approach is viewed negatively, and is somehow thought of as "cheating" in that the viewer is deceived by the on-screen image. Neepa Majumdar (2009) points out that Indian audiences had similar feelings about the transition from actor-singers to playback singers. Yet the institution of playback singing is one way of maintaining both a very high quality of vocal production and a high quality of acting and dance, without compromising one for the other. Indeed it is rare to have a good actor with excellent vocal performing ability, or vice versa. Singers are recognized in their own right apart from the actor lip-syncing their songs, and are often more popular than the actors themselves. Vocal timbre also plays a significant role in playback singing. In the early decades, singers were chosen for their ability to match the speaking voice of the actor among other things, and one playback singer typically sang for one on-screen actor throughout the film, and even across many films (e.g., Mukesh sang for the legendary Raj Kapoor). Dramatic changes in playback singing occurred throughout the past two decades, as music directors began to experiment with different timbres. Now, singers are chosen for their timbre, accent, style, and their vocal ability to portray certain characters or moods in the film.

A film's soundtrack may contain multiple playback singers, with a single actor having several voices sing for them in one film.

Most films require a choreographer to create movements for a film's dance numbers. Much like the variety in a film's songs, dances are also varied. There is even less scholarship on dance in Indian films than on music. Indeed, the ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel (1988) has quoted an Indian critic who labeled these movements "jerky calisthenics." Yet like film music, film dances combine local folk styles, classical and traditional Indian dance, Middle Eastern dance forms, and international dance fashions (e.g., the twist, waltz, tango, salsa, hip hop). Many of the numbers are group dances rather than individual dances, which highlight the hero or heroine surrounded by back-up dancers. As such, songs in which dance occurs lean towards disco/nightclub, flash mob, or street-fair-type scenes, and harken back to the large production numbers from Hollywood films. Most contemporary choreographed dance scenes include a "dance hook," a dance move associated with a particular song that fans can easily learn and replicate at parties, weddings, etc.

Finally, one term used in the context of Indian film production that is very important to the discussion of song and dance sequences is the "picturization." Many scholars of Indian film have analyzed the picturization of song sequences with minimal analysis of the musical features, a problem we seek to avoid in this volume. A song picturization is similar to a *mise-en-scène* in international films, in that it takes into account the totality of the scene (staging, lighting, cinematography, props, actors, costumes, music, movement); in other words, it includes anything that appears before the camera. Song picturizations in Hindi films are dependent on the film in which it is embedded for meaning, intertextuality, impact on storytelling and mood, etc., but they can also be viewed as a separate entity, such as in a compilation of movie songs for TV or as a component of the marketing of films on streaming media like YouTube.

Case Study: *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (K3G) (Johar 2001)

The following is an example to help contextualize these conventions, and explore the ways in which they work together to create the complexity that is at work in a picturization. In 2001, the blockbuster film *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* ("Sometimes Happy, Sometimes Sad"), colloquially known as K3G, opened in theatres across India and abroad. The 210-minute film, directed by Karan Johar, contained nine original songs by five composers: Jatin-Lalit, Shandilya, and Shrivastava. Babloo Chakravarty composed the background music. An all-star acting line up featured three sets of couples: veteran actors Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan, along with the hottest actors of the moment, Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, and relative newcomers Hrithik Roshan and Kareena Kapoor.

K3G is, in essence, a melodrama extraordinaire and one of the quintessential post-liberalization Indian films, warily pitting global systems, pressures, and mores against Indian values through a cinematic lens. The film targeted diasporic communities abroad, with dialogue, costumes, characters, and music imbued with a sense of nostalgia for the homeland[4] as well as an attempted reconciliation between Indian and Western ideals that reinforce the direction of Indian economic and capitalist desires. The film normalizes and celebrates international business, extensive and lavish wealth, and global travel, while also championing conservative, Indian family values—religion, close family bonds, subservient and obedient wives, arranged marriage, and maintaining Indian dress, language, and food customs even in the diaspora. K3G narrates the story of a very wealthy joint family consisting of parents Yash and Nandini (played by Amitabh and Jaya Bachchan) and their two children, adopted son Rahul (Shah Rukh Khan) and biological son Rohan (Hrithik Roshan). The film depicts the heartbreaking rift that occurs after the father rejects Rahul's love marriage to a girl of lower status. Rahul and his wife Anjali (Kajol) move to London, and the family is torn apart, with Nandini bearing the brunt of the sorrow, unable to tell Yash that she did not agree with his decision to banish the son. Roshan attends school in London to be near his brother, and meets Pooja (Kareena Kapoor) who also happens to be Anjali's sister.

The film's songs encapsulate a range of character emotions and plot trajectories, and serve to underscore main themes. For example, nostalgia and patriotism are exploited in a picturization of the Indian National Anthem ("Jana gana mana") sung at a school assembly. The song and dance sequence analyzed below, "Bole chudiyan" ("My bangles speak"), is designed to appeal to audience longing for large and extended families of India, and depicts *kharwa chauth*, a Hindu festival in which a married woman fasts for the longevity of her husband. The picturization takes place inside the family's august mansion, which is filled with hundreds of guests, all donning their finest, most elaborate wedding *saris*, *kurtas*, and jewelry. The song begins as Rohan flirts with Pooja, and challenges her to sing something.[5] This challenge results in a back-and-forth exchange (or duel) of singing and dancing, in which each tries to outdo the other. Pooja's voice (playback singer Alka Yagnik) begins in the light, sweet, highly feminine singing style that is ubiquitous for females in Indian film. Alka's vocal timbre harkens back to Lata Mangeshkar, the standard bearer for the female voice for over sixty years. By 2001, however, female playback singing styles had begun to change, taking on a more pop sound, with a more aggressive, full, and lower timbre. Thus, Alka's sound was cast as a kind of nostalgic throwback to an earlier period of film song. Alka's voice is acapella as she describes her bangles in a languid and rubato style, a highly traditional topic for Indian songs and poetry for hundreds of years. Pooja's actions draw attention to the jewelry as she flaunts her ornaments (see Figure 0.1). The camera focuses on her bare arm covered by dozens of bangles and moves with sultry smoothness followed by a wrist shake to make the

bangles "speak." The camera then pans slowly across her bare midriff, accentuating her languid movements. Although Pooja is wearing a *sari*, its style is highly seductive, and not at all traditional in design, thus drawing attention to Pooja's sexuality and outsider status as an NRI (non-resident Indian).

The rhythm for this song consists of a straight four-beat pattern performed on a *dhol* (drum), a folk instrument used in many parts of India to accompany popular dances such as Punjabi *bhangra* and Gujarati *ras-garba*. This large double-headed drum is played with thin wooden sticks, which give the rhythms a sharp, crisp sound. The use of this particular rhythm has cultural implications reaching far beyond that of the song; it is a representative timbre for folk song and dance from numerous regions in India, appropriated by Bollywood to lend a local "ethnic" flavor. Indeed, film songs frequently borrow from folk traditions. The dance-ability of folk music such as *bhangra* and *ras-garba*, however, has rendered these genres as national music almost universally played as reception wedding music for dancing, in nightclubs, and as a generic celebratory music.[6] As such, the use of this one rhythm means that the song would appeal to and resonate with myriad audiences, and register as familiar, catchy music.

Following the opening refrain (*mukhda*), the song form is the typical refrain-verse-interlude, with two verses and two musical interludes. The first interlude, set to an intensified *dhol* rhythm, is reserved for a picturization of actor Hrithik Roshan's dancing abilities; the second interlude, softened with flutes and a *santoor* (dulcimer) underscores the picturization of the *karwa chauth* function. In addition to the *dhol* drum, the instrumentation embodies typical *filmi* music and conventions that harken back to early film songs such as soaring orchestral

Figure 0.1 Pooja (Kareena Kapoor) dances with a group of women in "Bole chudiyan" ("Let my bangles speak") from the film *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (Johar 2001)