

East Indian Music in the West Indies: Tan-Singing, Chutney, and the Making of Indo-Caribbean Culture. By PETER MANUEL. Philadelphia: [redacted] University Press, 2000. 252 pp., with a Compact Disc. \$89.50 (cloth); \$29.95 (paper).

Given the dearth of published material on Indo-Caribbean traditional and neo-traditional music (due in part to the misperception that these diasporic art forms are marginal rather than archetypical), the body of research in this book by ethnomusicologist Peter Manuel is a welcome contribution to the field. The book describes two East Indian musical genres, tan-singing (local-classical music) and chutney, as they evolved in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname after the influx of indentured workers from the Bhojpuri-speaking region of North India from the mid-nineteenth to the early twentieth centuries. Written primarily for an academic readership, the study includes only one technical chapter aimed at ethnomusicologists (Chapter 5: "Style and Subgenre in Tan-Singing"). In addition to the introduction and conclusion, the other four chapters focus on the development of local-classical music; its efflorescence and decline beginning in the 1960s; the aesthetics of tan-singing; and the chutney phenomenon.

Despite their fascinating beauty and expressive role in cultural change, tan-singing and chutney have hardly been mentioned in the books on Indo-Caribbean culture and history written in the last decade. To overcome this deficiency, in 1993 Manuel began to interview Indo-Caribbean musicians, producers, and composers as well as to collect and record the music itself. His resulting analysis is full of complexities and paradoxes. For example, tan-singing in Trinidad, Guyana, and Suriname derived from what the author describes as "a static and inert" Old World tradition used by Indian workers to create a "mini-India" in their new locations. At the same time, it constituted a form of cultural resistance against the hegemony of colonial (i.e., British and Dutch) religion and culture. Nevertheless, what was considered by some to be an "authentically Indian" form of music evolved into a distinctive Indo-Caribbean genre of its own. The author offers an interesting parallel with the development of an Indo-Caribbean dish known as "roti," a type of wrapped, curry-filled sandwich: "Tan-singing has become to Hindustani [Indian] music what Indo-Caribbean cuisine is to mainstream North Indian . . . cooking" (p. 110). That is, while Indo-Caribbean tan-singing (like roti) may have its roots in India, it is not to be found there. It has its own distinctive "flavor," style, and legitimacy.

Another paradox Manuel points out can be seen in the use to which Indo-Caribbean women, especially in Trinidad, have put traditional chutney. What was once a private and segregated style of women's music embedded in the core of a conservative and patriarchal society has become a vehicle used by Indo-Caribbean women not only to protest men's power over them but to celebrate their own sensuality. Surprisingly, it is primarily middle-aged women who provoke the wrath

of conservatives by publicly dancing in a traditional style originally meant to be hidden from male view. The style bears a remarkable resemblance to the sexy Trinidadian "wine" (from the term, "wind your waist") seen during the street processions of Carnival every year before Lent. Thus, dancing publicly—especially to chutney-soca—has served not only to assert female notions of empowerment, but also to join into Creole and Afro-Caribbean cultural expressions while preserving one's "Indianness" at the same time.

Indian identity as expressed through music is another subject Manuel addresses in the book. Presently constituting the majority of the population of Guyana and the largest ethnic groups in Trinidad and Suriname, Indo-Caribbeans now reside in secondary diaspora sites such as New York, Toronto, and the Netherlands. Rather than see these three nations and their secondary diasporic locations as geographically bounded, Manuel sees them as "sets of crossroads on a virtual matrix of global media circuits" (p. 205). Local and global sounds blend into sophisticated, hybrid musical forms such as chutney-soca. These syncretised musical forms reflect new postmodern identities that are no longer bounded by nationality or geography. Rather, a range of transnational and multiple ethnic identities has become available to young Indo-Caribbeans as they seek to place themselves within the context of both local and global culture. In Manuel's dialectical view, newly created hybrid musical styles both reflect these changes as well as help shape them in the first place.

The excellent CD that comes with the book includes various sub-genres of tan-singing, such as thumris from Trinidad and Guyana; a bhajan and ghazal from Trinidad; a dhrupad and holi from Guyana; chutney from Suriname and Trinidad; and chutney-soca from Trinidad. In a section entitled "Selections on the Compact Disc" (p. 215), song lyrics are presented both in Hindi and in English, and a descriptive explanation of each song follows. Musical transcriptions of some of the songs may also be found in chapters 5 and 6. Unlike local-classical music, compact discs and tapes of chutney and chutney-soca are numerous and commercially available. For that reason, the book's discography (p. 245) provides a listing only of the tan-singing produced between 1970 and 1998. All but one of those listed (a CD available in the United States) are rare, twelve-inch LPs. To obtain the author's 50-minute video documentary, "Tan-Singing of Trinidad and Guyana: Indo-Caribbean 'Local-Classical Music,'" contact him at AMP Department, John Jay College, New York, N.Y., 10019.

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