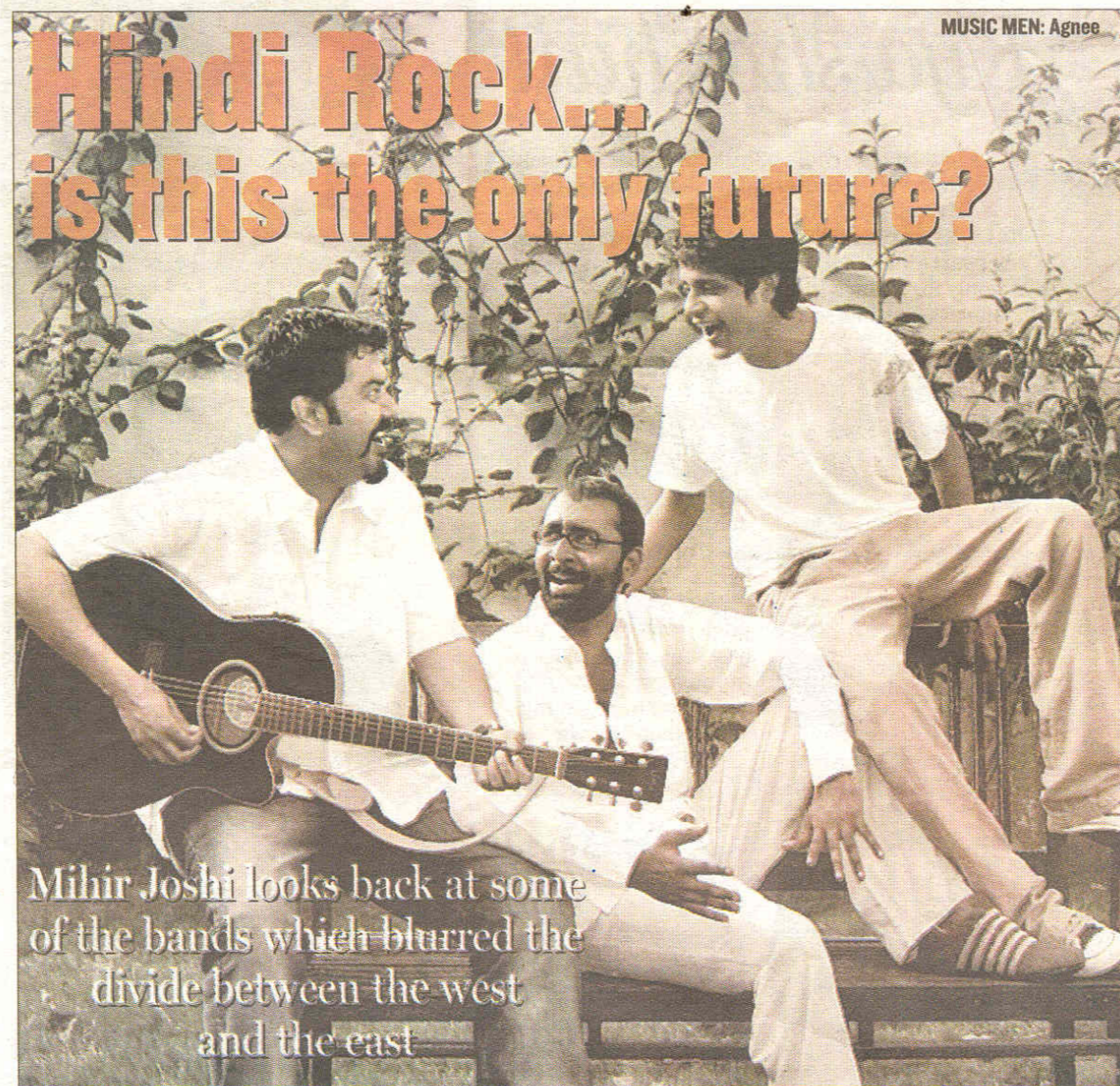


Hindustan Times

Hindi Rock... is this the only future?

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For me, the first band that comes to mind is without a doubt the **Colonial Cousins**. Possessing brilliance, **Leslie Lewis** and **Hariharan** weaved magic. Hariharan's phenomenal voice blending in with the western touch that Leslie gave to the music, displayed just how good fusion can be. *Let me See the love in your eyes*, *Krishna* and *Indian rain* from their first album were classics.

They were also the first Indian

band to go and play at the MTV Unplugged Concerts in the U.S. Their *Unplugged* album is still one of my favourite Indian albums.

Fuzon

Their debut album *Saagar* was another East-West fusion style classic. Songs like *Jhoom jhoom*, *Deewane* and *Mora saiyaan* made one realize their class.

Shafqat Amanat Ali (vocalist), **Shallum Asher Xavier** (guitarist)

and **Imran Momina** (pianist and composer) because of their varied backgrounds, were able to fuse traditional style with western genres quite effortlessly indeed.

One might also remember **Junoon** and **Strings**, though personally I didn't fancy them.

Orange Street

This band from Delhi, impressed me with their first album *Dharma* — *Morey piya* and *Naash* — two

tracks that instantly come to mind.

Anirban Chakraborty sang rap/rock English vocals and **Imran Khan**, the Hindustani classical vocals. They have even managed to garner some international success after touring a few European cities.

Om

This Mumbai band was next to wow audiences with their unique mix of Indian and western styles. They were more Indian with predominantly local lyrics and a western instrumentation style fused with Indian sounds. Their vocalist **Shriram** is one of my favourite Indian vocalists.

Newbies

I've had the pleasure of listening to two more bands that are to be shortly released — Indian band **Agnee** and the Pakistani **Mekaal Hasan Band**.

They're different from each other. Agnee with **Koko's** blistering guitar work, the classical, mature vocals and percussion work of **Mohan** and **Arijit's** urban vocals have a predominantly Indian feel.

The guys from the **Mekaal Hasan Band** are fabulous. They take off from where **Fuzon** left — a slightly more serious sounding **Fuzon**. Their sound is distinctly western, thanks to the brilliant guitar work of **Mekaal** and his bandmates. Vocalist **Javed Bashir** is outstanding.

Looking ahead

Is Hindi rock the only future for rock music in India? I sincerely hope not...but it's a good start and hopefully some day soon, English rock will also stand toe to toe with it in terms of popularity.

(The writer of the article is a radio jockey, singer and the editor of an online music magazine)