



Hidden Faces Of Ancient Indian Song

Solveig Mcintosh



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In India, music has never become a written art as it has in the West. Historically, music often seems to have been a means of communicating essential qualities, speaking in religious and mystical terms of what could not be put successfully into words. The tradition of music in India is a more encompassing concept than it is generally in the West; it includes a complex web of thoughts, ideas and philosophy that have influenced its practice. Hidden Faces of Ancient Indian Song traces a progression from basic principles of sound to different kinds of musical composition, from simplicity to complexity, from the finer concepts of sound to their incorporation within different forms of music. The author delineates a vocabulary for expressing different qualities and aspects of manifest and unmanifest sound. As a focus for the physical approach to sound, three concepts are used: the ear, the mouth and the hand, representing sound, language and gesture. The author looks closely at Vedic accents in order to illustrate the relationship between two fundamental laws; between the law of three as demonstrated in the recitation of Vedic mantras, and the law of seven as used in various ancient ascending and descending scalar forms. The issue of style, as the expression of the concepts outlined earlier in the book, is also considered closely, where musical structures are examined alongside the use of many forms of tonal movement (gamaka). The book will appeal to ethnomusicologists, philosophers, linguists and anthropologists.

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