



Drones, gamelan and raga are no longer only musics of the Indian sub-continent. All three forms are part of the new century's emerging planetary vocabulary. This *Margins of Music* looks at three musicians engaged in extending the forms into the planetary present

Indian oceans

From ancestral voice to the studio as instrument, **Sheila Chandra** has long been cross-weaving age-old sound worlds with the textures of the future. Her recent, *'This sentence is true'*, is no exception. Here Chandra talks about this first release in seven years in the context of both her musical past and present.

Sound of a million years

Sheila Chandra, doyenne of the microtonal sound nuance, returned in 2001 from five years of post-acetate silence with a new album *'This Sentence is True'*. A play on words – its subtitle *The Previous Sentence is False* catches the reader in its liar's paradox – it elaborates the myriad things a voice can be and do, before the word-world. Gone are the pared down essences of her previous offering, the rarified, vocal inner vision of *AboneCroneDrone*, even if, as always with Chandra, the listener is brought inside the voiceworlds' inner chamber. Instead she re-weaves the place of the voice, pushing it further towards the abstractions of sound collage, a new incantation on its possibilities.

It is this delight at pushing the boundaries, almost scientific in depth and thoroughness, which is at the centre of Chandra's investigation of the far shores of the voices' interiorised realms, attracting a wide and disparate following. As evidence of this, Chandra's name cropped up amidst London's *Sonic Boom* jamboree exhibition's brief historical topography of the sound arts world. Slated heavily towards its ambient forefathers, the list was also revealing in the noticeably thin showing of woman to this part of the electronic woods.

Inside the concrete art cavern, works by an oddly disparate grouping of musician art installationists sat in the dimly lit rooms: Finland's Pansonic; Paul Schutze and Russell Mills; but hardly a surfeit of women. If Kaffe Matthews and Pauline Oliveros were imaginable, though not present, in the hard-roomed spaces, Sheila Chandra, the third name on the imaginary mapping, was nigh on impossible. And yet Chandra is easy to envisage as a key contributor in the evolution of ambient's sonic cartography which the likes of Robert Fripp, Eno and Jon Hassell set in motion in the 1980s, and which by the 90s had expanded its horizons into rave and trance and through Womad and the World Music scene. Chandra was a constant in the latter decade's bubbling world ambient scene, through the release of a trilogy of *Real World* CDs, which were met with real delight and have been