

The Indian Music Industry Today: A MELODIC FUSION OF TRADITION, INNOVATION, AND GROWTH

*The Indian music industry, both in film and non-film sectors, is undergoing a significant transformation. Unlike a decade ago, when the film industry dominated India's music scene, today's independent musicians are breaking barriers and reshaping the industry. This shift is apparent in the **2024 IRAA (Indian Recording Arts Academy) Awards**, where the majority of nominations for this year came from independent artists rather than traditional film music. This signifies the growing strength of non-film music, allowing artists to express themselves more freely without the constraints often found in commercial cinema. During an exclusive discussion with **PALM Expo Magazine**, members of the 2024 IRAA Jury reflected on this evolving landscape that rivals even global standards. Read on to find out more about what industry experts appreciate about the industry and its future!*



EMBRACING TECHNOLOGY AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

Jim Satya, an *Eminent Music Arranger and Music Producer*, reflected on the remarkable evolution of music production technology, highlighting how the shift from mono recordings to Dolby Atmos has reshaped the industry. He points out the revolutionary impact of technological advancements, stating, "The Indian Music industry has evolved leaps and bounds through time. Embracing technology, creativity & talent in its path. From Mono recordings and Analogue tape to Dolby Atmos. In the field of music production, things have shifted from two track recorders to multitrack recording. Symphony Orchestra studios to Home studios. This technological revolution has paved the way for newer departments to form such as music production, sound design, sound editor, music supervisor, etc. to name a few. This in turn has created more job opportunities for musicians and technicians alike. With AI entering the industry, there could be furthermore use of technology in this creative process. Films are enjoying the use of this new technology. Film schools are offering courses to provide the younger generation with the best of music education." Satya also lauds the rise of independent artists stating, "With Indian music mainly centred around films, it's lovely to see a rise in independent artists, who are churning out spectacular songs and arrangements." He concludes by encouraging more artists, "There is room for everyone in this business."



FROM ANALOGUE TO DIGITAL

In lieu of the evolution of the technology used to develop music, veteran sound engineer **Yogesh Pradhan** an *Eminent Music Arranger*, reflects on this journey, sharing his insights from witnessing live recordings where musicians, singers, and backup vocalists would rehearse and record together. "It has been a beautiful journey that I have experienced, looking at and experiencing how acoustic and analogue recordings used to happen, with all musicians and singers, and with backup vocals rehearsing and then recording together. That was a great experience. Now, the scenario has totally changed, transitioning from analogue to digital recording. More precise and clean tracks are now available, with multiple tracks, and another category has evolved, namely mix & master engineer. It is great to have them, but according to me, the engineer who records the basic sound of each and every instrument live, has a character. Today, this has been tweaked into a different form, becoming a new fashion of sound exposure, which each composer has to follow and experiment with.

I thank the **IRAA Awards** for recognising and **PALM Expo Magazine** for felicitating and recognising these new technicians, music producers, and engineers for their hard work behind the scenes. May God bring good music in the future and, especially, uplift our Indian acoustic sound with present technology. Thanks for expressing my view. My best wishes to the IRAA Team, Jury, and Creative Heads for involving more categories and awarding them."



COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION IN THE INDIE SCENE

The genres in Indian music have become more diverse, inculcating voices from all facets, instead of solely on Bollywood and other popular genres. One such genre gaining more traction is the Indie genre, witnessing exponential growth, with artists collaborating and supporting each other despite the challenges they face.

Raag Sethi, *Founder of Compass Box Studio*, remarks, "In the last couple of years I've had the privilege to work with some of the top indie artists in the country. What I've really loved to see is a strong sense of a community forming in the non-film music industry, of course, there is still competition because there aren't enough venues or opportunities for everyone, but for the most part, people are willing to help each other get more out of their music. So many small startups have begun to address the need of the indie musician, either from a label standpoint, or production, the Indian artist of 2024 doesn't have to fail in order to figure out the ropes anymore." Startups and labels have sprung up to address the needs of indie artists, allowing them to focus on their craft and take their music to new heights.



A BOOMING INDUSTRY WITH GLOBAL REACH

Mujeeb Dadarkar, *Co-founder of OdBle Consultants*, feels one word represents the Indian Music Industry's trajectory: Growth. He notes that the industry generated around Rs. 12,000 crore in 2022, representing around 6% of India's media and entertainment sector. With the rise of legal music streaming and non-film artists breaking through to international audiences, Mujeeb believes that India is on the cusp of overtaking the USA as the leading music streaming nation. "Although the Indian music scene is driven by film music, with more than 70% of music production and consumption being film music, I am happy to see that new non-film artistes are breaking through to mixed audiences around the globe. A new generation of niche Indian artists are creating inspiring music that's finding an audience overseas. The Indian music industry is growing at the rate of 15% annually, with a huge rise in legal music streaming. It appears that India will overtake the USA to become the dominant music streaming nation soon!" he notes.



BLENDING TRADITION WITH MODERNITY

Though the industry is making strides forward in terms of genre and diversity, we have not forgotten our roots. The beauty of the Indian music industry lies in its seamless fusion of traditional and modern elements.

Ashish Saxena, *Director at Purple Haze Studios*, comments on this unique blend, saying, "The Indian music industry, both film and indie, has always been a remarkable blend of tradition and innovation. It seamlessly integrates diverse genres, from classical ragas to bhangra to folk to contemporary electronic beats, it forms an ever-changing, complex soundscape. From soulful classical compositions to cutting-edge indie tracks, Indian music reflects a spectrum of emotions and experiences. In the film industry, music is integral to storytelling, shaping narratives in ways that resonate deeply with audiences across generations. The rise of indie music has given a unique platform to independent artists who are experimenting with genres and creating fresh sounds. What I find interesting is the industry's openness to experimentation, where age-old musical traditions coexist with modern influences, keeping Indian music relevant and inspiring for global audiences." He highlights the rise of independent music as a powerful platform where artists can experiment with genres, creating fresh sounds that resonate with global audiences.



Indrajit Sharma (Tubby) *Composer and Record Producer* echoes this sentiment, emphasizing the diversity of Indian music. He remarks, "Indian music industry is as diverse as the country's culture, offering a wide range of languages, genres, and styles. From classical music like Hindustani and Carnatic to folk, devotional, and modern forms, it represents the rich variety of Indian sounds. Traditional instruments such as the sitar, tabla, and veena blend with modern instruments and technology, creating unique and exciting music. Whether it's Bollywood film songs or independent music, Indian artists celebrate both local traditions and global influences, especially from the West. This mix of old and new makes Indian music constantly evolve, while still reflecting the country's deep cultural roots. It's this diversity and versatility that make the Indian music industry truly special." He appreciates the balance between old and new, which keeps Indian music evolving while staying rooted in the country's rich cultural heritage.



THE ROLE OF TECHNOLOGY IN ETHICAL MUSIC CREATION

With modernity comes rapid technological development and the role of technology in music creation has sparked both excitement and concern.

Pramod Chandorkar, *IRAA Director, Founder & Director, Soundideaz Studios & Academy*, reflects on this development, urging the industry to adopt technology ethically. He warns against the misuse of technology in replacing human artistry, stating, "Technology has always paved the way for innovation. This is very evident in the recent times and is very promising (or concerning) in the coming times. We as musicians have a choice to make use of the technology in an ethical manner and avoid and discourage misuse. We should respect the art and the artists around us and ensure that we grow as a community and not by replacing artists with technology. Human expression of art will always remain unique, and only humans can respect it, not machines."



A THRIVING MERITOCRACY

In comparison to the Western music industry, **Donal Whelan**, *Senior Engineer, Hafod Mastering*, praises the Indian music scene for feeling more like a meritocracy. He observes that, "One thing I love about the Indian music industry is that it feels more like a meritocracy than in the West. The steady stream of song requests and income from the film industry creates a thriving environment where skilled musicians, composers, producers, and studio personnel flourish. This in turn improves non-film music because good musicians have disposable income, talented peers and excellent studios in which they record their own music. There are exceptions of course, but when you listen to successful songs or watch a live show of Indian film music, the production and musicianship are frequently fantastic. The western music industry has this dynamic but perhaps to a lesser extent. It's more important in the west to be "cool" or "fashionable" so fewer hit songs have that "wow" factor of exceptional musicianship." This in turn boosts the quality of non-film music. Whelan finds the production and musicianship in Indian film music to be exceptional, noting that this dynamic is less prevalent in Western music, appearance and aesthetic often takes precedence over exceptional music.



A NEW GENERATION OF TALENT

With new voices emerging across the industry, **Vijay Benegal**, *Co-Founder of Odble Consultants* shares his excitement about the emergence of independent talent in the Indian music industry. "What I really like about the Indian music industry today is that we are now seeing a lot of incredible talent emerging, especially as independent composers, producers, singers, musicians etc. There used to be a skew in favour of the film related music composers and singers which is slowly changing. It heartens me to see and hear these newer independent artists or bands producing their music with only themselves for direction. Some really good music and production is coming out of this. Some of these new artists are not afraid to try out new approaches both musically as well as in the recording and production aspects. This is very exciting to experience," he says. Benegal finds it heartening to see new artists producing music with creative freedom, often experimenting with new approaches both musically and in production. He is eager to see more exciting innovations from this new generation of musicians.



A HARMONIOUS FUTURE

The Indian music industry today stands as a harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, offering opportunities for growth, collaboration, and creativity. With the rise of independent artists, the integration of cutting-edge technology, and the industry's commitment to nurturing diverse talent, the future looks bright for musicians and audiences alike. As **Jim Satya** puts it, "It's time to recognise the stars behind the scenes, the ones who make the superstars shine brighter. Through IRAA these stars are awarded and rewarded. A timely recognition of their talent, time and energy."