



NATYA SHODH SANSTHAN

Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni

On

**'Bal Gandharva'**

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Recorded on 16<sup>th</sup>. April, 1988



Bal Gandharva

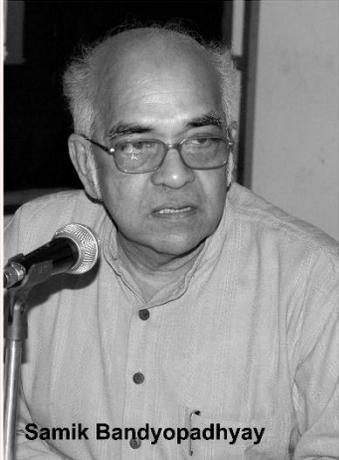
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## **Samik Bandyopadhyay**

16<sup>th</sup> April 1988, we are recording the talk by Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni at Natya Shodh Sansthan; he is speaking on Bal Gandharva. Ladies and gentlemen, we are happy to have with us Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni this evening and for tomorrow morning also. Now those who have been reading our news bulletin, the 'Rangvarta', will be aware

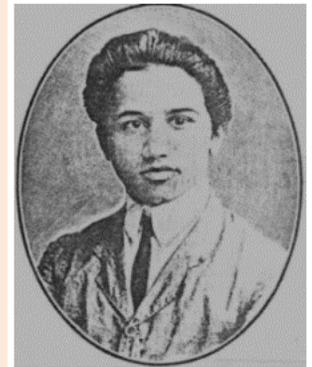


of the fact that in quite a number of issues we have been raising the question of theatre criticism and its limitations, its problems in India. This has been a very serious problem for Indian theatre. Such a lot of wonderful work is done in Indian theatre, but so little of that is properly evaluated, recorded for later generations. Whenever we try to understand a theatre of the past we always face this problem because the records, the critical records are so inadequate. There is fairly reporting of events but very little beyond that. So we have been very conscious of this through from the archive we can't change the nature and base of criticism. We have been trying to provide criticism with enough material to feed on to build on. That is been part of our major endeavor. This is the context in which we have invited Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni to speak to us because he has been a very exceptional kind of critic in the field of theatre criticism because he has been simultaneously studying, observing and very solidly criticizing three parallel areas of the arts – theatre, cinema and fine arts. And they have a kind of an inevitable inescapable bind in the modern creative field. One has to understand all the three and understand the interconnections between the three to respond to any one of these art forms today in any meaningful way. He is a very rare critic, at that level I really don't know any theatre critic or any film critic in India who has been equally, not as a supplementary area, not as in which the critic dabbles, but an area where he specialize equally with some sincerity, respect and devotion to fine arts. Theatre is an audio-visual art and the understanding of the science of theatre is very much part of theatre response and theatre understanding, which even very few directors understand or remember in our country. So we are expecting a really probing critical view of both the past of the Marathi theatre and the contemporary scene of Marathi theatre in the two lectures for which Dhyaneshwar ji has been very kind to come down on our invitation. This evening, as you know, he will be speaking on Bal Gandharva and what he means to Marathi tradition. Tomorrow morning he will be speaking on the contemporary

Marathi theatre scene. And I am quite sure that with his very special insight into theatre and very special approach to theatre, we shall have a very illuminating understanding of the Marathi theatre with its past and its present. With these few words I request Dhyaneshwar ji to speak on 'Bal Gandharva' and his tradition.

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

Friends, I shall be talking today about 'Bal Gandharva'. Now there is a lot of Marathi speaking people here. So they will forgive me, if they think that whatever I have said they know already or they have heard it before because there is a mixed audience and actually my idea was to interpret Bal Gandharva to a non-Marathi audience which I have also tried to do in my book called 'Bal Gandharva and Marathi theatre'. So if I say Bal Gandharva was a great singer-actor, don't say that I know it already because I have got to say that just remember that. So, imagine away the Marathi speaking member of the audience, imagine for some time that you are not Marathi speaking and that I am adding to your knowledge of Bal Gandharva. Bal Gandharva of course, the household word in Maharashtra, but still we have got to introduce this household word to people who are not acquainted with Marathi culture. Now, Bal Gandharva was born in 1888. This year we are celebrating his centenary proper. He was born on June 26, so next June 26 he would have completed hundred years of his life, if he lived. Before I tell you anything about Bal Gandharva, I must introduce you to the peculiar theatrical background of Bal Gandharva. I must tell you something about the Marathi musical drama and here also my Marathi speaking audience must remember that I am going to talk of a lot of things which may be familiar to them. As far as the Marathi theatre is concerned I myself feel that the musical stage, musical drama is really at the core of Marathi theatre. You may have seen the theatre of Jabbar Patel, you may have seen the theatre of Vijaya Mehta and both these producers and some other contemporary producers may have tried some kind of musical theatre also. For example, 'Ghasiram Kotwal' is a – you can call it a musical play. But I am thinking of Marathi classical theatre that classical musical theatre is at the core of the Marathi stage and therefore we think of a dramatist like Anna Saheb Kirloskar and Anna Saheb Kirloskar – he wrote his first Marathi musical play in 1820. This play was 'Shakuntala'. It was customary to call those plays, Sangeet Shakuntal, Sangeet



**Bal Gandharva**

Mahatma later and so on. Sangeet of course you know what Sangeet means. So it was a musical play – Shakuntal. ‘Shakuntal’ was translated from Kalidasa’s play ‘Shakuntalam’ – Abhijyan Shakuntalam. It is said that Anna Saheb went to see in Pune the grand operatic performance of a Buddha Parsi company. It was called ‘Indra Sabha’ and Anna Saheb Kirloskar saw that performance and he was carried away by the décor of the company, the songs and dances and all that, and he said to Himself – why shouldn’t I create this sort of play? Fortunately Anna Saheb Kirloskar

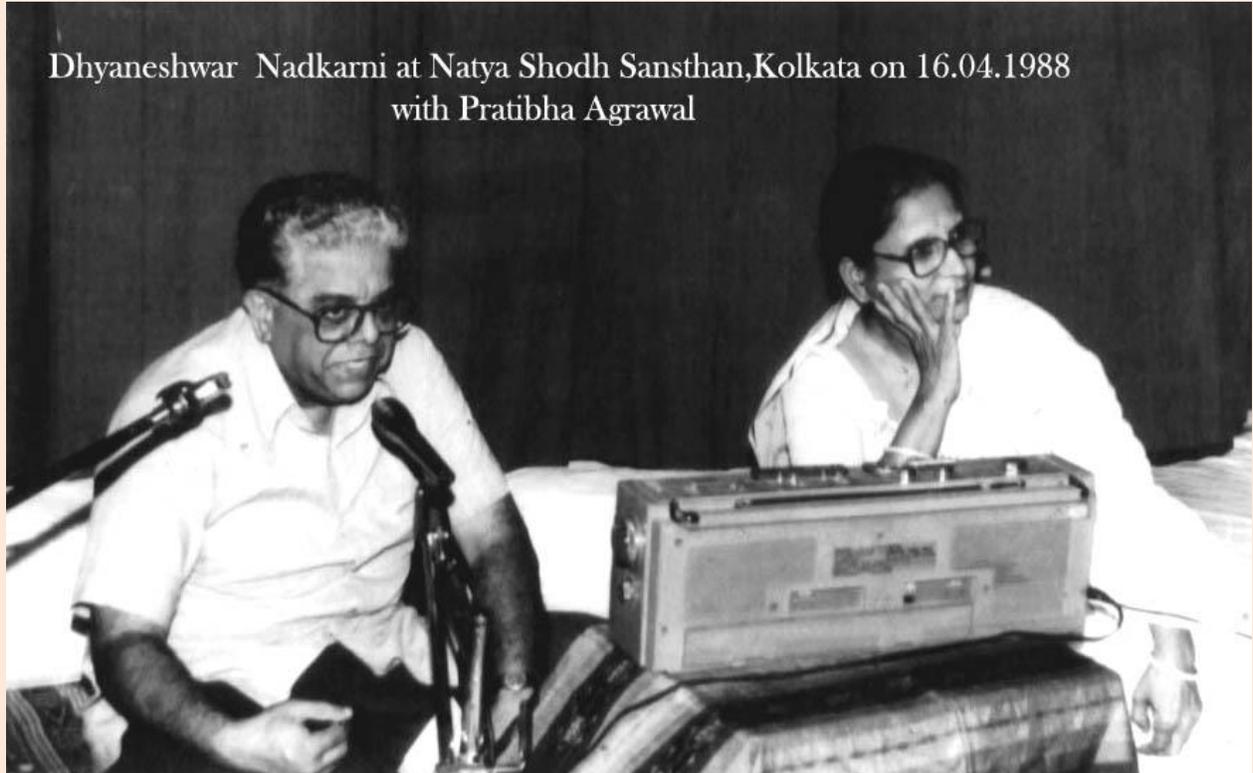


'Shakuntal' Bal Gandharva as Shakuntala (Middle)

did not create a type of play which was his own. I must make another point here and I would like my Bengali friends to listen to this point and compare notes with me. I always believe in bi-lingual bi-regional culture. I don't know about Bengal, I don't know which region Bengal wants to share its culture. As far as Maharashtra is concerned, a lot has come through the interaction between Maharashtra and Karnataka. Whatever you may read about the politics of the boundaries and borders and all that, Maharashtra and Karnataka have been interacted in a very decided manner. Now, how does it apply to Kirloskar? It applies to Kirloskar because he was born to in a small

town in Karnataka and when he was young he started composing in Kannada, he started composing songs as well as short plays in Kannada. Then he came to Pune and in Pune he started working in revenue commissioner's office and that is when he wrote the play 'Shakuntal'. In order to stage the play Shakuntal, Sangeet Shakuntal, he formed his own company. That was in 1880 or 1882 he wrote a play called 'Sangeet Saubhadra'. Saubhadra means about Subhadra. Now, this Subhadra is a sister of Krishna. The very mischievous God Krishna. The God Krishna was mischievous not only in the childhood, but according to Subhadra he was mischievous when he was adult and he was very mischievous. There is no character like this in any Marathi play like this Krishna. The centre of the plot is elopement of Arjuna, one of the Pandavas with Subhadra. He runs away with Subhadra and Krishna helps him - so that is the plot. Now, I shall tell you something about the format - the format of Kirloskar's play. Kirloskar's plays were backed by whole tradition. I don't know again my Bengali friends will have to compare notes by whole tradition of what is called 'Kirtan' in the temples. I don't know what Bengali

parallels. I have a very vague idea. It is not exactly folk singing, not folk theatre when it is not theatre either. The person who does the 'Kirtan' is the Kirtankar. That Kirtankar is a very erudite person, a very scholarly person. But still he wants to convey the gist of Mahabharata and the gist of Ramayana. The morals and the values of Mahabharata, morals and values of Ramayana to the people and therefore he takes recourse to singing and much of this singing are classically oriented. All that you get in Kirloskar's plays – for example, take Kirloskar's 'Subhadra'. Subhadra is full of scenes which are only between two persons. It is as



if the Kirtankar is narrating the episode and playing two parts. It is like that. I am telling you only one tradition which he imbibed but there were several other traditions. There were traditions not only of performances, what we called popular performances, but thereby traditions of poetry and religious writing. So all that?? Into a confluence into Anna Saheb Kirloskar's writing. I should talk a little more about 'Subhadra' than about 'Shakuntala' because everybody knows 'Shakuntalam', Kalidasa's play. What is peculiar about Anna Saheb Kirloskar is his great sense of humor. He was a very witty and humorous person. Another thing is he brought the mythological characters down to Marathi society at the turn of century. You go to 'Sangli' and 'Meeraj' and you go to a Marathi family and that Marathi family has tie and 'vaini' and they are eating 'toop' that is 'Ghee'. Can we have 'toop' in

Mahabharata? That is a point one researching. But we have ‘toop’ in ‘Saubhadra’. So like this I don’t know what they are called the cultural adjuncts of his own times. The ‘Saubhadra’ is transplanted into the society. You know, if you see ‘Saubhadra’, I am quite sure that you are familiar with ‘Saubhadra’ and Bal Gandharva used to play ‘Subhadra’, it is very relevant to Bal Gandharva. ‘Subhadra’ is like a Marathi family of the turn of the century in Meeraj or Sangli. This point is very well made, if any of you are curious – this point is very well made by Gangadhar Gadgil and that is what Subhadra is. And there is another thing I would like to tell you about the format of Anna Saheb Kirloskar’s plays which is also the format of Deval’s plays. Deval came next. Govind Ballav Deval was the next important dramatist. So what Kirloskar did was, there was a prose part, there was a dialogue and there were the songs and the dialogues floor very naturally into the song. The songs in turn flow naturally into the dialogue. The songs were not extraneous, they were part of the dialogue, and they were the part of the narrative texture. You know somebody is weaving the carpet and that is the warp and the woof – that is this warp and woof so like that carpet is woven. Prose dialogue and songs. Unfortunately during Bal Gandharva’s time, the song got out of hand because Bal Gandharva became a great singing idol. Now I shall come to Bal Gandharva. I told you the background of musical theatre which produced Bal Gandharva. Bal Gandharva was born in 1888. I have already told you. Round about age of 10, an uncle took him to sing for Lokmanya Tilak and Lokmanya Tilak was staying on the outskirts of Pune and Bal Gandharva started singing during the Ganapati Festival and Tilak was going from place to place. I mean Tilak was walking in the verandah. It is a point worth researching whether Tilak was very deeply attached to music or theatre. You see our



Bal Gandharva

Marathi historians are so bad that we don’t have any evidence of whether Tilak was really attached. Even when Bal Gandharva was singing, he was not among the audience. He was walking in verandah. Then he heard this young boy. He said, yes, this is a real Bal Gandharva. I need not explain the word Bal Gandharva to you. Bal means small, young and Gandharva means special mythological tribes we have in heaven – Gandharvas and Kinnaris. So he was one of the Ganadharvas. So these other singers, they can be called Kumar Gandharva or Chotta Gandharva or Sawai Gandharva. One

Bombay journalist wrote Bal Gandharva and Sawai Gandharva were father and son

and then they appeared together on the stage. So, please remember that these people can't be father, grandson or son. Gandharva is a title, this is Bal Gandharva. So he was called Bal Gandharva. His original name was Naryan Shripad Rajhansa. Recently there has been research again the age at which he sang for Lokmanya Tilak and it is said that it is not at the age of ten. It must have been at a later age since thirteen. But we need not bother about time. The next thing I want to tell you is he was bitten by a dog and because he was bitten by a dog he became permanently deaf in the left ear. So for a moment, imagine I am Bal Gandharva – god help me, I am on the stage. I mean he is in the female part and all his accompanists – tabla, Sarangi, the organ and the people are there. There would be two Sarangis, they were fantastic people. I will tell you later about it, fantastic accompaniments. So Bal Gandharva in order to catch the 'sur' - he had to catch the 'sur' because he was deaf by one ear, he had to incline his head like that. So always if you will notice Bal Gandharva used to stand like this because he had to catch 'sur' with right ear, unharmed ear. So Bal Gandharva had to have some medical treatment. Then I want to tell you the details. He was taken to the Maharaja of Kolhapur. The maharaja of Kolhapur heard him and said this man is a genius. You take him to the best hospital. So they took him to the best hospital in Meeraj. Because Meeraj, Sangli – small towns which are nothing today- I think there is nobody from Meeraj – which are nothing today, what I mean to say they are small towns but they were great as far as theatre is concerned.

Marathi theatre was born in Sangli; Vishnu Das Bhave did his first play in Sangli. Bal Gandharva was sent to Meeraj and he was given treatment there. He was kept in the Kirloskar Company. Maharaja of Kolhapur arranged for him to stay in Kirloskar Company and told the Kirloskar Company to look after this young boy well. So he stayed in Kirloskar Company which was of Anna Saheb Kirloskar's company. Anna Saheb Kirloskar had died in 1885. There was great singer actor doing female roles and later male roles called Bhaurao Kolhatkar. He also died in 1901. So they wanted a new actor. They were looking for a new actor. A person who could sing and who could play female roles. Now typically, there were four other companies looking out for an actor. So there was a tussle between these various



Bal Gandharva

companies and Maharaja of Kolhapur was a deciding factor. Whatever he would order that would happen.

So ultimately the Maharaja said Bal Gandharva will join the Kirloskar Company. So he was trained in the Kirloskar Company and there was a special 'Muhurrat' and there was sorts of, you call it 'grand rehearsal'. There was a grand rehearsal in Meeraj in which Bal Gandharva played a small role of Nati. There is an introductory part of every musical play – Sutradhar and Nati. Sutradhar - and his wife is called Nati. So they have a sort of semi humorous dialogue and then they introduce the



'Manapaman' Bal Gandharva as Bhamini

play. Then there are some songs. He was made to play the Nati. This was in 1905. So Bal Gandharva duly joined the stage at the age of 17. Now I have tried in my book, I have asked a question which nobody has answered. I don't know whether it will be answered or not. I have tried to go beyond the psychology of the male actor acting a female role. I have asked a question – what did he feel like when he put on female clothes? And what did he feel like when he put on all that women do to their hair? He had natural long hair. You see to start with, these people have natural long hair. Then later on, he grew bald, he started losing hair. He had to put on a wig. I must tell you something very cruel. Ultimately that wig was so tightly tied around his head, that bald Bal Gandharva's head, you don't like to visualize this but you have to. These are the conditions of our theatre. It was so tightly tied that the string left a mark here. For about three hours that mark would be there. It is something which gives me shiver. I don't like to visualize this. But at the same time you must know that he did all these in order to serve the public, to please the public, to entertain the public. I shall also tell you a little about what trouble he took in his make-up and all that. But I will come to that later.

Now I shall jump to that very deciding point in his career in the Kirloskar Natak Mandali and that is the staging of 'Manapaman'. He acted in Kirloskar's play, he acted in the role of Subhadra, he acted in Dewal's play; he acted in 'Sanshay Kallol'. Dewal was very much his teacher. He taught him how to act, Dewal taught him how to stand like a woman, how to bow like a woman. It is said that women bow in a particular manner. Dewal told him how to bow without bending the knees. That is

what women are supposed to do. He taught him a lot of things. So he appeared in play like ‘Sanshay Kallol’ and other plays of Dewal’s. He appeared in ‘Mrichchhakatik’ but it was all spread over the years and it went on even after Dewal’s death. After Dewal came the great other Guru – Khadilkar, Krishnaji Prabhakar Khadilkar, who is called Kaka Saheb Khadilkar and Khadilkar was the right hand man of Lokmanya Tilak. Khadilkar was a revolutionary and he was an assistant editor in Lokmanya Tilak’s paper ‘Keshri’. Here is a very sad thing. Khadilkar was revolutionary but the plays he wrote are very romantic plays. There has been no re-assessment of his plays. Take ‘Manapaman’ for example. ‘Manapaman’ is an absurd play. I have seen it many times. But I have been unable to understand the plot of Manapaman. What exactly happened in ‘Manapaman’? Take some of the subsidiary characters – what are they? How are they related to major characters, you don’t know and this idea of a very rich woman confronting a very poor army general and in Marathi productions of ‘Manapaman’ that army general is unfortunately dressed in a very peculiar manner! He puts on a tie also actually and he puts on ribbons and all that. But you can’t take him back to the age of ‘Manapaman’. But in Gandharva’s time, they were not dressed like that. What is important about ‘Manapaman’ is not the absurdity of the play or the average quality of the play but the high quality of music. That music came to Bal Gandharva mainly from Govind Rao Tembe. Who was one of the leading actors and Mr. Samik Banerjee should be interested in knowing that Govind Rao Tembe was the hero of first Prabhat Talkies called ‘Yo Deta Raja’. You see him there playing the role of Raja in ‘Harishchandra’. He was a very versatile man, very handsome man and he was a fantastic harmonium player. But anyway, he was an actor, he was a playwright, he could compose songs, he composed some opera and all that but during Gandharva’s time he played romantic roles and it was he who provided the music to Gandharva.

Now I have told you that Kirloskar came from Karnataka and Kirloskar brought a lot of Karnataka music and Karnataka songs. Kirloskar also brought some Lavani music and Govind Rao Tembe went a stage further and he brought North Indian light music. There were singers in these days called Maujuddin, Gohrbai, Malkajaan – all these. This Gohar is not to be mistaken with Gohar who appeared later in Bal Gandharva’s life and whose picture I have got there on the board. This is another Gohar, Goharbai. So their Thumri music, their Thumri and Dadra and all that, it was

brought wholesale. It was given to Bal Gandharva and that appeared in 'Manapaman'. And 'Manapaman' music became exotic. I tell you here also, I have to go few years forward and I have to tell you that Bal Gandharva in 1921, he staged 'Manapaman' with another great actor belonging to another great company, his name was Keshawrao Bhosle and Bal Gandharva staged his play in aid of Mahatma Gandhi's Tilak Swaraj Fund. It was a rolling success. But Bal Gandharva played the role of Bhamini that is the heroine and Keshawrao Bhosle played the hero and hero's songs are very aggressive, extremely aggressive. Lata Mangeshkar's father Master Dinanath used to sing in that role and Dinanath's singing of those songs is absolutely electrifying – out of this world! Absolutely electrifying and fortunately we have got some real good records. Anyway, we need not to go to the times of master Dinanath. We come back to Bal Gandharva. So anyway, the music of 'Manapaman' there is a big word which the critics used, I am sorry to use that word here, it is called eclectic. Eclectic means you borrow from all sources and that is what enriches the music of 'Manapaman'. The date of 'Manapaman' is 1911 and in 1930 major actors from Kirloskar Company left the Kirloskar Company – Bal Gandharva, Govind Rao Tembe and there was another actor called Ganpat rao Bodas. You have got pictures here of both Govind Rao Tembe and Ganpat Rao Bodas. Have a look at these photographs. Ganapat Rao Bodas was a prose actor, he was a phenomenal actor and he used to act hero's roles or even the roles of comic characters – buffoons or villains in these productions. So they left Kirloskar Company and they started what is called Gandharva Natak Mandali. Now at this stage, I must tell you something which has some relationship with Calcutta and that is after these people left the Company, the manager of this Kirloskar Company continued to have the Company and one of the actors recruited was Master Dinanath and one of plays they staged was an Urdu play called 'Taji Wafa'. This 'Taji Wafa' was brought by the Kirloskar Company to Calcutta and they took Calcutta by storm. This was round about 1915 and Amrita Bazar Patrika and all other papers they gave this 'Taji Wafa' rave reviews. So although I am here to glorify Bal Gandharva, I have to say that without Bal Gandharva also, you can take Calcutta by storm. So Dinanath must have



'Sangeet Punyaprabhav' production  
Kirloskar Natak Mandali, 1916

been in his first days of his youth. They really had show after show here and it's like a dream. A Marathi company staging an Urdu play and winning all Bengali audiences. It is a subject in which one should get an award for regional integration.

Then we have – I will come to a few stages. Then comes the next great stage the play called 'Swayamvar'. 'Swayamvar' has a mythological background and it is the elopement of Rukmini with Krishna and it is again a play written by Khadilkar. Here again the rich music, the classically oriented music was provided by Bhaskar Bua Bakhale. There was a photograph of Bhaskar Bua Bakhale who was a great Guru of Bal Gandharva and Bhaskar Bua Bakhale had been an actor himself playing female roles. Then he became a great classicist – classical musician and he moulded Bal Gandharva and quite a few other actors in Gandharva Company. For example, Master Krishna Rao who is well known for music direction of Prabhat films, some of Prabhat Films one of which features Bal Gandharva. I will come to that later. So this Bhaskar Bua Bakhale gave the tunes for the play 'Swayvar'. Now Swayavar otherwise is a conventional play. But the last scene of Swayamvar it is a very modern scene. In that Krishna pretends to be an ordinary coward and Rukmini accepts that pretention. Rukmini does not question him and there is a dialogue between Krishna and Rukmini. I reproduced part of it in my book which is very modern. The sensitivity is modern, something of today and which is not expected of Khadilkar. I must tell my Bengali audience that Khadilkar did not waste his time only in writing musical plays for Bal Gandharva. He is one of our finest prose dramatist, under a historical plays like 'Sawai Madhava Rao Vacha Mrityu'- that is death of Peshwa Sawai Madhava Rao. Then 'Bhau Bandaki' which is about Peshwa Raghoba Dada and Raghoba Dada's killing. There is a photograph here new production of that play 'Bhau Bandaki'. So he was a very impassioned playwright. Then he wrote a great play 'Kichak Vadh'. Now, 'Kichak Vadh' was supposed to be an allegory on Lord Curzon and Lord Curzon was Kichak and Draupadi was India – like that. So British government came down very heavily on 'Kichak Vadh' and banned the play. So that was what Khadilkar is, Khadilkar is a very complex character. But Khadilkar's association with Bal Gandharva is also very close and I would like to say this that Khadilkar effected Bal Gandharva and Bal Gandharva effected Khadilkar and together they march towards the decadence, the inevitable decadence of Marathi musical stage that we can't escape. We may glorify Bal Gandharva, we may celebrate his centenary but at the same time this decadence came in there. I will tell

you why this decadence came in there. You know Bombay had a cosmopolitan audience, Khojas, Multani Parsis, and Gujaratis during Bal Gandharva's time, not now. Now there is not such cosmopolitanism that is a paradox, but it is not there anyway now. So they used to flock to Bal Gandharva's plays and what they would do is as soon as Bal Gandharva started singing they would be in the theatre, they would be in the seats. Their costly seats. As soon as the prose part started, they would go out, have a cup of tea or have a smoke. After about 15 minutes they would hear the start of the next song, they would all pile in and they would sit in the .....so all that sort of things turned the musical plays into a 'mehfil' and other older proportions, the older balance between prose and song, the musical flow, the mutual rapport between prose and song that was lost. So it became a Mehfil and when it became a Mehfil it lead towards this decadence of the form. There is another thing - Bal Gandharva was a very thoughtless realist in the sense that all the crowds would have the real jewels. All Chaddars, (stoles) shoes would have real jewels. There would be very costly satin, kinkhab, and what not! And all jewellery, costumes, satin costumes, and Jari costumes – all that. He used to spend thousands on these things. Then also décor – décor will be sometimes very realistic and even when he had no money, he somehow borrowed money and created the décor and on top of that – imagine – he would use 'attar' – Bal Gandharva – before he entered the stage. He puts smelling from the wings. He used 'attar' and he would spend thousands of the 'attar'. I think this can only be called decadence and people glorify this but still I think this is the first step towards the decadence. So, in the result, he was very badly in debt. First time he ran into a debt of some 3 lakhs and the over seven years he paid 3 lakhs. Second debt he could not pay back. He had a very very bad time and also he was growing old. In 1930, he was about 42 years old. So 42 is something, 42 you cannot play a heroine of twenty, it is difficult. Then he was putting on weight. He was getting very plump and he was not of extraordinary height. He was of medium height. So he looked very plump. But people tolerated it and I will tell you later to what extent they tolerated all this. That is a man - when he captivates the audience, he captivates them to this extent. Anyway, I am telling you about the decadence of Marathi musical theatre at the time of Bal Gandharva. Then we come to another play. You see, he was a very complex character. I have told in my book that Bal Gandharva...I studied quite a lot, I read quite a lot but Bal Gandharva remains a big mystery both as a person and an artist he remains a big mystery. You can't unfathomed this mystery. He is a mysterious person. So I am telling you about these

costumes, attar all that. He comes out with a play in which he is dressed in tattered clothes, tattered sari and all that and that play is 'Ekach Pyala'. I have got a photograph there from 'Ekach Pyala' showing Ganpat Rao Bodas in the main role of Sudhakar. It is about the evils of drink and the clever researchers among you will find that structure of 'Ekach Pyala' is exactly the structure of 'Othello'. But nobody discovered this for a very long time because there was not enough research done. You still see the resemblance between Othello and Ekach Pyala. In Othello there is the handkerchief, here it is drink. In Othello there is jealousy and handkerchief, here



'Ekach Pyala' Bal Gandharva as Sindhu

it is drink. So Bal Gandharva is the wife ...Ganpat Rao Bodas is Sudhakar, the lawyer who starts drinking and goes down slowly with the drink. Bal Gandharva is his devoted wife. Now today any of our feminist today study 'Ekach Pyala', they would not like the idea of 'Ekach Pyala' because Sindhu till the last moment is devoted to him. Actually he beats her up, he beats the child, and they both die. It is a horrible thing. It is a terrible tragedy. It was written by one of our greatest playwrights Ram Ganesh Gadkari who died unfortunately very young and 'Ekach Pyala' saw Bal Gandharva in a very realistic role. No big costumes. He was no longer playing princesses,

half the time he played princesses – Rukmini, Subhadra, all princesses, all mythological princesses. Bhamini again very rich woman. No, now an ordinary housewife and ordinary suffering housewife. Some of the ordinary tunes that he sings are very touching – those tunes are very moving. So 'Ekach Pyala' is one of the great peaks in his career.

I must tell you something about Bal Gandharva patrons. After the Maharaja of Kolhapur in good old days, his real patron was Maharaja Sayaji Rao Gaekwad of Baroda. So I will tell how the performance took place in the Baroda Court. 'Ekach Pyala' would take place. Now it was a court performance, so everybody had to be in a formal dress. You could not come even in your best dress. It has to be formal court dress. Then you were not allowed to laugh, you were not allowed to clap. You were not allowed to say 'once more' as they used to say. In England we say 'Encore – Encore' 'Once more' that is the phrase we use. You are not allowed to do that. Only the Maharaja and Maharani they could do it and them also when they wanted to say

‘once more’ they had an electric bell by the side of their chair. So they would only press the bell. They would probably hear the bell on the stage or in the wings and then he could go out second time with the song. For all these tamasha, Bal Gandharva used to get 3000 or 5000 rupees and Maharaja would invite them and tell them you give us about 4-5 performances and they would get money according to that, I think on Bal Gandharva we will play some cassettes. When Bal Gandharva records are turned into cassettes and LPs the records were from Princely houses...at least Indore Maharani gave a number of records to us for our records, we will play them later.

Then I will tell you something about Sanyukta Manapaman and then about Bal Gandharva company. These are very fantastic things, it is impossible to believe them. You know he went to the theatre about 2 or 2 1/2 hours before the performance because his make-up, his drapery, costuming that took so much time, first he took a bath, first he had a shave – I will start from the beginning. First thing, he got up very late in the morning because he finished very late at night and you know when Khadilkar used to have his rehearsals, Khadilkar rehearsal started at ten o’clock where they had the rehearsals we have now our Lamington Road police station. In



**'Mrichchhakatik' Bal Gandharva as Basantasena**

fact I go there every morning. I don't go to police station but I go to coffee house which is opposite the police station. But that is the place where first Bal Gandharva used to live and used to have rehearsals. So Khadilkar started the rehearsals of Manapaman and Narayan Rao used to turn up very late. Khadilkar was a great disciplinarian and had a big temper so he used to get very angry. Then he was Bal Gandharva go through the places. How Bal Gandharva approached the character, how Bal Gandharva used to sing. After he heard Bal

Gandharva sing, he was so won over, he gave him a concession- you may not come at ten o'clock. You can come later. Anyway, he used to get up very late. He had one

meal during the day. But till the end of the performance he never had anything to eat. Then he used to have a shave. This shave again was a very cruel thing because his skin had to be absolutely pure. He was playing a woman's role after all. Then he would have his bath and Bal Gandharva liked cold water bath and Bal Gandharva especially like bath, bathing in cold water with lots of ice. You know he was a phenomenal singer he used to have ice sherbet and what not. Lots of ice in the sherbet and lots of ice while having the bath. It did not affect his voice. After the bath, he would start making up. Making up took very long time. Now I am going to tell you something very peculiar about it. Then he had a man. He was with him; he used to dress him in a sari. So Bal Gandharva would wear under-wear keep away all the clothes. He would dip the sari, jari sari or any other thing in eau-de-cologne and wrap the wet thing around him so that it would stick to him you know, imagine a man suffering so much in order to entertain his audience! He had one idea of female beauty. In order to present that idea of female beauty he had to suffer so much. This again really gave me a shiver when I read it that this fellow used to dip in cologne water, this eau-de-cologne to wrap it around!

### **Pratibha Agrawal**

This must have been quite enjoyable Mr. Nadkarni, having the sari in eau-de-cologne?

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

I don't know, it looks very ghastly to me. Then the play was on. This should be noted by these people who are in the theatre today, when the play was on, he never spoke to anybody, never spoke, just he did not speak. Then a friend of mine told me, while the play was on, there would be people with one silver plate of Musambies (oranges) in two halves and another silver plate of Musambies and he would have the Musambies to sustain himself and then he would have some milk that is about all. Then he was not also about having whisky from time to time that also be noted and Mr. Bodas said Bal Gandharva, they would go to a restaurant in Grant Road which is still there and we used to frequent at the restaurant many years ago. But over the past many years, I have not been to the restaurant because I must have graduated to better restaurants. That is called 'Coronation Durbar' or 'Coronation Restaurant'. So they would have chicken there. It is said that, Bal Gandharva started drinking at one stage. One patron of his told him that this is very bad for you so he stopped drinking. But these are all stories, one can't authenticate these stories. But one can say this much that he enjoyed his drink but as one critic told me recently whatever Bal

Gandharva did. Now after this talk you forget whatever I am telling you, whatever Bal Gandharva did, he never publicized it. So you do not know whether he was really drinking, whether there was any woman in his life. He must have woman in the sense he was a very handsome looking man and Durga Khote in her autobiography – Durga Khote’s family was very close to – Durga Khote’s father was very close to Bal Gandharva and Durga Khote first saw Bal Gandharva when she was five or six years old and she describes him as a very handsome person and how his hands specially from elbow to palm, that section of a hand was really like a woman’s hand. So all that is described. He must have been a fantastic character and I am sure if the women at that time were wise he must have attracted them.

I will tell a little about this musical accompaniments. I told you Bal Gandharva – whole thing became a mehfil. So the musical accompaniments were, I will tell you only about one person – Thirakawa, and he was a very well-known. Thirakawa was Bal Gandharva’s ‘tabalchi’ and Thirakawa is very well known that is why I mentioned. Thirakawa, the association between Thirakawa and Bal Gandharva was very long. Then I must come to the films of Bal Gandharva. There were only two films - there is one film – Prabhat Films – called ‘Dharmatma’. His – this poem is about saint poet Eknath. Bal Gandharva entered into a contract with Prabhat. Bal Gandharva was to be paid half the profit and Bal Gandharva was in very strained monetary circumstances. So he wanted the money. He acted in this film poet Saint Eknath. It was directed by V. Shantaram. It appears that Bal Gandharva was not happy in front of the camera. First of all he was playing a male part. So he himself was conscious that he was full of these female mannerisms. He had evitable those female mannerisms - the way women play with ‘pallu’ of their sari, the way they move and so on. Bal Gandharva has peculiar mannerism of standing also, standing on his heels and all that was very peculiar to him. Now this film was made round about 1937-38. Bal Gandharva was fifty years old at that time. He had to play the male role of poet ‘Sant Eknath’. He had to shave his head. So there is another interesting anecdote – he and master Krishna Rao who was providing music to that film and was also co-actor of the company. Master Krishna used to play female role and then role of ‘Narada’ in ‘Saubhadra’ and all that. Master Krishna Rao was a very versatile man and again a direct disciple of Bhaskar Bua Bakhale. So together with Master Krishna Rao he went to Nasik. He had his head shaved. You put a round

circle here and he shaved the rest of the hair. He relegated all hair to the waters of Godavari because Godavari is a holy river. So it was a very religious act for him to shave his head and after that he came back to Pune and he acted in the film. After the film was completed, the sensors were after him. We had an English principal in our college, Elfinstone College, Principal Hamil and Hamil was a member of sensor board and Hamil was after the film hammer and tongs. So they took a number of objections. First of all, they did not allow the name 'Mahatma' because you know what Mahatma was in those days. British did not allow the name 'Mahatma'. So they changed it to 'Dharmatma'. So this 'Dharmatma' is still available. 'Dharmatma' had been shown on TV and you can hear some very divine music of Bal Gandharva. There is another film called 'Sadhvi Mirabai'. 'Sadhvi Mirabai' is absolutely painful filmisation of a play of Bal Gandharva on Mirabai. Bal Gandharva looks very rotten, he looks very fat in the role. But still the singing can be tolerated and you can see that whole thing is photographed in a theatre. But it is a historical relic, it is quite interesting.

Then I must tell you about one person who mattered a lot to Bal Gandharva in his life. I told about Kirloskar. Kirloskar and Bal Gandharva never met. He acted in Kirloskar's 'Saubhadra', Deval was his great patron, Govind Rao Tembe and Ganpat Rao Bodas were his co-actors and there were others like Master Krishna Rao. Later came an actress. She belonged to the Bijapur and her name was Gohar Karnataki. She started cultivating Bal Gandharva. She wanted to act in Bal Gandharva's plays and she wanted to sing Bal Gandharva's songs. I am not going to tell you a very long story. You can read my book if you want that whole story. Besides - that story has to be told in a very balanced manner because people who believe that Gohar had very bad influence on Bal Gandharva's life and that she treated him very badly. There are people who think she had very good influence on his life and she treated him very well. I had to select these two extreme viewpoints. I have seen Gohar also. In fact, I have seen Gohar in a play 'Ekach Pyala'. Gohar used to sing very well. Gohar used to sing in Bal Gandharva's style. So ultimately they came together and anyway while he had his wife and he had children, he married Gohar. Then he must have been sixty years of age when he married Gohar. Incidentally he used to lose his children. His children used to die. On two occasions they died when his play was on. 'Manapaman' was staged – first show was on when his daughter died. Something

similar happened in the later stage. But he said, 'I am going to act. I am not going to sit at home and shed tears. I am going to act.' That was very brave of him. I told you that man was very complex. He was a great mystery. This is something of mystery.

Let us come to the last stage of Bal Gandharva when he was getting old. He was not strong in his legs. But still he was acting. He had to act. Again researchers would be interested to know that at the age of sixty, his fees was 500 rupees per performance. This is after independence so he acted in a number of plays. They were contractors, he did not have his company. He had his company for some time. He had some successful tours. He had two tours of Goa. Like that he went on. But he was on his declining years. He gave his last performance in Vidarbha – three last performances and you will be surprised how old he was and what he was playing! He was playing female roles and you know how old he was – 67 years old! So, imagine a 67 years old man playing the role of Rukmini and all that! But he gave all that performances. After that he was struck by paralysis so that he could not stand. He could only sit and his bodily functions he could not perform properly. So he took a place in Mahim, on the way to the airport if you are going from South to airport, there is an area called Mahim in Bombay. He took a place there and he stayed there with Gohar. It is said that she treated him very badly. As I said that people say that she looked after him. He was 75 years old in 1964. There was a big celebration. Sombhu Mitra came to Bombay to take part in the festival. This festival was staged at Birla Theatres. Incidentally Sombhu Mitra has seen Bal Gandharva in 1944 when he came to stage something at Bombay Marathi Sahitya Sangh open air festival. I think, probably this play was 'Nabanna'. Tripti Mitra was not with him. Sombhu Mitra had come. Sombhu Mitra was going around and Bal Gandharva was making up. This old man of '44, he was fifty six years old. He was making up for the main role – Arjuna, he played Arjuna. Sombhu Mitra saw him. Sombhu Mitra was very much affected by the sight of this legend. Much later I got to know Sombhu Mitra. When I got to know Sombhu Mitra many years later, he always used to say, you must write about Bal Gandharva and by strange accident I decided to write about Bal Gandharva. So the first sentence in my book refers to Sombhu Mitra suggesting that I should write about Bal Gandharva. And anyway I am coming to 1964, 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebration. Sombhu Mitra staged one or two plays at Birla Theatre and quite a number of plays were staged. That was February 1964. Very soon Gohar died. I think Gohar was not

properly living at that time, round about that time she died. Gohar had a niece who looked after Bal Gandharva. Then in '67, he went into coma and he was moved to a hospital in Pune and after many days in coma, he died. Now something very queer happened at that time. It is said that certain ministers in the Maharashtra government who thought that they were custodian of Bal Gandharva reputations, they feared that Gohar's relatives would take charge of his body and bury him according to Muslim rites. So they very quietly issued instructions that the body should be taken charge of and Bal Gandharva should be cremated according to Hindu rites, but very quietly without people knowing. So actually the funeral procession moved through the streets of Pune and lanes of Pune. Before you could say Bal Gandharva, he had been cremated. Now, I have not talked firsthand about this with anybody because it is very shabby affair. But I have read quite a lot and I have talked to people who have been involved. It is true that some of his closest associates, one of his biographers, (the Sansthan has a book) Vasant Shantaram Desai, I think even he was not informed. It was a very sorry state of affairs. There we come to the end of Bal Gandharva. I shall just do a little summing up.

Then I want you to hear some six stage songs of Bal Gandharva and I shall also proceed this with a few comments. Unfortunately, Marathi musical theatre is not doing well these days. I have got some photographs here from Vidyadhar Gokhale's plays. Vidyadhar Gokhale tried to revive Marathi musical drama. But today Marathi musical drama is nowhere. I have also got a photograph of a recent play called 'Hel Preet Raja Osi' which is based on the life of Bal Gandharva. So you have an actor there acting in – imagine this role of Bal Gandharva and he is in female dress but he renders - this particular actor renders the songs of Bal Gandharva extremely well. Unfortunately this play had flopped and people were not ready to receive this play. And we have been having the centenary since the Maharashtra government is in charge of the centenary, they have done a few things but there is a lot still remains to be done. As for our Marathi musical theatre is concerned there is a big ideological lag, there is a big distance between what Bal Gandharva achieved and what could have been achieved. Now before we go on to the song, first thing is his voice. It is very difficult to describe his voice. How can I describe a voice. Suppose I say it was a silken voice, that won't convey anything. It is a voice, other day I talked about Bal Gandharva before a very young audience. I was asked about the voice. I can describe

it negatively. It is not a falsetto voice – means a man trying to sing like a woman. Not like that, it is his natural voice. But it can be man's voice on women's voice. It has got that sort of ambivalence. It can act two ways. When he is singing female roles, you don't feel that a man is singing, you feel that a woman is singing. Number two – his pronunciation is absolutely perfect. First grade pronunciation. There are no defects in his pronunciation. So that is number two. Number three is the actual composition of the songs themselves. In the composition of songs the use of vowels and consonants, there is a lot of assonance. Pras, Anupras or what you call Pras Anupras or the play of sound is there among the vowels and consonants. That also you have to notice. There is what we call Rasa Nishpatti. By the very sound, Rasa is produced. So the sound combined with the voice, produce the Rasa and Rasa relates to the emotion of the character. Suppose Subhadra is singing – mat jao kangal sharana – Subhadra is in distress, emotional distress. She sings that 'Sharana' that means the song is supposed to express the emotion, that is the Rasa is created. Like that, so these are the few things which you should notice in the song. Now, if you are not very tired, because we have another climatic program for you. But now we shall play the song. Then I shall answer your questions, if any.

**(Song: 1) [to listen to this song click here](#)**

You know, there are certain Ragas which were very popular with Bal Gandharva. They were very common to the stage singing of that time. So, Yaman Kalyan, Bhimpalashree, Bageshree – these are very common raga but there are others about which I do not know much. If you say Maand, I can't understand it. But some of the popular Ragas, I have some knowledge. You see here, apart from the melody...I will point one technicality. There is such a thing as 'som' I don't know what it is called in English. You know about this 'som' comes when he says the word 'Mohi'. Mohi means – Mohi is a word for Moh. You know what Moh is? Moh is a well-known word. So that som comes on the word – letter Moh and the way he pronounces it, that has got all the Najakat, it has got a typical thing. It has got a subtlety otherwise you know some singers who are beginning to learn music, they attack 'som' as if they are attacking it with hammer. Now here it is very persuasive. Now that is - that is the right word



about Bal Gandharva's music. It is very persuasive. It just sort of persuades you to accept certain things, certain musical values as well as thematic values.

**(Songs: 2 & 3) [to listen this song click here](#)**

I must explain one thing about the cassettes. These cassettes or LP's – the cassettes as well as parallel LP's issued by HMV. These are together from old records so that the extent of the song here is only 3 minutes, 3 minutes, and 3 minutes. So do not imagine that Bal Gandharva used to sing for 3 minutes. In fact, he was criticized for singing endlessly and then again there are two points of view. There are people who say he used to sing for half an hour, then he would get 'once more'. Suppose he sang a song for 10 minutes, you get 'once more', he would sing again. He would get six or seven once mores and he would go on singing. Actually there is an anecdote about him since there are many people here from Nagpur. I think it will be of special interest to people from Nagpur. It is said that the audience of Nagpur are very frightening. I think when Bal Gandharva was in his prime, may be when he was in Kirloskar Natak Mandali he had yet to leave Kirloskar, in the old days, they went to Nagpur, they staged a show. So the manager had asked all these actors not to take any 'once more', not to accept any 'once mores', not to sing again and again. So at one stage, there was a 'once more' and Bal Gandharva refused to sing and he made his exit. There was an uproar and these people were threatened and they were told that if they don't comply with the request of 'once more' they would not be allowed to leave the theatre. So there was some compromise, somebody went in, there was some talk. He was asked to render the song again and he won that 'Once more'. I don't know whether people who tell us story add something of their own because it is said, I was told, after that there were no 'once mores'. Anyway, that was the theatre of that times. It is as well that you understand theatre of these days. Now we will have a short question and answer session. After that, there is VCR here. We have in VCR lot of our stage 'Gayaki', stage singing explained in a very scientific manner. The grammar of Marathi stage singing is stated there. After that if there are questions, I would be happy to answer them. I shall say a few words. Jayshankar Sundari is mentioned in my book. Jayshankar Sundari was very famous Gujarati actor and he played the role of 'Sundari'. So the name 'Sundari' tucked to him. If you go to Ahmedabad, there is a very fine 'Jayshankar Sundari Theatre' there. There are big blow-ups of Jayshankar Sundari as he looked and as he played female roles. Now Jayshankar Sundari and Bal Gandharva apparently met in Baroda and it is said

that Jayshankar Sundari taught Bal Gandharva how to dress in the role of a courtesan 'Basantasena' or 'Revati'.

How to wear silver anklets and walk like a woman. That is what Jayshankar Sundari is supposed have taught Bal Gandharva. Their relationship was very close but there was no professional association because Gujarati theatre was following one stream and Marathi theatre was following another stream.



Shivaji Ganeshan with Bal Gandharva  
(L to R)

[\(Interview continued next page\)](#)

## **Questions by Sushil Mukherjee –**

Prof. Sushil Mukherjee asks several questions regarding mythological stories enacted by Bal Gandharva, whether he had music directors to direct him, about his accompanists, nature of dialogue used in the plays and whether the songs overshadowed the productions.

### **Sushil Mukherjee**

He played mythological stories? It is a wonderful thing to know that Shakuntala, I have gone through the history of drama in various states. And I find Shakuntala occurs everywhere. In all parts of the Country Shakuntala is played. Here also he started Shakuntala from the elopement episode. He used to play different roles. Girish Chandra Ghosh, was inspired from his boyhood to listen to ‘Kathaks’ He used to go with his aunt and grandfather to listen to the Kathaks and come back with the stories of Puranas and the manner in which Kathaks used to convey.

All these things influenced Girish Chandra Ghosh when he started writing plays for public theatre. Here is a strange similarity between how drama began in Maharashtra and how it began also in Bengal.

**Q** As we specially and particularly written to suit his genius but the play is written according to the genius of the main character who will be playing the role or the plays were simply independent and he had to fit himself with the roles.

**Q** The third is had he any music director to tell him to do this and do that to direct him as we have music directors nowadays? So had he any music director to direct him?

**Q** Did his accompanists overpower his singing by the loudness of various instruments as we find in these days? The singer is thrown in the background and the instruments predominate. What was the state of affairs in Bal Gandharva’s time?

**Q** In the dramas that were played in those days, were the dialogues in verse or prose or just a combination of both? If it is a mix up then what portion in verse and what portion in prose?

**Q** Did the songs overshadow the play itself? Did the play suffer because of the predominance of singing and the personality of the singer? Who is more important – the drama or the singer? How did it affect the audience of those days?

**Q** I have gone through the history of drama in various states and I have found that ‘Shakuntala’ appears everywhere. In all the parts of India, ‘Shakuntala’ was played. Here also we started with ‘Shakuntala’ long ago. Anyway, this ‘Kathak’ role, he used to play alone different roles. We have Jatra before we had play on the stage. We had Jatra which was held in open like this and player should play in the middle. So there is similarity between these two. Then I will come to the questions which I have raised, if you kindly answer.

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni (Answers)**

We must go back to the condition of theatre in which Bal Gandharva operated. You see in those days they never used any microphones. Because they did not use any microphone they had to project themselves for very big audience, the acting was necessarily exaggerated. All these I have got from accounts. Those who have traced Bal Gandharva, they say that Bal Gandharva was as good an actor as a singer. I asked Dr. Shivarama Karanth who had seen Bal Gandharva in the twenties, so Sivarama Karanth in a straight forward manner he said, others were singers but this man was an actor. That is what he said. That means he was also impressed by Bal Gandharva’s acting. Now tailor made roles, after he became famous, it is true that certain dramatists notably Khadilkar wrote certain roles meant for him. But paradoxically what happened was, real strength of Khadilkar’s playwriting began to go down. Khadilkar deteriorated as a playwright. The more he catered to Bal Gandharva, the more he wrote for Bal Gandharva, more he deteriorated. Take for example, Manapaman is not at all a good play. It is notable for its music. But even ‘Manapaman’ – the first Khadilkar’s play in which Bal Gandharva acted, was not written for Bal Gandharva.

### **Question from audience**

So the play can be prescribed as a musical play? Opera or something like that or it may be a drama where music predominates?

**Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

No, no. When Marathi musical drama was progressing, it came very near to opera but it really never became opera. Anyway I shall go to the next question. Bhaskar Bua Bakhale was one of his music directors. Govind Rao Tembe was one of his music directors, Master Krishna Rao.

**Question**

Names of music teachers?

**Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

No, I did not mention names. There was early teacher called Mehboob Khan. I did not mention names because I don't want to load all this with lot of names.

**Question**

Did Mehboob Khan belong to any Gharana ?

**Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

Yes, yes, that is true. It was not a Gharana as such. He was not a very well-known musician. His name was Mehboob Khan and from Mehboob Khan he had his first lesson in classical music. Would you just mention the subject?

**Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

Should we have the VCR? Before we have VCR, I will explain what it is. See, this is Vasant Rao Deshpande doing a lot of singing with one of his disciples Asha Khadilkar, and he is explaining various modes of singing. Now some of them come from Kirtankar tradition. For example some of them must be singing lot of dindis. Then there are other modes which come from Thumri, Dadra and all that. That sort of thing he will be doing in a very stylish manner. This is a song from 'Mrichchhakatik'

**Song (4)** *Shakti nasate bhupalal ochanala* ([To listen song click here](#))

**Song (5)** *bhaut din nacha bhetton sundarila / Karin jevhan mee bahut arjawala / patra hoyin maga madhura suhasyala* ([To listen song click here](#))

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

Very typical 'Bageshree'. This is a very famous song.

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

This is from a play by Vasant Kanetkar. He suddenly jump several years ahead. ...  
Vasant Kanetkar's play called 'Matsyagandha' (song)

#### **Song: 6**

*Nako wisarwe sanket meelnacha / trishita aahe mee tujhya darshanacha*  
[\(To listen song click here\)](#)

#### **Song: 7**

balma mora – this is original classical song. This song is from 'Saubhadra'.  
[\(To listen song click here\)](#)

### **Pratibha Agrawal**

From 'Saubhadra' – Balma mora mar gayo –

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

No, no the tune is the same. This is from Saubhadra. ....we are just moving forward.

#### **Song: 8**

*Majhi matul kanyaka rupshila / ticha majha bahu lobh julun gela / manya purwi  
tathbandhu asuti tyala / pudhe nichani wachana bhanga kela*  
[\(To listen song click here\)](#)

(Nadkarni response to something Vasant Rao Deshpande says)

This is in the Kirtankar tradition (Hardas is Kirtankar) taken in Anna Saheb Kirloshkar's Saubhadra

#### **Song: 9**

*Balsagar tumhee vir shiromani kothetari ramala*  
[\(To listen song click here\)](#)

### **Pratibha Agrwal**

This is the last song

#### **Song: 10**

*Kashya tyajoo padala / mama subha gasubhapadata wase padayuga jithe he /  
mama Swarga teka sahe*

[\(To listen song click here\)](#)

### **Dhyaneshwar Nadkarni**

This is a song from 'Ekach Pyala' and is sung by 'Sindhu' – the role which Bal Gandharva played. There is just one thing I will tell you about Bal Gandharva is that the quality of his voice was so peculiar that it blended in a very unique way with the sound of the organ. So that it is said even some of the accompanists didn't know when the singing had started and when the organ was not playing. Something like that. It is something very peculiar. Finally I want to thank all of you. I want to thank Pratibhaji, I want to thank Mrs. Kelkar and Mrs. Mahajan for all the help. They have worked very hard. They have made this experience very comfortable for me. Actually I must also pay tribute to Natya Shodh Sansthan itself because the resources of Sansthan, they also were very useful to me. I must congratulate the Sansthan and its workers for putting up such a fine display of Bal Gandharva's photographs. I don't know, what you call me but I must say that it was totally unexpected for me, and your files of Bal Gandharva contains Bal Gandharva special numbers. All that was much unexpected for me. Thank you.

