

ENTERTAINMENT



PHOTO/Joti Dhalizwal

MUSIC

English lyrics, bhangra beats

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With his mind always buzzing with marketing possibilities and reaching into diverse markets, Hothi has set sights on going mainstream with his music. Songs on *Indian Groove* are sung mostly in English, reflecting a clear goal of Hothi's to reach non-South Asian audiences, too.

"When I came back from India (on a trip last year to sell his music to publishers and record labels), they were saying I should add more

Hindi and Punjabi lyrics to the songs. Those songs are on the CD, but the English ones are up top (including a killer cover of "Cecelia," the old Simon & Garfunkel hit, and an upbeat original hit called "Kabhi Kabhi"). I'm trying to make bhangra more accessible to the Canadian mainstream by singing in English. It's just a natural thing."

The CD's dance grooves come naturally, too.

"I just don't like people sitting down when I play, that's all," says Hothi. "I

want them up dancing and having a good time. That's what I'm about."

Back in the days of Dal-Dil-Vog, Hothi learned school administrators were open to having the band perform for students. It didn't take long for the mileage to pile up.

"We'd play the exact songs we played at a club or bar," he remembers, "but in the middle (of the set) we'd talk about the instruments (such as the dhol, a two-sided drum) and the history of Indian music, whatever. We probably did 600 shows like that, sometimes two or three a day, driving from school to school, and then we'd play at a club that night. Those days were crazy-busy."

His CD recorded and available to the public, Hothi has put together a band to hit the road again. Along for the musical trip this time are Mal Kalar on guitar, Andy Baryar on bass, drummer Scottie McCarger drums, dhol player Preet Reyat and John Dean on keys.

"The band is great, phenomenal," says Hothi, beaming.

"But the cool thing about doing shows," he continues, "is having my kids there (boys age nine and 11). Having them involved now is so great, and they're great sales people, too, selling my CDs to people. It's fun now having them a little older and so into it."

For upcoming Dilvog concert appearances and song samples, click on www.indiangroove.com. The band performs Thursday, April 19 at the Rime restaurant/bar in Vancouver (1130 Commercial Dr.) and is set to play a date in White Rock next month.