

THE ORCHESTRAL TRADITION AMONGST
INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS IN DURBAN
BETWEEN 1935 AND 1970

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ABSTRACT

During the mid-thirties, a tradition of music-making began amongst South Africans of Indian origin that dominated the cultural life of the majority of Indian South Africans for about forty years. This study concerns itself with the ways in which this tradition - the Indian orchestral tradition as it is referred to by its participants - was practised amongst Indian South Africans in Durban. The study examines the factors that created and sustained the tradition. Areas that come under focus during the course of the presentation include: the contributions made by individual personalities and institutions to the development of Indian popular music generally, and to orchestras specifically; the various locations in and around Durban where this type of music-making was most prevalent; and the manner in which environmental factors affected the development of orchestras. The theoretical basis for this research has been drawn from principles in oral history and ethnomusicology. The study locates the orchestral tradition within Eric Hobsbawm's understanding of traditions and of the ways in which they are created and perpetuated. Further, since the

presentation involves the extensive use of oral evidence, photographs, posters and related memorabilia, Paul Thompson's methods of collecting and interpreting such data are used.

The whole thesis, unless otherwise indicated, is my own original work.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

TOPIC AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY

Up until the mid-thirties, Indian popular music in South Africa was based mainly on Indian folk and religious musical elements and thus drew primarily on Indic traditions. Generally, the music was designed for performance by small ensembles. During the thirties, Indian film made its appearance locally and, within a short space of time, became one of the most sought-after forms of entertainment for Indian South Africans. The films, which were all musicals, became a wellspring of inspiration and material for Indian popular music. Film music, much like Indian life in South Africa, blended Western and Indian elements. Although the films were imported from India, their make-up was very much a reflection of the nature and aspirations of Indian South Africans at the time. As a result, film gained popularity with local Indians rapidly and, within a

short space of time, began to form the core of most forms of popular entertainment.

As the content of popular music changed, so too did the nature of the ensembles that were used as vehicles for this music. Larger ensembles were formed amongst local Indians and, like those used to produce film music, drew on Western and Indian traditions. Referred to by musicians as orchestras, these ensembles formed the bedrock of a tradition of music-making that has, since its advent, dominated the popular cultural life of the majority of Indian South Africans for the past sixty years.

This study concerns itself with the ways in which this tradition - the Indian orchestral tradition - was practised amongst Indian South Africans in Durban. In the presentation, I attempt to examine the factors that spawned as well as sustained the tradition. Areas that come under focus include: the contributions made by individual personalities and ~~institutions~~ to the development of Indian popular music generally, and to orchestras specifically; the various locations in and around Durban where this type of music-making was most prevalent; and the manner in which environmental factors affected the development of orchestras.

Oral evidence suggests that orchestras began appearing in Durban during the thirties, and by about 1970, began to be replaced gradually by smaller ensembles once again. Therefore, I have chosen the years 1930 - 1970 as the period under examination.

MOTIVATION FOR THE PROJECT

In 1994, a collection of documents, photographs, posters, recordings and programmes belonging to the Golden Lily Orchestra came into my possession upon the death of my uncle, James Murugasen. He had been the secretary of the ensemble between 1940 and 1970. The orchestra consisted of about sixteen musicians, eleven of whom were members of my family. During the sixties, the Golden Lily Orchestra was led by my father, Denny Veeran.

Even before 1994, I had heard many stories and anecdotes about the "family band", its music, the occasions and venues at which it performed, and the incidents that shaped its development. Intrigued by this wealth of oral information and documentary evidence, I began searching for scholarly literature pertaining to Indian popular music and to Indian orchestras.

I also felt it necessary to turn to the musicians themselves for more information. Thus, in 1995, I enlisted the help of my father in an attempt to contact musicians who played in other orchestras. Through his help I secured a number of interviews and contacts and thus gained access to information that generally is not shared with outsiders.

Since I was a student of two prominent researchers of Indian South African music in the early nineties, viz. Harichand Somaroo and Melveen Jackson, and since I was uniquely positioned in the research arena, I was inspired to expand on the limited literature available on the subject. In times of rapid change, performance conventions reflect that dynamic, "and often die with their exponents, or become highly modified by succeeding generations" (Jackson 1988: 14). Melveen Jackson states that:

There is a great need to collect data, both documented and oral, before time has distanced us too much from the sources and valuable material is lost forever (1988: 14).

Using her statement as my primary guide, I designed my research to begin to tackle the following tasks: to describe the repertory, performance practices and characteristics of the orchestral tradition; to identify some of the factors that created and supported this tradition; and to examine the

relationship between the musicians and the society in which they lived, and the ways in which their social environment influenced the tradition.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As has been mentioned, Indian film made its appearance in South Africa during the early thirties. As its popularity with Indian South Africans increased, people's regard for the music that was a part of the films increased proportionately and within a short space of time, film songs found their way into the local Indian popular music repertoire. By the mid-thirties, film music established itself as the primary source of material for Indian popular music in South Africa. Accompanying the ascendancy of film music was the reorganisation of local ensembles. Larger ensembles, which came to be known as orchestras, mushroomed, and more western instruments began to be included in these ensembles. Within a short space of time, local Indian orchestras became standardized, and between the mid-thirties and the early seventies, was also characterized by structural and functional invariance. Orchestras continued to be an integral part of variety shows, weddings and other celebrations. Further, the number and type of instruments as well as the musical arrangements of

the pieces, did not change. In sum, the orchestral tradition was essentially a tradition that was created, or, to use Eric Hobsbawm's terminology "invented" in response to the appearance of Indian films. As a result, one of the first theoretical issues that needed attention was the issue of tradition and the ways in which it is created and sustained. In this regard, Hobsbawm's brief discussion of "invented traditions" proved useful (1988: 1).

Hobsbawm talks about two types of traditions. The first type, he states, are traditions that "are actually invented, constructed and formally instituted", whereas the second refer to "those emerging in a less traceable manner within a brief and dateable period - a matter of a few years perhaps - and establishing themselves with great rapidity". He also states that "where possible", invented traditions "normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past" (1988: 1). During the course of his discussion, Hobsbawm adds that "the object and characteristic of 'traditions', including invented ones, is invariance" (1988: 2).

Hobsbawm's understanding of tradition is undoubtedly useful since he provides a useful framework that

explains the emergence of orchestras on the one hand, and also provides insight into their subsequent development on the other.

Another important issue that surfaced during this project was the involvement of Indian customs in the development of the orchestral tradition, and conversely, the involvement of orchestras in the subsequent refashioning of these customs. Evidence reveals that customary events such as weddings and naming ceremonies played important roles in establishing the *modus operandi* of orchestras. Further, these customary events gradually began incorporating popular music in association with their ceremonies although not into the ceremonies itself. In this regard, Hobsbawm's view on custom provided insight into tackling the problem. He states:

Custom[s] ... do not preclude innovation and change up to a point, though evidently the requirement that it must appear compatible or even identical with precedent imposes substantial limitations on it. What it does is to give any desired change .. the sanction of precedent, social continuity and natural law as expressed in history (Hobsbawm 1988: 2).

In other words, Hobsbawm's differentiation of custom and tradition explains how and why Indian customs accommodated the orchestral tradition.

The second theoretical concern that underpins my research concerns the validity of oral data. In his

book, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (1988), Paul Thompson discusses the reliance of historians on documentary sources. He states that "the documentary method not only provided an ideal training ground," but also offered three key advantages to historians. These were:

First, the test of a young scholar's ability could become the writing of a monograph ... based on original documents, and therefore, in that sense at least, original. Secondly, it gave to the discipline a distinct method of its own ... Thirdly, for the increasing number of historians who preferred being shut up in their studies to mixing with ... ordinary people, documentary research was an invaluable social protection (Thompson 1988: 51).

Concerning oral evidence on the other hand, Thompson suggests that:

The historical value of the remembered past rests on three strengths. First ... it can and does provide significant and sometimes unique information from the past. Secondly, it can equally convey the individual and collective consciousness which is part and parcel of that very past ... More than that, the living humanity of oral sources gives them a third strength which is unique. For the reflective insights of retrospection are by no means always a disadvantage ... If the study of memory "teaches us that all historical sources are suffused by subjectivity right from the start", the living presence of those subjective voices from the past also constrains us in our interpretations ... (1988: 148).

He concludes that, "We are dealing, in short, with living sources who, just because they are alive have, unlike inscribed stones or sheaves of paper, the ability to work with us in a two-way process" (1988: 149).

RESEARCH METHODS AND RESEARCH CONSTRAINTS

During the early stages of this project, a pilot study was initiated for the purposes of identifying the research arena and investigating the feasibility of a scholarly endeavour. As part of the study, interviews were conducted and contacts were established whilst I simultaneously investigated the relevant literature on my subject. While I found a dearth of literature directly concerned with Indian popular music and Indian orchestras in South Africa, I did find relevant material in several studies not primarily concerned with the orchestral tradition. These studies include the research of Bill Freund (1995), Jayendran Pillay (1994), Sallyann Goodall (1991), Harichand Somaroo (1989), Melveen Jackson (1988) and Fathima Meer (1969). However, while these authors discuss Indian music or Indian lifestyle in South Africa, they are of a general nature and refer to Indian music only in broad terms. For example, in the studies carried out by Somaroo, Meer and Jackson, the reader is made aware of the existence of orchestras and of Indian popular music in South Africa but only as part of a larger body of musical experience rather than as unique experiences in themselves. In other words, owing to the lacunae of substantive information concerning Indian music in South Africa, these studies were, of necessity, exploratory in nature.

In the absence of other scholarly literary sources, I initiated an archival investigation in a quest for new material and fresh insights. Initially I examined photographs, brochures and programme notes in my own home where boxes of material had been accumulating for years; I then moved my investigation to the Documentation Centre at the University of Durban-Westville which houses a number of private collections, photographs and historical documents pertaining to Indian experiences in South Africa. Both these avenues proved fruitful, since I discovered many interesting leads as well as important historical information. Apart from these discoveries, my research at home also showed me that in my position as a native researcher, historical data is not always housed in some institution waiting to be discovered but rather, can well be a part of everyday life.

Apart from my archival investigation, perhaps one of the most rewarding aspects of this project was the relationships that were established during its course. Although in many instances I was known to my informants either through my own or my family's involvement in music, there were also cases in which I contacted previously unknown informants,

friendships blossomed and a sense of trust was then established. It must be borne in mind that practically all of the musicians that played in orchestras have now retired either from their ordinary, non-music-related employment, from performing, or from both. For many, my conversations and questions were a journey into a period that only the words "glamour" and "prestige" could come close to describing.

During these interviews, the initial period of time was usually spent on my questions. This was generally followed by our listening to old recordings, or sometimes even the performance of an old film tune in which I would be requested to participate. A meal always followed, and refusal was sometimes met with phrases such as "a growing boy must eat", or "You can't keep studying; you must take a break." By this stage of the visit, the wives of my informants would contribute memories of their experiences of the orchestral tradition. I was always treated with respect and, in many instances, with reverence because I was attempting such a project.

One of the goals that I set myself at the start of this project, was to collect information about

orchestras and the musicians that performed in them. This, I felt, would form a foundation upon which most, if not all of my arguments would eventually be based. My initial plan took the form of a table where I listed all the orchestras that people made reference to during interviews. I focussed on the following: the names of the musicians who performed in the orchestra, as well as a list of the instruments that they played; the area of origin of each ensemble; and any other relevant detail that would provide further insight into the nature and make-up of the ensemble. In cases where little information was available about an ensemble, I included the ensemble in a list at the end of the table. This table now forms Appendix A. Locating data for this research was not problematic. People were eager to share their experiences and materials and saw participation in my study as an opportunity to honour and give something of worth back to the people that helped them shape their musical careers.

However, research constraints are inevitable, and in my case I had to constantly bear in mind my position as a native researcher. This concern, particularly with respect to the research of Indian people in South Africa, is not new. It surfaced in the mid-eighties during a research project by Jayendran

Pillay who is himself an Indian South African. He states that not only was he a native researcher, he was, like me, a total insider. The dilemma he faced was whether his "insider perspective was 'better' or more valid or more relevant than an outsider perspective." Comparing these perspectives, he adds that "one is reared in the culture under study while the other is not. One shares the aspirations of the group being studied, suffers from the problems it encounters", whilst this may not necessarily be true of the other (Pillay 1994: 292).

Consideration of these two perspectives is a compelling issue that ultimately seems to me to be a matter of making a personal choice and then recognizing the advantages and disadvantages of that choice. In my case, the questions that surfaced during my investigation were ones I felt I could answer without implying a negative influence on the project. If I were an outsider to the Indian South African tradition, would the information and insights that I gleaned be of a lesser or greater value? Did the subjectivity which was part of this study affect the outcome of my findings negatively? And finally, if an ethnomusicological study is going to carry with it a sense of personal bias, should it

be abandoned, or should it be continued for the sake of scholarship?

As Pillay states, "There are no easy answers to the questions posed above largely because so many complex variables are at play" (Pillay 1994: 293). In this project, I accepted my position as an insider, since it offered me a number of advantages. Firstly, being an Indian South African researching an Indian South African phenomenon made me both accessible to and accepted by interviewees. Interviews, almost always, became two-way processes where not only information and data were exchanged, but also where opinions were shared. Language also did not present any problems. All of my interviewees spoke English albeit with a number of Indian South African colloquialisms with which I was familiar. Further, my being familiar with Tamil also helped a great deal especially when song texts were mentioned. And finally, my understanding of Indian customs and rituals was also an asset in my work.

Inasmuch as my position as an insider was advantageous, I was constantly aware of my position

as a researcher, and my position in the research arena.

CHAPTER TWO

THE EMERGENCE OF THE ORCHESTRAL TRADITION IN DURBAN

Around the middle of the thirties, screenings of Indian films began in Durban at cinemas such as the Mayville Theatre, the Avalon and the Krishna Theatre (*The Leader*: 17 December 1940). These theatres were established in response to the needs of the 143 220 Indians who lived in the urban areas of Natal (Arkin 1981: 134)¹. All the films that were (and still are) screened were musicals "with negligible exceptions ... which [had and still do] have an average of six to eight songs" (Somaroo 1989: 242). Removed from their visual context, these songs constituted, and to a large extent still underpin, Indian popular music today in South Africa.

Indian popular music therefore, much like its Western counterpart, is presently a "mass - disseminated music [that is] distinct from both [Indian] folk and [Indian] classical or art music"

(Hamm 1986: 646). However before 1936, this was not the case.

INDIAN POPULAR MUSIC IN DURBAN BEFORE 1940

The popular music repertoire preceding the introduction of Indian film to Natal, drew almost exclusively on religious and folk wellsprings. The folk music which furnished inspiration included the musical items contained within the activities of the South Indian *therikuthu* (six-foot dances), as well as the repertoire of the North Indian *Sarangī Taal* groups that existed throughout Natal in the twenties and thirties (Meer 1969: 220). On the religious front, the music performed at recitals of episodes taken from the Hindu epics such as the Mahabharata, Ramayana and the Puranas produced by the early dance-drama troupes made a significant contribution to the corpus (Film Script 1993: 2).

By the end of the nineteenth century, local musicians began to provide entertainment based on these folk and religious sources at weddings and at temple celebrations. Initially performing on an *ad hoc* basis, these performers eventually formed amateur groups that played together on a fairly regular basis.

Possibly one of the first ensembles to organize itself during this period was the Sarasvathie Group. Established in 1892 by M. Rangiah of the Desharma Sugar Estate in La Mercy, the ensemble consisted of seven members. The group performed exclusively at Indian weddings although traditional Indian wedding songs as such were not a part of their repertoire. Of the membership, five were instrumentalists and two were vocalists, whilst instruments that were used included *mrdangam*, Jew's harp, harmonium, violin and *thalam* (Naidoo, T.P. 1996: Interview). All members were men. As Meer points out, "women were barred from such professionalism" owing to the stigma attached to unaccompanied women performing with a group of men (1969: 220).

By the end of the 1920s, almost three decades later, a number of ensembles were still performing in the Sarasvathie Group mould. One of the more prominent among these was the Sarasvathie Sangeeth Mandil. Led by D. Roopanand of Durban, it consisted of musicians who were children or grand-children of Indian settlers. Their efforts were channelled primarily into performing at North Indian weddings. Exactly when and why the group disbanded is not known (Naidoo, T.P. 1996: Interview).

Other ensembles that performed at weddings and other celebrations around this time included The Ayer Murthie Carnatic Group, The South Indian Carnatic Group [S.I.C.G.] (Peter 1996: Interview) and The Thyagaraja Carnatic Music Group (Govender, G. 1996: Interview). The naming of the ensembles gives us significant clues to the identities of the participants. Undoubtedly, the Sarasvathie Group and the Sarasvathie Sangeeth Mandil who took the name of the Hindu Goddess of Music, Sarasvathie, established their identities within a religious framework. However, the other early ensembles of Durban seem not to have used religion as a basis for their identity but used their area of origin in India. Further, the repetition of identities within their respective names suggests a sense of reinforcement for the musicians. For instance, the South Indian Carnatic Group is a good example. Since "Carnatic" in itself refers to South Indian music, the inclusion of "South Indian" as well in the name of the group - the South Indian Carnatic Group - strengthens the statement of Indian identity carried by the name. With regards to the Thyagaraja Carnatic Music Group, there seems to also be a case of duplication in that Thyagaraja was a composer of Carnatic music, in other words a South Indian composer who composed South Indian music. The choice

of these two names thus demonstrates one example of the extent to which Indian South Africans identified with India, even though they were the children of settlers and not settlers themselves.

The issues of identity and duality around this period (c.1930) seem to be crucial ones. These issues surfaced in newspaper articles and radio discussions of the time. Indian popular music it seems, was just one of the many areas in which it was most evident. It was also during this time that the Cape Town Agreement of 1927 was signed with what Somaroo calls "its court injunction to the Indian to become British or go home" (Somaroo 1989: 240). Seemingly in defiance of the Cape Town Agreement, musicians of this period clearly chose to maintain their "Indianness" albeit within a South African context - a concept that Muthal Naidoo referred to as falling "between the two extremes" (Naidoo 1993: 3).

THE IMPACT OF IMPORTED RECORDS ON LOCAL MUSIC

By the 1930s, another form of Indian music emerged in India and within a short space of time, began to gain popularity. This music, which was popular primarily in the North and for the purposes of All India Radio's broadcasting services (Peter 1996:

Interview), consisted of instrumental pieces of about three minutes duration arranged for large ensembles of Western and Indian instruments. Composers of these instrumental, or "orchestral" pieces such as Timir Baran and the Sarma Brothers², were clearly influenced by Hindustani and Carnatic folk and classical traditions, as well as European and American "Big Band" traditions. The pieces, performed in single keys, and set within strict rhythmic frameworks, were a blend of counterpoint and melody orchestrated for large ensembles. Both a suggestion of *raga* and a sense of Western harmony were manifest in the music, whilst the outstanding features of these pieces were the presentation of a massed unison sound at certain points and the doubling of parts at others.

Although in its totality the music was not Indian in the traditional sense, its make-up seems to have mirrored the social reality of pre-independence India. This era was characterized by uncertainty and restlessness, with identities and traditions being invented and reinvented so that a sense of continuity with the past was ensured (Hobsbawm 1988: 1). Eric Hobsbawm's view that individual identity, and group traditions, are in a constant state of flux (rejecting the notion of tradition or identity

as being fixed), aptly describes the scenario (1988: 1).

By 1935, records pressed in India and England under the labels of *His Master's Voice*, *Columbia*, *Hindusthan*, *New Theatres*, *Kohinoor*, and *Jenophone* could be purchased from record and music stores throughout Central Durban. These stores included: The Radio Record Trading Company in Victoria Street, Goshalias in Grey Street, The Orient Music Saloon in Field Street and Roopanand Brothers³. By 1940, these records sold at either three shillings each, or if one purchased a dozen, one would have received a discount price of two shillings and six pence apiece (Leader: 11 December 1940).

The musicians who performed on these records included musical directors, composers and musicians such as Anil Biswas, R. C. Boral, Timir Baran, Naushad Ali, V. Balsara, G. N. Balasubramaniam, T. R. Mahalingam, D. K. Pattammal, P. U. Chinappen, P. G. Venketasen and The Sarma Brothers (Govender, G. 1996: Interview). Although film music has dominated the popular music scene since the thirties, instrumental pieces such as the above continued to be recorded until the late fifties (Nair 1996: Interview).

Between 1940 and 1960, at least 40% of the repertoire of local popular music ensembles drew on these imported recordings. The pieces were used primarily as "signature tunes, opening numbers and fanfares" for local popular music ensembles (Veeran 1995: Interview).

INDIAN FILM AND ITS RECEPTION BY INDIAN SOUTH AFRICANS

After its debut in Natal around 1935, Indian film rapidly escalated in popularity; it was one of the few avenues of entertainment available to Indians at the time. Segregation laws restricted access to all theatres and other entertainment venues. Racially mixed audiences were also not allowed until the 1980s. The films that were popular initially were screen-adapted plays that depicted episodes of Indian mythology, tragedy and history as well as biographies of Indian heroes. Indian South African audiences identified readily with these films, since they had been exposed to the dramatized version of the same stories enacted by local artists such as Jimmy Veeran and Muthoo Pillay as early as a decade before. Films based on the Tamil plays such as *Kavalan*, *Galaver*, *Kovilan* and *Kanaygie*, *Nullathungal* and *Sathiavan - Savithree* (Naidoo 1993: 3) were

extremely popular among locals and especially among Tamil speaking Hindus.

Another view cited for the popularity of Indian films and film music (*filmi sangeeth*), relates to what Somaroo (1989: 243) refers to as the "newly acquired and sought-after image" inherent in the nature of film music. He states that:

Film music for the local Indian represents, at least in a musical sense, the bridging of two cultures, the yoking of the old and the new; it satisfies his innate Indian proclivities as well as his Western aspirations. He cannot be accused of spurning Indian traditions ... and at the same time his patronage of a music ... which incorporates the latest trends and styles of [Western] pop music, ... makes him a man of the world, a man in tune with the changing times (1989: 243).

The thirties were indeed "changing times". "With the onset of the depression", and Indians being viewed by white South Africans as a "redundant population" who could be "induced to emigrate to India" (Freund 1995: 49), it is not surprising that Indian South Africans faced an identity crisis. On the one hand there existed the desire to identify with the culture that was dominant locally, i.e. Western culture, whilst on the other, there was a need for an individual cultural identity within a larger social matrix. In sum, the rise in popularity of film music was a "musical manifestation of a social dilemma" (Somaroo 1989: 243).

**"ORCHESTRAL MUSIC WAS THE MUSIC OF THE WORKERS":
POPULAR MUSIC IN THE RAILWAY AND DURBAN CORPORATION
BARRACKS**

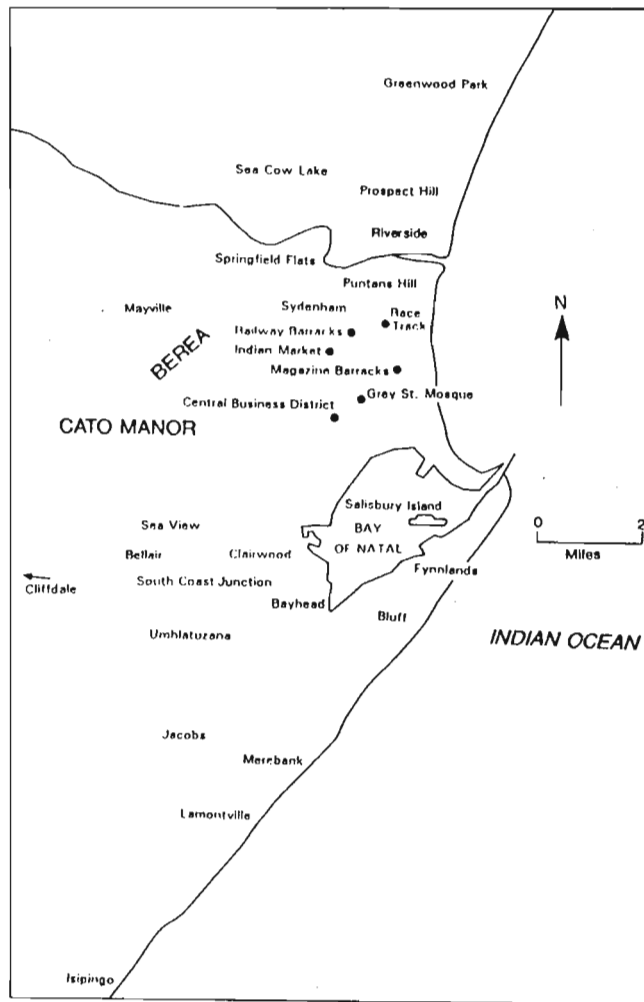
By the late 1800s, Durban emerged as a prosperous city owing to its sugar exports and its railway link to the Transvaal goldfields. Owing primarily to the growing shortage of semi-skilled white labour, the Durban City Council began employing a large number of Indians, most of whom had recently completed their period of indenture on the outlying sugar estates. To house these workers, the City Council started construction of a housing scheme on the marshy, inland side of the upper Marine Parade in 1880 [refer to map, Figure 2.1] (Mikula 1982: 59).

Two clusters of buildings set within a short distance of each other initially comprised the scheme. Very military in appearance, these cantonments were named the Railway Barracks (housing railway workers) and the Durban Corporation or Magazine Barracks (housing workers of the Durban Corporation's essential services) (Pillay 1996: Interview).

Life was difficult and living conditions were miserable for the more than 6000 residents (Mikula

1982: 59). Curfews were in force, and sanitary conditions worsened with each passing day. By 1914, "The Barracks" (as informants refer to them collectively) were condemned because they were "notoriously insanitary and overcrowded" (Omar 1989: 8).

Figure 2.1. Map of "Indian Durban" featuring the Barracks (Freund 1995: 30).



Despite this scenario, the residents of the barracks created living spaces for their religious practices, their musical occasions and the exercise of their cultural traditions. Two temples and one hall - the Old Drama Hall, were built in the barracks. The first temple was built in 1924 by K.R. Pillay and the second, in 1937 by Alagan Pillay (Mikula 1982: 15). Construction of both the buildings was financed by the community. In fact, a variety of socio-cultural activities such as Hindu ritual performances, Tamil dramas, and dances are reported to have taken place regularly (*Leader*: 14 October 1960).

The proximity within which families lived in the barracks, and the communal nature of their existence seem to have been factors that contributed significantly in creating conditions for socio-cultural development. In fact, informants suggest that in other compounds in Durban such as the "Tram" Barracks in Cross Street and the "Point" Barracks at the end of Point Road, "musical and cultural items" were "part of the life" (Pillay 1996: Interview). Bearing in mind that the "barracks" community did not consist of individuals but of groups of individuals, each with their own

customs and traditions which they perceived to be unique to their own group, a complex tapestry of different religions, languages, classes and political groupings emerges with the focal point being the commonality of their experiences.

The evidence related to music, which is available in the profiles of the orchestras themselves, tells a similar story (see Appendix A which lists all the major orchestras active between 1935 and 1970). Tamil and Hindi speaking dance troupes and musical ensembles existed side-by-side, performing on the same bills, and to the same audiences. Networks developed amongst performers who shared similar interests, not unlike the "homeboy networks" created by Zulu migrants in the mining compounds of the Transvaal (see Erlmann 1990: 210), and with the development of these networks came musical progress in terms of technical proficiency and quality of reproduction. In fact associations based on common regional and religious origin and on kinship ties have been the most enduring. Possibly they were the earliest organizational patterns devised by the residents of the barracks. As Erlmann suggests in relation to Zulu migrants, networks of these types were attempts at minimizing the effects of

proletarianization and provided "some measure of stability in an uncertain environment" (1990: 211).

THE PAPIAH BROTHERS

In 1930, six brothers, among them Nagiah, Varttha and Ramadu Papiah, formed an ensemble that they named The Papiah Brothers. Employed as semi-skilled workers by the City Council and based in their two-bedroom flat in the Railway Barracks, The Papiah Brothers modelled themselves on the Sarma Brothers of Madras, India. As an ensemble, they performed at all the major Indian functions in and around Durban during that period.

Jack Peter who currently leads the Karshi Orchestra was in his early teens at the time. He remembers that: "The Papiah Brothers was one of the first Indian orchestras. Groups that followed were just replicas of The Papiah Brothers" (Peter 1996: Interview). Other participants agree that in terms of the Indian orchestral model, the Papiah Brothers dictated trends and set standards in the early days. Moreover, audiences identified with the working-class musicians as well as with their music. In fact, Jack Peter still holds the view that, "orchestral music was the music of the working class. In fact," he continues, "the only time we had

any dealings with the rich Indians, was when they hired us to play at their weddings. They never had any dealings with us. You can put it down! [colloquial phrase for 'You can quote me on that']" (Peter 1996: Interview).

THE RAILWAY YOUTH ORCHESTRAL CLUB

Founded in 1935, The Railway Youth Orchestral Club or the R.Y.O.C. began performing as a twenty piece ensemble at weddings and other functions (See Figure 2.2; Govender, G. 1996: Interview). Like the early Carnatic groups, their choice of name reveals important issues. The ensemble, like the hundreds of ensembles that followed in the decades ahead which included the word "orchestral" or "orchestra" in their names, was more like a small jazz orchestra or "combo" than an orchestra in the sense of Western classical music. Tholsiah Naidoo, president of the Indian Academy of South Africa offers the following explanation as a possible reason for the use of the word "orchestra" by ensembles:

The [local] groups at the time were playing film music although they had no idea of what the original [Indian] groups looked like. The films didn't show you the musicians, you simply heard the music. One had no idea as to the size of the groups or exactly what instruments were being used. As a result, the local musicians identified with the only comparable ensemble in Durban - the Durban City Orchestra [est.1881]. This is how the word 'orchestra' came to be used (1996: Interview).

The other interesting aspect of the R.Y.O.C. was their physical layout of the musicians when they performed (see Figure 2.3).

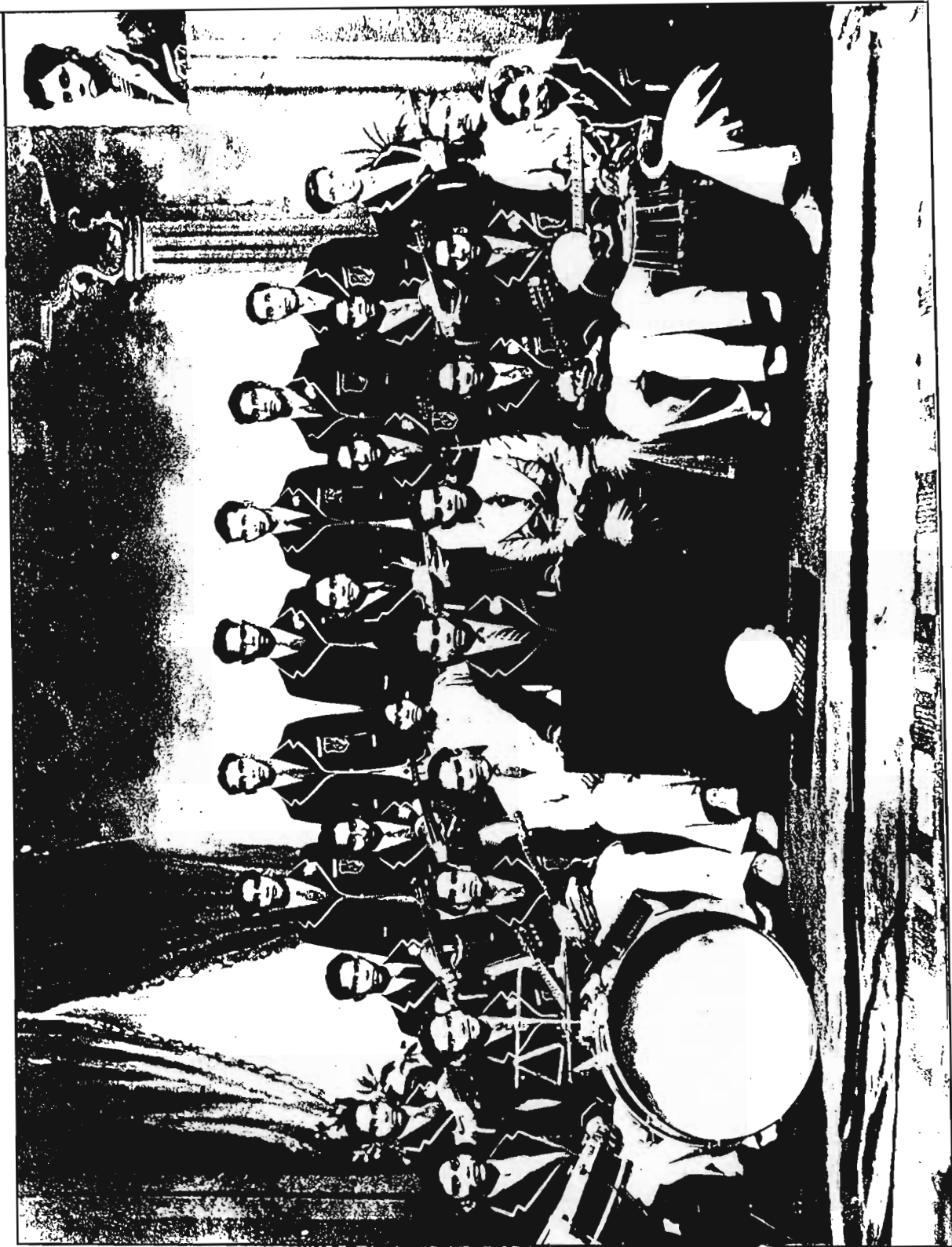


Figure 2.2. The Railway Youth Orchestral Club. The photograph was taken in Durban in 1938. For names of the members, see Page 32 (Private Collection of Madhavan Nair).

The Railway Youth Orchestral Club (1938)

(Back Row) M.P. Naidoo, S.G. Naicker (Assistant Secretary), A.S. Chetty, K. Govindraj,
S.N. Chetty (Treasurer), P.K. Dass, R. Ganas (Insert)

(Centre Row) M.G. Reddy (Secretary), M.M. Muthoo, M.M. Moodley (Assistant Treasurer),
Miss R. Samanathanam, M.S. Naidoo, M.N. Govender (Manager), M. Gopaul, M.M. Moodley

(Seated) C.N. Abbai, P. Chinniah, M.M. George, Narsingh Naidoo (President), K.S.
Naicker (Leader), S.R. Devar (Honourable Life President), A.S. Lott, V. Kisten Pillay,
Gengappa Naicker (Patron), K.M. Pillay

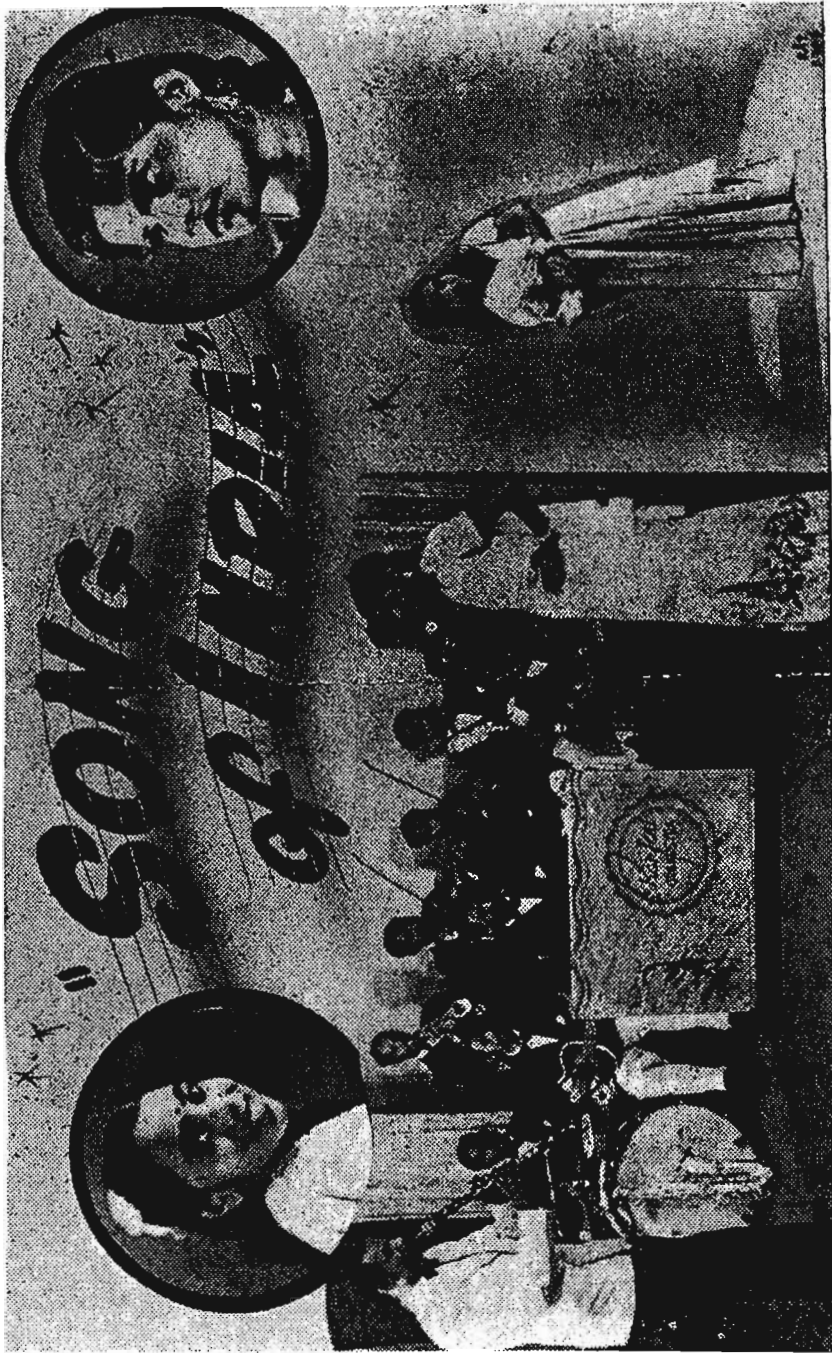


Figure 2.3. Advertising pamphlet for the show "Song of India" ([Durban], 1946, from the Private Collection of Madhavan Nair).

Whilst the arrangement of the members reminds one of the early American "big bands", the leader, the first Indian clarinettist in Durban, the late K. S. Naicker, reminds one of the early jazz clarinettists. When I put this to my informants, two of them, Madhavan Nair and Tulsidas Naidoo stated that although the orchestra played Indian film music, the only examples of large ensembles that the musicians encountered visually were on the American films as well as, possibly, the photographs on record covers⁴. These sources featured musicians such as Fletcher Henderson, Glenn Miller, Hugh Basie, and clarinettists such as Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Jimmy Dorsey, and Benny Goodman.

In fact, the layout of Benny Goodman's band [which was organized in 1934 (Green 1981: 125)], and the famous Goodman "stance" i.e. with Goodman conducting his band at the side with his clarinet outstretched and the reed on the tip of his lower lip, became a distinguishing feature of a large number of local orchestras (see Figures 2.4). Further, the position that the clarinettist occupied in the ensemble, i.e. the leader, became standard practice among local groups until the 1950s. Ensembles of the thirties, forties and early fifties such as The Ranjeni

Orchestra, Bala Vinodha Orchestra, The City Youth Orchestra and The Golden Lily Orchestra, were all led by clarinetists.

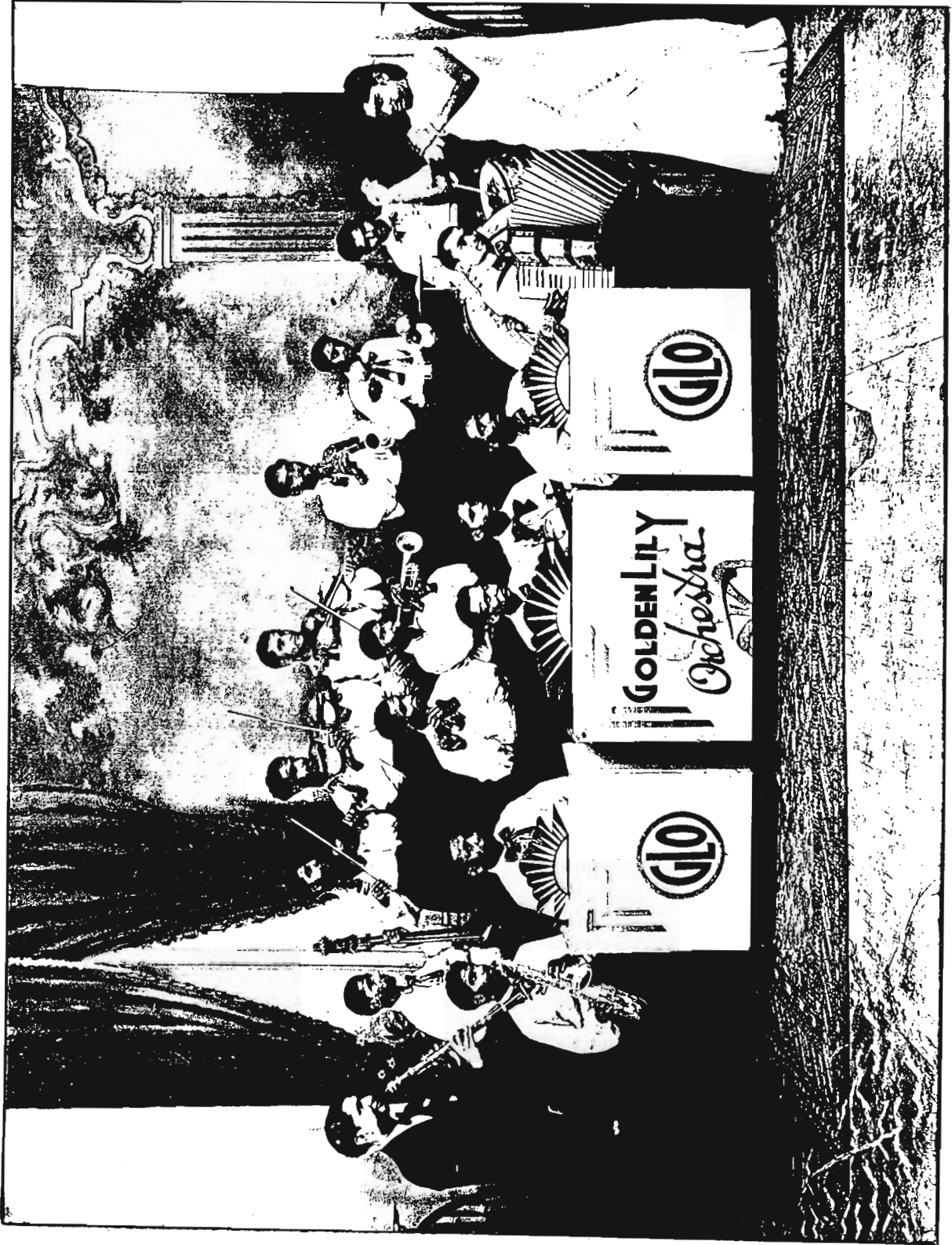


Figure 2.4. The Golden Lily Orchestra ([Durban], c. 1950, from the Private Collection of Denny Veeran).

By 1938, the R.Y.O.C. which seems to have been a result of a mixture of Indic, European and American traditions, decided to change their name. Whereas Jack Peter suggests that this was as a result of many of the members not identifying with the Railway Barracks any more⁵ (1996: Interview), Gopalan Govender states simply, "the name was too long. Members were asked to find a new name and someone came up with the Ranjeni Orchestra" (1996: Interview).

Under the name The Ranjeni Orchestra, the ensemble continued performing until 1992 (see Appendix A for more details). The leadership changed twice, once in 1952 when Billy Gengan became the leader, and again in 1958 with Madhavan Nair taking over. Both of these musicians led the group from the harmonium.

MAYVILLE, CLAIRWOOD AND CENTRAL DURBAN: POPULAR MUSICAL ACTIVITY AFTER 1940

Apart from being in the employ of the city, a number of musicians, mostly grand-children of the indentured labourers, worked in the private sector. Among the jobs that they held, the most common were the positions of waiters, clerks, barmen, and factory workers⁶. Living in close-knit communities

made all sorts of musical activities possible. Mayville, for example, contained almost 40 000 Indian South Africans in the late fifties (*Leader*: 14 October 1960).

By 1940, folk entertainment such as dance dramas, and performances by *sarangi taal* ensembles, which were a prominent part of Indian life outside the city, was on the wane. As the American ethnomusicologist Bonnie Wade points out:

[when people] migrate to cities, traditional ceremonies are curtailed and the repertory of songs which were once integral to the ceremonies ... [are] forgotten. As is common with musical traditions specifically related to context, the absence of context means the disappearance of the musical tradition, which may be replaced by a newly meaningful one (1980: 157).

Fathima Meer echoes Wade's sentiments and adds that with the emergence of "the Indian film and the growing importance of English as a language of communication ... 'musical bands' ... largely replaced traditional folk entertainment" (1969: 222).

Film music, it seems, undoubtedly rode the "tide of commercialism, its pace being determined, perforce, not by the dictates of musical standards but rather by the whims and vagaries of the populace who emerge[d] as its ultimate arbiters" (Somaroo 1989: 242). The standards of success for the local

orchestras then, were not based on renditions of original compositions, but rather on "how well they copied a film tune" (Naidoo, S. 1996: Interview). In fact, the situation was not unlike the early African jazz bands who, as Christopher Ballantine describes, were "infatuated" with the African-American ensembles. He states that for these ensembles, "Favourable comparison with an individual, group or style in the US was the ultimate stamp of approval. For the top performers such accolades were common" (1993: 15).

THE GOLDEN LILY ORCHESTRA: MUSIC IN THE EXTENDED FAMILY

In 1940, the Murugasen family who lived at 126 Trimborne Road in Mayville, started a family band which they named the Golden Lily Orchestra, or the G.L.O. as surviving members refer to it (See Figure 2.4) (Private Collection of James Murugasen). The birth of their orchestra was directly linked to the extended family phenomenon, which characterized early urban Indian life style in South Africa (Freund 1995: 35). The extended family, as Meer points out, was a "focal point of South African Indian life ... When [South African citizenship] became a certainty ... the joint or extended family

became both a choice and economic necessity" (1969: 65).

The lifestyle of the Murugasens and their nephews, the Veerans, was no different from the lifestyles of the hundreds of families that lived in Mayville. In fact, it typified the normative behaviour patterns of Indian South Africans at the time. As Veeran points out:

We were 40 in one house. Anyway we had our differences but the success of the band, well, for one, when it came to music; we were one. We were rated as one of the largest family bands in the Southern Hemisphere - basically eleven from one house (Veeran 1996: Interview).

Apart from the closeness of the family, the proximity in which people lived in Mayville (which was similar to their proximity in the "barracks" situation), seems to have created ideal conditions for the continuation and further development of their traditions. With musicians living within walking or bussing distance from each other, it is hardly surprising that the G.L.O. performed as an ensemble for thirty years.

Apart from the length of their existence, another striking feature of the G.L.O. was that they included a number of female vocalists in their ensemble. Veeran states, "There were a lot of girls that were involved in the band. Samba Padayachee,

Samadhanam, Radha Peters, Mrs A.M. Pillay and others sang at some point with us" (Veeran 1996: Interview).

The presence of women vocalists which emerged around the late 30s when Madhimugum Pillay's wife began singing at public functions, became extremely fashionable by 1940⁷. "This was about the time when the emancipation of our girls began", recalls Tulsidas Naidoo (1996: Interview). One of the first women to sing with an orchestra was Mickey Chitray's wife, C. Mognambal who began singing with the New India Orchestra around 1940 (Nair 1996: Interview). Other women that were prominent singers in the forties and fifties include: Samadhanam, Savithree, Saksha Singh (nee Susheila Soodyall), Maya Devi, Yanum, and Subuluxmi Naidoo.

By 1946, 8.7% of Indian women in South Africa were economically active. This figure, which increased to 13.3% by 1951, indicates the changing position that Indian women occupied in society (Arkin 1981: 133 and 279). The shift in attitude, i.e. from women being viewed traditionally in domestic terms to being considered a viable economic force within the Indian community, may well have been the impetus

that inspired changes in the social dynamics of orchestral performance.

The late 1940s was witness to the birth of a new era in the life of Indian people. In view of the 1948 National Party coup and the resultant entrenchment of apartheid laws, the morale of the G.L.O. was low. This worsened in 1949 when the Durban Race Riots erupted on 13 January 1949. Put down by the white government to the "racial characteristics of Blacks and Indians and the long term tensions between them" (Arkin 1981: 232), the riots left "87 Africans, 50 Indians, 1 white and 4 'unidentified' people" dead (Freund 1995: 59). The riots coupled with the repressive policies of the apartheid regime did much to dampen the spirits of musicians and non-musicians alike. Veeran remembers that "travelling [for the orchestra] became increasingly difficult, but we nevertheless made the best of a bad situation. We didn't have a choice" (1996: Interview).

Continuing unabated into the fifties, the G.L.O. performed at a number of weddings, concerts and private functions. By this time however, changes to their repertoire began. Veeran recalls:

We still continued with the film tunes but not so much of the old fashioned stuff, but the more modern of these. We also introduced a bit of [Western ballroom] dance music at the end of our wedding

programmes ... People went crazy. They never used to leave because this was a new concept (1996: Interview).

Tulsidas Naidoo suggests that ballroom dancing became an integral part of Indian lifestyle, especially among the younger generation of the time. A number of ballroom dancing schools mushroomed in Durban during this period. These included: The Shan Pillay School of Dancing, Runga Naidoo's Dance Academy, Desmond Pillay's Dance School and Francis Shadrack's School of Dancing. "Younger people had access to radios and records, and with such bands as the Blue Ricks and the Five Pennys, ballroom dancing became the craze" (Naidoo, T.P. 1996: Interview).

From the foregoing, it is no wonder that the G.L.O. repertoire was a strong success. Harry Arunachalam who led the Bala Vinodha Orchestra (the B.V.O.), which was based in his home "on Mayville Hill, opposite the Mayville Hotel", remembers that his repertoire also increased to include "some Western music" around the same period (Arunachalam 1996: Interview).

CLAIRWOOD: AMALGAMATION OF TRADITIONS

Although Mayville was the most densely populated Indian area in the country before the late sixties, Clairwood and Central Durban were hives of

orchestral activity. Although the Group Areas Act was in force for 10 years by 1960, informants state that they started moving only during the mid-sixties.

One of the most popular ensembles in Clairwood was the Star Orchestra (see Figure 2.5). Led by Muthu Pillay (see Figure 2.6), who was a singer and an accomplished actor of Tamil dramas, the ensemble was established about the same time as the G.L.O. and the B.V.O. However, the Star Orchestra's repertoire varied from what was expected of orchestras at the time (Naidoo, T.P. 1996: Interview). Along with film songs and instrumental pieces, Muthu Pillay also included music from the dramas that he produced. In fact, Pillay composed and arranged the complete scores for two plays viz. "Kovilan and Kanaygie", and "Harichandra".

The music from these scores were examples of original music, and the Star Orchestra was thus the first orchestra of the period to attempt such music. To what degree it was successful with audiences is not known. However since Pillay continued starring in plays and performing with his orchestra well after the fifties (see Figure 2.7), his music must have met with a certain degree of approval.



Figure 2.5. The Star Orchestra of Clairwood ([Durban], 26 October 1944, from the Private Collection of Muthu Pillay).



Figure 2.6. Muthu Pillay ([Durban], 24 February 1938, from the Private Collection of Muthu Pillay).

DEEPAVALLI CELEBRATION.

THE STAR ORCHESTRA

CLAIRWOOD.
(RE-ORGANISED)

PRESENTS

A VARIETY SHOW

ON FRIDAY 29th OCTOBER 1948

AT THE
PATHMAJURANNI ANDHRA SABHA INSTITUTE

63 Bacus Road, :: CLAIRWOOD

Doors open 7 p.m. — Commencing 7-30 p.m.

Concluding about 11 p.m.

Programme consists of:

1. PRESENTING OF THE ORCHESTRA.
2. A TAMIL SKETCH FROM
"SATHIAKANDAN"
3. A TAMIL PLAY ENTITLED
"SHREE VALLI"

ADMISSION FREE

RIGHT OF ADMISSION RESERVED

S. N. NAIDOO
President

V. A. NAIDOO
Hon. Secretary

R. MUTHOO PILLAY
Hon. Treasurer

R. MUTHOO PILLAY (Found. Principal)
S. V. REDDY
Band Leader



Figure 2.7. Poster advertising a variety show produced by Muthu Pillay ([Durban], 1948, from the Private Collection of Muthu Pillay).

As mentioned earlier, folk entertainment such as dramas, began fading with the advent of the orchestra. In the case of the Star Orchestra however, it seems that a newer tradition merged, or possibly was made to merge, with an older one forming what Eric Hobsbawm refers to as an "invented tradition" (1988: 1). In light of this argument, a possible reason for the inclusion of drama scores in the Star Orchestra's repertoire, could be attributed to Muthu Pillay's predilection for both music and drama. However, a more plausible explanation would seem to be that in view of the fact that the Star Orchestra flourished even after the fifties, their fans identified with the Tamil dramas of the twenties and thirties, and as such, may well have been members of the older generation.

CENTRAL DURBAN: POPULAR MUSIC AND THE EMERGING MIDDLE CLASS

Melveen Jackson suggests that during the first half of this century "class and socio-economic status soon became the mode whereby they [Indian settlers] were identified" (Jackson 1991: 175). In the case of the orchestras that were based in Central Durban during the forties, this certainly seems to have been the case.

The City Youth Orchestra led by M. Ganas Pather, a jeweller whose family owned a business in Durban, rehearsed in the building behind Simon's Cafe in Victoria Street. Jack Peter states, "that band catered more for the richer classes of Tamils and Telegus. People who lived in town had better jobs, they could afford more and they were better situated" (1996: Interview). Indeed, the central location of the group, the access the group had to adequate rehearsal space as well as the necessary infrastructure such as readily available transport, and possibly telephonic communication, could well be the reasons behind The City Youth Orchestra being considered as middle class.

The general feeling among informants about the City Youth Orchestra as well as other ensembles based in Central Durban such as the Merry Melodies, the Sarojini Orchestra and the Manoghari Orchestra, seems to be based on a question of access. In other words, as a direct result of their financial positions and the location of musicians, orchestras based in the city were viewed as "those town boys". They were easily accessible and conversely, had more access to facilities, venues and contracts than their peri-urban counterparts. They were usually the

first to be contacted when concerts were held, and when an orchestra was required for a wedding, Shama Naidoo remembers, "they used to get the contract" (1996: Interview).

However, this situation did not persist. A number of orchestras mushroomed in and around Durban by the fifties, and rather than access to a handful of ensembles, audiences now had a wider choice. On the basis of the repertoire, appearance, personalities and profile of the orchestra, prospective employers could choose from a range of ensembles. Therefore, by the end of the fifties, class was not the only mode by which orchestras were judged since their image and characteristics became equally as important.

VARIETY SHOWS: SPACES FOR FURTHER ORCHESTRAL ACTIVITY

Among the avenues that were available for orchestral activity in the early years of this century, possibly one of the most lucrative and prestigious for local musicians was the variety show. Before 1935, most concerts consisted of "dramas, folk dances and some devotional singing. In fact, it was during this time that Muthu Pillay made his mark" (Naidoo, S. 1996: Interview). The concerts which

were mostly two to three hours in length, usually featured a single artist and his troupe. In June 1935 however, this format changed owing to the success of a variety show that was held at the Durban City hall.

"The Big Broadcast" (June 1935), as it was called, was a new concept for local audiences who "packed the place" (Govender, G. 1996: Interview). Organized by Dr G.M. (Monty) Naicker, the Natal Indian Congress stalwart, the show featured The Hindu Youth Orchestra; Dada Kadhani, a magician from the Transvaal; The Govender Trio with 11 year old Gopalan Govender on the *mrdangam*; a gymnastics display; "a bit of the exotic" with an Indian piece performed on the "bull-bull tharang"⁸; and a sketch entitled 'Vinodha Vivagam' (A Strange Wedding) (Govender, G. 1996: Interview). Although in a slightly modified form, the show format of 1935 continued until the seventies.

Gopalan Govender who is now more than seventy years old, remembers that on Dr Monty Naicker's return from studies in Edinburgh in 1934, Naicker started the Hindu Youth Movement. Knowing the effect popular music had on the locals, and "as a violinist himself, Monty Naicker started the Hindu Youth

Orchestra [as part of the Hindu Youth movement] which was the main band [featured] at The Big Broadcast" (1996: Interview).

By 1946, a number of shows including "The Song of India" which was held at the Durban City Hall, followed "The Big Broadcast" format (see Figure 2.3 for the "Song of India" advertising brochure). Many of these were promoted by the Anti-Segregation Council and the Natal Indian Congress since, apart from helping finance their political activities, they provided a platform to help muster up support from the Indian people.

Other shows that helped set trends and establish reputations included: "Songtime" (1944) which was promoted by Yuseph "Kat" Kathrada under the banner "Indian Radio Cavalcades" (Figure 2.8), "Sing Baby Sing" (late forties) that established the reputation of the singing sensation Miss Saksha Singh, "Dream Time", "The Voice of India" (Figure 2.9), "Indiana", and "On The River" which was promoted by the Bala Vinodha Orchestra in conjunction with the Mayville Theatre. Saksha Singh who is now in her sixties, began her singing career with the Ranjeni Orchestra in the late 1940s (Singh 1996: Interview). By the early fifties, her reputation as an accomplished

singer was established. She began recording with the Shalimar Record Company about this time, and also appeared in their cinema adverts. Appearing in shows in the mid-fifties as well, informants almost always refer to her in relation to the shows she appeared in, or the songs she sung. For example, Madhavan Nair calls her Saksha "Shake in the Grass" Singh, Jack Peter refers to her as "Sing Baby" Singh, and Gopalan Govender remembers her as "The Diamond Queen".

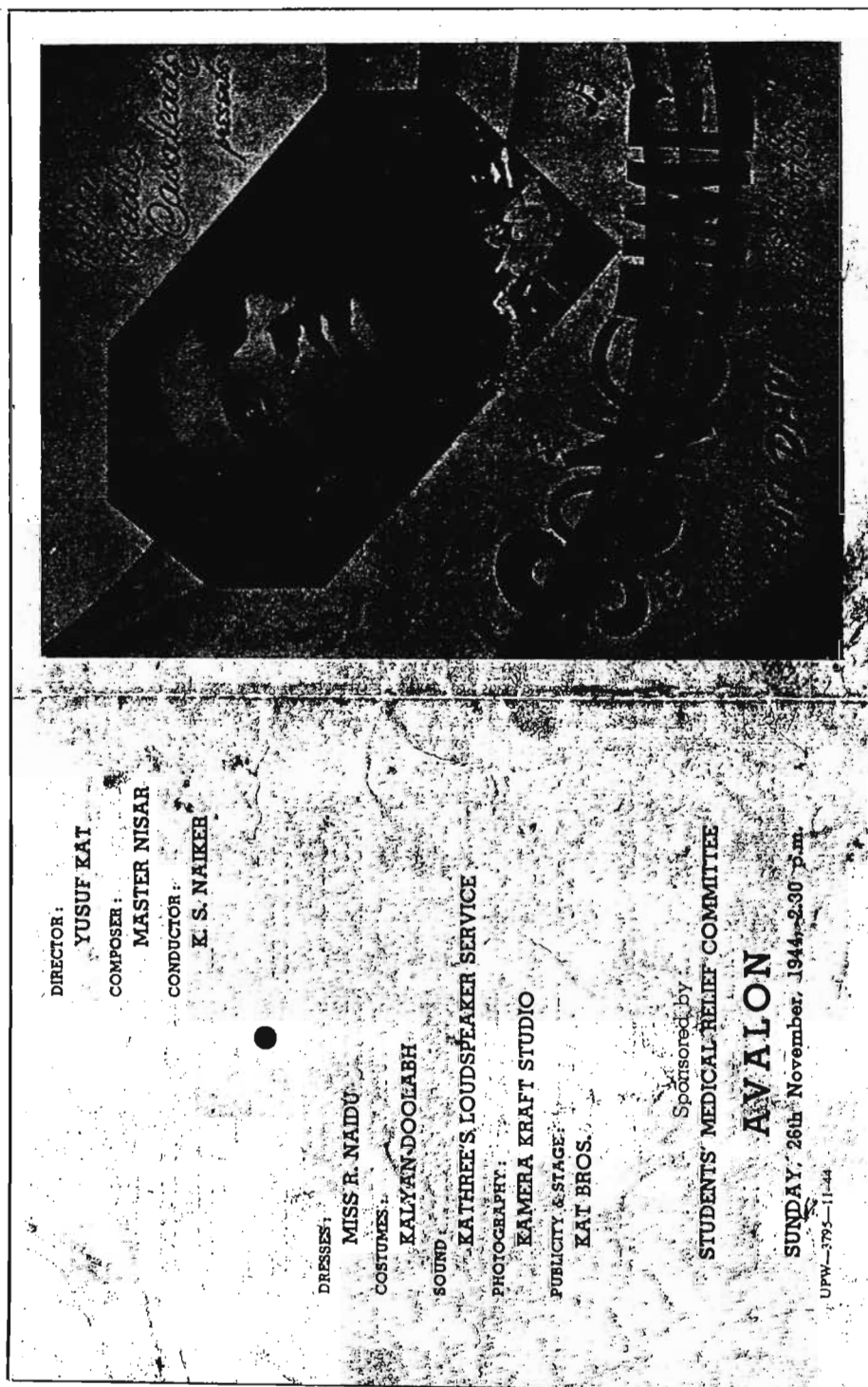




Figure 2.8. Cover of the souvenir brochure of the variety show, "Songtime" ([Durban], 26 November 1944, from the Private Collection of Madhavan Nair).

The Golden Lily Theatrical Company
 —★ PRESENTS ★—
THE GOLDEN LILY ORCHESTRA
 ★★★★★★ THE ALL STAR BAND ★★★★★★
 IN THE YEARES' GREATEST & GAYEST MUSICAL SENSATION OF 1954


THE VOICE ★
OF ★
INDIA




MISS S. PADAYACHY.
NEEDS NO INTRODUCTION.



MISS SAVITHRI,
OF KOVILAN PANE
BY COURTESY OF THELAL SADRARAJAN
THEATRICAL TROUPE.



INTRODUCING - SHEILA DEVI.



MISS ASA,
THE GLAMOROUS DANCER.

★

AT THE NIZAMIA HALL
 EAST STREET, P. M. BURG.
 ON SATURDAY 27th FEBRUARY 1954
 AT 8 P.M.

It is The Year's Greatest Triumph with
 ★ DURBAN'S NEWEST STARS ★
 Its Something New - Its Something Grand - Its The Tops.
 Spiced with Laughter "Enchanting Songs, Astounding Magical Feats and Liling Dances.
!! Dont Miss It !! "You never had a Greater Cppportunity".

Musical Reproduction by Mr. R. MANILALL (Principial). Founder : Mr. P. G. VALLUVANAR.
 Band Leader : SONNY MURUGASEN. Organiser : M. JAMES. Director : SONEY RAIDOO.

ADMISSION : 5/- & 2/6. (3c. 3x)

SMOKE NEEDLE POINT CIGARETTES
 THY NEVER DISSAPOINT.

Grand Prices, 27 East Street, Durban, Phone 12118

Figure 2.9. Poster advertising the variety show, "The Voice of India" ([Pietermaritzburg], 27 February 1954, from the Private Collection of Denny Veeran).

CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown more than anything else, the manner in which musical traditions develop, change and continue in response to changing political, social and cultural circumstances. In the case of popular music before the 1930s, evidence suggests that both folk and religious traditions contributed significantly to the repertoire and the performance practices. The issue of identity which surfaced in the discussion of this period was evident in the choices of names for early ensembles.

With the emergence of Indian film came dramatic alterations to the popular music repertoire of the day. Accompanying these changes were the uncertainties local musicians faced in terms of their identity. As a result, the popular music ensembles emerged around the forties as a tradition within a tradition. In other words, as a popular music tradition that absorbed elements from American, European and Indic traditions, it existed within the larger tradition of Indian films.

The way of life in the residential areas revealed how organizational patterns evolved, and the manner in which orchestral music responded to these developments. The proximity within which Indian

South Africans lived around the forties and fifties, and the networks they formed probably accounts for the large number of ensembles that existed within the confines of Durban (for details see Appendix A).

Regarding the Golden Lily Orchestra, the main issues considered were the emergence of women vocalists in the orchestral tradition, and the resultant (musical) effect of the joint family. The Golden Lily Orchestra however, was by no means the only family-based orchestra at the time. Shama Naidoo who led the Silver Star Orchestra from 1948 to 1970, suggests that "most of the bands started among connections [colloquial term referring to members of the same family]" (1996: Interview).

With regard to the Star Orchestra in Clairwood, an example illustrating Hobsbawm's "invented tradition" surfaced. Whereas every ensemble performed film and instrumental music at the time, the Star Orchestra included elements based on an older tradition, viz. the Tamil drama.

The chapter also looked briefly at the shift in mode by which orchestras were considered. City-based orchestras were initially considered middle class. However, by the fifties the mode by which they were

judged shifted from class to image. Ensembles began to be considered in terms of their size, overall appearance, repertoire and performance.

The discussion of some of the effects of "the variety show" on orchestral development brought this chapter to a close. Areas focussed on included Monty Naicker's involvement in popular music, the format of shows, and a list of some of the most popular shows of the forties and fifties.

NOTES

1. Arkin (1981: 121) lists the total Indian population of South Africa as being 220 000 in 1936. Eighty five and a half percent lived in Natal, whilst 65.1% of this number lived in urban areas such as Durban
2. Informants refer to these pieces as orchestral pieces, using the word "orchestral" interchangeably with "instrumental".
3. The Radio and Record Trading Company later claimed in adverts that they were the sole distributors of His Master's Voice and Columbia records (Leader: 11 December 1940).
4. Madhavan Nair led the Railway Youth Orchestral Club in 1958. However by this time the group had changed its name to the Ranjeni Orchestra.
5. By the late thirties, a number of members of the R.Y.O.C. moved out of the employ of the Durban Corporation and as a result, had to vacate the barracks.
6. This can be seen from the following list which contains a few of the names of the musicians that I came into contact with during this project as well as the first jobs they held as adults: Shama Naidoo - clothing factory worker; Harry Arunachalam - tin factory worker; The Murugasen brothers - waiters and porters; Madhavan Nair - shoe factory worker; Sonny Govender - cabinet factory worker; Denny Veeran - clerk; and Jack Peter - waiter.
7. Madhimugum Pillay was a member of the South Indian Carnatic Group in the early thirties.
8. Gopalan Govender believes the "bull-bull tharang" to be a Japanese harp. Judging from his explanation of the use of the term "bull-bull tharang", it seems that it was based on the sound the instrument produced rather than a Japanese translation of the name.

CHAPTER THREE

CHARACTERISTICS OF ORCHESTRAS

By 1940, a number of orchestras established themselves in and around Durban. As mentioned in Chapter Two, membership in some of these was based on kinship, whilst in others, it was based on the geographic proximity of musicians. However, all the orchestras subscribed to the same performing and participatory conventions, performing at such events as weddings, birthday parties, naming ceremonies, engagement parties, and variety shows. Customs, i.e. social practices that possess the sanction of precedent, can and almost always do incorporate innovation and change. While an amalgamation of Indic, European and American traditions gave rise to these orchestras, the conventional customary events mentioned above sustained and shaped their subsequent development. Further, music was a part of the respective customs "from time immemorial" (Hobsbawm 1988: 2). However, with the advent of the orchestra all of the conventions were modified to include orchestral music. In other words, rather

than inventing new opportunities for orchestral performance, existing ones were refashioned so as to accommodate it. For example, musical commentaries based on the theme of marriage, in other words wedding songs, have always been an integral part of Hindu weddings. In the case of the Hindus of North Indian descent, these songs were performed strictly by a small ensemble of women - most often elders in the family - who were accompanied by a single instrument, the *dholak* (Somaroo 1989: 256). In the case of the Hindus of South Indian descent, similar songs were sung by small ensembles not unlike the *katcheri* ensembles of South India. In most instances, both repertoires accompanied the various pre-nuptial and post-nuptial rituals. However, the nuptial ceremony itself was not usually accompanied by songs. The absence of music during this phase, it seems, allowed guests to "witness the nuptial ceremony" (Peter 1996: Interview). However, with guest lists that sometimes consisted of up to 800 people, and marriages taking a minimum of 45 minutes, the introduction of the orchestra into the wedding ceremony was a welcome innovation to the guests. On one level, the orchestras entertained the audience, whilst on another, they merged a custom (the wedding) with an emerging tradition (the orchestra). The result however, was not the advent

of yet a third relatively stable tradition, but rather the modification of a custom in the sense of a social practice "that was readily modified to meet changing practical needs" (Hobsbawm 1988: 3).

In the case of Hindu naming ceremonies, the situation was not dissimilar. Birth songs and songs sung by women at naming ceremonies or christenings (*sohars* or *araros*), were once the only repertoires sung at these occasions (Somaroo 1989: 256). However, gradually, orchestras were hired more and more often to perform at christenings - usually at the end of the formalities. Eventually, orchestras included orchestrated versions of *araros* in their repertoires and were thus hired to perform throughout the ceremony (Veeran 1996: Interview).

In the case of variety shows, Chapter Two explained how the emphasis of their programmes shifted from dramatic performances to orchestral performances. Evidence also suggested that variety shows developed routines and a format that became formalised with repetition. The conventions of the wedding and the variety show therefore shaped and were shaped by the performance practices and the characteristics of orchestras.

INSTRUMENTS

By 1950, evidence suggests that it was standard practice for an orchestra to have at its core, a clarinet, a keyboard instrument such as the harmonium or accordion, and a *tabla*. Although my informants are adamant about Indian music not utilising Western harmonic principles generally, it is clear that Indian popular music did do this. Further, the instrumental core seems to suggest that the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic components of popular music were all important in the music of the orchestra.

Other instruments that were prominent included the tenor banjo, the trumpet, and a Western drum set. In most instances, ensembles featured only one of each of these instruments. By the sixties, the guitar, the double bass and the saxophone began to gain popularity with orchestras. This was possibly due to their popularity in Western popular music at the time.

K. S. Naicker who was the first leader of the Ranjeni orchestra, was also the first to introduce the clarinet into Indian popular music in the thirties. He played the simple-system clarinet and is considered by all my informants as "one of the

finest Indian clarinettists" in South Africa. The simple-system clarinet was extremely popular with orchestras between the thirties and fifties. This implies that it was also readily available. A possible reason for this may be due to its versatility, since it featured in both jazz and military bands during the pre-World-War-Two era.

Whether or not the clarinet itself featured on the early soundtracks of Indian films however, raises another important issue. This deals with instrumentation in local arrangements of film songs. When one couples the fact that Indian instruments were not easy to come by in South Africa with the opinion that those that were available were exorbitantly priced, it comes as no surprise that musicians "had to make do" (Peter 1996: Interview). The tenor banjo and accordion, for instance, were popular instruments in the "types of coloured-Afrikaans and white-Afrikaans dance music known as *tikkie-draai* and *vastrap*" in the thirties (Ballantine 1993: 27). As a result, these instruments were readily available and were relatively inexpensive. In the absence of instruments such as the *sarod*, *nagaswaram* and mandolin locally, the tenor banjo and even the accordion found a home in the orchestra.

John Wembly Jeevanantham, also known as Dickie, was one of the first Indian trumpeters in South Africa . In the thirties, he founded the Jazz Pirates and in 1939 (see Figure 3.1), when Indians were allowed to join the army, Jeevanantham enlisted as a trumpeter. Upon his discharge he began teaching the trumpet and found a ready market among prospective orchestral musicians. In fact, between the forties and sixties "almost every Indian trumpeter studied with Dickie ... and those that didn't, said that they did"¹ (Veeran 1996: Interview). Although Jeevanantham himself never played Indian popular music, his role as an educator, contributed much to the development of the orchestra.

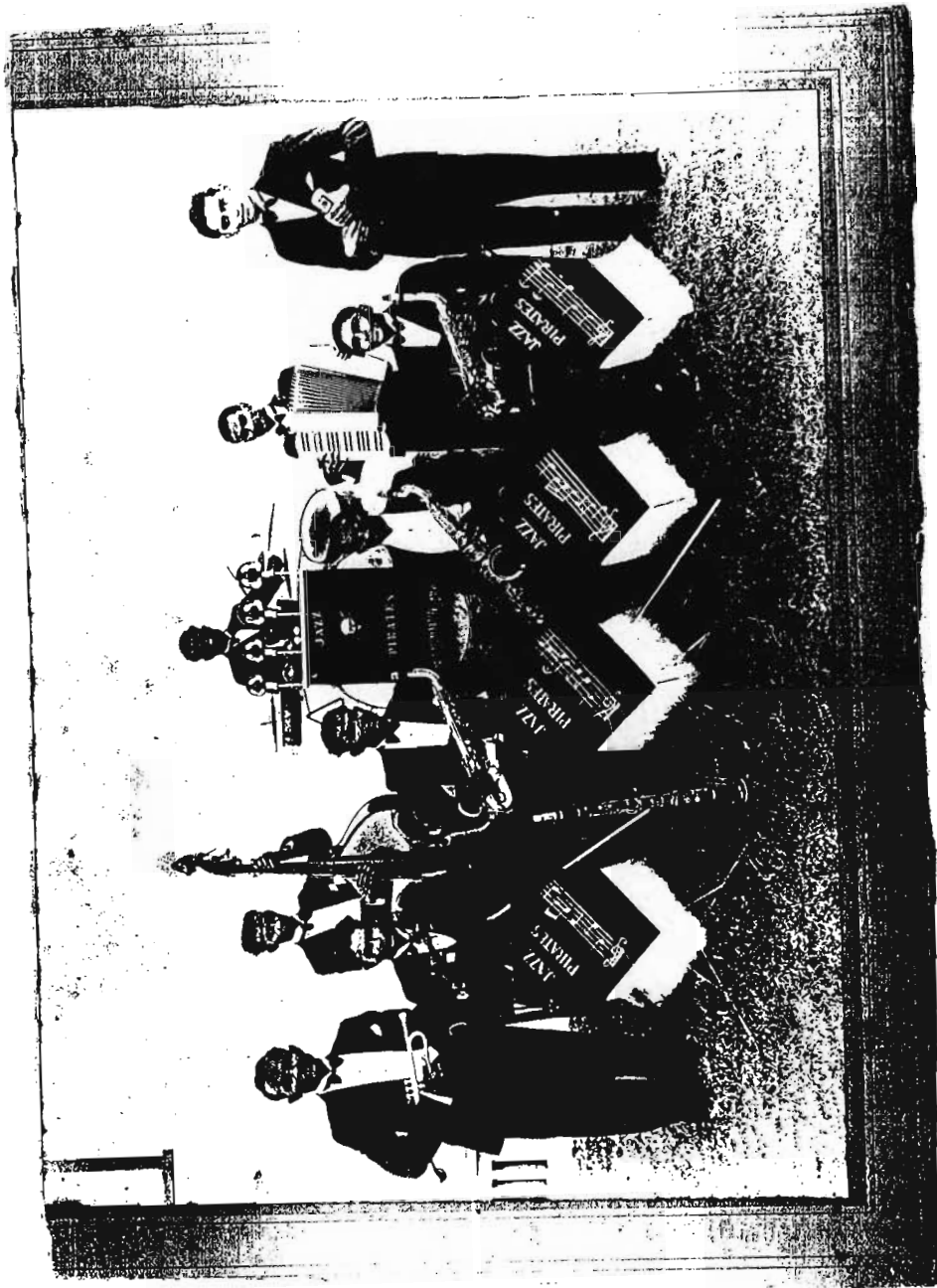


Figure 3.1. The Jazz Pirates featuring Dickie Jeevanantham on trumpet (standing extreme left) ([Durban], c. 1935, from the Private Collection of Denny Veeran).

THE HINDU WEDDING: SETTING THE STAGE FOR ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE

Sunday morning between ten and eleven o'clock was probably the most important hour of the week for orchestras. This was the time when most Hindu weddings were held, and for the musicians that single hour represented the culmination of many hours of practice, rehearsals and personal sacrifice. Harry Arunachalam who was once the leader of the Bala Vinodha Orchestra, recalls that performing full-time was not an option for Indian musicians. Rehearsals and practice sessions meant "meeting the band boys by seven and working sometimes until twelve, one o'clock in the night. Forget about connections' weddings and family get-togethers" he adds, "my wife got used to going alone" (Arunachalam 1996: Interview).

Personal sacrifice was indeed the order of the day, and it seems that only a handful of experiences could rival the sacrifices that musicians had to endure. Tulsidas Naidoo remembers that, "In those days, musicians [also] never received any remuneration. Money earned from contracts were usually used by the group for the purchase and maintenance of instruments. Money was also used for transport arrangements, the hire of a microphone,

and uniforms. The musician never saw a cent" (Naidoo, T.P. 1996: Interview). Madhavan Nair adds that "it was for the love of music that we played and for nothing else" (1996: Interview).

REPERTOIRE

Wedding programmes usually consisted of about twenty pieces. Of these, one was usually a "signature tune" (Naidoo, S. 1996: Interview). This was generally not a film tune but an instrumental piece that distinguished one ensemble from another. The balance of the repertoire consisted of film songs from films that were currently on circuit, or from older films that were extremely popular with local people².

An analysis of the repertoire reveals that:

Vocals were sung in Indian vernaculars ... and simple ragas could be clearly recognized against a harmonic background ... Instruments were tuned to the tempered scale of the keyboard component, ... and the tala were usually those based on two, three, or four pulses, often becoming indistinguishable from ... [European and American popular] dance rhythms (Jackson 1988: 225)

During practice sessions, songs were learned by ear.

Veeran remembers that:

The members of the band would listen to a record a number of times. Since the majority of them couldn't read a note, it was a very long process because they had to memorize their parts as well. In some bands, the leader worked out the song and gave each member his part, this also took a long time. I was lucky, I could read and write [western] music, so as soon as I learned a tune, I immediately wrote it down [in western notation]. The problem with the film songs [however] was that the record [which contained all the songs from a particular film] was only released

months after the film was on circuit. What most musicians did was to see the same film over and over again, come home, and try to put together what he heard (1996: Interview).

Despite the hardships musicians encountered during their practice sessions, Tulsidas Naidoo states that "you must give credit where its due. Some of these groups played outstandingly; it was like hearing the real thing" (1996: Interview).

ORGANISATION

The wedding programme was held together by a compère who introduced the items by providing the name of the song, the film that it was a part of, and the name of the singer. He (it was almost never a woman) also introduced the guest speakers and welcomed the guests. The compère was sometimes a member of the orchestra, but most often, dynamic personalities within the intelligentsia were approached by the wedding hosts to "add some splendour to the occasion" (Naidoo, S. 1996: Interview). The compères who were almost never paid for their services also hosted many of the variety shows. They included such personalities as "P. R. Singh, P. K. Naidoo, A. A. 'Thunderbolt' Peters, Ruthnam Pillay, J. R. Devar, and T. P. Naidoo" (Govender, G. 1996: Interview).

Following what seems to have been the dress-code of the American "big bands", male members of the

orchestra were usually clad in formal Western attire (or derivations thereof; see Figures 2.4 and 3.2). The female singers wore saris, and the resultant effect contributed to the overall image of the band. In fact, "in band contests of the sixties, the Ranjeni won a number of prizes as best dressed orchestra" (Nair 1996: Interview).

With respect to the physical layout of the ensemble, photographs taken in studios suggest parallels with American "big band" traditions. However, Figures 3.3 and 3.4 which are copies of photographs taken during weddings in the fifties and sixties respectively, shows that this was clearly not always the case. Firstly, both photographs show that the musicians seems to have been allocated a small space where they were forced to organize themselves into a cluster rather than in rows. Secondly, it also seems that the musicians had to use the resources supplied by the venue (such as chairs and tables), rather than making own arrangements. Madhavan Nair states that:

If the wedding was held in a marquee, we sat on wooden chairs in the corner near the stage, or if the wedding was held in a hall, we sometimes got a part of the stage or the area below the stage. We couldn't always arrange ourselves the way we liked (1996: Interview).



Figure 3.3. The Ranjeni Orchestra during performance. The photograph was taken during a wedding which was held at the Mayville Theatre in Durban c. 1960 (Private Collection of Madhavan Nair).

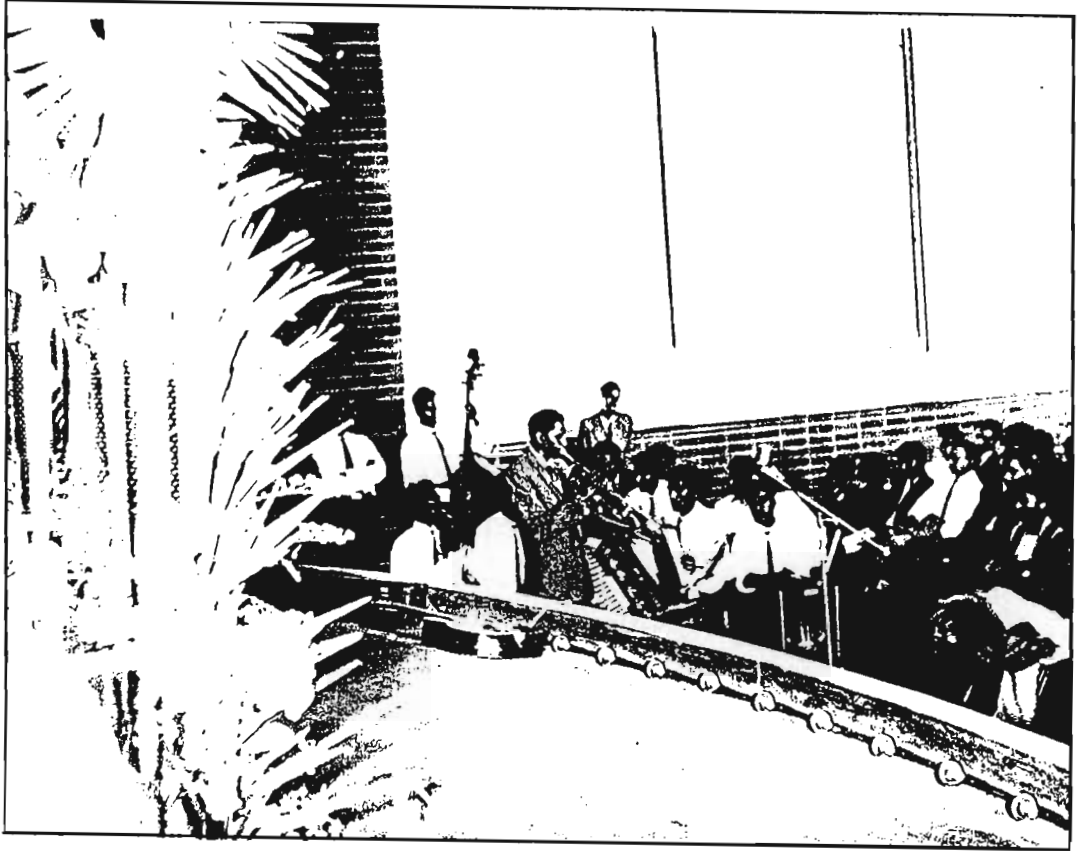


Figure 3.4. The Golden Lily Orchestra during performance. The photograph was taken at the Orient Hall in Durban c. 1965 (Private Collection of Denny Veeran).



Figure 3.2. The Ranjeni Orchestra ([Durban], c. 1955, from the Private Collection of Madhavan Nair).

Although audiences were large, the seating arrangement of musicians, was never a priority. In fact, apart from a single microphone for the singer, amplifiers and amplified equipment did not feature in orchestras until the sixties (Govender, S. 1996: Interview). Of course this equipment was not commonly used by Western ensembles either at the time, the volume of the overall sound of the orchestra was thus created by the sheer number of instruments, whilst instrumental interludes were made prominent by two to three instruments playing the same part simultaneously. This probably accounts on the one hand, for the large number of musicians that featured in orchestras, whilst on the other, for the decline in number of musicians in orchestras by the more technologically advanced seventies. By about 1970, emerging orchestras consisted of between six to eight members including vocalists.

THE VARIETY SHOW: IMPROVING PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

Variety shows, which seem to have gained popularity in the thirties, were not exclusively Indian South African phenomena. Evidence suggests that they differed little in principle with the variety shows of other cultures. In the case of the local Indian offering, they were much like wedding programmes in that they were held together by a compère. Whereas

his function at weddings was as a master of ceremonies, his position in the variety show, seems generally to be in line with the one of the stock characters in South Asian folk theatre. This figure, the narrator, used to "introduce the characters, explain the action and symbolism, tell jokes to reduce boredom of all-night performances, prompt actors should they flag ... and direct and control the entire performance" (Jackson 1991: 181). P. R. Singh who was a school teacher during this period, generally fulfilled audience expectations and as a result, was a popular choice for compère.

Women also began to feature as compères by the late fifties. However, unlike their male counterparts who were drawn from the ranks of the intelligentsia, most women compères were singers or were involved in entertainment at some level. Saksha Singh who was an extremely popular singer in Durban at the time, was generally a favoured choice. Another favourite was Samadhanam, who sang with a number of orchestras including the Golden Lily and the Ranjeni.

However, the trend of women compères did not continue. This was probably due to the fact that the orchestral tradition, much like Indian lifestyle at the time, was a product of an urban environment,

and, as Fathima Meer points out, although Indian women were becoming a viable economic force within the Indian community, they were "less involved in the hurly-burly of urban life than men" (Meer 1969: 86). In fact, she continues, the daughters of indentured labourers and the succeeding generations of women, generally retired "into the privacy of their homes, tending to husbands, children and household chores" (Meer 1969: 86). Further, the dress of men versus women at the time - mentioned earlier with regards to musicians' attire - also reflects the fact that men were outside the home more and therefore more in contact with and influenced by Western styles and habits. In sum, the implication seems to be that an Indian woman at home was the rule, whilst an Indian woman at work was the exception.

Variety shows were held on Saturday evenings. They generally lasted for three hours with a fifteen minute interval about half-way through. This trend seems to be in line with Indian films of that period which ran for a similar duration. A typical variety show consisted of at least ten to fifteen songs. Of these, at least four were entirely instrumental - one at the beginning and one at the end of each half of the programme. The balance of the programme was a

kaleidoscope of sketches, dances, songs, magic shows, and gymnastics displays. In between, the compère established the pace by telling jokes and by providing exciting introductions to the forthcoming items.

All shows were held in halls or cinemas. However, racial segregation prevented these shows from being held at just any suitable venue in Durban. Specially designated venues such as the Durban City Hall and Bolton Hall in central Durban as well as the various "Indian" cinemas and temple halls in the suburbs, became the most popular, if not the only, choices.

With regards to the contribution of the variety show to orchestral development, Tulsidas Naidoo, who was a popular choice of compère himself, states that:

Shows raised the status of Indian music and really gave it a place in the sun. It had to be glamorous to attract audiences, so the orchestras were forced to improve their quality of music, their dress and their overall image. Uniforms became the fashion, and glamour was the order of the day (1996: Interview)

Figures 2.10 and 3.5 which are copies of a poster advertising a variety show, and a souvenir brochure for the same show, "The Voice of India", undoubtedly confirm Naidoo's belief that "glamour was the order of the day". With phrases such as, "The Years Greatest and Gayest Musical Sensation", and "Spiced with Laughter, Enchanting Songs, Astounding Magical

Feats and Liltling Dances" being used in the poster, no one could doubt that the orchestra was pitching for a larger-than-life image (see also Figure 3.6).

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"THE VOICE OF INDIA" PROGRAMME

- | | |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1. THE GOLDEN LILY ORCHESTRA | "Musical-Merri-go-Round |
| 2. SONGTIME | Miss Savithri |
| 3. HINDI VOCAL | Miss S. Padayachee |
| 4. TAMIL SONG | George Morgan |
| 5. DANCE TIME | Miss Asia |
| 6. HUMOUR-PAR-EXCELLENCE | |
| 7. TAMIL DUET | Miss Savithree & George Morgan |
| 8. ORIENTAL MYSTICS | |
| 9. HINDI VOCAL | R. Manilal |
| 10. SURPRISE! | |
| 11. THE VILLAGE DANCE | |
| 12. THE GOLDEN RHAPSODY | The Golden Lily Orchestra |

INTERVAL

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 12a. APPOINTMENT WITH MUSIC | The Golden Lily Orchestra |
| 14. TAMIL SONG | Ganase Roy |
| 15. SWEET! HOT! BLUE! | Miss S. Padayachee & George Morgan |
| 16. "SONG OF SLEEP" | Sheila Devi |
| 17. "LAUGH - A - MINUTE" | |
| 18. TAMIL SONG | Ganase Roy |
| 19. HINDI VOCAL | Sheila Devi |
| 20. BEWARE! IT'S ALL FLAMES | |
| 21. MR. MYSTERY | R. Manilal & Sheila Devi |
| 22. HINDI DUET | Miss Asia |
| 23. DANCE OF THE MOGHUL COURT | The Golden Lily Orchestra |
| 24. "BAND CALL" | |

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Figure 3.5. Souvenir brochure of the variety show "The Voice of India" ([Pietermaritzburg], 27 February 1954, from the Private Collection of Denny Veeran).

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PRESENTS
IN AID OF ITS FUNDS

ORIENTAL EXPRESS

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(R. F. Geyender)
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CONTEST IN ENGLAND.

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SOUTH AFRICA'S GREATEST DANCING SENSATION.



Mubow Filly
the French and International.



Ramesh
Famous Star - His Appearance.



YUSULTINI
Africa's Greatest Master of Magic.



Soudham
The Voice and Thrill
Throats.



Ambigay
Korbin Fame.



Billy Grogan
The Road Leader
of the African Orchestra.



K. Parthab
Durban's Artist.



Ganganam
India's Delight.



Marie Geyender
Durban's F. O. V. Organist.



Pathana Ministry
Durban's Artist.



Manika Nidoo
of Durban School
of Music.



Madhavan
The Great Artist.



Kunka James
Dancer with the Orchestra.



Manormania
The Greatest Dancer.

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SAROJINI ORCHESTRA
The Rising Musical Maestro of the year.

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MUSIC
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★ **DAWOOD SULAMAN**
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Figure 3.6. Poster advertising the variety show "Oriental Express: East to West" ([Durban], 5 June 1954, from the Private Collection of Madhavan Nair).

However, even more striking than the advertising slogans, is the fact that no vernacular titles were used in the programme notes. In other words, everything was expressed in Western terms. In fact, rather than naming songs, sketches, or styles of dance according to their vernacular designations, broad generalizations such as "Tamil Song", "Laugh-A-Minute", and "Dance of the Moghul Court" were used³. In part, this may be attributed to the processes of "assimilation", and "anglicisation" of which Melveen Jackson speaks. In other words, as "assimilation ... and syncretism became the main choices after 1920" for Indian South Africans, these concepts became evident in the music, the outward appearance, and the *modus operandi* of orchestras as well (Jackson 1988: 94 and 102).

As mentioned earlier, with regards to performing at weddings, musicians never received any remuneration. With respect to performing at variety shows, this was also true. For example, the secretary's report at the 18th Annual General Meeting of the Golden Lily Orchestra, states that:

So far, we have catered for a number of weddings in the last year ... I have great pleasure in mentioning to you that we have taken part in a number of shows where we rendered music free to quite a number of charitable institutions (Private Collection of James Murugasen).

Sometimes variety shows were hosted by charitable organisations. When orchestras did promote their own shows, the money that was earned was generally used for the financing of the next production (Veeran 1996: Interview).

Some of the most successful variety shows also toured. For example, "Songtime", which featured the Ranjeni Orchestra, toured the major cities of South Africa in the fifties whilst "The Voice of India" toured the Transvaal and Natal extensively during the same period⁴. The income that these shows generated was generally used for financing the tours themselves. Concerning management of these tours, Madhavan Nair states that:

We sometimes toured for a few weeks at a time. Those musicians that could get off from work used to come but most times, we used to get musicians from the areas that we played in, to play with us. In fact, Mehmoona, the singer - you must have heard of her - we met her in East London. She joined us there and came back to Durban with us (1996: Interview).

CONCLUSION

By about 1940, a number of participatory and performing conventions such as weddings, naming ceremonies and concerts were modified in response to the proliferation of Indian popular music on Indian lifestyle. Each of these conventions assimilated popular music into their respective formats in

varying degrees, and for various reasons. With regard to Hindu weddings, evidence suggests that popular music was a welcome innovation to the nuptial ceremony. Hindu naming ceremonies also provided important spaces for orchestral performance to the extent that orchestral performances began replacing traditional forms of entertainment.

In respect of individual contributions to the orchestral tradition, personal sacrifice played an important part in shaping orchestral development. The lack of remuneration, and the time that was spent on practice and rehearsals reflected the level of commitment shared by the participants of the tradition.

By and large, orchestras reflected the norms, behaviour patterns, and values shared by the majority of Indian South Africans. With regards to women compères, prevailing attitudes to Indian women during the late fifties were reflected in the orchestral model. Evidence also suggests that Indian orchestras were good examples of the ways in which Indian South Africans were being assimilated into the dominant culture of the time.

In sum, custom and tradition as defined in Chapter One, played equally important roles in shaping orchestral performance. Whereas existing traditions contributed to the advent of the orchestra, customs helped sustain and support the orchestral tradition.

NOTES

1. For details of trumpeters, examine Appendix A.
2. Veeran remembers that when he began playing with the G.L.O. in the fifties, some songs that were popular in the forties, were still a part of the ensemble's repertoire (1996: Interview).
3. One of the musicians who performed in "The Voice of India" stated that the "Tamil Song" was actually entitled *Thilai Ambala Nadaraja*, "Laugh-a-Minute" was a Tamil sketch entitled *Vinodha Vivagam*, and "Dance of the Moghul Court" was a dance based on the principles of classical Indian dance viz. Bharata Natyam.
4. Evidence suggests that one of the first shows that went on tour was "Music Fanfare" which featured the G.L.O. It toured the Transvaal and Northern Natal between 1951 and 1952 (Private Collection of James Murugasen).

CHAPTER FOUR

BECOMING A MUSICIAN IN THE ORCHESTRAL TRADITION: A PROFILE BASED ON INTERVIEWS WITH SELECTED INDIVIDUALS

As has been mentioned, I spent extended periods of time with a number of participants during this project. In many instances friendships developed which allowed stories of a personal nature to sometimes be told. Among the informants that I worked with, I spent the greatest amount of time with Madhavan Nair, Jack Peter, Denny Veeran, Gopalan Govender, Harry Arunachalam and Tulsidas Naidoo. Except for Naidoo and Veeran, all the other musicians began their orchestral careers in the forties and either still perform or teach part-time at present.

The individual participants were excellent sources of information about historical events. Their stories not only reveal their own personal behaviour patterns, norms and values, but also tell something of the history of the groups to which they belong.

Life stories can also contribute much to our understanding of how musicians evaluate their own work (see Erlmann 1989: 33).

When reconstructing the history of a tradition that has long since been refashioned or reinvented, one of the most difficult hurdles to overcome is attempting to locate scholarly literary data pertaining specifically to that tradition. This type of data is important since it offers an avenue whereby evaluations can be checked or re-checked. However, in the absence of the above, people become the most important sources of data.

"I'M A SELF-TAUGHT MUSICIAN": MUSIC EDUCATION AND ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE

As mentioned earlier, pieces performed by local orchestras contained both Indian and Western musical elements, and the orchestras included both Indian and Western instruments. Scores were not available, and working-class musicians could not afford physical contact with India, the country from which the music was a direct import. Further, there were no local institutions that included orchestral repertoires in their syllabi. Thus, if one wanted to join an orchestra, one had to learn to play an

instrument first, and then to adapt one's technique to suit Indian orchestral music.

Learning to play an instrument was a hurdle for all the musicians. The teachers of Western instruments were mostly white, and the racial segregation of the thirties and the entrenchment of apartheid laws in and following 1948, made it difficult for Indians to study with a white teacher. Added to this impediment was the fact that music lessons were luxuries that most Indians could not afford. Denny Veeran who has been a full-time private music teacher since 1970 remembers that:

I went to quite a few white teachers. I sweated like a dog learning from them. I used to work seven days a week doing all sorts of jobs, for just one lesson. I remember once, I couldn't make the full amount. This white lady had me clean her floors. It was also difficult at home because none of the band boys could read, they all played by ear. I couldn't discuss anything that I learned. One teacher chased me out because I couldn't grasp the basics of harmony and counterpoint. When I argued, she threatened to call the police (1996: Interview). Even learning to play an Indian instrument was not without its problems. Somaroo writes that the local Indian community consisted largely of indentured labourers and that it "had little time for the pursuit of higher ideals, expending its energies in coming to terms with the more practical issues of living." He adds that, "there were no professional musicians amongst the early Indians and it is regrettable that those who initiated the local

musical tradition fell far below the standards of professionalism found in India." As a result, he concludes, there was a "lack of teachers of worth" (1989: 241).

Orchestras, it seems, did little to promote music education. "Orchestras didn't produce musicians; musicians produced orchestras", responded Jack Peter when I brought up the topic of music education (1996: Interview). His opinion generally seems to be in line with other evidence which suggests that, apart from the Kalaivani and Linghum orchestras which offered music lessons in the fifties and seventies respectively, none of the orchestras that existed, had specific didactic objectives. According to Madhavan Nair, "orchestras were too busy practising and performing to worry about teaching" (Nair 1996: Interview). However, another explanation might be that musicians of the orchestral tradition, with the exception of a handful, never received any formal training. As a result, they were not adequately equipped to teach.

Jack Peter who echoes the views of a large number of my informants, states that:

When we were growing up, we never had so many music schools like nowadays. I liked the clarinet and I used to watch K.S. Naicker and I copied his style.

Those days if you wanted to learn, you watched carefully and listened as well (1996: Interview). Similarly, Harry Arunachalam who is considered as a "fine" clarinettist by local musicians states: "I'm a self-taught musician. I never went to anybody for lessons. I used to listen to a lot of musicians and to lots of records. I picked it up quickly" (1996: Interview).

Learning by observing and listening, it seems, was the order of the day. Although these two components were also a part of the traditional Indic music education system - the *guru-shishya parampara* (the master-disciple relationship) - this was not the institution within which local Indian music flourished¹. In most cases, it was the orchestra that was forced to become the institution. An individual would join an ensemble through the performance of a percussion instrument such as the tambourine or maracas. If he wanted to learn another instrument, he would observe a musician in the group, listen to his performance, and imitate him. This was a laborious process and one for which, it seems, some individuals paid (Veeran 1996: Interview). In most instances however, a point was eventually reached when there would be little of value that could be gained from any further interaction. As one of Melveen Jackson's informants

found out after spending a short period of time studying under a musician, "there was nothing new for him in the information on offer" (1988: 208).

Some musicians, however, in what seems to be an attempt to add credence to their performance, state that they were once pupils of one or another famous musician. For example, I came into contact with a clarinettist a few years ago who stated that he was once a pupil of the late "great" K.S. Naicker (mentioned earlier). When I enquired about the nature of his lessons - i.e. how often were they held, how much did they cost, what was learned, and what method of instruction was used - the picture that emerged was that he befriended Naicker and spent a lot of time watching and listening to him play, rather than receiving any formal tuition. In other words, he considered himself a pupil not because of receiving tuition, but by virtue of being associated with an acknowledged expert.

Those musicians who could read or write music, generally applied those skills to orchestral music as well. Figure 4.1, for example, is a copy of a score for a film tune that was used in the early sixties.

SARTASH

acc. Run. *acc. OR. Run.* *acc. OR.*
SECOND PT. CONT. *Cont?*
END. PART IN
R-Cont.
(3 TIMES)
SNANA SOUNDRIE. TITLE NO.
THE END. *PP*
G A C D E

Figure 4.1. Trumpet score of a film tune used in the sixties by the Golden Lily Orchestra (Private Collection of Denny Veeran).

The musician who wrote it did not notate the entire piece, but only the trumpet interludes. Further, the rhythmic notation is not exact. Other pieces that I have examined, are similar. It seems that written scores were generally memory-aids rather than actual scores.

MUSICIANS' BACKGROUNDS

Of the musicians that I interviewed or that I came into contact with at concerts, at least ninety percent never reached high school. Those that did, did so with a great deal of family and personal sacrifice. Education was not compulsory, and going to school, it seems, was a luxury that meant having the requisite funds for school fees, text books, writing material, and school uniforms. All orchestral musicians came from large working-class families and at some point had to leave school in order to support their families. As a result, most Indian musicians (and many non-musicians for that matter) entered the labour market at very early ages. The hotel and catering industry were generally favoured choices, but working as doormen, messengers, machinists, and clerks was not unusual. In situations where an uncle or other male relative of a musician already held a position in an organisation, the general trend was that he

"organised a graph for the lighty [used his position to secure employment for the boy]" (Govender, S. 1996: Interview).

All musicians that I spoke to were conversant in at least two languages - English and an Indian language such as Hindi, Telegu or Tamil. The Indian languages were generally spoken at home, and sometimes in the workplace when employees "didn't want the lahnee [boss] to know what they were talking about." There were, however, musicians that spoke African languages fluently as well. For example, the late A. Gwainsamy, a well-known tabla player who was commonly known as "Tabla" Gwain, "spoke Zulu like a Zulu." This earned him the nickname "Kumfaan" [boy] by which informants still refer to him today (Nair 1996: Interview).

One of the most important ways in which a musician was identified was by the family from which he came. If his uncles, brothers or father were well-known musicians, this meant an automatic entry for him into the orchestral tradition. Shama Naidoo remembers that he initially experienced resistance from a number of bands since he was relatively unknown. I.e., he did not come from a family of musicians. Even when it came to recordings and

broadcasts, he recalls, "everything was connection call [based on family]" (Naidoo, S. 1996: Interview). Musical identity based on kinship however was not exclusively a local Indian phenomenon, since this seems generally to be in line with the *gharanas* of India. This tradition was based on a similar set of unwritten rules.

A *gharana* (school of music) referred essentially to a professional class of classical musicians - mostly members of the same family - who shared a repertoire and a particular style of performance². There are a number of *gharanas* in India today, and most musicians can trace their lineage to one of these. Entry into a *gharana* is restricted to members of the same family, and only in extremely special circumstances is it possible for an outsider to join (Somaroo 1989: 270).

REASONS FOR JOINING ORCHESTRAS

As can be seen from the last two chapters, it is evident that orchestras more than anything else, were urban symbols that represented the aspirations of the working-class. As such, they were akin to "bridges" where for some the crossing of musical barriers meant the crossing of social and cultural barriers as well. For the Indian musician, the

number of genres that satisfied his "Indian proclivities as well as his Western aspirations" were limited (Somaroo 1989: 243). As a result, performing in an orchestra became an obvious choice, if not the only one. In fact, a number of Indian musicians who played in Western dance bands in the sixties began their musical careers by performing Indian popular music. It seems that those who did not were generally members of families that did play in Indian orchestras (Sharma 1996: Interview).

Jackson speaks of orchestral music as being musically neutral in a sense that it was neither Indian nor Western, but both. She explains that "it was Indian enough to conjure up an evocative Indian nationalistic sentiment which had become largely nostalgia for most South African Indians but ... it was also Western enough to cater for the new Indian South African nationalism" (1988: 226). With regards to the above, it seems to me that inasmuch as orchestral music was a synthesis of Western and Indian musical traditions, it was not musically neutral but value-laden in a sense of musically carrying a social identity.

Jack Peter remembers that as a teenager selling newspapers, he was fascinated by the orchestras that

played at the "Red Square", a vacant parking lot in Pine Street, Durban which is now occupied by the Nicholl Square Parking Garage. He states that anti-segregational organisations such as the Natal Indian Congress often held their meetings there. At the beginning and end of each session, the bands would play - almost in an attempt to drum up support. In fact, he states, "the passive resistors were 'sent off' from Red Square. The musicians played. Oh, what a glorious sight that was!" (1996: Interview).

For Denny Veeran, the situation was different but the result the same. He states that, "almost everyone at home was a musician. As a boy, I was surrounded by music. The band rehearsed at home and that's all I wanted to be - a musician. I started with the band playing the maracas, then the drums; eventually I went onto the trumpet" (See Figure 3.2 which features Veeran at the age of 10 on the maracas) (1996: Interview).

Gopalan Govender's experience was not unlike Veeran's. He was born into a family of musicians, and at the age of eight began playing the *mrdangam* with a number of established ensembles. At the age of eleven, he was one of the youngest performers to

play on a live broadcast of the South African Broadcasting Corporation. During his early teens, he was "discovered" by members of the Ranjeni Orchestra - the ensemble with which he continued to play until its demise in 1992 (1996: Interview).

From the foregoing, it is evident that individuals chose orchestras as modes of expression for varied reasons. Becoming a member of one, it seems, could be a goal to be striven for; part of the natural development of an Indian musician; or simply, a way for an individual to participate actively in the life of his community.

CONCLUSION

Ignoring the hardships that were inherent in obtaining a musical education, Indian musicians forged ahead, knowing that their efforts contributed to the cultural life of their community. The orchestra provided for them a mode of expression whereby their identities could be established.

One of the most important factors that promoted the development of Indian popular music was its ability to attract young people as potential orchestral members. It seems that youth were infatuated to the extent that those who eventually chose musical

careers shaped them around Indian popular music. If popular music infatuated them, then the orchestra was definitely the most viable path in realising their affections. The youth admired orchestras for a number of reasons. This included the fact that "Indian films enhanced 'Indian' orchestral music's glamorous image" as well as that many of the youths' role-models, performed in orchestras (Jackson 1988: 226). In each case however, the result was the same - a possible member in the making.

NOTES

1. For more information about the *Guru Shishya Parampara*, see Neuman (1974).
2. For a full description of the *gharana* tradition, see Neuman (1974).

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION

Indian music, like the musics of many other cultures, is an integral part of the lifestyle of the people it represents. In South Africa however, this aspect of music was used by the apartheid government in its quest to emphasize separate development. Indian music, especially in the seventies and eighties when the political situation seemed most volatile, was viewed in favourable terms by the government, since it was seen as "belonging" to Indian people and as such, maintaining, if not reinforcing their Indianess¹. In other words, it was used as an effective political tool by the apartheid regime to further "Indianize" and thus de-Westernize the image of Indian people. As a result, there was massive state support in the eighties for the introduction of Indian music into Indian schools, for the development of a separate "Indian" radio station, and for the granting of airtime on nation-wide television².

Prior to this period in South Africa's history, Indian music did not receive any state support except for a weekly half-hour radio broadcast. In part this neglect may be attributed to the government's notion that Eurocentric culture and values were superior, and as such, deserved a very high percentage of the social, cultural, educational and political arenas. Realising in the seventies and eighties that Indian music was a major part of Indian lifestyle in South Africa, and further, that this could be used to their advantage, the government's position on the issue shifted. In fact, this was not only true of music but of other areas as well. In other words any aspect that could emphasize differences was used to separate people. This included skin-colour, language, religion and customs.

Prior to receiving state support, i.e. in the period before the seventies, Indian popular music and, by extension, Indian orchestras developed within the existing Indian social fabric. This included such traditions and customs as Indian weddings, variety shows and other celebrations where orchestral trends were set, individual reputations were established, and a sense of group identity for the musicians and their audiences was maintained.

The South African ethnomusicologist Carol Muller has suggested that any researcher attempting to trace the development of a tradition of music-making, must bear in mind that "performance could be used as a kind of historical text itself" (Muller 1995: 2). In other words, encoded in the structures, characteristics and performance practices of a music, are patterns of behaviour shared by its practitioners which reflect their outlook, aspirations, and value systems at a particular time. In the case of the orchestral tradition, it seems that her statement is indeed an accurate reflection of how the socio-political and cultural events that occurred in the lives of Indian South Africans, were expressed through performance.

Apart from the institutions that supported and sustained the orchestral tradition, the proximity within which Indians lived in areas such as Mayville and Clairwood made rapid development of the tradition possible. The Papiah Brothers in the "Barracks", the Golden Lily Orchestra in Mayville, and the Star Orchestra in Clairwood are examples of how the development of a tradition of music-making relies not only cultural, but on social circumstances as well.

The urban phenomenon of the extended family also played a major role for the participants in the tradition. This type of living arrangement not only made economic sense for Indian South Africans in the forties and fifties, but also provided ideal conditions for orchestral activity. Small ensembles began among family members and gradually expanded to include musicians who lived in the surrounding areas as well.

Orchestras undoubtedly enjoyed a prominent place in the community. Apart from being the central focus of popular entertainment before 1970, the musicians were regarded as role models by the youth. In fact, many of my informants who grew up in the thirties and forties, still speak of musicians of that era with a great deal of admiration and respect. Individuals thus chose orchestras as modes of expression for reasons ranging from wanting to contribute actively to the life of their community to regarding the joining of an orchestra as a personal accomplishment to be striven for.

Music education, like mainstream education, was expensive, and thus available to only a handful of individuals. Those who took music lessons sacrificed

a great deal in financial terms. They also knew that opportunities for them to perform or teach full-time were virtually non-existent.

**THE ORCHESTRAL TRADITION IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES:
REINVENTION IN THE FACE OF POLITICS AND TECHNOLOGY**

The Group Areas Act that was designed by the South African Nationalist government, and which became law in 1950, had devastating effects on the people of South Africa³. Areas such as Mayville, Clairwood and the "Barracks" location, were declared white. This forced families to move to Indian-, African- or coloured-declared townships that had been built or that were in the process of being built at that stage. Families were thus scattered over a wide radius. Speaking of the orchestral tradition, Tulsidas Naidoo states:

Most of the bands started thinning out because they were all community based. The Group Areas Act made it impossible for rehearsals, and for members to keep in physical touch. Further, the venues for concerts were all based in existing Indian communities which added a further difficulty (Naidoo, T.P. 1996: Interview).

Apart from the distances that separated individuals, moving to new areas meant additional financial considerations. People began to concentrate on developing their living environments, and music, as well as other forms of entertainment consequently took second place. The increased focus on income was

devastating, since performing in an orchestra was definitely not a financially viable proposition at the time.

In practice however, the Group Areas Act of 1950 was not an overnight possibility. People in every part of the country were affected making the immediate implementation of the Act difficult. As a result, large numbers of people only began moving house many years after the consolidation of apartheid laws. In the case of my family and a number of my informants for example, moves to the Indian township of Chatsworth began taking place only in the late sixties. As a result, orchestras continued to exist until the early seventies when it became impossible for large ensembles to function anymore.

Technological advancements that made amplification within the reach of the average musician, also contributed to the development of smaller ensembles in the early seventies. Programme notes of shows held after 1970 reveal that most ensembles consisted generally of five musicians and two vocalists.

It was also around this period that the term "orchestra" began to fade. Ensembles were no longer large, and bands with names such as Regal

Entertainers, Eastern Melodies or Oriental Serenaders began to feature prominently instead.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In her master's dissertation, Melveen Jackson concludes that, "Almost all aspects of music practice and music meaning amongst Indian South Africans ... require further research" (1988: 279). Eight years have elapsed since that statement, yet it is as true now as it was then. In relation to orchestras, there are a number of areas that demand further enquiry, either because certain arguments were difficult to verify, or because particular information was inaccessible during my period of research. Broadcasting and its impact on orchestral development, for instance, is an area that has been neglected. A telephonic conversation with Mr J.R. Devar who was once a radio presenter on the English service of the South African Broadcasting Corporation, revealed that proper documentation and programme recordings pertaining to Indian music were never kept. Thus research into this area is vital. The role played by Indian women in the orchestral tradition is also an area that requires investigation. Developments in Indian popular music after 1970 and more especially since the advent of democracy in South Africa, are most definitely

worthy of consideration. Apart from contributing to the study of Indian popular music generally, such research may contribute new ideas and insights to the study of the orchestral tradition as well. In sum, if this investigation assists in arousing the interest of the academic community and suggests paths to further inquiry, then it has accomplished its goal.

NOTES

1. When I speak of the political situation as being volatile in the seventies and eighties, I refer to incidents such as the student riots that took place in Soweto in 1976, the declaration of a State of Emergency by the South African government in 1986, and the acts of violence that erupted subsequent to both these incidents.

2. For more information regarding the way Indian music was used as a political tool in South Africa, see Pillay (1994).

3. For an in-depth discussion of the impact of the Group Areas Act on Indian South Africans, refer to Freund (1995).

APPENDIX A

ORCHESTRAS ACTIVE IN THE PERIOD BETWEEN 1935 AND 1970

The following table contains details of orchestras active between 1935 and 1970. In cases where little or no information was available about an ensemble, the ensemble is included in a list at the end of the table.

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
Bala Vinodha (BVO)	Cato Manor: Mayville Hill	Harry Arunachalam (clarinet), A. Perumal [aka Willy Thomas] (tenor banjo), Kistraj Raghavan (violin), 'Tabla' Gwainsamy (tabla) [performed with group for a short while], Kenny Kersaval (harmonium/vocal)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active from 1942 to the late 60s 2. Rehearsed at Arunachalam's home in an area known as Mayville Hill (opposite Mayville Hotel) 3. Arunachalam began recording with the Shalimar table in 1949 together with other members. 4. Kenny Kersaval, before his tragic death in 1955, recorded 2 pieces with Shalimar in 1952. 5. The Group Areas Act of 1950, which dispersed members, made it impossible for the group to continue after the late 60s.
Bharathi	Railway Barracks	Sonny Gengan, Billy Gengan, B.K.Reddy (tabla), Sonny Lott (violin)	Sonny Lott (who worked in the 'prestigious' position as the foreman at Joko Tea) provided rehearsal space at his home. He was also one of the group known as the Lott Bros. (Soobrey and Rathnam being his brothers) who enjoyed a measure of success in the Durban entertainment scene during the 30s.
Buxons	Central Durban: Bond St.	Cassim, Dawood Suleiman (violin), Ronnie Singh, Vishnu, Rabin Heera (clarinet) [pupil of K.S.Naicker], Sonny Govender (violin)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Active in the 40s. 2. Band performed both Hindi and Tamil film music.

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
Columbian	Railway and Corporation Barracks	George Stevens (accordion), Harry Reddy (trumpet), Balu (sax.), C. Mognambal (vocal), C. Ganas (violin), Mickey Chitray (tabla), Harry Chetty (clarinet), Sam Abrahams (sax)	1. Described as having created a new sound at the time; i.e. they introduced intricate harmonic patterns and interesting arrangements into their repertory. 2. When group disbanded, musicians that left joined either the National or the Travancore Orchestras.
City Youth	Central Durban: Victoria St.	M.Ganas Pather (clarinet/sax) [pupil of K.S.Naicker], Narain (harmonium)	1. Rehearsed behind Simon's Cafè in Victoria St. 2. Many members from Puntans Hill (Telegu-speaking community).
Eastern Serenaders	Clairwood	A. Khan (accordion)	1. 50s-60s 2. Repertoire drew mainly from North Indian film music.
Ghanga Devi	Mayville: Standard Rd.	Billy Naidoo (clarinet), Cyril Muthusamy (secretary), Shama Naidoo (violin), Frank Muthusamy (violin), Gansen Tommy (harmonium) [Kistraj Raghavan's brother-in-law], Nad Govender (sax), Billy Rungan (tabla/double bass), Ganas Naicker (harmonium), 'Tabla' Gwainsamy (tabla), Dick Rungan (manager)	1. Group based in Standard Rd.: Mayville. 2. Repertoire of G. N. Balasubramaniam.

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
Golden Lily (GLO)	Mayville: 126 Trimborne Rd.	Harry Murugasen (violin), Sonny Murugasen (clarinet) [style of clarinet playing modelled on K. S. Naicker], James Murugasen (tabla), Roy Murugasen (accordion), Denny Veeran (trumpet), Jonny Veeran (guitar), Percy Veeran (clarinet), Radha Peters (vocal), Iris Pillay (vocal), George Chokalingum (sax), Srinivasan Sonny Pillay (violin), Ganas Roy [aka 'India' Ganas] (vocal), R. Manilal (harmonium), Sonny Naidoo (trumpet) [c. 1950]	1. Family band based in their home in Mayville. 2. 1940-1970 3. Disbanded-Group Areas 4. Group toured Natal extensively in the 50s and 60s to perform at weddings and shows.
Indian Highlights	Overport: Brickfield Rd.	Danpal Naidoo (clarinet), Gansen (tenor banjo), Sonny Govender (violin)	Active in the 50s
Hari Narayana	Railway Barracks	S. Nandha (veena), Tony Moon (vocal), Bell Moonsamy, Thatoomarie (flute), Moses (violin), Ratty (tabla)	An orchestra active in the 40s but comprising musicians from the 'older' generation, i.e. musicians that were popular in the early 30s. The group lasted less than 5 years. The musicians thereafter performed on a freelance basis.
Indian National (INO)	Central Durban	Vadi Naicker (trumpet) [leader], A. Khan (accordion), Devar (clarinet) [pupil of K. S. Naicker]	1. Active in the 50s. 2. Band performed in a concert in honor of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II at Curries Fountain on the 2nd June 1953.

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
Karshi	Railway Barracks	Peter Jack (clarinet) [Leader], Andrew Chengan (accordion)	1. Band formed to serve the needs of Christian Indians (1946). Still in existence under same leader. 2. In 1946, Peter Jack composed 2 pieces which were sung by George Chokalingum and Patricia Henry. Renditions of these pieces were sent to India with Nadarajan Moodaliar where they were entered in the Gospel Hit Parade (Madras). Performing on these recordings were: 'Tabla' Gwainsamy, Kistraj Raghavan, Billy Kisten (tenor banjo) and others. 3. The recordings were made at the Virginia Lee recording studios in Broad Street: Durban. 4. The band performed and still performs in the Ranjeni Orchestra/Sarma Brothers tradition.
Kalaivani	Pieter-maritzburg	Nadaraj Moodaliar (accordion), Soobiah (clarinet), Yanum (vocal), 'Kalaimani' A. Govindsamy Pillay (founder)	Moodaliar converted to Christianity and left for India to preach in 1950. Group later disbanded.
Kalaivani	Mt Edgecombe	Ganas Pillay (leader) [Grandson of M. Rungiah - the leader of one of the first Indian popular music ensembles]	1. Group made up of sugar mill workers living in the barracks 2. The group continues today under the leadership of one of Pillay's grandsons.
Linghum	Clairwood		1. One of the bands still in existence. 2. Many of the members left Star Orchestra to join this group.
Merry Melodies	Central Durban	A. Khan (accordion), Vadi Naicker (trumpet)	Many of the members also played in a Western - style dance band, the Master Keys Dance Band.
Manoghari	Central Durban: Lorne St.	Kanabadhi Moodliyar (clarinet), Dixon (tenor banjo), Sonny Naidoo (Manager), Nad Govender (trumpet), 'Pipes' (sax.)	Kanabadhi is purported to be the first Indian musician to use the Boehm system clarinet (unlike others who were using the simple system clarinet at the time)
Mayfair	Clairwood: Dhayal Rd.	M.G.Paul (sax), Sonny Govender (violin), Sam (harmonium), Daddy Govender (violin), Thangavel Govender (drums)	Active in the 50s

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
National	Clairwood	Harry Reddy, Balu (sax), Gopaul, R. Balakrishna (vocal), Percy Veeran (clarinet) [1970], Johnny Veeran (guitar) [1970]	1. This ensemble performed popular music but concentrated on semi-classical Indian music and devotional songs in the 50s and 60s. 2. The group is still in existence and now performs only film songs at weddings and concerts.
New India (NIO)	Central Durban	V.G.Pillay (clarinet) [leader], V.G. 'Bones' Naidoo (violin) [associated with ballroom dancing], Mognambal (vocals), G.G. Reddy (tabla), Vadi Naicker (trumpet) [started in 1943], A.Khan (accordion), Mahadevan Nair (vocal/harmonium) [1946], Gopalan Govender (mrdangam) [1940].	
Olympic	Puntan's Hill	Vadi Pillay (violin)	1. Active in the 40s 2. Most of the members were Telegu-speaking Indians.

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
The Railway Youth Orchestral Club [RYOC]	Railway Barracks	Founding members were: M. P. Naidoo, S. G. Naicker [Assistant Secretary], A. S. Chetty, K. Govindraj, S. N. Chetty [Honorary Treasurer], P. K. Dass, R. Ganas, M. G. Reddy (Honorary Secretary), M. M. Muthoo, M. M. Moodley [Assistant Treasurer], Miss R. Samathanam, M. S. Naidoo, M. N. Govender [Manager], M. Gopaul, M. M. Moodley, C. N. Abbai, P. Chinniah, M. M. George, Narsingh Naidoo [President], K. S. Naicker [leader], S. R. Devar [Honorary Life President], A. S. Lott, V. Kisten Pillay, Gengappa Naicker, K. M. Pillay	1. One of the first groups to emerge after the Papiah Bros. (1935) 2. Name changed to the Rangeni Orchestra in 1938 after the group decided on the need for a shorter name [see below].

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
Ranjani	Magazine Barracks	<p>K. S. Naicker (clarinet) [leader in 1938, pupil of trumpeter Dickey Jeevanantham], Gopalan Govender (mrdangam) [joined in 1943], Peter Jack [clarinet 1940 - 1946], Billy Gengan (harmonium) [joined the band in 1947 and later led in 1952-1958], Madhavan Nair (accordion /harmonium) [started in 1952, led group in 1958], Billy Kisten (tenor banjo), Srinivasan Sonny Pillay (violin) [Arumugam Pillay's brother (violin teacher)], Loganathan Pillay (sax.), Kisten Naidoo (clarinet), Nadarajan Naidoo (clarinet), Pat Krishnan (trumpet) [pupil of Dickey Jeevanantham], Samadhanam (vocalist) [aka the "Nightingale of SA". She joined the group in 1940]</p>	<p>1. Musicians suggest that this was the first orchestra to play popular music after the Papiah Brothers. 2. Seems to have modelled itself on the the Glenn Miller/Benny Goodman big band tradition and the Papiah Bros. 3. Formerly known as the Railway Youth Orchestra. 4. Contributed to the Bengal Famine fund (India) by performing at a concert held at the Orient Hall in Durban during the fifties. Also raised funds for the Friends of the Sick Association (FOSA). 6. In 1946 the Anti-Segregational Council and the Natal Indian Congress held a show at the City Hall called "Song of India" featuring the Ranjeni. "Song of India" thereafter toured. Later, with impressario Yuseph 'Kat' Kathrada and members of the BVO, the following shows were held at the Durban City Hall around 1950: "Songtime" and "Sing Baby Sing". 7. Band rehearsed in Mr Bell's (first manager) home in Umgeni Rd. and later at Billy Gengan's home in Prince Edward Street. When he passed away, the group was given space free of charge by the Natal Tamil Vedic Society at the Vedic Hall's Council Room in Carlisle St. (1960 -1992). Presently Gopalan Govender still uses this venue for his mrdangam classes. 8. K.S.Naicker is purported to be the first musician to introduce the clarinet into popular music ensembles. 9. Around 1950, the band charged 5 pounds for an engagement. 10. Group disbanded in 1992 after 57 years.</p>
Sarojini	Central Durban: Leopold St.	<p>Reggie Naidoo (accordion), Ramadu (clarinet) [pupil of K. S. Naicker], Sonny (double bass), Pakiri (drums), Sonny 'Taxi Driver' Naidoo (trumpet)</p>	<p>Rehearsed behind Simon's Cafe in Victoria St.</p>

Name of Orchestra and Common Abbreviation if any	Area of Origin	Personnel *	Other Info.**
Silver Star	Cato Manor: Bristow Rd.	Shama Naidoo (violin), Jimmy Naidoo, Barney Nagan (clarinet), S. P. Chetty (tabla/vocal), Kisten Chetty (drums), Peter Naidoo (manager), Ganas Naicker (harmonium), Gwain Naicker (trumpet), Lighty Naidoo (guitar), Johnny Pillay (guitar)	1. 1948 - c. 1970 2. Many of the members also played with the Ghanga Devi Orchestra.
Star	Clairwood	R. Muthu Pillay (leader), Mahadevan Nair (harmonium) [1940]	One of the first orchestras to perform original music for 2 plays, viz. <u>Kovilan and Kanagie</u> , and <u>Harichandra</u> , both starring Muthu Pillay.
Young India	Clairwood South: Collingwood Rd.	Harry Chetty (clarinet), Sonny (violin), Andrew Chengan (accordion), Benny Gengan (clarinet) [leader], Morgan Gengan (vocal)	Described as a group of youngsters. Group disbanded when one of the key members died tragically.

* This column reflects both the names of the founding members of the ensemble and also the musicians who featured prominently during the life of the ensemble. Further, since this list is based entirely on the recollections of surviving members of the ensembles, it is not a complete list. Certain names may not have been recalled. If surnames or in some instances, first names of musicians are missing, it is because the people I interviewed did not remember them.

** This column reflects details that distinguishes one ensemble from another. Elements include items such as the dates the ensemble was active, the places they played, the concerts they gave and other performance-related activities.

NAMES OF OTHER POPULAR ENSEMBLES ACTIVE IN THE PERIOD 1935-1970

Asian Orchestra

Clairwood Orchestra - Muthu Pillay (harm.), Morna Naidoo (vocal). Active in the early 40s.

Goodwill Orchestra

Highlight Entertainers - Hindi ensemble from Clairwood - Houghton Road.

Kalayvaner Orchestra - Ensemble who named themselves after N.S.

"Kalayvaner" Krishnan (an Indian actor and musician). Band was based in Mt.Edgecombe.

Merry Melodies (Mt Edgecombe)

Merry Melodies (Pietermaritzburg)

Mohani Orchestra

New Theatre Orchestra

Odeon Orchestra (Pietermaritzburg)

Parasathie Orchestra (Central Durban)

Puntan's Hill Orchestra - Members of the Telegu-speaking community.

Group led by Ramadu on clar.

Rossburgh Sarasvathie Orchestra

Sharda Orchestra - Hindi ensemble from Victoria Street.

Travancore Orchestra

Vijay Orchestra

Young Men's Vedic Orchestra - Group led by Mr Reddy (father of one of the first female singers of Indian popular music viz. Mognambal Reddy).

SOURCES: D. Veeran, P. Jack, H. Arunachalam, S. Naidoo, T. P. Naidoo , G. Govender, S. Govender, M. Nair (Interviews 1995-1996).

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