

## The Production Process of Hindi Film Songs

Chapters 3 and 4 turn to the music of Hindi film songs. Whilst lyrics are referred to, the focus is on film songs as a musical expression. These chapters draw on previous scholarship on Hindi film songs, material on Western film music, pop videos, American film musicals, Indian theatrical traditions and music, and studies on the Hindi film narrative, as well as material from fieldwork and the analysis of picturized film songs. Chapter 3 reviews previous studies of film song style and then proceeds to investigate film song style through a comparison of film and non-film *qawwālīs*. This comparison reveals what the film has added or changed in traditional *qawwālī* and hence isolates what film song style is. This method is also used to isolate the cinematic aspect of the historical development of film song. Film song style is discussed with relation to the cinematic and narrative style of Hindi films. With comparison to other popular music genres, themselves influenced by film song, it is possible to isolate the unique components of film song style. The chapter concludes with a discussion on how far film songs can be seen as an independent style, as in Prasad's model discussed above, and how far they are to be identified with the Hindi cinema.

Chapter 4 extends the study of film music to the backing scores of Hindi films, and addresses the issue of musical meaning in the music of Hindi films. It focuses on the phenomenon of the use of Western music in film songs and background scores. First, it is established to what extent the use of Western music in Indian and Hollywood films overlaps. Then it is discussed how an overlap may occur if music is a culture-specific semiological system. The debate about whether meaning in music is arbitrary and culturally learned, or whether it is inherent in the musical structures or indeed in physiological processes of the human body, will be revisited with the findings of this specific case of Hindi film songs. Trends in the use of Western music in Hindi films are discussed in the light of the narrative context of this music, and it is argued that the narrative role of film songs plays a part in the borrowing of Western music in Hindi film songs and background scores.

In chapter 5, the commercial life of film songs is examined. The history of film songs as a commercial product is discussed through a focus on four eras of film song history, the early years of sound film; the early 1930s to the mid-1980s: the gramophone era; the 1980s-2000: The cassette revolution and the spread of commercial television; and 2000 and beyond: From boom to bust. The commodification, marketing and profitability of film songs in each of these eras are discussed, and the commercial relationship of films and film songs explored.

Chapter 6 overviews the reception of film songs and its relationship to the cinema, focusing chiefly on the contemporary situation. First, the popularity as opposed to the commercial sales of film songs is discussed through an examination of countdown charts that are calculated according to audience requests as well as sales. The contact of audiences with film songs is then discussed, so as to ascertain how far audiences are exposed to film songs in the context of the parent film or the Hindi cinema in general. The question of what audiences then 'do' with film songs is also addressed. Chapter 6 concludes with a discussion of the different levels of film song reception, and a return to the Adornian profile of film songs as passively consumed and causing musical alienation as argued by Manuel (1993).

Like most varieties of song, Hindi film songs have a vocal melody, lyrics and a instrumental accompaniment. However, in addition to this, they also have a visual component, the picturization as it is called, and appear within the narrative of a Hindi film. How, then, is a film song put together? How are all of these different components coordinated? There is no study that examines the production process of film songs in detail, although it is likely that this would reveal much about the kind of music that film songs are. As discussed in chapter 1, the view put forward by studies of the Hindi film is that film songs are para-narrative units that appear in films, but that are not determined by the film narrative. Prasad, in his examination of the production of the Hindi film, argues that a Hindi film consists of a number of components – songs, dialogues, story, fights, and so on – which emanate from an area shaped by their own traditions rather than varying due to the demands of a given film narrative (Prasad 1998: 36-51). They are thus made by separate personnel: namely the music director, dialogue writer, story writer and fight master respectively. This chapter focuses on the production process of the film songs themselves, and examines whether the film narrative and the visual dimension of songs are in fact insignificant to the way the songs are conceived and produced, as Prasad argues; or whether the musical, narrative and visual components of film songs are in fact more integrated. This is based on nine months of fieldwork in Bombay, where many aspects of the production process of film songs were observed at first hand, as well as recounted through personal interviews with members of the film industry. The primary focus of this chapter is on film songs as a musical expression, but lyrics are also discussed.

### The production process of the Hindi film

Before proceeding with a detailed account of the production of film songs, the making of the songs will be briefly located in the overall production process of the Hindi film. To state what might seem to be the obvious, the starting point for Hindi film songs is always a Hindi film.<sup>1</sup> If there is no film, there will be no film songs. A film usually begins with a story idea, most often by a director or a story-writer

<sup>1</sup> Film songs may be adapted from pre-existing songs or composers' song banks, but this process of adaptation into a new song is only carried out when work begins on the music for a particular film.

director (if it is a story-writer rather than a director who presents the story idea), stars, a music director, a lyricist, a choreographer, as well as various other people who will work on the film.<sup>2</sup> A music company will also be approached to buy the audio rights to the songs and market the music at this stage (see chapter 5). When any of these people or institutions agree to work on the film, they 'sign' the film, which may involve a written and legally binding contract in which the payments and any royalties are stated (Avtar, Yash Raj Films UK; interview, 20 August 2001).<sup>3</sup> Once a team has been gathered in this way, the next stage is to complete the story of the film, including a preliminary screenplay, the arrangement of the film into scenes, and the locations and sets where these scenes will take place. When the director knows where the songs are going to appear in the film and in which scenes, and the locations they will be picturized in, and work can begin on the songs. When the producer and the director are happy with the music and lyrics provided by the music director and lyricist, the recording of the songs will begin. After the recording of the songs is finished, the shooting of the main body of the film and the song picturizations can begin. The actual dialogues of the film are usually written before scenes are shot, sometimes even the night before. The production of Hindi films is largely oral, and bound and written scripts are relatively rare.<sup>4</sup> People involved in the film learn of what is required from them from the director. In practice, these stages may overlap considerably. The shooting of the main body of the film may begin before all the songs are recorded, or one song may be picturized before another has been composed. Changes may also be made to the story after portions of the film have been shot, and changes to the cast may be made as well. Songs, or other scenes, may also be added or even deleted after the main shooting of the film is complete. However, no single song will be shot in its entirety before it has been recorded. When all of the material has been edited, dialogues and sound effects are dubbed in. Then all that remains to be completed before the film is finished is the background music. This theoretical order of events is illustrated in figure 2.1.

<sup>2</sup> The use of a narration of the story rather than a bound script (see below) means that different people receive slightly different narrations, which in the case of the stars not infrequently leads to complaints that their role had seemed much larger than it actually was.

<sup>3</sup> In big production companies like Yash Raj Films, signing involves a written and legally binding contract, while other smaller concerns may not issue such legally binding contracts.

<sup>4</sup> See Prasad 1998: 44-45. Some people in the industry do work from scripts. Salim-Javed, the writers behind some of the most famous dialogues of Hindi cinema, such as *Deewar* (1975) and *Sholay* (1975) 'used to refuse to allow any changes to the bound scripts which they completed' (Dwyer 2000: 110). Aditya Chopra and Prakash Jha are also directors who begin production on a film with a full script (interviews, 9 November 1998 and 8 June 1999 respectively). Music director Khayyam also says that he insists on working from a full script for composing music for a film (interview, 7 April 2000).

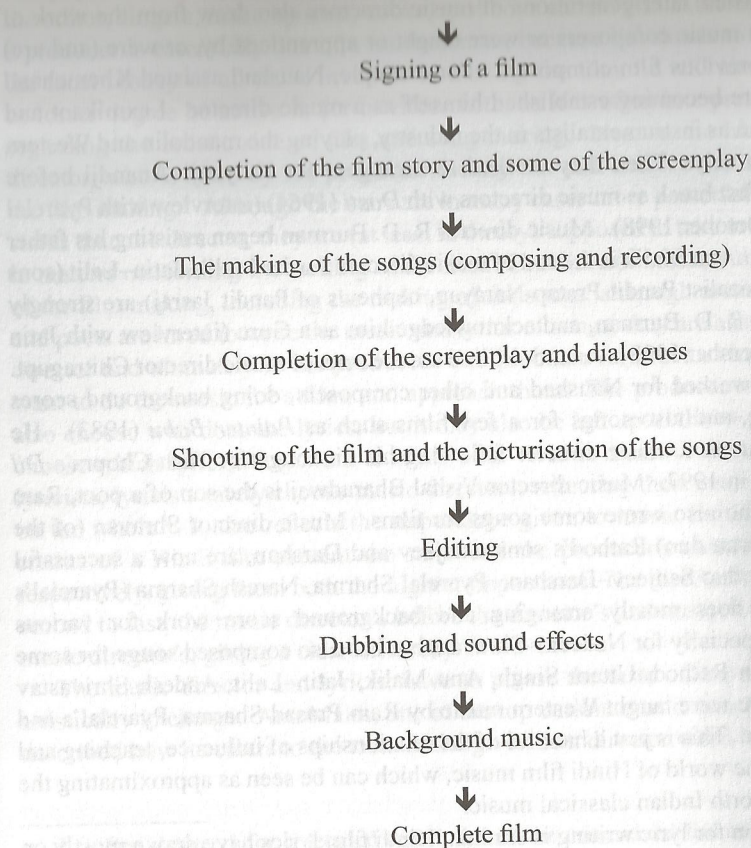


Figure 2.1 The production stages of a Hindi film

## Composing the songs

### *Musical traditions*

The origins of the Hindi film song are mostly theatre music, since the majority of the composers working in the first sound films came from the urban theatre traditions such as the Parsi Theatre, Marathi Theatre or Bengali *Jatra*. Theatre music itself drew on a mixture of classical, light-classical and folk music. Film music continued to draw from this, adding to it increasing amounts of Western and other foreign influences in the form of instrumentation, harmony, rhythms, and melodies. This process of development is described in detail by Arnold (1991), and her analysis of the resulting style is overviewed in chapter 3.

local folk musics, later generations of music directors also drew from the work of previous film music composers or were taught or apprenticed by, or were (and are) relatives of previous film composers. For example, Naushad assisted Khemchand Prakash before becoming established himself as a music director. Laxmikant and Pyarelal began as instrumentalists in the industry, playing the mandolin and Western violin respectively. Then they worked as arrangers for Kalyanji–Anandji before getting their first break as music directors with *Dosti* (1964) (interview with Pyarelal Sharma, 31 October 1998). Music director R. D. Burman began assisting his father S. D. Burman. Anu Malik is the son of music director Sardar Malik. Jatin–Lalit (sons of classical vocalist Pandit Pratap Narayan, nephews of Pandit Jasraj) are strongly influenced by R. D. Burman, and acknowledge him as a Guru (interview with Jatin Pandit, 4 November 1998). Anand–Milind are the sons of music director Chitragupt. Uttam Singh worked for Naushad and other composers, doing background scores and arranging, and also songs for a few films such as *Painter Babu* (1983). He became famous as a music director following his hit songs for Yash Chopra's *Dil To Pagal Hai* in 1997. Music director Vishal Bharadwaj is the son of a poet, Ram Bharadwaj, who also wrote some songs for films. Music director Sh୍ରavan (of the Nadeem–Sh্রavan duo) Rathod's sons, Sanjeev and Darshan, are now a successful music director duo Sanjeev–Darshan. Pyarelal Sharma, Naresh Sharma (Pyarelal's brother, who does mostly arranging and background score work for various composers, especially for Nadeem–Sh্রavan, but has also composed songs for some films), Sh্রavan Rathod, Uttam Singh, Anu Malik, Jatin–Lalit, Aadesh Shrivastav and many more were taught Western music by Ram Prasad Sharma, Pyarelal's and Naresh's father. This is just a handful of the relationships of influence, teaching and blood within the world of Hindi film music, which can be seen as approximating the *gharānās* of North Indian classical music.

The situation for lyric writing is similar. Hindi film lyrics have drawn mostly on the Urdu poetic tradition, and also on various Hindi folk and devotional poetry. Most lyricists were, until recently, Urdu poets, and Hindi film lyrics still draw heavily on the imagery and vocabulary of Urdu poetry for a language of emotions and love.<sup>5</sup>

### *The role of the parent film*

Although, as Prasad argues, a musical and lyric tradition can be traced in film song that is to some extent independent of the cinema, having its own momentum and own lines of transmission, this is only part of the picture. The production process of Hindi film songs is far more complicated than this view of film music or lyric writing suggests. The first thing that links the making of the music with the production of the film is the fact that the making of the songs is paid for by the film producer, who is also the producer of Hindi film songs. The film producer pays for the making of the entire film including the songs (often by borrowing money from a financier),

<sup>5</sup> See Dwyer 2000: 110–113 for a discussion of language in Hindi cinema and film songs. See Kesavan (1994) for a discussion of the place of Urdu in the language of Hindi films and film songs, and also Kabir (1999) for first hand material on film songs and dialogues.

the editor, singers, make up men, cooks, spot boys and so on.<sup>6</sup> Although the role of a producer is essentially one of a businessman, because he<sup>7</sup> stands to make or lose the most money of all those involved in making the film, he will also to a greater or lesser degree be active in (or interfere with, as it is often interpreted) decisions regarding the artistic side of film and song making. Next in the hierarchy is the director, who is hired by the producer to carry out and oversee the artistic side of the film making.<sup>8</sup> Although the stars are in many cases more powerful and of higher status than the director, they are (at least in theory) supposed to take orders from him in matters concerning the making of the film. The director controls the artistic side of the film making, including the making of the songs: although musical specialists and poets are hired to write the music and lyrics of songs, they are answerable to the director and ultimately to the producer. The producer or director choose who they want to do the music for a film, and approach them. The producer or director may also choose who does the lyrics, but it may also be left up to the music director to choose which lyricist they want to work with. Whilst music directors may choose lyricists, lyricists rarely choose music directors, reflecting their overall lower status on the whole.<sup>9</sup> It also reflects the importance given to music in Hindi films. The credits of a Hindi film present the stars' and the producer's names first and last, respectively, giving them both the highest importance. The director's name is given second to last, the music director's before the director's and the lyricist's before the music director's, giving a clear hierarchy.

The music director and lyricist have to please the taste of the director, who is artistically in charge. Anu Malik, one of the top current music directors in Bombay described how he caters to the taste of the given film director when he composes:

<sup>6</sup> See chapter 5 for a detailed description of the commercial life of film songs. See Mittal (1995) for an in depth study of Hindi film production, distribution and exhibition.

<sup>7</sup> The vast majority of producers, directors, music directors and lyricists are men in the commercial Indian film industry. More female directors have been emerging, for example Tanuja Chandra (director), to name one of the first ones. Female producers are rare, though a number of female stars have gone into production, such as Pooja Bhatt (from a filmmaking family), Juhi Chawla and Aruna Irani. The only female music director I have heard of is Saraswati Devi (1912–1980), who composed mostly for Bombay Talkies in the 1930s and 1940s, and I am unaware of any female lyricists. The use of the masculine gender in this discussion therefore reflects the male-dominated nature of the industry.

<sup>8</sup> In practice, producer and director are often one and the same person, or both part of the same family. Yash Chopra now produces and directs his own films, and also produced his son's, Aditya Chopra's, earlier films. Sooraj Barjatya's films are produced by his father's production company, Rajshri, and Subhash Ghai also produces and directs his own films. These three producer–director set-ups are now financially successful enough to finance their own movies. Such a situation is the ideal for film making, since it means that financial and artistic priorities need not be at loggerheads as they so often are in film making in India, to the great frustration of up and coming directors and music directors.

<sup>9</sup> The lyricist Sahir Ludhianvi was said to refuse to work with music directors that were more famous than him. He had gained enough acclaim as a lyricist to be able to make such demands. However, his case is unusual.

him, and I have to give him what he wants... I keep a director in mind when I work. In fact I believe in variety. For example, a true composer is one who can come out with a song at the time for a director and make him feel that, 'Oh this tune was born for me!' (Interview, 1 July 1999)

Shiv Kumar Sharma, the renowned classical *santūr* player who has composed music for commercial Hindi films, also commented on how the music director has to follow 'the choice of the director and not only his [own] choice' in film music:

[One] thing which is very very essential in film music is the point of view of the director. Each director has got his or her own choice of music, style of music, they like particular style of music. What Mr Yash Chopra likes may not be what Raj Kapoor liked. They have got different choice (Interview, 26 March 2000).

The music director also has to deliver music that is in line with the taste of the producer, and more significantly, his conception of commercial music that the masses will like, since the producer is primarily concerned with the film being financially successful. Producers are usually the ones who are blamed for what is often perceived as the poor quality of film music nowadays, insisting on the most commercial sounding songs, even if they have no place in the story. I have also heard of producers threatening to cut songs from films that they believe will be too expensive to shoot or that they do not consider as commercial enough in their appeal. Some of this may be a case of passing off the responsibility for unimaginative music or lyrics, but the producer, being the one who is financially responsible for the success or failure of the film, does have the right to veto most aspects of film making or demand changes.

Some composers find having to please the taste of the director and producer in this way restricting. Jagjit Singh, the famous *ghazal* singer, said that he preferred not to work for films, since you were restricted by the taste of the producer, of the director, and also by the scene and the characters (described below). He said that when writing music for TV serials, he doesn't allow the director to come to recording sessions. He said that people can hire him to do the music, can instruct him as to what they want, but then should let him do his job (interview, 9 January 1999).

All musicians and artists are restricted by financial considerations and by the tastes of their patrons or producers; the Hindi film music director's and lyricist's having to please the director and producer and make something the producer believes to be a saleable product is by no means unique. However, what makes the job of the Hindi film music director and lyricist more unusual is the way that they have to cater not only to the tastes of the producer and director, but also to the needs of the parent film, the song situation, the characters, the locations and the narrative when composing a film song. The producer Rajkumar Barjatya of the long standing Rajshri Productions, who produced most famously *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989) and *Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!* (1994), explained:

... a song itself is a scene. In any film, ... if a scene can be removed and it does not hamper the last two or three reels which are the main crux of the story, then that scene has no business to remain in the film normally. Sometimes there are extraordinary scenes

removing a song then that song is not worth keeping, however good a tune it is, however good its lyrics are. So, it should be woven together, and this is only possible when the film is conceived as a musical film (interview, 30 June 1999).

Director and producer Anil Sharma, who is now best known for *Gadar – Ek Prem Katha*, the superhit film of 2001, which he directed, also commented on how the songs should not be separate from the film, 'First we see that the song should be a hit, the number should be very melodious. ... Second thing, song should be very close to our situation, not even close, song should be the situation also' [*sic*] (interview, 15 April 1999). Prakash Jha, director of many successful art films, the semi-commercial *Mrityudand* (1997), the more mainstream, though commercially unsuccessful, *Dil Kya Kare* (1999), and the winner of several National Awards, explained that all aspects of a film, including the songs, should be integrated with the story of that film:

For me what is most important in the film is the story. Everything begins there. So whether it is a song scene, whether it is an emotional scene, an action scene or climax or middle part or whatever, everything must relate to the story. So the songs must be a part of the main plot. [They must] contribute to the drama which is unfolding within the narrative.... (interview, 8 June 1999).

Deepak Balraj, director of the hit film *Sailaab* (1990) and *Jaan Teri Naam* (1992), also said that the plot should continue during song sequences, otherwise people would leave the theatre during the songs (interview 17 November, 1998). Nabh Kumar Raju, director of the commercially unsuccessful *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (September 1999), also described how the songs of a film should be a part of it, saying that the songs must 'help the film' must 'unfold the film' (*film ko nibhānā hai*) and must 'carry out the duty of the film, what the film has to do' (*film kā dharm nibhānā hai*). If the songs are not in some way necessary for the film, then they should not be there (interview, 25 April 1999).

Music director Khayyam, most famous for his music for *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) and *Umrao Jaan* (1981), explained that 'when we compose music for film, so we are following the script and characters'. This is why he had composed the title song of *Kabhi Kabhie* in a traditional style, because it was the love song of the older generation, and *Pyār kar liyā to kyā?* 'So what if I've fallen in love?', in a rock and roll style, as it was sung by the next generation. He also explained how he carried out research for historical films such as *Umrao Jaan* and *Razia Sultan* (1983), so he could give the flavour of the contemporary culture in the music (interview, 7 April 2000).



Figure 2.2 Romance in elder and younger generations in *Kabhi Kabhie* © Yashraj Films and DVD still

Pyarelal, sees the most important determinant of the style of a song as the film story and song scene. He gave the example of the infamous hit song *Coli ke piche kyā hai*, 'What is beneath [my] blouse' (the answer, of course, is *dil merā*, 'my heart'), from *Khalnayak* (1993). In this song, the heroine, a policewoman, goes undercover, posing as a coquettish Rajasthani gypsy dancing girl<sup>10</sup> to track down a dangerous escaped criminal. After performing this Rajasthani style song with its teasing and innocently brazen lyrics, the criminal is besotted with her, and she joins his gang, enabling her to follow him. Although this song received immense criticism from various conservative groups, Pyarelal asserted that the film demanded such a song. He also attributed the reason for the increasing Westernization of film music as being the use of stories with more Western situations, scenes and locations. As songs depend on films, if the film is more Westernized, so must the songs be (interview, 31 October 1998).

Music director Milind, of the Anand–Milind duo, stated that the film and style of film, often dictated by the star, play a role in shaping the music:

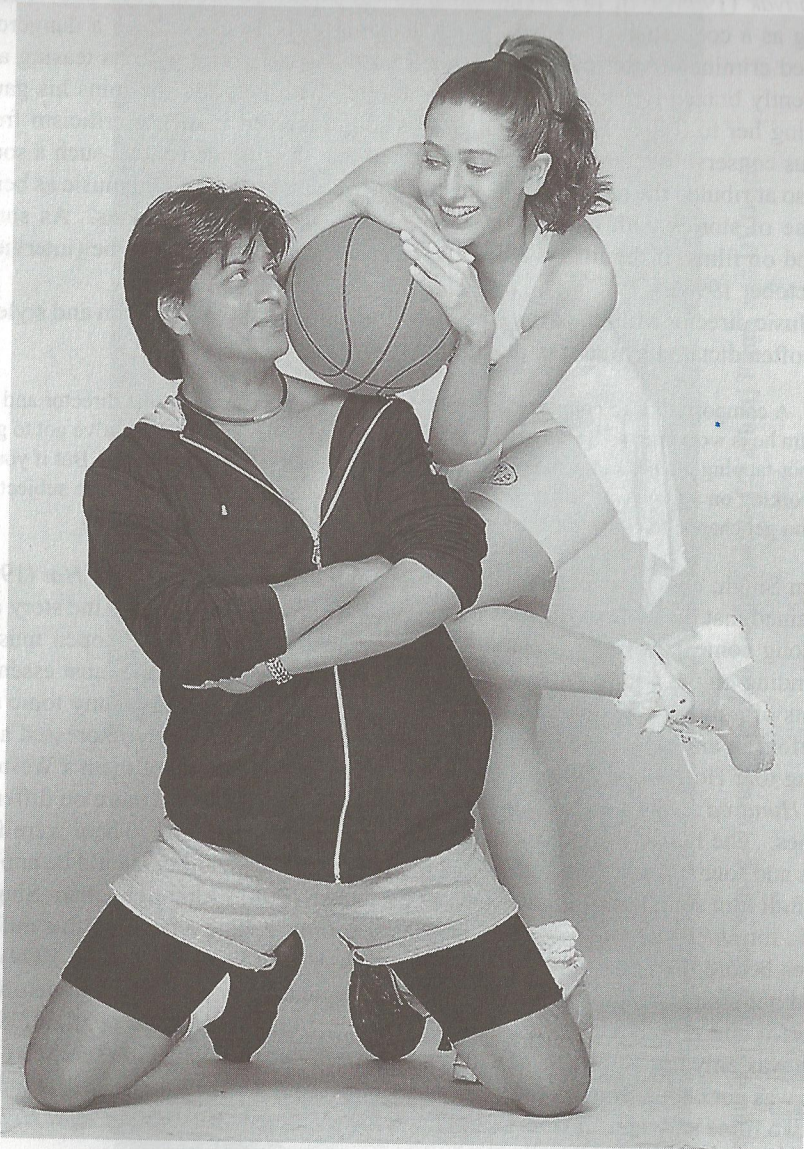
... A composer has to compose according to the kind of subject and the director and the film he is working on. So when you're working on a Govinda<sup>11</sup> film ... you've got to give foot-tapping music, and it should be a little funny, because that's his image. But if you're working on a *Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak* with Amir Khan, and it's a romantic subject, so you get chance to give a different kind of melody (Interview, 3 March 2000).

Uttam Singh, composer of the record-breaking music for *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997) explained that the style of the music (song or background) depends on the story and the song contexts, even going so far as to say that film music was 'open music', depending on the nature of the film. Hence, versatility is one of the most essential talents of a music director, since you should be able to do a film on any topic and therefore in any style. He explained how he had been particularly impressed after seeing four Hollywood films all scored by Jerry Goldsmith, one of them a Western, *One Hundred Rifles*, another a Sci-fi, *Planet of the Apes*, and two more on different themes. The music had been completely different for each film. There were four films and four styles. Uttam Singh felt that this same adaptability should be applied to Hindi film song writing (interview, 6 November 1998). Although Uttam Singh's music for *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997) broke all records, selling a massive five million copies before the release of the film (interview, Harish Dayani, 15 June 1999), he could not simply make similar music for subsequent films because they were very different and required different music. Thus, in *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (1999) there was only one romantic love duet, whereas in *Dil To Pagal Hai* there were six. This was not Uttam Singh's choice, but stemmed from the very different demands of the two films and their directors. In Uttam Singh's music for *Dil To Pagal Hai*, set

<sup>10</sup> The classic assumption with dancing girls in India, which in some cases is true, is they are second only to (or actually are) prostitutes.

<sup>11</sup> Govinda is particularly loved for his skills in comedy and dancing, in films like *Coolie No. 1* (1995), *Hero No. 1* (1997), and *Bade Miyan Chote Miyan* (1998), in which he starred alongside Amitabh Bachchan.

in an urban setting with lycra- and sports clothes-clad jazz dancers as protagonists, there is a strong Western and jazzy flavour in tunes and orchestration. However, this would be anachronistic and quite unsuitable for *Gadar* (2001), set in pre-partition India, which therefore required a strong Indian basis.



**Figure 2.3** Publicity shot of Shahrukh Khan and Karisma Kapoor for *Dil To Pagal Hai* © Yashraj Films

Vishal Bharadwaj, who composed the music for *Maachis* (1997), *Satya* (1998), *Pu Tu Tu* (1999) and *Godmother* (1999), had a similar conception of film music. He stated that 'I think ... because it is film music, so everything depends on the film, the story'. He continued:

People say 'whose style you want to follow?' or 'what kind of style you want to bring a film?', so always my answer has been that, 'you know, film demands its own music' can't, I don't want to, you know, throw ... my music, my style on a film. Rather I'll try to adapt that film's region, the characters' mental state and the place it has been set in. I'll try to adapt that and make a new style for that film. I may not repeat that later in another film. So film music to me is like being a part of the story writing team (Interview, 16 March 2000).

He said that what he enjoyed was researching for a film. For example, *Godmother* was set in Gujarat, so he researched Gujarati folk music and used it in the songs for this film. Similarly, he researched and used Punjabi and Marathi music in *Maachis* and *Hu Tu Tu*, set in the Punjab and Maharashtra respectively. *Satya* was set in Bombay amongst gangsters, and had 'nothing to do with the mileu' of Maharashtra. In this film, it was the song situations rather than the region that was important for the music (interview, 16 March 2000).

Sanjeev, of the duo Sanjeev-Darshan, one of the new generation in music directors, commented on the role of the picturization and the visuals:

How the director's going to picturize it ... that's how we incorporate the strings, the strings should come in such part. Then we visualize. In the mind we visualize the heroine will be walking like this, then hero will be standing like this, and then they exchange some thoughts. So that's how the music is made, according to the visuals. we have to very much take care of the situation about how the music is going to come [sic] (Interview, 25 March 2000).

The same is the case with the lyrics of the songs. The late renowned lyricist Majroor Sultanpuri explained how, in writing lyrics for a film song, first of all it is necessary to know who the character is, what their cultural, social and intellectual register is, what their general vocabulary and mannerisms are. If a song is sung by a villager, an ordinary person on the roadside, a comedian and so on, then the diction of the song should be according to the language such a person would use (interview, 11 November 1998).

Thus although most scholarship sees songs as incidental to films, this appears not to be the intention, whatever the final result. The above are a range of figures from the film industry, some more famous, more critically acclaimed or more commercially successful than others. All of them, and many more, emphasize that songs should not be separate from films. Producer Rajkumar Barjatya especially emphasized this when he stated that the songs and story 'should be woven together and this is only possible when the film is conceived as a musical film' (interview, 30 June 1999). Although songs are partly an independent tradition, they are conceived in isolation from the film, and the film is not conceived in isolation from the songs. Contrary to the argument put forward by Prasad, the songs are

Given that the songs are so integral to the film, the next question is how are the songs put together. Backing music must be appropriate to the film and the scene. However, it is composed after the film has been shot, and a composer therefore has the film before their eyes as they compose music, and can adjust every aspect of their music to the film, the visuals, the characters and the drama. Non-film pop videos have visuals that suit the song. However in their case, the video is shot according to the song. In Western pop videos and Hindi non-film pop, the visuals are an interpretation of or commentary on the song, also focusing strongly on the image of the singer and performance, whether 'live' or spectacle-orientated, depending on genre (Mundy 1999: 239-241). They do not usually involve an overarching narrative or drama, since they are usually independent items, though mini-narratives are found in many Indian and Western pop videos.<sup>12</sup>

The composition of Hindi film songs is in many ways far less straightforward than background music or non-film pop videos. Hindi film songs are an integral part of the wider film narrative. However, the music director and lyricist compose their music and lyrics before the film has been shot. It is only the director who will have 'seen' the film in his imagination. Scripts are rarely used at this stage, and even if they are, it is only the director who may have a complete vision of the film and a sense of the music he requires. The music director and lyricist must therefore rely on the director to tell them what the film and the song scene is like, and what kind of music and lyrics it requires. This process requires extensive discussion between director, music director and lyricist and in many cases, considerable planning. It necessarily places the film director at the centre of the process of song and lyric composition.

The planning of the songs and lyrics largely takes place in what are known as 'sittings' between the director and music director, and director and lyricist. There may also be sittings where all three are present, and sometimes the film producer, stars, dance director/choreographer or dialogue writers are also present. These sittings may continue for as long as a year, depending on the director. For *Dil To Pagal Hai*, director Yash Chopra and music director Uttam Singh were in sittings for a year, and that was just for the melodies of the songs. Uttam Singh composed

<sup>12</sup> Straw talks of pop videos involving 'the construction of a matrix – which may be narrative, situational or both – within which the ambiguity of performer/character identities is left intact' (1993: 16). Mundy describes pop videos as usually 'being concerned with implicit narratives rather than making clear the causal connections which realist cinema demands', citing the way music videos have been described as 'evoking the story rather than telling the story' (1999: 226). Whilst the performer is present in the form of themselves or a character in Western pop videos and many Indian non-film pop videos, actors are used in mini-narratives in the videos of many *ghazal* singers. Most *ghazal* singers would not appeal to the younger generation in age or image, and hence young and beautiful actors are used for a romantic narrative, often inter-cut with shots of the singer.

eight months (interview with Pam Chopra, singer and wife of Yash Chopra, 17 June 1999). Music director Khayyam stated that he would not write a song with less than five or six sittings with the director and lyric writer (interview, 7 April 2000). For *Ham Tum Pe Marte Hain*, director Nabh Kumar Raju stated that sittings were held with music director Uttam Singh over several months, with meetings several times a week (interview, 25 April 1999). Director and producer Prakash Jha commented that it usually takes from two to five sittings per song (interview, 8 June 1999).

In order for the music director to give music that is right for the film and the scene without having actually seen it, the director must give sufficient information to the music director. The amount of detail varies from director to director and across different schools of film-making. At one extreme are directors who are said to just tell the music director 'give me a funny song' or 'give me a sad song'. Such an approach relies completely on the musical and cinematic conventions and genres of film music and song picturization pejoratively referred to as 'formula', and will tend to result in songs which are irrelevant or incongruous to the film narrative (interview with Pam Chopra, singer and wife of director and producer Yash Chopra, 17 June 1999). Where a director has just asked for a 'funny song' or a 'sad song', they would then work out all the details of the shooting of the scene from the music. Even though convention, discussed below, plays a role in all film songs, I have never met anyone who admits to relying on it so completely, and such an approach may well be more hypothetical than factual. However, I have been given countless examples of this approach as an illustration of how *not* to work, or of how the people who make bad movies work, or of how film music is not what it used to be. Director and producer Prakash Jha, for instance, explained how he goes about the music for his films:

I can never look at a situation and tell the song writer or the music director 'Now let's do a love song, let's do a sad song, an emotional song, a solo or a duet or anything else', so it always begins with narrating the story to the song writer, to the music director telling them *exactly* where I want my narrative to be punctuated with songs (Interview, 8 June 1999).

At the other end of the spectrum are directors like Aditya Chopra and Karan Johar who, according to music director duo Jatin-Lalit who have worked with them, give immense detail about their song situations (interview with Jatin Pandit, 4 November 1998). Lalit Pandit found that Karan Johar was giving so much detail about his songs for *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998) that he felt it was necessary to tape-record many of the sittings. He commented that 'directors like that actually have to have seen the film before they make it' (interview, 9 January 1999). Karan Johar worked as an assistant director on Aditya Chopra's *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), and has apparently adopted a similar approach to Aditya Chopra and Yash Chopra (Aditya's father), both of whom are said to have a visualization of their entire film as they work on it. With this approach, the fully imagined song, including shot to shot details, will be described to the music director, who will then write the music, and then the song will be shot as it was imagined. Such forward planning will tend

conceived as a part of the film (interview with Pam Chopra, singer and wife of Yash Chopra, 17 June 1999).

In practice, most directors do not give every single detail of the song to the music director, and have not worked out what every single shot of the song will be before sittings begin. They will know what the important movements of the song situation are, where the song comes in the story, who is singing and their state of mind, and what purpose it is serving in the story. They will provide the music directors with certain necessary points (see below), and then work out the final details of the picturization from the music they end up with. In this way, the music and the film song picturizations may to a certain extent grow together, rather than the songs being shaped entirely on the situation conceived by the director. Shraavan Rathod, of the music director duo Nadeem–Shraavan, commented: ‘Being a music director, we have got some visuals in our mind too, so according to their situation, we visualize our ideas, and then we give them our ideas, and then our ideas and their ideas they match, and then they picturize’ [*sic*] (interview, 1 April 2000).

Sittings will usually begin with the director explaining the film story and the song situations to the music director and the lyricist. They will give a range of information, usually including where the song situation comes in the film, the types of character or characters in the situation, their moods, where the song takes place, and what happens in the song scene. The director will also specify the length of song he wants. Music director Uttam Singh described the way the director instructs the music director as their giving a ‘road map’, with ‘the right turns and left turns’ marked for the music director (interview, 6 November 1998). To write the music, the music director needs to know where he is going in the song, and what he will meet and what will happen on the way. The situation is the same for the lyricist. From the point of view of a director, Nabh Kumar Raju, who worked with Uttam Singh in *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (1999), described the process of getting his songs written as parallel to getting a screenplay written by a screenplay writer, that Uttam Singh, ‘bearing the whole film in mind ... had written a musical screenplay with his songs’ (interview, 25 April 1999).

In the sittings, the first thing that is always worked on is the *mukhrā* of the song, the first line of the refrain and the most important part of the song.<sup>13</sup> If you get a good *mukhrā*, then, as director Anil Sharma put it, ‘half the battle is won’, since it is the *mukhrā* which has to catch the listeners’ attention. According to Anil Sharma, if people like the *mukhrā*, they will like the song (interview, 15 April 1999). There

<sup>13</sup> In classical compositions, the *mukhrā* is the part of the refrain that leads into the *sam*, the first beat of the rhythmic cycle. It is used to structure improvisation cyclically, with the soloist returning to the *mukhrā* in between passages of improvisation. It provides fixed points within the melodically and rhythmically complex improvisatory passages where all present can clearly sense where they are in the rhythmic cycle. Its literal meaning is ‘face’, and it is the most important and distinctive or catchiest part of the composition. In film music, it most closely approximates this sense of the ‘face’ of the refrain, or in Western terminology the hook, rather than something that leads to the *sam*, since there is no improvisation in film music. In film music, *mukhrā* is also often used more or less interchangeably with the term *sthāī*, which refers to the entire refrain of a classical composition.

is a saying that *mukhrā kā m mukhrā hāī* meaning ‘the face that makes a song’, it is just the problem of getting the *mukhrā* (interview with Anil Sharma, 15 April 1999). Director and producer Prakash Jha described the *mukhrā* as being ‘like the attractive face of the song’ and that the *antarās*<sup>14</sup> ‘tell you the real story of the song’. Because it is the *mukhrā*’s role to attract listeners and hook them into the song, *mukhrās* tend to be short, simple and catchy, at least in contrast to the *antarās* (interview, 8 June 1999). Producer Rajkumar Barjatya also commented that ‘*choṭī bahar kā mukhrā*’ or short *mukhrās* were successful, giving the example of *Dil dīwānā*’s (or ‘Crazy heart’s’) superior success over *Mere rang meṅ rangānwālī* (or ‘The girl coloured in the colour [of] my [love]’), from *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989) (interview, 30 June 1999). When the *mukhrā* is ready and the director is happy with the result, then work on the *antarās*, or ‘verses’, will begin.

The essential information the music director and lyricist need to know to write the song melody and the lyrics relate to what is happening emotionally and dramatically to the characters who are singing the song. The music director must make the melody appropriate. For example, if a character is Westernized, urban, disco-loving, and so on, then it would be incongruous for them to sing a traditional folk or classical style song. The music director must know if a character is a professional singer or dancer, and if so, of what kind. They must also know if they are educated, from the city, a village, a particular region, extrovert, introvert, talkative, shy and so on. The lyricist will also need to know this so they can use an appropriate language register for the lyrics. For example, an uneducated character from a village would be unlikely to express themselves in an Urduized diction, or one with a lot of English loan words. They also need to know if anything dramatically significant happens during the song scene that would change any of the characters’ moods, and hence the style and content of what they might sing.

In modern film songs, it has become the norm for the lyrics to be written after the melody, which is composed by the music director on the given situation, or is one from the music director’s tune bank that the director has chosen as suitable for his situation. Previously, all film songs were composed on lyrics.<sup>15</sup> It is only from the 1970s and 1980s that lyrics have begun to be composed on tunes. However,

<sup>14</sup> *Antarā* refers to the ‘verse’, literally, ‘that which goes in between [the refrains]’ of a classical composition. In classical music, the *antarā* explores the upper register of the *rāg*, particularly emphasising the upper tonic, whereas the *sthāī* is usually placed in the lower register. Although many old film songs contain this characteristic shift of tessitura in their *antarās*, it is by no means necessary for a film song to do so, and the sense of *antarā* is more equivalent to ‘verse’ in film music.

<sup>15</sup> Previously, lyrics followed closely the forms and styles of Urdu poetry, and the poetry was sophisticated enough and enough of a focus of the song for writing words on music to be impossible. As Urdu in its true subtlety has gone out of vogue, with fewer people in India understanding it, the words of film songs have become more simplified and colloquial. Also, film songs, with the expansion of the media, are reaching a wider and wider audience all the time; therefore, they have to cater for people of all levels of education and literary knowledge. Majrooh Sultanpoori (1924–2001), who worked in the industry as a lyricist from the 1940s till his death in 2001, commented in 1998 that modern music directors did not know Urdu properly, so he would rather write lyrics on their tunes, even though this was an extremely



although writing the lyrics on the melody is the norm nowadays, lyrics may be taken first. As director and producer Prakash Jha said, 'it's a simultaneous work ... if the songwriter comes up with a nice line then we follow that, and if the music directors come up with a lovely tune, then we follow that' (interview, 8 June 1999). In songs where the lyrics are particularly important, or the song is to be very wordy, then the music will be written on the lyrics. For example, the *qawwālī* in *Sarfarosh* (1999) *Zindagī maut nā ban jāe*, 'Let life not turn into death', was written by Jatin-Lalit on Israr Irani's lyrics, and the very popular patriotic song *Sandes āte haiñ*, 'Messages come', from *Border* (1997) was written by Anu Malik on Javed Akhtar's lyrics. A *qawwālī* is a traditional song style, a Sufi devotional genre, with a distinctive style of lyric setting and much rhythmic improvisation with the lines of the text, and therefore, for a composed *qawwālī* performance, as this one was, the lyrics had to come first. The second song had prose-like lyrics and was also very wordy, and thus required the lyrics to come first (interview with Anu Malik, 1 July 1999).

But whichever comes first, getting the right tunes and lyrics is a process of negotiation, and in director and producer Prakash Jha's words: 'Generally like you toy with lines, expressions, make a lot of suggestions' (interview, 8 June 1999). The guidance by the director often extends, for example, to suggestions of instrumentation, whether it should be very Westernized or more traditional, with a lot of violins, guitar and so on. Director Aditya Chopra, for example, suggested the glass spoon noise used in the song *Ruk jā*, 'Stop!', from *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995) (interview with Jatin Pandit, music director of Jatin-Lalit duo, 4 November 1998). As the director explains his film, situation, characters, and the kind of song he wants, the music director and the lyricist will start to come up with some tunes and phrases. Much of the music sittings will be the music director playing/singing tunes he has made, which the director will then comment on, accept, reject, or suggest changes to. In this way, he moves closer and closer to what he wants. While a good director knows his film and will have a strong idea about what he wants, he is not a composer, and therefore has to use the music director to realize his ideas. The music directors may keep a tune bank, and select appropriate tunes from that and refine them, or they may compose fresh tunes. Choudhary describes music director R. D. Burman's approach to composing tunes:

Pancham's [R. D. Burman's nickname] way of functioning was this: He would tell his directors to narrate the story in a nutshell but to describe the song situations in elaborate detail. An assistant would make copious notes during the narration. Sometimes, after the narration Pancham would pull out ten appropriate tunes from his bank. The ten would be narrowed to five, which he would polish and present to the director at the next sitting. Or he might reject them all and start afresh (2000: 48).

When both the *mukhrā* and *antarās* are complete, then work will begin on the musical interludes. This usually happens just a couple of weeks before the song is recorded. Like the melodic and lyrical style and content of the *mukhrā* and *antarās*, the instrumental arrangement of the song should also blend with the narrative, the

difficult task, than have them mess up the lyrics he had written with music that did not fit their meter properly (interview, 8 November 1998).

story, the situation, and be appropriate for the characters who are singing and the states of mind. For example, a song performed by a traditional courtesan would likely to have at least some *tablā*, harmonium or *sārangī*, and *ghunghrū* (an bells). A film *qawwālī* would have hand clapping, and probably some *dhōlak*, *tanpūrā* and harmonium in its accompaniment to reflect the light classical nature of the genre, and/or some *rabāb* to reflect the Muslim identity of this genre. A song where the couple are in a state of jubilation, having just discovered that their love is mutual and are running and dancing in wide and open outdoor locations (mountains, hills, gardens), would have an accompaniment that is likely to include a lot of violin and/or fast mandolin (mandolin is found more frequently in older songs, but is still popular in modern Hindi songs), *santūr*, *sitār*, or *sarod* playing (usually *jhālā* rapid, strumming style). Certain instruments and instrumental styles are associated with particular kinds of people, moods and scenes in the same way that certain vocal styles and melodies are. The instrumental arrangements as well as the style, melody and lyrics, are used in a way that is appropriate to the scene according to their associations.<sup>16</sup>

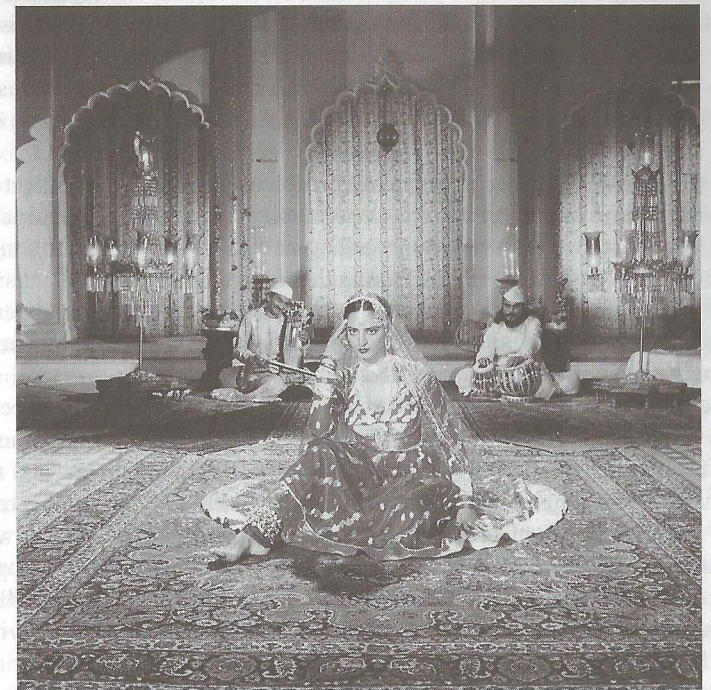


Figure 2.4 Performance by a late 19th Century courtesan as depicted in *Umrao Jaan* © Kamat Foto Flash

<sup>16</sup> The associations of certain instruments, melodies and vocal and instrumental styles are discussed in more detail in chapters 3 and 4. Chapter 3 includes a detailed analysis of *qawwālī*.

Arrangements are also used to reflect changes in location. If there is a change in location from indoors to outdoors, reality to fantasy, city to rural, a move to a particular region (Punjab, Gujarat, for example) or to the West, for example, the arrangement will change to reflect this. Music director Khayyam spoke of 'indoor style' music as being of mellow sounds, contrasting to the big and loud phrases of the 'outdoor style' (interview, 7 April 2000). Arranger Babloo Chakravarty also spoke of outdoor style as being 'loud music, bright music, very bright open music' (interview, 25 March 2000). Whilst the arrangement changes, the vocal style and melody will continue as before, unless the character has undergone a radical change of mood or a new character is singing. For example, during one musical interlude and a *mukhṛā* and *antarā* of *Jā rahe ho tum* 'You're going', in *Ham Tum Pe Marte Hain*, the location moves from a train to a village in Gujarat, where everyone gets off the train and joins the locals who are dancing *Dandiyā*, a Gurarati folk dance. As the location changes, the train-like groove of the song disappears, and is replaced by one that is based on this form of Gujarati folk music. As the characters return to the train, the music reverts to how it was before. Apart from the different locations normally needing different music, transitions from indoors to outdoors or reality to fantasy, featured in so many Hindi film songs, are also often scored. This is most typically done with a violin run (interview with Shravan Rathod, music director of Nadeem-Shravan duo, 1 April 2000), though a similar run in another instrument such as flute has also been used (interview with Adesh Shrivastav, music director, 13 April 1999).

Changes in dramatic mood during a song sequence also tend to be reflected in the arrangement. For example, if a song scene involved the hero and heroine singing and dancing whilst the villain was approaching unbeknown to them, the song would be inter-cut with shots of the villain. During the shots of the villain, the music would probably change colour, using more dissonance, less melody, brass and percussion rather than violins, guitars, sitars, and so on, to reflect the change in dramatic mood from romance to approaching danger and evil.<sup>17</sup>

Musical phrases may be coordinated with certain shots, and the director may therefore require a particular number of phrases if he wants to shoot something in a particular number of shots. For example, director Aditya Chopra had to make alterations to one of his songs for *Mohabbatein* (2000) at one of the recording sessions, because in one musical interlude, there were only two phrases where he was planning to have three shots (19 June 1999). Similarly, if, for example, four characters are involved in a song sequence, certain parts of the music will require four 'cuts' or phrases, as a shot of each character is presented in turn (interview with Shravan Rathod, music director of Nadeem-Shravan duo, 1 April 2000). As well as often having to follow the numbers of characters present or the number of shots, if specified, music directors also write according to camera movements. As music director Khayyam explained, 'Sometimes ... we follow camera movement. In the song, director is telling us 'so I am panning, I am zooming in, I am showing the long, long shot, which should be look like total horizon' [*sic*]. In such a case, a full violin

<sup>17</sup> See chapter 4 for a discussion of these and other musical conventions of the Hindi film.

run may be scored, so matching the musical and cinematic gestures, the long sweep of a violin run with the expansive shot (interview, 7 April 2000).

As well as being used appropriately for character, state of mind, location, dramatic mood, and matters of cinematography, arrangements are also used to score certain actions. In *Jāne wah kaisā cor thā* 'Who knows what kind of a thief it was from *Yaraana* (1995) for example, when the heroine stabs the villain, not only do the whole song express a kind of anger and aggression through its heavy use of percussion, some violin tremolos and chromatic runs, and a 'difficult', non-diatonic scale, but at the moment when this action took place, the music responded with loud, dissonant brass, tremolo violins, and then a crashing build up of strings and percussion led to the end of the song.

Actions that are dramatically less significant than these may also be scored in the song arrangement, and may be scored in a more or less prominent way, that is more or less in keeping with the melody of the song. For example in the title song of *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (1999), a love song which takes place in a fantasy setting in Switzerland, the hero is seen up on a ladder, banging nails into a wall in the course of building a small home for the heroine and himself. A percussion effect accompanied this action, but one which blends with the song. Similarly, in *Jā rahe ho tum*, also from *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain*, the hero is chasing and teasing the heroine on a train. In desperation, she climbs up a ladder onto the roof of the train. The director, Nadeem Kumar Raju, explained how this action is accompanied by an ascending phrase, but one which fits in with the melody and style of the overall song, and that this was planned out prior to shooting the visual sequences (interview, 25 April 1999). In this way, actions can be scored, but not in a way that interferes with the tunefulness of the song. This leads to music that is effective on screen and also good to listen to. To be able to write effectively around action while at the same time not spoiling the appeal of the song is difficult, and as music director Milind (of Anand-Milind duo) commented, a challenge (interview, 3 March 2000).

In some songs, the musical interludes will stay closer to the song and its melody and there will be little or no scoring of actions. In others, there will be many actions scored in a prominent way that is distinct from the idiom of the song. Director and producer Anil Sharma described this as music that is 'as per the song' and 'as per the visuals' respectively (interview, 15 April 1999).<sup>18</sup> It is up to the director how much 'as per the song' or 'as per the visuals' the arrangement is. Certain situations may also require more scoring of actions. If there are actions that are dramatically important that take place during the song sequence, such as the villain being killed or the lovers' first embrace, then they are more likely to be scored. Music that is 'as per the visuals' is also more common and acceptable in comedy, where some degree of 'mickey-mousing' or exact coordination of physical movement to music helps to heighten the comedy. Some directors and music directors like to include scored actions more than others who place a higher priority on keeping the melody character of the song. Music director Khayyam, for example, said that it was bet-

<sup>18</sup> How this emerges in the actual music of film songs is discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

<sup>19</sup> This has become a standard term in Western film music, following the technique of scoring for cartoons like Mickey Mouse (Gorbmann 1987: 88).

should be arranged so that such events did not take place during song sequences (interview, 7 April 2000). There has been a tendency in the last two or three decades of film music to include more action in film songs, and hence to have more drama and action scored in songs.

On the whole, the arrangements of film songs are more 'as per the visuals' than are the vocal sections. More importantly, they are used to musically express a lot that is happening dramatically that the characters are not aware of, and therefore not expressed in the vocal sections of the song. In these ways, the writing of film song arrangements is very similar to the writing of background music, except that the background music is written after the film has been shot. The musical conventions and style of song arrangements and instrumental sections also have much in common with background music, as discussed in chapters 3 and 4. Music director Khayyam described the sort of music where, for example, a villain appears in a song as background music, and Milind, also a music director, commented that the instrumental interludes of a song 'might be like background music' (interviews, 7 April 2000 and 3 March 2000 respectively).

In order to write the instrumental interludes and the arrangement of a song, the music director requires details of characters, changes in location, changes in dramatic mood, camera movement, all important action, and any smaller actions the director may wish to have scored. Furthermore, they will also require the timing of these events and particular shots: for example, when in the song does the heroine stab the villain, how many times does she stab him (how many chords or phrases are required), and how long does the stabbing last? However, although timing and shot lengths must be given in many instances, as director and producer Anil Sharma explained, things cannot be totally worked out beforehand, since the music director 'has to come in beats', and so to some extent, the timing of the action will always take place according to the music (interview, 15 April 1999). It also may be possible for a certain amount to be worked out once the song is recorded, shooting the visuals according to the given music. *Terī āmkhen boltī haiñ*, for example, contains funny effects which were not timed in advance of shooting, as music director Uttam Singh explained (interview at recording session, 26 March 1999). It was perhaps easier in this case to shoot satisfactorily according to the song, since the whole song elaborates a single comic situation of the heroine trying to teach the hero, who is pretending to be dumb, how to speak. If this had only been going on in one interlude, then more timing and instruction would probably have had to be given.

The more the director wishes actions to be imitated or echoed musically, and the more complex a song situation is in terms of when and where it takes place and who is singing, the more planning it will take (interview with Pam Chopra, singer and wife of director and producer Yash Chopra, 17 June 1999). Many modern film songs are extremely complex and require careful planning and extensive discussion between director, music director and lyricist. Shifts in location are common, such as between indoors and outdoors, reality and fantasy, and different geographical regions. Many characters may sing in a single song, involving a number of different points of view, and flashbacks and simultaneous scenes and actions are also all common.

of film music. Although film music is not usually seen as a 'classical' style, in comparison with classical music, Shiv Kumar Sharma, who has composed film music for a number of films, noted that to compose film songs is in fact 'a very difficult task' for a classical musician:

We [classical musicians] are trained to play a *rāg* for years and years at home, practicing, then come on the stage, play according to your own mood and liking and your style of playing. Nobody is there to impose on you what they want. Film music is totally different. It's a situational music. You have to see the film. First you have to know the characters, the screenplay we discuss, the situation where song is going to come, what kind of characters are there, what is the location. According to that we have to do. For classical musicians it's not done thing, they're not used to all this, they go and they play their own thing, what they like. So this is a very difficult field for a classical musician to do justice [*sic*] (Interview, 26 March 2000).

### *The role of musical and cinematic tradition and convention*

Film song, stemming from urban theatre music, classical, light classical and folk music, has developed certain stylistic norms, including a refrain-verse structure, a mix of Indian and Western style and instruments, a Hindi-Urdu text and an Indian vocal style.<sup>20</sup>

Although command over a wide range of styles and a chameleon-like ability to cater for all kinds of situations are essential to being a music director (or lyricist), particular music directors also have their own distinctive styles. For example, Jatin-Lalit's music tends to be quite soft and romantic in nature, and they are best known for big glossy romances (*Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai* (1998), *Mohabbatein* (2000)) and romantic comedies (*Yes Boss* (1997)). They are less likely to do songs for slapstick and rowdy films, such as those starring Govinda. However, they have done music for many other kinds of films, such as *Sarfarosh* (1999), a political thriller about arms smuggling and terrorism in India and Pakistan. A. R. Rahman has a very distinctive style which, apart from introducing a strong South Indian flavour into the Hindi film industry, is also highly innovative. When a director hires Jatin-Lalit, A. R. Rahman, or any other music director, they know that they will write songs for their film and situations to some extent in their individual styles.

Although a basic film song style and at least elements of the characteristic style of the music director (or lyricist) are a part of most film songs, there is always adaptation to the film situation, as described above. However, as well as this there are also genres or conventions of film song that have developed over seven decades of song use in Hindi films, such as 'sad songs',<sup>21</sup> 'funny songs', 'wedding songs', 'teasing songs', and so on. Romantic songs will mostly adopt the (nowadays simplified) language and imagery of Urdu poetry and use instruments like violins,

<sup>20</sup> See Arnold 1991 for a description of this style, summarized in chapter 3.

<sup>21</sup> Sad songs are more a feature of the pre-action era of film songs, before the mid-1970s.

of the lovers going to Europe, which was first featured in Raj Kapoor's *Sangam* (1964).<sup>22</sup> In this way, it would theoretically be possible, though by all accounts not advisable, to get a song composed by simply telling the music director to compose 'a sad song', 'a funny song' or 'a big dance number' and so on. Music director Milind of the Anand-Milind duo explains how they are guided by these conventions in the case of directors who have a less detailed conception of their film and story and are unable to give them many details:

Usually, what happens is most of the songs have fixed situations ... Hero and heroine meet, and there might be a duet song, then a *cher chār* song where the hero teases the girl or the heroine teases the boy, or you have a cabaret, or you have a *mujrā* [where a courtesan performs] or you have a song in a disco. So we work on those fixed situations (interview, 3 March 2000).



Figure 2.5 Lovers in Europe, *Sangam* © Kamat Foto Flash

<sup>22</sup> As Dwyer argues, Kashmir and other stunning outdoor locations can be seen as a manifestation of the *caman*, the garden or earthly paradise where love takes place in Urdu poetry (2000: 114).

particularities of the given film, it is still not a process of musical composition that is independent of the cinema, since these clichés of situation, picturization and musical style have grown up together in Hindi sound cinema.

All songs involve some degree of convention in their situations, music, lyrics and picturizations, and these conventions, often as manifested in particular songs, may be used in the production process to help communicate ideas. This is evident in director and producer Anil Sharma's account of how he goes about getting the music director to deliver the music he wishes his film to have:

We tell this to the music director, 'Look, this is our story, and this is our song situation and now for this song situation I want this kind of a song'. ... I give an example of some certain songs, 'Look have you heard of song of that film, have you heard of song of that film. ... That kind of a song, I don't want that song but that kind of a melodious song, the family of the song should be that [*sic*] (Interview, 15 April 1999).

However, there is usually at least some degree of tailoring the song to the particularities of the given film and scene. Anil Sharma continues:

Then I tell, look, this is the boy, this is the girl, this is going to be their behaviour, this is how I'm going to begin the song, this is the business I'm going to have in the song. ... I'll say it'll open with such and such a shot and this is going to be the business in the song [*sic*] (Interview, 15 April 1999).

Even the most conventional of film songs may still be as carefully woven into the particular film as songs that are more obviously distinctive, so that it will be unique and different from other such film songs. For example, a song when the couple first fall in love or declare their love to each other is virtually obligatory in Hindi cinema. However, director Aditya Chopra spent a long time in heated debate with the late eminent lyricist Anand Bakshi concerning the lyrics of this first love song of his film *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), *Tujhe dekhā to yah jānā sanam*. Whilst the lyricist wanted to keep this song in the classic tradition of the Hindi film love lyric, filling it with beautiful poetic expression or *śāyri*,<sup>23</sup> Aditya insisted that his hero and heroine would not speak to each other in *śāyri*, so why should they sing *śāyri*? Instead, he felt the feelings of his characters were better encapsulated and expressed in the first two lines of the song, which he himself had written and insisted on keeping: *Tujhe dekhā to yah jānā sanam, pyār hotā hai dīwānā sanam*, 'It was when I saw you, my darling, that I understood that love is crazy'. He wanted the song to be written along these lines, with a kind of colloquial charm and elegance rather than a more formal or traditional poetic tone, since that was the way his characters were (interview with Aditya Chopra, 9 November 1998). In this way, this now classic love song really belonged to the film and its characters and was unique, despite being firmly in the tradition of film love songs. Conventions are there to be used, and also to be adapted and departed from, and as the success of this particular song and

<sup>23</sup> *Śāyri* is the Urdu word for poetry and hence refers specifically to Urdu poetry and poetic style such as *ghazals*, the core component of most Hindi film songs.

film suggests, such minute attention to the shaping of or departing from a particular genre's conventions can have a big impact.

### *The importance of the director*

The importance of the director in the process of song and lyric composition must be emphasized. It is the director who conceives the song in his imagination, and then conveys this imagined song and all its particular details to the music director in such a way that they can turn it into a reality. As music director Utpal Biswas put it, 'film music is the director's conception of the situation' (interview, 3 March 2000). Music director Vishal also elaborated on the crucial role the director plays in film music:

I think ... as far as film music is concerned, everything depends on the director's attitude towards music, the kind of music, and his clarity towards the situations, the story, and ready to do the experiment with new sounds, and a new compositions, looking at a situation from a different point of view. So everything depends on the director. That's how the good directors have extracted good music even out of less talented composers (Interview, 20 March 2000).

The idea that a director 'extracts' work from music directors is commonly expressed in film music, and emphasizes the active role of the director in composition. The ability of the director to 'extract' good work, as well as the music director's ability to give good work, is reflected in the prices that film music rights sell for, as discussed in chapter 5. This side of the director's role is also seen as that of inspiring the music director, providing song situations the music director can feel enthusiastic about, and putting them across in an inspiring way (interviews with Lalit Pandit, music director of Jatin-Lalit duo, 9 January 1999; Shravan Rathod, music director of Nadeem-Shravan duo, 1 April 2000). Many music directors admit that they are able to give better work to directors who have a clear vision of their film and their song situations, and who can give details of the story and song situation to work with, rather than just the clichéd situations of Hindi cinema (interview with Milind, music director of Anand-Milind duo, 3 March 2000).

This role of the director in film song composition is potentially the source of considerable tension. One point of view is that the director and the film inspire the music director. However, the other side of this coin is the view that the director is interfering in the music director's job. Naresh Sharma, who has worked mostly on background scores as well as songs, commented that some directors who are musical make suggestions and comments, which can be a good thing, but others who have no sense of music also do, which can be very frustrating for the music director, who after all is a musician with his own standards of music (interview, 11 March 1999). All music directors complain of the interfering director figure at some time. Occasional fights seem to be a part of this song production process that places a figure at the centre of song and lyric composition who is not a musical specialist or a poet.

However, whether the music director or lyricist likes it or not, as renowned classical musician and film music director Shiv Kumar Sharma put it, 'it's the director who is the captain of the ship', because the songs are for a film and song scenes which he will shoot and picturize. If the music director and lyricist want to

stay on board, they have to come to a point where they are in agreement with the director (interview 26 March 2000). Some directors, such as the late Raj Kapoor, like to take a very active role in song composition, and some music directors are happy to take a lot of 'suggestion' from the director. However, other music directors will not accept a great deal of 'interference' from directors. Naushad, for example, having discussed the film and song situation with the director would not tolerate suggestions on the music he gave. Naushad was a powerful enough music director to be able to work like this, but would not have been able to work with Raj Kapoor, for instance (interview with Shiv Kumar Sharma, 26 March 2000). Ultimately, it is a question of rapport. As Shiv Kumar Sharma commented, 'because film music is connected with the film, so you have to work in tandem [with the director], and you have to have a same opinion, agree, and then it works' (interview, 26 March 2000).

Whether it is the director, the situations, the proposed visuals or the lyrics that inspire or guide a music director, and however they manage to come to agreement with the director and also the producer, musical composition in Hindi film songs may still be beset by the same problems as it is in many other musical traditions. Anu Malik, one of the most prolific music directors, put it: 'My tunes either come to me or they don't come to me, and if they don't come to me then I start shivering, and I ask God "Are you angry with me?"' (interview, 1 July 1999).

### *Recording*

When the melody, lyrics and arrangement of a song have all been composed, the it is ready for recording. The director and the producer will be present for most of the recording sessions, and almost certainly for the dubbing of the vocal track, making sure that the performance of the song is what they want and what the scene requires.

The first thing that will be recorded is the basic track of the song, the groove or beat, and some harmony. Over that acoustic instruments or sampled sounds will be dubbed, such as strings, brass, Western and Indian drums, Western or Indian flute, saxophone, *sahnāī*, guitar, mandolin, *sitār*, *sarod*, solo violin, bass guitar, chorus and, most importantly, the vocal tracks. The singer may have rehearsed the song with the music director or from a rough recording on cassette before the recording session; alternatively, they will learn the song just before they record it. The director will usually explain the film story and the particular song situation to the singer, and occasionally to instrumentalists too. They usually give suggestions to the singer as they record, so as to make sure they are singing in character. The art of playback singing may cross over with acting considerably. I have heard singers told to 'act as they sing' (*acting karke gānā gānā*) (Music director Uttam Singh instructing playback singer Udit Narayan on the recording session for *Kaisī sagāī hai yah kisī sagāī hai?*, 'What kind of an engagement is this, whose engagement is this?' (interview, 1 January 1999). Singing for a film song is not just about singing beautifully. The singer rather has to fit their singing around the character and the scene. To take an obvious example, if the character is drunk, so must be the singing. At a recording session for *Monday ho yā Sunday* from *Dil Kya Kare* (1999), director Prakash Kapadia complained that part of the song was coming out 'too singy'. He said that it was

be in his scene was not there (27 December 1998). A successful playback artiste is one whose voice will suit a variety of characters and will appear good on film, 'a screen voice', as music director Milind described it (interview, 3 March 2000). The success of singers like Lata Mangeshkar and Mohammad Rafi is popularly attributed to not only their singing talent, but also to the way their voices can match so many different actors and characters (interviews with music directors Utpal Biswas and Milind, 3 March 2000). As Arnold points out, playback singers also need to compensate for the inherently alienating effect of hearing a voice singing which is other than that of the character we see singing: 'The film actor-singer had been able to establish a certain rapport with [the] ... public regardless of his vocal talent. ... Having only the audible component to affect the cinema audience, the playback singer needed expert vocal ability, technique, and emotion, as well as flexibility, in order to sing convincingly for a variety of film characters and screen actors' (1991: 52).

Although the song should not be changed at the recording stage, amendments may be made to songs if necessary. As mentioned above, director Aditya Chopra had to alter part of one of the songs for *Mohabbatein* (2000) to make it right for his proposed shot sequence (recording session, 19<sup>th</sup> June 1999). Director Nabh Kumar Raju had half a day's work redone on *Ham banjāre ho*, 'We are gypsies', from *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (1999), since the song was not coming out right. This song was meant to have a romantic, erotic feel to it, and was set in an *ādivāsī*<sup>24</sup> village during a festival. However, as he closed his eyes and visualized the song, he said that it seemed that some people had come to fight. The romance had gone from my mind and the girls who were going to the festival had also gone. Instead, it seemed that the *ādivāsīs* were fighting' (interview, 25 April 1999). To correct this and get the originally planned feel into the song meant completely changing the basic track of the song.

In rare cases, a song may turn out to affect the director's conception of an aspect of his film, thus exerting influence over the narrative. For example, Prakash Jha had planned *In hawāon meñ kisī ne likh dī*, 'Someone has written in these breezes', from *Dil Kya Kare* as a song from one of the heroines' points of view. It was to be a solo song in the film, but adapted into a duet for the audio, to increase its commercial potential or 'audio value'. However, Prakash Jha was so impressed with the male singer's, Udit Narayan's singing of this song that he decided to keep the song as a duet in the film, and adjust the visuals accordingly (recording session, 7 January 1999). Similarly, music director Uttam Singh recounted how director Anil Sharma was so pleased with *Ur jā kāle kāvañ*, 'Fly black crow', from *Gadar - Ek Prem Katha* (2001) that this song's role in the film became extended considerably, used thematically in more situations, though with the tune adapted in style, lyrics and arrangement to each situation (interview with Uttam Singh, 6 November 1998).

The above discussion has focused on the role that the parent film and Hindi cinema play in the production of the film songs and how songs are in fact connected to films in their production rather than just composed independently according to their own traditions. However, film songs are not just made for films. They have always had a life outside films that has helped the parent film, and in recent decades, this has become commercially far more significant. Film songs have always constituted the main publicity for a film, and since the 1990s have been used as an official marketing device, as described in chapter 5. The ability for a song to have some impact outside of the film as an audio item and marketing tool has to be considered during the production process, as well as its ability to express the song situation in the film. A song's ability to sound good on its own and have scope outside of the film is known as its 'audio value'. However, in many ways, the kind of music that works best with the film and the picturization is not always the kind that has the highest 'audio value'. Changes of location, changes of mood, action, drama, and unconventional song situations are some of the things that tend to lead to what are known as 'situational' songs, songs in which the situation is somehow audible or unusual, and which therefore depend more on the film to make sense. The audio value of such songs is inevitably lower. They generally only have the scope of becoming popular as music if the film is a hit, hence making the song situations widely known. For example, *Terī āñkheñ boltī haiñ*, 'Your eyes speak' from *Pyar Deewana Hota Hai* (2001), the comic song where the heroine is teaching the hero (who is actually not dumb) how to speak, is one for which the listener needs to understand this situation to enjoy. Alka Yagnik, the singer of this song, commented after the recording session was finished that she had not understood what the song was about at first, but once she did, she really liked it (recording session with Uttam Singh, 26 March 1999). A reviewer writes as follows about the song: 'It is a humorous number which hints at what the film is about. Although there is an upbeat, catchy rhythm, it may be the only number on the soundtrack you may want to skip, since it is definitely a situational song in the film...' (Planet Bollywood website, accessed January 2001). Other situational songs are those for *Sharabi* (1984) by Bappi Lahiri, who commented that for those songs, you had to see the film (interview, 15 November 1998), *Kabūtar jā*, 'Go pigeon!' from *Maine Pyar Kiya* (1989), which the producer Rajkumar Barjatya commented would seem silly out of the context of the film (interview, 30 June 1999), and *Nahīñ hona thā*, 'It shouldn't have been', from *Pardes* (1997), to name just a few.<sup>25</sup>

The audio value versus situational nature of songs dichotomy thus has important implications for commercial success and reception, which are discussed in chapters five and six below, and the musical style of film songs, which is discussed in chapter three. As regards production, it is another factor that music directors, lyricists, directors and producers have to keep in mind. There is a need to balance the demands of the film and the situation with the audio value of a song. Opinions vary as to whether the demands of the film should take priority over the audio value of

<sup>24</sup> The *ādivāsīs*, also known as 'tribals', are the indigenous, non-Aryan, peoples of South Asia.

<sup>25</sup> *Kabūtar jā* is discussed in chapter 4, p. 169, and *Nahīñ hona thā* in chapter 3, pp. 110–113.

if his songs did only average business, he didn't mind, but they should make sense and serve the purpose of the film (interview, 25 April 1999). This is really gambling on the success of the film, and in the case of *Hum Tum Pe Marte Hain* (1999) it proved an unsuccessful gamble. This film flopped, and with most of the songs being situational, the audio had very little potential to do well on its own, or to bring independent strength to the film.

Nabh Kumar Raju's attitude seems to be on one extreme of the audio/film value balance, and other directors place importance on the audio as well as the film value of their songs. Anil Sharma commented that 'the song should be a hit, the number should be very melodious', as well as saying that it 'should be very close to our situation, [it] should be the situation...'. His reasoning was that by putting a song in a film you are already taking an artistic liberty, so the song should at least be good and a hit (interview, 15 April 1999). Prakash Jha said that really both audio and film value should be there. However, having said that, he also explained how he had had one song from *Dil Kya Kare* (1999) drastically altered, because it was not right for the film. The music directors Jatin-Lalit felt the song had great potential as it was, but Prakash Jha insisted it should be changed, despite the fact that it was a good song, because it was more important for it to be right in the film (interview, 8 June 1999). As the director, he had the authority to change this song even against the music directors' wishes.

Although the director will tend to want songs that fit the film, the producer is more likely to be concerned about 'audio value', since he is the one whose money is on the line. Some producers may even go as far as to insist on the addition of an extra song of high audio or spectacle value, such as a romantic number or a big dance number, in an attempt to boost the film through the success of the music. However, this desire to fill a song with good musical numbers in order to make the film more popular can result in songs which are, as Harish Dayani, then Vice President of Marketing at HMV, described it, 'thrust upon the film' rather than woven in (interview, 15 June 1999). This practice of adding songs to a film where they do not really fit tends to backfire, because people may be disappointed when they see the film, and may be put off the songs, which will damage both the audio sales and the success of the film at the box office.

Apart from differing opinions of priority of film and audio, there are a number of factors that help balance the needs of the two. The first is that people accept songs as one of the conventions for the expression of emotion and drama in Hindi films. The fact that Hindi films have always had songs means that their narratives are designed for the inclusion of songs. They pause for long enough to incorporate a full song on one emotion, and audiences are used to this. Plots also bend to make way for songs. The story may happen across a group of folk singers, or a confrontation may take place in a nightclub, or in older films in a courtesan's salon, and of course, weddings always provide opportunity for big song-and-dance scenes. Characters may also be professional performers of some kind (courtesans have been a favourite) similar to show musicals in the West.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, not all film situations demand the sort

<sup>26</sup> See Altman (1987) for an in depth study of Hollywood film musicals.



the introduction of playback in the first decade of Indian sound cinema

of changes in location, character, point of view or mood or action that make a song situational. For example, a film may have many love scenes, and hence scope for romantic songs that are best able to work just as well out of the film as in it.<sup>27</sup>

As mentioned above, it is not always necessary to score actions to make the song 'as per the visuals', and hence more situational. It is often enough for certain details to exist only at the visual level. If several characters are singing, it may be possible to use only one or two singers, making the song a solo or a duet. This makes it less idiosyncratic and therefore potentially more able to have a life independent of the film. This technique was used in the title song of Yash Chopra's *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997), which sounds like a romantic duet, but is actually a more complex situation between four characters taking place in parallel scenes. However, not all film makers would do this. Aditya Chopra, Yash Chopra's son, felt that this should not have been done in this way, and that the song on audio should give a sense of the film. For his film *Mohabbatein* (2000), which has four heroes and four heroines, Aditya Chopra and his mother Pam Chopra pointed out that a different singer consistently sings for each (recording session, 17 June 1999). The use of playback singers rather than actor-singers, which began in the mid-1930s, is a similar method of increasing audio-value. This enabled a high standard of singing to be maintained in film songs, which was difficult when actors were singing their own songs.

As mentioned above, changes in location, mood, action etc. – the situational aspects of a song – are generally expressed in the instrumental parts of the song. The vocal parts of the song, which are higher profile than the instrumental parts, can retain their own style and coherence, and hence keep a kind of unity in the song as a whole.

There is also a method of getting the best of both worlds. Songs may be altered for the audio. The title song of *Kabhi Kabhie* (1976) is a good example of this. This love song is sung by Amit, the poet (Amitabh Bachchan) to Pooja (Rakhee). However, the song is abruptly cut short in the film as this romantic song scene between Amit and Pooja cuts to the scene of Pooja's marriage to someone else. This cutting short of the song in the film is very effective in the film, as we get a sense of the abrupt and untimely end of Amit and Pooja's love. However, this would sound bad on the audio, and would spoil the song, so on the audio version, the song ends without interruption.

Also, films contain a variety of songs, so songs that have a high audio value can balance out more situational ones. On the whole, the consumption of film songs is becoming more visual, so it is becoming less important what songs sound like just in the audio dimension. It is probably not a coincidence that film songs have become more situational since around the 1970s, which is also the time when television began to become widely available in India.<sup>28</sup>

There are a number of ways of negotiating the need for songs to work with the film and yet work outside the film, and a number of opinions of what it is and is not acceptable to do. However, that film song has two main contexts – that of the

<sup>27</sup> See chapter 6 for a discussion of the ways that songs are appropriated by audiences and the implications this has for which songs become popular.

<sup>28</sup> See chapter 5.

film and that of the outside world – has become fundamental to this genre, and is significant to all levels of its existence. It will be discussed in more detail with respect to musical style in chapter 3, the commercial life of film songs in chapter 5, and the reception of film songs in chapter 6.

### Filming the songs

When the very first Hindi sound films were made in 1931, technology only allowed for the 'simultaneous recording of sound and image on one film negative' (Arnold 1991: 94).<sup>29</sup> One camera, together with one microphone, recorded both sound and image. This placed many restrictions on the director and music director. First of all, this meant that actors and actresses had to sing their own songs. Furthermore, the microphone was large, heavy, immobile and 'unreliable' (ibid.: 96). This meant that song picturization was a very tricky business, as the singer had to stand still near the microphone for the duration of the whole shot. The microphone was usually hidden somewhere out of the frame above the singer's head, or perhaps in a nearby bush. Musicians were similarly hidden out of sight. Song picturizations were therefore very static, mostly consisting of 'close-up shots of the screen characters that allowed the musicians to be positioned close to the microphone but out of the field of the camera' (ibid.: 101). For every new shot, the microphone and musicians would have to be repositioned and the song sung again. This whole process was so laborious that most song picturizations were taken in just one shot (ibid. 1991: 97). Needless to say, the sound quality was very poor. Not only was the recording equipment unsophisticated, but the recording of the sound also took place at the same time as the shooting rather than in a separate recording studio, where soundproofing and proper positioning of instruments, singer and microphone could be arranged without having to worry about what was showing on camera.

In the mid 1930s, playback came in. This involves the prior recording of the song which is then played back during shooting, and the actors and actresses lip-sync the words. The first film using playback techniques is said to be *Dhoop Chhaon* (1935). The prior recording of songs led to much better sound quality, and it also freed up the song picturization. It was possible to use more instruments, as they no longer had to be hidden in bushes, and more movement and dance could also take place during the singing. Previously the singers could not move much as they would go out of range of the microphone, and also if they were moving too much, they would not be able to sing properly. The advent of playback also meant that the roles of the actor-singer started to diverge, with the singing of film songs increasingly being carried out by

<sup>29</sup> There were two ways of synchronising image and sound available by that time, both of which had been used in Hollywood. The first was gramophone discs synchronised with silent films in the sound-on-disc systems such as the Vitaphone developed in 1924. The second was the sound-on-film system. The sound-on-film system actually arrived in India before the sound-on-disc system, featuring better sound quality and less bulky and easier to manage equipment. *The Jazz Singer* was the first true sound film produced with this technology, in 1927. See Arnold 1991 chapter 3 for a detailed account of technological developments and the introduction of playback in the first decade of Indian sound cinema.



one of their own songs, such as Amir Khan in *Att kya Khandala* 'Are you coming to Khandala?', for the film *Ghulam* (1998). By the end of the 1940s, most of the old actor singers had died or retired, and a large proportion of songs were sung by a group of extremely proficient playback singers, most notably Lata Mangeshkar, Geeta Dutt (1930-72), Asha Bhonsle, Mukesh (d. 1976), Mohammed Rafi (1924-80), Kishore Kumar (1929-87) and Manna Dey, who came to largely dominate the industry until the late 1980s. This playback technique is still in use today, although in a far more refined form than it was in 1936. It is only massive improvements in technology which have made the complex film song picturizations we see today possible. A song can move effortlessly through many different locations in several different countries. For example, the classically picturised *Dholnā*, 'Darling', in *Dil To Pagal Hai* (1997): as the hero and heroine finally embrace in the evening at the end of a wedding party, the scene changes to a sunny and idyllic hillside (actually shot in Germany), where they sing of their love for each other. *Ajūbā*, 'Wonder', in *Jeans* (1998) moves through the Seven Wonders of the World and many costume changes. Songs are also able to contain action, such as *Yah dostī* 'This friendship', from *Sholay* (1975), where the two heroes sing of their friendship as they cavort through a village in a motorbike and sidecar.

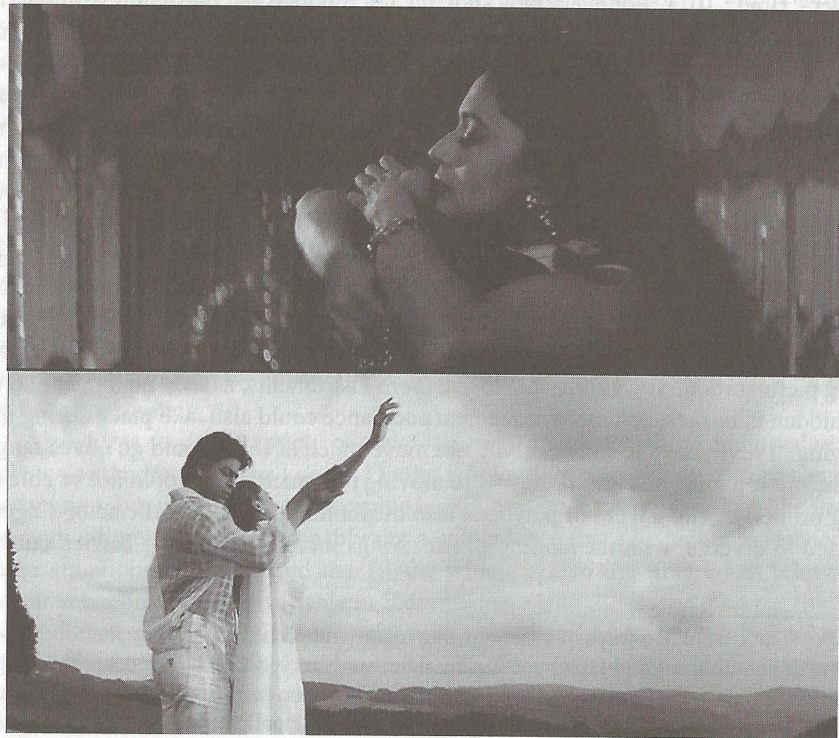


Figure 2.7 Reality to fantasy in song sequence from *Dil To Pagal Hai* © DVD stills

in full. Since the 1970s, a dance director or choreographer, although during the song sequences (even those that do not contain actual dance), although the film director still oversees the whole shooting. The dance director choreographs the songs, and rehearses any characters who are dancing. Each choreographer has their own troupe of dancers, who will dance in any of the songs as needed. With playback, virtually all shots of the song picturization are normally taken to music, with the song being played over loudspeakers. The song is divided up into sections, the introduction, the refrains or *mukhṛās*, the verses or *antarās*, and the instrumental sections. These sections are further divided up and assigned shots, i.e., incorporated into the screenplay of the song. The song will then be shot, in one location or many. After shooting, the final stage in a making a Hindi film song is editing.

The freedom of playback and technological improvements has given film song picturizations the possibility of breaking even more laws of realism for greater emotional or spectacular effect. However, there is at least a semblance of verisimilitude even in the most fantastic of modern film song picturizations, where the most energetic dancing, action or movement usually takes place during the instrumental sections of the song, since the character could not very well be singing while engaged in so much activity, even though we know, of course that they are not singing, and most of us know exactly who is singing! The sung portions of the songs tend to be relatively more static.<sup>30</sup>

Spectacle has played a role in Hindi film songs from some of the earliest films, such as the famous drum dance of *Chandralekha* (1948), or the dream sequence of *Awara* (1951). However, its role has increased in the last few decades. This can lead to a visual appearance of songs being 'items' within the film story and narrative. For example, the use of extra narrative locations is commonplace now. When couples sink into each other's arms, they tend to be transported to a different and spectacular location. During the 1990s there was a craze for hundreds of extra narrative dancers, usually dressed in dazzling and coordinating costumes, to suddenly appear in film songs. Costumes are also more numerous, spectacular and erotic during song sequences (Dwyer 2000: 114). This increased spectacle and the exotic locations gives songs a different visual style to the main narrative, helping to put them 'within the realm of fantasy'. Despite the strict moral code of the main narrative that demands that the heroine be presented as a chaste, Sita figure (the conservative ideal of the Hindu wife) however 'modern' she is in other ways, with a shift to the spectacular displays of the song sequences, it is possible for the woman to become 'the central component who solicits and intensifies the voyeuristic gaze' (Kasbekar 2000: 293). The diegetic or staged performance of many song sequences in the story by heroine or vamp, which are justified by the narrative in many ways, also allows for a 'disavowal of voyeurism', leaving it possible for audiences to enjoy the erotic display but not feel voyeuristic, since the display is for the on-screen audience rather than the cinema audience (ibid.: 295-305). In this ways, songs may

<sup>30</sup> See chapter 4 for a discussion of stasis in film songs and its implications for musical style.

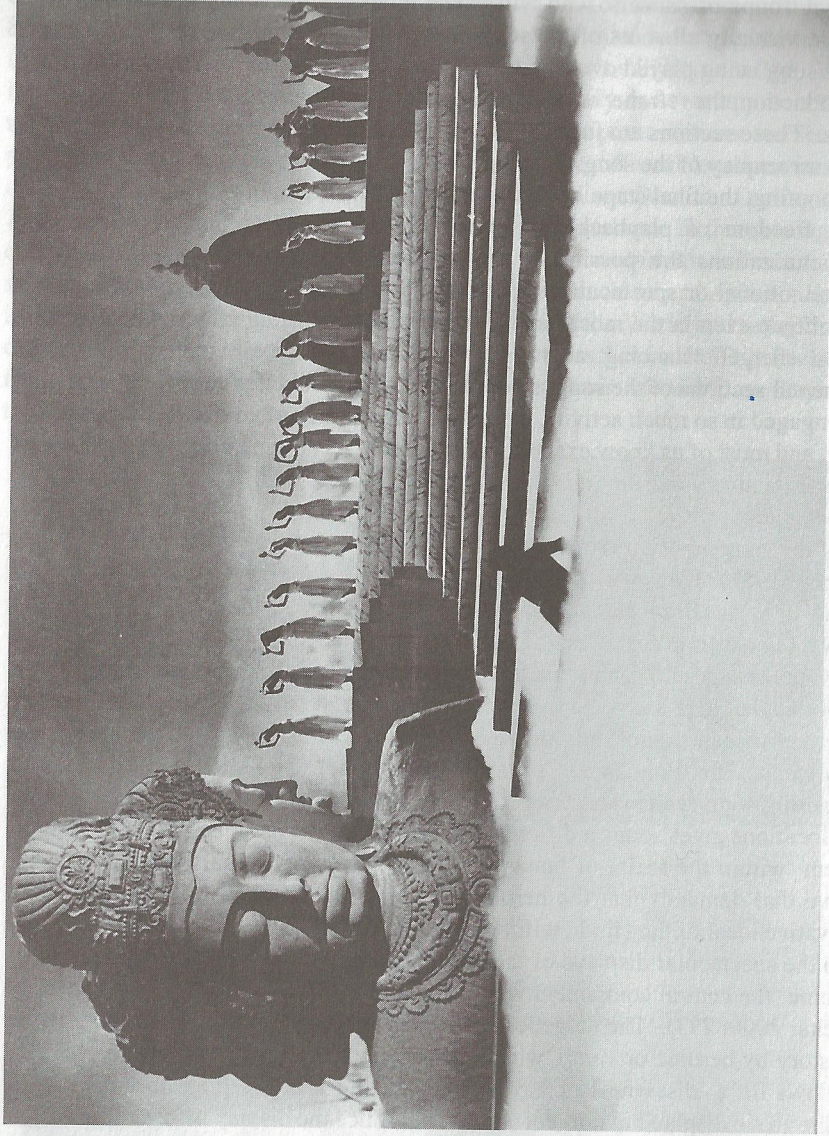


Figure 2.8 Song sequence spectacle from *Awaara* © Kamat Foto Flash

moral code of the Hindi film (ibid.: 293).

The spectacle of song sequences may also be justified by the narrative, or contribute to narrative meaning and effect. For instance, the couple's being transported to a beautiful location that is different from their everyday lives focuses and isolates the feelings of the romantic couple and their desire to be alone together, and also visually creates poetic images commonly used in song lyrics. As Dwyer writes:

These locations not only fulfil the lyrics' requirements for an earthly paradise, but by their remoteness allow the characters to step outside the confines of their everyday lives, to savour movement and freedom but also to show the universal, spaceless nature of love (2000: 114).

Although this moving to different locations in song sequences is a part of Hindi films that Westerners tend to find ridiculous, it has to be remembered that privacy is far harder to find in India than the West. The heightened way in which the couple is able to enjoy solitude, beauty and freedom in a stunning or dream location far away from their everyday world can also be seen as a part of the melodramatic mode of the Hindi film, and makes the subsequent separation of the lovers and the threat to their love more poignant. The extra narrative dancers and the array of costumes can also be seen as contributing to a melodramatic enlarging of effect, and also a big-screen entertainment mentality. Such song sequences also offer a kind of consumerism, displaying a life-style that is out of reach of, and hence particularly desirable to, far more Indians than Westerners.

However, although these aspects of spectacle contribute to narrative meaning and effect, they are also used to give songs a 'video value' akin to their 'audio value', an ability to be visually something in themselves (interview with Sehdev Ghei, distributor for Yash Raj films, June 9 1999). The 'transgressive pleasure' of the erotic display in song sequences also adds to this. The 'video value' of a song also has implications for a song's popularity. However, again, this is something that needs to be balanced with the narrative needs of film songs, and while some directors might like to use a lot of extra narrative locations and dancers and costume changes, others will want things to be more integrated with or justified by the narrative.

## Conclusions

This chapter set out to explore the production process of Hindi film songs, how their musical, lyrical, visual and narrative components are coordinated, and if they are produced according to their own musical and lyrical traditions as Prasad has argued (1998), or if the Hindi film narrative actively shapes them. It has found that even though songs are composed prior to the shooting of a film, they are cinematically conceived, beginning with anything from the conventional demands of a conventional song situation to the idiosyncratic ones of a particular film and song situation. This places the film director and the film at the centre of the production process of film songs.

parts' (Prasad 1998: 43), or as a cinema of attractions (Vasudevan 1994: 307), makes sense in many ways. In the Hindi film, 'scopophilia, catered for through strategies of overt spectacle and display', and the pleasures of music, the stars, fights, dialogues, comic interludes and so on, take 'priority over epistemophilia, (the desire to know, or to 'find out')' (Kasbekar 2000: 286). With songs, the melodramatic mode and spectacular visual styles of picturization make songs appear to be items that are independently composed, although these characteristics contribute to the overall narrative meaning or effect. However, at least with the songs and the lyrics, there is a great deal that integrates individual song production with Hindi films. The examples of how details of the situation, drama, emotion, character, location, action and cinematography affect songs demonstrates the level of integration between songs and the narratives of their parent films. When only conventional song situations are given, such as 'a sad song' or 'a teasing song', it is true that the narrative of the parent film barely necessitates variation in the style of the songs. However, these songs are still not written according to an independent tradition, but rather around a conventional cinematic situation, drawing from an integrated musical, lyrical and cinematic tradition of sad songs and teasing songs in Hindi cinema. The only aspect of the production process that may truly point away from Hindi cinema or individual film narratives is the need for songs to have audio and video value. The amount of importance this is given is up to each individual director and producer.

Having established a link between the conception and production of film songs and Hindi films, the next two chapters now turn to an examination of the significance of the cinematic context to the musical style of film songs and its development.

## The Musical Style of Hindi Film Songs

In chapter 2, it was found that rather than Hindi film songs being produced independently from the film that they will appear in according to a separate musical tradition, their production is well integrated with the parent film and its particular scenes, characters, visuals, locations, action and cinematography, and also the conventions of Hindi cinema and song picturization. Film songs are made by musical specialists and lyricists, but in collaboration with the film director. The only element of the production process that is not cinematically oriented is the attention that is paid to the appeal songs will have 'outside'<sup>1</sup> the film, namely their 'audio value' and also 'video value'. However, this is balanced with the demands made on the song by the film and situation, and rarely outweighs them completely.

Songs are conceived to a large extent as a part of their parent films and their cinematic situations. This chapter investigates how film songs are integrated with films in terms of their actual musical (and to some extent lyrical<sup>2</sup>) style, and how far they can be said to constitute an independent style of popular music. It examines how important a cinematic analysis of film songs is to an understanding of their style. It takes as its starting point Arnold's musicological research on Hindi film songs in her unpublished thesis (1991), reviewing her findings. Arnold's work largely concentrates on film songs as Indian popular music rather than their place in and relationship with films, their 'real' rather than 'reel' world context. Here, a specifically cinematic analysis of film song style is carried out via a comparison of film *qawwālīs* with traditional *qawwālī* style, thus revealing how the film has modified traditional *qawwālī*. Songs are analysed in the context of their film and visual sequences, and film song style is discussed in a historical cinematic context.

### Arnold's analysis of film song style<sup>3</sup>

According to Arnold, most of the earliest members of the film world including music directors came from urban theatre traditions such as the Parsi theatre, the Marathi Theatre or the Bengali *Jātrā*. The musical training of the early film music directors was in classical and light classical music, and also in their respective local folk musics. The earliest film songs therefore drew heavily on stage or light classical music, and were stylistically indistinguishable from them (Arnold 1991: 59, 61). It

<sup>1</sup> As argued in chapter 6 below, the parent film extends outside its immediate narrative context and is involved in much of the 'outside' consumption of film songs. Even more pervasive is 'cinema culture' in general.

<sup>2</sup> This chapter focuses its analysis more on musical than on lyrical style.

<sup>3</sup> Some material from other writers and my own interviews is also included.