

Origins of BHANGRA!



=dhol



=ektara

Bhangra originates from the folk music in Punjab, in North India. It is one of the oldest types of folk dance, sung and played by farmers at the end of harvest time to give thanks for the harvest. The rhythms of traditional Punjabi folk music are played on the dhol- a double barrelled drum played with two sticks.

The dhol is heard together with the ektara, (a single string is stretched between a split bamboo cane neck, which is attached to a 'head' made of dried pumpkin, wood or coconut). Pressing the two halves of the neck together loosens the string, which lowers its pitch. The changing tones and pitches with each slight flexing of the neck gives the ektara its distinctive sound. There are no markings or measurements to indicate what pressure will produce what note, so the pressure is adjusted by ear.

The tumbi is a high pitched single string plucked instrument made of a wooden stick attached to a wooden resonator covered with skin, and the chimta consists of a long, flat folded piece of metal steel strip, often with 7 pairs of small metal jingles. The rings are plucked in a downward motion to produce tinkling sounds.



= tumbi



= chimta

The modern Bhangra style developed in the U.K in the 1980s. Indian musicians fused the rhythms of traditional Bhangra with Western styles such as hip-hop, disco, drum and bass, rap and reggae, and used electric and bass guitars, which made Bhangra a very popular style of music.

Key Features of BHANGRA!

BHANGRA is a FUSION of Punjabi folk music and western pop and dance music

- Melody = Quite simple and repetitive, played out usually on a synthesizer/harmonium/accordion or a guitar)
- Bhangra lyrics, always sung in the Punjabi language, generally cover social issues such as love, relationships, money, dancing, getting drunk and marriage. Additionally, there are countless Bhangra songs devoted to Punjabi pride themes and Punjabi heroes. The lyrics are tributes to the rich cultural traditions of the Punjabis. The vocalists employ a high, energetic tone of voice. Singing fiercely, and with great pride, they typically add nonsensical, random noises to their singing. Likewise, often people dancing to Bhangra will yell phrases such as *hoi, hoi, hoi; balle balle*
- Rhythms = In modern Bhangra drum machines replaced the traditional dhol
- Tempo = moderate to fast, energetic and upbeat
- Form = Bhangra has changed its musical form from Punjabi folk music- which are usually songs) to that of a dance form. Bhangra uses the traditional verse and chorus structure that is common to British pop songs.

- Texture = Music technology plays a big part in Bhangra:

Remixes- tracks with lots of different layers mixed together in new ways. A remix normally sounds very different from a live performance because so much has been changed in the studio

Samples- from other music, e.g. bass line, drum parts, lyrics

Drum machines- instead of the dhol

DJ techniques like scratching

- Bhangra music is more complex than traditional folk music and Punjabi styled riffs and solos are usually played with keyboards or guitars. In this respect it stands out from all other forms of Asian music which are vocal based (such as bollywood).
- Timbre or Instruments = voice, drum machines, electric and bass guitar
- Artists include:

Alaap-took Bhangra to audiences outside the Asian community with hit song "Bhabiye Ni Bhabiye" in the 1980s

Safri boyz, Malkit Singh, Sahotas and Panjabi MC