



Singing a Hindu Nation: Marathi Devotional Performance and Nationalism

Anna Schultz

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Singing a Hindu Nation explores how the political becomes devotional through musical performance. At the heart of author Anna Schultz's study is *r=ashtr=iya k=irtan*, a western Indian performance medium that combines song, Hindu philosophical discourse, and nationalist storytelling. Performers of *r=ashtr=iya k=irtan* have impacted the political environment throughout the last century, inspiring Marathi-speaking people to resist colonial domination both violently and non-violently in the early twentieth century, supporting state health and national integration projects in the early post-colonial era, and in the last decade of the century, using their performances to buttress the rhetoric of Hindu nationalists as these groups rose to power. By performing in regional idioms with rich associations for Maharashtrian congregations, singers of *r=ashtr=iya k=irtan* use music to combine political and religious signs in ways that seem natural and desirable, and as a result effectively promote embodied experiences of nationalist devotion. As the first monograph on music and Hindu nationalism, *Singing a Hindu Nation* presents a rare glimpse into the lives and performance worlds of nationalists on the margins of all-India political parties and cultural organizations. The book is an essential resource for ethnomusicologists, as well as scholars of South Asian studies, religion, and political theory.

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