



National Film Archive of India

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Interview of Renowned Music Composer Vijaya Bhaskar in Indian Cinema by Randor Guy

00:00:23

Q : This is Randor Guy interviewing Vijaya Bhaskar. Vijaya Bhaskar is one of the leading music composers or music directors, as we call them in this country, in Kannada cinema. He has composed music for several films, not only in Kannada but also in other languages like Tamil, etc. He has done music and composed tunes in six languages till now, and many of his songs have proved extremely popular. Kannada is one of the four languages of South India, the other three being Tamil, Telugu, and Malayalam. The first Kannada talkie was produced in 1934 and during the last 57 years or so, the Kannada cinema has made enormous progress, and Vijaya Bhaskar is one of the senior Creative Artists of South Indian cinema. This interview, the first one with Vijaya Bhaskar, takes place in Madras on the morning of Thursday, February 21, 1991. Vijaya Bhaskar speaks in English as well as in Tamil. Good Morning to Vijaya Bhaskar, it's very nice of you to agree to talk to me about your experiences as a senior music composer or music director. As I told you, this is an oral film history project which I am doing for the National Film Archive of India, initiated by its director Mr. P.K Nair, I'm sure you know him. Here, the idea is to collect data, details and information about our cinema and the history of our cinema, the people who are being connected with it, as early as possible as we can trace, various disciplines like acting writing, directing, sound recording, music composing, whatever is, publicity, film, journalists and so on. This I've been doing for the past 10 years or so, in Tamil and other languages. And

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as I know you well, I thought I could start with you in Kannada. So, that is the broad concept of this and I will ask you questions and you can talk to me and you can reveal your experiences, what you think about the industry and so on and there is no time limit. It is to be done in so many hours as you can take, as long as you want, the more information that you are able to give it will be useful to us. Now, you belong to Bangalore.

A : Yes, I belong to Bangalore and actually I'm born and brought up in Bangalore and my education and everything took place in Bangalore.

00:03:33

Q : When you say your education, I believe you started as an engineer or you wanted to be an engineer?

A : It is not I wanted, my father wanted and one advantage in being brought up in Bangalore, you come in exposure to the music very easily, and you know the pre-independence days. The Raj gores (Rajaswar/Rajeshwar? - inaudible) band used to be played at Cubbon Park.

00:04:05

Q : There's a bandstand even, no? At Cubbon Park.

A : That indoor place used to have this brass band very nicely westernized, as well as we had Kannatic music bands also, alternating. Mostly on Saturdays, it will be a Western band and other days, Wednesdays like that, the classical band, and a string section. And also, the brass section was also used to play Carnatic music, such a combination was there. It was a very great opportunity for us.

00:04:41

Q : To listen to music,

A : To listen to music, they imbibe something though in that day we were not knowing, what was actually what. But it attracts us.

00:04:52

Q : Actually, I would like you to tell us, how you got interested in music and how you became a music composer, that story. Is your family very musical? Are there other musicians in your family?

A : No, no. Nobody.

00:05:09

Q : Normally they say music runs in the families

A : They say but, in Hindu family, only you know, they only teach the girls before they get married, by that I picked up some Carnatic music from there. I cannot say very much from that but where we were situated in, around our house

00:05:30

Q : Where? Where was that?

A : Malleswaram, Seventh cross

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Q : Your house was in Malleswaram.

A : Malleswaram, Seventh Cross. By parallel road, there is a Kannika Parmeshwari Temple, and when you go a little further there are Ganpati temple, Rama temple.

00:05:42

Q : Yes.

A : That is a very famous place in Malleswaram. In every summer there would be 10 to 12 days regular Hari Kathas and Sangeet Sabhas will take place, in those days as an (inaudible) I used to go and sit in the evening

00:05:57

Q : To listen to the music.

A : listen to the music and I'm very much attracted to this Hari katha, especially this harmonist was there. When he was the Hari katha teller was narrating the

story he used to give sound effects with his harmonium. (inaudible) I cannot say anything to them to remember as a re-recording

00:06:20

Q : I know, background music.

A : Background music effects were very effective. It gave me a great impression on that music and later on by the other side of the house, that the dances were there like Sonlal, you know all that schools, and Mahara was also in the seventh cross. Sixth Cross, they will cross the GB Bhave following on from, he was an exponent in Hindustani classical music. He was a disciple of Digambar Swami whose (inaudible) music. (inaudible) Hindustani music throughout the north in undivided India. So, we had like this, he is simply going sitting and all that. I may be in my age maybe nine or ten. It is very coincidence I can call it, we had the shops along with house and where there are some goldsmiths used to work, they all Tamilian families, acharis. And they always do the play this Tamil Records of Kitapa's, G Kitapa Songs and Ashwatama Songs and all that. I used to hear a lot every day it was a must they used to play every day while working, (inaudible) to these discs it was a very great enumerating experience for us and slowly got the taste, taste for the music. And then I thought simply hearing won't do at certain age, I thought of learning it. When actually I got, I got interested in film music is when I heard the very first song of Pankaj Malik Sundaram Pritam I still remember even all eyes, I by hearted all the songs including the background I used to sing like that I got interested in the music by sight of these things. These people I didn't know they were working in films these acharis.

00:08:38

Q : They were working in films? What were they doing?

A : They were acting in some way in small roles, minor roles. That today was Mysore Song Studio.

00:08:47

Q : Was it a Song Studio? Must be during the Talkie age. Mysore Song Studio this was the Kimmaya Studio. Where is this in Bangalore?

A : It is on the 17th cross. Now, I think that the whole building was owned by CV Raman. I didn't know Sir CV Rahman is now no more there, his family's having, very recently a month back also I saw, just stopped my car and old building. Nothing has been changed, they have removed the sheds and all. The old building is as it is.

00:09:21

Q : I haven't seen it. I will, still there on the same 17th cross?

A : 17th cross, and then I think I was studying in middle school.

00:09:30

Q : When? When the year was this Mysore Sound Studio?

A : 1937. Our school was just falling on that road Malleswaram, now that it was middle school, now that middle school was converted into girls' school. No more of a boy school was there, then we used to come out and see around, what is going on in the studios.

00:09:59

Q : Did you see any shooting in that studio?

A : Yes, I have seen. Very funny thing, it's very vague for me and I used to see the rehearsals of music then and the very first time I saw there was our Picha Padma Shastri. I never knew his name then, (inaudible - Swami man?) I remember his face very well, later on, I slowly got an interest as he told me to learn music then I started learning with Mr. G.V. Bhave.

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Q : You learned first, Hindustani music?

A : Hindustani Music, and I first learned Sitar, and very few students used to come in those days but to learn Hindustani music in Bangalore. It was very strange for them to learn Hindustani music. Some or other I got interested in Hindustani, local and as well as Sitar by that you know, I became very much involved in the family.

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Q : You were studying at that time?

A : Yes, school. School, I mean, musical, per month, we are only paying three rupees or five rupees, I still remember to tutor but learning all things and of course, maybe the three to five rupees were very valuable. But all the other time I used to be there by the time getting free access to other things. Then as I was continuing like that, and later on what happened when I came to high school by that time, my thinking about music is also grown. Then I thought why not? When we hearing the bands and all that what was playing on Sundays in that government park. We are regularly you know, in this age used to go about a cycle, in those days, pre-independence days people will never go to the cantonment.

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Q : Was there any restriction?

A : No no, nothing nothing. They've got some kind of complex, very few people used to go city to cantonment. People like us who were old enough to go to the restaurant and all, they had little for this waiters and all that they will be serving the Britishers then, the black people were not allowed.

00:12:24

Q : Racist. There was racism in Bangalore?

A : There was. Yes, that some of the hotels I still remember with panels, now where, MG Road, there was a hotel called Funnars, a restaurant. Yes, restaurant and bar, and were very few people used to go and then the seven a clock you know, used to be standing on the road, next to that even still that window side, big windows are there and that will go open everything to a room that was for

anything. We stand there with the piano, and the bass guitar, the music instruments, in the sixth and seventh sound combination of sax and double bass drums like that, we used to play.

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Q : Who are the players? Indians?

A : No, Indians no. Goanese mostly.

00:13:22

Q : They used to play?

A : Yes, they used to play, Goanese and (inaudible). that somehow or the other I was very much attracted to, fascinated towards the western music and much attracted towards the piano.

00:13:34

Q : But no Indian was allowed to enter?

A : Very few rich people used to be allowed, the ordinary people were never used to go, and I still need this connection, I remember in the 40s, even in 40s, 43, 44. Now, today the total coffee club which is (inaudible - Tamil - Church Road - MG Road) coffee bars so they are committed even in the father and all that, they never used to even Malayalee Christian opening in those war times and he never has to do 'Hello' to Indians then. We as the students used to go and used to make (inaudible) 'Why are you not Indian? Why should you not give us? You are also the same colour. Why don't you?'. So, like that, we used to talk and then let me come back.

00:14:47

Q : It is interesting anyway, whatever you say or hearing about this in Bangalore.

A : And that is very common roads and all very lovely, cool and we just three or four people only from cities to go from Malleswaram and roundabouts, during those days looking at annual (inaudible), it was a very great attraction for us to

pass simply for some time and come back, that was all that we could do. There were, theatres were also their theatres you know, there was Opera Theatre, which only runs on Tamil and this thing, and there was a Globe Theatre, it was dismantled now. And there was BRB and Plaza and Imperial, Empire, Empire is no more

00:15:38

Q : Surveyed on recent years.

A : Empire is no more. Imperial is-, that is Globe. Liberty and Globe and these are the theatres. And one great, beautiful opportunity we had was the lot of English Pictures used to be released in Bangalore. And let me come to that later and later, when I was got interested in western music, I was I wanted to learn and I don't have the piano at my home, what to do now I was thinking, and my parents were very against me to take music class and I used to take my Sitar and used to play the one there was one writer Tara Subra. Who was staying in our same road in Malleswaram, seventh cross, down. He was living in a room. I used to go to his room and play, and later on, he left that room and went somewhere else. Then the other side of the house, there was a tailor. When he allowed me to come and practice in his this thing, I used to keep my sitar and next day.

00:16:57

Q : So, your father objected to your singing in the house? So you had to go somewhere else to practice?

A : Yes. So, in the early morning at 4 o'clock, I used to go over there, in one condition he put me where I will give you the place but you must also teach me. The problem for me and he did not have a sense of music, but some or other I have to get a place, so I would teach something and he wouldn't learn anything, and later on, he gave up but he allowed me to practice like that I started practicing. Later on, what happened, when I wanted to get to know Western music, I was just searching like that, roaming in cantonment streets and all that one day in Benson town, there was a band going up, an Anglo-Indian band. And I was just (inaudible) I

don't remember the church's name, actually that every Saturday and Sunday, the bands so we used to go and stand just to see the fun. Then after coming to the dance is over by 11 o'clock, so I asked the pianist 'Will you teach me Piano?' 'Oh yes', he said. He was an ex palace pianist. Name - Hunt, he used to get food pension, the Maharaja has given him, Maharaja of Mysore. He gave him a house and all that, he's a very kind man. He knew something about Indian music also because he was in Palace, and he took me to, he asked, he gave me his house number and all that, next day I went, he charged me seven rupees per month for teaching three lessons for a week, and I went for a month like that. My progress was not good 'You're not able to play, have you got a Piano at home?' ' No.', I said. 'Then how can you practice? You simply played and I have to express this is my problem. Don't worry, whenever you have time you come and play.' They're very nice and very kind to me. His wife was also very nice, that lady was very nice. I can still remember he said he used to call me 'Vijaya' come Vijaya, you come and play anytime you want, no restriction because I was only one Indian learning then, that made them some how they find extra interesting, means they like also, they love I started learning it as a freehand. By the time, I came to the passed out my school and everything and by the way, he advised me to go by theory also, and knowledge and musicals there also are the same. No, they used to conduct random concerts to college music. Then I attended all the postings by the time I came to intermediate, I got through all the grades and he used to take me also sometimes to ask me to play, give me some one or two pieces to play, like the western classical music as well as to jazz too, jazz music also I used to play. His son used to play jazz music. Then by this time, this music is also good now. That is one part, by that time I told him I was playing sitar, there was some orchestra, specific band, those people used to call me to play including great dancer, you know, Rambo was in motion control media and when you go by Brindavan and then you can see that dilapidated house, that is very much sad when I see that place, it was buzzing with great artists. Now, it is like a haunted house. And something is coming up I didn't know. But that studio was still there when the practice was going on, Ram Gopal's though his orchestra used to play sometimes they used to give four rupees. There were two

Nataraj, one Nataraj he never used to pay us for the program. But people liked him, a little sharp and all that, he used to give up like that, the music, the music I cultivated. Actually, when I got interested in film music, it's insane. High School itself, I told him when I had the song, as a regular filmgoer, at least in a month for a day they used to see a film.

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Q : Every day? What kind of films did they see?

A : Every day. Every kind of film, silent films, even Tamil films, in those days Tamil films only used to play in Cantonment, not in the city. In the city, Hindi, Telugu and English. There were very few Kannada films coming up, only Telugu, Hindi and English films, one or two English (inaudible). There are two of us, we used to go sit in the front row.

00:22:15

Q : Have you seen any silent films in Bangalore during your railway days?

A : Only once I remember, real, with my father that type of Magic Flute or something, I remember that one, that is a silent film I'd seen, in between I don't remember the theatre I don't know (inaudible) or something it is called.

00:22:37

Q : Have you seen a silent film being made in Bangalore studio?

A : No, that I feel there was a shooting near our Primary School Maybe vague, very vague idea I got. Two people are standing and touching their own (inaudible - cloth, cranking?). That was on the main road and the house also was still there.

00:23:02

Q : So silent films, hand-cranked? In those days they were only hand-cranked.

A : Later on only I came to know that one that is on, in those days I did not know that they were shooting a film. And these people I told you, you know that the

Garedi Subramaniam and also they had this, there was another man named Manikyam.

00:23:23

Q: Manikyam.

A: And they used to do real stunts, mind it, somersaults and these things, and I used to learn with these people also something can work on my back.

00:23:40

Q: So you wanted to be a stunt actor also?

A: At that age around you don't know what to do and those people used to tell me that, the film's actors, especially Subramaniam, Sharif Badmash he used to go to Bombay, act and come.

00:23:55

Q: He was a stunt actor, Garedi Subramaniam? That's his name?

A: Yes, not only stunt actor, he used to do roles also and he was a great hero for us because we have seen him in the film and he must be a great man. Another person, I still remember we used to call him Jamadagni, he was a very fair person used to walk around (inaudible) cinema actors (inaudible) people used to walk (inaudible). But we respected his roles in films, and later on when I passed all these things, and I told you, you know the Padma Shastri used to live in Seshadipra.

00:24:39

Q: Yes, he was in Seshadipra. Yes.

A: So you know, from Malleswaram to Seshadipra is very close by, while going from the cycle we used to see he used to be standing before the house. Just before I'm talking, he coming to Madras and doing films for Telugu pictures.

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Q: Telugu pictures, he has directed some Telugu pictures.

A : Yes, in those days he used to bring orchestra from Bangalore and utilize in Telugu films, I have seen Telugu films also music, sangeetam, padmaksham.

00:25:07

Q : Yes, he has done some, composed music.

A : Yes, Orchestra. Jaymurthi Orchestra, Bangalore.

00:25:15

Q : Credits

A : Credits. So, whenever I used to go (inaudible) was there and I used to go and talk to him and all that, he used to (inaudible). Then he knew that I was playing Sitar then I can only in every summer, I used to make a tour to Madras. Three months to try pro with this man is working here. I still remember in one summer I came with my sitar then there was only in Madras (inaudible). And one of the relatives of the state, mine stayed in Raipur, my mother's sister's house and her husband was there, son, daughter. And I stayed there. And from there, I used to hold my sitar like this all the time, hold the trap and travel up to, he was staying in Raipetha and he said he said you go and visit Vaidh Shastri's brother, he was assisting there. him when he opened his mouth, he's all only just Sanskrit. (inaudible - another language) Then I went there and first he started abusing me and all that. And somewhat I think he didn't like educated men coming into the orchestra, and then all that you come. He said, then he took me near somewhere and that Santo, there was a company, they're making some (inaudible) picture, which he was giving music to, I don't remember the name of the picture and (inaudible), then he gave music that music is nothing but the Laila Majnu music. I got disgusted and asked why you're copying, then he said why you want to bother, whatever notes I give just play, then that picture cut two songs so, I played the recorder and I think in the Swarnachala or Neptune, in the same time the Radhika or Bala Saraswati Rai called, BR Rai was the camera man in Telegu.

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Q : With Bala Saraswati? Was it Swarna mala? Radhika? Yes, that was much much earlier, in which Padmanabhan played Krishna.

A : Yes, that one. That writer was a director. And BR Rai when I went for a chance there then he was a manager of the Neptune studio, that Bala Saraswati's father. From where you are he was asking and Oh you're Kannadiga he asked me, I said yes. The camera man he's also Kannadiga. Then I asked is that all I tell him and that summer, it could not happen, so I used to go direct daily there and come like that I cultivated some cinema like this and one of the recordings of Somnath. Then again the academic year started and I went back, like that I used to go and actually what happened in 1949 or 48. 48, I was just like going by cycle to my college, I saw this Noor Mohammad Charlie you know? He used to act in Hindi films. He was walking in the stores now that what will you know just near that race course, the big stone building, he was just walking and I saw that time, I got down and asked him said I want work in Hindi films. He gave me a letter in Urdu. I couldn't read anything and then he said you come to Bombay. He gave me this thing, after one year I went, he gave me somewhere in 48 I went in 49. Summer again, I think I was in second year or first years, then I went and I searched, he had left the country and went to Pakistan and what am I, I was flabbergasted I had only 300 rupees that's all in my pocket, what to do and I was just sitting in Bombay. One gentleman was sitting next to me, the manager. He was observing me actually and he was like from where you are and I said Karnataka.

00:00:21

Q : No, you were talking of Charlie. Noor Mohammad Charlie

A : Noor Mohammad Charlie, 1948.

00:00:26

Q : He acted in a Tamil film called (inaudible - Lavanki?) which I remember right, which was made by YV Rao, he acted in that. YV Rao was always introducing Santa Apte, his daughter Savitri

A : Even YV Rao was also living in Bangalore. Eighty crossed.

00:00:39

Q : I know I know. I saw him once. And now going back a little, you told me that you have seen the shooting of Naveena Nirupama. Can you say something about that? Because very few people know about that picture.

A : Naveena Nirupama, a Tamil talkie film. The Tamilian Acharis were all taking part they were also acting in that film.

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Q : In Naveena Nirupama? Where was this Naveena Nirupama made?

A : Same, in that same Mysore Song Studio.

00:01:14

Q : Have you seen the shooting of this film?

A : Yes one night they took me along with the Mysore Diamond scene.

00:01:18

Q : You remember who acted in all that?

A : I didn't ask her whole name, Tansan Malay or Rasala Poorti, and very young artists.

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Q : I know I know, can't precisely remember. But do you remember that this Naveena Nirupama, it was made in Bangalore. somebody told me that Naveena Nirupama was made in Bangalore, very few people know about that.

A : Yes, this I see, these two films. This I know very well Dwarkanath and Karnashatri they still because I worked in Rajashree.

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Q : Rajshivan was a talkie. Talkie naturally whether there was music composed

A : And then this fellow, I don't know who did the music in Kannada, they are also rehearsing in Tamil (inaudible) this I remember the (inaudible).

00:02:05

Q : And I can check because I have my notes. Nobody knows about this. So, you went to Bombay at Marine Drive, somebody offered you a job and you were not interested in it?

A : Then I said I need a letter sir, he gave me a letter to Madhulal master.

00:02:20

Q : Madhulal master, I see.

A : He was then a music composer in Hindi and from him, as soon as I mentioned that man is having an unbreakable voice to that master, and he told me why do you want managers, actors and all that. *Chhodo bhai tum*, and why don't you take up the...I'll give you a good job. I said I want to be in films, 'Okay then' he said then you come tomorrow. Then I went like that two-three days just roaming around, he used to play, took me around to help and one day he was recording for some song, then he said, '*Kya bajaata hai tu?*' you see I had that fair if I would be able to compete with them or not that's why, then I said that I play piano, harmonium, sitar. Because I remember Sitar. 'Achha kya bajaata hai baja.' Then I played, he simply looked at me, next question he asked me 'Can you write notations?' 'Yes.' He dictated I wrote notation in western music. I said I can write in Hindi also. 'How do you know Hindi? You're Madrasi.' 'Nahi nahi, I am from Karnataka sir.' Madrasi, all from South India are Madrasi. But I am not sorry for that. Then I said he was flabbergasted that I will do notation and everything and none of the music directors I can keep in record even now, they don't write notations and when I put all the (inaudible) on and everything, they were looking at me, he said, 'Oh, you work with me.' He knew that not many pictures were done. He used to allow anybody to work wherever he told his sister to take all wherever you want like that they used to pay about 20-25 rupees only. I don't know. But that used to cut something and he used to pay me even then 30 rupees I was very happy, I was

earning still. Sometimes for a week, four or five recordings used to be made. Rerecorded in Bombay, many other music directors, one I remember distinctly, Banerjee music director he called me saying that, you come home then some film he was working on and then he had a Piano at his house, his songs he gave me I wrote and cleanly orchestrated. He looked at me, he asked me, "Will you teach piano?" I don't do this work. I don't do this teaching work. If I get a gap, I'll come and teach you but not and he took me somewhere (inaudible) I'm not interested in only taking the money and coming here. He told (inaudible) then later on, I'm fed up. I thought these Hindi film music directors were very big and we may learn so many things. Yeah, great people I must say (sarcastically). I was disappointed, and these fellows cannot even say the notation and only harmonium they play, you have to take the notation and all. From that I got disgusted, and again my college reopened, I came back. After that my father became very serious with me, you cannot be going like that either you complete your education and go. But don't leave off in the middle, some or other three years I continued that, this thing could not stop me. By this time I was too involved in so many other things in orchestras, I told (inaudible) and then in final year result I some or other got that urge.

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Q : You were doing engineering? In Bangalore?

A : Yes, in Bangalore, government college. After my final year, in the summer that is 1952, 51 or 52 I went to Bombay because I had so many contacts and also my friend NG Rao, photographer, he was working with EN Reddy and all, as the operative cameraman. We are both friends, he started in Bangalore in the second year, we both in the same class we used to imagine and want to go to the film festival, even at that time. He became a cinematographer and I became a music director. Then I had the opportunity of working with a big music director Naushad.

00:07:41

Q : You worked with Naushad? In which film did you work with Naushad?

A : Yes, then he was doing Baiju Bawara.

00:07:48

Q: So, you worked in that department, as his assistant?

A: Assistants, he had 3 or 4 assistants and most of the job I used to do, you know, how it all happens and he liked me very much, liked in the sense, they know we are very sharp with notating and doing things. (inaudible - in Kannada) they had that kind of respect, knowledge. One thing is, I used to speak very fluent Hindi, they were understanding either I am Maharashtrian or you people, even now he used to call me, Bhaskar Rao, they never used to call me Vijaya Bhaskar. Some or other Bhaskar Rao Bhaskar Rao, they used to call me, that's how I was working and it spread out, very nicely spread out. You know once this Laxmi Kant - Pyarelal was playing mandolin, one, Lakshmi Kant was playing mandolin and Pyarelal was playing the violin. They're not music directors and they're very famous people were there, Husnlal Bhagatram. That through there, how I got the introduction was Dilip Chandra VEDI, he was the greatest Gharana singer of Punjab, was teaching in Bangalore, Chidanand in Bangalore, 11th cross. In their rehearsals, I used to go, university in Bangalore, used to play harmony with them in classical music and I used to tell me whenever the chance occurs I used to ask to give me a recommendation letter, in Bombay I want to work and then he gave me, those two people who are the shishyas of this Husnlal Bhagatram, he wrote again in Punjabi some letter, he gave me some translation I remember, they are on the top. They are very famous but one fellow was very nice to me, I think Bhagatram was very nice, other than the other one but they gave me some chance, either one of one-two years I was there, in Bombay then I met in '73, V.R. Krishnamurthy.

00:10:18

Q: So, all these years you were in Bangalore?

A: Bangalore, yeah. Only three years, 2 and a half years only I stayed in Bombay. Continuously.

00:10:27

Q : Then you came back, what were you doing in Bangalore at that time? In the 50s?

A : In the 50s, I don't know. I was continuing my education then in last year, I said no.

00:10:33

Q : You gave up. In the 60s what were you doing? 1960s?

A : 54 afterwards, I came to Bangalore and did that film, Krishnamurthy film - Sri Ram Pooja.

00:10:50

Q : So, that was your first film, that was in 1954?

A : 54. We made it in 1954, released in 1955 we came for re-recording here in Madras and that picture was though the music was very much appreciated up till now, the time I did that film only about 50 films came, in Kannada.

00:11:13

Q : I know, not many films were there.

A : And in all those films you know, you had mostly borrowed films from Hindi and Tamil and mostly Hindi and Tamil films.

00:11:26

Q : Ram Puja. Who were the producers of this picture?

A : VR Krishnamurthy himself - Producer, Director, Writer.

00:11:37

Q : He is a writer, V R Krishnamurthy

A : Yes, he has written the story also.

00:11:42

Q : He was the man associated with Nagendra or Nage(inaudible). He is alive now?
And where was this picture shot?

A : No, he died. Navjyoti Studio in Mysore and Navjyoti Studios Mysore, we recorded there also, they had recording facilities also, in the sense they are the recording theatre, then it was not being used, we recorded on stage, only with one mic.

00:12:09

Q : The soundtrack?

A : Yes, there was a very funny incident, I want to tell you.

00:12:14

Q : What's that? Tell us.

A : Even MEN Ayyangar was there, MEN Ayyangar was a famous recordist there, in Navjyoti Studio. There was another, his assistant Sitharaman, these two people were there. One day I visited MEN Ayyangar, "You are a very big music ace. You know how many things go for making music success?" I said, "No sir, I don't know." He said, "Then why do you come and work? No no, please tell me there are twelve things to go back. Honestly, come on tell me." "Melody must be very good." "Yes sir." "The lyrics must be very good." "Yes sir." "Singer must be very good." "Yes sir." "Recording must be very good." "Yes sir." Afterwards this (inaudible) this Ayyangar has the audacity to talk to everybody like that, there are certain people are like that your own recordist or some people like that. Here also, I said, "You don't know things but you simply..." In those days I used to give back, "You don't simply want to block me. I think I want more than you with better people." I said, he kept trying then, later on, he asked "Who was this man?" and then they told him, then he kept quiet. Later on, I said, I don't want him to record my songs, I'll take his assistant and record, I did that and so, when the very first day when I went for the song recording, and they know this (inaudible) Dev Murthy Orchestra was taken, then this B Saroja Devi came there for a singing chance, she's not exceptional singer, in Navjyoti she was acting in some dramas there.

00:14:09

Q : Drama artist?

A : Yes. And she sang some songs. I was selecting all local people, mind it. In my first, in Bangalore only, we used to do rehearsal here in Bangalore only, and we have months together, six songs we used to rehearse. We selected only local Bangalore people, even singing except Mohan Kumari and all college girls I used to interview and get. Like that, I made three people sing, like that she came for a singing chance. Then I said to our producer “She’s having a good face. Why not use for acting?” That’s how it was linked I tell you, and she and her sister both of them acted in the film.

00:14:54

Q : In Shriram Puja?

A : Actually small role. She has acted as the comedian in the picture along with the Supanna the makeup artist, with him. I think I must be having the old photographs.

00:15:10

Q : We go back to Shri Ram Pooja, it was made in Navjyoti Studios. Who are the artists in that film? Main artists?

A : The main artist, latest artist were Sandhya and -

00:15:24

Q : Sandhya. Was it her first picture?

A : No, the second picture or third picture but leading role it was the first picture.

00:15:33

Q : As the heroine. Did she play Sita?

A : No, not Sita this the wife of the Ram (inaudible), this is not based on Ramayana. Shanivar vartas, it is about that in the story.

00:15:52

Q : And who was the hero?

A : Hero was one Krishnappa. His name was changed to Rajendra Krishna.

00:15:57

Q : I don't think he's very much active, I've not heard of him.

A : I know, he did small roles or something.

00:16:04

Q : And who are the other artists in the film?

A : Mari Rao was there, Ishwarappa was there. In those days they were well-known artists. And (inaudible) was there and Supanna was there, in those days he was a good comedian.

00:16:19

Q : Saroja Devi acted as his pair?

A : And in the film in her name was Kokila.

00:16:27

Q : Kokila, yes. Because I have seen one or two stills in an old Telugu magazine published by Mr. Naga Reddy and Chakrapani. In that very youngish looking Saroja Devi is there and the name is given as Kokila.

A : Yes, in the film actually she was named as Kokila,

00:16:47

Q : But her real name is Saroja Devi.

A : And her sister also acted in the film. I'm missing her name and from that film many people took off.

00:17:00

Q : From Shriram Puja. Like Saroja Devi was one?

A : Saroja Devi was one and Lakshminarayanan, the director. For song, Geet Priya got for that film. Geet Priya started writing songs, one song he wrote and other song was written by Birla Ram Shastri, who was then famous writer.

00:17:19

Q : Birla Ram Shastri, famous playwright.

A : He wrote one song and Vardharajan also become a camera man and like that so many people took off, take myself also.

00:17:36

Q : You view that as your first film? Who are the people who sang in this, in Sriram Puja?

A : Except Mohan Kumari all the other artists locally.

00:17:49

Q : You did not take anybody from Madras? Like B Srinivas, Chinky and all.

A : No, the male singer was also Tyler by name. He has a beautiful watch and I took him and Narayan Das was another who acted in this film. He sang his song.

00:18:08

Q : Did Saroja Devi sing in that?

A : No, she did not have any singing part at all.

00:18:12

Q : She was doing comedy in small roles.

A : And we had Jay Murthy orchestra rehearsed and we took Mysore Paras Brand Orchestra for (inaudible) and all that from there itself. And it was a great surprise for them, one thing I still remember, I went and brought them, gave them a notation and these people rehearsed really well within one or two rehearsals, they were wondering I said that is the advantage of the western notations, and that way

and later on also, when I did the re-recording for the same film, I brought from there the Mysore Orchestra from Bangalore. In those days in Madras, we did the re-recording at Revathi Studios, which was originally where now that Congress, Teynampet. There we did our...., V.S. Raghavan was contesting. And then those people who came around with me stayed in Madras, in those days to get a salon and sitar player in Madras in 1955.

00:19:30

Q : There were no players to play Salon and sitar in madras?

A : Very few people were there, not such good players. I actually imported many people from Mysore palace, made films in Madras They stay on and next also one film we made with collaboration with Salem, Neptune Studios.

00:19:52

Q : What picture was that?

A : That picture was not completed. We only recorded in Paramal Studios, then the whole lot of the people I brought from Mysore, in that film (inaudible).

00:20:12

Q : (inaudible) he composed music for some Malayam pictures also?

A : Yes, yes. For some Kannada films also. And that's how we brought people from there and that's why whenever the people say that cannot be done recordings, then I say in those days in (inaudible) also we have same problem why not we can also solve the problem, that's how it has been done. And of course, that film was not very much successful. But all the reviews including Screenbook, that this film is the first time which has not been copied, original songs and music.

00:20:34

Q : Music was original. Previously what were they doing, they were copying from Hindi, Tamil...

A : Telugu, and whichever popular songs were there, they used to copy them. There are some earlier films some of the songs have been in total copied and that time that kind of working (inaudible) again need to work for Kannada. I stuck up to Bombay that we were different that somehow that love for the state, why should we not. Whenever they used to tell me, *“Kya tum log khaali apna kyu copy karta hai? Aisa bolein toh bahut dukh hota hai.”* Then I used to think why should we not make an original, which I always believed we can do a better job later because I've been working there, I knew what is that. So that's how I deal with it.

00:21:58

Q : Now, talking of Ashavtamma you said, you used to listen to her music. Did you know her?

A : Personally, no.

00:22:05

Q : You have seen her?

A : I've seen her once before her death, I guess.

00:22:09

Q : She died very young, did very few films. Chintamani, Sarangkapani, then Sakubai

A : Those films, later on I've seen

00:22:22

Q : After she died. But she was very popular because I remember in my house, we used to have this Gramophone disk which I saw as a kid in the 40s that had one particular song which used to haunt me. That is a very famous song that (inaudible) still a haunting melody.

A : That I was very engaged and I used to wonder, why she is saying Africa. Later on, only I came to now, it's Haan Priya.

00:22:52

Q : It's not Africa. Was it in any drama? No. It was a private song, very popular song.

A : And she was a rage in Karnataka.

00:23:05

Q : Tamil Nadu also, all-over south India Yeah. Especially after the success of Chintamani.

A : And in those days, I still remember I it may not be out of place and it is a good record also. Good music also came before the universal copying products. They did Purandara dasa, in '37, that was done by Devi Films, they made it in two languages who was the music director, I don't know.

00:23:36

Q : That I can find out. I will tomorrow.

A : How much it has impressed me because in those days, they used to move by the van, stop the van in the corner, junction or a corner and play records and there's those records, you know, those songs, which we heard, still I remember.

00:23:58

Q : Purandara dasa. I will tell tomorrow music director; I've got notes at home.

A : Please. I have a very great admiration. That's how the songs you know, which has inspired us to make, learn classical music and that episode was always green in my -

00:24:16

Q : Rajagopal Chetty who I spoke recently to about Samsara Namma, it's a Kannada film. At that time I spoke to him, he said the Samsara Namma gave us a lot of money, I produced it at 33,000 rupees and collected nearly two or three and a half lakhs whereas Purandara dasa did not make money, it only gave us some satisfaction that we did a good picture. I said Purandara was not a box office,

whereas Samsara Namma possibly was because it was a very successful play and after this Shri Ram Pooja, what was your next film? And before we proceed further when you came into the field in Kannada, that is in 1953, actually started in 54, who were the other music directors working in Kannada cinema at that time?

A : In those days sham anna was there in violin score. P Sham Anna. He was doing some Kannada pictures Shankar Singh and Hitlacharya.

00:25:22

Q : And Padnav Shastri was he popular in Kannada?

A : Padnav Shastri was based in Madras.

00:25:28

Q : So, he did he didn't do much for Kannada?

A : (inaudible) earlier, before I came. M Reddy (inaudible) and all those.

00:25:36

Q : They were all made in madras

A : He never did any music in Bangalore or Mysore.

00:25:43

Q : He has always lived in Madras. What about the others who were the other music directors?

A : Sham anna was actually was in Bangalore, in Mysore itself and I think later on one picture was Raja Nalanga's.

00:26:01

Q : They came to a holiday

A : They were in Mysore itself one picture I remember. One picture again that was purely copy product and, in those days, again, the background scoring was a peculiar thing. I think I changed it actually.

00:26:28

Q : What were the peculiarities about it?

A : They only used to, I mean repeat the songs which were in Hindi films or the hit songs of the other Hindi films.

00:26:38

Q : That are used as re-recordings?

A : It was annoying for me. Why I'm telling you because I know that the contact of this Western music and all that, I used to see a lot of western films, in those I was very much interested in will stay in (inaudible) in those three recording method sites to (inaudible). All these people's re-recording, I was narrating that one, the encrypted sound. In those days, I tell you it was only seven and a half hours for a second of the scene, the daily number. And in the English theatres, they used to only ask once for the ticket, after that they never bother with where you sit. What used to happen there, every time they show the first the new script interval then the picture starts, after the interval, they will never ask you for a ticket or anything. One picture in my life, especially the music part of it, I used to visit like this with no ticket, anyone can't say. They used to say, "No ticket, just go and see." Because from my elder days I used to trust that, that is our parent age like that clear. So, nobody is to ask us, some type of circus plaza and all have those little certain type of people, they used to ask, in those I used to mark the timing when the film comes. And I don't stand in the lobby I hate the music like that I cultivated the re-recording and then later on, you take it, it's not my ego to say.

00:28:22

Q : It's not the ego. What you have done you can always claim.

A : You can take these few of Indian, I mean Kannada film re-recordings, you can change signature motifs which are created, usage of choral music for re-recordings and those things you can see only in mine. And you know what? It happened to me the great problem was for me, they asked me in 1984 to give in Kannada the progress of music how it took place. So, they (inaudible) our native, then when I

used to speak about, I have to tell my own is I said to station director It was very hard for me to talk about myself. Then you don't talk about you talk about the picture, he said, then whatever you tell, that is the truth. Nobody can write it. So, right from the beginning I tried -

00:29:30

Q : Actually, one of the reasons, how I came to know you because when I started seeing Kannada pictures in 1970 when I made my first Malayalam picture in Bangalore, I noticed a kind of a totally different and I used to ask some of my friends that, that's the time I came to know. Then they said Vijaya Bhaskar's music is a little different, how to say. Then only they told me that you are a very good piano player and you have a Western musical background. Then only I met you. So, at that time it was so noticeable. That's why asked this man is very different from others, then they say no, no, he's a very well I think Laxman told me or somebody, 'He is a very good piano player and he has got that Western training and all that he has done a lot of work.' So that the effect you see is and others are different when they play the harmonium with no notation, or any scientific approach in music, that sounded different was very, very clearly seen in your familiarity with Western music and your orchestration and all those things. So, after this Shriram, Puja, what was your second film?

A : The second picture was Bhaghya chakra.

00:30:32

Q : That one was directed by YV Rao.

00:00:21

Q : Bhagya chakra was produced by NG Rao. He was the producer and the cameraman. And Y V Rao was the director, where was this film made? Was it in Madras? Who are the artists in Bhagya chakra?

A : Yes, Madras. We recorded the songs at Revathi Studio. Soka Jani was the Heroine and Kalyan Kumar, KN Balkrishnan and the Shastri he did the father role and very peculiarly I made the Chandra Babu to sing in the film.

00:01:09

Q : Chandra Babu acted in Kanada.

A : No, No.

00:01:10

Q : He only sang. For whom did he sing?

A : It was for the hero Kalyan Kumar, we were friends then.

00:01:12

Q : I know him very well.

A : That pushed the, they used to have this drama Cinema this Kalyan Kumar and his wife. Sangya, Vidyvati, they did some drama, music also, it was made in Bangalore.

00:01:43

Q : Now, can you tell me something about the earlier background of Kalyan Kumar? What is his original name? It's not Kalyan Kumar, it's something else, isn't it? He's a Mysore Ayyangar?

A : Mysore Ayyangar, he was living in Basanbogi. Yes, I know in this some '52-53

00:02:21

Q : Was he on stage first before he came into the cinema?

A : No, I don't think so, he was in Bombay and he came to Bangalore and when we were shooting the Ram pooja some people came from Bombay to make a film.

00:02:38

Q : In Navjyoti?

A : Not in Navjyoti, in Bombay. They were asking for more people, then we suggested to Vidyavati and (inaudible)

00:02:49

Q : You went to Bombay for Shri Ram Pooja?

A : No, Shri Ram Pooja was done in Mysore Navjyoti and some portion of patchwork we did here in Madras.

00:03:05

Q : Where Ragin? Revathi?

A : Revathi. While shooting some Bombay party came, they wanted to make a Kannada film in Bombay and for that (inaudible) gave everything. And then we suggested this Kalyan Kumar and Vidya Vati already our picture had been released Natashekhara.

00:03:26

Q : That was the first picture for Kalyan Kumar also?

A : Asha Nirasha it is called, it is shot in Ranjeet Studios

00:03:36

Q : They acted in that both of them? Was it his first picture?

A : No no no, after Natashekhara.

00:03:47

Q : Natasekhara was a big success.

A : Yes,

00:03:52

Q : Which boosted him in a big way.

A : He cannot be boosted, there very few Kannada films that boost or no boost, actually his boost I can say from this film only Bhagya Chakra.

00:04:06

Q : Bhagya Chakra who did the story and all that?

A : I did the story and the screenplay.

00:04:15

Q : You directed the film also, worked on the sets. You directed (inaudible) apart from music. So, you had a lot to play in Bhagya Chakra? What kind of a story was that?

A : It is a very progressive story in those days. A College boy falls in love with a village maid. He is Zamindar's son. And somehow or other they are being affected, you know, they, they come in contact in such a way that she becomes pregnant. And by that time you know so many things take place, in her view that she is pregnant and all and she, her parents are a conservative type of people then she has to escape and she lastly comes to the (inaudible) like that it goes. It's a tragedy and that same subject I can say that was taken by Dudh ka Phool here the child dies, that is the change, why you have done. 'For sympathy'. Everybody said they should not have made the girl die in the end what to do you cannot deal with the director and in that film we made the Katasala sign.

00:05:34

Q : In Kannada? (inaudible)

A : Balsaraswati used that in a different range. He made up a club dance

00:05:57

Q : What song was that do you remember?

A : (inaudible)

00:06:09

Q : Who wrote the lyrics?

A : Geeta Priya wrote. Geeta Priya wrote the dialogues and songs. We changed the entire making a film. Song writing also, before all the songs were written by a prototype of piping you know, but by this picture, we brought up the new ideas and they were very (inaudible) these things have never been done before and even the love songs (inaudible)

00:06:48

Q : It used to be (inaudible)

A : No, we never did that and even photography, narration wise is quite a progressive picture and everybody used to say, even in Malleswaram, when they used to see the rushes and all, people used to appreciate, “Arey waah! Tum log kaha se aaye ho.” From where you people have come from like that. One of these things, even our singer, I told no, Chandra Babu was only given hearing the song, he then sang the song and said I don't want money. “Why?” I said. “It is such a good song.”

00:07:39

Q : What is the song he sang?

A : Footpathvasi - a man who lives on the footpath. Footpathvasi (inaudible - Kannada) that way in a way he's talking to the girl. And he sang very nicely also. Very popular writer. We were in a set direction and all that, we did a good job, we saw I think the very first time in Madras, a set was being erected in beach and shot.

00:08:07

Q : Beach, which beach? Algiers Beach? What type of set?

A : Pillars and all that old Roman type of pillars.

00:08:24

Q : For the sound? It was corrected only for the sound, it is not important to the story, it's like a Greek theatre, amphitheatre-like I said.

A : And with the background, there were some old wooden houses it is not there now, I think some of the photographs I may be having. Lovely, I used to go sometimes and think why these people are smiling.

00:08:54

Q : (inaudible) totally different. You have that shacks and all. Yeah, I remember it very well. The other thing, who was your art director?

A : Gothgankar

00:09:07

Q : He's a very famous art director, he proposed to talk to me about his experiences. Geeta Priya told me that he was also an art director for some time. He dabbles in all sorts of things.

A : No, dance director. He was a dancer.

00:09:27

Q : He was a dancer, though he doesn't look like one today.

A : Of course. And then he was working in actually, you know, after going, let us go back then how have I selected Geeta Priya in the gaps you know, we used to play, the drama was there. I cannot-, we used to play dramas and all.

00:09:31

Q : But he was in a very active stage in Bangalore even at that time. What about the professionals Subhay Naidu, Nagendra Rao, BR Nath?

A : They were already quite old and going out of the market. Only drama companies that were very famous and again, this fellow (inaudible) You cannot also call them drama because they go by dialogue.

00:10:05

Q : Hiranaya, I know I know I've seen all his plays he goes on talking

A : According to this he changes the dialogue, very popular guy. Then we are having this most of the trusted people used to join with us. However, MVC, a very

close friend. He used to act and on that one scene, one drama he's acted and I did acting as well as playing the harmonium.

00:10:35

Q : He barely talks. He was the first man to publish my stories in Kannada, very good friends.

A : (inaudible). And like that, we used to play, in orchestras. You've seen that one, I have shown you that there was another Kalaniketan, they used to conduct it.

00:11:25

Q : In that what did Geeta Priya do?

A : Geeta Priya was selecting for some drama, the artist. He came as one of the artists and he had to act then I selected him, okay. Then, later on, we became friends and by that time I made him write the song, in the film, one song. Later on, he joined somewhere I don't know, (inaudible) he came back again and working in the hotel -

00:12:08

Q : in Bangalore

A : Cubbon Park, as a bill writer and experienced also then I said, why don't you leave this job and I'll post or pay monthly salary for him. And ask him to write, I used to dictate the whole screenplay, as it was typed, I think I will show you tomorrow.

00:12:17

Q : So he was your scriptwriting assistant. Not many people do that even I do that, many people don't do this kind of script work, preparing it, typing it, binding it, following it, It's the correct way of doing a picture and the reason why there is such poor quality is because of that.

A : Nowadays, I see the (inaudible) film composers. They go there and start composing. They don't do any homework.

00:12:47

Q : Nothing at all, they don't bother.

A : And why the background comes also they don't know. Why should the background be there? Even I'm sorry to say but the directors don't know.

00:13:02

Q : They don't know because nobody knows what is going on.

A : Hiranya asked what is it going to come? And see (inaudible). In whose point of view, you want the music either the character or the audience or the actor. What is it they want?

00:13:39

Q : They just want some noise.

A : Then we say our (inaudible), like that you know very few people do it.

00:13:42

Q : Very few directors, sorry to say about our very own colleagues, understand that silence can also be very eloquent on re-recording.

A : When re-recording film which Lakshminarayanan made Naandi. When she comes back when she's getting in the fire, and when she seems just amazed, I said, "Cut the music." He's asking "Why why?" I said "In the world, our brain is going black, why does this sound have to be here?" (inaudible) wonderful. you like there to be picture and sound together it creates such a great effect. Very few people understand that.

00:14:36

Q : They're not able to, every frame should be filled with nice sound. And after this Bhagya Chakra what was the reception to Bhagya Chakra from the company? Was it a successful film?

A : I cannot call it a successful film but the reviews were very good. The well-made film, music was very much appreciated. They were trendsetting.

00:14:55

Q : It was totally different from what was being done earlier.

A : It was orchestrated, organized and good re-recording, and by that way, it was again to me in a personal way, they branded me, western musician, 'He does not know Indian music' they said 'He only knows western music', and it was a very big problem for me to get work because you know, very few Kannada films were being made. In those days, three or four Kannada films were made. And let me little deviate from here. And our friend Kalyan Kumar had a role, had a dancing role and all that, and this our dancing role, the dancing video, we showed previews and they saw that one, the dance director was same for us, I forgot his name. (inaudible) in Kannada, Sadanand.

00:16:37

Q : The remake of Sadanand? Second time? MV

A : He got the chance.

00:16:39

Q : He acted in it, that was produced by AVM?

A : AVM and VB.

00:16:46

Q : (inaudible) was the man who made it famous and he made in '35, 1935, Raja Chandrashekhara, directed the film.

A : And again he got it from there. The same thing, you got to pay him Manayabandh Mahalaxmi or something, from that picture, I think. He is a good artist, no doubt.

00:17:11

Q : Because he has a lot of problems with the man.

A : Of course, that he cannot help it. That we cannot help.

00:17:14

Q : I had a very interesting experience when I never met him. When we made a Malayalam film there in Bangalore, he had a huge house. It's belonged to some Muslim Nawab or somebody which we wanted to use but he's in cantonment. Later on, I was told that he ran a hotel there (inaudible). So, we wanted to shoot and it suited my story. It takes place inside a building and we thought being big, we could stay there and cut our expenses, you know, without losing those days when there were very low budgets, unlike today. And at that time, I could not meet him at all. I wanted to meet him because he was an artist. I met one of his brothers-in-law Krishnamacharya or somebody, Krishnaswami Ayyangar. He said 'I am his brother-in-law, his sister's husband'. That's what he said. And he came and he quoted us a fancy rent for that, which was almost 1/4 of our film's budget. So, then I said, "Can I see Kalyan Kumar then I can talk to him and maybe I can convince him?" Then that man told me, that brother-in-law, (inaudible - Kannada), so he gave me the elderly man, he gave me that place. Then only I came to know that he had not a problem, other producer friends told me that it was very difficult to handle and then Sreedhar told me because he did for Ninjil Waraleyam. And he did some Tamil films because Ninjil Waraleyam came. That's the reason why he lost his (inaudible), that's what, he created these problems for himself. He was a very good artist there is no doubt about that. In Bhagya Chakra what did you do?

A : After Bhagya Chakra, I did R. Nagendra Rao, Premada Putri.

00:19:02

Q : That was a comedy. Nagendra Rao himself wrote? He got an award for this.

A : Yes, it's a nice film. He is Producer, Director.

00:19:22

Q : In the early days he even composed music.

A : That's his very first picture.

00:19:25

Q : 1930s, he said that's what he told me. He was a music composer.

A : And that was made in three languages, Ambedeva, a beautiful girl (inaudible) and Premad Putri and Premedevi. Veda directed Telugu. Three languages. We did the re-recording at some portions at Golden and some portions at Rochester.

Q : By the time, he was living in Madras. Everyone was living there. Kannada film industry was in Madras. And in 1953 when you entered the field, Raj Kumar was not yet this famous, I think he had just done (inaudible - Beranakanapar?). Before the other top artists at that time in Karnataka.

A : As such, in those days only, our (inaudible) was only famous in Tamil as well as this one, and you know, there was no such, (inaudible) hero was not there, Kempraj was doing in Jalaguraga and all those things from Madras. From Mysore, there were some films were being made by Sukhlacharya, there used to be pick anybody, some people from (inaudible) there was no box office hero like that.

Q : There was no hero as such and I think he made that Naga Kanika, which has a small boy, it's supposed to be a very sexy film in those days.

A : Yes, that was done by Tamilian music director. G Vishwanath, music is also done by a Tamilian I guess. Swami Ayyangar Nair? I can tell tomorrow.

Q : Was it a very successful film, Naga Kanika?

A : Yes yes.

Q : Because of the sex content. Jayshree was exploited and I clearly remember it as a small (inaudible), and I was taken to task for going to see that picture because it was about to be very vulgar. Now, of course, anything goes. Hitlacharya told me that it was a very successful picture. So, there was no hero as such in Kannada. And heroines were there Jaymaa, Jayashree -

A : Jayashree was there, and Jaymaa and other class of people were not heroine lead, but she was doing in Telegu.

00:22:15

Q : Telugu is M Seema and other pictures. MB Rajmaa came and settled down here, she is in more Tamil pictures than Kannada at that time. And who were the top directors in those days? Again, from Tamil only. There are any?

A : As top directors or?

00:22:34

Q : Because one of the, I don't want to say complaint. One of the features of Kannada Cinema is that it did not produce any great directors except perhaps Puttana. (inaudible), Shankar Nagen came much more recently, and there is one opinion with which some of our press friends agree, that even Puttanna was a creation of the press. Because one of the reasons is that Puttanna again was a very close friend of mine, I knew him very intimately, it's like you knew him, he had a chance to make Tamil Films, he had a chance to make the Telugu Films he made Malayalam films. He started in Malayalam, and he also made Hindi but he did not make any impact in any of these language films except in Kannada. So, one opinion is that because he made the remaining stories and other writers that was the reason for his popularity and this is one opinion, of course, it's a matter of opinion. But Kannada cinema did not produce like a Shantaram, Bal Chandra. Again, Bal Chandra made films in Kannada. This is one criticism; do you agree with that?

A : No, I won't entirely agree with that, and till the entrance of Mr. Puttanna, the Kannada films were made in the Madras and what about the very first film he made, he took out from Madras, Bellimoda. How he did Bellimoda, I know that love was there, and that man showed all the things that he wants, and he showed Kannada people, there are locations in Karnataka which can outweigh anywhere in India.

00:24:16

Q : Of course. Locations in Karnataka tops in India. Entire 100% I agree.

A : He was the one person, he made one thing, he had that what you call the local colour, we cannot call it a, it is not a very minor thing. It is a major thing.

00:24:18

Q : He had that vision.

A : And whatever you shoot in Madras and sets, and all that you cannot. You see, every third picture in Tamil, Telugu and everything, same thing. With the same sets are being exploited in other language comes to Bangalore. (inaudible - kannada)

00:24:53

Q : Here. That's one thing I cannot understand as a filmmaker how they can go on using this VGP location, it has become a cliché and you know the unfortunate part of it is the singers are the same, and the dance masters are the same, even there will be the artists also same, locations are also the same. So, when you see the song and dance sequences on TV, they all look alike you can more or less anticipate what is going to be the next shot and the next moment because the same persons are doing it. There is no attempt to give you variety.

A : One, last this thing I was seeing. Last Friday or so, the songs won't come to know sometimes it seems they are the same.

Q : That's what I said!

A : Everything - instrumentation, orchestration -is the same. I was wondering what this -

Q : Because that man has no time, whoever is composing has no time to think he has got ready-made things (inaudible - Kannada).

A : And another thing, let us go back to Puttanna, and he had that literary knowledge in Kannada. He used to select songs from big poets also. You cannot

call all these things, he has not done it. He has brought down and in his first film itself, you know, he based his songs. He brought, that was a very famous song.

00:26:21

Q : Which was that in Bellimoda? Who composed music for Bellimoda?

A : I did. Right from the start.

00:26:25

Q : I know, you did a lot of his films. That's why I want to ask you, this Bellimoda, I have some link with it, not the Kannada version. See, Srinivasan who produced that film. Unfortunately, he died about a couple of years back, he is no more. He had some stomach problems and they said it's cancer and he passed away, and he wanted to remake it in Tamil. This was in the early 70s and he asked me, "I want you to come and see one picture." That was the first time I saw Bellimoda, I did not see it earlier and he went for a projection at the Chamber Theatre. I saw it thrice, he said, "This I want to do in Tamil, meaning wanting to do, you do it. Then only he told me that it is Triveni, small and all, and then I asked Puttanna, "Puttanna, I said, "-it is a very nice subject (inaudible - Kannada) he told I harassed him because I didn't know him very well. "Do it whatever help you want from me, I'll definitely be of help, I'll advice you." Cause I was quite new at that time. Then he brought this Pramila, that heroine Pramila and showed her the picture the first day I saw it with her, the second day he brought his EMGR Manjula, Vocal Manjula, Manjula Vijaykumar. She came and saw then I told Sreenivasan, I said, "Look, there's no point in you bringing these people if you want to make this picture then bring Kalpana. (inaudible - Kannada) He did not have the confidence to try Kalpana in Tamil then he dropped it. At the time I saw it three-four times. Then only I was able to, I remember almost every scene. This one particular sequence, there is a sequence this song I think was done by our P.B. Sreenivas, wrote the broken mirror in Kannada. That song still haunts me. Can you tell me how you composed that? I always want to ask that about that.

A : Before that, you asked me about the other song Moodala Maneya. In that, she goes down and the (inaudible) sun rises after that. In fact, that became a very famous song. Very popular in Karnataka they set a tune for that, everybody used to sing that one. It was a very peculiar tune that I remember.

00:29:15

Q : Who made it?

A : Poet himself

00:29:17

Q : Poet. Who wrote that?

A : Dharavendra. Poet, poet Laurette, and I said it's no use making up a tune. He was a little uptight. Leave it, we know how to do it. Don't bother. Then I brought the orchestra, I made a tune with humming, it is about nature. He said the (inaudible) will come, the birds will sing. Now only, we made it like that. There was a very limited orchestra, having more comments on the narrative and all sound effects were being used. There is humming, the humming is representing the whole universe and that song caught like anything I tell you, wherever you go to Karnataka, of course, this picture's songs had become super hit, particularly this song all the elite classes.

00:00:12

Q : We were talking about the music in Belli Moda.

A : He wanted to, he was a peculiar man and he won't go for the

00:00:20

Q : Ordinary

A : Ordinary. One of the million like that he wants. He wanted a song to be made, they used to know background sound (inaudible) like that he used to call, and the (inaudible - Kannada), it shouldn't be a competition. So, I don't want to take in those times the make of that kind of songs will always be starting in the top

somewhere and falling like anything, coming down, as I remember. In the reverse process, (inaudible) and we have to be very, I think it's my record that I never made a second tune.

00:01:05

Q : Exactly. The first tune was always okay.

A : Very first tune is okay. But before making this tune, I heard the ten times the story, not just go and sit and do it, and I hear the story, and the sequence, where and how it takes a song and then I'll go and sit.

00:01:23

Q : That's the correct way of doing it.

A : For that, I need to know, what to do what not to do. Then I go, I do one song, not that I will do only one song, you know? When we send it, it touches. His heart is very good, I said. Like that, I want to take one incident, when he did after the Gajja Gujja. He said, there is one song (inaudible) that is a song where she feels her heart's highest emotion and what she wants, (inaudible) so how should that song be. Her whole world must come (inaudible) was the producer. (inaudible) and we went for the composing that Ashwatamma he got in and sat and just called Jay Gopal over there.

00:02:57

Q : He wrote the lyrics? Jay Gopal wrote the lyrics?

A : Yes, Jay Gopal wrote the lyrics. "I want like this." I said, "Okay fine." First I said, "How would you convey in your (inaudible)? You give me, let me see." Then he wrote (inaudible), Rumi and so contrasting. Then I took the melody also like that, the highest pitch and lowest pitch. The very moment he had that song, he said. He's an emotional man, not like other humans. He won't say, "Haan, you do it please." No, he has got a conviction that very few people have got because then you don't have a conviction and you're going on groping.

00:03:40

Q : You don't know what you want.

A : You don't know yourself what you want. That's correct. Then he said okay, begin. Within 10 minutes, song was over. He came, (inaudible) "Okay. Song is over.", he said. So calmly he said, "Yes it's over." And he had some occasion, then we packed up.

00:03:57

Q : Where was Gajja Gujja shot? And where was this song recording done?

A : Shot in Mysore. Song recording - Madras. Gajja Gujja songs were recorded by Mohan Sundaram.

00:04:09

Q : They shot in the studio? They used sets I think.

A : In Mysore, Navjyoti Studio, not in Madras. processing and everything was done in AVM but entirely shooting was done, rerecording was done in Mysore.

00:04:22

Q : Before you we came ahead of a little to Puttanna, going back to the 1950s after Bhagya Chakra. What were the films? You said there were some difficult films in your career, you were being branded as a western music director.

A : After Bhagya Chakra I did Premada Putri with Nagendra Rao. After that, it was very difficult for me and I was working for dubbing pictures, which dubbing pictures means again I want to tell one thing, in those days there was no track.

00:05:05

Q : Oh, they never used to keep.

A : In the Vasu studio, they were dubbing all audio from Hindi to Tamil or Telugu and Kanada. So, they did not have a track, then I gave them an idea, they used to take a track, you're understanding? On the fold, the film writes the notation and everything, wherever I want I used to change not giving the original Kannada but lip-syncing and all so perfect, and mix with other languages. They were very happy.

00:05:42

Q : You used to run it on a movie (inaudible) and take notes?

A : No, notes and everything. First, I will give the notation and everything, run the film. Simultaneously, write the songs also. Tamil, (inaudible) was writing, in Kannada Geetha Priya and Telugu (inaudible) was writing. It is a team and mainly I think this is the difference -

00:05:46

Q : At that time there was no objection about dubbing in Kannada as you now have?

A : No, not then only when the Ramayana came then only the trouble started. No dubbing this and that started, till that there was no problem for us.

00:06:18

Q : How did this problem come? Is it political?

A : I don't know what is wrong with that. Maybe or may not be, nothing is done that does not tell them there are no problems. Ramayana was dubbed, Hindi Ramayana was dubbed in Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. When it was released you first all the trouble the picture went for, that was a different matter then it was, the dubbing in the Vasu Studios, they were doing most of the artists were dubbing artists - (inaudible), Ramsingh Shastri, Jay Gopal

00:06:31

Q : They are all dubbing artists?

A : Yes, Vijay Narsimha, Yes, all of them. What to do, there was no other Kannada film, they all survived like that. And later on, like that lady artist also, or Jayashree and any others. I forgot their names. All of them only living on -

00:07:05

Q : So, there was so much of dubbing activity in Kannada at that time?

A : Yes, we all regularly, yearly 3 or 4 pictures we used to do, just in the factory. You are free to select anything and like that we are after I think Ramayana only the tracks came. I still remember Satish Sulochana was dubbing was going on. And Babuba Mistry came and he saw the I was taking the music. And he said, “This song was not in my film.” That was done by a Vasant Tripathi and he has put on old songs, this song he is supposed to sing for Ravana. Ravana is supposed to be a great musician. *Ye kya kachra song hai kar ke.* Our (inaudible) is done, we’ll change I said. I changed actually. All classical song and tabla tarangs and all those things, and veenas. (inaudible) change anything, he has got that intelligence and the timing sense and he can change also.

00:08:17

Q : In Ramayana what was the trouble?

A : Once it was released, you know, they wanted to not, that picture was not to be released and all that. More oppositions towards the big pictures. And there were a lot of dubbing pictures coming up coming in Kannada. So, they thought the dubbing picture will kill the industry. So, this trouble started.

00:08:39

Q : So the opposition, who started it actually? It can’t be the public.

A : Some industrial people, you cannot say anything.

00:09:03

Q : Industrial parties, (inaudible)

A : Maybe some (inaudible)

00:09:09

Q : By the time the (inaudible) movement had started there? This was sometime in the 50s, late 50s or even later?

A : Yes, later, in the 60s.

00:09:19

Q : Up to 60s they were dubbing in Kannada, then only it became a political issue. And then you are doing a number of dubbing pictures -

A : And I used to do some of the, most of the, some of the Tamil films also I rerecorded.

00:09:30

Q : You remember any of the pictures?

A : No, I don't want to tell these, they used to come and I used to do these films from the only money point of view.

00:09:39

Q : Your name did not appear in the credits?

A : And later, after that next change came was from Rani (inaudible), I think the 60s, Raj Kumar and Saroja Devi directed by Yusuf and Sitaram Shastri. Pura Sitaram Shastri, is a well-learned person, educated person and he is the one person who knew how to use language. In the sense very rhythmic language in his dialogues, as you can see is in all of his films. What are his dialogues in the film, so, beautifully rhythmic! And again, I learnt from him, the usage of melody in relation to the words. It was his combination I learnt, the technique and how to view more emotion or the words, and he is a good man also. He had some sense of music, what we used to say he used to understand it, and he had that little of, since he worked in Singapore and here that brought sense, of the western music and all.

00:09:58

Q : The Shah Bothers (inaudible)

A : And he accommodates, as well, that's why I told, you know? I was banned, only western music and all that. In Rani Honamma some of the songs we fantastically orchestrated. You maybe heard this song (inaudible), that nobody will believe recently I was in Bangalore somewhere and heard that cassette they were playing. I

said, "Why they're playing?" He said, "Sir, they've been hearing always this one." They told me and I was wondering, so much good work was done in those days.

00:11:35

Q : Rani Honamma was when? Which year was that?

A : Maybe '62.

00:12:12

Q : By the time Raj Kumar was fairly popular.

A : Yes, very popular means not a superstar or anything, but just because Raj Kumar was there nobody used to buy film. That time they had to go by one by one too, distributor offices. There was no such superstar at all.

00:12:19

Q : But what was the, why was he not received well?

A : Not received well, they had not paid much attention to his work.

00:12:43

Q : In spite, it might be, even (inaudible) Kannapaa did very well, isn't it?

A : Very well, but he did not get any stardom on that. (inaudible). Then later on I tell you, it is only when he got stardom, in his hundredth picture, I will be deviating from there because this topic is my own. Bhaygyadaba, I did the music, and it was Ravi who directed the film and we both made the same amount.

00:12:49

Q : You and Raj Kumar?

A : Yes, as a hero and as a music director. I've done more pictures than him.

00:13:26

Q : I know. When was this Bhaygyadaba released? Was it before, earlier than Bengal Dabanshya?

A : '67 or '68. Yes yes, very much earlier, I can give you the date.

00:13:39

Q : I have the notes.

A : That you know, in that film there was a situation where a madman sings, I said, "Why don't you utilize like this?" I just gave the idea, Ravi said it is very good. Let us have it. Nanhe Rajkumar and he is a madman he can sing anything he wants and a challenging song like that. He acts like a madman and that song I tell you, skyrocketed. Every street, wherever you see this, 'Nanhe Rajkumar' and only after his 100th picture he became a superstar.

00:14:12

Q : That song was probably sung by Srini?

A : Srinivasanan, yes.

00:14:32

Q : He was giving, lending his voice at that time.

A : From that time he became probably, if you look in any corner of Karnataka that song was so popular, every child knew Rajkumar. Not that, before that people knew. He became a big star, this gave him a big image.

00:14:42

Q : And striking a personal note. I have something which is very unique with Raj Kumar which is, you can say part of the Kannada film history. I did the only short film he acted in, many people don't know, I don't know you know about it. I did an advertisement film with Raj Kumar. That's the only film he did. This was for Mysore Cements. In 1972. It was called 'symbol of strength', in which Raj Kumar and Jayanti both of them appear in the film, and I had the pleasure of directing him. We shot it in that Bannar Gantha guest house in Birla, he came there. From that time only I came to know him. He was quite tickled and said it is the only time I am doing it. I don't know what, you only tell me what to do? Do I look into the

camera? Or do I look here? I said, "You're such a big star, you want me to know, You are the director, you tell me what I should do because this is something I don't know if it's a scene and all that I can tell you, I'll stand here and stand there. It's I'm absolutely new to this. And when this film was shown in Bangalore, theatres, nobody would believe it, because he has never done it. That was the only film. And I asked PB Srinivas to give the commentary because we're very good friends, to give the commentary in Kannada for that. We made it in about seven languages. When I rang him and said, I made a short film with Raj Kumar. He said, "What? Raj Kumar? You can't be telling truth. You are bluffing." I said, "You come, that's why I want you to give the voice." Then he said, "How did you get this man?" I said, "Somebody was there, and some people connected with Birla and all that." You know that Bander Krishnamurthy, he brought him to the location and all that, that is a very interesting experience. It was very unique. that's beside the point, of course, and, and in the 60s, after this dubbing pictures. How did you and when did you get back into Kannada cinema?

A : Not the 60s, I did this Rani Ganamma.

00:16:45

Q : Rani Ganamma was a turning point in (inaudible).

A : I cannot say that Rani Ganamma was a turning point. I can say doing another film also, Halli Hodigi, Rajashankar acted in that film, that songs are also..Rajashankar and Harini. And in the same time, what happened I was doing, then all of a sudden -

00:16:58

Q : You were talking about some situation. How you were coming back to this Halli Hodgi.

A : In that also, PB Srinivasanan's songs are there, fantastic songs. During that time, the Radhakrishna (inaudible), who did the stunning film with Sundara Madakarni, brother in law. He died recently not long back, and he, I knew him of course, in those college days and all that.

00:17:35

Q : Was he your classmate? He was in college with you?

A : Yes.

00:18:17

Q : Had you met P. Radhakrishnan?

A : Yes, we were right, he used to live in Malleswaram cross eight. He was a son of a big doctor. By the time he knew me and all that, and he knew also my background in Hindustani music and all that.

00:18:23

Q : He produced that Halli hodgi?

A : No, he was looking for a man to do Sant Tukaram for music, he wanted a man who knew Hindustani music. Then he told me I am doing this, why don't you do it? And I said, I am very happy, and then he called me one day and said you do the music and introduce to (inaudible). And we had to sit for a composition, it is a very peculiar thing I want to tell you, I went the first time, Radhakrishnan also knows music, he can sing also. He has a peculiar type of voice. We sat to compose it, the very first song was Jaya Tu Jaya Vitala. The title song of Tukaram, we sat for composing, Sadashiv had come and he said, "Come on, give me the (inaudible)" he said. I always give preference to the writers first you write, I never interfere in their writing and give them freedom wherever you want change, I never do anything, I never make them write for a (inaudible) and sometimes I make them also depends upon the producer. (inaudible) I say, "You know that I will give them freedom, right?" Most of the 90% of my songs are like that.

00:19:56

Q : You write the lyrics then the tune?

A : Of course, it's trouble for me but I believe that I can give a freedom to a writer, whatever you want, so I can also, it gives me an imagination.

00:20:02

Q: That's better, that's what even MS Viswanathan use to say.

A : Then, we came on set, I made the film, again the same problem came, ten minutes the song was over. Then he said, "Bohot achha kar rahe ho" and he was sitting and "Achha hai", (inaudible) he speaks in Hindi. I was wondering, why he is saying that and he got up, got out, nothing it's enough. The song has come out very well, he got up and went off on that side. He said, "Doosra banao", do another. I said, Why do you want to do it again? Lyrics is okay, the song is okay, what do you want?" By the time he came again, he said, "No no no, it's good why do you want to do it?" "Okay, pack up" he said. Very next day what happens, he was going to Kolhapur to select these girls, (inaudible - Sundarnavalkar?) he went, the day he's coming back to Madras they fixed recording of the song our PBS didn't call them, they had rehearsals in Madras and they had their accommodation booked over there, and in one of the Studios, that day morning, he came. One thing he did not like was, I did only one melody and it was approved and though I told him to make another he did not. He had a certain grudge against me. That some or other, everyone who plays that song. Later on, it became a super hit and then through that film, throughout, you know, I might have done 50 to 60 films around December. In the picture itself, there were 15 melodies. Rajkumar and Leelavati played. (inaudible) he said, "No, she is a cabaret singer." "Forget it, we will make a new." That song also became a great hit. And like, Lavni shot in Kolhapur and brought it, (inaudible - Sundaranayakam?) edited and put it on, "Idhar ye itna jump kyu kar raha hai? The shots are very, how can I do it?" Maine bola, "Tum toh dubbing expert hai, karna." "Dubbing expert hai wo theek hai but how should I match?" Then what (inaudible) we quarrel all that film, later on, he said, "There is some adjustment is needed. We did the music. Okay, nobody found out, the words also they did match. And all that after the release of the picture, the picture's music was, wherever it got an award, the people now began to think I can give classical music. Then afterwards, I did the Naandi, Laxmi Narayan, like that we did then the rerecording and all that, the trends of recording music, the approach of

music also been going on changes. Now you can see that when you play all these old pictures we can see the change, it is approaching the subject, not merely putting the song. Approaching the subject is also an important thing in some ways also. That way also we have been making changes, and from that, it'd taken off.
Tukaram -

00:24:20

Q : Tukaram was your turning point in your career.

A : And next to that immediately was Naandi. (inaudible).

00:24:25

Q : So you came to be recognized not only as a western music director but also the eastern music director. Yesterday, you made a reference to an experimental film made by Laxmi Narayan it's called Bliss, which was sponsored by the British Film Institute, London. You said that it had only, it had no words and only music. Did you say something about that film?

A : Yes, that's about the picture is about an old retired journalist who goes after, after working so many years in the field, he wants the quiet life, he is seeking bliss. And in the whole film, there's no sound effects, no dialogue and only whatever be the mood and whatever the action what is taking place, brought through and expressed in the music. That was not very much layered, only 4 instruments he used.

00:25:53

Q : It was western or Indian?

A : Indian, all Indian. Sitar, flute and table, (inaudible), these four instruments were used and the outcome was really fantastic. For that, you know that? You know it is the usage of music, I think in San Francisco he got an award.

00:26:12

Q : You know, Laxmi Narayan told me once but I didn't get the chance. San Francisco Film Festival - Film as a medium of artistic expression, that's what the citation says. It was a short film, documentary direction. With Laxminarayan, you did that film Naandi, which again, got some awards for Best musical score? This was in 1964. Yeah. And what kind of a film was this Naandi?

A : Naandi, it was basically the story of a deaf and dumb girl. That was I think the first film to be made in India about a deaf and dumb girl and human being, later on, I think some people did in Hindi, copied from the Japanese film. But it was a very original thought of the film. We before making that film, we went around. It was made in the Madras. And we went to the schools who were having, the deaf on dumb schools, and how they treat these boys and girls. How they expressed when they want to talk and all, and they're able to hear anything at all. For that also, the four times or five times we went there, when they are having a class and all that. We learned something, observing that and we introduced those things in the film, in a way that can be applied to the story. Now the story, is of a Hindu society where the girl is being taken, and how she is being treated all that. And there is one beautiful situation, how can a deaf and dumb girl will be able to create a song for her. She won't sing but her husband sings for her, the idea behind it being it was in the Indian culture, we believe that when the girl is pregnant when she's approaching eight months or nine months. You know the (inaudible). So the idea behind that, the child in the womb, must have good things to be heard so that the child imbibes the sound part of living. So, the good sound should be (inaudible), I think it's psychological.

00:28:54

Q : I think there is some scientific basis, about that also, they have found out that.

A : Yes you are quite right and, for that, we have made Raj Kumar sing the song '(inaudible)'

00:29:03

Q : He sang it himself? PB Srinivasanan sang?

A : Before that, you know he has expressed how that, though the character does not hear and she can feel the vibration in that there will be a table in the house and she will be cleaning the house, accidentally her cloth touches the table, she touches and feels the vibration, like that is gradually by way of scientifically also it justified.

29:19

Q : Made it authentic.

A : And that one, whatever the people climb today, that what we call 'New Wave Film' and 'Parallel Film' 'Other Side of the Film' and all that. I can say he is the first man in the south to me, in art wave film. In 1964.

00:29:51

Q : In 1964. Naandi was off because I didn't get to see it, But I have heard of it from many people including Laxmianarayanan. It also won several awards.

A : Yes

00:00:19

Q : (inaudible)

A : Would you like to skip up like that or?

00:00:20

Q : Anyway as you like.

A : Before Naandi I did one film with Pura Sitaram Shastri that is Manna Machida and with Raj Kumar and Leelavati that was shot at Film Centre. We recorded and rerecorded, everything there. In that one also, the trend of music was very much changed.

00:00:29

Q : In what way?

A : Usually we had that type of song which we used to follow in Kannada but then we took it off and we got the words, I think (inaudible - Kannada), and like that we had taken in 6-8 tempo, we made it. That song was again, that was sung by Sushila and PB Srinivasanan. It was rage, a big hit. In that one picking of the title music in that one, the director said why don't we go for the great author (inaudible) poetry. JA Karnataka, one song they used to sing tunes and all that. When we recorded that song that was done on the spot, and the re-recording was going on, and he said, "Okay. You can do it." Then I did it within I think 50 minutes or so, the song composition I was talking about and we called, rang up (inaudible), they say come. He came over, and we made him sing. That song has become now in Karnataka as a national song. Whenever they sing this tune has been adopted, the lyrics are the same, the tune has been adopted, it is surely an evergreen song.

00:00:58

Q : How does that song go? Can you hum it?

A : I can't, I have got a cold.

00:02:34

Q : Now, talking of this national anthem of our state and this song by Malinga Rao (inaudible) it was also used for a very long time, isn't it?

A : Very. Before the Kannada, actually, the Kannada suffix state was given, till then they were singing. (inaudible - Kannada) 'Let it born'. Then I did an event Kannada Vishwa, Kannada Summit in Mysore World Conference, they asked me to do music and for 2 and a half 3 hours music. Tape it actually, depicting the culture, religion, various aspects of Karnataka through music, and we recorded, in that, I used the title song. I made the Raj Kumar sing, the actor Raj Kumar and in that, you know, what he did was we recorded all the-, I used all the stalwarts of Karnataka, (inaudible), Srikanthan, topmost singers and topmost players also, who have got a name, who have contributed to Kannada music culture, and it was a big job, no doubt to handle all these people, and we did a good job. It came four hours, so it was a problem for us, we cannot make the audience sit for four hours. So HK

Ranganath, (inaudible), it was his tip actually, and we sat and trimmed to 2 hours and 10 seconds. When the tape was played, the actors come and they just gave a lip moment, in that Anandnath and RK did the job, and the dancers actually danced there was a dance - hip hop dance was there. And everything went on very, very nicely. It was the first time, it was the first show at Mysore Palace, and the connection with that one (inaudible - Kannada). That's there how I used it, it's already been (inaudible).

00:02:53

Q : It had already just come, become a reality.

A : That's how UT to state song as you said.

00:05:21

Q : He had called me and told me that you were getting a pension for that song from the Mysore palace, that's what he told me once just before he died. You know, he drank himself to death.

A : Yes. I know, we had a very good this thing how.... let me tell, let me go back a little backwards. When we were doing this Shri Ram Pooja, we every day we used to meet. There was a coffee house in that exhibition building, at 11 o'clock when there's no -, because I told you I was also working as a Steinback assistant, and I used to go there walk from the Saraswati Poonam (inaudible), it was a lovely place then to walk, very sleepy and all. And we used to sit and discuss many things and he proposed, of course, Kalinga was a good singer, no doubt, made songs, other aspects he did not know much. I heard, he played for me. That was the first time we were using it, I got it from the palace and used it there. I was always trying to find some good music. And he played it's not difficult to play actually, who all can play the harmonium they can play it.

00:05:35

Q : What kind of instrument is that?

A : That's you know, it is a reed instrument. The sound is somewhere between piano and bells. You can clamp it between the microphone, it stays the song. And he played that and I was searching for, he came that Mohan Kumari was singing, not a real player. (inaudible) "Okay. I'll play.", he said. And later on, during he was recording something, he was doing some Tamil film also. In that film, Revathi was acting. It was a new era film; I forgot the name. I don't know the name of the film, and he asked me to come (inaudible), I went. I went there then he was getting all the orchestra and all that, he wanted to do the background and all that.

00:06:50

Q : We were talking about the (inaudible - Delsitone?) and the recording was done by Kalinga Rao in Madras.

A : Not, not in Madras, in Navjyoti Studio. Yes. They were shooting some Tamil film and in those days the Tamil films, then they were recording as we were recording, and he told me this is the background and all, then I understood he didn't know.

00:07:57

Q : His knowledge was limited.

A : Then I changed so many things. And there was no (inaudible) player was there, and I played (inaudible) actually, played in Hindi style not in Carnatic style. Two or three songs that I got it recorded but I know very well that Revathi was acting in that film.

00:08:33

Q : I'll check out that film. In the new era, they made a film called Vidadare. But I don't know that was directed by K Ramana(?), He was also one of the partners. That was also a new era banner.

A : New era distributors in Bangalore, distributors.

00:09:00

Q : Was it a film with MGR?

A : No, that was a different film Maruganati, some films were made-

00:09:04

Q : Kalinga was the music director. Then what happened?

A : I know that film, it was Kalinga Rao. We used to sit and discuss so many films and later on, he announced a film, and he is to direct I have to give music. It was a great surprise to many people.

00:09:18

Q : I know, it is a surprise to me now.

A : And of course we couldn't, we didn't have that much money

00:09:35

Q : Did it even start?

A : No, it didn't start.

00:09:40

Q : Only composed songs

A : Not even he composed. discussing these story aspects and everything, and people who had promised him that, and that's how that episode happened in Mysore. Coming back to -

00:09:45

Q : You have the tape for that 2 hours 10 seconds performance did?

A : That is with the government. They've been telling me we'll send but not sent. That officer who was there, he has been transferred. So, the new one is like Sir, I'll try to find out and all that. Some next time (inaudible).

00:10:10

Q : So, you won't get it. So after that, what is the other film you would like to talk about in the earlier period because we went back?

A : After that, in 1960 Rani Honamma, after that -

00:10:45

Q : Sant Tukaram, Nagamani. Bellimoda, you spoke about yesterday.

A : No, before that I told you the Manna Mechhida Madadi, that again Raj Kumar and Leelavati did that.

00:10:54

Q : Who directed that film?

A : Pura Sitharaman. He directed the film; he wrote the songs and that was also his first picture. After that, I did Sant Tukaram, actually it started parallel and Manna Mechhida Madadi was released earlier than Sant Tukaram.

00:10:56

Q : I see, and there's another film which again, I think was by Laxmi Narayan - Mukti?

A : Mukti, before Mukti, I want to talk about something else. In 64, I did a film for Mr. GV Iyer, that's called Postmaster, that was shot in Famous Studios in Mysore, and of course, we recorded the song at Golden Studios here when Mohan Sundaram was there, and that's also again, you know? I think it's from a Marathi story, I think so, he says it's his own. to I think so. He says his its own, I don't know but I am not sure about it, and that film the songs were written (inaudible), and in that film, Mr. Iyer told me while we were composing, he's going to shoot one song in colour.

00:12:28

Q : The picture was in black and white? Actually, in those days there was Indu colour.

A : (inaudible) Vandana (inaudible) and he told me that he's going to picturise the song in (inaudible), the sunrise and all.

00:12:36

Q: I shot that in my Manipal Film, I waited for 2 hours.

A: He told me I'm going to shoot there and I'm shifting over to the (inaudible) Sagar, there the whole things rise up, I want it to look like that. "Okay, done.", I said. Afterwards picturising, the song was recorded and when it came to rerecording, there was no colour, not even (inaudible). He had shot that part of the song, in our (inaudible) studios, there itself. I asked, "What is this Iyer? You were very particular and you reminded me. You told me, I put so much pain to compose and there's nothing there." He said, "No, I want to do aise, the artist is not available and all that." Of course, it may be a fact or maybe lack of finance, that's how the beats change. Once we compose the record, when we see the film. It is totally lost. And after the Postmaster, that same year, I did for R. Nagendra Rao, Pattiya Deva, in that also Nagendra Rao himself acted, and after that film only I did Naandi.

00:14:25

Q: You know talking of Nagendra Rao, he has composed music in the early 1930s. Was he very knowledgeable as a musician? Because I never heard him sing.

A: He used to sing with him. Basically, all song artist -

00:14:36

Q: They were singing in their own voice.

A: Singing in their own voice and they had knack of singing. But to the present-day film music, you cannot compare.

00:14:42

Q: Call it music.

A: But sometimes, you know, I used to, when we had to compose and all that. He used to give ideas like that.

00:14:59

Q : So, he had some knowledge of music. Did you have any chance to work with the Subbaya Naidu?

A : Yes, he had knowledge of some ragas and all. No, Subbaya Naidu when I went, he was not doing (inaudible).

00:15:16

Q : In early days, he (inaudible).

A : Yes, he didn't do any other pictures.

00:15:25

Q : Not many films he made. I don't think after 1930s he was much active.

A : I guess after (inaudible -Bukailash?), I don't think he made anything.

00:15:34

Q : And (inaudible) also, you didn't have any opportunity of watching him or maybe you saw him on stage?

A : I saw him on the stage many times, when I was young. And his -

00:15:44

Q : Poorna Shagari, you did not compose, that was one of the films he made. (inaudible) And then Gajje Pooja about which you spoke yesterday, Puttanna's film. Now, so far as Puttanna Kanagal is concerned, how many films of his you did? You did Belli moda, Sharapanjara, Gajje Pooja and Shiva mangala. Ravi's Production. Paduvaraali Pandavaru? Which gave me a second innings as a (inaudible). And (inaudible).

A : I think he has made about 29 or 30 films, out of that 26 films I have done.

00:16:45

Q : Only very few others did. And the Sharapanjara, do you remember anything about that film? Because it was a little again, an offbeat story of a mentally disturbed woman, who was called as condemned as man. I saw that so many times.

A : Yes, that I want to talk about. You see that actually in the character of the film. She loses her chastity.

00:17:18

Q : Yeah, what she searches.

A : That is the story but when he started that film, and everybody thought that he is a mad man. He is anti-sentimental and should not supposed to say this story. But he never touched in that way, very diplomatically he touched.

00:17:37

Q : Many people told me that because once, at the American Consulate, where I first met Puttanna and we were very close there. He arranged a projection of that picture. And some of the American officers, their wives, they all came, very knowledgeable, well known directors, a number of others who don't have much. You know, Kannada films don't get screened much in Madras, as much as we want. Unless you go to Bangalore, I go to Bangalore to see those films. So many people came and it was a packed house, and during the film when she comes to that river, and then goes on searching, and many people felt it's not very clear what the hell is she searching? Because it was probably left vague because of this problem he had. He could not directly say she lost her virginity there. Can you tell me something about that? Because I know the story, I was able to follow it then I explained it at the end of the show.

A : I can explain you better now, throughout the music. How much music plays a part in that film. I mean, you have seen the film, in that she wanted to visit (inaudible), already says he takes her. He makes her sit in the car and goes, then stops the car. And she runs. That is a minute of silent shot is taken. He has taken, he does not convey any meaning at all. And she goes there and searches in the water and searches for some time, gets up and then speaks, "Ille (inaudible).", then says, (inaudible) but he told me, Vijaya he used to call me. Look, I have taken these shots, how to build up the film. I said, "Don't worry, we'll build up", then as soon as I edited, he put a regular beat, you know the heart's pumping like that, for

running, she's running, he is chasing. Like that we divided. All these changes are, I mean; she wants to get hold of that, and she comes to (inaudible) and she comes and looks there. Then built-up music comes and as soon as she stops in the water we cut out the beat music, and we get a very pathetic, weird, very distorted way of playing flute, that means broken. That means her thoughts are not clear, in that way we have used that music. She is going on searching, after searching and she gets and then he says I came, I saw (inaudible). That is he says, I saw you and I reached you and the meaning is given, the people who have little of understanding they can get it. And he left off, he did not want to give very elaborate (inaudible), then he sits and he gets up, I lost a lot and the music it also merges like that. Something, she has been got beaten, that pre-conscious is there. Rather we have changed again, the music later and we get, to the day she comes and she comes to the home, that episode in that while the pictures were running, somebody had asked me, "What is that you have seen, he has done very contrasting picturising and all this?" I said, "My good friend." I was told critic, "Okay, next time for my (inaudible) go and see the film. Two places, I tell you just close your, put your two fingers in your ears, and see the film, two places and come and tell me this is the one place where she comes after seeing he has been with a girl, come back to the house and that place. Can you make out anything? He did saw, he said I cannot make out anything, that's why I tell you music is the greater part, not dialogue. The film is not the media you always explain things by dialogues I don't believe that. That's why I always appreciate Puttanna, I mean in many of the films and when he has recorded the dialogues also, when music has been given. He used to close the dialogue and simply listen to the music. And he used to (inaudible), I said, "Cut off that, music is very good man." He is the one person I always liked, when the job is done, he is an emotional chap, he will ring up dead of midnight, when I say, "Hello" (inaudible - Kannada). Spontaneous, and like that when she entered the house when she's getting back that this thing, Magnus then he wanted to (inaudible), we exaggerated greatly. She comes and is tearing up sofa covers and all, which is exaggerated are not going in continuous every other minute reflected melodies are poor like things that's what this looks like and repeated not played in the in

between I used to go and sitar also in such a way robotics yes we'll start that team will start that means the audience will come to know she's again got back when she entered the door and she breaks off from the glass that's not on me because I think it comes inside from this you rock store shopper so breathing early exactly. Like this is actually compensates the sound exaggerated and against pulls out the sofa cover. I mean, tearing up the exaggerated and later on, she moves him, theme music I made for that. The discord in notes, they were not going in continuous melody. Cut it, cut it out, and I made reflected melodies, (inaudible) playing like that, and repeated not played. In that in between, I used flutes also and Sitar also, in such a way with chromatic scales, we decided that theme, that means the audience will come to know she has again got back her of madness. So, when she opens the door and she breaks the glass, that's the sound, not even any music is going to add, and again she comes inside and walks towards the sofa, she's breathing, it is exaggerated. Like that she is, and she comes and sits, that sound is exaggerated, and again she pulls out the sofa cover and starts tearing off, that's only exaggerated and then sits and stops. Then that theme of ours, that mad theme we called, that theme is there. The people, so many people wept I tell you, even I feel now I am getting that film. So, in that way, he is also very (inaudible), which means he can understand what when you say and I don't think any other director accepted it that way. No no, that is the climax, come on give (inaudible) music. They insisted it could not come naturally, I have to succumb to it. So that way he was very sensitive to those things.

00:18:29

Q : Very sensitive director. That novel was very popular, by Triveni.

A : Yes, very popular, and for that, you know people and hear I want to drop out one thing also, this Sharapunjara while doing, he had so many problems in the sense, no distributor financial accounts because though one colour picture had already been made Ranga, (inaudible) he did a double version, and he had resources to make it, in those days he had, and here is a man, that way he did it in

Madras. He had these people, they did not want so much money to be spent about, and they were not sure it is going to come, and many people were discouraged.

00:26:05

Q: Who was the producer of Sharapunjara?

A: His brother-in-law Raja was there.

00:25:20

Q: So, virtually he was himself the producer.

A: Yes. And the when the first and the parties recorded the song and all, again the song recording was also very, I mean in a very peculiar way, it has happened. In the sense that he has such a great confidence. Again, I'm going to go back to the Belli moda. So, Belli Moda was his first film, and as Srinivasan was financing the film and the songs were all composed, the date was fixed. His father died.

00:26:36

Q: Who? Puttanna's father?

A: Yes, and he went there and he at any cost he did not want this song recording to stop and at the same time he cannot come because in Kerela (inaudible) rituals, he cannot leave and come. He wrote me a letter and he wrote me such a letter, see this my first Kannada film you see the songs to be come out very well. Because it is my ambition this film must go very well. The film should go and the songs should go. Please see the songs to be recorded, never postpone things. So, he was upright, for me some of the elements were there that he is supposed to stop this, somebody may say that this is a bad omen, better stop this film. I understood it, I wrote him back, "Don't worry. I will that it's done." You know, what happened? We went there, then we recorded the song, and Jeeva was there. The very first song I said Bellimoda, PB Srinivasan, one day we did that, the next day all the songs came, stuck, the recording didn't work, and what to do. We tried patching up this thing, that thing. (inaudible), I know I was very damn afraid the tape was not good. But what all so far it has come, it's very good. (inaudible) I did not because he's already

entered me now, so, I did not want to go back. So, I took a risk, (inaudible), continuous days were put for all the songs to be recorded. Next day we, everyone recorded the song, then after (inaudible), I waited two hours, to hear the song at least, how far it has come. And later on, they could not do, "Sir, some or other (inaudible) is to be rectified. You can come, are you sure you can record tomorrow? I said "Sure sir." Then I came up, so, nine o'clock is the recording time, I went over there 7-7:30 and sat and heard the song, then came to know what has happened. Whatever I had taken in the first day, (inaudible), it is the first (inaudible), so that's how I built the song. And that's how it became a superhit. Like that we recorded music for that. Then later on he came and we had the song and he was very much happy.

00:28:54

Q : I know, it is a very popular song. Actually, I have planned to do a book on Puttana, I see later that does nothing in English about him.

00:00:19

Q : This was about Puttanna as I told you, I'm planning to do a book. So, whatever you say, your experiences with Puttanna, it will definitely help me get that book right, you tell me whatever you want to say about him.

A : In a way in the film industry, I'm not only myself around the circle.

00:00:42

Q : Interested in all the aspects.

A : I used to with (inaudible) when I was doing all these dubbing films, I used to sit in editing. So, I used to cut the song, I used to join and all such knowledge I got. So, that I always used to sit there on other's work, you know, he's a good friend of mine, I used to sit with him all the day. Other day I counted, 58 pictures I have done the other and the film centre. Each picture in three languages, and some pictures were Sinhalese also, and I dubbed.

00:00:59

Q : What was the original? Hindi?

A : Original, Hindi. Dubbed into all these languages say Ram Bhakta Hanuman, (inaudible - Tamil) we dubbed in Tamil that ran 100 days, we dubbed in Telugu it ran 100 days in many centres there. Like that, from that they got so much increase, they did all the dubbings here, including some other films dubbings also I've done. So, I do all this and why? It has a link. Whenever I used to see the films, you know, why don't you cut the films I used to say, we cannot come into the correct tempo of the film. I'm not restricting you people to cut so much film, no. It's up to you as a director, but whatever you cut it should be maybe, 3 or 4 or whatever it may be when I have the music to be done correctly then three seconds and stop, if you cut according to your own vision, I find what happens, the music ends somewhere and you know, the music has a tempo. It cannot be stopped anywhere you like, and you cannot (inaudible) the changes. But even then, we do many times unfortunately.

00:01:38

Q : That problem arises when the director does not have any sense of music.

A : Yes, and also the editor must also know. He must also have a sense that for example, I want to tell you. Any other director would have been, could have fought with me. See, he did wonderfully his ow production.

00:02:55

Q : Who?

A : Puttanna, fantastic film, and he went and shot on the climax of the film, that when the Bharati goes back to the to what the set is called, Mount Abu.

00:03:16

Q : Tribals?

A : No no, Mount Abu that religious this thing. She joins Bramhakumari and then sees, so he brings the story to the end, in that way, and she goes and joins that the Rama Krishna her sons come, and she says, "My days are over as you go and do the

worldly things now.” (inaudible) Karm Gyani (inaudible). Then there is one grey in that film, where the son has been sentenced to jail and his various changes take place, while thinking a lot. Plus, where she is, this hearing that brahmakumari’s lectures and all that he is cut like that.

00:03:37

Q: Intercuts like that?

A: He wanted to have; he always liked this choral music very much. In various films you must have seen, he likes it. And I said we will use it is a very apt situation. Then very first day we may have put call sheet from 2 to 9. Or 9 to 9.

00:04:37

Q: Were you in Madras?

A: Madras only. Composing was to be done in Bangalore only but recording all done in Madras.

00:04:56

Q: But there are no facilities in Bangalore.

A: I composed the music and all that in this (inaudible). I said, “Your trim is not getting this correct. I mean beat, it comes little oddly (inaudible). Why don’t you cut?”

00:05:08

Q: A scene?

A: Not scene, shots accordingly. I wanted to rearrange shots. You arrange it in whatever (inaudible) just stick to it and (inaudible). He saw it, “Okay” he said, he cancelled. It was his own production, mind it. He is in great troubles, that they orchestra would have cost about 22 to 23 thousand rupees, his own production I’m telling you, he won't do it for others (inaudible - Kannada) for others he won't tell them. “Okay. You’re right” I said, “You cancel it.” 10 o’ clock we cancelled. It cost us full money for all these things but we rehearsed and we went till the night. Next

morning, he came. We rehearsed once, sang a little arrangement I (inaudible). The sync was so nice to hear, so beautifully it is changing, as the music changed, the scene changed. So, "It's good" I said and I kept one surprise for him also, I had called Chanakya from Kolkata, that chap where we were sitting, "What we are going to do with these fellows?", "Wait, wait, wait, wait. Let a specific thing (inaudible) a small thing coming inside." Then twice or thrice we did rehearsal, "Pakka, hai kya?" I asked question. "Look, I gave the music, this music starts when the Ram Krishna enter from that roof, when she got to see her son. From there you play that, the whole choral violins and everything is played, and she's all the, because of one big whole reel I'm playing, and not much of a loud, it is silent, and he approaches, she sees him. Then he takes up the (inaudible). Chanakya seems to be coming up along with the choral music, the violins and all, he gives a very drastic effect, you know? He wept actually, he's moved so much, he wept with the (inaudible) coming from the Shanaya music, we were playing in all minor scale, and he said that he can feel, he's weeping actually *yaar*, I've seen. I said, "Good play sir." Then we played in one shot, within 3 hours we finish up. I said, "Why I'm telling him?" There are certain things director must also know, in the creative sense that how best the music can help the picture. It is greatest sense, I think.

00:07:11

Q: I completely agree with you.

A: In that way, he's a great man and again you know, classical music, again you said, "Why you have not used, you have picked that person, why you have not involved them?" You know, I've a great respect for them, he's a great musician. When I look somebody, they say he sang, that I don't want, that I'm linguistic. I want my things to be heard, my music to be mentioned. So, I said they told me to take Chitti Babu, Chitti Babu played in Postmaster also.

00:08:07

Q: Veena?

A : Veena. He's not anymore today. He got name now. You know, he is a great man. He is very nice man. He cannot do technical things, film title things, key changes also he will not be able to do like that. So, who do you want the producer of the Ram Nath? He said, "Dekhna, aakhri me daalna hai, you can take them, they are great." I never said they're not great. They are great. But for me I don't want them, then I take somebody whom I can bend as I want. Then Shyamla Swami used to play always funny. I know, then I told Shyamla Swami, "In this film, I'll give a credit in the title. Veena played by Shyamla Swami." You understand me? Not simply I'm making her play and I use throughout the film, her Veena and key change. And she's (inaudible), whatever she plays, she's good. Grasping power, and I used, film based on the veena itself. Then they saw, when I went back for the preview at Bangalore they invited (inaudible - name) and all, and I asked before all the trust, I was not afraid, even if you say it is bad, I will definitely take it. (inaudible) Veena utilization, "**A :** do you know the veena very well? You've done a wonderful job" he said. (inaudible) but I tell you, it is his greatness, acknowledging that. Some other fellow would have found some mistake or something but in that way I always admired, not just he pleased me, in three or four occasions I've seen him, the way he talked about me. He remembered the ragas and dhun, something (inaudible) in that film. (inaudible - Kannada) While doing that musical film, I used to tell him, you are showing in the film veena playing inside, music will be playing somewhere and the fingers are shown somewhere, if you rewind.

00:09:06

Q : Most films they do that.

A : You take somebody, I shot it myself, to show it. You take Veena player and use their fingers and keep her and where you want the shot, tell her where this scene comes, and you can do it like that. So, he knows after that, in that way also he takes. There are scene and people playing, the Veena's only heard, they'll be showing Guitar song.

00:11:59

Q : I know, happens even in so called, even in Shankaravarnam those mistakes are there. I always tell Shankaravarnam, I told Maha (inaudible), he composed music for my song for my film, and Mama is a very good friend. I call him Mama, he calls me Mable. (inaudible - Kannada) So many instruments he has given even in that first song, you don't see all of them you see the traditional Kacheri like (inaudible - Kannada). You should have recorded that song with that, the director had no idea of how he was going to picturise that.

A : Very fundamentally it is wrong I'm telling you. Why? I'm telling you. No south Indian will keep the veena in this thing, tambura like and we never (inaudible - Kannada). But why do they keep the tambura now, only in Maharashtra they do. Such mistake are there, quite a lot.

00:13:35

Q : The switcher clicked in a big way and became a classic.

A : That's why now when they wrote VK Ranga wrote Malayalam (inaudible - Artham?) was released. You have watched?

00:13:43

Q : No, I've not seen Malayalam.

A : I will give you, too good. (inaudible) what he wrote was, full page he wrote.

00:13:54

Q : Vijay Chitra?

A : Not Vijay Chitra, the screen. He used to write big Malayalam (inaudible) full two columns he wrote, why this music (inaudible), it is a classical music done for a film in a filmy way? Filmy way not in a wrong sense. It is truly composed, not taken up just like as shankapparnas as tyagraja songs or not that, not like that. A (inaudible) would be selected and very rare ragas have been selected and composed for the film as it should be, and for that he should be given doctorate; he should be given Padma Bhushan (inaudible - Kannada).

00:13:59

Q : A very good critic that way.

A : He has written so much, and in that film also, what happened you making a classical music, for that matter, any music. For that matter, you make music for film either the light type of music or classical music, you see, you have to give your own ideas to the composition. Plus, you should allow the singer also to have his certain place, certain freedom for him also to have his flourishes nature, not style, flourishes. So, that if he gets serious, you have to lay. But you give everything, suppose you may ask - then what is the use? Yes, see I give a ragas and swaras and everything, I make it pakka and that I need to be in that place so that it is the longest, it should not be rigid one. He should not be rigid, classical should not be rigid. If you make a light song you can be rigid (inaudible - Kannada). Now, in classical music I give swaras, the Aradhanas I give, I give what is the (inaudible - Kannada) why? He should not remain that, like mechanic, he should have some target that he accepts. "Why?" he said, he had not told me (inaudible) Sir, he is very intelligent in that he did not make me sound parrot-like, he wrote it in this way, so that I can also sing. (Inaudible - Kannada).

00:14:43

Q : Who are the artists in that picture?

A : Vishnu Vardhan, Madhuri, and the third girl. Usually, I never bother about the artists. Sarita.

00:16:43

Q : It is about a musician? (inaudible)

A : The Malayam Artham is about the musician. Of course, where that musician who wants to learn music, after there the pitch came in the world (inaudible - Kannada - though the music was worthy of a national award?). Of course, all the other departments, music has to be number one. The end of it, the teacher dies. In the end when he goes, the shishya goes, his soul his singing part comes to him, that is superstition. (inaudible) Uttam he lost the award people say, that is all the

80% of the people for the music of this film. What has got that to do with the music is separated, (inaudible - kannada). And like that, the composition also must be like that. Certainly, you said some picture now, you can make out the rigid composition (inaudible) it has to be rigid. There's no other way to get, one bar two bar, it does not sync. Here, it is not like that, to be here it is not like that, in (inaudible), I've compiled all the things if you don't want to do anything, you cannot sustain yourself, that kind of freedom, you must have that kind of sense in composition.

00:18:52

Q : This Nagara Howe, again one of Puttanna's film, there also the music was a little different. In the sense that it blended very well with the theme especially that song he sings you know Howi ni desha.

A : It is a good thing you brought up that one also, I would have forgotten it. Again in that where we have basically

00:19:20

Q : We were talking about this Howindwasha gurversha in Nagara Howe Puttanna's film, where he wanted to say something about the music, especially that song he pointed out.

A : The song itself is the thematic substance in that film.

00:19:46

Q : Yes, that's the angry young man.

A : In that you know, we want to establish young man is always fighting against the establishment. I mean, what is the right or wrong whatever the rituals are, tradition, orthodoxy, that is the spirit of the film. In that he wanted to express through the song, but there what we have done is in the sound portion we have taken, and not actually copied the tune of the song and the background and the scale of the song and made it as theme music throughout the film. And usually in that, in that circumstance people used to add with Western instruments say

trumpets and brass instruments, which I don't want to do. Very fact is that when you see the background and the story, the narration of the story and the man in the picture, if you add the scenery and the sound won't sync. So, I thought why not, why should you go for the brass and all, he will not believe me, how I used it. Actually with double (inaudible) and sitar and (inaudible), there were congo and that Italian instrument, perifax or something like that, then in that one that you get the string timber in that, it adds the bass and all. With that, we add throughout we add only rhythms and two Tiffany's I used, it added the (inaudible) the melody and throughout whenever he is getting angry about things and people, we used to same melody throughout. Of course, in some places I changed the violins, where needed. So, wherever that music comes, the signature music comes the people know he is angry, something is going to happen, like that we have filled. And another very, very important thing since sensitive thing in this film was a he was loving, a younger girl, a brahmin girl in and he loved a Christian girl. And there comes a time when he has to choose between Margaret and Alamelu and then he has taken a shot very lengthy shot I'm telling you maybe a 3 and half, a lovely shot, but there's no sense in it that's all. We saw that film in the AVM Theatre and he was telling what will we do with this shot and I said don't worry we will retain that shot, with music, very long shot, on the hill, both in the parking Margaret here in the parking and all that and there comes a time, and she goes up with him, and Alamelu is coming. How do we do it? Then we build up. I did not want it to cut, we used music on the dialogues, I calculated silence and that I used so the throughout monotony I don't want to do, throughout violins also. Where I did not want to use flute also, then I used this all this plucking instruments while the walk and the stalk when the stalk was walking, I used the violin, again the silent comes and naturally this plucking instrument comes and the sound, when she goes out of his life and she enters there, this Western type of music is being discarded. I mean not discarded actually, on the overlap by the Indian music - veena, sitar and tabala but in those days we did not have this three or four or six packs. We have two main we have only mono track, what to do. And I suggested like this, I kept veena, sitar, flute and Mridingam in the voice notes. And I said okay, we'll do it. Both the music

can be played. For this people play when the entrance of the Alamelu, and this music continues. This also continues. But I sat in the mixer, the moment when she goes on, at the scale of the both, the music is same, though one is westernised, but the one is shudhh (inaudible). I composed them. When coffin is a (inaudible), hmmm music will be coming, I'm listening to choral music and all coming. When the point comes, both are same, when she's going out and going up, making this lower, lower and lower and lower and same is going up, only by our hand because it's not a track system and all that. And it sounded so beautifully. When she goes out the restaurant music is going up. And she's very Indian music, very dramatically. And many people ask me, even recordists how did you do it, that is a trade secret. I won't tell.

Q : Even that the Hoginadesha was very well picturised. You see the speed of the songs. And the vishnuwardhan walking very fast, kept in close ups blended very well. You know, that's what I told Puttanna, very well visualised. At that time I didn't know you otherwise I would have told you. I told Puttanna the music band is in very well configuration, has been very well thought out, as I think of everything he said and he's a very big success. He also told me that Heera swami who finance that film, he was a producer. He was a little nervous in the beginning about the picture.

A : You know, due to some camera problem, speed variations they had to shoot again. So, they're naturally any financial person would worry. He did not grudge and as a good director, he did not want to compromise, naturally these accept, but it's a very good effort I can say.

00:26:58

Q : Unfortunately very first, you know, it was made in a Tamil by somebody else Rajanagam. And then they remade it in Telugu as Kode nagu, in Hindi also as Zehrila Insan, Puttanna himself made with Rishi Kapoor.

A : And he told me Dharendra Sinha, he came and said yes, this song also they have copied, in Hindi. 2 songs, you know, as it is they copied even background and

everything but they could not get that punch, that punch, the secret till late, when they called me that okay I will re-record but you have to put my name. So no, he won't RD Burman wouldn't agree. Then why should I do it? They said, 'no no no, we give money.' The money is the second thing, credit also should be given. Then he took the all the tracks and the they are played like anything there and they cannot they are that they will but they use a lot of trumpet and a lot of big noises. And so, you see one thing they forget though that the picture had that force and all but it is a very sensitive. Though it gets angry and all, the sensitivity of anger is towards this society, but they make it like a regular pakka fighting. (inaudible)

00:29:05

Q: The thing comes down.

A: Then I used the all the table and violin and all that, (inaudible), he was very (inaudible) to the Indian instruments. The same thing he has copied in Sholay, replaced this (inaudible) same music, more or less is applied there, he is going to probably kill and all. I regret certain things now, we have to be very innovative. A part of music is the same, the swaras and the notes are same. How do you do it, the best you can. You can create so much of magic. That is the fascination of music itself. You have the knowledge of music, you can understand.

00:29:25

Q: That is the point which many directors unfortunately don't get and after this Nagra how, again we are now on Puttanna, so we will go with his films. You did that? Mullah Mana Pavada. That's the one film which I have not seen. What is the film about? Somehow, I never had an opportunity even to talk with -

A: That is I mean, that is though it is a novel in Kannada, but that novel is the copy of the novel of the Bengali story. That they have been Chhota bhai in Hindi in (inaudible). Long back in theatres. That was a Bengali story, novel, that we did it, that was written by Kanna - .

00:00:21

Q : -which was used for music, Shubhmangala which was produced by Ravi and Lakshman.

A : No, it was only Ravi

00:00:32

Q : But I think these two people financed it because in the credits both their names are there, dream offering and all that. Because at that time, I was doing a film in Bangalore, I used to, because I know both of them very well. I used to meet them at Hotel Broadway, Ravi had a room and he was very tense at that time he used to be exploding all the time and he said I'm having problems with this man, with that man, your friend Puttanna is teasing me, he wants me to suddenly bring 100 girls, why the bloody hell will I bring 100 girls in the desert. He used to say all this, About Shubhamangala, it was a very fine film and it did very well and your music also helped in that. Especially, I wanted to ask you about that (inaudible) song, you know that Snehada Katalali, it was very nicely done and would you like to say something about the way you went about that music?

A : That music also very good, I tell you. That song, you know, is very peculiarly composed -

00:00:57

Q : In what way is it peculiar?

A : If you've got some music sense or knowledge about it, you can understand very well. You know I actually started this Pallavi and everything in (inaudible) film. Same (inaudible) and all that this one the hype, I started with, in the top notes and came off, then I said going on the same note for long, it won't have the desired effect. When it comes lower, you know, it now has a trend, a (inaudible - jovial?) trend, what we had thought of. Then suddenly, I shifted over to (inaudible - mid?) scale, these kinds of things, you know, you must have the knowledge of western music only then you can model it nicely without finding any jerk or anything. Then I said, "Why don't we do this?" He does not know about these things, let me tell you.

00:01:35

Q: Was he musically minded? Puttanna?

A: He can appreciate but not -

00:02:36

Q: But not much of knowledge, that's what I felt, I'm just taking it up with you.

A: Yes, it is true. Also, he did want to learn piano and he bought a piano, he asked me to teach him but I refused to teach him, in the sense you know, when you know, in that age you have to regularly practice. I myself I cannot play piano for months I am telling you because I only sit and compose and go there and do things. I sit before the keyboard and do all those things. But it is rather than learn and practice, we don't know there's a saying you know; a musician does not play for a day his neighbour knows, if he does not play for a week, his street knows, if he does not play for a month the whole city knows, that means when he plays, you know, he makes so many mistakes. So, that, that is constant practice. He cannot, the hands cannot move. (inaudible - Kannada) after some time, I get it that is not all of a sudden. Like that I know, suppose if he don't learn, he'll put blame on me.

00:03:30

Q: Yes

A: I said, "No, no, don't worry, I'll send a good man." PR Diwakar, I arranged him, I arranged a piano and everything for him, and he said, "You better learn as friends we should know, not teachers. We don't know him." He said, "Well I know these problems." Then he learned, for some time, some lessons he learned and whenever I used to go, he used to play, I used to teach him, "No no, like this.

You should play like this.", and I used to show him, that's all, what he has already learned, correcting the mistakes. Afterwards, learning piano, he started admiring music more. He told me once said, "Music is a great thing, it's very difficult to learn." It is not that easy. Then that way he is very sensible even. But he had that knack to is choose a good thing. And one greatest, I cannot say in advance

(inaudible - maybe meant disadvantage?), disadvantage, he always used to rely much on the words, we can see. But whereas other music directors, you know will find very difficult. So I cannot, I made so many innovation while composing, you want that word to be there, I said it does not go with the rhythm or aavartan. “No, that word has to be conveyed.” And I had to make so many these things and keep it in a nice place, so that it does not go out of the tune or they should not be felt when the hearer, hears the first word. That needs a little knowledge and all, of course and I don't know what did intuition (inaudible) and then of this thing, I composed the minor key, then I saw that when he's very jovial and all that, that same key won't help. So, I changed out the major key and I gave him change in the, the rhythm is same, in the background, and coming back to the major scale, in his very (inaudible) this thing, and jovial type of words and all that. Then when it comes to the again to Pallavi has to come, then I nicely modulate the minor, that's what so no people found it is a mixture actually. It starts on a high note (inaudible), that is the way when he is facing the sea and all, and he cannot sing.

00:03:46

Q : That's what I thought. Was it inspired by any kind of folk music?

A : Nothing.

00:06:38

Q : Nothing at all? Came out of your own imagination? Not any particular school of music? Because it is done on a sea background and all.

A : No, nothing. We did not have any -

00:06:46

Q : Fishermen's folk? Nothing like that?

A : No, it has nothing to do with folk music at all.

00:06:51

Q : So, it came totally out of your own imagination, and this there was another song that's yours that is that Shubhamangala?

A : That is pure classical.

00:07:03

Q : Yeah, that was also very well made, I think it became very popular also.

A : Yes, very popular. There's another song also Suryanagu Chandranoor which Ravi sang, that song was composed in while he was sure, we went for composing -, this is composed in Madras - Shubhamangala.

00:07:10

Q : Where in their office?

A : No, in Palm Roof Hotel. And this Shubhamangala was composed in Bangalore on Pallavi in Broadway. (inaudible) was completed here in Madras. Suryanagu Chandranoor was composed in Chikalgud, he was shooting there, then he said, "Why not come as a holiday and compose it?" I said, "Okay, I have also not seen so we went there." We composed three songs or so there, in Chikalgud. In that song you know, that very first writer, Vyasa Rao was introduced and he was brought and from morning daily he could not write, whatever he's telling, he could not write, I told him I always need it to be clear to the writer to come up. The way he was explaining and all that, he got confused. He was on the verge of running away and in evening I took him out, and I said, "You write, you say whatever you want. Don't worry, I'm there to help you. Don't worry." He came back after going out for some time at 4-4:30 in the evening and he wrote Suryanagu Chandranoor. By that time, he finished his shooting and all that along with Shashi Kapoor or Rishi Kapoor and all other crew members were also sitting and I took the song and I -

00:07:37

Q : You were shooting Zehrila Insaan?

A : Yes. Then he heard the song, I took the Pallavi from him, I saw this one and just signed that, and as soon as I sang the song he liked it. Rishi Kapoor got up and he

touched my feet, “*Kya sahab, kya banaya aapne!*” and everybody was happy. Then after he liked the song, within 5-10 minutes the song is over and that song again, Ravi sang in the film and that became a superhit, very popular. And that's how we did Shubhamangala.

00:08:53

Q : Is Ravi a regular singer because he sings now and then? He sang one song, I don't know whether you composed it - Ille Naraka Ille Swarga?

A : He has got a flair of singing, and that is not mine, that is somebody else's.

00:09:42

Q : It became quite popular, because I'm going to do a similar program like this on Ravi. Most likely next week and I hope to see him in Bangalore. I'm going to ask him. So that was not done by you, that particular song?

A : No no, again, you know? Many of the songs he has sung for me have become great hits, and again in all the years even one song he sang for that film - Sangharsh.

00:10:01

Q : What was the Sangharsha? Ravi directed it?

A : No, Ravi sang in it.

00:10:25

Q : Ravi sang a song in the film for somebody else, who was the director? What kind of film was that?

A : Director was (?). That is the story of a woman (inaudible), in that the song (inaudible - Kannada) that is the song, he sang it. He should not go astray, that song also became very great, it was superhit like anything, In that film, where there is the heroine is the subject.

00:10:34

Q: You remember who played heroine?

A: Sreelata, she acted in that. And in that way, I introduced two western numbers, I made Usha Uthup sing.

00:11:04

Q: She was my friend, she sang all my songs.

A: In that, it isn't recorded till date and we ourselves sat and made these songs, English words, not what you hear in regular films, no, how a pop song should be it is like that, and after this song, we were recording, she came, Usha. "Today I was singing in so many films, I feel I have done justice to the song." He was also then producer for that (inaudible), then later on he left off.

00:11:28

Q: Where was it recording?

A: Prasad Studios, Madras. And for that this film, you know, when the very first time they conducted their film function in Madras, they asked me to do the music. And when I did almost all the 2 or 3 films got awards and (inaudible) also got award, like that 4 or 5 films, mine were there. Then I was made to sing all the songs, all the heroes sang Bal Subhramanium , Yashudas, Susheela, PB Srinivas like that galaxy of singers came, we kept their last item. I kept quiet. After all this, program was over then Usha Uthup called, I tell her the people simply floored, sensation it was. I got awards and this. So, where were we? Under Ravi's Sangharsha, like that he has sung. His latest film also, Jambu Sawari.

00:13:29

Q: A children's film for which he got an award. You composed the music for it?

A: Yes, in that also he had sung that song also very popular.

00:13:36

Q: I have not seen the film, was supposed to show it.

A : But you will always see, you've got a knack of my name. Where to, what to, give it to and how to take it out. But it's not a very difficult job, when you know the names of the person what you can deliver, you can always (inaudible).

00:13:41

Q : And what is the other film yours, Paduraavalli Paandavaru, which was the turning point, second innings as Puttanna used to say, he called it my second innings.

A : Yes, comeback as you say.

00:14:06

Q : I will tell you an incident. When you say this, I was doing a documentary film for which editing was going on at AVM and he had come there to show it to some distributors, this Paduraavalli Paandavaru. And I had made some marks and my editor was V Raj Gopal, number one editor, at that time he was just making his way. I mean, he was not having much work and he said okay, (inaudible - Kannada). This was some time in '78 - '79, and that was the time I think he made the film. So, I was just wandering outside in the veranda I saw Puttanna, he called me. It was about 8 :30 - 9:00 in the night, working late. I said, "What are you doing here?" "You see, I've made a film called Paduraavalli Paandavaru. Some distributor is supposed to come and see at 6 'o clock, no bastard has come to see." And I am quoting his words 'no bastard has come'. I said, "What's your film? Why are you looking?" "Oh no, my graph is a zero-straight line. And nobody's coming. You can see." At that time, my production manager Mr. AV Ramakrishna, he was a very educated man. He works in the High Court, this was as a hobby. He came, he came and I introduced him to Puttanna I said, "This is Ramakrishnan, my production manager.", they shook hands, they said hello and he started telling about his tale of woe, Puttanna started telling about his film. I heard and Ramakrishna also heard, by that time my editor came. He said, "It's all ready, you have to take a look." So, we went, "You go, I'll wait here.", he said. So as Ramakrishnan and I, my production manager, we're walking back Ramakrishna said, 'Who is this

gentleman? You did not tell me his name.” I said, “That is Puttanna Kangal, I thought you know who he is. That's why I didn't, he is a very famous man.” He said, “I have not seen him before that's all, I know the name.” Then he said, “Why is this man weeping?” I've heard Puttanna is a very hottie type of man and he's such a successful director. And I could never connect Puttanna to talk like I said, “He explained it to you what is his career, now he is in a very low year.” Then only that became a turning point. Then later on, he told me that was his second innings, it was one small incident, he was in a very bad shape when that picture came. It was his own production, wasn't it?

A : Yes yes, (inaudible - Kannada), and he was a great fan of his, that time he did that Drama picture you know? With Aarthi and all that. Actually, he helped him into the production and all that. But when he saw the film Paduraavalli Paandavaru, and I told him also, he also felt that if he showed the film to the distributor, no distributor will take it. He knew it and I also told, no don't go. Then we had to record, he did not have much money and all. “Can you do it for this film?” Of course songs were done very cheaply, cheaply in the sense very limited instruments but nobody felt that they have not used much instruments, in that way we did the songs, and songs portion was okay, the melody was there, everybody was enamoured by that, nobody bothered that what are instrument we used. But rerecording is so much silent portion is there, what it conveys people would be knowing. So, let us not risk showing it to the distributors. He accepted, somehow or other he arranged the recording money. We did it in Gemini Studio. We did again, you know, it is common (inaudible), in those days we were confused because of all of these problems, and he was not able to get (inaudible), I was recording something, he used to come and sit. “I am not getting much money Vijaya, you do, limitation is there but we should trust our this thing, what economically we can do we'll do it.” Then we started, we saw the film, we thought so that we will see always the film whenever I used to tell him, whenever you have some projection for somebody, you just call me, I'll come. That's how we used to see for any film I used to tell that. Don't arrange another projection for me or anything, whenever after 3 weeks - 4 weeks like that also, you show me that

effects ideas with me, it will come in that. Like that every film I used to see. I've seen enough times, four reels, five reels after fully edited this film. He has always had that confidence in me to pick, he knew I would speak truth. I don't price just like that. (inaudible - Kannada) They don't like us if we keep quiet but I don't have a price, and when we saw this film, I said we need a good background score, unless we do the background score the other (inaudible), the more we use the character to use that those feelings, when it comes, then only people will enjoy. Then "Okay.", he said and again we recorded, after the rerecording the first copies in the (inaudible) that was the incident that where it began I want to stress, because always his films have that, much of the music that you can see throughout his films, it has a visual and the visual is always to be supported by the music. He (inaudible), he never believed in it (inaudible).

00:20:40

Q: In the visual medium very well.

A: Then we began to be shot back to Upasana again. So, when there is a, when she argues with her husband you know enough, then we said in the recording, we used the haunting sound." The whatever she speaks is just like weeping, but she's not weeping that we used that effect along with the music. So, understand this? So, in this kind of innovative, in rerecord, he's also worried, he has also had his original ideas, he is also like I used to speak up there, very welcoming. And Sangharsha, that's what I wanted to tell you, still I am not getting the director's name but, you know, when we were rerecording, the last reel as I was rerecording, I stopped and called the director, "Look here, why don't you change the episode to there? Why don't you want to keep it in the end, and earlier, it will spoil the whole story.", I said. "Sir, it is not possible.", he said. "No, you just check it won't align.", some Telugu editor was there. (inaudible) Harinarayan, (inaudible). "Just shift there and see what effect it gives your story, then only your picture would survive.", I said, so emotionally I spoke. "Why do you worry? By the time I will be here see, up to 2 and a half hours it will take. I'll complete it don't worry, you go and get changed and come." (inaudible - Kannada), why do you worry about it and then he went there,

you don't it there, you do here. I asked our (inaudible), half an hour. He went there cut and joined. Don't need to jump over the dialogue, I know it, don't bother. Then he cut it, the whole trend of the film changed. He said, "Sir!", "That's the way you have to see, so many times you have seen, you never used your brain? It is your shot I am changing; I have not added anything. That you must have thought yourself." Then that picture also ran very successfully, black and white - Sangharsha, Kesthur was the director. Then afterwards you know every film we used to, we cannot, if there is anything you can do it, if there is nothing you cannot. I suggest if there is anything you can do it like that. So, this sense of the editing also is very important.

00:23:01

Q : This Paduraavalli Paandavaru, it's an interesting second innings, it was remade in Telugu by Babu as Panuvari Paandavaru, it was a successful film. He remade it in Hindi as Hum Paanch. That was also a success. And Hema Malini's mother Jayalakshmi produced it in Tamil as Mammavur Pandavan, and she had a hell of a problem with that, (inaudible - Lenin?) or somebody directed it, and she could not release it at all. She really, she nearly went mad, and at one meeting she said I don't know whether the paanch pandavas or Mahabharata went through so much of difficulties but in making this picture called Pandavan I went through more difficulties than all the fights and Draupadi put put together, she said. I think it was released not in Madras, it was never released and in some centres, it was released randomly for a two days, and it was almost a disaster that's what she said (inaudible). It's sad and then that other film, Ranganayaki also you did?

A : No, I did not do that.

00:24:54

Q : That was about the darkest drama. This Katha Sangama was a collection of short stories, three short stories? By, and he did one film for Pantarus Pandvi, that was Kali Tiranga. Did you do score music? He did not disturb, that is how you did

that '(inaudible)', and other things. And I see that you've done the music for Madhilukhal - walls, for our friend Adoor Gopalakrishnan.

A : He is one of the -, and I want to tell you one thing also. Such directors are very rare I can tell you. Very first time, he was searching, of course usually (inaudible), and after that he was somehow or other I met him earlier also in festivals. We had met and talked, and sat together all those things we used to do, good friends that time. Afterwards he thought of whom to pick and later on stuck to me, for some reason I don't know. One fine morning he rang me up and said, "You come.", I said, "Okay, I'll come." Such and such on a later date but I will come by. He called me from Toronto. I took a flight and sat through the whole night, saw the film first and loved it. Such kind of work I love to do I'm telling honestly, I made notes and all that from where the music comes and I'll ask him, is it okay for you or you want somewhere else. We made a team, and first day we went and recorded one piece.

00:25:43

Q : Where did you do the recording? Here?

A : Here, in Prasad at Madras. First day we did and he saw it, he said. "It's okay.", then he was not pleased. I said, "I know you didn't like, I'm also not happy with it." And he said, "Okay, don't worry.". It was already 9:00, other pieces we had done, that thematic music somehow or other, I was finding lacking, Adoor said, "Okay, that is different matter." I did not want to tell him and he also was feeling that, I said, "Okay don't worry Adoor, we will sit tomorrow morning." As soon as I went in the morning and sat, and composed. For the title and the same title is being changed, little-little changed. But the other episodes were changed. And I was recording this, rehearsing, he was sitting I just turned back and we recorded, that we have been throughout the beat changed according to tempo and all. Fantastically it came, and many people told me, "The war scene, very fantastic music." Again, you know when we went for mixing and all that, this sound record I believe, (inaudible - Kannada), and he liked the music and he wrote me also a letter, and very few directors are like that, and speak about the music director in the press. He has spoken very good about me.

00:28:17

Q : I'm knowing him very well, I know his qualities.

A : He has said very nice things.

00:28:25

Q : Especially in his picture, there is very little dialogue and his kind of films, you know, have a lot of scope for a music director.

A : And also in certain places he does not want music. I also like that.

00:28:33

Q : Naturally, silence. It precedes music.

A : They gave me, I am not the person who does not want the songs which is not wanted to be unnecessarily thrust. I said, "Why do you want this song?" And I don't think any music director will say that. Why do you want the song, you tell me?

00:28:39

Q : That is a much-praised film all over the world.

A : For me, I had a very nice experience working in a Malayalam film. But I have worked earlier Malayalam films, I've done Pusatiputhan, M Krishna Nair. I have nearly 6 - 7 films which are made in Malayalam.

00:29:15

Q : This Grahana was another film in which I think you won an award. An international award, that was Girsih Kasavari?

A : No no, that is Nagabharana's film. That is a very peculiar film, that's how those people came, you know, they either to they had a set-up, thinking in the film industry, this kind of films, the mainstream films that people are doing these music directors and say the parallel cinema, or alternate cinema. Some or other, I have done earlier then, Sankalpa and all those films, which got award. Sankalpa was soundless picture and it is awarded only for rerecording. That's also, I have

done so many innovations in that. Okay that from that I had proved that I can do both kinds of music, then what is wrong with speaking. Personally, you only need one music and if you have got sense how to apply that then it is okay. Then these people came, they said, “Sir, we are not going pay you what we said.” “It’s alright.”, I said, “You show me the film first. You show me the film, if I like this film then I’m not going to ask for money.”

00:00:16

A : Limited money budget, you won’t believe, I finished up the whole recording in 2500 rupees

00:00:21

Q : 2500 rupees, entire film? But you have used only very few instruments musical instruments?

A : That picture only wanted that much

00:00:36

Q : That is a kind of offbeat film.

A : Off-beat film one, one that is all village background, the superstition and that way I used. When it went to Delhi, when it was shown, before the award, festival and I never missed any festivals, and they were seeing this picture and no one knew me. He was asking that, a foreigner, who is the composer of this. He told me he should be (inaudible) “Very fine. Very fine”. And I call this, “You are still not paying me money.”

00:00:39

Q : He reminded you.

A : I was joking. And then you know, afterwards he getting an award (inaudible), the producers came, searched for me and paid 5000 rupees.

00:01:21

Q: Double of what was promised.

A : But I never said I want this money whatever you give, even if you were not paying, I would not have said that, I'd have job satisfaction that in good film I am helping everybody.

00:01:32

Q: Sankalpa, you were mentioning a while ago. That was whose film was that?

A : Manja Raja's, I was a lecturer in Mysore in college. I think that the first time we have (inaudible) and that film was done in a see, (inaudible - parallel film?). And where the re-recording portion was, I mean, the background scoring. For the (inaudible), there also I have not used any western music, only Indian music because of the poojas and like that, lot of rituals were taking place. And that gave me a scope to do something innovative work.

00:02:25

Q: And you have done a film in Tulu, a successful film Poti Chennaya. That was by our famous Sivaraman Karantan. Can you tell something about this? Here also I can see you got an award for this Best Musical, Nava Bharata.

A : Nava (inaudible), this regional award

00:02:58

Q: Karnataka State Government, 04th best film.

A : That theory, no? Where, you know, all the 5 pictures being awarded by Karnataka -

00:03:04

Q: had music by you.

A : All 5 music were orchestrated and scored by me. But they did not give me any special award for me, do you know why? They said they already taken four times. Why should we give? Like that award is.

00:03:11

Q: What is this Potti Chennaya? What kind of film is that?

A: It is a folklore on Tulu people, it's a novel of course. It is about the characters, four brothers. You know, (inaudible) type, the people are living there, they come and save people.

00:03:32

Q: It is a historical kind of thing?

A: Cannot be a historical thing, kind of pseudo-historical

00:03:52

Q: In Tulu, you can't have big budgets and make this kind of -

A: That producers made money, not money they made they spent money. I think either to that (inaudible). I went to Bombay somewhere in (inaudible) I was sitting in a hotel and one man came and asked me, "You are Vijaya Bhaskar?" then he asked me in Kannada or Tulu Malayali (inaudible). I said that I can follow Tulu I cannot speak. Like that, the interest took life and again, I did in Konkani also.

00:04:32

Q: What are the Konkani language?

A: (inaudible - Konkani)

00:04:38

Q: What does it mean?

A: That is 'the life of ours is like that'

00:04:40

Q: Oh, I see.

A: That also I'm very happy you know, either to know that all Konkani music is to be I mean, the Goanese type of music, influenced. I know, I've seen Goanese, I got some touch with Goanese also, you know? Then I thought the story and all that

about why not make a change, then I had adopted Hindustani and Indian type of music, of course, western music also. We call it fusion music, that you know, when I went after the 100 days there, it was a big hit and wherever I used to go, they used to keep a bottle before me. My god! Such a very hospitable place. They say, "Oh you come, come! Party."

00:05:41

Q : And who was the director of that picture?

A : Vaidirao (inaudible) (Google says - Anand P Raju). He died you know, he was the director. Old Vaidi Rao.

00:05:48

Q : Where was the film made? This Konkani film.

A : In Mysore district. I mean Mysore.

00:06:07

Q : So, the studio. It was not shot completely in outdoors?

A : Some portion. Film was made all indoor in previous (inaudible) and this Anveshane.

00:06:12

Q : I think that's again by Nagburna here that does a murder mystery. Yes. Because he once told me 'Why don't you? You are a crime specialist, why don't you make it in Tamil' he said. I did not see, he only said. And it's a murder body disappearing? That was acted by Girish Karnar. Smita Patil is also there. He told me that it's a good murder mystery, why don't you try, in a murder mystery I think, you have good scope for those kinds of music, was there?

A : No, not like that. It is in the different type trend it goes.

00:06:55

Q : I see, I didn't see the picture.

A : It's quite a different one though it is a mystery that we used to usually use Hitchcock's type of music. So, I used in a different manner. And actually, that that supposed to be done by a Karan.

00:07:02

Q : B V Karan

A : He is the sound person. Then later I had to redo the songs. I redid the songs after that (inaudible) also.

00:07:29

Q : It did very well. It was suggested to me by Nagabharana.

A : I think somebody made it in Telegu also.

00:07:38

Q : Successful films are always remade and this Banker Margayya was another state award winning film. This was again a governor of those parallel film cinema type of film. It was done by (inaudible)?

A : No no. Banker Margayya was done by Nagabharana. Narsimha was the producer.

00:07:56

Q : I see. He was the produce, who produced all the serials later, RK Narayan's. Was there any special thing to talk of about the music index? And Dharani Mandala, another very long title?

A : It is the title of Puttanna's film.

00:08:26

Q : Puttanna's film. I didn't know that. When did he make this?

A : I think that year is there, no?

00:08:34

Q: '84. What kind of film was this?

A : That is labour and catalyst. Dharani Mandala Madhyadolage again, imagine the place you know I mean, in the midst of the world that labour and the problems he's caught up in.

00:08:43

Q: And how did it do?

A : I've not heard much.

00:09:03

Q: And what about his last Masanata Hubu?

A : He (inaudible). Before that he did one film, again, his third comeback but Maanasa Sarovara.

00:09:07

Q: Maanasa Sarovara, I've heard a bit but I didn't see it.

A : That began another career.

00:09:16

Q: What kind of film was that Maanasa Sarovara?

A : Maanasa Sarovara, as I can tell you is, by that time he was separated from Aarathi. More or less, I can say, it is based on that. Autobiographical. He made a doctor here, and how a woman is cursed. He loves her, he hears this girl is mentally deranged but there's a reason for that. And he comes and gives and all, he thinks he loves her so much, he loves that much. And in the end, she loves somebody, and he's in a lurch. That is the story, it is very nicely done.

00:09:27

Q: Who did that role? No Aarathi at that time.

A : No, Aarathi. But Padmavasanthi came and again. And that film became comeback, it was a successful film.

00:10:13

Q : And in Masanada, you did the music?

A : Yes

00:10:26

Q : He did not complete the picture, he died in between.

A : He did not shoot the, I mean what do you call, in the usual filmy language - the climax.

00:10:31

Q : Who did that film?

A : In the end, Ravi did that film. Because he'd not left any script. He improvised on the set.

00:10:41

Q : Sometimes he even got the novel, he told me I take the novel to the central office every day. I read it, I read it again and get some idea. He did one film called (inaudible) which was quite bad I thought. Oracle Productions, that was again his own.

A : Not his own, that is Aarathi's brother's.

00:11:10

Q : Somebody told me that Oracle is Aarathi and Kangal, they slept over there. Somebody told me this.

A : But it was a good picture and the attempt was good. It did not run because people may not like it.

00:11:24

Q : See, I saw it on the second week in Malleswaram theatre, the hall was empty. One of the distributors took me and the distributor sat with me for one hour after

cup of coffee he was leaving to get a drink, he left me and he went and I was the only man upstairs there is nobody at all. And the manager theatre came and sat with me for a little while he said, "No sir, it's not running well." And I think that there he repeats the same story twice like that was the kind of treatment again.

A : Yes. I don't know which part actually may not have been gone to the audience actually.

00:12:09

Q : It was really obscure about it I think.

A : But anyway again very but it is very easy. Again another great attempt was made in that film also and all of a sudden you know, he just before this immediately our songs person in Gemini, suddenly he told me (inaudible), any other producer would have been upset, I was thinking what to do now. Then I changed the (inaudible) and made it 10 MR, all reflecting sound and when he heard it, 'Okay now it's okay'. I can understand that sometimes what you want you may not be able to express, when you hear only or read only you get it. What you have got conception in you, he will not able to say directly what it is and how we want it. So, when we show, you feel 'Oh this may be like this'. Like that many people get the idea. Then we give it back after we improve upon it. And of course, with the director.

00:13:21

Q : Very great filmmaker of Karnataka. Is it possible? is it available VHS prints of his films, some of the films I missed, that when you write a book, you like to see them again, it's not possible to see on screen. I've been making inquiries even in Bangalore.

A : The best person will be Ravi who will be knowing this.

00:13:55

Q : Ravi I am supposed to ask him because I went to one shop, (inaudible) circle, they said all the films may not be there they said, 'Sir, why don't you ask his son?'

A : Only one picture he has given, that Maanasa Sarovara, that too our print is not good. But for your reference it may,

00:14:24

Q : I have not seen it at all. I always do that, I remove songs, I remove scenes. And you did another film for writing Geethapriya Yahwah Janmad and that was a film which was much talked about, a big success.

A : Yes. That film you know, again this Geethapriya is another director, he's got his own peculiar way of doing things his Medina, the 1st film he did, it is his first film, as a director and the writer and songwriter, no. It's that Kalpana and Raj Kumar acted and I think he is the first man to shoot in the real location, in the real houses in Bangalore.

00:14:58

Q : 1st man, innovator.

A : Because the producer cannot afford sets that's the reason, what he has done is a good attempt and that film, that is the first film I think Rajkumar (inaudible) and wherever that picture ran, very successful.

00:15:30

Q : What was it about Mani Namagare?

A : Back to the village.

00:15:52

Q : That was the theme that was called Mani nagare.

A : He visits town and he comes back again Kalpana is there and a social worker.

00:15:58

Q : I think I saw it on TV?

A : Yes, it came.

00:16:06

Q : I remember that.

A : In that you know, in a bit one small fight scene comes. There I used used tabblas and sitars, pipes. They were the idea in film centre Vasu, then of our Sunil Dutt was acting Vasu was making Kandahar. He was coming and watching inside and after the take is over, he came, “Who is the music director?” He showed me, very quietly said you are conceiving beautiful music and quiet music. But when it is released, many plus people including my good friend asked Why a sitar for fight sequence? I asked him, very gently, I was in (inaudible) and those things, you fellows after this film, this film will come. When those play tabala and sitar you praise for each instrument. There is no rule, it is your thinking. What’s wrong with it? Is anything wrong, you tell me?

00:16:14

Q : It becomes monotonous? When you talk about when you are a music director, you will appreciate the joke its not joke actually, it happened in the South Indian Film Directors Association. I was the vice president for 10 years. We used to organize classes in screenplay, editing, like for assistant directors, I was conducting it. And N. Krishna Swami. Swami was the course director and I was conducting it. So, we had a course on music direction. Re-recording music that was the subject. So, I asked MB Srinivasan to come and talk. (inaudible) And then we announced, every Saturday we used to have the mornings from nine to one. And because MB Srinivasan was going to talk and MB Srinivasan was connected with the Federation, you know, he was the president. And then he went out. So that was that period, so there was a huge crowd, and we used to have like a classroom, a Blackboard, we used to give chalk pieces, duster, wiping cloth. Okay, class we were conducting. I used to do speed deriving direction and all that. So, it starts at nine by about 11 o'clock, or 10:30 we used to give tea to all the people like I'm getting a lot of guests, press everybody and some of the senior directors like BM Reddy and AK Shaikh, they were all alive at that time. They also used to come just to see what is going on. BM Reddy said, (inaudible) because I did a book on BM Reddy, so I used

Steenback. So, all of them used to come. So, he stood up then huge crowd of assistants, associate directors with people like BM Reddy. He said rerecording music today in cinema and at that time, he was doing only Malayalam cinema and he had a contempt for the way rerecording music was being done especially in Tamil, Telugu, even kanada some people he said recording music is so easy. You don't have to know music to score. Everybody laughed, a music director said so you are saying you know music better than music director. He said don't laugh this is not a laughing matter, I have not come here to make you laugh. I'm telling you about a very serious question. Then I will tell you how to score rerecorded music. Now I believe you're all assistant directors. I don't know of any music directors and these are assistants in music, I don't know. They said no this is Karnataka's Association for only directors, there are one or two music directors who have come here, because you have come. He said you have to remember only four words to score rerecording music for any average Telegu or Tamil or Kannada film. Again, everybody laughed. He said he was talking in Tamil because most of them could understand Tamil and he did not know English, he said (inaudible - Tamil) Only four words then he took a piece of chalk, and then rotate, both in English and also, in Tamil. These four words you remember? Siricha Sitar, Satta Shehnai. Thank you. And he sat, the lecture was over. It took about 10 minutes for the laughter. I said, what did you watch one of the I have given the lesson of the of recording, if there is a joyous occasion. You bang on the sitar. If there is a tragic occasion, you start growing into a Shehnai. That's what's happening. He said, Thank you very much. I'm going. Why don't you be on the team and did not come, now it goes on for four hours. And everybody was laughing and somebody got up and said, 'Sir are you being serious?' I told you I wrote it on the board it's the lesson that guys put a blackboard I just had to write it. You become a big music director, you will learn about various forms you but this is the basic principle you combine it you'll get only this, and you need only these two instruments, you don't have other people that they're trying to impress the producer other than (inaudible) I think you'll agree most of the market is essentially Siricha Sitar Satta Shehnai, it's is a very interesting story which I thought you would like. And, you know, that was MB

Srinivasan, that why and this Lankesh film (inaudible). That was again an off-beat film yes. Something like city people. What is the story?

A : Story about them, a man murders and take a shelter, he has come somewhere you don't know. But actually, in the end, he helps these people, whether if they say (inaudible). So, the what good he has done unto the family. He's been highlighted, he has come from somewhere else. And in the very peculiar to the subject was it takes place in the village, I used three plucked instruments, you may not believe me only three instruments in the entire film, enough for the songs that sound like all the songs, and they become super success. Of course, in the re-recording, I used more instruments.

00:21:53

Q : I did not see that but also the critics. I know it is a much talked about film. So, I don't know Lankesh, I've just seen him once or twice. I can't say he's a friend of mine, and I think you did a children's film for (inaudible), which I saw, I was in selection committee.

A : Yes. That is, you can say it is a novel picture. Yes. mostly, I mean, to children, Charles Dickens story based on that. But it's a good attempt.

00:23:13

Q : That was another interesting film. And I think we will talk about some of the awards you got you once went to Vienna. I remember.

A : Yes, Vienna being, I went to all of Europe,

00:23:39

Q : Was it some award was given to you for work? What was that occasion?

A : No no. See, I went to represent the copyright union office and (inaudible) official composers from India. It was the international body, they invited only Naushad and me, and of course it was sanction of the government of India.

00:23:46

Q: Sponsored by the government.

A: There was the, one of the people should be Chief (inaudible). Four people who went from here.

00:24:12

Q: Who were the others? You, Naushad sir?

A: Naushad didn't come because he cannot talk English or write and do and all. And from central government (inaudible) and Aziz Qaizi, a writer and I was made (inaudible) and it was connected with the IPR office, secretary of the IPR office.

00:24:22

Q: Where was this conference room in Rome was it? Not in Vienna. Right?

A: Yes. Shot is Robert Clive in India. Robert Clive came to Madras and Swami Gopal was in the British Council, and he rang up and told me Ram Gopal Ramana (inaudible - Kannada - something to do with documentary?)

00:25:06

Q: Gopalakrishnan, not GS Gopalakrishnan.

A: I've got his name somewhere in my diary. Actually, I gave them the South Indian music and everything I recorded here for them and the sequence. I said I recorded them and gave them all the scales and all the (inaudible) whatever this may be the composer, conductor utilize this thing. The director was there also.

00:25:45

Q: Do you remember who the director was?

A: (inaudible - Kannada). Diary is missing, must be somewhere.

00:26:13

Q: I know, which year was this approximately? 1980s?

A: Five years ago, four five years ago and they told me we have a show in Africa completing this month, we'll have a show in Britain mostly. And I went to London,

to some other matter when I went there, I went to this the company which produced this picture. (inaudible - Kannada - oxford Street?). I asked what has happened, they said they have completed. I said I had an accredited credit, my name in that, they promised me and only it is I never took it in writing but they make good money now. I protested, 'No no, they took my chords and all that' and they said 'We'll see about your credits' I never happened to see that film, neither I know whether they added my name or not.

00:26:29

Q : And in this Rome conference what happened? What took place and what was your role in it?

A : That is you know, the whole the composer has got a right in performing. That is suppose I work in a film there you know, you are the writer, the composer. Your work could be utilized in the soundtrack as much as you want to produce, all the other things who wants to be creative? Suppose you broadcast a radio; it must come to you. Suppose you make a cassette it must come to you, suppose you broadcast on TV, it must come to you. That is the practice in vogue throughout the world. In India our copyright system is so feeble. Though they copy the copyright law of the British but after that they never changed that. (inaudible - dog barking too loudly) as it belongs to the composer and artist in the next say 52 years or I'm not correctly remembering the (inaudible) they say it belongs to none who makes the film, as such we don't have publishers in place, the publisher's place is given to the producer. How can the producer be the publisher? And we make the picture and we pay them, what do people pay the money for then? How can it be I make the music for the picture, other utilizations must belong to me, and even if it doesn't belong but is utilized, you have to pay something no? We are not getting anything. We are also not asking everything to be paid, you take something and here's the deal. I mean any of these things we have in the room convention, the whole world supported across and wrote to the Government of India to make certain changes in copyright laws and of course you know the government they are not interested, in this correction I want to tell something, (inaudible) of course he

is connected with IPRS and I am also. All the music composers, we're all members now of (inaudible), they're taking some money. Money in the sense, they know anyone can (inaudible), whatever they collecting, western music, that we are distributing. We have made such a collateral arrangement with the Indian (inaudible), so allow them to collect whatever we make, they collect Indian music. Interesting music, that you cannot get, especially you don't have any right (inaudible). The Government of India (inaudible).

00:00:21

A : That is a private organization in Bombay. That is president is (inaudible) and Pratibha Patil, the vice president and they got all judges, famous musicians, members of the press and each year they give award to one of the upcoming musicians and in dance as well as the films. They give for the music where it has a classical orientation, even if it is one song also they give, for that there were criterias, the award criterias, for suppose that film is mostly based on classical music, not polluting in purity, they gave the best award a score, that is once I got the Sursingar Sansad Award for (inaudible) and next time I did for this, Murligana. Twice, this is the highest award they give - Raseshwar Award. That is this award the people who have got this far, people like Ravi Shankar, Bhimsen Joshi, and even film producers were also given, (inaudible), Shyam Benegal was also given and I got for this film also, I think I am the only one from South.

00:02:15

Q : Is that so? Because I have not heard of this award at all.

A : Every year they did announcing on the screen and all that but from South I got, I was the only person.

00:02:30

Q : You are the only person that got. It's quite critical.

A : And that is one of the prestigious awards.

00:02:40

Q : And I think the Karnataka State Government also gave you for your contribution to Kannada cinema called Rajyotsava Award, it is given every year, that was for your body of work, not any particular film.

A : No no, for the particular film the state award is given.

00:02:59

Q : That you have taken many times, I think. You must have gotten tired of it by now.

A : But this Rajyotsav Award is for the contribution the person has made. And also I've been, they elected me as a member for the Sangeetvidya Akademi, last year and very, very rarely they nominate.

00:03:21

Q : Normally, they say film music is not pure.

A : And I told them, you should give, don't call it film music or anything, any creative music. Now, for example, that's where I want to come and say the greatest musical sense now, either to the bring playing the music in (inaudible) all picked up records for the phantom music and synchronizing it and somebody said you are breaking the copyright law, they will sue means they will get the collection, you can get away with Indian music but western music never, they will simply take away your collection. Then they will start searching who will do it, and they approached many people, they said we cannot do it. Then they wrote me, they wrote me a very nice letter, and I said I'll come and see and then I will give my decision. I went and saw that, myself and my right man, and then asked them to play that, what you have done let me hear. Then I heard, I said, "You are not (inaudible) if you earn 250 - 350 rupees rent from that they will take share you don't know." Then they say, "No no sir, what to do?" "Okay. I will do it." Then I said, "In the night again, I have to come and I saw the gradation of the soundtrack, whatever changes they can make.

00:04:55

Q: And where did you compose it?

A: Here, in Madras.

00:05:02

Q: You used only instruments or human voices also?

A: No, no voices only instruments.

00:05:04

Q: No humming also?

A: Nothing, because international people come and see - Russians come, Japanese come. So, it is more or less fusion music, and keeping at the same time, the Indian-ness as well as the western-ness. You don't feel like copied, there was more fusion. One or two I did few folk songs, Rajasathan folk songs so that the people had come. The local people some had heard and like that, I had changed. He wrote me, he ran and said when I was inaugurating (inaudible), the people were very much appreciating and all that. (inaudible). But I have not seen so far, but I asked those people to send a person here. And I said, Never mind if the government does not pay for him, I'll pay for various things. I'll give correct (inaudible), then it will be very nice because I've seen all those things and (inaudible), according to that I will compose it. So let him come, and I've made it the raising (inaudible - Kannada). I mean, (inaudible - Kannada) but people say it's very good.

00:06:41

Q: Talking about this copyright voice, see some years ago when I was a student of law. I used to be an apprentice of a very famous lawyer called BC Gopal Rao. You must have heard of him. He was a playwright, he was a stage actor, and he was a Censor Board member, and he was the legal adviser for all the cinema people. That's how I came to know many cinema people like that. There was a film made by R. Padmanabhan, an old pioneer, in Telugu called Raksha rekha, it was a very popular film. Nageshwar Rao, Bhanumati and Anjali Devi. Sometime in the early

50s that picture was made in Telugu, late 40s, and somebody wanted to dub it into Tamil, like any other Telugu picture being dubbed in Tamil, and the dubbing was started, the rights were bought and somebody came to know about this and they informed Bhanumati, in the 50s she was a top star, she was at the peak of her career, and then she came to Gopalratanam. The first time I was meeting Bhanumati, I used to go to the office by 6:30, in the lawyer's house, she and her husband Ramakrishna both came. Then Gopalratanam always comes a little late only, at 7:00 am, till that I'm the only man reading the day's cases, picking up the law books, and they started talking and then I started talking to them in Telugu, they said where are you from, became quite friendly, and then he said (inaudible - kannada) something like that is going on. They are using some new girl to dub for me, for my voice in Telugu (**meant to say Tamil**). I want any law, by which it can be stopped, Gopalratanam said yes, it can be stopped then why don't you go outside then she was busy for some shooting she was going. She came with her makeup kit and all that, and Ramakrishna stayed back and she went away (inaudible - Kannada) shooting, she went away. Then there was a Kutumbharao Govarde, production manager at that time, some distant relation, he's no more. Then he came after he dropped this lady and he came and sat, then Gopal Ratnam went to various, he was a top lawyer. He said if the voice of a well-known artists is substituted in any other version, without her knowledge and consent, it amounts not only to an infringement of copyright, it is also defamation because by using some nondescript voice, which may not suit, you are actually lowering the reputation of the artist, if there is a reputation. Now, Bhanumati was a top star and everybody is familiar with Bhanumati's voice, they know her as a singer, they know her as an actress. So, by using some other voice, you are actually condemning her, in many ways apart from, and he said it is also an infringement of copyright. This was a totally new point, which nobody has thought of in India that this was in the late 50s. So, he sent a notice to the producer, they had the address, this R. Padmanabhan, who was the producer of the original picture in Telugu. He was also a friend of Gopalratnam for many years and also a client. So, he and this producer, he was some (inaudible) Reddy, they all came running when this notice came from

Gopalratnam. sorry. (inaudible - Kannada), that was the first time I have seen R. Padhmanaban, the famous pioneer, he said what nonsense is this, if you are making a picture in Telugu. Number one, you are the man who bought the rights for the dubbing, you should have had the courtesy to go and ask Bhanumati, would you like to come and dub because it is your voice, we don't want to misuse your voice or if you are not happy or you don't want to come and dub or you think it is not worth it, that there is no money in it. You are a very busy artist, you have so many pictures, you at least give us the permission to use the voice of Ms X or Mrs Y or somebody and this is the voice, please listen to this, is that okay for you or you want me to get some other voice? Like that you should have had the courtesy, you just somebody gives you 5000 rupees or 10,000 rupees, you just come and take the rights you give whatever tracks you have, some bloody sensors and then you forget about all your artists. They are giving you, created your film, why did it run? Because of Bhanumati, then because of Nageshwar Rao, because of so many people, music by Kanthashala, all these factors not because you made it, you made that is a different thing. So her right is involved, you think you have copyright of her voice? Everybody knows, they will say what is this, this is not Bhanumati's voice. What happened with the voice something has gone wrong, people all will not know that it's dubbed. (inaudible - Kannada) that is defamation, (inaudible) there is a law otherwise I would not have, then he said what do we do? There are two ways - one, because it is an infringement of copyright under definition because you are lowering the reputation of the artist. A) You can request Bhanumati to come and dub her lines, if she's not interested the only other way is to stop it. If you say no no go to hell, I will get an injunction and stop your dubbing, and seize your rights (inaudible), I will do that as my client's rights are involved. Then they said give us 24 hours' time because Gopalratnam was representing Bhanumati, Padhmanaban went to some other lawyer to consult, he said you are free because I am representing her, I cannot represent you also, then he came back and said (inaudible) I spoke to Bhanumati, she says I don't have time for dubbing if you are remaking it in Tamil, let me know I will act. I'm not interested. At that time, these dubbing pictures were not very popular like about 25 years ago, 25- 30 years back.

So she said nothing doing and the picture was stopped, the dubbing was stopped, abruptly it was stopped. They had done two days work in Vasu or some Film Center at that time, the whole damn thing was stopped, and that Reddy came, "(inaudible - Hiramandi?) sir, I spent so much sir, I've given so much to this man. I've given so much to the artists, the dubbing artists." I said, "Look, if you proceed with the picture, you will be investing more money and at that time it will be seized. You want that? Or you want to write off a few 1000 and go home, then you take a train." Then he said I will stop it. (inaudible). "Yeah, it will be stopped." "You are not obliging me but Bhanumati, you have broken the law of copyright and you are not obliging me or obliging my artists, or obliging the lack of copyright when you (inaudible), you will be hit on the edit and will be stopped, will be made senseless and your rekha, your Raksha rekha will not save you, it will not be your Raksha rekha. It was stopped and this was the first time something like this happened, many people don't know I'm going to write about this case also, that it did not come to the court.

A : And you must write something about this copyright.

00:13:42

Q : It's definitely this and that was the time because once when we were, I produced one or two dubbing pictures also because I bought this, I told you, no? This Kadingu Kalave and made it in Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam. We made money in Malayalam and Telugu, we lost it in Tamil. So we closed it, we thought it's not worked out because I had nothing to do as a director. I'm like a glorified production manager. In editing, everything is ready-made. So the only thing we could do in Kadingu Kalave, in the mixing, when somebody hits somebody, there is somebody screaming. So I told Mohan, the sound recordist of RK, to give an echo, that's the only thing because we had (inaudible - Kannada). Then I told my cousin, he was my partner. (inaudible) feature film, I've not understood and we found that we had lost a little money because we lost (inaudible) in the industry. So this dubbing pictures were not very popular at that time, I was telling one artist, they were in that film, there was this Ambrish, Prabhakar, these two Jayamala was the

heroine. So, I was telling one of the people, why don't you ask Ambrish to dub the voice (inaudible), sometimes he's here. Why should we use his voice? I said he can stop and he can object it, Prabhakar can object it, when I told he said you are the buyer, you're buying the picture from (inaudible - Kannada) you are a cinema man sir, forget you are a lawyer, don't talk law. And I told him about this case. This is very interesting, many people don't know. It happened in Raksha rekha, anyway that is besides the point. I see that, you won several awards for many pictures from Sangeet Samrath, Sangeet Brahma, Sangeeta Kalanadi from Bombay, Sangeet Sarvabhana from Shimoga, several titles which I think you, Swarashilpi and from Madras, I think, various awards, I think the fact that your music is very popular, and that you have contributed so much to music is I think the greatest award that you can get. And finally, as I told you yesterday, I have a request that I would like you to play on the harmonium, at least a few bars. That will be the end with that we can finish this program. If you can do that I would be very happy. Now, we have in the magazine, a list of novels from which films in Kannada were made. It is quite formidable, the list runs nearly two pages.

A : The novels I did the music I'll tell. The first novel was done by me was Belli moda.

00:16:37

Q : Who was the writer for that?

A : Triveni.

00:16:41

Q : The famous lady writer.

A : That Mallammanna Pavaada.

00:16:45

Q : Who wrote that?

A : I forgot his name, I'll try to, he is a famous writer (on research - B. Puttaswamayya). Then Eradu Mukha, again I got the book I'll find out who wrote it.

00:16:59

Q : Eradu Mukha is by YR Swami.

A : Eradu Mukha is written by Vittal Rao, MR Vittal in Baroda, he is the director. He has psychological issues, split personality.

00:17:17

Q : Schizophrenia. It was a famous novel.

A : And Uyyale, Uyyale was Laxmi Narayan, and Sharapanjara and Mukti, these are also famous novels, and Nagarahavu.

00:17:32

Q : Naagarhaavu, who wrote it?

A : Saraswat Rao.

00:17:37

Q : Is it a novel or a short story?

A : No no, big novel, and then Abichurina Post office.

00:17:45

Q : Laxmi Narayan again, that's why I make it first, before many years in Madras lab, I told you no? That Bangalore film library, that Vaishali Ramarao's. I was editing my first Malayalam film, he was editing Abichurina post office. So, we became close friends after many years.

A : And then Vipasana, Krishnamurthy, station director Bangalore, and Shubhmangala, and Bhagyajyoti, again I don't remember the director, and Bili Hendthi. Bili Hendthi was -

00:18:30

Q : It was where a foreign girl marries in an Indian house and her problems and difficulties that began that was made in Tamil also, (inaudible - Tamil). Copyrighting from Puttanna without his knowledge.

A : And Katha Sangama, a collection of stories, in that Hunga, Munthaiyi, Atithi. And Besuge.

00:18:48

Q : I wanted to ask you about Besuge, that was Geetha Priya. That was produced by Lakshman. One particular song, which I remember the title song, choral music you know, I always used to hum it at home. It was very well done. How did you do that? I wanted to ask you I forgot about it.

A : Basically, it's you know the fusion, I mean, what you call, mixing, basically soldering, basically I had to solder. So, that director gave idea, I made it into a song like that.

00:19:35

Q : Very well done, very effectively done. It haunts you all the time.

A : And I repeat that song in some of (inaudible)'s films also.

00:19:47

Q : The haunting melody, I think when you play on harmonium if you think you can?

A : I forgot the music. And Phalithamsha, and Maagiya Kanasu, it was directed by Ravi. And Mukti, Laxmi Narayan, and Kappu Kola, this film also again mystery subject, that new director (inaudible), he died. It was a murder mystery from a novel. And Grahana, and Mother. Mother was done, that director also died, he was a director and writer. And Mithuna, Suvarna Sethuve it was a novel directed by Geetha Priya, and Banker Margayya was RK Narayan. (inaudible), again it was a novel directed by Pradeep. And (inaudible) Tejaswini wrote that one story and our Laxmi Narayanan directed it.

00:21:16

Q : It is what happens in a bus?

A : Yes. I think.

00:21:20

Q : You showed it to me.

A : I think, Jimmy Gallu, Lakshman's. That is when (inaudible) goes. It was remade in Tamil, Telugu also I think. It went very well, that also went further, and Theerada Bayake, that also I did, I don't know, that is Krishnamurthy. And Sadananda, it was Puranic who wrote that one. (inaudible).

00:22:25

Q : These are all Kannada writers?

A : And (inaudible), and Shubhamangala Vani, (inaudible). Three writers were there - (inaudible), Saroja Rao, (inaudible) (All names of Kannada writers)

00:22:49

Q : General question about this, novels being made into films. Now, if you take Malayalam cinema. Practically, every film in Malayalam is taken from a literary source, and many literary personalities are themselves keen to cinema, right from the first stage when the second silent film in Malayalam was made in Kerela which was in Travancore that was (inaudible), it was taken from a very famous novel by CV Raman and from that time, all the literary figures, they came into films to work, be it as writers, lyric writers, dialogue writers, and the link and association between cinema and literature is maximum in Malayalam.

A : I think that is the maximum, I think next is Bengal.

00:24:40

Q : Whereas in Tamil, it is practically zero. How is it in Kannada?

A : You can say 40-60. 40% from literary sources, the other original or copied from or inspired. You cannot say 50-50, 40-60 is right.

00:24:58

Q : So, there is an attempt. But did any literary figures come into films like they did in -?

A : Literary figures like Sriram Kavan came but he was not a successful filmmaker and he's Kannadiga right? Now you cannot call him such a great writer, more an actor.

00:25:19

Q : Vasudev Nair, P. Bhaskara, YLR Ramverma, Poonam (inaudible) all of them were there mostly everyone was there, (inaudible) a whole lot, all of them came into that, that kind of people were not there like KP Mohammad. So that kind of literary relevance, the links were not there. That's one of the characteristics of Kerala cinema, Malayalam cinema, which we don't have here. And another question about this parallel cinema though I don't really agree that you can call it a parallel cinema but somehow it has come into this vogue, and now it's supposed to be dead in so far as Kannada, only solid 3% Girish (inaudible) makes who tries to make at least one picture in 2 years with NFDC or somebody. Recently when I was, in November, to research on my book on South Indian Cinema, I went to see as I told you no, Hiraswami, he was not well and I could meet Gangappa, his good friend because we wanted pictures from him apart from that. So, I was asking about this parallel cinema, why did it die. He said that is a question from your point of view. He is a producer. He said, "Randor Guy, I need a concrete example, and you are a clever fellow you can draw conclusions. Your friends - BV Kavan and Girish Karnad, they both made a film called Tableyu Nina Damakne and that has become (inaudible) only in Hindi, they made two versions and we thought here is a new team of writers, directors coming into the field, and we should also develop another kind of production unit. We are having our (inaudible), GRID, etc, etc. Puttanna, that is another school. So, we thought, basically we are also distributors, so we need products and they are also doing it in Hindi and Kannada. So, two films, one source financing it, we thought we were averaging this, with all these

business principles in mind. We gave nine lakhs, which in those days was a big sum, some 10 years ago, it was '78 I think this film was made 77-78 and we could take that was risk, big enough. So we gave that nine lakhs and he said that was in 77. And when I saw him it was 19 November that is a few months back. He said till today, we have not received even our postage expenses on the project. Not publicity, even postage expenses were spent on that project, writing letters, sending packages, (inaudible - Kannada). So, naturally, we will not think of a Producer and Director comes, if you tell me I want to make a film like that, I will say, have a cup of coffee then get lost. If you are talking about murder mystery, I'll listen to what you say. Naturally, and if Veera Samia you know is one of the top producers, distributors, financiers of Kannada cinema. If he cannot take that kind of risk, naturally small people will not even think, even though he said here unlike other parallel cinema art film or whatever you want to call it. In Kannada, there was support from distributors and producers. We did we did not treat it as a step-motherly child, as Hindi cinema did, in Hindi cinema no distributor would touch it, they had to go to film cinema's Corporation, NFDC, (inaudible) no pictures are made or not were made, Shetty, Manohar Shetty, he was a very rich man he could afford even he stopped after some time, he couldn't go on losing money, so naturally it died. So today only Kasaravali is making it because NFDC is trying to support him, 100% financed. And that's Varna, who was a very rich man, I believe he's an (inaudible - upkari?) contractor or something like that, even he has stopped taking this risk. Another thing is that when color came into vogue, all these budgets went up, and these people could not afford to spend money on these kinds of subjects and then make it a success, so they were themselves hesitant to make, and number three, when this kind of filmmaking became a fashion in certain intellectual and middle class and upper middle-class circles. Everybody started making pictures without knowing, after all this is a technological medium, you must know what is the camera, what is the lens, what is sound recording, what it can do, what it cannot do. So, all those people came and they were not technically competent. So the pictures turned out to be very bad and very boring. So how do you watch them for a while, it was a fashion to watch, Yes, I

saw Samskara. Yes, I saw Godul. But they were not able to sustain interest so it died. And fourthly, he said all these pictures for whatever reason, I don't know, they were taking stories from the Brahmin community and everything was concerning something concerning the Brahmin community even their funeral rites in Samskara or (inaudible) Sharda, nothing else was available or it was an (inaudible). LP Sharada the widow, which was also another award film and all these if you take even Shankaracharya. So, it became after some time, stale even for Brahmins to watch. So, these are prime reasons for various reasons it flopped.

00:00:27

Q : This kind of analysis and I'm telling you is what I got from Gangappa, we spoke for one hour, on a cup of coffee and he spoke about all this and I came back to my hotel room and made notes because I want to put all these in the book because during that analyse, you know, maybe say (inaudible) is dead. Whereas in Kerala, we are able to sustain it, Adoor Gopalakrishnan or Arvindan Shahji and a few others. Of course, they are getting support from NFDC. I don't know how far commercially they are successful nobody knows. But Gangappa revealed the fact that they invested nine lakhs, they did not get even their postage charges. He said "We did not get even postage charges." So, what do you say? What is your opinion about it? When you are composing music for some of those films? Which are wrongly called parallel films?

A : I call everything cinema.

00:01:16

Q : Cinema. that's what, I agree. There is nothing called art cinema, every cinema is art.

A : But the only thing is his approach was different. That's only the thing. I don't give any tags. I call, you make film whatever film you make, it has to sustain in front of audience, if it does not sustain, it's not a film.

00:01:41

Q : It is not a film, it's a communication. You are communicating to that there. So you agree with me and Gangappa?

A : Sure sure.

00:01:55

Q : Gangappa used to act ladies role na? I know he does small roles in his own films.

A : No No I'm talking about drama days in 40s. (inaudible) He was looking very charming in that day.

(SONG SINGING PERFORMANCE)

00:03:34

Q : Who wrote the lyrics of this song?

A : This is (inaudible).

00:03:41

Q : And this is from the film you said Nenapina Doni?

A : It is originally Bal Subramaniam sang that. SP Bala Subramaniam. He plays this in a party on piano. And the piano is the main instrument

00:03:57

Q : I know, you can hear the choral music. Little western touches also.

A : Yes, landing point and the same point, I know.

00:04:05

Q : Very well-made fusion of both.

A : If not, you have to give when he's playing a piano, that western touch is there.

00:04:17

Q : And you have done several films also. You gave a big list. I think it's Kalyanama

kalyanama. It was by Chitramangal Krishnamurthy.

A : That I wanted to say something about myself in the film. When it was Tamil films, please allow me to speak very frankly.

00:04:42

Q : You must speak frankly because we are recording history.

A : Actually, you can take that yes, the Tamil film was impersonal, a very low (inaudible).

00:04:52

Q : Which year was this?

A : That was 1974. Earlier I came, that was not very, I mean memorable, and the regularly I started making 74-73 and in those days the film music they used to say, Tamil music was not in such a good shape. When I entered, I actually changed the climb, you can hear the songs even now, the melody that was given very prominent and orchestration, was likewise. Even I used in that Kalyanama Kalyanama, that western type, guitar and all that. Those songs became very catchy and they were quite popular, then again, I introduced the folk songs also, Jayshakaran and Jaychitra, in farm.

00:05:51

Q : Farm. That became a very big hit.

A : Very big hit, really and like that I changed even rerecording also, even (inaudible) was another day when I met him, Sir I was (inaudible - Kannada). Like that, that I not even one effort I did in, but I will always look for some change. (Inaudible - Kannada). Even in Mangalore (inaudible). People used to tell me, they used to hold me up and tell me, again that song, what is that picture, it became a super hit and they made it in three languages, in three languages also I did not see that - (inaudible), and that song, you know. I forgot what is that song. The entry version that sounds will come.

00:07:11

Q : You scored the music on all the 3 versions, that is - Tamil, Telugu and Kannada.

A : And her other very, peculiar this thing. I did (inaudible).

00:07:35

Q : That was one film that 'Asey asey asey'. That was catchy.

A : That was rerecording. You do know how he expresses, he sees everything whatever he wants, you cannot show them. By then I told (inaudible) and Devaraja, who introduced, they liked that, quite catchy, something new.

00:07:57

Q : Cause I saw the Telugu version of it, actually it is the Marathi story which was made in Telugu by Dumpi as Buddha Petani and written by a friend of mine called, a famous Telugu writer Tempur Rao. Don't know if you must have heard of him. He is no more. He was one of the people responsible for me becoming a writer. I owe a lot to him and he wrote the picture in Telugu as Budh Puthani but these kinds of effects were not there. And it did not do very well in Telugu whereas in Tamil there's something new, the story was the same because -

A : She is trying to commit suicide, in between the hero does not come and while I was re-recording, I thought where is the hero and how did he come to her and sees. And how he told him. "What shall I do sir?" I said, he said, "It is a lengthy shot, in between the cut and intercut and all, I take a shot and I think it conveys. And on her rerecord imagery, you see, she is saying that, "(inaudible)". Then they didn't like that. Like that I have concentrated on the creative side of the direction. Maleswara song, Kamal Hassan, that Maleswara song was very popular. The trend I mean, what was the trend. I am not against the way they have done it but the project became very.....

00:09:38

Q : I think in 74, you did a number of Tamil pictures.

A : Yes, 74, 75, 76, 78, (inaudible - Kannada), 79. My last film was in 82.

00:09:51

Q : What was the last picture about, in 82?

A : Uttai Papam. And again, the great expectation was there (inaudible). The songs were very catchy. He himself in his entry said, "Hi, what is (inaudible)?" Then he wanted that the (inaudible), with folk songs. I said, "Why do you want folk songs?" (inaudible) It is the trend what to do. I made a folk song, that became very catchy also. So, that's now I mean, it is only a thinking person, a man, a creator. How he feels, how best he can do it. For the situation.

00:10:41

Q : That involvement must be there. To do your best, that is missing in many. Cinema itself is missing this.

A : No. (inaudible) whatever we need to fill up and feel the difference, that's all.

00:10:55

Q : It is just used as a prop. Not an integral part of the film. And in Telugu, you have done some film?

A : Telugu also I have done 7 or 8 films, out of that two were renamed (inaudible)

00:11:21

Q : In Hindi did you do anything? Marathi, you have done? What you are doing now?

A : Pattita Pavani. That is Raje, Aruna Raje's biography. Aruna Raje, she is from Hooghly.

00:11:42

Q : I know, Aruna Vikas she became later.

A : That is actually bilingual in Kannada and Marathi.

00:11:54

Q : In Sinhalese, you said you've done some work, long back and Konkani and Tulu. Multilingual music, you created.

A : And it is a pleasure, you know? To make in so many languages. The challenge is also there and the language, how much you can hear the justification.

00:12:14

Q : So I think I must thank you very much for sparing your time Vijaya Bhaskar sir, for sitting with me and explaining at such great length. And it has been a very great pleasure for me as a filmmaker, as somebody who knows something of music and as a writer, whatever you want to call,

A : And it was in return my pleasure, a man who can give such an impetus to my thinking and get things out of me.

00:12:46

Q : Thank you. Thank you very much Vijaya Bhaskar. I hope we get to work together in some film.

A : Let us not hope. Let us do it.

00:12:55

Q : Let us do it. Thank you very much. All the best. That was the interview with the music composer, Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar. These interviews were held during the month of February 1991 at the residence of Mr, Vijaya Bhaskar in Calingut, Karunanidhinagar, Madras. This is the Randor Guy thanking Mr. Vijaya Bhaskar for his help in speaking about his experiences, his views and opinions on cinema, music, etc. I thank him on behalf of the National Film Archive of India Pune, its director, Mr. PK Nair, and on behalf of myself, and all those interested in cinema, film music, and the history of cinema. Thank you very much Sir.

A : Thank you.