CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter is devoted to the introduction and definition of music, folk and traditional music or indigenous music, Church music and music in the Khasi traditional religion, and review of literature.

The urge to make music is ancient, and it is an essential part of all cultures. Music is thought to be the oldest form humankind has found for expressing its feelings. It can affect emotions, making people dance or cry, or make repetitive work easier to bear. Music is played whenever there is celebration, from a harvest to a wedding. Essentially, all music is made from sounds called notes organized into patterns of melody,\(^1\) rhythm\(^2\), and harmony\(^3\).

Music is an art or an activity that appears in all cultures around the world. To this view, Jeremy Yudkin in his article “Introduction to the study of music”, observes that each nation, each ethnic group, each tribe develops its own music and preserves its own musical traditions.\(^2\) Again, from another view point, Robert C. Marish in his writings on “Music” views that music is a basic social and cultural activity of mankind. Music has probably existed in some form from the earliest days of man.

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\(^1\) The main part in harmonized music.
\(^2\) A strong regular repeated pattern of music, sound or movement.
\(^3\) The sound produced when two or more notes are played simultaneously.

Man was born with a musical instrument, his voice. He therefore undoubtedly used his voice to express himself through music long before he thought of making music with instruments. Substantiating this view, he writes,

“For thousands of years in man’s early history, music existed only as simple and natural voice sounds. Then man began making music with a wide variety of musical instruments.”

The writer adds further by saying that music can either be vocal or instrumental or a combination of both. Music takes many forms and reflects many different ways of life. But all types of music have one basic quality in common. That is all music is a form of communication in which sounds are deliberately organized in some manner for an artistic purpose.

Music has always been referred to as an important form of communication and aural activity. Among the authors who have expressed their opinions on this aspect, mention may be made of Subha Mudgal, who in authoring the article on “Music an Evolutionary Overview” observes,

“From times unknown, human beings have attempted to express their feelings and exchange ideas and information using gestures and language in both

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4 Ibid.
primitive as well as highly complex methods of communication. The process of making music is yet another system of expression and communication that has continued to evolve over the ages, giving rise to styles and forms as rich and diverse as the human race itself. In its primal, pristine form, music can be said to exist in a birdsong, the clap of thunder, the murmur of waves, and other aural manifestations of nature. With its roots in such elemental phenomena, therefore, music is a universally recognized aural activity.⁵

In line with this, R.S. Lyngdoh a Khasi writer, in his article on “The Sonata of Music and Dance across the Blue Hills of Meghalaya” is of the opinion that like all other arts, both music and dance are the best means of communication of ideas and cultures among the different peoples of the world. Unlike other arts, music can easily be understood and appreciated by all people. The young and the old, the educated and the uneducated, the white and the coloured people can freely understand the language of music. Music is the best international language through which all people of the world can communicate their ideas or get those ideas communicated to all parts of the world. In its highest form, it touches the Creator himself.⁶

⁵ Subha Mudgal, “Music An Evolutionary Overview” in Students Britannica India, Vol. 6, New Delhi, 2000, p. 83.
Among other arts, music may be considered as a powerful sensory stimulus that can work simultaneously on the body, mind and spirit. Hence, it is said to be the best communicative medium through which humans express their feelings of joy, peace, concern, aspirations, fears and sorrows. This has also been emphasized by Jerald S. Ravi in his writings on “Music an instrument to effect social changes” in which he writes,

“Music is a universal language and it influences all grades of human beings. It is a medium of expression. A person can express all the pleasures and displeasures through music. It is the vibration of the whole body and it is capable of giving happiness, peace, health and concentration. It plays an effective role in helping human beings to lead a better and fruitful life.”

The significance of music in human life is undeniable because, no other fine art can activate human sensory feelings, imagination, thinking, as much as music can. There are few people who do not react to music to some degree. The power of music is diverse and people respond in different ways. To some, it is mainly an instinctive, exciting sound to which they dance or move their bodies. Other people listen for its message, or take an intellectual approach to its form and construction, appreciating its formal patterns or originality. Above all, however, there can be hardly anyone who is not moved by some kind of music. Music covers the whole

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8 Ibid.,
gamut of emotions: it can make us feel happy or sad, nostalgic or energetic, and some music is capable of overtaking the mind until it is oblivious to all else. It works on the subconscious, creating or enhancing mood or unlocking deep memories.⁹

Music is therefore intimately bound up with important events in all our lives. There is hardly any ceremony, whether personal or national, that is not accompanied by music. It may be as simple as the nightly ritual of a mother singing a lullaby to put her baby to sleep or as formal as the playing of a national anthem. It may be a spontaneous outpouring of mass emotion, such as the spectators singing before a football game, or it may be a highly wrought and carefully rehearsed performance of massed bands or choirs at a great wedding or funeral.¹⁰ To give more emphasis on the above attributes of music as specified, it may be affirmed that music is the expression of the deepest part of our levels. It expresses what words and paintings cannot.¹¹ This opinion further finds expression in the words of Rabindranath Tagore, who, with his genius and wide experience of Indian and Western music observes,

“Music excels speech in expressiveness. Thoughts expressed in words acquire deeper meaning when expressed through music, and thoughts not easy to express in words can be fully conveyed through music.”¹²

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¹⁰ Ibid.,

¹¹ Jeremy Yudkin, *op. cit.*, p. XIX.

In addition to what is said, mention has also been made of the power of music as emotionally uplifting and useful for theological values. David C. Nichols in his book *Musical Encounters*, has quoted Marin Luther who has attributed due emphasis on the theological aspect of music in these lines,

"Experience testifies that after the word God, only music deserves to be praised as the mistress and governess of the emotions of the human heart, by which emotions human beings are ruled and often torn asunder as if by their masters. A greater praise of music than this we cannot imagine... It is out of consideration for this power of music that the Fathers* and Prophets** willed, and not in vain, that nothing be more closely bound up with the word of God than music." 13

It is perhaps in line with the above that Pope John XXIII (1958-1963) in attributing other values to music observes that of the means given man by God, to lift him up, to help him get away from narrow selfishness and to turn toward universal horizons, music is surely one of the very highest. 14 Therefore, in the light of the foregoing views and opinions, music may be said to be the greatest art, as it elevates and saturates the level of consciousness and spirit of man with its sweet flavours. It is

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* Outstanding leaders, writers, teachers and catechists of the early Church.
** Persons called by God to deliver divinely revealed messages to humankind.
the greatest not in magnitude, length and breadth, but it is the greatest for evoking the highest passion or sentiment that transcendental luminosity which is God the Absolute.  

Music being a subjectively perceived phenomenon has been defined in a variety of ways. Its definition has been tackled by philosophers, musicologists, lexicographers*, composers, teachers, semioticians**, linguists, scientists, and musicians.  

The word music comes from the Greek word *mousike* by way of Latin adaptation *musika*. The Greek word is itself derived from *mousa* or *muse* the name for the goddesses of ancient Greek mythology who presided over the arts and sciences. Hence, it was applied to all branches over which the muses were supposed to preside.  

To shed more light on this, the *Concise Dictionary of Word origins* explains that in Greek mythology, the muses were a group of nine goddesses of the various arts. Since poetry, drama, and other forms of recitation in ancient times were always accompanied by melodious sound, it was fitting that this melodious sound was termed music.  

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* Those who deal with languages that are spoken by divergent cultural groups.

** People who study semiotics or develop a general theory of signs and symbols.


17 *Encyclopedia Britannica*, Inc. Volume 15, Benton William (Publisher), Scotland, 1768, p. 1056.

Music may be defined as the arrangement of sounds produced by the human voice or by musical instruments which gives pleasure to the listener.\textsuperscript{19} According to \textit{Wikipedia, the Free Encyclopedia} music has been defined as,

"An art form in which the medium is sound, bearing the elements of pitch\textsuperscript{*} (which governs melody and harmony), rhythm (and its associated concepts of tempo, meter and articulation), dynamics\textsuperscript{**}, and the sonic qualities of timbre\textsuperscript{#} and texture".\textsuperscript{20}

In other words, music is defined as the art of combining vocal or instrumental sounds or tones in varying melody, harmony, rhythm and timbre, so as to form structurally complete and emotionally expressive compositions.\textsuperscript{21}

St. Augustine in his treatise \textit{De Musica} (on music) defines music as \textit{Ars bene modulandi} (art of good modulation)\textsuperscript{22}, which implies the observance of some kind of measure: hence it was applied to dancing and also to singing and playing. Therefore, his definition means that music is the art of controlling (or organizing) sounds


\textsuperscript{*} The extent to which a sound or tone is high or low.

\textsuperscript{**} An element of music concerned with relative loudness or softness of a sound.

\textsuperscript{#} The character of a musical sounds or voice as distinct from its pitch and strength.


\textsuperscript{21} http://www.answers.com/topic/music, dt. 07/07/2008.

\textsuperscript{22} \textit{Encyclopedia Britannica}, Inc., op. cit., p. 1056.
properly, i.e. not merely in away that is technically correct but in a manner that satisfies the moral sense.\textsuperscript{23}

Again, viewed from a wider perspective, music is said to be more than organized sound. It is a means of social communication that humans use to express various ideas, concepts and emotions. Music often carries with it extra-musical values. These may be emotional or effective, such as expressions of joy, triumph, anger, or despair. They may also be descriptive, such as musical passages that imitate the wind, the rippling of a brook, or the firing of guns; or the intended values of a composition may be purely abstract. Such music is written with a primary goal of creating manipulation of musical materials. It needs neither stories nor practical symbols to have relevance; it is an art form with intrinsic value. It speaks for itself. Hence, music can be thought of as the translation of ideas into a medium that results in sound to be received and interpreted by living, thinking beings.\textsuperscript{24}

Therefore, on analyzing the various definitions of music contributed by the aforesaid writers, it may therefore be said that music is such a wide subject which can be approached from any angle, and whose effects can touch everyone's life in a variety of ways. However, in addition to the above, the definition that appears to be the most appropriate is that found in the article on "Music" by F.C. Lehner as appeared in the New Catholic Encyclopedia which reads,

\textsuperscript{23} \textit{Ibid.},
\textsuperscript{24} David C. Nichols, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 4.
“Although initially music was employed in a broad sense to signify any human art over which the nine muses presided, it was gradually restricted in meaning to signify the fine art of combining vocal and instrumental sounds into rhythmic, melodic and harmonic structure. It is regarded as the most moving emotionally of all arts”. 25

Music as an art plays a significant role in many areas considering both the secular and church levels. As mentioned earlier, every tribe or culture is born with its own music known as folk music which later, develops into traditional music and other music forms. Obviously therefore, before church music appears, it is folk and traditional music that grows along with the tribe or culture.

For many people throughout the world, music making is a custom or tradition that they learn from others around them. Music is played, often with singing and dancing to entertain people and to accompany events, particularly religious ceremonies. This kind of traditional music is called folk music or ethnic music. It is seldom composed, or even written down, and continues as one generation hands the music and the methods of playing it down to the next. 26

Folk music is defined as that music that relates to a community or particular region and has existed for a long time. David Willoughby in the *World of music* is of the opinion that folk music is music that grows out of the folk culture of a nation or region. It reflects the spirit and personality of the people, who produce it, use it, and value it. It is music that grows spontaneously out of the lives of the people, and conveys in song the joys and sorrows, relationships and romances, events and circumstances that are important to them. He further observes that folk music can be considered informal, aesthetically and musically unsophisticated, and usually simple. It is preserved and transmitted by means that require learning songs from memory rather than from notated, printed music. Thus, we can think of folk music as a body of repertoire comprised of traditional songs and dances derived from an oral tradition. Folk songs are preserved by oral tradition within the communities and cultural groups. Folk music therefore, is typically not created by professional composers and lyricists, as the creators are usually unknown.

Other views on the subject have been given by writers like C. Khongwir, a Khasi folk music composer who writes,

"Folk music is music spontaneously composed and sung or played by the common people of long ago,

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commemorating personal experiences of everyday life or uncommon events or characters of local interests."²⁹

Again, in the light of what is said, Jerald S. Ravi explains folk music in these lines,

"Folk music is a spontaneous depiction of the local culture and is a living art. Folk music helps people to have local entertainment and communicate the message powerfully. Folk music has been used very profoundly in our forefathers' time on all occasions and in interactions. It was a powerful medium to communicate the message to the people. Folk songs serve as an authoritative and authentic medium than the verbal communication, because they preserve and transmit their culture, good and bad memories and the events of the days to the coming generation."³⁰

Therefore, analyzing Khasi folk music on the basis of the views and opinions made, it is mentioned that there is no clear information as to its origin, but it is believed that Khasi music is as old as the Khasi race itself.³¹ Hence, like other tribes and cultures around the world, Khasi music in the form of folk and traditional music.

is said to have precedence over church music and other forms of music in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. It is perhaps in line with this observation that Lapynshai Syiem asserts,

"Khasi folk music is considered as the mother or the base of other forms of Khasi music. Khasi folk music has provided the basic structure upon which the traditional music and other forms of Khasi music have evolved." 32

Hence, considering the above, folk music may therefore be explained as that music handed down from one generation to another by word of mouth, in the process of which, no formal learning or training is involved. 33

Folk music as the mother of other forms of music has given birth to another type of music known as Traditional music. The term "traditional" means relating to, or in accord with tradition, 34 and "tradition" relates to the passing down of elements of a culture from generation to generation, especially by oral communication. 35 Hence, the folk music of a culture which has been commonly practiced for a long time, and is in turn passed on through oral tradition and performed in an informal atmosphere is termed as traditional music. 36

33 Ibid.,
34 http://www.answers.com/traditional 10/09/2008
36 Ibid.,
In shedding more light on the term, Professor Komal Kothari, a folklorist and folk music expert, in a discussion had with L. Syiem, is of the observation that traditional music is that which contains some elements of organization and learning process though not in a structured manner. He asserts that training starts at the level of traditional music and in this way, excellence is achieved. It is therefore, at this point that music moves away from the folk.\textsuperscript{37}

In the light of this, L. Syiem therefore explains traditional music as,

"That type of music which is handed down from generation to generation but unlike folk music, it is acquired through learning, repetitive practices and constant involvement of the performer with the art and music. From folk music, traditional music takes its root to establish itself as a class of music which is not without discipline, practice and learning."\textsuperscript{38}

Hence, analyzing the above term in the context of Khasi traditional music, the author asserts that,

"Khasi traditional music is unwritten yet, it is an organized form of music. It is this feature that makes

\textsuperscript{37} Komal Kothari "Traditional Music" as quoted in L. Syiem, op. cit., p. 49.
\textsuperscript{38} Ibid., p. 48.
Khasi traditional music more authentic than folk music.\(^39\)

Folk and traditional music of any culture or region generally come under the term indigenous music. Indigenous music (which will be dealt with in the subsequent chapters) is therefore that music that belongs naturally to a place, and has not been brought in from outside. It is created by a particular culture and reflects the traditions, concerns and activities of that culture.\(^40\) It is music that explains the original way of life of a particular culture which is being valued, preserved and enriched in its social, cultural, secular and religious aspects.

Along with folk and traditional music or indigenous music of any culture, other forms of music like Church music of any Christian denomination may be established. This has exactly been the case with the Presbyterian and Catholic churches in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills. Church music in these denominations is said to have been introduced at the same time when Christianity itself was then established.

Church music as has been the tradition is always associated with Christianity. The word Church is defined as a place where Christians meet, and in this context it means the Christian community or an association of people who share a particular belief system.\(^41\) The term denomination on the other hand implies a group of churches having their own particular traditions and practices. In other words, it is a

\(^{39}\) Ibid.,
\(^{40}\) Jeremy Yudkin, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 5.
\(^{41}\) http://www.answers.com/topic/church, dt. 10/09/2008
subgroup within a religion that operates under a common name, tradition, and identity. 42

Church music is written for performance in a religious rite of worship. The term as such has been defined by a number of scholars, writers, church personalities and others. M.T. Legge in the article “Music Liturgical” defines Liturgical music as,

“That music used in public worship of the Church i.e. in conjunction with the celebration of the Eucharist,* of the sacramental rites, of Benediction,** and of the Liturgy of the Hours. # Liturgical, or what is also called church music, is to be distinguished, therefore, from more general terms such as sacred, religious or spiritual music.”43

The Roman Catholic Church document, the Vatican Council II## in a chapter on “Instructions on Music in the Liturgy” defines Liturgical music as that music being created for the celebration of divine worship, and is endowed with a certain

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* ‘Thanksgiving’ using bread and wine as symbols of the body and blood of Christ (also called Holy Communion, Mass, the Lord’s Supper).
** Sacrament of the Eucharist.
# Also called the divine office is the official daily prayer of the Church. The term ‘hours’ implies certain set periods of prayers which occur round the clock.
## An important Ecumenical Council of the Catholic Church.
holy sincerity of form. \(^{44}\) Again, in a chapter on “Sacred music” it emphasizes sacred music as that music considered to be holy, closely connected with the liturgical action, which makes prayer more pleasing, promotes unity of minds and confers greater solemnity upon the sacred rites. \(^{45}\)

In the course of time, and with the variety that prevailed in the church service, there was need for different types of church music. To name a few, Motets which was the principal musical form of the thirteenth century, comprised of music that was set to Latin texts used in the Liturgy. Chorales were congregational hymns written by Martin Luther and others and sung to simple tunes. They were smooth, flowing, lovely melodies rendered by human voices in unison as plainsong. Gregorian chants consist of melodies set to sacred Latin texts and sung without accompaniment. Oratorios were composed and rendered for promoting religious dramas performed without stage action. These plays originated from the early sacred plays, the mysteries and miracles, presented in churches or in halls. However, it is mentioned that all the different types of church music that prevailed, have as their basis the religious ideals of the Christian faith. \(^{46}\)

It may be mentioned that music functions as a significant component of religious ritual throughout the world. \(^{47}\) Music therefore, has had a place in the Christian churches right from the earliest years and its presence is an almost constant

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\(^{45}\) Ibid., p. 48 (n. 112).

\(^{46}\) Violet Paranjoti, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

\(^{47}\) David C. Nichols, op. cit., p. 259.
It can be used to reinforce religious beliefs as well as serve as an outlet for expressive worship and ritual. In this regard, Han Engel in the article on "Ecclesiastical music" mentions,

"Christianity in general has always made great use of music in its worship. Churches maintain choirmasters, organists, musicians and also publish hymn books. Music has always been used in church worship, both as an accompaniment of the ritual and as a medium through which the congregation could take part in the services. Music has always been an element of religious worship."{49}

It is further observed that the church has always felt the need for music. In fact, the liturgy, Bible passages and hymns make a greater appeal when suitable music illuminates and intensifies the content and spirit of the sacred portions. With suitable music, the entire service takes on greater grace and significance. In seeking to commune with God, and in desiring to glorify the Lord, man derives much help from music.{50}

The above observations appear to become more substantial on the ground that sufficient references have been made on music and singing in both the Old

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{50} Violet Paranjoti, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
Testament* and the New Testament** of the Bible which specify that music was a vital and integral part of the life of the people. In the Old Testament for instance music was part of the day to day life of the Israelites*. In the worship services of the Hebrews* in the Synagogues#, music was used to intensify devotion, prayer and praise.51 Likewise, in the New Testament, we find the use of songs indicated explicitly many times in the Gospels##. Jesus, in criticizing some who refused to believe in Him talked of music (Mt*. 11:17; Lk**, 7:32). Again, there might have been music accompanied with dancing at the homecoming of the prodigal son (Lk.15:25), and undoubtedly singing was part of the marriage feast in Cana (Jn.2:1ff)52 and so on. It has therefore, been noted that the verb to sing with related words such as song and others, is one of the most commonly used words in the Bible. It occurs 309 times in the Old Testament, and 36 times in the New Testament.53

It is perhaps this strong interrelationship between music and Christianity which has made music to be looked upon as an inseparable part of prayer in Christian churches.54 This has therefore, led Percy. M. Young to assert,

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* The first part of the Christian Bible corresponding approximately to the Hebrew Bible.
** The second part or the Christian Bible recording the life and teaching of Christ and his earliest followers.
* Members of ancient Hebrew Nation.
** Members of the ancient people living in Israel and Palestine.
# A Greek word meaning an assembly of people. A building where a Jewish assembly meets for religious worship and instruction.
51 Ibid., p. 24.
• An apostle, the author of the First Gospel.
** An evangelist and author of the third Gospel and Acts of the apostles.
52 Jerald S. Ravi, op. cit., p. 382.
“Music owes a great deal to Christianity, and Christianity owes a great deal to music and musicians.”

Prior to the coming of Christianity namely, the Presbyterians, Catholics and others, into the Khasi and Jaintia Hills, the Khasis professed their faith in a religion known as Khasi traditional religion. In the words of a Khasi writer, R. T. Rymbai,

“By the term Khasi religion, we mean the traditional religion professed by the indigenous inhabitants of the land known after the advent of the British as the Khasi-Pnars.”

The writer further observes that traditionally the Khasi-Pnars, like the Jews, believe that their religion is God-given, not founded by man. But unlike the Jews who look forward to the coming of the Messiah, the Redeemer, they speak of the coming of persons from time to time among them called: U Syntai u Bulot, or U Kaja u Myntoi, or u Simpah u Simpieng, (a philosopher, friend and guide).

It may therefore, be stated that Khasi religion is neither animistic, nor pantheistic; it is purely monotheistic. It is based on a belief in One Supreme God,

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56 R.T. Rymbai, “Khasi Religion” in Helen Giri (ed.) Lest We Forget, Published by Seven Huts Enterprise, Shillong, 1994, p. 5.
57 Ibid., p. 4.
58 The promised deliverer of the Jewish nation prophesied in the Hebrew Bible.
59 The belief that all things in nature have a soul.
60 Believing in many or all gods.
the Creator commonly known as "U Blei Trai Kynrad, Nongthaw Nongbuh" (God, Lord, Almighty and Master, Creator and Disposer).  

According to another Khasi author, I. Kharkongor, the word "religion" is "Niam". It is a combination of two words "Nia" (reason) and "lm" (living), or ka "Nia-im" (the living reason). It is so called, because by nia or reason man is able to realize the presence of God in him through the signs given in his sacrifice. Therefore, to the Khasis, their religion is a "way" or "practice" or as it is called "Ka Niam Khein Ka Niam Bishar" (The religion of figuring out, the religion of judging or reasoning).

An important point that needs to be considered is whether Church music which is closely associated with religion and religious worship, has any role to play in the Khasi traditional religion. This aspect has been highlighted by the same author, who writes,

"Khasi tradition speaks highly of God the Creator but there is no system of worshipping God. Unlike other religions, the Khasis have no temple or sacred place of worship. No individual or corporate worship can be seen among the Khasis. Every Khasi knows God but that knowledge of God ends with himself is limited

58 Ibid.,
60 Ibid.
within himself- he cannot express himself about God in any form.  

Shedding more light on this, it is noted that in the Khasi traditional religion, there are no churches or temples since all ground is considered sacred, and there are no saints* or priest since it is believed that each man can save himself by his own actions. Khasis are therefore, said to have no fixed days of congregational worship, and they have no common written book of worship on which their faith is based.

Therefore, considering these views and observations, it may be mentioned that Khasi traditional religion is only a way of life, and does not fall under the purview of the term used in Christianity. Religious music is found to have altogether a different role to play. The religious music for instance found at Hima Khyrim includes the religious drum beats of the Hima. Likewise, the non-religious music found at Hima Mylliem includes the Socio-cultural dance beats used at the level of the Raid under Raid Mylliem (Mylliem Native State). Hence, in the absence of Christianity and congregational worship, there is no such thing as church music. Music therefore, in the folk and traditional form is being used in the performance of sacrifices and other rituals, but church music and congregational singing as practiced in other Christian churches does not exist in the Khasi traditional religion.

Khasi music has attracted the attention of a number of local writers, composers, songwriters, church musicians and music lovers in recent years. In this

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* Ibid., p. 41.
* Persons of great goodness who are declared to be saints by the Church after death.
63 L. Syiem, op. cit., p. 49.
regard, a good number of works, writings and compositions on Khasi music have also been produced.

It is recorded that the first Khasi songs written and published in the tonic solfa notations entitled *Ki Sur Syiang* (melodious tunes) was brought out by the Sacred Heart College, Mawlai, Shillong in 1958.\(^{64}\) The songs included in the volumes of this publication are mostly anthems, patriotic songs, love songs, songs of nature and others of secular nature. This was followed by the publication of a Khasi song book *Ki Jingrwai Khasi* (Khasi songs) by Victor G. Bareh in both tonic sol-fa and staff notations in 1960.\(^{65}\) In the same year, S.G.Nalle also published a song book entitled *Ka Kot Hikai Tonic Solfa* (A Book to learn tonic solfa).\(^{66}\)

Other subsequent publications include that of P.R.Kyndiah in 1969 who has written about Khasi music in his article “A Peep into Khasi and Jaintia Music” as quoted from *Khasi Heritage — A Collection of Essays on culture and religion of the Khasis.*\(^{67}\) In 1975 C. Khongwir a Khasi music composer and songwriter published 34 (thirty four) Khasi songs in tonic sol-fa notations in his song book *Ki Saimuka ka Duitara* (Silk strings in Duitara).\(^{68}\) The composer has also talked much of Khasi traditional music in his writings on “Some stray thoughts on Khasi Traditional music” as quoted from the magazine *Panorama* in 1984,\(^{69}\) and has again produced a


\(^{65}\) Ibid.,

\(^{66}\) Ibid.,


\(^{68}\) E.B.R. Wanswett, op. cit., p. 10.

commendable work on Khasi folk music in his essay on "Khasi Folk Music – A General Survey" as quoted from the book Less We Forget Indigenous Peoples’ year 1994.70 A.D. Tham in 1985 has published some works on "Khasi Folk Songs" as quoted from the Sura Jhankar, and E.B.R Wanswett in 1982 published a Khasi music book titled Ka Persara ki Sur Khasi (Nursery of Khasi music) in tonic sol-fa notation, followed by the publication of his 40 Khasi folk songs of North East India Vol. II in 2000, along with another book Khasi Music-A Peep, in 2001 in which he tried to explain Khasi music that flourishes against all odds.71

Other recent publications include that of Lapynshai Syiem who has produced a book in 2005 on The Evolution of Khasi Music: A Study of the Classical Content in which she talks of Khasi folk music, Khasi traditional music and Khasi musical instruments, and analyzes Khasi beats and tunes in the classical context.72 This was followed by the publication of a book entitled Katto Katne Shaphang ka Put ka Tem Tynrai (A glimpse on Traditional Music) by the North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, edited by H. Giri in 2006.73

Again, coming closer to the subject of Church music, in 2003, E.W. Kharsohnoh in his unpublished seminar paper on “Ka Bynta Ka Traditional Music Ha Ka Jingshakri Blei” (Role of Traditional Music in the service of God) has briefly explained the role of Khasi traditional music and the need to introduce Khasi

70 C. Khongwir, “Khasi Folk Music – A General Survey” in Helen Giri (ed.), Lest We Forget, Published by Seven Huts Enterprise, Shillong, 1994, p. 38.
71 E.B.R. Wanswett, op. cit., p. 10.
73 H. Giri, (ed.), Katto Katne Shaphang Ka Put Ka Tem Tynrai, Published by North Eastern Hill University, Shillong, 2006.
indigenous music in church singing. In line with this, Radiancy Rnga in her unpublished Master of Theology dissertation on the “Significance of the Khasi Hymn Book for Christian Education” in 2004 has also highlighted on the importance of hymn singing as a means of educating Christians. She also indirectly expresses her regrets for ignoring Khasi indigenous music from Church music.

In addition to the above, we also have a number of music compositions on church music and devotional songs in both western and indigenous forms composed from time to time by local musicians and songwriters. But so far no analytical study has been done on church music, nor has there been any work done on the role played by Khasi indigenous tunes in church music as such. It is in this context therefore, that an attempt is made to analyze Church music and the role of Khasi indigenous tunes (vocal and instrumental) in church music in the Khasi and Jaintia Hills.

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