

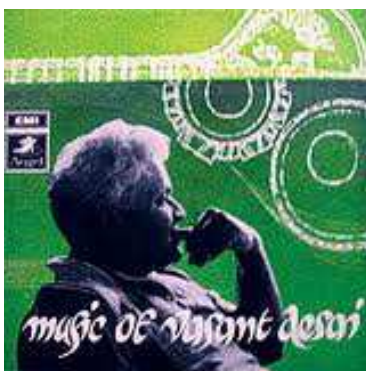
THE RECORD NEWS

The journal of the 'Society of Indian Record Collectors'

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S.I.R.C. Units: Mumbai, Pune, Solapur, Nanded and Amravati



**Feature Articles: Cardboard Player
Vasant Desai, Bollywood Mine, Ravi Shankar**

‘The Record News’
Annual magazine of
‘Society of Indian Record Collectors’ [SIRC]
{Established: 1990}

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From the Editor

I am pleased to present our annual issue – The Record News (TRN-2012) to all the members, well-wishers and friends of ‘Society of Indian Record Collectors’ [SIRC]. In addition to Mumbai and Pune, record collectors at small and remote places such as Amravati and Nanded are doing very well and they do meet once in a month to listen to old music from gramophone discs. Record collectors from South India are also now joining efforts of SIRC.

- Suresh Chandvankar
- Editor

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Front page pictures: Cardboard Player, Vasant Desai, Israeli vinyl
LP cover, Pandit Ravi Shankar

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] Y. B. Chavan Pratishthan, Mumbai
- 2] Bhavan's Cultural Center, Andheri
- 3] Karnatak Sangh, Matunga
- 4] Suburban Music Circle, Santacruz

Topics of the listening sessions held:

Life and music Music of Vasant Desai, Malhar Utsav, Master Krishnarao, Ustad Amir Khan, Sixty years of song 'Ae Mere Watan Ke Logo', Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Rajesh Khanna, Gandhipriya Bhajans and Dev Anand,

Programs were also presented at New Delhi, Kolkata, Indore, Hyderabad, Solapur and Aurangabad.

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

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

TULJAPUR - Mr. Sudhir Peshwe, 22, 'Adwait', Mauli Hsg. Society, Near Peshwe Hospital, Tuljapur - 413 601. District Osmanabad.

NANDED - Mr. P .T. Shastri, President, SIRC, Nanded. 32, 'Chaitanya', Bhagyanagar, Nanded - 431 605.

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

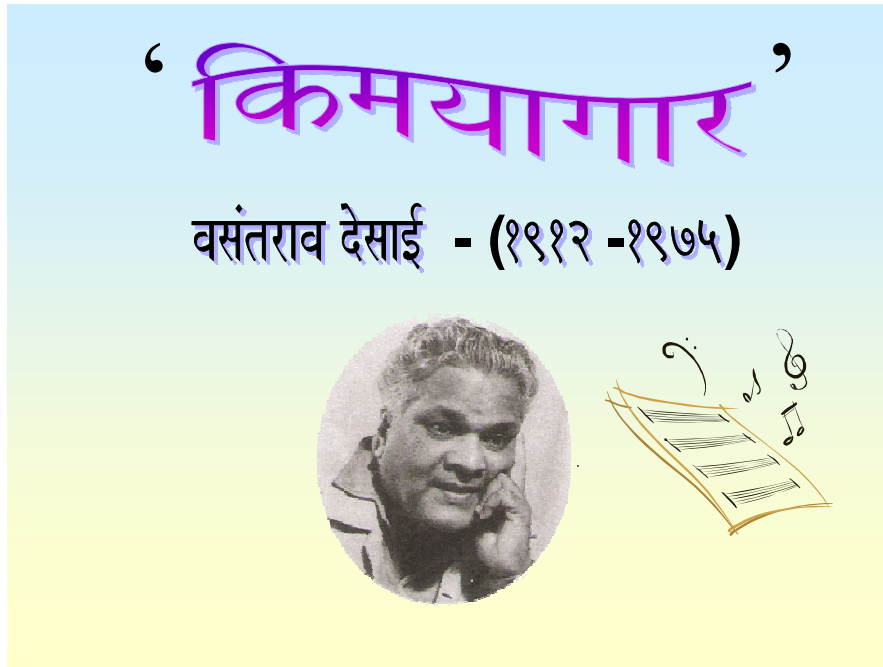
AMRAVATI – Mr. Arvind Hambarde, Ekvira Colony, Aakoli Road, Sainagar
Amravati - 444 605. Maharashtra state, India

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‘Kimayagar’ Mr. Vasant Rao Desai (1912-1975)

Birth centenary special article

A pleasant and smiling face, gleaming and sparkling eyes overflowing with lot of curiosity and love, physique like a wrestler and a ‘Mogra’ flower band (Gajra) on the wrist of the left or right hand – this is how was the appearance of Mr. Vasant Rao Desai. An Alchemist (Kimayagar) is a person who would turn any stone into gold. When he entered the cine world, the surrounding was like a stone. Among many, who turned it into gold, Vasant Rao was an important ‘Kimayagar’ – Alchemist.

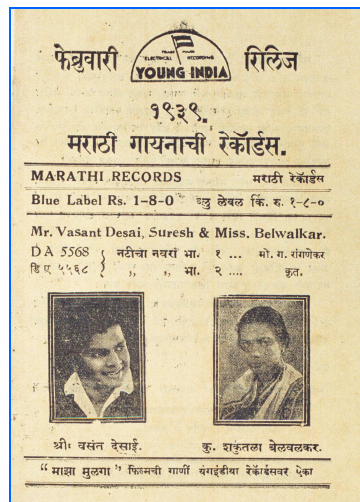


At times when Vasant Rao entered the cinema, it did not have any glamor and was captured by unskilled and vagabond people who used to drink, gamble and get involved in all kind of anti-social activities. It did not have any prestige and status in society. Vasant Rao was among few who changed this image through their personality and hard work and paved way for generations to come.

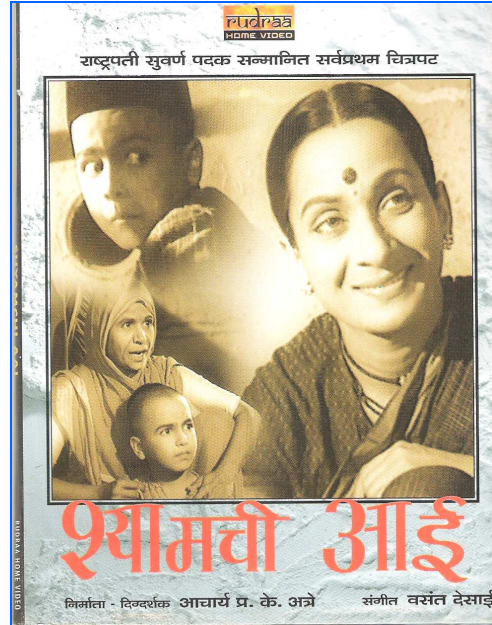
Young Vasant wanted to join circus as an animal trainer. At the tender age of sixteen years, his uncle brought him to Kolhapur and met Shantaram Vankudre (V. Shantaram) who was with the film company of Baburao Painter. He offered him work for zero salary as company wanted manpower but could not afford any salary. There were no fix working hours and no prescribed job. Each one was expected to do whatever is needed. As a result, all recruits including Vasant Rao

got exposure to many diverse tasks and learned a lot. He worked this way until about 1933 and then moved to Pune when Prabhat Film Company moved from Kolhapur. He worked with Prabhat, Pune from 1933 to 1942. His initial salary was Rs. 55 per month and last salary was Rs.350 when he left Pune.

Like 'New Theaters' in Bengal, 'Prabhat' film company of Pune was the 'University of Cinema' for many young persons in Maharashtra and it gave many actors, singers, musicians and technicians to the film industry in early period of cinema. In Pune, V. Shantaram gave him free hand to go to any department and learn whatever he wants to. Salary was meager but opportunities for learning were ample. He spent many months in makeup, drapery, settings, property and music department. Prabhat Company had purchased large number of musical instruments for music department. Soon he became regular at music room and used to handle and play number of instruments. He also could learn many things from great musician's viz. Master Krishnarao Phulambrikar, Govindrao Tembe and Keshavrao Bhole. This helped him in shaping his own career although his ambition was to become hero. He played small roles in many Prabhat films. Most memorable and long role was in the film – 'Sant Dnyaneshwar' (1940). He played Bhairu Gadeevan (a bullock cartman). While giving a ride to four lads – Nivrutti, Dnyandeo, Sopan and Muktabai, he also sang a song – 'Aamhee daivache daivache shetkari re'. He was mentioned as an assistant music director in the credit titles of this film. During Prabhat period, he was also busy in many activities. His house was near Peru gate in Pune. He used to go in gymnasium regularly. Company used to give a glass of milk to everyday who would do exercise and wrestling. So, that was an added attraction. Also he began to take lessons from Ustad Inayat Khan. Soon he became expert singer and used to attend and perform at prestigious music conferences held at Calcutta and Allahabad. He also composed music for Master Vinayak's film 'Chhaya' with a nick name. For this, he used to go to Kolhapur taking care that V. Shantaram would not know. He also recorded some solo and duet songs and skits for 'Young India' record company. One of the catalogs carries his photograph with co-singer Kumari Shakuntala Belvalkar.



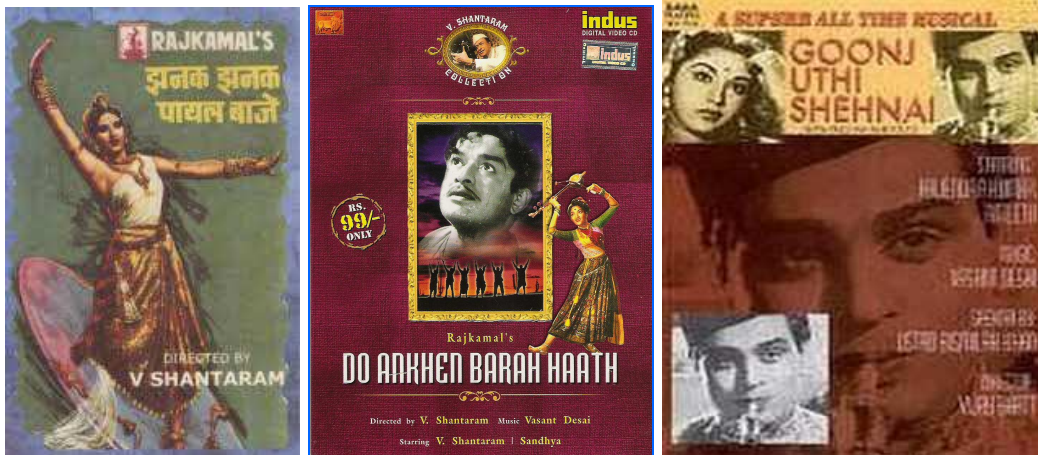
Around 1933, Sane Guruji's book 'Shyamchi Aai' came in the market and it became so popular that it reached each Marathi speaking family. Vasantrya read it several times and became a total devotee of Guruji and his writings. In 1938, Sane Guruji was in Pune for some work and stayed for long period. Through a friend, Vasantrya met him with garlands and (Gajra) of Mogara flowers. He offered him his favorite flowers in a tiny bamboo basket. Both of them talked for a while with love and affection. Just before leaving, Guruji casually picked up a small 'gajara' from the basket and put around the wrist of Vasantrya's hand. He was thrilled and accepted it as a precious gift from his guru. In memory of this incidence, he always used to put a Mogra flower gajra around his wrist and that became his signature. Fragrance of the flowers would come first wherever he would go and the whole atmosphere would become pleasant. With this, probably



Guruji gave him blessings to work as fresh as Mogra flowers and let the music spread out like a fragrance. His music spreads that fragrance even today, pleasing the body, the mind and the soul of the listeners. In the meeting, both of them did not know that Vasantrya would compose music of the film based on Guruji's book – 'Shyamchi Aai' after Guruji's death. Both of them had a tragic and unexpected death. Guruji committed suicide in 1950. In December 1975, Vasantrya died suddenly in unfortunate circumstances while boarding the lift of his building. His friend and admirer Mr. Bal Thackrey (Later supremo of Shivsena in Maharashtra) came to his house to pay his tributes and had brought a Mogra flower gajra in a small paper bag in his pocket. He gently took it out and put it around the wrist of Vasantrya's hand before he was taken for the funeral. Truck carrying his dead body was decorated with the garlands of his favorite Mogra flowers.

In 1942, just at the onset of second world-war, Vasant Rao came to Mumbai with V. Shantaram and joined his 'Rajkamal Chitra Mandir' for a handsome salary of Rs.750 per month. Salary hike was very slow and it became Rs.950 per month when he left Rajkamal. Main attraction was the opportunity of learning from his guru V. Shantaram. Of course V. Shantaram gave him permission to work free lance with other producers while he was on the pay roll of Rajkamal.

In the beginning, he composed music for J. B. H. Wadia's three Hindi films 'Shobha', 'Aankh Ki Sharm' and 'Mauj' - all produced in 1942. He gave good music but the films were super flops. Hence the songs are not known. However, all the films of Rajkamal became super hit and his music pleased the listeners. There is a huge variation in the music composed since the films were based on diverse topics of social concern. Rajkamal's film 'Shakuntala' (1943) gave name and fame both to V. Shantaram and Vasant Rao Desai. The film was screened for 104 weeks in Mumbai. Some of the hit songs of the film are – 'Mere babane baat meri man lee', 'Jhulungi jhulungi', and 'Kamal hai mere samne'. The songs were released on 'Young India' label 78 rpm discs. Later he composed music for 'Parbatpe Apna Dera' (1944), 'Dr. Kotniski Amar Kahani' (1946), 'Jeevanyatra' (1946), 'Andhonki Duniya' (1947), 'Matwala Shayar' [Hindi] and 'Lokshahir Ramjoshi' [Marathi] (1948) and 'Dahej' (1950). He experimented a lot while composing music for these films. Dr. Kotnis film is based on his work in China. And hence, he studied Chinese music and used it in the songs and also in the background score. 'Main hun nanhi nai dulhan' is one such example from that film. He also composed music for Rajkamal film 'Jeevanyatra' in which Lata Mangeshkar played a role and also sang a song – 'Chidiya bole chun chun chun'. In the same period, he also composed music for Master Vinayak's 'Subhadra' (1946) and 'Mandir' (1948). He also worked with Sohrab Mody for his films 'Hindusthan Hamara', 'Sheesh Mahal' (1950), 'Anand Bhavan' (1953) and 'Jhansi Ki Rani' (1952)



Best films of Vasant Rao's career are – 'Jhanak jhanak payal baje' (1955), 'Gunj uthi shahanai' (1958), in Hindi and 'Lokshahir Ramjoshi' (1947) and 'Amar bhoopali' (1951) in Marathi. Jhanak jhanak payal baje was successful both in India and abroad. It was screened in Liberty cinema for 75 weeks. It was a musical film full of dances of Sandhya and Gopi Krishna. Vasant Rao toured for two years throughout India in search of best musicians, instruments and players. Thus he brought Pandit Samta Prasad from Benares for playing tabla, Pandit Sudershan from Calcutta for playing a rhythm instrument 'Khol'. He went to Kashmir and brought Santoor player Shivkumar Sharma and Pakhwaj player Ramdas. Music became so popular that discs of background score and dance music were also released on 78 rpm discs. They had a huge demand. The film won many awards including National award. Due to the title song – 'Jhanak jhanak payal baje', Ustad Amir Khan Saheb became popular throughout India and abroad.



Vasantrao had composed this title song in raga 'Darbari' in a very very slow tempo using a slow aalap. One can listen to it in the background in a shot where hero Gopal Krishna is putting up a Rangoli of colors on the floor. Everything was set to record this title song. Studio floor was decorated nicely like a concert stage for Ustad Amir Khan. At the last moment Vasantrao felt that he should get consent of producer-director V. Shantaram and hence he invited him to studio to listen to the final rehearsal. Upon listening to the tune, he became bit nervous and unhappy. He told Vasantrao either to change the tune or the singer or both. He also asked to cancel the recording. Fortunately this talk took place in the listening booth and Amir Khan Sahib did not hear it. Somehow Vasantrao persuaded Amir Khan and called off the session for a day. When he reached home, he sat down quietly. He did not know what is wrong and could not sleep that night. Early morning he realized that the dances in the film had very fast tempo and rhythm whereas his tune was in very very slow tempo. Then he chose raga Adana composed the same song in very fast tune. Next day morning, he rehearsed the new tune with Ustad Amir Khan Sahib. It was in the presence of V. Shantaram. Now everybody was pleased. Thus, the song became the signature tune of the film with very effective credit titles. Amir Khan sang it at the Liberty cinema in the celebration of sixtieth week of the film. He also used to sing it in his concerts.

In 'Gunj Uthi Shahanai' he brought two stalwarts together for an unusual duet of vocal and instrumental music. Ustad Amir Khan and Ustad Bismillah Khan participated in it so well that along with the film songs, gramophone records of these duets were also issued. Songs like 'Tere sur aur mere geet', 'Jeevan me piya tera saath rahe', 'Dil ka khilona toot gaya' became so popular that Bismillah Khan used to get requests for playing them on Shahanai in his concerts. To encash the popularity, HMV issued a set of 78-rpm discs of Bismillah Khan playing these film songs only. Around this time, he composed music for Rajkamal's films 'Toofan aur Diya' (1956) and 'Do aankhe barah hath' (1958). All the songs in both the films became popular. A prayer from the later film viz. 'Ae malik tere bande hum' became very popular in Pakistan due to the words 'Malik' and 'Bande' in the lyrics.

After 'Sant Dnyaneshwar' (1939), Vasantrao did not get any film for eight years. In 1947, he composed music for Rajkamal film – 'Lokshahir Ramjoshi'. In 1951, he composed music for another Rajkamal film – 'Amar Bhoopali' based on lives of Honaji and Bala. Both the films were based on the lives of a poet. Ramjoshi was a poet of masses whereas Honaji was a milkman. Both composed devotional and romantic lyrics with same proficiency. Composing music for both the films was a real challenge. Vasantrao went to rural area and met many musicians and singers. He learned many styles such as Lavni, Kat, Mharki, Bhedik Lavni and Sawal-Jawab. Some of the lyrics were also written by G. D. Madgulkar and Vasantrao composed wonderful tunes. Jayram Shiledar and Hansabai Wadkar played the lead roles. Melodious songs such as 'Sundara

manamadhye bharali', 'Hata tatane pata rangavun', 'Bhai savadh vha', and 'Nar janmamadhi nara karun ghe' are popular even today.

Panditrao Nagarkar and Sandhya played lead roles in 'Amar Bhoopali' and Lata Mangeshkar provided playback to the songs. Ram Joshi hailed from Solapur whereas Honaji was from a village Sasvad near Pune. He spent his life in Pune in the infamous place called 'Bavankhani' – a place for prostitutes and dancing girls from ancient times. Vasantrao searched the house in this area and met the family members of Honaji. Family gave him 'Tamburi' – a string instrument that Honaji used to play. He also found out his Samadhi (tomb) in Pune, sat down there and worshipped for a while. In that trance mood, he composed tune to his famous bhoopali – 'Ghanashyam sundara shreedhara'. This tune really became very popular and immortal. HMV produced a 78-rpm disc and over 75,000 copies were sold. Raj Kapoor used to listen to it everyday for many years. Later Nitin Bose produced the film in Bengali keeping the tunes same. Music composed by Vasantrao was identical except for the Bengali words. Manna (Prabodhchandra) Dey was the co-singer replacing Panditrao Nagarkar and these were the first Bengali songs of Lata Mangeshkar. Today, the Bengali film print is not available. However, sweet Bengali songs issued on 78-rpm discs are preserved by the collectors.

After the success of these two Marathi films, Acharya Atre invited him to compose music for his Marathi film 'Shyamchi Aai'. The film was released in 1953. It was based on the famous book of the same name written by Pandurang Sadashiv Sane alias Sane Guruji. Atre had taken an oath at the funeral of Guruji that he would produce a film on his book as a tribute. However, he was worried whether he could afford heavy fees to be paid to Vasantrao Desai. But he did not know that Vasantrao too was a devotee of Late Sane Guruji. So, Vasantrao composed music with a token fee of just one rupee. With the limited resources, financial difficulties and crude technology he could complete the film. Through this film a classic book on mother-child love reached to masses. The film was not only successful but won first President's 'Gold' award. Natural acting of Vanamala and Madhav Vaze, heart touching lyrics of Acharya Atre and Kavee Yeshwant and melodious music composed by Vasantrao Desai made this film a great success. 'Neej neej majhya bala' 'Draupadisi bandhu shobhe narayan', 'Ghandat raneevani', 'Chhadi lage chham chham' and 'Aai mhanonee konee' songs are popular even today. Recently Rudra Video Company of Mumbai has released the film on DVD and took it to over one million children in Maharashtra.

During 1942 to 1976, he composed music for over 50 Hindi films comprising of over 375 songs. These songs are sung by about seventy singers of which Lata Mangeshkar has sung seventy two songs. Around 1958, Acharya Atre announced a film 'Amar Samadhi' based on the life of a musician with lead roles played by Shahu Modak and Shyama. This film was never completed and remained a dream project. However, three songs were recorded and one of them is a duet - ragamalika sung by Salamat Ali Khan and Lata Mangeshkar. They

have sung ragas Lalat, Chandrakauns, Adana and Yaman. This six minute recording is safe with the collectors and could also be available on social media networks in future. Purpose and style of Hindi film songs changed drastically since 1960. Heavy orchestration and gimmicks, loud rhythms entered the compositions and this was harmful to melody. 'Binaca Geetmala', 'Sartaj songs' and 'Filmfare Award' became very popular involving lot of politics and money. Vasantrao could not cope up with this new trend and hence never got any nomination for the Filmfare award. This also affected his career with few films at hand. Even then he gave very good music in films – 'Pyraki Pyas', 'Sampoorna Ramayan' (1961), 'Amar Jyoti', 'Rahul' and 'Yadden' (1964), 'Ladki Sahyadriki' (1967), 'Ashirwad' (1968) and 'Guddi' (1971). Vani Jayram sang famous 'Bolere Papihara' song in 'Guddi'. He also composed background score for Hindi films – 'Achanak', 'Graham' and Sunil Dutt's one man film – 'Yaddein'. He had left Rajkamal long ago. However, when his guru V. Shantaram called him, he composed background music for 'Geet Gaya Pattharone'. His last film was 'Shaq' produced by his nephew Vikas Desai. Songs sung by Faiyaaz and Asha Bhosle became very popular.

During 1947 to 1976, he composed music for over 150 songs in twenty Marathi films. Some of the important films are – 1] Kanchan Ganga (1954) – Lata Mangeshkar has sung songs based on classical ragas 2] Ye Re Majhya Maglya (1955) – Ustad Amir Khan Saheb has sung his famous bandish – 'Jogia Mere Ghar Aayo' in raga Lalat and a 78-rpm disc has been issued. 3] Baap Majha Bramhachari (1962) – In the picturization of the songs, famous bhajan singers Bagdeboa and Phulajiboa are seen singing on the screen. 4] Chhota Jawan (1963) – His famous song 'Jinku Kinva Maru' was sung by Mahendra Kapoor and included in the film. 5] Molkarin (1963) – This film was based on Sane Guruji's famous short story of the same name. One duet song - 'Has ale aadhee kuni, tu ka mee?' was sung by Asha Bhosle and Talat Mehmood 6] Swayamvar Jhale Seeteche (1955) – In this film, King Ravana sings a song – 'Ramya hee swargahun lanka', set in raga Hindol and sung by Pandit Bhimsen Joshi. 7] Iye Marathichiye Nagari (1965) – In this film, Vasantrao Deshpande and Amar Shaikh has sung the songs. Pandit Jasraj, son in law of producer-director V. Shantaram has sung a song 'Vandana Karo'. Manna Dey and Mahendra Kapoor sang songs in his last Marathi film 'Tuch Majhi Rani'. The film was released in 1976 after his death.

In late forties, there was a heavy debate on 'The Anthem' of independent India, whether it should be 'Vande Mataram' or 'Jana Gana Mana'. Many musicians and singers were busy in setting up tunes to 'Vande Mataram' and trying to please and persuade several political leaders, especially to Vallabhbhai Patel and Pandit.Jawaharla Nehru. Their consent and approval was absolutely necessary. With the inspiration and insistence of producer-director V. Shantaram, Vasantrao Desai composed tunes suitable for singing in chorus and for playing on instruments. Three discs were issued on 'Young India' label. Vasantrao himself sang the song in the vocal version. Two separate discs of instrumental

version were issued using Indian and Western ensemble of instruments. Also one exclusive disc was issued for 'Playing in Theaters' only. Although these discs were issued commercially, today very few copies have survived and are in the safe hands of collectors in Mumbai. In 1955, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Vasant Rao met in one function at Delhi. Panditji talked to him about the neglect of music in the school education and especially of mass and choir singing. Vasant Rao listened to him carefully and accepted it as a challenge. He began to experiment with school children in Maharashtra. In 1958, he invited Panditji for a function at Shivaji park in Mumbai. In that function over one lakh school children sang 'Jana gana mana' in chorus and Panditji was moved with that presentation. Due to this novel experiment, he came in contact with Lal Bahadur Shastri, Smt. Indira Gandhi and many leaders. After the formation of Maharashtra state, he came in contact with the chief minister and governor and initiated a program 'Ek sur ek taal' for chorus and mass singing.

In his late fifties, around 1960, Vasant Rao wanted to retire from his career as a musician and settle at Hrishikesh in pursuit of spiritual life. He had chosen a place too. He was contented and satisfied over his achievements. But he was destined to achieve much more during last fifteen years of his life. During 1960-1975, he composed music for number of Marathi plays and set tunes for songs for school children and worked on this mission till his last breath.

Maharashtra state was formed in 1960 in a ceremony held on Shivaji Park at Dadar (in Mumbai) in presence of Prime Minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nahru. Lata Mangeshkar sang famous song 'Ghanashyam Sundara Shreedhara' and its tune was composed by Vasant Rao Desai. Madhukar Rao Chowdhury was the minister of education. He appointed Vasant Rao as the first 'Director of Music' of the Government of Maharashtra. He initiated many programs – most significant being 'Ek sur ek taal' consisting of mass singing of school children. He also put forth an idea of composing tunes to the Marathi poems in the school text books. His team of workers and volunteers included Mr. Bal Deshpande of Nasik and Mr. Kailashnath Jaiswal and Mr. Somnath Parab from Mumbai. Among the singers, Faiyaz, Pramila Datar, Vani Jairam and Jaiwant Kulkarni contributed a lot. These schemes and programs became very popular throughout the state from Chanda to Banda'. Through the wonderful bond between children and music, he established a unique relation with God. He used the Government machinery and structure as minimum as possible and believed in the spontaneous participation of citizens and children. He chose over 20 poems from Marathi text books and released a set of EP discs / records through Gramophone Company of India at Mumbai. During 1962 Chinese aggression, he set simple tune to G. D. Madgulkar's patriotic song 'Jinku Kinva Maru' and it was sung by thousands of children at Shivaji Park in Mumbai. Later, same song was sung by Mahendra Kapoor for Marathi film 'Chhota Jawan' and was issued on the gramophone disc. He had set up a troupe of artists among Mumbai mill workers who would present entertaining cum educative programs in rural Maharashtra. Both Vasant Rao Desai and G. D. Madgulkar were nominated members of the

Maharashtra government's legislative council. In early seventies, they worked for propaganda and congress party songs, election songs and even songs for propagating twenty point program of Government of India. One EP record cover containing speech of then chief minister S. B. Chavan has a photograph of Vasant Desai. He probably taught him some lessons of recording a speech for HMV disc. His friends would jokingly call him 'Sarkari Sangeetkar' - Musician of the government.



Around 1965, Maharashtra government put forth an idea of 'Konkan Railway' and proposed sale of special loan bonds for this dream project, to collect funds from citizens. For this, a propaganda song was penned by Mr. G. D. Madgulkar. This Marathi song was composed by Vasantrao Desai and sung by Asha Bhosle. Special 78-rpm disc in QC series was issued on a white label and circulated to all agencies of the government. Words of the song were –

'Phulanar bagwadi, phulnar shetwadi,
Ya konkanat aata, yenar aaggadee..

He received honorary title 'Padmashree' from Government of India in 1967.

In 1969, Maharashtra Government set up a committee to celebrate the birth centenary of Mohandas Karamchand alias Mahatma Gandhi. Madhurkarrao Choudhary was the President of this committee. He asked Vasantrao to set tunes to Gandhiji's favorite bhajans and prayers and release them on gramophone records for internal circulation. He showed him a letter written by

Gandhiji and asked if he can compose a tune to the prose. The letter was on the nature and the existence of God. Vasantaro accepted the challenge, set a wonderful tune and recorded it in the voice of Manna Dey. It was released on a special 78-rpm disc in QC series with credit – ‘Lyric: Gandhiji’. [Please see: a long article on this song included in this issue]

While working with state government under various schemes, Vasantrao was also busy in composing music for new Marathi stage plays. And that too in the so called golden period of Hindi films. Marathi stage of Balgandharva era was a part of history. Bal Gandharva himself had become very old; Smt. Heerabai Barodekar was on the verge of retirement. Acharya Atre however was writing drama and songs and his troupe ‘Atre Theaters’ was touring all over Maharashtra. New dramatists – Purushottam Darvhekar from Nagpur, Vasantrao Kanetkar and V. V. Shirwadkar alias ‘Kusumagraj’ from Nasik and Vidyadhar Gokhale and Bal Kolhatkar from Mumbai – had begun to emerge with new musical plays. New set of artists and directors had begun to emerge. However, there were very few musicians left who would compose good music. On this background, young dramatist Vidyadhar Gokhale wrote new musical drama – ‘Panditraj Jagannath’ and Bhalchandra Pendharkar of ‘Lalit Kaladarsh Company’ came forward to stage the shows. Mr. Pendharkar met Vasantrao Desai with a proposal to compose music for this new play. But he could not get time since he was too busy in other commitments. After waiting for two years, finally he could get music composed and the first show was in Delhi in the presence of Pandit Jawaharla Nehru. He was much pleased and expressed his feelings after the show. This drama set a new era and trend in the history of Marathi stage. As a result a series of new plays emerged viz. ‘Jay jay gauri shankar’, ‘Madanachi manjiri’, ‘Katyar kaljat ghusli’, ‘Mandarmala’, ‘Vahato hee durvanchi judi’, ‘Dev deenaghari dhavala’, ‘Preetisangam’, and ‘Shivray Kaveebhushan’.

In ‘Panditraj jagannath’, initially actor Prasad Savkar used to sing a song ‘Sawan ghan garaje’ in raga Megh Malhar. He used to sing it well but producer Bhalchandra Pendharkar was not very happy with it and felt that something is missing. So he asked dramatist and lyricist Vidyadhar Gokhale to write another song. Gokhale wrote – ‘Jay gange bhagirathi, har gange bhagirathi’ and gave it to Pendharkar who in turn handed it over to music director Vasantrao Desai, who was about to leave for a pilgrimage to Hrishikesh, along the banks of holy river ‘Ganga’. So, he took the song with him and composed it while he was residing on the banks of the river Ganga. Around that period, he was busy in composing music for film ‘Amar Samadhi’ and was in the company of famous singer Salamat Ali Khan. Salamat, in his concerts in Mumbai used to sing a combo raga – mixture of Kalavati and Basant. Vasantrao liked it very much and used it to compose tune for this song. So, mukhada (opening) of the song was in raga Kalavati and subsequent text of the lyric was composed in raga Basant. Upon return, he taught it to actor singer Prasad Savkar. The composition was bit unusual and not fitting in the traditional tunes of Marathi stage songs. Hence Savkar was not very happy about it. But after few shows it became so much

popular that it became the main attraction and signature tune of the drama and holds its status even today. This drama had thirty songs in it.

Later in 1966, another drama 'Jay jay gauri shankar', based on the life of Shankar and Parvati was staged and had twenty-eight songs. These were sung by renowned singers viz. Pandit Ram Marathe, Prasad Savkar, Bhalchandra Pendharkar and Jayashree Shejwadkar. 'Nirakar omkar', 'Surganga mangala', 'Jay jay rama raman shreerang', 'Narayana ramaramana' and 'Sawaj majhe gavasale' became very popular. Next drama 'Shabas Birbal Shabas' of 1970 was not successful but one song of that play – 'Vishwanath sutradhar, tuch shyam sundara' is known to music lovers even today.

In 1963, Bal Kolhatkar produced drama – 'Seemevarun parat ja' based on the conflict between Pauras and Sikandar, on the backdrop of Chinese aggression in 1962. Asha Bhosle sang one song 'Ha shabda nava, ha artha nava'. Since 1964, shows of Bal Kolhatkar's 'Vahato hee durvanchee judi' became popular all over Maharashtra. From its seven hundredth show, two songs were played on gramophone placed in the wings of the stage and the actors used them as a playback. These were sung by Sau. Manik Verma – 'Lavite mee niranjan' and 'Nighale aaj tikadchya gharee'. HMV released them on a 78-rpm disc first and then on EP record. These were best sellers for many years and used to be played on festive occasions and especially in marriage ceremony when the married daughter is given a farewell. This song is ever popular even today and many listeners become emotional.

In 1968, he composed music for Atre Theaters Marathi drama 'Preeti Sangam' based on the life of Sant Sakhu. It had twenty three songs sung by Jyotsna Mohile, Udairaj Godbole and Vishwanath Bagul. Some of the most famous songs were – 'Deha devache mandir', 'Kiti panduranga vahu sansaracha bhar', 'Krishna majhi mata, Krishna majha pita', 'Tu sunder chaphekali'. In 1970, he composed music for next Marathi drama - 'Dev deenaghari dhavala', based on the friendship of Bhagwan Krishna and his childhood friend Sudama. It was produced by Bal Kolhatkar and had twelve songs. Two songs sung by Smt. Vani Jairam and Pandit Kumar Gandharva became popular – 'Runanubandhachya jithun padlya gathee' and 'Uthee uthee gopala'. HMV released them on EP record and it is a collector's item now.

In 'Shivray Kaveebhushan, Vasantrao composed two songs in the voice of legendary singer Pandit Kumar Gandharva – 'Panghat Kativari' and 'Prakat Hot Man Mor'. In the drama 'Avagha Anandee Anand', Bhimsen Joshi sang a song with the same words. The song was composed in raga Hindol. These dramas were not successful and had only few shows. Later, Mr. Bal Kolhatkar took initiative and released some songs in two cassette set – 'Natya Purnima'. These tapes too have become rare now.

Vasantrao composed music for over fifteen Marathi drama (stage play songs) consisting of over 175 songs. He also composed back ground music for these plays. Composing background score was a specialty of his music and career. In his life span of over 60 years, he composed music for over 800 songs. These include film, drama and propaganda songs for government schemes and programs. He lived a clean and pure life and had no vices. This was a very difficult achievement in the environment in which he worked. Chary Atre used to wonder and praise Vasantrao for this unusual virtue in him. He was fond of classical music concerts, good food and gymnasium. He was unmarried and had a great respect and honor towards women. He served as a President of Marathi Natya Parishad and Marathi Sahitya Sammelan. In his last days, he was busy in preparations for his film 'Surtaal' – dedicated to music. Due to sudden death, this work too remained unaccomplished. After his death, his nephew produced a 90 minutes documentary film – 'Vasantashree'. Over thirty five years have passed after his death. His music and songs however, are fresh and pleasant and shall remain 'Immortal'



A summary of total number of songs

Hindi Films – 49, songs – 375

Marathi Films – 20, songs - 145

Marathi stage drama – 15, songs – 175

Chorus songs and propaganda songs – about 100

Total number of songs - 800

Singers of Hindi film songs

Ameerbai Karnataki, Asha Bhosle, Ustad Ameer Khan, Aarti Mukherjee, Shahir Amar Shaikh, Ashok Kumar, Balakram (Worlikar), Baby Renu, Dilraj Kaur, Kumari Faiyaaz, Gulraj, Geeta Dutt, G. M. Durrani, Hemant Kumar, Harindranath Chattopadhyay, Hemlata, Indu, Jayashree (Kamulkar), Johrabai Ambalawali, Zeenat Begum, J. K. Banerjee, Kalyani, Kausalya (Manjeshwar), Khan Mastana, Kumar, Krishna Goyal, Kamal Barot, Lata Mangeshkar, Lalita Deulkar (Phadke), Laxmi Shankar, Muhammad Rafi, Manmohan Krishna, Mohantara Talpade, Manna Dey, Mahendra Kapoor, Nalini Gupte, Naseem Akhtar, Narayan, Nalini Jaywant, Pandeji, Pahadi Sanyal, Parshuram, Premnath, Pushpa Hans, Premlata, Pradeep, Pandit Jasraj, Rajkumari, Shobhana Samarth, Shahu Modak, Shreenivas, Shanta Apte, Shamshad Begum, Surendra, Subeer Sen, Sarla, Suman Kalyanpur, Sushma Shreshtha, Salamat Ali, Talat Mehmood, Usha Timothee, Valisaheb, Vani Jayram, Yakub and self – Vasantryao Desai

Lyricists (song writers) of Hindi film

A. Kareem, Aziz, Anand Bakshi, Behjad Lakhnavi, Bharat Vyas, Balkavi Bairagi, Diwan Sharar, Dr. Mohammad Iqbal, G. S. Potdar, Gulzar, Hasrat Jaipuri, Harindranath Chattopadhyay, Hafiz, Khumar Barabankvi, Moti B. A., Majrooh Sultanpuri, Madhukar Rajasthani, Narendra Sharma, Niranjana Shreevastav, Niranjana Sharma, Najim Panipati, Noor Lakhanavi, Pandit Indra, Pandit Ratanpiya, Pandit Sudarshan, Prem Dhavan, Pandit Radheshyam, Pradeep, Raja Mehendi Ali Khan, Rajendra Krishna, Saint Narsi Mehta, S. R. Chopda, Shums Lakhnavi, S. R. Saz, Saraswatikumar 'Deepak', Saint Meerabai, Yogesh and Vasantryao Desai.

Singers of Marathi songs

Asha Bhosle, Ustad Ameer Khan, Appa Inamdar, Amar Shaikh, Bheemsen Joshi, Bhoomanand Bogam, Phulaji Boa, Hridaynath Mangeshkar, Jayram Shiledar, Jaywant Kulkarni, K. Jaiswal, Kumar Gandharva, Lalita Parulkar, Lata Mangeshkar, Meena Mangeshkar, Mahendra Kapoor, Mallesh, Minoo Puroshottam, Manna Dey, Panditrao Nagarkar, Pramila Datar, Ram Marathe, Sulochana Chavan, Suresh Haldankar, Shahir Sable, Suman Kalyanpur, Shobha

Gurtu, Talat Mehmood, Usha Mangeshkar, Vasantrya Deshpande, Vaghmare, Vani Jairam.

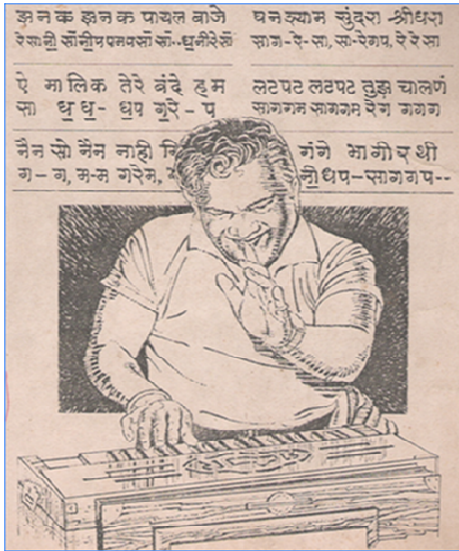
Lyricists of Marathi songs

Acharya Atre, Amar Shaikh, G. D. Madgulkar, Kavee Girish, Honaji Bala, Jagadish Khebudkar, Madhav Patkar, Parshuram Kavee, P. Savlaram, Shahir Ramjoshi, Rajesh Mujumdar, Sanjeevani Marathe, Shree Shankar Shastri, Suryakant Khandekar, Sant Tukaram, Sudheer Moghe, Vasant Sabnis, Vasant Kanetkar, Rajkavee Yeshwant and Yogesh

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फिल्मोग्राफी : श्री .विश्वाम नेरुरकर



लेखक : श्री .मधू पोतदार

Lyricist Gandhiji – Revisited

September 20, 2012. 'Ganesh' festival holiday. So, set out for a short trip cum outing to Ahmadabad, (Gujarat, India) with my wife. As this was the first visit, tour to 'Akshardham' temple and 'Sabarmati ashram' were on top priorities. Akshardham temple was a very nice place but it was quite hot outside the temple as we set out towards Sabarmati. Car driver too was quite restless due to this unusual heat. However, as we approached the town, suddenly the atmosphere changed with black clouds in the sky and a real transfer scene. It was getting ready to pour anytime.

Just before this visit, I had read a nice book 'Meera and Mahatma' by Sudheer Kakkar. It had many pages describing this sacred place. This was an ideal laboratory for preparing volunteers for freedom struggle and 'Satyagraha'. Gandhiji had spent several years here with his novel experiments in many fields. His disciple and close associate Meeraben also spent many years of her youth. She was a British lady but had faith in Gandhiji's philosophy and joined his work at Sabarmati. This book describes lives of Meera and Mahatma, a young revolutionary Prithvising occupying her life for a while, Gandhiji's advice to her in such a situation and so on. So, I had lots of vague images of that period and people in my mind.

Akshardham temple is located far away from town and the ashram is now quite inside the city. The temple has lot of strict security due to a terrorist attack few years ago. However as we drove into the ashram straight from the busy road, even a security guard was not clearly visible. The straight road took us to the banks of Sabarmati River. On right, old buildings of the ashram were seen whereas on left modern exhibition area and book shop attracted our attention. Next to this area, Bapu statue has been installed in a lawn. He is in a sitting yogic posture, wearing loin cloth, body covered with another cloth and looking towards the old place where he had moved actively during 1920-35. While glancing on either side of the road we reached the riverside and spent quite some time silently. Now both the banks have concrete walls and quite modern amenities and many bridges joining two ends of the town. We could have spent more time but water droplets forced us to move away. So, we went to the Meeraben's hut – once made out of mud and rough floor, now in a memorial with nice flooring and her photograph on the wall. By the time we reached Bapu's Kuti called 'Hriday-Kunj', it actually began to drizzle. Many visitors were drawn in to avoid heavy rains. This is a rather large place with a spacious verandah – courtyard. On one side, Bapu's personal belongings viz. spinning wheel (Charkha), writing table and dining table have been preserved and the room with a meshed door is locked. Visitors were taking pictures from the window in the door. On the other side, replica of the charkha and writing desk are placed. Visitors were encouraged to handle them and get a feel of the atmosphere. Many young and old persons were busy in canning the moments in the mobile pictures and videos.



Bapu statue (L) and his hut Hriday-Kunj (R)

At the center of the corridor, my wife drew my attention to 'The Prayer' inscribed just below Gandhiji's oil painting. I sat down to read it carefully. It had two prayers, one in Devnagri (Hindi) and another in Roman Script. I knew the Hindi version well due to the gramophone record in my collection. I had written a long article on it in 'The record news' – TRN 2011 [reproduced below, at the end of this article]. This was a gramophone disc issued by Maharashtra Government during Gandhiji's birth centenary (1969). This prayer was sung by Manna Dey and Chorus. Music was composed by Vasant Desai and credit for the lyrics was given to Gandhiji. Left over copies of this disc ended up in Mumbai Chor Bazaar and some of them were found by me in one of the Friday visits to this flea market. There is also a story cum myth in circulation, viz. this was a letter written by Gandhiji to little Maniben (daughter of Vallabh Bhai Patel) when she asked several questions about God and its existence.



(L) – Bapu's close room, (R) - visitors with charkha,

This was quite surprising and raised several questions in my mind: if this prayer was so old then what was the tune for singing? Was it sung by Bapuji himself with the disciples? And how is it sung today and what changes have occurred in the basic tune in all these years. I saw one lady employee talking to the visitors and hence decided to ask her. She said, 'this prayer is never sung in last so many years. Once an English woman had recited it here and she only read the English version in roman script. You might get some more information with our secretary in the office'. I was shocked and just took out my mobile and put it near

the prayer plaque. I had Manna Da's song loaded in it. As the sweet voice of Manna Da began to fill the atmosphere, many visitors and employees flocked in to listen to it quietly. I played it couple of times and was quite moved. By this time another employee came with a booklet and a bunch of keys. The booklet contained words of this prayer in Gujrathi too. Credit for all the three versions was given as M. K. Gandhi. Now we were special guests and the locked room was opened for us and we were invited to enter. This was quite a surprise and an exciting experience for us. We went in and saw Bapu's room with moist eyes. By this time it had begun to rain heavily, as if we were destined to spend more time in this sacred place. So we went to backyard where Kasturba used to live and had a little kitchen and a guest room. We sat there for a while. As we came from Maharashtra and Mumbai, many questions were asked like – 'what was the role of V. D. Savarkar in the assassination of Gandhiji? How is it that Maharashtra people love and hate Bapu with a similar intensity? Etc. While discussing, I imagined that Bapu too would have joined us had he been alive.



Disc label of 'The Prayer' inscribed in the Bapu-kuti at Sabarmati Ashram

Soon the rains stopped and we set out to leave. Still, the questions regarding the prayer were haunting me. So, we went to the exhibition area to meet senior person Mr. Amrut Mody, Secretary of the Ashram. He listened to my query patiently and meanwhile called his assistant over phone. A young lady came in with a register in her hand. She was writing something in it and listening to us patiently. Soon she called peon and asked to



प्रार्थना

हे जगन्ना के सागर !
दीन भोंगी की हीन कुटिया के निवासी
गंगा यमुना और ब्रह्मपुत्र के जलों से सिंचित
जिस सुंदर देशमें तुझे सब जगह खोजने में
हमें मदद दे।
हमें गहनशीलता और खुला दिल दे,
तेरी अपनी जगता दे,
भारत की जलता से अकरुण हीरो की
शक्ति और उत्कंठा दे।

हे जगन्ना !
तु जहाँ मदद के लिये आता है
जब अक्षय प्रभु काकर तेरी शरण लेता है।
हमें चखल दे,
कि सेवक और मित्र के साथ
जिस जनता की हम सेवा करना चाहते हैं
उस से कहीं जगज्ज ल पक जाये
हमें त्याग, शक्ति
और जगता की सृति बना
चाकि इस देश को
हम ज्यादा सज्जों और ज्यादा चाहें।

मो. क. गांधी

PRAYER

Lord of humility,
dwelling in the little pariah hut
Help us to search for Thee throughout
that fair land Watered by Ganges,
Brahmaputra and Jamuna.
Give us receptiveness.
Give us open heartedness.
Give us Thy humility.
Give us the ability and willingness
To identify ourselves
with the masses of India.

O God !
who does help only when man
feels utterly humble. Grant that we
may not be isolated from the people.
We would serve as servants and friends.
Let us be embodiments of self sacrifices
embodiments of godliness.
humility personified that we may know
the land better and love it more.

M. K. Gandhi

PRAYER

Lord of humility !

Dwelling in the little pariah hut
Help us to search for Thee throughout
that fair land Watered by Ganges,
Brahmaputra and Jamuna.
Give us receptiveness.
Give us open heartedness.
Give us Thy humility.
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O God !
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We would serve as servants and friends.
Let us be embodiments of self sacrifices,
embodiments of godliness,
humility personified, that we may know
the land better and love it more.

-M. K. Gandhi

પ્રાર્થના

નમ્રતાના નિધિ હે !

દીન ભંગી તણી હીન કુટિયા મહી
નિવસતા નમ્રતાના નિધિ હે !
જાહનવી, બ્રહ્મપુત્ર તણાં જળ વહે,
સરિત યમુના તણાં પુણ્ય ગહરાં
એહ સુંદર અહો દેશમાં શોધવા,
સૌ મથીએ તને, સહાય તું થા ! - દીન...
થાય મન મોકળાં, હૃદય ખુલ્લાં રહે,
હે હરિ તાહરી નમ્રતા દે !
ભૂમિભારત તણા લોકથી એકરસ
થૈ જવા શક્તિ મતિ ને સ્પૃહા દે ! - દીન...
હે પ્રભુ ! સહાય તું થાય છે માત્ર જ્યાં
થઈ રહે નર નિરાધાર છેક;
મિત્ર ચાકર બની સેવીએ લોક જે,
તેથી વિખૂટા ન પડીએ, તું દેખ. - દીન...
આત્મબલિદાનની મૂર્તિ થઈએ અમે,
દિવ્ય મૂર્તિમતી નમ્રતા શા,
જેથી આ ભૂમિનું થાય દર્શન સુભગ
ને વહે એ પ્રતિ પ્રેમધારા. - દીન...

-મો. ક. ગાંધી

પ્રાર્થના

હે નમ્રતા કે સાગર !

દીન ભંગી કી હીન કુટિયા કે નિવાસી
ગંગા યમુના ઓર બ્રહ્મપુત્રા કે જલો સે સિંચિત
અિસ સુંદર દેશમેં તુઝે સબ જગહ ઝોજને મેં
હમેં મદદ દે ।
હમેં ગ્રહણશીલતા ઓર યુલા દિલ દે;
તેરી અપની નમ્રતા દે;
ભારત કી જનતાસે એકરૂપ હોને કી
શક્તિ ઓર ઝત્કંઠાદે ।
હે ભગવન્ !
તૂ તખી મદદ કે લિયે આતા હૈ,
જબ મનુષ્ય શૂન્ય બનકર તેરી શરણ લેતા હૈ ।
હમેં વરદાન દે,
કિ સેવક ઓર મિત્ર કે નાતે
જિસ જનતા કી હમ સેવા કરના ચાહતે હૈં
અસ સે કબી અલગ ન પડ જાયેં.
હમેં ત્યાગ, ભક્તિ
ઓર નમ્રતા કી મૂર્તિ બના
તાકિ અસ દેશ કો
હમ જ્યાદા સમઝેં ઓર જ્યાદા ચાહેં ।

-મો. ક. ગાંધી

get 'The collected works of Mahatma Gandhi-vol. 58'. She saw the index quickly and opened up page 436 for me to show the original 'A prayer'. Dated late September 1934, this was a note added to the letter sent to F. Mary Barr. In turn this was a request of Miss Linforth of Chennai to get some message from Bapu. I also learnt that the Gujrathi version was penned by Bhanvarilal whereas Hindi translation was prepared by Uma Shankar Joshi. Reading my mind, a photocopy of this page was promptly given to me. I was now totally stunned with the revelation of 'The Truth' at this sacred place. As we thanked all and were about to leave, Amrutbhai asked me if I can give them a copy of the song? They want to play it at Bapu Kutī. Of course I had it with me on the mobile for quick transfer using Bluetooth. So, visitors henceforth will hopefully listen to 'The Prayer' while they are reading it at the Bapu Kutī corridor.

Dr. Suresh Chandvankar, Hon. Secretary, 'Society of Indian Record Collectors'
September 21, 2012.

485. A PRAYER¹

[On or before *September 12, 1934*]²

Lord of humility, dwelling in the little pariah hut, help us to search for Thee throughout that fair land watered by Ganges, Brahmaputra and Jumna. Give us receptiveness, give us open-heartedness, give us Thy humility, give us the ability and willingness to identify ourselves with the masses of India.

O God, who does help only when man feels utterly humble, grant that we may not be isolated from the people we would serve as servants and friends. Let us be embodiments of self-sacrifice, embodiments of godliness, humility personified, that we may know the land better and love it more.

Bapu—Conversations and Correspondence, pp. 88-9

^{1&2} The prayer was an enclosure to "Letter to F. Mary Barr", pp. 437-8. In the source, Mary Barr explains: "Miss Linforth is an Englishwoman who was then working at a Hyderabad Welfare Centre run by an inter-communal committee of Hindus, Mussalmans, Christians and Parsis. She had asked me to get Gandhi to give her a message. So he enclosed in his letter to me this little prayer, which she framed and put in her Centre."

³ The addressee had sought Gandhiji's permission to go back to Khurja to attend to his ailing son.

⁴ *Vide* p. 443.

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The collected Works of Mahatma Gandhi
Vol. - 58

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Lyricist Gandhiji –
Namrata ke Saagar or Samrat?

Namrata Ke Sagar [2008]

Recently 'You Tube' has featured a very interesting video based on Gandhiji's Bhajan - 'O Namrata Ke Sagar'. It could be viewed at –

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z86LscyJhNY>

The song is sung by Pt. Ajay Chakraborty and ending words are by Pt. Bhimsen Joshi. Mr. Amitabh Bachhan appears at the end, reciting some of the verses of the bhajan. This bhajan 'O Namrata ke Sagar' was chanced upon by the

illustrious Aditya Birla family of India three years ago. They say that it must have been written by Mahatmaji at their house where Bapuji used to stay often. The composition pleads God to bestow humility on the people and bless the country with prosperity. Reportedly, neither the Congress nor the Gandhi family had any inkling about its existence. The Aditya Birla Group is going to introduce a music album soon, of which this bhajan of Mahatma Gandhi sung in Big B's voice is going to be a part of the album. The music for 'O Namrata ke Sagar' has been composed by southern maestro Ilayaraja. Sources inform that the Mahatma's bhajan is more like a prayer or soliloquy without poetic meter.

The lyric in this video sounds like –

He Namrata ke sagar, teri apni namrata de

He bhagvan tu tabhi Madad ke liye aata hai?

Jab manushya shunya bankar teri sharan leta hai

Hindustan ki janatase, ek roop honeki shakti do utkantha de

The video is a spectacular one and made beautifully with lot of money spent and may become a hit if it reaches out properly. It is interesting to trace the origin and the history of this unusual song.

'He Namratake Samrat': August 1969– cut on a special 78 rpm record



Specially mfd. By The Gramophone Company of India Ltd.
For Gandhi Centenary Committee (Maharashtra State).
Hindi QC 1870 OJW 7530.
Manna Dey and chorus.
Music: Vasant Desai [Mfd. C.1970)

Transcript of the song from this gramophone record is

He Namrata ke Samrat, He Namrata ke Samrat,

Deen bhangi ki heen kutiya ke nivasi,
Deen bhangi ki heen kutiya ke nivasi,
Ganga yamuna aur godavari ke jalonse
Sinchit isa sundar deshmen
Tujhe sab jage khojanemen, hamen madad de
Hamen grahan sheelata aur khula dil de
Teri apni namrata de, teri apni namrata de,
Bharat ki janatase ekroop honeki,
Shakti aur utkantha de, shakti aur utkantha de, he bhagvan
He bhagvan,
Tu tabhi Madad ke liye aata hai
Jab manushya shunya bankar teri sharan leta hai
Hamen vardan de, hamen vardan de
Ki Sevak aur mitrake naate,
Isa janataki hum seva karna chahate hain
Usa se kabhi alag na pad jaye,
Usa se kabhi alag na pad jaye,
Hamen tyag bhakti aur namrataki moorti bana
Taki isa deshko hum jyada samjhe aur jyada chahe
Hamen vardan de hamen vardan de
He bhagvan, He bhagvan, He Bhagvan

Clearly this is not a poem but reads like a prose.

Recently I talked to Mr. Bal Deshpande on Phone. He lives at Nasik. As soon as I asked him about this record and the song, he began to sing it. This is because he was closely associated with Mr. Vasant Desai and was present at the recording of this song in Mumbai. He told me that this is neither a poem nor a bhajan, but a letter. Gandhiji wrote it to Maniben Patel, daughter of sardar vallabh bhai Patel. Young Mani had asked gandhiji some questions about the God. How does he look like, where does he stay? Where can I find him? What should I ask him? This letter was found by Mr. Madhukar Rao Chowdhury who was the President of the "Gandhi Centenary Committee" set up in 1968. Vasant Rao Desai was closely associated with the cultural and music department of Maharashtra State and had launched 'Ek Sur Ek Taal' movement among school children. Mr. Chowdhury requested him to set tune to this letter and thus the letter took the form of a song. Special records were made by state Government and distributed to its institutions. Many copies were lying in cellar and later on scrapped. Die hard record collectors found few copies in Mumbai 'Chor Bazaar' and thus this part of the history was preserved.

- Dr. Suresh Chandvankar

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Cardboard 78 Player from India

Ref. <http://arcmusic.wordpress.com/>

13 11 2012



For video: Please see –

http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=f19cah5kNUM

While in India I had the great pleasure of meeting Suresh Chandvankar, a scholar and one of the catalysts behind the Society of Indian Record Collectors (SIRC). He also spoke at the IASA conference in New Delhi, is an author and has helped Dust to Digital to release material from the Young India Label. His true love is Indian Classical music on 78s. He was also my guide to the record haunts in Chor Bazaar (Thieves Market), Mumbai.

One of the treasures that he showed me was this attempt to create a portable record player for the masses, for pennies (film below). He remembers finding this simple, ingenious device while hiking in the Himalayas forty years ago. At first he thought the cardboard was there just to separate the two discs until the seller told him that he could only buy the records if he bought the gramophone also. “What gramophone?” was his bewildered response? And to his amazement the cardboard was unfolded and the player revealed. To his amazement the two discs and player was six rupees (11¢). Here’s how it works;

The corrugated cardboard is divided into three folded sections. On one end is a revolving metal disc with a spindle, on the other a metal stylus (needle). The 78

rpm record has a spindle hole and a small hole on the outer edge of the label to insert a pen, pencil or stick. The cardboard is folded to make a triangular shape, the stylus placed on the record, the triangular fold acting as a resonator. The user insets the pen and hand cranks the disc, and voila, an early walkman.

It's an iffy sounding system, but then again, it does indeed create a gramophone for practically nothing. The designers were proselytizing Christians, hell-bent on bringing "The Good News" to, in their minds, the heathen Hindus. The disc containing sermons, Bible stories and quotations. The only info I could glean from a partially obscured label states that this is a "Card talk Record Player" manufactured in Bangalore.

So feel free to make one of these at home, a great add to our DIY plastic cup cylinder disc player @ <http://arcmusic.wordpress.com/2007/07/29/anti-iphone-contest-all-systems-go/>

For fine academic work on early Indian sound recordings see back issues of Record Collectors News published by the SIRC that Suresh has made available online, downloadable as PDFs

– <http://hindi-movies-songs.com/sirc/index-sirc.html>

B.George, USA

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7 responses

13 11 2012



Ceints de bakélite (12:26:07) :

I have to try this!!! Thanks a lot for this interesting post!

13 11 2012



Rainer E. Lotz (13:12:52) :

Actually, those missionaries distributed the system around the globe, from Patagonia to Zanskar and beyond, in all imaginable languages. Discs and cardboard reproducers could be manufactured with locally available material. I obtained a batch of several African languages in Capetown. Rainer E. Lotz, Germany

13 11 2012



bgeorge (13:58:02) :

Did you get discs AND players?

Reply

13 11 2012



Rainer E. Lotz (14:44:13) :

Yes, sure. I still have four record & "cardtalk grammaphone" player combinations in Shangaan, Pedi, Venda andTswana (the others went in auction on one of our auction lists. As well I have mimeographed instructions on how to use these creatures (The Phonetic Trouble Shooter), like what to do when the sound is tinny or muffled... And also three different illustrated printed folders from "Gospel Recordings". They claimed to have produced 12 million records in 4000 languages for 170 countries. They also offered more "sophisticated" hand-wound "grammaphones", and even hand-wound cassette players. Rainer E. Lotz, Germany

13 11 2012



suresh chandvankar (14:57:08) :

Wow Rainer! Is there is any article on this topic?? May be some archives do have copies of these inexpensive players. Interesting to explore.

13 11 2012



DJ in NZ (20:28:42) :

Still spreading the word...

<http://globalrecordings.net/en/222>

Reply

14 11 2012



suresh chandvankar (00:15:21) :

Great to know about similar efforts for cassettes and CD's. Yes words and images are very strong communicators. Suresh

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BOOK REVIEW:

“Sangeet Ratna: The Jewel of Music “- A Bio-discography



Author - Michael Kinnear, Australia

Khan Abdul Karim Khan—A Bio-Discography (Australia: Bazakhana, 2003)

Mr. Michael Kinnear has published this book from Australia recently. Around 1973, Mr. Kinnear chanced to listen to Abdul Karim Khan's gramophone records and was fascinated with the music. He then decided to write a bio-discography of Karim Khan. This book is the outcome of painstaking research conducted over thirty years. Khan Saheb Abdul Karim Khan (1873-1937) was a legendary Indian vocalist of the 20th century. Born in the village of Kairana in North India, Abdul Karim Khan left his native place in 1890, never to return. He spent most of his active life as a musician in Maharashtra. Initially he served in the state of Baroda state. He had to flee from that service due to his association with Tarabai Mane, a student who was also a member of the Baroda royal family. They settled at Miraj in south Maharashtra. He established Music schools (Sangeet Vidyalayas) at Belgaum, Miraj, Pune and in Bombay. He also pioneered ticketed shows of classical music. These were organized in order to collect funds in aid of the schools that he had established. He also served in the state of Mysore, where he was honored with the title 'Sangeet Ratna'. This book traces the life of Karim Khan, and his pioneering work as teacher, researcher, and propagator of Indian classical music. Half the book is devoted to his musical as well as personal life.

His wife Tarabai Mane left him in 1922. She worked hard to set up careers in music for her five talented children: Abdul Rehman (Sureshbabu Mane), Champakali alias Champutai (Heerabai Barodekar), Gulab (Kamalabai

Barodekar), Sakina alias Chotutai (Saraswati Mane {Rane}) and Abdul Hamid alias Papa (Krishnarao Mane). The separation was a big jolt to Karim Khan, and although he continued his career, his music changed after that, and became full of pathos and sorrow. He later married another disciple, Bannubi Latkar, and settled in Miraj. He passed away on a railway platform in 1937 while returning from a concert tour from South India.

The second half of the book describes his gramophone records (discography). Khansaheb made recordings in two sessions – first in 1905 in Bombay at S. Rose & Co. – a place near the present location of Rhythm House, opposite the Jehangir Art Gallery. He cut 32 songs, each of 90-150 second duration. The singing on these early records is quite forceful and exhibits his skills at a very young age. About 22 of these songs were reissued by HMV in 1994 as part of the 'Chairman's Choice' series. He then refused all other offers for recording. In 1932, however, Bai Sundrabai persuaded him to cut records for the German Odeon company, then conducting recordings in Bombay. During 1932-36, he recorded over 25 songs, each of 4-5 minutes duration. These included classical, light classical, Marathi drama songs, bhajans, Canarese songs as well as instrumental music for the Been. Michael Kinnear gives a detailed and professional discographic account of the records, along with label photographs of discs and of the test records that were sent to Karim Khan for his approval prior to issuing in market.

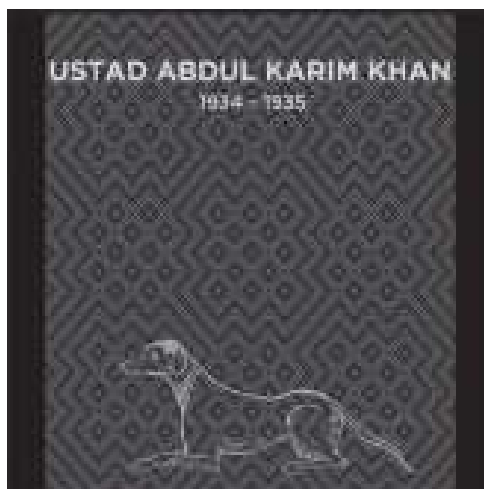
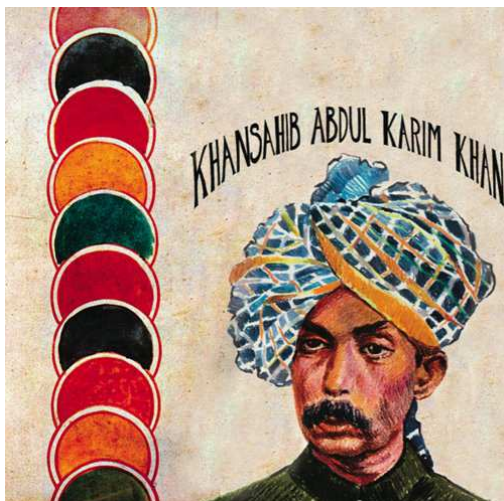
This book also gives an historical account of several important events that took place in Karim Khan's period. We have details about the lives, professional careers, and recordings of Tarabai and her children, Abdul Karim's brothers Abdul Latif and Abdul Haque, his uncle Abdul Wahid Khan, as well as other vocalists of the period, such as Rahimat Khan Huddu Khan, Roshan Ara Begum and Saraswatibai Mirajkar (Bannubai Latkar)

The book is lavishly decorated with a large number of black and white photographs and maps, as well as a nice portrait of Karim Khan on the cover. The back page shows Karim Khan in a recording session for 'Odeon'. In 1973, in commemoration of Abdul Karim's birth centenary, Mr. Balkrishnaboa Kapileshwari published a 900-page book on Abdul Karim in Marathi. An English translation was published subsequently. However, there has been no other books before this on his life, music, and records. Khan Saheb's records have been reissued in LP and cassette format, and now on compact disc. This book will provide the listeners with an account of Abdul Karim Khan's life, and add to their listening pleasure.

Suresh Chandvankar, Hon. Secretary, *Society of Indian Record Collectors*
Email: chandvankar@yahoo.com

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Khansahab Ustad Abdul Karim Khan's songs reissued



For details, Please see

<http://www.discogs.com/Khansahib-Abdul-Karim-Khan-Khansahib-Abdul-Karim-Khan/release/3015187>

and

<http://www.phonicarecords.com/product/view/104477>

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A BOLLYWOOD VINYL “MINE”

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Friends,

The possibility to find in Europe Bollywood record material is quite low, except for some countries where Indian communities are deeply rooted since generations. In my life of collector and researcher of jazz and dance-band music (and not as a Bollywood fan), I had never come across such material but generally, as they say, “Never say Never”! The opportunity came when a friend of mine told me about the possibility of buying an 'interesting vinyl collection of film soundtracks, including some jazz score, on LPs, 10 "and 45s format.

For obvious reasons of privacy, I'll omit here the specific details regarding the source and origin of this material, however, I won't forget to mention that this collection had a broad overview of film music focused on American cinema, embracing a major portion of European cinema, including Italian, from the beginning of the sound film industry, until the early 90s. Among the special features, many soundtracks had been stored in multiple copies, especially when the covers looked different, belonging to different pressings from various countries all over world.

Once there, I spent many days in “exploring” this **vinyl mine**, “extracting”, with renewed and growing awe, obscure soundtracks from the shelves, of which I was not even aware of. Many of these Original Soundtracks come from a wide variety of countries, with several examples of Argentine, Brazilian and South American cinema, next to rare documents of ethnic music and exotic film music. So “digging”, within this cinematic kaleidoscope of a thousand ethnic groups, I came across a significant number of Indian Cinema records, popularly known as “Bollywood” in India.

Issued on a wide variety of formats (45s, 10" and 12" LPs) this Bollywood material can generally be divided into three main groups:

1) Indian cinema, from partition to the mid 60's;

2) Indian cinema of the 70's, with many films testifying the first instances of change by the youth generations, within the early transformations of Indian

society of late '60s;

3) Indian cinema of the 80's inevitably oriented towards a progressive westernization of the costumes;

In addition to these three main categories, mainly in Hindi language, there are also some rare examples of Bengali, Tamil and Pakistani film, but in small numbers. One of the exclusive features to this Bollywood collection is the immaculate condition of the records that, most likely, were purchased locally from selected shops that probably used to import brand new and unplayed vinyls. You all surely know very well the problems related with proper storage of vinyl records in India: in this collection however, vinyls magically appear unplayed, still preserved in their inner sleeve, while covers look handled with extreme care. In short, a real rarity for every discerning collector.

Among the LP worthy of note I want to mention an original pressing on Angel label of "MERE SANAM" (1965) by OP Nayyar, two original Odeon by R.D. Burman "SEETA AUR GEETA " (1972) and the "holy grail of Bollywood records", "GARAM MASALA "(1972). Furthermore, two other original Odeon by Shankar Jaikishan," APRIL FOOL "(1970) and "ANDAZ" (1972) and two second prints, equally difficult to find, "UPAASNA" by Kalyanji Anandji and "MOTHER INDIA" by Naushaad. All of them are in great condition.



But the most unique characteristics is represented by some rare examples of film soundtracks of the '60s, issued, for reasons as yet undetermined, by the Israeli label Ron-Ly, with clear lettering in Hebrew on the labels and on the cover. It is therefore undeniable that such material circulated, although only in limited number, among the Hebrew speaking population, since the back cover included a pictorial selection of the most recent releases of various music by Ron-Ly, with description of content written in Hebrew language and script.



Personally, I also asked myself whether in Israel was present an Indian community so large as to require a record production of Bollywood repertoire in their based country. Unfortunately my ignorance on this specific subject has not been able to answer this question.



In this article, you will find some examples of covers reproduced by Ron-Ly, nowadays mostly gone to enrich important collections of passionate enthusiasts. The uniqueness and rarity of these vinyls is mainly offered by the extraordinary originality of the covers, almost always artistically drawn. It is assumed that the Ron-Ly had difficulty reproducing photographic images, perhaps for reasons of copyright, and therefore realized these unique covers thanks to the hand of experienced draftsmen, masters of painting, with a touch of vivid and brilliant color. Among the vinyl shown here, a special attention deserves the cover of "MOTHER INDIA", with strong and dramatic subject enhanced by dark colors, and pictorial portrait of the main characters of the film.





Other discs offered are:

"PHOOL AUR PATTAR" and "KASHMIR KI KALI".

"JAB PYAR KISI SE HOTA HAI" and "JANWAAR "

offer a selection of music on 10" with photographic covers taken from the movie. The only LPs by Ron-Ly appearing in a poor state of preservation are "SURAJ" and "BRAHMACHARI" that are here reported for exclusive historical and documentary value.



**** Thanks to Mr. Raj Chandarana, U.K. for providing the jacket pictures reproduced below.**





Remembering Pandit Ravi Shankar (1920-2012)

On 6 December 2012, Shankar was admitted to Scripps Memorial Hospital in La Jolla, San Diego, California, USA after complaining of breathing difficulties. He died on 11 December 2012 at around 16:30 PST. According to his spokesman, Stuart Wolferman, Shankar died at a hospital near his home in Encinitas, California. '*The Ravi Shankar Foundation*' issued a statement that read: 'Shankar had suffered from upper-respiratory and heart issues over the past year and underwent heart-valve replacement surgery on 6 December 2012'.



Personal Life

Shankar married Allauddin Khan's daughter Annapurna Devi in 1941 and his son Shubhendra Shankar was born in 1942. Shankar separated from Devi during the 1940s and had a relationship with Kamala Shastri, a dancer, beginning in the late 1940s. An affair with Sue Jones, a New York concert producer, led to the birth of Norah Jones in 1979. After separating from Kamala Shastri in 1981, Anoushka Shankar was born to Shankar and Sukanya Rajan. Shankar, however, lived with Sue Jones until 1986. He married Sukanya Rajan, (whom he had known since the 1970's) in 1989 at Chilkur Temple in Hyderabad, India.

Shubhendra: "Shubho" Shankar often accompanied his father on tours. He could play the *sitar* and *surbahar*, but elected not to pursue a solo career. He died in 1992. Norah Jones became a successful musician in the 2000s, winning eight Grammy Awards in 2003. Anoushka Shankar was nominated for a Grammy Award for Best World Music Album in 2003. Anoushka and her father were nominated for Best World Music Album at the 2013 Grammy Awards for separate albums. Shankar was a Hindu and a vegetarian. He wore a large diamond ring which he said was "manifested" by Sathya Sai Baba. He lived with Sukanya in Encinitas, California.

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A Yogi, A Sitar Player And The City of Bombay,

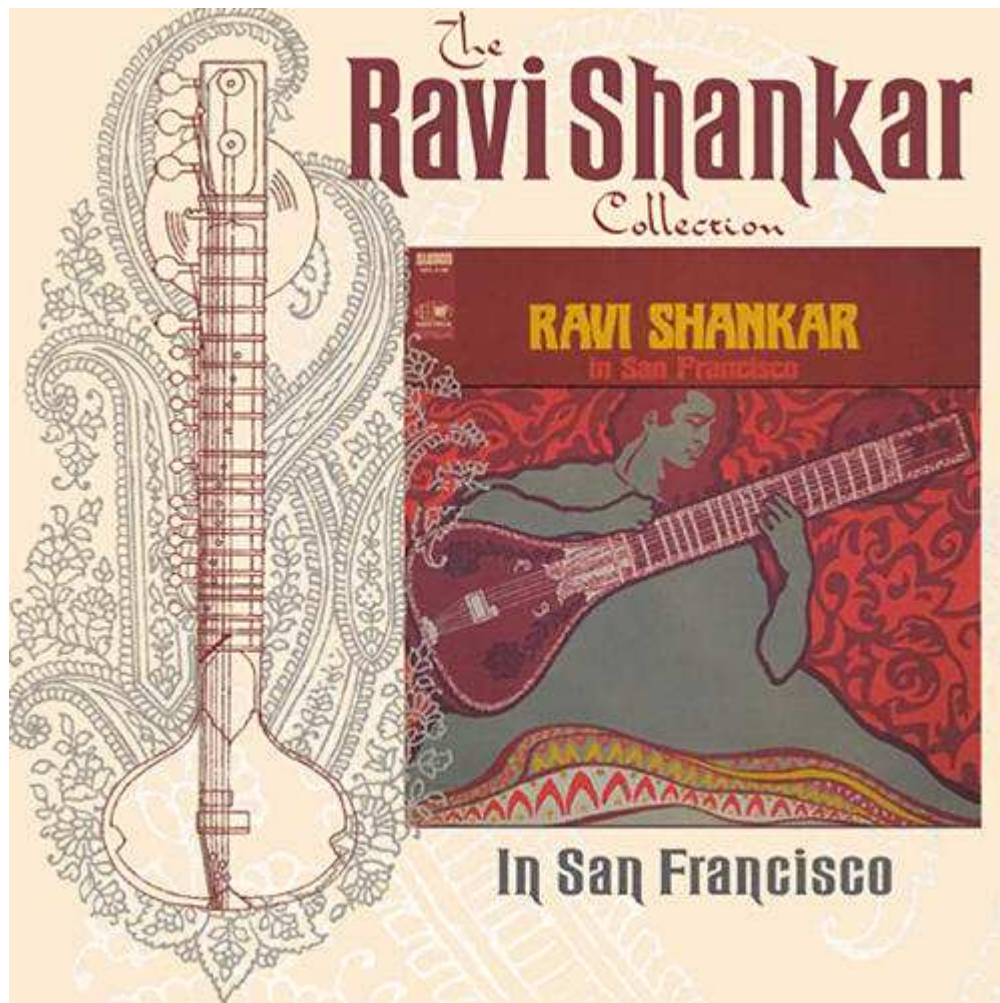
By Suresh Chandvankar

Ravi Shankar (1920-2012) had a unique relationship with the city of Bombay from where he sailed for Europe and the USA in early 1930's. He has written about his life in this city in his autobiography 'Raga Mala' [First Welcome Rain Edition, 1999]. After 1938, he spent six to seven years of rigorous training and practice under the strict and watchful eyes of Ustad Baba Allaaddin Khan (1862-1972). By 1944, he started giving regular performances over All India Radio (AIR) Lucknow. However within a year he moved to Bombay with wife, Annapurna, and two-year- old son Shubhendra. He took a job in the recording company 'His Master's Voice' in Bombay as an apprentice in the music department. Around this time he met Kamla Sastri who had come with her elder sister Laxmi Sastri who had married to Ravi's middle brother Rajendra alias Mejda. They were staying at Malad, suburb of Bombay. Ravi and Kamla knew each other from Almora days. Soon, they became more and more drawn to each other. This was to create a strained relation with Annapurna leading to a separation.

By this time, his elder brother Uday Shankar had closed his institute at Almora and some dancers and musicians joined the Indian People's Theater Association (IPTA) of Bombay. Ravi Shankar saw this as an opportunity to expand his musical and cultural horizons and also joined the group. He was engaged to prepare a score for a ballet named 'India Immortal' on behalf of IPTA. He was then commissioned to prepare the musical score for a Chetan Anand's film 'Neecha Nagar' (The City Below) produced by India Pictures, Bombay. Although some songs were featured in the film, the songs were not issued on disc records. However, the next film 'Dharti ke Lal' (Children of The Earth), produced by IPTA again with Ravi Shankar as Music Director, had several songs and were released on 'Young India' label disc records. He toured with the ballet 'India Immortal', performing in Bombay and Calcutta but left the IPTA in early 1946. It had been a wonderful one year period until he felt the crunch of the Communist Party politics.

During this period he was asked to rewrite the tune of a well known song, 'Sare Jahanse Accha Hindustan Hamara' (Our India is the best place in the world). The original poem was written by Mohammad Iqbal in 1904. The old tune was long, drawn out and did not have enough strength. It was sung in a very slow tempo. The new melody was catchy and gave the song a brighter mood. Popularized via the airways of All India Radio, it gradually became treated as a national song, especially after independence. It was played everywhere in its new arrangement and became extremely popular. (It is still popular today. Unfortunately many people are not aware and rarely give Raviji due credit. Recently he was shocked to read on the inlay card of a cassette brought out by HMV India, featuring nationalistic songs by Lata Mangeshkar, that the music credit for 'Sare Jahanse Accha' was 'Traditional'!).

It was here in Bombay that he created his first new raga 'Nat Bhairav'. He had started the 'Kinnara School of Music' at Breach Candy. In AIR Bombay, he met Alla Rakha, a Music Director and a fine Tabla player. Their friendship and the association were to last for decades. During his Bombay days, he stayed at the Madgavkar Bungalow in Borivali for three years and experienced the joy that can be found in full family life. A greater joy was derived from creating a new production based on Pandit Nehru's book, 'The Discovery of India'. This was sponsored and supported by Indian National Theater (INT), the cultural wing of Indian National Congress. INT arranged a show in Delhi for the meeting of the Asian Conference in March 1947. Many great leaders including Gandiji, Nehru, Patel, Rajaji and Radhakrishnan attended and the show was a grand success.



During this period, starting from May 1947, many great national events occurred and simultaneously most of Raviji's major struggles began. On 15th August, all his family and friends were glued to the radio listening to Nehru's famous 'Tryst with Destiny' speech to the nation. He was hurt deeply by the partition and later

by the assassination of Gandhiji. He had very hard times since he had no financial backing except for what he was bringing home from his sitar recitals. He was helped by two dear friends, Shantaram Ullal and Batukbhai Diwanji, as well as Harihar Rao, one of his first disciples. As he had no telephone, he would often travel in a local electric train to Churchgate and then walk two to three miles to meet them. Usually he would meet them in lunch hours and had nice snacks. It was through these friends that he was trying to get as many sitar recitals as possible in music circles and wealthy private homes, or in other towns. He never forgot the love, affection and help received from them. (Incidentally, he inquired after these friends when he addressed a press meet at the Taj a few years ago when he came to play at Shanmukhananda Auditorium. Diwanji, now 95, is still happily with us and stays at Nalasopara. It was the 'Suburban Music Circle' based in Santacruz which hosted Ravi Shankar's concerts in the early fifties. Shantaram Ullal was one of the founder members of the music circle).

Ravi was undergoing through a deep crisis materially, emotionally and spiritually and that led him to plan for a suicidal attempt. He carefully formulated and decided to throw himself under a running train, fixing the date and even going to the extent of preparing final letters to the family members and the police. But before the chosen day, he underwent an extraordinary encounter with a man who was to turn his life around. Passing by his Borivli house one afternoon in 1948, the spiritual guru and a yogi named 'Tatbaba' (so named for his robe made from 'tat' or a sackcloth) stopped and asked if he could use his bathroom. Entranced by the appearance and the aura surrounding this strange visitor, Ravi readily agreed to play sitar for him, forgetting completely that he had agreed to perform in front of the Prince of Jodhpur that evening for a generous fee. Yet somehow the yogi knew of both Ravi's missed concert and his plans for suicide. After the recital he told him, 'The money you missed tonight will come back to you many more times over. Don't do anything foolish'. And then there was no looking back. At the end of 1948, he was appointed as a Director of Music at AIR Delhi, composed music for Satyajit Ray's 'Apu Trilogy' films before leaving for west. The rest as might be said is all History with several dozens of recordings from 78rpm to CD era, films and other cultural performances.

Many more years passed. As he started staying abroad and playing fusion items with world renowned musicians like Yehudi Menuhin or Philip Glass belonging to other systems, he began to be criticized by orthodox musicians from Bombay either for reasons of dogma or out of envy. Ravi would often visit Bombay during the winter and would give purely classical performances at traditional venues like 'Chhabildas High School' at Dadar or 'Brahman Sahayak Sangh' near Shivaji Park to prove his credentials as a traditionally trained musician. Such concerts would begin at 9 pm and go on till the wee hours.

He would treat Bombay folks to ragas like 'Yaman', 'Bageshri', ' Malkauns' and 'Bhairavi'. Sometimes there would be two coffee breaks and yet he and his tabla accompanist Alla Rakha would play on energetically till the time when one could

hear the clinking of the milk bottles arriving from the Aarey and Worli dairy outside. It was Ravi Shankar's participation at the 'Jan Fest' hosted by the Indian Music Group led by young students of Xavier College in South Bombay which really gave a big boost to the event. One recalls his marathon performances at this festival on 25th January every year in the last session. He would begin by 1 pm and would go on till sunrise. When he began the moon would be high in the ascendant and as he signed off, the gentle rays of the morning sun would caress one's body. The music lovers in Bombay would forever cherish the sunrise which they experienced with 'Sitar Yogi – Pandit Ravi Shankar'.

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The Record News – Publication of 'Society of Indian record Collectors', Vol. 2001 pages 95-107. Ed. Suresh Chandvankar

Amrendra Dhaneshwar, in 'Hindustan Times' dated 13.12.2012

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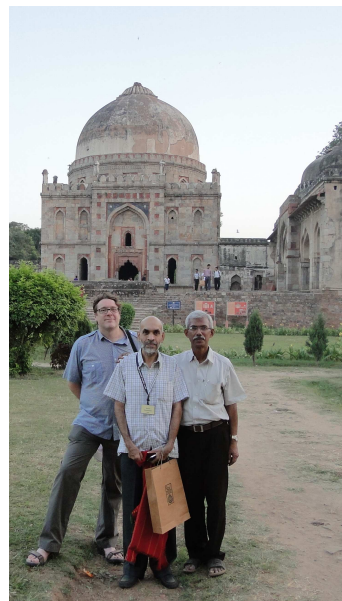
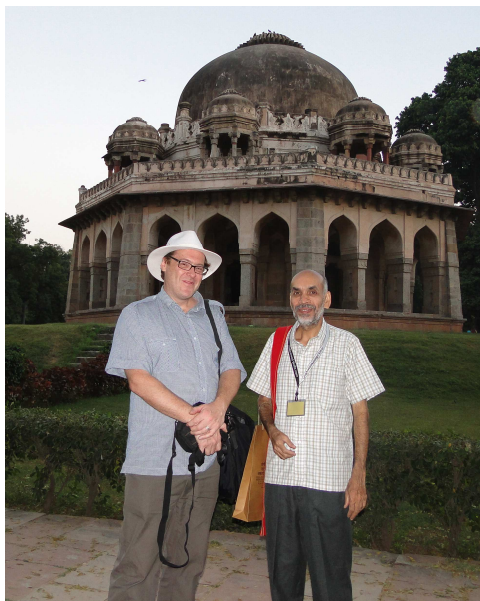


Report and memoirs of the IASA annual conference, New Delhi.

[IASA - International Association for Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA)]

by Robert Millis, Seattle, USA

I arrived in Delhi in October of 2012 as a "fresh-faced" Fulbright research scholar, interested in the earliest music recorded in India. I am not an academic-- I research and pursue topics around music to feed my own compositions and work as a music producer and collector. I was especially interested in meeting Indian record collectors and through exposure to them learning more about India's music and the early Indian recording industry. I joined the IASA and attended the IASA 2012 conference near the lovely Lodi Gardens in New Delhi, within a few days of my arrival in India, thanks to the recommendation of Suresh Chandvankar. This conference turned out to be the perfect way to begin my Indian experience. Not only did I meet several serious 78-rpm record collectors and researchers, but also met Dr. Shubha Chaudhuri and Uma Shankar who had organized the conference through the Archives and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology (ARCE) in Gurgaon. During the first part of my Fulbright, after the conference, I made the trek almost daily to the ARCE research center in Gurgaon and my time there was invaluable, listening and spending time in the ARCE library.



Left – Robert Millis and Suresh Chandvankar

Right – Robert Millis, Suresh Chandvankar and Sunny Mathew at Lodi gardens

The IASA conference roughly divided itself between two camps--those focused on archiving and preservation practices in the public domain (for museums, libraries, archives, universities, etc.) and those in the private domain (essentially a coterie of 78-rpm record and sound collectors and music enthusiasts). For me,

obviously enough, the private side of this divide is what interested me. Among the attendees at the conference, in addition to Suresh, were collectors and researchers Kushal Gopalka, Sunny Matthew, Marco Pacci and Rainier Lotz.

Kushal, besides being a singer of dhrupad and a wealth of knowledge on the Indian film industry has a deep fascination with the earliest recordings made in India and has produced several museum exhibitions on the subject. Kushal's knowledge and friendship helped me enormously with my Fulbright work.



From Left – Rainer Lotz, Marco Pacci, Kushal Gopalka and Suresh Chandvankar

Sunny Matthew has an enormous 78-rpm collection, as well as a collection of old wind up players, advertising, signs, and paper ephemera, that focuses especially on music from the south of India. I spent several days with Sunny at his home in Kerala soaking up so much music that I never would have heard elsewhere, and eating delicious Keralan food, and for this I am eternally grateful. His name is “Sunny” for good reason.



Sunny Mathew at work with his discs and machines

Marco Pacci is a deeply knowledgeable Italian record and 78-rpm collector of mostly jazz, and Rainier Lotz is an important researcher and collector whose work with early 78-rpm archives and discographies is practically unparalleled. These collectors gave some very interesting talks: Suresh on the SIRC and the role of private collectors and access to historic recordings, Sunny Mathew discussed his preservation techniques and projects and the difficulties faced by individual collectors, Marco Pacci discussed his collection of Italian and Indian jazz and attempts to create public forums and access to these recordings and Rainier Lotz discussed his “Black Europe” project.

In addition to these talks, there were presentations of potential new museums in Bangalore for Indian music, presentations on archival techniques, digital media, issues associated with tape, performances by Rajasthani musicians, discussions of copyright and legal issues, how to make archives accessible, and tours of various archives in Delhi (including All India Radio, ARCE, and Sangeet Natak Akademi). Presentations which I particularly enjoyed included: Yousuf Saeed’s discussion of music in Pakistan and the “nostalgia of an undivided South Asia” (Yousuf made an interesting documentary called “Khayal Darpan: A Mirror of Imagination” about the development of classical music in Pakistan after 1947); Uma Shankar’s talk on “archiving acoustics”—a look at the acoustic qualities of ancient sites in India and how sounds were amplified in the days before recording and electricity; Amlan Das Gupta (who runs a small but fascinating archive of classical Indian music in Calcutta associated with Jadavpur University) presented on the “digital object of desire”; and finally Moushumi Bhowmik presented on her and her husband’s life-long work “The Travelling Archive” which documents Bengali folk music. Through Moushumi’s work I learned about the continued vitality of folk traditions in India but also and more importantly for me about the influence of 78-rpm recordings on the continuing folk traditions of the region, artists who learned singing styles or songs from early gramophone records. Thanks to meeting her at the conference I am producing compilations of the music she has recorded in Bengal for an American record label.



Galaxy of collectors at Kushal's house in New Delhi

From Left – Cristina Pacci, Suresh Chandvankar, Rainer Lotz, Sunny Mathew, Marco Pacci, Kushal Gopalka, Rantideb Maitra and Mrs. Maitra

Probably the most fun however, was an evening spent at Kushal Gopalka's home in Delhi during the conference. Great food, endless collecting stories and the beginnings of what I hope are lifelong friendships. These were people from all over the world, brought together through music (and the efforts of Suresh and the magazine - "The Record News"). For me, archives and libraries, though important, do not interest me as much as private collections. People with an intimate relationship to the music and (though this is sadly not always the case) a generosity and excitement about sharing it with others. I feel I learn more connecting with people like this, and this is why collecting is so important, collectors are passionate about the music they have, always surprise you with new sounds, and know a lot about their corner of the musical world.

Robert Millis, USA

Related websites:

<http://www.iasa-web.org/>
www.thetravellingarchive.org
<http://yousufsaeed.blogspot.com/>
http://www.tajmahalfoxtrot.com/?page_id=1381 (re: Marco Pacci's recordings)
<http://www.lotz-verlag.de/> (Rainier Lotz)
<http://www.indiastudies.org/ethnomusicology/> (ARCE)
http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP132;r=6729
 (Amlan Das Gupta)

'International Association for Sound and Audiovisual Archives' (IASA),
although based in Europe, has an international outreach.

Annual meetings might be held anywhere there are AV archives.

In recent years, these were held at Mexico City, Sydney, Athens, Philadelphia, Riga, Pretoria, Singapore, and Oman and local institutions have played host.

Forty-third IASA annual meeting was held in India at New Delhi during
October 7-11, 2012.

The hosting institution was the **'Archives and Research Center for
Ethnomusicology'** - part of the **'American Institute for Indian Studies'**

Theme of this five day meeting was – “In Transition: Access for All”

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National Music as a Cultural Bond

By - Dr. Suresh Chandvankar

Synopsis

Music has often proved as a strong cultural bond among citizens of a nation and India is no exception. Indian music is vast and it cannot be restricted merely to the North Indian or South Indian art (or classical) music. It includes at least five broad categories like 'adima' or primitive music, folk music, devotional music, art music and popular music. Some more categories would be worth adding to this list. One such candidate, viz. 'National Music' is rather new and probably emerged during the British rule, when ideas like 'nation state' and 'nationality' were re-asserted in modern form. Culture on the other hand is an ancient idea loosely defined as a 'way of living'. Music with all these categories plays a vital role in binding citizens together by a strong bond. In this paper, I plan to elaborate on what is 'National Music' and how it manifests as a 'cultural bond'. The statements and the arguments will be supplemented by the references of the recorded music.

Music and culture are well established entities in modern civilizations. In Indian context, music is omnipresent from the birth to the death of a person. It is an integral part of social functions and religious ceremonies. Culture on the other hand, is the way or style of living of persons in the society. It manifests in their behavior, thoughts and speeches. Music not only helps in nurturing the culture but forms a firm bond. This bond could be strong or weak depending on the situations. One can see variations of this cultural bond in different Indian states due to many different languages and customs. National music is relatively a new idea and can serve as a special cultural bond offering some features common to all Indians. As known, music consists of singing a song, playing instruments and dancing. This could be in solo or in groups. This indeed is a vast subject to deal with this definition of music. However, in this paper, I shall try to explore some facets of this bond through examples of century old recordings.

National music was the new category added to musical forms during the British Raj. British entered India around 1760 and their encroachment in the garb of merchandise continued for over one hundred years. They studied the geography and demography of this vast land, understood the competition, rivalry and friendship among different castes and communities. They also closely watched the Hindu rulers in South and Muslim rulers-predominantly in North. In 1813, the British Empire announced that the East India Company shall rule over Indian states. After 1833, the 'Company Government' became an administrative wing of the British rule. Soon the planning for infrastructure like roads, dams, post service was undertaken. Several kings and rulers of states realized the danger in future and decided to unite and revolt leading to events of 1857. It was the first organized war against British rule, but British historians called it a 'Mutiny'. After

the unsuccessful war of 1857, and the 'Proclamation of Queen of India' in 1958, the British rule was firmly established. As an outcome of this event, Prince of Wales visited India in 1875. He was offered a grand welcome and a Royal treatment in the manner as if he was the son in law of Hindusthan. This was heavily criticized in private, in public and in the literary world. Around this time, Indians were considered as the citizens of British Empire of Queen Victoria, thus bringing an abrupt and official end to the Mughal Empire. The British rulers soon began to realize that the natives will not accept us so easily. In order to make a strong bond between the rulers and the citizens many different novel ideas were put forward. One of them was to enforce the British National Anthem viz. 'God Save The Queen'. Bankimchandra Chatterjee (1838-1894) wrote a poem 'Vande Mataram' in this same very year of 1875! Was this just a coincidence?

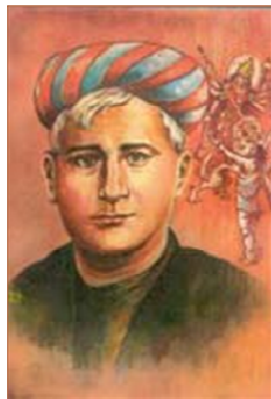


History tells us that we had songs in praise of Gods and Kings. We had slogans for wars and deities. We had Royal songs of praise and devotion but no 'Anthem'. Even concepts like 'Nation' and 'Nationality' are not our own but imported. Nationalism and romanticism are the reactions against the dominance of British Rule. In reply to the ruthless governance and militant Imperial nationalism, an Indian nationalism began to emerge in different forms and in various sectors of Indian society. Naturally it had the influence on music too. Music and songs were essential for the long lasting movement leading to struggle for freedom. Thus, a new idea of 'National Music' entered the music world.

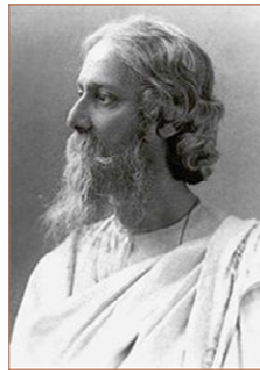
In 1885, establishment of Indian National Congress by a British person gave boost to the movement of adapted idea of nationalism. This was to form a strong bond among millions of Indians to fight against the British rule. In this century long journey, music was to play a major and significant role in forming a strong cultural bond. We shall now examine this relation in three different periods.
Pre independence era (1875-1947)

Although written in 1875, included in Bankimchandra's novel 'Anandmath' in 1882 and sung in Bengal among elites, the words 'Vande Mataram' became a slogan in 1905 protest against partition of Bengal. These two words served as an inspiration to many martyrs, freedom fighters and citizens at large. The poem then spread in other states like a fire and became a 'Ved Mantra' [religious chant]. Through the renderings from R. N. Tagore to A. R. Rahman, and sung by over 100 singers, the 'Music' of 'Vande Mataram' has formed the strongest cultural bond. Although the song went through several rounds of controversy, opposed by Muslim leaders on various grounds, not accepted as 'The Anthem' in Independent India, the music was well received throughout India, establishing it as a 'Cultural Song'. Bankimchandra died in 1894 and hardly knew that his poem shall become the inspiration to freedom fighters and martyrs, will be the 'National Song' of Independent India, and shall rule for over 135 years, with 100 different recordings. [Ref. - <http://www.mustrad.org.uk/articles/mataram.htm>]

Vande Mataram (1875)



Bankim Chandra Chatterjee
(1838-1894)

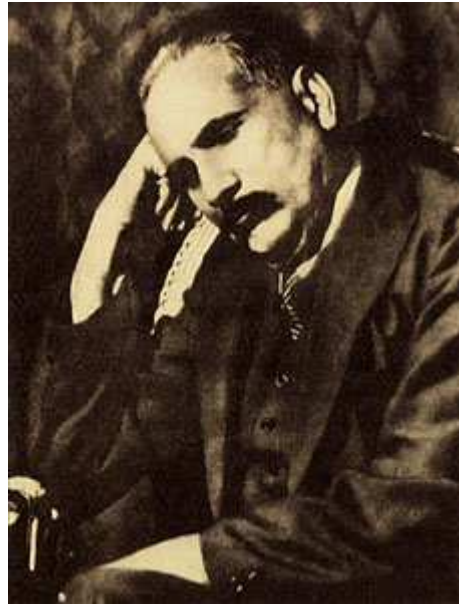


Rabindranath Tagore
(1861-1941)

An answer to British National Anthem???

In 1904, Sir Muhammad Iqbal alias Allama Iqbal (1877-1938), wrote a gazal titled 'Tarana-e-Hindi' (Anthem of the People of Hindusthan). It has eight stanzas. This is one of the enduring patriotic poems of the Urdu language. Written originally for children in the ghazal style, the poem was published in the weekly journal *Ittehad* on 16 August 1904. It was later published in 1924 in the Urdu book 'Bang-i-Dara'. In 1911, Pandit Chand Narain cut a gramophone disc with only four stanzas (HMV P 985 – [C. June 1911]). Disc label mentions it as a 'Gazal'. It is now better known by its first line - 'Saare Jahanse Accha, Hindusthan Hamara'.

Around Independence, famous Sitar player Pt. Ravi Shankar was asked to set another tune that could be sung by everyone. His tune is popular even today, although he is not given due credit as a music composer. This is seen in the inlay cards of audio tapes and CD covers issued after independence. This song too is sung at many occasions forming another cultural bond. This poem too went through several rounds of controversy and internet web sites are full of incorrect and misleading information.



Muhammad.Iqbal (1877-1938)

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From – Book - Bang-e-Dra

Tarana-e-Hindi The Indian Anthem

Sare Jahan Se Acha Hindustan Humara
Hum Bulbulain Hain Iss Ki, Ye Gulistan Humara

**The best land in the world is our India;
We are its nightingales; this is our garden.**

Gharbat Mein Hon Agar Hum, Rehta Hai Dil Watan Mein
Samjho Waheen Humain Bhi, Dil Ho Jahan Humara

**If we are in exile, our heart resides in our homeland.
Understand that we are also where our heart is.**

Parbat Woh Sub Se Uncha, Humsaya Asman Ka
Woh Santri Humara, Woh Pasban Humara

**That is the highest mountain, the neighbour of the sky;
It is our sentry; it is our watchman.**

Godi Mein Khailti Hain Iss Ki Hazaron Nadiyan
Gulshan Hai Jin Ke Dam Se Rashak-e-Jinaan Humara

**In its lap play thousands of streams,
And the gardens that flourish because of them are the envy of Paradise.**

Ae Aab-e-Rood-e-Ganga! Woh Din Hain Yaad Tujh Ko?
Utra Tere Kinare Jab Karwan Humara

**Oh, waters of the river Ganges! Do you remember those days?
Those days when our caravan halted on your bank?**

Mazhab Nahin Sikhata Apas Mein Bair Rakhna
Hindi Hain Hum, Watan Hai Hindustan Humara

**Religion does not teach us to be enemies with each other:
We are Indians, our homeland is our India.**

Yunan-o-Misar-o-Roma Sab Mit Gye Jahan Se
Ab Tak Magar Hai Baqi Naam-o-Nishan Humara

**Greece, Egypt and Byzantium have all been erased from the world.
But our fame and banner still remain.**

Kuch Baat Hai Ke Hasti Mitti Nahin Humari
Sadiyon Raha Hai Dushman Dour-e-Zaman Humara

**It is something to be proud of that our existence is never erased,
Though the passing of time for centuries has always been our enemy.**

Iqbal! Koi Mehram Apna Nahin Jahan Mein
Maloom Kya Kisi Ko Dard-e-Nihan Humara

**Iqbal! No-one in this world has ever known your secret.
Does anyone know the pain I feel inside me?**

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In 1910, Iqbal wrote another song for children, *Tarana-e-Milli* (Anthem of the Religious Community), which was composed in the same meter and rhyme scheme as *Saare Jahan Se Achcha*, but which renounced much of the sentiment of the earlier song. Iqbal's world view had now changed; the new song

proclaimed that "our homeland is the whole world". After the Europe tour, he had changed completely and wrote this for promoting idea of 'Pan Islam'. It was set to tune and gramophone discs were cut from 1910 to 1950 and beyond. Earliest one 78 rpm disc is in the voice of Mr. Peara Saheb of Matiaburj in Kolkata. The complete song of 11 stanzas was issued on a double side disc. Two decades later, in his presidential address to the Muslim League annual conference in Allahabad in 1930, he was to propose a separate nation-state in the Muslim majority areas of the sub-continent, an idea that inspired the creation of Pakistan. Due to this he later became known as *Muffakir-e-Pakistan* ("The Thinker of Pakistan"). He is officially recognized as the national poet of Pakistan. Today one can listen to couple of modern versions of *Tarana-e-Milli* on YouTube.

[See e.g. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btxCyvgklhk>]

Tarana-e-Milli **The Anthem Of The Islamic Community**

Cheen-o-Arab Humara, Hindustan Humara
Muslim Hain Hum, Watan Hai Sara Jahan Humara

China and Arabia are ours; India is ours.
We are Muslims, the whole world is ours.

Touheed Ki Amanat Seenon Mein Hai Humare
Asan Nahin Nitana Naam-o-Nishan Humara

God's unity is held in trust in our hearts.
It is not easy to erase our name and sign.

Dunya Ke Butkadon Mein Pehla Woh Ghar Khuda Ka
Hum Uss Ke Pasban Hain, Woh Pasban Humara

Among the idol temples of the world the first is that house of God;
We are its keepers; it is our keeper.

Taighon Ke Saye Mein Hum Pal Kar Jawan Huwe Hain
Khanjar Hilal Ka Hai Qoumi Nishan Humara

Brought up in the shadow of the sword, we reached maturity;
The scimitar of the crescent moon is the emblem of our community.

Maghrib Ki Wadiyon Mein Goonji Azan Humari
Thamta Na Tha Kisi Se Seel-e-Rawan Humara
In the valleys of the west our call to prayer resounded;
Our onward flow was never stemmed by anyone.

Batil Se Dabne Wale Ae Asman Nahin Hum
Sou Baar Kar Chuka Hai Tu Imtihan Humara

**We, oh heaven, are not to be suppressed by falsehood!
A hundred times you have tested us.**

Ae Gulistan-e-Aundlas ! Woh Din Hain Yaad Tujh Ko
Tha Teri Daliyon Par Jab Ashiyan Humara

**Oh garden of Andalusia! Do you remember those days,
When our nest was in your branches?**

Ae Mouj-e-Dajla! Tu Bhi Pehchanti Hai Hum Ko
Ab Tak Hai Tera Darya Afsana Khawan Humara

**Oh waves of the Tigris! You also recognize us;
Your river still relates our story.**

Ae Arz-e-Pak! Teri Hurmat Pe Kat Mare Hum
Hai Khoon Teri Ragon Mein Ab Tak Rawan Humara

**Oh land of purity! We fell and died for your honour;
Our blood still courses through your veins.**

Salar-e-Karwan Hai **Meer-e-Hijaz (S.A.W.)** Apna
Iss Naam Se Hai Baqi Aram-e-Jaan Humara

**The Lord of Hijaz is the leader of our community;
From this name comes the peace of our soul.**

Iqbal Ka Tarana Bang-e-Dra Hai Goya
Hota Hai Jadah Pema Phir Karwan Humara

**Iqbal's song is like the bell of a caravan;
Once more our caravan measures the road.**

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In 1911, Rabindranth Tagore (1861 -1941) wrote 'Jana Gana Mana' as a reaction to a friend's request to write a welcome song in praise of King George the fifth who was visiting India in 1911. This song too faced serious criticism during the life of Tagore denying the charge that it was penned for the King. Finally he stopped arguing. The charge still continues on social media and internet with long and unnecessary debates. Like Vande Mataram, Tagore set tune to this song as well, cut a disc in his own voice in early 30's. Later he set tune for the chorus and the Vishwa Bharati Board of Music cut the disc on a special label replacing the dog and horn label with the 'Charkha' (a spinning wheel). The song

was not as popular as 'Vande Mataram'. However, it was sung at the political meetings and social gatherings. It was translated in number of Indian languages. Of all these three songs, Vande Mataram is most popular even today. 'God Save The Queen' was the enforced anthem, whereas 'Vande Mataram' became the song of cultural heritage, although in the beginning it was a manifestation of Indian Nationalism and was considered as 'The National Anthem'. With time, it lost its virtues like wider appeal, suggestion and definite purpose and soon it became a popular and beloved lyric. Thus it became an emblem (Prateek) and not the symbol or sign as is associated with The Anthem, Controversy, doubts and arguments for and against these three songs shall continue in future. However, as evidenced, the music and the cultural bond will get stronger with time.

King George the Vth and Queen...December 1911



**Rabindranath refused to write a song in
praise of King and wrote a poem
Jana Gana Mana Adhinayak Jay
he
Bharat Bhagya Vidhata....**

**He passed away in
1941
but the controversy
and debate still
continues....**

Since 1860, nationalistic songs and lyrics were sung in Hindu Mela (social gatherings). Indian music could be and should be written in staff notation was debated since 1874. In some Indian states Indian musicians and British band masters had begun to work together. In Baroda state, Maula Baksh and Abdul Kareem Khan were asked to organize and train band squad which would also play orchestral music. Jhalawar, Maihar, Mysore, Tanjore and Travancore states had their own bands comprising of Indian and Western instruments. Allaudin Khan Saheb (1862 - 1972) headed the Maihar state band with novel instruments

using cut pieces of hollow metal pipes. These orchestral renderings were recorded on 78 rpm shellac discs during 1930-45, probably with the state sponsorship. Apart from orchestral music, vocal and instrumental renderings of the state anthems were also recorded so that these could be played at the remotest places away from the main towns. This must have helped in strengthening the cultural bond among the people. Several such examples have been put up by Sunny Mathew on internet.



[Ref. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZRZwhYXB18w>].

With the popularity of the National songs, Gramophone Company took initiative to record the songs sung or played by individuals and groups. Many such examples are available especially during 1940-55. It is interesting to study the effect (of these tunes and songs) on the way of thinking of Indian citizens.

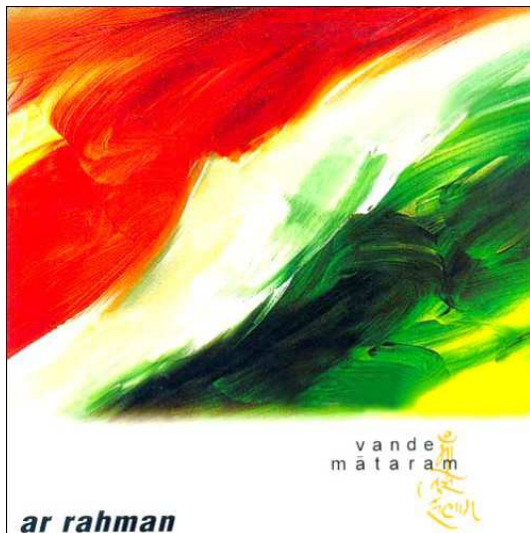
Post Independence Era (1947 - 2000)

Soon after independence, Indian flag was finalized and adopted but it took three years to decide on 'The Anthem'. On January 26, 1950 Indian Republic was announced and declared. First stanza of 'Jana Gana Mana' was declared as 'The Anthem' and the first stanza of 'Vande Mataram' having equal status of 'The Anthem' was declared as a 'National Song'. Soon, new discs following the norms of 'The Anthem' were cut and sent to various states and departments, schools and radio stations. Although 'Vande Mataram' song was strongly opposed and could not get the status of 'The Anthem', it is this very song that is played every morning on all radio stations and Indian TV channels. This is probably the reason

why this is in the mind of every Indian citizen and part of his culture. That is why A. R. Rahman came up with its Urdu transliteration 'Maa Tujhe Salaam!' during the celebrations of golden jubilee of Indian Independence. This song helped in strengthening the bond even further.



The songs that were known as 'Songs of Movement' and motivated many had a new role to play after independence. Majority of the old songs were now termed as patriotic songs [Deshbhaktee ke gane] and were main items to be played or presented at every Independence Day and Republic Day celebrations. Except few films songs, not many new songs were written till 1997.



During Golden Jubilee celebrations of Indian Independence in 1997, sizeable number of new songs with modern tunes appeared in social, print and electronic

media. They were accepted and loved especially by young ones with 'Ma Tujhe Salam, Vande Mataram' of A. R. Rahman topping the list. Due to satellite communication and large number of TV channels, these songs crossed the national borders and reached out to global platform with unimaginable outreach. This gave another dimension to the cultural bond that is yet to be explored. Historians and social scientists will certainly take this important topic. Here again new ideas to present 'Vande Mataram' and 'Jana Gana Mana' were employed and one can see large number of videos on You Tube.

Twenty first century Era (2000+)

Due to the explosion of IT technology and spread of social networking, internet, mobile phones and modern gadgets outreach became phenomenal.

In 2000, 'Vande Mataram' completed 125 years, centenary of Tarana-E- Hindi (Sare Jahanse Accha) passed unnoticed, but in 2012 centenary of 'Jana Gana Mana' was celebrated by mass singing in stadium in Thane and In Aurangabad in Maharashtra. This was registered in 'Guinness book of world records'.

Young generations have begun to ask questions on internet like e.g.

"I want a list of all patriotic songs of INDIA"?

And the prompt answer appeared in no time.

India's Patriotic Songs are

"Jana Gana Mana" - (National Anthem)

"Vande Mataram" - (Anandamath) (National Song);

Also serves the de-facto National Anthem of Bharat) an alternative

"Aao Bachchon (Actual song in Image format)" - (Jagruti)

"Ab Tumhare Hawale" - (Haqeeqat)

"Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Saathiyo" - (Ab Tumhare Hawale Watan Saathiyo)

" Ae Mere Pyare Watan" - (Kabuliwala)

"Aye Mere Watan Ke Logo" - (by Lata Mangeshkar)

"Ae Watan Ae Watan" - (Shaheed)

"Aisa Des Hai Mera" - (Veer Zaara)

"Apni Azadi Ko Hum" - (Leader)

"Bharat Ka Rehanewala Hoon" - (Purab Aur Paschim)

"Bharat Humko Jaan Se Pyara Hai" - (Roja)

"Des Ki Mitti" - (Bose - The Forgotten Hero)

"Desh Mere Desh Mere" - (The Legend Of Bhagat Singh)

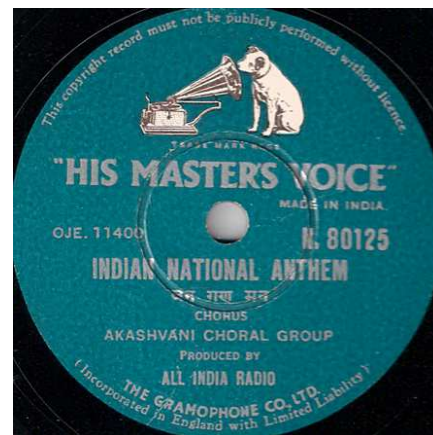
"Har karam apna karenge hai watan tere liye" - (Karma, Kavita Krishna Murthi)

"Hindustan Ki Kasam"

"Hindustani" - (Dus)
 "Hum Hindustani"
 "Hum Laaye Hai Toofan Se" - (Jagruti)
 "I Love My India" - (Pardes)
 "Insaaf Ki Dagar Pe" - (Ganga Jamna)
 "Jahan Dal Dal Pe" - (Sikandar-E-Azam)
 "Jai Janani Jai Bharat Maa" - (Dharam Putra)
 "Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai" - (Jis Desh Mein Ganga Behti Hai)
 "Jo Samar Mein Ho Gaye Amar"
 "Kadam Kadam Badaye Ja" - (Culcutta Youth Choir)
 "Kandhon Se Milte Hai Kandhe" - (Lakshya)
 "Nanha Munna Rahi Hoon" - (Son Of India)
 "Mera Rang De Basanti Chola" - (The Legend of Bhagat Singh)
 "Mere Desh Ki Dharti" - (Upkar)
 "Saare Jahan Se Achcha"
 "Sabarmati Ke Sant" - (Jagruti)
 "Sarfaroshi Ke Tamanna" - (Shaheed)
 "Sarfaroshi Ki Tamanna" - (The Legend of Bhagat Singh)
 Vande Mataram from the album Maa Tujhe Salaam by A R Rahman
 "Watan Ke Raah Mein Watan" - (Shaheed)
 "Ye Desh Hai Veer Jawanon Ka" - (Naya Daur)
 "Yeh Jo Des Hai Tera" - (Swades, by A.R. Rahman)

'Nationalism' is usually shaped by unexpected external pressures such as rulers and invaders whereas the 'Culture' manifests by internal forces and mass behaviors. How then the music will react in the same manner to both? Naturally the bond between the two will always be flexible and evolving. This has indeed manifested for over 150 years and shall continue in future too.

Dr. Suresh Chandvankar, Mumbai



Announcements At The End of the First Indian 78-rpm Records an inquiry and a request.

by Robert Millis, Seattle, USA

I am interested in any research readers may have done on the early announcements made on Indian Gramophone records. The "old story" is that they were used to help the pressing plant in Germany, where the early master recordings were sent for duplication prior to the establishment of the pressing plant outside of Calcutta. In theory, the German speaking workers at the plant would have been unfamiliar with the Indian musicians and languages. However this has always seemed ridiculous to me. The recording engineers generally kept "good" notes. There was an elaborate concoction of matrix and catalog numbers to keep track of each recording. Why assume that an announcement in a thick Indian accent (and in the case of many in their own native language) at THE END of the record would be of much help to German-speaking technicians at a factory in Hanover? In the American, European and Middle Eastern recordings from this early period there are examples of announcements---but always at the beginning of the record and ALWAYS mentioning the record label. This would be useful of course to advertise the record label. "This is Vess Ossman recording for Columbia Records!" Further I have several 78s from later in Gaisberg's first historic recording trip for the Gramophone Company in 1902-03 (after he left India he went to Japan and China and Burma) and there are no announcements (that I have heard) from these countries. Also in some of the early Russian and Spanish recordings made at this time there are no announcements at the end of the recordings. In India none of these announcements that I have heard mention the record label--I find it hard to believe that if they were officially sanctioned that the Gramophone company would not want their name mentioned...especially once competition from other labels began in earnest.

I suspect that the announcements were an attempt by the artists to stake a claim to their recordings, to sign it like a painter. After all, many artists, and large parts of what became their audience, were not literate, could not read a record label and in fact at least at first would have had no idea what a record label even was and that it could contain useful information about the recording. All of this was very new at the time. And in fact early demonstrations of the Gramophone were in public places where the label would not have been visible anyway. So a quick "shout out" to themselves, for all listeners, at the end makes sense, especially from savvy artists such as Gauhar Jan; artists who were aware of the idea of self promotion and realized that if someone heard what they liked they might not know who was singing and therefore not be able to contact her for engagements or to buy more records.

Regardless of what the actual explanation might be--and perhaps there are multiple explanations--it remains a fascinating and heart-wrenching few seconds at the end of these early recordings. To hear the artists in their actual speaking

voices, making an appeal to the ages...remember me! I am Gauhar Jan! I am Zora Bai of Agra! This is Master Labhu...etc...in these hurried little announcements, have a special magic in them, a conversational personal quality and it almost feels like they are speaking directly to you.

Who was the first to do this? Who copied whom? What was the view of the recording engineers about this trend? Why did they allow it? Why did it stop? If anyone has any thoughts or information I would love to know more.

This is a casual and personal inquiry and a research project in itself...any links to articles or thoughts would be appreciated!

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Robert Millis is a USA based musician, producer and sound artist. Traditional music, especially from America and Asia, alongside the earliest recordings and the era of 78 rpm records, Victrolas and Gramophones are of particular interest and inspiration in his work, which has encompassed soundtracks to films, sound design for theatre and choreography, installation, and many LP and CD releases on a variety of labels. He has produced and designed projects for a variety of record labels such as Sublime Frequencies and Dust-to-Digital, including Victrola Favorites: Artifacts From Bygone Days, The Crying Princess: 78rpm Records from Burma, and Scattered Melodies: Korean Kayagum in the 78rpm Era. In 2012-13 he was a Senior Fulbright Research Scholar in India, studying India's early 78rpm Gramophone recording industry and working with Indian record collectors, musicians and sound artists.



The matrix number on this Gramophone/HMV disc would indicate it was recorded by Arthur Clarke around 1915. It has an announcement in Telugu at the end. The disc would have been manufactured in Calcutta by Bengali-speaking workers. Why an announcement in Telugu? Unless perhaps the artist was advertising to the Telugu community their availability to sing songs at weddings...



Robert Millis in front of the Seethaphone Record shop in Bangalore

Obituary - Mr. Ashok Thobade (1936-2010)

Two years after him....

Mr. Ashok Thobade was a secondary school teacher in famous Siddheshvar high School at Solapur in Maharashtra State. During his entire career as a teacher, he collected large number of gramophone records and audio tapes. He was a possessive owner of 78-rpm records and knew the importance of his collection. We used to meet often and talk about our hobby and passion of old music on gramophone records.

In December 1991, he came to my house and showed me an appeal that appeared in Marathi newspaper 'Maharashtra Times'. It was especially useful for the gramophone record collectors in India. His face was so bright with the idea of establishing the network under 'Society of Indian Record Collectors' (SIRC) banner and I still remember it distinctly. In fact, he took initiative, invited Mr. Suresh Chandvankar to Solapur and initiated the SIR activity. He always had a child lime attitude and suddenly used to become overwhelmed whenever he came across new records in the old market.

During his last days, he looked very tired but we never thought that he was at the 'exit door'. He had a passion for old Hindi films and film songs. He had very rare Lata Mangeshkar songs collection for which he had spent lot of money.

In those days, we were not conversant with the mobile phone, computer and internet. Thobade sir had selected many such songs and had ordered them from Mr. Dalwadee from Nagpur and from a shop in Pimpri near Pune. He then became a proud owner of many songs and had arranged listening sessions at his residence. Actually, he was trying to relate himself with SIRC activities in Mumbai. We three- Mohan Sohoni, Ashok Thobde and myself formed a good team-work. He used to be very eager to give his Commentary during the program. We together had compiled and presented Akaashvani serialized Program titled “yaadein” for about 7-8 years. His written script used to be very exhaustive and ‘Thobde sir’ as he was popularly known had written on various subjects in local Newspaper. It was the first-day of Diwali-2010, when he breathed his last. Normally he was not a talkative type person, but used to participate with his memory-stricken data, especially about the films during 1940s and 1950s. Because of the normal age-problems, he looked tired but used to walk 4-5 km in the scorching heat of Sholapur in the month of May, just for few songs.

The faint-soft colored shirt stacked in Dark Pant, a perfect British way and a cloth Bag (either with records, cassettes or recently published article) in his hands we could see him on any roads in Sholapur which has now vanished since last two years.

The association of Thobde Sir with us in person and with SIRC came to an end suddenly but he will be remembered always. He had presented a program in Mumbai (at Purandare sabhagrah in Girgaon) with Mr Sohoni. And the topic was - “Solapur anee dhvanimudrika”. He was very proud to explore the ‘Kavi Sanjiv’ controversy regarding “Akheracha haa tula dandavat” song in that program. Ashok Thobde was a very simple person and believed everybody. I remember one incident when Music Director Naushad visited Sholapur. Thobde happened to be the proud owner of Naushad’s first song, 78 rpm record – ‘Janaki vallabh sitaram’. With the same record in hand he went to the Hotel. He wanted Naushad’s autograph on the record. Someone from the organizers took that record from him and promised him the autograph. Unfortunately, the record did not come back. ‘I could have myself gifted that record to Naushad, but these middlemen did not even allow me to talk few words with Naushad. I waited and came back’ – Those were his words.

A ‘Gentleman’ to the backbone, but so simple that his relying on anybody taught him much in his life. We three presented about 100 programs in Sholapur and now also, each time we feel his absence and that is now forever.

Jacana Raleraskar, Hon. Secretary, SIRC Solapur

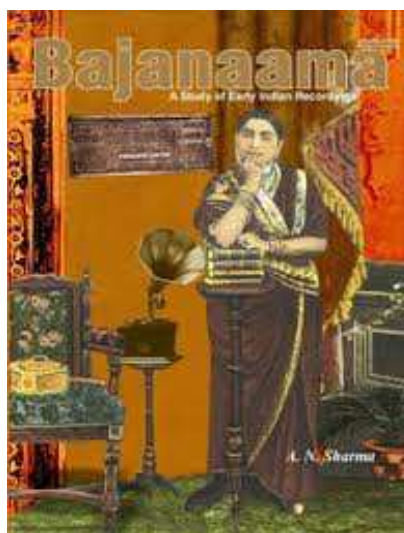
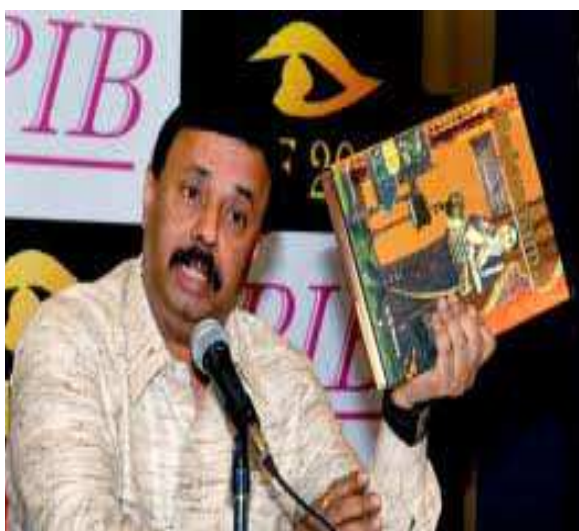


Mr. Ashok Thobde showing record to Mr Vijay Jadhav, then In charge of Film Archive, Pune, [Ref. SIRC exhibition at Pune in May 2010]

An Appeal

Music lovers and record collectors are requested to provide information on history of Pathe recordings in the Indian subcontinent, any related advertisement or reference, discography of Indian Pathe records and their photographs to help in a work about Pathe records of the Indian subcontinent. Their contribution shall be duly acknowledged in the work.

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