



(LYRCD 7452)

FOLK MUSIC FROM UTTAR PRADESH, INDIA

With its tapestry of varying customs, the state of Uttar Pradesh has a rich treasury of folk musical traditions. In its simplest forms, this music penetrates the soul of the listener, for folk songs reveal the joys and sorrows of the common folk. For village people, storytelling, folk theater and folk songs are the means by which they learn about their ancient heritage. The material for this compact disc was recorded during 1972-1999 in the state of Uttar Pradesh, concentrating on rural villages in the districts of Kanpur, Unnao, Raibarely, Lucknow, Hamirpur, and Varanasi.

The best part of recording and spending time in the villages is the simple lifestyle. Almost everybody, young or old, is engaged in some activity of daily chores. An outsider is a curiosity and everyone stares at you, directly or indirectly, especially if you have modern gadgets e.g., cameras and recording equipment and city clothing. Striking up a conversation with any man is easy. Almost every night, I heard music going on in some part of the village. The music you hear on this CD was recorded at such informal gatherings.

Traveling to villages is an adventure in and of itself. The most common conveyances are local buses and indigenous three-wheel scooter-taxis, into which travelers are packed like sardines, while regulars hang precariously from the frame of this moving machine. There is no schedule, so it is in your interest to take any transportation available until you reach your destination. However, these traveling challenges are worth facing, in order to hear traditional folk ensembles.

Over the years, changes are noticeable everywhere, just like spring growth in your garden. Adaptations to urbanized Western and Indian movie-oriented lifestyles are budding in all segments of the rural population, and it seems that folk music is faring poorly. Still, life in the villages has its own pace and charm. One only wonders how long it can last!

[1] Purvi (7:03) - A song style popular in eastern Uttar Pradesh. Sandar Kavval Party (Ram Prasad, Suraj, Munnulal, Radhey Shyam and Vijay Kumar)., Varanasi city. Instruments: dholaka, harmonium, and dhapali.

In the village of Gokul, milkmaids are longing, cruel Krishna has left us in great pain. For what fault has he forgotten to remember us; he has shot our heart with the bullet of separation; He is staying with co-wife. Around the banks of the Yamuna and under the kadam tree; I searched for him all around the fragrant groves; I can't find the cruel king of Gokul. He has not come nor has he sent any letter; day and night, I can't forget Krishna's face; all my body is burning like a gas O cruel one. He has lost himself in the company of his hunchback co-wife; he did not come to show his face; cruel one has sent a message through Udho. O Lalacan [composer], now they will not be patient; they will go to the city of Mathura to fight; they will pull the hunchback co-wife's hair.

[2] Phag (4:07) - Another festival of great significance is Holi (Festival of Color), which is musically one of the most popular. Anything goes during this festival: merry-making, singing serious as well lewd songs, displays of humorous acts and dialogues (often with sexual overtones), throwing colored water and/or smearing dry powder on people and hugging everyone among same sex groups. Groups of Holi singers tour their neighborhood, singing traditional Holi songs before, during, and after the festival. Jhaulal, Ramnath, Sadhulal and Param Sukh of Nandana village, Kanpur Rural district. Instruments: dholaka and jhika.

Dear husband, let's go to the groves of Braj. In the dense groves of Vrindavan, there are many peacocks sitting with their feathers together. Krishna is collecting the feathers which fall on the ground; out of those feathers, he makes a crown. With that crown on his head, Krishna is dancing.

[3] Kajari (4:54) - Swinging songs are popularly sung during the rainy season. It is a wonderful sight to behold a group of men or women in colorful attire, swinging in a grove or in front of their homes, singing and giggling. Daughters-in-law traditionally go to their parents' home during the month of Savana, a great time for music-making and festivals. These songs are called Savan, Kajari, and Jhula ke Git. Hira Lal and Party of Varanasi. Instruments: dholaka, karatala, and manjira.

Where did Krishna come from? It is drizzling. Where did Radha come from? It is drizzling. Krishna came from Gokul. Radha came from Barasana. How old is Krishna? How old is Radha? Krishna is twelve and Radha is thirteen. Where did the sandalwood board come from? Where did the silken rope come from? The sandalwood board came

from Gokul. The silken rope came from Barasana. The swing has been put on a branch of the kadam tree. Darling of Krishna [Radha] is swinging. All the girl-friends are singing kajari. People from Cauka Ghat sing this with delight.

[4] Bhajan (5:39) - Devotional song. Khaggu, Nandlal, Kamalu, and Bharose of Tahirapur village, Unnao district. Instruments: two dhapali, jhanj, and manjira.

Just a while ago, they were playing outside, but now they have taken the path of ascetics. Mother Kausalya came out to search for them, but couldn't find them. Both brothers have gone to the forest, following the long forest paths. Rama leads the way, Lakshmana is behind, and in the middle Sita looks beautiful; thus they proceed towards Citrakuta through the forest. Without Rama, my Ayodhya is desolate; without Lakshmana, there is no lordliness; without Sita, my kitchen is empty. Who is there to serve and who will eat? In the month of Savana and Bhadau, clouds thunder and rain, and the easterly wind is blowing hard. Perhaps both brothers, Rama and Lakshmana, are getting soaking wet under a tree. Inside, mother Kausalya is crying; outside brother Bharata. Tulsidas says: "Recite the name of God, Vibhisana became the king of Lanka."

[5] Bhajan (4:17) - Sung by Rama Shankar, a blind musician from Varanasi city, accompanying himself on dhapali.

In which forest is Krishna playing the flute? People are sad without food and fish are fluttering without water. Without her husband, the faithful wife is suffering and heart broken. After bathing in the Ganges, I worshipped the sun and prayed. But, oh fate, what wrong have I done that I have a mediocre man in my fate? There is a red bed with red linen and a thin sheet; be careful when getting on the bed, because the beautiful woman is sleeping. For all this sorrow, there is only one remedy, the Guru; Ram Nagina sings: "Oh God, your ways and means are beyond understanding."

[6] Bhagat (7:26) - Bhagat is a typical singing style of the Kol tribals in the Bundelkhand region. The Bhagat is a religious song sung during Ramanavami (Rama's birthday) and other religious festivals. Singing is accompanied by two-drum set call Nagariya, dholaka, and jhangh.

[7] Lahacari (5:06) - Lahacari (also called Lacari Acari, or Devi Git, Song of the Goddess), is typical of the Yadav (the caste which traditionally raises animals and sells milk). During festivals associated with the worship of goddesses, men's groups meet in the evenings and sing such songs well into the night. A group usually consists of 9-11 singers, arranged in a semi-circle around the drummer. Almost all singers play Jhanjh (cymbals), about 8-10 inches in diameter. When the tempo is fast, some of the singers get up and dance. (Lallu Yadav, lead singer)

Song Nos. 6, 7, and 8 were recorded in Bidokhar village by thirteen musicians (Chandrabhan Singh, Raghunandan Kus, Lallu Yadav, Shankar, Udhav, Bacca, Ramsevak, Ram Asre, Badalu Ram, Raj Narayan, Vir Bahadur, Ran Vijay Singh, and Daya Ram. The lead singers were noted experts for the styles of songs they sang. Eight of

the musicians played Jhanjh. Daya Ram, Vir Bahadur, and Ran Vijay Singh took turns playing Dholak for different songs.

The gardener's wife has put on Mother a garland made from the best flowers of ketai, kakanar, and cameli. With devotion, we offer Mother flowers of gulmehandi, gulanar, sevati, sarasij, sadabahar, maurasiri, and malati. Dancing with expressive gestures at Mother's pavilion, holding a worshipping-plate in our hand, we perform the arati of Mother. Listen to the prayers of 'Jitendra' (the composer) to take himself across the ocean of worldly desires. Glory to Mother's blessings!

[8] Dhimariyai (7:07): - Dhimariyai is popular among the Dhimar sub-caste (who specialize in farming and related activities) in the Bundelkhand region. Chandrabhan Singh, lead singer.

Keep reciting the name of Rama, and be patient in your mind. Only the ocean of kindness, Rama, can help you in your actions. The lord of the poor has left Sita in Lanka! Hanumana did not recognize Sita but heard her recite the name of Rama. Standing under the Asoka tree, Hanumana dropped the ring. Some fruits were brought for Sita without anyone's knowledge. Oh, Mother, please let me where these fruits are, and I will bring them in plenty. Ravana has come to the forest to persuade Sita to stray from the right path. Look at him; he would ruin Lanka!

[9] Khari Phag (5:21) - A typical style of singing Holi song with intense rhythm in between phrases. Vir Bahadur, lead singer)

Let's meet and be friends as you proceed towards your last journey, because there will be no meeting afterwards. Congratulatory songs were sung at the time of your birth; one cries as you depart. All your houses and two-story palaces and wealth will be left behind.

[10] Dhapali solo (2:22) - Performed by Rama Shankar, a blind musician of Varanasi city.

[11] Kandala music (3:07)- Two musicians play traditional wedding music. Maujilal and Gortelal from Nandana village, Kanpur Rural District.

[12] Folk Tune (1:54) - Played on the cikara, accompanied by huduka, jodi, and manjira. Khaggu, Nandlal, Kamalu, and Bharose of Tahirapur village, Unnao district.

[13] Folk Tune (2:49) - Played on the bin, accompanied by dholaka and lejama. Bakelal, Khagga and Bhaiyalal of Biraicamau village, Unnao district.

[14] Nakata (2:08) - While the groom and his party are at the bride's home for the marriage ceremonies, women of the groom's side engage in singing and merrymaking. Phoolkali, Rajkumari, and Vimla of Dhanabad village, RaiBareilly district. Instruments: dholaka and manjira.

It's raining, but Krishna has not come. It's raining in the fields and gardens; the poor gardener's wife is suffering. It's raining in the lakes and tanks; the poor washerman's wife is suffering. It's raining on the palace; the poor sister-in-law is suffering. It's raining on the bed; the poor co-wife is suffering.

[15] Katakī (3:15) During the month of Kartik, it is customary for men and women to go to a nearby pond or river early in the morning, to take bath and pray. On their way and return, the group of women sing Katakī songs. (Sadhana Sharma, Sunita Avasthi, Gayatri Sharma, and Shilam Sharma of Bidokhar village, Hamirpur district.)

The child Krishna is very cute; may he not fall down. With one hand, He is balancing his crown; with the other hand, He is holding onto a heavy mountain! In one hand, He is carrying the flute, and He is sneaking looks at his girlfriends.

[16] Savana (3:07) - See Song No. 3. Mrs. Uma Misra and Mrs. Maya Shukla of Kanpur city.

On my way to my husband's country, I lost my way. Oh husband, I am solely dependent on you now. Mother gave me a sari of five colors, father gave the dowry, brother gave a horse to ride on, and brother's wife put sindura in my part. Mother says to come back every day, father says to come every six months or so, brother says come when there is some occasion, but brother's wife says there is no need to come at all. When I left, mother cried like a flowing river, and father cried as far as the outskirts of the village; brother cried so much that his dhoti got wet, but brother's wife was laughing.

THE INSTRUMENTS:

Bin: a bagpipe, also called masaka.

Cikara: a bowed instrument, similar to the sarangi.

Dhapali (Daphali): a skin-covered tambourine, also known as khanjari.

Dholak: a popular barrel-shaped cylindrical drum whose two heads are played by hands.

Huduka: an hourglass-shaped drum

Kandala: a huge bugle-like instrument, about 6-feet long.

Karatala: an instrument consisting of four wooden pieces, 8" x 2 1/2", in which round metal pieces are set. Sometimes four bow-shaped pieces of solid iron, about 7" long, are used instead.

Lejama: a bow-shaped bamboo stick, 4 1/2 feet long, onto which a chain of iron rings is hooked at both ends. Small round pieces of metal are inserted in each ring.

Jhanjh is a pair of cymbals, about 8-10 inches in diameter, made of brass.

Jhika: a rectangular wooden frame, 12" x 3", in which metal plates are woven through iron bars. Also known as jhanjh.

Jodi: similar to manjira, but bigger in size, producing a louder tone.

Manjira: a pair of small brass cymbals.

Nagariya: two-drum set played with two sticks.

DR. LAXMI GANESH TEWARI, Ph. D.

Trained as ethnomusicologist at Wesleyan University, Dr. Tewari has studied Indian classical vocal music in the guru-shishya-parampara (teacher-disciple-relationship) tradition; Turkish music and Ghanaian drumming. He has conducted numerous field researches to India, Turkey, Trinidad and Tobago, and Fiji. He enjoys sharing his first-hand experiences with the musics of South and Southeast Asia, the Middle East, and African in the 'teaching what you know best' theory.

CREDITS

Produced and recorded by Dr. Laxmi G. Tewari

Graphics by John Ostendorf



Lyrichord Discs Inc.

PO Box 1977 Old Chelsea Station

New York, NY 10011 Ph: 212 404 8290 Fax: 212 404 8291

email: nick@lyrichord.com Web: www.lyrichord.com

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