



International Baccalaureate Form 6/FISCS

Film cover sheet: independent study

SUBMIT TO: EXAMINER ARRIVAL DATE: 30 APR (30 OCT) SESSION: A04
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- Type or write legibly using black ink and retain a copy of this form.
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SUBJECT: Film LEVEL: Higher
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Instructions to candidates

Please tick/check to show you have included:

- Synopsis
- Script
- List of sources

Number of script pages (HL 12-15, SL 8-10): 15

Title: American and Indian Musical Cinema

Cultures examined	Films studied
America, India	Lagaan, Madhumati, Pardes, Dil Chahta Hai, Khabie Khusi Khabie Gham, Moulin Rouge, West Side Story, Singin' in the Rain, The Sound of Music

I confirm that this independent study is my own work.

Candidate's signature: Date: 2/19/04

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Teacher's name: Date: 2/19/04
 Teacher's signature:

American and Indian Musical Cinema

19 February 2004

Synopsis:

An analysis of musical cinema that compares American filmmaking conventions with that of the Indian “Bollywood” industry. How do these two countries’ musicals influence each other?

American and Indian Musical Cinema
February 19, 2004 – Produced and written by

Video

FADE UP WS SINGIN' IN THE RAIN: "Singin' in the Rain," Gene Kelly dances around a lamppost at night in the middle of a downpour.

WS MY FAIR LADY: "I Could Have Danced all Night," Audrey Hepburn dances around the room.

WS THE SOUND OF MUSIC: "Do-Re-Mi," Julie Andrews and children sing and dance.

CLIP: 1961 Academy Awards

CLIP: 1964 Academy Awards

CLIP: 1951 Academy Awards

CLIP: 1965 Academy Awards

WS ANCHORS AWEIGH: Gene Kelly tap dances.

WS THE SOUND OF MUSIC: Julie Andrews twirls and sings on the mountainside.

WS THE KING AND I: "Shall we Dance?" Deborah Kerr and Yul Brynner dance around the ballroom.

CLIP: WS TAJ MAHAL

Audio

MUSIC UP (Gene Kelly "Singin' in the Rain")

NARRATOR VO: Remember the golden age of musicals?

A time in America's cinematic history when a character breaking out into song was completely natural?

A time when classic American musicals like Singin' in the Rain, The King and I, and The Sound of Music dominated the box office and won countless Academy Awards?

PRESENTER: "And the Oscar goes to... West Side Story"

PRESENTER: "...My Fair Lady"

PRESENTER: "...An American in Paris"

PRESENTER: "...The Sound of Music"

NARRATOR VO: ...probably not. Your grandmother might, but chances are you don't remember the fifties and sixties, when the musical dominated popular American cinema, ever changing and shaping the way we watch and interpret films.

Yes, it's time to face the hard truth. Today, the American musical is all but extinct. The days of Gene Kelly...

...Julie Andrews...

...and Rodgers and Hammerstein are over. And the American musical genre has taken a backseat to loud, epic, action-packed Hollywood films.

MUSIC UP (traditional Indian sitar music)

CLIP: CHINA GATE, "Chamma Chamma" opening sequence

NARRATOR VO: But halfway around the world, nine thousand miles away, one country has a different idea.

MUSIC UP (*China Gate*, "Chamma Chamma")

CLIP: LAGAAN, "Rhada Ke Se Na Jale," Ahmir Khan and Gracy Singh dance together in a religious ceremony.

NARRATOR VO: It's stylized, it's excessive, it's emotional, it's Indian musical cinema... and it's popularly known as, "Bollywood."

And though you may have never seen a single Bollywood film, we'd like to let you know that India is home to the world's largest film industry—bigger than any other country in the world—, producing over eight hundred films a year. It's a staple of modern Indian life, and a cultural phenomenon.

CLIP: KABHI KUSHI KABHIE GHAM, "Shava Shava," Kajol and Shah Rukh Khan dance together in an extravagant birthday celebration.

And that's not all. While American culture has left the musical in the dust, transferring its love of music to the modern-day MTV culture, Indian cinema has embraced this genre since the very beginning of movie making. In fact, a Hindi film today without song and dance is just as rare as a contemporary American film with song and dance.

CLIP: HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM, "Dholi Taro Dhol Baaje," Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai dance together in an Indian wedding ceremony.

So what does this mean to America? Well, a lot more than you'd think. As it turns out, Bollywood has a lot more influence over American cinema than one would imagine.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, "Hindi Sad Diamonds," Nicole Kidman and cast dance onstage in a homage to Bollywood.

MUSIC UP (*Moulin Rouge*, "Hindi Sad Diamonds")

And that's why, in the next twenty minutes, you'll see just how significant these two countries are in the world of cinema. And how the future of the musical lies in the fate of these two industries and their influence over each other.

FADE to BLACK

TITLE: "American and Indian Musical Cinema"

NARRATOR VO: Before we jump right in and discuss where the musical's going, it seems necessary to discuss where it's been. And what a better place to start than right in your own backyard.

CLIP: OKLAHOMA, "Oklahoma," cast sings and dances.

MUSIC UP (*Oklahoma*, "Oklahoma")

WS SINGIN' IN THE RAIN,
"Broadway Ballet," Gene Kelly and
cast tap dance in front of an
impressionistic background of
Broadway signs.

CLIP: AN AMERICAN IN PARIS,
"I've got Rhythm," Gene Kelly sings
and dances with a group of French
children.

CLIP: AN AMERICAN IN PARIS,
"Dream Ballet," Gene Kelly and cast
dances through blue, white, and red set
pieces painted to look like the streets of
Paris.

CLIP: SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, "Sing
in' the Rain," Gene Kelly tap dances in
the street, splashing through puddles.

CLIP: THE KING AND I, "Getting to
Know You," Deborah Kerr sings to a
group of children.

Yes, nothing's more American than the
classic Rodgers and Hammerstein's
musical—that's true. But let's go back a
little bit farther, to where the spirit of the
American musical was really born.

It's 1951, and the public's fascination
with the American musical can be summed
up in a single name:

Gene Kelly.

Sure, there was Fred Astaire before him,
but Gene Kelly is famous for leaving
behind the stuffy, sophisticated dancing
style of Fred Astaire and bringing his own,
personal, musical vitality to the screen.

And up until 1951, musicals had been
completely ignored by critics and the
Academy alike, until Gene Kelly teamed
up with director Vincente Minnelli to make
the best-picture winner, *An American in
Paris*.

MUSIC UP (*An American in Paris*, "I've
got Rhythm")

Set to the brilliant music of Gershwin,
surrounded by breathtaking sets and
inspired by Kelly's clever choreography,
An American in Paris brought the
Academy to their knees, honoring Kelly
with an award for his achievement. The
musical spark was lit, and the public
wanted more.

Unfortunately, Kelly's next famous
work, perhaps the most loved and classic
American musical of all time—*Singin' in
the Rain*—somehow went unnoticed.

MUSIC UP (*Singin' in the Rain*, "Singin'
in the Rain")

As with every film genre, these dance
musicals were becoming risky to produce,
with no guarantee of public interest. But
the musical was not about to fall flat on its
face. Hollywood had a solution.

MUSIC UP (*The King and I*, "Getting to
Know You")

NARRATOR VO: Thus begins the era of
the epic stage musical. And what a better
way to deal with the uncertainty of the

MS THE KING AND I: Yul Brynner speaks to Deborah Kerr.

CLIP: THE SOUND OF MUSIC, "The Sound of Music," Julie Andrews twirls and sings on the mountainside.

WS THE KING AND I: Deborah Kerr and Yul Brynner speak to each other in a static camera shot.

MS THE SOUND OF MUSIC: Julie Andrews and cast sing in a group in a static camera shot.

CLIP: WEST SIDE STORY, "Jet Ballet," The camera zooms; the Jets snap their fingers in time with the music.

CLIP CONTINUES: The camera follows the Jets and Sharks as they twirl down the streets of New York.

CLIP CONTINUES: The Jets and Sharks face one another, chase each other, dance down the street.

public's interest! Now, Hollywood could take successful shows from Broadway and turn them into cinematic masterpieces without any doubt that they would be well received.

No duo in this time period was as well respected as Rodgers and Hammerstein. Together, they produced such memorable classics as *The King and I*...

YUL BRYNNER: "Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera and so fourth."

NARRATOR VO: ... and *The Sound of Music*.

MUSIC UP (*The Sound of Music*, "The Sound of Music")

JULIE ANDREWS: "The hills are alive, with the sound of music!"

NARRATOR VO: But with these new adaptations came restrictions. Most films were, only, adaptations of stage shows, and thus, the true capabilities of cinema were not explored. It wasn't until 1961's *West Side Story* that a musical truly exhibited new life.

MUSIC UP (*West Side Story*, "Jet Ballet")

NARRATOR VO: *West Side Story* explored a new kind of musical filmmaking, one not restricted to soundstages and static camera movement. The heart of the stage musical was still there, but the filmmakers left behind realistic intentions and opted for a more stylized feel.

MUSIC CONTINUES (*West Side Story*, "Jet Ballet")

NARRATOR VO: The result was a film that was both a musical and visually stunning, reminiscent of the early Gene Kelly musicals. Unfortunately, these films marked the end of the golden age. As with every film genre, Hollywood tried desperately to capitalize of the popularity of musicals, but box office success was small for movies like *Hello, Dolly!* and *Doctor Dolittle*.

CLIP: SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, "Singin' in the Rain," Gene Kelly stops dancing, hands his umbrella to a police man, and strolls down the pavement offscreen.

CLIP: HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM, "Chand Chupa Badal Mein," Salman Khan and Aishwarya Rai dance together.

CLIP: DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE, "Ruk Jaa O Dil Deewane," Shah Rukh Khan tries to impress Kajol with his entourage of background dancers.

MS THE KING AND I: Yul Brynner speaks to Deborah Kerr.

CLIP: SHOLAY, "Holi Ke Din," Cast members celebrate Holi, dancing in a shower of brightly colored powder and dye.

CLIP: DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE, "Tujhe Dekha To," Shah Rukh Khan confesses his love to Kajol in a field blossoming with mustard flowers.

CLIP: MADHUMATI, "Aaja Re Pardesi," Dilip Kumar chases Vyjayanthimala through a forest.

CLIP CONTINUES: Vyjayanthimala dances her way around trees, glancing back and giggling.

The public was growing tired of musicals, and the American musical genre was worn out. Failed attempts at box office success and public interest pushed musicals aside, and by the early eighties, the golden age of musicals was forgotten.

So where is the American musical headed? It may surprise you, but *India* is the answer.

Indian musical cinema provides an interesting contrast to the trials and tribulations of American musicals. In fact, India's culture looks fascinating in comparison.

But then again, why wouldn't it? In a world where religious ceremonies, bright colors, family gatherings, singing and dancing are a part of daily life, the movies here are bound to have more vitality than, say, an American stage musical on screen.

YUL BRYNNER: "Et cetera, et cetera, et cetera and so fourth."

NARRATOR VO: And there are more similarities between Indian and American cinema than one would think. India, too, had a golden age of the musical, centered around the late forties to the mid-fifties. But unlike American cinema, music has always been an integral part of Indian films.

Ever since the first Indian "talkie", *Alam Ara*, song sequences have established themselves as essential conductors of emotion. And indeed, Bollywood has developed much in the same way. Like the golden age of American musicals, Bollywood is defined by popular cinema—a need for public approval.

Perhaps the image most readily associated with Bollywood films is that of two Indian lovers cavorting through the forest, hiding behind trees, the veiled woman one step ahead of the man. Whether you've seen it, heard it, or watched some American parody of the whole sequence, you know what we're talking about.

The classic Indian musical, *Madhumati*, is a definitive Bollywood picture because it contains sequences such as these.

CLIP: MADHUMATI, Dilip Kumar wanders through a dark house, discovers Vyjayanthimala asleep on the floor.

CLIP CONTINUES, Vyjayanthimala wakes up.

WS WEST SIDE STORY, "Mambo" scene.

MS THE MATRIX, gunfight scene.

CU TITANTIC, romance scene.

MS THE SEARCHERS, John Wayne on his horse.

MS AN AMERICAN IN PARIS, Gene Kelly tap-dances in a café.

WS LAGAAN, Indian villagers and British face off in a cricket match.

MS HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM, characters embrace one another before a wedding ceremony.

WS KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI, characters face off in a one-on-one basketball game.

MS SHOLAY, karate-style fight scene.

MS PARDES, characters throwing punches.

MS LAGAAN, cast members pray with tears in their eyes.

WS HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM, cast takes place in an extravagant

VYJAYANTHIMALA: "Come to me my love!"

NARRATOR VO: This idea of a song and dance sequence exclusively between a man and a woman is seen in nearly every Bollywood film to this day. *Madhumati* is one of the earliest Bollywood films, and the connections to modern Indian cinema are obvious. In fact, every Bollywood film follows a certain kind of "pattern." There's a few defining traits of Bollywood that everyone should know:

Indian musical cinema is different from American musical cinema because of one key difference: genre. Think about it: In America, the "musical" is a genre. In western culture, we depend on these genres to distinguish...

...musicals,...

...from action films,...

...from romance films,...

...from classic westerns.

And so on and so fourth. In this way, the American classic musical adopted a rigid, familiar style that, to us, is very typical.

Bollywood doesn't work that way. In Indian cinema, there is no division of genres, and in this way, the Bollywood film has been shaped to appeal to India's incredibly diverse audience. A Bollywood film has to be "everything to everyone." In America, musicals play a small part in the cinematic experience, but in India, these musicals *are* the popular cinema.

Therefore, these movies contain everything from extreme action,...

...to rage and murder,...

...to sadness and death,...

...to love and celebration,...

wedding ceremony.

CU MADHUMATI, slapstick comedy routine.

CLIP: PARDES, "I Love My India," Shahrukh Khan sings and dances with a group of small children on a hillside.

CLIP: PARDES, "Jahan Piya Wahan Main," Mahima Choudry sings to Shahrukh Khan.

MS PARDES, A man clumsily falls into a pile of bicycles.

WS PARDES, Mahima Choudry cries as Apurva Agnihotri attacks her.

MS PARDES, Shahrukh Khan kicks Amrishi Pouri. Mild blood and violence.

CLIP: PARDES, "I Love My India," Shahrukh Khan joins the cast in a glorious finale sequence of dancing and singing.

CU HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM, Aishwarya Rai screams, her hair flowing behind her.

CU KABHI KUSHI KABHIE GHAM, Kajol pokes fun at her younger sister.

CU KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI, Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol exchange a

... even comedy and pleasure.

Perhaps the best example of this style of film can be seen in *Pardes*. Not only does *Pardes* include little kids singing and dancing...

CHILDREN: "I love my India!"

NARRATOR VO: ...but there's also romance...

... comedy...

...rape...

...and karate-chop style violence. It's everything rolled into one. In the Indian film industry, these types of films are referred to as "*masala*" films—actually a culinary term for a mix of several flavors in a single dish.

Bollywood films are anything and everything. They are not an Indian film genre. Instead, they are Indian films. This stands out as one of the key differences between the western style of musical and the Bollywood style.

Aside from genre, Bollywood musicals present an acting style that is much different from western acting traditions: it's overly dramatic.

WOMAN: "Why are you torturing me, Sameer?"

NARRATOR VO: And not just dramatic in a desperate way. But dramatic in a comical way as well.

KAJOL: "Take a chill pill!"

NARRATOR VO: But why shouldn't the acting be overly dramatic? We're talking about an audience here who's used to song, dance, and musical accompaniment. It seems only natural that an Indian audience

comical secret handshake.

MS SHOLAY, Sanjeev Kumar attempts to impress Helma Malini while riding a bike.

CLIP: MERE YAAR KI SHAADI HAI, "Hum Dono Jaisa," Bipasha Basu dances with her family as she sings about her new fiancée.

MS DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE, characters running through a field of wildflowers.

WS SHOLAY, characters brandish guns and shoot.

CU KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI, characters talk at a children's summer camp.

CU PAKEEZA, a woman cries over-dramatically.

CLIP: AMERICAN DESI, Deep Katdare and company sit on a couch watching Bollywood films.

CLIP: DIL CHAHTA HAI, "Koi Kahe Kahata Rahe," a group of young men take part in a magnificent dance sequence at a modern Bombay club.

CLIP: AMERICAN DESI, Deep Katdare sits on the couch; makes sarcastic remarks about a Bollywood film.

would have no problem accepting stylized departures from realistic storytelling. The result is a departure not only from realistic storytelling, but also from the real world itself. The Bollywood film engrosses the viewer, and ensnares him in a sensory trap of bright visuals, vivid songs, and enriched emotion.

MUSIC UP (*Mere Yaar Ki Shaadi Hai*, "Hum Dono Jaisa")

NARRATOR VO: Multiple subplots are also typical of Bollywood films, fitting with the tradition of "everything and anything." The films are generally inoffensive and offer a wide range of entertainment. They're multi-generational, and appeal to people of all ages.

Ok, so let's recap:

Lovers' duet...

... "masala" style genre...

... inoffensive, multiple subplots...

... and stylized acting. All are typical Bollywood traditions. And all are lacking in the typical American musical.

Oh yeah, and then there's the songs.

KATDARE: "Hey, it's been ten minutes, aren't we due for another song and dance sequence?"

NARRATOR VO: In Bollywood, songs are the most important part of a film. In fact, if a storyline is over-used and a plot has predictable dialogue, a movie can still flourish if the music has originality.

KATDARE: "Oh, good... I was starting to get worried."

CLIP: LAGAAN, “Radha Kaise Na Jale,” Aamir Khan and Gracy Singh dance in a religious ceremony accompanied by a large number of cast members.

CLIP CONTINUES, Aamir Khan and Gracy Singh are left alone to sing and dance in duet-form.

CLIP: KABHI KUSHI KABHIE GHAM, “Yeh Ladka Hai Allah,” the entire cast is treated to a performance by Kajol in anticipation of a wedding ceremony.

CLIP: KUCH KUCH HOTA HAI, “Saajanji Ghar Aaye,” Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol take part in an intimate duet.

CLIP: DILWALE DULHANIA LE JAYENGE, “Tujhe Dehka To,” Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol embrace each other during a love song.

CLIP: SINGIN’ IN THE RAIN, “Good Morning,” Gene Kelly, Donald O’Connor, and Debbie Reynolds gather in the kitchen to talk.

But perhaps the most obvious difference between Indian and American music lies in culture. In India, music is a part of life. It permeates every aspect of religion and celebration. This is why so many cultural and religious ceremonies are integrated into Bollywood films. Not only does it appeal to the inter-generational audience, but it’s a tribute to the vibrant culture of India as well.

MUSIC UP (*Lagaan*, “Rhada Ke Se Na Jale”)

NARRATOR VO: In *Lagaan*, the Indian celebration of Holi is a perfect excuse for a lavish musical number enriched in dance and song.

MUSIC UP (*Kabhi Kushi Kabhi Gham*, “Yeh Ladka Hai Allah”)

NARRATOR VO: And in *Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, like most other Indian films, a wedding ceremony is the perfect opportunity for song and dance. In this way, it seems that it’s simply the nature of Indian culture that separates American musicals with that of the Indian genre.

But if we look closer at how these song sequences are actually placed *within* the films, one would notice one very big difference.

Basically, we’ll break it down for you. Keep in mind we’re generalizing here, but when we look at musicals as a whole, there are two apparent types: a film that features songs accompanied by story, and a film that features story accompanied by songs. Structured musicals, and stylized musicals. Musical with songs that construct the narrative, and musicals with songs that complement the narrative. American musicals, and Bollywood musicals.

Think about American musicals for a second. There are certain strict conventions used in classic musicals to introduce a musical number. It’s almost cliché: the dialogue becomes exaggerated, the music creeps in...

DEBBIE REYNOLDS: “Look, it’s morning! Good morning!”

CLIP CONTINUES, Debbie Reynolds begins to sing. Gene Kelly and Donald O'Connor join in.

CLIP: THE KING AND I, "I Whistle a Happy Tune," Deborah Kerr reassures her son upon arriving to Siam.

CLIP CONTINUES, Deborah Kerr begins to sing.

WS SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, "Good Morning" dance sequence.

WS THE KING AND I, "Getting to Know You" musical number.

CLIP: HUM DIL DE CHUKE SANAM, "Kaipoche," the entire cast takes part in a kite-flying holiday, accompanied by joyous song.

CLIP: KABHI KUSHI KABHIE GHAM, "Shava Shava," Amitabh Bachchan performs onstage for his son's birthday.

CLIP CONTINUES as the rest of the cast joins in.

CLIP: MERE YAAR KI SHAADI HAI, "Ek Ladki," a montage of clips; Uday Chopra and Bipasha Basu chase each other through a field, ride bikes, and ski down a snowy slope.

NARRATOR VO: ...and away we go!

MUSIC UP (*Singin' in the Rain*, "Good Morning")

NARRATOR VO: It's a classic tradition that really evolves from the stage conventions American musicals have.

DEBORAH KERR: "Whenever I'm sad, I just whistle a happy tune!"

MUSIC UP (*The King and I*, "I Whistle a Happy Tune")

NARRATOR VO: This is definitely not something you'd see in a Bollywood musical. American musical songs are integral to the narrative of the story. They fit right into the plot, and therefore, the plot surrounding them isn't much to look at.

What would *Singin' in the Rain* be without the songs?

What would *The King and I* be without its musical numbers? Pretty boring, that's what.

Indian musical numbers are different. We already know these types of films have plenty of plot (and subplot) to go around. So, really, the musical numbers in Bollywood films *complement* the narrative, instead of form it. These sequences, instead of offering insight to the plot, offer a break from the plot.

In *Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham*, characters take place in an extravagant song and dance at a birthday celebration.

MUSIC UP (*Kabhi Kushi Kabhie Gham*, "Shava Shava")

NARRATOR VO: When it's all over, nothing has changed, really. The song hasn't offered any insight to the film, and the plot continues as normal. The sequence was sheer, stylized, entertainment.

Since songs aren't critical to the narrative in Bollywood films, the sequences exhibit a freedom unknown to the western musical. Montages are especially popular, where a song is carried through many scenes, locations, and days.

CLIP CONTINUES as the camera reveals breathtaking cinematography and moving shots of Indian countryside.

CLIP: LAGAAN, "Mitwa," Sanjay Dayma suddenly breaks out into song, playing a sitar.

CLIP CONTINUES as other cast members join in.

CLIP: AMERICAN DESI, Deep Katdare, still sitting on the couch watching Bollywood movies, turns to his girlfriend in exasperation.

CLIP: DIL CHAHTA HAI, "Koi Kahe Kahata Rahe," montage as Aamir Khan and friends showcase their leather pants and MTV-inspired dance moves in a Bombay nightclub.

CLIP: DIL CHATA HAI, "Kaisi Hai Yeh Rut," Akshaye Khanna imagines himself with Dimple Kapadia next to a brilliantly blue stream.

MS WEST SIDE STORY, Rita Moreno and cast dance in "America" sequence.

WS SINGIN' IN THE RAIN, Gene Kelly dances with cast in "Broadway Ballet" sequence.

MUSIC UP (*Hum Dil De Chuke Sanam*, "Aankhon Ki Gustakhiyan")

NARRATOR VO: And with this freedom, Indian musicals don't feel the need to stick to conventions like American musicals. Before a number, there's no exaggerated dialogue or soft music. There's just a story, and then a song, interrupting it.

MUSIC UP (*Lagaan*, "Mitwa")

NARRATOR VO: This all connects back to Bollywood conventions we've previously talked about. Stylized acting and genre mixing creates a world in which anything can happen. So when an Indian musical star breaks out into song, the audience doesn't need justification. He just starts singing, and it works.

Perhaps the most difficult obstacle the musical faces is modern culture. In America, modern audiences are used to violence, action, and realistic story settings. They depend on realism and convincing performances in their films. In this way, a traditional musical is very difficult for a modern American audience to accept.

KATDARE: "I've seen porno films with better storylines than this, honestly!"

NARRATOR VO: But Bollywood is adapting. In the 1999 hit, *Dil Chahta Hai*, song sequences feature MTV-inspired dance moves and a music video feel to appeal to a younger generation.

Dil Chahta Hai also uses a technique now very prevalent in modern Bollywood films—placing a song sequence within the imagination of a character. A musical number taking place in somebody's head seems a whole lot more plausible than a musical number taking place on the streets of modern Bombay.

So if the Indian musical can adapt, what about the American musical? Can a modern American audience accept a film in musical form? Where is this lost genre headed?

The answer is right in front of us, and the answer is "Bollywood."

WS LAGAAN, Aamir Khan comes up to bat in a cricket match.

WS MOULIN ROUGE, Nicole Kidman and Ewan McGregor sing to each other on top of an extravagant, elephant-shaped building.

CLIP: LAGAAN, Aamir Khan talks with Gracy Singh on top of a hillside overlooking a tiny village.

CLIP: LAGAAN, Aamir Khan and cast practice their meditation skills in front of a temple.

MS LAGAAN, Aamir Khan sings in “Chale Chalo” sequence.

CU LAGAAN, characters fight over chickens.

CLIP: LAGAAN, “O Rey Chori,” Aamir Khan and Gracy Singh sing and dance together in the desert.

CLIP: LAGAAN, “Mitwa,” Gracy Singh turns around surprised to find her father singing to Aamir Khan in approval.

To predict the future of the musical, we’ll take a look at two of the most recent, one Indian and one American:

Lagaan...

And *Moulin Rouge*.

By tradition, *Lagaan* is a modern Bollywood film, but it sets itself apart from the rest because of one certain aspect—its achievement in America. And although this movie was not, by any standards, “successful” in America, it was well received by critics, and earned itself a Best Foreign Film nomination at the 2000 Academy Awards.

So what makes *Lagaan* so different from other modern Bollywood films? Well, it has western influence as well as Indian influence.

While the song sequences are stylized,

... the plot long and riddled with subplots...

... and Bollywood conventions like the “lovers’ duet” are present here too, the setting is very much reminiscent of an American musical. Instead of being set in a modern age where song and dance numbers would seem more out of place, *Lagaan* takes place in the nineteenth century, in the fictional poor village of Champaner. The result is a world so detached from a modern setting that song sequences seem almost plausible.

In addition, *Lagaan* actually exhibits development through song—something rarely seen in Bollywood films. In a genre where songs aren’t necessarily important to the narrative, this difference presents *Lagaan* in a more western light. In the song sequence “Mitwa,” the main character Bhuvan actually convinces his friend to join his cricket team, and there is a definitive development—a change in a character’s outlook from the beginning to the end of a sequence. This aspect seems heavily reminiscent of American musicals,

CLIP CONTINUES as more cast members join to take part in a dance celebration.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, “Can-Can sequence,” Jim Broadbent leads the cast in a vivid montage of dancing and singing.

MS MOULIN ROUGE, Ewan McGregor at his typewriter.

MS MOULIN ROUGE, Nicole Kidman seduces Ewan McGregor in the red room scene.

MS MOULIN ROUGE, Ewan McGregor pitches his story to the Duke.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, “Hindi Sad Diamonds,” Jim Broadbent and Richard Roxburgh watch as Nicole Kidman and cast perform a stage tribute to Indian culture.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, “Elephant Love Medley,” Ewan McGregor and Nicole Kidman sing to each other inside the elephant.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, “The Pitch,” Ewan McGregor, Jim Broadbent, Nicole Kidman and cast convince the

where songs are crucial to the narrative.

So *Lagaan* has both influence of India and America. The result? A musical that is currently finding in audience in not only India and America, but worldwide as well. And in this day and age, that’s a pretty rare occurrence.

Another modern musical that has found a worldwide audience is Baz Luhrmann’s 2000 film, *Moulin Rouge*. Set in nineteenth-century Paris, the musical follows the story of Christian, a penniless poet, and his love affair with Satine, a courtesan at the Moulin Rouge. Not only was this film honored with many Academy Award nominations, including Best Picture, but it also is possibly the most innovative, groundbreaking, American tribute to Bollywood to date.

EWAN MCGREGOR: “India, India, it’s set in India!”

NARRATOR VO: Inspired by a Bollywood film he saw while traveling in India, Baz Luhrmann created a visually dazzling, emotionally stunning homage to the genre, combining both Indian traditions...

MUSIC UP (*Moulin Rouge*, “Hindi Sad Diamonds”)

NARRATOR VO: ... and American influence and songs.

MUSIC UP (*Moulin Rouge*, “Elephant Love Medley”)

EWAN MCGREGOR & NICOLE KIDMAN: “I... will always love you...”

NARRATOR VO: The musical is, traditionally, a western one, because the songs are very much integral to the plot, often telling the story or expressing characters’ feelings for each other.

MUSIC UP (*Moulin Rouge*, “The Pitch”)

EWAN MCGREGOR: “The courtesan and

Duke to invest in their show.

sitar man... are pulled apart by an evil plan..."

CU MOULIN ROUGE, Jim Broadbent talks to Richard Roxburgh.

JIM BROADBENT: "Spectacular, Spectacular!"

CU MOULIN ROUGE, Jim Broadbent and cast sing and Richard Roxburgh looks on horrified.

NARRATOR VO: The movie ranges from highly comedic...

CU MOULIN ROUGE, Ewan McGregor holds a dying Nicole Kidman in his arms and begins to cry.

MUSIC UP (*Moulin Rouge*, "Like a Virgin")

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, "Tango de Roxanne," montage of clips, cast dances the tango, Ewan McGregor sings, Nicole Kidman struggles against Richard Roxburgh.

NARRATOR VO: ... to hopelessly tragic.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, "Your Song," Ewan McGregor sings to Nicole Kidman and the two dance across the sky.

The setting is highly stylized and unrealistic, sacrificing realism for emotion and impact. As a result, *Moulin Rouge* creates a "heightened world" similar to that of modern Bollywood musicals. In this environment, anything is possible. Characters, emotions, settings, and dialogue are all stylized to complement a world where characters can break out into song. Unlike traditional American musicals, *Moulin Rouge* is unafraid and unashamed. The musical numbers need no justification—instead, they fit perfectly into this heightened environment.

Though some audiences were not ready to commit to a movie so unrealistic and emotionally driven, *Moulin Rouge* grossed over 100 million dollars worldwide and won several awards. Baz Luhrmann has reinvented the musical genre, and he has done it with the help of Bollywood.

WS CHINA GATE, "Chamma Chamma," opening sequence continues.

CU LAGAAN, Aamir Khan and Gracy Singh ride alongside each other on a cart.

Halfway around the world, Bollywood is still going strong, singing and dancing its way into countries all over the world, influencing the American films we watch today.

Perhaps the future of the musical lies in that influence itself. A culmination of

WS MOULIN ROUGE, Nicole Kidman and cast rehearse for the “Hindi Sad Diamonds” number.

CLIP: MOULIN ROUGE, “Hindi Sad Diamonds,” Nicole Kidman sings her final notes and the sequence ends in a triumphant culmination of song and dance.

FADE TO BLACK

stage traditions, acting conventions, visual techniques, and emotional stories coming together to create a musical that a modern age can enjoy.

MUSIC UP (*Moulin Rouge*, “Hindi Sad Diamonds”)

NARRATOR VO: But whatever happens, the musical is not dead. It’s here to stay. And we have Bollywood to thank for that.

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