



INDIAN MUSIC NEWSLETTER

A quarterly information paper for lovers of Indian music in the West.



THE MUSIC OF SOUTH INDIA

In Indian music today there are two main schools, Hindustani, or North Indian music, and Carnatic, or South Indian music. Though similar in concept — both melodic and governed by the strict rules of raga and tala — they are nonetheless entirely different forms of musical expression. There was a time when a single system prevailed throughout India, but as early as the 12th century a division had already begun. Successive waves of Muslim invaders during the Middle Ages profoundly influenced Indian life and culture in the North, whereas the South remained relatively untouched, and was left in peace to continue its cultural development. Carnatic music belongs to the four Dravidian states of South India; Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala. On the map the dividing line is roughly from Goa on the west coast through Hyderabad to Vijayawada on the east.

The traveller through South India today is confronted with a world different in so many aspects from the North, in peoples, languages, landscapes, food and cultural attitudes. With their own kind of refinement characteristic of the Dravidian mentality, it is not surprising that musically the South developed its own style. In its present form Carnatic, or South Indian music is five centuries old and still flourishing, its centre in modern times being the city of Madras on the east coast of Tamil Nadu.

Carnatic music is understandably less known in the Western world than its northern counterpart. Few of its great exponents have ever found their way westwards. Apart from the Wesleyan University in the U.S.A., which provides a permanent teaching centre, facilities for Westerners to study Carnatic music outside India are few and far between. Few also are the outsiders who have ever mastered the art. By far the greater number of concerts given in the West are by North Indian musicians. With Hindustani music becoming undoubtedly more listened to and appreciated in South India, the reverse cannot be said to be true. An indigenous art form, with its intense use of *gamaka* (bending or slurring of tones), Carnatic music presents a real challenge to the uninitiated ear, and only time will tell if its true worth will ever be fully recognised, even among the growing number of Westerners who are able to appreciate the delicacies of oriental and exotic music.

Carnatic music, in common with the Hindustani system, uses a tonal system



The saraswati vina. Tirugakarnam Ramachandra Iyer

which resembles that of the West; it divides the octave into twelve semitones of approximately equal length. However, if we compare the Indian tones with those of the Western tempered scale, we find that there are minute — but audible — microtonal pitch differences, slightly above or below the corresponding Western tone, refining the melodic structure. Through this sophisticated melodic structure (raga) and its relation to the cyclic rhythmic structure (tala) a vast range of musical possibilities is explored, uplifting and inspiring both performer and listener.

Though basing its format on composed music, the Carnatic system uses improvisation extensively, in the forms known as *alapana*, *ragam*, *thanam* and *pallavi*. It is perhaps in these forms, in all the sheer bravado and spirit of adventure which are inherent in them, that the Western ear can first begin to grasp what an amazing world is contained within the realms of South Indian music.

When Indian music first made its mark in the West in the sixties, it was mainly through the sitar and sarod of North India. Carnatic music has had exposure in the West but it still remains little known. It is perhaps best represented in the Western world through the saraswati vina. Some of its great players, like S. Balachander, Emmani Shankar Shastri and V. Doraiswami Iyengar, have been heard in Europe and the U.S.A., and two great Carnatic violinists, L. Shankar and L. Subramaniam, are currently experimenting with incorporating their techniques into mod-

ern western music.

The South is very rich in superb concert violinists and flautists, notably Lalgudi Jayaraman and M.S. Gopalkrishnan (violin), and T.R. Mahalingam and N. Ramani (flute). But instrumentally, apart from the *nagaswaram* (a double-reeded longer version of the *shehnai* of North India), and the rarely-heard *gottuvadyam* (the slide vina), the South has far fewer concert solo instruments than one would imagine for such a rich system of music. It is primarily a vocal art form. Carnatic music involves a more complex use of percussion than the North; the Southern concert drum, the *mridangam*, is often accompanied by the *ghatam* (clay pot), the *kanjira* (tambourine), and the *morsing* (jews' harp).

Though the distant origins of Indian music go back to Vedic times, the first major consolidation of form in Carnatic music came about through the poet-saint Purandaradasa (1486-1564), in the time of the great Vijayanagar empire, a golden age in South Indian history. Purandaradasa has come to be known as the father of Carnatic music, so systematising and refining it that it has remained basically unaltered until the present day. A prolific composer, scholar, *bhakti* and aesthete, he developed a form known as the *kritti*, a composition, entirely metered in structure, into which is woven the essence of raga and tala, a form with often profound lyrics but which remains predominantly musical. It was a progression out of the simpler, already existing, more devotional



Tyagaraja

kirtana form which placed more emphasis on lyrical content than musical sophistication. His other major contribution was to initiate the methodical study of Carnatic music, beginning with the practice of scales, exercises, simple songs (*gitas*), more complex songs (*varnam*) and finally *kritis*. This method is used exclusively in the teaching of Carnatic music today.

Purandaradasa's life was a remarkable journey. A certain miraculous incident in his domestic affairs convinced him absolutely of the errors of his avaricious way of life as a wealthy trader. So profoundly did this incident affect him that he gave up his worldly life and went on to live the life of a renunciate, as a disciple of the greatest yogi of that time, Vyasaraya. Purandaradasa became one of the immortal names in the history of South Indian music.

A hundred years after Purandaradasa, in the mid-17th century, Venkatamikhil established a system whereby the immensely complex language of raga could be classified. This system is based on 72 *melakarta* (parent) ragas, consisting of all the possible seven-tone scales in regular ascent and descent. From these, five or six-tone scales are derived, known as *janya* ragas. In North India, this kind of classification was virtually ignored until this century.

The three poet-saints Tyagaraja (1759-1847), Muttuswami Dikshitar (1775-1835) and Shyama Shastri (1763-1827), created the next wave of development in Carnatic music. By the 18th century, after the fall of the Vijayanagar empire, the major centre for Carnatic music moved further south, to Tanjore in Tamil Nadu, and Travancore in Kerala. In the mid-1700's, in the village of Tiruvayur, near Tanjore, these three men were born within a few years and streets from each other. They were to enrich Carnatic music to such an extent that a modern concert programme, be it vocal or instrumental, relies largely on

their compositions.

Outstanding among them was Tyagaraja. Descended from Telugu Brahmins from Andhra Pradesh, trained early in life in Sanskrit, astrology and vina playing, he developed into a man of yogic vision and musical excellence. His *kritis* are full of rich rhythms, exquisite language and symbolic meaning. 700 of them exist today, in 260 different ragas. His texts, though mostly devotional, range from the highest yogic ideals to matters of government and social welfare. Like Purandaradasa, he lived only by singing and begging and spurned the patronage of royalty.

Muttuswami Dikshitar's music is noted for its manliness and power. Influenced by the ancient Hindustani style of singing known as *dhrupad* during a six-year stay in Benares, his compositions are slow-moving. He wrote only in Sanskrit, resurrected old ragas and his music is heavily ornamented. It has been described as 'ethereal architecture'. He is considered to be the great master of raga and his work the most challenging for the Carnatic musician.

Shyama Shastri wrote 300 *kritis*, of which about 30 are popular today. His pieces, written in Sanskrit and Telugu, are noted for their rhythmic beauty.

Through the inspired contribution of these three saints from Tiruvayur, the golden age of Carnatic music had arrived. It has been carried into the 20th Century through a long list of great musicians of old, names like Musiri Subrahmanya Iyer, Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Chembai Vaidyanatha Bhagavathar, Patnam Subrahmanya Iyer, Veena Dhanamal, etc. Today the list is equally impressive, including great female vocalists such as

M.S. Subbulakshmi, M.L. Vasanta Kumari, D.K. Pattamal, and Radha and Jayalakshmi, who sing as a vocal duet, or *jodippattu*, like the *jugalbandi* of North India. Well-known male vocalists include Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer, Maharajapuram Santanam, G.N. Balasubramaniam, S. Ramanathan, Balamurali Krishna and the late M.D. Ramanathan.

The Concert

A Carnatic concert is generally three hours long, without a break. To the soloist's right sits the mridangam player, and to his left the violinist. Behind, the indispensable tamboura provides the drone, often played by a student who will provide vocal support during the composed sections of the concert. Also in the background will sit any additional percussionists to make up the ensemble of up to seven musicians.

A recital begins with a *varnam*, similar to an *étude*, a warming-up composition, entertaining in its own right, and close to the basic structure of the *kritis* that will follow but less complex. A *kritti*, a rondo-like form, has as its basic element the *pallavi*, *anupallavi* and *charanam*, melodic patterns within the mould of raga set to literary texts. Each of these sections of the *kritti* explores different areas of pitch register, with other types of variation set between these forms. The whole piece gains complexity through the repetition of phrases at different speeds. Unlike Hindustani music, which uses a gradual building-up of tempo, increase of speed in Carnatic music is always a doubling of tempo (or tripling, quadrupling and so on). Within a *kritti* are passages where the musician can improvise melodic variations, but keeping to the text (*niraval*),



A typical South Indian ensemble. In the centre a flute player (N. Ramani), with to his right the mridangam, to his left the accompanying violinist and at the back a tamboura player.

another where just the *swaras* or notes are improvised upon (*swara kalpana*).

As a concert progresses through the performing of a succession of *kritis*, the artist will precede them with **alapana** (*alap*) of varying length. The piece de résistance of the recital is the **ragam-thanam-pallavi**, which is performed towards the end. It is an entirely improvised form, except for the theme introduced at the beginning of the metered third section of the improvisation, the *pallavi*. *Alapana* is developed fully, with the violin repeating as closely as possible the phrases of the singer, about a second or so behind, tracking the voice, as it were. Then the violinist takes his solo for about as long as the vocalist, contrasting with the Hindustani style where the vocalist alone is responsible for his *alap*, and where no place is given for solos by accompanying musicians.

In **thanam**, the second sequence of the *ragam-thanam-pallavi*, a rhythmic pulsation is established, similar to the *nom-tom* *alap* and *gor* of Hindustani music. *Thanam* is the forte of the *vina*, with its three 'sruti' strings plucked with the little finger to accentuate the continuum of rhythm. At first, the pulse of *thanam* is broken by non-rhythmic phrases or flourishes of *ragam* (*alapana*), but gradually the *tanam*, by doubling in speed, becomes consistent, still without reference to metre.

With the introduction of the **pallavi**, one line of composed melody, enters the *mridangam*. What follows is a highly technical rhythmic exercise where *talas* of unusual length and complexity are often used, and where the point of principal rhythmic weight is not on the first beat, but the half-way point in the *tala* cycle. After introducing the theme, improvisation begins through a maze of melodic and rhythmic variables, notably **swara kalpana**, where solfège syllables (names of notes) are woven into parts of the cycle and sung at different levels of speed. A climax is reached and after returning to and repeating the opening *pallavi*, the *mridangam* gives a solo, known as **tani avartam**. All melody disappears and the vocalist or the *vina* player will keep *tala* visibly by slapping the thigh or clapping and waving the hand. In the case where the *mridangam* is accompanied by the *ghatam*, *kanjira* or *morsing*, each tries in turn to outdo the one before him in rhythmic intricacy, epitomising the fascination for rhythm and metre that is so prominent in Carnatic music.

A recital closes with either a **tillana** or a **javali**, both light classical forms and about five minutes long. A *tillana* is principally a dance form, lively and attractive, whose rhythmic passages correspond to the footwork patterns of the Bharat Natyam dancer. A *javali* is a light love song often with erotic overtones, the only form in Carnatic music where phrases or tones foreign to the given *raga* are

allowed.

Three other types of composition used occasionally on the concert platform are the *tevaram*, *padam*, and *devaranama*. A *tevaram* is an ancient form of Hindu temple music, an offering to a particular deity as a kind of complex musical puja (worship). A *padam* is an intense simply-worded song expressing, for example, the sufferings of love, expectations of happiness, eroticism, satire etc. Other kinds of *padam* give names of auspicious places, names of herbs and trees. Kshetrappa was the great composer and father of this form.

A *devaranama* is a simple devotional song, outpourings of the devotee in moments of intense religious experience, usually containing lofty ideas pertaining to the messages of the Upanishads.

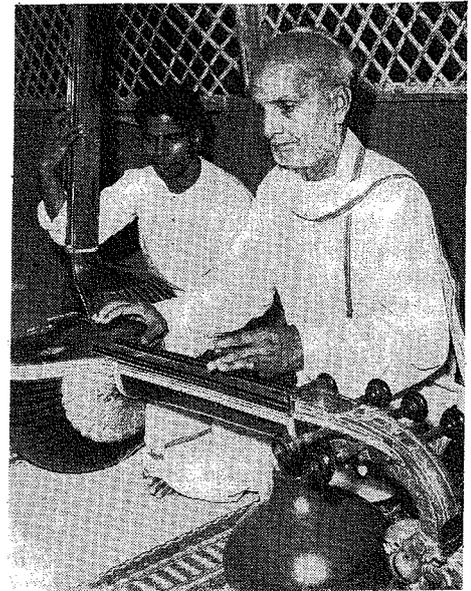
Instruments

The major solo instruments used in Carnatic music are the *vina*, violin and *venu* (flute).

The **saraswati vina** has seven metal strings, four for creating melody and fingered over its 22 frets, and three positioned off the side of the bridge and stroked with the little finger, acting as a drone, like on the *rudra vina* of North India. But unlike the *rudra vina* the instrument is wooden, the gourd a hollowed-out block of jackwood or rosewood, a five-eighths-spherical resonating chamber, usually topped with a rosewood plate. The *vina* gives a deep, rich and sweet sound. Frets are lengths of round brass set into a bed of a mixture of wax and lampblack. The left end of the instrument is a carved dragon's head turned under, providing a small horizontal surface on which the *vina* player places ghee (clarified butter) to facilitate an easier sliding over the frets of his instrument. In more ancient times the *vina* was used to accompany vocalists, but by the mid-19th century the violin replaced it and the *vina* is now a solo instrument. Its four melody strings are tuned to the tonic, fifth, octave



The *nagaswaram*. Sheik Chinna Moulana



The *gottuvadyam*. Budelur Krishnamurti Shastri

and fifth in descending order, and its three drone strings to the tonic, fifth and octave. The fifth is lowered to the fourth for certain ragas. Unlike the *rudra vina*, it is unfortunately not used much on the bass strings, with the exception of the great self-taught *vina* player S. Balachander, who is unique in exploiting the potential of this instrument in the lower register. Other well-known great *vainikas* (master *vina* players) of our time include V. Doraiswami Iyengar, Emmani Shankar Shastri, R.K. Suryanarayana, R.K. Narayanaswamy and Chitti Babu.

The *vina*'s slide counterpart, the **gottuvadyam**, a sadly neglected instrument today, resembles the *vichitra vina* of North India. It is designed and tuned the same as the *vina* but is without frets. A rounded block of wood is used to stop, the tautly-set strings and two melody strings are usually plucked simultaneously an octave apart. Like the *saraswati vina*, two metal plectrums on the first and second fingers are used to pluck the strings in a downward motion.

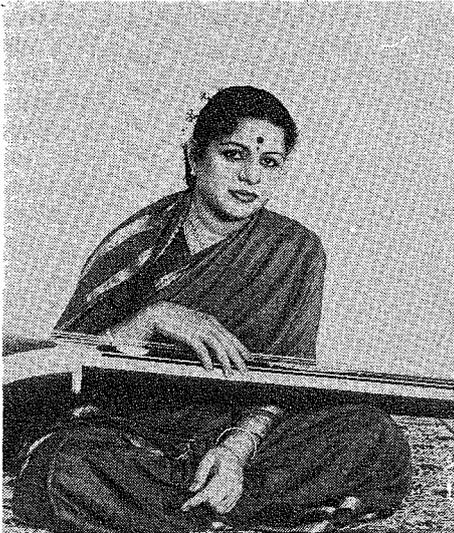
The South Indian flute, the **venu**, is a transverse treble instrument, much smaller than the northern flute, the *bansuri*. It has eight holes and a range of two-and-a-half octaves. The top three holes are stopped by the left-hand fingers, the next four with the right hand and the lowest hole is left open at all times. *Gamakas*, or graces, are effected by rolling the fingers across the holes and by rolling the instrument on the lower lip. It is a virtuoso's instrument, and among its great exponents today are T.R. Mahalingam, N. Ramani, K.S. Gopalkrishna and T. Vishwanathan.

The **nagaswaram**, or *nadhaswaram*, is similar to the northern *shehnai*, but much longer. It is a loud, double-reeded, eight-holed instrument almost trumpet-like in sound. It has twelve holes drilled into its barrel. Seven are fingered, one is

left open and the rest filled with wax to adjust the pitch. The outstanding concert artist on this instrument is Sheikh Chinna Maulana. It is played with the **ottu**, a double-reeded drone instrument that replaces the tamboura. A circular breathing technique, using the cheek cavity as an air chamber, creates and sustains the drone.

The drum that accompanies the naga-swaram, the **tavil**, short and barrel-shaped, is played vigorously with a stick on its left head and by the hand, wrist and fingers on its right head.

The principal drum to accompany the Carnatic musician is the **mridangam**. Unlike the tabla, that reinforces the simple beats of the tala in Hindustani music, the mridangam provides a cross-rhythmical accompaniment in one of seven basic talas. It is a single-piece drum hollowed out of a block of jackwood, redwood or mango; its two layered leather playing ends, secured by leather braces, are tuned an octave apart, to the tonic of the soloist. Small cylindrical pieces of wood between the braces and the body of the drum render the pitch of the instrument adjustable. Like the tabla, a mixture of iron filings or



M.S. Subbulakshmi, the famous vocalist

manganese and cooked rice is stuck onto the right head of the drum. The rhythmic elaborations of the mridangam are internal arrangements of time-patterns within a cycle with a complex distribution of beats and criss-cross syncopated rhythms. But that sense of 'arriving' at *sam*, a characteristic of Hindustani music, is not there with mridangam playing.

The mridangam is played with a variety of left and right-hand techniques in rhythmic patterns of five, six, seven or eight beats, or computations or divisions thereof. There are seven main talas in Carnatic music, with five varieties of each tala. Outstanding artists on this instrument are Umayalapuram, K. Sivaraman, Guruvayur Dorai, T.V. Gopalakrishnan, T. Upendran and the late Palghat Mani Iyer.

Another widely used percussion instrument in South India is the **ghatam**, a specially-made, large-bellied clay pot which the player strikes with his hands, wrists, all ten fingers and fingernails. The general effect is a fast and scintillating crackling. The player can achieve changes of pitch by moving the narrow open mouth of the pot away from and against his bare stomach. Sometimes he throws the pot up into the air, catching it in time with the music.

To form a percussion ensemble, the mridangam and ghatam can be accompanied by the **kanjira**, a simple circular wooden frame over which is stretched wild lizard skin on one side. Pieces of metal, or coins, are inserted into the wooden frame, similar to the tambourine. The **morsing**, the jew's harp, completes the trio of auxiliary percussion instruments.

In recent years, instruments like the saxophone, clarinet, mandolin and cello have been introduced into Carnatic music. The harmonium is nowhere to be seen on the concert platform in South India.

The two great yearly musical events in Carnatic music are the Tyagaraja Festival in Tiruvayur to commemorate the birth-

day of the great poet-saint, and the ten-day Sabha (festival) in Madras.

In olden times the great patrons of the arts were the maharajas, in the South notably of Mysore, Tanjore and Travancore. Some of the maharajahs were also great composers. Today All-India Radio offers a humble living to its large staff of studio musicians. All the modern musicians mentioned here have recorded long-playing records, and Carnatic music is well represented in recorded form.

Indian music is by its nature an emotive art form, eliciting an aesthetic response from the listener. It is given the status of *Adhyatma Vidya*, a pathway to self-realisation through a state of mind known as *nadaprasana*, or contemplation on sound. Playing on the inner psyche, it provokes compound sentiments, with the subtly different modes of raga and tala stimulating the inner world of moods and deeper emotions. The responsive listener is known as a *rasika*, that is, someone who has latent impressions of feeling that may be aroused. He must have the capacity to transcend ordinary emotion and experience the deeper sensation of poetic sentiment (*rasa*). Nine rasas are generally spoken of—love, humour, pathos or compassion, anger or wrath, courage or heroism, fear, disgust or loathing, wonder and peace. To them can be added joy, pity, mystery, repentance, patience, devotion, tenderness, loneliness, patriotism and detachment from the crowd.

South Indian classical music may never reach out into the outside world to the same degree that Hindustani music has. Nonetheless, it is a profound offering to the world of fine art. Struggling to maintain itself in a rapidly changing atmosphere where ancient traditions and values are being sacrificed in the race to modernise, Carnatic music is among the precious gifts that India has to offer humanity in these vicarious times.

Peter Bendrey

CASSETTE REVIEW:

'The Lost Saraswati'

South Indian vina by R. Visvesvaran
Stereo 180 min. Produced by Saraswati Project, 1984

The Saraswati Project has been formed to provide the discerning listener with high-quality recordings of Indian musicians in concert. In contrast to the time limit imposed by the long-playing record, and the bland atmosphere of the recording studio, the project aims to capture the full three-hour concert format, as performed before a small, select audience.

The first offering from the Saraswati Project is a recital given by the great saraswati vina virtuoso R. Visvesvaran. Available on two metal or chromium 90-minute Dolby (B) cassettes, this beauti-

fully recorded three-hour recital is a truly professional product well worthy of its name, 'The Lost Saraswati'. Compared with other recordings of this instrument currently available, this one is in a class by itself. One is left to wonder why R. Visvesvaran has never been recorded before. As a child prodigy, he gave his first public concert at nine years of age, as a vocalist, taking to the vina a few years later. As a vina player, vocalist, composer and musicologist, R. Visvesvaran is undoubtedly one of the leading figures in Carnatic music today.

From the opening varnam in raga Sahana, by Tyagaraja, it is obvious that Visvesvaran is the master of his craft. He follows this with his own composition in raga Hamsadhvani, exquisitely rendered, at times blending his voice with his vina in the pallavi. His swara kalpanas here and

everywhere on this recording are superb, as indeed are the alapanas that precede his next two pieces in ragas Saramati and Ranjani, both krittis composed by Tyagaraja. After these we hear his interpretation of Dikshitar's composition Navaratnavilas, with the morsing accentuating the brisk sound of the mridangam, creating beautifully fluid rhythmic patterns. Next, the listener is treated to a detailed alapana in raga Mohana, leading us into another kritti by Tyagaraja. Here the virtuosity of R. Visvesvaran is displayed in his handling of improvisations within the composition at quadruple speed. The ragam-thanam-pallavi that follows in raga Todi, and subsequently a *raga-malika* (a piece where several ragas are played in succession), is an astonishing piece of creativity and dexterity. After a full alapana in Todi,

(continued on back page)



Bade Gulam Ali Khan shortly before his death.

OLD MASTERS OF INDIAN MUSIC - IV

Bade Gulam Ali Khan (1902-1968)

Bade Gulam Ali Khan was born in 1902 in Lahore (now Pakistan). His father, Ali Bux, was a musician, but as a boy Bade Gulam Ali was taught by his uncle, the famous musician Kale Khan of Patiala, for ten years. After his guru's death, he continued practising and studying with his father and also with Ashiq Ali and Sindhi Khan, well-known musicians of their day.

In this way the young musician combined an inborn talent with a thorough training under great masters and with endless practice. This resulted in possibly the most perfect voice there has ever been in Indian music; three octaves of smooth and beautiful tones in perfect tune. To this he added a humble approach to music as something truly divine, as well as a very sensitive and emotional approach to the classical tradition.

Bade Gulam Ali Khan's entire life consisted of continuous practice, since he was totally devoted to music. This is why he could start a performance with a fast composition with very fast improvisations,

while others had to warm up their voices in alap. However, he was criticised both for the stress on intricate patterns and his lack of systematic development within the ragas. But he felt that careful delineation was the subject of alap and dhrupad; he preferred the fanciful aspects of khayal.

With his numerous performances he won the hearts of many music lovers all over India. He had a charismatic personality and a thorough understanding of the mood of his audience, so that he always sang the right pieces at the right moment.

It is said that he established his reputation in Calcutta, a major cultural centre, in a matter of days. At a 'music conference' that lasted several days an unknown fat man expressed his wish to perform. After insisting, he was scheduled for a performance at a time when most people would be going out for lunch anyway. The audience was uninterested and making a noise. But with the first note of Bade Gulam Ali Khan the atmosphere changed and the audience was entranced by his singing for hours. Those who had missed his performance demanded to hear him the next day, and lost their interest in the other artists.

The emotional appeal of music was the most important aspect for Bade Gulam Ali

Khan. Without this he felt that classical music was lacking life. With his fabulous musical background and skill he was able to find inspiration in music by expressing natural phenomena in musical notes. In an article he was reported to have said (B.R. Deodhar, 1949): 'All the objects in this world are full of beauty and I strive to give expression in musical form to everything that attracts my attention. When I am sitting by the bank of a river or on open ground on an evening I see the birds flying in the sky. Their flight, the perfect freedom with which they move hither and thither, their capers, their quick upward dartings and leisurely returns to the trees — how I like all this. I begin to think up ways of expressing all these actions faithfully in music. I flash a *tan* up to the *pancham* of the upper octave and descend spiralling my voice round, back to the tonic Sa.' Another time he was observed singing ascending and descending *tanas* to the leaping-up and dashing-down of the waves from the sea on Bombay's Marine Drive.

With this emotional and 'impressionistic' approach to music, it was no wonder that he excelled in the light classical thumri form. He also sang lyrics and folk songs. He composed many thumris under the pen-name 'Sabrang', which means 'full of all colours'. The thumri offered Bade Gulam Ali the opportunity to fully explore the scope of his voice and his musical imagination. It is for his thumris that he is most remembered today.

In 1961, Bade Gulam Ali Khan suffered a paralytic stroke. Although his tongue was affected, the devoted musician continued to sing until his death in 1968. The most popular classical artist during his lifetime, he is the most imitated one after his death, comparable only to the great Amir Khan of Indore. His best disciple, his son Munawar Ali Khan, is respected as one of the best vocalists of the present generation, although only his music, not his voice, echoes his incomparable father.

Bade Gulam Ali Khan has been frequently recorded during his lifetime. There are six different records of his available on the HMV EMI Label (the Gramophone Company of India).

Classical

Ragas Gujri Todi, Desi Todi, Bhimpalas, Kamod, Pahadi, Kedar, Jaijaiwanti, Darbari, Adana, Malkauns and Paraj:

HMV MOAE 5004.

Ragas Gunkali and Malkauns:

HMV EALP 1258.

Ragas Darbari Kanada and Kaushi Dhani:

HMV EALP 1265.

Ragas Suddha Sarang, Megh Malhar and Thumri Pahadi:

HMV EALP 1364.

Light classical

Thumri - Featuring Aaye ne balaam:

HMV MOAE 5005.

Great Master, great music:

HMV EALP 1516.

REVIEW (continued from page 4)

Visvesvaran plays a long thanam, first in Todi, then in raga-malika form, in ragas Jajiwanti, Varali, Kannada, Marwa, Bhairagi, Bhairav, Ahiri and Madyamavati. His thanam technique is his own, creating long sustained sequences of powerful and moving sound, bringing out the full richness of his beautiful instrument, which is somewhat larger than the normal saraswati vina. Though whole sides of long-playing records have been devoted to the thanam form, notably by S. Balachander and R.K. Suryanarayana, Visvesvaran's thanam is a tour-de-force second to none. His Pallavi is equally impressive, building in speed and complexity to a climax, with vina, drum and morsing finally in unison and at speed. The last half-hour of the recital contains five pieces. The first three, short and sedate, are compositions by Vyasraya, Jayadeva and Subramanya Shastri. Visvesvaran then plays a delightful tillana in

The Saraswati project recording of Visvesvaran can be ordered by mail from: Saraswati Project, Leif Karlsson, Mardvagen 14, S-644 OO Torshalla, Sweden. They are also available at Au Bout du Monde record shop, Singel 313, Amsterdam, tel. 020-251397, and during concerts in the Mozes en Aaronkerk in Amsterdam.

Prices:

Set of 2 metal 90 min. cassettes	3 hrs	US\$39,-	Hfl 125,-	300SKR.
Set of 2 chromium 90 min. cassettes	3 hrs	US\$34,-	Hfl 110,-	250SKR
Part 1, 1 metal 90 min. cassette	90 min.	US\$19,50	Hfl 62,50	150SKR
Part 2, 1 metal 90 min. cassette	90 min.	US\$19,50	Hfl 62,50	150SKR
Part 1, 1 chromium 90 min. cassette	90 min.	US\$17,-	Hfl 55,-	125SKR
Part 2, 1 chromium 90 min. cassette	90 min.	US\$17,-	Hfl 55,-	125SKR

Finally, there is the possibility of ordering a standard quality cassette with only part of the concert of Visvesvaran:

1 x 60 min. cassette, selections	60 min.	US\$12,-	Hfl 35,-	100SKR
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INTERNATIONAL DIARY

As usual, the winter season has little to offer in terms of concerts of Indian music. There is a festival in Cologne (Köln), with three top artists, who need no further introduction. In April the season will start in most other countries. However, do check local sources for house concerts and possible other concerts that have escaped our attention.

Germany

Ravi Shankar - sitar

Sunday 3 March, Stuttgart

Tuesday 5 March, Cologne (part of festival with Hariprasad Chaurasia and Shiv Kumar Sharma)

Thursday 7 March, Hamburg

Saturday 8 March, Berlin

Hariprasad Chaurasia - flute

Monday 4 March, Cologne

raga Jhinjoti, written by Vina Seshanna, a court vina vidwan of the Maharaja of Mysore, Visvesvaran's home town. The concert concludes with a short composition of Purandaradasa.

With this recording, it becomes obvious that the delicate acoustics of Indian stringed instruments demand an expertise in recording technique. The South Indian vina does not respond well to the poor amplification and recording systems currently used in India, and its popularity as a concert instrument has suffered consequently. The Saraswati Project, created recently by Norman Sjomann, a Canadian sanskritist, deserves full credit for the aptly named 'Lost Saraswati', a valuable addition to the world of recorded ethnic music. Hopefully, more of the hidden talent that lies behind the mainstream of Indian music today will be exposed and recorded by the Saraswati Project.

Peter Bendrey

INDIAN MUSIC NEWSLETTER

Editors: Huib Schippers, Jane Harvey
Post Box 10088, Amsterdam, Holland

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Hfl. 15,— (or international equivalent) per year. Send by **International Postal Money Order, U.S.** Bank cheque, cash in registered letter or pay to **Postgiro acc. no. 5265123** made out to Indian Music Newsletter, Amsterdam.

BACK ISSUES

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A NOTE TO OUR DUTCH READERS

Vorige maand is het boekje **Muziek uit India voor de luisteraar** uitgekomen. In dit 42-pagina tellende boekje zet Newsletter-redacteur Huib Schippers op heldere wijze de basisbegrippen van de Indiase muziek uiteen, waarbij het vergroten van het luisterplezier voor muziekliefhebbers voorop staat. Verder bevat het een sectie over boeken en platen en een woordenlijst van de meest voorkomende Indiase termen. U kunt het fraai uitgevoerde boekje bestellen door f 9,— (f 7,50 + verzendkosten) over te maken op giro 5265123 t.n.v. Stichting Tritantri, Amsterdam. Het is ook verkrijgbaar bij de betere boekhandels in Amsterdam en Utrecht.

Shiv Kumar Sharma - santur
Wednesday 6 March, Cologne

Holland

As yet no concerts have been planned for Holland until around 13 April, the Indian Festival Weekend in the Mozes and Aaronkerk, Amsterdam, to celebrate the birthday of Ravi Shankar.

France

On the 7th and 8th of April 1985 there will be a **'24-hour raga concert'** in Paris. The artists participating in this giant concert will be Fahimuddin Dagar (dhrupad singing), Gopal Krishna (vichitra vina), Usman Khan (sitar), Hariprasad Chaurasia (flute), Zia Mohiuddin Dagar (rudra vina), Gangubai Hangal (khayal singing), V.G. Jog (violin), Ranidhir Roy (esraj), Shiv Kumar Sharma (santur) and Sabri Khan (sarangi). As you see, there will be artists and even instruments which have rarely, if ever, been heard in the West

before. We will give more extensive information in the next Newsletter.

INDIAN MUSIC WEEKENDS

To be held at Dartington College of Arts in Devon, England.

18-20 January, to include Indian music/dance concert on 19 January.

26-28 April, to include Indian music/dance concert on 28 April.

The Indian Music Weekends provide a variety of learning and playing opportunities for beginners to advanced students of Indian music and dance. These are in the form of workshops, instrumental (sitar, tabla), dance and vocal classes as well as lectures and film run by professional Indian musicians and musicologists. A detailed programme is available on request from The Secretary, Music Department, Dartington College of Arts, Totnes, Devon, England. Tel: Totnes 862224 Ext. 38.



INDIAN MUSIC NEWSLETTER

A quarterly information paper for lovers of Indian music in the West.



INTERVIEW WITH HARIPRASAD CHAURASIA

by Ira Landgarten

Where and when were you born?

I was born in Uttar Pradesh in the city of Allahabad, which is a holy place where three rivers meet together – the Ganga, Jamuna and Saraswati. This is a popular place called Triveni Sangam. I was born in July 1938. I was not born into a musical family. I'm sorry to say my father was a wrestler, and he was very far from music. He was not interested in his children becoming musicians; rather he wanted his children to become wrestlers and follow his profession. It's a family tradition in India, like musicians' families. When I used to whistle he would slap me! 'Why should a wrestler's child whistle?' he would ask.

How did you become involved in music?

Well, from childhood I had an interest in music, but I used to hide from my father when I was playing or singing, or do it very softly. When I was about 12 years old I started learning vocal music.

Did you have much exposure to classical music in your youth?

Yes I did, because in Allahabad there used to be a great music festival called Prayag Sangit Samhiti, so I would listen. As a child I would go there. When my father slept, I went. My mother died when I was six, so there was nobody except my father. I was very keen to learn classical music.

Who do you remember from those days; did you hear any of the greats?

There were many musicians who didn't become famous; singers and instrumentalists. There was Pradip Kumar Chatterjee, one of the vocalists, who lived just a few minutes' walk from my house. And there was a sitarist, Satish Chandra; at present he's teaching at Kanpur music school. And also Amjad Khan who played sarod, but he wasn't from Allahabad, he was from Rampur.

Didn't the masters from all over India perform at these music conferences? Did you hear people like Faiyaz Khan, Bade Gulam Ali or Omkarnath Thakur when you were young?

Yes, I used to hear such great artists as Ustad Allauddin Khan, Habibuddin Khan, Amir Khan, Bade Gulam Ali Khan, all the great masters used to come to Allahabad.

When did you start studying music?

When I was about 12 years old I started learning vocal music. In my neighbourhood at that time there lived a great musician, Pandit Rajarao. At that time he didn't have any children so he liked me very much. He requested me to come and learn, so I

learned from him for one or two years. Then one day I heard a flautist called Pandit Bhojanath, from Benares. He joined All India Radio in Allahabad and I got a chance to hear his flute. I was so overwhelmed that I



thought: "I must change to playing the flute". I got a flute and I went to him and asked him to teach me. So I started learning flute from him, and continued with him for four or five years. Then I got a chance to work with All India Radio, Cuttack, a job very far from my birthplace. That was in 1956. I used to play in children's programmes for All India Radio (AIR).

Did you become a stage performer at that point?

No not then. I only performed in small houses and on All India Radio.

What happened after you got the job with All India Radio?

When I started the job, I played as a regular artist and I used to compose music for AIR. My father then became a little bit interested because I was earning money! Then he said, 'Okay, it's fine, go ahead!' He had never even heard me play! But he had heard from others what I was doing, and that I was performing in concerts, and he was told, 'Your son is going to become a great musician'. So he used to feel so happy and proud. 'Okay, it's all right when he's earning, and getting name and fame, let him do it!' But I was very far from him; I wanted to bring him to Cuttack but he was very attached to his own friends, so he couldn't leave. So I was all alone in Orissa, and I really started practising and listening to all the great masters because I knew that I was going to take this profession very seriously.

At that point was the bansuri considered to be an instrument suitable for performing classical music?

At that time there was only one flute player who was very famous, the late Pannalal Ghosh. He used to play a big bansuri, and he played classical music in khayal style. He was very popular as a flautist.

Then there was one of his students, Devendra Murdeshwar; he used to play in the same style. I started by listening to such masters as Allauddin Khan-sahib, Ravi Shankar, Vilayat Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Amir Khan. I started my own way of playing.

So you were influenced by vocalists and string players as well as flautists?

Yes, and others. At first I started with the same size flute as Pannalal Ghosh but my playing is very different from others, because I started learning from guru-ma Annapurna Shankar, the genius daughter of the late Allauddin Khan. I met her when I was in Orissa, but at first she said, 'No, I cannot teach you'. She just refused me! 'I will not teach anybody; if you want to learn, you can learn from Ravi Shankar'. Because Ravi Shankar was her husband. She is a very private person. And she is very far from this world; she doesn't mix with anyone, she's got her own thinking, her own imagination. She is a very kind, very nice lady; I have never met such a lady in my life, and I'm grateful that she accepted me afterwards. But it took me three years to be accepted. I was really grateful when I started learning from her and I still am.

Do you still see her periodically? Does she perform at all? Practise?

Yes, yes. She doesn't perform but she always practises; every day she is practising but she will not perform – God knows the reason, and I don't want to know since she is my teacher. She plays the surbahar, which is bigger than the sitar; it's like a cello compared to a viola, and it's a very difficult instrument. Whomever I have met, great musicians who have heard Annapurna-ji when she used to play about 15 years ago – nobody can forget her music. You cannot imagine that kind of playing, and I'm telling you, I can't imagine this kind of teaching!

How did she teach you once she had agreed to? Did she sing?

Yes, sometimes she sings, sometimes she plays. When she's in the mood she plays surbahar and sometimes she plays sitar, because the surbahar is very heavy, especially for ladies! But whenever she's in the mood she will sit to play – occasionally, not every time. I've heard her, say once or twice. I had a chance to listen but not like in a concert; she used to teach me and at that time I heard her. She has had very few concerts – with Ravi-ji, with Ali Akbar some time ago, maybe 15 years ago.

When did you actually begin studying with her?

I got my job transferred to Bombay from Cuttack, so I came to Bombay in 1961 and I started learning from her in 1962 or 1963. I was still with All India Radio, but left in

1963.

Had you started performing on the stage then?

Yes, I started playing classical stage programmes in 1958 when I was in Cuttack. While in Cuttack, I wasn't studying with anyone, just practising and listening to all the great masters. As I was working in All India Radio, I had access to recordings and phonograph records. I will tell you this: it is very difficult to find one person who is a great performer as well as a great teacher, but I have found such a person and that is my guru-ma. She is really a wonderful performer without any doubt, but she is also a wonderful teacher. Her sincerity, her emotions, her hard work – I have never seen such a teacher, and she doesn't charge a single paisa! I'm learning a lot, but she doesn't charge any money, either from me or anyone else! If she has time, she will certainly sit with a student, and if she gets students who are really involved in music, and willing to practise hard, to them she is very nice; she is very sincere. She won't charge a single paisa, and she likes to feed her students as well! She is really guru-ma! Her father used to be like that; he used to love me very much.

The flute is like vocal; blowing also comes from the mouth. If you want to become an instrumentalist, you should first learn vocal, then also a little bit of tabla for rhythm. This helps you a lot in learning an instrument. Musicians like Ravi Shankar, Vilayat Khan and Ali Akbar Khan became very popular because there were only a few singers at the time like Abdul Karim Khan, Faiyaz Khan, Amir Khan and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Now all those singers are dead. Now there is nobody to sing like Amir Khan, or any of those great singers but there are young musicians who play instruments. There are a few talented ones who can replace some of the instrumentalists if they practise 10 more years. But not in vocal music. Also there have been improvements in the manufacture of musical instruments within the past 30 to 40 years.

Let's follow your career a bit further. When you were studying with Annapurna were you also giving recitals?

Yes; after learning from Annapurna-ji I got so much confidence that I used to play on the stage with great artists. I have played in all the cities where music festivals take place. I've played in every big music festival in India. I've played in all the big music festivals abroad, too, like in Berlin, London, Paris, Holland, Sweden, even in Russia in the Bolshoi Theatre – I've played everywhere! I started touring in 1966, and I played my first concert in the Royal Albert Hall; I played my second concert in 1970 in the Royal Festival Hall.

You were already quite well-known in India by that time; what helped to make you so well-known? Was it recording albums or film music? – I understand you've done a lot of film music as well?

That's right, I've played in films and composed music for Indian films. I became a composer in 1958 when I joined AIR.

When I came to Bombay I started composing music for films, and it was really appreciated by music lovers. But it was not because of my composing or records – I became popular when I started to have a lot of concerts. And maybe because of albums; but in India, you know, you will not find so many music lovers who buy albums (LP's); they are costly, and also people prefer to listen to live music. Or they listen to the radio; we play regularly on the radio and sometimes our records are played in-between, and if the listeners like that record they just tape it. So they don't buy it! So it's mainly because of concerts, and maybe the albums because All India Radio plays our albums. I've recorded albums in India, Russia, Germany, England, France and many other places.

Now all the great masters like to listen to me, and they like to listen only to my flute. There are thousands of flautists in India, but they just like to listen to my flute because they enjoy it. They want to listen to classical, light classical as well as light music from me. I think that everybody likes my style now. There are many flautists who like to follow my way of playing, but it is very difficult. If you want to follow this kind of style, you have to learn from a teacher who is a genius, and then after practising hard you can play this kind of music. Otherwise it's very difficult. I understand this because I have practised and I've been learning for so long from my teacher, and I know how hard it is to play so many things on the six-hole bamboo flute.

When did you get your first flute? Did you get it in a music store?

I got my first flute in 1954. No, not in a music store! You know in India when you are thirsty, you can find a water pump on the road. There was a boy about my age playing flute, and when he felt thirsty he went to the water pump and started drinking, leaving his flute behind. I was so excited that I took his flute and ran away! At that time you used to get very bad flutes, but I liked the sound of that one when he played it, so I took it.

How long has the flute actually been considered a classical instrument? It's been associated with the story of Krishna and folk music, but you said that at one time Pannalal Ghosh was considered one of the only serious performers. Would you consider him to be somewhat of a pioneer, or were there others prior to him who adapted flute for classical music?

When I heard Pannalal Ghosh, I was not so overwhelmed by his music as by his playing, his tonal beauty. But I was very much overwhelmed by Bholanath-ji. At that time he was busy, and famous amongst the musicians. I really appreciated his flute size. Our classical music's temperament is such that it has got depth. If you don't play a big flute, you will not find the depth and the instrument will not sound nice. In South India you will find small flutes because their musical temperament is very different from North Indian classical music. Suppose they play their music with a big flute, it will not sound nice. Suppose I

play their music with a big flute, it will not sound nice. I started by taking the same size flute as Panna-babu (Pannalal Ghosh), but my playing was quite different, and everybody must feel that I'm getting Indian music – total Indian music, all the concepts of Indian music – with this flute. I was the first one to achieve that.

At the time how did you get flutes? Were they made for you?

I used to buy them in the market in Allahabad when I started classical music. There are traditional flute-makers, and even my guru-ji Bolanath used to make very nice flutes and I learned flute-making from him. I also used to get them in the market, but not so nicely tuned.

Where would the bamboo come from?

We get good bamboo from Assam, sometimes from Bihar, and the best bamboo you will find in Burma. My flute is Assamese bamboo; Burmese bamboo is very difficult to get in India. For one flute you have to have about ten big bamboos – not to choose the piece, but to make the flute! Because when you make flutes, you don't have any measurement. If you want to make an E flute, you don't have any measurement for making an E flute – you have to make holes according to your blowing. To make a flute, first I make the blowing hole, then I start from Sa. The blowing hole determines the pitch; if the sound is not nice I cut the bamboo a bit. Then I start holding the flute, and leaving the first three holes, I start making the fourth hole, the tonic Sa. Then I will make the other holes, until there are six finger holes.

If your blowing is soft, it will sound flat; if you blow hard, it will sound sharp. So according to your blowing, you have to make it yourself! Because there is no fixed measurement, you have to make one hole, then blow; put in another hole, then blow; if it's not in tune you have to take the hole a little up or down. You waste so many bamboos making a flute! For a bansuri player it's very important to know how to make his own flutes. Bholanath used to make very nice flutes, and I used to watch him. I think he's one of the best flute makers; he's still alive, working for All India Radio in Allahabad.

Does he make flutes to sell?

No, just for himself, but suppose he gives one to someone, he won't charge a single paisa. But if I'm going to Assam or Bihar, he will request, "Please bring some bamboo because I am going to make a few flutes!"

Is the bamboo aged?

No, we just select the bamboo according to our choice. Dry, not green but not very old either. Some makers treat the bamboo with oil, but I don't use it. They use oil because they believe the bamboo will be strong, that it will not crack. But on the other hand the oil lets the bamboo vibrate less – when I put oil on, I will not get that nice sound. So if I put oil, cream or anything that will prevent the bamboo from cracking, it will not sound like pure bamboo.

INDIAN MUSIC NEWSLETTER

Editors: Huib Schippers, Jane Harvey
Post Box 10088, Amsterdam, Holland

EDITORIAL 31 March 1985

The Indian Music Newsletter has been in existence for more than three years now. The publication of issue no. 15 marks the end of the third official subscription year. The editors have enjoyed working on the Newsletter in its present format. A great deal of information could be contained within the few A4-size closely-typeset pages, and postage costs be kept to the minimum due to economy of paper usage. The Newsletter was started as a subscriber periodical, which was also sold at Indian classical music concerts in Europe whenever the editors (or helpers) could be in attendance.

However, the editors feel that a change is called for at this point. We would like to

broaden the audience of the Newsletter and make a publication which can be distributed to bookshops along with more substantial-sized magazines and journals; the new publication should therefore have a longer bookshelf life, in homes as well as in retail outlets. This also makes more financial sense; ever since the Newsletter began, approximately 50% of the costs have had to be borne by donations.

Therefore issue no. 15 is the last edition of the Indian Music Newsletter in its present form. In September of this year we will begin publication of the Journal of the Indian Music Newsletter. The Journal will appear twice a year, in the autumn and spring. It will be approximately 20 pages long. The subscription rate for the coming year will remain the same as for the Newsletter, Hfl. 15,- per annum. Readers whose subscriptions to the Newsletter have not yet expired will automatically be sent the first issue of the Journal. We hope that Newsletter subscribers will be happy to start subscribing to the new Journal. In addition to two journals per year, there will occasionally be extras which will be sent out as part of the regular subscription. Any up-to-date concert information that we have received

will be sent out on a separate sheet with the Journal.

Each edition of the Journal will be based on a particular theme or topic, such as vocal music, dhrupad, certain artists and their instruments, dance-styles etc. Since autumn and spring are the two main seasons for Indian classical music performances in the West, the journals will wherever possible be related to particular artists who are known to be visiting the West in the period of publication.

We would like to thank all those individuals and institutions who have helped us in numerous ways, from providing material, contacts, money and editorial support, to folding the Newsletter and licking stamps. Moreover we thank you, the readers, for making our work possible by reading the Newsletter. We still believe that publishing lucid information on Indian music is an essential factor for the appreciation of this music in the West. We hope you will stay with us.

The Editors

Jane K. Harvey Huib Schippers

WHAT'S WHERE OF INDIAN CLASSICAL MUSIC

For a long time we have been planning to provide our readers with a list of important addresses for lovers of Indian music, and this issue seems to be an appropriate place to publish a small "What's Where" of Indian Music.

Records and Cassettes

France: FNAC 3, Les Halles, Paris.

Holland: Au Bout du Monde Muziek, Singel 313, 1012 WJ Amsterdam. Tel: (020) 25 13 97.

U.K.: Collets Folk Department, 129-131 Charing Cross Road, London WC2. Tel: (01) 734 0782.

U.S.A.: Ali Akbar College of Music, 215, West End Ave. San Rafael CA 94901.

Books

U.K.: Books from India, 45, Museum Street, London WC1. Tel: (01) 405 7226.

Holland: Au Bout du Monde, Singel 313, Amsterdam.

Other Publications on Indian Music

Journal of the Indian Musicological Society, Jambu Bet, Dandia Bazar, Baroda 39001, India.

Journal of the National Centre for the Per-

forming Arts, Nariman Point, Bombay 400 021, India.

International Society for Traditional Arts Research Bulletin, 113, Jor Bagh, New Delhi 110003, India.

Sruti Magazine, "Alapana", Narasimhan Avenue, Madras 600018, India.

Organisations and Indian Music Schools

There are many private teachers of Indian Music in the West. We cannot list them all; please contact an organisation in your area.

Holland: Stichting Tritantri Vidyapeeth, Kromme Waal 16, Amsterdam. Tritantri Indian Music School, Herengracht 607, Amsterdam (Jamaluddin Bhartiya). Tel: 020-222460. Ripa School of Arts, Kromme Waal 16, Amsterdam (Darshan Kumari). Tel: 020-258508.

Germany: Deutsch Indische Gesellschaft, Schützenstr. 5, D-7570 Baden-Baden. Institute for Comparative Music Studies, Winklerstr. 20, 1000 Berlin 33.

France: Centre Mandapa, 6, Rue Wurtz, Paris. Tel (01) 589 0160.

U.K.: Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, 4a Castle-town Road, London W 14. Indian Music Department, Dartington College of Arts, Totnes, Devon.

Switzerland: Atelier D'Ethnomusicologie, Case Postale 316, 1211 Genève 25.

Denmark: Musikcirkeln, Fluebergvej 2, So-

sum, 2760 Maalov.

U.S.A.: The Ali Akbar College of Music, 215, West End Ave, San Rafael, CA 94901 (Ali Akbar Khan). The Academy of Indian Music, 230a Fuller Street, Brookline, MA 02146.

India: Benares Hindu University, Music Dept, BHU Campus, Varanasi, India.

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MUZIEK

Overleaf you will find an index of articles that have appeared in the Indian Music Newsletter nos. 1-15, ordered in groups and series. For those who have preserved all the Newsletters, we do not only give issue nos., but page references as well. The contents page is p. 1; issue no. 1 begins with p. 3. From there on the numbers run up to p. 78, the last page of this issue.



INDIAN MUSIC

NEWSLETTER

Index of Indian Music Newsletter Issues No. 1 - 15 (April 1982 - June 1985)

BASICS OF INDIAN MUSIC

A Concert of Indian Music	issue no 1	p. 5
Raga	issue no 2	p. 9
Tala 1	issue no 3	p. 12
Tala 2	issue no 11	p. 53
Composition and Improvisation	issue no 12	p. 57

STYLES

Dhrupad	issue no 2	p. 8
Khayal	issue no 3	p. 11
Thumri	issue no 8	p. 33

INSTRUMENTS

The Rudra Vina	issue no 2	p. 7
The Sarangi	issue no 3	p. 13
The Sarod	issue no 4	p. 17
The Sitar	issue no 6	p. 25
The Tanpura	issue no 7	p. 30
The Voice	issue no 7	p. 31
The Tabla	issue no 13	p. 66



INTERVIEWS

Ali Akbar Khan	issue no 4	p. 15
Ravi Shankar	issue no 6	p. 27
Ram Narayan	issue no 8	p. 35
Latif Ahmed Khan	issue no 10	p. 48
Durga Lal	issue no 11	p. 51
Shiv Kumar Sharma	issue no 11	p. 55
Nikhil Banerjee	issue no 13	p. 67
Hariprasad Chaurasia	issue no 15	p. 75

OLD MASTERS

Faiyaz Khan	issue no 7	p. 29
Abdul Karim Khan	issue no 9	p. 41
Bade Gulam Ali Khan	issue no 14	p. 73
Allauddin Khan	issue no 12	p. 59
Ahmed Jan Thirakwa	issue no 10	p. 48

INDIAN DANCES

Introduction	issue no 13	p. 63
Kathak	issue no 11	p. 51
Bharat Natyam	issue no 13	p. 65
Odissi	issue no 6	p. 28

GENERAL BACKGROUND

Indian Music and the West	issue no 1	p. 3
On Indian Music (René Daumal)	issue no 5	p. 21
Views on the Significance of Indian Music	issue no 5	p. 22
ISTAR - Technology and Tradition	issue no 8	p. 37
Music of the Temples or Music of the Courts?	issue no 9	p. 39
Baijis - Female Performers of the Past	issue no 10	p. 45
Tradition and Indian Music	issue no 11	p. 54
Rasa - The Aesthetic Experience	issue no 12	p. 61
South Indian Music	issue no 14	p. 69
Obituary: Jon Higgins	issue no 15	p. 77
Obituary: Gokul Nag	issue no 10	p. 47
Books	issue no 5	p. 23
Records	issue no 5	p. 19
What's Where of Indian Music	issue no 15	p. 2



The editors of the Newsletter were saddened to find out about the recent death by accident of **Jon Higgins**, the most well-known Western student and respected performer of Indian classical music (Carnatic). Below, we present an article adapted from the obituary written by his teacher T. Viswanathan, in the February/March 1985 issue of *Sruti* magazine (Madras).

JON HIGGINS 1939-1984

Jon Higgins was killed, aged 45, on Friday night, 7 December 1984, by a drunken hit-and-run motorist while walking his dog on the road across from his house.

Jon Higgins was an unusual individual. As a Westerner he committed himself to long and serious study of a music foreign to his own culture. Even more striking was the fact that he became an accomplished performer in that culture.

Jon was born on 18 September, 1939, in Andover, Massachusetts, a small town in New England. He attended college at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut, where he received his B.A. (double major) in Music and History in 1962. He completed an M.A. in Music in 1964 and a Ph.D. in Ethnomusicology in 1973, both from Wesleyan University.

T. Viswanathan writes: "I first met Jon in 1962 when he was a Master's candidate under Dr. Robert E. Brown, who was responsible for initiating the Indian music programme at Wesleyan. It was because of Brown's fine taste in music and gift of generating interest and enthusiasm in his students, that Jon was first exposed to and captured by the music of South India. Only a few months before our acquaintance, Jon had been deeply touched by a performance of my sister Balaraswati's when she had sung and danced at Ted Shawn's famous Jacob's Pillow music and dance festival in Lee, Massachusetts".

Jon was forcefully impressed, and felt that the role of music in Balaraswati's performance "was not mere accompaniment to a dancer, but rather the living source of the dance itself". Jacob's Pillow and selected tapes of Robert Brown's convinced Jon to focus on Brown's study group in South Indian music where between 1962 and 1964, Jon participated in survey courses and seminars in ethnomusicology and in the music of India. He studied with Viswanathan's brother Ranganathan (the result of which was a Master's thesis), and was for the first time involved in vocal classes where he learned *saralis*, *gitams*, *varnas* and *kritis* from lesson tapes Viswanathan had made for Brown in 1960. In a 1971 interview for the Times Weekly Jon said that "... although the Carnatic idiom was totally new and different, I felt I could, with perseverance and dedication, understand its language". Committing himself to the idea of full-time study of Carnatic vocal, Jon asked for and received permission from T. Viswanathan to become his student. He applied for and was granted a Fulbright scholarship to go to India in 1964, and went to Madras, where at that time Viswanathan was head of Madras University Department of Music.

After some months, Viswanathan encouraged Jon to sing at the Tyagaraja aradhana festival in Tiruvaiyaru. Jon was extremely frightened and nervous at the thought of facing thousands of *rasikas*. He suffered even more when told that his short performance would be broadcast nationally on All India Radio. The day he was to go on stage, he was a physical and mental wreck. But the audience was delighted, and they listened to his performance with amazement. They were even more astounded that a foreigner could take such interest in the art music of South India, and that he could sing so well and with such *bhava* and sincere *bhakti*. What they did

music, a practical approach to the theory of *rasa*, and other performance-related topics.

Jon made a good impression on thousands of music lovers throughout India. He performed in many concerts, mostly accompanied by V. Thyagarajan, T. Ranganathan and V. Nagarajan. He was also honoured by the accompaniment of great artists such as the late Palghat Mani Ayyar, Palghat Raghu, Umayalpuram Sivaram, Tiruchi Sankaran and Karaikkudi Mani, to name a few. Jon drew a devoted following of Indian *rasikas* in the U.S. as well. For American audiences he was always particular to present well-crafted lecture-demonstrations so that those



Balaraswati, the famous dancer & teacher of Jon Higgins. Photo courtesy of Felix van Lamsweerde, Music Dept. of the Royal Tropical Institute, Amsterdam.

not know was even with his great talent, how hard and with how much commitment he had worked for over two years. When people said that he must have been born on the banks of the Kaveri river in his previous birth, Jon took it as a compliment, but he knew the truth lay in his long hours of devoted practice.

In 1966 the United States Information Service recognised his role as a cultural ambassador and a concert tour of South India was arranged for him. Jon also received invitations from *sabhas* in Bombay, New Delhi, Calcutta and other big cities, and wherever he performed he was appreciated with warmth and acceptance. Jon's Fulbright scholarship was extended for an unprecedented third year when that organisation realised the contribution he was making to promoting cross-cultural understanding, and of Jon's need to continue his music studies in order to improve.

For the last few months of Jon's stay in India that time his teacher was (the late) Ramnad Krishnan, as Viswanathan had to go to Wesleyan University. Jon returned to the United States in June 1967.

Two years later Jon returned to India to begin work on his doctoral dissertation "The Music of Bharatanatyam". Under Balaraswati's guidance he learned dance

hearing Carnatic music for the first time could listen to his concerts with some understanding and appreciation.

Between 1971 and 1978 Jon was Professor of Music and Associate Dean of Fine Arts at York University in Toronto, Canada. During his tenure there he invited Tiruchi Sankaran, who joined him on the faculty as professor to teach mridangam. With the help of Sankaran, Jon propagated Carnatic music throughout Canada. Jon joined Wesleyan University as the Director of the Center for the Arts and Professor of Music in 1978.

Jon visited India for the third time as a Senior Research Fellow of the American Institute of Indian Studies between December 1981 and June 1982. He was preparing for a series of performances but unfortunately he fell ill and had to cancel most of the concerts.

Jon's early death deprives all of us, both Westerners and Indians, of his services as a cultural ambassador and his performances as a serious and developing musician. As Viswanathan says, "... that such a dynamic and sensitive person who had so much more to give should be deprived of life strikes one as a cruelty beyond comprehension".