

**A MUSE FOR MUSIC: THE HARBALLABH  
'MUSICIAN'S FAIR' OF PUNJAB, 1947-2003**

*Dissertation submitted to Jawaharlal Nehru University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the award of the Degree of*

**MASTER OF PHILOSOPHY**

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**2012**



Date: 25<sup>th</sup> July, 2012

### DECLARATION

I declare that the dissertation entitled "A Muse for Music: The Harballabh 'Musician's Fair' of Punjab c.1947-2003", submitted by me in partial fulfilment of the requirement for the award of the degree of **Master of Philosophy**, is my original work and has not been submitted for the award of any degree of this or any other university.

Radha Kapuria

### CERTIFICATE

We recommend that this dissertation be placed before the examiners for evaluation.

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**Dedication**

For

My grandmother,

Rajmohini Khurana

*for being a fount of musical energy and a medium for building bridges;*

and

My mother,

Bindu Kapurea

*for symbolising the power of action, for teaching me the value of commitment and  
what it means to love boundlessly.*

Listening, makes *Sidhs, Pirs, Surs* and *Naths*.  
Listening, keeps earth and stars on their paths.  
Listening, sustains the earthly sphere.  
Listening, dispels death's preying fear...  
By Listening, all the godly virtues realise...  
By Listening, realise the powers within concealed.  
By Listening, is the spirit of scriptures revealed.  
His votaries, Nanak, ever bliss relish.  
By Listening, their sins and sorrows perish.

--Japuji, VIII-IX\*

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\* Translated by Surinderjit Singh and Transliterated by Dr. Balkar Singh, Publication Bureau, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1994, pp.18-21. The Japuji is the first sacred composition found in the Guru Granth Sahib, the primary Sikh holy scripture. A universal song of God said to be composed by Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, it consists of a root chant or 'Mool Mantra' followed by an opening shloka (verse) and 38 *pauris* (hymns) and a closing verse. Regarded as the most important *bani* or 'sacred verse' by the Sikhs, it is recited every morning by practising Sikhs. The word 'Jap' means to 'recite' or 'to 'chant'.

## *Preface*

This study began with an attempt to historicise culture and music in the Punjab, with a clear and definite motivation to access what constituted a shared sense of Punjabiya<sup>†</sup>, which predated, preceded and made culturally redundant the 1947 political borders of the Punjab.

The compulsion to work on the eastern side of the divide lies in the obvious banality of the fact that I am located in the nation which claims its territory. However, the inspiration to study it comes from the work of Ajay Bhardwaj, renowned filmmaker, cultural commentator and activist, who pointed me in the direction of the Harballabh. Given that the space of eclectic culture in the Punjab is generally seen to belong to folk genres of music and dance, I was at first dismayed, and to put it mildly in informal language, ‘put off’ when he suggested I look at this classical music festival as my topic. Classical music? I said to myself. Ha! Boring, elite, irrelevant!<sup>‡</sup> And obscure, or certainly marginal to the Punjab, which my rich imaginings assured me possessed a culture far more alive vibrant, folksy and identifiably popular. As opposed to working on a festival of classical music, the *dhad-sarangi* itinerant performers held more promise. However, a week later, after the discovery of Michael Nijhawan’s monograph *Dhadi Darbar*, along with the historian’s dilemma of being grounded in some kind of written archive, I found myself returning, resignedly, to the Harballabh, which nonetheless claimed an astonishing, 135 year old lineage.

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<sup>†</sup> The term has been recognised fairly recently in academic writing, and even then in tentative terms only. For example, Anshu Malhotra and Farina Mir in a recent volume of essays ‘consider the notion of *Punjabiya*, a loosely defined term often used to describe a sentiment of belonging or attachment to Punjab and/or the foundations of a shared, cross-religious, cross-caste culture.’ They go on to enquire, ‘Is there an ‘idea of Punjab’ or ideas of Punjab’ that help ground—as Punjabi—people from the region...? Or that connect those in Indian and Pakistani Punjab...?’ The most important question they pose is this: ‘...despite political, social, religious—indeed, historical—differences, are there notions of *Punjabiya/Punjabiness* that constitute Punjab as a region conceptually in history, culture and practice?’ A. Malhotra and F. Mir (eds.), *Punjab Reconsidered: History, Culture, and Practice*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2012, p.1.

<sup>‡</sup> This particularly negative attitude towards classical music has undergone a change as this thesis has reached its end, thanks to the many enjoyable hours I spent, familiarising myself with the joys of listening to it!

I regained hope when Ajay told me about the context in which the Harballabh emerged, very different from the world one associates today with classical music. My flagging initial motivations (of accessing/discovering/bringing alive the Punjab of the past, with its shared Punjabiyyat) were resurrected on paying heed to this aspect of the Harballabh's history. Eminent scholar and musician Madan Gopal Singh's comments on the festival which reaffirmed this history, along with considerable encouragement and faith in the potential of this work from my supervisor, Prof. Sucheta Mahajan, ensured that I stuck to this topic.

Once I began in earnest, I had imagined references of this eclectic Hindu-Muslim past surviving in the oral and written record of the festival. However, as I continued interviewing, the world evoked by the interviewees took me onto a completely different journey, a journey into the salience of the experience of listening itself. This opens the way for exploring what a history of listening itself might yield, for the future. For the purposes of this thesis, however, I have consciously limited myself to a narrative account of the festival, so as to better understand the present in the Harballabh's past, and vice versa. The interviews increasingly produced richer testimonies of the recent past rather than the picture of the fluid origins of the festival I had in mind, with anecdotes about the great masters of Hindustani music occupying centre-stage as opposed to, say, the presence of regional Punjabi musicians—whether Hindu or Muslim. Thus, the primary impetus, the nostalgic/romantic dream to be discovered for this study remains: what shared cultural matrix of music, embracing people from across religions, existed in the Harballabh in particular, and east Punjab more generally, pre-Partition? There are very sketchy and extremely limited clues that I have stumbled across—vastly insufficient to frame an answer to the question at hand. Instead, my impulses for discovering a Punjabiyyat in the sphere of music has led me to a more grounded, nuanced study of the festival of the Harballabh itself.

This has thus turned out to be a study of the evolution of the festival itself: an account of the broad ways in which it changed over some 128 years of its existence, though more focused on the period post-independence. These are changes across different axes: changes in its organisation and patronage, changes in the space of performance it has harboured, and most importantly, changes in the meanings it has held for its audience members, patrons and performers over this large time-swathe. All the while, the effort is to locate the happenings at this festival in the local context of Jalandhar, the regional context of the Punjab, and crucially, for an enterprise so intimately associated with classical music (as it has emerged in the 20th century), the national one.



## *Acknowledgements*

It is impossible to thank everybody who has helped shaped this thesis and I apologise for having unintentionally left out anyone. I wish to thank my supervisor, Prof. Sucheta Mahajan, for her unfailing support and encouragement at every step of the way, for the words of caution, for ensuring this work was presented at many research-oriented discussions with her and for perceptive literary tutelage. Her close reading of the text and suggestions-both minute and mighty-have made this work more solid than I ever expected it to be. I am grateful for the time and space so generously offered for this work to grow.

Other faculty members at the Centre for Historical Studies have also influenced this dissertation. Prof. Bhagwan Josh, the Chairperson, helped to formulate this project at its initial stages as a seminar paper. Prof. Vijaya Ramaswamy and Prof. M.S.S. Pandian held my hand at important junctures of this work, and Prof Neeladri Bhattacharya's exciting lectures on Historical Method constitute an important formative methodological influence while Prof. Tanika Sarkar gave valuable historiographical clues. Prof. Aditya Mukherjee and Prof. Ranabir Chakrabarti gave solid encouragement to this work at crucial junctures. Prof. G. Arunima at the Women's Studies Programme, JNU gave much needed encouragement in the crucial formative days of this work, helped widen my understanding of the vast literature on gender and feminist theory, apart from introducing me and my batchmates to the wonder of the 'primary source' during our B.A. days at Lady Sri Ram College. Prof. Susan Vishwanathan at the Centre for Study of Social Systems, JNU helped me to maintain a broader perspective on aspects of music and culture.

I must thank Prof. Shahid Amin from my alma mater, the Department of History at Delhi University, who has been so generous with valuable references and suggestions that have enriched this work in more ways than one. I thank my professors Amar Farooqui, Dilip

Menon, Prabhu Mohapatra, Mahesh Rangarajan, Anshu Malhotra and Vikas Gupta who apart from Prof. Amin, sparked tremendous interest in aspects of Indian history during a memorable and intellectually enriching M.A. at the University of Delhi, and strengthened the base on which this dissertation stands. During my undergraduate days, I have to thank my teachers Prabha Rani, Smita Sahgal, Vasudha Pande, Meera Baijal, G. Arunima, Pankaj Jha and Deepasri Baul, all of whom were encouraging, inspiring and made history so much more than the bleak subject it was in school! Sr. Nirmalini A.C., my school principal at Carmel Convent, for her faith in me, and for the wonderful academic training at Carmel. Neera Narain ma'am at Birla Vidya Niketan, my alma mater. I thank the staff at the Nehru Memorial Museum and Library and the Central Secretariat libraries for their cooperation in the completion of this work.

In Jalandhar I thank Mr. Rakesh Dada, whose personal example in archiving rare records of the Harballabh is inspirational, as is his generosity with his time. I thank him for sharing the documents on which much of this dissertation is based and Dr. Monica Sharma at the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya in Jalandhar for helping me with valuable information especially her suggestions to consult out of the way but important libraries. I acknowledge Pt. Ramakant, Baldev Narang, Gurdial Singh and Mohan Malsiani for enriching me with their knowledge and musical depth. I thank Yousuf Saeed, Dhruv Sangari and the Ektara Team for the beautifully conducted workshop on Sufi and qawwali music where I first discovered the wellsprings for this dissertation.

At DU and JNU, to my dearest friends Sourav, Soumi, Surabhi, Sonu, Nima, Anchala, Smriti, Vipul, Ayang, Subir, Rakhi, Pratyay and Varsha for their interest in and support of my work, apart from the many fun-filled, light and happy moments that made the at-times-unbearable journey worthwhile. Sourav Mahanta in particular has enriched this thesis in ways I could not have imagined. Bhupinder, Subhadip, Preeti and Piyush also gave me important support. Also

to my wonderful, wonderful friends Aroma, Erum, Ada, Seema, Seher, Mahima, Ambika, Anusheel and Larah—all of whom have over the years shown so much faith in me and given me so much of their love. Thank you to you all.

Most of all to Mr. Naresh Kumar, my predecessor in the study of the Harballabh; friend, philosopher and guide at every step of the way on this dissertation, who consistently sustained this project and gave me oceans of encouragement and endless leads to follow. His personal example and grounding in the eclectic traditions of the Punjab, along with an invaluable narrative clarity and sense of direction have been the reason this work was completed in time. I do not have enough words to thank Mr. Ajay Bharadwaj, who led me towards the Harballabh and helped me see the importance of doing original work all through, and dispelled doubts with illuminating force. It would not be amiss to say that but for Naresh ji and Ajay ji, this work would have not seen the light of day.

I thank Dr. Pearl Drego for giving me crucial literary guidance, showing me the value of critiquing our gendered, asymmetric world and helping me better understand the importance of consistent editorial work and referencing. Fr. Oswald Summerton guided me into a new, stress-free and healthy work ethic where I learnt to take responsibility for academic work and actually began enjoying it, for which I am ever grateful. This is apart from all the direction and support in terms of political activism and cultural commentary I have received from TACET, as also the consistent support in fulfilling the work of this dissertation.

I thank my grandfather Hari Krishan Khurana, whose unfailing support, abundant blessings and faith in me throughout have been a foundational influence in my life. My family in Jalandhar made this work possible in the first place and I thank them—R.K. Chowdhary, Nidhi Chowdhary, Renu and Anil Chhabra and dearest Srishti supported my work when in Jalandhar making my stay comfortable and memorable. This work is dedicated to my mother,

Bindu Kapurea, without whose unflinching love, hard work, concern, care, faith in me and crucial emotional, mental, psychological, moral and financial support, I would never have come this far either in this dissertation or in life. It is also dedicated to my grandmother, Rajmohini Khurana, who passed on when I was only five, but whose songs continue to give us strength today and whose indomitable spirit will always remind us, in her words, that *'duniya chaahe kuch bhi kahe, ab Sai hamare saath hai'*.

I have to acknowledge my debt to the late Dr. Joginder Singh Bawra, who left behind a vast compendium and archive of information on the Harballabh, on which this dissertation is based. Finally to the late Sheila Dhar, for posthumously inspiring this work (especially its title) and bringing the world of Hindustani classical music alive so vividly

**Introduction**

*‘But isn’t this place, Harballabh, in the Punjab, near Jullundur of all places?’ my father had asked patronizingly, as though serious music and Punjab were incompatible.*

*‘I could never have imagined how sensitive and sophisticated the musical tastes of the regular listeners at this festival are. And most of them are Punjabis’, Kesar Bai had said with the air of someone who has witnessed a miracle.<sup>1</sup>*

--Sheila Dhar

*‘Reading the brief but intelligent article on festivals in Grove’s Dictionary, you become aware of the deep divergence between pre-modern music festivals as symbolic rituals connected with religion and agriculture and modern music festivals as commemorations of great composers or as commercial and tourist attractions...the first type has now receded into a dim anthropological past.<sup>2</sup>*

--Edward Said

*Any social structure is the result of interaction and of numerous individual strategies, a fabric that can only be reconstituted from close observation.<sup>3</sup>*

--Carlo Ginzburg

This work seeks to explore the history of the Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan of Jalandhar—considered the oldest classical music festival of north India— with the purpose of establishing that performing and listening to music is not static through time. Rather, music is a cultural practice which is as determined by the social milieu in which it occurs, as it in its turn impacts those social realities. Thus, as Hildegard

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<sup>1</sup> S. Dhar, ‘The Muse and The Truck Drivers’, *Raga’n Josh: Stories from a Musical Life*, Hatchette India, 2005, pp.177-178. Having grown up in a Mayur Kayastha family of Delhi which attached great importance to musical sensitivity, followed by a lifelong commitment to understanding, discovering and being intimately acquainted with the world of North Indian classical music, the late musician Sheila Dhar, that inimitable and deft wielder of words, has left behind invaluable fragments of insights into that world.

<sup>2</sup> E. W. Said, ‘Pomp and Circumstance (on Musical Festivals)’ in *Music at the Limits: Three Decades of Essays and Articles on Music*, London: Bloomsbury, p.23. Originally appeared in *The Nation*, August 30, 1986.

<sup>3</sup> C. Ginzburg, ‘Microhistory: One or Two Things I Know About It’, *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 20, No. 1 (Autumn, 1993), p. 33.

Froehlich has succinctly said, ‘music is a vital social agent in the lives of all who engage in it, whether as performers or as listeners.’<sup>4</sup> The importance of writing a social history of music has been recognised relatively recently. As the conversation cited by Sheila Dhar quoted above testifies, music is closely allied with larger social perceptions of particular linguistic-cultural groups. The point of departure of this thesis is that such notions which tie together music with broader cultural attributes need to be contextualised in a historically rigorous way rather than simply being labelled as prevalent, and hence self-explanatory ‘common sense’<sup>5</sup>. Such a study is important because the importance of a social history of music is routinely ignored by historians. While music has been recognised in more recent decades as an important concomitant of cross-border peacebuilding, the many myriad histories of music in the subcontinent, and especially the Punjab, *prior* to the coming up of borders has been largely understudied.

Similarly, hagiographic accounts of the Harballabh festival also tend to treat music as an entity completely separate from society, and the present shape of the festival is conveniently mapped onto a varied and multidimensional history. Given the fact that the festival was begun in 1875 by Baba Harballabh, the then *mahant* of the seat of the sacred *sakti-peeth* site<sup>6</sup> of the ‘Devi Talab’ (so called because of a 18th century tank that was constructed here), where today stands the largest Hindu temple of Jalandhar, the pasts of the Harballabh too are rather easily imagined as being unequivocally ‘Hindu’. Thus, from its origins to the present, the site of the Devi Talab is understood to be unambiguously ‘Hindu’, in a teleology where the present stands as the apogee of an ancient Hinduism, strengthened by a sprawling temple, intimidating in its sheer size. Such a teleology, burgeoning in Right-wing Hindutva oriented histories of Jalandhar which enjoy a mass readership, obliterates not just the non-Hindu presence at the Devi Talab (and indeed, Jalandhar), but also does injustice to the inclusive Hinduism from within which the festival emerged.

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<sup>4</sup> H. Froehlich, ‘Tackling the Seemingly Obvious – a Daunting Task Indeed: An Essay Review of *Music in Everyday Life*’ in *Action, Criticism, and Theory for Music Education*. Vol. 1, #2 December 2002.

<sup>5</sup> J. Storey, *Inventing Popular Culture: From Folklore to Globalization*, UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2003, p.52.

<sup>6</sup> As per Hindu mythology, the left breast of the goddess Sati/Parvati fell here.

Thus the premise with which I begin this dissertation upholds the essentially syncretic character of music in the Punjab. This is consciously done in a way so as to refute the subtle ways in which the space for classical music at the Harballabh has aligned itself to being organically 'Hindu'. Instead, through this history of the Harballabh in an evolving context I seek to demonstrate the complexities of its history. I wish to emphasise the multivocalities of the musicians, patrons and listeners who together gathered historically at this Annual Rag Mela—voices that have been purged conveniently with the post-1947 divisions, when a particular view of classical music became hegemonic. I hope to unravel the many different and concerted, conscious but also unintended ways in which the festival came to acquire its present-day connotations. In many ways then, this is also a cultural history of the city of Jalandhar more broadly. I am interested in this project from the larger standpoint of understanding culture in South Asia in its many pre-twentieth century dimensions, in all its varied forms, and especially how these changed in the twentieth century and more pertinently 1947, in the context of the Punjab and the specific one of Jalandhar. What were the primary impulses for such a change and how did it occur?

My personal investment in this work stems from my location as a descendant of refugees from West Punjab; as an amateur musician with basic training in classical music and as an activist (though currently passive), with an interest in the power of music in social transformation. Therefore, the motivating thrust behind this study has been to unravel the long-term impact of 1947 on a vibrant musical culture of the region. This dissertation is thus a case study of a single institution, *en route* to gaining a larger understanding into the implications of partition on the Punjab.

In his article on "Microhistory", Carlo Ginzburg calls for an approach of historical analysis that privileges the micro-level and local sphere of study, without ignoring macro-level developments in the unfolding of the histories of institutions and phenomena otherwise considered unimportant as objects of analysis. When it comes to studying the social and cultural history of the Punjab, a similar call is needed. Despite the sophisticated analyses which efficiently club together traditional archival work with detailed oral histories and methods closer to conventional anthropology, there remain certain lacunae that impede us from more closely understanding the culture of the Punjab.

Perhaps one of the reasons for this is the prevalent image of the Punjab as a land with a predominantly rustic culture. In part this can be seen as a present day remnant of the taxonomising impulses that marked the colonial ethnographic project, capably analysed by scholars like Bernard Cohn. Indeed, this idea of ascribing particular geographical regions of India with definite cultural essences (which of course facilitated colonial governance) was strengthened like never before with the call for “unity in diversity”—Nehru’s maxim for a secular ethos of the independent Indian nation-state, for in order to attain an ever-elusive unity in the face of a bewildering heterogeneity, neat and definite categorizations for each region and community needed to be established. In the process, however, what was lost was the variety/multiplicity present in each region, one which questioned this image of the typical Assamese, or the typical Maharashtrian, or in our case, the typical Punjabi.

No wonder then, if one were to start writing a history of the 136 year old Harballabh Classical Music Festival of Jalandhar, Punjab, the first question a layperson would ask will probably be: “Sorry, come again? A festival of classical music that is 136 years old, and that too in the Punjab?” This, at any rate, was my first reaction, which apart from my obvious ignorance also demonstrates the deep-seated power of cultural stereotypes. It is the very exceptionality, of a chronologically long presence of a classical music festival in the Punjab that is implied by the Harballabh, which prompts a closer examination.<sup>7</sup> It is ‘exceptional’, because the Punjab is seen as an arena, culturally, of what is qualitatively rustic, loud and brash, and by implication, culturally “low”. While this is undoubtedly a layperson’s conception of culture in the Punjab—one which corresponds to the image of the loud and boisterous Sikh/Jat peasant as the representative Punjabi subject—there is a long tradition of historiography and scholarly writing in general which has rigorously and consistently couched “the Punjabi” in the image of the peasant.

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<sup>7</sup> In terms of accounts of Harballabh in the audio-visual media, the two most significant are firstly a video documentary called *Sangeet Mahakumbh (Harivallabh)* [Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts titled *Sangeet Mahakumbh (Harivallabh)* 2007, DVD 62 minutes; Directors: Vishal Sharma and Rajesh Kaul] and an audio-documentary by Naresh Kumar on the Harballabh in Hindi-Urdu entitled “The Spring is Not Far Behind” narrated by Mahmood Farooqui in traditional *dastan-goi* genre. The former though packed with interviews with patrons and musicians, is nonetheless marked with a rather narrow perspective and a narrative which glosses over many historical circumstances such as the tradition of dhrupad singing in Punjab, the links of music across east and West Punjab and the participation of rural audiences. The latter, though shorter at around 27 minutes is much more evocative of the many things the Harballabh has meant to different people across time. It also is one of the best introductions of the Harballabh for a lay audience and narrated in a manner that is both intimate, yet objective.



The following example from Sir M. L. Darling's well-known book from British India titled *The Punjab Peasantry in Prosperity and Debt* (1925) captures for us the very precise terms in which this stereotype was framed:

Ignorant, no doubt, and unimaginative, and with a mind that is often as empty as the horizon that surrounds him, he has the virtues of a life spent in constant battle with the forces of nature... the very spirit that makes him the finest soldier in India renders him also capable of the most desperate crime. Otherwise he is sober enough, with a shrewd, picturesque humour which makes his language a joy to those who delight in vivid expression.<sup>8</sup>

In a word, Punjabis are unimaginative, fine soldiers, fond of vivid expression (possessing a shrewdly picturesque humour) and incapable of subtleties. Darling also refers to the immense martial qualities of the Punjab peasant proprietor in this one ingenious passage. This quintessential peasant was then the backbone of the conception which monolithically imagined the Sikhs as a 'martial race' especially during the re-construction of the colonial army begun by Commander-in-Chief Lord Frederick Roberts in the late 1880s. By 1911, following a change of army recruitment policy away from the 'Hindustani' in favour of the Punjabi, post-1857, the army had acquired a Punjabi representation of almost 54 per cent.<sup>9</sup>

In post-independence India, the emphasis on the Green Revolution and Punjab as the granary of the nation further deepened the image of Punjab as the land of agriculture and importantly, not one of culture.<sup>10</sup> The realm of music in particular within the more general arena of aesthetics and art is the one where this image is articulated most

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<sup>8</sup> M.L.Darling, *The Punjab Peasantry in Prosperity and Debt*, London: Humphrey Milford and Oxford University Press, 1928; first printed 1925, p.536. As he elaborates in his Preface, "in this study we must realize that agriculture is the chief industry of the Punjab and the agriculturist its main support. 'The well-being of a people,' says a Chinese philosopher, 'is like a tree; agriculture is its root, manufacture and commerce are its branches and its life; if the root is injured, the leaves fall, the branches break away and the tree dies.'"

<sup>9</sup> See R. Mazumder, *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, pp. 15-19.

<sup>10</sup> At the very least it was not seen as a possessor of the culture that was seen as crucial and definitive of the new Indian nation-state. Further, celebrating the culture of a region with a powerful syncretic tradition such as that possessed by the Punjab presupposed intimate connections to the now estranged West Punjabi heartland and was a source of discomfort, and not in keeping with the troubled spirit of these times. It is only in the last 20-25 years that these connections have been openly, unashamedly emphasized, particularly driven ahead by peace initiatives by civil society groups such as Pakistan India People's Forum for Peace & Democracy, as well as an increasing presence of Pakistani singers in Bollywood, facilitated by technology-induced flows of culture across the borders.

clearly. Thus the traditional centres for the proliferation of North Indian classical music are considered to be located more firmly in Maharashtra and Bengal rather than anywhere in the north proper, the Punjab being too disconnected from them—geographically and culturally.

A recent PhD dissertation in the field of ethnomusicology which aims to resuscitate the importance of “locality” and “geography” in the making of the Hindustani classical music tradition demonstrates the importance of the region quite clearly. Jeffrey Grimes’ major concern is to show how north Indian classical music, with the shift to a predominance of middle and upper class performers, was also defined by their regional backgrounds: especially given that most came from the Maharashtra-Karnataka border region and Bengal. It is interesting to note that while mentioning north Indian classical music, Grimes’ vision extends, beyond Bengal and Maharashtra, to U.P. and Bihar only, at the complete exclusion of the Punjab, mentioning only the Punjab gharana of the tabla.<sup>11</sup> The tabla fits in nicely with the larger stereotype of Punjabi culture as masculine, robust and somewhat ‘in-your-face’. It is this picturisation which collapses, to a certain degree, when one clubs what is arguably the oldest north Indian festival of classical music with the Punjab.

In terms of a social history of the music of the Punjab upto now, the objects of analysis have again been limited to more identifiably ‘popular’<sup>12</sup> cultural forms and artefacts. Recent work by Michael Nijhawan on the *dhad-sarangi* tradition<sup>13</sup> and Gibb Schreffler on the *dhol*<sup>14</sup> though pioneering and particularly insightful in their own ways, corroborates this. I do not assert that these works consciously propagate the stereotype we are questioning here, but wish to further explore their conclusions, and work out a way in which the Harballabh music festival can be understood not only in the more local context of Jalandhar but in the larger one of the developments in the Punjab as a region. On the history of music in the region of the Punjab as a whole, there is only one monograph by Geeta Paintal in Hindi entitled *Punjab Ki Sangeet*

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<sup>11</sup> J. M. Grimes, *The Geography of Hindustani Music: The Influence of Region and Regionalism on The North Indian Classical Tradition*, Unpublished Dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin.

<sup>12</sup> I do not subscribe to the widely prevalent blanket division between “popular” and “classical”. Indeed, one of the impulses for carrying out research on the Harballabh is precisely to explore the possibility of a musical space that was neither purely classical, nor categorically popular.

<sup>13</sup> M. Nijhawan, *Dhadi Darbar: Religion, Violence, and the Performance of Sikh History*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

<sup>14</sup> G.S. Schreffler, *Signs of Separation: Dhol in Punjabi Culture*, Unpublished Dissertation, University of California, Santa Barbara, 2010.

*Parampara*<sup>15</sup> which offers a comprehensive view of the evolution of music in the Punjab. Filled with rich anecdotes, the book is marked by meticulous compilation of information regarding the different genres of music that characterise the region, the various gharanas of classical music in Punjab and their genealogies, as also the manner in which musical knowledge was transmitted down generations. Largely written from an ethnomusicological perspective, this work is nonetheless restricted on account of its narrow conception of the link between music and society. Indeed tired clichés and stereotypical opinions take the place of any serious analytical engagement and thus this work is more useful as a compendium of exhaustive information on the varied musical traditions of the Punjab, in which regard it of course stands out.

The spatial context here is of Jalandhar, a major city of the Punjab, long settled and comprising a *mélange* of different groups of people and cultures. The cultural context, provisionally, and as a starting point, is the Harballabh Mela as it is patronized, organized and consumed by the majority of Jalandhar's Hindu population, especially in the present context. This temporal limitation is necessary because, in order to do a coherent analysis, one needs to impose a time limit, given that we are dealing with a festival having 135 year-old history. Analysing an annual music festival with its quintessentially fluid character (with performers and the content of performance changing every year) can be tricky and unconventional as a subject of social history, but this micro-level of analysis has its own fruits; Ginzburg's quotation with which this essay opens alerts us to the significance of the small and micro-level "individual strategies".<sup>16</sup> It is exactly these individual level strategies that I wish to look at closely, so as to explore the resonances they had with larger social norms and space-time contingencies.

While not ignoring the relationship of the festival with Sikhism, I wish to emphasise that Hinduism in the Punjab context needs to be analysed more closely and that we need to move beyond the predominantly Arya Samaji mould into which all Punjabi Hindus are conveniently cast very often. In other words, a large population in the Punjab, broadly labeled as "Hindu" needs to be placed between two movements which stood (and in many ways still stand) strongly opposed to each other: the Singh

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<sup>15</sup>G. Paintal, *Punjab ki Sangeet Parampara*, New Delhi: Radha Publications, 1988.

<sup>16</sup> The importance of these independent strategies is reflected in much of the work he is known for, famously, C. Ginzburg, *The Cheese and the Worms: The Cosmos of a Sixteenth-Century Miller*, London and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980.

Sabha and the Arya Samaj.<sup>17</sup> Many within this non-Arya Samaji Hindu population may have their antipathies with the other two movements. On the other hand, this broad middle stream is also linked up with the two zealous reformist movements mentioned above and seeks to place itself delicately vis-à-vis each, without fully embracing one or the other. But the relative autonomy of this group, however fluid its boundaries, needs to be recognized.

I have mentioned only the Hindu and Muslim contexts upto now, somewhat curious for an enterprise firmly located in the Punjab—the birthplace of Sikhism. Partly this is because of the demographic profile of Jalandhar as being populated by a majority of Muslims pre-partition and Hindus post-partition.<sup>18</sup> But on another level, this is also because of the centrality of the huge Devi Talab temple in whose precincts the festival is held every year.

Given the fact that the location of the Harballabh festival is a sakti-peeth site also opens up the way for a deeper discussion of the history of Hinduism in the Punjab, especially the tradition of goddess worship. This is because, like the Harballabh, Amritsar also has the Laxmi Narayan Rag Sabha held during Holi at its Durgiana Temple, which is only some 30 years younger than its Jalandhari cousin. This evidence of music's links with a Hindu *sacrality* even in north India runs contrary to the received, typical stereotypes about north Indian classical music held by many.<sup>19</sup> In general, the South turns up to be a very strong “Other” against which music lovers and musicians in North India manifestly define their tradition as distinct from that of the South, which is most usually seen as purer, better organised, and in an advanced state of health compared to the North. It is thus the ideal to which the north aspires.

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<sup>17</sup> They were polar opposites in the sense of the particular communal identities, Khalsa Sikh versus Arya Hindu. However, in terms of their methods and goals they were largely similar. For the Arya Samaj in Punjab, see K. W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Punjab*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976. For the Singh Sabha movement, see H. S. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.

<sup>18</sup> N. Kumar, Festival of Music in the City of Sports: Harballabh Sangit Mela of Jalandhar, CSDS-Sarai Project Report, Independent Research Fellowship, 2006, p.5. A revised version of this paper will be published in the forthcoming issue of *Sangeet Natak*, the journal of the Sangeet Natak Akademi. Further, Jalandhar is one of the few regions of the Punjab having a history and identity beyond and without any significant events of Sikh history.

<sup>19</sup> Importantly, what we see with these music sittings is a Hindu mysticism that does not arrogate to itself the claim of being culturally superior. Rather, there seems to be a more open and flexible space within the confines of modes of Hindu worship, be it the marking of *barsi*, the performance of *yajnas*, the *dhunas* etc.

To digress somewhat, the following passage from Pt. Ravi Shankar's autobiography is a vivid illustration of this imagination:-

In the South, many musicians were in service of Hindu rulers and in many instances, the temples also functioned as "patrons" for performing artists. Every temple had a large courtyard where concerts, discussions and other programs could be held. In this way, there was a great deal of contact on the part of the common people with classical music. Anyone who pleased could attend musical programs given at the temples. In the North, on the other hand, classical music continued to be restricted mostly to the royal courts and to a small group of wealthy men who could afford to keep musicians in their households. Because of the openness of the system in the South and the musical interchange that was carried on, the Karnatic music developed in a highly organized manner, with very little irregularity in concept and approach.<sup>20</sup>

Pt. Ravi Shankar's teleology clearly and unambiguously locates the development of North Indian classical music in a closed private sphere of royal patronage, cut off from wider, more 'democratic' procedures which were open to its more 'in-the-public-because-located-in-the-temple' avatar.<sup>21</sup> The Harballabh Sangeet Mela presents a problem from this point of view: whether in terms of documentary evidence or the rich testimonies available to us in the form of oral narratives, it directly comes head-on against such a blanket, homogenous formulation about Hindustani music. I now wish to look at the current trend of history writing on music in South Asia in general.

### ***Historiography of Music in Colonial and Post-Colonial India***

Historiography of music is a relatively new field; while works on Indian music in the disciplines of musicology and ethnomusicology abound, the serious attention of historians towards music has only been drawn very recently. This in itself points to the way in which music, more than any other cultural practice, has been taken for granted, and not treated as an object of serious study.

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<sup>20</sup> R. Shankar, *My Music, My Life*, New York: Simon and Schuster, 1968, p.47. Emphases added.

<sup>21</sup> Beyond this, there is a problem in the very ahistorical way that the development of the content of music (and its precision) has been described by Shankar for both North and South India, a trait shared by many a great many musicians and music-lovers I spoke with. The extensive writings of Lakshmi Subramanian and Amanda Weidman (among many others) for South India and those of Janaki Bakhle for the Pune-Bombay region have shown how the crystallization of Indian music in purely classical forms which matched up to the Western parameters of notation and technical accuracy was a very 19th century and modern phenomenon.

The majority of work on the history of music in India has tended to be written by musicologists, and is very limited temporally, the work of S.S. Paranjape ending in the Gupta period, and that of Sulochana and Kailash Chandra Dev Brihaspati going up till medieval times.<sup>22</sup> Other writing has been more specialised, and is generally concerned specifically with a musical text, such as the 13<sup>th</sup> century *Sangeet Ratnakara* of Sarangadeva, or with biographies of musicians, lineages of gharanas, evolution of genres and instruments. Ethnomusicologists, who go a step further and study music in its social context, have, on the other hand, limited themselves to narrow realms of enquiry based on their particular field work. The 1979 work of Daniel Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India*, is a rare monograph that examines the conditions in which north Indian classical music exists in the twentieth century while providing relevant background historical information on various aspects of the structural organisation of Hindustani classical music. Rich in detail, and informed by Neuman's own anthropological engagement with the Hindustani music scene, this work systematically detailed the world of Hindustani classical music to a larger academic and intellectual milieu. There is also the interesting work of Peter Manuel on the impact of cassette industry on the democratisation of music in south Asia titled *Cassette Culture* and Regula Burkhardt-Qureshi's extensive writings on *sufi* and *qawwali* music. Being more clearly grounded in *present-day* practices and structures of musical organisation, history appears in these works only in so far as it can provide background information on the travails of the present, and one cannot term them as contributing to a history of music *per se*, in any serious manner. However, given their interdisciplinary nature and some basic use of archival and primary sources, as well as their emphasis on studying the interlinkages between music and society—through the concept of the 'ecology of music'<sup>23</sup>, for example—they have paved the way for the histories that came in the decade of the 2000s.

The corpus of the literature on music therefore has by and large viewed it at a remove from history, as an esoteric artefact above and beyond the materiality of everyday life.

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<sup>22</sup> Traditional musicological scholarly work such as S.S. Paranjape's *Bharatiya Sangeet Ka Itihaas* ending with the Gupta period, or Acharya Brihaspati's *Musulmaan Aur Bhartiya Sangeet* and Sulochana Brihaspati's *Khusrau, Tansen Tatha Anya Kalaakar* which end in the medieval period remain temporally circumscribed.

<sup>23</sup> To view music 'ecologically' is to interpret it as "intricately interrelated to societies; as a commodity sold, purchased and consumed; as an artifact—probably the most important one in most cases—of a culture; in short, as anything but pure, abstract and self-contained". W.K. Archer, 'On the Ecology of Music,' *Ethnomusicology* 8(1), 1964, pp.28-33. Quoted in Neuman, p.203.

Colonialism and its impact has, until recently, largely been ignored by scholars as a valid field of historical enquiry. Those keen on a history of music in south Asia had to wait for the writings of scholars like Lakshmi Subramanian, Janaki Bakhle and Amanda Weidman, all three of which were published almost co-terminously in 2005-06.

These histories, by going to the archives, by being attuned to facets of music's social, political and economic milieux are an important step forward. Each explores music in the colonial context and how this era of its modernisation under the aegis of a nationalist middle class inaugurated major changes in the symbolic and social character of music.

Lakshmi Subramanian's work, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*<sup>24</sup> is a finely grained account of the change in Karnatik Music during the colonial period. The able and succinct theorisation of the way in which music acquired a new personal and exclusivist communitarian connotation during the 19th and 20th centuries is throughout done by her in a way that never loses sight of the larger processual changes that emerged in the wake of colonialism—be it in education and curricula, print capitalism, knowledge systems, the creation of a new middle class and the new social identity and episteme it manufactured for itself, etc. She consistently locates facets of musical practice and performance in this larger historical context of the Madras elite—both Brahmin and non-Brahmin. Subramanian discusses the impact of colonial Orientalist writings on Indian music and culture on the development of classical music in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, as does Bakhle, and to a lesser degree, Weidman.

Discussing the agenda of the Madras Music Academy, Subramanian details how the social imperatives of the Brahmins who most actively patronised and popularised Karnatic music, tying it up with creating a modern identity for themselves, re-oriented music in a way that foregrounded the spirituality of the music over its sensual aspects. This was part of the Academy's "sanitizing" operation, whereby a strict distinction was produced between "classical" and "light" music. She also shows us the educational and pedagogical thrusts of this group, who framed "a coherent agenda for

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<sup>24</sup> L. Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court to the Madras Music Academy: A Social History of Music in South India*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2006.

reform and for streamlining an aesthetic” and were driven by a “compulsion to modernize and thereby establish firm foundations for a modern classical music culture.”<sup>25</sup> Tracking the shift from princely patronage to new educated middle-class patrons, she explains how new “virtues of standardization, spiritual regeneration, and authenticity became the guidelines for the emerging agenda of cultural reconstruction that developed explicitly nationalist overtones over time.”<sup>26</sup>

Music, in Subramanian’s account, emerges as an integral part of the social status of those patronising and consuming it and her work thus constitutes not simply a contribution to the history of music, but a social history of the men and women who performed, taught, patronised and consumed it. Her main focus is on the main social groups associated with music and their changing relationship to it: how they act on the music, and who is left out in the process; thus chapters are titled “Defining”, “Consolidating” and “Contesting” the “Classical” and those who were relegated to the “Margins of the Classical”. In sum, her work is a comprehensive survey of the evolution of music in South India, taking on board all the various changes that occurred in the given time period, and, in her own words, provides us with “a concrete understanding of the history of ideology and institutions in the making of a new context for classical music and how this was tied up to the projects of modernity and nationalism”.<sup>27</sup>

Janaki Bakhle’s work is the first substantial monograph by a historian on the evolution of Hindustani classical music during the course of the late 19th and early 20th centuries under the twin influences of the nationalist moderniser Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande and the devotionally-minded Hindu nationalist, Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. Her story of both these men from Maharashtra, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*<sup>28</sup> who have left an indelible mark on the way we perceive and perform north Indian classical music today, is healthily balanced by both the local perspective of Maharashtra music and stage culture, princely court patronage of musicians in the late 19th century as well as

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<sup>25</sup> L. Subramanian, *From the Tanjore Court*, p.71.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 74

<sup>27</sup> L. Subramanian, *New Mansions for music: Performance, Pedagogy and Criticism*, New Delhi: Social Science Press and Orient Blackswan, 2008, p, 162.

<sup>28</sup> J. Bakhle, *Two Men and Music: Nationalism in the Making of an Indian Classical Tradition*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2005.



a focus on the regions beyond, such as UP, the Punjab, Baroda etc., in as far as they are tied to the lives of the four men of music, the other two being Prof. Mowla Bux and Abdul Karim Khan. As opposed to Subramanian's work, Bakhle's is written in a more vividly narrative fashion, and qualifies as a good read for laypeople as well. Whereas Subramanian is keenly aware, always, of the ways in which historical exigencies impinged on the way music is performed etc, and her language consciously academic, Bakhle's project is far more ambitious than the modest title limiting itself to only *Two Men and Music* suggests. Her thesis is that north Indian classical music in particular faced novel challenges in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, given the imperatives of colonial modernity and how this led to a Hinduization of the public sphere in which music was now being increasingly performed, resulting in a decided blow to the prominence of traditional practitioners, the majority of whom were Muslim. Her chapter titles capture the general tenor of her work, and their sequential arrangement imparts to the reader the sense of the historical process she wants to convey to us, beginning with a focus on the world of the princely state patronage of music, moving to how music *entered* the public sphere, then detailing how Bhatkhande's project, lost in the *contradictions* of music's modernity ultimately failed, while the *certainty* of music's modernity was more ably captured in the life-work of Paluskar, whose agenda of Hinduisation of music as part of institutionalisation through his GMVs succeeded phenomenally.

Bakhle thus treats the field of music itself as the primary protagonist, and observes the changes wrought in it, beginning with a pre-reform scenario (a discussion of the incipient modernisation undertaken at the court of Sayaji Rao Gaekwad at Baroda, and the work of Prof. Mowla Bux<sup>29</sup>), the slow progression of music into modernity and the public sphere and ending with the post-reform one. Bakhle points out how the school of Mowla Bux was one of the viable alternatives to the more exclusionary visions of Bhatkhande and Paluskar, but nonetheless does leave us wanting a more in-depth answer into why this more eclectic vision does not survive the tests of time. Another figure who recurs throughout the book is the towering musician, Abdul Karim Khan, known not just for his sweet voice that defined the Kirana gharana, but also as a courageous innovator, and a Muslim musician who launched a somewhat

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<sup>29</sup> Prof. Mowla Bux set up a school of music there which was unique in its ingenuity of combining north Indian with south Indian classical forms in terms of the curriculum as also the attempts made by the 'Professor' to embrace the notation that defines western classical music. Bakhle, *op.cit.*

different kind of school of music, and more secretively, as the father of Hirabai Badodekar, respectable Marathi middle-class singer and theatre performer. One can't help but wonder how a book that concentrates almost as diligently on Abdul Karim Khan (and to a lesser degree, on Prof. Mowla Bux) refers exclusively, only to Bhatkhande and Paluskar in its title. This procedure of naming her book—though Bakhle certainly did not intend it this way, given her *a priori* concern with the decline of Muslim musician performers in 20th century India—only crystallises and strengthens Paluskar and Bhatkhande's place in the annals of the history of music in modern India, at the cost of further sidelining the already sidelined.

Nonetheless, Bakhle does proffer a sufficient analytical framework of the contradictions of colonial modernity that made it possible for Paluskar to succeed at the scale at which he did, as opposed to the other three. By bringing to light their life-trajectories and contributions to the perpetuation of music in the public sphere, in their different historical contexts, Bakhle's account of these four men of music assuredly opens up a promising future of research in the realm of India's music history. One of the questions her work leaves us with is: in which early 20<sup>th</sup> century and contemporary spaces do we still find echoes of the alternative visions of modernising music, such as those of Abdul Karim, Mowla Bux, and (to a lesser degree) Bhatkhande?

Despite their stylistic differences, the works of both Bakhle and Subramanian share a common ground in being written, first and foremost as histories, following narrative structures however different, based on painstaking archival work, in tandem with a recording of oral memoirs, without which any history of music would be incomplete.

As opposed to this, Weidman, writing from within the discipline of anthropology is written in a much more leisurely manner than either, and also more focussed on a postcolonial history of music in South India, as suggested by her title, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India*<sup>30</sup> Her work shows us how the cherished assumption of modernity that voice is a “natural” expression of self and the foregrounding of the idealized female singer in Karnatic music was not a pre-given reality, but rather one that emerged at a particular

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<sup>30</sup> A.J. Weidman, *Singing the Classical, Voicing the Modern: The Postcolonial Politics of Music in South India*, Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2006.

historical conjuncture of defining ideals of chaste womanly behaviour, resulting in women who could be heard (on AIR and gramophones), but not seen in public. Detailing the impact of the silencing of the devadasis on music and dance, along with the ways in which classical music was made into “respectable” art for upper-caste women (and concomitantly linked with notions of the artist, natural voice, companionate marriage and domesticity), she argues that “the valorization of the voice in Karnatic music is part of a distinctly modern set of ideas about music, the self, and Indianness.”<sup>31</sup>

As an anthropologist sticking to the basic tenets of fieldwork, her account of the changes in Karnatik music is regularly interspersed with reflections on her own position and experience as a student of the violin with a prominent woman violinist. It is thus a vastly more detailed account than either Subramanian or Bakhle, given the constant interplay between past and present that marks every chapter of her book. Through such a strategy, Weidman succeeds in foregrounding the *longue duree* history of Karnatik music and helps us in acquiring a richer understanding of how the past continues to impress upon the present and the paradoxes and ironies of social change in the world of music.

Given her professional location as an anthropologist, there is an excessive focus on her hypothesis on the production of a modern discourse of voice which at times seems to be overtly laboured. Nonetheless, one needs to applaud the robust interdisciplinarity of Weidman’s work, because she rigorously historicises every anecdote of the present. Therefore her work could be said to well-deserve its place in a historiography of music, following in the footsteps of Bernard Cohn, self-confessed *Anthropologist among Historians*.

To sum up, the three works of music histories mainly discussed here are all pioneering because, to use Weidman’s words, they all “focus on (how) the appearance of particular practices of and attitudes about music have become identified with the notion of classical music in South India to suggest that, far from being natural or purely aesthetically motivated manifestations of an essentially Indian sensibility, they

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<sup>31</sup> Weidman, *op.cit.*, p.6. Thus she says that, “in this discourse on classical music, performance that drew attention to the body came to be associated with the artificial; good music was not something to be performed but rather was simply “expressed”. Ibid., p.289 and p. 145.

(these practices and attitudes) are the products of a particular colonial and postcolonial history.”<sup>32</sup>

Future histories of music in India need to build upon this work and more seriously push the divide between folk and classical music that arguably emerged or at any rate was consolidated, in the colonial period. For Hindustani music, and places like Punjab and the Bengal, the impact of Partition needs to be the object of historical analysis, as also the different trajectories of music in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh, to further explore how far 1947 constituted a de-Islamicisation of music in India, and what a counterfactual history of music in South Asia would look like. In particular for north India, the exodus of many Muslim musicians in the wake of Partition along with Paluskar’s posthumous presence loomed large over the music scene. The trajectory of the Harballabh thus in many ways embodies, in miniature, the extent of these changes which north Indian music underwent in the first half of the twentieth century.

### ***Historiography of the Punjab***

Relevant work on the socio-cultural history of Punjab needs to be read in tandem with political and cultural history. What follows is a brief discussion of historiography on the Punjab in the modern period, with a focus on such works that have a direct bearing on the cultural history being pursued in this thesis. Important ethnographic groundwork on the rural peasantry of Punjab was undertaken by the British administrators like Sir Malcolm Darling, S.S. Thorburn and F.L. Brayne who by and large were concerned to establish the progress made under colonialism of the Punjab agrarian economy, which became known as the ‘Punjab school of administration’, marked by what N.G. Barrier has termed ‘the paternalist attitude towards an illiterate peasantry’.<sup>33</sup>

Several works written in post-independence India on the peasants in Punjab build upon observations of Darling and other colonial commentators, along with doing some pioneering archival work themselves, and upholding a diametrically different perspective. Prominent amongst these are Mridula Mukherjee’s *Peasants in India’s*

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<sup>32</sup> Weidman *op.cit.*, pp.23-24.

<sup>33</sup> N.G. Barrier, *The Punjab Alienation of Land Bill of 1900*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1966, p. iii.

*Non-Violent Revolution: Practice and Theory*<sup>34</sup> and *Colonializing Agriculture: The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism*<sup>35</sup>. In the former, Mukherjee discusses at length the various phases of the peasant movement in the Punjab in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, making an important case to understand the stalwart activism of the Punjab peasants on its own terms, beyond religious differences. Charting out the various phases of peasant mobilisation in the national movement, Mukherjee presents a finely-grained account of the high-point of resistance. Without claiming for her case study of Punjab peasants the status of a broad model, Mukherjee makes a powerful case for ‘a revolution based on a strategy of non-violent action in which the central role was assigned to the peasants’ thus lending them an element of political autonomy that is generally denied. The second work builds on the former by working to dispel the canard that colonial policies produced an agrarian system conducive for self-sustained growth unaided by external factors. She meticulously argues how despite claims of Punjab’s agrarian advances under colonialism (the canal colonies being the primary example), in fact all the fundamental features of underdeveloped agrarian structures like subsistence-based production, lack of investment in agriculture by those appropriating the surplus, high level of indebtedness with the majority of peasants owning a small percentage of land, rents and revenue paid in kind, etc. all held true for colonial Punjab.

Neeladri Bhattacharya’s articles on the forms of agricultural labour and the patterns of agrarian production in Central and South-eastern Punjab have focussed on the regional variations in the same and discussed the difference of the Punjab from other regions such as South India, Gujarat and U.P. He has argued how an ‘ideology of the self-cultivator, the mentality of the small producer, was the hegemonic work ideology in rural Punjab, which, in many ways, expressed and regulated the work pattern of the peasants. The Jat rich peasants emerged within this social context.’<sup>36</sup> His writings also give us an insight into the contours of the *sepidari* and *jajmani* systems, highlighting

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<sup>34</sup> M. Mukherjee, *Peasants in India’s Non-Violent Revolution: Practice and Theory*, New Delhi: Sage Series in Modern Indian History, 2004.

<sup>35</sup> M. Mukherjee, *Colonializing Agriculture: The Myth of Punjab Exceptionalism*, New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2006.

<sup>36</sup> N. Bhattacharya ‘Agricultural Labour and Production: Central and South-East Punjab, 1870-1940’ in Gyan Prakash (ed.) *The World of the Rural Labourer* (New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992) p.147. Also his ‘The Logic of Tenancy Cultivation: Central and South-East Punjab, 1870-1935’, *The Indian Economic and Social History Review*, April-June 1983, vol. XX, no.2.

the work and emigration patterns of various groups of low-caste agricultural labourers.

In terms of the studies on religion and culture, the early works of W.H. McLeod<sup>37</sup> detailed the evolution over time of Sikhism and attempts to contextualise how the various definitive norms and rituals were linked with historical processes such as the conversion of many Jats to Sikhism around the early seventeenth century. The writings of J.S. Grewal<sup>38</sup> place the history of Sikhism in the larger trajectory of Punjab history and geography, giving equal space to the development of Panthic Sikhism and the rise of Ranjit Singh's Sikh empire, going on to the carving out of the new Punjab state in the 1960s and concluding with the turbulent 1980s. From an anthropological point of view, Richard G. Fox in his *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making* underlined the importance of British authorities in patronizing a distinct Sikh identity, arguing that 'in pursuit of their colonial interests through means dictated by their own cultural beliefs [the British] foreshadowed the reformed Sikh, or Singh identity propounded by the Singh Sabhas.'<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, Harjot Oberoi's prominent work<sup>40</sup> emphasises the role of the Singh Sabha reformers themselves in the re-fashioning of Sikh identity. He argues that the religious boundaries of Sikhism were solidly constructed, sharply marking out what constituted Sikh theology and ceremony in conscious opposition to Hinduism and Islam. Heterodox Sikh practices, especially popular belief systems held in common by many Punjabis irrespective of religion, were outlawed and a fixed and monolithic Sikh identity in its place. Similarly, and prior to Oberoi, Kenneth Jones<sup>41</sup> had contended that for the vast majority of Punjabi Hindus, "Hinduism" was not the primary operative category of self-definition, but "the 'specific tradition' of an individual's *jati* or caste rather than the great tradition of his religion dictated social behaviour."<sup>42</sup> This tradition was altered with the conversions by many high-castes to Christianity during the 1870s,

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<sup>37</sup> W.H. McLeod, *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* Oxford, 1968 and *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* Oxford, 1975.

<sup>38</sup> J. S. Grewal, *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1994; Second Edition 1999.

<sup>39</sup> R. G. Fox, *Lions of the Punjab: Culture in the Making*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985, p.10.

<sup>40</sup> H. S. Oberoi, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994.

<sup>41</sup> K. W. Jones, *Arya Dharm: Hindu Consciousness in 19<sup>th</sup>-Century Punjab*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

which provided the Arya Samaj of Punjab, led by the urban and middle class mercantile men, major ground from which to codify Hindu belief and practice, re-fashioning Hinduism along militant and self-assured lines and simultaneously challenging Sikh and Islamic reformers. For Islam, the thrust of most works is tied to the subsequent emergence of the desire for a separate Muslim homeland rather than on the Punjabi Muslims as a distinct group in themselves. David Gilmartin's account<sup>43</sup> goes some way to refute the causal connections most writings make of Punjabi Muslims with the Pakistan movement, by delineating the reasons behind the politics of the anti-League Punjab Unionist Party. He has argued that British rule gave a fillip to the existing traditional structure of tribal hierarchy in rural Punjab leading to the emergence of "a class of rural leaders, tied closely to the administration, [who were] exercising [their] authority largely in a 'tribal' idiom."<sup>44</sup> This group also used their new position of authority to patronise the Punjab-wide network of sufi shrines which had for many centuries, "served as the crucial link between the Punjab countryside and the power of imperial Muslim states."<sup>45</sup> He thus argues that the success of the Unionists accrues from a weaving together of various factors such as authority over popular and heterodox belief practices, land dominance, and conspicuous support from the colonial government being among them.<sup>46</sup>

Pioneering work on gender in Punjab has been done recently, one example being Veena Talwar Oldenburg's 2003 work on dowry<sup>47</sup> and the more comprehensive *Gender, Caste and Religious Boundaries* by Anshu Malhotra<sup>48</sup>. The former argues that policies of the British Raj privatized land ownership into exclusively male hands wielding severe economic pressure upon male land holders, transforming dowries from a safety-net into a catalyst for marital conflict and violence. The thrust of the latter is to show how entrenchment of caste in colonial Punjab went hand-in-hand with defining the behaviour of the docile, domesticated ideal woman. Malhotra deftly

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<sup>43</sup> David Gilmartin, *Empire and Islam: Punjab and the Making of Pakistan*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p.22.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p.23.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> V. Talwar Oldenburg, *Dowry Murder: The Imperial Origins of A Cultural Crime*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003.

<sup>48</sup> A. Malhotra, *Gender, Caste and Religious Boundaries: Restructuring Class in Colonial Punjab*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2002.

portrays the struggle between the new male reformers who campaigned against traditional practices of women where inter-caste interaction was the norm and many Punjabi women who resisted this move. At a basic level, her work weaves together the three categories of gender, class, caste and religion, demonstrating how “caste became a significant ingredient of class formation [which] had very serious implications for defining women’s social roles as ‘right’ conduct on their part, and control over their sexuality increasingly became the indices for flaunting a high caste and middle class identity.”<sup>49</sup> The low-caste movement under Mangoo Ram was discussed on its own terms by the earlier work of anthropologist Mark Juergensmeyer<sup>50</sup> who delineated how colonial rule inaugurated a new attention being lavished on lower castes from all quarters—Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims and not to mention the colonial state, with the expansion of seats in provincial legislature. Mangoo Ram founded the Ad-Dharm movement mobilising his followers around the teachings of the low caste medieval mystic Ravi Das.

The politics of language in Punjab has been a relatively understudied field and Farina Mir’s recent work<sup>51</sup> is an important step in filling this lacuna. She discusses the fate of Punjabi as a vernacular through a focus on the rise of a brisk vernacular book trade which maintained the colonial-era market for the traditionally popular and orally recited *qisse*. It was through the *qissa* tradition which kept alive the book trade in Punjabi that this vernacular flourished despite an unsympathetic colonial state which favoured English and Urdu.

### ***Sources and Methodology***

Given the long temporal span covered here, the focus will therefore be on what I consider to be significant moments in this long history, as revealed through a study of memoirs of musicians, newspaper reports over this time span (*The Tribune*), an examination of gazetteers of Jalandhar districts wherein small references to this festival are made, some of the brochures distributed by the organisers in the post 1965 era, apart from some limited select pieces of documentary evidence made available

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., p.201.

<sup>50</sup> M. Juergensmeyer, *Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in 20th-Century Punjab*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982.

<sup>51</sup> F. Mir, *The Social Space of Language: Vernacular Culture in British Colonial Punjab*, Ranikhet: Permanent Black, 2010.



thanks to the generosity of the treasurer and archivist of the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha, Mr Rakesh Dada. This is supplemented by ethnographic fieldwork, primarily consisting of oral history recordings done in Jalandhar in October 2011. The main secondary source for the reconstruction offered in the following pages is Dr. Joginder Singh Bawra's two books, *Harivallabh Darshan* and *Harivallabh Darpan* because his are the only full-fledged works in the public domain which cover the story of the festival from its origins down to contemporary times.

For the initial, originary phases of the festival in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, almost no archival documents have yet been discovered, which makes the 1875-1900 phase of the festival part of its 'pre-history', the only source for reconstructing it being oral memory. This thesis thus relies for a large part on oral history, without which any history of music is impossible to write. Rather than diminish the veracity of history, a strong focus on oral history in fact brings to light many areas hitherto unknown in the history of music, which do not enter the world of newsprint or music-school curricula. The most frequent source mined as part of the oral history interviewing undertaken in October 2011 is the 'reminiscence.'<sup>52</sup> On the whole one finds that oral testimonies play a crucial role in filling the many lacunae that remain in written sources, especially when one is writing a history of music. As the renowned Italian oral historian Alessandro Portelli has asserted, '...written and oral sources are not mutually exclusive. They have common as well as autonomous characteristics, and specific functions which only either one can fill (or which one set of sources fill better than the other).'<sup>53</sup>

One source which combines oral and written testimonies in equal measure is in the writings<sup>54</sup> of Dr. Joginder Singh Bawra which remain the definitive primary source at least for the post-Independence period, the mainstay of this thesis. Many times, therefore, it is only Bawra's word that we have for particular occurrences. While

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<sup>52</sup> In the words of the eminent oral historian Jan Vansina, 'reminiscences are bits of life history... the image of oneself one cares to transmit to others... (they) are part of an organized whole of memories that tend to project a consistent image of the narrator and, in many cases, a justification of his or her life.' J. Vansina, *Oral Tradition as History*, London: James Currey and Nairobi: Heinemann Kenya, 1985, p.8. I have attached four such interviews, which yielded significant material for the thesis, at the end of this thesis.

<sup>53</sup> A. Portelli, 'What makes oral history different' in R. Perks and A. Thomson (eds.) *The Oral History Reader*, London and New York: Routledge, 1998, p. 64.

<sup>54</sup> J.S. Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, Jalandhar: Sangeet Kala Manch Publications, 1998 and *Harivallabh Darpan*, Jalandhar: Sangeet Kala Manch Publications, 2003. Henceforth Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan* and Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan* respectively.

acknowledging the pioneering work of Bawra, I nonetheless critically analyse some of the evidence he presents by reading his work against the grain. In some senses then this thesis builds on Bawra's work by undertaking a critical, ironic reading of his work, which is important because of the sheer vastness and depth of what he has covered. Given the paucity of time and length and resources, I have not been able to, in most cases, verify the veracity of Bawra's claims—at least for the major questions. Also this is not possible really because of the lacuna in time between the time he conducted oral interviews and I did my field work. Hence at most I have questioned Bawra's tone and presentation of the events—not being in a position to, most of the time, question the existence of 'traces'<sup>55</sup> from the past reported by Bawra, whether oral or written— themselves.

In terms of the method employed in this thesis, it most closely resembles that used by Carlo Ginzburg and the historiographic school of Italian microhistory. As opposed to induction, which is too restrictive and deduction which is constrained theoretically, abduction is more open ended, for in the words of Edward Muir, 'it seeks a theory, and the consideration of the facts suggests the theory.' Further, abduction does not proceed to prove anything but "merely suggests that something *may* be." The significance of abduction lies not in its ability to prove that something is operative or actually exists but in the creative potential it represents and for Charles Peirce who first coined and defined the term, abduction "is the only logical operation which introduces a new idea...making its start from the facts, without, at the outset, having any particular theory in view, though it is motivated by a feeling that a theory is needed to explain the surprising facts".<sup>56</sup>

It is exactly such an approach of abduction that has helped ethnomusicologists, historians and sociologists of music to come up with new knowledge that especially upturns conventional understandings that the classical-folk binary has existed since

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<sup>55</sup> P. Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative, Vol.3*, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1988 (first published 1985), pp. 98-100. For Ricoeur, the only measure of the 'reality' of the past is the way in which it survives in 'traces'-be they documents, testimonies, accounts of witnesses or in oral memories. It is through the 'trace' that the past persists in the present, and the work of the historian is to re-enact the past by re-presenting these traces. Ibid. Thus, my reading of the anecdotes studded in Bawra's writings stems from my own unique subjective position, as also my particular scholarly motivations, already highlighted above.

<sup>56</sup> Quoted in E. Muir and G. Ruggiero (eds.), *Microhistory and the Lost Peoples of Europe (Selections from Quaderni Storici)*, Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991, p.xviii.

time immemorial. The sociologist of music Tia DeNora has demonstrated how classicisation and the coming up of fixed boundaries between the ‘folk’ and the ‘classical’ took place recently in history only in the nineteenth century. Prior to this, there was instead much more ‘musical contemporaneity, as William Weber has described... and a programming practice of musical miscellany..., by no means fully extinguished by 1900.’ Thus canonical practices of Western classical music, such as rapt listening, a hierarchy of musical taste and great works, were, until the early nineteenth century ‘when they first emerged as cultural innovations, antithetical to musical life.’ She further argues that ‘while music was certainly a medium of distinction, tastes, styles and genres did not, in themselves, presume exclusive taste publics. There was, by contrast, an *aesthetic of inclusion*: if anything, aristocrats would have welcomed their underlings sharing their tastes since, without aristocratic riches, the bourgeois would never have been able to match the grandeur of spending that promoted musical culture and supported music makers. This aesthetic of inclusion was one that held on in other art forms, at least in America, well into the nineteenth century.’<sup>57</sup> In the case of the Punjab in general and particularly the Harballabh festival as I argue in the following pages, this ‘aesthetic of inclusion’ was the dominant trend well into the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> decades of the twentieth century. It was only then that a thoroughgoing process of modernisation strove to transform the norms of performing and listening in an irreversible way.

### *Chapters*

Specifically, in this study I am looking at what it means to perform classical music in a cultural context (the Punjab) where the classical is seen as marginal to its self-definition of being folksy and rustic. In fact, a trajectory of this very idea shall be explored, implicitly and explicitly, throughout the whole dissertation.<sup>58</sup> This shall be

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<sup>57</sup> T. DeNora, ‘Culture and Music’ in T. Bennett and J. Frow (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, London: Sage Publications, 2008, pp.146-147. Emphasis added.

<sup>58</sup> Here it is important to state that though the chapters are divided temporally and the aim throughout is to contextualize the festival in different historical conjunctures, there is a great deal of temporal overlapping as well. Jan Vansina, the oral historian has explained this methodological paradox, especially for oral sources: ‘...oral traditions are documents *of the present*, because they are told in the present. Yet they also embody a message from the past, so they are expressions *of the past* at the same time.’ He goes on to clarify that ‘one cannot deny either the past or the present in them. To attribute their whole content to the evanescent present as some sociologists do...is reductionistic. To ignore the impact of the present as some historians have done, is equally reductionistic.’ Vansina, *op.cit.*, p.xii. The constant tension of locating a piece of information or a testimony between past and present is the tight rope on which this thesis walks.

done through the first chapter, where an examination of the colonial context of Jalandhar will be followed by the character of its patrons in shaping the festival, followed by the impact of the visits of Pt. Paluskar to the Harballabh, and the reasons for his resonating success. A major theme discussed throughout the first chapter will be the public sphere of culture emerging in the early decades of the twentieth century at Lahore and its relationship with Jalandhar.

In the second chapter I examine the world of Jalandhar and the gradual but certain transition of the Harballabh from mela to sammelan in the post-independence context, emphasising how national dreams and projects had powerful local reverberations. The impact of partition as also Jalandhar being made temporary capital (with relocation of the Lahore-All India Radio here) put the festival more easily into a certain concert mould adhering to national levels. I also explore what the space of performance and listening at the Harballabh was like in the eyes of some of its patrons, performers and listeners, followed by a description of the coming up of a huge temple on these grounds in the 1970s as also the lull that followed in the decade of the 1980s.

The third chapter examines the festival in the context of a changing, globalizing, liberalizing world, and the increasing prominence of exclusivist, majoritarian strands of Hindu identity edging out the more secular spirit of the preceding phase of Mr. Ashwini Kumar, and the eclectic space of inclusive Hindu bhakti traditions in which the festival began. The focus here shall be on the relationship between the Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha and the Devi Talab Mandir Committee, and how this impacted (or not) the organisation of what have by now been reduced to mere “concerts”. characterized by the entrenchment of a ‘hard’ Hindutva ideology which coalesced with a blatant, jingoistic nationalism in various realms of social life, I do not ignore the earlier phases of the festival, when other images of and investments made into it by a greater diversity of groups, gave it a more cosmopolitan and plural identity.

To end this introduction with a disclaimer. I am not particularly interested in the intricate dynamics of the music performed in itself, which would be more appropriate for the investigations of musicologists. This is a history, a social history of music, and thereby of the people who made the music, who organised what used to be a mammoth musical fair and, to a somewhat lesser degree (due to paucity of sources) of

those who consumed it. Writing a history of music has its own challenges and rewards. It is challenging because, given the fluidity and immense malleability of music as a medium of human communication, it is somewhat hazardous to impose strict regional straitjackets on it. In this particular case study, I have found it hard to pitch for concrete generalisations, and though I am primarily concerned with a regionally situated fair, the larger interregional cross-currents have never really been absent.

### *Nomenclature*

The Harivallabh Rag Mela has been called by many different and elaborate names throughout its history from ‘Symposium of Musicians at Jullundur’ to ‘Musicians’ Fair’ to the more recent and most sanitised ‘Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan’. However, in this dissertation, I will refer to this music festival plainly as ‘the Harballabh’ for the sake of convenience and brevity.

*Chapter 1*

***A Provincial Mela Reckons with the National-Classical, 1913-1947***

The historic town of Jalandhar, located in the Bist Doab, or the region between the Beas and Sutlej rivers, is one of the two oldest cities of the Punjab. The other is Multan, located across the border in present day Pakistan. Both cities were one of the 5 major districts that the colonial Punjab was divided into after its annexation in 1849—the other three being Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Ambala. Jalandhar, or ‘Jullundur’, as it was referred to until recently in a spelling with very colonial origins, was geographically the centre of the doaba region and more generally of the eastern Punjab. While many linguists and scholars agree that the dialect of Punjabi spoken in Jalandhar and its surrounding areas is a distinct ‘Doabi’, what has probably not been taken up for scholarly analysis is the distinct and somewhat characteristic cultural history of the Doaba as a region.<sup>1</sup>

I thus seek to investigate this cultural history of the region through a focus on this one music festival, the Harballabh Sangeet Mela or Rag Mela. In the first part of this chapter, I begin with a sketch of the specific context of colonial Jalandhar, before moving on to an outline of the stories and myths in which the origins of this festival lie, detailing how the festival was sustained by the residents of the town.

I then explore the impact of the visits of Pt. Paluskar to the Harballabh examining the character of the performance format prevalent at the Harballabh during this early stage. Next, I look at the set of impulses leading to the formation of the Sangeet Mahasabha in 1922, as also the definitive role which this body came to assume. Two annexures of this chapter are based upon a roster of reports from *The Tribune* on the musical scene in Lahore (Annexure II) and specifically on the Harballabh (Annexure III), to get a better picture of the cultural developments in the early twentieth century with regard to the Harballabh.

The primary archival record for this broad phase from 1875 to 1947 are contemporary newspaper reports from *The Tribune*, the main nationalist English daily for the Punjab and North-west published from Lahore in the pre-1947 days, as well as documents

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<sup>1</sup> There is a thorough list of the different dialects of Punjabi as per the changing geographical terrain in Geeta Paintal’s book already quoted in the Introduction. See Paintal, *op.cit.*, pp.258-259.

and souvenirs made available to me by the Treasurer of the Sangeet Mahasabha<sup>2</sup>. My analysis also relies on oral testimonies collected during fieldwork in October 2011 as also on secondary literature written and published in Jalandhar itself, much of it only during the 1990s onwards.

### *The Spatial Context*

Jalandhar is an old settlement dating back to antiquity, with many different forms of heritage rubbing shoulders with each other. Traces of the Indus Valley civilisation have been found across many sites and villages of Jalandhar district. The name of the city has its groundings in Hindu mythology. As per the latter, the Padma Purana mentions a “Daitya” king, son of the Ganges and the Ocean who was killed by Lord Vishnu<sup>3</sup>, called “Jalandhara”. A range of legends, myths and stories abound about this demon king and his wife Vrinda and today several sites in and around Jalandhar commemorate the mythical demon, his wife and other gods.<sup>4</sup> Jalandhara was apparently the capital of the Trigarta region and dynasty mentioned in the Mahabharata. The first historical reference to Jalandhar occurs in the reign of Kanishka, when in around A.D. 100, the Fourth Buddhist Council of theologians met near Jalandhar chiefly for the purpose of collecting manuscripts and preparing commentaries on them.<sup>5</sup> The city was visited by Hiuen Tsang and also appeared in the accounts of Ptolemy and Hsiuen Tsang<sup>6</sup>. The city witnessed many Hindu and Muslim rulers<sup>7</sup> thereafter and was occupied by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1807.

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<sup>2</sup> Mr. Dada collects and maintains all records of the festival as a personal hobby and service to the Sangeet Mahasabha.

<sup>3</sup> Jalandhar, a Daitya, is believed to be the son of the river Ganges, by the ocean. This land is also believed to have emerged from the sea; the story goes that the land was evacuated by the sea for Jalandhar Daitya at the behest of the Shukracharya, the gurus of Asuras. Jalandhar was killed by Lord Vishnu and his consort Vrinda turned herself into Tulsi when Vishnu after killing her husband, declined to give her refuge as a wife. A temple of Vrinda or Tulsi Mandir is situated in Kot Kishan Chand. See Shastri, 1998, p. 40. See also Dilgeer, 2004, pp. 17-19. I am grateful to Mr. Naresh Kumar for these references.

<sup>4</sup> For a roster of these varied legends, see Dilgeer, 2004, pp.17-20. Interestingly, the collation of all the many different legends related to Jalandhar occurred systematically for the first time in the works of British scholar-administrators like Alexander Cunningham. See Alexander Cunningham, *Archaeological Survey Reports, Vol.V.* and also his *Ancient Geography of India* (Reprinted: Varanasi, 1963). Quoted in Gazetteer of 1980, p.503.

<sup>5</sup> This council marks the final schism between the Northern and Southern churches of the northern and southern churches of Buddhism.

<sup>6</sup> Interestingly, according to Dilgeer, Ptolemy calls it Kulindrine (Sulindrine) and Hsiuen Tsang terms it ‘She-lan-ta-lo’. Dilgeer, 2004, p. 18.

<sup>7</sup> Ibrahim Shah, the Ghaznavide of Ghor is said to have ‘taken’ Jalandhar in 1179-80 A.D., as per the Gazetteer of 1980, p.491. Following this Jalandhar was intermittently either directly under the Delhi

Present-day Jalandhar is full of nooks and corners that breathe and smell of many years of its bygone history. Architecturally in particular, crumbling remains of colonial-era buildings, havelis and religious shrines of all three major religions are abundant, especially in the old city, with many structures intact speak of a culturally rich and eventful town. Jalandhar, as it developed upto 1947, had an exceptional landscape visible in the organization of the city into 12 *bastis*, 12 *kots* and 12 gates.<sup>8</sup> The town having its existence since antiquity has a number of historical monuments with immense historical, mythological and religious significance. The mausoleum of Imam Nasir<sup>9</sup> and Jama Mosque<sup>10</sup> belong to the fifteenth century. The Shiva Mandir, at Gur Mandi was built by a Nawab of Sultanpur Lodhi. Sheetla Mandir, Annapurna Mandir and Tulsi Mandir are believed to be as old as the city is. After the defeat of the Sikhs at the end of the First Anglo-Sikh War in 1846, the British annexed the entire Jalandhar Doab, and it became the Commissionership of the trans-Satluj States. Thus Jalandhar was one of the earliest regions of the Punjab to be brought under colonial control, the rest of the Punjab following some 2-3 years later in 1849.<sup>11</sup> The British also established the cantonment here and connected it with the G.T. Road and railways.<sup>12</sup>

The transition from pre-colonial to colonial Jalandhar, in administrative, political, strategic terms is thus key to understanding why the Harballabh festival emerged here of all places, and in the particular way it did. Whether it was the coming of the railways in the 1860s and 1870s which linked the town to Lahore and Delhi and hence to the rest of the country, the setting up of the British army cantonment, or the constitution of the city as a new administrative centre for eastern Punjab, conditions contingent upon its colonisation by the British point to a newly strategic location of

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sultans taken by one or another chieftain. In A.D. 1524, Babur gave Jullundur and Sultanpur in jagir to Daulat Khan Lodhi, at whose instigation he had come to India for the fourth time. During Akbar's reign (A.D.1556-1605), Jalandhar was one of the mint cities, but only copper was coined. Gazetteer of Jalandhar, 1980, pp.22-26.

<sup>8</sup> These 12 bastis were occupied by the Muslims and 12 kots or muhallas by the Hindus, each kot or fort having its own gate. Most of these outlying *bastis* (suburbs) of Jalandhar were founded during the 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. Dilgeer, Encyclopedia of Jalandhar, 2004,p.58. See also Gazetteer of 1980, p.492.

<sup>9</sup> The present structure came up in 1930s, which replaced the old one built in the 12<sup>th</sup> century. See Dilgeer, 2004, p. 60-61. For more on the Imam Nasir shrine, see below, p. 14, fn 40 and p.21, fn 58.

<sup>10</sup> In 1947, the mosque was converted into a Gurudwara but its domes and towers remained intact. These were destroyed during 1980s. Ibid,

<sup>11</sup> Gazetteer of 1980, p.2.

<sup>12</sup> Dilgeer, 2004, pp. 11-15.



Jalandhar. All of these developments had important, far-reaching impact on the social-cultural matrix of the city, as shall be discussed in this chapter.

However, several aspects of the socio-cultural lives of the ordinary people of Jalandhar continued as before, the most important of which was the continuation of various fairs round the year. Most of them were of a religious nature, but constituted an occasion of celebration which was all-inclusive and eclectic. Indeed the main features at all the fairs were noticeably common; this is how the Census Handbook of 1916 for 'Jullundur District' describes their ambience:

Wandering minstrels at times appear and sing the love tales of Sussi Punnu, Sohni Mahenwal, Hir Ranjha and Buga. Snatches (*boli*) of these tales are sung by the villagers themselves. A wrestling match by professional athletes will draw a crowd even from neighbouring villages. Fairs are highly appreciated, though walking about in one's best clothes and eating sweetmeats, which seem the principal amusements, may appear somewhat tame to outsiders... Most of them (principal fairs) are purely religious gatherings, at which people combine devotion with amusement, and buying and selling are confined to sweetmeats and other articles of food.<sup>13</sup>

The syncretic environment and ethos fostered in these fairs is evident when one observes that the important fairs of Jalandhar district were not confined to any one religion. Instead, each of the three major religions had their own peculiar fairs, in many of which members of all communities participated equally. Thus for example, at the fair held at the shrine of Imam Nasir on the occasion of its annual *urs* mela, 'both Hindus and Muhammadans attend(ed)' it on '2nd Thursday in Har (June-July)'. As per the roster of the fairs this fair emerges as the one which attracted the largest numbers, going up to 15,000, the maximum number to attend any single day-long fair in Jullundur tahsil. The only exception to this is the fair during the annual Dusahra festival of Hindus, for which a number of 40,000 people is given. However the time period is clearly recognised under the 'Date of Fair' as "lasts 10 days", which makes it difficult to estimate the numbers over a single day.<sup>14</sup> Either way, one gets an idea of the way members of all communities did, in fact attend these mammoth

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<sup>13</sup> *Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. XIV A, Jullundur District and Kapurthala State with Maps, 1904*, Lahore: The "Civil and Military Gazette" Press (Sole Contractors for printing to the Punjab Government), 1908. Part A, p.145.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p.145.

celebrations irrespective of the particular religion.<sup>15</sup> The fact that the fair was held in the winter months—the slackest period of the agricultural cycle— also accounts for the large numbers visiting it, as this also marks the time of maximum migration from rural to urban areas. As Neeladri Bhattacharya has demonstrated, ‘for many cultivators this was a period of leisure and festivities; for agricultural labourers it was a season of low wages, lack of employment and migration to urban areas’.<sup>16</sup>

The phenomenon of fairs also needs to be understood in the context of a Jalandhar which was only gradually undergoing urbanisation under the impact of colonialism. Fairs, given their sheer size and the numbers they attract are essentially rural phenomena, and their prevalence in the heart of Jalandhar town point to the fact that peasants visited the town for purposes of religious devotion and entertainment apart from more mundane reasons. The large presence of peasant-listeners then is what made the Harballabh acquire the epithet ‘Mela’. Echoing this archival description from the Census Handbook about fairs in general is the oral testimony of Mr. Ashwini Kumar, when he describes his childhood experiences of visiting the Harballabh Fair in the 1920s:

I remember the scenes of the Harballabh from my childhood: people would come in thousands to listen to the three nights of music; me and my brother would be especially sent from Lahore by our father, an avid music-lover. He had even retained a full time *mirasi* practitioner to teach us children the intricacies of classical music. At the Harballabh Fair, I clearly recollect how a peasant member of the audience stood up and interrupted the singing of one of the ustads, saying ‘twaadi eh waali shruti theek trahn nahi lagi’ (you didn’t strike that particular *shruti* very well.)<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>15</sup> See Annexure 1 to this chapter, where the valuable roster of all the principal fairs in Jullundur tahsil given in the *Punjab District Gazetteer* of 1904 has been reproduced.

<sup>16</sup> N. Bhattacharya ‘Agricultural Labour and Production: Central and South-East Punjab, 1870-1940’ in Gyan Prakash (ed.) *The World of the Rural Labourer*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1992, p.150. Mridula Mukherjee has also noted, in another context, the high level of mobilization amongst peasants in Jalandhar district, for example large numbers would turn up for political rallies around issues uniting peasants even without the ‘bait of darshan’: ‘thus at the Doaba Political Conference at Narur in April 1939, as many as 45,000 were said to have been present’. See Mukherjee, *Peasants in India’s Non-Violent Revolution: Practice and Theory*, New Delhi: Sage Series in Modern Indian History, 2004, p.188.

<sup>17</sup> Interview dated 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2011. Jalandhar has always been a densely populated area, and post-partition the most densely populated one of the Indian Punjab. Further, as per the 1971 census (a time when the Harballabh reached its zenith in terms of the prestige attached to a classical music festival), rural density per sq km was highest for Jalandhar tahsil at 353, as opposed to the other tahsils Nawanshahr (320), Phillaur (328) and Nakodar (233). See *Gazetteer of Jullundur*, 1980, pp.63-64. Thus, the claims of many commentators, about there being a large number of peasants at the fair, at least up till the 1970s seem grounded in a demographically conducive context.

This image of the anonymous yet well-informed peasant, aware of the intricacies of classical music, one who would travel on bullock cart from his far-off village with bed and bedding in tow so as to be immersed in music, is a crucial component through which the place of classical music in the life of the Punjab is understood. The ‘exception’ that classical music is for this region, it can only be fully redeemed and entrenched in the cultural ‘norm’ of the Punjab, when ratified as having an interested but also informed peasant audience of phenomenal numbers. In terms of sheer numbers however, the rural population has always been substantial in the Jalandhar tahsil, around 85% between 1881-1911.<sup>18</sup>

The roster of fairs given in the table reproduced in Annexure I below shows us how at the venue of the Devi Talab, where the Harballabh fair was held in winter, the ‘Hindu Dusahra’ festival was also held, which combined with a ‘horse and cattle fair’. This reference firstly establishes the importance of the Devi Talab as a site in the popular geography of the city related to fairs. More importantly, it demonstrates the fact that peasants and other rural folk were familiar with the spot, given the ‘horse and cattle fair’, and those keen on music would find it convenient to arrive a month or two later in December for the ‘Harballab, or Musician’s fair’. The extant evidence thus firmly establishes the importance of the Devi Talab as a physical site associated with popular Hinduism in Jalandhar and we can now examine the origins of the Harballabh fair itself.

### *Origins: A Mela of Jalandhar*

Despite these new compelling political boundaries of 1947 which negatively impacted the heritage of shared traditions of Jalandhar, its primary identity is seen to reside in its function as the place that hosts the Harballabh; being recognised as a major mecca of music in the Punjab. Before moving on to delineating the origins of the festival, I hope to identify the associations of the city of Jalandhar with music. An interview in October 2011 with Pt. Ramakant<sup>19</sup> yielded a most interesting anecdote which foregrounds the musical identity of Jalandhar:

We have heard that the Harballabh had such a name; I had gone to Norway where Fateh Ali Khan saab of Patiala gharana had come. So he had such a belief in Jalandhar—even though he

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<sup>18</sup> see Jullundur Distt. 1916 Census Handbook, Distribution of Population, Part B, p. x.

<sup>19</sup> Tabla maestro, veteran teacher of music at the old Kanya Maha Vidyalaya and a long time performer at the Harballabh, hailing from Nurmahal district close to Jalandhar.

had left India and had been residing in Pakistan—while talking he told us that once such a time came in Pakistan, when the President of the time was Zia ul Haque. He called everyone—all the artists who were there, he called Farida Khanum, Amanat Ali-Fateh Ali, Salamat-Nazakat Ali—all the artists—howsoever many there were, they all had been invited. He said, “look brothers, I cannot help you directly or legitimately, as I am trapped between the clergymen, but indirectly I will help you.” This was narrated by Fateh Ali Khan sahib to point out that he—Zia ul Haque—also was fond of singing. He was a resident of Jalandhar earlier, so Fateh Ali Khan sahib said that, since he was a resident of Jalandhar no, that is why he had such a fondness for music. Meaning the music of our Harballabh has such ‘charcha’(widely talked about), that whosoever is in Jalandhar, all of them, like people, when taking the name of Bombay say that it is filled with actors only. So they used to say, he who has not sung the Harballabh is not an artist. Our (elder) people used to say two things: they used to say that he who hasn’t seen Lahore, he has seen nothing. And he who hasn’t sung at the Harballabh, he isn’t ‘pass’ in music. Such was the tradition made by the Harballabh.<sup>20</sup>

The above oral narrative is strikingly powerful in establishing the place of Jalandhar as a locus for music. The first section of the anecdote, irrespective of whether it has any factual grounding, serves to establish how somebody from this city is so partial towards music that he vows to protect musicians despite being ensconced in the teeth of religious orthodoxy that wants music banned. Zia ul Haque, that extreme example of a theocratic state’s censorship of culture, is resurrected as a humane figure in this story only on the strength of him hailing originally from Jalandhar! The analogy which follows, that Jalandhar is to music what Bombay is to films is also interesting, for it shows us how this city is viewed as a centre of musical production and excellence at least by regional musicians and music lovers of the Punjab, if not others.

And the Harballabh is central to this musical identity of the city, with Pt. Ramakant narrating a popular belief transmitted to him by his elders of comparing an experience of the rich socio-cultural life of Lahore with the experience of singing at the Harballabh. Of course, Ramakant is himself a musician, also hailing from a family of musically-inclined forebears, and thus the Harballabh assumes extra importance in his case. For the one group by which this festival is most celebrated is the eclectic one of musicians from across northern India and Pakistan who have performed here in the course of the twentieth century. The exponent of the Gwalior gharana, L.K. Pandit,

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<sup>20</sup> Interview dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011. For the full interview in see the transcripts in Hindi attached at the end.

whose father and grandfather also performed here, with he and his daughter continuing this tradition, mentions:

In the social world of Punjab, this festival has had such an impact that at every other place in Punjab, raag sabhas began to be organised, and listening to raag-singing became a prevalent practice at weddings or any auspicious occasion. Even today in Delhi there are many such families settled from the Punjab, in whose weddings Pt. Krishna Rao ji had sung, this is what he told me.<sup>21</sup>

Apart from the Harballabh, therefore, there were many other music gatherings, fairs and festivals in places in southern and eastern Punjab such as those in Rahon, Sham Chaurasi, Ambala, Amritsar, Hoshiarpur, Badi Bassi, Udmud Tanda, Nakodar, Pathankot etc<sup>22</sup>, which were perhaps equally poised to become celebrated musical events. However, this fate seemed to be reserved for the Harballabh alone because of the unique geographical place it now occupied in colonial India, straddling the national and the local. A souvenir for the music festival from 1966 translates this distinctiveness of Jalandhar into an understanding which sees myriad other music festivals as arising subsequently, being inspired by the Harballabh:

The name 'Harballabh' was not only confined to the music festival at Devi Talab but this centre also inspired people of Amritsar, Rahon, Hoshiarpur, Nawanshehar and Gardiwala to hold Harballabh music festivals. But it is a matter of genuine pride and pleasure that Harballabh festival at Jullundur always has the biggest gathering because it has been drawing the top ranking Indian musicians.<sup>23</sup>

The historical and material circumstances which made it possible for a local music festival of Jalandhar to become renowned as a national one over time, are de-emphasised in the above paragraph, when all other music festivals are seen as coming up post-the Harballabh. The reasons behind the Harballabh drawing 'the biggest gathering because it has been drawing the top ranking Indian musicians' are multi-varied, and it is inadequate to offer ahistorical, supra-local, and mythic explanations. We instead need to do a micro-study of the features of this festival to understand why it became the way it did, paragon for the local in the guise of the national.

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<sup>21</sup> J.S. Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, Jalandhar: Sangeet Kala Manch, 2003, p.18.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, p.54.

<sup>23</sup> Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha Souvenir of 1971. The attachment of the name 'Harballabh' to other classical music conferences held in the Punjab was also mentioned by Pt. Ramakant, interview dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

The milieu from within which the ‘oldest festival of classical music in India’ took birth was one tremendously different from the present day one, because of the fact that the late 19th and early 20th century constituted a period that was a crucially important threshold in the musical and cultural life of India. While the era of India’s colonial modernity heralded wide-ranging changes in its polity, economy and society, the implications for its cultural norms and practice with all their ramifications have only recently been acknowledged. The major projects of Pt. V.N. Bhatkhande and Pt. V.D. Paluskar bore fruit post-1900, and the fact that the Harballabh began a short 25 years before the turn of the century makes it a unique case to study what the agendas for the modernisation of music entailed on the ground, in musical congregations and soirees, especially in those that existed prior to the inauguration of this new epoch of classical music.

Until now this shift has been largely ignored, though of course the figure of Pandit Paluskar has been much celebrated in the written and oral record of the Harballabh. I am therefore interested in establishing the character of the Harballabh in its ordinary moments, something which most journalistic and hagiographic accounts of the mela disregard altogether at worst, or at best treat as a mere stepping stone to the subsequent glory it achieved. The following December 2007 report from *The Tribune* is illustrative of the latter:

Baba Harivallabh was a famous classical music saint-artiste who believed in preaching bhakti through music, and felt that music was an important means of access to God...His parents died when he was quite young and he started living with his mother’s parents at Jalandhar... The Baba’s tanpura and kharavan are still lying at his Samadhi in Devi Talab Mandir, Jalandhar.

*In the beginning, only saints and musicians from Punjab used to take part in the sammelan but gradually those from all corners of the country started getting attracted to it...*<sup>24</sup>

This account of the festival begins in a brief biography of its founder, underscoring that its origins lay in his desire to “preach bhakti through music”. The report establishes Baba Harballabh in categorical terms, as a “famous classical music saint-artiste”. Through such a definitive label, Baba Harballabh becomes transformed into a

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<sup>24</sup> H. Khetal, “Harballabh Sangeet torch glows”, *Arts Tribune*, Friday, December 26, 2007, p.15. Emphases Added. The tanpura and kharavan are no longer lying there; it is said they were destroyed during an accident at the North Zone Cultural Centre of Patiala the body which took up the revival of the festival after 1989.

meta-musical figure. The possibility that Baba Harballabh might not actually be an accomplished or “famous classical music saint-artiste”, is thus ruled out completely, as also the very contingent origins of the festival, which in fact began as an annual death anniversary of his guru. This extremely generalised account of the festival ignores the specificities of its origins, glossing over many details, and painting Baba Harballabh as the mystic, accomplished musician, the past being coloured by the concerns of the present.<sup>25</sup> This is in stark contrast to the more rational and detached way in which the festival was reported in the period of its formation into a national music festival, in the decades of the 1910s, 1920s and 1930s.<sup>26</sup> Such a ‘popular history’ of the festival papers over very important features of the history of the Harballabh because the focus is on the ‘grand festival’ of classical music of *the present*, and hence the purpose of this article from 2007 is to base the Harballabh in a hallowed origin, overplaying the musical gifts of Baba Harballabh, as opposed to recognising the rich and diverse context in which the Mela began. Further, the rationale for its popularity and eventual emergence as a festival of music with national renown is located, ‘naturally’ in a golden past, which ignores the specific historical processes that transformed the festival from provincial mela to national sammelan.<sup>27</sup>

The origins of the festival lie in the tradition of singing *dhrupad* couplets in Sanskrit practised by the Brahmins in the Punjab, a devotional music genre associated with north Indian temples in general. Singing in the dhrupad style was more widely prevalent in the Punjab—with musicologists believing that Guru Nanak himself sang to the accompaniment of the rabab in a variant of dhrupad which survives as *partaal gaayaki* of the Sikh tradition today.<sup>28</sup> The Ramagarhi artisans from within Sikhism

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<sup>25</sup> The reference to the way in which the figure of Baba Harballabh is turned into a sacred figure, defined by his great qualities of ascetic devotion and musical sacrifice—in a trope that seems a later day addition—is found in innumerable instances.

<sup>26</sup> For more on the newspaper reports of this period see the section on ‘Music and Lahore: the Constitution of the Norms of Cultural Practice’ below.

<sup>27</sup> While the mela can said to have fully evolved into a sammelan proper only with the beginning of Mr Ashwini Kumar’s patronage (discussed in fuller detail in chapter 2), the decisive shift in this direction were made during the early 20th century. There were many reasons and many persons behind this shift, and in this chapter, I wish to delineate the full implications of what it meant.

<sup>28</sup> Partaal gaayaki of the Sikh tradition, having its affinities with dhrupad needs to be further understood, especially in terms of how far it flourished in the eastern Punjab in and around Jalandhar. More crucially, to what extent were partaal musicians also present at the Harballabh fair? Curiously enough, whether in Bawra, or in Shastri, or the souvenirs of the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha itself, the reference to Sikh participation is very scarce. Like the Muslims, but to an even lesser degree, the Sikh musical heritage is simply not talked about when speaking of the musical milieu from which the Harballabh sprang forth. According to contemporary commentators and surviving practitioners of the partaal gaayaki genre, this trend has not seen commensurate patronage from official, panthic Sikhism

were also proficient in dhrupad singing but also sang more light forms of music.<sup>29</sup> Further, Muslim practitioners of dhrupad have been also extremely prominent throughout the Punjab. Another very vibrant tradition was that practised by the *mirasis*—who were extremely versatile and were adept at performing a range of music across genres including folk, qawwali, bhajans, and khayal renditions.<sup>30</sup> These traditions of music in the Punjab are lesser known than the more widely recognised folk music played on the *tumba* by Jat Sikh peasants or the music of the sufi *pirs*.

This then was the musical context in which a concatenation of circumstances came together to inaugurate the Harballabh Rag Mela. The Harballabh festival grew out of what was originally an annual commemoration of the erstwhile mahant of the Devi Talab *sakti-peeth* site by his successor, Baba Harballabh. Swami Tuljagiri himself was a respected mahant of this sacred spot, next-in-line to Swami Hemgiri, who came from Hoshiarpur and established himself as the *gaddi nasheen* mahant of this site which had hitherto been apparently occupied by Muslim saints Shah Sikandar and Bhure Khan. Having vanquished the so-called Muslim ‘threat’, the *patta* of the Devi Talab land was given to Hemgiri by Maharaja Ranjit Singh, which consolidated the Devi Talab site as firmly Hindu.<sup>31</sup> Hemgiri’s successor was Tuljagiri who initiated many rituals marking out the *sakti-peeth* site as an important ritual spot in the sacred geography of upper caste Hindus of Jalandhar in particular. These developments

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either, leading to marginalisation from within as well. One could hypothesise that the impulses towards modernisation, social reform, homogenisation of the Sikh community in a process described eloquently by Oberoi 2006, along with the concomitant definition of raagi and liturgical music led to rigidification of the boundaries between such music and the *partaal* variety. Springing forth from the Sikh tradition, *partaal* was also left behind from what was increasingly being defined in narrow ways, due to the perseverance of Pt. Bhatkhande, Pt. Paluskar and others, as the canon of a pan-North Indian classical music.

<sup>29</sup> As far as the Sikh gurus and music is concerned, Guru Ramdas used to play the *sarinda*, which is a stringed folk instrument similar to lutes or fiddles, played with a bow. The fifth Guru Arjan Dev is renowned for having set the holy book, the *Guru Granth Sahib* to raga music. I am grateful to Mr. Naresh Kumar for the information and knowledge regarding the types of music prevalent in the Punjab, discussed in this paragraph.

<sup>30</sup> P. Tandon, *Punjabi Century: 1857-1947*, London: Chatto and Windus, 1961, pp.79. On *mirasis* in general in Hindustani music, see D. Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India: The Organisation of an Artistic Tradition*, New Delhi: Manohar, 1980, pp. 90-135.

<sup>31</sup> K. Shastri, in his detailed history of Jalandhar, entitled *Trigartapradesh Jalandhar: Aitihāsik aivam Dharmik Drishtikona* Mai Heeran Gate, Jalandhar: Bharatiya Sanskrit Bhawan, 1998, on p.105, gives the following account of Baba Hemgiri. Apparently, he was called from Bajwara (Hoshiarpur) in order to liberate the *sakti peeth* from the encroachment of Muslim *pir* Shah Sikandar and Bhure Khan. In order to further consolidate the site as Hindu, Hemgiri received support from Ranjit Singh’s diwan, Lala Lakshman Das, whose army stayed on this site for 6 months, and helped the ‘*talab*’ to be filled with water again. For a similar account, see also J.S.Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.10-12.



popularised the site, with *saadhush* and *sants* now arriving in large numbers.<sup>32</sup> It was in this immediate milieu where a form of devotional *dhrupad* music was practised by Brahmin priests that this music festival was to emerge.

In the winter of 1875, the talented and blind dhrupad musician born in Bajwara (district Hoshiarpur), Baba Harballabh, who was the mahant of the sakti-peeth site at the Devi Talab, invited other musicians, especially dhrupad singers of the region in an endeavour to honour the memory of his guru and preceding mahant, Swami Tuljagiri.<sup>33</sup> As per Dr. Joginder Singh Bawra<sup>34</sup>, the principal biographer of the festival, and one who based his 1998 published book on oral testimonies from the 1970s onwards, it is not entirely true that Baba Harballabh was an accomplished musician, as it has been made out in the above December 2007 report and in numerous, ever-burgeoning instances from the 1960s onwards. As he puts it, while describing the first festival held to commemorate the memory of Swami Tulja Giri:

In 1875, Harivallabh ji organised a bhandara on the occasion of the first death anniversary of his guru. In order to celebrate this death anniversary, according to the regulations of the sage-community, many saints/hermits and great souls etc. were invited. Swami ji also had a great love for music. He could also sing a little bit of the dhrupad genre. *It is believed that he had received musical education from Shri Duni Chand.* On this occasion, along with a sermon, some programme of classical music also took place.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid. Shastri paints a very detailed picture of the function of this spot for Vedic prayers, holy dips in the Devi Talab tank, *janeu* ceremonies etc. Unfortunately we do not have other sources or perspectives on the history of this site.

<sup>33</sup> 1875 is accepted as the most likely date for the beginning of the mela, and mentioned as such by Bawra, Shastri and the official website of Shri Baba Harballabh Mahasabha. The only exception is the 1911 issue of Indian Music Journal, according to which the date could be 1878, for it publishes a notice from Pandit Tolo Ram, the then Mahant, that the 34<sup>th</sup> Sammelan would take place in December 1911. Quoted in Dard Neuman, "The Production of Aura in the Gramophone Age of the "live" performance", *Asian Music*, Summer-Fall, 2009, pp. 105. I am grateful to my teacher Mr Naresh Kumar for this valuable reference.

<sup>34</sup> The late Dr. Joginder Singh Bawra, born in 1936 in Montgomery district of west Punjab (now Pakistan) was a wonderful combination of musician, musicologist, teacher and in his later years, public relations expert for the Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan Mahasabha, apart from being a classmate and guru-bhai of the late ghazal singer Jagjit Singh. He also held a Master's degree in Urdu and a B.Ed. degree, apart from his degrees in music. This music teacher retired in 1994 as Head of the Music Department at the Government College of Education Dharamshala, Jalandhar and Patiala, after having served an illustrious career in music education in the Punjab Educational Services (I) spanning 3 decades. Jalandhar resident since 1948, PhD holder from the Faculty of Music at University of Delhi and author of 5 books, Dr. Bawra passed away in 2003, the year of publication of his second book on the Harballabh. Both his works has provide us with a wonderfully comprehensive picture of the Harballabh Music Festival, and are the main pillar on which this thesis is based.

<sup>35</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.22. Emphasis added.

The reference above describes the precise historical circumstances in which a musical sitting of singers and mystics was initiated by Baba Harballabh. In this account we come across the fact that Baba Harballabh began an impromptu meeting of musicians to collect together and sing, on the occasion of his guru's death anniversary or *barsi*.<sup>36</sup> By the next year, in January 1876, the festival underwent further changes because many musicians from across the Punjab, such as Miyan Ahmed Baksh of Phillour, Muhammad Baksh of Hariyana (distt. Hoshiarpur), Vilayat Ali and Meera Baksh of Shyam Chourasi gharana, and musicians from Jadla, Amritsar and Lahore also joined in.<sup>37</sup> Across the oral and written record, we hear of how the primary audience of this festival was comprised of mainly saints, ascetics--*sadhus*, *sants*, *fakirs*, *pirs*--who collected for this annual mystic mela, to listen and sing to music for purposes of *bhakti* and *ibadat*, to commune with the divine. Oral testimonies from the exponents of the Punjab's Talwandi gharana of *dhrupad* singing<sup>38</sup> such as Bhai Baldeep Singh in India and Ayesha Mahmood in Pakistan maintain that the first sitting in 1875 occurred when a *nazrana* of one and a half rupees was offered to Miyan Kalandhar Baksh Talwandiwale by Baba Harballabh. Thus, by 1876 this became more than an impromptu gathering, beginning to take the shape of a regional music festival, with musicians from all over the Punjab region coming and performing. By continuing the musical commemorations in memory of his guru and initiating an annual *mela* of music, Baba Harballabh broadened the range and base of what was earlier sung at this site. The fact that Baba Harballabh himself passed away (c.1885) at the same time in the year as his own guru Tuljagiri in whose memory he had begun the festival, led Pt. Tolo Ram, the mahant who was next in line, to intensify further the musical leanings of the annual *barsi*.

The following paragraph, describing the performers in the context of the earliest musical sittings, establishes the cruciality of *dhrupad*, *dhamar* and *tappa* at the mela:

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<sup>36</sup> The importance of this festival as annual religious occurrence is reflected in the fact that the dates of the mela were, and still are, mentioned in the annual *jantris* or calendars of *sadhus* which enjoy an all-India circulation. This information was provided by Rakesh Dada, Treasurer of the Harivallabh Sangeet Mahasabha, in an interview dated 17<sup>th</sup> October, 2011. See Annexure below.

<sup>37</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p. 23.

<sup>38</sup> For more information on the Talwandi gharana of *dhrupad* singing, see Paintal *op.cit.* pp.164-177. Paintal does not discuss the most prominent *present-day* exponents of this gharana who are based in Lahore, Pakistan, the students of Ustad Muhammad Hafeez Khan. For a detailed discussion of these exponents, see K. Basra and D. R. Widdess, 'Dhrupad in Pakistan: the Talwandi gharana', *Dhrupad*, Annual 4, 1989, pp.1-10. For a shorter account, see R. Sanyal and R. Widdess, *Dhrupad: Tradition and Performance in Indian Music*, SOAS Musicology Series, England: Ashgate, 2004, pp.30-31.

Miyan Meera Baksh used to sing the *tappa* well. Muhammad Husaun and Udho Khan were accomplished in *dhrupad* singing, Ahmed Baksh was famous for the singing of *dhamaar*. Everyday he would sing (Raga) Bhairavi in the morning, (Raga) Basant in the evening and bihag at night. His Bhairavi, the *sthaayi* of which was: “Musafir son riha chalna see door/ Traveller is sleeping (?), he had to travel far”. In Raga Basant he would sing

Tu ghar aa ja ve sham mera soona des/ You come home, Krishna, my land is empty

Sang ki sakhiyan phagwa khelat saari/ My girl-friends all play in the phagwa

Main kyun kar kheloon mera kant pardes/Why shall I play, my kant is away/abroad

His throat was so melodious that people would listen to him again and again and would refuse to get up. Udhdho Khan of Rampur was a devotee of Harivallabh ji. Every year he would join in the anniversary. He used to sing *dhrupad*. Miyan Muhammad Hussain of Haryana was also famous for the *Dhrupad* genre. Every morning he would sing Raga Hindol and Raga Bilawal. The *dhrupad* in Rag Hindol was very dear to the Swami ji also. He used to listen to it from him (Muhammad Hussain) every year:

Hai tu hi aadi anant sakal jagat karanhaar tu hi.

Aadi tu anaadi tu ved path brahm tu hi.

Vyaapak Raho Sakal Jagat Naari Kant.<sup>39</sup>

Referring to a second composition in the same Raga, Bawra tells us how it was composed by Naath Raam of Batala and disseminated to the Haryana musicians by Baba Harballabh. This instance brings to the fore the important centre of musical exchange which this mela must have been (a major attribute of its regional fame in the early years), with musicians coming forth and performing in an atmosphere of camaraderie, marked with a mandate for singing for the divine, for a mystic cross-communal purpose of *bhakti* and *ibadat*. A small vignette, which captures the lyrics of a *dhrupad* composition, illustrates this cosmopolitan, inter-religious sphere very vividly:

In Rag Bilawal, Miyan Muhammad Hussain would usually sing the following *dhrupad*:

Sahsar gopi ek kanhaiya, ya dekhon main raam

Dehar mein maseet mein but khane mein maykhane mein

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<sup>39</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.23-24.

Koi to bole kalma nabi ka, koi bulawe ram ki ja

As is evident, a richer variety of dhrupad itself—beyond the limited dhrupad music of primarily Sanskrit couplets performed as temple music—came to be performed at this site, given the participation of so many accomplished Dhrupad musicians from across the Punjab, reflecting the eclectic traditions of singing of the Punjab. Thus, though the specific locale of the origins of the Harballabh Rag Mela was a particularly Hindu one, the vehicle of music drew together musicians and mystics from beyond the pale of Hinduism to pave the way for a rich, eclectic, diverse and inclusive sphere of mystical music performance to emerge.

The eclectic sentiments in the above dhrupad composition echo the larger context and space in which the Harballabh took place in these times: as a mela, a fair, with all the conviviality, flexibility and celebration which define that phenomenon/institution. Attracting a veritable cross section of people from across the Doaba region and beyond, because this was a mela, people came for the general air of festivity as much as, or in fact even more than, for the particularly classical music sung at the Harballabh. Describing the impromptu shops that would spring up outside the Devi Talab, Bawra tells us:

When we used to go outside Devi Talab, below the road, towards the temple, then first of all the jheever<sup>40</sup> along with his group would be playing taals (rhythmic metres) on the ghadas (utensils of mud constructed to keep water cool). A little away, dhadi musicians would be singing along with dhad and sarangi. Further removed would be yet another group wherein poets of Punjabi could be heard doing *baintbaazi*. If at one spot bhajans were being sung, the qawwali could be heard at another. At night there also used to be a rasleela. Classical music was anyway its central attraction. People would enjoy whatever form of music appealed to them... Devi Talab used to be filled with water, in which Desraaj would row his boat. He used to ferry people from one shore to the other for the price of a ticket (information received directly from Faqir Chand Kapoor himself). Small-small shops would also be put up. In each direction the sight of a vast mela could be seen. Later on all of this stopped and rested on the

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<sup>40</sup> Given the fact that 'ghadas' (utensils of mud constructed to keep water cool) are being used, the reference most likely over here is to the '*Jhinwar*, or water-carrier' who is described by colonial ethnographers as the one who 'supplies water to each house, night and morning, also in the harvest field (for which he is specially paid), and at weddings and funerals when he generally gets moderate fees in coin. He is also expected to help carry the bride's *dooly*. For ordinary work he gets grain at each harvest, calculated in various ways, and usually is supplied with daily food by the villagers turn and turnabout.' *Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. XIV A, Jullundur District and Kapurthala State with Maps, 1904*, Lahore: The "Civil and Military Gazette" Press (Sole Contractors for printing to the Punjab Government), 1908, p.212. Emphasis in original.

central focus of classical music. Slowly and gradually, the sages and saints also stopped coming.<sup>41</sup>

A similar and even more succinct articulation comes our way from Krishnanda Shastri:

50 years ago the atmosphere at the devi talab would become musical. Somewhere qawwalis are happening, somewhere bhajans are being sung, somewhere classical music is taking place, at another a competition of couplets is occurring. Did you ever see such an environment at the Devi Talab today? *Where have those people gone, who used to establish such an atmosphere?* Today you will nowhere find one learned in the lore of the *baints*. The earth of the Devi Talab would be surrounded with echos of the waves of swaras. The public used to be in an environment of enthusiasm. Since 1936 I have been continuously seeing this mela.<sup>42</sup>

The reference to the performance of poetry, and especially the baintbaazi of Punjabi poets establishes this place firmly in a regional Punjabi idiom, unlike the sanitised picture one has from later reports, of a concert that is devoted solely to music. More important are the reference to the *qawwali* and *bhajan* singing groups, painting a picture of the Harballabh for us where common folk, unversed in the intricacies of the more classical genres, could indulge in these more popular forms of music and devotion, during a time devoted to the celebration of music. Even more interesting is the panorama of the Devi Talab grounds, with the sacred 17th century tank (known as the talab of the devi), being utilised in a very functional way as a means for people to get across from one side of the grounds to the other. This establishes for us the important difference between past and present, underscoring for us the difference in the temple/Hindu sacred site of the early 20th century and that of the latter. In the present day context, for example, it is unthinkable to imagine the talab to be used for something utilitarian, or, indeed even for the purpose of the entertainment of being ferried to and fro. This opens up further questions regarding the connotations the space at the Devi Talab temple grounds has acquired today, which are dealt with in Chapter 3.

Related to the origins of the Harballabh in a mela-context was the way in which it grew to be 'a festival of Jalandhar'. A range of affective ties bound the populace of

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<sup>41</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p. 36. Elsewhere Bawra describes the mela-like character in equally imaginative detail, laying focus on the eclecticism of the music performed, see *Ibid.*, p.26.

<sup>42</sup> K. Shastri, 'Parishisht: Uttari Bhaarat ki Mahaan Sangeet Sabha Ek Sant Parampara', a 12 page annexe document to his book, p.141. Emphases Added.

this town and surrounding areas to the running and organisation of this 4-day long 'feast of music'. Recalling the mela in its early twentieth century avatar, Krishnananda Shastri gives us the following picture of geography of musical sittings and of the ambience of the mela:

Those old people who would have seen this spot in their own lives, would well remember that solid big and tall stairs were there on this spot... In front of the Samadhi on an open space, listeners would sit. Along with this itself, in the outer zone of the Devi Talab, a stage used to be made by putting chaandni etc. Here musicians would sing bhajans in the afternoon. Those who weren't fond of pakke raag, they used to enjoy this music. The people of Jalandhar know, on the occasion of the mela, the shops of the halvaaiys would be decorated, while sweets and puris would also be made here. Those who would not want to eat the food of the langar they used to eat here. On stalls, peanuts, *revris*, *chilgozas* etc would keep getting sold. This place would take the form of a complete mela.<sup>43</sup>

Recreating the ambience of the festival in a similar vein for the pre-1930s era, Bawra tells us:

Along with the sangeet mela, from 26 to 29 December, yagyas used to take place in which many kinds of food would be prepared. For four days, poor people used to enjoy the langar. The langar would be on from 5 o'clock in the morning till 10 o'clock at night. Music-lovers coming from outside would get their food from here itself. The material for the langar was provided for via donations. Seth Bissumal and Lala Gursahay Mal from Amritsar were great devotees of Padit Tolo Ram. On this occasion, apart from donating the raw material for the food, they would bring along with themselves clothes, warm blankets, warm shirts, shoes, fruits etc and distribute these to the poor and the saadhus.

The residents of Jalandhar also donated in plenty. Grams, plain wheat-flour, semolina, fine wheat flour, sugar, clarified butter, etc. would collect in such vast proportions that it would be used even 6 months later. The villagers and the milk-sellers would come share milk. Tea and milk would be available throughout.... 6 cooks would do sewa from 4 o'clock in the morning until 10 o'clock. The same number would continue from 10 o'clock until 8 o'clock at night. *Those keen on drinking tea would reach at 4 am itself.* There used to be a rush of those interested in food all day long. The langar would be shut down only between 4 and 6 pm in the evening and from 10 o'clock at night until 4 am in the morning. Halwa, puri, roti, vegetables, tea, milk would be ceaselessly distributed. For the artistes, food would be prepared separately here itself. Pandit Ishar Das, who was a relative of Rai Bahadur ji, and greatly respected Pt. Vishnu Digamber used to take responsibility for the organisation. Sant Ram

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<sup>43</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.124.

Ahluwalia (owner of Sant Cinema) would himself monitor the langar. Prior to the distribution of the food, he himself would taste it as a check.<sup>44</sup>

As per interviews and fieldwork done in the month of October, people from humbler backgrounds also contributed to the mela in their own little ways. Pt. Ramakant, a famous tabla player of the Doab, who retired as the seniormost teacher of music (tabla) at the Kanya Mahavidyalaya of Jalandhar, recounts,

Now I will talk to you about the time before 1947. Our maternal grandfather used to come to the harballabh sangeet mela...sammelan. At that time the character and colour of this festival was a little different. So during that time, even if someone wasn't a music lover, he would come just like that and after hearing the harballabh mela, these elderly people would go to the spot where the guests would be. And they would always bring along something or the other for the artistes who used to stay there. In those times, there were no toothbrushes, so our maternal grandfather would bring *datun* from the village for them.<sup>45</sup>

The other memoir comes from Dr. Monica Sharma, also from a socio-culturally upper caste background like Pt. Ramakant, who recalls her maternal grandmother telling stories of how vessels and utensils from their home would be sent to the Devi Talab, in which food for the *langar* would be prepared.<sup>46</sup> Apart from this, several other informants shared how wheat flour and oil would be donated by people for food preparation.

As opposed to the emphasis on the availability and consumption of tea at the *langar* which Bawra emphasises in his imaginative reconstruction of the mela in a roseate past (which, moreover is undated) we have a more plausible description of the nature of the langar in the testimony of the famed musician and disciple of Pt. V.D. Paluskar, Onkarnath Thakur. Thakur's memories, as recorded by Bawra, emphasise the consumption of milk as opposed to tea, given that tea-drinking caught on in full strength in India only post-1910s (get date right) 1930s.

Shops would be set up from the Tanda Road Gaushala (cow shelter) to the Devi Talab. On the corner of the talab as well there would be shops set up. A free *langar* as well as a milk *langar* would also be on. Village folk would bring grains and milk and a very huge *bhandara* would be set up. Less of tea and most often milk alone would be served. Hermits, recluses, *dhuni*-warming saints would come in large numbers and very often the *gaddi nasheen* mahants

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<sup>44</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.26-27. Emphasis added.

<sup>45</sup> Interview dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

<sup>46</sup> Personal communication 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2011.

would arrive astride their elephants. From the side of the temple, food for the saints, wood along with feed for the horses and elephants would be given.<sup>47</sup>

The references to these big food *langars* is thus important, and underlines for us the devotional way in which people of Jalandhar supported the festival, very much within the matrix of devotion to a local saint, on a very sacrally charged *sakti-peeth* site, and elaborates the ties of the festival with popular religion. Further, Muslim traders and owners of warehouses donated the wood for the *dhunas* for atleast 50-60 *sadhus* which lasted for a week and also for the preparation of food in the langar up until 1946. According to Shastri, all of this was donated for free.<sup>48</sup> The city of Jalandhar in any case was renowned for its sufi saints and their many *mazaars*, the foremost of which was that of Imam Nasir, the celebration of its *urs* mela being a major event, as already described above.<sup>49</sup> Sir Richard Temple's three volume study entitled *The Legends of the Punjab* has a 40 page long chapter which records the songs and oral traditions of 'The Saints of Jalandhar'.<sup>50</sup> Given all such connected references as also the record of oral memory, it would thus be fallacious to postulate that the only people who patronised and participated in the festival were Hindus alone, the impression one gets at the Devi Talab today.

Nonetheless, it is this characteristic of an organically voluntary organisation and patronage of the festival which find expression time and again. This was the reason why up until 1932 at least, as per the information provided to Bawra by Jagannath Parti, the first General Secretary of the Sangeet Mahasabha, there was no need to go around hunting for funds and subscriptions to the Mahasabha fund:

According to Jagannath Parti himself, until 1932, no kind of donation etc. would be collected from anyone. People would themselves come and bring the necessary items. By 1935, this gathering, rather than being a music soiree, had become a raga fair. Its fame spread in all four corners. To such an extent, that the space became less and limited. Close by there was a small cottage with two rooms in which the artistes used to stay. This writer has himself seen how

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<sup>47</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp. 28-29. Bawra's uncritical assumption of the presence of tea-drinking in the days of yore (dateless, at best) is a good example of how his experience of the langar from the 1950s through to the last decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century colours his treatment of the past.

<sup>48</sup> Shastri, p.114.

<sup>49</sup> 'Fairs and religious gatherings', *Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. XIV A, Jullundur District and Kapurthala State with Maps, 1904*, Lahore: The "Civil and Military Gazette" Press (Sole Contractors for printing to the Punjab Government), 1908. Part A, pp.144-146.

<sup>50</sup>R.C. Temple, *Legends of the Panjab*, Vol.3, Bombay: Education Society's Press and London: Trubner & Co., [1884-1900].



artistes would stay at the homes of their friends. Thakur Onkarnath, Pandit Jasraj, Shrimati Gangu Bai Hangal, Shri Zaakir Hussain etc. used to stay in the Sant cinema.<sup>51</sup>

The way in which the food material for the langar would not be asked for, but instead the reverential people themselves used to deliver, similarly until 1932 never once did the need for asking for money arise. Music lovers and charitable men would give according to their status and reverence. Around the temple, small-small collecting urns would be put up. People coming from outside would contribute donations in them covertly. This much money was sufficient for the artistes.<sup>52</sup>

The issue of volition is central here, for it describes volition in terms of a devotional *sewa*. The foremost example of this is of Faqir Chand Kapoor, the first and indefatigable treasurer (so zealous in his collection drives, that one long-time Harballabhite described him, in a play of words, as “Kapoorchand Faqir”, so deeply had he imbibed the role of alms-seeking faqir<sup>53</sup>) of the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha had familial connections with Tolo Ram, who had named him as an infant.<sup>54</sup> Reporting on some memories collected from Faqir Chand Kapoor, Bawra writes how:

Fakir Chand Kapoor himself shared that Seth Gurusahay Mal Kapur of Amritsar would bring along 5-6 tins of pure clarified butter, 67 sacks of wheat flour for the langar, and blankets and kurtas for distribution. He greatly revered Pt. Tolo Ram ji. As prasaad we would get boondi, kasaar, maththi. Pandit Tolo Ram would go himself upto Ahmedabad, Bombay, Poona, meet the artistes, ask them to come to the fair, and bring money as well.<sup>55</sup>

Though the narrative has been couched in terms of volition, the real issue is one of the simplicity and non-mercenary character of music. The fact that the professionalization and concomitant commercialisation of music has not taken place is what is celebrated, though the overt terms emphasise individual volition in the interests of the mela. Similar to the above paragraph in its celebration of the affective intimacy between host and guest, patron and artiste is the following description, when Bawra speaks about the hospitality extended to the musicians during the ‘good old days’—an unspecified period existing anytime in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century:

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<sup>51</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.26

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.28. According to Krishnananda Shastri, the date upto which no funds were required was 1942. Shastri, *op.cit.*, p.125.

<sup>53</sup> Interview with Pt. Ramakant, in Jalandhar, 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011. See Annexure.

<sup>54</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p. 17. Here Bawra presents a brief biography of Pt.Tolo Ram through the narratives of the father of Faqir Chand Kapoor, Lala Teerth Ram Kapoor a great devotee of the mahant.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*,p.35.

Sitting in the kitchen-house, the musicians used to eat pure vaishnav food. For them, the kitchen-house was prathak. Mahant ji would himself take care of the sewa rendered to them. Even the question of residing in hotels did not arise. The artistes would stay at Devi Talab itself. Tents would be organised for those coming from outside and for the musicians. The princely states of Kapurthala and Kashmir would help out with the organisation of the tambus. If there was a greater need for space, then rooms would be taken at the Doaba Arya High School. Pandit Vishnu Digambar and Thakur Onkarnath would stay in the rooms of this school only. Thanks to the influence of Shri Devi Chand, the princely state of Kapurthala would send 20 volunteers to set up the tents.<sup>56</sup>

The picture one gets is of a self-sufficient golden age of the Harballabh, and while much of what Bawra says might, in actual fact be true, it would be problematic to view the virtues of individual volition he is celebrating here as being a monopoly of the past. As much as Pt. Tolo Ram, Faqir Chand Kapoor, Jagannath Parti, Ashwini Kumar, the present-day inheritors of their mantle such as Purnima Beri, Arun Kapoor, A. S. Datta and Rakesh Dada (among many others, including the late Dr. Bawra himself) are no less zealous in their individual volitions towards making the festival a success. According to Pandit Ramakant, another stalwart musician of the Doaba with a long-standing familial connection with the Harballabh, one need not view the present necessarily in terms of decay. What then is Bawra really celebrating? The crucial difference between present and past, I postulate, lies in that other dimension, the change in the larger political economy of classical music.

Be that as it may, these stories of people supporting and sustaining the festival through their contribution to various aspects of the organisation and running of the festival again are important for they offer us an important insight into the organic character of the festival in the early days (in opposition to the changes post-1950s), as available in the collective memories of the people of Jalandhar and the musicians associated with the Harballabh.

In the above descriptions we also get a sense of the way in which different actors across the spectrum contributed to the entire effort of feeding and hospitality for the musicians and those who had travelled from outside to the festival. Those contributing to the success of the festival ranged across social hierarchies, from the princes of

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<sup>56</sup> Bawra *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp. 27. These descriptions form a fairly common refrain. Elsewhere, Bawra tells us: 'every year on the occasion of the sammelan sadhus, sants, sannyasi, mahatmas etc would be invited and food, wood and necessities would be supplied to them.' *Ibid.*, pp.23-24.

Kapurthala and Kashmir, who sent men and material for the setting up of the tents, to the big merchants and traders of Amritsar and Jalandhar, as well as the common residents of Jalandhar and surrounding areas. In Onkarnath Thakur's account quoted above there is an interesting statement, "very often the *gaddi nasheen* mahants would arrive astride their elephants" which gains full significance only once it is placed in the context of royal norms and customs as well; by arriving on elephants, the *gaddi nasheen* mahants are making a statement about their status during an important event central to the glory of the site. This is borne out by the interesting memoir of Teerth Ram Kapoor (father of Faqir Chand Kapoor, and a devotee of Pt. Tolo Ram) wherein he shares with Bawra that "the wazir of Kapurthala, Aziz Bakhsh used to bring along elephants and come"<sup>57</sup> Onkarnath Thakur's memoir also gives us an important insight into the changing dynamics of the physical space of the Devi Taalab grounds:

There was a temple at the corner of the talab. Next to the mandir a pandaal would be set up that would be quite big. Listeners would sit in a great number. Later on this mela began to be organised in the middle of the dry Devi Talab. At that time trees and plants were in plenty on these grounds and nearby was the hospice of Shah Sikandar. *At that time there was no wall between the Devi Talab and the mazaar. Baba Hemgiri and Shah Sikandar's shrine (mazaar) were constructed close to each other only.* Here, a wrestling ground for the jhoomal (?) of wrestlers was also there. There was also a halti here. On one side a poetical gathering of baintbaazi would also establish itself.<sup>58</sup>

What is interesting here is the way in which Onkarnath Thakur implicitly points to the fact of there being no walls between the shrine of Shah Sikandar (who in the official narrative celebrating the legendary powers of Baba Hemgiri, is defined as a low usurper, across the sources discussed here) and that of Baba Hemgiri (mahant of Devi Talab shaki peeth site). Further, in an intriguing slip from his conventional purified Hindi, Bawra describes Baba Hemgiri's shrine in Urdu terms as "mazaar" (not its Hindi equivalent, the usual "samadhi"), in a rare and wonderful linguistic clubbing together of the two adversarial Hindu and Muslim saints.<sup>59</sup> Instead of seeing it as a mere slip of language, this instance shows us how traces of the shared past, despite its share of antagonisms, crop up and survive the internal, ideological filters/censors of the chroniclers. Onkarnath Thakur must have indeed emphasised the absence of walls,

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<sup>57</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.17

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 28-29.

<sup>59</sup> It is on very few exceptions that Bawra takes a detour from the pure almost officialese Hindi of his prose and takes a flight into words from Urdu/Hindustani.

for this almost unconscious note of upholding a semi-syncretic tradition to creep in so unequivocally. It is important to underline this, because it is a small example in the extensive writings of Bawra on the Hemgiri-Shah Sikandar conflict, which, at all other times, like Shastri's account, is written in carefully antagonistic terms.

Therefore, the concept and lived experiences of this music mela offer us a possibility of imagining an alternative public sphere of culture—not without its problems or hierarchies, especially in its marked exclusion of women, something recognised even up to the 1960s in official sources<sup>60</sup>—where musicians, mystics and music enthusiasts from varied backgrounds gather to revel in the flow of music. This conception, though grounded in a celebration of the notion of Punjabiya (which some might argue is yet another kind of myth) and music's original *saanjhi virasat*, stands up to the tyranny of the contra-conception, very prevalent in the accounts of the Harballah.

This other conception perpetuates an image of the north or Punjab (in the realm of music) where it becomes endowed with an ancient, golden and legendary lineage of sacred “Hindu” music, corrupted by subsequent ‘invaders’, read the ‘Muslim’. Bawra constructs an image of the region that establishes its links to the larger Indian nation, restoring Punjab's fragile self-image of being a culturally endowed centre of civilization in defiance of the popular expression that it is “a land of only agriculture and no culture”:

On the basis of the evidence and proofs provided by the searches of history, light has been thrown on the fact that the creation of world's most ancient religious book, 'Rig Veda' was done on this holy land. The ancient name of the Punjab, 'Brahmavarta' is a symbol of the fact that *first and foremost the Creator of the world, Brahma ji, created this land and it was here that the rays of human civilisation first burst forth, whose light spread all over the world.*

The earth of the Punjab being excessively fertile, gold in the form of grain is produced here. This “bird of gold” had to face the negative ambitions of the foreign attackers. Due to this, the art of music wasn't able to develop in the Punjab as much as it did in South India.

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<sup>60</sup> For a fuller discussion of the issue of women's participation at the Harballah and the gendered space that it constitutes, see ‘The performative space at the Harballah’ below. Secondly it is restrictive and colonial Punjabi in the sense that women are excluded, a feature that is conspicuous as late as 1961, when the Gazetteer for Jalandhar enlists “All, mostly men” under the column for earmarked for the composition of the audience. See R.L. Anand (Superintendent of Census Operations and Enumeration Commissioner, Punjab), *Census of India 1961*, Punjab District Census Handbook No.10, Jullundur District. Chandigarh: Government of Punjab, 1966, p.121. The total number of visitors to the Harballah is estimated by the census at 60,000, which also notes that ‘A poetical symposium is also organised’ as part of the festival. Ibid.

The swaras from the flute of Lord Krishna and the rabab of Guru Nanak Dev ji echoed here, while various gurus, saints and prophets accepted music as an instrument of divine devotion and sang the praises of the Lord by singing their devout compositions in sweet music. *The fact that the 'baani' (voice of God) is received in the Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy book) in 62 raagas, is a mark of the pedestal on which the Gurus placed music and the importance they attached to it.*<sup>61</sup>

As is evident from Bawra's formulation, it is on the Punjab's 'holy land' where the Rig Veda was composed, and further, the Punjab itself enjoyed a priority, way above the rest, in being created and called into existence by Brahma, the Creator. Having established the origins of the Punjab in a firmly Hindu universe, Bawra goes on to build the more conventional narrative of a prosperity that is time immemorial, and holding the resulting invasions responsible for the subsequent poverty of the development of music as opposed to South India. This contrast with South India, is something that pre-figures in the arguments put forth by many Orientalist writings on music in North and South India.<sup>62</sup> Further, the sacrality of music, beginning in a Hindu universe, finds its ultimate fruition in the efforts of the Sikh gurus who set the verses of the Guru Granth Sahib to raga-music. For Bawra, then, though to differing degrees, music had a glorious past and Punjab occupies pride of place in the Vedic origins of Indian music, which for him identifies with "Hindu" music.<sup>63</sup> The ingenuity of Bawra's formulation shows us how in order to make sense of the Harballabh in the larger national context he needs to play up the prevalent stereotype of Punjab as culturally backward—the specific reason conveniently being the recurring invasions.

It is this reasoning that ignores the substantial contribution of the sufi *pirs*, but especially of the Muslim musicians to the Punjab musical repertoire. Nowhere in this formal scheme, thus, is mention made of the substantial contribution of the sufis to the Punjab musical repertoire, or indeed the non-canonical Sikh musicians (such as Ramdasis or Partaal practitioners). While I am quoting translations and not the text in

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<sup>61</sup> Bawra 2003, p. 48. Emphases added.

<sup>62</sup> Margaret Cousins in her 1935 work *Music of the Occident and Orient* tells us, "In India, life is religion and religion is life. Until the advent of the Muhammadans into India, there was no secular type of music. In South India, all the themes are still religious only and a music party is more like a prayer meeting than an entertaining concert." Quoted in Subramanian 2006, p.1. For Cousins, music in South India is redeemed to a pristine religious quality, in keeping with its apparently Indian essence, thanks to the fact that the advent of "Muhammadans into India" did not impact the South as it did the North. This argument is echoed, albeit more explicitly, in Bawra's formulation.

<sup>63</sup> For similar perspectives in the context of the history of Jalandhar in general, see Krishnananda Shastri, *Trigartapradesh* Jalandhar, Bharatiya Sanskrit Bhawan, Mai Heeran Gate, Jalandhar, 1997.

original Hindi, the linguistic requirements of writing in a pure Hindi further strengthen the myth of a unitary homogenous Hindu sphere, rubbing out the multivocalities of Punjab musical culture within which this festival was born.<sup>64</sup> This is not to say that no mention of Muslim musicians is made—in fact Bawra meticulously offers us details of how the first performers at the festival were definitely Muslims from the region.<sup>65</sup> However, Muslim names remain merely that: names—while an unrelenting obliteration of any mention of the substantial Islamic heritage of music in India and in particular the Punjab proceeds unhindered. In other words, Muslim musicians seem to be incidental to the whole enterprise of music as it is thought to have originated, and performed, in a largely Hindu sphere. To some extent, this also reflects the particular temporal context of Bawra, who writing in 1997-2003 must surely have been affected by the currents of thought wherein the purity of the past and its ‘Hindu’ nature were seen coterminously.<sup>66</sup> I highlight this point because Jalandhar has had a powerful Islamic heritage itself<sup>67</sup>, being a major centre of sufi shrines, having a substantial settlement of Muslims here since at least the 12<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>68</sup> To probe into the reasons for this exclusive Hindu-Sikh rendering of Punjab culture further research into the post-1947 predicament of refugees establishing themselves in Jalandhar, such as Bawra, concomitant with the excision of the Islamic heritage in thought and speech, needs to be undertaken.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Even while mentioning the eclectic shared space within which this festival originated, the terms used for the holy men coming together for performing and listening to music for purposes of mystic devotion are ‘*sant-sadhu-mahatma*’, the Muslim terms of ‘*pir-fakir*’ hardly ever being invoked. It is in exactly such a way that certain exclusivist meanings get ascribed to the Harballabh, overstressing its Hindu character.

<sup>65</sup> For the 1876 festival, Bawra tells us how there was progress from the first year in that apart from holy men, musicians from Punjab, such as Miyan Ahmad Baksh of Phillour, Miyan Muhammad Baksh of Hoshiarpur distt Haryana, Vilayat Ali and Meeran Baksh from Sham Chaurasi in the Doaba region all participated. Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.23.

<sup>66</sup> This particular temporal context has been dealt with in Chapter 3.

<sup>67</sup> See ‘The Spatial Context’ above.

<sup>68</sup> Imam Nasir is, according to the oral testimony of the present-day gaddi nasheen caretaker of the shrine, apparently 1083 years old shrine of the Chishti saint Hazrat Imam Nasiruddin Abu Yusuf Chishti who came to Jalandhar in the 11<sup>th</sup> century from Iran. His fellow and contemporary *pir* Baba Farid Ganj Shakar of PakPattan (Ajodhan, in present-day Pakistan) is said to have visited this place in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and a memorial has been built to commemorate his visit. See Dilgeer, 2004, p.61. This matches with the oral testimony I recorded with the caretaker of the shrine in October 2011.

<sup>69</sup> For example, the famous Pakistani qawwali singer Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan’s father and uncle—capable singers of khyal as well—hailed from Jalandhar, moving to Pakistan post-partition according to Ustad Sabri Khan, who was an artist at the AIR where the duo would often come to perform. The Jalandhar-based musician Mohan Malsiani recounted in an interview dated 19<sup>th</sup> October 2011 how this duo made the pilgrimage in 1952 for the annual *urs* at the shrine of Imam Nasir, where they performed *qawwalis* in the saint’s honour, witnessed by a young Malsiani. This was thus their first visit back to

But music did not play itself out in a world untouched by other developments. The emergent public sphere for culture in the Punjab with its centre at Lahore was one where the specific realm of music was crucially linked to Hinduism, especially the powerful Arya Samaj current which instituted the *satsang* as a crucial, definitive part of its various, weekly and monthly activities. In such a world and milieu then, it was apposite for the organisers of the Harballabh too, to speak in similar terms, when the link with divinity was tied explicitly, conspicuously and programmatically to making classical music respectable, and cleansing any connotation it had with its *mirasi* practitioners.

More pertinently, the specific field of the history of music in 20<sup>th</sup> century India draws our attention to the fact that this excision was in fact a general tendency, amplified by Pt. Paluskar and even Pt. Bhatkhande, avowedly the more secular of the two Vishnus. As Janaki Bakhle has perspicaciously reminded us, this was a trajectory Hindustani classical music took in the 20th century due to the kind of largely complementary though superficially dissimilar projects undertaken by Pt. Bhatkhande and Pt. Paluskar. The reason for this riding roughshod over the Muslim participation in the making of this festival can be seen to actually lie in a period preceding the Partition, which constitutes a rupture for the larger social-political sphere only, and consolidated, in material terms, the direction music had begun to take already by the 1940s. The early twentieth century was a period when Hindustani music came to acquire, thanks to the particular projects of Pt. Bhatkhande and especially Pt. Paluskar, for the ‘reform of music’, a characteristically Hindu gloss.

In opposition to this tying in of music with divinity as part of a clear agenda to make music respectable, the organic link of music with mysticism—definitive of the origins of the Harballabh just described above—points to an eclectic, egalitarian bhakti tradition of Hinduism, where Muslim musicians and audience members (*pirs* and *fakirs*) were an integral part of the annual *barsi* of a Hindu Brahmin mahant, coming together for reasons of sharing in a celebration of mystical music making.<sup>70</sup> The

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their hometown after Partition, oral accounts claim that they hailed from the famous suburban Basti Sheikh (established in the 15<sup>th</sup> or 16<sup>th</sup> century) of Jalandhar.

<sup>70</sup> As mentioned above, the Devi Talab had seen a brief period of Hindu-Muslim antagonism in the late 18th early 19th century, with the Muslim pir Shah Sikandar who apparently usurped a considerable part of the landscape, and to vanquish whom Baba Himgiri (guru of Tuljgiri, and who, it seems, revived the institution and seat of *mahant* of the seat) was called upon from Hoshiarpur. The local prevalence of the rivalry between mystic saints, rival Hindu and Muslim, with the story of Imam Nasir and the local

references above point to an inclusive trend of bhakti-based Hinduism in the Punjab, which was to be subtly overshadowed in the years to come. This character of the Harballabh in its origins is vastly different from the self-consciously, overtly sacred and exclusivist Hindu veneer that the festival has come to acquire, especially in recent decades.<sup>71</sup>

Emphasising such a space at the Harballabh means that we need to go beyond the facade of sacrality which is part of the prevalent trend in Indian classical music: a conspicuous obsequiousness to divine origins, tied closely to the fashioning of a programmatic Hindu identity, the result of Paluskar's project.<sup>72</sup> This emphasis is important if we are to recover the ways in which sacrality and the divine were associated with music in a non-sectarian, inclusive fashion, in a sphere where intercommunal conversation and interaction was the norm. This was in sharp contrast to the later era, when efforts to modernise and classicise this music took place in a *colonial* public sphere, in which a bourgeois modernity very often combined with a strong communitarian identities, unlike in the West. Such contradictions of colonialism and the attendant crystallisation of identities in all spheres of life on the basis of a highly homogenised, *sans* internal contradictions, religious community led their impress ofm the world of music as well.<sup>73</sup>

***Pt. V.D. Paluskar discovers the Harballabh and vice versa***

Accidentally arriving at the Harballabh in approximately 1901, some six years after the death of Baba Harballabh, Pandit Paluskar's discovery of the Devi-Talab was a turning point in the history of the mela. It is described in ample and dramatic detail by Bawra:

Around the year 1901 Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar passed through Jalandhar on his way from Bombay to Hoshiarpur for the darshan of the *jwalamuki*. In those days there was no train

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Nath yogi who was defeated in a battle of mystical wits, much like the way Himgiri defeated Shah Sikandar many centuries later in the 18th century. What is interesting, therefore, is the very beginning itself, and the ways in which a mystic egalitarianism and cosmopolitanism, papered over a history of minor antagonisms, for the interest of a musical communion with the divine, shared alike by Hindus and Muslims.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>72</sup> Bakhle *op.cit.*

<sup>73</sup> The divine legends and iconography which surround the Harballabh story paint this festival of music as being categorically beyond the merely musical. However, this becomes a feature which is used to uphold, and put in practice a musical festival that is profoundly regimented and disciplined, displacing the flavour and meaning of the original space in which that music was performed.



going till Hoshiarpur. Travellers coming from afar had to alight at Jalandhar railway station only. From Jalandhar to Hoshiarpur one could travel only by foot, bullock cart, paalki, chhakda or tonga... When Pandit ji alighted at Jalandhar railway station, he also got a whiff of this music festival. He also headed towards the Devi Talab in order to fulfil his desire. Pandit ji heard some musicians. When the gathering came to an end, then Pandit ji said to Swami Tolo Ram, “Maharaj, I also want to sing.” Pandit Tolo Ram ji asked his name. Pandit (Paluskar) began to say, “what use is a name to you. All I need is the permission to sing, I would like to sing.” Swami ji told him to come early the next morning. The next day Pandit ji along with his disciples of music reached the talab. The mahant along with various listeners had calculated that this ‘Vishnu’ would sing for a short while. Giving the go-ahead to Pandit Paluskar to sing, Mahant ji said “You also may sing”.

Along with his four disciples Pandit ji took his seat and out of the four disciples one took the harmonium, the second the violin, the third, Onkarnath Thakur and the fourth, Vinaya Rao Patwardhan both took charge of the tanpuras. After tuning all the instruments Pandit ji began Raga Jounpuri. *The listeners present were dumbfounded on seeing such an atmosphere.* Barely had the swaras been touched that everybody’s ears pricked up... He sang Raga Jounpuri continuously for three hours. *The adulation from all four sides just wouldn’t stop because they had never had the opportunity to listen to such singing before.*<sup>74</sup>

Firstly, it is important to understand how in the accident of Paluskar’s visit to Harballabh, we see the importance of the technicality of the railways. Though his destination is Hoshiarpur, the nearest railway station is that of Jalandhar—highlighting for us through a very concrete example, the infrastructural ingredients of colonial modernity in shaping the history of the city and the Harballabh, something already discussed in the first section of this chapter. The above description also brings to the fore the way in which Pandit Paluskar and troupe’s particular mode of performance affected the Harballabh audience and organisers. The discipline with which the performance takes place, and the fact that a chunk of the retinue of disciples acted as accompanists on the Harballabh stage—whether on the harmonium, the violin or the tanpura—are both seen as novel and impressive.<sup>75</sup> Given the primacy afforded to *dhrupad* singing internal to the Punjab at this festival, what might truly have been novel for the listeners, it could be argued, is the novelty of beholding

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<sup>74</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*,: pp.24-25. Emphases added.

<sup>75</sup> Bawra goes on to describe how after the performance, the subsequent discovery of Paluskar’s true identity, and a promise of his participation next year, a ‘shobha yatra’, literally an ‘auspicious procession’, was taken out by the Mahant and the residents of Jalandhar to honour him. Ibid. See also Shastri, p.116 for a very similar account and the *juloos* (public procession) taken out in celebration of Paluskar.

*khayal* compositions sung along with *kirtans* and *bhajans* in an air of gravity and ascetic Hindu devotionalism definitive of Paluskar.<sup>76</sup>

The reasons for Paluskar's phenomenal success and rousing reception by the mahant Pt Tolo Ram and the audience at Jalandhar were more than merely musical, and indeed, the larger question I am posing is the social one of how far Pt. Paluskar impacted Jalandhar's Brahmins, the majority of whom were religiously, musically and materially invested in the Harballabh. Given the contemporary wave of social reform represented by the success of the Arya Samaj in the Punjab, with its self-conscious, modernist understanding of who or what is a Hindu, as also its extensive popularisation of *bhajan* and *sankirtan* entailed a ready ground for Pt. Paluskar to propagate his message. Therefore Paluskar, with his clear cut ideas regarding Hindusim and the character of its links with music, readily appealed to them, offering a future for the festival, strongly rooted in India's ancient Hindu culture, a melding of past and future embodied by the figure of Paluskar. The impact of Paluskar's passionate missionary zeal on the organisers of the Harballabh Mela led by the mahant Pt Tolo Ram was radical and immediate:

Thanks to Pandit ji's aamad (Generosity? Talent? Prowess?), the barsi of this year (i.e. 1901) attained a moon-lit illumination of success (chaar chand laga diye). Now the fame of this barsi spread beyond the Punjabi region to subas afar. The next year Mahant ji set out to meet and invite musicians from U.P., Rajputana, Banaras, Gwalior, Jaipur, Poona and Miraj etc four months prior (to the Harballabh) itself.<sup>77</sup>

Thus, in the very next year after his visit, i.e. 1902, we find Pt. Tolo Ram moving around feverishly across north India in an attempt to invite the foremost musicians of these areas to the *barsi* started by his predecessor. This garnering of musicians in the immediate aftermath of Paluskar's visit, from across the nation in places like Gwalior, Jaipur, Poona and Miraj etc, most of which correspond to the centres where Pt. Paluskar had links, establishes for us the decisive break his visit forms in the history of the Harballabh.

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<sup>76</sup> As Bakhle has shown us, 'He believed music had an important task to perform: returning the attention of the public to the true and only faith of the land—the Hindu faith.' Bakhle, *op.cit.*, p.138. Further, 'Paluskar aspired to the life of a saint, believed one should live in the fashion espoused by India's ancient sages...', *Ibid.*, p.144. For the Hindu devotionalism with which he imbued music, see pp.137-179.

<sup>77</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.25.

Given the strong associations of Punjabi culture as rustic and far removed from the classical (already discussed in detail in the Introduction), current day Jalandhar patrons of the Harballabh (like Bawra) regard the visit of Pt. Paluskar as a divine miracle; his visit embodies that one stroke of divine genius which transformed their rustic and regional festival, a mediocre local affair into a robust nationally recognised music event. Thus, divinity and hagiography surrounding Pt. Paluskar began building up soon after his visit, and today he is regarded as one of its patron saints. Indeed, the figure of Baba Hariballabh cuts a sorry figure, almost, when compared with the luxuriant prose showered on Paluskar.

Perhaps this has to do with the relatively immodest impromptu origins of the festival, sans any clearly defined musical agenda, as opposed to Pt. Paluskar, who was indefatigable in fulfilling his mandate for music. In the absence of sufficient stories about the musical power and capabilities of Baba Harballabh himself, Pt. Paluskar becomes the *de facto* central heroic figure.

Bawra is at his most eloquent when he describes the manifestations of Paluskar's intimate and conspicuously publicised link with the divine at the 1919 festival, when Mahatma Gandhi is said to have visited the Harballabh. Crucially, the following description is like the climactic zenith of the report of the 1919 mela, which is historic for the number of dignitaries and representatives of state present. Pt. Paluskar is portrayed as the embodiment of all the divinity surrounding the Devi Talab in a passage where Bawra's imaginative potential approaches a rare subtlety.<sup>78</sup>

In the very end, Pandit Vishnu Digambar graced the stage with his presence. Pandit ji was wearing royal clothes. Wearing pagdi with gota, achkan of Kheen Khaab, chooldidar pyjama, he sat on the stage with his students. His personality was very impactful. Everybody was looking at him without moving. The entire environment seemed like a vast ground of the *indralok*. Prior to singing, Pandit ji said: "In this ground of the Indralok, many big-big artistes and many big-big rich men have sat, if I were to sing what would I sing?" Then he started saying, "I will sing a raga of the gods themselves."<sup>79</sup>

While the sketching of Pt. Paluskar as a royal figure with a distinctive sartorial sheen is self-evident and affirms the place Pt. Paluskar has, the above paragraph also makes

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<sup>78</sup> Interestingly, I have been unable to find references in *The Tribune* to this visit of Gandhi to the festival. The other plausible date is 1929, when the Congress session was again held in the Punjab at Lahore.

<sup>79</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.32.

us aware of the way in which Paluskar's discourse around the Harballabh affected it, consciously painting it in overtly obsequious terms as '*indralok*', where only 'a raga of the gods themselves' would be appropriate.

This heroism and divinity attributed to Pt. Paluskar also reflected itself in stories about the extreme arbitrary power that as a guru he had over his disciples.<sup>80</sup> As Daniel Neuman has shown us, however, this was nothing new for the world of music. Perhaps what was new, one may argue, was the way in which it is through the figure of Pt. Paluskar that such stories are resident in popular memory. In the absolute power he commanded, whether over audiences, fellow musicians or his disciples, combined with a visible obsequiousness and public displays of devotion to the shrine of the Harballabh and his modernist reform of Indian classical music, Pt. Paluskar was the figure most suited to take the mantle of the patron-saint for the newly rising intelligentsia backing the Harballabh. He became the new *sadhu* for the Harballabh, replacing the great swami himself in the stories narrating his power (over fellow musicians) through his prowess of singing. Such instances entrench his place as a canonical, God-inspired saint musician, in a way that Baba Harballabh could never have become. In contrast to Baba Harballabh, who, at the limit displayed a penchant for dhrupad musicians from only the Punjab-Haryana region, here was a spiritual musician, displaying his musical and other powers in the flesh, and instituting policies which bore fruit in concrete ways.

There are many anecdotes of Paluskar's triumphs on the Harballabh stage, two of which deserve quoting for they have been narrated by Jagannath Parti to Bawra, and hence give us as much of a peep into Parti as into Pt. Paluskar himself (to say nothing of Bawra, that deft and creative channel through which they reach us). The first anecdote narrates an impromptu competition, mediated by Pt. Tolo Ram, between Paluskar, and Ustad Kale Khan, a *darbar* musician at the court of the ruler of Kashmir.

Once at night he sang Raga Darbari. Khan Saheb's swaras were echoing in every direction. The singing had a great impact. Spectators had stopped breathing and were lost in listening. There was complete silence. After him Pandit Vishnu Digambar came on the stage. Prior to

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<sup>80</sup> Pt. Ramakant, a veteran tabla player of Jalandhar and retired teacher from the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, shared in his interview dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011 that Vinayak Rao Patwardhan showed him and his father, marks on his back, of the violence he suffered, for not sufficiently practicing his music, at the hands of his guru, Pt. Vishnu Digambar.

beginning his singing Pandit ji said in praise of Kale Khan, “The singing has already been finished by Khan Saheb now what can I sing?” But Khan Saheb couldn’t digest his own praise and said, “Yes! Pandit ji I challenge you to do so”. Pandit ji had a laugh and began Raga Behag... Mahant Tolo Ram ji also did not like the words of Khan Saheb... Now Mahant ji, in order to break the haughtiness of Khan Saheb, said Pandit ji you please stop singing as the performance had almost reached the end with the taans. He told Khan Saheb that he also should come on to the stage, and both singers sing the taans of the raga one after the other. Then what remained (‘bas fir kya tha’). Both began singing. The competition lasted for almost two hours. As the time kept getting past, Pandit ji kept moving forward and Khan Saheb kept reducing (in his stature/prowess). Pandit ji then drew him (Khan Saheb) close and hugging him, gave a lot of commendation. This incident occurred in 1912 or 1913.<sup>81</sup>

Contrary to the superior position of Pt. Paluskar which this anecdote is supposed to establish, via the victory of the singer possessing the better musical capabilities on an apparently level-playing field, it is disturbing for several reasons. The genesis of the conflict lies in a seemingly innocent compliment to Ustad Kale Khan which the latter could not receive in all its supposed magnanimity. Had it not been for a remarkably similar tussle with an unnamed beenkar from Jaipur who in the same way could not accept the praise of Paluskar<sup>82</sup>, we would be compelled to take the above paragraph at its face value. In both anecdotes, with the benefits of hindsight one could argue that the reason the compliment translated itself into an affront on reception in both cases had to do with the *context* in which they were made. I would argue that by 1912-13, almost a decade since Pt. Paluskar made his memorable debut at the Harballabh stage, his superiority and revered position was perhaps at its zenith, as also his reputation as an innovator of music, with his Gandharv Mahavidyalaya at Lahore (set up in 1901 May) similarly breaking many glass ceilings. The supposed defeat of the other musicians perhaps stems from an intimidation they, and especially Kale Khan had felt in the knowledge that Pt. Paluskar enjoyed priority of position in the mahant’s eyes, as also, perhaps, the audience. The refusal to accept this otherwise harmless ‘compliment’ could perhaps be grounded in an underlying opposition to everything Pt. Paluskar stood for. However, this resistance is comfortably couched in the metaphor of the forgiving father embracing the prodigal son, after the latter realises his folly, the Jaipur beenkar, for example, bowing his head before he tells Paluskar,

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<sup>81</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.30-3.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*

“May you be blessed, Maharaj! The Almighty has truly made you an incarnation of Music.”<sup>83</sup>

To see these above instances in purely musical terms glosses over the context and deeper rationale behind the resistance towards Paluskar. The resistance was actually against the direction which public culture was taking thanks to the efforts of Pt. Paluskar and Pt. Bhatkhande, whereby the professional hereditage and hold of court musicians was increasingly being challenged by Paluskar, who threatened the tenuous stability of court musicians. The popularity and adulation received by Pt. Paluskar from the audience as also the organisers all served to highlight the fragility of the position of these traditional-style performers. Paluskar’s seemingly adulatory though subtly mordant ‘compliment’ to Ustad Kale Khan and the *beenkar* from Jaipur amounted to adding insult to the larger injury of being unable to match up to Paluskar’s unrivalled position as musician *par excellence* across north and west India. It is then likely that these musicians resented that their cherished craft—handed down generations and the main source of their livelihood—was being made rapidly democratised in overtly Hindu cultural sphere.<sup>84</sup>

The way in which Pt. Paluskar managed to mould the Harballabh festival as per his vision of an ideal Hindu religious space preserving music since ancient times is captured in the following story, quoted with great reverence by both Bawra and Shastri:

Once Pandit Vishnu Digambar ji while travelling to the Maharaja of Kashmir, joined in this sammelan on his way there. While bidding him adieu a packet of Rs. 250/- was donated to him. He took the packet in his hand, removed Rs. 5/- from his pocket and adding it to the packet placed it on the Samadhi of Swami ji and said “*This is a spot for giving, not for taking.*”<sup>85</sup>

Here we find Pt. Paluskar adding through his volition, to the purity of the space as a shrine of music where it is an honour for him to be able to perform, as opposed to performing in return for mercenary reasons, ironically one of the most decisive steps

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

<sup>84</sup> Paluskar’s mission for music was clearly not merely musical; as Bakhle puts it: “His aim was not just to train musicians, but to *produce a musically educated listening public that would associate music not with entertainment or pleasure, but with religious devotion.*” Bakhle, *op.cit.*, p.153. Emphasis Added.

<sup>85</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.30. Emphasis added.

he took in the modernisation of music. The eminent ethnomusicologist of South Asia, Bonnie Wade informs us about the singularity of this achievement of Paluskar:

In Rajkot in 1897 he initiated a practice which he continued all his life and which was most significant for Indian music. Since only a small selected audience would be admitted to hear a concert at a royal court or in the home of a rich person, he decided to give his musical performances *in public, charging admission fees*. By this means he wished not only to make music accessible to the common man but to provide a means for musicians to earn a livelihood independently of rich patrons. Most traditional musicians (including his *guru*) opposed him, of course, saying *that the art of music would be cheapened and commercialised* (an argument that rages still!).<sup>86</sup>

This claim, of music being cheapened and commercialised rose amidst the organisers of the Harballabh most vociferously in the 1950s, a decade when musicians began insisting on fees even at the Harballabh, considered a ‘shrine of music’. Harballabh organisers looked back to the days of Pt. Paluskar which were seen as untainted by the mercenary insistence on fees—a feature which ironically had been pioneered, for elsewhere in the public sphere by Paluskar himself! Thus, the Harballabh was cultivated by Paluskar as the exception to the rule of demanding fees for public fees which he himself had established.<sup>87</sup>

The description of Paluskar returning the money offered to him at the Harballabh also fits in nicely with his larger vision of music within a strictly Hindu, devotional sphere. In his devotion for the Harballabh grounds as a shrine, however, he is casting that geography with a peculiar connotation which corresponds to his larger programme for reviving the ancient apparently Hindu lineages of classical music. In order to affirm such a vision, the Harballabh, and performing there ‘for free’ became an article of his faith.

Curiously then, the affirmation of the sacrality of the spot of the Harballabh by Pt. Paluskar needs to be seen in the important context of his self-awareness of the nobility of his mission, in the completion of which, casting the Harballabh grounds as a shrine of music is almost a natural by-product. The obsequiousness exhibited by Pt. Paluskar towards the Harballabh (as opposed to similar gestures made by a lesser known

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<sup>86</sup> B.C.Wade, *Khyal: Creativity within North India's classical music tradition*, Great Britain: Cambridge University Press, pp.43-44. Emphasis added.

<sup>87</sup> For the lament during the 1950s and beyond, for a non-mercenary past as exemplified by Paluskar, see Chapter 2, the section on Pt. V.D. Paluskar.

musician) makes sense only after his primacy as a reverential figure (note the attention to his sartorial sheen above) has been established in the world of the Harballabh. This element of obsequiousness is something which the Jalandhar intelligentsia were also quick to pick up, along with his recipe for the kind of music to be performed and the norms of performance he upheld. The celebration of the traits of volition and specifically the non-mercenary proclivities of musicians in the early twentieth century celebrated across the many accounts of the Harballabh (and discussed in the previous section), can thus be seen to reside in the particular connotations which Pt. Paluskar actively imbued the Harballabh with. Thus, while for Paluskar, the act of not accepting money and instead donating money on Baba Harballabh's Samadhi might in reality be expressive of a legitimate faith, the impact of his actions for the festival itself were problematic, because any musician *not* exhibiting the same devotion at the Jalandhar festival was (and still is) looked askance by the majority of people whether patrons or audience members. This then is yet another example of Paluskar's agenda of imbuing a more syncretic musical cultural sphere with an overt Hindu religiosity, an aspect which was changing the larger national cultural sphere at this time.<sup>88</sup>

As Bakhle succinctly reminds us, 'Paluskar's devoutness is not by itself the issue any more than is the genuineness of his faith. The real issue lies in the *commingling of music and sacrality in modern India*, not as the expression of individual private faith, but *as a paradigm of public culture*.'<sup>89</sup> The Harballabh is thus a foremost example of Paluskar's exclusivist effect on what were hitherto eclectic and diverse musical meetings. By the time Pt. Paluskar reached the end of his life in 1931 the mystic fluidity and 'aesthetic of inclusion' of the Harballabh's origins had been transformed into the clearly Hindu devotionism of a modernised music. How this occurred is the theme of the next section.

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<sup>88</sup> The crucial point Bakhle demonstrates is the fact that 'we see through Paluskar's achievements...the emergence of a national cultural sphere in the early years of the twentieth century, long before the nation itself was in sight, in which Muslimness needed to be hidden from view, toned down, or reformulated. It had to *demonstrate*... its participation in Brahminic ritual, prayers, *bhajans*, *kirtans*, and *abhangs*, and attendance at temples as proof of its right to membership in the Indian nation. *This inaugurated the structural and systemic difficulty of being a musician in the public world of music without participating in Hindu forms of religiosity*.' Bakhle, *op.cit.*, pp.174-175. Emphases Added.

<sup>89</sup> p.178. Emphases Added.



***The performative space at the Harballabh***

Sufficient discussion on the ambience of the festival in the local Jalandhar context during the early twentieth century has been undertaken for us to attempt an approximation to the world of performance at the Harballabh. The peculiar norms and practices of performance which prevailed at this festival would of course have changed from time to time; however, given that we are studying a largely fluid cultural phenomenon and the nature of our sources (precise dates are hard to ascertain), references to such peculiarities are few and far in between.

Marking out the space of performance at the Harballabh, it is useful to begin with a discussion of the most conspicuous absence definitive of the Mela—that of women. As per all available accounts of the festival, women were debarred from the Mela grounds during the four days of its duration, both as performers or listeners for the time period under review. Most interviewees as also Bawra and Shastri agree that only by the late 1940s and especially with the reins of organization coming in Mr. Kumar's hands, were women allowed at the Mela in any seriousness. However, it needs to be remembered that the majority of those interviewed, as also our main interlocutors Bawra and Shastri, hail from upper caste backgrounds, which precludes the long twentieth century history of controlling women's autonomy. The impulses of Punjabi upper caste male reformers behind the barring of women from traditional spaces where caste barriers became irrelevant have been discussed in cogent detail by Anshu Malhotra. Insufficient information in the extant archives on the Harballabh regarding its lower caste performers and participants need not rule out their presence at the festival. Indeed, it is plausible that only upper caste and middle class women were historically debarred. Oral memoirs by a certain 'K.G.' printed in the Souvenir for the 1979 festival mention an old time listener recounting how 'singing girls' from the Kapurthala princely state 'would come year after year to the Harballab to listen to the masters.' Moreover he reproduces the memories of an anonymous visitor to Jalandhar who tells him 'how he had heard from much older people that in the days of the Harballabh peons would turn up late in the office and *cleaning women* not show up because they had all been listening to music nearly all the night before'. Thus women from marginalized status groups can be seen to have visited the Harballabh in pre-Independence days as well, as per this rare memoir. The exclusion of women at

the Harballabh also instituted the following subversive tactics adopted by musically-inclined women, in the following quirky anecdote:

By all accounts, Bhaskarbua was loved by audiences in the Punjab in particular, for example in Jalandhar, where women reputedly dressed in men's clothing in order to hear Bhaskarbua sing at the festival there (at Devi Talao) which allowed admission only to men.<sup>90</sup>

Given that the extant archive for the pre-20<sup>th</sup> century period of the festival is extremely sparse, one can not fully corroborate the claim that women were excluded at the Harballabh since its origins, in the limited space of this thesis. However, sufficient work has been done on gender and caste in the Punjab<sup>91</sup> as well as the gendered basis of Paluskar's project<sup>92</sup> to enable us to discuss the early twentieth century exclusion of at least upper caste, middle class women from the fair.

Paluskar's agenda for women coalesced neatly with the newly defined role and position which middle class and upper caste women of the Punjab had to occupy, which is perhaps one of the main reasons why his first taste of success came in the Punjab.<sup>93</sup> Control over Punjabi women's sexuality and exhortations to them to engage in 'right' conduct had become the indices for flaunting a high caste and middle class identity by the early twentieth century, following a wave of reform led by the Arya Samajis for the Hindus and the Singh Sabhas for the Sikhs. 'Right' conduct however meant walking the tight rope between upholding a newly strengthened, 'invented tradition' on the one hand and simultaneously demonstrating the attributes of modernity.<sup>94</sup> Paluskar's mission to make Hindu women actively pursue music from 'within the home', was thus in step with the larger drive of social reformers in the Punjab—both of the Arya Samaj and the Singh Sabha—to control female visibility in the public sphere through a redefinition of religion and culture.<sup>95</sup> This redefinition

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<sup>90</sup> Grimes, *op.cit.*, p. 152. This anecdote was also quoted by the Jalandhar based vocalist Mohan Malsiani in an interview in October 2011.

<sup>91</sup> Malhotra, *op.cit.*

<sup>92</sup> Bakhle 2005.

<sup>93</sup> Bakhle pp. 144-157.

<sup>94</sup> Malhotra, pp. 201-202. This burden on women was a reflection and result of the larger process whereby 'high castes' regrouped themselves as a broader caste and a class, breaking out of the narrower biradaris, which 'put pressure on all those included in this identity to follow certain rituals and customs that were seen as honourable and suitable to their caste status.' Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Elaborating on the clampdown on the earlier autonomy experienced by Punjabi women in the pre-reform period, she argues 'A pativrata... could only emerge if women gave up their autonomy, a culture that allowed them a modicum of prestige and honour, and control over economic and material

involved a rigidification of caste identities ‘because women’s belonging to caste and class was viewed as ambiguous, they were seen to transcend easily from one level to the other.’ Thus, ‘*placing women within homes and a cultural distancing from the low were projects undertaken simultaneously.*’<sup>96</sup> This redefinition also entailed an ‘attack on the syncretic culture of Punjab, and removing women from public spaces where castes and religions mixed,’ which ‘was an important step in the direction of laying down sharp religious differences’.<sup>97</sup> Thus, the outlawing of women from such syncretic public spaces such as the Harballabh Mela, was a clear mandate for the upper castes and middle classes in early twentieth century colonial Punjab.

Jalandhar’s powerful Khatri and Brahmin families, many of whom supported the Harballabh as volunteers, both before and after independence, would definitely fall within the larger trend of gender discussed here. The only channel for most women desirous of listening to and practising music in the Punjab thus came via the route of the modern pedagogic project as first introduced in the Punjab by Paluskar. For Jalandhar itself, the school set up by Lala Devraj Sondhi for girls. Lala Devraj Sondhi, pioneer of women’s education and founder of the Kanya Mahavidyala of Jalandhar, had to face tremendous opposition from his narrow Khatri biradiri in order to be able to embrace the modernist ideals of the Arya Samaj. In order to win over Khatri orthodoxy, the educational project at the KMV corroborates Malhotra’s thesis on the increasing control over women in the Punjab. The place of music was early on established at the KMV, with exams being held in classical music. The March, June and August 1913 issues of *Panchal Pandita*, the Jullundur Weekly of the Kanya Mahavidyalaya, for example, contain ample references to the place of music in the life of the college, particularly in the context of a much feted visit to the college by Pt. Vishnu Digamber Paluskar.

Learning through such media however also meant that ‘many women, as they struggled to find new opportunities of self-enhancement and individuation could do so

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*resources*, in the name of devotion to the husband and his family.’ p.202, emphasis added. She further demonstrates that ‘men both questioned women’s firm belonging to caste and religious affiliations,’ so as to try to ‘incorporate them in the world-view that encouraged a *singular sectarian public posture*’ thus strengthening reification of identities along communal lines.’ p.204, emphasis added. Anshu Malhotra 2002.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.203. Emphasis added.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid. , p.204.

only by imbibing and espousing new communal politics'<sup>98</sup> or by actively exhibiting 'a consistent disgust...towards all menial castes.'<sup>99</sup> The most evocative example of the internalisation of such attitudes comes from the writings of a middle class female disciple of Bhagat Mangat Ram, a renowned though blind dhrupad music teacher of Jalandhar<sup>100</sup>, who along with his many disciples, was a regular performer at many musical meetings at Jalandhar and Lahore.

Before discussing the disciple herself, it is important to understand the teacher better. In the extant evidence we come across his presence twice at anniversaries of the Arya Samaj at Lahore. The first instance dates to 1921, when after an early morning 'Swastivachan Shanti-path Havan', there is 'Sankirtan by Pt. Indra Jit Ji, Bh. Mangat Ram Ji, 8 to 8:30' which is followed by 'Upasana and Updesh' by a certain Swami Vishudha Nand.<sup>101</sup> Here we can clearly see the importance of the Arya Samaj in fostering a new kind of public, Hindu devotional music, a trend which becomes very prevalent across the Punjab, a context in which Bh. Mangat Ram flourishes.<sup>102</sup> This is the milieu in which he trains students as well, established well in the aforementioned notice (fn 92) which claims that he has made many students autonomous and independent musicians, several of them having become employed with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and the Pradeshik Sabha of Punjab in the capacity of '*bhajnik*', thus being mediums of 'entertainment' for the public. However, there is another interesting report from the year 1927, the year for the Golden Jubilee celebrations of the Lahore Arya Samaj, which is celebrated with a mammoth 'Sangeet Sammelan', where Bhagat

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<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> p.203.

<sup>100</sup> A school of music set up by him in 1904 was based in Bhakt Bazaar of Jalandhar, simply called "Sangit Mahavidyalaya". As per an advertising notice reproduced in his disciple Devki Sud's *Sangit Prabha* (Amritsar 1934), it claims to be the only institution across the Punjab where students from humble backgrounds can also learn 'pure classical music' along with every kind of instrument, claiming to provide 'free' education to students from economically humble backgrounds. Interestingly, by actively reaching out to those with 'humble means', Mangat Ram's Sangit Mahavidyala could be seen as positing an alternative to the more powerful Gandharva Mahavidyala established only three years prior at Lahore by Paluskar. One can postulate that this 'philanthropic' character of the Jalandhar Sangit Mahavidyala could have something to do with the fact that it was the city of the Harballabh, which was renowned for its open accessibility to all music lovers.

<sup>101</sup> *The Tribune*, Nov. 20, 1921, p.8. The programme is for the Arya Samaj (Wachhowali) Anniversary celebrations.

<sup>102</sup> This is the context in which he trains students as well, for the aforementioned notice (fn92) claims that Bh. Mangat Ram has made many students autonomous and independent musicians, several of them having become employed with the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha and the Pradeshik Sabha of Punjab in the capacity of '*bhajnik*', thus being mediums of 'entertainment' for the public. This again establishes the new professional respectability afforded to musicians, provided it was in the garb of Hindu devotional music, an outcome of Paluskar's peculiar modernisation undertaken in the Punjab.

Mangat Ram would have performed with his disciples, represent the town of Jalandhar at the metropolis. Our Jalandhari teacher and his disciples figure along with 11 other vocalists:

Bhagat Mangat Ram of Jullundur.

Pandit Hari Chand Bali of Jullundur (Amateur).

Lala Jagan Nath—Teacher, Sain Das Anglo-Sanskrit High School, Jullundur (Amateur).

Kumari Gopal Devi—Jullundur (Amateur).<sup>103</sup>

The first three names above are all well-known in the history of the Harballabh and classical music of Jalandhar more generally.<sup>104</sup> The unknown figure is the only woman in the group, a disciple of Bhagat Ram (we presume), Kumari Gopal Devi, who has not left behind any sufficient trace in either written or oral memory for us to know her contributions to the world of music. Fortunately, we do have one woman disciple, of this Jalandhar based music teacher who went on to author a full length book on music entitled *Sangit Prabha* of which only a handful of 16 pages remain in photocopy form.<sup>105</sup> (See Figure \_ on pp in Chapter 2 for a photocopy reproduction of the frontispiece.)

This brings us back to our intriguing ‘authoress’. In the Preface to her book, which is primarily a pedagogic tool for the dissemination of classical music, Devki Sud<sup>106</sup> makes the following set of remarks about music:

Of late, Music has unfortunately fallen into disrepute: it has been regarded as a base profession—specially reserved for the ‘fallen’ specimens of humanity, theatrical

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<sup>103</sup> *The Tribune*, Tuesday, December 20, 1927, p.6. To see the full report and an accompanying analysis, see Annexure 2 below p. .

<sup>104</sup> Bhagat Mangat Ram is renowned as the music guru who trained a young Bhimsen Joshi during his turbulent years in search of an appropriate ‘Guru’; eventually Bhimsen met with Vinayak Rao Patwardhan at the Harballabh, who guided him towards Sawai Gandharva of the Kirana *gharana*. Hari or Harish Chand Bali was a musician who was the first Honorary Principal of the Harballabh Music Academy set up in the 1950s for a brief period and his disciples continue to prosper as music teachers in Jalandhar today. Jagan Nath Parti is of course the famous first Secretary of the Sangeet Mahasabha formed in 1922, whose memoirs are liberally quoted in Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, and amply used in the history presented here. See the section on the ‘Birth of the Sangeet Mahasabha’ below.

<sup>105</sup> This was made available to me by Shri Rakesh Dada, who in turn received it from Shri Krishnananda Shasri. Reproduced here with kind permission of Shri Krishnananda Shastri.

<sup>106</sup> She was the wife of one Lala Ram Sarup Sud, Block Inspector with the North Western Railways. In an obliging foreword, the renowned Lahore musician Rai Sahib K.L. Rallia Ram (Headmaster of Rang Mahal Mission High School of Lahore and author of *Music of India*) has ‘no hesitation in saying that she is the first Punjabi lady who has made such a scientific study of this great art...I hope through her efforts Music will be revived in our homes and will brighten the lives of members of a family and thus raise the moral and intellectual tone of all its inmates.’ Ibid.

performances, cinema shows, forsaken wandering tribes and fakirs residing in tombs and ancient crumbling monuments. Owing to the banishment—so to say—of music from our daily lives, many a respectable home has been rendered dull and uninteresting, and it is a pity that the charms and melodious vibrating notes of music should be sought for in vain in the delicacies and and upbraiding varieties of fashion and gait and in the shades of variegated colours and costumes. But *there is no doubt that with a little effort on the part of our ladies homelife can be made as pure, as religious and as sweet as in times of yore.* Sangit-Prabha is primarily and zealously intended to introduce music into our domestic life once again with the same old reverence and sanctity.<sup>107</sup>

The above paragraph is pertinent because it details the decline of ‘Music’ in a vein remarkably similar to the views held by Pt. Paluskar and many others of the time, of whom he is a symbol. Striving to ensure that ladies make that ‘little effort’ to make homelife ‘*as pure, as religious and as sweet as in times of yore*’ however requires that all the ‘fallen’ specimens of humanity be implicitly purged from this ‘pure’ art form which deserves ‘the same old reverence and sanctity’. In a similar paragraph written in Hindi—translated below— she points the finger towards the mirasis, with the following lament:

Unfortunately since some days raag-knowledge was being understood as merely a means of accumulating wealth. In fact, the common people had assumed that singing and playing was the birth-proven right of the *bhaands* and the *mirasis*. Due to this, raag-knowledge was seriously harmed. Fortunately, thanks to the untiring efforts of some greatly experienced Pandits and Vidvaans, the days of raag-knowledge have returned again. Now once again this is being propagated in good households. It is my desire also that residents of Bhaarat make efforts to learn pure music and gift new life to this ancient art of Bhaarat.<sup>108</sup>

The clear and ‘consistent disgust...towards all menial castes’ noted by Anshu Malhotra as a general trend in the Punjab of these times is starkly evident in the realm of music. Devki Sud has thus clearly internalised the prevailing norms for the ‘right’ conduct of women, which here includes learning ‘music’ so as to please their husbands and prevent them from seeking out ‘the fallen specimens of humanity.’<sup>109</sup>

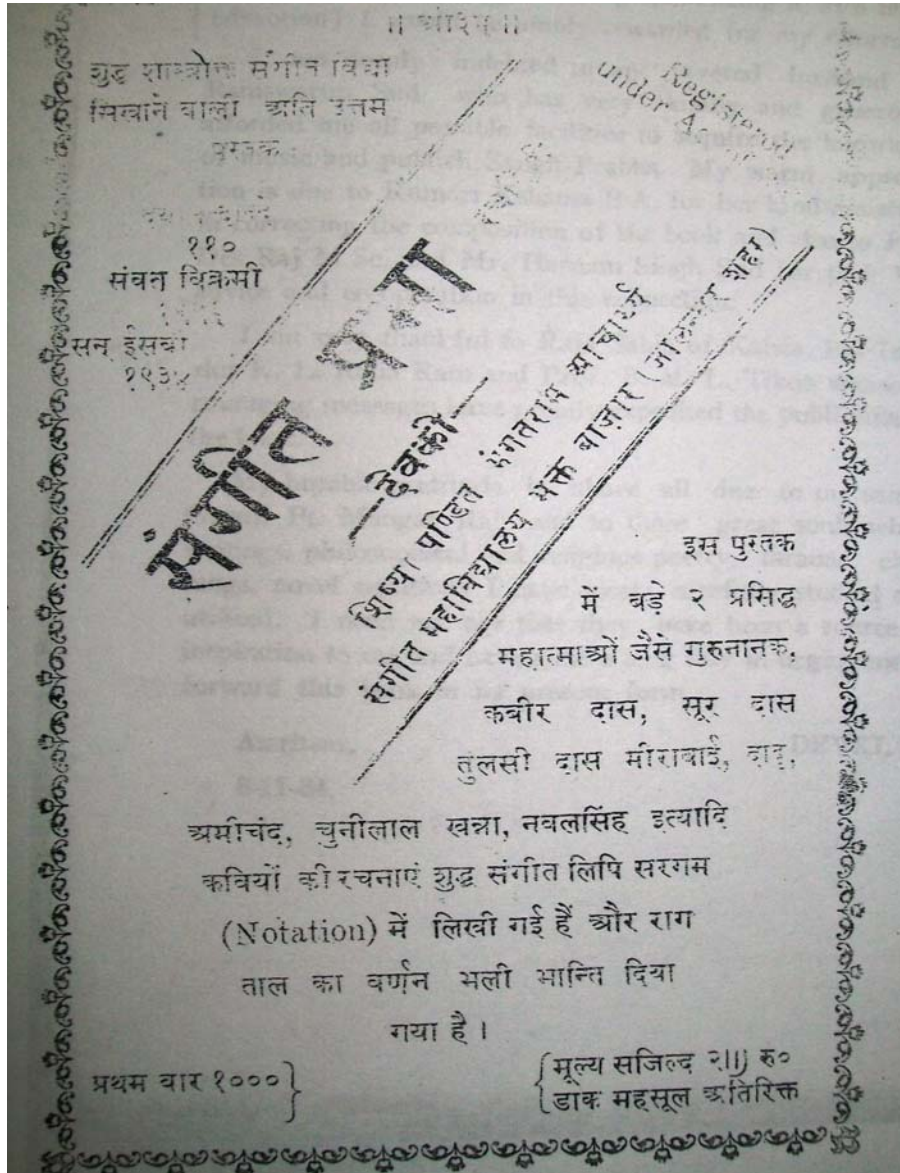
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<sup>107</sup> Page numbers are not clearly available, as some are in Devanagari, while some in Roman. Either way, the very few pages from the book available in the photocopy number around 16. Emphasis added.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p.2. Emphasis added.

<sup>109</sup> Interestingly, Devki is married to a ‘Sud’, who as per Anshu Malhotra ‘insisted upon a Kshatriya status and took the battle to make good their claim into the pages of the journal published by the Anjuman-i-Punjab’. Ibid.,p.24. This battle waged for a higher caste status followed upon the ethnographic survey of Punjab undertaken by Denzil Ibbetson in 1881, who ‘was conscious of the difficulty of defining caste and wrote of its historically flexible character.’ It comes as no surprise that a wife of one such ‘Sud’ also takes up the battle of inculcating ‘our ladies’ with the requisite skill to

The very fact that the book is published in 1934, viz., three years after Pt. Paluskar's death, points to the fact that, prior to his rapid pedagogic modernisation with the Gandharv Maha Vidyalaya at the turn of the century, a book like *Sangit Prabha* might not have been written. Devki Sud thus personified the rationale behind Paluskar's phenomenal success in the Punjab, and also indirectly demonstrates the reasons for the exclusion of women from the Harballabh grounds upto 1947.



**Figure 1**

Frontispiece of Devki Sud's *Sangit Prabha*, Amritsar: 1934.

make 'homelife pure', while espousing a consistent denigration of traditional lower caste practitioners of music in the Punjab.



**Figure 2**

'The Authoress' of *Sangit Prabha* (Amritsar: 1934) Devki Sud, displaying her talent on the sitar, in a posture that symbolises the 'respectable' woman's arrival on the scene of Hindustani classical music. Note the resemblance with the cover of the Harballabh Souvenir for 1967 reproduced in Chapter 2.



Having examined the gendered coordinates of the space of performance, one needs to move on to the spatial configuration of the way the stage itself was organised, to understand hierarchies pertaining to musicians themselves. One of the traditions which was a feature of the festival in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century and could have begun as part of the institution of the festival on the lines of the more conventional concerts that took place in Lahore, was the bestowal of the ‘jai mala’ or ‘jai patra’ to the seniormost or most talented musician of that year: usually decided on arbitrarily by the *mahant* Pt. Tolo Ram. This is a practice which echoes the practice of giving gold medals at the many musical sittings in Lahore.

This tradition of Jai Mala and Jai Patra, was also known as ‘pagdi’ by some others like the famous sufi singer Puran Shah Koti of Jalandhar (guru of Hans Raj Hans) who states in *Kitte Mil Ve Mahi* that his guru had been given the ‘pagdi’—a great honour and a public recognition of his musical merit—at the Harballabh.<sup>110</sup> This instance and practice thus shows us the ways in which the concert was central to the lives and self-definition of many, many musicians even outside of what is traditionally considered ‘classical’ music; and thus the region of Punjab in general.<sup>111</sup> There are many other little features recalled by interviewees, among which the most prominent is the presence of four to five tabla players as accompanists to the vocalists:

In those days the tabla player wasn’t a singular individual but around four-four or five-five of them would sit down (to accompany). Right in front and below the stage tabla players would sit. At a certain time, one would put the theka, while at another a second one. From the very sound of the theka, listeners would calculate which tabla player’s hands it is.<sup>112</sup>

In those days Miyan Malang Khan of Hoshiarpur, Bhai Rakha, Bhai Naseera, *rabaabis* of Amritsar and Natthu Khan of Jalandhar etc were also famous. One tabla player would not accompany singers, as is the case today, but the practice was such that the vocalist would sit on top of the stage, while the tabla players would sit right below in front of him. The singer would be one while tabla maestros four-four, and taking turns, everyone would play.<sup>113</sup>

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<sup>110</sup> *Kitte Mil Ve Mahi (Where the twain shall meet)*, Director: Ajay Bhardwaj, 72 minutes, Punjabi with English subtitles, DVD, 2005. See also Shastri, *op.cit.* p.117.

<sup>111</sup> Perhaps this ritual compensated for the feted non-mercenary character of the music. I thank my friend Sourav Mahanta for this insight.

<sup>112</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.27.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, p.30.

Why is it that so many tabla accompanists, and many of them from within the Punjab were accommodated at the Harballabh. One obvious line of inquiry is the fact of the importance of the tabla as an instrument in the Punjab. The other could be the growing popularity of the Harballabh stage and the fact that local performers found this as a good way to be closer to the ‘great’ vocalists from other areas. In the second of the two paragraphs quoted, we find a plethora of names of musicians from the Punjab itself who were perhaps important tabla maestros and instrumentalists and accompanists. It is a rare instance where their names figure, however, no anecdotes of their performances and peculiarities are quoted, that privilege being reserved for the non-Punjabi.

Another very important feature is the issue of the time devoted to each musical sitting, and further, to each individual performer. Let us discuss the first issue via an advertisement for the 1922 Harballabh in *The Tribune*:

Musical Conference, Jullundur—A correspondent writes: The Musical Anniversary of MahaSabha, Jullundur City, commenced on 26<sup>th</sup> instant and ended at 12 noon on 29<sup>th</sup>. On a big platform 142 *Choukis* were played and 26 forms of Rag and Ragini were sung and 11 instruments of different kinds were shown and played.<sup>114</sup>

The above snippet from the newspaper opens up several avenues for us to understand the character of the festival during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>115</sup> Most intriguing is the way in which it informs the reader that 142 *Choukis* were played on the stage, which is modestly termed, in this initial phase of the journey of the Harballabh from mela to sammelan, ‘a big platform’. How do we interpret the ambiguous term ‘*Choukis*’? Rather than ascribe to it the current day, limited symbol of being a devotional singing programme, it seems best to postulate a midway hypothesis. Further, historically we are aware that the *Choukis* are also a part of the Guru Granth Sahib and the Gurmat. Hence, one could safely propose that in the

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<sup>114</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, December 31, 1922, p.6. Emphasis in original. See also *The Tribune*, Lahore, December 19, 1928, p.7, for a similar format of representing concerts in Lahore. “Vocal and Instrumental Music—Sangit Sabha’s Meeting: The last sitting of the Sangit Sabha was attended by a large number of prominent persons. The proceedings began with a sweet prayer in chorus. This was followed by a varied programme of vocal and instrumental music, each item of which had a characteristic charm of its own. The outstanding feature of this sitting was the exhibition of an orchestra consisting of 2 flutes, violin, *taos*, harmonium, triangle, *jaltarang* and tabla.” See Glossary for elaboration on the instruments.

<sup>115</sup> First and foremost, this is the instance when the term ‘Mahasabha’ emerges for the first time in the reports, given that the histories of the Harballabh share with us that it was in this year that Pt Tolo Ram, successor of Baba Harballabh, institutionalised the organisation for the festival.

context of the above paragraph, our correspondent from *The Tribune* is referring to 142 *spells of music* being performed, which leads one to hazard a guess about the duration of each spell of music.

As per the fact that the conference lasted a total of 3 days (a maximum of 72 hours), with something around 50 hours or so as a plausible duration for performance, one can derive a plausible duration of 1-3 hours per performance. A *chouki* is also something that is installed and gets over quite quickly. Each spell lasts for a relatively short duration of time. Thus, 'choukie' could also refer to a spell of performance by an individual artist, irrespective of whether he performed again or not. Choukie could thus refer to a presentation or a spell, sung as per the particular raag of the time of day.<sup>116</sup>

Interestingly, the reporters, or indeed the organisers who deemed it necessary to reach out to *The Tribune* correspondent with the above piece of 'Local and Provincial' news, offer a very clear and precise reportage of the *number* of the various performances.

Apparently, it is important, for the newly constituted Mahasabha, to assert the wide range and variety of the performance orchestrated at the Harballabh, by underlining the number of performances, in a de-personalised, scientific manner, for example it further emphasises the fact that 11 instruments of different kinds were shown and played.

Unlike the 1913 report (see Annexure III below) where the aim behind the announcement seems to be to alert potential audience members to the fact that a famed performer, from outside the Punjab, and all the way from Goa is coming, forewarning audience members to bring their beds and beddings with them; the tone of the 1922 announcement reveals for us the concern on the behalf of the Mahasabha members to *keep count* of the performances in an exercise of providing legitimacy to this aspirational national concert, on the lines of the other national music conferences organised by the likes of Pt. Bhatkhande and Pt. Paluskar, especially at Lahore (see Annexure II below).

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<sup>116</sup> I thank Mr. Naresh Kumar for the ideas and arguments that helped in framing this suggestion.

It is in the interest of presenting an attractive spectacle that a substantial quantity and range of music pieces has to be mentioned as having been performed, the clear aim being popularising classical music amongst the masses.

Similar to the use of the term 'choukis' in the above news report, which has a connection with the mother goddess, a rare primary source-viz., a common invitation letter printed by Pt. Tolo Ram in 1924 to invite eminent people to the Harballabh (see Figure 1 below), yields another musical reference related to the Devi:

॥ प्रार्थना पत्र ॥

**संगीत महासभा जालन्धर शहर**

मान्यवर श्री \_\_\_\_\_  
की सेवा में प्रार्थना है कि सं० १९८० पाँच  
प्रविष्टे १२ से १५ तक यहाँ की संगीत महासभा  
का उत्सव हीगा सो आप अपने इष्ट मित्रों सहित  
अवश्य पधारे क्योंकि यह उत्सव आप ही पर  
निर्भर है।

पाँच प्रविष्टा	समय विभाग।		
	प्रातः	मध्यान्ह	सायं
१२	७ से १२	१ से ६	७ से १२
१३	७ से १२	१ से ६	७ से १२
१४	७ से १२	१ से ६	७ से १२
१५	७ से १२		

प्रति दिन १ से ३ बजे तक निम्नलिखित उत्सव होंगे  
पं० सभा. मिस्र २ भजन मंडलियां, भीरों का राग,  
लौनी, देवी की भेटों काफ़ीया राग साखी।

**पं तुलाराम, देवी तालाब।**

**Figure 1**

Invitation letter cum advertisement printed by Pt. Tula Ram in 1924, Shastri, *op.cit.*, p.129.  
Reproduced with kind permission of the author.

As is evident, here we find an allusion that the ‘devi ki bhentan’ will be one of the items performed, thereby firmly establishing the range of popular pieces of music apart from the classical which were performed here right upto the 1920s. Interestingly, amongst the other kind of musical repertoires advertised by Pt. Tolo Ram are “2 bhajan mandlis”, “jheeron ka raag”, “louni”, “kaafiyan”, “shabd saakhi”. Each of these repertoires are in themselves extremely interesting. The first are the “2 bhajan mandlis” referring to the fact that two wandering troupes of bhajan singing minstrels—a practice and cultural phenomenon clearly catering to popular needs—would be performing at this Mela of classical music. ‘Jheeron ka raag’ is the next item on the list, and I would propose this refers to the groups of the jhinwar caste, to whom a reference is also found in Bawra, already quoted above on page 32 and whom colonial ethnographers recorded as playing an important ritual in helping to lift the bride’s palanquin<sup>117</sup>. This is thus a clear reference to the presence of a variety of folk music at the Harballabh. Even more interesting is the reference to “louni”, which can only be understood as a corruption of the Marathi “lavani”, perhaps referring to the popular music of Maharashtra in general and not the dance form for which the epithet is more widely known; however, this is a point on which only further research can corroborate. Nonetheless, the fact that it is chosen as one of the musical repertoires to be printed in this notice could allude to the fact that the many Marathi musicians regularly attending the Harballabh post-Paluskar, would, in fact be exhibiting folk music from their region. This would make “louni” an exotic attraction from a distant region that is available for consumption only at the Harballabh, hence meriting special emphasis.

After mentioning the exotic however, Pt. Tolo Ram (or Tula Ram as his name is spelt in the notice) finds it necessary to firmly return to the familiar. The next item on the list are the much-loved Sufi genre of the Punjab: the “kaafiyan”, which are followed by the last item hailing from the Sikh liturgical tradition, viz., “shabd saakhi”. The inclusion of these genres point to their popularity in the Punjab, and given that they occur after the presumably Marathi “louni”, also their status as genres *representative* of the Punjab, and hence one may surmise that many other rich genres from Punjab

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<sup>117</sup> See p.32 above, fn 40.

would have also been performed.<sup>118</sup> Despite the main attraction being classical and raga music, the reference is to genres which are all beyond the pale of the classical. Given the focus on rag music at this festival, the mentioning of these quintessentially non-classical items can thus be seen as a means to attract a wider audience via these more popular genres and draw them towards classical music through the backdoor, as it were. The invitation also tells us that the time for the performance of these ‘non classical’ items would be mid-day, and also gives us the other carefully worked out time slots.

From Bawra, our main anecdote-studded secondary source<sup>119</sup>, we get a corroboration of the time slots into which the four days were divided, as per the 1924 notice above. He also discusses the beginning of the practice of extending performances until late into the night and early morning. As is often the case, a prominent musician from beyond the Punjab, in this case Pt. Onkarnath Thakur is seen to be responsible for this shift.

The programme of that era had a wondrous quality to it. Early morning at 5 a.m. first of all the grandfather of the famous astrologer of Jalandhar Amrik Lal, called Pandit Gajju Raam Bhaagwat would do a path of the Geeta for an hour. After this, singer-folk of Jalandhar and surrounding areas would sing bhajans in remembrance of the gods and goddesses in bhairav, ramkali, gunakali, assaavari etc. raags, bringing time to a standstill almost. After this classical music would happen which would take place till 12 o’ clock. The second sitting would take place from 3pm to 5 pm in the evening. This sitting would be organised on that spot where today a dharamshala has been built. In this sitting, along with classical, light-classical music would also be sung. At night at 7 pm the third sitting would begin continuing till 12 o clock at night. Over here the sitting would in any condition be completed by 12 am. However in c. 1934 this tradition was broken when Thakur Onkarnath at 11:30 pm started singing ‘peer na jaane’ in Raag Malkouns on the israr, and it took upto 2:30 am.<sup>120</sup>

The above anecdote thus establishes for us the fact that long, meditative spells of music were not the norm in classical music performance.<sup>121</sup> Rather, what we find with

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<sup>118</sup> Today however, this broader ‘aesthetic of inclusion’ has almost completely disappeared and it would be unimaginable to find the organisers advertising “shabd saakhi” or “kaafiyan” in their souvenirs or invitation cards, as items of performance. The intervening period of the 1940s-1980s, when such eclectic genres were completely excised from the Harballabh is discussed in the next chapter.

<sup>119</sup> Bawra’s writings constitute a secondary source for the period in question. For the period striding the 1960s upto 2003, however, one has to treat his work as a primary source.

<sup>120</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.33.

<sup>121</sup> I am grateful to Mr. Naresh Kumar for this insight.

Omkarnath Thakur unintentionally singing on till 2:30 am in 1934 is an ingenious “invention of tradition”. This is because the Harballabh has been believed to be an ancient ground of music; with the shift to the ‘purely’ classical under Mr. Kumar and the concomitant pedagogic stress on faithfully following the ‘time-theory’ of Indian ragas, stretching the performances at the Harballabh late into the night (indeed, the 2011 Harballabh concluded at 5 a.m. in the morning) so that the ragas of the night could be sung at their appropriate times. This is not to deny that this practice was not taking place in an unofficial manner in the pre-independence days. However, with Mr. Kumar, this practice received an official impetus, and indeed there has been no looking back.

Another aspect of the performative space at the Harballabh for these years is how it was defined by the imperative of the national, at the cost of the local. While many instances of musical soirees at Lahore include the names and locations of the various performers who came from across the Punjab to perform at Lahore<sup>122</sup>, in the case of the Harballabh, local notables and artistes are rarely if ever mentioned. Indeed one finds references to them in notices for musical events at Lahore rather than Jalandhar itself. This of course could be more a feature of the primary source itself; *The Tribune* being a national daily, Pt. Tolo Ram and later the Sangeet Mahasabha thought it prudent, in a bid to invite members from across the Punjab and north India, to mention the great national level performers, most of whom are followers of Paluskar.<sup>123</sup> The second-rung position occupied by local performers is however also recorded by Bawra:

The times were cheap economically. Whatever Mahant ji decided to donate as pushp putra to whichever musician, he would accept it. Local artistes were not even sent the invitation for the feast. Letters were written only to established musicians from distant regions. The talented people would come on the set- dates on their own.<sup>124</sup>

From this assertion, Bawra goes on to mention the important place of the Harballabh in the lives of the local musicians, telling us,

Each had a desire for stage-performance in their hearts. They would consider singing and playing on the stage of the Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan as a big honour. To the extent that

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<sup>122</sup> See Annexure 1.

<sup>123</sup> See all reports on the Harballabh in Annexure 2.

<sup>124</sup> p.29.

merely sitting and singing on this stage began to be seen as a certificatory document in itself.<sup>125</sup>

At this point, however, he takes a sudden leap to national level, extra-Jalandhar musicians such as Pt. Onkarnath Thakur (disciple of Pt. Vishnu Digambar), the Veena player of Patiala, Abdul Azeez Khan and Ustad Pyaare Imamuddin of Aligarh, who came to the Harballabh on their own initiative, without any formal invites being sent to them, as a testimony to the great merit of this festival. The reason for jumping to these ‘bigger’ names is soon made clear. Bawra quotes an anecdote which establishes the centrality, self-respect and identity of the Harballabh in unambiguous terms,

There was also such a time when an artiste going to perform at a princely court would be asked: “have you ever sung at the Harballabh sangeet sammelan?” An example of this is the incident that occurred with Thakur Onkarnath at the Kapurthala court. (Only) when Thakur ji presented the proof of document from the Harballabh did he get the order for performance at the court. Harivallabh sangeet sammelan was a public display organised in memoriam of a sacred soul. As to why this happened there are reasons behind it. Classical music concerts were very less and could easily be named. Opportunites to perform and listen to (such music) were limited.<sup>126</sup>

In order to explain the reasons for the Harballabh’s prominence, as a test of a musician’s capabilities, as evidence of his performative perspicacity, Bawra launches into the simplicity trope yet again, as well as the unique position of the Harballabh in bringing the classical to the masses. However, what is evident on closer observation, once we view the textual journey that led him upto this point, is the tension between the ‘national’ and the ‘local’. Bawra began by mentioning how the mere performance at the Harballabh stage was akin to achieving accolades of musical merit (‘Yahaan tak ki iss manch par baithkar gaa lena apne aap mein pramaan patra samjha jaane laga.’). However in order to make this point, the example he has for the reader stars a national-level musician from the usual, recurring cast of 4-5 characters. He ends, in other words, with a reiteration of the superiority of the local (i.e. the Harballabh), but the individual agent appropriate for this has, by necessity, to be national. It is important to mention this, because on the surface, Bawra seems to be saying the radically opposite: that the festival—a local and structurally limited affair—is what legitimises a national-level performer. The anecdote, standing on its own, certainly

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> p. 29.



affirms this. In the context of the preferences of the princely ruler of Kapurthala, newly emerging national standards are not paramount: what matters instead is the stamp of tradition represented by the long-standing Harballabh.<sup>127</sup> This is an explanation which, in its own context can clearly be seen to hold water. Curious, in this case, is the context where Bawra, perhaps unintentionally, inserts it: after explaining an asymmetrical, one-sided relationship between local musicians and the Harballabh.

Perhaps the real paradox of this anecdote, and the appropriate placement of it in Bawra's text, lies in its ability to capture a moment, where, eventually the local does triumph, but via a national agent. In acting as the seal of authority, as the entry point for new-age musicians to old-style durbars, the Harballabh through this anecdote emerges as a conduit for the flow of the national into the local, while in the very same moment being placed even more firmly on the local pedestal, imbued with all its particular sacrality and divinity. This play between the national and the local, becomes more starkly evident when we view the news reportage for the festival in a leading national daily. Uptil now, the discussion has primarily based on oral memories as recorded by this researcher and by Bawra. The observations regarding the Sangeet Mahasabha made above need to be historicised with a view to the references to it in The Tribune which affords us the closest archival proximity to the pre-1947 era of the Harballabh.

I would like to end this section with a classic though brief anecdote which captures the firm changes being wrought on the space of performance through the aegis of modernisation and nationalisation of classical music. The following notice, in Urdu, is issued in November 1928 by the Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha, which itself was formed barely 6 years before. Interestingly, this is issued immediately in the

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<sup>127</sup> The only reference of the ruler of Kapurthala having visited the Harballabh which I have been able to find is in the Souvenir for 1979, where the writer, a certain 'K.G.' reminisces that, 'Mr. Kapila, a Jullundur photographer, who has been to the Harballabh for much longer than I have been, recalled with fondness the days when the Maharaja of Kapurthala used to come to the festival himself, and how the singing girls from that place would come year after year to the Harballabh to listen to the masters. For the Devi Talab, he mentioned the Kapurthala Maharaja gifted once a magnificent chandelier, now lost.' Bawra mentions how the Maharaja when visiting Jalandhar could hear the singing at the Harballabh at a long distance from the Devi Talab, where his Jalandhar palace was located. Bawra, pp.

aftermath of Pt. Tolo Ram's death in July 1928, during a time of a leadership-crisis, so to speak, for this infant Mahasabha.<sup>128</sup> It is important to read it in that context:

In this sabha, at a time when some singer is singing, at that time any sahib giving the singer any reward in the form of money, jewels, clothes etc. from his side will not be entitled to do so in the sabha. If any sahib wishes to give, then he is requested to call the singer to his hime or visit the singer at the house where he is staying, and give him the reward there. Please do not try to give rewards in the sabha itself. Despite this request if any musician will accept rewards in this sabha, then his to-and-fro rent and reward will be seized.

Note: It is strictly forbidden to have cigarette, cigar in the sabha under any circumstances. The person, who makes any kind of noise and hullabaloo or instigates fights and brawls, that will have to hand over his ticket to the police and will be thrown out by them.

Issued by: Secretary, Sangeet Mahasabha, Devi Talab, Jalandhar Shahar. Kishan Steam Press, Jalandhar City.<sup>129</sup>

What is evident in the above paragraph is the championing of a performative style completely divorced from the strong associations with pleasure and entertainment, which practices such as the spontaneous bestowal of gifts in cash and kind by besotted listeners to the musicians signify. These practices date a long way back in the performative arena of Indian music and dance. The problem with this practice in modern India, apart from the overt divisions and discontent it creates amongst different musicians by persons external to the Sangit Mahasabha<sup>130</sup>, is that it smacks of an asymmetrical power relationship between patron and performer, reminiscent of the traditional *jajman-mirasi* relationship, with the patron belonging to a higher caste and the performer hailing from a lower status caste group.

However, as Bakhle has reminded us, Pt. Paluskar "institutionalised a Brahminic Hinduism as the modal cultural form of Indian music... by placing religiosity at the forefront of his pedagogy."<sup>131</sup> Behind this disavowal of the unpredictable and arbitrary bestowal of gifts on musicians by audience members is thus the hallowed feature espoused and begun by Paluskar, of treating the Harballabh as a place to

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<sup>128</sup> This aspect of the Mahasabha in the aftermath of Pt. Tolo Ram's death is discussed in greater detail below on p. 72.

<sup>129</sup> Shastri, *op.cit.*p.128. The reference to punishing anyone indulging in fights or brawls is corroborated by evidence from newsreports in *The Tribune*, which for the years 1937, 1939 and 1940 report 'rowdyism' in the audience at the Harballabh. See Annexure 2, and also pp.43-44 below.

<sup>130</sup> After all, the mahant and the Mahasabha after him continued bestowing the *jai patra* or *jai mala* to a musician, as part of formal procedure which continues in an altered form even today.

<sup>131</sup> Bakhle, *op.cit.* p.173.

perform out of respect, not for merely monetary and mercenary purposes. For a Paluskarite self-definition of musicians who perform for primarily devotional purposes, aspiring to sagehood<sup>132</sup>, the remotest possibility of being equated with lowly 'mirasis' is unthinkable, especially at a place which it is by now *believed* to harbour a tradition of music with an ancient and purely celestial lineage. The reference to the disciplining of the audience in the little 'note' at the end of the above notice, upholds new, modern, disciplined and bourgeois norms of audience behaviour.<sup>133</sup> In this new era of the onset of a new kind of classical music, struggling to be upheld as a respectable middle-class profession in itself, such practices need to be outlawed, if a new middle class can attend the Harballabh, which by now has even changed dates to suit its needs.<sup>134</sup> Apart from sacralising the Harballabh, such a strategy also favours the new, middle-class performer anxious of being treated on par with traditionally lower-caste performers of music most evident in the many examples of the Arya Samaj anniversary celebrations in Lahore (see Annexure II below). Hence, saying "no" to the money offered them is an effort to establish themselves as upholders of a hallowed tradition 'of the gods', and hence it is important to identify the Harballabh as a space where this autonomy of the artists, as performers for the Devi, is paramount.

Like Pt. Paluskar did for the larger sphere of Indian music, so the doyens of the newly created Sangeet Mahasabha can here be seen to be institutionalising the Harballabh mela itself, foregrounding new norms of purity through this pedagogic notice, which serves to change prevailing notions that move patrons and audience members to spontaneously reward pleasure-giving/joy-inducing entertainment.<sup>135</sup> The strict instruction and official exclusion of any musician who does accept such sullied rewards is radically new, for hitherto "musicians thought of themselves first as artistes

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<sup>132</sup> Towards the end of Paluskar's life, "increasingly he preferred pravachans in temples over performances in secular venues and adopted the vestments of a sadhu (one who has renounced the world and spends his time in meditation and prayer). He refrained from singing secular classical music, except on rare occasions or when his singing ability was challenged." Bakhle, p.165.

<sup>133</sup> Bakhle also notes how Paluskar's success lay in welding together Hindu devotionism and nationalism with the bourgeois aspirations of the rising middle classes: "In Paluskar's successful cooptation of the public sphere, one sees clearly how the commingling of religious instruction with musical education cemented the identification of the culture of the bourgeoisie as Hindu." Bakhle, p.177. Emphasis Added.

<sup>134</sup> Read more on the change of dates under the section 'Birth of the Sangeet Mahasabha and the nationalist imperative'.

<sup>135</sup> In the case of north India and especially the Punjab, this is also a cultural artefact, still very prevalent on weddings and other festive occasions, when notes of money are rotated around the head of the performer and bestowed on them.

and inheritors of a particular performance-based tradition. How might they have responded to Paluskar's foregrounding of Hindu religious beliefs in his musical pedagogy?"<sup>136</sup> In the strict outlawing of this practice and warning musicians in the above notice, we get an inkling of how some musicians indeed must have reacted to the strictures of those upholding a sanitized and newly 'respectable' version of performance. For, unless there indeed *were* musicians who accepted such gifts, how could the need to publish a didactic notice written in such categorical terms arise?

***The Birth of the Sangeet Mahasabha and the nationalist imperative***

With the shift from the 19<sup>th</sup> century to the 20<sup>th</sup> and the concomitant impact of Pandit Paluskar, a host of changes occurred, which have been detailed in the last two sections. In the light of those changes, we now need to see how the organisers of the Harballabh (alongside other regional/provincial efforts at musical congregations) were defining their festival in the new idiom embodied by developments in Lahore. I seek to understand the formal institutionalisation of the Harballabh in the light of these national and modernising influences which reached it via Lahore—that urban paragon of the modern-national for the Punjab.

The Harballabh was organised and run solely under the headship of the mahant Pt. Tolo Ram of the Devi Talab until 1922, aided by the steady flow of volunteers and materials from the residents of Jalandhar. In that year however, thanks to the urging of a young high school teacher, Jagannath Parti, and with the agreement and leadership of other local leaders of Jalandhar, the first steps towards the setting up of a modern body were made.

In 1922 Shri Jagannath Parti was serving at the Sain Das Anglo-Sanskrit High School in the role of an English teacher. He had a great fondness for music and every morning he would meet Mahant Tolo Ram ji. Mahant Tolo Ram ji made him also join his efforts. With inspiration from Master Parti, Mahant ji accepted the solution of making a sabha. This year at the residence of Lala Mushtaq Rai Sood, a meeting of different (katipaya?) residents of the town was called, wherein this sabha was named "Shree Harivallabh Sangeet Mahasabha". Shri Rai Bahadur Pandit Devi Chand was chosen as its President. Babu Sant Ram Ahluwalia (in whose name there is the Sant Cinema) and Rai Bahadur Mushtaq Rai were chosen Vice-Presidents. Master Jagannath Parti was chosen (mukarr) as the Secretary. From 1922 until

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<sup>136</sup> Bakhle, p.173.

1964, he continued working in the role of Secretary. He praayaha used to organise/monitor/manage/control (sanchalan) the stage only.<sup>137</sup>

This account corresponds, almost word-to-word, with the account of Jagannath Parti himself in Urdu.<sup>138</sup> The above paragraph squarely places the impetus for the emergence of the Sangeet Mahasabha from within the literati and other powerful, local elite notables of Jalandhar. The larger coincidence of the setting up of the Mahasabha in the year 1922, which marked the height of nationalist mass mobilisation around the Non-Cooperation Movement, marking a new wave of middle-class self-consciousness and the emphasis on national universities, education and culture cannot be missed.

The active link the Sangeet Mahasabha forged with the ongoing Indian national movement<sup>139</sup> is evident in the fact that the practice of singing 'Bande Mataram' at the end of each session of the Harballabh was introduced here by Paluskar. Pt. Paluskar and disciples would be present at many Congress sessions to conclude them with soulful singing of the Bande Mataram. The Harballabh too, adopted this practice of finishing each year's sitting with the singing of this national song. The first reference in newspaper reportage to the singing of 'Bande Mataram' comes from the year

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<sup>137</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.26.

<sup>138</sup> Part of a 12 page long document in Urdu of his memoirs included in the *Sammelan Souvenir* of 1972.

<sup>139</sup> For the Harballabh, it is the 1919 Congress that is the most memorable. In this instance too, it are the musicians from beyond the Punjab who take centre-stage, and not Punjabi ones, in what was perhaps one of the only classical music festivals that Gandhi would have attended in the Punjab. Those participating on this historic sitting included musicians such as Pandit Bhaskar Rao, Ustad Fayyaz Khan, Pyaare Imaamuddin, Master Krishna, Pandit Ram Krishna Buva, Shri Kanhaiya Laal, etc. and Bawra commented that: "Prior to c. 1919 so many artistes of such high calibre had not come here together... On the last day, amongst the listeners present were the English Commissioner of Jalandhar, the Guru(s) of Kartarpur, the Chief Minister of Kapurthala princely state Miyan Abdul Azeez, and the ministers of Patiala and Kashmir as well. In those days, just like today, listening was done sitting on the floor." Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.32. Bawra also quotes the memoirs of famous musician LK Pandit: "Revered father used to keep telling us about the mela of Harivallabh. One or two he has even written in his memoirs. In one of these anecdotes, the arrival of Mahatma Gandhi to the Harballabh as also the description of an unbelievable music sitting is there. In 1919 on the occasion of the Harballabh Rag Sabha, the Congress was organised at Amritsar. Before Mahatma Gandhi three artistes were to sing as per the programme; these being Pandit Bhaskar Rao ji and Pandit Krishna Rao ji. But en route from Amritsar to Jalandhar, due to no prior visit of Mahatma Gandhi to this area, Mahatma ji was delayed from reaching the raag sabha. Looking at the paucity of time, the organisers asked the three performers to sing together. Neither of the three artistes were prepared for such an unpredictable eventuality. But keeping in mind the delicacy of time, they went on the stage. On the stage, Pt. Bhaskar Buva ji asked Pt. Krishna Rao ji to start a pad a bhakti composition). Pandit ji began "raam bhajan ko diya kamalmukh" (I gave a lotus-mouth to the bhajan of raam) in khamaaj. Then what was there, all three great artistes sang one after the other, creating such magic that Mahatma ji was soul-struck." Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.18.

1937.<sup>140</sup> This surely cannot be the exact date, for ‘Bande Mataram’ was an integral part of Pt. Paluskar’s agenda at all political meetings held in Lahore during the days he was setting up the first Gandharv Mahavidyala there during the first decade of the twentieth century.<sup>141</sup>

What is peculiar about the 1930s is the swelling in the numbers of listeners at the Harballabh pandals and the concomitant efforts to discipline their ‘rowdy’ behaviour, a brief example of which we witness in the 1928 notice quoted at the end of the last section. Jagannath Parti, in a memoir published in the 1980s reminisced that the numbers increased post-1935.<sup>142</sup> Interestingly, this is corroborated by the evidence from *The Tribune*, where the year 1937 Harballabh experienced a ‘tremendous rush of visitors’ who were nonetheless controlled by ‘the volunteers of the Hindu Sewak Sabha and Krishna Dal’ who also ‘controlled the traffic and maintained order in an appreciable manner.’<sup>143</sup> On another day for the same year, we are told that ‘a section of the audience thrice attempted to disturb the proceedings, but they were promptly checked by the volunteers’.<sup>144</sup> Fortunately for the organisers, their efforts seemed to bear fruit for two years later on the last day of the 1939 festival, ‘though the rush of people was greater than previous days, nothing untoward happened throughout the sitting.’ However, for the second-last day, ‘some rowdyism was witnessed at the conference yesterday when a section of the audience was disturbed by a hand-to-hand fight between two men. The police had to make a light cane charge to restore order.’<sup>145</sup> This is merely a temporary victory, for the next year, in 1940, we are told that ‘the proceedings of the first sitting of the annual music conference remained undisturbed till 11 a.m. when a section of the audience suddenly rose and began moving out from the pandal. Two men had a hand-to-hand fight over a seat. The volunteers promptly restored order.’<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>140</sup> *The Tribune*, Friday, December 31, 1937, p. 7, Local and Provincial. Under the heading ‘JULLUNDUR MUSIC CONCERANCE CONCLUDES’ the report tells us that ‘With the singing of the “Bande Mataram” song the conference came to a close.’ References to Bande Mataram in *The Tribune* reports recur for the years 1937 and 1944. See Annexure 2 below.

<sup>141</sup> Bakhle, p.155.

<sup>142</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.147, published first on 22 December 1981 in the Urdu newspaper, the *Hind Samachar*.

<sup>143</sup> *The Tribune*, Thursday Dec 30, 1937, p. 7. See Annexure 2, p. 5 for the full report.

<sup>144</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>145</sup> *The Tribune*, December 29, 1939, p.4.

<sup>146</sup> *The Tribune*, Monday, December 30, 1940, p.4. “PROVINCIAL NEWS”.

These attempts at disturbance by the large crowds, seemingly insignificant in themselves—constituting the minutiae of history, and the banal detail of newspaper reportage—however acquire significance because this is a history of performance and consumption. And while there is ample evidence of the ‘performance’, when it comes to the reception and ‘consumption’ of the music, and a question of putting faces to the crowd, the extant archive is largely silent. The above references to the efforts to control the crowds are extremely interesting. In the report from 1937, what is striking is the deployment of volunteers from bodies external to the music mahasabha—a rare occasion in its history where otherwise the only body that is remembered is the Mahasabha itself. However the link of these volunteer corps to the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha, and crucially their Hindu-character is surely a development that could have occurred only during these years since the very existence of these bodies is a symbol of the increasing polarisation of identities along religious and communal lines.<sup>147</sup> Of greater import for issues of music’s performance and consumption, is the effort towards disciplining the rowdy audience, who thrice disturbed the gathering, in a fashion which is amenable to the smooth running of a modern musical concert. The very possibility of hosting musicians from across the nation, those who constitute the ‘best’ of the nation arriving here is something which is possible only in a time of modernity, especially the infrastructural ingredient of the presence of the railways, as already noted previously. ‘Rowdyism’ continues in 1939 as well. This time it is interesting to note how the police, a visibly colonial institution, was present to control it.<sup>148</sup> Further, an instance of almost carnivalesque violence breaks out here, suppressed eventually by the superior, now more legitimate, violence of the state. Alas, we shall never know who the two men were or indeed what led to their ‘hand-to-hand fight’. Was it over issues musical or mundane? Violence in the world of music was certainly not unknown, and Joginder Singh Bawra’s book records these instances. Moreover, the links of Punjab’s music with larger notions a martial masculinity, and the symbolic and sometimes quite real connections of musical prowess with wrestling and

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<sup>147</sup> However, Jalandhar was a Punjabi city with more Hindus than others, and perhaps the two bodies were not really reflective of communalism. The connection with communalism drawn here is rather tentative and awaits further corroboration. Unlike Amritsar, Jalandhar did not emerge as the centre of the Singh Sabha movement; rather, orthodox Hindu organizations like Sanatan Dharm Sabha were also active here since 1860s.

<sup>148</sup> Despite the presence of this ‘colonial’ institution what is remarkable is the ease with which ‘Bande Mataram’ can be sung, and how it was not banned by the British—but this could be a testament of the proximity of the policemen, who were no doubt Indian, to the nationalist cause itself.

wrestlers highlights for us the social world of musicians in India, wherein music is not always the sublime, esoteric, other-worldly pursuit, unsullied by the pettiness of day-to-day life. On the other hand, it could simply be a mundane trigger behind the violence, to do with the constraints that could have arisen with large numbers congregating together, maybe the two fighters had been straining over access to the music being performed!<sup>149</sup>

This was also the time and context when the festival was first defined self-consciously as a Rag Mela', the name first appearing in 1933. Perhaps the reason for the epithet 'Mela' being attached is the fact that by this time numbers were swelling, due to the democratisation and popularisation of music thanks to the efforts of Pt. Paluskar and Pt. Bhatkhande and the gramophone industry, and most importantly the fact that it was in the 1930s that the radio established itself in a major way in India.<sup>150</sup> Another reason for the application of this epithet is the fact that by this time the festival, under the efforts of the Sangeet Mahasabha is actively defining itself as an upholder of the classical music as defined in decotional terms by Paluskar, thereby leading to the inclusion of the crucial first half in the term 'Rag Mela', i.e. 'Rag.'. Prior to 1933, the festival is termed in very tentative and un-pompous terms as an 'annual symposium of musicians' (1913 and 1914), 'symposium of musicians' (1921) or simply 'anniversary of the Mahasabha' (1924).

The consciously cultivated modern character of the Harballabh Mela under the aegis of the Sangeet Mahasabha, who wished to cast the festival in the mould of the disciplined urbane music concert characteristic of Lahore (see Annexure II), is thus responsible for the disciplining of the large crowds. By the 1940s then, the Harballabh had become an important and crucial centre for the nurturance, performance and consumption of classical music in a democratised<sup>151</sup> public sphere of culture defined by the norms of colonial modernity.

The desire for a modern festival resembling the better-managed concerts of Lahore however meant an acknowledgement of the professionalization and monetization of the

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<sup>149</sup> This certainly seemed to be the case the next year, as is spelt out in the reports from 1940, when 'two men had a hand-to-hand fight over a seat'.

<sup>150</sup> B.N. Goswami, *Broadcasting: New Patron of Hindustani Music*, Sharada Publishing House, 1996: Delhi, p.149.

<sup>151</sup> It needs to be noted that this democratization was exclusive of women at least until the 1950s when during Mr. Ashwini Kumar's time women were officially allowed entry to this festival both as performers, audience members and indeed, as patrons.



profession, and this in turn entailed a collection of sufficient funds to organise the festival. While Bawra, as per the information provided by Parti, argues that the need for funds arose only post 1931, a rare primary document in Urdu quoted by Krishnananda Shastri in his book *Trigartapradesh* Jalandhar complicates this picture further. The figure of Pt. Tolo Ram now acquires the halcyon air reserved for Baba Harballabh and Pt. Paluskar in the following letter written by (we presume) Sangeet Mahasabha representatives to an anonymous wealthy resident of Jalandhar, in the aftermath of the mahant's death in 1928:

Pt. Tolo Ram ji has made heaven his residence in the month of July 1928. How much ever one may mourn him it is not enough. Such a pure soul serving the public is born after so many centuries. For fifty years he has served the public with his body, heart and wealth. It is of paramount necessity to retain his memories. This means that the Sangeet Sabha Conference Baba Harivallabh ji is the sole channel of the propagation of raag-knowledge in Hindustan. Starting on 26 December 1928, it will finish on 29 December 1928. Till the time this resident of heaven was present (here on earth), he kept this Conference going somehow or the other, but at this moment the organisers of the conference have become absolutely neglectful. Because in the beginning of the Conference the expenses would total least one hundred rupees and they have nothing available with them. You are one of the renowned wealthy persons of our Jalandhar that is why we request you that for the help to the conference, please give us the initial amount of the expenses. Whatever wealth you choose to bestow upon us will be spent only in the initial expenditure. And moreover, after this the earning will be made by tickets to such an extent that it will be of use for every year from now on in the future. In this way your donation will become solid and permanent and in future you will not be troubled ever again.<sup>152</sup>

The above primary document is a rare source which shows us the day-to-day difficulties in running and organising the festival even during the late 1920s. The decline, after the death of Pt. Tolo Ram comes across as stark. It almost seems as though the crisis was also there during the mahantship of Pt Tolo Ram though his personal charismatic leadership helped run the festival. Thus one needs to keep in mind that the formation of the Mahasabha constituted a formal institutionalization of changes which had begun with the onset of Pt. Paluskar at the turn of the century. With the death of Pt. Tolo Ram, the crisis merely came to a head.<sup>153</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> Shastri, *op.cit.* p.134. My translation from the original Urdu. I thank Dr. Sajjad of the School of Languages at JNU for his help in this regard.

<sup>153</sup> As far as the temporal context in which the Mahasabha was formed, this was a time when the concomitant rise of the gramophone record company implied the cultivation of a particular taste amongst audiences. At the Harballabh itself, this meant a shift from the initial primacy of dhrupad—

The shift towards a more concert-like format (though the mela-like character was still predominant) thus occurred we have to surmise, sometime during the second and third decades of the century. The most evocative indication of this is the shift in the dates of the mela from January, to the Christmas holidays in late December. Bawra notes that the change occurred in order to accommodate the travel requirements of artistes who had to come from afar for the festival, and more importantly, to dates on which listeners could come in large numbers.<sup>154</sup> The Christmas holidays was the best time for this, when the ‘lawyers, officers, mulaazmon, school and college teachers would not be deprived from the pleasure of this art’. Given the testimony of Jagannath Parti in persuading Pt. Tolo Ram to set up a formal body to represent the musical anniversary, it is quite possible that he (and other young music-loving professionals of Jalandhar, as also the ever-increasing band of musicians from beyond the Punjab, especially Maharashtra) he played an equally decisive role in shifting the dates from January to December. This one single change, captures at a micro-level the fundamental transformation occurring in the nature of the Harballabh over time which this dissertation is tracking. In other words, the performance of music at this festival was becoming tied to the rhythms and time-cycles of the colonial economy, and the modern industrial economy more generally. Colonialism thus, very visibly produced the conditions, prepared the ground, so to speak, for the character of music performance and consumption.

It was this logic peculiar to modernity—of being closely attentive to the value and utility of ‘time’, which could no longer be ‘wasted’ at a whole day long of music—

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which was already on the wane post 1901—to a predominance of *khayal*. In the context of the Mahasabha itself, this letter made available by Shastri also highlights the dissensions within those organising the festival. Unfortunately, the writer(s) of the letter remain unknown; yet the epithet ‘absolutely neglectful’ attributed to the organisers of the Mahasabha in the aftermath of Pt. Tolo Ram’s death reminds us of the cracks within the barely 6 year old Mahasabha. Like the earlier notice this one also refers to the levying of a ticket, and that too a ‘financial’ ticket, and not a mere ‘paper ticket’ (as in a free pass for entry). On the basis of these two primary documents from 1928 made available by Shastri, it seems that the claim that the Harballabh has *always* been a ‘non-ticketed’ event can be challenged, even if for a short temporal window.

<sup>154</sup> In a comprehensive and well-researched article in *The Tribune* of 1956 by G.C. Sondhi, the year when the dates were shifted from January to December is precisely mentioned as 1903, merely 3 years after the visit of Paluskar. This one instance thus proves to us that the shift towards modernisation, keeping in mind the larger audience of the now burgeoning Jalandhar professionals, occurred right on the heels of the visit of Paluskar: “After the passing away of Shri Harballabh, Pandit Tolo Ram coming from a well-to-do Brahmin family of the town took up the mission of Shastriya Sangeet. He toured the country in search of master musicians of his time and invited them to the annual music mela at Harballabh. In fact, it was as early as 1903 that he fixed the dates of the annual celebrations from December 26 to December 29.” *The Tribune*, December 28, Friday, 1956, p. 9.

that urged Parti and party to urge for the shift of dates to December, and indeed, to form the Mahasabha as well; not a lack of funds, for, as mentioned by Parti himself, funds were not needed a good ten years after the birth of the Mahasabha<sup>155</sup>. The reasons then seem to lie elsewhere: in the desire and urge to engage the educated middle classes for listening to and eventually, performing music, and especially ridding *khayal* singing of its ambiguous and ‘impure’ associations with lower caste, mirasi performers, as seen above in Devki Sud’s account.<sup>156</sup> This same attention to time and the description of who or what is worthy of it, also foregrounded national-level and non-Punjabi singers at the expense of local and regional talent.<sup>157</sup> And this again is the reason why Pt. Paluskar and his disciples have enjoyed such an illustrious and hegemonic position in the annals of newspaper reportage on the Harballabh and the writing of its history more generally: for they were the apt vehicles, and one could argue, initiators, of the transformation of the ‘Harballabh Rag Mela’ into the ‘Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan’. By 1947, however, this process was far from complete. For that to happen, a more through-going set of changes had to simultaneously occur. It is these changes which are mapped in the next chapter.

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<sup>155</sup> Collection of funds not required until 1931. (Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*,: p.28). According to Krishnananda Shastri, the date upto which collection of funds was not required was 1942.

<sup>156</sup> Also see P.Tandon, *Punjabi Century, 1857-1947* London: Chatto and Windus, 1961, pp.79-82.

<sup>157</sup> All the reports in *The Tribune* from 1913 onwards (when the first reference to the festival occurring in December is found; previously the festival was held in January, and these reports can be mined only via future research) right upto 1946 (the last instance of the mela pre-Partition), clearly mention national level musicians far more frequently than local artistes. See Annexure 2. The obvious secondary place given to local musicians and artists is also noted in Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p. 29.

*Chapter 2*

***Between ‘Rag Mela’ and ‘Sangeet Sammelan’: Modernising the festival, 1948-1988***

The turn to independence/partition in 1947 was an undoubted watershed in the history of India, with lasting effects evident in all its myriad realms. It was arguably in the realm of culture—especially those particular practices deemed worthy of being ‘national treasures’—that the most thoroughgoing impact of 1947 was felt. In the case of regions situated near India’s newly created borders, the more enabling and positive impact of having an independent non-colonial government was offset in irreparable ways by the disruption of the socio-cultural fabric constituted by the exodus of Muslims, in the case of the Punjab towards the west into Pakistan and the concomitant pouring of Hindus and Sikhs into India. What follows is thus an account of the Harballabh festival in a time when the socio-cultural and political matrix around it was undergoing calamitous changes and major mayhem. The ways in which the mela dealt with the twin outcomes of this period of history— of facing the enormity of the human tragedy engulfing the Punjab on the one hand, while also sallying forth enthusiastically to eagerly build a nation long dreamed about— is explored in some detail.

I begin with an account of the temporal context following Partition, with its attendant socio-cultural rupture (via the exodus of Muslims from East Punjab to the West) as also the new and enabling impact of the shift of the All India Radio station from Lahore to Jalandhar. Following this I discuss the tenor of organisation of the festival during these four decades, during which the festival reached its apogee of fame and excellence. In this section, the focus shall be on the organisers, the patrons and residents of Jalandhar, as it was in the last chapter, and the way in which the festival acquired a new centrality for them. While marking out these changes, I nevertheless also examine the continuities with an earlier era. The next section discusses the place of the Harballabh in the world of the musicians, while the fourth deals with the construction of the huge Devi Talab temple on land owned by the Sangeet Mahasabha authorities and the concomitant entry of the temple and the goddess in iconography related to the festival. The final section examines the important decade of the turbulent 1980s when the festival underwent a brief but significant lull in activity.

As its central theme, this chapter maps the processes by which a full-fledged shift occurred in the character and content of the festival and how it metamorphosed during this phase into a modern, urban-based and professionally organised concert, with little resemblance to the 'rag mela' it used to be. We have already seen in the last chapter, especially Annexure 2 and 3, how the seeds of this transformation to a *Sammelan* or formal concert from an earlier, more fluid *Mela* format occurred with the transfer of norms of cultural practice of 'star' performers of 'all-India fame' from Lahore to the Harballabh in the 1920s and 1930s. In this chapter we shall examine how the Harballabh itself emerged, post-Partition as the new urban cultural hub of the Punjab, taking on the mantle of Lahore.

### ***The Post-Partition Context***

The impact of Partition was manifold for the entire Punjab. A socio-cultural rupture of cataclysmic proportions, the division of the Punjab along religious lines paved the way for the formation of newer collective identities on the basis of the political borders. The demographic complexion of the city also changed completely in 1947 when the Muslims, constituting a majority of the population (44.5%, followed by Hindus at 33% as per the 1911 Census) had to leave and it was occupied by the Hindus and Sikhs coming from Pakistan.<sup>1</sup> Most of the mosques, Jama Masjid at Punj Pir Bazar, Masjid Ghumaran (Central town), Masjid Ali, Mosque of Baba Mitthu at Basti Mitthu, mosque of Basti Sheikh Darvesh, Sayeedan mosque at Sayeedan Gate were then occupied by Hindus and Sikhs and turned into temples, gurudwaras, schools etc.<sup>2</sup> This resulted in many unexpected changes in the quality of the festival with the mass exodus of Muslims significantly altering the composition of performers and audience members at the festival.

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<sup>1</sup> *Punjab District Gazetteers, Volume XIV B, Jullundur District, Statistical Tables 1916*, Compiled and Published under the Authority of the Punjab Government, Lahore: Printed by the Superintendent, Government Printing, Punjab, 1917, p.xliv. This gazetteer compiles tables from the 1911 census. As per a stray, unreferenced estimate in Harjinder Singh Dilgeer's *Encyclopedia of Jalandhar*, Muslims comprised 85 per cent population of the city. For Jalandhar tahsil itself in 1911, the Muslims comprised around 49%, Hindus about 30.7% and Sikhs 19.3%. In nearby Nakodar, Muslims comprised 59.6% of the entire population and Hindus 22.8% and Sikhs 17.2%. Nawanshahr and Phillaur had higher percentages of Hindus than Muslims. *Ibid.*, p.xlv. See Annexure. Dilgeer, p. 10. The 1980 Gazetteer claims that in 1947 'the Muslims which formed about 60 per cent of the total population migrated to Pakistan'. p.493.

<sup>2</sup> H.S. Dilgeer, *Encyclopedia of Jalandhar*, Belgium: Sikh University Press, 2004, p. 10.

It is important to note that the general survey of the cultural field post-Partition reflects a curious silence on and obscuring of the magnitude of the cataclysm surrounding the Punjab. Even though writers, intellectuals and poets like Manto, Intizar Hussain and Chaman Nahal did write about their experiences, on the whole, there was a noticeable overall silence on the issue.<sup>3</sup> As Faiz is said to have reportedly told his daughter Saleema Hashmi, in response to her persistent questions later on, regarding the lack of writing on the Partition, “we just couldn’t deal with it.”<sup>4</sup> Film critics have similarly pointed to the remarkable neglect in cinema of the theme of the partition; on the contrary, there seems to be a focus on joyous themes of hope.<sup>5</sup> In the discourse around the Harballabh as well, Partition figures largely through its denial. Newspaper reports of the Harballabh for 1948, for example, also reflect this general tendency to put under the blanket the momentous impact of partition.

Jullundur Music Conference: The annual music conference known as ‘Harballabh Rag Mela’ will be held at Devi Talao from December 26 to 29. Pandit Vinaikrao Patwardhan, Principal Gandarb Mahavidyala of Poona, Prof. Narayanrao Vyas, a filmstar of Bombay, Pt. Krishnarao Cuankar, Principal, Gandharb Mahavidyala of Gwalior, Pt. Bawanrao, Principal, Gandharb Mahavidyala of Kolhapur and other prominent musicians will participate in the conference.<sup>6</sup>

A similar though even more elaborate description of the festival is given for the next year, 1949, which apart from recording the musical acumen of the event, also looks forward to celebrating the Diamond Jubilee of the festival for the next year. As such it deserves quoting in the full:

The 74th Session of the Music Conference concluded on Dec. 29 after four days with ‘Bande Matram’ sung by Thakur Omkarnath. Earlier, he gave two splendid performances in response to pressing demand from the audience. Pandit Krishnarao Chaunkar, Principal, Gandharb Mahavidyala, Gwalior also kept the audience spell-bound for three quarters of an hour

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<sup>3</sup> This is not to deny the vast literature in Urdu and Hindi and Punjabi that *did* in fact, take Partition on board, and very actively as well, as also those literary and cultural trends which formed an important adjunct to activist fire-fighting in the face of ravaging communal fires.

<sup>4</sup> Salima Hashmi narrated this anecdote at a public lecture organized during the Faiz Ahmad Faiz centenary celebrations at the JNU School of Arts and Aesthetics Auditorium in February 2011.

<sup>5</sup> As noted by Meenakshi Bharat and Nirmal Kumar, ‘...from the comparative fledgling arena of cinema, there was little or nothing forthcoming. It was as if a pall had descended both sides... Giving cinematic voice to this hurtful subject at this early juncture was quite unthinkable. The immediate national imperative was the painstaking erection of the edifice of new nations (and) cinema inevitably came to be commandeered for the purpose... All allusions to the ‘other’ nation were assiduously avoided. It is in *this nebulous beginning, that is yet extremely vocal and evocative in its silence, that the wellsprings of the interest of this volume lie.*’ M. Bharat and N. Kumar, *Filming the line of Control: The Indo-Pak relationship through the cinematic lens*, New Delhi and UK: Routledge, 2008, p.1. Emphasis added.

<sup>6</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala Cantt., Wednesday, December 22, 1948, p.2.

although the loudspeaker had ceased working. His melodious song was exceedingly thrilling. Prominent among other artists, who gave vocal and instrumental performances were Pt. Shiv Kumar, Pt. Prem Vallabh, Prof. Deshbandhi, Dewan Prem Nath, Master Panna Lal and Pt. Ram Narain and Pt. Prem Vallabh.

Before singing the 'Bande Matram' Thakur Omkarnath said that the vital issue of national anthem ought to have been decided in consultation with some musicians. He preferred 'Bande Mataram' to 'Jana Gana Mana' maintaining that it was fully expressive of all the virtues of Mother India ('Bharat Mata').

The song was preceded by showering of flowers ('Jai Mala') and a brief speech by the Secretary of the Doaba Sangeet Sabha tracing the history of the Conference to a period as far as 74 years back when Baba Harballabh, the Yogi musician held a small meeting of musicians mostly Sadhus on the steps of the Devi Talao in memory of his 'Guru' Sri Tuljagirji. Later, after the demise of the Yogi musician, the anniversary was celebrated as music conference which gained all India importance in the time of Pt. Tolo Ram, worthy disciple of Baba Harballabh, and musicians and artists from different parts of India began participating in it for their devotion to the Yogi musician.

As announced today, the Diamond Jubilee of the Conference will be celebrated next year and Thakur Omkarnath consented to participate in it.<sup>7</sup>

In both the examples of the post-Independence/Partition festivals, Paluskar's stalwart disciples such as Patwardhan, Vyas, Thakur thus continue to make their mark at the festival: a simple parroting of their names is what becomes central for a newspaper and public sphere, where the national is what is prominent, respectable and praiseworthy culturally. Thus, there is no mention of the local Punjab performers and musicians, a tendency which had its roots in the early decades of the twentieth century, as seen in the last chapter, and consolidated firmly with the turn to independence. For the Harballabh, the changes wrought by the visits of Pt. Paluskar in particular, as argued in Chapter 1, provided an even stronger rationale for a seamless continuity with the pre-1947 era.

However, for Jalandhar at least if not other cities of the Punjab, the new political divisions also entailed a more enabling, positive impact. Given the fact that it was one of the few urban, cosmopolitan centres in East Punjab which could take on the mantle of Lahore (Amritsar's proximity to the new border ensured that it be rejected as a

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<sup>7</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala Cantt., Saturday, Dec. 31, 1949, p. 3, 'HARBALLABH SANGEET CONFERENCE AT JULLUNDUR.'

potential candidate for the capital<sup>8</sup>) resulted in it being designated as the temporary<sup>9</sup> administrative capital of the Punjab. Thus Jalandhar became the newly established headquarters of the East Punjab Government, upto its neck in dealing with the steady influx of refugees from the West. While Amritsar, given its rich Sikh historical heritage, was seen as being more representative of the Punjab in general and for taking the lead in the religious-cultural sphere by the new Indian ruling elite who treated ‘Sikh’ and ‘Punjabi’ almost as synonyms<sup>10</sup>, it was Jalandhar which perhaps reaped the more significant harvest. The most positive impact of this shift of capital to Jalandhar with regards to music in particular was the re-location of the All India Radio of Lahore to Jalandhar. The physical and geographical proximity of the ‘AIR-Jullundur’, set up on 1<sup>st</sup> November 1947, was symbolic of the new intimacy of the Harballabh Mahasabha with state patronage during this phase<sup>11</sup>. B.N. Goswami believes that “it was a matter of coincidence that the radio emerged as an effective medium, when the music system in North India was passing through a crucial stage” of “codification and standardisation.”<sup>12</sup> Independence marked this out in an even more stark way, primarily with Dr. B.V. Keskar’s appointment as Information and Broadcasting Minister. He held fort at the AIR for a substantial 9 years from 1952-1961 which is said to be the ‘golden age’ in the history of broadcasting classical music on AIR, given that a conscious policy of encouraging classical music now came into existence.<sup>13</sup> The zeal with which Dr. Keskar went about ‘popularising’ classical

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<sup>8</sup> Madan Gopal Singh mentioned in an anecdote narrated at the 2012 Jaipur Literary Fest how as a child growing up in post-1947 Amritsar, he used to tune into Radio Pakistan broadcast from Lahore which reached Amritsar till 1964. <http://jaipurliteraturefestival.org/program-2011/22-jan-2012-program/> accessed on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2012, 19:23 pm.

<sup>9</sup> While Chandigarh was being built as the new capital. Nonetheless, prior to the shift to Chandigarh, the capital first shifted from Jalandhar to Simla. Baldev Raj Sharma, (State Editor, Gazetteers of Punjab, Chandigarh), *Punjab District Gazetteers, Jullundur*, Chandigarh: Revenue Department, 1980, p.493.

<sup>10</sup> This association of Sikhism with Punjab has already been discussed in greater detail in the Introduction.

<sup>11</sup> B.N. Goswami, *Broadcasting: New Patron of Hindustani Music*, Sharada Publishing House, 1996: Delhi, p.100. The ‘Akashvani Jullundur’ relayed select pieces performed at the Harballabh for broadcasting to a wider public, as per the report of General Secretary K.L. Jain, included in the Souvenir for the 96<sup>th</sup> Sammelan held in 1972 January, which means the AIR relayed the items for 1970 festival as in 1971 no festival took place due to the Indo-Pak war.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, Introduction, pp.17-18.

<sup>13</sup> Amongst the range of other changes made by Keskar were introduction of a new audition system, inaugurating the National Orchestra or ‘Vadya Vrind’, holding of ‘Annual Radio Sangeet Sammelan’ etc. See Goswami pp.69-85. As part of this process, he imposed a complete ban on playing film music on AIR. Keskar also lifted the ban initiated during the tenure of his predecessor Sardar Patel on the baiji’s from singing on AIR; now they were welcomed and referred to by the more respectable sobriquet of ‘Devis’. *Ibid.*, p.18.



music, which became part of official policy under his tenure is summed up as follows in a statement of his from 1953:

Classical music...must not remain the monopoly or the pleasure of a few, but should be a vehicle of consolation and enjoyment to all cultured people in society.

In this age of democracy, *it is the duty of the State*, which replaces the princes and aristocrats, to patronise music and encourage it in every possible way.<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Keskar thus clearly elaborates the state-led thrust to assume responsibility for the well-being of classical music, which itself had to be disseminated as ‘a vehicle of consolation and enjoyment to all cultured people in society’. This official policy amplified the self-importance of all music festivals across the country, with the oldest reacting in ways discussed below.

### **Modernisation and its Discontents: The Harballabh reaches its ‘Zenith’**

The bounden ‘duty of the State’ to encourage classical music, mentioned above by Dr. Keskar was also evinced in the post-1947 history of the Harballabh music festival. Various factors converged, throughout this time-frame, to produce the Harballabh as a music festival of national excellence, at par with those organised in the more metropolitan centres of Calcutta, Bombay, Pune, pre-Partition Lahore<sup>15</sup>, to say nothing of Madras. The patronage of this festival as well as the character of those now invested in the festival changed remarkably during this period, due to the ongoing process of rupture caused by Partition.<sup>16</sup>

The fluid composite patronage of the past, characterised by a spontaneous voluntary aid of the festival largely by wealthy traders, as well as shopkeepers and commoners as shown in the first chapter, became more formally institutionalised from the 1950s

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<sup>14</sup> *The Tribune*, 1953, December 23, p.5. Emphasis Added.

<sup>15</sup> As shown in the previous chapter.

<sup>16</sup> ‘The arrival of refugees from West Punjab (Pakistan) injected a new element into Jullundur. The uprooted, to stand on their legs, set up any kind of trade. Most of the industry at Jullundur before 1947 was owned by the Muslims and about 40 percent of their population was engaged in it. They used to make cocks (taps), hand pump, fittings, locks, sewing machines, and flat-irons for pressing clothes. The Hindus were mostly shopkeepers and financiers. After the partition, the refugees stepped into the places of the Muslims in all spheres of industrial and business activities. As Jullundur was a market of iron and steel, several small industrial units sprang up’ and the town grew up to be ‘one of the most important industrial towns. It has earned a name at home and abroad in sports goods, pipe fittings, hand tools, rubber goods, leather products, surgical instruments, autoparts, agricultural implements, ball bearings, motor body building, electrical appliances, household appliances, and valves and cocks.’ B. R. Sharma, (State Editor, Gazetteers of Punjab, Chandigarh), *Punjab District Gazetteers, Jullundur*, Chandigarh: Revenue Department, 1980, p.493.

onwards. Though the Sangeet Mahasabha was formally established in 1922, its heyday came only in the 1950s, through concrete efforts and a range of variegated changes undertaken by Mr. Ashwini Kumar, eminent sportsperson and high-ranking police official who now took over the reins of the festival, who took over the mantle for the organisation of the festival during these years. Connoisseur, man of letters, sensitive listener, empathetic, passionate pedagogue, all these personal characteristics along with historical contingent circumstances served to help him raise the festival to the heights it reached during his time.<sup>17</sup> Memories of attending the Harballabh ever since he was a boy of six, travelling from Lahore to Jullundur (his birth town) along with other boys and men of his household on the insistence of his music-loving father, along with the decay the festival underwent in the immediate aftermath of Partition plus the happy quirk of history which placed him close to Jalandhar post-Independence—all these experiences propelled him to come forward and dedicate himself to renewing the festival in the new era of Independence. In an April 2011 interview, Mr. Ashwini Kumar shared the moving story of how he came to lead the festival to new heights, by shaking it out of the doldrums it had fallen into following the impact of partition with the mass exodus of many Muslims (both performers and listeners) from east Punjab to Pakistan. He narrated how he was deeply struck by the dwindling of the numbers attending the festival:

There were only a few 100 people listening, when I visited the Harballabh in 1948, as I was also SP of Jalandhar at that time. Only two singers—Narayan Rao Vyas and Vinayak Rao Patwardhan were performing that year. The *mahant* of the Baba Harballabh Mahasabha Pt. Dwarka Dass, was ill, lying down on a *manji* (cot). He looked at me, and perhaps recognizing a kindred spirit, told me, “Now you have to ensure the festival continues and thrives.”<sup>18</sup>

Given the sterling commitment of Mr. Kumar to the festival, he would have perhaps gone ahead and worked for its revival even without the *mahant* blessing him to take on the mantle. But he was formally “blessed”, and the story of how he, along with a

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<sup>17</sup> As Principal of the Phillaur Police Training Academy at the time of his taking over the charge of running the festival, Shri Ashwini Kumar, born in Jalandhar, a recognised music connoisseur and Harballabhite since his childhood days in Lahore slowly worked to recast the festival. Padma Vibhushan Ashwini Kumar, former Director-General, Border Security Force and Director General, Punjab and Himachal Police, is a very famous sportsman who has led many Indian contingents abroad. He was also the vice-president of International Olympic Committee and the International Hockey Federation. See Annexure for a fuller biographical note.

<sup>18</sup> Interview Dated 18 February 2011.

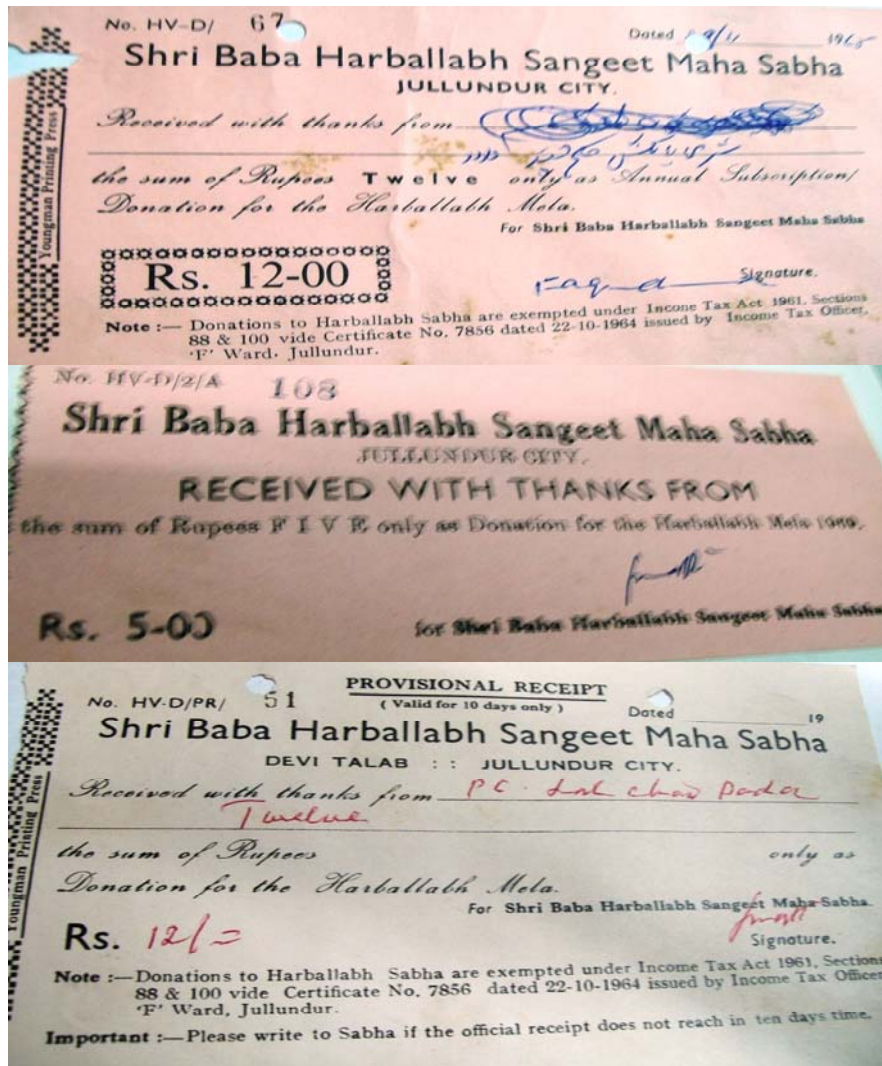
leading and wealthy Jalandhar merchant and philanthropist Seth Hukm Chand<sup>19</sup> steered the festival to its present day eminence as a national festival, reads like many other similar biographies of figures of that time who built and renewed institutions radically from within: be it in education, urban industry, culture, constructive work in the villages, etc.<sup>20</sup> As he went about his project of reviving the festival to its ancient halcyon days in the way he remembered them from his childhood, he kick-started a process of institutional-building which was characteristic of the enthusiasm with which, more generally, independent India's rising middle classes went about reviving, re-building, and in the process re-constituting and defining anew what was an important concern for them: in our case, the nation's valued and profound aspects of its culture. As part of this process, Mr. Ashwini Kumar introduced several new features in the organization of the festival; re-galvanizing financial support from the rich and powerful *bania* (trading) community of Jalandhar as well as official state patrons, who, as we have just seen were already avid and eager to come to the aid of classical music. Most of all, Mr. Kumar streamlined the functioning of the Sangeet Mahasabha, injecting it with new technicalities such as collecting Re. 1 from each member of the vast audience, not merely for the sustenance of the festival. This feature of collecting donations from the audience members had a more fundamental purpose: the revival of the old civic sense and spirit of ownership amongst the Jalandharis that the festival *belongs* to them. Mr. Kumar is clear that he instituted this mechanism not just for ensuring financial security but for instilling a sense of ownership amongst the people for and belongingness to the festival.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Seth Hukm Chand died in 1954 leaving the running of the festival entirely in Ashwini Kumar's hands. See Shastri, *op.cit.*, p. 125.

<sup>20</sup> From a completely different perspective, one is reminded of the achievements of Sr. Karuna Mary Braganza, the first Indian Principal of Mumbai's Sophia College for Women, who unleashed a whirlwind of innovations in women's education during her years at the College. See Pearl Drego, *The Charism of Karuna—Life Story of Sr. Karuna Mary Braganza*, Mumbai: Alfreruby Press, 2011. What is interesting about Mr. Kumar's life-trajectory is that his sterling revival of the Harballabh is one of the lesser known of his achievements, with his exploits in the fields of sport and the security services that claim wider recognition.

<sup>21</sup> Interview dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011.



**Figure 2**

Receipts of voluntary individual donations to the Sangeet Mahasabha by the residents of Jalandhar, collected by the Treasurer, Faqir Chand Kapoor famed for his commitment to raising funds for the festival and his humility in carrying out the funding drive. The top two receipts are from 1965 and 1969 respectively while the third is undated. The first and third receipts are both in the name of P.C. Lal Chand Dada, the grandfather of the current Treasurer, Mr. Rakesh Dada, who made them available to me and with whose kind permission they are reproduced here.

However, the difference between this feature introduced by Mr. Kumar and the earlier phase of voluntarily supporting the mela in the pre-1947 days is the element of ‘benign coercion’ exercised on behalf of the ‘people of Jalandhar’ by Mr. Kumar. Such a stance is symbolic of the role Keskar also cast himself in, as did the larger new Indian middle class that found itself in positions of governance and responsibility, a time when such work was defined in these days of idealism as ‘public service.’ Given the fact that Mr. Ashwini Kumar held a fairly high public office during the time of reviving the Harballabh by 1950, along with his own commitment to a rigidly

classical, disciplined and cosmopolitan (read secular) variety of music, decisively stamped the future direction of the Harballabh. The die was firmly cast in favour of strictly classical. The price of revival and national glory was an unequivocal and complete rejection of the 'aesthetic of inclusion' characteristic of the origins of the Harballabh. It now became much, much more than simply an annual 'Rag Mela', a Fair of the Ragas; given the newly acquired place of Jalandhar as temporary capital of East Punjab, as AIR hub for North India, and most importantly, as a festival now run by a music-loving, sportsman-policeman, it had to metamorphise, given the many contingencies of its history, into a national festival, a 'sangeet sammelan' in the true sense.

The seeds sown by Pt. V.D. Paluskar and his disciples, in nationalising the festival during the first half of the twentieth century finally bore ripe fruit in its latter half. However, the spirit and tenor in which the festival was modernised and became the centre for annual musical excellence in the Punjab, was not cast in a Hindu-mould à la Paluskar, but rather in a secular and rationalist one. This character of the modernisation process can be attributed to the eclectic and positively nationalist and secular view of music performance and consumption which Mr. Ashwini Kumar held.<sup>22</sup> The best evidence of this outlook held by Mr. Kumar is an article 'Contribution of the Punjab to Indian Music'<sup>23</sup> wherein he narrates the contribution of different groups, Hindu, Sikh and Muslim, to the music of Punjab, with a remarkable detachment and neutrality/objectivity, unlike the melodramatic overtly Hindu tone of Bawra already discussed in chapter 1. This secularist stance towards music was also echoed more widely in the state policy of this time as well. For example, a December 1954 report from *The Tribune* quotes the erudite C. Rajagopalachari proclaiming at a musical event in Madras that music is "mightier than a-bomb":

Pen is mightier than the sword, but music is mightier than the atom bomb. Mr. C. Rajagopalachari said at the Indian Fine Arts Society today on the occasion of the opening of a music festival here that music was one of India's priceless assets and before it the power of the atom bomb paled into insignificance, provided music had its roots in 'Bakhti'<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> These views were evident to this writer in the two interview held with him on 18<sup>th</sup> February, where what was most evident was the fact that music was his most intimate and arduous passions.

<sup>23</sup> Reproduced in the Souvenir for the 101st Sangeet Sammelan of 1976, pp. 1-4.

<sup>24</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala, December 28, 1954, Tuesday, p.2.

For Rajagopalachari, music is implicitly a vehicle of Gandhian ‘non-violence’, ‘provided music had its roots in ‘Bakhti’. This aspect of music as an instrument for peace, was also beneficial in bolstering the secularism of the post-partition nation state. Hence, the secular character of classical music was repeatedly emphasised by various national leaders. On the heels of independence at the All-India Music Conference held at Calcutta in 1948 December, Dr. M.R. Jayakar, its President, highlighted the secular value of classical music and the historic role it had played in maintaining communal amity:

Presiding over the fourth session of the All India Music Conference in Calcutta today, Dr. M.R. Jayakar appealed to all lovers of music to protect the fine art from external and internal aggression. The secret of art, he said, was to know the great divine through love. But there was great danger and the lovers of music must protect it. Dr. Jayakar said that the state must protect the art of music by extending patronage to universities who should make it a subject to study. Speaking from the point of view of nationalism which aimed very rightly to turn India into one country, he said the music was a national art for which both Hindus and Muslims had laboured. If the present Government wanted to bring the two communities together, in knowledge, literature, philosophy and culture, they would not find a better art for the purpose in the country than music. It had served the purpose of unity and nationalism for centuries.<sup>25</sup>

The pronouncements of Dr. Jayakar above point to us the centrality attached to music as an important element in the building of the nation. This is also echoed by Keskar in the report from 1953 already quoted above,

He felt that the spiritual affinities of music had to be strengthened. That should not be done in a sectarian way, but they should do it in a broad spiritual way. This, he said, would facilitate the penetration of music into every family, which should be their goal.

Dealing with the spread of music, Dr. Keskar said that it was gratifying to note that during the last 20 years or so music had spread considerably, more especially in the south. This spread of music must continue so that within a measurable period of time every family with some education would consider music to be an indispensable part of family culture like literacy.

“It is then”, he added “that music will regain its real place in the country.”

The reason for this, apart from the symbolic one outlined by Rajagopalachari, of the state extending active patronage to ‘culture’ of a certain kind, is the concomitant one of the secularisation and monetisation of classical music, and the state as the new

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<sup>25</sup> *The Tribune*, Dec 27, 1948, p.7, report entitled ‘PROTECT MUSIC FROM AGGRESSION: Dr. Jayakar’s Appeal To Government’.

patron. The passion and commendation with which music was understood as a great *secular equaliser* was also very visible in the style and character of the patronage of the Harballabh by Mr. Ashwini Kumar. Given the arguments in Bakhle 2005 one could perhaps argue that Ashwini Kumar has been to the Harballabh what Bhatkhande was for the larger sphere of Indian classical music more generally. This is due to his active intellectual and affective interest in music itself, along with the fact that unlike Paluskar, he does not harbour a disavowal or disapproval of Muslim performers. Further, like Bhatkhande, given a missionary though secular zeal for national music, Kumar also couldn't find the ingenuity to subvert Paluskar's vision of music, which by and large the Harballabh seemed to eschew. However, with the benefit of hindsight it must be said that in comparison with the excessive Hinduisation of the Harballabh post-1989, the 4 decades of Mr. Kumar's patronage seem like a secular halcyon utopia.

However, there was no dearth of detractors of the changes brought in by Mr. Kumar, by Harballabh patrons and audience members who set great store by an overtly Paluskarite obsequiousness (to the sakti-peeth site Baba Harballabh, in a way which made 'performance' for fees seem mercenary and worldly) for the festival. The move to a more modern organization, with professional musicians receiving their monetary due in a cosmopolitan public sphere is technically one of the most conspicuous features of the modernization heralded by Ashwini Kumar. This feature is however looked down upon by a fair number of Jalandhar residents involved closely with the organisation of the festival. For them, Mr. Kumar's patronage began the process of a crass monetization, sullyng the purity and non-mercenary spirit of performance in the past. The systematic way in which he professionalised performance at the festival, dissociated the formulaic ritualistic mould into which Paluskar and his disciples had cast it, and brought renowned names from a newly prestigious world of classical music to perform at the Harballabh stage, created a predicament for both his admirers and critics. His detractors initially viewed the thrust towards professionalisation in a largely negative vein. This set of changes is discussed in Bawra's work when he quotes from an article by Jagannath Parti from the *Hind Samachar* of 24 December 1982, who laments the new practice of artistes demanding fees for performance, in violation of the hallowed traditions of performing out of devotion at the Harballabh:

Prior to 1950, no fee etc was decided upon with any performer. After 1950, first of all Ghulam Ali Khan Saheb asked for Rs. 3,000 which was agreed upon and procured by the President Shri Ashwini Kumar. Then, it became a routine thing. Pandit Onkarnath, Pandit Vinayak Rao Patwardhan, Pandit Narayan Rao Vyas and Pandit Krishna Rao ji, who had never asked for more than the travel fare, now increased their demands because of their higher status. The melon changes its colours after seeing another melon. The respect and honour for the Samadhi of Harivallabh began reducing and the chain of bargaining began.

Like shopkeepers and customers, after exhibiting your work, the bargain comes to an end. The thing which causes amazement is that every passing day, performers keep hiking their worth... Before 1950, performers used to stay at the devi talab and obtain their food from the langar there. But now they have need of grand hotels. Along with the times, the mindset of each one has also changed. Perhaps they think that Harivallabh is a tree on which instead of leaves, there grow notes of hundred-hundred rupees.<sup>26</sup>

Unfortunately, in the case of Parti and also as per Gurdial Singh, this monetization is couched in communal terms, laying the blame on the Muslim-ness of the musicians as being responsible for the downhill slide towards mercenary monetization, rather than the uncertain conditions of a contracting patronage in the face of the abolition of the princely states. The year 1951 constituted another blow to hereditary performing musicians by closing another traditional avenue of patronage via the powerful *zamindars*, via the abolition of the *zamindari* system. In keeping with Parti pointing the finger of blame towards Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, an interview with the renowned Jalandhar-based sitar and string instrument maker Gurdial Singh (who learnt the art of string-making from his uncle who in turn had shifted from Amritsar to Jullundur on the invitation of the Kanya Maha Vidyalaya which required a music teacher) goes a step further in espousing a generalised prejudice towards Muslim musicians, a phenomenon which needs to be elaborated upon. If one were to go by the logic of Parti's statement alone, and accept the date of 1950 as the beginning of the demand for performance fees, then a remarkable coincidence is evident. The internal evidence,

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<sup>26</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.148-149. Parti was also member of the 'Finance Sub-Committee' responsible for fund-raising to be able to meet the fee demands of the artists. Parti's views were echoed even in the Souvenirs of the Mahasabha, for example the year 1972's report for 1970-71 has the Secretary K.L. Jain saying : "the expenses are increasing every year due to abnormal increase in the fees of the Artists. Such a state of affairs is rather unfortunate and should not be allowed to continue for all times to come.' However he is not directly attacking the artistes as done by Parti, proposing instead that 'A permanent source of income must be found out to run this unique and historic organization, which provides a rich feast of music from the top ranking musicians to thousands of listeners every year without any admission fee.' Thus K.L. Jain attaches priority to the performers and listeners and recognizes the need for a 'permanent' source of funds, unlike Parti, who believes in the utopia of Paluskar's era.



even if oral and hence by its nature open to question and inherently fluid, is corroborated by the external evidence of 1950 being the date for the abolition of the princely states and the disbursement of privy purses. This convergence clearly points to the end of the traditional channels of patronage, with either the AIR or public concerts becoming the only regular channel for musicians to continue to support themselves with a degree of respectability.

The cynical tone of Parti, “they think that Harivallabh is a tree on which instead of leaves, there grow notes of hundred-hundred rupees” stems from the well-nurtured belief and myth of the spot as being beyond material benefit, a notion that was strengthened by the great modernisers like Paluskar and team, as portrayed in the last chapter. As pointed out earlier, Paluskar and party could afford to idolise the Harballabh and make dramatic displays of devotion, revoking any performance fee, at the rare occasion when it was offered by the Mahasabha authorities, because they had other sources for survival and sustenance and performing at the festival was inculcated in them by Paluskar as an act of faith rather than mere performance.

As opposed to this cynicism by Paluskar-hands, there is a recognition of ground realities and a positive evaluation of this process of monetization in the narratives of musicians. Oral testimonies of the early days of the Harballabh by musicians mention how artistes would come to perform for free, sleeping on simple mats on the temple grounds, demanding almost no monetary compensation in return: at the most only their travel fare. It is thus during the period of Mr. Ashwini Kumar’s leadership which is looked up to by musicians, as the era that launched the days of prosperity and adequate compensation for artistes, a more professional setting as opposed to the more selfless spirit in which musicians gathered at the site of the temple in the earlier days.<sup>27</sup>

The very modernisation heralded by Bhatkhande and Paluskar had a premise in the professionalization of musical performance for and in the colonial, bourgeois *public* sphere, wherein remuneration for performance was a necessary precursor, except for the rare concert for charity performed by exceptionally popular artistes. Detractors like Parti desire retention of the veneer of the pre-reform Harballabh with its legendary attribute of performing purely for the Divine, while at the same time

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<sup>27</sup> Interview with Ustad Sabri Khan dated 2nd March 2011.

suppressing the context of this performance-tradition—the spontaneous, non-professional orientation towards the abstract ideal of *bhakt* and *ibadat*, listeners primarily being mystics themselves. However, there is a refusal to acknowledge that such an orientation was (is) completely at odds with the post-reform one where ‘singing for the Divine’/‘art for art’s sake’ became superseded by more conventional norms and mores of ‘performance’. Despite the movement towards performance for an audience in colonial times, post-Paluskar’s transformations, traditional avenues of patronage and employment had not yet closed for musicians and participating in the festival required a re-imburement of travel fare at the most, with the added advantage of listening to other stalwarts, learning from their artistry and engaging in a musical conversation over 3-4 days. Post-1950, this enabling environment and ethos in which the Harballabh had emerged was no longer viable, and the professionalisation undertaken by Kumar and associates was the only route available (given the definite changes wrought by Paluskar in making the festival more responsive to ‘national-level’ performers) to ensure the survival of the Harballabh. Castigating the new demand for performance fees<sup>28</sup> in such circumstances, thus reveals a tendency to have one’s cake and eat it too and thus Parti’s acid stance stands out as even more unfair. In other words, organisers were expected, by those holding views akin to Parti, to theoretically continue the tradition of performance purely for *bhakti* (viz., for non-mercenary motivations) while in practice, to establish the Harballabh at par with the *best* music concerts of metropolitan India.

This duality, of seeking to retain the features of performance that marked the pre-1947, or rather the pre-1900 era of the Harballabh while simultaneously modernising the logistics of performance and aspects of the running of the festival at par with the best national (and indeed international) conferences of music, recurs constantly in the writings and reports on the various concerts of each year. Further, there was also the thrust towards making the festival come up to the standards of other more established classical music concerts of the country such as those held in Maharashtra and Bengal, and eminently, the South, as well as match up to the international recognition coming

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<sup>28</sup> Whether or not this was initiated by Muslim musicians is besides the question. However, the problematic of musical ‘Ustads in Modern India’ has been best dealt by Lakshmi Subramanian in a lucid article of the same name ‘Faith and the Musician: Ustads in Modern India’, *Economic and Political Weekly*, November 11, 2006, pp. 4648-4650. I thank Yousuf Saeed for the reference.

the way of Hindustani classical music.<sup>29</sup> The encounter of Indian music with the West during the 1960s and 1970s also had an impact on the content of the music performed at the Harballabh. If *khayal* singing came in at the Harballabh in a major way post-Paluskar, replacing the primacy of dhrupad, this era saw the rise of a new and emphatic modality of performance, viz., the autonomous presence of instruments on stage. This of course was a larger trend in north Indian classical music adopted by the Harballabh.

Thus, in the process of revival, the Harballabh had to acquire a new image—one which was in keeping with the high pedestal and new respectability on which music was now beginning to find itself across India, especially the north. In other words, while aiming to institute a *revival* of the Harballabh to its earlier glorious days, as aimed by Mr. Kumar, what was being revived was an image of a well-attended, popular music festival.<sup>30</sup> In terms of content and organisation, several radically new changes were instituted. Thus, in the name of reviving or re-awakening tradition, this was a quintessentially modern project, which in the process ended up imparting a rather new meaning to what it meant to organize the Harballabh.<sup>31</sup>

The procedure through which this thoroughgoing modernisation was undertaken was unique (given the distinctiveness of the Harballabh, acquired through more than 70 years of a rich and varied history) yet universal in the singularly important role played

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<sup>29</sup> During the mid-twentieth century, especially the late 1960s and 1970s onwards, there is also a new consideration of international recognition and respectability being suddenly showered on Indian music. Thus, a concern with ensuring that the Harballabh also match up to the world-class standard that Indian classical music was beginning to achieve thanks to the growing popularity of people like Pt. Ravi Shankar abroad, reached an apogee when Ravi Shankar himself arrived to perform for the festival. That, according to Mr. Ashwini Kumar and many others, such as Ustad Sabri Khan, was one of the turning points for the festival that renewed its popularity phenomenally as never before.

<sup>30</sup> In an interview dated 18<sup>th</sup> February 2011, he shared with this writer about the presence of prodigious peasants in the audience whose knowledge of the classical idiom matched or even surpassed that of great maestros: “I remember the scenes of the Harballabh from my childhood: people would come in thousands to listen to the three nights of music; and me and my brother would be especially sent from Lahore by our music-lover of a father. I clearly recollect how a peasant member of the audience stood up and interrupted one of the *ustads*, saying ‘*twaadi eh waali shruti theek trahn nahi lagi*’ (you didn’t strike that particular *shruti* very well.)”

<sup>31</sup> While this is largely from the perspective of the form of the music performed, according to Bhai Baldeep Singh, even in the realm of the content of the music, this change is evident. He mentions the significant impact of the recording industry on the popularization of the *khayal* genre of classical music as opposed to dhrupad, for him the more pristine genre. In concert with the efforts of Bhatkhande and Paluskar to establish a modern, national classical music of India, the gramophone records with their structurally limited time- frame, opened the way for a wider reception of *khayal* and light classical forms like *thumri*, *ghazal*, *dadra* etc. He postulates how the middle class patrons and audience of the festival thus more readily gave a platform to singers of *khayal* as opposed to dhrupad, a genre more appreciated by connoisseurs such as the erstwhile patrons, the rulers of the princely states. Interview dated 16th February, 2011.

by state patronage and the concomitant nationalising-classicising agenda for music it upheld. While the support of Jalandhar's elites, who themselves had undergone a change demographically post-1947, continued in newer and stronger ways post-Independence, this was now augmented by a marked sustenance given by state agents. In the previous chapter we saw how efforts at disciplining the large crowds at the Harballabh were made by volunteer groups belonging to Hindu groups (such as the 1937 Conference, where order was maintained by the *Hindu Sewak Sabha* and *Krishna Dal* already referenced in the previous chapter). With independence and the shift of the leadership from the Devi Talab mahants to Mr. Kumar, this began to change as well, and the presence of groups having a link with the arms of state became more visible. A report from 1952, a year which heralds the infancy of Mr. Kumar's stewardship, reflects this shift from the past in stark terms:

The 70<sup>th</sup> Session of the Punjab Music Conference known as 'Harballabh Rag Mela' concluded yesterday with Vande Matram sung by Pt. Vinaikrao Patwardhan, Principal, Sangeet Mahavidyala, of Poona. "Jal Trang" by Mr. Satyapal, "Tabla" by Pt. Prem Vallabh of Delhi and vocal performances by Mr. Daleep Chand Bedi and Pt. Vinaikrao Patwardhan were highly admired in the afternoon sitting. Pt. Patwardhan kept the audience spell-bound. Master Mohan, Mr. Sham Krishen, Patnak, Master Koshal of Meerut, Mr. Raghunath 'Shainaiwale' of Banaras, Suresh Babu Nane of Bomay and Shri Narain Vinaik Patwardhan of Poona gave thrilling performances.

*The 'pandal' was packed to capacity on the last day. The volunteers of the Home Defence Department maintained order.* Presenting the report on behalf of the Sangeet Mahasabha, Master Jagan Nath Passi traced the history of the conference, which was established 10 years back.

The Sabha, he said, has now 200 members. Pt. Ashwini Kumar, Principal, Police Training School, Phillaur, is its President, while Mr. S.R. Chhabra, Superintendent of Police and Seth Rishidev Sondhi are Vice-Presidents and Master Jagan Nath Passi is Secretary. Pt. Chand Narain Raina, Deputy Commissioner and S. Jaspal Singh, Special Magistrate are its patrons. The conference placed on record its deep sense of grief at the demise of Mahant Dwarka Dass and paid tributes to his memory for the services rendered to the cause of music.<sup>32</sup>

In the above report, we can see a picture of the festival revived. An astonishing feature is the phrase which tells us that 'the pandal was packed to capacity', to such an extent, indeed, that order was required to be maintained by the 'volunteers of the

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<sup>32</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala Cantt., December 31, 1952, p. 3. "PUNJAB MUSIC CONFERENCE CONCLUDES". Emphases added.

Home Defence Department’! Along with the impressive line-up of a good number of renowned musicians, the paragraph mentioning the names and professional designations of all the organisers and patrons clearly herald a new age of self-conscious modernity on part of the organisers, as opposed the fluid Mela-like organicity of the Harballabh.<sup>33</sup> The sentence ‘Pt. Chand Narain Raina, Deputy Commissioner and S. Jaspal Singh, Special Magistrate are its patrons’ again highlights the conspicuous links with the bureaucratic top-brass, to say nothing of the fact that the Education Minister of Punjab was the Chief Guest (of whom, more in a moment). Jagannath Parti presenting the report also tells us how the patrons include the Deputy Commissioner and Special Magistrate of Jalandhar, which of course continues from the previous era, but now the presence of the state representative becomes overtly central for the festival, becoming a central, integral ritual in the cluster of rituals definitive of the festival from the pre-1947 days. From a reading of the above paragraph, one is impressed by the meticulously precise information regarding every aspect of the festival which is provided, with the Home Defence Department volunteers, a sign of a new deference which state outfits—now in the hands of Indians— have for this music mela. It is clear that the man behind them is the newly established President of the Sangeet Mahasabha, ‘Pt. Ashwini Kumar, Principal, Police Training School, Phillaur’.

The meaning of the role of Ashwini Kumar in the annals of the Harballabh is also evident in Bawra’s account of the history of the pre-1947 period of the festival based on Parti’s testimony which appeared on 22 December 1981 in the Urdu newspaper, the *Hind Samachar*. In Parti’s account, as quoted by Bawra, the issue of large and rowdy crowds is seriously engaged in only one instance, and as follows:

After 1935, this festival became a centre of great attraction due to its popularity. The crowds began increasing and the tent-space was not enough, some mischievous elements would also join. Due to the crowds, there would also be some physical brawls. Ashwini Kumar, who was the Principal of the Police Training School at Phillaur at that time, took the organisation of this festival in his hands. Now the mela began to take place in an open field under a huge tent. Prior to this, the entry of women to this sammelan was forbidden; now they too, began coming in large numbers.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>33</sup> Though this was evinced even in the 1930s and 1940s, as has been demonstrated in the last chapter.

<sup>34</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.147.

Interesting here is the consummate ease with which Parti, after alluding to physical brawls due to the swelling of crowd-numbers post-1935, leaps more than 15 years into the future in asserting how Ashwini Kumar alone, being Principal of a Police Training School, could bring the requisite discipline for this newly unruly festival. This is followed by the statement of the historic entry of women to this public festival; highlighting how the presence of a strict modernising disciplinarian, such as Mr. Kumar, a high-ranking police official, was seen as a necessary pre-requisite for women's access to the festival.

An important facet of Mr. Kumar's phase of leadership was the irrevocable direction the festival took towards becoming—like other music conferences across India—an annual occasion for government officials to publicly proclaim their commitment to India and its rich culture. Such pronouncements were made as an effort to establish one's credentials as a representative of the new nation-state, as per the coordinates established by Keskar. The earliest reference to this, in the case of the Harballabh, is again from the 1952 report where incidentally one finds the first reference in *The Tribune* reports on the Harballabh to 'Pt. Ashwini Kumar' himself. This remarkable convergence of the two references is not mere coincidence, for the revival of the Harballabh from around 1950 by Mr. Kumar went hand in hand with an increasing involvement of the government with the Harballabh. This was because of the new nation-state's obsession with classical music more generally. To return then to the newspaper report from 1952, we find the following account of the experience of the chief guest, a state functionary:

Lala Jagat Narain, Education Minister, who presided over the afternoon sitting yesterday, in a short speech, observed that politicians had generally no knowledge of music and he was no exception to it. It was for the first time he participated in the conference and he derived great pleasure from the thrilling performances. He fully enjoyed the song "Ram Nam Ras Bhini Chadaria" sung by the daughter of Pt. Kunja Lal of Noormahal. He shunned film songs and commended the ancient art as spiritually uplifting. *"Any efforts made towards the revival of the ancient art," he said, "would be a great national service." He congratulated the Sabha and the musicians on the marvellous success which had attended the conference.*<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala Cantt., December 31, 1952, p. 3. "PUNJAB MUSIC CONFERENCE CONCLUDES". Emphasis added.

Lala Jagat Narain, by firstly setting out to decry any knowledge of music, which he thinks defines others of his ilk (of politicians) more generally, sets up a contrast with the field of music, which stands as unsullied, esoteric and pure since time immemorial.<sup>36</sup> The report tells us that at the conference, in the language of the prevailing hegemonic view upheld by Dr. Keskar he ‘shunned film songs and commended the ancient art as spiritually uplifting’. This example is characteristic of the Harballabh in the new post-independent era.<sup>37</sup> From its origins in a mystical gathering of music held in the memory of a mahant and attended by saints and mystics and local Punjab musicians in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, to the priority it assigned to musicians of ‘all-India fame’ external to the Punjab from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards<sup>38</sup>, the post-1947 phase witnessed a new, increasingly ubiquitous figure on the horizon of the Harballabh stage.

A strong symbol of the new and vigorous state patron of the arts, the exalted government official of newly independent India became a presence at the festival which could not be ignored from now on. The priority assigned to preserving classical music as a mandate for the state is evident in Jagat Narain’s words, “Any efforts made towards the revival of the ancient art,” he said, “would be a great national service.”<sup>39</sup> Such statements were repeated *ad nauseum* during this period, with perhaps a handful of state dignitaries being in actual fact passionate and genuine about their claims. Some of the more profound pronouncements came from B.V. Keskar, the Union Minister for Information, quotations from one of whose speeches opened this

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<sup>36</sup> A newspaper report for the 1954 December Mela tells us that the Sangeet Mahasabha had ‘approached the State as well as the Union Governments for help in establishing a music university at Jullundur (which was a seat of learning and classical music in ancient India)’, again highlighting the welding of the stereotype of Jalandhar’s ancient greatness with the standards of ‘excellence’ at the Harballabh. *The Tribune*, Ambala, Saturday, January 1, 1955.

<sup>37</sup> The participation of women performers is visible in the young daughter of Pt Kunja Lal of Noormahal, also the father of Pt. Ramakant, one of our major interviewees. As per his oral testimony dated 24<sup>th</sup> October 2011, the first woman was his sister, Shanta Bharadwaj. See the transcript of his interview in Hindi below.

<sup>38</sup> Much of this shift has been discussed in the previous chapter.

<sup>39</sup> The presence of such state dignitaries was not unknown in the pre-1947 phase but was exceptional and characterised the rare occasions such as the visit of Mahatma Gandhi in 1919. One could argue that the intimate links of princely state patronage with classical music in pre-independent India, and the necessary asymmetrical, hierarchical relationship this implied meant that state dignitaries would by default be bowed down to at such concerts. However this ritual of the dignitary making elaborate speeches in favour of preserving classical music needs to be seen as an impulse of its times, a strategy crucial to the self-identity of the new India. In the later, more recent phase of the 1990s, this ubiquity of the ‘VIP’ becomes a matter for censure rather than commendation. See Chapter 3.

section. For the 1954 Mela, for example, Keskar sent the following congratulatory note to the Sangeet Mahasabha:

I have great appreciation for the Musical Fair that you are holding. I wish more such fairs were organised in the country *to make music more popular*. I wish every success to your Conference.<sup>40</sup>

As part of the agenda of Dr. B.V. Keskar to popularise classical music by putting it on a pedagogic pedestal, the doyens of the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha under the tutelage and visionary leadership of Ashwini Kumar also decided to utilise the now-increasing prestige of the festival by charting out an agenda for its wide pedagogical spread. In 1956, a music academy was established at Jalandhar. After all, as per the souvenir for 1971 Pt. Paluskar was inspired by the Harballabh Mela to take the historic step of setting up his first and famous Gandharv Maha Vidyalaya at Lahore (See Chapter 1). K.C. Parashar, in a lucid article in *The Tribune* of 1961 tells us more about this newly formed academy of music:

A regular Sangeet Akademi was started by the Mahasabha in 1956. The Jullundur Municipality, the Central Sangeet Natak Akademi and Punjab Government donated Rs. 3000, Rs. 2000 and Rs. 1000 respectively for its development. The Akademi is now affiliated to the Akhil Bhartiya Gandharb Mahavidyala Mandal of Bombay and Harivallabh is recognised as an examination centre. The institution is rapidly progressing under Mr. Harish Chander Bali, Honorary Principal.<sup>41</sup>

The music academy did not, however fare well and had to close down by the 1970s. On the other hand, the 1970s saw the beginning of another vital institution at the Harballabh music festival, which robustly continues till today. This was the competition for young students and children. Like other innovations, such as remuneration for music performances, the provision of hotel accommodation for the artistes, etc., this too was welcomed with disdain initially. Here, as an illustration, are the first impressions of Bawra, who later went on, like all Harballabhites, to openly embrace the competition:

...On 3-4 January 1977, instead of a sammelan, there was organised a music competition of students. Who would go to listen two days of a rasa-deprived programme? Such competitions

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<sup>40</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala, December 28, 1954, Tuesday, p.2. Emphasis Added.

<sup>41</sup> *The Sunday Tribune*, Magasine Section, December 31, 1961, p. 4.



in any case take place commonly in colleges and universities. On the high-level stage of the Harballabh, such a competition has no special place. No listeners came from outside either.<sup>42</sup>

The process of monetization and professionalization was undertaken by the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha under Mr. Kumar's leadership in very transparent and democratic in the sense that Souvenirs, from 1966 onwards exhibited the balance of receipts and expenditure for the previous years. This balance of accounts was exhibited along with a detailed report of the process of organising the previous year's festival, the contribution of each member of the Mahasabha etc. What comes across starkly from these accounts is the fact that despite the magnanimous offers made by the government officials throughout this period, the lion's share of funding coming from donations by Jalandhar's residents.

Thus for the year 1970-71, the total Grant-in-Aid received, i.e.—Rs. 56,409.58/—Municipal Committee of Jullundur donated a meagre Rs. 3,000 and Rs. 5,000 from the Punjab State Government, a bare 14% of the total pie. The 'donations' on the other hand, alone account for Rs. 47,468.38, i.e. a whopping 84% of the entire funds raised.<sup>43</sup> The large share of the total donations offered by Jalandhar residents was borne by the industrial scions of the city, most of whom had built their industries on the earlier, pre-existing industrial base owned by Jalandhar's Muslims pre-1947.<sup>44</sup> The owners of these industries belonged to the upper caste and middle class groups of Jalandhar, a continuity with the composition of the group of educated notables of elite Jalandhar elites who came together to form the Sangeet Mahasabha in 1922. This continuity stemmed from the place of the Harballabh music festival in the lives of this broad social group, which was tied to notions of a new respectability attached to music as a national treasure combined with a Paluskarite passion to preserve it. The

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<sup>42</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, 1998, p.123.

<sup>43</sup> Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha, Income and Expenditure Account, For the Year Ending 31st March, 1971, published in the Souvenir for the 96th Sangeet Sammelan held in January 1972. The corresponding proportions for the year ending 31st March 1972 is 16% from the Municipal Committee, Jullundur and the Punjab State Government, while the majority comes from donations again, i.e. 74.45%. For the year ending 31st March 1976 is 17% and 82% respectively. These figures are reproduced from the available Balance Sheet and Income & Expenditure Statements published in some of the Souvenirs.

<sup>44</sup> Amongst the regular donors from industrial houses of Jalandhar were Leader Engg. Works, Amin Chand Pyare Lal, Seth and Shah Traders, Kalsi Metal Works, Jagdambay Engg. & Welding Works, Goverdhan Dass P.A. Jullundur. Many of the scions of these industrial houses (such as D.D. Sehgal of Leader Works) were members of the Sangeet Mahasabha and were involved directly in the running and organization of the festival. Firms from Delhi and Bombay also contributed. See Souvenir for the 96th Sangeet Sammelan held in January 1972, published by the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha.

passion to preserve the Harballabh in the way it used to be, and to uphold ‘tradition’, clashed with a concomitant desire to modernise the festival. Hence, free entry of listeners had to continue as a mark of the Harballabh’s continuity with tradition, but this idealistic and commendable stance was at odds with the aim of showcasing the ‘best’ of Indian classical music at the festival, resulting in a consistent crunch of funding.<sup>45</sup>

*Continuities With an Earlier Epoch*<sup>46</sup>

Apart from the broad continuity of the broad social group who helped organise the festival, and the refusal to charge fees for entry to the Harballabh, there are several other instances of formal continuity with both the pre-1947 and the pre-reform era which can be culled out from Bawra and other sources. One of the rare and interesting continuities is visible in the prevalence of the ‘**farmaish**’ or requests made to musicians to perform as per the desire of the audience members, in particular the powerful patrons. Two instances from 1977 and 1980 respectively, bear this out:

Ustad Munawwar Ali Khan presented tarana after rendering Rag Yaman in vilambit and drut. After this, he performed many light pieces, as the requests (farmaish) kept coming. Pahadi, Sohni, tarana in Rag Bhoopali, ‘bal-pech’ taans of Patiala gharana, all established their colours.<sup>47</sup>

Shri Sohan Singh of Punjab presented Khayal in Rag Jog. On a farmaish of Shri Ashwini Kumar, he performed Ustad Fayyaz Khan’s thumri “Hato Kahe Jhooti Ko Banao Batiyan” and made his mark.<sup>48</sup>

The sitting format of the **baithak** was perhaps an even more central feature of continuity, one that also fitted in well with the contemplative reverie Mr. Kumar desired for Harballabh listeners to enter. The photo from a Sammelan Souvenir for the year 1976 captures the audience in a jovial mood, in the throes of a full-blooded response to the music. Many such photographs have also been unearthed from *The*

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<sup>45</sup> According to Bawra, once when tickets were charged, the festival was a complete failure as hardly any audience members came. Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.44. For 1966, an industrial and agricultural exhibition was also clubbed with the Harballabh, a feature which according to oral testimonies didn’t go down very well with the audience (See Figure 1).

<sup>46</sup> This sub-section focuses more on instances of continuities from the concerts of each year as reported in Bawra and *The Tribune*. Thematically, it overlaps with the section on ‘Performing and Listening at the ‘fabled’ Harballabh’, yet the focus in the section on performance has more to do with the perceptions around ‘performance’ and ‘listening’ in the minds of musicians, patrons and audience members.

<sup>47</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.134.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p.144.

*Tribune* reports of the 1950s and 1960s. The continuity of this feature has to be understood in the context of the “modern” sittings of music held in music halls and auditoria, neutral/secular venues which could well be used for other purposes as well, as is the case in all the metropolitan centres where concert performances take and took place regularly.

The legendary **hospitality** of the Jalandhar residents also continued during this phase, despite the slow shift towards accommodating musicians in hotels. Despite the claims of the musician Sheila Dhar (who describes her first visit to the festival) that all the musicians who were to perform stayed in the homes of local residents, it must be taken with a pinch of salt, for she first visited the Harballabh in the late 1970s, by which time the process of accommodating artistes in hotels had already begun. However, the following anecdote is more illustrative of the general ambience of hospitality offered to the musicians:

The two hundred-odd musicians who converged on the town were billeted in the homes of various local patrons who prided themselves on being chosen as hosts. The visiting artistes were regarded almost as messengers of the goddess, precious if not divine. Some of the older citizens treated their participation exactly as though it was a religious ritual which would earn them merit... On arrival at the railway station, garlands of marigold were flung around our necks by a disorderly but enthusiastic reception committee. While we were waiting for the other invitees to get off the train, I bought some oranges from a stall on the platform. The fruit vendor could tell from the garland that I had come to perform and absolutely refused to accept any money for the fruit. When I pressed it upon him, he got very upset. He touched my feet, folded his hands and begged me not to force him to commit sacrilege. There was nothing for it but to withdraw from the argument and accept the gift. Kamalaji, the warm and hospitable wife of an affluent woollen garments manufacturer, was my hostess.<sup>49</sup>

Another feature of continuity was the fluidity of performance, priority being attached to the **‘flow of music’** and not to the formal, pre-planned punctual schedule of a modern, metropolitan city concert. This feature is well-described again by the musician Sheila Dhar, who was first invited to perform at the Harballabh in the late 1970s.

A special feature of the festival I discovered was that there was no fixed programme. The artistes could decide on the spur of the moment what and when they wished to perform. Since

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<sup>49</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, p.185.

the music went non-stop for three or four days, ragas for the oddest times of the day which never fall into any concert pattern, for instance three o'clock in the afternoon or the same time in the morning, got an airing at Harballabh. One was free to go up to the organisers and say exactly when one wanted to mount the stage. They set great store by spontaneity and simply scribbled in chalk on a crude blackboard placed near the entrance to the grounds what the next item would be.<sup>50</sup>

Hence, the priority of choice is given to the musicians, maintaining the Harballabh as that rare space in modern north Indian musical gatherings, where the artiste was relatively free to choose when and at what time during the length of the three-four days of the festival she performed. As was mentioned by Mrs. Renu Kumar, wife of Harballabh trustee and chief patron, Ashwini Kumar and a former resident of Jalandhar:

I recollect visiting the Harballabh every year-it was like an annual picnic and family outing which we had to attend. Once I remember being awe-struck by the music, sitting continuously for 12 hours at a stretch, lost in the music; without taking a break for food or heeding nature's call. I got up with a stomach ache borne of physically being in one position for so long.<sup>51</sup>

The image narrated by Mrs. Kumar above, of the long-stretched time periods of the Harballabh, is echoed by other listeners as well. An extraordinarily succinct and well-directed audio documentary by Naresh Kumar mentions how those attending concerts in Delhi merely get drenched in a shower of 'ras', but if one wants to truly "drown" in this 'ocean of ras', they will have to go to the Harballabh.<sup>52</sup> This sense of being 'drowned' stems from a rare intimacy between the performer and the audience.

In Bawra's account also we find instances of performance—in a highly concentrated and continuous form—taking precedence over the rigidity of modern concert formats, recur as late as the 104<sup>th</sup> sammelan in 1979, when the festival went on unceasingly for 16 hours at a stretch:

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<sup>50</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, p.187. Also see the section on 'Performing and Listening at the Harballabh.'

<sup>51</sup> Interview dated 12 April 2011.

<sup>52</sup> 27 minutes long Audio-documentary by Naresh Kumar on the Harballabh in Hindi-Urdu entitled "The Spring is Not Far Behind" narrated by Mahmood Farooqui in traditional *dastan-goi* genre. My translation.

The last gathering of this sammelan was on Sunday, 30th December 1979. Beginning from 11 AM in the morning it kept continuing without any break till early morning on the 31st December. This unbroken flow of music ran for almost 16 hours.<sup>53</sup>

In another instance of the flow of performance taking precedence over the scheduled format, one or two lesser-known artistes were left out from the main sammelan of 1975 altogether and had to be accommodated in an impromptu soiree the next day:

I remember very well that Dr. Laal Mani Mishra was deprived from playing the been even on the last day. Artistes had been invited in excess but due to the paucity of time, the notes of his veena could not echo at the Harballabh. On the next day, some music lovers organised a sangeet sabha in the Arya Samaj mandir in which his veena-recital was listened to. I was also present there.<sup>54</sup>

The tone of admiration at continuity of the tradition of long spells of music witnessed in 1979 instead existed as a critique for the year 1975, when a musician was deprived of the opportunity of performance altogether. This then is a classic example of tradition clashing with modernity: the tradition of long, uninterrupted spells of music (which again speaks of the Harballabh as a place beyond mere formal performance, further strengthening its mythic character) is looked at with condescension, as symptomatic of its insufficient modernity as reflected in improper stage-management, which was unable to give all the artistes their due equally, the time slots not being followed with fidelity. Instead there is evidence of concentrated singing, which continues from the previous years.

The very fact of a certain musician being left out is also an attribute of modernity, where the organisers cannot go beyond the stated days of the festival. In the early days of the festival, when performance formats were fluid and less rigid (and with more than one music soiree taking place at any given time at the Devi Talab), this was very possible, and surely a specially invited musician would always be accorded precedence for performance; the same also perhaps during Tolo Ram's leadership. In a time of high modernity, this is definitely not conceivable, because a fidelity to timing becomes primary. These comments of Dr. Bawra's for the 1975, a year before the centenary celebrations, speak of the loopholes of this new way of organising the festival. Clearly, Bawra doesn't acknowledge how the intervention of the audience

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<sup>53</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.141.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p.121.

might also be responsible for such lengthening of scheduled performance time, as is evident in the anecdote from the next, centenary year celebrations in 1977, where the listeners are clamouring for the *bansuri* to continue:

Now India's renowned flautist Shri Hariprasad Chaurasia came on the stage... Sitting with him was the son of Ustad Allah Rakha Khan, Zakir Husain Khan, icing on the cake. Zakir Husain is just like another form of Allah Rakha Khan. The recital had just reached its full bloom and in the calm of the night the sweet, melodious *taans* of the *baansuri* were dissolving rasa in the ears, that the anchor announced that the next performer will present their recital on the stage. However the listeners were still in the mood to listen to the baansuri. The people wanted to listen to it, and they succeeded in listening. What is the fault of the announcer in this; some organiser must have signalled to him. My solution is that in order to indicate the time for conclusion to the artiste, the support of an electric light should be taken, as it happens in the radio. People were eager to listen to the baansuri. The baansuri recital began again, but got finished in a few minutes only.<sup>55</sup>

Here we have Bawra contradicting his earlier disdain for not keeping to time-slots, by taking the side of the audience in its support for the established major artistes like Chaurasia and Hussain, far removed from the empathy he exhibited (just shown in the preceding quotation) for a second-rung artiste like Laal Mani Mishra. While he does offer a solution to the dilemma, viz., replicating the AIR model, his lament that the recital got over in a few minutes only is symptomatic of his partiality for Chaurasia and Husain to continue, just like the audience.

Such contradictions in stances are of course the prerogative of any audience—the prerogative of being arbitrary in choices favouring some musicians versus others. Sheila Dhar's information about artistes being given the priority of choosing when exactly to perform might be taken as somewhat overstretched, her imagination being was fairly over-active in her reconstruction of the festival, as she herself recognised towards the end of her essay. However the important factor is that she conveys for us the relative fluidity of the time-slots, and how musicians had the comfort to be able to convey their preferences to the organisers. In such situations then, it is no surprise that the more renowned and powerful musicians benefit vitally, while newer, less familiar artistes suffer. These anecdotes raise the question of the character of the audience and the practice of listening as it is perceived and practised at the Harballabh, to be dealt with in a later section.

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<sup>55</sup> Ibid., p.125.

Another negative tendency which continued from the post-Paluskar phase and not the more syncretic phase preceeding it (unlike all the continuities discussed upto now) was the importance given to the non-Punjabi, great musician of ‘all-India fame’ from outside the Punjab. While in the pre-1947 days, the festival, despite the thrust towards modernisation, was still largely a mela, and Paluskar and his disciples by and large arrived at the steps of the Harballabh out of self-volition<sup>56</sup>, now, with the Harballabh becoming a model concert of national classical music<sup>57</sup>, the thrust being actively, on listening to the best of musicians from across India, this further strengthened the presence of musicians from outside Punjab at the Harballabh. So much so that this became inherently ingrained in the identity of the festival itself, and when the turbulent decade of the 1980s cut off the Punjab from the rest of the country, it could not afford to stand on its head graciously and honestly honour the local musicians who played.

One can thus clearly see that apart from the continuities with the pre-1947 era, of structuring and technicalities of the organisation of and performance at the festival, there is also another, negative and disabling continuity from the post-Paluskar phase (unlike the continuities discussed till now, which perhaps go back to the pre-Paluskar Harballabh). This is the continuity in terms of privileging the national over the local.

A positive continuity is the retention of the free-entry format for the festival, which kept it open to all.<sup>58</sup> However there are innovations made here as well, as for example in the year 1966, when an industrial and agricultural exhibition was clubbed along with the Harballabh possibly with a view to giving an impetus both to music and agriculture and industry. The primary beneficiary of course was the exhibition (see the Advertisement in the Souvenir taken out by the Mahasabha for that year Below, Figure 2). This also had its precedents, as seen already in chapter 1, in the fact that the Devi Talab grounds were used to hold a ‘horse and cattle fair’ during the Dushehra

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<sup>56</sup> Despite the formal invitations which Pt. Tolo Ram had begun sending around by 1911, as is evident from the fact that the 1911 issue of Indian Music Journal publishes a notice from him announcing that the 34<sup>th</sup> Sammelan would take place in December 1911. Quoted in Dard Neuman, ‘The Production of Aura in the Gramophone Age of the “live” performance’, *Asian Music*, Summer-Fall, 2009, pp. 105. See also Shastri p.129.

<sup>57</sup> This was the time when this festival started being recalled with the epithet—‘one of the oldest institutions of its kind in the country’ (cf. Souvenir for the 96<sup>th</sup> Sammelan in the year 1972 )—a perfect and rare example that classical music did enjoy a major popularity since a long time.

<sup>58</sup> We have already noted the exception to this tendency in Chapter 1, in the documents from 1928 which refer to the charging of a ticket. See chapter 1.

festivities (see Annexure I). Nonetheless, the important factor is how this was an event where entry continued to be ‘free’.

Thus what we see is how formal continuities go hand in hand with a change in the content of the music performed— a clear shift towards performing *strictly* classical music, which by the time of independence, had carved out a distinctive identity for itself as ‘high’ culture. \\

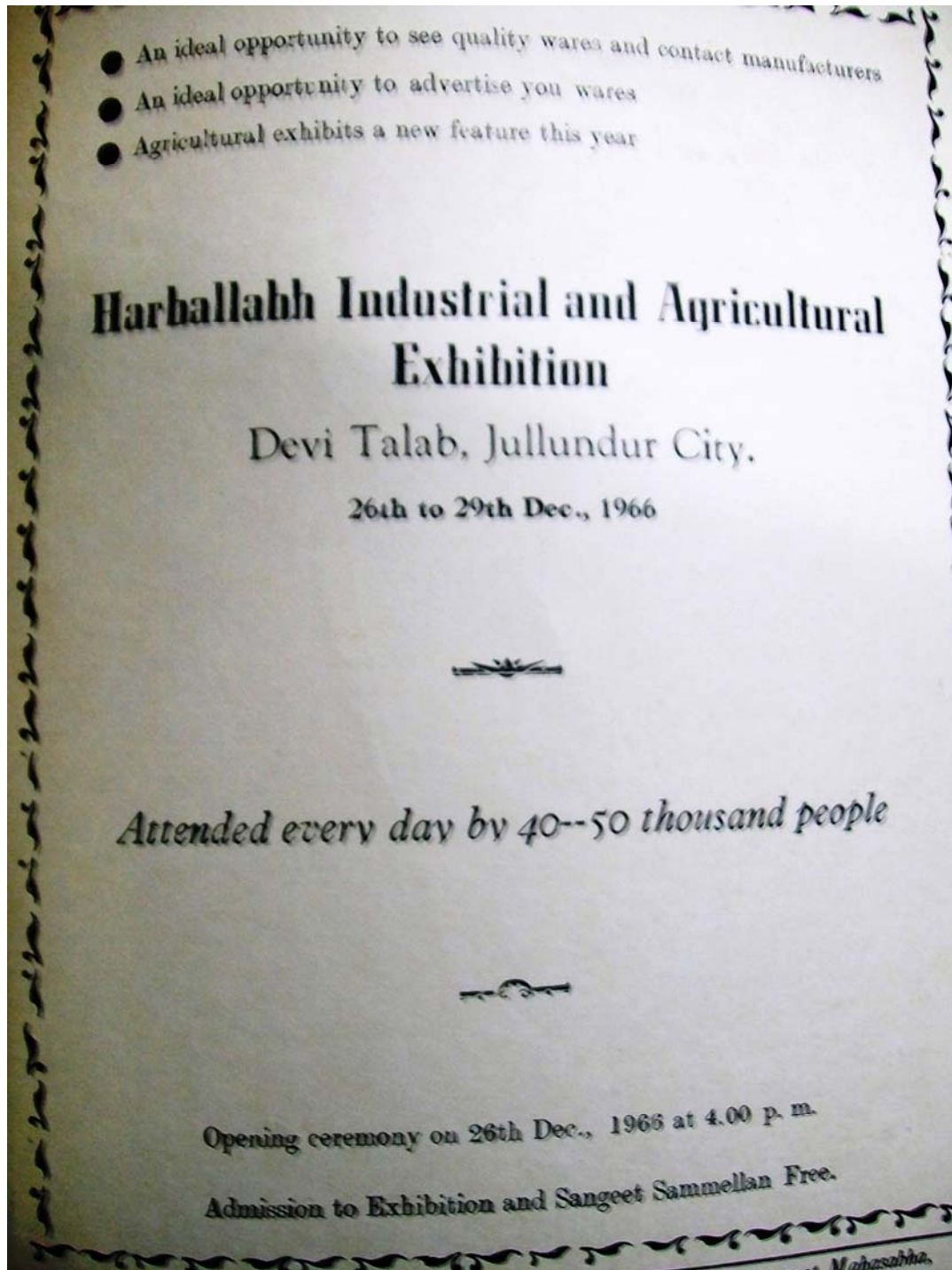
While the festival in this phase embodied a foremost thrust towards modernisation, strengthening its image as the last bastion of classical music in post-1950 Punjab<sup>59</sup>, while retaining traditional modes of listening, in the occasional departure from modern concert-format convention. These departures, along with the many different practices of performance and listening—such as the baithak format, the retention of ‘farmaish’, as also the incessant flow of music, uninterrupted by modern and rather urbane notions of the limited time format, helped to consolidate, via the medium of practice, the much-cherished claim of a vibrant fidelity to its hallowed origins.

In a word, these practices prove crucial in the self-definition of the festival as being consciously modern yet quintessentially traditional. It could now, in this phase, be rightfully defined as a classical music festival which was neither tradition-bound nor constrained by the extreme attributes of a purely mercenary modern music festival. Rather, it could rightfully claim its identity as being that rare phenomenon/institution, the ‘tradition-stamped-yet- modern’ concert of the Punjab.

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<sup>59</sup> Given the abolition of princely states around this date.





**Figure 2**

An advertisement from the Harballabh Sangeet Sammellan Souvenir for 1966 when an agricultural and industrial exhibition was combined with the music festival.

*An insufficient modernisation*

The important continuities just mapped out existed in an uncomfortable embrace with the ever-elusive drive for modernisation of the festival. For, despite the great organisation and the apparent zenith of the national-classical which was scaled in these years, problems never ceased, and striving for ever-greater standards of musical perfection was at a premium. The drive towards modernisation, like the journey for musical perfection, is after all never really complete. In this phase, the acme of modernity remained elusive at best, at least in the eyes of the organisers and patrons. For them rather than being modern, the festival was in a state of being ‘not-fully-modern’, a modernity always ‘yet-to-be-achieved-fully’. This is a vivid and ever-present tendency in Bawra’s account, and he consistently notes the lack of excellent standards, some of which we have already seen above while noting the continuities with an earlier time. One feature which embodies this in a glaring way for Bawra is the fact that there is a lack of funds for musical instruments:

Ram Narain sat for a long time on the stage tuning his *sarangi*: the *sarangi* is not an instrument of one or two strings but of almost forty strings. This work should have been done in the green room rather than on stage. The Harivallabh Sangeet Sabha doesn’t even have a proper organisation for instruments. It is a matter of great surprise that even a commonly-used instrument viz., the harmonium, is also unavailable.<sup>60</sup>

The flipside of the modernisation heralded by Mr. Kumar, in terms of deploring the trend of artistes staying in hotels during their time in Jalandhar has already been encountered in the pronouncements of Parti and Bawra. While this was part of the new professional dignity offered to the musicians, the stay in hotels undermined older, communitarian (though not exclusivist) and more organic forms of hospitality present prior to 1947. For Bawra, this resulted in a major malaise, the mixing up of the order of performance, thereby jeopardising the Harballabh’s newly established claims of being a centre of excellence, at par with the best modern concerts elsewhere in India:

Many times the organisers used to prepare a different programme, something different would be up on the board, while one would get to see and listen to something completely different on stage.

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<sup>60</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.133.

Even the arrival of performers on the stage wasted a lot of time. The delay in beginning proved to be very difficult for listeners, but what do the organisers care about that.<sup>61</sup>

While anecdotes of audiences braving the rain to listen to the Harballabh are as old as the festival itself, the chaos of being unable to handle the rain becomes an occasion of humiliation for the newly modern and proud Harballabh, where the insufficiencies of the organisers stand out uncomfortably. Inability to deal with the outpouring of rain stands at odds with the Harballabh's image, during this phase, of being a professionally organised, well-controlled and perfectly managed concert:

On 25th December 1977, it was the last day of the 102nd Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan. Since early morning itself, a gentle rainfall had begun. *Blessed are the people of the Punjab, who reach the venue in order to listen to classical music, regardless of difficulties.* The Harballabh Sangeet Mahsabha spends thousands of rupees to organise the sangeet sammelan, but couldn't put a sheet-roof of iron or cement in order to protect listeners from the rain. The shamiana couldn't stop the water of the rain and water started dripping in the pandal.<sup>62</sup>

While the tirades are poured out towards the 'organisers', never is the figure of Mr. Ashwini Kumar directly lampooned in print. Instead, the oral record is packed with anecdotes praising his presence of mind and courage in a chaotic situation, as is the case with the following instance related by Pt. Ramakant:

Then in the Harballabh once or twice it so happened that rain fell at night. So then the president, patron of this place, Shri Ashwini Kumar, who was the Director-General BSF, he worked in the middle of the night itself (to restore order). That is, rain fell in the middle of the night around 3 or 4 am, after which he shifted the pandal to Labbu Ram Doaba College and fixed a new pandal there. He didn't even sleep an inch nor did he yawn for even a second. He put the pandal in the morning and only then did he leave.<sup>63</sup>

Thus, the critique of an insufficient modernisation is offset by a strong valorisation of the figure of Mr. Kumar and the singular role he played, in making the most of adverse conditions, ensuring the festival was a roaring success, however rainy the odds. Despite the vociferous condemnation of the many inefficiencies and logical mishaps in the running of the festival, there is an underlying consensus favouring

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.121.

<sup>62</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.132. Emphasis Added.

<sup>63</sup> Interview dated October 24<sup>th</sup> 2011.

Kumar. In the same way that Pt. Paluskar became one of the central pillars constitutive of the festival's identity in the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, in the post 1947 one, it was Ashwini Kumar, who through his untiring efforts embodied the character of the Harballabh as sufficiently tradition yet faithfully modern.

Above and beyond the abovementioned sporadic occurrences foregrounding the insufficient modernity of the organisers, most of which were attributable to a lack of internal efficiency within the Mahasabha and hence could be easily remedied, there was another front on which external forces combined with internal inefficiency to thwart the modern dreams of the organisers of the Harballabh. The vision behind this dream is most vividly captured in the following paragraph from an essay by Mr. Aswhini Kumar:

The first thing, therefore, to reform music is to educate the musician, and education, properly understood, does not mean the mechanical transmission of information. It is to enable a person to think for himself. It is to awaken his critical faculties and help him approach his subject in the light of the knowledge thus acquired. Thus alone will he know what is the real function of art and how to achieve it.<sup>64</sup>

Thus, the setting up of such a permanent educational system was of the greatest importance, so as to train musicians in 'the real function of art' rather than indulge in a veneer of musical calisthenics to please an impressionable audience.<sup>65</sup> This pedagogical thrust and motivation for setting up an institution was only a more recent and modern face of the desire to have a firm building, fitted with modern electrical fittings etc., where to hold the sammelan (especially given the proclivity of rain during December), which goes back to the 1930s, when it was first articulated by Lala Prithvi Raj Thapar.<sup>66</sup> The acquisition of land to build a trust devoted solely to the propagation and pedagogy of the fine arts, however turned out to be an ever-elusive dream for the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha. The importance and worth attached to this dream are evident from the clear set of seven Aims and Objects of the Sangeet Mahasabha, published at the beginning of the Souvenirs for each year available from

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<sup>64</sup> A. Kumar, 'Is Indian Classical Music Decadent?', *Casual Symphony: Reminiscences and Reflections*, New Delhi: Kalyani Publishers, 1977, pp.23-24.

<sup>65</sup> The larger issue of Mr. Kumar's understanding of what it means to make and listen to classical music is dealt in the section on 'Performing and Listening' below.

<sup>66</sup> See chapter 1 for Prithvi Raj Thapar and the 1937 and 1939 festivals.

1966 onwards. The second, sixth and seventh of these aims are as follows respectively:

- To encourage setting up institutions for training such (viz. Indian classical) music
- To co-operate with other organisations for furtherance of the Sabha or any of its objects.
- To acquire, hold title in or be trustees of any movable or immovable property and to maintain, sell, mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of, exchange, alter or develop the same in furtherance of the objects of the Sabha<sup>67</sup>

While many efforts were made towards the realisation of this dream, they were all false starts. The first attempts began with the laying of the foundation stone for the building of the Jalandhar Kala Kendra by the Governor of Punjab Shri D.C. Pavate in 1967. The name of the proposed building soon changed to “Rajeshwari Kala Sangam”, portent of a controversial future.<sup>68</sup> In 1971, one finds an indication of further developments on this front in the following description of the “Jullundur Kala Kendra” in the Souvenir issued by the Sangeet Mahasabha for the 96<sup>th</sup> Sammelan held in the year 1972:

During the year under report Shri D.P. Sharma, our Vice-President was entrusted with the duties of the secretary for Jullundur Kala Kendra. This was done primarily to reduce work load of the general Secretary and secondly with a view to have the project expedited. It may be recalled that the completion of the first phase of the project had been left over to Seth Styra Paul of M/s. Amin Chand Pyare Lal. An additional piece of land adjacent to the site was made available by Jullundur Improvement Trust and the same has since been enclosed with the boundary walls. A tubewell which forms a part of the first phase of the project is under construction and is likely to be completed soon. *I have every hope and wish that entire project would be completed as desired to enable is to start the proposed academy of fine arts in Jullundur.*<sup>69</sup>

One can clearly see the note of optimism and confidence with which the Secretary-General, Kasturi Lal Jain discusses the impending construction of this long-dreamt of structure. Notwithstanding the origins of this project in good faith and trust as just seen from the report from 1972, in the course of the coming year, further developments had taken place. The souvenir for the 1973 sammelan reported,

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<sup>67</sup> Souvenirs of the Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha for the years 1966-1980.

<sup>68</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.111.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.117.

It is a matter of consolation for the citizens of Jullundur that Rajeshwari Kala Sangam has started functioning in the building of Jullundur Kala Kendra. *For the present, our Sabha has no share in the management of the Rajeshwari Kala Sangam and the whole project continues to be a matter of controversy which is still unresolved.* But our worthy President has all the hopes that the controversy would be resolved soon and the Sabha might participate in the control and management of the Kala Sangam.<sup>70</sup>

Five years later in 1978, the coup de grace is complete, with the Rajeshwari Kala Sangam ready for the people of Jalandhar with a plethora of courses ranging from ‘batik painting’ to ‘vocal music’.<sup>71</sup> This signalled a major disappointment for Harballabh organisers, especially Mr. Kumar.

What does this incident signify, and why were they unable to gather together forces and fight back to claim an initiative which they had begun? The answer to this probably lies in the short duration during which the concert happens—4 days during the year, hence a fleeting, performance-oriented setup, which does not manage to translate itself into the establishment of a living tradition of guru-shishya teaching etc., because of the interests of the patrons in other assignments, more pertinent to their daily material existence—with Harballabh functioning only as an occasion to “continue tradition” and earn merit, which reduces it to a ritualistic happening, thriving on the popularity it achieved during Ashwini Kumar’s stellar organisation of it.

This shows us how Ashwini ji’s phase itself reflects both the zenith the Harballabh could reach in the future, as also defining the limitations in the style of his organisation of the festival. He was after all no Tolo Ram, solely devoted to music and the contemplation of the divine, despite the otherwise deep commitment he had for music, to be discussed in a moment. The highly prestigious public offices he held throughout his life constrained the role he could play, which would have been vastly

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., p.118. One of the major patrons for the Harballabh Festival at least the right through the 1970s, Sh. Stya Paul, was the main benefactor of the Rajeshwari Kala Sangam, which is more well-known today as APJ College of Fine Arts. (cf. Souvenirs of Sammelan for 1972 January and December 1976, 1977, 1978; see also Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.119).

<sup>71</sup> As per an advertisement in *The Tribune* of 1977 dated December 31, p.3: “Rajeshwari Kala Sangam, JULLUNDUR, Short Courses in Batik Painting, Interior Decoration, Knit work, Guitar, Sitar, Kathak Dance and Vocal Music from 15<sup>th</sup> January 1978. Registration starts 2<sup>nd</sup> January, 78 at 2:30 P.M. **Adviser-cum-Registrar.**”

different had his focus been, like Tolo Ram, on solely the music. Music never became the priority, the reason also being that music now thrived as never before in school and graduate education, ample patron avenues thereby opened up for those wishing to dedicate their lives teaching music. Perhaps the best that can be said in this case is the fact that the music competition begun 1977 onwards<sup>72</sup> creatively utilised the name and symbol of Harballabh to give a space to young and upcoming musicians to showcase their talent.<sup>73</sup>

### **Performing and Listening at the ‘fabled’ Harballabh**

Ears, then, and training are what are needed if one is to acquire an appreciation of music. *Sometimes the training comes from living in the midst of music until it is absorbed without effort...Trying to appreciate music, however, without having music to appreciate is like learning to swim without water. A few motions may be learned, but they are of little use. Music must be provided and in such a way that it must be heard repeatedly. Familiarity may breed contempt, but not in the case of great music...* It is almost an axiom that any music worth hearing at all is worth hearing several times.<sup>74</sup>

Meaningful music demands one’s *undivided attention*, and one can give it only when one is in a receptive mood and feels a need for it. *The use of music as a kind of ambrosia to titillate the aural senses, while one’s conscious mind is otherwise occupied is something extremely hateful.*<sup>75</sup>

—Ashwini Kumar

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‘The Harballabh people know how to listen. They know the difference between musicians and circus performers. You can’t fool them. They are not like the puppet audiences of Delhi.’<sup>76</sup>

—Kesarbai Kerkar, paraphrased by Sheila Dhar

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...the katcheri (or concert) became more than just a performative space where the performer enjoyed the freedom to capture the attention of his audience—*rather it became a tightly*

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<sup>72</sup> The AIR had begun a youth outreach programme entitled ‘Yuvwani’ in 1969. See Goswami, *op.cit.*, p.159.

<sup>73</sup> In later years, the performance of the Saraswati Vandana and other devotional pieces at the start of every Sammelan became common. However for more on this feature see chapter 3.

<sup>74</sup> A. Kumar, *op. cit.*, pp.11-12. Emphases Added.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p.15. Emphases Added.

<sup>76</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, p.177.

*organized space where the performer was expected to abide by conventions and by a fairly fixed repertoire that carried with it carefully assembled markers of classicism...*<sup>77</sup>

—Lakshmi Subramanian

In this section I seek to explore the ways in which the stamp of prestige and excellence that came to be bestowed on the festival due to the stalwart efforts of Mr. Kumar inhered in the space of performance at the festival, affecting world views of musicians, patrons and audience members. Outlining the main features of how concepts of the ‘sacred’ and the ‘pure’ function with the Harballabh as symbol will be my key focus.

The above remarks of Mr. Ashwini Kumar not only show us the depth of his connoisseurship and knowledge of music, but also his conception of the ideal listening experience and audience-type. These remarks also give us inkling into the motivations behind the modernisation process he undertook, delineated upto now in this chapter. For, it was only through such a process that his intention of creating an atmosphere and ambience conducive to serious, contemplative and committed performance and consumption, i.e., listening and performance, could be fulfilled. The changes wrought by Mr. Kumar were thus grounded in a very sensitive and deep understanding of the procedure for listening to and performing music.

It has been well said that it takes two to make an artiste: the artiste himself and his audience. In this respect the musician is very unlucky. I have noticed that audiences show no more than a lukewarm interest when the musician is at his best, when he is finely portraying a Raga. But let him come to his antics, to his Sargams and interminable Tanas and the audiences are electrified and wild with excitement. No wonder, the musician finds in this enthusiastic reception a confirmation of his views and gives the public more and more of these flourishes.<sup>78</sup>

Mr. Kumar’s effort was to ensure that the best of music was produced at all times, something which could occur only when both musician and listener were both equally earnest. Indeed, he emphasised the importance of ensuring not just the listener, but

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<sup>77</sup> L. Subramanian, *New Mansions For Music: Performance, Pedagogy and Criticism*, Social Science Press, Orient Blackswan, 2008; Introduction, p. 2.

<sup>78</sup> A. Kumar, *op.cit.*, pp.23-24.



equally, the musician also being trained on this front.<sup>79</sup> For Mr. Kumar, the entire process is one where music creates a new world shared by both performer and listener sketched out in detail as follows:

The main function of our classical music is the evocation of melody. A Raga is a sweet concord of sounds and the musician is at his best when he succeeds in bringing out its full melodic effect. *A successful musical performance has a hypnotic effect on the listener. It detaches him from his surroundings and carries him into the world of absolute sensation.* This state of mind we represent by words like ecstasy or transport which means to be carried out of oneself. This elevated state of mind inevitably occurs when a master musician renders a Raga truthfully and it lasts as long as the performance lasts. In fact, so great is the effect of a great composition that even when we have come back to ourselves, that is, when we have left the world of absolute sensation, we are still more or less subject to its spell. Our surroundings try to assert themselves and the senses resume their normal course, but the overmastering intoxication continues, and it is very gradually that we return to the light of common day.

And paradoxical though it may sound, this compulsive state of mind which holds us in its powerful grip is most fragile, too. It is more delicate than an egg-shell. *Let the musician commit the slightest error, overdo something or omit it, and the magic is shattered and we feel like one whose beautiful dream is broken by some disturbance in the external world. What is the business of a musician then? It is to see that the magic he has cast on his listeners does not break and the pleasing sensation continues till the end.*<sup>80</sup>

The focus for Mr. Kumar is therefore to enter a kind of contemplative reverie as listener. With its traditional *baithak* style of seating, the Harballabh, under Mr. Kumar thus strove to retain this kind of pure-listening experience, celebrated by music-connoisseur Raghava Menon in the following sentences:

Since a major element of the music of the *Raga* lies in the irrigation of the subconscious mind, the nature of attention becomes an important ingredient both in the learning of the art as indeed its performance. Before electronic amplification became endemic in Indian music, *the audience listened with such intense and total attention which was a kind of attending in which all the five senses of the listener participated equally, so that every performance could be remembered and recalled with a kind of physical intimacy and a striking fidelity to nuance and feeling, sometime for years after the concert.*<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.20. Emphases Added.

<sup>81</sup> Raghava R. Menon, *Indian Music: The Magic of the Raga*, Somaiya Publications, New Delhi: 1998, p. 11. This work was recommended and loaned to me by Mr. Ashwini Kumar himself, for which I am deeply grateful. Bawra's account also has several instances where the stillness stemming from the

Clearly then, for Mr. Kumar, the primary motive in patronising and running the festival was a desire to foster music itself, and not the pursuit of social status or indeed paying lip-service to the state's espousal of classical music.<sup>82</sup> Creating such an environment and such a condition for the listening of music was the priority for him, and the Harballabh was the best place and space for him to do so—as mentioned in the first of three quotes by him above, it was a place with a long-standing tradition of appreciating music. Indeed, his words “sometimes the training comes from living in the midst of music until it is absorbed without effort” can, by inference, seem to address themselves directly to the Harballabh itself.

We have discussed elsewhere the issue of the rural *mela* like character of this fair and Mr. Ashwini Kumar's oral memoir about the vastly knowledgeable peasant. However, the anecdote deserves quoting yet again. In an interview in 2011, he shared with this writer about the presence of prodigious peasants in the audience whose knowledge of the classical idiom matched or even surpassed that of great maestros:

I remember the scenes of the Harballabh from my childhood: people would come in thousands to listen to the three nights of music; and me and my brother would be especially sent from Lahore by our music-lover of a father. I clearly recollect how a peasant member of the audience stood up and interrupted one of the ustads, saying ‘twaadi eh waali shruti theek trahn nahi lagi’ (you didn't strike that particular *shruti* very well).<sup>83</sup>

The Harballabh then was the place where Mr. Kumar found the great raw material who could slowly be turned into connoisseurs—peasants and other ‘rural’/‘simple’/‘unlettered’ folk, who had been inadvertently trained to ‘appreciate music’ by default, simply ‘from living in the midst of music until it is absorbed without effort’. On this already existing ground, an even more vibrant, self-aware and educated tradition of listening could be fostered. As part of this impulse, he undertook

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magic of the music has the entire audience spell-bound, especially see Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.138 and p.153.

<sup>82</sup> B. Wade, ‘Patronage in India's Musical Culture’ in *Arts Patronage in India: Methods, Motives and Markets*, Joan L. Erdman (ed), Manohar, New Delhi, 1992, pp.181-192.

<sup>83</sup> Interview dated 18<sup>th</sup> February, 2011. Demographically, the rural population in Jalandhar *tahsil* has always been substantial around 85% between 1881-1911 (*Punjab District Gazetteers, Volume XIV B, Jullundur District, Statistical Tables 1916*, p. x). Jalandhar has always been a densely populated area, and post-partition it was recorded as the most densely populated one of eastern Punjab. Further, as per the 1971 census (relevant for this period of the Harballabh), rural density per sq km was highest for Jalandhar *tahsil* at 353, as opposed to the other *tahsils* Nawashahr (320), Phillaur (328) and Nakodar (233) [See *Punjab District Gazetteers, Jullundur*, 1980, pp.63-64.] Thus, the claims of many commentators, about there being a large number of peasants at the fair, at least up till the late 1970s, seems grounded in demographically conducive circumstances.

the many steps showcased above, such as ensuring a level of calm amongst the audience, through the installation of defense guards, ensuring that the biggest and best names in Hindustani Classical music in India continue visiting the Jullundur in the interest of cultivating ever-attentive listeners by striving to set up a pedagogical institution. It was thus during the patronage of Mr. Ashwini Kumar that the festival acquired its full bloom as a festival showcasing the best of north Indian classical music. This was a direction which the festival had already taken in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century with Paluskar *et al* as shown in chapter 1 which reached its full fruition or zenith only now.

The peculiarity and singularity and individuality of the listening experience at the Harballabh, also lay in other factors. First is the eclectic composition of the audience, already witnessed to a certain extent in Mr. Kumar's anecdote above, and eloquently described by musician and writer Sheila Dhar as follows:

*The audiences were huge and did not consist of the sort of elite one associated with classical music elsewhere. There were farmers, truck drivers, shopkeepers, fruit growers, small mechanics, big industrialists, journalists, and businessmen of all sorts. Most of them came with their families, bringing blankets and food, in the spirit of pilgrims on the road, happily prepared to weather all hardships, the bitter cold and the lack of sleep for three nights in expectation of the musical benedictions the festival offered.*<sup>84</sup>

The eclectic background of the listeners, went hand-in-hand with another well-renowned myth about the *content* that the audience of Jalandhar preferred, for which we again have the following incisive remarks by Sheila Dhar:

Over the years, the Harballabh festival had developed a culture of its own. No light classical music was ever permitted, no matter how great. *The ears of the local people, who were otherwise extremely simple, had been nurtured and conditioned since the origin of the festival to appreciate only the purest classical idiom of khayal and dhrupad.* They were not receptive to novelty or innovation and dismissed any attempt to please as unworthy. New talent was recognised only if it was in the direct tradition of any of the great names the Harballabh audiences had been brought up on. If it was outside their ken, the chances that the newcomer could establish communication with them were very slim. *These audiences were not delicate in their responses. Their approval and disapproval were both clearly expressed.* As Kesar Bai had put it, 'They do not have the patience to wait while a musician crawls under the bed with

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<sup>84</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, pp.178-180. Emphases Added.

a lighted matchstick looking for the exact nuance of a note! They want each sound to be explicit and healthy, like their own temperaments.’<sup>85</sup>

Thus what we find here is the mapping of a cultural stereotype about Punjabis (who appreciated ‘only the purest classical idiom of khayal and dhrupad’ and were ‘not delicate in their responses’, wanting each sound to be explicit and healthy, like their own temperaments’) onto the listening preferences of the audience, as believed by Kesar Bai, and thence by her admirer Sheila Dhar.<sup>86</sup> The fact that these audiences were very vocal about their likes and dislikes is repeated in another place by Dhar as follows:

There was no need for setting formal limits to how long it could go on because the audience reaction here was very vocal. They would never allow anything to drag on out of politeness... Nor did they leave one in any doubt as to who their idols were. They simply adored Bhimsen Joshi, who was lovingly referred to as Panditji, and would genuinely be unable to hear anyone else if they knew he had arrived on the scene.<sup>87</sup>

Sheila Dhar goes on to describe how Ustad Rais Khan the sitar maestro had to literally be requested to vacate the stage in mid-performance to appease the collective clamour for Pt. Bhimsen Joshi.<sup>88</sup> This feature, of the audience being so collectively mesmerised by a crowd favourite that appreciation of an otherwise soul-stirring performance by an artiste already on stage is rendered impossible also recurs in contexts martial, not merely musical. One of the most vivid anecdotes in this regard is narrated by Ustad Amjad Ali Khan, who recounts the following story:

After the Indo-Pak war in 1965, I was performing at night in Jalandhar and my concert was being broadcast live on All India Radio. An army General, who became very famous during

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<sup>85</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, pp.178-180. Emphases Added.

<sup>86</sup> Interestingly enough, in the beginning of the essay on the Harballabh, Sheila Dhar points to a rupture caused by Kesarbai’s example of the Harballabh in the long-standing stereotypes her family has held about the Punjab, which are crystallised in the question her father supposedly asked Kesarbai: “‘But isn’t this place, Harballabh, in the Punjab, near Jullundur of all places?’ my father had asked patronizingly, as though serious music and Punjab were incompatible.’ *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.187-189. Ustad Sabri Khan has also shared how audiences could be outright rude in rejecting music they did not like. We have already noted Mr. Ashwini Kumar’s anecdote about the prodigious peasant who confronted a maestro with his apparent lack of melody.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.* To find out the wonderful denouement of this lively anecdote it is highly recommended to read Dhar’s complete essay. Reasons for Bhimsen Joshi’s popularity lie beyond an appreciation of his musical prowess, and for the Jalandhar audiences in the fact that as a young man he had lived in the city for a couple of years while in search of an appropriate guru. During this time he learnt from Bhagat Mangat Ram, a blind teacher of dhrupad and khayal, while spending time being fed on the legendary Punjabi diet. Further it is claimed by Harballabh aficionados and biographers of Joshi that it was at the Harballabh itself that a young Joshi was guided towards Sawai Gandharva as a possible Guru, by Vinayak Rao Patwardhan.

the war walked in my concert and seeing him people started shouting ‘General Dhillon Zindabad’. It began softly and gradually became very loud. The General walked up to my stage and took the mike and addressed the audience in Punjabi, ‘Bhaion Beheno! ye ranchetra da maidan naheen hai, main itthe khan saheb da Sarod sunan aya see so please keep quiet.’ (This is not a war front, I am here to listen to Khan Saheb). I had stopped at this point but the General sat with me on the stage through the concert as I commenced.<sup>89</sup>

The above anecdote also recalls for us the incidents of rowdyism from amongst the crowd reported during the 1930s and 1940s already seen in chapter 1. Further, it consolidates the mela-character of the festival, where the audiences and crowds are not disciplined or passive. Interestingly, General Dhillon creatively resolved the combustible situation by sitting with a young Amjad Ali Khan on stage itself—thereby appeasing both the audience on the one hand and the organisers and the musicians on the other.

These descriptions of the volubility of the audience also find evidence from Bawra’s account, where we find consistent references to the fact that the *tabla*, that loud and robust instrument, evokes the loudest cheers from the audience.<sup>90</sup> I quote two representative instances. The first describes an audience eager to listen to Zaakir Hussain at the 1977 Centenary Festival:

At quarter past 12 sarod player Ustad Amjad Ali Khan and table player Zakir Hussain arrived on the stage. The audience welcomed them with applause. He played the *alaap* of Rag Lit for forty five minutes. He was greatly melodious but the audience was eager to listen to the accompaniment of the *tabla*. After the *alaap* as soon as the *gat* began on the sarod and Zakir Hussain’s fingers begun thrumming the *tabla*, the people roused up in appreciation. He finished prior to the *sam* and then played the *tukda* in only two beats to show the *sam*.<sup>91</sup>

In another instance, describing Budhaditya Mukherjee’s sitar rendition of Rag Malkauns and accompaniment by Pt. Shanta Prasad on the *tabla* in 1980 December, Bawra tells us,

He improved the beauty of the rag via *meend*, *gamak*, *ghaseet* and *lag-daant*. There was pindrop silence in the *pandal*. As soon as the *gat* began the beat started on the *tabla* and when

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<sup>89</sup> Amjad A. Khan, ‘The Maestro Speaks’ on <http://www.kavitachhibber.com/main/main.jsp?id=amjad-feb2009> Accessed on 15<sup>th</sup> July, 2012 at 18:00 hours.

<sup>90</sup> Perhaps this can be said to corroborate Mr. Kumar’s twin disdain for the excessive virtuosity and gymnastics of the musicians as well as audience members, who, too appreciated such calisthenics without focussing on conveying the whole meaning and emotion behind the raga rendition.

<sup>91</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.128-129.

waves of rhythm emerged as the fingers stopped on the *sam* after playing a 'tihaayi', the sound of 'waah-waah' echoed in all four directions.<sup>92</sup>

These unique features of the Harballabh audience were also seen in the fact that the extreme cold was braved in order to be able to attend the festival, against all odds:

A whole township used to spring up at the site of the lake by the original temple for the three days that the festival lasted. These three days had to be in the coldest part of the winter, the audience had to sit in the open, and there were no chairs. *These brutal conditions ensured that only the most dedicated adherents would stay on.* The resulting concentration and focusing of interest and the automatic weeding out of casual elements were believed to create special vibrations that changed the attitudes and indeed the lives of those who went there.<sup>93</sup>

A similar sense of religiosity is described in the innumerable instances of the dedicated listening of audience in the face of heavy downpour of rain, as is visible in the following example from the 102<sup>nd</sup> Festival, held on 23-25 December, 1977:

The first sitting ended at 4 'o clock and the second began at 6 'o clock in the evening. Pandit Jasraj performed a *bhajan* after singing raag puriya dhanashri. Rain had started, and the *shamiana* began to drip. There was no impact of the rain on the listeners; they remained lost (in the music).<sup>94</sup>

Given this level of commitment on behalf of the listeners, the festival has often been described in religious terms, and seen as a pilgrimage of sorts, especially for the musicians and performers who would come from outside. The element of faith in the festival and the prevalent superstition in the music fraternity that fame comes to those who perform at/ seek blessings at the spot of Harballabh is also asserted in Dhar's memoir:

Since Kesar Bai had first fired my imagination twenty-five years earlier, I had garnered a lot more information about Harballabh though I did not know from where. I knew that musicians and listeners came to the festival from all over the country *as though it were a pilgrimage and the venue harboured a widespread superstition that whoever came to the shrine to pay their respects would become successful and famous.* Ravi Shankar and Onkar Nath Thakur were often cited as examples.<sup>95</sup>

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p.144. Also see a similar anecdote on p. 141.

<sup>93</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, pp.178-180.

<sup>94</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.133.

<sup>95</sup> Dhar, *op.cit.*, pp.178-179.

Sheila Dhar's own vivid retelling of her experience of performance, preparation for it and exultation after it, is a microcosmic, concentrated example of the place of the Harballabh in the lives of musicians themselves. It captures the perspective of the musicians on the 'fabled' festival, and shows us how the Harballabh is created as a muse based on the many, many stories about its uniqueness and singularity. Though already having quoted profusely from her, I would like to take the liberty of offering three more longish quotes; for the simple reason that they show us the journey—in terms of thought and emotion—which Sheila Dhar took, leading up to her performance.

Right in the beginning, her essay opens with the following paragraph, encrusted with what the name of Harballabh signified for her. Here she is again, at her eloquent best:

"I had dreamed about this music festival ever since I first heard the famous singer Kesar Bai Kerkar speak of it at our family dining table when I was about twelve. Almost every musician I came across spoke of it as though it was a religious experience. By the time I reached my twenties, the name of Harballabh sounded like a magician's code word with a symbolic meaning. To me it became the musical promised land, the ultimate criterion of true worth in music, a synonym for commitment and purity...."<sup>96</sup>

Given her intimacy with many famed musicians from the 1930s onwards to the present century, her comments give us a fair idea of the general perception of the festival amongst musicians of north Indian classical music. The many beliefs about the Harballabh transmitted to Dhar (and through Dhar to us), form the ground on which she planned her performance, keeping in mind the words of the famous singer Kesarbai Kerkar:

Kesar Bai had been dead for nearly twenty-five years when I started practicing for Harballabh. During this gruelling phase I was transported into her awesome presence in spite of myself. She was my most vivid connection with Harballabh and now seemed to take possession of my mind. It was almost as though she was directing me, making sure I didn't fall on my face. I clung to this fancy because it diffused my nervousness like an anaesthetic and helped me to focus on the faults that she had said would not be tolerated at Harballabh. *I had to move away from detail and nuance a little and look more at the broad outline and the shape of the total structure.* The musical intention had to be much bolder than the tentative, delicate exploration I had been taught to idealize. I concentrated so much on these aspects that I felt a big change

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p.176.

in myself, so much so that when it was time to go to Jullundur I felt like an athlete with rippling muscles getting ready for a wrestling match.<sup>97</sup>

The witty turn of phrase with which the above paragraph ends works so well not only because of purely literary reasons. The stereotype of the Punjab again hides behind the metaphors of ‘rippling muscles’ and ‘wrestling’—the important fact is that it were in these terms that a performer like Dhar viewed the arena of the Harballabh, leading on to what she describes as ‘the happiest moment of her life’ at the conclusion of her performance:

I had carefully prepared myself for the kind of audience I would have to face. But when the big moment arrived, the sheer size of the stage and *the vastness of the numbers* paralysed me. I wasn’t sure I could produce any sound at all. I took a deep breath as I had been taught and brought it out in a single note like a sleepwalker. The primitive loudspeakers boomed and crackled, and I began to listen as though it was someone else who was trying to sing. The raw response of the people to the simple but powerful lines of Bhairav came at me like a moving truck and ran over me. I felt as though I was one of the listeners, one to whom something was happening rather than one who was producing the sound. At first the singing did not seem to have much life. But slowly the tentative, rather feeble pulse of the music became stronger. It would survive, I thought passively, but with relief. *My love for the music was willed out of me by something outside myself—the place, the people, the force of their expectation, their faith.* What I experienced was not the usual performance-audience chemistry that one often encounters in this business but a kind of revelation that is impossible to describe. When it ended, I realized that I had been on the stage for more than an hour and they had not booed me off. This alone meant that I had been a success. I was in the seventh heaven when I collected my things and retired to the tuning tent. It was the happiest moment of my life.<sup>98</sup>

Dhar has been described as a rare, unrecognised literary genius of Indian English writing.<sup>99</sup> The quotations from her essay on the Harballabh explain why. The metaphors she repeatedly uses: ‘moving truck’ (for the ‘raw’ response of the audience), the ‘rippling muscles’ (for her level of performance), ‘explicit’, ‘healthy’ (for sound and temperament), ‘puppet audiences’ (to signify the opposite of the Harballabh audiences), all capture the many notions about the Harballabh in circulation among musicians and music lovers in concise words. Indeed, a newcomer to the world of Indian classical music need only read her remarkable essay to familiarise herself with the range of characteristics related to the Harballabh.

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.184. Emphases Added.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p.193.

<sup>99</sup> Rukun Advani, ‘Pungent Melody: The Life of Sheila Dhar’, Ibid., p.394.



My entire argument in this dissertation is not to accept such notions at their face-value, however well-portrayed they may be. The unmistakable ‘true’ and witty ring of Dhar’s words notwithstanding, for purposes of analysis it has to be pointed out how the experience of performance which she finds it ‘impossible to describe’ does not stem from anything inherent to the place itself, or indeed even in the imagined ‘raw response’ of the phenomenal audience. As she herself goes on to realise at the end of her first visit, many of the ‘great’ attributes of the festival and the audience rang quite hollow. It is in noting even this contradiction, and in realising how ‘the beatuous, inscrutable face of a god perfect in all respects’ she had conjured in her mind was instead the face of a ‘world-weary sage who was also part clown’,<sup>100</sup> that her true worth as a writer, who can convey some facet of reality, lies.

In the above paragraph, Dhar also informs the readers how ‘the vastness of the numbers paralysed’ her momentarily; the reason being that compared to the small audiences typical of the more manicured urbane settings, the Harballabh still retains a flavour of its mela-like origins. This emphasis on numbers is also made by other musicians like Ustad Sabri Khan:

People used to come *in the thousands, even lakhs*, and sitting in the freezing cold, wrapped in blankets, would listen for three nights non-stop.<sup>101</sup>

The reference to the phenomenal numbers attracted by the Harballabh in past days is thus yet another trope which abounds across the board, which musicians, patrons, scholars, visitors from outside, filmmakers, etc. all testify to. Hence, the Harballabh’s origins in a Mela-like space—both temporally and physically, and not that of the professional concert—are invoked again. The first chapter has already dealt extensively with these origins.

In conclusion, the Harballabh, in such perceptions held by its patrons and performers, becomes one of the few places where the realm of classical music can truly claim some kind of organicity, popular link with the people *outside* the princely courts. This is the image one gets throughout all these descriptions of the reception by the audience, who were simple, primitive, yet possessing well-trained ‘ears’ for listening (but by default, in a certain sense, as mentioned by Mr. Kumar’s quote above), yet

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<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*, p.198.

<sup>101</sup> Ustad Sabri Khan Saheb, renowned Sarangi player who has performed regularly at the Harballabh since the 1950s. Interview dated 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2011.

also a great sensitivity and knowledge. The paradoxical nature of the audience at the Harballabh also mirrors another paradox, a deeper dilemma of classical music itself, and its ambivalent stance vis-a-vis folk and popular music. This is because classical music is also always trying to straddle the middle ground between its purported links, and arguably origins in folk music, and its subsequent destiny as a ‘high’ culture, just like the trajectory of the Harballabh in the Punjab.<sup>102</sup>

The world of performance and consumption at the Harballabh was thus valued as being unique, the spot ‘fabled’, thanks to all the features described above. In spelling out its uniqueness as compared to other music conferences, ever-burgeoning across a newly independent India, the Harballabh came to be defined as the singular space for musical performance where an organic link with the masses was palpable and vivid. This singular characteristic of its links with some element of a popular consciousness further entrenched its spot on the top of the symbolic pyramid of music conferences of Hindustani music. The phase from the late 1940s to the late 1970s, a phase when state support for classical music traditions was at a premium and which has been the focus of observations in this chapter upto now, was therefore the time for the greatest recognition to be bestowed upon the Harballabh in its history. In the 1900-1947 phase, the Harballabh, in many ways, was preparing for this time, shaking off its provincial colouring, and taking on a more national flavour, a trajectory already mapped in chapter 1. Mr. Ashwini Kumar’s patronage, given its deep springs in a musical commitment stemming from a life-long association with the mela since

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<sup>102</sup> The texts available to us exhibit a recurring motif of reaching out to the lay reader by communicating the intricacies of classical music so as to create an enlightened and knowledgeable public, one that can listen in the true sense. Dr. Bawra, who meticulously, and with a great eye to detail as to the execution of the *gamakas*, *meends*, *layakari* etc. displayed by the performers, often expresses a need for greater organization, coherence and classicism in the interests of the purity of the music. Both his books have dutifully assigned entire chapters to discussing the theory of music, in an effort to ensure that whosoever in Jalandhar (and beyond) reads his works can attain crucial basic information on the subject. In many ways, it was this pedagogical function that united the organizers in a common passion to disseminate the intricacies and joys of listening to classical music—as an art in itself—to lay people. A close-knit organizational group very clearly articulated this pedagogic function, pro-actively building the Harballabh up on the lines of the South Indian *katcheri* mentioned by Subramanian above. An illustration of this is Bawra mentioning the vignette of how Mr. Ashwini Kumar shares an interesting musical anecdote—which establishes music as the root of all other art forms—whether dance, painting or sculpture—during one of the organisational meetings of the core team behind the Harballabh. Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.110. As much as the lay reader of Bawra’s books, the middle-aged and educated music-lover who helps in the organisation of the festival needs to understand and be educated about how music is at the *root* of all creative endeavour! Through a recounting of such an anecdote, we see a concrete example of Mr. Kumar’s impulse to ensure that the core group of organizer recognize the fundamental aesthetic and ontological necessity of music in the birth and development of all artistic endeavour.

childhood, gave a national dignity and deep substance to the Harballabh during these 4 decades. This was the time when Mr. Kumar was seeking to change the Harballabh as a place where music performance would be, to use Rokus de Groot's phrase, 'an extreme occasion, concentrated, rarified, often conspicuously discontinuous with daily life, in which the highest standards, utter specialisation and complex production processes lead to a single event.'<sup>103</sup>

From the late-1970s onwards, however, this phase of the mela as paragon of classical music conferences and gatherings began to wane. One of the reasons for the slump in its predominance at least in the Punjab was the establishment of Chandigarh in the 1950s and its concomitant ascension as new cultural capital by the 1970s. At the spot of the Devi Talab itself, however, more thoroughgoing changes were afoot, which were to completely alter both the geographical space and symbolic space of the Harballabh.

### ***The Coming up of the Temple and Gender in the Symbolic Universe of the Harballabh***

1969 and 1970 saw the drive and mobilisation by some residents of Jalandhar under the leadership of Mohan Lal Chopra and Dwarka Dass Sehgal to build a vast new temple at the Devi Talab sakti peeth grounds. Interestingly, the main source of our reconstruction, viz., Bawra, there are no references to the coming up of the temple.<sup>104</sup>

The major primary source available for writing the history of building the temple then is *Trigartapardesh* Jalandhar, also perhaps the only full-fledged book on the history of Jalandhar. The work is written by a right-wing, Hindutva espousing scholar, whose account is liberally peppered with vitriol against Islam and Muslims, and a rigorous couching of every Islamic aspect of the city's history in derogatory terms. In this work, we get a sort of preliminary account of the coming up (or rather renovation, 'navnirman' as he would have it) of the temple at the Devi Talab. On the whole as well, the book is expressly concerned with delineating the ancient origins of the city of Jalandhar and hence its strong grounding in consistently drawing mythological

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<sup>103</sup> R. de Groot, 'Music at the Limits: Edward Said's Musical Elaborations', in W. Otten, A. J. Vanderjagt and H. de Vries (eds.) *How the west was won: Essays on the literary imagination, the canon, and the Christian middle ages for Burcht Pranger*, Leiden: Brill, 2010, p. 128.

<sup>104</sup> Bawra only mentions the fact that D.D. Sahgal helped with the running of the festival, taking no note of the fact that he played an instrumental role in the organisation for constructing the temple.

connections to present predicaments, thereby emphasising the religious importance of the city. Given that today the Devi Talab is the single biggest temple of the city, apart from its enormous significance as a sakti peeth site, the construction of this temple during the 1970s is of great import to Shastri's entire account and he provides the reader with ample details.

According to his account, efforts at resurrecting the ancient temple and replenishing the dry talab with water were made repeatedly in the history of the site. Skipping over the developments in the pre-1947 period, the interesting thing is how in the 1950s, an itinerant and relatively unknown 'swami' arrives at this spot to raise the temple again.<sup>105</sup> To return to the building of the temple, these are the comments that Shastri has to make:

From 1957 to 1969, i.e. for 12 years the pillars kept standing in the same way, nobody gave attention in this direction. Despite the fact that inside this talab innumerable harivallabh sammelans have taken place—those people also kept themselves limited to raag sammelans only. Never ever did they speak about its renovation. This was in a way a matter of great shame for the people of Jalandhar. No body's attention went towards this lone spot. The lake in which people used to bathe, became waterless.

In December 1969 Lala Mohan Lal Chopra time and again made this plea of Lala Dwarka Das Sehgal that this incomplete temple should be built, but what could Lala Dwarka Dass do on his own. He said, gather together the people of Jalandhar, pressurise all of them, so that this incomplete temple can be built.<sup>106</sup>

Here we can clearly note the tone of resentment with which Shastri speaks of the organisers of the sangeet sammelans, as though they were using the spot without giving it its proper due. Interviews with Mr. Ashwini Kumar have revealed that he himself was not keen on getting the temple built, rather, in an inspired move, the resident of Jalandhar pleaded with his mother, who being of a religious bent of mind, agreed to bestow her consent on the building of the temple on land which was in her name ever since Mahant Dwarka Dass had, on his death bed, handed over the control

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<sup>105</sup> Interestingly, there is a parallel here with Baba Hem Giri, guru of Tulja Giri, who in turn was the 'preceptor' of Baba Harballabh, who was invited from Hoshiarpur in order to take over the sakti peeth site from the apparent encroachment of a Muslim saint Shah Sikandar (this has already been referred to in chapter 1).

<sup>106</sup> Shastri, *op.cit.*, p.76.

and running of this festival to Mr. Ashwini Kumar. Perhaps Mr. Kumar was aware of the already existing Hindu temples that were patronised by the Jalandhar elite, hence his reluctance in letting the Devi Talab/Harballabh grounds being turned into yet another conventional temple complex with all its attendant noise and rituals, which could be so inimical to the kind of music festival he wanted to build.

Mr. Ashwini Kumar's reluctance to allow a temple to be built<sup>107</sup> seems to be an aberration which stands in sharp contrast to the enthusiasm with which the other patron-elites of the Harballabh who were eminent Jalandhar industrialists, responded to the call for setting up a temple. The esteem in which they held the Harballabh Music Festival had an important element of the sacral in the name of continuing a hallowed tradition. Thus, Kumar's apathy to having the temple come up was only an exception which highlighted the rule. Many patrons of the Harballabh coming forward enthusiastically to build the temple as an act of piety, thus the first meetings of the Temple Committee took place at Leader Engineering Works whose chief was Lala Dwarka Dass Sahgal, a stalwart member of the Sangeet Mahasabha and instrumental for the collection of funds to run the festival. Further, for the Balance Sheet of the Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1976, we find a curious head, apart from 'Academy and Other Project Fund' (last balance of Rs. 53,374.01) and 'Auditorium Grant' (last balance of Rs. 10,000) titled 'Mandir Building Fund' (last balance of Rs. 7,506). This is irrevocable evidence of how the Sangeet Mahasabha itself played an instrumental role in the building of the temple. However passive the support of Mr. Ashwini Kumar, he was clearly not antagonistic to the project, given the fact that his compatriots in the Sangeet Mahasabha felt so strongly for the project.

By 1972 the roof of the temple structure had been laid, and the completed building was installed with idols in February 1975. Shastri emphasises the role played by the common lay people of Jalandhar who donated small, individual amounts for the building of the temple right upto the installation of idols in a vein reminiscent of the way in which this same social group of people—largely upper caste and middle class—donated for the running of Harballabh in its early days.

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<sup>107</sup> Personal communication dated 10 April 2011.

The emergence of the temple inaugurated a whole set of new changes in the self-representation of the festival, not only in the physical and spatial configuration at the Devi Talab, but because it also heralded an even more saccharine and conspicuous presence of Hindu temple devotional iconography in the yearly souvenirs published by the Sangeet Mahasabha issued every year.<sup>108</sup> Visually, this is apparent in the souvenir-covers from the Festival of 1976 December (101<sup>st</sup> Sangeet Sammelan) onwards which clearly figure a sketch of the newly built temple forming the backdrop for the foreground of the Goddess Saraswati.

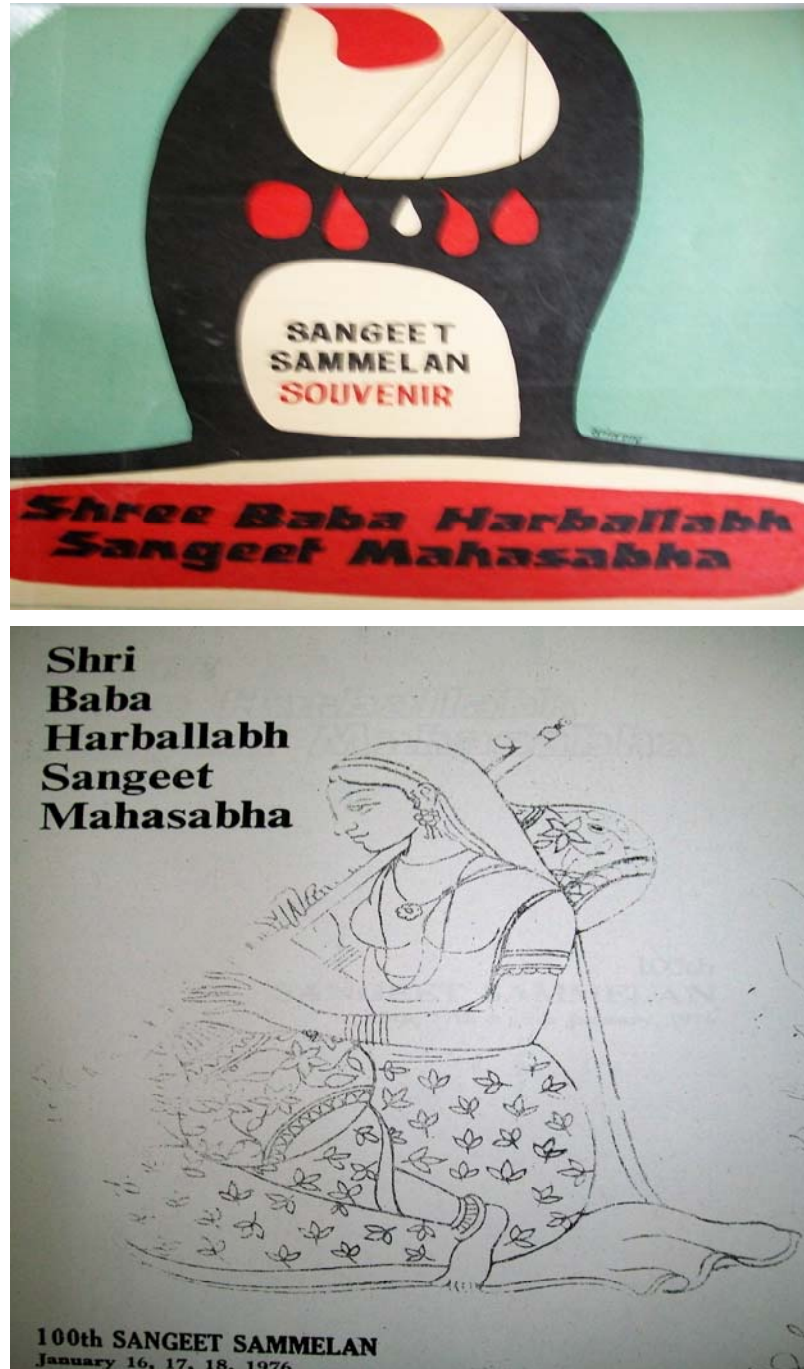


**Figure 3**

The earliest Souvenir available for the 1967 Harballabh festival, issued by the Sangeet Mahasabha. Note the Saraswati motif, as the sole and independent design. Also striking is the similarity of this ‘Saraswati’ pose with the frontispiece of Devki Sud’s book, reproduced in Chapter 1.

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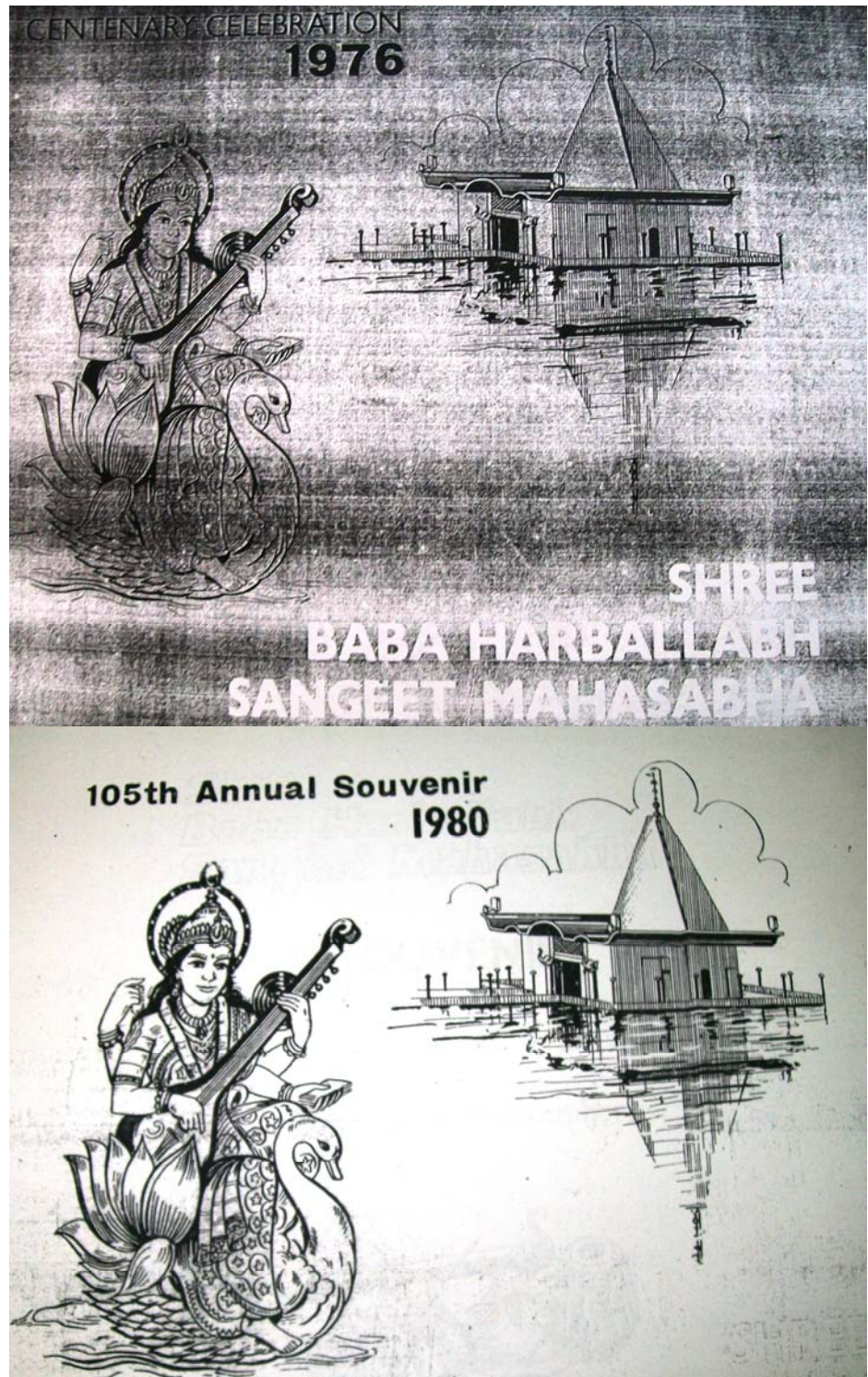
<sup>108</sup> The souvenirs can make an interesting case study in themselves with the many advertisements revealing much about the patterns of economic and social organisation in the city. However, such a minute analysis is beyond the scope of this limited MPhil dissertation.



**Figure 3**

*Top:* The Souvenir for the 1972 Harballabh festival, with an abstract design on the cover, resembling a musical instrument.

*Bottom:* The Souvenir for the January 1976 Sammelan where we have another abstract female figure with a stringed instrument representing the Harballabh festival, as was the case for 1967.



**Figure 4**<sup>109</sup>

Top and Bottom: The Sangeet Sammelan Souvenirs for 1976 and 1980 respectively. Note the homogeneity in the representation of the cover, with the newly constructed Devi Talab temple now as prominent as the Goddess Saraswati.

<sup>109</sup> I have not attached the covers for the intervening years, viz., 1977-79 as the covers are exactly the same.



Hitherto, the Goddess Saraswati had appeared only once (for example in 1967) and that too alone in all her glory (nothing in the background). For the immediately preceding festival held in January 1976, we find a rare and interesting portrayal of a Mirabai-like figure on the cover. For the year 1966 when the first Souvenir was printed, a 13th century cymbal player photographed from the Konark temples at Orissa, while for 1972 January and December festivals, there is a creative abstract pattern on the cover.

However, beginning with December 1976, this diversity of representations on the cover gets subsumed by the uniform and monolithic image of the Goddess Saraswati, not alone, but *alongside* the new Devi Talab temple in the background. This shift towards a uniformity of representation and a decline of creativity highlight for us just how important the temple was in the sacred geography of the Devi Talab as imagined by the majority of the members of the Sangeet Mahasabha.

Even more telling were the performances of Pt Jasraj, From the year 1977 onwards, Bawra has given detailed references to the *content* of performances and what stands out in case of Jasraj is the repeated invocation of the goddess through his famous ‘durga stutis’. I quote two representative examples, the first from 1979 and the second from 1980<sup>110</sup>:

The performance of Pandit Jasraj began with the bada khayal of Rag Pooriya ‘Phoolan ke harva’. The sam on mandra nishad was truly flowering. Taans, bol taans and sargam from across the three saptaks really set the atmosphere on a musical plane (khoob rang jamaya). How could the people let go of Pandit ji once he had come into their hands without listening to ‘maata kaali’. He also obliged and by singing ‘maata kaalika’ in Rag Adana established his right. It felt as though the goddess was standing in front.<sup>111</sup>

Now to give his second item, Pandit Jasraj came for a second time in the same sammelan. Singing Rag Darbari bada khayal ‘jay shri durge’ in ek taal and ‘ajab teri duniyan’ in teen taal,

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<sup>110</sup> For the 1977 festival we have a similar description: “Now Padma Shri Jasraj ji came on the stage. He began Raag Malkauns in a unique way, with each word of the khayal drowned in sur. Each word, issuing from the heart was descending in the hearts of the listeners. The ‘badhat’ of the raag was done in a very beautiful way... Singing a bhajan in the khayal style, he made his stamp on the time. Then he sang a very beautiful bandish in Raag Khamaj Bahaar. All the people wanted to listen to yet another item. What was this? Your renowned stuti of the goddess, ‘maata kaali kaali’. Around 1 am at night you finished the singing.” Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.126.

<sup>111</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.142.

he left the listeners steeped in ananda. Even when his recital was over, listeners were sitting and requesting for a bhajan. Then, by singing his famous 'durga stuti' in Rag Adana 'jay jay maata kaali' he provided contentment to many hearts. Shri Kale Ram accompanied him on the tabla.<sup>112</sup>

Critics will rightly object that to raise cudgels against the stutis themselves would be a tad too puritanical, and that the music itself is blameless, as it has a universal language, with the notes of Raga Adana making it conducive for a mystical communication with the abstract Divine in a spiritual and possibly humble and inclusive way.<sup>113</sup> This in itself is what the Harballabh has always been about. However, I am arguing that the music *per se* is not a problem, but the context in which it is viewed or received. In this case, the context itself is slowly becoming unmistakably and conspicuously Hindu-ised. The more lasting implications of this raising of the temple would come fully to the forefront only in another 20 years, and will be dealt with in greater detail in the next chapter. But to fully understand how the festival changed post-the emergence of the temple, we need to first evaluate the decade of the 1980s.

### ***The Lull of the 1980s: The Festival in Flux***

Thus far we have looked at the festival during three decades of the 1950s, '60s and '70s, formative ones in the establishing of the identity of a newly-born nation state, and doubly decisive for the resuscitated Harballabh festival, due to the singular attraction which the State had for Classical Music. Thematically many issues seem to have been discussed in a rather atemporal and ahistorical vein; yet some trends are visible in the identity and position of the festival over these three decades, when it was patronised by Mr. Ashwini Kumar. The early 1950s saw a revivification of the festival under Mr Kumar's aegis, a centrality reflecting itself in newspaper reportage as well. This lasted till the mid 1960s after which time photographs of the festival became an extremely rare occurrence, in stark contrast to the faithful photos produced throughout the 1950s. The late 1960s and especially the 1970s was also a time which

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<sup>112</sup> Ibid., pp.145.

<sup>113</sup> It is well to remember the cryptic remarks of Bakhle on the religious content of classical music in this case: "It should also be noted that forms of religiosity particular to South Asian Islam do not seem quite as visible in the world of music as do Brahmin chants and rituals from musical performances. *Suras* from the Koran, for instance, are not routinely recited by Hindu musicians. Instead, rumors circulate, sotto voce, about how the famous musician Pandit Kumar Gandharva refused to sing ragas like "Miyan ki malhar" on the grounds that they were connected to Muslims." Bakhle, *op.cit.*, p.174.

heralded the arrival of Chandigarh, as a full-fledged capital, on all fronts, including the cultural. This entailed Jalandhar playing second fiddle to a bigger cosmopolitan capital once again in its history.

The 1980s, however proved more altering than any other preceding decade for the future directions the Harballabh was to take from then on.<sup>114</sup> Uptil 1982, the festival continued to be spread out over 3 days in December. 1982 was the year when Mr. Ashwini Kumar retired and left Jullundur and shifted base to Delhi. This in itself was the end of a remarkable epoch. Added to this, however, was the fact that the 1980s were to be the most cataclysmic decade for the Punjab since independence. Thus, Mr. Ashwini Kumar's departure, combined with the volatile environment in the Punjab together heralded a lull in the festival on the whole. Post-1982, and prior to the full-fledged revival of the festival in 1989, the festival was held only in 1983 and 1985. For 1984, 1986, 1987 and 1988, it was only the havan which was done which kept the tradition alive. Capturing the dismay of the sudden, sporadic drop in the scale of the activities, Bawra's lament for the 1983 festival is as follows:

Who should be blamed for this half hearted tempo? The organisers, listeners, artistes or the prevalent circumstances of the Punjab? This is a question well worth pondering. This is the same sammelan in anticipation of which music-rasiks would be waiting with all their might. Not only national artistes, but those artistes feted internationally would consider coming to this festival as their good fortune, whereas this time this programme remained limited to only the Singh brothers, Hariprasad Chaurasia, Kartik Kumar and the local Shri Sohan Singh. Whose evil eye was set on the divinity and success of this festival?<sup>115</sup>

Dr Joginder Singh Bawra in the above paragraph eloquently captures the predicament of the Harballabh—that paragon of the national at the local level, at a time when the local asserted itself in a severely limiting way. He also hints at the fact of Mr. Ashwini Kumar's retirement from the scene in the implicit pointing of blame at the organisers. Given these severely limiting circumstances, and the decline of the visits of the national level big musicians from outside Punjab meant, however, that Punjabi musicians got a boost at the festival.

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<sup>114</sup> The 1980s was also the decade when the cassette industry made vast inroads into regional hinterlands of north India. As shown by Peter Manuel in his *Cassette Culture*, between 1982-1986, regions like the Punjab especially saw a boom in the manufacturing of the regional cassette industry.

<sup>115</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.151.

The descriptions of the 1983 sammelan in Bawra yield us the best example of the opportunities the crisis opened up for local musicians. This festival saw a rare flowering of local talent and an element of spontaneity because it afforded an occasion for youngsters to grace the Harballabh stage as performers. This was a rare occasion when they were not relegated to the competition alone. More interestingly, post the *havan* ceremony, which ritually heralded the start of the festival, we have an extraordinary situation with a music-lover doing an impromptu dhrupad rendition:

Near the Samadhi of Baba Harballabh one music lover sang dhrupad and Shri Muhindra Singh sang the khayal. Today's day was fixed for the students of colleges in which only a few colleges participated. This year instead of doing a music competition the students were heard in the form of performers only, which can be called a positive sign. Competition is good for progress in some art fields but it also produces mental restlessness and a feeling of jealousy.<sup>116</sup>

For the years 1986 and 1987, we again get an idea that apart from the *havan* small performances by local musicians also took place. However, in a telling technicality of writing by Bawra, the *names* of these local artistes are not even deemed worthy of mention. Thus, for the 1986 sammelan he just has three sentences by way of description which nonetheless mentions local artistes performing post-*havan*:

On 26<sup>th</sup> December 1986 a *havan* was done in the morning after which two local artistes presented a small programme of their own. Due to the disturbed circumstances of the Punjab musicians from outside are afraid to come here. This is why this festival couldn't take place in a complete form this year.<sup>117</sup>

For December 1987, the next year, Bawra's comments are further reduced to a single sentence:

Due to the disturbed environment in the Punjab only the *havan* was done and local artistes put up a small *mehfil*.<sup>118</sup>

The festival, which originated and began at the level of the local in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, had now come full circle, forced in to a lull by limiting local conditions. Bawra could have at least given us the names of the local musicians, if nothing else. What is surprising is Bawra's casual erasure and denial of the local level performers—with even their names not being mentioned. This is a far cry from

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<sup>116</sup> Ibid., p.149

<sup>117</sup> Ibid.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

Bawra's many critical comments towards the organisers regarding the sidelining of local musicians and performers. For instance the bitterness he experiences as a Punjabi musician finds its way into the account of the 1977 centenary festival,

On this very night performers who had come from outside were feted with garlands of flowers. However what is regrettable is that the very need of honouring any artiste of the Punjab was not even perceived. If this keeps going on then a Punjabi musician will never be able to progress by staying in the Punjab.<sup>119</sup>

Again, Bawra tells us for the 105<sup>th</sup> sammelan in the year 1980 that:

The maximum time of listeners was wasted in eating food, *pooris*, breakfast. Whereas in that time the artistes of the Punjab could have been given time (to perform). This would have increased the enthusiasm of the local musicians as well. But perhaps nobody is even willing to listen to this solution. Punjabi people collect money from Punjabis only but not for Punjabi artistes. Performers from outside are made to reside in expensive hotels, while big-big, beautiful rooms at the Devi Talab remain vacant.<sup>120</sup>

While in these instances Bawra perceptively captures the dilemma of the local Punjabi musicians receiving second-hand treatment, he himself glosses over the local performers when they do, in fact hold centre-stage in the lull of the 1980s. Bawra then seems to be mirroring the dominant view of the organisers where a privileging of the classical at the Harballabh was concomitant with a downgrading of the local. Hence, a festival shouldered solely by Punjabi talent is not even deemed a full-fledged festival, whether by *The Tribune* or, more surprisingly, by Bawra, a Punjabi artist himself. As the development of the festival from the late 1940s to the early 1980s under the substantial direction of Mr. Ashwini Kumar has shown, the festival was seen as *the* paragon of the national at the local level, its identity closely tied up to performers from outside. Showcasing musicians from outside the Punjab, of 'all-India fame' was of course a process that was vivid from at least the 1930s. Thus the identity of the festival, in the twentieth century, had changed so irrevocably in the direction of an 'all-India' festival that without musicians from outside, the very worth and existence of the festival (as in the case of the 1980s) was seen as being under threat.

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<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p.123.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., pp. 145-146.

When, in the 1980s, we find the local finally asserting its supremacy over the national in a telling way—opening up opportunities for hitherto-sidelined local musicians to come to the forefront—these were not fully exploited, for historical reasons outlined in chapters 1 and 2. As a result, when the massive transformations of the 1990s—in economic, political and cultural realms—came, the Harballabh proved largely incapable to build on its remarkably eclectic heritage. What remained was the formal veneer of a ‘pure’ Hindu classicism that too readily could be used to bolster a Hindutva ‘common sense’.

In conclusion, in the face of change and a ruptured socio-cultural fabric of the urban landscape of Jalandhar, the Harballabh slowly emerged in a time of reconstruction as one of the few institutions that could rightfully claim to represent both the old and the new. In being able to stand as the perfect representative of tradition refurbished for the glory of the newly independent modern nation-state, it represented a larger tendency which institutions of ‘classical’ Indian culture underwent throughout the country. While the modernisation launched by Mr. Kumar in itself was a great step forward, in the process, the original context in which the Harballabh emerged suffered a further erasure.

The past, as in all phases of history, was cast in terms of the present, because only partial aspects of it were emphasised. These aspects were primarily the personal life-story of Baba Harballabh and his guru, with rare allusions to the range of musicians who performed or the content of their performance. Rather, Baba Harballabh, described now as the Yogi musician/Swami musician became merely the device with which to affirm the great lineage of the present: a present which was rigidly, puritanically classical. In the time of Baba Harballabh itself, this was scarcely the case, as already shown in chapter 1. Thus, all affirmations about the Harballabh, especially in newspaper reports seemed to have a one-point programme: to re-affirm the purity of the present day enterprise. Beyond this, there was hardly any desire or compulsion to see the distinctiveness of the original milieu of the Harballabh. Of course, the seeds for this erasure of the original milieu lay in the peculiar drive to classicisation and modernisation begun by the two Vishnus half a century prior.

Despite this erasure of the past of the Harballabh in the everyday life of the festival during the 1950s it needs to be remembered that the tenor of this modernisation was *not*

steeped in excessive Hindu devotionalism and ritualism, a la Paluskar, but rather in a passion for nurturing good music, evocative of the broadly eclectic and cosmopolitan cultural sphere of the colonial Lahore in which he had grown up. Such a music festival was organised professionally in such a way as to serve as an asset to the infant nation-state, imagined in a avowedly secular way during these days. Only a man of letters like Mr. Kumar, connoisseur of music, and one who was a patron in the primary sense, giving priority to patronising *music* itself and nurturing a new culture of performance and listening could help the Harballabh scale the heights it did during these years—whether in terms of performative space or local and national prestige. To fully recognise the character of Mr. Kumar’s patronage, Bonnie Wade’s demarcation of the different motivations behind the patronage of India’s musical cultures is useful:

**CHART I**

	<b>Motivation of Patron</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Result</b>
Direct Process	Fostering of music	Patronage of music	Patronage of musician
Indirect Process	Entertainment	Patronage of musician	Patronage of music
	Social status	Patronage of musician	Patronage of musician
	Cultural status	Patronage of music	Patronage of musician
	Political rank/status	Patronage of musician	Patronage of music
	Practice of religion	Patronage of musician	Patronage of music

*Source:* Bonnie C. Wade, ‘Patronage in India’s Musical Culture’, in *Arts Patronage in India*, Joan L. Erdman (ed.), New Delhi: Manohar, 1992, p.184.

Thus a major continuity with the pre-1947 era, in terms of the sanctity and priority accorded to music and performance itself—instead of patronage of musicians—is evident in this post-Independence period. Mr. Kumar’s services to the Harballabh did not stem from a desire to earn religious merit, but out of a passion for maintaining a tradition

of listening and performing a profound variety of music, as much a part of the ‘direct process’ of fostering music as the ‘indirect’ one of upholding ‘cultural status’—the only two axes wherein ‘patronage of music’ and not of the musician is the action. In attaching priority to music *per se*, and not social status or religious merit, Mr. Kumar generally formed the exception to the rule of an obsequious patronage of the festival—that helped in the festival primarily as a means for earning religious or social merit<sup>121</sup>. As a deeply committed citizen connoisseur who took up the mantle of running this festival, hitherto in the hands of the temple *mahants*, he infused a new meaning in the running of the festival. However, the majority of his colleagues in the Sangeet Mahasabha, including a handful of original Hindu inhabitants and a score of new Hindu-Sikh refugees from Pakistan, the older associations with religious merit, combined in equal measure with what was often an almost incidental appreciation of music. So while there was a secular thrust to the festival in this era thanks to Mr. Ashwini Kumar’s commitments, this was a secularism which was closely allied with official secularism, though not imposed directly by state-authorities. Yet, it couldn’t be like the eclectic secularism of the early days, separated from Mr. Kumar’s phase by the chasm of partition. This secularism was nonetheless a major continuity with the *de facto* secularism of the past, apart from the larger major break which Paluskar’s presence marked. Paluskar’s arrival at the Harballabh had begun a tradition of honouring musicians from outside the Punjab, and this new 20th century practice was continued by Ashwini Kumar as well. For Ashwini Kumar, born in 1920 and acquainted with the festival at its height of being a regional and north Indian success under the active patronage of Tolo Ram, who in turn was inspired by Paluskar, the national-classical music at the Harballabh was something to be proud of. Like the emerging force of nationalism, the Harballabh stood, in the realm of culture, for the great paragon of the best of the national available at the level of the local. Thus, giving a full-fledged space and voice to local Punjabi artistes ceased to be the *raison d’etre* of the festival post-Tolo Ram’s fervent drive for displaying national talent at the local level. This was a tradition which Ashwini Kumar carried out with great aplomb, and, to his credit it must be said that despite the stress on the national, local artistes were not domineered into insignificance. After all, it was under his patronage that the first steps to set up Jullundur Kala Kendra, patronise the Harballabh Music Academy which

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<sup>121</sup> Already discussed above and in Chapter 1.



had a brief innings from 1956-, and institute a competition for young musicians were taken.

The ultimate question is why all these efforts eventually came to naught? I have proposed a tentative answer above—the reason for the failure resides in the fact that the Harballabh this didn't become a life-long commitment for its organisers; it remained an activity they patronised as a means to continuing tradition as also enjoying music. But unlike the temple, the coming up of the music academy was not enough for a self-definition of Hindu patrons—their personal careers take care of their individual and familial identities while the grand new temple embodies their collective identity. Without adequate, on-the-ground round-the-year commitments to turn the dreams into reality, the Mahasabha continues to only be able to run the festival. Rather, we should view the propensity at the Harballabh, to proclaim proudly 'I will donate 'x' amount of money', as an exercise in legitimacy, borrowing and partaking from the temporal depth and lineage which supposedly lends to the festival an air of a hallowed cultural treasure of the nation.

Despite the failure on the front of building a permanent, round-the-year academy or auditorium generous donations by these very people was the financial pillar of the phenomenal success and prestige enjoyed by the festival during these years. In spite of the state's many proclamations of being an active upholder of tradition, the real support in running the festival came from these groups—the elites and industrialists of Jalandhar, largely upper caste and middle class Hindus—who had a strong investment in identifying themselves with a larger Hindu religiosity, and increasingly from the mid-1980s onwards, the conception of a broader Hindu spatial geography, evident in the eager and committed fashion in which the mandir was built by them on the Devi Talab. These attempts could also be a reaction to Sikh communal consolidation in the 1980s, when many gurudwaras were converted into virtual forts, especially the Golden Temple. In New Delhi's New Friends Colony, for example, a 'Mata ka Mandir' was established by the resident Punjabi Hindus in the wake of Sikh militancy. These motivations, however, gradually established through the 1980s, an ascendancy of the temple on the Devi Talab in such a way that the long associations of this site with music and the Harballabh were significantly jeopardised. However that is the story narrated in the next chapter.

*Chapter 3*

***Redefining Music's Sacrality, 1989-2003***

In the last chapter we saw how the 1980s almost saw a termination of the festival. The antagonism and alienation amongst Hindus and Sikhs as a result of the Khalistani movement and the 1984 anti-Sikh riots inaugurated a time when the definition of who is a Punjabi or what constitutes Punjabiya becomes increasingly contentious, especially so for the Hindus. Compounded with this cessation of the festival was Mr. Ashwini Kumar's effective retirement from the managing of the Sangeet Mahasabha in 1982 through a shift of residence to Delhi. These circumstances along with a trend of a marked wave of Hindutva across the country from the late 1980s onwards, an excessive self-awareness about marking the spot of the Devi Talab as a rigidly Hindu space by the elites of Jalandhar becomes apparent.

This chapter shall examine the festival in its most recent phase, from its revival in 1989 by the North Zone Cultural Centre, Patiala to 2003-2004, by which time the colonisation of space at the Devi Talab by a consumerist temple iconography was more or less complete. The many developments mapped out in this chapter need to be viewed against the backdrop of two definitive trends in the material, cultural and political realms in Indian society: the post-1991 economic reforms and the concomitant and conspicuous rise of right-wing Hindutva politics.

The revival of the festival in 1989 was undertaken by the North Zone Cultural Centre in Patiala, which continued to organize the festival upto 1992, from which time onwards, it once again began to be organised solely by Jalandhar residents under the banner of the Sangeet Mahasabha.<sup>1</sup> The changes occurring in this most recent phase of the Harballabh are discussed below firstly in terms of the altered space of performance. This is followed by a discussion of the connections between the change in the quality of mass media broadcasting and the festival, which lays the ground for the third section on the interference caused by the frequent speeches of VIPs. The fourth section examines exclusivist Hindu associations with the Harballabh which leads on to an analysis of the conflict between the Devi Talab Mandir Committee and the Sangeet Mahasabha in the last section.

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<sup>1</sup> Shastri, *op.cit.*, p.126.

### *An Altered Space of Performance*

...What do we mean when we say that a certain religion is decadent? Obviously, we mean that its followers are so intent upon the mechanical observance of its externals, its forms, ceremonies and ritual in general, that they think they can dispense with the problem of conduct. (This happens when) The forms are no longer treated as means to an end; they become substitutes for it.

--Ashwini Kumar, 'Is Indian Classical Music Decadent?', *Casual Symphony*, p.19.

The above parameters used by Mr. Ashwini Kumar to firstly define the decadence of religion and thereafter that of Indian Classical Music, capture for us the predicament of the Harballabh post its revival in 1989, when several changes are apparent in the space of performance at the festival. The most prominent amongst these is the way in which the *havan* becomes a ritual in itself, without an accompanying display of local Punjabi talent as used to be the case previously. Describing the inauguration of the 1992 festival, Bawra informs us,

On 25<sup>th</sup> December morning a *havan* was done at the Samadhi of Baba Harballabh as per procedure under the guidance of Shri P.S. Pawar I.A.S. Commissioner Jalandhar Division. Apart from Shri Vijay Sehgal, Shri Avnash Chada, Shri Kishan Singh and the author many Sabha members were also present. After the *havan*, the programme would begin and local musicians would especially participate in which the writer of these sentences used to also join in. But now this tradition has completely ended.<sup>2</sup>

The reason for this seems to be the fact that the *havan* becomes a ritual that stands on its own merit, as a way to signify sacrality, nothing more, a ritual for an auspicious start. Earlier it used to be a mini-event in itself, with local musicians getting an important space to be heard.<sup>3</sup> Further, despite the second-rung occupied by local Punjabi musicians, by placing their performances right after the auspicious *havan* was also an indirect way of acknowledging their *priority* to performance at the Harballabh. As a result, a stronger sense of ownership was inculcated amongst the musicians and music-lovers of the Punjab—many of whom also volunteered with the Mahasabha (or indeed were it members)—towards the Harballabh. Inculcating such a spirit amongst Jalandharis was, as has been demonstrated in the last chapter, a priority for Mr. Ashwini Kumar. It was not an occasion complete in itself, to merely exhibit publicly

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<sup>2</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.167.

<sup>3</sup> See for example *Ibid.*, p.113 for the 1969 festival where this practice is mentioned for the first time.

the ritual through perfect Sanskrit intonation and Hindu-ness, during the 1990s which continues today. Thus, for the 1995 sammelan Bawra, noting the change in the character of the *havan* tells us,

After the *havan*, a music soiree would begin but these days a new practice of limiting the *havan* to only chanting mantras and putting offerings has started.<sup>4</sup>

Such a downgrading of local talent went hand-in-hand with a temporal reduction in the, especially during day time, in the hours devoted to musical performance. Earlier on, the local musicians would begin their performances immediately after the *havan*, and national-level artistes would continue for the latter half of the day and into the night with the result that music echoed on the Devi Talab grounds for almost the entire day. For the 1992 sammelan Bawra reports that

Music listeners from outside had also come who waited for the programme the entire day long, eager for the evening when the music would begin. They said that this sammelan should continue during the daytime as well, but nowadays who listens (to such pronouncements)? It is only a few years now that the day-time sabhas have closed down. Earlier the flow of music would continue for the entire day and people would come in the thousands.<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, then, the elimination of the time-slot post-*havan* for local musicians was a sign of the *reasons* for which the post-1989 Sangeet Mahasabha continued its patronage. Despite the best of expressed intentions, of fostering music in the Punjab, encouraging local musicians etc., the dominant thrust behind organising the festival was as an effort to 'continue' and 'revive' tradition as a means of increasing and consolidating their *social* prestige as elites of the city. This was diametrically opposed to the tenor of Mr. Kumar's patronage, which stemmed from a deep knowledge of music and a passionate desire to disseminate the sublime effects of performing and listening to it amongst the people of his birthplace. In contrast, during the last decade of the twentieth century, revival *per se* was the primary aim, with an overt display of rituals being entrenched at the festival; 'the forms are no longer treated as means to an end', but becoming 'substitutes for it', in Mr. Kumar's succinct words. The end of a sublime experience of performing and listening to music nurtured at the Harballabh was thus substituted during this time of 'decadence' by an excessive ritualisation,

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<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.191.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p.170.

most evident in the excision of time earmarked for the performances of local musicians.

This excision of local musicians from the 'official programme' was simultaneously replaced with a new musical practice. This was the ritualised 'Saraswati Vandana', which now became the herald with which all sammelans began. The first time in the recorded history of the Harballabh when the Saraswati Vandana makes an appearance is 1979.<sup>6</sup> Hereafter it appears again in 1989, never to be ousted from the Harballabh stage, and continues to be secure till today as a ritualised semi-institution, which is performed by women students from colleges across the city and the Punjab.<sup>7</sup> Here what is interesting is the fact that it is female students who are deemed appropriate to render the Saraswati Vandana and never young men. While at a facile level this is celebrated by some as 'opportunity' for talented Punjabi women to 'perform' at the Harballabh stage, one must remember the limited nature of the Vandana—not as serious as either dhrupad or khayal, it is performed by a group of students with the element of choice of composition in the hands of teachers and not the students themselves. On the whole, the permanent fixture which this practice has become at the Harballabh reflects the larger trend of the festival during these times of content being sacrificed at the altar of a formulaic, facile and ritualistic grandeur. Importantly, the Saraswati Vandana could not have been institutionalised at the Harballabh without the prior transformation of the sacred geography of the Devi Talab by the coming of a new, grand temple in the 1970s. As seen in the last chapter, *Sammelan Souvenir* covers also began exhibiting the obsession and primacy attached to the festival by a successive, year wise repetition of the temple motif.<sup>8</sup> This time of overt emphasis on externals also reflected itself in the fact that in 1994 the Samadhi of Baba Harballabh was also installed, along with a new renovation of his Samadhi spot, a further step in firming up an attractive, polished veneer.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p.139.

<sup>7</sup> See Ibid., pp. 155-217 for references to the Saraswati Vandana inaugurating all sammelans in the 1989-1997 phase and Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, for the 1998-2003 phase.

<sup>8</sup> In the context of the establishment of the Saraswati Vandana as an important ritual one must also note that from 1976 onwards till 1980 (a time when the festival also celebrated its centenary in 1977) that along with the Devi Talab temple in the background, the foreground always featured a sketch of the Goddess Saraswati.

<sup>9</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.182.

The apogee of this trend was visible in the year 1995, when the campaign was launched to collect gold so as to cover the exterior of the temple in gold, so as to fulfil the dream of the Devi Talab Mandir Committee to build a 'swarna mandir' on this spot. The process itself took less than a year, with the 'gold temple' ready by 1996, the next year.<sup>10</sup>



**Figure 1**

The Old Samadhi of Baba Harballabh, prior to renovation in the 1990s.

*Photo Courtesy: K. Shastri, Trigartapradesh Jalandhar, reproduced with kind permission of the author.*

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<sup>10</sup> Shastri, *op.cit.*, pp.81-82.



**Figure 2**

*Left to Right:* The exterior and interior of the newly renovated Samadhi of Baba Harbllabh on the Devi Talab grounds.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>11</sup> All photos courtesy Radha Kapuria, December 2011, unless otherwise specified.

In terms of the impact on the Sangeet Mahasabha, one must understand how this emphasis on external glory of the *physical space* of the Devi Talab—converting it into a spot of institutionalised Hinduism as opposed to a more popular and inclusive Hinduism (which was the case in the time of its origins<sup>12</sup>) overshadowed the prior musical predilection of this space.

Consequently, as we shall see below, the old dreams of the Mahasabha for building a solid and permanent auditorium-like structure or indeed an academy of music, almost all crumbled to dust, given that many of the members of the Sangeet Mahasabha favoured the religious predilections of the Devi Talab Mandir Committee given that most belonged socially and culturally to the post-1980s Hindu elites of Jalandhar, who as a whole were invested in a new ascendancy of temple-building all over north India. Indeed it was only after the gold-topping of the temple and the concomitant transformation of the Devi Talab as a major tourist spot that the Harballabh too was given the title National Festival of Music also in the year 1996.<sup>13</sup>

This much cherished status was interestingly bestowed not by the Culture Ministry but instead by the Tourism Ministry.<sup>14</sup> Given such a changing spatiality and reconfiguration of the Devi Talab, the most which a Sangeet Mahasabha, implicated in these many changes, could manage, was continuing the festival itself and the music competitions preceding the festival.

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<sup>12</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>13</sup> Shastri, *op.cit.*, p.135. Also Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.202.

<sup>14</sup> The participation of NRI musicians, many of them Punjabi and from Jalandhar itself is also evident in this time period. For the example of three NRI tabla players, Devindra Singh, Jaya Shankar and Manindra Singh at the 1997 festival, see Bawra p.216. This in turn also points to the important role played by NRIs in patronising and popularising the Harballabh, or even indeed in helping the temple-building effort at Jalandhar, which only future research can shed light on. I am grateful to my supervisor Prof. Sucheta Mahajan for alerting me to this dimension.





**Figure 3**

*Clockwise from top left:* The gold-topped central Devi Talab temple built in the mid-late 1970s; A view of the transformed grounds; A Ram temple close to the grounds where the Harballabh now takes place; A newly-installed Shiva statue behind which stand newly constructed grand gates for entrance to the Devi Talab; A view of the temple precinct, with an Annapurna temple on the left, a Hanuman statue on the right, and a statue of Parvati half-submerged in the Talab.

The music competitions which were earlier held on the mornings of the main days of the festival, or indeed at times alongside the main festival itself, were now re-scheduled to be spread out over 2-3 days *prior* to the festival. This emphasis on the competition, while on the one hand constituting an apparent advance and step in the right direction for local Punjabi musicians, on the other hand further circumscribes the level playing field available to them.<sup>15</sup> Firstly because during this time, the qualifying upper age limit for performing at the festival was reduced from 30 to 25, and secondly, the norms of judging and performing at the competitions were strictly defined, tailored towards building up the careers of upcoming musicians. This went hand-in-hand with a lowering in the stature of those judging the music competitions. Whereas earlier on, national-level artistes would perform the role of judges, this task was now being taken up by lesser known musicians and teachers of music from within the Punjab. The fact that artistes of national stature would judge the competition earlier on entailed also that a promising young musician could be selected as disciples by any of the 'great masters' attending the competition, as happened with the case of Girija Devi, who noticed a young and talented Sunanda Sharma at the Harballabh competition.<sup>16</sup> Thus, there was a reduction in the quality or prestige of the competition which went hand-in-hand with an expansion in the number of categories for exhibiting competence<sup>17</sup>, as well as the number of days devoted *solely* to the competition.

Here I tentatively suggest that greater investments—in terms of time and finances—in the institution of the competition itself, along with a lowering of age limit for performance encapsulates prevalent norms of a neo-social Darwinist ethic which middle-classes across India trumpeted from the late 1980s onwards, when pressures on young people for high-performance were at a premium. This increasing pressure

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<sup>15</sup> For the 1983 festival, the lack of 'big names' vastly improved the space of performance afforded to local musicians. See chapter 2.

<sup>16</sup> Anecdote narrated by Mr. Naresh Kumar.

<sup>17</sup> Now the number of categories has also increased to four major ones such as 'Vocal – Gayan-Kanth Sangeet', 'Instrumental – Non – Percussion – Swar Vadya', 'Instrumental – Percussion – Taal Vadya' and 'Vocal - Thumri, Dadra, Tappa'. Accessed from [www.harballabh.org](http://www.harballabh.org) on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2012 at 9:00 am.

was also a function of the 'global superpower' of the new middle classes which after 1991 were on the ascendant. Competing with the most powerful nations of the earth (and beating them at their own game)—whether in beauty pageants, nuclear weapons, economic 'growth' etc.—defined the reigning world-view of this group at this time (and continues to do so). It thus comes as no surprise that the festival during this time period trumpets the music competition in a major way which, through its exclusive focus on young people also overturns traditional norms of competence in the field of classical music, where the more time spent on a particular raga makes the musician grasp it better, thus foregrounding the importance of seniority as opposed to this exclusive focus on young performers).

The fact that these new values became remarkably common to a pan-Indian middle class, the majority of which was Hindu (many of whom tacitly backed—increasingly—the aggressive, militant definition of nationhood, if not Hindutva) was possible because of the rise of 'national television' during this time, the most conspicuous marker of which was the telecasting of serialised Hindu epics such as *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata*. According to media analyst Arvind Rajagopal, this helped in the dissemination of a homogenous, monolithic Hindu identity.<sup>18</sup> This brings us to the important question of the impact of the reconfiguration and boom in the mass media in the wake of liberalisation which took place during these years on the festival.

### ***The new media and the melancholic modern music festival***

The ongoing discussion on the increasing ritualisation also needs to be understood along with the concomitant drive towards the boom in the media and the emergence of newer and indeed louder forms of entertainment. Given these trends, the status of the Harballabh, as a place showcasing the best of Indian *tradition* became even more solidly reified. Thus the lament of Shastri and many others that organizers are too keen on a positive image in the media and newspaper reports, as opposed to a commitment to the festival due to its inherent character, is reflected in the ways in which the media is viewed vis-à-vis the festival which shall be examined here.

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<sup>18</sup> A. Rajagopal, *Politics after Television: Hindu Nationalism and the Reshaping of the Indian Public* (Cambridge University Press, 2001).

This time period was one in which *television viewership increased phenomenally across India*, a feature that reflected itself in the case of the Harballabh as well, though with mixed results. In general however, one can say that the increasing media intrusion was robustly critiqued whenever the opportunity arose. Occasionally, however, there is a grudging acceptance of the ways in which the media might play a beneficial role, though this is always tempered with the vision of days of yore, when thousands turned up across the 3 days.<sup>19</sup> This is the case in the following short account of the decline in numbers due to increased digitization and television broadcasting of the event into homes given by Bawra:

People from various cities benefitted merely by seeing the photographs and reading the reviews (of the festival). The cable operators of Jalandhar kept up a live telecast of the sammelan. The result of this was two-fold. Firstly, those people who used to personally come to listen to the performances, now stayed at home enjoying the performances, wrapped in their quilts, protected from the cold, *thus leading to a difference in the numbers present*. Secondly, it is possible that some of those people who might have never come to hear (attend) the Harivallabh and had only read its name in the newspapers might have watched and heard it.<sup>20</sup>

Leaving aside the problems with the media *per se*, those related to the hazards of modern-day technology more generally, also emerged:

It was not without a discordant note. Constantly ringing mobile phones at the Sammellan irritated the artistes a lot. Pt. Shiv Kumar Sharma even stopped his performance and requested the audience to switch off their mobile phones. The heaters placed too near the stage caused the instruments (to) go out of tune. Visibly upset artistes asked the organizers to change the direction of the heaters is if all (sic). This was not enough, there were clouds of smoke on the stage due to aggarbattis which hindered the performance of vocalist Veena Sahastrabuddhe. The organizers had to remove aggarbattis from near the stage on the request of the Artist (sic).<sup>21</sup>

.....Shiv Kumar expressed his annoyance at the cell phone repeatedly disturbing him. His Santoor according to experts, got out of tune due to the heat of the blowers. Repeated requests to switch them off went unheeded. The artistes spent half their time tuning and correcting the instruments that are sensitive to heat. Music lovers pointed that the organizers had created a

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<sup>19</sup> *Ustadon ki kami ke saath saath shrotaon ki kami ka ahsaas bhi sthaapit aur pratichhit kalakaron ko khalta raha*. Newspaper Report in *Divya Himachal*, 29<sup>th</sup> December 1998.

<sup>20</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.88. (For the festival on 25 December, 1998.)

<sup>21</sup> *The Indian Express*, December 29, 2002; Sharma's gentle notes echo at Harballabh, Quoted in Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, 2003, p.150.

record of sorts by keeping the Saraswati Vandana after the first musicians gave their performance.<sup>22</sup>

Apart from the just mentioned technical reasons, there were many other fronts on which the incompetency of the organizers within the contingencies of the present stimulated a recurring lament for a more pristine past, a continuity with similar laments about inefficient organisation already seen in the previous chapter. What is crucial to understand here is the fact that putting up a good show and the norms of “live” performance have become so deeply seated during this phase, that it becomes nearly impossible, for either the musicians, or the organisers or the audience members, to envisage a different, impromptu musical performance, or discussion of matters musical, while technical lags are taken care of. Edward Said has most perspicaciously commented upon the predicament of music festivals in the twentieth and current century. Invoking some of the issues that have been raised with regards to the Harballabh above, Said analyzes the impact of the newly booming media and technolog on the entire tenor of music festivals, at least in the West. Drawing upon Theodor W. Adorno, Said notes that,

At festivals, then, the music is mostly subordinated to the occasion. Norms for “live” performance are borrowed from the spectacle and from the recording. As Adorno says in his aptly titled essay, ‘On the Fetish-Character in Music and the Regression of Listening’, when it is excellent, “the performance sounds like its own phonograph record.” A long series of performances, such as those at a festival, are like many records in one’s library—available, accessible, ready for instant use. Festivals at which teaching and new compositions are therefore quite rare.<sup>23</sup>

Therefore, the strict following of time slots reflects an inability to push for an atmosphere of more musical conviviality, as was the case for the earliest phase of the festival, and probably upto the 1960s. This lament at the changes that have been instituted in the life of classical music comes through most clearly in the following instances wherein the organizers are criticized for leaving the stage in the hands of those unaware of and disconnected from the intricacies of classical music:

Due to ignorant stage-management and disorganisation, the harivallabh sangeet sammelan lost some of its colour and verve this time. The Head of the Amritsar Khalsa College, Prof. Asha Singh shared that the basis of the disorganisation of the Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan is

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<sup>22</sup> *The Times of India*—Sunday December 29, 2002, Quoted in *Harivallabh Darpan*, 2003, p.150.

<sup>23</sup> Said, *op.cit.*, p.28.

only this much that *the stage was conducted by those who are unacquainted with the world of music.*<sup>24</sup>

The other reason for discontent amongst the purist listeners has to do with the order of performances which does not adhere to traditional precedent, thus leading to a disrespect of senior performers:

Newly rising performers were neglected in a bad way and the traditions of the Harivallabh Sangeet Sammelan were also openly flouted. Dr. Singh said that the stage should remain in the hands of music-specialists. *Several traditions were broken in the sangeet sammelan this time when artistes who are renowned ustads were given an earlier time-slot to perform, while younger musicians at the level of their shagirds (students) were called later on.* Ustad Allauddin Khan was called before, while after him rising performers like Pranav exhibited their art.<sup>25</sup>

In the above paragraph, what Dr. Singh and those in empathy with her do not give credence to is the aura of the celebrity musician, which combined with the travails of modern life, results in an ordering of performances where the more well known and senior artistes are given priority in the hope that they will act as crowd pullers.

A critique of the modern-day musician is painted in detail and with great nuance by Bawra under a section titled “the difference between past and present”:

Nowadays, excessive attention is given to the comforts and pleasures of the performers. Earlier, musicians would perform every day. *After their giving performance, they would, they would sit and listen to the other performers as well.* There are even stories of how a musician would sometime decline to perform after a potentially influential performance by a great singer, in case his own performance was scheduled after the significant one. By not singing after the great performer, they would increase the prestige and respect accruing to that musician.

Nowadays, the return ticket of a musician is already booked beforehand. Getting over with their performance and the stress of catching the train is primary in their minds. Complete the performance, however good or bad it might have been, collect the fees and catch the train to the next destination. Today, instead of representing devotion, penance and spiritual peace, has only become a tool for earning fame and money. *Earlier on, the thirsty would go to the well to quench their thirst, whereas now, the well has reached the thirsty. Indeed, the wells have all*

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<sup>24</sup> Harivallabh Darpan, 2003, p. 97.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

*been closed down and water is reaching via pipes.* To listen to the same music one needn't go anywhere, you can listen to anything, sitting at home.<sup>26</sup>

In the above paragraph, we find Bawra on the brink of cogent sociological analysis but alas he doesn't push his brilliantly crafted argument—with an ingenious use of the metaphor of water—to its conclusion. As noted in the comments of Edward Said above, Bawra too is describing a process where music is reduced to mere fetishistic consumption, divorced from any kind of musical exchange or camaraderie, as was the case for the Harballabh in the past. However, despite this recognition of a decline in the quality of performance and consumption at the festival, faith in the popularity of the Harballabh is frequently reiterated. While these references are not as frequent as those just mentioned that focus on the travails of this recent era, but they surely do occur:

Thousands of music lovers sitting in pin-drop silence today were a proof of the fact that those listening to classical music are not less. *Perhaps our young generation had become tired of listening to the loud cacophony of pop music and had enthusiastically emerged to see and listen to its heritage.*<sup>27</sup>

Or here is Bawra again, affirming his faith in the Harballabh after witnessing phenomenal numbers:

The presence of the listeners today proved that the popularity of Indian classical music is not decreasing but rather is consistently increasing.<sup>28</sup>

All these are however, wishful proclamations of faith in a context where the old solidity of commitment first and foremost to matters musical was becoming increasingly overshadowed and redundant in the face of a triumphant, newly powerful consumerist Hindu middle class which was redefining the subtle prestige of the Devi Talab from being a spot for musical excellence, to becoming the most prominent and the biggest temple complex of Jalandhar.

Perhaps the most vocal criticism of the decline this spirit (wherein sacrality is assigned above all else to music) amongst the majority of the organisers, comes from the old guard, who stood for a Harballabh that was a nationally prestigious, no-

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.126. This metaphor of water to describe music is used by others as well and quite recurrently. Ibid., p. 125, where he uses the metaphor of the Bhagirathi river to refer to the music that flowed at the Harballabh in 2000.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p.124.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.153.

nonsense music festival, that could look to the future rather than the situation today when it has become a stale, reified bastion of tradition where a parroting of past glories is put on a pedestal, and not the nurturing of a robust tradition of classical music. Indeed, the mark of success seems to be closely tied with television-worthiness. As Mr. Ashwini Kumar acidly remarked mentioned in an interview, one of the current members of the Sangeet Mahasabha was proud to announce to Mr. Kumar that one of their most notable, recent contributions have been that of a young girl (Sugandha Mishra) who won the competition of the Harballabh Sammelan making it big on Indian reality TV as a singing sensation.<sup>29</sup> Concomitant with the primacy of the media boom altering the space of performance at the Harballabh was the reason, most often, *behind* this frustrating interference by the media; viz., the VIP, who found it increasingly essential to arrive with a retinue of presspersons in tow.

***State funding, concert ritual and the wearisome VIP***

Our love of music is bound up with its forward motion...Music's incessant movement forward exerts double and contradictory fascination: on the one hand it appears to be immobilizing time itself by filling out a specific temporal space, while generating at the same moment the sensation of flowing past us with all the pressure and sparkle of a great river. To stop the flow of music would be like stopping time itself, incredible and inconceivable. *Only a catastrophe of some sort produces such a break in the musical discourse during a public performance. The public, at such times, looks on, unbelieving.*

-Ashwini Kumar, 'Appreciation of Music', *Casual Symphony*, p.16.

The catastrophe that interruption constitutes, as detailed above in the quotation from Mr. Kumar perfectly captures the 'nuisance' of the stage-presence of VIPs at the Harballabh during this time period, because the ritual of honouring such state dignitaries became more and more arbitrary and elaborate.

As the last chapter has shown, the presence of the VIP on the Harballabh stage was concomitant with its modernisation and the recognition it received from the newly independent nation-state post-1947. For the period under question, however, state patronage takes on a centrality missing in Bawra's account or newspaper reports of

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<sup>29</sup> The boast is not entirely an empty one, for despite the frivolous trajectory of Sugandha Mishra post her debut on reality TV, she comes from a family of music teachers, comprising the elite of Jalandhar, who, moreover, have been intimately involved in the running of the festival since the days of Mr. Kumar's patronage.



the festival from an earlier era. For example, note the following report from the *Jalandhar Newslime* for the 1998 festival, quoted in Bawra:-

Punjab Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, who inaugurated the sammelan, announced a grant of Rs. 5 lakh for the festival and declared that he will request the centre to release the funds it had promised when the sammelan was declared a national festival of music.

He also offered to organize the event on the behest of the state government from next year. Dhumal also promised financial assistance for the construction of an auditorium at the venue. Khurana said the centre would double the grant from Rs. 1 lakh to 2 lakh from the next year and pending aid would also be disbursed soon.<sup>30</sup>

The reasons for these announcements of aid accrues from the fact that by this time, in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century, Indian classical music has acquired the stamp of “official culture” sponsored by the Government of India, as the correct and pure music, with a purported lineage and strength of tradition that lends it a new air of a “respectability”.

Referring to the changes on the Indian music scene, post the popularity of Pt. Ravi Shankar internationally, music critic Raghava Menon makes the following observations, which hold a strong relevance for the Harballabh in the given period:

Suddenly Indian culture became a key ingredient of India's international relations. Ms. Pupul Jayaker, speaking to the *Times of India* in June 1985 discovered that “Indian culture was no longer a matter of entertainment alone. It has now become a major arm of Indian diplomacy”...Suddenly culture was everywhere. A Minister was appointed, there were Czars and Czarinas. By the Sixth Plan, allocation for culture shot up to Rs. 265 crores and by the Seventh Plan it had become Rs. 482 crores. Culture began to be packaged and hung on the national Christmas tree.<sup>31</sup>

In other words, the Government of India, especially since the late 1980s, has been concerned, even more than before (the links of classical music with the Indian state going back to the post-1947 policies, some of which have been discussed in Chapter 2) to represent to the world, classical music as the national music of India.<sup>32</sup> To what extent these disbursement of funds actually functioned to actively promote classical

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<sup>30</sup> G. Watika, *Jalandhar Newslime*, Friday January 1, 1999.

<sup>31</sup> Raghava R. Menon *Indian Music: The Magic of the Raga*, Somaiya Publications, New Delhi: 1998, pp. 82-3.

<sup>32</sup> Of course, the ground for this was laid by British Orientalist writers and also Indian writers following the same model. See Bakhle, *op.cit.*, pp. 51-62. Further, the patronage of the colonial state for classical music though marginal was not negligible, with no less a figure than Paluskar, with his avowed nationalism, performing at the Coronation Darbar in Delhi in 1911. *Ibid.*, pp.155-156.

music is however another question. Announcing a sum of money amounting to a few lakhs at an annual music festival (the main purpose being to meet the fee requirement of the talented artistes invited to perform), eventually operates to masterfully uphold the government's public image as protector of the arts and heritage of the nation without necessarily committing itself to investing in building music as a viable profession for the young people who win the competition.

Related to the centrality assigned to state patronage in the primary sources being consulted are the rituals that govern the festival, particularly the way in which exhibiting deference to "high officials" (the VIPs) becomes an integral part of the conducting it. Interestingly, this generates a lot of bad press for the festival, due to the interference caused to the even flow of music. The priority assigned to the performance and consumption of music is thereby jeopardised.

At the festival, state patronage is visibly embodied in the form of the VIP, who becomes a figure vying for the audience's attention at the cost of the musician's. Along with his (most of the time it is men who are the VIPs at the festival) entourage of attendants and the battery of media accompaniment, the VIP is most often seen as a necessary nuisance. One of the most jarring features described by Bawra in this context is the fact that most VIPs attending the festival are asked to make a speech to all those present; irrespective of whether a musician is mid-way in performance. Such instances recur constantly from the 1996 Sammelan onwards.<sup>33</sup> I quote below some remarkable instances of the interruption of the flow of music, noted by a reporter at The Indian Express present there:

The spirit, though, wasn't evident in the front rows, with the glitterati trooping in and out even when performances were on. And at times, members of the audience had to keep reminding themselves that they were at a sangeet sammelan and not a political rally. When Biswajit Roy Chaudhary commenced the inaugural recital, for instance, in came three labourers into the pandal with a ladder to put the banner of the sponsors—Department of Cultural Affairs, Punjab Government. The second day was graced by the spiritual head of an art institution, whose coterie arrived shouting slogans. The guru occupied the stage, and so did his bandwagon.

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<sup>33</sup> For the 1996 festival, Bawra, pp.207-208, which quotes Rathi A. Menon's pieces in *The Indian Express*, dated 22<sup>nd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> December 1996.

On another occasion, when an artiste had just finished with the *alap*, the compere for reasons best known to him, invited a minister at the Punjab Government to the stage. When the *bandish* was over, there came another invitation, this time for a politician, a patron of the arts. Finally, as the artiste as preparing for an encore by popular demand, the stage was swamped by the organisers. Then began the announcements—a list of the sammelan's sponsors was read out and an endless round of long-winded speeches followed as they were being feted.<sup>34</sup>

Clearly these interruptions qualify as what Mr. Kumar has eloquently termed 'a catastrophe of some sort' which have produced such an unbelievable 'break in the musical discourse during a public performance' as described by Rathi A. Menon above, that 'the public, at such times, looks on, unbelieving.' At the 1997 festival, there were ample such occasions for the audience to look on, unbelieving. Bawra describes one such occasion when one of the grandsons of Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan was singing:

In the midst of this at 8-25 the Chief Minister Shri Prakash Singh Badal and Bibi Jaagir Kaur arrived in the pandal. Khan Saheb had barely sung the *sthaayi* of Bulle Shah's kaafi "saanwal mod muhaaran" that the singing had to stop because Mr. Badal had to reach somewhere else.<sup>35</sup>

Rathi A. Menon, given her objective position as an outsider to Jalandhar describes in far greater detail some of the more ignominious of these interruptions was made in the midst of Ustad Rashid Khan's recital:

..as they (audience) got ready to hear Rashid Khan, who has been called the future of vocal music by Bhimsen Joshi, they had to hear a long, literary speech by B.K. Srivastav, the chairman of the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha. Not only did it spoil the spirited mood, but his intervention in the last part of Rashid's concert left a bad taste in the minds of both the artiste and his listeners.

The organisers also did not think it right for the artist to wind up the Sammelan as the great maestro AMjad Ali Khan had already arrived at the venue. That meant Rashid had to vacate the dais with unpleasant memories of participating in the country's oldest sangeet sammelan.<sup>36</sup>

This makes for some rather remarkable situations, adding to the drama, as it were, of eminent musicians sparring with political bigwigs, as is evident from the following instances reported in *The Jalandhar Newslines* for the 1998 festival:

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<sup>34</sup> Rathi A. Menon, 'Discordant Notes', *The Indian Express*, January 5, 1997, quoted in Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, pp.209-210.

<sup>35</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.212.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.220. Originally appeared in *The Indian Express*, Chandigarh, December 30, 1997. B.K. Srivastava, whom Menon mentions as the chairman of the Sangeet Mahasabha, was actually I.A.S. Commissioner, Jalandhar. See Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.100.

VIPs play Spoilsport

VIP visits marred the three day-long 123<sup>rd</sup> annual Baba Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan that concluded here on December 28. The tight security arrangements made ministers and the flurry that marked their arrival in the middle of musical performances upset many a music lover. *This year, the sammelan seemed more of an official affair with heavy police bandobast.* Visitors were frisked thoroughly before being allowed entry. Cameramen rushing to click VVIPs and the chaos that marked their reception was irritating not only for musicians but for audience as well.

Khurana snubbed

There was a showdown of sorts when Debu Choudhary, a renowned artist of Senia Gharana, who was performing with his son, was told to cut short his composition as Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister Madan Lal Khurana had to catch a train. *Debu stopped for a moment, but only to express his anguish at this "indecenty."* He told Khurana in no uncertain terms that he could leave if he wanted, but he (Debu) was not going to condense his recital. *The audience reacted with a thunderous applause, much to the chagrin of the honorable minister.* Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Prem Kumar Dhumal added a new dimension to the sammelan by dwelling on the introduction to Saraswati Vandana in schools. His speech seemed more like a propaganda.<sup>37</sup>

The most important sentence here is the one noting the audience's disapproval of the VIP's antics. Recording the same visit, and mentioning how the VIP arrived much later than the official launch of the festival, Bawra notes,

While the alaap on the sitar was in progress, the Chief Guest Shri Madan Lal Khurana and Shri Prem Kumar Dhumal also arrived. *The constant getting up and sitting down of those welcoming the guests, facilitating them and wanting photos with them defiled the peaceful atmosphere.*<sup>38</sup>

In 1999, Bawra again makes as strong an indictment as the one above, lamenting the fact that this routine interruption of musicians by photographers and politicians is in danger of becoming a new tradition in itself:

Stopping the artiste in the middle, and inviting a certain leader or chief guest on the stage, requesting him to say a few words, and in the end forcing him to announce an amount in aid of the festival, is fast becoming a new tradition in itself.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> *Jalandhar Newslite*, Friday January 1, 1999 reporting about the events of 26<sup>th</sup> December 1998, quoted in Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.91. Emphases added.

<sup>38</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p. 89, for 26 December, 1998. Emphases added.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p.104.

For a few moments, there arose *a wall of photographers between the singers and the listeners.*

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A similar instance occurs some 3 years later, as evident in the following report:

The organizers made a mistake by stopping them (Shankar bandhu-the shehnai players) as they had taken off. A VIP had to be introduced and honoured. They even wanted to present another Raag. *Scant respect was shown for the sanctity of a musician time and again.....*<sup>41</sup>

A report in *The Tribune* for the 2000 festival notes some rather 'blasphemous' acts committed by the VIP and his entourage:

...the special treatment by the organizers to VIPs who were *allowed to take their cars on the "parikrama" of the temple irked the crowd. Some of the VIPs even placed their shoes near the Samadhi of Baba Harballabh.* The vehicles, including the car of Gen. (V.P.) Malik (ex-Army Chief and chief guest for the 1999 Harballabh) was allowed to be parked on the "parikrama", along with the Baba's *samadhi*. Securitymen, belonging to the Punjab police and that of the military police, accompanying him entered the main "pandal" with their shoes on.<sup>42</sup>

It is clear how Malik and his cohorts commit the ultimate blasphemy by disregarding the purity/pollution norms that govern the sacred site of the pandal. Despite the frustration that marks the range of complaints listed above, the necessity of the VIP taking the stage cannot be fundamentally questioned, primarily due to the need for funds. This is in marked contrast to the earlier period under Mr. Ashwini Kumar's patronage, when VIP would 'grace' the festival with their presence both figuratively and literally-their speeches occurring not in the midst of a recital. In other words, music was not sacrificed at the altar of the ritual of honouring official representatives. It goes without saying that the twin reason for this could be, firstly, the increasing paucity of time, and secondly an increasing reliance also on state sources for funding, given that performance fees for artistes touched a new high during this post-Sixth Plan (1981) phase. This is also evident in the gradual increase in the amount donated by government bodies between the time frame 1979-2011. (See Annexure<sup>43</sup>) The shift

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<sup>40</sup> Ibid., p.106., 26 December 1999.

<sup>41</sup> *The Times of India*—Sunday Dec. 29, 2002. Quoted in Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p.91. Emphases added.

<sup>42</sup> Varinder Singh, "Life-time award for Krishan Maharaj", *The Tribune*, December. 31, 2000. Emphases added.

<sup>43</sup> Most of the funds were received for the construction of Harballabh Bhawan which came up as a functional building as late as 2010, and the more recent ones for 'Harballabh Academy' which are yet to materialize. See Annexure IV below. Despite this, however, funds remain on paper and the Bhawan still stands incomplete, see Figure 7.

in the *pace* of time of the festival, has been well captured in Bawra's discussion on 'The Difference between Past and Present', already quoted in the full for the section on 'the space of performance' on p.7 above.

However, along with this financial exigency, there is another reason why the speech ritual interrupting the music, as succinctly mentioned in the quote by Bawra above, cannot be revoked. It is an aspect of the organization of the festival and comprises an inherent feature that the Mela as an event that enjoys public participation and has an important hold over the cultural life of Jalandhar, particularly in the ways in which the patronage and flow of funds of the festival functions.

To use a cliché, the arbitrarily-timed speech of the VIP becomes almost written into the DNA of the festival as it functions today: the price which the organizers, performers and audience pay for disbursing the much needed funds to invite "big names" from across India to the festival. Hence, even the generous criticism that Dr. Bawra lavishes on the increasing interference caused by the VIPs, is tactfully tempered by a realization of the importance of ritual, when it comes to presenting a copy of his work on the festival, *Harivallabh Darshan* to these same much-maligned VIPs. The following statement which bears this out recurs often:

Shri B. K. Srivastava I.A.S. Commissioner, Jalandhar and Shri J.S. Bir, D.C. Patiala were presented copies of the book *Harivallabh Darshan* by Dr. Jogindra Singh Bawra and several musicians were presented with this book by the Sabha.<sup>44</sup>

All artistes were facilitated with a shawl, a copy of while some were presented with a copy of Bhagavad Gita.<sup>45</sup>

Thus, the insistence with which VIPs of all shades turn up to make speeches at the Harballabh, with an aim of making an explicit association with this ancient classical music festival, as well as the necessity Dr. Bawra exhibits in presenting his book to all these VIPs shows us how these rituals reflect larger socio-economic realities instead of merely being empty felicitatory gestures. Also interesting is the fact that a religious Hindu book is deemed appropriate to be gifted to some officials, something which would never have occurred in Mr. Ashwini Kumar's phase, when the festival was consistently organised in a tenor above the exhibition of religious partisanship.

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<sup>44</sup> Bawra 2003, p.100.

<sup>45</sup> Bawra 2003, p.153.

These rituals become a crucial part of the image and self-importance of the Sangeet Sammelan and the organisers of the same, to boast to the people of Jalandhar at large, their power because of their links with those who wield it. This is especially so in the context of the tiff with the temple authorities, mentioned above (see p.10 above quoting Purnima Beri); whereas the ritual and pageantry at the temple is a daily thing, the 3 days in December provide the main opportunity to portray to the public in Jalandhar the sanctified and special event the Harballabh is. The reason this ritualisation of the dignitary's speech occurs is because the Harballabh becomes one of those few respectable annual cultural events of the city where all local dignitaries *have* to make their presence felt.

The description of each of these aspects in the given sources is undergirded with a lament for a purer, more pristine past, vaguely defined, romantically imagined and monolithically constructed, while observing the paradoxes and contradictions of organising, performing and consuming a classical festival in a world beset with rapid socio-economic change.

The agonies of hearing a formal speech as opposed to enjoying music balance themselves out when the state functionary promises a hefty amount to the running of the festival. Rarely is it that Bawra finds a VIP who prioritises the musical function of the Harballabh stage, as opposed to appropriating that space for banal self-aggrandisement. Ultimately, the most winsome and emotionally charged praise is reserved for that rare chief guest, who goes ahead and restores the sacrality of the priority reserved for music, rather than making propaganda-like speeches:

In between this singing, Higher Education Minister, Punjab, Master Mohan Lal arrived. When he climbed the stage, he forgot that he is a Minister and *he touched the feet of 'Ajay' with a lot of veneration and exhibited his love of the art as also his humble regard.* I have been listening and watching this Sammelan since many years, and witnessed such humility on behalf of a politician for the very first time. *In his small speech he declared the bhangra-esque culture as one that increases tension and Indian culture as one that provides succour as well as one that removes many diseases.* When he came back and took his seat, I could not resist commending his humility.<sup>46</sup>

The interesting formulation of Master Mohan Lal, wherein he draws a stark distinction between the angst-causing 'bhagravaadi' folk culture (by implication a

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<sup>46</sup> For the 30 December 2001 festival, Bawra 2003, p. 138. Emphases Added.

'low' civilization of the Punjab) as opposed to the more civilized and succour-providing "bharatiya" tradition functions to show us how the Harballabh is yet again understood as a fundamental exception to Punjab culture. Given that he was Education Minister when making the statement, this hints at a potential avenue of research into the cultural policy of the Punjab state and how the dominant stereotype of its culture was reaffirmed and reformulated in its specific experience of being patron to the Harballabh.

The ritual of honouring the VIP is also played out at the humbler level of the music competition that precedes the 3 day main festival as well. Only difference is that here it is a lower rung of dignitaries, such as music school/college Principals and otherwise unassuming veteran musicians and music lovers, to stand centre-stage, away from the world of the speech-spouting, ignorant VIP.<sup>47</sup> Just how central the festival is as a site to affirm different identities for the many myriad inhabitants of Jalandhar, particularly the identity of "Hindu" and "Indian", is dealt with in the next section.

### ***Hindu Nationalist Associations with the Harballabh***

The telling of the past of the Harballabh and its origins during this time reflects a longer-term trend of seeing classical music as co-terminous with a Hindu essence, a result of the modernization projects of classical music undertaken by V.D. Paluskar and V.N. Bhatkhande in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>48</sup> I wish to examine how such recountings of the past (of the Harballabh and music in the Punjab) during this period establish a symbolic universe of meaning within which the Harballabh comes to be understood by Jalandhar residents and music-lovers during this time, and how this reflects larger trends about the constitution of social meaning as per the quote of Williams above. Such a meaning (the past and purity of music as being organically linked with Hinduism) is firmly established only when the past is written, thought about and informed by presentist concerns. To begin with, a particularly representative example from *The Tribune* for the year 2000, the story of the hallowed origins of the festival and definitions of classical music are irredeemably linked with sacral references to Hindu deities:

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<sup>47</sup> Pt. Ramakant interview—the music competition is where the old atmosphere of musical camaraderie and bonhomie, with musicians conversing and reveling in musical treasures prevails today.

<sup>48</sup> See Bakhle 2005.



The three-day annual Baba Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan took off today with an invocation of Goddess Saraswati and Lord Ganesha by way of a “yajna” on the Devi Talab temple lawns. Keeping with the age-old tradition, a “puja” was organized to seek the blessings of Goddess Saraswati *since* the function relates to the *purest* form of music, known as classical music, held at a place associated with Baba Harballabh who derived his musical prowess from the Goddess in the 19th century.<sup>49</sup>

The ingenious second sentence in the above quotation (which invokes many other similar statements across newspapers) presents a seamless welding of past and present in an unmistakably Hindu idiom. The rationalization offered for the ritual of *hawan*, links it to a trope of the purity of the music performed, thereby assigning classical music a strongly sacred character. While I do not critique a sacrality being assigned to music *per se*, given the strong links between sacrality and music in India (the themes this opens up is beyond the scope of this thesis), in this case, a clear sequential link is established between doing the “yajna” and “puja”, in order to establish the purity of music. Further, in the above description, the founder of the festival, Baba Harballabh, functions merely as a symbol who lends the festival with the stature of an enterprise blessed by the Goddess. All of this presents a picture of the Harballabh peculiarly harmonious with the present location of that festival in the vast Devi Talab temple grounds, underscoring the predominance of the latter. In short, the music is seen to be pure, in a particular way, *because* it is located on hallowed temple grounds.<sup>50</sup> Moving onto an example of writing about the festival from Bawra, the tone of invocation we encountered in the above passage about music in general is echoed this time emphasizing the Hindu sacrality of the Harballabh grounds:

On one side Mother Bhagwati, on the other Mahakaali, and in the third direction, the Samadhi site of Baba Harivallabh. With the meeting of these three emerged the form of the Goddess of music, art and knowledge, Maa Saraswati.<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan begins”, *The Tribune*, December 29, 2000, p.20. Emphases added.

<sup>50</sup> Such an understanding ignores the fact that the building of the temple took place as late as the 1970s, after a delegation of Jalandhar residents pleaded with the Chairman and Trustee of Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan grounds, Shri Ashwini Kumar, for land allotment and permission to build the temple.

<sup>51</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p. 88 for 26 December, 1998. For Bawra, then, music had a glorious past and Punjab occupies pride of place in the Vedic origins of Indian music, which identifies with “Hindu” music. His comments on the place of Punjab within the larger Indian nation and the cultural heritage of the Punjab have been discussed in chapter 1.

Given the immediate space-time contingencies of the period under study, statements like the above, filled with a great symbolic charge, communicate meanings about the festival that associate it with a recognized and grand site of Jalandhar's ancient Hindu culture, reflecting the nationalist urgings of the times in general.

The meaning the festival has in these times, therefore changes, apart from the fact that a high profile battery of BJP officials such as Madan Lal Khurana, Prem Kumar Dhumal visit the festival with a need to establish the connection with the crowds at the Harballabh as an exercise in keeping with their image as self-appointed protectors of Hindu culture.<sup>52</sup>

The short Kargil war fought with Pakistan in 1999 became another occasion wherein the festival came handy as a vehicle to express strong commitments to nationalism by the organizers of the festival—primarily upper caste, middle class and industrialist groups of Jalandhar.

Thus, the first of the 3 days of the 1999 sammelan (24 to 26 December, 1999—also a time when the IC 814 was hijacked by terrorists—something mentioned by Bawra while recounting these days; leading to a high pitch of nationalist fervor) was marked as a commemoration of the Kargil soldier-martyrs:

The Sangit Sabha of today *was offered to the martyrs of Kargil*. Shri K. Dawar, Lt. General lit the lamp.<sup>53</sup>

This is a line that is repeated almost verbatim once again, while concluding a recording of the day's highlights, signifying the importance this held for Bawra. The following comments of Bawra represent the zenith of his prose in expressing a militant nationalism within a Hindu idiom:

*If Lakshmi has to move forward in the direction of progress and Saraswati has to move towards the rise of knowledge, it (they) requires the sword-arm of Durga*. In this context and keeping this feeling foremost, today, the Shri Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan, famously regarded as the Kumbh Mela of

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<sup>52</sup> See the newsreport above the visit of Khurana and Dhumal, and how the artiste and audience combined to snub the elaborate 'standing on ceremony'.

<sup>53</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p. 101. Emphases added. This is a line that is repeated almost verbatim once again, while concluding a recording of the day's highlights, signifying the importance this holds for Bawra, and more importantly the audience.

Classical Music, *was dedicated to the nation's brave soldiers*. In the Sarmelan, where on one side the shining star from the world of music Pt. Kishan Maharaj participated and illuminated the Sarmelan, on the other the pride of the Indian army and Former Army Chief General V. P. Mallik...was present in the form of the Chief Guest.<sup>54</sup>

Other reports of actual instances from the festival bear this out. For example, referring to the famed table player Pt. Kishan Maharaj, Varinder Singh of *The Tribune* tells us that,

The audience burst into cheers when Pt. Krishan Maharaj welcomed the Chief Guest, former Army Chief, Gen V.P. Malik, by making his instrument 'speak out' (the) "top ka gola", a typical and difficult "toda" and saying that: "top ka gola dushman phenkte hain, par yeh ek dost ki taraf se aa raha hai."<sup>55</sup>

This anecdote recalls the audience's passionate enthusiasm around 1965 for the war-hero General J.S. Dhillon already encountered in Chapter 2 above.<sup>56</sup> Important in Pt. Kishan Maharaj's gesture is the fact that the otherwise prevalent opposition between VIP versus artistes and audience breaks with a strong resonance.<sup>57</sup> However, this can only happen on the rare occasion of welcoming a chief guest who enjoys popular regard as the leader of the nation's armed forces in a time of heightened nationalism and anti-Pakistan feeling—which works as a unifying factor. "Dushman" or enemy otherwise, in this curiously interesting context, war works to transform the much maligned figure of the speech-spouting VIP (with his characteristic disregard for the priority and norms of the music festival) into a "dost"<sup>58</sup>. Pt. Kishan Maharaj's comments come out in the ultimate analysis, as a blessing of the elder for the triumphal son, reaffirming a macho male martiality. The centrality assigned to Kargil

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.117. For the festival on 29 December, 2000. Emphases added.

<sup>55</sup> Varinder Singh, "Life-time award for Krishna Maharaj", Tribune News Service (*The Tribune*, Dec. 31, 2000). For more on the audience, see last section, pp. 25-27.

<sup>56</sup> See p.137.

<sup>57</sup> These 6 years are marked with an increasing interference of VIPs spouting speeches ignorantly, in an attempt to gain publicity and popularity at this one major and historic event in the life of Jalandhar City.

martyrs and frequent use of war metaphors at the festival exposes a contemporary re-working of the ways in which Punjab is seen as a land of the “martial race” of Sikhs.<sup>59</sup>

Notwithstanding the intimacy between nationalism and the festival detailed above, which corresponded to a post-Kargil and post-IC 814 hijack context, in 1997, we find an heartening and illuminating scene when Pakistani artiste Ustad Shafqat Ali received a warm response from the audience:

Ustad Shafqat Ali, son of the late Salamat Ali Khan of Punjab's Sham Chaurasi gharana...took part after 30 years. He held the audience spell-bound with Raga Marwa. Audience roses (sic) from the seats to give a thunderous applause to the maestro. People urged the managers of the sammelan to give more time to the Ustad.<sup>60</sup>

Such anecdotes also abound aplenty in accounts of the Harballabh, and urge us to be careful when applying broad and generalising arguments to its history, especially as we do in this chapter. Such contradictions are indeed what reaffirm music's role as subversive to conventional socio-political norms, and as containing the potential for building bridges.<sup>61</sup>

### ***The Devi Talab Mandir Committee versus the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha***

“Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is in fact the process of community: the sharing of common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to tensions and achievements of growth and change.”

-Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution*<sup>62</sup>

Keeping in mind the above considerations of Raymond Williams, in this section I examine part of the extensive ‘communications’ of Dr. Joginder Singh Bawra which pertain to the most significant development these times for the music festival, viz., the behind-the-scenes tussle between the Sangeet Mahasabha with Devi Talab Temple Committee. During this period there was increasing pressure from the temple

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<sup>59</sup> See R. Mazumder, *The Indian Army and the Making of Punjab*, New Delhi: Permanent Black, 2003, pp. 15-19.

<sup>60</sup> “Patiala gharana steals the show”, *The Tribune*, Tuesday, December 30, 1997, p.4.

<sup>61</sup> One of the best examples for this, in a context remarkably similar to the Indo-Pak one, is the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim and co-founded by Edward Said, to bring together West Asians in the cause of music. See Said *op.cit.*, pp.259-64.

<sup>62</sup> R. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, Chatto and Windus, London, 1961. p.55. Quoted in S. Hall, “Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms”, in Dirks, Eley and Ortner (eds.) *Culture/Power/History- A Reader in Contemporary Social Theory*, Princeton University Press, 1994, pp. 522-23.

authorities to expand and make the temple the centre of the complex, even if this amounted to encroachment of the space belonging to the Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha.

The temple came up much later, and thanks to the benevolence of the Sangeet Mahasabha, in whose name the entire area of 130 acres of land was leased to Doaba College, Labbu Ram Doaba School and Devi Talab Mandir on lease for 99 years. However, less than 3 decades after the temple has come up, the tables have turned very clearly, the temple authorities now being in control and the Sangeet Mahasabha being at the former's mercy, as is evident in the following example from 1998:

The spot which the Devi Talab temple committee had agreed to give for the construction of the (Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha) Bhawan, and on which the Punjab Governor Lt. Col. Retd. Sh. B.K.N. Chhiber had even *laid the foundation stone the previous year* (i.e. in 1997), *was changed and they wished to give another plot for the Bhawan. On the original spot, a vast Kailash mountain can be seen to be in construction.* The Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha has collected enough funds to build a bhawan, but God alone knows when the scheme to build it will be operationalised. It is also possible that the Devi Talab Temple committee begins yet another construction project. So then what will happen? This is an issue worth pondering upon.<sup>63</sup>

Truly an issue worth pondering upon; for two years later in 2000, the conflict becomes publicly visible:

Addressing a press conference...today, the Shri Baba Harballabh Mahasabha General Secretary Smt. Purnima Beri exposed the functioning of the mandir committee chairperson and general secretary and said that *both the officials had tried to break Hindu society in the name of celebrating sacred Hindu festivals in the previous year.* They had tried to vilify the glory and prestige of that illuminating pillar of Jalandhar's cultural heritage. The leaders of the Mahasabha said that the land of the Devi Talab Mandir is an immovable property of the Baba Harballabh trust.<sup>64</sup>

The above paragraph, though superficially reporting a conflict and head-on collision between representatives of the Sangeet Mahasabha and those of the Devi Talab Mandir Committee, in reality portrays the reasons behind the repeated defeats suffered by the former at the hands of the latter. Therefore, when Mrs. Purnima Beri

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<sup>63</sup> Bawra, *Harivallabh Darpan*, p. 99. The meeting in which this was discussed happened on 9<sup>th</sup> November, 1998. Emphases added. See Figure 4 below, p.166.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111. Emphases added.

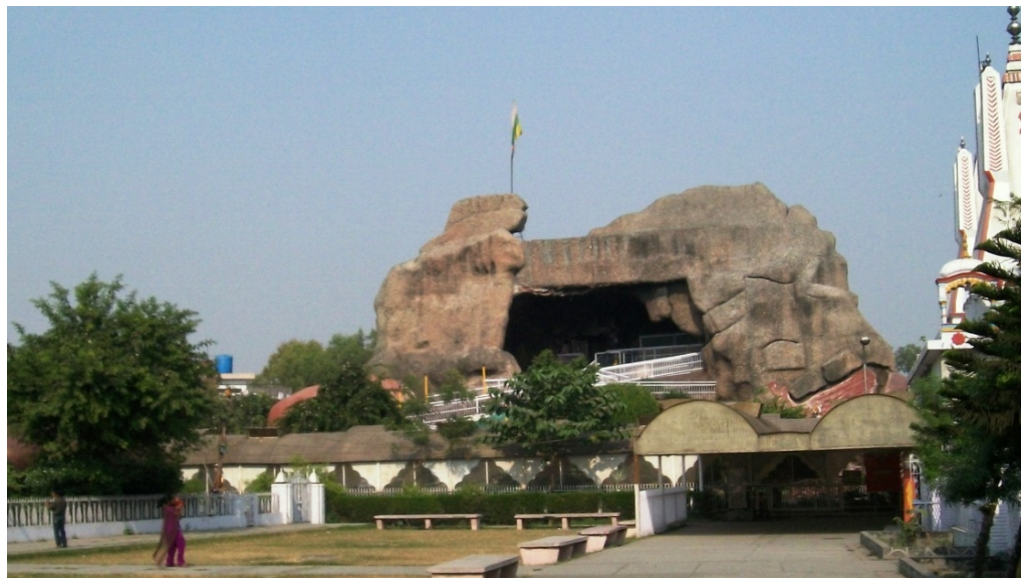
of the Sangeet Mahasabha accuses the Mandir Committee of “breaking up the Hindus”, her tone implies an erstwhile concord between the two warring bodies as there is a visible element of outrage at the audacity of the temple authorities. Beri is outraged because she cannot fathom how it is that the members of the Mandir Committee, many of whom have equally strong links with the Harballabh Festival, could disregard what for her and other Sangeet Mahasabha members is the centrality of the Harballabh as a site of crucial importance for Hindus. The most cutting judgement which Beri can make for the encroachment and colonisation spearheaded by the Mandir Committee is in terms of their vilification of ‘the glory and prestige of that illuminating pillar of Jalandhar’s cultural heritage’ which is the Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan. Hence, while Beri begins her argument in the interests of ‘Hinduism’, she effortlessly glides from “Hindu society” to “Jalandhar’s cultural heritage” in referring to the place and function of the Harballabh. In other words, the above paragraph proclaims how this music festival—supposedly pure and above social and political pulls— becomes a hallmark of a specifically Hindu cultural artefact even in the minds of its main patrons and organizers. For the first time, however, this intimacy between the temple and the music festival now proves too close for the comfort of the latter, and we come across such statements of outrage as the above. What is unsettling is the fact that ‘culture’ is again understood as a synonym for ‘Hindu society’, which was in tune with the larger trend unfolding across India, where all aspects of Indian society, politics and culture, were being explicitly

defined as 'essentially' Hindu, by the BJP-ruled NDA alliance.



**Figure 4**

The laying of the foundation stone for the Harballabh Bhawan by the Governor of the Punjab in December 1997. *Photo Courtesy: K. Shastri, Trigartpradesh Jalandhar*, reproduced with kind permission of the author.



**Figure 5**

The Amarnath cave which was built on the above spot by the Devi Talab Mandir Committee.

The temple authorities continue with their plans and move on to capture a second spot as well:

*It was learnt that the Devi Talab Committee was planning to capture the second spot as well on which the bhawan is to be made. Shri Ashwini Kumar (Chairperson) had written an invitation to Shri Amrit Pal Sehgal to the meeting as well... Neither did he arrive, nor did any of his colleagues join in the meeting...At the meeting...held under the leadership of... Ashwini Kumar, members of the Sabha expressed agreement on the fact that the land given (to the temple) on lease has had work done on it in such an advanced stage that it is not possible to build further on it in the future.<sup>65</sup>*

What we witness here is how a newly assertive temple committee, insensitively usurps land assigned for a Bhawan for the Music Sannmelan, riding roughshod over preceding contracts, in total disregard of the musical and cultural mandate of the music mahasabha, the original owners of the land. While such an usurpation could have occurred at any other time of the history of the temple and the music mahasabha, the ease with which the temple forces registered their victory emphasizes for us the centrality of this particular time-period, marked by a highly aggressive form of Hinduism asserting itself throughout India, and a national milieu which provided the temple authorities with the requisite belligerence for such a blatant encroachment. And it is this temporal context which also accounts for the meek acceptance, on the whole, by the music mahasabha, of this usurpation—whether in terms of an inability to garner enough funds, or the lack of the political will to stall the encroachment of land meant for the Harballabh *Bhavan*. This contest reveals for us the centrality of the temple and the power wielded by the newly emerging temple orthodoxy reflecting how incidental music and performance is to the entire spatial geography of the site.

The other interesting feature of note here is how the first spot of land is converted into a mountain cave, exposing the need to have an amusement park-like structure, in keeping with the tying in of certain modes of entertainment with religion that was a hallmark of these times. It is important for the Devi Talab, as one of the largest temples of Jalandhar (and indeed in north India), with an ancient, legendary lineage (linking it with the Shakti peeths and Amarnath) to function as a powerful symbol of a resurgent Hindu middle class by establishing an elaborate iconography of a

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 112. Emphases added.



reconstructed Amarnath mountain cave with its paraphernalia of demons and gods in all their colourful glory (See Figure 6, p.169).

Perhaps one can argue that the need of the newly assertive Hindu middle classes to visually and physically consume a visual iconography (that weaves together the major spots of pilgrimage of north Indian Hinduism) feeding into the great glory of the Devi Talab temple is seen as the primary function of the place. This is borne out by the relatively easy victory of the temple authorities over the Sangeet Mahasabha authorities. Thus when one enters the sprawling complex, one has to search strenuously for the spot of the Samadhi of Baba Harballabh and the concert grounds, something that doesn't hold true for the obviously prominent Devi Talab itself and the huge mountain cave.<sup>66</sup>



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<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, the official website of Jalandhar also lists the Devi Talab as its number one spot of note for visiting for tourists and amongst the two photos of the grounds included, the larger and dominating one is of the amusement park-like mountain cave with vivid larger than life-statues of deities. See <http://jalandhar.nic.in/html/tourism.htm>. As opposed to this, the old Imam Nasir site, almost 900 years old finds only cursory mention, not having a full-fledged note on the importance of the site, despite the fact that it was apparently built on the site of the shrine of Jalandhar Nath Yogi, who lends his name to the city. Accessed on 14th November 2011, 17:41 pm. The 'Mata ka Mandir' at New Friends Colony mentioned above also has a cave resembling the one at Vaishno Devi, thus it illuminates for us a broader tendency.



**Figure 6**

The second spot which was earmarked for the Harballabh Bhavan, converted into yet another holy mountain. Mr. Ashwini Kumar had noted at a meeting of the Harballabh Sangeet Mahsabha that on this second spot work had been 'in such an advanced stage that it is not possible to build further on it in the future.' Note the amusement-park like nature of the construction.

These connections between a new ethic of consumption heralded by the increased capitalism through the economic reforms of 1991 and a revived Hindu worldview have been studied by many scholars. We briefly noted Arvind Rajagopal's work *Politics After Television* above which made a similar argument in the realm of media and visual culture. Lise McKeane has similarly studied neo-Hindu gurus who are modernizing elements of Hindu worldview to serve as ideology of the new, globalized business classes.<sup>67</sup> Therefore, the lasting victory of the Mandir Committee could occur only during this time when a re-defined space at the Devi Talab was warranted by larger socio-economic changes that equally implicated members of both the Mandir Committee as also the Sangeet Mahasabha. From being owners, they have become guests at the temple precinct. Indeed, as late as July 2012, the Harballabh Bhawan remains incomplete, conspicuous by its bare and cement-laced grey façade

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<sup>67</sup> L. McKeane, *Divine Enterprise: Gurus and the Hindu Nationalist Movement*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1996. Quoted in M. Nanda, 'A Case for Indian Enlightenment', *Breaking the Spell of Dharma and other essays*, Gurgaon: Three Essays Collective, 2007, p.135.

(see Figure ), in a complex populated with colourful and glitzy temples-both big and small (see Figure).<sup>68</sup>

In conclusion, the phase 1989-2003 in the history of the nation had a deep impact on the Harballabh, in the way its past was imagined and the performance and consumption of its music arranged. It has been argued here that it was during this phase that the element of music was relegated most to the background, when compared to previous epochs. Rather, the organisation of this music festival became a site for the extra-musical, for affirmations of an ascendant and prosperous Hindu identity, the affirmation of a 'traditionally-rich' militant nation, and the one space reserved for the most rigorous competition for young Punjabi musicians. Further, the kind of writing and communication—written, oral and visual— *about* the various aspects of the festival: the kind of music played, its history, the physical site of its location, all combined to have a close correspondence with the social realm, and

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<sup>68</sup> For the current stalemate in funding from the Punjab Government due to which the Harballabh Bhawan remains incomplete, see Aparna Banerji, 'Samiti's lax attitude taking a toll on Harivallabh Academy: Five years on, the academy building still awaits completion', *The Tribune*, Chandigarh, November 12, 2011. See <http://www.tribuneindia.com/2011/20111113/jaltrib.htm#8>, accessed on 15th July, 2012, 17:09 pm.



**Figure 7**

*Left:* The limited grounds on which the Harballabh festival takes place today, almost resembling a park in one of the residential colonies of present-day Jalandhar.

*Right:* The long-anticipated Harballabh Bhawan, on the Devi Talab grounds, envisioned as early as 1937 by Lala Prithvi Raj Thapar who had pointed out that “funds were necessary for the materialisation of a proposal for the construction of a spacious hall with a gallery fitted with electric installations and loud speakers etc. for the future sessions of the conference.”<sup>69</sup> It today stands incomplete, in the same condition in which it was when first built in 2010, with no funds for its completion; in marked contrast with the new ornate constructions that are apace for an even grander entrance to the Devi Talab temple, as seen in Figure 3 above on p.145.

<sup>69</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Friday, December 31, 1937, p. 7.

questions of community identity. This was reflected most starkly, in the way in which the on-the-ground conflict over land between the temple and music festival officials. The surprisingly easy victory of the former reveals an underlying consensus between the two sets of opponents over, to quote Raymond Williams, “the sharing of common activities and purposes”. As a result, the self-conscious modernity attached to organising the Harballabh in the decades after independence was subsumed under the debris of an explicit ritualism and recasting of the sacred geography of the Devi Talab in terms of a homogenous, institutionalised, exclusive Hinduism as embodied in the temple.

Importantly, this chapter also maps the impact of the new boom in the broadcasting and mass communication sectors and also digitization of music related recording technologies on the character and quality of the festival. Hence in this phase, the festival has become artefact alone, substance being largely relegated to the realm of history, heritage and tradition. Instead of taking pause and making use of the swelling numbers of young people interested in classical music by having a democratic membership procedure, the organisers of the Sannelan seem bent upon casting the festival in the light of the properly managed, hush-hush elite gatherings of classical music in Delhi and elsewhere. Not for them the ‘rowdy’ crowds of 1937, or yet worse, even the Home Guards volunteers of 1952 from the days of Ashwini Kumar. A mela which began in a spirit of ‘celebration and commemoration’ has now ‘harden(ed) into routine and... unashamed touristic promotion’ marked with an alarming ‘degree of alienating opulence and reactionary as well as pointless display.’<sup>70</sup> Caught between the official conception of the classical, alienated from the very vibrant origins of this exceptional mela kept alive by them, the Harballabh today struggles to find a toehold in a milieu increasingly dominated by norms of spectacle, music of the moment and the stifling horror of the reality show.

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<sup>70</sup> Said, *op.cit.*, p. 149 and p.155. These words of Edward Said for music festivals in the West are also apt for the Harballabh. The focus at the Harballabh in recent years has shifted from content to display according to many long-time listeners. One listener who comes all the way from Udaipur said for the 2011 sammelan that ‘as the numbers coming to the Harballabh have decreased, so proportionately have the glossiness of the souvenirs, and the grandeur of the stage increased.’ I thank Eric Maier for sharing this anecdote with me.

### *Conclusion*

In this thesis, I have looked at a music festival whose identity is today strictly grounded in the classical, from the different temporal vantage points of its history. This has been undertaken via a narrative unfolding through time. The whole purpose of writing this narrative was to understand how and why certain meanings, designated as ‘common sense’ became so intimately connected with the Harballabh. Rather than supposing an organic link between these meanings and the Harballabh, or taking them for granted (as has been done by most accounts of the festival), I have worked to understand, in the words of John Storey, ‘why particular meanings get regularly constructed around particular cultural practices and thereby achieve the status of ‘common sense,’ acquire a certain taken-for-granted quality?’<sup>1</sup> In thus attempting to understand the origins of these common sense views around the Harballabh, I have located that institution in its historical context, across the three chapters, with the following major shifts.

The first chapter mapped the change from a late nineteenth century fluid, regional *mela* of the Punjab to a music festival patronised by the educated elites of Jalandhar, and influenced by the newly emerging norms of performance at Lahore. In this formative phase of the festival, a more regional and fluid *mela* became acquainted with the soon-to-be-canonical classical music. Newspaper reports from *The Tribune* and oral memories were mined in equal measure to be able to approximately access the world of music in early 20<sup>th</sup> century Punjab. This revealed how the imperative of modernity and the national, which was establishing itself in a major way in the lives and hopes of the Punjabi elites more generally, redefined the world of music itself, making it more ‘appropriate’ and ‘respectable’ for a new middle class that modernised itself in the public sphere while at the same time entrenching and re-fashioning tradition in the sphere of the private. It has been eloquently argued by Partha Chatterjee<sup>2</sup> that this was a larger tendency for colonial India. However, the story of music as highlighted through the course of this thesis does not fall into the rather neat ‘public vs. private’ distinction which is the foundation of Chatterjee’s analysis. I would rather argue that music was one of those few practices which stood at the cusp

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<sup>1</sup> John Storey, *Inventing Popular Culture: From Folklore to Globalization*, Blackwell Publishing, UK: 2003, p.52.

<sup>2</sup> P. Chatterjee, *The Nation and its Fragments: Colonial and Post-Colonial Histories*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993.

of the public and the private, and was used powerfully to transform both. The world of music was peculiarly apt as a vehicle for this twin transformation—traditional enough for the pursuits of the domesticated housewife and modern enough for musical soirees to be termed ‘conferences’.<sup>3</sup> This agenda of a modernisation of tradition inaugurated by Punjab elites found a reverberating echo in the mission for Indian music which Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, who first tasted success in the heart of the middle class Punjabi dispensation at Lahore. Such aspirations on the part of the Jalandhar elite, combined with Paluskar’s momentous visits to the Harballabh combined to introduce a new disciplined ethic of performance at the Harballabh, evident in the notices issued by the Sangeet Mahasabha which was formed at the height of the Indian National Movement.

This shift in the space of performance was simultaneous with a parallel shift in the content of music performed here. In terms of the more sublime or avowedly ‘classical’ genres, dhrupad, which enjoyed a wide following throughout the Punjab, with a considerable number of practitioners, was slowly being ousted by khyal, the genre foremost in Paluskar’s agenda. Further, many varieties of music performed here such as sufi kaafiyān, debi ki bhentan and other popular folk genres were also slowly being sidelined. Thus, an eclectic form of music was performed and consumed by an equally eclectic group of Punjabis began to shift towards a more rigidly fixed musical sitting focussing on the formalised classical music of a sanitised high tradition as upheld by Paluskar and his cohorts, which attracted musicians from beyond the Punjab as well. These musicians from outside the Punjab were very often however also feted and invited by the organisers in Jalandhar themselves, a feature that was definitive of the Harballabh from then on.

The second chapter delineated the way in which the Harballabh became the modernised festival of classical music ‘proper’ under the indefatigable tutelage of Mr. Ashwini Kumar and supported, at least verbally, by a sympathetic Nehruvian state setup. It focussed on how classical music was *officially* defined as the high tradition of the country requiring greater propagation and cultivation, and hence ruling elites openly endorsed it. This provided a very conducive atmosphere for Mr. Ashwini

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<sup>3</sup> Janaki Bakhle devotes an entire chapter to such conferences, as they were organized by the two pioneering Vishnus. Bakhle, *op.cit.* Chapter 5, ‘Music in the Public and National Conversation-Conferences, Institutions and Agendas, 1916-1928’ pp.180-214.

Kumar to revive the Harballabh from its post-partition paralysis and take it to new heights. We also saw how efforts at going beyond the pale of event-management alone and towards institution building consistently met with failure, and the reasons for the same. Further, this chapter examined the emergence of a grand, long-desired temple was finally built at the Devi Talab site in the late 1970s as also the turn to a lull in the scale of the festival during the turbulent decade which the 1980s were for the Punjab.

The third and final chapter dealt with the time period when the local was sidelined in the most thoroughgoing way yet in the history of the Harballabh. This was the logical and unfortunate culmination of a process begun in the early twentieth century, heralded by the arrival of Paluskar: the Harballabh, which began as a festival where the vibrant local musicians of the Punjab could hold forte in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, becomes by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup>, thoroughly defined by its 'national' credentials, and how the national so comfortably becomes the local. This sidelining of the local was an outcome of wider changes occurring in the Indian economy and society in the form of the economic reforms of 1991 and the simultaneous wave of an ascendant Hindutva evident since the late 1980s. While there are no overt links of the Sangeet Mahasabha with Hindutva forces, the fact that during this very time it suffered ignominious defeat at the hands of the Devi Talab Mandir Committee, in the process losing out on the land allotted for its long-dreamed of Harballabh Bhawan, reflects the fact that belligerence and aggressiveness were becoming the hallmark of a Hinduism focused on the temple. As a result, the earlier inclusive Hindu sacrality, of which Baba Harballabh was a fine example, suffered great defeat, and in the ensuing re-casting of the spatial configuration at the Devi Talab, music-making and listening became a secondary feature, almost incidental to the larger enterprise of defining the Devi Talab in terms of a temple, symbolic of a rigid, monologous and homogenous Hinduism, championed by and (arguably, crucial for) the success of Hindutva at the larger national stage.

However, the argument of this thesis has been to view developments at each successive period as incorporative of what went before and elements of the preceding phases were not all lost due to the shift in time. Elements from the immediate past in fact can be postulated to have continued in the next phase as well, within however an overall shift or thrust towards classicisation and formalisation. Thus, rather than hold



this small time frame (of 1989-2003) as responsible for the defeat of the Sangeet Mahasabha, it might be more apposite to see this as the culmination of a process heralded by the impact of the modernization of music undertaken by Bhatkhande and Paluskar, especially the latter.<sup>4</sup> This is evident in the position of the author of Harivallabh Darshan—the major source for my alternative reading of the Harballabh's history. Dr. J.S. Bawra's location professionally<sup>5</sup> as also his exclusivist view of the development of music, the organicity between Hinduism and Indian music which his account champions in his writings about the Harballabh is something that stems from a success of the agendas of Paluskar and Bhatkhande. As has been demonstrated by the first chapter, the thrusts motivating Paluskar's mission were instep with the aspirations of the newly educated middle class and upper caste Punjabi Hindu elite of the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early twentieth centuries. In the short run this accounted for the reasons behind Paluskar attaining his first flush of success in the Punjab. In the long run, it has served to almost completely obliterate the cosmopolitanism of alternate Hindu *bhakti* traditions that formed the originary core impulses of the Harballabh music festival in favour of a triumphalist, exclusivist Hinduism of more recent times.

In sum then, through the temporal watersheds reflected by the three chapters of this thesis, changes have been occurring along the three major axes. The first is the shift in the content of the music performed and encouraged at the festival. Initially, during the nineteenth century, as also upto the 1930s of the twentieth century, dhrupad was the primary classical genre of music performed, along with a plethora of folk and religious music. The predominance of dhrupad, an avowedly classical form, dating prior to khyal, in the physical space of a '*mela*' also raises serious questions about the convenient bifurcation of classical and folk music, and the conventional categorisation of classical as restricted to the elite. This is not to deny the fact that patronage to keep the festival running, did in fact flow from the elites of the Punjab. With the dramatic entry of Paluskar, this slowly shifted predominantly towards *khyal*. Indeed, some ethnomusicologists have argued that *khyal* attained its country-wide

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<sup>4</sup> It were the visits and efforts of Pt. Paluskar to the festival from 1901 onwards that brought it out of a local and regional significance and onto a stage of national importance. In the process however, the importance of regional artistes who for a variety of different reasons didn't make it big nationally were overshadowed; thereby, in oral narratives and popular memory, the early pre-Paluskar years figure as a time of insignificance due to the absence of the 'great maestros' performing there.

<sup>5</sup> Former Head of the Department of Music at Govt. College of Education, Jalandhar and Dharamshala.

prevalence only in the twentieth century, as part of the conscious modernisation and democratisation undertaken by Paluskar and Bhatkhande.

There was thus a gradual shift also in the space of performance at the festival which was historically fluid and eclectic given that Baba Harballabh began the commemorations of his guru through an impromptu musical gathering of musicians and mystics. There was a continued adherence to the ‘aesthetic of inclusion’ that befits a *mela* at least until 1924 as per the available evidence (chapter 1 p.). This aesthetic came to be increasingly compromised as the organisers began to wholeheartedly reshape the festival in the image of Paluskar’s music gatherings and other soirees characteristic of the urban space of Lahore, where classical music was consciously sequestered from other genres. Concomitant with this was the importance attached to ‘national-level’ performers of ‘all-India fame’ from outside the Punjab at the festival, a process that reached its culmination post-Independence under the leadership of Mr. Ashwini Kumar when the Harballabh became a paragon for the national at the level of the local. In other words, the Harballabh’s primary identity as a national-level festival, unexpectedly located in mofussil India crystallised only post-Independence, given the rigid disciplining of the festival that occurred with the committed revival undertaken by Mr. Ashwini Kumar in a context where Indian classical music was the blue-eyed boy of the leaders of independent India, reflected in the preferential treatment afforded it by B.V. Keskar.

In terms of the shifts in the character of the patronage itself, Bonnie Wade’s distinctions of the motivations behind patronage of music have already been discussed above in chapter 2 on p.48. As per this categorisation, the patronage of Baba Harballabh, as also the aid that the *Mela* received from the princely states of Kapurthala, Patiala and Kashmir was of a primary nature or part of a ‘direct process’ in Wade’s words, in that the ‘fostering of music’ itself was the main motivation behind patronage. On the other hand, the donations offered by the residents and elites of Jalandhar along with a handful from Amritsar may *in toto* be defined as secondary or part of an ‘indirect process’ where donations were made in the spirit of earning religious merit and social status. This does not mean that individual donors-whether laypeople or big merchants or traders-did not hold purely musical motivations for their yearly offerings for the running of the *mela*. In the absence of any concrete

evidence to link such donations to musical predilections however, one has to broadly categorise them as secondary.

As opposed to this, Mr. Ashwini Kumar's patronage of the festival needs to be defined, based on the record, as primary. Despite the fact that others in the Sangeet Mahasabha might have continued their patronage of the festival in order to 'continue tradition' or 'earn religious and social merit', a brief gleaning of the depth of his involvement in music and the primacy he attaches to the experience of performing and listening (chapter 2 p.) demonstrates the fact that for him, music has always been the main protagonist. It is this zeal that skyrocketed the Harballabh to national pre-eminence and local reverence. With Mr. Kumar retiring in 1982, a mere 7 years after a newly constructed temple on the Devi Talab grounds had changed the spatial configuration of the Harballabh grounds, the nature of patronage also ceased to be primary. Since his departure, most observers—both internal and external to the Punjab—agree that the quality of music performed and consumed at the festival has declined. This is eloquently summed up in Jalandhari author Krishnananda Shastri's book *Trigartapradesh Jalandhar* (1998) where he describes the motivations of current-day organisers in the following words, "I should remain ahead in organising etc. so my name is on everybody's lips', one gets to see this kind of trend only nowadays."<sup>6</sup>

Another very important feature of Mr. Kumar's leadership was the commitment to a secular ethos, which reversed an earlier pre-Partition trend where Paluskar's prominence at the Harballabh had begun to jeopardise its original eclectic character. This also reflected the larger Nehruvian secularism where a celebration of India's cultural heritage was consciously secular. The post-Kumar phase of the organisation and patronage of the festival is however marked by a remarkable lack of this anti-partisan flavour, with many rituals at the festival—such as gifting special guests with copies of the Bhagavad Gita in one instance, as well as the entrenchment of the Saraswati Vandana bespeaking this. Thus a more inclusive, secular space became exclusivist over time. What is visible at the Harballabh is thus a slow process in which inclusive bhakti Hindu has become a unidirectional exclusive Hindu.

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<sup>6</sup> p.139.

Yet another shift has been in the composition of the audience, where initially mystics and musicians along with rural listeners were the norm in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Listeners from beyond the Punjab began visiting the festival, one presumes from the 1920s onwards, post-the popularity it achieved thanks to Paluskar. The biggest break came with 1947 and the exodus of Jalandhar's majority Muslim population across the borders and the concomitant inflow of Hindu-Sikh refugees from West Punjab, changing the demographic profile of the city in one stroke with profound cultural implications. The long-term shift, attendant upon the erosion of the 'aesthetic of inclusion' has also been the decline in rural listeners, who earlier were a prominent part of the audience. With time, and the particularly conscientious and cultivated patina with which classical music has been packaged, urban elites have become the overwhelming majority of listeners, with the size of the pandal progressively decreasing over the last 20 years, even as the claim of the Harballabh being a pillar of tradition is amplified through an ever-more vast and ornate stage and glossier souvenirs.<sup>7</sup>

The Harballabh has thus meant different things across the various time periods of its history.

This thesis has therefore emphasised how all aspects of music-making at this festival underwent a major shift in the twentieth century; from fluidity to rigidity both in form and content, from a devotional inclusive Hindu bhakti sphere of performance to state-led concert of classical music, an asset of the nation.

By limiting itself to the organisers, patrons and musicians of today's festival, and ignoring other musical agents beyond the pale of the classical (notably the *qawwal gharanas* of Malerkotla), this dissertation has been inherently limited. Given the nature of the sources, especially the works of Bawra, who was a professor of music in Jalandhar, our view of the Harballabh has accordingly been informed by the

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<sup>7</sup> The organisers have, post-Paluskar exhibited a tilt towards an all-India representation along with a glorification of the same. Maybe this is a reflection, coterminous or attendant upon the desire of Punjab Arya Samaji Hindus to portray themselves as Hindi and not Punjabi. This can also be seen in terms of the fact that the language used for announcements is Hindi and hardly ever Punjabi. Here, keeping with the larger argument that the national is redefining the local, it can also be tentatively argued that linguistically, Punjabi offers a sense of intimacy that dissolves sense of "Hindu" and "Muslim"; as opposed to this the 'shuddhh' Hindi in which announcements are made ever year reinforces the alienation of non-Hindus.

perspective of its patrons and pedagogues, losing out on the views of the audience and the listeners. However, for future research, it is the question of the audience that needs to be posed more comprehensively so as to understand how people *made* popular culture out of their participation at the Harballabh by exploring its links with the many more performers and consumers of qawwali and popular bhajans that populate the Punjab. We further need to strengthen our understanding of the ways in which classical music and popular music came to occupy two distinct territories from the 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards in north India and how the Harballabh festival accepted this binary. Other questions that need to be taken on board in future research include comparisons of the festival with other regionally located nationally famous festivals such as the Dover Lane festival of Kollkata, the Saptak of Ahmedabad, the Sawai Gandharva of Pune etc; the issue of the links of music with the worship of the goddess in Punjab given a similarly old Raag Sabha at the Durgiana Temple at Amritsar; the question of Sikh, Muslim, Christian and indeed Dalit participation, and the Harballabh memories of the Punjabi Muslim musicians from Malerkotla in India, and many places across the border in Pakistan.

I would like to bring this thesis to a close through an anecdote from the life of the legendary singer K.L. Saigal who hailed from Jalandhar, as narrated by his biographer Pran Neville. When Saigal's father moved back to Jalandhar from Jammu where he was a Tahsildar with the Maharaja of Kashmir, the young Saigal's voice had broken and he was disheartened at his subsequent inability to sing. This was a period when Saigal immersed himself in *listening* rather than singing and Neville tells us:

Having dropped out of school, Kundan was left with only one pursuit and that was music, henceforth the only passion of his life. No one noticed this change in him and expected him to... do something worthwhile for a living and settle down in life like other young men of middle class families. On his part Saigal realised he was not cut out for this kind of life as his ambition was to understand the mystery and meaning of music. *He came in contact with the Punjabi folk singers in Jalandhar and learnt about the traditional ragas integrated into the verses of the Punjabi love ballads...* At the Har-Vallabh music festival, the annual traditional gathering of musicians from all over India in Jalandhar, Saigal had the opportunity of listening to the leading classical maestros of the day. *He keenly observed the vocal styles of the eminent khayal and thumri singers from Lucknow, Agra, Gwalior etc. and he would try to imitate them*

*and then sing in his private gatherings.* Saigal was now all music—totally engrossed in his art, more to satisfy his inner urge than to entertain his listeners.<sup>8</sup>

In the above account, Jalandhar emerges as a site of musical mingling of the folk and the classical<sup>9</sup>, of Punjabi traditional music and of music from elsewhere in north India, and as a cusp of the musical meaning which a young Saigal was in search of. As a melting pot of different genres of music and keeping alive a culture of listening, it perhaps should come as no surprise that the critically acclaimed K.L. Saigal, the popular singer of films who sang in a classical *andaaz*, should have fulfilled his initial musical urges in the musical mecca of Jalandhar.

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<sup>8</sup> Pran Neville, *K.L. Saigal—Immortal Singer and Superstar* (New Delhi: Neville Books, 2004), p.21. Emphasis added.

<sup>9</sup> The most striking way in which this is evident even today is the fact that the leading folk and popular singers and composers of the Indian Punjab—such as Hans Raj Hans, Manmohan Waris, Master Salim, etc. are Life Members of the Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha. See <http://harballabh.org/List-of-members5.htm>. An article from *The Tribune* provides a roster of the many popular and folk singers with vital connections to Jalandhar: “Besides immortal singers like K.L. Saigal and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, singers associated with Jalandhar include the Bollywood playback singer Sukhwinder Singh, Hans Raj Hans and his Guru Pooran Shahkoti, Jasbir Jassi, Jazzy-B, Sarbjit Cheema, Manmohan Waris, Kamal Heer, Master Salim, Sukshinder Shinnda, Surinder Makhsoodpuri, K.S. Makkhan, Nirmal Sidhu, Ranjana, Sukhnain, Debi Makhsoopuri, Palwinder Dhani, Sarbjit of 'Koka' fame, Sabarkoti, Kaler Kantha and Surinder Laadi.” Varinder Singh, “It’s balle balle for singers from city”, *The Tribune*, Friday, August 20, 2004, Chandigarh, India.

## ANNEXURE 1

Jullundur tahsil 'Fairs and religious gatherings', c.1904.

<b>Tahsil.</b>	<b>Village or town.</b>	<b>Date of Fair.</b>	<b>Estimated number of people who assemble.</b>	<b>Remarks about Fair.</b>
Jullundur	Jullundar	2 <sup>nd</sup> Thursday in Har (June-July)	15,000	Held at the shrine of Imam Nasir-uddin. Both Hindus and Muhammadans attend.
"	"	15 <sup>th</sup> Sawan (about end of July)	2,000	A Muhammadan festival in honour of the Panj Pir, said to be five learned instructors in Islam, appointed by Mahmud of Ghazni, who were martyred.
"	"	5 <sup>th</sup> Muharram	4,000	A Muhammadan gathering at the shrine of Sayyad Alim Ulla Shah, where a Bihishti Darwaza has been instituted in imitation of that of Baba Farid at Pak Pattan, in the Montgomery District.
"	"	14 <sup>th</sup> Shaban	4,000	A Muhammadan festival, Shabbarat, on occasion of the annual making up of each person's account in Heaven. In Jullundur the festival is chiefly marked by an ominous contest with fireworks.
"	"	10 <sup>th</sup> Muharram	10,000	The Muhammadan celebration of the Martyrdom of Hasan and Husain, grandsons of the Prophet.
"	"	Dusahra (lasts 10 days)	40,000	The Hindu Dusahra festival combined with a horse and cattle fair, at the Devi

				Talab.
”	”	December... ..	...	Harballab or Musicians’ fair
”	”	Ditto... ..	...	Hindu fair at the Sodhal asthan. The offerings are taken by a Sao Brahman.
	Basti Shekh Darwesh	7 <sup>th</sup> Har (about middle of June).	4,000	A Muhammadan gathering at the shrine of Sayyad Kabir, who died about 165 years ago.
”	”	1 <sup>st</sup> Shawal	4,000	Do. On occasion of the lesser ‘Id (after the month of abstinence)
”	Jamsher	Holi	4,000	The Hindu Holi festival held at a Gurudwara of Bairagi Fakirs, which is said to be 300 years old.
”	Do. And Hardo Pharaula	11 <sup>th</sup> April (Baisakhi)	800	Hindus come to bathe in the Bein. Such bathing usually restores Sikh children to health.
”	Kartarpur	Ditto	20,000	A Sikh festival. People bathe in the Gangsar tank, and pay their devotions to the Thamji Sahib and Adi Granth Sahib. The Guru comes forth with much pomp and takes his seat on the Damdama Sahib, where he reads the Granth Sahib. Next day the faithful present offerings.
”	”	Diwali	1,000	Procedure much the same as the Baisakhi festival.
	Bhadiana	14 <sup>th</sup> Phagan (about end of February)	8,000	A Hindu fair (in honour of a stone image found at Kanaura, in Hoshiarpur, 200 years ago) transferred to Bhadiana, about 25 years ago on



				account of a fight between Hindus and Muhammadans at Kanaura.
	Beaspind	2 <sup>nd</sup> Magh (about middle of January)	4,000	Called Chhinj. Instituted by Jassu, a Chamar, in accordance with a vow to Sakhi Sarwar, when Jassu was buried in a well and miraculously escaped.
	Muhammadpur near Alawalpur	Various	3,000	Held at the Bhikamsar tank at the Holi, Chet Chaudas, Baisakhi and Diwali festivals.

*Source: Punjab District Gazetteers, Vol. XIV A, Jullundur District and Kapurthala State with Maps, 1904, Lahore: The "Civil and Military Gazette" Press (Sole Contractors for printing to the Punjab Government), 1908. Part A, pp.144-146.*

## ANNEXURE II

### *Music and Lahore: The constitution of the norms of cultural practice*

Lahore occupied a centrally important place in the cultural and political life of the Punjab, and indeed north-west India in general. It was a flourishing centre of political and socio-cultural activity. Newspaper reports of *The Tribune* for the months of December from the 1920s through to the 1940s are replete with weekly instances of robust cultural activity. Whether it is a concert by musicians from other parts of India, visits by child prodigies, or more frequently, notices of weekly meetings of some musical society or the other<sup>1</sup>, what we find is a cosmopolitan, urbane milieu that served as model for cultural activity in the mofussil towns such as Jalandhar. The fact that the following reconstruction is done through the window of newspaper reports alone gives us an opportunity to understand the colonial emerging public sphere in which newly emerging educated Indians negotiated their cultural identity.

The following example, picked at random, is illustrative of the larger cultural world of music in Lahore:-

MUSICAL CONCERT: We are asked to announce that Prof. T.R. Singh (Medalist), Darbar Musician to H.H. the Maharaja of Bharatpore and Mr. Vedi the well-known pupil of the late Gaayanaacharya P. Bhaskar Rao will give two performances at the SPSK Hall on Sunday, the 18<sup>th</sup> December, 1927 at 10 am (morning ragas and raginis) and at 5 pm (evening ragas and raginis). Admission will be by tickets.<sup>2</sup>

This advertisement for a musical concert gives us a fair idea of the changes being wrought on music: credentials of musicians have to be established. Most importantly, though fixed for a certain exact time, the stamp of tradition is evident in the two elaborations in parentheses of the morning ragas and raginis at 10 am and the evening ones at 5 pm. Finally, given this is a limited urban space, what we find is the insistence on tickets, underlining the composition of the crowd, as primary. All three: stating the credentials of musicians, welding of the traditional with the modern and finally, spatial constraints of an enclosed hall as also a financial insistence on tickets--display the new context for musical performance very clearly. Court musicians are

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<sup>1</sup> See for example, *The Tribune*, Saturday, December 16, 1934, where there is an advertisement that a 'fortnightly meeting of the Sangit Sabha Lahore will be held at the SPSK Hall, Sat, December. 15 at 8 pm.'

<sup>2</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Saturday, December 17, 1927, p.6.

now courting the public sphere and institutions of modernity to engage successfully with the modernisation of music.<sup>3</sup>

Concomitant with this spurt in weekly musical events in the city was the establishment of formal clubs of music, who, through their regular and rigorous fortnightly or weekly meetings, worked to educate and popularise India's 'traditional' music—both folk, film, and classical. Meetings were combined with some kind of lecture or discussion or constitution of committees for the organisation of upcoming music concerts. Some of the important clubs which sprang up include the Sangit Sabha, the Ladies' Sangit Sabha, the Punjab Orchestral and Dramatic Club, the Lahore Musicians' Association (1930s), Lahore Music Circle, Punjab Classical Music Society, etc. Some of the instances which I quote below capture well enough the *zeitgeist* of the times and also show us the discursive terrain in which the Harballabh reports emerged, as also the cultural proclivities of the newly educated nationalist middle-classes of the Punjab in general.

The musical society par excellence of course was the Gandharva Mahavidyala which was set up for the first time in Lahore in 1901 by Paluskar. The magnitude of activity it engaged in can be viewed in the following example from 1925, some 24 years after its establishment in Lahore, with the GMV rigorously planning its 8<sup>th</sup> musical conference:

#### GANDHARVA MAHAVIDYALA LAHORE 8TH MUSICAL CONFERENCE

The Secretary writes:

The 5th general meeting of the 8th Musical Conference of the Gandharva Mahavidyala was held on Friday the 4th December 1925 in the Vidyala's premises outside Taxali Gate Lahore. MR. N. Mahajan of Bombay was in the chair. It was proposed and decided that the 8th session of the GMV should meet at Cawnpore on the 23rd, 24th, 25th December 1925. All renowned musicians and lovers of music are requested to attend the same. Arrangements of boarding, lodging and conveyance of all delegates will be made by the Conference provided they give information to the Hon. Secy. before the 15th instant. Thesis on music should be addressed to the Hon. Secy. not later than 15 December 1925.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Bakhle has done a cogent analysis of the ways in which court and gharana musicians responded to the agendas of both Bhatkhande and Paluskar. See especially Chapters 5 and 6, pp.180-255.

<sup>4</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, December 6, 1925, p.4.

Along with detailed attention to the logistics for ‘delegates’, as also the deadlines for participation and sending in theses—all bespeaking rationality and meticulous planning—shows us the new norms for organising musical soireè which are very firmly located within an emerging modern public sphere.

A whiff of such a normativity in organising music-related events as also the general ambience of Lahore may be observable from the following series of reports from the late 1920s onwards, featuring many of the different music societies mentioned above:

Sangit Sabha Meeting:- The Secretary writes.

The fortnightly meeting of the Sangit Sabha, Lahore, will be held in the SPSK Hall on Saturday, the 8th December at 7:30 pm which will be open only to the members and their friends.<sup>5</sup>

The exclusivity of the Sangit Sabha meeting doesn’t need to be overstated. The next two instances, referring to events separated by only a week in December 1928, exhibit a flavour of the general musical activity in Lahore, not taking place under the aegis of any formal ‘music society’ as such. The first instance features a musical Headmaster of a school in Lahore who is the agent for the presentation of a court musician to the general populace of the city, while the second has the same school Headmaster giving a lecture-demonstration under the aegis of the Lahore Sangit Sabha<sup>6</sup>:

Grand Musical Concert: Under patronage of Mr. K.L. Rallia Ram, Head Master, Mission High School Lahore, a grand musical concert and variety entertainment will be given on 8th December at 6 pm at the YMCA, The Mall, Lahore by Prof. Tej Rajendra Singh, musician to the Maharaja of Bharatpur who has been awarded gold medals at the All India Music Conference and Mysore University.<sup>7</sup>

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LAHORE SANGIT SABHA: A brief discourse will be given by Mr. K.L. Rallia Ram and will be followed by practical vocal demonstrations, at the fortnightly meeting of the Sangit Sabha on December 16 at 7:30 pm.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, December 2, 1928, p.7.

<sup>6</sup> This headmaster, K.L. Rallia Ram, seems to be a prominent public figure propagating the cause of a respectable and sanitized music. We have already encountered him once before in the first chapter, while discussing Devki Sud’s *Sangit Prabha*, to which he wrote a most agreeable foreword. Chapter 1, fn 102, p.54.

<sup>7</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, December 9, 1928, p.7.

<sup>8</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, December 16, 1928, p.7.

Another curious body was constituted especially for the musicians themselves, referring to a potentially successful secular grouping of musicians themselves, evident in the following report:

LAHORE MUSICIANS' ASSOCIATION: The Secretary writes- The next meeting of the Gaayak Mahamandal (Musicians' Association) will be held in the SPSK Hall on Sunday the 23rd November at 8 pm. Among those who will participate in it will be Prof. D. Bedi, Prof. G.P. Pathak (Gwalior), Prof. Hans Raj, Principal Dhondi Rai (Violin), Prof. N.R. Nadandud (Dirluba), Prof. Hoogan (Violin and Surmandal), Prof. Mehraj Din (Sitar), Pt. Rama Nand Sharma (Muzaffarnagar), Mr. G.L. Madhore B.A. L.L.B., the famous amateur vocalist (Gujranwala), B. Bahadur Singh (Tabla).<sup>9</sup>

A very interesting new body of music lovers that came up in early 1930 was the Punjab Orchestral and Dramatic Club. Were a contemporary layperson to express bewilderment at this rash of musical societies in Lahore, the leading organiser of the club, a certain Mr. A.S. Bokhari vividly outlined the rationale for this latest addition to musical civil society in Lahore:

The first meeting of the Punjab Orchestral and Dramatic Club, Lahore, came off on 6th December at 6:30 pm in YMCA Hall. The Honourable Sir Jogindra Singh was in the chair. The audience consisted mostly of students of colleges and pick of the gentry. The Hall was overcrowded and many persons had to go away for want of room. At the request of the President, Mr. A.S. Bokhari explained the aims of the Club which he said, was not to replace any club, but to augment the work already being done. The club was going to have Orchestra and Dramatic performances.

The subscription of the month was Re. 1 per month or Rs. 10 a year. After some music by Misses Bestem and Mr. Kinnaro, Mr. B.K. Bhattacharya, Mr. Ganga Prasad, Misses Sushila and Vidya, and Master Krishan and Master Baghali, the President made some closing remarks, after which the meeting terminated amidst celebrations.<sup>10</sup>

Jumping some 14 years to c. 1944, we come across a music society which is definitely and unambiguously classical, a symptom of the successful harvest of the seeds sown by Paluskar at the turn of the century:

PUNJAB CLASSICAL MUSIC SOCIETY: The last musical meeting of the Punjab Classical Music Society, open to members and their guests will be held at the Lahore Y.M.C.A. on December 30 at 6 p.m. An interesting programme has been chalked out which includes items

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<sup>9</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, November 23rd, 1930, p.7.

<sup>10</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Tuesday, December 9, 1930, p.7.

by well known artistes like Khan Ghulam Ali Khan “Bare,” Said Baksh “Nikarchi” of Multan, Prof. R Singh of Bharatpur and some amateurs. *It has been decided to hold the annual general meeting of the society on January 7, 1945 when elections for the year will be held.*<sup>11</sup>

What strikes one is that the “PUNJAB CLASSICAL MUSIC SOCIETY” held an idea of the larger Punjab, covering a large swathe of north India, and not necessarily the Punjabi-speaking regions alone— with areas such as Multan and Bharatpur also being included. Equally important is the democratic election format of the organisation, a clear indicator of the established norms of the functioning of such associations in the public sphere.<sup>12</sup>

As much as the above-mentioned secular bodies for the appreciation of music, whose primary feature was their urbane cosmopolitanism, the performance and consumption of music also occurred through another crucial channel. This was the role played by Arya Samaj in popularising *kirtan* music as part of its larger agenda of re-fashioning Hinduism. The following example shows us the importance of *kirtan* music as part of the Anniversary celebrations of the Arya Samaj:

#### ARYA SAMAJ ANNIVERSARY

The following is the programme of the Arya Samaj (Wachhowali) Anniversary in Lahore:-

THURSDAY 24TH NOVEMBER, 1921

MORNING Swastivachan Shanti-path Havan, 7 to 8.

*Sankirtan* by Pt. Indra Jit Ji, Bh. Mangat Ram Ji, 8 to 8:30.

Upasana and Updesh by Shri Swami Vishudha Nand ji Maharaj (8:30-9:15)

Bhajans by Chimta Mandli<sup>13</sup>

Here it is important to note how *havans* precede and an *updesh* follows the ‘*sankirtan*’ performances by two musicians, the second of whom is the pre-eminent Bhagat Mangat Ram of Jullundur<sup>14</sup>. Again, time slots are strictly demarcated, pointing to the new, tightly organised temporality in which music was fitted now. This strategy, of integrating music with the political economy and time-constraints of colonial modernity is key in the agenda for its modernisation. In the context of writing on the Harballabh, it is exactly this kind of programme which Bawra and Shastri have in

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<sup>11</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Friday, December 29, 1944 p.3.

<sup>12</sup> Perhaps this is a feature of these times and was not so in the 1920s and 1930s? Future work needs to corroborate this.

<sup>13</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, November 20, 1921, p.8.

<sup>14</sup> More on Bhagat Mangat Ram below p.81.

mind when they think of the originary moments of the Harballabh, the music emerging for them, from a kind of regimented Hinduism, with a focus on preaching, and a special slot for musical *kirtan*. Perhaps we need to distinguish between the way *bhajan kirtan* music might actually have been performed by Baba Harballabh and his associates, from the circumscribed function which *kirtan* music played at Arya Samaj anniversaries as highlighted above. The larger question of course is how *kirtan* music underwent a change with the shift to modernity. As historians, we need to be wary of Bawra and Shastri comfortably imagining the origins of the Harballabh in performative practices that were more characteristic of Arya Samaji gatherings in the early twentieth century, rather than for a dhrupad-loving *mahant* of a Doaba sakti-peeth site. A similar example from an Arya Samaj anniversary is quoted below:

ARYA SAMAJ ANNIVERSARY (Wachhowali Lahore)

SANKIRTAN

On Friday morning the 25<sup>th</sup> there was *yagya* ceremony arranged on a large scale, in which all the Pandits took part. At 6 p.m. in the evenings there was done *sankirtan* instead of the usual *nager kirtan*. The special feature of this function was that both sections of the Arya Samaj combined this year to have this function together and bhajan mandlies were stationed in different chowks to sing their bhajans moving on vehicles throughout the bazaars of the city. After 8 p.m. the Bhajan Mandlis gathered in the Pandal at Waterworks and sang songs before the audience assembled there. The *chimta* mandli was much appreciated because of their numerous songs and it also sang songs in support of Charkha, use of Swadeshi and boycott of liquor.<sup>15</sup>

The above instance foregrounds the distinction between *nager* and *san-kirtan* (which needs to be clarified to us in the 21<sup>st</sup> century via further research), as also the way in which the *bhajan mandlies* are innovatively stationed in different chowks across the city, using vehicles to popularise the anniversary of the Arya Samaj. This testifies to the wider reach of Arya Samaj music to all and sundry on the streets of Lahore, which highlights its missionary character. Also interesting is the overt link with songs of the political composed for the national movement. The following report of another Arya Samaj anniversary is very important because of the priority and prominence given to music. Perhaps this is one of the only detailed programmes in which one-line

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<sup>15</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, November 29, 1921, p.4

biographical sketches of participating musicians are provided, perhaps because it is a Golden Jubilee:

ARYA SAMAJ GOLDEN JUBILEE

SANGEET SAMMELAN PROGRAMME                      Lahore, December 18.

Lala Barkat Ram Thapar, Adhishthata, Ardha Shatabdi Sangit Sammelan, writes:

In connection with the Ardhashatabdi Aryan Sangit Sammelan (musical concert) to be held on Friday, the 23<sup>rd</sup> December, 1927 at 7 pm, the following gentlemen who have made their name in scientific and classical music have given their consent to treat the public of Lahore with their skill in this art in the sammelan:-

Pt. Damodar Das (with Messrs. Sada Sukh and Muni Lal)— Superintendent, Establishment branch, Agents Office, North-West Railways and President, Saturday Music Club, Lahore (Amateur).

Professor D.C. Bedi—worthy disciple of the late lamented Pt. Bhaskar Rao, a renowned Maharashtra musician of all India fame.

Pt. Jiwan Lal Sahib Muttoo— A very charming vocalist and player on harmonium. (Amateur).

Pt. Kanshi Ram Sharma—A young rising musician and Dr. Abnash Chandra Ahuja, M.B.B.S. (Amateur).

Lala Lal Chand—A famous player on Harmonium, of Lahore, with his pupils.

Pt. Amin Chand—Musician of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha, Punjab.

Pt. Girdhari Lal Shukala—Professor, Sudh Sangit Vidyalaya, Delhi.

Bhagat Mangat Ram of Jullundur.

Pandit Hari Chand Bali of Jullundur (Amateur).

Lala Jagan Nath—Teacher, Sain Das Anglo-Sanskrit High School, Jullundur (Amateur).

Kumari Gopal Devi—Jullundur (Amateur).

Lala Dhani Ram—Arya Samajist, Lahore (Amateur).

Master Uttam Chand—Harmonium Master, Lahore.

Dr. Ganga Ram Nagpal—Optician and Electroplator, The Mall (Lahore).

Lala Charn Singh—Clerk, Railway Department (Amateur).

Two expert Tabalchies named Bhai Bahadur Singh and Uttam Singh of Lahore will play with the above mentioned artistes. The opening of the Sammelan will begin with the concert of the well-known Bengalee Orchestra of Lahore.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Tuesday, December 20, 1927, p.6.



The benefit of having these one-line brief biographical sketches gives us an idea of the people who comprised the first beneficiaries within the Punjab and north India in general of Paluskar's Gandharv Mahavidyala. The professional composition of this new band of 'respectable', educated, and largely middle-class performers of classical music, is clearly mentioned in an attempt to foreground the respectable, 'modern' credentials of these performers 'who have made their name in scientific and classical music'. Interestingly, while all the majority of non-Jalandhar musicians have an elaborate biographical line devoted to them, the figures from Jalandhar—barring Jagannath Parti who is a school teacher—have no description of their musical or professional credentials. While Bhagat Mangat Ram was arguably the most prominent teacher of raga music in the city of Jalandhar<sup>17</sup> (and one who trained the young and wandering Bhimsen Joshi), Pt. Harish Chandra Bali went on to head a GMV set-up for awhile at Jalandhar, while Lala Jagan Nath or Jagannath Parti is none other than the important first secretary of the Harballabh Sangit Mahasabha. However, the reason that no elaboration is required for these four is, I argue, because of the imagination of Jullundur as a fount for musical activity and talent some 5 decades since the origins of the Harballabh. The very spatial location of Jalandhar—and its association with music for the readership of the Punjab and especially Lahore—speaks for itself, as early as 1927.

There are many examples like the one above of a plethora of musicians coming in and performing at anniversaries of the Arya Samaj.<sup>18</sup> What is intriguing about these examples is the fact that while ostensibly upholding a scientific and hence rational and methodical (and by implication 'neutral') classical music, all performers are invariably Hindu or Sikh, but never Muslim. While Bakhle has pointed out to us the Hinduising efforts of Paluskar what has not been brought out sufficiently enough is the spatial context of Lahore, with its tradition of an entrenched Arya Samaj culture, which constituted a sort of ready ground for Paluskar's project to succeed. However

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<sup>17</sup> Bhagat Mangat Ram has again been discussed in the first chapter, where he figures in the role of Devki Sud's teacher. Chapter 1, pp.52-54.

<sup>18</sup> "Musical Concert- on the occasion of the 51<sup>st</sup> Anniversary of the Arya Samaj (Wacchowali) Lahore, a *Sangit Sammelan* (music symposium) will be held on Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup> Nov. 1928 at 7:30 p.m. in the Arya Samaj camp, Gurudutt Bhawan, Ravi Road, Lahore. Shri Bedi Dalip Singh, Professor Partap Singh, Pandit Kanshi Ram, Pt. Parkash Chandan, Arya Bhajnik of Ajmere (Ragistan), Lala Bihari Lal, Sardar Charan Singh, Lala Dhani Ram, Master Ralla Ram, Reverend Thakar Das, Shri Dhundo Rao, Prof. Hansraj and various other persons will give musical entertainments." *The Tribune*, Wednesday, November 21, 1928, p.7.

this is more in the nature of a suggestion based solely on evidence from *The Tribune* and clearly needs to be substantiated through further research.

Lahore's eclectic space for a flowering and refashioning of culture was not restricted to Punjabis alone, with other groups, such as the Bengalis, marking out an especial presence as well. This is evident in the results of a music competition from 1939, where there are 5 photos under "NEWS IN PICTURES" of ALL-INDIA MUSIC AND DANCE COMPETITION of the following winners:

All 5 winners..... Kumari Neri Bose---instrumental  
Kumari Hira Bose—dancing  
Kumari Jog Maya Mukherjee—music  
Kumari Amila Ghose—light classical music  
Kumari Sushama Das—classical music<sup>19</sup>

Such a cosmopolitanism of Lahore, is evident not only in the marked presence of non-Punjabi groups on the musical stage, but also in the role music was seen to play in the view of many who patronised this music, and also emphasised a solid commitment to communal amity. The following snippet shows us exactly such a hope held by the chief dignitary at a Lahore concert:

MASTER MOHAN:- Master Mohan's concert gave their last performance at the SPSK Hall on Tuesday, the 30<sup>th</sup> November. The Hall was packed with eager listeners who listened to the boy musician with eager appreciation. An interesting item in the programme was the presentation of a gold medal to Master Mohan by K.B. Nawab Muzaffar Khan, on behalf of an admirer of Master Mohan's art from Amritsar. While presenting the medal, Nawab Muzaffar Khan in a short speech suited to the occasion facilitated Master Mohan on the distinction he had won as a musician so early in his life and observed that *at a time when they were distracted by communal dissensions it did one's heart good to see that they could all unite in their appreciation of music and literature. He hoped that poets and musicians would be able to accomplish what politicians had not so far been able to achieve.* It was announced at the end of the performance that Nawab Muzaffar Khan had offered to present a gold medal to Master Mohan as a token of his appreciation of his musical proficiency.<sup>20</sup>

This appreciation of the cementing role of music and literature by the chief dignitary is important in the context of the increasing rigidification of communal identities

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<sup>19</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, December 31, 1939, Sunday, p.5.

<sup>20</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Tuesday, December 2, 1926, p.9.

which the 1920s witnessed in Punjab. Moreover, the offering of ‘a gold medal to Master Mohan as a token of his appreciation of his musical proficiency’ by Nawab Muzaffar Khan, highlights a larger trend palpable in the changing cultural world of India at this time more generally. We have already seen the example of Prof. Tej Rajendra Singh above. More importantly for us, this example also echoes or perhaps anticipates the practice of the *jaimala* or *jaipatra* being given to the most accomplished musician, at the end of each year’s Harballabh (discussed above). I quote two more examples of this tendency, both from 1937, the first one being of a famous film singer who hailed from Jalandhar itself.

#### SAIGHAL LEAVES LAHORE FOR JULLUNDUR

His Programme at Exhibition Concludes

Lahore December 28

K.L. Saighal, the New Theatres’ film star, concluded his programme at the All-India Arts and Crafts Exhibition tonight and left for Jullundur whence he goes to Amritsar before proceeding to Calcutta. He was awarded a *gold medal* by Seth Shanti Sagar this evening in appreciation of his talents for Indian music.

Saighal was entertained at a luncheon by Nawab Ahmad Yar Khan Daultana at his bungalow on Jail Road today.<sup>21</sup>

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#### KUMARI SHEILA SAIDA AWARDED MEDALS

Lahore, December 27

A correspondent writes: --

Kumari Sheila Saida, the talented amateur singer of Lahore, has been awarded two *gold medals* for her most charming and melodious songs in the All-India Music Conference, held under the management of the All-India Arts and Industries Exhibition this year.<sup>22</sup>

It is interesting to note how the incident of Kumari Sheila Saida being awarded two gold medals occurs as part of ‘the All-India Music Conference, held under the

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<sup>21</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Wednesday, December 29, 1937, p.7. Emphasis added.

<sup>22</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Tuesday, December 28, 1937, p.7. Emphasis added.

management of the All-India Arts and Industries Exhibition' held in 1937, which was also where Saigal performed, in his first and only public performance at Lahore<sup>23</sup>:

ALL –INDIA MUSIC CONFERENCE AT LAHORE

Lahore, December 21

Musicians from all over India have agreed to come to the All India Music Conference, which commences in the All-India Exhibition of Arts and Industries on Wednesday, December 22. On the opening day there will be only one session from 5 pm to 10 pm and on the following two days two sessions one in the morning and one in the evening will be held. The morning session will commence at 9 and will end at 1 pm.

The conference, which will be the first of its kind ever organised in Lahore, will be attended by musicians not only of the Punjab, but from all over India, including Gohar Gegeum (sic!), Akhtari Bai, Professor Narain Rao Vyas, Khan sahib Chhote Ghulam Ali and Khan Saheb Abdul Aziz Veenkar from Patiala State.

For the opening day, when the Nawab of Mamdot will throw open the conference, Rai Saheb Kirpa Naram with the help of a committee, of which Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Dass is the Chairman, has fixed a varied programme of vocal and instrumental music. Beginning with prayer by Pt. Janardhan Pethe of Gandharva Maha Vidhalaya, Lahore, there will be fifteen items on the programme supported by the N.W.R. Orchestra. Khan Saheb Chhote Ghulam Ali Kasuri, K.S. Abdul Aziz Veenkar from Patiala State, Gauhar Begum from Jaipur, Moni Bardhan (dancer), Rattan Chand of Hadiabad, K.S. Rahim Khan of Poonch (Sitar) Bibi Jaswant Kaur, Amritsar, Mr. Prithvi Raj Soi (Violin) Mr Abdul Majjid, BA LLB of Asar and Mian Channoo will give their programme.<sup>24</sup>

What stands out in this example is firstly the mega-scale of the event: comprising a kind of culmination for the regular weekly or fortnightly meetings and performances held throughout the year by the various music lovers' societies. The larger context or location of the musical conference in the All-India Arts and Industries Exhibition underlines the new place occupied by music in India, as consciously a part of a culture that needs to be exhibited publicly. The meaning of performing music is thus changing radically in this time: from being tied to princely states, religious shrines, fairs, both religious and non-religious, weddings etc. alone, it is now being exhibited as part of a larger national cultural imagining. Hence, the programme for Friday, December 24<sup>th</sup> 1937 features a music conference in the morning followed by a hockey

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<sup>23</sup> According to Pran Neville, his biographer in *K.L. Saigal—Immortal Singer and Superstar*, New Delhi: Neville Books, 2004.

<sup>24</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Wednesday, December 22, p.7.

tournament, after which again follows more music, while an exhibition of robots simultaneously takes place at the ‘Hall of Science’:

ALL INDIA EXHIBITION

(MINTO PARK)

Today’s events:

MUSIC CONFERENCE

9-30 a.m. to 1 p.m.

5 p.m. to 10 p.m.

GOHAR, NARAYANRAO VYAS, SWADESHRI

HOCKEY TOURNAMENT

1.15 p.m. to 5 p.m.

3 matches a day

HALL OF SCIENCE

R O B O T S

HOLIDAY PROGRAMME

SAIGAL, RATTAN BAI, K.C. DEY<sup>25</sup>

What is equally important is the way in which the temporal space for music is becoming exceedingly circumscribed; a natural outcome of the constrained exhibitory context in which music now finds itself—specifically in the All-India Exhibition, but more generally as well. Another feature of this report from Lahore stands out—a specificity in naming, *precisely*, all those who will perform at the various events, whether they are from Lahore or not. There is a clear enunciation of the names and locations of the various performers, for e.g. Khan Saheb Chhote Ghulam Ali Kasuri, K.S. Abdul Aziz Veenkar from Patiala State, Professor Mehar Khan of Talwandi, Bibi Jaswant Kaur of Amritsar etc. This could be attributed to the fact of Lahore being a locus for all of British Punjab: thus, the names of even regional musicians find a mention, unlike the case with the Harballabh, where there is a lopsided privileging of the national, or at least the extra-Punjabi over the local, in terms of the names mentioned. At a broader level, the act of naming artistes of fame with a great reputation is a feature of musical performance associated with urbanism. It is in urban cultures and the concomitant shift to professionalization of work where culture is consumed by relative strangers. This had telling results for music-making and musicians. In the context of the West, the sociologist Tia DeNora has argued that with the turn to greater urbanism ‘reputation took on a heightened salience—to live, and to work, a musician had to become known. As Moore has observed, this shift towards a ‘star system’ worked well for some musicians, some of the time. However, it was antithetical to most musicians, most of the time, and even for the ‘stars’,

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<sup>25</sup> *The Tribune*, Friday, December 24, 1937, p. 7.

such as Mozart, it was precarious.<sup>26</sup> Such a ‘star system’ is amply evident in the reports quoted above, and perhaps at one level is a banal technical feature of newspaper reportage itself. But these reports clearly reflected a larger socio-cultural conjuncture and what is more, preoccupation with this ‘star system’ increasingly began to wend its way even in newspaper reportage on the Harballabh as was visible in the first chapter and will be more visible in Annexure III.

The centrality of Lahore, not just as regional hub for the Punjab, but as cultural capital for the north as a whole ensured that this was the pre-eminent centre for experiments in the nationalisation and classicisation of music.<sup>27</sup> In sum, the musical scene in Lahore during the two decades from the 1920s to the 1940s exhibits few defining features symptomatic of larger changes occurring in the public sphere of colonial modernity, including the fixity of timings; public recognition via the medium of the gold medal; the formal structure of the music committee/association; an organisational core of individuals, who consciously spelt out the content of performance prior to its occurrence; and a general celebration of national-level artistes and performers.

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<sup>26</sup> T. DeNora, ‘Culture and Music’ in Tony Bennett and John Frow (eds.) *The Sage Handbook of Cultural Analysis*, London: Sage Publications, 2008, p.147.

<sup>27</sup> The evidence of music in the cultural sphere of late 19th and early 20th century Lahore, gleaned from newspaper reports and presented in this brief annexure, opens up a newer understanding of what the ‘nationalisation’ and ‘classicisation’ of music might have entailed. This understanding is one which, though building on the work of Bakhle, does not accept her argument about the inexorable Hinduisation of classical music, but seeks to question its applicability for northern India. However, this theme is an agenda for future research.

### ANNEXURE III

#### ***A Compilation and Analysis of The Tribune reports on the Harballabh, 1913-1946***

“There is nothing as evocative as an old newspaper. There is something in its urgent contemporaneity—the weather reports, the list of that day’s engagements in the city, the advertisements for half-remembered films, still crying out in bold print as though it were all happening *now*, today—and the feeling besides, that one may once have handled, if not that very paper, then its exact likeness, its twin, which transports one in time as nothing else can.”<sup>1</sup>

The transportatory potential of newspapers described eloquently in the passage above, which helps one capture the fullness of a particular time or era, also gives the historian a fair idea of cultural activity on a day-to-day basis. In this section, we shall see how the Harballabh festival was represented in relation to the larger cultural sphere as dominated by trends set in Lahore. Most interestingly, the informal, clinical tone of reportage as well as the impression of a ‘modern’ concert in which the Harballabh ‘music symposium’ is cast in the reports helps us understand how the terms of such discourse can tend to rub out the fullness of the real picture. Were it not for the rich oral testimonies on which much of the chapter has been based upto now, a sole reliance on newspaper reports could have jeopardised an invaluable and vast portion of the Harballabh’s history. To a certain extent this could be due to the discrepancy between the national (which *The Tribune*, as the leading English daily of North West India foregrounded as part of its mandate) and the local. Due to paucity of time, the local newspapers as well as those national ones relevant for the Punjab which were in Urdu, Hindu and Punjabi have not been adequately mined for this dissertation; perhaps the Harballabh’s multivocal history has received a greater voice in these other newspapers. Nonetheless, an analysis of *The Tribune* reports from this period gives us a window into the tensions between the national (as represented by the centre of Lahore) and the local (in our case, the ‘Jullundur’ of the first 4 decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century).

“SYMPOSIUM OF MUSICIANS AT JULLUNDUR CITY”

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<sup>1</sup> A. Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, Educational Edition, 1995 (reprint 2004), p.227.

The annual symposium of musicians which attracts professional experts and amateur singers from far and near will assemble at Devi Talab, Jullundur City (Punjab), to commemorate the 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mahatma Tuljagiri, Guru of late saint Hariballabhji, on the 26<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> December 1913. For the information of those not already aware, we may mention that this conference meets once in the year and is the only one of its kind in India. An additional attraction this year will be the presence of Pt. Ram Kishan Bajaj (an illustrious singer styled Tan Sain of this age) of Goa, who has accepted invitation to come and take part. In view of the cold weather it is requested that visitors will kindly bring their beddings with them, and arrangements will be made to look to their comforts otherwise.<sup>2</sup>

Also the local musicians must be the majority of the attraction still. What is striking is the cold clinicality of the tone used to describe the festival here perhaps because of the overt eulogisation witnessed in sources like Bawra upto now. The above reference is most likely the first report in *The Tribune* for the Harballabh, given that previous years didn't yield anything, and also evident in the line which informs readers that, "For the information of those not already aware, we may mention that this conference meets once in the year and is the only one of its kind in India." Because this is the first time, we find a curious reference to the ways in which the festival was experienced by listeners as a four-day fair and revelry, for the notice informs us: "In view of the cold weather it is requested that visitors will kindly bring their beddings with them, and arrangements will be made to look to their comforts otherwise." This clearly refers to the fact that the festival was enjoyed by many across Punjab, music lovers and musicians both urban and rural who arrived well-equipped to face the cold, a feature repeated in most accounts-written and oral of the Harballabh. This was perhaps the first time that the organisers of the festival were looking for audiences and musicians from across India. Again, starkly visible is the evidence of the reference to Pt. Ram Kishan Bajaj of Goa who is mentioned as the main attraction, and not any equally talented musician from the Punjab. At one level, this could be a strategy to rope in listeners and other musicians from different parts of India. More plausible, however, is the theory that, increasingly, it was the non-Punjabi who was seen as possessing the requisite talent for a newly sacralised 'classical music'; further the fact that the favourite classical musician for Lahore people, Pt. Paluskar, was from Maharashtra and anyone from western India therefore described tellingly as "an illustrious singer styled Tan Sain of this age".

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<sup>2</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, 7<sup>th</sup> December, 1913, p.5.



## MUSICAL SYMPOSIUM AT JULLUNDUR

The far-famed annual musical symposium held at the Devi Tal, Jullundur city, through the indefatigable and devoted efforts of Pandit Tolo Ramji, in memory of the Saint Tulchagirji, will be held this year in the ensuing Christmas, on 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th December. Celebrated musicians of India will, *as usual*, display their art daily from 7 a.m. to 12 noon, 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 12 midnight except on the last day when the symposium breaks up at noon. Among others, the following masters of music are expected to grace the symposium with their presence—Pandit Bhaskar Rao ji from Patna, Pandit Ganga Dhar ji from Benares, M. Mahomed Hussain from Nagina, M. Mamankhan Sarangi Khan from Delhi and others. The symposium thus furnishes a highly prized public entertainment to all lovers of music.<sup>3</sup>

The above report constitutes one of those rare instances when the name of Baba Hariballabh is not invoked at all. This is symbolic of the time it belongs to, prior to the conscious self-awareness of the festival in the minds of its organisers which has to be presented to its readership in a certain way. At a general level the report exemplifies the best kind of clinical reporting—a straightforward process of transmitting neutral information. However, reading between the lines one finds the careless mention of two harmless words ‘as usual’. This throws up for us the fact that the Harballabh is either gaining ground as a popular festival because the implication is that readers have prior knowledge of it. Or, on a more banal level it could be argued that this is merely the stance taken by a reporter (who might have been influenced by people in Jullundur having a long time association with the Harballabh) for whom the Harballabh is a very regular and established occurrence. Curiously, the use of ‘as usual’ occurs the next year as well, this time, however, the report ends with a clear commendation emphasising the uniqueness of the Harballabh *at a national level*. Hence this opens up for us the evidence that the festival is finally gaining acceptance and re-fashioning its image from being a provincial mela to a one-of-its-kind music conference unique in all of India:-

## HARIBALLABH MUSICAL SYMPOSIUM AT JULLUNDUR

This Year’s Anniversary

We are asked to announce that a symposium of musicians will assemble at “Devi Talab,” Jullundur City, to commemorate the 44th Anniversary of the death of Mahatma Tuljagiriji, Guru of late Saint Hariballabhji on the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th December, 1921. *As usual*

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<sup>3</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Tuesday December 22, 1914, p.5. Emphases added.

professional experts and amateur players with masterly command of melodious modulation of voice and instruments from different parts of India are expected to arrive.

It should be mentioned for the information of those not already aware that this conference meets once in the year and is the *only one of its kind in India*.<sup>4</sup>

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#### JULLUNDUR MUSICAL CONFERENCE

We are asked to announce the 47th Anniversary of the Maha Sabha will be celebrated on the 26th, 27th, 28th and 29th December, 1924, at Devi Talab, Jull. City. The public will be entertained with Indian musical performances daily.<sup>5</sup>

Interestingly, the Mahasabha is given a 47 year long lineage, when in reality it is barely 2 years old! This is a sleight of hand which reflects the ‘conversational constraint’ of the larger public sphere and the norms that governed it, as represented in the aspirational example of Lahore.

#### HARBALLABH FAIR

Music Festival at Jullundur

Jullundur, December 28.

Today is the third day of the Annual Music Conference better known as “Baba Harballabh Rag Mela”, which is being held here at the Devi Talao. As in preceding years, thousands of music-loving people (have) arrived here from different parts of Punjab, Sind and U.P. About sixty distinguished musicians, including Mas (?) Venaik Rao Patwardhan of Bombay, Master Sadashive of Gwailor, Master Ganpati Rao of \_an (?) and Masters Karam \_\_\_\_gh (Singh?) and Ratan of the Doaba have arrived.—United Press.<sup>6</sup>

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#### JULLUNDUR MUSIC CONFERENCE

Tremendous Rush of Visitors

(From Our Correspondent)

Jullundur, Dec. 28.

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<sup>4</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Saturday, Dec 24, 1921, p.4. Emphases added.

<sup>5</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, December 16, 1924, p.4.

<sup>6</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, December 31, 1933, p. 15. The names are illegible because of the folds in the newspaper.

Today was the 2nd day of the 62nd annual Music Conference (Harballabh Rag Mela) which is being held here at the Devi Talao in memory of Sri Tuljagir, Guru of Baba Harballabh. With the arrival of some musicians of *all-India fame* there was a *tremendous rush of visitors* at the afternoon sitting but the *volunteers of the Hindu Sewak Sabha and Krishna Dal controlled the traffic and maintained order in an appreciable manner*. Over a dozen musicians gave both oral and instrumental performances at the morning and afternoon sittings. In the morning sitting Pandit Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal, Gandharb Mahavidyala of Poona, and Pandit Omkar, another talented musician, kept the audience spell-bound for quite a long time.

Master Rattan of Hadiabad, Pandit Sadashiva, an artist of *all India-fame*, Master Karam Singh and Piara Imam Din of Aligarh are expected to give performances at the night sitting.<sup>7</sup>

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#### JULLUNDUR MUSIC CONCERENGE CONCLUDES

(From Our Own Correspondent)

Jullundur, Dec. 29

To-day being the last day of the annual Music Conference only one sitting was held from 7 a.m. to 12 noon. *About a dozen songsters of all-India fame* gave performances before a large gathering. *A section of the audience thrice attempted to disturb the proceedings, but they were promptly checked by the volunteers.*

Lala Prithvi Raj Thapar read the annual report of the conference. He pointed out that funds were necessary for the materialisation of a proposal for *the construction of a spacious hall with a gallery (sic) fitted with electric installations and loud speakers etc for the future sessions of the conference.*

Pandit Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal Gandharba Mahavidyala of Poona, then sang some melodious songs.

With the singing of the "Bande Mataram" song the conference came to a close.<sup>8</sup>

Very important is the reference to musicians of all-India fame, coupled with the complete lack of any local names. The only name worthy of quotation is Pt. Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, one of Paluskar's disciples who could well-deserve the epithet of the most- remembered and oft-quoted musician in the history and records about the Harballabh, along with another Paluskar-shishya Onkarnath Thakur. Bande Mataram

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<sup>7</sup>*The Tribune*, Lahore, Thursday, December 30, 1937, p. 7. Emphases added.

<sup>8</sup>*The Tribune*, Lahore, Friday, December 31, 1937, p. 7. Emphases added.

had begun to be sung by this time, and affirms the nationalist convictions of the festival, its organisers and the artistes.

Another crucial aspect concerns the attempts at disturbance by the large crowds, apparently insignificant in itself—constituting the minutiae of history, and the banal detail of newspaper reportage—however acquiring significance due to the fact that this is a history of performance and consumption. And while there is ample evidence of the former, when it comes to the reception of the music, and putting faces to the crowd, the extant archive is largely silent. The above two references to the efforts to control the crowds are extremely interesting<sup>9</sup>. In the Dec. 28 report, what is interesting is the deployment of volunteers from bodies external to the music mahasabha—a rare occasion in its history where otherwise the only body that is remembered is the Mahasabha itself. However the link of these volunteer corps to the Harballabh sangeet mahasabha, and crucially their Hindu-character is surely a development that could have occurred only during these years. Of greater import for issues of music's performance and consumption, is the effort towards disciplining the rowdy audience, who thrice disturbed the gathering, in a fashion which is amenable to the smooth running of a modern musical concert. This is not to dismiss out of hand the presence of disciplining measures in the pre-modern period, but only to note the fashion and way in which the disciplining occurs in a society in flux, aspiring for and moving towards an indigenous statehood. And finally, the reason behind the apparent tremendous rush and apparent rowdyism, which seems to be the fact that several musicians of 'all-India' fame have graced the occasion. It may also be postulated that the railways themselves would be crucial in ferrying people across different parts of the Punjab and north India more generally to this festival.

Most importantly however, is the well-articulated dream vision that Lala Prithvi Raj Thapar has of the future of the Harballabh, a time when it would supposedly come into its own, with a "spacious hall with a gallery (sic) fitted with electric installations and loud speakers etc for the future sessions of the conference". As the subsequent history of the Harballabh, upto the present, is to show however, this dream could never fully attain reality, and a series of aborted attempts at the construction of such a

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<sup>9</sup> According to Bawra's account of the history of the pre-1947 period of the festival which he bases on Jagannath Parti's testimony, the numbers at the mela swelled post-1935 due to the increasing popularity of the festival. Bawra 1998, p.147.

hall points to deeper currents and phenomena about the social world of Jalandhar. However this particular history will be dealt with in greater detail in the next two chapters.

JULLUNDUR (From Our Own Correspondent)

Jullundur, Dec. 29, 1939

Musical Conference

Today being the last day of the 64th Annual Musical Conference also known as “Harballabh Rag Mela,” only one sitting was held from 7 a.m. till 12 noon. About two dozen musicians gave vocal and instrumental performances. Prominent among them were Sjt. Krishna Rao, a film star of Bombay, Gosain Ganpati of Nepal, Pandit Bawan Rao of Poona, Master Naurang of Bombay, Khan Ghulam Ali Khan of Lahore, Masters Murari Lal and Lahori Ram of Jullundur, Pandit Dhundi Rao of Bombay and Master Dharam Chand of Dasuya (Hoshiarpur distt.)

Lala Prithvi Raj Thapar read out the annual report in the course of which he gave a brief history of the conference. *After appealing for funds for the construction of a hall fitted with electric installations and equipped with loud speakers, Lala Prithvi Raj Thapar thanked all those who made the Conference a success.*

Colonel Rattan Chand presided over the “Jai Mala” (showering of flowers) ceremony amidst loud applause. *Though the rush of people was greater than previous days, nothing untoward happened throughout the sitting.* The Conference concluded with the singing of the “Bande Mataram” by Pandit Bawan Rao.

*Some rowdyism was witnessed at the conference yesterday when a section of the audience was disturbed by a hand-to-hand fight between two men. The police had to make a light cane charge to restore order.* Master Dharam Chand of Dasuya gave a thrilling performance holding the audience spell-bound for a quarter of an hour.<sup>10</sup>

‘Rowdyism’ continues this time, in 1939 as well. On this occasion, it is interesting to note how the police, a visibly colonial institution, was present to control it. Also interesting is the ease with which *Bande Mataram* can be sung, and how it was not banned by the British—but this could be a testament of the proximity of Pt. Paluskar and Pt. Bhatkhande with the British, as also a success scored by the national movement itself. Further, an instance of almost carnivalesque violence breaks out here, suppressed eventually by the superior, now more legitimate, violence of the

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<sup>10</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Saturday, December 30, 1939, p.4. Emphases added.

state. Alas, we shall never know who the two men were or indeed what led to their 'hand-to-hand fight'. Was it over issues musical or mundane? Violence in the world of music was certainly not unknown, and Joginder Singh Bawra's book records these instances. Moreover, the symbolic and sometimes quite real connections of musical prowess in the Punjab with wrestling and wrestlers highlights for us the social world of musicians in India, wherein music is not at always the sublime, esoteric, other-worldly pursuit, unsullied by the pettiness of day-to-day life. On the other hand, it could simply be a mundane trigger behind the violence, to do with the constraints that could have arisen with large numbers congregating together, maybe the two fighters had been straining over access to the music being performed!

This certainly seemed to be the case the next year, as is spelt out in the reports from 1940, when 'two men had a hand-to-hand fight over a seat'. Fortunately for the flow of music, 'volunteers promptly restored order'. The use of the term 'hand-to-hand fight' two years in a row emphasises, one can propose, the absence of any weapons in such a fight, and illustrates us for us the de-weaponisation of society in general under the British, especially during a time of the ongoing Second World War. Can one also naively attribute the consistent reports of audience violence, and participation in large numbers to the flux caused by the ongoing war?

JULLUNDUR (From Our Own Correspondent)

Jullundur, Dec. 28

Music Conference

The proceedings of the first sitting of the annual music conference remained undisturbed till 11 a.m. *when a section of the audience suddenly rose and began moving out from the pandal. Two men had a hand-to-hand fight over a seat. The volunteers promptly restored order.* Pandit Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal, Gandharva Mahavidyala, Poona, gave a thrilling performance while Pt. Omkar Nath kept the audience spellbound for about half an hour. Prominent among the other musicians were Pandit Bawan Rao of Kolhapur, Pandit Krishna Rao Chawankar, Master Narayan Rao Vyas and Master Datatrya son of late Pandit Vishnu Digambar, Gaayanacharya.<sup>11</sup>

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JULLUNDUR

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<sup>11</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Monday, Dec. 30, 1940, p.4. Emphases added.

#### Music Conference

Preparations are afoot for the 66th Music Conference known as ‘**Baba Harballabh Rag Mela**’ to be held here at Dei Talao from the 25th to the 29th December. Prominent amongst the musicians expected to participate in the Conference are Pandit Krishna Rao, Principal, Gandharb Mahavidyala of Gwalior, Professor Narayan Rao Vyas, Pandit Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal, Gandharb Mahavidyala of Poona, Pandit Omkar Nathji and Master Rattan Chand of Hadiabad. *A strong reception committee has been formed.* Three sittings (7 a.m. to 12 noon, 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to midnight) will be held daily except on the 25th and the 29th instant when only one sitting will be held (7 p.m. to midnight on the 25th and 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the 29th).<sup>12</sup>

The sentence ‘a strong reception committee has been formed’ refers to an emulation of a common feature in the social cultural life of Lahore. Give quotations. We are thus, now, a modern, organised, rational group of aware citizens ready to conduct a festival of great importance. Hence the clear reference to exact timings of the sittings. Whereas we know, at least as per Bawra, how Onkarnath initiated the practice of going on till 2-3 am from c.1932 onwards.

#### JULLUNDUR

(From Our Own Correspondent)

Jullundur, Dec. 28

#### Music Conference

To-day is the third day of the annual music conference which is being held here in the memory of Baba Hariballabh, *a yogi musician of this place*. Over a dozen musicians gave vocal and instrumental performances. Prominent among them were Professor Narayan Rao Vyas, a renowned film star of Bombay, Master Madan and Master Dharam Chand of Dasuya.<sup>13</sup>

In the above report, the first we have on the Harballabh for the 1940s, the beginnings of mythification of Baba Hariballabh are evident. The term ‘yogi-musician’ gives us a very clear picture. The original purpose of holding the *mela* and its ambience, with a primary audience of mystics is superseded by the emerging norms of the fledgling music industry in India.

#### PROVINCIAL NEWS

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<sup>12</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Sunday, December 21, 1941 “Provincial News”. Emphases added.

<sup>13</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, December 31, 1941, p.4. Emphases added.

## JULLUNDUR

Yesterday being the last day only one sitting of the Music Conference known as '**Harballabh Rag Mela**' was held from 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. *The pandal was packed to capacity.* Pandit Vinaik Ro Patwardhan, Principal Gandharb Mahavidyala of Poona, Pandit Omkar Nath of Kateswar, Master Naurang of Bombay and Master Dattatrya son of late Pandit Vishnu Digamber, gave thrilling performances and kept the audience spellbound. *The annual report* was presented on behalf of the Sangeet Mahasabha by Lala Parshotam Lal, *pleader*. The session successfully concluded with "Bande Matram" sung by Pt. Omkar Nath (all standing).<sup>14</sup>

Important for us in the above paragraph is the procedure of naming the Harballabh as a 'Rag Mela', an important recognition of the mela-origins of the now-changing festival. The changes are visible with the modern features instituted by the setting up of the Masabha in 1922—such as reading out of its annual report by a local notable whose professional identity as a 'pleader' is foregrounded. The coordinates of the national are also firmly established via reference to the singing of the Bande Mataram. Most importantly, the concern with numbers, and expectations of consumption by an audience clearly emerge—something which we have already noticed above, with the shift of dates from January to December vacations and indeed in the setting up of the Music Mahasabha itself. In the following report for the year 1946, which is more in the nature of an advance notice for the festival to occur in the near-future, there is a further element of a very precise marking out of the time-slots when the performances will take place. This has already been seen for the years.... And more generally for the Lahore music soirees. Hence, the modern contexts and the predilections are very evident in the organisation of the Mela since about the 1920s. Because, naming the time exhibits the desire to reach out to the professional middle classes, who value time, and more importantly, do not have time on their hands to go attend music melas.

## JULLUNDUR

The annual Music Conference known as '**Harballabh Rag Mela**' will be held here at the Devi Talao from the 26th to 29th instant. Pt. Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal, Sangit Mahavidyala, Poona, Prof. Narayan Rao Vyas of Bombay, Pt. Krishna Rao, Principal, Sangit Mahavidyala, Gwalior, Pt. Bawan Rao, Principal, Sangit Mahavidyala, Kolhapur, Prof. Dalip Chand Bedi of Calcuta, Thakur Omkar Nath of Bharach, Pt. Mahadev Prashad Kathik of

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<sup>14</sup> *The Tribune*, Lahore, Monday, January 2, 1944, p.3. Report for the December 1943 Mela. Emphases added.



Amritsar and other talented musicians will participate in the conference. There will be three sittings from 7 a.m. to 12 noon, 2 to 5 p.m. and 7 p.m. to 12 midnight on the 26th, 27th and 28th instant and only one sitting from 7 a.m. to 12 noon on the 29th instant.<sup>15</sup>

It was this logic peculiar to modernity—of being closely attentive to the value and utility of ‘time’, which could no longer be ‘wasted’ at a whole day long sitting of music—that urged Parti and party to urge for the shift of dates to December, and indeed, to form the Mahasabha as well; not a lack of funds, for, as mentioned by Parti himself, funds were not needed a good ten years since the birth of the Mahasabha<sup>16</sup>. The reasons then seem to lie elsewhere: in the desire and urge to engage the educated middle classes for listening to and eventually, performing music, and ridding it of its ambiguous and ‘impure’ associations with lower caste, mirasi performers. This same attention to time and the description of who or what is worthy of it, also foregrounded national-level and non-Punjabi singers at the expense of local and regional talent.<sup>17</sup> And this again is the reason why Paluskar and his disciples have enjoyed such an illustrious and hegemonic position in the annals of newspaper reportage on the Harballabh and the writing of its history more generally: for they were the apt vehicles, and one could argue, initiators, of the transformation of the ‘Harballabh Rag Mela’ into the ‘Harballabh Sangeet Sammelan’. By 1947, however, this process was far from complete. For that to happen, a more through-going set of changes had to simultaneously occur, which have been mapped in Chapter 2.

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<sup>15</sup> *The Tribune*, Ambala Cantt., Wednesday, December 25, 1946, p.7.

<sup>16</sup> Collection of funds was not required until 1931, Bawra, *Harivallabh Darshan*, p.28.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 29.

## SUMMARY OF REPORTS

YEAR	ORDER OF NAMES OF MUSICIANS + TITLES OF MUSICIANS
1914	Pandit Bhaskar Rao ji from Patna, Pandit Ganga Dhar ji from Benares, M. Mahomed Hussain from Nagina, M. Mamankhan Sarangi Khan from Delhi and others.
1921	Professional experts and amateur players with masterly command of melodious modulation of voice and instruments from different parts of India
1933	About sixty distinguished musicians, Mas (??? Missing in folds) Venaik Rao Patwardhan of Bombay, Master Sadashive of Gwailor, Master Ganpati Rao of _an (??) and Masters Karam _____gh (Singh?) and Ratan of the Doaba
1937	<i>About a dozen songsters of all-India fame</i> Pandit Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal Gandharba Mahavidyala of Poona, Pandit Omkar, Master Rattan of Hadiabad, Pandit Sadashiva, an artist of <i>all India-fame</i> , Master Karam Singh and Piara Imam Din of Aligarh
1939	Sjt. Krishna Rao, a film star of Bombay, Gosain Ganpati of Nepal, Pandit Bawan Rao of Poona, Master Naurang of Bombay, Khan Ghulam Ali Khan of Lahore, Masters Murari Lal and Lahori Ram of Jullundur, Pandit Dhundi Rao of Bombay and Master Dharam Chand of Dasuya (Hoshiarpur distt.)
1940	Pandit Vinaik Rao Patwardhan, Principal, Gandharva Mahavidyala, Poona Pt. Omkar Nath Pandit Bawan Rao of Kolhapur, Pandit Krishna Rao Chawankar, Master Narayan Rao Vyas

	Master Datatrya son of late Pandit Vishnu Digambar, Gaayanacharya.
1941	Professor Narayan Rao Vyas, a renowned film star of Bombay, Master Madan Master Dharam Chand of Dasuya.
1944	Pandit Vinaik Ro Patwardhan, Principal Gandharb Mahavidyala Poona, Pandit Omkar nath of Katheswar, Master Naurang of Bombay and Master Dattatrya son of late Pandit Vishnu Digamber
1946	Pt. Vinaikrao Patwardhan, Principal, Sangit Mahavidyala, Poona, Prof. Narayan Rao Vyas of Bombay, Pt. Krishna Rao, Principal, Sangit Mahavidyala, Gwalior, Pt. Bawan Rao, Principal, Sangit Mahavidyala, Kolhapur, Prof. Dalip Chand Bedi of Calcuta, Thakur Omkar Nath of Bhabhaich, Pt. Mahadev Prashad Kathik of Amritsar

Note: It is evident from the above table that only in the earliest festival is there an equal number of Muslim and Hindu musicians performing. In the next reference, we find Muslim names neatly put, together, after Hindu names. Somehow or the other, the very structure of the sentence which places Piara Imam Din of Aligarh last of all is curiously unsettling and worthy of comment. The year after this we again find only one Muslim musician from Lahore amongst the participants while the presence of a singer from Nepal testifies to larger links beyond the bounds of British India. It is also the rare report which mentions place of belonging, and is also rare for containing references to Punjab musicians. Over the next few years, the list of participants reveals that the Maharashtra musicians, especially those connected to Pt. Paluskar. More disturbing is the fact that from 1940 onwards, even the singular token representation of *one* Muslim musician of Lahore (as was the case for 1939) is not encountered. Rather there is a complete lack of any participation by Muslim musicians, perhaps a sign of the communally-charged times? Only future research can corroborate. On the other hand, it has to be argued that the names reaching the records of an English newspaper are definitely not representative of the *actual* singers who did in fact participate, and it might be premature and hazardous to read the decline of Muslim musicians primarily from this source alone.<sup>18</sup> Instead, the above table might more readily be seen to represent the cultural world as seen by those writing and editing *The Tribune* itself.

<sup>18</sup> The Jalandhar based musician B.S. Narang shared in an interview that once at the Harballabh, an unknown vocalist came on stage and left the audience spell bound by his singing. However, before the people could recover from the magic of his singing, this anonymous vocalist had disappeared, obscuring once and for all his identity. This anecdote reveals how it is hazardous to treat the newspaper reports as a source for *all* the participants on the ground. Interview dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2011.

**ANNEXURE IV**

**Brief Details of Grants Received, 1979-2011<sup>1</sup>**  
**Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha (Regd.)**

<b>A/C Year</b>	<b>Grants sanctioned/ Received from</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
1979 - 80	Punjab Government – Deptt. Of Cultural Affairs	1.25 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
1995 - 96	Punjab Government – Deptt. Of Cultural Affairs	1.25 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
1996 – 97	Punjab Government – Deptt. Of Cultural Affairs	6.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
1996 – 97	MP-LAD Grant – S. Balbir Singh	2.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
1996 – 97	Punjab Government – S. Beant Singh	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
1998 – 99	MP-LAD Grant – S.Iqbal Singh	5.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
1998 – 99	Punjab Government – S. Parkash Singh Badal	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
1999 – 00	Punjab Government – S. Parkash Singh Badal	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2000 – 01	Punjab Government – S. Parkash Singh Badal	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2000 – 01	Punjab Government – S. Parkash Singh Badal	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2001 – 02	Punjab Government – S. Parkash Singh Badal	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2004 – 05	MP-LAD Grant – S. Balbir Singh (out of Rs. 2Lacs)	1.5 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2004 – 05	Punjab Government – Sh. Avtar Henary	1.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2004 – 05	Punjab Government – Distt. Dev. & Panchayat Officer	1.0 Lac	No Letter – Not Defined
2005 – 06	Punjab Government – Sh. Mohinder Singh Kaypee	2.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2005 – 06	Punjab Government – S. Amarjit Singh Samra	1.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2005 – 06	MP-LAD Grant – S. Balbir Singh (out of Rs. 2Lacs)	0.5 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2006 – 07	Ramesh Chander Memorial Trust	5.0 Lac	Construction of Shaheed Ramesh Chander Memorial Hall in Harballabh Bhawan
2006 – 07	Ramesh Chander Memorial Trust	2.5 Lac	Construction of Shaheed Ramesh Chander Memorial Hall in Harballabh Bhawan
2006 – 07	Ramesh Chander Memorial	2.5 Lac	Construction of Shaheed

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced with the kind permission of Shri Rakesh Dada, Treasurer, Shree Baba Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha.

	Trust		Ramesh Chander Memorial Hall in Harballabh Bhawan
2006 – 07	Jalandhar Improvement Trust	15.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2006 – 07	Punjab Government – Ch. Jagjit Singh	1.0 Lac	Development of Cultural Activities
2006 – 07	Punjab Government – Mrs. Gurkanwal Kaur	1.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Bhawan
2008 – 09	Punjab Government – through Jalandhar Improvement Trust	1.0 Crore	Construction of Harballabh Academy
2009-10			
2010-11	Sangeet Natak Academy	1.5 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2010-11	Ministry of Culture	5.0 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2010-11	Punjab Government – Ms. Lakshmi Kanta Chawla	1.5 Lac	Sangeet Sammelan
2010-11	Punjab Government – S. Parkash Singh Badal	10.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Academy
2010-11	Punjab Government – Sh. Manoranjan Kalia	5.0 Lac	Construction of Harballabh Academy

*Brief Note of Interviews Conducted<sup>1</sup>*

**Report of the Meeting with Mr. Ashwini Kumar, Ex-Director General of BSE,  
New Delhi on 18th February, 2011**

Mr. Kumar, now 90 years old, who has run the festival for close to 40 years, shared a lot of information. Particularly important were the snippets of life-history which he provided, mentioning how his highly educated doctor father (the 1<sup>st</sup> Indian medical graduate from Harvard University), hailing from a rich *zamindar* family in Lahore (having a home spread on 7 acres on Canal Bank), was a great lover of music, a great connoisseur, and for this reason had kept a Muslim *mirasi* musician under his employ, to ensure that his children learn some of the basics of music. Mr. Kumar's passion in music was traced by him back to these early years. He has been attending the festival since he was 6 years old. He remembers how in those times, people could and would sit on the platforms that functioned as a stage, close to and facing the musicians. These platforms were and are next to the Samadhi of Baba Harivallabh and there would be a huge crush, with a mammoth number of people wanting to sit on it.

He also shared how during his time, the festival was divided into two parts—the main one near the Devi Talab temple, where classical music was played, and the other near the *ponas* or *hamams* the open air baths where the ghazals and light classical musical forms were sung.

Mr. Kumar narrated the following story of how he took over the festival in the late 1940s:

There were only a few 100 people listening, when I visited the Harballabh in 1948, as I was also SP of Jalandhar at that time. Only two singers—Narayan Rao Vyas and Vinayak Rao Patwardhan were performing that year. The *mahant* of the Baba Harballabh Mahasabha Pt. Dwarka Dass, was ill, lying down on a *manji* (cot). He looked at me, and perhaps recognizing a kindred spirit, told me, “Now you have to ensure the festival continues and thrives.”

Mr. Kumar mentions how many musicians and artistes came and stayed over at his own *haveli* (or house) in Jalandhar, and how he persuaded the Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, to have him posted at Jalandhar alone, so that he could keep running the

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<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately I was unable to record these interviews, due to technical reasons, and hope to do so at an early date.

Festival, so great was his passion for music. He mentioned with pride how he took 1 Rupee donations from members of the huge audience in order to raise funds to pay the eminent musicians, and also to ensure that the audience felt they owned the festival, that it was their own. He shared how people would come from 2-3 districts of the Punjab, such as Amritsar, Ludhiana, Kapurthala, etc. In 1981, he ensured that Pt. Ravi Shankar came. It was only Mr. Ashwini Kumar who could manage to have Roshanara begum of the Kirana gharana who migrated to Pakistan post-1947, to perform at the Harivallabh as her husband was also a police-officer and thereby had good relations with Mr. Kumar.

He was very emphatic that I understand that the Punjab is not a wild place. In order to convince me, he mentioned how those who are considered to be the wildest Punjabis (i.e. Sikhs), have their holy book set to music. The 5<sup>th</sup> guru developed the poetical part and *mirasi* musicians sitting next to him set the verses of the Guru Granth Sahib to music. Mr. Kumar's own passion and knowledge of music and the Punjab is so deep that during the centenary celebrations of the Guru Granth Sahib, some of the Sikh leaders approached him to work out a production that eventually was constituted of 23 volumes encompassing all the 29 raagas contained/used in the sacred work.

As a further example of the importance of Punjab as a musically endowed region, there was his insistence that the Kirana gharana can be traced to a place called Kirana in Punjab, near Karnal, as well and apart from the conventionally understood Kirana in U.P. Similarly he mentioned how many people are not aware that Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar opened one of his first Gandharva Mahavidyalayas at Jalandhar but unfortunately it had to close down. He also remembered with great fondness how his dear friend, Pt. Bhimsen Joshi spent considerable time in Jalandhar in search of a guru during his adolescent years.

He reiterated the view about the peasants knowing their classical music thoroughly by emphasizing how even peasants would understand and follow what was being sung, narrating the following anecdote:

I remember the scenes of the Harballabh from my childhood: people would come in thousands to listen to the three nights of music; and me and my brother would be especially sent from Lahore by our music-lover of a father. I clearly recollect how a peasant member of the

audience stood up and interrupted one of the ustads, saying ‘twaadi eh waali shruti theek trahn nahi lagi’ (you didn’t strike that particular *shruti* very well).

He insisted I my research begin by tracing the changes attendant upon the work done by Pt. Paluskar and Pt. Bhatkhande, especially the former. He also said I get in touch with the members of the erstwhile royal family of Kapurthala.

Apart from this information, his wealth of and passion for knowledge of purely a musical nature was tremendous. He shared the difference, in intricate detail, between Hindustani and Western classical music as also Carnatic music. He wanted me to learn and engage more with Hindustani classical music, sharing many anecdotes about his favourite raga, Shyama Kalyana. In an effort to educate me, he offered me a small book of essays written with a pedagogical person for the lay listener: *Casual Symphony*. He ended by saying he wished he had spent the majority of his life engaging with music rather than building his illustrious career.



## Report of the Meeting with Ustad Sabri Khan Sahab, in New Delhi on 2<sup>nd</sup> March

2011

Ustad Sabri Khan Saheb, 84 years old, *sarangi* player and Padma Bhushan awardee, was most accessible, approachable and forthcoming. He shared with us a lot of his stories and anecdotes. Primarily, he shared how he has performed every year at the Harivallabh over the last 50-55 years. He mentioned how he had performed at other places in the Punjab as well, such as Amritsar, Phagwara, Kala Bakra (?), and Pathankot, where a Basant festival would happen from 11-13<sup>th</sup> April every year.

As far the Harvallabh was concerned, on asking him why he thought that the audience in Jalandhar was so discerning, according to him the reason was that “Punjab ki mitti hi sureeli hai.” He narrated with great pride and awe how even if singers like Begum Akhtar, more renowned for their ghazal gayaki were invited, they had to sing classical sangeet only, as he put it, “it was a pure classical stage.”

The recurring motif of the peasant and the discerning public listening to the great ustad and critiquing or showing disrespect occurred in Us. Sabri Khan’s as well. But for Ustad Sabri Khan, as a performer, the stress was more on showing how the audience refused something they didn’t enjoy, thereby giving a slight window into their tastes as opposed to the idyllic trope of the almost-prodigiously knowledgeable peasant, as narrated by Mr. Kuamr and many others. Here the question of the audience was on an individual level. Ustad sahib narrated the story of Bijli Pehelwan interrupting Salamat Ali Saheb who was accompanied by Sabri Khan on sarangi and Chaturlal—younger brother of famed sarangi player Ram Narain, on tabla. Daniel Neuman, from his 1969 visit also remembers that the peasantry was present in large numbers.

The other important thing that Sabri Khan Saheb mentioned was the fact that how earlier, they would all sleep on a durrie on the grass—“ghaas bichchakar durrie par bithatay thay.” Further, they would just receive the money –a meager amount like 200 Rs.—that was barely enough for travel. For him, it was when Mr. Ashwini Kumar’s taking on the mantle that changed things around. He recalled with pride how on the celebrations of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday, Ashwini Kumar gave a speech in which he

mentioned how it was Sabri Khan who ensured the festival ran each year, for he was always on stage, impeccable accompanying each singer: “Sabri Khan sahib ne Harivallabh ko har saal sambhaala hai.” In the recollections about Mr. Kumar, Khan sahib noted with considerable fondness the illustrious career of Mr. Kumar.

Prior to Mr. Kumar, he mentioned that the President was Sardar Acchar Singh, who was also a harmonium maker and the General Secretary was Jagannath Prithey, the 1<sup>st</sup> Secretary of the Hari Vallabh mahasabha. Sardar Acchar Singh had a daughter who was fond of playing the sitar, and played by listening to Pt. Ravi Shankar play; there was a photo of him in their house.

He shared other anecdotes about the legendary tabla player, Ahmed Jan Thirakwa’s performance, where he started the tabla at the extremely fast and vigorous “9 laya” tempo at which the earlier tabla player had left it. Also how once he played the table as one would play a pakhawaj, in order to ensure that the dhrupad performance would take place. All through he exhibited a considerable aptitude and accuracy in recalling information which was remarkable.

As part of narrating his experiences on the journey of becoming a musician, he made it categorically clear that how he used to listen to and respect his elders, sharing a story of how his acrobatics in the spurt and passion of youth in accompanying a famous singer were met with rebuke: “*Badon ka hum adab karte they.*” (We used to respect elders).

**Interview with Treasurer, Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha, Mr. Rakesh Dada,  
on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Tanda Road, Jalandhar, 89 minutes, 47 seconds**

*(Note: 'RD' refers to Rakesh Dada the interviewee and 'RK' to Radha Kapuria, the interviewer)*

RD : Why did you select this topic?

RK : Actually, basically I'm a Punjabi myself but third generation refugees from Lahore , all settled in Delhi or Bombay. So over the years we have stopped speaking Punjabi and atleast I can only speak Hindi properly. So I thought if I get an opportunity to do research in history I'll do on Cultural History of Punjab. So somebody suggested to me that why don't you look at the Harballabh music festival of Jalandhar. And I confess I had no idea about it. So I am totally a newcomer, but I have an interest in music. I have learnt in childhood from Gandharv Mahavidyalaya but now I am totally out of touch for 8-10 years unfortunately. I have given fourth year exams so it's a joy for me do this history and I found Bawraji's book very instructive.

RD : It's very exhaustive, Kaafi kuch unhone diya hua hai. In fact we are trying to update that book now. Bawraji is no more now. Nobody has made an effort now.

RK : In fact it should even be translated into English now.

RD : This time it's going to be in English.

RK : Oh wonderful. That's great.

RD : I am compiling all that, plus I am trying to trace the history of all those who have participated in Harballabh, in which year. There is lot of information available on the internet. One has to put lot of effort in order to do that. Hopefully we will come with this book, which will give available details about all those artists- I am starting from 1930 to 2010. This is my target. It is a very long time period. I have information available in Bawraji's book and onwards, all that's with me but prior to that i.e. 1947-1945, 1940s. Plus trying to get the pictures of all those artists, we will try to include all those pictures in that book.

RK : All the documents from that time...

RD : Yes some of the documents I have been able to trace- the letters written to the organizers in Harballabh. It's 1928 or...

RK : In fact in Bawraji's book there is a reference to Laxmankrishna Rao Punditji, who says that 'mere dastawej hain aur..'...[sound of opening of a book]...oh my God, isn't that wonderful.

RD : This for your information Pandit Bhimsen Joshi started learning music in Jalandhar.

RK : After coming to Jalandhar. Yes..

RD : That's the picture of his guru.....this book was published in 1934.

RK : Acha in Amritsar

RD : Yes this book was published in Amritsar because one disciple of the same guru Devaki, she has written a book called Sangeetprabha. She also learnt from Pandit Mangatram Acharya.

RK : So she was a lady from Punjab itself.

RD : Yes

RK : Oh. That's wonderful. Because I don't know, I am not sure but. Is it true that it was only in 1970 that women were allowed to perform on stage?

RD : No I think it was in 1950s. I am not sure about the year...which year they started. Maybe it was a bit earlier.

RK : Because I meet with Aswini Kumar ji in Delhi. It was really wonderful to have actually meet him.

RD : Yes he is actually a storehouse of all the information.

RK : Absolutely. Also I read this memoir by Mrs. Sheila Dhar, who must have performed in 1979 or something and she wrote that Kesharbai Kekarji used to come.

RD : I think it's on the internet.

RK : She has written a book of all the musical things. That was very nice to know that even Kesarbai Kerkarji has performed at the festival.

RD : I think starting with Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. He did a great job for Harballabh. He was the one who motivated lot of artists from Maharashtra and Karnataka that they should come and participate in the Harballabh festival. In the earlier times it was just... I would say artists from Punjab and the earlier Punjab means from pre-partition, undivided Punjab...they used to come and perform in Harballabh Festival.

Actually Harballabh in those days was very different from what it is now.

I think Ashwini ji must have told you something about those days. Did he?

RK : Yes, he told me that as a young boy from Lahore since he was six year old his father used to send him and his brother to attend the Harballabh. And how people would come in thousands and there would be stampede and he would be in someone's shoulder and they would sit next to the stage. He said how his father was really strict about music and every year they used to go and so really I mean....

RD : It was very different in the way that now we stick to the purity of Indian classical music. Earlier, in olden times as I hear it used to be in different groups and it was not organized. I am talking about say 1920s, what it used to be in 1900 or 1920s. So there would be several groups. The congregation would be at one place... they are busy with Qawwali, another place Bhajan.

RK : Very eclectic! *Ghazal* at one place, *Bhajan* at another place.

RD : Everything used to be there.

RK : Ashwiniji said that “ek hamam hota tha wahan pe ghazal ki evening hoti thi”. Have you also heard such a hamam or open air bath? I don't know what he referred to?

RD : In olden times there used to be a well and around the well they would have... I remember I have seen earlier it was a well and then it was converted into a tube-well. It was a place of pilgrimage for many people, DeviTalab they would come early in the morning...

RK : And what about the mahants ? I am not able to grasp exactly it wasn't a proper temple as we see today but it was a Shakti peeth.

RD : Actually this has a very long history. In the prehistoric times if we go when we say it is a Shaktipeeth . Are you aware about what were Shaktipeeth?

RK : I have very little information actually.

RD : Well in India, Pakistan and Afghanistan combined there are 52 Shaktipeeths. It is believed that Parvati was not invited to one of the havans or ritual at her father's place. But she went there and she jumped into the havan kund because Shivji was not invited to that havan. So from there the story starts. When Shiva heard that such a thing has happened and Devi is no more he was in great pain and he took the body- that was the burnt body of Devi and he was roaming around all the places just like enraged and madness and finally it is said like it is written in the Puranas and the scriptures that Bhagwan Vishnu using his Sudarshan Chakr, what we call in hindi '*mohbhang karna*'. He was so much attached to the Devi that he was not able to leave the body. So different parts of the body of Devi fell at different places. So wherever each part fell that became a Shaktipeeth. So in all there are 52 Shaktipeeths. DeviTalab is one of the Shaktipeeth.

RK : So it is part of the pilgrimage tour.

RD : This is mentioned in the Padma Purana. This was in prehistoric times.

RK : Jalandhar is one of the oldest city of Punjab along with Multan.

RD : Yes, very old city, this has a mention in various Hindu scriptures and the evidence is there. We have BrindaDevi Mandir here. Jalandhar was a demon and his wife BrindaDevi and we have Sati Brindavevi Mandir in Jalandhar. I have seen the temple- at the moment I think it is 10-12 feet below the ground level. That is one of the evidences that temple existed there in olden times and with the passage of time construction in the nearby area. So changes have taken place but the temple is still there. So Jalandhar is a very old, ancient city and being on the western frontier most of the attack all those Muslims, pathans. They all came from this route and whenever they wanted to attack India... some of them came they just wanted to loot whatever is available and leave and in most of the temples you would find that the lot of gold lot

of precious stones and silver, that has been there since the olden times. So there in history people have written that they went even upto Kangra. The Kangra temple which was supposed to have doors made with pure silver- even they were melted and taken away. So Devi Talab temple when we say what did they discovered it. So this was a Shaktipeeth. There is a small temple here we call it Tripurmalini temple. That is still there.

RK : On the Devi Talab grounds?

RD : Yes. Now in the modern temples what we have is statues made of marble and they are erected away from the walls. In the earlier times most of the temples you would see, in ancient temples all the idols were on the wall.

It is said that during Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's time one of his prime minister, he was travelling from Lahore to Haridwar and he stopped at Jalandhar. He had some army with him. They must have heard about this place and they wanted to see the place and people told him that there used to be a pond because every temple it is associated with the sacred Talab And even this had a pond and people must have told them that the pond was there, the Talab was there but it was again to destroy the history or Hinduism or history or temple what they did was they covered the pond and this became the ground level. So he ordered the digging of the pond and in that pond they found another statue-that was Mahakali. And he was the one who installed this statue and erected the Kali temple in the Devi Talab Mandir. So that temple is 450 years old. And he was so impressed with the, that he told Maharaja Ranjeet Singh that such temple exist in Jalandhar because land belonged to the Maharaja, everything belonged to the Maharaja. So he donated this land to Devi Talab.

RK : For the purpose of building a temple?

RD : Yes, he initiated and erected the temple, started the construction of the old Kali, which is still there. I mean lot of construction have taken place with the time and in the old historic books you would find old pictures of the temple the same old architecture was there. But now every thing has changed with the times-modern, with marble and new construction and gold plating and everything. That's the typical of north Indian temples now. Again it is said....there are two parallels-one is the

religious part and second is the musical past. Religion and music are so interconnected and so interwoven in all the religions.....

RK : Very true. Yes.

RD : Years passed by and it is said that there was one Shah Sikander, a Muslim pir . With the time he had his influence. And people in Jalandhar actually it used to be 70-80% Muslim population in pre partition days. And this pir was naturally very effective active and lot of support and people requested- he was doing lot of things for the temple. This was an ancient temple-Kali temple and Tripurmalini temple. People really got very worried and they requested another saint he was from Hoshiarpur district- Baba Hemgiriji.

RK : Even Baba Harballabh was from Hoshiarpur

RD : Yes he was also from Bajwara. They requested Baba Hemgiri, they went to Hoshiarpur and they told him the entire story that there is an ancient temple which needs to be preserved we request you to please come and save the old heritage and Shah Sikander it is written in the books whether it's true I don't know that he.... because he used to roam around he would change his powers to change his form. He would become a tiger or a lion. These are the stories..... Then Baba Hemgiri came here and Shah Sikander tried to play the same trick with him but it is again said that Baba Hemgiri was more powerful and converted him from a tiger to a goat. So a compromise was struck between two saints.

RK : Amiably thankfully. It is such a wonderful story because otherwise.... Ayodhya and that kind of horrible thing

RD : You stay in your territory, this is my territory, so let it be a Hindu territory....And from there another line starts Baba Hemgiri then after him his disciple Baba Tuljagiri

I think that lineage is mentioned in Dr. Bawra's book.

Then there is a book written on Jalandhar by Krishnanand Shastri.

RK : In fact Nareshji told me that I must meet him.



RD : Bawraji has taken lot of material from that book. Actually all these facts are mentioned originally in the book titled 'Jalandhar'.

You have to meet him and fix up a time

RK : That would really be wonderful because older the people their memories will be...

RD : Yes he will remember. He must be 85 now. He has seen many artists perform at Harballabh, which I have not. So that's the historical part one was the religion and second was... and each of the saints they would sing in the praise of the God. Baba Tuljagiri was very good Sanskrit scholar and a Dhrupad exponent and people from the city would come daily to listen to his bhajans, early morning prayers and they would visit DeviTalab. That was the daily feature and it is written in the books that even in the rainy days when this place used to be flooded, people would swim across the temple. So that was the glory of the saint-Baba Tuljagiri.

RK : And the power of the music.

RD : Harballabh at very young age became an orphan. Actually he had a relative from Jalandhar

RK : That was lucky for Jalandhar otherwise mela would not have existed in Jalandhar

RD : He brought Harballabh from the village Bajwara to Jalandhar. Sri Jwandhlal was his name. He was a rich man, philanthropist and a very religious person and his routine like others he would visit DeviTalab everyday and he would take young Harballabh along with him.

RK : By this time the Talab had been resurrected after Baba Tuljagiri....

RD : No Hemgiri

RK : Sorry

RD : Baba Hemgiri came there. Kali temple and the Talab was there in place. So Harballabh was so impressed with the Bhajans singing, I mean people singing on the banks of the Talab, people would sit do their meditation and listen to Baba Tuljagiri.

And it is said that Harballabh one day he was sitting on the Samadhi a young child was sitting in Samadhi and Baba Tuljagiri was standing in front of him and the time passed and when Harballabh opened his eyes he saw the Guru and that was the time when Guru found the disciple and the disciple totally surrendered to his Guru. That where Harballabh starts. So the Guru trained him in Sanskrit and in Dhrupad singing and with time he also became an exponent of Dhrupad style of singing in classical music. Time passed and in 1874 the guru passed away and Harballabh was named as ...the Gaddinashin of the DeviTalab... as the main Mahant.

So 1875? The first barsi was celebrated so Harballabh thought that the best way to celebrate or have a congregation of Sadhus and Fakirs and let there be singing in the praise of god. So they organized a small congregation of Sadhus and Fakirs at the Havan and the singing lasted for seven days.

RK : It must have attracted people also....

RD : Yes from the city, because who were daily visitors were also part of the same congregation.

This was in December because that was the time Baba Tuljagiri...

28<sup>th</sup> December. Actually with Hindi normally the date comes around 28<sup>th</sup> of December every year. So this became a regular feature year by year starting with 1875 onwards every year the same type of Sadhus and Fakirs they would gather, have that havan. It would start with the havan and then singing and Langar would go on and usually it was seven day feature and day and night and with time there were various varieties like Bhajan, Shabad, Quawalli. Because this was the Muslim dominated area so there were lot of Sufi singing- Sufiana Qalams and Quawallis. But everything religious and in the praise of God.

RK : Absolutely and that's what make the Harballabh so important because even though it is at a Hindu temple site it is getting musicians from eclectic Punjab culture, Sikh and Muslim also who are performing together

RD : Actually music does not have any religion.

RK : Yes exactly. I read in Bawraji's book that people even from Haryana and Fillore would come

RD : Yes these are the places which are say 50 miles away from Jalandhar, people would travel. Are you aware that there is a thing called Jantri. All punditjis use that-  
grah kaun sa hai. That was the year book. Normally in the modern times we have  
various types of year books, such and such event is going to happen. In olden times it  
used to be the Jantri. It was the year book.

RK : Ji Ji I have heard of it, but now you are saying about...

RD : Desi mahina...So it used to be mentioned in the Jantri and it was under the head-  
'Punjab ke mele'. Even in modern times Jantri you would find mention of Harballabh.

RK : Where would these Jantris be available Sir. Because the thing is in the  
dissertation if I want to show this history I might have to show a little picture of the  
Jantri may be...

RD : Yes why not

RK : Like in the Tribune I found some editions report and that I would be taking a  
reprography and producing it because they would like to see the evidence.

RD : Which year Tribune?

RK : I will be honest I used all the help that you have given by putting it on the  
website. So I went to 1913 issue there 7<sup>th</sup> December ka, in which it said that please  
bring your bed and bedding and someone from Goa is going to perform.

RD : Can you show me that?

RK : Yes it's 7 December 1913- Sunday Tribune, under the local and provincial  
heading it says, "Symposium of music and musicians at the Jalandhar city".

RD : That's in the book..

RK : No no that's in the Website also.

RD : Acha you took it from there.

RK : Yes . So Pandit Ramkrishan Bajaj from Goa, it's in Page 5 the Tribune. But  
because the Tribune was an English daily I think I'll get more references in Punjab  
Keshari and the urdu newspapers. I suppose the pre-1947 urdu newspapers...today of

course there it would not be there. But Pratap and Milap were post 1947 isn't it? They were Hindu refugees who came. Actually it's easier to do post 1947 period but more the time is passing the memories of pre 1947 will keep getting less. So that's why I thought I must atleast get as much as I can.

RD : So where were we?

RK : At the jantri

RD : Yes. It is available in the market even today I'll just find out I have some old clippings may be some Jantris. I'll look for that. Not today may be some other day

RK : So there is an official archive as I understand as well. I would like to be a member so that I could access it, life member or whatever is the procedure

RD : Sure you are most welcomed to be a life member, all those interested in music we welcome them to be life members, small fee we charge but we are interested only in people who are interested in music

RK : No I am interested in music but also in history of it. Both.

RD : Most welcome. I'll try to look for... I have all these information...old Jantri available with me. We will fix up some dates and....

RK : Ji ji I'm here till November 1<sup>st</sup>

so it was mentioned in that year book called jantri- Harballabh mela will be held for four days from 28<sup>th</sup> December was included always.

But this Jantri was available all over Punjab.

RD : All over Punjab, all over northern India, it's available. I mean there are 2-3 Jantris which are very popular with all the pundits in the northern India. One is published from Jalandhar one is published from Turali, a place near Chandigarh. So both these Jantris have a mention about fairs and festivals in Punjab and has a mention about Harballabh. So that's how people came to know that Harballabh is going to be held on these dates. I mean there is no question of Harballabh not being held.

RK : Right right. Everyone would turn up. In fact Bawraji mentions that one year the dates were changed or something and people were not there and they would get people from college.

RD : Now a days actually since last ten years and depending on peoples' conveniences, because on the weekdays the people are busy, they don't have much time and we need dedicated audience for classical music. So we fix up we have changed the dates it should be atleast Saturday Sunday always included. Make it for 3 or 4 days that depending on the finances and availability of the artists but we make sure that Sunday and Saturday are included. Because Sunday morning lot of people come to attend the Sunday morning sessions....

RD: So you had said *ki wo Jantri, Khurali and Jallandhar mein print hota hai* and the since last ten years the dates have been changed because of audiences' conveniences....

RK: Right. In fact there was a thing when someone had said that sometimes the greater performers are performing before... once I remember reading the 1998 or 1999 festival... like more senior artist perform before when some younger one later on perform. So this is great disrespect but I suppose what they don't realize is that the audience will come to listen to great artist....

Actually this is again order of seniority, sometimes the very senior artist they even don't like junior should come after them. That's again our problem.

RK: It is. But I was wondering about the maximum numbers that you have witnessed at the Harballabh site or the stories that you heard of people from rural areas also coming and attending the Harballabh.

RD: They do come even now, people are coming... lot of NRI's are coming. They plan their holidays because NRI's are visiting from November to February and most of them those who are interested in music they plan their holidays in December. Like just now I got a call from somebody who was saying... Mr. Sharma wants to come with his family from USA. They want accommodation, they want us to arrange for their accommodation. We will do that. The pandal can hold nowadays what we have

is it's a very comfortable pandal with a seating capacity of around 5000. And there is a turnover- people who come at six o'clock and they leave at 8 o'clock. Some people join at seven they might leave at ten. So the total turnover in a day might be more.

RK: Yes might be easily over 5000

RD: But after the hours sometimes the festival goes on, it starts four o'clock in the evening and will go on till 5:30 in the morning. But at the fag end we have still have around may be 1000 or 1500 interested people. Out of those 1500 I think there are many from the nearby villages. most of them. from the city there is live broadcast so they don't come out of their homes they see everything on the television. All those 1500 we assume come from outside so this is our assumption.

RK: But I read in the Gazetteer of the 70s or 60s I forgot the exact date but I saw in Delhi library that it has some 60,000. That's the number that is given....

RD: Actually those were the different times, only live music was available on the AIR or on the record it was just 3 min performance in LPs or EPs. For the live performances people had to come wherever the festival was. Nowadays with the television and even internet again lot of information in recorded music and recorded form is available in the CD's, DVD's even the live performances are available on the DVD's. So those interested can easily get access. But again we are happy that we are getting atleast more and more young people joining, they are getting interested into Indian classical music.

RK: Absolutely it is so important that for people from rural india even today it is not very easy to get such music. So for them it is wonderful opportunity to... it is kind of break also three days...

RD: We are getting audiences from as far as Gujarat, Assam, Calcutta, Varanasi, Bombay. People come from all over the places, Punjab naturally we are getting from the nearby places.

RK: So that's what is so interesting.

RD: Another challenge that we have taken on ourselves is to promote the upcoming artists.

RK: Sir but before that I want to just ask what is the maximum number that you have seen you have heard about like if you heard any stories *ki itne saare log aaye* the I mean during the nationalist era.

RD: I think 1962 or 63 may be in the early 1960s that I started going to the festival.

RK: People from all across tell me that there were peasants.

RD: It used to be jampacked.

RK: Obviously more than today...

RD: Yes much more than today much much more than today The pandal used to be bigger and there used to be a morning session also which is not possible nowadays because people are busy with their own professions and life has changed. Now actually we start around 2 actually we say it's 2 o'clock but 4 o'clock is the time when it really starts. Then we have Saraswati Vandana, winners of the previous year performing but the invited artists they start from 4 o'clock but again starting at 4 o'clock in the evening going up 4 o'clock morning next day starting again at 4 o'clock in evening. It's a big challenge actually for the organizers even to get good audience. All the people of my generation will remember Pandit Ravi Shankar, they often ask- are you inviting Pandit Ravi Shankar, forgetting that what we have seen Ravi Shankar was some 20 years back. And they are expecting the same performance from Ravi Shankar even today which is not possible. So unless we... if we have to continue with this- start promoting classical music, so we have to promote the younger generation also. And there is so much of talent in India, only what people need is opportunity and Harballabh is giving opportunity to young artists...

RK: With Competition such a major platform...

RD: No competition is yet another aspect that we organize a competition and the level of competition you should see....

RK: I came last year it was brilliant!

RD: They were very good and the first five people- they were highly competitive.

RK: And then they go on to earn name and...

RD: Naturally, our tradition is that, the coming year we initiate them as the performing artists. They come in our directory and we...on our website that this is the person who has come first this year and he will be performing next year. His name and photograph, and everything reflect on the website. So they start getting invitation from other places also.

RK: So whether it's in the Khayal section or in the...so they all will come. I was there at the competition last year but I couldn't unfortunately stay for the Harballabh... but I was very impressed. So I guess that girl will be singing this year. I'll look forward to... [pause]. So these were the great numbers like you said and people coming in.... .And even during I mean....like you might have heard from other people older people, during the nationalist times like when Paluskarji was there, even Mahatma Gandhi had visited?

RD: Yes he had visited. Actually he had come to Amritsar..

**RK-** For the Congress?

RD: After that he visited Harballabh.

**RK-**Do we have any...?

RD: We don't have any photograph...[laugh]

RK: No photo. But there must be some reports? I tried in Tribune but I did not find. But that's because he is Gandhiji, he is going everywhere how much will they would report about...

RD: *Waise* it is mentioned in other documents and books that are published-and the book titled Jalandhar and *Bawraji's* book, you will find the reference.

RK: And I am sure if I look at the newspapers of the Hindi, Urdu.

RD: There is one- since you are from Delhi you can ask Mr. L.K Pandit.

RK: From Maharashtra?

RD: No L.K Pandit is in Delhi.

RK: Yes I think he is Meeta Pandit's father.



RD: Meeta Pandit's grandfather-he was the one who sang in front of Mahatma Gandhi.

RK: *Acha*. Krishna Rao Panditji.

RD: Krishna Rao Panditji. And they were three of them....and Mahatma Gandhi, he got delayed travelling from Amritsar to Jalandhar. At every village or city he was stopped. He wanted to come to Harballabh be here for a longer period of time but since the delay the programme was so designed that he would listen to three artists performing. He was short of time and all the three sang together and one of them was Krishna Rao Shankar Pandit.

RK: So it will be very important to meet Mr. L.K Pandit.

RD: He will give you lot of documents and because in their family four generations have performed at Harballabh. Meeta is the fourth generation. Krishnarao Pandit and his father-they all have been performing at Harballabh.

RK: He mentions something like *Jaipatra* also *ki woh*....

RD: Every year there used to be a tradition- at the end of the festival on 4<sup>th</sup> day they would decide that who was the best artist, best performance and he would be given *Vijaypatra* and the *Pagdi*.

RK: *Acha* that is the *Pagdi*. Ok. Because someone has made a film on sufi music in Punjab- eastern Punjab, Indian Punjab and in that someone Puranshah Koti is interviewed and he says that my guru got the *Pagdi* of Harballabh some such thing... So *Jaipatra* and *Pagdi* were the two symbols.

RD: For the best performers.

RK: So this is like history of today's sms audience.

RD: Ha ha ha [laugh]... you are right.

RK: That's wonderful. But sir this has obviously stopped now.

RD: Now we don't actually.

RK: But this used to happen I mean -do you have any idea *ki* -it must have come gradually. Obviously it wasn't there since 1875 onwards because it started with like.

RD: I am not sure about year when it started and when it stopped... But actually those were very different times.

RK: There is whole that- *Punjab ki gayaki dangali jaise* even *tans* they say *pehalwani* you know the whole sense of competition and very robust *ki* like.

RD: I have heard of people- one vocalist would have three accompanists, three tabala players [pause]...and turn by turn they would accompany the vocalists. There used to be no sound systems and voice quality, pitch has to reach so many thousand. You can very much imagine the type of vocalists we had.

RK: In fact Mr. Raghav Menon in his book *Ashwiniji* told me to read it- he had said that how amplification has been in some way detrimental also because... made it audible but then the quality of voice has gone down- of the singers. They make little less effort because they know mike will... But that's amazing I mean these little things are so important about...

RD: The way you are sitting now- we are not very close to where Harballabh is held and if you go farther away there is Maharaja's palace here- Maharaja of Kapurthala

RK: Oh he has a palace here Jagatjit Singh

RD: This is in Vikrampura.

RK: I'll definitely visit.

RD: Nearby place. Nobody live there, the maharaja has sold off his property now. There is a school running there. So in that place- it is written in the books that he was sleeping in his palace and somebody was singing at Devitalab and he could hear the artist in the palace, this must be almost half a mile away. Look at the quality of singing, the voice, the pitch, and the volume.

RK: Which means the maharaja also patronized the festival....at least Kapurthala...

RD: Yes Harballabh has been getting patronage from Kapurthala, Jammu and Kashmir. [pause]

RK: The Dogra rulers of Jammu and Kashmir...

RD: Yes.

RK: And what about Patiala?

RD: I have not seen any mention about Patiala but Kapurthala and... but there were other philanthropists from Jalandhar, Amritsar, Karachi, Sakhar in Pakistan.

RK: Which is where the river goes...?

RD: No Sakhar is in Pakistan. People used to come from all those places to attend Harballabh. After Baba Harballabh, his disciples then they took over.

RK: Pandit Toloram...Dwarkadasji...

RD: At that time actually the expense was not much. People- they were not coming here for money.

RK: They were coming here out of a desire to....

RD: ..perform this was a place for pilgrimage ...this was a great seat of music. So like in south you have Thayagraja temple- people don't go there for money, that's the place of pilgrimage. Similarly we have in northern India the Harballabh temple here or the Samadhi of Harballabh. So this is a place for pilgrimage, people would come... and I remember what we have heard that a committee used to pay to and fro fare. In one of the year, they did not have money to pay for to and fro fare and they just gave- this cardamom- this is all we can, this is for Prasad and people were happy. Pandit Omkar Nath Thakur, they may give him some money so he returned all that and he took out 5 Rupee note from his pocket, added that into the money-what was given to him and offered that to the Samadhi. They say this is not the place where we come for money. But again things have changed now. Life was much simple and people could make their living and their family could live on small amounts [earlier], now everything has changed.

RK: Also the Maharajas would be patronising the singers and musicians...

RD: Yes most of them.... music has flourished out of the patronage from maharajas.

RK: Do we know about musicians from the court of Kapurthala or Patiala?

RD: From Gwalior... Mita Pandit's family

RK: They were from Gwalior Gharana. But what about our Punjab courts?

RD: Punjab, Punjab Gharana.... Well Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, he spent a lot of time in Lahore and then took in Calcutta. I don't have any particular names from Kapurthala or Jammu Kashmir or from Patiala. I'll have to find out. This will be an addition to my knowledge also.

RK: I'll find out and share...

RD: We will be so grateful.

RK: I'm grateful, there is no question, it's a joint... knowledge is for everybody to share and create. I meet one lady at Harballabh last year called Manjit Paddha who is working on Kapurthala and Patiala, so she might be able to tell us about the singers there.

RD: We are going to organise a seminar.. You are going to be here in November? I might have to leave by 1<sup>st</sup> of November. Ok on 5<sup>th</sup> November we have a seminar on 'Music and spirituality'.

RK: Actually I should perhaps stay on.

RD: So it is one day seminar and you will have an opportunity to meet Paddha and other people. Would you like to meet Mrs Purnima Bedi ?

RK: You have her number?

RD: I think I have her number... [searching]. Yes I have her number ... It is \_\_\_\_\_. We have Mr. O.P Seth who is the president, Mr.S.S Ajimal is the Director. And Shastriji... I did make a mention to him. He can give you lot of information about Harballabh, he has attended Harballabh, he has written a lot about music, he has written that book called 'Jalandhar'. And most of the document I got- all this is from his library. Now this is a declaration which was- see Narayanrao Vyas. This is a document which is a self-declaration given by the artists that nobody should offer any prize money to the artist during the performance and anybody violating this code will not be invited to Harballabh in times to come.

RK: That is so nice because that will maintain the solidarity of artists one artist will feel...This book (which you are showing me) is also very interesting this lady... because women in music is another ballgame altogether.

RD: See 1934 writing a book about music that also by a lady ....

RK: ....absolutely is phenomenal.. where can we find this book sir?

RD: This book I don't know, I got the Photocopy from documents Shastriji had, he might have the book also.

RK: We can find out, maybe I can check out the libraries.

RD: Name of the book I told you- Sangeet Prabha. [long pause]

RK: Sir how did you get attracted to the Harballabh and to the music and....

RD: Actually our family has been associated with the Harballabh for a long time, my uncle... because whenever there was, this collection drive going on...[pause]

RK: Collection drive....I think Ashwiniji told me that...I don't know what is right, true or not but he started the collection drive so that people feel that this is our festival and it is not just....

RD: Actually he became the president I think in 1950s, 1952 something, even earlier to that there were voluntary donations to organize the festival. These were in cash as well as in kind for *langar*...To feed the sadhus and fakirs and everybody and somebody would provide the ration and somebody would provide firewood.....Some money was required even at that time. [pause]... So Mahantji would like .....we used to have our ancestral shop at Chowksudan. Shops were around the Chowk, that used to be his first stoppage at my uncle's shop he would address *Pandit Harballabh aa gaye*. He would address my uncle as *Panditji*-

RK: Ok, Ashwaniji?!

RD: No, no, not Ashwaniji, but Mahant Dwarkadasji. Aswaniji was a police officer, he would not go, he would just instruct people, he would telephone people in Kapurthala, Ferozpur everywhere his associates. Because he was the SP, that time SP was a big man and he would ring up his subordinates that I'm sending people get the

collection done. And even the good part was 'smaller donations'-people even donating 5 Rs, we used to collect even 5 Rs from the bazaars.

RK: Acha your uncle would do the...not Dwarkadas..

RD: No...You are mixing up two things actually. One was Mahant Dwarkadas, he would come and visit my uncle at his shop in Chowksudan and then my uncle would ask, request people- the other shopkeepers in Chowksudan, 'come and donate for Harballabh'. And he would say whatever is left and he would open his cashbox that how much money you need more- take from my cashbox. So that's how our family got connected with Harballabh and naturally when you are making a donation you get invited to a place so when he used to be invited so the family would go and as children we also used to go to Harballabh. So music is just a.....

RK: ...it's an added benefit for a family?

RD: We got addicted to music.....[laugh].. So right from childhood we have been seeing, great artists performing at Harballabh, so now it is our turn to oblige.

RK: Very true sir. Really it is such an important part of Jalandhar's...(history).

RD: Actually it gives us lot of satisfaction that we are at least making some contribution, making the history go forward [pause]...asking me as a person, I'm the Treasurer, when we are asking for funds we visit all the places. It brings in... we go there just with a begging bowl, brings in lot of humility in a person, when we go and ask for money. So for me this has been a good lesson...[pause]. Actually your point is absolutely valid, there are people who can sponsor the whole festival. First of all we don't want to do that. Let everybody make a contribution and everyone feel that it is my festival. That brings a sense of belongingness

RK: That's during the festival that we go to them.

RD: We started... getting even 5 Rs donation from the market- it requires lot of effort actually but we had people like Jagannath Party, then Fakirchand Kapoor, then Kalia brothers- they were the people who would go with the donation slips from door to door. Somebody would say I'll give 11 Rs- Ok let him give 11 Rs , it used to be....many of the people would say- 'a rupee a month', so that was fixed, so this was

at 12 Rs a year that used to be fixed for, at many of the places, many of the shopkeepers.

RK: So that's the way that people felt that it is my festival...they belong to the festival.

RD: That's also necessary. I have old donation slips with me saying- donated 11 or 12 Rs , 15 Rs It's Ok.

RK: It is such an important thing because even when Mahatma Gandhi, he made the Congress, a people's organization, went to villages, there also people would give voluntary donations and...

RD: In Agarwal's...this is Maharaja Agrasen, he started- 'one rupee and one brick', anybody who would migrate to his town, residents would give him 'one rupee and one brick'. So if there are thousand residents even at that time, small village he would get thousand bricks to build his at least one room and thousand rupees if you want to extend, want to build a bigger building make livelihood or want to start a business. So that was one tradition started by Agrasen, who was founder of Agrawal Samaj.

RK: This is such an important part of the Harballabh because *ek to hai* how it started all of that then this is the way it has maintained itself and has become such an important institution. It's like part of Jalandher's identity almost.

RD: Yes but now we are moving forward we are doing the things, starting with Music and Research Academy, building of Archives. Harballabh Bhavan which has come up we spent lot of money-crore and 25 lakhs has already been spent. It's going to be full-fledge Music Academy, Research institution. We have started a music school. We are giving free education to all those interested. Initially we started with the school students and now college students even come, even the adult working. It used to be nearby school, now we are getting people from Phagwada and Kapurthala, they also come. And some of the student, they come with recording, like your audio recorder, they come once in a week, take the lessons, record the lesson and go back and practice at their places come back after a week and take new lessons...[laugh]

RK: Oh that's amazing.

RD: Because they are working they can't come from Phagwada everyday. Again technology has made the difference..[laugh].

RK: Really it's amazing. So the legacy continues...

RD: So we are trying to do our bit, trying to preserve classical music promote classical music *insallah* everything will be going to be Ok

RK: *Bilkul*, absolutely. Thank you so much for your time sir.

RD: You are making great effort, whenever you finish your thesis

RK: But I would like to meet you again because I might have some more doubts if I meet more people, there might be more questions if I go come up *toh*...and already I have taken more than an hour of your time, easily more than...so *aap jab bhi bolein* whenever later....because I have to visit newspaper office also like Punjab Keshari and....

RD: I have some old pictures.....

RK: Oh wow..

RD: This is the document...

RK: And if I mean I apply for the permission to quote these I will write- courtesy with your name there all of that..

RD: This is 26.11.1926..written by Krishenrao Shankar Pandit, Pandit Tolo Ramji *maharaj ko Kisanrao ka bahot namaskar aapki kripa se patra mila riyasat mein naukri ho jane se he is working in Gwalior still aane ki koshish karenge nahi hua to hum vidhyalaya ke ache balak aur vidhyarathi bhej denge*. There is a postal stamp of 26...[laugh]

RK: My God it's amazing sir! Really wonderful!

RD: This is Mr. Toloramji, Devi Talab, Jalandher.

RK: This is amazing. He was the man who organized it properly on modern...



RD: This is the public declaration after they had made a self-declaration, it was published as a leaflet, it was distributed that nobody is going to give cash prize or something this is the *prasansha patra*

RK: The *jaipatra* which.....

RD: No it is not the *jaipatra* this is music competition we had started earlier this is 1958 I think. This is signed by Ashwini Kumar. Now we have Pundit Ramakant, he is a performing artist goes to many music conferences...

RK: Even today...

RD: As a young boy he won 1<sup>st</sup> prize for instrumental music. He got this certificate and we got a copy from his copy scanned. He is part of the Academy now, he is giving free services to the Academy.

RK: Ok that's how this is taken forward.

RD: This is how it happens

RK: Some of these are on the website. I have seen. This is the old Samadhi Baba Harballabh

RD: Morarji Desai visiting the festival....Kishen Kumar [sound of flipping pages]

RK: Sir even Kundanlal Sehgelji was also *wasinda* of Jalandhar.

RD: Yes he was born in Jalandhar, he did not have any training in music.

RK: But still I am sure he must have sit and listened to so many of Harballabh. Somebody once said that....I don't know...obviously it is not possible that he would be performing or singing may be as in informal thing because he died in 1948.

RD: I don't have any reference about his performance in Harballabh, but we have reference about Master Madan. He also died at a very young age. So these are the... I am trying to get these from internet [pause]....Wadali brothers have grudge against Harballabh that they were not allowed to perform in Harballabh. He gave a performance in 1940 in Calcutta and 1944 in Bombay his performance was highly appreciated... performance in 1958 which he gave in Jalandhar. Dr. Manorama

Sharma she writes in her book .... So I am trying to get all these informations, compile these information about.....Krishnarao Shankar Pandit.

RK: Even Laxman, his son would also have....Laxmankrishna Rao Panditji would have perhaps some of the old....

RD: I think he has lot of material about Harballabh....

RK: In fact we can request him to share a scanned copy with the Mahasabha....

RD: Shastriji has taken some of the documents from him...[Long Pause]

Salamat Ali Khan 1941

RK: the Shyam Chaurasi Brothers, I read on the internet- I found that apparently they gave their first performance as 8 year olds at Durgiana temple at Amritsar.

RD: That I am not aware of.

RK: I will send you the website where- one old gentleman from Pakistan reminiscing that someone Mr. Sheikh, that it was in Durgiana, that young Salamat...

RD: Pandit Omkarnath Thakur in 1918, he was invited to sing in the famous Harballabh Mela in Jalandhar. I am trying to get all these for my book. May be I will get something from your dissertation.

RK: I hope sir, definitely. Ashwaniji mentioned that there was a Gandharva Mahavidhyalaya opened in Jalandhar as well.

RD: There was one but....

RK: It did not flourish..

RD: Dalip Chandra Vedi and....[long pause]....there was a centre of Gandharva...a small place they used to conduct exams, this was one of their centres....

RK: But I think what he meant was Pandit Paluskar established apart from Lahore, he did it in Jalandhar also. But I have not come across such reference on Pandit Paluskar's history anywhere else.

RD: It is not mentioned anywhere. You are right.

RK: Yes. Lahore and then Bombay.

RD: Jalandhar probably they had given one centre to Dilip Chandra Bedi, this is vaguely I have this information, I can ask one of his disciples.

RK: He was in Paluskarji's time? I am sorry I don't know, who Bedi ji is?

RD: But this is one name I can associate with the Vidhyalaya...

RK: In the early times...?

RD: They used to provide training in music and there were very few students and even Music Academy we had opened- Harballabh Music Academy in the earlier times also. So I think at that time it was not maintained and finally... Since now we have our own place it makes a lot of difference the continuity once you have a house you continue to live there. So if you keep on renting a house you may shift to another city. If you build a house in one town there is a probability that you may live there for next 25-50 years. I think the same thing about opening a school here and there....

RK: Very true and Kanya Mahavidhyalaya is another very old institution of Jalandhar. They RD: They have some archives also.

RK: Because I read their newsletter *Panchal Pandita* of 1913 and in that they referred to the visit of Pandit Paluskar. Tribune doesn't see anything about his visit to Jalandhar but *Panchal Pandita* does and in that they have given the importance of music and how it was in the curriculum also in 1913.

RD: They were the first who introduced music for ladies. In fact they have published a book on the 'History of Kanya Mahavidhyalaya' and they are going to celebrate 125<sup>th</sup> year on 20<sup>th</sup> of October or something.

RK: Ok. I will find out. I'll be going...

RD: Why don't you go and ask? Aatima Sharma is the principal, good lady, very helpful.

RK: Sure definitely I will.

RD: It used to be a tradition because they were the only girl students who were trained in music and Harballabh would start with Bande Mataram and sung by students.

There were two things which were permanent Bande Mataram and Saraswati Bandana they would start and Bande Mataram.... Even in the British time it was banned, Harballabh would conclude with Bande Mataram. Public singing of Bande Mataram was banned and even then they were doing that. That is Nationalism and National Movement...

RK: Thank you so much sir for your time.

**Interview with Vice-President (Competition) HArballabh Sangeet Mahasabha,  
Mrs. Beas Kalyan Singh, 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Model Town, Jalandhar. 45  
minutes, 25 seconds.**

(Note: 'BKS' refers to Mrs. Beas Kalyan Singh, the interviewee and 'RK' to Radha Kapuria, the interviewer)

BKS—First time I attended in 1953 because I was born and brought up in Jammu & Kashmir, related to Dr. Karan Singh ji, he is my first cousin. Hamara joh shauk shuru hua toh unke birthday par all the singers used to come...

RK: Malka Pukhraj?

BKS: No, no, Malka Pukhraj was hardly a *singer*, she was tafiq.. (tawaif?) not *her*, but Kesar Bai, Gangu Bai, Onkarath Thakur, I have heard all these. As I am growing old I have forgotten the names... His birthday used to be in September, when a darbar was held. There used to be a purdah for ladies in the palace from behind which we would hear all the great singers; men and women used to be separated. We used to talk about music, and also sing classical ourselves. It was my subject, sitar was my subject in B.A.

RK: Which university, ma'am?

BKS: Panjab University. Earlier this all used to be Punjab, Jammu and Kashmir didn't have its own university. In 1947 I had to give the intermediate exam—in those days, the intermediate exam used to be there. In order to give the exam for music, one had to go to Lahore in those days. So my father he refused because the fighting (riots) had started. HE said 'no, you cannot go to Lahore.' So I changed my given subject to Panjabi or something just three months before my exam. I am explaining to you... how could they send girls in those days? For us it wasn't something difficult to go to Lahore as we used to go do our shopping in Sialkot and Lahore; the cars also used to have purdah due to our connections with royalty. So I changed my subject at that time. What I mean I had these seeds sown from the beginning. So when I got married in Jalandhar, because I was the only one in 5 sisters who got married in Punjab—my elder sister was married to Rana Saheb Mellore that was in Himachal, two sisters are married in Jodhpur royal family, and one sister is married in Uttaranchal in Nainital. I was pitied by everyone they used to say, 'She is going to Punjab, over there there is

no culture at all.' I used to feel so bad. Everyone used to say, 'She is going to Punjab? Poor girl, poor girl! She is getting married in Punjab.' But when I came to Jalandhar, for me it was something. At that time you know, my father-in-law was in the IAS and he was Director, Rehabilitation. 1953 I got married and 1953 December Harivallabh I went with him.

RK: Your husband is also from a royal family?

BKS: No, they are common their family is also from Himachal, but at that time it was all Punjab. After half an hour my father-in-law said, "Come, lets go home." I was shocked, I said "It has just about started now!" (laughs) I was shocked I couldn't say anything to him, I used to cover my head in front of him. I requested him that I'd like to go on listening. He said you take your husband, same with my husband he also said after half an hour "lets go." (laughs) Because there needs to be some 'shauk' for/towards music, no? Which they didn't have. Somehow you know I made friends with Kamla Lal. She used to be married to the owner of Sant Cinema here. She belonged to a very cultured Jalandhar family and she told my husband, "Don't you worry, you go home, I will send your wife home. No worries." Next day my father-in-law, there is a certain strictness in us Thakurs, he asked me "how did you come?" So I reassured him, "they have dropped me, their driver just dropped me and left." From then I kept taking interest and now I am in-charge for all the competitions for young people. Really good.

RK: I attended the competition last year. Unfortunately I had to return to Delhi so couldn't stay on for the main Harballabh; I had met you once at that time also.

**BKS:** Yes. Those days are also very cold. Now actually I look forward (giggles), from the whole year. Very good committee and very good people around.

RK: They are very much interested in music.

BKS: And we are quite strict with competition rules. And then its an all-India event, its not a regional or restricted to Punjab. Some Punjabi people come saying 'you do this, you do that', so I am very strict. I always tell them, 'don't say this thing to me. For me Punjabi, Haryanvi, or whatever, U.P.... Awadhi etc. whoever comes for the competition, they are the same. What I mean is that we have a very good competition. And children have so much opportunity.

RK: That is a good thing the Harballabh is doing. Some of the memorable experiences of yours in the Harballabh?

BKS: One I remember is the incident of Bade Ghulam Ali... The rain was in such full swing, that the shamiana was all drenched. The entire gallery was filled with people sitting in the cold and rain. Once this happened with Ravi Shankar ji as well. Once when he had come, he was playing for *four hours*.

RK: My God.

BKS: People couldn't get enough of this. You would feel you are somewhere else (with the music)! That is if you are generally fond of music, you see, it depends.

RK: The audience also...

BKS: Yes, you see, going to a place like Delhi.... First going is difficult, you have to obtain a ticket etc. You have to spend lots of money and travel far distances. In Jalandhar, distances are not too far. Secondly, there is no ticket charged, nothing.

RK: Everyone can come.

BKS: This is the unique part of Harballabh. From our side we always try that we make the public comfortable and work hard and well. It is very good. Second thing, the audience who comes to listen, one are music teachers and their students. The other category are the middle class. They have heard only a couple of names, those who are extremely famous who straightaway demand in lakhs. But there are so many artists who are as good as the big names and they get the opportunity. So such talented artists. I say, at least listen to the new talent, instead of being fixed in 3-4 big names. How else would they get a chance? Earlier this wouldn't happen. But even now, artistes wish to come to Harballabh just for the sake of performance. They phone our General Secretary, Mrs. Purnima Beri. Nowadays, there is great paucity of funds. My children are doing very well. My daughter is married to Maharaja Kishangarh, Rajasthan and my son, elder son with God's grace has got a very good business and all. Right now a cheque is kept here, I'll show you, Rs. 1 lakh! For harballabh. Because I have a shauk for music. So he says, Mamma, you and spend it however you like. What I mean is we need lots of money—for all the rganisation, sitting, this, that, electricity etc., everything. So now our meetings will start, fundraising is so difficult.

There is no difficulty for listeners, the administration helps everyone very well. There is no difficulty for seating also, with God's mercy it runs very smoothly.

RK: Yes. Many more people come because there is no ticket. So what is the largest number you have seen?

BKS: We have never counted in this way, child. Never! But this much is definitely true that the entire pandal gets filled up. A very good response. But I was now saying this to Purnima ji, that now we shouldn't hold the sammelan so late. Everyone is getting on in years. I completed 79!

RK: You don't look it at all!

BKS: (laughs) But from the beginning there is a rule that Harballabh goes on the entire night. I was born in Himachal; brought up in Jammu and Kashmir but my family comes from Himachal. Over there, even if there is a birthday, then ladies sing folk songs all through the night. You won't believe it, but entire nights are spent this way. They are so fond of music. These songs are also such, different for birthdays, different for weddings. My bua, the mother of Dr. Karan Singh, she had just one son, so we used to mostly live with her in the palace, all of us sisters. She had such a great fondness for music, I have seen myself how singing would continue till 4 am in the morning. SO fond of music are people in Himachal. Now of course because of the coming of film music its not the same, but basically, those people also do folk dance, if once they start dancing, then they will dance for hours together. Even in Rajasthan this is so, they also have a very good music.

RK: This entire belt is such, right?

BKS: A lot of rhythm in the ladies, which I see when I go for weddings. Punjab doesn't have it so much. There is more of show in Punjab. There is a lot of noise, but not like that (rhythm of Hmachal etc.)

RK: Did the Maharajas of Kapurthala, Patiala also patronise the Harballabh?

BKS: That I can't say. With Kapurthala we had no links, but with Patiala we had kinship relations as well. I had the opportunity; once I stayed in Shimla, and met Amarinder's grandmother, a very majestic lady she was 6 feet tall and very beautiful, with eyes like this. (gestures). Because mostly Rajput girls they used to marry.



Patiala princes had a great fondness for music. As for Kapurthala, I never saw any link with Harballabh, that they came or not. We sit down, no, in baithak style. Sometimes we also put chairs in the rear of the pandal, some people cannot sit down for such a long time through the night. Now in fact it is very comfortable, earlier there used to be only common durries. Now there are mattresses, carpets, very well organised. You must definitely come.

RK: Yes definitely. Did women come in the audience to listen?

BKS: Oh yes! But the majority used to be male because it went on through the night. College students used to come in large numbers. Music teachers and their students used to be in the largest number. Some would come just out of fondness and liking of music.

RK: Even on stage were there lady-artistes performing?

BKS: Yes, yes! In 1953 very good, famous ladies used to come. All used to come. There was no such thing. For music, ladies used to come even to Jammu-Kashmir. For classical music, there was no such (restriction).

RK: And have you heard the shabad sung here?

BKS: This.... We only do classical music, we don't want to do light music. You see, this is only meant for classical. In classical, any one may come, we have no restriction. There are many *raagis* who sing the *shabad*, but then it becomes a free-for all religions; Buddhists will come, Hindus will come, x,y,z religions will come.

RK: Then it becomes very difficult...

BKS: No, its not like that, in classical music, everyone comes. All the artistes.

RK: After Partition, artistes who might have migrated from here... would even come from across the border and perform here?

BKS: Yes, yes. They come even now.

RK: Yes, but in 1947, because the division was fresh...

BKS: I have no idea about 1947-1949, I was not here since I got married in 1953. So in 1953, lots of artistes used to come, even from Pakistan. They used to come from all

over India. Because music is... you see....beyond borders. They used to come and stay with me only; one gentleman from Kashmmir only, he was my *munh bola bhai* from Pakistan, I stayed with them in America. So they used to drive (across the borders) and come here stay with me. Not for Harballabh, they used to go to Delhi. What I mean is, these rigid borders were not so rigid as they are now. Earlier there were not so many restrictions. They were of Kashmir, they migrated to Pakistan and they studied with my brother in college. When I went to America I stayed with them only. Those bad feelings were *not at all* there. Not at all! Even in Kashmir, you see, when riots and violence happened, there were no bad feelings. In fact what I say is that we have seen a rare secularism. Maharaja Hari Singh was very secular; this is because Sheikh Abdullah came in the middle and meddled with Pandit Nehru for his own benefit and getting his own family ahead. At the time when the entire Hindustan was burning and being cut into pieces, Jammu-Kashmir was the only place. I was very young at that time, I must have been 13 years old in 1947. So we used to go with my buaji, you won't believe me that she used to lot of social work. So the ladies who came from Mirpur, their chests were slashed in such way. (gesture)

RK: Tsk tsk.

BKS: It was so bad, I was traumatised. The people who came from Mirpur, they were not Kashmiris, they were in a very terrible condition. I have seen with my own eyes. We used to hold camps, give them clothes, food, everything in 1948. I have seen lots of things with my own eyes. A bestiality had come upon the people, those were bad times. People can't *imagine* what happened. It is always the woman who suffers.

RK: Yes.

BKS: The Rajput families of Poonch etc., killed their own young daughters, and it is said the wells were full. What could they do? Or else they would be picked up and out in an even worse state. They killed them themselves. It was a very bad time. The children of nowadays don't know what happened. It was the worst time I have ever seen. But I have seen a rare secularism also. All my friends were Muslim girls, and we are such good friends and have had such good times. Even now, we have no this thing, our hearts don't have this (communalism) at all. We are broad-minded. My brother settled down in Hyderabad itself, he was working there and liked the people

and the place. There are very nice cultured people over there. They come to our weddings. Very nice people.

RK: Did Raushanara Begum also come here?

BKS: Yes, she used to come here. I have heard her even in Delhi.

RK: I once read an article on Kesar Bai Kerkar by Sheila Dhar.

BKS: Yes she (Sheila Dhar) had come, but no one can hold a candle to Kesar Bai.

RK: Yes, Kesar Bai first told Sheila ji about Harballabh and said that the audiences in Delhi are like puppet audiences, people know how to listen at the Harballabh. So, have you also noticed the audience being very knowledgeable?

BKS: Yes, *very* knowledgeable you know. Some old people come to listen to the Harballabh so in fact they sit in the back, when we see that they come every year, we ask them to come sit in the front. Because they are genuine! We also have organisation for feeding. There are so many workers, working people, we call them and feed them and we see, that yes, truly they have a great fondness for music. Common people I am talking about. They know what raag etc.

RK: In the early days when you used to go, there used to be lot of common people and peasants?

BKS: Well I am talking about ordinary working people who have a fondness for music. Who know about the raags and used to listen every year. There are *many* such people in Jalandhar. Even now there are many who listen a lot. In fact now music is a subject now in all the colleges. A lot of students come, even in the competition. You will see how tough our competition is. Its not *easy*. You know, sometimes, talented children are pushed *so hard* by their parents. I tell them, see, the diamond will always shine. Nor will its worth ever decrease. The one who has to test, he/she will get to know it is a diamond. So please don't push the child so much that his/her other activities are stopped. Give it time to play, don't rob its childhood. I saw in the competition, parents are so keen to see their children come on top. So I tell them, see, your child *has* a lot of talent. But you have to store that talent, but don't push them so hard, that they lose out on their childhood. Give them time to meet their friends, be

natural. There are such parents also who are professionals, music teachers themselves, they push them so much, that I feel very saddened.

RK: When did the competition start?

BKS: I don't remember. When I was made in-charge, then the competition was already in place. I don't even remember when I became in-charge. I used to go only to listen. Then slowly, slowly I became a member, earlier even this was not there. Then slowly they got me involved. Now they have made me Vice-President. From my side it is my full endeavour that everything happens genuinely. Our fees for performing is also very nominal. If you do it completely for free also, then people don't respect it. Therefore a small fees and restrict the number of performances, beyond which we don't accept more. Those coming late sometimes come with *sifaarish*. This doesn't look nice at all. In art, this shouldn't be the case, for art cannot be in everybody. Everyone cannot be talented. Some even become *be-sura* in the middle. We give them 9 minutes. Its quite interesting actually. I hope you'll come.

RK: I will definitely come without a doubt, this time. Looking forward to it.

BKS: Do you sing or...?

RK: Ma'am I have learnt during childhood, my mother made me give the 4<sup>th</sup> year examinations at Gandharv Mahavidyalaya in Vocal. But its been more than 10 years now and I haven't been in touch.

BKS: But this means you know the a,b,c, and you must know something. Some knowledge you must have.

RK: Ma'am, was there newspaper coverage of this in the 1950s, 1960s? Do you remember reading?

BKS: Oh yes! Lots. Both *The Tribune* and also local papers in Hindi. Everyday there is a report. Nowadays, there is much more coverage, you know how the media is changing. Nowadays I don't like the hoarding at every corner. This looks very cheap, and doesn't look aesthetic, I don't understand what people see in it. Its very bad. Punjab is a little loud in this way. What is your surname?

RK: My surname is Kapuria.

BKS: Where are you from?

RK: My father's family is from Lyallpur.

BKS: Are they sardars?

RK: No, no.

BKS: Only thing I find in Sardarji is that some time they don't know anything. Sometime they make fun of our gods goddesses. I get very annoyed. I say its not that. The other day only they said, what is this ritual? We have this yagopaveet ceremony for my son, one of very important sanskaars out of the 32 sanskaars. So they said what is this? I said, don't say that. The threads, all three have some meaning. It is significant. My elder son wears it, not my younger one. I don't force them, you are educated, you decide for yourself. My husband doesn't wear at all. I don't say anything. I have got my puja room and got everything. I don't force my children and say come and do this etc. I have got shivling, I have got everything; I do it because I like it. What I mean is it is a way of life for me. I wouldn't call it a religion. I say don't call me religious, it's a way of life. Hinduism is a way of life; I feel good waking up in the morning, bringing flowers for God; white flowers for Shiv, red flowers for the Mother Goddess (Mata). I like it, taking bill stone for Shiv and dhoop for Ganesha. We have seen this in our houses, so nothing wrong with that.

If ever I pass a gurudwara then on its own my head bows down. I like Sukhmani Sahab very much because I understand it. In our Srinagar, right next to us was the *ziarat*, upstairs was the church. And we have studied in the convent (Presentation Convent Srinagar). Our mother told us this only, in the morning when you get up, the church was on top, we used to bow our head to that also, there was the *ziarat*, to which we would also bow our head, and also bow our heads to the mandir. Such secular upbrining, you see. No bad feelings, purity or something. And I always tell that Hinduism is a way of life, there are no dogmas. You want to do it bare-headed, do it that way. If you want to fast, fast, else don't. There is no forcing. I have two daughters-in-law, I don't force them. One is from Rajasthan royal family, the younger one had a love marriage with a Delhi girl. It is their wish. My husband did not know the names of the wives of Shivji and Ramji when I got married. He is from Doon School and Government College, Lahore. He is a very good swimmer. His interests

are totally different. We are complete opposites. But with God's mercy, its 58 years now that we have been married.

RK: That's wonderful.

BKS: First year I used to feel how am I going to cope with him because he was so find of travelling over in his car. We went all over in the car. We drove to Leh, Goa, Hyderabad so many time, Bombay. All places in the car, in those days! Once we had found dacoits ahead of Gwalior. We had such fun! Then I have done a lot of trekking. 14 kilometres above Gulmarg near Khilanmarg is the Al-Pathar. Beautiful frozen lake. We went to Amarnath ji on foot from Belgaum. I trekked all those heights in young age. Badrinarayan ji was also on foot earlier. Now ofcourse the car goes right upto it. When we had gone, one had to walk on foot long distances. I think best thing is trekking and it is very healthy. When I came to Punjab I heard people condemn me for eating meat. I was really shocked because I was brought up in such a way where nothing is good nothing is bad in the conception only. In Punjab, such a conception is there. So I was very amazed. But life is there in everything, whether in *vansapati* or animals. Yes, it is not as though I cannot live without meat, but because in the mountains, there is hunting. Hills and plains are different because it used to be very cold up there. There used to be no fridge which was not a problem. Now of course the entire conception has changed. Only thing is that I want to say this to girls, that you must know one or two talents. Despite marriage and one or two kids, who will grow up and go away, to fall back you must have your own hobbies, your own circle. Not as if you are so involved in the children that when they leave you are depressed. You must keep your interests alive. Health is wealth and take care of your health, if you have good health, you can enjoy your life.

RK: Ma'am one more thing I had to ask about donations to the Harballabh?

BKS: There are many industrial houses in Punjab. Actually the entire organisation of Harballabh was changed by Mr. Ashwini Kumar. Earlier it used to be completely ordinary, sadhu-sants used to come and set up their dhunas next to Devi Talab. When we went in the beginning, then there was a raw shamiana, not a water-proof shamiana like these days. People used to bring quilts and come. Even now some people bring quilts and come. I think Pt. Tolo Ram was an elder of his family. He organised it in a disciplined manner and made it a proper festival up to a standard. Anyway you come and see this time.

**Interview dated 28<sup>th</sup> October 2012 with vocalist and teacher Dr. B.S. Narang, Adarsh Nagar, Jalandhar 49 minutes, 48 seconds**

*(Note: 'BSN' refers to B. S. Narang, the interviewee and 'RK' to Radha Kapuria, the interviewer)*

RK: After 1947, you...?

BSN: I actually belong to Nakodar.

RK: Ok, you are from Nakodar!

BSN: So I stayed there until my childhood and metric, after which I did B.A. here in our college.

RK: Yes, the colleges are here only.

BSN: Now even Nakodar has 3 colleges. I am not talking about now but about an earlier time. There used to be an atmosphere of music at home. My father sahib was very knowledgeable and a musician and music lover of a high order. You must have heard of Pooran Shah Koti, Hans Raj Hans' guru. Pooran Shah Koti's father he was a student of my father.

RK: Ok.

BSN: Barkat Sindhu was also his student only.

RK: Pooran Shah's father's name was Barkat Sindhu...?

BSN: No no, his name was Niranjana. Barkat Sidhu was his nephew, still is. A very good singer in the sufiana style of music. My father sahib kept me in classical only from the beginning and when I used to study at school then there used to be a musical conference in Nakodar, so we used to sing there. It used to be a Mela of Shivratri.

RK: At what time of year did this happen?

BSN: This used to happen every year at Shivratri.

RK: Of one day alone?

BSN: No, of 2-3 days, mostly of 2 days.

RK: Does it still happen now?

BSN: Now it doesn't. Since a long time it has stopped. It might still be happening, in another way perhaps. But the atmosphere of classical which used to be there that hasn't remained to the same degree now.

RK: So this means that even at the Shivratri Mela there used to be classical music?

BSN: It used to be a small mela, the singers from all over Punjab would come there. Pt. Banwari Lal, Pt. Kunj Lal—Ramakant ji's father, Master Govardhan ji, Pt. Satapal ji, Onkarnath.

RK: Thakur?

BSN: No, not Thakur, but an Onkarnath from a village Chhokran here itself. This Onkarnath used to sing very well. And Pt. Manilal Bali, Harishchandra Bali, Pt. Husn Lal-Bhagat Ram ji the music directors.

RK: That is all the singers of the Punjab.

BSN: Yes, many from Punjab- Pt. Baburam ji, Sardar Sohan Singh ji, all these big people, at that time the atmosphere of classical in Punjab used to be substantial. It is still there today but not as much as then. Classical music is music of 'A Class'. Classical music has refinement in it. I believe to be cultured is to be refined, example when we say so-and-so 'is a very refined man.' Nowadays in our Punjab especially, disco music is being propagated because of the media boom, music is also 'seen' apart from being 'heard'. But music is something to be heard (not seen) and listened to. It is closely related with a spiritual background. Unless you don't have a spiritual background, you cannot follow classical music until then. I was talking about my childhood, and the Shivratri mela. Over there, I think I sang at the age of 9-10 years. My brother used to sing, his name was Krishan. First he used to sing and he got a lot of respect and was garlanded. I was younger, and my mother said, 'you should also sing and do *riyaaz*.' That is it. My father saab made me do a lot of *riyaaz*. Once it so happened I think in about 1952 or 1953, the tabla player Inayat Husain had come from Pakistan. He was a friend of my father saab. He had gone from here itself, after partition. Partition resulted in losses for many people, see this is such a bad thing about politicians, that the biggest brunt of Partition was borne by the Punjab. Bengal



had already been partitioned before. Upto Delhi at that time it was all Punjab only. Now there are three—Haryana, Himachal and some part of Delhi—it was all Punjab. And more than this, there was west Punjab, which is Lahore. So Punjab was something else only, it was so very different. ('Punjab ki toh baat hi kuch aur thi).

RK: Ustad Salamat Ali, Nazakat Ali.

BSN: They were of this Punjab. They went there (Pakistan) late on. They used to sing at the Harballabh. I even have a recording of them singing at the age of 8 or 10 years old.

RK: They had sung at the Durgiana also.

BSN: Yes, yes, everywhere they had sung, from childhood itself he was genius. Ustad Salamat Ali-Nazakat Ali. I once went to take an exam at Sujampur in Himachal and there I saw an old photo of his, one Mr. Dikshit over there showed it to me. He said can you recognise who this is, an 8-10 year old boy sitting amidst *Ustads*. At that time the *Ustads*—Pt. Krishna Rao, Vinayak Rao Patwardhan, Pt. Onkarnath Thakur ji, Narayan Rao Vyas—amongst such great people, this child was sitting in the middle on a chair! Which means even at that time, these great people used to give him the honoured title 'ustad'. He was something else, I tell you. Punjab's Sham Chaurasi gharana (to which belonged Salamat Nazakat Ali) was earlier of dhrupad, Haryana also had it, Talwandi too in Ludhiana...

RK: Which is now in Lahore, perhaps they are coming this year to the Harballabh.

BSN: Who is coming?

RK: I think Muhammad Hafeez Khan.

BSN: Yes, of Talwandi gharana, it is near Ludhiana over here. I was telling you about Inayat Hussain Khan Saab, he was playing with me. My father saab had made me prepare Raga Deshkaar. "Mohan Jaago Man Harwa; Jagadish, Jagadpati, Jagjeewan"! See, usually it is said that wording is not very important in classical music; but see the poetic and literary content of this composition! It is so good. 'Mohan jaago, man harwa, Mohan jaago, man madhusudhan, man bhaawana. Man Jaago Jagadish, Jagadpati, Jagjeewan.'

RK: It is a Raga which resembles Bhoopali.

BSN: Yes, yes very much so. After singing it, Inayat Hussain Khan Saab gave me lot of praise and commendation, saying the *antra* of this was very difficult. I will sing a bit and show you. (Sings Raga Deshkar composition) It was appreciated a lot. In any case when a child sings, he is encouraged by people, so I got a lot of love. And in childhood we used to sing Bhoopali... (Sings 'Shaam man more binati karoon main tohri...') I mean to say that along with the music studies also continued. My father used to say that studying is important. When I was in class 5 or 6, then in our Nakodar, over there, there used to be a great master poet of Urdu (Ustad Shayar) his name was Josh Malsiani. He used to organise *mushairas*. And I used to even participate in the functions in school. In our D.S. Higher Secondary School at that time it was just High School. So in those *mushairas* Josh sahib taught me the *ruhaniyat* of Urdu, like there are *ghazals* and different words (recites sher). He used to make me recite this in the *mushaira*... these are the memories of childhood when I was 10-12 years old there used to be functions of our Arya Samaj where people used to come to participate from outside as well. So we used to sing the songs and *qawwalis* of Swami Dayanand ji.

RK: You mean the songs and qawwalis of Josh Malsiani ji?

BSN: No in our Arya Samaj function there used to be Santram Aish (?) his students used to write songs of patriotism and classical would continue alongside.

RK: Your birth is of the 1940s?

BSN: My birth was in 1945.

RK: Before independence?

BSN: I was 1 and-a-half years old when Pakistan was made. I had not seen and nor had I studied Urdu but Josh sahib used to tell me about Urdu, that one should pronounce it like this or that. Nowadays people don't even know how to say 'ghazal'. When the Harballabh Mela used to happen we used to come to listen to it in childhood.

R: from Nakodar?

BSN: Yes from Nakodar only... My father saab used to come here no, so for three-three days they would stay here only.

RK: Since what age do you remember coming?

BSN: I think when I was 10-12 years old. Perhaps earlier than that also, since there was a great fondness for classical music. So I have heard big-big people, I have heard Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan sitting right in front of him. I have heard Begum Raushanara and Basavraj Rajguru, Pt. Onkarnath Thakur ji.. At that time mostly vocalists used to only come. V R P, NRV I have heard all of them. Us Salamat Ali Khan saab he used to love me tremendously, he has even come to my house. Bakaayada he has tied me a ganda and I have heard so many *ustads*, Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Vilayat Khan, and in tabla, Shanta Prasad Gudayi Maharaj, Chatur Lal, Ram Narain (sarangi) and one Sundhari player Siddhraam Yadav.

RK: Sundhari?

BSN: Sundhari is an instrument just like shahnai. A little different sound than the shahnai, but a very, very sweet sound. Siddhraam Yadav. I have listened to Ustad Karim Jaafar, Nikhil Banerji, Ajay Chakraborty... who is newer.

RK: In those days when you used to go, then apart from classical was there any other singing also? And did *saadhus* and *fakirs* come?

BSN: *Saadhu sants* used to come a lot. They used to have their *dhunas*. Many types of people, they used to *sher-o-shaayari* later on. But my great fondness was for classical music alone. The talab in which you see water now used to be dry at that time. The mela used to be organised and on the floor they used to lay a '*kaayi*' which is also called a '*paraali*' in Punjabi, so that it also feels a little cosy. This tradition used to continue and I had to listen every year, and the things I have heard in childhood I still remember them. I still feel, when I have to listen or I am in unity (*ekaant*), then those voices and those instruments I can still hear them today. Ahmad Jan Thirakwa and Ustad Vilayat Khan saab, on the sitar, along with him for *sangat* on the tabla Pt. Prem Vallabh his student is sitting. These people were very... now what can I tell you much effort an artiste has to put in. Nowadays there is a great lack which is coming in music that we people only in 7-8 years say that we become teachers, teachers who doesn't even need to sing or play! But if he doesn't know the practical aspect, then what will

he tell the students? This is the lack coming here. So from doing PhD or MA—even I have done it—singing or playing doesn't come that way. This is an act of great commitment and sacrifice. You have to put in maximum efforts from the very beginning

RK: Yes.

BSN: So every time one goes on stage you have to be perfect. Just listening to the Harballabh has helped me increase my knowledge of music. My father saab used to also correct me. In 1962 or 65 Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan saab had come Pt Kasurlal Rasariya ji used to be there over here, he had called him. So what singing of Khan saab! Then there was Us Amir Khan saaahab. Salamat Ali-Nazakat Ali, Chatur Lal on the tabla, Pt. Ram Narain on the sarangi. They sang Raag Poorvi at the Harballabh. Salamat Ali-Nazakat Ali, Bhimsen Joshi, their singing had a great deal of mass-appeal. They used to sing also very well. But Ustad Amir Khan saab's singing was for the artistes. After the Poorvi of Nazakat-Salamat Ali, Khan saab sang Marwa. So when 8-10 years ago Ustad Salamat Ali came to my home I asked him, you had sung Poorvi and Us Amir Khan saab had sung Marwa after you.

RK: You mean Salamat Ali Khan saab

BSN: Yes, he had tied me the ganda saying that you are singing the way we sang in our youth, the gaayaki of our youth. Khan saab told me many times that this city is not for you, you should be staying in Bombay, Delhi or Calcutta. But my children used to study here. So Khan saab told me that I don't remember my Poorvi but I remember Amir Khan saab's Marwa. This is a great tribute! Those people were so true and simple. After school I did graduation in college, then did M.A. in Political Science. I was the best artiste of DAV College. Jagjit ji was my senior by 4-5 years. I learnt much from him also, he also used to love me a lot. I used to participate in light and classical. It was very nice, every time first position used to come. In 1965 I performed for the first time at the Harballabh. People really stroked me a lot and gave me a lot of love. People used to say a lot, that you have done the name of Punjab proud at that time I was hardly 30 years old. I had sung the Bilaaskhani (Todi)...I continued performing at the Harballabh and then there was a small diversion also. I had a friend who made me a member of the Selection Board of Punjab. Along with

me there were 3 IAS officers, so I was one of the public men, I got to learn a lot from them as well. Over there my M.A. Political Science came very handy.

RK: Yes!

BSN: Then I was a member of many boards here in Jalandhar and outside, but I never left music. Even when I used to go for meetings I used to take my children along and do *riyaaz* after meetings. In 1980 I got an opportunity to go outside. I had gone to England and people really appreciated me over there. Since then I go every year. Because of this I have profited but also suffered losses. The benefit is that I dealt with good, big companies. I studied at DAV College, one of the premier institutions of the country where only the most qualified people come. So I spent most of my time among highly qualified people and not the artistes. Once I was in London and Ghulam Ali Khan saab was singing...

RK: Bade Ghulam Ali Khan saab?

BSN: No no, the ghazal singer Ghulam Ali. I told him that I had heard his programme. So he said that there was no recording, but I said I made a recording and he was very happy. He said singing and music is the work of you (meaning classical music) people. I said 20 years I put in studying. So he began saying, 'Oh you are a graduate!' So my student began saying that he has even done his M.A. Even in college I was primarily involved in creative work. I never left my singing. I gave an audition here on the Radio. But nowadays *riyaaz* has reduced, and 'buttering' has increased. I directly got an 'A' grade designation. It has been 10-12 years since some people made recordings of mu singing. They say that even today when they hear me they say that 20 years ago the quality and character this man's voice had he still has it today. It is only God's grace, Raam's grace. I was once singing at the Harballabh, so I started singing Rageshri Raag in vilambit and as I began it for the first few minutes I closed my eyes. When I opened them, then in front of me was sitting Sadguru Jagjeet Singh ji.

RK: Of Bhaini Saab?

BSN: Yes. Now I had prepared to sing another *bandish* (composition). But I said to myself, *sadguru* is sitting in front of me. I don't know how I thought of this, perhaps some things come naturally to one's mind. Sometimes even after thinking a great

deal these ideas don't come. So as I was singing I kept concentrating, telling myself Guru Maharaj is sitting in front of me. So the *bandish* I sang simultaneously at that very moment.

RK: You mean it got composed there and then?!

BSN: Yes, I sang 'Bhaag More Jaage, Guru Charanon Mein Chit Laage.' (My fortunes have awakened, my life is at the feet of my Guru).

RK: That's wonderful.

BSN: The original bandish was 'matwaare nain kajraare' (Mischief-filled, kohl-lined eyes), but Maharaj ji was sitting in front! (laughs) This is a story from 1970. After I did my Parveen in music. In any case classical is a thing of ruhaaniyat, which is something that a person learns with age. Other compositions also I made. The Punjabi Academy had done a programme of mine in Delhi of Punjabi bandishes. In that I sang some of the bandishes of *Ustads* and some of my own composition. Where I have learnt from big-big *ustads*, there I also learn from my students.

RK: How often have you heard Punjabi bandishes sung at the Harballabh?

BSN: Not at the Harballabh. These bandishes were sung at a special programme of mine at Delhi.

RK: Yes, of the Punjabi Academy.

BSN: Yes here twice they organised a programme of my shabads. Once SEHER of Delhi organised my programme of sufiana compositions. So in *ektaal vilambit* even I sang Raag Marwa in the Sufiana style. There is a lot of Ruhaniyat, the rag is of great seriousness. A very deep raag, it is a 'bhakti-pradhaan' raag. I keep reading *sufiana kalaams* of Bulleh Shah, Shah Hussain, Ghulam Farid, Sultan Baahu, Sarmad all these people. They were all way ahead in their own fields. They elaborated whatever is there in our relationships. Usually what do people understand by religion? They think it is ritual, which is not religion. Ritual is merely to teach a young child about going to the temple or the gurudwara or etc. But it has nothing to do with the spirituality. Spirituality means purifying yourself, first your heart. Most of us keep most things only at the superficial level to show-off. So for music, spirituality is very important. All the great gurus, maharajs, saints, they have all taken the support of music. For

example see the Guru Granth Sahib—the name of the raga is given first. Before that see the Sama Veda, it is entirely a Veda for singing. So I feel that classical music has its base in spirituality. This is very important. Whatever be the kind of music, for it, your basis needs to be very strong, this is important. If the foundation of a building is strong, then howsoever high you build it, it will not falter. Similarly, the gurus and *ustads* say that you require great depth in the *Mandra saptak* (or low octave), a little less in the *Madhya saptak* (middle octave) and for the *Taar saptak* (or the high octave) you can thin your voice out and reach the top. So like a pyramid your voice is structured. This should be a value for life. Music starts with our very life. The kind of music we hear since childhood that is only what we become (can become). You know that nowadays the media has done a great hazard to music. The priorities of government are also different especially in our Punjab. They should spend money on sports but they also focus towards music. Once upon a time Plato had said that music and gymnastics is must for the development of a personality. He said the ‘quality of a state is known by its music.’ So you can see nowadays the amount of corruption in our society, and the kind of behaviour of people and all the noise and bustle on t.v. one doesn’t even feel like watching.

RK: The saadhus and fakirs who used to come, you would have an idea as to which sect they belonged? For example, Nirmalpanthi?

BSN: I tell you, mostly Udasi and Nath Yogis...

RK: You have seen the Udasi and the Nath yogi people yourself?

BSN: I have seen a little. Then the naga sadhus also used to come.

RK: And *fakirs* also?

BSN: Sufis and fakirs used to also come. One who is a true saint or fakir he will in reality love music. Like the *deras* today, it didn’t used to be like this. At that time, people had a fondness for music. Nowadays the artiste does a lot of *riyaaz*. But to whom will he sing it for? Those listeners are more interested in listening to ‘*mata ki bhentaan*’. This is not music as mentioned in our *shastras*. Narad asked Lord Vishnu ‘where do you stay?’ Lord Vishnu replies that ‘neither do I stay in *Vaikunth*, nor with the *Yogis*, I stay with the one who does my *bhajan*.’

RK: The *sants* you would have seen at that time? *Udasi*...?

BSN: The *Nirmalpanthi* people also love me. Then there is *Sadguru Bhaini Saab*. If in classical music, any saint has encouraged it in any real way, then it is him. He sends his disciples to the big-big *ustads*.

RK: Is he *Nirmalpanthi*?

BSN: No he is a *Naamdhari*. The *dhuna-babas* used to come to listen, would eat along etc. but the one who has promoted music the most is him.

RK: So during the beginning when it was started by Baba Harballabh, then did all the *sadhus* and *fakirs* come together, in a shared way?

BSN: Yes, at that time it used to be so. I told you that classical music is *bhakti* itself. Mostly the saintly people they felt they had to come. And those other listeners also had a saintly nature. Even now you can see all the great musicians, they could not have reached where they have without devotion, and sacrifice, concentration. There should be complete surrender. Without this one cannot 'know' music.

RK: What numbers of people have you seen at the Harballabh? The maximum number?

BSN: At that time, there used to be so many people, that the entire grounds... (used to be filled). Because the Harballabh Mela alone used to happen. Now what happens is that in one direction the Harballabh Mela is happening while in the other, *besura* (out of tune) people of the Mandir are continuing with their music. You could call it belief and justify it in the name of religion. But I don't like the fact that on end Pt. Jasraj is singing and on the other a *jagran* is going on. That is also needed, I don't say that that shouldn't happen, but even the Harballabh doesn't have any major hall here for itself which is soundproof, etc. A person like me doesn't like this. Now the larger number of people go there only (towards the *jagran*).

RK: When you used to go earlier...

BSN: That time the common listeners had a great standard. Now Delhi and Bombay etc. still have people who listen.

RK: Many people believe that even farmer folk used to come to listen??



BSN: Yes, all people used to come. At that time people had simple and plain hearts. Such people never have any element of manipulation. They used to believe in the Ultimate Soul (or God), but now people believe more in leaders and politicians. Everything is done superficially only from the surface.

RK: Are there any such instances that the audience did not like something performed on stage and they might have said to an artiste that you please stop, etc.?

BSN: Once I was singing when Parveen Sultana and her husband sang, I gave them commendation, but it was misunderstood. It does happen sometimes. But here if someone was not liked, then people would say it also.

RK: The audience here was therefore very knowledgeable?

BSN: Many people used to be very knowledgeable and well informed. Because those people who every year have heard such big-big *ustads* non-stop for three days, their ears would get trained. In that time, the population of Jalandhar and Punjab used to be quite less. People used to come from Himachal also. At that time, there used to be tremendous rush. Now there is not as much rush as there should be. Nowadays there has been an explosion in population. But classical music has reached people who do not know how to listen. Earlier the kings used to be trained in how to listen.

RK: Did they also patronise Harballabh?

BSN: Yes Maharaja Kapurthala used to.

RK: So your father saab also used to go to Harballabh?

BSN: Yes, he used to sing. He was a good teacher.

RK: Did he tell you any stories about the Harballabh?

BSN: he used to tell us that once it so happened that one young person sang so well on the stage that people didn't come to know who is singing and before anyone knew he had already gone and left the grounds. People couldn't find out because they had become so spell-bound. Some things cannot be explained by logic but need a divine reasoning. But there is a logic also in this. I have seen with my own eyes how Pt. Bhimsen Joshi and Ustad Salamat Ali Khan are singing for nonstop 3 hours and the people are spellbound, there is complete silence and peace in the *pandal*. This was the

kind of *mijaaz* the listeners had. Nowadays, now you say that you are doing an MPhil. It is a very good thing, but I would say that instead of writing if you listen seriously, that is much better.

**Interview with Vice-President, Harballabh Sangeet Mahasabha, Mr. Arun  
Kapoor, on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2011, Seth Hukm Chand Colony, Jalandhar, 51minutes,  
39 seconds**

***अरुण कपूर के साथ बातचीत***

अरुण कपूर- मेरा 1949 का Birth है, अपने फादर के साथ जाया करता था।

रा. - तो आप जालन्धर में ही Born थे ?

अ.क.- हां यहीं है मेरा Native Place यहीं है।

रा.- अच्छा जी, आपके फादर, दादा भी यहीं के हैं ?

अ.क.- जी हां।

रा. - अच्छा, तो आप यानी 1954 से ही जाते रहे होंगे ?

अ.क.- जी हां।

रा. - तो आपका सबसे यादगार अनुभव कौन-सा रहा है ? यानी जो आपको याद हो उन दिनों से ?

अ.क.- 1971 में था, पं. भीमसेन जोशी गा रहे थे, रात के दस बजे वे स्टेज पर चढे और सुबह चार बजे उनका गाना खत्म हुआ, छः घण्टे लगातार गाया उन्होंने। आपको मालूम है ना पण्डित जी के बारे में ? पं. जी इस सम्मेलन में पहली बार 1974 में आये थे। उन दिनों में Main Artist जो थे गाना ठाकुर, किशनराव शंकर, बडे गुलाम अली खां ये उन दिनों। इनका राज था संगीत की दुनिया के उपर। पं. भीमसेन जोशी उन दिनों junior Artist थे। जब भी कभी स्टेज कभी खाली होता था तो पं. भीमसेन को चढा देते थे, उनको गाने का बडा शौक था, वो लगातार गाते रहे और 1978 तक वो यहां आते रहें। तब उनको पहले पद्मश्री मिला, फिर पद्मभूषण मिला ,फिर पद्मविभूषण मिला, 2007 में उनको भारत रत्न मिला, और हमारे बुजुर्ग बताते हैं कि वो सात साल इस हर वल्लभ की समाधी पर as a Teammate काम किया, घर से भागकर आये थें वो।

रा.- भीमसेन जी ?

अ.क.- हा, भीमसेन जी ? उनके पिताजी ढुंढते- ढुंढते यहां आ गये थे। उनको बचपन में गाने का इतना जूनून था कि यहां शिक्षा-दीक्षा लेने के लिये बाबा हरवल्लभ की समाधि पर जो Concert हुआ करते थे, बड़े- बड़े संगीतकार आते थे तब ये लोग यहां पर पैसा नहीं लेते थे, और अपने आपको देखने के लिये कि हम कितने पानी में हैं अपने फन का मुजायरा करने के लिये आते थे उल्टा समाधि पर कुछ चढा के जाते थे। लंगर में खाना खाते थे। और है तो संगीत में है एक श्रृंगार रस है एक भक्ति रस है, हरवल्लभ पर ज्यादा जो है वो भक्ति रस की धारा बहती है। तो यहां बहुत-२ दिग्गज कलाकार यहां हमारे यहां आते रहे हैं तो हम बचपन से उन्हें सुनते रहे हैं।

रा.- आपसे पहले आपके पिताजी और दादाजी भी जाते रहे होंगे ?

अ.क.- पिताजी जाते थे दादाजी का तो मुझको पता नहीं, तो...

रा.- उन्होने भी आपको बातें बतायी होगी, आपके फ़ादर जी

ने ..?

अ.क.- हां..हां, मैं उनके साथ ही जाया करता था।

रा.- तो यानी खासकर की क्योंकि मैंने बावरा जी की किताब पढी है उसमें ज्यादातर 1940-1950 का जिक्र है मगर उसके पहले के समय का थोडा कम मिलता है यदि आपके पिताजी ने कोई कहानियां बताई हो पहले के जमाने की..?

अ.क.- पहले के जमाने की ये थीं कि यहां स्टेजे नहीं लगती थी जैसे अब स्टेज लगती है ऐसे ग्रुपों में जाते थे जैसे कोई सरोद बजा रहा है, तो उस नुक्कड़ में कोई सितार बजा रहा है, इधर कोई वोकल परफार्मेंस दे रहा है उधर कोई कव्वाली भी गा रहा है, वायलन बजा रहा है। अब तो सब कुछ कमर्शियली हो रहा है अब तो पर सिटिंग का जो पैसा लेते हैं, तब कुछ नहीं लेते थे। अभी तो इतना-२ पैसा मांगते हैं, अभी ये इसको नसीर खां को हमने कॉटेक्ट किया तो नौ लाख रुपया मांग रहा है एक कन्सर्ट देने का और 1997 में वो साठ हजार में आया था यहां पर, तो बात भी नहीं करता फोन पे.. मतलब मेरे पी. ए. से बात करो, ये करो, वो करो मतलब बुलाना मुश्किल हो गया, मतलब हमारा बजट तकरीबन पच्चिस लाख का है। इसमें से 16 लाख रुपये तो परफार्मेंस फी ही

आजकल निकल जाती है मतलब गवर्नमेण्ट की एड ना हो तो सम्मेलन कराना मुश्किल है। हम जो कलेक्शन करते हैं तो 8,9 लाख रुपया इकठ्ठा होता है जैसे चीफ मिनिस्टर पांच लाख रुपया दे जाता है, कभी कोई मन्त्री दो-दो,तीन-तीन लाख दे जाता है ऐसा करके कुछ ना कुछ हो जाता है काम।

रा.- पुराने जमाने में आपके फादर ने बताया होगा कि शायद महाराजा लोग करते थे...।

अ.क.- नहीं ,नहीं,महाराजा लोग नहीं करते थे ऐसे ही बोडियल थी शुरु से, ये 136 वां।

रा.- जी 136 वां,1875 में शुरु हुआ।

अ.क.- तो ये ऐसे कलेक्शन से ही होता था। तब लोग पैसा ही नहीं लेते थे।

रा.- तो मतलब, पर जालन्धर के जो नागरिक थे वो सब पैसा या कुछ देते होंगे ?

अ.क.- हां , देते होंगे, हम डोर टु डोर कलेक्शन करते थे। हमने वो जमाना देखा है..।

रा.- और आपके फादर भी करते थे डोनेट और ये सब उन्होंने बताया आपको ?

अ.क.- हां..हां...,करते थे उनको भी बहुत शौक था। मैं उनके साथ ही अंगुली पकडकर जाया करता था छोटा। तभी पिछे देवी तालाब मन्दिर नहीं होता था ये तालाब था बस। उसके बीच में कुछ पिल्लर खडे थे ऐसे। हमारे होश में देखा हमने देखा। मन्दिर का निर्माण जो है वो बाद में हुआ 1974 में पहले खाली तालाब ही होता था। आज इसका जो स्वरूप है ना ये अश्विनी कुमार जी थे डायरेक्टर जनरल बी. एस. एफ. के. ये उनकी वजह से सब कुछ हुआ। उन्होंने इसकी कमान सम्भाली हुई थी। आजतक वो आते है। एट दी एज ऑफ नाइन्टी वन। अभी भी आते हैं।

रा.- उन्होंने ही इसको रिवाइव किया है ?

अ.क.- नहीं चल रहा था मतलब इस गद्दी के महन्त वो है जो पहले इस गद्दी के महन्त बाबा हरवल्लभ के बाद कोई तुलजा गिरि थे ,पं. तोलुराम थे उसके बाद बाबा द्वारकादास थे। द्वारकादास ने जो अपनी जो पगडी थी वो अश्विनी कुमार साहब के सिर पर रख दी थी।

रा.- ये आप थोडा बतायेंगे कैसे हुआ ? क्योंकि तुलजागिरि ने हरवल्लभ को दी फिर उन्होंने तोलुराम जी को दी..

अ.क.- तोलुराम जी ने द्वारकादास जी को दी द्वारकादास जी ने अश्विनी कुमार को दी जो आजतक इसकी मतलब सर्वेसर्वा वहीं है। दिल्ली में ही रहते है फ्रेण्ड्स कोलोनी में.. ।

रा.- जी..जी. मै मिली थी।

अ.क.- मिले थे..? जी बडे आदमी है।

रा.- जी..जी.. थैंक यू।

तो आप यहां पे, यहां के लोगो का मानना है कि यहां के ऑडियन्स भी बहुत कमाल के हैं। आप थोडा, आपको थोडे किस्से मालूम है कि लोग.....

अ.क.- यहां ऑडियन्स जी ...है कि..कुमार साहब जैसे पुलिस के डी. जी. पी. थे ना ऑल इण्डिया के वो बी. एस.एफ. के कमाण्डर थे, यहां पिन ड्रॉप साइलेण्ट होती है यहां कोई बीच में उठ के बोल नहीं सकता। बहस नहीं कर सकता मतलब ये पहले तो किसी लीडर को भी स्टेज पर चढने नहीं देते थे।

रा.- अच्छा , ये जो वी. आई. पीज हो गये ?

अ.क.- १९२९ में जब महात्मा गान्धी भी आए उन्होने भी Elites में नहीं सुना, ऐसे बहुत -२ हाईली।

रा.- १९२९ में या १९१९ में ?

अ.क.- १९२९ में आये शायद महात्मा गान्धी।

रा.- आपके फादर जी तो गये होंगे तब..?

अ.क.- हा ..देखा है उन्होने , गान्धी जी के नाम यहां गान्धी मण्डप भी एक बना है। वो देवीतलाब मन्दिर से कुछ ही फासले उपर है। वहां पर भी महात्मा गान्धी आए थे। ये बहुत प्राचीन जगह है। बडे-बडे फनकार, बडे-२ कलाकार यहां पर परफार्म कर चुके हैं जिनका वर्ल्ड में नाम हैं। पं. रविशंकर को हमने यहीं सुना, बडे गुलाम अली खां को सुना,,,

रा.- आपने खुद सुना है?

अ.क.- हां.. मैने अपने बचपन में सुना है। मेरे पास कैसेट है सबकी है। सबकी है हमारे पास।

रा.- तो इस फेस्टिवल का जालन्धर में क्या महत्व है?

अ.क.- जालन्धर में...(हंसते हुए)..इस फेस्टिवल ने जालन्धर का नाम वर्ल्ड लेवल तक पहुंचा दिया। ये ही बहुत बड़ी देन है इस फेस्टिवल की। ऑल वर्ल्ड में ऐसा कोई संगीत सम्मेलन नहीं होता जहां पर इतने कलाकार आकर परफार्म करें। ऑल वर्ल्ड में इतना नहीं होता। एक आध कन्सर्ट किसी की होती है , नहीं होती है। यहां पर तो मेरे को याद है जब पं. जसराज यहां पर पहली बार आए;उनको टाइम नहीं मिल रहा था बड़ी रिक्वेस्ट करके १५ मिनट उनको दिये गये। १५ मिनट में उन्होंने ऐसे कमाल का गाया, ऐसी बन्दिशें गाईं, दो ही, एक वो राग अढाना में माताकाल का वो उन्होंने सुनाया, फिर उसके बाद बहार सुनाया(बहार राग)- “हे री माँ सकल बन गगन पवन बनत जल फुरवाई” सुनाया..... उसके बोल थे बहार राग के। उन्होंने दो बन्दिशें गाईं और बहुत वाह वाह लूटी, बड़े- बड़े अच्छे जहां जुगलबन्दियां हुईं । पं. रविशंकर की अली अकबर खां की सरोद पर और सितार पर जुगलबन्दी उन्होंने की। अल्ला रक्खां खां का और जाकिर हुसैन का तबले पर जुगलबन्दी हुई। और उस्ताद वलेद खां की और उसका जो भाई था इमरत खां, उन दोनों की जुगलबन्दी हमने यहां सुनी। अभी नये जमाने में ये पं. शिवकुमार शर्मा की और जो सितारा बजाता है नीलाद्री कुमार, ऐसी जुगलबन्दियां हमारे यहां बहुत हुईं। सरोद की, गिटार की, वायलन की, सुब्रह्मण्यम की और अमजद अली खां की ..ये भी बहुत छोटा था, १५ वर्ष का था जब पहली बार आया था।

रा.- जाकिर हुसैन जी भी छोटे ही थे जब आए थे ?

अ.क.- बहुत छोटा था , अपने पिताजी के साथ आया था।

रा.- और यानी लोग बाहर , जैसे मैं भी दिल्ली से ही हूं पंजाबी हूं पर जानती नहीं थी हरवल्लभ के बारे में, तो लोगों का एक वो होता है ना मानना कि साउथ इण्डिया में तो बडा है शास्त्रीय संगीत और बंगाल में है चलो महाराष्ट्र में भी बहुत है। पंजाब में कहां से..? तो कुछ लोग चौंक जाते हैं कि हरवल्लभ इतना पुराना है। वो भी पंजाब में होता है।

अ.क.- ऐसे है..., कुछ सम्मेलन है जो अभी स्वाई गन्धर्व फेस्टिवल होता है पूना में, वो पं. भीमसेन जोशी ने अपने गुरु की याद में शुरु किया ऐसे ग्वालियर में एक होता है वहां पर भी बहुत दिग्गज आते हैं। ऐसे वृन्दावन में भी एक होता है।

रा.- और बनारस में ?

अ.क.- बनारस में तो होते ही रहते हैं कोलकाता में बहुत होते हैं।

रा.- और साउथ में तो भरमार है।

अ.क.- साउथ में बहुत हैं। बैंगलोर में, पर वो कर्नाटक संगीत है ना... वो हम लोगों के समझ नहीं आता।

रा. तो पंजाबी बन्दिशें भी आपने सूनी है खयाल में, यानी अदल तो ब्रजभाषा और अवधी में होती है।

अ.क.- नहीं नहीं, पंजाबी बन्दिशें हैं। हमारे यहां अभी प्रोफेसर बी. एस. नारंग है वो गाते हैं। सोनसिंह जी थे वो गाते थे पंजाबी बन्दिशें। इवन ये पटियाला घराने के बड़े गुलाम अली खां, इवन परवीन सुलताना पटियाला घराने की थी।

रा.- वैसे वो है बंगाल से।

अ.क.- वैसे वो आसाम से है नवगांव से, सेटल्ड बोम्बे में है लेकिन घराना उनका पटियाला घराना होगा। वैसे जयपुर करोली घराना है उसमें किशोरी अमोनीकर है, अश्विनी बिस्ट है, ये गाते हैं। ऐसे ग्वालियर घराना है, अभी आते हैं, लक्ष्मणराव पण्डित ल. कृ. पण्डित। उनकी बेटी वो नीता पण्डित, ये ग्वालियर घराने के है।

रा.- और श्याम चौरासी घराने से..।

अ.क.- नजाकत अली, सलामत अली।

रा.- आपने सुना है इनको..?

अ.क.- हां.. बडी बारा यहां आते रहे हैं परफार्म करने। मेरे पास पडी है उनकी सारी हरवल्लभ की, हरवल्लभ की १९५६ की रिकार्डिंग भी मेरे पास पडी है। अभी दिखाता हूं आपको..।

रा.- शुरु में यहां लोग ही पैसा दे के चलाते थे ना?

अ.क.- हां.. यहां के लोग ही, वो ही चलाते थे।

रा.- तो क्या आपने भी बोलेन्टियर के रूप में योगदान करते थे?

अ.क.- हां करते थे और अभी भी करते है।



रा.- हां ..अभी भी करते है मेरा मतलब शुरु में?

अ.क.- शुरु में हमारे फादर थे ना , सभी लोग करते थे शहरवाले। तभी इतना खर्चा नहीं होता था ना। सात हजार में तो पं. भीमसेन जोशी आ जाता था। अभी ये सरोद बजाने वाला अमजद अली खां ही सात लाख रुपये मांगता है। और भी ब्यान लाके देते है देखो जी हरवल्लभ वाले हमको बुलाते नहीं है। इन लोगों ने अपने रेट ही इतने बढा दिये है। ये नहीं सोचते कि यहां पर हम २०० रुपये में पहली बार परफार्म किया था यहां आकर सजदा करते थे ये इबादत करने की जगह है। अब इनकी डिमाण्ड्स बहुत बढ गयी है। जो हमारी कम्पनी की नीड्स के बाहर हो जाती है। गवर्नमेण्ट की एड ना हो तो आजकल सम्मेलन नहीं चल सकता।

रा.- शुरुवात जब हुई थी हरवल्लभ हरवल्लभ साहब ने अपने गुरु मेमोरी में की थी और सभी साधु फकीरों को बुलाके और सबने गाया था एक इबादत की भावना से।

अ.क.- ऐसे ही चलता था यहां, भीमसेन जोशी वगैरह है ना ये आधा- आधा घण्टा समाधी के आगे नतमस्तक होकर खडे रहते थे। उस जमाने के तो हमने फोटोएं भी देखी हैं दादा जी के पास फोटोएं भी थीं। दिखाई नहीं आपको?

रा.- हा, दिखाई हैं।

अ.क.- उनके पास बहुत काफी वो है सारी लाईब्रेरी उनके ही पास है। उनके पहले कुमार साहब के पास थी। उनसे वो नार्थ जोन कल्चर सेन्टर वाले ले गये।

रा.- जी खडाऊ और....

अ.क.- गीतका काला जो नार्थ जोन कल्चर सेन्टर की चीफ थी तभी वो कुमार साहब से दिल्ली में से ले के चली गई।

रा.- तानपुरा बाबा हरवल्लभ, और वो अब मिसिंग है ना? सुनने में आया है।

अ.क.- उनके पास ही है।

रा.- और जब आप जाते थे तब उन दिनों लडकियां या विमेन आती थीं सुनने के लिए ?

अ.क.- सुनती थीं।

रा.- १९४९ तक तो आती थीं।

अ.क.- जब गाने वाली ही लक्ष्मी शंकर आती थी, हीराबाई बडोदकर आती थी।

रा.- आपने सुना उनको?

अ.क.- दा. बेगम अख्तर को सुना है हमने स्टेज के उपर। बहुत –बहुत आती थीं।

रा.- केशर बाई केरकर?

अ.क.- केशर बाई केरकर वो भी, उनकी १९५६ की रिकार्डिंग है मेरे पास।

रा.- उनकी भी बहुत अच्छी, गला उनका बहुत ही...।

अ.क.- क्या बात है। उनकी गायकी भजन गाया हुआ है। ओंकारनाथ ये बहुत ही अच्छा गाते थे। बहुत लेडीज आती थीं सुनने भी जाते थे और परफार्म करने भी आती थीं।

रा.- और वन्दे मातरम का जो गायन होता है वो कन्या महाविद्यालय की लडकियां गाती थी बाद में।

अ.क.- पहले तो वो खुद ही गाते थे हमने भीमसेन जोशी के मुह से वन्दे मातरम सुना है। पं. जसराज के मुह से वन्दे मातरम सुना है। लेकिन वो एण्ड में गाते थे समापन के ऊपर आजकल क्या है कि वन्दे मातरम नहीं गाते है सरस्वती वन्दना गाते है जैसे स्टार्टिंग होती है तो यहां पाँच-छः कालेज है हमने उनको बोल रखा हैं वो सब अपना एक-एक ग्रुप बना के भेज देते हैं। सरस्वती वन्दना आज के सुबह की जो स्टार्टिंग है उसकी शुरुवात कन्या महाविद्यालय वाली करेगी, शाम को एच. एम. वी. वाली कर देगी, दूसरा दिन बी. डी. आर. वाली करेगी. एस. डी. कालेज वाली आ जायेंगी, डी. ए. वी. कालेज वाली आ जायेंगी।

रा.- वन्दे मातरम पर अभी भी होता है?

अ.क.- वन्दे मातरम लास्ट में होता है। वो तो जो कलाकार समापन करता है उसके साथ हम सारे कमिटी वाले मिलकर गाते हैं। दैट इज दी एण्ड ऑफ दि सम्मेलन।

रा.- और ये जो राग बहार और वसन्त का भी एण्ड में होता है?

अ.क.- एण्ड में, ये परम्परा बाबा हरवल्लभ ने शुरु की जो हरवल्लभ का संगीत सम्मेलन का जो एण्ड है वो बहार गाने से एक साथ समापन होगा वो जो भी लास्ट परफोर्म करेगा उसको वो बहार गाना ही पडेगा ।

रा.- क्योंकि सर्दी-२ में होता है तो वो वसन्त बहार को याद करेंगे।

अ.क.- नहीं..नहीं, ऐसा नहीं होता है वो परम्परा है। ध्रुपद गायकी यहां पर जरूर होगी। एक परम्परा है मंगल ध्वनि से स्टार्ट होगी शहनाई से। हमारी जो पहली आइटम होती है वो शहनाई होती है। सितार वादन है, सरोद वादन, वायलिन वादन है, जलतरंग वाले भी कभी -२ आते हैं ऐसे वो क्लिष्ट है फिर उसमें कवालियां तो नहीं होती।

रा.- लाइट वाइट नहीं..?

अ.क.- नहीं होती है अलाउड ही नहीं है।

रा.- आपने सुना आपके टाइम पे वेद या....?

अ.क.- नहीं , ऐसे लास्ट में कोई ना कोई आदमी- भजन गा देता है जैसे अब उसने दो राग सुना दिया, फिर किसी ने ठुमरी सुना दी, दादरा सुना दिया, उसके बाद कोई फरमाईश करते भजन सुना दीजिए तो वो अपने किसी ना किसी राग में ही भजन सुनाते। पं. भीमसेन जोशी था उनका वो मशहूर भजन है – जो भजे हरि को सदा... ये भैरवी में वो गाते थे एण्ड के उपर। ऐसे पं. जसराज हैं वो भी भजन सुना देते थे बन्दिशें ही ज्यादातर भक्तिरस की ही सुनाते थे। पं. जसराज की बन्दिशें ज्यादातर भक्तिरस में। भीमसेन जोशी की बन्दिशें श्रृंगार रस में आती थीं।

रा.- जी बिल्कुल।

अ.क.- आप देखेंगे इनको सुनिए तो पता लग जायेगा। बन्दिश वो ही होती है जिसको भक्तिरस में गाना, जो उसको श्रृंगार रस में गाना । डिफरेंट-२ रागी का अपना मतलब हिसाब होता है। अब राग तो भैरवी ही है। पं. जी श्रृंगार रस में गाते थे। रस के भरे होरे तो वो श्रृंगार रस हो जाता है और वहीं भैरवी राग में “जो भजे हरि को परम पद पायेगा” वो भी भैरवी ही है। श्रृंगार रस में गाना है वो भक्तिरस में गाना है। भक्तिरस में जाना मतलब डायरेक्ट लिंक विद गोड हो जाता है।

रा.- जी.., बिल्कुल बिल्कुल। और जालन्धर में तो बहुत-२ म्युजिकल टेलेन्ट यानी बहुत लोग भी म्युजिकली जो हैं। अभी जगजीत सिंह जी की डेथ हुई है।

- अ.क.- वो भी जालन्धर के है। जालन्धर में रहे है वो डी. ए. वी. कालेज में पढते थे यहां।
- रा.- और फिर उस्ताद नुसरत फतेह अली खां साहब का परिवार जालन्धर से ही था।
- अ.क.- ये निजाकत अली, सलामत अली भी ३० किलोमिटर दूर थे। अपना श्याम चौरासी...।
- रा.- यानी सब लोग आके सुनते ही होंगे अपने हरवल्लभ में क्योंकि उससे राग की.....
- अ.क.- सुनते हैं, सुनेंगे क्यों नहीं, जिसको संगीत का शौक है वहीं आते है ना आजकल के पोप संगीत वाले तो नहीं हमारे यहां आतें। हम तो वैसे हर तरह के संगीत को बढावा देते है लेकिन म्युजिक तो म्युजिक है ना चाहे कोई भी हो लेकिन उसमें थोडा सुकून होना चाहिए वो शास्त्रीय संगीत है। अब कोई भी सींगर अगर गाना भी गाता है जैसे जगजीत सिंह है गुलाम अली क्यों फेमस हुए? इसलिए फेमस हुए क्योंकि इनका बेस क्लासिकल है।
- रा.- बिल्कुल , और नुसरत का भी बेस क्लासिकल है..।
- अ.क.- बिल्कुल, जिसका बेस क्लासिकल नहीं हो उसके गाने में वो रस नहीं होता।
- रा.- तो पंजाब में और भी ऐसे फेस्टिवल होते हैं संगीत के?
- अ.क.- होते रहते हैं। अभी फगवाडा में शुरु हुआ है। कपुरथला में होता है हैरिटेज फेस्टिवल।
- रा.- अच्छा, वो कब होता है?
- अ.क.- वो नवम्बर में होगा।
- रा.- और फगवाडे का?
- अ.क.- फगवाडे का वसन्त में होता है।
- रा.- और भी कोई होता है?
- अ.क.- उन्होने शुरु किया है मा. रतन मेमोरियल फेस्टिवल, मा. रतन भी एक बहुत बडे दिग्गज हुए है शास्त्रीय संगीत के। वो फगवाडा को बीलॉग करते थे। उनका बेटा आजकल लन्दन में रहता है।ही डाएड एट दी एज ऑफ नाइण्टी फाइव, काफी संगीत के वो भी विद्वान थे।
- रा.- उनके बेटे?

अ.क.- नहीं, मा.रतन जी। उनके बेटे ने तो वो एडोप्ट ही नहीं किया तो उनकी याद में यहां अभी संगीत सम्मेलन पांच-छः साल से फगावाडे में शुरु किया है क्योंकि गवर्नमेण्ट की एड के बिना नहीं हो सकता ये लोग अब पैसा बहुत मांगते हैं।

रा.- अभी इन्टरनेशनली बोलबाला हो गया है ना तो उसके बाद तो और भी फिर..

अ.क.- नेचुरली, आप देख लो जितने बड़े दिग्गज संगीतकार हैं , वो जा के अमेरिका में ही बसे हुए हैं।

रा.- वहां तो उनको बहुत पैसा मिलता है।

अ.क.- वो अनुष्का शंकर है रविशंकर की बेटी ९ लाख रुपया मांगती है एक परफार्मेंस के! क्योंकि वहां का एक रुपया इधर के चालीस रुपये। तो वो वहां पर १०० रुपया ले तो समझो यहां का चार हजार रुपया बन जाता है। यहां के दो लाख भी मिलें तो उनके वहां पे ५ हजार है। इसलिए वो फोरेन में ही ज्यादा परफोर्म करते है।वो मनी मेकिंग एक्सरसाईज हो गई ना सारी। वो जो श्रद्धा भावना थी संगीत में, अब नहीं है।

रा.- तो पहले वो लोग तो तीन चार दिन बैठते होंगे?

अ.क.- यहां रहते थे, लंगर में खाते थे, चटाइयों के उपर सोते थे, दरियों के उपर सोते थे शाम को। हमने बड़े-बड़े यहां देखे हैं। और आके मिस्रत करते थे कि हमको आधा घण्टा हाजिरी लगाने का समय दीजीए। अब हम इनको इ-मेल करते हैं आठ दिन जवाब नहीं आता। फिर बोलते है मेरी बेगम साहिबा से बात करो, मेरे पी. ए. से बात करो। सब कुछ कमर्शियलाइज हो चुका है।उन दिनों में ऐसा नहीं था। उन दिनों वे अपने-आप आते थे। समाधी पर सजदा करने और अपनी परफार्मेंस देने के लिए आते थे।

रा.- और वहां पे गाने का ही, जैसे आप कह रहे हैं भक्तिरस से ही गाते होंगे तो उसी एक फिलिंग से ही...

अ.क.- वो तो फिर एक डिफरन्ट ही आनन्द है जो भक्तिरस में गाते हैं तो वो तो आपको बैठे ऐसे ही लगता है जब परफार्म कर रहा होता है मतलब डायरेक्ट लिंक विद दी गोड। जब ये भजन वगैरहा जाते है।

रा.- तो आपको कोई खास किस्सा याद हो जो बहुत मेमोरियल एक्सपीरियन्स जो अभी भी....

अ.क.- बहुत है एक नहीं है। १९७३ में सुगन्धा पटनायक ने यहां गाया। वो स्टेज पर जब आई तो जो गाना शुरु किया फर्स्ट टाइम आई थीं। उअनके स्टेज से चले जाने के बाद भी १० मिनट तक तालियां बजती रहीं। इतना अच्छा गाया था। भीमसेन जी का मैंने आपको बताया १९७१ वो रात १० बजे स्टेज पर चढे सुबह ४ बजे उतरे, दो राग पूरे गाये उन्होने।

रा.- सिर्फ दो राग....!!!

अ.क.- दो राग पुरे गाये दरबारी और मालफोस, फिर उन्होने ठुमरिया सुनाई फिर इसके बाद दो भजन गाये, वो काफी इलागुरेट करते थे राग को , उनका एक राग है दो-ढाई घण्टे में कम्पलीट होता है और उनका जो गाने का अन्दाज था उनका जो श्वास था बहुत लम्बा था। उन जैसा तो न भूतो न भविष्यति, ना भुतकाल में हुआ है ना भविष्य काल में होगा। आज तक जितने मैंने भी सुने हैं, ना वहां तक कोई पहुंच ही नहीं पायेगा, मेरा ख्याल है। मैंने नहीं सुना।

रा.- और ये समय कोई बदला है कि नहीं जो बैठक का समय; थोडा कोई चेंज हुआ है आपके शुरु के हिसाब से..?

अ.क.- ऐसा है कि कन्टीन्यू चलता था २४ घण्टे। कोई कन्सर्ट देता था कोई छुट के खाने चला जाता था कोई नहाने चला जाता है तब कोई दूसरा आ जाता था। आगे २४ आवर चलता था ,अब ऐसा नहीं है। अभी सिर्फ तीन दिन है, वो शाम छः बजे स्टार्ट होता है, सन्डे को दोपहर को स्टार्ट करते है फिर तडके के तीन-चार बज जाते है सुबह के।

रा.- पहले भी सुबह इतना...!!!

अ.क.- पहले जो था ना वो कन्टीन्यू ही रहता था सुबह के नौ बजे भी गा रहा होता था, ६ बजे भी गा रहा होता था। अभी ये है कि इसकी वजह से ना थोडे वो मोर्निंग राग है ना वो कम हो गये हैं।

रा.- हूँ...जी।

अ.क.- मोर्निंग राग है जैसे ललीत है, भैरवी है, पटियार है, तोडी है, मियाँ की तोडी है मोर्निंग राग है ये जो है ना लुप्त हो गये क्योकि तकरीबन सभी रात को ही बैठते हैं और रात के जो राग है दरबारी हुआ, मालफोस हुआ, विहाग हुआ, मारोविहाग हुआ ये सब रात को गाते हैं।

रा.- तो वहीं ज्यादा गाते हैं!!!

अ.क.- वहीं ज्यादा हुए ना ,, वो दिन वाला जो है बैठकी खत्म हो चुकी है। दिन के राग, हरवल्लभ में आजकल सुनने को कम मिलते हैं।

रा.- आजकल तो प्रोग्राम सोविनीयर १९६० से छपता मिलता है।

अ.क.- हां., कम्प्युटराइज्ड है सब-कुछ।

रा.- मगर जो पुराने टाइम में वो मै पुछना चाहती हूं कि किसी ने बताया कि कहीं वो बोर्ड होता है जिसमें चाक से लिखते थे तो...

अ.क.- हा, लिखते थे अभी क्या है वो जो चार्ट है वो कम्प्युटर से छप के आ जाता है।

रा.- तब फ्लेक्सीबल होता होगा उस टाइम पे फिर भी...?

अ.क.- उस टाइम ऐसा था कि एक तो सर्दियों में धुंध बहुत होती है, अब सब बाई एयर आते हैं तभी ट्रेन से आते थें , गाडी किसी की आठ घण्टे लेट है धुंध की वजह से तो उसका नाम हटा के दूसरे का डालना पडता था, अब भी कभी -२ ऐसा हो जाता है, फ्लाइट लेट हो गयी पूना से दिल्ली आया आगे धुन्ध ट्रेन भी नहीं आ रही तो यहां से हम टेक्सी में लेने भेजते है तो फिर स्लो स्पीड से आती है; उसकी परफार्मेंस का जो टाइम होता है वो निकल जाता है। उसके लिए जो आया हुआ हो उसको एडजस्ट करना पडता है और उसकी परफार्मेंस बाद में रखी जाती है, ऐसा हो जाता है।

रा.- तो पहले ब्लैकबोर्ड पे लिखा जाता था, आपको याद है?

अ.क.- हां, लिखा जाता था।

रा.- और कित्ते तक लोग आते थे सर...?

अ.क.- क्या ?

रा.- जब आप जाते थे १९५४-५५ तक आपको याद कितने लोग आते थें?

अ.क.- लोग बहुत आते थें।

रा.- करीबन नम्बर्स...?

अ.क.- उस टेम पाँच हजार के करीब, अभी दस हजार के करीब आते हैं। अभी तो पाण्डाल फुल रहता है, हमारे घर में इतने-२ फोन आते हैं , मेरे को पास चाहिए कि मेरे को पास चाहिए।

रा.- अच्छा.., पास होते हैं। वो आगे के लिए.....

अ.क.- V. I. P. के लिए।

रा.- पीछे के लिए तो सब लोग फ्री आते हैं।

अ.क.- हमने ऐसे दो-तीन ब्लाक बनाये हुए हैं। कमेटी मेम्बर्स का अलग ब्लाक है फिर हमारे लाइसेन्स देने वालों का, डोनर्स का ब्लाक है, फिर जो वी. वी. आई. पी. ब्लाक है। मन्त्री आ गया कोई, मुख्यमन्त्री आ गया वो ब्लाक है। उसके बाद फिर सारा सभी के लिए है। आम पब्लिक जो है ना उसको शास्त्रीय संगीत में रुची कम है। यहां ऐसे लोग बैठे रहते हैं कोई रसिया से आया हुआ है, कोई बोम्बे से आया हुआ है, कोई कनाडा से, कोई इंग्लैण्ड से आये बैठे हैं। चार-२ दिन ,आठ-२ दिन पहले ही आकर बस जाते हैं। जो रिपल में संगीत प्रेमी है। मै और मेरी वाइफ; हम दोनों बनारस गये, तो रास्ते में एक मियां-बीवी ने हमको रोक लिया वहां..

रा.- बनारस में ?

अ.क.- हा बनारस में, वो दशाश्वमेघ घाट है ना वहां पर, वो आया एकदम आगे आया, आपका नाम अरुण कपूर है ? मै का हां जी, आप जालन्धर से आए ? मै तो घबरा गया, पता नहीं परदेश में कौन है, क्या है, मै क्या बोलिए क्या बात है। तो बोला हम मियां-बीवी हर साल हरवल्लभ में आते हैं। आपको वहां हम देखते है, तो आज आपको यहां देख रहे है तो बडी खुशी हुई है। मुझे ध्यान है वो मियां- बीवी है, उनके पास स्कूल है ८- १० वो चलाते है। वो भी चार दिन पहले आ जाते है तो हरसाल आते हैं यहां। बडे लोग आते हैं दिल्ली से बडे लोग आते हैं हर साल। इधर का ट्रेफिक पूरा वो रहता है , ट्रेनों में सीट नहीं मिलती। संगीत प्रेमी दूर-२ से आतें हैं। कलकत्ता से, ग्वालियर से, बोम्बे से. पूना से,बेंगलोर से आते हैं। बाकी फोरेन से भी काफी लोग आते हैं। कैनेडा से, अमेरिका से, अभी यू. एस. ए. से पीछे परफार्म करके गये थे लक्ष्मी गणेश तिवाडी। वो कहते है कि मै अमेरिका से आया हूं। मेरे को आधा घण्टा टाइम जरूर दिया जाये, पाँच- छः साल पहले की बात है। अच्छा वो गा के गये है।

रा.- तो अभी संख्या बडी हैं लोगों के आने की ?

अ.क.- हा..हां, क्योंकि अभी मंच भी ऐसा बडिया लगता है और पाण्डाल भी बहुत बडिया लगता है। पुराने जमाने में ये सबकुछ नहीं था जो आज है। अभी चैनलों वाले, सबने अपने कैमेरे लगाये हुए हैं। बहुत बडा इवेन्ट है।



रा.- तो अभी फ्यूचर में आपको लगता है और भी बढ़ती होयेगी ? लोगों में ये जो इन्ट्रस्ट है वो भी बनाये रखेगा ?

अ.क.- हा हो रहा . अभी ये है जो , संगीत के विद्वान हैं जालन्धर में उनके पास काफी शिष्य है जो दीक्षा लेने के लिए जा रहे हैं। हमारे यहां वीरेन्द्र है जो सितार से गाते है, प्रोफेसर बी. एस. नारंग है; उनके पास काफी स्टूडेंट हैं। ओम्प्रकाश थापर है।

रा.- अच्छा, ये भी सीखाते हैं ?

अ.क.- ये सीखाते है, इनके पास सीखने जाते हैं बच्चे। पं. रमाकान्त है, अजयकान्त गुप्ता, वो तो दादाजी के घर में शाम को क्लास भी लेते है।

रा.- जी..जी फ्री की, और ए. आइ. आर. जो रेडियो है, ये लोग भी आ के मतलब इसकी ब्रोडकास्ट करते हैं ?

अ.क.- हां , डायरेक्ट करते थें।

रा.- आपने रेडियो पे भी सुनी है वो हरवल्लभ की....

अ. क.- हा सुनी थी, ऐसा था ना, फैक्ट्री में बैठे है; तो उन दिनों रेडियो ही होता था, तो रेडियो ओन करना तो बोले हरवल्लभ शुरु हो गया, तो चलो देवीकला पहुंचे। सीर अहमद खां गा रहे है, तो बडे गुलाम अली खां गा रहे है, स्टार्ट हो गयी कन्सर्ट चलो...पहुंचे।

रा.- तो वही लाइव रिकार्ड करते थे ब्रोडकास्ट ?

अ.क.- सीधा लाइव मतलब लोगों को भी सुनाते थे लाइव, ऑल इन्डिया रेडियो जालन्धर वाले, अभी साधना चैनल वाले है, कल्चरल चैनल है ये लोग लाइव भी दिखा देते है हरवल्लभ की अपने चैनलों पर।

रा.- तो सर ये जो सिक्खों की है मतलब, सिक्ख म्युजिक भी बडा रीच है। मगर हरवल्लभ भी आते है...?

अ.क.- हा..हा, बेनीसाहब से आते है, गुरुजी के सिक्ख, हरबार परफार्म करते है। डोनेशन भी देते है एक लाख रुपया भैनी साहब है ना ?

रा.- हा लुधियाने के पास ।

अ.क.- नामधारियों के गुरु, उनका बहुत योगदान है। कभी -२ आर्टिस्ट भी स्पॉन्सर कर देते हैं। उनके पास भी बहुत लोग आते हैं। मैं गया हूँ भैनी साहब, वहाँ पर साज पडे हैं उस्तादों के, उस्ताद विलायत खां का सितार पडा है, ऐसे ही है अली अकबर साहब की सरोद पडी है जो बजाते थे। उन्होने बहुत अच्छे तरिके से रखी हुई है। भैनी साहब का मैन मकसद है म्युजिक को प्रमोट करना और स्पोर्ट्स को प्रमोट करना।

रा.- और भी बात है जो आप बताना चाहेंगे ?

अ.क.- बहुत है मैं आपको सारा बता सकता हूँ नाच विद्या पर किसने गाया, अठ विद्या पे किसने गाया। सेवन्टी में किसने गाया, सब बावरा मेरे से पूछ-२ के लिखता था।

रा.- अच्छा तभी इतना डिटेल्ड वो है।

अ.क.- मैं बहुत छोटे से जाता था, मा. साहब के बेटे से मिले है आप ?

रा.- अभी मिलना है , उनके पास टाईम नहीं था, सेटरडे या सन्डे को मिलेंगे..।

अ.क.- नहीं मिल लेना, बहुत अच्छे है वो फैमेली, बावरे का भी योगदान है। म्युजिक का काफी प्रेमी था बेचारा, दो साल पहले ही डेथ हुई है हमारे साथ काफी प्यार था।

रा.- उन्होने बडी अच्छी किताब लिखी है बडी पेनस्टेकिंग, हर बात डिटेला।

अ.क.- हा..हा वो तो एक कन्सर्ट की डिटेल वो देते है उसमें, सारे अब शाम के छः बजे है, अब फलाना आर्टिस्ट स्टेज पर चढा है, अब उसने ये राग शुरु किया....

रा.- उस काल में ?

अ.क.- उसके साथ संगत इसने की है। सारंगी पर साबरी खां है, तबले पर प्रेम वल्लभ है। लिखते बडे डिटेला से क्योकि वो सारी जो प्रेस को देते थे, तो वो जो प्रेस नोट है वो खुद रख लेते थे, उससे उन्होने किताब लिखी थी।

रा.- बडा अच्छा किया उन्होने, वो खुद भी म्युजिशीयन थे..?

अ.क. बहुत अच्छा आदमी था, वो खुद भी म्युजिशीयन था जगजीत का क्लासमेट्स था।

रा.- अच्छा, डी. ए. वी. कोलेज..?

अ.क.- डी.ए.वी. में वो और जगजीत मिलके गाते थे, मैंने एक फोटो देखा उनके बेटे जगदीप के पास, डा. राजेन्द्र प्रसाद डी. ए. वी. कोलेज में आए हुए थे और जगजीत सिंह गाना गा रहे हैं और वो सितार बजा रहे हैं। तजविन्दर सिंह बावरा, यूथ फेस्टिवल में आते थे ना सभी उन दिनों। तभी जगजीत सिंह सरदार था।

रा.- बावरा जी भी सरदार ही थे, मी. समरवाल भी सरदार है ?

अ.क.- किशन सिंह समरवाल..., वो है, अभी उम्र हो गयी उनकी एटी फाएव, मिले है उनको ?

रा.- हा. मिली थी।

अ.क.- वो तो थे ना ; बोलेन्टीयर का काम करते थे। लोगों को बिठाने का। बड़े डिवोटेड था। हम जब बच्चे थे, हमको आगे उंगली पकड़ के बिठाते थे वो। अश्विनी कुमार साहब के ज्यादा नजदीक थे। आपको पास नहीं दिखाया आपको, जब से निकाल के कुमार साहब का लेटर उन्होने ?

रा.- अच्छा, नहीं, मैं पूछुंगी उनको..,

अ.क.- उन्होने दिया हुआ था पुलिस महकमे में, कहीं भी जा सकते थे कुमार साहब उनपे इतने खुश थे। बहुत सेवा किया है उन्होने हरवल्लभ की।

रा.- जी बिल्कुल.., और भी फकीर चन्द कपूर साहब..?

अ.क.- वो कलेक्शन करते थे। वो भी कुमार साहब के काफी नजदीक थे।

रा.- तो ये जो १९२०, नहीं १९४८ के बाद जब अश्विनी कुमार जी ने इसको लिया तो फिर काफी उन्होने बताया कि काफी मुश्किल थी और एक- दो लोग क्योकि वो पार्टिशन के बाद थोडा, तो उसका भी असर रहा होगा, आपके फादर ने आपको बताया क्योकि....

अ.क.- वो ऐसा था ना कि कुमार साहब ने इसकी रेज अब सम्भाल ली थी बहुत बड़े अफसर थे तो उनके सामने कोई बोल भी नहीं सकता है। उन्होने तो सिंगल हैंडेड भी इसको हैंडल करके ही इसको बुलन्दियों पर पहुंचाया।

रा.- पर और भी कोई इण्डस्ट्रिलिस्ट है। सेठ लोग जालन्धर के उन्होने भी कुछ, फिर पैसे दिये।

अ.क.- हा.., द्वारका दास सहगल थे। लीडर इन्जनरिंग वर्क्स के।

रा.- अच्छा, वो अभी भी लीडर है।

अ.क.- मैडम को मिली है आप?

रा.- मिसेज बेरी को..? नहीं, मिलना है।

अ.क.- मिलना, मिल लिजिए, वो इनके पार्टनर थे अभी उनकी डेथ हो चुकी है।

रा.- किनके पार्टनर ?

अ.क.- मैडम बेरी के पार्टनर थे, इनके फादर इन ला के पार्टनर थे। वो लाला द्वारका दास सहगल, उसने भी हरवल्लभ में काफी योगदान दिया।

रा.- अच्छा, वो ट्रेजलर भी थे शायद...?

अ.क.- ट्रेजलर भी थे, प्रेजीडेन्ट भी रहे, प्रेजीडेन्ट तो खैर अश्विनी कुमार ही थे। वो देवीतालाब के प्रेजीडेन्ट रहे।

रा.- उन्होने ही मन्दिर के लिए अपनी भूमि को दिया था आगे क्योकि ?

अ.क.- नहीं..नहीं, मन्दिर की भूमि तो कुमार साहब की प्रोपर्टी है सारी।

रा.- जी., वो उनके मदर के नाम था तो...

अ.क.- मदर के नाम नहीं था , कुमार साहब को ,उस गद्दी का.. बताया ना, पगडी उसको दे गये थे पुराने महन्त।

रा.- और ये जो पगडी का भी है। ऐसा भी आपको याद है कि हरवल्लभ की पगडी किसी गायक को ही दी जाये! या फिर वो शायद यो जयपत्र जो ज्यादा अच्छा गाते है।

अ.क.- नहीं , नहीं, वो श्रीवास्तव जी थे एक अपना कमिश्नर जालन्धर डिविजन के। उन्होने ये परम्परा शुरु की थी कि हरवल्लभ सेवा सम्मन दिया जाये और ये अपना लाइफ टाइम अचीवमेन्ट अवार्ड किसी ना किसी आर्टिस्ट को हर साल दिया जाए, तो वो किसी ना किसी एक को दे देते थे।

रा.- पहले के भी टाइम में कई लोगों ने बताया कि जयपत्र, लक्ष्मण कृष्ण राव पण्डित जी ने बताया कि जयपत्र कुछ ऐसा होता है।

अ.क.- मेरे को इस बारे में जानकारी नहीं है।

रा.- आपको याद है कि वो पगडी वगैरह पहनाते थे ऐसा कुछ?

अ.क.- पगडी नहीं पहनाते थे, ऐसा नहीं है। हमारी उम्र से पहले की बातें होंगी, मेरे को जानकारी नहीं है।

रा.- जी.जी..जी...। पुराने दस्तावेज भी है जो उस टाइम के, जैसे दादाजी ने मुझे दिखाई ६० - ७० की डोनेशन स्लीप है। तो ऐसे कोई पुराने कोई कागज या चीजें हैं जो हमें उस टाइम का कुछ दिखा सकती है ?

अ.क.- वो पीछे ना १९६७ के एक सम्मेलन की लेके आये थे, कालिया यहां मिनिस्टर थे, वो लेके आए थे उनके पिता जी की वो मनमोहन कालिया १९६७ में मिनिस्टर थे उनकी फोटो, वैसे दादाजी के पास जालन्धर की एक पुरानी किताब है उसमें सबकुछ है। बावरा से पहले लिखी गयी वो।

रा.- कृष्णानन्द शास्त्री जी की ?

अ.क.- हा. वो देखी है आपने? उसमें भी उल्लेख है काफी।

रा.- जी, बहुत है।

अ.क.- यहां पर तो कोई ऐसा दिग्गज आर्टिस्ट नहीं है शास्त्रीय संगीत का, यहां आने से पहले अपने आप को एक अधुरा समझता था कि जिसने हरवल्लभ पर नहीं गाया वो संगीतकार नहीं कहलाता था। तरसते थे लोग यहां टाइम मिलने के लिए ऐसा होता था। कोई किसी का आप नाम लीजिए मैं आपको बताता हूं कि वो यहां जरूर आया होगा। उस्ताद बिस्मिल्ला खां, उस्ताद वलायत खां, ये पं. रविशंकर, पं. किशन महाराज, पं. कण्ठे महाराज, ये अपना पुराण महाराज अभी परफार्म करके गया।

रा.- हीराबाई बडोदकर भी...?

अ.क.- हीराबाई बडोदकर, लक्ष्मीशंकर, दिल्ली से आती थी एक शीला कौल।

रा.- शीला धार,

अ.क.- शीला धार... बहुत आती थी, कलकत्ता से कोंकणा बहनजी शायद वो भी यहां परफार्म करके गयी थी। ये भिण्डी बाजार की बोम्बे से आती थी, औरों का नाम नहीं याद, बहुत लोगो ने परफार्म किया, पं. भीमसेन जोशी, पं. ओमकार नाहटा।

रा.- वो एक पं. मल्लिकार्जुन मंसूर?

अ.क.- मल्लिकार्जुन मंसूर भी यहां गा के गये है और वो सी. आर. व्यास वो भी परफार्म करके गये और क्या नाम है इसका ये उस्ताद सराफैदु हुसैन का, वो भी परफार्म करके गये। ये बेगम अख्तर ने, बेगम अख्तर को भी मैंने सुना स्टेज पर।

रा.- क्लासिकल गाया उन्होने ?

अ.क.- क्लासिकल गाया, दादरा ठुमरी बहुत अच्छी गाती थी बहुत एक और बनारस से आती थी गिरजा बाई।

रा.- ठुमरी की तो .....

अ.क.- गिरजा बाई, पहले इसको गिरजा बाई बोलते थे अब गिरजा देवी बोलते है। दो साल पहले भी हमने बुलाया था उसको और बहुत आती थी। वो जो पीछे उसकी डेथ हुई है वो शोभा गुर्तु, वो भी यहां परफार्म करके गयी, शोभा गुडगिल भी यहा गा के गई, ये अभी सिंगर बनी हुई है। पं. हरिप्रसाद चौरसिया, पं. शिवकुमार शर्मा, भजन सुपोरी और उस्ताद सलामत अली खां, अभी तीन-चार पहले ही आया था, पाकिस्तान का वो है।

रा.- शफकत....?

अ.क.- शफकत तो कई बार गा गया।

रा.- उनके बेटे है ना

अ.क.- सलामत अली खां साहब के बेटे है। ये क्या, क्या इसका नाम है; ताफू, तबले वाला, ताफू खां, वो भी यहां परफार्म करके गया। फिर हुसैन बकश, वो भी यहा परफार्म करके गया, एक काबुल से आते थे, उस्ताद मोहम्मद हुसैन खां, क्या नाम था उसका ....काबुल से हर बार आते थे वो।

रा.- तो वो कुछ अलग नई....,

अ.क.- हा, अपनी वो फारसी भाषा में अच्छा, बहुत अच्छा परफार्म करते थे।

रा.- गाते थे ?

अ.क.- गाते थे, वोकलिस्ट थे। ऐसे विलायत खां के लडके सुजात ने कितनी बार बजा गये ।

रा.- दिल्ली में ,

अ.क.- हा., इमरत खां साहब के चारों ही बेटे यहां परफार्म करके गये । ये क्या नाम है भूल जाते है.....राजन साजन मिश्रा बहुत बार गा के गये, अभी ये क्या उसका नाम है भोलानाथ मिश्रा।

रा.- तो ये तो बहुत अच्छी बात है कि संगीत में विभाजन , जैसे देश का विभाजन हो गया मगर तब भी, सरहद के उस पार से गवईये आते रहे, मतलब ५०-६० में रुके नहीं।

अ.क.- आते रहे बुलाते रहे हम लोग, अभी तो पीछे काफी आए पीछे.,

रा.- तो १९४७ के मतलब ये जो , आजकल तो बहुत ज्यादा वो हो गया है। रिलेशनस थोडे खराब हो गये है इण्डिया और पाकिस्तान में, जब ये गवईये है और संस्कृति है वो.....

अ.क.- जैसे हम पंजाबी बोलते है वैसे वो बोलते है। जो इधर पंजाब से आते या पाकिस्तान से , नेचर में कोई खास फर्क नहीं है, कुछ भी नहीं है पर पाकिस्तान उतना खुशहाल नहीं है जितना इण्डिया खुशहाल है। उनके सिकरों के हाव-भाव से, ड्रेस से ही पता चल जाता है। हमारा मंच देखकर ही वो घबरा जाते है, कई बार वहां पर ऐसी महफिल ही नहीं लगती पाकिस्तान में।

रा.- बडा मुश्किल है।

अ.क.- वो कह रहे हमें तो सारी उम्र संगीत की दुनियां में फाकायपरस्ती ही करनी पडी, यहां तो संगीत में बहुत पैसा है।

रा.- तो मतलब उनका आना-जाना लगा रहा इधर...!

अ.क.- हा, लगा रहा , बीच में २०-२५ साल नहीं हुआ...

रा.- कब..?

अ.क.- ६५ की लडाई के बाद , बाद में फिर शुरु हो गया, ८० में फिर शुरु हो गया।

रा.- तो ८० में ये टेरेरिज्म के टाइम में तो थोडा..,

अ.क.- दो-तीन साल बीच में हरवल्लभ नहीं हुआ।

रा.- ८४ के टाइम..

अ.क.- फिर दुबारा शुरु किया नार्थ जोन कल्चर सेन्टर वालों ने, उसके बाद श्री वास.. कमिश्नर आये तो इसको पुरी तरह शुरु कर दिया।

रा.- हवन ही होता रहा उन सालों में..

अ.क.- हवन वो करते थे जो लोकल थे ना, थोडे मुकामी कलाकार लोग शुरुवात करते थे दो-चार राग-रुग गा के।

रा.- आप गये थे उन सालों में ?

अ.क.- हा.. , मै गया हूं।

रा.- कौन से थे लोकल यानी...?

अ.क.- लोकल में ये नारंग साहब हुए, अक मनोहर लाल थे, एक कृष्णकान्त थे पं. रमाकान्त के भाई। ये लोग गा लेते थे थोडा बहुत, हरिदेव जी थे गुराया से।

रा.- सारे पंजाब के ?

अ.क.- सारे पंजाब के वो आते थे। बाबाजी को थोडा गाके श्रद्धाञ्जली दे देते थे। टेरेरिज्म में तो यहां बहुत ज्यादा, उसके बाद आलोक सोमी ने इसकी कमान सम्भाली, १०-१२ साल उन्होने मतलब अच्छा, वो आर्गनाइज सेक्ट्री थे। मैडम २-३ साल बीच में नहीं आई थी। उनके बेटे की डेथ हो गई थी।

रा.- कौन मैडम..?

अ.क.- पूर्णिमा देवी.., इनका यंग बेटा चला गया था तो ३-४ साल ये नहीं आई थी, उन दिनों आलोक सोंधी ने चलाया था। अभी कर्त्री- धत्री वो ही है जनरल सेक्ट्री।

रा.- बहुत-२ शुक्रिया..! आपने बहुत बहुत इन्फर्मेंशन दी है।



**Interview with tabla exponent and former teacher at the Jalandhar Kanya Maha Vidyalaya, Pt. Ramakant, Nakodar Road, Jalandhar, 84 minutes, 24 seconds**

***पण्डित रमाकान्त जी से साक्षात्कार***

राधा कपूरिया:- आप जालन्धर के निवासी है ?

पं. रमाकान्त जी:- हां, एकचुअली, नूर महल गांव है हमारा। ३६ किलोमिटर दूर है वैसे एक ऐतिहासिक गांव है। वहां पर जो नूरा जहां थी उसका जनम नूर महल में हुआ था, तो किसी वक्त में नूर महल जो था वो जी. टी. रोड कहलाता था, शेरशाह सूरी मार्ग जो है असली हमारे गाव के बीच से जाता था...नूर महल, नकोदर, अखरोज ऐसे लाहौर जाता था. उस गाव की मेरी पैदाइश है।

रा.- यहां से कितनी दूर है सर?

पं. र.- ३० किलोमिटर जालन्धर डिस्ट्रिक्ट में है, भगवान की ऐसी इच्छा है मैं उस परिवार में पैदा हुआ हूं जिसमें तीन चीजों का समावेश हैं, तीन चीज – संगीत, देशभक्ति और स्पीरिच्युअल. साधु सन्त से, स्पीरिच्युअल त्रिकालदर्शी सन्त।

रा.- ये कौन हैं?

पं.र.- ये सन्त होते हैं, बहुत पहुंचे हुए सन्त होते हैं गुरबत कहते है।

रा.- जी..जी, कोई खास धारा में?

पं.र.- उनकी रामानन्दी धारा.. उस परिवार में हमने जनम लिया। हमारे दादाजी और नानाजी को भी संगीत का शौक था और नानाजी उनमें भी फ्रिडम फाइटर की लहर दौड़ रहीं थी। संगीत के साथ इसका ये रिलेशन है कि उस समय में जो पण्डित विष्णु दिगम्बर पलुस्कर जी हुए, महात्मा गान्धी जी उन्हें गाने के लिए बुलाते थे। ऐसे हमारे गाव में हमारे नानाजी जो थे, संगीत के प्रति श्रद्धावान थे। उनकी भी बेटी जो ब्लाइंड थी, हमारे पिताजी ने उनको भी गाना सिखाया था. हमारी मौसी को भी संगीत का शौक था. उस अन्धी मौसी ने एक छोटा सा आसन बना था तो उस वक्त पं. नेहरू जी घोड़े पर जाया करते थे तो उस वक्त, उसने उस आसन को पंडित जी को प्रेजेण्ट किया. पं. जी कहने लगे, अब हमारी देश बिल्कुल आजाद हो कर ही रहेगा, जब इतनी लोगो में भावना जागृत हुई है।

रा.- किस किसम का आसन उन्होने बनाया ?

पं.र.- ऐसे जैसे बैठने के लिए बुनते है ना, दरी टाइप, उन्होने बनाया था। अब मै ४७ के पहले की मै बात करता हूं। हमारे नेताजी हरवल्लभ संगीत सम्मेलन में आया करते थे। तब इसकी जो रूप-रेखा थी, थोड़ी अलग टाइप की थी। उस समय कोई संगीत का चाहने वाला भी नहीं था। वो ऐसे ही हरवल्लभ का मेला सुनकार ऐसे ही तीर्थ स्थान पर आ जाते थे बुजुर्ग लोग और वो जो लोग होते थे, जो कलाकार वहां ठहरते थे उनके लिए कोई ना कोई चीज लाते थे। उस वक्त ब्रश-ब्रूश नहीं होते थे तो हमारे नानाजी गाव से दातूने लेकर आते थे कलाकारों के लिए। वहां पर धुनें वगैरह लगे रहते थे। साधु-सन्त अपना गाजा-बाजा भी लेते थे, अपना चील्लम वगैरह भी पीते थे। १९४७ से बाद भी ये हुआ है, हमने देखा है बचपन में १९४७ से पहले ज्यादा था।

रा.- तो जो साधु-फकीर आते थे वो कहां से आते थे ?

पं.र.- पंजाब से आते थे , कभी कोई देहरादून, कोई हरिद्वार से आ गया सुनकर, कोई जम्मू-कश्मीर से साधु आ गया, अपने धुने वगैरह लगाकर बैठते थे।

रा.- धुनी का क्या महत्व था ?

पं.र.- लकड लगानी, कोई नागे साधु होते थे, शरीर पर जला के मलनी तो हरवल्लभ सुनते रहना और उनको लकड वगैरह खाना हरवल्लभ वाले प्रोवाइड करते थे। १९४७ से पहले जो कलाकार आते थे हमने सुना है, भास्कर राव(बाखल) जी आते थे, तो एक बार ऐसा हुआ उनका गाना नहीं बसा भास्कर राव जी का। लोगों को पसन्द नहीं आया तो लोगों ने उन पर गन्ने के छिलके मारे। अगले दिन गाया भास्कर राव जी ने फिर गाया तो लोग रो रहे थे तो भास्कर जी ने कहा कल भी मै भास्कर था आज भी मै भास्कर हूं। इतनाअ हमारे पिताजी हमें बताया करते थे। दूसरी बात ये पता नहीं भास्कर राव जी का या विनायक राव पटवर्धन जी का वो गा रहे थे ४७ से पहले तो उनको टेलिग्राम मिला भाई उनके बच्चे की डेथ हो गयी है, उन्होने कहा भाई अब तो मै गाकर ही जाउंगा। मै अब बाबा के , भगवान के आअगे हूं इतनी जल्दी तो नहीं जा सकता। मतलब ऐसा भी यहां लोग श्रद्धा से आते रहे, अपने बच्चों को थोडा सा भूलकर। फिर उन्होने कहा अब बच्चे के लिए मै ये गाउंगा, इस ढंग से वो करते थे तो और जो कलाकार आते थे उनमें पैसे का लालच नहीं था । तब तो गाडियां भी कम होती थीं कलाकार आते थे, बामन राव उपाध्याय हुए, अपने बामन राव कोल्हापूर वाले हुए, सुरेश बाबू माने हुए, पं. ओंकारनाथ ठाकुर, हिराबाई बडोदकर...१९४७ से

पहले उतना मुझे भी नहीं याद और १९४७ के बाद हरवल्लभ में अपने परिवार के बारे में बताता हूँ। हमारे पिताजी पं. ओंकारनाथ ठाकुर जी के शिष्य थे। एक तो हमारे परिवार ने ये इतिहास रचा, हमारी जो बहन शारदा भारद्वाज गवर्नमेण्ट कोलेज से रिटायर हुई, क्लासेस एक की पोस्ट थी गुरगावा से। ८ साल की उम्र में उन्होंने पं. ओंकारनाथ ठाकुर जी के साथ बजाया तबला अकम्पनीमेन्ट की हमारे पिताजी का लडका- लडकी में कोई भेद नहीं था।

रा.- आपके पिताजी वोकल करते थे कि तबला वादक थे ?

पं.र.- वो ऐसे थे, पिछले जो हमारे पंजाब के कुछ कलाकार होते थे ना वो चारों पट्ट का गाना जानते थे मतलब क्लासिकल साखियां, ध्रुपद धमर, ठुमरी, थोडा सा तबला भी बजा लिया, थोडी सी सितार का भी, वायलीन का भी कुछ कलाकार, हरफन मौला कला कार थे और उनमें पैसे का लालच ना होते हुए भी संगीत के लिए श्रद्धा बहुत होती थी। दूसरी बात ये कि हमारी सिस्टर सबसे पहली लडकी थी, जिसने हरवल्लभ संगीत सम्मेलन में गाना शुरु किया , पहले यहां पर लडकी नहीं आती थी।

रा.- अरे वाह ! ये कौन से वर्ष की बात है?

पं.र.- ये मेरे ख्याल से ये कम से कम १९५०-५२ की बात है, मुझे इतना नहीं याद है।

रा.- उनके पास कोई दस्तावेज होगा इसके बारे में ?

पं.र.- दस्तावेज, ऐसे तो मुझे याद नहीं। उनके पास पता नहीं है या नहीं। तब लाला जगतनारायण जी जो यहां एजुकेशन मिनीस्टर थे, जो कि पंजाब केसरी के चीफ एडिटर थे तो उन्हें हरवल्लभ सम्मेलन में बुलाया था तब उन्होंने उनके सामने गाया था। फिर लडकिया अपनी लक्ष्मीशंकर जी आयी और भी लेडिज आना शुरु हुई, हिराबाई बडोदेकर हुई, मालविका कन्नन हुई, उनके बाद आना शुरु हुई।

रा.- अरे वाह ! तब आपने अपनी सिस्टर जी को देखा था जब उन्होंने परफार्म किया ?

पं.र.- नहीं तब तो मैं बहुत छोटा था लेकिन बाद में भी गाता रहा हमारा सारा परिवार। हमारे पिताजी लेकर आते थे ना हम चार भाई थे हालाकि हमारे घर में इतनी अच्छी कन्डिशन नहीं थी उसके बावजूद भी हमारे पिताजी का इतना शौक था संगीत के लिए और सबके प्रति सद्भावना होती थी। उनमें ये नहीं है भाई मेरे उस्ताद है सबसे अच्छे है, कोई भी अच्छा कलाकार होता था तो

उनको प्रणाम करवाते थे जैसे विनायक राव पटवर्धन जी थे, नारायण राव व्यास जी थे तो हमारे पिताजी उनके प्रति भी श्रद्धा भावना रखते थे। विष्णु दिगाम्बर जी के लडके दत्तात्रेय पलुस्कर जी , हमने उन लोगों के भी दर्शन किये हैं और उनमें इतनी सादगी थी दत्तात्रेय जी में और पटवर्धन जी में भी. दत्तात्रेय जी भी विनायक राव पटवर्धन जी से गाना सिखते थे, कुछ लोगों ने ऐसा करके जो नारायण राव व्यास जी थे , पटवर्धन जी के गुरु भाई उनके पास दत्तात्रेय जी को भेज दिया उनके पास सिखते रहें, मगर वी. आर. पटवर्धन जी ने अपनी सिम्पलीसिटी या अपनी सादगी, अच्छापन नहीं छोडा। एक बार में हम हरवल्लभ में मिले उनको तो पटवर्धन जी तो पिताजी को जानते थे; लाहोर में थे। गन्धर्व महाविद्यालय जब खोला तो हमारे पिताजी भी लाहोर में गन्धर्व महाविद्यालय में सीखा उन्होंने। तो मतलब दत्तात्रेय जी आये हुए थे साथ में गाने के लिए तो पटवर्धन जी ने एकदम नमस्कार किया। उन्होंने कहा कि गुरु-पुत्र भी आये हुए है उनसे भी मिलें तो उनसे हम लोग मिलने के लिए गये। इतनी सादगी थी, दत्तात्रेय जी से लोग रघुपती राघव राजाराम जो विष्णु दिगाम्बर जी का था, सुनते थे। तो पटवर्धन जी उनके पीछे आवाज दे रहे हैं, गा रहे हैं कोई ये बात नहीं है, इतनी सादगी थी। और खास बात ये थी संगीत की उन दिनों में जब मिले पटवर्धन जी को, कहते –देखो जी गुरु कृपा है अपने पर तो उन्होंने अपनी पीठ पर नीशान दिखाये; कहते हैं एक दिन ऐसा था जब गुरु जी पं. विष्णु दिगाम्बर जी हमारी बहुत पिटाई किये रियाज करने के लिए मतलब ऐसे वो कलाकार थे। तो हरवल्लभ में जो कलाकार थे हमने अपनी आखों से भी देखा तब हरवल्लभ नहीं लगता था हमें लगता था कुछ ऐसे ही जाते हैं; कोई हेमकुण्ठ साब जाता है, कोई कहीं जाता है। बचपन में हमारे ऐसे होता था और लोग भी बड़े इत्मीनान से सुनते थे और इतने साधन तब नहीं होते हुए, लोग सारी रात बैठकर सुनते थें. तब उस वक्त ये चार दिन चलता था – २५, २६, २७, २८, २९ दते ये पक्की होती थी। तो उसके बाद चलते -२ अपने ढंग का होता रहा. बीच में एक ऐसा वक्त भी आया, जो यहां पर बलबीर राज सौन्धी जी थे सेक्रेट्री तो उन्होंने यहां पर ये वो नुमाईश लगानी शुरु कर दी. कोई किसी चीज की नुमाईश कोई मशीनों की नुमाईश और ढंग से हम देख रहे हैं बचपन से हरवल्लभ की कमिटी जो है इतनी सोलीड कमिटी शायद किसी की भी नहीं होंगी सब में सद्भावना है। हम तो नहीं कुछ कर सकते जो तबला बजा दिया, कुछ कर दिया। इतनी सद्भावना जिसकी ज्युटी जो भी है अगर वो अनाउन्समेन्ट कर रहे है बडी श्रद्धा से कर रहे है जो कम्पीटीशन भी कर रहे है वो बडी श्रद्धा से काम कर रहे है मतलब इसका सुचारु रूप से चलना इसमें कोई मिट्टी का प्रभाव है, या देवी का ऐसा या बाबा जी का कह लो ऐसा प्रभाव है आज तक हम ने कभी भी किसी के साथ मेम्बर का तकरार होते नहीं देखा और

सबको कलाकारों को सबको यहां खुश करके ही भेजते हैं, इतना ही है। अब तो क्या कलाकार लाखों रुपये लेते हैं। अब कई लोग जो है फिर भी श्रद्धा के लिए आते हैं। हमने ये सुना है कि हरवल्लभ की इतनी चर्चा थी, मैं नोर्वे गया तो वहा पर पटियाला घराने के फतेह अली खां साहब आये हुए थे तो जालन्धर का उनका ऐसा विश्वास था हालांकि इण्डिया वो छोडकर पाकिस्तान रहने लगे थे; गाने के बीच बातें करते -२ वो बताने लगे... कुछ ऐसा दौर ऐसा आया जो उनके प्रेजीडेन्ट उस वक्त था जिया-उल- हक थे। उन्होने सबको बुलाया सारे जो कलाकार थे, उन्होने फरिदा खानम को बुलाया, अमानत अली- फतेह अली को बुलाया सालामत नाजकत अली जितने भी जितने भी कलाकार उन सबको बुलाया, उन्होने कहां “जी देखो भाई जारी तौर पे तो मैं आपकी मदत नहीं कर सकता, क्युकि मैं मुल्ला- मौलानों में फसा हुआ हूं पर इन्डायरेक्टली मैं आपकी मदत करंगा।” वो फतेह अली खां साहब ने इसलिए कहां क्युकि- झिया उल हक- गाने का शौक रखते थे; वो जालन्धर के रहने वाले थे, कहते वो जालन्धर के थे ना इसलिए उनको गाने का शौक था। मतलब हमारे हरवल्लभ के संगीत की ऐसी चर्चा थी कि जो जालन्धर में है सब लोग, जैसे लोगों को बोम्बे का नाम लेते हैं सब कहते हैं वहां पे सब एक्टर ही हैं और ये कहते थें जिसने हरवल्लभ नहीं गाया वो कलाकार नहीं है ये एक मंच ऐसा मतलब अब भी लोगों में हैं।

रा.- ये बात कि जिसने हरवल्लभ नहीं गाया उसने कुछ नहीं गाया, आजकल मैंने बहुत लोगों से सुना हैं, पर आपके नाना, दादा इनसे भी आपने सुना हैं ?

पं.र.- हां..हां, दो चीजे कहते थे लोग हमारे । कहते थे जिसने लाहोर नहीं देखा, उसने कुछ नहीं देखा; जिसने हरवल्लभ नहीं गाया वो गाने के लिए पास नहीं मलब हरवल्लभ की एक ऐसी धारणा बनी हुई थी और फिर जो आम लोग थे जिनको गाने से कोई शौक नहीं था वैसे ही शौक रखते थें तो जैसे हमारी कुशती में होता है ना, भाई आखरी पट्ट की कुशती किसकी हुई ? तो आखिर में किसने गाया, गले में जयमाला किसके डली। जो आखिरी दिन गाता था वो भाई बिचारें लोगों को ये नहीं पता था कि ये जो आखिरी गायेगा उसे फुल पत्तियों की वर्षा होगी। एक दो बार हमारे साथ भी ऐसा हुआ है दो-तीन बार आखिरी जो आइटमा होती है उसमें फुल बरसते हैं. प्रभा अत्रे के साथ हमने बजाया।

रा.- तो ये पगडी भी कहते है, पगडी पहनना ?

पं.र.- वो पगडी... पट्ट को ही कह देते है, पट्ट का पगडी का रूप ही होता है मतलब जिसको अंगरखा कहते है ना।

रा.- जी..जी।

पं.र.- मेरी ८ साल की उम्र थी, १५ साल की उम्र से हरवल्लभ में तबला बजा रहा हूं तो हरवल्लभ में जो पहले कलाकार थे ना आजकल के कलाकार कहते हैं हमारे साथ ये अकम्पनिस्ट हो, हमारे साथ वो अकम्पनिस्ट हो, उस वक्त ये नहीं था...हम जैसे कोई कलाकार बैठा हुआ है बचपन में वो बड़े कलाकार उन यंग लोगों को पुश किया करते थे तो हम २२-२३ साल की उम्र में परवीन सुल्ताना के साथ बजाया, लक्ष्मी शंकर जी के साथ बजाया, पं. भीमसेन जोशी के साथ बजाया, मुनव्वर अली खां साहिब के साथ बजाया और हमने २२-२३ साल की उम्र में ही हरवल्लभ में मतलब इतना बजाया है और हरवल्लभ वालों ने उन्होनेण हमारा कर्ज देना है या नहीं ये मुझे नहीं पता। हमारे परिवार के साथ हमको हरवल्लभ वालों ने प्रीफर किया और खुश होते थे। पता नहीं मुझे महसूस होता है पर हमें प्रेफर किया... हमारी पिताजी की बदौलत ये हुआ...अगर आप चाहो तो एक दो बातें अपने लाइफ की , संगीत के बारे में बताऊं ?

रा.- बिल्कुल..बिल्कुल।

पं.र.- हमारे दिल में हमेशा ये इच्छा बनी रही, हमने अपने माता-पिता का नाम रौशन करना है संगीत में बचपन से क्योंकि हमारे पिताजी ने एज ए फ्रिडम फाइटर गवर्नमेन्ट से कुछ नहीं लिया...२-३ बार जैल गये. जब उनकी २२ साल की उम्र थी शहर की कमिटी के प्रेजिडेन्ट थे और संगीताचार्य भी कहलाते थे हमारे पिताजी।

रा.- जी जी..जी..जी, उनका शुभ नाम ?

पं.र.- पं. कुञ्ज लाल संगीताचार्य.....और वो संगीत सिखने के लिए बेटा , हमारा गाव नूरमहल है नूरमहल से दिल्ली तक पैदल गये थे और वहां पर जाकर ,पता नहीं कैसे पहुंचे वहां पर गोस्वामी भगवद किशोर जी थे दिल्ली में अगर आप दिल्ली युनिवर्सिटी में पढ़े हो तो राधाकृशन गोस्वामी थे वहां पर एक लेक्चरर किसी जमाने में अब तो उनकी डेथ हो गयी उनके पिताजी थे गोस्वामी भागवद किशोर जी उनसे सीखा फिर थोड़ी देर बाद वापस आ गये तो फिर लाहोर जाकर सिखा और बचपन में जब पार्टिशन के बाद हमारा परिवार गुरबत में था तो हम बाहर से गोबर उठाकर लाते थे...तब हमारे घर में आग जलती थी और हमारी माता, हमारी सिस्टर वो सारी -२ रात सूत कातती थी, चवन्नी का एक किलो करते थे. अब तीनों माता और बहनों की १२ आने रुपैये की इनकम होती थी तब और बड़े अलख के साथ हमारे पिताजी ने ये नहीं है , दब्बू स्वभाव के नहीं थे; एज ए फ्रिडम फाइटर जब वो हमें रियाज करवाते थे ऐसे वो खांड की बोरियां होती है ना ? वो

पटसन की बोरियां होती है जो वहां बैठा कर रियाज करवाते थे- दरी भी नहीं थी हमारे घर में ढंग की अगर कोई उस वक्त जब हमारे पिताजी हम पांचों भाइयों बहनों को रियाज करवा रहे हैं संगीत बता रहे है अगर कोई शहर का प्रेजीडेन्ट आ गया कोई उधर से मेला आ गया हमारी कान्स्टीट्यूएन्सी का, मिनीस्टर आ गये मिलने के लिए सब आते थें वो भी आकर बोरी पर ही बैठते थे। बोरी बिछाती थी हमारी माताजी। जब तक हमारा रियाज नहीं कम्पलिट हो जाता तब तक वो बात नहीं करते थे। हमारे पिताजी की इतनी अलख थी। इतनी गुरबत में होते थे और किसी से आजतक उन्होने एक नया पैसा भी उधार नहीं लिया। आज भी हमारे गाव में चले जाओ अगर हमारे पिताजी को जानते होंगे तो वो जरूर कहेंगे, हां भाई, पण्डित जी का लडका है, पण्डित जी ऐसे थे इवेन पाकिस्तान में जो लोग हमारे गाव के किसी की दुकान पर लिखा है नूरमहालियों की दुकान। उनको पूछा भाई आप किसी को नूरमहल में जानते थे जब लडके थे? तो कहते हैं भाई और तो हमें नहीं याद हमारे बुजुर्ग एक पण्डित का नाम लेते थे ज्योतिशी , उनका लडका था कुञ्जलाल वो संगीत गाता था उसका नाम लिया करते थे। हमारे परिवार का अच्छा उस वक्त इस किस्म का अच्छा वातावरण था।

रा.- वो अन्त तक नूरमहल में ही रहे ?

पं.र.- हां.., अब तक भी हमारे मन में इच्छा है कि अपने माता-पिता का नाम संगीत में रौशन करूं हालाकि ७० साल की मेरी उम्र हो गयी फिर भी जो अपना जोशा है संगीत का कायम रखता हूं।

रा.- जी..।

पं.र.- तो हरवल्लभ में हम बजाये... तो औरों के लिए ऐतिहासिक और चीजें होंगी अब हमारे लिए तो ये ही हमारा जो सर्कल है सुबह जाके मैने सितार वादक अरूण मिश्रा है उनके साथ बजाया उसके बाद आया गोपालकृष्ण विचित्र वीणा वाले, उन्होने कहा यहीं लडका ठीक है मेरे लिए, उसके बाद लक्ष्मी शंकर जी आयें वो कहती यहीं बजायेंगा हमारे साथ तो रात को परवीन सुल्ताना के साथ मै बजाया मतलब ये एक ऐतिहासिक घटना हरवल्लभ की मै बता रहा हूं आपको।

रा.- जी.., बिल्कुल।

पं.र.- तो जब परवीन जी के साथ मै बजाया तो हमारे पिताजी बाहर पण्डाल में सुन रहे थे तो लोग मुझे तो कम कह रहे थे हमारे पिताजी को लोगों ने घेर रखा था पंडित जी आपको मुबारकां हो

लडका आपका ऐसे और पं. भीमसेन जोशी ने स्पेसीअल बुलाया मुझे छोटा सा लडका था तब २२-२३ साल का हूंगा कहते हैं परवीन के साथ जिसने बजाया उसको मुझसे मिलाओ तो देखो भाई हमारे घर में संगीत का ऐसा था, भाई एक रात में हम अमिताभ बच्चन बन गये तो अभी तक, हरवल्लभ वालों ने मुझे लाइफटाइम अचीवमेन्ट अवार्ड दिया। हमारी तो कुदरत ने ये दिया है मतलब वोकल और इन्स्ट्रुमेन्टल; किस वोकल के साथ कैसा अकम्पनीमेन्ट करना है, ये हममें खासियत है। अब तो वो माहौल थोडा अलग ढंग का बन गया मतलब ये हरवल्लभ वालों ने हमें बहुत कुछ दिया, उनकी कृपा से ही हम लोग यहां तक पहुंचे हैं और पूछियें आप ?

रा.- जालन्धर में कब आपका आना और बसना हुआ ?

पं.र.- हां, जालन्धरा में १९५८ में एफ. ए. की परीक्षा दी, रणधीर कोलेज, गवर्नमेन्ट कालेज, कपूरथला। पिताजी की इच्छा थी भाई इसको अब तबला ही सीखाना है तो उस वक्त जालन्धर में हमारे पिताजी के दोस्त जिनसे हमने तबला सिखा उस्ताद बहादूर सिंह पार्टिशन से पहले लाहोर रेडियों पर थे, पार्टिशन के बाद वो जालन्धर आकाशवाणी में आ गये तो क्युकि बचपन में वो हमारे पिताजी के दोस्त थे तो यहीं था कि बेटे को अगर तबला सिखना है तो उस बहादूर सिंह जी से ही सिखना है तो उस्ताद जी की ऐसी कृपा हुई २-३ साल में मैं अपना सैल्फ-स्टैण्ड हो गया, तब ३-४ साल के बाद १९६७ में हमारे उस्ताद जी स्वर्ग वासी हो गये और मुझे किसी के पास सिखने की जरूरत नहीं पडी ना मेरा मन किया मन में ये रहा कि मैं जो अपने उस्ताद से सीखा हूं उससे मूडकर नहीं होना हालाकि उस वक्त अल्लाह रखा खां साहिब बहुत मशहूर थे, पं. प्रेम वल्लभ जी दिल्ली में बहुत मशहूर थे, शान्ता प्रसाद जी हालाकि कईयों ने कहां भी हमसे कि भाई हमसे तबला सिखो, हमारा मन नहीं किया ना हमारे पिताजी का किया और तबले की बात ऐसी है मैं सीतार का भी थोडा सा घर में संगीत करके नोलेज रखता हूं तो हमारे पिताजी ने कहा "तबला ही बजाना सारी उमर" हालाकि मैं एम . ए. के पोस्टग्रेजुएशन के बच्चों को सीतार भी सीखा देता हूं गाना भी सीखा देता हूं। मगर हमारे पिताजी की ये आज्ञा थी कि तबला ही बजाना तो आजतक मैं तबला ही बजा रहा हूं।

रा.- आपकी सिस्टर हरवल्लभ की स्टेज पर पहली लडकी थी इसके अलावा कन्या महाविद्यालय भी बहुत पुराना है, वहां से भी बच्चे आते थे?

पं.र.- KMV और हरवल्लभ का जैसे नाखून मांस का सम्बन्ध ऐसा रहा अब १२५ साल इस वर्ष मना रहे हैं तो वहां पर भी जबसे शुरु हुआ इस शहर के लाला देवराज सौन्धी जी ने शुरु किया तो



उन्होंने छोटी सी पाठशाला के रूप में शुरु किया तब भी वो संगीत से शुरु हुई थी। विष्णु दिगम्बर जी भी आये हमारे कालेज में। संगीत के प्रति हमारे कालेज में ऐसा रहा है कि जो हमारी फाउण्डर प्रीन्सीपल आचार्या लज्जावती जी थी वो खुद भी गाती – बजाती थी... बैठकर रेसर्दी भी कुछ करना... उनमें दो गुन थें एक तो फ्रिडम फाइटर के प्रति सम्मान और दूसरा संगीत के प्रति समर्पित हो। उसको कभी छोड़ती नहीं थी। उन्होने मुझे सीलेक्ट किया था कि फ्रिडम फाइटर का लडका है बडी खुश होती थी।

रा.- वो खुद बजाती थी ?

पं.र.- खुद वो हार्मोनीयम बजा लेती थी। कुछ पंजाब में जो पुरानी लेडीज थीं अच्छे-२ घरों की, संगीत जो पुराने पंडित गाते थें थोडा बहुत जरूर सीखती थीं। हमारे गाव में वहां पर अच्छे-२ घरों की औरतें तीन-चार लडकियां हमारी माताजी से सीखती थीं। शादी के बाद हमारे पिताजी ने हमारी माताजी को ही गाना सीखाया। हमारे माताजी की जो तपस्या है, मै तो कहता हूं शायद इतनी तपस्या भगवान राम की माता कौशल्या में नहीं होगी जैसे हमारी माताने तपस्या की है। हमारे पिताजी तो ध्वन्ध थे संगीत में उनको और कुछ नहीं पता बाकि सारे घर का वातावरण हमारे माता ने लिया सारे परिवार को प्यार करना, क्या करना, क्या लेना, क्या देना वो हमारी माता माताजी जानती थी और संगीत के प्रति थी तो रोज कहना, बैठों...गाने के लिए बैठाती थी वो भजन भी गाती थी जितने हमारे भाईयों को याद थे क्लासिकल के, मियां की थोडी हुआ, सुबह के राग हुए, भैरव भी सुनते रहना कई बार हार्मोनीयम से निकालते भी रहना तो अब मुझे याद नहीं आरहा....("दीनन दुख...") ऐसे बजाती थी हमारी माताजी और तरहा के भजन भी ,सारे सारे भजन ऐसे सीखाती थी क्लासिकल भी जानती थी। हम नौ भाई बहन सब गाते- बजाते थें।

रा.- जैसे हीर.., मैया हुआ ?

पं.र.- वो पोर्शन अलग है फोल्क म्यूजिक का आज कल जो लीचर गाने है, उनके बुरे शब्द हटा दो , तो हमारे क्लासीकल म्यूजिक की जो नींव है वो हीर रान्झा हुआ। पंजाबी पॉप कह लो हर एक गाने में ऐसे कुछ चीज होगी कि जो भावना होती है वो अक्षरों की तरफ नहीं होती वो धुन की तरफ होती है वर्ड्स बाद में डाल दो जब सद्भावना होगी तो चाहे वो लाइट म्यूजिक कोपी करते है और कॉपी भी करते है तो पहले ट्युनें सारी वर्डिंग के मुताबिक बनती हैं अगर पहाड की बात हुई तो ऊंचा सूर लेना अगर कोई और तो नीचे का सूर लेना वो फिलींग आती थी(वर्ड्स के मीनिंग की) अब

पहले की ट्युनस शब्दों से होती थी धुन टाइप....जितने भी लाइट गाते हैं जिनको थोड़ी समझ उनमें कुदरती देन होती है। क्लासिकल का पता होता है कि भाई पक्के राग हैं जैसे जसबीर जस्सी, गुरदास मन्न, हंसराज हंस, सरदूल सिकन्दर है और भी हरियाणे में भी होते हैं ऐसे कलाकार उनमें जो भूख रहती है कि हम क्लासिकल गाने सीखें हम उनके कम्पेरिजन में (पैसे और शौरत के मामले में) फकीर लोग है मगर वो हमारी इज्जत हैं कहते हैं हममें क्लासिकल की कमी रह गयीं। हमारा जो परिवार है इस सर्कल में भी है। मै रेडियो से एप्रूवड हूं जाता रहता हूं तो हंसराज से मिलते रहना जसबीर जस्सी तो अब हमारे घर का ही मेम्बर बन गया ये उनका शागीर्द है जो हमारी पुत्र वधु लगती है। दिल्ली में सुनन्दा शर्मा गाती है(गिरजा देवी के शिष्या) जसबीर को सीखाती है। हमारी बेटी भी तबला बजाती है दिल्ली में हमारे दामाद सुधीर पाण्डे करके बहुत मशहूर है अमजद अली खां सबके साथ बजाते हैं तबला और हमें देखो संगीत को प्रेफर किया जैसे हमारे पिताजी ने किया। हमारी लडकी डबल एम.ए. है वोकल म्युजिक और तबला में और वो इन्विलिश की एम. ए. है तो हमें जब फेर आया सुधीर जी का तो हमने बस दो ही बातें पूछी हालाकि शादी के पहले लडकी की मानसिक स्थिति कुछ और होती है आप जानते हो आप भी लडकी हो तो संगीत के प्रति हमारी बेटी ने भी इन्कार नहीं किया। हरवल्लभ में बजाकर गाया है दोनों ड्युएट। हमारा परिवार चलो जाकिर हुसैन तो नहीं है पर ये है कि हमने संगीत का उतना रस लिया जरूर है चाहे हमारा सर्कल हमारी चार दीवारों तक है।

रा.- नहीं, बिल्कुल।

पं.र.- तो बाकि हरवल्लभ से हमें तो प्रेरणा मिलती है। हर बार जब देखा है हर साल ये लगता है हर साल इसमें कुछ-२ नयी चीज लगती है...अब कई लोग क्रिटिसाइज करते हैं जो पहले था अब नहीं है वो हमें बहुत फजूल लगता है। जिस चीज के बारे में आपको नहीं पता ऐसे ही कहते रहो?

रा.- बिल्कुल।

पं.र.- अब देखों नये नये कलाकारों को इन्ट्रोड्यूस करते हैं। अब पं. जसराज को लोग दो बार सुनेंगे, तीसरी बार लोग कम सुनेंगे। यंग आर्टिस्ट है ऐसे अजय चक्रवर्ती जी हैं एक दो साल बाद

फिर बुलाया दिया। यानी नये नये कलाकारों को इंट्रोड्यूस करना ये हरवल्लभ वाले ही करते हैं। अब जो अच्छे कलाकार हैं वो ४-५ लाख रूपया मांगेंगे, अब ४-५ लाख रूपये में ५-६ कलाकार जो यंग ब्लड है उनको उस्ताद भी मिलेगा कि हम हरवल्लभ में गा के आये हैं। बडे कलाकारों को परमात्मा ने इतना दिया हुआ हैं उनको तो वैसे भी लोग देखना ही चाहते हैं। मैने तो कहा तो ऑर्गनाइजर्स को एक बार चाहे कलाकार गाये ना गाये बस झलकी दिख जाये एक बार कलाकार की ५०,००० रुपिया, लाख रुपिया वैसे उनको कर दो तो कम से कम लोगों को पता चलेगा ये पंडित जसराज जी है, ये पण्डित भीमसेन जोशी जी है, ये अजमद अली खां साहिब हैं लोगो का मन करता है कोई फेमस आ जाये अभी तक भी यहां पर ये क्रेज है...।

रा.- जी, के.एम.वी. की छात्राएं हरवल्लभ में वन्दे मातरम गातीं थीं?

पं.र.- शाम को वन्दे मातरम जरूर गाती थीं और आजादी से पहले भी झन्डा रोज चढ़ता था। एक दोहा मुझे अब याद नहीं, “आज़ाद कब होगा, ये राज़ खतम कब होगा” अंग्रेजों ये साथी में उसके कहते थे और हमारे घर में शाम को जब पिताजी हमें रियाज़ करवाते थे तो रियाज़ के बाद आरती करनी आरती वो विष्णु दिगाम्बर जी की अलग है (हम्स ए धुन...ओम जय जगदीश हरे..संकट क्षण में दूर करें) वो ऐसे गाकर, जहां पर भगवान राम की जय करनी, महावीर जी की जय करनी, वहां पर गुरु गोविन्द सिंह जी की जय करनी, गुरु नानक देव की, और महात्मा गान्धि की जय ,पं. नेहरु की जय कहलाते थे हमारे पिताजी मतलब उनमें इतना देश के प्रति डिवोट थे पोलिटीशन्स नहीं थे। के.एम.वी. में ऐसे ही शुरु से चला और यहां कि जो स्टुडेन्ट थीं, भगतसिंह के साथ भेष बदलकर भगतसिंह को छिपाने वाले; लाला लाजपत जी के साथ लाठियां खाने वाले। दुर्गा भाभी तो मशहूर है यहां पर मतलब ५-८-१० लडकियां तो ऐसी थी बिल्कुल मर-मिटने के लिए तैयार।

रा.- जी..., तो इनमें से लडकियां आके गाया करतीं थीं हरवल्लभ पर उस दौर में ?

पं.र.- छात्राएं गाती तो नहीं थीं, पर यहां पर जो कलाकार गाने आते थे ना, तो उनको विद्यालय भी ले कर जाया करती थीं शुरु से यहां पर बडे-२ अच्छे कलाकार आये हुए हैं और विद्याला का तो

ऐसा है नाखून मास का सम्बन्ध है मतलब दूसरा चोली-दामन का मुझे नहीं अच्छा लगा थोडा ऐसा लगता है संगीत का सम्बन्ध विद्यालय से ऐसा है। देखों मुझे १० साल हो गये रिटायर हुए। प्रेजीटेंट साहब जो हमारे हैं अभी तक इज्जत करते है “उस्ताद जी, उस्ताद जी” बुलाते है।

रा.- तो सर कितने नम्बर आपने यहां पर देखे हैं ? कितनी तादात में ? और किसान लोग भी यहां आते थें ?

पं.र.- लोग..., तब से जानते हैं हरवल्लभ को जब देवी तालाब जो था सूखा था तो जो पन्डाल जिस ढंग से लगते थे जो सीढियां थीं छोटी ईंट की तो वहां पर जैसे स्टेडियम होता है वैसे बन जाता है मतलब इतनी दूर तक काफी दूर तक ,लोग काफी आतें थें। कोई हरियाणा से, रोहतक से, जम्मू से आ रहे हैं। हजारों की तादात में अब भी आतें हैं मगर अब लोगों में इतनी कैपेसिटी नहीं रही कि रात रात जागें फिर लिव होने लगा इसलिए लोगों के घर में, मै हरवल्लभ की बात बता रहा हूं ४-५ साल पहले मुझे इन्होंने कहा कि पण्डित जी शाम को आपने बजाना है लोग तो आजकल टेलिविजन पर देखते हैं जो हमारे शुभचिन्तक हैं वो घर में टेलिविजन छोड कर पन्डाल में आगयें हमने बस ट्यून करके जब तबले पे ये “थप” ऐसे दी तो लोगों ने क्लैपिंग किया हमें। मतलब जालन्धर के लोगों ने हरवल्लभ वालों ने ऐसा इम्तिहान था वो पं. भीमसेन जोशी के पोता-शिष्य थे तो हरवल्लभ वालों ने एक अनाउन्समेन्ट करी। कहते हैं आज से २५-३० साल पहले पण्डित जी ने भीमसेन जोशी जी के साथ यहीं राग पर बजाया आज उनके पोते-शिष्य के साथ उसी राग पर संगत कर रहे है तो लोगों ने क्लैपिंग की। पता नहीं (मेरा) सम्बन्ध है जितने मेम्बर हैं ना, मगर उनमें जो अच्छी भावना है मैडम पूर्णिमा बेरी जी है, अजय कान्त गुप्ता है, अरूण कपूर है, अरूण मिश्रा है ठीक हैं अपनी जगह ये लोग बिज्ञनेसमैन भी हैं..अपने ढंग का पॉलिटिक्स भी है पर यहां पर संगीत में जाकर नहीं हैं तो अपना उनका होता हैं भाई हमने हरवल्लभ को सकसेसफुल बनाना है। मै दिल्ली में भी गाया हूं मतलब और भी जगह गाया हूं औरंगाबाद, ग्वालियर वगैरा गया हूं मतलब ऐसी कमिटी की जो भावना है या फिर शायद हम उनसे ज्यादा क्लोज़ है इसलिए हमें लगता है ये भी हो सकता है मगर ऐसी कमिटी जो है, जो भावना है ये...

रा.- ...रेयर है।

पं.र.- फिर हरवल्लभ में एक-दो बार ऐसे हुआ, भाई रात को बारिश पड गयी तो जो उस वक्त के प्रेजीडेंट श्री अश्विनी कुमार जी डायरेक्टर जनरल रहे है और इतनी रातोंरात ही मतलब रात को जैसे बारिश पडी उसके बाद ही मतलब तीन-चार बजे दूसरी जगह पन्डाल उन्होने लगवा दिया। एक सेकेण्ड भी वो सोये नहीं और एक सेकेण्ड भी उन्होने ये भी नहीं किया(डेमोन्स्ट्रेट्स) ऐसी उबासी करता है कुछ करता है ऐसे भी नहीं किया सुबह पन्डाल लगाकर फिर गये शाम को अलग एक नया पान्डाल बना दिया लब्बु राम दोआबा स्कूल में। स्कूल की जो ग्राउंड है उसमें काफी लोग बैठ सकते हैं ३०००-४००० तक की कैपेसिटी है।

रा.- अब तो देवी तालाब बहुत बडा बन गया पर जब आपने देखा था शुरुवात में तो वो पूरा जो ग्राउंड होता था उसमें लोग सुनने के लिए इतने बैठते थे कि...?

पं.र.- हां..हां, बैठते थे। पूरा फैलाव होता था। लोग ऐसे बैठते थे जैसे धुना लगा हुआ, चार-पांच लोग सुन रहे हैं माइक की आवाज आ रही है।

रा.- तो में पन्डाल होता था साथ में कोई और गायन भी होता था, इधर-उधर जैसे कव्वाली हो गयी ?

पं.र.- वो पन्डाल के बाहर कव्वाली हो गयी, कई लोग ऐसे होते थे जैसे ढोलवाले थे जैसे मानों किसी ने मन्नत मांगी होती "हम चौकि भर कर आयेंगे...." तो उन्हे चौकि भर कर जाना, अच्छा तब जो टाइम खाली होता,जैसे दोपहर के तीन बजे खाली हो गया हरवल्लभ तब धुने के पास बैठे होते बुढ़े कलाकार साथ में उन्होने चील्लम भी थोडी पीनी। अच्छा कोई ऐसे थे बाबा आजाते धुने पर ही गाना बजाना हो रहा है, दूसरी जगह कोई और बैठक हो रही है। उधर कोई बैठे बोल रहा है, पंजाब की पोइट्री होती है, हमने ऐसा माहौल थोडा सा देखा है। अब वही जो माहौल है दूसरी जगह कन्वर्ट हो गया है। ऐसे हुआ हमने तो पहले का भी माहौल देखा है। अब जो कम्पिटिशन होता है ना तो देखा है ४ बज्जे यहां पर तबला बजा रहे है तो दो बज्जे वहां सितार बजा रहे है, उनका जैसे

रियाज हो रहा है। उनको ये नहीं पता कि हमारे मन की फिलिंग क्या है कि ऐसी धुने लगती थी। अब ये लोग बच्चे ऐसा कर रहे हैं ये बहुत अच्छा किया है हरवल्लभ वालों ने जो कम्पीटीशन रखा है, यंग ब्लड में कम्पीटीशन ताकि वो सीखें कि संगीत कैसे उठाया जाये और जितना भी जोर लगता है हरवल्लभ वाले हर एक मेम्बर जो है उसकी यही इच्छा है।

रा.- पंजाबी बन्दीश कितनी सूनी हैं हरवल्लभ में ?

पं.र.- हरवल्लभ में हमारे जो पंजाबी कलाकार होते थे ना जैसे पं. हुसन लाल भगत राम हुए वो पंजाबी बन्दीशें गाते थें और भी लोग जैसे पण्डित गाते रहे तप्पा भी गाते रहे। मेरे ख्याल बेगम अख्तर भी आर्यीं यहां पर उसने भी गाया मतलब टप्पा गायकी, पंजाबी बन्दिशें यहां पे बहुत गाते रहे लोग। हमारे मोहन मिलसियानी जी गाते है, बी. एस. नारंग साब है ये भी हमारे इलाके के ही रहने वाले हैं।

रा.- पंजाब के जो घराने है शाम चौरासी, पटियाला ?

पं.र.- मैं तो यहीं है। छोटे -2 जैसे वो कपूरथले का घराना भी था किसी जमाने में। अब फिलौर का घराना था। अब जहां के कलाकार मशहूर हो गये वहां का घराना बन जाता है। पटियाला में राजे महाराजे संरक्षण देते थें पटियाला घराना कहला दिया। शाम चौरासी वाले वहां के थे इसलिए वो शाम चौरासी घराना बन गया। ये था भाई उन लोगों में जैसे शाम चौरासी वाले थे ना, सलामत अली, नजाकत अली वो तो बहुत गुरबत में थे उनको तो जैसे कुदरत ने दिया हो गाना ऐसे चलता था जो बाकी के थे उनको संरक्षण था राजा-महाराजों का जैसे कपूरथले का और हमारे इस इलाके में काफी कलाकार थें। मास्टर बाबूराम आते थे, मुकर्दी वल्ला यहां से इलाका था। मास्टर रतन जी, शौकत हुसैन जी जो तबला बजाते है वो वो इसी इलाके है जो पाकिस्तान में चले गये हरवल्लभ में सलामत अली, नजाकत अली बहुत आते रहें बटवारे के बाद भी और अफगानिस्तान से भी मोहम्मद साहारंग ये भी हरवल्लभ में हमने इनके साथ भी तबला बजाया है बाद में लोग अफगान का गाना जरूर सुनते थे... फर्माइश करते थे वो गाओ तो पाकिस्तान बनने के बाद और भी आते रहे यहां पर, रईस खां साहब जो सितार बजाते है पाकिस्तान बनने के बाद भी आते रहे और

अब्दुल खां सत्तारी या तरी खां आते रहे पाकिस्तान से। एक लिखो भाई नाइट जो मुसलमान रबाबी गवैये थे ना, तबला बजाते थे।

रा.- तो ये जो मीरासीयों की भी परम्परा रही है पंजाब में...

पं.र.- मीरासीयों की परम्परा रही है पंजाब में हालाकि उसको आम लोग हीन भावना से देखते थे मतलब कुछ समय ऐसा भी आया इन्होंने संगीत को संजोके रखा।

रा.- कुमार साब से मैं दिल्ली मेरी भेंट हुई थी तो उन्होने बताया था कि उनके पिताजी ने घर में एक मीरासी को रखा था कि बच्चों को संगीत सीखायें।

पं.र.- ठीक है ना ? इन्होने काफी हद तक हमारे क्लासिकल संगीत को सम्भाल कर रखा है और देख लो जो यहां पर इनकी इज्जत है तो पाकिस्तान में इन लोगों की इज्जत नहीं है जैसे गुलाम अली है और भी...वहां पे ६०-७० परसेन्ट लोग उनको अच्छी निगाह से नहीं देखते। हमने तो ये देखा है जो हिन्दुस्तान के हाई कमिश्नर थे उनका कहना था कि जो मीरासी रवि दरिया पार कर जाता है वो हिन्दुस्तान में जाकर अल्लाह बन जाता है। देखो, पार्टिशन के पहले भी जो महफिलें होती थीं वो तो हिन्दुओं की ज्यादा होती थीं कोई भिन-भेद नहीं करता था जो गाते थे हिन्दुओं के बच्चे उनके पावों को हाथ लगाना, आशीर्वाद लेना, खाना कट्टे खाना कोई बिन-भेद नहीं थीं। जैसे संगीत की विद्या जो है जो ब्रह्म विद्या है जो गायेगा वहीं ब्राह्मण जिसके पास विद्या वो ब्राह्मण । बस, इस ढंग का हमारे संगीत में था। उस समय जैसे हरवल्लभ संगीत सम्मेलन हो रहा है वैसे होशीयारपुर में भी हो रहा है उसको वहां पर भी हरवल्लभ ही कहते थे।

रा.- अरे..वाह !!!

पं.र.- जहां पर भी कोई प्रोग्राम होता ना, उसको हरवल्लभ ही कहते थे इतना मतलब ये हमने सुना और देखा। होशीयारपुर में भी हरवल्लभ लगना है जैसे इन्दिरा गान्धि जब मर गयी तो २-४ दिन तो यहीं निकलता रहा कि "प्राइममिनिस्टर इन्दिरा गान्धि" क्युकि जबान पे चड़ जाता है हरवल्लभ का नाम ऐसे चड़ा हुआ था। कहते थे बस्सी में (होशीयारपुर में तसला है छोटा सा) में

हरवल्लभ होना है और पंजाब की हमारी इस इलाके की जो धरती है ना बजवाडा जगह है एक, बैजू बावरा बजवाडे का था। बाबा हरवल्लभ भी वहीं के थे, महात्मा हन्सराज भी बजवाडे के थे और आज की खास बात आचार्य बृहस्पती प्रख्यात लेखक और संगीतकार वो भी बजवाडे के थे। जो रीखी राम सितारें बनाते है दिल्ली में कनाड प्लेस में दुकान है उनकी वो भी बजवाडे के ही थे बहुत मशहूर इन्स्ट्रुमेन्ट बनाते थे।

रा.- उस्ताद नुसरत फतेह अली खां साब भी जालन्धर के थे मैने सुना है ?

पं.र.- हां, बस्ती शेखां में थे इनके बुजुर्ग। यहां पे कलाकार ये धरती जो है थोडी नवांशहर, होशीयारपुर, जालन्धर मतलब लाहोर तक ये इलाका एक ही था। अमृतसर का अलग था गाने बजाने का। सबसे बडी बात यहां पर संगीत का प्रभाव इसलिए भी ठीक रहा क्योंकि गुरुवाणी का भी यहां पर संगीत का प्रभाव रहा।

रा.- तो कभी शबद वगैरह गायी गयी है हरवल्लभ में ?

पं.र.- नहीं शबद तो नहीं गाते पर संगीत का जो प्रचार है हर गुरुद्वारे में लोग संगीत का करते हैं और जो वाणी में जो शबद आते हैं कोई मालकौन्स में है, कोई टोडी में है उनका भी हाथ योगदान क्लासिकल में रहा है। हमारे पिताजी के पास भी ८-८, १०-१० सरदार लोग सीखते थे उस वक्त, हिन्दुओं की संख्या कम होती थीं सरदारों की ज्यादा हालाकि वो ज्यादा क्लासिकल के कलाकार नहीं हुए पर हमारे यहां एक कलाकार नहीं सरदार सोहन सिंह जी, कुमार साब के गुरु, उनको पद्मश्री भी मिला था वो भी हरवल्लभ में गाते रहे।

रा.- जैसे सूफी गायकी भी होती थीं ?

पं.र.- इतना नहीं होता था पर सूफियाना क्लाम की ये बात थी जैसे हमारे वो सिन्ध भैरवी है (डेमोन्स्ट्रेट्स..सिंगस) ऐसे सुनते थे लोग और परवीन सूल्ताना से "मैने शिकरा यार बनाया", बतालवी का ये भी सुना था लोगों ने ऐसे कभी फरमाईश करके सुनते थे लोग कभी..।



रा.- जैसे बुल्ले शाह...

पं.र.- हां, बुल्ले शाह तो सूफियाना कलाम आगया ना, हां वो तो चलता था लोग सुनना चाहते थें सलामत अली वगैरह से यहीं ऐसे से सुनना चाहते थे वो एक खास गायकी हमारे पंजाब की है सिन्धु भैरवी लोग इन कलाकारों से हरवल्लभ में कहते थें “सिन्धु भैरवी सुनाओ” उनमें सूरों का लगान जैसे निशाद वगैरह अपने ढंग की गायकी है और मिश्र अंग भी है (सिंगस अगेन) उनका सम अलग ढंग से होता है और जो हमारे हिन्दु कलाकार थें हरवल्लभ में पटवर्धन जी, ओम्कारनाथ ठाकुर जी उनसे लोग “जोगी मत जा मत जा” सुनना चाहते थें। देख लो हरवल्लभ में ये पार्टिशन के पहले और बाद दोनों की बात है। सलामत अली , नजाकत अली १९५० और १९६० के बीच में।

रा.- जैसे होशीयारपुर में हरवल्लभ कहते थे तो ऐसे ही पंजाब के और भी संगीत मेलों में होता था?

पं.र.- इवेन चण्डिगड में भास्करराव संगीत सम्मेलन होता था पहले। वहां पर भी पहले हरवल्लभ ही कहते थे उसको। लोग कहते थे, “वहां का हरवल्लभ कब होता है जी ?” इक-दो बार हम गये है बजाने। ये १९६५-६६ तक की बात है जब नयी -२ बनी थी जैसे हमारा के.एम.वी. है। सभी कोलेजेस को लोग इसी नाम से पुकारना चाहते थे जैसे बी.डी. आर्य कोलेज है उसे लोग बी. डी. आर्य कन्या महाविद्यालय बुलाते थे जो हमारी फाउंडर प्रिन्सीपल आचार्या लज्जावती थीं उनका हर जगह प्रभाव था जैसे हरवल्लभ का था वैसे उनका था।

रा.- के. एल. सहगल साहब जालन्धर के ही पले-बडे थे...

पं.र.- के.एल. सहगल यहीं के थें मैंने दर्शन किये है उनके हमारे सन्तों के सेवक थे। ये जो बैठे है (फोटों की तरफ इशारा करके) कुर्सी पर उनके सेवक थे। ये सन्ता हमारे ताउजी थे साधुराम जी; नूरमहल में ही डेरा है तो सहगल साब इनके शिष्य थे।

रा.- तो वो भी कभी हरवल्लभ सुनने आया करते थें ?

पं.र.- उनका हमें पता नहीं हमने ४-५ साल की उम्र में देखा उन्हें वो हमारे गाव आये थे। उनको कहा सुनाओ तो वो कहते है मै पीने के बगैर में गा नहीं सकता महाराज जी के आगे मै पी नहीं सकता। उनकी बहन शकुन्तला बहुत अच्छा गाती थीं ये उसी इलाके में थे हरवल्लभ के पास के इलाके में ही रहते थे। सहगल मोहल्ला अलग है मतलब हरवल्लभ के नजदीक ही रहते थे वैसे शहर भी छोटा था उस वक्त।

एक खास बात और थी हरवल्लभ की जब लोग रात को एक-देड बजे गाते थे जैसे भास्कर राव जी गा रहे है तो स्टेशन तक, बगैर माइक के गाते थे तो रेल्वे स्टेशन तक गाने की आवाज़ आती थी हमारे पिताजी बताते थे।

रा.- तो पटियाला, नाभा, कपूरथले के जो महाराजे थे इन्होने भी योगदान दिया हरवल्लभ को ?

पं.र.- खूब.., वो महाराज कपूरथला ने दिया है वो पैसे भेजते रहे, कई कुछ किया उन्होने।

रा.- जो ओडियंस है यहां की, आपने बताया कि भास्कर राव जी को लोगों ने पसन्द नहीं किया एक बार, तो लोग बोलते भी थे ?

पं.र.- हां सुनते थे लोग । जैसे वो महन्त थे द्वारका दास जी । कहते थे -‘अब भास्कर राव जी, वो सुनाओ’। फ़रमाइश करते थे लोग। कोई भजन सुनाओ, थोड़ी सुना दो।

रा.- तो यानी Learned थे लोग।

पं.र.- लोग learned थे। कान के बहुत अच्छे थे। ऐसे बैठे रहना, सुनते रहना। देर रात बस सुनते रहना।

रा.- कई लोग आकर गाया भी करते थे?

पं.र.- अब तो नहीं। तब वो गाते थे, बीच में इन्टरवल हो जाता था। ऐसे बैठे दो-चार लोग गा रहे हैं। (गाता है: ‘नि मैं मसलत पूछ दियां। रल भावों, से लड़ियो-ओह-ओह। नहीं आंवदा.... की

करां.....? सैय्यों मेरा,दिल नहीं लगदा.... हुंडदि फ़िरां,नहीं आंवदा..दूर दूर जानदा, नीद नहीं आनदा, केडियां गल्लां तो न शर्मावांदा..नहीं आवांदा , की करां.....)। मतलब 'क्या करूं,नहीं आता'(हंसे...।) लोग इतनी feelings के साथ गाते थे, ये थोड़ी में हमारी पंजाबी बन्दीश है।तब ज्यादा रेडिओ नहीं थे। फ़िल्मी गानों के भी रिकॉर्डस् जो चलते थे। मगर गाते बहुत थे, थोड़ा थोड़ा ज़रूर गाते थे। हर गांव में ऐसे लोग थे, लोग थोड़ा थोड़ा ज़रूर गाने का शौक रखते थे।

रा.- तब मंच कितना बड़ा होता था?

पं.र.- पहले था, तबला पर आठ आठ दस दस तबले बजाया करते थे। अब एक राउण्ड मैंने लिया, एक उसने लिया। फिर धीरे धीरे थोड़ा अच्छा होने लगा, फ़िर दो-दो तबला प्लेयर हो गये। एक इधर बैठा था। अब के बैठा है। मैंने बजाया है बहुत दो-दो तबला वाले बैठे थे। पूरे तबला वाले बैठा करते थे।

रा.- पंजाब में बन्दिशें गायी जाती थी तो क्या फ़ारसी में भी?

पं.र.- वो अफ़गनिस्तान से आने वाले मुहम्मद सहारंग गाते थे फ़ारसी में सलामत अली नज़ाकत अली ने गाया है।

रा.- तो लक्ष्मीनारायण राग सभा अमृतसर की, उसका हरबल्लभ से कोई रिश्ता है?

पं.र.- रिश्ता ऐसा है यहीं से प्रेरित होकर लाला गुरहर सहायीमल जी ने वहां पर दुर्गीयाणा में संगीत शुरु किया। वो वहां से सुनने आते थे यहां पर तो फ़िर वहां पर उन्होने अपना दुर्गीयाणा में योगदान दिया। वहां पर भी क्लासिकल होता है तीन चार दिन के लिये। यहीं से प्रेरणा लेके जो लाला मधु माल जी, बीजली पहलवान जी, मिस्टर ग़ोवर करके थे एका।

रा.- तो ये कब होता है सर?

पं.र.- ये होलियों में होता है। सबसे पुराना हरबल्लभ है। बाकी सब बाद में है।

रा.- सहगल साहब ने तो कभी गाया नहीं ना?

पं.र.- वो तो फ़िल्म इण्डस्ट्री में चले गये। उनका गाना मतलब अपने ढंग का था और जो आखिरी की कमाई थी, आखिरी फ़िल्म की वो सारी सन्तों को दान कर गये थे। उनकी सिस्टर बड़ा अच्छा गाती थी, कोट किशनचन्द में रहते थे यहां।

रा.- सर और भी कोई यादें, आपके नानाजी या दादाजी ने बतायीं हों? कोई लोग बताते हैं कि लोग अपनी तरफ़ से आटा और तेल देते थे लंगर के लिए।

पं.र.- हां हां , आपको वो सुनाया कि हमारे दादाजी दातुनें लेकर आते थे। लोगों की श्रद्धा भावना ऐसी थी, इसको कॉन्फ़ेन्स नहीं इसको मेला ही कहते थे हरवल्लभ का मेला है.....।

रा.- तो आप बचपन से हर वर्ष जाते रहे?

पं.र.- मैं ९-१० साल की उम्र में दूसरी क्लास में पढ़ता था तबला बजा रहा हूं हरवल्लभ का तब से इनटच हूं। हमारे बुजुर्गों को श्रद्धा भी बहुत थी हरवल्लभ में ऐसी कमिटी का ऑर्गनाइज बहुत कम होगा।

पहले तो लोग जो थे ना हरवल्लभ वाले घर घर जा के पैसे मांगते थे। एक थे फकीरचन्द कपूर वो लोगों को ऐसे ताश के पत्ते बच्चों को जादू भी दिखाना साथ दस रुपया भी ले लेना हरवल्लभ के लिए उनका नाम फकीरचन्द कपूर होता था, हरवल्लभ वाले उनको कपूरचन्द फकीर कहते थे।

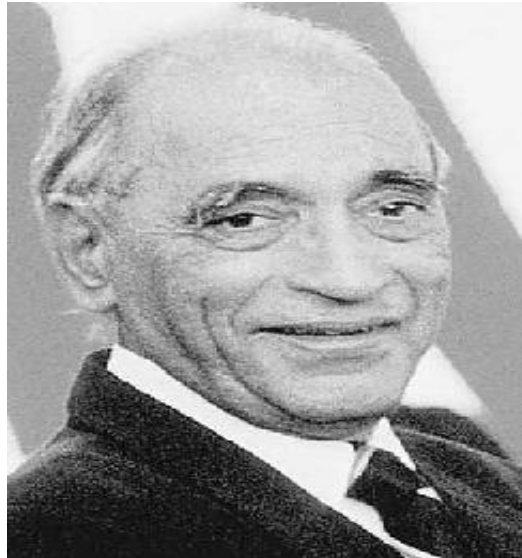
लाला जगन्नाथ पिरथे हुए, मोहन लाल चोपडा हुए मतलब इनकी ऐसी कॅन्ट्रिब्यूशन होती थीं सब बेटा, होते थे। मतलब हरवल्लभ होना ना, उन्होंने नयी-नयी पगडी बान्धनी, हरवल्लभ में घूमना, जैसे कोई शादी या दूल्हे की बारात आयी हुई है। जश्र के भाव से, देख लो।

रा.- और कोई यादें?

पं.र.- किसी वक़्त हमारी शकल अश्विनी कुमार से मिलती थी। उन्होने भी हमें बहुत पुश किया। एक बार मैं किशोरी अमोन्कर जी के साथ बजा रहा था तो कुछ ऐसे हुआ कि उनको मेरा तबला

सूनायी ना पडा तो कुमार साब कहते मुण्डा घबरा गया फिर किशोरी जी ने कहा नहीं ऐसी बात नहीं है, उन्होने कहा माइक ठीक नहीं है फिर सब लोग वाह..वाह करने लगे। वक्त की बात होती है। हमारे लिए हरवल्लभ तो समझ लो संगीत का बडा तगडा टोनिक है, लोगों में संगीत का उत्साह भरने के लिए, कला भरने के लिए, ये लिख लो।

## **Biographical Note on Mr. Ashwini Kumar**<sup>1</sup>



(Photo Courtesy: The Hindu)

Son of a famous physician of Lahore, Dr. Vishwa Nath, one of the first to have studied medicine in England, Mr. Ashwini Kumar was born on December 27<sup>th</sup> in 1920. He graduated with a Master's degree in History from Government College, Lahore, where he was also the assistant editor of the college magazine *Ravi*. A crack boxer, a fine hockey player, an athlete and rower he caught the eye of the Federal Public Service Commission, which selected him for the Indian Police in 1942. He represented his country in hockey, boxing, rowing and athletics. He retired as the Director-General of the Border Security Force in 1978 after serving in the police force for 36 years as one of the most distinguished officers. To date he is the highest decorated Indian police officer for gallantry and distinguished services, having been awarded the President's medal for gallantry (two citations), the President's Medal for Distinguished service and the Police Medal of Meritorious Service and the Padma Bhushan award (1972).

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<sup>1</sup> This biographical note has been prepared combining the information provided in an article entitled 'Olympic award for Ashwini Kumar' in *The Hindu*, December 24, 2002. <http://hindu.com/2002/12/24/stories/2002122401642100.htm>, accessed on 15th July 2012, 17:45 hours. Even more informative was a well-written account of Mr. Kumar's life by Islamabad-based researcher Zarminae Ansari, who was part of his 90<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in 2010, invited to Delhi by his daughter. This account appeared on the online edition of *The News (International)* dated 27 January 2011 entitled 'Signs for those who will see'. <http://www.thenews.com.pk/Todays-News-14-27841-Signs-for-those-who-will-see>, accessed 15th July 2012, 18:00 hours.

He has been the vice-president from 1983 to 1987 of the International Olympic Committee (henceforth “IOC”), a very rare distinction, being the first from the Asian, Latin America and African continents to have been elected to this coveted post. In his capacity as security delegate, he organised security for all the Olympic Games since 1980. Mr Kumar has also been Chairman of the Olympic Radio commission. He was elected as an International Olympic Committee (IOC) member in 1973, and became a member of the IOC Executive Board in 1980 and was re-elected to it from 1992 to 1996. He became an IOC honorary member in 2000 and adjudged the 'Policeman of the Millennium' in Sydney during the 2000 Olympic Games. He served the Indian Hockey Federation (IHF) for 16 years, and was the Vice-President of the International Hockey Federation (FIH) for more than 15 years. He is former Secretary General of the Indian Olympic Association; member of the Commonwealth Games Federation and of the Asian Games Federation was a President of the Indian Basketball Federation and the Punjab Olympic Association for 12 years and was elected Life President of the Indian Olympic Association.

He served as Chef de Mission of the Indian contingent for the 1960 and 1964 Olympic Games. He was awarded the Order of Merit of the International Hockey Federation in 1982. In September 1990, he was specially honoured by the Olympic Council of Asia with the prestigious Order of Merit for the development and promotion of sports in Asia. For his work as security delegate to the 1992 Olympic Games, he was awarded by the king of Spain, one of the highest civilian decorations in Spain. He has also been specially awarded a sports distinction medal by the Brazilian Government, and in Paris in 1996 the Centenary award for services to sport by the International Olympic Committee. He was awarded the Medal of Merit on behalf of National Association of Olympic Committees of the World In 1997. For his outstanding work in International Sports, Mr Kumar was awarded the rare Olympic Order in 2002 in Mexico.

Ashwini Kumar was awarded the prestigious Olympic Order in the 114th Congress of IOC in 2002 in Lausanne, by the IOC president Jacques Rogge. The citation said: "In recognition of your outstanding merit in the cause of world sport and your faithfulness to the Olympic ideal as illustrated by Pierre de Coubertin, Renovator of the Olympic Games, I award you the Olympic Order."

## SELECT GLOSSARY<sup>1</sup>

Alap	The introductory section of a musical performance. In the instrumental style it consists of three major parts, the first one of which is also called alap, and characterised by free rhythm. It is followed by jod and jhala. In the dhrupad form the alap can include fifteen or more divisions, distinguished from each other essentially by tempo.
Andaaz*	Urdu word for style or mannerism.
Antara	The second part of a vocal or instrumental composition, following the sthayi. It stresses the upper tetrachord of the raag scale and is usually performed in the upper octave.
Baansuri	The bamboo flute of North Indian music.
Bhajan*	A genre of Hindu devotional song.
Bol Taan*	A taan with words and syllables rather than pure musical sound in alap style. See 'taan' below.
Bada Khayal*	Khayal composition of a Raga in vilambit tempo. See 'vilambit' below.
Badhat*	The systematic and increasing elaboration of a composition unfolding through time.
Baintbaazi	A Punjabi practice of public poetical exchange, now on the wane. 'Baint' refers to the couplets of verses composed by the Punjabi sufi saint Sultan Bahu.
Baithak*	A sitting for the purpose of performance and consumption of music.
Bandish	The general term for a composition in Hindustani music, conventionally including both the instrumental composition (gat) and the composition of khayal vocal music.
Barsi*	Death anniversary.
Be-sura	Out of tune.
Chilgoza	Pine nut.

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<sup>1</sup> All musical terms have been reproduced from D. Neuman, *The Life of Music in North India*, pp. 270-277. The starred musical terms are attributable to me and I have referenced internet sources. This list is not exhaustive; I apologise for any lacunae.



Dadra	A light classical vocal form; also the rhythmic cycle of six beats (matras) in which it is performed.
Datun	Neem twigs commonly used in India for cleaning teeth and oral health.
Dhrupad	The oldest extant form of classical music in North India. Also a composition in that style.
Dhuna*	A wood-fire burnt by mainly Hindu ascetics for devotional purposes.
Drut*	The fast tempo of a particular composition which usually follows the vilambit version of the same raga in dhrupad/khyal performance.
Farmaish*	A request for a particular musical composition.
Gamak	An embellishment or ornamentation of a note.
Gat	A set instrumental composition fit to a particular rhythmic cycle. Also a composition for the tabla.
Havan/ Yajna*	A Hindu ritual which consists of making offerings into a consecrated fire.
Heer*	A genre of folk music narrating aspects of the Heer-Ranjha tale (one of the four popular tragic romances of the Punjab), set to the notes of Raga Sindh Bhairavi.
Jai Patra*/Jai Mala	Literally 'Victory Letter'/'Victory Garland'. An honorific entitled on the musician who sang at the very end of the yearly Harballabh festival; as a letter or certificate bestowed by the mahant of the Devi Talab and also in the form of the musician being garlanded. See 'mahant'.
Jaltarang	An instrument consisting of the porcelain bowls which are filled with water differentially to fix the pitch and which are struck with two sticks.
Jhala	The third section of the instrumental alap, also played at the end of a composed section where it is known as gat-jhala. Musically it is characterized as a rhythmic section in which a main melody is played against pulse patterns plucked on the chikari. It is performed only on plucked instruments.

Juloos*	A public procession taken out for a cause or in honour of a luminary.
Jugalbandi*	A performance by two musicians simultaneously, marked by an element of competition, where each responds to the other's melodies. It is aimed towards a joint, mutual creation of deeper musical meaning, rather than a mere fostering of competitiveness.
Kaafi*	The genre of Punjabi, Sindhi and Saraiki music which utilizes the verses of kafi poets such as Bulleh Shah and Shah Hussain and is sung primarily for Sufi devotional purposes. <sup>2</sup>
Kirtan/Sankirtan*	Communal singing of Hindu devotional songs; where one person leads the singing and the chanting done by the leader is then repeated by those assembled.
Langar*	The Punjabi term for 'free kitchen' where food is provided, usually at Sikh gurudwaras, to all irrespective of caste or social background.
Layakari*	Mastery exhibited by a musician over tempo.
Mahant*	A religious superior, in particular the chief priest of a temple or the head of a monastery. <sup>3</sup>
Mahiya*	A form of folk music comprising triplets; the first line contains a pen-picture and the second and third lines are much more expressive. <sup>4</sup>
Mazaar*	Grave or shrine of a sufi saint.
Mehfil*	A gathering for the performance and listening of music, usually associated with the latter half of the day. More generally, an Urdu synonym for 'soiree'.
Mela*	Fair.
Meend	A slide or glide from one tone to another, equivalent to the portamento of Western music.
Munh-bola bhai*	Brother only in name, not a blood relation.
Nazrana*	Homage or gift

<sup>2</sup> Information obtained from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kafi> accessed 19th July 2012, 17:00 hours.

<sup>3</sup> Information obtained from <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mahant>, accessed 19th July 2012, 17:02 hours.

<sup>4</sup> S.S. Bedi, *Folklore of Punjab*, New Delhi: National Book Trust, 1971; Second Revised Edition, 2007, p.115.

Pandal*	A tent set up for festive occasions.
Qawwali*	Muslim devotional song, usually sung in a group.
Rabaab	A gut-stringed/plucked lute, unfretted. There are two major types, known as the Afghani and the Indian rabaab.
Raga*	One of the melodic modes used in Indian classical music, consisting of an established number of notes upon which a melody is constructed.
Ras	The affective state generated by an aesthetic performance. In classical theory each rag (sometimes each tone) is thought to characterise, embody and generate particular emotional states.
Revri*	North Indian sweet eaten in winters and made of sesame.
Riyaz	The Hindustani music term for practicing music, connoting the internal journey of the individual who is practicing as much as the mastery over technique.
Saanjhi Virasat	Shared heritage.
Sam*	The first beat of a rhythmic cycle. The point where the soloist and the tabla player are often supposed to meet.
Sammelan*	A formal gathering or meeting.
Saptak*	The gamut or series of the seven notes, Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dha, Ni, Sa.
Sarangi	Bowed fiddle used in Hindustani music.
Sewa	Service.
Shabad-Saakhi	Hymnal story. Shabad refers to a hymn, paragraph or sections of Sikh Holy Scripture, most usually set to music, while saakhi means a story.
Shagird	The Urdu-Persian word for disciple.
Shamiana*	A ceremonial tent awning or cloth canopy used for holding festive occasions outdoors.
Shruti*	A microtone or the smallest interval of pitch the human ear can detect. There are said to be twenty-two known Shrutis in Hindustani classical music.

Sifaarish*	Plea, reflecting a (financial) incentive to persons in authority in order to obtain undue favour. Usually seen in a pejorative sense in India, as a form of corruption.
Sthayi	The first part of a composition, preceding the antara. It is usually focussed on the lower part of the rag scale and performed in the middle and lower octaves.
Tal	Rhythmic cycle.
Taos*	Literally, Persian for 'peacock', it is an instrument similar to the <i>dilruba</i> , and has 28-30 strings and is played with a bow. It has a bigger soundbox, thus producing a more resonant and mellow sound and is said to have been created by Guru Hargobind Singh. <sup>5</sup>
Taan*	An elaborate musical phrase sung or played in khayal compositions towards the end, usually in a very fast tempo.
Tihaai*	A polyrhythmic technique used most often to conclude a piece, the basic format being 3 equal repetitions of a rhythmic or melodic pattern, usually interspersed with 2 equal rests, calculated to fall and conclude on the sam. See 'sam'.
Theka	The basic rhythmic framework of a tal, defined by the particular combination of bols.
Thumri	The least constrained form of classical music, typically used to finish a performance. Originally a romantic vocal genre (*marked for its sensuality), it is now also performed by instrumentalists.
Tappa	A type of light classical song, originally said to be a Punjabi camel driver's song.
Urs	Death anniversary of a sufi saint.
Ustad	Teacher/master, used as an honorific term.
Updesh*	Precept or advice.
Vilambit	The slow movement of a musical performance.

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<sup>5</sup> Information obtained from <http://www.sikhiwiki.org/index.php/Taus>, accessed 19th July, 2012, 16:44 hours.

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