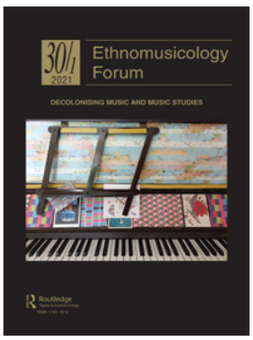
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Analysing Indian Ocean's *Kandisa*: a dialogue with decolonisation

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ABSTRACT

This article provides justification for the minority scholar trained in 'elite' music analysis (my term) to apply voice-leading analysis to rock band Indian Ocean's fusion number *Kandisa*. In so doing, I find a meaningful new way to address decolonisation debates in music. Born and schooled in India, and now based in Ireland, I first reflect on recent tensions around music theory's white racial frame as argued by Philip A. Ewell in his 2020 article 'Music Theory and the White Racial Frame', for *Music Theory Online*. I ask what this means for a minority scholar whose non-luxury training in Western art music (henceforth WAM) and its theory has – curiously – placed me on the fringes of music academe. A close reading of *Kandisa* is presented next, as an engagement with musical minutiae via a language that I argue is far more accessible and meaningful (to me, my fellow Indian friends and colleagues, and the band members themselves) than any 'Indian' music terminology. Recognising the potential for this viewpoint to cause a stir amongst ethnomusicologists who have had the double good fortune to train in WAM *as well as* its Indian counterparts, I recontextualise *Kandisa* through the lens of decolonisation literature which includes Audra Lorde, Tuck and Yang, and Sunaina Kale, to name just a few.

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Part I: Music theory, tonality and postcolonial Ireland

Robert J. C. Young poses the following questions in the introduction to his text on postcolonialism (Young 2003:1):

> Have you ever been the only person of your own colour or ethnicity in a large group or gathering? … Do you feel that your own people and country are somehow always positioned outside the mainstream? Have you felt that the moment you said the word 'I', that 'I' was someone else, not you? … Do you ever feel that whenever you speak, you have already in some sense been spoken for? Or that when you hear others speaking, that you are only ever going to be the object of their speech? Do you sense that those speaking would never think of trying to find out how things seem to you, from where you are?

For the better part of 20 years, I would have always responded in the affirmative to the above questions, while also deliberately avoiding any lengthy engagement with such

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discourse. While this article presents a music analysis of a popular song from the Indian sub-continent, it is also a (self) conscious attempt to respond differently to the questions above. Before I move forward, however, I would like to provide some contexts for my writing to follow, including a case-study analysis and situation of it in broader debates of decolonisation. At this time of writing, music analysis has emerged for the second time from the shadows of musicology and ethnomusicology, though for rather different reasons. Let us consider two moments in its history, exemplified in quotations below (spanning over 30 years between them)

> These new analyses are, as always, conducted at different levels of sophistication and insight. Even the best of them leave the reader uneasy. They come up with fascinating data and with undoubtedly relevant data; yet one always has a sinking feeling that something vital has been overlooked. (Kerman 1980:320)

> I argue that the white racial frame is very much active in music theory today, with respect to the composers we choose to analyse and teach, and the theorists we tend to study and admire. (Ewell 2020, *Music Theory Online*)

Some readers will not need reminding of the second quotation, since 'Schenkergate' ended up making its way into Facebook feeds and Twitter timelines in my native India. But for those readers who need more information, let me offer a quick recap: in 2019 for the Plenary Session of the Annual Conference of the Society for Music Theory, Philip A. Ewell offered a paper on the 'white racial frame' of US music theory which placed him – a Black music academic – at the heart of the subsequent Schenkergate controversy. Ewell's assault on music theory's whiteness (which flourishes because of the exceptionality and superiority of certain individuals) caused him to critique a music theorist called Heinrich Schenker (1868–1935) whose work casts a long shadow on music theory texts spanning many decades (from Ian Bent's seminal *Analysis* to Steven G Laitz's *The Complete Musician*). What happened next is that the *Journal of Schenkerian Studies* (JSS) which trades in Schenker graphs as academic currency, put out a hurried compilation of replies to Ewell's Music Theory Online article (from senior music theorists). This in turn received public condemnation on social media platforms from many academics, graduate students and laypersons, because of the flimsiness of many of the published responses, but also because the JSS did not invite Ewell to respond. US music theorist Megan Lavengood's overview of the scandal and subsequent outcry is available to read via her own website (Lavengood 2020) though the real-time responses on Twitter and other platforms should also be considered a rare example of music theory's wider impact outside academic platforms. Further accusations of music theory's white racial frame have been so widely disseminated (Indian music teachers for example have shared links to Ewell's talk alongside YouTuber Adam Neely discussing, nay, lambasting music theory) that it is impossible to ignore the conundrum that I now face, as a graduate music analyst of popular music who also identifies as a minority scholar.

For the purposes of the present article, it is vital that I revisit Ewell's main argument, and consider his accusations in the spirit with which they were intended: to dismantle unfair systems of knowledge acquisition and expose racially suspect modes of music scholarly inquiry as academic capital that benefits white persons. As a scholar of colour (not Black, but Brown) I have a vested interest in pursuing similar lines of inquiry as Professor Ewell; my minority status as (I presume) the only Indian-

Iranian graduate student studying music analysis in Irish academia (University College Cork) means that I occasionally find existing knowledge systems oppressive also. But the problem arises when Ewell (and his supporters) attack *all* music theories as a fundamentally racist enterprise. Compare Ewell's words here – 'of course we should seek solutions to the problems created by our racialized structures, but we must also reframe how we understand race in music theory … ' with his subsequent critique of Schenker – 'Schenkerian theory is an institutionalized racialized structure – a crucial part of music theory's white racial frame – that exists to benefit members of the dominant white race of music theory' (Ewell 2020) and consider what such overemphasis on what he terms 'colorblind racism' means in the context of decolonisation of music academic knowledge. Ewell's rhetoric conjures up powerful images of dyed-in-the-wool theory professors (like the JSS brigade) scrambling for cover from the barrage of abuse levelled at them on social media (and probably via private communication also). It turns Heinrich Schenker (who might easily have been forgotten by now) into a powerful emblem of white supremacy – a purveyor of all that is toxic in WAM culture.

And so, even as Ewell's piece shines light on race, it remains silent on class. It overlooks the diversity problem in a university education which shows how students from certain privileged socioeconomic backgrounds can access music academic knowledge (including and especially theory and analysis) while working-class people remain at a strong disadvantage owing to their lack of prior knowledge of WAM. (Sean Coghlan's 2021 BBC report on how this unequal system applies also to poor whites can be read here: https://www.bbc.com/news/education-55804123, accessed 24 February 2021).

Back to music academia, the whitewashing of Schenker (as critiqued by Ewell 2020) takes place on the grounds of a neoliberal music academia; in less privileged contexts (certainly in my native India, where WAM is also practised by the working class, and in the Irish university department where I took my Master's degree), Schenker lives on mainly because some students find his analytical methods useful in expressing their own musical creativity. Their take-it or leave-it approach has certainly been my own experience, and Schenkergate 2020 seems far too steeped in privileged academic politics and power struggles to offer a corrective alternative to the more madcap theories of Schenker. In any case, this paper is about how his codified technique of graphic music analysis can be a useful addendum to ethnomusicological work on decolonisation, especially when the subject matter falls outside the classical canon.

Before I dive into the analysis, I would like to provide clarification on a few more technical matters, to absolve certain people from the necessarily harsh critique of Ewell and his supporters, which, despite its timeliness, risks tarring many with the same Schenker brush. Because of my non-traditional, performance-based background (I did not study for an undergraduate music degree at university), my training in this 'elite' music analytical system[1] was emphatically different from that of my Cambridge – trained Schenker teacher and his peers. They – it seemed – had studied Schenker in the original language, and in great depth, at hallowed institutions like Oxbridge and the US Ivy League. The Schenker being critiqued by Ewell and his supporters is the Schenker *they* know, but not one taught to me or my students.

My fluency in voice-leading analysis (some of it properly 'Schenkerian', some of it – as I later show – just … voice-leading analysis) owes a great deal to the practical Schenker

pedagogy of a young British music teacher Tom Pankhurst, whose website SchenkerGUIDE (schenkerguide.com) and the accompanying textbook presents the codified techniques of Schenker as one way (amongst many others) from which to engage with tonal music of the common-practice period in Western classical history (Pankhurst 2010). And here I use the term 'Western' to conjure up the musical styles I was taught, loved to listen to, and worked on as an analyst – so everything from Bach to Backstreet Boys, and utopian Bollywood dance numbers to Andrew Lloyd Webber's musicals. Where Schenker goes over the top with his hateful race metaphors, Pankhurst extracts only the most unproblematic concepts and develops a working method that elucidates tonal music's inbuilt mechanisms of expressiveness and coherence. When I wrote to Pankhurst expressing my anxiety about using voice-leading analysis (too anxious now not to identify as 'Schenkerian') in a post-Ewellian musicology, he immediately replied to say that he always knew the tensions underpinning Schenker's probing musical mind on the one hand, and the problematic epistemological contexts to which this theory belongs on the other (Pankhurst to Felfeli-Crawford, private correspondence, 4 December 2020).

As I near the end of my own doctoral journey, I am confounded by the methodological dilemma I face, and which in turn fans the flames for the rest of this article. Certainly, we see a clear example of double standards in music academia, where a knowledge system that was always exclusivist (Schenker's German language work) was first used to measure a migrant student's advanced musical literacy and competency, and later – pace one publication by Ewell – publicly denounced as a symbol of oppression. The problem is not the rejection of Schenker by ethnomusicology and other academic quarters since Ewell's piece went viral, but the profound implications this turn of affairs has for someone who has had to study the epistemology to gain access to a music education, qualification and career that cannot be obtained in the migrant student's place of birth (university music i.e. musicology is not offered in my native India).

This brings me to the central argument of this article. After nearly 7 years of advanced music theory and analysis study, I am convinced my training cannot be completely in vain; Ewell's scholarship highlights many toxic aspects of academic music theory, but does not touch upon other challenges facing the non-US minority music student (the high cost of obtaining visas; the lack of financial aid for Indian students who want to study non-STEM subjects like music; English and European language proficiency; prior knowledge of WAM). From a self-consciously subaltern position, my article tries to reinstate the value of 'elite' music analysis in order to engage with decolonisation, afresh, and this takes place via a close reading of a hybrid case-study of Indian fusion rock (Indian Ocean's *Kandisa*). As for the music theory debates, the problem lies with both parties, actually. First, Ewell, fixates on certain aspects of Western music theory (Schenker over the equally oppressive discourses of sonata theory or *Formenlehre)* to the detriment of *his* main critique, which is that Schenkerian theory sustains 'racialized systems that benefit whites and whiteness' (Ewell 2020). Next, the JSS professors who defend their privileged positions do so (with the notable exceptions of Nicholas Cook and Suzannah Clarke) by missing Ewell's point, and remaining stubbornly fixated also on the epistemological value of Schenker's method (Lavengood 2020). I avoid both pitfalls, and in what follows, deploy music analysis to reveal cross-cultural creativities that can't be figured out via any other means. I argue for a music analysis that is more than a taxonomy, via transcriptions and voice-leading graphs that tell one side of the story, and

are never to be considered an end in their own right. Ultimately, I hope to show that 'elite' music analysis is – despite the troubling ideologies it seems to prop up – a force of good for decolonisation purposes, because of its provisionality, and its ability to showcase certain learned competencies that facilitate a minority scholar's initiation into the curious and complex world of academic music.

Part II: Analysing Indian Ocean's *Kandisa*

It is tempting to present this case-study with as little preamble as possible, since Part I lays out a fairly robust context from which to proceed. There is also a conspicuous gap of academic scholarship that examines the music I am about to discuss, since it falls outside the working areas of scholars including Beaster-Jones 2014 (Bollywood) Morcom 2007 (Bollywood), and Jones 2015 (bhakti) to say nothing of the many Indianist scholars who write about art music cultures and the sub-continent (a notable exception is Sherinian 2014). In some respects, it is good that there is no precedent to follow, since this creates the possibility of a novel cross-cultural music theory pedagogy. The choice of the piece *Kandisa,* released in 2000, is 'Indian fusion', which conjures up an image of a hybrid work that resists categorical fixity. My exposure to Indian music is limited (like many urbanites) to Indi-pop of the 1990s, and Bollywood film music. As such, ethnomusicological writings on Indian classical musics once remained as alien to me as WAM scholarship is to the average Indian, though my ignorance could very well reflect *my* lack of training in elite (and in many cases casteist) classical systems of my native country. That being said, I have, for the sake of this exercise in analysis and also for my own general training gained a basic awareness (via university ethnomusicology modules) of Hindustani (North Indian) classical music, even as I deliberately deploy WAM analytical techniques including Schenkerian reduction. My analysis serves two basic functions: (1) it allows me to confront the epistemological challenge of analysing 'my music'[2] with techniques that come from the outside and (2) it allows me to reconcile aspects of my own hybrid identity from 'the music itself'. As I am the common denominator between both, I take the blurring of boundaries between my Indian and Irish musical identities to reflect a mutual regard for various knowledge systems.

Kandisa presents a striking anomaly in the context of popular music from the subcontinent. A quick Google image search should show that the band have always visually resembled rock musicians rather than pop idols. Their core appeal lies in their ability to write their own songs, which are sung in Indian languages and dialects, against non-Indian pop-rock-folk instrumentation, and 'Indian classical' vocality. Indian music media circa 2000 (when *Kandisa* was released) emphasised a bewildering range of genres and sub-genres, from devotionals to Bollywood blockbuster OSTs, to say nothing of the dominating force that is US popular music. My interest in Indian Ocean reflects a genuine admiration for their originality of craft, along with a sense of misplaced patriotism for the Indianness that they embody.

A few words on the song are in order: as the band's breakout hit, lyrics are taken from a Catholic prayer that continues to be recited in Syrian Orthodox churches in south India, and the band deliver the song in the ancient Eastern Christian language of Aramaic. As a work, *Kandisa* falls in between established genres of commercialised 'Indi-Pop', where songs are sung in *Hinglish* and 'Fusion', which features well-

respected classical and folk artists incorporating Western and Indian popular music idioms into their songs to cater to the World Music market. *Hinglish* refers to the linguistic hybridity borne out of MTV India, characterised by Indi-Pop from the mid-1990s until the present day. Verses are usually sung in Hindi, while refrains or choruses include English words.

The lack of a music video for *Kandisa*, coupled with the band's distinctly unglamorous image and their inability to be typified (even as a rock band) have all presented challenges as for the Indian market. The band's apparent unwillingness to compromise is reflected in their self-conscious remarks about their in-betweenness and Indianness. *Tabla* player and Hindustani vocalist Asheem Chakravarty states 'we don't yell or ape Western rock artists' (Chakravarty, Sen and Banerjee 2010) while Sushmit Sen, the band's lead guitarist goes a step further in his assertion that 'we are very Indian, our music, our instruments, our songs are all Indian. We cannot classify our music and we cannot even call it an amalgamation of the Western and the Eastern. We do not experiment, we express' (Chakravarty, Sen and Banerjee 2010). For Indian Ocean, this 'expression' manifests itself through carefully constructed musical processes that mimic and subvert principles of Western tonality and form which results in the formation of exactly the kind of misinformed 'first impressions' by dominant powers (and listeners) in the West. As Timothy Taylor rightly states 'interpretations aren't made solely by those in power … but hegemons have ways of ensuring that their interpretations prevail at least in those institutions that they control, such as the major record labels' (Taylor 2007: 146). Indian Ocean's members further attest to Taylor's observations when they discuss their experiences with Peter Gabriel and his label Real World. Rahul Ram, the band's lead singer and bass guitarist states that Gabriel 'found our music to be quite Western. It wasn't authentic enough'. Ram asserts that band members are only creating music that allows them to express themselves truthfully, but that Gabriel's label 'cannot see us in our own reality. And I object to someone telling me we are too sophisticated' (Ram and Chabhra 2009). A final point: when I say Indian Ocean's *Kandisa* engages in mimicry and subversion, I refer especially to Homi K. Bhabha's landmark theorisation of these processes as they pertain to the (post)colonial subject, who consciously or unconsciously deploys these strategies to push back against dominant/oppressive colonial forces. How this plays out in a single song will form the basis of the analysis that follows.

Here, then, is *Kandisa* via YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKWKDOiHVDw (24 February 2021). The table analysis that follows presents my reading of the song's key features; this analysis naturally projects details of my personal musical awareness and is not a mindreading exercise of Indian Ocean's musical decisions or moment-by-moment creativities.

The song does not end at 03.42, though it is helpful to consider what is happening until this point. Because of the repeats noted above (02.55–03.32; 03.32–03.42), which are reproduced in their entirety, *Kandisa* is already different from the bite-sized Indi-pop norm. This time around there is an increase in texture in the percussion section, which now features *tabla*, drums and a host of Indian instruments such as the *tarang* and *gabgudi* that collectively continue the rhythm cycle. This five-part AABAB song structure (Figure 1 below) contains the form of a rounded sectional binary form which, like many formal structures, does not always fall neatly into established music theoretical categories. Its first part or AAB can be reinterpreted as a simple sectional

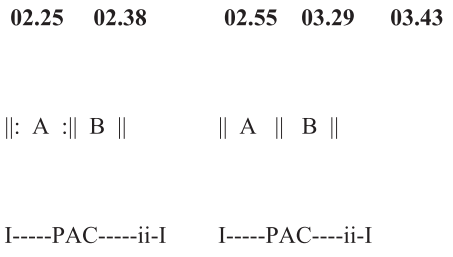


Figure 1. Formal design of *Kandisa*.

binary structure which is repeated in a slightly modified form in the second part of the song. The thematic content and harmonic structure of this verse-refrain section conforms to most principles of common-practice tonality, apart from the absence of any tonicisation or modulation, which is perhaps the most overt opposition to the European model of tonal harmony by *Kandisa*'s Indian composers. In terms of formal organisation, this structure can best be described using Wallace Berry's term 'incipient binary', that is, almost but not quite binary (Berry 1966).

Let us continue listening/analysing from where we left off.

The analytical commentary in Tables 1 and 2 presents *Kandisa* through the lens of a tonality nuanced by Indianness; performers and connoisseurs might be perplexed by such a language of analysis, since this is not a score-based composition (of WAM). In the same vein, Figure 2 presents *Kandisa's* vocalise through the lens of an idiomatic transcription. This reflects my own desire to give something back to the band, but it also shows that transcription is more valuable to the transcriber (in that we at least get to rub shoulders with the band's creative and artistic processes) than as part of a music analysis toolkit. Back to *Kandisa*, Figure 2 shows how dashed bar-lines and various ornament symbols attest to its quasi-improvisational qualities; the section fits into both the 4/4 time-signature established by the drums and the tonic harmony over which it unfolds.

Before we return to the analysis of *Kandisa*, I will provide some elaboration on the song's development. At first, the use of drums instead of *tablas* and the persistent percussion accompaniment to what is meant to be an unmetered improvisation can be interpreted as more disruptions to any kind of self-consciously 'Indian' conceptualisation. Indeed, we now observe how a nationalistic Indian art music structure (which appears to be a loosely-defined Indian fusion) is first seen to dominate the composition, but subsequently has its traditionality interrupted by explicitly tonal elements. This certainly appears to be the case, for in the following C1 section (from 04:52, Table 3 below), the electric guitar takes over the *alap*, and uses it to reaffirm both the D major tonality and the strict 4-beat time-signature. Furthermore, the guitarist eschews the virtuoso rock-guitar style of soloing in favour of an improvisation that mimics the *alapanas* found in the opening sections of raga performances by *Santoor*, *Sitar* and *Sarod* players (Figure 3).

The thematic design within *Kandisa's* three sections now looks like this (Figure 4):

The guitar confirms the role of the C section in the transformation that has taken place since the beginning of the piece. The song-writers begin the work by mimicking Western/Christian musical practices, as is reflected both in the verse (common-practice tonality) and refrain (ii-I chant cadence). The incipient binary form further alludes to the fact that this section is an imitation of Western organisational principles. Indian Ocean

Table 1. Walk-through analysis of *Kandisa*.

Duration	Structure	Analysis
00.00–01.33	Introduction, part 1.	The process of mimicry is evident in the song's opening, an eight bar Hymnody that is never heard again in the rest of the work. A four-note guitar motif precedes and accompanies the reverential solo vocal line (bars 3–8), which touches upon the notes of the D major triad, and leads into the beginning of the A section or verse (Alam Balam).
01.34–01.52	Introduction, part 2.	The rhythm cycle is introduced via guitar and drums. At 01:53, the vocal line is accompanied by backing vocals that add simple harmonies a third and fourth above the melody line, as well as by bass guitar, which reinforces the underlying tonal harmonic framework. The austerity of this Christian prayer, sung in the original language in which it was written is contrasted by the accompanying *tablas*, which establish a livelier pulse through the rhythmic figuration that sets a distinctly Indian beat cycle or *tala* in motion (for example at 01:34). The Indianness of the *tabla* figuration is then juxtaposed with a new funk-rock motive on guitar which continues over the beat cycle at 01:49.
01.49–01.56	A, Verse (Alam Balam)	Together, the *tablas* and guitar act as a lead into the A section (Alam Balam) which is repeated with elaborate ornamentations in the style of Indian classical performance as performed by the classically-trained vocalist from 01:56.
01.56–02.28	A section closure.	The guitar is then joined by cymbals and drums that add another subtle layer of opposition to the hybrid vocal line which continues to juxtapose Christian lyrics with ethnic ornamentation. The A section closes with a perfect authentic cadence in the tonic (02:24) and leads me to conclude that despite some superficial Indianisms [*tabla* rhythm cycles, ornamentations in the verse] and their prominence at certain key moments in the song, the predominantly Western harmonic and rhythmic frameworks remain unaltered.
02.28–02.39	B, *Kandisa* refrain.	Next, cymbals herald the beginning of the B section or *Kandisa* refrain (02:28, bar 45) which restates the Syrian prayer in an even more deliberately 'Indian' vocal style over the rock-flavoured guitar motive and percussion. The underlying harmony which has so far conformed to the principles of common-practice tonality now provides resistance to it by rejecting conventional cadences in favour of a ii-I plagal idea in its closing bars (from 02:36–02:39). The lack of a more familiar perfect or half-close cadence is not to be interpreted as an outright rejection of Western tonal frameworks, but a modification of them to incorporate a progression that was widely used in polyphonic music up until 1450. The ii-I motion was by far the most frequently used cadence in Gregorian chant, something that further attests to its usage in *Kandisa* as being a self-conscious identification with sacred European early music (see Randel 2003, *p*. 130).
02.55–03.32	A, Verse (repeat).	Repeat of the verse Alam Balam (A). Same materials as 01.49–01.56, but increase in percussion; texture thickens as a result.
03.32–03.42	B, *Kandisa* (repeat)	Repeat of the *Kandisa* refrain (B) leads to the ii-I closure, though the start of the next section (vocal solo) is elided at 03.42.

then introduces an elaborate C section that utilises compositional practices derived from Indian art music into this near-perfect mimesis.

As we examine *Kandisa* through analysis, we begin to observe common-practice tonality as 'both a spatialising system and a progressive, teleological system', something that is evident even in compositional devices such as the perfect cadence (Taylor 2007: 28). By allowing the cyclical structures *(alapanas)* to develop within a Western music-theoretical framework (tonic prolongation leading to a V-I perfect authentic cadence), Indian Ocean present *Kandisa* as an agent of subversion: the classical music (of European colonisers) becomes a hybrid form that appeals to urbanites and diasporic (read educated) Indians like myself, who constantly seek new ways to survive/live/thrive in the West. That being said, subversion is an analytical construct, of course, and one that is difficult to concretely pin upon Indian Ocean. But if we go a step further, we can view it in plain sight in analytical terms. Despite the sense of finality and tonal closure offered by the climactic guitar *alapana* in the last minute of the song, Indian Ocean bring back the drums, *tablas*,

Table 2. Walk-through analysis of *Kandisa*.

Duration	Structure	Analysis
03.43–04.49	C, *Raga Desh* Alapanas (Vocalise)	The ii-I cadence gives way to an elaborate and extensive raga-based section (C) that includes two *alapanas*. In Hindustani classical music, an *alapana* is an elaborate improvisation built around the notes of the raga in which it is performed. In *Kandisa*, a solo vocal *alapana* takes place over a tonic prolongation, and sparse but constant percussion. In terms of its melodic material, it abandons the hymn-like opening as well as the folk-rock style of the verse and refrain, to evoke the notes of *Raga Desh*, one of the most well-loved and easily recognisable Hindustani ragas. Of the nearly three hundred ragas of Hindustani classical music, *Raga Desh* is the one most closely associated with representations of Indianness and to feelings of being Indian, for it is this raga that forms the basis for *Vande Mataram*, the national song of India. The insertion of this Indian classical vocal solo into an otherwise radio-friendly popular song therefore merits further scrutiny. The *alapana* or *alap* in Hindustani music is unmetered, usually precedes the main body of the raga and can range from two minutes to half an hour in duration. When percussion accompaniment is introduced in an instrumental *alapana*, it heralds the end of the improvisation, so as to set the pulse and establish the beat cycle for the rest of the raga (see Viswanathan and Cormack 1998, pp. 220–222). In *Kandisa*, two *alapanas* are inserted at 03:43 (exactly halfway into the song) and they are accompanied by percussion throughout. The first *alap* begins as an *Akar-Tana* or vocalise sung to the syllable 'aah', which takes as its starting point, the root note D. It schematically exposes the notes of *Raga Desh* before weaving into the last line of the *Kandisa* refrain 'Isaraha Male' in bar 78 (04:49). This type of vocal improvisation, where words are used instead of vowel sounds, is known as *Bol-Tana*. The improvisation features a gradual ascent first to D an octave higher, then to F sharp above it, before descending rapidly to low A, and then by a skip of a fourth to the D on which the *alap* began. The singer's proficiency in classical vocal performance is evident in his ability to deliver the microtonal scales, trills and slides that are incorporated into the improvisation. If there is one thing that opposes the otherwise traditional Indian art music structures, it is the nuanced drum accompaniment that infuses the *alapana* with distinctly Western conceptions of time and metre.

guitars and unison vocals (06:48 onwards) for a final rendition of the fusion-rock verse and refrain (A and B). Bearing in mind that B lacks a strong sense of finality, owing to the ii-I movement that closes it, it is assumed that a codetta structure will follow this reprise, or at very least a more conventional fade-out will be used to conclude the song. Instead, the song ends with B, much like an Indian classical raga performance where the music simply stops at the end of a cycle, without any deliberation or cadential closure. When this final AB structure is added to the preceding 5-part AABAB and raga-based C sections, it leads one to mistakenly conclude that *Kandisa* is another example of AABAB-CAB, a combination of the ballad and one-bridge form models which occurs in popular music. If this were the case, C would be nothing more than an extended improvisation section (similar to a guitar or drum solo in a popular song) that would have little impact on the song's overall harmonic and formal framework. But in reality, the AB repeat at the end disguises the transformation of the song from a replica of pop/rock music, to a hybrid music that resists categorical fixity.

Kandisa and the use of Schenkerian notation

A useful way to consolidate this interpretation is to present it via the technique of voice-leading reduction (Figure 5). Such an approach complicates broader epistemological
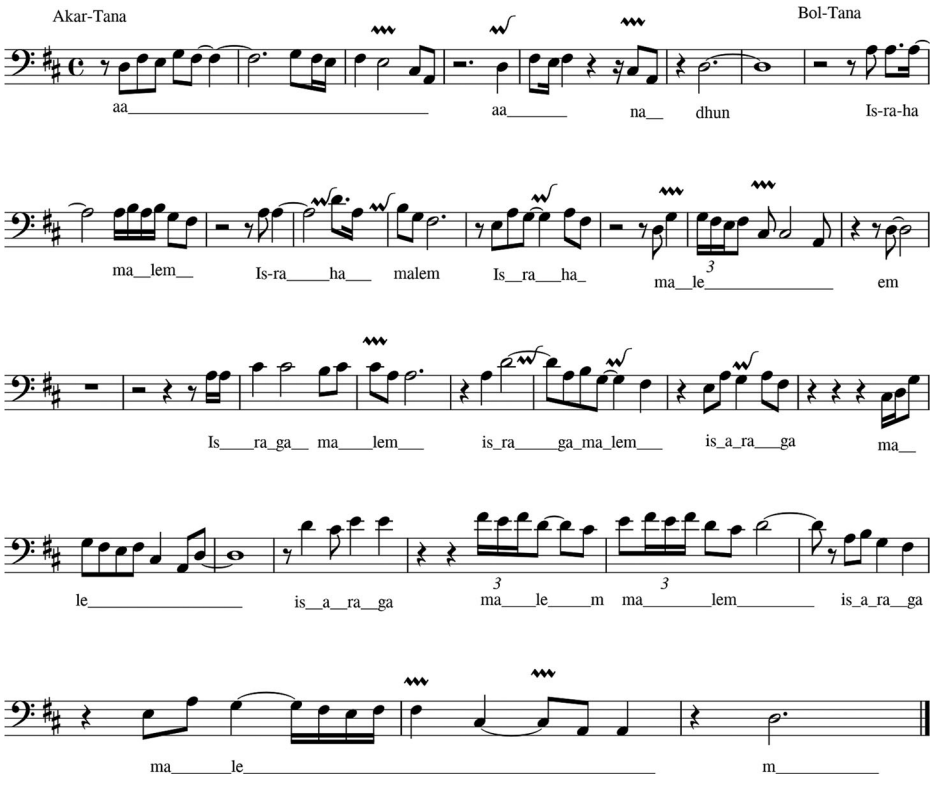


Figure 2. Vocalise (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKWKDOiHVDw 03:43–04:51). Accessed 24 February 2021.

matters, because the inventor of this method – Heinrich Schenker – did so to justify his beliefs about the superiority of Austro-German WAM over all other forms, and because Indian Ocean (and most of their fans) lack the training in this method that I undertook (self-taught, via Pankhurst 2010) during my masters. Of course, this was some years before the publication of Ewell's above-mentioned article (2020). I reiterate that Schenker's voice-leading graph technique was designed to demonstrate the superiority of certain Austro-German musical works over others. However, switching my analysis from walk-through to graph at this stage of play (despite the ongoing problematisation of Schenker in music academia), I still believe in the worth of five concomitant aims: (1)

Table 3. Walk-through analysis of *Kandisa* duration.

Structure		Analysis
04.52–06.45	C1, Raga Desh *Alapana* (Guitar)	C1 section (guitar *alap*) begins. The guitar *alap* (Figure 3.3) continues its exploration of *Raga Desh*, but features regular disruptions to the improvisation in the way of a repeated D motive that is reminiscent of the A section. The drums continue to accompany this *alapana* and remain relatively unobtrusive for the most part. The guitar continues its gradual ascent over nearly three octaves, before returning to D, two octaves higher than the note on which the *alapana* began. Unlike the vocalise, which remained true to the basic tenets of Hindustani art music that emphasise melodic movement over harmonic development, the guitar *alapana* concludes with an emphatic 1-V-I perfect cadence that is reinforced by three cymbal crashes.

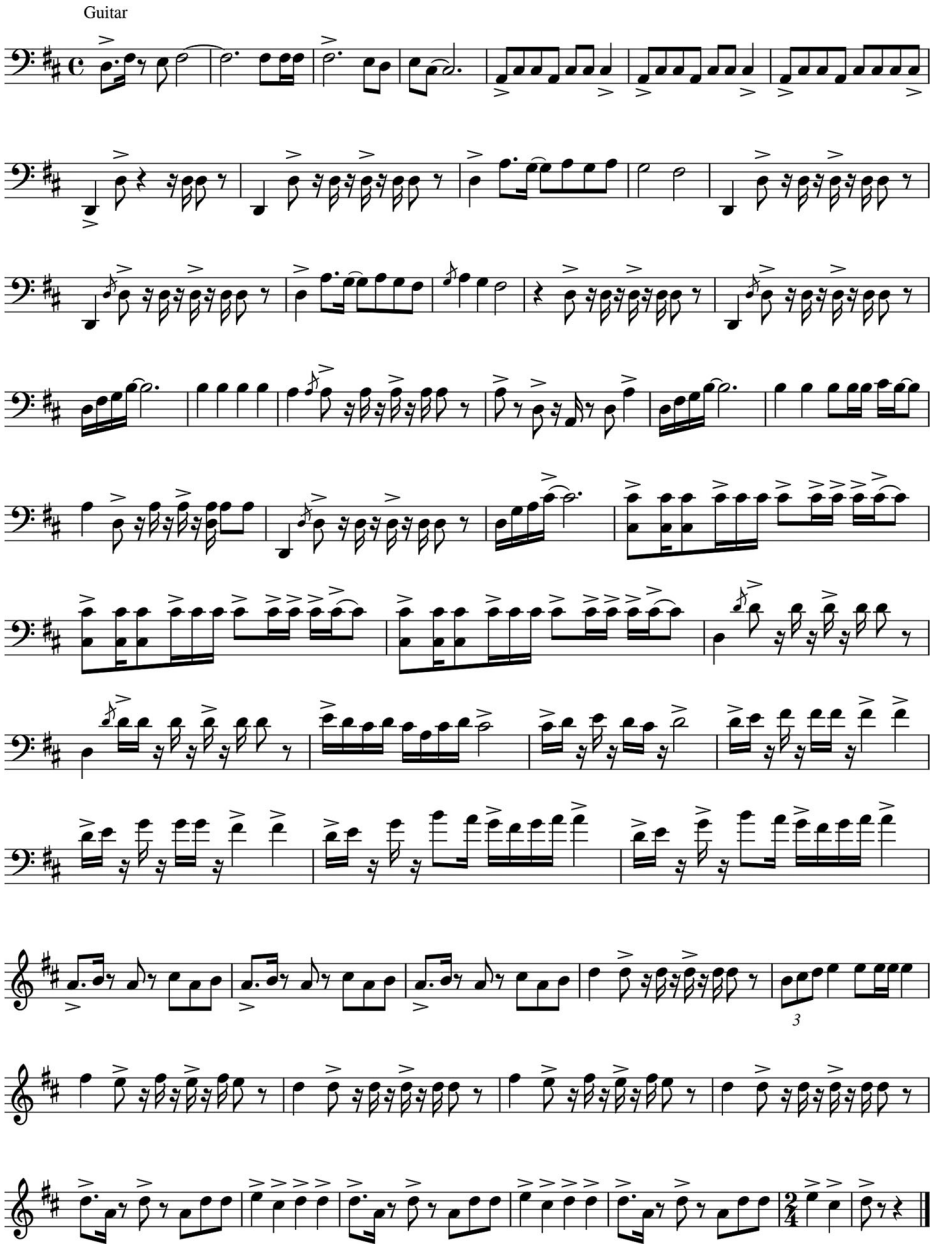


Figure 3. Guitar Solo (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bKWKDOiHVDw: 04:52–06:45). Accessed 24 February 2021.

A - Verse *Alam Balam*	B - Refrain *Kandisa*	C - Raga-based *Alapana*
||: I----IV---PAC in I :||	|| ----------Plagal (ii-I) ||	|| I----------PAC in I ||

Figure 4. Tonal outline of *Kandisa*.

to make Indian Ocean's music available to career music academics in the West, via a contribution to music analytical knowledge from the dual perspective of Indo-Irish ethnomusicology; (2) to justify the inclusion of this music for pedagogical purposes in UK-Irish higher education where I hope to secure paid employment; (3) to present music analysis as defensible only when it is based on an acknowledgment of its subjective origins; (4) to admit that the value of music analysis lies in its ability to express creativity, artistry, technique and taste in Indian popular music, but through an academic language developed for urbanites and classically-trained foreigners and (5) to demonstrate the insider status of the author who is fluent in this technical language. In doing so, I follow not only in the footsteps of Kofi Agawu, who has made a remarkable contribution to music analysis and ethnomusicology via publications and monographs that constantly call into question what has been expected of him as a 'Ghanaian' but also the analytical ethnomusicology of Michael Tenzer. And so, while Agawu urged us to 'get back into analysis' (Agawu 2004) before showing exactly how that might work in WAM (Agawu 2009) Tenzer presented a viable way forward for scholars of world music who want to specialise in analysis, reminding us that 'music analysis must be rigorous but it is essentially creative, with only tangential claims to being scientific (Tenzer 2006:6).

The graphic notation (Figure 5) displays the modifications and oppositions to the overarching tonal theoretical framework that take place in the incipient binary structure. The missing 4 in the overarching melodic line of the verse is at odds with its conventional bass progressions, while the weaker I-ii-I cadential idea in the refrain is at odds with a 3-line descent in its upper voice. Moreover, the effect of mimicry that occurs in the Westernised verse-refrain sections is the camouflage of the C section which they envelope. Upon listening to the song, the C section (Raga Desh) appears to be nothing more than a traditional Indian improvisation that soon blends in with the verse-refrain structures. It is only when this section is transcribed using Western notation, and analysed using tonal music theoretical concepts, that another latent identity in *Kandisa* becomes visible.

The graph above (Figure 5) needs to be explained since few outside academic theory and analysis circles will understand what the symbols mean. The white (open) noteheads show points of structural importance (for Schenker, the treble needs to contain a descending melodic contour of 5-4-3-2-1, or 3-2-1 to be considered a

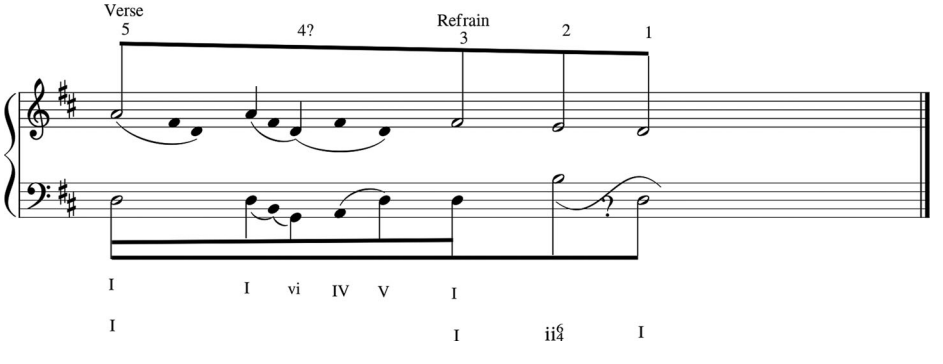


Figure 5. Reduction of *Kandisa's* verse- refrain (5-part binary structure).

'masterwork', which means that many notes have to be explained away as being less important neighbour notes or passing notes). Similarly, for Schenker, the bass needs to prolong the tonic chord over a large stretch of time, before it eventually resolves to a V-I (this does not take place here, since the *Kandisa* refrain always ends with the weaker ii-I). So all one needs to know is that the melodic line emphasises scale degree 5 (A in D major), but – like many classical pieces – lacks a prominent scale degree 4 (though we have IV in the bass). The slurs that join various notes show levels of middleground detail (that is, we do not hear them in the recording as notated, but we see the connections clearly when the surface embellishments are removed). This stripping-away process (rhythmic reduction) also requires long beams in both treble and bass, which indicate the deepest levels of prolongation (such as the tonic D between verses, and verse and refrain), and also the bass support that moves from I (verse) to ii (final refrain). In many respects, Schenkerian analysis works with this song (at least many middleground features are seen in action when we strip away the surface). However, Indian Ocean also shows the limitations of such a graph, which falls just short of Schenker's (racially-suspect, many would now say) fundamental conceptualisation of structure.

Similarly, the voice-leading graph in Figure 6 shows, via graphic reduction of C and C1 (the vocal and guitar *alapanas* on Raga Desh) how the very same melodic and harmonic background structures that Schenker believed to be crucial to the system of Western tonal theory appear in this Indian fusion song. Namely, the 3-2-1 upper voice descent and a I – V – I bass progression that are clearly visible once the elaborations in the C section's *alapanas* are taken away. As with the previous example, the stemmed and beamed notes are considered more important to the structure, and to the song's tonal framework. As one can see, Indian Ocean's extended alapanas resolve with a perfect authentic cadence (PAC) that confirms tonality at work.

Critics of popular music analysis will be hesitant to endorse a methodology that relies so heavily on musico-theoretical concepts derived from a hegemonic WAM tradition as I have chosen here. My analysis of *Kandisa* should not be interpreted as a counter-argument to other, field-based, or sociocultural approaches, but (as I outlined at the start), exists as a way for me to expand knowledge of 'my music' [WAM-musicals-film

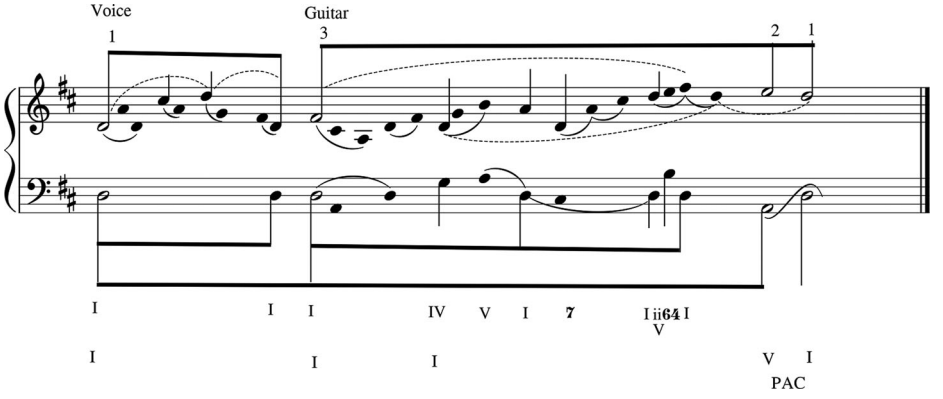


Figure 6. Reduction of raga-based vocal and guitar *alapanas*.

tunes – synthpop] so that I can move between different crude binary oppositions like Western/Indian or classical/popular in my own scholarly work without feeling pressured to use particular labels and terminology for one, and a whole other set of signifiers for another.

The ultimate thrust of the two graphs (Figures 5 and 6) is to illustrate how certain tonal theoretical principles have first been mimicked, then successfully destabilised, via a modification of dominant (colonial, perhaps) musical forces. In so doing, Indian Ocean have created a new, hybrid music that is of relevance and meaning to my own moving identity and life trajectory. Second, the analysis proceeds from easy to difficult in rapid fashion, illustrating whatever concepts are necessary to articulate my personal interpretation of Indian Ocean's song. A precedent exists also in this regard, since 'Schenkerian-inspired forms of analysis can contribute to ethnomusicological study by providing a convenient reductive format through which questions of musical structure may be considered' (Stock 1993:236). We might also consider the many analytical studies pertaining to so-called 'world' musics (the journal Analytical Approaches to World Music is an obvious example) that present analysis of less commercial forms as an important brand of ethnomusicological discourse.

Conclusion: then what about decolonisation?

Working on analysis of Indian Ocean's *Kandisa* has led me to draw some conclusions that reflect the prickly contexts and musico-analytical strands of this work. However, it is necessary to show how all this fits in with the bigger theme of decolonisation, the theoretical framework from which many music academics (especially ethnomusicologists) examine the status and function of musics of the world, in a range of local and global contexts. Sunaina Keonaona Kale provides a useful starting point from which my own analysis of *Kandisa* can be better understood, when she aligns decolonisation with activism (Kale 2017:25). Let me clarify this in a way that makes sense when I consider my own ambivalence towards decolonisation. The tendency of some people is to infuse music academic discourse with activism in a way that delineates many differences between musicology and ethnomusicology (with music analysis falling somewhere between both). The romanticised idea of fieldwork is often viewed against colonial histories which present us with a rather limited way from which to undertake decolonisation in our own work. We generally assume that the wrongs of the past need righting, we decide that we are the ones to do this, and we identify different methodologies that hopefully achieve this aim. Whether we like it or not, such work is sometimes problematic because of the underlying tendency towards activism, which Sunaina Keonaona Kale elaborates thus

> Activism requires strategic essentialism—erecting borders that define groups of people in order to justify their legal protection, do repatriation, and resist erasure. However, moves in the academy, and in indigenous studies particularly, to consider subjects multiple, both within and among themselves, seem to contradict strategic essentialism. (Kale 2017:25)

This kind of academic discourse about and in response to decolonisation provides us with a rather confused idea about what decolonisation can do for music studies. Activist movements (within and outside the music academic domain) are better understood as

agents of disturbance or change, that upset or unsettle the dominant ideology or status quo. Researchers who engage with music activism do so to shake the foundations of power systems that undermine or suppress marginalised voices. The idea of decolonisation (and the history of the term, and of the movement) is a powerful one, but there are many nuanced arguments to be had about its relevance to certain music cultures (any kind of 'Western' music in India comes to mind, certainly). That is not to argue that decolonisation is completely wasted on Indian music studies, but to clarify that there are many instances where the idea is deemed unnecessary, since India's colonial past also features non-Western occupation, such as the Mughal empire. To advance decolonisation as a healthy way forward for research of Indian music is to overlook the dominance of English as one of two official languages in 2021, and as the primary language of commerce and culture, which leads many to ignore the rich tradition of 'Western' and musics on the sub-continent (it is unfortunately impossible to avoid using this term, to denote the countrywide popularity of everything from symphony concerts to soft-rock and rap). Again, it is Kale who adequately sums up my position about India and music scholarship when she states:

> Decolonial activists can continue erecting borders in order to achieve the necessary goal of repatriating land and power, while others (who can also be decolonial activists themselves) can also consider the wide range of musics and subjectivities that will always be inflected with colonialism. (Kale 2017:26)

Let me turn now to the broader theme of decolonisation as it applies to me, my work in analysis and to many others like me. As a member of the Zoroastrian (Parsi-Irani) population of India, I fall outside the dominant Indian culture (of Hindus, Muslims, Christians and Sikhs); my religious affiliation (fire-worshipping Zoroastrian) and my naturalised status as an Irish citizen since 2005 creates an interesting cultural canvas from which to examine my colonial secondary education, and my training as a Western classical pianist. As I said, there are many others like me still living and working in my hometown of Pune, India, many of whom continue to use Western classical music as a reminder of their rich and meaningful colonial heritage. And there are others (like the members of Indian Ocean, and many millions of India's music loving public) who are well versed in Western pop and rock idioms also.

The idea that decolonisation might provide a powerful way to reverse the damage inflicted by the British Raj naturally does not sit right with me, since neither me nor my friends and colleagues in India are ignorant about the injustices and grim histories of colonial rule. None of us were tutored in this music by way of a luxury colonial education – I received music lessons as a little girl, and for a pittance from an ex-nun; I did not have a piano at home and none of us could procure musical scores until the dawn of the millennium and the Internet age, by which point, aged nineteen, I had begun a new life in Ireland. I was not under the spell of WAM's magic either – I acquired a skill, and happily dabbled in it on the side, without feeling any of the pressure conservatoire students do in many parts of the developed world. Unless we Indians have misunderstood the contexts through which decolonisation can take hold in India (via the secondary school system of Anglo-Indian schools, for example) there is the feeling that tonal music forms allow for the expression also of so-called *Indian* identities and competencies; the entrenchment of WAM amongst the intelligentsia and middle-classes is rarely viewed

as being historically suspect. There is more to decolonisation than that, but the most pervasive view amongst my peers in India is that there is no wrongdoing in WAM and subsequent popular music cultures.

But culture (especially and including music) can take hold of subaltern identities also, in a way that stimulates a powerful new cultural confidence, and without inflicting damage on others. To put it another way, people who play and teach rock guitar, or classical piano in India have never posed any great threat to their Hindustani and Carnatic music colleagues; the cultural rivalry we ascribe wrongly as an offshoot of colonialism appears to me an imaginary construct of musicology in Ireland and the UK (what I have experienced), rather than a reality on the ground.

My admittedly crude impression of decolonisation is therefore shaped by my experience as an unwitting agent of colonialist cultural values (facilitated by my practice and promotion of the classical composers of both sexes, in my native India, and later in Ireland); the activism associated with decolonising projects can also be found in my own advocacy of UK popular music, and its classical precedents, in my doctoral research, which is an incredibly inclusive and vibrant environment for the aspiring minority music graduate compared to my other alma maters. While I am not hostile to decolonisation projects in musicology and ethnomusicology, I am less confident about the value of such work to (my) music analysis PhD, since it glosses over narratives of people like me for whom music operates as an agent of intellectual and creative self-expression, and also as an identity marker that is quite untarnished by historical metanarratives and political tensions. Therefore, I am hesitant to denounce colonialist elements in music instruction, or critique musicology's chequered past, though I remain sympathetic to Dane Kennedy's statement that 'so much of what decolonisation realized – and failed to realise – remains relevant to the global challenges we face today' (Kennedy 2016:7).

Dwelling on this point, we might rethink decolonisation as more than a corrective operation in the context of university music pedagogy, since at least here in Ireland, WAM is no longer the driving force of tertiary curricula that it once was (consider the remarks of Harry White, writing in 1998 about the declining status of this music in the Irish higher education system; White 1998), alongside Julian Johnson's defence of the canon in his *Who Needs Classical Music?* (Johnson 2002). Of course, the anxieties shown by writers towards the turn of the millennium must be considered as a knee-jerk response to a covert decolonisation (certainly in Irish university music departments) that took hold in the early 2000s, which gradually usurped WAM and paved the way for a larger number of courses in every kind of music outside the common-practice canon. This picture reflects the situation in 2020, where university music in Ireland no longer relies so heavily on prior knowledge of WAM; the exception seems to be where music analysis is concerned as here, a grasp of WAM is still seen as integral to the practice and teaching of various systems ranging from Bach chorales and counterpoint, to Schenker and sets, and even *Formenlehre*. Despite some notable exceptions (the 2013 POPMAC conference of the Society for Music Analysis in Liverpool, a popular music special of the affiliated journal *Music Analysis* and the 2019 *Routledge Companion to Popular Music Analysis*) the discipline of music theory and analysis as it operates in Irish contexts seems welded to colonialist frameworks, and the proverbial idea of 'rigour' crops up frequently as a justification for Schenkerian analysis' prominent place in British–Irish academe. Too often, such analyses are uncritical (in that they rarely

engage with decolonisation, nor acknowledge the regressive ideologies that underpin the method), but they are used as a marker of insidership rather than musicianship, which is a great pity considering the sensitive listening and performativity that underpins many hardcore analytical systems (of which Schenker is a good example). I have attempted decolonisation in my own work within the Society for Music Analysis and in my doctoral thesis, to show how 'decolonization has a longer and more complex history that requires more nuanced – and less celebratory – not to mention less exceptionalist – analysis than it often receives' (Kennedy 2016:23).

This raises another concomitant point: the idea that decolonisation is the only way to dismantle unfair systems and dangerous pedagogies; too often some ethnomusicologists present their alternatives to colonialist (European) classical music as being better for non-elites than WAM-derived topics. Naturally, this creates a divide between WAM and its Others, both in terms of the people who make music, and the people who study it and write about it. Decolonisation becomes something that is always associated with ethnomusicology, rather than a meaningful cause that can be taken up by historians and analysts also, which then magnifies the disciplinary tensions at ground level (in the university classroom) and perpetuates the idea of musicology as being racist and elitist, analysis as being exclusionary, and ethnomusicology as being the only music discipline (or methodology) that concerns itself with the plight of the marginalised and oppressed. In terms of anti-colonial (ethno)musicological research, we learn that 'decolonisation was a complex and contentious process that appears to offer a range of outcomes' (Kennedy 2016:70).

It is worth dwelling a moment on the idea of 'outcomes' in decolonisation; postcolonial literature (including the texts referenced in this work) offers a cohesive framework from which to understand the predicament of the colonial subject. Indeed, some writers have addressed also the inadequacies of this scholarship, for example by stating 'thus, relying solely on postcolonial literatures or theories of coloniality that ignore settler colonialism will not help to envision the shape that decolonization must take in settler colonial contexts' (Tuck and Yang 2012:5). When it comes to projected outcomes, however, theories of postcoloniality (including colonial mimicry; Bhabha 2004:121–131) are still a good framework from which to investigate decolonisation's suitability to music studies. Without trying to defend past wrongdoings, or subsequent scholarly methodologies, I use Bhabha's work alongside many of the writers referenced at the end of this article, in my own PhD thesis, and to augment several aspects of my *Kandisa* analysis also.

Another outcome is the concept of cultural confidence: I engage in 'elite' music analysis (of popular music) because I am intrigued by the idea that decolonisation is not necessarily a conscious choice, but a way of (re)gaining epistemological control over a musical object. The word 'control' already conjures up powerful images where decolonisation is concerned, since we normally equate colonialism with the acquisition of various commodities (land, persons, goods, and culture). To admit that music analysis acts as a form of control is to create the space from which to act out certain (decolonisation) fantasies. Therefore:

> … we locate the desire to *become without becoming [Indian]* within settler adoption fantasies. These fantasies can mean the adoption of Indigenous practices and knowledge, but

> more, refer to those narratives in the settler colonial imagination in which the Native (understanding that he is becoming extinct) hands over his land, his claim to the land, his very Indian-ness to the settler for safe-keeping. (Tuck and Yang 2012:14)

What is important here is my observation that music analysis of *Kandisa* (in the context of my Indianness and Irishness) facilitates the 'become without becoming' process described above, since it allows the postcolonial, colonised subject to move back and forth between the practices of the colonial settler (in both Indian and Irish cases a stereotypical Anglicised Western classical creativity) and some kind of 'native' form, where music is presented as something foreign, something different from the Western tonal prototype.

Decolonisation is no longer the primary concern, since actually, a process of *re*colonisation happens over and over again. This is a point worth dwelling on, and actually university music is a good environment from which to articulate this further. When we train as musicologists, or ethnomusicologists, or music analysts, we prioritise the acquisition of cultural capital through academic knowledge about music. In order to generate more knowledge, we have to ourselves undergo a process of de-*something* and re-*something*, an idea that might appeal to ethnomusicologists (who negotiate between Self-Other encounters in and out of the field) but also to millennial minority music analysts such as myself (for whom music theory becomes a way to survive in academe). Of course, these realities are not linear or teleological (and that is where I depart from 'elite' music analysis, actually), but only a way to experience music as an agent of cultural confidence which can then be used to subvert dominant ideologies. This applies as much to the metatheoretical Schenkerian concepts of *Ursatz* and *Urlinie*, or the Western theoretical hegemony of the seemingly innocuous perfect authentic cadence as discussed in my analysis of *Kandisa*. The gist of what I am getting at is properly captured also in our self-awareness of Western art music's impact on our shared humanity, and an honest admission of how much we know about it, and why this matters. Stock captures the essence of my own argument when he writes:

> Since we have a much richer knowledge of Western art music than of any of humanity's many other musical styles, musicologists are, in fact, well positioned to lead investigation into the pan-human aspects of music making. At such moments, however, they will need to draw on evidence of musical traditions from across the rest of the world. (Stock 1998:63)

And so, I hope my musical analysis of *Kandisa* helps to close the gap; it presents a more truthful engagement with decolonisation as something difficult to problematise from within academic music; autobiographical details prove helpful but not always. We might redefine decolonisation, therefore, as a gradual shifting of an individual's acceptance of themselves, which can take place in music academic contexts, through hegemonic practices like analysis, which seek to control, and then to liberate (and maybe then to control once more). Of course, there are bigger issues for many minority musicians like myself; music may sometimes seem the least of our concerns. Consider the following:

> People of color who enter/are brought into the settler colonial nation-state also enter the triad of relations between settler-native-slave. We are referring here to the colonial pathways that are usually described as 'immigration' and how the refugee/immigrant/migrant is invited to be a settler in some scenarios, given the appropriate investments in whiteness, or is made an illegal, criminal presence in other scenarios. (Tuck and Yang 2012:17)

Crucially, my engagement with music analysis allows me to participate in an intellectual activity that delineates the end of an Indian-Iranian identity, and the beginning of an Irish identity. The ghosts of Anglican music teachers are equally hard to shake-off, and the hybridity that is foregrounded in my research activities shows mainly that the technical apparatus of transcription and Schenkerian analysis can help us rethink what decolonisation means to a minority scholar of music that everyone terms 'Indian' this or 'Western' that. Certainly, it is many things to many people: an ideology, an activity, a set of ideas, a model for pedagogy, a theoretical framework, an exercise in self-reflexivity, and – for me personally, all of these things, plus a reason to keep musicking. And yet, I know perhaps better than most, that decolonisation may not be all it promises, since many of its staunchest advocates may ultimately still be blind to our predicament:

> We don't intend to discourage those who have dedicated careers and lives to teaching themselves and others to be critically conscious of racism, sexism, homophobia, classism, xenophobia, and settler colonialism. We are asking them/you to consider how the pursuit of critical consciousness, the pursuit of social justice through a critical enlightenment, can also be settler moves to innocence - diversions, distractions, which relieve the settler of feelings of guilt or responsibility, and conceal the need to give up land or power or privilege. (Tuck and Yang 2012:20)

And so, while it is true that WAM-trained readers might reject my reading of *Kandisa* because of the WAM music theoretical concepts I describe (for example, cadences and what not), I feel it is the only way I ensure my analysis is accessible to non-elite Indians like me, who play, read about, and research Mozart and Beyoncé (but not Ravi Shankar – or for that matter – the band I work on in my PhD: 1980s LGBTQ icons Erasure). There is nothing to support the notion that Indian musicians would struggle to understand my analysis: the English language music concepts are perhaps more easily recognisable than 'Indian' art music vocabulary, with its heavy reliance on caste sensitive pedagogy. Unlike many of my senior colleagues (white ethnomusicologists who have specialised in Indian classical music), I could easily wager a bet (or instigate a 'fieldwork' challenge) that all the Indians I have known, hailing from fairly humble urban families in Western India where my parents still live, have *never heard Indian classical music* or – for that matter – *never watched a Bollywood film* and so would hardly equate Indian Ocean's fusion rock with the lingua franca of elite Indianist ethnomusicology of academe. Many of my India-based friends, ex-schoolmates, family members, and laypeople I meet in hospitals, shops and via music events have shockingly poor standards of Hindi, because they identify as native English speakers even if their outward appearance and socioeconomic status gives a different impression. Simply put, some Indians might be fully WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich, and democratic) but many of us are merely WED (Western, educated, democratic).

Pushing back against anyone who might call me out on my defensiveness, I would argue that a WAM-trained reader who prefers to hear *Kandisa* through the lens of elite Indian music theoretical terminology (that is out of bounds to a Zoroastrian lower class Indian as myself) is perhaps too entrenched in a different kind of privilege to understand my predicament, or for that matter, the band's, though I do not doubt their capacity to acknowledge this problem. Still, it is a mistake to consider how 100% Indianist conceptualisations of *Kandisa* (that reject my diatonic hearing) could be of any value to anyone but the most

privileged members of the academy. In any case, *I* use Western music theory as a marker of my own Indianness, and also to demonstrate a competency in an epistemology that I find has wider outreach appeal for Indians who play WAM and pop, such as myself, and it's especially great when this also reflects the innermost aspirations of the musicians. This is confirmed via my lengthy email exchange with Indian Ocean's founding member Rahul Ram, who is delighted that *Kandisa* is being analysed in one of India's two



Figure 7. (a) Rahul Ram, pictured on the extreme right, as part of Indian Ocean. (b) The author, Karishmeh Felfeli-Crawford, pictured in all-white traditional Indian salwar-kameez, with her school friends, celebrating graduation from school in 1998; the location is Pune (pronounced Poo-nay), a busy urban city in Western India.

official languages English, and via Western music theory which he hopes will lead more people in India and the West to become familiar with the band's tonal music (Ram to Felfeli-Crawford, private correspondence, November 2020) (Figure 7).

Which brings me to my concluding comments, namely the idea that music analysis actually facilitates a more honest engagement with the realities of decolonisation in the context of the tonal repertoires I work with – including Indian Ocean's music, from which space 'elite' and 'everyday' analytical competencies can be carefully scrutinised. The idea that a minority music scholar as myself, for whom music analysis is a marker of a kind of piecemeal musical identity, has to now absorb and engage with other dominant academic cultures (US-UK hip-hop & rap, African drumming, indigenous musics of the world, Japanese protest music, plus the elite world of Hindustani and Carnatic rags) to say nothing of complex theoretical frameworks like formal function, paralanguage or semiotics, places an extraordinary strain for the aspiring music graduate student BBIPOC. *How – when we come from places where running water and electricity are strictly rationed, and where musical instruments are a luxury commodity – do we read, study and analyse academic musics that are so entrenched in their own epistemological greatness?* Or – to put it another way – ethnomusicology in the West is sometimes too slow to consider identities like mine, where competency in music is cultivated against an inhospitable everyday reality of power cuts and water shortages. In such conditions, the wonder of ethnomusicology is that it permits a deep study of music and musicians, while also remaining compassionate about less privileged and fortunate people. So when the tables are turned, and a person like me finally makes it into the academy, it is also because I want to be the ethnomusicologist from India, who studies musics that have been erased from the deeply conservative, heteronormative culture that I come from – for example LGBTQ synthpop and electronic dance music. If my analysis of *Kandisa* shows anything, it is this: analysing Indian Ocean through the lens of music theory is perhaps the best indictment of a 'new' new ethnomusicology – one that gently sustains my Indianness, without making me want to apologise for my Westernness.

Notes

1. To clarify, the author was taught Western classical piano and music theory via piano lessons at a small music school – 'St Cecelia's School of Music' founded by an Australian ex-nun Enid Roberts. The author's parents could never afford to purchase a piano (it was difficult to obtain one in the late 1980s in India) and the broad strokes teaching of piano and music theory took place via after-school private and group lessons, which were provided at a very low cost mainly because of Roberts's church belief. The school was, until 2012, the centre for Trinity College London grade and diploma exams in Western India. There was no conservatory or concert hall, no opera or symphony concerts, and hardly any recordings of classical music (even the exam pieces were sold in photocopy format).
2. By this I mean the music I grew up with – a smorgasbord of tonal sounds, easily accessible to most people without formal training, including and especially Western film soundtracks, musical theatre canons from My Fair Lady and The Sound of Music to Disney OSTs like The Lion King, plus a smattering of 'classical' tunes like Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata and Tchaikovsky's Swan Lake, plus popular music from the West spanning mainly heteronormative bands like Madonna and Backstreet Boys, to say nothing of Indian Ocean and Junoon's fusion rock which I got to know in my late teens.

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Notes on contributor

Karishmeh Felfeli-Crawford has submitted a PhD for examination at University College Cork, where she is researching music analysis of synthpop band Erasure, with input from the band members Andy Bell and Vince Clarke, and under the supervision of Jonathan P. J. Stock and Alexander Khalil. A peer-review published Mozart scholar (*JSMI* 2019) and former BBC Radio 3 presenter, Felfeli-Crawford identifies as BBIPOC but prefers to describe herself as a minority scholar, being Indian-Iranian, and originally from Pune, India. As of 2020–2021, Felfeli-Crawford is co-secretary of the Society for Ethnomusicology Music Analysis sig, and project associate at IRiMaS–University of Huddersfield.

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