



Bhangra

WORLD'S FIRST BOOK ON THE HISTORY OF BRITISH BHANGRA **Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond** tells the unique story of a growing phenomenon

Ever wanted to know what hugely popular artists such as **Nelly Furtado**, **Kelly Rowland**, **Twista** and **Truth Hurts** have in common? They have all used elements of the traditional south Asian music genre known as bhangra in their songs, with massive success.

A Birmingham born academic has written a revolutionary book, which charts the history of the musical phenomenon that is British bhangra music from the streets of Birmingham to its place in the mainstream music world.

Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond, the first book of its kind ever, is written by **Dr Rajinder Dudrah**, a senior lecturer in Film and Media Studies at the University of Manchester. This historical overview of the unique music genre has been produced in collaboration with Punch Records supremo **Ammo Talwar** and established photographer-writer **Boy Chana**.

Bhangra music is a genre that comes from the Indian subcontinent and sung in Punjabi. **Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond** traces its birth in the UK to when migrant workers from the Indian subcontinent and East Africa arrived in the country in the 1960s, many settling in West Midlands areas such as Birmingham.

This traditional folk music was initially performed mainly on festive occasions as a song and dance. At least one performer will play the dhol, which the book describes as 'a large, double-sided cylindrical drum'. Bhangra essentially gave the first generation of South Asians the means through which they could remember their homelands, especially in a British society, which at the time threw up many hardships such as poor housing conditions and racism.

Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond then develops the story of bhangra music, taking readers on a remarkable journey that looks at how the genre developed through the years, spreading to other music and entertainment genres in the UK.

Along the way, we learn how stars such as Heera, Alaap, Premi and Malkit Singh stamped their influence on the scene, paving the way for fresh UK based talent such as Apache Indian, Bally Sagoo, Juggy D, Sukshinder Shinda amongst many others, to follow in their footsteps and become successes in their own right.

The story of **Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond** is told using splashes of colour, a superb archive of photographs of bhangra artists past and present, and a clear,

factual yet absorbing narrative. There is also a whole section dedicated to women and how they continue to make their telling contribution to bhangra in Britain.

Talwar says of the book:

"Bhangra has really forged a path for itself through the years and nowadays it is commonplace to hear its influence in many mainstream songs, such as the remixed version of Mundian To Bach Ke, which has leading hip-hop artist Jay-Z's rapping on it. Clearly, British bhangra music has evolved in the UK from its folk beginnings in the Punjab. I simply wanted to recreate the journey bhangra has embarked on over the years and I hope the end product is an experience worth sharing with others."

Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond has partly evolved out of a unique exhibition, "**Soho Road to Punjab**", which also tells the story of bhangra in the UK and is currently touring throughout the country.

Dudrah believes the book will appeal to a variety of audiences:

"I think this fascinating tale about bhangra music's journey would provide mainstream, as well as south Asian audiences, a means through which they can find out about the origins of bhangra, how it has evolved in the UK and its relevance to the music scene today."

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For further details, interviews, or other materials please contact: Punch on 0121 224 7444 or ammo@punch-records.co.uk

Notes to Editors

1. **Bhangra: Birmingham and Beyond** The book has received co-funding from Birmingham City Council and Heritage Lottery Fund. It is published by Birmingham City Council. More details about the book and the exhibition "**Soho Road To Punjab**" can be found at www.sohoroadtothepunjab.org
2. **Dr Rajinder Dudrah** is Head of the Department of Drama and Senior Lecturer in Film and Media Studies at the University of Manchester. He has researched and published extensively on film, media, cultural studies and sociology.
3. **Amarjit 'Ammo' Talwar** is the director of Punch Records - A dynamic grass roots organisation that helps to programme music events, seminars, workshops and festivals around the west midlands. More information can be found at www.punch-records.co.uk
4. Gurshuran Chana, more commonly known as **Boy Chana**, is a well-known photographer, writer, and DJ who has worked at well-known media institutions such as the newspaper Eastern Eye and Radio XL in Birmingham. He was inspired to take pictures and write during the 1985 Handsworth riots in Birmingham, when his family welcomed journalists into their home and transformed it into an impromptu pressroom.