

An opus experiment: East meets West in music

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On the sidelines of a cricket game at Brown Field at Tulane University, an accountant, a chemist and a chemical engineer decided to collaborate on an unusual experiment ? a new style of music that combines East and West with old-style lyrics from India and Pakistan, and a Western rock beat with a New Orleans blues sound.



From left, grad students Pradeep Venkataraman (lyrics), Jaspreet Arora (background singer and Jindri lyrics), Ankit Jain, (arrangements manager and artwork) and Aditya Kulkarni (vocalist) collaborate on a new sound. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The song, "[Canal View on Canal Street](#)," joins two places of meaning to the song's producer, Suhail Farooq, a 2011 master of finance graduate with a passion for music. It links New Orleans, the home of the blues and jazz, and Canal View, a popular locale in Farooq's hometown of Lahore, Pakistan.

"When I imagined the tune for the song," says Farooq, "it was a blues, rock beat ? a sound that reminded me of New Orleans ? with lyrics that reminded me of home."

The lyrics, written by chemical and biomolecular engineering doctoral student Pradeep Venkataraman, utilize a traditional ghazal-style poem incorporating Urdu

words. Venkataraman says Urdu mixes love for God with love for humans, a typical theme in Indian music. He says these kinds of ideas in Urdu and Hindi poetry are referred to as “shadowism.”

“On the surface it would appear that someone is searching for love or a soul mate,” says Venkataraman, “but another allusion is to the search for peace or a more spiritual longing.”

He also incorporated Sufi elements, in which Allah is sought and reached through music. Recording the song was a dream come true for vocalist Aditya Kulkarni, a chemistry doctoral student who always imagined singing in a professional studio.

The track was recorded in Hindi at Loyola University's Vital Sounds Recording Studio and released by F7 Productions.

Chemical and biomolecular engineering graduate student Jaspreet Arora, who was one of the background singers, also wrote the lyrics to another song produced by Farooq: a Punjabi rock ballad called “[Jindri](#).”

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