



University of HUDDERSFIELD

University of Huddersfield Repository

Sahota, Hardeep Singh

Bhangra: Mystics, music and migration

Original Citation

Sahota, Hardeep Singh (2014) Bhangra: Mystics, music and migration. University of Huddersfield Press, Huddersfield. ISBN 978-1-86218-123-6

This version is available at <http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/21237/>

The University Repository is a digital collection of the research output of the University, available on Open Access. Copyright and Moral Rights for the items on this site are retained by the individual author and/or other copyright owners. Users may access full items free of charge; copies of full text items generally can be reproduced, displayed or performed and given to third parties in any format or medium for personal research or study, educational or not-for-profit purposes without prior permission or charge, provided:

- The authors, title and full bibliographic details is credited in any copy;
- A hyperlink and/or URL is included for the original metadata page; and
- The content is not changed in any way.

For more information, including our policy and submission procedure, please contact the Repository Team at: E.mailbox@hud.ac.uk.

<http://eprints.hud.ac.uk/>

Foreword

The study of Bhangra has a new and welcomed addition in helping to understand its evolution as a folk song and dance from the Panjab in South Asia, to its hybrid formation as British Bhangra. Post-war work that charted the development and rise of this genre in Britain and the USA includes scholars, researchers, DJs and arts curators such as Gerd Baumann, Sabita Banerji, Gayatri Gopinath, Sanjay Sharma, John Hutnyk, Ashwini Sharma, Virinder Kalra, Rajinder Dudrah, Simon Redgrave, Punch Records (Birmingham, UK), Gursharan aka Boy Chana, Anjali Gera Roy, and Falu Bakrania amongst others. To this list we can now add the name of Mr Hardeep Sahota who has, in parts, taken up aspects of this former work and developed his own project concerning Bhangra as a popular art form.

The book presented here is the legacy of the Bhangra Renaissance project (which Sahota explains in the pages that follow), and also arises out of a number of other related endeavours that the author has been involved with over the past several years. These have included research conducted during his Masters by Research awarded from the University of Huddersfield in 2012 (for which I acted as the external examiner), ventures undertaken through his role as Creative Director of VIRSA, his on-going seva/service in the Sikh Gurudwaras and melas of Huddersfield and surrounding areas, and the gathering of oral histories and ephemera related to Bhangra dance and music.

Mr Sahota's book is a balance between being partly academically researched at Master's level and partly aimed at lifelong learning audiences interested in global and cosmopolitan popular cultural forms. The book could work well with assistance from teachers for use in the Music subject area in secondary schools as well as being a good introductory overview of the development of Bhangra in the Panjab and overseas for a more scholarly audience from A-level onwards. The contents of the work cover the following areas: the etymology of the term Bhangra from a number of different and competing perspectives; an examination of the musical traditions of Panjabi Sangeet; Bhangra dance and Indian mysticism; a focus on some of the key and pioneering folk artists of Bhangra; a consideration of what the author terms as the 'renaissance' of Bhangra dance and music in the contemporary moment; to a look at the global reach and development of the genre. One of the innovative features of this book is its contribution to studies of Bhangra by looking at the genre through a different approach beyond textual analysis of the music and lyrics alone. Sahota offers an interesting and challenging cultural argument of the music as also having its roots and routes as possibly located in and being worked through faith-based social groups and spiritual networks across mystical interpretations of Hinduism, Sikhism and Sufi Islam. It will be interesting to see what other scholars and aficionados of Bhangra dance and music make of this proposition. The publication also benefits from being heavily illustrated with historical, ephemeral and even originally commissioned images that help bring to life some of the arguments being made. This includes artwork from Karachi based artist Sara Rizvi, photographs by Bradford based Tim Smith, and illustrations by Zara Hussain.

A respectable study of a particular genre or text pays homage to what has gone before, as well as helping to develop that work in new and possibly exciting ways for future scholars, users and readers of the form. Bhangra: Mystics, Music & Migration is a fine contribution in the good tradition of this kind of work which I hope will be enjoyed by different generations of readers and lovers of Bhangra dance and music.

Dr Rajinder Dudrah, Senior Lecturer in Film and Media Studies, University of Manchester, UK
Author of Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond (2007)