

The Phonograph in India

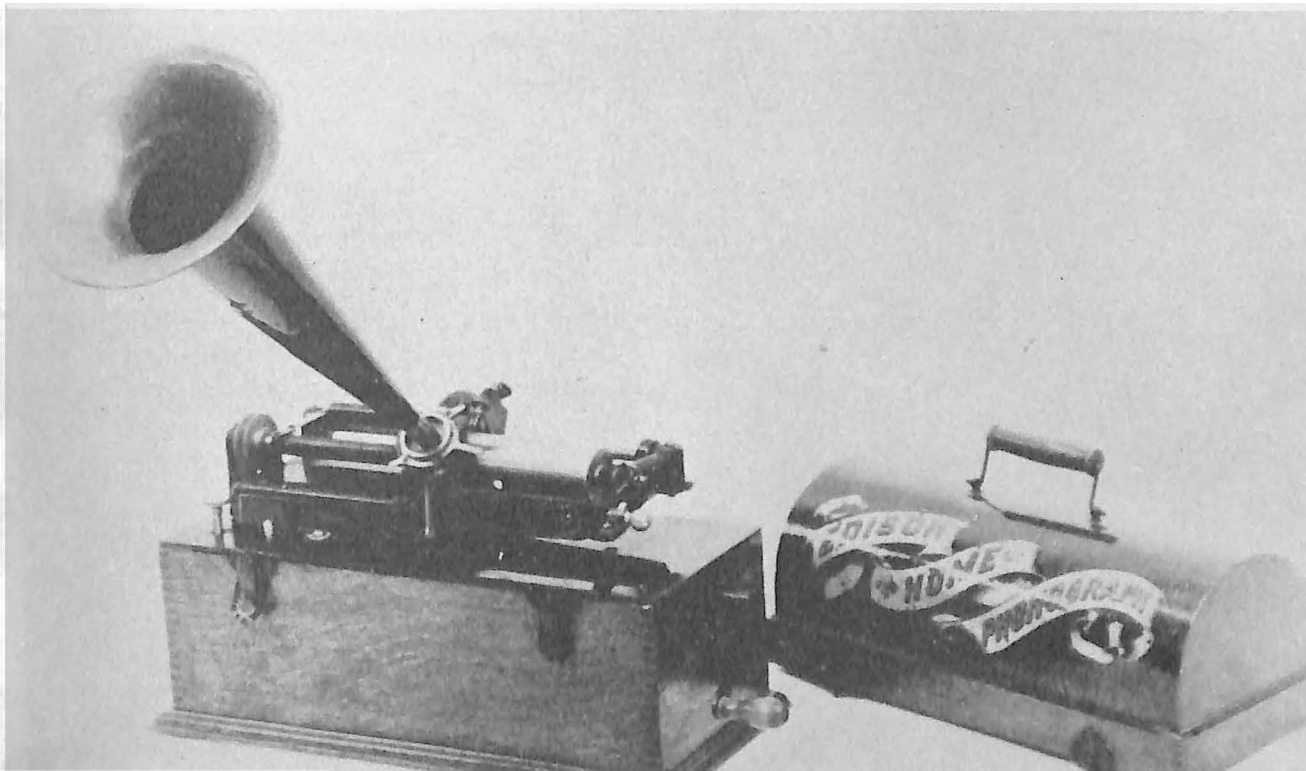
G. N. Joshi

The Beginnings

The history of the phonograph in India dates back to the beginning of the century. Though gramophones began to be exported to India since 1898, the idea of commercially exploiting the phonograph on a large scale in the east was mooted in 1900 and Messrs. The Mutoscope Biograph Co. of India was given the agency of selling horn-gramophones and records of European music imported from America. In 1898, Mr. W. B. Owen had established in England the parent company of the Gramophone Co. Ltd. He was sent to England by the American inventor of disc recording, Mr. Emile Berliner, to sell, if possible, his European rights for the disc records which he had patented in the U.S.A. Since Mr. Owen did not succeed in selling Mr. Berliner's rights outright, the two formed The Gramophone Co. Ltd. in England. Mr. Berliner erected a record pressing factory at Hanover in the U.S.A. for supplying records and machines to the newly-formed company in England.

At this point a mechanic named Johnson invented a spring-wound motor for the phonograph machine. Until the time his invention was perfected, users (during the period when the record was being played) had to rotate, with the help of a handle, the turntable with the disc on it. The spring-motor

Edison 'Home' Model A



enabled the phonograph to be wound for a certain number of playings and hence the listener could sit at a distance without having to bother to crank the machine all the time.

The Mutoscope Biograph Co. in India started selling machines and records pressed in America. The most popular record imported into India at that time was the Bert Sheppard record "The Laughing Song". It had proved popular wherever it has been released. Over a period of a few years nearly half a million copies of this record were sold.

The Mutoscope Biograph Co. did not do well; and its agency was terminated. In 1901, Mr. J. Watson Harod was sent out to open a branch of the company, which he did on July 7, 1901, in Calcutta.

In the initial stages, a gramophone record used to be manufactured by the process known as 'zinc etching'. A zinc disc with a smooth, shiny surface was coated with a layer of fat, on which a spiral groove was cut by a stylus. The stylus was fixed to a diaphragm that vibrated in sympathy with the sound waves of the song and music, sung or played into the large mouth of a horn. The recorded zinc disc was then immersed in acid for about ten minutes and the spiral groove of the music was etched into it. This record could then be played back straightaway.

In 1901, recording on wax was invented and it also became possible to duplicate the matrices, so that huge quantities could be pressed from these. The process opened up an enormous field for expansion.

Pathé

Polyphon No. 1492





By the beginning of October 1902, Mr. T. W. Gaisberg, who had worked with Mr. Berliner for several years, came out to India with the intention of developing the record trade in the east. His recordings in India became a landmark of great value.

Gaisberg and his successors in the following years recorded Miss Dulari, Gourajan, Zohran, Malkajan, Angurbala, Indubala, Kamala, Goharjan and popular *quwali*-singers Pearu Quwal, Kaloo Quwal, Fakre Alam Quwal

Angurbala

Kamala Jharia



and several others. The accompaniment for these artistes comprised just a few instruments: a harmonium, tabla, sarod, clarinet, and with female singers, the sarangi and bells. These recordings were sent to the factory at Hanover for processing and pressing. The finished records were then imported back into India and were sold in large numbers. In order to interest prospective purchasers to listen to discs, a novel idea was tried out. At the close of the singing, the artist would announce his or her name "My name is Jankibai of Allahabad" or "My name is Mushtaribai of Agra". These statements in English by performers who did not know the language amused listeners and helped somewhat to boost sales of discs. The earliest record was only 7" in size but later it was increased to 10" and 12". The early horn machines were black in colour, but later these were changed to brass for a more attractive and dazzling effect. The coloured horn was known as "Morning Glory" and it became a rage in 1907.

The year 1908 was unique in the history of the gramophone for in that year factories were established, one at Belliaghat in Calcutta and the other at Hayes, Middlesex, in England. This assured a steady supply of gramophone motors, machines and records to the rapidly growing market in India.

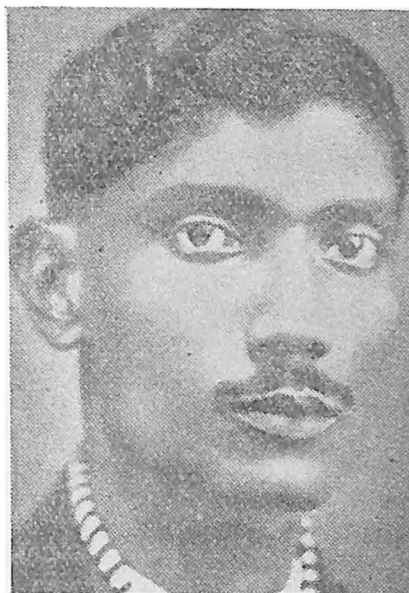
After the initial success of the record "The Laughing Song" by Bert Sheppard, the company brought out another one by Charles Primrose.

Goharjan





Kaloo Quwal



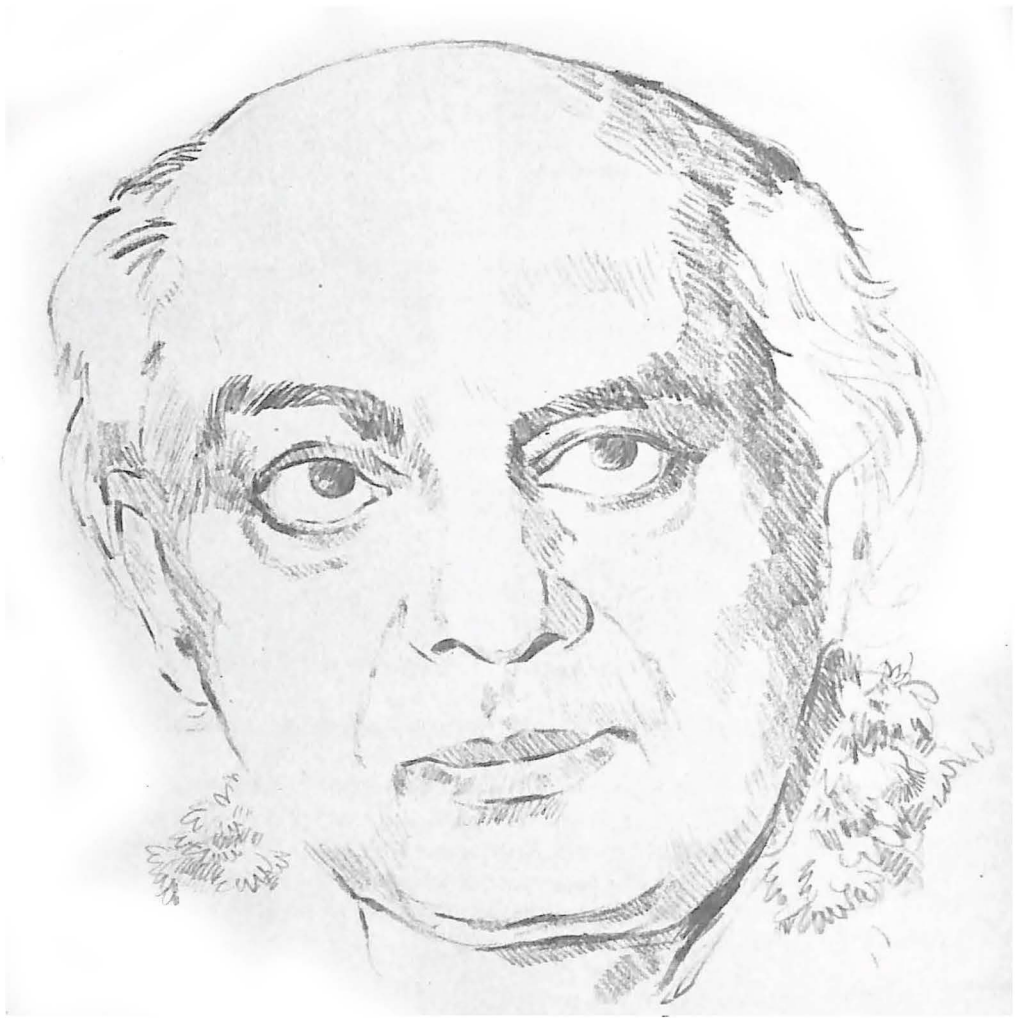
Fakre Alam Quwal

Records containing route-march songs, bugle-calls, camp-fire songs, 'pipes and drums' played by Q. O. Cameron Highlanders of the 2nd Battalion and comic songs like "The Peanut Vendor" also proved to be money-spinners. The company's factory at Belliaghata could not meet the rapidly growing demand for discs. In 1928, therefore, the company shifted its operations to a bigger factory at Dum Dum.

Technological Developments

The period of the last nearly fifty years has been one of continuous progress and expansion. The introduction of electrical recording in 1925, when microphones, amplifiers and cutting styli were used for recording the 'master' on wax, brought about a miraculous change in the technique of recording. The voice of the singers and the accompanying instruments could be controlled and what is called a 'balance' between the two could be achieved. The round piece of wax shaved to a mirror-finish was placed on a turntable which was driven at a fixed speed of 78 R.P.M. through a governor-driven device. A heavy weight attached to a pulley, descending slowly through a cable wound around a drum, would drive the turntable at a steady speed.

There were no studios with good acoustics and engineers had to arrange heavy curtains on the walls and thick carpets on the floors to ensure that the sound on the disc was neither too dull nor too reverberant. Later on, studios were set up in Dum Dum (Calcutta), Bombay, Madras and Delhi. Wax recording held sway till about 1948, despite the risk of breakage in transit from the recording centres to the factory at Dum Dum. To minimize such hazards, acetate-coated aluminium discs began to be used. But the weight-drive could not provide the requisite power to cut the new material



Kazi Nazrul Islam

which was stiffer than wax; an electric motor had to be used for this purpose. Then, in 1950, came the revolutionary magnetic tape-recorder with a frequency response of 50 to 10,000 cycles per second. This recorder also provided facilities for playing back the recorded material. The merits and flaws of the recorded piece could be observed, and mistakes rectified through re-recording (after an erasure of the previously recorded attempts). This resulted in improved sound-quality in the performances, without any loss except of labour and time. By 1964, even better tape-recorders, with a frequency response between 40 to 15,000 cycles per second, appeared and alongside facilities for stereophonic recording.

Besides manufacturing and marketing machines and records, the company today offers a wide variety of record-players, radiograms, tuners, and stereo-systems through a nationwide network. The phonograph that first landed in India at the beginning of this century has found its way into millions of homes and the invention of the great Thomas Edison and Charles Cros is rightly known today as one that radiates human happiness.

Expansion of Activities

India, with a population of over six hundred and twenty million people and more than thirty languages and dialects, has a varied treasure of musical traditions and colourful folklore. The present catalogue of the company includes over 7,500 records featuring every kind of fare: classical, folk, patriotic, devotional, light classical, light as well as pop and film music. In addition to items of sheer entertainment value, there are quite a large number of recordings of educational and cultural interest.

The stirring words of our national leaders, Mahatma Gandhi and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, were recorded and thus preserved for future generations. *Vande Mataram* was recorded by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore somewhere around 1900. The record was a 12" disc which played from inside to outside and it was published under the auspices of H. Bose's Record. A copy of the record was traced in 1961, the centenary of Gurudev's birth. Gurudev Tagore's voice was also recorded by H.M.V. during the early '20s in the Belliaghata factory and subsequently in the studios at Dum Dum. The voices of Kazi Nazrul Islam, Sumitranandan Pant, Mahadevi Verma, D. R. Bendre and poet Vallathol have also been preserved through records of their recitations of their poems.

During the early years, the company marketed imported records under various different labels such as Pathe, R.C.C., Decca, Pye, but soon afterwards it obtained the exclusive rights to use in India the trade-mark "His Master's Voice". Undoubtedly the dog and the phonograph is today the most famous trade-mark in the world and although millions of listeners are fascinated by the picture of "The Nipper and the Machine", very few people know the real story behind the picture.

An artist named Francis Barraud observed that a dog belonging to his deceased brother Mark Barraud would cock one ear to the sound emitted by an old Edison phonograph. It used to listen with rapt attention and the expression on its face suggested that it seemed to be waiting to hear its late master's voice. Francis Barraud was quick to grasp the value of the scene and he painted it as he saw it — "The Nipper and the Edison-Machine". He took the picture to the Edison Company but they did not evince any interest in it. A friend suggested to him that he change the ugly black machine and substitute it with a more modern horn. In 1899, while he was tramping the streets of London in the hope of finding such a horn from one of the various companies engaged in the rapidly growing record business, he happened



to call at the small office of the Gramophone Co. Ltd. He showed his oil-painting to the manager, B. Owen, who immediately grasped the potential it held as a trade-mark for his company. He gave a hundred pounds to the artist and obtained it for the company. The company had till then another trade-mark, "An angel writing, while sitting, on a disc". But when records with the dog and the sound-horn appeared, with the caption, "His Master's Voice", the trade-mark won fame and popularity of a kind unparalleled in the history of the industry. It was found printed on millions of records and machines in several countries of the world. In India, it first appeared on a portable machine in 1920. Later it was printed on the first electric records produced by the company. The abbreviated letters "H.M.V." for His Master's Voice became synonymous with the organisation "The Gramophone Co. Ltd."

The Gramophone Co. and the records with the dog trade-mark were meeting with increasing popularity and market support. The period (1920-21) coincided with the political awakening in the country and the nation-wide movement of Swadeshi. As a result businessmen, inspired by patriotic sentiments, decided to market records of songs supporting the Swadeshi Movement. The songs invoked listeners to boycott foreign goods and purchase exclusively things made in the country. T. S. Ramchander & Co., a firm in Bombay, recorded a number of such songs by local artistes and had them processed in Germany. These were issued under the 'Ramagraph' label.

Bal Gandharva

Hirabai Barodekar





Bai Sunderabai

About the same time (1920-25) musical dramas began to stage a comeback on the Marathi stage. Actor-singers like Bal Gandharva, Keshavrao Bhosle, Master Krishnarao, Master Dinanath, Bapoo Pendharkar, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, Sawai Gandharva, Chhota Gandharva, Hirabai Barodekar, performed practically every evening on the stage in the larger cities. The actor-singers were all gifted with enchanting voices; they had also had training under exacting masters in classical music. Each one of these actor-singers succeeded in developing a distinctive individual style of presentation. Vocalists like Bhaskarbuwa Bakhale, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Abdul Karim Khan had been groomed by great Muslim Ustads and they, in turn, passed on the great tradition to these young and gifted actor-singers. These dramas drew packed houses since the audiences were charmed by the music they presented.

The Gramophone Co. seized the opportunity to record the more popular songs and thus began an era of stage-music on gramophone discs. Scores of songs recorded by these actor-singers were the rage of the day and even today, after nearly three decades, listeners are overwhelmed by nostalgia when they listen to these songs of yesteryear. The Bengali and the Gujarati stage could also boast of a rich musical talent, and songs from plays thus gave a strong impetus to the record business.

The phonograph gained rapidly in popularity. The Gramophone Co. was faced with the challenge of satisfying the musical needs of a diversity of people, speaking different languages and spread over a vast sub-continent. But to record the musical lore that was part of their tradition was well-nigh impossible. The recording capacity of the Dum Dum factory and facilities for absorbing the discs in the market were limited. The Gramophone Co. could not by itself accept all the talent and material available.

Two companies, 'Columbia' and 'Odeon', with established labels in the world market, were trying to gain access to the Indian market. Columbia

started its operations in India in 1930 through S. Rose and Co. in Bombay and P. Orr and Sons in Madras and Odeon was introduced by Carl Lindstrom, a German. These companies started recordings in their own studios and had the discs processed and pressed in the U.K. and Germany respectively. Popular artistes like Goharbai, Amirbai Karnataki, Omkarnath Thakur and Saraswati Fatarphekar appeared on the Columbia label while Odeon presented such names as Bai Sunderabai, Hirabai Barodekar, Abdul Karim Khan, Sureshbabu Mane, Azambai and Shankarrao Sarnaik. Omkarnath Thakur, Abdul Karim Khan and Hirabai Barodekar were exponents of classical music. Sunderabai and Azambai presented the *lavani*—a typical regional music-form with a strong romantic content. Columbia later took over Odeon but by 1938-39 itself got amalgamated with The Ruby Record Co. The Ruby Record Co., which was started in Bombay in 1933, introduced listeners to the music of Bal Gandharva, Master Krishnarao, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze and other vocalists. The Gramophone Co., however, took over The Ruby Record Co. in 1943 and thus also obtained the repertoires of Columbia and Odeon. The vast repertoire of the three companies was subsequently divided between H.M.V. and Columbia, when the latter was revived again as a separate entity in 1945. It had a separate office alongside H.M.V. but the recordings done in the H.M.V. studios were common and intended to feed both the companies.

Yet another attempt at forming an independent recording company was made as early as 1934 under the name 'Broadcast Record Co'. Backed and financed by a city firm of jewellers, it won over for its label top-ranking artistes like Kesarbai Kerkar, Master Krishnarao, Siddheshwaridevi, Mallikarjun Mansur, Rasoolanbai, Jaddanbai (mother of Nargis Dutt) by paying them fabulous fees. But the company soon foundered on the rocks of economic losses.

The Gramophone Co. Ltd. thus succeeded in allowing a few small companies to function under its own wing. In Calcutta alone there appeared three such units. The Hindustan Record Co. (1931), the Megaphone Record Co. (1932) and the Senola Record Co. (1932). Senola concentrated on talent in the Bengali language. The Hindustan label became immensely popular with the records of songs by K. L. Saigal. Megaphone was associated with the bewitching voice of Akhtari Faizabadi. These companies did their recording and pressing with H.M.V. but distributed the records through their own channels. Their success led to the creation of other units and soon other labels like Bharat, Pioneer, Victoriaphone, Manmohan, Shahenshahi, Filmophone flooded the market.

The Gramophone Co. Ltd. had its head office and factory at Dum Dum. But it had by now opened branch offices and depots in Bombay, Delhi, Madras, Kanpur and Gauhati. Many smaller companies were soon ushered in by these branches. In Madras, there was Hutchinsons; in Bombay, Jaya-bharat and King Record Co.; in U.P., Maxitone, Aerophone, Star Record Co.; in Punjab, Jemophone, Gulshan, Frontier Trading Co.; and in Rajasthan (at Jodhpur), the Marwadi Record Co. All these small companies were reared and fostered by the Gramophone Co. Ltd.

HARIPURA CONGRESS 1938 SESSION



Honour for Sm. Sati Devi and Kanak Das

These artistes were invited to sing VANDE MATARAM at the Congress Session at Haripura. These are the artistes who made the Vande Matařam record in Bengali (N17014).

The Hindi version appears on N6944 which has already become popular.

Keep the record before the public as the demand will increase as time goes on.

Sm. Sati Devi is often referred to as a nightingale in her part of the country and here are some of the records she has made for your benefit :—

HINDI

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| P10642 | { | MERA TO GIRDIHAR GOPAL— MIRABAI BHAIJAN MAINE CHAKAR RAKHOJI— MIRABAI BHAIJAN |
| P11817 | { | KHELAT HAI GIRDIHARI —HORI THUMAK CHALAT RAM- CHANDRA |
| P11807 | { | BARSE BADIYA SAVANKI PYARE DARSAN DIJO |
| N9998 | { | MANRE PARAS HARIKA CHAKAN BHAIJAN—Sati Devi and Mr. Dutt AO ZULA ZULANE ZULA— Sati Devi and Mr. Dutt |

BENGALI

P11763, P11796, P11802, N3820, N17005



Parasuram

A NEW PRABHAT RECORD !

At least the two songs which appear on this record have not been available on one record before.

Those of you who saw the film "Duniya Na Mane" will remember how very good the song of the little boy was. Hindus, Mahommedans, Parsees—all liked it. This song was put on record No. N15619 on the other side of which appears the very popular Hindu Arti. For Hindus this record was ideal as it had the Arti and the very popular song of the boy. But for non-Hindus, the Arti had no attraction and many of them did not buy the record for this reason.

To meet the demand of non-Hindu buyers, we re-arranged the song of the street-boy-singer :—

MAN SAF TERA HAI YA NAHIN

The record is :—

- | | | |
|--------|---|--|
| N15654 | { | MAN SAF TERA HAI YA NAHIN |
| | | By Parasuram |
| | | SAMJHA KYA HAI DUNIYA —By Shanta Apte |

All the records from this film as they have been available so far will remain unchanged. N15654 is an additional record for those who like the two songs put on it.

In the span of over seventy years of its existence, there have been hardly five or six serious attempts at breaking the monopoly enjoyed by the Gramophone Co. Ltd. As early as 1920, a Gujarati businessman named Vallabhdas floated (with German collaboration) a company called 'Vialophone'. This Bombay-based venture proved to be very short-lived. Later, taking advantage of the nationalist movement, another businessman promoted a company called 'The National Gramophone Record Co'. 'Young India' and the emblem of the National Flag, accepted by the Indian National Congress, was its trade-mark. The entire manufacturing plant, machinery and the technical personnel were imported from Japan. This was about the year 1938, when film-music had just begun to exercise influence on the record trade. The earliest records of film-music were brought here in 1934 from Germany by V. Shantaram along with the coloured copy of his film "Sairandhree". The release in the market of records from this film unleashed a wave of mass popularity for film-music. From 1933 to 1938 the Prabhat Film Co. in Poona and the New Theatres Ltd. in Calcutta produced a galaxy of films with music which had a strong popular appeal. The melodies were mainly based on classical modes but were presented to audiences through the visual medium in an attractive setting. 'Amrit Manthan', 'Aadmi', 'Padosi', 'Sant Tukaram', 'Gopal Krishna', 'Maya-Machhindra', 'Dharmatma', 'Duniya-Na-Mane' etc. were released under the Prabhat banner while New Theatres Ltd. earned fame with 'Devdas', 'President', 'Chandidas', 'Vidyapati', 'Dhoop-Chhav', 'Jawab', 'Zindagi', 'Dushman' and 'Street-singer'. Singers like Shanta Apte, Govindrao Tembe, Shanta Hublikar, Ratnaprabha, Vasanti, Shahu Modak were projected through the Prabhat Productions. New Theatres Ltd. regaled viewers with songs rendered by K. L. Saigal, Pankaj Mullick, Kananbala, Pahari Sanyal, K. C. Dey and others.

The newly-formed National Gramophone Record Co. did give a jolt to the Gramophone Co. by causing the defection of V. Shantaram from the H.M.V. family. He was one of the directors of the new company and 'Young India' could thus count on the record business of the Prabhat Film Co. In that climate of patriotic resurgence, the call to boycott the British company and its records received a ready response. The National Record Co. thus made an excellent start and in the political conditions which were then prevalent in the country it stood a very good chance of capturing the record business. But the Gramophone Co. Ltd. had as its main assets the quality of the recording and of the processed record. The finished product of the 'Young India' label could hardly compete with the sophisticated quality of the records with the H.M.V. label. A disillusioned V. Shantaram returned to the fold of the Gramophone Co. Ltd. With their mainstay gone, the National Gramophone Record Co. could not survive for long and had to close down.

The appearance of records under the 'Polydor' label is a recent occurrence. 'Polydor' enjoys a big reputation in Europe for high-quality production and in the last ten years it has also made a headway here. 'The Gramophone Co. Ltd.' is now known as 'The Gramophone Co. of India, Ltd.' This is because, in accordance with government policy, equity share-holding by Indian investors has been effected. Yet another company under the trade-



Pankaj Mullick



K. C. Dey

name 'Indian Record Co.' has, it is learnt, recently made a debut in the gramophone world at Calcutta.

Till about 1920, all phonograph machines used to be imported and a phonograph in the drawing room was in those days a status symbol, very much like the telephone, refrigerator, motor car or television set of today. Around 1928-29, cheap machines manufactured in Japan invaded the market. They were so low-priced (each costing about Rs. 10 to Rs. 15) that even a person of average means could afford to purchase a machine. A little later, dealers in phonomachines started importing component parts from Japan and Switzerland and, using locally made wooden cabinets, assembled all these in Bombay, Calcutta and Delhi. The boom for gramophone records began with these cheap machines. These phonographs had a single standard speed of 78 R.P.M. Hence the playing time for one side of a disc of 10" size was a maximum of 3 minutes and 30 seconds. Later slightly larger-sized records of 12" (with an additional playing time of one minute) were considered suitable for the recordings of top-ranking artistes. These were naturally priced higher than the 10" discs.

Artistes

When the Gramophone Co. tried to draw upon the repertoire of the exponents of classical music, it invariably faced serious difficulties. The musicians were reluctant to share their knowledge with others and make their treasures accessible to the public. They refused to record and, if they were at all persuaded to do so, would stipulate such high fees that recording them ceased to be commercially viable. The company, therefore, focussed attention on the more popular singers. It was easier to persuade them to

record and their discs earned large profits. In the initial period, along with the imported records, the company recorded and issued for sale discs made by these popular singers. Amongst these are many who are still remembered, even after a lapse of more than three decades, for their sweet voices and attractive style of presentation. The names of Jankibai, Malkajan, Goharjan, Mushtaribai, Kamla Zaria, Angurbala, Indubala, Dulari, Joharajan and Mehboobjan linger in our memories even today.

The other types of musician artistes, who were accessible and whose discs had a good sales potential, were the *quwali* and *ghazal* singers and the performers of *kirtana*-s and devotional songs. The *naat*-s (Muslim religious songs) and *quwali*-s of outstandingly popular singers like Pearu Ouwal, Kaloo Quwal, Bhai Chhela, Master Rohit, K. C. Dey, Ashraf Khan, Fakiruddin Quwal, Aga Faiz, Ali Hussain Pyarasaheb still evoke affectionate response from listeners.

For centuries the poet saints of India propagated their teachings through their devotional songs. Tulsidasa and Surdasa in the north, Kabirdasa in the Punjab, Chaitanya Maha Prabhu in Bengal, Narsi Bhagat in Gujarat, Meerabai in Rajasthan, Dnyaneshwara, Eknatha, Namdeva, Tukarama in Maharashtra wrote hundreds of devotional songs which have been preserved

M. S. Subbulakshmi in her teens, when she began recording





M. L. Vasanthakumari



D. K. Pattamal

with reverence for centuries by devotees. These compositions provided artistes with rich and varied poetic material which found an immediate echo in the hearts of audiences. The Gramophone Co. took the decision to record a large number of such devotional compositions and amongst the artistes projected in this section were Juthika Ray, K. C. Dey, Dilip Kumar Roy, Master Vasant Amrut, Vishnupant Pagnis, Abharam Bhagat, Dula Bhagat, Fulajibuwa, Bai Sunderabai. Excerpts from the *Guru-Granth-Sahib* (the holy book of prayer of the Sikhs) and *Shabad* written by Guru Nanak and Guru Govind were immensely popular with the Sikh community.

I have confined my remarks so far to the North Indian scene partly because I have worked in the North for many years and my concern has been mostly with the Hindustani tradition, and partly also because the Hindustani system covers a much wider area and population. But the impact of the gramophone in the South has been considerable from the very early days.

Lovers of Karnatic music speak nostalgically of the records of Coimbatore Thayi, of Bangalore Nagaratnam, of the recordings of the incomparable Veena Dhanam and a 78 R.P.M. disc of Shanmukhavadvu (the mother of M. S. Subbulakshmi). Some of the great classical musicians of the early decades of this century—Veena Sheshanna, Bidaram Krishnappa, Ponnuswami Pillai and Ramaswami Pillai (Nagaswaram vidwans)—have all left behind them samples of their musicianship. The South, too, had its quota of stage stars—S. V. Subbia Bhagavatar, S. G. Kittappa, K. B. Sundarambal, all of whom recorded extensively.

Of the classical renderings of the '30s a very popular pressing was the rendering of *Nagamomu* by the late Musiri Subramania Iyer. Many of his



Palghat Mani Iyer



S. Balachander

contemporaries—Chembai, Ariyakudi, Maharajapuram, G.N.B., Venkataswami Naidu (violin), Rajamanickam Pillai (violin), Chowdiah (violin), Rajaratnam (nagaswaram) have all left the imprint of their art on discs, though few of them recorded extensively.

In more recent days we have had LPs from such distinguished singers as D. K. Pattamal, M. L. Vasanthakumari; also from very distinguished instrumentalists like the great Palghat Mani Iyer (mridanga), K. S. Narayanaswami (veena), T. R. Mahalingam (flute), Ramani (flute), S. Balachander (veena), T. Vishwanathan (flute), M. S. Gopalakrishnan (violin). This is by no means a complete list but will give an idea of the wide representation of

N. Ramani



Yesudas





M. S. Subbulakshmi with Lata Mangeshkar

Karnatic music on discs. Finally there is M. S. Subbulakshmi who has cut more titles than any other exponent of the Karnatic tradition. There are the unique "Suprabhatams", a wide range of *varnam*-s and *kriti*-s, and a variety of *bhajan*-s.

Of the many "playback" singers of the screen Yesudas is undoubtedly the biggest vogue today.

Narratives from the epics, mythological and historical episodes were recorded by Goswami Narayan, Pandit Ramanand, Kathavachak and others and were in great demand. In Maharashtra Shahirs P. D. Khadilkar,

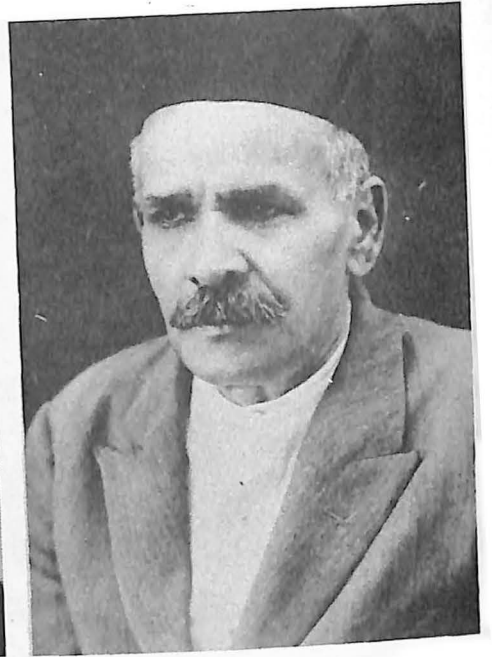
Faiyaz Khan

Rahimat Khan





Khansaheb Abdul Karim Khan



Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze

Nanivadekar, Piraji Sarnaik and others recorded *powada*-s (ballads) capturing significant moments in the history of the Marathas. They adhered to the traditional style adopted three hundred years ago to awaken the heroic sentiment of the Maratha warriors and rouse them to fight the repressive rule of the Moghuls.

Kesarbai Kerkar felicitating Mogubai Kurdikar





Bade Gulam Ali Khan with Munnawar, Ahmadjan Thirakhwa and friends

The phonograph often proved to be a trend-setter in the field of music and determined public taste in a large measure. In Maharashtra, the immense popularity of stage music paved the way for interest in classical music. The great artistes of the period recorded by the Gramophone company include masters like Rahimat Khan, Faiyaz Khan, Abdul Karim Khan, Inayat Khan, Nissar Hussain Khan, Allauddin Khan, Amir Khan, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Ahmadjan Thirakhwa, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Narayanrao Vyas, Vinayakrao Patwardhan, Kesarbai Kerkar, the Dagar brothers, Mogubai Kurdikar, Omkarnath Thakur, Gangubai Hangal, Mallikarjun Mansur and

Ram Narain

Vilayat Khan



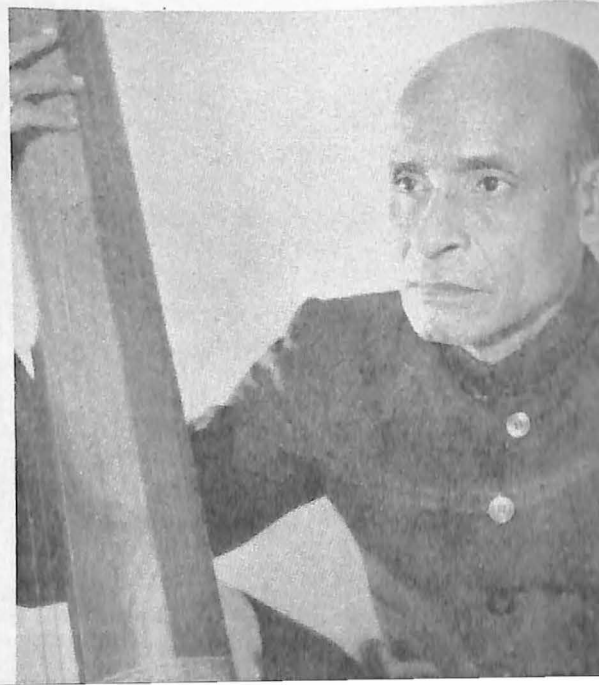
Hirabai Barodekar. In recent years this large repertoire has been further enriched by the Long Play recordings of outstanding artistes like Ravi Shankar, Ali Akbar Khan, Vilayat Khan, Bismillah Khan, Pannalal Ghosh, Bhimsen Joshi, Kishori Amonkar, Alla Rakha, D. V. Paluskar, Ram Narain, Kumar Gandharva, Pandit Jasraj and Jitendra Abhisheki.

Various companies have also recorded with great advantage many light-classical, minor modes and folk-songs from the different regions of India. Akhtari Faizabadi, better known in later times as Begum Akhtar, won unprecedented acclaim with her renderings of *ghazal*-s and *dadara*-s on Megaphone and later on the H.M.V. labels. Rasoolanbai, Siddheshwaridevi, Girjadevi and others became popular with their recordings of *thumri*-s, *tappa*-s and *dadara*-s. Jankibai, Goharjan, Malkajan and others (who have been mentioned earlier) had also recorded *hori*-s, *chaiti*-s, *sawani*-s, *dadara*-s and *ghazal*-s. The small companies in Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan even recorded songs containing the mutual abuses showered with gusto during weddings by the mothers of the bride and bridegroom. These Gali songs delighted listeners in villages.

After 1930 the *bhavageet*-s in Maharashtra opened an era of 'lyrical' music. To the writer of this article is given the credit for pioneering and popularising lyric-singing in Maharashtra. Compositions of eminent poets like B. R. Tambe, Madhav Julien, N. G. Deshpande, Anil, Yeshwant, Girish, Borkar, Kusumagraj, and others were recorded by him and others carried on the work. These records proved to be so popular that even stage-music had to change its pattern on the lines of *bhavageet*-s. In recent times, poems of well-known poets like G. D. Madgulkar, Mangesh Padgaonkar, Shanta Shelke have been recorded by Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhonsle, Manik Verma, Sudhir Phadke, Arun Date and other newcomers and these have all found favour with listeners.

Bhimsen Joshi

Mallikarjun Mansur





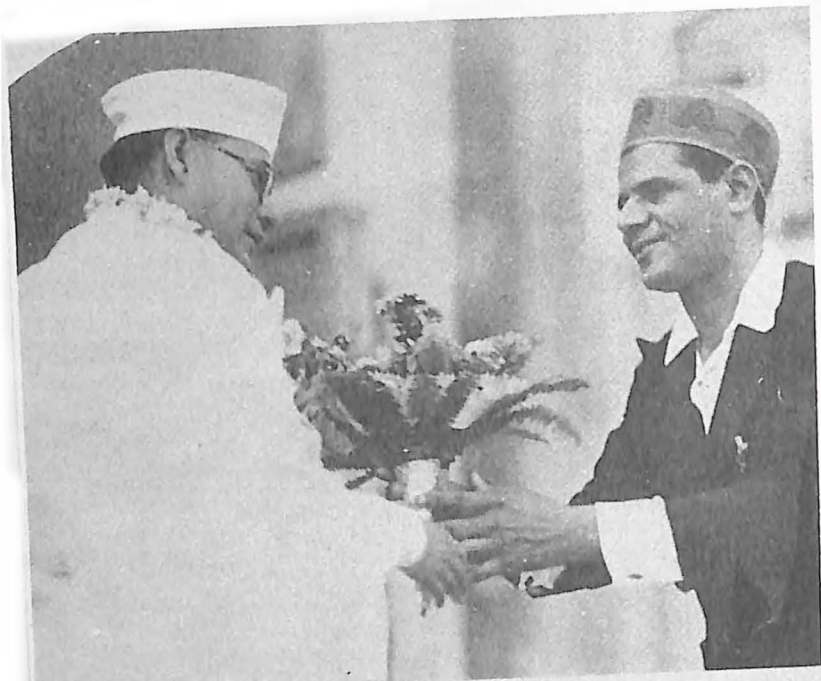
Ali Akbar Khan



Pannalal Ghosh

Film Music

Between the years 1930 and 1940, there was much advance in the technique of film production. Once again, Bengal and Maharashtra led the way, producing pictures of high quality. New Theatres Ltd. in Calcutta and Prabhat Film Co. in Poona, each of these established a distinctive style in music through its films. The names of music-composers R. C. Boral, Timir Baran, Anupam Ghatak of Bengal and Master Krishnarao, Keshavrao Bhole, Dada Chandekar, Sudhir Phadke of Maharashtra are associated with the chaste, classical-based music which they scored for many a successful film. The songs of actor-singers K. L. Saigal, Pahari Sanyal, K. C. Dey, Kananbala, Shanta Apte, Shanta Hublikar, Shahu Modak, Govindrao Tembe, Vishnupant Pagnis left a lingering flavour, which still has its own appeal. It was V. Shantaram who in 1934 first introduced songs on discs from his film 'Sairandhree'. These records fascinated listeners and the Gramophone Co. was besieged by demands for songs from other films. It had to go all out to secure contracts from film-producers for exclusive rights to record the songs from their films. In those days transfer from a film-track was unheard of. The actor-singers on the screen had to re-record the songs in H.M.V. Studios and the procedure continued for nearly twenty years. In the first few years of the talkies, producers paid more attention to the production of pictures in regional languages like Bengali, Marathi, Telugu and Malayalam, and Hindi films were made on an experimental basis. As the inter-provincial market for film expanded, film-producers found it more profitable to make pictures in Hindi and ensure an all-India appeal. Bombay soon became known as the Hollywood of India and a crop of film companies appeared, the better known among them being Prabhat, Bombay Talkies, Filmistan, Prakash, Ranjit, Sagar, Minerva etc. This led to a sudden demand for new voices, for music-makers and musicians. This was the time when Devika Rani, Ashok Kumar, Arun Kumar, Pandit Pradeep, Motilal Ishwarlal, Kantilal, the comedian Charlie, Leela Chitnis,



Mr. Sohrab Modi, Director of the Minerva Film Co., presenting a bouquet to Mr. Subhash Chandra Bose when the latter went to witness Minerva's Prohibition Film: "Meehta Zahar." Songs from this film are available on "Twin" Records.

Snehaprabha, Sitaradevi, Naseembanu, Sheela, Savitadevi, Maya Banerji became popular on discs. At the same time, the period coincided with the discovery of the very fine musical talent of Noorjehan, Khursheed, Suraiya, Ameerbai Karnataki, Wahidan and other artistes. Ghulam Haider, Shyam Sunder, Rafiq Gaznavi, Naushad, Khemchand Prakash, C. Ramchandra, and Anil Biswas composed and directed music for films which soon won immense acclaim for their fine musical score. New styles appeared, leading to fast-changing trends in music-composition and soon their market appeal brought about a fusion of varied modes which might perhaps be described as a kind of national integration.

The introduction of play-back singing around the year 1950 opened a new chapter in film music. The technique of lending voice to non-musical heroes and heroines offered opportunities to a large number of male and female artistes possessing voices suitable for the mike. Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhonsle, Suman Kalyanpur, Arati Mukerjee, P. Sushila, Mohammed Rafi, Manna Dey, Mukesh, Hemant Kumar, Kishore Kumar and Talat Mahmud and newcomers Yesudas and Vani Jairam are now legendary figures and the number of their individual recordings has surpassed all expectations. Lata Mangeshkar's achievement is indeed phenomenal. She holds a world record for the number of songs rendered for films. They are estimated to be more than twenty thousand. She has sung in almost all the Indian languages and in addition to film songs, she has recorded devotional music and lyrics. Her voice is familiar in every corner of the country and popular in distant parts of the world.

The enthusiasm for Rock-Beat-Pop music in the west also influenced the "composition" and presentation of film music in India. Large orchestral ensembles of Indian and western musical instruments have become essential ingredients for the recording of a film song, resulting quite often in a crude fusion of the east and the west.

The demand for Indian discs in the international market has increased steadily. The India-made gramophone record finds its way to every corner of the world, the main markets being the U.K., U.S.A., the East European Countries, the Middle-East, the West Indies, East Africa, Malaysia, Singapore and Fiji. The orders from outside India for these records are so great that the Gramophone Co. Ltd. could register a phenomenal rise in its export trade.

For the broad mass of the Indian people, who are still burdened by poverty, the phonograph is still an item of luxury. Its educational potential has yet to be utilized. But its value as a mode of entertainment is generally recognized. After all, a phonograph brings to the owner music of his own choice and of the kind which is always at his command. It is undoubtedly true that the invention of Thomas Edison and Charles Cros has brought undescrivable happiness to countless homes in this country.
