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Cassette Culture: Popular Music and Technology in North India (Chicago Studies in Ethnomusicology)

Peter Manuel

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In *Cassette Culture*, Peter Manuel tells how a new mass medium—the portable cassette player—caused a major upheaval in popular culture in the world's second-largest country. The advent of cassette technology in the 1980s transformed India's popular music industry from the virtual monopoly of a single multinational LP manufacturer to a free-for-all among hundreds of local cassette producers. The result was a revolution in the quantity, quality, and variety of Indian popular music and its patterns of dissemination and consumption.

Manuel shows that the cassette revolution, however, has brought new contradictions and problems to Indian culture. While inexpensive cassettes revitalized local subcultures and community values throughout the subcontinent, they were also a vehicle for regional and political factionalism, new forms of commercial vulgarity, and, disturbingly, the most provocative sorts of hate-mongering and religious chauvinism.

Cassette Culture is the first scholarly account of Indian popular music and the first case study of a technological revolution now occurring throughout the world. It will be an essential resource for anyone interested in modern India, communications theory, world popular music, or contemporary global culture.

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