

## Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India

Based on a vast, virtually unstudied archive of Indian writings alongside visual sources, this book presents the first history of music and musicians in late Mughal India c.1748–1858, and takes the lives of nine musicians as entry points into six prominent types of writing on music in Persian, Brajbhasha, Urdu and English, moving from Delhi to Lucknow, Hyderabad, Jaipur and among the British. It shows how a key Mughal cultural field responded to the political, economic and social upheaval of the transition to British rule, while addressing a central philosophical question: can we ever recapture the ephemeral experience of music once the performance is over? These rich, diverse sources shine new light on the wider historical processes of this pivotal transitional period, and provide a new history of music, musicians and their audiences during the precise period in which North Indian classical music coalesced in its modern form.

KATHERINE BUTLER SCHOFIELD is Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society, and recipient of a European Research Council Grant and a British Academy Mid-Career Fellowship. She is co-editor of *Tellings and Texts: Music, Literature and Performance in North India* (2015) and *Monsoon Feelings: A History of Emotions in the Rain* (2018).

# Music and Musicians in Late Mughal India

Histories of the Ephemeral, 1748–1858

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*To Mirwaiss Sidiqi, Waheedullah Saghar, Mohsen Saifi,  
Ferishta Farrukhi, Najeba Arian, Homira Sabawoon and  
all my other Afghan sisters and brothers in music: may you  
find your way home.*

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This book was written and completed painfully slowly during the years of the Covid-19 pandemic, and delayed further due to my involvement in the international effort to help Afghanistan's musicians get themselves to safety after the fall of Kabul to Taliban in August 2021; never has the 'scattering' of Shahjahanabad 260 years ago felt so close. I am forever grateful to have found such a patient and generous editor in Kate Brett and her team at Cambridge University Press (especially Abi Sears) to steer this very stately ship to shore. But their patience is nothing in comparison

to that of my son Alex, who was seven when this book's journey began and is now a teenager. Every so often he asks me politely, 'How is your book going?' Finally I can tell him, 'It is finished! *tamām shod!*'

The best ideas in here were inspired by conversations with Paul Schofield, a broad intellectual and cultural enthusiast beyond compare. This book is for him, my own dear *rasika*.

## Notes on the Text

### On Transliteration

This book is based largely on sources in the Persian language that contain a great deal of Indic vocabulary, and more selectively from texts in early forms of Urdu (*rekhta*) and Hindi (*Brajbhāṣā*) written in the *nastʿalīq* script. I use a simplified system of transliteration which only marks long vowels (ā ī ū); retroflex consonants (ḍ ḍh ṇ ṛ ṣ ṭ ṭh) and nasalisation (ñ) in words of Indic origin; <sup>ʿ</sup>*ain* (superscript ʿ) and *hamza* (ʾ); and distinguishes kh ڪ from kh خ and gh ڪ from gh غ. The glossary and titles of untranslated sources in the bibliography include full diacritical markings following F Steingass’ *Comprehensive Persian–English Dictionary* and John T Platts’ *Dictionary of Urdū, Classical Hindī and English*.<sup>1</sup> In accordance with Steingass I use *-i* for the *izafat* construction (e.g. *majlis-i samāʿ*), and *al-* titles of works (e.g. *Usūl al-Nagh̃māt*).

Spellings (except for proper nouns) are per Steingass and Platts, deferring to Steingass for words of Persian and Arabic origins (e.g. *z*, not *dh*, for ذ). The key exception is the important term *mehfil* (not *mahfil*) as it is used today for private musical assemblies. Titles of published works in the bibliography are spelled in accordance with their publishers’ preferences for romanisation.

In a text this complex, there will inevitably be mistakes and inconsistencies; when you find one, feel free to shout ‘bingo’!

### On Dates and Calendars

I have translated dates from the al-Hijri lunar calendar (AH) into Christian/Common Era (CE) dates throughout, using the useful tool available at [www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/hijri.htm](http://www.muslimphilosophy.com/ip/hijri.htm). The AH lunar year and CE solar year are of different lengths, so there is no systematic date correspondence between them. Where the source gives the AH month

<sup>1</sup> F Steingass, *A Comprehensive Persian–English Dictionary* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963 [orig. 1892]); John T Platts, *Dictionary of Urdū, Classical Hindī and English* (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1997 [orig. 1884]).



(and sometimes day) along with the year, I give the exact CE year (e.g. 1800); where just the AH year is provided, I give a forward-slashed year range (e.g. 1862/3). If only the regnal year is given, this is presented as a dashed year range (e.g. 1752–3).

The Vikram Samvat (VS) solar year of the Hindu calendar is the same length as CE, although the months are lunar. It has generally not been necessary to calculate the VS–CE conversion, as for the chapter on Rajasthan I am mainly using British documents. But for the record, the Vikram ritual year (*samvat*) in use in Jaipur and Jodhpur began on 1 Chaitra (March), the revenue year began on 2 Bhadrapada (August)<sup>2</sup> and the year conversion is generally calculated by taking fifty-seven years from the VS year to arrive at the CE year.

## On Proper Nouns

For names of places I have generally used the Anglicised names prevalent during the period covered in this book (e.g. Calcutta, Tanjore rather than Kolkata, Thanjavur). With festivals, I have chosen to use common spellings without diacritical markings; for example, Diwali rather than Dīwālī, Eid not ʿĪd.

Many of the people in this book have long names, pseudonyms and/or multiple titles, some of them easily confused (there are two Khushhal Khans and two Ghulam Razas, for instance). I use the long form of individuals' names in the first instance, without any diacritical markings, spelled to reflect their usual pronunciation in Indian languages today (e.g. Moin-ud-din rather than Muʿin al-Dīn). Thereafter, I have used a variety of strategies:

- Where the person was a poet, author or musician, I refer to them when possible using their *takhallus* or *nom de plume*/stage name; so ʿInayat Khan Rasikh and Niʿmat Khan Sadarang become Rasikh and Sadarang. There are a few exceptions, such as where individuals are only ever referred to by one name (e.g. Tansen). To avoid confusion I refer to Khushhal Khan Gunasamudra of Chapter 2 as Khushhal, as his father was also Gunasamudra, and Khushhal Khan Anup of Chapter 5 as Anup.

<sup>2</sup> Monika Horstmann, *In Favour of Govinddevji: Historical Documents Relating to a Deity of Vrindaban and Eastern Rajasthan* (New Delhi: Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts and Manohar, 1999), pp. 69–70.

- Where I use an individual's name rather than their *takhallus*, I use the shortest form that makes meaningful sense and won't easily be confused with another individual, for example Himmat for Miyan Himmat Khan, Raushan-ud-daula (not Raushan) for Raushan-ud-daula Zafar Khan Bahadur Rustam Jang. To avoid confusion with the Mughal Emperor Ahmad Shah (r. 1748–54), I refer to the Afghan warlord Ahmad Shah Abdali Durrani as Abdali. I call the *sitār* player Ghulam Raza of the 1840s–50s by his title, Razi-ud-daula, to distinguish him from the important treatise writer of the 1790s Ghulam Raza *qawwāl*.
- Emperors, queens, royal princes and independent rulers are referred to using their common ruling titles: so Muhammad Shah; Lal Kanvar; Muhammad A<sup>c</sup>zam Shah; (Nawab) Asaf-ud-daula; (Maharaja) Ram Singh; and so on. Shah <sup>c</sup>Alam in this book always refers to Shah <sup>c</sup>Alam II (r. 1759–1806).
- I use the honorific titles Hazrat, Khwaja, Shaikh, Hakim, Miyan and so on where they are present in the original texts.



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## Ruling Dynasties\*

\* Only individuals with a tenure of a year or longer are listed

### The Mughal Dynasty (Agra/Delhi)

Babur (1526–30)  
 Humayun (1530–40, 1555–6)  
 Akbar (1556–1605)  
 Jahangir (1605–27)  
 Shah Jahan (1628–58)  
 Aurangzeb °Alamgir I (1658–1707)  
 Shah °Alam I Bahadur Shah (1707–12)  
 Jahandar Shah (1712)  
 Farrukhsiyar (1713–19)  
 Muhammad Shah (1719–48)  
 Ahmad Shah (1748–54)  
 °Alamgir II (1754–9)  
 Shah °Alam II (1759–1806)  
 Akbar Shah II (1806–37)  
 Bahadur Shah II Zafar (1837–58)

### The Nawabs of Awadh (Lucknow)

Burhan ul-Mulk (1722–39)  
 Safdar Jang (1739–54)  
 Shuja°-ud-daula (1754–75)  
 Asaf-ud-daula (1775–97)  
 Sa°adat °Ali Khan (1798–1814)  
 Ghazi-ud-din Haider (1814–27)  
 Nasir-ud-din Haider (1827–37)  
 Muhammad °Ali Shah (1837–42)  
 Amjad °Ali Shah (1842–7)  
 Wajid °Ali Shah (1847–56)

### **The Asaf Jahi Nizams of Hyderabad**

Nizam-ul-mulk (1720–48)  
 Nasir Jang (1748–52)  
 Salabat Jang (1752–62)  
 Nizam ʿAli Khan (1762–1803)  
 Sikandar Jah (1803–29)  
 Farkhanda ʿAli Khan (1829–57)

### **The Maharajas of Jaipur (Amber)**

Jai Singh II (1699–1743)  
 Ishwari Singh (1743–50)  
 Madho Singh I (1750–68)  
 Prithvi Singh II (1768–78)  
 Pratap Singh (1778–1803)  
 Jagat Singh II (1803–18)  
 Jai Singh III (1819–35)  
 Ram Singh II (1835–80)

### **East India Company Governors-General (Calcutta)/Residents of Delhi**

Warren Hastings (1773–85)	
John Macpherson (1785–6)	
Charles Cornwallis (1786–93)	
John Shore (1793–8)	
Richard Wellesley (1798–1805)	David Ochterlony (1803–06)
George Barlow (1805–07)	Archibald Seton (1806–11)
Lord Minto (1807–13)	
Francis Rawdon-Hastings (1813–23)	Charles Theophilus Metcalfe (1811–18)
	David Ochterlony (1818–20)
	Alexander Ross (1820–3)
Lord Amhurst (1823–8)	William Fraser (1823)
	Charles Elliott (1823–5)
	Charles Theophilus Metcalfe (1825–7)
	Edward Colebrooke (1827–8)

William Bentinck (1828–35)

William Fraser (1828–9)

Francis James Hawkins (1829–30)

W B Martin (1830–2)

William Fraser (1832–5)

Charles Metcalfe (1835–6)

Thomas Theophilus Metcalfe  
(1835–53)

Lord Auckland (1836–42)

Lord Ellenborough (1842–4)

Henry Hardinge (1844–8)

Lord Dalhousie (1848–56)

Simon Fraser (1853–7)

Viscount Canning (1856–62)