

‘THE VOICE OF THE PEOPLE, A SONG, A NOTABLE PHRASE, A RHYME, MANAGED TO SURVIVE’.¹ THE BIRTH OF MUSICAL AESTHETICS AND THE GLOBAL MUSICOLOGICAL MOMENT

“LA VOZ DEL PUEBLO, UNA CANCIÓN, UNA FRASE NOTABLE, UNA RIMA, LOGRARON SOBREVIVIR”. EL NACIMIENTO DE LA ESTÉTICA MUSICAL Y EL MOMENTO MUSICOLÓGICO GLOBAL

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Resumen

En esta historia intelectual de la aparición de la estética musical global, trato del nacimiento de la estética como un campo filosófico moderno y la expansión de la historiografía musical hasta incluir el mundo entero. Estos momentos musicológicos globales son muy evidentes en los primeros escritos de Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), quien canalizaría y mantendría esa confluencia a lo largo de su vasta obra publicada. El título de este artículo procede de Herder, específicamente de los volúmenes que llamó *Volklieder* (Canciones populares, 1778/79), en los que conecta sus escritos fundacionales sobre estética, *Kritische Wälder* (Selvas críticas), con el primer concepto integral de estética musical global. La historia de la recepción de Herder es en sí un hilo conductor crítico en la historia intelectual de la estética musical que conecta el siglo XVIII con el XXI. Sigo este hilo conductor hasta el sur de Asia en el siglo XVIII a la búsqueda de una moderna estética musical hindú fundacional, particularmente en el género clásico *kriti*, del sur de la India, y el vasto dominio estético de la teoría de los *rāga*, que también dio un giro hacia lo moderno a finales del siglo XVIII. El artículo concluye volviendo al presente con ejemplos de principios estéticos de Herder aplicados a interpretaciones musicales en la actual crisis migratoria global. Es esa historia intelectual, con ejemplos del pasado y del presente, de la Ilustración en Europa y en el sur de Asia, especialmente sus dimensiones

¹ The title of this essay comes from the “Introduction” to Johann Gottfried Herder, *Volklieder*, vol. 1, part II (Leipzig: Weygandsche Buchhandlung, 1778/1779). It is translated in Johann Gottfried Herder and Philip V. Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses: Herder on Music and Nationalism* (Berkeley:

Abstract

In this intellectual history of the emergence of modern musical aesthetics globally, I concern myself with the birth of aesthetics as a modern philosophical field and the expansion of music historiography to include the entire world. These global musicological moments are abundantly evident in the earliest writings of Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803), who would channel and sustain their confluence throughout his vast body of publications. The title of the essay comes from Herder, specifically from the seminal volumes he called *Volklieder* (Folk Songs, 1778/79), in which he connects his foundational writings on aesthetics, the *Kritische Wälder* (Critical Forests) to the first comprehensive concept of global music aesthetics. The history of Herder reception is itself a critical thread in the intellectual history of musical aesthetics that links the eighteenth to the twenty-first century. I follow this critical thread to eighteenth-century South Asia in search of a foundational modern Indian musical aesthetics, particularly in the South Indian classical genre, *kriti*, and the vast aesthetic domain of *rāga* theory, which also took a turn toward the modern at the end of the eighteenth century. The essay concludes by returning to the present with examples of Herder’s aesthetic principles in musical performance in today’s global migration crisis. It is that intellectual history, with the cases from past and present, enlightenments in Europe and South Asia, espe-

University of California Press, 2017), p. 54. An earlier version of this essay was delivered as a keynote address at the conference, “Twenty-First-Century Challenges to the History of Eighteenth-Century Aesthetics”, Turin, 11-12 June 2018.

globales, la que da forma a la teoría de momentos musicológicos globales que constituye el núcleo de este artículo.

Palabras clave

Ilustración, momento musicológico global, Johann Gottfried Herder, *kriti*, teoría de los *rāga*, estética musical, *Volkslieder*, “Zaid and Zaida”.

AVANT PROPOS. HERDER’S JOURNEY AND THE BIRTH OF MUSICAL AESTHETICS

I began early on to collect what would become a history of lyrical song, and I disdained nothing that would not serve this end. ... Whoever speaks about folk songs also comes to understand her or his own time and all that is part of it, even after ceasing to speak about folk songs.

—J. G. Herder, *Volkslieder*, part 2, 1779.²

In 1773, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) proclaimed a new way to understand the very being of music, proposing a radical new way to experience it as at once everyday, intimate, and sublime. Herder would claim a new place for music in human experience through the 1770s and beyond, over the course of his lifetime as one of the great philosophers, theologians, anthropologists, polyglots, and polymaths of the Enlightenment — and as the thinker who coined the term, *Volkslied*, folk song.³ Herder not only coined the term, but he also gathered folk songs, as an ethnographer no less than as a philologist, published them in anthologies, set debates about their meaning in motion, and profoundly rerouted the history of music.

This was a moment of song, indeed, a moment after which the art and aesthetics of music would never be the same. The song that Herder called forth as ontological fact, first in 1773, had limitless potential, for he truly be-

cially their global dimensions, that shapes the theory of global musicological moments at the heart of this essay.

Keywords

Enlightenment, global musicological moment, Johann Gottfried Herder, *kriti*, *rāga* theory, musical aesthetics, *Volkslieder*, “Zaid and Zaida”.

lieved, as did many who heeded his call, that song could be sensitive to “the entire being of life.”⁴

Herder’s Enlightenment moment of folk song in the 1770s also produced his first engaged attempt to implement a new musical aesthetics, which he had developed systematically and theoretically during the late 1760s, when he entered actively into the debates about the new philosophical attention to what, since first used by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in his *Meditationes philosophicae*, had been called aesthetics.⁵ Herder embraced the potential of aesthetics fully, proclaiming in his earliest writings from the mid-1760s that “not *poetry*, but *aesthetics* should be the field of the Germans.”⁶ Herder’s earliest aesthetic writings, particularly the four volumes of the *Kritische Wälder* (Critical Forests), would become a prolegomenon to what we now would understand as a full-blown field of musical aesthetics. In the fourth *Critical Forest* of 1769 — which was not published in Herder’s lifetime— he sought to understand music as the art-form that contained the “properties of the delightful that penetrated most deeply into the soul and moved it most powerfully.”⁷ To forge a theory that would lead to an understanding why this was so would be no less than a “gateway to a new aesthetics.”⁸

It was also in 1769, the year in which the *Critical Forests* appeared, that Herder would embark on a different journey, fully through the “gateway” he had imagined as metaphor in the prolegomenon. In May 1769, Herder, already a twenty-five-year-old theologian, anthropologist, philosopher, and music scholar, embarked on a sea

² Translated in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, p. 70.

³ The term “folk songs” appears for the first time in two related forms, “Lieder des Volks” and “Volkslieder,” in Johann Gottfried Herder, “Auszug aus dem Briefwechsel über Ossian und die Lieder alter Völker,” in *Von deutscher Art und Kunst: Einige fliegende Blätter*, ed. J. G. Herder (Hamburg: Bode, 1973), translated in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, pp. 140-67. In 1778, “folk songs” appeared as the title of Herder, *Volkslieder*, the first anthology of folk songs from throughout the world.

⁴ Herder, “Auszug aus einem Briefwechsel,” translated in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, p. 165.

⁵ Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten, *Meditationes philosophicae de nullo ad poema pertinentibus* (Halle: I. H. Grunert, 1735).

⁶ Johann Gottfried Herder, “Versuch über das Sein,” in *Johann Gottfried Herder Werke*, ed. Ulrich Gaier (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1985 [1764]), vol. 1, pp. 9-21.

⁷ Cited in Johann Gottfried Herder, *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, ed. and trans. by Gregory Moore (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2006), p. 207.

⁸ Herder, *Selected Writings on Aesthetics*, p. 207.

journey that would take him far from his Baltic home in Riga, Latvia, and across the great seas of human experience before he would find his way to Germany, where he would produce a lifetime of thought that, among other influences, would transform the understanding of what music in the world was and could be, in other words, a full-blown theory of musical aesthetics. Herder kept a journal, perhaps better understood as elaborate field notes, on his sea journey, in which he intimately traced the transformation of personal encounter to the global experience of a common humanity.⁹ In his notes, which like the contemporaneous fourth volume of *Critical Forests* he himself never published, he made the challenge he was embracing as a scholar indebted to an aesthetics with explicit global dimensions. What had earlier been tentative theory now introduced ethnography as encounter and experience to an aesthetics that would stretch beyond Europe and beyond the eighteenth century:

For this purpose I wish to collect data about the history of every historical moment, each evoking a picture of its own use, function, custom, burdens, and pleasures. Accordingly, I shall assemble everything I can, leading up to the present day, in order to put it to good use.¹⁰

It is the spirit of “moving beyond,” made possible by the journey immanent in musical aesthetics, that I follow through this essay. It is this spirit that formed at the confluence of historiography and anthropology in Herder’s writings in the late Enlightenment, laying the foundations for a musical aesthetics that was at once modern and global. It is the aesthetic capacity to move beyond, moreover, that connects three different histories that begin in the eighteenth century and that have extensive resonance in the twenty-first century, connected as they are by the global and globalization (Table 1).

- 1) The birth and history of musical aesthetics
- 2) The birth of global history
- 3) The birth and history of world music

Table 1. Three Histories Converging in the Eighteenth Century.

⁹ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Journal meiner Reise im Jahr 1769* (Stuttgart: Reclam, 1997 [1769]).

¹⁰ Herder, *Journal meiner Reise*, cited in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, p. 266.

Critical to my understanding of the paradigm shift brought about by all three is the crucial role of folk song, experienced and given aesthetic dimensions by Herder. My approach to the moments of folk song I locate historically throughout this essay is broadly ontological, because I search for the moment — actually a history that returns to folk song across many moments — as a chronotope (time and place) in which the ontology of folk song — its very being — acquires renewed meaning and identity. Whereas my focus here is on folk song, I also let folk song represent the much larger concept of music, in its many aesthetic and ontological forms, across genres, geographies, and histories. The moments of music about which I reflect are notable because they are never static, hence music’s ontological power is unleashed through history.¹¹

The narrative threads that interconnect in the historical *longue durée* of musical aesthetics I trace through this essay often begin with Herder and run through his substantial body of work on music.¹² Of considerable importance is that these narrative threads return to Herder and to history, whether it be in the eighteenth or the twenty-first century. Herder’s ontological moment in the *Volkslieder* thus resurfaces in the moment of intimacy we find in Herder’s *Lieder der Liebe* (Songs of Love), his reflections on the biblical *Song of Songs*, and also in his translation of the great epic of Spain, *Cantar de mio Cid*.¹³ To expand the aesthetic chronotope I move through early and modern moments beyond Europe, especially to India, not only because these moments are the focus of my research, but because it was Herder who was the most important Enlightenment German scholar to call attention to music in early Sanskrit writings, and then to translate several critical texts, for example the *Bhagavad Gita*.¹⁴

¹¹ See also Philip V. Bohlman, “Ontologies of Music”, in *Re-thinking Music*, ed. Nicholas Cook and Mark Everist (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 17-34.

¹² Nine of his most influential writings on music are translated in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*.

¹³ Cf. Johann Gottfried Herder, *Lieder der Liebe: Die ältesten und schönsten aus Morgenlande, nebst vier und vierzig alten Minneliedern* (Leipzig: Weygandsche Buchhandlung, 1778), and idem, *Der Cid—Geschichte des Don Ruy Diaz, Grafen von Bivar, nach spanischen Romanzen*, in *Johann Gottfried Herder Werke*, ed. Ulrich Gaier (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1990), vol. 3, pp. 545-693.

¹⁴ Richard H. Davis, *The Bhagavad Gita: A Biography* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2015), pp. 84-87.

Before moving more expansively to extend the historical and geographic landscape of folk song's ontology, I should like to turn briefly to the questions that so preoccupied Herder and the Enlightenment when folk song came into being. I do this consciously and deliberately because I believe that Herder's aesthetic of song and music has been foundational for what music scholars — internationally and across disciplinary boundaries — undertake as a common field of musical aesthetics. No work poses these questions more sweepingly than the first major collection of folk songs, which appeared as two volumes, each containing six compact folios, called first *Volkslieder*, and in later editions, *Stimmen der Völker in Liedern* (Voices of the People in Songs).¹⁵ In the 1778/79 *Volkslieder*, folk songs acquire new functions, both different and distinctive. On one hand, folk songs retain Herder's goal of illustrating the historical qualities of song, with emphasis on the old and the ancient. Rather than establishing these historical qualities more specifically for German and Scottish repertoires as he had in 1773, Herder looks beyond the historical and linguistic borders of Northern and Western Europe to establish age and oral transmission as qualities of folk song in cultures throughout the world.¹⁶

THE GLOBAL MUSICOLOGICAL MOMENT. AN AESTHETIC MATRIX IN THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND BEYOND

Herder's moment of global encounter in 1769 quickly and sweepingly left its impact on music, for among the data he collected were the songs of peoples throughout the world. Within four years, in 1773, he created a new word to describe these songs: *Volkslieder*, or "folk songs".¹⁷ As he gathered the songs, he began publishing them in collections in 1774, leading finally to an anthology of 194 songs published in 1778 and 1779, called simply *Volkslieder*. The influence of Herder's "folk songs" was enormous, indeed, a paradigm shift in musical aesthetics with global proportions.

Herder's writings on folk songs and other forms and genres of music represent what I call in recent work a "global musicological moment".¹⁸ I invite music scholars

to think about the temporality of such moments as having two dimensions. First, there is the moment itself, when a change of revolutionary proportions takes place because of the transformation of musical object (a song, for example) to subjectivity (the ways in which songs shape human society throughout the world).¹⁹ Second, global musicological moments change history, both as it is understood in the past and as it unfolds in the future.

Herder's global musicological moment was especially significant because it represents a moment in which the first concept of world music was invented and given aesthetic dimensions. His volumes begin with songs from northern Europe and the Baltics (e.g., the Estonian "Jõrru, Jõrru") and conclude with songs from Madagascar and Peru (e.g., "To His Child").²⁰ He wrote major works on biblical song (e.g., the *Song of Songs*) and medieval Iberian epics (*Cantar de mio Cid*). Herder's global musicological moment, nonetheless, was not isolated in the history of musical aesthetics. There were those who came before and those who would come thereafter, and it is this intellectual history of musical aesthetics that is my larger concern in this essay.

Among the works in which concepts of world music emerge during shorter or longer moments prior to Herder's Enlightenment world, I should like to mention three here, though there are many other candidates. Of these three moments, the earliest is the one that forms around the Indian treatise on music, theater, and dance from roughly the third century of the Common Era, the *Nāṭyaśāstra*.²¹ The search for music's universality became an historical leitmotif in medieval Islamic works on the global reach of history, for example, Ibn Khaldūn's (1332-1406) fourteenth-century *Muqaddimah*, an "Introduction" to the history of the universe, with abundant references to music in culture.²² During the sixteenth and

Lachmann, and the Global Ethnomusicological Moment", in *Remixing Music Studies: Essays in Honour of Nicholas Cook*, ed. Ananay Aguilar, Ross Cole, Matthew Pritchard, and Eric Clarke (London: Routledge, 2021), pp. 131-147.

¹⁹ I use the concepts of scientific revolution and paradigm shift as in the classic Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

²⁰ See Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, pp. 63-64 and 104.

²¹ *Nāṭyaśāstra*, *The Nāṭyaśāstra*, trans. by Adya Rangacharya (New Delhi: Munshiram Manoharlal, 1984).

²² Ibn Khaldūn *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, 3 vols., trans. by Franz Rosenthal (New York: Pantheon, 1958).

¹⁵ Herder, *Volkslieder*.

¹⁶ See Herder, *Volkslieder* and "Aus einem Briefwechsel".

¹⁷ Herder, "Aus einem Briefwechsel".

¹⁸ See, e.g., Philip V. Bohlman, "'All This Requires but a Moment of Open Revelation': Johann Gottfried Herder, Robert

seventeenth centuries, the European Age of Encounter would also produce the potential for global musicological moments, the best known of which is probably Athanasius Kircher’s 1650 compendium of musical objects from the world, *Musurgia universalis* (see Figure 1).²³



Figure 1. Frontispiece of Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis* (1650).

In the centuries since Herder, there has been a proliferation of global musicological moments, and it is upon these that the modern fields of music scholarship have been built. A century after Herder, it would be Alexander

²³ Athanasius Kircher, *Musurgia universalis* (Rome: Francisco Corbelletti 1650).

J. Ellis and Guido Adler who would integrate various social and physical sciences into modern musical scholarship, notably expanding the field to encompass growing musical and human diversity.²⁴ Adler’s 1885 essay on the “Scope, Methods, and Aims of Musicology” was notable for the ways in which it was globally and disciplinarily inclusive, specifying exactly what music history, music theory, and ethnomusicology could achieve.²⁵

It is the confluence of aesthetic ideas at these moments that is especially significant for the formation of ethnomusicological moments, and therefore I should like to give a bit more theoretical shape to the aesthetic matrix that yields such moments, particularly that in the eighteenth century. In the model I propose here, the global musicological moment occupies a central position among four other moments, which proceed chronologically in the following way (Table 2):

- 1) The Moment of Encounter
- 2) The Moment of Audibility
- 3) The Ontological Moment
- 4) The Moment of Revelation

Table 2. Aesthetic Moments of the Global Musicological Moment.

None of these moments is static, but rather each is transformative as it expands the aesthetic capacity of musical thought to perceive and understand musical experience. The movement afforded by the four processes is one of expansion, a dynamic process of globalization. The universal qualities we witness in music are, for example, both internally implicit and expansively explicit. Song and melody, moving across these moments, might be globally comparable, even similar, not because of their sameness, but rather because of their differences. Music history, by its very nature, moves from the local to the global, represented in the aesthetic matrix below as processes that coalesce at its center (see Figure 2).

²⁴ See Alexander J. Ellis, “On the Musical Scales of Various Nations”, *Journal of the Society of Acoustics*, 33 (1885), pp. 485-527, and Harry Liebersohn, *Music and the New Global Culture from the Great Exhibitions to the Jazz Age* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2019).

²⁵ Guido Adler, “Umfang, Methode und Ziel der Musikwissenschaft”, *Vierteljahresschrift für Musikwissenschaft*, 1/1 (1885), pp. 5-20.

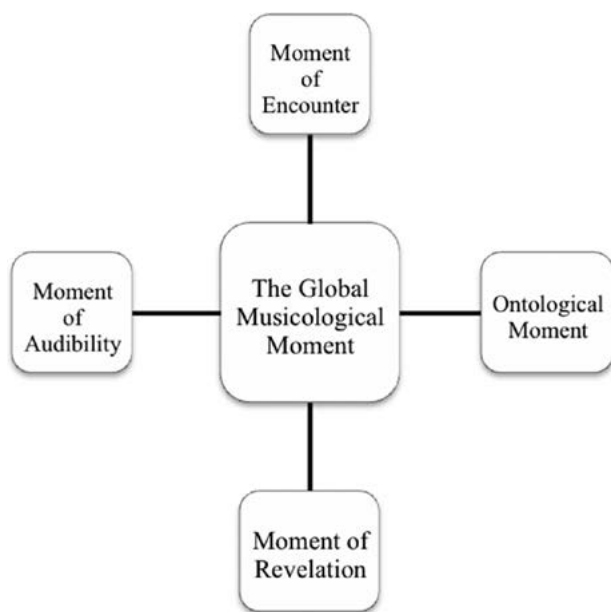


Figure 2. The Global Musicological Moment.
The Aesthetic Matrix of the Eighteenth
Century and Beyond.

THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY AND THE GLOBALIZATION OF MUSICAL AESTHETICS

Critical to the intellectual history of musical aesthetics that I examine here is its acquisition of global dimensions, the globalization that eventually leads us to the twenty-first century and beyond. The modern emergence of musical aesthetics in the Enlightenment shared by Baumgarten and Herder, therefore, also shaped the enlightenments that were emerging elsewhere in the world at the same time. Among the many cases for what I call global enlightenments, I should like to focus here on the rise of modern musical aesthetics in India, not in small measure because of the direct and indirect connections to Herder and his generation.²⁶ I do so by first turning to one of the earliest sources to shape Indian aesthetics, the *Rg Veda*, an extensive anthology of sacred hymns, that entered written Sanskrit verses from oral tradition during

²⁶ Philip V. Bohlman, “Musical Thought in the Global Enlightenments”, in *Studies on a Global History of Music: A Balzan Musicology Project*, ed. Reinhard Strohm (London and New York: Routledge, 2018), pp. 61-80.

the second millennium BCE.²⁷ The aesthetics of the Vedic hymns emerges from an expansive range of metaphors, both musical and material, for example, in passages such as the “Creation of Sacrifice” (Table 3):

1) The sacrifice that is spread out with threads on all sides, drawn tight with a hundred and one divine acts, is woven by these fathers as they come near: “Weave forward, weave backward,” they say as they sit by the loom that is stretched tight.

2) The Man stretches the warp and draws the weft; the Man has spread it out upon this dome of the sky. These are the pegs, that are fastened in place; they made the melodies into the shuttles for weaving.

3) What was the original model, and what was the copy, and what was the connection between them? What was the butter, and what the enclosing wood? What was the metre, what was the invocation, and the chant, when all the gods sacrificed the god?

4) The Gāyatrī metre was the yoke-mate of Agni; Savitr joined with the Uṣṇi metre, and with the Anuṣṭubh metre was Soma that reverberates with the chants. The Bṛhatī metre resonated in the voice of Bṛhaspati.

5) The Virāj metre was the privilege of Mitra and Varuṇa; the Triṣṭubh metre was part of the day of Indra. The Jagatī entered into all the gods. That was the model for the human sages.

Table 3. From “The Creation of Sacrifice,” *Rg Veda*.²⁸

Among the Vedic hymns that Johann Gottfried Herder translated, the “Creation of Sacrifice” was one of Herder’s favorites. The Vedic hymns provided him one of the most immediate points of entry to Brahmanic Hinduism, which he situated among the other world religions in which he searched for common meanings of sacred texts, expressed through intersecting aesthetic practices. Critically, the act of translation, as it did so often in Herder’s writings, took on historical meaning: Herder came to understand that he was translating from one enlightenment to another, which is to say, producing translation between an Indian and a European aesthetics. Translation between

²⁷ The standard English edition and translation is Wendy Doniger O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981).

²⁸ O’Flaherty, *The Rig Veda*, p. 31.

and among global enlightenments provided Herder a means to gain a sense of the music and of musical aesthetics, as expressed in language and text. Pranabendra Ghosh, making one of the strongest cases for Herder’s knowledge of Sanskrit, reflects on why translation was so important, indeed, as an act of aesthetic realization, thus “also a matter of faithfulness to form, which, to him, in addition to numerical and metrical form, is also sound, melody, rhythm and tone and, therefore, organic form”.²⁹

It was at these eighteenth-century moments of the global aesthetic matrix that we also witness ontological change of remarkable proportions, a parallel aesthetic modernization in Europe and India, and beyond. We witness, for example, modern forms of classical music emerging at moments of encounter, contestation, and political change in the surfeit of global enlightenments. In South India at the same moment of enlightenment, the “trinity of saint composers” of South Indian music, Thyāgarāja (1767-1847), Muthuswāmi Dikṣitar (1775-1835), and Śyāmā Śāstri (1762-1827), created a canon of compositions that standardized the structure and improvisation of the genre, *kṛiti*, whose formal structures share much with the spread of sonata form in European music. Table 4 illustrates the three-part form that became canonic in the eighteenth century with Thyāgarāja’s *kṛiti*, “Maregulara”.

Indian musical aesthetics formed from this moment of global enlightenment, not just in the centuries leading to the eighteenth century, but also in the global music history that leads to the present. Of particular interest for expanding the history of musical aesthetics are the ways in which melodic mode —*rāga*— became global and came to serve as the primary symbol of an aesthetic system that is both ancient and modern. By the end of the eighteenth century, as the British colonial Raj fully took hold of India, systematic musical thought —above all, the classification of *rāga*— had entered a domain of global exchange. William Jones, living in colonial Calcutta and conducting research at the Asiatic Society, published one of the most influential texts on *rāga*, “On the Modes of the Hindoos,” in 1784.³⁰ It would be the Bengali music

²⁹ Pranabendra Nath Ghosh, *Johann Gottfried Herder’s Image of India* (Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati Research Publications, 1990), p. 268.

³⁰ William Jones, “On the Modes of the Hindoos”, in *Hindu Music from Various Authors*, ed. S. M. Tagore (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1964), pp. 88-112.

Pallavi

Marugelara o Rhaghava
Why this screen separating me from you?
O Rhagava!

Anupallavi

Marugela caracara rupa paratpara
Surya sudhakara locana
Why this screen? Between me and the Lord of
all forms,
Who has the sun and moon as eyes!

Charanam

Anni nivanucu antaranga muna
Tinnaga vetagi telusukotinayya
Ninne gani madinenna jalanorula
Nannu brovavayya tyagaraja nuta
After inner soul searching, I now see
You are in everything!
I can think of none but You!
Please protect me, Thyāgarāja!

Main theme reprised

Marugelara o Rhagava
Why this screen separating me from you?
O Rhagava!

Table 4. Thyāgarāja, “Marugelara”.
Lyrics in Telugu; the melodic mode,
or *rāga*, is *jayantasri*; the meter, or *tāla*, is *aditāla*.

scholar and collector, Sourindro Mohun Tagore, who would republish Jones in India, but as a parallel historical material with his own extensive works on the *Universal History of Music* (Tagore 1896/1963),³¹ and detailed organological works, which accompanied, among others, the actual collections of musical instruments that he sent to the Berlin Phonogram Archive in which Curt Sachs and Erich von Hornbostel would later work and propose their standard classification system for musical instruments, based on Indian models. I make this historical observation to illustrate that, when we write about exchange from the eighteenth century onward, it moved in both directions, following paths prescribed by a global aesthetics.

³¹ Sourindro Mohun Tagore, *Universal History of Music, Compiled from Divers Sources* (Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1963). Originally published in 1896.

The importance of rāga in that emerging global aesthetics should not be underestimated, and for that reason I make a brief excursion to Indian musical aesthetics that potentially allows us to reroute the intellectual history of music scholarship more generally. I turn, in fact, to one rāga, the many manifestations of which came to enter a new global musical aesthetics in the eighteenth century. I speak here of the rāga, or rāgini, Todi, for whom an aesthetic language coalesced in what we can understand as the Indian enlightenment. The aesthetic language used to express the ontological meanings of rāga encompasses a remarkable range of the arts, among them the religious narratives and visual designs of the tradition of miniature painting known as rāgamāla (see Figure 3).



Figure 3. Rāgamāla Painting of Rāgini Todi.
(Personal collection of Philip V. Bohlman)

A rāga with primarily feminine attributes, hence a rāgini, Todi shapes herself as an avatar for melodic mode,

thus evoking the vastness of music's ontologies. The goddess Todi's many musical forms and avatars notwithstanding, there are several that are especially suggestive for the ways she becomes an avatar for Indian musical aesthetics. Clearly, the Todi entering a forest clearing in this rāgamāla from village West Bengal, a folk depiction I collected in Kolkata, is richly endowed with musical form and meaning. Rāgas and rāginis contain and express differences in gender, and rāgini Todi makes it very clear why this is so. The goddess/rāga Todi we see here traditionally carries a *vīṇā* over her left shoulder. The *vīṇā* is not just any musical instrument, but rather it is the instrument that is most closely connected to Sarasvatī, the Hindu goddess associated with learning and the arts, particularly music. In some interpretations, Sarasvatī's body and the anthropomorphic body of the *vīṇā* are considered the same: the goddess is music, and music is the goddess.³²

Stories always accompany rāgamāla paintings, and in counterpoint with the visual images they expand the universe of rāga's representational meanings and the forms in which they appear. Characteristically, the stories that describe Todi revel in her beauty. The stories circulate widely as mythological tales, but they also appear frequently on the paintings of a rāga, such as the following story by Chaupayi on a rāgamāla for Todi.

Chaupayi's story: The Almighty has made a wondrous creature in Todi. He appears to have spared no charm and grace in this act. Holding the nectar in her hands, she stands in a garden, and the world around her is filled with deep love. Hearing the enchanting sounds of Todi, herds of deer lose their way. The beauty of Todi is so enchanting that eyes drop after a glance at her. Nearby is a pond of clear, sweet water, sacred as "Gangajal" [waters of the Ganges; sacred water]. Taking her to be his own, Sarang extends his hands and beckons her to his side.³³

Todi is an especially eloquent storyteller. In her long history as a rāgini, she has assumed many forms and captivated many to admire the narratives that resonate with her songs. She invites many other rāgas to join her, to weave

³² For a more extended analysis of this rāgamāla, see Philip V. Bohlman, "Foreword: Todi in the Forest of Song", in Kirin Narayan, *Everyday Creativity and Well-Being: Singing Goddesses in the Himalayan Foothills* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016), pp. ix-xvi.

³³ Cited and translated in Walter Kaufmann, *The Ragas of North India* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1968).

their stories into hers through melodic modulation. All accounts of Todi’s presence in Indian musical aesthetics acknowledge that she has a remarkable presence. As a rāg (the North Indian form of rāga), she owes the importance of that presence to her familial genealogy, for she is one of the noblest members of the family, or thāta, of rāgs to which she also gives her name, Todi thāta. The family of rāgs that bears her name has a particularly interesting lineage. We know of it as a distinct thāta since at least the fifteenth century, but Todi as a rāg would enjoy an extensive familiarity with another rāg of considerable presence, Bhairavi, until the eighteenth century, when Bhairavi —also a rāgini, representing Bhairavi worshiping Lord Bhairava on Mount Kailasha, often with cymbals in her hands— would go her own way in North Indian classical music but retain a scalar filial relationship in South Indian Karnatak classical music.

The scales —the bare notes of the melodic mode that we extract from countless stories sung by the rāginis Todi and Bhairavi, North and South— are intriguing both for what they say and for what they do not say. Above all, what they say tells us a great deal about the changing relations of kinship, religion, and gender in the eighteenth century. Perhaps in its simplest form, we could represent Todi’s ascent as a scale with the following Indian (sargam) notation and its Western equivalent, locating the primary note of *sa* on middle C (Table 5).³⁴

Rāg Todi
sa—re (komal)—ga (komal)—ma (tivra)—pa—
dha (komal)—ni (śuddha)—sa
C—D \flat —E \flat —F \sharp —G—A \flat —B—C

Table 5. Rāg Todi’s Scale in Sargam and Western Notation.

Todi makes it abundantly clear that the melodic and aesthetic sameness with rāg Bhairavi is the source of a particular attraction. Of particular interest, moreover, are rāgs that form in the narrative and musical spaces that conjoin Todi and Bhairavi. Rāgs that fill these spaces enact a type of ambiguity, which complicates the gendered roles of Todi and Bhairavi as rāginis. It is into such aesthetic spaces of ambiguity that Todi invites new rāgs, as if to

seduce new songs and stories into her world. No rāg has responded more fully to this invitation than Bilaskhani Todi. The naming of Bilaskhani Todi —tradition claims that Bilas Khan, the son of the great sixteenth-century musician and composer at the Mughal court, Tansen (ca. 1490s-1586), sang the rāg as an alternative to Bhairavi while mourning his deceased father— stresses its syncretism and hybridity. Muslim tradition enters the narratives of Hinduism; male and female forms of rāg sound the potential of their union. It is this aesthetic union, realized through the formation of the modern genealogy, or *parampara*, of the *gharānā*, that becomes the catalyst for a new musical aesthetics in eighteenth-century North India.

THE RETURN OF EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY AESTHETICS TO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY

As I draw toward the conclusion of this essay on global aesthetics, I return to the intellectual history of musical aesthetics as I began, through folk song, and I do so with a ballad, “Zaid and Zaida,” that Johann Gottfried Herder published in several variants at the beginning of his first folio of *Volkslieder* in 1778. Because ballads, as a narrative genre, with specific linguistic histories, were the first to capture Herder’s attention, it might not seem surprising that Herder should include the Spanish *romance*, or ballad, as five variants (songs 7-11) in his *Folk Songs*, including translations from Spanish, English, and what Herder calls “moorisch”, a standardized version of Maghrebi Arabic (see the variant that was published as song 8, “Zaid und Zaide”, in Figure 4).

The history of “Zaid and Zaida,” however, is far more complex and global than first meets the eye. The ballad’s origins are in medieval al-Andalus, and like other early ballads from the Mediterranean Middle Ages, the narrative moves through many languages in oral and written tradition, in the case of “Zaid and Zaida” Arabic and multiple Iberian Romance languages, among them Castilian, Portuguese, and Ladino. Herder translates from a historical work by Ginés Pérez de Hita, published in 1647.³⁵ Among other reasons he was attracted to the song was its etymological relation to the *Cid* epic. Zaid and Sa’id are

³⁴ N. A. Jairazbhoy, *The Rāgs of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 1971), pp. 97-99.

³⁵ Ginés Pérez de Hita, *Historia de los vandos de los Zegries, y Abencerrages, cavalleros moros de Granada, de las civiles guerras* (Barcelona: S. de Cormellas, 1647).

Durch die Strasse seiner Dame
Wandelt Zaid auf und nieder,
Harrend, daß die Stunde komme,
Endlich komme, sie zu sprechen.

Und schon geht der Mohr verzweifelnd,
Da es sich so lange zögert,
Denket: nur von ihr ein Anblick
Wird all meine Flammen kühlen.

Und da sieht er sie! Am Fenster
Tritt hervor sie, wie die Sonne
Aufgeht in dem Ungewitter,
Wie der Mond im Dunkel aufgeht.

Leise tritt ihr Zaid näher:
Alla mit dir, schöne Mohrin!
Ist es wahr, was meine Pagen,
Deine Dienerinnen sagen?
[...]
Warst du's, die auf dieser Stelle
Zu mir sprach, noch jenen Abend?
Dein bin ich, dein bin ich ewig!
Dein, o du mein Leben, Zaid!«

Through the streets on which his lady lived
Paced Zaid back and forth,
Waiting for the hour to come,
Finally to come, so that he might speak with her.

And, in doubt, the Moor was already thinking
That it had been such a long delay,
He thought: If I could but once glance upon her,
All my flames would be quelled.

And then he saw her there!
She approached the window like the sun
Rising after the storm,
Like the moon rising in the night.

Quietly Zaid drew closer to her:
Allah be with you, lovely Moor!
Is it true, what my pages,
What your servants say?

Was it not you, who on this very spot,
Spoke to me on that very evening?
I am yours, I am yours forever!
Yours, oh, you, my life, Zaid!"

Figure 4. “Zaid und Zaide / Zaid and Zaida”, Song 8 in J. G. Herder, *Volkslieder* (verses 1-4 and 14).

both Arabic predecessors to the name “Cid.” “Zaid and Zaida,” moreover, is a captivity narrative, a genre that was widespread in Mediterranean song long before it entered the history of colonial encounter, the classic 137th Psalm, “By the Waters of Babylon”, being one of the earliest examples. Even this history attracted Herder, for he worked through and translated the 137th Psalm on several occasions.

The history Herder might have attempted to realize by publishing variants of “Zaid and Zaida” in the 1770s, however, would unfold as a history of aesthetics that even he might have imagined. As a narrative ballad with a captivity narrative, the story of the lovers, “Zaid and Zaida”, also captured the attention of writers and musicians in Enlightenment Europe, among them Jean-Philippe Rameau and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, who began composing the Singspiel, *Zaide*, in 1780. Its arias and ensemble components were eventually gathered as K. 344, but there is no overture or third act, thus leaving the Singspiel incomplete. *Zaide*'s narrative remained open, and it surely influenced that best known of operas with a captiv-

ity narrative, Mozart's *Entführung aus dem Serail*, K. 384, which was premiered in 1782.

It is the unfinished history of *Zaide*, passing through medieval, Renaissance, and early modern variants, but then entering the modern aesthetics of Herder's Enlightenment, that extends its narrative arc to the twenty-first-century refugee crisis faced by so many from the Mediterranean, Africa, and Middle East in the contemporary migration crisis of the present, for it now becomes the source for new variant performances that extend the Andalusian, Arabic, Spanish, Herderian, Mozartean history to the present. We experience these performances by refugee and immigrant ensembles in Central Europe, for example the productions of *Zaide, eine Flucht* (Zaide, a Refugee's Journey), which employ an aesthetic counterpoint that mixes Middle Eastern and European Enlightenment sounds. It is, in fact, *Flüchtlinge*, refugees seeking refuge in Europe, who weave their histories into new libretti and performances in Europe. They interweave improvised recitatives about daily dangers and the difficulties of crossing national borders that have been fenced

into the arias and ensemble songs composed by Mozart for *Zaide*.³⁶ In these, refugee and non-refugee, the aesthetic possibilities of past and present, the classical and the modern, the medieval al-Andalus and postcolonial migration crisis, converge in the global musicological moment we together witness in real time.

I conclude this essay by reflecting on the aesthetic space in which the historical *longue durée* and the history of the present converge, and I do so by returning to its beginning, Johann Gottfried Herder and the birth of a new musical aesthetics in song. I listen for the global moment that is so presciently palpable in the final passage of Herder’s last major essay on song, the chapter called “Von Musik” (On Music) in the 1800 book that encompassed his aesthetic vision at the end of his life, *Kalligone*. I began with Herder’s reflections on the possibility of a global aesthetics as he embarked on his journey of discovery in 1769, and I close with his own final return to the history of song through a summation of his thought on musical aesthetics.

If one gathers, without any prejudice, the affects that melodies and songs invest in human feeling and afford to all collectivities of human society, from the family to the nation, music would rise as a narrative of miraculous tales from the lowest rung to which it has been assigned to realize its relation to the *culture of humanity*. “The concepts of music come from *transitory* impressions; either they disappear entirely, or if they are deliberately repeated from the strength of imagination, they are more burdensome than unpleasant”.³⁷ ... As we know so very well, it is music that we experience within ourselves that lifts us up from the earth at the very moment of death.³⁸

Upon returning to song, upon returning to music at the end of his own life, Herder envisions a musical aes-

³⁶ For videos of performance extracts, see, *Zaide: Eine Flucht*; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8xPPndgffRs>; most recent access on October 29, 2020.

³⁷ Herder quotes here from his own essay on immortality, Johann Gottfried Herder, “Über die menschliche Unsterblichkeit”, in *Johann Gottfried Herder Werke*, ed. Hans Dietrich Irmischer (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), vol. 8, pp. 203-219.

³⁸ Johann Gottfried Herder, *Kalligone*, in *Johann Gottfried Herder Werke*, ed. Hans Dietrich Irmischer (Frankfurt am Main: Deutscher Klassiker Verlag, 1998), vol. 8, pp. 641-964; translated in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, p. 259.

thetics embodied by a global collective, *Menge* — of choral singing and communal dance — that expands considerably upon his earlier and more comfortable reliance on speech and the philosophy of language. “We cannot listen often enough to the intimate passages that move us. How they echo, and we wish for their return without satisfaction, until we (so we imagine) absorb these passages and they become part of our soul”.³⁹ Herder’s return to history through music becomes more focused and more human, while at the same time the range of music’s aesthetic matrix becomes more expansive and more universal. Accordingly, he foresees the future, maybe even the twenty-first century, and wonders whether “the voice of the people, a song, a notable phrase, a rhyme, managed to survive”.

Herder’s late reflections on the aesthetic moment of song in the final stage of his life opened upon a vision of transcendence. Herder hesitated not at all to call that moment, having arisen from the birth of musical aesthetics, also a moment of death. That moment contained humanity and the universe, life and death. Music and aesthetics, which live through our return to them, however transitory such return sometimes is, are endowed with remarkable force, the very power to realize life itself, and to do so in the moment in which music is transcendent, when music enters the aesthetic realm beyond itself.

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³⁹ Herder, *Kalligone*; translated in Herder and Bohlman, *Song Loves the Masses*, p. 258.

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