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Other articles: Teheran Records, O. P. Nayyar.
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From the Editor

I am pleased to present our annual issue – 'The Record News' (TRN-2007) to all the members, wellwishers and friends of 'Society of Indian Record Collectors' [SIRC]. In addition to Mumbai, record collectors at small and remote places such as Amravati, Tuljapur and Ahmadnagar are doing very well. They do meet once in a month to listen to old music from gramophone discs. Solapur unit has been broadcasting radio programs from local radio station from last many years. Public reading library in Solapur has now provided for storage and listening room for the old discs. They have just begun computerization and digitization of the records.

TRN 2006 had twenty articles on 'Gramophone Celebrities'. This issue contains more articles [21-40] in part-II of this series. A special feature on Hindi film music director O. P. Nayyar is also included. Hope you will like this issue and appreciate our little efforts.

- Suresh Chandvankar
- Editor

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Front page pictures: 'Gramophone Celebrities and record labels'.

![Image of a gramophone]
SIRC NEWS FROM MUMBAI

During the period of this report, Mumbai unit of SIRC has presented the listening sessions by invitations from the following organizations:

1] Cultural wing of Ashay Film Club, Pune
2] Y. B. Chavan Pratishthan, Mumbai
3] Arohi Sangeet Academy, Dombivli
4] Karnataka Sangh, matunga
5] Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Kanpur
6] Bhatkhande Music University, Lucknow

Topics of the listening sessions held were – Kesarbai Kerkar, Heerabai Barodekar, Amir Khan, Kojagirichee gaani, Music of Vasant Desai, Roshan, O. P. Nayyar, Vande Mataram, Hinglish songs, Bal Gandharva, Purvasurinche Sur

For news and program details from our units, Please contact:

PUNE – Mr. Adwait Dharmadhikari, Mr. Milind Sabnis.

SOLAPUR – Mr.Jayant Raleraskar, 154 A, Indira Nagar, Bijapur Road, Solapur - 413 004. Maharashtra, India.


BARODA - Mr. Narendra Kamal Sreemali, 23, Jayratna Society, Behind ESI Hospital, Gotri Road, Vadodara - 390 021. Gujrat State, India.

AMRAVATI – Mr. Arvind Hambarde, Ekvira Colony, Aakoli Road, Sainagar Amravati- 444 605. Maharashtra state, India.
Gramophone Celebrities - 21

Bai Sunderabai Jadhav Punekarin (1885-1952)

Around 1920, Bal Gandharva staged Ram Ganesh Gadkari's Marathi drama – 'Ekach Pyala'. Bai Sunderabai of Poona composed its music. Songs from this drama are popular even today, after a long gap of over eighty-seven years. She used kawali 'Katla mujhe kar dala rama' for the pad 'Satya vade vachanalala natha' and gazal 'Dile bekarar tune' for most famous pad 'Kashi ya tyaju padala', both sung by the heroine Sindhu. Tune of this gazal and song became so much popular that Mr. K. R. Vaidya, Marathi poet of Nalasopara (near Mumbai) wrote a parody song and she recorded it on twelve inch diameter, 78 rpm record – 'Tu haansalees majala tirva karuni dola'. It also became very popular.

Born in 1885 at Pune, Sunderabai was a child prodigy. Her father realized talent in her voice and encouraged her to pursue this as a career. Her attachment to her birthplace was so intense that it could be heard at the end of some of her early 78 rpm recordings wherein she ends the song with an announcement – 'My name is Bai Sunderabai of Poona'. However, she spent most of her working life in Mumbai (Bombay). Initially, she lived in Girgaon and learnt bhajans from Thakurdasbo who used to perform in Ram Mandir in Girgaon area. Later on she moved to Indore for some time and learnt from Ustad Dhamman Khan, Ustad Gulam Rasool Khan and Pandit Kesbhaiya. In addition to pure classical music, she learnt almost all styles of light classical music. In Mumbai, she used to sing in prestigious music circles such as Laxmi Baug wherein great musicians like Bhaskarboa Bakhale, Master Krishnarao and Bal Gandharva attended her concerts. She was promptly recommended for music conferences outside Maharashtra. Later she regularly performed at prestigious conferences at Banaras, Allahabad, Hyderabad and Calcutta.

Bai Sunderabai became very popular and earned lot of money, fame and name as 'Bai Sunderabai Jadhav Punekarin'. She bought two motor cars and rented complete top floor of the building opposite to Victoria Terminus railway station in Bombay. This building is next to Capitol cinema house, presently occupied with McDonald outlet on the ground floor.

She cut few records with the gramophone company in early period where her voice was rather thin and high pitched. She announces her name in these records. She again cut records in October 1921, in which her guru Ustad Dhamman Khan has accompanied her on tabla. She cut over 150 songs (75 records) on H.M.V., Odeon, Regal, Columbia and Young India labels. These songs were in Urdu, Hindustani, Pharsi Bhojpuri and Marathi language. She has sung few ragas such as Jogia, Jaunpuri. However, she was very comfortable with light music. Although she was expert in Hori, Gazal, Dadra, Kawali, Bhajan and Thumri, her speciality was Marathi Lavni. Some of her famous lavni's are – 'Tumhi majhe savkaar', 'Dipawalichya sani' and 'Katteen bai badudyachee

Sunderabai lived for over seventy years. She adapted herself with all the new modern and emerging media including radio and cinema. She acted in couple of films – Marathi ‘Sangam’ (1941), Hindi / Marathi ‘Admi / Manoos’ (C.1937) and her role of hero’s innocent and pious mother was very well received. She planned to launch a new record company titled – ‘The Navbharat Record mfg. Company’ with the help of Mr. Dattopant Phatak, Pune who was also associated with Odeon record mfg. company. She thought of making several new records through her own company. However the company was never formed and her dreams were shattered. She lost all her money, property, cars and had to live in a small room with her paralysed daughter. She received the job with All India Radio, Bombay. She persuaded several musicians including Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan for cutting records with the Odeon Company and also to give concerts for radio. Mr. Z. A. Bukhari, station director of Bombay radio was very helpful to artists and he encouraged and honored them during his tenure. Sunderabai organized several radio programs of Bal Gandharva who was like her brother. She died in 1952 while in service with radio. Today, she could be seen singing a religious song if you play VCD/DVD of ‘Manoos/Admi’ –

Mana papi bhool, kauna ise samajhaye
Sukhaka saath, dukha sankatmen, kabhi kaam naa aave
Jisko tune jagmen jalaya, vohi tujhko jalaye................1

Shahad shakkarse milke ne hoga meetha kadava phal
Tan dhojega, manko kaise dhoye gangajal...................2

Miss Sundarabai.
Fam Suvarna.

Master Krishna.
MAHAR KUKA.
Sangeet Kalanidhi – Master Krishnaraao

Master Krishnaraao Phulambrikar (1898-1974) alias ‘Master Krishna’ was ten years younger to Bal Gandharva. Both of them were the disciples of Bhaskarboa Bakhale. He learnt music from 1911-1915 and joined Gandharva Natak Mandali formed by his gurubandhu Narayanrao Rajhans alias Bal Gandharva. He acted both in male and female roles in musical plays such as Sanshay Kallol, Swayamvar, Draupadi, Asa-Nirasha, Nandkumar, Amrutsiddhi and Kanhopatra. He also set tunes to songs from these plays and in this respect Bal Gandharva always honoured him as his guru.

In about 1933/34, both of them joined Prabhat Film Company - Bal Gandharva in acting department and Master Krishnaraao in music department. Meanwhile, Shankarcharya Dr. Kurtakoti had conferred title ‘Sangeet Kalanidhi’ to Master Krishnaraao. His songs from Prabhat Company’s hit films viz. Dharmatma, Gopalkrishna, Manoos / Admi, Amariyoti and Shejari / Padosi became so much popular that he had to sing them in his private music concerts. Later on he moved to Bombay in Rajkamal Film Company formed by V. Shantaram. He acted and provided music to Rajkamal Films Bhakticha Mala / Mali in his guru.

He then again turned to Marathi drama around 1943-45, not as an actor but as a music director. His first drama ‘Sangeet Kulvadhu’ was hit due to its music. Songs such as ‘Bola amrut bola’, ‘Manaramana madhusudana’ are popular even today. He set number of tunes to ‘Vande Mataram’ song and used to sing in his concerts. In 1935, he was refused to sing this song on radio. So, he stopped singing on radio till he could sing it again after independence in 1947. During 1948-50, he worked very hard to get it accepted as ‘The Anthem’ in the parliament. He made special records required as per the norms and guidelines of ‘The Anthem’. However, ‘Vande Mataram’ was not selected for non-musical (political) reasons. In the later years of his life, he turned to religious music. Some of his Marathi songs ‘krishna majhi mata’, ‘bhav tethe dev’, ‘tujhiye nidhali’ were very popular and played on radio for several years.

He passed away in 1974. Child prodigy ‘Master Krishna’ to ‘Sangeet Kalanidhi’ was a very long journey and he cut over 110 songs on 55 gramophone records. These records were made in both acoustic (pre 1925) and electrical era. In 1922, guru Bhaskarboa Bakhale was much pleased with his recorded songs ‘Mundari mori kaheko’ (Adana) and ‘Kahe aab tuma aaye’ (Sohoni). He made records in classical music, light music, stage songs, devotional songs, film songs and patriotic songs. Most of these records were made on HMV, Columbia, Odeon, The Twin and Young India labels. In 1937, Broadcast record mfg. Company, Bombay cut four records that play for five minutes per side. These are in raga bhimpalas, pahadi, bageshree, bhairvi and two songs from Marathi drama ‘savitri’. In 1998, his birth centenary was celebrated in Maharashtra.
Gramophone Company reissued some of his most popular records on audio tapes and later on compact discs. Although Bakhaleboa did not record single song, both Bal Gandharva and Master Krishnarao have cut hundreds of records representing his gayaki and music.

Gramophone Celebrities - 23

Principal Bapurao Ketkar (1898-1954)

Bhaskarboa Bakhale had several discipless including females Rahimubai Vajeer and his own daughter Pramila Bakhale. Both of them made couple of records that have now gone into oblivion. Next to Bal Gandharva and Master Krishnarao, Bapurao Ketkar was the only disciple of bakhaleboa who made ten records with the gramophone company.

Ketkar family belonged to Ketki, a tiny village near Chiplun in Konkan. Lakshmanboa Ketkar was a court singer in Ramdurg state in Karnataka. His son bapurao made considerable progress in dhrupad-dhamar style of singing while studying for matriculation. After sudden death of his father, Ketkar family had to move to Pune. Bapurao was then 20 years old. He began to continue his music lessons with Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan who was in Pune and had established Arya Sangeet Vidyalaya, an institution for imparting music education in a traditional guru-shishya parampara. He met Bhaskarboa Bakhale through Master Krishna and then joined his tuition with the permission of Kareem Khan. Bapurao then not only learnt music form his guru but also nurtured the Bharat Gayan Samaj established by Bhaskarboa. He was the Principal of this Samaj / and the music vidyalaya (school). He staged several shows of ‘Sangeet Sanshay Kallol’, ‘Varvanchana’, ‘Panchangi Jugar’ plays for raising building funds of Bharat Gayan Samaj. He used to play roles and sing songs in these plays. He also acted in plays of Gandharva Natak Company whenever Bal Gandharva had problems in getting replacement actors. With the suggestion of Master Krishnarao, he went to Karachi for establishing unit of Bhara Gayan Samaj. He met Sheth Lakshmidas Ishwardas who was a great admirer and patron of both Bhaskarboa and Master Krishnarao. Lakshmidas organized several concerts of bapurao and music lovers of Karachi were much pleased. However, there was no move in establishing the institution in Karachi. Hence, bapurao returned to Pune in 1932 and resumed his work at Bharat Gayan Samaj.

In 1932, he also composed music for Saraswati Cinetones Marathi talkie film 'Shyamsundar'. It was also dubbed in Hindi and Bengali and was shown for over 27 weeks in Bombay. Thus, this was the first Indian film that celebrated silver jubilee of film screening. In this film, Shahu Modak acted as a child Shree Krishna and Bapurao Ketkar played the role of Naarad. Later, in 1935, Baburao Painter and Dadasaheb Phalke invited him to compose music for Hindi film 'Sati Sulochana'. The film reels are no more available. However, some of the
gramophone records of these films are available with the collectors. Bapurao did not pursue this career and returned to his work as the Principal Ketkar.

Odeon Company invited Bapurao in 1935 to cut seven records (14 sides). He has recorded ragas Bageshree, Durga, Shankara, Kafi, Sohoni, Marwa, Todi, Deskar, Adana, Devgandhar and Bharavi. He has also recorded songs from Marathi drama. Bapurao's pronunciations of the words of bandish and natyapad are clear and sweet. Odeon Company published his photograph in their catalogue containing publicity material. Bapurao had received rigorous taalim from Bhaskarboa for 2/3 years. Experts found glimpses of Bhaskarboa's style in his singing in the concerts. Bal Gandharva used to remark, 'Bapurao sings Asthai / Antara like our guruji Bhaskarboa'. Thus, these records represent true gayaki of Bhaskarboa Bakhale. 'Alurkar Music House' of Pune published / reissued some of his songs on audio-tapes in late eighty's.

Marathi song from drama 'Varvanchana' recorded on A 245009 became very popular – 'Sundera gamena tee bala, daveena majla jee prem leela'.

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BAPUROAO KETKAR.


मातृत्व याहाचे केलकर.

मेंतर यायोर अव किंतुर
Gramophone Celebrities - 24

Gayanacharya Vazeboa (1871-1945)

Ramkrishna Narhar Vaze, born in 1871 at a small village Ozare, in Sawantwadi State, had no music background in his family. However, he had keen interest in music since early childhood. Although married at young age, as per the tradition of that time, he left home in pursuit of music and struggled for over twelve years in North India. He tried to learn from many different Ustads and Pandits of different gharana. He also learnt a lot just by listening to many stalwarts including Taanras Khan, Bande Ali, Nissar Hussain Khan, Rahimatkhan and many others. He used to note and write down the songs and bandishes that he received during this long period. He toured with the circus company of Prof. Vishnupant Chatre and also visited court of Nepal Naresh. During this period, he also met Swamy Vivekanand and sang for him. Thus, he added several other colors (rang) to his Gwallor gayaki and became an expert and renowned singer. He earned name fame and money and became known as Vazeboa. He had a voluminous voice and very aggressive style of singing.

He returned home after fourteen years and met his mother and wife. He then moved to Pune and built a house in Sadashiv Peth. The house is now changed into a big complex named after him as ‘Ramkrishna Housing Society’ in which his grandchildren live in a spacious flat. Soon, he became busy in tuitions, music conferences and like Bhaskarboa, he also began to compose music for Marathi drama companies. He composed music for Master Deenanath Mangeshkar’s ‘Balwant’ company and Bapurao Pendharkar’s ‘Lalit Kaladarsh’ company. Both of them treated him as guru. His tunes were based on pure classical music. Songs from Marathi plays ‘Rakshasi mahatvakanksha’, ‘Ranadundubhi’, ‘Turungachya daaraat’, ‘Sanyashacha sansaar’, ‘Sanyast khadga’ became very popular and the records were sold for many years.

He was very busy and always on tour. As a result, he could not teach many students. During 1933-40, he cut nine records (eighteen sides / songs) and these were released on Columbia Company label. These are electrical recordings and Vazeboa’s matured voice at the age of seventy could be heard quite clearly. He has sung classical ragas viz. todi, khat, bhatiyar, sarang, bhairav bahar, khambavati, kafi kanada, tilak kamod, marwa, nat bhag, tilang, bageshree and miya malhar (bolere papiyara). He has also sung Meera bhajan ‘Udho karmanki gat nyari’. Mr. Frank Choun recorded few records in 1932 at S. Rose and Co. near kala ghoda where Rhythm House stands today. In 1939, M. J. P. Sen recorded rest of the songs at Universal Building, Fort, Mumbai in HMV head office in Bombay. These records were listed in Columbia Company’s catalogue upto 1962. Around 1997, eight records out of nine were reissued on tape by HMV Company. Vazeboa also sang on All India Radio and Mr. Z. A. Bukhari was fan of his music. Vazeboa’s twenty-seven minutes AIR recording of raga Miya Malhar is in circulation among die-hard collectors. This recording begins with an
announcement by Mr. Bukhari. Ustad Bundu Khan has accompanied him on sarangi whereas tabla accompanied was by Alla Rakha. During Vazeboa's visit and stay with Swamy Vivekanand, Swamiji gave him dohara:

'Sangeet kala hai naari, sabko ho gayi pyari
Kol din gali gali men phirati, kol din thadi rajdarbari
Aisi naari jis ko milat hai, baaki hai balihari'.

Gayanacharya Vazeboa
Bapurao Pendharkar (1892-1937)

Vyankatesh Balwant (V.B.) alias Bapurao Pendharkar was born in 1892 in Jamkhindi state. He studied in Pune. Just before completing his matriculation in 1915, he left school to join Keshavrao Bhosle’s ‘Lalit Kaladarsh’ drama company. He had neither good height nor beautiful voice and face required for the female roles. However, Keshavrao trained him so intensely that he learnt to overcome all his shortcomings and turned them into assets. He began with the insignificant female role in ‘Sangeet Sharada’ and made progress to enact the role of heroine Bhamini in ‘Sangeet Manapman’.

In Lalit Kaladarsh company, he became ‘gandabaddha’ disciple of guru Ramkrishnaboa Vaze. Until then, he was mostly imitating Keshavrao Bhosle’s singing style. Vazeboa taught him to give up this habit and sing in his own voice and style. He devoted himself to the company. Hence, when Keshavrao passed away in 1921, he took over as the owner and carried out his responsibilities till 1937. At the age of forty five years, he passed away in Gwalior. After his death, his son Bhalchandra (Anna) Pendharkar took over and has been keeping up the company till today in 2007. This is probably the longest lived drama company in India. Bapurao staged B. V. alias Mama Varerkar’s ‘Satteche Gulam’ in 1922. He then produced number of plays and most of them were successful. Some of his important plays are: Turungachya Daraat, Krishnarjun Yuddha, Shree, Kargarah, Shikka Katyar, Sajjan, Vadhuh Pariksha, Nekjaat Maratha, Snyacha Kalas, Patt Pawan and Swayamsevak. This was also beginning of talkie films and many persons from stage were attracted to this medium. Bapurao founded ‘Lalitkaladarsh Movietone Company’ and produced Marathi film ‘Vijayachi Lagne’, (‘Shadika Maml’ in Hindi).

Bapurao’s records were cut after Keshavrao passed away. In 1922, he recorded ‘Devata kamukata rahtita’ song from drama ‘Shaha Shivaji’. British engineer George Dillnutt recorded this song at S. Rose and Company (present Rhythm House) premises. Later, he cut over 140 songs on about 70 records. These were reissued on black color HMV labels, green color Zonophone labels and yellow color The Twin labels. He has recorded highest number of songs among three generations of singers of Lalit Kaladarsha Company. Most of his popular satge songs have been recorded and his son has preserved them for posterity. In 1974, selected songs were reissued on one Long Playing record. In 1996, HMV released four audio cassette-packs of sixty-four most popular stage songs. Bapurao’s few songs have been included in this compilation. Famous musician Mr. Keshavrao Bhole has written about these records in his book. He writes, “Bapurao’s voice has a volume that fills the theater. He sings in all the three octaves. His style of singing with high pitch notes and expressing the mood and feelings of the song has made them most popular. ‘Baare panduranga’, ‘Ahankar
majha', 'Mukharata ka shobhe', 'Varta maunada ha', 'Mama bandhu sakha', 'Tujhe palanewala' are among these key songs that led him to great success.

He recorded two songs on record number P 7365 in April 1926. One song is 'Bol brijlala' from drama 'Punyaprabhav'. Flip side of this record has a poem by Govindgaj (Ram Ganesh Gadkar) – 'Rajhans majha nijala'. It is not known whether he recorded this as a gap filler or he liked the poetry. Thus, he becomes the first ever singer who has recorded Marathi 'Bhavgeet' on gramophone record. The song is a mother's grief over the death of her baby. She laments:

"He kona bolale bola, rajhans majha nijala
Durdalva nagachya shikhari, nava vidhava dukhhi aal
Te hridaya kase saiche, me ugach sangeet nahi
Je anandeli radate, dukhhet kase te hol
He kuni kuna sangave, asichya bala thave, Premachya gava java
Mag alkeve ya bola, rajhans majha nijala".
Gramophone Celebrities - 26

‘Balwant’ Gayaki – Master Deenanath Mangeshkar (1900-1942)

‘Ganda badhha’ disciple of Vazeboa! However, his singing style was an unusual combination of many different gharanas that he imbined from many Ustads and Pandits. The gayaki was bright, aggressive and ‘Balwant’ (strong). As a child prodigy, he appeared on Marathi stage in a Mangeshi festival in Goa. Later on he entered Kirloskar Natak Mandal as a replacement of Bal Gandharva who had left the company to form his own Gandharva Natak Mandal. He played a female role of Kamla in Urdu drama ‘Taj-e-wafa’. This role and the songs made him famous as a new star. His comic role in ‘Kantomen Phool’ was also popular. His audience consisted of Parsis, Gujarathi, Bhatiye, Multans and Urdu speaking Muslims. He also used to act in old Marathi drama revived and staged by Kirloskar Drama Company. Haunted by his melodious voice, Mr. Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar gave him title of – ‘Master’ meaning child prodigy. Kirloskar Company toured extensively in North India during 1916-17. Thus, he had an opportunity to see and listen to many different acting and music styles during this tour. Around this time his voice became more masculine and consequently it affected and changed his style of singing. In 1918, Kirloskar Company had a second major split. Deenenath took initiative to form a new company and with the suggestion of Mr. Ram Ganesh Gadkari named it as ‘Balwant Natak Mandal’, in memory of Annasaheb Kirloskar. Company flourished and became famous under his able leadership and was active until about 1933. Gadkari’s ‘Ekach Pyala’ was so popular that company earned Rs. 75,000 in those days. Among other dramatists, ‘Balwant’ staged the plays of Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar, Shreepad Krishna Kolhatkar, Tatyasaheb Kelkar, Vasudevshastri Khare, Veer Vamanrao Joshi, Achyut Balwant Kolhatkar, Viththal Sitaram Gurjar, Swatantryaveer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar and Vishram Bedekar (Brahmakumari). This period was full of struggle for independence and patriotism was often expressed in plays such as Ugramangal, Ranadundubhi, Sanyasta Khadga, Manapman, Rajlakshmi, Rajsanyas and Deshkontak. Around 1937, Deenenath also produced ‘Krishnarjun yudhya’ film under his ‘Balwant Pictures’ banner and burnt his fingers like Bapurao Pendharkar. This led to the tragic turn of his career due to the debt. He had to close down his company, and finally he died in 1942 at very young age. He left behind his widow and five children who were to become great singers later. His eldest daughter Lata Mangeshkar became the legendary singer of the century.

Even in such a short span of just forty-two years, Master Deenenath has left behind his music in over fifty songs (twenty five records). These were recorded using electrical method (during 1930-37) and issued on HMV, The Twin, and Young India labels. Majority of these are famous songs from the Marathi drama. He has also sung ragas Jaijaivanti, Basant, Bahaduri Todi, Sindhura and also songs in Kanadi and Telugu languages. His first records were cut in 1930 in a studio on Rampart Row, next to Rhythm House and 1931 catalogue of HMV has
his portrait on the front cover. The recording was done in one day and night and in one sitting. Master Avinash (Ganpatrao Mohite), Parsharam Samant, Babi Borkar (on tabla), and Shantaram Manjrekar (on Harmonium) were present. In 1937, Young India Company made his records in the lane opposite Akbar Ali's in Fountain area. These Young India record labels read as ‘Master Deen Nath (Sangli)’. Early recordings reflect his true gayaki with bright colors, whereas latter recordings are full of sorrow and touch the listener’s soul. Due to the efforts of Mangeshkar family members, almost all his songs are now available on CD's and tapes. Gramophone Company also released them on LP and audiotapes on number of occasions. One of his most famous Marathi song from drama ‘Ranadundubhi’ is –

Jagin ha khas vedyancha pasara majala saara,
game ha bhrant sansaari, dhruvacha vedh ha tara

Master Deenanath Mangeshkar
Gramophone Celebrities - 27

Prof. Shankarrao Vyas (1898-1956)

Shankarrao Vyas was born in Kolhapur in 1898. His father Ganeshpant was a well known Keertankar and Puranikh So, he was brought up in the religious and musical environment. Unfortunately, Ganeshpant died when Shankar was seven years old. His paternal uncle brought him up for few years. His maternal uncle (Mama) noticed his inclination towards music and enrolled him in the ‘gurukul’ of Maharaj (Pandit) Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. In those days, students had to sign a bond with the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya. Training period would last 8-10 years and the student would become all-rounder in every field related to music. Thus, Shankar Rao spent nine years in this gurukul, earned ‘Sangeet Pravin’ degree and gold medal for overall development. With the suggestion of guruji, he worked in Lahore vidyalaya for few years. In 1931, he moved to Ahmadabad for establishing branch of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya. He was an expert not only in vocal music, but could play and repair many instruments including sitar, jaltarang and mandolin. He would conduct orchestra consisting of Indian and western instruments. He was also a very good composer and wrote several bandishes. He was the key person in planning music section of national (Rashtriya) schools: an idea originated by Gandhiji in Ahmadabad.

In 1935, he left Ahmadabad and settled in Bombay. He founded school for music education at Dadar, just outside the western railway station. ‘Vyas Sangeet Vidyalaya’. It is still functioning at this place. His brother Narayanrao Vyas and brother in law Vasantrao Rajopadhye also joined him in this noble cause. Around 1930/31, HMV Company invited both Vyas brothers for recordings and they cut over 200 songs (100 discs) until about 1938. He also cut few orchestral records under ‘Vyas Brothers’ banner playing pure classical ragas. These records were best sellers and company had printed their photographs on record catalogues.

This period was also the beginning of talkie films. Shankar Rao composed music for Hindi (35), Marathi (5), and Gujarathi (3) films from 1937-1955. He also composed background music for fifteen films. Most of his films were based on religious or mythological themes. He also taught music to non-singing actors such as Sardar Akhtar and Shirin Bano. His most famous musical films were – Narsi Bhagat (1940), Bharat Bhet (1941), Ram Rajya (1943, in Hindi and Marathi). Saraswati Rane sung ‘Beena madhur madhur kachu bol’ in raga Bhimpalas in Hindi film ‘Ram Rajya’ and this song became popular throughout India. This was the only film that Gandhiji watched in cinema hall and was much impressed with the music. Songs from Marathi version of ‘Ram Rajya’ viz. ‘Sujanho parisa ramkatha’ and ‘Ladkyaa raanila lagale dohale’ are shown on TV even today.

He was very busy in many fields as a composer, Principal of his music school, author of articles and bandishes, President of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and
founding editor of ‘Sangeet Kala Vihar’ magazine (founded in 1947) of Vidyalaya that is published even today. He passed away at Ahmedabad in 1956. He has sung couple of abhangs of Saint Tukaram. These are available on HMV records. Record P 13454 published in 1931 has a sweet abhang – 'Roopi guntale lochan, charani sthiravale mana'.
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Prof. Narayanrao Vyas (1902-1984)

Prof. Narayanrao Vyas was the younger brother of Prof. Shankarrao Vyas. Title Professor was indicative of the profession and also the Principalship of the music school. In pursuit of music, he followed Shankarrao by joining Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in 1911, two years later than Shankarrao. He spent eleven years in this gurukul and then joined him at Ahmadabad, as per the instructions of Maharaj Paluskarji. Later on he settled in Bombay in 1927 and emerged as a professional singer. He used to sing in Ganesh festivals and was in much demand in those days. He had a sharp voice, slightly nasal but could swoop in all the three octaves. He used to command his successful concerts and audience was pleased with his style.

This led to an invitation from the Gramophone Company for the recordings in 1929. His association with the company lasted for over next fifteen years. He has recorded over 150 songs on 75 shellac records that revolve at 78 rpm and play for about three minutes per side. His songs are in Marathi, Hindi and Gujrathi language. He recorded only for HMV and The Twin Company and the discs were issued on black, red and yellow labels. Most of the records are ten inch size. However, he has also cut few twelve inch diameter records that play for over four minutes per side. His photographs were published on the publicity material of HMV such as catalogues, record sleeves and display boards.

Most of these records contain a raga on one side and a light classical item such as bhajan, thumri on the flip side. Narayanrao himself made this suggestion. He thought that the classical music on both sides would be a double dose for ordinary listener. This suggestion was well taken by manager Mr. Ramakant Roppoj of HMV and later followed for the records of many artists until about 1950. His records are considered model even today in rendering all the details of a raga in such a short time of three minutes. In 1934, he recorded famous bhajan ‘Radhe Krishna Bol Mukhase’ on twelve-inch diameter record and the copies were sold in large numbers. Publicity brouchure of this record gives him titles – ‘Sangeet Pravin’, ‘Taanke Kaptan’ and ‘Ahdunik Tansen’. He has recorded Gandharva Mahavidyalaya’s prayer song, ‘Jay jagadish hare’. Some of his most popular and best seller records were – Sakhi mori rumzum (Durga), Neer bharan kaise jaun (Tilak kamod), Tum jago mohan pyare (Bhairav), Neer bharan main to chali jaat hun (Malkauns), Balam mora suni ho (Mand), and Bahutsahi tori sanvriya (Bhairvi). He also experimented with ragas with Marathi bandishes on few records. Examples are – ‘Prabhu to ramchandra’ (Jaimini {Yaman} Kalyan), ‘Pnanatpal prabhu tu asashi’ (Lalat). After 1937, he devoted himself to the cause of teaching in his own Vidyalaya in Dadar. Some of his most well known disciples are – Master Navrangi, Pandit Vasantrao Rajopadhaye, Pandit V. R. Athavale, Kumari Vimal Patki, Shankar Abhyankar, Sharad Jambhekar, Prasad Savkar and his son Pandit Vidhyadhar Vyas. He used to participate in almost all important
music conferences throughout India and would travel a lot. He is probably the only musician who built a house in Dadar with the money earned in music profession. He used to boast on this achievement and would stress that he never acted on stage and worked for films. However, Harminder Hamrazz’s Hindi Film geet kosh, vol. 2 [1941-50] has an entry on page no. 240 as: Film – ‘Ever Green’ alias ‘Garma garam’, stunt movie, music director – Narayanrao Vyas. This was censored on January 12, 1946. This film was produced by Jupiter films, directed by Naari Ghadiali, and had ten songs listed. However, no records were made on HMV label. Also names of the singers are not mentioned.

He passed away in 1984. Narayanrao was of course best known as a vocalist. He used to sing on radio quite often. He has cut a long playing record of Jugalbandi in raga Malgunji with his gurubandhu – Prof. Vinayakrao Patwardhan. Some of his records were reissued on EP records. In 1997, HMV reissued some of his most popular songs on four audio-cassettes. His most famous bhajan is

Radhe krishna bol mukhase, tero kya lagega mol
Hath pava nahi hilana, das bees kos nahi chalana
Kuch gire ganth nahi chutana, teri manki gundi khol
Tero kya lagega mol, radhe Krishna bol.

Prof. Narayanrao Vyas
Gramophone Celebrities - 29

Prof. B. R. Deodhar (1901-1990)

Professor Balkrishna Raghunath Deodhar was best known as ‘Deodhar Mastar’. He was not a trained musician of the gurukul of Maharaj Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. However, he learnt music from him and was a very different and unique disciple. As per the suggestion of Maharaj-ji, in 1925 he started a School of Music in Gignaon area. Initially he hired few classrooms of a municipal school and later on moved to his own premises near Opera House where the school functions till today. It is known as ‘Deodhar’s School of Indian Music. In the beginning, he formed an orchestra of amaetuer Indian musicians. In 1929, he recorded couple of ragas on Orchestra and these were released on HMV and Columbia record labels.

In the era of silent movies, Prof. Deodhar used to provide music for silent movies using his orchestra. Before ‘Alam Ara’, the so called first Indian talkie film, a talkie named ‘Nakli Tansen’ was released in 1930 in Realto cinema hall in Bombay. Prof. Deodhar composed music for this film. Thus, he is the first Indian composer / music director of Indian films. However, this fact is shadowed over by the hype of ‘Alam Ara’. During 1932-1943, he composed music for over ten films and produced one film ‘Neela’ both in Hindi and in Marathi. He has also composed as a co-composer for few films. He has composed music for over 90 film songs. Although details are available in Harmandir Singh Hamaz’s geet kosh, only four songs of film ‘Madari Mohan’ were recorded on gramophone discs. Today, we do not see even those records/recordings. Film reels and the songs have gone into oblivion. Due to loss and failure of his film ‘Neela’, and bitter experience in film line, Deodhar mastar was much reluctant even to speak about this part of his career. He was however active and co-operative with the record companies.

Deodhar mastar lived a very long life of over ninety years. Apart from his music school, he groomed and shaped Kumar Gandharva like his son, founded and edited ‘Sangeet Kala Vihar’ – a magazine of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya that is published till today. He wrote several articles based on the interviews of musicians and later on it was published in book form – ‘Thor Sangeetkar’ in Marathi [and translated in English as – ‘Pillars of Hindustani Music’]. His most remarkable work is the introduction of ‘Voice Culture’ among Indian musicians. He went to USA in 1955 and spent two years in learning ‘Voice Culture’. He has cut a nice LP record in USA demonstrating Indian classical music.

Around 1930, he made few records with HMV as a composer, orchestra conductor and even as a singer. His photograph is printed on the front page of 1930 catalogue. In this session, he recorded Sawan aayo aaj (Sawan) and Banao batiya (Bhairvi) for HMV and these were released on black label (HMV P. 13450) disc. Later in 1937, he cut a record of raga Sindhura (Saj saj aavat) and Hindol Bahar (Koyalia bole) on Odeon label. By then he had toured Europe and it
is mentioned in Odeon catalogue as, “We are proud to release this record of Prof. B. R. Deodhar who has recently toured and hoisted flag of Indian music in Europe. This record would be most ideal for those listeners who want to learn music through gramophone records”. These two songs were reissued by HMV in 1997 in their ‘Great Luminaries’ series. Song text of songs is:

**Sindhura**
Saj saj aavat hai, brijnaar khelanko
Shashi vadan mruga nayani
Kesariya sheer cheer basanti, phoolan gohe lai beni

**Hindol Bahar**
Koyalia bolte lajat, ye nar naranki dhamar aage
Soj peeri bhai aise jaise sado
Suhag rang barsat tinkusuve baug.

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Prof. B. R. Deodhar
Gramophone Celebrities - 30

Sangeet Martand Omkarnath Thakur (1897-1967)

Born at village Jahaj in Gujrath state, young Omkarnath wanted to become a pahiliwan (wrestler). This activity helped him in building his body and these exercises were useful to him in his career in music. He had a large family, his father had turned towards philosophy and mysticism and hence mother had to shoulder the household responsibilities. Soon this family moved to nearby town Bhadoch (Bharooch). Omkarnath had keen sense of music and used to sing well as a child prodigy. Upon listening to him, Seth Shapoorji Doongaji arranged for his further studies in the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya’s gurukul in Mumbai. Omkarnath learnt music for six years from 1913-1919. Paluskarji was much impressed with his abilities and leadership. He sent him as a Principal of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in Lahore. He used to attend and sing in number of music conferences while carrying out his duties as the Principal. He married in 1922 and enjoyed a married life for ten years. Unfortunately, his wife and new born baby both died and then he did not marry again. He got completely engrossed in singing and teaching music. He used to visit Nepal and sing in the court of Naresh. He was offered the position of court singer. However, he refused it and returned to his assigned work.

He used to travel a lot for the music programs, concerts and conferences. In 1931, he toured and performed in many European countries. In Italy, he tried music therapy on Musolini to cure him from insomnia. Maharaj Paluskarji used to sing ‘Vande Mataram’ song in the opening ceremony of the congress conventions. After his death, Omkarnath used to perform this duty. He used to sing prolonged ‘Vande Mataram’ in his concerts as if it was a bandish. He also cut a twelve inch gramophone record and named raga as ‘Bangiya Kafi’ for this song. In the parliamentary session of independent India, he sang ‘Vande Mataram’ for more than 25 minutes and all the members including Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Home Minister Sardar Patel had to stand in attention. In 1950, he visited Afghanistan and sang in the court of Sultan Amanulla Khan. He also recited ‘Gurubani’ in the local gurudwara in Kabul.

He was appointed as the Principal of music department of the Banaras Hindu University and worked there until 1957. His disciples include scholars like Dr. Smt. Premilat Sharma and renowned violinist Dr. Smt. N. Rajam. He was a composer and has written several bandishes. He used to write articles with pen name ‘Pranav Rang’. He wrote six volumes of ‘Pranav Bharati’ on music. Central government awarded him with ‘Padmashree’ title in 1955 and Sanskrit Mahavidyalaya of Calcutta honored him with the title ‘Sangeet Martand’. After a prolonged illness, he passed away in 1967 at his native place.

Omkarnathji had a grand personality and so was his appearance at the concert. Often he used to have four tanpura players at four corners around him, wore
expensive dress, and had long hair like a sage. His concert was always pleasant with his mudra-abhinay and his body language would add colors to the listener's pleasure. He has cut over twenty records during 1934-1961 in all the formats viz. 78rpm, Extended Play (E.P.) and Long Play (L.P.). Some of his records feature his lecture demonstrations. Apart from Raagdari and bhajans, he has also recorded patriotic songs, Meera bhajans and Gujrati folk song (Raja taru dungarjyaman) and a gazal. Pandit Ram Narayan has accompanied him on sarangi in most of his recordings. He had also accompanied Omkarnathji in his concert tour in Afghanistan. Omkarnathji was also a frequent broadcaster of All India Radio (A.I.R.) and some of his recordings have been released commercially. He is probably the only disciple of Maharaj paluskarji who has so much variety of recordings made available for posterity. Some of his admirers and bhakta like Mr. Vijay Porcha, Mumbai have hours of live concert recordings and he releases these recordings occasionally.

His most popular songs of course are: 'Paga ghunghuru bandha meera nachin' (Malkeuna), 'Main nahi makan khayo' and 'Jogi mat ja' (Bharavi).
Gramophone Celebrities - 31

Professor Vinayakrao Patwardhan (1898-1975)

Born at Miraj in 1898, Vinayak lost his parents in plague when he was just four years old. He grew up in his uncle’s family. His uncle, Mr. Keshavrao Patwardhan was a disciple of Balkrishnaboa Ichalkaranjikar. Another uncle Mr. Gurudeo Patwardhan was a renowned tabla and pakhawaj player. He was appointed as a vice Principal at the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Lahore by Maharaj Paluskarji. Young Vinayak was being groomed in such a music rich atmosphere. Shreemant Balasaheb Patwardhan of Miraj sent him to Lahore for music education with a monthly scholarship of sixteen rupees. Vinayakrao spent six years at Lahore and completed the course of all round education in music. He returned to Miraj in 1914. In 1918, at the age of twenty years, he performed in the music conference at Bombay. Many stalwarts including Balkrishnaboa Ichalkaranjikar were present in the audience and they appreciated his performance. Subsequently, he had an opportunity to stay at Miraj and learn further from Balkrishnaboa.

Paluskarji was always keen that his disciples should teach and popularize music to all sections of society. He wanted that the music should be taught in colleges and in universities. Aim of his gurukul was to produce teachers and missionaries who would form music schools and take the cause further. However, Vinayakrao was the exception. In 1922, he joined drama Company with the salary of Rs. 160 per month. He then joined Gandharva Natak Company. He was young, handsome, and had a sweet and voluminous voice. He learnt acting from Mr. Ganpatrao Bodas. His song ‘Sukant chandranana patali’ in the role of ‘Ashwin Seth’ from drama ‘Sanshay Kallo’ was very popular. He also played roles in Mooknayak and Swayamvar. He was either on the stage or on the concert tour in North India. HMV Company recorded his songs both from classical music and stage songs. In 1932, he played hero’s role in Imperial Film Company’s Hindi talkie, ‘Madhuri’. HMV released four songs of this film on two records.

In 1931, Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar passed away and this was a turn in Vinayakrao’s life. He left his career as an actor singer and decided to devote rest of his life for music education. He went to Pune and began Pune unit of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya. Digambar Vishnu alias Bapurao Paluskar was just eleven years old. Vinayakrao took him under his tutelage and groomed as a first rank vocalist. List of disciples of Vinayakrao consists of over ninety persons. Prominent among them are – Rajabhau Kokaje, Nagesh Khalikar and Tryambakrao Janorikar. These disciples in turn continued the mission and trained hundreds of men and women. Some of the female singers are – Leela Limaye, Indu Sohoni, Kalindi Keskar, Seeta Mavinkurve and Seeta Dharap. He used to take these disciples to number of music conferences for accompaniment and for training at such large gatherings. He was also Principle at Vidyalaya in Delhi for short time around 1945-50. Bhimsen Joshi was wandering in North in search of a guru. Vinayakrao told him to go back and meet Sawai Gandharva.
who was close to his native place. Like many disciples of Paluskarji, Vinayakrao also used to sing and popularize ‘Vande Mataram’ song in his concerts. In 1975, he passed away at the age of seventy-seven years.

During 1928-1935, he cut fifteen records in 78-rpm format and these were released on HMV black label. Most of these are stage songs from drama – Vidhilikhit, Manapman, Kanhopatra, Sanshay Kallol and film Madhuri. Later in 1940-45, he cut records in raga Miya Malhar, Bahar and tarana in various ragas. Tarana was his speciality. In 1935, Gajanan Phono Works, Pune sponsored his five records containing ten ragas of music lessons. These were cut by Columbia Company and issued on green color labels. A nice notation booklet was also supplied with this set of educational records. In these three-minute lessons he has taught ragas bhairav, khamaj, purvi, yaman, asavari, kafi, bhimpalas, durga, bageshree, and malkauns. He has recorded raga Bhoopal Todi ‘Jab ram naam koi gayaga’ and bhajan ‘Abki teka hamari’ is released on EP record in 1961. In 1967, he recorded raga Lalita Gauri and jugalbandi in raga ‘Malgunji’ with his gurubandhu Pt. Narayanrao Vyas. Soon after he passed away, HMV released LP in his memorium containing ragas Hameer and Anandi Kedar. Like Narayanrao Vyas, he also tried and experimented with Marathi bandish for classical ragas but it was not very well received. His famous Meera Bhajan in raga Bahar is ‘Shree giridhar aage nachungi, nacha nach priya rasika rijaun.’

Professor Vinayakrao Patwardhan
Gramophone Celebrities - 32

Dattatreya Vishnu (D. V.) alias Bapurao Paluskar (1921-1955)

Bapurao was the 12th child of Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. All eleven children had died and hence his wife Ramabai decided to name next living child to Lord Dattatreya. Hence he was named after this God. At home, he was called Bapu and among his circle of friends and disciples he was called as Bapurao. Initially he heard and accompanied his father who was then completely engrossed in Ramnaam, Rama Keertans and Rampaths. This religious sanskar had a deep and long standing effect on young Bapu’s personality. Maharaj Paluskar passed away in 1931 at Nasik. Bapu learnt music from his uncle for 2/3 years at Nasik and then moved to Bombay to learn music from Prof. Narayanrao Vyas. He stayed with him for few months. However, in 1935, Prof. Vinayakrao Patwardhan decided to settle in Pune, persuaded Paluskar family to come along and hired small house for them in Dixit wada near Shaniwarwada. Bapurao lived here till his death in 1955. He began to take formal education in school and music education in Gandharva Mahavidyalaya formed by Vinayakrao Patwardhan. He would also teach music to junior students in the evenings. His daily schedule was very much tight and through this he mastered time management, strict discipline, patience and various facets of music as a student, teacher and a performer. He was known for non-enmity and soon emerged as an able performer. At the age of 17 years in 1938, he gave a recital on Bombay station of All India Radio. As per the practice of that time, he received chain booking of AIR programs and visited number of AIR stations from Lahore, Peshwara to Madras. He also began to perform at number of prestigious music conferences in various cities. It is really surprising that these artists could manage this in poor transport and communication in those days.

When Bapurao began his career as a concert singer, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Faiyyaz Khan, Ameer Khan, Kesarbai Kerkar and Moghubai Kurdikar were already star performers. He developed his own and unique style with the help of his sweet and naturally pleasant voice. His voice was quite flexible, taans were superb and he had earned music with his hard work. He also sang in two films – a duet in raga Desi with Ameer Khan in Hindi film – ‘Baiju Bawara’ (Aaj gavat man mero jhumke) and a song in raga Bahar in a Bengali film – ‘Shapmochan’ (Kaliyan sang karata). With these two songs he became famous and known to common music lovers in North India. He was often requested to sing these songs in his concerts. However, he never sang and requested audience to see the films for the songs. He went to China with the first delegation of Indian artists. Soon after return, he died with a short illness. He was already at the height of his career and left this world.

Gramophone Company recorded his 78-rpm records during 1944-46. They consisted of ragas and bhajans – His very first record was in raga Gaud Malhar – ‘Banara byahan aayare’. Maru kavan aaj (Marwa), Piyu palan lagi (Gaud sarang),
Badhaliya Lavo (Asavari) became very popular and best sellers. Just before his death, he had recorded raga Shree (Harike charan kamal) with the insistence of Mr. G. N. Joshi of HMV. He was not really very well and one can guess and hear so in this recording. G. N. Joshi improvised and made eighteen minutes raga out of available recording and released it on a long-playing record with his famous bhajans on the flip side. Later on some of his radio program recordings were also released under AIR-HMV scheme. Today, after over sixty years of his untimely death, these bhajans are still fresh and take listeners to transe and transport them to another world. His most famous Meera bhajan is:

Chalo mana ganga jamuna teer
ganga jamuna nirmal pani, sheetal hota sharer
chalo mana ganga jamuna teer.

Bapurao Paluskar
Gramophone Celebrities - 33

Kumar Gandharva (1924-1992)

‘Shivputra Siddharamaiya Komkali’ was born in 1924, in a Kannadiga family at village Sulebhavi near Dharwad in Karnataka district. Shreemad Shankarcharya awarded him with a title ‘Kumar Gandharva’ at the tender age of seven years. For the rest of his life, he was known by this name. The title was given because of sweet and melodious voice he had. As a child prodigy, he used to sing ragas and mimic great singers such as Karim Khan, Faiyaaz Khan, just by listening to their gramophone records. His father took him to many places for ticketed shows and these tours were successful in projecting young Kumar and also in earning money. He used to sing in prestigious conferences along with stalwarts. In early period of talkies, Wadia movietone made few short movies on child prodigies including Kumar Gandharva and Firoze Dastur. Around 1935, Odeon Company invited him to cut three discs viz. Gund lavore malaniya (Bageshree), Sagari raina (Ramkali), Aaj kaisi brijmen (Mishra Kafi), Banao batiya (Bhairvi), of ragas and two Marathi bhavageete – Pream dyava thava (Nand), and He mohan kanha (Tilang). Hindustan Company issued two records featuring four ragas: Shyam sunder mohan mohan (Bhairvi), Sakhi mori rumzum (Durga), Sumiraho namko (Asavari), and Kaun kaun gune gaye harike (Mand), These records became very popular and young Kumar’s nice photograph wearing medals on his coat was printed in record catalogues.

Some senior musicians persuaded his father to get a rigorous training for Kumar. As a result, his father took him to Prof. B. R. Deodhar who had listened to his music in one conference at Calcutta. He agreed to teach Kumar in guru-shishya tradition. Kumar lived in Deodhar’s house in Bombay during 1936 to 1947 for eleven years and learnt music. He had an excellent middle class atmosphere to live in and was groomed by Deodhar family like their own son. Prof. Deodhar had his own school of Indian Music at his residence near Opera House. He taught Kumar along with other disciples. After few years, Kumar also began to teach in the school. He had a sharp memory and tremendous grasping power. Deodhar allowed him to listen and learn music from different gharanas. As a result, he developed his own style that had glimpses of Kirana and Jaipur style in the main framework of Gwalior gharana gayaki. This was a new idiom and soon it became extremely popular among the music circles and lovers in Bombay.

Soon Kumar Gandharva became a very busy concert performer. He got married with Kum. Bhanumati Kauns, who was learning music under his guidance in Deodhar’s class. She also had cut couple of records of Marathi Bhavageete. Soon after his marriage, he became sick and they had to move to Indore / Dewas for treatment of T.B. (Tuberculosis). He was totally out of music performances, but studied the theory and intricacies of music including folk and religious music of the region. Bhanumati looked after him during this long illness. Slowly he recovered and around 1953, he began to perform with reportedly one functional
lung. New style of singing surprised the audience and soon he returned in the lime light of the concert stage. They had first son Mukul Shivputra in 1955. During the delivery of the second child, Bhanumati passed away in 1961. This was a big jolt to Kumarji. However, he came out of it soon with his devotion to music. In addition to classical music he presented several programs on light classical music. In 1968, he presented 'Mala Umajalele Bal Gandharva' – based on Marathi drama songs of Bal Gandharva. It was a serious musical study. Soon, HMV released two LP records with the same title and six songs in each LP. His other presentations were: Folksongs of Malva, Bhajans of Kabir, Surdas and Meerabai (Triveni), Niguni Bhajans, Geet Varsha, Geet Vasant, Geet Hemant (Rutu Darshan), Marathi songs of B. R. Tambe (Tambe Geet Rajani), and Tukaram's Abhang. By then, he had married Kum. Vasundhara Komkali, another disciple from Deodhar School times. She began to accompany Kumarji on tanpura in his concerts. She also participated with him in Triveni program. Soon HMV brought out 'Triveni' LP record of these bhajans and it was a best seller. They had daughter Kalapini who now sings in the style of his father. Although Mukul sings occasionally, depending on his mood, his son Bhuvenesh Komkali has emerged as a fine singer and performer.

During 1963-1988, he has cut nine LP records of classical music, and six EP's of Marathi natyasangeet/bhavgeete and bhajans. Apart from the traditional ragas, he has recorded unusual compositions in ragas Sanjari, Lagan Gandhar, Saheli Todi, Patmanjiri, Beehad Bhairav, Gandhi Malhar and Madhasurja. In the raga Madhasurja, he composed a bandish – 'Bachale Mori Maa', [O mother save me], a lamentation of a lamb to the mother who is driven to a slaughter house in the mid-day sunlight. He provided playback for songs in Marathi drama – 'Saint Tulsidas', 'Shivrai Kathushan', and 'Dev Deenaghari Dhavala'. In 1969, his record 'Mangal din aayo' (Malavati) and 'Mharui bhulo na bano' (Sohoni Bhatiyyar) was released during Diwali. Soon, it became a must in every Marathi household family on Diwawali day festival. His bhavgeets written by Kavi Anil (A. R. Deshpande) – 'Aaj achanak gaath pade' and 'Ajuny rusuni aah' also became very popular and were often played on radio.

During 1962-65, he cut twelve songs on six records in 78-rpm era. Each of this song is a 'Marvel of a sculptured sound'. 'Jaag re piya' (Kabir), 'Sanvariya maro', 'Mharee preet nibha jogi' and 'Main Jyanu naheee' (Meera) were the bhajans and they became extremely popular through radio. Among the classical ragas, he recorded - Sirpe dharee ganga (Shankara), Have maine toli (Adana), Aai ritu aai (Dhani), Mori naina Lage (Kamod), Lade beer mharee chunaree (Kedar Mand), Ja jare bhavara ja (Deskar), hari hari ja (Jaumpuri) and self composed 'Na bateee tun pehechan (Gaud Malhar). Last composition emerged soon after Bhanumati passed away. He used to feel her presence in the house but she was not showing up. In a disturbed mental status Kumarji wrote this bandish and used to sing in concerts with extremely fast tempo depicting his sorrow in a very unusual way. It was soon recorded on HMV record:
Na batatee tu pehechan, bhool meri o jaan
Yaad karat wo pyar, bhulan na mori jaan, pehechan
Na batatee tu pehechan

Child prodigy – kumar gandharva

Kumar Gandharva
Bhoo Gandharva Rahmat Khan Haddu Khan (1860-1922)

He belonged to the family that is considered to be the origin of the Gwallor gharana gayaki. It is believed that two brothers Hassu Khan (1790-1851) and Haddu Khan (1800-1870) established this school (gharana). Haddu Khan had three children – Chhote Mohamad Khan, Haider Khan and Rahmat Khan. Initially Rahmat Khan learnt music from his father. After the death of Haddu Khan, he continued with his elder brother Chhote Mohamad Khan. He then left home to seek career in music. He had extremely sweet and melodious voice. However, due to his whimsical nature and ever increasing addiction to opium, he was often penniless and would wander in the streets of Banaras and many different towns in North India.

Professor Vishnupant Chatre owned circus and also had learnt vocal music from Haddu Khan. He also liked the music and style of Rahmat Khan. During his circus tour, he found Rahmat Khan wandering in the streets of Banaras. He could not see his gurus talented son in this situation. He persuaded him and brought him to Maharashtra and organized several concerts of Rahmat Khan at many cities. He also had his little concert in his circus shows whenever they were on tours. Slowly he brought his opium addiction in control. Govindrao Tembe had attended his 25/30 concerts and has described one of his concerts in his Marathi book – ‘Majha Sangeet Vyasang’. He writes, ‘Rahmat Khan’s taan was as sweet as the seedless Kabuli grapes soaked in honey’. After the death of Vishnupant in 1905, his younger brother Kashinathpant Chatre looked after him for very long time. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Bhaskaroba Bakhale arranged several concerts of Rahmat Khan. He also sang in Wilson College, Bombay. After about 1910, he lived in Kurundwad state near Miraj. Karim Khan used to visit him to listen to his music. He died in 1922. His tomb was erected in Kurundwad.

In 1919, the Gramophone Company recorded his eleven songs on six records and released them in 1922 [on HMV P 4696-4701] on twelve sides. One coupling song of Master Krishnarao was taken to complete the set. During the recording session, Master Krishnarao and Bal Gandharva accompanied him on tanpura. Mr. Balwantrao Rukadikar and Mr. Rajanna provided the tabla accompaniment. Master Krishnarao, in his book describes the event as, ‘Recording session lasted for two days. As it was done acoustically, two large horns were placed before him as microphones. He was very much disturbed by the recording atmosphere and talked too much during singing. One large HMV emblaze frame of dog looking and singing into the horn was placed to catch his attention. However, it irritated him even more and he asked them to remove the dog picture. When sample was played to him, he got angry since someone else like him was singing back through the horn. He got up to leave the hall immediately. With great difficulty, he was persuaded to stay and the recordings were taken’. That is why one doesn’t get flavour/sample of his music by listening to these records. HMV could get the
recordings but could not sell much. As a result, few copies are now left with the
die-hard record collectors. Rahimat Khan has recorded ragas Yaman, Malkauns,
Bhoop, Tilang, Basant, Pilu, Bhairvi Hori and Tappa. In 1997, company has
released two songs in raga Yaman and Bhairvi (Jamunaka Teer) in their great
luminaries series.

Rahimat Khan
Gramophone Celebrities - 35

Bahire Abdul Wahid Khan (1882-1948)

Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan was ten years younger nephew of Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan. He learnt music from his uncles Ustad Haider Baksh and Ustad Kale Khan. He had an intensive training of sarangi playing upto the age of twenty years. He used to play and listen to high pitch sarangi notes for 12-16 hours every day. As a result, he became partially deaf and hence was called as bahire (deaf) Wahid Khan. Haider Khan of Chaprauli (1855-1913) was in the service of Mysore court. With his recommendation, young Wahid Khan also joined services at Mysore. Later on, both of them moved to the court of Shahu Maharaj at Kolhapur and stayed up to 1912. After retirement, Haider Khan returned to his native place ‘Kairana’, whereas Wahid Khan joined Arya Sangeet Vidyalaya of Kareem Khan as a music teacher. He also used to tour with kareem khan for concerts and ticketed programs. He also moved with the family to Bombay to form vidyalaya. When Tarabai and children separated from Khansaheb, she changed names of the children and requested Wahid Khan to teach music to young Heerabai. Thus, a fine kirana singer emerged due to the rigorous kirana talim from Ustad Wahid Khan.

During 1920-1940, he toured to Lahore and Karachi in North India. He used to perform in concerts and also organize ticketed concerts. He taught music to several disciples. Shreemati Padmadevi (Manoramabai Banaraskar alias Munnibai) was his most favourite disciple and consort. They lived together like a married couple until about 1936. Due to this relationship, Kareem Khan and his admirers severed the relations with Wahid Khan. He was never invited to the annual Miraj festival that was organized for several years in memory of Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan. List of his disciples is very long – Nazir Ahmad Khan of Allahabad, Mohini Devi of Allahabad, Pandit Jeevanlal Matto (who became Director of Delhi radio station), Gulam Abbas Khan of Agra, Phiroz Nizami, Bai Benzir Bai of Darbhanga, Heerabai of Punjab, Pandit Pran Nath (who later on moved to America and taught music to several disciples and lived for over 95 years), Muneer Khatun Begum, Ashiq Ali Khan of Raipur, Rafiq Gaznavi (Mohamad Rafi), and Miss Akhatarbai Faizabadi (Begum Akhtar). Ustad Ameer Khan learnt through radio programs of Wahid Khan and imbibed his style of slow aalap in his gayaki that was later known as ‘Indore gayaki’. He performed in Jinnah Hall in Bombay in 1938. This was probably his last performance in Bombay. Around 1940, he returned to Lahore, since his most favourite Multan and tombs of Sufi saints were nearby. He returned to Kairana in 1945 and married to Nazira Begum who was 45 years younger to him. His son Hafizullah Khan was three years old when Wahid Khan passed away in 1948 at Saharanpur. He was buried there. This child Hafizullah Khan learnt sarangi from his gharana ustads and used to play and accompany on radio programs.
Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan taught and made another galaxy of Kirana gharana. Many of these disciples have cut three minutes 78-rpm records. Khansahab could never sing for such a short time. His aalapchari itself required hours. Even half/hone hour on radio was not enough for him. He would continue to sing even when the broadcast time was over and the transmitters were switched off. Staff at the studio would then get a special feast of his music. Hence, many music lovers would attend his live broadcasts in AIR studios. He would also give his best during the presence of such audience. Gramophone Company has released his music in 1976 on a LP record [ECLP 2541] in collaboration with AIR. He has sung ragas Patdeep, Multani and Darbari Kanada. All the three ragas are sung in jhoomra taal. The record cover has a nice photograph of Wahid Khan wearing a turban. This recording gives an idea of his style and the music.
Gramophone Celebrities - 36

Professor Sureshbabu Mane (1902-1953)

Original name was Abdul Rahman. He was the eldest son of Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan and Tarabai alias Tahirabibi. His pet name in house was babu and later Baburao among his friends, and family members. His first teacher was father Kareem Khan and he also learnt music along with the first batch of disciples of the Arya Sangeet Vidyalaya founded by his parents. His voice, swarlagao and style were ditto to his father. He received taalim till the age of sixteen years when his parents separated. He had by then became a teacher and concert singer. Like his father, his thumri was a speciality and listeners would name it as a ‘Maharashtri’ thumri. He was not only an expert vocalist but also could play harmonium, tabla, sarangi, tablatarang, kashta tarang, jal tarang, shahanai, and piano.

After about 1920, Khansaheb became very busy with his many tasks and concert tours throughout India. As a result, he could not attend to the needs and music education of his children. Compounded with some household family problems, Tarabai decided to separate from him and left him in 1918. In the beginning, she stayed in Bombay for some time and then moved to Pune with her five children. She decided to change their muslim names. She used Mane and Barodekar as the surnames. Barodekar was derived from her native place whereas Mane was her surname before marrying Khansaheb. Thus Abdul Rahman became Suresh (god of music notes) babu Mane. She opened up new music school ‘Nutan Sangeet Vidyalaya’ with Sureshbabu as a teacher along with other teachers and students. Sureshbabu also began to teach his sister Heerabai. However, they were all in their teens, and hence Tarabai persuaded and appointed uncle Abdul Wahid Khan as the teacher for children. Later on, with the help of Sawai Gandharva (Rambhau Kundgolkar) she opened up drama wing of Nutan Sangeet Vidyalaya. They staged several old and new drama and all brothers and sisters played roles. Sureshbabu and Heerabai also played roles in Hindi and Marathi films during 1930-40. Sureshbabu also composed music for films.

In 1926, with the efforts of Bai Sunderabai, HMV recorded two songs sung by Sureshbabu – ‘Balam mora naina tere rasile’ (Khamaj thumri) and Marathi pad ‘Ram Ayodhya nagari’. This record (HMV P 8756) was issued on black label and is very very rare. In 1930, Odeon record company released two songs of Mr. N. S. Phadke from his drama ‘Yugantar’ staged by Nutan Natak Company. In 1940, Columbia company released four songs – ‘Balam nainoka jalim’ (Dadra), ‘Bajuband khal khul ja’ (Bhaiviri), ‘Piya tirchee najariya’ (Khamaj thumri), and ‘Dekho Jiya bechain’ (Tilang thumri). He has sung for Marathi film ‘Devayani’ and Hindi film ‘Sach Hai’. His voice from these two films is available on the gramophone records. One record featuring ‘Chandrama ha saticha’ song from Marathi drama ‘Khalvadhu’ written by Barrister Khasgiwale is also available. He
used to broadcast from All India Radio frequently. Shuddha Kalyan recording of a radio program is a collector's item.

Sureshbabu was not successful as a performer and he did not pursue this as a career. However, he was an excellent teacher. Some of his well-known disciples are: Heerabai Barodekar, Saraswati Mane/Rane, Prabha Atre, Vasantrao Deshpande, Menkabai Shirodkar, Vitthalrao Sardeshmukh, Bhimsen Joshi, Arvind Mangruk, Dattapant Deshpande, Madhu Kanetkar and Gajananrao Watev. Towards the end of his career he turned to mysticism and alchemy. This had very bad effect on his health. At the ripe age of just fifty years, this 'Cursed Gandharva' left this world, leaving behind over one hour recordings.
Gramophone Celebrities - 37


Her household name was ‘Champakali’. However, she was always called as Champutai. ‘Tai’ means the eldest sister in a family and has a responsibility like a mother. She indeed loved and looked after all her brothers and sisters after their mother Tarabai passed away. Tarabai changed her name from Champakali to Heera, the name of Tarabai’s mother who was also a singer at Baroda. She was born at Miraj in 1905. Her mother wanted her to be a doctor. However, she was born with musical notes of her father and was to make a great career in music. Initially she learnt from Sureshbabu, but it was just an introduction. She received an intense training from her uncle Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan. She also worked hard and began to perform at very young age. In 1921, she first sang in the annual gathering of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Mumbai and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar himself listened to her and admired her music. Sunderabai took lead and her first gramophone records were released in 1922 on HMV black label with name as Miss Heera. She sang Dattatreya bhajans, couple of natyapad and ragas. Later, after marriage, record labels were made with name as Sau. Heerabai Barodekar. Her recording career spans till 1950 and she has cut over 100 discs featuring 200 songs.

Heerabai was probably the first female singer of Kirana gharana to give ticketed public concert. Her appearance on stage was modest and pleasant. She became a role model to middle class women in society and because of her style and music, several of them began to learn music with pride. In those days, male actors usually played the female roles in drama. Heerabai was the first to change this tradition. Around 1929, she began to play female roles in the drama staged by Nutan Natak Mandali and once again opened up another field to ladies in Maharashtra. She played roles in ‘Sangeet Saubhadra’, ‘Jagati Jyot’, ‘Yugantar’ and most famous ‘Sadhwai Meerabai’. When this company was bankrupt in 1935, she took up the career of a film actress to repay the loans. ‘Suvana Mandir’ and ‘Pratibha’ were the notable films in which she acted and sang. However, she left this field and spent rest of her life in music teaching and as a performer. In her house, she used to sing Dattatreya bhajans on every Thursday and large number of music lovers and devotees used to attend it. She used to sing in Ganesh festivals and in almost all the prestigious and renowned music conferences throughout India. She was also frequent broadcaster of All India Radio. In addition to pure raagdari, she used to include thumri, bhajan and natyapad in her concerts.

List of her disciples is long. Smt. Prabhaj Atre learnt music from Heerabai after the sad and untimely demise of Sureshbabu Mane. Saraswatibai Mane / Rane also learnt music from Heerabai. Around 1965, both the sisters used to sing duets in concerts and HMV has cut one LP record featuring two ragas. This is the only LP record of Hindustani female vocal duet so far. After the age of sixty
years, she stopped singing in public concerts and continued teaching only. She received love and affection from the listeners and several prestigious awards from private and government organizations. Around 1945, she toured to Africa for concerts. After independence, she toured to China with the cultural delegation and sang in many cities. She has cut records of ragas, natyasangeet, light classical music and Marathi bhavgeete. In 1997, Gramophone Company has reissued some of her songs on tapes and now on CD’s. She was fortunate to sing Meera Bhajans for Gandhiji and receive blessings from him. In 1937, she had recorded Marathi song 'Labhala mahatma neta dhanya bharata' written in praise of Gandhiji. In 1948, she sang and recorded a Hindi song as a tribute and ‘Shradhanjali’ to Gandhiji.

‘Ram nama leta mahatma, mantra de gayo
gurusaman sagari jahanko gyan de gayo’

Gramophone Celebrities - 38

Kumari Saraswati Mane / Saubhagyavati Saraswati Rane (1916-2006)

Born in 1916 at Miraj, her household name was ‘Sakina’. However, she was always called as ‘Sakin Chhotutai (Chhotu means a little one)’ or simply ‘Chhotutai’ as she was the youngest among the family members. Kamlabai Barodekar was the third sister among the trio. She too has cut few records on Odeon label and has played roles in Nutan Natak Mandi’s dramas. In 1917, Khan Saheb moved to Bombay with his family with the intention of better education for his children. Arya Sangeet Vidyalaya needed lot of funds for its smooth functioning, and hence he had to be on concert tours. Thus, Tarabai had to shoulder the responsibility of both the house and the Vidyalaya. She was trying her best with the help of growing children, especially with the help and support from eldest son Abdul Rahman (Sureshbabu).

Soon, the situation took unpleasant turns resulting in the divorce. After seperation from Khansaneb, Sakina’s name was changed to Saraswati Mane. Kumari Saraswati Mane cut several gramophone records with this name on the label. Later, after marriage with Mr. Sunderrao Rane, the records were issued with changed name, Sau. Saraswati Rane. She had initial training in music from her elder sister Heerabai. She also learnt from Ustad Nathan Khan (1889-1946) of Jaipur gharana and from Prof. B. R. Deodhar of Gwallor gharana for a short while. During 1929-1933, she cut few discs on Odeon label featuring classical ragas and light items such as bhajans and Marathi bhavheet. Some of them were reissued on Columbia label during 1945-50.

During 1940-1950, Saraswati Rane has provided playback to songs in over thirty Hindi and Marathi films. Her first film was Huns Pictures Marathi film ‘Paisa Bolto Aahe’ (1943). She also sang in Hindi film ‘Shahenshah’ produced around the
same time. In 1944, she sang songs for a Marathi play ‘Kanyadan’ and Aatre’s Navyug films ‘Pudalik’. She has provided playback in almost all the films produced by Acharya Pralhad Keshav Atre. ‘Anganant phulalaya jaijui, javali ga pati majha nahi’ from Atre film’s ‘Payachee Dasi’ became very famous. However, her voice reached far and wide throughout India through her song ‘Beena Madhur Madhur Kachu Bol’ from Prakash film’s ‘Ramrajya’. This song based on raga Bhimpalas became so popular that Marathi poet Mr. Sodashiv Anant Shukla wrote Marathi song ‘Maina madhur madhur vach bol’. It was recorded and issued on Columbia label and the record was among the best sellers. Mr. Shreedhar Parsekar composed the music of this Marathi song. During 1945-1950, she provided playback to films: Dev kanya (Vishnu Cinetone, Mumbai, 1946), Jeevanka Saaz (Hamid Pictures, Mumbai, 1947), Mahasatli Tulsi Vrinda (Jayant Desai Productions, Mumbai, 1947), Jay Bheem (Navjhankar Productions, Pune, 1949), and Alakh Niranjan (Super films, Mumbai, 1949). Alakh Niranjan was the Marathi version of Hindi film Raja Gopichand. She was the star singer during the early period of playback in Hindi and Marathi films. Around 1950, she stopped singing for films due to rise of Mangeshkar’s and many other young singers. After a gap of about 25 years she again sang in 1975 for Shyam Benegal’s Hindi film ‘Bhoomika’. She sang raga shuddha kalyan in this film along with her grand daughter Meena Phatarpekar and Uttara Kelkar.

Around 1955, she began to sing duet (Jugalbandi) with her sister Sau. Heerabai Barodekar and this new idea became very popular. They performed in many cities and this was the main attraction of their concerts. This is a unique and only experiment so far. We do hear duet of two male singers but very very rare among female vocalist in North Indian classical music. HMV company invited them to cut one LP record [ECLP 2356, (1968), ragas: chandrakauns and basant bahar] of their duet. She lived longest life among her family members. On October 10, 2006 she passed away at the age of 90 years. Few months before her death, she sang raga Todi at Sharada Sangeet Vidyalaya, Bandra, Mumbai, in the birth centenary celebration of her sister Heerabai Barodekar.

Saraswatibai has left behind over 200 songs recorded on 78rpm gramophone records. These are from films, ragas, bhavgeete etc. Die-hard collectors have preserved most of these records. One of her Marathi bhavgeet written by G. D. Madgulkar and composed by Mr. Shreedhar Phadke became very popular. It was played on radio for several years and was sung by young ladies in that period. It was released in 1950, on blue label Columbia GE 3308 record. One side was ‘Ghanashyam nayani aala’ based on raga dhani and the flip side had another song ‘Ja gheuni sandesh pakhara’.

Ghanashyam nayani aala, sakhe me kajal ghalu kashala
Romanchani natalee kaya, heere manke kashas vayaa
Kashas mohanmala, sakhe mee kajal ghalu kashala

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Mrs. Saraswati Mane/Rane

Gramophone Celebrities - 39

Roshanara Begum (1910-1982)

Born at Calcutta in 1910, Roshanara was the daughter of Ustad Abdul Haq (1874-1925). Her mother Chanda Begum was the resident of Patna city and 'gandabaddha' shagird of Abdul Haq. She was a fine singer and also an actress of films from silent era. In 1916, six years old child Roshanara came to Pune with her father to attend the annual gathering of 'Arya Sangeet Vidyalaya' founded by her uncle Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan. She met her cousin brothers and sisters. Apart from this, there is no information on her early childhood. She took initial lessons in music from her parents. In 1922, just at the tender age of twelve years, Gramophone Company cut few discs of her recordings in Calcutta, with the name as Miss Roshanara. Interestingly, in the same year Heerabai also cut few songs on HMV in Bombay with the name Miss Heera. It is interesting to note that neither Chanda Bagum nor Abdul Haq made any recordings for HMV. This
also shows how the great musicians of that period neglected this powerful medium and considered it as a novelty toy item, suitable only for their children. After Abdul Haq passed away in 1925 at Jaipur, Chanda Begum moved to Bombay and tried to get roles for her daughter in films. Since 1929, Roshanara began to act, dance and sing, first in silent films and then in talkies. She also began to take music lessons from her uncle Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan whenever he used to be in Bombay. After his death, she sang in several fund raising concerts for the memorial of Khansaheb.

Around 1934, she recorded eight songs for Odeon record company featuring gazal, dadra, bhajan, hori and ragas Multani and Bihag. These were issued on red color Odeon labels. In 1938, she recorded four songs on two records issued on Young India label. These are – Beguna guna ga (Gujjri Todi) and Jamunake teer (Bhairvi). Other two songs were Marathi bhavgeete written by Mr. M. G. Rangnekar. In 1942, she recorded ten ragas for Columbia label and in 1945, she cut two discs featuring four ragas for HMV label.

In 1935, she played a role of a dancer in Hindi/Marathi film ‘Neela’ produced by Prof. B. R. Deodhar. Booklet of film Neela has a nice picture of Roshanara in that role. During 1938-1947, she acted in several Hindi films, most notably in ‘Punarjanam’ and ‘Jawani Ka Rang’. In 1947, she gave playback to Hindi film ‘Jugnu’ and these songs were recorded in Lahore, since by then she had migrated to Pakistan with her husband. After the partition of India, Mr. Z. A. Bukhari, station Director of Bombay radio migrated to Pakistan and joined newly formed Radio Pakistan as the first Director General. In the beginning she had several programs on radio and also private concerts. However, with time, she got set back. Several artists who migrated to Pakistan had the same fate, mainly because of the newborn nation lacking technical facilities and due to the lack of political stability. In 1959, Pakistan music council felicitated her with the title ‘Malika-e-Mousiki’ (Queen of song). In 1961, Gramophone Company of Pakistan began to cut and produce Long Playing records. Under the series, ‘Music of the World’, couple of LP’s of Roshanara were issued in which she has sung ragas Basant, Kedar, Shuddha Kalyan as a tribute to his uncle Late Khansaheb Abdul Kareem Khan. These records are popular even today. During 1976-78, in the era of audio cassettes, she recorded several ragas for the series ‘Gharanonki gayaki’. Pakistan television featured number of programs and interviews of Roshanara. She died in Lahore on December 15, 1982.

July 1935 Odeon record catalogue has a nice photograph of young Roshanara in which she is seen wearing saree with ‘pahalu’ on her head and taanpura in one hand. Publicity matter along with this picture says, “Miss Roshanara is learning music with Abdul Kareem Khan Saheb. She is also a famous film star. These records will convince the listener how sweet voice she has”.

She has cut ‘Begun guna gâbandish in raga Gujñi T odi on Young India label record. This bandish is also recorded by Heerabai Barodekar in 1924 and by
Abdul Kareem Khan in 1935. However, none of them sing complete and correct bandish. Same is true in case of several singers including Pandit Bhimsen Joshi who sings its distorted version. Original bandish was written by Sadarang (Niyamat Khan, C. 1750) and has words:

Begun guna ga,
Allahke Samne jaoge, puchenge baat
Nabeeka kalma hardam jabanpe rakhana
Han jab jaoge puchenge baat
Aziz hun mohziz tumhi ho
Paida kiyeki sharam tumheeko
Manse apne Sadarang gaat
Begun guna ga
Gramophone Celebrities - 40

Sawai Gandharva – Rambhau Kundgolkar (1886-1952)

Born in 1886, at Kundgol, a small place near Hubli in Karnataka, young Ram had a naturally sweet, tuneful and melodious voice. He took initial lessons from a keertankar from his village. Later, this family moved and settled in Hubli. He met Abdul Kareem Khan and took taalim for seven years from 1901-1908. With age, his voice changed and he was worried about his singing career. However, Kareem Khan asked him to practise 'mandrasadhana' in Kharja (lower) notes every morning. This continued for several months till he received back his tuneful voice. He got command over his voice and could sing at will in all the three octaves. Soon he became a professional singer. He used to accompany Khansaheb and sing in his concert tours. Unfortunately, as was the custom with the disciples of Khansaheb, Ram was also identified by the drama company. He was offered female roles and good salary. As a result, in 1910, he joined 'Natyakala Pravartak Sangeet Mandal'. This company wanted to stage musical drama 'Saint Sakhu' written by Hari Narayan Apte (1864-1919). Young Ram played role of heroine Sakhu. First show was staged on 26th February 1911 in Pune and it became hit. Master Krishnarao Phulambrikar played another minor female role. Both of them staged many dramas in future and played female roles together. This continued for several years.

Although he became important actor/singer of Marathi stage, he also used to perform in private concerts and teach music. However, soon he began to suffer from asthma and had to give up his career. Around 1935, he returned to his native place, Hubli and spent rest of his life in teaching music. He used to teach Firoze dastur in Bombay, Gangubai Hangal from Dharwad and Bhimsen Joshi who was a resident disciple. All his three disciples became great singers of Kirana gharana and in turn they also taught music to young students. In 1942, he had paralysis attack and his music activity came to halt. He died ten years later in 1952. Since 1953, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi has kept his guru’s memory alive through the annual music festival at Pune titled 'Sawai Gandharva Sangeet Mahotsav'. This has become one of the prestigious events in the music field.

Rambhau Kundgolkar received the title 'Sawai Gandharva' from the music lovers. During 1925-35, he recorded Marathi natyapad (stage songs), classical ragas and light classical music on 78-rpm records. Interestingly, around 1935, his disciples Firoz Dastur (who was also acting in films as a child artist) and Gangubai (Gandhari) Hangal also cut gramophone discs. Out of over 30 songs, twelve songs were recorded using acoustic method in which brass horn was used as a microphone. Remaining songs were recorded electrically using a carbon microphone. These records were issued on Zonophone and HMV labels. He also cut few 12” diameter records that played for over 4 minutes per side. Recently Gramophone Company has reissued some of his songs on tapes and CD’s. He has recorded ragas Miya Malhar, Kafi, Jogia, Sarang, Pilu, Malkauns,
Dhani, Hindol, Puriya, Gujri Todi, Deskar, Mand, Tilang, Tilak kamod, Asavari, Bahar, Shankara and Adana. In the December 1935 HMV catalogue, an advertisement of his twelve inch record has been published along with the words of the bandish as:

‘Kal na pare maiko ha,
Nisa din tarasat, barsat nehati kabhun piyana
jabri hati mori bari umariya, aab to aai nahi bahariya
jo pave to, desan maika, chandan gailo’
HOME RECORDING DISC

By Mr. A. R. Qureshi
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My father was very fond of collecting and listening gramophone records. The device with a Garrard Machine was one of the most attractive things for me in childhood. Competitions were held between collectors in respect of variety and quantity. It was the period when technology had provided new prospects for the artists in the field of audio visual entertainment. It began in 1877 when Edison succeeded in reproducing sound waves on a paper strip. Records were initially produced by mechanical transcription of sounds on cylinders or discs. In a radio interview “Bhai Chhela of Patiala” recalled the days when strings were used to keep the singer at proper distance from the recording horn for sound volume control. The problem was resolved with the development of electrical recording in 1919 by the Bell Laboratories.

Many innovations were then made in the techniques and materials used in record production. New plastic materials were experimented for increasing the fidelity and duration of recordings. In 1931 an attempt was made by RCA for producing 33-1/3 RPM records. Perhaps in the intervening period some discs were produced with soft plastic material for providing the hobbyist with a simpler recording mechanism. Such discs already had the plain grooves without any speed label.

I came across these discs at a record shop at the Nila Gumbad Lahore in mid-fifties during one of my periodic visits. Photo of the disc indicates the name of manufacturers and the guidance about the recording needles to be used. I was not having any such needle at home. In my eagerness to test it for recording sound I placed it on the turntable of a mechanical gramophone and while shouting in the horn placed the sound box needle in the grooves of the revolving disc. On replaying the disc with the sound box my shouting could be heard although feeble but distinct. I was happy to have repeated the 1877’s experiment of Edison but the poor sound to noise ratio dejected me. I then used the magnetic pickup for recording by connecting it to the output of an amplifier – thus simulating in a way the demonstration by the French youth, in which he played old cylinders with modern record player cartridge. Now the recording volume and quality was better. I am sure that using the proper recording head and level controlled feeding amplifier acceptable quality recording could be produced on the disc. I could not go that far as the good quality reel type audio tape-recorders were then available at reasonable prices.
There is joke about making of three ponds by a monarch. The first and second had hot and cold water respectively but the third was kept empty. The explanation justified the option. The third was for those who do not like to bathe. This blank record could perhaps be presented to those who altogether do not enjoy melodious sounds – but it is definitely an item to be preserved.
WESTERN STYLE POPULAR MUSIC RECORDED IN INDIA

By – Mr. Ross Laird, Australia

The vast Indian record industry produced a huge range of recorded material for the Indian market and also for export to the Middle East, South East Asia and elsewhere. A very small fragment of this picture consists of Western style popular music recorded in India. The range of this material is varied and includes recordings by hotel and other dance bands, some jazz, popular vocals of the period, Hawaiian style music, etc.

Several articles in past issues of TRN (The Record News) have dealt with this topic — but what I would like to outline here is the background to the first attempt to comprehensively document these unique recordings.

The majority of the recordings in this genre were released on the well known labels produced by EMI (HMV, Columbia, etc.). This company produced an enormous number of India only series, many of which featured Western style music. But only a few of these series seem to have included Western style music recorded in India. Below is an outline of what is known about these recordings, starting with the major labels.

The Gramophone Co. Ltd. (HMV)

The earliest recording of a Western style dance band made in India was released in 1926 by Lequime’s Grand Hotel Orchestra on HMV P 7094. This issue falls into the HMV P1 to P9999 series which also includes Burmese, Sinhalese, Malay, Chinese and various other repertoires.

Later HMV blocks of catalogue numbers were allocated to what were at the time described as “English” recordings. The specific blocks of numbers were N 4199 to N 4499, NE 200 to NE 897 and N 14001 to N 14109, which together covered the period 1932-1947. Most issues in these series were re-releases of U.S. recordings plus a few from British, European or other sources, but there are over 180 issues which are Indian recordings of Western popular music.

Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd.

Of the many Columbia series there are three which included Indian recordings of Western repertoire. These are the DB 30000, FB 40000 & FB 45000 series. Again most of the issues in these series are releases of U.S. or British recordings, but there are over 80 issues which are Indian recordings of Western popular music (mainly in the FB 40000 series).
Regal-Zonophone had a MR 20000 series of over 400 releases. It included at least a few Indian recordings of Western repertoire (but specific details of these are unknown).

Rex ME 7994 features the well known 1936 recording by Crickett Smith & His Symphonians. It is unknown if Rex ME 7995 through ME 7999 exist. But as the normal British Rex series started at 8000 it seems strange that the only Indian recordings in what seems to be an extension of the main series would be allocated several digits down unless other currently unknown releases account for 7995-7999. There was also a 1943 private recording by Frank Orford released as Rex RLR-1 but this seems to be the only issue in this series.

The Twin label also includes at least a few Indian recordings of Western style music made between 1933 and 1940. While the FT 1000-1999, FT 8000-8999 & FT 9101-9119 blocks seem to consist largely of reissues of U.S. & British recordings it is very possible that other so-far untraced Indian recordings of Western repertoire exist on this label.

No Indian recordings of Western style music are known on Decca or Parlophone but it is possible there are some that are so far unknown.

A few issues of Western style music are also known on other Indian labels. But the total number of such issues is very small. Details are:

Dr. Jazz FGS-1 was a private recording made in 1932 and this is the only issue.

The Melody label was produced by the National Gramophone Co. in the early 1940s and it seems there were probably only 8 issues (in a catalogue series which apparently began at M 31 and of which the highest known is M 38). If anyone knows of Melody M 31, M 36, any issue above M 38 or any below M 31, I would be delighted to know the details.

The Rhythm label seems to have had only issue in 1941 (despite the only issue showing a catalogue number of 786).

The Rhythm House label of the late 1940s seems to be a different label to the above and possibly issued some Indian jazz recordings, but no details are known.

The Young India label released at least one issue featuring Western repertoire viz. F-5032 by the Hutson Sisters. As this female vocal group also recorded with Teddy Weatherford's Band in 1944 it is possible that the Young India issue was made around that time. No other issues in the F-5000 series are known but it may be that this series includes other similar material (and there are potentially at least 31 other issues).
The Electro-Voice label had one issue (numbered EV-791) in 1945.

Blue Rhythm BR-1001 released some modern jazz recordings by a visiting British group recorded in 1953. This was the only release.

Finally, there was a Pic label which probably only had the single issue of P-5701 in the 1950s. Possibly the first two digits indicate it dates from 1957?

The above brief survey covers all the known 78rpm labels and series that include Indian recordings of Western style popular music. There are possibly others so far unknown, but over 280 issues have been traced during my research so far.

All known details of these recordings have been posted on my web site. Please go to www.scarcesounds.com and click on the “Discographies” tag at the top of the page. A list of discographies will be seen and item No. 3 is “Western Repertoire Recorded in India, 1926-1954. Any comments, additions or corrections are welcome and I can be contacted via my web page.

I am very conscious that this discography is very incomplete. Many details (such as matrix numbers and details of vocalists for known recordings) are lacking, while of course any details are needed for items not listed.

I would like to request anyone having record company catalogues: Please check what is listed and contact me if any of the following are among your holdings. Specifically, I need copies of any 1930s Indian catalogues for HMV, Columbia, or The Twin and many 1940s catalogues for Columbia, HMV, The Twin or Regal-Zonophone. If you supply me with details such as dates of any such catalogues I will let you know if you have any not previously examined. I'm happy to pay for photocopies if original catalogues are not available. Note that I don't need catalogues from the 1920s or earlier or from the 1950s or later as few if any records related to this research project would be in such catalogues.

Ross Laird
Was Jazz recorded in India?

By Mr. John A. Payne, UK

This article is reproduced from back issue of 'The Record News', Vol. 29-30, Jan / Apr.1998, p.36. [Mr. Payne passed away few year ago]

The Secretary occasionally receives requests from collectors overseas engaged in discographical projects asking for information upon jazz recorded in India. From what is known the answer has to be that very few recordings were made in India of music that could be realistically described as "jazz". However, there are a number of dance-band recordings where the solo work of some musicians may be of interest to jazz collectors. It is the work of these bands that I believe that the opportunity for research would rest.

In this article, I am also going to put forward suggestions for those areas of recorded music of India for which it would be interesting to have more information. I will not restrict this to dance bands, however, and it would be useful, I feel, to consider all western music recorded in India. I will use the end of the 78rpm era as the cut-off point. I think that those who are looking for jazz are going to be disappointed. However, I hope it will encourage readers in India to do a little research into western music recorded in India.

I think that it is safe to assume that the first recordings directed towards the British market would have been the comic songs and patter recorded by W. S. Burke of Calcutta in 1902-1907 and the subsequent sessions of 1924-1925. Michael Kinnear presented Burke's discography in great detail in vol. 7 of 'The Record News'. In April of the year following the last Burke session Jimmy Lequime's Grand Hotel Orchestra recorded in India. The next recordings appear to have been those made by John Abriani and his Saturday Club Orchestra for 'The Twin' label in early 1930's and for which dr. Rainer Lotz appealed in the second issue of The record News. Does anyone possess any of the records of John Abriani?

The most prolific years were the late thirties and early forties. Nevertheless, from W. S. Burke in 1902 until Independence in 1947 perhaps a total of less than 300 sides of western music were recorded in India. This is not surprising. The number of overseas recordings pressed in India by the Gramophone Company and to a limited extent by one or two other manufacturers would have been adequate to meet the demand of what must have been a small percentage of the record market in India. Furthermore, from the evidence of the makes of records that appear in some quantity in second hand sources, the import of pressings from overseas must also have been considerable. From what I have found, the American labels, Brunswick (particularly issues from the late 1920's) and Perfect (the 1930's) would have been imported in substantial numbers. Apart from the
second-hand market, I have found American Columbia (not Dum Dum Columbia bearing US catalogue numbers) and Bluebird issues from abroad around 1945 new in stock in a record shop in Calcutta in 1951 and the English Broadcast label (not Indian pressings) of late 20's and early 30's in a shop in New Delhi in 1969. (I have also found UK issues from the 1920's new in a shop in Karachi as late as 1982). Given the ease at which the purchasers could obtain the records by their favorite artists, it is hardly surprising that there would have been little incentive to record Indian dance bands.

For the jazz collector it is the recordings of Teddy Weatherford and his American associates who worked and recorded in India that are of the most interest. These have been well documented, starting with the isolated side by Crickett Smith & his Symphonians on Rex ME-7994 recorded in Bombay about April 1936. Although this record was of British manufacturer I think that this side and the reverse by Jules Craen were aimed at the Indian market, perhaps specifically at Bombay. I shall return to this record later. Some years ago, the British collector’s journal ‘Storyville’ (alas, no longer in publication) featured a number of articles concerning visiting American musicians in India and which included discographies of Teddy Weatherford and his colleagues. Of these, the following are particularly informative as regards their recording activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue 65</th>
<th>June/July 1976 TEDDY WEATHERFORD</th>
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<td></td>
<td>By Peter Darke &amp; Ralph Gulliver</td>
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|           | By Peter Darke & Bill White |

| Issue 111 | Feb./Mar. 1984 The Mystery of CRICKETT SMITH |
|           | By Peter Darke |

| Issue 115 | Oct./Nov. 1984 Additions and Corrections to the Discography of CEDRIC WEST by Peter Darke |
|           | |

| Issue 151 | Sept.1992 TREVOR MAC. |
|           | An Investigation by Gerhard Conrad |

Issue 69 (Feb./March 1977) of this magazine also contained an article entitled "HERB FLEMMING" by Frank Driggs that referred to a claim by the American musician Herb Flemming that, while playing an engagement at the Grand Hotel, Calcutta between December 1933 and April 1934, he recorded at least six sides for HMV. So far as I am aware, no evidence of these records has been found.

In 1984, a Long Playing (L.P.) gramophone vinyl record entitled “Jazz and Hot Dance in India” was issued on the Harlequin label (HQ-2013). This record included the Lequime sides, the Crickett Smith from Rex, and sides made by Teddy Weatherford and Reuben Solomon for Columbia. The sleeve note written by Rainer Lotz provides a brief but compressive history of ‘Jazz in India’. I am not aware of any published account of ‘Jazz in India’ subsequent to the articles that
appeared in ‘Storyville’ and the sleeve note to the Harlequin record. I will, therefore, refer to those recordings, or possible areas where recordings may exist of which no information is available, in the hope that interest will be stimulated and that someone may be able to fill in the gaps in our knowledge.

It is much unlikely that much of jazz interest will be discovered but there is always the possibility that other recordings may be found in which foreign musicians working in India took part. We will start with Columbia as it is the label which issued most of the Indian recordings of Teddy Weatherford and those of Frank J. Orford, Paquita and Zarate, the All Star Swing Band and Reuben Solomon which have been well documented in the articles in ‘Storyville’ to which I have referred.

In Calcutta, Francesco Casanovas was the leader of the orchestra that played at Firpo’s restaurant into the 1950’s. He was also the conductor of the Calcutta Symphony Orchestra and Principal of the Calcutta School of Music. His orchestra made a number of dance records for Columbia but also accompanied number of Bengali singers. I was first aware of this when I saw that on two songs contained in the HMV cassette “The Genius of Pankaj Mullick”, HTC 04F 4242, the accompaniment was credited to F. Casanovas and his orchestra. Then in an answer to the query I raised on this question, Sri Sushantakumar Chatterjee in his letter published in The Record News No. 22 provided the details of two records by Hemant Kumar Mukherjee that were accompanied by Casanovas. Does any reader know of other records where Francesco Casanovas provided the musical accompaniment? As he was associated with two such major figures in the film industry, did he provide background music to any films made in Calcutta?

From Bombay we need more information upon the recordings of Theodore and his Taj Hotel Orchestra upon Columbia. Crickett Smith was a member of this orchestra and his name appears on the label as one of the vocalists. I believe that this orchestra played at Taj from 1939 until early 1942 and I understand that there were a number of Theodore brothers who were musicians. One, Joe Theodore, is mentioned on the label of HMV NE 501 by MELLOW & RICH as playing bass. Was he the leader of the orchestra at the Taj, or was this one of his brothers? Another orchestra that recorded for Columbia in the early 1940’s and upon which more information would be appreciated is that of Chic Chocolate (Chic & his Music Makers).

One other Indian recording has been reissued on L.P. - Harlequin HQ 2070, “Jazz and Hot Dance in Hawaii" which contains one track by Tau Moe’s Tropical Stars, with Dr. Jazz at the piano, of the song “Paducah" originally on Columbia FB. 40408. The sleeve note of this L.P. suggests that ‘Dr. Jazz’ is Teddy Weatherford, but from enquiries I made in the early 1950’s I received information from three independent sources that there was a performer who appeared as ‘Dr. Jazz’ and who was certainly not Teddy Weatherford as he was active after Teddy Weatherford’s death. Michael Kinnear has suggested to me that ‘Dr. Jazz’ may
have been Frank G. Shriver who made a private recording in Calcutta about May 1932 that was issued on HMV FGS-1. The last report I had of 'Dr. Jazz' was that he was in Lahore after independence. Does anybody have any information about this artist?

There appears to have been more recordings of dance and popular Western music made in India for HMV than any other label. A few years ago Michael Kinnear very kindly gave me a photocopy of a list of the matrix numbers used on the HMV NE series, an issue series that was devoted to western popular music and contained a number of American swing and jazz recordings with some U.K. and other European recordings. This series included 168 sides recorded in India. The most prolific recorder on the 'NE' series was Ken Mac and His Orchestra, India's premier dance band. Other artists whose sides were issued on this series, of which I am aware of – The BESA Swing Trio, The Casual Club Quintette, Ted Frangopoulo & his Band, Mellow & Rich, Tau Moe's Tropical Stars and John Phillip's Orchestra, but these alone are unlikely to have accounted for all these sides. Can anyone provide information upon recordings of these and other artists in HMV series?

The only other label, prior to 1947, which I have seen that issued Western music in India was the 'Electro-Voice', produced by 'The National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. Ltd.', of Bombay for the Regal Music Saloon. I have only one example, No. EV. 791 played by Hugh Bert and his Orchestra. It is hoped that the appeal for information on the recordings of this company in The Record News No. 15 will have produced more information upon Electro-Voice.

We have so far looked at dance records, but what of light music and classical music? The reverse of the Crickett Smith record on Rex is 'Can it ever be' by Jules Craen and his Quintet. This is the type of group that in the U.K. in the 1930's would have been associated with Palm Court of a hotel or in a tearoom. Jules Craen was at one time conductor of the Bombay Symphony Orchestra. This brings me to speculate upon the reason for the issue of this record. Crickett Smith’s Synphonians played at the Taj Hotel in Bombay, as, I believe, did Jules Craen. The title of the Crickett Smith side is 'Taj Mahal' and, before I heard the record, I had always imagined that it would have been made to publicize the hotel, especially as the Rex series consisted of recordings made to special order. However, the Taj Mahal of the song is referred to as 'India's mystic shrine' that is a description more appropriate to the tomb built by the Emperor Shah Jahan at Agra than the Bombay Taj Hotel. On both sides the name of Mena Silas is in capital letters as having written the words and music and is given greater prominence than the recording artists. Mena Silas was, I understand, a pianist active in classical music circles in Bombay in this period and I now wonder if the record was made to promote her work. Does anyone know of other records of Mena Silas or of her compositions? There appear to be two missing sides here, as the matrix number of Crickett Smith is STB-1 and that of Jules Craen is STB-
4. It is reasonable to assume that one or other of these groups made STB-2 and STB-3.

I remember that I used to see on second hand record stalls in Calcutta in the early 1950’s a coupling of two classical piano solos by Liesl Stary. It was quite common and was on HMV, I think, on the ‘P’ series, but with a red label of the same color that HMV used for their classical ‘DA’ series. Liesl Stary was, I recall, married to an American dentist who used to practice in Calcutta. Has anyone details of this record or of any recordings of western classical music made in India?

Reference has been made to the work of Francesco Casanovas with Bengali singers who had a close association with the film industry. With the introduction of western harmony into Hindi film music, a number of Goan musicians who normally played jazz/dance music were engaged in film work. Mario Cabral e Sa in his book ‘Wind of Fire - The Music and Musicians of Goa’ (Promilla & Co. New Delhi 1997) refers to the music directors S. D. Burman and Naushad Ali and, later, O. P. Nayyar, R. D. Burman, C. Ramchandra, Shanker-Jaikishan and Laxmikant Pyarelal as being among those who made use of Goan musicians. Mario Cabral e Sa refers especially to the work of Chic Chocolate in Albela (1951) and Aakhari Khat (1966). In Albela, many of the songs are in a Latin-American style with a trumpet prominent on ‘Diwana parwana’, ‘Kismatki hava kabhi naram’ and on ‘Bhoori surat dilke khote’. On this last, a duet between Lata Mangeshkar and Chitalkar Ramchandra, there is an unusual example of a ‘hot’ shahanaai solo. (‘The Encyclopaedia of Indian Cinema’, OUP, New Delhi, 1994, refers to the instrument used in Albela song as an oboe, but it sounds to me like a shehanai). An extended trumpet solo, presumably by Chic Chocolate, is to be found in ‘Aakhri Khat’ (Music director, Khayyam) on the song by Bhupinder ‘Rut jawan jawan’. I have always regarded a prime example of near jazz/dance music in Hindi films to be the second part of ‘Aana meri jaan, meri jaan, Sunday ke Sunday’ from C. Ramchandra’s 1947 film ‘Shehanai’. I have often wondered at the identity of the clarinet and saxophone players and the drummer on this song.

These are just a few examples of the work of Goan musicians in the film studios, there are obviously many more. Is it only to film sound track music that we can look for recorded examples of the foremost Goan musicians or did they make dance records in their own names? Were any of the visiting foreign musicians of the 1930’s and 1940’s engaged in film work? There may be also Konkani songs that provide a similar musical accompaniment. The HMV LP ‘Noman Noman Tuka Goa!’ (ECSD 2764) which features the writing and playing of Chris Perry among others, but that is from a later period. However, there could be some 78’s.

Inevitably, there were few examples of western music recorded in India after Independence during the final years of the 78rpm era. I know only of three; the single coupling from the ‘British Modern Jazz Concert’ at the Taj Mahal Hotel on 4th August 1953 on Blue Rhythm BR-1001, Columbia FB 45000 by Angelo
d'Souza's Swing Harmony Boys from about June 1954 and Columbia FB 45004, with one side by Palm Crain, the other by Pamela McCarthy which, I believe, dates from 1955. As regards FB 45000, Mario Cabral e Sa refers to a 'single' recorded by Joe Pereira with the Swing Club of Calcutta in 1954. I suggest that this is a reference to the Angelo d'Souza's record, as this band was a major feature of the Swing Club of Calcutta concert held in Firpo's restaurant that year.

This then is my overview of western music recorded in India. I have to admit that it is very sketchy and is written with the hope that it will stimulate discussion and, thus, provide information. I fear that it will indicate to jazz collectors that little of interest to them was recorded in India other than that which has already been the subject of articles in the journals devoted to their interests.

I am not going beyond 78rpm record, as one then enters the era of fusion of western and Indian styles, the music of the jazz yatra concerts, Ravi Shankar's 'Jazzmine', 'Infinite Fusion' by Shamim Ahmed and Rajesh and many other collaborations between east and west.
The 'Teheran' Records

By: Amir Mansour, Iran

The National Gramophone Record Mfg. Co. Ltd., Bombay was the unique center to record and produce Persian 78-rpm records during 1945 to 1947. His Master's Voice, Columbia and Odeon representatives began to record in Tehran towards the end of 1947. The known Persian labels of National Gramophone Record Mfg. Co. are:

- Young Iran, containing about 80 records of Badizadeh, Khaledi, Zahedi, Parvaneh and Kamoosi recordings in 1945.

- Delbar, containing 10 records by Minbashian brothers and Ken Mac band in 1946.

- Nava ye Iran, containing about 32 records by Mrs. Delkash, Khaledi and Zahedi in the same days of recordings for Delbar records in 1946.

Recently, a new Persian label manufactured by The National Gramophone Record Mfg. Co. Ltd., Bombay is found in a private archive of 78 rpm records in Tehran and is titled "TEHERAN".

"TEHERAN" is a pink label with golden texts in Persian and English, starting by the matrix number 9620 and the last known matrix number is 9683. The known catalogue numbers are between "A. B.1" and "A. B. 9" so it must be a private recording label, containing 10 double sided records.
The known "TEHERAN" records are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matrix No.</th>
<th>Serial No.</th>
<th>Record title</th>
<th>Singer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9620</td>
<td>A. B. 1</td>
<td>gerdooi (part 1)</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9621</td>
<td>A. B. 1</td>
<td>gerdooi (part 2)</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9629</td>
<td>A. B. 2</td>
<td>tokhmeh foroosh</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9632</td>
<td>A. B. 4</td>
<td>amoozgar (part 1)</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9633</td>
<td>A. B. 4</td>
<td>Mari joon</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9637</td>
<td>A. B. 2</td>
<td>vakalate khanomha</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9653</td>
<td>A. B. 6</td>
<td>tango bade saba</td>
<td>Mahmood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9654</td>
<td>A. B. 6</td>
<td>rumba rooze vesal</td>
<td>Mahmood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9662</td>
<td>A. B. 8</td>
<td>Alishah</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9663</td>
<td>A. B. 8</td>
<td>Pariroo</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9679</td>
<td>A. B. 9</td>
<td>nov bahar</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9683</td>
<td>A. B. 9</td>
<td>dobeiti Shiraz</td>
<td>F. R.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Even though there is no information of the place of recording and the "I" prefix of other Persian labels of The National Gramophone Record Co. LTD is not seen either on the label or on the wax of TEHERAN records, but the recordings seems to be taken in India.

"Parviz Khatibi" was a young Iranian artist, songwriter and a vocalist of 40's who was planning for a recording session in India. He has mentioned in his book "Memories of artists" (pp: 120-122) about his idea of recording some popular songs by help and cooperation of “Parviz Mahmood” who was a young European graduated in music. Mahmood’s uncle “Hossein Ostowar” was a famous Iranian pianist, had made several recordings from 1928, and was the main sponsor of their plan.

Ostowar arranged with Minbashian brothers. They were from a famous family in Iranian music. After few months, Delbar label records were imported to Iran as their musical product. Parviz Khatibi gave up the idea of recording outside Iran and recorded for Columbia in Tehran in 1947 and then for Musical Record.

"TEHERAN" records show that Parviz Mahmood followed their Idea and took part in recording. His name is registered as the vocalist of record No. A.B.6 (matrix No.: 9653/4), in a style that is similar to Delbar records. Identity of the other vocalist F. R. is not known so far but the style of music and lyrics are quite similar to the recordings by Parviz Khatibi in Iran.
Letter to the Editor

From
Mr. Anthony Lennane,
3, The Glebe, Sarn, Newton,
Powys, Wales, U.K.

Date: November 7, 2007

Dear Mr. Chandvankar,

I recently found your web site and I thought you might find the enclosed photograph of some interest. My father Mr. W. Q. Lennane spent three years recording artists in India for Columbia Records of E.M.I. Ltd. Sadly, he was killed by the Japanese in Labuan, Borneo after being captured in Singapore in 1942. So, I have no information regarding his recordings, as all the master copies and their history have been disposed off.

I do not know the names of the group of musicians in the picture, just that it was probably taken around 1935/36. Anyway, I hope, it is of interest.

Yours Sincerely,
Sd/
[Anthony Lennane]
e-mail: juanita_lennane@tiscali.co.uk

Can you identify the accompanying artists and the person on chair at left?
Editor's Note:

It appears that this photograph is from the recording session of Ustad Amir Khan. It is known that he made about ten recordings for Columbia records during 1935 and a photograph wearing a turban was published in 1935 Columbia catalogue. Same is reproduced below. If we compare the two photographs then it is confirmed that the photograph is of the same person. Columbia record label has the name – Prof. Amirali Khansaheb (Indore). These records were not very popular and are not reissued till today. This is a quite different style of singing.

Prof. Ameerkhan (Indore) from 1935 catalogue
Mr. Lennane has contributed in the important golden period of recordings for Columbia Company during 1935-40. He seems to be involved in the recordings of Vazeboa, Saraswatibai Rane, Gohar Karnataki and many other artists. It was unfortunate that he was killed in Singapore when he was returning to his home. Thanks to his son for providing this information and very rare photographs. Seen below is Mr. Lennane in action. Readers are requested to identify the accompanying artists. Ustad Shakoor Khan seems to be playing Sarangi.

Mr. Lennane in action at Columbia studio

Mr. and Mrs. Lennane
Tumsa nahi dekha, na suna!

A tribute to late O. P. Nayyar

Sunday, January 28, 2007. Omkar Prasad (O. P.) Nayyar had just finished his lunch at his paying guest accommodation in the house of industrialist Jayant Nakhwa at Thane. He was watching the ‘Laughter show’ on television. During the short break, he went to toilet and suddenly collapsed. He had celebrated his eightieth birthday just ten days ago with his friends in Hyderabad. He had an appointment at Pune at the end of January for a program that was postponed last year. But there was an urgent call from heavens since he had an urgent meeting with Gods and Gandharvas.

Thane Municipal Corporation elections were scheduled around the same time. Several leaders were busy in road shows. Mr. Sharad Pawar, President of Nationalistic Congress was in Thane and visited Nakhwa’s house to pay his tribute. Photographs were printed, news flashes appeared on television. Unripe and half cooked journalists and TV anchors gave incorrect information on his songs and showed wrong film song clips.

For over twenty-five years, Nayyarsaab was away from the lime light of film industry. Hence, very few persons from the industry attended his funeral. He had strictly warned not to inform his family members. As per his will and wish, Nakhwa family performed his last rights in presence of few friends and music lovers. Both print and electronic media covered this news item for few days. Several articles on his music were published. Among the singers, Lata Mangeshkar in her message said, “His music was different from his contemporaries and has left a long lasting mark on Hindi film songs”.

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With certain views and decisions, he did not use Lataji's voice for any song that he composed. In 1990, the Madhya Pradesh Government announced 'Lata Mangeshkar' award to O. P. Nayyar. However, he refused to accept it even when he was in need of money. His logic was simple. He said that in films, music composer / director is the supreme, and not the singer. The award was named after a singer. Had it been in the name of a music composer, he would have accepted it with pleasure. The fate was such that Lataji's condolences message appeared in newspapers. However, Asha Bhosle, who had sung 324 songs on his tunes was out of country on concert tour. She has not said a word till today. However, everyone including his family members must have felt a loss for a moment. These feelings are well depicted in one song sung by Asha Bhosle,

"Chainse humko kabhi, aapne sone na diya
jahar bhi chaha agar, peena to peene na diya".

He was known as a rhythm king and this is probably the only song that has no rhythm at all. The song is from 1973 film 'Pran jaye par vachan na jaye'. It was recorded for but not used in the film. However, it was released on a 78-rpm record. The lyricist was 'Shamshul Huda (S. H.) Bihari'. 'Rajendra Krishna' was very famous lyricist when Nayyar began his career and it was rumored that he makes or ruins music composers. So, Nayyar decided to do without him. As a result, Rajendra Krishna did not write any song for Nayyar. Thirty-seven lyricists wrote songs for him – Majrooh Sultanpuri (125), S. H. Bihari (94) and Quamar Jalalabadi (74). Most of the films have now gone into oblivion since they were B and C grade. However, several songs composed by Nayyar are still ringing in the ears of music lovers.
Nayyar had no guru and Godfather in the industry. He became a composer on his own merit. He was known for his strange behavior and for making controversial statements publicly. Smt. Asha Bhosle was singing to his tunes until about 1974. In a recent press conference in Pune, Nayyar commented on her voice, “Ashaji’s voice has changed. It does not have the old charm”. This became the headline in leading Marathi newspapers in Pune and later was picked by glossy magazines too. Ashaji took this seriously and accepted the challenge. Within a month, she gave a concert at a stadium in Thane (where Nayyar lived) in reply to what he had commented upon. The show, as expected was over packed. However, it did not answer the comment made. You cannot retain the same voice when your age is advancing and Nayyar was probably hinting at that. Considering the age of both, music lovers thought about their ‘second inning’ where everything is fair, and turned back to the original recordings from their collections. These recordings prove Nayyar’s point through several solo and duet songs sung by Asha Bhosle: ‘Main shayad tumhare liye ajanabee hun, magar chand tare mujhe janate hai’, ‘Aankhonse jo utaree hai dilmen, pehchan hai mere dilwarki’, ‘Ye hai reshmi julphonka andhera na ghabaraiye’, ‘Jaiye aap kahan jayenge’, ‘Jara haule haule chalo mere sajana’, and so many others. Many duet songs with male singers are equally charming even today.


‘Star, Romantic, Maestro of the Century – The Legendary O. P. Nayyar’, in which complete details of his career as a composer were printed. This book is an excellent reference source for students of music and researchers. Asha Bhosle has given an extensive interview in one article. She says, ‘Nayyarsaab was an excellent teacher, since he was a singer himself. He used to teach us so many beautiful phrases and styles while composing a tune. Me and Rafisaab could pick up only eighty percent of what he used to sing. His music arrangers Sebastien and G. S. Kohli were master craftsmen. Their homework used to be so perfect that we hardly spent hours after hours in just rehearsals. Many times I have recorded four / five songs in one session till lunch recess. This was possible through discipline and well planned work. Whenever he was pleased with anyone
who played or sang an excellent piece, he would gift him a hundred rupee note (of 1960’s). He encouraged me in gaining confidence and brought me in the mainstream of playback singing. He used to compose tunes suitable for the natural voice of a singer. He used to urge me and Rafisaab to sing in natural notes and scale, preferably one note lower”.

Why do we like songs composed by O. P. Nayyar? Several answers are possible. As mentioned by Ashaji in her interview, his tunes were set to singer’s natural scale. The tunes were so simple that anyone could try to sing. He used moderate orchestration. Sitar, Sarod, Mandolin, Flute, Santoor, Piano, Accordion, Saxophone, and Sarangi were his favorite instruments. Among rhythms, apart from tabla, dholak and bongo/congo, he used horse carriage rhythm (Ghoda gaadi theka) in many songs. This book mentioned above, has a photograph of over 40 musicians from a recording session. In early fifty’s, some of the instrumentalists who played with him are – Shivkumar Sharma (Santoor), Raishkan (Sitar), Hariprasad Chaurasia (Flute), and Ram Narain (Sarangi). They were yet to become ‘Pandits’ and ‘Ustad’s. All of them speak very highly and with respect about him. Nayyarsaab used to make cash payment to accompanists immediately after the recording shift, a rare quality among the music composers of that period.

Next to Ashaji, Mohammad Rafi has sung 202 songs. [60 solo and 142 duets] Some of his evergreen songs are: ‘Pukarata chala hun main’, ‘Kabhi na kabhi, kahi na kahi’, ‘Ae dil hai mushkil, jeena yehan’, ‘Yun to humne lakh hansi dekhe hai, tumsa nahi dekha’. Rafisaab used to say, ‘Yun to humne lakh sangeetkar dekhe hain, magar nayyarsaab, aap jaisa nahi dekha’. Mr. Ram Kadam, famous
composer of Marathi films has written an interesting incidence in his biography. He was invited by Filmistan studio to compose music for their forthcoming Marathi film production. He was rehearsing in the studio where Nayyarsaab was composing music in the adjacent room. As he got disturbed, he came in and shouted, “What is this noise! Stop it immediately.” Ram Kadam just signaled to his musicians, picked up the harmonium and began to sing loudly, “Yun to humne lakh hansi dekhe hai, tum “SA” nahi dekha’, tum “RE” nahi dekha, tum “GA” nahi dekha, tum “PA” nahi dekha... tum kuch bhi nahi dekha re, tum kuch bhai nahi suna re”. Nayyar saab quickly realized the members of “his” family and pulling his earlobes went away saying, ‘Excuse me brothers. Continue’.

Nayyarsaab strongly believed that ‘The Director’ is and should be the supreme and the highest authority in film industry. This could be the Director of the film, music, costume, make up or even drapery and sets. His word should be final. He was probably the only composer who commanded this authority and never compromised on this issue. Once Rafissab arrived one hour late and gave an excuse that he was busy in some other great musicians shift. Nayyarsaab did not say a word, but ordered for a pack up and removed him from that film. He did not invite him again till an apology was received from Rafisaab.

Mahendra Kapoor was another favorite male singer who has sung famous songs for Nayyarsaab such as: ‘Ankhomen kayamat ke kaajal’, ‘Tumhara chahanewala’ (Kismat), ‘Badal jaye agar malli, chaman hota nahi khali’ (Baharen phir bhi aayegi). Today, it is becoming increasingly difficult to listen to these songs in their original form. This is because remixed and re-created versions of these songs are available in the market and on the internet. In this matter of remixes,
both Ashaji and Nayyarsaab were together. They never opposed this idea and strongly believed that new generation is looking back to their old work in new perspective. Among other male vocalists, Talat Mahmood has sung three songs, Kishore Kumar — thirty-eight, Manna Dey — one and Mukesh has sung just four songs for Nayyar. Among these four songs - 'Chal akela, chal akela, chal akela, tera mela peeche choota rahì chal akela' from film Sambandh (1969) became most popular. Words of this song probably suggested the future of Nayyar's lonely career. After about 1970, Nayyar could not adjust himself with the changing trends of the film industry. Added to this was his strange and obstinate behavior. He had taken up studies in homeopathy and horoscopy. He believed that music consoles the soul, whereas medicine cures the body and horoscopy enlightens the mind of a human being. After about 1975, he devoted most of his time to medicine and horoscopy and became an expert homeopath in Thane. He used to tour with the groups who would present his songs in public programs. He used to appear in TV shows such as TVS SaReGaMa with his famous attire, stick and the felt hat. Due to the problems and quarrels with his family members, he had left his home at Churchgate, moved from place to place before settling with the Nakhwa family in Thane.

During the last phase of his life, he had mentally returned to Lahore city of undivided India. He had spent his childhood and youth in this city and was a regular broadcaster on Lahore radio. During this career, he had composed music for forty-two songs that were non-film or so called ‘private’ songs. Among these songs, 'Preetam Aan Milo' written by his wife 'Saroj Mohini Nayyar' became most popular. He used to sing this song on radio. Considering its popularity, HMV issued it on Regal label. It was sung by C. H. Atma and composed by Nayyar. This record was so much popular that Atma used to get royalty for several years, whereas Nayyar received one time payment of Rs. forty only because of the different contracts they signed with the record company. When Guru Dutt learnt the success story of this song, he urged and persuaded Nayyar to re-create it in the voice of Geeta Dutt for his film 'Mr. and Mrs. 55'. Another song written by his wife – 'Punarjanam men milungi balam, akhiyan neer na aaye' used to be played often on Delhi radio. Recently, Nayyar used to say that these songs were actually written by him but he chose to give his wife's name. Whatever be the truth, the
record labels give credit to his wife. It also shows how Nayyar had foreseen his future and fate through the songs written in his youth. Music of these songs reflect the impact of New Theater's music and Punjabi style. Keeping this as a basic structure, he improvised his tunes and made memorable tunes.

Nayyarsaab's career span is from 1952-1992. Out of these forty years, he was in full form and in the limelight for over twenty years. He composed music for seventy-three films. Total number of songs including private songs is six hundred and eighty-three. He received only one Film-Fare award in 1958 for the music of Hindi film 'Naya Daur'. He remarked to producer B. R. Chopra, "This is not only 'Naya Daur' but 'Nayyar Daur' too", implying the importance of his music. As a result, he did not get any further film from Chopra camp. He was ready to compose free for the films of his friends such as Guru Dutt and Shashadhar Mukherjee, but would demand unreasonable honorarium from the producers he did not like.

After his death, several English and regional newspapers in Mumbai wrote editorials and special features on his life and music. In the editorial 'Oh tera kya kahana' [Loksatta, 30/01/2007] he was credited for his famous 'ghodagadi' (tanga) thecka. 'Sharab, Shabab. Kabab and Rubab' was his motto! In Marathi, we say, 'I shall break but shall not bend'. Nayyarsaab always refused to break, so there was no question to bend! And this is the sign of a true Marathi person. Probably, that is why this 'Punjab Da Putta' finally rested in the nest of Maharashtrian Nakhawa family in Thane.

Nayyar was struggling for five years from 1947 to 1952. He had a chain of flop Hindi films in which he had composed wonderful music. Frustrated, he decided to return to his native place. He went to see his friend Guru Dutt to get some dues. Guru advised him to hold on and asked him to compose music for his forthcoming film 'Aarpar'. He also gave him a fresh stock of Bing Crosby's 78-rpm records that had just arrived from local music store. Nayyar decided to take last chance and accepted the offer. Together they listened to the records with
shayar Majrooh Sutanpuri. Majroohji immediately wrote ‘Sun sun sun, O jalima’ on Crosby's tune ‘Jhing Jhang Jhing’ and everybody liked it. Soon all the songs were written and composed. The film became super duper hit mainly due to the songs: ‘Kabhi aar kabhi paar, laga teere nazmar’, ‘Ye lo main haare pya, hui teri jeet re’ and of course ‘Babuji dheere chalaana, pyarmen jara sambhalana’! This unexpected success was a re-birth for the composer O. P. Nayyar. He later on composed wonderful music for films starred by Dev Anand (C.I.D), Dilip Kumar (Naya Daur) and Shammi Kapoor (Kashmir Ki Kali).

It is not known how his wife and family members used to address Nayyarsaab. However, Geeta Dutt used to call him ‘Babuji’ and so were his friends and members of the Nakhawa family! Hindi film industry has probably never seen a composer like O. P. Nayyar who always dictated his terms and never bowed to anyone. However, Industry has seen three persons wearing felt hat – O. P. Nayyar, Amrish Puri, and Dev Anand! Two have left this world and Devsaab is still active and batting. Fortunately, almost all the songs of Nayyar are available with his fans and original discs are with die-hard record collectors. Most of his hit songs are now available on CD’s, VCD’s and DVD’s.

All the gossips on Nayyarsaab will be over and forgotten as time progresses, but not the wonderful tunes that he composed. Ever changing technology shall make them available for generations in so many different formats. Future netizens shall listen to Nayyar’s music through cyberspace and dance with his tunes. They would also hum and sing,

‘Yun to humne lakh hansi dekhe hai, (Nayyarsaab) tumsa nahi dekha, na suna’

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* Author of this article has compiled a ninety minutes audio/visual presentation on O. P. Nayyar. Interested music lovers are requested to contact.

Editor – Shree Vishwas Nerurkar, Mumbai
Book Review


Smt. Sheila Dhar (1929-2001) – M. A. (English) from Boston University, officer in the publication division of government of India, wife of Prof. P. N. Dhar, a renowned economist and a person from Smt. Indira Gandhi's inner circle in politics. She has written few outstanding books in English. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote preface to her book 'Children's history of India' published in 1961. This book has been reprinted several times and is popular even today. However, singer Sheila Dhar is less known. She was a 'Gandabaddha' disciple of Ustad Faiyaz Ahmad Khan of Kirana gharana. She had written several articles and essays on music and was an expert story-teller. This book is a compilation of her popular essays and stories from a musical life written in most humorous, satirical and at the same time touching manner. Most of these were published long ago and were not easily available. After she passed away, her husband has published them in a single book.

This book is divided in three parts. First part - 'Here is someone I would like you to meet' - has ten essays covering memoirs from childhood to youth. Sheila was born in a wealthy 'Kayastha Mathur' family. Her grandfather was a renowned barrister during British Raj. He was in the upper elite class in Delhi. He had built a rather huge bungalow outside old Delhi in a thick forest. The house was always crowded with at least over fifty persons at any given time. This included guests, relatives and students. In the Kayastha community, children and especially girls were always encouraged to learn skills such as music, drawing, painting etc. This was considered as an additional asset useful in finding a match and for social gatherings. Daughters and ladies were not expected to be experts in cooking, since fleet of servants and cooks were already employed. Her father had learnt music as a hobby, during his college days in Lahore. He studied in Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskarjis music school. Although he did not pursue this career, he had great love for the music and later became one of the chief organizers of music festivals in Delhi. As a result, several musicians used to visit and stay in their house. Considering the interest of young Sheela in music, her father would take her help in the arrangements. Thus, she had an opportunity to interact with many great musicians since her childhood. They had a hand cranked gramophone machine with a brass horn and heaps of records, mostly gifted by the musicians who would stay with them. Their photographs were printed on the record jackets and sleeves. She would often talk to them during their visits and listen to their music both in the concerts and on the records.

During music conferences, even top class and renowned artists used to stay with the families of music lovers chosen by the organizers rather than in hotels. Proud family members would volunteer in receiving them with their group of shagirds
and accompanists at the railway station, offer best possible hospitality and would escort them to the conference hall and back. Young Sheela met Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Smt. Kesarbai Kerkar, Pandit D. V. Paluskar and Ustad Ahmad Jan Tirakhaowa. There are several sweet memories and anecdotes described in these essays.

Around 1940, Ustad Bundu Khan used to live in Delhi. He used to visit their house every Sunday afternoon and play his sarangi for one hour in a small room assigned to him. His audience used to vary from one to many listeners of all age groups. One Sunday, as there was no one in the room, he went out into the garden, rolled on flower beds with his sarangi and played raga Bahar to the flowers as it was a basant ritu. Surshree Smt. Kesarbai Kerkar used to perform in annual Harivallabh sangeet mela at Jalandhar. On her way to Jalandhar and back she used to stay in Delhi with Mathur family for couple of weeks and it used to be the golden period of musical feast. When in mood, she would sing classical, light and bhajans to the household audience and friends. With great persuasion, she agreed to teach couple of items to twelve years old young Sheela. However, at the assigned time, attraction of sixth round of Walt Disney’s film 'Snow white and seven dwarfs' proved to be dominant. Her father felt very bad and in later years singer Sheela realized what opportunity she had lost. Kesarbai used to describe Hari Vallabh mela with great details. Sheelaji never imagined that after few years, she also would be invited to sing in this mela. She has written about that great experience in one long essay. In the same mela, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi was also invited as he was the ‘star’ attraction in those days. That evening, he was in altogether different world and did not sing except a Marathi Bhajan for few minutes. However, he argued with the organizers that he has already rendered raga Malkauns for over one hour and the audience did not complain. Sheelaji has described whole incidence. It shows the devotion and love of audience to the musician in such a distant place. This is really amazing.

'Gavaiyya so Khavaiyya' [one who sings well eats also well] is a popular saying among the musicians. There are many interesting stories in some of these essays. In an annual concert in Delhi, great Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan was put up with one Hindu family that offered vegetarian meals only. Furious Ustadji just made a list of items required and sent his shagird to market. Meanwhile, he himself lit up fire (chulha) in the outhouse of the bungalow. He cooked nice meals. Only after enjoying the ‘Bada’ and proper khana, Badeji’s team moved to the concert venue. Ustadji used to say,” The aroma in our musical notes and gayaki originates from the food that we eat “. Here, we meet Pandit Pran Nath eating one dozen eggs just for the breakfast and Ustad Bundu Khan dipping hot samosa in the sweet cup of tea after his Sunday afternoon solo concerts. Zia Mouniddin Dagar capturesthe kitchen of the apartment of his student in New York and fills it with the aroma of Indian spices even before imparting first lesson in music. Siddheshwari Devi and Begum Akhtar were the food goddesses. They used to enjoy cooking delicious dishes equally and would enjoy in the company of their fans and family friends.
In her childhood, Sheelaji had listened to records ending with an announcement ‘Mera Naam Akhtarbai’. At that time, she had hardly realized that the same Akhtarbai would be instrumental in seeking gurus for her in music. With her efforts, Sheelaji could take proper training of Kirana gharana with the legendary Niyaz and Faiyaz Ahmad Khan. She used to stay for months in Mumbai with her brother during these tuitions. We also come across why Begum Akhtar wanted to learn Sitar from Ustad Vilayat Khan and why it did not materialize. Siddheshwari Devi had only one foreign tour during her lifetime and had to leave it halfway due to the reasons that may appear funny to the present generation. In an essay titled ‘Go Lady Go’, we encounter with one Maharashtrian singer of ‘Gandharva tradition’. He is singing in the farewell ceremony of chief patron of their Delhi based institution, ‘Lady Linlithgo’, as she was to leave India soon after independence. Great singer has composed a powerful bandish in Raga Adana with words ‘Lady lin litha go’. Each time he sang “Go!” quite forcefully while arriving at the sam. Restless lady failed to understand and really got ready to leave. It is really stunning to learn how the singer changed the scene and made lady to stay back using the same words in the bandish and without any interruption in the rendering of raga adana.

In the section, ‘The Cooking of music and other essays’, Sheelaji gives a brief account of Kirana gharana, some basic thoughts of the idea of raga, modern recording techniques and their effects on the music industry, changes in the attitudes of the musicians and the audience. We come across several personalities and events in this part. Her boss at the publication division Mr. Mohan Rao, a great admirer of Gandhiji, and how he encountered with Sir Richard Attenborough twenty years ago when the later was preparing for his ambitious film ‘Gandhi’. In the portrait of ‘Baua’, we meet her mother and read about her sufferings in a large family. Best essay of over forty pages is – ‘Pandit Pran Nath – an Odyssey’, with whom she learnt for short time. He was the disciple of Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan. During his stay in Delhi in early seventies, he used to demonstrate slow aalaps of Kirana gharana and would insist that his disciples should also follow. Mr. P. N. Dhar was like son in law to him and Sheelaji as a daughter. After learning that Mr. Dhar shall be on tour to Kashmir, he requests repeatedly for small quantity of saffron for his throat. Mr. Dhar refuses since it was an expensive commodity. Later, Pran Nath moves to USA with the insistence of his disciples who build an empire for him. When Mr. and Mrs. Dhar stay in USA for couple of years on official duty, Pt. Pran Nath organizes several concerts for her daughter Sheelaji and gives a Royal treatment and feast to son-in-law without hinting at the past. He lived over 95 years and spread the Wahid Khan doctrine of Kirana Gharana in USA. Unfortunately very little is known to Indians. However, now lot of information on his work is available on internet.

Entire book does not have any picture or photograph. However, Sheelaji’s picturesque style has made up for this shortcoming. This is a ‘must’ for all music
lovers, researchers and students of music. This is because with such books only they will get to know how much ‘Josh’ is involved in creating the ‘Raga’.

Dr. Suresh Chandvankar
Hon. Secretary, ‘Society of Indian Record Collectors’, Mumbai

Sheila Dhar

"...contains some of the most thoughtful, most perceptive, and certainly the most vivid writing about Indian classical music that I have ever read."
— Amitav Ghosh

"...makes very good reading. Nothing of the kind has been published before."— Khushwant Singh

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Stories from a Musical Life
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