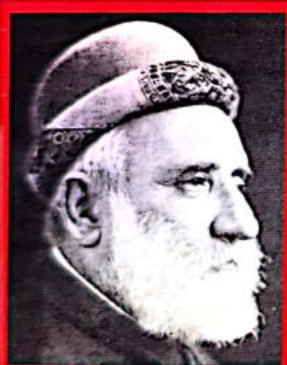


the parsi and Indian classical music

an unsung contribution



Dr. Aban E. Mistry

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parsi
and
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classical music

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Aban Mistry

Dr. Aban E. Mistry

with heartfelt gratitude

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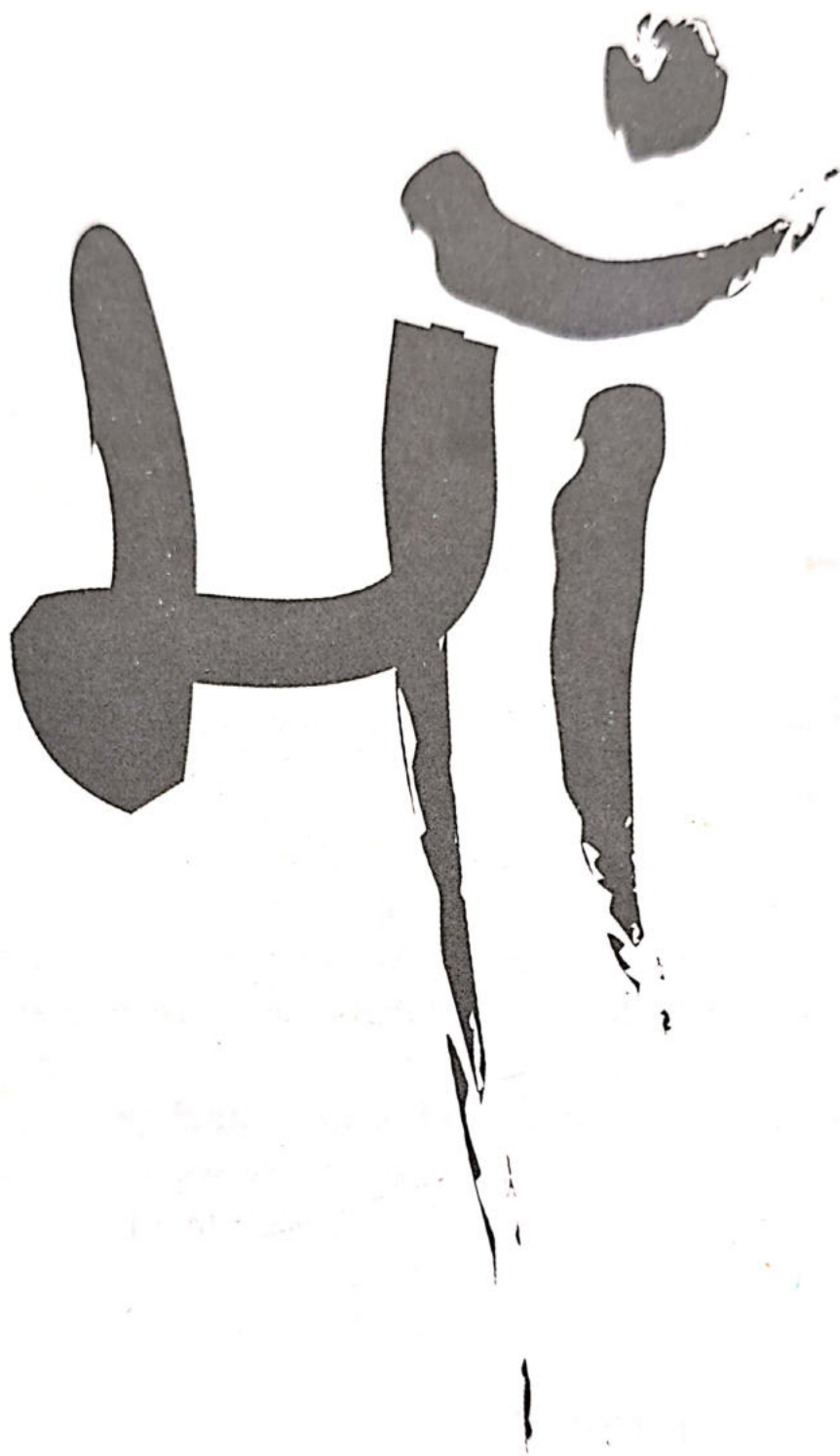
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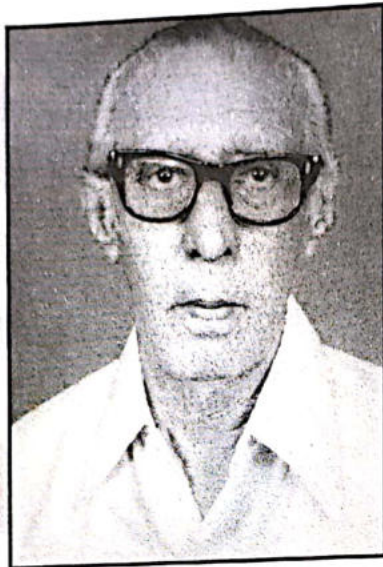
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MY BELOVED PARENTS

SHRI ERUCH PIROJSHAH MISTRY & SMT. KHORSHED ERUCH MISTRY



My initiation into the wondrous world of Indian Classical music and dance was thanks to my parents.

In those past orthodox times, they defied social norms and made my dreams theirs, my hopes and wishes marked their every step and my dedication and total surrender to Indian

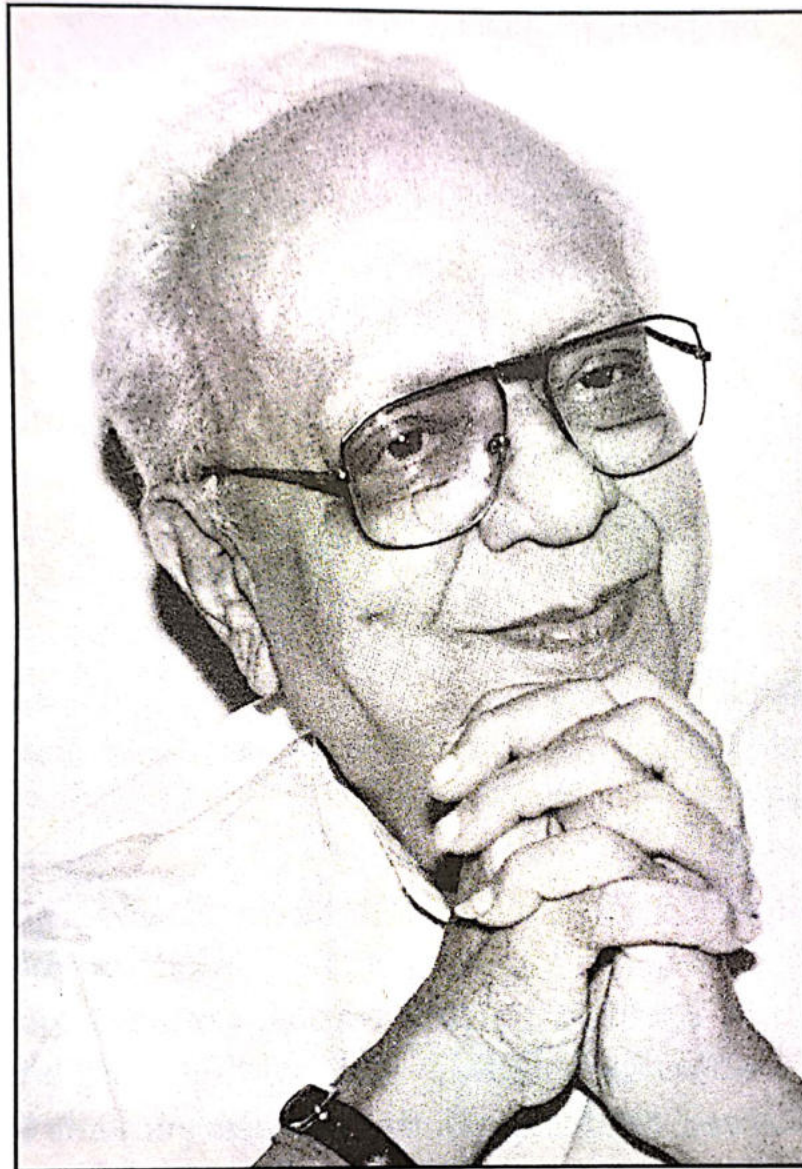
Classical Music became their life's commitment. I often wonder what I had ever done to deserve such kind-hearted, supportive parents who guided my life and ambitions with the light of their selfless, unconditional love. That I have been able to author and publish this book is thanks to my

Mother and Father.

May God eternally bless their souls.

MY PUJYA GURUJI

PANDIT KEKI SHAPURJI JIJINA

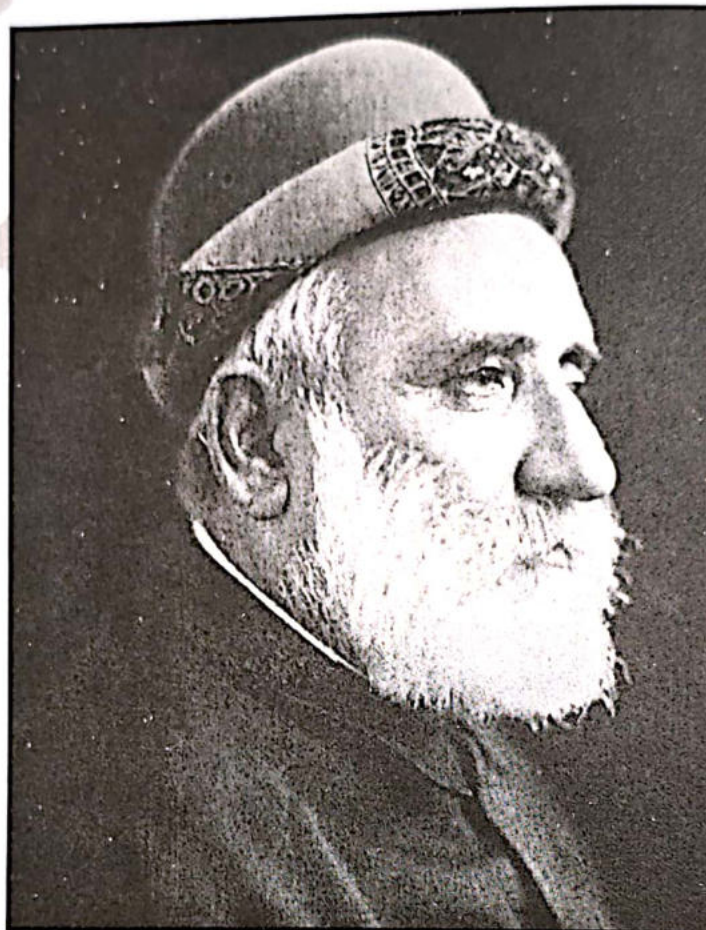


Pandit Keki Shapurji Jijina
(1922 – 2003)

Whose inspiration, guidance, encouragement and unstinted support made it possible for this book to progress from a thought to reality.

This book is my respectful offering to one of the
Parsi community's greatest sons,

SHRI KAIKHUSHRU NAVROJI KABRAJI



Shri Kaikhushru Navroji Kabraji
(1842 - 1904)

Shri Kabraji's untiring efforts and achievements in the
varied fields of literature, drama, journalism and music
remain unparalleled.

As 2004 A.D. marks the death centenary of
Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji,
it is a matter of great pride that this book
is being published in the same year.

foreword

Dr. Aban E. Mistry, well-known tabla artiste and author of authentic theoretical treatise on *tabla-vadan*, in her preface to this book, invokes the blessings of *Dadar Ahura Mazda* (Great God) and the Hindu Goddess of Learning (*Sangeet and Sahitya*), *Maa Saraswati*. This does not surprise me as for all of Swar Sadhna Samiti's concerts - monthly and annual, the commencement is always with a prayer to *Maa Saraswati*.

I have noticed over the years that in whatever she undertakes Dr. Aban aims for thoroughness and decorum. This book is a fine example of it.

During my long years of association with Indian music, I have had several opportunities of listening to Parsi musicians, their music covering light to classical and vocal to instrumental. The word "Parsi" means the man from Pars or Fars (Persepolis) in southern Iran, center of the ancient Iranian empire of Kings, Cyrus and Daraius. Parsis are the descendants of those who migrated some 1200 years ago to escape forcible conversion to Islam and thus saved their Zoroastrian religion. They made Gujarat their homeland, adopting Gujarati language, dress and customs yet maintaining their identity, taking inspiration from the Omnipotent *Aatash Behram* (the *Agni Devata* of the Vedic-Hindu religion) and integrated into Indian culture.

As the vice-president of the Gujarat Sangeet Natak Akademi (1994), I had the privilege of inviting Dr. Aban E. Mistry and *Pandit Keki S. Jijina* to present a lecture paper on "Contribution of Parsis to Indian Music", which Dr. Aban has referred to in her preface. She has taken great pains to prepare this documentation of the history of some 250 years of the involvement of the Parsi community in fine arts -

music, dance, drama, literature – enriching themselves and serving the community of musicians and art-lovers, especially in the city of Mumbai.

In the sphere of music, the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* (G.U.M.), established in 1870 by Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji exerted a great influence in the teaching and propagation of Hindustani Classical music in the city of Bombay. Great *Ustads* of the period served as teachers and also gave concerts organized by the *Mandali*. The great musicologist and inventor of simple music notation, *Pandit* Bhatkhande was once a student of the *Mandali* and later a teacher. The author rightly points out the role played by the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* in Chapter Three of the book in these words: "Though after these several of *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji's books were published by outside sources and were amply appreciated, the fact remains that because of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* help and support that he received for his three prime publications, his writing received a tremendous boost." She also points to the contribution of G.U.M. and several Parsi donors, helping Bhatkhandeji to publish 'Swar Malika' and his monumental theoretical book, 'Sangeet Padhhati'. I recall having seen a book published by G.U.M., in which concert dates, *Chija*-texts, *ragas* and names of performing artistes and *Ustads* were given. A most valuable source book for research scholars.

Though not stated anywhere in this book, it is obvious to me that the legacy of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* is now being carried on by Swar Sadhna Samiti. Established by Dr. Aban E. Mistry and *Pandit* Keki S. Jijina, the Samiti has been evolving to suit contemporary times, encouraging new and budding artistes in music and dance through annual all-India competitions, awarding scholarships, holding monthly concerts by eminent artistes and honouring great artistes and

musicologists. Swar Sadhna Samiti has served the cause of music in India ably, through its torch-bearers, Dr. Aban and (Late) Pandit Jijina.

What a galaxy of Parsi performing artistes – disciples of great *Ustads* – there has been through the last hundred years or so! Nearly all of them have been mentioned by the author in this documentation. Quite a few of them, like Firoz Dastur, Dr. Aban, Pt. Jal Balaporia, Peenaz Masani and Zarine Daruwala continue to serve Indian music zealously.

In instrumental music, the outstanding Late Pandit Hirjibhai Doctor, a renowned *beenkar* has been well-remembered. Pandit Doctor was a close student of Pandit Bhatkhande, having served the Baroda Music College for 25 years as its principal.

Some of the great names in the world of Indian dance, Smt. Shirin Vazifdar, Smt. Khurshid Chawda and Smt. Roshan belong to the community of Parsis.

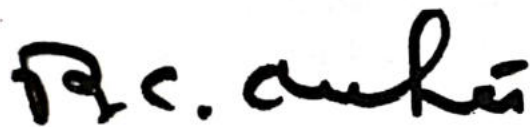
No genre of Indian music has been ignored by Parsis. In addition to classical music, Parsis have sung *bhajans*, *abhangs*, film music, have composed film and orchestral music and served as pioneers of the Indian music recording industry through the establishment of recording companies like the Odeon and Ruby, which recorded veterans like Abdul Karim Khan, Vilayat Husein Khan, Omkarnath, Vaze Buwa, Hirabai, Roshanara, Saigal and Rasoolanbai – to name just a few.

In Chapter Thirteen, "Contribution of Parsis to Musicology", a book that deserves to be noted is Jehangir Karaniwala's 'Ragasthan'. This is a collection of some 600 compositions – *Dhrupad*, *Dhamar*, *Hori*, *Khayal*, *Thumri* and hundreds of *ghazals*. The publication date cannot be deciphered from the tattered copy I have but it appears to be at least one hundred years old. It reveals the great labour taken by its author in collecting then-prevalent music which

makes it priceless for constructing a history of Hindustani music in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries should such a task be undertaken in future.

The author has not forgotten to mention world-renowned Western musicians like Zubin Mehta and Mehli Mehta, both Parsis along with some others.

In the absence of recorded performed music, a history of music cannot be understood fully as an art-in-evolution. While attempts are being made to reconstruct history, efforts at documenting contributions of individuals, communities and institutions are very much welcome. I am sure this book – a result of much researching – of Dr. Aban E. Mistry will be of great help to the understanding of the growth of Indian music and dance in India, particularly western India.



R. C. Mehta

Vadodra, India

7th June, 2004

preface

Dadar Ahura Mazda's and Maa Saraswati's grace and blessings have ensured that despite all odds, this effort on chronicling my community's contributions to Indian Classical Music has seen the light of day.

Many years ago, Dr. Ashok Ranade, an eminent scholar and musicologist, pointedly asked me as to why I had not already researched and compiled a book detailing the involvement of Parsis in Indian Music and Dance, especially the establishment of the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. He went on to state emphatically that it was a matter of duty as a Parsi for me to do so. This seeming admonishment from a respected and admired authority in the music world had a profound impact on me. Right there and then I decided to dedicate myself to this cause.

Several years passed as I compiled notes on this subject. However, the commitment that I had made to myself as a musician and a Parsi was never forgotten. The inspiration for authoring this book and continually delving deeper into my chosen subject came from none other than my *Pujya Guruji*, *Pandit Keki Shapurji Jijina*, a multi-faceted musician and renowned sitarist of his time. Through the many obstacles that arose during the research process, his encouragement kept me going. Most importantly, my *Pujya Guruji*, expressed his deepest wish that the publication of this book be expedited. But, this was not to be. I regret my inability to have published this book during my *Guruji's* lifetime. The book's release has been timed to mark his first death anniversary and is a humble gesture of my indebtedness towards his unconditional support and guidance.

In 1994 A.D. the Gujarat *Sangeet Natak* Academy and the Gujarat *Vidyapeeth*, jointly organized a seminar at Ahmedabad where they invited me to present a paper discussing the contributions of Parsis to Indian music. The

feedback was extremely encouraging. It was this dissertation (an abridged version of my ongoing research) that became the framework of this book. My weekly column on music in Mumbai Samachar, called 'Naad Brahma' also carried excerpts from my continuing work.

The reader will find enlightening the hitherto little-known factual details of the involvement of Parsis in Indian music and dance from as long ago as 1750 A.D. to date. The establishment of the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* and the founding of Swar Sadhna Samiti, two associations devoted to the promotion and teaching of Indian classical music, by Parsi social reformists is extensively written about in this compilation. The book also reveals that our now forward-looking community was an unimaginably orthodox one till the 19th century. The establishment of musical societies and the wholehearted involvement in these of socially eminent Parsis like Shri. Kaikhushru Navroji Kabraji created furore within our community. This dark orthodoxy, which viewed music as a pagan indulgence rubbed off on other communities too at the time. As Parsis of the 21st century, with secularism and tolerance as our middle-names, it is almost incomprehensible that times and viewpoints such as those described within this book actually existed. Also, proof of the grave misconception that Parsis singularly indulged in Western music and culture will be found in the chapters that follow. It was, unfortunately, only after 1950 A.D. that our community swayed towards more western lifestyles.

Reading through the drafts – from initial stages to the final one – unfailingly invoked a deep respect and pride within me for the revolutionary work undertaken by fire-brand Parsis like Shri. Kabraji and members of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. Other communities as well as fellow-Parsis are only too well aware of our contributions in every aspect of Indian

life. Be it social, political, economic, philanthropic, judicial, sports, education, fine arts and industry the founding and then forging ahead by Parsis is well chronicled and highly appreciated. Unfortunately, virtually unknown are the feats of the many Parsi ladies and gentlemen who played pivotal roles and earned accolades in the rich, cultural world of Indian music and dance. I have done my utmost to bring to light the achievements of these unsung Parsi heroes so that the reader may be stirred with pride and respect.

There are several Parsi artistes mentioned in this book who are, like rare diamonds, multi-faceted. Rather than group all their talents and achievements uninterestingly at one go, I thought it befitting to discuss each facet of these fine Parsi gems according to the relevant chapter. I thus entreat you to read through the entire book and revel in the unfolding of our best artistes, like it were an important, intellectual discovery.

Speaking of rare and multi-faceted gems, I wish to acknowledge my gratitude to Prof. R.C Mehta, who has so graciously written the foreword to this book. Prof. Mehta, an eminent musicologist with almost twenty-two books on musicology to his credit and more awards and accomplishments than will fit on this page, is a retired professor and Department Head of the M. S. University of Baroda. Above all, he is a very learned and enlightened being, awe-inspiring yet deeply compassionate. Totally dedicated to Indian classical music, even at the golden age of 84 years, Prof. R. C. Mehta remains immersed in the study of musicology and partakes in every aspect of the Arts. It is an honour for me to have him, as a revered authority on music, write the foreword to my book and a privilege for my readers to peruse it.

It is vital to note that in readying 'The Parsis and Indian

Classical Music: an unsung contribution' there has been constant assistance and interest from my students, friends and well-wishers to whom I acknowledge my thanks. Above all, I wish to convey my indebtedness to Smt. Rupa M. Sethna, who generously adopted my dream as hers, from its inception. Smt. Sethna ably translated and computerized the entire book, combing through the many drafts. She was assisted in her work by Smt. Nazneen F. Katila and Shri. Feroze R. Katila. I thank Shri. Jiten R. Zaveri for all his help in the evolution of this book. Once the volume was complete, graphic designer par excellence, Smt. Seema Shroff Zaveri, with the help of Shri. Ambrish J. Zaveri painstakingly created the design. A perfectionist, passionate about her work, Seema deserves not only my deepest gratitude but also full credit for the creative metamorphosis that takes a draft copy and turns it into a book. My thanks to photographer Shri. Santosh Samal and Reproscan for processing the book. Finally, my immense thanks to Shri Khushru Patel of JAK Printers, Mumbai for the personal interest taken in the printing of this book.

Should this book evoke some amount of interest in every reader; should it generate a yearning in Parsi youth to understand the basics of Indian music or dance; should it inspire but one Parsi individual to become a celebrated artiste, then my work with its trials and tribulations will all have been worthwhile.

To conclude, my earnest wish is that this book may elicit a response of pride in the Parsi reader, that it may be an eye-opener to the previously unseen but huge imprints left by Parsis in the fields of Indian Music and Dance.

Aban Mistry

Dr. Aban E. Mistry

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introduction

Music is an art. Music is divine blessing. Music is religion. The only religion that includes each and every being in our world, regardless of cast, creed, colour, country, gender, faith or political identity.

Music evolves from so deep within a soul, a community or a civilisation that it envelopes all in its wake; that it becomes the world's greatest binding factor, blurring all man-made and natural boundaries.

Music is omnipresent, extending its reach like the Divine Mother's arms to gather more and more of her mortal children in her fold.

To engage in a dissertation on the Parsi community's achievements in Indian Music, initially seems to be in complete contrast with the above exultations. Among the minority communities of India, this demographically dwindling one made Indian soil its home after having been forced to flee native Iran, over thirteen hundred years ago, in order to safeguard their religion from persecution by a new regime. Since then and to date, this section of the Aryan race, in gratitude wove their lives into the wondrous fabric that is India so deftly that the historical quotation: "like adding sugar to milk so as to sweeten it", seems perfectly apt. Parsis today are acknowledged as being literate, progressive Indians. Whether it is education, trade, business, science, art, cinema, drama, journalism, Defence Services, law, politics or sports, in almost every nook and cranny of India you will find Parsis - endeavouring to and succeeding in adding that much more to the quality of Indian society. This is one community that truly teaches the world a vital lesson: size does NOT matter! This miniscule community with its gigantic sense of commitment and patriotism has not only sweetened the milk of human kindness, as it were, but has struggled and made a difference.

To many, a marriage between Parsis and Indian Classical Music would seem unlikely. The misconception that the two make strange bedfellows is not entirely unfounded. Consider the majority of urbane, educated Parsis who have and still do lead a more westernised mode of life, particularly during the last fifty years. The truth as documented in several newspapers and books of yore is that Parsis infact dedicated themselves to the grace and dignity of Indian Classical and folk music for years (dating back to almost one and a half centuries). History bears witness to the fact that Parsis wholeheartedly adopted Indian culture including its glorious music forms by establishing one of the foremost Indian music institutions, the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. Very few are aware that in the field of Indian music the contribution of Parsis has been extremely important especially considering their limited number in comparison with other communities' multitudes. Based on the few notes available it can be gathered that at the advent of the nineteenth century, Parsis were methodically and dedicatedly learning Indian Classical Music from prominent *Ustads*. However, the waning interest and lack of efforts to safeguard these facts and memories only ensured a fading-away of certain records.

I have tried my utmost to gather and consolidate in this one volume, rare and factual details as available in myriad documents, both to make my community aware and proud of its ancestors' musical achievements (hitherto little-known) and preserve for posterity a record celebrating the outstanding contributions of artistes of this fist-sized community and a legacy bequeathed to Indian music.

Quite simply, this book for me is the fruition of a long struggle, many uphill tasks but above alla dream!



CHAPTER I Lok Sangeet

In Parsi *lok sangeet* (folk music) the songs comprise of lullabies, *Navjote*, (a Zoroastrian/Parsi initiation ceremony) and wedding and other auspicious songs. Then there are religious songs and *garbas*. These religious songs are chants (*monajats*) in praise of the Lord and are rendered effectively on their specific days. These are *Dadaar Ahura Mazada's garbo*, a song in praise of Prophet *Asho Zarthushta*, and a homage up to 30 days of the Parsi calendar, a revered song propitiated to the holy consecrated fire, song to worship *Khorshed Yazad* i.e. the sun god, *Ava Ardisur Banu*, song in praise of water, *monajats* of homage unto righteousness and *Sudreh-Kusti*, the sacred vest and girdle apparel, obligatory to every *Zarthushti*. Additionally, there are *garbas*, *garbis* and *monajats* to enlighten and educate the laity of the importance of life's daily, immutable routine, of cosmic laws of cause and effect, of good thoughts, good words and good deeds. The present contemporary, literate Parsi society with leanings towards western culture and mode of life may well have forgotten the past glory of these meaningful and holy hymns, but these have been preserved in safe custody by some of the more conservative, orthodox Parsis in venerable memory of their old dear, departed ones. Fortunately audio cassettes of these holy and festive songs have been produced by Zoroastrian Studies, in Mumbai. These songs have been compiled by Shri. V. Balsara of Kolkata, his disciple Smt Dhunawaz Indorewalla, Shri. Kersi Mistry and Smt. Jaloo Bhesania and recently by Smt. Shernaz Neville Munshi for our present and future generations.

During the last century every Parsi home, literally at the crack of dawn, would come alive with these hymns and *monajats* as well as group prayers (*humbandagi*). As a special feature, professional Parsi women singers were specifically invited to a house, to sing on auspicious occasions. These ladies were known as *goyans* and their profession was public singing. Besides *goyans*, men were also in this field singing professionally and were called *posaagirs*. *Goyans* held an honourable place in our erstwhile society and were bestowed with precious gifts on festive occasions. The previously famous names in Mumbai's Parsi society were Soonamai Goyan, Meherbai Goyan, Ratanbai Goyan alias Ratu Agboat, Sorabji Chicken alias Solu Bailo etc.

Moreover, apart from *goyans*, there were professional women who were hired for funeral services, just to mourn, sing *marashiyas* and cry aloud, beating their chests and foreheads dramatically. This peculiar custom in the Parsi society was known as the custom of "taking *chhajiya*". The daily newspaper 'Satyaprakash', had severely admonished in print this custom of professional mourning and the women involved. But as the community became more and more progressive and educated, this ridiculous custom became scarce and now of course it has totally ceased.

During the mid 19th century, two Parsi gentlemen by the names of Shri Nanabhai Rustomji Ranina and Shri Maneckji Burjorji Minocherhomji were renowned for writing and singing *garbas*. A volume of their compositions and a compilation of other *garbas* were published by Shri Khurshedji Burjorji Framroze from the Mumbai Samachar Press in 1818 A.D. This volume was titled 'Garba Sanghrah', and these *garbas* were immensely popular and sung in almost every household.

From mid 18th to the end of the 19th century, a unique style of musical presentation called *kalgi tura* (meaning a confluence of music and poetry), was highly prevalent in the Parsi community. *Kalgi tura* was presented by two opposing parties in a question and answer form. Items used to enhance the "crowning glory" or hair namely, flowers, beads, gems or jewellery artefacts are called *kalgi tura*. *Kalgi tura* means embellishment of the head. Its use varies from decorating the crowns of religious idols to adorning the bridegroom's headgear. In the 18th - 19th century, poetry and music fused, like the iridescent art of *kalgi tura* and prevailed especially among the Parsi society of that period.

Kalgi tura comprised of subjects like life's philosophy, proffering devotion to god and debating contemporary social problems. These were bound in poetic compositions and rendered vocally to an exalted piece of music in a question and answer form. Two opposing parties of *kalgi tura* would present their art by throwing challenges at each other. The poetic party that asked questions was called *kalgi* and the other that spontaneously responded by answering musically was called *tura*. During the display of such *kalgi tura* events, the two parties would sit in a semi-circular formation opposite each other with its leader sitting in the middle of the circle thus formed and would present the programme. Fierce competition would ensue between the two sides and the air would be charged with melodious music. In a way the basics of *kalgi tura* resembled the *qawwali*

style of music. Its most special feature was its spontaneity. They had to compose and sing on the spot as there were no rehearsals and no preparations. The initiating question would be replied in a tuneful challenge from which other questions would invariably evolve and so it would proceed. This is why it was deemed extremely essential to have in its artistes the requisites of spontaneity in composing poetry, the competence to bind the same in music simultaneously and also possess the skill of being quick-witted. Although based on Farsi *betbaaji* (poetry form), the poems of *kalgi tura* were created in simple, colloquial Gujarati.

Many a time, among the two competing parties, the stream of verbal language would cascade in such a manner that one single alphabet would prompt the beginning of the flow of a whole lot of poetic couplets and it would also act as a cue to end a specific alphabet. For example, if the poem commenced with 'N', then till it finishes, all its couplets would begin with 'N' and end with 'N' as well. *Kalgi tura's* artistes were essentially from the athletic, wrestler class. As such, its study and training sessions were mainly carried out in gymnasiums or arenas. *Kalgi tura* programmes too were organised in big open places like "*maidans*" and commenced late at night. The audience would gather in thousands to witness these *dangals* as they were locally called. *Kalgi tura* songs were referred to as *khayal*. This is an Urdu word meaning thought. These *khayals* would commence with a *sakhi* (couplet). The music of *sakhis* rendered in whichever *swar* (note) would be so foot-tapping and catchy and simple that people would begin to hum it. The instruments used in *kalgi tura* music were the *duff*, *chang*, and *tuntuna* (like the *ektara*) and *ghunghroos* tied to sticks.

In the 19th century, there existed, five to six groups or *mandals* of Parsi *bawajis* in *kalgi tura*, and they were

successfully established as creative artistes and organisers. On the *kalgi* side the especially famous names of artistes are Jivanji Dorabji, Pestonji Sam Kalgiwale, *Ustad* Nusserwanji Khorshedji Poonawalla, Malhari Noshirwan, Master Adil and Dadabhai Kalgiwale. Whereas on the *tura* side, the names that evoke nostalgia were those of Dhunjibhai Tamboli, Dadi Maharaj, Kali Kalingar alias Cawasji Turawalla, Dorabji Dadabhai Mistry alias Tanadhari and Dadi Malhari. Moreover one Dossabhai Dubash too was considered a renowned artiste of *kalgi tura*. These artistes were average citizens with their jobs, services, business etc. They were bread-winners like other men but because of their participation in *kalgi tura* they were socially revered. In both parties of *kalgi tura*, Parsi artistes only would participate. Only occasionally Muslim artistes would enter the fray as part of the opposing party in these cross-exchange *dangals*. At such times the competition would catch on with the true spirit of revelry. Again, there were times when in the assembly, instead of poetic *dangals*, spitfire *dangals* would take place and in the heat of frayed tempers, verbal accusations would be hurled at each other causing acrimony instead of inspiring poetry. Sometimes the fights would turn uncontrollably violent and if the audience chose to participate in them, they would become bloody battles. An incident comes to mind when a big *dangal* was organised in the compound of Mumbai's famous *Wadiaji Atash Behram* (fire temple) on the occasion of the temple's anniversary. During the proceedings the *dangal* broke out into a massive riot with many skulls broken and the injured admitted to hospitals for urgent medical aid.

In view of these violent events, people gradually lost interest in *kalgi tura dangals* and started viewing them instead with repulsion and repugnance. Decent families who

considered themselves to be of good breed dissociated from them completely and its social attraction waned. Especially after the *Atash Behram* anniversary incident, *dangals* evoked society's wrath and towards the close of the 19th century *kalgi tura* became totally defunct. In present times though, it is alleged that once again *kalgi tura* art has been revived and one of its public programmes too was organised.

(This chapter is based on the in-depth description of *kalgi tura dangals* portrayed by Shri Nanabhai Ranina and Shri Dhunjibhai Patel.)

The Gayan Uttejak Mandali

Up to this point, we have dealt with only folk music and *kalgi tura*. Now we must venture into *shastriya*

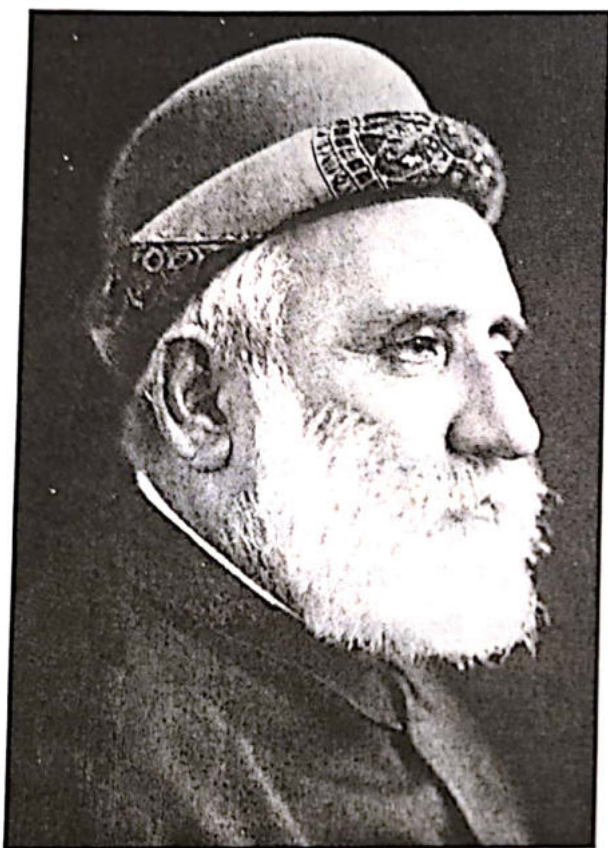


*the logo-symbol of the
Gayan Uttejak Mandali*

sangeet or classical music. Perhaps the most important and precious gift that the Parsi community has contributed to Indian classical music is the hundred and thirty five year old music institution THE GAYAN UTTEJAK MANDALI. It becomes imperative at this juncture to enlighten my readers about its motive and work proceedings.

The Gayan Uttejak Mandali was born in the latter half of the 19th century, the "brainchild" of some Parsi music enthusiasts of Mumbai. To understand it thoroughly, we must delve deep into its 130 year-old history.

It was the year of 1870 A.D. A Zarthosti gentleman of Mumbai by the name of **Shri Kaikhushru Navroji Kabraji**, an art connoisseur, established a music institution with the help of his few, generous-spirited and liberal-minded friends. Considering Indian music as god's gift and thus a divine art, his zealous mission was to spread it among his Parsi brethren and indeed to all other communities' educated and progressive male and female members. Thus,



*Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji
Founder: Gayan Uttejok Mandali*

on the 1st day of October in 1870, the **GAYAN UTTEJAK MANDALI** was born.

Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji was a man of progressive views, a keen reformist, an astute visionary and a multi-skilled individual. Shri Kabraji was a true Renaissance man: a writer, dramatist, novelist, journalist and an editor of a newspaper, actor and a dedicated educationist all rolled into one. He was totally devoted to Indian music (*desi sangeet* as it was known at the time). In the

year 1859, he started learning methodical and systematic ritual music under the tutelage of Gwalior *gharana's* *Ustad* Imdad Khan. His inspiration were the eminent enthusiasts of classical music and educated reformists, Sir Sorabji Shapurji Bengali and Shri Dadabhai Navroji.

The idea of founding a musical institution had already been on Shri Kabraji's mind for years on end. His dream institution would enable literate and liberal-minded men to assemble and learn to enjoy the fine art of *abhijaat sangeet* or Indian Classical Music. However, at the time something very interesting took place which brought about the sudden establishment of Kabraji's music institution.

According to a historical booklet in Gujarati, titled '**Gayan Uttejok Mandali ni Tavarik**' by Shri Pestonji P. Kapadia,

some Parsi men in 1869, under the guidance of an erstwhile Mumbai High Court judge called Mr. Gibbs, organised an institution of western music in Mumbai called 'The Philharmonic Society'. The Society's interesting plans and programmes were published in detail and with much fanfare in the major newspapers of the time. This development alerted Shri Kabraji to sit up and take note. This pandering to the West irked him immensely. If a western music society could be established then why not a *desi gayan mandali*? Eureka! That was it! To inspire, inform and enlighten people, he picked up the only weapon he was confident of - his pen! He began to write several vociferous articles on the subject in various newspapers. For example in the 1869 edition of 'Raast Goftaar' (a newspaper of that time) coming down heavily on Parsis he wrote "instead of going to the house of flaunting dancers and by inviting them over to your house, thus polluting your mind, residence and life, the need to teach our own women the chaste and divine art of Indian classical music and including our women in the congregations of male members is deemed very essential. Music classes must be made compulsory in schools. Also, the time has arrived when the acute need to establish an institution of *desi* music in our literate society is viewed as necessary." This created an awakening about *desi sangeet*.

He wrote several similar articles, and encouraged others to write as well. This caused people's opinion to change gradually. Finally on 1st October 1870, with the co-operation of some enthusiastic personal friends like Maneckji Dhunjibhoy Doctor, Sorabji Shapurji Bengali, Dadabhai Navroji, Dhunjibhai Patel, Khurshedji Cama, Framji Bharucha, Jeejeebhai Laam, Shri Dinshaw Petite etc., Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji laid the foundation of this historical institution named *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* in a small bungalow



*the mandali's first president:
Shri Khurshedji Nusserwanji Cama*

in Mumbai's quiet and peaceful locale called New Foras Road. This was despite all opposition in an environment that was frightfully orthodox and almost 'anti-music'. He speedily constituted the institution's rules of code and conduct and framed its aims and objectives too. Shri Khurshedji Nusserwanji Cama was elected as the foremost president of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji became its first

secretary and Shri Jeejeebhai Laam its first treasurer. Two main objectives of the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* were laid down by its founders. One was to begin training the well-educated music devotees of both sexes in Indian classical music through an appropriate and systematic method by high-calibred *ustads* and *pandits*. The second aim was to ensure that the *mandali* organised regular, music festivals and concerts to provide an opportunity for the members to enjoy performances of celebrated artistes.

Dear readers, this was an incredibly dark and staunchly close-minded age when music was considered a device of corrupted leisure and a low form of entertainment, restricted to the confines of either the royal courts of *Rajas* and *Nawabs* or the chambers of cheap entertainers. Even listening to music, let alone performing was considered a sacrilege. Those were indeed dark days when men and women could

not sit together in public, when husband and wife could not speak to each other in the open, when women could not step out of their homes and ladies dare not have the courage to sing before their own families' male members. In such a discriminatory and confined society, to have formed an institution that went against almost every grain of conventional wisdom by having men and women mixing freely to better appreciate music, took sheer guts and much farsightedness. In the year 1876, a programme was organised especially for women by *Gayān Uttejāk Mandali*, wherein all member-families' women also participated. This could be termed as an important step towards social reformation. How much might Shri Kabraji and his friends have suffered for their social reforms? With what firm resolution must they have had to confront society is beyond our imagination even today. By the courageous beginning of Shri Kabraji and his friends, for the first time in history not only in Mumbai but throughout India, an institution organising music shows and imparting education in music was able to be established. Truly in the annals of music and art, Shri Kabraji's and his *Gayān Uttejāk Mandali's* names are emblazoned in gold letters and have been immortalised. It is said that Guts and Glory walk hand-in-hand. The *Gayān Uttejāk Mandali* deservedly enjoyed its glory thanks to Shri Kabraji's gritty determination and total fearlessness.

Behind the establishment of this reformist society, also rests firmly the invaluable co-operation of Parsi-owned newspapers like *Raast-Goftaar*, *Satyaprakash*, *Streebodh*, *Chabuk* etc. and their forward-thinking editors.

No sooner was the *mandali* established than its founders put into gear its two main objectives. They commenced enthusiastically with the organising of 1) music concerts and 2) running classes in teaching music methodically. The

mandali received as a generous gift, from magnanimous members like Limjibhai Batliwala, Sorabji Bengali, Hormusji Saklatwalla etc. one harmonium, two violins, four sitars, two beens, six tamburas, two pakhawajs and six pairs of tabla.



the mandali's committee members

Moreover, Shri Edulji Rustomji Reporter charitably gifted the *mandali* with all his priceless music books.

Up to four years into its inception, the *mandali* organised small private, music functions. The very first such private programme was organised six months after the *mandali's* inception on 28th April 1871. On this occasion, *Ustad* Imdad Khan the celebrated stalwart of the Gwalior *Gharana* rendered his *Khayal Gayaki*. Following this, on 1st August 1875, an open function was organised in a public hall where the outstanding artistes of the time gave recitals in classical and light classical vocal music. The programme comprised of *dhrupad gayaks*, *khayal gayaks* and *thumri gayaks* who

presented *ragas* like *darbari*, *miya malhar*, *kedar*, *desh* and *khamaj*.

In July 1880, the *mandali's* 21st programme was organised in which according to the monsoon season, *raag malhar* was rendered. While entering the 21st century, it is evident that music shows are replete with diverse *ragas* presented as per seasons, extolling the virtues of their natural beauty. Today, the very thought that a bold beginning was ventured as far back as 130 years ago, by the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* is truly exciting and a milestone for Parsis to be proud of!

In September 1880 another programme was organised by the *mandali* specifically for children with the intention of creating interest and a love for music among the younger generation. *Bandishes* were presented in a simplistic style. Besides this, six to seven young girls presented some *garbas* which led to a huge social protest. "Exploitation of nubile girls with conduct unbecoming" was the accusation society hurled at the organisers and created unpleasantness and commotion. Rubbing salt into the wound, one Gujarati man Shri Mansukhlal went completely haywire, charging the *mandali* via his poison-tipped pen about spoiling children, leading them astray and indulging innocent children with the horrific addiction to music. He managed to spread so much vitriolic that finally Kabraji had to take recourse by dragging Shri Mansukhlal to court. Shri Phirozeshaw Mehta was engaged by the *mandali* as prosecutor. It is believed that a lot of in-depth investigations into the administration of the *mandali* and especially about their music programmes and music classes were carried out. Conclusively, the high court ruled out all allegations. This was sweet victory for Kabraji. Shri Mansukhlal was forced to concede defeat, fined and had to extend an apology. This event serves as a fine example of

the intense hatred towards music in that era. It also draws a clear picture of what Shri Kabraji and his friends must have gone through in order to effort social reforms.

In the year 1881, following the footsteps of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*, a few Hindu brethren emulated the idea and inaugurated a music society of their own. In the field of music *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* and Shri Kabraji's untiring and commendable efforts are credited for this progressive step forward. Shri Kabraji reported extollingly about Hindu Gayan Samaj and its founders in his newspaper *Raast Goftaar*. Thereafter during the decade of 1880, many music organisations came into existence of which Arya Gayan Vidya Rakshak Mandali, Shripad Sangeet Shala, Albert Music Club and Pune's Bharat Gayan Samaj are considered major ones. Pune's Bharat Gayan Samaj, after over a century, is still active and very much in existence.

Besides music, the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* also organised elocutions and lectures. The venue of these lecture-demonstrations was mainly Mumbai's Framjee Cawasji Hall at Dhobitalao. It is said that the *mandali's* programmes were so meticulously organised and were presented by such stalwart artistes on stage that *pandits* of music and maestros like Aftab-e-Musiki, Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Sangeet Ratna Ustad Abdul Karim Khan, and *Gayan Shiromani* Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan would attend these *mehefils* themselves.

Now a look into the *mandali's* sangeet classes.

The *mandali's* music-training classes commenced from 1872 under the auspices of the descendant of Gwalior *Gharana's* Ustad Imdad Khan. He served the *mandali* for ten long years as a teacher, and was its true guide and advisor. In the pre-establishment years of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* i.e. way back in 1859 A.D., Shri Kabraji and his friends Framji Bharucha, Gandhibhai Vatchhagandhi, Dadabhai Thuthi, Dr.

Manecksha Doctor, Dhunjibhai Patel etc. came to be trained in classical music by *Ustad Imdad Khan*. Thus, *Khan Saheb* enjoyed a close and privileged association with the founder members of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* which lasted till his demise. There were other celebrated artistes in *Ustad Imdad Khan's* time who served as teachers on the *mandali's* payroll, of which some names are prominent. They are *Ustad Nazir Khan Bhindibazarwale*, *Ustad Chhajju Khan Dhrupadiya*, *Ustad Khadim Hussain Khan Khayaliye*, vocalist *Raojibuwa Belbagkar*, *Shri Jaganath Pakhawaji*, *Shri Ramchandra Tablavadak* etc. In 1880 *Ustad Imdad Khan* breathed his last. After his death, the *mandali's* classes continued to be held regularly and several paid as well as honorary teachers kept up the good work of teaching music. Among the highly respected teacher-guides were *Ustad Ali Hussain Binkaar*, *Mr. P.R. Lisbo* (for western music), *Haji Miya Sarangiwale*, *Purushottam Tabalchi*, *Feroze Master (Batliwala)*, *Ganpatibuwa Bhilwadikar*, *Ramchandra Bhilwadikar*, *Ganesh Manerikar*, *Vazir Khan Rahim Khan*, *Chowgule Master*, *Dattatreya Deodhar*, *Master Ramchandra Kale*, *Vishnu Chiplunkar* and *Sangeet Shashtri Pandit Bhatkhandeji*.

The *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* with the prime intention of simplifying formal music education composed a volume of *Raagdari Bandishes* – songs – and published and printed them in 1887 A.D. These were to be taught in their music classes. That volume consisted of the compilation of nearly 125 *Gharanedar Bandishes* of various *ragas*. Although the names of *ragas* and *taals* were printed as titles at the head, the rest of the songs were found devoid of any systematic music notations. So, for the students and artistes it was not feasible to master music theory. During that period, when literacy was at its lowest, the musicians were virtually illiterate and so music was passed on orally from *guru* to *shishya* or

disciple according to the ancient methodology of *gurukuls*. Where could one expect to find literate, intelligent artistes who could develop simple music notations that could be easily written and taught? Fortunately, the founders of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* happened to meet just such a personality by the name of *Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande* (B.A., L.L.B.), an attorney by profession. He was also devoted to Indian classical music and was a music research scholar.

According to the book '*Gayan Uttejak Mandali ni Tavarikh*' authored by Shri Pestonji P Kapadia alias 'Hairat', who was the last vice president of the *mandali*, *Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhandeji* was actively associated with the *mandali* since 1883 A.D. In the beginning he would attend music programmes organised by the *mandali* thereby coming into contact with the *mandali's* teachers. It is said that in those days the music education classes of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* were imparted by the nation's best music *gurus*. Shri Bhatkhandeji enrolled himself as a student of the *mandali's* classes in 1883 by paying a monthly fee of Rs.2/- and began to diligently study music and its theory from its teachers like *Pandit Raojibuwa Belbagkar*, a scholarly vocalist who had a vast treasure-trove of *ragas* and *bandishes* of *drupad* and *khayal*. In 1885 A.D. *Pandit Raojibuwa Belbagkar* sadly passed away. Even after his demise *Pandit Bhatkhandeji* continued his studies from *mandali's* other scholarly teachers like *Ustad Vazir Khan*, *Pandit Ganpatibuwa Bhilwadkar* etc. He accomplished an in-depth knowledge of diverse *ragas* and its *bandishes* from both these *Ustads*. Then he went on to synthesise thousands of *gharanedar bandishes* and bound them into simple notations creatively invented by him, compiled and published six volumes titled '*Kramic Pustak Malika*'. *Pandit Vishnu N Bhatkhandeji's* contribution to the field of pure, formal music will always be cherished as

infinite and second to none.

From the year 1895 A.D. *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji was appointed as teacher of the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. It is so believed that because of his musical education, his analytical knowledge of music and impressive personality, he commanded immense respect in *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. In appreciation of his invaluable service to music, the *mandali* appointed him as an honorary member, thus conferring on him due respect and glory.

The first three books authored by *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji were published under the aegis of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* of which the initial edition of his original book 'Swar Malika' was released in 1909 A.D. *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji dedicated this book to the man who served *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* for years and was also its first president, Shri Khurshedji Nusserwanji Cama. Its second edition was published in 1915 and third in 1919 by *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*.

His second book 'Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati's Gujarati translation (translator Shri Ratanshi Liladhar) was published in 1912 A.D. by the *mandali* and his third book 'Raag Lakshan Malika' followed in 1915 A.D. **Though after these several of *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji's books were published by outside sources and were amply appreciated, the fact remains that because of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* help and the support he received for his three prime publications, his writing received a tremendous boost.**

Based on the *Tavarikh's* context, *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji better known as the 'man of the century' of music maintained his association with *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* for almost 35 years, continued imparting his priceless knowledge to others in the *mandali's* music classes and also remained absorbed in his own research work as well as in producing and scripting on the subject of *sangeet shastra*.

Kavi (poet) Shri Pestonji P Kapadia alias *Hairat* faithfully dedicated his book 'Gayan Uttejak Mandali ni Tavarikh' to *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji and wrote thus:- "Dedicated to the famous author of 'Lakshan Geet' and the *guru* of the *mandali* for years, *Pandit* Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhandeji B.A., L.L.B. — the gentleman who has dedicated himself to the art of music, and the invaluable service he has rendered to the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* in the field of music, his equivalent can hardly be found in this selfish world".

It is truly good fortune that a researching music scholar like *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji and liberal-minded social reformists like the founders of *mandali* coincidentally met. This meeting of similar minds and hearts brought about several new thought - provoking and scientific methods in the field of Indian Classical Music. **In the printing of all his books, the *swarlipi* or the notation system that had been used by *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji was the fruit of his extensive and laborious research work accomplished during the period of his association with the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*.** In this respect, the principal of the Baroda Music College the renowned *Beenkar, Khan Saheb Ustad* Maulabaksh, also invented around the same time, his notation system and *Sangeet Ratna Pandit* Vishnu Digambar Pulaskar too brought out his own method of music notations. From all of these, *Pandit* Bhatkhande's notation style proved the easiest and most clear, resulting in wide circulation. Even today in the North Indian music system, the most extensively used style of notation is *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji's.

Pandit Bhatkhandeji's main disciple and scholarly musicologist, *Pandit* Shrikrishna N. Ratanjankar has in his book 'A Biography of *Pandit* Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande', made a detailed note about his traditional lifestyle. In his book the author has made reference to *Pandit* Bhatkhande's

association with the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*, but has not mentioned the fact about Bhatkhandeji taking tuitions in music in the *mandali's* classes. In the author's opinion, *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* was only a club for affluent Parsis in which a great person of *Pandit Bhatkhande's* status could never study music. This misconception from such a scholarly personality like *Pandit Ratanjankar* is profoundly sad. What has already been accepted as history is difficult to disregard but not impossible. *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* has never been a club for only wealthy Parsis. After its golden jubilee i.e. between the years 1922 to 1930 A.D. owing to its economic difficulties there was a sizeable reduction in the *mandali's* activities. This kind of financial shortfall occurs in every institution and thank God it did not last long. After 1938 A.D. the *mandali* once again managed to strengthen its hold after which it fully blossomed. Basically, behind the grim picture portrayed by *Pandit Ratanjankar* in his book about the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*, lies the Parsi Punchayat's total disregard as well as the post-1950 westernised Parsi's indifference towards our rich, cultural music. It is sadly ironic that Parsis themselves, due to their neglect, effectively erased from the world of music, the name of a prestigious and honourable institution like the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*, founded by a fellow-Parsi.

History is silent witness to the profound philanthropic work *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* has carried out in the field of music from 1870 to 1950 A.D. Many musical artistes of high calibre of that era were associated with this institution. Even *Pandit Bhatkhande* himself, closely connected with the institution since 1883, became almost like a family member. As a teacher and as a member of its working committee, he served upto 1925 A.D. After that he dissociated himself from the *mandali* for reasons of incompatibility with the committee

members. Sad but true.

The allegation previously mentioned that the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* was a club only for affluent Parsis is blown to smithereens when we study *Pandit Bhatkhandeji's* long and very close association with the *Mandali*.

For nearly fifty years renowned artistes and teachers graced the *mandali's gurusthan* and imparted impeccable knowledge to Parsi and Hindu men and women in Indian Classical Music. These classes were later shifted to the Tutorial High School in Nana Chowk in Mumbai. At the outset, the monthly fee for music – class was fixed at Re.1/- which was later increased to Rs.2/-, then Rs.3/- and finally went up to Rs.5/-. After 1930 A.D. it seems that these classes were conducted in collaboration with Sharda Sangeet Vidyalaya, a music institution in the vicinities of Dhobi Talao and Flora Fountain. Besides vocal music, systematic lessons were given in Harmonium, Sitar and Dilruba. It is here that my mother Late Khorshed Eruch Mistry took lessons in Dilruba. It is personally poignant to note here that through these lessons my future and indeed my entire life was fated.

During the same period *Pandit Bhatkhandeji's* contemporary, the illustrious vocalist *Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar's* music classes were also being conducted at Lamington Road wherein many Parsi and Hindu ladies and gents were trained in *gayan vadan*. Among his Parsi disciples, one Smt. Banubai Bharucha's name is specially referred to.

The next chapter discusses *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* in detail.

4 The Evolution of Gayan Uttejak Mandali

According to the contents of 'Gayan Uttejak Mandali Ani Tavarikh', the famous poet and musician of Parsi society, **Shri Firoze Batliwala**, like his predecessor *Pandit Bhatkhandeji*, was part of the *mandali* for years and played a major role in its many activities. Not only was he a dedicated office-bearer but was also a committed practising musician. Being a friend and disciple of *Pandit Bhatkhande*, he enjoyed a close relationship with *Panditji* and as such remained a teacher in the music classes of the *mandali* for years.

Kavi (poet) Firoze Batliwala's first edition, '**Firoze Gayan Sanghraha**' was published sometime around 1885 A.D. Thereafter in 1894 A.D. he produced another volume '**Sarod-e-Avesta**' which the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* got published posthumously in 1930 A.D. In that volume to enable the extracts of Zoroastrian liturgical prayers to be easily intoned, they were entwined with the strains of melodious *swar* creations and presented in the form of *geet*. Based on an announcement by a Parsi religious society, *The Rahnumaye-Mazdayasnan-Sabha*, poet Shri Batliwala had composed these songs which included several of Avesta's sacred chants and ancient holy prayers like *Yatha-Ahu-Vairyo*, *Ashem Vohu*, the essence of the *Kusti* prayers (*Sarosh baaj*, *Hoshbam*, *Kemna Mazda*). *Ahura Mazda Khudai* and *Jasame-avengha Mazda*. These were translated in poetic form and presented in delightful *bandishes* of *raag* and *taal*.

Kavi Batliwala received full co-operation and incentive in the composition and notation of 'Sarod-e-Avesta' from his

Guruji Pandit Bhatkhande. Tragically, once again, history repeated itself and all hell broke loose. Severe protests and opposition from overtly conventional Parsis came down like many thunderbolts. They bitterly condemned his religious songs and tore his reputation to shreds accusing him of being an infidel, a pagan, and showered him with the choicest profanities. In fact, no stone was left unturned to destroy every fibre of his moral being with slander. Today the very songs of this 'Sarod-e-Avesta' are valued as priceless heirlooms inherited by the Parsi community. The celebrated musician Shri V. Balsara of Kolkata, under the auspices of Kolkata's *Inreco* record company got some of the songs from 'Sarod-e-Avesta' re-edited and recorded them in the mellifluous voice of his disciple late Kumari Dhunawaz Indorewalla, which on hearing gives an idea of Kavi Shri Batliwala's intellect and rich poetic skill.

Besides being a good musician, Kavi Shri Batliwala was also an outstanding teacher and a social activist. He was a true devotee of music who taught Parsi girls and women music and aroused spiritual fervour through religious songs. He spent his whole life giving music lessons to Parsi girls in schools.

He commanded tremendous respect from the members of the *mandali* because of his desire to serve, his deep knowledge of music and his benevolent views. In appreciation of his sincere services, the *mandali* sought to appoint him as an honorary member in the year 1889 A.D. Just before his demise in 1912 A.D. the *mandali* had organised a public meeting to honour him grandly. As the speeches eulogizing him were being made, this *karma-yogi's* soul transmigrated to the celestial world. And so, the grand meeting revering this iconic personality, turned into a condolence meeting.

In the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* centennial long existence,

Kavi Shri Batliwala's footsteps were followed by many enthusiastic Parsi men and women who poured their hearts into their work to ensure the *mandali's* systematic and smooth management. From 1870 to 1885 A.D. Shri Khurshedji N. Cama and from 1885 to 1892, *Hind - Na - Dada* or Grandfather of the Nation Shri Dadabhai Navroji (he was known as Dadabhai Master in those days) were at the helm of the institution. Thereafter under the leadership of Shri Bomanji Petit, Jehangir Bomanji Petit, Dinshaw Bomanji Petit, Hormusji Muncherji Cama, Jehangirji Khurshedji Cama, Kekobad Cawasji Dinshaw, Kaikobad Adenwala, Sir Pherozeshaw N. Mehta and Pestonji P. Kapadia, the *mandali* grew from strength to strength. In 1904 A.D. Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji passed away though before that he had gracefully retired from the *mandali*. Even so, his association with and guidance to the *mandali* lasted till the end of his life.

Besides the above-mentioned presidents and vice-presidents there were many others who served this institution in various capacities right from its inception to 1955. Names such as Jijibhoy Lam, Dr. Muncherji Sorabji, Behramji Madraswala, Dr. Manecksha Doctor, Dhunjibhai Patel, Dadabhoy Sethna, Khurshedji Khambatta, Framjee Patel, Jijibhoy Wadia, Framjee Petit, Dhunjibhoy Petit, Pestonji Mehta, Hormusji Seervai, N. F. Kayani, Maneck Banaji, Ardeshir Dubash, Sorabji Dastur, Hoshang Anklesaria, Marzban Chhoi, Pestonji Lala, Lavjibhoy Subedar, Framroze Batliwala, Dhunjisha Batliwala, Shapurji Mistry, Pestonji Press, Cawasji Davar and Sorabji Raja, come to mind immediately. It is thanks to these generous and open-minded men and their service, dedication and economic backing, that the *mandali* was a success through good times and bad. Besides Parsis, Hindus too had begun to partake in the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* activities

enthusiastically in which, besides *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji, the names of Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai and Sheth Nanabhai Haridas are prominent.

Upto 1912 A.D. women did not actively participate in the running of the *mandali* but thereafter more and more women came forward to be associated with its management. Among these were the following:- Bhikaiji Engineer, Jerbai Avasia, Freny Cama, Shirin Doctor, Motibai Dastur, Navaz Panthaky, Piroja Dastur, Jerbanoo Mistry, Khorshed Mulla, Coomie Lakdawalla, Coomie Bharucha, Tehmi Gagrati, Jerbai Gandevia, Banoo Bharucha, Aimai Bomansha, Smt. Byramji, Perin Dalal, Khorshed and Maneck Minocherhomji, and Shirin, Khurshid and Roshan Vazifdar. Importantly, the '*Tavarikh*' mentions that in 1876 a programme especially for women was organised by the *mandali*.

From 1870 to 1955 A.D., the duration of precisely eighty-five long years, the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* experienced many ups and downs but somehow bounced back. During these years a new dimension was added to its various activities and that was to organise music competitions that went on to be a success. For this, Seth Khurshedji Doongaji and Seth Navalsha Doongaji contributed a grand trophy to the *mandali* to encourage young talent.

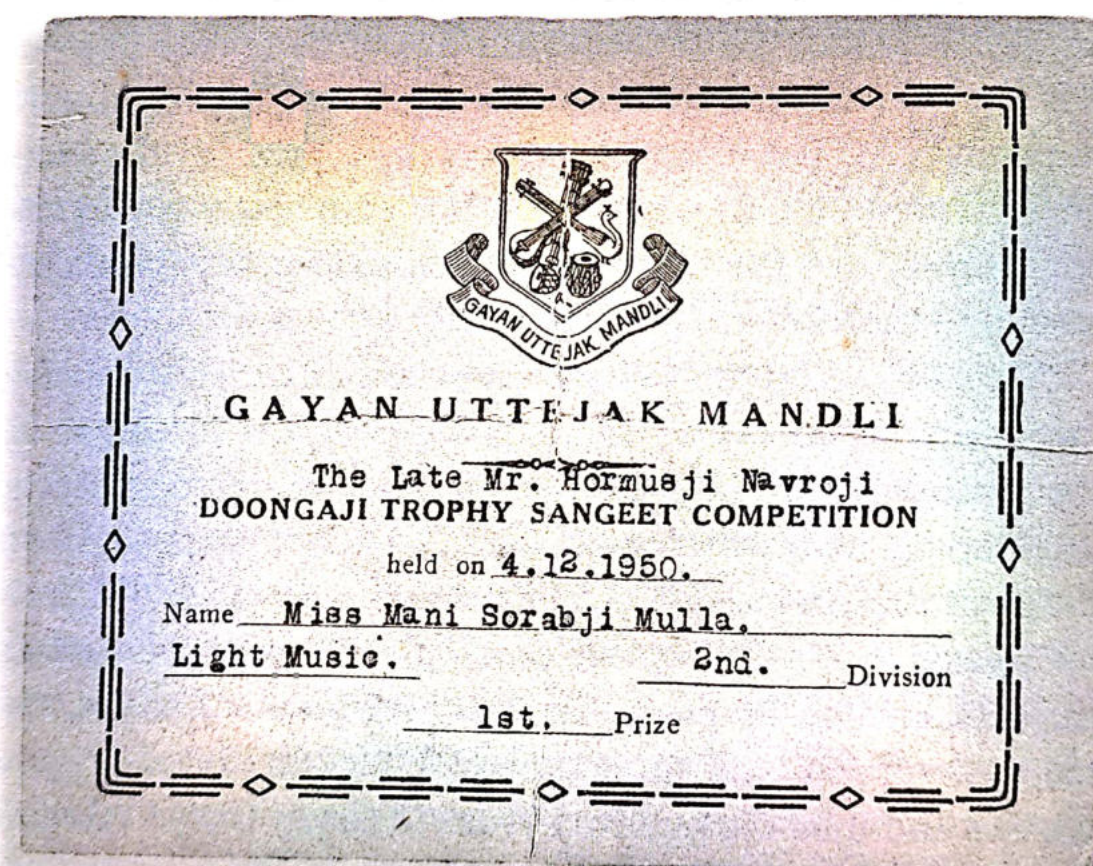
Then, in the year 1940 A.D. *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* was once more revived and a fresh new Trust Deed was made. After 1955 A.D. it finally began to protract and stagnated and all its activities ceased to exist. Visibly affected by the grave state of the *mandali*, my *Pujya Guruji*, *Pandit* Keki S. Jijina, a sitarist of great renown began to contribute articles penned by him to Parsi newspapers like *Jam-e-Jamshed* and *Kaiser-e-Hind*, around 1967. Voices from all directions were raised and so the *mandali's* then Vice-president Shri Pestonji P. Kapadia called the two of us to meet him. Shri Kapadia was also eager

to see the *mandali* breath life again. Almost fifteen years after its closure, with the help of Pandit Keki S. Jijina and myself, the newly-revived *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* first programme was held in the hall of Khareghat Colony on 25th May 1969. Thanks to the efforts of all concerned, the *mandali* sprang back to life. In its activities the members of our Swar Sadhna Samiti too willingly gave support and some people enrolled as its new members as well. Finally, with the coming together of all members, the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* centenary festival was celebrated on Sunday 21st March 1971 at Khareghat Colony's hall. The honourable justice Shri Jal Vimadalal was the chief guest. The programme included, among other artistes, Gwalior *Gharana's* renowned vocalist Pandit Jal Balaporia's sonorous rendition and my own tabla solo recital. Dame fortune seemed to smile over me when my music career took off at the tender age of five years in 1945 A.D. at the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* organised music competition where I happened to win a prize in the sub-junior section; then twenty five years later I was given the opportunity to match with the celebration of its centenary wherein I performed my Tabla Solo.

After this occasion, unfortunately once again the *mandali* met with a severe crisis. The centenary function proved to be the 'swan song' for *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. The curtains never went up again. Shri Pestonji Kapadia wished to close down the institution in view of his advanced age. So in 1981-82 A.D. he passed over the *mandali's* complete funds, its various trophies and all its possessions to Shri Sudhir Phadke, the famous vocalist and music director of Marathi stage and movies and thus the hundred year old *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* breathed its last.

Nothing is infinite in this universe. With every birth, death too is inevitable. So it is not as though our grief is

only for the demise of the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. The pain and distress we suffer is for all the glorious and revolutionary work this past century's institution accomplished, achieving its goal towards Indian music without any equal. Worse still is the fact that it vanished from peoples' memories as if it never existed! Its founder, Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji, along with the other philanthropic Parsi personalities, has drowned in the vortex of time. Alas! It is regretful that most of today's contemporary generation's musicians, musicologists and music devotees or for that matter men and women of our Parsi community do not even remotely recall the name of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*.



a 1950 music competition certificate of gayan uttejak mandali

The Swar Sadhna Samiti

Creation and destruction are a part of nature's order. A bud blooms into flower, flower comes to fruition, fruit produces seed; and seeds sprout to make way for other buds. In this manner Nature's cycle whirls on endlessly. Just as birth is not a beginning likewise death is not an end. It is simply a rotating cycle of birth and rebirth. Similarly the closure of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* was not a finale to the practice of pure, classical Indian music within the Parsi

the pioneering force: (l-r) Pt K. S. Jijina, Dr. M. Bhamgara, Shri S. Belvi, Shri Mithaiwalla, Smt. Belvi, Dr. A. E. Mistry



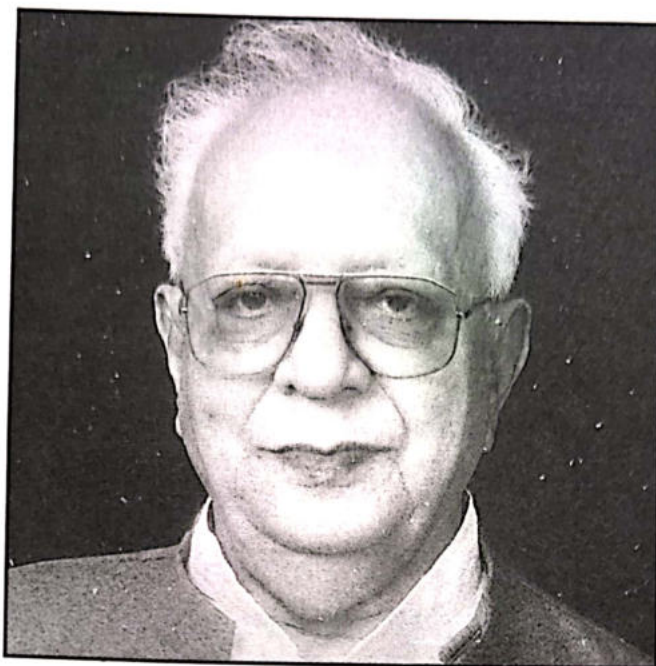
community. Infact, a decade before its closure, October 1961, saw the dawn of a fresh, new institution founded by Parsis to promote Indian Classical music aptly called **SWAR SADHNA SAMITI**. Getting acquainted with this government-recognised institution, serving non-commercially in a metropolitan city like Mumbai since decades, is deemed imperative here.

Devotedly practising one's chosen art-form throughout life to accomplish oneself as a good artiste is one thing. It is altogether a different matter to present that accomplished art from an appropriate stage before the audiences of connoisseurs. The perfect fusion of both is vital because the true flavour of art lies in the gratification received from audiences. To promote Indian Classical Music and Dance there needs to be open encouragement for talented artistes that their art may be appreciated by a live audience. Thus a stage is considered to be a befitting medium. Such a stage can be made available to artistes only by a good, prestigious institution.

Just as values in life change with moving times, similarly, access to and promotion of art also changes. The outlook of art-institutions too changes along the way. Generally contemporary art-institutions seem to be interested only in patronising the commercially sound and high-profile artistes, whose celebrity status and saleability will not only highlight the institution's name but also bring in lucre and laurels. Over the years, Mumbai or for that matter all over India's towns and cities, catering only to few selective, illustrious artistes' programmes has become the norm. It will not be an exaggeration to say that presently this has intensified even further, to the extent of eclipsing and killing off, as it were, true artistes totally devoted only to their art and not to fame, which jolts our mind to ask vital questions.



*the leading lights: Pt.
Keki S. Jijina &
Dr. Aban E. Mistry*



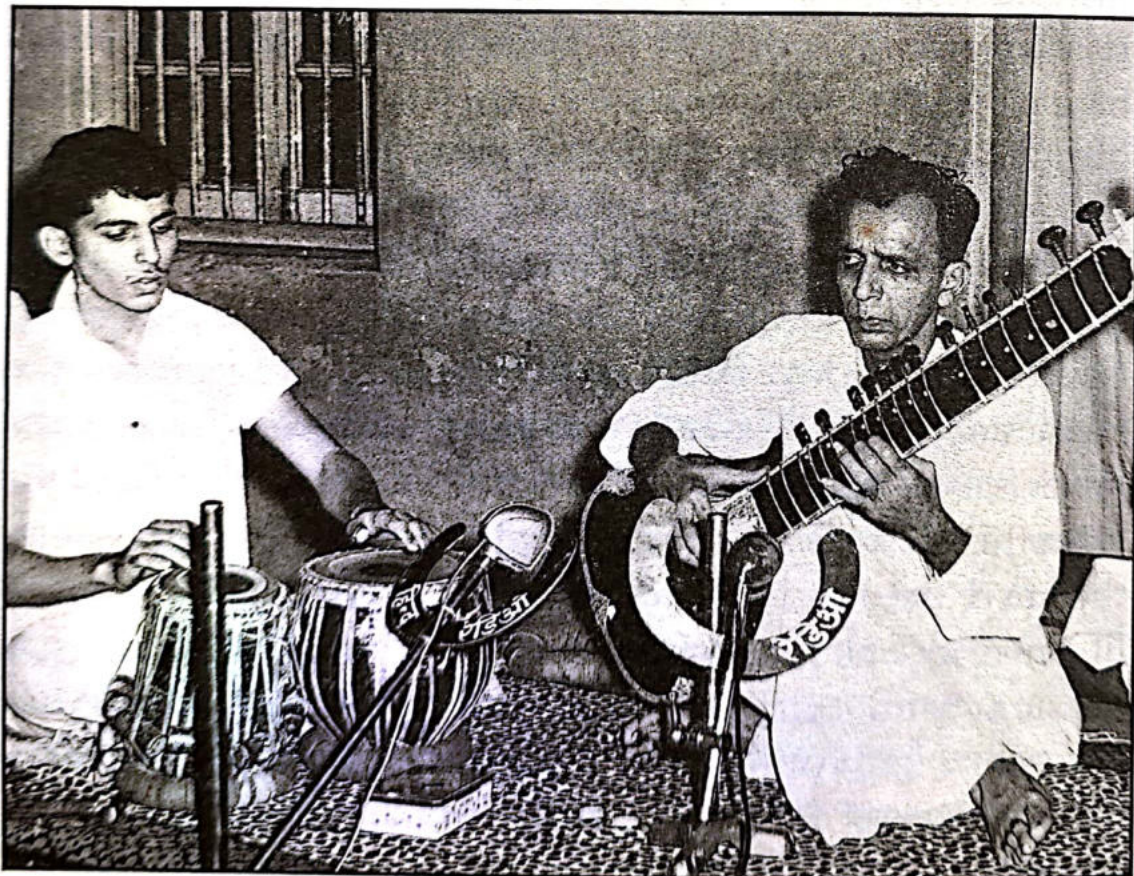
What about the majority of artistes who despite their life-long practice and dedication to the art are denied any fame just because they come from humble and frugal beginnings? If these artistes do not get the right opportunity to present their art then how do they acquire an audience? What about the evolving young artistes who are the torch-bearers of our future? Should not all these competent but fresh artistes get some incentive? When and where do they start? These were the very thoughts and questions that forty-three years ago haunted the minds of the then novice artistes Keki Jijina and myself. In our own music career we too had to confront at every step of our lives severe austerity and many heartaches. From these crushing and bitter experiences as also from the warm sentiments for our talented but unknown colleagues, sprouted the tiny seed named **SWAR SADHNA SAMITI**. The mighty oak grows from a tiny acorn and similarly Swar Sadhna Samiti has grown into a huge tree which has flourished in the music world sustaining under its protective canopy, several artistes of a lesser God.

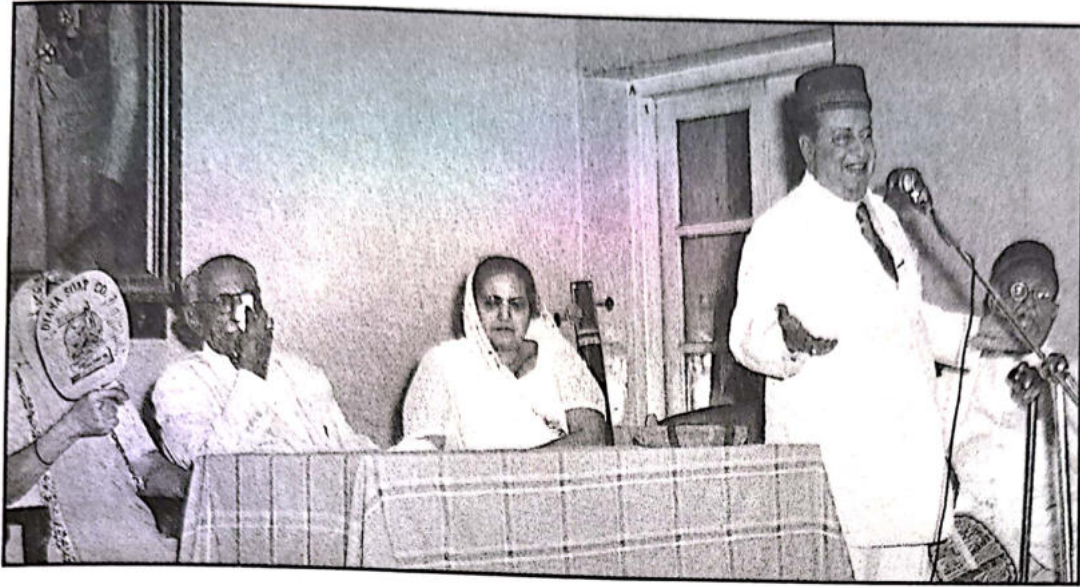
From its humble but earnest beginning in 1961, Swar

Sadhna Samiti's name and its activities have become internationally renowned today in the music world. Factually speaking, Swar Sadhna Samiti is an off-shoot of its parent music school, the Wadia Sangeet Class. However the Samiti has grown to the extent that it has overshadowed its birthplace, the Wadia Sangeet Class and today the two have merged into one common body. Keki Jijina and I never imagined in as far back as 1953, as we taught music to novices and conferred with lesser known artistes that our dream of providing them with a stage would evolve into an institution of such magnitude – the Swar Sadhna Samiti.

It was a Parsi, benevolent lady named Smt. Alamai P. Banaji who offered a small room in pious memory of her late father, Pestonji P. Wadia on 16th March 1953 to help run a

*the first monthly programme 1961: Pt. Keki S. Jijina on Sitar.
Tabla accompaniment: Shri Sapal K. Jijina*





the samiti's benefactor: Smt. Alamai Banaji

music class. Jijina named the class after his benefactor and thus was born the humble Wadia Sangeet Class in Mumbai's Dhobitalao area. Penniless but rich in cultural and moral discipline Jijina laid a firm foundation of *surtaal* in this tiny class. This strong base of classical music has today crossed national barriers and disseminated far and wide. Hundreds of students have availed of not only outstanding music knowledge but inculcated its devotional sentiments and humanitarian values. Of these several graduates wrapped afresh in the knowledge of music have become accomplished artistes today. Some have gained fame and popularity in India and abroad whereas some have opened their own music schools and reached the status of *guruship*.

In this very Wadia Sangeet Class on 19th October 1961, on the auspicious day of Dassera, *Pandit Keki Jijina* and myself lit an oil lamp bowing before *Maa Saraswati* (goddess of music & knowledge from the Hindu pantheon) and beseeching her blessings for Swar Sadhna Samiti's success. Our premiere music programme also on 19th October 1961 had as its first performance my vocal recital in *raag Purva*



*top: a historical milestone: the samiti's 500th monthly programme
bottom: encouraging young talent: bal sangeet sammelan*



Kalyan, along with my beloved sister late Mehernaz Mistry. This was followed by a solo sitar recital by my *pujya guruji* Keki Jijina. His son Sapal Jijina ably lent each of us accompaniment on the tabla. Today, artistes whether they are new ones or high-calibred and established all express immense pride and honour in performing on the stage of Swar Sadhna Samiti. It is vital and of great personal pride to our Swar Sadhna *parivar* to note that from its inception to date, Swar Sadhna Samiti without any omission whatsoever has already celebrated its 500th uninterrupted monthly programme on 15th June 2003. These regular monthly programmes commence very punctually as announced, beginning with the sublime *Saraswati Vandana* prayer and ending with the national anthem, '*Jana Gana Mana*'.

Besides these uninterrupted monthly programmes, Swar Sadhna Samiti each year organises three Sammelans. Every year with the ushering of spring in March, a three day music festival, the '**Swarsadhnotsav**' has been organised since 1965 in which our nation's top-most musicians infuse divinity into their mellifluous performances. From 1979 it has also been organising annual **Kishore Sangeet Sammelans** wherein the youth from age fourteen to twenty years take part and **Bal Sammelans** where musically meritorious children below the age of fourteen years perform. These programmes are held at National level. Several music lectures and lecture - demonstrations have been organised; distribution of books and cassettes among students of Swar Sadhna Samiti through music libraries take place and **Swar Sadhna Ratna's** priceless title has been conferred on hundreds of classical artistes including excellent vocalist, instrumentalist, dancers, instrument-manufacturers, music critics, accompanists, sponsors, etc., all in appreciation of their services and honouring their contribution towards Art.

There are some more important activities of Swar Sadhna Samiti which are detailed below.

The crowning glory of the Samiti's efforts is the scheme of holding **All India Music & Dance Competitions** annually. Since 1965 the *Samiti* has been organising these competitions, and has undertaken a herculean task to cull near -prodigious talents by hundreds and disseminate the same in the field of Indian music and dance. Today winning a trophy from Swar Sadhna Samiti has become a matter of prestige and challenge. About thirty years ago, those men and women who won trophies from Swar Sadhna Samiti's competitions, today bring their own children or students to participate in these competitions, or have become such renowned artistes that they are invited to judge these competitions. Not one has ever forgotten or failed to mention the encouragement their career received from Swar Sadhna Samiti.

Every year, to participate in this annual competition held in January, around six hundred artistes in the make arrive from all corners of India. They assemble at Mumbai's New Bharda High School to display their art in the fields of *gayan*, *vadan*, and *nritya*. There are a total of thirty divisional competitions that go on for four days over two consecutive weekends. With the purpose of seeing that proper justice is meted out, India's almost thirty-five judges, all specialists in different fields of music are invited from all over the country. Victorious contestants numbering over one hundred are presented with trophies, mementos and certificates of merit. Twenty-five trophies or rotating prizes are given away and cash prizes valued at thousands of rupees are awarded too. Moreover, six to nine scholarships worth Rs.2000/- each are donated annually to talented and deserving students. The most important of all these is that every trophy-winner from diverse age groups and music categories is given an



Wadia Sangeet classes 1st student batch invoking Maa Saraswati's blessings at the inaugural monthly programme: 1961

opportunity to present his/her expertise in Swar Sadhna Samiti's Annual, Bal, Kishore or music conferences.

This apart, under the principalship of *Pandit Keki S Jijina*, *vidyadaan* was strictly observed i.e. music taught totally free of cost to deserving students at Wadia Sangeet Class, in the traditional and ancient style of *Guru-Shishya Parampara*. Monetary aid too is rendered to old, infirm and physically incapacitated artistes from a separate fund formed especially for this purpose.

Through the auspices of Dr. Jaychandra Sharma, founder originator and musicologist of Bikaner's renowned music institution Sri Sangeet Bharati, Swar Sadhna Samiti co-organised in Mumbai the foremost informative eight-formula music exhibition in a unique style. In the exhibition, through various illustrations, maps and ingenious games,



*felicitating eminent personalities with the 'Swar Sadhna Ratna' title.
2nd from (r) ex-editor, Mumbai Samachar, Shri Jehan Daruwala*

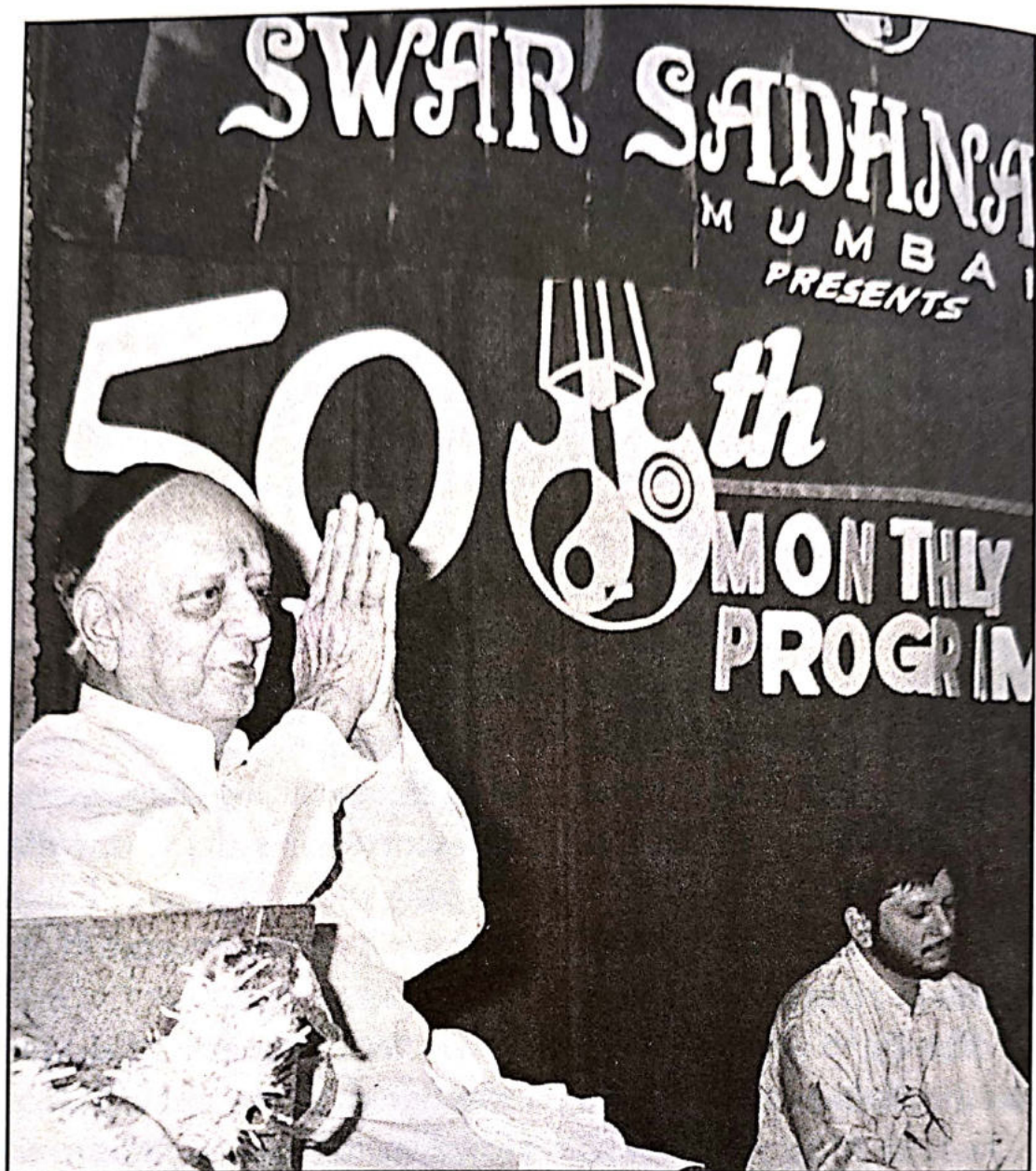
systematic music education was presented in a very comprehensive manner. This remarkable exhibition was so appreciated that Swar Sadhana Samiti was obliged to re-exhibit it within a short span of time. Through the editor of a monthly publication 'Sangeet Hathras' and Delhi's well known music critic, Dr. Mukesh Garg, an all- India based music organisation **Sangeet Sankalp** with over seventy branches has Swar Sadhna Samiti managing its Mumbai branch. The artistes from branches of **Sangeet Sankalp** from all over India are invited by Swar Sadhna Samiti to perform in its annual and monthly programmes and Swar Sadhna Samiti's own artistes are also sent to perform at **Sangeet Sankalp's** various branches. Thus via this talent exchange, music activities are further strengthened. In this manner, many novices or lesser known artistes get the necessary exposure and experience and opportunities to perform which otherwise would be near impossible.

The most important factor is that all the above-mentioned activities of Swar Sadhna Samiti from its sammelans, including all other music programmes, to exhibitions is the

absence of any entry fee.

Right from its inception Swar Sadhna Samiti has adhered to its policy of rendering strictly honorary service towards the cause of Indian Classical music and without expecting to profit from it. Whatever is done is being done for the sincere love of art. Being a non - profit organisation, Swar Sadhna Samiti's expenses are met by only membership fees, voluntary donations and advertisements for the annual souvenirs. Every artist arriving in Mumbai from elsewhere in India to perform on the *samiti's* stage is personally received by Swar Sadhna Samiti's office-bearers. Their boarding and lodging, conveyances and other nitty-gritties are all provided for. However, no professional remuneration is paid to any artiste - big or small. Even though there are so many economic restraints and limitations, artistes anxiously look forward to be represented by Swar Sadhna Samiti. So eager are they to be able to present their skills from the Samiti's prestigious stage in a leading metropolitan city like Mumbai, that their names are registered with us almost three years in advance for our monthly programmes.

The early years proved very hard for us founders because of the *samiti's* strict policy, formulated to preserve Indian Classical Music and Dance. However, the adage "faith can move mountains" was amply proven in Swar Sadhna Samiti's case. With deep faith in *Maa Saraswati* and with their fortitude, strength of conviction, self- confidence and a life-long commitment to serve, Swar Sadhna Samiti's *Karmayodhaas* (warriors of noble deeds) were able to overcome their struggles to survive. They continued giving their unstinted support thereby accomplishing superlative results. Even today, though experiencing several hardships, Swar Sadhna Samiti is a leading institution that pursues its objectives zealously.



the founder: a humble thank you to the well-wishers and patrons of the samiti

Under the able and brilliant leadership of three consecutive presidents namely, Shri Ratansha Mithaiwalla, Shri Srinivas Belvi and Shri Jitendra Zaveri, the nucleus of Swar Sadhna Samiti has been efficiently safe - guarded and its activities kept alive with several touches of innovation. The vice-presidents Dr. Meherwan Bhamgara, Dr. Nalin Kapadia, Smt. Yasmin Tarapore, Smt. Sulabha Chaugle and

the secretaries, office-bearers and students of Wadia Sangeet Class have all kept this institution throbbing with life over the years. Whether the situation is favourable or adverse, like political upheaval or personal helplessness, strikes, pickets or bomb explosions or even a tragic death in the family, from its inception in 1961 to date, this Samiti has organised every month its free programmes like clockwork.

This very significant achievement will go down in the annals of the history of Indian classical music



eminent members of the audience: 2nd from (l): Pt. Thakur Jaidev Singh. 1st from (r): Ust. Khadim Hussain Khan

Shastriya Gayan

The subject of music institutions such as *Gayana Uttejaka Mandali* and *Swar Sadhna Samiti* has been discussed. We shall now probe into the individual stories of Parsi musicians and their success in the field of classical music.

During the period of 1750 A.D. to 1900 A.D., many adventurous Parsis left Gujarat for other places in India like Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Lucknow, Madras, Kolkata, Karachi, Lahore (this was pre-independence), Kutch, Kathiawad, Gwalior, Kolhapur, Satara, Indore, Mhow, Hyderabad, etc. They gradually flourished in varied fields such as business, trade, industry, and various services or were appointed as *Dewans*, administrators and advisers, in several of the royal courts. Generally, because of *Rajas* and *Nawabs'* love for music, under the patronage of royal courts, music and musicians enjoyed a prominent and permanent place. Besides the resident artistes of the royal courts, several *ustads* and *pandits*, at the invitation of these *Rajas* and *Nawabs*, used to visit to present their own specialised art. And so, naturally those Parsis settled in the royal states or in and around other cities, came into contact with Indian music and musicians. Among these musicians, the most eminent names were of the *Dhamar* vocalists Vazir Khan, *Khayal* vocalist Haddu, Hassu and Tanras Khan Gwaliorwale, Punjab's *Tappa-gayak* Tassaduk Hussain, Kashi's Babu Jodhsinh Pakhawaji, Vadodra's Nasir Khan Pakhawaji, Jamnagar's Adityakhan Pakhawaji, Pune's *Ustad* Bande Ali Binkar, and Gwalior's *Ustad* Imdad Khan, Sarod *vadak* *Ustad* Gulam Ali Khan and

vocalists *Ustad Abdul Karim Khan*, *Ustad Faiyyaz Khan* and *Ustad Vilayat Hussain*. Influenced by this constant exposure, the inclination towards Indian music proliferated amongst Parsis. From the eighteenth century to the outset of the nineteenth century, many Parsi men and some Parsi women too, took lessons in music from these above-mentioned artistes and their disciples. Thinking of individual contribution towards classical music itself brings forth primarily, poignant memories of **Shri Kaikhushru Navroji Kabraji**. From all the information of last century's Parsi musicians to date, Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji's status and work in the field of Indian music appears to be the loftiest.

Ishwar (God) lives in *Swar* (musical note) and *Brahma*, the eternal spirit resides in *Naad* or sound. When an artiste realises this fact in its full essence, then to him, prayer in any form or language and diverse abodes of worship are all united into one symbolic factor. Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji was one such man who exalting in the dignified worship and greatness of *Swar* and revelling in the blissful joys of *Naad* was a true connoisseur of music and a staunch follower of the Zoroastrian religion. Possessing passion and zeal for progressive reforms, he was a dynamic journalist, editor, stage - dramatist, performer, novelist, lecturer and musician. He was not just inclined to music or fond of it. He infinitely loved it and devoted his life to music. Shri Kabraji's life is forever etched in the glorious past of Indian music, literature and journalism.

Nearly one hundred and fifty years ago, when society seethed with rage against music of any sort, people expressed nothing but hatred and all things negative towards music. At that crucial period, realizing the divinely sublime force of Indian music, encapsuled in the core of *sur* and *taal*, Shri Kabraji took on an awesome challenge to

award music its appropriate place and honour in society via his sharp, talented penmanship. At the young age of just twenty-nine years in 1870 A.D., he took several historical steps in the field of Indian music by establishing the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. It could well be classified as a most courageous and bold adventure. Shri Kaikhushru Navroji Kabraji was born on the 21st August in 1842 A.D. in a Mumbai middle-class family. His schooling was completed at Sir J.J. High School. His reformatory outlook and fundamental attitude towards powerful journalism throbbed in his very veins. So at the tender age of sixteen years after finishing high school, he started his first job with the daily Parsi newspaper, *Jam-e-Jamshed*. In 1863 A.D., at the age of twenty-one years, Shri Kabraji became the editor of *Raast-Goftaar*, a reformatory newspaper and with that, the fledgling journalist virtually flapped his zealous professional wings. It (*Raast-Goftaar*) was like his creative pen. Ever-brimming with fervour, he literally discovered a new world. Besides *Raast-Goftaar*, he regularly contributed to other progressive newspapers like *Satyaprakash*, *Stree-Bodh* and *Chabuk* etc. filling up column after column over the years. He took up cudgels for women's education, women's liberation, promotion of literature and music, protesting vociferously against staunch, conventional systems by writing several articles and made a conscious effort to channelise people's thinking in a more progressive direction. To this effect, the very day he took over as editor of *Raast-Goftaar*, the foundation of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* was laid even though its actual establishment took place several years later i.e. in 1870 A.D. and Shri Kabraji was associated with this *mandali* till he breathed his last.

Shri Kabraji's life was an illustrious one and like a triangular confluence of service, education and cultural

values. He was so multi-dimensional that classical music was considered only one part of his personality. His magnanimous work in the fields of drama - scripting, authoring novels, as performer, as reformist, as social-worker, as also a judicious editor was laudably exemplary.

Shri Kaikhushru Kabraji took his initial music training from **Framji Sorabji Bharucha**. *Bharuchasaheb* was the father of the famous social worker Burjorji Framji Bharucha. Thereafter Kabraji studied *Khayal Gayaki* and *Dhrupad Gayaki* systematically from *Ustad* Imdad Khan, the nephew of Gwalior *Gharana's* illustrious vocalist *Ustad* Mohammed Khan. Regarding Shri Kabraji's *riyaz* in music, the well-known Kirtankar Shri Dhunjibhai N. Patel wrote in an edition of *Satyaprakash* in 1904 A.D. "At night, sitting in the open recreation grounds with windmills all around, Kabraji along with his friends Sheth Gandhibhai Vatchagandhi and Sheth Dadabhai Thuthi, Nusserwanji Appakhatyar as also his teacher Framji Bharucha while learning and singing lilting music in his soft, mellifluous voice attracted hordes of people who would gather to hear him in what was known as the Maidan of Windmills."

In the year 1882 A.D. the Gujarati translation of the erstwhile English national anthem of the British *Raj* 'God Save the King' was entrusted to Shri Kabraji which he carried out with much success. It is alleged that under the auspices of the English Governor of that period, Sir James, when this translated version was first presented in the halls of Framjee Cawasji Institute, he not only received accolades from all over India but from as far as England messages of hearty congratulations were sent. Towards the waning years of his life, he was also drawn to western music and so acquired expertise and knowledge from some English musicians of the time. He died in the year 1904 A.D. at the

age of sixty-two years. According to references found in contemporary newspapers, in 1942 A.D. different institutions from Mumbai and Karachi, celebrated his birth centenary in a big way. Now with his death centenary year being 2004 A.D., it remains to be seen whether the present day Parsis will do anything to commemorate his overwhelming achievement and good deeds. Only time can tell whether the community will succeed in carrying out its duty, to honour such a legendary figure or will it all have vanished into thin air?

One of Shri Kabraji's friends and associate, **Dr. Dhunjibhai Patel**, who sat and studied music together with him, was professionally a veterinary surgeon. Dr. Patel had been fond of classical music right from his childhood. In 1859 A.D. he along with Kabraji, began studying vocal music seriously and methodically from Gwalior *Gharana's* *Ustad* Imdad Khan which lasted till the demise of *Ustadji* in 1880 A.D. Fortunately, Dr. Dhunjibhai Patel had many opportunities to travel throughout India during his life time. As per the information available, taking advantage of these opportunities he took further training over the years from *Pandit* GopalDas in *Ashtapadi Gayaki* and also in *Khayal Gayaki* of Jaipur's *Gosai Gharana*. Besides that, he also studied extensively the knowledge of *Raga* from Jodhpur's *Sarangivadak Pandit* Kanhaiyalalji and Amritsar's vocalist, *Pandit* Hiralalji of Shamchaurasia.

Besides *raagdari-gayaki*, Dr. Dhunjibhai was also fond of intoning *kirtans* from the *Shahaname*. It is believed that when he used to weave the *ragas* in his lilting, well - trained voice with *kirtans*, the audience was spell-bound. In that period his *kirtans* of 'Rustom-Sohrab' and 'Kisse-Sanjan' were so popular that whenever he performed a large crowd gathered around him. His *kirtan* programmes were mainly

organised in Dhobitalao's Framjee Cawasji Hall and at the time were so filled to capacity, that there was scarcely any place to even stand. In establishing *Gayan Uttejok Mandali* his contribution and support to Shri Kabraji is indeed noteworthy.

Dr. Dhunjibhai Patel was also knowledgeable in the theory of music. That's why through the request of Shri Khurshedji Cama, president of *Gayan Uttejok Mandali* and Shri Nusserwanji Patel, the secretary, he began giving lectures as preface to the *Mandali's* programmes from 1875, on various subjects of Indian Classical music. These lectures were produced and published in book-form titled '**Kalavant Yane Aryasangit - Science of Indian Music**' in 1905 A.D. According to available references this book was printed and published by one **Shri Hoshang Tehmurasp Anklesaria**.

Dr. Manecksha Dhunjibhoy Doctor of Bharuch was also among Shri Kabraji's close friends and was a sincere devotee of classical music. His contribution in establishing *Gayan Uttejok Mandali* was also vital. Although professionally a medical practitioner, he too like Dr. Dhunjibhai Patel was deeply into the science of music, doing serious *riyaz*. He commenced his vocal training from *Ustad* Imdad Khan in 1859 A.D. which continued in *Gayan Uttejok Mandali's* premises till *Ustadji* passed away. Because of his visits to Saurashtra and especially Jamnagar, he came in close contact with *Pandit* Adityaram - the celebrated musician of Jamnagar's Royal Court. *Pandit* Adityaram, besides being a vocal virtuoso, specialised in Pakhawaj *vadan* too and hence Dr. Manecksha, in addition, acquired a thorough knowledge in Pakhawaj *vadan* also. It is said that Dr. Manecksha cherished Pakhawaj *vadan* to such an extent that whenever he was totally exhausted from the pressures of his medical profession, he would start playing the Pakhawaj for hours on

end, getting so engrossed in the *laya-taals* that his stressful condition would soon vanish. Besides, even in his medical practice he would make use of the classical *raagdari* music, especially of Pakhawaj *vadan*, to relieve his patients of their afflictions, much like today's technique of healing through music. More details about him follow in the next chapter.

Two other friends and *gurubhais* of Shri Kabraji, Shri Nusserwanji Appakhatyar and Shri Dadabhai Thuti too had taken training in music from *Ustad* Imdad Khan. They specialised in *khayal gayaki* and *drupad-dhamar*. Even so both these gentlemen's vocational field remained mainly the stage, i.e. drama, and so when we discuss Parsi *nataks* and its musicians in our later chapters, we shall discuss these two artistes in some detail. But it is imperative to note here that both these Parsi gentlemen had infused their *natya sangeet* with the use of *raag-raginis* and classical *taals* in such an easy manner that it led to a natural liking and interest towards classical music among the common people. In the Parsi community, bringing classical music into our social fold, making it a part of people's lives, was the salient contribution of these two gentlemen.

The two Parsis who had inspired Shri Kabraji to learn Indian Classical Music and who had shared both the real facts of music as also their enthusiasm, support and affection, were Shri Sorabji Bengali and Shri Dadabhai Navroji. Shri Kabraji was able to establish *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* with their help. Unfortunately, no information is available, about whether or not these two gentlemen had studied methodical music and if so, from whom? Again, whether they had real knowledge of or were just fond of music is anybody's guess. Shri Bharuchaji, who initially trained Shri Kabraji in music in the 'Maidan of Windmills' wove *kirtans* with *ragas* then taught Kabraji *ghazals* and *geets*

like 'Gori Chali Kusum Ki Bari' and 'Sitamgar Bhola, Tumne Ye Kya Zoolam Kiya' etc. Sadly, Framji Sorabji Bharucha's own guru remains unknown.

Due to the activities organised by *Gayan Uttejok Mandali* via its music classes and music concerts or *mehfils* from the end of 19th century to the first five decades of 20th century, several Parsi men and women had the opportunity of hearing and learning music. This resulted in them having direct exposure to music and their opinions now reversed in favour of it. The inclination, appreciation and knowledge towards classical music had thus been enhanced among Parsis to a great extent.

Besides the above-mentioned few Parsi gentlemen's love for and education in music, there have been several Parsis of both genders who had begun to study music very sincerely and seriously during the advent of the 20th century. Due to this in the field of *Khayal Gayaki*, *Dhrupad Gayaki*, *Thumri* and *Sugam Gayaki* (light classical) as well as in the field of instrumental music several luminous personalities surfaced. Among these the names of **Dr. Jehangir Warden** and his sister **Smt. Meherbai Warden** are noteworthy of attention. This pair of brother and sister were true votaries of music and highly knowledgeable. They obtained their music training systematically from *Pandit Ganpatibuwa Bhilwadikar*, the scholarly guru associated with *Gayan Uttejok Mandali*. It is alleged that in musical gatherings and shows, their melodious vocal renderings were so captivating that even the high-calibred scholar like *Pandit Bhatkhandeji* had a word of praise for them. Smt. Meherbai possessed an extremely lilting and melodious voice. This lady from a genteel, good family had developed the courage of singing in open public concerts. In the initial decades of 19th century, when women dared not attempt to sing in public, Smt.

Meherbai Warden bravely went on stage and openly rendered her *gayaki* earning the knowledgeable audience's thunderous applause. Smt. Meherbai and Dr. Jehangir Warden got a lucky break in the ensuing period to learn music from the sagacious *Pandit Bhatkhandeji*. It is really sad that today's Parsis, forgetting their language, culture and art are embroiled in seemingly western ways. This is why the community in which a precious gem - the Kohinoor diamond of classical music - *Pandit Firoze Framjee* was born, is today totally ignorant about his name too. What could be more unfortunate for us than this? Born in 1878 A.D. in Mumbai but adopting Pune as his professional base, Firoze Framjee commenced his music lessons at the tender age of nine years in Mumbai. More than vocal he excelled in instrumental music and yet further his specifically unique gift was in the field of musicology. Working closely in music with *Pandit Bhatkhandeji*, *Pandit Framjee* has created thirty-two big and small vital volumes on the science of music. His work will be further discussed in the chapters on the theory of music.

On the subject of sincerely dedicated members and teachers of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* and disciples of *Pandit Bhatkhandeji*, *Kavi Shri Batliwala* has already been discussed in the previous chapter on *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. However it is appropriate that we mention him here as a competent vocalist, proficient teacher, and scholarly writer.

Among those to have studied music systematically in the first four decades of the 20th century, the name of *Shri Behram Chinoy* from Bharuch is prominent. *Ustad Abdul Karim Khan's* disciple *Shri Lavji Lavangia*, Surat's *Shri Behramji Turel*, the Unwalla Brothers, *Rustomji* and *Pestonji* born in Kolkata but who made Hyderabad their vocational base, *Pandit Bhatkhandeji's* disciple, *Shri Kaikhushru Kanga*,

the vocalist in *Drupad Dhamar Gayaki* Shri Jehangirji Batliwala who took his training from a saintly musician Master Mohan, Edulji Mazgaonwala, Nusarwanji Forbes, Kuvarji Nazar, *Thumri gayak* Jamshed Boga, Dadabhai Workingboxwala, Muncherji Narialwala, Jijibhoy Lam, Byramji Madraswala, Dadabhai Sethna, Cavasji Gandhi, Meherji and Hormusji Barbhaye, Behram Dalal, Pirojsha Mistry, Dadabhai Patel, Pestonji Mulla-Feroze, Rustom Irani, Pestonji Madan, Dorabji Dhabar, Sorabji Katrak, Shavak Master, Nusarwanji Khan, Dosabhai Mogul, Pestonji Pokhraj, Barister Noshir Jhabwala, sitarists Jivanji Meherji and Homi Kapadia, Burjorji Jijikavna, and Gustadji Lawyer, are the few famous names. Among the well-known female artistes are Agra *Gharana's* *Ustad* Vilayat Hussain Khan's disciples Smt. Shirin Doctor, Smt. Freny Cama, Smt. Hirabai Mistry, Kum.Mehru Workingboxwala, Kum Coomie Lakdawala, Smt. Motibai Dastur, Kum Coomie Pohwalla, Smt. Jerbanu Mistry, and Kum. Jerbai Wadia; *Pandit* Vishnu Digambar Paluskar's disciple Smt. Banubai Bharucha; *Pandit* Ganpatibuwa Bhilwadikar's and *Ustad* Vilayat Hussain Khan's scholarly disciple, Smt.Khorshed Mulla; *Pandit* Omkarnath Thakur's disciple Smt. Piroja Dastur; initially trained in the classes of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* and later become the worthy disciple of *Pandit* Ratanjankar, Sushri Khorshed Minocherhomji (music directress Saraswati Devi), her sister Maneck Minocherhomji the famous Vazifdar sisters Shirin Vazifdar and Smt. Khurshid Chavda, Mody sisters Smt. Shera Kapadia and Smt. Coomie Dallas; *Kavi* Firoze Batliwala's disciple Smt. Nariman, Surti sisters, Smt. Soona Khambatta, Smt. Tehmina Dubash, sister of Dr. Rustom Cooper, Smt. Freny Cooper, Smt. Jerbai Gandevia, Smt. Subedar, Tehmina Dastur, Freny Cama, Modi sisters, Smt. Khorshed Mulla and her disciples Smt.Aloo Patel, Kum.

Mini Patel. Other well-known Parsi musicians were *Kirana gharana's* *Ustad* Abdul Karim Khan's disciple, *Pandit* Shaivax Kapadia and Agra Gharana's vocalist brothers from Vadodra Shri Dinshaw and Shri Minoo Vimadalal, Shri Dinshaw Vimadalal, Rajpipla's Shri Bomanshah Medhora, Surat's Shri Nariman Bhaya and the outstanding vocalist Kariman Adajania's names are all worthy of mention here.

The disciple of *Ustad* Babumiya Bachumiya, **Shri Framroze Shroff's** reference is considered essential. Shri Framroze Shroff had himself studied music sitting at the feet of *Pandit* Bhatkandeji in Sharda Sangeet Class and trained under *Ustad* Babumiya Bachumiya. What is considered highly commendable about him are his relentless efforts to disseminate music among Parsi brethren. Between the period of 1930 A.D. to 1950 A.D., by inaugurating music classes for Mumbai's Parsi music lovers and imparting knowledge of music methodically to all of them, he did a great service to the community. Based on classical and light classical music he would organise programmes with orchestras and choir music at Mumbai's famous Cowasji Jehangir Hall, because of which among the young Parsi men and women, a fresh new awakening in music was kindled. His programmes consisted of his one hundred students simultaneously presenting orchestra music accompanied with an unparalleled kind of *layakari* by *Ustad* Bachumiya on the tabla. These colourful and lively concerts prevailing over half a century ago surely must have made a lasting impression on its audiences. Some of the now very aged Parsis still savour those nostalgic memories. There were a number of Parsi men and women, including Shri Keki Sahiyar - the celebrated singer of stage dramas - who trained under Shri Framroze Shroff. Among them, besides his own wife and niece, are the prominent names of Shri

Dinsha Panthaky, Smt. Aloo Panthaky, Shri Darabsha Dhabhar, Smt. Bachamai Mulla, Shri Nariman Balsara, Smt. Tehmina Irani, my father, late Shri Eruchsha P. Mistry, etc. India's illustrious music director and 'magician' of the keyboard, Shri V. Balsara, is also among the vast disciple group of Shri Framroze Shroff.



Smt Khorshed T. Mulla helped make popular, Indian classical music amongst the parsi youth in the mid 20th century

During the first decade of the 20th century the name of a Parsi lady **Smt. Banubai Bharucha** surfaces as a knowledgeable musician. Smt. Banubai had accomplished her music training from *Pandit* Vishnu Digamber Paluskar. It is believed that she had the good fortune and honour to teach music to Lady Thackersy of Pune as well as become the *Guru* of music to the Maharani of Mysore State. Smt. Banubai had for years propagated North Indian (Hindustani) music in the sylvan Southern Indian State of Mysore. She had even established a music school in Mysore where several

women had studied music under her able direction. Besides teaching music, Smt. Banubai Bharucha had also authored two books on music.

Another Parsi lady, **Smt. Khorshed Tehmurasp Mulla**, a

devotee of music and a famous musician had methodically and with tremendous effort, accomplished important work in the field of music. By authoring seven books on the science of music her contribution towards the production of music theory is tremendous. This apart, by organising many music gatherings at her Cumballa Hill residence, in Mumbai, with the participation of illustrious musicians of those days, she managed to permeate music amongst the Parsi community. By further imparting the knowledge of music charitably on a very vast scale amongst the community's ladies, she had infused pure cultural values of classical music into Parsi homes. Prominent among her disciples are the names of Smt. Aloo Patel and Kum. Mini Patel, who excelled as vocalists, were astute teachers and were also famous as authors for their books on music.

Smt. Khorshed Tehmurasp Mulla had attained an in-depth training in *Khayal* and *Dhrupad-Dhamar Gayak* from the Agra Gharana's Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan and Gwalior Gharana's Pandit Ganpatibuwa Bhilwadikar. She even possessed outstanding knowledge of *Raagdari* and creation of *Bandishes*. Years ago, because of her extreme love and faith towards music, Smt. Khorshed Mulla donated a beautiful artistic, silver trophy of a Tanpura to Pandit Keki S. Jijina with a view to organise music competitions. It is pertinent and interesting to note at this juncture that originally, Smt. Mulla had stated that her trophy was to be rotated for seven years only. She also deemed that after this period, Pandit K.S. Jijina was to discontinue the awarding of her trophy and to keep it personally as a token in her memory. However, Pandit Keki S. Jijina thought it befitting to continue the trophy in Smt. Mulla's memory. Today, this trophy has become a symbolic force of the advent of Swar Sadhna Samiti's nationally renowned All India Annual Music and Dance

Competitions. From 1961 A.D. onwards *Pandit* Keki S. Jijina and myself at the helm of Swar Sadhna Samiti have been organizing these competitions. Today besides Smt. Khorshed Mulla's trophy for Swar Sadhna Samiti competitions there are an additional twenty-five trophies. Its popularity has become so wide-spread that today its music and dance competitions have gained a glorious status throughout the nation. But the credit for the cause of the inception of this beautiful work goes hands down to the art-connoisseur, Smt. Khorshed Mulla - a fact that simply cannot be ignored.

It is necessary to mention here barrister **Shri Noshir Zabhwalla**. For all practical purposes, Shri Zabhwalla was professionally a legal man attending to courts, litigations etc. He had at the same time, studied in minute detail, the rules and laws pertaining to music and had obtained a good enough knowledge of *Dhrupad-Dhamar* and *Raagdari* as well. So very fond of music was he that it was very seldom that *Mehfils*, in Mumbai, were not graced by him. Perpetually engrossed in *Yoga-sadhna* and better known as Zabhwalla Saheb, he was in the truest sense, a practitioner of *sur* and *taal*.

We have seen earlier that in the third and fourth decade of the 20th century, many Parsi women had made good progress in the field of music among whom **Smt. Freny Cama**, **Smt. Shirin Doctor** (both sisters), **Smt. Motibai Dastur** and **Smt. Piroja Dastur's** names require specific attention. All these women were closely associated with *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* and were also its committee members. Smt. Freny Cama, Smt. Shirin Doctor and Smt. Motibai Dastur had received from *Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan* the training of *Agra Gharana's Gayaki*. Moreover, Smt. Freny Cama had obtained knowledge of music from Gujarat's scholarly musician *Pandit Jaisukhlal Shah*. There was a third sister Smt. Jeejeebai who had completed her music training

in Pune from a Maharashtrian musician. Smt. Piroja Dastur was the disciple of *Pandit* Omkarnath Thakur, a celebrated musician. She had learned from *Panditji* lessons in Raagdari. She possessed a very beautiful voice. Smt. Shirin Doctor and Smt. Piroja Dastur had also presented over the years their vocal programmes on All India Radio.

Besides these ladies, Smt. Hirabai Mistry and Kum. Mehru Workingboxwalla too were music devotees possessing good knowledge of the art. Both these sisters had undergone extensive training in vocal music from *Pandit* Vishnu Chiplunkar, a scholarly music teacher in the Gamadia High School for girls as also from *Ustad* Bashir Khan, *Pandit* Sitaram Phatarpekar and Agra Gharana's *Ustad* Vilayat Hussain Khan. Smt. Hirabai Mistry was a radio artiste and the Mumbai and Vadodra Centres of All India Radio frequently aired her vocal renderings. Kumari Mehroo Workingboxwalla was very fond of *tabla* as well and in her later years had attained some knowledge of *tabla-vadan*. During my childhood I had learnt the basics of music from Kumari Mehroo Workingboxwalla who was my maternal aunt.

In the beginning, learning music from Gamadia Girls' High School's teacher *Pandit* Chiplunkar Master and then training in *Khayal Gayaki* from *Ustad* Vilayat Hussain Khan, **Kumari Coomie Lakdawalla** also earned name and fame in the field of music. Apart from vocal music, she had studied *Kathak* Dance and folk-dance too. Being a music and dance teacher in the Parsi schools like Gamadia Girls' High School and J.B.Vatchha High School, she had inculcated cultural values especially in music among young Parsi girls. Under her capable guidance, the folk-dances, garbas, dance ballets and musical programmes presented by her students were always the centre of attention. Among her main disciples

were Smt. Sheru Kapadia, Kum. Khorshed Lilaowalla, Kum. Mani Mulla, Kum. Freny Avasia etc. As a student of Gamadia Girls' High School, Dhobitalao, Mumbai, I was privileged to have been trained by Kum. Coomie Lakdawalla in both folk and kathak dance during the 1950s. Another teacher who painstakingly taught classical vocal to children in the primary schools was Banu Khodaiji - Khot.

At this point, it is deemed necessary to draw special attention to a couple of matters which come to the fore. They are about the education of music among the men and women of Parsi society. The first one is that in promulgating classical music among last century's Parsi brethren, *Ustad* Imdad Khan's contribution remains noteworthy. For years *Ustad* Imdad Khan had served as a teacher in the music classes of *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. Since he had mastered the art of Gwalior *Gharana* naturally among last century's Parsis the *Gayaki* of Gwalior *Gharana* prevailed abundantly. Thereafter, in the initial four to five decades of 20th century, Parsis, specifically Parsi women, studied music under the guruship of Agra *Gharana's* *Ustad* Vilayat Hussain Khan which led to the dissemination of Agra *Gharana's* *Gayaki* among the Parsi men and women.

In this manner, in moulding Parsis if not as Tansen then at least as *Kansen* (having a knowledgeable ear for music), it would not be an exaggeration to state that *Ustad* Imdad Khan's and *Ustad* Vilayat Hussain Khan's legacy has been indeed noteworthy. It is profoundly shameful that the atmosphere that prevailed among Parsis of that period towards Indian music has dissipated altogether today. And to top it, there seem to be very few Parsi men and women remaining who would actually be eager to learn or comprehend Indian music.

The other vital matter is that about forty years ago, in our

Parsi schools Indian music and dance were being taught systematically as a subject to Parsi youth of mixed gender. Schools used to employ the best male and female teachers to impart good education in the field of music and dance to students. Not only that but for potential students with enough propensity, special classes were held that helped enhance the students' intellect. In my career, the legacy bequeathed to me by the music classes of my alma mater, The Gamadia Girls' High School and its scholarly music guru, *Pandit* Laxmanrao L. Bodas, (a disciple of *Pandit* Vishnu Digamaber Paluskar), is definitely most significant. I can neither forget nor repay my gratitude to my school and guru Bodas Master.

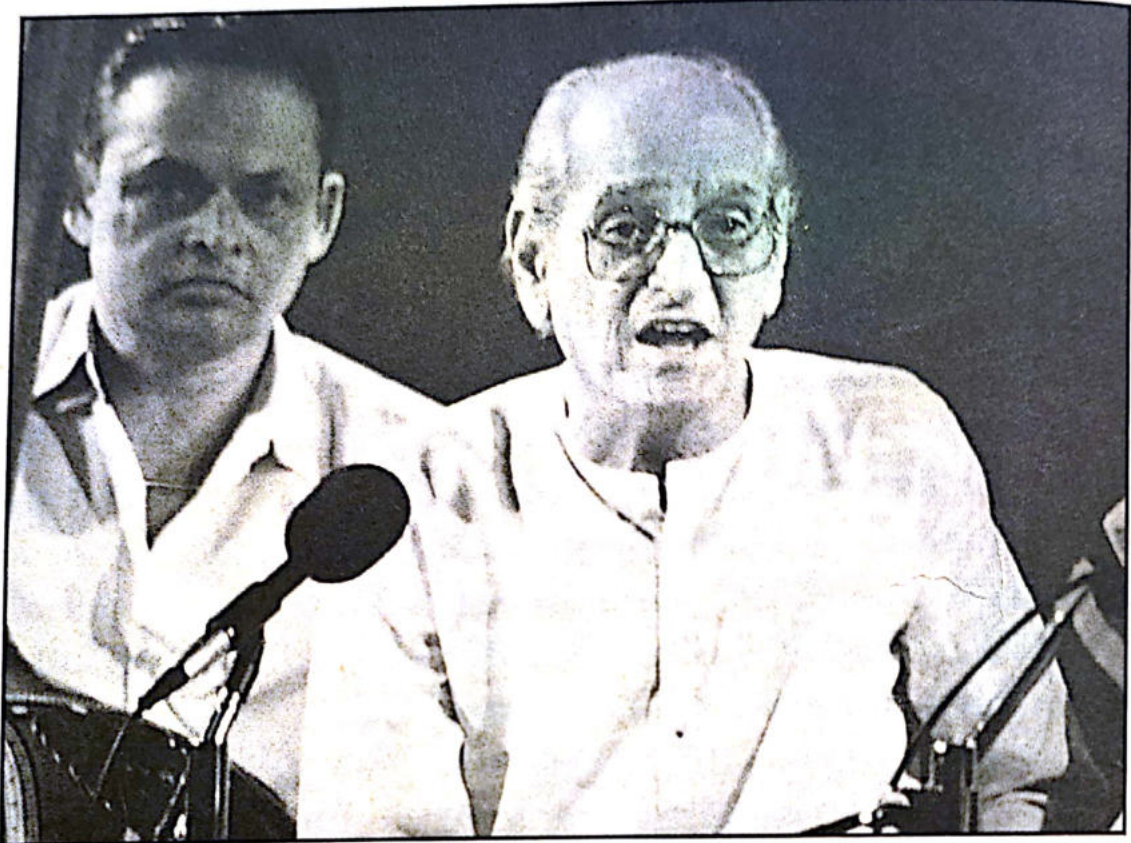
It is essentially because of various Parsi Schools' guiding policy towards music and art that in the Parsi homes of that period Indian music and Indian culture were able to reach out and make some headway. Those were the days when in Mumbai various such schools existed, thriving on these arts. Among them were Princess Street's Gamadia Girls' High School, Churchgate's Bengali Girls' High School, Grant Road's Pandey high School and Pavri High School, Tardeo's C.J. High School, Dadar's J.B.Vatchha Girls' High School, Bandra's Petit High School and for the boys, Sir J.J.Fort Boys' School, Sir Behramji Jeejibhai School, Bharda New High School, D.P.Y.A. School etc. In these schools besides music scholars such as *Pandit* Vishnu Chiplunkar and *Pandit* Laxmanrao Bodas, others such as Kum. Coomie Lakdawala, Smt. Aloo Patel, Kum. Mini Patel, Kum. Mehernaz Mistry, Smt. Sheroo Kapadia, Kum. Freni Avasia, Kum. Khorshed Lilaowala, Smt. Mani Mulla, Shri Farokh Bardoliwalla, etc. and many musicians remained at the head of *guru*-ship and spreading the fragrance of music. This, of course, is only pertaining to Mumbai. In the State of Gujarat

too, in several towns and cities such as Navsari, Surat, Vadodra, Valsad, Vapi, Billimora, Ahmedabad, etc. a similar curriculum of music prevailed in the various schools. It is truly sad that, barring a couple of schools, today all our Parsi schools have stopped providing education in Indian Classical Music. Unfortunately, due to our access to modern modes of life and education, a deep rift has appeared and hence it is no more considered important to infuse in our children of the present generation, the knowledge of, nor create an awareness of, our rich cultural heritage. Among several reasons for the disappearance of Indian Classical Music from the homes of Parsis, this could very well be one of the main.

We now discuss the venerable '*Sushri*' **Khorshed Minocherhomji** alias '**Saraswati Devi**'. This wise and learned lady had accomplished her thorough vocal training from *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji's disciple *Pandit* Shrikrishna Ratanjankarji in Lucknow's Morris Music College, now known as the 'Bhatkhande College of Music'. She held the title of *Sangeet Snatak* (Degree of Bachelor of Music) as also a distinctive supremacy over *Khayal Gayaki* and *Dhrupad-Dhamar Gayaki*. But she used this knowledge especially for film music and so, when we come to the chapter of film music we shall discuss some more about her life and career.

Let us now drift our attention to the modern day vocal artistes. Among the present generation in the field of vocal music in the Parsi community, the good fortune of holding the leading position as the renowned celebrity goes to *Pandit* **Firoz Dastur**. Gwalior *Gharana's* *Pandit* **Jal Balaporia** is also a successful vocalist enjoying glorious fame. These two artistes do not only hold their own in the Parsi community, but also throughout the world of Indian Classical Music where they cherish a reputed, leading position.

In his youth, starting his career in the Wadia Movietone as an actor and singer, *Pandit Firoz Dastur* accomplished an intense classical music education from *Kirana Gharana's Pandit K.D. Jaokar* and also learnt from *Pandit Balkrishnabuwa*. It was the tutelage of his guru, *Sawai Gandharva*, one of the greatest exponents of *Kirana Gharana* that imparted to *Pandit Firoz Dastur*, the unmistakable stamp



Pt. Firoz Dastur an eminent parsi vocalist

of this *gharana*.

Internationally acclaimed, this intellectual vocalist's incredible prowess does not share a divided opinion in the world of music. In his *Gayaki* vocal style, beauty, melody, and sovereignty exercised over his *Gharana's Parampara* or heritage, is most distinct. The music-worshipping Maharashtrian society is totally enraptured with *Pandit Dastur's* virtuoso. Delhi's *Sangeet Natak Academy* has



(1) *Pt. Jal Balaporia during one of his enthralling vocal performances*

endowed *Pandit* Firoz Dastur with its highly coveted Award. Also, the State Government of Madhya Pradesh conferred on him its *Kalidasa Award*, the State Government of Maharashtra honoured him with the laudable title of *Kala Gaurav*, the South Gujarat University glorified him with its reputed Doctorate Degree, and Swar Sadhna Samiti of Mumbai has bestowed their prestigious *SWAR SADHNA RATNA award*. Several other music institutions and art academies honoured *Pandit* Dastur with their various titles, thus bringing him the prestige and eminence that he richly deserves. *Panditji* has been associated with the Music Department of the Mumbai University since its inception in 1969, educating many students in the art of music and outstandingly guiding novice and budding artistes. *Panditji* also has to his credit several gramophone records and more recently music cassettes and CDs as well.

Pandit Jal Balaporia, was a mechanical engineer by

profession. This scholarly vocalist of Gwalior *Gharana* holds an important position in the world of music, what with his intense practice, impressive vocal style and vast knowledge accrued over the years. He began serious pursuit of music at the age of fourteen years under *Pandit* Sitaram Eknath Pandit who had set up a class in Billimora. Later in Surat, he studied under Shri H. Ghanekar, and in Mumbai under the renowned Dr. Harihar Gangadhar Moghe. Besides *Khayal Gayaki*, he has also acquired proficiency in *Tappa Gayaki*, a special form of semi-classical *gayaki*. His beautiful rich voice and solemn style of singing – having an in-depth knowledge and grasp of the *ragas*, have ensured that this vocalist has gained recognition both nationally and internationally. Presently *Pandit* Balaporia too is associated with Mumbai University's Music Faculty as a lecturer of music. He has received the title of *Sur Mani* from Sur Singar, Sangit Kala Academy and Music Forum Award 1997, the Kaladan Award, Maharashtra in 1998 and the *Swar Sadhna Ratna* award. Other awards and honours are too numerous to list. He has been performing on All India Radio since the fifties. His cassette 'Tanas and Tappas' was released some years ago and his music has been preserved for posterity on CDs by a French Music Company.

Pandit Keki S. Jijina the disciple of Bhindibazar *Gharana's Pandit* Pandurang Amberkar, obtained knowledge over *Khayal Gayaki* after a lengthy, intense training around 1945A.D. He also successfully gained extensive knowledge in tabla, violin and vocal music from the great vocalist, Master Mohan of old Gujarati stage and drama. However, because of his extreme interest in the sitar, he relegated his vocal practices and achieved not only expertise in *sitar vadan* but also carved for himself a niche in the music world. There will be more about him in the following chapter on classical

instrumental music.

Dr. Aban E. Mistry too trained in vocal music under *Pandit* Vishnu Digamber Paluskar's disciple *Pandit* Laxmanrao L. Bodas for twenty-seven long years that earned her a degree of *Sangeet Pravin* (Doctorate). Despite this, she is more famous for her *tabla vadan* throughout the nation. Albeit, the credit for the success she has obtained in *tabla* could be attributed to this aforesaid long training in vocal music which helped strengthen the foundation of *tabla vadan* and instilled in her thorough knowledge of music. This fact cannot be ignored.

Besides the above, many Parsi men and women have gained success to an extent in vocal music by studying the subject. Among them are the names of Navsari's Shri Pesi Kaka Mulla, his son Burjor alias Bawaji Mulla, Shri Dossabhai Desai, educationist and poet of repute Shri Bejon Desai, Shri Soli Masani the father of our celebrated *Ghazal* singer **Kum. Peenaz Masani**, Chiplunkar Masterji's disciple Smt. Roda Kerawalla, Smt. Nandedwala, Shri Edulji Doongaji of Madras who used to frequent Mumbai specially to pursue his music training, then *Pandit* Vishnu Digambarji's disciple from Pakistan Smt. Sanjana, Karachi's Smt. Katrak, Smt. Doctor, Smt. Gool Dhalla of Lahore, Smt. Mehru Lawyer, Mumbai's Smt. Banoo Khot, from whom I got my initial grounding of musical scales, Surat's Shri Nariman Bhaya, celebrated musician *Pandit* Jaishukhlal Shah's disciple Smt. Homai Panthaki, **Shri Jal** and **Smt. Silloo Shroff**, **Shri Navroze Mehta** Kum. Sheru Madon Shri Khurshedji Screwalla; teacher of Mumbai's Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan, Kum. Zarine Mirza, Navsari's Kum. Pervin Bilimoria, Pune's Firoze Framjee's son Shri Adi Framjee, *Pandit* P. Madhukar's disciple and Parsi community's renowned poet Shri Adi Mirza, disciples of saintly artiste

Master Mohan namely Shri Manecksha Jijina (Pandit Keki S. Jijina's brother and first *Guru*), Shri Jehangirji Batliwala, illustrious poet and journalist Shri Adi Dhondy, renowned sound recordist Shri Sarosh Bhabha's father Shri Minoo Bhabha, Pandit Krishnarao Kumthekar's student, Smt. Perviz Irani, Smt. Khorshed Mulla's students Kum. Jaloo Bhesania, Smt. Amy Kapadia, Kum. Pervin Vatchha, Smt. Coomie Engineer, Smt. Jalamai Wadia, Smt. Mehru Adajania, and Pandit Jadhav Master's disciples Kum. Aloo Kapadia, Smt. Mani Shahukar, Smt. Gool Mehta, Shri Ratan Mehta, Kum. Bana Mehta, Smt. Dhun Bhabha, *Pandit* Jal Balaporia's disciples Smt. Gool Guard, *Pandit* Laxmanrao Bodas' pupils Smt. Bachanmai Captain, Kum. Dinaz Hakim, Smt. Dinoo Gandhi, Beroze Motiwala, Banoo Poonawala, Coomie Fitter, Pesi Poonawala, Dolly Saiyar, *Pandit* Keki Jijina's disciples Sakar Bohman Behram, Banubai Engineer, Najamai Driver, Mehernaz Mistry, Smt. Aban Panthaky, Smt. Farida Satha-Toorkey, Adajan's Shri Percy Adajania, Smt. Dolly Katrak, Sanober Parabia, famous journalist Shri Sarosh Bana, and disciple of *Ustad* Hamid Husain Khan, Smt. Dinaz Minwala presently domiciled in Karachi (Pakistan) etc.

In the light classical category **Shri Soli Kapadia**, Khorshed Minocherhomji's student **Shri Farokh Bardoliwala**, and *kirtankar* **Parvez Katrak** are well-known.

In *Dhrupad Gayaki* Surat's **Shri Nariman Burjorji Bhaya** had taken training from Rehmuddin Dagar. **Dr. Shirin Ratnagar**, disciple of Delhi's *Ustad* Zahirudin Dagar is also well-known in *Drupad Gayaki*.

7 Indian Classical Instrumental Music

Now let us turn our attention to those Parsi men and women who have gained supremacy over Indian classical instrumental music. Among the last century's artistes the name that comes first to mind is of **Shri Manecksha Dhunjibhoy Doctor**. A doctor by profession, Shri Manecksha Doctor although proficient in vocal music by way of formal training acquired systematic and thorough knowledge in *pakhawaj vadan* from the celebrated Mrudungacharya *Pandit Aditya Ram* of *Baldev Sha Gharana*, Jamnagar. Shri Manecksha knew by heart innumerable *Bol Bandishes* of his adopted *Baldev Sha Gharana's Mrudung* literature. Not only that but he executed these on *Pakhawaj* very competently and deftly. It is alleged that he so loved *pakhawaj vadan* and had such tremendous faith in its sublime healing powers that he used the same for treating his patients to their great advantage.

A domicile of Malav, presently Mhow, **Shri Gustadji Lawyer** was extremely fond of instrumental music. Although in the legal profession yet he studied methodical music from the *ustads* of neighbouring Indore. Thereafter, traversing Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and far-flung Punjab, Gustadji trained under various *gurus*, all specialists in their own field like flute (*bansuri*), violin and harmonium. Both his sons Noshir and Ardeshir were also knowledgeable in music, having been exposed to it since childhood.

Shri Burjorji Jijikavna although more inclined towards western music still acquired proper knowledge of Indian classical music which is why he could master Indian *ragas* on

violin that he presented so beautifully.

References testify that in the initial decades of twentieth century a gentleman by the name of Shri Homi Kapadia greatly valued sitar *vadan* and used to study it regularly whereas a lady Smt. Naju Dastur proved her dexterity on the *Jal-tarang* and Dilruba and Jeevanji Meherji proved himself to be a good sitar *vadak*.

Earlier in the vocal music chapter we have thrown light on Firoze Framjee as well as **Framroze Shroff** but here it is imperative to refer briefly to Firoze Framjee's instrumental specialities. **Pandit Firoze Framjee** was born in Mumbai in the year 1878 A.D. Since the tender age of nine he commenced his music training in various instruments. He could play instruments like violin, sitar, veena surbahar, sur-sagar etc. with competence and proficiency. He also used to give sitar performances at music festivals. In his later years he left Mumbai and settled in Pune where he imparted knowledge of instrumental music to several men and women. In 1938 A.D. he died in Pune. Besides *gayan vadan*, **Pandit Firoze Framjee** authored thirty-two volumes on theoretical music thereby creating history. Further details of his books may be read in the chapter on musicology. His son **Shri Adi Framjee** too was a successful performer of several musical instruments.

Gayan Uttej **Shri Pestonji P. Kapadia** was actually a chartered account and income-tax consultant but because his love of music made him a sensitive poet and a true connoisseur of music, it is worth specially acquainting the readers with his talents. Under the nom-de-plume of *Hairat*, he created many *ghazals*, geets and couplets thereby delving deep into the field of Gujarati poetry.

Being extremely fond of the tabla, he learnt it to

perfection. Moreover, he even qualified in performing on the *bansi*, *sarangi*, *kashta-tarang*, *jal-tarang* and *gayaki*. The influence of music was passed on to him by his father Phirozesha Kapadia. It is said that **Shri Phirozesha Kapadia** had for years studied music under *Ustad* Kabir Baksh, the Sarangivadak of Bharuch and became accomplished in *tabla*, *sarangi* and *sitar vadan*.

Shri Pirojsha M. Mistry the renowned music director of India's first ever talkie film 'Alam Ara', although specialising as an artiste and composer of light classical and film music, could still claim proficiency in classical *raagdari* and harmonium *vadan* both of which he studied under *Ustad* Bachumia. Both his sons Shri Keki Mistry and Shri Kersi Mistry too are quite accomplished in playing the harmonium, piano and accordion over which they hold good command. Details regarding them will be appropriately discussed in the chapter on *Sugam Sangeet*.

Vadodra's illustrious veena *vadak*, **Pandit Hirjibhai Doctor** was considered one of the great national artistes in the field of vichitra-veena. Among rare artistes of vichitra-veena that could be counted on finger tips throughout India, **Pandit Hirjibhai** held a special place. Due to his deep study in both prevailing and antiquated, obsolete ragas, intense knowledge of both practical and theoretical music, and ability to create new ragas and a melodious playing-style, place him in a rare, envious position as one of music's prime scholars. **Pandit Hirjibhai** had the honour to grace the erstwhile M.S.Music College - Vadodra, presently known as "Faculty of Performing Arts, Maharaja Sayajirao University" - Vadodra as its principal for twenty-five long years. Delhi's 'Sangeet Natak Academy' had conferred its prestigious award on **Pandit Hirjibhai Doctor** thus acknowledging his dues in the field of music



padma shree Smt. Zarine Daruwalla-Sharma: one of India's leading sarod player

In Sarod *vadan*, **Smt. Zarine Daruwalla-Sharma**'s name is famous as a celebrated Sarod *vadika*, both nationally and internationally. Today Zarine is considered one of the country's best string instrumentalists. A child prodigy, she was exposed to music at a very young age, as her father would hold frequent music gatherings in their home featuring renowned artistes. At four years of age she started learning the harmonium and performed on the stage of Sur Singar Samsad. On her tenth birthday, she was initiated on the sarod by Haripad Ghosh. Concurrently, she was also taught vocal, *sugam sangeet* and kathak. Her other *gurus* were *Pandit* Chimote, *Pandit* Bhisimadev Vedi, *Pandit* Laxman Prasad Jaipurwale, Dr. S.C.R. Bhat, *Pandit* V.G. Jog and Dr. S.R. Ratanjankar. Today she grooms students of Indian Classical music in varied fields, many of whom have

succeeded as good performing artistes. Zarine also holds a leading position since many years in films' orchestration. She too is a recipient of Delhi's Sangeet Natak Academy Award, the State Government of Maharashtra's Award and many other prestigious ones.

One stalwart artiste whose fame has crossed all national barriers to reach foreign lands is Kolkata's key-board wizard **Shri Vistasp Balsara**. He is our invaluable gem in the world of Indian Music and unanimously considered to be an artiste of outstanding calibre. Shri V. Balsara's talent is phenomenal on the piano. Perfectly blending an Indian classical music form on a Western classical instrument is no mean feat. The supreme harmony that emanates from both his solo and *jugalbandi* performances leaves his audiences spell-bound. While presenting the *raags*, his piano chords maintain the



Shri V. Balsara: the key-board wizard and pride of the parsi community

ethics of the purest form of *raagdaris*. Shri Balsara has been explicitly groomed by the likes of Shri Framroze Shroff, *Ustad* Bachumiya, Madam Hilda Feildberg and *Pandit* Munneshwar Dayal and today he has transcended from an artiste to being acknowledged as a legend. For years he has managed Kolkota's institution called 'SAAZOAWAAZ' and has also authored and published several books of which 'Chords and Harmony in Indian Raagas', 'Easy Practising', 'Finger Exercise', 'Music Guide to Practise in 304 Scales' etc. are the most important ones. Delhi's Sangeet Natak Academy has compiled all these above mentioned books in one volume which it has published and made famous by the title of 'ORCHESTRA'. He has many books and cassettes to his credit. Shri Balsara has the distinction of getting Rabindranath Tagore's songs translated and presented in sixteen Indian and eight foreign languages. He has also organised an Indian orchestra with eighty musicians portraying different moods from one of Tagore's poems. He is the founder-member of the Youths' Own Union (YOU), a music circle in Mumbai. He is the recepient of several prestigious awards like the Sangeet Natak Academy Award from Delhi, the Sangeet Research Academy Award, The Shiromani Award, Indira Gandhi Award, Rajiv Gandhi Award, Kolkota's Bhuvalkar Award, Satyajit Roy Award and the Swar Sadhna Ratna Award to name but a few. Among his vast disciples was one jewel, late Kumari Dhunawaz Indorewalla who won many hearts with her velvet voice. His over sixty years of service to the film industry will be discussed in the later chapter.

The illustrious sitar *vadak* and Maa Bhagwati's prime devotee ***Pandit Keki Shapurji Jijina*** was not only a sitar *vadak* par excellence but also a scholarly musician, a generous preceptor, a writer and the founder-director of a



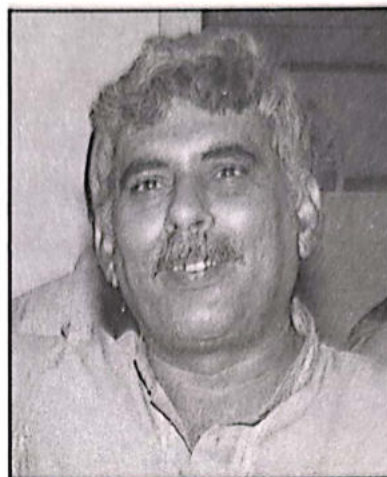
Pt. K. S. Jijina, born to serve the cause of Indian classical music

progressive and prestigious music institution called SWAR SADHNA SAMITI in Mumbai. *Pandit* K.S. Jijina was also an excellent performing artiste. He gave solo performances at music programmes all over India and visited several universities as a judge during their youth festivals. Besides vocal music, *Panditji* had a good knowledge of Kathak dance and instruments like bansi, violin, jaltarang, kaanchtarang, harmonium, tabla etc. Due to a near-fatal bus accident rather early in his career, his inability to sit in a certain position specially required for *sitar vadan* rendered him incapacitated as a performing artiste. A classicist both by training and temperament, he refused to compromise on the impeccable

standards of sitar *vadan*. As such, unfortunately, the bright career of an intellectual performing artiste ended prematurely. However, *Panditji* continued to impart training in both vocal and instrumental Indian classical music to many. He propagated classical Indian music from the Wadia Sangeet Class and under the auspices of Swar Sadhna Samiti, both nationally flourishing institutions which *Panditji* had established and run, in a metropolitan city like Mumbai for the past half century. His life's dream, the Swar Sadhna Samiti has given perfect incentive and opportunity of a stage presentation to thousands of aspiring musicians and continues to do so just as *Pujya Guruji* envisaged. His sincere endeavours to kindle an awakening in Indian classical music among Parsis and Gujarati-speaking populace are a tribute to his invaluable and outstanding service in cultural art. Among his scores of disciples, the names of his son Shri Sapal Jijina and Dr. Aban E. Mistry, the author of this book and renowned musician lead the list. His other Parsi disciples in sitar *vadan* are Shri Percy Bhathena, Shri Bomansha Saklatwala, Smt. Gool Jijina, Shri Bomi Sorabmasa Irani and Shri Keki Patel; In *kaanchtarang-vadak*, Kumari Roda Cooper; in tabla *vadan* Shri Naval Jijina, Shri Adil Mistry, Shri Murzban Karai and his grandson Shri Khushnoor S. Jijina, in harmonium *vadan* his grandsons Farhad and Freddie Patel, Smt. Rupa M. Sethna, Shri Rustom and Shri Zavareh Sethna.

Pandit Jijina's advent into the world of music was initiated by intense training in vocal music from his saintly *guru*, the celebrated vocalist and musician Master Mohan, Bhendibazar *gharana's* *Pandit* Pandurang Amberkar, from sitar *vadaks* like *Pandit* Rajaram Koparde and *Ustad* Dastagir Khan and his advance training in sitar *vadan* commenced under the guruship of no less than the world renowned

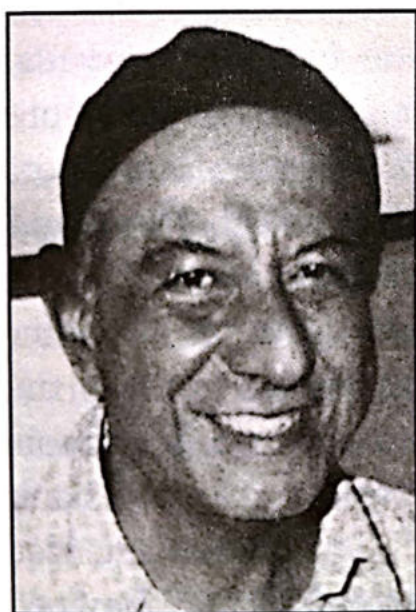
exponent, Bharat Ratna *Pandit* Ravi Shankar. Besides this, his vast theoretical knowledge and deep grasp of subtle *raagdaris* came from India's prime scholarly artiste, *Pandit* Jaisukhlal Shah. Nation's various institutions and art academies, honoured his achievements by conferring on him invaluable titles which duly acknowledged his praiseworthy and selfless services in the field of music.



Shri Sapal Jijina: an accomplished tablavadak

Pandit Keki S. Jijina's son, **Shri Sapal K. Jijina** is a professional tabla player and gives tabla accompaniment to both instrumental and vocal artistes all over India. Shri Sapal has been gifted with an innate sense of rhythm, making him an accomplished *lehra sangatkar* for tabla solo recitals. He also teaches music and is an ex-faculty member of Mumbai University's Department of Indian Classical music.

Two Parsi artistes Shri Navroze Mehta and **Shri Adi Mirza** (Driver) displayed good command on harmonium.



Both are accomplished harmonium players with proper training. Shri Adi Mirza happens to be a sensitive poet too. Many of his cassettes have also been released. His harmonium training was carried out under the *guruship* of famous musician *Pandit* P. Madhukar. **Shri Navroze Mehta** besides harmonium was also

Shri Navroze Mehta: a versatile musician and composer

competent in vocal music. He was the disciple of *Pandit* Jaisukhlal Shah. He directed music of *sugam sangeet* and provided accompaniment on the harmonium to classical vocalists performing for Swar Sadhna Samiti's programmes. **Shri Kersi Mistry** commands supremacy on the keyboard also and holds a unique stand in *gayan vadan* and music direction. There is more about him in later chapters on *sugam sangeet*.

The worthy disciple of *Pandit* Keki Jijina, *Pandit* Laxmanrao Bodas and *tablanawaz* *Ustad* Amir Husain Khan, **Dr. Aban E. Mistry** as India's first professional tabla *vadika*, is famous not only in the country but also overseas. She has gained much name and fame, earning laurels for herself by securing professional authority over an otherwise male-dominated instrument like the tabla for the last fifty years. Kolkata's Inreco Record Company has originally cut Dr. Aban's tabla *vadan* record in 1974 A.D. **The Limca Book of Records** made an entry of **Dr. Aban Mistry's** name in its glorious pages in 1995 A.D. as the nation's prime lady percussionist, thus adding a prestigious feather in her proud cap. She is affiliated with nearly fifteen universities throughout India as a board member, faculty member, research / analytical directress, guide to Ph.D. students, examiner and a visiting professor. She has absolute command over both the practical and theoretical aspects of the subject and has authored a volume in both Hindi and English titled 'Pakhawaj & Tabla - History, Schools, and Traditions'. This invaluable thesis is her labour of love after an intensely deep and lengthy research carried out over the years, for which she earned her doctorate degree. This thesis is perused by several Indian universities as a reference book and is considered as an encyclopaedia on the subject. Her other book on rare *Bandishes* is under publication. Further,



Dr. A. E. Mistry: first female tabla vadika to storm the male bastion with her guru Pt. K. S. Jijina

Dr. Aban Mistry holds a Sahitya Ratna (literature) degree in Hindi and Sanskrit. Her incredible control over the *laya* has led her to perform her tabla solo recitals all over India and abroad. Besides being invited to perform at prestigious music conferences and conduct workshops, Dr. Aban Mistry has the distinction of being conferred with coveted titles such as 'Taal Mani' by Sur Singar Samsad, 'Charma Vadya Tabla Bushan' by the Shankaracharya of Shankeshwar Math, 'Taal Samrat', 'Kala Ratna', to name a few. Besides, she is the recipient of the prestigious Omkarnath Thakur Award from the Academy of Art & Culture, Surat - 2002, and The Dadabhoy Naoroji Millenium Award for Lifetime Achievement - 2002, ITC Indian Music Forum Award for Research in January 2003 and Amruta Award - 2003. Her

name and bio-data is also mentioned in the book titled 'Daughters of Maharashtra'. She is the co-founder and directress of India's prestigious music institution, Swar Sadhna Samiti, besides being involved in philanthropic services by giving opportunities to deserving novice artistes and talented but lesser-known ones, a stage to perform in a city like Mumbai. She also actively participates in the Wadia Sangeet Classes.

Besides *Tabla vadan*, Dr. Aban is a dominant authority on vocal music and *Sitar vadan* as well. That is the reason her record on Sitar *Jugalbandi* with her *Guruji Pandit* Keki S. Jijina cut by INRECO has been made famous. Her vast knowledge in Kathak dance is also overwhelmingly impeccable. She has been training many disciples in tabla, vocal and sitar from the Wadia Sangeet Class.

8 Shastriya Nritya, Lok Nritya & Modern Dance Form

At the advent of the 20th century, three sisters hailing from respectable and educated family adopted classical dance as a profession. They were Smt. Shirin Vazifdar, Smt. Khurshid Shiavax Chawda and Smt. Roshan who studied Kathak, Bharat Natyam and other classical dance forms in which they became adepts winning fame universally. In the field of classical Indian dancing, danseuse Smt. Shirin Vazifdar-Anand is considered an extremely venerable person.

In the early and mid-twenties period of the 20th century it



the Vazifdar sisters with their guru Pt. Krishna Kutty

was difficult to imagine that any well-bred girl, especially a Parsi, would learn classical dance and further present it in public too. During such a conservative time that too in Valsad, a small town in Gujarat, Shirin was born into an orthodox Parsi family. It was she who first took the bold lead, later to be followed by her sisters Khurshid and Roshan, all of whom embraced Kathak and Bharatnatyam classical dancing. They have set a good example by their assertive, adventurous step, brimming with self-confidence which is truly worthy of appreciation.

Achieving grand success in life with their firm will power, the Vazifdar sisters did not just learn classical dancing from reputed *gurus*, but nearly seven decades ago they presented public programmes, and created many dance-dramas. They even performed classical dance in Hindi films which was rare. Thus they raised the credibility of classical dance and saved it from the clutches of being considered a cheap and lowly form of entertainment. This was their great and salient contribution to the cultural art. Around 1950 A.D. Shirin, with her *Guru* Krishna Kutty, journeyed abroad performing dance-ballets all over the world enhancing the fame and elevating the art of Indian dance abroad. This priceless service to art did not go unnoticed. Appreciation and honour came their way in the form of several awards all well deserved. Besides their public assignments Smt. Shirin Vazifdar and her sister Smt. Khurshid Chawda also conducted dance classes grooming many Parsi ladies in the art. With Shirin's fame and Khurshid's endeavour and dedication many Parsi girls were inspired to study the art of dancing. Both sisters have a considerable number of disciples. Apart from teaching, Shirin is also well-known for her fair and unbiased criticism and commentaries. By giving judicious reviews, after careful perusal, in the dance and art

columns of newspapers about established as well as budding artistes she has given many of them the necessary incentive. Several art academies and cultural institutions have conferred on Shirin their prestigious awards. It is unfortunate that to-date the Indian Government has not officially recognised her worth to award this dignified celebrity the honour she so richly deserves.

A resident of Indore, **Sushri Naju Godrej** is another knowledgeable artiste of Kathak from the Lucknow *Gharana*. Despite her physically-challenged condition, she firmly confronted the adverse circumstances to achieve supremacy over Kathak dance style. Almost 50 years ago, she had the good fortune and honour to dance before the first President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad after which she won accolades abroad by presenting her Kathak recitals that earned her name and fame.

About fifty years ago, Bharatnatyam, the most prevailing dance style was always performed by women. Male dancers used to limit their art upto the graduation. They would not perform on public stage but flourish and permeate their art by teaching in the hereditary *guru-shishya* style. In the mid-twentieth century, a few progressive male artistes commenced presenting their Bharatnatyam art on stage. **Shri Rohinton Cama's** name deserves attention. He is a successful Bharatnatyam stage artiste, outstanding dancer and an imaginative choreographer. He was trained under the vigilance of best *gurus*, according to the ancient hereditary style and obtained extensive training. Swift physical movements, sentiment-expressing gestures, with reverberating emotions, chastity of excellent hand and footwork with refined grooming and a beautiful approach to presentation have all helped to make his performances unusually attractive. That is why Rohinton Cama has been



bharat natyam exponent Shri Rohinton Cama

renowned nationally and internationally. In Europe, especially in France, Rohinton's name draws enthusiastic crowds. Besides performing, he also teaches dance in Mumbai and Paris.

The famous Hindi film dansuesse actress **Madhumati** of fifties fame is a Parsi lady. Her real name is **Hutoxi Reporter**. Madhumati is a competent master of Kathak and folk dance

styles. She took her Kathak training from no less than the celebrated maestro Gopi Krishna. Her sister **Smt. Rukhshana Irani** too enjoys a respected reputation in Classical Kathak Dance as well as other folk dances. Rukhshana also was trained by exponent *guru* Gopi Krishna. Presently Smt. Rukhshana Irani runs her own dance academy in Thane near Mumbai.

Among the past generation of classical Kathak and folk dance artistes, the illustrious **Coomie Lakdawalla's** dedication to art and service to the field of music cannot be overlooked. She not only danced her way through years of fame but also taught innumerable Parsi girls thus spreading the wings of Kathak and folk dance to a flourishing dimension. Being a music and dance teacher in Mumbai's two to three well-known, reputed schools, many female students have passed under her ever - watchful guidance.

Jeroo Chawda-Khambatta, alias Jyoti, is a successful dancer. The niece of Smt. Shirin Vazifdar and daughter of Smt. Khurshid Chawda, Jeroo is a graduate of Mumbai's Nalanda Sangeet & Nritya Vidhyapeeth and commands supremacy over Odissi, Bharatnatyam and *Lok Nritya* styles of dance. She not only trains her growing student populace but also choreographs dance-ballets, conducts workshops and lecture-demonstrations at prestigious music institutions. Also worthy of mention is **Sheroo Patel**, disciple of Shirin Vazifdar.

Besides the above, possessing expertise and steeped in dance rituals are many such names whose reference in diverse dance styles is considered appropriate here. They are *Pandit* Gauri Shankar's disciple and Jaipur *Gharana's* Kathak exponent Smt. Silloo Irani, Kathak devotees Kum. Dinaz Hakeem, Smt. Dolly Sahiar, Smt. Shanya Marfatia, Smt. Nargis Irani, Kum Bahnaz Variava etc. Bharatnatyam artistes



a kathak tarana performed by the sister-brother duo, Shri Hoshi Mulla and Smt. Mani Mulla

are **Shri Hoshi Mulla**, **Smt. Khurshid Irani**, **Smt. Parinaz Todiwalla**, **Smt. Mani Mulla**, **Kum. Arzan Patel**, (presently in the USA), **Hufriyar** and **Cherezad Medhora**, etc. **Shri Hoshi Mulla** and his sister **Smt. Mani Mulla** have earned laurels in folk dancing as well. Hoshi efficiently conducts popular dance classes. Moreover, Hoshi's performances abroad have also won him accolades through his imaginative presentation. Mani Mulla is a good choreographer and

vocalist besides being a good dancer. Her presentations in dance dramas enacted by her disciples and directed and choreographed by her are frequently viewed on Doordarshan. A trained teacher, Mani excels in preparing her students especially in folk dance for professional performances. Mani was a child-prodigy and has dedicated a major part of her life to teaching and sharing her gift and art.

Presently, in modern dance many young Parsis have gained name and fame. Their names are mentioned here due to their Indian classical foundation in the various modern dance styles. They are Shri Astad Deboo, Smt. Asha Kurlawala, Shri Shiamak Davar, Shri Zubin Surti etc. Modern dances although coming nowhere near our hereditary Indian classical dance styles still have their own beauty and power to enliven a specific subject or theme. In these dances greater emphasis is laid on western styles and vigorous physical movements.



parsi girls in a dance ballet

Sugam Sangeet, Thumri, Tappa, Geet, Ghazal & Abhang

Among the last generation's artistes of semi-classical and light (*sugam*) music the name of an extremely knowledgeable and learned personality from Rawalpindi (presently in Pakistan), **Shri Jamshed Boga** calls for special reference. Shri Boga had specialized in *Thumri gayaki* and Punjab's renowned *Tappa gayaki*. We find a reference of him presenting *Thumri* and *Tappa* in a Lahore *mehfil*.

Celebrated music directress **Khorshed Minocherhomji** alias Saraswati Devi's forte was *Sugam Gayaki* in the mid-twentieth century. Several songs, *bhajans* or *bandishes* composed or rendered by her and recorded are aired on *Akashwani* occasionally even today. Besides lending her expertise to film music, she has also composed beautifully many *geet-bhajans* for dance-ballets and either sung them herself or got rendered by her disciples and other professional playback singers. A detailed discussion on her will be included in the chapter on film music.

The composer of several *bandishes* of *geet*, *bhajan*, *ghazal*, and *garba* **Shri Pirojsha Mistry** too evokes past memories here. Since his unique contribution to film and *natak* music will be discussed in a later chapter, only reference of his name here will suffice.

In the contemporary generation, the names of highly illustrious Parsi stalwarts and exponents of classical Indian vocal music, **Pandit Firoz Dastur** and **Pandit Jal Balaporia** who command equal supremacy over *Thumri*, *Tappa* and other semi-classical *gayakis* besides *khayal gayaki*, definitely

deserve a mention here. *Pandit Firoz Dastur* is the celebrated vocalist of *Kirana Gharana*. In this style of *gayaki*, a good bit of importance has been given to the *Thumri* vocal style. Therefore in *Pandit Dastur's gayaki* one finds equal stress on *Thumri* as well as *khayal*. Rendered in mellifluous voice and beautifully sentimental style, his *Thumris* are highly famous among the connoisseurs and music lovers alike. Besides *Thumri*, *Pandit Firoz Dastur* also performs other forms of *sugam gayakis*. Infact his music career commenced with classical-based songs presented in Indian films of Wadia Movie Tone over fifty years ago.

Pandit Jal Balaporia commands a supreme position on *Tappa gayaki*. Among the very few celebrated *Tappa* vocalists in India who could literally be counted on finger tips, the name of *Pandit Balaporia* is worthy of mention. The hallmark style of his *Tappa gayaki* is his dextrous and masterful renditions of *taans* which convey a sense of sweetness. *Pandit Jal Balaporia* also specialises in *Ashtapadis* - a light classical vocal style sung completely in Sanskrit. He also excels in other *sugam gayakis* besides *Tappa* and *Ashtapadis*.

Kolkata's ***Shri V. Balsara*** or *Vistasp Ardershir Balsara* in the field of *sugam sangeet* is not only a Parsi artiste of repute but a stalwart of high national calibre. His deep and extensive study of Indian and western music styles, his immense knowledge of classical *raagdaris*, his supreme command on various key-board instruments and his novel, imaginative compositions know no equal. His radio and television programmes, public music gatherings and his audio-video cassettes recorded by various record companies are famous in Bengal, all over India and abroad.

Among the younger generation, the renowned *ghazal* -vocalist, ***Peenaz Masani's*** name and position in the field of *ghazal gayaki* is well-known. Her complete command over



Urdu language, clarity of words, a melodious voice sprinkled with romantic nuances that is so typical of the style of *ghazal gayaki* ensures Peenaz Masani's popularity amongst *ghazal* lovers in India and abroad. Her extensive, lengthy training in *ghazal gayaki* was obtained from the

*well-known ghazal singer
Kum. Peenaz Masani*

illustrious vocalist Sushri Madhurani. Her successful concerts, C.D.s, audio, video cassettes, radio and television programmes are all a result of the leading position she enjoys among *ghazal* singers of the nation. To top it all, Peenaz Masani was the first woman *ghazal* singer to have earned the distinction of winning a gold disc for her *bhajan*, 'Pooja ke Phool'.

Ahmednagar's **Shri Rustom Kaka Hathidaru** used to present the Balgandharva *Gayaki* style of Marathi *Natya Sangeet* with such a flourish that the Marathi music enthusiasts and devotees of Gandharva *Gayaki*, were sentimentally moved. During the decades of 1950's to 1960's he attained much fame and popularity even among the staunchest of Maharashtrian art enthusiasts with his rendition of Bal Gandharva's style of Marathi *Natya Sangeet Gayaki*. His son Shri Maneck Hathidaru, being a *Tabla vada*k would generally lend tabla accompaniment to his father during his performances.



Smt. Dhunawaz Indorewalla regaling her audiences. Accompanied by her guru Shri V. Balsara

In the field of *Bhajans* it is imperative to speak of **Dhunawaz Indorewalla**, disciple of **Shri V. Balsara**. Her melodious voice, steeped in devotional sanctity along with her soulful and emotive presentation of *Bhajans* captivated her audiences and crowned her with success and fame in Eastern India especially Bengal. Her profound renditions of thirty-two *Thaats* compiled in a chronological order on cassettes under the direction of her guru Shri V. Balsara, melts the heart. She has presented her songs in many diverse languages of India and besides *bhajans* has also sung *ghazals*, *geets*, *Rabindra Sangeet* and *Nazrul Geeti* all of which have been recorded on cassettes. She has also translated and vocalised Tagore's *Rabindra Sangeet* in sixteen Indian and eight foreign languages. A noteworthy feat!

Shri Kersi Mistry is the disciple and son of the famous film music and *Natya Sangeet* director, of yester years, Shri Pirojsha Mistry. Shri Kersi Mistry had been working for



several years as music director in the HMV Record Company. He has attained mastery over many key-board instruments like piano, harmonium, accordion and directs and presents music for films, dramas, concerts, television

guru-shishya duo: Shri Kersi Mistry and Kum. Jaloo Bhesania

and radio. Some of the film industry's best playback singers have worked with him. All this has rallied for him a good fan following. His songs have been well- received in foreign countries and frequent invitations have been extended to him for his performances. Shri Kersi Mistry's most noteworthy gift to light music has been the introduction of Jaloo Bhesania to the music world.

The famous singer of many Gujarati film songs, Doordarshan and Radio artiste, Kumari B. Kamlesh Kumari, is none other than the Parsi lady **Jaloo Bhesania**, the disciple of Shri Kersi Mistry. Jaloo Bhesania's vast vocal range, striking resonances and a cultivated, melodious voice clearly brings to fore her training in vocal classical music obtained under the tutelage of Smt. Khorshed Mulla. Under the direction of her *guru*, Shri Kersi Mistry, Jaloo Bhesania has sung innumerable songs, *bhajans*, *ghazals*, and light folk music songs, film songs which have also been recorded on cassettes, C.D.s and are readily available in the market. Jaloo

Bhesania is well-known both in India and abroad especially amongst the Gujarati, Marwari and Rajasthani communities as a musician of repute. A Sangeet Visharad of Lucknow University, she has received honours for her rendition of classical ragas as well as light classical forms.

The name of **Kariman Adajania** of Surat is also well-known for *Bhajans*, *Kirtans*, and light classical vocal music. He had trained systematically under various *gurus* for both classical and light classical music. His sonorous voice made



him a popular *Bhajan* singer all over Gujarat especially Surat and also in Mumbai.

Recently **Soli Kapadia's** fame and popularity has also spread in the various vocal styles of Hindi and Gujarati songs *ghazals*, *bhajans*, *thumri* and light classical music, all over Mumbai and Gujarat. A disciple of renowned vocalists like *Pandit Firoz Dastur*, *Pandit Ajay Pohankar* and *Pandit Purushotam Upadhaye*, Shri Soli Kapadia has become a prominent artiste. His training in classical music has cultivated his naturally

*Shri Soli Kapadia an established
vocalist of sugam sangeet*

gifted voice to exude such sonorous and mellifluous music that it has brought him fame and success. Be it AIR Doordarshan or on cassettes, Soli Kapadia's songs are steadfastly gaining popularity. Soli's forte is off-beat

melodies and tunes based on classical *ragas*.

Shri Farokh Bardoliwalla, the disciple of India's first lady music director, Sushri Saraswati Devi alias Khorshed Minocherhomji has also trained in vocal classical music from 'Sangit Mahabharati' and *Pandit* Pradip Chatterji. Shri Farokh Bardoliwalla has acquired a distinctive style in presenting his songs. His cassettes are readily available in the market. His young daughter, Dinaz Bardoliwalla is also following her father's footsteps and being trained by him.

A resident of Gwalior, **Smt. Beroze Chatterjee** had good knowledge of Indian classical music *ragas*. Her melodious and soothing presentation of *ghazals* had gained her good popularity. A famous playback singer, Behroze carved out a name for herself abroad. She inherited her love for music from her late mother, Dina Balsara, who was a renowned singer. Behroze's first public performance was held when she was just six years old. She studied classical music first under *Pandit* Bhaiyaji Wazalwar, then *Guru* Supan Kumar Chatterjee whom she later married. Her other *gurus* were *Ustad* Faiz Ahmed Khan and Pakistan's *Ustad* Mehdi Hassan. Beroze was given the Shiromani award in 1992 in Delhi. She has to her credit many cassettes.

If **Shri Eruch Ankleseria** of Surat has established himself with his sound knowledge of light classical music and *bhajan*, then Mumbai's **Shri Navroze Mehta's** name needs attention as he had created many compositions which have been vocalised, instrumentalised and recorded. He had been tutored by *Pandit* Jaisukhlal Shah and influenced by *Pandit* Chandrashekar Pandya. Shri Navroze Mehta had good knowledge of Indian classical music and gave harmonium accompaniment to many vocalists of Indian classical music in reputed concerts. Even his wife, **Smt. Viloo Mehta** is a good vocalist and has been presenting her husband's

compositions. Villoo sings as part of several groups, rendering beautifully many Parsi songs. She has lent her voice for audio cassettes of Zoroastrian religious and festive songs.

Again **Shri Percy Siganporia** of Surat has proved his efficiency and fame in both classical and light music as also Mumbai's **Shri Dali Palkhiwala** in vocal, harmonium and organ along with his direction of music compositions. **Shri Jal Shroff**, a disciple of *Pandit* Jaisukhlal Shah gained a firm foundation in Indian classical music and is adept at *raagdari*. In the same manner **Smt. Silloo Jal Shroff** is well-known for her tuneful *bhajans* and light classical songs and has a sound base in Indian Classical music. Silloo performs even today and her melodious voice has guaranteed her popularity. She trained in Indian classical music from *Pandit* Laxmanrao Bodas.

Smt. Freny Dalal-Pagdhiwala, though a teacher of western classical music, has lent assistance in releasing Zoroastrian religious and festive music audio cassettes.

The illustrious piano-accordion ace player **Shri Goody Servai** held good command on both western and Indian music, although his leanings were considered more to be towards western music. Even presently his cassettes of light music and film music played with various musicians are available in the market. His son **Jango Servai** has been well groomed in instrumental music.

Besides these, several other Parsis have sincerely attempted to study and acquire knowledge of music in diverse instruments. In classical harmonium *vadan* Bharuch's **Shri Naval Vimadalal**, **Shri Minoo Bhabha** (well-known sound recordist **Sri Sarosh Bhabha's** father) who for years played the harmonium for the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali's* classes and programmes, Master Mohan's disciple **Shri Adithondy** and the celebrated organ and harmonium *vadak* **Shri ahadur Nanji** earned accolades in the field of light music

and film music. Some more names follow as violin *vadaks* – Shri Minoo Bookbinder, Shri Sam Master mandolin *vadak* Shri Dorab Patel, Kum. Rati Chinoy, guitar-*vadika* exercising proficiency on harmonica Shri Behram Daruwalla, Shri Firoze Damri, Jazz-player Shri Bob Damri, key-board players Shri Rusi Balaporia, son Zubin Balaporia, **Shri Dinshaw Sanjana**; specialising in the field of rhythm, **Shri Cavas Lord**, his sons **Shri Kersi** and **Shri Baji Lord** and Homi Mulla and Edul Mulla's names are worthy of special reference in the field of light classical music.

All the above artistes have for decades been engrossed in the rituals of music and have all graduated in music. More details about some of these artistes will ensue in the chapter on film and light music.



Shri Goody Servai (accordion) and Shri Kersi Mistry (keyboard)

CHAPTER 10 Natya Sangeet in Parsi Dramas & Operas

Parsi stage is considered the foundation stone of Gujarati *Nataks*. Drawing inspiration from the western stage in the middle of the nineteenth century, a few art-enthusiast Parsis marked the beginning of Gujarati stage drama. The first and foremost *Natak* of Gujarati stage that took place was 'Rustom Jabuli and Sohrab' which was enacted in November 1853 in a theatre at Grant Road where an all-Parsi cast performed their roles in Parsi style Gujarati. It is said that after watching this initial success other art-enthusiasts of diverse Indian origins and languages took the cue and formed their own theatre groups.

As far as India's regional languages are concerned, the art-loving Maharashtrian populace's dramas are by far the most distinctive. But history bears witness that it was only through Parsi Natak Mandalis that they garnered their inspiration. Seeing Victoria Natak Company's musical play titled 'Indra Sabha', Shri Annasaheb Kirloskar set his sights on scripting and performing such musical plays in Marathi. He felt that the time and market was ripe for such endeavours for the Marathi audience and that such musical plays would be appreciated and would prosper. So, taking his cue from the Parsi *natak*, 'Indra Sabha', Annasaheb Kirloskar scripted and staged his play called, 'Sangeet Shakuntaal' in 1880 A.D. It is imperative to note that this Marathi *Natak's* establishment was 27 long years after the inception of Parsi dramas. Today even after 125 years, Annasaheb's original 'Shakuntaal' is still as popular

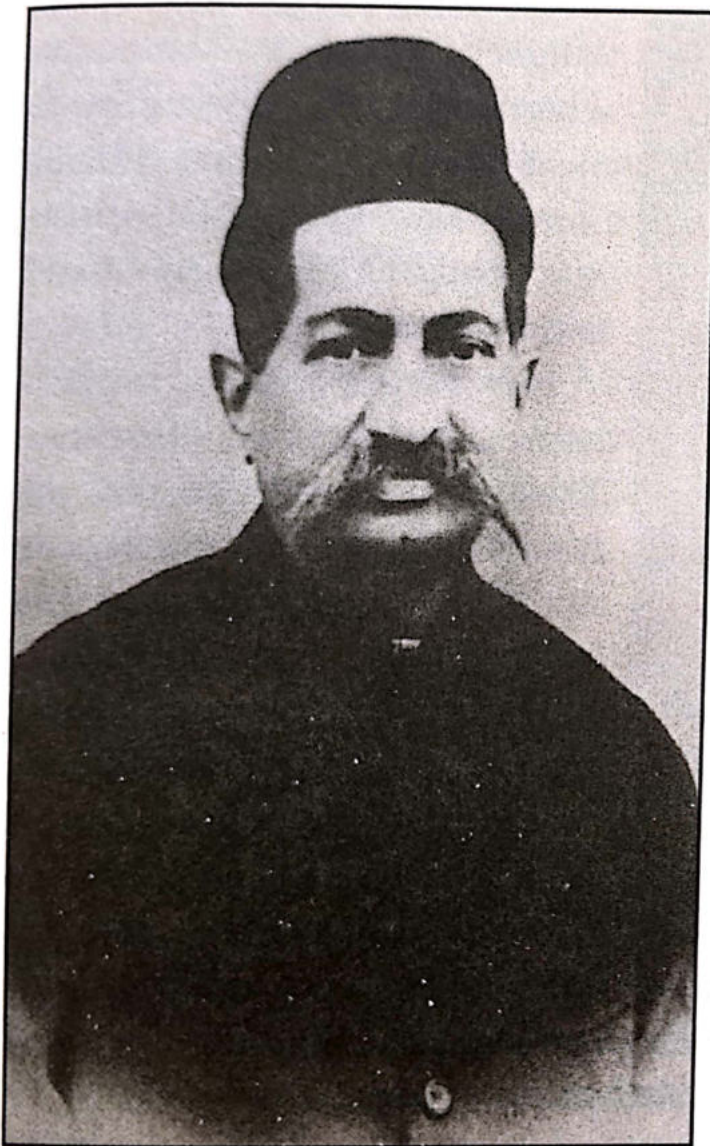
amongst the Maharashtrians. Close on the heels of 'Shakuntaal', countless Marathi *Natak's* were scripted and performed gaining much fame and a special place in the Marathi audiences' hearts. Yet among all these 'Shakuntaal' will remain memorable.

Let us revert back to the subject of Parsi Drama. In 1853 A.D., **Shri Nusserwanji Dorabji Appakhatyar**, an art-loving Parsi gentleman, with the help of some of his drama-enthusiasts and musician friends, presented a musical play in Parsi Gujarati based on western plays. He selected as his subject Firdausi Tusi's legend 'Rustom-Sohrab' from the 'Shahname'. Transforming the story from poetry forms into a musical drama - he embellished it with creative Indian music and directed the drama himself. He also acted in it with much flourish and gained success. This is how the Parsi-Gujarati stage originated.

Shri Nusserwanji Dorabji Appakhatyar besides being a poet, writer, performer, musician and wrestler was also a proprietor of the **Gujarati weeklies**, '**Satyamitra**' and '**Panch**'. He propagated through the pages of his own weeklies the operas (the musical plays) giving necessary encouragement and publicity. His play 'Rustom Jabuli Sohrab' performed to several houseful nights establishing firmly a record measure of success. Thereafter subsequent Parsi-Gujarati *Nataks* were created of which some became successful whereas others were not so. During the first quarter of the twentieth century, it was the Parsi artistes and Parsi writers who kept the Gujarati stage thriving. At the time many *Natak Mandali's* (almost thirty in number) crept into existence. But of all these, the prominent ones that rose to fame were **Mumbai's Victoria Natak Company, Alfred Natak Company, Baliwala Natak Company and Calcutta's Madon Natak Company**. Under the aegis of these

companies several plays got scripted, translated, music composed and finally performed. Especially for their presentation many a theatre was built.

The plays / dramas of that period were based mainly on 'Shahname' legends. Moreover, western dramas namely Shakespeare's adaptations as well as farcical parodies were performed to the hilt. These were all translated into Gujarati. That being a musical age, music enjoyed a prominent place in the *Nataks* of yore. The actors / performers and even



Shri Jamshedji Framji Madon: supporting and propagating parsi theatre

writers themselves had to be essentially good singers. And because of this not only the performers but even the rest of the team, namely Parsi crooners, instrumentalists and music directors gained name, fame and prosperity.

Among the renowned names of artistes of that era the following are worthy of reference- Kaikhushru Kabraji, Framji Gustad Dalal, Cooverji Nazer, who composed music for the plays of Wajid Ali Shah, Dadabhai Patel, Pestonji

Dadabhai Mulla-Feroze, Edulji Nusserwanji Mazgaonwalla, Nusserwanji Forbes, Dadabhai Mistry, Rustomji Irani, **Madon Company's owner, Jamshedji Framji Madon, his brother Pestonji F. Madon**, Dorabji Dhabar, Shiavax Master, a barrister and the very first actor of "Indra Sabha" drama, Nusserwanji Khan, Dossabhai Mogul, Pestonji Pokhraj, Edulji Khorji, **Baliwala Theatre's proprietor Khurshedji Baliwala** his actress wife Munibai, - both husband and wife



Shri Khurshedji Baliwala: an eminent theatre personality

had come to visit my *guruji*, Pt.Keki S. Jijina at our Wadia Sangeet class in Dhobitalao when I had the opportunity to meet them -then Framjee Dalal, Sorabji Katrak, Pirojsha Mistry, Mapla and Gorla, Bapuji Mistry and many more.

It is alleged that the artiste's names were crowd - pullers. They were so popular that the *Nataks* would run merely on their names and to hear the music, distance was no criterion for the audiences who would travel far to attend these plays.

The artistes sang with a flourish and in classical style inviting ten, fifteen and even twenty encores. The audiences absolutely adored them. **Sorabji Katrak** was also an actor of high calibre and was a staunch devotee of music whereas **Pirojsha Mistry** apart from being an excellent actor was also a singer, harmonium player and a music director. His famous songs viz. 'Sakhi suraj bhale Ugiya', 'Panjare Thi Popat ji Re Vasia', 'Dhan Dhan Dahado', 'Gota, Gulab, Champa, no Haar' etc. even today warms the

hearts of old, conservative Parsis. The records of these old songs are available even now from his son and music director Shri Kersi Mistry.

At this point, it becomes imperative to mention Dadabhai Thuthi. **The proprietor of Victoria Natak Company Dadabhai Thuthi** was such a connoisseur of music that the *Nataks* performed under the aegis of his company were liberally sprinkled with the use of *Raag-Raaginis* which is why he gave a free reign to Nusserwanji Appakhatyar for the music of his plays. Shri Appakhatyar's foremost Gujarati *Natak* 'Rustom Sohrab' was performed under the banner of Shri Thuthi's Victoria *Natak* Company. To state that the inception of Gujarati *Nataks* commenced with the Victoria *Natak* Company would not be inappropriate. For the plays of Dadabhai Thuthi's *Natak* Company the music and songs represented were based on the classical style of *Dhrupad-Dhamar* and *Khayal Gayaki*. Although the *bandishes* were composed on simple *Raag Raginis* still they were bound in such *Sugam Taals* as *Taal dadra*, *Pashto*, *khemto*, *Kaherva* etc. that songs did not take long to catch on popularly. **In this manner, Shri Dadabhai Thuthi, by incorporating classical music's simple yet chaste form in his Natak Company, thus propagated classical style among the masses. This can be considered an invaluable contribution towards music on Shri Dadabhai's part.**

Among the last generation's artistes to embellish and flourish their plays with beautiful, melodious music are the unforgettable names of Keki Saiyar, Mapla-Goria, Bapuji Mistry, Framroze Shroff, Udwadia Sahib, Keki Mistry, and Dara Mehta. The name of **Padma Shree Adi Marzban** deserves special mention as he was not only a renowned artiste among Parsis and Gujarati-speaking communities but also a pioneer of the Gujarati stage. His plays and farces were

the premiere television shows some decades ago. Who can forget his rib-tickling comedy series with typical Parsi folk music, "Avo Maari Saathe"

Presently, the names of Dali Palkhiwala, Shri Kersi Mistry and to infuse life into Bengalis Nataks' music, Kolkata's Shri V. Balsara's name specifically deserve a mention. Recently, Surat's **Shri Shehezad Yazdi Karanjia** has begun to take his initial but firm foothold in this field. He is the promising son of intellectual dramatist Shri Yazdi Karanjia. One gets to hear his music in the dramas of Karanjia's group.

CHAPTER 11 Music Direction & Background Music in Films

A Parsi gentleman, Shri Pirojsha Meherwanji Mistry enjoyed the distinction of being the music director



*1st talkie-film
music director,
pride of parsis:
Shri Pirojsha
M. Mistry*

of the first talkie film, 'Alamara' produced by Shri Ardeshir Irani in 1931. Shri Pirojsha was considered a



surshree Saraswati devi in performance at the swar sadhna samiti's annual music festival

proficient vocalist, harmonium player and music director of his time and had been trained under *Ustad Bachhumiya*. Besides film music, Shri Pirojsha Mistry's contribution to light classical music and drama music has indeed been stupendous. Many of his records are available even today.

Again the Parsis had the proud privilege of producing the **first lady music director of films Sushri Khorshed Minocherhomji, better known as Saraswati Devi amongst the music fraternity**. She was a highly knowledgeable personality in the field of Indian Classical music. In spite of being a resident of Mumbai, she travelled all the way to Lucknow to train under *Pandit Shri Krishna Ratanjankar* at the prestigious *Moriss Music College* (now known as the *Bhatkhande Sangit Vidyalaya*), from where she obtained the degree of 'Sangit Snatak' (Bachelor of Music). She had acquired a good command over both the *Khayal* and *Drupad-Dhamar* vocal styles and was equally versatile on the harmonium and other instruments.

The credit of introducing Saraswati Devi to films as music

director goes to Shri Himanshu Roy the producer-director and owner of the famous Bombay Talkies of yesteryears. Right from the 1940s to the 1950's Saraswati Devi attained great popularity by composing famous hit songs in several Hindi films. Though her film songs were infused with strains of folk music, they had a classical base. The simplistic style, sweet melody and magnetic appeal of her songs have made them immortal. The most famous of her films were: "*Jawaani ki Hawaa*" (starring Devika Rani and Nazrul Hussain), "*Jeevan Naiyya*" (Devika Rani and Ashok Kumar), "*Achoot Kanyaa*" (her famous song, "Mein ban ki chidiya..."), "*Janmabhoomi*", "*Kangan*" and "*Bandhan*". Even after a period of sixty years her songs are still popular and evoke nostalgic memories among the older generation. Due to the absence of playback singers in the early years of the film industry, Saraswati Devi tirelessly trained the actors and actresses of yester years for singing such melodious songs which is indeed a noteworthy achievement. Besides films she had also composed several melodious songs for radio broadcast which are relayed on AIR even today. She had also composed music for several dramas and dance-dramas and moreover she herself sung and trained other singers to sing a variety of her compositions. Her sister **Maneck Minocherhomji** was a singer and actress of repute. It was an honour for me to have known them. Saraswati Devi, particularly, was very encouraging and supportive of my classical music dreams. Both sisters were totally devoted to their art.

Shri V. Balsara of Kolkata is also the successful music director of Bangla, Assamese, Oriya and Hindi films. He has to his credit dramas relayed on television, radio and many record companies have cut discs of his music. He has already been introduced in the previous chapters. His melodious compositions have been vocalised by his disciples,

Dhunawaz Indorewala, Mandira Lahiri and other legendary singers of Hindi films like Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhonsle, Mohammad Rafi, Talat Mahmood, Manna Dey, Mukesh, Hemant Kumar, Sandhya Mukherji and Usha Mangeshkar to name a few.

The famous sarod player **Smt. Zarine Daruwalla-Sharma** has been a great asset to the film music world and is a favourite amongst both the older and modern generation of music directors.

The renowned Indian classical vocalist **Pandit Firoz Dastur's** career had been launched during his youth, on the silver screen as both an actor and singer. He had attained much fame by presenting songs for several films directed under the banner of Wadia Movie Tone. However, now he has long relinquished his career in films and has totally devoted himself to Indian Classical Music.

We have already acquainted ourselves about **Shri Kersi Mistry's** contribution to the music world. He has directed and composed music for several Gujarati and Hindi films, dramas, radio, television and for HMV Record music Company. His compositions have been rendered by many well-known singers and his disciple **Jaloo Bhesania alias Ms. B. Kamlesh Kumari** has earned much fame by rendering these compositions in many films.

Another famous keyboard instrumentalist was **Goody Servai**. **Shri Cavas Lord** and his two talented sons, **Kersi and Baji Lord** have also attained much fame in the sphere of music direction for films. The Lord trio have carved a niche for themselves in films and teleserials by lending background music and as music and assistant music directors. The contribution of **Shri Kersi Lord** to the keyboard rhythm and background music is indeed manifold. He is a noted musician, arranger and composer and has been in

tremendous demand among Indian music composers of four generations. Kersi has pioneered the use of new instruments in film music in India. Moreover **Shri Homi Mulla, Shri Edul Mulla, Shri Bahadur Nanji, Shri Behram Daruwala, Shri Minoo Bookbinder** etc. have made their mark in the celluloid world as musicians, keyboard or string or percussion instrumentalists while **Rusi Balaporia**, along with his composer son Zubin and the artiste of fusion music **Shri Dinshaw Sanjana** are well-known in the world of film music. All these artistes have attained success in their own right within the Hindi film industry.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC; - Parsis have not lagged behind in instrumental music. During the 1940's **Shri Framroze Shroff** along with the disciples of his sangeet class would enthral the audiences with 'musical nites' staged in Mumbai's famous C.J. Hall. Even today interesting anecdotes are woven around these events and narrated with great pride and nostalgia. For several years all Parsi auspicious occasions like weddings, *Navjotes*, etc have been enlivened by the scintillating tunes of light classical, film folk music and *Garbas* along with western music from the orchestras of **Shri Meherwanji Kashinath** (Meherwanji Kashinath had mastered the violin. Though proficient in playing western wind and string instruments, he had also become an exponent of Indian ragas), **Shri Jehangirji Khodiaji** (there are three generations of Khodaijis - Ardeshir, son Jehangir and grandson Jal), **Goody Servai, Jehangir Pettigarah, Feroze Damri, Nelly Battiwala, Kersi Mistry, Dara Mehta** (The oldest Parsi band, "The Darling Orchestra", in existence for 60 years was led by Dara Mehta and his son Marzban Mehta), **Dali Palkhiwala, Jangoo Servai, Silloo Shapurji, Minoo Kavarana** etc.

ENCOURAGEMENT AND PATRONAGE TO ARTISTES;-Besides studying the intricacies of Indian Classical music, written records have been found naming philanthropic Parsis who championed the cause of Indian classical music by patronising and extending financial support to several deserving artistes. Foremost among these benevolent Parsis is the name of Bharuch's **Seth Shapurji Muncherji Doongaji** under whose patronage, *Pandit* Omkarnath Thakur flourished to become India's great maestro and vocalist of unparalleled distinction. So astounded was Shri Doongaji by a vocal recital of the fourteen year old Omkarnath Thakur that he convinced the boys' mother and made all arrangements to send him for advanced training to Mumbai's Sangit Gandharva Mahavidyala under the renowned maestro *Pandit* Vishnu Digambar Pulaskar. Again it was Shri Doongaji who contributed a lion's share and initiated the pioneering of the music competitions at the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*. His moral support and donation of a trophy of an attractive, large silver tanpura enabled the *Mandali* to launch its vocal competitions. Unfortunately, these competitions did not continue for a long period of time. Innumerable examples of such Parsi benevolence have been evidenced by the music world. Gujarat and Mumbai have produced many such illustrious artistes who have been patronised and promoted by Parsi Seths, without any self-motivated drive or racial prejudice. And it is due to the magnanimity of these Sethias that these artistes could avail the benefit of advanced training to scale the ladder of success and attain fame. Examples of many such generous Parsi Seths have been illustrated in the historical account of the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali*.

CHAPTER 12

Record Companies & Sound Recordists

The period from 1925 to 1950 A.D., saw the growth of many well-known record companies in Mumbai and Kolkata like that of **The Odeon Record Company, The Ruby Record Company, Columbia Record Company, Indian Record Company (INRECO), His Masters Voice (HMV),** etc. Of course, though many of these have ceased to exist, HMV has to date survived the onslaught of modern competition and is very much functional. These record companies had many Parsis who officiated in various capacities as technicians, recordists, artistes, music composers or music directors.

At this juncture, let's look into the two foremost record companies of Mumbai at that time - **The Odeon Record Company** and **Ruby Record Company** whose founder, proprietor and sound recordist was a worthy Parsi gentleman, **Shri Rustomji Dhunjibhoy Sethna**. Popularly known as 'Rustom Seth' he was responsible for keeping alive the divine art of many legendary musicians of the bygone era in the diverse fields of classical and light classical, instrumental, film and folk music etc. By capturing the artistes' musical melodies on records, he not only succeeded in preserving this treasured art for posterity but also kept alive the history of both vocal and instrumental classics.

It is often said that initially Sangit Kala Ratna, *Ustad Abdul Karim Khan* refused to have his music recorded. However, it was Rustomji Seth who took the initiative to

1st Issue

Odeon Records

1934.

ઓડીયન
ઇલેક્ટ્રીક
રેકર્ડ્સ.

RUBY
RECORD
CO.
CHURCHGATE
STREET, FORT,
BOMBAY.



*the 1st issue of the Odeon Record Company promoting its artistes
and their albums*

convince Khansaheb of its importance. So taken up was he by Rustomji's warm-hearted and sincere appeal that he readily agreed to have his recording done. Rustomji did not stop at this. His genuine love for music and perfection towards his job drove him to personally supervise the finer intricacies of this monumental recording. By skillfully sensing and responding to the Khan's sensitive moods he



*Shri Rustomji Dhunjibhoy Sethna.
sole agent for Odeon Record Co.*

extracted the very best from this maestro. And so the legendary Khansaheb's discs were cut by Ruby Record Company and marketed by the Odeon Record Company. Thereafter, Khansaheb cut many discs but it was the far-sightedness of this Parsi gentleman, Rustomji which pioneered this prominent move. A mention of this has been made in an interview by the legendary vocalist of yesteryears, Smt. Hirabai Barodekar.

Rustomji Dhunjibhoy Sethna was also appointed by the Odeon Record Company of Germany as its distributor, representative and sound recordist for India.

In April 1934, three young entrepreneurs, Rustomji Dhunjibhoy Sethna, Hasmukh Gordhandas Jagirdar and George Waterenburger contracted with the Odeon Record Company of Germany to establish a business of selling records, record needles and other such items in the city of

Mumbai. The Odeon Record Company of German origin produced and sold music records and so these enthusiastic youths acquired the rights and agency from Odeon to also produce vernacular records. Unfortunately, Waterenburger had to leave for Germany unexpectedly and soon Shri Gordhandas also separated from the company. Thus, the partnership got dissolved, leaving Rustomji to fend for himself. Finally on 16th March 1935 Shri Rustomji D. Sethna became the sole proprietor of Rubu Record Company. However, being a man of strong convictions, he remained undeterred and struggled single-handedly to establish a record business in India by acquiring the rights from the Odeon Record Company to produce and sell both Odeon international and vernacular records.

Thereafter many businessmen from different parts of India became dealers for this company and again one of them was another Parsi gentleman Darabshaw Muncherji, resident of Rajpipla. Shri Rustomji Dhunjibhoy Sethna was a sound recordist and most importantly a true lover of music. It may also be noted that the recordings of Ruby Record Company were of a high standard and well recognised all over Asia at the time. The recordings were done in his own studio situated at the present Dadi Seth House, Churchgate Street, Fort, Mumbai. After readying the records, they were sent to Germany for stamping under the Odeon Logo and again returned to India for sale through Rustomji's shop named The Popular Record Depot, situated at Thakurdwar, in Mumbai. Thus under the aegis of Odeon Record Company and Ruby Record Company many discs of Indian music were recorded and sold. This paved the way for many more record companies to follow and flourish. The artistes of yesteryears whose recording was done by Shri Sethna were *Ustad Abdul Karim Khan*, *Ustad Vilayat Hussein Khan*,

Pandit Omkarnath Thakur, Pandit Ram Krishna Buwa Vaze, Smt. Hirabai Barodekar, Smt. Sundra Bai, Smt. Durga Khote, Smt. Goharjan Bijapurwali, Smt. Roshanara Begum, Smt. Radharani, Shri K.L. Saigal, Shri Pankaj Malik, Master Firoz Dastur, Smt. Saraswatibai Manjrekar, Smt. Rasulanbai, Smt. Balubai Hyderabad and Mapla - Gorla to name a few.

In the film world **Shri Minoo Katrak** held sway as a sound recordist and his contribution in this field is immeasurable. His exemplary style of functioning, dedication and sincerity to the art inspired many in this field. His grandson **Farhad Dadyburjor** is also a trained recordist of good standing and now settled abroad.

Presently **Shri Sarosh Bhabha** is one of the foremost sound recordists of Mumbai. He is popular within the classical and non-classical music circles and has proved his efficiency in this field. His son **Kaizad Bhabha** too has been trained as a sound recordist in America and has settled there.

Shri Farhad Wadia is another well-known sound engineer having his own recording studio. Again the popular recorders, **Shri Rustom Pavri** and **Sam Poonawalla** are much sought after at various functions for their efficient sound systems. Even Mumbai's **Shri Maneck Dadachandji** was well-known for providing his sound system at various functions for several years. **Firdos Karai** is also well-known as a recording technician and art director. There must have been and still are many such Parsis who have shown proficiency in this field but may have been inadvertently omitted.

Contribution of Parsis towards Musicology

Parsis contributed just as much to the theoretical side of Indian Classical Music as they did to its practical aspects. As a result, many thought-provoking and ground-breaking research volumes have been authored, published and printed by Parsis. These gifts to the world of Indian Classical Music are invaluable.

A book printed way back in 1838 A.D., authored by **Behram Tehmurasp Chinoy** has been found in this field. Shri Chinoy was a resident of Bharuch and very knowledgeable in Indian classical music. Besides studying vocal music he had done intensive research into the theory of music and written a book explaining the theoretical aspects of Indian classical music. This book was **printed by Cawasji Andhyarujina** at his press in Daman. Unfortunately, the name of the book remains unknown.

Again, between the forties and fifties of the nineteenth century a Parsi gentleman had published a priceless volume titled '**Raag Pothi**', in seven volumes, furnishing information on *Ragas* and throwing ample light on its structure, along with its *Bandishes*. Since the author had refrained from disclosing his identity and instead only mentioned from '*A Parsi Lover of Music*', we are unable to acknowledge the writer of this treasured volume.

In 1862 A. D. a book titled '**Raag Sthaan Pothi**' found in Litho print was written by a Parsi gentleman. However, again the author's name only as '*An Unknown Parsi*' has been mentioned. Printed in this book are *Drupad Dhamar*,

Khayal Tarana and *Ghazal Bandishes* of those times but their notations have not been included.

In the year 1887 A.D. the *Gayani Uttejaki Mandali* had compiled a volume containing a variety of one hundred and ten *Bandishes* of different *Gharanas* which were taught from the portals of its institution. Though the *ragas* and *taals* have been mentioned for every song, it has been rendered useless as the notations once again are missing.

During this period **Dorabji Dhabar**, a Parsi dramatist composed and wrote in poetry form a musical drama (opera) known as 'Jahabauksh Gulrukh' which has been kept alive by preserving it in a book form. Better known as Dolu Dhabar, Shri Dorabji himself was a good actor and musician who often acted in his own plays. It is said that he had received much encouragement and support from the newspaper 'Chabuk' and its editor, Shri Ruttonji. This enabled Shri Dorabji to compose this musical drama and get it published.

We have already made mention of the professional veterinary surgeon, **Dr. Dhunjibhai Patel** in the previous chapters. He was well-versed in Indian classical music and acquired the knowledge of Gwalior and Jaipur's *Gosai Gharanas'* *Gayaki* from those *Ustads* and stalwarts. Besides vocal, he had equal proficiency over the theory of music. Between the periods 1875 A.D. to 1885 A.D. he had given a series of lectures on various topics of music under the auspices of *Gayani Uttejaki Mandali*. These lectures were compiled in 1905 under a publication titled '**Kalavant Yane Arya Sangeet' - Science of Indian Music**' and this book was published and promoted by a Parsi gentleman, **Shri Hoshang Tehmuras Ankleseria**.

The well-known poet of the Parsi community, **Shri Feroze Batliwala** was also a proficient musician and a devoted worker and teacher of *Gayani Uttejaki Mandali*. He had

mastered the art of music from the scholarly *Pandit* Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhandeji. Shri Firoze Batliwala had authored many music books in which he had employed the notation system of his *Guru Pandit* Bhatkhandeji. He published his first book 'Firoze Gayan Sangrah' in 1885 and thereafter wrote many such books. The most important amongst them was '**Sarod-e-Avesta**' written in 1894. Thirty-five years after his death i.e. in 1930 the *Gayan Uttejak Mandali* published and promoted this book to rekindle the memory of its renowned author Firoze Batliwala. The '**Sarode-e-Avesta**' contains the sacred prayers like '*Yatha Ahu Vairyo*', '*Ashem Vohu*', '*Kem-na-Mazda*', '*Ahura-Mazda-Khodai*', '*Jasm-e-Avangeh Mazda*', '*Sarosh Baaj*', '*Hoshbaam*', etc and other important and common prayers of the Zoroastrian religion in *slokas* and verses.

These are composed in poetic translations, woven into sweet melody of *bandish* and bound in notation and rhythm which have become a treasured legacy for the Parsi community.

Shri Firoze Batliwala received good guidance and encouragement in composing notations and verses of the '**Sarod-e-Avesta**' from his *Guru, Pandit* Vishnu Bhatkhandeji. As it happens to all great men and thinkers who are ahead of their times, Shri Batliwala too was ostracised by the orthodox bigots of his time who brandished him as being sacrilegious and left no stone unturned to criticise his work causing him mental agony and suffering.

In 1970 Shri V. Balsara of Kolkata rekindled the memory of Shri Batliwala by selecting some compositions from the '**Sarod-e-Avesta**', redefining them and getting them sung in the melodious voice of his disciple Dhunawaz Indorewala through the INRECO Record Company. Now a long time has elapsed since this venture, so we do not know whether this record is still available in the market.

During the beginning of the twentieth century a

knowledgeable musicologist, Pandit Firoze Framjee made a detailed research in Indian classical music making inroads

FIROZE

RAG



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along the path founded by *Pandit* Bhatkhandeji and wrote thirty-two books on various subjects of Indian Classical music. These volumes contain such in-depth scientific research that it is no wonder that he has been hailed as a stalwart of Indian classical music, making the Parsi community proud of his genius.

Firoze Framjee's first book was published from Pune in 1916. He passed away in 1938 and till then wrote a total of 32 books which had already been in print. Of these the important ones are 'Shastriya Sangit Kala Shikshak', 'Hindustani Sangit Vidya' Part I & II, 'Hindi Sangit Encyclopaedia' Part I-VI, 'Bharatiya Shruti Swar Raag Shastra' and 'Sitar Shiksha' Part I & II.

Firoze Framjee was born in Mumbai in the year 1878. He had started training in Indian Classical music from the young age of nine years and thereafter he was not only a musician and writer but had also mastered the practical knowledge of his subject. He had a good command over vocal and several other musical instruments like sitar, veena, surbahar, sursagar, violin etc. But from amongst all these instruments it was on the sitar that he excelled.

Besides this *Pandit* Vishnu Digambar's disciple **Smt. Banubai Bharucha** had also written two books on music. She was the *guru* of the Maharani of Mysore and Lady Thackersey of Pune. Smt. Banubai resided in Mysore for many years where she founded a Sangeet Vidyalaya (music school) and thus propagated and imparted training of North Indian music amongst the women of South India. Though she had written two books on music, it is indeed unfortunate that their names remain unknown. In the middle of the 20th century, Smt. **Khorshed Mulla**, an accomplished vocalist and teacher had written and published seven books on music of which 'Saraswati Sangit Sangrah' could be deemed

as the most important. This book contains many *bandishes* and songs of the Agra *Gharana* along with notations and also famous songs and *bandishes* of other *gharanas*. Smt. Khorshed Mulla's disciple, **Smt. Aloo Jal Patel** had also written two books of *Raagdari Bandishes* and compositions with notations providing informative knowledge especially for students.

The renowned musician, **Shri V. Balsara** has written and published from Kolkota a small but very informative and useful book - 'Chords and Harmony in Indian Ragas'. This book lucidly explains how the Indian *Ragas* without defiling their purity can be presented on a western instrument like the piano. It also states the mandatory changes and variations required in the piano chords. This book reveals his intensive research, utmost effort, thorough practice and dedication to master his subject and present Indian Classical music on the piano. Besides this book he has also written a few other books furnishing information on the easy playing style of Indian Classical Music on various keyboard instruments like 'Easy Practising', 'Finger Exercise', 'Music Guide to Practice in 304 Scales'. He has written the notations of five to six of his popular cassettes in a book form in order to facilitate students of Indian classical music into playing their instruments with ease. These cassettes are titled 'Raag Mood' where ten ragas have been presented; 'Luptmani' in which the ragas do not have the notes 'ma' and 'ni' in their scales. Another is titled 'Sapt Raag', 'Panch Raag' which has been composed with notations based on Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's songs and poems.

In the year 1995 The Sangit Natak Academy of Delhi realised the importance and significance of Shri V. Balsara's various booklets and compiled all these into a voluminous publication under its aegis titled 'Orchestra'. In this book Shri V. Balsara has scripted the Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni



Shri Bejon Desai inaugurating Dr. Aban E. Mistry's book 'Pakhawaj and Tabla History, Schools and traditions'

notations as letters SR G M P D N so that foreign students can easily comprehend the music.

In conclusion a short resum of the books, research and contribution of the author, Dr. Aban E. Mistry. Her in-depth research study on history of *Taals* and thesis on it has earned her the degree of 'Sangeetacharya' (a Doctorate). The volume titled 'Pakhawaj Aur Tabla ke Gharane Evam Paramparaye' traces and details the History, Traditions, Evolution, Development and playing styles of the various *gharanas* of both Pakhawaj and Tabla. Moreover, the book contains thirty-one genealogical charts tracing the hereditary and

disciple lineage through the generations of the various schools of Pakhawaj and Tabla. Infact this painstaking research, being the only one of its kind on the subject is now recognised as an encyclopaedia and used as a ready reference book by research - scholars and percussionists of Indian Classical music in universities all over India. Due to the demand from foreign universities and their students, this book has been translated into English and contains special staff notations for their benefit. The English version is titled, 'Tabla & Pakhawaj - History, Schools and Traditions'. Presently it is also being translated into various regional languages. Dr. Aban E. Mistry's forthcoming book titled, 'Tabla Bandishes' will open a Pandora's box, revealing to students and tabla enthusiasts the world over, rare *bandishes* and other knowledge kept secret by the *ustads* and *pandits* of yore.

14 Publications & Papers on Workshops & Seminars

In the 1960s Mumbai's well-known Parsi newspaper, the '**Jam-e-Jamshed Weekly**' for three continuous years published a column titled '**Swar Sangam**' which presented articles detailing the works and achievements of several known and unknown Parsi musicians and dancers. Articles in this column were authored by **Pandit Keki S. Jijina** who after painstaking research strove to keep alive the contributions of many Parsi artistes, both past and present. The decade of the nineties also saw **Pandit Keki Jijina's** column '**Sangeet Jagat**' in the **Jam-e-Jamshed** weekly, which gave informative articles on the lives and works of great saints, artistes, musicians and life's philosophy, weaving it deftly to make it relevant to a practical, modern lifestyle.

For about a year, **Dr. Aban E. Mistry** wrote informative articles of in-depth research on various aspects of music like *Naad, Swar, Raag, and Taal* etc. in the '**Naad Brahma**' weekly column of the prestigious newspaper, '**Mumbai Samachar**'. Moreover she had also been contributing articles in the same newspaper in the Editor **Shri Jehan Daruwala's** column titled '**Parsi Prakash**'. These historically researched articles pertained to the topic on the Contribution of Parsis in the Field of Indian Classical Music.

Moreover, **Dr. Aban Mistry's** articles on music are regularly published in music journals and magazines all over India, like '**Sangeet**' from Hathras, U.P., '**Sangit Kala Vihar**' published from Meeruth, '**Journal of Indian**

Musicology'-Baroda and in the 'Curtain Call' column of Surat's newspaper 'Gujarat Mitra'. Her papers are also read in seminars and workshops organised by prestigious institutes, music academies and universities all over India. She has been awarded the prestigious Indian Music Forum ITC Award for Research - 2003.

Even **Shri V. Balsara** has written and continues to contribute many articles pertaining to Indian Classical Music in English and Bengali newspapers and magazines of Kolkata as also of other states of India.

Thus various publications have enlightened its readers through informative articles on Indian music contributed by Parsi research scholars.

epilogue

Since we have purely dealt with the contribution of Parsis in the field of Indian Music it would be out of place to make mention of Parsis who have contributed to western music. Yet it is necessary and appropriate to mention the Parsi, world-famous, living legend of western music - Zubin Mehta. He has conducted world-famous Orchestras at prestigious concerts all over Europe, America, and Israel etc. At this stage it would be necessary to make mention of his father **Shri Mehli Mehta**. Every morning on tuning into All India Radio - Akashwani - the various stations begin their programme with a signature tune composed on the violin followed by the strumming of tanpuras. This has been composed by none other than Shri Mehli Mehta. Born in India, Shri Mehli Mehta was an artiste of Western Classical music. Both father and son have settled in America since a long time. Parsis have also contributed in a big way in all fields of western music - classical instrumental, orchestra, light-classical, pop, rock etc. Whether in India, or other Asian or European countries as musicians, Parsis have made a mark and stamped their identity in the diverse fields of music. Even the director and conductor of the internationally acclaimed Paranjoti Academy Chorus is a Parsi lady, **Coomie Wadia**. The choir has added new dimensions to the East-West blend of music with songs written specifically for it in varied Indian languages. They are dubbed "the singing ambassadors of India". Established in 1960, the Paranjoti Academy Chorus is known for its wide repertoire ranging from 16th century music to contemporary Indian and International

compositions, spiritual and folk songs – all this in no less than 21 languages. However, their contribution is not detailed in this research volume as it is dedicated to Parsi musicians of Indian music.

To the best of my knowledge I have tried to include names of nearly every Parsi musician of Indian music. However, if any name has been omitted due to oversight, I beg pardon.

the end

explanatory notes

Atash nu Geet : Prayer in song dedicated to fire as an element of nature.

Ava Ardvisur Banu Geet : Prayer in song dedicated to water.

Baldev Sha Gharana : A school of vocal music of Saurashtra.

Bandish or Gut : A musical composition of vocal, percussion, wind or string instrument.

Dangal : Fight, argument, quarrel between two opposing groups.

Dilruba : An Indian classical string instrument of the last century played with a bow.

Drupad Gayaki : A vocal style of Indian classical music.

Drupad Dhamaar : A vocal style of Indian classical music.

Gwalior Gharana : A school of music belonging to the city of Gwalior. *Gharana* is a school of music established by a creative, innovative artiste who creates cultural revolution in his existing hereditary knowledge and pioneers his own distinctive style of music. Many such schools of music have been founded by such artistes from various places.

Humbandagis : Mass prayers for welfare of family and community.

Jaltarang : A musical instrument comprising of cups filled with water and played by beating with sticks to produce *raag* music.

Kachtarang : A musical instrument made of glass pieces.

Kalgi-Tura : A unique presentation by two opposing parties

rendered in musical poetry form.

Khayal Gayaki : A vocal style of Indian classical music.

Kirtans : Religious songs.

Lucknow Gharana : A music school belonging to the city of Lucknow.

Mehfils : Concerts.

Monajats : Devotional songs or bhajans of Zoroastrian religion.

Marashiyas : Melancholy songs sung by professional women singers during mournful occasions.

Pakhawaj & Mrudung : A percussion instrument shaped horizontally.

Sugam sangeet : Vocal light classical styles of Indian music.

Tappa Gayaki : A light classical vocal style of music.

Tavarikh of Gayan Uttejak Mandali by Pestonji Kapadia : A book tracing the history of the Gayan Uttejak Mandali. 'Tavarikh' means history.

Thumri : Vocal light classical styles of Indian music.

Thumri / Tappa : Vocal light classical style of music.

Vadak : Player of an instrument.

Vichitra Veena : An ancient string instrument used in North Indian classical music and Carnatic style of music.

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