MANIPAL
ACADEMY of HIGHER EDUCATION
(Institution of Eminence Deemed to be University)

THE ALTERITY OF KUMAR GANDHARVA

EXAMINING MUSICAL OTHERNESS IN THE TRADITION OF THE HINDUSTANI KHAYĀL

A THESIS TO BE SUBMITTED TO
MANIPAL ACADEMY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

FOR FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
AWARD OF THE DEGREE
OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
BY

SRIJAN DESHPANDE

UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF
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DECLARATION BY THE CANDIDATE

I declare that this thesis, submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy to Manipal Academy of Higher Education, is my original work, conducted under the supervision of my guide Dr. Nikhil Govind. I also wish to inform that no part of the research has been submitted for a degree or examination at any university. References, help and material obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged.

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the work incorporated in this thesis **"The Alterity of Kumar Gandharva: Examining Musical Otherness in the Tradition of the Hindustani Khayāl"** submitted by Srijan Deshpande was carried out under my supervision. No part of this thesis has been submitted for a degree or examination at any university. References, help and material obtained from other sources have been duly acknowledged.

Research Guide

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October 2022

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I, Dr. Nikhil Govind, certify and attest that the work done by my Ph.D. student Mr. Srijan Deshpande is original and vouch that there is no plagiarism. The work has not been submitted for the award of any other degree / diploma of the same University / Institution where the work was carried out, or to any other University / Institution.

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Conventions Used in the Text

Translation

All quotes from Kumar Gandharva have been translated by the author of this dissertation from the original Marathi or Hindi, which are the only two languages the former uses in the interviews referenced in this dissertation. Gandharva's lexicon included the occasional English word, such as 'outline' or 'repair'. Where these words are used, this is indicated in the translated passage using [original term]. Translated passages from other sources mention 'translated' explicitly. However, translations from Gandharva do not mention this and it should be assumed that all passages from Gandharva have been translated by the present author. Passages cited from English-language sources are not marked in any way.

Orthography

Indic terms have been transliterated in this dissertation using a modified version of the International Alphabet of Sanskrit Transliteration (IAST), and italicised. A few modifications have been made to this system here to aid readability. Since most Indic words used here belong to the Hindi language family which does not make explicit use of the schwa, this sound has been dropped so that, for instance, *rāg* is used instead of *rāga.* Additionally, the sh sound has been spelt using the conventional 'sh' in place of the IAST ś (*bandish* in place of *bandiś*), and the *anusvāra* has been spelt using an n or m as appropriate in place of the IAST ṃ (ashṭāng instead of aśṭāṃga).

Genre names are spelt using IAST but not italicised (khayāl and thumrī). Names of persons, instruments and *rāg*s use conventional spelling in place of IAST, and are not italicised (Kumar, Tabla and Malhar instead of *Kumār, tablā and malhār*). All other Indic terms are italicised and are transliterated using IAST conventions.

When quoting directly from referenced sources, the orthographical conventions used in the original source have been retained.

Notation

While this study uses audio samples in place of full-fledged musical transcription to support its arguments[1], minimal musical notation is used inline with the text, only where necessary, to point out a specific feature in an audio sample. The notation used in such cases is a rudimentary version of Bhatkhande notation that uses only transliterated note names for the twelve scale degrees of the Indian solfege. It omits all other glyphs such as those for *mīnḍ*, and does not represent rhythm at all. The transliterated note names are as follows:

Scale Degree	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Devanagari Bhatkhande Notation	सा	रे̲	रे	ग̲	ग	म	म॑	प	ध̲	ध	नी̲	नी
Transliterated Notation	*sā*	*re̲*	*re*	*ga̲*	*ga*	*ma*	*ma̍*	*pa*	*dha̲*	*dha*	*ni̲*	*ni*

Per Bhatkhande notation, a dot below the note name indicates the lower octave (*sā̤*) while a dot above it indicates the upper octave (*sā̇*).

Audio Samples

The audio samples used to support the arguments in the dissertation are numbered according the chapter-section-subsection hierarchy they occur within. Thus, the first audio clip in subsection 4.2 of section 4 in chapter 1 is labelled ‘Clip 1-4-2-1’; while the second clip in the same subsection is called ‘Clip 1-4-2-2’. These names are hyperlinked within the text, so for readers referring to the soft-copy of this dissertation, clicking on the clip name will allow them to listen to the file in their web browser (e.g. Clip 1-4-2-1). For those reading the hard-copy, all the audio clips can be accessed at the following google drive links: https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/11jDlCFGEhPfnLqi75BRa4hb3U7wRso6k?usp=sharing or https://bit.ly/KGAlt-Soundclips

[1] See Gabriel Solis (Solis 2012, 542–43) for recent thinking on the value and purpose of audio samples as compared to musical transcription: ‘Already in 1964, it was clear from a “symposium on transcription and analysis” held at the society’s [the Society for Ethnomusicology] annual meeting and published in [the journal] Ethnomusicology that transcription was by no means an objective undertaking, and that in fact transcriptions bear within them the result of a transcriber’s analytical understanding’ (ibid, 543).

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Introduction

Kumar Gandharva (1924-1992) is widely acknowledged as one of the most important, if also the most controversial practitioners of Hindustani vocal khayāl music of the latter half of the twentieth century. In the words of critic Mohan Nadkarni: 'Prodigy, poet, innovator, rebel - Kumar Gandharva is all this and much more. Blazing new trails in the tradition-bound field of Indian classical music, he is one of the most controversial vocalists of our time' (1984). Recognized in his lifetime as a master vocalist, and honoured with a number of awards, including India's second-highest civilian honour, the Padma Vibhushan[2], Kumar Gandharva is also credited with posing perhaps the most serious of challenges to established understandings of the nature, purpose, and performance-conventions of the genre.

This doctoral research project aims to examine the trope of alterity that was used to describe Kumar Gandharva's music, both by the musician himself as well as by the larger community of the khayāl tradition in the twentieth century. 'Alterity' is a translation of the Marathi term *vegaḷepaṇ* or 'difference', which is encountered repeatedly both in Gandharva's own discursive reflection upon his music[3] as well as in appraisals of it made by various commentators, writing and speaking from a diversity of perspectives, in their attempts to describe the former's musical idiom as well as his particular understanding of the conventions and traditions of this music[4].

Indeed, the review of musicological literature in the English, Marathi and Hindi languages that was conducted for this dissertation revealed that there exists a broad consensual understanding of the fundamental mechanics of music-making in the khayāl tradition to which Gandharva's

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[2] See Ministry of Home Affairs (2017)

[3] Some examples of this discourse, translated from the original Marathi are as follows: 'I've always felt, right from my childhood, that I shouldn't sing the way everyone else sings' (1985, 02:00); 'Music does not mean *tān, ālāp, laykārī* – these are secondary. Music is something different. That is what I wanted to achieve'(1988); 'The feeling of the *swars* is a very different thing...*āghāt* (accentuation) is not the same as mere rhythmic play. It is a very different thing' (Gandharva et al. 1988); 'The language of the *rāgs* is different…any *rāg* can express any *ras* you want it to if you understand its language' (2007, 145); 'All of Gaud Malhar has been tied into a knot in this *bandish* [Amaraiyyan Ke Birkhan Ke]. If you understand this, you'll be able to express Gaud Malhar differently' (2007, 35); 'This *bandish* gives birth to a different Todi *rāg*…[most musicians] sing Todi in a standard way. If you don't do that, there is joy. Then the Todi becomes different' (ibid, 60); 'Every Bhairavi I sing will sound different to you. They'll sound like different *rāgs*' (2014, 222); 'when I sing *bandishes* as notated in Bhatkhande's books, people say 'Kumar did something different' (2007, 49).

[4] These commentators variously describe Gandharva's music as 'different' and 'new' (V. H. Deshpande 1989) and Gandharva himself as 'unorthodox' (Nadkarni 1984), 'modern' (Lath 2013) and as 'the ultimate rebel' (Raja 2011). Other commentators who describe Gandharva and his music similarly include (Ranade 2011) and (Menon and Pasricha 2001) among many others.

approach seems often to be at odds. This literature includes stylistic studies of the various *gharānās* of khayāl music, written by Indian scholar-musicians, such as Vamanrao Deshpande (1987) and Srikrishna Haldankar (2001), as well as more formal empirical work, albeit with similar goals of stylistic analysis, such as that by Bonnie Wade (2016 (1980)) and Wim van der Meer (1980). All of these studies paint for us a broad picture of khayāl as a *genre*, albeit in different ways: Deshpande is among the first to theorize the aesthetics of khayāl music as a genre; Wade draws heavily upon Deshpande and presents empirical evidence in the form of notation and audio recordings in an attempt to accommodate the diversity within the genre while also arriving at a common-denominator understanding of it; Haldankar investigates two *gharānās* in detail to present an understanding of the genre that problematizes Deshpande's claims about *gharānā* hierarchy; and Meer represents a particular view of the genre rooted in *gharānā* orthodoxy – primarily that of his teacher, scholar-musician Dilip Chandra Vedi. Martin Clayton's is another broadly framed work (2008) that theorizes temporality in Hindustani music and makes important claims about its constituent song-forms, khayāl, dhrupad and thumrī, as *genres*. What can be seen as emerging from all of this work is a particular conception of the nature and the mechanics of the khayāl genre as a whole, to which, as mentioned above, Kumar Gandharva's music appears in many ways to be alternative. To construct a rigorous, empirically supported and comprehensively referenced account of how this may be so is one goal this dissertation sets itself.

The case of Kumar Gandharva is also made especially interesting, however, by the particular historical moment in which his musical alterity was constructed. Gandharva's career spanned about six decades of the twentieth century[5], that coincided with the complex negotiations South Asian culture engaged in as it transitioned from grappling with the colonial encounter to grappling with the acquiring of a new national identity. There is an established literature of another kind that describes the transition the sphere of Hindustani music went through, within and as a response to these larger currents. This literature is represented primarily by Janaki Bakhle (2005), who frames the two seminal figures of the recent history of the genre, VN Bhatkhande (1860-1936) and VD Paluskar (1872-1931) as the perpetrators of an anti-colonial nationalist, reformist movement that resulted in a reinvention of the tradition. Bakhle contends that this movement theorised and systematised the tradition, canonised its repertoire and

[5] Gandharva is known to have first started singing in 1931 (See Kalapini Komkali and Inamdar-Sane 2014), and passed away in 1992. He remained an active performer until the end.

'cleansed' its performative and pedagogical spaces in problematic ways. Bakhle's thesis is tempered by Scarimbolo (2014) and Kobayashi's (2003) important contributions, while Dard Neuman's work (2012) argues for the claim to contemporaneity *Khandanī Ustāds* and their pedagogical practices retained in the face of this reformist movement in particular and of colonial and print modernity in general.

While all of this work focusses on how the Hindustani tradition and its principal actors attempted to reconcile colonial, modernist forces with pre-colonial musical practice, pedagogy and performance, their work does not extend into the latter half of the twentieth century to develop a rigorous account of the repercussions of these complex negotiations on the post-1947 world of the khayāl. This dissertation is a step in this direction, and takes as its case Kumar Gandharva – a practitioner who was an inheritor of Bhatkhande and Paluskar's reformist movement, but was removed from it by two generations so that they were an inseparable part of the musical 'tradition' he received. This dissertation frames Gandharva, then, as an acclaimed performer whose much-discussed alterity was rooted in this reformist history, as subsequent chapters will show, and whose career extended well into the last decades of the twentieth century.

A crucial figure in this dissertation is BR Deodhar (1901-1990) who, as Paluskar's disciple and Gandharva's mentor, functions as the bridge between these two ends of the twentieth century landscape of the khayāl. This dissertation will complicate the roles both Deodhar and Gandharva played in the history of this music by resisting a simple subsummation of their work into a Hindu-reformist-nationalist mould. It will do so by viewing their work in the light of specifically *musical* urges experienced by these musicians in their capacity as *practitioners*. This dissertation will, then, engage seriously and directly with Gandharva's music itself, through its empirical phrasal, rhythmic and acoustical analysis of it.

There does indeed exist an established literature in the Hindi and Marathi languages that engages with music directly, but this takes the form of grammatical treatises and anthologies of *bandishes*, such as the work of Bhatkhande himself (2005) or that of more recent grammarians and anthologisers like Ramashray Jha (2001) and his disciple Geeta Bannerjee (2012). This work, however, carves out for itself a space of discourse that is somewhat abstracted, and tends towards the musicological much more strongly than towards the social. Other important work includes biographies of musicians such as those written by Deodhar himself (1993) and Vamanrao Deshpande (1989). Ashok Ranade's work (2011, 2008) belongs

in this group too, although it extends the bounds of Indian musicology to include non-classical forms and, importantly, provides standard definitions of conventional musicological terms. However, this literature, while indispensable to the current project, is the work of scholar-practitioners who were respected *teachers*, and tends therefore to be of a *prescriptive* flavour, written with the aim of instructing readers in the theory of music-making, or in developing an image of the musical utopia they received from their teachers in turn, or imagined for themselves. Its *descriptive* function is restricted largely to the biographical and anecdotal, while descriptions of musical style and strategy tend to be based on accumulated experience in receiving, performing and transmitting music, rather than on rigorous empirical work. Even so, this work is foundational to the present study and provides it with an important ethnographical and musicological archive.

Importantly, there is also a substantial fourth kind of literature: primary literature consisting of the numerous and very substantial interviews Gandharva himself regularly gave, where he discusses his music at length, often with other practitioners and scholars as his interlocuters. Perhaps the most substantial of these, and the most important source for this dissertation is *Kumar Gandharva: Mukkam Vashi* (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007), which is a published transcription and audio recording[6] of a three-day interview Gandharva gave at the premises of the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya in Vashi, where his interlocutors are mostly practitioners and scholars. The question that drives these conversations is precisely that of Gandharva's alterity – interlocutors' and audiences' desire to understand what it is that makes his music different. Gandharva himself emphatically and repeatedly reinforces in these discussions the idea that he is able to perceive many of the conventions of the tradition differently, but the resulting discourse, while fascinating and illuminating, is also often ambiguous and cryptic, and in need of empirical and hermeneutic analysis. Often, this ambiguity appears to be the result of an inability to articulate his own musicology in language, that causes Gandharva to use *vegaḷepaṇ* - alterity - as a catch-all term[7]. In Gandharva's discourse, this term comes to encapsulate the perspectives he claims as uniquely his own or as uniquely those of other practitioners or *gharānā*-traditions in *his* appraisals of them. These perspectives - '*malā je diste*' (What I can see) (Gandharva et al. 1988) then become Gandharva's justification for exercising personal agency and aesthetic choice in his dealings with traditional musical material. This discourse

[6] This audio recording is unpublished, but is available at the archives of the Manipal-Samvaad Centre for Indian Music, MAHE Manipal

[7] See quotes from Gandharva in footnote 3 above for examples.

thus becomes a major archive that remains largely untapped in formal scholarship. Analysing it with reference to the scholarly literature mentioned above, and qualifying it with empirical analysis of Gandharva's music is, thus, a major goal of this study.

The other important sources for this study have been Gandharva's disciples Satyasheel Deshpande and Madhup Mudgal, who were both interviewed extensively and exclusively for this dissertation. Their respective understanding of their mentor's practice, as well as their recorded demonstrations that often feature as audio clips in this study form a fifth important archive that this dissertation builds upon.

The present project aims, then, to tread the necessarily interdisciplinary ground that lies at the cusps of these various literatures, and to develop, thereby, an account of Gandharva's alterity that, while being explicitly musicological, also constructs it as a specific response to larger historical currents. It thus frames Kumar Gandharva as an important twentieth-century figure – a gifted practitioner who drew upon the conceptions of the nature and purpose of khayāl music that he encountered in his particular moment in history, and who attempted a reimagination of them, resulting in a music that was both widely celebrated and vehemently criticized (as discussed below), as *alternative* to an established tradition.

While various commentators have discussed Gandharva's alterity and attempted to explain it, these attempts have been insightful but brief at best, and at worst, either hagiographical or utterly dismissive. Indeed, Kumar Gandharva's alterity is known to have polarised the world of the khayāl in its responses to it. As music critic Mohan Nadkarni, writing in 1984, puts it, '[Gandharva's] genre, novel in form and unorthodox in approach, evokes extreme reactions – fanatical adulation from fans and consistent hostility from purists. Yet he compels attention. Always' (1984). The 'purists' Nadkarni refers to are probably figures like Jaipur Gharana vocalist Mogubai Kurdikar who '[did] not find Kumar's slow *khayal* interesting' (V. H. Deshpande 1989, 108) or Agra Gharana vocalist and scholar Srikrishna Haldankar whose trenchant critique of Gandharva's music has been engaged with in chapters three and four of this dissertation in detail. Even the iconic actor-singer Balgandharva, of whose music Gandharva was himself a great admirer, while refraining from explicit criticism, says that 'All of this [Gandharva's music] passes over my head. I cannot follow it' (ibid). On the other hand, prominent figures like Marathi humourist, playwright and musician P.L. Deshpande hailed

Gandharva as a renaissance man: 'this artist seems to me like a *mahāpurush*[8] who has taken on an *avatār* in order to make fluid the stagnant waters of Indian music' (1987, 191, translated). Opinion was divided among other figures of prominence in the cultural sphere of the twentieth century as well: prominent Marathi writers and critics like NS Phadke and SV Gokhale 'openly criticized Kumar for his non-conformist ways' (V. H. Deshpande 1989, 108), while Mukund Lath and Ashok Vajpeyi hailed him as the moderniser of the tradition[9].

Among the more neutral attempts to engage with Gandharva's music are scholar-musicians Vamanrao Deshpande (1989, 70–124) and Ashok Ranade (2011, 293–351), and Gandharva's disciple Satyasheel Deshpande (2005 and 2014). While these attempts are insightful and foundational to the present study in many ways, they are of the form of brief and general commentaries that articulate the authors' respective understandings of Gandharva's music based on the accumulated experience of listening to (and in the case of Satyasheel Deshpande, studying with) Gandharva over many years. They do not, however, inhabit the idiom of a comprehensively referenced, empirical, full-length study in the way the present project aspires to do. Surprisingly, formal English-language ethnomusicology seems to have dismissed Gandharva as unimportant: Bonnie Wade's magnum opus on the genre makes no mention of him at all, in spite of it having been published in 1980 when Gandharva was arguably at the peak of his career and popularity, and in spite of having an entire chapter titled 'On Individuality' that considers musicians who cannot be typified into a single *gharānā*[10]; while Wim van der Meer's book, written at around the same time, dismisses Gandharva, claiming '…that he has brought little news in style, and that his innovations are rather artificial and intellectual'(1980, 163)[11].

Rigorous and widely referenced, interdisciplinary scholarship on Kumar Gandharva, then, appears to be missing, in spite of the importance he is accorded in the recent history of this music. It is the primary goal of this project to develop such an account - one that is grounded in the empirical analysis of Gandharva's recorded music, and that examines his music in the

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[8] lit. great man. The term has connotations of reincarnation and spiritual enlightenment in Indic mythology. See (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica 2016).

[9] See Lath (2013) and Vajpeyi (2005). The latter is a book of essays and poetry dedicated to Gandharva and, in its introduction, echoes PL Deshpande's proclamation to hail Gandharva as 'a timeless [*kāljayī,* lit. time-defeating] *shalākā-purusha* of not just Indian music but of Indian culture in its entirety'. A *shalākā-purusha* is a divine figure from Jain mythology, not dissimilar to the figure of the *avatār* in Hindu mythology.

[10] Mukund Lath's rather critical review (1988) of Wade's book points this out and castigates the author for this.

[11] Chapter one of this dissertation, in particular, engages with these scholars extensively.

light of his own discourse, which discourse is itself problematized with reference to the literature, discussed above, that describes the various historical, sociological, musicological and stylistic dialectics that make up the twentieth-century ecosystem of the khayāl. This project also attempts, thus, In Martin Clayton's words, to meet 'the need in ethnomusicological analysis to examine both musical sound and discourse, and to interpret the relationships between the two'(2003, 60). Importantly, the present study explicitly theorizes Gandharva's own discourse, and culls from it a number of important tropes and analytics that Gandharva himself uses to reflect discursively upon his music. Some major tropes from among these are *Abhivyaktī* (expressivity), *Svābhāviktā* (organicity), *Dhun* (discussed below) and *Samvād* (consonance/conversation), all of which have been briefly discussed below. Other themes that recur in Gandharva's discourse, albeit less prominently, include those of a universalism that has appeal beyond *gharānā* silos, a holist music that does not fall prey to particular stylistic or technical approaches, and of a desire for criticality and progress, which this study traces to his modernist-reformist moorings.

Each of the four chapters of this dissertation develops these themes and connects them with one another in order to develop a comprehensive picture of Gandharva's alterity. Because this is not a biography of Gandharva, a brief account of his life is perhaps called for in this introduction, and will also incorporate brief summaries of the chapters that make up this dissertation.

Kumar Gandharva, originally Shivaputrayya Komakalimatha (also known as Shivaputra Komakali), was born on April 8, 1924 to a musically inclined father who had studied some music and sang avocationally[12]. At age seven, in 1931, the child began unexpectedly to mimic the recorded music he often heard playing at home on the gramophone, with a proficiency that stunned his father and brothers into giving up their amateur singing practice, and earned him the title of 'Kumar Gandharva' from a local seer in his hometown of Sulebhavi in northern Karnataka. Gandharva's father proceeded to take the child on extensive concert tours across the subcontinent where he earned the applause of the greatest masters of the time and became a known name. However, this concert career was interrupted when a well-wisher advised Gandharva's father to send him, in 1936, to Professor BR Deodhar in colonial Bombay, for formal training. As has been discussed in Chapter One below, this advisor as well as Deodhar

[12] All biographical information here is derived from Potdar (2018), Kolhapure (2004) and Komkali and Inamdar-Sane (2014)

himself were the inheritors of Vishnu Digambar Paluskar's nationalist, reformist movement. This early period in Gandharva's life represents a set of negotiations between a prodigious musical talent and the various currents flowing through Hindustani music at the time, ranging from mass-media in the form of the gramophone (Neuman 2009) to colonial and print modernity and the larger, ongoing formation of a new national identity (Bakhle 2005).

While this chapter traces the engagements of these protagonists, particularly Gandharva and Deodhar, with reference to these modernisms, it will resist reducing them to only being agents of these historical processes. Instead, it will dwell extensively on the *agency* they demonstrated as *practitioners*, as incumbents of the Hindustani tradition and its ecosystem, not simplistically reduceable to actors who merely inherit musicianship, either entirely from a pre-colonial *gharānā* ethos to the exclusion of colonial ideas of modernism, or from modernist forces that seek solely to disrupt tradition. This chapter develops an account of Gandharva's teacher BR Deodhar's particular engagement with his reformist inheritance and shows how Deodhar's particular comportment was formative for Gandharva's music. Importantly, it frames musical negotiations in this era as practitioners' engagements with various opposing forces, musical as well as cultural and historical: those of order and freedom, individualism and tradition and even of conceptions of the khayāl and allied genres as masculine and feminine. Importantly, this study connects these dichotomies to the *mārgī-desī* dialectic that Indic musicology borrows from literary discourse (Schofield 2010). In particular, this first chapter shows how Gandharva engages with these dichotomies to interpret the Khayāl tradition as one driven by *abhivyaktī* (expressivity) – a term that becomes a trope in his discourse and is one of the major drivers of his idiom[13]. Entitled '*Abhivyaktī*: Reimagining *Paramprā*', chapter one thus lays out the musical, social and historical grounds upon which Kumar Gandharva constructs his alterity, while also analysing Gandharva's discourse to show how he constructs a sense of an *authentic* belonging to the tradition in spite of his alternative construction of it[14].

After studying with Deodhar for an extensive twelve-year period, Gandharva's emerging career was interrupted a second time, by tuberculosis, in 1947. Acting upon medical advice to seek

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[13] 'What does it mean to know music? [It means] being able to express [*vyakt*] anything, being able to mould the *rāg* in any shape'(1985, 12:30 min) . Gandharva uses this term to resist interpretations of the genre as necessarily averse to explicit affective expression. This dialectic is best represented by Vamanrao Deshpande, who frames it as one between 'classicism' and 'romanticism', terms he borrows from discourse on Western classical music (V. H. Deshpande 1987).

[14] As evidenced by his repeated proclamations that 'I don't change *bandishes* at all…I [sing] them the way they were sung sixty or seventy years ago' (Gandharva et al. 2019)

drier climes, Gandharva relocated to the town of Dewas in the Malva region of the erstwhile Madhya Bharat (now Madhya Pradesh), where he famously encountered and studied Malvi folk music (referred to in his own discourse as the Malvi *lok-dhun*). Gandharva's use of '*lok'* appears to have been restricted to his experience of the rural music of the Malva region, and while he memorised and notated a large number of these tunes (Gandharva, Bhagwat, and Dhaneshwar 1985), these appear to have been intended as a personal reference, and were not published anywhere. While Gandharva did famously present concerts where he sang these tunes, either exclusively[15] or interspersed with other song-genres[16], the present study does not conduct an examination of them. Instead, Chapter two of this dissertation, entitled '*Dhun:* Rethinking *Rāg* and *Bandish*', distils Gandharva's music to identify specific principles he appears to have drawn from this music – or from the *lokdhun* as a *genre*[17] – as well as from the diversity of sources he was exposed to through Deodhar, to develop a musicological account of how Gandharva rethought the traditional repertoire of khayāl. The chapter attempts, thereby, to lay out an ontology of *rāg* and *bandish* according to Kumar Gandharva. The attempt here is not to develop a comprehensive or universally applicable ontology, but one specific to Gandharva, and therefore, inevitably, one that is contingent upon the particular historical moment he inhabited.

Chapter two will also address the question of the *authenticity* of the material Gandharva received and built his music upon, particularly the *bandishes* notated and canonised by Bhatkhande, and will develop an account of how Gandharva exploited the new affordances this printed and disembodied material presented him with. It will make a contribution to the musicological dialectic between composition and improvisation by bringing into it Gandharva's conception of the *dhun,* and thereby complicating the category of the 'song' in a traditional (pre-mass media) Indic context. Crucially, this chapter will develop a nuanced account of the specific musical principles Gandharva derived from the idea of the *dhun,* and will discuss how his doing so problematized the relationship between a constituent *bandish* and its categorizing *rāg* – a problematization that, as this chapter will argue, is an important

[15] Such as in his '*Malvā Kī Lokdhune*' concert, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzWe2WV6Jj4

[16] Such as in his thematic concerts based on the seasons, eg: '*Gīt Varshā*', available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKsXewM02ug

[17] It thus constructs Gandharva's use of '*lok*' as a rhetorical, even a polemical device with which to challenge conventional understandings of the repertoire and performance-processes of khayāl. Gandharva is keenly aware of his status as a trained, elite vocalist: 'Now when I sing these [*lok*] tunes, [my singing] will be *surīlā* [intonationally accurate]. I can't help this!' (Gandharva et al. 1988).

contributor to the alterity Gandharva's contemporaries perceived in his renditions of *rāgs* and *bandishes*[18].

Gandharva's subsequent post-illness trajectory was one of prolific creative output. This output consisted of the composition of about two hundred and fifty original *bandishes*, eleven '*dhun-ugam*' (folk-derived) *rāgs* as well as other *joṛ* [combination] and wholly original *rāgs*, the conception and presentation of a large number of thematic concerts that covered Malvi *lokgīt*, bhajans, *thumrīs* and allied genres, as well as the presentation of a large and constantly evolving repertoire of traditional *rāgs* and *bandishes.* This dissertation will not, however engage in a detailed analysis of Gandharva's entire repertoire except incidentally, and will refrain almost completely from engaging with the other genres of music (apart from the khayāl) that formed important parts of it. Instead, it will focus on that aspect of his music that earned him perhaps the greatest notoriety - his experimentation with and reinterpretation of the classical repertoire of *rāg*, *bandish* and *gāyakī.*

Chapter three will examine the repercussions of Gandharva's engagement with *dhun* on his *gāyakī* – on his musicianship as represented by the structure of his performances[19]. It will engage with the idea of *svābhāviktā* ('naturalness' or, as translated here, 'organicism'), which is another trope that is central to Gandharva's discourse[20], and attempt an explication of it. Entitled '*Svābhāviktā:* Remodelling *Gāyakī*', this chapter will argue that much of the alterity of Gandharva's music resulted from his rejection of particular conventions of *gāyakī* that he saw as orthodox and contrived[21], in favour of the *dhun* which he saw as organic. In particular, this chapter will frame this dialectic between a *dhun*-based organicity and a *gāyakī*-based orthodoxy, again, as a *mārgī-desī* dichotomy, and attempt to show that the music Gandharva labels orthodox draws its sense of order and discipline from particular *mārgī* conceptions of

[18] In the words of scholar-musician Ramashray Jha, 'Kumarji's *kehen* was so remarkable that when he sang a traditional composition, it would take on an entirely new form and colour. We would sing the same composition too, but when he would *say* it (*jab ve kehte the*), it would seem completely new' (in Patel 2006, translated).

[19] 'Structure' here implies the way Gandharva structures the progression of his performance through a single piece of music, not the sequence of pieces performed within a concert.

[20] As evidenced by the following examples from his discourse: 'Anything [that one does in music] must happen in a *svābhāvik* fashion, but there must be thought behind it too' (2007, 9); 'Very few [singers] have a *svābhāvik* ability for *tān*. This is a gift' (ibid, 11); 'The *rāgs* have a *svābhāvik* balance, an anatomy' (1985, 26:00 min)

[21] 'We [most vocalists] attach *tāns*, *ālāpī* or a little *laykārī* to the *bandish*. I think this shouldn't happen, and I'm always trying not to let this happen…' (1983, comments made during performance).

khayāl music, conceptions that Gandharva's music distances itself from[22]. The analysis presented here will draw largely from Martin Clayton's work on the rhythmic analysis of Hindustani music which can be employed to '[address] issues of historical continuity and innovation, and the relationships between various genres and styles' (Clayton 2008, sec. 1.3). It will demonstrate Gandharva's departures from convention in an explicitly empirical fashion by presenting a table of qualitative and quantitative data culled from the recordings of a number of vocalists, both contemporaneous and senior to Gandharva. It will thus show, based on ten musicological parameters drawn from largely from Clayton's work, how Gandharva distances himself from particular orthodoxies more substantially than most other vocalists.

Throughout Gandharva's career, the one aspect of his musicianship that appears to have received universal acclaim, even from his critics and in spite of its alterity, is the exceptional mastery he was acknowledged to have over his *intonation*[23] and for the especially resonant and uniquely expressive *vocal idiom*[24] he was known to have cultivated. Chapter four will, therefore, examine Gandharva's aesthetics of the singing voice. This chapter will examine how Gandharva furthered his goals of *svābhāviktā* and *abhivyaktī*, as well as that of *samvād* (lit. consonance/conversation - the third trope central to Gandharva's discourse[25]) in the domain of musical *sound*. Titled '*Samvād:* Re-forming Āvāz', this chapter will engage with Gandharva's emphasis on *surīlāpan* (intonational accuracy) and *nād* (resonant vocalisation), and will examine and problematize his critical appraisal of traditional vocal aesthetics. Crucially, this chapter will tap into the disciplines of voice science (I R Titze 2015) and psychoacoustics (Howell 2017) to make concrete claims about Gandharva's vocal idiom. Through empirical acoustical analysis, as well as ethnographic and hermeneutical work, this chapter will also examine the vocal *training* Gandharva gave his disciples, and will attempt to examine this pedagogy with reference to what modern science (such as, primarily, Bozeman 2013) tells us about the singing voice. This chapter will thus make an important contribution to the study of

[22] The attempt here is not to perpetuate binaries but to frame them as opposing forces that practitioners must negotiate, and to describe the case of a particular practitioner's negotiation of them as emergent from his music and his discourse.

[23] '[Kumar's is] a voice as true as the Kirana voice, although it is of a different breed' (V. H. Deshpande 1979, 104, translated).

[24] 'No other singer in the pantheon of Hindustani classical music but Kumar Gandharva crafted a voice that howled like the wind, carrying shades of joy, lament, love and loss, modelling it on the sounds of the folk music that he had introspected on for years'(Mudgal, Shubha 2014, 219).

[25] Eg: 'Where in *nād* (sound, resonance) is there not *samvād*? Your *swar* must be able to do *samvād* [achieve consonance / conversation] (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 23).

the genre by examining practise and discourse from the vantage point of voice science. This chapter will also contribute to one of the larger themes of this dissertation, that of developing an account of the *reformist comportment* that Gandharva appears to have inherited from Deodhar, by examining how he applied this reformist lens to the singing voice as much as he did to the other aspects of music-making dealt with in preceding chapters.

The four chapters that comprise this dissertation, then, attempt to foreground Kumar Gandharva's experience of the khayāl tradition, and to thereby to complicate the relationships that individual agency and aesthetic choice have with traditions of aesthetic sensibility and artistic practise. They attempt, thereby, to view fundamental assumptions of propriety of style, comportment and embodied musicianship seen as idiomatic to the genre, indeed conceptions of the nature of the genre itself, from the unique lens of Kumar Gandharva, who, as an incumbent of a tradition in flux, exercises *agency* in his engagement with it, to create an alternative music.

Chapter 1. *Abhivyaktī*: Reimagining *Parampará*

1. The Early Years

1.1 Beginnings

Kumar Gandharva's[26] (1924-1992) career began in the third decade of the twentieth century and ended in its last. He was thus born into a musical ecosystem that had been reshaped, only recently, both by the inevitable forces of colonial modernity as well as the deliberate efforts of its nationalist reformers[27]. This reshaping was one in a series of significant transformations that South Asian music in general and the Hindustani khayāl in particular are known to have undergone - in their aesthetic priorities as much as in their social, performative and pedagogical systems – in acknowledgement of the dramatic transformations occurring around them. This chapter aims to frame this tumult, and Gandharva's emergence from within it, as an encounter between a musician hailed as a prodigious talent, and the world he found himself entrenched in through his own geographical, social, cultural, and aesthetic situation as well as that of his chief mentor, Prof. Balkrishna Raghunath Deodhar (1901-1990).

Gandharva's father was an admirer of musicians like Ustad Abdul Karim Khan (1872-1937) and was an avocational performer[28]. He was also an admirer of the acclaimed Marathi singer-actor Balgandharva (1888-1967) and listening to the 78rpm records of Abdul Karim Khan and Balgandharva, among other masters, was a regular feature of the Komakali household. Around the age of eight, Gandharva began unexpectedly mimicking the music he heard at home[29]. Anecdotal evidence (referenced below) describes how this mimicry went beyond simple reproduction and turned him into something of a celebrity.

[26] Originally Shivaputrayya Komakalimatha

[27] See Bakhle (2005), Scarimbolo (2014) and Kobayashi (2003) for accounts of this process.

[28] Biographical information derived from Potdar (2018) and Kolhapure (2004)

[29] See Rele and Darshane (2009, 16) for Gandharva's own account of the incident.

This childhood precocity earned him the title of Kumar Gandharva[30], and caused his father to start the 'Kumar Gandharva and Party' troupe which toured extensively between 1931 and 1935, when Gandharva was aged between seven and eleven years. The troupe travelled, from their native northern Karnataka, as far as Sindh-Punjab in the North, and Gandharva acquired a substantial reputation as the child who could render flawless imitations of the three-minute 78rpm records of the masters of the time and continue improvising in that vein for much longer. While these feats might sound apocryphal, a large number of sources confirm their occurrence, most famously ones describing Gandharva's performance at the Jinnah Hall in Mumbai in 1935[31]. What commentators most emphatically point out about this mimicry is that it wasn't mere mimicry - apart from latching on to the singer's vocal mannerisms and reproducing improvised phrases, Gandharva was able to internalise the gait of the *rāg* being sung as well as the singer's particular approach to extemporisation. The best example of this ability that is available to us is Gandharva's 1936 78rpm recording of the Bhairavi *dādrā* 'Banavo Batiya'[32], possibly learned from the 1934 recording of Ustad Faiyaz Khan's (1886-1950) rendition of this composition[33]. It is also clear from this recording, however, that this was not a verbatim reproduction of Faiyaz Khan's rendition. It displays, instead, Gandharva's ability to inhabit both the *rāg* as well as the singer's idiom and to create *new* melody from therein. It was this ability that earned Gandharva the kind of astonished praise he received. In Gandharva's later discourse, this childhood ability becomes an important cornerstone in his own theorization of *rāg-sangīt*, which will be dealt with in chapter two below. At this point, it is important to note

[30] Kumar: young/child. A Gandharva is a mythical being, a deity specifically associated with music, though the term is also sometimes ascribed to a historical community of that name. 'Kumar Gandharva' thus literally means 'young god of music'.

[31] See Deshpande (1989, 82–83) and Potdar (2018, 18–21) for detailed accounts of this and other such childhood performances. Deshpande also notes that 'Singers like Abdul Karim Khan, Faiyaz Khan, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Omkarnath Thakur, Master Krishnarao, Sawai Gandharva, Mallikarjun Mansoor, Kesarbai Kerkar etc have congratulated Kumar after listening to his imitations of them'. (1989, 86)

[32] Available at https://www.jiosaavn.com/song/kahe-ko-jhuti-banao-batiyan/MQA8Bz1nTXc.

[33] The characteristic enunciation at 01:40 onwards is an obvious example of the influence of Faiyaz Khan's style. However, Gandharva's disciple Satyasheel Deshpande points out that the phrases around 02:25min in this same recording also show a distinct influence of Abdul Karim Khan, the other great of the time that Gandharva extensively mimicked (Personal Interview, September 2021). See Potdar (ibid) for accounts of Gandharva's imitations of him. Also, Rele (2009, 17) credits Gandharva's famed intonational accuracy to these early influences derived from listening to and mimicking recordings of Balgandharva and Abdul Karim Khan, both of whom were admired for their intonation.

that Gandharva's ability was praised by many masters of the time, in gestures that demonstrate true appreciation, rather than patronizing encouragement[34].

1.2 Mimesis

By the 1930s, 78rpm records of the kind Gandharva mimicked had already been in circulation in India for over three decades. The advent of the gramophone changed the music it encountered and reproduced in important ways, and Gandharva's encounter with the music it made available to him as well as the disembodied way in which this occurred are significant. Fred Gaisberg, one of the earliest recording engineers and record-producers in the history of recorded music, was sent to India by the Gramophone Company in the beginning of the twentieth century to scout for local talent and to recruit singers to make records to sell to the local market. After over four decades of work, in 1942, Gaisberg observed that "…new artists were learning their repertoire from gramophone records" (Farrell 1993, 47). While Gerry Farrell mentions this in the context of 'songs for festivals and weddings' (ibid) that formed part of their catalogue, Gandharva's childhood mimesis brings this phenomenon into the ambit of the khayāl, a genre that, in its discourse, continues to position the guru as the only valid – if not the only - source of repertoire and technique. In thinking about the implications of this for genres like the khayāl – genres that were seen as unsuitable for recording given the extended durations for which they were conventionally performed and the limited recording time available on the discs – Gerry Farrell asks important questions:

> *What was being copied in terms of musical form, and how did recorded versions of khayāl, thumrī, and other traditional genres relate to live performances? Were the records in fact "constructions" rather than "reproductions" of Indian music-- to put it another way, was the music that appeared on discs the creature of recording technology rather than a representation of a performance?* (ibid)

In trying to understand how musicians of the time compressed into less than three minutes what would otherwise have been a much longer performance, Farrell analyses a Gauhar Jan (1873-1930) recording and finds that the performance comprises of "a brief *ālāp*…the composition itself…[and] sections of improvisation based on the *sthāyī* section of the composition." (ibid,

[34] On listening to Gandharva mimic his own music in the Allahabad music conference in 1935, Ustad Faiyaz Khan is reported to have said "Son, if I were a landlord, I would have handed over all my land to you" (Potdar 2018, 19, translated). Also see Potdar, p. 136 onwards for newspaper reports of Gandharva's performances from this time.

49); and as he tries to divide the recorded performance into sections to measure their duration, he finds that "In total the fixed composition, with the *sthāyī* and antarā sections, takes up one minute, or almost half of the total recording time" and that "The "improvisations" take the form of *tāns* (sweeping melodic phrases), with a return to the *mukhrā* at the end of the phrase." (Ibid, 50)

Most if not all the recordings that Gandharva encountered and mimicked in the 1930s would largely have followed this performance format[35]. Farrell makes the claim that "…one possible effect of the duration of early recordings was to lead artists to give greater weight to the composed or fixed parts of the performances than they would normally have done in live recitals" (ibid, 51). This is significant because, as chapter two will show, perhaps the most important feature of the alterity of Gandharva's music was the importance he gave to the bandish – the composition that he was singing and how he constructed his performance around it. While Farrell addresses recorded performances here, Gandharva's is perhaps the only example of a musician whose *live* performances appear to have retained some of this shift in the nature of khayāl performance that the arrival of the gramophone record might have led to. This is admittedly a tenuous link, and the centrality of the *bandish* to Gandharva's music – that will be proposed here and theorised in detail in chapters two and three - certainly had more to it than just this. But the idea that his earliest musical influences were these three-minute recordings that foregrounded the *bandish* more than they did a ritual sequence of improvisatory devices seems too important to ignore, especially when one also considers the fact that Gandharva was able to internalise the music in these recordings comprehensively enough to be able to continue singing in the idiom of the musician he was listening to after the recording had ended.

In response, then, to Farrell's questions, Gandharva's music – both his childhood imitative music as well as his later, fully evolved idiom - could be seen at least in part as a second-

[35] Critic and vocalist Keshavrao Bhole claims, writing in 1948 under the pseudonym 'Shuddha Sarang', that Zohrabai Agrewali (1868–1913) was the originator of this format: 'Later musicians copied her method of giving records so faithfully that this 'Zohrabai formula' has become immortalised. When she performs her *baṛhat* by singing the *sthāī-antarā* in a very lilting way and gradually pulling (*khench*) the *swars* and weaving the text of the *bandish* into her *ālāps*, *murkīs* and *khatkās*, [the recording] is filled with the colour of a *mehfil*. And when she sings, through her gradually intensifying throw (*vādhatī fek*), her *laykārī* and *tāns*, and then ends the record by stating her name 'Zohrabai Agrewali', you don't realize how the time has passed, so effective is the *rachanā-kaushalya* (compositional ability) she possessed' (Bhole 1948, 22, translated). We will see in chapter three below how Gandharva subverted the *intensification* Bhole describes here.

generation creature of recording technology, borne of a perhaps unintentionally *bandish*-centric music that recording technology gave birth to. As will be shown below, the other factor that contributed to this approach was the obsession Gandharva's teacher BR Deodhar had with collecting *bandishes*. Possessing a large repertoire of *bandishes* is traditionally considered important, and Deodhar's motivations for doing this will be considered below. The contention here, however, is that Gandharva's early understanding of the nature of this music, moulded by gramophone records, may have been foundational to how he *used* the *bandishes* in his repertoire, in performance. Gandharva belonged to a generation of musicians who began their careers inspired by music heard on the gramophone or, a little later, on the radio[36]. The question of how mass media may have shaped the landscape of the music is a vast one and scholars like Dard Neuman (2009) have made important inroads into this question. We present Gandharva here as an example of a musician whose handling of the genre itself can be shown to have been shaped, at least in part, by the technological limits of the gramophone record.

2. Professor Deodhar

2.1 Context: Inheriting Reformism

In 1934, Shankarrao Bodas - one of the disciples the musician and nationalist reformer Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (1872-1931) sent abroad to continue his project of proselytizing Hindustani music and institutionalising its pedagogy - heard Gandharva perform and advised his father to send the child to Professor BR Deodhar in Bombay to further his musical training. Deodhar's disciple Pandharinath Kolhapure quotes Bodas as justifying this advice by reasoning that Deodhar, although not a concert performer, was a thoughtful and studious scholar, and that his discipline and scholarly rigour would be a good influence on the young Gandharva. Bodas suggested that because Deodhar was not a performing musician, he would not see Gandharva as a future competitor as other teachers might, given Gandharva's precocious ability to grasp and reproduce the music taught to him, and would thus groom him with diligence and sincerity (Kolhapure 2004, 27, paraphrased, translated). This advice, and the rhetoric of a scholarly, elitist and disciplinarian understanding of the music that it encapsulates, could be read as emerging from the early twentieth century reformist project, spearheaded by Paluskar and his contemporary and rival Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (1860-1936), that aimed to 'cleanse',

[36] See Neuman (2009, 106–7) for more.

regularise and discipline the teaching and performance of Hindustani music, as well to theorize its grammar and canonise its repertoire.

This nationalist project and its implications for Hindustani music in general have been treated extensively by Janaki Bakhle (2005). The narrative that Bakhle creates implicates Bhatkhande and especially Paluskar in the usurpation of musical authority from Muslim musicians, who they accused of secrecy and nepotism, to the benefit of the emerging Hindu Brahmin bourgeoisie community, in an effort to create a 'national' and 'scientific' music in response to the colonial encounter. While Justin Scarimbolo and Erico Kobayashi[37] have since provided important qualifications to this thesis by showing how Bakhle bases her work on public discourse and official documents rather than on lived experience, and that quotidian interactions between Muslim musicians and their Hindu counterparts were not always driven by a religious agenda; and while Dard Neuman has shown that Muslim musicians were not, in fact, 'displaced' in the way and to the extent that Bakhle suggests[38], Bakhle's work remains an important if problematic contribution. It is perhaps a result of her work that the analytical lens of recent English language musicological / ethnomusicological scholarship has continued to refrain from looking at the musical activity - both pedagogical and, importantly, performative - that grew out of Bhatkhande and Paluskar's work and has tended to retain its focus on the history of the reform movement instead. It is in response to this scholarly work, then, that the figure of BR Deodhar, who was an immediate successor to these reformers, and was also Kumar Gandharva's primary mentor, will be discussed here.

BR Deodhar was a disciple of Paluskar, and was one of the students Paluskar trained with the explicit intention of creating teachers who would then be sent to various important towns in the subcontinent to set up branches of his Gandharva[39] Mahavidyalaya and continue his pedagogical work. While it would thus be tempting to subsume Deodhar (and thus Gandharva) within the Hindu nationalist fold that Paluskar represents[40], this would be simplistic and

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[37] See Scarimbolo (2014) and Kobayashi (2003), passim

[38] See Neuman (2009, 115) and (2021, 14–15)

[39] Pronounced *Gāndharva* – this is an archaic reference to music, mentioned in Sanskritic treatises as including vocal and instrumental music, but excluding dance, chosen by Paluskar to suggest that dance was not taught at this institution (Keshavchaitanya Kunte, personal communication, May 2022). This is not a reference to Kumar Gandharva in any way.

[40] As Bakhle and scholars who draw from her work tend to do: See Bakhle (2005, 197, 174, footnote 73 on p297). In what is a good example of such reductionism, Bakhle claims on these pages that Gandharva 'refused to sing *rāg*s like "Miyan ki malhar" on the grounds that they were connected to Muslims'. This is a false

reductionist. While Deodhar certainly held his teacher in high regard and devoted himself to furthering his cause, he also distanced himself from his teacher's methods in significant ways - he called his school 'Deodhar's School of Indian Music'[41] instead of calling it a branch of Paluskar's Gandharva Mahavidyalaya; his own attire was, unlike Paluskar's, distinctly non-sectarian; he was Paluskar's only student to have matriculated and later earned a BA[42], and, most importantly, his pedagogical project had the same secular quality (as shown below) to it that Bakhle sees in Bhatkhande's work and finds missing in Paluskar's.

This is not to deny that Deodhar saw himself as a 'reformer' of the music, and as a successor of both Bhatkhande and Paluskar's projects, but to say that his activities, such as his continued collection of compositions from Ustads and Pandits, were driven by musical and musicological urges more than sectarian or nationalist ones – an argument Kobayashi makes about the reformers themselves (2003, x). Bakhle shows that "For Bhatkhande, classicization meant at least two things: system, order, discipline and theory, on the one hand, and antiquity of national origin, on the other" (2005, 124) and Scarimbolo qualifies this argument to suggest that "Bhatkhande excluded Muslim musicians not because they were Muslim, but because they were not Hindus"(2014, 362); thereby indicating the limits of Bhatkhande's anti-Muslim sentiment. Deodhar's approach to collecting compositions and *rāg*-knowledge from Muslim (as much as Hindu) musicians appears to have grown out of a very similar sentiment – a desire for system, order, discipline and theory, and, to a lesser extent, a sense of entitlement owing to a belief in the idea of national origin he inherited from his predecessors. As a committed scholar and educator who did not seek to establish himself as a performer, the other ambition that seems to have driven Deodhar's many endeavours is the desire to transmit the knowledge he continued to acquire to those studying at his school.

When reading accounts of Deodhar's work, and especially when listening to Deodhar's many recorded interviews, one is struck by a sense of paradox, very similar to the paradox one

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rumour, clearly given place in an otherwise rigorous work only because it reinforces its larger thesis. Gandharva's HMV LP record (ECSD 2710) as well as several live performances, including the *Geet Varsha* concert contain this *rāg*, and his book of compositions, *Anuprāgvilās* contains three of his own *bandishes* in the *rāg*. Other performances also have him singing *rāg*s like Bilaskhani Todi, Darbari Kanada etc, that are also seen as connected to Muslims.

[41] The name was suggested to him by Sarojini Naidu, acc. Kolhapure (2004, 42)

[42] Ibid., also see Deshpande (V. H. Deshpande 1989) for details about how Deodhar even became the subject of ridicule among orthodox musicians for his distinctly non-traditional attire as much as for his Paluskarian, and therefore 'non-*gharānā*' lineage.

encounters in Gandharva's own discourse on his music: that of simultaneously being an entitled incumbent of and a detached outsider to the world of *rāg-sangīt*. With Deodhar, perhaps because on the one hand his own singing lacks the technical refinement and the persuasive comportment that gives a 'performer' her apparent authority; and because on the other hand his knowledge of *rāg*-music is encyclopaedic and widely acknowledged as authoritative; an overview of his musical activity establishes him as both an authoritative insider and a detached outsider to the tradition – there is an inescapable 'otherness' (a kind of alterity) to his inhabitation of the world of khayāl music that he appears to inherit from Bhatkhande and transmit to Gandharva, as much as he does his sense of incumbency and entitlement. A brief review of Deodhar's engagements with music, with a focus on his work at his School of Indian Music in the years Gandharva lived and studied there are then in order.

2.2 Deodhar's School of Indian Music

Through the 1930s and '40s, Deodhar's school of Indian music, originally run out of the classrooms of a day-school, grew large enough to warrant relocation into its own space, which Deodhar found in the Modi Chambers building opposite the Royal Opera House in South Bombay – an area home to a number of elite patrons of music as well as newly emerging music circles, and also to courtesans such as Gangabai who ran their *kothas* nearby[43]. Musicians from across the geography of the khayāl who were drawn to Bombay because of the various kinds of patronage it offered inevitably ended up spending time at the school, performing, teaching its students and interacting with them and with each other. This, of course, was in addition to the various performances that took place at other locations in the city which Deodhar made it his business to attend, with his students – primarily Gandharva – always in tow.

In a letter to his friend and music critic Arvind Mangrulkar, Deodhar writes:

> *'...I would take [Kumar] to performances by Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Mogubai, Kesarbai, Faiyaz Khan and others to enable him to understand the specialities of their styles of singing. But I would explain each singer's speciality to him before the*

[43] This as well as the following historical information about Deodhar and his school is derived from the following sources: Kolhapure (2004, 34–60); Deshpande (V. H. Deshpande 1989); Rele (2009, 10–19); Pradhan (2014, 94) and Gandharva et al. (2007, 80–82). Pandharinath Kolhapure was a student at the Deodhar school, but considered himself Gandharva's disciple. CP Rele was a student of Deodhar's as a child, and studied at Deodhar's school together with the young Gandharva in the 1930s and 40s. He had a longer intimate association with Deodhar than even Gandharva, and was later recognized as a scholar and an inheritor of Deodhar's legacy in his own right. Rele is thus an important and authoritative source.

> *performance. He was very inquisitive and would ask me many questions about the rāgs he heard, about the intricacies of the singer's style, and I would explain these things to him…I would buy recordings of Kesarbai, Faiyaz Khan, Abdul Karim Khan and others for him and I'd allow him to play them repeatedly until he wore them out, as long as he was able to reproduce every phrase from them flawlessly, which he was always able to do. From the end of 1936 onwards, I would take him to almost all the music conferences in Uttar Pradesh, and I'd send someone with him if I was unable to go myself. After 1944, to save money, I'd send him on his own.'* (From letter reproduced in Rele and Darshane 2009, 146–47, translated)

While Paluskar had already set a precedent for institutionalised, systematized teaching, Aneesh Pradhan describes how he had also set a precedent for institutionalising this kind of eclecticism, how '…the Gandharva Mahavidyalaya adopted an eclectic approach to music education…[that] was at variance to the conventional practice of musicians learning from one guru for a sufficient period and moving to another only after procuring permission for such a change from the first guru.'(2014, 94). Deodhar appears to have followed suit with much vigour.

From learning *bandishes* from visiting musicians like Bholanath Bhatt or Imdad Khan of the Sahaswan *Gharānā* or inviting and publicly honouring musicians like Rajab Ali Khan in order to acquire *bandishes* of the Kalyan *thāt* from him; from reserving Saturdays for *mehfils* at the school where musicians as diverse and accomplished as Abdul Kareem Khan, Bashir Khan Javarvale, Master Krishnarao Phulambrikar, Rajabhaiyya Poonchwale, Bundu Khan, SN Ratanjankar, not to mention instrumentalists like Allauddin Khan with his famous disciples Ravi Shankar and Ali Akbar Khan, and tabla masters like Amir Hussain Khan, among many others regularly performed for each other with Deodhar's students as witness, to engaging in long-winding musicological discussions with scholar-musicians including Ravi Shankar, Vamanrao Deshpande and Jagannathbua Purohit[44] while his students looked on – Deodhar's

[44] Kolhapure mentions that of all of these, Deodhar considered his discussions with Ravi Shankar to be the most valuable.

school in the years Gandharva studied there, and for some years after, remained a focal point and melting pot of musical activity in Bombay[45],[46].

Providing the exceptionally talented Gandharva, as well as other promising students like CP Rele with exposure to a diversity of music was certainly one reason why Deodhar went to such trouble to associate with a wide range of musicians, but the other reason appears to be his personal theoretical project – of collecting repertoire and through it, developing a well-ordered understanding of the landscape of Hindustani *rāg*s. The vigour and consistency with which Deodhar continued to collect *bandishes* and *rāg*-knowledge from the musicians he encountered perhaps rivalled that of Bhatkhande himself, as well as that of other similarly driven musicians like Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan, who was a regular at the school and an important source for Deodhar. Vamanrao Deshpande's observation about Deodhar's own singing – that it was 'free from what was commonly described as Gwalior [*gharānā*'s] *babashahi gayaki* or simplistic style…[and] was pleasing and contained a spark of originality' (1989, 166–67) perhaps indicates Deshpande's appreciation of Deodhar's project as an attempt to develop an understanding of music that was independent of established conventions of music making, while still taking them into account.

There is no denying the fact that in doing this, Deodhar was an important inheritor of the pedagogical and musicological environment that had resulted from Bhatkhande and Paluskar's efforts. Deodhar's eclecticism, his obsession with collecting repertoire and *rāg*-knowledge and constructing a theoretical framework of *rāg*-music[47], as well as his pedagogical and institutional efforts certainly owe themselves to precedents set by Bhatkhande and Paluskar. However, Deodhar's work both extends and moves away from that of his predecessors in one important way – Deodhar's comportment is unambiguously that of a scholar engaged in the

[45] See Neuman (2009, 105–6) for a demonstration of how opportunities to listen to musicians were severely limited in pre-independence India. Deodhar's efforts to provide exposure to his students were a way to address this scarcity of opportunities of encountering musicians.

[46] 'Deodhar would find something or the other which was not quite right in the music of most artists; the result was that Kumar took a vow not to model his music on others or to even imitate anyone' (Deshpande 1989, 85)

[47] Deodhar did publish a set of volumes called *Rāg-Bodh*, but these are more in the nature of textbooks for institutional teaching. His 'musicology' was captured primarily in the training he gave to Gandharva, Rele and others, in his many recorded interviews on theoretical and historical matters, and to some extent in his articles on musicians in the S*angeet Kala Vihar* magazine that he published. That Deodhar did not publish a formal theoretical treatise in spite of having acquired the authority and ability to do so lends some credence to the contention that this musicology was a personal project for him. These interviews, articles and his students' accounts of his teaching are the sources upon which these arguments are constructed.

theorisation and transmission of a *living* tradition, rather than that of one trying to *reform* and revive a tradition perceived as deteriorating.

In trying to show how pre-colonial Mughal musicologists carried out a 'classicization' of Hindustani music in ways that were uncannily similar to Bhatkhande and Paluskar's methods, Katherine Schofield demonstrates that the latter, like their Mughal precursors, were in search of a 'golden age' of music that existed 'in the past, in Sanskrit and in the South'(2015, 494). In contrast, Deodhar's musical endeavours display a desire to theorize the landscape of *rāg-sangīt* and to broaden its limits by accommodating within it as much diversity - of *rāg*-grammar, repertoire, approaches to performance, expression and vocalisation – as he could find. This is not to say that Deodhar rejected Bhatkhande and Paluskar's projects, but instead to posit that, unlike Paluskar's other students, he appears to have inherited their sense of agency with which to continue building upon their work. This was in stark contrast with Paluskar's other famous disciple Omkarnath Thakur (1897-1967), for example, who was heavily invested in reinforcing the idea that this is a Sanskritic music, and in denying the agency of Muslim musicians in particular[48]. Where anecdotes tell of Thakur 'purifying' the concert stage after a performance by Faiyaz Khan, Deodhar goes to great lengths to learn *bandishes* from Sinde Khan (dates unknown), voice use from Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (1902-1968) and performative strategies from Bundu Khan (1880-1955), among many others[49]. Deodhar appears, thus, to have been treating the Ustads and Pandits he encountered as the bearers of a diverse, living oral tradition that he was in the process of assimilating and transmitting. His scholarly and pedagogical work can thus be seen as giving rise to the new eclectic classicism that Gandharva inherited – a classicism perhaps best represented in Deodhar's pedagogical methods.

Deodhar's students describe how he encouraged them to listen, over many years, to many musicians, playing the same *rāg*s in vastly divergent styles; to learn from gramophone records, notated compositions, especially Bhatkhande, whose works had now become for scholars like

[48] From lectures by Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, available at Saptak Archives, Ahmedabad. See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-SsT1mX5WXQ for an example of his discursive search for authenticity in the past, in Sanskrit and in the south, as well as his penchant to reject the possibility of Islamic influence on Hindustani music.

[49] From interviews of Deodhar at the archives of Samvaad Foundation, Mumbai, particularly tapes SFC000119, SFS000038, SFS000039, SFS000040. A complete catalog of the contents of these tapes is available at https://www.samvaadfoundation.org/the-samvaad-database/

Deodhar a dependable canonical repertoire that was, importantly, independent of *gāyakī*[50] or performative style, and to absorb *gāyakī*, independent of *bandish*, from visiting musicians[51]. What Deodhar seems to have been putting together, then, was a pedagogical practice where theory was made available in systematic fashion and there was permission to assimilate repertoire and *gāyakī* from a variety of sources – a practice in which the resultant *gāyakī* that students would come to possess was not predetermined in the way the *gāyakī* resulting from the *gharānedār* pedagogy of the time could be.

As noted above, Janaki Bakhle's work on Bhatkhande and Paluskar attributes their efforts to a desire for system, order, discipline and theory as well as reinforcing a sense of national origin – and, in Paluskar's case, Bhakti Nationalism. A consequence of her work, however, has been that the musical and musicological endeavours of all of their scholar-musician successors[52], including Deodhar, becomes reduced to and collectively represented as a concerted Hindu reformist-revivalist effort[53]. The aim of this section has not been to deny that Deodhar acted out of a sense of national origin and entitlement, but to point out that he and his colleagues were driven primarily by a desire to make sense of the landscape of *rāg* and *bandish* for themselves as *musicians*.

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[50] While *gāyakī* is usually defined as 'vocal style', it is a more complex phenomenon than that, especially in the light of Gandharva's problematization of it's meaning and relevance. Conventional interpretations of the term and Gandharva's take on it will be discussed in chapter three below.

[51] Kolhapure, in a letter to Gandharva written after the latter had moved away from the school and relocated to Dewas to recuperate from his tuberculosis, says, "…the vacuum you left behind at the school was filled for a while by the visiting Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. Deodhar as well as all of us, his students, were so taken by his music that we could think of nothing else for weeks!" (2004, paraphrased, translated). This is also an example of the genuine admiration and infatuation with which Muslim ustads were received in Deodhar's school, in spite of Paluskarian heritage. Deodhar and Bade Ghulam Ali's friendship and mutual respect were substantial. Deodhar was also instrumental in getting Bade Ghulam Ali the Indian citizenship he wanted after partition. See Deodhar's interviews in *SFC000119* in the Samvaad Foundation archives for more.

[52] Some other important scholar-musicians known to have produced anthologies like Bhatkhande's include, apart from Paluskar himself, Yashwantbuwa Mirashi (1883-1966), Rajabhaiyya Poochhwale (1882-1956), SN Ratanjankar (1899-1974), and many others. Satyasheel Deshpande describes how in his later years, Gandharva would keep returning to the *bandishes* anthologised by these scholars to think about what they represented and how they ought to be sung. (Personal Interview, September 2021)

[53] Subsequent ethnomusicological scholarship has also showed that a number of Muslim musicians were engaged in similar theoretical activity. See presentation by Max Katz at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q6Qs5OJLq3c. Also see Daniel Neuman (2014) for a retrospective acknowledgement of this prejudice in ethnomusicology, particularly towards Maharashtrian Brahmin musicians.

2.3 Deodhar's *Tālīm*

Aside from exposure, eclecticism and assimilation, of course, Deodhar's school was where he carried out the everyday business of training his students to be musicians. A brief account of Deodhar's classroom, as an experience formative to Gandharva's later music, is then in order. The following is an account of Deodhar's teaching methods in his classroom[54].

When he began teaching a *rāg*, Deodhar would make his students sing the notes of the *rāg*, and demonstrate its 'frame' or basic structure to them. He would ask them to write this down in their notebooks. Then Deodhar would teach them a bandish in the *rāg* – the text of the *bandish* would be written down in the students' notebooks, and the students would repeat the text to memorise it[55]. Then the melody of the *bandish* would then be taught to them, and the *bandish* in its entirety would be sung repeatedly by the students, to tabla accompaniment, until it was memorised. Then the elaboration of the *rāg* would begin. Deodhar would extemporise an entire *āvartan* and conclude it at the *sam*, and then each of the students would take turns to do the same, displaying their own understanding of the *rāg*, and Deodhar would correct any mistakes they might make. Deodhar would also ask his students to read Bhatkhande's volumes for information about the *rāg* in question. Rele says that 'these books had become the cornerstone of our education' (2009, 19)[56]. Deodhar would also proceed to tell the students where and how he disagreed with Bhatkhande's explication of the *rāg*, while also explaining to students subtle differences between similar *rāgs* and giving them advice on how to handle these. Importantly, Kolhapure recalls that Deodhar would tell students which *gharānedār gāyakī* they should emulate in order to do justice to the unique nature and gait of each *rāg*. In this fashion, Rele recalls that he and Gandharva were formally taught about forty *rāgs* over a period of six years[57].

Gandharva's initial education with Deodhar thus took place in more of a formal, academic idiom than was the tradition at the time – an idiom that received as much criticism as it did praise. Wim van der Meer, based on his experience of studying with Agra *Gharānā* singer and

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[54] Descriptions of Deodhar's teaching methods drawn from Rele (2009, 10, 19) and Kolhapure (2004, 34)

[55] Kolhapure notes that Deodhar would get extremely annoyed if students forgot the text of a bandish

[56] When Bakhle compares Paluskar's institutional success with Bhatkhande's work and characterizes the latter as a 'failed visionary' (2005, 136), the impact Bhatkhande had on educators like Deodhar, as depicted here, and on musicians like Gandharva, as will be shown below, seems to have escaped her attention.

[57] Gandharva does claim that he "went to *Deodhar* to learn, not to the school…I lived in my teacher's house, not in the school", (Gandharva et al. 1988) implying that the formal classroom training he received was less significant than what he received informally by being Deodhar's constant companion. Rele however asserts with erudition and conviction that these early years in the classroom were formative for Gandharva.

scholar Dilip Chandra Vedi (1901-1992), asserts, for instance, that "The only way [to learn]…appeared to be simply imitating the teacher without thinking…to take down a composition in notation first and then sing it is a waste of time" and that "The lack of a definite system of teaching was one of the reasons why protagonists started schools with a curriculum. Later, however, many scholars realized that the old methods had great advantages over a fixed programme of training." (1980, 139). Such criticism seems to have been borne of anxieties about the impact colonial and print modernity - which educators like Deodhar embraced – might have on the music. One reason why this form of pedagogy was seen as a threat is perhaps the fact that it makes it a point to make students familiar with technical nomenclature and classificatory knowledge from the very beginning of their education, instead of withholding this information until students have acquired a certain level of technical facility. The debate between the importance and the place of classificatory knowledge in classical music is an ongoing one, and is, in fact, an example of a debate that is as much about the music as about its politics, and that, in spite of being at the heart of Paluskar's and especially Bhatkhande's projects, seems to have escaped Bakhle's attention, owing perhaps to her lack of investment in the music whose history she has attempted to write.

Dard Neuman's work on 'embodied creativity' in Hindustani music (2012) is an important contribution in this regard. Neuman uses the term 'embodied' here to represent a set of traditional pedagogical practices in which 'master musicians (*ustads*) typically withheld forms of technical nomenclature and referential knowledge' such as *rāg* names and note names from their students – a 'practice of teaching without classificatory terminology and with seemingly excessively repetitive exercises' that '[equipped] the body-instruments… to first move automatically and then explore autonomously, independent of a directing mind' (ibid, 426). Neuman's argument is important because it is a scholarly representation of one side of this debate – it is a particular understanding of the epistemology of music that its author claims is applicable to the entire genre of Hindustani music[58]. In advocating and justifying this approach to pedagogy, however, Neuman sets up a dichotomy between it and the approach that is apparently its opposite – the one Deodhar employs, as detailed above. In making the claim that 'one [approach] is art-based and analyses and categorizes music from an objectified distance, while the other is craft-based and comprehends music from a de-subjectifed familiarity within

[58] 'Musical agency, we will see, is not a subject-centred activity *for the Hindustani musician*' (D. Neuman 2012, 426, emphasis added)

aesthetic spaces.' (Ibid, 426-7), Neuman implies that an approach that analyses and categorizes music *must* do so from an 'objectified distance' and cannot simultaneously contain a 'familiarity with aesthetic spaces'.

Deodhar's pedagogy is perhaps representative of the fact that an 'art-based' approach such as his does not preclude the student acquiring such familiarity, especially when coupled with exposure to the *craft* of a diverse array of master musicians. That his student Gandharva acquired the ability to inhabit aesthetic spaces that were not only 'familiar', but also often lay beyond the ambit of the theoretical categories within which the *rāg* and the *bandish* ensconced the music he was making, is testament to this fact. This was, in fact, the ability that caused musicians like Ramashray Jha (1928-2009) to comment that 'familiar *bandish*es would take on a fresh new form in [Gandharva's] hands' (in Patel (2006))[59].

Related to this is a primary criticism that was often made on Gandharva – that his music did not conform to the idiom of any single *gharānā*, and that it therefore did not 'belong' to the tradition of Hindustani music[60]. It is my contention that it was Deodhar's unorthodox pedagogy that gave Gandharva a strong understanding, not only of the nature but also of the limits of *rāg*-theory, and that this gave him the ability and the intellectual freedom to inhabit *alternative* aesthetic spaces – an ability that repetitive practice may in fact preclude. One might equally argue, in response to Neuman, that mimetic learning through unquestioned repetition, without referential and categorical knowledge might make it inevitable for conventions of style and articulation inherited from the teacher to become entrenched in the student's musical idiom, thus giving the student a strong, familiar – and possibly restrictive - *gharānā* identity[61]. Deodhar's pedagogy, on the other hand, can be seen as one that makes classificatory knowledge freely available while forcing the student to make his own stylistic and expressive choices, derived from exposure to a multitude of options. It was therefore the agency that Deodhar's

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[59] As an example of this, see Gandharva's renditions of traditional bandishes in *Rāg* Bhoop here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MlM8t_8mKDQ. Apparent in these renditions is his approach to extemporisation which demonstrates his ability to discover aesthetic spaces that appear to be led by craft, body and sound more than by distant analyses of categorised and objectified music.

[60] '…a senior and respected instrumentalist was sitting next to me…[Kumar's] recital was, of course, very absorbing…but the senior musician whispered in my ear, "This is alright, but Vamanrao, which is Kumar's *gharānā*?"' (V. H. Deshpande 1989). This question is known to have been asked about Gandharva by many musicians.

[61] This was, indeed, Gandharva's contention and will be a recurring theme in subsequent chapters.

pedagogy gave to Gandharva, and the choices he used it to make that allowed him to create the idiom that was 'both fanatically criticized and applauded' (Meer 1980, 162).

As an extreme example of Deodhar's heterodoxy and the influence it had on Gandharva, consider the following quote from Gandharva himself:

> *Guruji [introduced me to] many things - looking at [music] as art - because he had travelled abroad and he would tell me about musicians there and how they looked at music. He would always talk about this and this had an influence on me. [I thought,] can we sing our music like this? Music that is bound within the rules of the rāg - can we sing it as freely? Our musicians are unable to present rāg-sangīt freely, but it would be great if we could! We get tied down in rāg-sangīt. A particular kind of beauty certainly arises from this, but we get stuck in it, we aren't able to free ourselves. Guruji told me about Western thought - I mean thought, mind you. Before I started learning from him, I was already able to sing properly, [by which I mean] I wouldn't make mistakes [in rāg grammar]. There is a solid grammar of consonance (samvād) that underlies the rāgs, and I had understood it even then, even though I didn't really know anything, and this is why I was able to sing [correctly]. But [when I heard] the ideas Guruji brought back from abroad, I thought, can we present rāg-sangīt like this? What I say now about rāg-sangīt often surprises people. But [Deodhar Guruji] is where my ideas come from. Vādī-samvādī etc are very elementary concepts - like primary school education. We should be able to free ourselves from them. If we're able to do that, then there is great joy to be found!* (Gandharva et al. 1988)

Unsurprisingly, in dealing with Gandharva, Meer criticizes just this kind of heterodoxy to say that '[Deodhar] received a scholarship to study Western voice training, which made his ideas on the topic rather un-Indian.' (Meer 1980, 162). One finds in this statement an academic desire to categorize; to *define* what identities such as 'Indian' and 'Hindustani musician' connote, while in Deodhar's and Gandharva's endeavours, one finds the incumbents of these categories acting out of a sense of agency to engage with the local and global cultural situations they have inherited, and to craft their own musical and cultural identities through this engagement.

Deodhar's influence on Gandharva is thus crucial to his alterity, which is the focus of this dissertation[62].

2.4 Collecting *Bandishes*

While all the activity described above certainly exposed Deodhar and his students to a diversity of approaches to music-making, the one unit of musical knowledge that seems to have been at the forefront of this effort was the *bandish*. Deodhar would collect compositions obsessively – '[if we were in] an Irani hotel, there would be a *bandish* written at the back of his pack of cigarettes…[Deodhar] always had a pen with him….and as he was speaking [to another musician, to acquire a *bandish* from him], I'd immediately memorize it, because I was always with him, like a tail' (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 82). Acquiring a large repertoire of *bandishes* has traditionally been considered valuable, especially in Kalawant *Gharānā*s like Gwalior and Agra[63], but Deodhar was operating in a post-Bhatkhande era where a large, canonical repertoire of compositions had already been made available in print, and was put to extensive use by Deodhar himself. Deodhar continued, in spite of this, to collect compositions extensively, with the eccentric Gwalior *gharānā* singer Sinde Khan, for example, being one of his most important sources[64].

One way to understand Deodhar's endeavours, particularly his obsession with collecting and notating *bandishes* is to attribute to him an anxiety about the impending loss of traditional knowledge and repertoire that seems to have pervaded his times. Dard Neuman convincingly shows how written notation as well as the gramophone – both technologies of preservation - produced a paradoxical sense of impending loss, particularly of *bandishes,* in the early twentieth century[65]. Neuman finds it significant that the composition – the only unit of the performance that can be captured in written notation – becomes, in pre-independence activity,

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[62] There is also a trend among admirers of Gandharva's music to underplay Deodhar's role. E.g.: Raghav Menon says 'In actual fact, Kumar Gandharva did not need a Guru in the strict sense in which the Guru Shishya Parampara was originally envisaged. Kumar could easily have gone it alone as, in fact, in a certain sense he did'. (Menon and Pasricha 2001, 58). But see quote from Gandharva above and also in (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 82) for Gandharva's own emphatic declarations about the importance of his tutelage with Deodhar.

[63] Faiyaz Khan was known to have received, as his wedding dowry, a large number of the *bandishes* of the composer Mehboob Khan 'Daraspiya' when he married the latter's daughter. See Daniel Neuman (1990, 52) for more on musical elements as 'commodities'.

[64] In describing Deodhar's own singing style, Vamanrao Deshpande writes, 'ask [Deodhar] to sing a *bandish* – it will be distinctly of [the] Sinde Khan style. But when Deodhar begins to unfold and develop the same *bandish*, you will clearly see the influence of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan' (V. H. Deshpande 1989)

[65] "…thousands of compositions are everyday being lost owing to their being not recorded…", from a 1912 issue of the Indian Music Journal, quoted in Neuman (2009, 102).

the object of crisis and produces an anxiety of impending loss precisely because it is preservable; and that "the obsessive focus on the *composition* also indicates a corresponding indifference towards *performance*" (2009, 103).

While this anxiety may have been one of the things that drove Deodhar's obsession with collecting compositions[66], the major driving force appears to have been a desire to create a map of the landscape of *rāg*s by using *bandishes* as units that both exemplify *rāg-rūp*s and challenge their boundaries. Deodhar also used *bandishes* as the primary means through which to transmit *rāgs* to his students. In CP Rele's words, 'When teaching us, [Deodhar] always taught us diverse *bandishes*. [He would teach us] many *bandishes* in a single *rāg*, *bandishes* situated in the middle octave, sometimes *bandishes* that approached the upper octave from the middle, *bandishes* that were entirely in the upper octave, *bandishes* in various tempos and *tāls*…Deodhar master would say that *bandishes* allow you to see the *rāg* in its entirety'(2009, 122). Deodhar thus appears to have simultaneously been imparting to the tradition a measure of fixity - by notating compositions and categorising *rāg-rūps*; and a measure of flow – by reimagining how these might be sung, extemporised and elaborated in performance, and by using diverse *bandishes* in the same *rāg* to extend the *rāg*'s theoretical boundaries. This approach to the *bandish* becomes crucial to Gandharva's idiom as we will see in chapters two and three below.

Kumar Gandharva can thus be seen as an acclaimed performer who was one of the earliest significant products of the new eclecticism brought about by colonial and print modernity, recording technology, notation, and institutional scholarly education, all of which he encountered in his formative years at Deodhar's School of Indian Music.

3. Two Traditions

3.1 Introduction

While this chapter began by examining Gandharva's early childhood and his subsequent tutelage with Deodhar, its purpose is not to lay out a chronological account of Gandharva's musical development. The larger thesis of which this chapter is a part aims to conduct an ex post facto analysis of the musical idiom that emerges from Gandharva's entire career trajectory

[66] Neuman clarified in a personal communication (December 28, 2021), however, that it is the post-colonial connoisseur he ascribes these anxieties of impending loss to, more than musicians like Deodhar.

– gleaned from his music and its reception as much as from his own discourse on the subject - and to complicate and make nuanced its claim to alterity. This chapter, then, aims to lay out the social, cultural and musical context – and Gandharva's understanding of it – against which this alterity can be discussed.

In his later discourse on his approach to music-making, Gandharva was often severely, even acerbically critical of the Hindustani tradition within which he functioned, as we shall see below. This section will, then, examine and contextualise his claim that the *gharānā* traditions of Hindustani music had reached a point of stagnation. It will do so by attempting to link the reasons for this stagnation to conventional understandings of song-genres and their hierarchies within the Hindustani music complex, and by tracing the history of this hierarchy, before moving to Gandharva's own deviation from these conventions, the 'alternative tradition' he carved out for himself and the critical reception his idiom received.

3.2 Dhrupad, khayāl and Song-Genre Hierarchies

To understand and contextualize Gandharva's discourse on the *gharānā* tradition of the Hindustani khayāl, some investigation of this music's *abhijātya*[67] or 'classicism' as it is understood within the tradition is in order. Within music studies, the term 'classical' tends to be used in two broad senses. In its etic usage, most apparent in English language ethnomusicology, the term is used to describe genres of music that have undergone a process of 'classicization', often in response to the colonial encounter, to become pan-regional genres that are substantially standardised, explicitly theorized and are purveyed by specialist performers and patronised by a community of elite connoisseurs[68]. The term thus becomes a construct grounded in social more than aesthetic or stylistic criteria. In its emic sense though, particularly in Marathi and Hindi sources as well as in discourse among musicians, the term[69]

[67] In Ashok Ranade's definition: '*Abhijata* (a. S = of legitimate, acceptable birth)…The term obviously carries snobbish overtones not necessarily acceptable to musicians…Art music in India, which is mainly identified with presence and use of concepts of *rāg-tāl* and *prabandha*, is generally described as *Abhijata.* It is clear that the term came into vogue during the nineteenth century, following the Occidental (mainly British) way of thinking, as an equivalent of the term 'classical'' (Ranade 2006, 171)

[68] As first theorised by Powers (1980) in the context of Hindustani classical music, and built upon in the same context by a number of important scholars including Manuel (2015) and Schofield (2015)

[69] Often employed in its English form, as 'classical', or in its Hindi/Marathi translated form, as '*abhijāt*', as in footnote 67 above. A related and often-used term is 'art music' (Ranade 2008, 198), which although more politically correct, tends to perpetuate similar connotations of superiority and aesthetic 'weight'

continues to be used as an indicator of *aesthetic and stylistic* '*weight*'[70], discipline, antiquity, authenticity and even superiority.

While the two usages of the term are inevitably co-dependant, scholarship that takes both into account is less common. On the one hand, English language ethnomusicology tends to use the term as a construct based upon which to categorize genres, while not taking into account the emic usage of the idea of 'classicism' in a narrower stylistic sense[71], as a measure of aesthetic 'weight' *within* the genres already labelled 'classical', such as khayāl and dhrupad. On the other hand, Hindi-Marathi scholarship as well as informal discourse tends to deal with the idea of classicism while only rarely taking into account the social connotations of the term, thus often implicitly assuming the *aesthetic* superiority of the 'classical' genres. With reference to the history of the nationalist classicization of the khayāl, this section will seek to complicate notions of 'classicism' as found in scholarship and informal musical discourse, to show that the use of this term as a measure of aesthetic 'weight' depends largely upon the adherence of the khayāl music being so measured to performance conventions associated with genres and approaches to music-making that are seen as chronologically preceding the dominance of khayāl, which are represented, in this discussion by the dhrupad genre.

This analysis is relevant to establishing the alterity of Kumar Gandharva's music because, as chapter three will show in some detail, Gandharva distances his musical idiom from these dhrupad connections much more substantially than his contemporaries and immediate predecessors do. This is not to say that twentieth century khayāl singers were deliberately or consciously emulating dhrupad practices, but that dhrupad has, in the collective subconscious of the khayāl community, perhaps through the medium of discourse, come to represent a Sanskritic past against which the merit of khayāl performance tends to be evaluated. Kumar Gandharva's 'new style of music' (V. H. Deshpande 1989), can be seen as the result of a rejection of this model as the barometer of aesthetic 'weight' by rejecting a number of conventions and associations that are seen as giving the music its *abhijātya*, its classicism. This is also not to say that Gandharva was necessarily thinking about dhrupad practise while in the

[70] As indicated by the common usage of the terms 'light' or 'semi' classical to denote genres such as thumrī and ghazal.

[71] Much like the Western use of the term to denote the style of the triumvirate of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven (Schofield 2015, 510)

process of constructing his idiom[72], but to say that the conventions he rejected can be linked to those found in dhrupad practice.

Schofield's work (2015) on the pre-colonial Mughal-era classicization of Hindustani music demonstrates how a particular song-genre achieving the status of 'classical music' for a time before losing it to another is as much an ongoing historical process as is the birth of the genres themselves. These hierarchies of status are 'derived from Sanskrit literary models that privilege *mārga*, the universal Way, over *desī*, [rooted in] the local Place'(ibid, 491), an idea that continues to be important even in contemporary discourse in the khayāl community. Three examples of these processes are particularly relevant to this discussion.

The first comes from the pen of the Mughal musicologist Faqirullah, 'the high-ranking author of the most important musical treatise of the seventeenth century, the *Rag Darpan*' (ibid, 495). Faqirullah demonstrates how new song-genres are inevitably the result of the consolidation of existing established genres when he 'argue[s] that Raja Man Singh [Tomar, of Gwalior, r. 1486-1517] had forged dhrupad from both *desī* and *mārgī* song-genres, *rāgs* and languages, "so that it has emerged now as a wonder of the age"' (ibid, p. 500). Dhrupad itself, then, can be seen historically as an amalgam of existing *desī* and *mārgī* material, as well as concomitant dispositions to music making.

The second example is Schofield's demonstration of the fact that 'the Mughal labelling of dhrupad [and khayāl[73]] as *mārga*' was nothing but a pre-colonial process of classicization that bore uncanny resemblances to that carried out by the colonial-period nationalist reformers of Hindustani music. While the thus classicized genres of khayāl and dhrupad 'have not changed their status as art music in 350 years' (ibid, 503), the dhrupad tradition 'all but failed in the middle decades of the [twentieth] century' owing largely to its becoming 'enveloped in an ideology rooted in ancient concepts…whereby its performance was viewed in a purely spiritual light and its transmission regarded as a sacred and sacrificial undertaking', which ideology 'did

[72] Instead, Gandharva emphatically states that this was a *svābhāvik*, organic process of accepting and rejecting ideas, repertoire and approaches to music making. The contention here is that what he rejected can be shown to be musical conventions linked directly to a subconscious adherence in the community to *mārgī*, dhrupad practice and the discourse surrounding it.

[73] Schofield contends elsewhere (Brown 2010) that the term Khyāl was 'originally used to describe a number of similar two-to-four verse regional genres…' and that it later came to represent a specific '"classical" variety most closely associated with the *ravish* of Amir Khusrau and its musical heirs, the Qawwals of Delhi'. She goes on to show how the roots of the modern khyāl lie in a number of song-genres from the regional and now obsolete *cutkula,* to the "classical" and still persistent dhrupad.

not encourage dhrupad singers to compete in the struggle for public patronage following the decline of the princely courts'(Widdess 2010, 134). On the other hand, the reasons emic scholarship gives for the failure of dhrupad tend to be stylistic – it posits that it was the relatively greater freedom for improvisation the khayāl's structural features provided that caused it to overtake dhrupad in popularity[74].

The third example of these historical processes is that of the musicologist and nationalist reformer V.N. Bhatkhande's attempts to systematize and textualize the Hindustani tradition – Bhatkhande provided the 'classical' genres of khayāl and dhrupad with a canonised repertoire, and a theory that was written in Sanskrit and explicated in Marathi. As noted above, Bakhle attributes Bhatkhande's motivation to carry out this systematization and textualization to a modernist desire for 'proof, demonstrability, documentation, history and order'(2005, 99).

While these historical process are certainly driven by the forces of societal change, these three examples also demonstrate an enduring conflict that appears to be the aesthetic and stylistic ground for these historical processes: *musicians'* attempts, as they engage with the possibilities of musical form, to balance the coherence offered by order and discipline (as found in theorized, canonised *mārga* music) with the freedom promised by inorganisation and its concomitant, flexibility (in non-standardised *desī* [75] music). The pervasiveness and the historical importance of this fundamental conflict become even more apparent in the paradoxical fact that while Bhatkhande's efforts furthered the consolidation of khayāl as the pre-eminent classical song-genre of Hindustani music by buttressing its increased popularity with a ground of Sanskritic theory, Bhatkhande himself looked upon dhrupad as *the* model for khayāl singing, and was convinced that without a grounding in dhrupad, it was not possible for khayāl singers to 'understand the twists and turns and the rules of [a] *rāg*' [76,77]. Bhatkhande's

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[74] See for instance Deshpande (1987, 172–77) and Haldankar (2001, 13)

[75] '…it is the *mārga-desī* binarism, with all its hierarchical and diffusionary implications that Sanskrit music theorists used in the Sangita Sastras (music treatises) to differentiate "ancient [universal] music of divine origin" from "provincial music" of "particular regions' (Richard Widdess, qtd in Schofield 2015, 492–93). Schofield goes on to show how even seventeenth century Mughal musicologists associated *mārga* with ancient, divine, Sanskritic, and southern music, while *desī* 'became associated with the familiar local context of the North, with the current practice of musicians, and with modernity and newness.' (Ibid, 500)

[76] See conversation with Deodhar (Deodhar 1993, 41). We have already seen above, however, how Deodhar made it a practice to amass a repertoire of *bandishes* (and, significantly, *not* dhrupad compositions) from which to deduce *rāg*-rules, and we will see in chapter two how Gandharva builds upon Deodhar's work and extends this inclusive understanding of *rāg*-sangeet.

[77] D.C. Vedi is more direct: 'Any khayal singer who does not learn dhrupad first is a first class fool!' (Quoted in Magriel (Magriel & du Perron, 2013, p. 19))

work is widely accepted as foundational to the modern khayāl and the man himself is revered as one of the most important figures in its history. It would therefore be safe to say that Bhatkhande's elevation of dhrupad is as much representative of the ideology of the time as it is a generator of the ideologies that pervaded and continue to pervade the performance-practice of subsequent generations of musicians[78].

Bhatkhande authoritatively affirmed that the Vedas and the Natyashastra, as well as a number of musical treatises from the Sanskritic canon were not relevant to music as it was performed in contemporaneous times (Bakhle 2005, 99, passim). While this was a radical claim for its time[79], it did not preclude Bhatkhande as well as his successors maintaining the conviction that '[the] golden age [of music lay] in the past', and that they needed to achieve a 'reconnection of contemporary practise with a Sanskritic past'[80]. Bhatkhande's creation of a new Sanskrit theory notwithstanding, it appears that scholars and even performers of the khayāl found *in the conventions of dhrupad practice* the authentic, authoritative 'past' that theory could not provide them with – this was a 'past' that was directly relevant to contemporaneous khayāl practise, as is evident from a number of writings on music that portray khayāl as the offspring of dhrupad[81].

Bhatkhande's belief in the authenticity and superiority of dhrupad is hardly an isolated case – it is representative of a sentiment that was pervasive and often explicitly discussed at the time. Given the status Bhatkhande is accorded in the history of this music and how foundational his work has come to be, his acceptance of this hierarchy becomes important. Other examples abound, such that of Alladiya Khan's (1855-1946) pride in his familial dhrupad lineage and his reluctance to take instruction from the khayāl-singer Mubarak Ali Khan although he was greatly influenced by the latter - Mubarak Ali Khan himself is said to have refused to teach him lest he 'sin by converting a Dhruvapadia' (Wade 2016, 163–64). It is safe then to say that dhrupad has historically been seen as the *superior* counterpart to khayāl, a notch higher than it

[78] Chapter three below will address this contention in detail.

[79] And continues to be considered a radical claim today, which is one of the reasons why Bakhle, albeit very problematically, portrays Bhakthande's project as 'failed'. (2005)

[80] Convictions that were strikingly similar to those held by their Mughal-era predecessors, as Schofield (2015) so convincingly shows.

[81] Such as Wade (2016, 11), Deshpande (1987, 174–79), and Haldankar (2001, 13), although scholars have since argued that *khyāl* and *dhrupad* have existed parallely for at least 350 years, possibly longer, although no consensus has been reached on what the *khyāl* of antiquity really sounded like. See (Dhond 1982) and (Bakhle 2005, 263).

in its 'classicality', if not in its popularity[82]. Bonnie Wade also points out that 'singers of…dhrupad have held the position of highest social status among musicians' from as far back as the sixteenth century' (ibid, 278).

3.3 Genre Gendering

This hierarchy is thus cultural as much as it is musical – but, importantly, it also carries with it connotations of gender. Richard Widdess traces the modern understanding of the dhrupad-khayāl relationship to colonial musicologist N.A. Willard's conception of it as 'rooted in a gender distinction manifested in both poetry and musical style' so that dhrupad is 'the heroic song of Hindoostan' while khayāl is 'portrayed as an essentially emotional, expressive genre', unlike dhrupad which is '"too masculine to suit the tender delicacy of female expression"'(quoted in Widdess 2010, 131–32). This genre-gendering and stereotyping has continued through the twentieth century: Wim van der Meer, writing in 1980, concludes that 'there is a broad distinction in classical Hindustani music between male-*bīna-pakhāwaja* (dhrupad*a*) on the one hand and female – *sārangī – tablā* (khayāl) on the other' and that 'khayāl…emerged precisely as the female counterpart to *dhrupada*'(1980, 57). In the following discussion, Meer's work has been taken to represent this gendered view of Hindustani music, a view he appears to have inherited from his teacher, acclaimed musician and scholar Dilip Chandra Vedi. The following extended excerpt from Meer is revealing:

> *In the course of the 19th century, it becomes evident that there are two main streams in khayāl: One consisting of dhrupada singers who have taken up khayāl and another that is still closely linked to the community of sārangī players… From novels as well as from biographies it becomes clear that many musicians of the first category used to teach tawāifs (courtesans) for their living and many sārangī players learnt whilst they accompanied the leading female vocalists as well as the respected male musicians. Gradually the line between the respectable world of dhrupada (and those gharānās of khayāl related to dhrupada) and the lowly world of courtesans becomes vague...*

[82] And it continues to be seen as such. Consider Haldankar: 'If an artiste's music is weighty and dignified his music is thought of as highbrow and of a very high standard. In keeping with this is the convention of considering dhrupad at the top after which comes khayal; then thumari, then ghazal, followed by light music and film music. The dignity and weightiness vary according to the form of music presented.' (2001, 10) Interestingly, Haldankar also states that '…dhrupad, although more dignified than thumari, is less subtle than thumari' (ibid, 12).

> *Till quite recently the gharānās of Gwalior, Agra and Jaipur bore the strong imprint of their dhrupada background, whereas the gharānās of Kirana, Delhi, Patiala and Indore had definite influences from their sārangī background. Artists from the latter gharānās do not know dhrupada unless they have learnt it from someone outside of the gharānā. Curiously they treat the sthāyī and antarā rather carelessly. This is readily explained by the fact that they learnt through accompaniment instead of being actually taught. The supremacy of knowledge on the side of those gharānās that descend from dhrupada indicates that khayāl was originally composed by dhrupada singers, though it became highly influenced by the persons it was composed for. The story of Sadārang indicates the same; he sang dhrupada but composed khayāl as well, though it is believed that he did not sing it in court. (Meer 1980, 58–59)*[83]

The idea that artists from the Kirana, Delhi, Patiala and Indore *gharānā*s are 'careless' is found elsewhere too[84]. Most poignant is Deodhar's own account of Patiala *Gharānā* master Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's music. Deodhar and Khan were very close, and Deodhar describes how he once spoke to Khan about this accusation that was made about his music. Khan responds by singing in an exceptionally orderly fashion to show that such discipline is within his abilities. He presents before Deodhar a *rāg* 'for forty-five minutes so beautifully that I could not find a trace of his usual untidiness'. Deodhar describes this 'tidy' performance as follows: 'The first part consisted entirely of charming gestures and *alapi*…There were no twists or turns or the tiniest of *harkats*. The *bol-anga* that followed was equally beautiful. Finally, he ended with spiral *tanas*…' (Deodhar 1993, 253). In response to Deodhar asking him why he doesn't usually sing like this, Khan says "Because all [audiences] are not discerning listeners like you…people think of me as a musician who is adept at *harkats* of Punjabi style…If I do *alapi* as I just did, within a short while listeners begin to look displeased" [sic] (ibid). Clearly, then, even Deodhar, for all his eclecticism and his great admiration of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's

[83] Gandharva's disciple Satyasheel Deshpande argues that the 'knowledge' Meer mentions is not only knowing how to put up a disciplined presentation, but *rāg-vidyā* – which implies a clear, classificatory understanding of how similar *rāg*s differ from each other in performance – something *Kalāvant* descended *gharānā*s are understood to possess and *Mirasi* descended *gharānā*s to lack. For more on *Kalawant* and *Mirasi* descent, see Daniel Neuman (1990)

[84] See for instance Deshpande on Abdul Kareem Khan: 'Critics complained that [Abdul Karim's] style lacked a formal structure and proportionality, that it was devoid of rhythm-play, *bol-tān* and general discipline…' (1987, 41).

music[85], wants Khan to be more orderly in his presentation. This 'orderliness' implies, then, the *sequential* presentation of various improvisatory devices such as *ālāp* followed by *bol-ang* followed by *tān*, as in Deodhar's description of Khan's 'tidy' performance. As chapter three will demonstrate, this *sequentiality*[86] can be seen as a derivative of dhrupad performance practice. It might be pertinent to point out here the irony of the fact that Deodhar's protégé Gandharva was, as we shall see, later himself accused of a similar disorderliness, one that even Deodhar himself is known to have criticized. We will also see in chapter two below how Gandharva organised his music around a different organising principle – that of the *bandish* and its *dhun*.

But to return to the discussion at hand, the gendering of these song-genres in discourse is particularly important to this discussion because it underlies musicians' and musicologists' judgements of musical structure and genre-status. Consider Meer again:

> *The types of ornamentation, the nature of the text, the rāgs used, the accompaniment and the musical structure indicate that khayāl could be considered a female counterpart of dhrupada. The loose presentation, the many varieties of khayāl and the indefinite form show that the process of mixing music parts so as to replace the rhythmical specialization demanded in dhrupada is an unfinished one… The emergence of khayāl seems historically and socially related to the decadent period coinciding largely with the disintegration of the Moghul empire and the rise of rīti poetry in Hindi. It suited the taste of a leisure class, which had little to do but enough to spend, particularly on the courtesans who provided music and dance, be it in a rather mundane context. (1980, 69–70, emphasis added)*

Also:

> *Gharānās which descend from dhrupada have in the past been marked by a sober and dignified style, whereas other gharānās used aspects of lighter styles in their music... The ornamentations of thumrī have now become common in almost every [khayāl] performance, simply because the audience has generally reacted much*

[85] As is apparent from his writings on Khan as well as recorded interviews

[86] 'Sequentiality' here does *not* refer to the sequence of *bandishes* that might be sung at a concert. Instead, it implies the *internal* sequence of improvisatory devices such as *ālāp, bol-ālāp, bol-bānt, bol-tān, tān* etc that may be employed to carry out the performance of a single *bandish.*

> *more favourably to florid, effeminate and romantic styles than to sobriety and dignity. (Meer 1980, 171)*

Clearly then, for scholars as diverse in their socio-temporal contexts as Bhatkhande, Willard and Meer, genres are explicitly (and problematically) gendered: dhrupad is seen as authentic, sober, disciplined and dignified, and (therefore?) masculine, while khayāl is seen as emotional, loosely defined, light, ornamental - even populist – and characterised as feminine.

Perhaps the most insightful comment about the historical relationship between dhrupad and khayāl comes from Mukund Lath:

> *[Lath] observes that the composition-types (prabandha) described in Sanskrit sources, with which dhrupad has been linked by many music historians, are not defined or distinguished in terms of style. He speculates that it was not until a rival genre with a distinct style of its own – namely, khayāl – arose in competition with dhrupad, that dhrupad itself became identified by its own particular style. (Widdess 2010, 120)*

It is hardly surprising then that dhrupad came in the early twentieth century to assume, in discourse as well as in practise, the role of the stabilising, authenticating counterpart to the increasingly unfettered khayāl. Although dhrupad and khayāl had been established as separate genres by Bhatkhande's time, it is clear that the demarcations between them were still blurry, as is evident from a number of observations found in Bhatkhande as well as in other writing on music of the time[87]. While the waning popularity of dhrupad did see a revival later in the twentieth century, khayāl had by then made a drastic departure from it – its form and performance conventions are now as different as the communities of its performers are disconnected from those of dhrupad. Khayāl pedagogues no longer deem it necessary for their students to study dhrupad.

In spite of this separation, there is a case to be made for the hold that dhrupad continues to exercise over khayāl practise, albeit in an indirect and less than obvious way. As chapter three below will show, a number of practices that continue to represent structure, discipline and

[87] See for instance Shukla's reminiscences of Alladiya Khan: 'Khan Saheb began his recital with a khyāl in Lalit…at the outset, it seemed, as if it was a piece in a Shuddha Bani – Dhruvapada, but with the tabla after a few minutes getting some prominence in accompaniment…it looked *like* a khyāl' (original emphasis) (Shukla 1971, 14–15)

authenticity in khayāl performance can be shown to have their roots in the conventions of dhrupad practise. It will be argued there that although the two genres are markedly distinct today, it is to a collective memory of dhrupad practise that the khayāl community looks, perhaps subconsciously, for its notions of sobriety, dignity and restraint, and that it is precisely these conventions that Kumar Gandharva plays down more comprehensively than his predecessors and contemporaneous khayāl performers, instead centring his performance practise around the *bandish* and its *dhun*[88], which become *his* sources of structural order and cohesion.

3.4 Khayāl *Gharānas* and 'Stagnation'

That the various *gharānās* of khayāl have traditionally looked to dhrupad as a model is apparent from Bonnie Wade's analysis of them. In particular, Wade discusses at some length how the discourse surrounding the music of the Agra and Jaipur *gharānās* prominently includes the idea that their styles are 'close to dhrupad' (2016, 102, 171). This is particularly obvious for these two *gharānās*: for the Agra *gharānā,* being close to dhrupad means emulating its syllabic rhythmic style through its extensive use of song-text for divisive *laykārī* or *bol-bāṇṭ*, and for its dhrupad-derived *nom-tom ālāp*; while for the Jaipur *gharānā*, this means maintaining a sense of majesty and serenity by avoiding devices of ornamentation that find no place in dhrupad like *khaṭkās* and *murkīs* (ibid).

These attempts of *Gharānā* musicians to seek some form of affinity with dhrupad can be seen as attempts to use notions of pedigree with which to impart a sense of stability and grounding (discursively as well as musically) and therefore 'dignity' to the loosely structured frameworks of khayāl. This phenomenon appears to be another example of the conflict discussed above, between the coherence provided by order and the freedom provided by flexibility or a relative lack of order. Mukund Lath's insight above is particularly relevant here and could also be extended and reversed to say that while dhrupad acquires its identity relative to khayāl, khayāl continues to acquire its own stylistic identity in reference to this newly solidified understanding of how dhrupad is different from it. The khayāl *gharānā*s, then, can be seen as one solution

[88] Gandharva's understanding of these constructs as formal principles, and how it was different from conventional understandings of them, is dealt with in detail in chapter two

musicians found with which to address the often unwieldy, *desī* freedom the khayāl genre afforded them, while still discursively claiming it to be a *mārgī* music[89].

For Kumar Gandharva then, as we will see, the *gharānā*s are rigid ideologies – fixed approaches to music making – that have perhaps gone too far in their attempt to stabilize and discipline the genre. In his analysis of the *gharānā* tradition, Gandharva looks at the *gharānā* as a particular mode of expression that emerges organically through a visionary musician's quest for new beauty, but then becomes rigid because the musician's admirers and disciples turn it into an ideology, a *gharānā*[90]. 'And once these [*gharānā*s] are born, then they start fighting [each other]. And then that entire [original] *gāyakī* comes to be destroyed…and only its name remains' (2007, 60-61). In thinking about what *gāyakī* means, Gandharva problematizes the term by somewhat irreverently reducing the meaning of the term to only '[musical] material – certain *tāns, ālāps bol-tān*' (ibid), implying that the *gāyakī* of a *gharānā* is nothing more than rigid conventions of using particular devices of improvisation in particular ways. An account of how Gandharva creates an approach to improvisation that rejects these conventions will be developed in subsequent chapters below.

What is apparent from Gandharva's discourse here, however, is the idea that to him, the *gharānā*s represent a new idiom, a new aesthetic that arises organically from an *individual* musician's vision, and that becomes reduced to a stagnant ideology in the hands of the admirers and disciples that coalesce around him. Gandharva does *not*, then, dismiss *gharānā*s entirely, as is popularly claimed. Instead, he sees in them a particular, valid and beautiful vision of *rāg-sangīt* that loses its charm to later processes of musical and discursive standardisation. That this standardisation finds its way into the music itself by means of discourse is a possibility that cannot be ignored. Scholars have often found more diversity than consensus among *gharānā* approaches when trying to characterise the idiom of a *gharānā*[91], but the rhetoric of

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[89] Of course, the origins of *gharānā*s lie equally in the sociological situation musicians found themselves in in the 19th and early 20th centuries – see Daniel Neuman (1990) and Tirthankar Roy (1998) for extensive treatments of this. The attempt here is to examine the musical forces at work behind the *gharānā* phenomenon, forces that arise from the specific formal affordances and restraints these genres embody. It is notable that *gharānās* do not exist in any significant form either in dhrupad or in Carnatik music, though traces of *gharānā* tendencies may be found in these musics too.

[90] Gandharva thus sees *gharānās* as the result of musicians' vanity: 'It is not good that musicians want their *gāyakīs* to last. This desire is where *gharānās* come from. Their followers repeat and achieve mastery over music that has already been created for them.' (2007, 89)

[91] See for instance Wade's attempts to characterise the Gwalior (2016, 79–80) and Kirana *gharānā*'s *gāyakīs* (ibid, 225).

fidelity to a *gharānā* idiom, and the manifestation of that fidelity in practice, arises perhaps from musicians' attempts to grapple with the conflict between *mārgī* and *desī*, and concomitant binaries of restraint and freedom, order and chaos, and even male and female, as discussed above. In thus vindicating *individual* visionary musicians while implicating in the alleged stagnation of the music the homogenous groups that standardise their vision, Gandharva carves out for himself two traditions: a stagnant, rigid *gharānā* tradition that he rejects, and a dynamic, fluid tradition of individuals that he allies himself to[92]. There is, in fact, some scholarship that substantiates this claim. Tirthankar Roy argues that while *gharānās* as *families* [which term itself Roy convincingly problematizes] might have genealogies going back many generations, *gharānās* as distinct *styles* 'are not the work of 'families', but can be traced to individuals, who lived around the turn of the century, and are known to have been conscious innovators' (1998, 28).

It is in this way that Gandharva sees the Hindustani tradition as a tradition of *individual* musicians who function as carriers of organic, subjective artistic expression, and therefore as a pluralistic and diverse tradition within which he claims the right to exercise agency and choice instead of conforming to the norms of any single established *gharānā*[93]. This is especially significant considering that Hindustani music has often been typified as 'feudal' in its culture and ethos, and scholars have regularly expressed their anxiety at the possibility that the *gharānā* ethos might cease to exist[94]. It is based on this alternative understanding of the tradition, then, that Gandharva's own alterity can be understood.

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[92] This dual understanding of tradition makes itself known throughout Gandharva's discourse. See for instance his acerbic criticism of the Gwalior *gharānā*'s stagnant repertoire (2014, 213) and its being 'stuck in the *gamak tān*' because one if its progenitors, Bade Muhammad Khan was known for this (2007, 11, 29) while simultaneously lauding individual musicians from the *gharānā* such as Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze and Rahimat Khan (ibid, 141). Another way in which Gandharva problematizes the *desi-mārgī* dichotomy is by infusing into his khayāl singing the idea of the *dhun*, ostensibly derived from his encounter with the exemplarily *desi* Malvi *lokdhun.* This aspect of his music will be treated in detail in chapter two below.

[93] Gandharva's affinity for the idiom of the individual is also apparent in his non-*khayāl* music, namely the bhajans he became widely known for. About his Tulsidas bhajans, for instance, he says 'I didn't want to express (*vyakt*) the Ramayan. I wanted to express Tulsidas'(2014, 127).

[94] See for instance Wade (2016, 280) and Deshpande (1987, 92). Also see Clayton (2008, sec. 4.2.4) for a perspective on the premium attached to homogeneity and consonance with historical principles in Hindustani music culture, from the point of view of rhythm studies.

4. Diversity, Expressivity, Alterity

4.1 The Gwalior *Gharānā*

Kumar Gandharva's pedagogical lineage is that of the Gwalior *Gharānā*[95]. Gandharva speaks of Gwalior both as a great, fountainhead *gharānā,* as well as one that has fallen into stagnation and deterioration[96]. Gwalior is popularly acknowledged as the 'mother *gharānā*' of which other *gharānā*s are offshoots, and has been acknowledged as such by the founders of other *gharānā*s as well as by later scholars[97]. Accounts of the Gwalior *gunijan-khānā*[98] abound and are replete with tales of the sheer diversity of musicians, singers as well as instrumentalists, that populated it. But an important aspect of the diversity of the older Gwalior *gunijan-khānā* is perhaps that of genre: as has been mentioned above, in the era before Paluskar and Bhatkhande's nationalist-reformist movement, the dividing lines between dhrupad and khayāl as song-genres were blurry. Accounts of musicians, particularly of musicians who lived and made music in the Gwalior *gunijan-khānā* tend to be constructed around their instrument of choice rather than in terms of clearly defined genres. LK Pandit (b.1934), of the famed Pandit family of Gwalior, lists the Hafiz Ali Khan family of Sarod players, the Kudo Singh Parivar of Pakhawaj players, Bande Ali Khan's family of Been players, thumrī singers like Bhaiyya Ganpatrao and courtesans like Tataiyya, Channa and Chandrabhaga and a number of others as the incumbents of the old Gwalior *gunijan-khānā* (Pandit and Deshpande 1993).

Satyasheel Deshpande asserts that the fact that such a diverse array of musicians lived in close contact with each other under the patronage of the court made for this to be a particularly rich musical environment, and that the security provided by court patronage meant that musicians were at liberty to engage with each other's music rather than with lay audiences, to the betterment of the music (Personal Interview, September 2021). It becomes possible then to see the old Gwalior *gharānā* as a melting pot of fruitfully unorganised musical activity, and the discursive and musical separation of *khayāl* and Dhrupad as genres, as well as of the *gharānā*s (as fairly homogenous groups with identifiably distinct approaches to *khayāl* singing) from

[95] And can be traced thus: Kumar Gandharva <- BR Deodhar <- VD Paluskar <- Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjikar <- Vasudevbuwa Joshi and Devijibuwa, both of whom were disciples of Hassu Khan, of the brothers Haddu and Hassu Khan who are acknowledged as the founders of the Gwalior *gharānā*.

[96] Deshpande, writing in 1962, echoes this view: 'today this *gharānā* is all but in shambles (sic)' (1987, 50)

[97] See Wade's (2016) accounts of the various *gharānā*s

[98] The 'storehouse (*khānā*) of talented (*gunī*) musicians' associated with the Gwalior court.

each other, as the product of later attempts by musicians to bring a sense of order, both to their individual musical practice as well as to the sphere of musical activity they inhabited.

Satyasheel Deshpande's assessment of this process, as presented in this extended quote, is pertinent:

> *The three gharānās [under discussion - Agra, Jaipur, Kirana] picked particular angas [improvisational devices] from among the ashṭāngas [the eight angas that Gwalior singers were known to use in performance]. This also caused [these other gharānās] to culture their voices accordingly and to thus establish normative practices of vocalisation. Most singers of specific gharānās tend to use phrasing that is conventional to that gharānā to construct their āvartans. Gwalior, on the other hand, cannot claim to have common phrases or common approaches to āvartan-construction that can be called 'representative' of the gharānā idiom. A survey of the music of, for example, Krishnarao Shankar Pandit, Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, Omkarnath Thakur, Kumar Gandharva, DV Paluskar, Sharatchandra Arolkar and others will bear this out. The amount of diversity one can find in āvartan-construction in the Gwalior idiom is hard to find in other gharānās. Because Gwalior's musical phrases are not fixed, neither is its approach to voice-use. (S. Deshpande 2010, 81, translated)*

The journey of the khayāl genre, then, can be seen as beginning with a musical ethos that is unfettered, in which musicians are not overly concerned with conforming to rigid conventions of music making; and moving towards an ethos where genres are identifiably distinct and approaches to improvisation categorised and standardised. Within this history, the Gwalior *gharānā* is understood as representing the very beginnings of the tradition – the point at which the modern *khayāl* acquires its identity.

For Gandharva, these two ideas - that Gwalior is a fountainhead *gharānā* from which the tradition of the modern khayāl itself can be argued to have emerged, and that his own pedagogical lineage can be traced back to its founders in a direct line - allow Gandharva to see Deodhar's and his own 'unconventional' approach to inhabiting the khayāl tradition – rooted in both diverse eclecticism and technical classificatory nomenclature - as essential to the nature and practice of the *genre itself*. That Gandharva sees himself as both belonging to and separate from the Gwalior *gharānā* is in concurrence with his stance on the *gharānā*s outlined above – it is to the tradition of diverse musical expression that Gwalior represents that he professes

allegiance, while rejecting any common-denominator standardisation of its conventions of music making.

4.2 Expressivity: What does the Music *Say*?

What, then, drives each individual musician within the alternative tradition Gandharva carves out for himself? What is this alternative tradition a tradition of? As Gandharva sees it, the common thread that runs through his alternative tradition is the affinity, the affection its incumbents feel towards the musical material in their repertoire, diverse as it may be. This might be a felt affinity for their understanding of a *gharānā* idiom, a teacher's idiom, a *rāg*, a bandish an improvisational device, a *jagah* - a particular phrase or even a single note. It is these musicians' attempts to express this affinity in performance that give rise to affect and power in their music:

> *Yesteryear musicians…would brim over with love for any aspect of music. The affinity [ātmīyatā] they felt as they sang, while turning a phrase, while singing a bandish, that kind of affection has almost disappeared now. This is very apparent in the old records…the love they had for the music - for the bandish, for the rāg was of a very high order. The phrases of the rāg, what we call its pakaṛ, or the darjā[99] of a swar…their struggle to express these was of a very high order. They had great affinity for music and were very proud of what they knew….it is this affinity, this affection that affects you…Listen to Vazebuwa's records for example. (2007, 141)*

What Gandharva finds important in Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze's (1871-1945) music, then, is the urge to express, to *say* something that is delicate and demands struggle, something that loses its charm when it becomes standardised in a *gharānā* idiom. This conflict - between the stagnant execution of the idiomatic conventions of a music on the one hand and expressing one's subjective experience of the music and its culture on the other - is perhaps universal to all kinds of music. As Nicholas Cook so succinctly puts it, '…a musical culture is, in essence, a repertoire of means for imagining music' (Quoted in Clayton 2008, 4). If early twentieth-century Hindustani music and the Gwalior *gharānā* within it are the particular musical cultures

[99] Lt. grade, degree – indicating both the objective acoustical height of the pitch and its consonance with the tanpura, as well as the subjective 'quality' and sophistication of its expression.

Vaze belongs to, then his struggle to express his own affinity for (or distance from) this culture becomes a part of the repertoire of means through which Gandharva imagines his own music.

This is not to say that Gandharva's music is purely an eclectic rehashing of that of an assortment of musicians, but to assert instead that the alterity of his own idiom emerges perhaps from the agency and choice he displays in putting this repertoire – his own archive of meaningfulness – together. It is the struggle of the musicians in his archive to express the affinities they feel towards the musical material they have come to embody for Gandharva that provides him with both the inspiration and the authority to express his own affinity for it and for the genre as a whole. The following discussion will try to lay out this conflict and Gandharva's navigation of it within the ambit of the khayāl genre.

The allegation that *gharānā* musicians often find themselves stuck in ritual performance at the cost of subjective expression also finds its precedent in Deodhar. Deodhar asks musicians, "What *rāg* are you singing? What are you trying to *say* in it", (Deshpande 1987, xv, original emphasis) and finds that they are only able to describe the grammar of the *rāg* to him and 'do not have any specific idea or mood to convey' (ibid). Deodhar finds an attempt to 'convey a mood' in the music of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, in the latter's attempts to 'portray in his music the beauty of nature'[100]. While Gandharva's attempts to *say* something through his music rarely drew upon physical phenomena in as literal a way as Khan's did, Gandharva may have inherited the sense that music ought to *express* something and that such expression was, at least to an extent, missing in the music of the time, from his teacher.

Gandharva's excursus on the Gaud Malhar bandish 'Jhuki Aai Badariya' is a good example of his own investment in such expression[101]. The text of the *bandish* describes the descent of rainclouds and how the protagonist, in spite of her youth blooming in (or because of) the rains, misses her absent lover. Gandharva poignantly interprets the situation described in the text to mean that the protagonist finds solace in blaming the rains for her lover's failure to come back home. He talks about the gravity of the emotion with which the monsoons continue to be

[100] Ibid. See Deodhar's account (1993, 244–60) of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan for descriptions of the latter's attempts to emulate in his music such things as bird flight and the rising of the waves on Mumbai's Chowpatti beach.

[101] (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 41). The audio recording of this interview, of which the book is a transcript, is available at the Samvaad Foundation's archives and, because of the sung demonstrations it contains, is a better illustration of the arguments made here than the text in the book is. Selections from these demonstrations have been provided here to aid analysis.

received in northern India[102], and identifies the depth and darkness of the clouds depicted in the *bandish* with the resonance he finds in the syllable '*rī'* of the word '*badariyā'* – 'I will not let go of the *nād* of this *rī*, because it expresses so much!' (2007, 41) (Clip 1-4-2-1) - and goes on to praise the sophistication of Bhatkhande's notation of this composition. Much can be unpacked from this demonstration, all of which will be dealt with in more detail in subsequent chapters: Gandharva's attention to the text of the *bandish*, his use of the content of the *bandish* itself – its text, the particular resonances of its syllables, his awareness of the social, cultural and geographical situations from which the *bandish* emerges – as the forces with which to direct his extemporization of it, and in this way, to cause the *bandish* to *say* something: 'I really like this *bandish* because it says something different' (ibid). The 'difference', the alterity that Gandharva claims he sees in this *bandish* emerges, in his rhetoric at least, from his ability to 'catch' the particular beauty it contains - to direct his extemporizations using the semantic, acoustical and structural indications contained within it[103].

Expressiveness in the *bandish* is not, however, limited to allegory for Gandharva. In another similarly poignant demonstration, Gandharva compares three *bandishes* in *rāg* Shuddha Sarang, all of which have a nearly identically structured *mukhrā* – the traditional[104] *Ja Re Bhavra Ja*, Rajab Ali Khan's (1874-1959) version of the less well-known *Nek Na Bisaro Pyare*[105], and his own *Naina Na Maane Mora* (ibid, 58-9). Gandharva demonstrates how each of these *bandishes*, even though their respective *mukhrās* are almost identically structured in terms of melody, still differ greatly in terms of their syllabic content. He argues that while most people think *Neka Na Bisaro* is based on the ostensibly older *Ja Re Bhavra* (Clip 1-4-2-2), the former is a superior *bandish* – 'it is much richer, its quality is much better, it is a higher bandish'

[102] 'You're even allowed to miss a court appointment – because of the monsoons!' (ibid)

[103] A complete rendition of this *bandish* is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-R1FmgCvYI. Gandharva can be heard prefacing his rendition with the comment 'This is also a very old and famous Gaud Malhar *bandish* that has fallen behind now. No one sings it anymore, they just know it. Sometimes, even some incredible *bandishes* lose their *rasa* because so many people sing them repeatedly and the *bandish* becomes impoverished. This is one of those *bandishes*'.

[104] In common Hindustani music parlance, the term 'traditional or *pārampārik bandish*' typically signifies a composition that is well known, but cannot be attributed to a specific known composer. This particular *bandish* was made famous by Hirabai Barodekar's c.1935 78 rpm record of it.

[105] Which Gandharva says he acquired from his friend Krishnarao Mujumdar, a disciple of Rajab Ali Khan. Gandharva also says no one but Rajab Ali Khan sang the bandish in the way he demonstrates it here.

(ibid, 58) – because 'in the way its syllables drop (Clip 1-4-2-3) [106, 107], in their resonance, the *rāg* the bandish is in – Shuddha Sarang – *says* so much that cannot be said in *Ja Re Bhavra* (ibid). As he then demonstrates his own *Naina Na Mane* (Clip 1-4-2-4), he asks, 'What has been said in this bandish? Nothing, except in what other, larger way Shuddha Sarang is beautiful…more beautiful than as encountered in *Ja Re Bhavra.* That's what this *bandish* exists to say. Its [textual] meaning is less relevant, but because it is less relevant, the *rāg* becomes even bigger and [paradoxically] this makes the text very meaningful.' (Ibid, 58-9)

Gandharva's focus on expression and emotivity is not, then, limited to doing justice to the text of a composition. On the contrary, as in the above examples, the syllabic content of the text of a *bandish* becomes a tool with which Gandharva is able to express the *rāg differently*[108]. Read in this fashion, Gandharva's treatment of the khayāl genre does not fit neatly into the 'Romantic' category it was put in by Vamanrao Deshpande: 'I have labelled the traditional element of entertainment in music as 'Classicism' and the current exposition of music with 'feeling' as 'Romanticism'.' (1987, 167). For Deshpande, '…'Classical Music' is more attentive to the design, i.e., the organization of music, its well-knit build-up, i.e., in general, the neatness of the whole musical design. It pays less attention to 'emotivity', (ibid, 194) while 'The chief characteristic of romanticism is a certain indifference to structural integrity and more stress on the expression of mood or emotion' (1989). The social, cultural and musical situations that are likely to have given rise to this discursive dichotomy have already been examined in section three above. The above examples demonstrate how Gandharva's music problematizes this dichotomy – importantly, Gandharva insists that he finds 'emotivity' in *traditional* bandishes and claims, therefore, that a focus on subjective expression is in no way alien or even a recent addition to the genre[109].

Ironically, both Gandharva and Deshpande envision a utopian khayāl which 'is not tainted with the traffic of the world' (ibid, 120). Gandharva is himself careful to point out that 'a *bandish* is

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[106] Gandharva can be heard saying this clip, 'Rajab Ali used to sing a *bandish* [sings the *mukhṛa* of *Neka Na Bisaro*]. Look at how [this *mukhṛa*] falls (indicating the playful way in which the descending notes bring the syllables of the *mukhra* to the sum). [sings again] 'This thing is not there in Ja Ra Bhavra. We assume that this *bandish* must be based on Ja Re Bhavra' [sings entire *sthāi* of Nek Na Bisaro] 'This *bandish* is much richer than Ja Re Bhavra!'. Elsewhere, Gandharva describes the 'fall' of Nek Na Bisaro thus: 'It doesn't even make a sound! That's why this bandish is very rich – much richer than Naina Na Mane or Ja Re Bhavra Ja' (ibid, 59)

[107] A complete rendition of this *bandish* is available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5iM5KqoEQtM. The title of this YouTube video incorrectly interprets the text '*Neka Na*' to be '*Meghan'*.

[108] As does its phonetic content – which will be dealt with in chapter two below.

[109] Deshpande calls Gandharva 'The chief exponent of the ideology of Romantic music' (ibid)

not just a poem set to a tune…the emotion in *rāg-sangīt* is not the same as the emotion that comes from the text of a *bhāvagīt*[110]. [In fact], it is by freeing it of such *bhāv* that [*rāg-sangīt*] achieves its potential.' (2007, 142). For Gandharva, then, as for Deshpande the real *bhāv* of *rāg-sangīt* comes from the structural frameworks the genre employs: 'Everyone uses *swars* to sing…but in a *rāg*, the *swars* become something different. Each *rāg* has a different *language*…We don't just sing in rhythm, we sing in *tāl*. The *tāls* have rhythm inside them, but it too becomes something different there' (ibid, 143). Clearly, then, Deshpande (as representative of many of Gandharva's critics) and Gandharva understand 'organization', 'neatness' and 'structural integrity' differently. Subsequent chapters will explicate this difference and attempt to theorise Gandharva's alternative understanding of these constructs. Of importance here, however, is Gandharva's claim that his understanding of these terms is *not* alternative and is, instead, as 'traditional' as is the expressivity and emotivity he finds in traditional compositions.

5. Authenticity

5.1 Of Pedagogical Pedigrees and Pan-Regional Standards

Gandharva's proclivity for claiming that his music is no less traditional than anyone else's, that it is perhaps, in specific ways, *more* traditional, speaks to the importance authenticity is given in the tradition of Hindustani music. As has been mentioned in section 3.2 above, ethnomusicological scholarship sees in the 'classical' identity the khayāl's practitioners give it, a pan-regional standard and explicit theorisation of musical material. However contested this standardisation and theorisation may be, especially in the hands of someone like Gandharva, the formal structures upon which the genre is based, especially those of *rāg* and *tāl*, are expected to adhere to canonical standards and to have been received by a performer through a legitimate pedagogical lineage. This canonical musical material is seen by some to be fluid and by others to be static, and the legitimacy of a musician's lineage may be contested. But the fact that these canonical standards remain crucial, even defining aspects of the genre is apparent from the following examples.

[110] Lit. 'emotion-song'. The Marathi term for a song typically composed by setting poetry to a tune that does not necessarily identify with a *rāg* from the classical cannon and to *thekās* not used in the classical genres. The tune is fully composed by a composer and performed by a singer to orchestral accompaniment with no improvisation. The merit of the music of a *bhāvgīt* is usually judged by the justice it does its lyrics.

The first example concerns the brothers Haddu (d.1875) and Hassu Khan (d. 1859), popularly acknowledged as the founders of the modern khayāl. In his memoirs, Alladiya Khan, the founder of the Jaipur-Atrauli *gharānā*, goes to some length to discuss the legitimacy of the music of these brothers. He calls them '*sunī shāgirds*' – 'disciples by hearing', musicians who learnt their craft by eavesdropping on Bade Mohammad Khan rather than receiving systematic training from their teachers (2012, 72). It is not unimportant that this debate about the purity and authenticity of the music made within this genre goes back to its very beginnings. In another anecdote from another generation of musicians, we have the well-known account of Sinde Khan's visit to the ailing Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjikar[111] (1849 – 1926). Khan finds Ichalkaranjikar resting with his eyes closed, and introduces himself as the son of singer Amir Khan. Without opening his eyes, Ichalkaranjikar says '*Shakal dikhāo*' (show me your face), to which Sinde Khan sings one of his father's compositions. Ichalkaranjikar finds in Sinde Khan's singing the kind of fidelity to the music of his father that one might expect to find in a child's face, and is only then convinced that this is in fact Amir Khan's son (V. H. Deshpande 1987, xii). What Sinde Khan would have sung would have been a khayāl *bandish* – a composition which is only broadly or loosely defined and must necessarily be extemporised by the performer. What convinces Ichalkaranjikar, then, is not just the choice of *bandish*, but the manner in which it is presented – what gives proof of Sinde Khan's lineage is not only choice of repertoire but fidelity to an improvisatory precedent. Both these anecdotes, involving some of the most important figures in the tradition, betray an anxiety about authenticity and continuity that appear to be at the very root of how musicians in this tradition conceive of it[112].

Gandharva, in spite of his notoriety for his non-conformist ways, is no exception to this phenomenon. Gandharva speaks of how difficult he found *rāg-sangīt* to be when he first started studying it formally with Deodhar, 'because it is rule-bound. Anything can become difficult once it is bound by rules'[113]. Rele observes that Gandharva refrained from singing *rāg*s like Devgiri Bilawal that he hadn't been formally taught and that for some *rāgs* like Ramdasi

[111] Sinde Khan has been mentioned above; Ichalkaranjikar was the teacher of VD Paluskar.

[112] Justin Scarimbolo provides an important insight into this phenomenon when he shows that 'the very *claim* to continuity (and not actual continuity) is itself one of the most enduring and convincing continuities of this tradition' (Scarimbolo 2014, chap. 3)

[113] (Gandharva et al. 1988) Gandharva also defines the limits of *rāg-sangīt*'s definition: 'You don't need to learn [a *rāg* like] Malkauns, because you can't really go [structurally/grammatically] 'wrong' in it, but you can't sing [a *rāg* like] Gaud Sarang without learning it from a teacher' (ibid). See Lath et al. (2018, pp. 13–14) for a concise explanation of why Malkauns is more loosely defined than other ragas.

Malhar, in which he acquired a *bandish* without being taught the grammar of the *rāg*, he was careful to transmit to his students only the *bandish* without presuming to extrapolate the *rāg* grammar from it.

The idea of authenticity certainly was, then, important to Gandharva. His alterity and apparent non-conformism can then be argued to lie in the *diversity of sources* from which he drew his sense of authenticity, and which he used to give the musical material in his repertoire a sense of historical and 'traditional' legitimacy. When demonstrating the Shuddha Sarang *bandishes* discussed in section 4.2 above, Gandharva is careful to point out that he hasn't 'developed' [original term, implying 'modified'] any of these *bandishes* while learning them' (2007, 59). This is a recurring trope with Gandharva – in response, perhaps, to commentators alleging that he does not belong to the tradition in a conventional sense, Gandharva is often at pains, even in concert performances, to cite his sources.

The unstated accusation Gandharva makes, then, on musicians and commentators who find his music inauthentic, and on the *gharānā* tradition – that he sees as largely stagnant – in general, is that they only understand authenticity as fidelity to a certain set of (usually *gharānā*-specific) idiomatic conventions, while he is able to discard these conventions and treat various *gharānā* and non-*gharānā* idioms as sources of diverse, authentic musical expression, of which he is more discoverer and interpreter than inventor.

5.2 The *Desī* Dhun and the *Mārgī Rāg*

There is, however, another more radical way in which Gandharva's music addresses the problem of authenticity in the Hindustani tradition:

> *"We [musicians of this tradition] keep journeying between the pure and the impure. I wanted to examine [current] rāg-rūps to see how impure they had become, whether their internal consonances were still intact, and this is where my forays into lok-sangīt began. I am convinced that rāg-sangīt has its origins in the [lok]dhun. It was from this perspective that I repaired my rāgs and this is why I appear to be different". (Gandharva et al. 1988 translated, except for the English word "repair" which Gandharva employs in the original).*

Gandharva implies, then, that musicians have prioritised the conventions idiomatic to their respective *gharānā*s and pedagogical lineages over the *rāgs* themselves, and that this has led to *rāg*s becoming ossified and therefore 'impure'. The *gharānā* conventions in question arise

from musicians' attempts to grapple with the extensive extemporisation the genre demands, while still staying fidelitous to canonised and standardised grammatical frameworks. This is a larger discussion and will be entered into later in this dissertation, as will be Gandharva's solution to it: the *lokdhun*. In order to 'repair' *rāgs* then, to restore to them identities that are independent of *gharānā* moulds, Gandharva becomes invested in the *desī* pedigree of the genre as much as he is in its *mārgī,* standardised-theorised nature as described above[114]. While the mechanics of using a *dhun*-idiom in actual performance will be addressed in the next chapter, what the *lokdhun* appears to represent for Gandharva is a song that emerges in an organic fashion, *without contrivance or artifice*, so that its internal structures and movements cohere and are in *consonance* with each other, much like the regional, *desī* music specific to pre-mass-media geographically defined communities[115].

Consonance – *samvād* – becomes an important trope in Gandharva's discourse. While demonstrating the Gaud Malhar *bandish* Jhuki Aai Badariya discussed in section 4.2 above, Gandharva finds that the *bandish* is in consonance, in conversation with itself. For him, the theoretical construct of *tāl* that is at the heart of the genre is a *samvād*, in a way a 'mere' rhythm is not (2007, 143). He wants the *sthāi* and the *antarā* of his *bandishes* to be in consonance with each other, as he does everything, from his sung notes with the drone of the tanpura to the various *bandishes* he chooses to perform in a *mehfil*. Gandharva employs this trope frequently enough in his discourse for us to consider it foundational to his aesthetics. But of importance here is the idea that this logic of consonance, with its implications of organicism[116] is derived from the *lokdhun* – from the idea that *rāg-sangīt* itself originates in the *lokdhun*.

Gandharva's renditions of Malwi folk music, his 'folk-derived' (*dhun-ugam*) *rāgs* and even his employment of the *dhun* in canonical *rāgs* are testament to his earnest investment in this

[114] Martin Clayton pointed out, in a personal communication, that this thinking has striking parallels with much of late 19th and early 20th century European musical discourse, and is allied to nationalism. (personal communication, November 9, 2021). It is not impossible then, that Gandharva's contention might be a result of the influence of European thinking on Deodhar, and also of colonial era reformist-nationalist discourse.

[115] Such as the music of the Malwa region in Madhya Pradesh, which Gandharva extensively studied after he relocated there to recuperate from tuberculosis in the late 1940s. Vijay Verma calls this ' "true or pure folk [music]," quintessentially comprising relatively simple songs, performed collectively by non-specialists for their own enjoyment, without a sense of display or elaboration, and without any particular relation to Hindustani *rāg* and *tāl*' (qtd in Manuel 2015, 91)

[116] *Svābhāviktā* – the other important trope upon which, as will be argued in chapter three below, Gandharva bases his entire strategy of extemporisation.

approach. But that he also uses the *lokdhun* as a polemical tool, albeit in the face of criticism for his handling of canonical repertoire, is apparent from the following quote:

> *[after demonstrating a lokdhun] "If you people outlaw me because I distort your rāgs, I can make do with just the lokdhun I have in my repertoire - that is how rich my repertoire of lokdhun is! I don't need your khayāls and tappās and thumrīs!" (1990)*

Gandharva's investment in *desī*, non-standard culture is substantial. Sanskrit, for him, is a 'processed' language that has been derived from *desī* languages, rather than the other way around; the word *chaund* – a colloquialisation of the Sanskritic c*handra* (moon) that is commonly found in khayāl *bandishes*[117] is as 'pure' as its Sanskritic or Hindi counterparts (2007, 6) and *bandishes* with erotic content are as important to him as ones with devotional themes (ibid, 44). The *desī* is prior to the *mārgī* for him in important ways and it is this comportment, then, that allows Gandharva to claim an authenticity for his apparent alterity that is even more foundational than that of his Gwalior *gharānā* lineage.

5.3 A Holist Music and a Universalist Aesthetics

> *'I should be able to sing music (gāṇe), not just rāg. And there has to be musicality (gāṇepaṇ) in it. Music does not mean tān, ālāpī, laykārī - these are secondary. Music is a different animal - that is what I wanted to achieve. And I should be able to produce beautiful swars.' (Gandharva et al. 1988)*

> *The audience's reaction to a musician's performances should not be: 'he was so good at rhythmic play' or 'he was so tuneful' and such - it should only be 'this was such good music'. (ibid)*

[117] Such as in Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze's rendition of the Khambavati *bandish* Sakhi Mukha Chandra, available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z4Upy19Jx5k. Gandharva retains Vaze's pronunciation of '*chandra'* as *'chaund'* in his own rendition (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1j_kH1r-QF4), and even turns it into an expressive device, just as he does a number of the other idiosyncrasies that constitute Vaze's idiom, such as his asthma-driven bursts of short, intense phrasing. In Gandharva's own words, '[Vaze] would insert is asthma into his music, into *lay*, and produce a voice that would break through walls…'(2007, 100). This is a good example of the importance Gandharva gave to *individual* idioms, and is an important constituent of his archive of meaningfulness.

"I don't think music would have been at all deprived if rāg-sangīt hadn't come to be. Some other, higher music would have been born. (ibid)

Music, then, to Gandharva, is unambiguously a larger and more important phenomenon than the particular genre he operates within. He sees the *lokdhun* as an organic music that is prior to *rāg-sangīt,* and finds contrivance and artifice in attempts to rigidly standardise the formal principles of *rāg-sangīt* and its performative idioms at the cost of the diversity of expression it contains. He attempts, instead, an approach to *rāg-sangīt* that, while being inclusive of a level of standardisation, retains its organicity and spontaneity. He sees the *gharānā*s as specialist approaches to music, and sees himself, in contrast, as trying to 'craft a complete image (*pūrṇa mūrtī*)' of the music he is in the process of performing – an image that is an organic whole, not just a figurine that, though beautiful might omit an essential, organic appendage[118] (2007, 7).

The specific ways in which Gandharva conforms to and rejects approaches to the khayāl genre will be discussed at length in subsequent chapters, but as an instance: when he discusses his occasional use of *varjya swars*[119], Gandharva gives himself permission to do so as long as 'they…appear beautiful…that is the only simple rule…undoubtedly one needs mastery to use them'(ibid, 94). How does one engage with this idea of beauty? While a stance such as this indicates the limits of Gandharva's conformity to the genre's *mārgī* standards, it also implies that there is a universal aesthetics that he claims is at play and that he understands and is able to employ. In making 'beautiful *swars*' a goal important enough to be counted among his primary motivations for making music, Gandharva displays, again, his desire to inhabit a universalist aesthetic – chapter four will deal with his contention that singing voices too are cultivated and appreciated only with reference to *gharānā* idioms and do not have currency outside of them, and that his own aim is to produce *swars* that are beautiful both within the context of the Hindustani idiom and the idiom of the *rāg* at hand, as well as in terms of a larger, universal, genre-agnostic musicality.

Whether or not it is conceivable to arrive at a resolution of the conflict between a particular and a universalist aesthetics, Gandharva, as argued above, certainly aims to address the

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[118] Such as the Agra *gharānā*'s specialisation in *bol* work (rhythmic play using syllables as tools for syncopation) at the cost of intonational accuracy (V. H. Deshpande 1987, 42) or the Jaipur *gharānā*'s specialisation in premeditated complex *tāns* patterns that repeat across *rāgs* so that 'the same *rāg* appears to have been continued in the next piece' (Deodhar, qtd in V. H. Deshpande 1987, xiv).

[119] Notes that canonical *rāg* theory deems unacceptable in a *rāg*. Gandharva's use of these was minimal and occasional, but deliberate and explicit enough to attracted substantial attention – both positive and negative.

possibility - through his tropes of consonance (*samvād*), a universalist, organic (*svābhāvik*) musicality and a utopian holism.

5.4 The Authenticity of Notation

Gandharva's attempts to carve out an alternative authenticity for himself find support in what is perhaps one of the most significant resources he has available to him: anthologies of notated compositions, especially VN Bhatkhande's *Kramik Pustak Malika*. Gandharva was inducted into the practice of notating heard compositions and reading notated ones by Deodhar in his early years under his tutelage. Deodhar's approach to pedagogy has already been described in section 2.3 above. Additionally, in a letter about Gandharva written to critic Arvind Mangrulkar in 1954, Deodhar himself describes how he 'taught [Gandharva] how to write *bandishes* down in notation with the aid of a harmonium…and corrected mistakes he would make…so that he gradually learnt notation and, in a few months, was able to identify the notes used in any composition' (qtd in Komkali and Inamdar-Sane 2015, 258). Gandharva describes how he was in the habit of looking up published anthologies of *bandish* notations right from his years at Deodhar's school, including publications by Bhatkhande, Yashwantbuwa Mirashi, Rajabhaiyya Poochwale, VD Paluskar and others and is clearly proud of his ability to read and sing notated *bandishes* fluently, '…as if reading text from a typed page'[120] (2007, 38–39).

Section two above has already addressed the ways in which Deodhar and Gandharva were inheritors of Bhatkhande and Paluskar's reformist project, but their use of and faith in notated compositions, especially those put together by Bhatkhande is perhaps a singularly important way in which they inherit and build upon it. While recent scholarship has thrown the idea of the Hindustani tradition being an entirely oral one into crisis[121], Aneesh Pradhan points out an important way in which Bhatkhande's published anthologies were different from earlier notations: '[Early musicians' notations] were skeletal frameworks of the repertoire, accessible only to those having written them or to members of their family and disciples. Bhatkhande's works were on the other hand open to anyone curious about musical knowledge and equipped to comprehend his system of notation (2014, 81)', implying that Bhatkhande intended his notations to be *agnostic* of particular *gharānā* idioms. Although Bhatkhande's books contain

[120] Though Gandharva is careful to separate his ability with that of the average musician or student: 'Of course, you need to have the music [the *rāg*, the context] in your head first…we (most singers) tend to read *bandishes* literally, like a literary person might read them. But we are musicians! We [most singers] don't read music like musicians!' (ibid)

[121] See footnote 53 above

lists of the musicians he obtained the *bandishes* from[122], these lists are separate from the notations themselves, making it impossible to associate the *bandishes* with particular musicians/*gharānā*s and to infer thereby the composer's intended approach to rendering them[123].

In his rhetoric at least, Gandharva displays as much faith in these notations as authentic representations of traditional *bandishes* as he does in the *bandishes* themselves, as important carriers of *rāg-vidyā*: 'Because [Bhatkhande and the others mentioned above] were in the 'initial stages [of textualising the tradition], they've been very careful…their notation is very sophisticated...We should be able to do justice to it'(2007, 39). The Chhayanat *bandish Nevar Kī Jhankār* is a good example of this: the notation of this bandish in Bhatkhande (2014, 134) is rich in detail, especially in its transcription of the elaborate *kaṇs* (grace notes) that are known to give a *rāg* its identity, and Gandharva's renditions of this *vilambit* khayāl display a great deal of fidelity to Bhatkhande's notation of it[124]. Or there is the Gaud Malhar *bandish Mān Na Karo Rī Gorī,* the case of which becomes especially important here. This *bandish* was made famous by Kesarbai Kerkar's rendition of it in the *Vilambit Teentāl* that is idiomatic to her Jaipur *Gharānā*[125]. Bhatkhande, however, notates this bandish in *Madhyalay Teental* and this gives rise to a contestation of authority. Gandharva begins his rendition of it by saying 'Some people sing [this *bandish*] as a [*vilambit*] khayāl, but it is *originally* a *madhyalay bandish*' (1976)[126] and adds elsewhere, 'How beautifully Bhatkhande has notated this *bandish*! He has put in all the suggestions in the notation about the different ways in which this *bandish* can dance. I thought therefore that I must sing this *bandish'*(2007, 39). In the everyday politics of music making, this conflict is easily resolved and listeners as well as musicians are quite at ease in enjoying both renditions. For Gandharva, however, Bhatkhande's notation of *Mān Na Karo Rī Gorī* becomes a way for him to see the *bandish* as *separate* from the *gharānā* idiom Kerkar moulds it in. Without a sung precedent upon which to base his own rendition of it, this *bandish*, with its idiosyncrasies and deviations from canonised theoretical definitions of Gaud

[122] See (Bhatkhande 2014, 5–6)
[123] The only exceptions are *bandishes* which contain the composer's pseudonym in their text – but this is only occasionally the case.
[124] Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT-uq3MQoIo
[125] Available here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FmNQGiQpbE
[126] Available here; https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKMrAXpkeMk&t=2909s

Malhar, becomes a tool with which Gandharva is able to assert an alternative facet of the *rāg* and, simultaneously, use Bhatkhande's notation of it to give it legitimacy.

There is an element of circularity here that deserves some attention: While Gandharva relies on Bhatkhande's notations because he sees beauty and consonance in them and is convinced of the authenticity and legitimacy of Bhatkhande's work, it could also be argued that it is *because* of the acceptance and virtuosic treatment of Bhatkhande's notations by musicians like Gandharva that these notations *acquire* legitimacy. The debate about whether or not projects of notating *bandishes*, such as Bhatkhande's, are at all valid – whether or not it is actually possible to capture a *bandish* in the khayāl genre in written notation, and whether more is lost than gained in transmitting compositions in this fashion - is one that is unlikely to see resolution. For Gandharva, however, this debate appears moot – for him, Bhatkhande becomes perhaps his most important source with which to widen the theoretical bounds of the *rāg*, and to populate his repertoire with compositions in which he finds the qualities he is in search of – the qualities of consonance, organicity and diversity described above, that become apparent to him in Bhatkhande's notation precisely because they exist there shorn of their conventional *gharānā*-associations.

6. Conclusion

> *The thing about music is…we bring bits of it into being, and these disappear as we bring new ones into being. The music reaches completion only after it disappears. This is all imaginary, the image we construct. We never construct a complete figure, we're always in the process of constructing it on the one hand and letting it disappear on the other. And it is at the end that we understand the whole – what a beautiful image there came to be. And the image does not exist then…the joy that you find in its non-existence cannot be found in its being there. You understand, don't you? (2007, 7)*

Kumar Gandharva's apparent iconoclasm and non-conformism appear to arise, then, from a desire to shield his music – and the potential for fluidity and transcendence he sees in it – from the threat of stagnancy presented by convention and ritual. It is not a religious transcendence

that he wants to inhabit – Gandharva was careful about keeping religiosity separate from his musicianship[127] - it is, instead an artistic one:

> *There are two kinds of singers – [mere] singers (gānāre) and artists (kalākār) - these are different [from each other]. When I listen to a singer, I listen for how he thinks, how he understands music. I also pay attention to whether he makes progress or only repeats himself. (2014, 206)*

Gandharva separates artistry from 'mere' musicianship by understanding it as a desire to make 'progress' – he wants the act of listening to music to be one that allows him break out of a rigid frame of reference constructed of familiar aesthetical rubrics, so that he can inhabit a diversity of ways in which to understand music; rather than 'repetition' which implies, for him, an uncritical rehashing of convention.

Criticality, progress and diversity[128] are important to Gandharva as the means with which to transcend aesthetical stagnation. It is in this way, then, that Gandharva's musicianship can be seen as an individuated, performative extension of Bhatkhande and Paluskar's public, pedagogical and institutional projects. In Gandharva's own words, 'In the olden days, musicians weren't analytical at all[129]. They tried to make sense of and sing what they were taught, with a lot of devotion and hard work...[But being] analytical is a different thing. [Thinking about] what I do, what I should and should not do - this is a very different approach' (1988). 'Olden days' clearly refers to the era before the reformist movement had acquired a significant presence and had the impact it did on the music and its ecosystem. While the merits of the particular ways in which Bhatkhande and Paluskar engaged with colonial modernity can always be a subject of debate, it is an undeniable fact that that particular engagement resulted in the milieu from within which Gandharva enacted his own engagement with music[130].

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[127] 'Many say that music leads to god and such. But I don't. I feel I want to find music, that I should be able to pursue music. If I find music, then god, if he exists, will follow…I don't have [such] escapisms to deceive you with.' (Gandharva and Jogdand 2014, 221)

[128] And, importantly, affinity for and affection towards a variety of ways of doing music: '[for your musical identity to evolve], you need to love a lot, to love each kind of *gāyakī*, every person, every [different] mood… and then the desire to know and master everything - this should be there, the quest for an ideal beauty.' (2007, 65)

[129] A statement Vamanrao Deshpande, one of Gandharva's interlocutors, can be heard emphatically agreeing with

[130] Of course, Gandharva was exposed to post-colonial modernity as much as colonial modernity – one of the ways he is seen as being 'progressive' and 'modern' is in the intimate friendships he cultivated with a large

Gandharva's engagement with his reformist lineage was not, however, uncritical or free of contradiction. One is sometimes able to observe in his studio recordings a deliberate, almost contrived systematicity[131,] that is conspicuous by its absence in his live performances upon which many of the arguments in the following chapters are based – to someone familiar with Gandharva's idiom, this contrast is stark and suggests the possibility that he looked at the studio recording as a historical document and deemed it necessary to present in it the *rāg* in a 'systematic' fashion reminiscent of his early Paluskarian training at Deodhar's school. An even more glaring contradiction is his inclusion of *vādī-samvādī, chalan, pakaṛ* theory in his explication of his *dhun-ugam rāgs* in his *Anuprāgvilas* books[132], while simultaneously dismissing these theoretical constructs as 'elementary, primary school material that we must free ourselves of'[133]. The paradoxical fact that Gandharva applies an explicitly *mārgī* mode of theorization – even though he doesn't agree with it - to *rāgs* of his own creation that are explicitly *desī* (*dhun-ugam,* literally 'folk-derived') in origin can only be explained by seeing it as Gandharva's acceptance of Bhatkhande's format of theorization as the standard to follow. Similarly, Gandharva accepts the convention of associating *rāgs* with particular times of day, and even Bhatkhande's theorization of it, but also points out its flaws and attributes its validity to an organic, natural association rather than to conformity with the *shāstras*[134].

What emerges from all of this, though, is Gandharva's exercise of criticality, agency and choice and, importantly, a deeply felt affinity for the music itself, and for the emotivity it can evoke and convey. It would, however, be an injustice to view Gandharva's work entirely from the perspective of the reformist project. While this chapter has attempted to develop the links between that project and Gandharva's own work, it has also attempted to paint a picture of him as a musician reinterpreting a diverse tradition of music making with a tumultuous history – which is a history of the human urge to express and create as much as it is a history of social and political change. While this chapter has laid out the historical, social and political context for Gandharva's alterity, the succeeding chapters will examine how this alterity manifests itself

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number of important intellectuals and artists in various fields, including literature, architecture and the visual arts, and his contention that they all 'fed his music' (2014).

[131] Satyasheel Deshpande recalls that he was sometimes witness, as disciple and tanpura accompanist, to relatively unsuccessful concerts, which were inevitably the ones Gandharva presented in just such a 'systematic' mould. This will be addressed in detail in chapter three below.

[132] See Anupa*rāg*vlias, Part 1 (Gandharva 1965) and 2 (Gandharva 2002)

[133] See quote in section 2.3 above

[134] See Kolhapure (2004, 96) for how Gandharva questions Bhatkhande's logic of the two *madhyamas* as indicators of time of day, and see Gandharva (2014, 208) for his take on why he accepts the *rāg*-time association

in Gandharva's music and the formal and performative questions it raises for the genre of the Hindustani khayāl.

Chapter 2. *Dhun*: Rethinking *Rāg* and *Bandish*

1. Engaging with Traditional Material

1.1 Authenticity, History and Musical Structure

> *Cultural knowledge (Indian music) is not accurately characterized as a timeless and fixed stock of received models (rāgs, tāls, bandishes, styles etc). The instituted models, which are the public forms of culture (textbooks, notations), and the cognitive models, which are their instantiations in the mind (interpretation of the individual artist, expressed in performance), are both historically contingent artefacts.*
>
> (Widdess in Magriel and Du Perron 2013, xxi)
>
> *Sapat sur gāve gunījan*
>
> *Bhāva-rāga-tāla kāla kī ugam*
>
> [Great musicians [only] sing the seven notes. Emotion, *rāg* and *tāl* are products of time]
>
> *Sthāī* of *bandish* in *rāg* Nat (Gandharva 1965, 61)

This chapter will address, in more directly musical detail, how Kumar Gandharva dealt with traditional musical material and will attempt, thereby, to lay out an ontological account of *rāg* and *bandish* according to Kumar Gandharva. While any attempt at describing such an ontology is necessarily a discursive and speculative exercise, it is perhaps justified by the idea, gradually taking hold in the discipline of musicology, that '...structure in music is itself contingent, and needs to be recognized as a discursive artifact' (Clayton 2003, 66). Instead of attempting to formulate objective definitions of *rāg* and *bandish* by treating them as immutable, ahistorical constructs, we will attempt here to see these constructs in the light of the particular historical moment in which Gandharva engaged with them, and through the very subjective lens of his performative and verbal discourse on them. As the two quotations above show, both current

musicological thought and Kumar Gandharva himself seem to be in agreement with this approach.

Martin Clayton asks, importantly, 'Does raga exist as a system in our preverbal musical percepts and memories, or only in our internalizations of paramusical discourse?' (2003, 89) and calls for a 'metatheory' for musical discourse that addresses 'the relationship among sound…the experience of producing, perceiving, and responding to that sound; and the processes by which people imagine that sound to possess structure or to convey meaning' (ibid, 94). The case of Kumar Gandharva's engagement with *rāg* and *bandish* seems an especially important one in this context.

As we have seen in chapter one, Deodhar exposed Gandharva to a vast and diverse repertoire of *rāg*s, *bandishes* (including, importantly, notations by Bhatkhande and others) and approaches to performance - a *diversity of sources,* all deemed *acceptable and valid* in Deodhar's pedagogy - and this exposure was one of the bases of Gandharva's alternative approach to the idea of authenticity which the Hindustani tradition places great primacy on. We have also seen how Gandharva saw conventional *gharānā* approaches to this repertoire as stagnant and attempted to exploit the potential for fluidity that he saw in the latter; and that he depended, for his sense of fidelity to tradition, on the aesthetic of *individual musicians*, which he saw as emerging from their urge to express their personal affinity with musical material. Finally, we saw that he drew on his affiliation with the Gwalior *gharānā* and his conviction that the *mārgī rāg* has its roots in the organic, *desī dhun* for a more radical, alternative sense of 'authenticity'.

AD Morris's work on the transmission and performance of khayāl compositions in the Gwalior *gharānā* (2004) is an important critical and empirical examination of the more conventional idea of authenticity that is widely held in the various *gharānā* traditions. Morris documents the transmission of a single traditional bandish (Kaise Sukh Sove in *rāg* Bihag), within a single *gharānā* (Gwalior) in order to examine the claims the *gharānā* makes with regard to the authenticity of its repertoire. Morris shows that 'even among the earliest generation of artists [of the Gwalior *gharānā*], including *gurubhāīs* [co-students] like V.D. Paluskar and Mirashi Buwa, the dimensions of the same *bandish* could sometimes vary considerably' (ibid, 298)

While discussing the role of Bhatkhande's notations in the transmission of *bandishes*, Morris shows that there was 'divergence [in the structure of a single bandish] between Bhatkhande and Gwalior singers, between different branches of the gharana and even disciples of the same

guru' (ibid, 117). Clearly then, this lack of a stable canonical repertoire was one of the forces that drove Bhatkhande to put his new canon together in the way he did: by collecting various versions of each composition, comparing them, and making decisions about what to retain from each version – melodic structure, *tāl*, *lay*, text and the various nuances within these categories – and what to omit or alter. Assisted by an 'editorial team' that included important Gwalior singers from within the gharana, Bhatkhande's notations 'underwent a series of revisions before reaching their final form' (ibid, 153). It is undeniable then that Bhatkhande's was a *curatorial* effort: the notations that Bhatkhande produced were the result of much deliberation and reflected the agency he and his team displayed, in spite of the attempts they claimed to have made to maintain fidelity with their sources. In spite of this, Morris shows that 'claims that Bhatkhande had simply distorted the form of the *bandish* collected from Gwalior singers looked less justifiable given the scale of variation within the *gharānā* itself' (ibid, 361).

While we have already seen how Deodhar was an inheritor of Bhatkhande's legacy in important ways, he is also known to have continued Bhatkhande's project of 'rectifying' *bandishes*. Pandharinath Kolhapure describes how Deodhar 'rectified a large number of uncommon *rāgs* and *bandishes*. He put the structure of *rāgs* in order, studied bandish texts and corrected errors in them and taught [these to his students]' (2004, 60, translated). This is clearly a legacy Deodhar inherits from Bhatkhande and Paluskar and passes on to Gandharva[135]. Archival recordings of Deodhar[136] are clear evidence of his continued investment in the act of tapping into a vast diversity of sources and attempting to develop an increasingly comprehensive understanding of the tradition of *khayāl* based on received *rāg* and *bandish* repertoire.

As far as Deodhar and Gandharva were concerned, their quest for a *gharānā*-agnostic music seems to have caused them to depend upon their intuitive aesthetic leanings to make decisions – whether as pedagogues or performers - about how to deal with the material they received. Importantly, both Gandharva and Deodhar were dealing with *bandishes* and *rāg-rūps* as received directly from musicians as well as from notated anthologies like Bhatkhande's. The

[135] Deodhar gradually became, through these efforts, one of the most important authorities on theoretical matters relating to *rāg-sangīt.* Various prominent musicians would regularly come to him with questions regarding *rāg* grammar. Kausalya Manjeshwar, for example, a prominent disciple of Mogubai Kurdikar (1904-2001) of the Jaipur *gharānā*, would often go to Deodhar to get bandish texts corrected, to learn new compositions and even for help with voice training (Pradhan 2014, 262,266-7). Deodhar's encounter with Bade Ghulam Ali Khan has already been mentioned in chapter one above.

[136] Such as those available at the Manipal-Samvaad Centre for Indian Music, see https://www.samvaadfoundation.org/the-samvaad-database/

alterity ascribed to Gandharva's music – the kind he claimed for himself as well as the kind others lauded or denigrated him for – stems in large part, then, from the *authority* he gave himself to interpret received repertoire and to fashion his performative idiom from the vantage point that his Bhatkhande-Paluskar-Deodhar legacy gave him, one that was abstracted from and agnostic of any particular *gharānā* or *gāyakī* idiom, and perhaps inducted him into the insider-outsider comportment that both he and Deodhar inhabited, as has been discussed in chapter one.

The present chapter will address, in more directly musicological detail, how Gandharva dealt with received traditional material, particularly received *bandishes*, while often also taking into account *bandishes* of his own composition, composed as responses to what was available (or unavailable) in the repertoire he received. Specifically, this chapter will theorize his particular use of the *khayāl bandish* in order to explicate how this song-genre, with all of its inherent musical affordances, became instrumental in the creation of Gandharva's alterity. While the observations made in this chapter base themselves upon analysis of Gandharva's recorded performances as well as on his discourse on these constructs, Gandharva's ideas in both these modes of expression address this material simultaneously as both static received material as well as as dynamic material that is shaped in the course of performance. A clear distinction between the fixed and non-fixed parts of a performance is bound to be contentious, and speaks to a long-standing dialectic between the ideas of 'composition' and 'improvisation'. A few words, then on this particular dialectic, as well as on musical structure in general are in order, especially considering the importance of the role the *bandish* - perhaps the most explicitly 'composed' unit in *khayāl* melody – plays in Gandharva's music.

1.2 Composition and Improvisation, Fixity and Play

The terms composition and improvisation, especially when used together to form an oppositional binary, betray their colonial heritage. A substantial amount of literature[137] has now established the idea that the description of Indian music as 'improvised' as opposed to 'composed' Western music is misleading, to say the least, and that the term 'improvised' was used in a derogatory sense in orientalist musicology to imply that Indian music did not consist of forethought, planning and significant notation and was made up on the spur of the moment as opposed to Western music, which consisted of well-defined 'works'. That a multitude of

[137] Including Nettl (1974), Nooshin (2006), Ranade (2012) and McNeil (2015) & (2017)

complex compositional principles and different degrees of forethought and planning are at play in 'improvised' performances of Indian music is now a well-established fact, as is the idea that improvisation plays an important role in the 'composition' of a 'composed' piece, and even in its performance - in other words, that 'one can no longer speak of 'improvisation' and 'composition' in any oppositional sense' (Widdess 2011, 1). The conversation moves, therefore, to the question of the degree and nature of the fixity of a composition - to 'how fixed' a composition is and 'how (in what way) it is fixed', as opposed to 'whether or not' it is fixed.

In dealing with the khayāl in particular, musicologists have proposed a number of frameworks that seek to explain how material is 'fixed' in it and the role this fixity plays in musicians' dealings with it. Most of these formulations begin with Bruno Nettl's idea that all music contains 'points of reference' or 'signposts' – fixed structural points[138] that, however diverse they may be in nature, can be roughly measured to see 'how close together or far apart they are' (1974, 13), and that this 'density' can indicate the degree of freedom the *performer* has to make musical decisions; so that in denser models of music making, most decisions have already been made for the performer, while in less dense models, the performer must decide how to move from one 'signpost' to the other. While this framework certainly provides a good means of comparing genres to gauge the degree of extemporization they permit (which was Nettl's intention), it seems to fall short of describing what happens in a khayāl performance: in Widdess's words, it seems 'rather one-dimensional', as if the only thing the performer does is think about 'how to get to the next "structural point"' (2013, 1). Various frameworks have been proposed to address this lack, and to also shed some light on the nature of these 'signposts' in the specific case of the khayāl. One approach that seems promising is Adrian McNeil's model of 'fixed seed ideas'[139].

McNeil uses the traditional Indian metaphor of the *bīj*, the seed, to represent 'a nuclear idea' that has a 'potential for growth in the context of a performance' (2017, 9). *Rāg*, *tāl* and *bandish* are all seed ideas for McNeil, that, taken together and accounting for their multiple levels of fixity, 'constitute what might be thought of as the fixed architecture, scaffolding or framework

[138] Some examples of which, specific to our case, might be the *sam* and the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish*.

[139] Another is Richard Widdess's approach of applying schema theory from the cognitive sciences to the act of music making. Here, the *bandish*, the *rāg*, the *tāl* and other musical categories such as pitch intervals, melodic contours, even styles and genres - all become *schemas* that can be 'hierarchically combined' and 'modified to accommodate new situations and experiences' by musicians. It is beyond the scope of this dissertation to apply the principles of schema theory to the discussion at hand, but see Widdess (2013; 2011) for examples of how this may be done.

for performing raga music' (ibid, 4). When dwelling upon the *bandish*, McNeil is careful to qualify the claim that it is a 'fixed' seed idea by calling it 'a launching pad for creativity within the conventions of the *nibaddh*[140] section, not a complete and intentionally bounded text' (ibid, 9). It will be argued later in this chapter that the *bandish* takes on a different significance for Kumar Gandharva, one that overturns the hierarchy of performative section and *bandish* implicit in this theorization; but the discussion at hand calls for the bandish-as-seed-idea model to be taken in another direction.

1.3 The Traditional Indic 'Song'

McNeil, of course, develops his model in the context of *rāg-sangīt*, and so for him, the *bandish* is 'an embedded seed idea of a [song]…situated within the seed idea of the raga' (ibid). There are important insights to be gained, relevant to our discussion, from thinking for a moment of the category of the 'song' – in particular of the pre-modern, non-theorized 'traditional Indic song', if such a category is justifiable - outside the context of *rāg*. It seems to be the case that in the absence of forces with the ability to impart a high degree of *fixity* to a song - the kind of fixity that could be conceived as lasting over generations of transmission - the 'traditional Indic song' would have been *non-fixed* in a profound, fundamental manner.

Forces that could lead to a greater degree of fixity are, to cite two examples, mass-media (such as the gramophone) and, secondly, absorption into an elitist, canonical repertoire that standardizes and fixes the songs either through rote memorization (for songs that have religious/ritual significance) or notation (for songs belonging to an art-music tradition). In the latter cases, authority figures who censure 'incorrect' versions are likely to play a role. As Dard Neuman points out, 'scriptural traditions often view organized sound (music, chant, etc.) as inextricably linked to the words' and therefore advocate a cultural ideology that seeks to fix[141]. Or, to put it another way, 'The elaborate memorisation techniques developed in classical India – memorising texts backwards or in various different permutations as a check against errors in 'normal' memorisation of scripture – also speak to an awareness *of the near-inevitability of change* in oral tradition'[142]. Other situations that might lead to fixity are group-performance and accompaniment to dance or theatre.

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[140] The section of the performance that is 'bound' or set to *tāl*, as opposed to the *anibadhha* section – the non-metrical *ālāp.*

[141] Personal communication, 06/01/2022

[142] Martin Clayton, personal communication, 05/01/2022, emphasis added.

But what of songs, belonging to predominantly oral traditions and therefore amenable to change, that do not fall into any of these categories? 'Songs' in India from the pre-mass-media era that are not associated with ritual, scripture, concerted performance (pre-composed choral/dance/theatre pieces) or high-art, would have been non-fixed *seed ideas* in a profound, fundamental manner. It is tempting to assume that the 'song' being addressed here is the 'folk song', but as Neuman points out, given the lack of scholarship in this area, it appears to be safer to think of this category simply as a 'song' (or '*gīt',* to use the Indic term) where the idea of 'composition' or 'fixity' is closer to the idea of a seed than it is to a that of a completed work[143]. Examples of such *gīts* might be found in Begum Akhtar's (1914-1974) and Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's records - Akhtar's 'Daf Kahe Ko Bajaye' and Khan's 'Maran Mithiyu' come to mind. These are not really thumrīs as they tend to be classified in informal discourse[144]. Peter Manuel, in his thoughtfully constructed taxonomy, lists such songs either under 'Light-classical music', which category includes, together with thumrī and ghazal, 'stage renditions of folk-derived genres such as *kajrī*...[genres that have since] been largely absorbed into the realm of classical music…[but] occupied their own autonomous milieu before this period'; or under 'Sophisticated professional folksong', which includes songs 'performed by trained specialists…often in a display-oriented virtuoso style with some…elements derived from Hindustani music, alongside other features distinct from that music' (2015, 88)[145].

The song-genres Manuel deals with constitute what he calls an 'intermediate sphere' that lies in between a pyramidal hierarchy of vocal music genres that has 'abstractly musical classical genres at the apex, and overwhelmingly text-driven…genres on the "light" or folk base' (ibid, 84). While Manuel notes that there has always been a symbiosis between many of these genres and *rāg-sangīt*, for many of these 'sophisticated folk' genres, '*rāgs* are better regarded as modal

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[143] Admittedly, this is speculation. As Neuman points out, ' "folk" music is by definition oral (not written) and so, prior to the recording age, we have no way of knowing if the popular song-forms (*gīt*) had a degree of fixity or flexibility' (personal communication, 06/01/2022). Both Clayton and Neuman agree, though, that the lack of fixity proposed here probably was the case.

[144] See https://gaana.com/album/bade-ghulam-ali-khan-thumris for the album 'Bade Ghulam Ali – Thumris' which includes this and other such *gīts*. Satyasheel Deshpande affirms that these are not *thumrīs* that have originated in courtesan culture - though they may have been subsumed into that culture later – and thus need not be thought of as conforming to a particular *rāg.* Akhtar's Daf Kahe Ko Bajaye escapes this classification, and can be heard, along with many other such *gīts,* at https://gaana.com/song/dhap-kahe-ko-bajaya-se

[145] Rajasthani folklorist Vijay Verma provides a four-part taxonomy of folk music, all categories in which display various degrees of 'sophistication' and relationships to mainstream classical music, but all of which, (perhaps other than the least 'sophisticated' 'true or pure folk' music, which is 'performed collectively'), align with our conception of an essentially unfixed, 'seed idea'. See Verma (1987, 5–6).

categorizations of existing songs rather than abstract bases for elaboration'(2015, 92)[146]. As can be heard in the examples cited above, then, the exposition of an abstracted, canonised and theorised *rāg-rūp* is not the intention of the performer of these songs – the intention is simply to 'sing the song', with the important caveat that the 'song', the *gīt*, is itself a seed idea as much as it is a fixed piece, and is likely to 'change' with every rendition[147]. To use Lara Pearson's formulation, these songs are 'systems' that have 'play' ('leeway – latitude, room to move') built into them, and are 'fixed only to the extent of being recognizable' (2021, 458). Importantly, in discussing such music, Pearson does away with the 'idealized concept of the musical work – the composition – as something complete and perfect in itself', so that there is 'no need for the musical category of improvisation'(ibid).

Of course, the relevance of this entire discussion to this dissertation is Gandharva's conviction, stated in the previous chapter, that *rāg-sangīt* itself originates in the *lokdhun.* There certainly is evidence that suggests this really is the case: Katherine Schofield argues, on the basis of voluminous and meticulously detailed evidence, that the term 'khayāl' was 'originally used to describe a number of… two- to four -verse regional genres in local languages on the subjects of love and the grief of separation', and that it came in the seventeenth century to be used 'to refer to…the "classical" variety most closely associated with the *ravish* of Amir Khusrau and its musical heirs, the Qawwals of Delhi' and that 'this variety of the khayal…eventually evolved into the khayal of the present day'(Brown 2010, 187).

There is also evidence that incumbents of the tradition, especially those belonging to the older pedagogical line of the Gwalior *gharānā*, agree with the idea that the khayāl has had an 'organic' evolution, to which the *gīt* was central. In a particularly telling interview, Sharatchandra Arolkar (1912-1994), noted scholar and direct disciple of Eknath Pandit and Krishnarao Shankar Pandit (1893–1989), when asked what musicians of previous generations meant when they said 'we don't sing the *rāg*, we sing the *bandish*', responds:

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[146] Gandharva also demonstrates how, in the Malva, the term *rāg* is used to denote tessitura: saying 'this is a high *rāg*' about a folk song might mean that it is classified as one to be sung in a higher tessitura than others.

[147] Performers of these genres, certainly in the pre-mass-media era, where there was no fixed, recorded version for reference and comparison, would not have conceded to this idea of 'change'. Bruno Nettl, in thinking about how musicians who 'improvise' regard the differences among their performances gives the example of 'a Persian musician who was asked to comment on the fact that two of his performances of the same *dastgah* were rather different: he denied that there was a difference. When confronted with the concrete evidence of the recordings, he admitted the existence of the differences, but not their significance, and implied that the essence of what he performed in a *dastgah* is always the same' (1974, 8)

> *This means we carry out rupakālāptī, not rāgālāptī*[148]*. The rāgs evolved like language – all kinds of poetry and prose were born spontaneously of the human imagination and these enlarged the dictionary [formal vocabulary and grammar] of the language and then we started writing poetry based on the dictionary. Similarly, the older Gwalior musicians used to say that 'we sing asthāī*[149]*, not rāg…so khayāl is not about displaying the rāg's vādī-samvādī or its tāl-anga or other grammatical features. It is the quality of the sthāi that is developed as we sing. The sthāi has a particular ache [dard], that no one should disturb. (1994, translated)'.*

This approach to *rāg* and *bandish* brings the idea that *rāgs* are 'modal categorizations of existing songs' from the realm of the folk into the realm of the khayāl[150]. Elsewhere in the same interview, Arolkar goes on to discuss the primacy of the *bandish* in the khayāl genre, and even uses the term *gīt* to refer to it, which usage often implies that the text of the song is to be given importance:

> *The speciality of the Gwalior gharana is the chīz*[151] *and its vistār [development]…this is gīt-vistār. There can be no 'sangīt' without 'gīt'. The idea that we don't need words [text], that their only utility is as pegs to hang tones from is wrong. We'd have to remove the term 'gīt' from 'sangīt' if that were the case. The term [for dhrupad] is Dhruva-pad – the 'pad', the gīt is at the heart of dhrupad, not nom-tom…A major feature of the classical forms is that the gīt is in a process of spontaneous emergence. I call this 'fluid sculpture'. A form that has great potential, and grows into a tree in the hands of a competent gardener – that is what a gīt is, that is what 'classical' really means. Of course, the gardener must be good,*

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[148] These are Sanskritic terms that originate in the Sangeet Ratnakara, and have been carried over to *khayāl* performance, although their usage appears to be diminishing now. According to Ranade, the Ratnakara mentions two types of melodic elaboration: 'One identified as *ragalapti* does not need a *tala* or a genre and to that extent it is absolutely melodic. The other variety, called *roopakalapti* is melodic but with the help of a composition set in *tala* and with a song-text. To that extent it is less absolute than the *ragalapti*.'(2006, 185)

[149] An alternative pronunciation for *sthāi.* It's usage here is an archaic way of referring to *bandish*

[150] Important musicians from outside the Gwalior tradition subscribe to this idea as well. See Govindrao Tembe (1881-1955), writing in 1955, for a detailed account of his understanding of the evolution of *rāgs* as categorisers of regional folk songs (2012, 11–12). Van der Meer, drawing upon the work of Swami Prajnanananda, agrees also (1980, 71–72).

[151] A term commonly used for *bandish*

as must be the seed…forms that don't have such potential are 'frozen sculpture'. (ibid)

Arolkar's ideas, it must be pointed out, are couched entirely in the *mārgī* language of Sanskritic discourse – he does not explicitly categorize the *gīt* he mentions into a specific song-genre, and certainly does not mention 'folk music'. Even so, his characterization of *gīt* as 'fluid sculpture', and his analogy of spontaneously emergent poetry that contributes to 'the dictionary' both speak to and reinforce the idea that the *bandish* is, or originates from a 'traditional Indic song', which is an unfixed seed-idea and is *prior* to *rāg*[152]. It will be argued below that Gandharva latches on to these ideas already established in the khayāl tradition in general and in the Gwalior tradition in particular, and on their basis, takes the khayāl *bandish* back to *this* understanding of 'song' in a radical way. For Gandharva, though, the particular song-genre that best represents this category of the fluid, non-standardised song is the *lokdhun.*

1.4 *Dhun, Rāg, Bandish*

In referring to Gandharva's particular engagement with *lokdhun,* the intention here is not to reinforce the already much-problematised hierarchy between the musics of the subcontinent, but rather to use the term to represent a particular conception of the idea of 'song', specific to the pre-mass media Indic context, as described above. In Peter Manuel's words, 'In India, much traditional music falls unproblematically into… conventional categories [so that] the khyāl sung in a concert hall neatly fulfils all the criteria of classical music, while the melodically *repetitive* work-song droned by peasant women in a field meets all the qualifications of folk music' (2015, 85, emphasis added)[153]. Manuel is careful to note that these are two ends of a continuum, the defining parameter of which is the semantic importance give to song-text; and his categorization of the various song-genres that constitute the 'intermediate sphere' that lies between these ends is sensitive enough to accommodate the various contradictions and overlaps such an academic enterprise must inevitably give rise to. For most of the song-genres that Manuel categorizes, however, especially those belonging to his categories of 'Folk music', 'Light-classical music' and 'Sophisticated professional folk-song', two common parameters

[152] Importantly, as we will see in the next chapter, in spite of this discursive emphasis on the *bandish,* the music Arolkar describes, namely that he inherited from his teacher Krishnarao Shankar Pandit, does *not* give it as much primacy as Gandharva's does. However, the fact that this idea is prevalent in tradition is important and forms the ground upon which Gandharva justifies his apparent departures from tradition.

[153] It is based on this justification that Manuel provides, as well as due to Gandharva's own use of the terk '*lok*' that this category has been used here, in spite of it being potentially reductionist and problematic.

are especially relevant to the current discussion. One of these has already been discussed above: we have already seen how, in *desī* musics, the term *rāg* has been used to denote a modal categorization of existing songs, and we've also seen how khayāl musicians like Arolkar and Tembe believe that these songs are *prior* to the idea of *rāg* as used in khayāl music as well[154]. The other parameter is that of *repetition*, such as is indicated in the quote from Manuel above, and is crucial enough to Gandharva's music to warrant serious consideration.

With reference to our characterization above of the traditional Indic song as a system with play built into it, it bears mentioning that the primary device these songs use in order to expose or exploit the possibility of play is the act of repetition. Even cursory listening shows that as the *mukhṛās* of these songs are repeated and their verses (which often have similar melodic contours) sung, they are *not repeated verbatim*. While there appears to be no scholarly work that substantiates this claim, the contention here is that it is the act of *non-verbatim repetition*[155] of the melody that simultaneously gives these songs a recognizable identity and imbues them with enough variation to keep them interesting for extended durations. Indeed, while such empirical work does not seem to exist, and is beyond the scope of this dissertation, it will undoubtedly show that the performers do not consider the variations they introduce into the fixed elements of these songs as significant, much like the Persian singer described in footnote 147 above who considered his varying performances of a piece to be 'the same'. The act of 'singing' these songs, then, implies non-verbatim rather than verbatim reproduction of the melodic structure of the song as a whole, and also, importantly, non-verbatim repetition of the various melodic motives that constitute the song, as an important performative device – a device that implies a creative act of extemporization rather than an act of simple recall. The present chapter, then addresses Gandharva's employment of *such repetition*, ostensibly derived from his engagement with *lokdhun*, as a *performative device in its own right*, that allows the

[154] This is also perhaps why Gandharva does not subscribe to a rigid *rāg-ras* association: '…the *rāg-rūps* that we have, anything can be said through them. They are complete *rūps*. Bageshree will take an emotion and whatever it says [to express that emotion] will be said in its [the *rāg's*] own way. Its language is different. And Malkauns might express the same emotion, but using its own language…It is said that Darbari is a *gambhīr* [serious] *rāg* so its subject matter [of the text] should also be *gambhīr.* I say I'll make you dance to my Darbari. Does making a *gambhīr* face make [the *rāg*] *gambhīr*? *I have tried to use the bandish to break these ideas'* (2014, 124, emphasis added)

[155] The term 'non-verbatim' is used here to describe the nature of the repetition of the *melody* of the song, not its text, which might be repeated verbatim.

bandish, with its inherent and often non-standard melodic peculiarities, to become the focus of the performance and to thereby challenge and extend its categorizing *rāg*.

Because repetition is essentially a temporal phenomenon, a brief examination of its manifestation in the particular context of the rhythm system that frames the khayāl *bandish* – that of the Tabla's *tāls* and *thekās* is in order. While Martin Clayton argues that *tāls* are no more cyclic than any other metric structures, and that their cyclicity is only conceptual (2008, sec. 5.4), he does concede that because 'the conception of *tāl* as cyclical [may have] fed back from music theory into practise…features which appeared to indicate cyclicity were enhanced and…musical repertoires slowly evolved to reinforce this concept' (ibid, sec. 2.4.2). Satyasheel Deshpande, in his theorization of the fundamentals of *rāg* and *tāl*, derived from the conviction that these constructs have their roots in *desī* rather than *mārgī* music (a conviction he appears to have inherited from his teacher Gandharva), postulates that the canonical *thekās* of tabla repertoire that are the standard accompaniment to which khayāl *bandishes* are sung are derived from a doubling of corresponding *desī thekās* – so that the sixteen beat *tīntāl* is a doubling of the eight-beat *kehervā*, the twelve beat *ektāl* is a doubling of the six-beat *dādrā* and so on (2014, 133). More important to Deshpande than this arithmetical correspondence is the fact that these tabla *thekās*, unlike their pakhawaj counterparts, have two conspicuously audible halves – the *khālī* (lit. 'empty', consisting mainly of treble syllables) and the *bharī* (lit. 'full', consisting of bass syllables) – arranged so that a typical tabla *thekā* such as the ubiquitous *tīntāl* will begin with bass syllables, enter into its *khālī* section with its treble syllables and, importantly, will *return* to its *bharī* section using the *khālī*'s remaining bass syllables, thus creating a strong sense of return[156]. For Deshpande, it is this emphasised cyclicity and the increased temporal space of the *mātrā*-doubled *tāl* it encapsulates that gives rise to the particular idiom of *improvisation through repetition* that is unique to the khayāl. Tabla scholar Umesh Moghe concurs with this view when he says that the 'Tabla skilfully unified these hitherto two different streams (Taals of Margi music and Thekas in Desi music) (sic)' and that *khālī-bharī* gave rise to a more prominently cyclical sense of 'aana-jaana' [coming and going] which 'literally instilled breathing in the theka (sic)'(2021, 30). This brief excursus on the particular brand of repetition or conduciveness to repetition that scholars and musicians see as inherent in the tabla *thekās* is intended to reinforce the idea that there is a case to be made for *repetition as a key*

[156] In Martin Clayton's words, '…the last 3 *mātrās* of the cycle effectively function as an anacrusis leading to sam'. Deshpande can be heard demonstrating this here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hGf5-Wsw2Uo&t=422s, as part of a comparison of khayāl with dhrupad, where this is not the case.

improvisatory device in the performance of the khayāl *bandish*, rather than it only being a way to frame and contextualise other devices such as *ālāp*, *bol-ālāp* and *tān*.

Repetition, thus, becomes a key analytic in Satyasheel Deshpande's analysis of his teacher's approach to *bandish.* Deshpande says of *bandishes* in Gandharva's repertoire – both those of the latter's own composition as well as received *bandishes* in his handling of them – that 'they contain a *dhun* that compels the singer to keep humming it by repeating it' (2014, 134, 144). Deshpande's use of the term *dhun*[157] abstracts it from the more concrete *lokdhun* and indicates a melody, the defining characteristic of which is that it *demands* repetition. The idea that the *bandish* as Gandharva conceives of it has a particular kind of agency that *compels* listeners to hum it repeatedly, in an almost involuntary fashion might be explained in one of two ways: either that the commentator – in this case Gandharva's disciple – is intimately familiar with Gandharva's idiom and the repeated re-statement of the *bandish* that it involves; or the other explanation, that the *bandish* as Gandharva presents it takes the form of what is known in both popular and scholarly literature as the earworm: a '…song that replays within the head and will not go away' or 'a piece of music running, apparently uncontrollably and without conscious volition, through our heads' (Beaman 2018, 1). While the investigation of this phenomenon is beyond the scope of this dissertation, an important characteristic of earworms that stands out from the literature on them is the fact that they '…can take the form of either a complete musical piece or, more frequently, part of the whole' and that '…the most common form of an earworm is a single but complete musical phrase or possibly a chorus' (ibid, 2).

Whether or not Gandharva's *bandishes* possess some intrinsic quality that triggers earworms in his listeners' minds, Gandharva's own approach to singing khayāl *bandishes* certainly fits this description. As will be shown below, Gandharva's approach to *bandish* depends heavily on the act of repetition – multiple repetitions of the entire *sthāī* and *antarā* of the *bandish* in opposition to the more conventional practice of singing these in their entirety only once at the beginning of the performance[158]; as well as continuous, purposeful repetitions of smaller parts of the *bandish*, most prominently of its *mukhṛā*, and repetitions of *upaj* (extemporised

[157] The term also connotes a kind of mystic, hypnotic delirium (*dhun lag jānā)* where one is obsessed with something and repeats it incessantly. The Oxford Hindi-English dictionary tellingly includes 'melody', 'craze' and 'perseverance' among its many definitions of the term (McGregor 1993, 531). Relevantly, the sacred fire of mystic *yogīs*, such as that of Shilanath Maharaj in Dewas (whose publications Gandharva drew upon for his *nirgun*-bhajan texts) is called a '*dhunī'* (Hess et al. 2009, 19)

[158] See Clayton (2008, chap. 7) for a survey of how performances of Hindustani music are typically organised.

movements derived from the *bandish*[159]). Of course, repeating the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish* is idiomatic to the khayāl genre and cannot be called an alternative act by any stretch. In spite of this, the following discussion will demonstrate empirically how even the repetition of the *mukhṛā* takes on an alternative significance in Gandharva's music. For now, suffice it to say that Gandharva puts the compulsive repetition characteristic of the *dhun* to use in his singing of *bandish* in order to emphasize, thereby, specific aspects of that *bandish's rāg*, so that rigid conceptions of the *rāg*'s grammar are often brought to crisis.

Kumar Gandharva's engagement with the Malvi *lokdhun* during his years of illness in Dewas is well known[160]. Rather than focussing on the songs he gathered in these years[161], the remainder of this chapter will focus, in light of the discussion above, on how he used the idea of *dhun* as a formative component of his alterity. We've also seen in chapter one above how the *lokdhun* become a polemical tool in Gandharva's hands, especially when faced with the criticism that his music did not 'belong' to the *khayāl* tradition and seemed too alien to its *gharānā*-derived conventions. However, further examination of Gandharva's discourse, especially that made in a less polemical mode, reveals that the relationship between *lokdhun* and *rāg* is a more complex one than this for him. Consider the following ideas:

> *Rāg-sangīt is the processed (parishkṝt) form of lok-sangīt, [processed in order to] be able to express more. Because lok-sangīt doesn't say very much. It has no need to say anything at all! (1985).*[162]

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[159] Vamanrao Deshpande defines *upaj* as 'derivative phrases…which sprout from the seed of the melody [of the *sthāī*]' (1987, 31). This term is important to Gandharva's music and its implications, especially in contrast to the terms *vistār* and *baṛhat* that are also used in similar contexts, will be discussed in more detail in chapter three below.

[160] See, for instance, Deshpande (1989, 90–92). Importantly, Gandharva credits Deodhar with providing the trigger and the precedent for his foray into *lokdhun* and the *Mālvā Kī Lokdhune* concert he later presented: 'The seeds of this were sown already. From *Gurujī*. When I was learning [from him] in Bombay, he had accidentally found a book of Holi-songs and brought it home, and he used it to present a program on the radio. This was my introduction to *lokgīt*. And then when I came to Dewas, I met Shyam Parmar and others, I read quite a bit, and that's when I started collecting tunes' (2014, 122). Shyam Parmar was a scholar of Malvi literature and the author of a number of books on the subject.

[161] Gandharva's *Mālvā Kī Lokdhune* concert is available here, and contains his renditions of a selection of these songs: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QzWe2WV6Jj4

[162] Or, put another way, 'These processed (*parishkṝt*) arts are for making other people happy. *Rāg-sangīt* exists for one to please others, not just oneself. *Lok-sangīt* is not meant for pleasing anyone else. It doesn't need applause – you [classical musicians] need applause!' (2007, 70, translated)

> *The rāg has a lot to say. It becomes wise and erudite. Rāg-rūps are scholarly and acquire character. The dhun is not like that. The dhun is very small. (Quoted in Inamdar 2014, 83)*

If the *desī 'rāg'* is no more than a 'modal categorization of existing songs', then, the *mārgī rāg* becomes more than just a categorisation of the *bandishes* within it. For Gandharva, the category, abstracted from the songs within it, comes to embody its own internal consonances and, thereby, its own *expressivity*. We've seen in chapter one above, through the example of *rāg* Shuddha Sarang, how various *bandishes* within that category express the category in diverse ways. Paradoxically enough, in spite of his conviction that *rāg-sangīt* has its origins in the *lokdhun* and in spite of his investment in *bandish,* Gandharva believes that 'the primary right to express belongs to the *rāg*' (Quoted in S. Deshpande 2014, 135), that what the *bandish* primarily expresses is the *rāg,* that the primary aim of the constituents is to express, in diverse ways, the category. This appears to be more a comment on the nature of the relationship between *rāg* and *bandish*, or between discourse and practice than one on the historical evolution of the genre. The fact that the *mārgī* history of the *khayāl* genre has positioned *rāg* as a performative and discursive category, brings it in constant conflict with the songs it categorizes. It is this conflict - *rāg* vs *bandish,* discourse vs practise, *mārgī* vs *desī* - that Gandharva's work with *bandish* directly engages with, as will be shown below.

The following sections of the present chapter will focus on how Gandharva, on the one hand, uses the vast and diverse repertoire of *bandishes* he receives from Deodhar and others as a means to challenge the theoretical bounds of *rāg* and, on the other, how he uses the idea of *svābhāviktā, samvād* and *abhivyaktī* - organicity, consonance and expressivity - ideas derived from the *lokdhun* and the act of repetition that it embodies – to rethink the place and purpose of the *bandish* in the process of music making within the khayāl genre. In other words, this chapter will address Gandharva's engagement with the *desī* and *mārgī* aspects of the 'fixed' repertoire of the khayāl tradition: how he keeps the *bandish* 'in play', much like he might a *desī dhun*, while allowing it to express its *rāg,* its *mārgī* category, in diverse and often unexpected ways.

2. Rethinking the Role of the *Bandish*

2.1 Expressing the *Rāg* Differently: Diversity, Alterity, Repetition

> *We say that the rāg has a certain rūp, and it does. But then why do we need bandishes? We could've sung rāgs using only vowels or sargam. But bandishes give rāgs a different rūp – the rāg appears before us with a different āghāt [accentuated differently]. If this wasn't so, we wouldn't have populated the world of rāg-sangīt with so many different bandishes. Diverse bandishes allow us to lay the rāg out in diverse ways. But in spite of such abundance, we sing rāgs in a very restricted manner, only in the way we've learnt them. We impose that single structure upon every bandish. And because of this, samvād [consonance] does not occur. Bandishes allow us to present the rāg very differently, and then the rāg takes on a very different form, as it should. The bandish changes the swing of the rāg. (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 32–33 paraphrased)*

As examples of these ideas, Gandharva demonstrates the *mukhṛās* of a few *bandishes* in *rāg* Todi: the well-known Garavā Mainsan Lāgī and Tumisan Lāgī Ratanā, the *mukhṛās* of both of which dwell in the lower ranges and around the *madhya sā*, and the traditional Gwalior *vilambit* Jā Jā Re, and his own Devo Mohe Dhīr, the *mukhṛās* of both of which dwell in the upper ranges and between the middle *dha* and the upper *sā.* A brief examination of these examples is in order then, to examine Gandharva's claim that these *bandishes* 'present the *rāg* differently'.

Such an examination is necessarily a hermeneutical exercise, but is presented here as an example of discourse playing a role in the reception of music: because Gandharva presents these *mukhṛās* as examples of the *rāg* presenting itself differently, the listener is perhaps forced to seek out the differences between them, rather than to look for unity on the basis of the common underlying *rāg*. While this might be an objectionable approach, its use in this dissertation appears justified: the purpose of this discussion is to develop an account of Gandharva's alterity, and Gandharva's own discourse is, as in the above quote, directed similarly. We are, therefore, addressing the diversity (and therefore the alterity) of *rāg* Todi as *he* sees it.

In Gandharva's demonstrations, then, the *mukhṛā* of Garvā Maisan Lāgī (Clip 2-2-1-1) presents itself as a rumination on the *sā-ṟe-g̲a̲* area of the *rāg,* inviting the performer to enter into the lower octave. The same could arguably be said about the next *mukhṛā* Gandharva demonstrates,

that of Tumisan Lāgī Ratanā (Clip 2-2-1-2). What, then, distinguishes the one from the other? A number of factors come to mind: the tempo of the *bandishes* is different, the former is slower, tending towards *madhyalay,* while the latter is significantly faster, a *drut bandish* proper. The text of the two is different also, and consequently the syllabic content that anchors the *swars* of the *rāg* is different between the two. The tempo of the *bandish* and its syllabic content are both temporal factors – the one creates a palpable difference in the overall pace of the song, while the other alters its accentuation, its *āghāt*. The textual content of each bandish also provides the performer with different sets of phonetic possibilities and semantic resonances to exploit.

These two *mukhṛās* Gandharva compares with another set of *mukhṛās*, both of which are situated in the *uttarānga* – the upper tetrachord of Todi. As he demonstrates Jā Jā Re (Clip 2-2-1-3) Gandharva can be heard in this clip asking 'Now what will you do with this [*mukhṛā*]? [Treat it the same as] Garvā Maisan? Its *sur* are completely different! [demonstrates again] Now what will the ground-floor dwellers do with this?' (2007, 34). By 'ground-floor dwellers', Gandharva refers to singers who are not comfortable in their upper ranges, but this also appears to be directed towards singers who, after singing this *uttaranga-pradhān* (emphasizing the upper tetrachord of the *rāg*) *bandish,* might abandon it and go back to developing the *rāg* incrementally, beginning with its lower tetrachord. Of the same example, Gandharva goes on to say, 'this is a Todi that is standing, fully upright! It won't speak to you sitting down at all!' (ibid), implying that such incremental development of the *bandish* is an imposition on it, one that ignores its internal *samvād.* This also applies to the fourth example, Devo Mohe Dheer (Clip 2-2-1-4) – it is an 'upright *bandish*' too, but it deserves a different treatment from Jā Jā Re because 'its *lines* are different' (ibid, emphasis added).

Of the four *mukhṛās* demonstrated here, only one is of Gandharva's own composition. The rest are 'traditional', well-known compositions - this diversity, then exists within the tradition and is not of Gandharva's making. What Gandharva does differently then, is that he is *attentive* to these differences: he sees these *bandishes* as *gestalts* that are *differently expressive* in spite of their common underlying *rāg*. Gandharva implies, then, that his treatment of these *bandishes keeps these gestalts in play,* and maintains a sense of the identity of a *bandish* as distinct from others in the same *rāg,* in the course of performance.

Notated anthologies of *bandishes,* particularly Bhatkhande's were, of course, the other important source of such diversity for Gandharva. Perhaps the most dramatic example of

Gandharva's use of notation is his presentation of the *bandish* Lāgī Re Morī Naī Lagan in *rāg* Kamod:

> *'I wouldn't sing this bandish in the past. [demonstrates an exaggerated, caricaturised version of how this bandish is conventionally sung:[Clip 2-2-1-5], I had only heard it sung like this and that's why I wouldn't sing it. There were other good bandishes that I knew, I'd sing those. And then I read [the notation of] this bandish [in Bhatkhande] and I thought, 'this is something totally different!'. I asked myself, why do we sing this bandish so badly when it has been written so beautifully here?'(2007, 40)*

The conventional version of this *bandish* that Gandharva caricaturises above is a version that is truly ubiquitous, and can be found to be sung by singers of many of the major *gharānās*[163]. As can be heard in the examples provided in footnote 163 below, all of these singers begin the *bandish* on the *sam*, so that the bandish lacks an anacrustic *mukhṛā*. What Gandharva finds in the Bhatkhande notation is just such a *mukhṛā* – one in which the syllable 'Re' of 'Lāgī Re' is on the sum, so that the 'Lāgī' forms an anacrusis, a significant difference that Gandharva exploits to a great extent.

As he begins his rendition[164], Gandharva repeats the *mukhṛā* a number of times before moving on to the rest of the *bandish*. Because of Gandharva's adoption of the *mukhṛā* present in Bhatkhande's notation, and equally because Gandharva chooses to repeat the *mukhṛā*, treating it as an independent unit before moving on to the rest of the *bandish*, each of his repetitions ends on the *re* note. Inevitably, this causes the entire rendition to pivot around this *re*, since Gandharva's episodes of extemporisation all resolve into its cadence.

A look at Bhatkhande's notation (Figure 1 below) however, reveals that Bhatkhande intends the vowel /e/ of the syllable Re (that is sung on the *re* note) to be elongated through the three subsequent *mātrās* (indicated by the ऽ or *avagraha* symbol) so that its pitch moves from the *re* to the *pa* on the third beat of that *āvartan*, which movement also takes the *bandish* into its next

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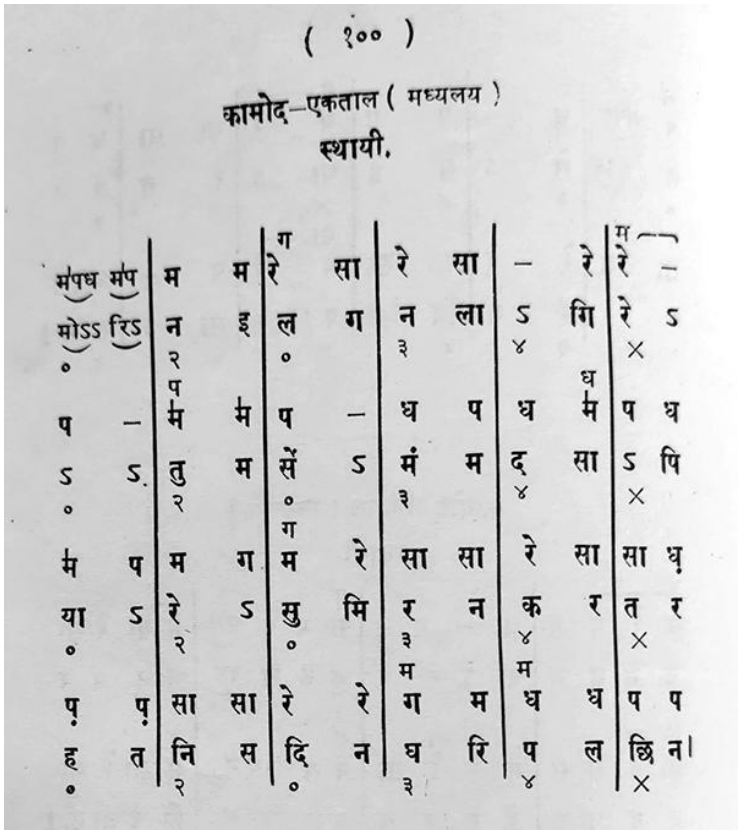
[163] Gwalior: D.V. Paluskar (1921-1955) (Saregama CDNF 150967/8/9, available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ffRv3jIZ3ow); Agra: Faiyaz Khan (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MNTfwITqOL0); Kirana: Hirabai Barodekar (1905-1989) (SFC000198-010, Archives of the Samvaad-Manipal Centre for Indian Music) and Jaipur: Padmavati Shaligram (1918-2014) (https://youtu.be/Rv1ovZBdUxs)

[164] The rendition analysed here is the one made famous by Gandharva's 78rpm recording published by HMV in 1963, and can be heard in its entirety at https://gaana.com/song/mori-nain-lagan-laagi

line. Given that the *re* on the *sam* is inflected with a *ma*, the resulting movement that is the author's intention is *ma-re-pa* (or simply *re-pa* if the inflection of the *ma* is considered insignificant).



(१००)

कामोद–एकताल (मध्यलय)

स्थायी.

मंपध मंप	म	म	ग रे	सा	रे	सा	–	रे	ग रे	–
मोऽऽ रिऽ	न	इ	ल	ग	न	ला	ऽ	गि	रे	ऽ
०	२ प		०		३		४	ध	×	
प –	मं	मं	प	–	ध	प	ध	मं	प	ध
ऽ ऽ.	तु	म	सें	ऽ	मं	म	द	सा	ऽ	पि
०	२		० ग		३		४		×	
मं प	म	ग	म	रे	सा	सा	रे	सा	सा	ध़
या ऽ	रे	ऽ	सु	मि	र	न	क	र	त	र
०	२		०		३ म		४ म		×	
प़ प़	सा	सा	रे	रे	ग	म	ध	ध	प	प
ह त	नि	स	दि	न	घ	रि	प	ल	छि	न।
०	२		०		३		४		×	

FIGURE 1: BHATKHANDE'S NOTATION OF LAGI RE (BHATKHANDE 2005, 100)

Gandharva's repetition of the *mukhṛā*, however, prevents this movement from forming – and even when he does move to the next line, he breaks the movement on the *re*, so that a definite *re-pa* movement does not appear. Indeed, a close listening of Gandharva's rendition of the *bandish* (not including his extemporization of it) reveals that it does not contain *even a single instance* of the *re-pa / ma-re-pa* movement, except for very subtle hints of it in his *tān*.

This movement is particularly important to Kamod: Bhatkhande includes it in his sequence of movements that form the *pakaṛ* of the raga (2014, 91–92), while Rajan Parrikar (deriving his authority from his teacher Ramashray Jha) writes that '[the sentence] S, (M)R (M)R P, G M P G M (S)R, S represents Kamod's signature. The R-P coupling is a recurring theme' (2002). Indeed, this movement receives substantial prominence in the 'conventional' renditions of the *bandish*, as can be heard in each of the examples referenced in footnote 163 above, on the

words ‘Lāgī Re’. Gandharva’s rendition of the *bandish*, however, excludes it almost completely.

Additionally, the movement *ga ma pa ga ma re sā* that Parrikar deems even more crucial than the *ma-re-pa* movement (‘the special *sangati* G M P G M R S has come to embody the Kamod *anga*…’ (ibid)), finds ample place in Gandharva’s rendition, albeit in a slightly modified form: *ga ma dha pa, ga* ^{pa}*ma re sā* – a movement, again, drawn from Bhatkhande’s notation (as on the words g*harī pal chhin morī naī lagan* in Figure 1 above) of the bandish, making this rendition unambiguously one of Kamod and of no other *rāg*. By eliding or modifying these crucial movements, then, Gandharva leaves the listener’s schematic expectations[165] unresolved, which contributes to the perceived alterity of his music.

So much, then, for Gandharva’s presentation of the *bandish* itself. An examination of the extemporisation episodes that intersperse the *bandish* renditions reveals that the *ma-re-pa* movement is elided in those as well (except for in one brief instance in his *tān*, at 00:58 – 00:59). There is glimpsed, however, in his *tāns*, a felt occurrence of this movement, but the way this movement presents itself in these *tāns* raises a number of important issues about the idea of musical structure that deserve some consideration.

The *tān* fragment that can be seen to represent the *ma-re-pa* movement can be heard at various points throughout this rendition, but it takes the same form in every movement: *ma re re pa ṁ ṁ dha pa pa*, as can be heard in the introductory *tān* (Clip 2-2-1-6). Although it is possible to distil the *ma-re-pa / re-pa* movement from within this line, listening to it without that express purpose in mind allows us to see its introductory movement as consisting of three groups of three notes each: *ma re re, pa ṁ ṁ*, and *dha pa pa*. While it is impossible to make any definite claims about the grouping Gandharva has in mind, it appears that it is *not* one that represents a *ma-re-pa* movement. It is also possible to invoke the gestalt principles of similarity and continuity[166] to infer that listeners are likely to group these movements thus. The only factors, then that might contribute to the idea that there is a *re-pa / ma-re-pa* movement embedded in this *tān* are *discursive factors* – the idea, stemming from discourse, such as the information that

[165] ‘Expectations based on the conventional patterns and structures of the musical style, absorbed into long-term memory through repeated exposure to that style’ (Widdess 2011, 4). See also Widdess (2013) for his application of schema theory to Hindustani music in general, and for the idea that a *rāg* is a cognitive schema.

[166] See Snyder (2000, 40–43) for examples of how Gestalt psychology might be applied to musical analysis, especially that of perceived similarity between pitch contours of the kind being discussed here.

the *rāg* being performed is in fact Kamod, and that *ma-re-pa* is an important movement in it that ought to be there.

Also noteworthy is the fact that the crucial Kamod movement *ga ma pa ga ma re sa*, that appears, as mentioned above, in the modified form of *ga ma dha pa ga* ^{pa}*ma re sā*, retains this modification throughout the rendition, even in Gandharva's *tāns*, so that the descent of almost every *tān* in the rendition concludes with the movement *ga ma dha pa pa, ga pa ma ma, re sā sā* (commas inserted to facilitate reading) – so that the 'expected' *ga ma pa ga ma re sā*, in its unaltered, unambiguous form is nowhere to be found in the rendition.

Gandharva's approach to this *bandish* forces the listener to read these movements into his rendition; and this provides perhaps a tangible example of musical structure inhering, at least to some extent, in discourse. Also important is the fact that Gandharva adopts this approach in reaction to a historical contingency - he brings Bhatkhande's version to the fore because he has only heard the *bandish* sung a particular way, too often, so that it 'it has become stale from too much singing…the beauty in it has disappeared because too many people [have started] singing it' (2007, 56). This entire phenomenon speaks to and is a demonstration of the thesis outlined at the beginning of this chapter, that structure in music is a historically contingent artifact, that *bhāv* and *rāg* are the products of time[167].

Before we move on from Lāgī Re, it must be pointed out that Gandharva's rendition, built upon Bhatkhande's notation, emphasises the *mȧ* note very substantially. This is a note that is considered non-essential to the *rāg*[168]. From among the other renditions of this bandish given above, only Padmavati Shaligram's rendition gives this note a similar prominence. DV Paluskar's and Faiyaz Khan's renditions employ it minimally, while Hirabai Badodekar's

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[167] The analysis of this *bandish* carried out for this dissertation yielded another example of this phenomenon: Faiyaz Khan's rendition of this *bandish* has him apparently employing the movement *sā re ga ma pa* (3:04 – 3:08 in the recording referenced footnote 163 above) which, as Geeta Bannerjee points out (based on Ramashray Jha's musicology), is a '*lakshana* of the *rāg* Chhayanat' and 'should be avoided [in Kamod]' (2012, p85). The informed listener might assume that this movement should have been *re ga ma dha pa,* which would have brought it squarely into the province of Kamod*;* but closer listening suggests that the movement could be considered broken at the *re,* where, indeed, Faiyaz Khan can be heard to have taken a momentary pause, so that the remainder of the line is *ga ma pa, ga ma dha pa, ga ma re sa,* and is unambiguously Kamod. How and whether this line signifies the *rāg*, then, depends on the placement of the metaphorical comma – on where the listener perceives one movement as having ended and another begun, which act of listening, informed by theoretical, classificatory knowledge, is a discursive act.

[168] See Bannerjee (2012, 81) for a review of the scholarly debate on how this note is non-essential to the *rāg*, but essential in classifying it into the Kalyan *thāt* as Bhatkhande does.

rendition elides it almost completely[169]. The prominence of this note in Gandharva's rendition is another important factor contributing to the perceived alterity of the rendition of the *bandish*.

This is not to say that every rendition of *rāg* Kamod that Gandharva presents elides these crucial movements or diverges from the conventional understanding of the *rāg* in this way. Indeed, his own composition in the same *rāg*, Aisan Kaisan Barsat Barkhā has a prominent *ma-re-pa* movement in its opening line (1965, 55) and he can be heard indulging it, as well as in the conventional, unmodified *ga-ma-pa-ga-ma-re-sa* movement liberally in his renditions of it[170].

This, then, is an example of how Gandharva allows diverse *bandishes* to present the *rāg* in diverse ways, by employing the act of creative, non-verbatim repetition and by refusing to impose a singular conception of the *rāg* on every *bandish* in it, so that with every *bandish*, the *rāg* 'takes on a very different form, as it should'(2007, 32–33).

2.2 *Bandishes* as 'profiles' of a *Rāg*

2.2.1 Form and Formlessness

> *The rāg is an ātmā (soul). It cannot do without a body. It takes on various bodies [bandishes]. And then it becomes play. The body has form, the soul does not. But we are human beings [and have form], so let's focus on form. The rāg is arūp [formless]. Only that which is formless can take on a form, isn't it? [On being asked, 'does the rāg not have an independent form at all?'] It does! The rāg does have a rūp that tries to tell us something. But we cannot comprehend it. We only understand its form in the way we might feel a gust of wind or a fragrance. We're able to understand the feeling of the incorporeal (amūrta) quickly, and that's why they say that rāg has rūp. You'll have to concede that the arūp is rūp [formlessness is form] – this is why Bilawal and Todi appear different to us. But it is such a delicate thing, that it can take on any form. It is arūp, and that's why I use the terms 'nirgun' and 'sagun' [as metaphors to describe this]. In the end, the form of the rāg*

[169] Except in one instance where it appears, very unconventionally, within the movement *sā re mȧ pa*, reminiscent of *rāg* Shyam Kalyan.

[170] In this rendition for instance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bTRXRCgb8rs – Note that the concluding descent in the *tāns* in this rendition takes the more conventional form *ga-ma-pa-ga-ma-re-sa-sa* rather than alternative *ga-ma-pa-ga-pa-ma-ma-re-sa-sa* encountered in Lāgī Re.

has no meaning. It is all the play of arūp, the joy of nirgun (formlessness). (2007, 36, 48–50, paraphrased)

The term '*arūp'*, as well as the metaphors of soul-body or form-formless are ones Gandharva appears to have encountered in and borrowed from the Nirgun poetry of Kabir and associated poets of the Nāth-Sampradāy, whose Bhajans abound in such metaphors and were famously brought to the classical stage by Gandharva. Linda Hess translates *arūp* (with specific reference to Nirgun Bhajans as sung by Gandharva) as simply 'no form', to complement '*rūp'* (outer form) and '*sarūp*' (inner form) (2009, 64–65). The more conventional 'formless' seems a better translation of 'arūp' for the present discussion and is the term that will be used here. Gandharva's ontology of *rāg* and *bandish,* expressed through these *Nirguni* metaphors, then, posits *rāg* as both having and not-having form. In discussing this paradox with reference to Kabir's poetry, Hess arrives at a metaphor we have already used in our discussion, that of the seed, the *bīj*, which 'contains both formlessness and form' (2002, 27–28), and this metaphor has some resonances with Gandharva's quote above. However, a thorough examination of Gandharva's ontology of *rāg* and *bandish* through the lens of Nirgun metaphysics, while conceivable, is beyond the scope of this dissertation, and only this brief gloss of some of its terminology should suffice for the present discussion.

What appears important in this discourse is Gandharva's insistence that it is the *bandish* that gives *rāg* meaningful corporeality, and that this corporeality, the 'form' of the *rāg* is *plural* and *diverse* and is acquired by the *rāg* through the diversity of the *bandishes* it contains. In the absence of *bandishes*, the *rāg* is only a *bīj*, a seed *idea*, bereft of meaning and tangible structure. For Gandharva, then, 'everything the *rāg* has to say cannot be said [in a single *bandish*]...and it needs various *bandish*es, with different potentialities (*gunjāish*) to say it all' (2007, 33, paraphrased). These 'various *bandishes*' are, for Gandharva, 'profiles' of the *rāg*. This is the English-language term Gandharva himself famously used[171] to describe his approach to *bandish* and *rāg.*

[171] Marathi writer and humourist P.L. Deshpande (1919-2000) relates an anecdote where writer Acharya Atre (1898-1969) asked Gandharva the *rāg* of the *bandish* 'Ajab Duniyā' that he had heard him perform recently. When told it was Hameer, Atre derides a fellow musician for having wrongly informed him that the *rāg* was a variety of Kalyan, to which Gandharva says 'That isn't his fault…these people can only recognise a *rāg* if it approaches them from the front. Yesterday, I was painting a profile of Hameer. They couldn't recognize it!'. (P. L. Deshpande 1987, 194)

This terminology can be used to lay out a rudimentary ontology of musical form in Khayāl music according to Gandharva - an ontology in which, summarily, each *bandish* is a profile that gives its *arūp rāg* a distinctive *rūp.* To reiterate, this ontology is the result of Gandharva's *attentiveness* to the *bandish* and his conviction that *bandishes* can serve a much greater purpose in the conceptualization and performance of khayāl music than they are conventionally allowed to. The following discussion is then an attempt to distil, from close readings of Gandharva's discourse and performances, a number of parameters that Gandharva sees as those modes through which the *bandish* expresses its unique identity. It is perhaps through his attentiveness, in the course of performance, to these parameters of the *bandish* at hand that his distinct and distinctly expressive profiles emerge.

It bears mentioning here, that as we have seen in the example of the *bandish* Lāgī Re in *rāg* Kamod, it is through the act of non-verbatim repetition that Gandharva establishes the alternative profile of the *rāg* that he sees in this *bandish*. Repeating the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish* is certainly not an act unique to Gandharva. It is, indeed, an essential feature of the genre of khayāl, and one of the cornerstones of the genre itself. For Gandharva, however, this repetition takes on a different significance: for him, the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish* (and, indeed, the *bandish* in its entirety) appears to move from only being 'a short cadential phrase used to mark the end of sections'(Clayton 2008, sec. 7.2) to being the focus of the performance, so that his extemporisatory episodes become secondary and *adjectival* to the *mukhṛā*.

It is, then, this *bandish*-focused (or, more specifically, *mukhṛā*-focussed) repetition that serves to highlight the parameters below, distinguishing one *bandish* from another in the same *rāg* – and giving rise to alternative profiles of the *rāg* thereby. A cautionary note: while the following is certainly an attempt to distil these several aspects of *bandish* from Gandharva's discourse and performance and present them as parameters, the intention is not to present them as formulaic rules. Presenting these 'aspects' of *bandish* as theorised 'parameters' is an inevitable outcome of the formal academic enterprise, but Gandharva's own approach to them appears to be to think of them as the various means through which *attention* can be paid to the potential of each *bandish*, ways in which the performer can *tend* to it, so that the unique potential each contains can receive *nurturing*. These parameters, as identified and discussed below, are:

1. Contour and Tessitura
2. *Lay*
3. *Chhand*
4. Text

5. *Samvād*
6. *Kehen*

It is Gandharva's consistent engagement with these parameters of each *bandish*, through non-verbatim repetition, that sets each *bandish* apart as a distinctly different *profile* of the *rāg,* and often also brings that category into conflict with its constituent, as we shall see below. We have already seen above how this approach to *rāg* and *bandish* is precisely the *lok*-derived intervention Gandharva makes in *khayāl gāyakī*, and the subsequent discussion of these six parameters will lay out the mechanics of this process.

While a discussion of these parameters might give them the appearance of burdensome responsibility that demands the subsummation of the performer's agency to that of the *bandish*, subsequent discussion will show how Gandharva's vision for them opens them up, so that these parameters become the means through which the performer expresses the *bandish, as well as herself.*

2.2.2 Contour and Tessitura

The examples of *bandishes* in *rāgs* Todi and Kamod above already show how the predominant tessitura of the *bandish* (in the case of the Todi *bandishes*), as well as its pitch contour[172] (as in the Kamod *bandishes*) serve to create diverse profiles of the same *rāg*. A few more examples of these are perhaps warranted.

Striking examples of using the *bandish's* tessitura as a generator of alternative expression within the same *rāg* are two of Gandharva's own *bandishes* in *rāg* Bhimpalas: Is Jag Mein and Āyo Rang Fāg. As can be heard in a 45 minute long rendition of Is Jag Mein (Clip 2-2-2-2-1), Gandharva's extemporizations remain almost entirely in the *pūrvānga* of the *rāg* while he sings the *sthāi* of the *bandish,* only venturing into the *rāg's uttarānga* when singing its *antarā*. On the other hand, his entire rendition of Āyo Rang Fāg (Clip 2-2-2-2-2) stays in the *uttarānga*. The *rāg* in question, Bhimpalas, is known to be one that favours the *pūrvānga* (Jha 2001, 125), a convention Gandharva conforms to in the prior *bandish*, and breaks away from in the latter, giving rise to what appear to be distinctly different manifestations of the *rāg*. As if to explain this digression, Gandharva can be heard saying in this clip, at 7:12, 'those who need to sing the

[172] Or, perhaps more appropriately, its pitch contour *schema*, to apply Widdess's use of schema theory to our case. As the examples above show, the two *bandishes* of Kamod become distinct 'profiles' because Gandharva can be seen to selectively emphasise or elide certain movements in them. Because the *bandish* is constantly 'at play' in Gandharva's hands, his acts of elision or emphasis can be seen as the enactment of a schema, through non-verbatim repetition, rather than as the execution of a pre-composed contour.

[lower] *sā* in Bhimpalas will be troubled by this *bandish* – it doesn't have the lower *sā* at all! It is a high bandish. [It is like this] Because [the text of] this *bandish* describes an afternoon of Holi'. As will be noticed across the rendition of Āyo Rang Fāg in this clip, this dwelling in the *uttarānga* causes the *dha* to receive more emphasis than convention dictates[173] - the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish* itself features an important clustering around this note. This emphasis on the *dha* is another feature that stands out in Gandharva's Bhimpalas, and is well known[174]. What is noteworthy however, is the fact that this emphasis is specific to Gandharva's handling of *this bandish*, and is not universal to his Bhimpalas – this emphasis is conspicuously absent from Is Jag Mein, owing to its lower tessitura.

For examples of pitch contour as a generator of a different profile of the *rāg,* perhaps the most striking ones come from Gandharva's *bandishes* in *rāg* Shree. Gandharva composed a number of *bandishes* in this *rāg*, including a *vilambit* khayāl and three *madhya/drut lay bandishes.* In renditions of three of these - Pāvā Main Durāse, Rīsai Kāhe and Karan De Re - the important Shree movement *dha ṁà ga re*[175] is conspicuously absent, both in the *bandishes* themselves[176] and, consequently, in Gandharva's extemporisations of them[177]. Gandharva appears to have reserved this movement for his other *bandish*, Sanjā Kahe Jāy, in which this phrase occurs in both the *bandish*[178] and in his extemporizations of it. Sanjā Kahe Jāy could then be said to have been a distinct profile of the *rāg* that Gandharva sets apart from his other *bandishes* in it by means of its pitch contour or *chalan*. The other three bandishes also distinguish themselves from each other based on other parameters that will be presented below.

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[173] As Jha puts it, '[the *dhaivat*] is used in the same proportion as the *rishabh* [which he previously describes as having *alpatva* – limited use]…it is only occasionally that it is used with a *kan* of *pancham*, wherein it becomes a little elongated'. (2001, 127)

[174] Pandit Jasraj (1930-2020) credits Gandharva's employment of the *dhaivat* in Bhimpalas with his own turn to vocal music. In a well-known anecdote (See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sZnwhP2M2-8) , Jasraj, who was a tabla accompanist at the time, describes how Gandharva once employed an emphasised *dhaivat* at a concert with Jasraj on tabla. The musician Pandit Amarnath (1924–1996) criticized this digression, which Jasraj defended by saying he didn't think it was a significant deviation from the *rāg*, to which Amarnath retorted, 'What do you know of *rāgs*? You are a beater of dead skin' – an insult which provoked Jasraj to give up the instrument and take up vocal music.

[175] See Bannerjee (2011, 218–19)

[176] See Gandharva (1965, 44–45) and (2002, 49–52)

[177] For Pāvā Main and Karan De Re, See *Sangeet Sartaj Vol - 1 & 2*, Music Today, ASIN: B0021H4DAS, available on YouTube at https://youtu.be/uKTXB-LeCIA?t=1966. For Rīsaī Kāhe and Sanjā Kahe Jāy, see Clip 2-2-2-2-3 (Sanjā Kahe Jāy begins at 12:30 min), courtesy the Manipal-Samvaad Centre for Indian Music.

[178] See Gandharva (1965, 44) and Clip 2-2-2-2-3 in footnote 177 above.

2.2.3 *Lay*

There are, broadly, two senses in which the term *lay* is used in most discourse on Hindustani music as well as in Gandharva's own rhetoric: when Gandharva states that 'the principle of [musical] form is stuck in *lay*, not in *swar*' (2007, 48) , he refers to musical time in general, which category includes the idea of tempo. In the quote below, however, Gandharva uses the term to explicitly mean the tempo at which a *bandish* is sung:

> *If the lay [of the bandish] increases or decreases, it says something different. The tāl itself expresses differently, and implores us to do different things [with it]. [On changing its tempo], the [old] thekā disappears… In a nutshell, the swagger of its gait changes! Drut Ektal and vilambit Ektal are not the same - only the mātrās are the same, and the chhand*[179] *remains the same, but the chhand expresses differently [at different tempos]!... What happens at a particular lay will not happen in other lays. (2007, 52–53)*

Gandharva's practice of carefully writing down the tempos at which he intended to perform each *bandish* in a concert[180] is reflective of the importance he gives to a *bandish's* tempo as an important parameter of expression. He goes on, in this interview, to discuss his engagement with *lay* and suggests to the musicians present that they increase or decrease the tempo of a *thekā* only slightly and notice the extent to which its expressivity changes, how it 'says something different'. Analyses of two examples of Gandharva's experimentation with *lay* may serve to illustrate what Gandharva means by this and how he puts this potential for diverse expressivity that he sees in *lay* to use.

The first example consists of two *bandishes* in *rāg* Shree that we have already encountered above. Of these, Rīsaī Kāhe is a *madhya-drut* khayāl and Karan De Re is a drut khayāl. While a cursory glance at these *bandishes* (see links to recordings of these in footnote 177 above) establishes them as independent compositions, each with its own distinct character and expressivity, a close analysis of them demonstrates that they are remarkably similar in their pitch contour. Figure 2 below is a line-by-line comparison of the notations of the *sthāīs* of these

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[179] Lit. Metre or accentual pattern, see section 2.2.4 below for a detailed consideration of this term.

[180] As described by his disciple Satyasheel Deshpande: "He would prepare for a concert by using pens of various colours to write down the lyrics and tempos (expressed as the number of seconds per *āvartan*) of all the *bandishes* he planned to sing. He was meticulous about this, even more so in his later years, and this was his way of reflecting upon what he wanted each item on his menu for that day to express." (Personal Interview, September 2021, paraphrased, translated)

two *bandishes*. For every line, the section highlighted in a certain colour for Rīsaī Kāhe can be compared with the corresponding section highlighted in the same colour for Karan De Re.

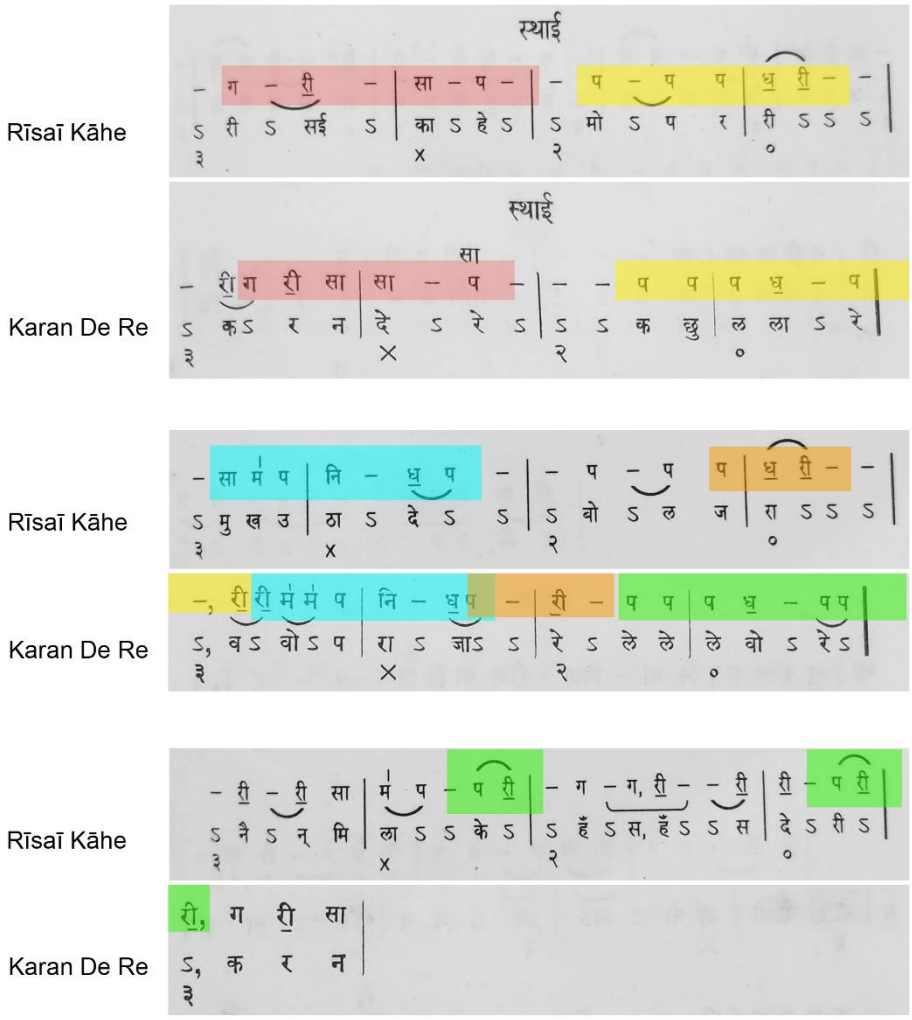

FIGURE 2 -TWO BANDISHES IN RAGA SHREE. SOURCE: GANDHARVA (1965, 45) & (2002, 51)

As is apparent from this comparison, as it is from listening to the *bandishes* from this point of view, the melodic structure of the three *bandishes,* their 'outline' to use Gandharva's term[181], is consistent. Certainly, the other parameters of these *bandishes* - namely their textual content and the particular syllabicity and timbral/phonetic characteristics that result from it - contribute to these being two independent *bandishes,* but the degree of similarity in their pitch contours makes these good examples of how dramatically *lay* can alter their expressivity in spite of this

[181] More on Gandharva's usage of this term in section 2.3 below

similarity. In fact, analysis shows that even Gandharva's *vilambit* khayāl in this rāg, Pāvā Main Dūrāse, retains a remarkably similar contour to the two *bandishes* discussed here. While it is difficult substantiate this claim conclusively, these three *bandishes* in *rāg* Shree appear to be Gandharva's way of demonstrating how dramatically different the expressivity of a melodic line can become on account of its transposition to a different *lay*.

The second example consists in Gandharva's experimentation with the tempo of a single *bandish*. His various performances of the Sadarang *bandish* Phulavan Sej Savāru, often have him singing it at dramatically different tempos. Two examples from among Gandharva's recordings are worth considering. The first example (Clip 2-2-2-3-1) is sung at an average tempo of 57bpm, while the second (Clip 2-2-2-3-2) is at a dramatically faster 104bpm. The intention here is not to deliver the mistaken message that such alteration in tempo was a regular feature of Gandharva's music – while he can certainly be seen to have been flexible with the tempos of his *bandishes*, singing the same *bandish* at two tempos as drastically different as this is a rare occurrence. What this example is intended to show is that the *bandish*, while retaining its melodic contour, can expresses the *rāg* differently and that the alterity of this expression is *contingent on its tempo*. All the points Gandharva makes about tempo substantially affecting the expressivity of the *bandish*, the *tāl* and the *rāg* are apparent in this example, as is the tempo's ability to cause the performer to 'do different things' with the *bandish*.

As mentioned at the beginning of this section, in Gandharva's usage, the term *lay* also connotes its larger meaning, that of musical time and temporality in general. This larger sense of the term is perhaps what Gandharva means to imply when he says 'Where does the *lāvaṇī* reside? In its *lay*. Where does *khayāl-gāyakī* or *thumrī* reside? In their respective *lays.* The *bhajans* I sing become *bhajans* because of the *lay* in which I express them'(2014, 218). The term *lay* here appears to indicate the various temporal aspects of rhythm that come together to give a song-form or a *bandish* its particular character and expression: tempo, metre, accentuation, and duration to name a few.

Another of these is rhythmic *density*, in which sense Gandharva uses the term *lay* as an analytic to describe what he sees as the essential difference between various Hindustani song-genres. Clayton defines rhythmic density as '…the measure of the [performer's] speed of articulation…' (2008, sec. 6.2.1). This *lay*, the speed at which the performer articulates the melodic contour, need not be regularly pulsed and need neither be in a straightforward relationship with the metric tempo of the percussion accompaniment. It is this density, this

sense of *lay* that Gandharva has in mind when he says that 'when the *thumrī* becomes *drut*…when it acquires speed, it becomes *tappā*…[The *tappa*] is a *drut* [form] that has emerged from the *thumri*…it isn't stuck in [dependent for its identity on] its Punjabi text, it is stuck in its *gāyakī*. It is *drut*'(2007, 122).

2.2.4 *Chhand*

Another crucial aspect of musical time that is an important parameter Gandharva uses to give a *bandish* its character as a distinctly expressive manifestation of the *rāg* is that of metre, of *chhand*. In discussing Gandharva's idea that 'the *bandish* must turn into a ring [circle/cycle]' and that, in this sense, 'the *tāls* have not yet been sung' (2014, 142), Satyasheel Deshpande uses the metaphor of a snake with the end of its tail in its mouth to indicate that Gandharva treats the *bandish* as 'having the space and the scope for *doharānā* [to recur, to be stated again]…so that *upaj* is achieved' (ibid). While Gandharva's *upaj* and the implications of the idea that it is *achieved* rather than deliberately created – Gandharva's trope of *svābhāvikta* or organicity – will be considered in the next chapter, the present discussion will focus on the alterity of this recurrence in Gandharva's hands, and on how it establishes a *chhand* particular to the *bandish* at hand. We have already discussed the importance of the act of repetition, derived from the idea of the *dhun*, to Gandharva's music; and we have also seen above, in the case of the Kamod *bandish* Lāgī Re, how Gandharva uses the recurrence of the *mukhṛā* to set up a different profile of the *rāg*. The other function of this recurrence – that of giving rise to a sense of cyclicity – is not unique to Gandharva and is a well-recognized feature idiomatic to the genre. What does Gandharva mean then, when he says 'the *tāls* have not yet been sung'? As explanation, Deshpande cites examples of the various *bandishes* Gandharva composed that had *mukhṛās* beginning from unconventional points in the *āvartan*, such as Shobhe Jatā in *rāg* Bhairav which has a 2.5 *mātrā mukhṛā*, or Ye Morā Re Morā in Shuddha Kalyan that begins from the eighth beat of teental and discusses the ways in which these unconventional *mukhṛās* set up unconventional *chhands*[182] (ibid).

The term *chhand,* while usually translated as metre[183], has a more specific meaning that can be applied here. Clayton defines the term, as used in the context of music, as an 'accentual pattern'(2008, sec. 10.2.1), which definition seems most suitable to the discussion at hand. That

[182] As opposed to most *bandishes* conventionally performed on the concert stage: '95% of the *bandishes* that 95% singers sing in *Madhya-drut lay* Teental, for example, begin from the ninth beat (the *khālī*)' (ibid)
[183] See glossary in Clayton (2008)

this is a *periodically repeated* accentual pattern is implied[184]. While Deshpande focusses on the unconventional *chhands* that Gandharva creates through his *mukhṛās*, the focus here is brought instead to the importance Gandharva gives to the act of keeping the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā* in play, as another of the means by which to establish the identity of the *bandish* at hand.

A case in point is Gandharva's rendition of the *bandish* Sakhi Mandarva Mein[185] (Clip 2-2-2-4-1). The *mukhṛā* of this *bandish* (like the *mukhṛā* of any *bandish*) has a particular accentual pattern: Figure 3 below shows which of the beats of *ektāl*, which *tāl* this *bandish* is in[186], are accentuated as a result of the syllables of the *bandish* text being articulated at those locations. Such, then, is the *chhand*, the 'accentual pattern' *of this bandish*:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
man			*da*		*ra*	*vā*		*me*		*sa*	*khī*

FIGURE 3: THE ACCENTUAL PATTERN OF THE MUKHṚĀ

As is audible in Clip 2-2-2-4-1 above, Gandharva keeps this *chhand* in play through most of the rendition. For about four minutes, before he completes the *sthaī* of the *bandish*, each restatement of the *mukhṛā* and thereby of this *chhand* is 'the same in type, but not in detail'[187]: Gandharva consistently articulates the syllables of the text at the same points in the *āvartan* so that the *chhand*, the pattern of accentuation that the *mukhṛā* sets up remains in play

[184] 'The use of repeated grouping patterns… in laykari is referred to in the tabla repertoire as playing in a particular chand' (Clayton 2008, sec. 10.2.4). Sudhir Mainkar defines *chhand* as 'the series arising from the repetition of a group of syllables of fixed value' (2008, 13–14), where 'value' indicates the durational value ascribed to a syllable.

[185] Composed and taught to Gandharva by Jagannathbuwa Purohit, whose pseudonym 'Gunidās' occurs in the *bandish's antarā*.

[186] The phrase 'the *bandish* is in the *tāl*' is used here deliberately, instead of 'the *bandish* is set to the *tāl*' because the latter implies that the text and melody are composed first and 'set to' the *tāl* later, which understanding of the compositional process Gandharva emphatically denies: '[When] composing a *bandish* in a particular *rāg, tāl* and *lay,* all of this is one effort. Only then is it a *bandish,* otherwise if the text is set to a *rāg*, it becomes a tune. A *bandish* is not a tune…The form of the *rāg,* the *lay,* the *tāl,* the syllables, everything comes to life at the same time' (2014, 219). This also speaks to Gandharva's organicist ambitions which will be treated more fully in the next chapter.

[187] to borrow from Clayton (2008, sec. 2.4.1), who says this in the context of his discussion of cyclicity in traditional Indian musical and philosophical constructions of time.

consistently[188]. The melodic line, however, does not undergo sheer recurrence – it is subject to continuous change, while still staying broadly within the same melodic contour of *dha pa ma ga* ^{ga}*re sa,* and thereby within the original tessitura of the *mukhṛā*, both of which ideas we have addressed above. Through these four minutes then, and substantially even after, the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā*, its melodic contour and its tessitura all remain intact. Gandharva's extemporisations consist in subtly varying the melodic line using all manner of embellishment and dynamic contrast, so that every *āvartan* is dramatically different in its detail[189].

An illuminating example of how this approach is alternative to convention, is Manik Verma's (1926-1996) rendition of the same *bandish*[190]. Verma can be heard setting up the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā* too, but here, the repetition of the *mukhṛā* takes the form of sheer, verbatim recurrence, with only two or three variations, after which Verma completes singing the *sthaī* and *antarā* of the *bandish* and quickly moves on to fast *tāns.* As these *tāns* are melismatic and do not consist of any accentuation, the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā* becomes deemphasized, increasingly so as the *tāns* become longer. From 30:35 onwards, Verma can be heard engaging in *bol*-work – extemporizing using the syllables of the bandish. But these extemporizations do not conform to the accentual pattern inherent in the *mukhṛā,* so that its *chhand* loses prominence. This comparison is not meant to imply that one rendition is superior to the other, but to say that Verma uses the *mukhṛā* as the incidental, idiomatic tool with which to frame her virtuosic extemporisation of the *rāg*, while for Gandharva, the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish* and its *chhand are the very point* he is trying to make.

While, as Deshpande shows, Gandharva certainly composed *bandishes* that created new *chhands* by using unconventional *mukhṛās*, thereby 'singing *tāls*' in ways they had not been sung before, the contention here is that the very act of being *attentive* to the *chhand* inherent in the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish* by constantly keeping it in play, and by highlighting its often contrametric interaction with the underlying *chhand* of the *tāl* at hand was Gandharva's way

[188] Gandharva can be seen to occasionally syncopate the first syllable of the line, '*man'*, by moving it to the second beat instead of the first, but the locations of the rest of the syllables are consistent, so that this subtle syncopation appears only to reinforce the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā.*

[189] As is evidenced by the audibly enthusiastic response of his audience, this extemporisation comes across as sufficiently dramatic and affective, and remarkably lacking in monotony, in spite of its consistency of *chhand*, overall contour and tessitura.

[190] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=haDpL5Vf7K8&t=1630s

of ‘singing *tāls*’ anew – while still using the origins of this contrametricity in the *chhand* of the *bandish* itself as evidence of the *svābhāviktā*, the organicity of his approach.

Two additional aspects of *chhand* bear mentioning here before we move on to the next of these parameters. Firstly, as Martin Clayton demonstrates, tempo is of ‘crucial importance…in the functioning of metre’ and ‘…if tempo is changed beyond certain limits, then the functioning of the metre must be disturbed’ (2008, sec. 12.2.2). Clayton’s ideas on the relationship between metre and tempo, while developed in the context of the tabla *thekā*, might also be applied to the *chhand* of the *bandish* as we have defined it above. Of particular importance is Clayton’s observation that ‘If the tempo is very slow, the structure loses most of its accentual character, and the *thekā* retains only its function as the source of cues for time measurement…’(2008, sec. 4.2.4). As far as the *chhand* of the *bandish* is concerned, Gandharva’s renditions appear to follow this principle. His adherence to the *chhand* of the bandish is more likely to be prominent at higher tempos, in *drut* and *madhya-drut lay bandishes*. In *vilambit* and *madhya-vilambit lay bandishes*, however, the temporal space between repetitions of the *mukhṛā* is substantially larger, and these gaps often prevent the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā* from remaining at the forefront of Gandharva’s extemporization. These spaces Gandharva fills using more melismatic movements that are not necessarily explicitly coupled with the underlying pulse of the *thekā*. While the *mukhṛā* remains important to Gandharva even at these tempos in terms of its other parameters – its contour, tessitura and *lay* continue to direct his extemporization episodes - the *chhand* of the *mukhṛā* loses prominence at slower tempos for these reasons. How Gandharva still maintains a sense of *dhun* at slower tempos will be addressed in detail in the next chapter.

Secondly, as we’ve already seen from the examples of the three *bandishes* in *rāg* Shuddha Sarang discussed in in section 4.2 of chapter 1 above, the syllabic content of the *bandish* and the affect its accentuation generates become important parameters of the *bandish’s* identity even when this accentuation is not as explicitly periodic as in the Bihagada example above. When Gandharva discusses ‘the way the syllables drop’ in the *bandish* Nek Na Bisaro Pyāre (see sec. 4.2 in chapter 1 above), he refers to a more free, non-periodic accentuation, to a more organic principle of *āghāt* as a generator of identity and affect: ‘*āghāt*, accentuation is not the same as mere rhythmic play - it is a very different thing’(1988). The present example of Sakhi Mandaravā Mein as well as the previous example of Nek Na Bisaro Pyāre both demonstrate Gandharva’s attentiveness towards *āghāt* as another of his distinguishing parameters for *bandish*.

Lay, chhand and *āghāt* are critical to Gandharva's music because they become key enablers in his project of allowing the emergence of a unique identity for each *bandish* within a *rāg*. Additionally for Gandharva, it is *tāl*, in the relationships (*samvād*) it sets between the spans of time marked out by *lay,* from within which form emerges[191]. Indeed, in Gandharva's own words, 'What happens in *shāstrīya sangīt* is that there is form *before rāg*, the form of *tāl*. [*Tāl*] gives rise to form without you having to do anything' (Gandharva et al. 2014, 118, emphasis added). It is this form of the *bandish,* a formalism that is *prior* to *rāg* that emerges from Gandharva's renditions of *bandishes* because of his consistent engagement with the *lay, tāl* and *chhand* of the *bandish* at hand. It is also perhaps Gandharva's engagement with this pre-*rāg*, *bandish*-based formalism, that *bandishes,* in his renditions of them, are often brought into conflict with their categorizing *rāgs*.

2.2.5 Text

Gandharva's engagement with the text of the *bandish* - how he both refers to the text allegorically in his musical expression, as well as how he sees text as moving beyond allegory in the specific case of the Khayāl *bandish* - has been discussed briefly in section 4.2 of chapter one above. In the present context, there is more to be said on the role of the text of the *bandish* as one of its distinguishing parameters, in Gandharva's music.

While debates on the role of the text of the khayāl *bandish* in its presentation are perennial, Vamanrao Deshpande coins a potent, albeit familiar metaphor for it. For him, while the semantics of a *bandish's* song-text must remain subsidiary to the *bandish's* structural concerns, they do play an important role in providing the musician with the 'ground for the germination of…emotions…[and] having fulfilled this purpose, the words of the *bandish* withdraw themselves into the background [of the performance]'. (1987, 108). This 'ground', Deshpande labels *raktibīj* (2012 (1961), 127) - a seed idea of affect[192], that establishes a particular ''mood' in the singer and the listener' (1987, 109) . When discussing Gandharva's *bandishes* in

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[191] '*Lay* does not do *samvād*. *Tāl* does' (Gandharva et al. 2014, 130). While Martin Clayton complicates this relationship between 'rhythm' (*lay*) and metre (*tāl*) (See Clayton 2008, sec. 3.3), his description of *tāl* itself reaffirms and extends this idea of *samvād*, which sense can be read into his use of the term 'relationship': '*Tāl* is a system for organizing musical time, and this organization involves two major aspects. First, a succession of time-spans is measured out; and secondly, these time-spans are ordered in a *hierarchical relationship*...these two principles suggest that *tāl* is a special form of metric structure' (2008, sec. 4.2).

[192] His translators render *raktibīj* simply as 'seedform', but because Deshpande himself discusses it in the context of the *bandish's bhāv* (emotion) and the 'mood' it generates, and because the present discussion uses McNeil's formulation of 'seed ideas', the term is rendered here as 'seed idea of affect', to distinguish it from other kinds of seed ideas such as those of melodic contour or rhythm.

particular, Deshpande affirms that 'Kumar's compositions have an identical seedform so far as the arrangement of words and the arrangement of music are concerned' (1989, 78), implying that in Gandharva's music, the text of the *bandish* at hand functions as a seed idea of affect that establishes a particular mood that is somehow in consonance with its melodic structure. There appears to be no empirical way in which to evaluate this claim, but what is of importance is the idea that Deshpande finds in Gandharva's music a *mood* that originates in the *text* of the *bandish* and pervades its performance, thus becoming an integral part of the identity of the *bandish* itself. Gandharva himself provides an example that succinctly, if simplistically, demonstrates what might happen if this *raktibīj*, this germinal mood was disturbed, in reference to the Gaud Malhar *bandish* Sainyā Morā Re: 'The way these syllables have arranged themselves is of tremendous importance. If you were to sing '*tuiyyā morā re'*...or '*baiyyā morā re*' instead, it wouldn't work!' (2007, 43).

Gandharva's attentiveness to the semantics of text, though not empirically demonstrable, is apparent to listeners familiar with Braj and the associated languages the traditional *bandishes* he sings are in, or the particular Malvi dialects his own compositions use[193]. Indeed, his use of the Malvi idiom is another way in which Gandharva establishes his own larger alterity as a composer. Most of his own compositions use Malvi vocabulary and grammatical idiosyncrasies instead of conforming to the canonical Braj lexicon of the Hindsutani *bandish.* As critic Srirang Sangoram says, 'while the Braj speech softens language, Malvi makes it even softer; what is more, this quality of spoken Malvi is representative of the abundance and contentment of the Malva region'(2003, 14, translated). Sangoram goes on to cite a few examples of how the Malvi idiom makes its way into Gandharva's song-texts, including using '*saneso'* for *'sandeso'* (lit. message/letter), *'ūbī'* for *'ubhī'* (standing), to show how Malvi removes hard consonants and aspirates that are present even in Braj to achieve this softening (ibid).

Also particular to Gandharva's own textual idiom is his use of the quotidian: Satyasheel Deshpande makes the important point that while 'depictions of the simple beauty inherent in quotidian events are only found exceptionally in traditional *bandishes*…Kumarji was adept at discovering such exceptional beauty', thus providing another way in which these *bandishes* are

[193] Gandharva's two-part anthology of his own *bandishes* is called '*anūp-rāg-vilās'.* While this literally translates to 'an unparalleled/new (anūp) revelling in or elaboration of (*vilās*) *rāg*, it is also a reference to the Malva region which is known as '*anūp-desh'.*

alternative to convention. Some examples are 'Rukhavā Tale Āyā' ('he comes to rest under the tree') in Madhmad Sarang which describes the peasants who would stop at the water-tap outside Gandharva's house in Dewas to rest and quench their thirst on their way up the hill to the temple of the local deity; or 'Āp Ke Bulāvā Hai Jo' ('you have an invitation!') in Desi in which Gandharva's friend comes over to remind him of a forgotten invitation to sing at a gathering.[194]

Gandharva's sensitivity to text is, then, well-known. While his use of the quotidian and of the Malvi idiom mark his *bandishes* as uniquely his, Gandharva is convinced that being attentive to textuality *is* as 'traditional' as anything else, but for the fact that most singers overlook the potential of song-text. As evidence, he presents traditional compositions where he finds the same melody-lyric consonance his bandishes are credited with having. 'Old *bandishes* are not of the sort where you take something and stuff it into a *rāg*. Later musicians may have done that sort of thing. But older *bandishes* are not like that. A lot of thought has gone into their composition…'Jhukī Āī Badariyā' says something different and 'Balmā Bahār Āī' says something else'(2007, 43). Whether older *bandishes* truly had such consonance, or what it even means to have such consonance are questions that are beyond the scope of this dissertation to engage with rigorously. What remains important is the fact that Gandharva detects this consonance. Even admitting for the possibility that this detection is an act of confirmation bias, the fact that it is detectable in his music by commentators like Vamanrao Deshpande is significant enough for us to consider Gandharva's attentiveness to text as one of our distinguishing parameters for *bandish*.

It is also worth repeating here, to avoid implying the simplistic conclusion that Gandharva's use of text was entirely allegorical, his contention that '[the literal] meaning [of the *bandish* text] is less relevant, but because it is less relevant, the *rāg* becomes even bigger and [paradoxically] this makes the text very meaningful' (2007, 58–59) and that '...it is by freeing [the *bandish*] of such [literal, semantically generated] emotion that [*rāg-sangīt*] achieves its potential.' (ibid, 142).

Apart from the semantics of the song-text, the other aspect that demands attentiveness from Gandharva is its phonetic content. The following example should serve as an appropriate demonstration: Gandharva's *bandish* Binjānā So Gā Re in Kamod is perhaps comprehensively

[194] See Deshpande (2014, 136–38) for more such examples.

exemplary of his approach to text. As he relates to his interlocutors in another conversation, 'I was taken to see a new railway line that was under construction, and Jawaharlal Nehru was scheduled to visit the place, so preparations were underway - construction, putting up boards with the names of all the villages, population counts and so on. And I saw a board for a village called 'Binjānā', and I thought, what a nice name!'(1985, paraphrased). Gandharva goes on to describe how he interpreted the name of the village to mean '*bin jānā*' or 'without knowing', which led to the following composition:

Bin jānā so gā re jana bāt re

hame nā sunāo, āyo hanso

kān ughāre na rākhe re

(Gandharva 1965, 56)

Translation:

Stories of those who sing without knowing -

do not tell them to me, they make me laugh.

They [such singers] do not keep their ears open.

The alterity of the subject matter[195] and its polemics (with reference to Gandharva's Bhatkhande-Paluskar-Deodhar lineage discussed in chapter one above) are apparent in this text. Listening to his rendition of this *bandish* (Clip 2-2-2-5-1), one can also detect, at the risk of indulging in purely subjective interpretation, the *raktibīj*, the *mood* of confident accomplishment, of pride at not being one of those who 'sing without knowing' that pervades the rendition for its entire duration. What may be less obvious is the particular *nād*, the 'buzz' of the palatal nasal consonant (IPA: ɲ) in the *bin* of *binjānā* that Gandharva latches on to and repeats, to achieve what Satyasheel Deshpande calls 'an alliteration of resonance' (2014, 140).

[195] Such alterity of subject matter is pervasive in the texts of Gandharva's *bandishes*. As Lalita Du Perron notes, 'Kumar Gandharva was an eclectic performer and an original poet. Both words and the melodies of his compositions often push the boundaries of established idiom without thwarting the rules of convention altogether. His springtime song [Aiso Kaiso Āyo Rītā Re] uses all the stock imagery associated with the season, but asks instead 'where is it?', perhaps suggesting such an overwhelming loneliness on the part of the speaker that even the beauty of spring appears black and barren.' (Magriel and Du Perron 2013, 146)

Binjānā So Gā Re is also a good example of Gandharva's idea that a good *bandish* should 'depict an event (*ghatanā*) and use only a few syllables, and not say too much, because the right to express belongs to the *rāg*, not to the text' (2014, 125).

To reiterate, then, the semantics of each *bandish* that Gandharva sings generate a particular *raktibīj*, a particular seed-affect or mood that is unique to that *bandish* in its moment of rendition, as are the opportunities for phonetic expression and *āghāt* that its syllables provide.

2.2.6 *Samvād* - Consonance

Samvād, is a trope that abounds in Gandharva's rhetoric and he tends to use it in both its conventional senses, those of 'consonance' and 'conversation'. While the term certainly connotes the strictly musical, acoustical phenomenon of consonant/dissonant relationships between the notes of the *rāg*, which usage is current in the field, especially to refer to the hierarchy of the tonal gamut (through terms like *vādī, samvādī, vivādī* etc), it appears that Gandharva uses it in a looser, metaphorical sense to denote the particular relationships he sees arising within the *movements* of *bandish* at hand – particular movements that give rise to a distinctive profile of its *rāg*.

At a relatively obvious level, this is easily demonstrable. As briefly discussed in section 5.2 of chapter one above, Gandharva uses this term when demonstrating the Gaud Malhar *bandish* Jhukī Āī Badariyā. In this demonstration, he sings the *antarā* of the *bandish* and on singing its last line, the melodic contour of which is identical to the last line of the *sthāī* (Clip 2-2-2-6-1), says 'this is how *samvād* occurs in the *bandish*[196]...the *bandish* wants to [make/do] *samvād*'(2007, 41). This recurrence of the same melodic motif in the *sthāī* and *antarā*, is perhaps one example of what Gandharva means when he says, when asked whether *antarās* are really necessary when *sthāīs* can be sufficient, 'the *antarā* completes the *sthāī*, otherwise there will be no *samvād*. We need the two parts [*sthāī* and *antarā*] for *samvād* to occur' (ibid, 124)[197].

This use of the term *samvād* deserves attention. Thinking of the *sthāī* as being 'in conversation' with the *antarā* causes the structure of the *bandish*, especially the trajectory of the *antarā* and its use of the final motif of the *sthāī* as its cadential resolution into the *mukhṛā*, to acquire

[196] A literal translation, accommodating the continuous present tense of Gandharva's Marathi, would read something to the effect 'this is called *samvād* [is] occurring of the *bandish*'.

[197] A complete rendition of this *bandish* can be listened to at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKMrAXpkeMk&t=4293s

significance, and to reinforce its sense of cyclicity[198]. When Gandharva says that the '*bandish* wants to [make/do] *samvād* with itself', he points, perhaps to a more subtle level at which the *bandish* works.

A close inspection of Jhukī Āī Badariyā reveals a number of smaller repeated motives embedded within its structure. The following discussion is an attempt to illustrate these using the literary metaphor of the rhyme scheme, where each motif is allotted a letter as follows:

Motif	Representative Letter
ma dha pa pa	a
ma ga re	b
re ga	c

Using this scheme, the repeating micro-motifs within the *bandish* can be identified in the following manner:

Jhukī	*āī*	*badarī*	*yā*	*sā*	*vana*	*kī*
a	b	bc	-	c	a	bc

The purpose of the table above is not to impose a rigid scheme on Gandharva's rendition of this *bandish*, but to suggest that such alliteration, to use another literary metaphor, is identifiable in Gandharva's rendition of this *bandish*. More importantly, listening to this rendition (See both Clip 2-2-2-6-1 above and footnote 197)[199] with an awareness of these motifs makes it possible to view Gandharva's extemporisations of it as an exploration of the motivic relationships, the motivic *samvāds* within the *bandish*, and of thus putting the *bandish* in conversation, in *samvād* with itself. Gandharva can be heard exploring these *samvāds* through most of this rendition so that they emerge as a defining characteristic of this particular *bandish* and, importantly, as a particular profile of its *rāg*. Needless to say, the *bandish's* other

[198] Whether this is another example of discursively generated structure, or whether there is another way to account for the ontological status of this felt cyclicity is an important question, though extensive consideration of it is beyond the scope of the present discussion.

[199] Gandharva can be heard saying in the clip, 'I'm singing this *chij* for you the way it was sung in the Gwalior gharana a hundred or a hundred and fifty years ago. These are not my phrases. [I'm singing them] so that you understand their beauty' (translated). This rhetoric can be read in reference to Gandharva's polemical claim to authenticity discussed in section 5 of chapter 1 above.

defining parameters: its contour, tessitura, *lay, chhand* and text are all tended to in the rendition as well. Once again, such an engagement with the motivic *samvāds* of the *bandish* might bring the *bandish* into conflict with the grammar of its *rāg* - as might be said to be the case here – to give rise to the kind of alterity Gandharva was known to bring to his renditions.

2.2.7 *Kehen*

Ramashray Jha, while discussing the alterity of Gandharva's renditions of traditional *bandishes*, says 'Kumarji's *kehen* was so remarkable that when he sang a traditional composition, it would take on an entirely new form and colour. We would sing the same composition too, but when he would *say* it (*jab ve kehte the*), it would seem completely new' (in Patel 2006, translated). Jha's use of the term '*kehnā'* (lit. to say) which portrays Gandharva as 'speaking' or 'saying' the *bandish* rather than as 'singing' it points towards how the term *kehen* is used – commonly in musical parlance - as an indicator of a mode of expressive articulation that inflects the melodic line with affect in a particular way. While Jha's use of the term for Gandharva's articulation of *bandish,* and for the novelty he sees in it can be explained using all of the parameters we have discussed above, there remains something to be said for the *kehen* that a *bandish* itself might carry, as *bandishes* in Gandharva's repertoire appear to do.

Gandharva appears to have been empathetic not only to the potential of a particular *bandish* but also to the particular stylistic idiosyncrasies of the musicians and *gharānā* lineages associated with it. We've already seen some examples of this above: Rajab Ali Khan's particular way of articulating the syllables of Nek Na Bisaro Pyāre is what would be called his particular *kehen*. We've seen how this *kehen* is important to Gandharva and forms an important part of the identity of those *bandishes*. Another telling example is Gandharva's demonstration of the *kehen* of the Panjab gharānā (Clip 2-2-2-7-1). Gandharva can be heard saying in this clip, 'The way the Punjab *gharānā* articulated the [upper] *sā*…nobody else sang it like that. They were experts at the *sā'*. After a demonstration of the *bandish* Kān Kundalā in *rāg* Adana in which he emulates the Punjab way of hitting an emphatic and uninhibited *sā*, Gandharva can be heard saying 'no Gwalior or Jaipur *gharānā* singer will hurl the *sā* at you like this…[Punjab singers] would hurl the *sā* at you with both arms raised high! And they'd be standing while they did it, not sitting down!'. The image of the 'standing' singer hurling the *sā* at his audience is metaphor for the *kehen* of the *gharānā*, and for Gandharva, idiosyncrasies such as this are important enough to retain in his own renditions of the *bandish*, so that this *kehen* that

Gandharva assimilates from the Punjab singers through the medium of the *bandish* Kān Kundalā becomes the *kehen* of the *bandish* itself.

Gandharva's work with the expressiveness of *bandishes* was thus twofold: for *bandishes* that did not have particular stylistic peculiarities associated with them, he would emphasise their structural peculiarities (the parameters discussed above) as well as, through the act of repetition, an *alternative* articulative character of the *bandish,* leading commentators like Jha to call this 'Kumarji's remarkable *kehen*'. On the other hand, the large diversity of *bandishes* he was exposed to – primarily, as we have seen, because of Deodhar – often contained *bandishes* like Kān Kundalā that carried with them the *kehen* of various musicians and lineages. Instead of abstracting the *bandish* from such peculiar articulations, Gandharva can be seen to have retained the *bandish's kehen*. Examples of such diversity of articulative expression, of *kehen*, abound in Gandharva's repertoire – Gandharva can be heard, for instance, to have retained Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze's asthma-induced[200] terse *kehen* in the Tilak Kamod *bandish* Tīrath Ko Sab Karein[201]; Abdul Kareem Khan's poignant melismatic flow in the Bhairavi thumri Jamunā Ke Tīr[202]; the Jaipur *gharānā*'s heavily punctuated, stepwise staccato lines in vilambit khayāls like Nevar Kī Jhankār in *rāg* Chhayanat[203] and the complex, *kan*-laden, octave-spanning passages of the Gwalior *gharānā* in general and their Maharashtrian Pandit branch in particular in *khayāls* made famous by them, including Banu Re Balaiyya[204] in Yaman Kalyan.

3. Conclusion

Contour, tessitura, *lay*, *chhand*, text, *samvād* and *kehen* become, then, for Gandharva means through which he enters and inhabits the *bandishes* he sings. Through his act of creative, non-verbatim repetition, Gandharva also sets up another kind of *samvād*: that of the performer conversing with the *bandish* at hand. When asked whether a musician trained in one *gharānā* should avoid singing a *bandish* associated with a different *gharānā* lest it sound strange, Gandharva replies 'It won't [sound strange] if it really contains beauty... do you *feel* something about its beauty, do you make *samvād* with it? Or do you sing different *bandishes* just for the

[200] See footnote 117 in chapter one above
[201] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_-IkkMLvXM
[202] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrYSWM-J718
[203] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT-uq3MQoIo
[204] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ks5yJ0UcqM

sake of doing so?'(2007, 57). Used in this fashion, *samvād* becomes the performer's act of being in *consonance*, or in *conversation* with the *bandish* – an act that consists precisely of being attentive to and dwelling with empathy upon the various parameters of each *bandish*, as discussed above, and doing justice to the potential for expression and affect that they contain.

The theorisation above, with its focus on the demands of the *bandish*, raises the question of the agency of the performer, to which Gandharva's answer appears, again, to be *samvād*: the performer's agency lies in *the ways in which* he converses with the *bandish*, with all the opportunities for melodic, rhythmic, prosodic and poetic opportunities it provides. On being asked what a 'good *bandish*' is, Gandharva gives the following reply, given as an extended quotation below:

> *A good bandish is svair [unconstrained] - it is very free. It does not obstruct the performer anywhere. Most importantly, it expresses the rāg-rūp very well. It avoids unnecessary syllables and words, [it's text] is metaphorical. We can attach various meanings to it. Sometimes it does have a definite meaning, but this is very dynamic*[205]*...the bandish is unconstrained*[206]*. This is why [musicians] sing good bandishes in diverse ways - it is inevitable. You can express your own saundarya-kalpanā (conception of beauty) through it. (2007, 56)*

As an example of this, Gandharva demonstrates the Bhimpalas *bandish* Dholan Mende Ghar Āve, as it was sung by Rajab Ali Khan (Clip 2-3-1) and contrasts it with the way it is conventionally sung (Clip 2-3-2[207]), while imploring his interlocutors to 'remember, there is no change in the original *bandish*. The spots are the same' (2007, 57). Elsewhere, in another demonstration, Gandharva justifies his version of the Gaud Malhar *bandish* Pharke Morī Baiyā in a similar way. While contrasting his version of it (sung more speedily, possibly owing to the agility that was natural to his vocal idiom) with the way it is conventionally sung, Gandharva says:

> *I don't change [bandishes] at all. When I sang Mān Na Karo Rī and Pharke Morī Baiyyā for you yesterday, I sang them the way they were sung sixty or seventy years*

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[205] '*Te khup halnare aste'*, lit. 'it is of the kind that moves/travels/shakes a lot'

[206] Gandharva is emphatic and makes this point repeatedly, as if to highlight the paradox between the term '*bandish*' (lit. restriction) and its description as 'free'

[207] Gandharva can be heard in this clip, saying 'this is the same thing! It is the same thing!', referring to the similarity between the 'outline' – the broad melodic contour – of the two versions he demonstrates.

ago…but don't assume that another singer must sing this bandish in exactly the same way I do. But he'll sing its outline without going wrong at all. [sings conventional – Clip 2-3-4]. The swars are the same as I sang them yesterday. [demonstrates his way of singing them – Clip 2-3-5] …[I sing it like this] and you say I changed it? Well, it did change! I put it before you in a beautiful way - this is not a mistake! If I present beauty before you in the way I see it, is this a mistake? (Gandharva 2019)

This trope, of the 'outline'[208] becomes an important analytic in Gandharva's discourse. The level of abstraction the term connotes, represents for him, as we have seen, a system with play built into it, so that it is flexible enough to accommodate singers of diverse temperaments, abilities and voices. From the examples he frequently gives to demonstrate this point, the term 'outline', seems essentially to indicate the melodic contour and, inevitably, the tessitura of the *bandish.* As an example of this, he can be heard elsewhere exhorting singers whose voice are not agile enough to reinterpret a *tān* that might be built into a *bandish*, and assures them that they will still be singing the same thing. Indeed, Gandharva is emphatic enough about this to interrupt himself in the middle of a performance of the Shyam Kalyan *bandish* Sāvan Kī Sānjh, that has a *tān* in its *mukhṛā* to ask the musicians among his audience, 'why do you get stuck in this [*tān*]?', sings an alternative and says 'this is the same thing![209].

Gandharva's advocacy of a *bandish*-focussed music, then, is *not* the advocacy of rigidity, or of adherence to one unchanging conception of the *bandish* at hand. Instead, his use of *bandish* appears itself to conform to the traditional Indic 'song', as conceptualised in section 1.3 above. Reading Gandharva's conception of the *bandish* in this fashion allows us to resolve the tension that seems to arise between his two apparently contrasting claims, of singing an authentic *bandish* in the 'way it was sung seventy years ago' and of it changing to accommodate 'beauty the way I see it', or the temperament and abilities of the singer. To reiterate, then, the *bandish* is, to Gandharva, a song that is fixed to the extent of it being recognizable, a system of musical expression that has play built into it. In other words, because Gandharva's singing of the *bandish* involves him 'playing' with its various parameters, as discussed above, those

[208] This is not a translation, Gandharva uses the English language term consistently in his discourse

[209] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TEn7D_rfOd8&t=717s. The comment mentioned above is at 12:54min. This rendition is also another good example of Gandharva's attentiveness to the various parameters of the *bandish* and his reinforcement of them through creative repetition. Especially noticeable is his perpetuation of the *chhand* and contour of the *bandish* through non-verbatim repetition of the *mukhṛā.*

parameters, those 'spots' remain consistent and give the *bandish* a recognizable identity, while the act of playing with or within them introduces change, expression, affect and, importantly, room for the performer's own agency to play its role.

In fact, Gandharva shows how composers in the tradition have often taken an existing *bandish* and altered just one or two of its parameters significantly while retaining its 'outline', to give the *bandish* a substantially different identity, one that is different in its potential for extemporization and expression. The three Shuddha Sarang bandishes already discussed in chapter one above are examples of this, as is his demonstration of two *bandishes* in *rāg* Bhoop: Nīndariyā Nahī Āye and Itano Joban Par Mān (Clip 2-3-6). Gandharva can be heard here saying '[the composer of Nīndariyā] made the same line [of Itano Joban Par Mān] more difficult…otherwise it is the same thing…only someone who can move speedily in the ī, ā, e vowels will be able to sing this *bandish* – else the *bandish* will fall asleep![210]'. Gandharva's constant reiteration of this idea, when addressing his fellow musicians, that these *bandishes* are 'the same thing', but are significantly different in expression, underscores his conviction that the potential of the *bandish* as a song-form that is unique to the khayāl genre has largely been overlooked by its practitioners, and that his apparent alterity stems, in no small measure, from directing his attention to it.

The other contention Gandharva makes in the quote above, that a good *bandish* '*expresses the rāg-rūp very well*', seems contradictory to the argument, developed here, that his own engagement with the unique potential of each *bandish,* through non-verbatim repetition, brings it into *conflict* with the grammar of the *rāg*. It will be recalled, however, from the argument made in section 2.1 above, that it is indeed Gandharva's contention that '*Bandishes* allow us to present the rāg very differently, and then the rāg takes on a very different form, as it should' (see section 2.1 above). These two claims need not be seen as contradictory. Instead, it appears that for Gandharva the two are concomitant: it is in fact the act of expressing the *rāg* 'differently' that rids the performance of rigidity and stagnation, allowing the *rāg* to be expressed 'very well'.

We have seen, then, how Gandharva employed creative, non-verbatim repetition of the *bandish*, derived from the idea of the *dhun*, in order to diversify *rāg* and challenge the conventions that narrowed the confines of it as a category. Indeed, as postulated in chapter one

[210] This is an ironical allusion to the text of the *bandish*: 'Nīndariyā Nahī Āye' literally means 'I am unable to fall sleep'.

above, this was the approach that gave Gandharva the ability and the intellectual freedom to inhabit *alternative* aesthetic spaces – an ability that repetitive practice, restricted only to a refinement of craft and embodied learning, may in fact have precluded. In adopting this approach to music making, however, Gandharva had to abandon conventional ideas of performance structure and discipline – an abandonment that earned him perhaps the most severe criticism. The challenges Gandharva's *dhun* and *bandish* based approach posed to conventional performance structure will be the subject of the next chapter of this dissertation.

Chapter 3. *Svābhāviktā*: Remodelling *Gāyakī*

1. Introduction: Organicism and Teleology

Chapter two above showed how Kumar Gandharva's engagement with the bandish caused him to diversify *rāg* and challenge the conventions that narrowed the confines of it as a category. The present chapter will examine the repercussions of this engagement on the structure of his performances. To clarify, 'structure' here implies the way Gandharva structures the progression of his performance through a *single* piece. It does not imply the structuring or sequencing of the various pieces that comprise an entire concert.

The attempt here will be to develop an account of two broad, contrasting approaches to the format of performance of the Hindustani khayāl: on the one hand, a 'conventional' approach that conceives of khayāl performance as the 'development' of *rāg* by means of a schematic process that is preconceived (albeit differently and to different degrees by different musicians); and on the other hand, Gandharva's approach, in which khayāl performance is conceived of as a delving into the expressive opportunities provided by the *bandish*, to the exclusion of other schemes of '*rāg*-development'. In the former, the *bandish*, although present, tends to be relegated to a subordinate role, so that it determines only the most basic parameters of the *nibaddha* section of the performance, the primary goal of which is to progress through a preconceived sequence of improvisational devices towards increasingly intensified[211] vocalisation. In the latter, preconceived sequences such as these, as well as a general trend towards intensification, though not entirely absent, tend to lose their significance (and are often even abandoned) in deference to a sustained and deliberate focus on the *bandish* itself, of the kind described in chapter two above.

[211] The term 'intensification' is used here to refer specifically to Martin Clayton's formulation of it as representative of large-scale linear features of rāg-music such as gradual ascent through the *rāg*'s tonal gamut, acceleration of metric tempo and rhythmic density and so on. See Clayton (M Clayton 2008, sec. 2.4.3 and chap. 7) for more.

A survey of the English-language musicological literature on similar dichotomies in other musics allows us to frame this dialectic in terms of two constructs that appear to connote the above contrasting approaches. These are, respectively, teleology/linearity, and organicism[212].

1.1 Organicism

The use of the term 'organic' above is as a proximate translation of Gandharva's use of the Indic term '*svābhāvik*'[213]. As we have seen above, Gandharva uses the term to describe the quality of his approach to extemporization that causes the new musical statements he develops to appear to have emerged *from within the bandish itself*, so that they do not contain contrivance or artifice. This is a stated goal:

> *While singing a bandish…in any rāg, it should appear as if the rāg emerges from within the bandish…It should not seem as though we're attaching gāyakī to the bandish. We [tend to] attach tāns, ālāpī or a little laykārī to the bandish. I think this shouldn't happen, and I'm always trying not to let this happen…it should appear as if [the rāg / gāyakī] emerges from within [the bandish], it shouldn't be separate from it. (1983, comments made during performance)*

A possible parallel, and an important one, to this approach is to be found in the ideal of organicism as developed in Western musical culture. Ruth Solie summarises the biological metaphor at play in this construction of what appears to be a pervasive aesthetic ideal, thus: '...a work of art should possess unity in the same way, and to the same extent, that a living organism does' (1980, 148). Whether or not it is at all possible to evaluate a work of art on terms as generic as these (what does it mean to 'possess unity', how is unity defined, is the assumption that living organisms possess it justified?), this understanding of organicism appears to be ill-suited to the song-genre under question here: the *bandish* of khayāl is certainly not a well-defined 'work' in the way a Western classical symphony is. As discussed in chapter two above, it is better defined as a composition that is fixed only to the extent of being recognizable and as a system with play built into it.

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[212] Both as used in musicological literature, not in their larger philosophical senses.

[213] The Oxford Hindi-English dictionary translates svābhāvik as 'natural' or '...proper to ones own nature'. Gandharva's use of the term, however, seems to me to include within it a sense of movement, especially since it is often used as an adjective for the act of upaj. Hence my choice of the term organic as its translation in place of the more static and seemingly impotent 'natural'.

Subsequent rumination on this metaphor in Western thought appears to have taken a more Platonic direction. For Hegel, a work of art is 'an individual configuration of reality whose express function it is to make manifest the Idea in its appearance' so that 'the success of [the] unification [of idea and objective reality] is the measure of the degree of beauty [of the work of art]' (ibid, 149). The connotation of an absolute, singular conception of beauty embedded in this understanding of organicism does, in fact, have some resonances with Gandharva's descriptions (as found in a number of his *bandishes*) of his imagined utopia:

Rūp dhare re / Jab sādhan pūran kar / sur ban lay dhāye re.

Ek hī sur sang re / bahurang ang so / pahichān karo re.

(Gandharva 2002, 67)

[When the musician completes his *sādhanā* (practice/striving), then his music gains form, and *sur* and *lay* begin running together as one. We only have one *sur* with us, and it has many colours within it that we must learn to recognize]

The idea expressed in these song-texts, that both what the musician seeks, as well as what music emerges from, is a certain singularity, appears to be consistent with Hegel's contention that 'We must…conceive Nature as herself containing in potency the absolute Idea' (Solie 1980, 149).

Reading Gandharva's utopian goals through a Platonic lens such as this, might make them appear to be in consonance with Hegel's conception of beauty and might even suggest that like Western thinkers, Gandharva's conception of the work of art was '...to elevate it to a status transcendent of the physical' (ibid, 150). It then becomes tempting to attempt an ex-post-facto, almost Schenkerian analysis of Gandharva's music to examine whether and how his extemporizations of the *bandish* add up to a gestaltic whole that transcends its parts and is even prior to them in some way. Such a pursuit, however, would be a fallacy.

All the ideas Solie discusses connote a pre-existing, *static* 'work' in reference to which the Western construction of organicism is derived[214]. This construction appears then to have been retrospectively ascribed to musical performance - a conception that appears to go against the grain of the khayāl genre. So, while it certainly was Gandharva's stated goal to 'make it so that

[214] Martin Clayton affirms that this is the case: 'Performance… is widely conceived in the West as the gradual revelation of a pre-existent structure in audible form, whose essential parameters (duration included) are known in advance.'(2008, sec. 2.3)

all my *upaj* emerges from the bandish', as quoted above, which approach might be termed 'organicist', one must be careful to keep in mind that the music being described using it is not a static work in any simplistic sense. Gandharva's own words give us a better sense of how the *bandish* is an 'organically' emergent 'work' for him:

> *When it comes to composing in rāg, it is a whole other world. In it, everything is expressed at the same time. The words don't come first. Tāl, rāg and text – they all emerge together. It isn't the case that one line of text is composed, and then you fit the rāg into it. That wouldn't be a bandish…Even its lay is expressed at the time [of composition] (2014, 123).*

The argument could be made, then, that Gandharva's organicism, his *svābhāviktā* - when it came to singing a *bandish* conceived as organically emergent in this way - was essentially an attempt to develop a performance model that took *non-verbatim repetition of the bandish,* and rumination on its parameters thereby, to be its method, so that extemporizations appeared to emerge from within the *bandish* itself, giving the bandish the status of an almost wilful *organism*. *This*, then is the way in and the degree to which Gandharva's music might be termed organicist.

We have already dealt with the mechanics of this approach in chapter two. What remains, then, is the construction of a more nuanced account of the performance strategies Gandharva had to *avoid* in order to make his organicism possible. The task the present chapter takes upon itself, then, is of describing the more linear and teleological approaches to khayāl singing, to which Gandharva's approach was, by his own claim, alternative.

1.2 Teleology, Linearity and Cyclicity

In his rumination on theoretical and cultural understandings of time in Indian music, Martin Clayton discusses the idea that *rāg-sangīt* is a form of music that lends itself to be described as a process that is *constructed* through time rather than as a product, or a structure that is pre-existent and is only *revealed* through time, as is understood to be the case in Western musical performance. Clayton usefully qualifies Lewis Rowell's conception of Indian music as 'pure process' (2008, sec. 2.3) by pointing out that Indian musical terminology equally suggests the existence of enduring *objects*, such as the *bandish* or movements characteristic of the *rāg,* that are manipulated through time, and arrives at what appears to be an accurate generic description of musical performance: that it is 'a process or a set of processes…[that] involve the presentation and manipulation of some musical object or other' (ibid). However, in light of the

fact that the 'object' that Kumar Gandharva's music centred itself around was the *bandish*, as discussed above, there is a need to further qualify the above understanding of process and product in the context of the khayāl.

The problem at hand is of making sense of how the performance of a piece of music is structured in its progress through time. A substantial and important part of Clayton's discussion focuses on how musicians and theorists in Indian culture have conceived of musical time itself, and particularly on the dichotomy between time as cyclical and time as linear. Clayton usefully ascribes these two conceptions of time to specific musical features: 'One is periodicity, regularity and recurrence, corresponds to the domain of metre and gives rise to the concept of cyclicity. The other is gestural, figural, and (in principle) unpredictable and relates to the domain of rhythm' (ibid, sec. 2.4.2). The contrast between the two and their implications for musical performance and our conception of it become wholly apparent when two vastly different musics, Western and Indian as broad categories, are compared. For Clayton, then, 'Western music theory has emphasized metre's aspect as time measurement and played down the aspect of recurrence, while Indian music theory has given expression to both equally', so that Western music is characterised as linear, narratival, and even teleological, in contrast to Indian music, which is described as being 'cyclical'. The attempt in the present chapter, however will be to bring this debate between linearity, and cyclicity or non-linearity within the ambit of the khayāl, to propose a continuum, the extremes of which represent 'linear' and 'non-linear' conceptions of khayāl-performance and to determine the point along this continuum where Kumar Gandharva's music lies in comparison with that of other approaches to the genre.

Clayton quotes Jeffrey Pressing to make the point that 'Since it is *repetition* that allows cyclicity to be perceived, it can be useful heuristically to classify the nature of repetition used in music, as an index of the *degree of cyclicity* of time.' (ibid, emphasis added). As chapter two above has already shown, and as this chapter will show again from another perspective, *repetition* is a crucial device in Gandharva's improvisatory arsenal, since it is through non-verbatim repetition of the *bandish* in general and its *mukhṛā* in particular that Gandharva's performances play themselves out in time. This is the basis for the argument, developed here, that Gandharva's music lies perhaps more towards the cyclicity end of the continuum proposed above than does most other khayāl music. While an empirical comparison of Gandharva's music with other approaches will be conducted below, a few relevant ideas deserve attention at this point.

The first of these is the idea that the *degree* to which a music appears to be cyclical depends to a great extent on the conviction of its performers, theorists and audiences that it *ought* to be so. In his discussion on cyclicity, Clayton makes the important observation that 'Indian theorists moved from a belief that *tāl* could be conceived [as cyclical] to the belief that this was, after all, a natural state of affairs…', so that 'the conception of *tāl* as cyclical fed back from music theory into practice as performers began to be persuaded that time in music *ought* to be so' (ibid). This was not always the case: Lewis Rowell describes a time when Indian *tāl* was *not* conceived as cyclical and that it consisted instead of 'complex modular formal structures [the ancient *mārga tāl* system]', and that it was through a process of theorization, evolution and diverse influence[215] that it acquired its current 'cyclical' character. Of relevance, then, to the current discussion, is the idea that the Indic *mārgī* musical tradition has itself variously favoured linearity and cyclicity in its conceptions and manifestations of itself, and that this has occurred through, to use Rowell's formulation, '"resonances" between a musical tradition and its controlling ideology'. For Kumar Gandharva, the controlling ideology is that of *svābhāviktā,* of an organicism, the source for which is the *bandish,* and the means of implementation of which is non-verbatim repetition, which repetition leads to a felt predominance of cyclicity.

The second idea that deserves consideration is, then, the corollary of the first. If Gandharva's music lies, as is contended here, towards the 'cyclical' end of our continuum, then the music of his others must lie towards its 'linear' end. The implication that Gandharva's music underplays linearity and its possibly concomitant trait of teleology deserves further consideration.

Clayton provides a metaphor that appears to be fundamental to how linearity in music has been understood by theorists in the Western tradition: that of the *narrative curve,* which consists, for instance, of 'exposition, tension-crisis and denouement or catastrophe', so that European music practise and theory both give importance to the idea that 'a piece of music should move through a logical order of events towards closure'(2008, sec. 2.4.3), thus making 'process' (whether of performance or of listening) distinctly teleological. Clayton contends that this is *not* the case in *rāg-sangīt*: '*Rāg* music tends to become faster, for instance, but there is no target speed for which the performer aims, and there is no point at which the 'final' speed can be said to have been attained. On the contrary, the music seems to accelerate until either the limit of the

[215] Clayton lists various devotional musics, including both Hindu and Sufi musical cultures, as having facilitated this change. See Clayton (2008, sec. 2.4.1).

performers' technical ability has been reached, the soloist becomes bored with the process, or the time limit set for the concert or recording has been reached' (ibid).

While Clayton is certainly right in the context of a cross-cultural comparison between Indian *rāg* and Western tonal music, there is discernible in the above account of *rāg*-music, a subtler level of teleology that Gandharva, it appears, attempts to elide: that it is customary for *rāg*-music to accelerate. Clayton is himself aware of this, and is careful to point out other linear features of *rāg* music too, such as linear approaches to *rāg*-development which are processes of 'expansion from a small kernel around the Sa…until the *rāg* occupies the whole gamut'. Clayton puts all of these linear aspects of Indian music under the general heading of 'intensification', but insists that they are 'linear without being teleological'(ibid).

That a level of teleology in both the performance and reception of khayāl music is distinctly at play is apparent from the very fact that intensification, and its implications for the rhythmic organisation of music, form an important part of Clayton's work. This is also apparent from the following quote from Vamanrao Deshpande that Clayton finds significant: 'Each *avartana* [cycle] must excel the one that has gone before. This process goes on until the last *avartana* in which the very acme of tension is reached, to be followed by a grand resolution which completes the entire recital' (1987, 33)

As subsequent discussion in this chapter will demonstrate, Kumar Gandharva takes this conception, of performance as a linear process of intensification, and the concomitant teleological expectations it creates in listeners, and subverts it perhaps more substantially than any other vocalist of recent times (albeit not entirely and not always). This chapter will also show that this defiance of linearity and teleology is a major cause of the apparent alterity of his music.

To support his discussion of linearity, teleology and cyclicity, Clayton brings in a fascinating set of opposing tendencies constructed by Johnathan Kramer that it would be useful to keep in mind as we progress through this chapter:

linearity	nonlinearity
teleological listening	cumulative listening
horizontal	vertical
motion	stasis
change	persistence
progressive	consistent
becoming	being
left brain	right brain
temporal	atemporal

(Kramer, qtd in M Clayton 2008, sec. 2.4.3)

At the risk of perpetuating binaries, and with the disclaimer that these must be considered relative tendencies rather than absolute characteristics, it is contended here that Kumar Gandharva's organicist, *bandish*-focussed, non-linear music can be described quite convincingly by the terms on the right, if only in comparison to most other approaches to khayāl singing which resonate with terms on the left of this table: Gandharva's music is a 'vertical' dive into the *bandish* as opposed to 'horizontally' progressing through the methodical development of a *rāg*; in constantly staying with the *bandish* at hand through non-verbatim repetition, it represents a kind of 'stasis' and 'persistence' and resists the 'motion' and 'progressive'ness of intensification; it can thus, paradoxically enough, be construed as a 'being' more than a 'becoming' and can thus be shown as being more atemporal than temporal. An important result of this is that listening to Gandharva's music can be construed as being more 'cumulative' than 'teleological'[216].

The goal of the present chapter, then, is to compare empirically the *gāyakīs* of a number of vocalists, both Gandharva's seniors and contemporaries, to locate teleological and organicist tendencies within them, and to view the linear tendencies they contain as subconscious

[216] Whether and how Gandharva's music is more 'right brain' than 'left brain' is beyond the scope of this dissertation, however my forthcoming work on the neural processes that underlie improvisational creativity might shed some light on this complex subject.

references to an older *mārgī*-linear approach to structuring the performance of a piece - the kind described in Rowell's quote above.

2. *Gāyakī* – Musical Material and its Sequentialization

2.1 The Traditional Sequence

The understanding that the progress of a Hindustani khayāl performance occurs in a discernibly *linear* fashion and is composed of various distinctly identifiable *stages* is widespread enough to be called commonplace. While the stages that various musicians belonging to various *gharānā* traditions employ, as well as the terms scholars use to describe them differ widely, the fact that there exists a discernible stagewise *sequence* of some sort that is being adhered to and that the general trajectory of performance is one that moves towards intensification appear to be universally accepted .

Bonnie Wade's argument is perhaps most representative of a fundamentally teleological understanding of khayāl music. For her, the *bandish* itself is nothing more than a concise model of the linear, teleological process the entire performance must follow:

> *In Hindustani classical vocal music, text carries the implication of rhythm, if not meter, and the implication of the more syllabic antara text is that the antara is more rhythm-oriented than the sthai. This is borne out in the improvised performance, as emphasis on rhythm becomes a major factor only after the raga has been adequately emphasized as in the sthai. Thus, the ciz [bandish] is … a microcosmic view of the structural principles of the performance to come, first emphasizing the raga (sthai) through pitch register extension (sthai to antara), then emphasizing the rhythm (antara). (2016, 20)*

This conception of performance as a stagewise, linear phenomenon is, for Wade, fundamental to Hindustani music as a whole, so that whether the song-genre being performed is dhrupad, khayāl or thumrī, '…one pays attention first to melody, then to rhythm, then to speed' (ibid, 30). In fact, Wade goes as far as to define the *chhotā khayāl* (faster paced or *drut bandishes*) as nothing more than the culmination of a large-scale linear and teleological process: 'Those *khyāl* performances in which attention to the melody is satisfied mostly by singing the *ciz*, thereby leaving improvisation to emphasize the musical elements of rhythm and, especially, speed, are called *chotā khyāl*…In order to fulfil the ideal of giving attention to the three musical

elements – melody, rhythm, and speed – *chotā khyāls* are rarely performed as independent pieces' (ibid)[217].

Unsurprisingly, Kumar Gandharva was known to defy this understanding of khayāl by often performing *chhotā khayāls* as independent pieces, and often even singing entire concerts consisting only of *chhotā khayāls*[218]. But relevant to the discussion at hand is Wade's understanding of the function of *bandish* in khayāl performance – the intention here is not to show that Wade's understanding is incorrect. Instead, it is to show that this is, in fact, a good summary of the particular understanding of *bandish* that Gandharva's music subverts and defies.

Another common way of understanding the progress of khayāl performance is by looking at it as a sequence of improvisational devices. For veteran Agra Gharana vocalist, scholar and teacher Shrikrishna Haldankar (1927-2016), 'In khayal gayaki, a performance begins with sthayi antara, and develops through alapa, badhat, vistar, layabol, boltana and tana' (2001, 14). Although they describe it in slightly different terms, Nicolas Magriel and Wim Van Der Meer both find, through their respective lenses, that this is in fact the case[219]. Although Haldankar's sequence can be (and is) brought into practice in a variety of ways (some of which will be addressed below), it unambiguously implies a stepwise increase in syllabicity, rhythmic density and speed in general, as Magriel's and Meer's observations will bear out. Clearly, then, Wade's formulation of melody -> rhythm -> speed, Haldankar's sequence and Magriel and Meer's observations on the progress of khayāl performance are all consonant with each other, and are described appropriately by Clayton's 'intensification'. The linear and teleological nature of khayāl performance is, then, well established in the literature.

2.2 *Baṛhat* and *Upaj*

The Indic terms used for the linear, sequential approach to khayāl development described above are *baṛhat* and *vistār*, both of which are often used interchangeably though they often also have

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[217] Clayton finds, similarly, that, 'In chotā khayāl…the text is rarely employed outside the bandisSh, and tāns (especially ākār tān) predominate' (2008, sec. 9.3.1)

[218]Some examples can be heard at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_GGgx9sYWbg, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKItwy1btcE, and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h6KC7_EtfbY. These are in addition to his thematic concerts, such as Gaud Malhar Darshan (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NKMrAXpkeMk) among others, which were explicitly intended to demonstrate the various profiles of a single rāg through various bandishes in it.

[219] See Magriel (2013, 11–12) and Meer (1980, 59–60, 4, 84-5)

slightly different connotations. For Ashok Ranade, *baṛhat* (lit. growth) means 'to move from slow to fast tempo…More specifically it means elaboration of *raga* according to established norms by stressing qualities of gradualness and attention to detail'(2006, 195–96); a definition in which a linear, gradually intensifying progression is distinctly implied. There is, however, another term in the khayāl lexicon that is also often used to indicate extemporized performance: *upaj*. *Upaj* (lit. sprouting) is typically used to refer to segments of the performance that are less premeditated and result from composing spontaneous variations on an existing movement, typically a phrase from the *bandish* at hand. We've already encountered Vamanrao Deshpande's definition of this term as 'derivative phrase'. Ranade's definition concurs, but its latter half is telling: 'The term refers to improvisation on a short phrase from a musical composition – the product being described as upaj in order *to stress the aspect of creativity* in the venture' (2006, 275 emphasis added).

The difference in tone in Ranade's definitions of these two terms is revealing, and is representative of two contrasting approaches to improvisation in Hindustani music. *Baṛhat* connotes linear, intensifying movement and follows 'established norms' of *rāg* elaboration, while *upaj* is only an 'improvisation on a short phrase' to which 'creativity' is important - in a way that it is not to an intensifying *baṛhat* process. The term *baṛhat* will, then, be employed in the remainder of this discussion to indicate the linear, sequential approach to khayāl singing discussed above. Gandharva's non-linear approach, on the other hand, could certainly be called *upaj*, as it has by many commentators. The *upaj* approach is certainly not an invention of Gandharva's, as the following quotation from Magriel, drawn from his substantial survey of recorded khayāl music, shows:

> *The performance organization in the early LPs of artists from the Gwalior, Jaipur and Rampur-Sahaswan gharānās does not lend itself to being … concisely charted. The baṛhat of these artists is more bandish-based than svar-based, taking the shape of variations on the song itself and not following a strict pattern of development, and there is a greater tendency to mix or alternate various types of upaj such as baṛhat, bolbānt and tān. To varying degrees these artists adhere to the Gwalior aesthetic that bandish should seem like upaj and upaj should seem like bandish. (2013, 40. See also pages 30-45 for a survey of performance organisation in LP recordings)*

The *upaj anga* or approach to khayāl singing, then, was a feature of the old Gwalior style, one that Magriel only finds in 'early LPs' and not in newer ones. This is certainly one of the things Gandharva implies when he claims, as we saw in chapter two above, that 'I sing *bandishes* the way they were sung sixty or seventy years ago'. Gandharva's conception of *khayāl* performance is, then, rooted in the older Gwalior *upaj* idiom – although it is a more *bandish*-focussed reimagination of it, as will be shown below through an empirical comparison between Gandharva's and the other approaches mentioned here.

2.3 The Critique of *Baṛhat*

> *'It is not right to sing bol-tāns in every khayāl*[220]*. [Whether or not to do so] depends on its syllables' (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 108)*
>
> *'I never sit down to produce tāns, or to do laykārī. I sit down to sing!' (Gandharva et al. 1988)*

For Gandharva, then, which improvisational device to use and whether or not to use it at all is contingent upon the *bandish*, and even when used, these devices are emphatically *not* the point – they are only tools that serve the demands of the *bandish*. Indeed, for Gandharva, pre-conceived musical devices, and especially sequences of them are not necessary because the constructs of *rāg* and *tāl* are inherently generators of new material that do not require such pre-conception: '*rāg-rūp* and *tāl-rūp*, all these *rūps*, which eventually unite with each other, if you're able to experience their *āghāts* in a *svābhāvik* fashion, then they are such that they make it impossible to repeat any musical material you may have created…it is not just *lay*, but *tāl* that has this quality. You just can't do the same thing again' (2014, 130).

Overt pre-conception and pre-planned sequentialization are, then, detrimental to Gandharva's conception of khayāl because they preclude such *svābhāvik* emergence of *upaj*. It is, then, this diminished importance that Gandharva accords both to improvisational devices and to the sequence in which they are arranged that causes *gharānedār* scholars like Haldankar to claim, on the very first page of his book, that 'Pandit Kumar Gandharva, whose iconoclastic ideas are well-known to many music lovers, strongly disapproved of gharanedar gayaki'(2001, 1). Haldankar uses the term *gāyakī* to mean an approach to khayāl performance that has been handed down through the pedagogical lineage within a *gharānā*. It is a specific approach to

[220] 'khyāl' here refers to *badā* khayāl – a bandish sung to a *vilambit* tempo, and not to the genre.

khayāl performance that dictates the aesthetic decisions performers who adopt it make: decisions about voice use, ornamentation, repertoire, and, importantly, improvisational devices. The pedigree of the *gāyakī,* the idea that generations of master musicians have contributed towards fashioning its approach is clearly important to Haldankar and is an important factor in the value he ascribes to it, both in his defence of his own Agra *gharānā gāyakī* and his critique of its Jaipur *gharānā* counterpart.

Gandharva, however, in a Socratic flourish, challenges musicians to define their terms: In response to the question 'to what extent does the *bandish* retain its significance when we start establishing our *gāyakī*?', Gandharva retorts, 'What do you mean by *gāyakī*?', and answers the question himself to say that *gāyakī* is simply '[musical] material' [original term]: 'four or five [types of] *tān*, ten-twelve [kinds of] *ālāp*, a few kinds of *boltān* – that's all it is' (2007, 60). Elsewhere, Gandharva is even more acerbic: 'Only knowing musical material is not knowing music. I'm not the boss of wheat-grain even if I happen to sell it in my shop.' (Quoted in Kolhapure 2004, 17). While Gandharva rejects this conventional understanding of *gāyakī*, then, he reinterprets it to indicate a particular *expression,* a particular *affective* approach to *rāg* and *bandish* that is not defined by or restricted to the 'material' it uses and the sequence in which that material is brought into play[221]; an affective approach that is inevitably standardized by its proponents, and has guilds (*sanghas*) form around it, which process leads ultimately to conflict between the various guilds and the destruction of the affective comportment that had given rise to the *gāyakī* in the first place (Gandharva 2007, 60, paraphrased). To clarify, the intention here is emphatically not to prove that Gandharva's approach is necessarily superior to that of other *gharānedār* approaches, but to develop a nuanced account of *how* it is alternative to them, and of the ideological ground upon which this alterity was constructed.

Haldankar's adoption and advocacy of a *gharānedār gāyakī* of high pedigree contains within it an advocacy of a socio-aesthetic, discursive ideal, as is demonstrated in his list of 'important factors which are necessary for maintaining a high aesthetic standard':

1. Dignity of presentation
2. Proportionality of exposition and precision
3. Capacity and inclination to explore the abstract
4. Ease and Abandon

[221] In a particularly rich and complex statement about the nature of gāyakī, Gandharva says 'When we see something expressed differently, we call it 'gāyakī', otherwise we only call it 'music' (2007, 60)

(2001, 10)

The historical baggage that the above factors carry, especially in terms like 'dignity', 'proportionality' and 'the abstract' has been addressed in some detail in section 3.2 of chapter one above. It was proposed there that khayāl practitioners have tended to look at dhrupad as the model from which to derive their understanding of the kind of musical propriety the above factors demand. It will be argued below that although dhrupad and khayāl are markedly distinct genres today, it is to a collective memory of dhrupad practise, to an aspirational dhrupad 'model' that the khayāl community looks, albeit subconsciously, for its notions of sobriety, dignity and restraint. The following analysis will attempt to show how a number of practices that continue to represent structure, discipline and authenticity in khayāl performance can be shown to have their roots in the conventions of dhrupad practise, and that it is precisely these conventions that Kumar Gandharva plays down more comprehensively than his predecessors and contemporaneous khayāl performers, instead centring his performance practise around the *bandish* and its *dhun*[222], which become *his* sources of structural order and cohesion.

3. The Dhrupad Model

3.1 Defining the Model

To clarify at the outset, dhrupad is treated here as the only surviving representative of a set of song-genres that were classicized or viewed as 'classical', and understood as *mārgī,* as discussed in chapter one above. Richard Widdess gives us an example of how dhrupad practice has a *mārgī* pedigree when he points out that notations in older musical treatises such as the *Brhaddesī* and the *Sangītaratnākara* offer '…parallels to processes of improvised development in the practice of modern dhrupad singers' and that '…these processes were formulated into a *standard method,* called *ālāptī,* which could be *applied to any raga*' (Widdess 2010, 117).

To hark back to the discussion, presented in chapter one, on the conflict between *desī* and *mārgī* as representative of the musician's conflict between order and freedom, it is probably in reaction to this standardization that the 'freer' khayāl gained popularity. As will be made evident from the analysis below, however, musicians have continued to try to reign in the freedom of the khayāl in various ways, for various purposes, and to various degrees. The

[222] Gandharva's understanding of these constructs as formal principles, and how it was different from conventional understandings of them, is dealt with in detail in chapter two above.

approach to *gāyakī* that they appear to adopt for doing so, then, has been termed here the dhrupad model, since its roots can be shown to have strong links with dhrupad practise, as has been done below.

One exceedingly important example of this is the twentieth-century standardization of the *process* of khayāl performance carried out by Vishnu Digambar Paluskar as part of his pedagogical movement. Paluskar's textbooks, particularly his *Rāg Pravesh Mālikā* and *Sangīt*, outline a well-defined performance structure, intended to be taught in his schools, that consists of a sequence of improvisational devices such as *ālāp, bol-tān, tān* etc, arranged in ascending order of intensification[223]. The impact Paluskar's work has had on subsequent music making in the subcontinent is well known, and is of particular importance to this discussion because Gandharva traces his pedagogical lineage to it, and goes on to depart from the kind of sequentiality Paluskar's pedagogy advocated, to move towards a *bandish*-based organisation of khayāl performance.

The table below, however, demonstrates how a *stage-wise* and *sequential* approach to improvisation such as Paluskar's, to give one example, solidifies the links the performer and his idiom of khayāl singing have with a 'systematic' and 'orderly' tradition, understood as *mārgī* through its adherence to dhrupad conventions. The elaborate dhrupad *ālāp* is another important example of this: this *ālāp* is performed in three increasingly intensified stages in the *anibaddha* section of dhrupad performance, and scholars have often approached the intensification they find in khayāl performance through its lens, so that many scholars concur that such stage-wise intensification occurs in the *nibaddha* section of khayāl, where, for instance, the *bandish* statement may be followed by more intense rhythm work in the form of *bol-bānṭ* and may be concluded by even faster (and therefor more intense) *tāns*[224].

The various scholarly accounts of the process of khayāl development all concur to a great extent, then, that there is a discernible and gradually intensifying sequence in khayāl performance, and that in most cases, one is able to mark out individual stages of the performance that involve the execution of an improvisational device that is more intense (i.e. usually higher in tempo or density) than the last[225]. Clayton finds that '…acceleration is the

[223] See Ranade (2011, 92–93) for a summary of this sequence.

[224] 'In much khyāl singing (and khyāl-based instrumental styles), a more or less systematic *rāg* development can be heard within the *tāl*-bound section, akin to the unmetered ālāp of *dhrupad* and *dhrupud*-based instrumental styles.' (Clayton, 2008, sec. 9.2.1)

[225] See for instance Meer (1980, 27–28, 43, 60); Clayton (2008, secs. 7.3 & 9.2); Wade (2016, 30)

most obvious factor which creates a sense of progression in the performance as a whole' and that this tendency 'reaffirms the primacy of process over structure in Indian music…' (2008, sec. 7.3.2).

While sequentiality and intensification are perhaps the most important means by which musicians appear to bring about a sense of *mārgī* discipline into their extemporized music-making, there are a number of other parameters too. The analysis below will show, then, that an unarticulated attempt to emulate various aspects of what has been termed here the 'dhrupad model' can be shown to exist in the performance conventions of various *gharānā* traditions. Martin Clayton gives us the methodological tool of rhythmic analysis that proves to be very useful for analyses such as this and can be effectively employed in order to '[address] issues of historical continuity and innovation, and the relationships between various genres and styles' (2008, sec. 1.3) which is precisely the goal of this analysis. The following analysis depends heavily upon Clayton's work to construct the dhrupad model and to see in which ways and to what extent the music of a variety of important twentieth century khayāl performers adheres to it; and to eventually show that the music of Kumar Gandharva distances itself from this model more substantially than that of any of the others. This model is built upon ten parameters, most of which are derived from Clayton's work, often also borrowing from Wim Van Der Meer who has been treated here as a representative of the idea that khayāl *ought* to look to dhrupad as its model (Meer's ideas on this have been discussed in chapter one above). The parameters are:

1. Sequentiality
2. Intensification
3. *Rāg*
4. *Bandish*
5. *Mukhṛa*
6. Rhythmic Style
7. *Laykārī*
8. *Tāl* and *Thekā*
9. Ornamentation
10. Voice Use

These parameters will be put to use to construct the dhrupad model, based on which a tabulated comparative analysis of recorded music will be conducted in section 3.2 below. The intention of this analysis will be to show how and to what degree a variety of performers, including

Gandharva, adhere to or distance themselves from this model. Each of the parameters is described in detail below:

3.1.1. Sequentiality

As described above, this involves the execution of a pre-formulated sequence of improvisational devices. These are sometimes referred to as the *ashtāngas* or 'eight limbs' of *gāyakī* but there is no consensus on which these are or even how many there are[226]. In general, however, these are understood to be *sthāī, antarā, ālāp, bol-ālāp, bol-bānt, tihāī, bol-tān, tān*[227]. As we will see below, however, various musicians from various *gharānās* follow different kinds of sequences and may elide some of the above or even add more. What is common amongst most, however, is an intensifying sequence of some description. One important exception to this convention is the older Gwalior tradition represented in the below analysis by Krishnarao Shankar Pandit, who is perhaps the least sequential of the musicians considered here with the exception of Kumar Gandharva himself[228]. Pandit's process of extemporisation can still be shown, however, to conform to *mārgī*-dhrupad standards to some degree through their adherence to the other parameters discussed below.

3.1.2 Intensification

As discussed above. For Clayton, intensification can occur in three ways, all of which find precedents in dhrupad practice[229]:

1. Acceleration of metrical tempo: 'Gradual but significant [acceleration]…is the norm in *dhrupad-dhamār*…' (2008, sec. 6.2.3)
2. Increase in rhythmic density: 'Divisive *laykārī* has an important role in acceleration and performance process in general, in several genres…[including] *dhrupad*, *dhamār*, and the more syllabic khyāl styles… divisive *laykārī* is used to accelerate the rhythmic density dramatically against a relatively stable tempo' (ibid, sec. 10.2.2)

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[226] See https://www.meetapandit.com/gwalior-gharana-styles-of-singing/ for one version. Also see Ranade (2006, 187–88) for an account of the mārgī origins of the term 'anga'.

[227] See Vikas Kashalkar (Kashalkar and Dublay 2021) for a detailed account of the Gwalior gharana's '*ashtānga gāyakī'*. Also see (Wade 2016, 27) for brief descriptions of six types of improvisation, which include some of the above, also including *sargam* and *nom-tom.*

[228]Bade Ghulam Ali Khan is another exception, since he was often accused of a lack of order and discipline in his music, as in Deshpande (1987, 56–58). In the recordings analysed here, however, his performances display a clear trajectory of intensification.

[229] See Clayton (2008, chap. 6,7) for a detailed excursus on tempo and rhythmic density in particular. Clayton's conception of the '*lay* ratio' (ibid, sec. 6.1) is also an important formulation.

3. Increase in rhythmic definition: '[dhrupad ālāp]' performances tend to increase in speed and rhythmic definition' (ibid, sec. 7.2)

Of crucial importance here is the fact that Gandharva is known to have explicitly avoided increasing the metrical tempo of the *thekā* across his performances, irrespective of the genre or type of composition at hand. We have looked at the reasons for this in some detail in chapter two above, namely that for Gandharva, the *lay* and *chhand* of the *bandish* are parameters that are inseparable from it because they contribute significantly to its particular expressive character. While the recording of Gandharva analysed here shows absolutely no increase in tempo even over a performance-time of 47 minutes, an unintentional increase of tempo is certainly discernible across his performances. Invariably though, this increase is insignificant, at an average of only 4.37%[230]. Compare this with Clayton's measurement of a performance by LK Pandit, which he classifies as 'Gradual and slight, and perhaps unintentional' in spite of the increase being at a substantial 20% (2008, sec. 6.2.3 See also footnote 16). And Gandharva's acceleration is certainly very insignificant in comparison with Kesarbai Kerkar (1892-1977) who, as seen in the table below, might accelerate the metric tempo of a single bandish in a single performance by as much as 304%! Gandharva's minimal acceleration then certainly does not qualify as intensification. As the table below shows, this is another very significant departure from dhrupad-derived convention and, as discussed in section 2.2.4 of chapter two above, is an aesthetic choice Gandharva makes in order to do justice to the *chhand* of the *bandish* that its *lay* is an inseparable component of.

Similarly, as will be addressed in section 3.1.7 below, Gandharva's indulgence in divisive *laykārī* is minimal, and one often encounters entire concerts that lack entirely in this regard. Even when divisive *bol-bāṇṭ* is engaged in, Gandharva invariably follows it up with anticlimactic slow *ālāpī*, and thus does not allow a linear flow or trend of intensification to form. Thus, a clear increase in rhythmic density and definition are both generally avoided in Gandharva's performances, although these trends may be discernible in some performances to a small extent, as exceptions that prove the rule.

[230] Based on a tempo-increase survey of 12 performances dated between 1955-1992, of bandishes in 10 different rāgs, 5 different tāls, various tempos covering vlimabit, madhya and drut lays, over durations ranging from 3:50min to 61min, covering studio recordings, live proscenium stage concerts as well as intimate mehfils.

3.1.3 *Rāg*

> *Dhrupada presents a neat separation of the important music parts, slow, medium and fast ālāpa, the actual composition and the elaboration through text and rhythm. The rāga is really complete in the ālāpa. To some extent the ālāpa must be attuned to the composition which follows, but on the whole it is an independent musical statement. (Meer 1980, 49, emphasis added)*
>
> *'The ālāpa of dhrupada is considered the most complete and sublime method for exposing a raga' (ibid, 32)*

The idea that a *rāg* can never be 'complete' is well established[231] – what Meer's usage of the term implies, then, is a performance of the *rāg* that travels a 'complete' *trajectory* from low to high *intensity*, and thus gives the appearance of a 'complete' elaboration. The dhrupad *ālāp* that is the epitome of such completeness for Meer does this in two ways: by gradually ascending through the tonal gamut that it addresses, and by covering slow (mostly unpulsed), medium and fast (mostly pulsed) tempos of singing in what Clayton calls its usual 'tripartite structure' (2008, sec. 7.2). Presenting the 'complete' *rāg* through such a structure *before* launching into the composition is a dhrupad convention[232], and the use of this approach in khayāl is most apparent in Faiyaz Khan's pre-*bandish nom-tom ālāp*[233]. But even for other musicians who do not indulge in such an explicitly dhrupad-derived, extensive pre-*bandish ālāp*, the convention is to engage in a similar trajectory of intensifiying their *vistār* through expansion of the tonal gamut of the *rāg* and an increase in tempo and/or density in what Clayton terms the post-*bandish* phase of development: '…the term *vistār* (lit. 'expansion'), which I have used primarily to refer to *ālāp*-like *rāg* development in *nibaddh* sections, is sometimes used as a general term for all post-*bandish* development.' (ibid, sec.9.1). As we will see below, Gandharva elides both this sequentiality and the conventional trajectory of intensification in his performances, and establishes instead a non-teleological, non-linear performance of the *bandish* at hand, so that 'completeness' in this teleological sense of the word is often not apparent in his renditions.

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[231] See for instance Clayton (2008, sec. 2.3). For an ontological excursus on *rāg* as representing an object that has identity that is defined by change, see Mukund Lath (Lath and Shulman 2018, passim).
[232] See Clayton (2008, sec. 7.1.1) for an account of this.
[233] See Wade (2016, 112).

Meer's 'complete' *rāg* also seems to have another connotation: that of delineating a *rāg* in an abstracted way so that it is not restricted to the demands of a particular *bandish*. This becomes eminently possible in dhrupad owing to the convention of singing an extensive *ālāp* before stating the composition at all. However, since khayāl convention demands that most *rāg* delineation is carried out in the post-*bandish* phase of performance, there arises the possibility of only singing the facet of *rāg* indicated in the *bandish*. We've already seen the extent to which Gandharva exploits this possibility by looking at *bandishes* as profiles of *rāgs* and by keeping these profiles in play throughout his performances of them, by constantly engaging with the various parameters of the *bandish* (outlined in chapter two above). To do this is to give *bandish* a degree of primacy over *rāg*. For most khayāl singers, however, this is not the case. In Meer's description of khayāl performance, for instance, he finds that 'If the composition is not preceded by an *ālāpa,* the full development of the *rāga* is done through *Baṛhata*.' (1980, 62), implying that a 'full' and 'complete' 'development' of the *rāg* is the primary aim of Hindustani music in general. This, indeed, is the conventional understanding and Wade states it categorically:

> *The gharana … has ensured the continuity of the most fundamental characteristics of the Hindustani art-music tradition: the primacy of raga among all musical materials; musical structure based on clear and consecutive emphasis of the basic elements of melody, rhythm and meter, and on utilization of a recurring melodic motive to delineate musical units; and association of song text with composition and meter. In the eighteenth century, and probably through the nineteenth, those fundamental characteristics were manifested most thoroughly and superbly only through the vocal genre alap-dhrupad. (Wade 2016, 274)*

Gandharva, as we have seen, gives *bandish* primacy over *rāg*, and as we will see below, does not give significance to 'consecutive emphasis of…melody, rhythm and meter', neither does he restrict his use of his recurring melodic motives (his *mukhṛās*) to only 'delineating musical units'. Indeed, as the analysis shows, discernible sequential and intensifying 'units' of extemporized performance, or even a distinct 'post-bandish phase' are not always identifiable in Gandharva's music. Singing a 'complete' *rāg*, then, is *not* the goal Gandharva appears to have in mind. This radical subversion of the conventional understanding of process in Hindustani music is perhaps at the root of Gandharva's alterity.

3.1.4 *Bandish*

The role of the *bandish* in its entirety – of its *sthāī* and *antarā* – is conventionally limited to being stated once or twice only at the beginning of the performance, not to be repeated thereafter[234]. Both Clayton and Meer have demonstrated that this is an established convention in dhrupad and is also adhered to in khayāl[235]. As shown in the comparison table below, Gandharva restates both the *sthāī* and *antarā* of the bandish often and at various points in his performance so that he appears to be *returning* to the *bandish* that forms the ground for his *upaj*.

3.1.5 *Mukhṛā*

An issue associated with Gandharva's emphasis on *bandish* is that of using the *bandish's mukhṛā* as a refrain. As discussed seen in section 2.2.4 of chapter two above, *mukhṛā* -repetition is certainly not unique to Gandharva and is a well-recognized feature idiomatic to the genre. However, as also discussed there, Gandharva repeats the *mukhṛā* in such a way as to keep the *chhand* – the particular accentual pattern - of it in play throughout his performance. This characterization of Gandharva's *gāyakī* must be qualified when addressing his *vilambit khayāl*. Given the longer duration of *āvartans* in *vilambit* khayāl, the *chhand* created by *mukhṛā*-repetition is discernibly less prominent. However, Gandharva's repetitions of the *mukhṛā* still retain a significance different from that observable in other musicians: they are *non-verbatim repetitions*, by dint of which the act of repeatedly stating the *mukhṛā* acquires significance as an *important improvisatory device in its own right*, and is not relegated to its conventional task of acting as a boundary line between subsequent episodes of *rāg baṛhat*.

This significance is also perhaps underlined by his adjectival extemporisations, as described in section 2.2.1 of chapter two above. Additionally, Gandharva also repeats and dwells extensively on the *mukhṛā* of the *bandish's antarā* – a feature that is certainly absent in dhrupad convention, and appears to be missing in a number of the singers surveyed below too. As is evident from Clayton's discussions on *mukhṛās* in Hindustani music in general, the *mukhṛā* is one of the most crucial features of the *khyāl* genre, but is largely optional in dhrupad, although

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[234] Wade states this as the convention, and links the likelihood of bandish repetition to tempo: 'In slow khyal there is relatively little repetition of either the entire composition or even of whole sections; somewhat more repetition might occur in medium speed bara khyal; and it is highly likely that the ciz will recur amid improvisation in chota khyāl' (2016, 32)

[235] See Clayton (2008, sec. 7.3.2) and Meer (1980, 27, 84) for analysis and graphical/tabular depictions of typical performance conventions that begin with a statement of the bandish.

it is common in dhamār[236]. Clayton also points out, importantly, that 'although some *dhrupad sthāīs* have *mukhṛās*, the *antarās* generally do not' (2008, sec. 8.4.2).

An associated point is that of the anacrustic nature of khayāl *mukhṛās*. What Clayton is implying in the above statements about dhrupad *mukhṛās* is that the *sthāīs* and *antarās* of most dhrupads begin from the *sam*, and therefore do not have an anacrustic *mukhṛā* that *arrives* at the *sam*, which is a feature idiomatic to the khayāl. Gandharva's preference for such anacrustic *mukharās* can be gleaned from the fact that an overwhelming number of *bandishes* from among his own compositions – 192 from among the 200 surveyed, an overwhelming majority of 96% - contain anacrustic *mukhṛās* as opposed to a mere 4% which begin at the *sam.*

In general, then, the importance Gandharva gives to the *mukhṛā* can be considered to be a departure from *dhrupad* convention, especially considering the reduced importance it has in dhrupad practice.

3.1.6 Rhythmic Style

Martin Clayton's formulation of 'rhythmic style' is a useful analytic with which to describe musicians' approaches to musical rhythm in general and to accentuation in particular as lying somewhere on 'a continuum from syllabic to melismatic' (2008, sec. 7.3.1). Clayton defines 'syllabic' music as music that is 'conceived as comprising distinct units, which have temporally definable attack points as well as other qualities of tone, timbre, dynamics, and so on' (ibid, sec. 4.2.1) – where by 'units', Clayton essentially means *bols.* Importantly, Clayton observes that dhrupad is 'the most syllabic of vocal forms' (ibid). On the other end of the continuum is 'melismatic' music in which 'there is no close relationship between the *tāl* and the surface rhythm…, the melodic style is highly melismatic…, many notes are sung to one text syllable…and their individual articulation points are not always clearly defined temporally.' (ibid, sec. 4.2.2). The crucial point here is that the dhrupad style is characterised as 'syllabic' because, as Clayton puts it, 'in *dhrupad*, improvised development (*upaj*) may be assigned to the *bol bānṭ* category, since *dhrupad* development is exclusively identified with that process' (ibid, sec. 9.3.1).

As any survey of Gandharva's recorded performances will show, *bol- bānṭ* is a process Gandharva engages in only very rarely, and for a very short duration when he does. It is for this reason that Gandharva's rhythmic style is argued here to lie towards the melismatic end of

[236] See discussion in Clayton (2008, sec. 8.2)

the continuum, certainly in the case of his *vilambit* khayāl. While *vilambit* khayāls tend to be melismatic in general as opposed to dhrupad, a comparison of the rhythmic styles of various musicians singing *vilambit* khayāl allows us to gauge the syllabicity of these *in comparison with one another*. In such a comparison, Gandharva's *vilambit* falls on the melismatic side of Clayton's continuum.

To call Gandharva's entire style melismatic would be an error, however, because as discussed in chapter two above, Gandharva places great emphasis on the accentual pattern of his *bandishes*, especially those in *madhya* and *drut lays*, an approach that would certainly be classed as syllabic. What he seems to have largely avoided is *bol- bāṇṭ* - syllabic division and recombination - which many other musicians engage in generously, as the table below will show. Gandharva also largely avoids other syllabic methods of extemporization like *sargam* and *nom-tom.* These are present in his music only as exceptions that prove the rule. Thus, while Gandharva's style might be called, in Clayton's terms, a 'hybrid' style, it can be said to veer away from the syllabic dhrupad and move closer to the melismatic end of the continuum than most of the other styles considered below.

3.1.7 *Laykārī*

As Clayton puts it, 'The use of potentially complex rhythmic techniques such as *tihāīs* may suggest *dhrupad* influence since there is generally more emphasis on rhythmic virtuosity in *dhrupad* than in *khyāl* performance' (ibid, sec. 11.3.3). In keeping with the discussion in the previous section then, any survey of Gandharva's performances across his career will reveal an almost surprising absence of devices or techniques of explicit *laykārī*, such as the *tihāī* that is idiomatic to dhrupad. Similarly, other explicit *laykārī* techniques such as *dugun, tigun* (doubling, tripling etc the tempo of the surface rhythm relative to the metrical tempo of the *tāl*) or *jātī* work such as singing in *tishra* or *chatushra jātīs* are all but absent from Gandharva's extemporization, except in rare cases, and then only for short durations. In spite of this, Gandharva's music exudes a strong sense of rhythm, the kind of 'rhythmicness' Satyasheel Deshpande terms *laydārī* (Forthcoming, chap. 2).

The semantic contrast between these two terms is crucial. Where *kārī* implies 'doing', *dārī* implies 'having'. Gandharva's music, then exudes a sense of 'having' or 'constantly being in' *lay* rather than 'doing' or explicitly manipulating *lay*. This approach has reference, again, to Gandharva's emphasis of *chhand* as discussed above – it is contended here that Gandharva avoids explicit displays of rhythmic virtuosity so as not to disturb the sense of what one might

call the dynamic stasis that his non-verbatim repetition of the *mukhṛā* and its *chhand* gives rise to, not to mention his driving ideology of organicism.

3.1.8 *Tāl* and *Thekā*

To develop his ideas about the role of percussion accompaniment in Hindustani music performance, Clayton brings in Rebecca Stewart's work that illuminates perhaps one of the most crucial points at which the dhrupad and khayāl genres diverge from each other: that of *tāl* and *thekā*. Clayton tells us how Stewart 'distinguishes between different *tāl* types, broadly associated with either of these two drums [*tablā* and *pakhāwaj*] and argues that the *tablā* has acted as an agent of an alien rhythmic system (basically Middle Eastern in origin), and that its adoption has entailed considerable changes in the North Indian rhythmic system' (2008, sec. 4.2.3). While the idea that the rhythmic system the *tablā* represents is 'alien' is contested by scholars like Clayton himself (ibid, footnote 11) and much more vehemently by practitioner-scholars like Umesh Moghe (2021, 20–22), it is clear that the tablā represents, and is exclusively used for, khayāl accompaniment, while the pakhāwaj does the same for dhrupad. In this context, Stewart characterizes her 'traditional Indian', pakhawaj-based rhythmic system (namely that of dhrupad) as follows: 'the tals have asymmetrical structures...the drum plays elaborative patterns rather than a theka...', and contrasts this with her 'alien' system (associated with *tablā* and therefore khayāl), where '*tāls* are characterized by the dynamic, timbre, and pitch variations of the *thekā,* having symmetrical structures and being varied not divisively but by the interpolation of extra strokes or *bols*' (Quoted in M Clayton 2008, sec. 4.2.3).

Gandharva, in contrast to a number of other musicians, strictly observes the latter approach: he never employs asymmetrical *tāls*: there is not a single instance of a *bandish* in *tāls* like *ādā-chautāl* which is common in various *gharānās,* or the more unconventional eleven or nine beat *tāls* such as Matta-tāl which is often found in musicians' repertoires, especially in singers of the Jaipur *gharānā* like Mogubai Kurdikar. Also, as the table below shows, Gandharva's accompanists strictly avoid divisive rhythm work of the kind found in the Agra Gharana or in Gajananbuwa Joshi's (1911-1987) music, for instance, and are at pains to play a simple, straightforward *thekā*, adorned only by dynamic, timbre and pitch variations[237].

[237] Gandharva's long-time tabla accompanist, Vasantrao Achrekar deserves special mention here for crafting a tabla sound and style so suited to Gandharva's music that it became inseparably associated with Gandharva's musical idiom. For a moving tribute to Achrekar written by Gandharva himself, on the former's untimely passing, see (Gandharva and Bakre 1980). This piece also contains an account of the kind of thekā Gandharva required and received from Achrekar.

Gandharva's rejection of asymmetrical *tāls* and elaborative patterns in his percussion accompaniment in favour of plain *thekās* of symmetrical *tāls* can thus be seen as an important component of his move away from dhrupad-derived convention.

3.1.9 Ornamentation

Apropos our discussion on 'dignity' as a feature of dhrupad that is alleged to have diminished in khayāl, scholars and musicians often consider the degree of melodic ornamentation (florid vocalisation that is seen as only embellishing musical structure[238] and not defining it) apparent in a rendition as indicative of the respectability and pedigree of the music in question. For Meer, 'Whereas the ornamentation in *dhrupada* is very broad, usually containing slow and majestic *mīndas*, that of *khayāl* is more jerky, often in the form of *murkī'* (1980, 53). That khayāl singers have used this as a model to shape their vocal disposition is evident from Wade's explanation of how Alladiya Khan's music was 'close to dhrupad': '[Khan] would develop the *sthaī* of the composition for a long time…without *khatka* ('jerks')…' (2016, 171) . As will be pointed out in the analysis below, Gandharva was not averse to using florid ornamentation where necessary in his rendition in order to meet his expressive goals.

3.1.10 Voice Use

> *'…the musician of the Agra Gharana…makes profuse use of the notes in lower octave producing khench [lit. 'pull'] which is an essential part of training in dhrupad. This is also predominantly seen in the Dagar Gharana of dhrupad' (Haldankar 2001, 111)*

> *'…the Jaipur gayaki is indeed a dignified and excellent style of high order.... Firstly, [this is because of] the 'dumsaans' or breath control capacity of singers which facilitates a continuously flowing rendition of the raag' (ibid, 20-1, while comparing Jaipur gāyakī with dhrupad)*

As is apparent from these quotes, the gravitas of dhrupad obtains from a proclivity to dwell in the lower ranges of the voice and to be able to produce sustained, uninterrupted melodies of long duration. These vocal dispositions are clearly vital to Haldankar and, indeed, Haldankar's intensely critical appraisal of Gandharva's music revolves almost entirely upon the latter's inability to meet these two demands:

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[238] Which connotes the accentual pattern (created by syllabic emphasis) that gives a melodic line its definition.

> *I have underlined here the fact that of the various components of gāyakī that cause it to become one of a high order, phrases of long-breath are vital. We must understand that [Gandharva's] breath was short because of the medical procedures carried out on his lungs. He would use his genius to make up for this lack by imbuing the space between two short statements with significance. But we must accept the bitter truth that short statements cannot achieve the high order that long ones can, no matter how much we admire this genius. (Haldankar 2014, 100, passim)*

Clearly, then, Gandharva's discomfort in the lower ranges, and his famously short and intense phraseology goes against the grain of a dhrupad-derived understanding of gravitas, depth and dignity in the eyes of contemporaries like Haldankar. Ironically enough, one important singer found to indulge extensively in short, emotive phrases rather than long, ponderous and 'dignified' ones was the Agra Gharana master Ustad Faiyaz Khan. Khan's phrasing, though of a starkly different affective flavour than Gandharva's, is surprisingly similar in this respect and is an important digression from the rhetoric of *mārgī* dignity surrounding it that Haldankar's comments represent.

3.2 The Comparison Table

3.2.1 Introduction

Table 3.1 below is intended to compare, on the basis of the parameters described above, Kumar Gandharva's music with that of other musicians spanning a range of *gharānā* approaches to khayāl singing. Because Gandharva's *vilambit* khayāl was the most criticized of his repertoire[239], the table restricts itself to an analysis of it and does not analyse his *madhya* and *drut lay* khayāls.

The comparisons made in the table are not intended to be absolute statements on the approaches of these musicians. Instead, the intention here is to demonstrate the *degree* to which and the various ways in which they conform to or distance themselves from conventional ideas of discipline, dignity and order in khayāl singing that, as we have previously seen, have their roots in a *mārgī* conception of 'classical music' that is modelled and represented here by a set of practices understood to be conventional in dhrupad performance. As the table shows, and as

[239] 'One cannot praise Kumar too much for his chhota khayal (whether in medium or fast tempo), tarana, tappa…My criticism is confined to his slow tempo khayal-singing' (V. H. Deshpande 1989, 118). This sentiment is known to have been echoed by a number of musicians and commentators.

has been postulated above, Gandharva distances himself from his links with the *dhrupad* idiom most dramatically and more extensively than any of the other musicians considered here.

In the interest of comparing like with like, the *rāg* Miya Malhar has been chosen for this analysis, since most musicians in this table have sung the same *bandish*– the Adarang vilambit khayāl *Karīm Nām Tero* - in it, and good representative recordings were available for most. For the few cases where this *bandish* was not available, another *bandish* in the same *rāg* was chosen for analysis. Where either no performances of the *rāg* itself were available at all or the available performance was found not to be representative of the singer's available repertoire, another suitable *rāg/bandish* was chosen for analysis. In some cases, the need was felt to supplement the analysis with that of another *rāg*/*bandish* in order to quell any doubts about adequate representation. In such cases, the related *rāg* Gaud Malhar has been used, in keeping with the intention of comparing like with like. In such cases, the recording designated as the 'primary recording' is the one analysed, and cases where observations from the secondary recording have been included in the table, it has been mentioned that such is the case.

The table has been arranged in order of increasing distance from the dhrupad model, so that the first musician considered in it (Gajananbuwa Joshi) has been found to be the closest to it while the last (Kumar Gandharva) is the furthest away from it. Individual cells of the table have been colour-coded to show whether and to what extent the musician adheres to the dhrupad-derived convention of performance being discussed; pink cells represent conformance, blue cells represent minor deviation; green cells represent major deviation.

An effort has also been made to identify YouTube links to the recordings analysed and these have been included in the table. The following pages contain the actual table.

3.2.2 The Table

(See next page)

		Gajananbuwa Joshi (1911-1987)	D.V. Paluskar (1921-1955)	Bade Gulam Ali Khan (1902-1968)	Kesarbai Kerkar (1892-1977)	Amir Khan (1934-1974)	Faiyyaz Khan (1886-1950)
	Recording Information						
	Primary Recording: Link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9FAeBNUXaU	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sbe_8v99TVs	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SM9eM_Hq7nQ	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AdTNDsr1s54	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LVaKgMBP0Tg	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ec5KL_MJlRY
	Rāg / Bandish	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*	Rāgeshri / Sab Sukha Deho	Lalitā Gauri / *Pritam Sainya*	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*	Gaud Malhār / *Kāhe Ho*
	Duration	00:29:56	00:20:43	00:28:50	0:48:13	00:45:05	00:27:51
	Date	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**1952**	**1958**	**c. 1940**
	Performance Context	**Live**	**Studio**	**Unknown**	**Live**	**All India Radio**	**All India Radio**
	Secondary Performance: Link	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FAHgorgmLzo	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9phevxRX7j0	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IaggcT7smno	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FmNQGiQpbE		
	Rāg / Bandish	*Gaud Malhār / Najarā Nahī Āve*	*Gaud Malhār / Kāhe Ho*	Miyā Malhār /	*Gaud Malhār / Mān Na Kariye*		
	Duration	00:24:06	00:16:49	00:19:08	00:04:21		
	Date	c. 1975	c. 1950	Unknown	1947		
	Performance Context	Live	Studio	Unknown	Studio		All India Radio
	Analysis						
1	**Sequentiality**						
	Stage-wise sequential organisation of performance	1. Short *Ālāp* 2. *Sthāī* twice 3. Semi-syllabic bol *ālāp* , full-range tonal gamut 4. Gets gradually denser and more syllabic, introduces explicit *bolbānt* , *boltān* and *tān* (punctuated by 'rest' passages of more melismatic *bol-ālāp*) 5. *Tān +bolbānt* 6. *Sargam* 7. *Tān* 8. *Antarā*	1. Short Ālāp 2. Sthāī twice (never repeated again) 2. Bol-ālāp or ākār ālāp, gradually expanding pitch range 3. Bol-bānt 4. Tān 5. Antarā	1. Short *ālāp* *2.* Sthāī stated once 3. *Bol-ālāp, with* gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut till *madhya komal tār sā* is reached; progressively denser work 4. *Antarā* *5.* Predominantly *tān* , and onramental (*harkat-murki*) work, interspersed with syllabic *sargam/bol* work	1. Complete *bandish* (*sthāī* and *antarā*) stated once 2. Melismatic *ālāp (* mostly *ākār,* occassionally *bol)* over entire tessitura, gradually increasing in rhythmic density and definition 3. *Tān*	1. Minimal ālāp 2. Repeats *sthāī* twice 3. Gradual ascent in *bol-ālāp* to *tār sā* 4. Explicitly syllabic *sargam* - rhythm work (with occassional 'rest' *avartāns*) 5. *Ākār /bol tāns* of gradually increasing density and complexity	1. Extended tripartite *nom-tom ālāp* 2. *Ākār ālāp / bol-ālāp* interspersed with *sth āī* (stated once) and *antarā* (stated twice) 3.*Bol-tān*
	No of distinct phases/sections of performance	8	5	5	3	5	3

		Gajananbuwa Joshi (1911-1987)	D.V. Paluskar (1921-1955)	Bade Gulam Ali Khan (1902-1968)	Kesarbai Kerkar (1892-1977)	Amir Khan (1934-1974)	Faiyyaz Khan (1886-1950)
2	**Intensification**						
	Acceleration of metrical tempo	Deliberate, significant stepwise acceleration, carried out thrice (at 15:13, 20:55 and 26:33). Overall acceleration: 48.57% (from 35-52 bpm)	Deliberate, significant stepwise acceleration, carried out twice (at 16:26 and 17:24). Overall acceleration: 20% (from 20-28 bpm)	Gradual but significant acceleration: 25% (from 24-30 bpm)	Deliberate, significant, stepwise acceleration, carried out four times (at 30:10, 34:56, 44:05, and 47:30). Overall accelleration: 304% (from 24-97bpm)	Gradual but insignificant acceleration: 13.3% (from 15-17 bpm)	Significant but seemingly unintentional. Overall acceleration in *nibaddha* section: 53.3% (from 45-69 bpm)
	Increase in rhythmic density	Gradual increase in density independent of tempo, punctuated with 'rest' avartāns	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Density increases gradually in as performance progresses towards *tān*	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Density increases stepwise in tripartite pre-*bandish ālāp* ; In *nibaddha* section, density stays constant, only increases in *tān* section
	Increase in rhythmic definition	Even initial melismatic sections are quite rhythmically defined, and succeeding syllabic sections are explicitly so.	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Rhythmic definition pervades entire performance, including *ākār ālāp* , but increases gradually as performances progresses	Significant increase in definition in *sargam* section	Definition increases stepwise in tripartite pre-*bandish ālāp* ; (Lack of explicit) definition stays constant in *nibaddha* section
3	**Singing the 'complete' *rāg***						
	In pre-*bandish* ālāp	Short *ālāp:* covers 1.5 octaves, introduces *rāg* phrases from lower ma to upper *sā* .	Short *ālāp;* Sings *rāg chalan* between *mandra re* and *madhya re* . Bandish does not go below *mandra pa* but *ālāp* does	Short *ālāp* ; establishes *rāg* around tonic *sā*	No pre-*bandish ālāp*	Minimal ālāp, almost nonexistent	Dhrupad derived extended tripartite *nom-tom ālāp,* gradually increasing in both tessitura and density, eventually spanning *mandra pa to tār ma*
	In *barhat*	Constāntly addresses full tessitura, right from initial *ālāp* , and gets gradually denser	After stating the *sthāī* twice, sequentially explores successively higher pitch zones, covering entire tonal gamut between *mandra ma* to *tār sā,* until he reaches bol-bānt section.	Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut, dwelling for short periods on successive, ascending pitch-zones	General trend of ascending through tonal gamut, rhythmic density and definition	Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut, dwelling for short periods on successive, ascending pitch-zones	Presents *barhat* through *bol-banāv,* no attempt to 'develop complete/sequential *rāg'*

		Gajananbuwa Joshi (1911-1987)	D.V. Paluskar (1921-1955)	Bade Gulam Ali Khan (1902-1968)	Kesarbai Kerkar (1892-1977)	Amir Khan (1934-1974)	Faiyyaz Khan (1886-1950)
4	**Bandish Restatement**						
	No. and position of *sthāī* statements	2; only in the very beginning	2; only in the very beginning	1; only in the very beginning	2; only in the very beginning	2; only in the very beginning	1; only in the beginning
	No and position of *antarā* statements	1; to conclude vilambit	1; to conclude vilambit	1, to conclude pitch rang expansion	1; only in the beginning	Not Sung at all	2; interspersed with *bol-ālāp*
5	**Mukhra**						
	Non-verbatim mukhra repetition	No	No	No	No	Yes	No
	Use of antarā mukhras as refrain	No	No	No	No	No	No
6	**Rhythmic style**						
	Use of (syllabic) bol-bānt (division/recombination)	Yes, extensively	Yes, after tonal-expansion section	Yes, after tonal-expansion section	Minimal, mostly melesmatic *ālāp* and *tān*	Vague use at anacrusis	Extensive in nom-tom ālāp; but absent in *barhat*
	Use of other syllabic methods of improvisation (sargam/nom-tom/other vocables)	*Sargam*	None	*sargam*	None	Explicit syllabic sargam	Extensive in *ālāp (nom-tom* and *sargam*); but absent in *barhat*
7	**Laykāri**						
	Use of definite rhythmic techniques such as tihais	3 *Tihāīs* , *tishra jātī laykārī*	None	3 *Tihāīs* , *tishra jātī laykārī*	None	None	Extensive in nom-tom ālāp; but absent in *barhat*
	General emphasis on rhythmic virtuosity / deliberate laykari	Substāntial from the beginning and gradually increasing	Only in *bol-bānt* section	Significant *laykāri* after tonal-expansion section	None	Significant *laykāri* in *sargam* section	Extensive in nom-tom ālāp; but absent in *barhat*
8	**Tāl and Thekā**						
	Percussion accompaniment						
	Plain theka / Elaborative patterns / Drum Solos	Plain *thekā* in Miya Malhar, elaborative patterns and *tablā* solos in Gaud Malhar	Plain *thekā* in Miya Malhar, elaborative patterns and *tablā* solos in Gaud Malhar	Plain *thekā*	Plain *thekā*	Plain *thekā*	Occassional elaborative patterns, but largely plain *thekā*
9	**Ornamentation**	No florid ornamenation	No florid ornamenation	Liberal Use	No florid ornamenation	Liberal Use	Occassional use
10	**Voice Use**						
	Breath (Long phrases)	Plentiful long phrases, especially during *tān* and *bolbānt* phases	Predominance of long phrases	Plentiful short, emotive phrases	Predominance of long phrases	Predominance of long phrases	Predominance of long phrases in *nom-tom ālāp,* but plentiful short, emotive phrases in *bol-banāv*
	Range	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Dwells extensively in the *mandra*	Does not dwell in the *mandra* in this recording; but Agra *gharānā* is known for doing this

		Kishori Amonkar (1932-2017)	Mallikarjun Mansur (1910-1992)	Bhimsen Joshi (1922-2011)	Krishnarao Shankar Pandit (1894-1989)	Kumar Gandharva (1924-1992)
Recording Information						
	Primary Recording: Link	https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLA1vrckXJ1h6NmZcEY2WWVqDht8fvhtD-	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-v-bL6TSpuM	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjOmZ59gXXA	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M3RzCdu7szY	https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwBWaPr1cFQ
	Rāg / Bandish	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*	Miyā Malhār / *Bājata Tata Bitat*	Miyā Malhār / *Karīm Nām Tero*
	Duration	00:50:07	00:22:00	00:26:16	00:30:15	00:47:11
	Date	**1995**	**Unknown**	**c 1980**	**1969**	**1986**
	Performance Context	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Unknown**	**Live**	**Live**
	Secondary Performance: Link					https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwBWaPr1cFQ&t=4919s
	Rāg / Bandish					Gaud Malhār */ Barse Meharavā*
	Duration					00:21:34
	Date					1986
	Performance Context					Live
Analysis						
1	**Sequentiality**					
	Stage-wise sequential organisation of performance	1. Short *ālāp* 2. *Sthāī* repeated twice 3.Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut upto *tār pā* 4. *Antarā* sung once 5. Full range, more syllabic *bol-ālāp* , occassional *bol-tān* . 6. *Bol-tān* section 7.*Tān* section	1. No *ālāp* , begins bandish immediately 2. *Sthāī* stated intermittently amidst *ākār ālāp* with occassional *bol-ālāp* *3.* Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut 4. After establishing *uttarānga, antarā* stated intermittently amidst *ākār ālāp* in *uttarānga* area 5. *Tān*	1. Short *Ālāp* 2. *Sthāī* repeated twice in the beginning, once again after a few avartāns; 3. Gradual ascent in *bol-ālāp* to *tār sā* 4. *Antarā* refrain, *uttarāng bol-ālāp* , with *antarā* fully sung twice; 5. *Tān* 6. Ends with completed *antarā*	1. *Sthāī* statement (no initial *ālāp*) 2. *Upaj* , predominantly through through *bol-ālāp. Antarā* stated twice in the begnning, amidst ongoing *bol-ālāp*	1. Short ālāp 2. *Upaj* , through through *bol-ālāp* and *ākār/ye-kār ālāp* . *Sthāi* and *antarā* stated repeatedly amidst ongoing *upaj* .
	No of distinct phases/sections of performance	7	5	6	No clear sectionalisation possible	No clear sectionalisation possible

		Kishori Amonkar (1932-2017)	Mallikarjun Mansur (1910-1992)	Bhimsen Joshi (1922-2011)	Krishnarao Shankar Pandit (1894-1989)	Kumar Gandharva (1924-1992)
2	**Intensification**					
	Acceleration of metrical tempo	Gradual but insignificant acceleration: 8.3% (24-26 bpm)	Gradual but insignificant acceleration: 8% (from 37-40 bpm)	Gradual but significant acceleration: 22% (from 19-22 bpm)	Gradual but significant accellaration of 22.8% (from 35-43 bpm)	None: 0% (tempo constant at 36 bpm)
	Increase in rhythmic density	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Density increases gradually in as performance progresses towards *tān*	Clear trend of gradual, significant increase	Density independent of tempo; varies throughout. General trend is of increase	No trend of intensification noticeable. Denser work such *tān* invariably followed by less dense *upaj.*
	Increase in rhythmic definition	Clear overall increase after *antarā* , but not consistent	Rhythmic definition pervades entire performance, including *ākār ālāp* , but increases gradually as performances progresses	Remains largely melismatic	No systematic or stepwise increase. Intermittent passages of greater definition	No trend of intensification noticeable. Occassional minimal increase in definition, followed by a *decrease.* Minimal syllabic at fag end of *vilambit* .
3	**Singing the 'complete' *rāg***					
	In pre-*bandish* ālāp	Minimal ālāp	No pre-*bandish ālāp*	Short *ālāp* ; establishes *rāg* around tonic *sā*	Avoids pre-*bandish ālāp* entirely	Short *ālāp* ; focusses on pitch zone surrounding the tonic
	In *barhat*	Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut, dwelling for short periods on successive, ascending pitch-zones	Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut	Gradual, ascending expansion of tonal gamut, dwelling for short periods on successive, ascending pitch-zones	Continuously explores entire tessitura attempts to address 'complete' *rāg* through non-sequential application of *ashtāngas*	No trend of gradual/stepwise ascent or exapansion of tonal gamut noticeable. No clear application of *ashtangas* visible.

		Kishori Amonkar (1932-2017)	Mallikarjun Mansur (1910-1992)	Bhimsen Joshi (1922-2011)	Krishnarao Shankar Pandit (1894-1989)	Kumar Gandharva (1924-1992)
4	**Bandish Restatement**					
	No. and position of *sthāī* statements	2; only in the very beginning	4; interspersed with *ālāp*	3; only towards the beginning	1; only in the very beginning	4; interspersed with *upaj*
	No and position of *antarā* statements	1, to conclude pitch rang expansion	4, interspersed with *ālāp*	2; after establishing *tār sā*	2; in the beginning; interspersed with *bol-ālāp*	2, interspersed with *upaj*
5	**Mukhra**					
	Non-verbatim mukhra repetition	Occassionally	No	No	Yes	Yes
	Use of antarā mukhras as refrain	No	No	Yes	No	Yes
6	**Rhythmic style**					
	Use of (syllabic) bol-bānt (division/recombination)	Intermittent, more at anacrusis in later avartāns	Rarely, remains largely melismatic	Tends to employ explicit syllabic bol-bānt at anacrusis, largely melismatic otherwise	Yes, intermittently	Minimal *bol-bānt* at fag-end of *vilambit*
	Use of other syllabic methods of improvisation (sargam/nom-tom/other vocables)	None	None	Occassional sargam, but sung melismatically - not a rhythmic device	None	None
7	**Laykāri**					
	Use of definite rhythmic techniques such as tihais	None	None	Occassional tihai	Occassional work in *tishra jāti*	None
	General emphasis on rhythmic virtuosity / deliberate laykari	At anacrusis, and in later syllabic sections, otherwise largely melismatic	None	Only at *mukhrā* anacrusis	Intermittent. Special emphasis on aamad	None
8	**Tāl and Thekā**					
	Percussion accompaniment					
	Plain theka / Elaborative patterns / Drum Solos	Plain *thekā*	Plain *thekā*	Plain *thekā*	Plain *thekā*	Plain *thekā*
9	**Ornamentation**	Occassional	No florid ornamenation	Liberal Use	Liberal Use	Liberal Use
10	**Voice Use**					
	Breath (Long phrases)	Predominance of long phrases	Predominance of long phrases; conspicuous absence of pauses/rests	Predominance of long phrases	Fragmented singing, but many long meend phrases	Plentiful short, emotive phrases
	Range	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Does not dwell in the *mandra*	Constānt return to mandra saptak, especially *mandra ma, pa*	Does not dwell in the *mandra*

3.2.2 Some Qualifications

This table must be taken to represent tendencies, and comportments. It is not intended to be an absolute verdict on the music of any of these musicians. The observations in it must be qualified with the fact that there certainly were occasions when Gandharva might have been more syllabic than at other times, or might even have adopted a more sequential and intensifying approach than was the norm for him. A striking example of this is his performance of the same *rāg/bandish* discussed above – *Karīm Nām Tero* in Miyā Malhār – for a studio recording[240]. Indeed, a survey of Gandharva's studio LP/EP recordings shows that he was usually more sequential in them than he was in his live performances. This might perhaps be ascribed to a desire to present 'definitive' versions of traditional material for posterity, not unlike his adoption of the grammatical vocabulary of *vādī-samvādī* while laying out the grammar of his *dhun-ugam rāgs*, as discussed in chapter one above. Such performances, however, are in the minority. The majority of his performances display the tendencies outlined in the table above and are what triggered the kind of criticism he received from Vamanrao Deshpande and others.

Again, the main consideration that seems to have driven Gandharva's choices in engaging with the parameters of performance this table describes, appears always to have been the *bandish* at hand. Consequently, if a *bandish* demanded a higher level of syllabicity, Gandharva appears to have acquiesced. His performance of inherently syllabic *bandishes* like his own Rang Kesariyā Sir Pāgā in Basant[241] are testament to this. What is important though, is that even in *bandishes* like this one, an explicitly syllabic *drut* bandish, Gandharva does not indulge excessively in *bol-bānṭ* work. Neither does he avoid bringing in long passages of melismatic *ālāpī*. Indeed, the only consideration that seems to guide his performative choices is the *bandish* – he can be heard here, indulging in creative, non-verbatim repetition of its *mukhṛā* while interspersing this with all manner of *upaj*, whether syllabic or not, always making it adjectival to said *mukhṛā*.

The Miya Malhar recording analysed in the table also illuminates a few other important features of Gandharva's music. One of these is his experiments with *rāg*. As is apparent in this performance, Gandharva makes the *shuddha nishād* of the *rāg* much more prominent than is the norm. Satyasheel Deshpande ascribes this to an older Gwalior tradition that was later lost, so that the *shuddha nishād* became only a stepping stone with which to either ascend to *shadja*

[240] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fE3mhIu-hBg as on 29/04/2022
[241] See https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ayEQkRTV0U

or descend to *Komal nishād* or *dhaivat*[242]. While one could argue that this is another case of Gandharva using diverse sources from which to draw authority for his aesthetic choices, it might equally be said that such *rāg*-idiosyncrasies come with every *gharānā* tradition. What makes the *nishād* doubly prominent and affective in Gandharva's rendition then, is Gandharva's elision of the interplay between the two *nishāds,* through the *ni dha ni sā* movement that the *rāg* is known for, and that the other musicians considered here employ liberally[243], so that the *shuddha nishād* alone comes to the fore. Again, the source for a Miya Malhar bereft of this movement appears to have been Bhatkhande – the latter's notation of this khayāl does not, in fact, contain this movement, and Gandharva appears therefore to have largely avoided it too, not only in his rendition of the *sthāī*, but also in his extemporisation in general. Add to this Gandharva's proclivity to dwell on only the tessitura of the *sthāī*, and even more prominently on that of its *mukhṛā*, and you have a *profile* of Miya Malhar that appears starkly different from other renditions of it.

Also apparent in this recording, as in the Gaud Malhar and the Basant discussed above, is Gandharva's minimalism. Gandharva's fondness for pauses within which 'my perfectly tuned *tānpurās* continue to follow the notes [*sur*s] I have just produced'[244] was well known, and Gandharva can be seen, across his *vilambit, madhya* and *drut* recordings to indulge in these pauses and refrain from filling them in with melodic material. It is this approach, then, that makes his *rāg* idiosyncrasies, such as the *nishād* in Miya Malhar, stand out all the more, in stark relief.

A striking feature of Gandharva's *vilambit* is the way in which he creates *dhun* in slower tempos. As discussed above, the longer duration of *āvartans* in *vilambit* khayāl cause the *chhand* created by *mukhṛā*-repetition to be discernibly less prominent, so that it becomes harder to give rise to the sense of *dhun* discussed in chapter two. What Gandharva appears to do in his *vilambit*, then, is create a number of shorter *dhuns* within the span of a single *āvartan*.

The pitch graph below (Figure 4) depicts two *āvartans* from the same Miya Malhar recording considered above (taken from 23:55 min – 25:21 min). As is apparent in this depiction, Gandharva creates his micro-*dhuns* in the large space afforded him by the *vilambit tāl*s

[242] Personal interview, 22 Sep 2021
[243] See for instance DV Paluskar's copious use of it in the statement of the *sthāī* and elsewhere throughout his *baṛhat*
[244] Quoted in Deshpande (1989, 110)

duration, in the following way: he begins with a statement such as the *sa - re ma re sa sa* movement on the word *tero*. This movement is repeated twice with minor variations, grouped together in the figure below by the red underline – this is an example of a micro-*dhun,* a short statement, the act of repeating which gives it the quality of a *dhun*, as discussed in section 1.4 of chapter two above. This *dhun* then leads him on to a variation of it – an elongated *ma-re mind*. This is revisited repeatedly, which repetitions are grouped together in the figure below by the green underline. In the same way, creative, non-verbatim repetition of this second *dhun* leads him on to a third movement, a more jerky *ma ma re* shape, mirrored in its *re re sa* counterpart, and vocalised on the words *karīm nām*, which Gandharva turns, again, into a *dhun* through the act of creative, non-verbatim repetition. This third set of dhun repetitions is underlined in purple below. Finally, Gandharva connects these movements to the *mukhṛā* and arrives at the *sam*.

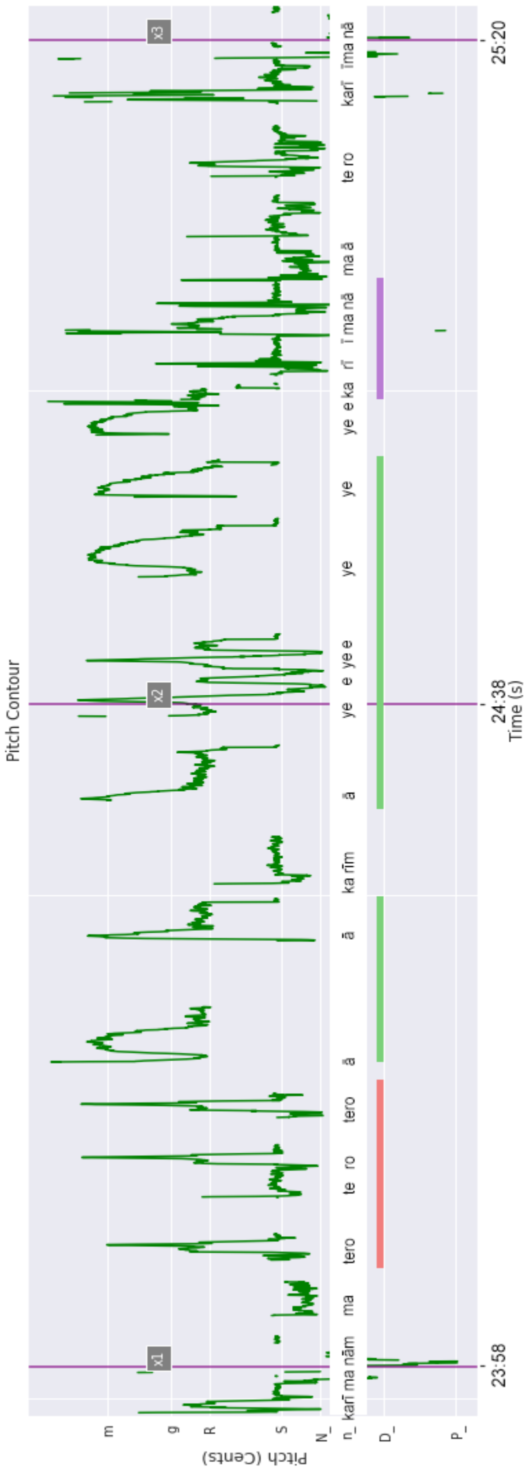

FIGURE 4: MICRO DHUNS IN VILAMBIT. SOURCE: AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS

This process of creating micro-*dhuns* within a single *āvartan* is characteristic of how Gandharva's *vilambit* progresses, and can be heard across his recordings. Of course, the nature of these *dhuns* varies with *rāg* and *bandish.* In *rāgs* like Shree, which afford more scope for *shrutī* exploration, these micro-*dhuns* tend to be put to use for that purpose, and Gandharva

uses them to explore both microtonal space as well as timbral possibilities[245]. In *rāgs* like Chhayanat, on the other hand, where structural patterns created by accentuation are called for, these micro-*dhuns* deal less with intonation and timbre and more with structure[246]. It is in this way, then, that the principle of *dhun* is kept in play in Gandharva's *vilambit*.

4. Conclusion: Form and Process, Melody and Method

As the comparative analysis carried out in this table makes clear, Gandharva's organicist, expressive, *bandish*-centric approach causes him to abandon a number of dhrupad-derived conventions of music-making. As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, perhaps the greatest criticism Gandharva's music faced was directed towards his abandonment of the conventional performance sequence that moved in a stage-wise trajectory of intensification. Vamanrao Deshpande's comments on the unpredictability[247] of Gandharva's music and on his having 'completely demolished [the traditional] method, discipline and order'(1989, 107) of khayāl presentation are representative of this criticism. As we have seen, Gandharva's subversion of the very idea of sequential *rāg* development was a result of his use of the *bandish* as possibly the most important principle around which to organise his performances.

The other important convention that Gandharva avoids, as the table has shown, is acceleration of both metric tempo and rhythmic density. This approach is crucial to Gandharva's alterity: as Clayton puts it, 'Acceleration is the key to one of the principal processes in Indian music - the transition from unmetred or loosely metred, melismatic, and slow tempo melodic development to metred, syllabic, and fast tempo rhythmic development' (2008, sec. 7.3.2)[248]. The table above reinforces the idea that such a trajectory of acceleration is certainly the norm in khayāl performance as a whole, but it is *not* crucial to Gandharva's music, which organises itself, instead, around the *bandish*. Clayton goes on to say that acceleration is 'a tendency which

[245] See, for instance, this 1975 performance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=n6aobB0LE3Q

[246] See, for instance this Chhayanat: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h9nNFIrPGdc

[247] 'It is impossible to say at any moment during a recital what Kumar Is going to do the next minute, i.e. whether what one has heard will be followed by a small fast passage or a long fast passage or a tana based on the words of the cheej…One old instrument-player told me that while accompanying other singers he is right in his expectations nine times out of ten, but in accompanying Kumar he can be wrong ten times out of ten' (V. H. Deshpande 1989, 103)

[248] Importantly, Clayton also points out that 'no theoretical concept sanctions acceleration of the *tāl*, despite the fact that such acceleration is a very widespread phenomenon in North Indian music…Historically it has been assumed by Indian musicologists that if and when music speeded up, it did so through an increase in rhythmic density alone, and the tempo of the tāl was by implication constant.' (2008, sec. 4.1.2, emphasis added)

reaffirms the primacy of process over structure in Indian music', so that without acceleration, 'we might expect a balance between acceleration and deceleration, and between increase and decrease in dynamic level, as in Western art music' (ibid). It is contended here that a balance of this sort – a resistance to teleological movement - is certainly visible in Gandharva's music, so that his performances are, as we've proposed in section 1.2 above, a 'vertical' dive into the *bandish* as opposed to a 'horizontal' progression through a sequential development of a *rāg*; that it represents a kind of dynamic 'stasis' and 'persistence' and resists the 'motion' and 'progressive'ness of intensification, so that it can be construed as a 'being' more than a 'becoming'.

Gandharva's focus on *bandish,* as we have already seen, derived itself from Deodhar's alternative pedagogy and found valuable support in Bhatkhande's anthologised compositions. Importantly, Bhatkhande's systematization and canonization of Hindustani music did *not* describe, theorize or standardise performance-conventions, although, as we have seen, Paluskar's pedagogical publications did prescribe one. Gandharva's adoption of Bhatkhande's notations, bereft of any associations of performance conventions, indeed his rejection of such conventions in spite of being an inheritor of Paluskar's pedagogy are both representative of the agency he displays in reinterpreting the genre as one in which the song and its expressive power are his driving forces.

We've also seen how the *bandish*, in Gandharva's hands, comes closer to our formulation of the traditional Indic 'song' (see chapter two) – a seed-song that is fixed only to the extent of being recognizable and is a system with play built into it, so that, like the *lokdhun* or other pre-mass media, non-scriptural *gīts,* the act of singing it involves creative non-verbatim repetition of melodic structure. We've seen how this repetition allows Gandharva to reflect creatively on and play with the contour, tessitura, *lay, chhand, samvād,* text and *kehen* of the *bandish,* so that performance for him becomes a process of creative, reflective repetition, rather than the execution of a pre-conceived sequence of elaborative techniques. All of Gandharva's deviations from convention that the table above analyses appear to have been made with this goal in mind.

In thinking about what the repercussions of this approach are for the genre of khayāl, some observations from Peter Manuel, in reference to his formulation of a continuum of 'intermediate' genres that lie between its two ends of 'classical' and 'folk', are worth considering: '…the genres in this intermediate sphere, in contrast to Hindustani music, tend to

be regional rather than pan-regional, less grounded in explicitly articulated theory, more text-driven, and in some cases, rather than being presented as autonomous arts, as musical entities they are often ancillary to ritual or narrative action'(2015, 86). The first three of these observations do seem to describe Gandharva's music to some extent: it does not shy away from bringing in specific regional flavours; it is certainly grounded in explicitly articulated theory, but it allows itself to bend that theory to the will of the song, and though it isn't quite 'text-driven', it does, arguably, put more emphasis on text than most other khayāl singers do, as we have seen. On the other hand, it certainly is presented as autonomous art and is not ancillary to ritual or narrative action. These observations only support an argument we've already made: that Gandharva's music, while certainly *mārgī* in its explicit grounding in received constructs of *rāg, tāl* and *bandish,* invested itself substantially in a *desī* idiom of expression and affect rooted in song.

Another important aspect of Gandharva's idiom, his *gāyakī*, is his investment in the text of the *bandish*. As noted above, the bulk of Gandharva's *upaj* is carried out using *bol* – using the text of the *bandish* and its syllables to anchor melodic extemporization in place of *ākār, sargam* or *nom-tom* vocables. This approach has sometimes been likened to *thumrī* singing: VR Athavle ascribes Gandharva's uniqueness to 'the theatricality that…is the principle of the *thumrī,* which makes emotive expressiveness possible in music' (2014, 26). Athavle holds this '*thumrī*-principle' responsible for the criticism Gandharva received 'from older traditionalist musicians' (ibid). Indeed, one of Martin Clayton's three schemes for the organization of performance in Hindustani music, labelled scheme 'C' and intended to describe *thumrī* seems to describe Gandharva's music aptly as well: 'In `C' the rag is not developed methodically, but melodic possibilities are explored in the context of expressive development of the text' (2008, sec. 7.1.1). It is contended here, however, that Gandharva's idiom was certainly not simply an application of the *thumrī* idiom of *bol-banāv* to khayāl repertoire. For one, Gandharva's singing is often very aggressive[249] - very uncharacteristic for *thumrī* - and deals explicitly with *shrutīs* to a great extent, which is something thumri singers are not known to do. More importantly though, as we have seen in chapter one above, Gandharva's renditions do not restrict themselves to allegorical expression of *bandish* text. Instead, they use the syllabic and semantic

[249] 'Aggressive' is used to mean 'forceful and affirmative' here, its negative connotation is not implied. As Deshpande notes, 'Another characteristic of Kumar's music is that despite its dual accuracy of tone and rhythm it is extraordinarily aggressive. His music is overpowering and captivating because of its extraordinary forcefulness'(V. H. Deshpande 1989, 98).

content of the text to express the *rāg* differently, and, through creative-reflective non-verbatim repetition, to dwell upon the various parameters of the *bandish* identified in chapter two. Additionally, as Satyasheel Deshpande notes, '[Gandharva's] singing certainly involved repeating the entire *sthāī-antarā* of the *bandish* often, but even his process of *baṛhat* was conducted using the *bols* of the *bandish*, part by part, to construct his sentences and fill his *āvartans*' and, importantly, that 'this was the way of the old Gwalior singers'(2014, 130). The Krishnarao Shankar Pandit recording analysed above is representative of this 'old Gwalior' way and it is evident that this, rather than *thumrī*, was Gandharva's precedent for a *bol*-based *upaj*. Gandharva is different from Pandit, however in important ways: unlike Pandit, Gandharva repeats the *sthāī-antarā* often, making his *upaj* adjectival to them, so that the *bols* in his *upaj* connect it with the *bandish* rather than remaining incidental syllabic handles with which to elaborate the *rāg* as they do in Pandit[250].

Gandharva's khayāl, as this discussion shows, raises what is perhaps a crucial question for the genre of khayāl: can 'form' or 'melody' in Hindustani music be separated from 'process' or 'method'? It is contended here that it was *this* question that drove Govindrao Tembe to famously label Gandharva 'a question mark in the field of music'[251]. Martin Clayton argues with insight that 'there can be no dichotomy between form and process' (2008, sec. 12.4) – It is contended here, however, that Clayton's observation is valid at a higher level of abstraction than the one at which the current discussion is taking place. At the level of comparative analysis of the extemporisation processes of khayāl singers, and taking the term 'process' to explicitly mean sequential, accelerating *rāg* development, it is clear that Gandharva favours an ideology of form over one of process, which is perhaps the single largest cause of the alterity of his music. There remains, however, another consideration that proves a major driving force in Gandharva's music, potent enough to warrant separate consideration: that of his investment in *sur* (intonation) and *nād* (lit. sound/resonance, but also connoting timbre, as will be discussed below). The following chapter will attempt to develop an account of these through the lens of psychoacoustics as much as through the ethnomusicological lens used in this dissertation thus far.

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[250] There is, admittedly, a small measure of irony in the attempt this discussion makes in distancing Gandharva's khayāl from a 'semi-classical' thumrī idiom. The attempt here, however, is not one of hierarchy but of achieving clarity and accuracy.

[251] Quoted in Deshpande (1989, 70)

Chapter 4. *Samvād*: Re-forming *Āvāz*

1. Introduction

This study of Kumar Gandharva's alterity has examined, thus far, how Gandharva conceived of and furthered his goals of *svābhāviktā, samvād* and *abhivyaktī* - organicism, consonance and expressivity - by putting the *bandish* and its *desī dhun* at the centre of the process of music-making in the *mārgī* genre of the khayāl[252]. This study has also argued that Gandharva constructed this alterity by drawing upon a vast and diverse array of sources, including the large repertoire of *bandishes, rāg-rūps* and approaches to extemporisation that he received exposure to, primarily through Deodhar; and, importantly, by rethinking the function and purpose of this repertoire with a sense of criticality and agency drawn, perhaps, from a sense of being an inheritor of Bhatkhande and Paluskar's reformist legacy. However, our discussion thus far has addressed these ideas almost entirely in terms of musical structure. The present chapter will examine how Gandharva furthered these same goals of *svābhāviktā, samvād* and *abhivyaktī* in the domain of musical *sound* – of intonation and resonant vocalisation, and will also examine his critical appraisal of traditional vocal aesthetics.

Additionally, as we saw in chapter one, another goal Gandharva had, and often expressly stated, was that of creating a *universalist* music. As briefly discussed there, Gandharva contended that singing voices in the khayāl tradition are cultivated and appreciated only with reference to *gharānā* idioms and do not have currency outside of them, and that his own aim was to produce *swars* that are beautiful both within the context of the Hindustani idiom and the idiom of the *rāg* at hand, as well as in terms of a larger, universal, genre-agnostic musicality. It is indeed the contention here that Gandharva's pursuit of a *gharānā*/genre-agnostic universalism hinges most substantially on the primacy his idiom gives to *intonational accuracy* and *resonant vocalisation*, and the present chapter will attempt to examine as well as problematise this universalist rhetoric.

Examining Gandharva's vocal aesthetic is particularly important because he was widely acknowledged as having exceptional mastery over his intonation and for cultivating an

[252] The context for this particular use of the *desī-mārgī* binary, with particular reference to Gandharva's interventions into the khayāl tradition, has been laid out in chapter one above, and has also been established through subsequent chapters.

especially resonant and uniquely expressive singing voice. Appraisals of his vocal idiom and descriptions of how it is alternative to that of other vocalists are varied. Often, its uniqueness is credited to a particular kind of *resonant vocalisation*; an affective, *acoustic* expressivity derived from his investment in the *desī* - as Shubha Mudgal puts it, 'No other singer in the pantheon of Hindustani classical music but Kumar Gandharva crafted a voice that howled like the wind, carrying shades of joy, lament, love and loss, modelling it on the sounds of the folk music that he had introspected on for years' (2014, 219). Other commentators look at it from a more *mārgī* perspective and applaud his mastery over *intonational accuracy*: for harmonium player and scholar Aravind Thatte, 'Kumarji would use *shrutīs* with a lot of awareness and deliberation... He had given a lot of thought to how the various shades of the particular *komal* and *tīvra swars* of the *rāg* he was singing could be used, and to how these shades could change with context…there are very few artists in *rāg-sangīt* who possess this kind of studiousness and ability' (2014, 147, translated). This chapter will, then, examine Gandharva's vocal idiom from both these perspectives – those of acoustics (in terms of timbre and resonance), and intonation (in terms of the perception of accuracy and *shrutī*) – in an attempt to both identify precedents to his particular vocal idiom, as well as to establish how and to what degree it is alternative to conventional vocal dispositions[253] (or in other words, what conventions his vocalism was alternative to), while also excavating his rhetoric for his motivations behind fashioning it in the way he did.

Gandharva was also particular about training his students' voices in specific ways, and had developed a definite pedagogy of the singing voice that he transmitted to them. Through empirical acoustical analysis, as well as ethnographic and hermeneutical work, this chapter will examine this pedagogy, with reference to what the modern disciplines of voice science and psychoacoustics tell us about the singing voice, to distil from it a baseline timbral 'profile' of Gandharva's vocal idiom in both a psychoacoustic and broader aesthetic sense. Another reason this investigation becomes important, particularly to an examination of Gandharva's alterity, is the idea, proposed by commentators like Vamanrao Deshpande, that the exploration of intonation and timbre was in fact a major, if not the primary, force that drove it: 'The essence of Kumar's romanticism (*bhāvavād*) was in employing various intensities of the [singing]

[253] This is a specific and useful construct, brought into the Hindustani context by Matthew Rahaim, who includes within it physiological, acoustical and relational ways of being – ' To work on one's voice is not only to strive after a sound, but to also strive after a *disposition* - of the tongue, lips, throat, nose, and chest; of attention, temporal sense, and relational comportment' (2021, 2).

voice' (1979, 125, translated). The present chapter will also examine, therefore, Gandharva's pursuit of intonation, timbre and resonance as an aesthetic goal in itself.

2. Critiquing the *Gharānedār Āvāz*

2.1 Re-forming the Singing Voice: BR Deodhar

We have discussed at some length the ways in which Bhatkhande's and Paluskar's modernist, reformist projects acted as precedents for Gandharva, mediated for him, as they were, by Deodhar's own pedagogical work and informed by the particular comportment the latter brought to the theorisation and transmission of the khayāl tradition. One aspect of music-making that seems not to have been given explicit theoretical attention by either Bhatkhande or Paluskar is that of the singing voice. While Paluskar is widely acknowledged as having possessed an exceptionally resonant singing voice, he is only known to have transmitted it mimetically to his own disciples[254]. Bhatkhande and Paluskar's theoretical focus – as known from their published work – was predominantly on the repertoire and grammar of the music, and the pedagogy of these. Deodhar, however, appears to have been the first scholar to have engaged with the singing voice, specific to Hindustani music, in a rigorous fashion, as has been shown below.

Deodhar's encounter with the pedagogy of the singing voice - as a 'modern' and independent discipline that was not contingent on genre, aesthetics or grammar – was an eminently colonial one. Giovanni Scrinzi (c.1864-1935) was an Italian pianist, composer and teacher living in Bombay who offered a scholarship to one student of Paluskar's Gandharva Mahavidyalay, in order to teach him Western classical music. The intention was to settle the ongoing debate about whether or not Indian music possessed harmony like Western music did – Scrinzi contended that only an Indian musician who took it upon himself to study Western music properly could then compare the two musics and settle the matter. Paluskar named Deodhar the recipient of this scholarship and, between 1921 and 1925, Deodhar spent a considerable

[254] 'Every guru tells you to increase the lung capacity but he cannot tell you how to do it. Whenever he taught [us] Panditji did pay attention to this matter, but his criticism was confined to and directed against superficialities such as making weird faces while singing, wild movements of the chin... nasal tone etc. He also told us repeatedly how essential it was for a singer to have adequate lung capacity'(Deodhar 1993, 58–59).

amount of time in Scrinzi's company, studying Western music theory and learning – with considerable difficulty - to recognize and play harmonic, contrapuntal music on the piano[255].

As Aneesh Pradhan points out, Scrinzi was no admirer of Indian music. It was, for him, '…traditional, legendary, sacred, even superstitious, *but progressive*, *no*', and depended on '…mere ornamentation [which] is repugnant to Western ideals of art, while it is a distinctive feature of Indian workmanship, whether in architecture, painting or music' (n.d., 7, emphasis added). Indeed, Scrinzi's scholarship was intended, apart from settling the harmony issue, 'To help Indians to a wider knowledge of musical art and science, in the hope that an enlarged outlook may vivify and foster their own national art' (ibid, 8).

While Pradhan suggests that Scrinzi's association with Deodhar may have tempered his disdain for Indian music, this is only evidenced by 'the magnanimity he demonstrated during his interaction with the GM [Paluskar's Gandharva Mahavidyalaya] and B.R. Deodhar thereafter' (ibid, 11). Deodhar, however, appears to have taken no offence to Scrinzi's acerbic and patronizing tone – his article on him is never critical (or even cognizant) of Scrinzi's disparaging views of Indian music as a whole. Instead, Deodhar is intrigued by Scrinzi's criticism of Indian musical technique, and takes seriously, for instance, Scrinzi's comment that Indian instrumentalists' 'technique of handling musical instruments can stand a lot of improvement' (Deodhar 1993, 55).

Scrinzi is also critical of the voices of the Indian vocalists he hears in Deodhar's company: 'He called some voices 'wooden' (lacking in resonance), and some others artificial. He could analyse every voice and unerringly pinpoint the fault(s) he noticed' (ibid, 59)[256]. As early as 1924, the year of Gandharva's birth and a good ten years before Gandharva meets Deodhar and begins studying with him, Deodhar is surprised at the 'resonance, breadth and power' of the opera singers he hears in Scrinzi's company, as much as he is by the ability of the same singers' voices to 'assume a velvety softness' when required (ibid, 57) . The result of this exchange is that Deodhar's study with Scrinzi moves from the theory of harmony to the cultivation of the

[255] See Deodhar's essay (1993, 51–74) on Scrinzi, and also Aneesh Pradhan (Pradhan, n.d.) for extensive information on this encounter. On the matter of harmony, Deodhar concluded that it did not in fact exist in Indian music, and termed the latter 'purely melodic' (1993, 66).

[256] Deshpande notes that one of the voices Scrinzi was particularly displeased with was that of Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze, and quotes him as saying "What kind of an artist is he? He does not even know the primary voice-production. The one singer who can use his voice reasonably well is your Panditji", referring to Deodhar's teacher, VD Paluskar (1989, 170).

singing voice – Scrinzi starts giving Deodhar lessons in breathing, posture, articulation and imparts to him, in Matthew Rahaim's words, a new 'corporeal awareness' (2021, 214) of his singing self. Deodhar is fascinated by the potential he sees in the mechanistic, corporeal, modern, 'Western' pedagogy of the voice that Scrinzi introduces him to, perhaps especially because he finds it missing in Indian music teaching[257].

Later, Scrinzi manages to procure for Deodhar an invitation to the 1933 World music conference in Florence as an 'authorised representative of India' (ibid, 72), during which trip, Deodhar also visits Austria and Prague to meet musicians there. All of this occurs in the years *before* Deodhar and Gandharva begin their relationship – indeed, it is this trip that Gandharva refers to when he describes, as we've discussed in chapter one, how Deodhar would tell him about musical thought he encountered in the West and how these ideas had an impact on him[258]. Deodhar's association with Scrinzi lasts till the latter's death in 1935 and appears to have been formative in some ways – Deodhar's interest in the genre/*gharānā*-agnostic science of the singing voice, rooted in 'anatomy and physiology' (B.R. Deodhar 1979, *naū*) begins with Scrinzi and lasts a lifetime, and even results in his 1979 publication on the subject '*Āvāj Sādhanā Shāstra*'[259], although these last developments occur long after Gandharva's move away from Mumbai and Deodhar.

Relevant to this discussion is the fact that Deodhar had already been exposed to and was intrigued by Western ideas of the voice, and had even had some rudimentary training from Scrinzi in applying them, *before* beginning his association with Gandharva. Deodhar also notes that he started training a group of children with the express purpose of turning them into professional singers, and made use of the books Scrinzi had given him earlier to address their vocal challenges, in 1944-45 (1979, 2). These were the very years Gandharva spent in Deodhar's company. While neither Deodhar nor Gandharva have explicitly described going through a process of training the voice in this idiom, it appears unlikely, on this background, that Deodhar's ideas of voice would not have rubbed off on the young, impressionable Gandharva. The reformist comportment that Deodhar inhabited, and that was bolstered in the

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[257] See footnote 254 above.

[258] See section 2.3 in chapter one above.

[259] This book comes after Deodhar's trips to New York to study with a Dr. Engam, a student of Douglas Stanley, author of important early publications on the subject (See Stanley, Douglas 1945). On his return to India, Deodhar even successfully coaches Indian singers – professional practitioners of Khayāl and Marathi musical theatre, who have vocal trouble and makes dramatic improvements in their singing voices, most notably Ashok Ranade and Nirmala Gogate (V. H. Deshpande 1989, 171)

context of the singing voice by his association with Scrinzi, certainly appears to have made its way into Gandharva's rhetoric on the subject, as does a particular timbral aesthetic that can be shown to be linked, at least to some degree, to a Western operatic timbral idiom, as will be demonstrated below.

This is certainly not to imply that Deodhar considered the Western voice as an absolute ideal or that such an ideal was transmitted to and employed by Gandharva in any simplistic sense[260]. The link between Gandharva's later consolidated vocal idiom and the vocal aesthetic he may have received exposure to from Deodhar, with its links to Western pedagogy, is a very specific *timbral* one, and will be developed fully below. However, the intention here certainly is to develop an account of the *reformist comportment* that Gandharva appears to have inherited from Deodhar, which lens he applied to the singing voice as much as he did to the other aspects of music-making we have dealt with thus far; as well as of Gandharva's own universalist ambitions for his music, which appear to have informed his timbral choices in important ways.

2.2 Continuing Reform: Kumar Gandharva

As we have seen, a major target of Gandharva's own reformism was the music of the *gharānās*. Gandharva extends his understanding of the various *gharānā gāyakīs* of his time - as reductionist standardizations of an *individual* originating musician's vision - to the singing voice as much as he does to musical structure and improvisatory approach. Indeed, Vamanrao Deshpande notes that there is assumed to be a very strong link between the overall idiom of a *gharānā's gāyakī* and the particular vocal idiom – both timbral and expressive – of its founding musician, and goes on to suggest the possibility (and even the desirability) of a separation between the two[261]. The inherently mimetic nature of pedagogy in Hindustani music means that the vocal idiosyncrasies and mannerisms of the *gurū* become an inseparable part of the musical idiom the *shishya* aspires to inhabit – Deshpande bemoans the dangers of this phenomenon and advises students to '…at all times, learn to avoid assimilation of the vocal defects of the guru' (1987, 21), and suggests that *gharānās* might instead be understood in

[260] Deodhar's vocal-timbral 'ideal', if he had a single one, and especially in his earlier years, is likely to have been his teacher VD Paluskar. Paluskar is remembered as having had an exceptionally loud and resonant voice and, as mentioned in footnote 256 above, is the only Indian singer Deodhar reports as having received Scrinzi approval. Deodhar later became an admirer of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's voice, as discussed in section 5 below, but this was a later development, since Deodhar developed a strong bond with Khan after Gandharva's departure from Mumbai.

[261] This is the central argument of Deshpande's chapter entitled, 'Gharanas and their Ways of Voice-production' (1987, chap. 2)

terms of their 'formal musical conception' which he goes on to theorize as *swar*-biased (what Martin Clayton would call melismatically organised, like the Kirana *gharānā*), *lay*-biased (syllabic, like the Agra *gharānā*) or as balanced between these two extremes (a syllabic-melismatic hybrid model, in which category Deshpande places the Gwalior and Jaipur *gharānās*). Classified thus in terms of its formal organization, it becomes possible to understand *gharānā* music in a non-corporeal, abstracted – in other words, in a *mārgī* – fashion. Deshpande suggests that if this understanding of *gharānās* had taken root, 'musical individualities [of *gharānā* musicians] would not have been undermined; on the contrary further lustre would have been added to them' (ibid, 22).

We have seen in the previous chapter how, for Gandharva this 'formal musical conception' of the major *gharānās* is reducible to a gradually intensifying sequence of improvisatory devices, albeit in different ways and to different degrees; and how Gandharva's focus on the *bandish* allows him to break away from this sequential conception of khayāl performance itself. As far as the singing voice is concerned, however, Gandharva appears to agree with Deshpande. While Gandharva sees expressive and affective merit in the peculiar vocal dispositions of individual musicians (in keeping with his individualist comportment), he also contends that the standardization and transmission of these dispositions as essential to the *gharānā*'s *gāyakī* help perpetuate 'vocal defects' and, more important, work against his universalist ambitions for the genre:

> *We listen to music based on the mānyatā (approval/recognition) that we grant [to singers]. Whether [the music] is good or bad, whether we like it or not. And then, others don't like the music that we like. Why don't they like it? Because we've given [the music we think we like] our approval somewhere [and we've overlooked its faults based on this bias]. [Just like] If I'm a brahmin, it pleases me if someone calls me a brahmin. This is how it has been in our music too.*
>
> *There is this idea in our music that one doesn't need a great voice in order to sing rāg-sangīt. There is some truth to this. But what has happened because of this is that singers with bad voices were considered great and we granted them mānyatā…They are great there. But they're no one here. Once they step outside their homes, no one cares about them…Those who don't [already] know the taste of their music will only spit at it. How do they sing? How do people listen? Mānyatā, only mānyatā…we haven't thought about what a good singing voice should be. Of*

> *course, only having a good voice is meaningless as well. (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 3)*

What Gandharva's 'home' appears to mean here is what Regula Qureshi, borrowing from Arjun Appadurai, calls 'a community of sentiment' (2000, 807) – a community whose incumbents are connected to each other by 'ties of aestheticizing privilege [which] leave little room for reflexivity, let alone a defamiliarizing holism' (ibid). Gandharva's *mānyatā* connotes just such an aestheticizing privilege, and his discursive goal appears to be to cultivate just such a holism through a process of reflexive reflection on the genre, as has been briefly discussed in chapter one. Indeed, holism implies, for Gandharva, precisely the kind of inclusive approach to vocal diversity that restrictive *gharānā* idioms may preclude: 'If you want to craft a complete image[262], then you need a [versatile] voice like that…you should be able to produce a very soft voice, and a very tough voice too'(2007, 14).

For both Deshpande and Gandharva, then, *gharānā-gāyakī* and the voice that is its medium, and the immutable identification of the two with one another, are what defeat this versatility and give rise to communities of sentiment; and these communities aestheticize what Gandharva and Deshpande both perceive as restrictive, reductionist approaches to music-making that run the risk of stagnation.

Gandharva's appraisals of the strength and depth of the link between *gharānā-gāyakī* and voice are rooted, however, in his own appraisals of his childhood mimetic successes (described in chapter one):

> *I know how a singer approaches music the minute he starts singing… I only need to hear his voice, not his music… Because a singer who is used to producing a particular kind of voice can only make a particular kind of music. He won't be able to sing absolutely anything he wants to sing. [For instance, take] Rahimat Khan…I didn't even know [his] name. In my childhood. As soon as they sang their 'ā', I'd know what they were going to do – what this music is, what its speed is…'(2007, 14, paraphrased)*

Hyperbolic as this sounds, we've seen in chapter one how this ability earned Gandharva tremendous childhood acclaim. Elsewhere, Gandharva tells us that in Rahimat Khan's (c.1860-

[262] See section 5.3 in chapter one above for Gandharva's use of this metaphor of the 'complete image' in the larger context of music-making.

1922) particular case, it was the lack of 'jerks' and 'crashes and bangs' in his singing that he latched on to as a child, and famously impressed the Maharajah of Sawantwadi with a rendition in that style that continued long after the disc had stopped playing[263]. Gandharva's explanation of his own mimetic ability tells us that it was the rhythmic style (melismatic in this case) of the musician that enabled it, and validates, in a way, Deshpande's theorisation of *gharānā-gāyakī*. Other important enablers of this ability emerge, however, from Gandharva's rhetoric: *āghāt* – expressive accentuation – that we have addressed in chapters one and two; and vocal timbre (through which musicians create their peculiar brands of expressivity and affect), which will be addressed here.

In terms of vocal timbre and voice-use, the *gharānā* that has been the recipient of perhaps the most vehement criticism for perpetuating a stereotypical and flawed vocal aesthetic has been the Agra *gharānā*. While Deshpande and Gandharva are both admirers of its most celebrated protagonist, Faiyaz Khan, they are both critical of the vocal idiom the *gharānā*, as an aestheticizing community of sentiment, privileged. It is the Agra voice that Gandharva caricaturizes when giving examples of 'vocal defects'[264], while Deshpande is unambiguous in stating that Agra singers '…ignored values connected with the *swar* – its sweetness, smoothness and delicate artistry of tonal nuances' (1987, 42). The other side of this dialectic is presented by Agra Gharana musician and scholar Srikrishna Haldankar, who brings more nuance into the discussion :

> *There are stratas [sic] of tunefulness [intonational accuracy / surīlāpan]. In one, the performer sings quite tunefully yet creates no impact of his notes on the listener. This is due to lack of resonance, sharpness and weightiness of the voice…In the other strata, the performer invariably creates a deep impact of his notes on the listener…the voice in Agra gharana is cultivated in this direction to develop these attributes. (2001, 91)*

'Resonance, sharpness and weightiness', in Haldankar's use of them, are terms that attempt to describe, beyond their literal sonic implications, the particular timbral affect ('impact', in Haldankar's words) that his *gharānā* aestheticizes and validates. Haldankar concedes, however, that 'this potential is sometimes misused…This mode, instead of creating a melodic

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[263] This is a well-known incident and is described in (Patel 2006).

[264] See (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 40). Also see section 2.1 in chapter two above for an audio clip of this caricaturization.

impact, does create a shouting or screaming impact which is repelling. This must be the result of the blind-following of Faiyaz Khan…'(ibid).

We have here the very situation Gandharva describes, where an *individual's* expressive idiom is reduced to a standardized vocal disposition that becomes inseparably associated with that *gharānā's gāyakī.* While Haldankar bemoans this, he also expects sympathetic listeners to base their appraisals of this *gāyakī* on 'not the actual performance but [on] the potential of a gharana…[which is often] implicit and [does] need a searching attitude for revelation' (ibid, 128). An audience that does this would, driven by an empathy-driven charitability, comprise a community of sentiment, precisely of the kind discussed above. Gandharva's goal, then, is to retain the kind of expressive power found in the individual's idiom without sacrificing it for a potentially insipid vocalism that favours correct intonation over affect, but to do so from within a timbral aesthetic that is more universalist, one that can stand on its own outside of such a circle of empathy and charitability. That Gandharva was successful to some degree in crafting such an idiom is something Haldankar himself affirms, in spite of his criticism[265] of Gandharva's voice: 'Among the artists of other gharanas who had this potential of deep impact mention must be made of Pt. Omkarnath Thakur, Kumar Gandharva and Pandita Gangubai Hangal' (ibid, 91). Vamanrao Deshpande agrees: 'Kumar…did not have to become disloyal to tone in order to capture people's attention' (1989, 98).

Apart from a *gharānā* pedigree, the other important identity vocal timbre in Hindustani music has come to signify is that of gender. We have already discussed the gendering of the genre in some detail[266], particularly in terms of dhrupad's associations with masculinity, with its connotations of sobriety and discipline, as opposed to khayāl's associations with femininity, with its connotations of emotionalism, ornamentation and indiscipline. Needless to say, such ideas of *aesthetic weight* have manifested in vocal timbre as much as in musical structure. Haldankar, when discussing the cultivation of a voice ideally suited to khayāl singing, a voice that has the kind of 'resonance, weightiness and sharpness' best represented by Faiyaz Khan, goes on to say that 'All this cultivation is, of course, suited to the male voice… It is only suited to those [female singers] who have broad voices like Kesarbai or Gangubai. It is not at all suited to those female singers who have no such voice. They therefore cannot do full justice to Agra gayaki, especially in ragas like Darbari and Megh' (2001, 112). Gandharva, however, appears

[265] See section 3.1.10 in chapter three above for Haldankar's criticism of Gandharva's vocalism
[266] See section 3.3 of chapter one above

to have rejected these associations[267], certainly in terms of voice use: 'We talk about equality between men and women in our era. Why are you stuck with these old ideas? You must absolutely let them go. These are obsolete ideas' (2007, 139). In saying elsewhere that instead of being concerned with these traditional gender/*gharānā* associations, 'each singer must be able to produce his own voice properly, whatever kind of voice it is' (2014, 207), Gandharva appears to be concerned primarily with 'proper' voice production. 'Proper' here appears to refer to good intonational accuracy and resonant vocalisation, with a slight bias towards the particular kind of resonance higher voices like Gandharva's own produce, an acoustical account of which will be developed below. Additionally, the focus on producing one's 'own voice' also appears to be in keeping with Deshpande's contention, cited above, that doing so would prevent the undermining of musical individualities of *gharānā* musicians.

It is possible to arrive, then, based on the above, at a description of Gandharva's acoustic utopia: an expressively diverse vocalism (diverse in that it does not identify completely with stagnant categories, such as those of *gharānā* and gender, and instead includes a diversity of them within it, as expressive possibilities) that is capable of generating forceful affect, while still achieving universal appeal upon the strength of its intonational accuracy and a particular timbral aesthetic that draws upon, at least in one specific way, a timbral idiom that has links with Western vocal pedagogy. In particular, the claim will be made here that it may have been an approach to the singing voice, rooted in a *gharānā*-agnostic corporeality, that Gandharva received from Deodhar, that played a key role in the development of his alternative vocal aesthetic. A detailed account of this aesthetic will be developed below, as will be a problematisation of its universalist claims.

3. A Timbral Tale: Acoustic Analysis

3.1 A Timbral Baseline

The attempt in this section will be to develop an account of Gandharva's vocal timbre through spectrographic analysis of selections from his recorded music, which will be correlated with his stated aesthetic and pedagogical goals for the singing voice, as articulated in his interviews. While timbral diversity and experimentation were important aesthetic goals for Gandharva,

[267] We have seen (in section 3.1.9 of chapter three above) how this rejection was part of a larger departure Gandharva made from a *mārgī* idiom represented by dhrupad conventions. This rejection can also be seen as part of his attempt to develop, as is being discussed, a holist universalism.

there appears to have been a definite singular timbral aesthetic underlying this diversity. The analysis below will attempt to describe this baseline aesthetic in timbral and psycho-acoustical terms, and to discuss how this particular resonance strategy might have been conceived of by Gandharva as being universalist[268].

An aspect common to most appraisals of Gandharva's vocalism is his sustained use of the elongated '*ye*' syllable which was, in Ashok Ranade's words, 'the main carrier for his vocalisations' (2011, 307). Figure 5 below shows a spectrograph (on the left) of about four seconds of a sustained *sā* on the /e/ vowel of the sung *ye* syllable[269]. The spectrum (on the right) depicts the relative intensities of the harmonics that comprise a single instant of this sound.

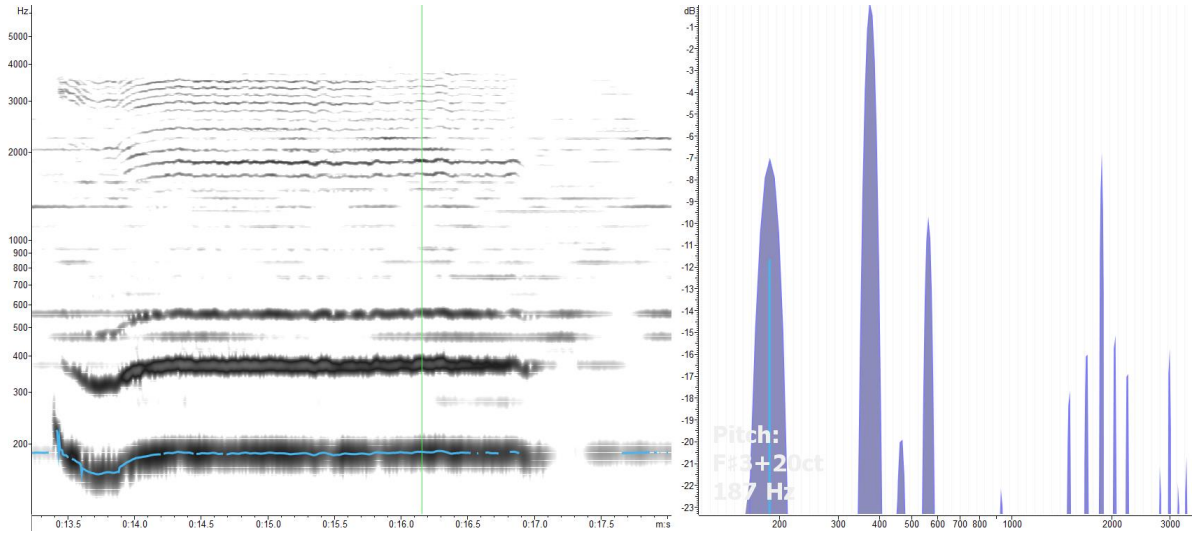

FIGURE 5: THE SUNG *YE* SOUND – SPECTROGRAPH (FREQUENCY VS TIME) AND SPECTRUM (INTENSITY VS FREQUENCY). AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS

As is apparent from the spectrograph, which measures frequency against time, the acoustic energy of Gandharva's tone is concentrated in two distinct areas: the region below 700 Hz and the region between 1700-3700Hz. There is a noticeable gap between these two regions (the 700-1700Hz area) because of the suppression of harmonic content in that region. The spectrum

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[268] This discussion makes use of principles from the disciplines of voice science and psychoacoustics. Kenneth Bozeman's work (2013) contains an excellent primer to basic concepts as well as more advanced insights, upon which much of the argumentation here is constructed. The canonical reference for this theory, upon which Bozeman builds, is Sundberg (Sundberg 1987). My own work, which brings this methodology of timbral analysis into Hindustani vocal music is forthcoming.

[269] Taken from 0:13-0:17 of Gandharva's studio rendition of *rāg* Lagan Gandhar (available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p6zHextf9Pw. This sample has been chosen as representative from among a number of similar samples that were analysed from across Gandharva's recorded performances, all of which showed roughly the same harmonic composition.

on the right measures acoustic intensity (normalised to the highest peak in the sample) against frequency and gives us a clearer depiction of the harmonic distribution in this tone. As is well known, the /e/ vowel is formed by tuning the first two resonances of the vocal tract (its formants) so that they amplify harmonics in approximately the 390Hz (F1) and 2300Hz (F2)[270] areas. Consequently, harmonics lying between these frequency ranges are supressed, leading to two distinct bands of energy that comprise this sound. We know from Ian Howell's work that percepts of acoustic 'darkness' and 'brightness' are a result of particular frequency bands in the harmonic spectrum being selectively emphasized, so that 'Low-frequency tones are dark and dull, and high-frequency tones bright and brilliant' (2017, 5).

BR Deodhar, in defining the kind of 'resonation' or *nād* that is desirable (and that Scrinzi found missing in the voices of musicians like Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze), describes a sound that has a 'double-voice' and likens it to a 'double-reed harmonium in which the upper and lower registers both sound' (Deodhar and Deshpande, n.d.), referring to the kind of Indian harmonium in which each key is assigned two vibrating reeds that are both tuned to the same note but an octave apart. Correlating this conception of resonance with the spectrograph of Gandharva's voice above, we find it to be an appropriate description of it – you have an (acoustically) 'dark', 'lower' tone that is coupled with a distinct 'bright', 'higher' tone, while other potentially interfering tones that might lie in between these two are *suppressed*, thus making the two sound like independent 'reeds' of a harmonium that are coupled with each other.

The interview of Deodhar this is cited from is from the late 1980s and is therefore from long after his time as Gandharva's teacher. Nonetheless, this conception of acceptable resonance appears to be informed by a Western classical understanding of it, of the kind introduced to Deodhar by Scrinzi, and that he later went on to study and adapt to Hindustani music through his later tours abroad and his book on the subject. In particular, this understanding of 'good' resonance finds a striking parallel in the widely known Western concept of *chiaroscuro* resonance. Kenneth Bozeman defines *chiaroscuro* resonance thus:

> *Chiaroscuro: an Italian term meaning "bright-dark" borrowed from art history to describe an ideal resonance balance between low and high frequency components in Western classical singing. It is usually accomplished (in middle and lower*

[270] See Catford (Catford 2001, 154)

ranges) by some balance in power between the first formant and the singer's formant cluster. (Bozeman 2013, 105)

The parallels are telling. Importantly, while the source of the dark component in Gandharva's tone comes from the energy in the <700Hz area indicating a low first formant and ties in nicely with its description in Bozeman's account of *chiaroscuro* resonance, the bright component of *chiaroscuro* is understood as being created by the singer's formant cluster. This is essentially a clustering of 'Higher formants (formant three and higher)' and is responsible for the 'ringing quality associated with professional classical singers that gives them carrying power over orchestras' (ibid, 17). The singer's formant cluster lies in the 2400-3200Hz area, which is where 'the human ear is most sensitive to loudness' (ibid).

Figure 5 above also shows us an intense concentration of energy in this 2400-3200Hz band, particularly at about 3000Hz. Indeed, such concentration of energy in this singer's formant cluster region can be heard across Gandharva's performances, across vowels, as depicted through the examples in Figure 6 below. From left to right, Figure 6 depicts an /ø/ vowel (IPA) sung to the *na* syllable and an /i/ vowel (IPA) sung as part of the text '*begī*'[271]:

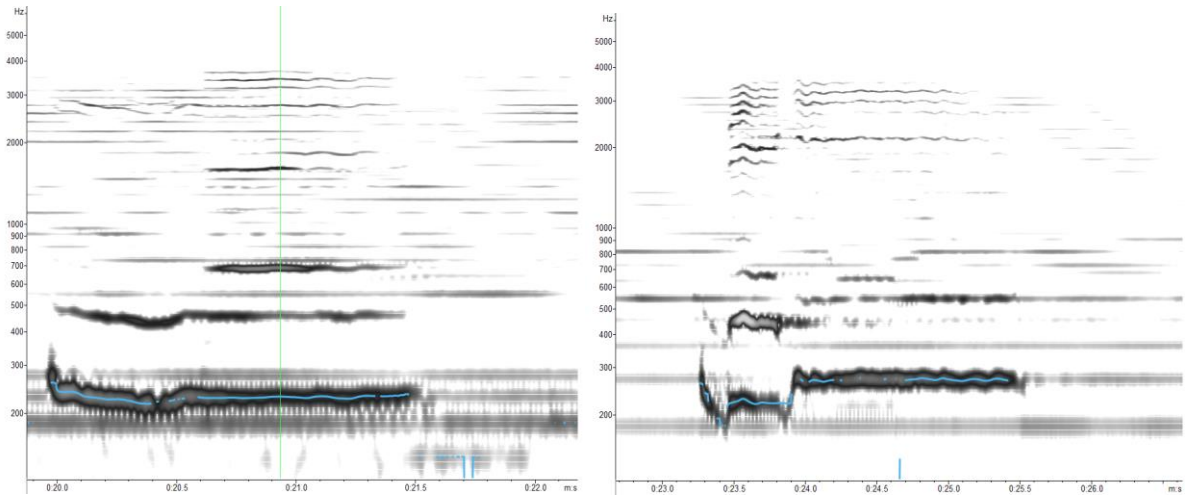

FIGURE 6: ENERGY DISTRIBUTION FOR /Ø/AND /I/ (IPA) VOWELS. AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS

This is not to suggest that Gandharva's timbral idiom can be entirely described as *chiaroscuro* timbre – such a claim would need the kind of empirical verification that is beyond the scope of this dissertation, but more important, *chiaroscuro* is a descriptor that is situated in a particular historical context that cannot be applied indiscriminately to Gandharva's differently situated

[271] From Gandharva's renditions of *rāgs* Hameer (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8E5glPWupI) and Multani (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1V5djX51lRE) respectively.

idiom. However, the above evidence can certainly lead us to the contention that a *chiaroscuro*-based aesthetic might have been a general timbral goal Gandharva received from Deodhar as discussed above, and that this acoustic sensibility contributed in no small way to the alterity of his vocalism. It needs also to be said that Gandharva does not employ this kind of balanced dark-bright timbre consistently throughout a rendition. Indeed, Gandharva is remembered for the timbral *diversity* he brought into his singing, as we have discussed above. However, his renditions invariably begin, in the initial *anibaddha ālāp* as well as in the initial stages of the *bandish*, with just such '*ye'*-based vocalisations in which a distinct dark-bright balance is to be found, with intervening harmonics conspicuously absent. And these are vocalisations to which he also *keeps returning* in the course of performance. This is the reason Ranade calls his vocalism '*ye*-based' as we have seen above, and it is also why it is contended here that this sound represents the *timbral baseline* upon which Gandharva's timbral aesthetic is constructed[272]. While Gandharva's voice has often been described as very similar to that of Omkarnath Thakur's and Abdul Karim Khan's[273], it appears that this is only true in a generic sense of these being higher voices from a previous generation, with dispositions that did not preclude affective, expressive vocalisation. The particular *chiaroscuro*-esque balance of bright and dark timbres that is audible in Gandharva's voice is not a prominent feature of either of these voices.

The ensuing discussion will return, then, to thinking about this timbral baseline and how it might have contributed to Gandharva's formulation of a universalist and organicist aesthetic. The following sections however, will attempt to bring some more nuance to our account of Gandharva's timbral goals by examining his discourse on vocal defects as well as the methods he applied to train his students' voices to avoid these.

3.2 Threads in the Voice: Roughness and *Surīlāpan*

Satyasheel Deshpande describes his teacher's lessons on voice use thus:

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[272] To reiterate, what we have established here is a *baseline*, a foundational timbral goal that Gandharva sometimes departs from but keeps returning to. It is practically impossible for this timbre to remain consistent throughout a rendition. As Rahaim puts it, 'A singer's voice, after all, typically retains its consistent sonority despite the dramatic overtonal variation between vowels. The instant recognizability of a familiar voice, then, hinges on dynamic disposition of voice rather than a single, unchanging arrangement of harmonics' (2021, 71).

[273] Ashok Ranade, for example, includes in the '…elements of [Gandharva's] art', the '…pointed tunefulness of the Kirana…[and the] evocative intonation in *raga*-music(like Pt. Omkarnath)…' (2011, 297). 'Kirana' here is a reference primarily to Abdul Karim Khan.

> *He wanted the voice to be round and resonant, for it to be pointed and to not have 'threads' in it. He had created a swar-sādhanā-mantra as an exercise to work towards this…It involved closing the mouth and singing various vowels and nasal consonants on various pitches in various rāgs, like a chant. (2005, 37)*

Elsewhere, Deshpande demonstrates the kind of voice Gandharva did not like as well as the 'closed mouth' remedy he recommended for it (Clip 4-3-2-1, From personal interview, 26th May 2022).

The spectrograph below depicts the harmonic content of these demonstrations. The spectrograph on the left is the unwanted timbre while the one on the right is the remedy for it – a closed mouth /m/ nasal consonant. Both samples are taken from the demonstration in clip 4-3-2-1 linked above.

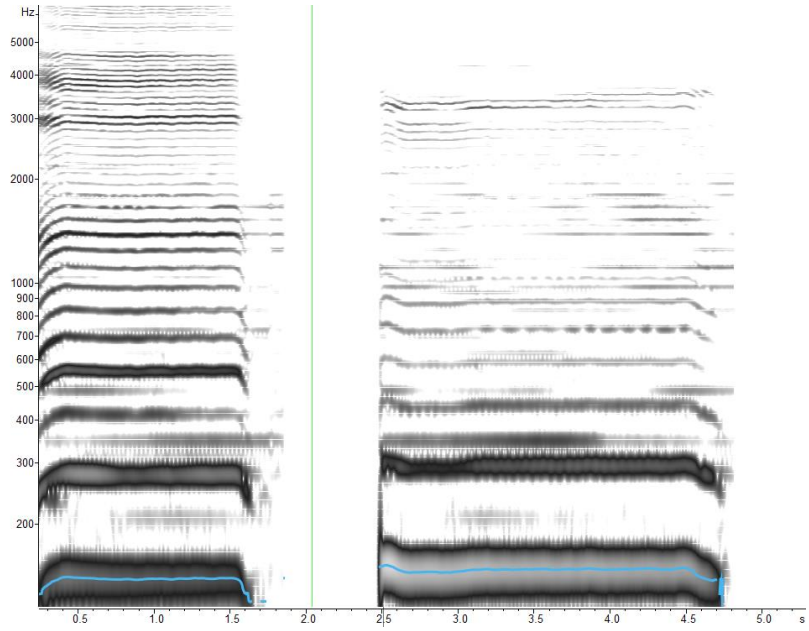

FIGURE 7: A REMEDY FOR 'THREADS' IN THE VOICE. AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS.

As is apparent from this spectrograph, closing the mouth results in the suppression of a large amount of harmonic content, especially in the 1000-2300Hz region. Particularly important, however, is the harmonic content that the /m/ nasal consonant does *not* suppress: the 'dark' area below 600Hz boosted by Deshpande's first formant, and the ringing 'bright' area boosted by his singer's formant cluster, around 3000Hz. This gives rise to just the kind of dark-bright timbre we have discussed above. Importantly though, the suppressed area consists of precisely those harmonics that contribute to a perception of 'auditory roughness'. Ian Howell defines auditory roughness as 'a buzzing, sometimes pulsing or beating quality introduced by the inner

ear because the cochlea is unable to differentiate simple tones that are very close in frequency' (2017, 4). This has repercussions for sung pitches because the intervals between subsequent harmonics in the sung tone become more and more closely spaced as we progress through the overtone series. Importantly, Howell observes that 'any two simple tones a minor third or closer will give rise to such roughness; the closer, the rougher' – this interval is termed the 'critical band' and is present between every pair of harmonics above the fifth harmonic (H5) (ibid).

Another important psychoacoustical principle Howell describes is that of 'resolvability'. The principle of resolvability builds upon the well-known principle of the missing fundamental which posits that for any sound that has pitch, human perception of that pitch persists even if the fundamental frequency (H1) is removed from it, since 'the ear folds [the] higher harmonics into the pitch' (ibid, 5). However, this principle only holds, generally for the first eight harmonics (H1-H8) which resolve neatly into the pitch of the fundamental, while harmonics from H9 onwards 'escape' from the pitch. Taken in combination with the roughness principle, Howell describes the three distinct 'perceptual divisions' this creates: pure and resolved (H1-H4), rough and resolved (H5-H8), and progressively rougher and unresolved (H9 and higher). Figure 8 below depicts how these percepts manifest through the harmonic series:

<table>
<tr><td>Harmonic No.</td><td>H1</td><td>H2</td><td>H3</td><td>H4</td><td>H5</td><td>H6</td><td>H7</td><td>H8</td><td>H9</td><td>H10</td><td>H11</td><td>Hn</td></tr>
<tr><td>Pitch Resolvability</td><td colspan="8">Resolved</td><td colspan="4">Unresolved</td></tr>
<tr><td>Roughness</td><td colspan="4">Pure</td><td colspan="8">Rough, progressively rougher</td></tr>
<tr><td>Summary</td><td colspan="4">Pure & Resolved</td><td colspan="4">Rough & Resolved</td><td colspan="4">Rough & Unresolved</td></tr>
<tr><td>Brightness</td><td colspan="12">Dark → Bright</td></tr>
</table>

FIGURE 8: ROUGHNESS AND RESOLVABILITY. BASED ON OBSERVATIONS IN HOWELL (2017, 5)

As can be seen in the spectrograph of Deshpande's demonstration above, harmonics above H5, that are emphasized in his 'open' tone and result in an audibly bright timbre, are suppressed in the closed /m/ sound, giving rise to a noticeably more 'close' timbre. These are, then, indeed, the 'threads' that Gandharva does not want in the singing voice. This resonance strategy can

thus be said to facilitate the production of, in acoustical terms, a 'pure and resolved' sound. Contrast this with the following spectrographic depiction of Faiyaz Khan's timbre[274]:

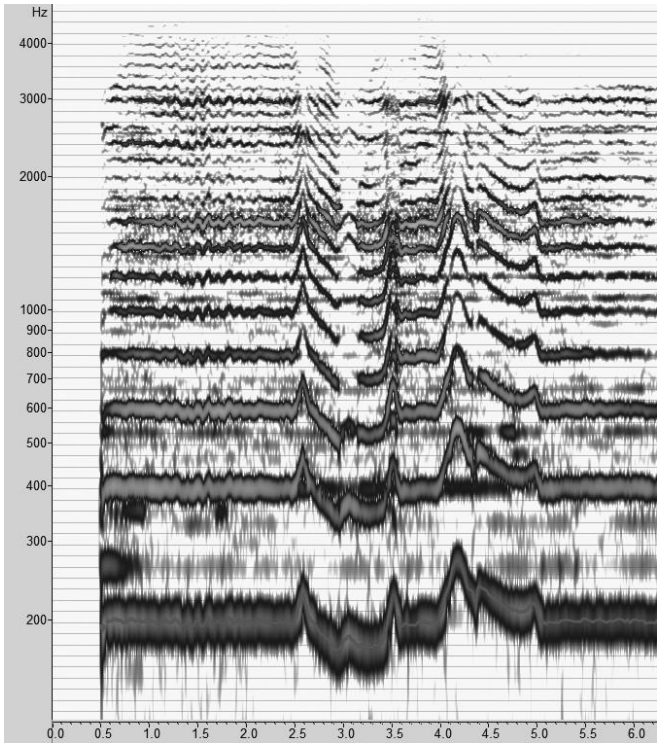

FIGURE 9: FAIYAZ KHAN'S VOCAL TIMBRE

Clearly, Faiyaz Khan's vocal idiom does not suppress 'rough' and 'unresolved' harmonics to the extent Gandharva's does, leading to the kind of voice commentators have described positively as 'broad', 'full-throated' and 'powerful', but also negatively as 'rugged', 'gruff' and 'grating'[275]. As we have seen, it is the emulation of this timbre by Faiyaz Khan's successors that Gandharva caricaturises, and that Vamanrao Deshpande accuses of lacking 'sweetness, smoothness and delicate artistry of tonal nuances'(1987, 42).

The other master vocalist from Faiyaz Khan's generation who is considered to be his polar opposite in terms of voice use (as well as, consequently, in *gāyakī*) is Abdul Karim Khan. Wade gives us the following description of the latter's voice:

> *Two statements have been universally used to describe Abdul Karim's voice: 'sweet' and 'pliant'. To these can be added 'high', for his natural pitch lay in a*

[274] Taken from Faiyaz Khan's gramophone 1938 recording of *rāg* Jaunpuri (00:08s – 00:14s), available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vTq3HrxQWcM. Author's analysis.
[275] See Wade (2016, 106–6) for various commentators' descriptions of Faiyaz Khan's voice, some of which have been reproduced here.

> *range that Western practise would call tenor. He produced an effect that was the opposite of, for instance, the powerful, forceful Agra gharana voice…The overall effect is of quietness and peace…(Wade 2016, 197–98)*

Deshpande contrasts this voice with that of the Agra gharānā and describes it as 'pointed' and 'sweet'. Indeed, for Deshpande, 'purity of *swara*…[was] the very essence of their [Khan and his successors'] musical art' (1987, 41–42). The spectrograph below depicts Abdul Karim Khan singing the vowel /a/ on the word '*piyā*'[276]:

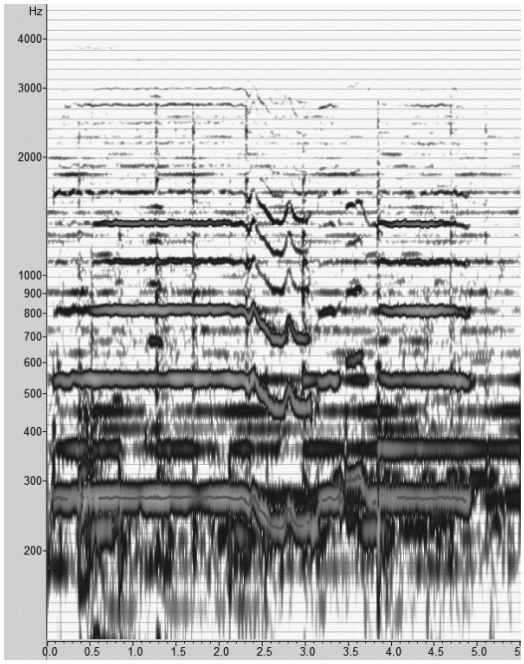

FIGURE 10: ABDUL KARIM KHAN'S VOCAL TIMBRE

Clearly Abdul Karim Khan's resonance strategy, in comparison with Faiyaz Khan's involves the suppression of a large number of 'rough' and 'unresolved' harmonics, resulting in the 'pure' *swar* Deshpande describes. This is an *acoustic* perception of purity, one brought about by the suppression of rough harmonics so that the harmonics that peak (have the greatest intensity) in Abdul Karim Khan's spectrum tend to be lower harmonics rather than other ones, in stark opposition to Faiyaz Khan's spectrum. Howell summarizes the results of this unambiguously: 'If the harmonics forming a spectral peak are low enough in the series, *that spectral peak's tone colour becomes an aspect of the pitch* with a pure quality. If high enough, that tone colour elicits roughness and eventually *escapes the pitch*' (2017, 5, emphasis added). Acoustic purity,

[276] Taken from Abdul Karim Khan's 1934 gramophone recording of the thumri Piya Bin Nahi Avat Chain (00:17s-00:23), savailable at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wdjlf_mzOiw. Author's Analysis.

then, is accompanied by *intonational accuracy* achieved by a strong resolution of harmonics into the fundamental pitch. Of course, intonational accuracy is contingent upon the relationship the sung tone has to its reference pitch – that provided by the tanpura. However, the principle that emerges from this analysis is that even if the alignment of the sung pitch with the tanpura is accurate, the perception of correct intonation – of *surīlāpan* – that the voice generates depends heavily upon the acoustic purity of its timbre, so that a timbre like that of Faiyaz Khan's is more likely to be perceived as being intonationally inadequate in spite of its expressive ability, while that of Abdul Karim Khan's more *surīlā*.

Abdul Karim Khan's *surīlāpan* is well known and has become the benchmark of sorts for intonation in Hindustani music, and it is Gandharva that Vamanrao Deshpande finds to be, in this respect, his successor: '[Kumar's is] a voice as true as [Abdul Karim Khan's] Kirana voice, although it is of a different breed'. (Deshpande 1979, 104, translated). Two things appear to have been meant here by 'different breed'. One, according to Satyasheel Deshpande is Gandharva's handling of microtonality – *shrutīs* – which will be dealt with in some detail in section 4.2 below. The other, it is contended here, is the 'ring' Gandharva's voice acquires through his use of the singers' formant cluster, as discussed above. This ringing component of the voice, often called 'twang' (Ingo R Titze 2001, 520), is much less pronounced in Abdul Karim Khan's voice, as is apparent in the spectrograph in Figure 10 above. It appears to be a result of this timbral colour that Gandharva's voice, in spite of being so close in timbre to Abdul Karim's in terms of its *surīlāpan*, is described as 'aggressive' and 'howling'[277], as we have seen above, rather than as 'smooth' and 'peaceful', as Khan's is.

That the adoption of this timbre is, like most things for Gandharva, a conscious choice, and that he is even aware of the fact that it is a coming together of harmonics in various proportions that gives rise to a particular timbral quality, is apparent from his discourse on the subject:

> *All the notes sound simultaneously in the voice. If you touch the upper sā [while singing the lower] in your voice, it gives pleasure. If [that upper sā] disappears then your voice lacks javārī. The voice ought to have javārī. [Whether or not it does] depends upon how you produce the voice, on how much pressure [original term] you give it. (2007, 20)*

[277] It bears remembering here that these adjectives have been used to describe Gandharva's voice in a positive way, to imply that his singing was forceful and assertive, and had a particularly affective resonance.

Javārī is the term used to describe the sound created by the string of a *tānpurā* (or other similar curved-bridge string instruments such as the *sitār*) as a result of the curved bridge that causes the string to hit the bridge at various points along its length, creating the harmonically rich 'buzzing' sound unique to these Indic instruments. This 'buzz' is controlled by means of a cotton thread inserted between the string and the bridge to create, in Ranade's words, 'A lingering, rounded sound, a resonance added to the sound of the original plucked/strummed sound of strings [which] is called *jawari*'(2012, 64). This is the reference behind Gandharva's 'thread' metaphor – an inappropriate thread, or one run inappropriately over a bridge can cause the instrument to emit a jarring, rough, disharmonic sound, much like the unresolved, rough resonance the singing voice can create when produced in a certain way. As with the *tānpurā,* then, Gandharva wants the voice to have only the right amount, and the right sort of *javārī,* presumably the kind that gives it a sharp, ringing edge without taking away from the 'pure' and 'resolved' qualities it has been given, as discussed above.

What, then, is this desirable kind of vocal *javārī*? While Ranade's description of the *javārī* sound conforms to the general understanding of it, Gandharva makes it more specific by attributing it to a particular harmonic in the voice – the 'upper *sā'* mentioned in the quote from him above. In terms of the harmonic series, the 'upper *sā*' in a voice singing a particular pitch would refer to H2 – the second harmonic, that occurs immediately after the fundamental frequency of the sung pitch or H1. By definition, H2 is twice the frequency of H1 and qualifies as the 'upper *sā*' if its reference 'lower *sā'* is H1. Indeed, a prominent H2 (when boosted by the first formant) is known to be responsible for producing what is known as 'open timbre'. In Bozeman's words, 'an F1/H2 coupling…forms an especially strong form of open timbre, characterized by ringing clarity and power' (2013, 21). The 'openness' and 'closeness' of timbre is, however, relative and depends on the relative intensity of H1 in comparison with H2, so that when H1 dominates, we have close timbre, and when H2 dominates we have open timbre (ibid, 20-23). For reference, Abdul Karim Khan might be considered a representative of close timbre while Faiyaz Khan represents open timbre. Gandharva's own timbre might be placed in between these two extremes, since analysis shows (as is also apparent in the spectrographs included above) that relative to their respective H1s, Gandharva's H2 is more prominent than Abdul Karim's but not as prominent as Faiyaz Khan's.

On the other hand, it is also possible that Gandharva's 'upper *sā*' refers to one of the many other octave multiples of H1 that fall within audibility in the harmonic series – H4, H8, H16, H32… - all of which qualify as *sā* in various octaves relative to H1. While it has proved difficult

to ascertain with confidence which of these, or what combination of these Gandharva perceives as his 'upper *sā'*, what seems important is Gandharva's corporeal, acoustic and self-reflexive awareness of these phenomena. This awareness points us to the idea that his own timbral choices were, at least to some extent, *deliberate* and *intentionally* made and appears to be a good example of Gandharva's use of both received and experiential knowledge in order to exercise agency and choice in his inhabitation of the tradition.

3.3 Training the voice: The *Mantra* and the *Tānpurā*

3.3.1. The *Swar-Sādhanā-Mantra*

> *[Singers] should achieve mastery over [vocalisation] that is 'closed'. We can do this sometimes, but we can't scream in [such vocalisation]… Also, we need to master our nasal sounds across our range. And all of this must be done with discernment. Only then will you be able to produce a pure ā sound, otherwise you'll end up with an ã*[278] *…you should truly fall in love with the ā sound, the n sound, the m sound, even the ŋ*[279] *sound. Only then will you achieve mastery. Because the vowels and consonants are really simple ways to produce nād [resonance]. [Your vocalisation] must be like a struck bell, so that once you strike it, its sound and volume are no longer under your control. It is in closed pronunciations that the resonance of your syllables and swars resides. I have created a mantra for students in order to practise all this. (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 4–6, paraphrased, translated)*

We have already discussed Gandharva's advocacy of close-mouthed vocalisation as a means to eliminate 'threads' or roughness in the voice. Noteworthy in the above extended quote, however, is the idea that *nād* – resonance – resides in 'closed' pronunciations. As we have seen in Satyasheel Deshpande's demonstration above, closed pronunciations play an important role in Gandharva's resonance strategy. To use terminology from voice science, what Gandharva appears to be advocating is a *convergent resonator* – 'a vocal tract shape that is relatively (for the vowel being produced) more open near the glottis and narrower near the lips (the inverted megaphone)' (Bozeman 2013, 105). Bozeman goes on to say that 'Such a resonance strategy

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[278] IPA: /ã/ (आं), Described in the international phonetic alphabet as the 'nasalised open front unrounded vowel'. (International Phonetic Association 1999, 180–82)

[279] The ŋ consonant used here is the voiced velar nasal consonant, which is the 'ng' sound in words like 'sing' (International Phonetic Association 1999, 169)

is typical of Western classical singing…' (ibid), reinforcing our hypothesis that Gandharva's timbral idiom displays a Western influence derived from Deodhar's encounter with Scrinzi. An examination of Gandharva's *swar-sādhanā-mantra* reveals how Gandharva adapted this resonance goal to Hindustani vocalisation. The *mantra*, as taught to me by his disciples Satyasheel Deshpande and Madhup Mudgal, is as follows:

ye an āī o

oī ūnīn

āū aī āre

o aū ūŋga ye

āvo āve nəi̯n/man[280]

āū re āū re

Apparent in Mudgal's demonstration of the first line of this *mantra* (Clip 4-3-2-2) is Gandharva's method of using closed pronunciations through close vowels like *ye* and nasal consonants like *an,* and sustaining pitch on these, to habituate his students into singing various vowels with a convergent resonator. The goal here appears to be, as in his performances as discussed above, to generate the 'dark' resonance typical to convergent resonators through these closed pronunciations, and to then move into a more open vowel such as *ā*, while attempting to *carry* this dark resonance forward through it. The spectrograph below depicts this movement in the *mantra*, from the closed *ye* to the closed nasal *an,* on to the open *ā* and back to the closed *ī,* concluding with the *o* :

[280] Madhup Mudgal uses the word *nəi̯n* (नैन) here, while Satyasheel Deshpande says *man* (मन) should also be used as an alternative to *nəi̯n,* in order to bring in the /m/ nasal consonant which is otherwise missing in the *mantra*

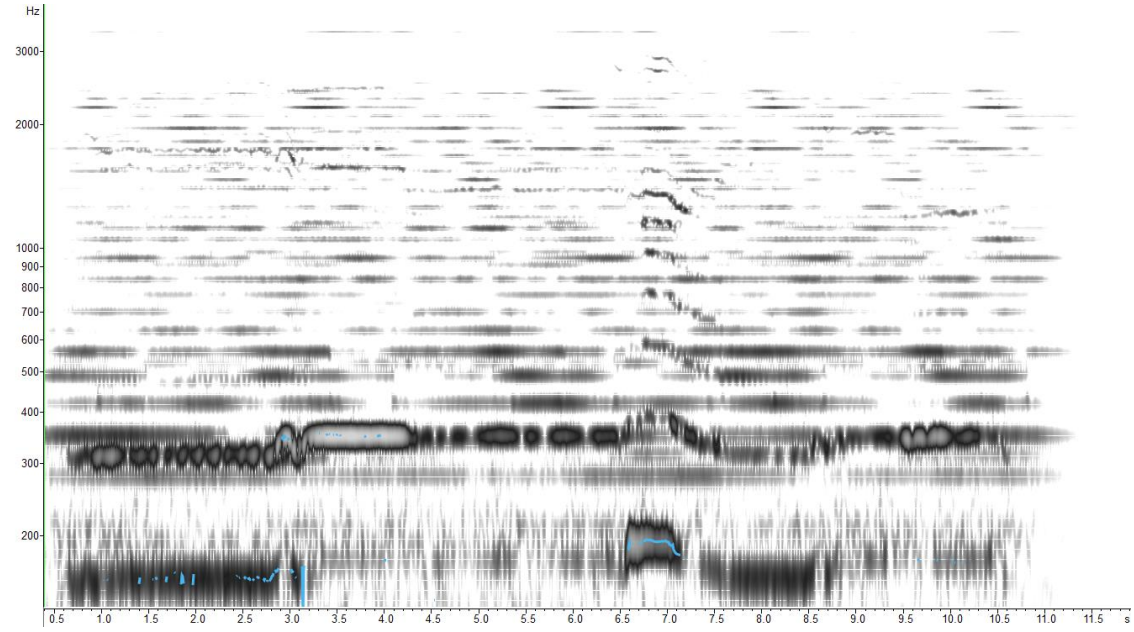

FIGURE 11: MADHUP MUDGAL DEMONSTRATING THE MANTRA. PERSONAL INTERVIEW, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021

The spectrograph in Figure 12 below depicts Gandharva himself demonstrating closed-mouth phonation, which he then opens up into an (approximately) /ɜ/ vowel (Clip 4-3-3-1)[281]:

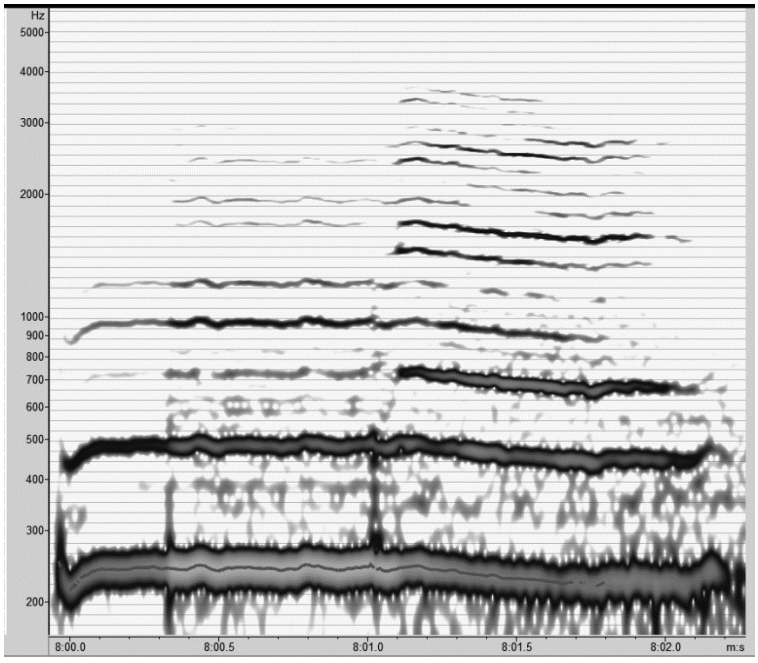

FIGURE 12: GANDHARVA DEMONSTRATING CLOSED RESONANCE AND ITS OPENING.

[281] Clip extracted from (Gandharva 1990)

Although Gandharva demonstrates closed pronunciation in general here, and not the *mantra* in particular, the result is very similar to Mudgal's demonstration of the mantra above, where closed mouth resonance is established first, and is later transferred into an open vowel. The distribution of acoustic energy across the harmonic spectrum apparent here is similar to what we have already seen above in our analysis of Gandharva's *ye*-dependent *ālāp*. It is safe to say, based on all of the above, that the purpose of Gandharva's *mantra* is to train students in pronouncing various vowels in a controlled manner through a convergent resonator, by encouraging a predominant use of close vowels and interspersed nasal consonants.

3.3.2 Nasality and the Semi-Occluded Vocal Tract

Another issue that Gandharva's *mantra* appears to address is that of unwanted nasality. Gandharva is clearly concerned about the excessive undesirable nasality he perceives as being prevalent in Hindustani vocalisation: 'Music has suffered across India because of [excessive] nasality' (2007, 8). Gandharva's solution to this problem, as we've seen in the quote at the beginning of this section, is achieving mastery over 'nasal sounds'. While current thinking in vocal acoustics has complicated the idea of nasality and has deemed it irreducible to a simplistic phenomenon, there appears to be general consensus that a perception of nasality arises from the dominance of high harmonics, although which these are and whether or not the resulting acoustic percept is considered a positive or negative phenomenon is highly debated[282]. Vocal pedagogue and scientist Ingo Titze defines two kinds of nasality: 'nasal twang', which is 'related to vocal "ring," an acoustic resonation in the laryngeal vestibule…, [the resonance of which] is primarily of high-frequency content (2500–3500 Hz) and the sound is radiated mainly from the mouth' (2001, 520); and 'nasal murmur', which 'is the result of acoustic energy propagated into (and through) the nose. This energy …has primarily low-frequency content (200–300 Hz). It is the sound of the nasal consonants /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/' (ibid). Although the term 'twang' is also often used to describe the ringing quality we have seen as being important to Gandharva's vocal idiom, it can also manifest as the kind of unwanted nasality Gandharva describes, and there does not appear to be consensus on an empirical, measurable distinction between the two. What can be said with confidence however, is that Gandharva's strategy of 'achieving mastery over nasal sounds' in order to rid oneself of unwanted nasality is an advocacy of practicing what Titze describes as nasal murmur – it is striking that Gandharva mentions the same three nasal consonants: /m/, /n/ and /ŋ/, even in the same order, as Titze

[282] See Nicholas Perna (2020) for an overview of the current understanding of nasality.

does. To practice these closed-mouth nasal consonants is to habituate oneself, again, to a lower-harmonics dominant, 'dark' sound: as Ian Howell points out in a discussion about nasality with Nicholas Perna, 'the spectra of a nasal continuant such as /ng/ [/ŋ/] will be a strong fundamental frequency with a steep roll off of harmonics following' (Perna 2020, 431), implying that the 'dark' area of the spectrum receives a boost in singing these consonants.

Gandharva doesn't want to rid music of nasality entirely: 'The nose is not a bad thing – it is a very good thing. If we were to remove the nose entirely from a person's face, it would look terrible! [But] we must practice using the nose. Once we do that, it doesn't trouble us at all. We must practice closed pronunciation' (2007, 4). Clearly, then, Gandharva advocates closed pronunciation – resonator convergence – as a strategy to achieve an acoustically pure tone (one that lacks rough and unresolved harmonics, which may also include harmonics that lead to the perception of unwanted nasality). Arguably, once this has been mastered, the 'twang' or 'ring' of higher harmonics can be brought in without introducing the kind of roughness or undesirable nasality that dominates the timbre of the voice.

This leads us to a possible explanation of Gandharva's contention that 'It is in closed pronunciations that the resonance of your syllables and *swars* resides': as we have seen, resonator convergence promotes a dark, lower-harmonic dominant timbre, and this gives rise to acoustically 'pure' tones that lack acoustic roughness (and potentially unresolved, nasal percepts). The syllables and sustained pitches that posses such acoustic 'purity' are resonant *in this particular sense,* so that Gandharva's contention appears to be valid to this extent. Current thinking has complicated the idea of vocal 'resonance', however, in order to temper the overtly positive connotation it has, and to say instead that all voices are resonant *in different ways*; or in purely acoustical terms, to say that 'resonance' is a perceptual construct with social significance, so that different listeners will perceive different voices as 'resonant'. In acoustic-perceptual terms, then, it is hard to make a qualitative judgement about any definite universally positive appeal that this kind of vocalisation inherently contains. There is, however, another related perspective that deserves some consideration, about which such a claim might be conceivable: the physiological.

In discussing the cultivation of the singing voice, Gandharva says that one must be able to 'sing entirely using a bee-like [buzzing] sound…sing the entire octave in a very small [soft/light] voice'(2007, 28), that 'we should be able to sing the entire octave using *mukhabandī* (closed-mouth phonation)' and that 'we should be able to make [this sound] scream' (ibid, 5). These

are all postures of phonation that require a closed mouth. Modern Western vocal pedagogy advocates a number of convergent-resonator exercises that are remarkably similar to the ones Gandharva describes here. These are known as SOVT (Semi-Occluded Vocal Tract) exercises and are designed to habituate singers into this posture[283]. Gandharva's bell analogy - the idea that once the 'right' kind of resonation is set up in the vocal apparatus, the singer can let go of control and allow resonance production to occur of its own accord – might be explained by another well-documented phenomenon that is a known result of using a convergent resonator or an SOVT posture: that of inertive reactance.

Bozeman explains this phenomenon as a result of what has come to be known in voice science as the non-linear source filter model of voice production. This model posits that 'certain resonation postures of the filter [the vocal tract that 'filters' or shapes the sound produced by the vocal folds, or the 'vibrator'] cause feedback on the vibrator that alters the function and contribution of the vibrator, ideally by assisting its efficiency' (2013, 111). Bozeman lists a convergent resonator shape as one of the main aspects of this posture, and defines the 'assistance' that the vocal folds receive from it as 'inertive reactance'. This term essentially implies the conditions wherein, because of resonator convergence ('closed pronunciation' in Gandharva's words), 'acoustic energy passing through the filter can be productively reflected back onto the source, assisting the efficiency and power of the voice source/vibrator' (ibid, 43). The implication here is that not only does a convergent resonator produce an acoustically pure sound, it also sets up a self-reinforcing feedback loop of acoustic energy that promotes effortless singing, often allowing singers to make their sound 'scream'[284]. If Gandharva's 'closed-pronunciation' encourages such powerful but relatively effort-free vocalisation, and assuming that the apparent effortlessness of a performer does in fact have universal appeal for audiences, the physiological side of Gandharva's vocal disposition might be argued to be conducive to his universalist goals.

[283] See Titze (2021)

[284] While there are studies that show that SOVT exercises do promote an increase acoustic output (Manternach, Schloneger, and Maxfield 2018) and (Meerschman et al. 2017), other studies on the subject complicate this by contending that what these exercises really do is give rise to 'a *self-perceived improvement* in comfort of production, voice quality and power, although objective evidence was missing' (Di Natale et al. 2020, emphasis added).

3.3.3 Intonational Accuracy and the Tanpura

Kumar Gandharva's obsession with and his mastery over the tuning and use of the tanpura is well-known. In Pandharinath Kolhapure's words, 'I have never seen another singer care for and immerse himself into his tanpuras as much as Kumar Gandharva did. Singers are varied in the importance they give to the instrument. Some tune it better than others. But it is only Kumar Gandharva who earns the first *dād* (appreciation/applause) of the *mehfil* from the audience just for his tuning of his *jodī* (pair of tanpuras)' (2004, 31, paraphrased, translated)[285]. While there is a dearth of studies that examine the role of the tanpura in training the Hindustani voice in a rigorous fashion, the instrument is traditionally given tremendous importance. Gandharva's disciples are often particular in insisting that the tanpura is the only instrument students should use to accompany themselves on while practicing their music, and tend to be against the use of the harmonium[286].

One explanation for this rejection of the harmonium may be derived from Gandharva's own discourse on the subject: 'all the notes are produced at the same time on the harmonium [while playing a single note]. This doesn't happen on the tanpura' (2007, 20). It is possible to draw from this a parallel to Gandharva's overall timbral aesthetic, described above. Consider these spectrographic representations of a harmonium (on the left) and a tanpura (on the right) playing the note D3 for a duration of about 9 seconds each:

[285] Stories of Gandharva's love for the instrument are legend, from the collection of tanpuras he acquired over the years, to his disciples remembering how he reprimanded them for even the slightest change in the tempo of their tanpura-playing – something he would be aware of even when in the midst of intense performance. Other anecdotes tell of the extent to which he would go to experiment with *javārī* threads to get just the right resonance from the instrument; or of him booking separate berths in trains for the instruments while disciples were made to sleep on the floor of the compartment (personal interviews with Madhup Mudgal, Satyasheel Deshpande and Vijay Sardeshmukh).

[286] Madhup Mudgal, personal interview, September 2021

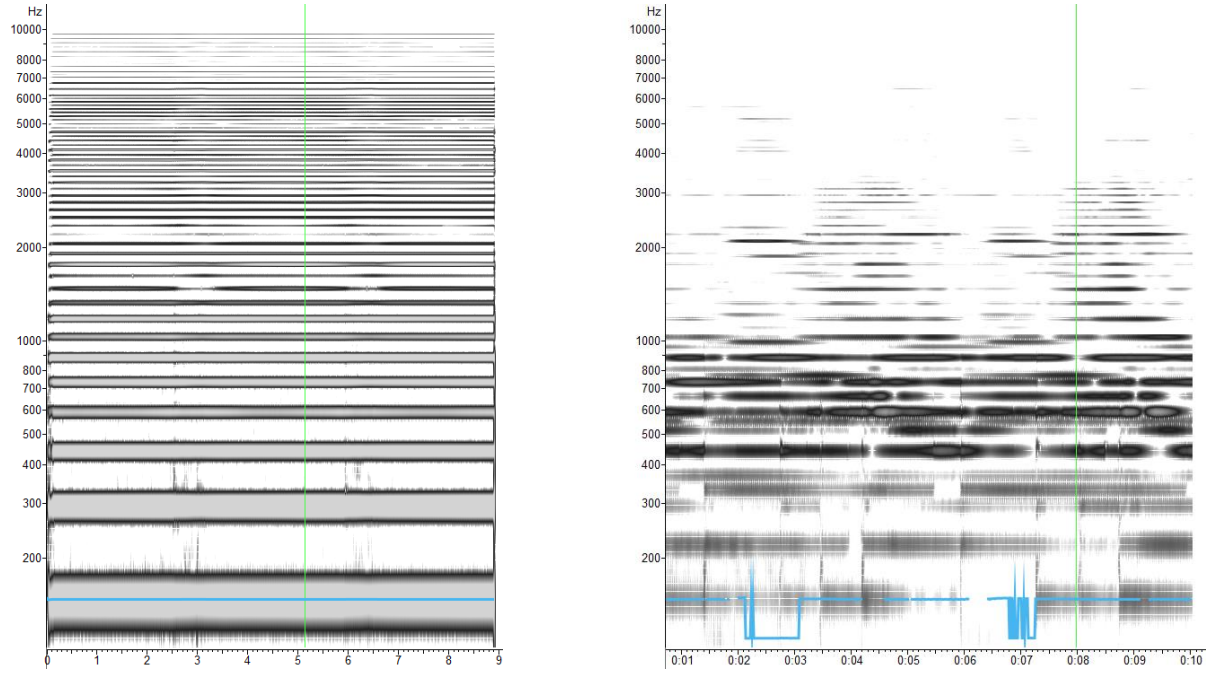

FIGURE 13: HARMONIUM VS TANPURA. SOURCE: AUTHOR'S ANALYSIS

Clearly, the harmonium produces a large number of harmonics at similar intensity – indeed, every harmonic in the series is clearly visible in the harmonium's spectrum; whereas the tanpura is much more selective. Also visible in the tanpura's spectrum is the fact that harmonics appear and disappear depending upon the string that is currently being played, while in the case of the harmonium, the intensity of each harmonic remains continuous. The harmonium's sound, then, drawing again from the acoustic principles discussed above, is a 'rougher' sound than that of the tanpura, and it is conceivable that use of the harmonium therefore causes singers to either emulate this roughness, or to develop an increased roughness (high harmonic predominance) in their voices in order to be audible above the instrument[287]. The tanpura, on the other hand, may be said to do the opposite, to encourage *filtering* of harmonic content, resulting, again, in an acoustically purer, clearer sound. Listening to this sound as attentively as Gandharva was known to do, while continuously (albeit perhaps subconsciously) matching the resonances in the voice with it may be the cause of Gandharva's famed intonational accuracy, his *surīlāpan*.

[287] To clarify, Deodhar's analogy of the two reeds of the harmonium in Sec. 3.1 above is a *metaphor* intended to represent two broad divisions of tone colour in the singing voice, bright and dark, much like a dual-reed harmonium has a bass and treble reed. This is a metaphor, not to be confused with the actual acoustical qualities of the harmonium discussed above.

While this might be considered mere speculation, and while these contentions would require a substantial amount of empirical work in order to be verified and made definitive, they have been included here nonetheless in order to perhaps open up an avenue for research in what appears to be an ignored area, and equally to include a discussion on the instrument that played as a important a role as it did in Gandharva's musical idiom.

4. The Pursuit of *Nād* and *Shrutī*

4.1 *Nād* – Indulging in Resonation

We have seen above that commentators like Vamanrao Deshpande ascribed the alterity of Gandharva's *gāyakī* to his experimentation, even in performance, with vocal timbre and intonation. Gandharva's own discourse on *nād* and *shrutī* is illustrative of his investment in these as tools that are crucial to his music in important ways. He says, for instance, about *nom-tom* style vocables that he uses sometimes, especially in his pre-*bandish ālāp*, that 'It isn't *nom-tom* that I do. [When] I move [the syllables] *da* and *na* around, I move their *nād* around, this is my *ālāp* of resonance' (Gandharva, Bhagwat, and Dhaneshwar 1985). Clip 4-4-1, an excerpt of a pre-*bandish ālāp* in *rāg* Malkauns, is an example of this kind of *ālāp.* This approach to *nom-tom* is a representative example of how Gandharva often handles traditional improvisational material – as a means of, from within musical structure, *exploring sound*. This excerpt is one of a number of examples that might be cited here. As discussed in chapter two above, one of the ways Gandharva kept the *bandish* at hand in play was to make use of the phonetic content of its text to create *acoustic* expression. In particular, Madhup Mudgal says that Gandharva would only indulge in *bol*-work when the phonetic component of the *bandish* text was amenable to it[288].

While all of this points to Gandharva's fondness for and sensitivity to the *sound* of music, his preoccupation with the exploration of a sheerly *acoustic* expressivity truly emerges in his *vilambit* khayāl. We have already seen how, at slower tempos, when it becomes difficult to keep the sense of a concise *dhun* alive because of the length of the *āvartans*, Gandharva creates micro-*dhuns* to compensate[289]. But the *vilambit* also affords Gandharva the leisure to indulge in an exploration of *nād*, and he can often be heard doing this for extended periods of time. In

[288] Personal Interview, September 2021
[289] See section 3.2.2 of chapter three above

one instance, Gandharva can be heard exploring *nād* and *shrutī* in the intervallic space between the *sā* and the *ga* of *rāg* Todi for the majority of an hour-long *vilambit* khayāl rendition, without bothering to explore the remainder of his tessitura, excepting the rare movement into lower/upper ranges[290]. An account of Gandharva's attempt in performances like this might be developed by examining his discourse on *nād* and *shruti*, and the idiosyncratic and often cryptic terminology he uses to describe his handling of these.

The following is a paraphrased translation of a conversation between Gandharva (KG) and singer Veena Sahasrabuddhe (1948-2016) (VS):

> *VS: When I was very young, you had written in my autograph book, 'music means grasping the madhya-bindu [lit. midpoint] of swars'. What does this mean? What do you want to say?*
>
> *KG: This is about samvād. On the one hand, you have your swars. But when they are used in rāg, there is a samvād inherent in the structure of the rāg that is very different – that you must grasp. And to do that, your swars must be sung well. Swars are very delicate. [As an analogy,] we can't become writers just because we know how to write. You may be able to write an ā and an ī, but when you write āī [Marathi for 'mother'], the mother must become visible. Just like that, when the swars are sung in rāg, they become very different. When the swar is sung correctly in order to grasp its midpoint, it begins to speak, loudly. Otherwise it keeps silent – you might sing the right note but it doesn't have the strength it should have.*
>
> *VS: [Is this about] the vitality [jivantapaṇā] of the swars?*
>
> *KG: Vitality. We want there to be vitality in our swars, don't we? We don't pay attention to vitality. [If we do that], the swars start spinning. They spin!*

(Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 16–17)

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[290] This performance, held in Delhi on 21/08/1977 (according to metadata obtained from the archives at the Manipal-Samvaad Centre for Indian Music) can be listened to on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dsB0tt9mq-w. Gandharva restricts himself to the *sā-re-ga* region of his tessitura in deference to the *sthāī* of the *bandish* which locates itself largely in that space – as we have seen in chapter two above, this was one of the ways Gandharva kept the *bandish* in play, and this rendition is a good example.

Much in this discussion is cryptic and difficult to explain acoustically, especially considering Gandharva does not provide demonstrations of the phenomena he describes. Thinking of *swar* as a zone with a midpoint is, in Matthew Rahaim's words, thinking of it as having spatiality, as 'a dimension stretching from periphery/surface to centre/essence' (2021, 76). Rahaim includes in his discussion of *surīlāpan* an interview of Pushkar Lele, a singer heavily influenced by Gandharva's music who describes to him this *madhya-bindu* as the unattainable 'centre' of the note, so that 'We are always somewhere…in [the] territory, in that area, but never in the centre of the note' (ibid, 77). Rahaim complicates this rhetoric eloquently: 'The practical spatiality of *sur*, then, exceeds a one-dimensional spatiality of absolute points: it consists of zones and regions, spaces and subspaces. And the disciplined disposition of *surīlāpan* is a disposition of properly *operating* within these zones, actively and sensitively *swar lagāo*-ing within a space, rather than simply instantiating numerical relations'(ibid, original emphasis).

Rahaim's point is that being *surīlā* is an active, dynamic, present inhabitation of a soundscape, particularly that created by the tanpura, and not a passive, static state of 'rest' on a note. While this understanding of *surīlāpan* might be said to be applicable to most accomplished Hindustani vocalists, Rahaim's focus on active, deliberate *operation* becomes especially important in the case of Gandharva – as discussed above, especially at slower tempos, Gandharva can be heard to have made *operating* within the zone of *swar* the very method of his *gāyakī*. While Rahaim attaches 'propriety' to this operation as a necessary condition for achieving *surīlāpan*, Gandharva often challenges such propriety: as Carnatic Vocalist TM Krishna puts it, 'Kumarji is often just plain off [out of tune], but he still sounds gorgeous!'[291].

Gandharva explains his *madhya-bindu* in two ways: as *samvād* or consonance, and as the point 'within' a note that, when grasped, makes the note 'speak loudly' and 'have strength'. Acoustic, timbral explanations might be proposed for both: *samvād* as an active exploration of consonance or gravitation between two notes in a *rāg* – a phenomenon scholars like Nazir Jairazbhoy credit with the origin and development of the *rāgs* themselves[292]; while the phenomenon of 'grasping' the 'midpoint' of the note so that it 'speaks loudly' could be interpreted to mean cultivating the kind of resonance that favours a particular high harmonic or a discreet set of higher harmonics, perhaps the ones amplified by the singers' formant cluster, that generate percepts of pointedness (the 'midpoint') and loudness ('speaking' loudly).

[291] Personal communication, 17/05/2022
[292] See Jairazbhoy (1971, passim)

To ascertain whether or not Gandharva truly means to imply these acoustic phenomena would mean engaging in the kind of large-scale empirical analysis that is beyond the scope of this dissertation. Important to this discussion, however, is the idea that it is Gandharva's engagement with these possibilities that often become *the point,* as it were, of his *gāyakī* in the *vilambit* khayāl. It is perhaps a failure to attend to this effort, or a rejection of such exploration of sonic space as a valid approach to *gāyakī* that earned Gandharva's music a great deal of notoriety as a 'different', 'alternative' music.

Similarly, the more cryptic of Gandharva's descriptions of these explorations of sonic space – of notes 'spinning' as in the quote above, of them having 'light' and 'roundness' might all be explained in psychoacoustic terms, but for a lack of empirical evidence to correlate these terms with actual examples of his singing. What is possible, however, is to listen for Gandharva's indulgence in such timbral and intonational play in the more esoteric of his vilambit (and occasional *madhyalay/drut*) renditions, such as in the Todi referenced in footnote 290 above.

4.2 *Shrutī* – Beyond Pitch Height

The discussion on *nād* above must inevitably lead to a discussion of *shrutī,* which has often been cited as another important source for Gandharva's alterity. To cite from Aravind Thatte again:

> *Grasping the [mid]points of shrutīs and swars accurately was a speciality of Kumarji's. His shrutī-swar locations were different from those of others. Because of this, when listeners enculturated to other kinds of gāyakī listen to his music for the first time, it is only natural that they might find his singing besur. But I think it is when Kumarji does the same thing repeatedly and deliberately that this misconception of besurpanā is (or ought to be) removed. (2014, 147, translated)*

This is a common concern that commentators voice about the microtonal nuance in Gandharva's intonation. Indeed, the specific concern is about the pitch-height of his *komal swars*: 'Kumarji tends to sing the *komal* pitches higher [than usual] in many *rāgs*. This is not found in other singers' (ibid). Thatte justifies this proclivity, however, by claiming that '…but, if pitch locations are studied scientifically, it is found that there are certain higher locations of *komal* pitches that are important...It appears that Kumarji was aware of this even without having attend college to study any kind of science 'methodically'' (ibid). When referring to 'important higher locations of *komal swars*' that 'scientific study' reveals, Thatte – who apart from being an acclaimed harmonium player has a doctoral degree in mathematics - is probably

referring to tones occurring in the harmonic series that are in the vicinity of the accepted *komal swar* locations, and are sometimes audible in the tanpura as unconventional microtonal versions of accepted *swars*. Some examples might be the 17th , 23rd, 26th and 29th harmonics of the series which manifest as higher versions *komal rishabh, tīvra madhyam, komal dhaivat and komal nishād* respectively[293]. For Thatte, then, Gandharva's *shrutī*-transgressions are valid because they are rooted in the *natural* phenomenon of the harmonic series, a phenomenon made particularly important to Hindustani music in general and to Gandharva's engagement with it in particular, because of the centrality to it of the tanpura, which instrument explicitly highlights this harmonic content[294].

Where this entire discussion on *shrutī* appears to fall short however, is on its focus on pitch as a singular, unidimensional construct that does not take into account the dimension of timbre and its concomitant psychoacoustical implications. In particular, as Bozeman puts it, 'pitch…can be [perceptionally] "flatted" or "sharped" from the actual fundamental frequency by resonance factors' (2013, 7 footnote 6). In a personal communication, Bozeman made this more specific: 'strong high harmonics can cause us to hear it [pitch] sharper, and weak or no high harmonics can lower our percept of pitch'[295]. This timbral approach to understanding intonation is particularly important to the discussion on *shrutī* because it is *expressive timbral play* that seems to be what musicians willingly and naturally engage in rather than in consciously trying to reproduce pre-defined *shāstric* intervals. Certainly, in the case of Gandharva, as we have seen, timbral play (*nād*) and expressivity (*abhivyaktī*), are both important means of creating *samvād* – consonance and communication: 'Where in *nād* does *samvād* not happen? Your *swars* should be able to do *samvād*! (2007, 23). While *samvād* is, as

[293] For example, the 26th harmonic, adjusted for octave equivalence, gives us the ratio of 26/16 = 1.625 which is higher than both the accepted locations for *komal dhaivat*, viz. 128/81 = 1.580 and 8/5 =1.60. See Dinesh Thakur (2015) for canonical *shruti* locations as well as an overview of how these are derived based on prescriptions in the Natya-Shastra treatise, and also for thinking on how the premise of this model might be flawed.

[294] Thatte's own work on *shrutī* goes some way in refuting the relevance of *mārgī Sanskritic* discourse on the subject. In particular, Thatte contends, based on a mathematical analysis of the discussion on *shrutī* in the Sangeet Ratnakara, that 'the entire discussion by Shaarangdev on the Shrutis is totally unscientific and very…vague', and that there is no reason why *shrutī*-locations determined aurally be invalidated even if they do not conform to those given in the *shāstric canon*: 'If [a musician] does not follow the method of tuning the string just above the previously tuned [reference] string as directed by Shaarangdev, he may come out with [discover] *Naadas useful for music* that are other than the previously tuned x Naadas (sic)' (Thatte 2010, 44–45)

[295] Personal communication, 03/04/2022

we have seen, an important and pervasive trope for Gandharva, in the current context, it refers to literal consonance with the tanpura as well as to expressive communication or conversation.

Given the harmonic richness of the tanpura and the centrality of it to Gandharva's music, it appears that one important aspect of Gandharva's engagement with *shrutī* is that of a *timbral* engagement with the harmonic wash emanating from the instrument. In particular, it is contended here that *shrutī* and *nād* are *the same conversation* and that one cannot be separated from the other. It is to an *acoustically* derived understanding of the *nād-shrutī* (timbre-intonation) complex, then, that Gandharva refers to (as opposed to a theoretically derived, *mārgī* understanding of *shruti* as a one-dimensional specification of pitch-height) when he says that 'a [real] *komal swar* is only *komal* when it appears to be *shuddha*' (1988): '*shuddha'* here refers to the perception of strong consonance that *shuddha swars* appear to have - singing *komal swars* so that they appear to be *shuddha,* then means achieving strong consonance – *samvād* - between the timbres – the *nād* – of the voice singing the *swar* and the tanpura. Similarly, Gandharva's comment that 'once you achieve *swar,* once you achieve mastery, then the *gandhār* of Todi becomes simple' (2007, 20), can be read as a comment on the *nature* of *shrutī* (in addition to this being a generic comment on mastery) – that even for *rāgs* like Todi that are reputed to employ specific *shrutīs* of *komal swars,* what is of importance is not a particular frequency, but a mastery of timbral *samvād* – the kind of mastery that, by developing a strong *timbral relationship* with the tanpura, imparts meaningfulness to every sung note regardless of its compliance with a *shāstric* precedent[296].

It is perhaps in deference to this potential for timbral *samvād* with the tanpura that underlay Gandharva's music, that his harmonium accompanists were expected to be very sparse in their accompaniment. As Thatte, who was himself one of Gandharva's later accompanists, puts it: 'Harmonium accompanists weren't supposed to reproduce each thing Kumarji did when accompanying him, even if they could. They were expected to maintain that much restraint. In some places…especially when he sang notes the *shrutīs* of which differed from those tuned on

[296] My forthcoming work on this subject explores this rather overlooked aspect of *shrutī* in detail, and with it and with the discussion here, I hope to open up a new perspective on a subject that seems to have been discussed only in the context of ancient prescriptive treatises heretofore.

the harmonium, they were only expected to hold down the *sā-pa* or *sā-ma* notes, depending upon the *rāg* being sung' (2014, 148, translated)[297].

The other area that most discourse on *shrutī* that is of a *mārgī* flavour tends not to explore is that of the affective side of *nād* and *samvād*: that of *abhivyaktī. S*atyasheel Deshpande attributes Gandharva's *shrutī* alterity, to some extent, to an attempt at bringing a *lok*-derived expressivity into his khayāl music. In particular, Deshpande cites the example of the unconventional *komal rishabh* Gandharva employs in *rāg* Bhairav, which Deshpande links with the idiosyncratic *shrutīs* of the *rāg* that Gandharva heard in the singing of the Nāthpanthī Sadhus he encountered at the Shilnath Dhuni in Dewas. For Deshpande, the conventional Bhairav *rishabh* is 'apologetic' while Gandharva's *komal rishabh* dons Kabir's attitude of '*nirgunī* independence' to rid itself of any feeling of repentance or penance[298].

This 'borrowing' of *shrutī* was not limited to the folk. Indeed, Gandharva is known to have borrowed *shrutīs,* as expressive-affective tools, from other khayāl musicians as well, even from his contemporaries. As Satyasheel Deshpande points out, the *komal rishabh* Gandharva employs in the *bandish* Anga Sugandha in *rāg* Malvī is an affective representation of Mallikarjun Mansur's (1910-1992) vocal idiom, which Gandharva adopts while singing this *bandish*, having learnt it from the latter[299]. This is an *affective* employment of *shrutī*, and the affect that Deshpande perceives in it appears to be a result of the entire timbre-intonation-consonance (not to mention social-associative) complex it embodies. It is not merely a function of pitch height[300]. Gandharva's own discourse on *shrutī* and on *swar* in general is starkly affective: 'You won't be able to grasp this *rishabh* [of his *dhun-ugam rāg* Madhsuraja] by

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[297] There is a substantial amount of scholarship that attributes the secondary role accompanists are given in khayāl performance to the history of classist-casteist hierarchies that have existed between lineages of soloists and accompanists (See for instance Martin Clayton and Leante 2015). Without denying this historical baggage, there remains a case to be made for also attributing this hierarchy to the possibilities, afforded to soloists by the khayāl genre, of extemporized, acoustic, timbral-intonational play (in addition to structural play), which might be perceived as in danger of being limited by equitable accompanist participation. Additionally, in post-Bhatkhande-Paluskar generations, accompanists and soloists tend to be of similar class-caste backgrounds: as was the case with Gandharva and his long-time harmonium accompanist, Govindrao Patwardhan, who was known for the impeccable tuning of his harmonium and the restraint he displayed in accompanying Gandharva.

[298] Deshpande can be heard demonstrating this, while discussing the various *shrutīs* of *komal rishabh*, here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i2GuKKRkhSs&t=376s

[299] Personal interview, September 2021. Renditions of this *rāg/bandish* by both vocalists are available on YouTube.

[300] Importantly, in the conclusion to his paper on *shruti,* Dinesh Thakur's suggestions for further work all involve empirical analyses of Gandharva's *dhun-ugam rāgs*, although they all suggest measurements of the *shrutīs* used in them in terms of pitch-height alone.

thinking of it in terms of *komal, ati-komal, shuddha…*you can only understand it because of the [heat of the] sun[301]. It says something different' (1988). Thus, while Gandharva's experiments with s*hrutī* certainly involved explicit experiments with pitch-height[302], it is contended here that these were the outcome of his intense engagement with timbre and consonance – with *nād* and *samvād*, and, most important, of his larger attempt at *abhivyaktī*.

4.3 Sound as *Gāyakī*

In light of Gandharva's engagement with *nād* and *shrutī*, then, it becomes possible to reframe the dichotomy Vamanrao Deshpande sets up between 'classicism' and 'romanticism' in Hindustani music as one between a *mārgī* understanding of *rāg* as a structural paradigm *abstracted* from sound on the one hand, and a *desī* understanding of it as corporeal, aural, sonic space on the other. Deshpande's contention that 'The essence of Kumar's romanticism (*bhāvavād*) was in employing various intensities of the [singing] voice' (1979, 125, translated) is, on first glance, a statement about Gandharva's use of vocal dynamics to generate affect. Deshpande credits Abdul Karim Khan with creating a precedent for Gandharva in his use of vocal dynamics even in the absence of electronic amplification, while arguing that it was the lack of such amplification that compelled musicians of the previous generation to restrict themselves to using 'a full-throated voice…of uniform breadth' (1989, 110–11). What Deshpande implies is that amplification afforded musicians the opportunity to rid themselves of this constraint of a producing a voice that was 'uniform' in timbre and intensity, an opportunity that Gandharva embraced and put to use to further his stated goal of diverse, affective *abhivyaktī.*

However, unpacked in the light of the *desī-mārgī* or abstract-corporeal dichotomies outlined above, Deshpande's contention tells us that Gandharva's engagement with the *sound* of *rāg*-material, embodied in the corporeality of his voice, made explicit a dimension of *rāg-sangīt* that *mārgī, shāstric* discourse was unable to address– it is contended here that this engagement with sound was one of the foundations of his alterity. Gandharva's associates and disciples describe this phenomenon in fascinating ways. Colleague CP Rele describes his post-illness

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[301] The name of this afternoon *rāg,* 'Madhsuraja', refers to the heat of the sun (*suraja*) at Mid (*madh)-day.*

[302] His explicitly defined 'higher' version of the *komal gandhār* in his *dhun-ugam rāg* Lagan Gandhar is a good example. While Gandharva obviously does not specify an intervallic ratio or a frequency to define it, he does modify the usage of Bhatkhande notation to notate this *shrutī* in his Anuparagvilas books (See Gandharva 1965, 38), and the two *shrutīs* of the note can clearly be heard as different from each other in his recordings of the *rāg*. Van der Meer's criticism that this *rāg* is nothing more than an appropriation of his teacher DC Vedi's cognate *rāg* Vedi Ki Lalit does not take the question of *shrutī* into consideration at all (1980, 180).

idiom as one in which '…*sur* was nurtured, *sur* became independent. Pauses came [into his music]…and he started exploring the relationships between notes' (2004), while for disciple Satyasheel Deshpande, 'It would seem as if his radiant *sur*, that emerged as if from the *amūrta* (lit. formless, abstract) were looking at the logics of *baṛhat* of the various *gharānās* with condescension' (2005, 31, translated).

Whether this was the result of sonic opportunities afforded to Gandharva's generation by amplification, or as vocalist Ashwini Bhide-Deshpande puts it, of a 'direct connection' Gandharva seemed to have with the '*Nāthpanthī sadhus*…with whose *bhajans* he has come to be identified with', so that 'even his *sur* in *rāgdārī sangīt* were…pure/naked…[and] did not contain any contrived sweetness or drama' (2014, 161), Gandharva's music certainly embodies the idea that musical notes have expressive power independent of musical structure, and are carriers of affect even outside of the formalism of *rāg-sangīt*. That this intense engagement with sound was crucial to Gandharva's music is also validated by the fact that his music sometimes, especially in his later years, 'became heavy with the weight of *swar*', as Satyasheel Deshpande puts it (Deshpande, forthcoming).

5. Conclusion

Kumar Gandharva's vocal idiom appears to have been deemed alternative, then, because of: the particular timbral aesthetic he adopted; the centrality of his tanpuras to his idiom; his specific, *acoustically* derived *shrutīs* that were driven by a desire for *expressivity* more than for *shāstric* conformance and were lauded for their intonational accuracy; and, perhaps most important to this alterity: the timbral, intonational and dynamic play that became for him an aesthetic goal, an improvisational device, even a *gāyakī* in itself. How did this timbral aesthetic, this vocal disposition, measure up to Gandharva's own discursive goal of universalism, of achieving a sound that might universally be accepted as pleasing because it was *svābhāvik,* (organic and uncontrived) and independent of *mānyatā* (agnostic of aestheticizing communities of sentiment, such as *gharānās*)?

Gandharva's use of the term *svābhāvik* for the voice can be complicated by viewing it in contrast with the very *gharānedār* dispositions of voice that it is a reaction to – it can equally be argued that a *khāndānī* vocal idiom acquired mimetically from within a familial tradition is no less 'natural' than the one Gandharva inhabits. One way to read Gandharva's claim, then,

is to think of this naturalness as a way of describing the effortless mastery of a musician whose instrument seems to bend to his every whim. This kind of naturalness is, to a great extent, a function of the technical command one acquires when one's physiological apparatus is *habituated* to the demands of the task at hand. In thinking about the term 'natural' with reference to the singing voice in particular, vocal pedagogue Ian Howell agrees and argues convincingly that 'when describing singing, "natural" actually means "an appropriately efficient and well-habituated use of the body for the given singing task"', so that ''Natural' is an assessment of the result…' and naturalness is achieved '…by the careful selection and implementation of habits over time' (2016, 2).

The task at hand, for Gandharva, was one that involved diverse and unpredictable vocalisation (given his shunning of sequential - and therefore relatively predictable - intensification in favour of *upaj*-centric, *bandish*-driven extemporization, as discussed in previous chapters) as well as precise and deliberate timbral-intonational play. We know from Gandharva's own admission that he carefully selected and implemented habits over time to acquire a vocal disposition that afforded this[303]. We have also seen above how Gandharva's resonance strategies were those that are acknowledged by current scholarship as being efficient and conducive to effortless singing. The *result* of this is a vocal disposition that *appears* natural because of the *effortlessness* that is apparent to listeners, as much as it is because of an intonational propriety that may be said to appear 'natural' because of its consistent engagement with the harmonic content of the tanpura, in which it is referentially grounded.

If this understanding of *svābhāviktā* is valid, if it is for these reasons that Gandharva's vocalisation appears *svābhāvik,* then it could also be argued that this is a basic physiological and acoustical level at which Gandharva's vocal idiom is indeed *universal* – assuming that physiological ease and mastery, and acoustical consonance have universal human appeal. At this level, it might be said that Gandharva's pursuit of a *gharānā*-agnostic universalism was successful. Importantly, it can be contended here that it may have been the approach to the singing voice that Gandharva received from Deodhar – one rooted in a *gharānā*-agnostic corporeality - that played a key role in the development of his alternative vocal aesthetic.

The reception of music, however, occurs simultaneously at various levels of aestheticization. Indeed, aestheticization appears to necessarily be a *cultural* phenomenon and is the process, in

[303] 'The command over the voice that that you see in my singing…it is indisputable that I have acquired it with discernment [*buddhī-purassar*]…it [such acquiring] happens gradually' (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 2)

music particularly, of consolidating acoustic signification within communities of music-making. Creating a community of sentiment is, by definition, a validation of one set of vocal dispositions over others. Because there are always a number of such communities (the *gharānās* are one example particular to the case of Hindustani music) in play, a single vocal idiom that has truly universal appeal amongst them all is difficult to conceive of.

That Gandharva's vocal idiom was no exception to this is apparent from the discourse of commentators like Ranade who, did not approve of his *ye*-based vocalisation[304]. Indeed, Deodhar himself was often critical of Gandharva's vocal idiom, and is known to have found Gandharva's later vocalism lacking in comparison to the former's own vocal ideal, Bade Ghulam Ali Khan[305]. While this might be attributable, to some extent, to his hierarchical position in his *guru-shishya* relationship with Gandharva, it remains testimony to the implausibility of the success of any universalist goals. On the other hand, Gandharva's vocal disposition was celebrated by his audiences, which included acclaimed musicians, to the extent that, as Satyasheel Deshpande puts it, '[there came to be a group of] exclusive Kumar-admirers who were so affected by his music, his personality and his other qualities, that they bore the weight of his *vilambit* khayāl [made heavy by the weight of *swar*], by accepting it as their destiny' (2005, 31) . This group, in the acceptance – the *mānyatā* – they awarded to Gandharva's music, might equally be described as an aestheticizing community of sentiment.

What, then, may have driven Gandharva towards his universalist goals in the first place? An important way to understand *gharānā* idioms – idioms validated by the aestheticizing communities of sentiment that Gandharva attempted, through his pursuit of universalism, to escape - is to see them as communities that obtain from a precolonial understanding of music as *craft*. Tirthankar Roy situates the history of Hindustani music within, in his own words, 'a larger history of north Indian craftsmanship' (1998, 21):

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[304] 'Pt. Kumar's pervasive use of the joint vowel 'ye' as the main carrier for his vocalisations cannot be considered ideal and worth imitating. That in the totality of his music it could be ignored, cannot be interpreted as acceptance of its musical validity or legitimacy. This 'ye' sound has nothing to recommend its persistent use in place of the traditional Indian preference for the vowel 'a'… In all probability the 'ye' sound was a consequence of Pt. Kumar's health which suffered a set-back early in his career' (Ranade 2011, 307).

[305] Deodhar's admiration for Khan is well-known (See for instance Kolhapure 2004, 56) and has been discussed before in this dissertation. In Deodhar's own words, 'as regards tonality, [Khan] was peerless' (1993, 251), and 'was the only man who [used his voice] naturally' (Deodhar and Deshpande 1988).

> *If the term 'craft' stands for an occupation in the successful performance of which manual skill matters more than either physical capital or individual creativity, then what are known as 'classical musics' worldwide all have a pronounced craftsmanship component. (ibid, 22)*

Roy sets up a dichotomy here between individual creativity and manual skill, so that the *gharānās* can be likened to familial artisanal communities, where 'knowledge of rules and manual proficiency are normally the only qualities needed to be a good musician' (ibid), creating precisely what we have been calling a community of sentiment, the aesthetics of which depends on a stable and consistently afforded *mānyatā*. Interestingly enough, Gandharva makes this connection too: 'See, there is a carpenter. He has been doing wood-work in a tradition of wood-working. But he does not have *gyān* about the wood. Once he acquires *gyān*, he will inevitably do very different work. He will see things differently' (2014, 121). '*Gyān',* knowledge, is the key term here. While the 'knowledge' a traditional craftsman has about his medium is certainly *gyān*, what Gandharva appears to refer to here is a *gyān* that is differently situated, *etic*, and of the kind that brings about a 'defamiliarizing holism', to borrow from Appadurai again, which in turns enables 'seeing things differently'. This kind of defamiliarizing *gyān*, Gandharva contends, is what is makes his handling traditional material 'different'.

The larger point of Roy's paper, however, is to explain a perceived decline in the quality of music-making after 1857, by linking it to a similar decline in the quality of craftsmanship in India as a result of the colonial encounter, which led to long-distance trade. This led to a situation where 'consumers were now distant and anonymous, and were often uncertain about what is good work', which in turn led to 'a propensity for fraud, and a need to make cheap (and worse) copies of old masterpieces' (ibid, 38). On the other hand, Roy also credits this distance, anonymity and uncertainty with a propensity artisans developed to experiment with their craft and '…break conventions' (ibid).

Insofar as the current discussion is concerned, what emerges from this historical complexity is the situation we have addressed in chapter one above – where a certain vocal idiom that has acquired aesthetic legitimacy within a community of sentiment begins losing that legitimacy when faced with an audience that is increasingly diverse and unfamiliar with its legitimising idiom, as has been observed to have been the case with Hindustani music in the post-colonial era. While musicians' responses to this situation are necessarily varied, they may be seen as

constituting a spectrum, one end of which is occupied by votaries of precolonial modes of receiving, transmitting and performing music, while the other is occupied by musicians like Gandharva who experiment with their craft, 'break conventions' and seek a certain universality with which to address these problems of distance, anonymity and uncertainty of musical quality[306].

In discussing the grooming of the singing voice in an interview, Gandharva engages with these categories by naming them (in English) 'voice training' and 'voice culture' respectively, and sets up a similar art-craft dichotomy between them:

> *The older musicians, though they were certainly great musicians, you can't put them in the category of 'voice culture'. You can put them in [the category of] 'voice training'. [Voice training means] preparing the voice in one singular way. Faiyaz Khan and Shankarrao Pandit belong in the voice training category. Most people do…like our Punjab [gharānā] singers…Only our [Bade] Gulam Ali [Khan]was good. He would sing like a human being. (Inamdar 2014, 67–68)*

Deodhar's influence is visible again here in Gandharva's validation of Bade Ghulam Ali Khan's vocalism, as is Gandharva's focus on the individual musician's 'cultivated' alterity as opposed to any homogenising 'training' regimen. Despite the historical inaccuracies and problematic politics that cohere in the artist-craftsman or emic-etic dichotomies, they are nevertheless useful in helping us understand how Gandharva theorised epistemologies – both 'traditional' as well as his own, and to suggest that this discourse played an important role in the alterity his music came to embody[307].

The enduring question that emerges from all this, the driver of this conflict, appears to be that of the nature and the scope of the *audience* that the music is addressed to. If *abhivyaktī*, expressivity, is an important goal of the act of music-making, as it is in Gandharva's case, then an audience that is able to contextualise and make sense of that expression is an inevitable necessity, which condition is implicitly a constraint on the size and scope of the audience. While intonationally accurate, acoustically pure and timbrally resonant vocalisation can be argued to have universal appeal, Gandharva evidently wants to augment this baseline

[306] Among Gandharva's contemporaries, Kishori Amonkar is another name that is often mentioned as a 'breaker of conventions', although a comparison of her departures from tradition with Gandharva's would be beyond the scope of the present study.

[307] Thanks are due to Justin Scarimbolo with help in framing these ideas.

universalist aesthetic with a layer of subjective, idiosyncratic expressivity: ‘I want my *madhyam* and *pancham* [*swars*] to say something. This is very important in music. It is because of this that I appear different to you’ (1988). For his *swars* to ‘say something’, there is inevitably a socially, culturally and historically situated ‘someone’ to whom ‘things are being said’, with whom *samvād* is sought to be achieved. It is perhaps a field made up of such ‘someones’, what Matthew Rahaim terms the Hindustani vocal ecumene – ‘a field of distinct but mutually influential forms of vocal technique, action, and being’ (2021, 11) – within which Gandharva’s vocal idiom must be situated and in reference to which it must be made sense of, as has been the attempt here.

Conclusion

> *'Everyone wants to know why Kumar's music appears different. There is certainly thinking behind [my alterity], but what is this thinking? The food is the same, the ingredients are also the same, but people find a different kind of enjoyment in it. This is why there is criticism too…So, thinking in music – this is where I am different' (Gandharva et al. 2014, 118)*

It has been the endeavour in this dissertation to develop a detailed account of what the 'thinking' behind the alterity of Kumar Gandharva's music was, and to demonstrate its repercussions on his music. Gandharva's claim that the act of 'thinking' is itself what sets him apart has clearly to do with the art-craft dichotomy he sets up, as discussed in chapter four above, and may certainly be construed as a problematic, even conceited attack on other modes of thinking and making music. As we have seen in the introduction to this dissertation as well as through its chapters, the music that Gandharva created was, in fact, found by his admirers as well as his critics as being dramatically alternative to many established conventions of music making, indeed even to fundamental constructions of khayāl as a genre, whether or not one approves of it. The attempt here, then, has not been to justify or validate Gandharva's rhetoric or his music, but to present a detailed account of it as a particular case that might add to the larger discourse of colonial and post-colonial ideas of modernism in the South Asian cultural sphere and, importantly, to examine its manifestation in practice.

Research Findings

As chapter one has shown, Gandharva's engagement with the various musical spheres he encountered in his early days, through his encounter with the gramophone, his tutelage with Deodhar and through his encounter with the rural music of the Malva region, were formative in different ways. Chapter one laid the groundwork for what has been a recurring theme in this dissertation: a framing of the various dichotomies of music making, such as those of craft and art, or tradition and individualism as being an enduring conflict in music making. It described these conflicts in terms of the attempts practitioners make, as they engage with the possibilities of musical form, to balance the coherence offered by order and discipline (as found in theorized, canonised *mārga* music) with the freedom promised by inorganisation and its concomitant flexibility (in non-standardised *desī* music). The *mārgī-desī* binarism was chosen in this dissertation as representative of this conflict for two reasons. The first was the fact that

the emic Indic musicological tradition has in fact used this binarism since at least the seventeenth century, as Schofield's work has shown[308]; and the second was that it was the *lokdhun,* an eminently *desī* music, that Gandharva used to break out of what he saw as a stagnating *mārgī* tradition.

Chapter one also showed how Gandharva attributed to himself an authenticity derived variously from the *lokdhun* (as a precursor to *rāg*), his Gwalior *gharānā* lineage (as a precursor to other *gharānās*, as well as to later standardizations of Gwalior itself) and from printed notation (capitalizing, perhaps, on the inherent authority a textualized canon might wield) to justify his alterity. Importantly, chapter one theorized that Gandharva carved out for himself an alternative tradition of *abhivyaktī* – expressivity – a tradition that consisted of *individual* visionary musicians, instead of one that, as he alleged, reduced their vision to standardized, rigid and ritualistic convention adhered to by *gharānās* or similar stylistic groups.

This phenomenon provides an interesting albeit contradictory parallel to Dard Neuman's work on the 'heterodox classicization' of Hindustani music (Neuman n.d.). There, Neuman posits that the nineteenth century musician Behram Khan 'introduced a "popular classicism" to the modern repertoire of Hindustani music' by repurposing important 'classical' treatises 'to bypass traditional [oral] sources of orthodox authority' to create a ' "new" performance practice' (ibid). Gandharva, functioning in a dramatically different historical situation, appears to have done something similar – to have found *alternative sources of authority* and used them, to borrow from Neuman, to create a new performance practice. The quote from Gandharva above might be tempered and qualified, then, to say that rather than the act of 'thinking' itself being a prime differentiator, it was a different *kind* of thinking that set him apart in as dramatic a way as it did[309]; and chapter one has attempted to develop links between this thinking and the larger historical situation within which it occurred.

Chapter two conceptualised the 'traditional Indic song' as a category of pre-modern music that existed on the cusp of 'improvised' and 'composed' musics, and distilled from it two very specific features that Gandharva appears to have borrowed from it and applied to his khayāl. The first of these was the creative, non-verbatim *repetition* of melodic structure that is inherent to the very act of singing such a song, while the second was a relegation of *rāg* to the status of

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[308] See footnote 75 in chapter one above

[309] Organising his performance around the *bandish*, as described in chapters two and three above, would be a prime example of this.

a modal category that comes into conflict with the songs (*bandishes*) it categorizes. The terms 'relegation' and 'conflict' are not used here in a negative sense. Instead, they are used as interpretations of Gandharva's claim that each *bandish* expresses its *rāg* differently[310]. While this understanding of *rāg* perhaps takes away from its status as a well-defined grammatical construct, it also perhaps *adds* to its status as an inclusive, flexible category that is *not reducible* to a simplistic construct.

Indeed, it may be argued that a *rāg* retains a strong singular identity (beyond its very basic scalar definition) only notionally: while the *idea* of a stable categorizing *rāg* guides musicians in their improvisation, various traditional *bandishes* might bring its stability into question, as we have seen. Gandharva's work, then, serves an important purpose in problematizing the relationship between *rāg* and *bandish* in creative ways, and in highlighting the fact that it is perhaps this very conflict, between constituent and category, that is a fundamental feature and a creative driving force of *rāg-sangīt.*

Chapter two also showed *how* Gandharva employed the principle of creative, non-verbatim repetition by identifying six specific parameters he was able, in the course of performance, to dwell upon, nurture and creatively play with: contour and tessitura, *lay*, *chhand*, text, *samvād* and *kehen*. It showed how the act of repetition of the *bandish*, primarily of its *mukhṛā*, kept each of these in play, thus giving the *bandish* its own identity, even its own melodic grammar that often brought it into conflict with its *rāg.* It also showed, however, that each of these parameters offered scope for *play*, so that it became possible for Gandharva to constantly create new *expressive* material, while simultaneously retaining said identity, so that the act of creative, non-verbatim repetition becomes an *improvisational device* in itself, in addition to accepted devices like *ālāp, bol-tān* and *tān*[311].

Chapter three presented, through a comparison of empirical data, an account of how the above approach to performing a *bandish* distanced Gandharva's music from that of other major practitioners, and provided evidence of the alterity of his *gāyakī.* Importantly, it constructed a broad account of the music that Gandharva's music was *alternative to* – which was in essence, a music that made use of the principles of *sequentialization* and *intensification*, among others,

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[310] See the conclusion (section 3) of chapter two above. Gandharva's treatment of the *bandish* Lāgī Re Morī Naī Lagan in *rāg* Kamod, also discussed in chapter two, is an example of how Gandharva's treatment of *bandish* often brings it into conflict with its categorizing *rāg.*

[311] Gandharva's treatment of the *bandish* Sakhī Mandarvā Mein in *rāg* Bihagda, discussed in chapter two above, is a good example of this.

albeit in various ways and to different degrees. This music, which might now be labelled 'conventional' in reference to Gandharva's alternative music, was shown as deriving these principles from a *mārgī* understanding of this tradition of music-making, represented in this case by conventions of dhrupad performance. Because of their dependence on a sequential and intensifying progression of performance, this mode of music making was labelled 'teleological' and contrasted with Gandharva's own 'organicist' approach, so that the former consisted of 'expanding' (conducting *baṛhat*) of the *rāg* 'horizontally', while the latter that consisted of a delving into *bandish* 'vertically, with no preconceived linear sequence in mind – an approach crucial to the alterity of Gandharva's music, and perhaps one of the most dramatic ways in which Gandharva reimagined the genre. This lack of preconception is precisely the explanation of *svābhāviktā,* a recurring trope in Gandharva's discourse, that this chapter proposed.

Chapter four tapped into the disciplines of psychoacoustics and voice science to examine Gandharva's timbral aesthetic, and to explicate and problematise his discursive ideas about the singing voice and its pedagogy. The empirical spectrographic acoustical analysis carried out in this chapter yielded at least two important results: the first was a *baseline timbre,* described in terms of its harmonic content, that, it was contended, adequately describes Gandharva's *acoustic* goals. This baseline was also timbrally and historically linked with an aural aesthetic rooted in modern (with reference to Deodhar's era), mechanistic Western vocal pedagogy, that Gandharva received exposure to through Deodhar. The second important result was the conception of *shrutī* as a function of *timbre,* and not only of pitch-height. This is perhaps the first time *shrutī* has been conceived of in this way, since all the literature on *shrutī* reviewed for this dissertation conceives of it in terms of the pitch height of the fundamental frequency of the sung pitch and its relationship with the tonic. It thus added to the discourse on *shrutī* the dimension of timbre, and the *samvād* of the sung tone with the timbral complexity of the *tānpurā*.

In establishing the aforementioned link between Gandharva's timbral goals and modern vocal pedagogy, chapter four brought the *reformist comportment* that Gandharva inherited from Deodhar, as posited in chapter one, to his engagement with the singing voice. It was shown that this allowed Gandharva to imagine a *gharānā*-agnostic pedagogy of the singing voice that had universalist appeal, outside of aestheticizing communities of sentiment, such as *gharānās*. While chapter four posited that Gandharva's vocal idiom might indeed be understood as universally appealing at the levels of physiology (the perception of effortlessness) and acoustics (intonational accuracy and *samvād* or consonance), at the same time, this chapter also

problematised Gandharva's universalist claims and argued against the plausibility of a truly universal timbral aesthetic. Indeed, it can then be argued that it was precisely the mechanistic, non-traditional approach to the singing voice he received from Deodhar, that afforded him a defamiliarizing, etic holism, that allowed him to imagine such universalism, however implausible it may be found to be.

This dissertation has thus posited that the alterity of Kumar Gandharva emerged out of his engagement with the reformist, modernist comportment transmitted to him primarily by Deodhar, which led him to challenge prevalent *mārgī* understandings of the nature, purpose and mechanics of khayāl; and that he was driven in doing this by his pursuit of his goals of *abhivyaktī, svābhāviktā, samvād* and a universalist holism, for all of which he found a precedent and a model in the *desī dhun*.

Future Work

While this dissertation has gone some way in describing the emergence and the nature of Gandharva's alterity, there remains more work to be done to extend these arguments into the larger sphere of twentieth and twenty-first century music-making in the khayāl genre, as well as to consider other specifics of Gandharva's music itself, that this dissertation has not been able to cover. A number of empirical projects emerge from the study presented here, and are described in brief below.

Specific to Kumar Gandharva, this work might include examining Gandharva's and Deodhar's work with particular traditional *rāgs* and *bandishes.* One aspect of Deodhar's reformism was his ongoing construction of *rāg* grammar by gathering perspectives on particular *rāgs* from the many musicians he encountered throughout his career. Some examples of this might include his 'recovery' of a *chalan* of *rāg* Shuddha Kalyan that set it apart from the cognate *rāg* Bhoop, without requiring the addition of the *shuddha nishād* and *tīvra madhyam* notes[312]. Gandharva is known to have continued working in this vein, 'recovering', for example, what he considered to be the 'lost' *chalan* of *dhạ nị sā ga ma dha* in *rāg* Nand[313]. The work both Deodhar and Gandharva did in 'recovering' 'lost' aspects of various *rāgs* appears to have been based not on empirical work in the formal academic sense, but to have emerged from an engagement with

[312] See CP Rele and Satyasheel Deshpande's discussion on this in Patel (2006)

[313] See Rajeev Sane (2014, 167–68) for analysis of Gandharva's take on Nand, as well as other *rāgs*. Sandeep Bagchee's unpublished piece (n.d.) contends, albeit unconvincingly, that '…while the recording of Nand by Kumar Gandharva is an unusual interpretation of the rāga, it does not convey its *bhava*, mood and aesthetic appeal even though it is grammatically correct…' (ibid, 5)

various sources that led to them making choices, based on intuition and on their personal aesthetics, about which source to trust and what to take from it. Discursively, however, Deodhar, Gandharva as well as Gandharva's disciples make the claim that these 'recovered' *rāg*-movements are 'authentic' and were lost in transmission at some point in history[314]. While many musicians make such rhetorical moves, and while chapter one of this dissertation has already touched upon the reformist history that might be said to lie behind these claims, an empirical investigation of them *with respect to particular rāgs* would be an important contribution.

Such work might also be done to examine the idea of *rāg*-consonance through Gandharva's lens. While Gandharva's usage of the device of non-verbatim repetition, of *dhun*, to bring the *rāg-bandish* relationship into conflict has been treated extensively in this dissertation, Gandharva also contends, as we have seen, that there is an inherent *samvād* in the *rāgs,* and that it was this consonance that allowed him to sing them 'correctly' as a child. While such claims about *rāg* have been treated extensively in terms of their scalar and intervallic consonances[315], investigating intra-*rāg* consonance by examining *phrasal* and *acoustical* consonance, with respect to Gandharva's conception of *dhun*, is then called for.

Another aspect of Gandharva's music worth examining in order to extend this dissertation is Gandharva's own *bandishes*: As has been mentioned before, Gandharva was a prolific composer, and has about 250 original *bandishes* to his credit. These *bandishes* are notable for their originality and stage-worthiness: '[they are] original and independent creations…[that] survive the acid test of standing up in *mehfil*' (V. H. Deshpande 1989, 73), and also for being distinctly alternative: 'Some khayals, most notably bandishes composed by the maverick genius Kumar Gandharva, stretch the limit of what might be considered acceptable' (Magriel and Du Perron 2013, 360). An examination of these claims with reference to particular *bandishes* would then be in order.

Also in order would be examining Gandharva's interpretations of his sources. As we have seen, Gandharva's repertoire was substantial and included *bandishes* and performative idioms that he gathered from various sources including individual musicians, *gharānā* representatives, and notations. Given the nature of Gandharva's *gāyakī* and his goals of *abhivyaktī, svābhāviktā* and

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[314] See Satyasheel Deshpande (2014, 138)

[315] Jairazbhoy (1971) is perhaps the most extensive of these. Another extensive treatment is Aravind Thatte (2010).

samvād described in this dissertation, it would prove a fruitful pursuit to examine Gandharva's renditions of specific *rāgs* and *bandishes*, in the performance of which he retains some aspects of their source and discards others. Examples of this abound: As discussed in chapter two, Gandharva can be heard, for instance, to have retained Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze's asthma-induced[316] terse *kehen* in the Tilak Kamod *bandish* Tīrath Ko Sab Karein[317]; Abdul Kareem Khan's poignant melismatic flow in the Bhairavi thumri Jamunā Ke Tīr[318]; the Jaipur *gharānā*'s heavily punctuated, stepwise staccato lines in vilambit khayāls like Nevar Kī Jhankār in *rāg* Chhayanat[319] and the complex, *kan*-laden, octave-spanning passages of the Gwalior *gharānā* in general and their Maharashtrian Pandit branch in particular in *khayāls* made famous by them, including Banu Re Balaiyya[320] in Yaman Kalyan. An examination of these, with reference to the larger theorization of Gandharva's idiom presented here, would reveal the ways in which and the degrees to which Gandharva interpreted traditional material as possessing the qualities of *abhivyaktī, svābhāviktā* and *samvād*.

Similarly, it might also prove worthwhile to examine Gandharva's engagement with song-genres other than khayāl. His engagement with *dhun*, and the consequent centrality of song in his music, described in this dissertation, also appear to have extended to the various other song-genres he engaged with, including tarānā, tappā, thumrī, bhajan, lokgīt and bhāvgīt. An examination of his renditions of songs from these genres in light of the theorisation presented here, as well as Gandharva's own discursive reflection on them[321] would be a fruitful pursuit. Gandharva's substantial engagement with these genres through the many thematic concerts he conceived of and presented provide ample material for such an examination.

This dissertation, through its examination of the challenges Gandharva's music poses to the conventions of khayāl singing, also invites work that extends to larger musicological questions beyond Gandharva's own music. One example of such work might be examining bandish-centricity in khayāl. In light of the arguments made here, it becomes possible to re-examine the claims made by various other major musicians and *gharānā* representatives that they too sing

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[316] See footnote 117 in chapter one above

[317] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6_-IkkMLvXM

[318] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CrYSWM-J718

[319] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PT-uq3MQoIo

[320] Available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7ks5yJ0UcqM

[321] For instance, 'The *tarānā* is also a *bandish*, its purpose is not just acrobatics' (Gandharva and Bhatavdekar 2007, 122). This is in response to the conventional understanding of the purpose of *tarānā*, as represented, for instance, by Ranade's description of it: '*tarānā* relies on fast elaborations and *tāns* for its impact' (2012, 30)

a *bandish*-centric music[322], to identify gaps between discourse and practice. Alternatively, such work might also involve problematizing the claims of *bandish*-centricity made in this study, or describing a number of ways in which, and degrees to which, khayāl improvisation can be claimed to be *bandish*-centric, if such is found to be the case. While the comparison table in chapter three above has considered the music of these or associated practitioners and has shown empirically that Gandharva is more *bandish*-centric than they are, there remains the possibility of *other ways* in which their claim to this might be justified.

Additionally, this dissertation has shown how a musician's particular motivations can shape her music in particular ways, possibly making it dramatically alternative to established conventions. If more such accounts of individual visionary musicians are developed, a comparative analysis of their performative strategies, repertoires, voices and of the theoretical and historical underpinnings of their music will be made possible, leading to richer ways to engage with larger questions about *rāg-sangīt,* such as Martin Clayton's question about *rāg:* 'Does *rāga* exist as a system in our preverbal musical percepts and memories, or only in our internalizations of paramusical discourse?' (2003, 89). This dissertation has addressed this question from the particular perspective of Kumar Gandharva[323], but a comparative study of *personal* conceptions of *rāg*-sangīt, such as the one proposed here would go a long way in developing a more comprehensive and nuanced response to such a question.

Chapters three and four of this dissertation address the idea of *laydārī*, the idea that the act of 'having' *lay* is a musical device separate from but equal in importance to *laykārī* ('doing' *lay*, engaging in explicit rhythmic play). This appears to be an important and overlooked aspect of music making in the khayāl tradition and deserves serious attention[324]. Theorising *laydārī*, then is an important avenue for further work, that this dissertation opens up.

This study also calls for a more thorough theorization of the construct of the 'traditional Indic song' proposed here. The category of the 'traditional Indic song' that this dissertation proposes emerged from an examination of Kumar Gandharva's engagement with the *lokdhun.* A rigorous examination and a problematization of this category is then called for, as is a study of

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[322] Some other important figures who make claims of *bandish*-centricity include Alladiya Khan of the Jaipur *gharānā* (See Khan et al. 2012, 8, 14), Srikrishna Haldankar of the Agra *gharānā* (See Haldankar 2001, 66–68) and Sharadchandra Arolkar of the Gwalior *gharānā* (See Arolkar, Deshpande, and Talwalkar 1994)

[323] See section 1.1 of chapter two above

[324] Martin Clayton's rigorous theorization of Hindustani rhythm (2008) does not, for example, consider *laydārī* at all.

concomitant ideas, such as creative, non-verbatim repetition, and modal categorization, as they apply to other pre-modern genres and modes of music making.

Finally, the present study also calls for a more thorough theorization of *shrutī* in terms of timbre and psychoacoustics. This dissertation has proposed, importantly and perhaps for the first time, that the discourse surrounding the phenomenon of *shrutī* in Hindustani music needs to move beyond a one-dimensional understanding of it as pitch-height, to address it as a complex sound, our perception of which is shaped by its *timbre*. An investigation of *shrutī* as timbre, as well as of *samvād* (the timbral consonance of the singing voice with the *tānpurā*) and *abhivyaktī* (expressive affect) as major generators of it would enrich our understanding of this important phenomenon.

Coda

At its heart, this dissertation has been an examination of a practitioner's engagement with a genre and a musical culture that affords fluidity and innovation, while simultaneously seeking to fix and standardize. Because this dissertation has Kumar Gandharva's alterity as its subject of study, it has constructed the musical practices that Gandharva's music was alternative to, as established conventions. While such a construction might be problematized, it remains the case that, as Clayton puts it, 'The very idea of homogeneity, and of a system in consonance with historical principles, is important to Indian music culture' (2008, sec. 4.2.4). It is for this reason, as much as because Gandharva's alterity was predicated upon his engagement with the *lokdhun*, that this dialectic between fluidity and fixity was framed in this dissertation as a *mārgī-desī* dialectic. This is not to say that a *mārgī* understanding of music precludes fluidity. Indeed, to borrow from Clayton again, 'The premium attached to a unitary and coherent theory not only obscures the diversity of musical practice, it has also in fact played a positive role in assisting the development of a modern hybrid system' (ibid). While Clayton uses 'hybrid system' in a specific way to describe Hindustani rhythm, the term might equally be applied to Hindustani music as a whole, especially considering the diverse influences practitioners acquire and allow their music to be shaped by, as is exemplified in the case of Kumar Gandharva. This particular case, however, represents a practitioner presenting important challenges to the premium that theorisation is awarded in this tradition, thus presenting the tradition as explicitly *mārgī;* while using the *dhun* – a non-theorized and therefore explicitly *desī* construct - to challenge it.

Mukund Lath, like many others, describes Gandharva's engagement with music as explicitly modernist, and defines this modernism as one that fulfils three criteria: 'an engagement with the *lok*, a precedence of faith (*shraddhā*) over reason (*buddhī*), and that of wordliness (*iha-laukiktā*) over other-wordliness (*pār-laukiktā*)' (2013, translated, paraphrased), all of which he finds in Gandharva's music. While this dissertation has attempted to trace the roots of Gandharva's modernism and to examine its manifestation in Gandharva's music, it has also tried to resist explicitly labelling Gandharva's music as 'modernist'. Indeed, Gandharva's own discourse, like his music, displays a complex negotiation with opposing forces. When he says, for instance, that 'the *tāls* haven't really been sung yet'[325], he also implies that that 'traditional' *tāls* have infinite potential, as much as he expresses a modernist desire to revisit them. Gandharva's polemic, while often intensely critical of traditional practices that are deeply valued, emerges perhaps, not from a wholesale disdain for tradition, but as a rebellion against forces that seek to stifle its fluidity.

A case in point is his conversation with acclaimed sculptor Raghunath Krishna Phadke (1884-1972): '[Phadke] was not ready to apply to music the ideas he had about painting and sculpture. When I asked him why, he said "imitation is not permissible in painting, but it is desirable in music". I said, [sarcastically] this is a good business – you're demoting music, that means you want *gharānās* here [in music] but not in your own art!' (Gandharva et al. 2014, 125). It was perhaps in rebellion to such rhetoric, then, that Gandharva's polemic often took on a particularly acerbic tone, and it is in the context of such rhetoric that Gandharva invokes dichotomies such as the one between art and craft[326], that might appear problematic in retrospect.

However his engagement with these dichotomies might be assessed, it is possible to say with certitude that Gandharva's musicianship, like that of any practitioner, was a particular search for meaning. Martin Clayton engages with the problem of musical meaning in a particularly useful way: 'Any musical event is meaningful insofar as it offers affordances to an individual: it may offer multiple affordances to each individual simultaneously, and it offers a more or less different set of affordances to each individual'(2008, 9). Kumar Gandharva's music offered a particular set of affordances to its audiences, and perhaps did not afford much to others.

[325] See section 2.2.4 of chapter two
[326] Addressed in section 5 of chapter 4 above

Because his music was, in fact, criticized by 'traditionalists'[327] and attracted the intelligentsia[328], and because it emerged out of modernist, reformist thrusts and prioritised at least to an extent, as we have seen, individual expression over traditional convention, Gandharva's might be said to have been a pursuit of a modernist humanism[329]. It might also equally be said, however, that the potential to engender such a modernist humanism has always been inherent in the tradition of the khayāl – this, indeed, is Gandharva's contention and an important justification he provides for his work with the genre.

Formulating a *singular* description of Gandharva's music or its alterity has *not*, in fact, been the aim of this dissertation. This has, instead, been an attempt at problematizing simplistic conceptions of his music and excavating from within it links to the larger tradition of Hindustani music and musicological discourse, as well as the larger social, cultural and historical currents these are themselves situated within. Gandharva himself often issues a call for more critical appraisal of music and music-making: 'How is criticism done in other fields? There is very good criticism in the field of painting. [Criticism] is much better in the other arts than it is here [in music]. They write good criticism (*samīkshā*) because they have gotten used to it… our field doesn't have critics yet. It should…the canvas of the critic is vast' (2007, 115–16). It is perhaps in response to this call, then, that this dissertation has been, at best, an attempt to seek critical intimacy with the music of Kumar Gandharva.

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[327] As discussed in the introduction to this dissertation

[328] In PL Deshpande's words, 'It is… the neo-poets (*nava-kavī*), neo-artists (*nav-chitrakār*), neo-novelists (*nav-kathālekhak*), in search of unploughed fields, who feel an affinity with Kumar. His *mehfils* are filled with such new soldiers of the arts who are themselves going through the struggle of a life in art (*kalā-jīvan*)' (1987, 194, translated). 'Unploughed fields' is a reference to a poem by the Marathi poet KK Damle writing under the pseudonym Keshavsut: 'Unploughed fields / are so much better / but tell me / what farmer dwells there?' (ibid), implying that Gandharva's music was one that was in search of untapped possibilities, untrodden paths, 'unploughed fields' in the world of Hindustani music.

[329] Thanks to Dard Neuman for framing this in these terms.

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