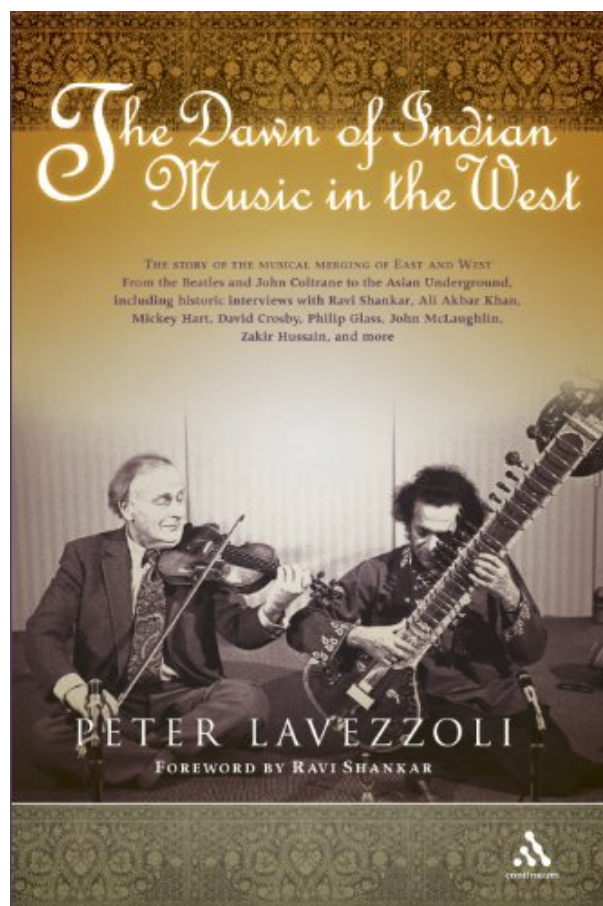
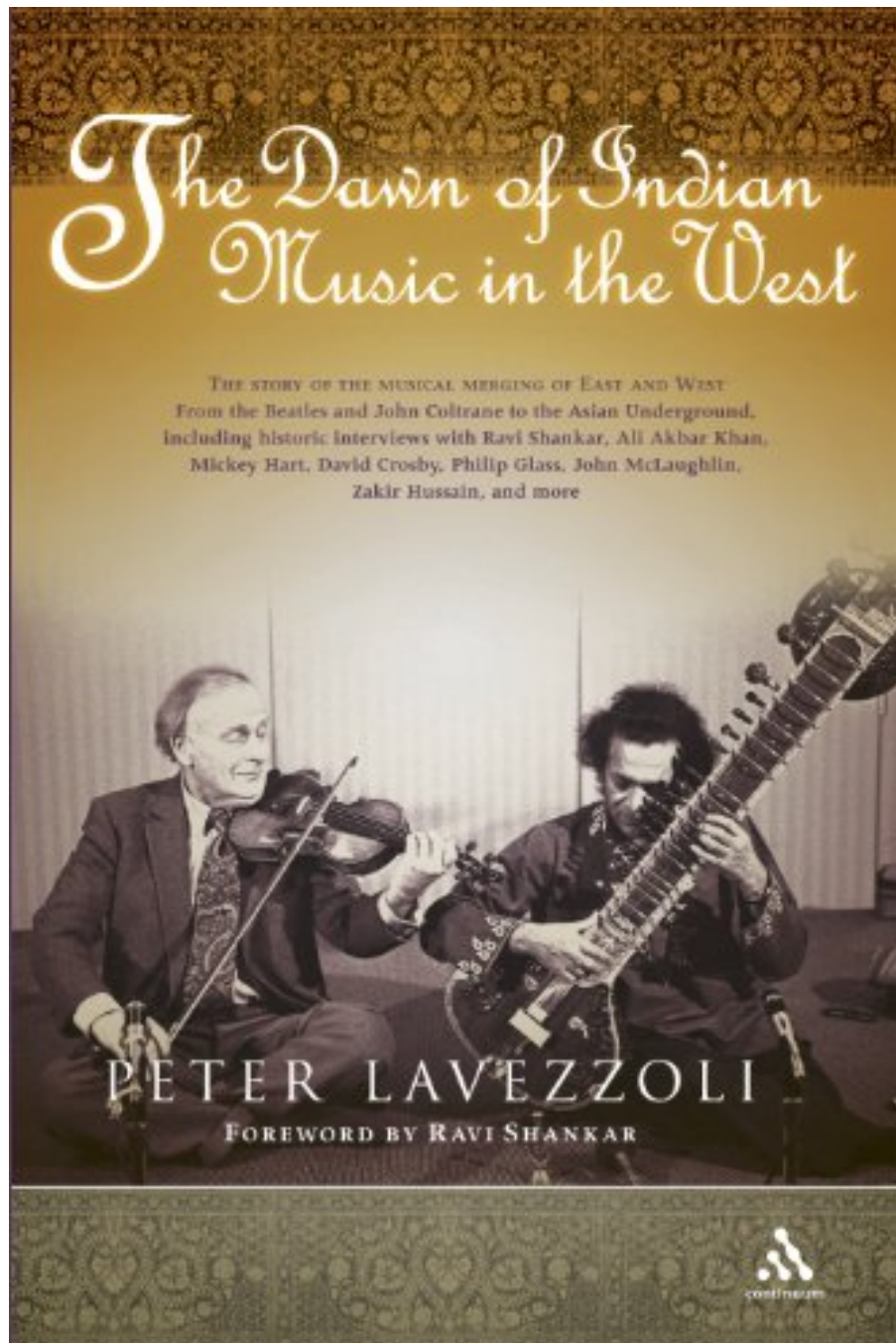


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February 2007

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"The Dawn of Indian Music in the West," by Peter Lavezzoli. Foreword by Ravi Shankar. In the 1960s, the wonders of Indian music, and its unique message of peace, were spread in the West by Ravi Shankar, George Harrison and the Beatles, John Coltrane, Yehudi Menuhin, and others. In 1971, Harrison and Shankar organized the Concert for Bangladesh, the first superstar charity event, in hopes of stopping a war and feeding the hungry. But Indian music also had a profound impact on the work of Mickey Hart and the Grateful Dead, Philip Glass, John McLaughlin, and many others. At the dawn of the 21st century, Indian music's spiritual message is more timely than ever before. Here is the story of the musical merging of East and West, from the Beatles and John Coltrane to the Asian Underground. Peter Lavezzoli has a rare ability to articulate the personal feeling of music, while also narrating a comprehensive history. In his refreshingly accessible discussion on Indian music theory, he clarifies Eastern musical structures and terminology for Western readers. For this book, Lavezzoli conducted historic in-depth interviews with: Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, Zakir Hussain, Mickey Hart, David Crosby & Roger McGuinn of the Byrds, Philip Glass, Jim Keltner, Zubin Mehta, John McLaughlin, Terry Riley, Bill Laswell, Cheb i Sabbah, Anoushka Shankar, Tanmoy Bose, Shujaat Khan, Shubhendra Rao, Saskia Rao de Haas, Mary Johnson Khan, and George Ruckert. These interviews bring an additional immediacy and authority to the book through the personal insights of the musicians themselves. The chapters on Indian music's relationships with jazz, rock, and electronic music are definitive. Includes a glossary and rare photos.

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Most helpful customer reviews

7 of 7 people found the following review helpful.

How the West Woke Up

By Steve Silberman

Peter Lavezzoli's "The Dawn of Indian Music in the West: Bhairavi" is a superbly written, astonishingly comprehensive, and deeply important book. Not only is it a must-read for anyone interested in how classical Indian musical forms were embraced by Western audiences -- laying the groundwork for the proliferation of so-called world beat and other fusions -- but it's also essential reading for anyone interested in how Western musical forms like jazz and rock and roll evolved into the complex, elegant, and risk-taking journeys of discovery that they are now, in the post-Byrds and post-Beatles age.

This book is crammed with fascinating anecdotes about and probing interviews of the musicians whose own creativity was transformed by their exposure to Indian music, and the result is a book that provides one of the deepest examinations of the global revolution in music over the past four decades. The careers of pop stars like the Byrds' Roger McGuinn and David Crosby are shown in a new light; the breathtaking evolutions of John Coltrane and the Beatles are analyzed in ways that are completely fresh; and such nearly forgotten geniuses and innovators as Collin Walcott and Nadia Boulanger are finally given their due.

I had done quite a bit of reading in these areas before stumbling across Lavezzoli's book in a bookstore, but every time I pick up this book, I learn something new about music I've loved for years, from Miles Davis' "Kind of Blue" to Walcott's "Cloud Dance" to Coltrane's "A Love Supreme." Lavezzoli's prose style is top-drawer -- conversational and obviously passionate about its subject, yet also highly learned and insightfully critical -- which makes the book a real pleasure to read.

One of the finest books of the year, and one of the best music books I've read in a decade.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Brilliant, Historic, Edifying, Comprehensive, Necessary

By Dr. Debra Jan Bibel

I shall add little to the other reviewers of this extraordinarily fine account of the history of Indian (particularly North Indian) music and how it was introduced to Western ears and influenced modern popular and classical musics. I will instead say that having myself lived that history--being exposed in 1955 to the first LP recording of Indian Music and watched Ali Akbar Khan on CBS Sunday's Omnibus, having been among the first to purchase the World Pacific and Prestige recordings of Indian musicians, having attended numerous concerts of Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan, Bismillah Khan, Jasraj, Shivkumar Sharma and other Indian masters, and having become a Friend of the Ali Akbar College of Music, where I met John Handy, Terry Riley, and Ravi Shankar, as well as having followed the influences and explorations of Indian modes and rhythms in classical music and rock as a Bay Area academic hippie--I can attest that this book is amazingly well researched, comprehensive, and gets it right. Indeed, through the many insightful interviews, we go well beyond the mechanics and structures of musical infusion across cultures into the realm of spirit, humanistic motivation, and metaphysics. For instance, Mickey Hart's interview expands and details his own previous accounts of his and the Grateful Dead's musical transformation by interactions with Shankar Ghosh, Alla Rakha, and Zakir Hussain (a two-way street for the latter). Other useful interviews are with (from the classical world) Philip Glass, Zubin Mehta, Terry Riley; (from the Indian tradition) Ali Akbar Khan, Zakir Hussain, Anoushka Shankar, Tanmoy Bose, George Ruckert, Shubhenra Rao; (from jazz and rock) David Crosby, John McLaughlin, Cheb i Sabbah. But the interviews are only spice to the meat of the text, which explains the uniqueness and detail format of Indian music, supported by a glossary, and the origins and construction of the various instruments. When our world is plagued by fear and misunderstanding of other cultures, music arrives as a source for common ground. This book demonstrates its power and its promise.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful.

Enhanced my knowledge and appreciation for Indian music and its many important influences

By Dean Gustafson

This is a fantastic book for many reasons; Peter Lavezzoli has done an amazing amount of research, delivering a lovingly written treasure trove of well-rounded details that will interest music enthusiasts from many different schools and tastes. Fascinating connections are drawn from the histories and influences of Indian music on rock, jazz, western classical and more. Included are vivid chapters on the pivotal history of Allauddin Khan, teacher of Ravi Shankar and the father and teacher of Ali Akbar Khan; Yehudi Menuhin's discovery and presentation of Indian music to western audiences (he is pictured with Ravi Shankar on the cover); the fabulous chapter on George Harrison; and a powerful section on John Coltrane, to name just a few personal favorites, with numerous connections to Ravi Shankar, who is widely referenced and featured (in too great a depth to summarize in a brief review).

A good portion of the book features the musicians and associates themselves having their say through remarkable interviews with Ali Akbar Khan, Mary Johnson Khan, Mickey Hart, Zakir Hussain, Jim Keltner, Terry Riley, Cheb i Sabbah, Zubin Mehta, Anoushka Shankar, Ravi Shankar, Tanmoy Bose, John McLaughlin, Bill Laswell, Shujaat Khan, George Ruckert, Shubhendra Rao, Suskia Rao-de Haas, David Crosby, Roger McGuinn, and Philip Glass. The author asks good questions and gets rich answers, making for a highly enjoyable reading experience.

This is a book I can spend hours re-reading. I've learned enormous amounts about a wide variety of music forms within each chapter. Readers with virtually any level of music interest will find something of value here. A real stunner! Highly recommended.

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About the Author

Peter Lavezzoli is the author of "The King of All, Sir Duke: Ellington and the Artistic Revolution," and "The Dawn of Indian Music in the West" (foreword by Ravi Shankar), both published by Continuum Books of New York & London. A revised edition of the latter book was published in India by Harper Collins as "Bhairavi: The Global Impact of Indian Music." Lavezzoli is a professional drummer and vocalist, and a Library of Congress narrator of Talking Books for the Blind. Lavezzoli holds a Honors Religious Studies BA from Florida International University, specializing in Chinese Buddhist History.

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