Chatura Pandit : V.N.Bhatkhande

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by

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India's cultural diversity is so phenomenal that one might well postulate that benign anarchy is one of the guiding principles of her cultural institutions. The variety of her languages, practices of worship, celebrations of joy and observances of grief, her arts and crafts etc. is bewildering. So it is also with her music. Not only are there several contexts in which music might be performed, (e.g. rituals ; observances of vital events such as birth, death, marriage etc.; concerts and recitals, and so on), there is also a tremendous variety of themes, interpretations, styles and traditions, not to mention regional or microlocal differences. In the present article, I am concerned with Hindustani Classical Music, which is a term that I shall use interchangeably with the term " Art Music ". Even within this genus, one finds a great variety of traditions and styles of performance, of compositions, of Ragas and their renderings, making a systematic study of this subject a challenging task.

Certainly there have been attempts to systematize Hindustani Classical Music - the Indian passion for taxonomy could scarcely be expected to waste such an opportunity. Nevertheless, traditional works on this subject are not as numerous as one might expect on a priori grounds, considering the long history of the subject. For example, in her detailed study of the history of Indian music (Footnote 2). Emmy te Nijenhuis lists only 30 - 32 specifically musicological works spanning the period between the 3rd and the 19th centuries A.D., not counting multiple annotated editions of the same treatise. The majority are in Sanskrit, and are relatively inaccessible to the average reader.

With the steady growth of interest in Hindustani Classical Music which has taken place over the last thirty years in North America, one can expect an increased interest in its musicology as well. Even if one shares the disdain of the Performer for the non-practising theorist, it would be difficult to deny that some systematization provides a common language and syntax for musical study and discussion and thereby helps to reduce the ambiguities inherent in the give and take of musical life.

Among twentieth century attempts to study Hindustani Classical Music systematically, I believe that the work of Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande occupies a special place. His efforts at systematization were the first modern ones undertaken with a scientific spirit, and they have had so much influence that his ideas provide much of the vocabulary of musical discussion today. Moreover, the work that he did brought about profound changes in the socio-cultural and educational context in which Hindustani Classical Music was performed in his day, and these changes have had an enormous influence on the way Hindustani Classical Music is practised today. It is my aim in this article to discuss briefly Bhatkhande's life and work.

His Life.(Footnote 3).

Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande was born on August 10, 1860, on Janmashthami, the day which marks the festival celebrating the birth of Lord Krishna according to the Hindu lunar calendar. His family was a middle class Brahmin family of modest means. The family had its roots in Ratnagiri district, not far south of Bombay on the west coast of India. His father had a high school education and was employed as an overseer/accountant of temple properties at a well endowed temple in Bombay.

The second of five children, Vishnu seems to have had a healthy, uneventful childhood. He showed some aptitude and liking for music, being sporadically interested in the flute. In any event, he was certainly exposed to a certain amount of music, due to his father's association with the temple, which served as a venue for ritual musical performance. At the age of 15, through the introduction provided by a neighbour, Gopalgiribuwa by name, he started taking Sitar lessons from a man by the name of Vallabhdas Damulji, an accomplished musician, who in turn had been trained by a well regarded Been player of the time, Jeevanlal Maharaj. It is a commentary on his milieu that he had to undertake this training on the sly. It was not considered proper for members of high caste families to study art music in a rigorous professional manner, although participation in music in a religious context was common, and indeed would be a point of pride in such families. The secret of his Sitar lessons could not long be concealed in a well-knit family. Fortunately, his father, perhaps recognizing an unquenchable musical passion, allowed him to continue the study of the Sitar, provided that Vishnu undertook to do so as an amateur - he must never perform in public, and he must promise not to allow music to interfere with his academic studies.

Young Vishnu, (or Annasaheb as he was usually called by then), continued the study of music throughout his college days. He attended Elphinstone College, Bombay, from which he graduated in 1885 with a Bachelor's degree, took a law degree in 1887, and was admitted to the Bar the same year. He practised law at the Bombay High Court (1887-89), and the Karachi

[1] The footnotes are segregated at the end of the article.

High Court (1889-1910). Early in the latter period, (I cannot determine just when), he was married, and shortly thereafter, a daughter was born. But the marriage was ill-fated. Annasaheb lost both his wife and daughter in 1900 and 1903 respectively after short illnesses. These events had a profound effect on him. He never married again, never gave further "hostages to fortune", and devoted an increasing proportion of his mental life to the study and contemplation of music. True to his promise to his father, he never sought to be a performer, although he was quite a competent and sensitive one, judging from contemporary reports. His bent was more for acute observation, analysis and synthesis. This naturally led him to the study of musicology; and this meant the musicology of classical vocal music - Indian tradition has always accorded primacy to vocal music above other media. So much did this absorb him that he gradually withdrew from his law practice, and essentially abandoned it in 1910. He had independent means by then, and thereafter his practice of law was limited to acting out the role of executor to two large estates until the legatees attained majority. For the rest of his time, he undertook what can now be seen as an extraordinarily ambitious project : He set out to understand thoroughly the musicology of Hindustani Classical Music of his day, its relation to historical sources, and to catalogue as fully as he could the vocal music then in practice, with respect to styles and compositions.

This task would absorb him for the rest of his life. He was ruthlessly single-minded in the pursuit of his goal. He travelled the length and breadth of India. On his travels he located and studied historical source works on music, almost all in Sanskrit, a language in which he was fluent. He interviewed other scholars and musicologists concerning their interpretations of the texts as well as their opinions of the prevailing state of the art, and above all, spent countless hours with some of the best performing musicians of the time, trying to understand the relation between the system propounded in these classical texts and the actual musical practices that these performers had imbibed from their respective oral-aural traditions. The microscopic study of their music and musical lore, including the study of precise points of similarity and difference in their renderings of particular Ragas and compositions became the ruling passion of his life.

A prodigious amount of work now began to appear from his pen. Over the next 26 years (1910-36), he produced four major works : (1) "Shrimallakshyasangeetam", a collection of Sanskrit verses which summarise his findings about the structure of various Ragas ; (2) "Hindustani Sangeeta Paddhati", a four volume work in Marathi, later translated into Hindi, containing a detailed exposition of his researches, written in the form of a Platonic dialogue; (3) "Kramik Pustak Malika", a six volume work in Marathi, also translated later into Hindi, which contains compositions that he had collected in his travels from scores of performing musicians and their families. He invented his own system of notation for this purpose. This work, with over 1850 compositions, including over 300 of his own, is still in use as a standard source in the curricula of most musical institutions in India today; (4) A longish scholarly article, " A Comparative Study of the Music Systems of the 15th, 16th, and the 17th Centuries ", which appeared in a quarterly publication entitled Sangeet, published by the Marris College (now known as Bhatkhande Sangeet Vidyapeeth), Lucknow.

Apart from these works, he supervised the publication of 26 other musicological works by other authors. Some of these were old Sanskrit texts critically annotated by him, others were editions of works by contemporary authors in which he had participated substantially as a discussant. All of them involved a sizable effort on Pandit Bhatkhande's part (by now, he had come to be known as " Pandit " - a learned man). In addition to this there were, of course, a large number of occasional essays, articles and so on, not easy to trace fully now. He also kept a diary of his reflections and encounters. I believe that these amount to some 2000 manuscript pages, and are archived at Khairagarh, Madhya Pradesh, in India.

Pandit Bhatkhande sufferred a stroke in 1933, the effects of which more or less confined him to bed for the next three years. He continued his activities from the sickbed, writing and editing the final volumes of Kramik Pustak Malika. He died on September 19, 1936, on Ganeshchaturthi, the day on which Hindus pray to the elephant god Lord Ganesha.

His Work

In order to appreciate his work fully, one needs to understand the musical as well as the social milieu in which he lived. It would be impossible to do this in a short article. I can only hope to give the reader an inkling of the scope and significance of his work, and thereby of his life.

It will be convenient to view Bhatkhande's work under several headings : (a) Musicological research and Systematics; (b) Collection and Documentation of musical compositions; (c) Original, creative work of musical composition; (d) Scholarly and educational work, e.g. editing, didactic writing, organizing institutions of musical instruction, planning of curricula etc.; I shall set down my thoughts briefly under these headings.

<u>(a) Musicological Research and Systematics.</u>

Bhatkhande's Magnum Opus, " Hindustani Sangeet Paddhati ", is a four volume work of over 2000 pages, cast in the form of a Platonic dialogue between teacher and student. It is a work of great detail, and although its structure as a dialogue sometimes tends to lure the argument into long digressions, it is a literate and on the whole a comprehensible work with a consistent internal logic.

The main problem that he set out to tackle was to understand whether the enormous variety of musical practices that he observed in the art music of his day could have arisen by differentiation from a common systematic basis. Most musicians saw (then as now) their training as being rooted in a system that went back several hundred years. In order to understand what such a system might be like, Bhatkhande first turned to the study of several Sanskrit works which had traditionally been regarded as the sources of ancient systems. Prominent among these were the Sangeeta Ratnakara (The Ocean of Music) of Sharngadeva, the Sangeeta Parijata of Ahobala and the Raga Vibodha of Somanatha. Somewhat to his consternation, he found that there were a large number of inconsistencies between the systems propounded by these works. Even when considered individually they sufferred from a certain flabbiness of expression and occasionally of concept as well. The basic terminology of musical scales was not the same in different sources, and the obvious difficulty of communicating in writing a physical phenomenon such as sound made the discussion of finer points of intonation all but inscrutable. After a detailed study of the internal consistency as well as the interrelations between these texts, Bhatkhande came to the conclusion that they could not be viewed as providing a canonical basis for the art music that was then prevalent, whatever one might claim about their having provided such a basis in the past. Bhatkhande's researches into this question led him to do interesting experiments with certain string instruments with fixed and movable frets which were designed for experimental use - the Chala Veena and the Achala Veena - modelled after descriptions in these classical works. These instruments made it possible to compare different descriptions of musical intervals to some extent. His conclusions, were detailed and definite, and the arguments by which he arrived at them are fully set out in the first 135 pages of Hindustani Sangeeta Paddhati Vol.2. In these pages Bhatkhande describes his experiments, (which involved understanding the relations between various theories of consonant sound which had existed in the ancient and medieval world, e.g. Pythagoras' celebrated progression of fifths, the various modes of Greek music such as the Aeolian, Phrygian, Dorian etc.), and seeks to arrive at a plausible guess as to what the musical scale used by Indian musicians might have been. He found that one could not accurately establish the relation between the terminology followed by the various texts mentioned above. Naturally, without this information, it was essentially impossible to try to reconcile the many inconsistencies between these works in their conception of various Ragas. Although he came to some tentative conclusions concerning an underlying proto-system, he found that they were too shaky as a basis on which one could hope to support an edifice of systematization. He therefore decided to proceed inductively, and set out to arrive at a plausible guess at an underlying system, from voluminous observation and documentation of existing art music, followed by an abstraction of its common features. This was surely an ambitious task; to put it in perspective, one can compare it to the task one would face if one tried to reconstruct the system underlying western music by studying the classical western music that is played today.

Fortunately for him, he was able to enlist several leading performing musicians of his time to help him in this task. To be sure this was not done easily, but involved patient - and sometimes servile - persuasion. But in the end, he managed to get the help of several such musicians who had a vast knowledge of traditional compositions often handed down orally from father to son over several generations. Their method of transmission, which was by rote, at least made it plausible that the basic tonal- structural features of a Raga might have survived essentially intact over the years, although clearly both the phrasing and the texts had probably changed. On the basis of extensive study of hundreds of these compositions, as well as comparisons of the prevailing practices for particular Ragas with descriptions of those Ragas in historical sources, he came to certain conclusions both in respect of the scale that underlies Hindustani music, as well as the structural conventions that govern various Ragas. This led him eventually to propose a classification of some 180 Ragas which were then in practice into 10 groups which he called Thaats, a classification which today forms the basis of instruction in most musical schools. He ventured to place this classification before his contemporaries as a " Paddhati " (i.e. a System) that underlies Hindustani Classical Music.

Because it represents a very influential and concrete part of Bhatkhande's work, I would like to discuss his classification briefly. His starting point was the Mela system which had found general acceptance in South India. This system, expounded circa 1640 A.D. by the musicologist Venkatamakhi, gave an enumeration of "parent scales" or Melas, based on certain rules. Since the system is basic to an understanding of almost any system of classification of Indian music, I will describe it in a simplified way.(Footnote 4). The reader who has no taste for technical discussion may skip the next page or so without too much loss.

Let us recall that in Indian music the notes of the octave have the names

SA, RE, GA, MA, PA, DHA, NI, SA.

We shall denote these by

S, R, G, M, P, D, N, S¿

In addition there are of course, certain notes which are flat or sharp versions of some of these. They are : Komal (flat) RE, which will be denoted by r; Komal GA, which we denote by g; Tivra (sharp) MA, denoted by M+; this is the augmented fourth; Komal DHA, denoted by d; Komal NI, denoted by n. Thus the full twelve- tone scale is labelled as :

S, r, R, g, G, M, M+, P, d, D, n, N, S.

However, unlike in western music, these names do not refer to notes of a fixed absolute pitch. Rather, having decided the register and key in which the performance is to take place, the performer selects the fundamental pitch, designates it as the first note of the octave, and gives it the label SA, the succeeding notes being named as above. Thus, for a performer who selects C as the fundamental, the notes will be named as follows :(Footnote 5).

S, r , R, g , G, M, M+ , P, d , D, n , N, S

C, C# , D, Eb , E, F, F# , G, Ab , A, Bb , B, C

Under the Mela system, each Raga is considered to have been derived from a particular " parent scale ", which is called a Mela (or more fully, a Swaramela - literally : a compatible collection of Swaras or pitches). For example, using C as the fundamental, the scale

S, r , G, M, P, d , N, S¿.

C, C# , E, F, G, Ab , B, c.

is a particular Mela, called Mayamalavagoula in South India, (and as will be seen below, called the Bhairav Thaat in Hindustani music), from which Mela spring several Ragas. In order for a scale to qualify as a Mela, Venkatmakhi proposed certain rules : (a) A Mela must always contain S, P, and S¿, (the initial note of the next octave); (b) It shall contain one and only one of the two notes M and M+; (c) Of the remaining four notes of the lower half of the full scale, namely r, R, g, G, a Mela shall contain exactly two notes; (d) Of the remaining four notes of the upper half of the full scale, namely d, D, n, N, a Mela shall contain exactly two notes. Using these four rules it is easily determined that there can be exactly 72 Melas. However, Venkatamakhi realised that not all these Melas are musically viable and pleasing, and he determined that 19 of them were in common use in the Karnatak music of his time. Although compositions exist in Ragas using material from the other Melas, some of them have a somewhat contrived air about them, and the 19 Melas he noted as commonly prevalent form the basis of Karnatak musical instruction to this day.

Bhatkhande realised that, as far as Hindustani Classical Music was concerned, the parent scales apparently in use were far fewer in number. This was partly due to differrent aesthetic conventions, which frowned upon the frequent juxtaposition of pitches which were only a semitone apart. Thus the scale

S, r, R, M+, P, d, D, S

would be an allowable Mela, but Hindustani music does not use it because of the preponderance of half-note intervals in it. Bhatkhande then considered augmenting Venkatamakhi's rules with an additional rule that would deal with this fact : namely that a parent scale shall have just one note from the following pairs -(r, R), (g, G), (d, D), and (n, N). Clearly this would eliminate many half-tone intervals. With this additional rule, one gets 32 scales that are allowable. Bhatkhande called each of these scales a Thaat (literally : manner or style) and seriously thought of adopting this set of scales as a basis for his classification of Hindustani Ragas. But he eventually decided to use a smaller number, partly for pragmatic reasons, i.e. ease of recall. By using a well reasoned inductive argument, he identified 10 such Thaats as being in common use, each of which he named after an important Raga which would be the Doyen of that Thaat. He then proceeded to ascribe the Ragas which were then performed (some 170-190 in number) to one or the other of these Thaats. As an example, we may look at the Bhairav Thaat which is the scale

S, r , G, M, P, d , N, S¿.

C, C# , E, F, G, Ab , B, c.

(Recall that this is also the Mela Mayamalavagoula). It is named after the Raga Bhairav which in a sense typifies Ragas of this Thaat. Several other Ragas use material from this scale, for example the Raga Jogia which uses the material S, r, M, P, d, N, S¿.(Footnote 6). Similarly there are 9 other Thaats e.g. Asavari, Bhairavi, Bilawal, Kafi, Kalyan, Khamaj, Marwa, Poorvi and Todi, each named after a principal Raga in that Thaat, which is supposed to be a prototype for other Ragas of that Thaat in their use of the scale. To sum up, Bhatkhande classified the then prevalent Ragas into 10 Thaats based on a precise set of musical ideas.

Since the number of possible scales is a good deal larger than 10, it must be expected that any classification that sets out with only 10 Thaats is bound to suffer from some inadequacies and inconsistencies. Bhatkhande's attitude on this point was far from dogmatic. He explicitly allowed in Hindustani Sangeeta Paddhati the validity and logical appeal of a finer classification with more Thaats, but settled on 10 Thaats because he felt that it led to an adequate system which would not burden a student's memory unduly. Ambiguities which inevitably arose were resolved by an ad hoc consideration, appealing to musical performance practice and the internal dynamics of the Raga.(Footnote 7).

Today, essentially all the institutions of Hindustani musical instruction use Bhatkhande's classification (in varying degrees of detail) as a basis for their curricula. Bhatkhande's system also forms the lexicon of discussion among musicians and musicologists, although, for reasons mentioned just above, its acceptance is not total. It is clear, however,that it is the only attempt at classification that has found reasonably wide acceptance.

(b) Collection and Documentation of compositions.

In order to comprehend the system underlying the music practised in his day, Bhatkhande travelled the length and breadth of India. During these travels, he talked with musicians and musicologists, learning both their theoretical practical ideas, and collected a large number of traditional compositions which had typically been handed down in hereditary musical families, which at that time formed the core of musical practitioners in North India. Most of these families consisted of Muslim musicians, whose forebears had scattered to the small towns and rural areas of North India after the disintegration of the Mogul empire. The ancestors of these families had mostly been court musicians either at the Mogul court or at smaller courts of the many vassals of the Moguls. With the advent of British rule, which did not extend such patronage, most of the court musicians scattered to smaller towns, and there formed the nucleii of musical traditions. They were called Gharanas or Khandaans (literally : households or families, i.e. lineages).

Over the next century these families maintained their musical traditions by oral transmission within the family. However there were several harsh realities in their musical life. They lived frugally, often under conditions of privation, and were far removed from the general educational and cultural processes to which they had access previously while at court. This led to the creation of a class of highly specialized musicians, often very talented and well trained, who were however generally uneducated, and certainly far removed from any scholarly inclinations. Their method of study was by rote; the principle that the Ustad (teacher) was a canonical authority whose wishes were absolute law to the Shagird (disciple), was actively cultivated and enforced. Even asking a question or expressing a doubt was often regarded as an indication of incipient dissent, and therefore as impertinent. Over time these families became highly inbred musical lineages, who jealously guarded their lore, which was after all the means of their precarious livelihood. Any effort towards systematizing that lore would naturally be seen by them as a step towards making it more easily portable and accessible to others outside the pale. Small wonder that they were unsympathetic, and often actively inimical to any such efforts. Such Hindu musicians as then existed were mostly trained by one of the Muslim Gharanas, and were not always allowed to learn all that their Ustads might have had in their possession. In turn, many of the Hindu musicians were also subject to similar economic and societal pressures, and thus came to share the same prejudices against efforts to systematize music, and indeed against scholarship and analysis in general.

Stepping into this milieu, Bhatkhande sufferred two basic disabilities. He was far removed from any Gharana; and he advocated an intellectual understanding of musical practice by espousing the cause of systematization. Ever the rationalist, he wanted to get to the root of every practice, and would go to great lengths to get answers to his many questions. This ran counter to the established ethos of acceptance of authority, so much so that he encountered active hostility from many quarters. The story of how he succeeded in breaking down the resistance of some of the best musicians and in obtaining access to many of their traditional compositions is fascinating.(Footnote 8). Here I have to content myself with simply reporting the result - he was able to collect over 2000 compositions, some dating back over two or three centuries. He carefully wrote them down, attended to correcting obvious interpolations and corruptions, and notated them with a notation system of his own devising. About 1500 of these, (together with some 300 of his own compositions) appear in the six volumes of the Kramik Pustak Malika. The rest, some 500, are presumably with his papers and diaries at Khairagarh.

The Kramik Pustak Malika, a six volume work, is a work of major archival significance. It is basically a collection of notated compositions, grouped according to the Ragas in which they are composed. It contains 1849 compositions in 189 Ragas. To this day there is no compendium of traditional compositions which comes close to it for variety and accuracy. It contains many Dhrupad compositions, some set to unusual Talas. Notwithstanding the well-known inadequacies of notation as a guide to the performance of Hindustani music, the collection has proved to be enormously useful, and is regularly used by practising musicians, especially in Maharashtra state. Its use by musicians has had another important effect : namely the idea that notation can play a role in preserving, albeit sketchily, the musical intent of the composer has now come to be accepted by performing Hindustani musicians in India. This is evidenced by the appearance of published volumes of collected compositions of many individual musicians. Several such volumes have emerged in recent years, and this practice can now be regarded as well-established. Most of these volumes follow the system of notation devised by Bhatkhande. This phenomenon is surely due in large measure to the work of Bhatkhande. Clearly, the very acceptance of the idea that notating compositions can have some utility (long out of favour with the majority of Hindustani musicians, and indeed not universally accepted even today), will have substantial impact on Hindustani music from the archival point of view.

This article has already become longer than I intended. I shall have to be even more casual about the other headings under which I set out to view Bhatkhande's work.

(c) His compositions.

Bhatkhande's work as a composer is extremely interesting to a musician who believes in the importance of literary and prosodic aspects of a composition for the total enjoyment of music. A study of the compositions in the Kramik Pustak Malika which can be ascribed to him reveals a nice command of these aspects. This is a feature that many traditional compositions lack, (perhaps having lost this or that fine feature over the gulf of decades of oral transmission). He also pays great attention to the characteristic phrasings of the Raga, sometimes incorporating the solfage cleverly in the text in such a way that the letters of the solfage do double duty as a part of a meaningful word in the song, while retaining their appropriate musical pitches. In this respect he follows the great tradition of classical Sanskrit poetry, in which such complex devices were often employed with great effect and skill. A fuller analysis of his compositions would be a subject worthy of further study. It would not only illuminate his creative genius more fully, but would also serve to illustrate well the devices and themes that are common to many compositions in Hindustani music. A reader could thus get a feeling for the cultural data with which a good audience is expected to be equipped to fully enjoy a Hindustani musical performance.

(d) Scholarly and educational work.

Bhatkhande believed fervently that the age of mass musical education was just dawning in India. Time and again he expresses in Hindustani Sangeeta Paddhati his dismay at the fact that in his day the upper echelons of society regarded the performance of art music as a decadent and degrading occupation associated with prostitution and orgiastic excess. The sociological reasons for this attitude are complex and numerous, and will not be dwelt upon here. Bhatkhande felt strongly that a civilized society cannot regard the practice of music as degrading. He had a vision that some musical training would in time become an essential part of the formation of every person who could be regarded as educated. I suppose that this noble vision (shared as well by other visionaries, e.g. Jefferson) will always be an unattained goal that inspires human effort. Bhatkhande strove hard to propagate this point of view. He did so by various methods. Editing and publishing musical and musicological work by other authors, bringing it within reach of the middle class was one facet of this activity.(Footnote 9). He did a lot of it, having been involved in the publication of over two dozen substantial works by other authors in one role or another, not to mention more casual popular and journalistic writing. Lack of space does not permit a fuller description here. Even more far-reaching in impact was his founding of several institutions of musical instruction, in Baroda, Gwalior, and Lucknow for example, and the adoption of a standard curriculum of musical instruction by these institutions. Although these institutions are not in the educational mainstream, being in this respect similar to conservatories in the West, their existence has served to dispel the social prejudices against music as an occupation. Today, musical skills are widely sought after by the upper echelons of Indian society, and many professionals in India have adopted musical performance as a secondary vocation, which in many case evolves into a primary career if they get recognition and popularity. I feel that Bhatkhande's writing and the example that he set by his own life had a major role in bringing about this change of attitude, especially in Maharashtra. He was thus an important participant in the process of cultural change to which other contemporary figures such as Rabindranath Tagore, Sourindra Mohan Tagore, and Vishnu Digambar Paluskar contributed. His dream of integrating music education as an essential component of secondary education remains unfulfilled and current educational trends in India do not allow one to hope that it will soon be a reality. Perhaps the main function of such noble dreams is to provide the spur to the efforts of visionaries like Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande.

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Footnotes

Footnote 1: Chatura Pandit (literally : the Clever or Crafty Scholar) was Bhatkhande's pen-name.

Footnote 2: Emmy te Nijenhuis; Indian Music, History and Structure; Handbuch der Orientalistik, Band

6; E.J.Brill, Leiden 1974.

Footnote 3: The reader who knows Marathi can find a detailed account of Bhatkhande's life in S. N. Ratanjankar; Pandit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande; Maharashtra Government Publications, Bombay,1973.

Footnote 4: In order to keep the discussion manageable, I have simplified certain points, concerning nomenclature of notes, which arise inevitably in an accurate discussion of the Mela system which is in use in Karnatak music. Thus the Karnatak names for certain notes have been replaced by their closest Hindustani equivalents. I believe that this does not do too much damage in a non-technical article. For a more careful discussion of Melas, see for example the article by Harold Powers in The New Grove: Dictionary of Music and Musicians, Vol. IX, pp. 69-166; W. Macmillan & Sons, London, 1981.

Footnote 5: If the performer chooses a different fundamental note, say for example Eb, the notes would be named with corresponding changes:

S , r , R, g , G, M , M+, P, d, D, n , N, S¿

Eb , E , F, F# , G, Ab, A , Bb, B, C, C#, D, Eb

Footnote 6: The tonal material does not by itself specify the Raga of course. One needs to describe many other characteristics, such as its ascent-descent structure, sonant-consonant pair, and above all, its characteristic phrases.

Footnote 7: Indeed, the resolution of such ambiguities seems to have been a bit of a cause celebre at certain times. It was a subject of heated debate among certain factions of musicians in Maharashtra, as evidenced by contemporary writing, and probably elsewhere as well. Between 1918 and 1922, Bhatkhande organized three conferences during which considerable time was devoted to a discussion of the phrasing and dynamics of certain major groups of Ragas, so that one could attempt to ascribe ambiguous Ragas to appropriate Thaats in a reasonable manner. Many of the best performers of that time attended these conferences, and apparently they even produced some concensus on certain musical points, as one can gather from references to this fact in the prefaces of two volumes of the Kramik Pustak Malika.

Footnote 8: He spared no tactic; of the classic Indian formula of Sama, Dama, Danda, Bheda, (which is roughly equivalent to Beg, Buy, Borrow, Steal), he tried all except the last method!.

Footnote 9: He even played on the susceptibilities of the society of his day in unexpected ways; for example, knowing that educated people in Maharashtra had a great respect for Sanskrit, he wrote his work "Shrimallakshyasangeetam" in Sanskrit, under the pseudonym Chatura Pandit, and cited it as a reference in his other writings. Being a work in Sanskrit many people automatically thought that it was an old work, and therefore worthy of the respect owed to canonical works. Bhatkhande did nothing to dispel this misapprehension. To be fair to him, he never lied about it either, emulating a famous incident in the Mahabharata. All of this had a mischievous air about it, and I think he enjoyed the double entendre implicit in his pseudonym; Chatura means clever, but it also means crafty.

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The End

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Dear Fellow Netters,

I am posting the Bhatkhande article as promised. It appeared originally in Bansuri, a journal published by Ragamala Performing Arts of Canada, some years ago. It has been reprinted by a couple of literary/musical review magazines in India since its first appearance. I would welcome comments and or corrections.

Ramesh Gangolli.

P.S. the footnotes are segregated at the end of the article.