

*Jaunpuri (Rendition of a Raga)* is a composition based on a traditional Indian raga and rare old vocal composition. *Jaunpuri* combines Western compositional structures, notation and harmony with the basic structures and materials of Indian classical music including *raga* (melodic archetypes), *tala* (rhythmic cycles), *alap* (non-rhythmic introduction and development), *bandish* (fixed melodic composition), *gamaks* (melodic embellishments), *taans* (virtuosic riffs), and highly stylized structured improvisation.

The work is based on an old *tarana bandish*, a special style of vocal composition, in *raga Jaunpuri*. *Raga Jaunpuri* is similar to the Aeolian mode, or Western natural minor scale, but omits the note *Ga* (3rd scale degree) in the ascending scale. With the exception of the opening *alap* and chorale, the entire work is in *jhaptal*, a 10-beat *tala* (rhythmic cycle). This rare composition is considered one of hundreds of family treasures of the Kirana *gharana* (a prominent musical lineage) and was sung by the great Abdul Karim Khan. I learned it by ear in 2006 from my guru Ustad Mashkoor Ali Khan, who is a senior vocal guru of the Sangeet Research Academy in Kolkata in India, and at the American Academy of Indian Classical Music in New York City.

As with the lyrics for most *tarana bandish* the wording for the *asthayee* (first part) is musical syllables without any literal meaning. The lyrics for the *antra* (second part), however, are in Farsi, and refer to the romantic and tragic Persian fable of Layla & Majnun. Besides a deep love for this particular bandish, one of the reasons I chose this raga is that the modern equal tempered piano tuning is not too distant from the correct tuning of the notes according to the Pythagorean tuning that is often used for this mode in Indian music. In addition to the *raga*, *tala*, and *bandish* the work also uses *taans*, fast melodic riffs that are improvised by Mashkoor Ali Khan, but in this case which are notated for the piano, and the use of *tihai*, which are riffs repeated three times so that the last note ends on the downbeat. Elements of Western music, such as the introductory chorale, harmony, and counterpoint are added to fill in for what the piano lacks in terms of sustaining a vocal melody and gliding between the notes, which is truly the essence of *raga*.

I composed the original version of *Jaunpuri* in 2012, during a residency at the MacDowell Colony in New Hampshire, for Kimball's tour of South East Asia and India. This new version for piano, Indian vocals, tabla and tanpura was completed in 2015 and premiered by the same great musicians at Carnegie Hall.

--Michael Harrison