Points of interest

* The fusion of Raga and Western traditional music.
* The structure of typical Indian Raga.
* The career or Ravi Shankar
* The mixture of live & synthesised music.

Breathing Underwater

‘Burn’, ‘Breathing Underwater’ & ‘Easy’.

1. Shankar 2007.



**Most commonly used time signatures**

**4/4 - 4 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**3/4 - 3 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**2/4 - 2 crotchet beats in a bar.**

**6/8 – 6 quaver beats in a bar.**

Fusion Music

Set Work 2

**Harmony & Tonality**

* *Burn* fuses Western chords with Indian type melody lines. The chords are often extended with 4ths, 7ths & 9ths.
* Dissonances often remain unresolved.
* Harmonic progressions are functional (often swapping between tonic & dominant).
* *Breathing Underwater* features diminished chords and plagal cadences.
* *Easy* uses only primary chords although the dominant is sometimes replaced by V11b.
* *Burn* has a verse/ chorus structure but this is modified to include a traditional Raga Alap introduction and a cello solo outro.
* *Breathing Underwater* is also in verse/ chorus form but again features an extended introduction.
* *Easy* is written in strophic form (as it lacks a chorus). There is a solo sitar instrumental between verses 2 & 3. Verse 3 combines vocal music and a sitar obligato line.

**Melody**

* *Burn* consists of two melodic ideas: improvised & ornate Indian inspired melodies and repeated western vocals. Vocal lines are syllabic and often descend via sequential movement.
* *Breathing Underwater* features a heavily ornamented sitar part. Vocal lines are conjunct but contain less ornamentation.
* *Easy* has a strong sense of the Mixolydian mode and repetition of musical ideas is common. The vocal range is narrow.

**Structure**

* *Burn* is mostly homophonic with a bass drone line providing stability. The addition of countermelodies create a more polyphonic texture.

Multi-layering is achieved in the final verse.

*Breathing Underwater* contains a sitar solo over homophonic chords and a sitar countermelody in the final verse.

*Easy* is melody dominated homophony with an emphasis on the vocal line. The piano and guitar create riff motifs. This song features dialogue between parts.

**Social & Historical Context**

**Sonority**

**Texture**

**Rhythm, Metre & Tempo**

* Anoushka Shankar is the daughter of Ravi Shankar and sister of Norah Jones.
* The album fuses Rajasthan folk music and Western rhythms & technology.
* Shankar is a sitar virtuoso performer.
* This is a multi-national album recorded in India, The United States and Israel.
* Shankar has collaborated with many Classical musicians including Joshua Bell and Mstistilav Rostropovich.
* In *Burn* Indian sonorities include sitar, sarangi & manijira. These are fused with orchestral strings & synthesised

parts. Percussion lines are pre-programmed.

* *Breathing Underwater* uses many sitar techniques to create interest: slides, trills, acciaccaturas & vibrato. The full range of the sitar is explored.
* *Easy* contrasts the timbre of the sitar with the piano. The piano part provides arpeggiated figures over sitar drones. The vocal line has a very low tessitura.
* Indian inspired raga features include: syncopation, cross rhythms and a sense of rubato.
* *Burn* is in 4/4 but the metre is blurred by the use of triplets and syncopation. The snare is used to provide a back beat.
* *Breathing Underwater* also contains triplet passages and syncopated rhythms but the tempo of the song is faster.
* *Easy* contains a rubato style sitar solo which is much more flexible and complicated than in the other songs.

Wider listening: *Sound Magic –* Afro Celt Sound System, *Revolver –* The Beatles, *Nadurra –* Capercaille, *Aftermath –* The Rolling Stones