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doi:[10.1017/S1479409823000411](https://doi.org/10.1017/S1479409823000411)

First published online 16 February 2024

From Musical Writings To Writing Music: Book-Writing Leading to Music School in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta

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Print created the urge to innovate new modalities of musical knowledge production and dissemination in nineteenth-century Bengal. Publication of music books made the bifurcation between music theory and practice clearer, but only as a textual category. As the literature suggests, these were two categories for organizing musical knowledge, intimately entwined, where one produces the other and also doesn't exist without each other. The technology of 'swaralipi' (musical notation) used in the modern printed books materialized the project of disseminating music to the reader who could now 'read' the music from the book. For some book writers, music books were meant to be a replacement for the oral tutelage, published as 'self-instructors'. But, on the contrary, the most prolific book-writers of the time used their books as the basis of oral tutelage in the music school. In the modern setting of the music school, the person of the 'guru' or 'ustad' was replaced by the formalized, systematic teaching of the 'professors' of music. Music books, as the medium of modern music pedagogy, thus changed not only the way students learned – making it possible to learn from the book with no instructor – but also the role of teachers, whose teaching was validated by the book. The music books came to function as the 'modern shastras' – to exercise regulatory authority over music practice, and how music is learned and taught. The 'orality' of music emerges as a liminal space in the gap between the writings on music and the writing of music. What emerges is an unlikely milieu where a new form of musical education is devised, the possibility of an education without a guru is conceived, and the schema of musical notation brings the entire process to life.

Introduction: Bengali 'Sangita Shastra'?

The history of music book writing in Bengali has recently received much scholarly attention.¹ Richard Williams, for example, studies the coming of the music book and book writing as a new medium of musical knowledge production and

¹ Richard David Williams, 'Music, Lyrics, and the Bengali Book: Hindustani Musicology in Calcutta, 1818–1905', *Music and Letters* 97/3 (2016): 465–95; Sagnik Atarshi, 'Whither Musicology? Amateur Musicologists and Music Writing in Bengal', *Ethnomusicology Forum* 26/2 (2017): 247–68.

dissemination, whereas Sagnik Atarshi foregrounds the rise of amateur musicologists in Bengal as music book writers in nineteenth-century Bengal. In this article, I present a historical overview of music-book writing and the book writers, marking moments of significant departures in the musical writings of late nineteenth-century Bengal. I also offer comprehensive analytical discussion of how printed music books ultimately served as the primary pedagogical device in the modern music learning system, forming the basis of its institutional instruction at the music school.

Richard Williams has outlined the broad set of the competing cultural and aesthetic factors that shaped Bengali musicology, which attempted to relocate musical authority from Delhi to the colonial heartland of Calcutta (Kolkata).² Williams argues that consideration of Bengali scholarship on music, distinct from the Anglophone scholarship, effectively nuances the notions of uniformity within the public sphere of music. Sagnik Atarshi focuses on the writings of two pioneering figures, Sourindro Mohun Tagore and Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay, and the dialogic interaction process between their works in the formation of distinctive discourses on colonial musical modernity.³

In the last couple of decades there has been a general increase in scholarly interest in India's early print history and print cultures.⁴ The history of early print culture in Bengal has also received scholarly attention in this context.⁵ These studies reveal how the new print media accommodated pre-print oral cultures and how the orality and the performativity of specific genres continued to inform how books came to be printed and circulated. The directions proposed by these works suggest that the negotiations, accommodations, and modifications of the oral cultures that printing inaugurated, had significant consequences for oral learning, especially of music. In this article, I wish to contribute towards a more nuanced understanding of what happened in music learning and the dissemination of musical knowledge with the coming of the music book as a pedagogical tool in an essentially oral field.

The technology of print in nineteenth-century Bengal created a new modality of musical knowledge production in the form of printed Bengali-language music books. While there were overlaps and commonalities in overall organization and themes between the music books that were published, I categorize them into three genres/categories: music treatises (*shastra*), song collections (*sangraha*), and music-learning books (*siksha*).

The first category of books were the early nineteenth-century Bengali music treatises (*shastra*), which attempted to unite theoretical and practical knowledge of music. Theoretical/conceptual knowledge consisted of rudimentary knowledge

² Williams, 'Music, Lyrics, and the Bengali Book'.

³ Atarshi, 'Whither Musicology? '.

⁴ Francesca Orsini, *Print and Pleasure: Popular Literature and Entertaining Fictions in Colonial North India* (Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2009).

⁵ See Tapti Roy, 'Disciplining the Printed Text: Colonial and Nationalist Surveillance of Bengali Literature', in *Texts of Power: Emerging Disciplines in Colonial Bengal*, ed. Partha Chatterjee (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 30–62; Tapti Roy, *Print and Publishing in Colonial Bengal: The Journey of Bidyasundar* (London: Routledge India, 2019). See also, Anindita Ghosh, 'Revisiting the "Bengal Renaissance": Literary Bengali and Low-Life Print in Colonial Calcutta', *Economic and Political Weekly* 37/42 (2002): 4329–38; Anindita Ghosh, 'An Uncertain "Coming of the Book": Early Print Cultures in Colonial India', *Book History* 6 (2003): 23–55.

of technical terms and concepts derived from Sanskrit and Indo-Persian musico-logical sources, and practical knowledge was of the song repertoire – the songs texts accompanied by cursory melodic and rhythmic information. These books could not be used for pedagogical purposes owing to the absence of illustrated musical examples and limited melodic-rhythmic information. Also, without any musical notation, the musical repertoire in them could not be performed by anyone who did not already know the music.

The second category comprised the numerous song collections (*sangraha*) that were produced to record and archive musical repertoire in song lyrics. These enterprises had their origins in recovering musical repertoires that were endangered. What became apparent was the rise of the *raga* as an important melodic-descriptive category of the songs, the lyrics of which were collected, collated, and published. Preserving the lyrics alone could not lead to actual performance, and these song collections did not offer enough information to preserve the musical works in a performable form.

Most importantly, the third category comprised the music-learning books (*siksha*). The modern technology of print and the publication of musical materials with readable notation fundamentally altered the nature of modern music books during the last quarter of the nineteenth century. Although musical notations appeared in Sanskrit texts from at least the thirteenth century, their use was limited to the documentation of musical-technical and theoretical information and could never be used for the performance of the repertoire, which the modern book did. The printed book also came to be endowed with authoritative power – as a repository of textual knowledge like its predecessor, the Sanskrit music treatises (*sangita shastras*), and exercised regulatory power over music pedagogy and performance with the musical notation (*swaralipi*) as the new pedagogical tool. The *swaralipi* enabled the book to become a new form of knowledge production that could potentially standardize the performance and pedagogy of the musical repertoire. With the music books as the new modality of knowledge production and the beginning of the use of notation, the first music school in Calcutta was inaugurated. The institutional space of the music school emerged as the location that reconfigured musical knowledge production and dissemination with the music book as an indispensable and foundational ingredient of modern music pedagogy.

In this article, I study the writings *on* music and the writing *of* music as leading to the beginning of music tutelage in formalized institutional spaces and what that meant for modern music pedagogy in late nineteenth-century Bengal. I posit my case study of nineteenth-century Bengal as a precursor to the monumental work of Maharashtrian scholars V.N. Bhatkhande and V.D. Paluskar,⁶ who is credited as the ‘modern architect’ of Hindustani music in the twentieth century. While the main aim of this article is to demonstrate how music books validated the modern pedagogy of music by authorizing its theory and practice and accentuating the need for oral instruction as essential for its institutionalization, I essentially argue that it was through the modern printed music book that the bifurcation and the simultaneous union of music theory and practice were made possible, where music could be made audible in print through the implementation of musical notation. I hope to demonstrate that the *orality* of music emerged as an intermediate space between musical writing and the writing of music.

⁶ See Janaki Bakhle, *Two Men and Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

A newspaper advertisement announcing the forthcoming publication of *Sangita Shastra – First Part*⁷ repeatedly appeared in almost all the issues of *Amritabazar Patrika* during 1870 and continued well till mid-1871. The notice announced that the book would be now available for purchase:

this book will be helpful to practise singing and instrument playing *without the instruction of the guru*. It will be available at Sanskrit Depository, and Banerjee & Bros. Library on College Street in Calcutta, or one may also write to the below signatory to get this book ... Shri Neelchandra Bhattacharyya, Jasohar, Amritabazar.⁸

Although this particular *Sangita Shastra* has not been located in the Bengali archive of music, a similar book in Bengali, titled *Shikhhak Byatireke Sangita Siksha*, was published two years earlier by Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay,⁹ with a separate English title: *A 'Comprehensive Self-Instructor' for the Setar, Esraj, Violin, Flute, and Harmonium; And Also For Singing, Containing all the Requisite Precepts and Illustrations on the Rudiments of Music And Exemplified by a Series of Easy Progressive Lessons, Followed by a Choice Selection of Popular Pieces, Both Vocal and Instrumental, As Exercises for Beginners*.

Juxtaposing the advertisement and Bandopadhyay's book-title raises questions that might help in understanding the modalities of musical modernity that the printed music book was envisioned to bring about. In this section, I look for answers to the question of how the Bengali music books in the early nineteenth century brought together the textual knowledge and the oral tutelage music, even before the music notation was devised. Was the music book a replacement for the traditional teacher? Was the orality of music tutelage thought to be replaced by the printed word? If so, then what was the symbolic code of the oral and the textual that the book comprehensively represented?

In Indian musicological tradition, the relationship between *sangita shastra* (as 'musicology') and *shastriya sangita* (as 'classical music') is complicated and can only be understood based on the divided nature of musical knowledge – the differentiation between theory (*lakshana*) and practice (*lakshya/prayoga*).¹⁰ The *Shastra*, as specific synoptic works, cite the older Sanskrit texts as a strategy to accommodate the past into the present. In recent scholarship, *shastra* has been argued to be the site where a dialogue between the past and the present is carefully produced by mechanical repetition of quotations from older texts and scholarly revision through critical commentaries – essentially remaining within a similar mythological narrative framework and canonical technical vocabulary.¹¹ *Shastra*

⁷ *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Weekly), Vol:4; Issue:31 (14 September 1871), 8, British Library, EAP262/1/1/2/35, <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP262-1-1-2-35>. This notice was a permanent feature in the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* during 1870–1871.

⁸ *Amrita Bazar Patrika* (Weekly), Vol:4; Issue:24 (27 July 1871), 3, British Library, EAP262/1/1/2/28, <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP262-1-1-2-28>. The title and the descriptive text of the notice were both in Bengali. The translation is mine.

⁹ Krishna Dhana Banerjee, *Shikhhak Byatireke Sangita Siksha* (Calcutta: P. C. Doss, Day & Co., 1868), emphasis mine.

¹⁰ For a detailed discussion on *sangita shastra* and *shastriya sangita*, see, Harold Powers, 'Sangita Sastra and Sastriya Sangita', *Indian Music Journal* 5, Part 1, no. 9, (1968): 52–56.

¹¹ See Matt Rahaim, Srinivas Reddy, and Lars Christensen. 'Authority, Critique, and Revision in the Sanskrit Music-Theoretic Tradition: Rereading the Svaramela-kalānidhi'. *Asian Music* 46/1 (2015): 39–77.

then becomes the site of negotiations between theory and practice, written and oral, past and present, traditional and contemporary.

The earliest such synoptic work on Indian music in Bengali was *Sangita Taranga*¹² by Radhamohan Sen Das, which had considerable readership across its three editions (1818, 1849, 1903), with a majority of high-caste Bengalis and a few Europeans.¹³ Well-versed in both Sanskrit and Persian,¹⁴ Sen Das draws the musical concepts and terms from older Sanskrit and Persian musicological vocabulary and ‘synthesizes’ them to produce a singular authoritative voice of his own. *Sangita Taranga* deployed the existing conventions of poetry (*kavya*) that Bengali poetry inherited from Sanskrit prosody, mostly using *payar chhanda*¹⁵ (*payar* metre). Written in a prescriptive tone, Sen Das probably had chosen poetry as his medium to make the reading enjoyable and participatory and, at the same time, to maintain continuity with the Sanskrit prosodic verses of the *sangita shastra*.

The author takes his readers through a journey of reading, imagining, understanding, learning, and finally performing contemporary *ragas* where the melodic and rhythmic framework is only suggestive and it is left to the reader’s imagination to render them into a performance. Sen Das brings together theoretical and practical knowledge of *ragas* in the first two-thirds of the book – the introductory section is devoted to *raga* classification, summarizing various classificatory schemes according to multiple schools of thought (*mata*). Sen Das includes both the ‘regional’ *ragas* (*desi*) and the ‘classical’ *ragas* (*marga*) mentioned in the older texts, and mentions that his contemporary singers sing a total of 132 *ragas*.¹⁶ Then he goes on to provide verbal tripartite descriptions (*dhyana–dhara–gita*) for each of these *ragas*: the lyrical descriptions include a visual imagery (*dhyana*), a musical flow (*dhara*), and the song lyrics (*gita*). The author is particularly attentive to the flow (*dhara*) of the *raga* – his emphasis on its tonal structure and the rules of inclusion and exclusion help the readers to imagine the sonic structure of the *ragas* in their minds. The lyrical description of the visual and the sonic imagery culminates in the song texts of the author’s self-composed *dhrupad*-styled compositions in Bengali with their respective *raga–tala* identifications.

Sangita Taranga is thus an attempt to theorize the contemporary musical practice of *raga* within a *shastric* framework – as a synthesis of textual knowledge of music from older works in Sanskrit and Persian, along with musical-technical information about the *raga* and its sonic structure. With his mastery over poetic metres, Sen Das produced a music treatise (*sangita shatsra*) that could be read in the ‘*panchali*’¹⁷ style and brought into circulation a significant body of song texts that

¹² Sen Das was an able composer, poet, and singer and also published a song collection titled *Rasa Sara Sangita*. See Radhamohan Sen Das, *Sangita Taranga* (Calcutta: Bangabashi Press, 1903), 12.

¹³ See, Richard David Williams, ‘Hindustani Music between Awadh and Bengal, c. 1758–1905’ (PhD diss., King’s College London, 2014): 257.

¹⁴ Sen Das, *Sangita Taranga*, 11 (Introductory section).

¹⁵ Poetic metres (*chhanda*) deployed in Bengali poetry are two types: ‘akshar-britta’, based on the number of syllables in a line, and ‘matra-britta’, based on the length of the vowel sound. *Payar chhanda* is an *akshar-britta* metre, where each line consists of 14 syllables, usually broken into four units.

¹⁶ ‘ek shata batrish ragadi gananaye / sei sab ekhhanete gayakera gaye’. This couplet features in the section titled ‘ragadir sankhya’, (number of *ragas*), see, Sen Das, *Sangita Taranga*, 227.

¹⁷ *Panchali* is an oral narrative form of stories and songs specific to Bengal and Assam.

could potentially be rendered as songs. While the melodic-rhythmic (*raga-tala*) information suggests that the authors wants his readers to render them as Bengali *dhruvpad*-styled songs, the *raga-dhara* was supposed to invoke the tonal framework within which the musical setting of the songs could be creatively explored. *Sangita Taranga* was potentially a valuable text for trained singers who could set music to a lyric text within a given *raga-tala* structure, but not meant for music enthusiasts and aspirants to learn from the book. It is in this earliest Bengali music book that *raga-tala* information emerged as the *code* that symbolically captured the melodic-temporal structure of the songs, but, at the same time, failed to actuate a performance from the printed text.

Recent scholarship suggests that the insertion of song texts in nineteenth-century Bengali popular literature in print was a tactical strategy to create a reading experience that was simultaneously performative and participatory.¹⁸ Ghosh observes that song texts, often unconnected to the book's main text, were arbitrarily inserted, along with instructions of the *raga* and *tala*, to graft the readers onto the text and to maintain continuity with the older participatory nature of reading.¹⁹ The insertion of song texts in *Sangita Taranga* was probably an adaptive strategy already common in other domains of print culture. However, following *Sangita Taranga*, song collections with *raga-tala* identification emerged as a standard model of including cursory melodic-rhythmic information in printed works on music throughout the nineteenth century. *Sangitarasamadhuri* (1844) by Jagannath Prasad Basu Mallick, which used *Sangita Taranga* as the primary source,²⁰ or devotional song collections like *SangitanandaLahari* (1848) by Ramchandra Bhattacharya, and *Sangita Rasamanjari* (1866) by Mahesh Chandra Mukhopadhyay, continued to follow the exact structural blueprint as laid down by Radhamohan Sen Das in his *Sangita Taranga*.

The first 'complete' Bengali music book to combine the vital components of musical knowledge in a single compendium was *Sangeeta Sara* (1869) by Kshetramohan Goswami. Published more than 50 years after *Sangita Taranga*, *Sangeeta Sara* was synoptic and synthetic of older musicological works and included a significant repertoire of instrumental music in musical notation. Goswami described this book as an outcome of a collaboration between patrons and practising musicians, jointly written by Kshetramohan Goswami and his patron Sourindro Mohun Tagore. *Sangeeta Sara*, 'treatise of Hindoo music', was endorsed by Goswami's contemporaries as a standard music book that was based on older Sanskrit and Persian musicological texts. Goswami, in addition, furnished letters of support from Hindu and Muslim music authorities at the beginning of the book, along with a letter of appreciation from a European professor, which proclaimed that the book properly represents their views.²¹

¹⁸ See, Ghosh, 'An Uncertain "Coming of the Book"', 23–55.

¹⁹ For a detailed discussion, see Ghosh, 'An Uncertain "Coming of the Book"', 32–44.

²⁰ Williams, 'Hindustani Music between Awadh and Bengal', 262–63. I have been unable to locate a copy of this work.

²¹ The author furnished two letters in the beginning of his book – the first one from the great grandson of Swami Haridas (the teacher of Mian Tansen of the Delhi court), Shri Mannalal Mishra, and the second letter from the professor of music at Fort William College, T.W. Davis. Letters of endorsement also came from the Muslim hereditary musicians in Calcutta, Basat Khan, Qasim Ali Khan and Ahmed Khan. See Khettra Mohana Gosswamee, *Sangeeta Sara Or A Treatise on Hindoo Music, In Two Parts* (Calcutta: Printed for the Author and Publisher by I.C. Bose & Co, 1869), 275.

The organization of *Sangeeta Sara* clearly demarcates the textual and practical knowledge of the three arts of song, music, and dance (*taurjyatrika*):²² the first part of the book deals with the theoretical and textual knowledge of the three arts (*aupapattika taurjyatrika*), and the second part with the practical knowledge (*kriyasiddha taurjyatrika*). The first part, *aupapattika*, is a systematic exposition of music theory divided into four parts: a) the section on musical concepts/definitions (*sangya kanda*);²³ b) the section on musical rules (*niyama*) of a *raga* (*gita kanda*);²⁴ c) the section on the classification of the musical instruments (*badya kanda*);²⁵ and d) the section explaining the key terms in dance (*nritya kanda*).²⁶ The second part, on the other hand, deals with practical knowledge of the three arts (*kriyasiddha taurjyatrika*), elaborating on the ways to practise (*sadhan pranali*) on the stringed instrument *sitar*, before presenting two-part *alaps*²⁷ (divided into *asthayi* and *antara*)²⁸ in eighty-six *ragas*.

The historical significance of *Sangeeta Sara* as a modern music treatise (*sangita shastra*) lies in the publication of these numerous notated musical pieces that are definitive as well as prescriptive – signifying the essential (*sara* means ‘essence’) ways of *raga* elaboration as recommended by the author. At the same time, this particular prescriptive set of *ragas* signifies the essential melodic corpus crucial for learning ‘Hindoo music’, according to Goswami. *Sangeeta Sara* thus unites the author’s prescriptions that must govern *raga* music performance on the *sitar* and the rules derived from practice theorized as textual knowledge of *raga* (*gita kanda* of the *aupapattika* laid down the *niyama* of the *ragas*): firstly, it remains the earliest available music book that enables the students to master their instrument through a series of systematic practices through its prescriptive notated music pieces; and, secondly, to eventually render the rest of the notated music pieces into an actual musical performance. According to Goswami’s vision, systematic musical knowledge thus produced entailed the knowledge of *Hindoo Music*.

Song Collections (Sangraha)

The other prominent genre of music books in nineteenth-century Bengal was the song collections. The first known song collection was *Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma* (1842–1849) by Ragasagara Krishnananda Vyasdeva,²⁹ in which the author had

²² According to the Sanskrit scholar Rishiraj Pathak, ‘tauryatrika’ is an ancient Sanskrit term with similar meaning associated with the word ‘Sangita’, which means the three arts of song, music, and dance (personal communication).

²³ See, Goswami, *Sangeeta Sara*, 1–13.

²⁴ See Goswami, *Sangeeta Sara*, 14–34.

²⁵ Goswami, *Sangeeta Sara*, 35–62.

²⁶ Goswami, *Sangeeta Sara*, 63–5.

²⁷ *Alap* is the brief musical introduction to a *raga* performance. In contemporary practice, it is considered to be free of any rhythmic structure and without any standardized musical form.

²⁸ *Asthayi* and *antara* generally refer to respectively the first and the second part/stanza of a song.

²⁹ Krishnananda was the principal music teacher (*sangitacharya*) of the Maharana of Udaipur, and his mastery over the *ragas* and *raginis* brought him the title ‘Ragasagara’ conferred by the Maharana of Mewar. See Krishnananda Vyasadeva, *Sangita Raga Kalpadruma*, ed. Nagendra Nath Vasu (Calcutta: Bangiya Sahitya Parishad, 1914), 1.

compiled 13,892 song texts from within the country and beyond.³⁰ Although primarily a song collection, *Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma* begins with an introductory section covering standard themes and concepts of musicology,³¹ quoting Sanskrit *shlokas* verbatim from older texts.³²

The voluminous section of song-texts that follows the musicological introduction is what makes *Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma* stand out from the other music treatises of its time. The entire book was printed in Bengali-type font, irrespective of the language of the song lyrics. The song collection includes song lyrics marked with their respective *raga-tala* information, and further subdivided into two sections: a) the chapter on songs (*'ganadhyay'*) and b) (the songs) collected by *ragasagara* (*ragasagara-sangraha*). The song lyrics are further classified into eight varieties of songs: a) *dhrupad-khayal* etc. songs (*dhrubapada-khyaladigana*), b) *hori* songs sung by *kalabant* (*kalabantihori-rangingana*), c) *bishnupada* etc. songs (*bishnupadadi-rangingana*), d) *ashtapadi* songs (*ashtapadi-rangingana*), e) *tappa* etc. songs (*tappadi-rangingana*), f) *dhrupad-khayal* based(?) songs (*dhrupad-khayal-majamuya-rangingana*), and ending with g) Bengali *nirgun* songs (*bangla nirgun rangingana*) and h) Bengali songs (*bangla bhasha rangingana*).³³

The organization of the song lyrics in *Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma* remains an example of an early effort to compile available song repertoire under one universal *raga*-based framework. The term *rangingana* adopted by the author does not have any parallels in the contemporary musicological literature of the mid-nineteenth century: *rangin* means colourful, colour (*rang*) signifies *raga* in Indian musicological tradition,³⁴ and *gana* means songs. The adoption of the *raga* as the key melodic signifier, the dominant characteristic of the upper Indian song repertoire, and the organization of the song-repertoire under the universal descriptive framework of *rangingana* was significant in the context of recasting Bengal's authority over *sangita shastra* and *raga*-based music.

What were to become musical categories/genres/styles in twentieth-century Hindustani classical music featured in this book as various categories of *raga*-based songs (*rangingana*). The collation and classification of the song repertoire inaugurated a hierarchical ordering of the song types within the *raga*-based repertoire (*dhrubapada*, *khayal*, *hori*, *bishnupada*, *ashtapadi*, *tappa*) where one can trace the early beginnings of a musical taxonomy in Bengali musicology. This taxonomic ordering clearly foregrounds the dominance of the upper Indian court-based music genre of *dhrupad* and *khayal*, especially the former. The *dhrupad* and *khayal*, as song categories, are mentioned twice – first, as an independent song category, and later, as a placeholder for the *raga*-based songs (*rangingana*) based on these two song types. Other than *dhrupad*, *vishnupada*, specific *dhrupad* compositions written in praise of Lord Vishnu, and *ashtapadi*, hymns comprising eight couplets

³⁰ Sarbananda Chaudhuri, 'Bishwa Sangita O Bibekananda', *ArekRokom* 18–19 (2017): 114.

³¹ These entailed the musicological concepts concerning the theories of sound, various musical embellishments, theories concerning *raga*, *tala*, dance, and musical instruments. The sub-sections were: *Nadotpatti*, *Shruti*, *Murchhana*, *Alankara*, *Swaralapa-Paltaprastara*, *Swaraprastara*, *Tanaprastara*, *Ragavivekadhyay*, *ragaputra*, *ragastri*, *ragaragini-samay*, *Ragaragini-dhyanaodaharan*, *taladhyay*, *nrityadhyay*, *vadyadhyay*.

³² These Sanskrit musicological works were *Sangita Ratnakara*, *Sangita Darpana*, *Nada Purana*, *Sangita Damodara*, *Sangitarnava* and *Narada Sanhita*.

³³ See Vyasadeva, *Sangita Raga Kalpadruma*, 2–16.

³⁴ The word *raga* derives from the Sanskrit root *ranj* which means to colour.

dedicated to Lord Krishna written by twelfth-century poet Jayadeva, are also allotted two separate categories. Thus, the Sanskrit *pada*-based³⁵ literary genres and their sung forms (*dhru-pada*, *vishnu-pada*, and *ashta-padi*), along with *khayal*, *tappa*, and *hori* (*raga*-based upper Indian song genres), comprises a significant share of the song collection.

Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma, as the earliest available Bengali song collection, had set precedence in this particular genre of music books and had immense influence in shaping the content and organization of other similar kinds of books. What makes this compendium a historically significant song collection (*sangraha*) in the context of Bengali musicology is that it brings together a significant repertoire of Bengali *nirgun* and *bhasha* songs (totalling 114 pages), along with six other predominantly *raga*-based musical forms of upper India. Incorporating Bengali language songs (*bangla bhasha rangingana*) and secular devotional songs in Bengali (*bangla nirgun rangingana*) within the larger body of upper Indian varieties of *rangingana* and putting them into conversation with each other, Vyasdeva attempted to bring Bengali songs within the purview of upper Indian *raga*-based music which otherwise did not have any particular connection with the upper Indian *raga*-based music. Positing his work as a discussion of the *shastra* (*'shastra-lochana'*),³⁶ the author expected that his compilation of song lyrics of *raga*-based songs (*'rangingana'*) would now govern its practice. *Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma* was then essentially the *shastra* that was envisioned to exercise normative control over the performance practice of *raga*-based song genres of upper India and Bengal.

Sangitakalpataru (1887) was another significant song collection jointly written by Narendranath Datta, later known as Swami Vivekananda, and Baishnabcharan Basak.³⁷ Published specifically as a song collection (*gita sangraha*),³⁸ the book was an anthology that included 647 song lyrics in Bengali on various topics³⁹ and an introduction to Indian musicology. This book also presents the lyrics with cursory *raga-tala* information. The author follows a 15-part classification scheme dominated mainly by religious and devotional themes, also including a range of social themes – patriotic songs, songs based on stories from the *Puranas*, and songs based on historical events and social issues. While it is not conclusive whether these categories at all existed within the performance practice of music in Bengal or were innovations of the editors of this volume, the taxonomical scheme in *Sangitakalpataru* points towards the various socio-religious contexts in which songs were sung and for which they were composed.

The classificatory schemes adopted in both of these song collections point towards the emergence of a musical taxonomy in Bengali musicology. While the classificatory scheme in the first collection was based on the hierarchical ordering of the musical forms, the second one was based on their social contexts. Published 45 years apart, *Sangita Raga-Kalpadruma* attempted to bring *raga*-based Bengali

³⁵ *Pada* literally means one line of poetry, the unit of Sanskrit or Vedic poetic metre.

³⁶ In the Sanskrit title page, the Sanskrit subtitle qualifies the original title as a 'discussion on the ancient Indian music shastras' (*bharatiya prachina sangita shastralochana*). See Vyasdeva, *Sangita Raga Kalpadruma*.

³⁷ Baishnabcharan Basak and Narendranath Datta, eds. *Sangitakalpataru* (Calcutta: Ramkrishna Mission Institute of Culture, 2010), 5.

³⁸ This is organized into three sections: *Sangita O Vadya* (Music and Instruments), *Sangita Sangraha* (Collection of Music), and *Parisishta* (Appendix).

³⁹ Basak and Datta, eds. *Sangitakalpataru*, 3.

songs and upper Indian *raga*-based song repertoire into a level-playing field. *Sangitakalpataru*, on the contrary, exclusively documents the Bengali song repertoire within the larger *raga-tala*-based framework. The common thread that links these two collections is the organization and categorization of Bengali song repertoire under the generalized melodic framework of the *raga*. This recasting of Bengali songs into the upper Indian melodic-rhythmic mould of *raga-tala* points out the deliberate attempt of both authors to relocate the musical authority of *raga*-based musical forms to the heart of Bengal.

This deliberation of recasting Bengali music into upper Indian *raga*-based music becomes more evident in a song anthology of Sourindro Mohun Tagore written in English, *A Few Specimens of Indian Songs* (1879),⁴⁰ where Tagore carefully categorizes the heterogeneous and multiple song types that marked the field of *Indian Songs*. Tagore systematically introduces each song variety in his anthology with a brief introduction – locating their origins/beginnings in the Sanskrit music traditions and marking their specific musical characteristics, followed by *specimen song lyrics* and their musical form in the Western Staff notation. Tagore charts out 30 different song types: the first 19 song types derive from the upper Indian *raga*-based music;⁴¹ the remaining 11 song varieties are exclusively from Bengal.⁴² While Tagore traces Hindu origins for most of the upper Indian song varieties, the name of their prominent Hindu patrons and composers, he also includes a few Arabic and Persian language-based song varieties. Devotional-song varieties, on the contrary, dominate the list of song types from Bengal, within which Tagore includes the songs of the ‘lower’ classes of Bengal as representative of *Indian songs*.

These local Bengali song varieties – the devotional songs by Bengali poets or the songs of the ‘lower’ classes, clearly not derived from upper Indian *raga*-based musical forms, came to be represented under the overarching *raga-tala* schematic. In incorporating the local non-*raga*-based songs within the *raga*-based framework, Tagore marked them as based on the *jangla* (lit. ‘wild’) varieties of known *ragas* like *Khamaj* or *Pilu*. *Jangla*, more than just a melodic description, was probably adopted by Tagore as a code to distinguish these songs as belonging to *wild* or impure versions of the popular *ragas* – the *durwan*’s (gatekeeper) song, the song of the snake-charmers, the song of the *kahars* (palanquin-bearers), or the song of the *santhals* (tribal community from Bengal), and other devotional and local song varieties are known to be outside the realm of *raga*-based music practice. Still, labelling these ‘specimens’ of Indian songs within the *raga-tala* schematic was symptomatic of the desperation to reclaim the roots of *raga*-based music in the local song varieties of Bengal.

The relocation of intellectual authority in music from upper India to Bengal, the beginning of which can be located in the translation of Sanskrit and Indo-Persian

⁴⁰ Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *A Few Specimen of Indian Songs* (Calcutta: Published By the Author, 1879).

⁴¹ These are *Alap*, *Swaragrama*, *Telena*, *Tribut*, *Chaturanga*, *Dhrupad*, *Vishnupada*, *Bhajan*, *Jat*, *Kaoyal-Kalbana*, *Gul-Naks*, *Tappa*, *Kheyal*, *Tap-Kheyal*, *Thumri*, *Gagal*, *Hori*, *Kajri* and *Ragamala*.

⁴² The local song types of Bengal, as listed by Tagore, are the Song of Rampershad (song dedicated to Goddess Kali sung generally by street beggars), Song of the Bauls, Durwan’s song (also known as ‘Ghanto’ or Chaiti), Song of the Snake-charmers (accompanied by the pastoral wind instrument Tubri), Song of the Kahars (sung by Kahars, accompanied by huruk and jhanjh), Song of the Sanotals, Kirtana, Jatra, Kabi, Panchali, and Songs of Dasarathi Ray (dedicated to Goddess Kali). See, Tagore, *A Few Specimen of Indian Songs*.

musical knowledge in Bengali by Radhamohan Sen Das, was thus further formalized into a systematic pedagogy when Kshetramohan Goswami collaborated with both Hindu and Muslim musicians to compose his treatise – the first work in Bengali that successfully united textual and practical knowledge of music into one compact book. From Krishnananda Vyasdeva to Sourindro Mohun Tagore, the Bengali song repertoire was recast in the mould of *raga* theory and put together in conversation with the *raga*-based repertoire of upper India. From Radhamohan Sen Das to Narendranath Datta, the seeming desperation to incorporate the local Bengali songs within the upper Indian *raga* vocabulary was particularly visible throughout the nineteenth-century musical writings in Bengal, which, as a result, upheld the primacy of *raga* knowledge in music pedagogy.

Music-Learning Books (Siksha)

Other than the Bengali ‘music treatises’ and ‘song collections’, the third prominent genre of music books was the music-learning books (*siksha*), which combined elements of the former two genres and aimed towards standardizing, formalizing, and concretizing musical knowledge and its pedagogy. Learning music without the help of a teacher dominated as a theme of music books published in the late nineteenth-century Calcutta, continuing well into the first half of the twentieth century. What critically marked the difference between music-learning books and the rest of the books were the use of musical notation (*swaralipi*) that could potentially lead to a standardized performance of the practice lessons and the song repertoire.

A range of music-learning books (*sangita siksha*) were written and published, the earliest being *Shikshak Byatireke Sangita Siksha* (1868) by Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay. All of these books provided rudimentary music theory and explanation of key terms and concepts and used some form of notation for documenting music examples. Also, authors like Nabin Chandra Datta published *Sangita Ratnakar Part-I* (1872) with the aim of making music learning easy and accessible to the literate, so that it does not remain solely dependent on *ustadi* teaching.⁴³ From Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay’s *Sangita Siksha* to Upendrakishore Roychowdhury’s *Sikshak Byatireke Harmonium*, or even *Saral Swaralipi Siksha Part-I* written by Tulsidas Chattopadhyay, claimed in their titles that these were the ‘only books’ to learn ‘without the teacher’.

Kshetramohan Goswami devised the first modern musical notation to synchronize the musical performance of a band of musicians that provided the background and interlude music to a classical play *Ratnaboli* staged in the Belgachia Theatres of north Calcutta in 1858. Goswami had ‘for the first time put into notation some of the native tunes and ragas’ and created a band called the *Belgachia Amateur Band*,⁴⁴ which was an ‘ensemble of native musicians who read their tunes from notation’ and played ‘in the Western manner’.⁴⁵ Goswami’s notation became the most important pedagogical tool that he used in the Bengal Music School for teaching music. Thus, the staging of *Ratnaboli*

⁴³ See Tulsidas Chattopadhyay, *Saral-Swaralipi Shiksha (First Part)*, 14th ed. (Calcutta: Haripada Chattopadhyay, 1931), title page (italics mine). This particular book ran to at least 14 editions and was still in circulation in the 1930s.

⁴⁴ Quoted in Charles Capwell, ‘Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta as a Component in the History of a Secondary Urban Center’, *Asian Music* 18/1 (1986): 145.

⁴⁵ Capwell, ‘Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta’, 149.

and the use of instrumental band significantly influenced the beginning of modern *writing of music* in India.

Publicizing *Hindu notation* as opposed to Western Staff notation became a significant agenda for the Bengali musicologists of the time, especially those belonging to Tagore's circle.⁴⁶ A sketch of a musical notation, initially published by William Jones in his article *On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos* (1784),⁴⁷ served as historical evidence of the existence of notation in the Sanskrit musical tradition for Bengali musicologists in the 1870s,⁴⁸ which was reprinted and cited numerous times and served as the foundation of Goswami's 'improved system' of notation 'approved by most of the learned musicians of Bengal'.⁴⁹ Goswami's musical notation (*swaralipi*) not only manually recorded music on paper but also made that music available to the future generation of scholars and musicians – to give them an idea of what was happening on the stage. Some of Goswami's scores were published a decade later by his student Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay as *Bangaikatan* (1867).⁵⁰ Contrary to his teacher, Bandopadhyay firmly believed that European notation was the best notation system in the world and attempted to publicize a Bengali version of the Western music theory and staff notation in his *Sangita Siksha* (1868).⁵¹ It was the disagreement around this publication that Bandopadhyay had an ideological split with his teacher Goswami. Kshetramohan Goswami and Sourindro Mohun Tagore remained together and published numerous music-learning books for vocal and instrumental music, and established Bengal Music School in Calcutta in 1871.

Although *Sangeet Sara* (1869)⁵² was Goswami's earliest work to include numerous notated musical examples in his *swaralipi*, his earliest music-learning book, 'a guide to vocal music', was *Kantha Kaumudi*, of 1875.⁵³ Written in Bengali, this book

⁴⁶ In addition to K.M. Goswami, S.M. Tagore and Lokenath Ghose, Kaliprasanna Bandopadhyay also published 'English System of Notation' (1868) to express his opinion about the unsuitability of Western Staff notation for notating Indian music. See Capwell, 'Musical Life in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta', 146.

⁴⁷ See William Jones, 'On the Musical Modes of the Hindoos', in *Hindu Music from Various Authors*, ed. Sourindro Mohun Tagore (Calcutta: Stanhope Press, 1875), 123–60.

⁴⁸ This was the reproduction of a notated music piece of Jayadeva's *Gita Govinda* set to *Raga Vasanta* reproduced from *Raga Vivodha* by Someshwara, a seventeenth-century Sanskrit musical text. It was reprinted by Lokenath Ghose in *The Music and Musical Notation of Various Countries* (1874) and by Tagore in *Hindu Music by Various Authors* (1875). In addition to numerous notated music pieces in *Sangita Sara* (1868) and *Kantha Koumudi* (1875), Kshetramohan also published *Swaralipi* (1871) with a concise biography of poet Jayadeva and 25 of his *Ashtapadis* with complete notation. See Kshetramohan Goswami, *Jaydeber Jiban Charita Sambalita Geetagobinda Geetabali Swaralipi* (Calcutta: Published by Mathuranath Tarkaratna, 1871).

⁴⁹ See Loke Nath Ghose, *The Music and Musical Notation of Various Countries* (Calcutta: J.N. Ghose & Biswas, 1874), 44.

⁵⁰ Krishna Dhana Banerjea, *Bangaikatān* (n.p., 1867).

⁵¹ Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay developed a Bengali vocabulary of Western music theory and staff notation – including its timing, the signs and symbols used and their meanings, musical intervals, scales, and musical embellishments – and provided Bengali terms for each concept, category and item. See Banerjea, *Shikhhak Byatireke Sangita Sikshā*.

⁵² Khettra Mohana Gosswamee [Kshetramohan Goswami], *Sangeeta Sara Or A Treatise on Hindoo Music, In Two Parts* (Calcutta: Stanhope Press, 1869).

⁵³ Khetra Mohana Goswamin [Kshetramohan Goswami], *Kantha Kaumudi or A Guide to Vocal Music* (Calcutta: Madhyastha Press, 1875).

comprised, according to the author, ‘all the necessary rules and methods for the cultivation of the voice’ along with ‘a variety of songs, alaps &c. compiled, composed, and set to the *modern system of Hindu notation*’.⁵⁴ Following the standard template of earlier music treatises, Goswami begins with a brief exposition of the music theory, introducing the key terms and concepts, and then proceeds on to the first section (*parichheda*) of the book, which elaborates on the ‘realization of musical notes’ (*swara sadhana*). A scrutiny of the progression of *sargam*-based⁵⁵ practice lessons reveals the systematic order in which the vocal exercises are designed – beginning with single-note, then double-note, and then progressing to multiple-note practices over the ascending (*anuloma*) and descending (*biloma*) scale. The initial exercises are prescribed in the natural scale (*shuddha swara*), progressing to *sargam*-based vocal exercises introducing the flat and sharp notes (*komal* and *tivra*) in the chromatic order.

In the song chapter (*gita prakarana*) of *Kantha Kaumudi*, Goswami elaborates on 14 different categories of vocal music; the author furnishes each of these song categories with short definitions and three to four songs in different rhythmic cycles (*talas*). The songs are written in the north Indian dialects of *khadi-boli* or *braj*, which signifies their import from north Indian *raga*-based music. Goswami then provides *swaralipi* of approximately 214 songs set to 100 *ragas* arranged chronologically according to their *prescribed* performance times. All the songs in this section belong to one of the north Indian vocal forms *dhrupad* or *kheyal*, as apparent from their song structures and *tala* indications. The 100 *ragas*, the songs of which Goswami includes in his book, include 26 morning *ragas*, 13 afternoon *ragas*, 34 evening *ragas*, 27 late night and early morning *ragas* with an additional nine *ragas* suitable for performing at any time of the year.⁵⁶

Other than Goswami’s music-book for learning vocal music, three books were authored by his student and patron Sourindro Mohun Tagore in Bengali, for learning *sitar*, *mridanga*, and harmonium – the three instruments that were taught in Bengal Music School. *JantraKhettraDeepica*,⁵⁷ a ‘treatise on Citara’, was published in 1872, which contained ‘all the requisite precepts and examples on the rudiments of Hindoo music, intended as an introduction to the study of the above instrument (*sitar*)’. This book contained ‘various exercises and 94 airs arranged in the present system of Hindoo Notation’ – *sitar* compositions (*gat*) in notation, composed by Kshetramohan Goswami, Sourindro Mohun Tagore, and Tagore’s *sitar*-teacher Lakshmi Prasad Mishra. The earliest known *sitar*-learning book in Bengal, *JantraKhettraDeepica*, begins with a detailed description of the *sitar*, its construction, the use of fingers, playing techniques, details of the different melodic exercises, and the placement of the instrument. The only woodcut-illustration in this book is clearly instructive of the ‘correct’ position of holding and playing the instrument.

Similarly, *Mridanga Manjari* (1873),⁵⁸ was published as a *Mridanga* learning ‘rule’-book (*Mridanga Siksha Bidhayak Grantha*) which contained *tala* playing patterns (*theka*) and a series of variations (*prakramanika* or *tala vistara*) for each of the

⁵⁴ This descriptive text was part of the subtitle of the main title of the book (emphasis mine).

⁵⁵ See Goswamin, *Kantha Kaumudi*, 8–27.

⁵⁶ See Goswamin, *Kantha Kaumudi*, 111–399.

⁵⁷ Sourindra Mohuna Thakoora (Tagore), *JantraKhettraDeepica* (Calcutta: Prakrita Press, 1872).

⁵⁸ Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *Mridanga Manjari*, 2nd ed. (Calcutta: Sasibhushana Kritiratna Bhattacharyya, 1902).

18 *dhrupad*-based *talas*.⁵⁹ The first seven *talas* are the most widely used in *dhrupad*, even in contemporary times: Tagore provides at least 20 variations for each of these *talas* and acknowledges the names of musicians from whom he had collected these rhythmic compositions in their respective footnotes, giving the readers access to the names of contemporary Hindu and Muslim composers and *mridanga* artists in Calcutta⁶⁰. *Mridanga Manjari* thus remains an important musicological work for not only preserving more than 10 *dhrupad*-based *talas* lesser known today or considered obsolete in contemporary musical practice, but the range of compositions and rhythmic variations (*prakramanika*) documented in this book also gives access to the performance practice of the late nineteenth-century Bengal.

There were also other music-learning books that Tagore and his contemporaries wrote and published. Tagore had published a manual of the European pedal Harmonium in Bengali, titled *Harmonium-Sutra* (1874), a 'treatise on Harmonium' introduced as a course book at the Bengal Music School when Harmonium learning class began under the tutorship of Madan Gopal Burman.⁶¹ Other contemporary musicologists continued to publish instructive manuals on learning various string and percussion instruments. These were cheap books, often meant for general music appreciation and beginners' learning. Two such examples are *Vadya Siksha* (1878),⁶² by Kedarnath Gangopadhyay, and *Vadya Siksha* (1880),⁶³ by Krishnadhan Chattopadhyay (1880). Both these books were brief to keep the prices low and were published by the *Sudharnab Jantra* press in the Chitpur area.

Thus, the third prominent category of 'music-learning' books (*siksha*) brought together in print customary theoretical knowledge, detailed descriptions of the instruments, tuning methods, elementary practice lessons, and ultimately the instrument-specific practice lessons and performance repertoire. The practice lessons were instructive sections devised by the authors for successfully mastering the respective instruments. In most cases, especially for vocal music (*Kantha Koumudi*) and *Mridanga* (*Mridanga Manjari*), the repertoire drew from contemporary practice, as evident from the name of the composers – both Hindu and Muslim musicians. On the other hand, the notated repertoire for *sitar* was largely made up of compositions of either Tagore or Goswami, and occasional compositions by their teacher, Lakshmi Prasad Mishra.

The musicological significance of the music-learning books was premised on the demarcation of theory and practice as separate but connected domains of knowledge. These books repeatedly enunciated the theoretical and musicological concepts relevant to performance practice. At the same time, they attempted to *theorize* practice through musical notations by standardizing the pedagogic process and concretizing its repertoire. Thus, the success of music-learning books crucially

⁵⁹ *Chautala, Slatha-Tritali, Surfakta, Rupak, Dhamar, Jhaptal, Teora, Patatala, Birapancha, Khamsha, Sattitlala, Mohantala, Dobahar, Bastala, Brahmatala, Rudratala, Brahmajoga, Lachhmitala.*

⁶⁰ These musicians were Boro Bhabaniprasad, Lala Choto Bhabaniprasad, Kabba Hussain Khan, Lala Keval Krishan, Lala Hiralalji, Babu Sharatchandra Ghosh, Lal Jyotsinha, Lal Maniksinha, Khodabaksh, Dayaldasji.

⁶¹ Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *Harmonium-Sutra or A Treatise on Harmonium* (Calcutta: Sasibhushana Kritiratna Bhattacharyya, 1874).

⁶² Kedarnath Gangopadhyay, *Vadya Siksha (First Part)* (Calcutta: Trailakyanath Datta, 1878).

⁶³ Krishnadhan Chattopadhyay Bidyapati, *Vadya Siksha (Second Part)* (Calcutta: Trailakyanath Datta, 1880).

relied on the implementation of musical notation as a modern pedagogic tool which was actualized through its institutionalization at the Bengal Music School. The revival of notational practices turned out to be primarily a matter of historical importance which was inseparably linked to the questions of authority and identity.

The *Swaralipi* of Kshetramohan Goswami

The Bengali music-learning books that used notation, as discussed above, used two systems of musical notation – the *swaralipi*, devised by Kshetramohan Goswami (see Fig. 1), and the ‘modified’ *swaralipi*, devised by Sourindro Mohun Tagore. Kshetramohan Goswami’s *improved system* of music notation brought together the three elements of language (words), music (notes), and time (rhythm) – the verbal, melodic, and temporal elements of a song into one compact space of a page as a *swaralipi*. The word *swaralipi*, which translates as the scripted musical notes, was the umbrella term that implied both the notation and the score – the systematic graphic marks, a combination of symbols and letters, yield meaning only when the musical notation is performed through a particular kind of reading. *Swaralipi* only defines the composer’s work – it requires the musician’s rendering from the page to the stage for it to become a song.

Introducing and establishing a new music writing system and reading through the *swaralipi* required clear instructions to enable reading. All three musical works of Goswami devote introductory sections explaining the *rules* of notation and its symbols in Bengali. Tagore, who used Goswami’s *swaralipi* in all of his pedagogical

শ্রীরাগ । সম্পূর্ণ ।
তাল তেওরা ।
(ঐ ঐ ঐ)
আস্থায়ী ।

ত দু মি ল ন দে প র ঙা র ত নু কি গ রি বে মি ঞা
হাঁজি ত দু কি গ রি বে অ জ বো হাঁ দি এ বা ০ ল

Fig. 1 *Swaralipi* of a raga Shree composition. Source: Kheta Mohana Goswamin [Kshetramohan Goswami], *Kantha Kaumudi* (Calcutta: Madhyastha Press, 1875), 233.

works in Bengali, devoted an elaborate introductory section explaining the elementary rules and a description of its signs.⁶⁴ Tagore himself developed a modified version of Goswami's *swaralipi* which he used in most of his later works in English.⁶⁵

Goswami's *swaralipi* was a three-tier Bengali letter-based notation system with three vertically arranged horizontal lines representing the three octaves (Ta = Tara (Higher), Mu = Mudara (Middle), U = Udara (Lower)). The three lines together denote a *stabaka* (stave), signifying the tonal range of Indian vocal and instrumental music. Goswami's *innovation* was to place the octaves one above the other so that the reader can visually trace the upward and downward movement of the melody. Goswami substantiated his adoption of the line-based notation system by claiming that it originated in ancient India and that it was through the Greeks who came and learned it from India that this system became widespread among the Europeans.⁶⁶ The musical notes are represented by the consonant syllables of the respective notes, with which they are uttered while singing: *sa, re, ga ma, pa dha, ni* is represented by their consonants as *s, r g, m p, dh, n* when used in *swaralipi*.⁶⁷ Goswami's *swaralipi* remains an oral notation where the utterances of the syllables are not only crucial in the production of the musical notes – they are inseparable. The flat notes (*komal swaras*) and sharp notes (*teevra swara*) are annotated respectively by a 'triangle' and a 'flag' sign on top of the respective notes.

Goswami charts out separate symbols to be added as annotations on the top of the notes to indicate musical embellishments: A complete set of these embellishments, as presented by Goswami, are touch notes (*sparsha*), fast downward and upward movement through multiple notes (*bikkhep* and *prakhhep*), oscillatory movement (*gamaka*), sustain (*ash*), and gliding movement (*murchhana*).⁶⁸ The *gamaka* is shown by a wavy line, the long sustain by a long straight line, and the sustained glide by a long wavy line. These musical embellishments, which could also be broken down into musical notes and be included in the *swaralipi*, were instead indicated by visually relatable signs and symbols.

It is not the tempo but the musical notes which are given prime importance in his notation. Spatially, the musical notes occupy the first three lines and visually become the most prominent in comparison to the words of the songs. In the *swaralipi*, the notes are equally spaced from each other, maintaining a visual regularity, whether or not that conforms to their temporal spacing. The time is marked as a binary action of *aghat* (beating) and *biram* (rest), signifying clapping and silence, and is assigned separate symbols.⁶⁹ The time markers are added on top of the notes as annotations. At the beginning of each time cycle, the *shome* is annotated

⁶⁴ See Tagore, *JantraKhetraDeepica* (1872), *Mridanga Manjari* (1873) and *Harmonium Sutra* (1874).

⁶⁵ See, for example, Tagore, *English Verses Set to Hindu Music* (1875), *Victoria Gitika* (1875), *Victoria Samrajyan* (1876) and *Six Principal Ragas* (1877).

⁶⁶ Goswami's claim was based on the available European scholarship on the subject of notation – from English language articles by William Jones and extending to Augustus Willard, Adolf Bernhard Marx, James Princep, Charles Burney, Edward Pococke, and excerpts published in *Encyclopedia Britannica* and *Encyclopedia Americana*. See, Gosswamee, *Sangeeta Sara*, 71–83.

⁶⁷ There is an exception to the first and the last note, *sa* and *ni*, where the vowels are used in notation.

⁶⁸ Gosswamee, *Sangeeta Sara*, 98–106.

⁶⁹ In contemporary practice the parallel terms are *Tali* (clap) and *Khali* (blank).

with a 'plus' symbol; the end of each cycle is marked by a vertical bar line, the *bibhajika rekha*. The song begins at the extreme left of the line, irrespective of whether it is from the first beat of the time cycle or not. The time markers are adjusted accordingly to where the song arrives at the *shome*, denoted by a 'plus' sign on top of the respective note.

The *swaralipi*, for Goswami, was the only way to recover or revive what is *pure*, the *shuddha* form of the ragas, which, in the absence of writing, had become *impure* (*ashuddha*) due to inaccurate transmission at each stage continuing through generations. The primary purpose of the *swaralipi* for Goswami was its utility as a recording device. As a pedagogical tool, the *swaralipi* was meant to act as a visual guide. As a mnemonic device, it was supposed to aid in recollection or retrieval of a song from the past. The *swaralipi* could then be utilized as a multipurpose *interface*⁷⁰ – to record, learn, and perform the song from the page.

Tagore's 'Modified' *Swaralipi*?

Kshetramohan Goswami's patron and prime disciple Sourindro Mohun Tagore modified his notation system to one line claiming that it is 'sanctioned by ancient usage' and that he did this 'in imitation of the original Sanskrit notation'.⁷¹ Tagore kept the Mu-line representing the middle octave intact and got rid of the upper and lower line replacing them with dots above (upper octave) and dots below (lower octave) the notes. The rest of the symbols for flat/sharp (*komal/tivra*) and *ati komal /ati tivra* (very flat/very sharp) were kept the same. However, that also made the design very complex, as seen in Figure 2. Other than the symbols for ornamentation (wavy lines), the symbols for everything else are placed on the top of the notes, making them look cluttered and not easy to read. In attempting to make his *swaralipi* intelligible for European readers, Tagore juxtaposed the Indian *saptaka* with the European natural diatonic scale. Accordingly, *sa, re, ga, ma, pa, dha, ni* could now be replaced with C, D, E, F, G, A, B. This way, Tagore achieved interchangeability and inclusivity of two disparate music systems into one common framework of *swaralipi*. Tagore could now seamlessly switch between Bengali, Devanagari, and English script: Bengali for Bengali songs, Devanagari for songs in Sanskrit, and English for translation purposes. Nevertheless, the loss that occurred to make these two systems comparable was that the *relative* idea of notes (*swaras*) in Indian music, where any note can become the tonic note, had to be replaced with the idea of *swaras* as *fixed*, absolute pitch classes where *Sa* corresponds to C, *Re* corresponds to D, and so on.

Kshetramohan Goswami and Sourindro Mohun Tagore pioneered the use of *swaralipi* in Bengal, marking the beginning of modern music *writing*. Two of Goswami's contemporaries, Dwijendranath Tagore from the Jorasanko branch of the Tagore family, and Maula Baksh from Baroda, also devised different notation systems. Although there was a massive debate as to who devised the first *swaralipi* in Bengal,⁷² later on, Goswami's system came to be known as *Dondomatrik* as

⁷⁰ For more on notation as an *interface*, see Floris Schuiling, 'Notation Cultures: Towards an Ethnomusicology of Notation', *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* 144/2 (2019): 429–58.

⁷¹ See Schuiling, 'Notation Cultures', 42.

⁷² For a narrative of this debate see Chitra Deb, *Thakurbrir Bahirmahal* (Kolkata: Ananda, 2016), 331.

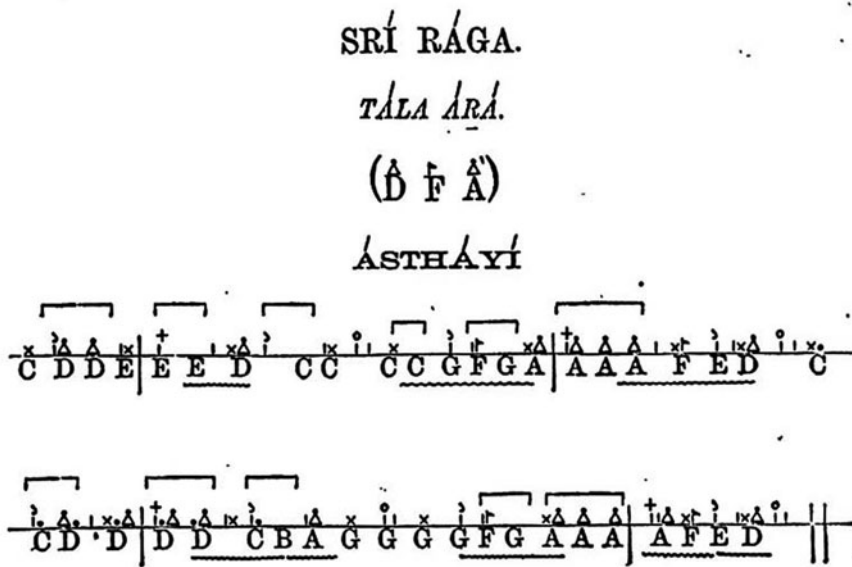


Fig. 2 Notation of a raga Shree composition. Source: Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *Six Principal Ragas*, 2nd Ed (Calcutta: Calcutta Central Press Company, 1877), page not numbered.

opposed to the one by Dwijendranath Tagore, which was called *Akarmatrik swaralipi*, and was appropriated by Rabindranath Tagore to standardize his compositions and continues to be used even today.

Another 'pioneer' of the notation system, contemporary to Tagore, was Maula Baksh 'Ghise Khan'. He was the principal musician at the Baroda court and known for his mastery over both the north Indian and the south Indian systems of music. Maula Baksh devised a notation system on the behest of Sayaji Rao Gaikwad for his music school where the timeframe appears as symmetric columns (Fig. 3), clearly marking the metric units with vertical column lines. This particular feature of giving primacy to the temporal space differentiated Maula Baksh's notation from Goswami or Tagore's notation system. This idea of symmetric columns was finally concretized in the early twentieth-century by V.N. Bhatkhande (Fig. 4), who combined the strengths of all the three notation systems devised by Goswami, Tagore, and Maula Baksh. The reason behind the 'success' of this notation was that it dealt with the visual unevenness of the temporal space in the other three notation systems: Bhatkhande treated the graphical space of notation like a table where the evenly-spaced columns divide the temporal space into blocks (irrespective of the number of beats), where the melody and the lyrics were plotted in each of the cells.

The main difference between Goswami's and Tagore's systems and all the other three was the visual and methodological treatment of the temporal space. Both Goswami and Tagore's *swaralipi* exploit the logic of line and letter, where the elements of the lyrics and the melody come together, flowing from one line to

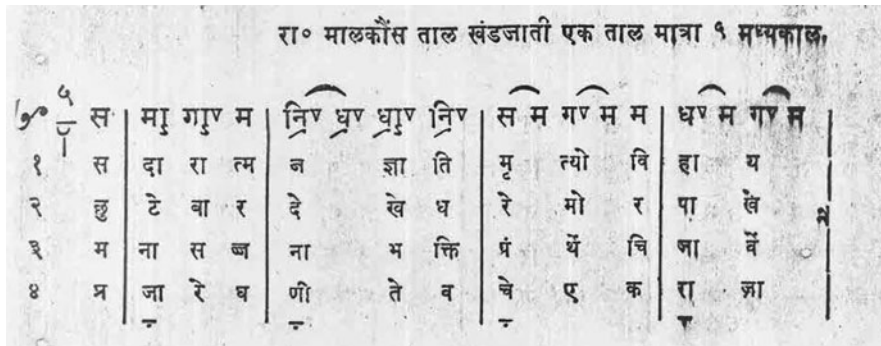


Fig. 3 Notation of a *raga* Malkauns composition. Source: Maula Baksh 'Ghise' Khan, *Sangitanusara Chandomanjari* (Baroda: Baroda Vatsal Press, 1892), 22.



Fig. 4 Notation of a *raga* Malashri composition. Source: Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande, *Hindustani Sangita Paddhati*, Volume Five (Hathras: Sangeet Press, 1954), 96.

another: both their systems held the *swaras* as the primary unit of notation, and the *danda* (vertical barlines) as denoting time. Despite attending to all these details, any musical ornaments/ embellishments (marked with symbols) remained *outside* the scope of *swaralipi* and had to be imagined. In order to accurately render the song in *swaralipi*, one still needed to know the specific melodic material of these embellishments and learn its execution. One still had to learn the *raga* to interpret the *swaralipi* correctly. Thus, the notation did not eliminate the need for oral tutelage – it was still kept alive even after the coming of the *swaralipi*.

Bengal Music School: Beginning of Modern Music Pedagogy

On 20 July 1871, *Amrita Bazar Patrika* carried an announcement for the inauguration of a 'SCHOOL OF HINDU MUSIC'.⁷³ It was a 'call for application' by Shri Haramohan Bhattacharya, who was to become the Honorary Secretary of the school:

A music school is going to be opened in Jorasanko. The monthly fee would be one rupee, and classes will be held from six to nine in the evening. Young students would not be admitted without written permission from their parents. Under the *mentorship* of Kshetramohan Goswami and *professorship* of Uday Chandra Goswami and Kaliprasanna Bandopadhyay, both 'theoretical' (*aupapattika*) and 'practical' (*kriyasiddha*) music will be taught.⁷⁴

The 'School of Hindu Music' mentioned in the advertisement was inaugurated ten days later, on 3 August 1871, as Bengal Music School (*Banga Sangita Vidyalyaya*) in the premises of the Calcutta Normal School, at 83, Chitpore Road in north Calcutta.⁷⁵ The man behind the establishment of the school was Sourindro Mohun Tagore, who had carefully put everything together. Gopal Chandra Banerjee, the Headmaster of the Calcutta Normal School,⁷⁶ facilitated the use of the school premises in the evening for music classes. As a government-run training institute for primary school teachers, Calcutta Normal School was a perfect location to publicize the school amongst educated Bengalis. Vocal and instrumental music classes began for three days a week: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from 7 P.M. to 9 P.M. The fee was fixed at one rupee a month, and Tagore bore all other expenses.⁷⁷

The establishment of Bengal Music School, the first known Indian music school in Calcutta and the first in India,⁷⁸ was a significant step in institutionalizing music pedagogy and introducing formal music education to the public. The Bengal Music School began with 19 students in August 1871 and grew to 43 students by the end of the first year (July 1872). The school grew steadily and had 56 students enrolled by the second year, with five classes: two each for vocal and instrumental music

⁷³ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, July 20, 1871, 8, Vol:4; Issue: 23; British Library, EAP262/1/1/2/27, <https://eap.bl.uk/archive-file/EAP262-1-1-2-27>. The original article title 'School of Hindu Music' was printed in English, and the rest of the article in Bangla.

⁷⁴ *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, July 27, 1871, 6 (translation and italics mine).

⁷⁵ Third Annual Report of The Bengal Music School in the Premises of the Calcutta Normal School (Calcutta: Presidency Press, 1875), 3. This was the first official printed report of the school. The section titled 'The Bengal Music School' provides useful details of the school activities since commencement.

⁷⁶ The Calcutta Normal School was probably established sometime in 1850s. 'Normal' schools were government-sponsored schools that were setup as training institutes for the primary school teachers under the supervision of the Calcutta School Society (1818), which was the joint initiative of David Hare and William Carey, with the aim to introduce identical teaching methods. See 'Normal School' in *Banglapedia: National Encyclopedia of Bangladesh*, https://en.banglapedia.org/index.php/Normal_School.

⁷⁷ Third Annual Report, 3.

⁷⁸ See Michael David Rosse, 'The Movement for the Revitalization of "Hindu" Music in Northern India, 1860–1930: The Role of Associations and Institutions' (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1995), chap. 2; pp.30–63, presents a case study of Bengal Music School and its history.

(*sitar*), and one for percussion (*mridanga*). A violin class was added during the third session (1873–1874).⁷⁹ Later, a Colootolah branch was also opened at the premise of the Calcutta School with the kind permission of Babu Keshab Chandra Sen for bi-weekly classes.⁸⁰

Tagore wanted to share the benefits of the system of musical instruction based on the ‘most improved principles of notation’, and his goal was to ‘promote the love of music amongst his countrymen, as a means of elevating their tastes and promoting rational recreation amongst them’. The hegemony of bourgeoisie values that percolated through the Western education of the Bengal *bhadralok* ensured that the teaching methodology followed in the school should conform not only to the bourgeois ‘norms of hard work, honesty, and punctuality, but also to bourgeois canons of taste, propriety, and respectability’.⁸¹ Tagore enforced ‘strict discipline in the institution’, and admission to the school required the production of a ‘certificate of good character’⁸² from a known gentleman to ensure the respectability of the school. Tagore envisaged a minimum of a five-year term at the school for the students to achieve an acceptable level of musical competence and encouraged them by awarding medals, books, and instruments at the annual prize distribution ceremony.⁸³

Other than mimicking the European institutional model, the establishment of Bengal Music School also foregrounded major *bhadralok* concerns of respectability and discipline, which articulated in the recruitment of music teachers from upper caste and ‘respectable’ backgrounds and the marginalization of the Muslim musicians living in the city. Tagore’s prime concern was to protect the respectability of the school. Prior screening was compulsory for the recruitment of teachers and the admission of students in the school: ‘The directors observed strictest enforcement of their rules, according to which nobody (was) appointed who (could) not submit a certificate of good conduct from a well-known person, from which (were) exempted those who have had appointments with princely states or merchant’s households, as long as there (was) no evidence against them’.⁸⁴ Also, as part of the ‘strict discipline in the institution’, the admission of students to the school required the production of a ‘certificate of good character’ and a permission letter from parents in case of young boys.⁸⁵

The core teachers at the school were all from upper castes, either Brahmin or Kayastha. The teachers were addressed as ‘Babu’ and designated as ‘professors of music’ (*sangita adhyapak*), whereas their lives as professional musicians remain largely unknown. Tagore initially appointed two teachers: Babu Udaychand Goswami for the vocal department and Babu Kaliprasanna Banerjee in charge of the instrumental department (*sitar*). During the second session (1872–1873), *mridanga* (present-day *pakhawaj*) was added to the instrumental department under

⁷⁹ Rosse, ‘The Movement for the Revitalization of “Hindu” Music’, 3–4.

⁸⁰ *The Bengal Music School Fifth and Sixth Sessions 1875–77* (Calcutta: I.C. Bose & Co., Stanhope Press, 1877), 8.

⁸¹ See, more on the bourgeois values in Brian A Hatcher. ‘Indigent Brahmins, Industrious Pandits: Bourgeois Ideology and Sanskrit Pandits in Colonial Calcutta’, *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 16/1 (1996): 22.

⁸² Third Annual Report, 3–5.

⁸³ See Rosse, ‘The Movement for the Revitalization of “Hindu” Music’, 35.

⁸⁴ Rosse, ‘The Movement for the Revitalization of “Hindu” Music’, 33–34.

⁸⁵ See Sourindro Mohan Tagore, *Public Opinion and Official Communications, About The Bengal music School and Its President* (Calcutta: Panchanun Mookerjee, 1876), 3–5.

the supervision of Babu Kalicharan Mitra. During the third year, a violin class was opened under the tutelage of Babu Brojonath Chakraborty.⁸⁶ Kalipada Mukherjee, who's *Bahulin Tatwa*⁸⁷ was already followed for teaching, later joined as a violin teacher. Guru Prasad Mishra, an eminent vocalist, joined later as a vocal teacher in the school, probably after the premature death of Uday Chandra Goswami. Ramprasanna Smritiratna, a Sanskrit *pandit*, taught music theory, and a harmonium class was opened later under the tutorship of Madan Mohan Burman. Most of them, if not all, were first-generation musicians from middle-class Bengali families, and some might also have been students at the Hindu College. Whether their lives as musicians existed outside the school remains a question. On the contrary, hereditary Muslim *ustads* were never appointed as teachers. However, Tagore was not only in close contact with them; he seemed to have briefly studied with the *sitar-surbahar* exponent Sajjad Mohammad Khan,⁸⁸ had Imdad Khan on the payroll at his private *darbar*, and invited Muslim musicians for performances at important occasions at the school, including Maula Baksh (1874), and Ahmad Khan and Ashgar Ali Khan (1876).

The pedagogical project of Tagore, which was centred on the Bengal Music School and its activities, brought together the modern professor and the printed books to set the pathway for a modern pedagogy in music. The establishment of Bengal Music School inaugurated a fresh, new, modern mode of music learning that allowed people like Tagore to initiate a transition from the traditional model of one-to-one learning from a hereditary musician (*ustad*) to the modern institutional space of music school facilitated by the professor of music (*sangita adhyapak*). Tagore remained the school's President while Kshetramohan Goswami was made the General Superintendent and Babu Kaliprasanna Banerjee the Head Teacher. Regular examinations, separately on the theoretical and practical, were conducted by Tagore and Goswami, with occasional guest-lecture of respectable musicians being organized for the students.⁸⁹ The teachers of the school were encouraged by special mentions in the Annual Reports and by giving them important roles in organizing the Annual Prize Distribution events and training the students for performance on those occasions.

The President and the General Superintendent of the school, respectively Tagore and Goswami, were both influential music book writers. Although Goswami had published *Sangita Sara* (1868) before Bengal Music School was founded, the rest of the pedagogical books written by Goswami and Tagore were published post-1871, which demonstrates that the formalization of oral tutelage and its standardization through music textbooks was well-orchestrated, combined effort by both of them. Music teaching was systematized into divisions of four music departments and classes, and each of the classes separately listed the teacher, the number of

⁸⁶ Tagore, *Public Opinion and Official Communications*, 3–4.

⁸⁷ Kalypada Mukhopadhyay, *Bahoolina Tatwa or A Treatise on 'Violin'* (Calcutta: Mothuranath Turkarutna at the Prakrita Press, 1874).

⁸⁸ See Rosse, 'The Movement for the Revitalization of "Hindu" Music in Northern India', 31.

⁸⁹ *The Englishman* reported on 13 October 1871 that there were already 40 boys learning at the school, their progress in two months have been found satisfactory in both practical and theoretical examinations taken by the President S.M. Tagore and Babu Kshetra Mohan Goswami, and that Babu Kalipada Mukherjee (author of the *Bahulin Tatwa* which was the guide book for violin instruction in the school later on) was invited as a guest of honour to deliver a speech on music. See Tagore, *Public Opinion and Official Communications*, 1.

students, and the 'works in use'. Vocal classes followed *Kantha Koumudi*, *sitar* classes *JantraKhetraDeepica*, *mridanga* classes *Mridanga Manjari*, and violin classes *Bahulin Tattwa*. These books provided the basis on which music instruction was possible. These music-learning books were formally and systematically written discourse on the concerned subjects. They were the modern treatises of music learning that could also be potentially used as *self-instructors* through the use of the *swaralipi*.

The *swaralipi* was endowed with immense authority that was generative of the music, which could be read anytime to reproduce the music from the page. Elsewhere,⁹⁰ I argue that the successful implementation of Goswami's *swaralipi* as a pedagogical tool depended on two inter-related musical practices: *sargam*-based *exercises* that helped to attain the mental ability to concretize abstract musical movements from the *swaralipi*, along with the parallel reading-skill to mentally put together the musical notes and the words in relation to the beats of the time-cycle (*tala*). Music instruction at the Bengal Music School included the latest European pedagogical methods of sight-reading musical notation (from the blackboard), pitch recognition exercises, and singing chromatic phrases. *The Indian Daily News* published an article on the visit of James Aldis, the Principal of La Martiniere School in Calcutta and a vocal music teacher himself, who was 'highly pleased' to find that the students could sing musical phrases 'at sight from the blackboard with fair precision' and also could identify musical notes by the ear.⁹¹

Conclusion

Print created the urge to innovate new modalities of music knowledge production and dissemination in nineteenth-century Bengal. Early musicological knowledge of the Sanskrit *sangita shastra* or the Indo-Persian musicological treatises came to be reproduced and re-signified through the modern medium of printed music books in Bengali and English. While the three overlapping genres of *shastra*, *sangraha*, and *siksha* roughly marked the domain of musicological literature in nineteenth-century Bengal, it also clarified the bifurcation between music theory and practice as two intimately entwined textual categories of musical knowledge. As a textual category, music theory came to signify technical/conceptual knowledge of music that included understanding key concepts and terms; and practice included *sargam*-based exercises and the musical repertoire that included song lyrics and notations. All three genres of music books included elementary theory – while the music collections focused on documenting and disseminating available song lyrics, the music-learning books specialized in disseminating practice lessons and available song repertoire through music notation that could be rendered into an actual performance. The technology of *swaralipi* (musical notation) implemented as a recording device in the printed music books materialized the project of disseminating music to the reader/prospective student who could read music from the book.

The Bengali archive of musical writings thus nuances the notion of uniformity regarding what was sought to be achieved through the publication of music-books.

⁹⁰ See Anirban Bhattacharyya, 'Kshetramohan Goswami and his *Swaralipi*: "Sargam Culture" and the Music Pedagogy in Nineteenth-Century Calcutta', *Music & Letters*, forthcoming.

⁹¹ See Tagore, *Public Opinion and Official Communications*, 11–13.

From the examples presented in this article, while some books were meant to replace the teachers and published as self-instructors, some others, as noted before, were more specifically written as a replacement of *ustadi* teaching. Adrian McNeil notes that modernity provided the means for Hindustani classical music to be culturally, symbolically, and pedagogically shaped by the anxieties of the Bengali cultural leaders and laid the foundation for a 'radical re-interpretation of the tradition's place and function' from the vantage point of the public sphere.⁹² For the most prolific book writers of the time, Goswami and Tagore, music-learning books served as the foundation of oral tutelage at the music school: the formalization of oral tutelage at the institutionalized space of the music school and the standardization of the musical repertoire through the music-learning books were strategically planned and executed to implement a modern pedagogy of music.

Janaki Bakhle notes that the establishment of music institutions and the publication of music-learning books with notated music, were also foundational in the careers of 'two men' from Maharashtra in the early twentieth century – the musical modernizers Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, who embarked upon retrieving and singularizing a dispersed and complex musical tradition in the service of nationalism.⁹³ Their project was to systematize and standardize music pedagogy and practice: Bhatkhande's goal was to give classical music a modern and systematic form, while Paluskar sought to emphasize its Hindu character. While Bakhle traces the beginning of musical modernity begins at the Baroda court with the principal court musician Maula Baksh devising a musical notation as a pedagogical device, her story also narrates how the same project of modernity, later, gradually marginalized the hereditary Muslim *ustads*. Max Katz argues that this appropriation of musical authority from the Muslim hereditary master-musicians and structurally marginalizing them from the public life of music took place through 'institutional communalism'. Katz demonstrates that

Bhatkhande Music College functioned as an ideological apparatus, employing institutional communalism to reshape the social field of Hindustani music with particularly dire consequences for the renowned lineage of *sarod* and *sitar* players known as the Lucknow *gharana*, a once proud and influential musical family with little scope for survival today.⁹⁴

I find resonances in the broader narratives of musical modernity between Bengal and Maharashtra. My findings suggest that the efforts in systematizing and standardizing music Hindustani music in Bengal began with Goswami and Tagore at least four decades before it picked up in Maharashtra. The printed music-books were meant to serve as an alternative to hereditary music teachers – the Muslim '*ustads* from the North'.⁹⁵ Neither Tagore nor Goswami, despite being close to

⁹² Adrian McNeil, 'Hereditary Musicians, Hindustani Music and the "Public Sphere" in Late Nineteenth-Century Calcutta', *South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 41/2 (2018): 306–307.

⁹³ See Bakhle, *Two Men and Music*.

⁹⁴ Max Katz, 'Institutional Communalism in North Indian Classical Music', *Ethnomusicology* 56/2 (2012): 284.

⁹⁵ McNeil, 'Hereditary Musicians', 299–304.

the hereditary Muslim musicians in the city,⁹⁶ ever formally appointed them in their school as teachers. Rather, the music professors, formally appointed at the Bengal Music School, and the students, came from upper class-caste Bengali families whose musical pedigree is not known. From the vantage point of the *bhadralok* public sphere, the traditional *ustadi* teaching of Hindustani music was appropriated from its hereditary custodians and re-signified into a systematic body of musical knowledge through the printed books where the orality of the musical tutelage was attempted to be concretized through the implementation of musical notation.

Goswami's 'Hindoo notation' or Tagore modified 'hybrid' notation, or Krishnadhan Bandopadhyay's championing of European staff notation as the 'best notation system' foregrounds how the *bhadralok* musical anxiety of loss and responsibility of revival relied on the implementation of this modern pedagogical tool – to facilitate learning music from the page. The obvious question that arises is whether reading music from the book could lead to actual music learning? Nicholas Magriel observes that these printed notations of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century were 'skeletal abstractions' and 'vague guidelines' and 'loosely related to' the actual performance practice.⁹⁷ The late nineteenth-century printed notations, although posited as essential tools to preserve and concretize the available song-repertoire, did not, then, exhaust the need for oral tutelage of music – to learn 'real' music one had to still go to a 'real' teacher.

What this meant for the traditional role of music teaching is that the *person* of the teacher (*guru* or *ustad*) was now replaced by the formalized, systematic teaching of the music professors (*sangita adhyapak*) in the modern setting of the school. The articulation of respectability at the music school meant that the modern music professors were the de-personalized incarnations of the traditional music teachers – who would only instruct according to the standardized curriculum set in the book. Music books produced not only the student, for whom the books were the self-instructors, but also the modern music professor, whose teaching came to be simultaneously validated by the book.

The printed music book thus came to function as the modern *sangita shastras* – to exercise regulatory authority and normative control over music practice and pedagogy. The music book served three purposes: firstly, it standardized and revitalized music pedagogy; secondly, it de-personalized music teaching; and finally, it complemented and validated music teaching. As the nineteenth-century Bengali archive of musical indicates, this process of revitalization and de-personalization of music pedagogy through the modern music book seems to have taken place at two different levels of detachment and attachment: while the modern music pedagogy and the school–professor–books–student are clearly signs of detachment from the traditional oral tutelage, it simultaneously reduced the gap between theory and practice – as testified in Bengal Music School's promise to bring together theory and practice (*aupapattika* and *kriyasiddha*).

The orality of music thus emerges as an intermediate space in the gap between the writings *on* music and the writing *of* music. An unlikely milieu emerges in which a new form of musical education is devised, the possibility of an education without a teacher is conceived, and the schema of musical notation brings the entire process to life. The notated musical exercises define what one needs to

⁹⁶ See Williams, 'Hindustani music between Awadh and Bengal', 232–5.

⁹⁷ Nicolas Magriel, 'Visualising North Indian Music: Looking at *Khyāl* Songs', *The World of Music* 47/2 (2005): 120.

practise, and the notated music standardizes its pedagogy and practice. The music notation emerges as an interface between the composer and the performer; the music book similarly serves as an interface between the teacher and the student. The oral was thus not replaced by the book's coming; instead, it was kept alive through the introduction of formal instruction within the institutional space of the school.