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From Qawwali to Coke Studio
The Evaluation of Music as a Social Identity in Pakistan

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ABSTRACT

Music is central to the process of forming the cultural and social identity of any given society as not only the source of artistic expression but also the mirror of the collective consciousness of a particular community. Qawwali is a type of Sufi devotional music that is very much part of Pakistani culture and has evolved as a religious practice to a cultural phenomenon. Research articles point to its development in the path to Sufi shrines, to social and cultural events, and its usefulness in the expression of religious sentiments, spiritual experiences and cultural identity. In the case of Pakistan, the changes in music as it was originally (as a traditional mela such as Qawwali) to a new form of digital music on Coke Studio would be a great change in the culture of the people, and it would reflect the various changes in the identity, ideologies, and values of people in Pakistan. This study explains how music can be used to build, sustain and restructure social identity in Pakistan based on a comparative analysis of Qawwali and Coke Studio. The results suggest that though Qawwali still remains a powerful cultural and historical reference, such a legacy has been reinstated through the Coke Studio by promoting pluralism and allowing the representation of undervalued cultures and languages. The significance of this study to cultural research is that it provides a perspective on how art and identity interplay in a dynamic and changing culture like Pakistan and how significant music is as a social force uniting people and transforming their identities.

Key words: Qawwali, Sufism, Sama (listening ritual), Ecstasy (Hal/Wajd), Amir Khusro, Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Coke Studio Pakistan, Spiritual identity, Cultural transformation, Fusion music.

Introduction

Qawwali has been endowed with part of the warp and weft of Oriental culture centuries ago. Ethnomusicology is one of the subfields of cultural anthropology ethnomusicology, is a study of music in other societies around the world. Ethnomusicologists describe and study the music as well as the culture that creates musical expression, the similarities and differences between musical performance and musical composition. Such music as religion and spirituality is unique in its entire social phenomena. But having relationship by interaction, music is a part of religion and spirituality, religion and spirituality is all mixed with music. South Asia has a compound relationship with music, religion and spirituality. Qawwali is a well-known genre of music in the Indian subcontinent. It has common features with the light classical music of North India and Pakistan, however, also unique features associated with its religious role. The very name Qawwali refers both to the genre of music and to the event of its performance, the devotional gathering of Islamic mysticism-or Sufism in the Pakistan. Just like all the other Sufi practices sarna' too is done under the guidance of the sheikh or the teacher who initiates and closes it with recitation of fatiha or the first chapter of Quran and regulates its each stage and time. It is held very frequently on a Thursday evening, and the present Qawwalli recitals at the shrines of the saints are a continuance of the same old custom. In Sufism, the primary mission of spiritual music is to gently lead the soul of the mystic into the state of ecstasy (hal, wajd) throughout the concert (sama‟) and to bring him into closeness with God. This poetry of the Sufi is the fruit of his many spiritual conditions (Ahwal), and, therefore, is impregnable with intense Hal (intoxicating influence). When the expert Qawwals (singers) sing such songs, well trained in Sufi technique, they create the same Hal in the audience and bring the seeker in the above mentioned states with the assistance of

these songs and the musical accompaniment. We start first with the worship of God, the holy Prophet and the saint of the Urs. General love songs follow, in order to cause a tempest of love in the heart of the seeker that like a rocket of great power should propel him well beyond the sun and stars, into the world of Divine Nearness. Then are sung the verses referring to Fana-fi-Allah, and the seekers shut their eyes and enter, silent, into Fanafi-Allah. This is left to persist within itself to allow the seeker to be well-established in Zat (Absolute essence).

The final phase in spiritual journey is called Baqa-bi-Allah and towards the end of mehfil (sitting) song of such nature is also sung to restore the seeker to sobriety (Sahw) after his or her intoxication (Sukr). So they continue flying to greater and greater heights of Divine Proximity to which there is no limit. It is more likely that Qawwali than any other form of Sufi music is predestined to appeal to such a listener, a mystic or a ordinary faithful one, to create enthusiasm in him, and to change his condition of consciousness. It causes the tears to flow through his eyes, opens his heart and empties it so Allah can come inside. The destruction of the ego is experienced by the listener. Music so intensely colored with emotion, so makes participation inevitable, and in those conditions of collective rapture which may be called gifts of God, are so often attracted by the sama' ritual in which it is most gloriously and abundantly exercised: at the shrines of the great Sufi saints of antiquity. The most vivid and profound experience of spiritualism in the Sufi tradition is regarded as the urs of such a saint, the celebration of his own ultimate union with God on the anniversary of his death, and the attempt to bring him into contact with God gradually, during concert (sama). Friends of Allah and intermediaries to Allah are highly respected saints, including Laal Shehbaaz Qalandar, Schal Sarmast and Pir Shams, which are the subjects of the songs referred to as Qalandari. These Qalandar are quite familiar in south and west Asia among the Muslim people and are the main source of inspiration of the repertoire of the mystic singers. Wine, love, inebriation and Qalandarism (Masti-oQalandari) unite with one other here. Dance and music produce a strong intoxicating mood at the shrines where Qalandars and Malangs visit. Dance and music produce a strong intoxicating mood at the shrines where Qalandars and Malangs visit. That type of music and singing, which is forbidden in Islam, is of the frivolous and corrupt kind whose vulgarity is unwholesome in any community.

The most lovely manifestation of spiritual growth is the spiritual poetry of Sufis of Islam which have no counterparts anywhere in the world and it is that poetry that gives the most attractive songs in Qawwali meetings in the Sufi shrines during Urses and sometimes even in residential homes. It is possible to say that the Sufi poetry is the fruit of their manifold states (Ahwal) and, therefore, filled with abounding hal. So that when those songs are sung by the great Qawwals (singers), thoroughly trained in the Sufi method, they produce the same Hal upon the hearers and lead them into ecstasies. A Qawwali involves being diverted, which is to be overpowered. The more you resist the higher you go. Its appropriation into film music and the incomparable popularity of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan as a foreign-stage musician gave the popularity graph of qawwali a peak in the early fifties. He became a star when he was 15 years of age and soon became an international artist. His performances were based on the subtleties of Indian traditional music and were appealing to people across the world due to the trance-like atmosphere his stage shows evoked. It was the beginning of many musical associations and experimentation in the later years by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan. The qawwali setting has evolved up to the point of a fusion music experiment. In the productions of Coke Studio Pakistan this musical blend of qawwali and western music can be seen. Soulful performances made by qawwals such as Abida Parveen,

Farid Ayaz and Rahat Fateh Ali Khan have made qawwali appear in a new avatar without losing the majaz of qawwali. In his playing of Rang, Farid Ayaz has maintained the traditional quality of the piece but experimented with the rhythmic composition using drums and bass guitar. Abida Parveen in her Coke Studio version of Maula-e-qul has played around with background score and rhythm. Even though in qawwali, music and religiosity are united, in the modern world, speakers such as the Sabri Brothers, Rahat Fateh Ali Khan have intelligently parted the religious in some places still maintaining some generally known ideas that might be viewed as being secular. These aspects in the Sufi philosophy and qawwali attract a huge crowd regardless of whether they believe in the religion or not not only in the subcontinent but also elsewhere around the world. Even the common people who do not know profoundly spiritual messages of the qawwali which are full of religious idiom can still connect with the ideas of love, freedom and ecstasy and most of all humanity and such a coming together, such a unifying or such a binding together is what has made qawwali become so special as a living performative tradition. Traditionally a qawwali performance is an ensemble of eleven musicians. They use sarangi, harmonium, tanpura and esraj as musical accompaniments. The rhythm instruments are tabla, dholak and pakhawaj. Clapping is one particular characteristic of a qawwali performance. The qawwals also think that the body itself is also a musical Instrument and the beat must be brought out by the body. A qawwali group has two lead vocalists usually. It is also possible to hear solo performances nowadays. Despite the fact that traditionally the qawwali could be performed only by men, female performers could also be occasionally observed in a general assembly. In Pakistan recently, three sisters Saba, Fauzia and Zille Huma have started an all-women qawwali band known as Manwa.

Background

As a Sufi music tradition, Qawwali has passed through time and has experienced a great alteration in space and structure. The Indian subcontinent has created a solid foundation of four major Sufi Tariqas (orders): Chistiya, Qadiriya, Suhrawardiyya and Naqshbandiya. Of the four, it was the Chistiya order that has had the greatest impact on the patronisation and spread of qawwali in the subcontinent. With the spread of Sufism in this area with its local tastes, languages, traditions and cultural ways, qawwali has also been experiencing various modifications. Marathi, Dakhini, and Bangla qawwali has been included as part of the already existing repertoire of Indic qawwali performances. The qawwali language occurred in the epoch of Amir Khusro, the Indo-Persian Sufi poet to whom both khayal and qawwali repertoires owes their structural form and soundness. Khusro, a member of the Chistiya Tariqat added numerous local tastes to the qawwali. Being a lover of languages, he has authored many books in Hindvi, Purvi, Brajbhasa and Farsi. One more well-known poet-saint Bulleh Shah composed in Punjabi. In South India qawwali accompanied the Sufi saint Gesudaraz Banda Nawaz. Though localisation has occurred in a variety of formats, qawwali has not really changed. It is necessary to listen in order to become familiar with the essence of qawwali performance as only by listening a person can experience sama, a practice that brings him/her closer to the divine. In the Introduction to his book A Psychology of Early Sufi Sama: Listening and Altered States, Kenneth S. Avery tells a story of a Sufi mystic, Abu'l -Husayn -al Nuri, who transformed a dry academic gathering (in 900 CE) into an ecstatic, frenzied gathering by reciting four verses of verse about love (Avery 2004:1). What the debates on different doctrines were unable to do, his poem accomplished.

Every one of the scholars who were there could undergo the ecstasy of the divinity. This is the force of the occasion of sama to which the origins of the origin of qawwali can be determined. Sama is a term which translates to listening to the divine message that awakens the heart to seek God (Hujwiri 1970:404 cited Qureshi 1986:82). Qawwali has also been named after Qaul, meaning (in Arabic) the saying. So Qawwali, according to Qureshi, is sama in practice (Qureshi: 82). It is a spiritual music and poetry. The traditional performance of a qawwali is in Sufi khanqahs and dargahs, which is accompanied by the beat and the zikr (repetition of chanting of names). The qawwals have traditionally been patrons of such Sufi dargahs. A qawwali gathering can be encountered at Urs, the celebration of the death of a Sufi saint or his ultimate communion with God, during which a spiritualist apprentice initiates himself to a listening technique known as sama. Qureshi notices two particular qawwali events, namely: Mehfil-e-sama or gathering to listen and Darbar-e-Auliya or Court of Sufi Saints. The former gives the context and space in which the so-called mystical experience takes place by means of music, and the latter is an event where a Sufi goes to seek his own mystical union (Qureshi: 107). Qawwali is a musical performance of texts which must be interpreted according to their context i.e. the Indo-Pakistani Sufism whose very core is interwoven with the early Sufi mysticism of Middle East and Persia.

The ultimate union of self with the divine (tawheed) by means of awareness and belief in the unity of God (Wahdat-al-Wajood) or that all is the reflection (Wahdat-al-Shahood) of the divine is sought. The development of a spiritually oriented man In order to become the so-called universal man or Al-insan al-kamil must pass through the phases of fana, annihilation of the self. These are: Fana fi Shaykh (annihilation in the being of the Murshid), Fana fi Rasool (annihilation in the being of Rasool) and Fana fi Allah (annihilation in the being of Allah). Then there is a stage of baqa, or of permanency. In the sama practice, poetry awakens this consciousness which can only be described as ecstasy (wajd). The contents of music here are (even though it is written in ghazal form), hamd or praise of God/Allah, naat or praise of Muhammad, manqabat or praise of Ali and other Sufi saints, munajaat (conversation at night), a form of prayer, marsiya (lamentation of the dead), and kafi or a poem in Punjabi or Sindhi. The traditional way of a performance by qawwali is a hamd, but a qaul means either the start or the finish. Hamd, naat and qaul are the mandatory songs that must be performed in a standard qawwali performance. According to Qureshi, Qaul is the founder of the principle of spiritual successorship upon which the theory of Sufi hierarchy is built (Qureshi: 116). The other group of hymns (Rung) are also sung during a qawwali congregation to mention the saint who started the silsilah (order). Indian classical music, such as in the case of Aaj Rang where Khusro is in a state of worship to his spiritual guide, his master Nizamuddin Aulia.As previously stated, Indian classical music has helped in giving the traditional qawwali repertoire a structural integrity. Usually a qawwali performance starts with the alap in a specific dominant raga of the performance. In contrast to the Hindustani classical tradition, qawwali confuses relatable ragas. Once the alap verse of a song or a text is recited, the main part of the qawwali is illustrated. Qawwali is like Sufism, experiential. A disciple is initiated into the practice of listening at a very early age. The training will be necessary only in those cases when some kind of correction is required, when the disciple is willing to study Sufi philosophy. Similar to the Hindustani classical music, qawwali is a family gharana. The performative technicalities are transmitted between the generations. The qawwali, specifically North Indian qawwali repertoire and Pakistani qawwali repertoire can be dated to Khusro, who instructed his pupils on the

specifics of a qawwali performance and therefore developed the mythical Gharana of qawwali known as Qawwal Bachche Ka Gharana. This gharana is the cradle of nearly all the famous Chistiya qawwali sikhs of India and Pakistan. The qawwals value gharana because the qawwali training involves not only a thorough grasp of Sufi philosophy but also of the extensive array of mystic poetry. The Indo-Pakistani qawwali repertoire possesses a recognised musical identity (Qureshi: 19), i.e., the texts are recognizable. These are referred to as Purane dhun / Purani Brandishing or old dhun such as Man kunto maula, then there are qawwali ke thet dhun such as Kaga sab khaiyo or some particular qawwali dhun which can be used in a performance with any textual background. More frequently a qawwal drifts between texts, even between poets. Other than these common qawwalis, the qawwals possess numerous modern tunes or Aajkal ke dhune. They also heavily borrow Sant Kabir and Tulsidas and other Bhakti teachers. They also write new melodies or borrow some melodies which they have heard somewhere; these are known as urana or snatched melodies.

Review of literature

Sama (Sufi music meetings) has its roots in the tradition of the 13th century, attributed to Amir Khusrau, a court musician to Sultan Alauddin Khilji and disciple of the Sufi saint Nizamuddin Auliya of the Chishti order. This was later accompanied by the use of music and professional singers in Sama, which led to the birth of Qawwali that is commonly sung in the death anniversaries of saints (Urs) and on other special religious events like during Ramadan. Qawwali became an element of the Sufi religious economy of South Asia shortly thereafter and integrated mystic poetry, music, and spirituality (Boyk, 2006; Qureshi, 1986). Qawwali is not just music, it is considered as a way to God and brings the listeners into a state of Wajd (spiritual ecstasy). Its religious poetry evokes love and devotion to God and the Sufi saints who are thought to be the mediators between man and God make these meetings even more sacred (Qadiri, 2000). However, modernization and globalization changed everything in the 20th century and Qawwali was modernized. New technologies and media gave Qawwali audiences outside Islam and South Asia, but this also turned it more secular and less spiritual. Big concerts, film versions, and commercial versions brought Qawwali to entertainment where it has ceased to be practiced in shrines. According to many followers of Sufi, such a commercialization has spoiled the spiritual nature of Qawwali (Boyk, 2006; Moini, 2004). Other Sufis even prohibited Qawwali in their Khanqahs (lodges) since they believed that contemporary versions were not spiritual. Nevertheless, in some of the shrines, including the one of Baba Farid Ganj Shakker in South Punjab, hereditary Qawwals still perform a traditional style (Qureshi, 1999). Despite the fact that Qawwali is a male dominated art, women are also involved in barely a few forms (Abbas, 2002). Qawwali has been and will always be about Sufi poetry and the young people were inspired by the poets of that time, Rumi, Saadi, and Jami. Sufi poets Shah Hussain, Sultan Bahu, Bulleh Shah, Waris Shah and Khwaja Ghulam Farid, wrote verses that have been popular in Punjab even today. They speak about love to God and Prophet (PBUH), the instability of life, and spiritual purity in their poetry (Ahmad, 2003; Ameen, 2004). Specifically, folk stories and Sindhia folk characters such as Sassi served to convey the themes of love, faithfulness, and resistance to suffering in the world, and this is why the poetry of Khawaja Farid was valuable to both spiritual and cultural audiences (Khakwani, 2004; Alam, 2007)

Discussion

Coke Studio, also known as Coke CS, an initiative sponsored by Coca Cola, the largest beverage company in the world, and Frequency Media, is a Pakistani music television series in which stars perform live studio-recorded musical performances. It was composed by Rohail Hyatt in 2008, and adopted by the Strings Band in 2014. Fronted by its producers, ―CS musical production generally blends Sufi and folk poetry with pop and rock song lyrics and traditional musical structures with increasingly modern and Western rhythms. Every year a new set of songs and other footage is issued in a series of Episodes which jointly form a Season says Mukhtar. Each episode or show is typically supported by a house band, along with backing vocals and guest artists in countries like Italy, Turkey and Morocco. There is much to be said about CSM performance. Singers work within a multi-semiotic environment in which music, rhythm and instrumentation are the dominant elements. Perched in (semi)circle, with the spectacular use of light, colour and sound plays in the background, singers wield blows, plucks, clonks, strikes, throbs mixed with electronic raps and taps and much more. Besides its visual qualities, what makes CS singers more popular (1) Najia Mukhtar, Using love to fathom religious difference – Contemporary formats of Sufi poetry in Pakistan, ‖ Contemporary South Asia 23, no. 1 (2015): 30. (2) Jay Moye, 'Music transcends everything':The active interaction between the popularization of Sufism and the emergence of New Age spirituality points to a sophisticated synthesis of ancient mysticism with the new cultural forms. Coke Studio Pakistan has provided a spectacular avenue through which this phenomenon has expressed itself as music becomes an influential instrument in developing a cultural narrative. With its focus on spiritual experiences and the search of divine love, Sufism has become a popular topic in the modern age. At the same time,

New Age spirituality has become an international phenomenon, and a combination of various spiritual practices and beliefs. The music television show, Coke Studio Pakistan has played a key role in achieving this fusion because it has had the capacity of integrating the Sufi music with the modern music. A case in point is the performance of the legendary Sufi qawwali "Tajdar-e-Haram" by the famous duet Atif Aslam and Abida Parveen in Coke Studio. Such collaboration turns the work of devotion into a contemporary masterpiece that is accepted not only by members of the traditional Sufi people. The emotion evoking melody, mixed with the latest production methods, attracts a wide range of population and fills a gap between the ancient and the recent. True interplay of Sufism and New Age spirituality is illustrated by the rendition of Afreen Afreen in Coke Studio Pakistan.

The concert with world-famous performers adds some modern musical layers to the traditional Sufi love song and attracts a large audience and raises the topic of the changing role of Sufism in spiritual life today. The sphere of influence of Coke Studio is not limited to the world of music alone, but it is'a sort of cultural ambassador and helps people feel together and learn to value diversity. Combining Sufism with modernity in its episodes not only appeals to local people but also receives recognition at the international level, displaying the richness of the Pakistani cultural heritage. The problem of authenticity and commercialization is raised in this interaction game as well. Critics have claimed that Sufi music is in danger of being commodified so that it can be sold to the general masses on the volumes like Coke Studio, to the point of becoming something that can be bought and sold. The distinction between true spiritual performance and commercial theatrical performance is permeable, and the threat of appropriation of culture is high. An excellent example

that can be traced of such convergence is in which AbidaParveen one of the most renowned Sufi artists is accompanied by Atif Aslam who happens to be a pop artist today. They collaborated in Season 10 of Coke Studio to sing the classic song “Dil Dil Pakistan” which is a fusion of Sufi verses and a modern pop-rock song. This kind of fusion was quite popular among the listeners and represented the power of music in overcoming religious and cultural barriers. The non-judgmental platform created by Coke Studio gives members of various spiritual foundations a chance to use music to share their religious beliefs. Another example of the Islamic devotional music traditions is the cooperation of Rahat Fateh Ali Khan, a Qawwali master, and Amjad Sabri, a famous Sufi qawwali. The combination of Qawwali and modernistic was an ideal case of how the show could transcend religious lines and foster unity. Additionally, traditional instruments, including tabla, sitar, and flute, are commonly featured in Coke Studio productions, and the sound they produce can be seen as resonant with the spiritual heritage of the area. A mix of the old and the new becomes hypnotizing with the combination of these instruments and modern means of production. Coke Studio helps create a feeling of unity and common spirituality by encouraging cross-religious and cross-cultural partnerships. The success of the show rests in its capacity to glorify the multiplicity of spiritual practices but to highlight the through line that cuts across them all, namely, the transformative aspect of music. Coke Studio Pakistan has been a cultural mediator, bringing people together through their love of spirituality as interpreted through the universal language of music, which is its other remarkable example. Coke Studio was an amalgamation of the enigmatic tones of Momina Mustehsan and the modernistic touch of Rahat Fateh Ali Khan who initially sang their respective roles in the song. The result was a magical performance that smoothly blended the ancient qawwali with modern music instruments, to create an emotionally stirring, but easy-going performance. There is nothing like a musical experiment to combine Sufi music with modern sounds in Coke Studio, but more a connection with spirituality in a modern society with its diversity and fluidity. The spiritual and transcendental themes of Sufi music receive new definition as Sufi music becomes intertwined with other genres such as rock, pop, as well as electronic music. Such an synthesis permits the traditional to co-exist with the modern, and appeals to a broad audience that might otherwise not have heard of Sufi traditions. It is a spiritual world which has been defined by a quest towards authenticity and inclusiveness.

The innovative fusion of Coke Studio is the cultural bridge that allows individuals across various backgrounds to identify with the spiritual origins of Sufi music. It is an expression of universal characteristics of spirituality, and transcends cultural and geographical boundaries. Coke Studio collaborative style of production supports the concept of shared spirituality. When these musicians of different backgrounds unite to make these musical masterpieces, they reflect on the cohesiveness and oneness that forms the central message of Sufi thought. The content analysis will assist in locating the thematic dimensions that reveal a unique combination of classical elements of Sufism and contemporary expression of music. To begin with, the Sufi musical works of Coke Studio tend to focus on the universal ideas of love, devotion, and spirituality. There are some songs that articulate the emotion of deep love not just in a love, but in a spiritual way like afreen Afreen and Tajdar-e-Haram. The lyrical treasures and soulful interpretations produce a feeling of emotion that breaks cultural borders. Second, the combination of the old Sufi instruments and new soundscapes is an important thematic factor. The way instruments such as the dholak, tabla, and flute blend perfectly with the electric guitars and synthesizers also indicates how Coke Studio is keen on maintaining the originality of the Sufi music without turning it into

a modernized version. This blending makes the Sufi music more accessible to more people. In addition, the collaborative spirit of Coke Studio productions can also be seen in its Sufi versions.

The combination of different artists, vocalists, and instrumentalists, creates a musical conversation that enhances the depth of the theme. In Sammi Meri Waar, the duet of Umair Jaswal and Quratulain Balook is a good example of how their different styles come together to enhance the Sufi message of seeking divine love. The perfectly blending of the old and new is seen in the use of traditional qawwali in the modern instrumentals in Abida Parveen and Rahat Fateh Ali Khan rendition of Chap Tilak. Ae Dil is the fusion of different cultural elements that occurred through the collaboration of Ali Zafar and Sara Haider and helped them create a feeling of unity in diversity. The imagery that has been used to accompany Coke Studio Sufi productions is the key to adding themes. There is also symbolic imagery that creates the overall immersive experience: dervishes whirling, landscapes with some spiritual isolation, etc. The images work together with the music and support Sufi motifs both visually and emotionally.

Conclusion

Qawwali is the source of spiritual and cultural identity of Pakistan. Developing as a highly expressive form of music blending elements of Persian, Arabic, Turkic, and Indian music, qawwali attracted a transcendent quality in the 13th century with the help of poet-composer Amir Khusrow, and with the help of musician Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan in 1985 when he played qawwali as a key element in his performances at Womad Festival, the genre achieved the appeal of transcience it continues to have today. These live concerts highlight that qawwali is an instrument that connects audiences despite religious, cultural, and national differences, and highlights love, peace, and spiritual unity Coke Studio, on the other hand, is a modern reinterpretation of Pakistani music that is open to diversity and evolving cultural tastes. Since 2008, Coke Studio is the longest running music television program in the country. Due to its purposeful blending of folk, classical, Sufi, ghazal, bhangra, qawwali, hip-hop, rock and pop in its unique, fusion-driven performances. By so doing, it has re-energized the old genres among the younger generation to the benefit of Pakistani music, and in the process, it has enhanced the Pakistani musical tradition by providing the trans-cultural touch. Coke Studio has been used as a powerful cultural icon during moments of national fear besides mixing music. The show has also contributed to intercultural communication on a worldwide level, with songs such as Pasoori by Ali Sethi and Shae Gill becoming internationally popular, heard in India and beyond, and with music being seen as an instrument that crosses political borders. But this change in expression has not been embraced by everybody. Some critics have argued that Coke Studio fusion style has the risk of diluting the core of traditional music. They fear that major folk traditions will be dwarfed by commercial aesthetics, which will become the stylistic backdrops of contemporary sounds. These perspectives put into the fore a conflict between change and cultural survival that has always existed.

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