

Jazz and race in colonial India:

The role of Anglo-Indian musicians in the diffusion of jazz in Calcutta

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Abstract

Musical forms such as ragtime and jazz were played in Calcutta's hotels and clubs, important institutions in elites' social life in colonial India. The musicians could be European or American, when a foreign band was hired for a season. Some of these formations tended to include Anglo-Indian members. Anglo-Indian musicians acted as go-betweens, passing down the theoretical knowledge of western harmony as well as the practice of western instruments to the generations of post-Independence India. Moreover, they were the first Indian musicians to perform jazz and blues standards in Calcutta or Bombay, around World War II. Thus, they played a major role in the diffusion of jazz and blues music in India.

Keywords: Anglo-Indians; India; race; Roy Butler; Teddy Weatherford

The history of jazz has often been reconstructed around the idea of an essentialist 'jazz tradition', which unifies, in an evolutionary progression, all the various genres, places, styles and historical contexts of jazz, as suggests DeVeaux (1998: 489). Jazz history could also be grasped as the multiple stories, sometimes parallel, sometimes divergent, of the different branches related to the places and the social worlds where it was played and listened to. In these locations, local musicians and audiences developed different, if not competing, definitions of jazz. India is one of the quite unknown places in its history, and is yet to be written. There is abundant literature on the relationship between jazz and classical Indian music, from Coltrane to Shakti, what has been coined 'fusion' or 'Indo-Jazz' in the 1960s

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(Berendt 1987; Farrell 1988, 1997). But it's always in the direction of hybridization conceived as a mixture of musically heterogeneous substances that their reports are focused. In the first and seminal study on jazz in India, Warren Pickney Jr. insisted on the musicological aspects of acculturation, with a study of a couple of Indian recordings, that he labelled 'Native Indian' Indo-Jazz, by Braz Gonsalves, a Goan saxophonist, who began his career in Calcutta in the 1950s, and then played in Bombay and in Delhi (Pinckney 1989). Gonsalves illustrates the major contribution of Anglo-Indian musicians to the diffusion of jazz in India.

According to the *Constitutional Law of India* (1950), "an Anglo-Indian" means a person whose father or any of whose other male progenitors in the male line is or was of European descent but who is domiciled within the territory of India and is or was born within such territory of parents habitually resident therein and not established there for temporary purposes only' (Basu 1998: 460). This article appeared for the first time in the *Government of India Act* (1935), in which the various minorities of India, according to ethnicity, religion or caste, were granted specific rights.

Thus, the Anglo-Indians are defined as a legal category, comprising all descendants of male European settlers, under the Indian Constitution. This category includes not only Anglo-Indians of British descent, but also Goans, of Portuguese extractions, and all the descendants of French, Dutch or Spanish male ancestors (Caplan 2001; Dorin 2005). From a cultural point of view, Anglo-Indians and Goans have played a leading role in the circulation of jazz in India as music lovers, but also as musicians, firstly for European audiences and then, gradually, for Indian audiences in the decades after Independence. Through their interactions with European and American musicians, they contributed to the making of an Indian version of jazz and the diffusion of this cultural form.

Jazz circulated in India very early, in the major cities of the colony, Bombay, Delhi, Madras and Calcutta. Even if Madras or Bombay's jazz scenes have also been very active (Fernandes 2011), I focus here on the major role of Calcutta in the cultural economy of colonial India. The Anglo-Indian community, by its size and scope,² had a deep impact on the cultural

2. 'Anglo-Indian' took over other denominations, such as 'Eurasian', in official census and reports from 1911. In the last census where this category was used in statistics, in 1941, the whole community in India was not over 250,000 persons, and Calcutta, with 29,000 members, was the largest regional community, before Madras. After 1941, the census used the category of 'Christians', which is less relevant to identify the size of the community, which was estimated, in 2001, as less than 120,000 people, due to emigration since Independence in 1947. See Caplan 2001 and Dorin 2005.

life of the city. In fact, Calcutta, because of its legacy as the ancient capital of India—until 1911—was the epicentre of the distribution and acclimatization of western cultural forms, particularly jazz music for the decades preceding World War II, which was revealed to be a turning point in the history of the circulation of jazz in India.

In this essay, I would like to emphasize the role of the Goanese and the Anglo-Indians in the diffusion of jazz in colonial India. They acted as cultural mediators, because they have contributed more than any other social group to the transmission of cultural forms during the Raj, between the colonizers and a tiny Indian elite. In these cultural forms, jazz provides an eloquent example for the role played by music in the redefinition of social and racial boundaries in India.

Musical antecedents of jazz in colonial India

The idea that jazz and rock culture emerged in India with globalization during the 1990s exaggerates the role of the media and global cultural industries and underestimates the historical depth of the diffusion of western popular music in India. Even though there is no official date for the arrival of jazz, there is some evidence that jazz hit the shores of India as early as the 1920s³ (Dorin 2005; Fernandes 2011). But, in the same manner as in Britain, the early circulation of American culture in the nineteenth century has conditioned the way jazz was perceived and received in India. And, only a few years later, black and blackface minstrel shows circulated in India. If T. 'Daddy' Rice was an early visitor in Britain in 1836, the San Francisco Minstrels toured Australia and India in 1849 thanks to their agent, William H. Bernard, according to the German discographer Lotz.⁴ They were followed in the 1860s by Joe Brown and, in the 1870s, by the song and dance team of Booker and Canfield.

Harry Reynolds, himself leading a company of minstrels in Great Britain, reported that Dave Carson has boasted of having driven for the first time a band of minstrels in India in the late 1860s. Reynolds told also the story

3. H. J. Collett, a journalist, wrote one of the first stories of jazz in India, for the *Illustrated Weekly of India*. He interviewed one of the most well-known Anglo-Indian jazz musicians of the times, Hal Green, who explained that 'the roots of jazz were planted in India in the year 1917–1922. The bands consisted of piano, violin, cello, string bass and drums, and they played rag-time, foxtrots and Viennese waltzes mostly' ('Thirty Years of Jazz in India', 22 August 1948).

4. Cf. Rainer Lotz, sleeve notes, *Jazz and Hot Dance in India, 1926–1944*, Harlequin, History of Jazz series, volume 4, HQ 2013, 1984.

of Willie Freear, who became a very famous minstrel, and, once in Calcutta, decided to leave the company to embark on a one-man show at the Coronation Theatre, breaking the conventions of blackface minstrelsy. But Freear lost all his money in the show, which revealed itself to be a disaster. His luck changed the day he crossed the street and fell in front of an Indian prince, along with a British official he had already met before. He plucked up courage and stopped the prince's carriage and asked him for the privilege of presenting his show in the prince's private residency. The latter, after having sought advice from the British officer, accepted. Thus Willie Freear gave his show at the prince's house for his numerous Indian hosts. It was only the first of a long series of private engagements of this kind, engagements that made him a rich and successful artist, patronized by Indian upper classes and British expatriate bourgeoisie (Reynolds 1928: 216–17).

As Catherine Parsonage suggests, 'the early blackface performances established expectations that not only influenced the reception of black minstrels, but, aided by the latter's perpetuations, established criteria against which black performance continued to be evaluated in the twentieth century' (2005: 6). In fact, two aspects of the reception of minstrelsy in Britain can be observed in reactions to jazz: firstly, the idea that black culture differs from the white, in its simplicity and exoticism, and 'otherness', with an innate musicality; and, secondly, black entertainment, with a more realistic aspect of black life, was less popular than blackface, less threatening and lighter because of the caricature of the Negro they provided. The competition between black and blackface minstrel shows forced black minstrels to mimic themselves so as to match the expectations of white audiences.

In India, blackface and black minstrel shows enacted the racial division of music and the logics of popular entertainment in a more profound way than in Britain. In fact, there was already a racial division in the western entertainment field, with an exclusion of Indian people from both the audiences and the performers. Minstrelsy introduced another dimension, with the division between black and white performers. If there were very few black people in Britain at the time of the minstrel shows, they were even less in India. Blackface and black minstrels tended to demonstrate that there was something like a hierarchy between black and white, where black meant exoticism and primitiveness. The place of the Indian in this hierarchy was yet to be defined, under white colonial rule and its cultural domination, but above primitiveness thanks to an ancient and profound Indian

civilization. At the same time, minstrel shows offered to white audiences the first instances of black culture, even though they were received with attraction and repulsion, fascination and fear, 'love and theft', as Lott puts it (1993). Minstrel shows initiated, in India as well as in Britain, multiple disruptions in the delineation of racial boundaries, but also in the separation between popular and elite entertainment, and between authenticity and acculturation.

According to Lotz, initial contacts with these musical forms had not effectively integrated with the local culture, and coon songs, spirituals, ragtime or cakewalk remained purely alien art forms in India, of interest only to the British settlers until the 1960s. This point is in a large manner inaccurate regarding the members of orchestras, since the Goanese and Anglo-Indian musicians began to join the entertainment scene in the 1920s. At that time, grand hotels began to hire foreign orchestras and the Anglo-musicians began to play dance music and jazz with foreign musicians in these orchestras. Regarding the audiences, the vast majority of them were British, or European, along with a growing number of 'European-educated students', as the journalist in the *Illustrated Weekly of India* phrased it in his article of 1948. It is unclear, however, if they were Indians or Anglo-Indians. Some of the listeners were also members of the tiny westernized and comprador Indian elites.

This paved the way for a mixed reception of jazz and American popular culture among Indian audiences. It could also explain why it has been somehow difficult to produce a local version of jazz, since it was associated with racial prejudice and colonial domination.

Racial exclusion and popular music under the Raj: Anglo-Indians as musicians

Even if in the beginnings of colonialism in India, Indian folk and classical music was produced and received by Indians, and western classical and popular music by Westerners for colonizers and a tiny westernized Indian elite, there has been a musical and cultural proximity of the Anglo-Indians and the Goanese with Western music, and tolerance by the authorities, since the order of 1795 of the East India Company vis-à-vis the Anglo-Indian musicians (Hawes 1996).

In fact, in the early stages of colonization, the marriage of British and Indian soldiers was encouraged, especially by the Court of Directors of the East India Company, which offered 5 rupees to the mother of any child born out of any such marriage. But, by the end of the eighteenth century,

the East Asians, as they were called, were too numerous, and represented a threat to colonial domination, because, in 1776, in San Domingo, the mulattoes had revolted against the Spaniards. That is why a series of three orders have been issued between 1786 and 1795, in order to limit the size and the power of the East Asian community. The first two orders forbade East Asians to receive European education and obtain civil and military jobs in the East India Company. The third one, in 1795, limited access to the military: only young men with two European parents could join, otherwise they could only become farriers or fifers (Hawes 1996). Alternatively, they could form brass bands, getting the chance to be in the military, in touch with European culture and way of life, and benefiting from their knowledge of western music and harmony.

In his seminal study of the effect of migration and circulation of people on culture, 'Human Migration and the Marginal Man', Robert Park suggested, 'it is in the mind of the marginal man that the conflicting cultures meet and fuse' (1928: 881). This concept was applied to the case of the Anglo-Indians in India. Their status was conceived as a 'formal marginality', according to Gist and Wright (1973), since their marginality is recognized, and even granted by the law. In so far as their position in the western music field has become dominant through the nineteenth century, I would like to label the Anglo-Indians as 'musical marginal men'.

Their relative number and their high visibility in the field of music, well above their absolute numbers in the population, thus reflect two factors: the first one is pragmatic, since it is the knowledge and practice of European music through the tradition of church music, and the second one is more political, as they were tolerated alongside the colonizers in the role of entertainers and Western musical entertainment providers. Thus, the only Indian musicians allowed to perform western music, whether classical or popular, were the Anglo-Indians, granting them a place of musical formal marginality.

The politics of racial exclusion in the vast majority of the entertainment scene, like the Calcutta Club, for instance, are one major factor that influenced later the ways in which jazz circulated in India. When the Indians were allowed to enter these venues, they were either industrial or political leaders useful to the British, and dominated by them, like the Maharajas, or Anglo-Indian musicians. The entrance to clubs and hotels was not always strictly forbidden for Indians, although it could be more stringent in select clubs, such as the Saturday Club, but it was impossible to get in dressed in dhotis or not in a European suit, even decades after Independence.

Thus, the Anglo-Indians were the first Indians to be authorized in these social circles under the Raj. In these venues and clubs, new definitions of entertainment and new genres of music emerged. One can thus understand why the Anglo-Indian community played a leading role in the transmission of western popular music in India, in the circuit of clubs and grand hotels, where they provided live music, and the beginnings of jazz, but also in the movie industry, where they contributed to the diffusion of western instrumentation, western harmony and western popular music, especially jazz and then pop (Dorin 2012). In the early steps of the diffusion of jazz in India, Anglo-Indian and Goanese musicians were then the very first to listen to foreign bands and try to emulate them.

Jazz and the redefinition of racial boundaries in colonial India

The international hotel orchestras: the reception of jazz and hot dance as a distraction for colonial elites

Long before ragtime and jazz, the diverse genres of dance music in vogue were waltzes, polkas, rumbas and tangos. Goanese and Anglo-Indian people, through their knowledge and practice of Western music gained notably in the church, formed the bulk of dance musicians. However, hotels and clubs had to hire the most prestigious foreign bands, which had spent several years in the Orient, or at least to reserve the place of bandleaders for European or American musicians. Until World War II, the vast majority of orchestras employed in grand hotels such as the Grand in Calcutta or Bombay Taj Mahal were Australian, British, French, Hungarian or American.

The first jazz band to tour the major hotels in Asia, from the Galle Face in Colombo to the Raffles of Singapore, through the Grand in Calcutta and the Taj Mahal in Bombay, was Dan Hopkins Syncopated Five in 1922, according to Lotz (1984). The group, however, left no trace on record. In 1926, the Grand Hotel had signed a contract with the Canadian Jimmie Lequime, previously hired in Shanghai.

His orchestra was truly cosmopolitan because there were two Russians, Joe Speelman (tenor sax) and Monia Liter (piano), an Austrian, Victor 'Vic' Halek (tenor sax, violin), a Filipino, Nick Ampí (trombone) an American, Bill Houghton (drums) and a South African, Al Bowllly (banjo). In April 1926, Jimmie Lequime's Grand Hotel Orchestra recorded a fox trot, 'Soho Blues', for HMV, the first trace of recorded jazz in India.

An excellent performance for the orchestra, well beyond the gimmicks of hotel bands of the era, including in the US, is revealed, as shown in the

available records (Lotz 1984). They added a second title, 'The House Where The Shutters Are Green', arranged by the pianist of the orchestra, Monia Liter. Shortly after these recordings, Lequime's orchestra left Calcutta for the Raffles Hotel in Singapore. In November 1932, John Abriani's Six left Berlin for the Saturday Club in Calcutta, where they remained until 1935. In that time, the orchestra cut several tracks for the Indian label Twin, but no record has apparently been preserved, and no evidence has reached us about the quality of these recordings.

There were also black jazz bands that toured early in the East. Teddy Weatherford (1903–1945), a native of Virginia, spent much of his career as a pianist abroad, having played for some time in New Orleans and then in the Chicago circuit in the early 1920s. His core activities in jazz, and most of his recordings, were conducted in India, particularly in Calcutta in the early 1940s, where he died of cholera. He has become, beyond its importance, actual and documented in the history of jazz, a true icon for jazz fans in Calcutta, and in India in general, where every jazz buff keeps the memory of his performances in the orchestra of the Grand Hotel in Calcutta.

Cultural transactions and the diffusion of a jazz culture in Calcutta in the 1930s

In India, at the end of 1933, we can thus identify the first orchestra hiring black musicians, including Roy Butler (1899–1997), a black saxophonist from Chicago, whose souvenirs and private archives have been a major source for this study.⁵ While he had already toured Europe in several bands, Roy Butler joined Herbert Flemming and His International Rhythm Aces at the end of 1932. The orchestra received an offer to perform in South America and was found in May 1933 in Buenos Aires, with local musicians in addition to the cast for the tour. Back in Europe, the musicians played in various formations in Paris and cut a few tracks, especially for the Brunswick label. Among others, they played with Leon Abbey, Lucky Millinder and the tenor saxophonist Alfred Pratt, who subsequently recorded a few solos with the orchestra of Louis Armstrong in Paris in 1934. Herbert Flem-

5. Roy Butler's Collection, entitled *Journey of a Jazz Sideman*, has been stored at the Music section of the Chicago Public Library since 2000. It contains essential material for the rarely documented history of the circulation of black American jazz musicians in Asia, particularly India. Photographs, clippings from not easily accessible local newspapers, programs of musical evenings organized at grand hotels, and recording sessions accounts all constitute valuable traces of the presence of these musicians and their interactions with local musicians.

ming's International Rhythm Aces played one night at the Salle Pleyel but failed to win a regular appointment.

During this period they received a timely invitation from India, to play in the Grand Hotel during the winter season. The orchestra arrived in Calcutta to play at the Grand Hotel on 12 December 1933. Indeed, between December and April, just before the heat of summer, Calcutta was the most exclusive winter's city of the Empire and thus a holiday destination, where music and entertainment abounded.

<h2 style="text-align: center;">GRAND HOTEL HOGMANAY BALL</h2>		
<p style="text-align: center;">TO-NIGHT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HERBERT FLEMMING AND HIS INTERNATIONAL RHYTHM ACES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TO-NIGHT AT THE GRAND HOTEL IS THE ONLY PLACE WHERE YOU WILL BE ABLE TO SEE, HEAR AND ENJOY THEM</p> <p style="text-align: center;">DINE AT THE GRAND</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">TO-NIGHT</p> <p style="text-align: center;">HERBERT FLEMMING AND HIS INTERNATIONAL RHYTHM ACES</p> <p style="text-align: center;">FROM NEW YORK, PARIS, BUENOS AIRES AND THE MOST FASHIONABLE CONTINENTAL RESORTS.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">EVERY LADY DINER WILL BE PRESENTED WITH A BEAUTIFUL BOTTLE OF</p> <p style="text-align: center;">COTY PERFUME.</p>

Herbert Fleming and his International Rhythm Aces, Grand Hotel, Calcutta, December 1933. From left to right: H. Fleming, Cesar Rios, Crickett Smith, Cle Saddler, Roy Butler, Luis Pedroso, crouching. © Roy Butler's Collection. Courtesy Chicago Public Library

The band, housed at the Grand, included a trumpeter, Crickett Smith (1883–1947), whose voice was compared with that of Armstrong, and who was nicknamed the 'Buddy Bolden of New York', a trombonist Herb Fleming, two saxophonists, Cle Sadler and Roy Butler, a pianist, Cesar Rios, a bassist, Harlod Kumai, and finally a drummer, Luis Pedroso, of Cuban origin. Their contract ended in April and the group broke up, Fleming and Cle Sadler embarking to Shanghai where they played with Buck Clayton, while Butler, Smith and Pedroso decided to stay in India. But this residence in Calcutta was the first step in the take-off of the Indian jazz scene.

This period appears, according to Butler, to be among the happiest periods of his life as a sideman. Working as a dance-band musician was not very demanding, while the pay and living conditions were excellent. The musicians were treated like royalty by both Indian and European customers, greedy for modern American entertainment, and by the management of hotels and clubs, to whom they provided quality services, but also

glamour and prestige as jazz musicians, helping to establish the reputation of the Indian winter season under the Raj. There was a need for the circulation of American culture in India, since it was trendy in Britain, and the newspapers were reporting what was played and received in London or New York. Calcutta and Bombay were two great cities of leisure for colonial elites, in the winter season especially. Jazz was then associated with modernity and the emergence of a rapid and intense metropolitan way of life, along with electricity, the car industry, trains, boats and planes. Calcutta, Bombay, Madras and Delhi had to have jazz in their clubs and hotels, as an embodiment of modernity and freedom.

It is in this spirit that Crickett Smith's Symphonians recorded for the Indian label Rex, in Bombay, in April 1936, 'Taj Mahal', a true musical advertisement of a fox trot for the hotel. We can hear interesting solos by Teddy Weatherford on piano and Roy Butler on sax and the voice of black American drummer Creighton Thompson.

The Indianization of jazz during World War II: the role of Anglo-Indian musicians

The war and its resulting population movements accelerated the process of incorporation of Indian musicians in jazz bands, as shown in the lists of personnel involved in the orchestras during the recording sessions for this period in Roy Butler's private archives.

There is no doubt that, beyond the circulation of records and the importance of radio, direct contact with European and American jazz musicians, and their instruments and musical practices, had at least awakened Indian musicians' desire to know more about jazz music—dance programs⁶ offered in entertainment included rumba, waltz, foxtrot, ragtime; the idea of a genre labelled 'pure' jazz was not a priority, especially in this context—and their desire to play jazz in their turn. It can be noted that the incorporation of Anglo-Indian and Goanese musicians in clubs and grand hotels' orchestras began as early as the early 1930s.

One of the first predominantly Goanese bands to be regularly engaged in Bombay in the 1930s was the Rhumba Boys, with L. A. Abreu on the saxophone, Johnny Gomes on clarinet and Mike Machado on piano. But one of the first jazzmen to dominate the scene was neither Anglo-Indian nor

6. In Roy Butler's archive, one can find some programs or promotional material that Butler collected during his career. For instance, in the Programs box of the archive, there is the brochure of the Grand Hotel of Calcutta (1930s), with rumbas, Viennese waltzes and rag-time.

Goanese: this was Rudy Cotton, whose real name was Caswaji Khatau, a tenor saxophonist, who recorded with Teddy Weatherford in Calcutta between 1943 and 1944, and opened, leading his own band, the first jazz festival in India, the Jazz Yatra in 1978. It is clear that until the 1950s, most Indian jazz musicians were of European descent, that is to say Anglo-Indian, and that Rudy Cotton was an exception.

The saxophonist Roland Craën, who was to lead his own band some years after, remembered his days in the 1930s this way:

I met Weatherford around 1935 in Singapore; he worked at Raffles Hotel and I at the Hotel Adelphi ... I was, in fact, born and raised in India, where my father [Jules Craën] was leader of the Bombay Symphonic Orchestra [funded by Mehli Mehta, father of Zubin]. I was learning violin at the Conservatorium, but my first engagement with jazz musicians was at the Taj Mahal with the English Orchestra of Ken McCarthy [known as Ken Mac] in 1934.

He insisted then on the international and multiracial composition of the professional field of jazz:

It was Rudy Jackson who gave me my first clarinet (in Bombay) and Roy Butler who gave me my first lessons on tenor sax. My European origins posed no problems; on the contrary, we were musicians representing one big family of races and colours. Moreover, they were men, for whom I had, as a young musician, great respect and admiration. They were charming and simple men. Teddy was a fine fellow, always sweet and calm. He admired Earl Hines and Fats Waller enormously. The bulk of the band's programme was based on jazz, with from time to time, some Negro spirituals, sung by a vocal quartet of Creighton Thompson, Rudy Jackson, Crickett Smith and Roy Butler (Darke and Gulliver 1976: 179).

Arguably it is the direct contact between American and European jazzmen and Anglo-Indian musicians that has helped to spread the practice of jazz in India.

Roy Butler's orchestra at the Taj Mahal Hotel and the first Indian jazz bands

World War II, particularly the entry of the United States into the war at the end of 1941 and the opening of a new front in Asia, accelerated the diffusion process of jazz in India. In this regard, the most important event is without question the US decision to evacuate its citizens from India in mid-1942. Thus, the American Consul in Bombay, Howard Donovan, sent on 6 July 1942 (as evidenced by a letter received by Roy Butler) to all registered US citizens a circular urging them, 'while there is an opportunity to do so' to

quickly return to the United States.⁷ Most musicians then left, but there was still a need for entertainment, especially for the thousands of Allied soldiers stationed in India and particularly in Calcutta, where a huge camp was set up in the south of the city, on the shores of Dhakuria Lake. Roy Butler was one of those who chose not to leave:

I foolishly chose to stay. I returned to the Taj Mahal Hotel, formed a band of Indians, and played a season at Green's Hotel, which was located next to the Taj Mahal Hotel and owned by them. My short stretch as a bandleader in India was not too earth-shaking. For one thing, I had only Indian musicians to work with, all the Americans having departed, and the local musicians were not too familiar with jazz at that time. I understand that there are some very good jazzmen out there now, but the time was too short for anything to develop, good or bad. I rejoined Teddy in early 1943 (Darke and Gulliver 1977: 188–89).

Roy Butler's band in late 1942 was composed of Johnny Gomes, who was part of the Rhumba Boys, the female singer Emerald St Martin, and the saxophonist Mickey Correa. The latter, born in Mombassa, Kenya, grew up in Goa and Karachi. Before Bombay, he had already formed his own band with his brother Alec, the Correa's Optimist Band. He was invited in Bombay to play for All India Radio in 1939 and landed a contract with the orchestra of Beppo di Siati, composed of American, Filipino and European musicians. He also played with Teddy Weatherford, and, after the war, formed his own orchestra at the Taj, where he played for over twenty years in a row, a record in the profession. A recognized member of the music scene, he also played classical music with the Bombay Symphony Orchestra.

1942 is therefore a pivotal year for Indian jazz musicians, as we find in the Taj and Green's programmes, next to the band of Roy Butler, an exclusively Indian jazz band, Sonny Lobo and His Nite Club Boys, which played on Friday and Saturday nights. So, before Micky Correa and His Swing Orchestra, pianist Sonny Lobo was the first Indian musician to lead a jazz band. The trumpeter of the group was a genuine star of the Indian jazz scene: Chic Chocolate, whose real name was Antonio Xavier Vaz (1916–1967), who imitated Louis Armstrong with his physique and his way of playing he gleaned from records, photographs and newspapers. His renditions of Armstrong standards were highly appreciated among jazz enthusiasts. In 1945, he also formed his own band, Chic and His Music Makers,

7. Letter from the American Consulate in Bombay, 6 July 1942, Documents 1 box of the *Roy Butler's Collection*, Chicago Public Library.

and became a mainstay of the Bombay scene, introducing even dance music and jazz in Hindi films in the 1950s, including *Albella* (1951), in which he plays a small role (Cabral e Sa 1997: 200). Chic played sometimes in tandem with another Anglo-Indian trumpeter, Chris Perry, whose brother Joe was a well-known conductor.

Roy Butler and Teddy Weatherford in Calcutta, 1942–1945

During the war, Calcutta was another theatre of this movement of Indianization of jazz, thanks to the tutelary figure of Teddy Weatherford, himself married to an Anglo-Indian, Lorna Shorland, a singer who appeared on stage alongside him, as can be seen on many concert programmes. He led a band at the Grand Hotel from September 1940. From September 1941, he began a series of recordings for Columbia, which, if not all classified in the category of 'jazz',⁸ however, allow us, through the list of credited musicians, to have a rather good idea of the magnitude of the Indianization of jazz during these crucial years.

Thus, the personnel of the orchestra included Bill McDermott from America, and George Leonardi from France. But we shall notice on trumpet the Nepali George Banks, who was born Pushkar Bahadur Budhapriti. He took an American sounding name for the love of jazz and was one of the key figures of the jazz scene in Calcutta after the war. He was the father of Louis Banks, one of the leading figures in the Indian musical and jazz scene after 1970. The Goan Tony Gonsalves played bass. He would later on play a leading role in the film music industry and was a co-founder of Cine Musicians Association in 1952 to protect the rights of studio musicians.

A young American saxophonist is also credited on some records: Paul Gonsalves (1920–1974), who enlisted in the Quartermasters' Corps as a truck driver in Calcutta during the war. He had often played with the group. He was to join Count Basie's orchestra in 1946 after he finished his military service, and later on, the orchestra of Duke Ellington in 1950. He then played the alto sax, borrowing one from the Services' Club when he had to play. He was to play only tenor sax afterwards. His presence in Calcutta in 1944 is validated by Reuben Solomon and the interviews Roy Butler gave to Darke and Gulliver in the 1970s. Paul Gonsalves, thanks to his Cape Verdean origin, and especially his playing and singing Portuguese songs

8. In the compilation of Teddy Weatherford's Indian recording sessions (1941–45) Peter Darke did for the *Matrix* review (no. 107–108) in the mid-1970s, some titles are labelled rumba, some other blues, some vocal (mainly movie songs), one waltz, and one fox-trot.

during his childhood, could easily connect with the Goanese musicians of Teddy Weatherford's band, to the point that he could be identified as one of them by an external observer of this truly international and interracial music scene in Calcutta during the war.

It was around August 1942 that Roy Butler joined Teddy Weatherford in Calcutta. We find his presence, in September 1942, on Columbia records, such as 'One Dozen Roses'. Teddy is remembered as someone carefree, always ready to tell a joke, and as a musician, a pianist who was always efficient, able to play for hours in the middle of tipsy soldiers and sailors, with one hand if necessary, when he was given a drink for instance.

Roy's presence was thus crucial, both for the cohesion of the group constituted by all the musicians, regular or occasional, and for the musical direction of the jazz band, to the detriment of popular songs. Then, popular pieces such as 'Kiss The Boys Goodbye', 'The Last Time I Saw Paris' or 'In Waikiki', performed without improvisation, were on the set list of regular evenings for the troops in the Winter Garden. These songs from American movies had the preference of the hotel management but also of the HMV studio, so the recorded titles are not all of great interest to jazz aficionados.

Jack Armitage gave a fairly accurate account of the level of Teddy Weatherford's band's performances in the French magazine *La Revue du Jazz*:

I had taken four weeks leave in Calcutta ... I was flattered to find him flushed with pleasure at the appearance of an old acquaintance and that he would compose a programme specially for the occasion ... This evening was so dazzling I would not hesitate to place him among the great musicians in jazz. He played all the pieces I asked of him, including 'Mr. Freddie Blues', as well as a unique version of 'Twelfth Street Rag', which I had never really liked. Not only did he play marvellously solo, but proved himself as a real strength in the rhythm section. One could feel his enormous power, the solid swing of the firm left hand lifting the band ... Most of the time the band worked out in a room full of British airmen, GIs, both black and white, and Anglo-Hindus ... As the leader of the orchestra, Teddy left much to be desired. Of course, he never had the same musicians, so the ensembles suffered from a serious handicap ... for all that the brass section was good and had power.⁹

In this valuable recollection, one may note the insistence on the 'multi-racial' audience and orchestra, and thus the fact it was unusual at that time, against the segregationist American policy, and the exclusion of Indians by the British in the context of the rise of Indian nationalism. This is also why

9. Jack Armitage (1913–1991) was a British jazz critic for *La Revue du Jazz* and *Jazz Hot*. This excerpt is from Armitage (1950).

those years and those places should be regarded as moments of intense circulation of cultural forms, hitherto compartmentalized between members of ethnic groups usually separated from each other. This is one reason why Teddy Weatherford loved India, particularly Calcutta. He used to say as a joke: 'We white people are treated well here!'

Kitty Walker, of Italian descent, since her parents came from Naples and established in Calcutta, used to sing with Teddy Weatherford's band and recorded a few tracks in 1943. She remembered her days with the band at the Grand, as a happy time when musicians and music lovers from all walks of life could blend together for the sake of jazz and dance music:

Teddy got a contract and was playing at the Grand Hotel; he had a big band, three trumpets, three sax, trombones, guitarists, a drummer. We had a big band. In 1943, I got a contract to sing with him¹⁰ ... The different places, like the 300 Club, were so select ... Calcutta was one of the jiviest places in India ... You had cabarets from all over, France, England. You had to be a member, or you could go in with a member, as a guest.

More importantly, she evaluated the diffusion of jazz culture among Indian social circles at that time, and not only Anglo-Indians:

Music has the ability of blending people together, from all walks of life; there were also Indian people, from the upper strata, that also came onto the musical scene. From that, a lot of the ideas of bands playing and the attitudes and guidelines of music were implemented into the Indian music culture, and now you have Indian musicians who play western music very well.¹¹

The massive presence of Anglo-Indians is a good indicator of the process of cultural transmission that took place during these critical years. But we do not believe in the fiction of a suspension of racial tensions because of war, as this episode demonstrates easily:

One time, there was this American soldier—he must have been a Southerner. He was standing right in front of the stage and he had this little black bear with him. Teddy always had a white sharkskin suit whenever he played, always immaculately dressed. He was smiling away, playing a solo, looking happy, when, for no reason at all, this soldier said, 'Here Teddy, here's your brother!' and chucked the bear at Teddy. Of course, the bear went flying about ten feet through the air, his claws came out, and he got hold of Teddy's sharkskin coat and

10. Kitty Walker is credited on the title 'Out of This World', with Teddy Weatherford and His Band, in May 1943 (Cold FB40315). See Darke, *Matrix*, no. 107–108, n. d.

11. Personal interview with Kitty Walker, 1999.

tried to climb. He ripped it to shreds and, of course, got a few claw marks on Teddy. It might have amused a few American fellows there, but it didn't amuse Teddy, or anyone else. Teddy took it very well. He wanted to set about this fellow but it wasn't wise (Darke and Gulliver 1976: 186–87).

There used to be indifference from the colonial elites, British or comprador, to the local population to levels hardly imaginable, during the great famine of 1943, which claimed over a million and a half dead. This was the direct result of wrong decisions taken by the colonial authorities of Bengal (Arnold 1988). Nevertheless, the circulation of cultural forms continued to operate within the Indian elite and Anglo-Indian musicians, who gradually came to dominate the population in certain areas of the entertainment industry and jazz music scene.

Thus, from late 1942 to early 1944, Teddy Weatherford and Reuben Solomon continued to record pieces for Columbia, mostly songs from American musicals designed to make people forget the hardships of war and to enhance soldiers' morale. The meeting of two orchestras gave birth on certain occasions to the All Star Swing Band, who recorded eight songs, including 'One Dozen Roses' in September 1942. But this did not prevent Weatherford from playing some more ambitious piano solos, from a jazz point of view, thanks to the support of Roy Butler, such as the series led by Sinclair Traill: the latter was an eminent jazz enthusiast, becoming editor of the famous *Jazz Journal* in 1948. In wartime service in the RAF, he conducted the session in which Weatherford recorded in August 1942 'Basin Street Blues', 'Memphis Blues' and 'St Louis Blues'.

At that time, in addition to visiting musicians, new Indian musicians came onto the jazz scene and took some sort of crash course at the Grand. As for overnight guests, we find, including on recordings, presented as an American musician, Bob Lee of the US Air Force, who recorded with the orchestra several popular songs such as 'So Long Sarah Jane', 'Blue Rain', and 'Hello America, Hello' with the Hutson Sisters, a local imitation of the famous Andrews Sisters. Bob Lee, a pseudonym of the famous Bob Merrill (1921–1998), cut some records with Teddy Weatherford in Calcutta between January 1944 and January 1945.

Roy Butler, meanwhile, left Calcutta in October 1944 after another, particularly intense, Japanese bombing on the city had made him decide to take the first boat bound for the United States. The last session of recordings known with Teddy Weatherford and the rest of his band was held with Bob Lee in January 1945, this time not for Columbia but for HMV. These pieces are popular songs, such as 'Together', 'When Irish Eyes Are Smiling'

and 'Make Way For Tomorrow'. A few weeks later, Teddy Weatherford contracted cholera in the hotel and died in less than forty-eight hours at the Presidency General Hospital, on 25 April 1945 at the age of forty-one. He was an early victim of the epidemic, probably spread by rats. The army forbade its men to drink anything in town. Teddy Weatherford's disappearance marked the end of a very rich period in overseas jazz history, characterized by the transmission of this cultural form through Anglo-Indian musicians in contact with excellent European and American musicians. The war had thus constituted a watershed in the Indianization of jazz.

Conclusion

The development of jazz in India has been quite incomplete, since jazz circulated firstly among the marginal Anglo-Indian community. This characterization of the story of jazz in India lies in the ambivalence of jazz: as a western popular music, jazz remains associated with colonial rule and foreign cultural domination, a nostalgia that strongly infuses Anglo-Indian culture. Because of the racial division of popular music the British produced, the Anglo-Indians, as the musical marginal men, played a major role in the acclimatization of this musical form in India. They were the first and only Indian actors in the development and circulation of jazz until World War II.

There is a paradox of the globalization era: it has revived the legitimacy of the story of jazz in India (Fernandes 2011), because of its historical depth, which proved that the links between Indian and American cultures were tied very early. Thanks to the international connexions of the jazz worlds and the hybridization of musical forms, there is even a form of national pride to claim a re-assessment of Indian participation, even if small, in the global jazz tradition. Jazz is then not only conceived as an Anglo-Indian heritage after Independence, but as a popular music that connects India and the West, even if the Indianization process of jazz has not been complete, or even gone as far as it did in other places, such as South America or France. But this claim of legitimacy is rooted in its colonial past, and, therefore, is a mixture of nostalgia, ambivalence and cultural pride.

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