

*As a follow on from her previous collaboration with the series producer on the 5x60min BBC2 series 'Arctic With Bruce Parry' in 2011, Nainita was commissioned for this new series due for release in June*



In this immersive documentary series, presenter Kate Humble experiences the challenges facing the semi-nomadic herders of the Wakhan Corridor in northern Afghanistan, Peru's alpaca farmers in the High Andes, and Australia's Outback shepherds.

The two main aspects of the initial brief were that the film-makers did not want the score to sound like a 'blue-chip' BBC series, so strings and orchestral elements were more or less banned unless absolutely necessary. Secondly, in order to capture the strong ethnic cultures and remote locations that Kate experienced, the music had to have an ethnic influence but at the same time have an organic, rough, raw feel. The other challenge was not to incorporate the obvious traditional instruments and musical styles one associates with the locations – the score had to sound fresh and different (e.g. no Pan Pipes for Peru, Didgeridoos for Australia)

Another route in order to prevent cliché and stereotypical tracks was to write a library of music before each edit commenced. Nainita says, "Writing 'blind' can always be a slightly 'hit and miss' affair, without seeing rough scenes you cannot gauge tempo and mood" so while the crew were on location for each episode, she would get sent location stills and rough scripts for some form of visual inspiration. With various sample libraries used to form a foundation, plus recording and layering ideas with her own collection of ethnic instruments to form the musical backbone, the budget also allowed for two specialist musicians per programme who were brought in for individual sessions to play on top of these tracks. As these musicians couldn't read music, 'directed improvising' and 'sung melodies' would yield a wealth of material which had to be structured into flexible editable sections. Each episode yielded about 16 themes plus 4 to 5 variations and sub-mixes for each theme, alongside pieces for specific scenes which were then presented to each edit as a 'toolkit' music library.

Nainita explains how bringing in the musicians to perform before even seeing a single shot was a risk. If the music didn't work in the edit, it would have been a very expensive mistake, but it was a calculated risk she had to take. Giving the directors 'sampled mock ups' during the edit to imagine how the music would eventually sound would not have worked because the authenticity of the ethnic playing were crucial in giving the directors the raw, visceral, rough feel they wanted. Having successfully worked in this way before for 'Arctic' and a few other TV series, the method was proven to work well.

Take a look at the instruments the musicians played on the score:

- Peru was J. Rodriguez on Andean flutes, Charango and pan-pipes. Sampled pan-pipes are a pale imitation compared to the amazing dynamic possibilities and expressiveness of real pipes.
- Afghanistan was Morgan Davies on Sarangi, a classical Indian bowed instrument adopted by the Afghani in their traditional music, and master player Tigran Aleksanyan on Duduk and various world flutes.
- Australia was Ben Mandelson on slide guitars, lap steel and banjo and Chris Haigh on folk fiddle.
- Alongside these were a variety of 'house' instruments – guitar zouk, tanbour, kemenche, nylon and steel string guitars, ukelele, banjo, dulcimer, double bass, custom jews harps, and electric guitar.

**Produced by Indus Films for BBC2 Series Producer: James Smith Presenter: Kate Humble Broadcast June 2013 BBC2 (TBC)**

*Be sure to check out two other projects from Nainita due to be released in June. 'Animal Heroes' starting Tuesday 4th June 8-9pm for three weeks and 'The People's Medal' on ITV.*

## **WILD SHEPHERDESS-SERIES TITLES**

Nainita Desai



00:00 / 01:35



**NAINITA DESAI**