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MUSIC · AUDIO · VIDEO · TELEVISION

Plus
TV & Video
Section

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PRABHAKAR

Hindi Pop Music

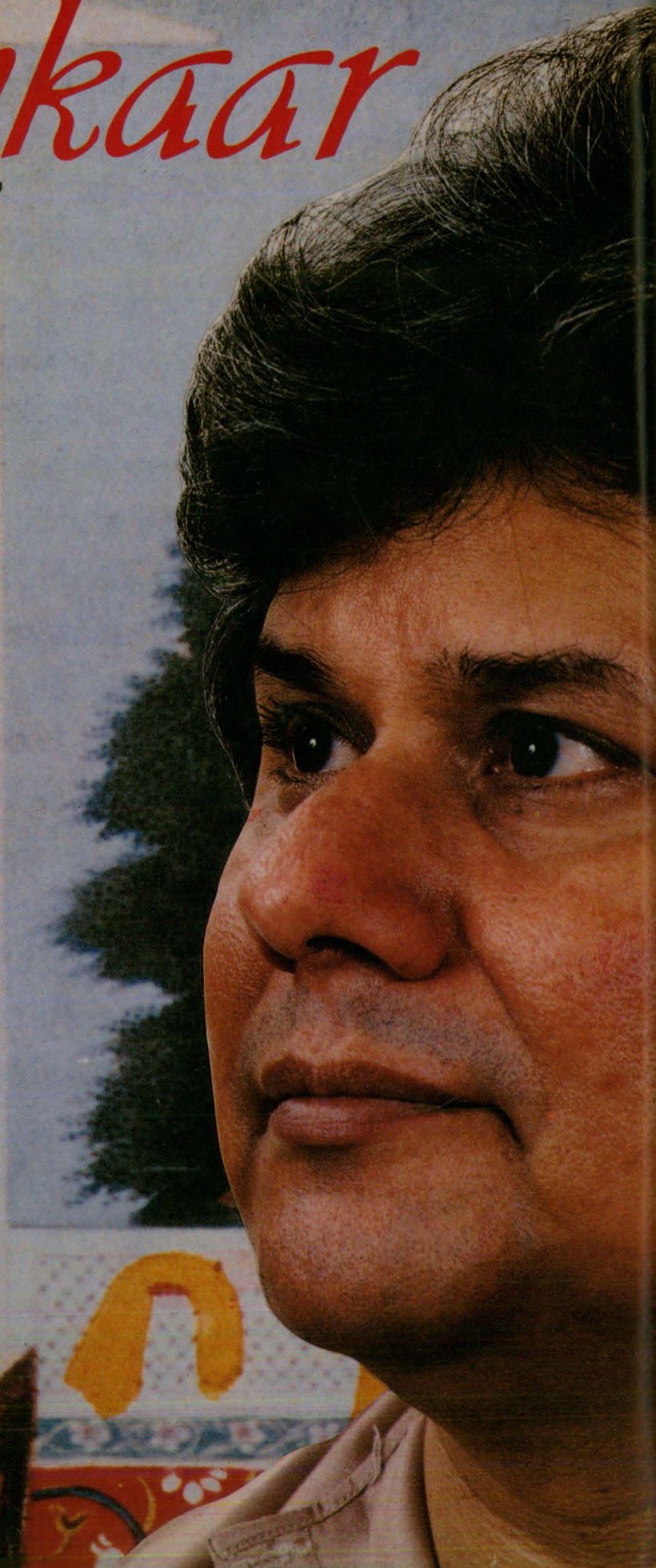
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Vol. I No. 12 May 1987

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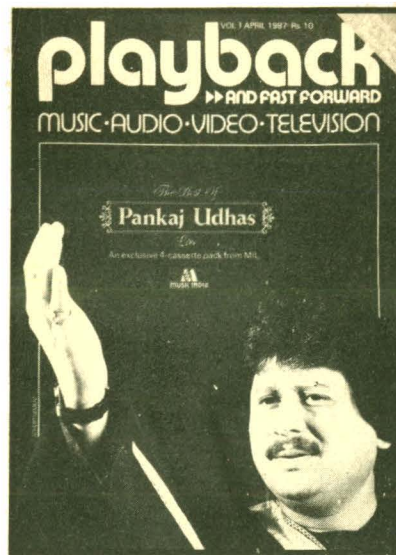
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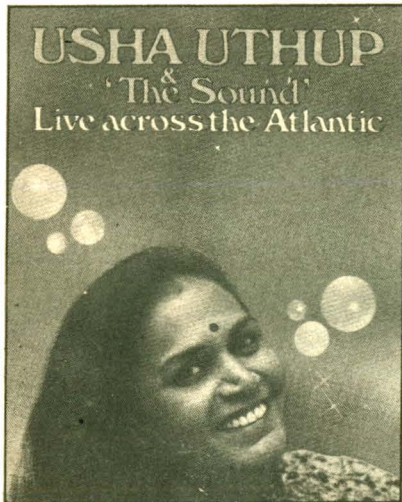
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MISUNDERSTOOD

In the review of my cassette 'Live Across The Atlantic' in the March issue of **Playback And Fast Forward**, the reviewer has apparently not really 'listened' to the cassette well and as usual I am misunderstood. A common happening, maybe, because I am one of the first 'ammass' to start the kind of singing and shows that I did.

I thank him for all the compliments he has given me, but I feel sad that he has not caught the underlying message to all, in what he calls "pure fun-frolic musical confectionery", whatever that means. Right at the beginning of the show, I said that I wanted to show the "other side of India", common people like us, who enjoy music, all kinds of music, and the fact that music brings people together all over the world. I have also a message of integration, as I have sung in many languages.

And as for not singing my own songs, let's be honest, I don't have so many film songs anyway! I want to wipe out this pre-conceived idea that versions of songs originally sung in a male or a female voice can only be rendered by the same sex.

The Bengali song has not been touched in the review, thought it was a great hit. There is no mention of 'Chitthee Aayee Hai', 'Chatte Chatte' or 'Baat Karte Hai', either.

Maybe he could listen to it once more, keeping in mind that my mission in life is to get people together through music. I feel I have definitely achieved that through the years, 1969-87 to be precise. And my aim is not to have people just judging me as a great singer. There may be better singers than I, or worse. But if I'm good, I am originally good, otherwise originally bad. But I'm original.

*Usha Uthup
Calcutta*

FASCINATING

Nalin Shah's article ('Fame, Fortune and Frustration', **Playback And Fast Forward**, March 1987) made fascinating reading.

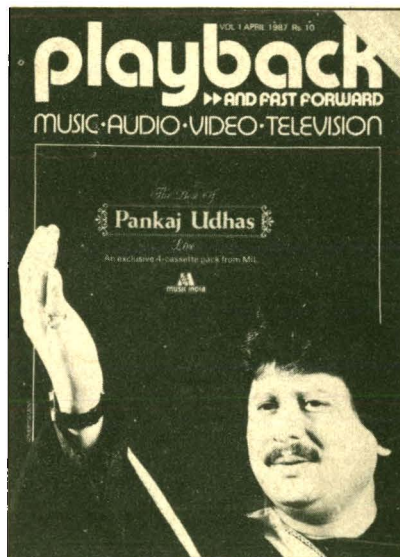
Why does not the government do something for these singers of yesteryear, who were so popular at one time but are fallen on evil days now? It makes you wonder - did they ever have an inkling of what the future held for them? How secure are today's top singers and other artistes?

*S Krishnan
New Delhi*

A MATTER OF PRIDE

It was heartening to read the success story of Kavita Krishnamurthy. It is all the more a matter of pride to me, since she had recorded her first playback song 'Aayega aanewala' in my film 'Kadambari', starring Shabana Azmi. Unfortunately, that song went unnoticed at the time though it was sung with feeling, maintaining the nuances of the original song, which is one of the greatest masterpieces ever composed and sung in the history of Indian cinema.

*Madhusudan Kumar
Bombay*



SOUND ADVICE

Thanks for the article on VCRs - 'Save Those Costly Repairs' (**Playback And Fast Forward**, April 1987). I look forward to more such articles on maintenance and other related topics.

Daman Sood's article on amplifiers was also 'Sound Advice' indeed.

*K Ramamurthy
Madras*



PIED PIPER

Singing sensation? You said it! Remo ('The Pied Piper', **Playback And Fast Forward**, April 1987) deserves every bit of the success he has got recently. We are very proud of this multi-talented singer who has put Goa on the international music map.

*G D'Cruz
Goa*

WELCOME ADDITION

The TV & Video section is a welcome addition. The photograph of Mitalee was great but I wish it was in colour.

*R K Naile
Orissa*

OLDIES ON LP, PLEASE

In this age of pre-recorded cassettes, it is hard to come by recordings of old Hindi film music on disc. Lovers of oldies would like to get hold of the songs of old movies like 'CID', 'Hum Dono' and 'Madhumati'.

HMV has all the old films in its catalogues. The company does release these frequently - but unfortunately only on cassette. This is daunting to people who buy strictly records, since the pre-recorded cassettes are generally of poor quality, both in terms of recording and the tape itself.

May I suggest that HMV bring out the old numbers on LP, for record buyers like me?

*Shamaraj
Kumbla, Kerala*

OOPS!

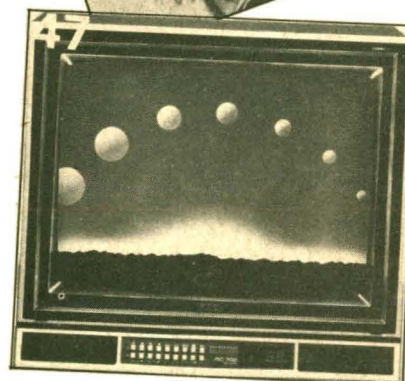
In the April issue, the pictures of Mitalee Mukherjee and Aditya Pancholi were by Gautam Rajadhyaksha. The omission is regretted.

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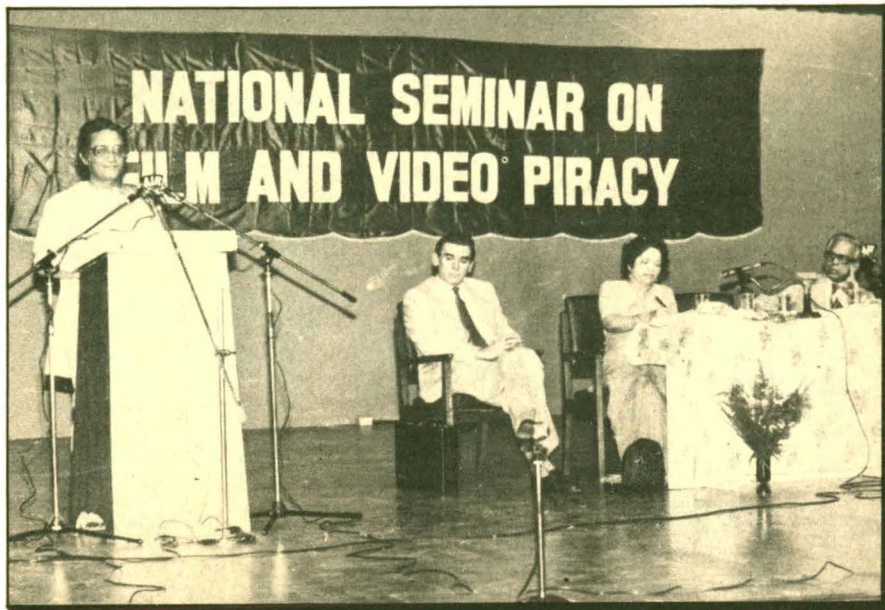
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Cover transparency of Sharon Prabhakar by Gautam Rajadhyaksha

UNDER SEIGE

Film and video pirates now face the threat of stiffer penalties, reports Parag Kamani.



At the National Seminar on Film and Video Piracy (L to R): Ajit Panja, Peter Duffy, Malati Tambe Vaidya and Y V Chandrachud.

The consensus of opinion among speakers at the one-day 'National Seminar on Film and Video Piracy', organised under the auspices of the National Film Development Corporation (NFDC), along with the Film Federation of India (FFI) and Association of Motion Pictures and TV Programme Producers (AMPTVPP), and held at the Nehru Centre Auditorium, Bombay, recently, was the need to provide stiffer penalties to prevent piracy, the union of the film industry with law enforcement authorities to curb this malady, and forming an organisation similar to the UK-based Federation Against Copyright Theft (FACT) in India.

The seminar, chaired by Y V Chandrachud, retired Chief Justice of India, was formally inaugurated by the Union Minister of State for Information and Broadcasting, Ajit Panja. The latter said that since the government had already amended the Copyright Act and the Cinematograph Act by providing stringent measures to combat piracy, it was now the responsibility of the film industry to organise itself to guard their property, and create public awareness against the menace of piracy.

Panja added that the law against piracy had been challenged in the Supreme Court but, paradoxically, only the government was defending it. He wondered why the film industry was not doing so.

Peter Duffy, President of FACT, who delivered the keynote address, stressed the need for unity among members of the film industry to effectively combat piracy. He spoke of how his organisation, FACT, tracked and tackled its foe with the assistance of producers, distributors and the police, culminating in no film released in his country since August 1983 being issued on pirated videocassettes.

HAMPERED

In her welcome address, Malati Tambe Vaidya, managing director of NFDC, affirmed her organisation's help in curbing piracy because even the export earnings of NFDC's films were being hampered due to film piracy. She also spoke of the need to set up a FACT-type organisation in the country.

B K Karanjia, editor of *Screen*, outlined that piracy commenced with audio cassettes a decade or more ago, resulting in unprecedented losses to the music

industry, which it was still incurring, with counterfeit cassettes still accounting for almost 90 per cent of the total market. That India lacked a swift and punitive check on piracy, as in other countries, was one reason behind the continuing piracy problems, he added.

The police commissioner of Bombay, D S Soman, expressed the inability of the police to take effective action against the pirates due to lack of supervision by film producers when they sent their films for duplication, and loopholes and lacunae in the law, that had resulted in light punishment to the pirates. In providing statistics on the number of raids undertaken by the police in the past three years, he added that many acts of preventing piracy were often hampered. Soman was upset that, in granting licences to video parlours, the collector of Bombay was encouraging piracy.

Renowned film producer G P Sippy, vice-president of FFI and president of AMPTVPP, opined that unless something drastic was initiated to prevent video piracy, the film industry would be destroyed. Other speakers included noted journalist M V Kamath; N K Anand, an advocate; and Bhaskar Chatterjee, deputy

secretary of the Ministry of Human Resources Development.

Later, in an exclusive interview with **Playback And Fast Forward**, NFDC managing director Malati Tambay-Vaidya spoke of the alacrity with which this seminar was organised and the extremely enthusiastic response it had evoked.

"NFDC took the initiative to organise the 'National Seminar on Film and Video Piracy', but it was really a team effort with FFI and AMPTVPP," she expressed modestly. "Our first meeting (with the two organisations) was held only on February 17, 1987, after which I went abroad. Prior to my departure we all were extremely clear about the purpose of the seminar and, although earlier there were isolated instances of discussing the issues of film and video piracy, we now felt the necessity to tackle them under one roof."

A coup of sorts occurred when it was announced in the press that Peter Duffy, president of FACT, would be a speaker at the seminar. How did it come about? "The United Kingdom has always been our most important market," said Tambay-Vaidya. "Then, when I visited London recently, I went and met him and spoke about the seminar. He was very enthused about it and hence accepted our invitation to come to India as our guest and speak at the seminar."

In featuring reputed and recognised people as speakers "under one roof", as she expressed earlier, the organisers "aimed to obtain all concerned people—from the judiciary, the police, the industry and the government—to stimulate interest in the area of piracy, something that is affecting everybody's life."

She was extremely happy that the people "operating on various levels" had agreed on certain measures in combating film and video piracy. Tambay-Vaidya asserted that as a follow-up to the seminar, "regular campaigns would be initiated against video piracy, including issuing publicity brochures for consumer awareness."

Similar seminars on film and video piracy are scheduled at New Delhi and Calcutta, too, but don't actions speak louder than mere words?

Music

director Ravi's first venture into the Malayalam film industry has been highly successful. His music for the films 'Panchangi' and 'Nakhazhathangal' has won awards from the Government of Kerala and the Kerala Film Critics' Association, respectively. Both the films have been directed by Hariharan. This makes Ravi the second music director (after Sailil Chowdhury) from the Hindi film world to win an award for a Malayalam film.



Govinda

Govinda,

Anil Kapoor, Sanjay Dutt, Manoj Kumar, Rajeev Kapoor and Mohmish Behl are the film stars acting in a television serial called 'Dharmal' scheduled to be telecast this month. Produced by film star Monty for Doordarshan, the script and direction are both by Bharat Dabholkar of 'Bottoms Up' fame.

The cast also includes well known artistes Harish Patel, Rajesh Puri, Shobha Khote and veteran Premnath.

Performing

at the Royal Albert Hall in London is one of the most prestigious things that could happen to any artiste. While many Indian artistes have performed there and in other places in UK in the past, there is a catch to it now: UK has introduced a 'withholding tax', which means that foreign artistes performing in UK will now have to pay a tax of 29 per cent of all their earnings from live performances in UK. This tax could seriously affect Indian artistes who usually have a very successful circuit in UK.

Musical

manuscripts by Mozart are expected to fetch more than US \$ 534,000 when they are sold in London this month in what auctioneers called the most important music manuscript sale this century. Sotheby's Auction House said 500 pages representing nine symphonies by Mozart were expected to fetch a record price on May 22.

The previous music-manuscript record of St £ 330,000 (US \$ 534,000) was paid in 1982 in London for the first full-scale working draft of Igor Stravinsky's Rite of Spring.

The symphonies, composed in the 1770's before Mozart's 20th birthday, are written in brown ink on thick cream paper. They represent almost a quarter of his works.

Amitabh

Charisma — that is the title of the four-cassette volume from MIL featuring the star-turned politician Amitabh Bachchan. The second in MIL's newly launched Quad Series, after 'Pankaj Udhas Live', 'Amitabh Charisma' features the star in four different moods and situations. The cassettes are appropriately titled 'Pyaar Ki Baten' (romance), 'Jazzbaat Ki Baaten' (emotion), 'Mazay Ki Baten' (comedy) and 'Action Ki Baten' (action).

The volume features 40 songs from 22 films and 36 dialogue pieces, the connecting factor, of course, being Amitabh's role in each. Songs include those by Amitabh himself, the late singer Mukesh, Kishore Kumar, Shabbir Kumar and Bappi. Among the films included here are 'Sholay', 'Deewar', 'Coolie', 'Kalia', 'Satte Pe Satta', 'Khoon Pasina' and others.

'Akashvani',

the fortnightly journal that had brought to the public information on All India Radio and, later, Doordarshan programmes for the past 57 years, is now closing down. The issue dated April 16-30 was its 'farewell issue'.

According to Information and Broadcasting Ministry sources, the English and the Hindi editions of *Akashvani* along with its sister publication *Awaz* in Urdu are closing down for economic reasons.

The Bengali edition *Betar Jagat* had ceased publication some time ago.



Margaret Thatcher

Margaret

Thatcher, British Prime Minister, says she would like to give pop star Cliff Richard a knighthood. "Cliff Richard has done wonders - it was he who really got pop going, really moving to the music," she said. And she joked that she would put in a good word for him when the honours are handed out.

The 62-year-old Prime Minister rocked pop fans with her musical knowledge in an interview in *Smash Hits* magazine.

She branded Percy Sledge's hit - 'When A Man Loves A Woman' - "marvellous. There's a theme to it and there's melody - it's lovely song."

She even gave her approval to her left-wing pop critic, Red Wedge. "I don't mind these pop groups who want to get me out of Number 10. Most young people rebel and then gradually they become more realistic," she said.

* * *

All

India Radio is organising a music competition from June 8 to 19 for persons who are not performing artistes of AIR.

The preliminary competition is open to persons in the age group of 16 and 24 years. A final competition will be held later at Delhi and Madras (Hindustani and Carnatic music respectively).

The competition will be in vocal, instrumental and group music.

* * *

O P Nayar,

veteran music director, makes a welcome comeback into the film industry, with the

music score for B R Patel Productions' maiden venture 'Subhaan Allah'. The lyrics are by Noor Devasi, sung by Mahendra Kapoor and Anuradha Paudwal.

The Muslim social, written and directed by Kanak Mishra for producer B R Patel and Rohan Kapoor in the lead roles.

* * *

The

Gramophone Company of India Limited (GRAMCO) has announced that the HMV Benevolent Trust has now been activated. A substantial sum is being donated personally by HMV chairman, R P Goenka and his wife to this Trust.

The aims and objects of this Trust are primarily to provide assistance to persons connected with music, that is, singers, song writers, music directors, musicians, etc. Those in need of financial assistance will be eligible to receive help from this Trust which will entertain applications from all over India.

The outside trustees are Raj Kapoor and M S Subbulakshmi while the company trustees consist of Sushila Goenka (director of HMV), Pradip Chanda (managing trustee), V K Dubey (trustee and secretary) and Sanjeev Kohli (trustee).

The Trust's activities commenced on April 7.

Two

years ago, Leningrad songwriter Boris Grebenshikov was an underground rock star. His performing trips to Moscow were limited to concerts for a few friends, under a pseudonym.

Things are changing now under Mikhail S Gorbachov's Kremlin. Authorities now are striving to show off the modern aspects of Soviet society, to probe the tastes of Soviet youth, and to loosen some of the ossified structures governing the arts.

Grebenshikov and his group, Aquarium, which first became popular through underground tapes, have now cut their first record with the state recording company, Melodiva. The state-run media now praises them as one of the nation's leading rock groups. Grebenshikov and Aquarium recently played eight nights at a Leningrad sports hall seating 6,500. They performed two short sets in Moscow during a cultural evening in the Manega, the nation's premier art gallery.

Their transition from an underground group, barely tolerated by Leningrad officials to one that is nationally praised, illustrates a new interest in coopting rock music - like jazz before it - into the structure of officially sanctioned culture.

Last May, for instance, authorities pro-

moted a rock benefit for victims of the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. With fans seated 70 yards metres from the stage, the occasion lacked the excitement of the West's 'Live Aid' concert for African

drought relief. But foreign reporters were allowed to get next to the trendily dressed performers, and came away with pictures that made Soviet rock look much like its western counterpart.



Interviewing teenagers in a Moscow studio, with a rock band as a backdrop.

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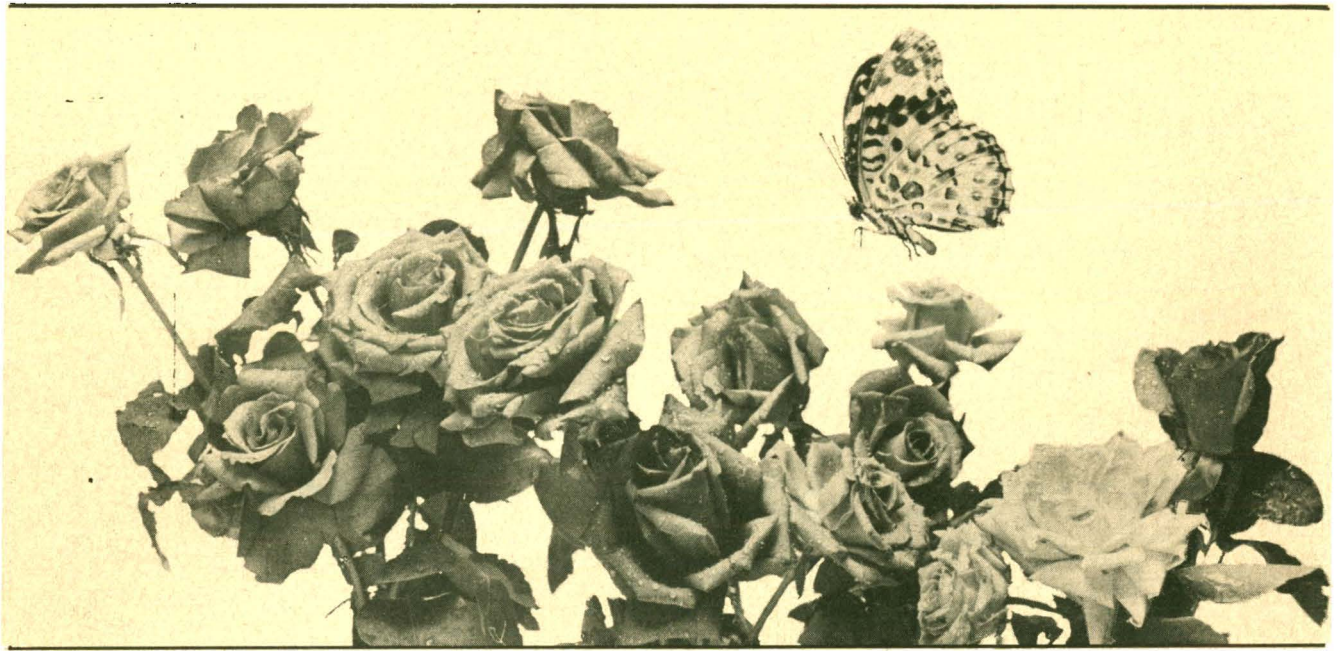
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Music by: Laxmikant Pyarelal

Romesh Films
Diljalaa
Music by: Bappi Lahiri

Dynamo International's
**Mardon
Wali Baat**
Music by: R.D. Burman

J.N. Entertainers present
**Soorma
Bhopali**
Music by: Dilip Sen, Sameer Sen.

Sunil Arts
Hiraasat
Music by: Kalyanji Anandji

V.I.P. Films
**Kalyug Aur
Ramayan**
Music by: Kalyanji Anandji

Ramayan Chitra Associates
Raahee
Music by: Jagjit Singh

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Allahabad: Friday - 9.45 p.m. **Patna:** Friday - 9.45 p.m. **Kanpur:** Friday - 9.45 p.m.

Lucknow: Wednesday - 9.30 p.m. **Ahmedabad:** Tuesday - 9.30 p.m. **Bhopal:** Friday - 9.45 p.m.

Jalpur: Thursday - 9.30 p.m. **Madras:** Friday - 9.30 p.m. **Trichy:** Friday - 9.30 p.m.

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Symbol/SCI/45/87

Bhupinder

and Mitalee released their latest ghazal album 'Shama Jalaye Rakhna' on April 22. HMV is promoting it in a big way, with a month-long tour scheduled for April-May all over India. In Bombay the couple held a concert on April 23.

The concert schedule takes the ghazal couple to Madras on April 26, going on to Jaipur (May 8), Delhi (May 9), Agra (May 10), Banaras (May 13), Kanpur (May 16), Lucknow (May 17) and finally again to Kanpur on May 21 and 22.

Dates for more concerts in Ahmedabad, Pune and Jodhpur are being finalised.

HMV is quite confident of excellent sales of this album. The company is bolstering the promotion campaign through radio, press, hoardings, posters, banners and special dealer display.

* * *

If a

Dutch company has its way, European drivers may soon reach for a compact disc instead of a map when they need travel details. Holland's Tele Atlas International is test-marketing a computerised route map of the Netherlands that can be displayed on a micro-computer built into a car.

The company uses a vehicle-mounted video camera to record landscapes and byways, from which it compiles data such as business names, street signs and power line locations. The system is based on Philips' on-board navigational system for cars, called CARIN. Combined with computer-generated maps, which Tele Atlas is developing with Philips, Tele Atlas compact discs will offer drivers up to 150,000 pages of street-by-street information, such as hotel accommodations, for about US\$ 40 per disc.

So far, one-third of Holland's highways and city streets have gone into the data base.

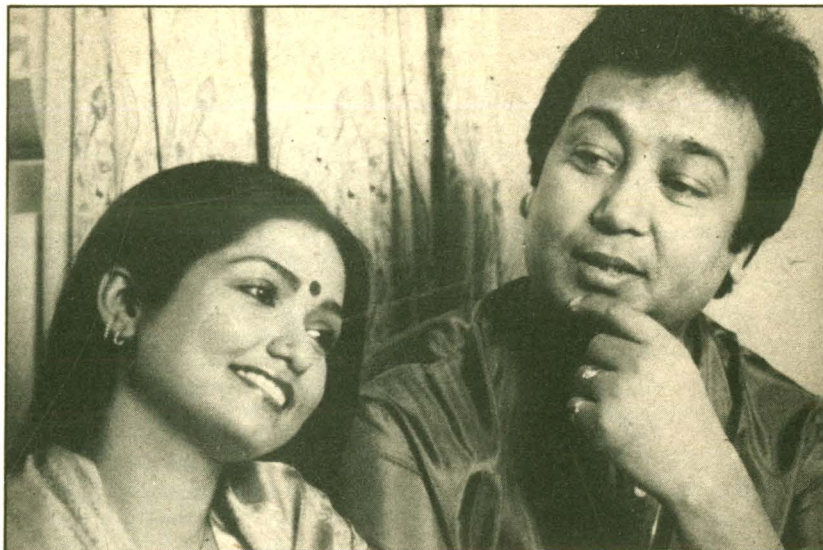
* * *

Audio

Electronics, a Madras-based tape manufacturing company recently came up with a proposal for a new media for daily news - audio cassettes.

According to V T V Sharma, chairman of Audio Electronics Pvt Ltd, the company had made a cost analysis and found it feasible to bring out a one-hour tape every day at a cost of about Rs 100 per month. The cost could be reduced further if an arrangement could be made for the collection of the housings.

The newscassette, says Sharma, would be of tremendous benefit to those people who cannot read, to the blind and to old people with failing eyesight.



Mitalee and Bhupinder

World

giants in the electronics components industry are reportedly disinterested in offering technical knowhow in high growth areas to Indian entrepreneurs, who have to remain satisfied with the second or, sometimes, even third rate technology, often from sub-licence suppliers of large Japanese, German and US principals.

In the fields of video cassettes and tape-deck mechanism, some of the Indian entrepreneurs who succeeded in bringing well-known foreign collaborators found, to their dismay, that the same foreign collaborators had offered to tie up with several other local competitors.

The government too is a net loser, at least in terms of foreign exchange, whether it allows OGL imports of components or domestic manufacture of quality electronics parts. In the end, it is the assembly business of imported components and parts that thrives at the cost of millions of dollars released by the Reserve Bank for imports.

In video cassettes, the demand for which has been estimated at 50 million pieces a year by 1990-91, even some of the first grade Indian entrepreneurs like Garware, Prakash Tubes, and United Breweries could tie up only with second rate collaborators from Hong Kong and Singapore. Big international names like 3M and JVC are not interested in negotiating with Indian parties for direct collaboration.

Industry sources say that a large Bombay company having West German associates wanted to enter the field of the fast growing video cassettes business and approached BASF of Germany for collaboration. The latter was agreeable only if it was allowed 51 per cent equity holding in the new project so that it could exercise

full control. The proposal was turned down by the government.

While the Department of Electronics (DoE) is keen on a fast rate of indigenisation in the components sector, the directorate general of technical development is concerned about the quality of knowhow. This could possibly explain why the government is withholding clearance of the licence applications to manufacture VCRs in the country and, perhaps, inadvertently encouraging smuggling!

* * *

The

All-India Convention of Creative Artistes was convened by the Indian Performing Rights Society (IPRS) and the Authors' Guild of India (AGI) at New Delhi on March 21 and 22.

Among the highlights of the convention was the unanimous resolution to set up an All-India Copyright Council primarily to strengthen copyright solidarity among all disciplines of artistes in India and also to keep the government acquainted with the difficulties faced by the creative community.

In another resolution the convention appealed to the Prime Minister to withdraw immediately the provision in the 1987-88 Budget proposals deducting 20 per cent of the royalty at source if it exceeds Rs 5,000 and 25 per cent if it exceeds Rs 10,000.

There was also unanimous agreement on the need to educate the entire creative community of India on their rights under the Copyright Law.

Certain recommendations were also made to update the existing Indian Copyright Act 1957 to make it reflect technological advances and to ensure effective protection for all categories of creative artistes. Specifically, the convention stat-

ed that the definition of the term 'artistic work' must be categorically altered and widened to include various forms of creative activity. The convention also gave the definitions of literary, artistic and scientific works as those given under the Tunis Model Law on copyright.

Brahma Kaicker, chief executive, IPRS and Rajendra Awasthy, Secretary-General, AGI, were joint convenors of the convention, which was inaugurated by Mrs Krishna Sahi, Union Minister of State for Education and Culture.

* * *

The

Gramophone Company of India (GRAMCO), which has gone through an extremely critical phase some time ago, is expected to show better results before long. If not, there is "something wrong in our thinking", reportedly says R P Goenka, chairman of the company.

There are already signs of recovery with the losses during the first six months of the current year (beginning October) being far less than during the same period last year. "The next few months have to show further improvements in the working of the company or there is, in fact, no justification for the management to continue with its present policies if losses continue," agrees Goenka.

The most crucial factor facing the hard-pressed company is the non-availability of resources. A financial package has been

worked out and negotiations with the financial institutions and the banks have reached the final stages. The institutions and the banks have, it seems, taken a positive attitude towards the company and will provide funds to boost production, towards modernisation, and to improve the turnover of the company.

Udayan Bose, vice chairman of the company, is presently finalising the rehabilitation programme of the company in consultation with the banks and the financial institutions and, once the green signal is given, the company will go ahead with the programme.

However, "Bose does not take any day-to-day interest in (the) Gramophone Company's affairs," admits Goenka. "It was appreciated that he would not be able to devote much time to the company."

In place, "we have now a full-time chief executive in Pradip Chanda," continues Goenka, "who is doing a good job."

"It is my firm belief that with a lot of imaginative thinking we will be able to help this ailing company turn the corner."

* * *

A unique

recording to be available soon on HMV is 'Shraddhanjali', 11 songs by Lata Mangeshkar. The songs were originally sung by four famous playback singers, all male: K L Saigal, Pankaj Mullick, Mukesh and Rafi, who have long since passed away.

Lata Mangeshkar has personally select-

ed the songs and has also given a commentary on each of the singers. HMV, which will release the cassette soon, is confident it will become a favourite not only with Lata fans but also fans of the four singers.

* * *

Janaki

Subramaniam kept the audience spell-bound recently with her melodious story of Rama from his birth to his coronation, through songs in Sanskrit, Hindi, Gujarati, Bhojpuri, Kannada and Telugu. She gave this unique performance at Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan in Madras on Ram Navami Day (April 7) in a programme 'Ramanjali'.

Janaki sung the compositions of sages and saints including Valmiki, Kamban, Tulsidas, Meera Bai, Kabir, Nanak, Surdas and the Trinity of Carnatic Music.

A cassette of Sri Ram Bhujang Stotram of Adi Shankara Hanuman Chalisa, sung by Janaki, was also released on the occasion.

* * *

Timir

Baran, famous sarod maestro and a close associate of Rabindranath Tagore, died of heart attack at a Calcutta hospital on March 29. He was 83. He is survived by his wife and a son.

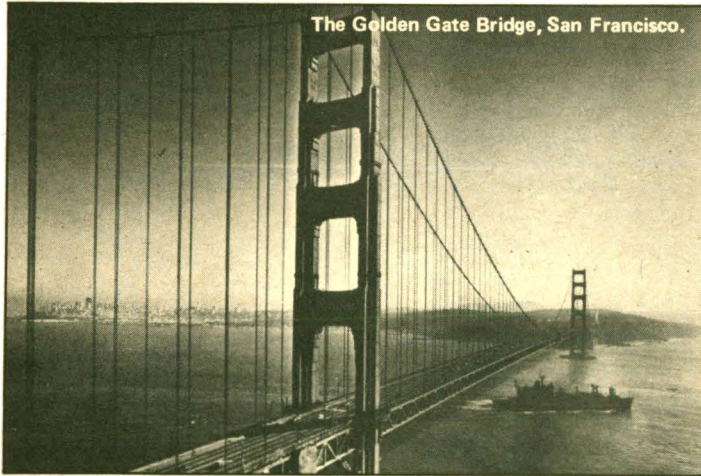
Timir Baran had received his early training in music from such stalwarts as Ustad Amir Khan and Ustad Allauddin Khan. A pioneer of the modern orchestra, Timir Baran accompanied the Uday Shankar ballet troupe as music director in a number of trips abroad. He had also scored music for a few Bengali films like 'Vijaya' and 'Adhikar'.

* * *

Joseph

d'Lima, music maestro Zubin Mehta's first piano teacher, died in Bombay recently at the age of 80. Mr d'Lima was the conductor of Bombay Symphony Orchestra for several years since 1949 when he took over from Jules Craen, a French national. He was honoured last year by the Trinity School of Music in London for dedicating more than 25 years to music teaching.

* * *



The Golden Gate Bridge, San Francisco.

The

Golden Gate Bridge at San Francisco, USA, may well be the world's largest musical instrument.

To mark the 50th anniversary of the bridge computer musicians decided to play the 2,824 metre bridge like a harp. "It appeals to our sense of wonder," said Doug Mckechnie, who used the span's support cables to make music. "It is

a little silly, but it is also very scientific. We are bridging the gap between music and technology."

Mckechnie and three other members of the San Francisco Synthesizer ensemble hit the cables with wooden mallets and recorded what they heard. Using computers and synthesisers, they merged the sound with foghorns, Pacific Ocean surf and the cries of gulls. The result was a 16 minute symphony in four parts.

Please Note

Due to space constraints, the Musiccrossword could not be included in this issue. It will be carried in the June issue, along with the solutions to both the March and April Musiccrosswords.

Musical Round-Up

Playback And Fast Forward keeps a track of the Artistes, Recordings and Releases in the world of music.

Audio Electronics

■ This tape manufacturing company which set up operations in Madras recently released its first pre-recorded cassette 'Sivasankari Sollum Sirukadhagal' early April.

The unique feature of this cassette, said chairman V T V Sharma on the occasion, is that this is the first time short stories are being brought out on a cassette and that too narrated by the authoress herself – popular Tamil writer Ms Sivasankari in this case.

AVM Audio

■ Following the success of their classical compilation brought out for the Music Academy Festival in December, AVM Audio has decided to extend the concept to tinsel hits as well. The first release under this 'Movie Melodies' series is an attractively packaged double album of K J Jesudoss. The release features the bearded playback singer at his best in Tamil hits from movies ranging from 'Uyarntha Ullam', 'Pudumai Penn' and 'Unnidathil Naan' to 'Odangal', 'Nallavanukku Nallavan' and 'Rasikan Oru Rasikal'.

■ Several duets are on the cards with S Janaki, Chitra, Vani Jairam and Uma Ramanan.

■ According to AVM Audio executive Vijayshanker, the company has already lined up packages of Vairamuthu and S P Balasubramaniam as follow-up releases.

■ The company, determined not to allow Sri Rama Navami slip past their noses this year too without a release, has signed on Madurai T N Seshagopal for a double album now being mixed down at its studio.

CBS

■ Following up the unexpected success of 'Ragageethi', CBS has just signed up

two Malayalam films featuring the 'Ragageethi' star, Ashalatha. Recording for both films – yet to be titled – has been completed at Kerala. The first has A S Francis' lyrics tuned over three tracks by Mohan Sitara. Ashalatha does two solos, one pucca classical and a Hindu devotional in praise of Lord Krishna, while the third track is rendered by upcoming young playback singer G Venugopal. The second film features the 'Ragageethi' pair Ashalatha and Unni Menon together again for two duets composed by Berny and Ignatius with lyrics by A S Francis. The third track is a solo by Asha.

■ On the Malayalam front again, this time from Madras, CBS has procured movie mogul K Balajee's prestigious next release for their label.

■ CBS has, for the first time ever, got three brothers together on one cassette. Pankaj, Nirmal and Manhar Udhas sing together in 'The Best of Udhas', a compilation album featuring 11 ghazals.

■ Another compilation from CBS is also on the way – this time all hits ghazals by Mehdi Hassan, Aslam Khan, A Hariharan, Ghulam Ali, among others.

■ Nirmal Udhas features on another CBS cassette. This time solo in a ghazal album 'Fankaar', with eight tracks.

■ Two other cassettes to be released soon are Shankar Dasgupta's 'Daaman-e-ghazal' and the music of the film 'Wali-e-Azam'.

HMV

■ Talat Aziz is back in the studio, recording a double cassette of ghazals, 'Tasavvur', scheduled for release in June. The album features Talat's own compositions – eight fully orchestrated ghazals on the first cassette and six

accompanied only by a sarangi, harmonium and tabla (the latter by Tari of Pakistan) on the cassette. Lyrics are by Bashir Bedi, Ibrahim Ashk, Saiad Sahid and various modern poets.

■ Alisha Chinai's pop album 'Aah Alisha' released last February has gone gold. And Alisha has renewed her contract with HMV.

■ But Jagjit-Chitra have done even better – their ghazal album 'Echoes' which went gold in February within two weeks of its releases, has reached platinum. The duo is now off on an extensive concert tour of USA.

■ Apart from Alisha, Talat Aziz, Ahmed and Mohammed Hussain, Shekhar Sen and Chhaya Ganguli have all renewed their contracts with HMV.

■ Encouraged by the "consumer excitement and position action across the counter" to volumes I, II and III of "Gaaner Surer Dhara", HMV plans to market in May all four volumes in a gift set of eight cassettes. The Tagore songs will be marketed in the 'Superior' category.

■ Recordings of Ghulam Ali, Malika Pukhraj, Iqbal Bano, Noor Jehan and other top Pakistani artistes will be available shortly in India on HMV. The company is all set to release in India recordings by these artistes originally made in Pakistan by EMI Pakistan.

■ Another HMV gold-winner is Rajendra Kumar's 'Naam', the music of which has sold over five lakh units. To celebrate, HMV held a function recently in Bombay where Mrs S Goenka, director, HMV, gave gold discs to the unit of 'Naam'.

■ Master Dinanath Mangeskar's stage songs, earlier available on LP, were

released in cassette form at a concert by Lata Mangeshkar in Pune. Baburao Pendharkar's LP 'Natya Sangeet' was also released recently in cassette form.

Many Punjabi albums are on the way, with artistes Amar Singh Chamkila, Hardeep Singh, Jaspinder Narula, K Deep, Sital Singh Sital, Narinder Biba, Charanjit Chann and others recording Punjabi songs at HMV's Delhi studio. HMV will also release the songs of the Haryanvi film 'Chori Sapela Ki' soon.

■ On the Hindi film front, HMV has finally released the music of 'Awam' and 'Rukhsat.' 'Awam' has six songs composed by Ravi and Hasan Kamaal, sung by Mahendra Kapoor and Asha Bhosle, while the six songs of 'Rukhsat' have been composed by Kalyanji-Anandji. Other film soundtracks slated for release soon include 'Insaaf Ka Khoon', 'Naya Johnny', 'Dushman Dost.'

■ Nandu Bhende, who had last released a disco instrumental album 'Disco Zamana' last year, is back with another - 'Sensations', just released in the market.

■ The popularity of Gary Lawyer's number in HMV's compilation 'Country Superstar' has prompted the company to bring out his solo album and the recording is on. The rock album will feature 10 tracks, including four ballads. The composition is entirely by Gary himself.

■ HMV is also busy on the Bengali music front, with some 10 cassettes to be released on the occasion of Tagore's birth anniversary on May 9. Six of these are re-releases of songs by veteran Tagore artistes Hemanta Mukherjee, Suchitra Mitra, Kanika Banerjee, Chinmoy Chatterjee and Sagar Sen. Also to be released are new recordings by Sandhya Mukherjee, Ashoketaru Banerjee and Purba Dam and Arundhati Holme Choudhury and a cassette of 14 songs titled 'Bhorer Alor Kanakani' based on morning ragas, sung by Rita Ghosh and Srinanda Mukherjee and debutantes Ashish Kumar Bhattacharjee and Abhirup Guhathakurta.

MIL

■ Vajahat Hussain's second ghazal album 'Mahak' is due for release soon,

on cassette and on disc. He had made his debut earlier with the ghazal album 'Aashna', again on MIL.

■ Pankaj Udhas, whose live recordings were released in the first of MIL's newly launched Quad series recently, has followed it up with a cassette of ghazals 'Be-Pardaah'.

■ MIL has joined in the combination trend too, with the release of the music of the film 'Galion Ka Badshah' combined with each of the films 'Itihaas' and 'Hum To Chale Pardes'. The latter also figures in another combination, with 'Itihaas'. Other combinations include 'Sadak Chhap/Saaheb', 'Sadak Chhap and other Hits of Bappi Lahiri' and Bhojpuri films 'Mayee Ka Anchara/Hamari Dulhaniya'.

■ MIL is adding to its MIL repertoire, this time with four devotionals by Narendra Chanchal - 'Jagrata', 'Tara Rani Di Katha', 'Rang de O Ma' and 'Hum Taran Da Veja'. Incidentally, Chanchal has quite a number of releases - mostly devotional - to his credit on the T Series label too.

■ A compilation of Salma Agha's ghazals will be available soon on MIL, titled 'The Best of Salma Agha'. This follows hot on the heels of her recent CBS release 'Ek Baar Milo Humse'.

■ Another 'Aafreen' from MIL is due soon. This time it is Aparna Mayekar, not Pankaj Udhas. In fact, Aparna sings all the original 'Aafreen' ghazals in this cassette. This is not the first time Pankaj's ghazals are being sung in a female voice. But MIL expects this release to do well, much better than cover versions, since Aparna's voice is dubbed in the original recording.

■ After its successful venture into Nazrul Geeti with three cassettes featuring Anup Jalota, the company has now released another cassette of Nazrul Geeti, this time by Sudhir Sarkar, titled 'Shivli Tolai Bhorbelai Kusum Kudai Pollibala'. This is the first time that Sudhir, erstwhile EMI and Venus artiste, has sung Nazrul songs. A highlight of this cassette, which is expected to be highly popular, is the direction by Kalyani Kazi, wife of Aniruddho Kazi, the younger son of the poet Kazi Nazrul Islam himself.

Venus

■ The music of three films 'Thikaana', 'Insaaf' and 'Parivaar' was released last month by Venus at separate release functions in Bombay.

■ The company continues its two-in-one combination blitz, this time with the songs of the films 'Shahenshah', 'Kamagni', 'Kaash', 'Thikana' and 'Insaaf'. 'Shahenshah' features in 16 combinations - the largest number in the new batch. Each of the new films is also available as a single cassette.

■ Venus has also come out with combination cassettes in Marathi, combining the film 'Prem Karuia Khullam Khulla' with each of 'Gadbad Ghotala', 'Kattay Panvalat Nahin' and 'Aai Tulja Bhawani'.

■ Suresh Wadkar and Anuradha Paudwal's Marathi ghazals are out on Venus, in a cassette titled 'Bedund Gani'. Another Marathi release is Sulochana Chavan's lavis in 'Chavlich Mann Kay'.

■ On the devotional front, Venus released Hindi budh geet in a cassette titled 'Bhim Gaurav'.

■ The label has added two more Minoo Chaddha albums - 'Chitti Mai De' and 'Aardas' to its Punjabi repertoire.

■ A recent Hindi disco pop release is Venus' 'Dance With Me', sung by Sheela, Neela and Charles, with music by the latter.

■ Prahlad Shinde, popular artiste of Maharashtra has signed an exclusive three years' contract with Venus.

■ Also signed up recently are Anand and Milind Shinde.

Jayanti and Honey, who play guitar and mandolin respectively, are to release their next instrumental this year on Venus.

T Series

■ Super Cassettes has released several film soundtracks - 'Sansar', which has

music by Laxmikant-Pyarelal and lyrics by Anand Bakshi, 'Dance Dance' with Bappi Lahiri's music and Anjaan's lyrics, 'Mera Yaar Mera Dushman', with music by Bappi Lahiri, and lyrics by Gulshan Bawraa, 'Gunghat' (music and lyrics by Laxman Shahabadi); music and dialogues of 'Pyar Karke Dekho' (music Bappi Lahiri, lyrics Indivar) in a two-cassette volume and 'Dilruba Tangewali' (music Anwar Usman, lyrics Khalid and Jalal Jhansvi) and 'Dharti Ki Kasam' (music Usha Khanna, lyrics Indivar).

- The music of 'Kalyug Aur Ramayan' has been re-released, this time with three new songs.
- The second volumes of hits of Lata Mangeshkar and Asha Bhosle are also out.
- The first in the Super Hits 1987 series has been released, featuring 10 tracks, with one song each from new films: 'Majaa', 'Hawalaat', 'Hiraasat', 'Sindoor', 'Mardon Wali Baat', 'Ghar Ka Sukh', 'Ghar Aur Bazaar', 'Sansar', 'Diljalaa' and 'Aulad'.

■ The sixth volume in the Bhoole Bisre Yaaden Series is also available now. The cassette features versions of hit songs sung by Vipin Sachdeva.

■ Shabbir Kumar features in yet another recent T Series release - Volume 2 of 'Duets of Shabbir', which has duets from recent films.

■ T Series has also come up with a volume of love duets, played on shehnai with flute, by Rajendra Prasanna. The 13 tracks are from as many films, including 'Anjaana', 'Saathi', 'Milan' and others.

■ T Series has also come up with several devotional release: 'Kabir Bhajan Mala' has singers Asha Batalvi and Vijay Batalvi, while the other two are by Narendra Chanchal - 'Tara Rani Katha' and the three-cassette volume 'Shri Durga Stuti'.

■ T Series has also added to its Marathi repertoire, with the release of the discs for the film 'Gammat Jammat', at a function held recently in Bombay.

■ At the same function gold discs were presented to produce Satish Kulkarni, director-actor Sachin and lyricist Shantaram Nandgaonkar, for the film 'Navri Mile Navryala'.

■ In its Marathi basic repertoire, T Series has come out with two cassettes of folk songs - 'Karuya Doghaat Rock 'n' Roll', sung by Vitthal Umap, Uttara Kelkar and Shaila Chikle, and 'Dhamaal Vinodi Lokgeeti', presented by Hemant Musical Night and sung by Vinod Kumar.

■ Two Tamil releases are also out - the film 'Kungumakkodu' with music and lyrics by S A Rajkumar, featuring singers S P Balasubrahmanyam, Chitra, Vidya and Sujatha; and a devotional album 'Mahalakshmi Avatharanga', with music by Surunbiyan and lyrics by Tamilnambi.

■ More film combinations are also out on T Series: 'Main Balwaan/Maa Ki Saugandh', 'Hukumat/Sansar' and 'Hum Farishte Nahin/Mera Yaar Mera Dushman'.

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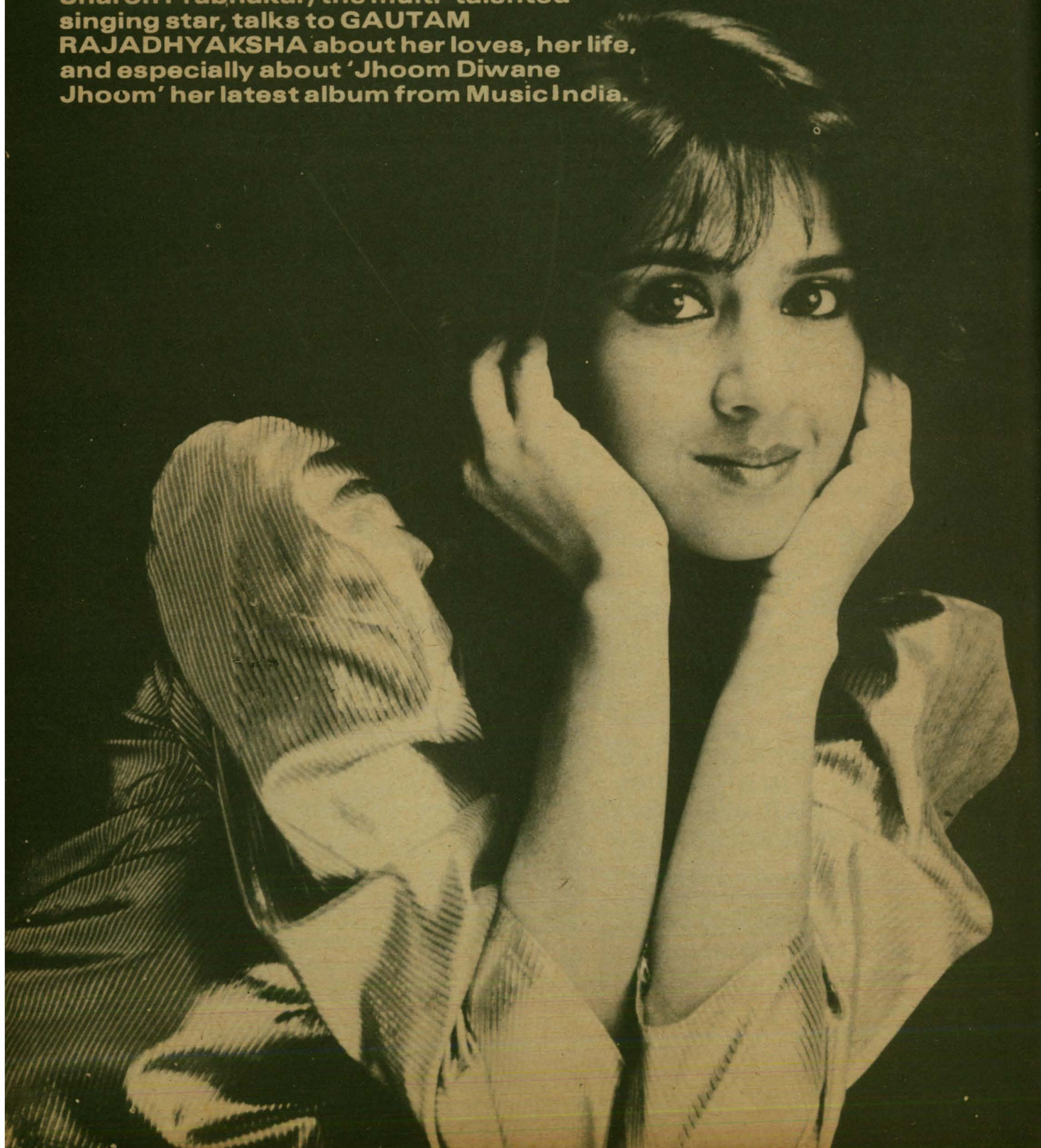


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SHABASH SHARON

Sharon Prabhakar, the multi-talented singing star, talks to GAUTAM RAJADHYAKSHA about her loves, her life, and especially about 'Jhoom Diwane Jhoom' her latest album from Music India.



Restless, energetic and imaginative. Sharon Prabhakar's enthusiasm has taken her to the world of pop music, the stage and even the screen. She has solo discs coming out annually with clockwork regularity. And, recently, her energies found direction in the production of a trend setting album: 'Jhoom Diwane Jhoom'.

In the world of music, even in today's fast paced age of cultural osmosis and fusion, we in India haven't had too many new schools or styles. Despite the influence of certain western rhythms that have seeped into our musical fabric over the years, the most important alloy blending the West and East was in the disco era. The pulsating beat spread world-wide in the late '70s, to create the first genuine international craze that overcame barriers of language and strong national musical

tastes. The successful Indianisation of disco was restricted to the setting of Hindi lyrics to predominantly western tunes. Musically, at any rate, we added nothing to style which we absorbed so easily.

'Jhoom Diwane Jhoom' changes all that. In this album, Sharon and Sharang have combined forces to create a new sound and new music in an attempt to bring about a genuine blend of East and West through an original concept: Indian folk tunes orchestrated and embellished by Western instrumentation.

"I was very keen to do something different," says Sharon. "The kind of disco music we are familiar with had reached a point of stagnation. But there is a large audience attuned to light pop 'danceable' music, and we have a wealth of melodies and styles that can be adapted. So this is Indian pop alright, but a new sound, new music."

And the 'new sound' shows yet another aspect of Sharon's versatility, which she has already displayed in other spheres. Under the bright spotlight, sequins sparkling and white feather boa glowing like a luminescent garland, Sharon looks every inch the legendary Evita. Then with two ponytails sticking out on either side of her head, she is the free-living, free-loving flower child in the Hindi play 'Titali'. She has crooned in that dimly lit restaurant closer to the starpierced sky than the street lights of Marine Drive below Oberoi Towers. She has toured from London to Nairobi to Gauhati singing her amazing repertoire of songs.

Sharon Prabhakar is, in a word, versatile and ambitious, indefatigable and optimistic.

Her on-screen and on-stage versatility is matched by the kaleidoscope of interests and activities that, some years ago, led to a great self-discovery – that she had a singing voice. An instrument she has harnessed sensibly and shrewdly to gain recognition and fame.

When the English stage in Bombay was bitten by the musical extravaganza bug, pioneered by Pearl Padamsee's 'Godspell' and Alyque Padamsee's 'Jesus Christ Superstar', Sharon had show-stopping numbers in both of them. That was well before she left on her jaunt to London, where she designed silver jewellery. Back in Bombay a year later, she took to singing rather cautiously. One ad jingle led to another. The next thing that came up was her contract with the Oberoi Hotels chain.

"Being untrained I slogged for four months frightened as hell. My only reference for such shows were the West End glamorous, well-rehearsed affairs. I didn't realise that I was launching myself as a singer." But she did – a 'night club singer' as some green and dismissive critics have called her. Sharon smiles indulgently. "I am sick of being called 'night club crooner'. I wasn't a crooner but a performer. Their ignorance is irritating – but then in show business one learns to put up with biased brickbats, because the bouquets are yummy," she giggles.

She can afford to – it was roses from then on. A lot of things happened around 1981. She sang for Sathya in 'Kahan Kahan Se Guzar Gaye.' Simultaneously, she released two records – a collection of nursery rhymes for children and 'This is Sharon'. Then Vijay Singh asked her to sing for his film 'Partner'.

Though Sathya's film is yet to be released, it's rushes got Sharon warm accolades from two discerning film personalities: Javed and Shabana, who had rather hesitantly encouraged Sathya to sign this anglicized Indian, were ecstatic about her intense yet effortless performance. They were also surprised at the ease with which Sharon coped with the language.



"This surprises me, too. I mean, I am a Delhi-bred girl. How could I *not* be fluent and easy in Hindi? I agree the first notices received were for my shows and the western numbers I sang, yet my base is Hindi," she stressed. How fluent she is is easy to hear – in the many songs she has sung for as many as 50 films in a short span. "The Lions' Award for my 'Armaan' song opened the doors," Sharon said.

DRAMATIC TURN

The most dramatic professional and personal turn in Sharon's life coincided with Alyque Padamsee entering her life. Before that, despite the fact that her career was taking a concrete shape, her personal life included a marriage that didn't work out.

"I married for all the reasons that a young girl gets married for. It was a combination of what nice girls are expected to do and, also, with this guy the stars shone brighter. And like all things that are not planned properly, it reached its culmination point," explained Sharon. "I grew up and out of it, like out of a set of clothes that didn't fit anymore. It's a perfect 'period' piece frozen in time."

If Sharon's way with words has a quotable quality, her picturesque speech and

world. Her stage effects, the choreographed movements, the synchronised slide show are a tour de force. Encouraged by the applause, Sharon, the ambitious, ventured further. "I love a challenge," she states. "I love living life in the fast lane. When everything begins to go comfortably, I change my lane. Look at my life. It's like a road map gone wrong." Not really. Sharon has 'moved with the tide musically', hopping from discs to geets and ghazals. "Light classical too," Sharon adds. "I do my regular riyaz with Satyanarayan Sharma. I want to sing everything and my range is expanding all the time."

Over confidence? Over reaching? "I've spent too many years being insecure. I will not be insecure again. I will not let anyone do that to me either."

So, like the Scarlett O'Hara who'll never be hungry again, Sharon switched lanes once again. Last year she did a couple of TV serials, still awaiting the green signal. One was Vivek Vaswani's 'Nayi Dishayen' where she plays a drug addict's girl-friend.

"But 'Bahu Beti' directed by Imtiaz Khan was the most exciting. It's a serial about a contemporary girl who, while retaining traditional values, strives to better her lot.

And then there are several film offers coming. I'm waiting for the right ones. For I

songs of a children's film at the age of 15. His lineage is equally impressive. Grandson of the veteran movie mogul V Shantaram and son of the famous classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj.

For the 'new sound', Sharang Dev, whose inborn musicality and heritage of classical forms is supplemented with contemporary recording techniques, has mingled the essence of tradition with modern sounds. "The use of western and electronic instrumentation gives Indian rhythms and melodies a universal appeal." Employing a 16 track recording system, he has used synthesizers, electric guitars, percussion and a mixed motley of instruments like the flute, tambourin, tabla and mridang and a chorus of male voices.

The opening song 'Aaja mere raja' is based on a Bhojpuri folk tune set to a Calypso-type rhythm. The Bhangda beat throbs through 'Jaana mere jaana'. A swaying Goan melody 'Tera mera balam' and a qawali clone 'Yeh mohabbat ka diyaa' are some examples of its versatile spectrum. There is an Arabic 'Khuda hi hai mohabbat' set to a foot-tapping beat. Contrasting with the fast and electric quality of the numbers, there is a slow persuasively languorous 'Bangliya' recalling the cyclic rhythm of the river-rafters of Bengal.



'I love living in the fast lane.'

personality obviously comes from her husband and India's Master of Advertising. "Ever since I came to Bombay, Alyque's been a constant factor of encouragement. Over this long period of time, his counselling turned to something I could trust. But the coincidence that both of us were in an emotional void was, I think, a godsend." "The two-decade gap in their ages doesn't trouble her. "I am very mature and he is an over-energetic, over-enthusiastic workaholic. I respect and love Alyque because he lets me be what I am. He lets me grow."

His mastery over showmanship has certainly given Sharon's musical nights a razzmatazz and polish unknown to this

know I'll be good."

And 'Jhoom Diwane Jhoom' happened while she was waiting for the right films. Sharon sings eight numbers in this album which has an assortment of melodies derived from folk styles around the country.

As composer Sharang Dev says, "Folk tunes are so much a part of our latent psyche, so deeply embedded in our genetic chemistry, that though one may not have heard them at all, there is something instinctively easy to identify with and have an instant appeal." Twenty-four-year-old Sharang has the credit of being the world's youngest film composer – he scored the background music and the

Sharon's protean voice changes colour and mood to suit the varying styles of the songs. There is a light flirtatious air about 'Mere nazdeek na ao' and 'Aaja mere raaja', a soft melodious tone, reminiscent of Geeta Dutt, for 'Tera mera balam', the strength and power of a ballad singer for 'Khuda hi hai mohabbat'. In short 'Jhoom Diwane Jhoom' represents a range versatile enough for Sharon to flex her vocal talent. The eight numbers are bound to please admirers of Sharon. And they are equally sure to get her a large host of new listeners. Besides, the amalgam of Indian folk and western sound may well set a new trend in Indian music.

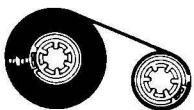


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THE SOUND OF MUSIC...

... will soon get muffled. Thanks to piracy which is rampant throughout the country. ANIL SUD, while tracing the origins of piracy, details the role of the Indian Phonographic Society (IPS) and how this premier body of music companies can play a vital role in checking this transgression.

Piracy, a high sea adventure word, means in music, the unauthorised duplication of sound recordings which enjoy copyright protection in most parts of the world and are given the elevated status of 'intellectual property'. The threat to legitimate recordings – almost all of it in the form of cassettes – comes not only from piracy but also from – Counterfeiting, which is also an unauthorised duplication of a sound recording but **packaged** to look like the original, including the use of original trademarks.

- Bootlegging, a cassette carrying an unauthorised recording of a live, broadcast or telecast performance.
- Home or custom taping, which has caused significant erosions in sales in recent years.

Though worldwide the menace manifests itself in piracy, counterfeiting is the logical refuge in countries where anti-piracy measures are most effective and successful. The Indian music industry has been shaken to its very foundations by the onslaught of piracy, and even if it survives, one doubts if it will have any strength or resources left to take on counterfeiting and home/dealer taping. And then it will have a head-on collision with video films,

computer games, sports and other leisure activities, a logical fallout of our growing affluence.

EXTENT OF PIRACY

The enormity and extent of the problem worldwide is clear from the following table.

In India, piracy is of very recent origin (1980) but has made faster inroads in the market. It is difficult to know the statistics for any legitimate industry; it is harder to estimate pirate sales. The Indian Phonographic Industry (IPI), the official body of the industry, would have one believe that the total sales of music have burgeoned to between Rs 250 and 300 crore in 1986, out of which the legitimate industry slice is 10 per cent while the pirates have commandeered a 90 per cent share. There is a

fallacy here which can be best understood and refuted by a brief, historical flashback first.

HISTORICAL FLASHBACK

The history of the industry in India is synonymous with the history of the Gramophone Company of India (GRAMCO) till the late '70s at least. Started in 1901, only three years after the first company (its parent, EMI) was started in UK, GRAMCO had a chequered and romantic career for seven decades. But these seven decades were sedate, to put it mildly, in terms of business figures, the sales reaching about Rs 5 crore by 1972, not very impressive by any standards.

With the emergence of competition (Polydor, now Music India, Inreco and

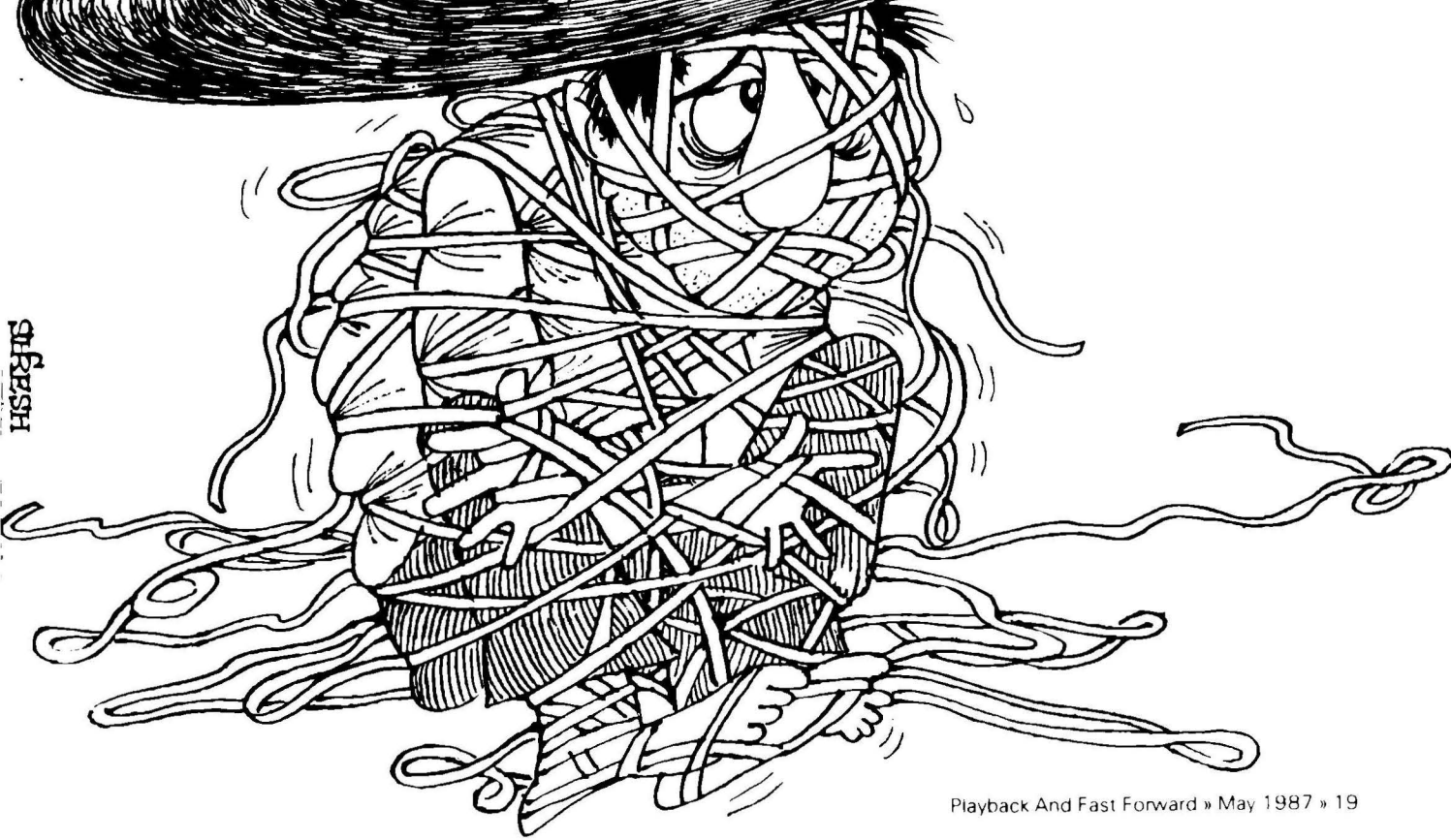
EXTENT OF PIRACY

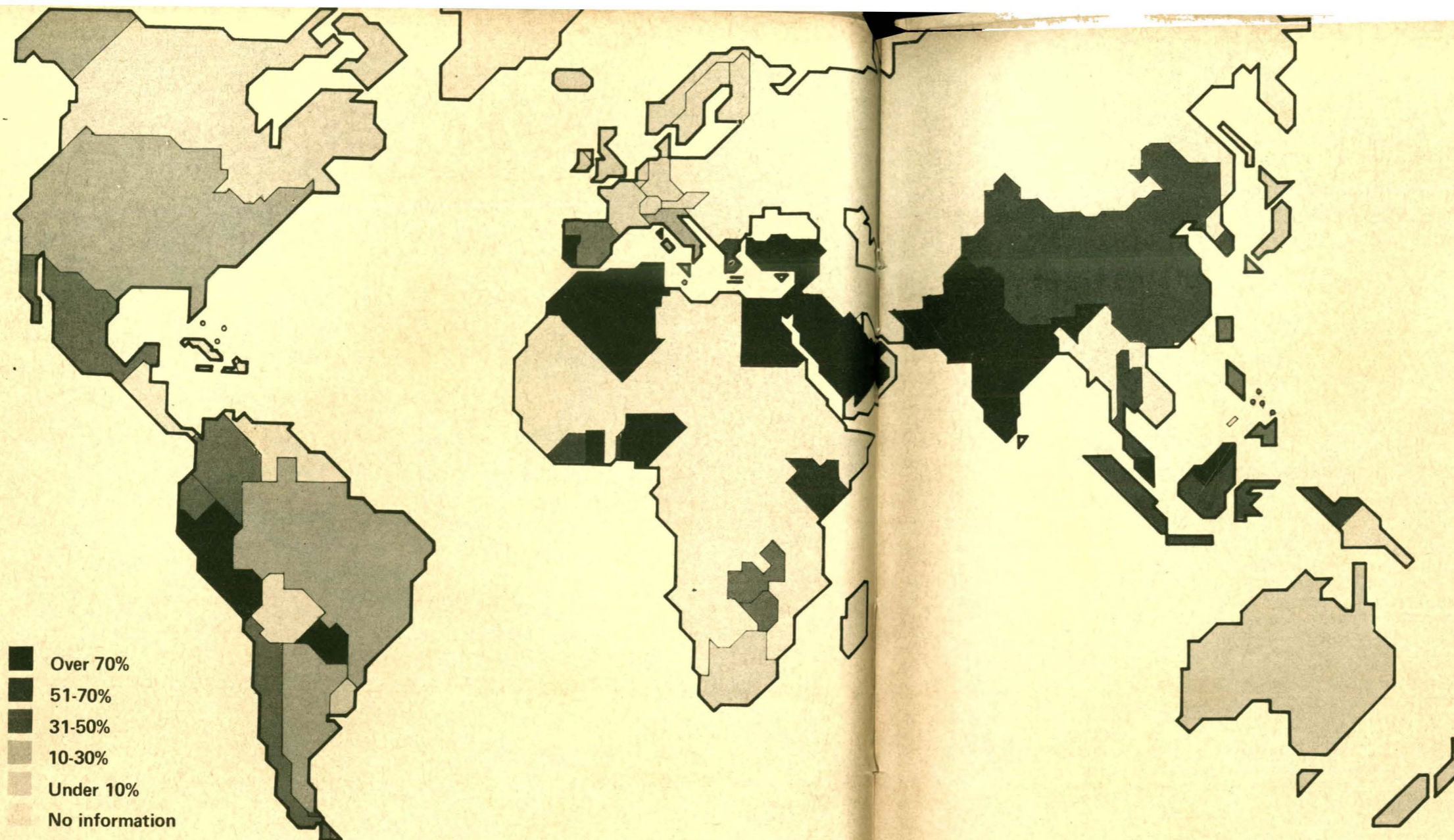
Region	Value (in crores of Rupees)	Total (in crores of units)	% to total business
North America	416	6	10-30%
Western Europe	169	4	Under 10%
Mediterranean, Middle East, Africa	403	16	51-71%
Asia, Australasia	455	25	60-90%
Latin America	117	3	31-50%
TOTAL	1560	54	

(SASTA... SASTA...!
RUPAYE MEIN
DO !!)



SHREESH





Tape piracy in the world: The map shows the size of the market for pirate, counterfeit and bootleg tapes calculated as a percent-

age of the total market for pre-recorded tapes in each country. CBS) and aggressive marketing of music, the industry entered its golden era (1972 - 1980), from a placid 'play' to a heady 'fast forward' position, reaching sales of Rs 25 - 30 crore by the late '70s. It continued in high gear till the approach of the '80s. A small wind which had already struck up in the mid-'70s gathered itself into a storm and the thunderbolt of piracy hit the industry by 1980-81, aided by an explosive growth in cassette recorders and an apathetic government. What brought the industry down was not just GRAMCO's problems with EMI, not the subject for elaboration here, but the monster of piracy, which struck a deadly blow just when the music companies were learning the art of tapping the vast potential of musicassettes. The industry reeled and staggered when the government slapped on a 26.25 per cent excise duty on cassettes in 1981 (reduced in 1982 and abolished in 1983) by which time the

industry's death knell had been sounded. The industry had to yield its happy hunting ground to the marauding pirates. **When the HMV giant tottered the other companies fell like dominoes.** The industry had just begun to taste and enjoy the wine of success but it was given no time for even a hangover. The champagne decade of the '70s did not last; the sparkle vanished. Prosperity was a thing of the remote past; survival was now the main concern of the industry's disc companies. The sea change in the music business brought the pirates and the **cassette companies to the forefront, way ahead of the disc companies.**

This brings us back to the present market profile and the fallacy of IPI's statistical representation that the pirates have cornered 90 per cent of the Rs 250 crore market. This may have been so from 1980 to 1983 but today the truer picture is that the pirates have sliced off probably

60 per cent of the cake (Rs 150 crore), the 'cassette' companies 30 per cent (Rs 75 crore) and the disc companies' (IPI members) have no more than a meagre 10 per cent slice (Rs 25 crore). The IPI view reveals its members' ebbing morale, despondency and a fatalistic rationalisation of its helplessness but it conceals the reasons for its poor market share. How have the pirates reached such dizzy heights how the 'cassette' companies surged ahead and captured 30 per cent of the total market and 75 per cent of the total 'legitimate' market, leaving the disc companies a poor third?

HOW AND WHY

The problem of piracy is universal, ubiquitous and a global epidemic. Any consumer industry which reaches the high profile summit and is highly visible, invariably and inexorably attracts the pirate. Levi and Jordache

age of the total market for pre-recorded tapes in each country.

jeans, Swiss and Seiko watches, Chanel, Dior and Aramis, Armani, Adidas, Johnny Walker and Gucci, Barbara Cartland and Sidney Sheldon - piracy in these products is estimated at US \$ 40 - 50 billion, 2-3 per cent of world trade!

But the piracy of music is unique in several ways:

- there is very little comprehension of the intricacies of copyright laws, of the remunerable rights of the creative participants - the singers, composers, lyric/song writers, record producers. Government agencies do not understand sufficiently why sound recordings should be protected and rewarded, nor do the law dispensers, the enforcers, the customers. Even record company executives by and large do not know the various 'infringements' and their implications. The law is not sufficiently comprehensive or punitive to be a deterrent.

the enforcement is very weak with no single police agency being responsible in different states of the country, the ease and economy of cassette duplication makes it a cottage and a backstreet industry,

- the anonymity of cassette duplication, the cassettes bearing no name and address of the duplicator, enables the pirate to avoid detection,
- the pirate has a great economic advantage: no expenditure on creation (he is a parasite), art works, royalties, taxes or even advertising!
- Indian music sales are dominated by film music, mostly in mono mode recording. The capacity of a legitimate recording company, to encash on a 'quality and price premium' edge over pirates is, therefore, severely limited to merely using a better transfer equipment and quality of tape. The harsh reality is that the high over-

head-and-expense-ridden companies have tended to cut corners and drop quality, thus narrowing the gap vis-a-vis pirated product. Often, the latter is in fact superior to legitimate product.

WHO CAN HELP?

Is there a tiny light at the end of the long tunnel? If there is, who is going to be the torch bearer? The customer? No. He wants the right price, the right quality and timely availability of his selections. The trade? Not really. Its interest lies in making maximum profits from all companies, from pirate product and even from running custom taping services. The creative fraternity of artistes, film producers, etc? Even very limited help is difficult to mobilise. Who are we left with, then? One, the government and its legislative and enforcement agencies and two, the entire legitimate music industry (not just IPI members) which is hurt the most by piracy.

The pirate has performed one and only one useful function. He has opened up the market and shown us how huge the cassette market is and how it can be tapped. Low pricing, reasonable quality, timely availability, countrywide distribution and penetration, marketing techniques, all of which should have come naturally to the IPI colossi with their advantages of an early start, transnational links, brand image, quality edge, and an enormous back catalogue. If there had been no piracy, the IPI club would never have estimated sales at Rs 250 crore. One can safely conjecture their preoccupation with their high prices, inadequate exploitation and poor servicing of catalogue, and dependence on a few, safe, established artistes and on film music.

Nevertheless, the music industry, and not IPI members only, must be protected from piracy for the following reasons.

1. Piracy is an anti social act, no less condemnable than common theft. We zealously guard our cooking recipes, dress designs and gardening skills. Why should we not respect the originality and creative merit in paintings, photographs, poetry, fiction, musical works, and ensure a sustained and just reward for the creator? Theft of ideas with impunity is a reflection on our national character. Do we want to be known in the world community as a nation of pirates?
2. Piracy is illegal, and must be punished like any other illegal activity.
3. Piracy means enormous loss to the exchequer, through evasion of payment of taxes and duties and is thus an economic offence.
4. Piracy could turn into a security risk for the country. The revolution in Iran was known to be whipped up by cassettes coming into Iran in the garb

of music cassettes, which actually contained Khomeini's messages to the people of Iran to erupt.

5. Piracy will kill creativity. If creativity dies, the pirate will die too (a negative consolation) for he has never created anything. He is just a parasite.

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

Piracy can never be curbed without the active involvement and support of government agencies. The measures that would help are:

1. Strengthening the legislation further to provide for the onus of proof of genuineness of the person on whom the 'infringing' cassettes are found—the duplicator or the trader/merchantiser.
2. Reimposition of excise duty on cassettes on a flat basis of one rupee per cassette, which will assist detection and net revenue for the exchequer. On the estimated sale of 10 crores pirated cassettes this duty would fetch Rs 10 crore, in addition to an equal amount from sale of legitimate cassettes. The excise duty scheme could be worked on the basis of serially numbered bandrolls, as with matchboxes. Excise duty would also facilitate recovery of sales tax, income tax and other levies which could be worth Rs 20-30 crore.
3. The law should provide for the elimination of anonymity and absence of manufacturer's name and address on the cassettes. The law must insist on the printing of PP and CO notices on cassettes, as required by the Copyright Act, otherwise the product must be deemed suspect and seized.
4. The government must have the political will to find the way to effective enforcement. The only solution is an apex, high powered, special unit assisted by squads in every state. The funding of such a machinery would come from the additional revenues and the industry too would be happy to contribute.
5. The improvement in the quality of hardware and tapes, and the future arrival of compact discs and digital audio tapes (DAT) has made taping easier and improved the quality dramatically. A surge in home taping will have to be taken for granted. The government must consider imposing a levy on hardware (playing and recording equipment) and blank tapes, and the proceeds should be utilised for partial compensation to music companies, artistes, etc, as well as for funding anti-piracy measures.

Ultimately, though, the battle cry has to



emanate from the music industry which has to help itself before it can expect help from the government. The IPI and the music companies have to demonstrate the will to fight and survive.

ROLE OF IPI

The Indian Phonographic Industry was founded in 1936 by GRAMCO (HMV) and two or three other disc companies. Even today it has no more than 6-8 active major companies and a dozen minor ones as its members. Yet it is the only organised body of the industry and with a 10 per cent market share, presumes to be the sole spokesman and guardian of the Rs 250 crore industry. IPI is affiliated to the international body International Federation of Phonogram and Videogram Producers (IFPI) and has received sizeable financial from it for anti-piracy operations.

IPI has done commendable work so far. It agitated against the imposition of the killer excise duty in 1981 and was successful in getting it reduced and abolished. Its memorandum of January 1983 on copyright was largely influential in persuading the government to amend the Copyright Act in 1984. Starting with the annual convention of IFPI in 1980, it has succeeded in focusing the attention of the highest powers on this problem. Finally, it has persuaded authorities to carry out several successful raids and seizures. But its efforts in this direction are likely to be brought to a standstill because of the myopic, selfish and indisciplined attitudes of its own members.

Will IPI be able to save the music industry? The more pertinent question is, will IPI be able to survive or can the music industry save IPI? Let us look at IPI more closely to get an answer to these vital

questions.

The dominant voices in IPI are

- GRAMCO in a shambles, with an accumulated loss of Rs 19 crore (sales Rs 13-14 crore per year).
- Music India, stumbling along somehow on the strength of Anup Jalota and Pankaj Uddhas.
- Inreco and Hindustan, ailing since long.
- CBS, which came with a Tata-CBS bang and is making barely audible whimpers.
- a handful of others, nothing much to write home about.

This is the roster of IPI—ageing, sick, invalid, desperately trying to cling on to their combined 10 per cent market share. The bulk of the music industry, scores of cassette companies representing 30 per cent of the total market share and 75 per cent of the legitimate market are not IPI members; rather, they are shut out from its membership. The senior members of IPI have a vested interest which they are committed to protect and perpetuate. IPI must change and expand its horizons. It must become bigger, by welcoming the cassette companies to its fold, so that it can speak with a louder and more persuasive voice and mobilise larger resources to deal with piracy. Only if it sheds its unrepresentative character can IPI stop being anachronistic. It needs, above all, youthful induction and can do with some freshness. Without this, it cannot hope to build up a lobby for its cause in the corridors of power, a lobby which is essential but which IPI has failed to mobilise so far.

IPI's other major failure is its abject inability to forge a unity of approach. Members are still not unanimous on the need to administer the version recordings effectively, on the need for reimposition of

excise duty and imposition of the bandroll, the need to persuade the government to consider levies on playing/recording equipment and on tape, the need to bring out joint compilations of hits of various members to pre-empt pirates, the need to stop playing the cosmetic but meaningless role of certifying cheapened 'gold' standards by not revising the standards following the proliferation of cassettes, etc. On all these matters IPI, for several years, has been long on deliberations and mutual accusations, but short on action. Instead of presenting a joint front, they steal each other's repertoire, under the garb of 'live' or 'film' recordings. Why does not the IPI publicly state its official position on these vital matters?

Piracy, litigation and disputes arise because of IPI's inability to confirm the copyright validity on old recordings. If I want to release a recording and am in doubt as to whether the recording is free from copyright, why can I not get a clarification from IPI?

IPI maintains that piracy can be fought effectively with the government's help, but it has failed to protect Indian recordings in UK and USA where the laws and their enforcement is strict and the incidence of piracy comparatively lower. The bottleneck is lack of funds, and IPI cannot augment its funds unless it takes some of the actions suggested. IFPI will help our fight only if we can protect international recordings in India.

The last area in which IPI has been dragging its heels is in sharing revenues from broadcast and TV agencies, and possibly from new levies with the other members of the creative community, the artistes, authors and composers.

IPI needs to help all, since it needs the help of all.

IPI MEMBERS

Initially, we must examine the role of the IPI member companies. Just as the spectacular rise of the music industry was synonymous with that of GRAMCO, so is its decline and fall. The HMV dog, forlorn and neglected by its old master, EMI, has found a new home but its eyes look sad. Its ears do not cock up to the His Master's (new) Voice anymore. Ironically, the pirates flourished on the treasure heap of HMV repertoire and catalogue.

The disc industry is unique all over the world. It has always sought supreme comfort in its wild successes, euphorically blowing up everything, never thinking of a possibly dark tomorrow. Unworthy successor of Edison and Berliner, it has never pioneered any breakthrough in technology, apart from recording techniques, and all the technological leaps – cassette, cassette player, video tape, and now DAT – have been made by non-music companies, mainly Japanese. And when it did dabble in something, the results were disastrous, like quadrophonic and the video disc. The industry, caught in a deluge, always hoped to be saved somehow. The Indian music industry is no exception, complacent when it should be preparing to tackle harsh realities.

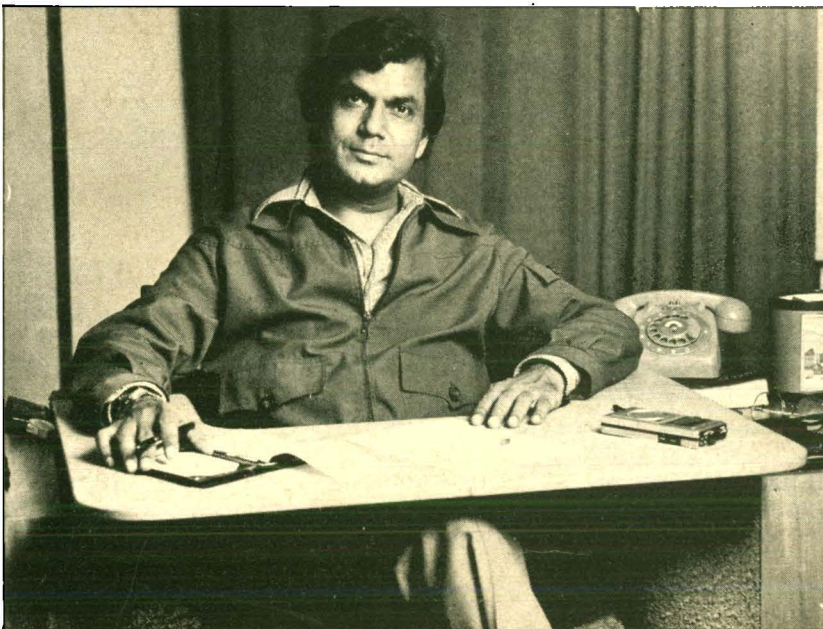
GRAMCO is caught in a multiple bind. It was not allowed to diversify in the '70s when the going was great. It cannot get over its past days of glory and its lost opportunities. It cannot explain how it has stagnated and declined while scores of small cassette companies have overtaken it and captured 75 per cent of the Rs 100 crore legitimate market, while it has stagnated at the Rs 12-13 crore sales level. GRAMCO has a cash crunch and an excruciating 'headcount' headache (about

1000-1200 surplus manpower). All these are formidable problems which will daunt even the most courageous. And GRAMCO has not yet displayed any of the sterling qualities of the survivors. It has managed to lose its hold on its stable of artistes and roster of film producers, dealer allegiance, consistent pricing and trading policies, and even allowed its quality to go suspect, whereas in the past it had sparkled with imaginative creativity and innovative marketing. The creative and marketing scene looks barren and desolate today. To succeed in this business, which is not a toothpaste or soap affair, you need to relate with artistes, courageously trust that 'gut feel' for potential hits, have an eye for a creative concept, faith in your success, an uncanny sense of timing and a lot of luck, apart from all other marketing, managerial and commercial attributes. I am sure the top men in the IPI club have all these attributes. It is just that opportunities seem to be eluding them. Thanks to the pirate who attacks the most popular hits of legitimate repertoire at a time and has a current catalogue of about 100 numbers only, there is a challenging opportunity available specifically, exploit 55e vast catalogue fully and to create and promote non-film music. This means, of course that GRAMCO will have to venture out boldly and creatively and not just sit back on its old repertoire and film music (which is recorded by film producers).

GRAMCO has a catalogue of thousands, and can subsist for at least five years without creating anything new, but its order fulfilment rate is at best 30 per cent. The obvious strategy is to decentralise and franchise, and improve the rate to 70 per cent, but one is dismayed to see the contrary trend. To survive in this jungle and to exploit a catalogue of over 5,000 numbers, GRAMCO must gear itself to accept several repeats of 100 units of each number. What is true of GRAMCO is true of the entire IPI club, more or less. Its foremost objective must be to help itself, through some or all of these actions. It must take a leaf out of the cassette companies' book and at least double its sales and market share. That would restore its morale, its confidence and its profits. This will also facilitate success in the second objective, of seeking help from the government to curb the pirates.

The IPI club must, therefore, stop misleading itself. Piracy is a major menace but there is still breathing room, provided the IPI companies can muster their wills.

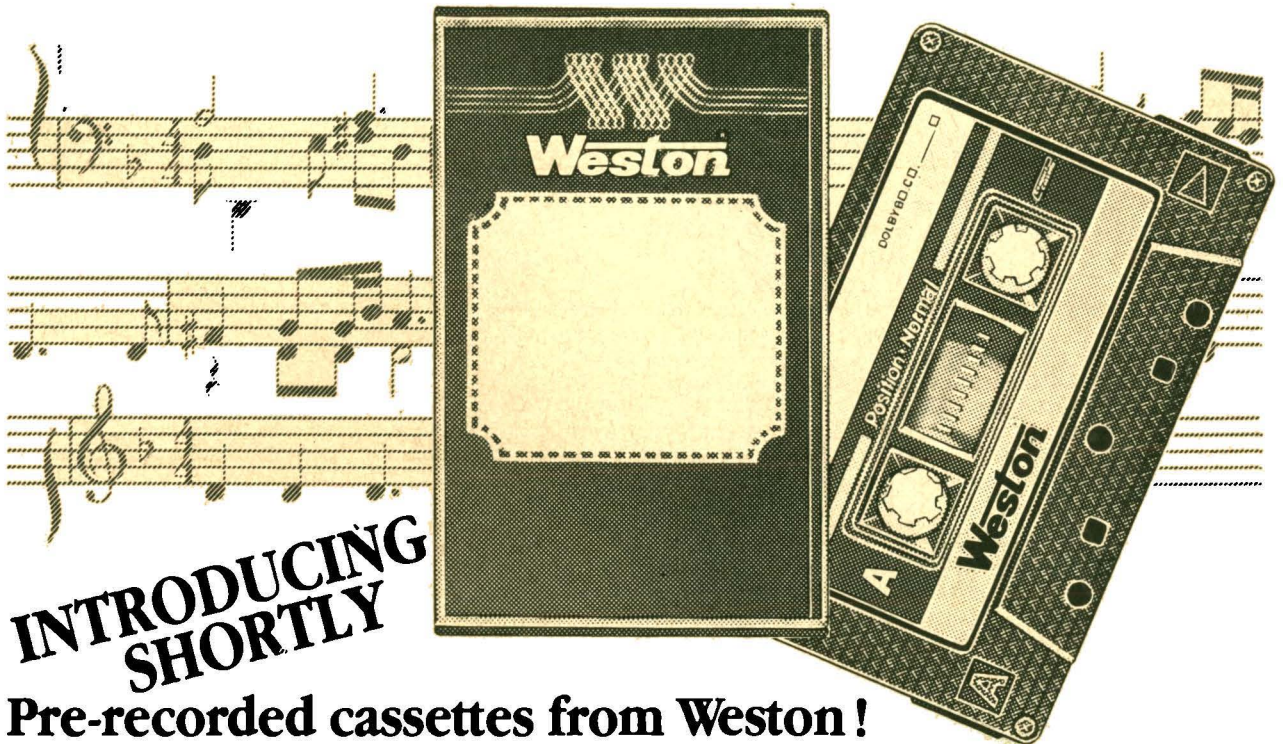
Anil Sud was Managing Director of the Gramophone Company of India (Thorn-EMI Group) from 1972 to 1983. He was also a director of EMI (Pakistan) and President, Indian Phonographic Industry. He is currently the Executive Director, General Electric Company of India.



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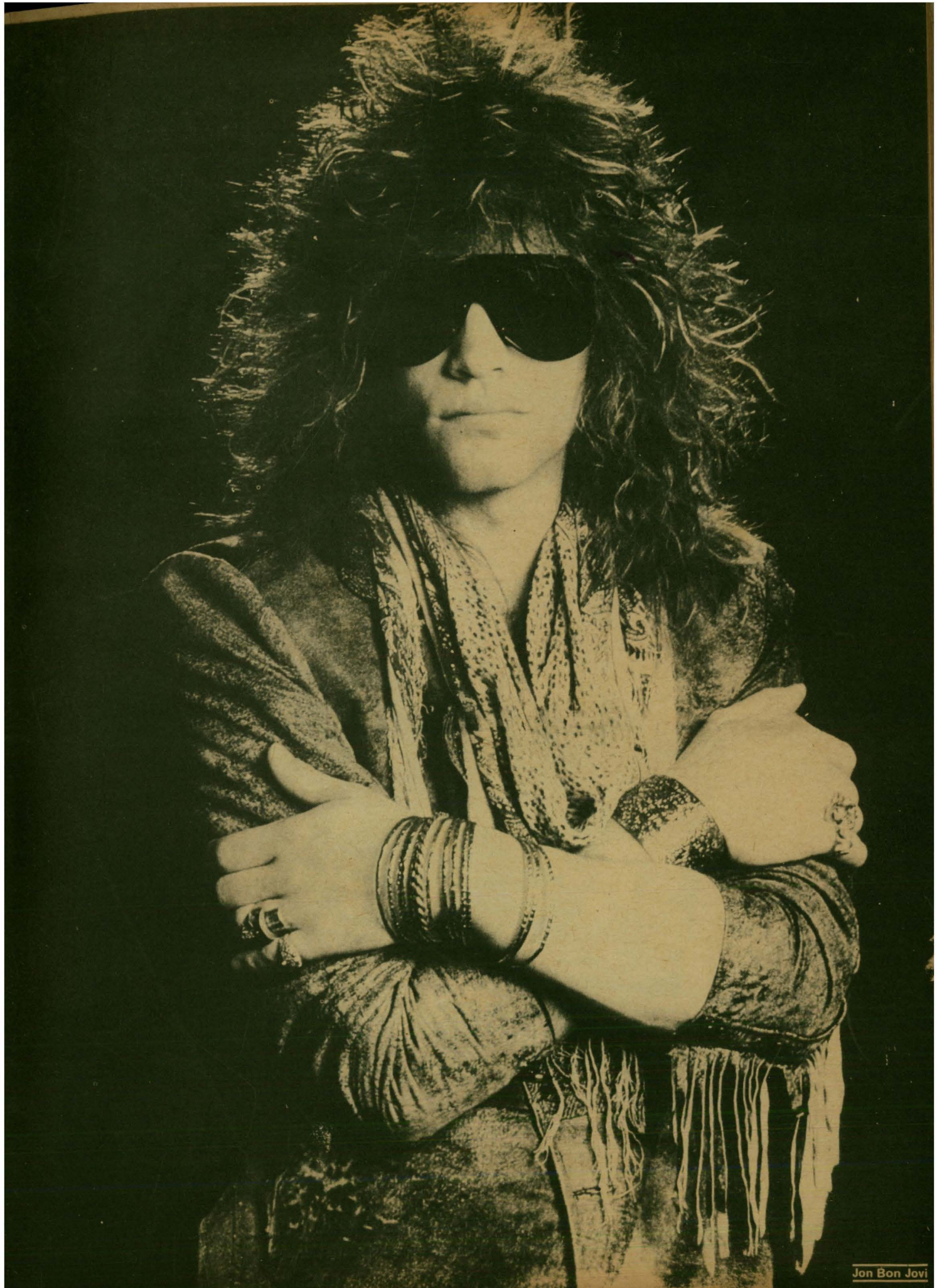
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Music For Everyone

There were several new releases from HMV and CBS aimed at a wide spectrum of listeners while Music India, whose interest in western music has nearly waned, finally released the Pointer Sisters and Kool and The Gang.

POINTER SISTERS

'Hot Together' by the Pointers has that layer of funk over spiking dance rhythms that make the title track and 'Sexual power', winners. The ballads are pretty effective with 'My life' being the most appealing.

KOOL AND THE GANG

Kool brings his usual effervescence to 'Forever'. There is a cloying concession to sentiment on 'Special way' but he really cooks on the funk-inspired 'Victory', the controlled rhythm of 'IBMC' and the soul decked r'n'b flavoured 'God's country'. James Taylor's smooth vocals add a warm feel as usual, making this another enjoyable album from the band.

IRON MAIDEN

Hheavy Metal strikes with Iron Maiden as they seek a futuristic concept 'Somewhere In Time'. One of the more articulate purveyors of the form dwell on the

Shadows, and 'Spanish Gypsy Dance' by Joe Loss. 'Careless Whisper' by Pieces Of A Dream is interesting in its treatment. A wide path but worth traversing.

Macho takes the Spencer Davis classic 'I'm A Man', makes it the title song of his album, and slaughters it mercilessly. To the boondocks with him!

GLASS TIGER

Glass Tiger came out of Canada playing top 40 tunes, opening for Culture Club at Maple Leaf Gardens and scoring a hit with their first single 'Don't Forget Me (When I'm Gone)' which has the hooks cascading from the opening riff. The single climbed to No 2 in the US and was followed by 'Someday' that burnt a bright, bouncy path to the No 7 spot. The album is 'The Thin Red Line' and it's full of good-hearted rock right down to the last note.

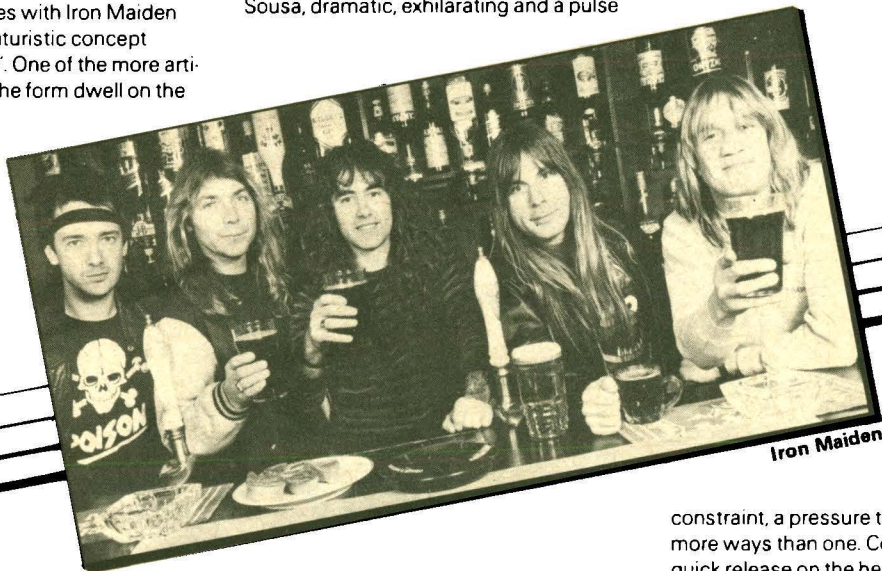
Though Glass Tiger lost out in the Grammy race for Best New Group, they captured three Junos for Most Promising Group, Best Album and Best New Single. Leonard Bernstein conducts the New York Philharmonic over two albums work of 'The World's Greatest Marches'. The first side of Vol I is given over to John Philip Sousa, dramatic, exhilarating and a pulse

The album is hard-nosed, there are no holds barred as Quiet Riot get bang into the mould with a tunefulness that should endear this one to many. Among the best cuts are 'Main attraction' and 'Twilight hotel'.

WEATHER REPORT

Weather Report have moved from a jazz-rock combine to a fusion one. Funk marks 'This Is This' but the composition has enough rich textures from Josef Zawinul and an accented beat from Omar Hakim to pull it out of the vestiges of the ordinary. 'I'll never forget you' is outstanding in its treatment of classical overtones melded with the blues. Zawinul is an all-consuming passion as he delves deep into the tonal expanse of the keyboards in its various manifestations. 'China blues', a gentle ballad, nicely wraps up 'This Is This'.

Incidentally, a little care by CBS would help. Frank Lloyd Wright is turned into Write on the Bridge cassette and Peter Erskine who co-produced with Zawinul is re-christened Eraskine. New releases rate a slow motion attitude. Finance is the



blues this time. They haven't sacrificed melody though. Anice serving for those who thrive on Heavy Metal (HM) and hard rock.

In contrast comes 'Top Instrumental Hits Vol 3', a compilation from The Big Wiz, which travels pretty deep into the past. That's where several of the selections here lie including 'Diamond Head' from the Ventures, 'Black Is Black' by the

stirrer! Flip and there are more accessible pursuits in 'Anchor's aweigh' and 'Colonel Bogey'. Vol II profiles the classical sides. Tchaikovsky's 'Marche Slav', Wagner's 'Fest Match from Tannhauser' and Verdi's Grand March from Aida are included. Simply superb!

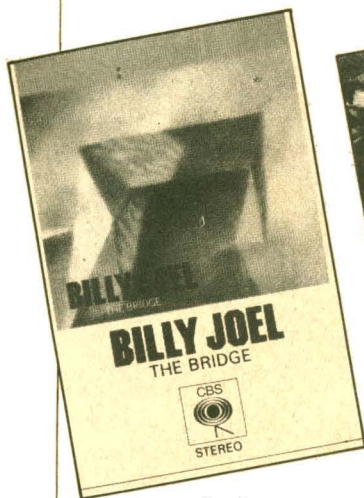
A buzz saw guitar heralds some more HM. This time it's Quiet Riot on their third outing called 'QR!!!'. It's also the last album with lead singer Kevin DuBrow who was dumped by the band amidst a slew of nasty words.

constraint, a pressure that contains in more ways than one. Consequently, a quick release on the heels of the US or UK street date is absent.

Again, hesitancy on the potential of a record leaves a gap that is filled by an illegal product. And when sales suffer, chins are cupped, brows are furrowed and the mind goes 'Why did we release this?' Some of the albums that should do well here are Santana's 'Freedom', Reo Speedwagon's 'Life As We Know It', Europe's 'The Final Countdown', Kate Bush's 'The Whole Story', Deep Purple's 'The House Of Blue Light' and Journey's 'Raised on Radio'. Will it happen?

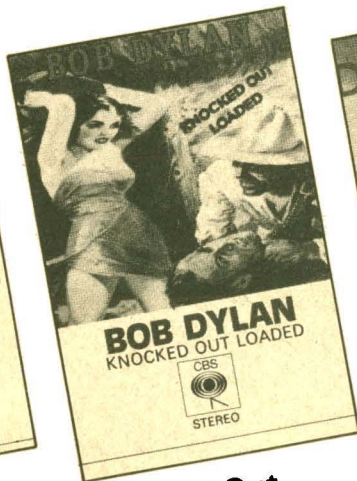
SPOTLIGHT

Playback's choice of the best selling albums for May.



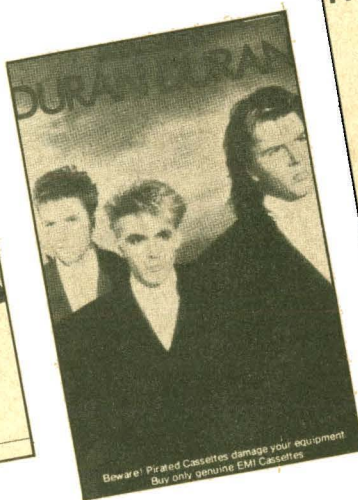
The Bridge BILLY JOEL

Has Billy Joel ever made a bad album? Did someone in the outback shout yes? You are banished from popdom for being unable to differentiate between uneven and bad. Past slip-ups are atoned for as this gently laid back effort throws up some nice tunes. Like what? Like the acoustic 'This is the time', the pop sensibility of 'matter of trust' and the nifty 'Code of silence' with Cyndi Lauper adding a wail or two. (CBS)



Knocked Out Loaded BOB DYLAN

Taken from various studio sessions, the album naturally enough profiles the power of Dylan. Songwriting chores are spread but the singer brings in passion, integrity and a fierce inspiration. The epic 'Brownsville girl' is a masterpiece and Dylan lends harsh credibility to Kris Kristofferson's 'They killed him'. And to prove he hasn't quite given up being a folkie he sweeps in 'Driftin' too far from shore'. (CBS)



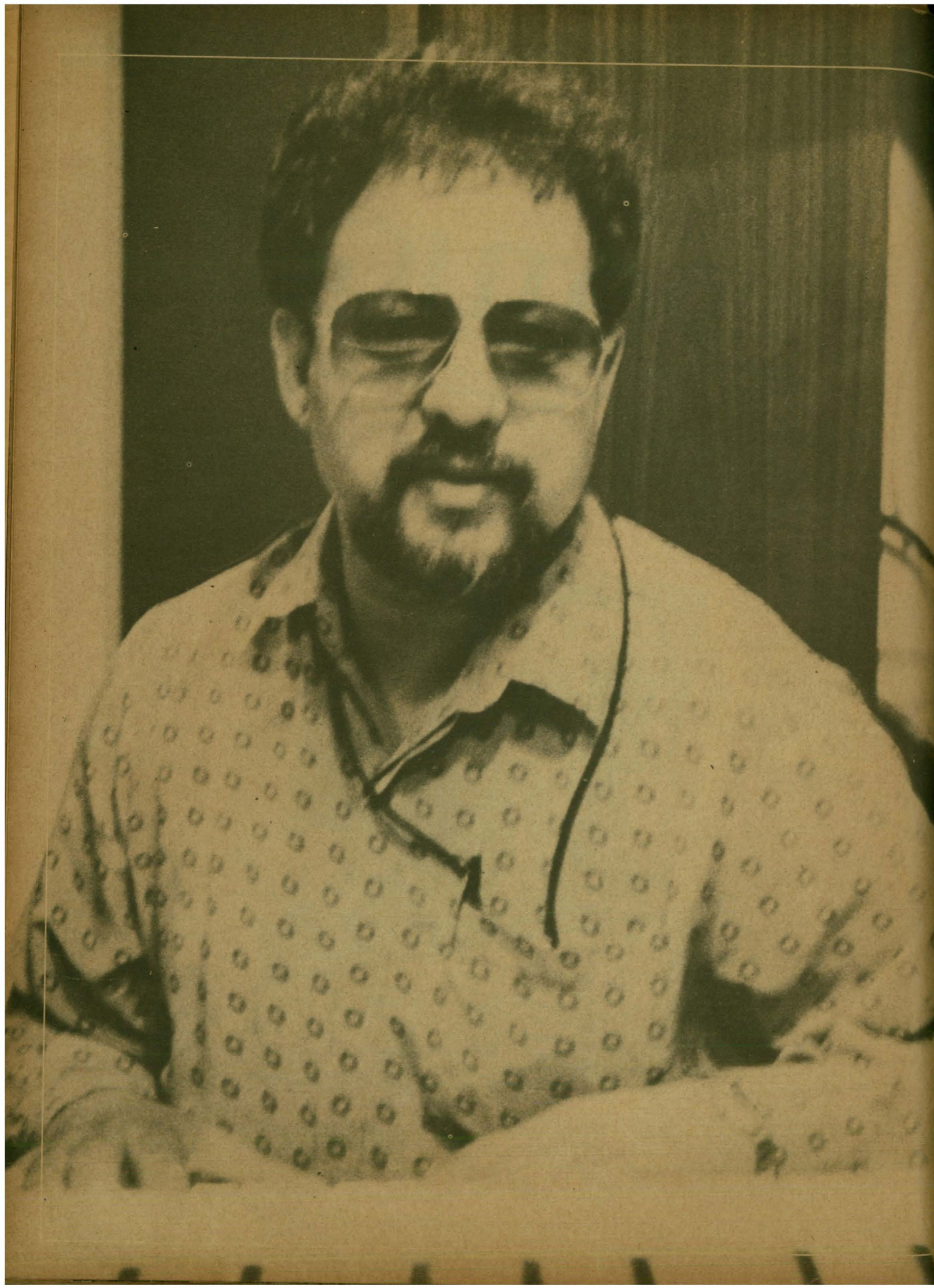
Notorious DURAN DURAN

A way from the welter of new Wave comes a new Duran Duran. The departure of Andy Taylor has cleared the smog and the compositions are precise, earthy and cut a swath into accessibility. Producer Nile Rodgers helps mine rock territory and the band scores with the surging title cut, the hip 'Skin trade' and the brilliantly languorous 'Winter marches on'. (EMI)



The Final WHAM!

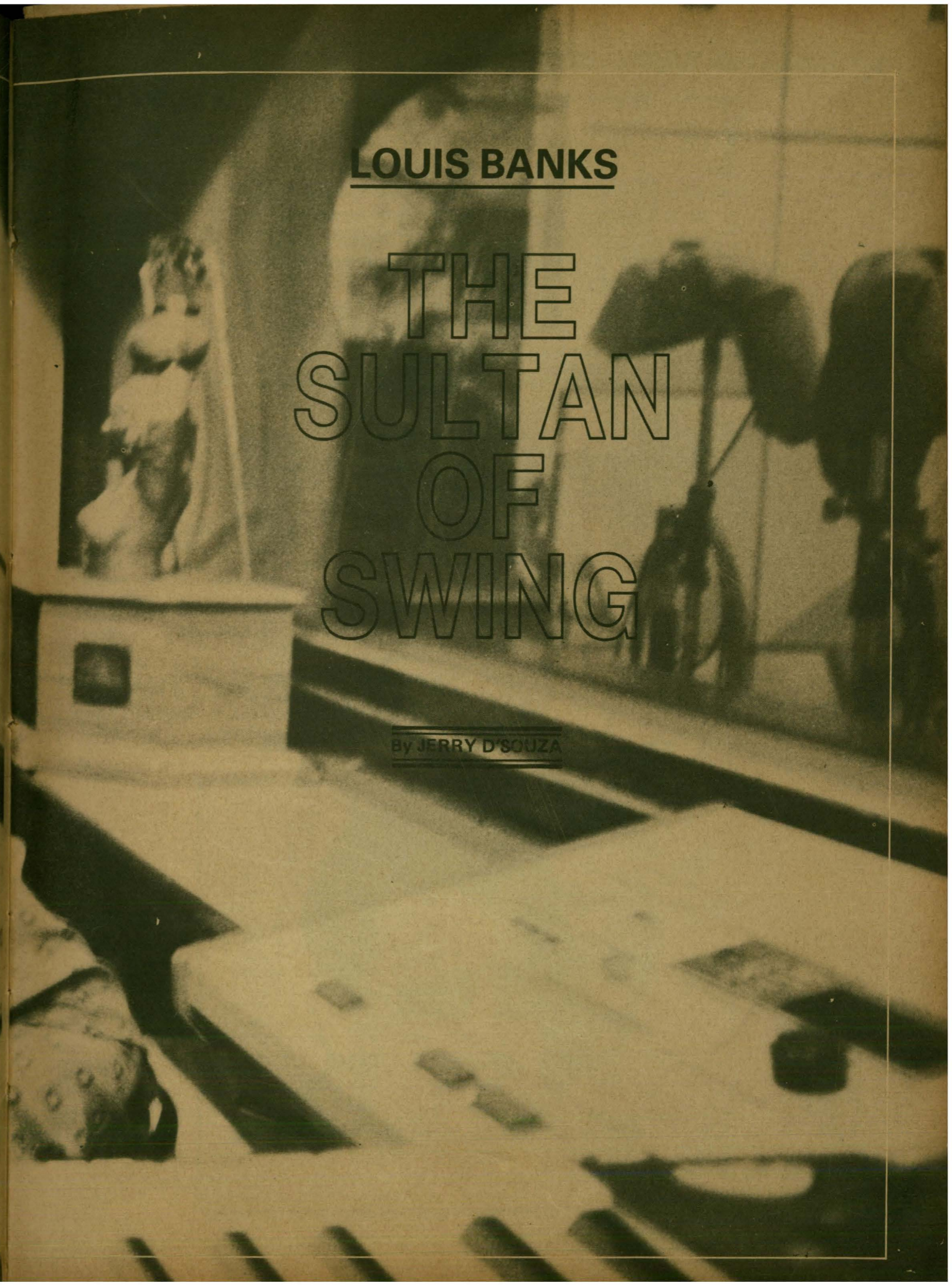
Men. The time has finally come. George Michael wanted out. Andrew Ridgely had no option. But they owed their fans a debt so what better way could they pay off than have a concert at Wembley which was sure to sell out and earn them a lot of money? Here they are then, in all their pristine glory, the songs that made the duo one of the most loved in the world. Twitch your ears to 'Wham rap!', flutter your eyelids to 'Where did your love go' and revel in 'Freedom'. In short, have a wonderful time. Wham! won't be coming your way again. (CBS)



LOUIS BANKS

THE
SULTAN
OF
SWING

By JERRY D'SOUZA



Louis Banks at his home computer, programming 'The Hoods' into acceptability.

The Hoods are out to change the face of music. Frontman Louis has Karl Peters on bass, Leslie Lewis and Sanjay Divecha on guitar, Ranjit Barot on drums, Aninha on keyboards, Manuel D'Souza on saxophone, with Pam Crain and Don Saigal on vocals. Their first show, Jazz Rock was, by general consensus, a success.

"Sure there was funk but we played a lot of Jazz," said Louis, switching on the video recording of the show. And the scintillating performance proves his point.

Louis Banks alias Damber Bahadur Budapriti, was brought up in Darjeeling where his father was a music teacher. He learnt the "grammar of music", grasping the essentials for he saw little point in just skimming over the notes. The early inculcation came in handy when the young man decided to make Calcutta his home and music his calling.

Calcutta in those halcyon days of the '60s and early '70s was the hub of jazz. The greatest names played there - Pam Crain, Braz Gonsalves, Brenda Mukherjee, Peter Saldanha and Digamber

But then the atmosphere changed. Vapid, commonplace tastes replaced the eclectic. Was this because of the new

found desire of the nouveaux riches to be with it? Whatever the reason, the effect was stultifying.

"I got tired. People would keep asking for 'Kung fu fighting'. We could no longer play what we wanted." A smile does not cover the exasperation.

Bombay beckoned and Louis travelled down to immerse himself in the hotel scene. Just when the downswing seemed steady, came Jazz Yatra '80.

THE JAZZ SEXTET

Louis grabbed the chance. With Calcutta mate Braz in tow, plus Peter Barot, Ramesh Shottam on thavil and percussion, Rajagopal on ghatam and Rama Mani on vocals, he formed 'The Jazz

Yatra Sextet'.

The band, with its combination of Carnatic music and jazz was a hit at the Yatra. The fusion was smooth, cohesive and blissful. There was no bastardisation of either genre.

A tour of Europe followed. The West, always willing to be enthralled by the unusual, especially Indian norms, swooned. Here was Rama Mani with straight Carnatic vocals weaving her way through jazz improvisations. Here was a blend that was harmony exemplified. It just couldn't miss! An album 'City Life' won praise and a citation as Album Of The Month in Germany. CBS released it in India but let it languish - its promotional strategy left a lot to be desired.



Jazz Yatra is meant to be a showcase for jazz and Niranjn Jhaveri puts in every effort to get the best from abroad. With the Yatra gaining in international stature, Indian jazz musicians feel, and rightly so, that they should be given greater exposure. Louis, however, came on to the Yatra stage only once more. In 1982, as accompanist for Yolande Bavan who acknowledged his genius.

"What has Jazz India done to promote jazz in India?" asks Louis. "It has a festival every two years, gets a few groups down but does it expose Indian jazz artists? it organises a band only at the last minute. The Yatra draws a lot of foreigners. Given a chance, we could show them the wealth of talent in India."

The obvious solution is to set up another organisation that would really give jazz its due. That's what Louis has in mind and he's working towards that objective. It should succeed, for Louis has proved his worth. Why, even Dizzy Gillespie had him play with him during his tour of India!

THE FILM CONNECTION

Being involved with jazz was one thing; making a living was another. Some time after he came to Bombay, he was drawn into the vortex of films. "I wanted to explore," he explains. And though Louis modestly declaims that it wasn't so, the news comes out strongly that he had helped shape R D Burman's arrangements. That's about as far as exploration went. His next big chance came when he was asked to write the music for Victor Banerjee's 'An August Requiem'. Unfortunately, the film was not given wide release. Then came 'New Delhi Times' and Banks came in for acclaim with his tasteful score.

But Louis did not let the atmosphere of the film industry stultify his creativity. He moved into writing music for plays. Some of these may have floundered but that was because of an inept script. The successes are beacons of the English musical stage: 'Grease Lightning', 'Bottoms Up', 'The Wiz', 'Tarantula Tanzi', 'Nuff said!'

Louis soon got into jingleland too. His catchy phrases made Gold Spot that zing thing a favourite drink, brought an exquisite lustre to Vareli and took Dunlop on the high road to success.

Yet the craving for jazz has not been stilled. That's a good sign. What could be more painful than losing a jazz genius to mundance pastures?

PROMOTING THE HOODS

"Yeah, as I was saying, I'm going to promote 'The Hoods'. We'll be having regular concerts, playing a whole lot of different music. Look, we've got to keep people happy. That's why we have to play different kinds



THE HOODS: (From top) Ranjit Barot, Karl Peters, Donald, Aninha, Pam Crain, Louis Banks, and Leslie Lewis

of music. All don't have the same tastes. You've just seen the video of the last concert. Don't you think the blend was good?"

"See, the whole musical scene is developing so rapidly. Everybody is going electric. I heard the new Chick Corea Electric Band – they were just too much. They got me thinking." His thought processes envisage a whole new world of electronic dynamics. He doesn't agree that once the programming was done, what followed would be easy. "Don't be under that impression. Programming can be so complex. One can go deep, reach far beyond the imagination.

"That's why I've put 'The Hoods' together. Each one is an exemplary musician. I know I can get the best out of them. Take Karl and Ranjit, for example. They are playing far better than they have ever done."

Besides, Manuel has shaped up into one of our most expressive saxophonists and Leslie always keeps himself up-to-date. "Anhina is a good keyboard player. With her in the band, I am free to improvise. Earlier, I had to comp and vamp as well," says Louis.

The showman in him rises to the surface. "I'm going to add visuals to my songs. And knowing him, the appeal to the mind's eye will be striking.

For a venture of this kind, only the best will do. Who else could it be for the sound but Roger Drego? And when it comes to lighting, the man will be Michael Nazareth. He was responsible for the outstanding graphics at Jazz Rock '87.

ALL THAT JAZZ

Electronic jazz is the music of the future. But within every true jazz heart beats the desire to get back to the acoustic. "Yes, Herbie Hancock and Chick Corea do it." So will Louis Banks.

"I will be working in a trio setting with Karl and Ranjit. When we do that it will be pure!" And knowing them it will be an evening to remember. The one inescapable fact is that this will require the right atmosphere.

"It was nice when Henry Tham had his jazz Sundays at The Mandarin", says Louis wistfully. Those days have passed. In the absence of a sponsor, it was difficult to cover basic costs.

There's still hope, though, if someone can come up with a viable structure. Hopefully, The Palm Grove Hotel's plans to give jazz a showcase will materialise soon.

Meanwhile, Louis' vision takes in other spectra. At the jazz workshop he held at the USIS in Bombay some time back, he helped shape and develop several budding musicians. He wants to start another workshop. Though St Andrew's Church, has asked him to start one, Louis finds the acoustics of the hall uncondusive. But he hasn't abandoned the project; in fact, he's now putting the finishing touches to it.

'ORIGINAL' PLANS

Any other person would have found these activities energy-sapping. Not Louis.

"I am writing an original musical," he laughs. "I am also writing an original book of songs for children. After that I will write another book of original compositions and perhaps an article teaching notations and chord structure regularly in a periodical."

Is that all, Mr Louis Banks? "Well... I'm planning to organise a big band Jazz Orchestra on an All-India basis."



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THE CREATIVE CIRCLE

Aruna Kundanani

Aruna is well known to ghazal lovers in Calcutta, where she has been performing regularly on AIR since 1976 and later on Doordarshan and at Kala Mandir auditorium. Her first disc was 'Ghazal Mahak' (EMI) which co-features Sabir Khan. Aruna has recorded a Sindhi ghazal with Ghan-sham Vaswani for a Sindhi film 'Hal To Bhaji Halun' and three ghazals for a Victor Bannerjee starrer 'Kahkasan'. And how another of her albums will be available on the newly launched Weston Music label - 'Ghungroo Hi Ghungroo', in addition to a cassette of bhajans, probably on the T Series label.



Vipin Sachdeva

In the busy studios of Super Cassettes Industries, one artiste recording practically daily is Vipin Sachdeva, who has six volumes of Rafi songs to his credit. Vipin has recorded for a total of 24 discs including songs for T Series 'Yaaden' and 'Sangeet Wohi Andaz Naya' series and even some bhajan albums - all on T Series. Wouldn't he like to sing some bhajan albums - all on T Series. Wouldn't he like to sing some original songs now? "The advantage with singing version is that the public is already familiar with what you are and that being the case, they readily accept them." And what of the future? Vipin says he is receiving film offers from Bappi Lahiri, Prasan Kapoor and others. "I hope it works out. Otherwise, I just wish to sing better and better and carve out a niche for myself in the Indian music industry. This is my life."

Bina Rai

At a time when the ghazal is being increasingly reduced to the level of populist entertainment, it is refreshing to come across a singer with a healthy respect for the rich tradition of ghazals. Bina Rai herself says: "I certainly believe there is a Begum Akhtar touch to my voice and to my ghazals. The classical is definitely there". Though, she admits, "in the final analysis, there is also a tilt towards the modern style of ghazal singing." T Series, which released her ghazal album 'Shabnam' in 1985, will soon release another. Bina stopped singing for nearly ten years after her marriage but she took it up again five years ago. She may have lost a few years of what otherwise would have been



a fully-realised talent by now. But the important thing is that she is now back.

Jolly Ghosh

Jolly Ghosh debuted recently on the Gathani label of Calcutta, with 'Ghazals Uske Naam'. The collection of ghazals was released by ghazal king Mehdi Hassan, from whom she learned the intricacies of ghazal singing during her stay at Lucknow some years ago. But that was much after her early training in classical music and Rabindra Sangeet. This versatile training perhaps explains why she can also sing bhajans, folk and Nazrul Geeti with equal ease. Jolly is married to Barun Ghosh Roy, a competent tabla player who has accompanied her during her stage shows in Lucknow. Right now she is busy with her next project: another cassette of ghazals, to be followed up with one of folk songs.

Leela Ghosh

After singing ghazals and bhajans in India the UK, Sweden, Portugal and France, Leela recently got down to some recording. First it was 'Garland of Ghazals' released recently in the UK and soon to be available in India. More recently, she completed recording 12 songs from the 'Geeta Govinda', sung in the traditional style. Leela who has sung in Urdu, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Bengali and even Swahili, is back in India now after nearly five years abroad.



SINGING STARS

RETURN

And are all out to prove their metier

Yes, singing stars are back! Every screen luminary, from Amitabh Bachchan and Rekha downwards, has been frantically trying to prove his/her mettle in front of the mike. Unfortunately, most of them are hardly made of the stuff the earlier singing stars like Noorjehan and Suraiya were made of. Though Sulakshana Pandit (she was too late for the era of the singing star in the '40s and the '50s, and too early to be part of the revival of the phenomenon) has gone on record to accuse Lata Mangeshkar of 'sabotaging' her career, I don't think Lata could ever have taken the 'threat' posed by the new singing stars seriously. Imagine, the Nightingale quaking in her 'chappals' at the thought of a Mandakini or a Salma Agha! Of course, as long as there is Bappi Lahiri to pamper and encourage the fad, more and more stars would continue to croak...er, sing themselves hoarse.

Bappi has now cajoled Mandakini to prove her vocal worth(?) in an album entitled 'Dancing City' (T Series). I'm surprised by the results, considering the general standard of Indian Pop (which ranges from the awful to the nauseating). Let me categorically state that Mandakini comes across more pleasingly than most singing stars. She is in 'sur' most of the way, though there is more of the part Bappi than the 'guest' Mandakini in the album. In many of the tracks, like the title song, 'Baton baton mein' and 'Woh din bitey' (the last being the only composition that's to be taken seriously), have Mandakini providing only supporting vocals! And I suspect most of the songs were pre-recorded in Bappi's voice with Mandakini's voice dubbed over the compositions. Whenever she has been allowed to breathe freely

(that is, whenever Bappi stays out of bounds), as in the duet with Bappi 'Deewane pyar ke', and the solo 'Hum se tum jo mile', the compositions flicker to life, even if it is only a fugacious sensation. Bappi has wisely kept his plagiarism from western charts to the minimum.

The songs are therefore more like adaptations than brazen copies. In 'Deewane pyar ke', he has used Madonna's 'Like a virgin' as a hookline upon which he hangs



Sulakshana and Vijayeta Pandit on their album inlay, 'Rhythmic Love.'

his own interpretation. Hence, you hear Madonna's tune only as a background refrain in the song. The lyrics are by Anjaan, his son Sameer, Farooq Kaiser, Indivar and (you won't believe this) Shiv Kumar Saroj! Though the lyrics are not as garbled as they usually are in such albums, I still wonder about the presence of so many poets in an album which seems as pleasurable as a one-night stand!

Since Indian Pop is still in its infancy, it is

not to be taken seriously at all. At the most 'Dancing City' is good for a laugh.

GREATEST SHAM

Bappi's 'Welcome' (CBS) isn't even that. If anything, it makes you seethe with fury. How dare this corny triumvirate of Bappi-Anil Kapoor-Salma Agha try to pull this, perhaps the greatest sham in the history of Hindi music! The album has been grabbing plenty of publicity for the past one year (manipulated, I suspect). When "The Wait Is Finally Over" (as they say in the blurbs), you are filled with a bitter sense of betrayal. The album goes wrong from the word 'go-go'. The two singers, Kapoor and Agha, appear to have formed a 'Mutual Admiration Society' in this album, in which the listener can only play the role of the helpless intruder. He calls her 'Supergirl', she calls him 'Superboy', 'Hello handsome', coos Agha 'Hi lovely', gurgles Kapoor... and so on. I would have laughed. Only, I was too busy choking on my outrage.

You are actually supposed to pay good money to listen to the two singers' tickling each other's ego! All the lyricists from 'Dancing City' (except Sameer) are back. All that can be said about these 'poets' is, if this is what commercialism does to you, then it is better to retire to the Himalayas. Just one track requires the 'rewind' button, 'Ankhen jaame sharaab'. In the rest, Bappi thinks he can compensate for the lack of ideas with technical razzle-dazzle. That isn't surprising since Bappi has been similarly duping the public for years. (It just goes to prove how much drivel we Indians can digest without a burp).

The standard of Anil Kapoor's 'singing' too isn't surprising: since the idea is to only cash in on a saleable name, surely you don't expect Kapoor to sing, do you?

● ●

When Bappi himself joins the two singers for 'Road dance', it is time to press the panic button. At best 'Welcome' is chic chicanery.

● ●

Nevertheless, his macho posturings (in one track 'Mere dildar khudha haafiz', he sighs out the poetry in a way that unconsciously parodies Amitabh Bachchan's dialogue delivery) have you tittering all the way to the bathroom. What takes you by surprise is Salma Agha's listless, 'Take-it-or-leave-it' renderings. This promising singer, who raised such great expectations in 'Nikaah', 'Kamla' and 'Sheeshay Ka Ghar', has touched rock-bottom with this album, with no hope of ever living up to this disgrace. When Bappi himself joins the two singers for 'Road dance' (what on earth is this supposed to mean to the Indian listener?), it is time to press the panic button. At best 'Welcome' is chic chicanery, at worst it is something quite unprintable.

RELIEF

You have to turn to the two-in-one combination 'Anjuman/Dahleez' (HMV) for relief and reassurance.

All's well in the music-world after all! 'Anjuman' features another singing star, though this time one with a difference (to put it mildly). Shabana Azmi has sung four of Khayyam's compositions in this Muzaffar Ali presentation. Muzaffar Ali, Khayyam, Shahryar, Shabana, Bhupinder... wow! That's what I call a musical banquet! Though Shabana herself singles out the duet with Bhupinder 'Gulaab jism ka yun hi nahin khila hoga' as her favourite, I prefer her solo 'Tujhse hoti bhi to kya' - a piercing lament of misty memories composed with the lavish devotion that is characteristic of Khayyam. 'Anjuman' comes just when your faith in Khayyam had begun to waver after 'Jaan-e-Wafaa', 'Ek Naya Rishta' and 'Devar Bhabi'. He proves he's still the Emperor of all he surveys! All the five compositions are genteel ballads that have you spellbound. Muzaffar Ali is a film maker with an acutely developed music-sense, who extracts the finest tunes from his music-directors, be it Khayyam in 'Umrao Jaan' or Jaidev in 'Gaman'. Shabana's singing understandably lacks professionalism. There are jagged edges in her rendition and she tends to gloss over the higher notes, especially in 'Main

raah kabse-nayee zindagi ki. There is raw romanticism in her voice which comes across perfectly in the magnificent song-picturizations in the film. 'Anjuman' also marks the singing debut of the music-director himself who sings a duet with his wife, Jagjit Kaur. 'Kab yaad mein tera saath nahin'. This is the only lyric by Faiz Ahmed Faiz, the rest are by the Ali-regular Shahryar whose poetic conceits never fail to thrill you.

The flip-side of this cassette contains the music of B R Chopra's fiasco 'Dahleez'. Its main virtue (if it can be called that) is its lack of noise. Otherwise, Ravi (BR's old faithful) does an encore of the tunes from 'Gumraah', with Mahendra Kapoor reaffirming the sense of *deja vu*. 'Dahleez' is also available on the HMV label with BR's 'Nikaah', Mahesh Bhatt's 'Naam' and various hits from BR films ('Naya Daur', 'Dhool Ka Phool', 'Sadhana', 'Gumraah', 'Waqt', 'Hamraaz' and 'Nikaah') (in fact, the only one that saves the score from being as big a disaster as the film), the Mahendra Kapoor-Asha duet 'Turn aaye to humko' has been edited from the various two-in-one cassettes! On the other hand, the Bhupinder-Mahendra Kapoor duet 'Ek adhuri si mulaqqat' which isn't even featured in the film, has been included in all the permutations! 'Anjuman' has also been combined with Muzaffar Ali's 'Umrao Jaan' by HMV. Bringing together as it does two of Khayyam's finest scores, and that too almost 'verbatim' (only the classical 'Jhoola kinne dala' and the folk 'Kahe ko biyahe bides' have been omitted from the 'Umrao Jaan' score), this must be one of the most tantalizing cassettes.

CREATIVE TAPS

Another HMV combination which is simply a must is 'Ijaazat/Palay Khan'. Both the scores are by R D Burman for film makers with whom he has had a long-standing relationship, Gulzar and Shakti Samanta respectively. While in Gulzar's 'Ijaazat' RD turns on the creative taps, in 'Palay Khan' he appears to be as sadly disoriented as in many of his recent scores ('Dacait', 'Itihaas', 'Inaam Dus Hazaar' and 'Jeeva'). Of course, in 'Ijaazat'

RD has the advantage of Gulzar's peerless poetry and Asha's spruce singing. There are just four songs, of which 'Mera kuch samaan' is the one that shall be regarded by posterity as being among the best of RD, Gulzar and Asha. 'Khaali haath shaam aye hai' follows closely, while 'Katra katra' and 'Chotisi kahani' have to be content in the shadows, though they are miles ahead of the average song.

In 'Palay Khan' RD has at least one of the advantages of 'Ijaazat' (Asha) at his disposal, but he isn't able to do much with it. He even has Lata to do two songs, one a duet with Suresh Wadkar 'Mere sanam tera khat mila' and the other a solo 'Salma to mil gaya balma'. Asha does all she can with 'Kabulse aaya hai' and 'Allah kare cham se'. But it is all such old-hat that even black magic couldn't have worked. Relatively interesting is Kishore-Suresh Wadkar's 'Allah ka naam le', but that's because of the clashing-swords and other ostentatious acoustics. 'Ijaazat/Palay Khan' offers an interesting juxtaposition of R D Burman's true talent and the way it's being subverted.

Among the oldies, HMV continues to let loose a torrent of scrumptious scores in two-in-one cassettes. Often, we have as many as seven or eight songs crammed on one side, with just as many on the other! There is 'Chori Chori/Anari', two Raj Kapoor-favourites both with music by Shankar-Jaikishan. Nothing needs to be said about the imperishable songs. But did you know there was a song called 'Sawa lakh ki lottery' by Lata and Rafi in 'Chori Chori' and a Manna-Lata duet in 'Anari' that goes 'Nineteen fifty-six, Nineteen fifty-seven'? Both are hopelessly outdated of course: that's the fun of it! They are amusing for their novelty value.

Another appealing combo is Laxmikant Pyarelal's 'Milan' with Shankar Jaikishan's 'Teesri Kasam'. Both scores still enrapture you by their melody, infused by Mukesh and Lata in the folk style. It's a pity Lata's 'Tohe sanwariya' from 'Milan' and Manna Dey's 'Chalat musafir' from 'Teesri Kasam' are missing. It would have been only fair to include the lone Manna Day number among so many Mukesh's and Lata's memorabilia. Also missing from 'Teesri Kasam' is the cute 'Laalee lalee doliya mein'. I would have certainly preferred either this song or 'Chalat musafir' instead of Asha's 'Haye ghazab kahin tara toota'. Manna Dey's 'Chalat musafir' is featured in another re-release of HMV that combines S-J's 'Teesri Kasam' and 'Mera Naam Joker'. While Lata's 'Maare gaye gulfaam' is missing here, several songs from 'Mera Naam Joker' are also absent. However, it is still an extremely attractive offer. There are many other vintage favourites fused in a single cassette. I'll discuss a handful more next month.

—Subhash K Jha

DAY DREAMS

The beginning of Doordarshan's Breakfast Show is a visual treat for the eyes.

The Breakfast Show on Doordarshan national network evokes mixed feelings in one. When it 'dawns' upon the TV screen with those scenic visuals of daybreak over the horizon, fields of corn waving gently in the breeze, gurgling brooks and cascading waterfalls, one's heart swells with pride to the strains of 'Vande Mataram'. As I watch the beauty of our country unfold before my eyes, my mind harks back to the lines of Sarojini Naidu's poem: Rise brothers rise, the wakening skies Pray to the morning light;

The wind asleep in the arms of the dawn Like a child that has cried all night.

As I feast my eyes on the tranquil scene, I say to myself 'This is the hour of hymn and harmony' for 'Pratah Smaran' or morning meditation. Ideally now is the time for a Meera bhajan, or a Purandaradas kirtan, with the video camera now turning its attention to the magnificent temples of India for appropriate visual interest. But alas what follows on the screen has too much of the city man's slant. Even on the odd day when Shivkumar Sharma or Pandit Jasraj appears on the show, the camera roves far and wide to the accompaniment of the music on the soundtrack. With some luck, one might have a fleeting vision of the santoor maestro or the vocalist, before the final fadeout. Unfortunately, music seems to play an incidental role in the present format, which is galling in our land where music has been accorded an honoured place.

In this respect, even the timing allotted for the National Program of Music and the National Program of Dance on the Doordarshan network gives one the impression that our traditional arts have been relegated to the late night non-prime timings when all good children are in their beds, for it is close to eleven o'clock. How then can we expect the coming generations to develop a taste for classical arts?

DIVINE ECSTASY

For sheer devotional fervour, the 'Sant Vani' of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi remains unmatched and continues to draw

crowds although he must have performed it umpteen times. Indeed he sings it with ritualistic regularity on the day of Ashadhi Ekadashi. On this holy day of the Hindu calendar, groups of varkans converge from all corners of Maharashtra on the holy place of Pandharpur – singing and dancing to the refrain of 'Gyano maooli Tukaram' – for the darshan of the deity

For sheer devotional fervour, the 'Sant Vani' of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi remains unmatched and continues to draw crowds.

Vithoba. And so it is with Bhimsen Joshi, he is a vithal bhakta. But his Sant Vani is not confined to the devotion of Vithal alone nor restricted to the saints of Maharashtra. Although the 'vani' of Sant Dnyaneshwar, Tukaram, Eknath and Namdev form the main bulwark of his repertoire, his rendering of the works of Meerabai, Tulsi-das, Kabir, as also the vachanas of Basaveshwara and Purandaradasa embellish his performances.

Thus his latest performance in Bombay for Snehakunj evoked considerable interest. He commenced with the customary

chanting of 'Jai jai Ramkrishna Hari' to the accompaniment of tala (manjira), mrudang and the choral support of his shishya who joined the refrain. Then he carried his audience on a tidal wave of divine ecstasy. From the opening stanza of Dnyaneshwar's 'Roopa pahataa lochani' to the concluding bhajan of Brahmananda, 'Jo bhaje Hari ko sadaa' it was like a bhajan yatra. Bhimsen Joshi gave his listeners ten precious gems of his devotion.

MEMORABLE OFFERING

In a conspicuously lean period for devotionals, the T Series continues to issue new titles with unabated consistency. Its latest output includes two major albums of three volumes each: 'Shri Durga Stuti' by Narendra Chanchal and a new version of Ram Charit Manas entitled 'Ram Katha Rasrang' which has a galaxy of singers including Mahendra Kapoor, Indrani Mukherjee, Jaspal Singh, Asha Khadilkar, Ravindra Sathe, Arati Tikekar, Rajeshwari Kelkar and Uttara Kelkar. The music has been scored by Shambhu Sen. The same team (or rather a part of it) under the baton of Shambhu Sen again makes a memorable offering of 'Sai Katha Satsang'. The bhajans are interspersed with anecdotes about Sai Baba of Shirdi. The introduction and the anecdote narration by Brij Bhusan is lucid while the singing by Jaspal, Asha Khadilkar and Uttara Kelkar based on appropriate ragas like Deshkar, Jogi is ideal for morning devotions.

Another issue to catch the ear of the discriminating listener is 'Muraliya Baje Jamuna Teer' rendered by Anuradha Paudal and Manhar Udhas. These bhajans are extremely appealing. CBS joins the fray with a cassette of Gujarati devotionals entitled 'Smaran' sung by Sudha Malhotra, Rekha Trivedi and Bharat Kumar Pathak who has scored the music as well. Other titles to emerge under T series are: 'Bhakti gnan', 'Ganeshvadana', and 'Shrimad Bhagwad Geeta'.

Nitin Mukesh is engaged on a major project for HMV under the direction of the upcoming duo Shekhar Kalya. More about this in my next bulletin. Till then,

– Sumit Savur

playback 25 selections

MAY 1987

1	Main teri dushman : Nagina Lata Mangeshkar: L-P: A-Bakshi: T Series		
2	Ameer se hoga : Insaniyat Ke Dushman Suresh Wadkar: Annu Malik: Shameer: T Series	14	Humsafar gham jo : Shohrat Anup Jalota: Anup Jalota: Murad Lucknowi: MIL
3	Dekho dekho yeh hai : Jalwa Remo: Remo: Remo: CBS	15	Veriya ve kiya : Naam NEW Lata: L-P: A Bakshi: HMV
4	Chal bhaag chalein : Kalyug Aur Ramayan Lata Mangeshkar: K-A: Verma Malik: T Series	16	Aisa ladka mila : Insaniyat Ke Dushman NEW Shabbir & Asha : Annu Malik: Indivar: T Series
5	Dil pukare : Jeeva Asha Bhosle: R D Burman: Gulzar: CBS	17	Dance dance : Dance Dance NEW V Benedict, Alisha Chinai & chorus: Bappi: Anjaan: T Series
6	Tu ne bechain : Nagina NEW Mohd Aziz & Anuradha Paudwal: L-P: A Bakshi: T Series	18	Koi Gopi aai : Bhajan Rath Vol I NEW Anup & chorus: Dhananjay: Vishweshwar: MIL
7	Naa jaiyo pardes : Karma NEW Kishore & Kavita K: L-P: A Bakshi: HMV	19	Meri ghazlon : The Best of P Udhas NEW Pankaj Udhas: Pankaj Udhas: Sheen Kaaf Nizam: MIL
8	Aankhein jaame : Welcome Salma & Anil: Bappi Lahiri: Farook Kaiser: CBS	20	Sajan aa jao : Aag Hi Aag NEW Asha & Shabbir: Bappi: Anjaan: Venus
9	Kispe jaan dijiye : Aafreen Pankaj: Pankaj: Zafar Gorakhpuri: MIL	21	Meera lago rang : Meera Lago Rang Hari Juthika Roy: Kamal Das Gupta: Traditional: HMV
10	Babusha : Aah...Alisha NEW Alisha: Louis Banks & Rajesh: R Johri & Alisha: HMV	22	Main khayal hoon : Echoes NEW Jagjit: Jagjit: Saleem Kausar: HMV
11	Pehle rock 'n' roll : Main Balwan NEW Kishore & Nazia Hassan: Bappi Lahiri: Anjaan: T Series	23	Ghar mein mach gaya : Dacait NEW Asha, Kishore & S Wadkar: L-P: A Bakshi: T Series
12	Bewafa jaa : Dahleez NEW Mahendra Kapoor: Ravi: Hasan Kamal: HMV	24	Chalna hai door : Kabir Vaani NEW Hari Om Sharan: Hari Om Sharan: Traditional: Concord
13	Na tum ne kiya : Nache Mayuri NEW Lata & S Wadkar: L-P: A Bakshi: T Series	25	Saqi teri mehfil mein : Shohrat Anup: Anup: Fana Nizami: MIL

Key: Track Film Album Singer(s) Music Lyrics Label The list is based on research conducted by Playback And Fast Forward and the performance of songs in the hit parade radio programme. Cibaca Geet mala (Courtesy Hindustan Ciba-Geigy Ltd.)



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THE CREATIVE CIRCLE-DE-3399-87

OH DEAR!

What A Success

DEAR Studio is another of those little studios that have mushroomed all over Bombay to cater to the booming business of recorded music.

Set in the crowded locality of Mahalaxmi's Jacob Circle, right next to the railway station, one would have expected the noise from trains to be an obstacle. "No," says proprietor Clement D'Cunha. "Right at the outset we had the studio specially soundproofed against this very thing, at a cost of Rs 40,000. It took Rs 10 lakhs to put the studio together."

What has been put together is basically the M 16 Soundtrac mixer, which is a 16-channel mixer with 8-outputs, more or less directly connected to a Tascam 8-track reel recorder.

Prashant, the recordist, who has taken charge of the studio since its inception, was earlier at Line-in, assistant to Ashish Dikshit.

DEAR Studio has become very popular over the past six months, since the day it started functioning. For two reasons: first, the price – at Rs 150 per hour, it has about the cheapest rates going, especially for a studio situated close to the biggest and best studios in Bombay, both for film and non-film recordings. Naturally, the musicians and artistes find it convenient. Secondly, there was an urgent need for a 'small' studio, for the growing band of version artistes, and small budget regional repertoire being produced by the indepen-

dent labels. The artistes have the run of the place – right into the recordist's chair, and full charge of the controls too. "As long as the business comes in and they are satisfied," D'Cunha is happy. He declares that "a number of music companies have offered to take over on lease."

With two months' bookings confirmed, and a lot of big names already having set foot on the 14-foot long recording floor, the lucky studio owner is already set on expansion.

Mohini Studio

A studio situated in the posh Civil Lines area of Delhi, housed in one of those sprawling bungalows complete with lush green lawns and flowers of different hues, and with a guest house for putting up artistes – is that the description of a 21st century studio or an informal present day set-up? This is exactly what the Mohini Studio – the audio recording division of the Yuki Transistor Company – is. Now 15 months old, Yuki has released some 200 cassettes of mainly folk music. The men responsible for the technical aspects of Yuki are names that have earned respect and admiration in the field of sound engineering. The Recording Engineer is N R Das Adhikary, with about 15 years experience and one of the first to graduate from the Film and Television Institute at Pune. The A&R chief is Zaheer Ahmed, formerly of HMV. It is

young Sailesh Mathur who heads the company, with his father Amresh Bahadur lending him a helping hand by way of experience in a field where only the very best survive.

The studio is not hired out. Recordings are done directly on two Nakamichi Dragon Cassette decks. Bhajans are given special treatment on an Akai spool deck. A Teac 2000 has been recently added.

– Sanjeev Verma

Audio Centre

Audio Centre is located in Behala, one of the quiet corners in Calcutta, where Salil Chowdhury's studio 'Sound-n-Sound' is also located.

The studio boasts of a separate room for string instruments, another room for singers and a separate section for rhythm. Spread over an area of 1500 square feet, the studio is centrally air-conditioned.

The chief recordist, Samir Sen, was earlier at Usha Uthup's Studio Vibrations.

Biswajeet Prasad opened the studio in August '85 after a successful track record with 'Broadcast', which supplied the sound system for stage to all the leading artistes performing in Calcutta.

Hire charges are Rs 1,200 per shift. A Teac 38 spool deck is used for recording. Concord's prestigious double album of Ghulam Ali's ghazals recorded live at the famed Kala Mandir was recorded at Audio Centre.



Do you have a problem with your hi-fi equipment? Technical Editor DAMAN SOOD will answer all your queries related to audio.

Q: I am considering updating my home system with one of the top quality cassette decks (like Nakamichi, Dragon, Revox B710, etc, but I wonder if I should wait for DAT (Digital Audio Tape) decks. Will DAT be a new cassette format altogether or will it be compatible with present decks?

*H Punjabi
Bombay*

A: At present R-DAT and S-DAT are being standardised and the decks may arrive sometime by the end of the year. R-DAT employs rotary heads and other stationary heads, as of this stage, no single format decision has yet been reached. Judging from the CD players market, there will probably be desirable improvements and features worth waiting for. In my opinion, it will be quite a while before present analogue tape decks are obsolete. Look at phono turntables, which as yet have refused to die despite the invasion of CD players.

There are also some, who strongly feel that whatever the measurements, analogue reproduction is more pleasurable than digital. Here they are comparing analogue phono discs with CDs, but we may eventually hear the same claims about analogue versus digital cassette decks.

DAT is a new format, which uses smaller cassettes than analogue. So if you are one of those who must be first with the newest, you will have a substantial period in which to enjoy music from a deck as fine as Nakamichi or any brand.

Q: What is the difference between ferric, chrome and metal tapes, and when should one use each type? Also, is 70 microsecond the same as high bias and 120 microsecond the same as 'normal bias'? My deck has little pins just inside the door that are supposed to adjust for different types of tape, but do all cassettes have corresponding holes?

*S Das
Calcutta*

A: The term ferric, chrome (ferri-cobalt, super avilyn, and others) and metal are used to describe the various magnetic materials with which recording tape is coated. Ferric oxide tape is the most common type and has been around since 1939. Its required bias is called normal bias. Cassettes using normal bias also use 120 microsecond (or us) playback equalisation (bias is not used during playback). Since two sections of one switch

can handle both the recording bias level and the appropriate playback equalisation, a single switch (or detector pin) is sufficient.

Chromium dioxide (and cobalt-treated ferric oxides that behave like chrome) first came into use about 15 years ago when the problem of high frequency response on the cassette was acute. Tapes coated with it require about 50% higher recording bias and are played back with a 70 microsecond playback equalisation.

To the best of my knowledge all ferric and CrO₂ type cassettes and many metal cassettes have standardised detector holes. The aim, as you suggest, is to simplify cassette use by letting the machine automatically do the necessary switching. The metal tapes are most expensive of the lot, and are available in C-60 and C-90 formats.

Q: Do metal tapes wear cassette deck heads more than other types of tapes? Does re-recording cause the sound quality of cassette tapes to deteriorate?

*H D Souza
Bombay*

A: So far there is no proof that metal tapes cause more wear of tape heads (and guides, etc) than other types of tape formulations.

Although tape does not last forever, a tape of good quality can normally undergo hundreds of passes (recordings and playbacks) before noticeable deterioration occurs. To an extent, physical tape wear depends on the deck, this is, the manner in which the tape is handled with respect to tension, head contact and others. Magnetic characteristics are essentially unaffected by use unless substantial amounts of oxide have been worn away or oxide shedding because of humidity.

Q: Is it possible to get print-through on 1 mil and 1.5 mil tapes if they are played infrequently, say every six months or yearly? Does print-through occur on C-60 or C-90 cassette tapes?

*S Gupta
Delhi*

A: Yes, print-through is possible in all the cases you have mentioned. The thinner the tape (e.g 1 mil instead of 1.5 mil or C-90 instead of C-60), the more likely audible print-through would occur. For example, print-through tends to be about 3 dB greater on 1 mil tape than on 1.5 mil. Print-through tends to increase logarithmically with time. To illustrate, about as much print-through occurs during 2 to 11 days of storage as during day 1, and about as much occurs again during 12 to 111 days. The higher your recording level, the more likely that you will get audible print-through.

The tape oxide tends to transfer its signal primarily to the next layer above it. Thus if you leave a tape in the played condition (tail out), print-through will tend to occur as a post Echo, which usually is less objectionable than PRE-ECHO which occurs when the tape is stored in the recorded condition (head out). If you leave the tape tail out and rewind just before playing, you may accomplish something like a 6 dB reduction in apparent print-through.

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Q: I have an old and a new deck with Dolby B and Dolby C Noise Reduction. Can I dub a cassette with Dolby B noise reduction onto a cassette with Dolby C, and vice versa?

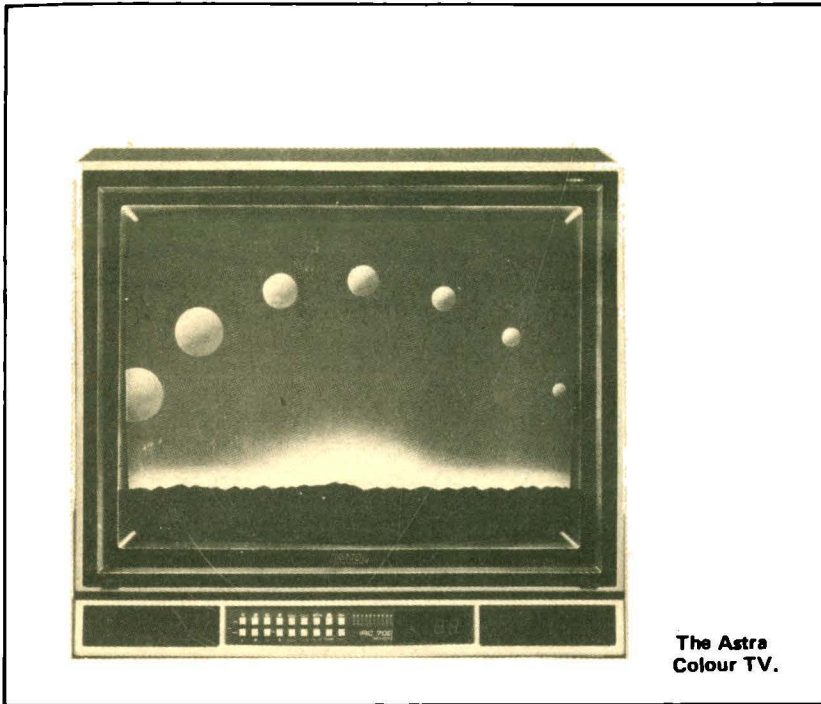
*K Nair
Trivandrum*

A: Yes. Play the Dolby BNR cassette with the old deck in the Dolby B mode. Feed the signal from this deck into the new deck and record with Dolby CNR on. This will produce a Dolby C noise reduction cassette. Reverse the procedure and connection to make a Dolby B dub of a Dolby C tape.

Q: What are the relative advantages and disadvantages of Dolby B and dBx noise reduction systems?

*K Anthony
Bangalore*

A: Dolby B tends to reduce noise about 8 to 10 dB, Dolby C about 18 to 20 dB and dBx about 30 dB. Dolby C has a special treble boost curve in recording that serves to reduce the chance of tape saturation and treble loss: this is achieved by a drop-off in treble boost at the very high end. Dolby tends to produce less distortion than dBx at low levels, while dBx has the advantage with respect to distortion when recording level signals. Dolby requires adjustment of the tape deck with respect to the particular tape being used. To match the tape's sensitivity (amount of signal output for a given signal input), input and output levels must match in order to achieve good tracking, namely preservation of treble response. In dBx tape, dropouts are more noticeable than Dolby when the same tape is used.



The Astra Colour TV.

Uptron's Astra Colour TV

Astra, the latest Uptron colour TV, is a monitor-style TV. It has a 51 cm, 90° Precision In-line Black Stripe 11 picture tube. This CCIR, PAL B/G TV can receive VHF channels 2-12 and UHF channels 21-69. Its two, 8-ohm elliptical speakers deliver a powerful five watts of sound output. The Astra is available in two models – one with wireless remote control and the other without remote. The remote functions include On-Off, Tuning, Band Selection, Station Selection, Volume, Contrast, Brightness, Colour, Muting, Memory for normal setting of Contrast, Brightness, Colour and TV channel selection.

Price: Rs 11,572 (with remote)
Rs 10,993 (without remote)

Goodbye DAT

Solid state technology is set to sweep away vinyl records, compact cassettes, CDs and even digital audio tape with a new generation of sound carrier. Dutch, American and British scientists collaborating at a research establishment in Oxford have developed a "hip chip" which is capable of storing the Top 75 singles – plus B sides and 12-inch versions – or up to a dozen albums on one component.

It is estimated that the vast BBC Record Library could be contained in one average

size filing cabinet and it is likely that the system will be made available to mass users before being marketed to the public early next year. Early models of the basic hardware – not much larger than the average Walkman – are play-back only. However, potentially devastating consequences for the music industry lie in the second generation of machines, already at an advanced stage of development, which will be capable of perfect home reproduction of any existing sound recordings or broadcasts.

One of the greatest problems of existing

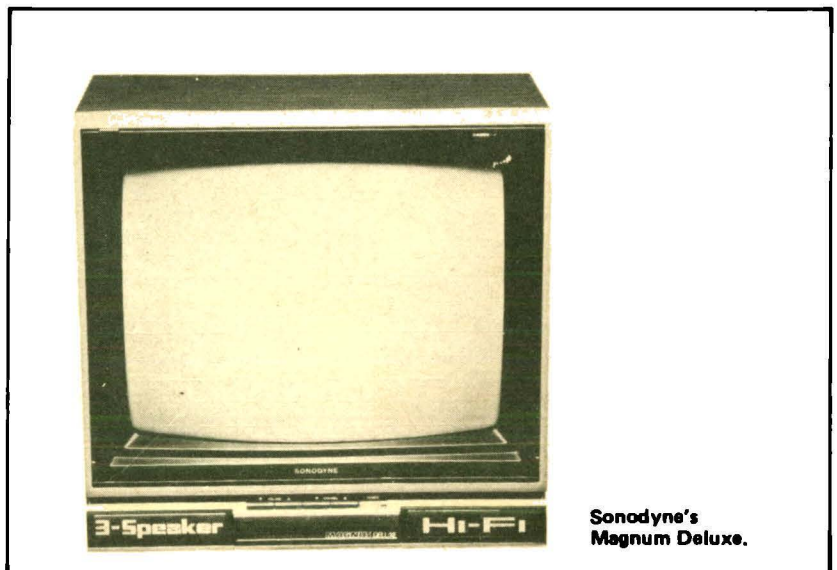
microchip technology has been that the storage capacity has not been great enough to cope with music, which requires several times more "bits" of information than, for instance, a video game.

"This has now been overcome by marrying existing micro techniques, with relatively new field of photonics, whereby intense light beams are capable of focusing precisely on silvers of silicon no more than 0.5 microns wide," explains professor Roger Pringle-Griffiths, leader of the development team working under the umbrella of Ersatz Enterprises Ltd.

Sonodyne's Magnum Deluxe

The Magnum Deluxe (51 cm) incorporates state-of-the-art technology. It includes a special protection circuit that gives the picture tube greater longevity, a specially designed brightness circuit that ensures sharp images, and a remote control unit which comes only with the push-button technology.

The Automatic Voltage Regulator regulates voltage fluctuations to give a hi-focus picture. This makes it ideal for VCR operation. The Magnum Deluxe has three speakers for hi-fi sound. To reduce strain on the eyes it has been fitted with anti-glare filter glass.



Sonodyne's Magnum Deluxe.

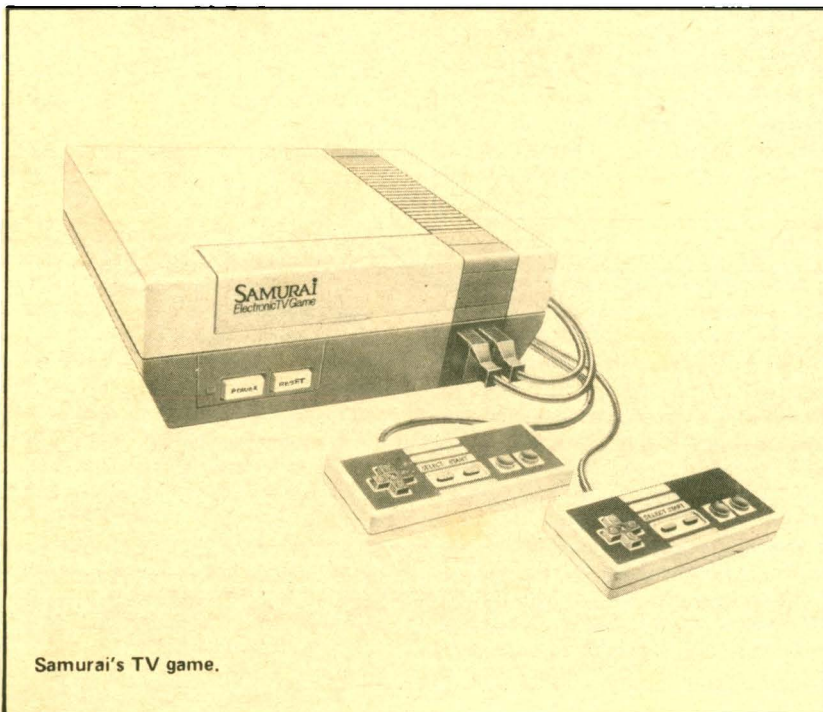
New Amplifier from Dynavox

Dynavox has recently introduced the Dynavox-Kenwood stereo integrated power amplifier (Model KA-32).

The dynamic power output of the KA-32 is 190 W at 4 ohms, and 35W x 2 RMS at 8 ohms. The frequency response is 20 Hz - 20 KHz at 0.09% THD. Two pairs of speakers can be hooked up to the amplifier. The Phono signal-to-noise ratio is 79 dB (5 mV, 1 HF-A). The dimensions of the KA-32 are 420 x 89 x 279 mm (W x H x D). It weighs 4.9 kg.



The Dynavox amplifier



Samurai's TV game.

Samurai's new TV Game

Samurai Electronics Pvt. Ltd., will be shortly introducing in India a new electronic TV game. Launched worldwide by 'Nintendo', this game has become a rage among the young and old alike and has already been termed as the hottest selling electronic game in the world.

Plugged directly into your TV (colour or B & W), this game called "Samurai Electronic TV game" will make it come alive in a way you've never seen before.

Help 'Super Mario' save a princess; become a Kung Fu expert, or just play an exciting game of golf. All-in-all have hours of fun everyday.

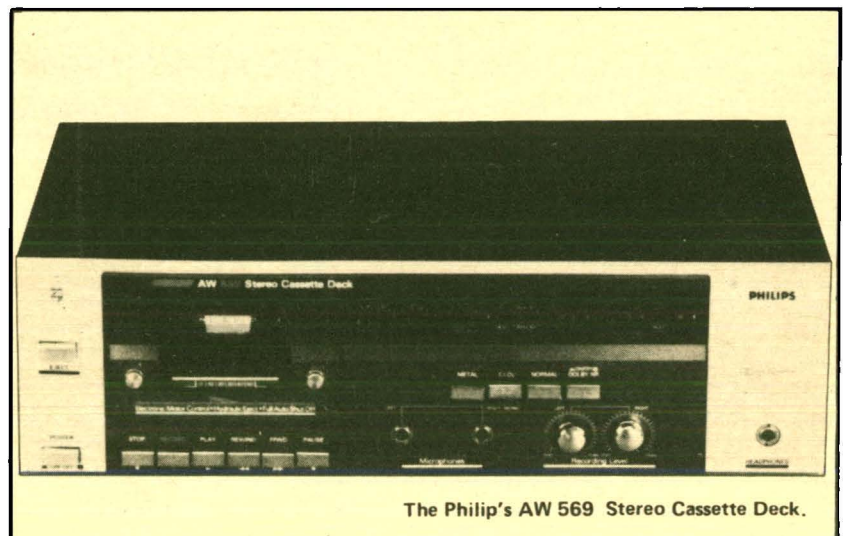
The console is priced at around only Rs. 4250 and each game cartridge costs only Rs.400. With a library of over 250 games which will be introduced in a phased manner, every family is guaranteed years of fun.

New Philips Ampli-Deck

The AW 569 Stereo Cassette Deck is a successor to the popular FC 140. Besides Dolby B Noise Reduction, it offers all the features that are standard in a top-of-the-line cassette deck like Soft Touch Tape Transport Mechanisation; electronically controlled Motor, Normal, Chrome and Metal Tape Compatibility, wide frequency response and low wow and flutter.

An interesting feature of the AW 569 is that it is aesthetically matched with Philips' speakers and hence can be paired satisfactorily with any of them.

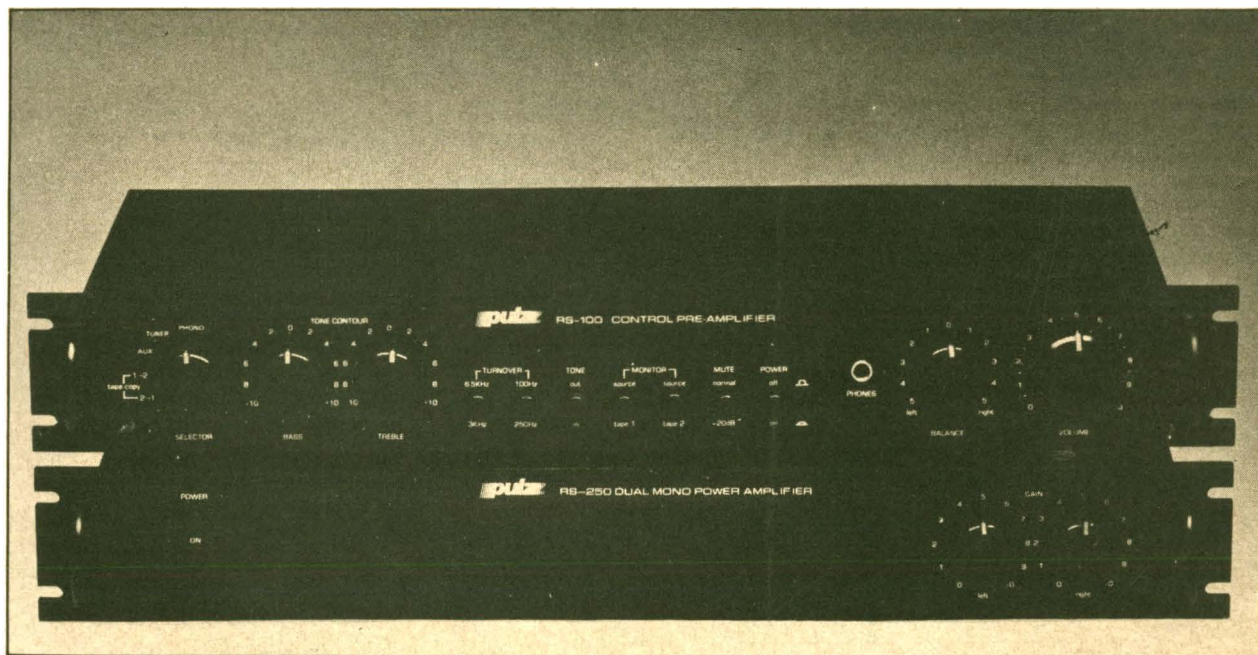
Price: Rs 3,500 plus taxes



The Philip's AW 569 Stereo Cassette Deck.

BLACK BEAUTIES

Technical Editor DAMAN SOOD put the Pulz amplifiers through their paces and discovered that, besides offering excellent value for money, they were as good as any imported amplifier.



For a long time now, Pulz has specialised in producing custom-made amplifiers and speakers. Their products are heavy duty, sturdy and fool proof. This is evident from the sale of their amplifiers to recording studios, renowned musicians and audiophiles. All Pulz amplifiers are black in colour conforming to the latest concepts in international design and styling. The model RS-100 is a pre-amplifier with five

selectable inputs namely Phono, Tuner, AVX and tape copy 1-2 or 2-1 which is on the left. Next to it are two Tone controls for Bass and Treble with turnover frequencies of 100 Hz, 250 Hz, 3 KHz and 6.5 KHz respectively which can be selected by switches. The maximum boost and cut at these frequencies are ± 14 dB. Next to it is Tone IN/OUT which is very useful when you want to compare flat sound and equalised sound. The tone controls are inoperative when this switch is out. There are

two switches to monitor tape 1 and tape 2. These switches are used when you want to listen or copy from one tape deck to another. By manipulating them you can listen either to the inputs from tape 1 or tape 2. Next to the power switch is a mute switch which cuts the input volume by 20dB. This feature is useful when you want to talk on the phone without stopping the music.

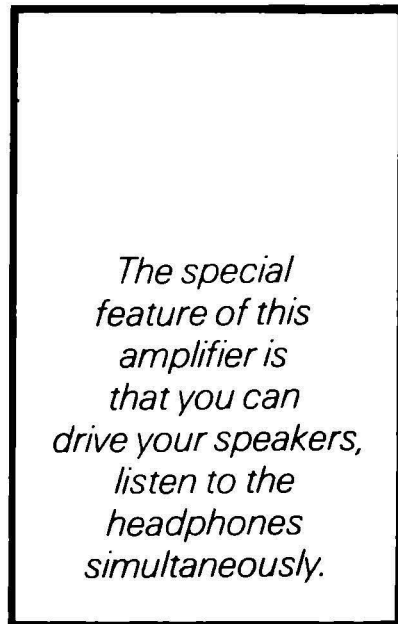
To listen through the headphones, a socket is provided for low or high impe-

PRODUCT TEST

dance. A separate stage of the amplifier (90 mw) drives stereo headphones with very low distortion (0.05%). The special feature of this amplifier is that you can drive your speakers and listen to the headphones simultaneously; or you can listen through the headphones while the speakers automatically get disconnected. The balance control provides the balance between the left and right channels and the volume control is used to adjust the listening level.

We checked this preamplifier and found that the frequency response, distortion, signal-to-noise ratio figures exactly match the ones in the technical specifications provided by the manufacturer. Even the response of the separate headphone amplifier output is flat from 20 Hz to 16 KHz.

While listening through the associated power amplifier (Model RS-250) Dual Mono Amplifier, the tone controls are very effective. Selecting 3KHz turnover frequency the voice in the recording becomes clearer and selecting 6.5 KHz the sizzling highs become very prominent, without any audible distortion. If your speakers sound boomy in the low frequencies, selecting the 250 Hz turnover frequency and cutting it can really solve the boominess in your living room. The 100 Hz turnover is effective if the record-



The special feature of this amplifier is that you can drive your speakers, listen to the headphones simultaneously.

ed music lacks a punchy bass as it is very effective in this range. It also has two electronic output muting devices to avoid thumps when the amplifier is switched on. This feature is also found in high quality amplifiers of world class, too.

The special feature of the Model 250 HDP amplifier is the dual power supply i.e.

separate power supplies for left and right channels. This helps in reducing cross talk and cross modulation distortion. It also has relay protection against power-on surges and short circuiting of output terminals. The power output, both channels, is driven from 20 Hz to 20KHz with 0.06% Total Harmonic Distortion is 60 watts RMS per channel into 8 ohms. The frequency response at 1 watt is 10 Hz to 50 KHz (± 0.5 db; - 1.5 dB). This amplifier is available in two versions, one with power on/off switch, LED indication and separate gain controls for each channel, the other with only LED ON/OFF indication for fixed installation and level as in recording studios.

CONCLUSION

We found the components used in these amplifiers to be of the finest quality and having very close tolerances, which is the reason why they sound so natural, although these amplifiers are a bit expensive. In short, the Pulz people know the pulse of making a good sounding amplifier.

These amplifiers are highly recommended to those listeners who believe that only an imported amplifier can sound good. Listening to any of the Pulz amplifiers is a real treat to one's ears.

NE NAMRISHIKA
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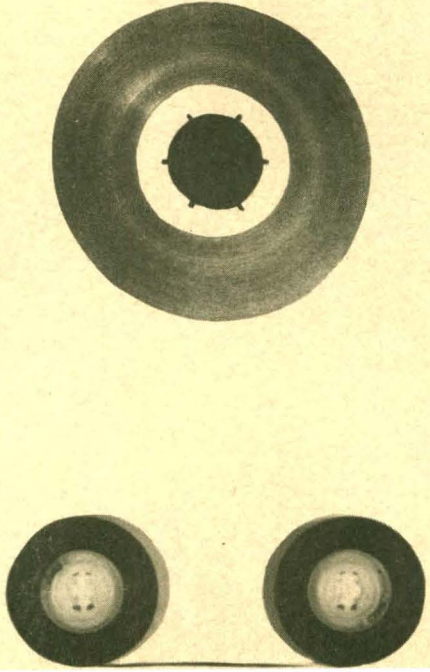
SIDE A

- 1) ஜெய ஜெய சங்கர
- 2) தாய்மை - ஒரு கோளாறு

SIDE B

- 1) அணில்கள்
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The Q Lock editing system ranges from the simple two machine systems right up to multi-editing systems with machine interfaces for over 80 models of video, audio and film transports.

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Mitsubishi X-400 digital recorder

The Mitsubishi X-400 is a 16-track PD-format digital multitrack recorder aimed primarily at the post production market. It features the same cut and splice editing technique as the X-850 and has a full range of interfaces for synchronised VTR operation. In addition to the 16 digital audio tracks there are four additional tracks on the X-400: one for timecode, two auxiliary analogue and an auxiliary digital track. With a special interface, computer mixing data can be stored on the Aux digital track.



The Q Lock editing system

Below: The Soundcraft Series 600 console



Soundcraft Series 600

The Soundcraft Series 600 is a professionally equipped eight buss, 16-track console. Its design pedigree shows in the 26 dB of pre-fade headroom, electronically balanced inputs, sweepable four-band equaliser and separate power supply.

Other facilities include eight sub-groups, six auxiliary sends, LED peak/VU metering and a full 16-track equalised monitor section.

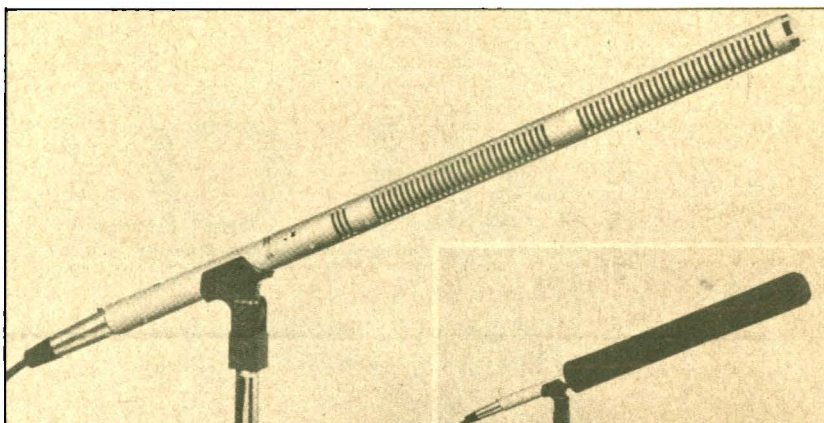
The 16-track interface may be expanded to 24 or even 32 tracks by adding optional monitor modules.

The Series 600 also has 336 high quality jacks, and an enhanced jack/PCB layout that provides automatic self-cleaning and contaminant clearance.

Audio Technica's gun microphone

Audio-Technica AT 815R Electret Condenser Line Microphone (Model AT815R) is a gun microphone designed for long distance sound pickup. It can be used in professional recordings in studio, film or TV shootings where you want to pick up sound sources clearly without any environmental disturbance. This microphone has excellent sound rejection from both the side and rear. It features a balanced low impedance output and a XLR cable connector. The Model AT815R will accommodate any external power source supplying from 9 to 52 volts DC. Current drain is low (just 500 UA at 9VDC), so prolonged battery life from external batteries can be expected.

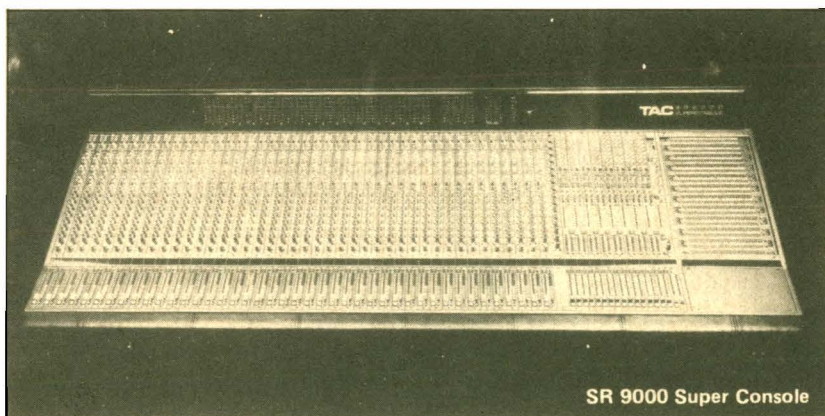
A foam windscreen is provided for outdoor or boom use which is a normal practice in film and TV production. A recessed switch at the base of the microphone handle provides a choice of flat frequency response for full range sound pickup or roll-off of low frequency for reduction of



The Audio Technica gun microphone

ambient background noise or low frequency rumble. It rolls off 10 dB at 50 Hz. The frequency response is 40 to 20,000 Hz and has 200 ohms impedance. It can take 140 dB SPL at 1% THD and weighs only 260 gms (9.2ozs). The length of the microphone is 465 mm (18^{9/32}”) with 21 mm (13/16”) diameter. The microphone is highly recommended for those users who are looking for gun microphones at a very

low price. Some of the mikes available from other manufactures cost at least three to four times. Audio Technica is a Japanese company which specialises in microphone and mixers and audio-video cleaning sets and cartridges. Suggested Price Rs 3500 Contact: Audio Technica US, 1221 Commerce Drive, Stow, Ohio 44224.



SR 9000 Super Console

SR 9000 Super Console

The SR 9000 is the latest addition to the TAC range of consoles.

The standard mainframe has 52 module positions, with a jack field located to the right which can accommodate upto 528 patchpoints on Switchcraft TT hand-wired jack connectors.

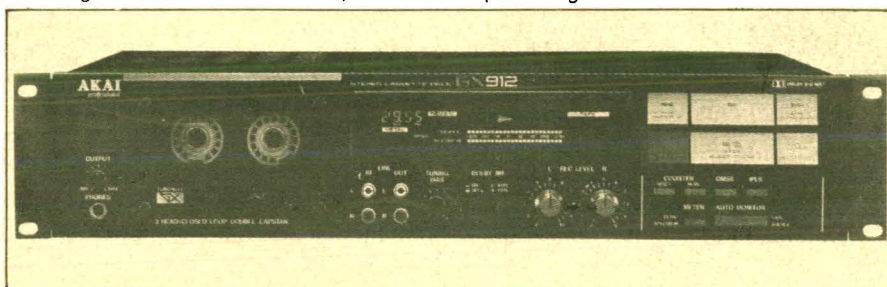
The input channel is configured with separate mic and line trims, and two microphones can be connected to each microphone amplifier and a switch will alternate between them.

Akai GX912 Pro Tape Deck

This deck is specially designed for studio applications. It is a three head machine with a closed loop double capstan system. At the heart of the GX912 is a micro-computer which controls the entire transport mechanism. Intro Scan, Quick Memory Search, Instant Program Location,

system and other features are available from feather touch front panel push buttons or from the wireless remote control. The digital electronic counter shows the elapsed time, as well as index position, and the time remaining on the tape. Frequency response is 20 Hz to 21,000 Hz -3 dB with metal tape and 20 Hz to 19,000 Hz -3 dB with normal tape. It is fitted with Dolby B and Dolby C noise reduction system which improves signal to

noise ratio upto 15 dB and 20 dB at 1 KHz to 10 KHz respectively. The line input and outputs are on front panel as this unit is the rack mount type. The dimensions are 482.6 (W) x 105 (H) x 372 (D) mm and weighs only 7 kg. Suggested Price is St £ 499 Contact: Akai (UK) Limited, Haslemere Heathrow Estate, Silver Jubilee Way, Parkway Hounslow, Middlesex TW4 6NF.



The Akai GX tape deck

TALL CLAIMS

The South has more major languages and performing art forms per square mile in India.

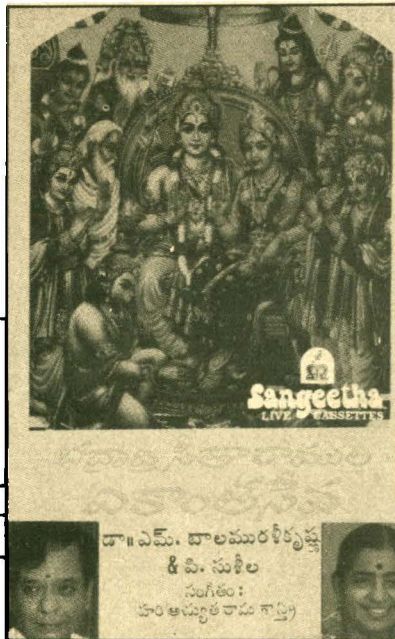
By V A K Ranga Rao

It is not parochial to claim that the South has more major languages and performing art forms per square mile than any other area in India. This is true for religious beliefs and rituals, in which music plays a major role. And the cassette has proved a big boon, spreading an assortment of riches before the listener. Even for the fastidious, the choice is large. And the quality of music is generally good, though the tech-

The perennial standby of the Andhras is the central deity of 'Sri Venkatesam' a SEA cassette. The passable lyrics of M K Ramu have been tuned by father and son S Rajeswara Rao and S Ramalingeswara Rao, sung by P Susheela, S P Sailaja and new singer D Muralikrishna. This cassette, too, is as splendid as the first, slightly lighter in fare. The first song is a joy in Anandabhairavi. Muralikrishna's pleasant voice is at its best.

(Krishna) allows lyricist Nandimangalam Imayavaramban to avoid staleness. He ranges, with joy, awe and wonder spilling over, from the banks of the Yamuna, to the battle-field of Kurukshetra and the blessed month of Margazhi. The melodies, the orchestrations are chaste and Vani sings these songs as though she has been in love with Krishna all her life.

It is rare for a Carnatic vocalist to make his debut on cassette before hitting the



nical quality of cassettes, and that of recording could do with some improvement.

Among the recent Telugu devotional releases, an outstanding one is Sangeetha's 'Bhadradri Seetharamula Ekanthaseva' which gets M Balamuralikrishna the classical vocalist and P Susheela, film playback singer par excellence, to team up for the coup of the year. Splendid is the only word to describe all aspects of this cassette which is selected by Madduri Subba Rao and tuned by Hari Achutha Rama

Two cassettes, both by Vani Jairam for two different labels, are the entrants in the Tamil devotionals. Both have been tuned by L Krishnan. 'Arulmigu Amman' on Geethanjali has the lyrics of Tamil Nambi and one each of Kanji Kesavan and S Parimala Devi. Those that elicit an immediate and hearty response are 'Mangattu kovile' and 'Alavainagar' by their inherent beauty of form, gilded by Vani's singing.

Her 'Gokula Ganam' for Sangeetha is a superior effort. To start with, the subject

big time, but R Ganesan has done just that for Sangeetha. He has, however, an old-fashioned quality, slurring his words and, in the opening varnam, it is a drag. The other songs, some of them exquisite, like 'Nadaloludai', 'Brovavamma' (Kalyanavasantham, Thyagaraja/Manji), Shyama Sastri, too, are tainted with this flaw, though to a lesser extent.

Out of the many Kannada devotionals released on cassette by Vikram Stereo, two attract attention. One is a harikatha

about 'Bhakta Purandara Dasar' told by Sant Sree Bhadraragi Achyutadasaru. His scholarship is unquestionable and the unfolding is easy to follow. But the 'musicality' of it is minimal.

The other, 'Jina Gana Manjari', has nine Jain devotional songs written and tuned by A Sundaramurthi. A good hit of this quality is singer Kasturi Shanker's achievement. The lyrics are finely crafted, the tunes in the traditional mould and the orchestral arrangements serviceable. A good buy. Technical aspects and inlay cards pass muster.

TAMIL HITS

At the moment a score of Tamil film cassettes are flooding the market every other week. Here's a representative selection.

'Chinnamayil' of Sri Visweswara Pictures has only five songs, released by Rakam 72. The unctuous introduction by a female is a pain. The first two songs are the best, 'Malai vandachu' (Vairamuthu/S P Balasubrahmanyam, S Janaki chorus) and 'Kekum varam yavum' (Gangaiamaran/Malaysia Vasudevan, S P Sailaja) with a touch of folk, in the best traditions of composers Manoj-Gyan. T M Sounderaranjan's weepy number and the other two that sound like rejects from Hindi films don't demand or deserve notice. Good inlay card and just passable technical qualities.

The cassette featuring the six songs from Sri Amman Creations 'Enga Chinna Rasa' released by Audiovision-Lahari opens with a revolting commentary by a

duets of the fifties, up-dated by orchestral vamping. The third duet, 'Thenpadai cheemai oram', is one with a mod turn, combining swaying violins with sizzling singing. The lone sad number 'Nan thananatha pattukku' (Vali/S P B) and 'Enra thukkam pochu' (Vali/S P B chorus) - a frolicsome folk song - are just listenable. Not so the commentary.

S R Combines' 'Neruppu Nela,' a much touted production in Cinemascope has four nondescript songs tuned by Shankar-Ganesh. This Audiovision-Lahari cassette, too, has irritating commentary between songs. Apart from S P Balasubrahmanyam, Vani Jairam and S Janaki, it has comparative newcomers Ramesh, Manjula and Sagari. Nothing to rave about, but the opening song 'Vuyire vuyire' has an expansive movement to it.

T Series has almost captured the Tamil mall, too, including one by Ilaiyaraja. They range between the excellent to the nearly excruciating. Ilaiyaraja's music through five songs in S K Cine Productions' 'Kathal Voivadillai' is a feather in T Series' cap. The opening duet, 'Inda davani' (SPB, S Janaki) is rompy and romantic, a sway-inducing melody set to foot-tapping rhythm. A sure-fire hit chart climber. S P B's solo 'Sirikkum mattum' is a philosophy fired in a folk-kiln. 'Manikka chilaye' by the first team is a slightly slower paced romantica. The orchestra has Ilaiyaraja's distinctive marks and makes the song. The same pair float through the old-fashioned flow, gentle of pace and generous of melody, 'Rajamohini.' Vairamuthu's poetry for the above is up to the mark but for the last duet 'Kadal

stale, badly enunciated. 'Thoduvanam' has Janaki ranging at Himalayan heights, not altogether a pleasant experience. Rajkumar Bharati's contributions, 'Aaaaas', are no better.

There is no one to beat HMV in vintage music. A recent release has seven songs each from Chitrakala's (stupidly and incorrectly credited to Shri Ganesh Pictures' Circuit on the inlay card) and Visalakshi Films 'Sumaithangi.' Incomparable! Memorable! Well, that's the kind of music made by Kannadasan-Viswanathan-Ramamurthi at that time, the time of the Golden Sunset. It contains exquisite gems that can be counted amongst the best songs of the singers. J P Chandrababu and L R Eswari race through 'Porandalum'. S Janaki and Sirkazhi Govindarajan cut right into the heart with 'Kannile neer edarku.' P B Sreenivas exemplifies the romantic solo, with 'Nilavukku en mel', and with Janaki's help, the romantic duet, 'Endan paruvathin'. Janaki's solo numbers are the musicalised essence of joy and grief, 'Radhaiketra kannano' and 'En annai seitha'. Good quality sound with material provided by Pallavi H Prakaash, a former HMV employee.

A new label Madura Audio, enters the fray with 'Adi Sirippale', which contains comic excerpts from the plays done by a young comedian turned film director, Y G Mahendran. For those who have seen the plays, the cassette offers a deja vu of the plays. For those coming across these escapades for the first time, the situation is explained by Mahendran's brief commentary. The inlay card contains almost no in-



female who oozes lubriciously over a particular name five times over. The first song is just a bright folksy, nayandi melam studded chorus (Gangaiamaran/S P B). But the three duets of S P B and Janaki are super delights. Shankar-Ganesh can be particularly proud about 'Kondaicheval koovum neram,' (Vali) a song with a heartening melody, sparkling banks of orchestration and first rank singing. 'Mama unaku oru thoothu' (Kuruviikkarambai Shanmugam) is a take-off on the melodied

mele' gets fractured between unlikely imagery. For instance, imagine a deer being likened to a wave in a sea!

A composer with a thorough Carnatic base, L Vaidyanathan, tries to be different through the four songs he writes for Mayascope Film Company's 'Kavitha Pada Neramillai'. The first chorus by Balu has slivers of newcasts slipped into it. 'Putham pudu ulagam' by Janaki and Vaidyanathan has a familiar and languorous feel to it. Jesudas' 'Puliyai vaithavan' is weepy,

formation about other participants, writers, etc.

Just announced by the AVM Audio is the long-awaited Carnatic vocal cassette of Madurai T N Seshagopalan, 'Sri Rama Nama Prabhavam' which contains a dozen songs on Rama. Though it is six weeks too late for Sri Rama Navami, Seshagopalan's sensibility might have well made it a timeless feast of devotional Carnatic music. The composers include Thyagaraja, Ramadas, Kabir, Papanasam Sivan, etc.

HINDUSTANI FILM

Hawalaat
Various
T SERIES SFMC 2556

Annu Malik follows a style that is obviously meant to be like Laxmikant-Pyarelal's ('Terejawani ke charche'), Mohammed Aziz is satisfied being a clone of the late Rafi, Gulshan Bawra churns out some shockers like 'Step by step' and Dalip Tahil and Rishi Kapoor fill in as attractions to prop up the music track of 'Hawalaat.' All of which doesn't augur very well. The 'steps of romance' is unintentionally both hilarious and embarrassing. Even the normally dependable Kishore Kumar is totally out of control. It is amusing to hear Lata sounding ever so coy and negotiating portions needlessly made complex (Tere Pyar pe bharosa kar to loon). Dalip Tahil only goes 'rapa pa para' and hisses menacingly. 'Haye re tera bholapan' (Asha Bhosle) is long and laboured while Shailendra Singh goes through the familiar vagaries of 'zamana versus pyar' in 'Shaayad tu mujhse pyar karti hai'. But being the most subdued of the numbers it stands a chance of turning into a popular hummer.

Majaal
Various
T SERIES SFMC 2556

The Bappi Lahiri bandwagon, rollercoaster, call it what you will. He has those numbers that will be turned into 'drill dances' on screen. So get set for desi Jane Fonda steps and some 'modern' mathematics like 'Tum into main, main into tum', 'Haye rama, haye rama' and 'Ting ting ghanti baje', a virtual Kishore Kumar-Asha Bhosle riot of thumping and cat calls. Don't be fooled either by the alleged alaap of Asha Bhosle in 'Sachch hota jiska pyar'. For all the references to the Lord Krishna it remains a surreptitious exercise in erotica.

Kamagni
Various
VENUS 689

Illyaraja's comeback effort after the excellent 'Sadma' score fails to fulfil the promise he had exuded then. The all-English number 'You are my dream' (Sharon Prabhakar) isn't a patch on his previous hit 'O bichhua', the dance number from 'Sadma'. Neither does the dream come true in 'Jiske sahare rangeen nazare', the theme song which looks like an amalgam of several nursery rhyme tunes. Asha Bhosle resorts to too much swooning in 'Main ha-seen tu jawan' and almost makes it sound like a parody of such situations. Though the effort to transform a Tamil tune into 'Aa gaya sapna koyee' shows, the number passes off as an enticing children's tune. The redeeming factor of the cassette is

the excellent stereo recording with Ilaiyaraaja's arrangement playing teasingly for stereo.

Dacait
Various
T SERIES SFMC 2122

An obstructive and catchy score by R D Burman if not exactly an original one. 'Gaon main mach gaya shor' sounds familiar but scores on its beats. It is one of those typical village celebration numbers where Kishore Kumar on sheer versatility



steals the show from Suresh Wadkar. Wadkar however stands up to Asha Bhosle in 'Maine kaha tumne suna' where Burman appears to be groping to compose an engaging tune, the result being a more attractive musical arrangement! Burman styles 'Kis karan naiya doli' exactly on the lines of Laxmikant Pyarelal's 'Kuch kehta hai yeh sawan' from 'Mera Gaon Mera Desh,' coincidentally another dacoit film! There is nothing distinguishable in 'Mere yaar ko mere Allah do ek chand sa pyaara lalla', a routine song of pre-birth mirth. 'Woh teri duniya nahin...mehfil nahin' has Lata Mangeshkar dissuading her man from stalking the woods. The number comes off better in the stanzas where the clan of Lata is justified.

And just-for-keeps-sake, the second side has instrumental versions of all the five numbers.

Insaaf
Various
VENUS VCF 643

The album begins on an awesome note – like a dozen monsters blowing hot numbers. That is a prelude to what sounds a cabaret number – a genre that has lost its haunting touch long way back with Laxmi-

kant Pyarelal's own 'Inteqam.' Here they need both Anuradha and Mohammed Aziz plus those heaving breathing sounds to merge with trumpet and piano to get the desired effect.

As though in redemption, Anuradha cries out 'Nand ka lala nand Gopala', only one wishes she wouldn't make an attempt to sound so coy. The effort shows.

Alisha Chinai makes a more trumpeting and sensational entry than Anuradha in another cabaret number that goes 'Main hoon too hai aur raat hai' which might just about get away with imaginative picturisation. 'Humsafar milte hai manzil' is a lively and robust number by Anuradha and perhaps the best of the lot despite the orchestration tending to get too loud at places, Farooq Kaiser's lyric cites a dozen examples of resurrection of a fallen soul.

Sansar
Various
T SERIES SFMC 2575

In 'Radha rani naiyo re', Laxmikant and Pyarelal manage a typical Radha-Kanhैया situation, fairly engaging with a semi-classical score. And Anuradha Paudwal backs up commendably. 'Dekhiye yeh sansar hai' (Balasubramaniam) a commentary about the materialistic, spiritless world suffers from a lack of basic tunefulness. It is as dull and drab as the world they decry. In contrast the next number 'Main aaj bahut khush hoon' is more discreetly composed. 'Buddha ho gaya ghoda' has an old man laughing off his sorrows but not desisting from self-pity and condemnation of the present order. Certainly doesn't befit the status he claims. And finally going 'zoo zoo zoo soja soja', you are treated to yet another lullaby that just about passes muster.

Aulad
Various
T SERIES SFMC 2575

'Aulad' begins with a pedestrian number (literally) that reads 'Raste ka maal saste mein' and Usha Mangeshkar has the ignominy of rendering it – shrill and off-key. Of the three Kavita Krishnamurthy numbers, 'Jeevan jyot jale' is subdued and comes off best with an unobtrusive background score, while 'Ek maa ka dil' bemoans the breaking of a mother's heart and is virtually reduced to one big sob. 'Ton ton ton' is a straight lift from a nursery rhyme and before you realise it you are in for another lullaby. Listening to 'Lo jaa raha hai koi' makes you realise how futile it is to try and differentiate between so many numbers of its kind being churned out with alarming regularity.

— Ananth Mahadevan

HINDUSTANI FILM

Key: Title/Label/Coupling No/Music Composer/Artiste(s)

- Dilruba Tangewali** T Series SFMC 2636 Anwar Usman Various
Dance Dance T Series SFMC 2636 Bappi Lahiri Alisha Chinai, Vijay Benedict, Uttara Kelkar, Bappi Lahiri
Duets of Shabbir - Vol 2 T Series SFMC 2635 Various Shabbir
Dharti Ki Kasam T Series SFMC 2661 Usha Khanna Hemlata, Vinod, Alka, Dilraj, Mohz Aziz
Ghungat T Series SFMC 2650 Laxman Shahabadi Alka, Dilraj, Suresh, Usha
Hits of Asha Bhosle - Vol 2 T Series SFMC 2633 Various Asha
Hits of Lata Mangeshkar - Vol 2 T Series SFMC 2634 Various Lata
Insaaf Venus VCF 643 Laxmikant-Pyarelal Various
Jawab Hum Denge (Dialogues & Songs) T Series SFMC 2533/4 Laxmikant-Pyarelal Kavita, Shabbir, Anuradha
Kamagni Venus VCF 689 Ilaiyaraaja Various
Kaash Venus VCF 662 Rajesh Roshan Various
Kalyug Aur Ramayan T Series SFMC 1141-A Kalyanji-Anandji Various
Laagal Chunri Me Daag (Bhojpuri) T Series SFMC 2653 Sumitra Lahiri Suresh Sanki
Mera Yaar Mera Dushman T Series SFMC 2667 Bappi Lahiri Kishore, Asha, Mahendra, Shailendra, Manhar
Pyar Karke Dekho T Series SFMC 2681 / 2682 Bappi Various
Super Hits 1987 T Series SFMC 2630 Various Various
Thikana Venus VCF 650 Kalyanji-Anandji Suresh, Alka, Asha
The Melodious Decade 1956-66 (Vol I & II) HMV STHV 42687/8 Various Various
Yaaden-Vols V, VI T Series SNMC 2623, 27 Various Vandana, Babla

Key: Title/Label/Coupling No/Genre/Artiste(s)

HINDUSTANI BASIC

- Ashwini Bhide Sings** HMV STCS 04B 7271 Vocal Ashwini Bhide
Dharmik Birha Gathani 4209 Folk Chhedi Lal Yadav, Gama Devi, Halim
Dahej Pratha Gathani 4208 Folk Chhedi Lal Yadav, Gama Devi, Halim
Dance With Me Venus VCF 622 Pop Sheila, Charles
Hari Nam Sumar Venus VCB 614 Devotional Nanik Chawla
Jay Maa Santoshi T Series SNMC 0205 Devotional Pandit Somnath Sharma
Jani Bhakthi Sangeet (Vol I) Sangeetha 6PMSC 30 Devotional Kiran Jain
Jaam Uthale Gathani 4207 Qawali Kamini Naaz
Love Duets-Vol II T Series SVMC 2692 Instrumental Rajendra Prasanna
Parvati Avtar - Part 2 T Series SNMC 2450 Devotional Vanda Bajpei, Chatur Sen, Bodhita & others
Raga Shyam Kalyan Alurkar AA 150 Vocal Ganpati Bhat
Rajan Yaman, Kalavati, Bgeshwari Alurkar AA 156 Vocal Ganpati Bhat
Raja Chhayana Alurkar AA 157 Vocal Madhuri Joshi
Shri Durga Stuti - 3 T Series 2620/21/22 Devotional Narendra Chanchal
Shree Shiv Pujan T Series SNMC 2463 Devotional Vandana Bajpai, Chatur Sen, Bodhita & others
Songs on Bahubali Sangeetha 4MSC 4002 Devotional Dr P B Sreenivos

- Tara Rani Katha** T Series SVMC 2706 Folk Narendra Chanchal
50 Golden Years of Ustad Bismillah Khan (Vols I & II) HMV STC 7273/74 Shehnai Bismillah Khan

BENGALI

- ***Ajoy Daser Ganopriyo Gaan** Gathani 136 Film songs Kishore, Asha & others
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Shree Ramkrishna Bhajan Gathani 4213 Devotional Mahesh Ranjan Som

CARNATIC CLASSICAL

- Jalatharangam** Sangeetha 6ECDB 7091 Instrumental Anayampatti S Dhandapani
Mandolin Sangeetha 6ECDB 7088 Instrumental Master U Srinivas
Nadaswaram AVM Audio BFBSR 606 Instrumental Thirupanandali S, Balsubramaniam & Party
Nadaswaram Sangeetha 6ECDB 224 Instrumental Kottur Rajarathinam Pillai
Padams & Javalis Sangeetha 6ECDB 7093 Vocal R Vedavalli
Ragam Thanam Pallavi Sangeetha 6ECDB 7145 Vocal Dr M L Vasanthakumari
Saxophone Sangeetha 6ECDD 7014 Instrumental Kadri Gopalnath
Sri Mahadevi AVM Audio BFSR 136 Vocal Prof Maveelikara R Prabhakaravarma
Sri Ram Nama Prabhavam AVM Audio BFSR 149/150 Vocal T N Seshagopala
Thillana Guchcha Sangeetha 4ECDB 7210 Vocal Lalitha Navile
Violin (Duet) Sangeetha 6ECDB 7083 Instrumental Kannakudi Vaidyanathan
Veena Sangeetha 6ECDB 143 Instrumental Suma Sudhindra
Vocal-Thyagaraja Krithis Sangeetha 6ECDB 225 Vocal Dr M Balamuralikrishna
Vocal Sangeetha 6ECDB 7124 Vocal Maharajapuram Santhanam

ENGLISH

- All Time Hall of Fame Hits** CBS 4CX 10258 Pop Tony Bennett
Bookends CBS 4CX 01145 Pop Simon & Garfunkel
Easy Listening Favourites - Vol 1 Capitol EASY 1 Pop Instrumental Various
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Transitions Capitol ST 6548 Pop Instrumental Frank Mills
The Beatles Ballads Parlophone PCS 7214 Pop The Beatles
Wow Dance Dance-Vol II EMI WODD 2 Disco Various

KANNADA

- * **Aaseya Bale** Lahari 4ALA 2812 Vijaya Bhaskar Various
 * **Bhadrakali** Lahari 4ALA 2811 Sathyam Various
Bhakthi Karunamrutha Sangeetha 4ECDB 7033 Devotional P Susheela
Bhaktha Pahlada Sangeetha 6ECDB 60021 Devotional Bhadrargiri Achuthdas

NEW RELEASES

* Indicates film with Music Composer in place of Genre

Bheeshmarjuna Amarnad ANK-37 Yakshagana
Dasara Padagalu Sangeetha 6ECDB 7038 Devotional
 Dr Rajkumar
Dasa Sahitya Sangeetha 6ECDB 7165 Devotional
 Srirangam R Kannan
Dasara Krithis Sangeetha 4ECDB 7168 Devotional
 Ranjani Suresh
Devotional Songs Sangeetha 4ECDB 7179 Devotional
 H S Anusuya
Dr Kuvempu's Ramayana Darshanam Amarnad ANK-23
 Devotional Shakunthala Bai Panduranga Rao
Dr Rajkumar's Film Songs Amarnad ANK-30 Instrumental
 Y N Subba Rao
Dr Gopalkrishna Adiga's Kendavare Amarnad ANK-32
 Light music Mysore Ananthaswamy & others
Dr Kuvempu's Prema Kashmiri Amarnad ANK-33 Light music
 Rahuram & H R Leelavathi
Edavat Eranna Amarnad ANK-29 Jokes A S Moorthy
Folk Songs Sangeetha 4ECDB 7034 Folk B K Sumitra & Party
Gana Sowrabha Sangeetha 3ECDB 3504 Devotional
 Mysore Prabha
Geetha Ganga Sangeetha 4ECDB 7162 Devotional
 Shimoga Subbanna
Hari Bhakthi Sudha Sangeetha 4ECDB 7176 Devotional
 N Rama
Hasya Chatakigalu Amarnad ANK 34 Jokes
 Chandrashekhar Hiremath
Jodi Kahale Amarnad ANK 31 Children's Songs
 Mysore Ananthaswamy & others
Krithis of Purandara Dasa Sangeetha 6ECDB 7035 Devotional
 Dr M Balamuralikrishna
Kanaka Dasa Sangeetha 6ECB 60026 Harikatha
 Bhadrageeri Acchuthdas
K S Narasimhaswamy's Prematharanga Amarnad ANK 38
 Light Music Mysore Ananthaswamy & others
Kailasam's Songs Amarnad ANK-39 Light Music
 C Aswath & Party
Kannadothasava Geethegalu Amarnad ANK-41 Patriotic
 Bangalore Latha & Party
Lakshmi Shobhana Sangeetha 4ECDB 7169 Devotional
 Madhura Satyaraj & Sulochana
Maharathi Karna Sangeetha 6ECDB 7045 Harikatha
 Sant Keshavadas
Magada Vadhe Sangeetha 6ECB 60020 Yakshagana Various
Muththina Thene Sangeetha 4ECDB 7047 Folk K Yuvaraj,
 Sulochana
Nithyadevatha Pooje Amarnad ANK 28 Devotional
 Ganapathi Shastri
 * **Nimbe Hanninantha Hudigi Nodu** Lahari 4ALA 2823
 Film songs Various
Purandara Dasa Songs Sangeetha P3ECDB 3504 Devotional
 Mysore Prabha
Paaduka Pradhana Sangeetha 6ECB 60061 Yakshagana
 Various
 * **Raavana Raajya** Lahari 4ALA 2817 Vijayanand Various
Songs On Vinayaka Sangeetha 4ECDB 7163 Devotional
 Dr M Balamuralikrishna
Sundara Kanda Sangeetha 4ECB 40013 Harikatha
 Sant Keshavadas
Seetha Kalyana Sangeetha 4ECB 40015 Harikatha
 Sant Keshavadas
Srikrishna Sandhana Sangeetha 6ECB 60033 Yakshagana
 Various

Sudhanvarjuna Sangeetha 6ECB 60034 Yakshagana Various
Shishunala Sharif's Songs Amarnad ANK 24 Folk
 Kasturi Shankar Jaipal & others
Sharavu Kshetra Mahathme Amarnad ANK 36 Yakshagana
 Gopalkrishna Bhat & others
Siddalingaiah's Kempu Surya Amarnad ANK 40 Light Music
 C Aswath & Party
Teraneleyutara Tangi Sangeetha 4ECDB 7036 Sherif Songs
 C Aswath, Shimoga Subbanna, Sulochana
Uttara Karnataka Bhavageethegalu Amarnad ANK 22 Folk
 Gururaja Hosakote
Viswa Santhi Bhajans Sangeetha 4ECB 40023 Devotional
 Sant Keshavadas
Viswaroopa Sangeetha 4ECB 40011 Harikatha
 Sant Keshavadas
Veerabhadreswara Suprabhatha Amarnad ANK 35
 Devotional Kasturi Shankar, Narasimha Nayak
 * **1987 Kannada Hits** Lahari 4ALA 2818 Film songs Various

MALAYALAM

Bhakthi Geetharchane Sangeetha 4ECB 40032 Devotional
 P Leela
Bhakthi Lahari Sangeetha 4ECDB 4044 Devotional S Janaki
 * **Malayalam Film Songs** Sangeetha 87121/22/23/24/26
 Various Various
Pushpanjali Sangeetha 4ECB 40040 Devotional
 P Jayachandran
 * **Ranga Tharangini** Tharangini 87125 Various Various
Sangeetha Sudha Sangeetha 4ECB 40050 Devotional
 P Susheela
Unniyesu Veetil Varu AVM Audio BFSR 139 Devotional Chitra,
 Asha, Parvathi, Jolly Abraham

MARATHI

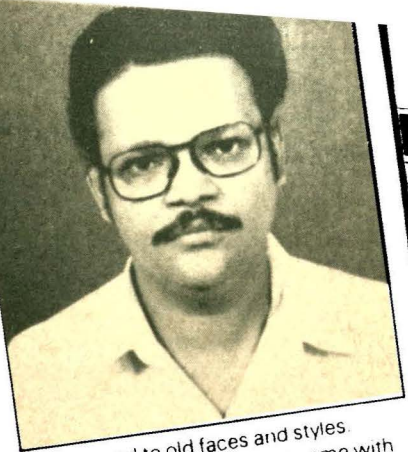
Aha Fatkewale Tumhi Aho Dadhiwale Tumhi T Series
 SNMC 2648 Lavani Uttara Kelkar
Bhishma Gaurav Venus VCB 651 Folk Vithal Umup,
 Shakuntala, Vithal Hedurkar, Kundan Kamble
Bhakthi Sangeeth Sangeetha 6MSC 1035 Devotional
 T M Naganath
Dhamal Vinodi Lok Geete T Series SNMC 2647 Devotional
 Vinod Kumar, R K Keni, Balkrishna
 * **Gammatt Jammatt/Navri Mile Navrula** T Series 2693
 Anil-Arun Various
 * **Gadbad Ghotala** Venus 666 Suresh Kumar Various
Karuya Dogat Rock 'n' Roll T Series 2646 Folk Vithal Umup,
 Uttara Kelkar, Shaila Chikkle
Maza Navara Sudharla Tips JE 458 Folk Krishna,
 Ranjana Shinde
Marathi Abhangs Sangeetha 4MSC 4076 Folk
 Pandit Vinayak Torvi
Nacharan Bor Yesavyachi Venus 670 -
Roktok Samna Surluk SUR 200 Folk Vitthal Umup,
 Ranjana Shinde
Shegan Teertha Yatra Tips JE 029 Devotional
 Anand Chiplekar
Swar Gandha T Series SNMC 1837 Bhakti Geete
 Nandini Sharon
Shivaji Maharajaoncha Rajyabhi shekh Tips JE 001 Powada
 Babasaheb Deshmukh
Santaji Dhanaji Gathani CL 101 Powada -
Tumchi Guitar Amchi Dholki T Series SNMC 2695 Lavani
 Uttara Kelkar
Yelcote Yelcote Jay Malha CBS NPX 2503 Devotional Various

**JOHN MATHEW,
Writer/Poet**

Breakfast TV is certainly a welcome idea. On the whole, Doordarshan's morning programme has been informative and entertaining. The music, a cartoon or a skit, an interview with a prominent personality, and the news bulletins – Hindi and English – have become a pleasant routine. And I'm sure that many Indians, like me, have become addicted to Breakfast TV. I hear a better fare awaits us in the future.

The 'Dus Kadam' aerobic exercises undoubtedly helps the young with their physical fitness. I, too, am tempted to practise some of those simple exercises at times. Perhaps, more complete and slow-paced instructions and demonstrations can be of further help.

Morning news bulletins are nothing but pale imitations of the evening news reviews. Some readers need a crash renewal programme in effective public reading, pronunciation, enunciation, etc. Some more young newsreaders will be quite welcome, since we have got too



accustomed to old faces and styles. Starting the morning programme with 'Vande Mataram' is a bit too old-fashioned an idea. Why don't we have some pulsating morning ragas – a different tune each day, perhaps?

As time passes, the duration of the Breakfast TV can be extended to a two-hour period, namely, from 7 am to 9 am.

**SHASHIN PATEL,
Student**

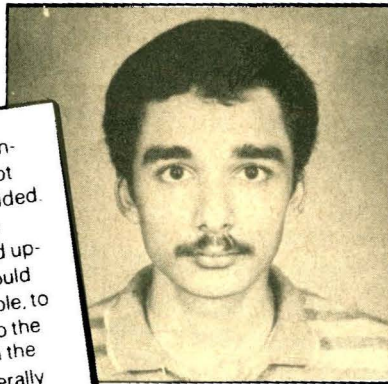
Viewing Breakfast TV was a pleasant surprise. I had no expectations on what was going to be shown but, when I read about the programme in the newspapers I felt it was a very good idea. However, when I started viewing the telecast, I found it had some limitations too. For instance, of the 45-minute relay every morning, 20 minutes are occupied by news – so much time devoted to it is no fun to me. If news should be extended,

The exercises shown are too simple... even for me. So far they are amateurish... should, therefore, be made more professional whereby viewers exercising with the programme should be able to improve themselves physically. Anyway, I find 'Keep Fit' is a far superior programme to 'Das Kadam'.

More educational programmes, meant specifically for school-going children, need to be shown. Science is an interesting topic. Also, a short serial can be shown during the mornings.

**JAWAHAR
Engineer**

A complete misnomer – Breakfast TV. Because most of the people watching it must be busy getting ready for work or doing housework at that time. And, if they are having breakfast, then all those exercises tend to be just another serial to watch.



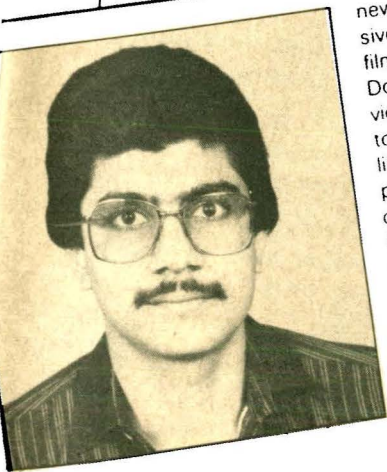
The Hindi news at 7.35 am and English at 8.05 am are quite stale – by that time the newspapers are already out. For example, one day the news announced that Prakash Padukone had entered the quarters of the National Badminton Championships, whereas, that morning's papers had it that Rajeev Bagga had beaten him in the quarters and entered the semi-finals.

The news should be fresh, plus there is no point in giving the temperatures of four major cities at 5.30 am. Instead, a detailed weather forecast for the country must be given, so it benefits office goers, farmers, fishermen and the general public. Plus an announcement of any public, national, bank holiday on that particular day should be announced too. Latest currency prices for the businessman, latest prices of major commodities, announcement of delays in major flight and rail timings – something like a teletex for the nation – will make the morning transmission more informative.

news events were reported comprehensively, even if simultaneous on-the-spot film documentation could not be provided. Doordarshan should similarly provide viewers with absolutely the latest and up-to-date news coverage. Also, one would like Bombay Doordarshan, for example, to provide news on local events prior to the commencement of Breakfast TV on the National Network. Viewers are generally very concerned with the proximity of events and this is one way of providing what they require.

Anyway, the exercise programme like 'Das Kadam', which features yoga, is good too but aerobics – meant for fitness maniacs – is disconcerting. If you can't do it (the exercises) well, don't show it! Except for news and yoga so far the rest of the programmes are bloody crap.

One suggestion is to include a programme on current topics – something like on the budget or a major dacoity. Then expert opinions of respected and reputed authorities, on the related events, could be obtained. This would be very interesting to viewers and would surely capture their interest.



**ATUL MAROO,
Partner, Shemaroo Video Library:**

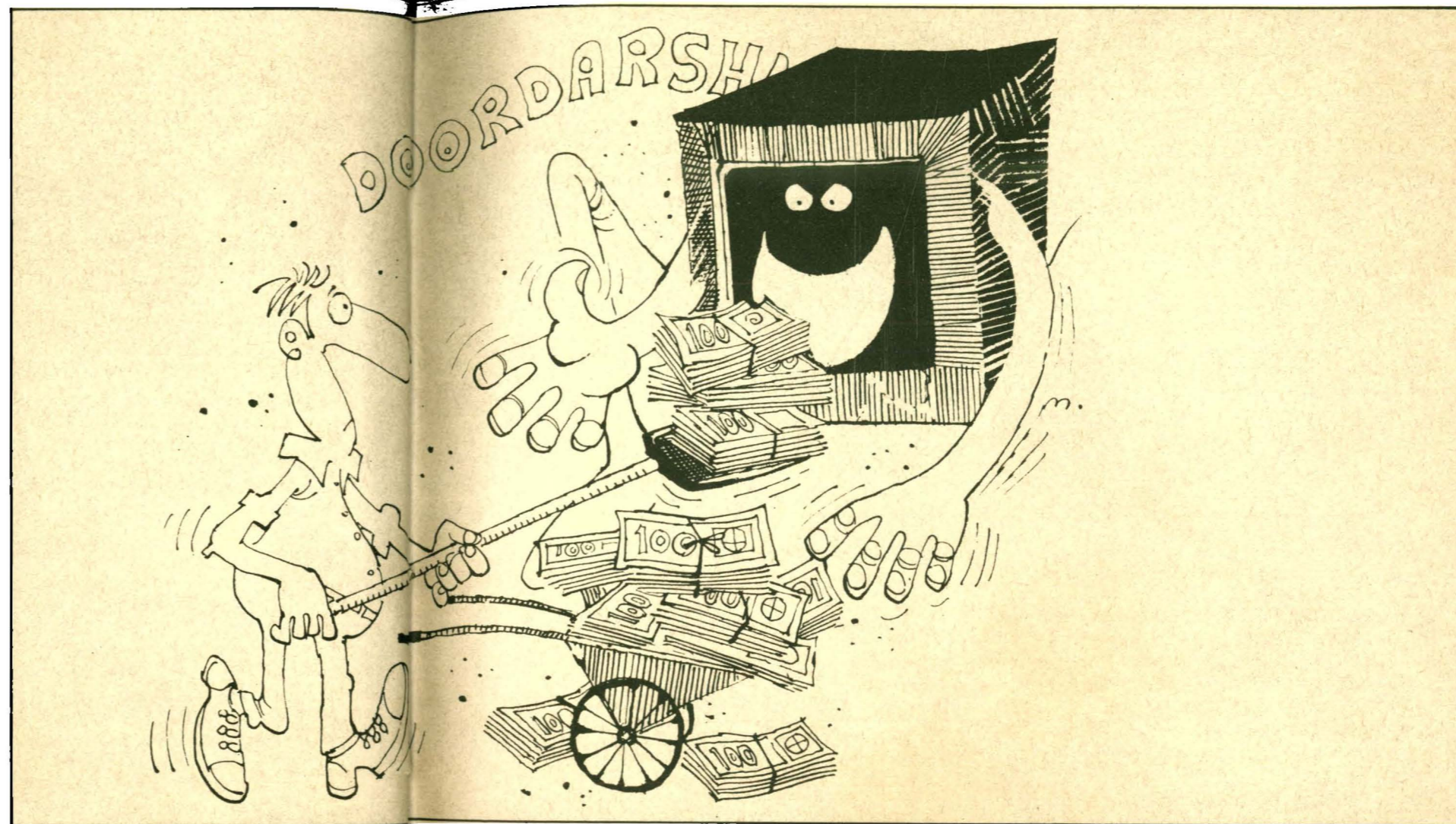
I expected Breakfast TV, a new concept being promoted for the first time in the country, to at least provide me excellent coverage of news. It has, but it still needs improvement.

When I was in Singapore, they had Breakfast TV there too and... the previous night's major

– PARAG KAMANI

India's Super Dream Bazaar

How does one get a serial passed by Doordarshan, especially if one is in a hurry and wants the prime time slot? To find out SANJAY SAYANI stalked the corridors of Mandi House and discovered a well-organised nexus between the good guys and the bad ones. His report.



Doordarshan, the super dream bazaar of media pundits in India, is almost like a demi God. It presides over 91,60,000 television sets in India, reaching an amazing 70 per cent of the population, 99% of which sit glued before their TV sets every night. The number of TV sets is steadily rising and statisticians pin the figure of 90 per cent coverage within the next three years.

These mind-blowing figures are a media controller's delight and signals manna from the heavens for manufacturers advertising their products on the tube, especially through the medium of sponsored serials. Compare this to a manufacturer who advertises in 18,000-odd publications, plus 12,000 cinema houses in India and yet is unable to reach as many people as one exposure on prime time on the National Network of Doordarshan.

This has encouraged all kinds of people to overload the Doordarshan bandwagon, from top notchers like Ramesh Sippy to a thousand other fly-by-night operators who

troop in, bugles blaring, confident of getting sponsors for dull and inane serials, episodic short stories, and sudless soap operas. Most of them get their approval in double quick time, greasing the right palms of the right folks in the right places at the right time!

This has reportedly led to heads rolling in the Doordarshan hierarchy, while there are others who have been charge-sheeted by the CBI. According to many producers and serial-makers, who requested anonymity, corruption is allegedly rampant in Mandi House.

Officially, Doordarshan is bringing home thick slices of bacon, and rates for sponsored programmes are spiralling like nobody's business. Just a year-and-a-half ago, sponsored programmes for 30 minutes on the National Network cost sponsors Rs 70,000 in the Super A category with two minutes free advertisement time, while today it costs Rs 1,50,000 with four minutes of advertisement time!

In any other medium, such hike in rates would have signalled a drop in revenue, but not for Doordarshan. The going is bet-

ter, not just as good as serials continue to boom.

However, the overall picture for producers who want to get their serials passed is bad. They have to wait almost as long as a year for the clearance and then too surrender to the whims and fancies of Doordarshan's policies. Serials like 'Subha' and those of its ilk got aborted mid-way, because objections were raised in Parliament, while serials like 'Ramayan' got past easily. Despite investing time and money and the labour of love as well as physical and menial work into making a pilot, submitting it for approval, waiting for it patiently, and finally getting it approved, through fair and foul means, the producer could find it whisked off the air, without so much as a notice.

Even approved serials, about to be aired, get aborted. One memorable case in point was Kundan Shah's 'Police Station'. Often producers are not even informed that their serials have been rejected. There is no cut and dried selection policy. Sometimes the decisions are collective; at other times it is individualistic. As one producer,

for obvious reasons, not wanting to be named, alleges, "I waited for one year for approval. First, they told me that there were 1000 serials pending. The official estimate was 350, and mine was placed at number 10. After almost a dozen trips to Delhi, I finally decided to approach one of the 'fixers'. I must say that the guy must have been God. I paid him what he asked me to, and within 24 hours, yes, that's the time, I had an approval letter in my hand, almost leading me to ask him if it was a forgery!"

The 'fixers' operate in Delhi. According to information available, it is alleged that the charges for immediate approval are a lakh of rupees; for an extension of another 13 episodes, it's Rs 75,000. For pushing through approved serials, the going rate is Rs 50,000 and for a better slot on the National Network, anything between Rs 15,000 to Rs 30,000 depending on the time you need.

Says a Doordarshan (DD) insider, "During Mr Khanna's period, the going was easier, now that Bhaskarsahab has come in, atleast the top levels aren't affected by

the termites of corruption."

MODUS OPERANDI

How does the system of 'fixers' operate so brazenly and get the job done?

The DD official explained the modus operandi to us. He said, "Look, even in the fixers there are two distinct categories, one, the cons who wouldn't hesitate in giving you a forged letter of approval. The other category, the big fish, operate genuinely, legally in illegality, and get their jobs done through the lower rungs, as the 'bur ra' sahebs don't have the kind of time needed to look into each and every approval proposal because of the burden of work on them."

Despite the outcry from public and press for better serials, more meaningful sponsored programmes, and the starting of the Breakfast TV, as well as the mooted of Channel Two in Bombay and Delhi, solely for entertainment programmes, the quality of current serials and other private and DD programmes leave much to be desired.

So scared are major sponsors and small and big time producers of being permanently blacklisted by Doordarshan authorities that they dare not come out in the open with the facts. In fact when **Playback And Fast Forward** approached several producers who had faced the wrong end of the DD stick, they refused to speak to us, and those who did request absolute anonymity, insisting that in no way should they be connected to the statements they've made.

The clout and the power Doordarshan wields over our lives is quite unimaginable. If there had been no television, would you imagine a business tycoon like Dhirubhai Ambani, Reliance Industries Limited, sinking Rs 7 crore as guarantee money to sponsor the entire World Cup Cricket series? No chance.

Today, even if the dream bazaar is expensive, nay, exorbitant; the reach it commands and the magical influence it holds on viewers, hooking them on the habit, almost like a snort of smack, is what makes Doordarshan the emperor of all it serves and purveys.

Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan

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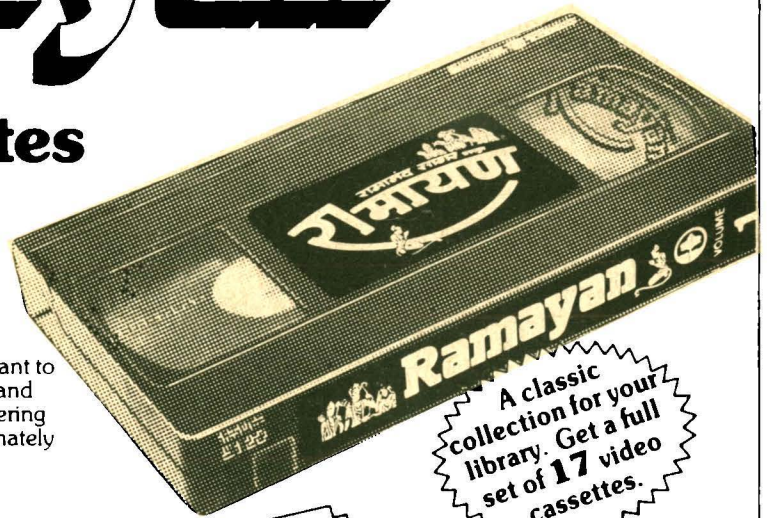


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Ramayan Karyalaya

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I am enclosing Demand Draft sending Money Order for Rs. 4,525 Rs. 600* in your name

In case I do not honour any VPP, you will have the right to deduct the normal cost of that cassette and postage from the deposit of Rs.600 with you, and I promise to reimburse that amount to remain on your subscriber's list

Please send video cassettes to:

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*Strike out whichever is not applicable

RATAN BATRA/87/SV/IE/01

Distributors for bookshops in India **JAICO PUBLISHING HOUSE** 121 Mahatma Gandhi Road, Bombay 400 023.

A Potent Medium

What do leading advertisers think of the television boom in India? **PLAYBACK AND FAST FORWARD** met **Sylvester da Cunha**, **Frank Simoes**, **A Krishnamurthy** and **Nari Hira** for their views on the subject.



Sylvester da Cunha, Managing Director, da Cunha Associates.

TV is indeed a very potent medium, but I don't agree with those who say that it has encouraged social schizophrenia. Right now everything has brought consumerism to the doorstep of advertising. The entire decision to give consumer was started by the government. The licensing of industries, banks investing money in consumer goods of all kinds and so on, and maybe because advertising is the ink on the typewriters, we become the most visible and the finger gets pointed at the ink and not at the entire mechanism.



A Krishnamurthy: Managing director, Mudra Communications.

The boom in TV is going to be there. TV has come to stay. I have seen it in the West, too, and TV hasn't gone out of circulation. It's still very much there. Today, if you look at leading advertisers, they are spending anything between 70 to 90 per cent of their ad budget on TV. Honestly speaking TV is a very powerful medium.

Comparing the advertisement slots with sponsored serials just cannot be done, because, for instance, a programme like 'Rajani' which had 90 per cent plus audience ratings, did a world of good for a corporate entity like Godrej, whereas an ordinary commercial placed at random could have got lost. Honestly speaking, as far as the Doordarshan set up is concerned there isn't much to crib about or criticise. About the steep rise in rates, it has upset the media calculations a great deal, but things will be fine soon.



Frank Simoes: Managing Director, Frank Simoes Advertising.

I think sponsored programmes have better capability. The advertiser associates with an ongoing programme, and your market also looks forward to it. It is somewhat unconsciously carried over to the product the company is trying to promote.

As far as Doordarshan's policies are concerned, I feel that we are in the process of growing up and understanding each other. Also there is no way the boom can go bust unless the government decides to change policies.

In certain areas of advertising, TV is unbeatable. You can get easier product identification. If you take a sliding scale of values of TV in the world, wherever it has gone commercial, you'll find that it is the most useful weapon in the armoury of companies.



Nari Hira: Publisher, and director Creative Unit Pvt. Ltd.

The print medium hasn't decayed because of the advent of television. Anyone who says this doesn't know what he's talking about. What I am saying has been proved throughout the world. It's an initial fascination for the new medium, from the advertiser's point of view and even we were one of the first to jump on the bandwagon.

It is only a matter of time before advertisers realise that TV is not the be all and end all of advertising, and I am not saying this because I publish six magazines, but they'll first go back to the newspapers and then to cinema, and TV will end up just as a reminder medium.

The Crook

SAMEER SHAH takes a pot shot at TV Serials

The outdoor antenna is the crook. Or so I thought. But I checked out a thousand other TV sets to discover that Priya Tendulkar looks funny on all of them. It isn't the reception on my little Sony Trinitron that's to blame – it's Ms P.T., who's always getting photographed for serials and soapsudsy commercials in close-ups that can be described as gargantuan.

So, the gargantuan lady drives me up the refrigerator as soon as she shows up on SWAYAMSIDDHA nowadays. So, why don't I just switch off the box? That's easier moaned than done. After all, I have to keep track with what the eminent Marathi litterateur is upto. The only conclusion I keep reaching is that he's making a home movie for his darling daughter.

Nothing wrong with a bit of nepotism now and then. If only the daughter was worth all the drama and doo-dah. But V.T. is fast-scuttling his reputation into the mire. To start with, Vijay Tendulkar is no film (or even serial) maker. Being a good writer (though I've revised my opinion about the good part now) doesn't mean that you'll be good also behind the camera. A scene break-up doesn't mean long, mid and close shot. Whenever dear daughter is in the frame, of course, it's always a close-up. There has to be a flair for direction besides a rudimentary knowledge of the craft which unfortunately V.T. hasn't acquired. A stint at the Pune Film Institute would be a great help (it's never too late). Or even an apprenticeship with a director, offbeat or commercial, Govind Nihalani or Subhash Ghai, would make him loosen up. And realise that cinema doesn't mean just placing the camera at any odd angle and praying that the outcome will tell a story.

The story, or what comes across of it, is a feminist's nightmare come true. The pot pretends to be liberated though you get this feeling that the woman who dared to walk out on her husband, would prefer to spend the rest of her life in a burqa. She simpers, sighs, kills cockroaches in her new flat, talks to herself and when she attends a meeting of oppressed women, she looks at them with a look of intense bafflement on her face. As if she didn't know that the species existed.

SWAYAMSIDDHA, I thought, was an

ultimate exercise in *pseudogiri*. Till I saw several episodes of the revived EK KAHANI. There's much ballyhoo made by Manju Singh – who insists on making elongated Hitchcockian appearances before each edition – about how the ethnic flavour is retained of every short story that's taken up for telefilming. But it's just the opposite. Instead of getting any of the regional atmosphere of a state, the story's selected from, all I get is the odour of mediocrity. Whether it's Orissa or Tamil Nadu, the setting doesn't matter: doomed characters go through doomed events so that the viewer feels that he's doomed for life to watch such tele-programmes.

Like many mortals, though, I have a weak spot for BUNIYAAD. The deft hand of director Ramesh Sippy is evident behind each episode which may not be exactly searing, but it's absorbing at least. The partition saga may have churned on for a spell and I also think I've sprung white hair since the soap began, yet there's something to be said about the life and times of Lajjoji and Haveliram. They're so well-performed by Aneeta Kanwar and Alok Nath that even if all that they do is to look sad and tragic, you keep watching anyway.

I wish I could say the same about the other characters populating the show (and there are so many that sometimes I wonder if Ramesh Sippy's ever heard of the red triangle). Quite a few of them are a pain. Leading this bunch is Mazhar Khan, who may be a hit with the teen set, but who strikes me (I'm old as the hills) as a cocky chap who thinks he has oodles of talent. Actually, he doesn't have a grain of talent. Otherwise, why should he sausage and ham? Also Nina Gupta makes such odd faces at the camera that I'm surprised that the lens hasn't cracked yet. Now, Kanwaljeet Singh may not ham. But he's so squeaky clean, so pure and nutritious, that he reminds me of a tin of condensed milk.

Now, the RAMAYANA can't be expected to be realistic. After all, it is a great epic and you can't possibly expect it to be stark and earthy. There has to be an element of grandeur and reverence which I'm afraid Ramanand Sagar lacks completely. It's quite possible that he doesn't even know the spellings. But the question of literacy aside, what do you have here? A Rama

who wears rubber chappals (Dawoods) under his brocade-lined dhoti and a Sita who wears eye-lashes so huge that you could take them off and sweep the floor. Those lashes could do the work of a couple of broomsticks.

Worse, the style is patently kitsch. The sets are done up in *mithai* colours, the general level of acting's out of a C-grade movie (BE-AABROO, BE-SHARAM variety) and they even have entire sequences ripped from movies of yore. Like they had this episode with the mother Queen waiting for her sons to return home (palace) after their years with a forest-guru. And the way it was filmed was taken straight out of MUGHAL-E-AZAM. The sequence where Jodhabai nearly bursts a blood vessel while waiting for the return of Prince Salim. Obviously, Ramanand Sagar perceives no difference between the Mughals and the descendants of Dashratha.

A silver lining to the RAMAYANA TV saga is that the plans to make MAHA-BHARATA by the other Bombay film satrap, B R Chopra have been shelved. Or else you might have just got an epic that saw no difference between the Pandavas and the Huguenots.

Focus now on M.J. Akbar. An ace journalist (or should that be editor?) is loosening up before the camera. He smiles now more comfortably and not as if Vinod Dua had stuck a gun behind his back. Don't say cheese, M.J., and you're full of lead. That's what I felt on the earlier editions of FOCUS. But after the much liked conversation conducted by M.J. with Gavaskar and Imran Khan, the smile's easier.

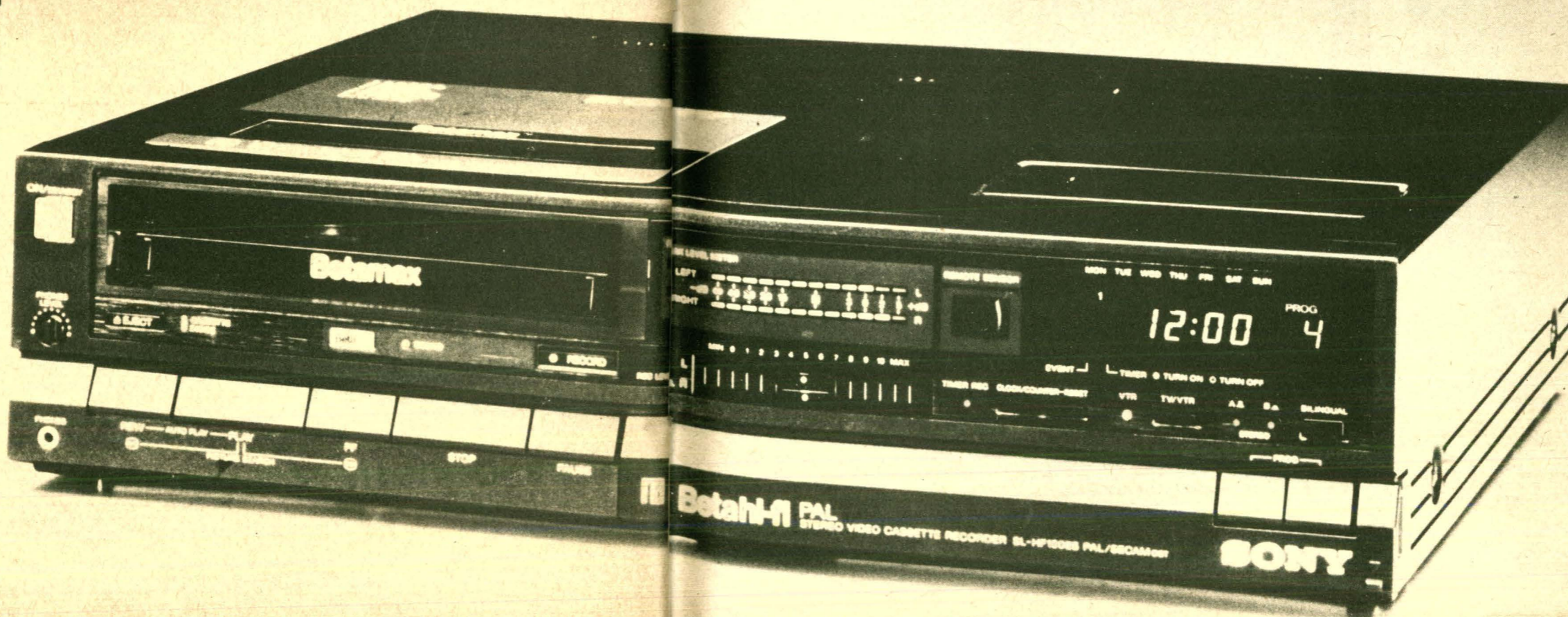
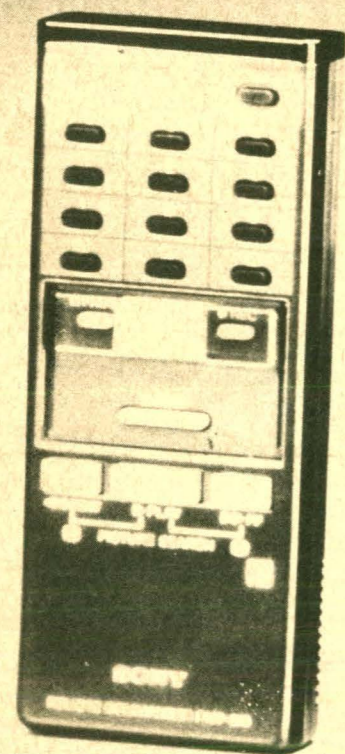
In fact, M.J. threw *chameli* white smiles at Vasant Sathe in the course of a discussion on private versus public sector. Sathe in return threw back vanilla smiles. I may have frowned a bit at all the fake bonhomie. But then, I don't count. I just watch from home. The conclusion is that M.J. is smiling and that's a good thing. But will he please get another jacket? The brown suede one needs a break at the laundry. Also one of his assistants – a ferocious looking fellow – could go easier on his nodding. Plus, it's not very clear whether he's agreeing or disagreeing with the people he's interviewing. That could be construed as an art of objective nodding. But it leaves me terribly confused.



HOW TO BUY A VCR

A bewildering array of videos, complete with bells and whistles, is available today. And for the uninitiated, buying a video could well be a daunting task.

Technical Editor JEETENDRA MISTRY, while lucidly explaining the various functions of a VCR, tells you how to buy the right one.



Sony's Hi-Fi VCR

Before venturing out to acquire a video – that very advanced electronic piece of home appliance – the first step would be to ask yourself the following questions to help you

make a wise purchase.

- How am I going to use my VCR?
- Do I want to cram as much as possible onto each tape?
- Am I planning to collect a library of pre-recorded tapes, or will I be using the machine mainly to catch up with programmes that are broadcast when I'm away?
- Is perfect video quality important to me, or am I willing to sacrifice perfection in favour of other practical advantages?
- What special features would I really make use of? Do I need to program many tapings over a two-week period (with Doordarshan, that's a laugh), or will a one-day function serve me just as well? Will I ever use a visible fast forward and reverse func-

tion (called Picture Search), or a freeze-frame?

- Will I be borrowing tapes from friends, or making copies of my tapes? Would I be wanting to view tapes from relatives in America (NTSC standard), or tapes recorded in colour standards other than PAL (used in our country)?
- Do I plan to use a camera, and will I be editing the tapes I record for myself?

Here are some sample answers to guide you.

- If you want to cram as much as possible onto each tape, and you're not fussy about the video picture quality, then you need a machine with twin-speed capability to give you upto eight hours' recording on each tape. Obviously, the format is VHS.
- If you borrow tapes from friends/relatives, it's important that your machine is compatible with theirs. You will have to decide which format tapes you will use most. If the borrowed tapes are

Beta, your *must* buy a Beta-format VCR. Also, if you wish to playback NTSC or SECAM standard tapes at times – you should seriously consider a multi-system VCR/TV combo which will obviously set you back a few thousand rupees extra.

- If you plan to use a camera to shoot your own home movies occasionally, and don't want to be confined to taping at home, you *must* purchase a component VCR system which includes a portable video deck to take along when you use the camera *and* a tuner/timer for all the facilities of a home-based table-top VCR.

The next consideration will probably be the price. Of course, there are some who think that this is the foremost consideration in purchasing a VCR – but these people could be making a serious mistake. It may be wise to spend a little extra now and get better value over the coming years than you'll receive from a cheaper model.

No matter how much you pay for the machine, it will be of no use if it doesn't

function properly, or continually breaks down. Most major brands are alike and should provide you with fairly good service. In the VHS camp we have, among others, JVC, National, Akai, Hitachi; in the Beta camp are Sony, Sanyo, NEC and Toshiba.

All video gear comes with the manufacturer's warranty, but this may have little or no relevance to you if you've purchased the equipment abroad from 'bucket' shops or if you don't live in a major city. All the brand names cited above have authorised service agents in India, and since these brands are widely used in our country it is

FEATURES

Today's video recorders are very versatile. Tapes can record up to eight hours of programming and you could also use Hi-Fi VCRs as *audio-only* recorders with the audio quality comparable with most studio-based open-reel recorders. Even with basic VCRs, you can fast forward a pre-recorded tape with a visible clear picture and can obtain a super-still picture. You can even run the tape in reverse, slow-motion or freeze the image. You can program the timer section to record multiple events over a two, three or four-week period. You can record in



The Panasonic NV-180B

not likely that your set will stay unattended for months for want of a particular component. Authorised service centres with full service facilities are, of course, your best bet. They have trained personnel in repair and maintenance. In our country, video technology is fairly new and it would be unwise to check-in your VCR to some quack engineers who seem to have sprung up in every part of India.

One more tip: Never buy a machine that uses an obsolete tape format, no matter what the price. If you are offered a Cartrivision or V-Cord machine, pass it by. It may seem like a steal, but there are no pre-recorded tapes available. It's almost impossible to find blanks for those machines and there is virtually no one who will service them. Format wise in India, the choice is limited: VHS or Beta. Even the V-2000 format (though technologically far superior) is unlikely to find good service or the supply of blank tapes.

stereo on conventional linear tracks or using the helical-scan in Hi-Fi with noise reduction options: the twin-track capability could be extended to record bi-lingual broadcasts or even simulcasts.

However, not all machines do these things. There are basic units that are cheap and will carry out simple record and playback; there are top-of-the-line units that will do just about everything (and cost a fortune); and there are in-between mid-range units for those who want to compromise between features and price. Here are some fundamental differences and similarities.

FORMAT

There are three widely available home video formats. VHS (Video Home System), a Japanese system developed by JVC, which is the bestseller all over the world. Betamax, another Japanese system developed by Sony, has

been more popular in the US. Video 2000, the late contender from Europe, has not gained much in popularity, thanks to poor marketing by Philips. Complicated though it may seem, multi-format video is likely to persist unless buyers and manufacturers decide to opt for one system. The introduction of the 8-mm format in 1985, backed by a 127-member strong committee of manufacturers around the globe, seems a likely solution to such a standardisation. However, purists are taking a wait-and-see attitude.

The choice of format will inevitably be dictated by personal requirements, such as where you live, for example. Each VCR format will play only cassettes designed especially for it: you cannot play a VHS cassette on a Betamax or a V-2000.

SYSTEM COMPATIBILITY

Different countries use different television systems. However, the only consideration you need would be in respect of whether you wish to record/playback Doordarshan telecasts and widely available pre-recorded software or you wish to playback tapes obtained from your relatives/friends abroad. In the former case you need a single-system VCR which will record and playback PAL colour standard System-'B' signals into a compatible colour TV set. In the latter, you would need a multi-system VCR.

There are three basic colour standards adopted in encoding a video signal inside the VCR. For our country, and some European countries and Australia this is PAL, in the US and in Japan it is NTSC and in France and certain Middle-East countries it is SECAM. Barring one or two models, all multi-system VCRs for India can record only PAL system-B signals; multi-system capability applies to playback only. Also, since *system* relates to the way in which the vision-sound is modulated, it is only necessary to see that your VCR can playback NTSC and SECAM besides PAL. System consideration is not critical with the VCR; you only need to ensure that your colour TV has the reception facility corresponding to the VCR's RF and System output.

RECORDING CAPABILITY

The most crucial feature of any VCR is its ability to record video and audio signals. How well it does this is an important consideration in making your purchase. Although specific points vary from unit to unit, certain elemental truths apply.

Picture quality depends mainly on the recording speed. The faster the tape moves, the better the recorded results will be. However, at faster speeds your tape will run out sooner. So if you can afford to sacrifice some quality, you'll wind up with more time to record. In the PAL standard,

only the VHS format offers a choice of two speeds. Most multi-standard VCRs with NTSC playback facility offer only the standard (SP) speed; the Hitachi VT-39 in VHS is the only VCR that can also record in NTSC in all the three speeds (SP, LP and EP).

PROGRAMMING

All table top VCRs can record off-the-air telecasts while you are out or otherwise occupied. The timer controls on basic units offer programming of one event over a one-day period. This means that the machine will turn On and Off at one specified time period in the 24 hours following its setting. More sophisticated units have a 7 day/4 event timer allowing you to program four different On and Offs within a one-week period; each event may also be on a different channel. At the top of the line are those models with 14 day/8 event or even 21 day/10 event timers. Both Beta and VHS units have these timers.

As an added bonus, some units have a special back-up battery supply for the timer, to prevent loss of information during a momentary power failure. Without this back-up, most models will hold information for about 20 seconds. With the battery back-up you can disconnect your unit from the mains supply and still maintain timer-memory for upto one hour – a useful feature if the power failure lasts too long or if you plan to move the VCR from room to room.

MEMORY

The simplest VCR memory facility takes the form of a switch called *Counter Memory*. When this is switched On, the tape automatically stops in fast-forward or rewind mode when the counter reads zero. It is very useful for finding the beginning of a recording, provided you remember to set the counter to zero when you start recording.

More sophisticated machines incorporate a system called *Automatic Program Location* or APL. At the beginning of every recording, an inaudible pulse is automatically recorded on the tape. In the fast-forward, rewind or search mode, the machine will look for these pulses on the tape and stops when it finds one. Hitachi machines have a further modification to this in the form of a switch labelled *Index* which will give you the option of recording/reading these pulses or just by-passing this feature.

A further development in some units will allow a memory to be used for repeated playback. You can index a 'start' and 'finish' point so that the machine will play the sequence, rewind and play it again as many times as required – to display advertisements in a store, for example. Only Beta format recorders offer this feature in

some of their models. Some Sony models even go further and allow programming of playback of selected segments in a pre-ordered sequence.

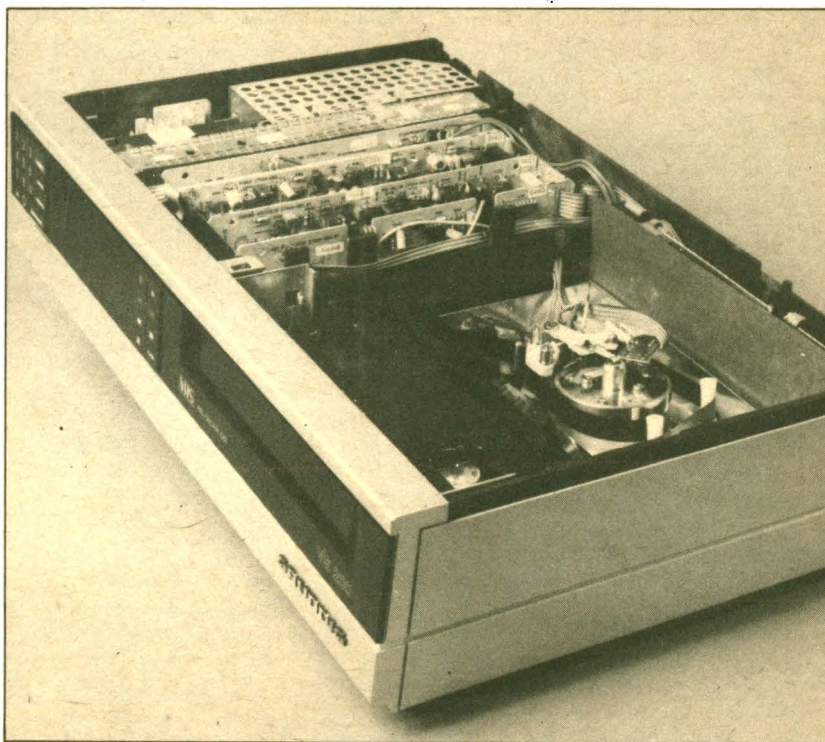
TRICK FRAMES

All top-of-the-line machines have most or all of the following trick frame facilities in the tape transport mechanism:

- * Freeze frame
- * Frame by frame advance
- * Picture search (also called speed search or shuttle search)
- * Slow motion, Fast motion

speed searching forwards, this is termed as *Cue* and when backwards, as *Review*. The sound is obviously muted as it would be unintelligible at such high speeds, but some later Beta models also allow sound to continue using special techniques. Used with discretion, this *search* facility is a very valuable asset to any VCR, and is now seen to appear on newer budget models.

All but the most basic domestic VCRs now offer a range of playback speeds. These vary from slow motion, which may be a simple half the normal speed or a continuously variable effect controlled



The inside of a Grundig VS 200 videorecorder

All machines are equipped with a *Pause* control that serves two functions: when playing back a tape, you can put the machine in pause if you have to answer the phone or when recording. Initiating this mode will allow you to eliminate annoying commercials or unwanted sequences of a programme. The pause control on more advanced units will freeze a frame of the action without the obtrusive noise-bar seen on simple pause.

Most mid-range and advanced units offer a separate *frame advance* control; each push on this button inches the tape forward successively, frame by frame, to enable you to precisely capture an important piece of action.

Probably the most useful of the trick frame facilities, fast picture search (also called *visual search*) allows the viewer to speed through the tape forward or backward at between twice and 40 times normal playback speed, while retaining a watchable picture on the screen. When

from a remote handset, to high speed playback with sound that is just intelligible.

TWIN-SPEED MACHINES

Many people in India have relatives, friends or business contacts in the US. This, coupled with the half-baked knowledge of some of the so-called experts in our country, has led to the rumour that the domestic format video could be made to record/playback tapes in three different speeds. While this is true for both VHS and Betamax in the US, it does not hold true when we talk of machines for the PAL/SECAM standard; in fact, even multi-standard VCRs, which have PAL recording capability and multi-standard-playback facility, will playback NTSC tapes recorded only at standard speed.

When we talk of twin-speed, this relates to the newer generation of VHS machines (not Beta, as yet) which incorporate a SP-LP switch allowing you to record either in the standard (SP) speed or in the half

(LP) speed. In the latter case you could use an E-180 tape to cram on upto six hours or an E-240 tape to record upto eight hours of any programme. If, on a particular tape, some segments are recorded in the standard speed and some others in the half speed, the machine will automatically set to the appropriate speed in the playback mode with little or no interruption in this time the machine undergoes a speed changeover.

SOUND

Sound has never been the strong point of domestic TV sets, and the reduction of home video recorders in size and quality from industrial U-Matic down to the domestic half-inch format has compounded the problems. Manufac-

market models have a provision for simulcasts to be recorded; the transmitting TV centre provides a simultaneous stereo audio-only broadcast to accompany their ordinary visual telecast. This, however, has no relevance to transmission in our country and it would be a waste to invest more to acquire this extra feature.

Both VHS and Beta formats now offer Hi-Fi sound in their up-market units. While different techniques are adopted for video-audio recording by Beta and VHS in their NTSC machines, both formats use the same *Depth Multi-plexing* technique for their PAL machines. The new system has two extra audio-heads mounted on the rotating video head drum and these increase the relative tape running speed to 580 cm/sec and make high density

onto a previously recorded videotape while leaving the video information intact on that section of the master tape. In some machines the original soundtrack is entirely erased and replaced by the new opted soundtrack, while in some others (such as Hitachi and their clones) a *sound-on-sound* feature allows overdub (add a new soundtrack to an old one).

With stereo VCRs, you can sometimes dub soundtrack on any one channel while keeping the other intact and playback in mono to obtain a mixture of the original and newly added sound. Some units allow only sound to be replaced and some others also allow both sound and vision of a particular segment to be replaced simultaneously, in which case this is termed as *video-audio dub*.

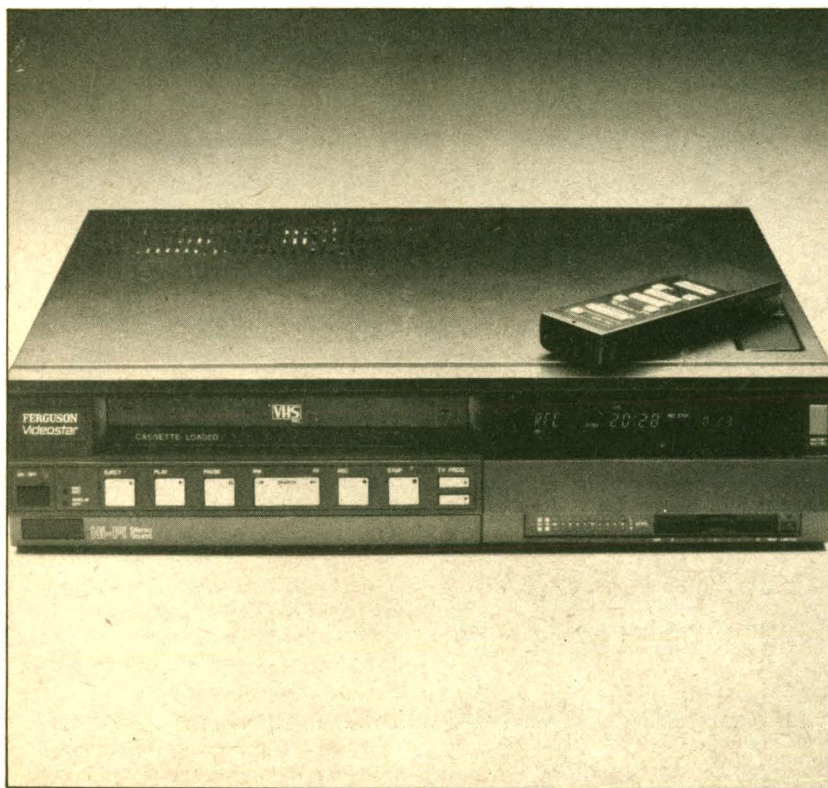
Video-dub alone is also possible, keeping the original soundtrack intact. This is termed as *insert-edit* and is featured in most portable VCRs as a standard feature. Only top-of-the-line tabletop VCRs feature this rarely used facility.

REMOTE CONTROL

Most VCRs are supplied with some sort of remote control. The simplest is a Pause switch connected to the VCR by a length of cable. Some extend the remote facility on such wired controls to include Play, Record and other tape-transport functions. In addition to the viewer's inconvenience of sitting within the cable's reach of the VCR, a trailing cable is a potential hazard.

Infra-red remote control overcomes many of the problems of cable remote. Commands are transmitted using an infra-red data link, which is an invisible beam. Some of the IR-handsets are *full-function*, meaning they include a host of commands including the facility to program the timer from the convenience of your armchair.

While you may be confused by the mind-boggling variety of VCRs currently available, it may reduce your confusion somewhat to know that there are less than a dozen 'types' of units. The reason for this is that some manufacturers do not engineer and develop their own equipment; instead they license them from others. The manufacturers who *do* create and sell their units (to the consumer and to other companies re-labelled) are known as OEMs (original equipment manufacturers). Thus the VCR purchased from Ferguson (and bearing its imprint) is really a JVC unit, and the units from Canon, Olympus and Blaupunkt are all made by National/Panasonic (Matsushita Electric). All other things being equal, you are better off purchasing an OEM machine. Because OEMs such as JVC and Hitachi, who have built and engineered the machine, have their authorised service centres in at least some city of our country.



Ferguson's Hi-fi VCR

turers have devised ways to improve the VCR's sound quality by adding noise-reduction facilities. Most advanced VCRs incorporate Dolby B or C and some others also incorporate dBX to solve problems associated with hiss. Dynamic Noise Suppression or Beta Noise Reduction (BNR) are attempts to circumvent the Dolby patents.

In the mid-range to up-market units, both VHS and Betamax offer machines with two channel sound to accommodate either stereo sound or bi-lingual capability. In this case the sound quality consideration becomes more critical due to the fact that each sound channel now occupies less than half the original space provided on the mono sound track. Some European

audio helical recording possible. All Hi-Fi VCRs also have the fixed audio head which makes it compatible with existing tapes you already own. Some manufacturers offer only mono conventional sound while others are generous enough to offer stereo, also in the conventional audio track, making a total of four audio tracks.

Dubbing is the term used when you copy from one machine to another. In this case both the vision and sound are copied onto a blank videotape from the original master cassette. However, *audio-dub* is an extended feature on some up-market VCRs and allows you to record a new sound-track

BANGALORE TV SURVEY

Plea For A Southern Hook-up

TV viewers in Bangalore would like to have a Southern hook-up in place of the national one. This was the result of the survey conducted by the Bangalore Darshakara Sammilana. Anthony Motha reports.

Most Hindi cultural programmes fail to recognise the existence of other cultural and language regions in India.

The Bangalore Darshakara Sammilana (BDS), a Bangalore-based voluntary organisation conducted a survey of television viewers recently.

The primary factors that prompted this assessment of Doordarshan's impact were the poor quality of programmes, unimaginative presentation and poor telecast; besides, something has to be done about the frequent interruptions and technical defects, the BDS felt.

The parameters of the survey were: (a) assessing the usefulness of television programmes (b) ascertaining viewers' reactions to various programmes and (c) eliciting opinions on expansion, contraction and alteration of components and duration. The BDS covered a wide segment of the urban viewers.

THE RESPONSE

One noteworthy observation was that the television set is no longer the rare commodity that it was. However, innovations and changes in audio-visual programmes are too slow, thereby disappointing viewers. The enthusiasm for colour television is on the wane, probably because over 60% of the viewers own a set. Colour television is no longer a status symbol and most owners are not exactly happy with the programmes.

DISAPPOINTING

The national programmes bear the brunt of the viewers' criticism. Seventy per cent of the respondents felt that Doordarshan was insensitive to the critics of language imposition. Another opinion was that producers lacked ideas and imagination and that they do not appreciate perceptivity and taste. The demand for English and Kannada programmes is on the increase.

When it comes to Sunday morning programmes and 'Priyaveekshakare' (a local

programme) this demand is much more pronounced; stereotype and evasive answers like "It shall be considered", "It is a national policy" and "Many have liked it" make this programme below par. It has been suggested that this programme be held in abeyance until regional stations become autonomous and, hopefully, more responsive to localised criticism.

Most Hindi cultural programmes fail to recognise the existence of other cultural and language regions in India.

'Chitrahaar' is the cynosure of all eyes, being popular with 63 per cent of the viewers, irrespective of language, occupation and age. One surprising revelation was that over 60 per cent preferred classical and popular songs of old movies, without sex and violence. Even more surprising is the reaction to Chitramala; 67 per cent call it bad and some of them (33 per cent) do not view it at all. Cultural programmes including music (classical or light, instrumental or vocal) are liked by 43 per cent of the respondents, while 37 per cent dislike it more due to poor presentation and provision of insufficient background information on the programmes.

Sports programmes, including Sports Quiz, are being accorded a subdued welcome. Over 51 per cent are favourably inclined towards this programme either as part of the national hook-up or as a local programme.

WELL RECEIVED

'Quiz Time' was well received, while 'Contact' it was felt, "is not good even for school children." Eighty-six per cent of the viewers feel that 'Quiz Time', being more informative, should be revived.

Neither the Hindi nor the English news bulletins are much appreciated. They are repetitive and highly personalised, and lack priority, relevance and objectivity. Viewers feel that the Hindi news should not be relayed by the Bangalore centre and the Kannada news should be broadcast in its place. A large majority (70 per cent) feels that the local news should not repeat what is likely to follow in the English/Hindi news.

Even people who understand Hindi are critical of the mechanical presentation by news readers. South Indians who do not follow Hindi reveal that they feel any love and 70 per cent of them switch it off.

The viewers' reactions to the English news is not exactly complimentary either. Forty-seven per cent feel that it is boring lacks sufficient visuals and is poorly presented. They suggest that the news could be made more interesting with more visuals, development news and innovative clips. Sixty-five per cent of the viewers

prefer English news to the other languages, while 14 per cent opt for Kannada and 21 per cent for Hindi.

'Buniyaad', with 60 per cent viewing, is the favourite serial, though viewers lately feel that it is inordinately slow with proverbial elasticity of episodes and unimaginative stretches that tell on the viewers' nerves.

It is really surprising to find that 91 per cent of the respondents find politics and politicians annoying! Many of them have described politics as "disgusting" while nine per cent are resigned to the fact that politics and politicians are an inevitable part of our lives.

BREAKFAST TV

The much-discussed programme has failed to gain popularity. A cross-section opined that, if the discerning eye and critical ear are to be trusted, the entire idea is a damp squib. The physical exercise is too late in the morning and exploitation of women, they feel, is not an ideal theme to start the day with. Further, opinions are unanimous on the futility of devoting over 20 minutes for the Hindi/English news. Apart from repeating what was said the previous night, it makes the morning newspapers redundant. The

consensus is: either do away with it completely or provide the bulletin in a capsule of seven to 10 minutes. A broad section feels that Breakfast Television should consist of regional programmes, highlighting local talents in both language and culture. The concept of Doordarshan's 'Suprabatha' should not be imposed on unsuspecting early risers, who must surely have better ideas on how to begin a day. Doordarshan could take a tip from All India Radio's morning broadcasts.

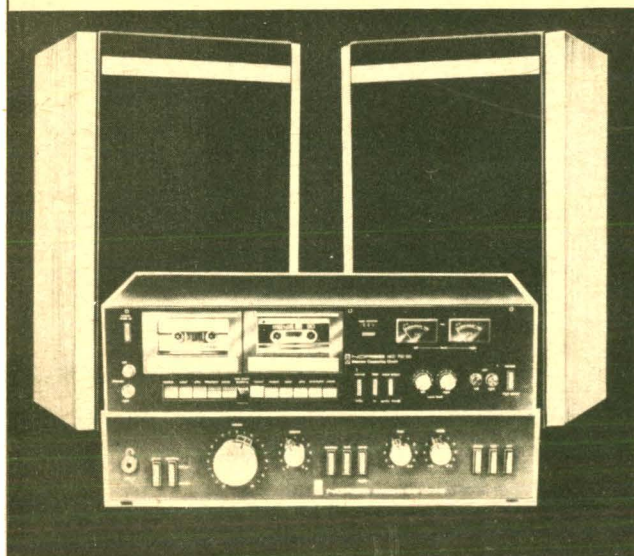
SUGGESTIONS

The Southern hook-up – an alternative to the National network – may be introduced, covering all Southern languages including cultural programmes like dance and music.

- * There should be a wider variety of programmes on Doordarshan, like in All India Radio.
- * With the new education policy on the anvil, programmes may be made more relevant thereto.
- * Programmes from the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) like 'Hitchcock', 'Sherlock Holmes', 'Yes Minister' and 'Old Fox' – may be imported.
- * Full autonomy may be granted to Doordarshan.

NORGE

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TV Serials

A monthly guide on sponsored programmes on TV.

MONDAY

Kashmakash

SPONSORS: VIP, Khaitan

TIME: 9 P M

● Crude, inept direction and sentimental, banal plots have succeeded in making this serial of short stories on women-oriented subjects, a rather sorry affair. It is directed by Manju Asrani, and produced by Asrani and Sushil Bhatnagar. The screenplay and dialogues are by Dr Achala Nagar. The serial further involves the talents of the redoubtable Shobha Doctor of Concept Advertising who, one hears, is espousing one more serial on women's causes, called 'Chetre' directed by actress Uma Banerjee. Unless the latter proves vastly different from its predecessors, Ms Doctor is wasting her time—and, more pertinently, ours.

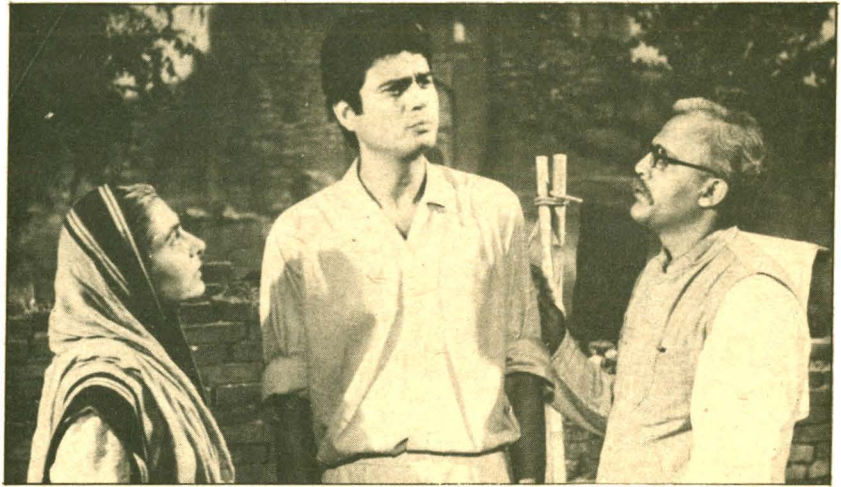
VERDICT: Poor

Khoj

SPONSORS: Richardson Hindustan Ltd, Asian Paints

TIME: 10.20 P M

● Devika Rawat (Kitu Gidwani) is comfortably ensconced in her own little detective outfit, in Rawat Intelligence, thither to wage her war against wrong-



Aneeta Kanwar, Kanwaljeet and Alok Nath in 'Buniyaad'.

doers with the help of the loyal Avinash (Dilip Dhawan) and the feather-brained secretary, Nisha. Well-disposed though as we are to the beautiful Kitu Gidwani, it has to be confessed that 'Khoj' appears to be suffering from a Karamchand hangover. Even the title-track is a pallid imitation of Karamchand's brilliant one, and the serial yet has to establish a distinct identity of its own. The serial is directed by Sunil Parikher, the music is by Uday Mazumdar.

VERDICT: Fair

TUESDAY

Buniyaad

SPONSORS: Godrej

TIME: 9 P M

● While the serial is gradually winding up, the makers of 'Buniyaad' continue to grab viewers' interest by the simple expedient of sending for Shyam Lal every time the situation gets too hunky-dory, to spray the air with dense clouds of misunderstandings, antagonisms, suspicions and other assorted lubrication needed to keep the wheels of the soap opera moving smoothly. With Shyam Lal on the scene, Satbir is now on the track of Lala Brishbhan's plot to settle money on him via Roshan; while the Brishbhan household is once more disrupted by the introduction of Veeravali. Fasten your seat belts everyone. The going is getting rough.

VERDICT: Addictive

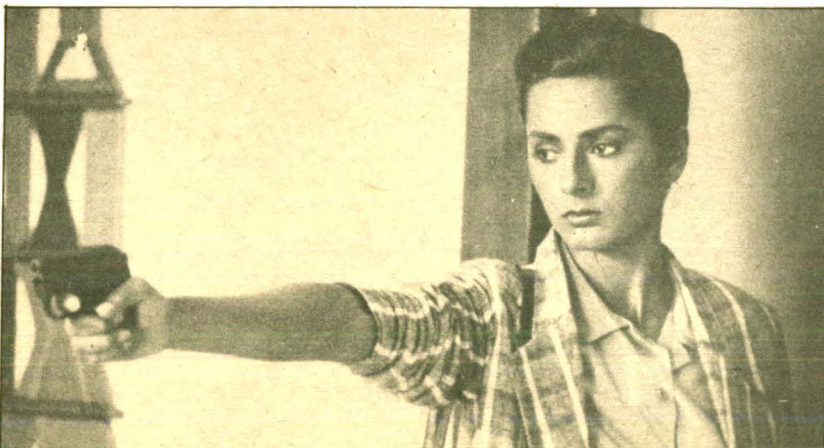
WEDNESDAY

Subah

SPONSORS: Brooke Bond

TIME: 9 P M

● An indictment against drug addiction, this serial follows the motions of three



Kitu Gidwani in 'Khoj'.

college students Bharat (Salim Ghouse), Prem (Kumar Bhatia), Appoo (Raagesh Asthana) as they succumb to the vicious habit. While one can sympathise with the director's idea to antagonise by shock treatment, the 'Subah' goings-on defy belief.

In one single episode, the viewers' nerves were tested by one robbery and three deaths, two of which are murders. Surely this is skinning rather close to the edge of credibility. How much better would the director have done to focus on the everyday dishonesties and alienations of the drug addict: his betrayal of friends and family, his loosening hold on ethics. By opting for crude drama, the makers have sacrificed identification with the character.

VERDICT: Poor

THURSDAY Swayam Siddha

SPONSORS: Garden Vareli
TIME: 9 P M

● This story of a woman's transition from wife to individual continues in the same desultory pace. Nirmala's (Priya Tendulkar) favourite place continues to be her bed, from which vantage view she reflects on her progress towards independence. We have no alternative but to take her word for it, for the director, in his wisdom, fights shy of actually showing us the situation.

A fine script, sensitive acting by Priya Tendulkar, and Sulabha Deshpande, a colleague in her office, are the plus points of this otherwise disappointing serial. Directed by Vijay Tendulkar, camerawork by Nirmal Goswami and music by Hridayanath Mangeshkar.

VERDICT: Fair

FRIDAY Ek Kahani

SPONSORS: Royal House and Polar Fans
TIME: 9 P M

● A state-of-the-art short story serial, 'Ek Kahani' draws upon the local atmosphere of each regional story's setting so skillfully, in terms of location and dialect, that it has no equal. Additionally, the direction is superlative, and the acting calibre of the cast uniformly high. Unfortunately, the quality of the short story continues to be uneven, sometimes rising to excellence as 'Gokul' and sometimes landing at the banal level as in the English short story, 'May The Best Man Win.'

RATING: Poor

SUNDAY Mickey And Donald

SPONSORS: Corn Products Co
TIME: 9.30 P M

● For Walt Disney comic addicts, an irresistible fix – the Mickey and Donald animated cartoons. Filled with the most incredible gags and jokes, the frenetic pace of the action and the zany plots are a testimony to the genius of its makers.

VERDICT: Excellent

Ramayan

SPONSORS: Mafatal Industries and Colgate Palmolive
TIME: 10.30 A M

● The immortal epic makes its appearance on telly, with Arun Govil as Ram and Deepika as Sita. Ramanand Sagar deserves a pat on the back for attempting such a monumental task, and the serial has been generally well-accepted by viewers everywhere, as they recapture on celluloid the oft-remembered tales. Unfortunately, however, the serial appears to suffer from a Hindi film hangover. The make up is too garish for propriety.

VERDICT: Fair

Sara Jahan Hamara

SPONSORS: TTK, Blow Plast
TIME: 11 A M

● Despite having everything going for it, this serial fails to live up to its promise.

Life at an orphanage run by Mausi (Dina Pathak), housing 13 irresistible kids ought to have tremendous responsibilities. Especially since the kids, without exception, are providing marvellous actors. The drawback, as always, is the script which is the usual package of tired jokes and implausible plots.

Another weakness is its tendency to see things in black and white. The villains are so excessively black-hearted



Surinder Kaur and Ravi Baswani

that we can't quite swallow it. If only the serial would give up stitching homilies into its plots and just have fun, a good time may be had by all. Script (ah, he's the villain) by Karan Razdan, and directed by Satish Kaushik.

VERDICT: Fair

Sau Baat Ki Ek Baat

● Five city kids forge into the countryside on a holiday and stumble into an adventure; a group of men whose mysterious activities suggests they are looking for treasure. The police is alerted and the varmints duly arrested, at which point it emerges that they are respectable archaeologists and not treasure-hunters. If this is supposed to be a take-off on adventure stories, it doesn't work. The plot is neither funny nor original. A video presentation, lyrics by Kaifi Azmi.

Chhote Babu

SPONSORS: Voltas
TIME: 12 NOON

● A soap opera, the plot centres around Rajesh (Shekhar Suman) affectionately named Chhote Babu by the local people, a recent widower who submerges his angst in philanthropic activity by day and drunken revelry by night. Into his life comes Meera (Supriya Pathak) a pregnant unmarried woman whom he saves from suicide by offering her marriage – a marriage by name only, he insists. Gradually, however, Meera's gratitude and warmth melts his resolve.

VERDICT: Fair

Rakshak

SPONSORS: Hindustan Lever
TIME: 5.05 P M

● A wildlife serial that stresses the interdependence between the species and the environment, and the urgent need to halt further depredation of our wildlife reserves.

Aimed at children, the message is cloaked in a storyline involving Major Ranjit Rao (Vijay Krishna) and his 14-year-old son Gaurav (Gaurav Rajput) as they make their way through the panoramic sweep of the Indian wildlife sanctuary from chilly Nainital to the tropical splendour of Thekkadi in Kerala. Major Rao's mission is to check that the wildlife laws are respected and observed. Enroute, they meet up thieves and other such malefactors. The subsequent chase adds quite a punch to the proceedings. Excellent photography, good acting and the theme makes this serial a worthwhile one.

Video Tracks

**** EXCELLENT *** GOOD ** FAIR * POOR

PLAYBACK AND FAST FORWARD reviews the best films – English and Hindi – available on video.

Hot Target

STARRING: Simone Griffeth,
Steve Marachule

RATING: ***

LABEL: NFDC – CROWN
INTERNATIONAL PICTURES

The power of sex and its overpowering writ in the life of a happily married woman is the subject of 'Hot Target', but

Actually the screenplay by Denis Lewiston, from a story by Gerry O'Hara, is pretty weak and even though Alex Mills' photography is good the film limps along and begins to get interesting near the halfway mark. But as it turns out to be it flatters only to deceive and though Simone Griffeth does display some acting talent (and is also good looking) the abrupt, lacklustre ending puts paid to a subject which offers interesting possibilities.

comes with a Vietnamese boy, George (Max Barabas) who helps her escape and by then her husband has found himself a girlfriend Shauna (Cathy Lee Crosby). This then is the setup in 'Intimate Strangers' and the husband tries his best to win back his wife who is still haunted by the days in the Vietnam prison camps.

"There are four women for any man in Florida," says Shauna who thinks that Jeff is the one man who makes her feel good.



A still from the film, 'Hot Target'.

the subject is treated rather drably. It starts ordinarily then gets rather interesting but the anti-climax of an end leaves the viewer cold and somewhat disgusted.

Christine Webber (Simone Griffeth) is the woman in question and she meets her John Thomas in Hastings (Steve Marachule) while walking her dogs in the park. Hastings wastes no time and soon they are lovers. Clive (Bryan Marshall), her husband, suspects something but one night he is murdered when Hastings comes to their house to steal but stays on to make love.

Intimate Strangers

STARRING: Stacy Keach, Teri Garr,
Max Barabas, Cathy Lee Crosby

RATING: **

LABEL: TELEPICTURES
CORPORATION

A husband and wife are separated after the Vietnam war. He, Jeff (Stacy Keach), is a doctor practising in Florida. She, Sally (Teri Garr), the nurse wife is left back in Vietnam in a prison camp. When they are reunited 10 years later she

And she tells Sally so in an unusual love triangle. But Jeff tries his best to readjust to his "lost wife" How dishonest the film is in probably making much of the torture in the Vietnam camps is a debatable point (like 'Rambo' which tends to distort history) but as a simple love story and a drama of readjustment, director Robert Ellis Miller ('The Heart Is A Lonely Hunter') does a good job keeping the viewer absorbed all the time.

The final turn may not have been convincing enough but Norman McLeod Morrill's screenplay is strong enough to



Sigourney Weaver in the film, 'Alien.'

sustain interest while Stacy Keach ('Mistral's Daughter') and Teri Garr (used to playing roles of the cheated wife) turn in creditable performances. Of course for variety there is Florida with its changing weather and a bit of boating.

Alien

STARRING: Lance Henriksen, Sigourney Weaver
RATING: **
LABEL: TWENTIETH CENTURY-FOX

One refreshing thing about 'Alien'—the title at least—is that it doesn't have the usual prefix—II. As for the film, Sigourney Weaver who had just come into films in 'Alien' grows from strength to strength, in keeping with the aliens.

Like some of the sequels ('Rocky' for example) it acquaints the viewer with the happenings of the parent film. Sigourney

Weaver wakes up after a 57-year-long sleep and the group goes out to combat the aliens. So, we are back to looking for those slimy, oozing, dripping, crawly creatures. On the mission they come across a girl who has been left out in space. Then you have a humanoid (Lance Henriksen).

Director James Cameron introduces the aliens aptly. Aided by Adrian Biddle's photography, these creatures are gradually, very gradually brought to light. The space travellers of course are armed with flame-throwers and all that. The aliens spring from all sides of the video screen and keep growing as time passes by, but for all its special effects and visuals a film like this is lost on video, it has to be seen on the big screen.

As for Sigourney Weaver, who generally ends up in her panties, she is the eternal feminist. There's nothing she can't do. And this time she has a young girl to mother.

Rather long drawn out but the aliens still have the ability to scare.

Turtle Diary

STARRING: Ben Kingsley, Glenda Jackson
RATING: ***
LABEL: UNIVERSAL

In an age when marriage is not a particularly going institution, 'Turtle Diary' has for its subject love of animals or pets. And the principal characters both think of freeing the imprisoned turtles, which of course leads to love.

William Snow (Ben Kingsley) works in a bookshop finding the "nice little corner" to keep out of trouble. He was married many, many years ago and it only means trouble to him now. Neera Duncan (Glenda Jackson) is a writer who looks after water beetles. She also feels sorry for the turtles.

So, the plan to free them. The strength of the film is a very fine script by Harold Pinter. The lush outdoor locales in the English countryside are beautifully photographed and director John Irvin gives the film the right mix of visual and psychological contentment. To use a cliché, the film is as today as tomorrow's newspaper and two very talented stars help put across the message most aptly.

All in all a very pleasing modern day love story.

Poison Ivy

STARRING: Michael J Fox
RATING: ***
LABEL: RCA - COLUMBIA

Films set on the campus are dime a dozen these days. And some of them meander into mediocrity. 'Poison Ivy', is, however, cute, naughty and generally entertaining as it captures the pranks of a group of boys on a summer camp.

Michael J Fox, of 'Back to the Future' fame, plays Dennis the one in charge of the little boys one of whom is his brother. But Dennis has eyes mainly for trainee-nurse Rhonda (Nancy McKeon) and he's not the only one. That Rhonda has a boyfriend only makes him try harder.

The fleeting romances, the little flirtations get a bit of footage but it is essentially the daredevilry, naughtiness and camaraderie that forms a major part of the film. Bennett Tranner's screenplay is good and director Larry Elikann has a vast canvass but he does not miss the wood for the trees. In fact with tight editing the focus is kept on the main characters with Michael J Fox displaying a King Bruce-like persistence in his efforts to win the girl.

In an all's well that ends well situation, 'Poison Ivy' (a little boy rolls in poison ivy so that he can pretend to be sick, to be tended by the trainee nurse) is good fun, particularly for the teenagers.

Extremeties

STARRING: James Russo
RATING: ***
LABEL: WARNER BROTHERS

After a squash game, Marjorie (Farrah Fawcett) is molested and nearly raped in her car.

The man Joe (James Russo) manages to get her wallet and follows her to her house to continue from where he left off. That's what 'Extremeties' is all about.

Actually it highlights the limitations or ineptness of the police which in fact has given rise to vigilante groups. It also shows the heights to which women's lib goes in the United States. And though Marjorie has roommates Terry (Diana Scarwid) and Patricia (Alfree Woodard) Joe comes when they are away.

The entire molestation episode is sadistic but still Farrah Fawcett goes through emotional hell as she is terrorised and brutalised. She reacts almost inhumanly. It is quite an unusual film and shows the lengths to which human revenge can go.

Heartbreak Ridge

STARRING: Clint Eastwood
RATING: ***
LABEL: WARNER BROTHERS

So Clint Eastwood has decided that there's nothing better than those 'Dirty Dozen'-like formula films after all. He had earlier made sequels of the tough cop Dirty Harry and in between got involved in those 'Any Which Way' films which broke new ground, even if some of them never rose above ground level.

In 'Heartbreak Ridge' Sergeant Tom Highway (Clint Eastwood) is the eternal sergeant uncomfortable in any line of work other than moulding men into fighting men. So you get an assortment of characters, the most amusing of them of course being rock and roll singer Stitch (Mario Van Peebles), and get this loner voice choice epithets, slug a few men, try and make up with his ex-wife Aggie (Marsha Mason) and eventually get the fighting men to see action in Grenada and you have an exciting, even enjoyable entertainer coming back to the old, old formula.

Actually, director Clint Eastwood seems to have improved with time. When he started off he was quite terrible. But with a story like this he could scarcely go wrong. As a veteran of the Korean (that's where he came across 'Heartbreak Ridge') and Vietnam wars he has enough medals to distribute to a platoon. But the easy-going, hard-hitting soldier has his fun while going through the motions of a very predictable sergeant drama.

A Fine Mess

STARRING: Ted Danson
RATING: *
LABEL: COLUMBIA PICTURES

In a Don Juan-like lover named Spence (Ted Danson) and drive-in waiter Dennis (Howie Mandel) you have a comic combination of sorts. But if you think this pair is able to keep "A Fine Mess" going you sure have another thing coming.

From the time they get chased in the racecourse it is fast paced in that they are running most of the time. But the quality of humour is rock-bottom and it depicts the clear deterioration in director Blake Edwards who has also written the script.

Paul Sorvino, the only recognised name, has a bit part as a Mafia leader and there are a number of females (Broke Alderson and Maria Conchita Alonso) to light up the proceedings, but they scarcely succeed. If

one braves it to the end there is a dig about Indian food and a reference to Gandhi (thanks to Sir Richard) but one would have to wade through a whole lot of juvenile humour to get at it. Surely not worth the effort. One thought Blake Edwards couldn't do worse than his recent Pink Panther efforts. But, they say, you live and learn. Only one fervent hope is that Blake Edwards learns to stop producing such crap.

Cave Girl

STARRING: Daniel Roebuck
RATING: *
LABEL: CROWN INDUSTRIES FILMS

Take a shy, goofy young man, spurned by the girls in college and put him back in time where he meets primitive folk and a girl who soon dotes on him and you have the basis of 'Cave Girl'—a film based



Clint Eastwood and Mario Van Peebles in 'Heartbreak Ridge'.



A still from the film, 'Cave Girl'.

on H G Wells' 'Time Machine' idea. But the lack of imagination and the cold, cheap entertainment it offers is enough to keep one away from films for a while.

If one looks for the plus points in a dull and boring film like this there are a couple of good jokes, like Rex (Daniel Roebuck) lighting a match after Eba (Cindy Ann Thomson) struggles to make a fire the old-fashioned friction way. Director David Oliver has also scripted and photographed 'Cave Girl' and one is not sure which is the worst aspect of the film, but they all are pretty bad.

If the jokes in college, where they try and bait the simple Rex are sick enough, the exploits into the past where Rex and the Cave Girl come across cannibals are even worse. How one can think of putting together such a pathetic film is unthinkable. Even worse is NFDC's decision to buy and distribute it on video ... that too among its first video cassettes.

Back To The Future

STARRING: Michael J Fox
RATING: *
LABEL: UNIVERSAL

Inspired by H G Wells' 'Time Machine' (even though credit is not given), 'Back to the Future' is an amusing story of how Marty McFly (Michael J Fox), late for class, gets behind the wheel of his eccentric scientist-friend Dr Emmett Brown's nuclear-powered vehicle to go back 30 years in time - from 1985 to 1955.

Maybe the most amusing part is young Marty meeting his parents-to-be Lorraine Baines (Lea Thompson) and George McFly (Crispin Glover), a shy, nervous individual. And soon after, imagine him becoming amorously entangled with his mother-to-be.

Actually the screenplay by Robert Zemeckis and Bob Gale is littered with laughs and director Zemeckis has a field day going into the past. But the film tends to lapse into predictability and even run out of ideas in the latter half. Steven Spielberg's name is merely associated as producer, while Michael J Fox uses the part to launch himself as an actor of repute.

It's greatest asset is the idea and that too is not original. Still, youngsters (and what more do youngsters want than seeing their parents courting!) will find it rather enjoyable.

The Glory Of Khan

STARRING: Anthony Jenov
RATING: ***
LABEL: NFDC

Tracing the origin of the Bulgarian state 'The Glory of Khan' is a spectacular film which combines form (the battle scenes are brilliant) with content and this is even more creditable as the story has been sort of invented with the help of available data.

Narrated by the Roman who was kept hostage by the Bulgars, it begins with the reign of Kourbat Khan who was not the barbarian he was made out to be ("his mind was as sharp as the sword he carried"), and his loyalty to the wandering tribe complete.

The undercurrent of socialism is unmistakable in the film, but Vera Moutafchiyeva's screenplay is comprehensive in its depiction of human nature and its varied facets. Director Lyudmil Staikov does an excellent job in recreating an ancient period. Some of the characters, especially the Roman, are excellent. The acting may not of a high standard but the visuals are satiating in the best Cecil B. DeMille tradition. Only a film of this nature should be seen on the big screen.



A still from the film, 'Glory Of Khan'.

Adult Films On TV

A sneak preview of the late night films to be shortly shown on TV.

Swayamvaram

Viswam and Sita (Madhu and Sharada) have eloped from their town. After spending the initial days in hotel rooms, they move to a small dingy house having assorted neighbours – Janaki Amma, the petty rice seller; Vasu, the lewd smuggler; coquettish Kalyani, the prostitute who is friendly with Vasu. Viswam's hopes are pinned on his novel which a popular weekly turns down as too 'sentimental'. Viswam gets a job as a temporary lecturer in a tutorial college, sacrificing his literary ambitions. The story goes on to show the lovers' ecstasy and their struggle to survive harsh economic realities.

Yeh Nazdeekiyan

'Yeh Nazdeekiyan' directed by Vinod Pande is no better than his TV serial 'Air Hostess'. For one, the director who's no great shakes as an actor casts himself in the important role of the man who enters the life of the heroine, Shabana Azmi when she's abandoned by her husband, Marc Zuber. But the husband is understandably enamoured by the beautiful Parveen Babi and eventually their live-in relationship sours and Mr Zuber returns to Ms Azmi who accepts him back as if he had just gone out for an evening stroll. A theme about adultery is reduced by Pande to pure pap.

Giddh

GS Ranga's 'Giddh' is an untidy looking film that loses out on the dramatic potential of its story. It has all the trappings of a non-commercial film – so there are no songs, dances and fisti cuffs. Instead, there is a plot revolving around the custom of selling girls who have just attained puberty to the power lords of the village. In fact, there's rivalry between two highly libidinous men coveting a girl who's barely stepped out of her childhood. The system is opposed by the village slut, played excellently by Smita Patil and a derelict Om Puri. It's for the acting qualities that the film is worth watching.

The Iceman Cometh

'The Iceman Cometh' is considered by many critics to be Eugene O'Neill's masterwork.

In Harry Hope's 'Last Chance' saloon on New York's lower West Side, the regulars anxiously await the arrival of Hickey. Hickey is a travelling salesman who comes each year to celebrate Harry's birthday, bringing with him the promise of free drinks and a good time. But the Hickey that shows up this time is a changed man. With messianic fervour he promises them peace and happiness if only they will discard their illusions and accept reality. Hickey urges them to act out their dreams – get out in the world again (something they neither can nor want to do) – or to realise the basic truth about themselves and abandon hope. They resent his interference because the truth is death for them.

Lace Maker

Nineteen-year-old Pomme is an apprentice in a Paris hair dressing saloon. Marylene takes a liking to the dreamy Pomme and decides to take her under her wing, and show her life, as she herself sees it. Later, Pomme finds herself alone in Cabourg, where she meets Francois, an extremely cultivated but terribly shy student. Inexperience, naivety and timidity unite Francois and Pomme in no time at all. The scene shifts to Paris, where the story moves on to its logical conclusion.

Triple Cross

An action-packed spy thriller which begins with Eddie Chapman (Christopher Plummer), leader of the infamous Gelignite Gang, hiding out on the British island of Jersey, after robbing a movie theatre. But the police find him and jail him there just before World War II begins.

Eddie is sent to a prison camp in German-occupied France. He is accepted by the Germans and leaves prison with a new German identity. Eddie Chapman is reported dead. From then onwards, Eddie moves through an exciting and fast-paced world of espionage and double cross.

At the time of going to press Doordarshan had not finalised the date of telecasting the films.

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Hindi Video Films

Aag Hi Aag

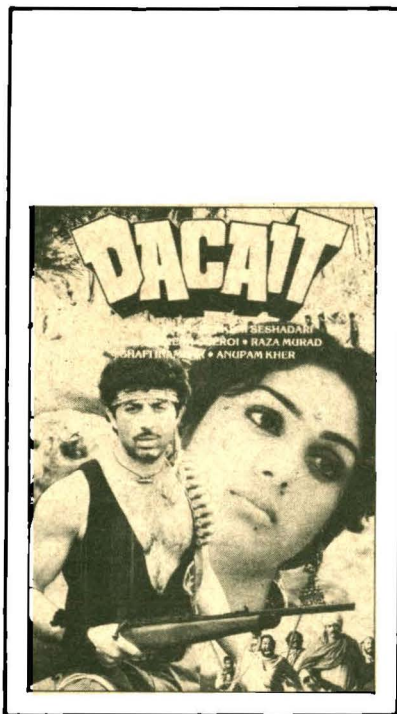
STARRING: Dharmendra, Shatrughan Sinha, Moushumi, Chunkey Pandey, Danny, Neelam
Rating **

Perhaps they're out to prove that the formula hasn't lost its bite. And for a while they almost convince you too. Dharmendra as a dacoit who accidentally kills a doctor and surrenders himself to the law while his gang graduates to palatial mansions and the doctor's son (Shatrughan) waits for revenge, all arouse expectancy of a dogged if not thrilling melodrama. But eventually the trail gets so bogged down in the quagmire of routine situations that all the 'aag' is lost. Dharmam's son (newcomer Chunkey Pandey groping endlessly), tries to woo villain Danny's daughter (Neelam) in vain until big dad steps out of jail to put things right. Then there is Shatrughan Sinha clamouring for blood, a court which rules all this rivalry as meaningless and a climax in the ravines where everyone's favourite passtime is dying. And 'Aag Hi Aag' crashes like an ox.

Dacait

STARRING: Sunny Deol, Meenakshi Sheshadri, Raakhee, Raza Murad
Rating ***

Rahul Rawail is a craftsman and every frame of 'Dacait' is witness to this. Javed Akhtar is a clever writer and his screenplay can make an ordinary subject like a 'Dacait' look menacing. Rajen Kothari has a splendid feel for visuals and he gives this film a breathtaking look which is as picturesque as his work in 'Damul'. Half the battle of 'Dacait' is already won with this team. The theme of an honest and socially conscious individual driven up the wall by a ruthless zamindaar



which eventually forces him to take to arms, violence and the hills is as old as the ravines, yet 'Dacait' has the stuff to rivet your attention. The initial portions in particular before Sunny turns avenger are done with more vitality and conviction. But there is always the sad tale of a poor finish. Still 'Dacait' is one of your better bets for deft entertainment.

Shahadat

STARRING: Om Puri, Aditya Pancholi
Rating: ***

The period and the plot are interesting: the eve of independence, in a remote village of Bengal. The characters, too, are complex enough, to possess their own inherent problems and ideals. The local zamindaar, Gauri Shankar, abandons his mansion and his millions, collects a hand-

ful of like-minded zealots, goes underground as a revolutionary and become an embarrassing bug bear of the British. The entire village is devoted to him and shield him from the eyes of the rulers. Enter young Nick Heathercote, a Bhowani Junction police officer, son of a British father and a Bengali mother. His mission: to annihilate the dreaded Gauri Shankar.

As Nick sets out on his impossible task facing hostility and non co-operation from the faithful villagers, he meets and falls in love with a spunky toy seller, Gulabo – herself a supporter an informer of the revolutionaries. By bribing Gulabo's drunkard father with bottles of Scotch, Nick succeeds in arresting (if briefly) Gauri Shankar, but results in the latter's wrath who slays her for her betrayal to the cause. The film ends in a swift and mercifully unmelodramatic tragic finish, which convincingly reveals the dilemma Nick faces to his two genetic impulses, British and Indian.

The highlight of the film is its genuine, unhurried languorous and rustic mood beautifully photographed. Yet in no way does it slacken the narrative. The etching of the principal characters is commendable.

As the idealistic Gauri Shankar, Om Puri is distinctive, easy, restrained and mature, evoking sympathy. The illiterate Gulabo, frankly, is a phototype of the millions of gaon ki goris that flood our films. But the deglamourised authenticity of Neeta Puri's performance should serve as an example to future exponents of this hackneyed character. Sexponents of this hackneyed character. She is brilliant – convincing, sincere, expressive, equally at home in emotional scenes or light ones. Supriya Pathak, too, is a pleasure to watch, playing Neeta's widowed sister. Her sensitive portrayal is excellent.

In the final analysis, the film centres around Aditya Pancholi. As young Nick, the Brown sahib, the green-eyed, fair Aditya has a tough job balancing his act between authority, officiousness and

sensitivity. He accomplishes his task with incredible success. He underplays – a bit too underplayed, almost stiff, for some tastes – but manages to portray the shades of doubt, complexity and mixed fidelity that are bound to hound a progeny of two races.

The simple line of Nina Arora's story has its own inbuilt confrontation and dramatic elements that are well brought out in an effective screenplay. Similarly, Anil Tejani's direction is good. Kirti Anuraag's score is very pleasing – far superior to the average Hindi film music created by the toprung cacophonous composers. The flaw lies in a few lapses in period authenticity. For example, what are Telco trucks and a post-'60s building doing in pre-Independence Bengal?

'Shahadat' is good video entertainment, and one wouldn't be surprised attracting large crowds in a theatre. Yet the style, approach, and performances are of a superior order and Nari Hira is to be complemented for producing such a film

has to unmask cops who act like thieves and crooks who parade as philanthropists. Sandhu and director Shibhu Mitra try fooling you with the identities of the real villains but it is seldom in doubt as to who is behind all the amorous goings-on. The battle takes on all the predictable twists and the punches miss their mark. Sandhu should have looked up the meaning of the title of his own film and desisted from churning out a non-starter like this.

Sone Ka Pinjra

STARRING: Neeta Puri, Aditya Pancholi, Subbiraj, Sabira Merchant, Anil Dhawan
Rating *

This one is Cinderella in reverse. A rich girl (Neeta Puri), bored of her status, decides to bridge class conflict by living in with the 'poor' and even marrying

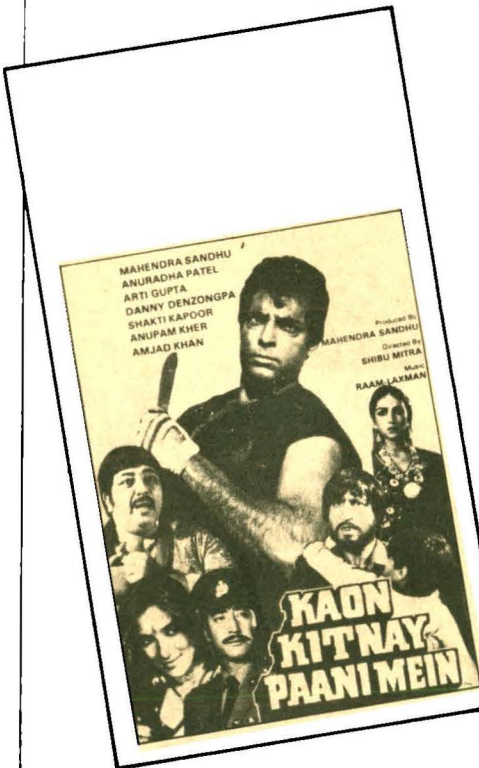
hyena and threatens to demolish the building. The finale is as routine as they come. All's well and our tough man even turns out to be a rich one after all. Everything is conveniently in place and to hell with the 'darling' intentions of the rich, wedding the poor.

Neeta Puri carries the burden of the predictable tale on her shoulders and for a first major effort shows promise. Her uninhibited approach could find better results under more expert eyes.

Imandaar

STARRING: Sunjay Dutt, Farha, Sumeet Saigal, Pran
Rating *

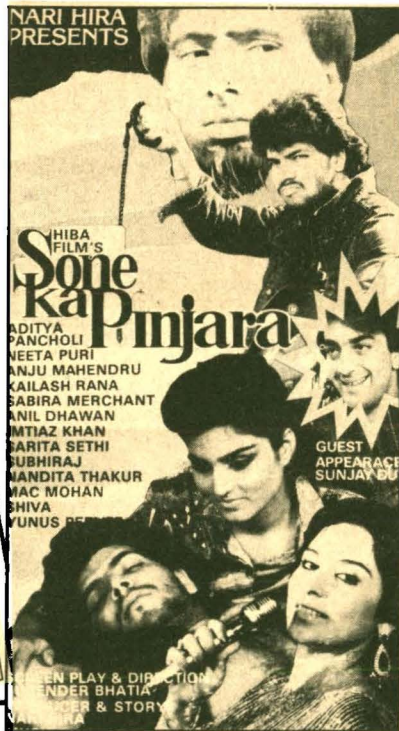
A by-product of the Prakash Mehra camp, 'Imaandaar' is like all the leftovers of 'Muqaddar Ka Sikandar', 'Laawaris' and 'Sharaabi' rolled into one. Sunjay Dutt is the scapegoat employed by inter-



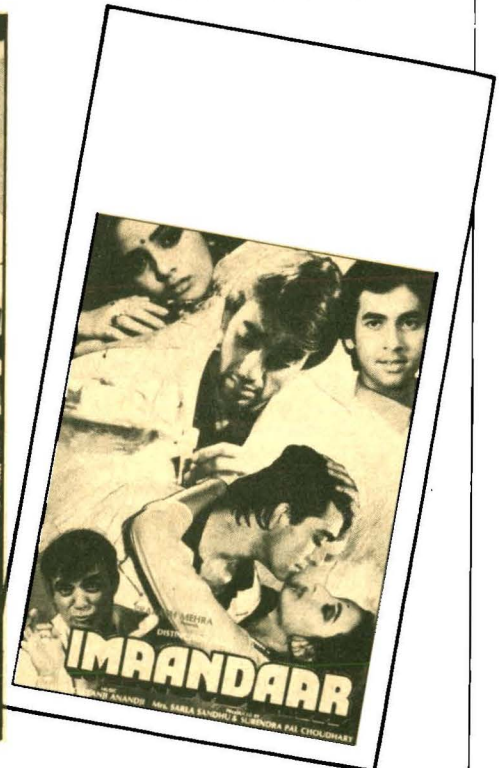
Kaon Kitney Paani Mein

STARRING: Mahendra Sandhu, Anuradha Patel, Danny, Anupam Kher
Rating *

Mahendra Sandhu woke up a little too late to 'Dirty Harry' and the 'Death Wish' series. All the same he goes about the beat of a duty bound policeman versus deadly criminals with a gusto. Of course personal vendetta is at stake, too. Only, he



one of them. The pretentious nature of the move apart, she lands up in a dilapidated building with characters obviously parading their exploited state. The conglomerate is a clumsy affair. A group of Parsi girls swoon over Sanjay Dutt, an office clerk who has cliched views on climbing up the success ladder and the worst of them all – an unshaven tough has bizarre dreams about his not-so-glorious-romantic-past. Now our girl has a tough time on her hands patching up differences, making the tough guy thaw, bringing Sunjay Dutt in person and warding off a villain who laughs like a



national flier Pran to get his daughter out of the love trap spun for her by schemer Sumeet Saigal. It doesn't take much grey matter to guess that the two would fall in love and gyrate erotically while Saigal is left twiddling his thumbs and running down his men who cannot beat up Lochinvat. But papa Pran has other plans for Farha. He flies home Rohan Kapoor for her and this leaves Dutt in the lurch now. But good old Madame Sacrifice is around with her magic wand and all's well that end's well. Barring a couple of hummable tunes, 'Imaandaar' is tedious and trite all the way.

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