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Musical Knowledge of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD

2016

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

The Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are professional hereditary folk musicians, living in small communities located primarily within the Western Rajasthani districts of Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer. In recent years, some Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār performers have established a presence on both national and international concert platforms, consequently drawing increased attention to their music. This process has generated a dichotomy between the musicians' traditionally low social status as rural bards, contrasted with their developing potential to earn significant sums of money as cosmopolitan recording and performing artists.

Subsequent commercial CD releases of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music have often included sleeve notes that use theoretical terminology, drawn from the Hindustani classical music tradition, to describe performance frameworks. Yet it is evident that the structural relationship between formal classical music and the repertoire of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs is rather complex. The question then arises: what precisely is the nature of this relationship? Whilst anthropological and musicological scholars have recognised that a certain correlation exists, there is currently no available literature to clarify the precise nature of any musical correspondences. A significant contributing factor to this lack of knowledge is that there has been no detailed analysis of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music.

Taking the pan-South Asian concept of *rāga* as a focal point of intersection between the *margā* ('Great') and *deśī* ('Little', or 'local') tradition, the twofold goal of this study is first: to contextualise the folk musicians' peculiar understanding of *rāga* within their own network of musical knowledge; and second: to analyse a selection of field recordings, so that any underlying melodic frameworks operating within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music performance may be identified. During the course of our investigation, we will gain a deeper understanding of this unique and complex folk music genre, whilst further elucidating its association with the hegemonic classical system.

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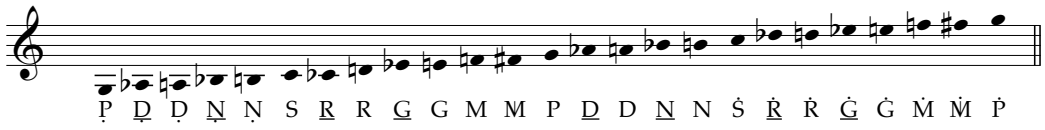
This work is dedicated to my daughter, Eden.

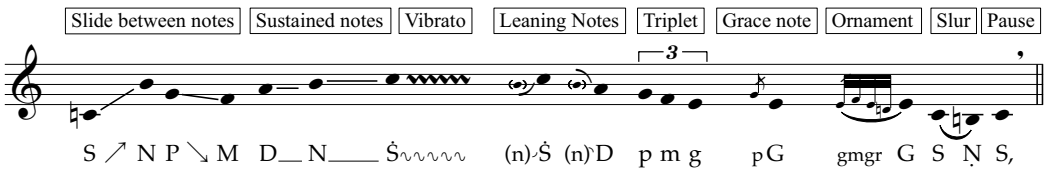
KEY TO THE TRANSCRIPTIONS

The compass of notes employed by Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians in general performance practice is relatively compact. The main focus of melodic activity is usually confined to the middle octave of the instrument or vocalist's range, with occasional forays being made into the periphery of the lower and upper registers, depending on the individual artist's skill level and creative expression. Whilst there are exceptions, none of the renditions featured in this study venture beyond the fifth degree (high 'Pa') of the upper register, or below the fifth degree (low 'Pa') of the lower register. The full compass employed can be expressed thus:



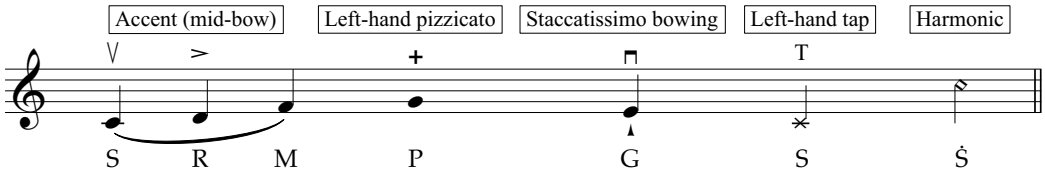
All transcribed music examples submitted in this work are represented using the above form of combined Western staff and North Indian *sargam* notation. For the purposes of generating more easily comparable and comprehensible representations, all of the examples have also been transposed onto the staff as shown here, with Middle C taken as the tonic.

In common with many South Asian *rāga*-based music systems, the artists' performance styles incorporate particular ways of connecting and embellishing the notes that are sung or played. Such ornaments may be considered significant in understanding the ways in which one particular *rāg* is distinguished; and so an attempt has been made to render these nuances of performance as accurately as possible, whilst keeping the transcriptions uncluttered and easy to read. Examples of the various ornamental symbols that are employed in the transcriptions are detailed here, with their attendant *sargam* symbols below.

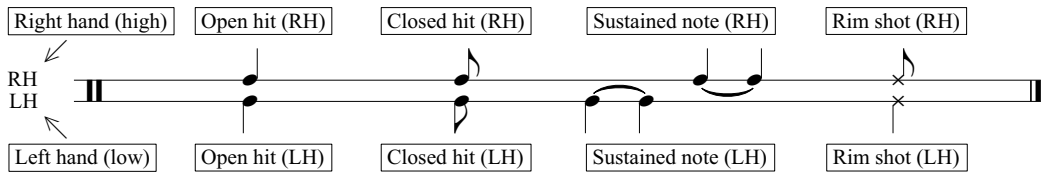


Chapters Five and Six contain assesments of the pitch hierearchies implicit within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* performances: presented in table format, these subjective assesments have been arrived at via the traditional method of using one's ear, rather than employing any statistical data collection methodology. The main reason for this is that certain notes may be highly significant in demarcating a particular *rāg*, but may occur infrequently. Each scale degree is accorded a relative value of significance, thus: 'SIGNIFICANT' (of prime importance); 'STRONG' (a key pitch, used frequently); 'NEUTRAL' (a passing note); 'WEAK' (rarely used and of little significance); 'V. WEAK' (hardly used and of no known significance); '-' (not present in the performance).

Whilst it is not the goal of this thesis to provide an in-depth study of *kamāichā* or Sindhi *sāraṅgī* styles and playing techniques, it is nonetheless relevant to give an idea of how these highly specialised – and often virtuosic – approaches to music performance contribute to the presentation of *rāg* melodies. To this end, certain notational symbols have been added to the transcriptions, for the purposes of representing various left- and right-hand percussive techniques that are regularly employed by senior Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* players and Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās during the course of any given performance. These symbols are shown here:



Finally, there are some instances where instrumental and vocal performances are accompanied by the double-headed barrel drum *dholak*. There follows a key to the hybrid notation used to represent the *dholak*rhythms, where applicable.



NOTES ON TRANSLITERATION AND PRONUNCIATION

All Hindi, Sindhi and Marwari terminologies that appear in the text are italicised, and rendered in Roman script using Unicode and the ISO 15919 international standard for the transliteration of Indic languages. The correct pronunciation of these words, along with the various attendant diacritic marks, can be achieved by following the methodology set out by Rupert Snell in the 2003 edition of 'Teach Yourself Hindi', and summarised in pages 7 to 11 of the eponymous companion textbook.

The main language of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities is Marwari – also known colloquially as Rajasthani – which is spoken widely in rural areas across Western Rajasthan and in the neighbouring Sindh region of southeast Pakistan. The dialectical variation between neighbouring local forms of Marwari can be quite profound, and therefore no claim is made here as to creating any "standard definition" for the terminologies that are mentioned. Any errors in the rendering of Marwari words are the fault of the author.

In terms of pronunciation, Marwari is particularly rich in retroflex consonants: Snell (2003: 9) categorises these as "hard" sounds, produced by curling the tongue back to touch the upper palate before releasing the vocalisation. This distinction can be illustrated by the fact that native speakers pronounce the word 'Marwari' with a very hard retroflex sound on the final consonant, making it sound more like the 'd' of 'dive': hence, according to the methodology established above, this would be transliterated as *Mārwāḍī* (pronounced 'Maarwaadi').

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

1.1. Genesis of the study

It was during the course of pursuing a Master's programme in performance on *sāraṅgī* – the main bowed lute of North Indian classical music – that I was first introduced to the music of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, whose traditional musical activities and way of life were discussed as part of a lecture on bardic and genealogical traditions in South Asia, given by Prof Richard Widdess. Despite having no previous knowledge of their music at all, I knew instantly that I liked the sound of it.

When subsequently listening to the 'Instrumental Music of Rajasthan: Langas and Manganiyars' (1991) CD from the SOAS library, and reading the accompanying sleeve notes, I first became aware of the frequent use of classical terminology to describe these beautiful desert song melodies that seemed, to my unacculturated ears, by no means structured in a traditionally classical way. This confusion gave rise to a paper that examined the structural melodic relationship between a recorded instrumental solo (performed by the late Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* maestro Sakar Khan), and its homonymous North Indian classical melodic counterpart, *rāg* Jōg (Davies 2008: 'Melodic Analysis of a Māṅgaṇiyār *Rāg* in Performance' (unpublished)).

During the course of this preliminary study, it became evident that Sakar Khan's conception of what he called "*rāg* Jōg" bore little structural resemblance to the melodic framework of the same name, that contemporary North Indian classical musicians would recognise. And, perhaps more interestingly, it was not immediately clear from listening to the recording what the intentions of this obviously skilled folk musician actually were, with regards to presenting his conception of the *rāga*. However, it did appear that there was some kind of conceptual intent to develop a specific form of melodic content, embedded

within the framework of performance; and so the idea was borne to examine this issue in greater analytical detail.

Shortly after completing my Master's degree, I had the immense good fortune of encountering a travelling group of Māṅgaṇiyār musicians from Rajasthan. The meeting, which took place in London on 8th December 2008, was facilitated by my *sāraṅgī* teacher Nicolas Magriel, who had himself happened upon these inimitable performers during the course of his own extensive musical research on *sāraṅgī* styles in North India: he insisted that I must meet these fabulous musicians, so that I might witness for myself their particular mastery of performance on their own unique bowed lutes, the *kamāichā* and Pyaledār *sāraṅgī*.



Plate 1.1: Ghevar Khan (with *kamāichā*) and Anwar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (left). Southall, London. 8th December 2008. [Photographer: Nicolas Magriel]

The meeting took place in a small hotel room in Southall, where the musicians were being accommodated over the course of performing a series of prestigious concerts in London. I was immediately struck by the friendliness and humble,

welcoming manner of the musicians, who were keen to demonstrate their musical prowess to me – despite being jet-lagged and suffering noticeably from the rigours of a chilly December in England. The visiting party of musicians included leading *kamāichā* master Ghevar Khan and now-legendary vocalist Anwar Khan (Plate 1.1), as well as Pyaledār *sāraṅgī* virtuoso Lakha Khan – who is pictured playing his instrument in Plate 1.2. The author can be seen in the background of this image, cradling Ghevar Khan's *kamāichā* lovingly, and being totally absorbed in the haunting desert melodies emanating from Lakha Khan's *sāraṅgī* (photographs from this session are courtesy of Nicolas Magriel, and are reproduced by kind permission).



Plate 1.2: Lakha Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (with Pyaledār *sāraṅgī*) and the author (right). Southall, London. 8th December 2008. [Photographer: Nicolas Magriel]

This first meeting with the Māṅgaṇiyār musicians had such a significant impact upon me that I resolved to investigate further, in the hope that I might penetrate some of the mysteries that seemed to surround their tradition, which appeared at once an elevated art form and yet which was also rooted in such humble, rural origins. Five years later, I found myself conducting performance-based fieldwork

with both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār senior performers, in their native home of Western Rajasthan; and the work presented here is the end product of this research.

The present chapter goes on to delineate the parameters of the thesis, by detailing analytical methodologies and further outlining specific research objectives. The place of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in the history and social fabric of Western Rajasthan is discussed in Chapter Two, which includes an overview of their musical repertoire and a review of literature related to the field of study. Chapter Three considers the pan-South Asian concept of *rāga* as a culturally attuned means of systematising musical knowledge; whilst Chapter Four details the various concepts of music theory expressed by the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, both implicitly and explicitly. Data obtained from performance-based fieldwork – focussing particularly on the musicians' use of *rāga* as a conceptual performance construct – is analysed in Chapters Five and Six. Finally, a cross-community analysis of how these melodic models are applied during the course of song performance forms the content of Chapter Seven; and the resultant findings are commented upon in Chapter Eight.

1.2. Methodology

Given the fact that there is no extant canon or theoretical literature that presents a formal, textual overview of the musical systems employed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, the first logical course of action was to visit them in person, and to listen very carefully to what they were playing. Being a professional musician versed in classical music performance on *sāraṅgī* proved to be a crucial factor in securing invitations to train with the musicians; and techniques of performance-based ethnography became central to the data collection process. This approach was undertaken as a conscious response to John Blacking's (1973) call for ethnomusicologists to attain some degree of 'bimusicality', or facility in two or more music systems. The use of performance as a research tool was, in fact, already being advocated by American ethnomusicologist Mantle Hood as early as the 1950s:

> The student in training and the researcher in the field must aspire to performance

> standards worthy of himself as a musician and equal to the expectations of the culture in which he is working… The degree to which 'you get hold of it' simply depends on innate musicality and the amount of time devoted to study.
>
> Hood 1971: 230-231

Despite the obvious benefits to this kind of approach it should be noted that, whilst locally applicable skills in language and performance undoubtedly opened certain avenues of research that might otherwise have been closed to me, nevertheless my presence as a pale-faced little English fellow passing through the rural village communities of Western Rajasthan was always a conspicuous one. With that in mind, the application of context-sensitive fieldwork methodologies is balanced here with a desire to be transparent regarding the impact of my presence in the field, and the manner in which this may have affected the transmission of, and access to, pertinent musical information.

Since the Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs are renowned for being extremely protective of their musical heritage – and given the fact that I had never before visited the region, and could not afford the time needed to spend a single extended period of "total immersion" in the field – it was decided that the fieldwork should be divided into three consecutive phases: a feasibility study; an enculturation phase; and a knowledge-gathering phase. These three distinct phases of fieldwork were conducted during the course of three separate visits to Western Rajasthan, all of which took place between February 2013 and March 2014. The total resultant time spent in the field was just under six months in duration.

In practice, these three phases overlapped with each other considerably during the entire fieldwork process. For example, I gathered much useful data during the preliminary, "feasibility" trip; and, during the final "knowledge gathering" phase, I was, of course, still exploring the feasibility of my study, and growing into the field. However, the "three-phase" construct worked well in terms of giving me a sound cognitive map – a schema, if you will – for negotiating the overall arc of the fieldwork process.

The preliminary visit to Western Rajasthan enabled me to develop a basic familiarity with the local culture and environment, as well as providing

opportunities for making first contact with the musicians in question. During this trip, I also formed relationships with key local informants from outside of the musicians' communities – notable among these were Shubha Chaudhuri, director of the Archives and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology in Gurgaon; Kuldeep Kothari, secretary of the Rupayan Sansthan in Jodhpur and son of renowned Rajasthani folklorist Komal Kothari; and Laxmi Narayan Khatri, owner and curator of the Thar Desert Heritage Museum in Jaisalmer. All of these figures provided invaluable assistance throughout the duration of my time in India; and they became key research facilitators as the fieldwork progressed.

Interviews, discussions, performances and musical exchanges with the musicians and informants were recorded using various digital audio formats, often in tandem with HD video. The main video camera used was a small Panasonic V210 camcorder, which was selected for its affordability, portability, and 1080i HD recording facility. The iPhone 5 1080p HD built-in video recording device became a useful secondary camera, enabling me to set up the V210 on a small tripod with a fixed wide shot and then to use the iPhone as a "roaming" viewer: this gave me the ability to shoot alternative camera angles to the main shot, and to focus in on certain specific details in certain situations (such as the bowing arm of a musician, or the movements of his fretting hand).

For dedicated audio recording, I used a Sony M-10 Linear PCM Digital Recorder. After experimenting initially with a selection of different sound settings (ranging in quality from LCPM 96khz/24-bit processing at the highest end, to 44khz/64kbps MP3 at the lowest quality setting), I eventually opted for the middle path of recording in the 44khz/320kbps MP3 setting: this format provides a sufficiently high quality audio file for archiving and editing purposes, whilst at the same time being relatively 'light' in terms of data space management, when compared to the much more voluminous LCPM files. In combination with the audio files captured with the lower quality inbuilt camera microphones, a detailed picture of the overall sound canvas can be presented.

In addition to capturing a large volume of audio/video footage relating specifically to the performance activities of the Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs, a number of local sounds and scenes were also recorded, with the intention of

gathering sufficient raw material for the creation of a future film project: this data includes contextual shots and audio recordings of the environment, flora and fauna, general human social activities, important life cycle rituals (weddings and funerals, Divali, Eid al-Adha, Holi, music festivals, and soforth), as well as instances of musical performances from other Rajasthani performing groups such as *Bhopā* and *Bhopī* priest-singers, *Naṭ* acrobats and jugglers, *Kālbeliā* dancers, *Bhāt* puppeteers and itinerant *Jogi* mendicants. A large number of still photographs were also taken, using variously the iPhone, an old Sony digital camera, and on the Panasonic V210; and a research journal was kept for the entire duration of the fieldwork.

A key facilitator in the elucidation of relevant musical material was the application of the aforementioned ethnomusicological performance-based research techniques. My initial interest in this genre of music was sparked through its use of various types of bowed lutes, including the *sāraṅgī*; and, as noted above, my own *sāraṅgī* playing became an essential component of the research process – particularly since the use of certain unique forms of bowed lutes lies at the heart of musical and social identity for both Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs. Being additionally equipped with considerable background experience as a professional performer, I was readily accepted as a co-participant in the basic processes of music transmission that are a constant feature of daily life within the communities of these musicians.

The combination of utilising native language skills and technical playing abilities was fundamental to the processes of social and musical exchange that would elicit the raw data necessary to commence analysis. To aid with verbal communication and understanding, I undertook basic Hindi and Marwari language tuition in London prior to the commencement of fieldwork; and, during my first visit to Jaisalmer, I was fortunate to find, by chance of visiting his collection of regional artefacts, a willing and able language tutor in local businessman and folklorist Laxmi Narayan Khatri.

Having lived in the district of Jaisalmer for his entire life, and holding two Master's degrees – one MBA, and an MA in Hindi and Marwari literature – Laxmiji proved himself to be extremely well versed in the manifold beguiling

nuances of local Western Rajasthani dialects. Additionally, his position as a local figure of some standing and influence in the community made him an invaluable friend and research associate: for example, he was able to facilitate my initial meetings with Akbar Khan, head of the Māṅgaṇiyār community and hereditary musician to the family of the Maharajah of Jaisalmer.

Laxmiji grasped an immediate understanding of the kind of information that I was seeking to gather during my fieldwork; and, being himself an hereditary *jajmān*, or 'patron', for a community of Māṅgaṇiyārs living in nearby Sam village (where he was born), Laxmiji provided me with an opportunity to view the patron/service provider relationship from both perspectives. He was not the only *jajmān* that I met with during fieldwork; but he was one of only two *jajmāns* who gave me detailed and informative interviews regarding their experiences with the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs – the other being Badri Singh Mahecha: a Rathor trader, Internet shop owner and retired Indian Air Force pilot, who also provided friendship, guidance and invaluable local information.

As an integral part of the participant-observation process, I attempted to absorb as much as possible of the musical techniques and practices through performance-based research study – primarily using *sāraṅgī* and *kamāichā*, but also at a more general level. This multi-instrumental approach to the learning process was important, since many Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs demonstrate at least a basic understanding of how to play the other instruments within their ensembles; and everyone seems to sing, at one time or another, as I noted in a journal after my first encounter with the group of Māṅgaṇiyārs in London, December 2008:

> Music seems to be the main communicative currency for these people, who at any given moment may – and frequently do – burst into loud song, or grab a *kamāichā* to accompany one another. They listen carefully and appreciatively to any music that is happening, not hesitating to join in if an appropriate moment presents itself. Any one of them could pick up an instrument and play some phrase or ditty.

My time spent in the field has only served to reinforce the view that multi-instrumentality is a key feature of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical behaviour. This all-inclusive approach to ensemble music making is fostered at a young age,

where the children are given every opportunity to try their hand on any one of the numerous instruments that are available within the typical professional musicians' household. It is not uncommon for precocious youths to boast (quite truthfully) that they know how to play seven or eight different instruments – although it is also notable that developing musicians usually gravitate towards a particular instrumental and/or vocal specialisation, especially when becoming involved in professional music activities outside of the domestic sphere.

1.3. Expectations and limitations

In Neil Gaiman's graphic novel 'The Kindly Ones', the character of Morpheus points out that "intent and outcome are rarely coincident." (Gaiman 1996: 11/7) The truth of this statement has been made evident to me many times whilst pursuing this research, and most especially during fieldwork. One notable example of this lies in the fact that, following my first trip to Jaisalmer, I received an invitation from leading artist and *kamāichā* legend Sakar Khan to learn music with him: this experience was to form the bedrock of my understanding of the local music systems, and I was confident that Sakar would provide me with an abundance of *rāg*-related insights and context-specific musical data. However, shortly after my first meeting with him, and less than two months before my return to the field, Sakar Khan passed away in August 2013 from complications related to a respiratory illness.

As a natural consequence of this sad and unexpected turn of events, the complexion of my fieldwork with the Māṅganiyārs changed entirely: first of all, I had lost my primary source of knowledge; secondly, his passing placed certain restrictions on music making in his home village of Hamīra, where I had hoped to spend much of my time; and thirdly, the effect of his passing on his family and on the community as a whole was understandably profound. I was forced to change my whole approach regarding the Māṅganiyār side of my fieldwork, away from obtaining a concentrated bulk of data from a single rich source based in a single location, to gaining a more general overview of incidences of *rāga* knowledge across the community. Conversely, and through no premeditated design of my own, the fieldwork with the Laṅgā musicians became centered

almost entirely around the musical activities of Sindhi *sāraṅgī* maestro Muse Khan Laṅgā and his family; but I was unable to meet up with any Surnāiā Laṅgā musicians at all, during any one of my three visits to Rajasthan. Because of this, there is a significant gap in the data that was collected.

Another potential issue lies in the one-sided gender focus of the present work. Whilst the analytical content of this study considers only the musical output of male members of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, it should be noted that women occupy a central position of importance within the inherited music traditions of these closely-knit family groups. Besides having their own unique repertoires of songs (which are usually sung for all-female occasions – for example during certain ceremonial gatherings that form a part of exceedingly complex and protracted wedding rituals), senior female figures within the community often act as key custodians and transmitters of the core male repertory; although this process invariably takes place in the privacy of the home, and over long periods of time, as the young children become gradually enculturated into their tradition.

Due to the strict and deep-set enforcement of patriarchal gender roles, Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār women are generally not permitted to become professional musicians. This behaviour pattern is also cultivated from infancy, with young girls being permitted – and sometimes even encouraged – to sing in the home, but given little or no opportunity to play instruments or to perform in public. As a professional male musician and foreign researcher coming into the community from the outside, I had little choice but to make a conscious decision to focus on the activities of senior male performers – not least because they are the primary exponents of the *rāg*-based knowledge that I have been chiefly concerned with for the purposes of this study. However, the fact remains that there is a huge subject area of women's song repertoires which has, thus far, been largely undiscussed in the academic literature, and for which context-sensitive fieldwork is urgently required.

For this and other reasons of a practical nature, the overview presented here of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge is necessarily partial. However, by adopting a descriptive approach to classifying the subject matter, and viewing the

data through as transparent a lens as possible, I shall present one possible outsider interpretation of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāga* knowledge (which is, in itself, but one aspect of their inherent musical knowledge system), rather than a normative model of how the music "should" be perceived and understood. This approach can be seen as reflecting the more flexible attitudes towards musical knowledge and practice that the musicians themselves seem to favour.

A related concern in the present work is to represent what the musicians themselves say and do, rather than to "guess" at what they may be doing. In order to guard against any possible misrepresentations, it is important to be aware of James Kippen's caveat that there is "considerable potential in our work for important information to be obscured because it is problematic" (in Barz et al. 2008: 138), and it is all to easy to misinterpret or re-present erroneous evidence because it fits conveniently into our own arguments.

One of the reasons to exert particular caution here is that there is some history of misunderstanding on both sides of the fence, which we shall examine in due course: therefore, it is especially important to represent all sides of any issue, without dogmatically adopting one particular standpoint or another. Orally transmitted knowledge systems can often evidence particularly fluid – even exaggerated – forms of information; but that does not necessarily mean that the data has no value or meaning, or that it should be dismissed out of hand. By the same token, it is the responsibility of the researcher to examine and cross-examine any statements that are advanced as "irrefutable fact", whether by the musicians themselves, or by those who have represented – or misrepresented – their music (these issues are discussed at greater length in Chapter Two).

1.4. Viewing music analysis in context

When any form of music is deconstructed and put under the microscope for analysis, it is all too easy to lose sight of the fact that the abstracted examples are, in fact, merely snapshots of a living, breathing, ever-changing expression of human social intercourse. This is particularly true of the orally transmitted performance tradition of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, which holds to no fixed canon of authority and is unashamedly forward-thinking in its hunger to

incorporate new ideas. Ethnomusicologists have been quick to advocate an emphasis on ‘music as culture’; but this focus has often been at the expense of taking a more analytical approach to the structure of the music sonic-object itself. A more balanced approach would ideally take into account the interactive links between these sonic and socially symbolic aspects, as noted by Widdess (2013: 22):

> It is assumed that the sonic structure somehow embodies symbolic meanings, but with a few exceptions (such as Feld’s work on the music of the Kaluli, Stobart’s on that of Andean farmers, or Marett’s on aboriginal songs) this assumption is rarely substantiated in any detail. Music of oral traditions is seen as performance rather than text, and performance is seen as social behaviour; the sounds that result from this behaviour can sometimes seem to be an almost incidental by-product.

During the course of this thesis, I will put forward an argument to suggest that human music systems can be seen as providing us with instantly apprehensible, culturally attuned sonic-symbolic models for human behaviour processes. We will consider the phenomenon of music as a structured sonic instantiation of a reflexive dynamic process, situated at shifting points between infinities of choice and strict sets of governing rules. Music will be seen as a symbolic representation of the cognitive and social processes involved in forming communal understanding and co-operation, by taking into account both individual and collective requirements and by experimenting with different ways of organizing structure and meaning. This tendency towards an emergent and identifiable structural organization, rooted in redundancy, which is constantly referring back to itself and yet is also constantly being reconstituted through acts of performance and listening, will be investigated as a key function of human musical knowledge systems.

There are, of course, multiple layers of knowledge present on many different levels within all music systems; and the task here is not to attempt an exhaustive total overview of the tradition in question, for the practical reasons highlighted above. As such, the “musical knowledge” referred to in the title of this thesis could be seen as referring to my own, necessarily selective and partial, understanding of the subject matter. In a very real sense, the present work can only hope to encapsulate the sum total of my own limited understanding of a

very specific area of musical knowledge – that of *rāga* – as practiced by certain specific individuals within a given timeframe – those being the select male musicians from the communities of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs that I had the opportunity to work with.

However, we must also be aware that the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities themselves continue to emphasise hereditary male lineage in their professional musical activities – and this seems to have long been the case. Putting aside the myriad deeply ingrained social conditions that have contributed to this pronounced gender imbalance (and regardless of what the outsider viewer may think or feel about the state of affairs), this is the reality of the current situation. Moreover, given the significant prestige that is accorded to senior male musicians – both within their respective communities and in the larger national and international contexts – for their skill in the rendering of certain *rāg*-based melodies during the course of performance, the present work's particular focus on this aspect of performed *rāg* knowledge is seen as an appropriate and worthwhile subject for in-depth study.

Even from this fragmented snapshot of Western Rajasthani culture, we shall see that the rich body of musical knowledge held by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs has enabled them to occupy a precarious, liminal position on the border between two long-struggling superpowers, surviving wars and invasions, subsisting within a harsh and unforgiving desert environment, gaining meagre patronage from Rājput overlords, whilst at the same time courting international stardom; and all the while maintaining unbroken patrilineal lines of transmission for a unique musical knowledge system, that both embraces the future and hearkens back to an almost forgotten era.

CHAPTER TWO

Ethnographic and Historical Context

2.1. Regional overview of Western Rajasthan



Map 2.1: Political map of India (State of Rajasthan highlighted)

In order to contextualise the study of our subjects, let us first consider the general nature of their geographical locale. Map 2.1 details the contemporary political

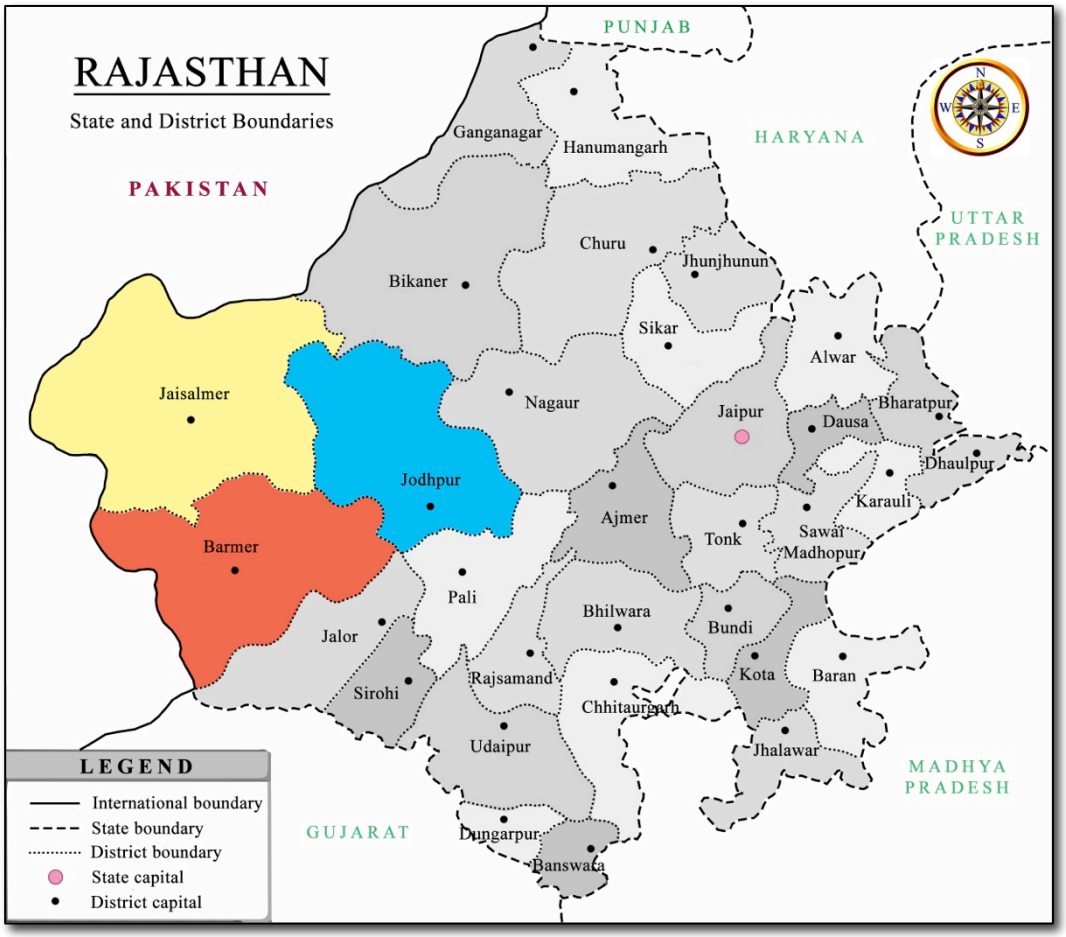
borders of mainland India, showing the modern state of Rajasthan situated in the northwest of the country (highlighted in orange), with Jaipur as its state capital. Covering an area of approximately 342,000 square kilometres, Rajasthan is currently the largest of India's 28 states. It is bordered by Pakistan to the west; Gujarat to the south; Haryana and the Punjab to the north; and the central north Indian states of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh to the east and southeast, respectively. Despite covering a similar area to Germany in terms of square footage, the population of Rajasthan was recorded in the 2011 Census of India as being more equivalent to that of the United Kingdom, at just over 68.5 million.

The chief reason for this comparatively low figure of human habitation is that much of Rajasthan's vast northwest terrain is covered by an arid desert region known as the Thar (sometimes also referred to as the Great Indian Desert, or the Rajasthan Desert), which stretches far beyond the north western border of India into southeast Pakistan. The Aravalli mountain range bisects Rajasthan from southwest to northeast, creating a natural boundary between the vast, arid northwest desert region and the more elevated, fertile land to the southeast. This ancient and extensive range also provides the rich deposits of copper and minerals that have contributed in no small measure to the state's relative wealth of natural resources.

In addition to being the largest marble and sandstone producer in India, the Rajasthan state economy is driven by the production of numerous agricultural and pastoral goods, such as millet, tobacco, pulses, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane. Substantial onshore oil reserves have been found in the Barmer region, leading to a rapid and conspicuous development in production facilities and related industries in and around the periphery of the district capital. And, in recent years, Rajasthan has developed a flourishing tourist industry, now being favoured as an exotic holiday destination by Indians and foreign visitors alike.

The 32 state districts of Rajasthan can be seen in Map 2.2, with each eponymous district capital marked. The main concentrations of Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār communities are to be found in the Thar Desert region of Western Rajasthan – an area comprising seven political districts. Of these, the four peripheral districts of Bikaner, Nagaur, Jalor and Pali are of passing relevance to this study, and will

not be covered in any detail. Our attention here will be concentrated on data from fieldwork conducted in urban and village communities within the large western states of Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, and Barmer (highlighted on Map 2.2 in yellow, blue and red, respectively).



Map 2.2: Districts of Rajasthan (Barmer, Jodhpur and Jaisalmer highlighted)

The official language of Rajasthan is Hindi; however, a plethora of dialects with many regional variants, known collectively as ‘Rajasthani’, are also used in daily practice. Marwari is widely spoken across these regional dialects, being especially prevalent in areas close to the western border with Pakistan, as well as in and around Jodhpur: therefore, its use is particularly relevant to the present work.

Marwari shares some lexical and grammatical commonalities with Hindi; but significant local variations in pronunciation, coupled with the use of distinct

pronouns and interrogatives, can render the dialect all but incomprehensible even to the ear of an experienced Hindi speaker. Due in part to the long-standing cultural commonalities held between Western Rajasthan and the neighbouring Sindh region of southeast Pakistan – a territory that also covers part of the Thar Desert – an influence of Sindhi vocabulary is often evident in the various rural forms of Marwari found in Western Rajasthan. A substantial influx of Sindhi peoples, following the establishment of the Indo-Pakistan international border in 1947, has undoubtedly contributed to this fusion of Sindhi and Hindi language systems; and the local dialects spoken by Laṅgās, Māṅgaṇiyārs and other local people that I encountered during fieldwork were no exception to this.

Considering the pervasiveness and fundamental importance of religious belief as a cohesive factor in the social structures of Western Rajasthan, mention should also be made here of some relevant general statistics. According to the 2011 Census of India, 88.45 per cent of the surveyed Rajasthani population identified themselves as being followers of Hinduism, with the largest minority religious group in the region being Muslims (circa 9.08 per cent – a slight increase from the 2001 Census data, at the expense of a 0.5 swing away from those declared as Hindus); the remaining 2 to 3 per cent continues to be shared between followers of Sikhism, Jainism, Christianity, and other minor sects. Despite Hinduism's apparent social dominance, a certain degree of religious syncretism is often evident at the ground level of social behaviour and interaction; and we shall see some vivid examples of this when we examine the lives of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians in more detail.

2.2. Introducing the musicians and their patrons

According to the prototype 6-way classification of Indian musicians developed by ethnomusicologist Felix van Lamsweerde (1969: 7-30), the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs qualify for placement into a broad category of musician types known as "bards and genealogists", by virtue of their traditional role in society as service providers for the wealthy ruling classes. The limitations of applying such a generalised system to an ever-changing cultural landscape are highlighted by the fact that some Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have more recently become regional,

and national (in some cases even international) stage performers, thereby qualifying themselves for inclusion within another category of van Lamsweerde's musician types, that of "concert artists". Nonetheless, in view of their traditional roles within society, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs do fulfil van Lamsweerde's essential criteria for being classified as bards and genealogists: both communities produce specialist hereditary male musicians, who sing ballads and keep records of genealogies for diverse patrons of various castes.

2.2.1. The *jajmān*/*kāmin* relationship

At the heart of contemporary society in Rajasthan, we find a complex system of social obligation, binding families to each other through hereditary ancestral relationships that still exist between many scheduled caste members and their patrons to this day. Although the traditional social order of the caste system is currently under a great deal of pressure in India – particularly in urban areas – due to widespread changes in the contemporary socio-political landscape, nonetheless in the remote desert villages of Western Rajasthan, the *jajmāni* system persists with some tenacity.

For musical and genealogical specialists such as the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, this system functions essentially as a reciprocal, though somewhat one-sided relationship: by performing for their patrons at important calendrical events or life-cycle rituals (such as births, marriages and funerals), and through keeping important oral records of family lineages, the service provider, or artisan – the *kāmin* (in this case a Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār) – gives spiritual benefit to their patron (*jajmān* – literally 'one who has a sacrifice performed'). In turn, the *jajmān* is obliged to give some form of remuneration back to the *kāmin* (see Wade and Pascatello 1976 for a detailed overview and analysis of the *jajmāni* system).

Payment for services rendered may take the form of money, foodstuffs, gold, and even livestock, with financial support usually being extended to cover the needs of the client's entire family. The patrons typically maintain that they are only required to provide the bare minimum of resources needed for their lowly service providers and their families to subsist; and this has contributed to the existence of

an often stark social divide between *jajmān* and *kāmin* groups, with the latter often living in close proximity to their patrons but in conditions of extreme poverty. Unsurprisingly, *jajmāns* are normally of higher social and economic status than *kāmins* – although, as we shall see, this is not always the case.

Despite a clear social asymmetry being inherent within the *jajmān*/*kāmin* dynamic, there is a certain sense that patron and client are mutually obligated to each other. Indeed, it is sometimes in the patron's best interests to keep this relationship as amicable as possible, lest he bring bad karma upon himself. Kothari (in Barucha 2003: 220-221) cites one example of a professional caste group who "divorced" their patrons – an extreme measure known as *talāq* – following an unresolved dispute: such situations can result in "a great deal of difficulty for the patrons" (ibid: 220), due to the social problems and stigmatic associations that follow in the wake of such an inauspicious circumstance:

> [The divorced patrons] find it difficult to get their sons and daughters married. There is also the risk of being ostracized by the community at large. In addition, patrons run the risk of being subjected to highly abusive poems composed in couplets called bhūnd, by which the musicians formally sever their ties with the families. Needless to say, no patron is comfortable about being censured in this way, because the entire legacy and future of his family are at stake. By asserting the power of retaliation through ritualized practices and threats… the musicians are capable of prevailing on their patrons and asserting their hereditary rights.
>
> Ibid: 221

Kothari's anecdotal account highlights the complex and mutable nature of the traditional *jajmān*/*kāmin* relationship, with its potential to be either beneficial or restrictive for both patrons and clients. We find this perspective echoed in other works on Indian village society – for example, in the study of Rampura village, Mysore, by M.N. Srinivas (in Marriott ed. 1955), where the peasant caste Okkaliga have become the dominant social group, largely through economic influence and by sheer weight of numbers. Equally, we have noted already that the caste system in general has been put under huge pressure by the rapid modernisation of India, especially during the last thirty years or so; and a vivid example of this was provided during an interview with Māṅgaṇiyār *jajmān* Laxmi Narayan Khatri (recorded 22nd February 2014), when describing the

changing family interactions with Māṅgaṇiyārs after the times of his father and grandfather in the villages of Kanoi and Sam, to the west of Jaisalmer:

> My grandfather[’s] generation and my father[’s] generation time, they [were] more close [to the] Māṅgaṇiyār… When there is any happy moment, they come; sing there; and then they get some money, or food, sweets; and they [were] emotionally connected… If they didn’t come, [the] function was uncomplete… and this was the only entertainment at the time. When I was married, my Māṅgaṇiyār didn’t come – and once my brother is [getting] married I invite[d] them, but they say they have [an] international programme, in Paris!

This example vividly illustrates an ongoing process of social transformation at grass-roots level, as well as highlighting the erosive effects of modernisation on the patron/client relationships that have been traditionally held by Rajasthani folk musicians. But before going further, let us now become familiarized with the subjects of our study, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs.

2.2.2. Laṅgā communities

Our first group of musicians live in a network of close-knit family units that are located predominantly in and around the districts of Barmer and Jodhpur. For the Laṅgās, music can sometimes be a secondary occupation, with their livelihoods also being earned from camel trading, the spice business, or from agriculture. However, the majority of Laṅgā participants featured in this study are professional hereditary musicians who make their livings primarily from both traditional and modern avenues of music patronage.

Laṅgā musicians are subdivided into two groups: the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās, who sing and play stringed instruments – most notably the bowed lute Sindhi *sāraṅgī*; and the Surnāiā Laṅgās, who perform exclusively on aerophonic instruments, such as the *satārā* (double end-blown flute) and *murlī* (gourd pipes), but do not sing. For the purposes of analysis, we shall be dealing almost exclusively with the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā tradition here, since it was the members of their families who provided the vast majority of data gathered during the Laṅgā phase of fieldwork. However, the inclusion of a commercially released Surnāiā Laṅgā recording, in the final analysis presented in Chapter Seven, will investigate the potential existence what could be called a Laṅgā-specific repertoire.

There is some degree of confusion regarding the source of the Laṅgās' patronage: according to Neuman et al. (2006: 225), the Laṅgās are unique in that they have no caste of patrons other than the wealthy Muslim livestock farmers called Sindhi Sipāhī; certainly the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās with whom I worked in Jodhpur and Baḍnava were indeed all patronised by Sindhī Sipāhī. However, Pandey (1999: 20-21) states that members of their caste have also "received patronage from the Rathors of Jodhpur". Yet another scenario, advanced by Kothari (in Barucha 2003: 223), posits that the *jajmāns* of the Surnāiā Laṅgās "are Mehar Muslims, and not Sindhi Sipahi, who patronize [only] the Sārangiā Langas".

It is certain, at least, that all Laṅgās converted to Islam at some point in history, either voluntarily or by force, since they all identify themselves as Muslims. When exactly this conversion occurred seems to be another matter of conjecture: Neuman et al. (2006: 21) assert that the conversion took place in the 17th century, during the reign of the Mughal overlord Aurangzeb (ruled 1658 – 1707); but some Laṅgās maintain that they converted to Islam much earlier, implying that they may not be indigenous to northwest India. One plausible reason for these variations between accounts is simply that different musicians may have experienced (or may recall) different histories – a point alluded to by Pandey (1999: 21):

> Some of the Langas say that they converted to Islam under the influence of Sufism some eight hundred years ago while some are of the view that the conversion took place three hundred years ago during the time of the fundamentalist Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb. But the Surnaia Langas maintain that they were originally Muslims.

This final perspective offered in the above quotation is also at variants with Neuman et al. (2006: 218), who take the alternative line that all Laṅgās were originally Hindus. In addition, they add that the Sindhi Sipāhī (whom some Laṅgās claim as their ancestors) were originally high caste Hindu Rajputs, also converted to Islam following invasions from the Middle East. If this were the case, then it would logically follow that any service providers who remained in the employ of the Sindhi Sipāhī would have been converted to Islam, by association, at the same time. However, irrefutable proof is unlikely to be forthcoming; and it is evident from the fractured, and sometimes contradictory

nature of this discourse that there is a certain amount of sensitivity regarding the issue of religious affiliation.

Unusually, for low caste retainers in this area, the Laṅgās – in some cases at least – seem to hold a degree of influence over their patrons. This power would appear to come, at least in part, from their control of the patrons' genealogies (the maintenance of which, as we have seen, is particularly significant in terms of preserving family prestige and in negotiating the delicate and exceedingly complex matter of marriage). The fact that both Sāraṅgiā Laṅgā and Surnāiā Laṅgā communities practice strict endogamy – indeed, as a rule, they do not even permit intermarriage between their own two Laṅgā social groups – may also mean that hereditary links of patronage are particularly well preserved within their ranks.

2.2.3. Māṅgaṇiyār communities

Within Māṅgaṇiyār society, once again we find two distinct categories of musicians. These groups, like those of the Laṅgās, can also be identified by their choice of instrumentation – although the Māṅgaṇiyārs can perhaps be most clearly distinguished by their rather less ambiguous patronage links: there are those few Māṅgaṇiyārs that play for both Hindu and Muslim *jajmāns*, typically using *sāraṅgī* as their accompanying instrument of choice; and there are the majority that perform for Hindu patrons only, who favour to play the bowed lute *kamāichā*. Unlike the Laṅgās, all Māṅgaṇiyār groups may – and invariably do – include singers.

The *kamāichā* is an instrument unique to the Māṅgaṇiyārs; and its physical construction and playing technique have thus far been largely overlooked in academic works. There are relatively few Māṅgaṇiyār *sāraṅgī* players in comparison to those who play *kamāichā*: data from a recent survey of 926 Māṅgaṇiyār musicians (in Neuman et al. 2006: 183) showed that 247 performed on *kamāichā* whilst only 32 played *sāraṅgī*. Performance skills and levels of musicianship are often high, with some Māṅgaṇiyār musicians demonstrating a strong, verbalised theoretical conception of their music.

Although Māṅgaṇiyārs identify themselves as Sunni Muslims (again, having apparently been converted from Hinduism at some point during the Mughal period), there is nonetheless a significant residual element of Hindu culture that is evident in their syncretic belief systems, and in their social behaviour. Some Māṅgaṇiyārs have even gone so far as to convert to Hinduism, becoming ritual musicians known colloquially as *dholi* (literally, "those who play the *dhol*"): one such group can be found in the old fort town of Pokhran, which lies some one hundred and eleven kilometres to the east of Jaisalmer. In keeping with the Laṅgās, Māṅgaṇiyār communities are also largely endogamous – although marriage outside of the community does sometimes occur, usually being permitted when there is a socially expedient reason for doing so, such as a strong financial imperative or a general benefit in family status (Khatri: pers. comm.).

The vast majority of Māṅgaṇiyār homesteads are located in the districts of Jaisalmer and Barmer – although it should be noted that significant numbers of Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs inhabit the Sindh region of southeast Pakistan. Precise figures are hard to ascertain, but Kuldeep Kothari (pers. comm.) has estimated that there may be an equal number of Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs living across the border in Pakistan as can be found in Western Rajasthan, which would give a total figure of roughly sixty thousand peoples belonging to each community. Members of both communities informed me that they have relatives living on both sides of the border; and they say that it is not uncommon for musicians from the Rajasthani side to travel into Pakistan for the purposes of family gatherings, and even for musical performances.

Typically, groups of Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs will live in village communities that are separate from each other, despite performing a remarkably similar function within Rajasthani society and having what appears to be a largely shared musical heritage. Whilst this segregation can be partially explained by the diverse nature of their patrons, these distinctly separate modes of habitation would seem to have been mediated in no small measure by the more strictly endogamous nature of the Laṅgās:

> Obviously the Langas did not socialise with them and matrimonial alliance with the Manganiyars was totally forbidden. This segregation contributed significantly to

> the evolution of two markedly different musical styles despite the fact that the Manganiyars and Langas were almost next-door neighbours living in the same region.
>
> Pandey 1999: 22

Neuman et al. (2006: 220-221) have identified one village called Sankra (located in Jaisalmer district, close to the border with Jodhpur) where, seemingly exceptionally, groups of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians live side by side; but Sankra is, by all accounts, highly unusual in this respect. The atypical mixture of castes inhabiting Sankra may be due to the "historical in-migration of large numbers of patrons with their musicians because of drought conditions elsewhere in Jaisalmer." (Ibid: 221) However, it is also conceivable that the mixed community in Sankra hearkens back to an earlier time, when the social demarcations between the two groups were perhaps not so clear-cut.

In view of the almost total lack of social cohabitation between the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in contemporary Rajasthan, contrasted with the marked similarities between their song repertoires and position within society, we are confronted with a fundamental question: do the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs share a common heritage? Furthermore, what actually distinguishes the Laṅgā repertoire from the Māṅgaṇiyār repertoire? And why have these two very distinct castes so often been considered in academic and marketing terms as a unitary phenomenon, when they seem to go to such great lengths to segregate themselves from each other in their everyday working and private lives? These questions will be addressed as the present work unfolds; and, at a more intrinsic level, we will consider what our insights into the musical knowledge system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs can inform us about the South Asian cultural system specifically, and human cultural systems in general.

2.3. Survey of relevant secondary sources

2.3.1. Ethnographies and other academic works

Current ethnographic material concerning Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical activity is summarised in two volumes: *Rajasthan: An Oral History* by Barucha

(2003), and *An Ethnographic Atlas of Western Rajasthan* by Neuman and Chaudhuri with Komal Kothari (2006). While these works are indispensable as introductory guides to the study of our subjects, there are contradictions and omissions in both – particularly with regard to musical detail. However, neither publication aims to focus exclusively on the music of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, with both works being designed primarily to give the reader a general ethnographic overview of a vast region, populated by many artists of diverse talents.

For the researcher of Western Rajasthani folk music who has never before visited the region, the ethnographic atlas by Neuman et al. is invaluable in providing a comprehensive overview of the districts, sub-districts, roads, railways, and geographical relief of Western Rajasthan. It also supplies the reader with 55 comprehensive maps that detail much pertinent demographic data – for example, the distribution of *kamāichā* players in a particular area, or the household numbers of Laṅgā musicians' families in a particular village in Jodhpur, and so on.

However, the nature of the data sourcing (much of which is drawn from both the 1991 and 2001 censuses) leaves one presented with a contemporary, synchronic overview of the subject matter that has been partially constructed from diachronic – and therefore less up-to-date – information. This issue of representation is exacerbated by the rapidly changing dynamics of Western Rajasthani society – a point conceded by the authors themselves, who remark on the seeming impossibility of their task by citing a striking example of the dramatic increase in the literacy rate in Rajasthan, "from 39 per cent in 1991 to 61 per cent in 2001" (Neuman et al.: XVIII). This upward trend in literacy has continued, with even some Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār children from very poor families now benefitting from a formal education that would have previously been unavailable to them.

Two short sections of the book are of particular relevance to this study, and warrant more detailed discussion: the first is a passage based upon a 1992 work by Hindi scholar D. B. Kshirsagar, describing aspects of the lives of folk musicians in the nineteenth century court of Jodhpur (Neuman et al. 2006: 283-

288) – this information will be considered further in section 1.4, below. The second relevant passage is a short section on music theory (ibid: 103-105) that highlights data provided by certain Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians regarding the identification of specific *rāgas*. Relevant aspects of this data are cited in Chapter Three, and in the subsequent melodic analyses where applicable.

Rustom Barucha's folkloric account *Rajasthan: An Oral History* (2003) is framed around a reconstructed dialectic between the author and Komal Kothari, taking us on an illuminating journey through various aspects of indigenous life and culture as seen through the eyes of the eminent Rajasthani folklorist. The true subject of this book could be viewed as being Kothari himself, since the vast majority of information presented within Barucha's work is projected through Kothari's mediated voice. Even so, the book is rich in valuable information regarding all kinds of ethnographic and socio-cultural phenomena, from the difficult subject of *satī* (the highly controversial and largely obsolete practice of widow immolation) to the wonderfully bewildering diversity of Rajasthani folk gods and goddesses.

The last three chapters of this book (217-288) deal with the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs almost exclusively, giving a highly personal overview of Kothari's extensive experiences in working with the musicians and their communities for over forty years, as both researcher and patron: this matter will be discussed further below. In terms of analytical information regarding musical practices, there are three short appendices (ibid: 330-334) that provide valuable information concerning the instrumentation and theoretical conceptions used by the Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, with particular reference to the classical concepts of *rāga* and *tāla*. However, once again we find any data pertaining specifically to musical structure to be presented in a somewhat anecdotal manner, as exemplified by the following quote from Kothari (in which he attempts to describe the main difference between the Māṅgaṇiyār approach to rhythmic structures and the North Indian classical theoretical concept of the *sam*):

> In the rhythmic patterns of the Manganiyars, there is also a point at which instrumentalist/vocalist and percussionist meet on a common stress. This point is referred to as muddā or gur. However, the point of convergence is not based on the

> principle of a regularly returning sam. If classical tāls are cyclical, the movement of Manganiyar rhythmic patterns can best be described as spiral.
>
> Ibid: 334

The implied similarities and differences between folk and classical modes of rhythmic organisation point to an interesting line of analytical enquiry – as does Kothari's perception that some Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār songs are definitely "*rāg*-like", whilst others are what Kothari called "impure" or "contaminated" (Widdess: pers. comm.): but, attractive as these poetic metaphors may sound, they do not tell us much about the how any theoretical distinctions actually manifest themselves in performance practice. For example, we can only guess at how a "spiral" rhythm is generated, or how the musicians themselves conceive of these concepts. Such a task was beyond even the considerable talents of Komal Kothari since, although he was a passionate lover of music, he had never received any formal musical training and was not himself either an amateur musician or a musicologist.

From my own short time working in the field as both a performer and a music researcher, I have noted that Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians rarely use such terminology as '*muddā*' or '*gur*' in everyday practice. Indeed, the use of any technical terms, when it can be found at all, is highly variable across both communities – and often such terms are either applied inconsistently, or are completely absent. These inherent tensions between perception, representation and actual performance practice would present an interesting study in themselves; but, from a musicological standpoint, there is a more pressing danger of both local musicians and researchers encouraging each other to apply pseudo-classical music terminologies that are simply not applicable to the processes in question, whilst at the same time distorting a clear view of what is actually going on within the local music system itself. A detailed musicological analysis is clearly required, in order to specify more precisely the technical and structural nature of the folk music system, so that it can be viewed in its own right, rather than as a mere shadowy offshoot of the classical tradition.

As we have already noted, there are no prior studies that deal directly with the music of our subjects in any analytical detail. However, two recent projects have

looked at contrasting ethnographic aspects that relate to the music and lifestyles of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs; and, whilst the foci of these works are completely distinct – both from each other and from the present thesis – it is important to consider their contributions to our understanding of the subject matter at hand.

The first of these studies is a recently completed thesis by Shalini Ayyagari, which concerns itself predominantly with the ways in which Māṅgaṇiyār communities are developing strategies to cope with the dramatically changing social circumstances in contemporary Rajasthan:

> In my research I am examining how this community of musicians, in an ever-increasing world of modernization, is actively [re]configuring musical practices, [re]constructing space and social positioning, and [re]articulating relationships in order to assert their livelihoods and individual agency.
>
> Ayyagari
> (http://www.ihc.ucsb.edu/subaltern/securearticles/Ayyagari_Proposal.doc. Accessed 2015)

Ayyagari's work examines the Māṅgaṇiyārs' place within the social structure of Rajasthan from a perspective informed by subaltern studies – an academic approach influenced by the work of Eric Stokes and Ranajit Guha that has sought "to remove from history a top down approach and replace it with a study of the culture of actual people" (ibid: 2).

Whilst the motivation implicit in subaltern studies is perhaps more in tune with the field of historiography than with ethnomusicology, there are clear lessons for the musicologist here, as we have intimated above in our desire to view the local music system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs on its own terms. Moreover, Ayyagari shows an explicit and informed interest in the musical repertoire of the Māṅgaṇiyārs – specifically, in how the changing circumstances of their place within local and global society may be affecting and influencing musical practices. Evidence of such change is relevant to the present study, and relevant issues concerning modifications in the contemporary repertoire of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs as a response to modern performance opportunities are discussed in Chapter Four.

Another relevant research project, called ‘Growing Into Music’, was completed in 2014. The aim of this project was to examine themes of musical enculturation across four distinct traditions; and one of the areas of study focused specifically on the activities of professional musicians’ families in North India, including those of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. Working as a research consultant on this project afforded me an invaluable contemporary second-hand insight into the lives of the Rajasthani musicians, immediately before visiting the field myself.

The methodology and goals of this AHRC-funded project differ considerably in size, scope and focus from those of the present study – not least in that the main focus of the ‘Growing Into Music’ project concerned the ways in which children acquire musical knowledge and skills in predominantly oral traditions (whereas the primary subjects of this thesis are all senior musicians). However, the resultant project output has informed the data presented in Chapter Four, wherein the project’s significant contribution towards understanding the socio-musical norms that operate within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities is particularly highlighted.

2.3.2. Komal Kothari and the Rupayan Sansthan

The influential figure of Komal Kothari looms large in all contemporary ethnographic works concerning Rajasthani folklore, and his highly significant (though at times problematic) role in bringing the music of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs into the public sphere deserves particular scrutiny.

Komalda, as he is affectionately and respectfully known, was born in Jodhpur in 1929. Having initially studied social anthropology at Sukhadia University in Udaipur, he first encountered the music of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs whilst gathering local Rajasthani songs and poems for publication in a folkloric magazine that he had co-founded in 1953, called Prerna (literally meaning ‘inspiration’). Kothari’s own account of his first attempt, in 1960, to record a Māṅgaṇiyār musician not only gives us a glimpse into the effervescent and dedicated nature of the man, but also highlights some of the problems that he initially faced when trying to capture this hitherto entirely local rural genre of music:

> I was preparing my vintage tape recorder to record him. It took a few minutes. When I turned around, he was gone. I went to the door and looked out. There he was, sprinting away. I chased him and caught up after some effort. Turned out, he feared the machine will swallow his voice away forever, if he sang in front of it!
>
> Kothari
> (http://www.goodnewsindia.com/Pages/content/conservation/manganiyars.html. Accessed 2015)

Having assuaged the concerns of these understandably wary local performers, Kothari began his ethnographic work on the musicians' communities in earnest; and he soon realised that their traditional lifestyle was under threat, and that a socially valuable and potentially more lucrative living was available to them, through the medium of stage performance. After much rehearsal (along with considerable modification of the repertoire, by Kothari, in order to best convey their music to unfamiliar audiences) he finally presented a select group of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians for their first staged national performance, which took place in Delhi in 1963. Following the success of this event he was able, in 1967, to take a Laṅgā troupe on their first international tour. Since then, both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians have performed regularly on the international concert circuit, appearing in both shared billings and as distinct groups.

During the 1960s, Kothari was instrumental in founding the Rupayan Sansthan – a folkloric research institute dedicated to the protection and maintenance of Rajasthani local culture. With its headquarters located at the Kotharis' own family home in the Mānji ka Hatta suburb of Jodhpur, the Rupayan Sansthan has become a repository for much of the documented information available on the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, in addition to housing a significant collection of field recordings, artefacts and local instruments.

Komalda's house has often been a hive of both musical activity and academic enquiry. Since his passing in 2004, his son Kuldeep has continued to develop the work that his father started, through constant liaising with musicians, artisans and academic researchers at the Rupayan's headquarters in Jodhpur. The vast amount of wide-ranging folkloric data gathered by Kothari and his assistants, during over

half a decade of archiving, is still in the process of being effectively catalogued; and new data is constantly being added to the collection.

The Rupayan has also recently been instrumental in founding the Arna-Jharna Desert Museum, located in the village of Moklawas, some thirty kilometres to the west of Jodhpur. This long-term project is conceived of as providing visitors and researchers with an opportunity to observe, and interact with, living exponents of Rajasthani folk culture, whilst also providing continued support to local craftspeople and traditional ways of life. An important component of the Arna-Jharna mission statement is to recognise and facilitate the necessary evolution of such skills:

> The museum celebrates the fact that the 'folk' is contemporary. The so-called 'traditional communities' holding on to skills and modes of knowledge from earlier times are also part of a dynamic, changing present.
>
> http://www.arnajharna.org/English/Museum_Concept.aspx (accessed 2015)

When considering Kothari's significant influence upon the modern concert repertoire of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in this light, the fact that he became a patron and promoter of theirs could be viewed as problematic, since this put him in a position to exert a degree of control over the musicians – even to the extent of schooling them in stagecraft, and choosing what manner of performance they should adopt for international audiences (despite not being a musician himself).

Unsurprisingly perhaps, given his own relatively high status in Hindu society and his love for the more traditional rural ways of life, Kothari spoke in favour of the caste system, describing it as "a kind of polytechnic" for local craftspersons in Rajasthan (Barucha 2003: 218). Whilst this view may be valid from a certain perspective, the issue of caste in Indian society remains a highly contentious area: caste-based discrimination in India was controversially criticised at the United Nations Conference Against Racism in 2001, much to the chagrin of the Indian government (see http://www.npr.org/programs/specials/racism/010828.caste.html) whilst social activists such as Buddhist scholar Kancha Ilaiah have been engaged in heated and often jingoistic debates with Hindu political leaders concerning the

pros and cons of maintaining such a rigid and asymmetrical social hierarchy (for an example, see http://www.bharatvani.org/indology/Ilaiah.html).

Regardless of his own views about caste and society, Kothari's role in the promotion of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical culture has undoubtedly contributed to the improvement of their place within the local caste system, by bringing about significant (and sometimes lucrative) changes in social circumstance for many of the musicians and their immediate families. Moreover, it is clear from talking to the musicians themselves that Komalda is greatly respected for the exhaustive work that he undertook on their behalf. Following his death in 2004, many of the local performers with whom he had worked during his life gathered at his home in Jodhpur, and paid fitting tribute to this remarkable man who almost single-handedly brought about the international presence of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians.

To conclude this section, we will take an excerpt from the revised version of Kothari's own Ph.D. dissertation, since it has had a significant influence upon the development of the methodology proposed and employed in this thesis. In his socio-anthropological study of the Bhils of South Rajasthan, Kothari attempted to characterise some of the problems faced concerning the integration of tribal peoples into the national mainstream of India's society, following in the wake of British rule. Even from this early stage in his research, one can clearly observe Kothari's convictions regarding the directions of social change during a period of rapidly accelerating modernisation, as well as his concern for the welfare of marginalised groups existing outside of the dominant Hindu mainstream culture:

> The talk of keeping back the tribals from participating at the regional and national cultural level is a mere utopian fancy. Every corner of the land including the hills and forests is being enmeshed into the wave of [a] more complex civilised network. If these tribals are to be enmeshed into larger levels of culture, the problems posed are different, the basic problem being how to absorb them without subjecting them to exploitation.
>
> Kothari 1985: 30

This perspective has clear echoes in the ethically grounded work that Kothari subsequently undertook to promote the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs as local

musicians, who could also adapt themselves to function in regional, national, and even international contexts. He goes on to point out the interconnectedness of these different levels of society:

> Tribal culture, in fact, is a local culture. It has its relevance in the village or at the most in a cluster of villages – Pals… The local level of culture is not an isolated one. It has links of integration with the wider level of culture identity which could be called… regional culture. The region consists of a plurality of cultures. But this plurality is submerged into the overall culture idiom of the region. A region is not only a geographical and political boundary. It is also a constellation of a common normative and value structure.
>
> Ibid: 28

Let us now consider North Indian music in general, being a cultural product of North Indian human society, in this contextual light. Viewed as a symbol of social structure and meaning, North Indian classical music can be taken to be a prime representative of the contemporary national mainstream (predominantly Hindu) mode of cultural expression – albeit a largely elite manifestation, as opposed to the widespread mainstream popularity of Bollywood songs, for example. Contrastingly, the music produced by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs can be viewed as one of many specific local instantiations of diverse music culture, evidencing responses and adaptations to the societal norm over an observable period of time, whilst also contributing to the hegemonic, mainstream system in ways that are sometimes explicit or premeditated; sometimes hidden; and sometimes unexpected. Furthermore, both the local and the classical music genres are now exerting some degree of international influence – as distinct artistic cultural products, and, increasingly, in the form of fusion groups.

The existence of this kind of dynamic cultural interactivity between the "Little", local folk music tradition and the "Great", Sanskritized, centralised, elite classical music tradition was documented in Hindu literature as early as the *Bṛddadeśī* (c. 8th – 9th Century CE) – a musical treatise, attributed to Mataṅga-muni, that is also the first extant historical document to offer a formal system for delineating the pan-South Asian concept of *rāga*. These issues are significant to the current study, and will be discussed at some length in the later stages of this chapter, so we will not dwell on them overly here: but we can make the

preliminary observation that the musical knowledge system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs has been explicitly linked with certain philosophical, theoretical and practical aspects of North Indian classical music performance, in all existing literature on the subject.

For the musicologist, therefore, the problem remains: is the musical knowledge system employed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs based, either in whole or in part, upon concepts derived from North Indian classical music? More specifically, is there a discernible musical framework, embedded within the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music system, that exhibits features of both unique local melodic and rhythmic patterns, as well as groups of patterns that exhibit noticeably "classicized" conceptual frameworks – or perhaps even instances of integrated patterns? Are these processes analogous with the processes of social integration from local to regional levels of identity, and from regional to national, as described by Kothari? What do these musical interactions tell us about the relationships between local and national culture in contemporary India, and the extent to which such specialised musical knowledge is valued? We shall attempt to broaden our understanding of these issues, through a unified analysis of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical structures, and their possible relationships to the organisation, and re-organisation, of North Indian society.

2.3.3. Commercial and field recordings

Prior to the international tours instigated by Komal Kothari in the 1960s, there were no publically available audio recordings of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. However, Kothari began the process of archiving recordings as early as the 1950s; and various commercial recordings of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have been released since. Such releases have provided a useful starting point for musicological analysis, whilst also collectively representing an interesting corpus of data in itself. A selection of commercial releases is listed in Appendix II; and these recordings have informed the present study in a number of ways. The artists chosen to perform for these often high-profile recordings chart the success of certain musicians, or groups of musicians, from each community, giving clues to issues of influence and seniority within the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians' ranks. Track listings highlight the relative perceived importance of particular

songs, both in terms of the musicians' own tastes and in approaches to marketing the music of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. CD sleeve notes have also often been found to contain pertinent (although sometimes debatable) information regarding song structure, lyrics, organology, and ethnography.

A series of unreleased field recordings that feature a selection of songs performed by both Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs were generously supplied by Richard Widdess, with the recordings having been made during a short but productive stay at Komal Kothari's house in 1995. A selection of these particular recordings are directly relevant to the analysis presented in Chapter Seven of the present work: whilst providing a useful, non-commercial comparison to the field recordings that I have made some eighteen or nineteen years later, the musicians recorded by Prof Widdess in 1995 were requested to play a number of songs in one particular *rāga* – namely, *rāg* Soraṭh – thus providing a substantial and focussed collective sample to augment my own recordings of *rāg* Soraṭh.

The Rupayan Sansthan in Jodhpur and the ARCE in Gurgaon together hold the largest and most comprehensive publically accessible collections of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār recordings. Many, if not all, of the commercial releases listed in Appendix II can be found within these archives (along with countless other audio and visual fieldwork and private recordings, made in a variety of formats); and two recorded performances drawn from these archives are used in the present work, with kind permission, to provide alternative versions of the 'Bālochan' song performances gathered during fieldwork, and analysed in Chapter Seven.

The audio and video recordings made during the course of fieldwork for this project are also in the process of being archived at both of the above institutions, with copies of the data being sent to the musicians involved for their own keeping. It is notable that at least two Māṅgaṇiyār musicians (Khete Khan, son of Sakar Khan, and Imamddin Khan, son of Akbar Khan) have tentatively begun their own archives of Māṅgaṇiyār recordings, with support from the ARCE and the Rupayan Sansthan; additionally, the Rupayan staff are currently engaged in a substantial project which aims to document and catalogue as many Laṅgā songs as possible. Such efforts can only aid in the ongoing classification of what represents a substantial and valuable repertoire of highly specialised folk music.

2.4. Historical context

The question of how the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs may have come to acquire a conception of classical music knowledge represents an interesting line of enquiry in itself, with such an investigation setting itself the challenge of uncovering documentary evidence that can demonstrate some historical point of intersection between Rajasthani folk musicians, and the theoretical concepts and practices of North Indian classical music. A contextual overview of the background for these potential interactions is appropriate here, situating the medieval development of *rāga* (both as a theoretical construct and as a practically applicable model for performance) firmly within the Mughal court traditions and landed estates of Rajasthan, where the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have traditionally found their chief modes of patronage.

We have already alluded to the early significance of the canonical text *Bṛddadeśī*, in formulating ideas concerning the establishment of *rāga* as a formal classical system that concerned itself with the structuring of both musical and aesthetic concepts. The same treatise is also notable here for being the first extant document to discuss the interactive concepts of *mārga* and *deśī*, or 'Great' and 'Little' music traditions (see Widdess 1995: 22-28 for a detailed discussion of this). Such distinctions are still relevant to contemporary South Asian music practices, and characterise the very socio-musical processes of interaction between the local and the hegemonic musical styles that we are examining in this work. It is only through an appreciation of the historical basis for this social ordering of North Indian music forms that we can understand the context within which the musical knowledge system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs has developed.

In the following sections, a review of selected relevant sources will trace this history. Additionally, a careful reading of colonial accounts and census data – taking into consideration Norbert Peabody's important study of 17th and 18th century caste censuses, as well as recent critiques of these accounts by Cohn (1987) and Dirks (2001) – will investigate some possible incidences of theoretical exchange between local 'folk' musicians and 'classical' musicians, in an attempt to shed further light upon the questions raised above. We will also

examine an alternative possible source of pseudo-classical music concepts for the Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs, via the Sufi-inspired writings of mystic poet and musician Shāh Abdul Latīf.

2.4.1. Court music in the Mughal period

The courtly patronage of music in Rajasthan has a rich and illustrious history, attested to in various contemporary chronicles and works of art from the reigns of Mughal and Rajput rulers. Evidence for the presence of a practiced classical music theory in Rajasthan dates back to at least the 15th century, when the Rajput king of Mewar, Mahārāṇā Kumbhā (who ruled from 1433 to 1468), wrote an elaborate musical commentary called *Saṅgīta-rāja*, that was based on the landmark Sanskrit musical treatise *Saṅgīta-ratnākara*, written by Śārṅgadēva in the 13th century. Not long after his death, Kumbhā's palace at Chittorgarh became the home of the hugely influential poet and Hindu *sant* Mirabai (c.1498-c.1547) – herself of Rajput descent, and both the subject and the eponymous author of many folksongs that are still popular throughout Rajasthan to this day.

By the 17th century, vivid *rāgamālā* paintings depicting visual representations of conceptual *rāg* identities were also being produced in Rajasthan (for example, see the collection reprinted in Bor 1999: 167-170), further emphasising the increased importance of inter-related poetic, artistic and musical aesthetics to certain strands of Mughal court society. Another important early musical treatise from this time was Faqīrullāh's *Rāg-darpan*, or 'Mirror of Musical Modes' (1666), which greatly informed music practice in the courts; and this work evidences a growing admixture of indigenous and foreign elements within the Hindustani classical system at that time. Schofield (2010: 495) draws our attention to the fundamentally elite male drive to patronise, and to mediate, Hindustani music – a drive that is itself embodied by the very existence of such canonical works:

> All these writings are suffused with considerations of what it meant to maintain exclusivity and power through patronising the right kinds of music and musicians, and through adhering strictly to known and age-authenticated rules of connoisseurship in that most exalted and exclusive of venues for musical performance, the princely *meḥfil*.

Schofield goes on to demonstrate that one of the reasons for the writing of treatises such as the *Rāg-darpan* was an attempt by the political elites to "protect them [selves] from the current unenlightened depredations of their professional practitioners" (ibid: 496) – in other words, to control and to dictate both the content and the objectives of elite music practice – by enshrining the then-current musical system of *rāgas* within a prescribed format that could only be understood by literate connoisseurs.

Significantly, the illiteracy of the majority of musicians themselves, and their resultant "ignorance of written theoretical traditions" is cited by many of these elite 17th century authors as a key reason for the perceived corruption of performance practice (ibid.). One can imagine the difficulty that the ancestors of our modern-day Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs must have had in negotiating their own lowly position in and around these elite courtly hierarchies; and it is possible that the more classicized structural approaches to music performance – namely, concepts of *rāga* and *tāla* – were first adopted by local professional folk musicians around this time, in an attempt to maintain the validation of their own music practices to their wealthy patrons and to "move with the times".

Although it is unclear as to precisely when (or how) folk musicians such as the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs may have historically adopted a theoretical conception of classical music performance, there are clues to highlight potentially fertile avenues of investigation. Erdman (1978), in her examination of data pertaining to artist-related financial records and work petitions kept during the time of Rām Singh II's court at Jaipur (1835-1880), discovered that certain documents housed in the Jaipur royal household archives evidence the then-concurrent employment of classical and folk musicians as part of the court entourage. Erdman hypothesises that the hereditary families of local musicians may have played a significant role in defining what would later become concrete stylistic categories within North Indian classical music:

> My intention is to suggest that the combination of "classical" musicians and performances with local traditions of musician communities and performances in the Maharaja's court is the basis for the development of the gharana system, or at least those gharanas which are named for their place of patronage rather than a

> particular artist or artist's origin.
>
> Erdman 1978: 346

The presence of high-status musicians at the courts of Rajasthan has been attested to by many sources. For example, Sanyal and Widdess (2004) note that the founder of the illustrious Ḍāgar *gharānā*, Muslim musician Bahram Khan, was himself present at Rām Singh II's court in Jaipur in the 19th century; and Erdman offers anecdotal evidence, supplied by the Ḍāgar family, stating that Bahram Khan had come to Jaipur in his later years as the musical teacher of Rām Singh II – himself a musician and music lover – heading the *Guṇījankhānā*, or 'Department of virtuosi', which "provided musical and dance performers for royal occasions" (Erdman 1985: 77). The admixture of local folk and visiting classical musicians detailed in the *Guṇījankhānā* records is particularly tantalizing, in that the data provides evidence for working conditions in which local professional musicians, such as the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, could conceivably have come into contact with contemporary performers of the emergent "Hindustani classical" music style – although direct musical interactions would have only been made possible by mixed gatherings of artists taking place outside of the formal performance contexts:

> To hear another artist perform or to see him dance, one had to hear or see him present in person. Only by joining gatherings of artists could they learn forms and styles of a tradition; they were excluded from invitation-only royal performances unless performing, and schools for learning a performance tradition had not yet been founded.
>
> Ibid: 76

If such gatherings did indeed take place, then such a context would have provided precisely the kind of environment that is ripe for musical exchange – the kind of musical exchange, between *mārga* and *deśī* musicians, that had already been advocated by elite musical commentators as early as the *Bṛddadeśī*, as a means of "subsuming local and previously unregulated musical practice within a universal music system" (Widdess 2014: 157). Therefore, it is conceivable that such interactions were even encouraged; and one can certainly

imagine that both classical and folk musicians would be keen to "borrow" from one another.

However, although we can say definitively that both 'local' and 'classical' musicians were present in certain particular contexts, it is considerably harder to locate specific documentary evidence of either Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musicians performing at the princely courts of Rajasthan during this formative period of the then-contemporary North Indian classical music. But there is a possible historical connection with the frequently occurring terms *Mirāsī* and *Ḍhāḍhī*. Neuman has discussed the use of these categories in some detail (1990: 125-135), and he problematizes the term '*Mirāsī*' beyond its general – and typically derogatory – historical association with low-status hereditary Muslim musicians, who were particularly renowned for their uncanny abilities to imitate classical styles:

> Mirasi, considered as a social category, has… at least two loci. One is as an *occupational* term for Muslim musicians playing either tabla or sāraṅgī, but not usually applied if one of them becomes a soloist. The other is as a *caste category* where marriage is concerned.
>
> Neuman (1990: 119)

Being both occupational and hereditary caste-based Muslim musicians, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs could easily be fitted into this broad category – and some Māṅgaṇiyārs have even gone so far as to appropriate the term, perhaps being unaware of its somewhat negative connotations within Hindu classical music circles.

Neuman goes on to show that this largely pejorative term becomes current in historical literature from the late 19th century onwards, supplanting the social category '*Ḍhāḍhī*' to a large degree (which itself came to refer more specifically to certain groups of Sikh musicians who sing ballads, play the hourglass-shaped tension drum *ḍhāḍ* - and who also, notably, accompany themselves on *sāraṅgī*). The term '*Mirāsī*' subsequently became further broadened, referring to "a wide range of musical specialists from wandering minstrels in rural areas to classical musicians in urban ones." (Ibid: 130) Neuman also makes reference to a more

specific, retrospective description made by Prakash Tandon in 1961 that evokes a much closer possible association with Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians:

> Another Muslim caste in the Jajmani system was that of the Mirasis. The Mirasis beat drums and played the shehnai, a flute [sic] with a trumpet end, at weddings and other auspicious occasions, but their speciality was wit and repartee, which they could exercise with traditional immunity on the highest and lowest in the society... Men and women sang praises of the family and recited its genealogy at weddings. They were also the vehicle of old ballads and songs.
>
> Tandon 1961: 79-80 (cited in Neuman 1990: 131)

Although Tandon would seem to have been writing about a tradition that was apparently active in the neighbouring state of the Punjab, there are clear echoes here of the *jajmāni* system that still abides in Rajasthan; and the *Mirāsī* musicians discussed could easily be equated with either Surnāiā Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, by virtue of their use of drums and double reed wind instruments, their recitation of genealogies for patrons, and their function as balladeers and musicians who are called upon to perform at "auspicious occasions" such as weddings. Moreover, the specialist association of these particular *Mirāsī* with "wit and repartee" accords particularly closely with another association that some modern-day Māṅgaṇiyārs attest to (including, as I discovered, the current community leader Akbar Khan, along with renowned *kamāichā* player Chanan Khan) – namely, that their ancestors were originally *Bhāṇḍ*, or 'jesters', in the courts of Rajasthan. This matter will be examined further below, and in Chapter Four of the present work, where information pertaining specifically to the Māṅgaṇiyārs is covered in detail.

2.4.2. Colonial sources

From the latter period of the East India Company's rule, until just after the end of the British Indian Empire in 1947, most of the territory in modern-day Rajasthan that lies to the west of Jaipur was politically governed by the British-controlled Rajputana Agency (1817-1948). A number of English-language colonial accounts written by British soldiers, academics and officials survive from this time; although the explicit mention of Laṅgās in these accounts is rare, and the caste name of 'Māṅgaṇiyār' appears to be entirely absent from all records made

during this time. The very dearth of information regarding our subjects may indicate either that they were living under the alternative titles that we have previously discussed, or that they were still dwelling largely outside the western administrative borders of Rajputana.

Despite the lack of data concerning 'Māṅgaṇiyārs' in colonial literature, it is possible to find some information relating to the *bhāṇḍ*, or 'jester' community in the 'Castes of Marwar', a forerunner of the India Census that was first published in 1894, conducted by Munshi Haradayal Singh and Munshi Devi Prasad at the behest of the then-British Government of India. The authors note that the majority of those declared as *Bhāṇḍs* are Hindus, with only 118 of the 922 surveyed professing to be Muslims (Singh 1990 [1894]: 141); and some form of direct connection with the *Dholī* community is also implied:

> They have, generally speaking, sprung from Dholis who learn buffoonery, mimicking and jesting in foreign countries… They attend all joyous festivals and contribute their jokes, thereby entertaining as well as exciting bursts of applause from their spectators.
>
> Ibid: 142

Notwithstanding a heavier emphasis on 'buffoonery' at the expense of serious music making, these associations with light-heartedness, auspiciousness and itinerancy still sit well with any view of contemporary Māṅgaṇiyār performance activities. Furthermore, a similar connection is implied with *Mirāsīs* in Singh's citation of Ibbetson's late 19th century work on 'Punjab Castes' (published posthumously in 1916), in which Ibbetson compares the *Bhāṇḍs* to the "Behrupia", who are now more commonly called *Bhopā*:

> Both… are commonly kept by Rajas and other wealthy men, like the Jester of the early English noble, but both also wander about the country and perform to street audiences. The Bhand is not a true caste any more than a Behrupia and I understand they are often Mirasis by caste and probably have in many cases so returned themselves.
>
> Ibid.

In this regard, the *Mirāsī* is listed in the Census of Marwar as being "a Musalman genealogist" who "occupies the same position among the Musalmans as the Bhats do among the Rajputs" and who "is also a musician" (ibid: 123). Either category of *Mirāsī* or *Bhāṇḍ* could easily apply to ancestors of the contemporary Māṅgaṇiyārs; and certainly at least some of the Māṅgaṇiyār families now inhabiting the Jaisalmer region were once members of the *Bhāṇḍ* community, as we shall see in Chapters Four and Six.

The few colonial references that have been found to mention Laṅgās are nonetheless tantalising. In Volume Two of the 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan', which was first published in 1832, Lieutenant-Colonel James Tod writes of the "tribe of Lanagha, or Laṅgā", tracing a long history of strife and warfare with the Yadu-Bhattis "from their expulsion from the Panjab to their final settlement in the Indian desert" (ed. Crooke 1920: 1197). More specifically, Tod's review of the available historical literature offers the following intriguing insight:

> It is distinctly stated that, at this epoch, the Laṅgās were Rajputs; and they are in fact a subdivision of the Solanki or Chalukya race, one of the four Agnikula; and it is important to observe that in their gotracharya, or 'genealogical tree,' they claim Lokhot in the Panjab as their early location
>
> Ibid

Moreover, Tod goes on to assert that, even though the Laṅgā tribespeople had been accorded a number of different names in various important historical sources, their origins were most likely Rajput:

> Abu-l-fazl calls them Nohmardi; Ferishta calls Rae Sehra and his tribe of Langaha, Afghans… The Bhatti chronicle calls the Langahas in one page Pathan, and in another Rajput, which are perfectly reconcilable, and by no means indicative that the Pathan or Afghan of that early period, or even in the time of Rae Sahra, was a Muhammadan. The title of Rae is sufficient proof that they were even then Hindus.
>
> Ibid: 1197-1198

A further, and equally intriguing colonial reference that Neuman notes, in his seminal work on the 19th century classical music tradition in North India, is cited

from Burton's account of the Sindh region, first published in 1851, in which the term '*Mirāsī*' is directly equated with a group known as 'Langhas'. Both terms are taken in this particular context to refer to "the bards of the country" (Burton 1973: 302, quoted in Neuman 1990: 266 n.34). Neuman notes:

> According to Burton, the music they performed was closer to Persian than Indian, a judgement corroborated by a photograph of Sindhi Mirasis, to be found in Taylor (1872: VI, Plate 335-2), where one musician is seen holding what looks like a Persian setar (although it has eleven tuning pegs). Yet according to Burton, the Mirasi and Kalavant "have a great and almost religious respect for the name of Tansen (Burton 1973: 304). These observations suggest that Sindh was an avenue for Persian influences, lying as it does between Baluchistan and Rajasthan.
>
> Ibid.

As we have already seen, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs dwell at the very heart of this axis between Persian, Arabic and Indian influences; and we will now examine the significance of one particular Sindh-based influence on the music and culture of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs: namely, the Sufi-inspired mystical songs and poetry attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf.

2.4.3. The *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf

Drawing ideas from both local folk legends and the North Indian classical music system that he is said to have encountered at the time, the Sindhi Sufi scholar and mystic poet Shāh Abdul Latīf (thought to have lived from 1689 or 1690 to around 1752) is credited as giving *rāga*-like designations to twenty-nine original *sūr* categories listed in his famous collection of poetry, *Shāh Jo Risālo*. In this particular context, '*sūr*' can be taken in one sense to mean 'chapter'; but the term also refers to a musical scale that is appropriate for the singing of those particular poems that are listed within a given chapter of the *Shāh Jo Risālo*.

The *sūr* chapters in the *Risālo* are collections of stories rendered in poetic verse, and named according to their general subject matter. The primary topic in *sūr* Soraṭh, for example – the name itself reflecting a then-contemporary classical *rāga* of the same name – is the story of a heroine called *Rāni* ('Queen') Soraṭh, who is one of the legendary 'Seven Queens of Sindhi folklore' detailed in Figure

2.1: as we shall see, songs and melodies relating to these legendary figures occupy a fundamental position in the repertoire of both the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, and more generally in the folklore of the Thar Desert region.

Figure 2.1: The 'Seven Queens' of Sindhi folklore

HEROINE	FOLK LEGEND
Māruī	*Umar Māruī*
Mūmal	*Mūmal Rāṇō*
Saswī	*Saswī Pūnhūn*
Nōri	*Nōri Jam Tamachi*
Sohini	*Sohini Mahiwal*
Lilan	*Lilan Chanesār*
Soraṭh	*Soraṭh Rai Diyach*

The various stories surrounding each one of the seven heroines, who are listed in the left-hand column of Figure 2.1, comprise the core literary and philosophical source material for Shāh Abdul Latif's corresponding *sūrs*; and all are associated with romantic folk legends that have long been popular in the Sindh region, as well as in the neighbouring regional cultures of modern-day North and West Gujarat, West Punjab, and Western Rajasthan. More pertinently, these legendary figures are still immortalised in song by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs – often using melodic structures that are labelled by the musicians themselves as being '*rāgs*' of the same name, such as *rāg* Mārui, *rāg* 'Sūr' Rāṇō, and *rāg* Soraṭh.

The titles of the specific legends attached to each 'queen' (right-hand column) comprise of the name of the heroine, juxtaposed with the moniker of the leading male protagonist that features in each story: for example, the story *Umar Māruī* tells of a non-Muslim rural village girl called Māruī (alternatively transliterated as Mārvī in some sources), who shuns the advances and temptations of the powerful overlord Umar, in favour of a simple life spent in the desert with her own people; and *Mūmal Rāṇō* tells the story of the beautiful Rathor princess from Jaisalmer called Mūmal, whose love affair with a local prince ends in both lovers tragically killing themselves over a case of mistaken identity. This particular story is still celebrated in Jaisalmer – although, interestingly, the male protagonist has become transfigured into the Rājput ruler Mahendra, as opposed to Sindhi ruler Rāṇō.

The writings attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf employ thematic elements of these stories as metaphorical poetic devices, rendered in verse (*baīt*), in order to convey Sufi-inspired mystical ideas (see Hossein 1974), which are also set to song and categorised in *sūrs*, according to literary subject matter. Moreover, it seems likely that Shāh Abdul Latīf had received some form of training in North Indian classical music during his formative years, which influenced his own conception and formulisation of the *sūr* musical structures. Baloch (in Yusuf 1988: 62-63) advances a possible explanation for this in the presence of court musicians at Thatta, the historical capital of Sind:

> Thatta… had been a centre of music and musicians even before the Mughal period… This classical tradition had continued to Shah Abdul Latif's time, and the court of the Mughal Governors at Thatta continued to reflect new tastes and technique in music including those which originated at Delhi.

Such assertions are impossible to establish as irrefutable fact, since there is a dearth of written material contemporary with Shāh Abdul Latīf's life. As pointed out by Sorley in his seminal (though often ethnocentric) account of the poet's life and times: "There is no really satisfactory account of Shāh Abdul Latīf's life. Nor will there ever be. Most of what is known comes from oral tradition." (Sorley 1940: 170) Regardless of how Shāh Abdul Latīf might have come to adopt classical music concepts, it is clear that many of the *sūr* categories do correspond, in name at least, to certain classical *rāgas*. Taking a specific example of this in Chapter Seven of the present work, we shall examine possible relationships between classical *rāg* Soraṭh, the *sūr* Sorath of Shāh Abdul Latīf, and the forms of *rāg* Soraṭh that are currently performed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs.

But first, we will attempt to gain a more general insight into the scale of influence from the late medieval North Indian classical *rāga* system on the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf. To this end, Figure 2.2 details the names of the thirty *sūrs* featured in the *Risālo* (taken from Butani 1991: 78-79): these are juxtaposed with nominal corresponding analogues, either approximate or precise, to North Indian classical *rāgas*. Any *sūr* designations that are known to form part of the repertoire of senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians – whether that may

be as conceptual frameworks for musical performance, or as thematic elements – are highlighted in bold text.

Figure 2.2: The *sūrs* of Shāh Abdul Latīf and their possible classical counterparts

NAME OF *SŪR*	CLASSICAL ANALOGUE	SIKH *RĀGU* ANALOGUE
1. **Kalyān**	Kalyān	Kaliyān
2. **Yaman Kalyān**	Yeman/Kalyān	Kaliyān
3. **Khambhāt**	Khamāj?	N/A
4. **Śrī Rāg**	Śrī	Śrī
5. Samundi	N/A	N/A
6. **Sōhinī**	Sōhinī	Sōhī
7. **Saswī Abhuri**	N/A	N/A
8. Māzuri	N/A	N/A
9. **Deśī**	Deś	N/A
10. **Kohyari**	N/A	N/A
11. Husainī	N/A	N/A
12. **Līlan Chanesār**	N/A	N/A
13. **Mūmal Rāṇō**	N/A	N/A
14. **Māruī**	Mārwā/Mārū	Mārū
15. Kāmōd	Kamōd	N/A
16. Ghattu	N/A	N/A
17. **Soraṭh**	Soraṭh	Sorṭhi
18. **Kedāro**	Kedār	Kedār
19. **Salang**	Sarang	Sarangu
20. **Āsā**	Āsā	Āsā
21. Rippa	N/A	N/A
22. **Khahori**	N/A	N/A
23. **Barwo Sindhi**	Sindhi Bhairvī	Bairadī
24. Rāmkalī	Rāmkalī	Rāmkalī
25. **Kāpatī**	Kāfī?	N/A
26. **Pūrāb**	Pūriyā?	N/A
27. Karayāl	N/A	N/A
28. **Pirbāti**	Bibhās/Birbhās?	Bibhās
29. Dahar	N/A	N/A
30. **Bilāwal**	Bilāwal	Bilāwali

Figure 2.2 shows that at least fourteen (and potentially as many as eighteen) of the thirty *sūrs* attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf appear to have been named after pre-existing North Indian classical *rāgas*. More importantly for the present study, when looking at the twenty-one names highlighted in bold, it is evident that there has been some form of substantial impact – either directly from the *sūr* system, or from related *rāga* constructs, or both – on the musical knowledge system practiced by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs.

An additional correspondence is highlighted in the third column, which draws attention to a number of commonalities between the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf and the thirty-one *rāgas* listed in the Sikh scripture *Aḍi Grānṭh* (taken from Bakshi 2012: 53). This highlights another possible avenue of indirect classical influence on the music system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs – particularly given the evidence cited above from Tod suggesting a direct ancestral connection of the Laṅgā communities with the Punjab region, and considering the aforementioned perspective offered by Neuman that the Sikh *Ḍhāḍhī* musicians (who also sing ballads and accompany themselves on *sāraṅgī*) may have some possible connection with low-caste folk musicians of Rajasthan.

The concurrence of *sūrs* with *rāgu* designations from the Sikh system is also notable – although it is somewhat less conclusive, with only around one third evidencing clear correlations. However, with regards to those *rāgu* names found in the *Aḍi Grānṭh* that do not find an obvious analogue in the *sūr* system, it is worth noting that a small number of these Sikh *rāgas* – Mānḍ, Toḍī, Tilang, and Gaud Malhār – are in fact regularly performed by both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians as *rāgs*, in some form or another that we have yet to discover. In fact, of the thirty-one Sikh *rāgas* listed in the *Aḍi Grānṭh*, only eleven (Gujri, Devgandhari, Bihāgḍa, Badhāns, Dhanaśrī, Jaitśrī, Nāṭnarāyan, Tukhari, Bhairav, Basant and Jaijaivanti) have no place in either the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf or the musical knowledge system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. As the *Guru Grānṭh Sahīb* was first compiled in 1604, with an influence that spread rapidly into the neighbouring areas of the Punjab, it is quite conceivable that Sindhi religious figures such as Shāh Abdul Latīf were influenced by this overtly spiritual codification of *rāg* knowledge, resonating as it does with Sufi concepts

of universal love for the divine, and social unity, regardless of caste or religious affiliations.

Since documented melodic content of the *sūrs* attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf consists only of basic ascending and descending scales, it is evident that the concept of *sūr* is not equivalent to the concept of *rāga*. However, some relation to both structure and meaning of the classical concept of *rāga* seems clear; so we can hypothesise that Shāh Abdul Latīf and his biographers were influenced by knowledge of classical *rāgas* that were current in the Sindh region during the 18th or early 19th century CE, and furthermore that this knowledge was used as a basis for the generation of many of the *sūr* scale types. Certainly there would appear to be an additional influence from the Arabic *maqām* system, evidenced by the inclusion of *sūr* Husainī; and a number of local Sindhi folk melodies, such as 'Kohyari' and 'Karayāl' (which are commonly performed by both Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs), are also cited.

It therefore seems likely that the musical performance frameworks employed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have been, and perhaps even continue to be, influenced by the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf. Indeed, it is conceivable that, being members of partially Sindh-based communities who are nowadays quick to acknowledge their own identification with Sufism, the musicians may well have acquired and maintained an awareness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's poetry and musical philosophy. Certainly the contemporary Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār performers are conversant in the regionally popular stories of the Seven Queens, demonstrated by the fact that some of the core songs in their repertoire are based upon the legends expounded in the *sūrs* 'Sōhinī', 'Saswī Abhuri', 'Līlan Chanesār', 'Mūmal Rāṇō', 'Māruī' and 'Soraṭh'.

We can find other clues that allude to an influence of Shāh Abdul Latif's *sūr* system on contemporary Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical practice: for example, various extant commercial recordings feature melodies that are said to be in *rāg* "Sūr Rāṇō". Rather than referring to an otherwise non-existent classical *rāga*, it seems more likely that this melodic designation alludes specifically to the Shāh Abdul Latīf *sūr* of the same name (which in itself is derived from the hero's name in the Mūmal story). Additionally, the pen name 'Latīf' crops up regularly

in certain Sufi-inspired Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār song lyrics, such as in the following example of an unknown *bhajan* sung by Hakam Khan Māṅgaṇiyār in the Sindhi *rāg* Kāfī (supplied by Widdess from 1994 fieldwork notes):

> "Don't speak ill about anyone. You will have to answer to everyone sitting on the bed, spluttering. The longer thread you draw out will reach to that world, says Latīf, don't speak ill about anyone."

As noted above, many contemporary Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs make no secret of their identification with Sufism – a philosophy with which they are increasingly associated in the public sphere. Both groups are now frequently asked to perform at modern-day Sufi festivals in India (see Plate 2.3); and at least part of the reason for this is that they routinely perform – and greatly enjoy singing – Sufi-inspired *bhajans* during the course of their musical activities.



Plate 2.3: Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians performing together at 'Sarkhej Roza' Sufi Festival in Amhedabad, Gujarat. November 2014

Sufi philosophies are often alluded to during the course of daily life within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, and it is not uncommon for the musicians to reference the name and words of great Sufi poets when singing such songs. It is known that the work presented in *Shāh Jo Risālo* was substantially influenced by the poetry and philosophy of Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī (for example, see

Schimmel 1986: 111); and, given the cultural importance that many Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs place on both their Sindhi and Sufi heritage, once again it seems likely that they would at least have an awareness of Shāh Abdul Latīf's philosophy.

There is also evidence to suggest that some musicians use the designation '*sūr'* as an operational musical term. During my time learning music with Sindh *sāraṅgī* maestro Muse Khan Laṅgā and family, I began to notice that both he and his sons would sometimes use the word '*sūr*' to refer to a specific aspect of musical structure: an example of this is shown in video extract V2.1. In this instance, the term is used as a means of differentiating between two melody types (in this case, *rāg* Sūb and *rāg* Mārū) that employ similar melodic content, but where – as Muse's fifth son Asin Khan Laṅgā puts it – "only one *sūr* is changed". Here, the term would appear to designate the contrasting treatment of a particular note in the descending phrases of the two musical frameworks; but there are other times when the term is also clearly used in the plural, to signify all of the pitches used in a given scalar context.

This use of terminology would seem to indicate that, for Muse Khan Laṅgā's family at least, there is a conception of both a system of *sūrs*, and a system of *rāgas*. Furthermore, the example demonstrates a clear awareness on the part of the musicians that the terms '*sūr*' and '*rāg*' are not equivalent – although they may be interrelated. We shall look more closely at this issue of distinguishing between different Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāga* structures in Chapters Five and Six. But, for the time being, we can take note that this is an instance where the senior musician demonstrates a clear conception that, in his music system, the same set of notes may be arranged in different configurations, to produce differently structured results that can be conceived of as separate conceptual melodic entities – which, in this case, are referred to not as *sūrs*, but as *rāgs*.

2.4.4. Development, tourism and the concert platform

Since Komal Kothari instigated the first national tour showcasing the musical talents of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in the late 1960s, the cultural landscape in Western Rajasthan has changed radically. There has been a similarly marked

change in the fortunes of those musicians who were able to benefit from the new revenue stream provided by national and international work: this turned them from humble local musicians, eking out a meagre living, into internationally acclaimed stars. Perhaps the most conspicuous and striking example of this development is shown in the remarkable life and career of the late Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, who rose from abject poverty to become the most renowned of Rajasthani folk musicians in the current era – and the first ever folk musician from Rajasthan to be presented, in 2012, with the prestigious Padma Shri award, the fourth highest national honour that can be bestowed upon any Indian citizen.

Along with this high-profile success for a select few Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians has come a certain degree of community-wide development. Vivid examples of this can be seen in the Māṅgaṇiyār communities in the villages of Harwa and Hamira, where stone buildings are beginning to replace the traditional mud and straw huts; and the artist colonies in Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Barmer are slowly becoming transformed into rather humble real estate developments, with attendant business opportunities (see Plates 2.2 and 2.3).

Another area of booming local business for musicians, especially for Māṅgaṇiyārs living in and around the town of Jaisalmer, has been in the increased performance opportunities to be found within a lucrative tourist industry. Jaisalmer boasts a huge number of hotels and resorts – as of August 2016, the online booking site Trivago (http://www.trivago.co.uk/jaisalmer-102546/hotel. Accessed 16th August 2016) lists 467 such establishments, in an area no bigger than that of a small English town – with live music entertainment providing an important aesthetic component of the "authentic" Rajasthan experience. The work is seasonal, running typically from October to March, and the rates of pay are somewhat meagre by international standards (Ghevar Khan: pers. comm.); but skilled (and/or persuasive) professional musicians can earn considerable sums of money in tips from foreign tourists, during a typical residency.



Plates 2.2 and 2.3: Modern stone building developments in the Māṅgaṇiyār communities of Barmer (above) and Hamira (below). October and November 2014, respectively

However, there are certain downsides that come with this rapidly developing avenue of tourist-based remuneration. Firstly, more skilled senior musicians tend to avoid such work, since it is considered to be less attractive (and also much less lucrative) than more prestigious national, international and studio recording work (Ghevar Khan and Firoze Khan: pers. comm.). Because of this, the work tends to go to younger, less experienced musicians, who can evidence more enthusiasm for gathering rupees than they are able to demonstrate prowess on their chosen instruments; and, in my own experience, the repertoire becomes significantly dumbed down for the perceived benefit of the ignorant and transient tourist, as well as to make the otherwise repetitive and tedious job of the inexperienced performers less challenging.

More significantly, there can never be the same relationship with the transient tourist as there is with the local *jajmān*, who not only understands the music tradition but also has a historically intimate personal relationship with the musicians. Additionally, local folk performers must now negotiate much higher levels of competition when providing entertainment for weddings and festivals, particularly in developing urban areas. Laxmi Narayan Khatri (interviewed on 22nd February 2014) offered this perspective on the traditional function of Māṅgaṇiyār musicians in contemporary urban contexts:

> Now it is getting less and less important in the town area… because there is available bands… and they are singing film songs… There is even the DJ… and this is more exciting for them [i.e. the urbanised patrons]. It is becoming smaller and smaller, because the new generation, they don't understand whether there is [a] blessing or not. They want to dance! And they cannot dance on Māṅgaṇiyār song. They don't understand Māṅgaṇiyār song. I mean… the words, they don't understand also. They want some new things.

One can easily understand how some folk musicians in Rajasthan might feel that their tradition has been unfairly supplanted, and even exploited. Many contemporary recordings and performances of North Indian classical music – and a growing number of Bollywood songs – feature folk melodies that have a Rajasthani origin: as an aside, we should note here that the traditions being sourced for these melodies are often not directly accredited with authorship, and this remains a contentious and problematic issue (see Barucha 2003: 266-289 for

an interesting discussion with Komal Kothari on the subject of "Marketing the 'Folk'", in which Kothari argues for researchers and film-makers to support folk artists in a manner that provides longer-term benefits for the local community as a whole). In the sphere of popular music, however, a hugely successful appearance by talented young Māṅgaṇiyār vocalist Swaroop Khan on the national television show 'Indian Idol', in July 2010, demonstrated that it is not always easy to keep talented Rajasthani folk musicians at the bottom of the social order.

The fact is that local Rajasthani music culture has long been at the heart of North Indian musical developments. In classical circles, some of the most renowned musicians have traced their family lineages back to Rajasthan (such as the Ḍāgar family of *dhrupad* specialists, the famous Jaipur-Atrauli *gharana* founder Ustad Alladiya Khan, and *sāraṅgī* virtuosi Pandit Ram Narayan and the late Ustad Sultan Khan, whose family still reside in Jodhpur) – although up until very recently few classical musicians would have been likely to voice any explicit connection with low-status Muslim caste musicians such as the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs.

But despite the general persistence of caste-based social prejudices, there is some evidence to suggest that the trend may be changing, such as in the high-profile musical collaboration 'Desert Slide', which is currently taking place between Jaipur-born classical musician Vishwa Mohan Bhatt and some of the more currently renowned Māṅgaṇiyār musicians – including Sakar Khan's sons Ghevar Khan and Firoze Khan, as well as the renowned vocalist and leading community figure Anwar Khan: all of these performers have played an instrumental role in the gathering of data for this project, and we shall become further acquainted with them presently.

2.5. Summary

From a reading of the diverse historical sources, and considering the contemporary oral accounts of the musicians themselves, it seems likely that the ancestors of contemporary Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs were performing – perhaps as *Mirāsī*, *Bhāṇḍ*, *Ḍhāḍhī* or *Langhā* (and potentially under the guises of all

these various identities) – in and around the courts of Western Rajasthan during the later Mughal period, if not earlier. We have seen that a performer from any one of these low-caste professional music groups could potentially have come into contact with the various classically trained musicians who were known to frequent the courts at that time. Therefore, it is reasonable to speculate the folk musicians might have first acquired some form of *rāg*-based knowledge during this period, either as a direct result of local and classical musical ideas being shared in court settings, or through the indirect observation and imitation of classical music practices.

However, clear evidence also points towards a strong connection with the *sūrs* of Shāh Abdul Latīf; and it seems increasingly likely that the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār conceptions of *rāg* frameworks may have been mediated, at least in part, through an understanding of this local knowledge system. The historical data we have examined here is far from exhaustive; and it is quite likely that more relevant information lays hidden in the court archives of Rajasthan and Pakistan, and in Rajput family records. But even from the small selection of evidence presented above, it is clear that the folk music and musicians of Rajasthan have had – and continue to have – a significant and reciprocal relationship with the prevalent genres of music in North India.

Whilst it may not currently be possible to connect the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs directly with the courtly houses of a bygone Rajasthani era, it seems highly likely that the ancestors of the contemporary families were plying their auspicious musical and entertainment trades in and around the courts, in one form or another; and, in some cases, firm links of royal patronage were certainly made, and are still intact. One such example, concerning the family of Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, will be discussed in Chapter Four, where we will also find anecdotal evidence of Akbar's family having received tutelage from at least one classical musician in living memory. But first, we shall outline the analytical framework for our study of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge – and specifically, the musicians' knowledge of *rāga*.

CHAPTER THREE

Rāga as Knowledge

3.1. What is musical knowledge?

The Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are custodians of a rich and diverse body of specialist musical knowledge, with this knowledge being made manifest almost exclusively during the transmission and performance of their repertoire. Given the wide-ranging nature, across both communities, of their collective knowledge base, the present study has chosen to focus in particular depth on one specific area: knowledge of *rāga*. The primary reason for analysing this particular aspect of musical knowledge is that it is considered by senior musicians from both communities to constitute one of the most serious aspects of their performance practice, along with the recitation of *subrāj* (genealogies) and knowledge of *duhā* (poetic couplets).

The concept of *rāga* holds special importance as a pan-South Asian musical phenomenon; and their explicit use of this term situates the tradition of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs within a matrix of musical understanding that has evolved over centuries, and which continues to be reconfigured at local, national and even international levels. The case of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs presents us with a particularly interesting manifestation of *rāg* usage – not least because their knowledge of *rāga* seems to have been developed and transmitted independently of an explicit theoretical canon. As a system for formulating and regulating musical practice, *rāga* has an ancient and significant history that requires some contextualisation here; but, before considering this matter, it is first necessary to clarify what we mean by 'musical knowledge'.

Considering the vast array of works that are available on the multi-faceted philosophical concept of knowledge, there are surprisingly few authors who deal directly with the subject of musical knowledge as an abstract concept in and of itself. Nonetheless, all studies of musical phenomena must necessarily address at some level, either directly or indirectly, the overarching notion of musical

knowledge – which is taken here in its broadest sense to refer to the sum total of what may be conceived, perceived and understood regarding either music systems in general; a specific music system; or a specific aspect of a certain music system.

To sharpen this definition further, it is first necessary to establish what we are referring to as 'music'. A useful starting point for such a discussion can be found in the seminal definition advanced by John Blacking:

> Music is a product of the behaviour of human groups, whether formal or informal: it is humanly organized sound.
>
> Blacking 1973: 10

Blacking goes on to suggest that "a perception of sonic order, whether it be innate or learned, or both, must be in the mind before it emerges as music." (Ibid.) However, Blacking himself modified this explicitly mentalist view of musical emergence in later writings; and subsequent scholars have either rejected such a standpoint (e.g. Rahn 1998), or sought to investigate the instantiation of music as an emergent, entrained consequence of physical movement and rhythmic stimulae (Clayton 2001 and subsequent works).

Putting aside the mechanics of how these special sounds are borne into our world for one moment, we can certainly isolate the cognitive processes involved in adopting an organised, subjective perceptual standpoint as being a key factor in any human being choosing to label a certain sound, or a complex of sounds, as being "music", or "not music": the act of perception is, therefore, fundamental to both music production and music reception. If we expand Blacking's seminal definition of music as referring to the human perception of organised sound, then we situate our particular brand of species-specific musical understanding at the very centre of an ongoing cognitive and embodied expressive human enterprise, whereby we acquire, develop, maintain and share meaningful information through diverse sonic technologies, be they organic or otherwise. In other words, music provides us with a means of both experiencing communication, and communicating experience.

The view taken here is that the experience of music is an interactive, multi-sensory, multi-faceted phenomenon, and that what we call 'music' emerges from both cognitive and embodied human processes. This perspective is strengthened by recent data from cognitive research which suggests that different areas of the brain evidence both 'top-down' and 'bottom-up' neurological connections (Ramskov 2008: 81); and it is now widely recognised that both active music making, and passively listening to music, stimulate widespread activity across both sides of the brain, which can lead to improved cognitive function (see, for example, Williams 1986 and Schellenberg 2005).

Musical behaviour has developed within the vast majority of human societies as an innate consequence of our being human; and it is a phenomenon that we are all able to recognise and accept as an integral part of our natural social behaviour. We may appreciate a form of music that was previously foreign to us, without necessarily understanding the social context; or we may find certain forms of music disagreeable, even whilst people from within our own social circles are positively moved by those same sounds. Moreover, we recognise that similarly organised communicative sonic phenomena exist outside the realms of human experience and meaning, and that our human perceptions concerning such phenomena are subjective and limited. So the key question remains: if we put our cultural biases aside, what are we actually saying to each other through the medium of music? Or rather, what is the inherent function of the music itself?

We continue to be both enchanted and bemused by the mysterious, ephemeral sounds that we make, and by the internal and external circumstances that motivate us to make them. Even without necessarily understanding at a conscious level precisely how the phenomenon that we call music actually constitutes itself, we nevertheless seem to know instinctively that these distinct patterns of organised sound are of significant importance to our identity as human beings. Our potential to experience an intuitive response to otherwise unfamiliar musical phenomena is something that many of us are familiar with – a point that has also been noted by Nicholas Cook (1990: 2):

> To write music, to understand its techniques, or even to play an instrument requires time, application and specialised knowledge. But when music is heard, the results

> of this are somehow synthesized into an immediate and intrinsically rewarding experience that does not, as a precondition, depend on the listener having any kind of trained understanding of what he hears.

In one sense, this thesis documents my own journey, from having just such an untrained "immediate and intrinsically rewarding experience" of hearing the otherwise largely alien recorded sounds of Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's *kamāichā*, through the processes of attempting to identify, acquire, and formalise some aspects of this specialised system of orally transmitted musical knowledge that is the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār male musicians' hereditary birthright. It is this specialised knowledge that acts as the vehicle for conveying both understanding and experience; and we must now give some consideration to the different ways of characterising such knowledge.

3.1.1. Operational versus representational knowledge

Discussions surrounding the concept of knowledge, and its equivalent non-English terms, have a long history in many global cultures. As both theoretical construct and a matter of practical understanding, the Oxford Dictionary Online (accessed 2015) defines 'knowledge' thus:

> 1. Facts, information and skills acquired by a person through experience or education; the theoretical or practical understanding of a subject:
>
> 1.1. What is known in a particular field or in total; facts and information:
>
> 1.2. *Philosophy* True, justified belief; certain understanding, as opposed to opinion.
>
> 2. Awareness or familiarity gained by experience of a fact or situation.

In the musical sphere, the first strand of this definition establishes musical knowledge as an empirical scientific construct: that is to say, as a framework of rules that can be justified, fixed, understood, transmitted and utilised, both practically and philosophically. Viewed from a cognitive standpoint, it can be argued that such processes are both inherent in, and integral to, the internal and external formulation of music systems – not to mention their being indispensable to the academic researcher. Such processes are necessary to communicate the structural and aesthetic qualities of human music experience, whether this is done

verbally, textually, or whether such knowledge is implicitly encoded into the actual music system itself.

However, viewing musical knowledge as a purely scientific construct can present a skewed representation of actual music practice – one that seeks to appropriate, concretise, and idealise musical experience. For example, a hallmark of elite classical music systems is the presence of highly codified and often complex musical constructs that are typically linked to aesthetic, philosophical or religious meaning, which are then embedded in fixed forms and laid down in some ideally irreducible (typically text-based) form. Such a standpoint is necessarily partial and exclusive; but we have already established that musical behaviour is, to all intents and purposes, a universal human trait. In the sphere of North Indian classical music, the solution to this issue was to treat *deśī* music forms as being an integral part of the societal whole, which were wholly necessary in order to stimulate development of the *mārga* tradition (see discussion of the *Bṛddadeśī* in the Historical Context of Chapter Two).

Viewed from the more philosophical perspective of "awareness or familiarity", musical knowledge can be seen to exist more specifically in a form that is situated within a given context of human cultural experience. There are power relations inherent in the culture-bound formulation of these constructs that are contingent on both perspective and circumstance (for example, see Haraway 1988 for a discussion of what she calls "situated knowledge", in relation to the feminist critique of scientific method); and we must be aware that our own institutions are themselves in one sense brokers for this kind of conceptual currency. It is no coincidence that the School of Oriental and African Studies – an institution that was founded during a time of war, and of the waning of the British Empire, with the express purpose of not only facilitating cultural exchange, but also gathering information, developing culture-specific skills, and maintaining influence – bears the Bacon-derived motto "Knowledge is Power".

Clearly, there is a grey area of intersection between philosophical and scientific definitions of knowledge. In order to avoid any further tautological or contradictory debate here, we will adopt a poststructuralist view of musical knowledge as being contingent – that is, neither completely true nor completely

false under all circumstances, but largely dependent upon the socio-cultural, historical and geographical contexts within which a particular system is both formulated and active (see Roche 1989 for a detailed overview of what he calls 'philosophical contingency'). To this end, we must first refine our view regarding the particular forms of musical knowledge that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs possess and express, as well as develop a sharper understanding of the contextual environments that have nurtured and sustained this knowledge system.

When analysing the various forms and expressions of musical knowledge, it can also be useful to make a distinction between what are 'operational' and 'representational' models, as characterised by John Baily (1988a: 114):

> Is such knowledge a static representational model that describes what the musician already knows but which has little or no direct role in performance? Or is it an operational model that has a dynamic role in the control of ongoing musical performance?

In this light, operational musical knowledge is characterized as being the kind of unspoken skillset that a musician must possess in order to sing or play recognisably in a given style ('practice'); whilst representational musical knowledge is, essentially, talking about or describing the musical style from an authoritative perspective ('theory').

Needless to say, the gulf between theory and practice can often be rather wide. In his discussion of 1970s Herati art music, Baily noted that some urban musicians had adopted the Arabic term *'ilm-e musiqi* ('science of music') to refer to a specialised body of musical knowledge that was used to transmit principles of rhythmic and melodic organisation. Bailey concluded that the *'ilm-e musiqi* functioned primarily as a representational model of knowledge for the Herati musicians:

> It was indicative and revealing of a 'rich knowledge base', but the theory was not the knowledge itself but simply an attempt to represent that knowledge in verbal form.
>
> 1988b: 57

Similarly, we can say that the musical knowledge systems expressed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs exist – primarily, at least – as operational models. Their body of musical knowledge is internalised by the musicians through a lifelong process of immersion in the tradition, which begins at birth; and skilled performers seem to be able to selectively draw from this reservoir of knowledge at will, using material to suit the appropriate performance context. Often the musicians themselves seem to struggle to put this knowledge into words; and there is currently no firm evidence of an explicit representational model that adequately describes how a given performance should be structured. However, the presence of such theoretical models cannot be entirely discounted, since we shall see clear evidence for the use of certain literate technologies in the promulgation of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoires; and it is equally possible that the musicians may not be sharing all of their trade secrets with us! Indeed, they may well consider that it is not in their best interests to do so.

3.1.2. Implicit and explicit theories of music

A related issue to the 'operational/representational' dichotomy concerns the notion of 'implicit' and 'explicit' music theories. The term 'implicit music theory' might appear on its surface to be oxymoronic, since adopting any kind of theoretical approach would normally allude to the conceptual development of a body of musical knowledge (as opposed to the practice of that body of knowledge). Within this context, the use of the qualifier 'implicit' suggests the identification of a theoretical framework that is made evident – and perhaps even developed – through the act of music practice itself, but which is not verbally expressed as an abstract concept by the practitioner. Indeed, the term implies that this theoretical framework is an integral, operational part of performance practice:

> the notion of an 'implicit' theory signifies a kind of compositional logic immanent in the musical work, which the theory seeks to unearth, while an 'explicit' theory refers to systematic theoretical constructs that provide a sense of general order but do not engage with the particularity of the work.
>
> Rehding 2003: 42

The distinction between implicit (non-articulated) and explicit (verbalised) music theories was first characterised by German musicologist Carl Dahlhaus (see Zaminer ed. 1985: 10), who developed these terms as a means of characterising Schoenberg's staunch aesthetic decision to break away from then-current Western classical theoretical norms. Schoenberg viewed these constructs as being obstacles to "the evolution of art" (Schoenberg 1978: 9), evidently feeling restricted by what he saw as a dominant body of prescriptive classical music theories; and, despite his own subsequent avocation of certain explicitly formulaic compositional approaches (such as his innovative Twelve-Tone Method), he also championed a more organic and immanent approach to composition. This particular example demonstrates that 'implicitness' and explicitness' are matters of perspective, and that theories of music can exhibit both features.

Regardless of whether a particular approach, or motivation, to produce musically organized sounds could be classified as inherently 'implicit' or 'explicit', we will argue that there are flexible cognitive processes embedded at the root of all musical knowledge systems, furnishing each given system with its unique, identifiable forms and structures. Such processes can be said to constitute the inherent musical knowledge of the system in question; and these processes are embedded within the music object itself, mediated, interpreted, and re-interpreted by both practitioners and listeners as part of ongoing dynamic social interactions.

Since the goal here is neither to impose an explicit, prescriptive formal theory on the subject matter at hand, nor to make iron-cast judgements upon the compositional merits of either implicit or explicit formulations of music theory derived from the musical examples analysed here, we shall first concern ourselves with the task of identifying various instantiations of both implicit and explicit theoretical musical knowledge that have been identified within the communities in question. Once these theoretical models have been detailed, we can then go on to analyse the intrinsic cognitive processes that give rise to Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* theory.

3.1.3. Orality and musical meaning

When examining the musical behaviour of our subjects, it generally appears that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs do indeed learn, produce and express the bulk of their musical repertoire using oral methods of transmission. Memorisation, repetition, oral mnemonics and somatic activity all have relevance here: as technical performance methodologies, these approaches can be contrasted with notions of musical literacy evident in, for example, certain forms of elite classical music, which have conceived of the musical canon as being enshrined in an irreducible text.

But a caveat is implied here in the use of the word "certain", since it is now widely understood that non-textual, improvisatory skills have also sometimes played an integral part in both the formulations and manifestations of mainstream European classical music. Certainly this is the case in North Indian classical music, which is ostensibly improvisatory in performance, yet which draws from a rich and ancient body of canonical knowledge; and, we shall see evidence here that some of the most senior members of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities do in fact employ literate technologies, to aid in the maintenance of their predominantly oral tradition. So, the lines between these seemingly oppositional and discrete binary categories can often be very blurred.

For the subject matter at hand, this issue requires careful examination – not least because there is a complex, paradoxical and sometimes misleading relationship, within North Indian music systems in general, between the oral and the textual transmission of musical knowledge. To complicate matters even further, the entire process of music transmission in rural Indian communities is currently in a state of extreme flux, due in part to rapidly rising literacy rates, changes in mainstream music education practices, and widespread access to modern communicative technologies that can transmit an entire world of musical influences at the click of a button.

In the case of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, a pertinent research question arises: to what degree are these modes of musical transmission independent of writing and textual representations? Indeed, what do the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār

musicians actually mean, when they use fundamentally canonical classical terms such as '*rāg*'; and by what mechanisms do they transmit this substantial body of hereditary musical knowledge from one generation to the next, if it is without recourse to textual or verbal cues? These crucial issues will be addressed in subsequent chapters; but in order to further contextualise the analytical approach to our study, let us first examine the broader phenomenon of orality, and how it relates more specifically to meaning in musical knowledge systems.

Rajasthan is home to a rich body of oral epic poetry that has been maintained through the medium of live performance by a number of different castes, including the Bhopa, the Charans, and the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. Our own European literate traditions owe a great deal to orally performed stories: for example, Lord's *The Singer of Tales* (1960) argued that certain epic works surviving in written forms, such as Homer's *The Odyssey* and the Old English heroic poem *Beowulf*, were originally performed orally. The annual Eisteddfod competitions currently held in Wales provide just one contemporary example of the resurgent – or perhaps continued – popularity of oral poetry performance in the United Kingdom; and the ability of bards to memorise and then deliver voluminous poetic accounts still lies chiefly in their expertise of utilising oral and mnemonic formulaic devices.

Emphasising the importance of hereditary lineages in such traditions, Lord concluded that by understanding the structure of orally transmitted songs, one could come to understand the deep societal importance of tradition and continuity that are embodied by orally maintained repertoires:

> For it is of the *necessary* nature of tradition that it seek and maintain stability, that it preserve itself. And this tenacity springs neither from perverseness, nor from an abstract principle of absolute art, but from a desperately compelling conviction that what the tradition is preserving is the very means of attaining life and happiness.
>
> Lord 1960: 220

Taking into account Lord's view of the central significance of oral traditions in our own particular stratum of human society, let us now consider Walter Ong's work on *Orality and Literacy* (1982), which takes this argument one stage further. Ong championed the importance of oral events, as existing in the moment of

performance, against what he saw as the domination of literate culture in European thought – a state of affairs that was also critiqued in the writings of Plato some 2400 years earlier (yet we should note that Ong himself recognises the paradox striking at the heart of his, and Plato's, argument):

> Plato expresses serious reservations about writing, as a mechanical, inhuman way of processing knowledge, unresponsive to questions and destructive of memory, although, as we know, the philosophical thinking Plato fought for depended entirely upon writing.
>
> Ong 1982: 25

From this perspective, literate technologies would seem to offer a direct threat to the promulgation of oral repertoires, such as those fragile Greek epic traditions of performance that Plato foresaw the diminishing of (though many of these stories have survived to be retold again and again); and we could pose the question of this same perceived threat to the repertoires of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, who are currently faced with an inexorable march of new technologies that have already begun to encroach upon their traditional modes of music-making, and their keeping and telling of local stories and genealogies.

However, such attitudes must be balanced by the fact that the written word is an inherently neutral semiotic tool that can conjure up a world of imagination, through the use of complex symbologies; and written texts may, of course, be orally performed. In this sense, literature and orality are by no means oppositional, or mutually exclusive. We should also note that Ong never directly encountered the "oral" groups that he wrote about. In view of this, it is perhaps unsurprising that some of Ong's assumptions would warrant testing in the field. Nevertheless, he makes the convincing case that a more equally weighted approach towards the study of both oral and literate traditions is required.

Building upon the arguments put forward by Ong, and others, to de-emphasise the primacy of visual and textual epistemologies, Steven Feld's investigation into the soundscape inhabited by the Kaluli people of Papua New Guinea (1990) led him to determine that the Kaluli defined their environment primarily by aural signifiers. Feld, however, points out again that stark distinctions between orality and literacy – such as those advanced by Ong – do not always work when

applied to musical scenarios. The relationship between these two apparently opposed modes of transmission can be complex, as we will also see when examining the musical activities of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in more detail.

A more recent work on the subject of *Communicating*, by Ruth Finnegan (2002), has been influential in shaping more context-sensitive approaches to examining source data gathered in the field. Finnegan, too, emphasises the importance of studying oral traditions within the context of human behaviour and experience:

> Earlier assumptions would have it that unwritten vocal forms were essentially crude and lacking in artistry, to be sidelined as 'traditional' or 'tribal'. But it is now clear that in both past and present many of these performed oral genres partake of the poetry and creativity that we associate with literature.
>
> Finnegan 2002: 71

Adding further strength to the argument for a more rounded study of such genres, Finnegan pays tribute to Ong's critique of the primacy of vision over sound, but points out that each cultural system needs to be assessed in its own right; she also warns that "where high value is accorded to sound or to touch, it does not follow that visual communication has to be unimportant." (Ibid: 174)

Being a "performed oral genre" existing at the margins of society, the musical repertoire of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs would seem to be precisely this kind of area: a field that has been overlooked by scholars of North Indian music in favour of more 'prestigious' forms – in particular, the classical genre. It is notable, for example, that previous studies on *sāraṅgī* music (such as Sorrell 1980 and Magriel 2001) have concentrated primarily on the output of classically trained musicians. However, given the premium value that is accorded to oral methods of knowledge transmission within the classical tradition, it seems likely that, in this case, the social marginality of the folk musicians themselves has been a primary factor in contributing to the lack of scholarly attention that has been paid to them and to their music. It is hoped that the present work will further encourage analysis of such less prestigious, yet nonetheless highly sophisticated genres of music.

We shall now turn our attention to the concept of *rāga*, which occupies a central place within the musical knowledge system employed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, and the examination of which is central to this thesis.

3.2. Mode and *rāga*

3.2.1. The classical concept of *rāga*

We have already established that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs use the term '*rāg*' to indicate some form of quasi-modal approach to melodic organisation; but before considering the role of *rāga* in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music, it is necessary for us to gain some further understanding of the origins and development of *rāga*, which has long been – and continues to be – a hugely influential concept within the many genres of South Asian music. In relation to contemporary North Indian classical music practice, the concept of *rāga* has been described succinctly by Joep Bor as a "tonal framework for composition and improvisation" (1999: 1); however, the original Sanskrit term, which goes beyond merely describing a structural approach to musical performance, has its origins in the *Vedas* – voluminous reservoirs of Hindu religious knowledge that became enshrined in four canonical texts at some point between 500 and 1700 B.C.E. It is notable that the Sanskrit noun *veda* can itself be translated as meaning 'knowledge', or 'wisdom'; and this Vedic knowledge is traditionally considered to be of divine origin, thus privileging its status as the highest possible order of understanding.

Historical evidence suggests that the Vedic mantras and liturgies were originally promulgated via oral modes of transmission; and the prescribed melodic contours for the ancient ritual chants, as outlined in the *Sāmaveda* (meaning literally "knowledge of melody"), may have become prototypes for the early structural forms of Indian classical music. These concepts were then further developed in the *Nāṭyaśāstra* (circa 200 B.C.E. – 200 C.E.) – an ancient treatise attributed to the sage Bharata that covered all aspects of the performing arts, and which outlined many theoretical concepts that subsequently became fundamental to the classical music system, such as the central concept of the *shadja*, or 'Sa', being

the fundamental tonal center from which all other pitches emanate, and to which all must inevitably return.

Whilst the *Nāṭyaśāstra* is the earliest known literary source to introduce the notion of musical modes (termed *jāti*, these modal frameworks could utilize certain explicit configurations of scale degrees – *śruti* – to arouse particular aesthetic effects), there is no mention therein of '*rāga*' as a theoretical concept. The earliest extant textual formalization of this process with direct reference to the concept of *rāga* is attributed to Mataṅga-muni, as put forward in a seminal music treatise the *Bṛhaddeśī* (dated to between the 6th and 8th centuries CE):

> This text defines *rāga* with reference to three criteria: (a) a set of specific pitches (*dhvaniviśeṣa*); (b) particular melodic movements—phrases or motifs (*svaravarṇaviśeṣa*); and (c) the effect of aesthetic delight that the combination of (a) and (b) give to the human mind. This definition continues to apply to rāgas of North and South Indian classical music today.
>
> Widdess 2014: 150

Besides outlining this now long-standing general definition of how *rāga* constitutes itself in the dominant South Asian classical music systems, the *Bṛhaddeśī* is also notable for being the first text to make a distinction between *mārga* and *deśī* forms of music, as noted in Chapter Two. It is interesting to consider that the conceptual formalisation of *rāga* developed in tandem with, and as an integral part of, the emergent text-based formulation of a 'Great' classical music tradition – raised above and made distinct from other lesser, 'Little' local forms, whilst also being in some sense dependent on appropriating their rich musical output for the generation of new raw musical materials.

We may postulate that this early textual association of *rāga* with the highest and most ancient forms of Hindu ideology was indicative of a conscious attempt, on the part of the predominantly male literate elite, to attach premium social and musical prestige to what they considered to be ideologically "correct" forms of *rāg* knowledge. From a technical standpoint, the concept of *rāga* was formulated as a means of codifying the various ways in which a musician or singer could "colour" or "beautify" the melodic aspects of their performance; but, importantly,

the *Bṛhaddeśī* specifies that this process should involve the incorporation of *deśī* music forms into the canonical, mainstream *mārga* music theory.

3.2.3. Relating *rāga* to mode

Historically, the Latin-derived term 'mode' has been most commonly used to designate melody and scale types that relate to the theoretical constructs of European art music. In the study of non-Western music systems, the concept of mode has provided a starting point for understanding what are seen as broadly analogous structural concepts from other parts of the world, such as Arabic *maqām*, Japanese *chōshi*, and Javanese *pathet* (see Powers in Grove Online, accessed 2014). However, all of these systems differ in significant respects from the orthodox Western classical modal system; and the South Asian concept of *rāga* is no exception. Therefore, it is necessary for us to understand from the outset that the indigenous term '*rāga*' goes beyond merely describing sets of intervals and scale types.

An early attempt to formulate a global model for the concept of 'mode' was put forward by Ki Mantle Hood in his landmark 1971 text *The Ethnomusicologist*, wherein he proposed a broad definition of the term that could potentially be applied to diverse human music systems:

> Basic features of Mode seem to include the following: (1) a gapped scale…; (2) a hierarchy of principal pitches; (3) the usage of…ornamental pitches; and (4) extra-musical associations.
>
> Hood 1971 (from Grove Music Online 2014)

Hood himself recognized the complexity of employing such a generalized and culture-specific definition within all global contexts; and Powers and Widdess (ibid.) have further problematized this notion of 'mode' as being a universally applicable scientific paradigm. In fact, the wide variety of approaches to melody type that are embedded within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār song performance may evidence an underlying resistance to any fixed overall categorisation. This would sit well with an earlier view presented by Powers, defining the structural concept of *rāga* in terms of its fluidity:

> A raga is not a tune, nor is it a 'modal' scale, but rather a continuum with scale and tune as its extremes.
>
> Powers 1980 (in Bor et al. 1999: 1)

Although Hood's early categorization system is actually rather well suited to describing the general structural features of a modern Hindustani classical *rāga*, we will also discover that it is not so easy to apply this definition to the music of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs with any consistency, since is it not possible to situate their concept of *rāga* at any one fixed point on a sliding scale between scale and melody. Therefore, Powers' idea that the concept of mode can be considered as a continuum, with 'abstract scale' situated at one extreme and 'fixed melody' (or 'tune') at the other – and that different *rāgas* may exist at different points on this continuum – is more applicable to the analyses presented in this study.

3.2.3. *Rāga* in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music

Musicians such as the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are living examples of the virtuosic skill that hereditary professional folk performers in South Asia can possess, whilst also demonstrating – through their elaborate and seemingly innate understanding of certain theoretical musical constructs – that different forms of sophisticated musical knowledge can be found at all levels of Indian society. Their local, or *deśī* ('Little') tradition has developed in tandem with the *mārga* ('Great') Hindustani classical music genre over a period of at least one hundred years (and quite possibly much longer), giving rise to complex relationships between the two systems that are not easy to unpick.

In a dynamic, reciprocal process that could in some ways be viewed as analogous to the patron/service provider relationship, structural musical information has been, and continues to be, exchanged between the developing classical styles and many pre-existing or emergent local music forms, including various genres of folk music from Rajasthan. At some point during the course of this ongoing process, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have adopted (either through indirect appropriation or via direct tuition) the use of certain structural features of what we now call North Indian classical music. Of these features, perhaps the most

conspicuous is their use of the term '*rāg*' to designate particular melodic frameworks that are employed in performance.

When discussing the place of *rāga* knowledge within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music, it is first necessary to understand that, within the communities themselves, such information is considered to be specialized knowledge. Senior musicians take pride in being able to perform, and to recognize the performance of, particular *rāgs*, whilst also gaining considerable prestige from both patrons and other less knowledgeable Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, as a result of commanding such sophisticated professional intelligence.

This specialized knowledge is often characterised by the musicians as being *purāṇa* ('old'); and a certain degree of privilege – even secrecy – can surround the communication of such valuable information. Komal Kothari himself actively encouraged this attitude in one sense, counselling the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs to "look after their family treasures" (Kuldeep Kothari: pers. comm.): by this, Kothari was no doubt referring in particular to the musicians' inherited form of *rāg* knowledge – something which he constantly emphasised when promoting the musicians, knowing that it lent them a certain degree of prestige and distinction in wider circles; and this advice was clearly taken to heart by many senior members from both communities, who will still cite his exact words to this day when discussing the importance of maintaining their unique hereditary knowledge.

These features of prestige, specialisation – and also variability – of *rāg* knowledge, which can be applied right across the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians' communities, are all equally evident to the North Indian classical music tradition (which, as we noted in the previous chapter, was once also transmitted primarily through oral hereditary lines in what subsequently came to be formalised as the *gharānā* system). By the same token, it is abundantly clear that the musical performances of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are not equivalent to a typical rendition of North Indian classical music. However, ethnographers have found it more challenging to characterize precise differences between the ways in which *rāga* functions as a melodic concept within both systems. One generally held view puts it thus:

> The key difference [in the Laṅgās' and Māṅgaṇiyārs' use of rāga] from the classical system is that ragas are not conceptualized as 'elaboratable'; one does not 'develop' a raga so much as utilize it as an attribute of a composition.
>
> Neumann et al. 2006: 95

If the above distinction is true, then one might expect Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār usage of the term '*rāg*' to refer to a means of labelling and categorising certain melodies, as opposed to being indicative a more generative approach to performance practice. In order to test this supposition, two stages of musicological analysis will have to be performed: firstly, we must determine as precisely as possible the ways in which the concept of *rāga* is understood and utilised by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, both anecdotally, pedagogically, and during the course of performance; secondly, we must compare and contrast this approach with the normative conceptions and applications of *rāga* in the classical system, both as it exists today and as it has existed in the past.

Consideration will now be given to a selection of related case studies, which further highlight the dynamic processes of interaction between the classical concept of *rāga*, and its manifestations within both regional and local genres.

3.3. Related case studies

We shall now turn our attention to musicological studies of *rāga*-related phenomena from three distinct geographical areas that, like Western Rajasthan, are situated in peripheral or contested border areas. As well as revealing much about the underlying cultural and socio-political dynamics of the regions in which they appear, these studies provide further evidence of the pervasive and widespread influence of *rāga* as a pan-South Asian musical concept that manifests itself in a variety of regional variants.

3.3.1. Kashmir

Kashmir is a strategically significant geographical area located just less than one thousand kilometres to the north of Rajasthan, with a long history of disputed ownership, and which is currently divided into three areas administered by India, Pakistan and China. Josef Pacholczyk's 1996 study concerns a genre of Kashmiri

ensemble vocal music called *Ṣūfyāna mūsīqī*, which consists of a sung repertory of suites that are called *maqāms*. In this tradition, the designation "*maqām*" can also refer to the mode, or melody type, that a certain specific group of songs are sung in; and Pacholczyk demonstrates that some of these melodic entities share common factors with the *rāgas* of Hindustani classical music:

> Whether Indic in origin or not, some of the 50 to 80 maqām-s in the *ṣūfyāna* repertory could resemble Indic *rāga*-s, for example, in the emphasis or avoidance of specific degrees, in melodic movement in certain registers, and even in specific motives.
>
> Pacholczyk 1995: 122

Through transcription and analysis of the extant *Ṣūfyāna mūsīqī* repertoire, and then working with the musicians in order to test his analytical findings, Pacholczyk demonstrates that the modal structure of any given *maqām* in *Ṣūfyāna mūsīqī* can be defined by scale content, a hierarchy of pitches, and certain melodic formulae. Pacholczyk observes that the first two of these three defining features are not in themselves sufficient for the musicians to identify a *maqām*, and that the understanding of an underlying group of melodic modules is key to their distinguishing one *maqām* from another:

> These melodic formulae are specific melodic modules that function as the building blocks of all pieces within a suite. They have their own particular melodic shapes and internal hierarchies of pitches and are rhythm-independent. In a song they are "dressed" in a fixed rhythm and become part of melodic phrases. These melodic modules are the principal identifiers of a *maqām* and are recognised [as such] by the musicians.
>
> Ibid. 92

Although the *Ṣūfyāna mūsīqī* tradition differs in many respects from the musical tradition of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs – most notably, perhaps, in the fact that it is a 'classical' tradition, in the sense of having an explicit theoretical basis and a formalised system of notation – nevertheless the two traditions have both grown out of the cosmopolitan admixture of Persian, Arabic and Indic styles that characterised the latter part of the Mughal period (see Pacholczyk 23-27 and the Historical Context in Chapter Two, above); in our analysis, we will consider the

possibility that, like the *Ṣūfyāna mūsīqī* musicians, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs utilise certain internalised formulae to distinguish one *rāga* from another.

These two traditions also share one important feature: an emphasis on the significance of Sufi philosophy and Sufi-related lyrical concerns. However, the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians of Western Rajasthan (and in particular the Māṅgaṇiyārs) have also been greatly influenced by Hinduism, and we shall explore this complex association in greater detail presently. But now, we will head to the southern border of Rajasthan, where we find another relevant case study – this time, focussing on a Gujarati folk music tradition.

3.3.2. Gujarat

Gordon Thompson has produced an article (1995) that examines a folk melody called Prabhāti from the *ḍhāḷ* tradition, which refers to a local melody form that is found specifically in Gujurati-speaking areas in the region along the tense International Border between India and Pakistan. Following a systematic analysis of several music examples, Thompson concludes that the Prabhāti melody type, although it is not viewed as being a *rāga* by practitioners themselves, nonetheless exhibits many of the underlying structural characteristics of a *rāga*.

Thompson situates the Gujarati *ḍhāḷ* tradition "somewhere in the middle of the continuum between fixed melody and rāga" (ibid. 420); and he also speculates on the nature of the evolution of *ḍhāḷ*, being an orally transmitted theoretical construct that has developed outside of the *śāstria* framework:

> Ḍhāḷs have apparently evolved freely within the constraints of personal ability and communal dialogue so that, while the concepts and accompanying terminology of śāstria saṇgīt have not been applied to this melodic approach, a ḍhāḷ tradition has at its core an abstract melodic precept represented by a diversity of musical realizations.
>
> Ibid.

It is evident from Thompson's study that the local Gujarati musicians who perform these *ḍhāḷ* melodies see their music as being totally separate from the classical system (most clearly exemplified by the fact that the practitioners do not

consider *ḍhāḷ* melodies to be *rāgas*). Thompson postulates that this disassociation from the *śāstria* tradition is a stereotypical strategy for South Asian folk musicians:

> In keeping with deśī sangīt approaches… the nature of the similarity between performances is largely un-enunciated. In other words, their knowledge of śāstria sangīt is kept discrete from their deśī saṇgīt praxis. The terminology and concepts of the former not only are kept separate from the latter, but attempts to use them are rejected, both verbally and functionally.
>
> Ibid: 429

Whilst there are some tantalizing commonalities and connections to be investigated between the folk music traditions of Rajasthan and neighbouring Gujarat, this is not one of them: in the case of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, not only is the term '*rāga*' used openly by the most skilled musicians to refer to a specific aspect of their performance practice, but also it is clear from working with these musicians that there is a significant degree of prestige attached to the acquisition and utilisation of classical knowledge, as we have noted already.

That aside, the evidence provided by Thompson which explicitly connects the Prabhāti melody type with fundamentally classical melodic features (particularly with reference to pitch content and melodic contour) adds further weight to the case for examining similar processes in other local music systems. However, a much wider sample is required to unpick the many complex instantiations of *rāga*-like structures embedded within the music performances of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs.

3.3.3. Nepal

A related prototype of this kind of analysis was offered by Ingemar Grandin (1997), who observed congruence in seemingly disparate variations of another *rāga*-like melody-type (in fact, one of a repertoire of melody types), this time occurring in the Himalayan region of Nepal, and known locally as Basanta:

> All [of these song] melodies move along diatonic scales of the same kind as are found in India… But there is one reason to listen for a closer affinity… Basanta is referred to as a song (mye) or a melody (laya), but also as a rāga… But various

> distinct melodies can well be surface manifestations of the same melodical essence, the same raga.
>
> Grandin 1997: 58-59

Grandin goes on to show (using a simple cipher notation to represent the discrete pitches) the presence of five superordinate phrases, and their five main derivatives. He distinguishes between melodic motifs – which he describes (64) as "the essence of the corresponding phrase" – primarily by the degrees of the scale used and the direction of the movement from degree to degree, whilst also identifying "versions" and "derivative phrases" that exhibit rhythmic or melodic embellishments. He also provides a statistical study of overall pitch prominence; and he identifies the individual roles for each scale degree, thus demonstrating an underlying formulaic consistency with which the musicians recognise the given melodies as being "in" *rāga* Basanta:

> A study of the individual pitches – their relative prominence in the melodical flow, the way they are used, and in what melodical contexts they appear – further confirms the picture of deep melodical affinities between the different Basantas.
>
> Grandin 1997: 64

Despite ignoring small melodic discrepancies in favour of generalisation, Grandin's overall methodology is effective in that it produces a set of formulae that account for the Himalayan Basanta melody complex. His work is taken several stages further in a more comprehensive study of the *dāphā* tradition by Richard Widdess (2014), which has greatly informed and influenced the approaches to this analysis. One of the key components to Widdess' analytical approach is to consider the different cognitive models employed by the *dāphā* musicians during the rendering of their performance repertoire as musical *schemas* embedded in the memory of each performer:

> In music, schemas include arrays of pitches (e.g. melodic contours, scales, modes etc.), of rhythmic durations (e.g. metrical structures), of formal elements (e.g. binary form), and of elements of style (e.g. ornamentation, timbre); genres are schemas combining elements of pitch, rhythm, form and/or style (e.g. *dāphā*, jazz, fugue etc.). Each schema is… reinforced by structured learning, and by overt representations such as notation, but it may equally be acquired incidentally through listening or participation, with or without explicit awareness.
>
> Widdess 2014: 24

The term ‘schema’ has been adopted from cognitive psychology, and refers more generally to flexible cognitive pathways that are formed through experience. We shall consider schematic approaches to musical analysis in more detail below, in the following section on analytical approaches.

In Widdess’ 2014 study of the *dāphā* musicians’ performances of *rāg* Bihãgaṛā, he uses a schematic approach to transcription and analysis which successfully demonstrates that the key to understanding the ways in which song melodies are structured is to is understand the *rāg kāyegu* (fixed melodic models that are internalised by *dāphā* singers throughout Bhaktapur, and which can account for the shared features occurring in diverse melodies that are ascribed to certain *rāgs*) even when some of the melodic features do not fit into the *rāg* structure:

> Our analysis…has enabled us to identify the features that these melodies share as a group, to recognize that a particular motif was *not* a feature of the *rāg* but a formula applicable in many *rāgs*, and to recognize that [the anomalous] example 5.14 was *not* a member of the same *rāg* group.
>
> Ibid: 178

Widdess is subsequently able to revisit Grandin’s study, and apply the same analytical process to *rāg* Basanta melodies, thereby demonstrating that the *rāg kāyegu* is also the essential schematic model for songs sung in *rāg* Basanta – not only in Bhaktapur, but also across the Kathmandu Valley.

Taking into account the highlighted factors in these regional precedents, the related task here will be to identify musical examples from the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoire that the musicians understand as being “in the same *rāg*”; to gain an insight into what this categorization means to the musicians – both structurally, and in terms of any extra-musical factors, such as spatial, temporal or other related aesthetic considerations; and then to establish similarities and differences between diverse musicians’ conceptions of *rāg* structure and identification, in order to determine how strictly and specifically the format is applied to Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music. Once these melody complexes have been understood in context, then a comparison with *rāga* structures from North

Indian classical music can be effectively performed, in the hope that this will shed light on the nature of any relationship between the two systems.

3.4. Analytical approaches

3.4.1. Influential methods of *rāga* analysis

The innovative methodology employed by Widdess, summarised above, is in itself the continuation of a rich line of analytical enquiry concerning itself with the formulation and transmission of *rāga* frameworks in South Asia. All of these modern approaches owe much to the pioneering work of Indian composer and musicologist Vishnu Narāyan Bhātkhaṇḍe. Having studied classical music from both teachers and texts, Bhātkhaṇḍe codified the early 20th century corpus of *rāgas* into a system of ten *ṭhāṭs*, or modal models, that could supposedly account for the basic melodic content of most North Indian classical *rāgas*, functioning in a similar way to the *mēḷakarta* system of Carnatic music for South Indian *rāgas*.

His subsequent series of textbooks, entitled *Hindustānī Sangīt Krāmik Pustak Mālika* (1919-1937), applied this system to all of the major *rāgas* of the time, whilst also detailing core theoretical concepts – *vādī*, *samvādī*, and soforth – along with basic *sargam* transcriptions for well-known song compositions for each *rāga*. Most pertinently for the present study, Bhātkhaṇḍe gives *calans* for each *rāga*, along with basic ascent and descent patterns (*āroh* and *avroh*): in Chapters Five to Seven of the present work, these classical melodic frameworks will, where appropriate, be compared to transcribed performances of *rāgs* performed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, in order to isolate any possible correlations.

Another highly influential approach to modern *rāg* analysis can be found the work of Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, first formulated in his 1971 publication *The Rāgs of North Indian Music: Their Structure and Evolution* (revised in 1995). In his discussion of Bhātkhaṇḍe's *ṭhāṭ* system, and the inherent frictions between theory and practice in North Indian classical music circles, Jairazbhoy points out that the evolution of North Indian *rāgas* "was neither coherent nor systematic" (1995: 90); and he concludes that *rāgas* cannot so easily be fixed as immutable

melodic frameworks, despite both practitioners and commentators having a strong underlying conservative urge to do so:

> Contrary to commonly accepted opinion, we feel that *rāgs* are unstable and that change is one of their most prominent characteristics. Yet the rate of change is controlled to a large extent by the force of tradition as well as the need to keep *rāgs* distinct from each other.
>
> Ibid: 179

Through what could be viewed as a schematic process of scalar analysis – in particular, examining the interactions between conjunct and disjunct tetrachords within a given *rāg* structure – Jairazbhoy concludes that classical *rāgas* tend towards melodic symmetry over time, and that 'unbalanced' or 'unstable' *rāgs* can ultimately lead to an evolution in the system. He further posits that "scalar imbalance can be resolved in the *rāgs*, to some extent at least, by the introduction of accidentals, omission of notes, oblique movement, slides, etc., each providing its own temporary solution in which symmetry appears to be a vital factor." (Ibid: 180)

Besides incorporating, where applicable, analogous processes of scalar analysis into the present work, the shadow of Jairazbhoy is also more directly present in the background here – both in the field of study, and within the academic framework. Having received his PhD from SOAS under the supervision of music department founder Arnold Bake, Jairazbhoy was instrumental in establishing the ARCE in Gurgaon, and conducted important audio-visual fieldwork with Rajasthani folk performers – including the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs – during the late 1970s and early 1980s (see for example Jairazbhoy 1977 and his 1984 film 'Folk Musicians of Rajasthan'). He is still remembered fondly by the family of Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, head of the Māṅgaṇiyār community in Jaisalmer, as I discovered during my own fieldwork; and, along with Komal Kothari, he must be credited with paving the way for subsequent research of folk music traditions in Rajasthan.

The analysis presented here draws to some extent from all of these important sources, with its primary objective being to determine how far classical concepts

of *rāga* can, or even should, be applied to the *rāg* theory of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. As we have noted, there are three fundamental and long-standing criteria that have been generally applied to *rāga* across the South Asian subcontinent since at least the time of the *Bṛhaddeśī*. These three criteria correspond significantly with Hood's broad definition of 'mode', as outlined above (to which he has added a further relevant dimension that he calls 'hierarchies of pitch', which encompasses classical concepts of *vādī* and *samvādī*, for example). Therefore, in order to test the extent to which the *rāgs* performed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs can be related to the classical concept of *rāga*, we must look for the following salient features:

1. An ascending and descending scale
2. Distinctive melodic movements
3. Hierarchies of pitch
4. Particular aesthetic and/or extra-musical associations

Conversely, any motifs or phrases that are not *rāg*-specific need to be isolated. In this respect, it is important that we do not incorrectly ascribe one performance to one particular *rāg*, since performances may vary within one *rāg* group, or across *rāg* categories, and this data would be significant. Because of such considerations, performances by a number of different musicians are analysed here. We must also guard against incorrectly identifying any underlying melodic features that may be the same for certain elements of a given performance, but do not take into account other important (perhaps even recurring) phrases.

Using this formulaic approach to the analysis of a selection of *rāgs* performed by senior musicians from both communities, cross-referenced with examples drawn from the North Indian classical music tradition, we will gain a clearer picture of the relationship between the classical *śāstriyā* concepts of *rāga*, and the *rāg* structures that are manifest in the *lōk sangīt* ('folk music') practices of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. In undertaking to analyse a selection of *rāg*-based musical material, as presented in performance by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, the purpose here is not only to represent the analytical details of performance practices, but also to say something about what is happening at a deeper

structural level within the repertoire: to this end, we will search for the presence of recurrent formulae, embedded within the musical structures.

So far in this section, we have taken an overview of how the concept of *rāga* has been developed, classified, and analysed, by both Indian and non-Indian scholars; and we have seen how relevant regional case studies can inform our consideration of the ways in which Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians may utilize *rāga* as a fundamental conceptual feature of their own unique musical knowledge system – a system which must also be considered within its own contextual background. We have also established the primary analytical focus as being to search for instances of *rāg* identity (or lack thereof) within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār performance practise. The following sections will now outline some additional analytical approaches, drawn from the fields of cognitive psychology and linguistics, which will be used in the present work to augment the more widely established methods of *rāga* analysis outlined above.

3.4.2. Music cognition and schema theory

Developed initially within the field of cognitive science, the concept of schemas alludes to the existence of plastic or rigid mental frameworks within the human mind that allow us to categorize, and interact with, recurrent patterns or modes of behaviour. George Mandler, writing in 1985, described schemas as "organizing experience"; and he asserted that these schematic frameworks were constructed automatically at a subconscious level during the course of successive interactions with diverse environmental situations:

> The schema that is developed as a result of prior experiences with a particular kind of event is not a carbon copy of that event; schemas are abstract representations of environmental regularities. We comprehend events in terms of the schemas they activate.
>
> Mandler (in D'Andrade 1995: 122)

Cognitive schema theory has previously been employed within the field of musicology in a number of different ways, and has proven itself to be particularly effective in mapping melodic frameworks. This kind of structural analysis can give rise to profound insights regarding the underlying processes at work in

music production, as evidenced by Richard Widdess' detailed study of the *dāphā* song repertoire in Nepal (discussed above) and in a forthcoming melodic analysis of a North Indian classical *ālāp* (Widdess: in print). In this work, Widdess argues that the success of *sitarist* Budhaditya Mukherjee's articulation, through improvised performance, of complex melodic structures, is enabled (in part at least) by an underlying set of frameworks that allow both musician and listener the opportunity to engage with one another in repeatedly innovative ways:

> Budhaditya Mukherjee's dynamic approach to rāga in this performance is only one aspect of a highly structured melodic discourse, in which many devices are employed that allow, and encourage, the formation of dynamic, schematic, and conscious expectations on the part of the listener: a melodic discourse that affords the listener an experience of engagement, anticipation, surprise, and fulfilment.
>
> Widdess (in print)

A recent thesis by Dave Kane (2008) has also used elements of cognitive schema theory to look at the different musical "paths" that two performers may take, as well as to map out the course of a performance framework, as it typically occurs within the Bengali vocal tradition of *Puthi-poṛa*. Kane emphasises the importance of using schemas adapted to melodic practice in the analysis of orally transmitted music traditions:

> Conventional notation is not able to represent the kind of variables that exist in tunes like these, nor can it reveal the cognitive processes used to generate them. In contrast, the melodic schemas do accommodate the variables that exist in a concise form, and represent generalised abstract models of what each *Puthi*-reader may have had in his mind when he came to read the different sections of his *Puthi*-texts.
>
> Kane 2008: 289

D'Andrade is careful to make a distinction between prototypes and schemas. A prototype is an instantiation of a schema; so from this we can draw a parallel between the movement from schema to prototype, from group to individual, and the parallel distinction in linguistic theory between dialect and idiolect:

> Note that a prototype is not the same as a schema; a schema is an organised framework of objects and relation which has yet to be filled in with concrete detail, while a prototype consists of a specified set of expectations. The filling in of the slots of a schema with an individual's standard default creates a *prototype*.
>
> (D'Andrade 1995: 124)

There is great potential for applying schema theory to the analysis of different instantiations of musical performances by the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, not least because their performances are to some degree re-invented and embellished during the course of each performance. Schematic analysis of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār melodies may be able to give us maps for the internal representations of music, which can in turn help us to understand how these specific musical structures perpetuate themselves in repeated performances. Moreover, the concept of having a pre-determined conceptual 'map' of the correct path to take during the course of a melodic performance has a clear precedent in the North Indian classical music tradition – namely, the *calan* – and we shall examine this association in some detail during the course of our analysis.

One criticism that has been levelled at schematic approaches to musical analysis is that they are too flexible, given that practically any aspect of human knowledge or behaviour can be fitted into the plastic framework of a schema (Widdess: pers. comm.); however, this need not be viewed as an invalidation of the approach, since it is the very universality and adaptability of schemas that lend themselves so well to studying the infinitely variable modes of human musical interactions. At the very least, the application of schematic musical analysis warrants continued testing, to find out how far the models can be pushed before they become tautological.

3.4.3. GTTM, cue abstraction and network analysis

One of the more influential methodologies to emerge from the field of cognitive musical analysis in recent years has been *A Generative Theory of Tonal Music* (hereafter GTTM), pioneered in the eponymous 1983 volume by composer and musicologist Fred Lerdahl and linguistic scholar Ray Jackendoff. In attempting the unimaginable task of a "formal description of the musical intuitions of a listener who is experienced in a musical idiom" (1983: 1), Lerdahl and Jackendoff produced a series of structural concepts and rules to explain the underlying cognitive processes at work in music understanding. The four strict hierarchical structures that GTTM posits as the basic framework for this understanding are grouping structures; metrical structures; time-span reductions;

and prolongational reductions. All of these organizational models establish tree-structures.

In her works on music perception, Irene Deliège has emphasized the importance of similarity and identity perception and categorisation in cognitive music analysis, which she views as a central theoretical construct to cognition theory – and which has been shown, for example by Simha Arom (1985), to be variable according to culture. Deliège attempts to circumscribe the ways in which culture systems can influence music perception with her cue abstraction theory, which seeks to empirically examine salient surface features of musical similarity using cognitive processes of categorization.

Building on the four general laws of music perception posited by GTTM (proximity, similarity, conflict and reinforcement), Deliège has used the notion of emergent boundaries within a total musical structure to emphasise the importance of similarity and difference as defining features of grouping between musical building blocks. The resultant theory of cue abstraction seeks not to invalidate the deeper, irreducible structural elements of a GTTM-style tree analysis, but rather to demonstrate that surface cues are of chief practical importance when listeners are attempting to understand a given piece of music. Paying closer attention to "the musical surface" is an approach that has also been advocated by Robert Fink (in Cook and Everist 2001) – although Fink goes one stage further than Deliège, insofar as he cautions against our over-using of hierarchic music theories as a means to cling onto "the defensive security of the depths".

Further, Roche's concepts of horizontality and verticality (1978) can be used to determine a conceptual cognitive structure for *rāg* knowledge, with the musical concept of *rāga* as the category, individual *rāg* structures at the superordinate level, and the melodic 'building blocks' of each *rāga* at the basic level. We should note here that this basic level must contain both rhythmic and melodic information, since *rāg* phrases cannot be rendered without some kind of temporal framework. There are, in one sense, two superordinate levels: at one extreme, we have the tonic; and, at the other extreme, we have the inviolable structure of the

rāga in question. Both are independent, and yet both depend on the existence of the other to define themselves and their role in musical expression.

The forms of analysis presented in this work have also been influenced by the concept of network analysis – a framework developed by Robert Gjerdingen (1988). Building upon the schematic theories put forward by Mandler, and others, from the field of cognitive psychology, Gjerdingen himself adapted the concept of network analysis from musicologist Eugene Narmour (see Narmour 1990 and 1992), in an attempt to develop a more flexible, cognitively attuned methodology to balance the Schenkerian-style 'top-down' approach to musical analysis advocated by more hierarchical systems such as GTTM. In describing the advantages of using a network-style analysis over tree-structures, Gjerdingen states:

> Whereas a tree-structure has a predictable shape and, more important, a strong influence on how an analysis proceeds, a network is unpredictable and places no initial constraints on an analysis.
>
> Gjerdingen 1988: 20

In addition to the advantages to be gained by using cognitive methods of analysis to shed light upon a music tradition within which the systems of knowledge are rarely made explicit outside the realm of performance, we should note that most studies of music cognition have been conducted within European or 'Western' cultural frameworks. The realization of music as a fundamentally diverse universal human agency, and the identification of the precise details of this universality, necessitates a dramatic broadening of the research field to encompass all global music traditions – a point noted by Ian Cross:

> There is a pressing need to extend the scope of research on music cognition into non-Western musical domains. Similarly, ethnomusicological evidence, and the success of music as a therapeutic medium, suggests that music has profound efficacy in social context; research is urgently required that explores the cognitive and socially interactive correlates of that efficacy.
>
> Cross et al. 2014:11

The efficacy of music as an interactive, synchronised form of social behaviour has resonance with recent studies of entrainment by Martin Clayton, Björn Merker, Ani Patel and others, which have shown that humans can coordinate their behaviour through musical cues – in particular, by becoming 'entrained' through underlying pulses present within metrical structures (see Clayton 2007: 77-79 for a more detailed definition of entrainment and its application to musicological studies). This biological process of 'beat induction' may be one of the fundamental cognitive components that enables humans to experience music as being rhythmically organised, even when a pulse may not be explicitly stated (see Patel 2008).

It has been noted that the capacity to entrain may be unique to humans (in Cross et al. 2014: 6); and Cross contends that the utilization of entrainment processes is one key factor that seems to differentiate music from language (ibid: 7). However, early studies with intelligent members of the animal kingdom – most famously, the study of Snowball the parrot conducted by Patel et al. (2008) – suggest that other species may also have the capacity for biomusicological entrainment. Moreover, vocal utterances can also employ processes of rhythm, metre, sound and gesture to convey meaning in a way that is inherently 'musical', and which could also manifest as a form of entrainment in, for example, communal chants. It may be useful to consider that both music and speech – whether written, recorded or enacted – can be construed as forms of communication, or languages.

Certainly it would seem clear that studies in both domains can inform each other significantly; and we shall now examine some ways in which analytical methodologies drawn from the field of linguistics can complement and enhance a cognitive approach to musicological analysis.

3.4.4. Linguistic methodologies

The relationship between music and language is a complex and fascinating one, with both processes being clearly differentiable from each other as distinct, yet highly complementary human agencies (Cross at al. 2014: 7). However, recent studies from the field of cognitive neuroscience show that there are startling

similarities between the ways in which the human brain processes musical and linguistic information.

For example, a PET study by Brown et al. (2006) has demonstrated that human music and language systems share the exceptional functional commonality of being processed by both sides of the brain, and that stimulae from both systems produce activity in many identical and widely distributed brain areas. Additionally, one recent study of developmental cognitive processes has suggested that both domains may employ similar capacities in early learning (see McMullen and Saffran 2004), and it has also been shown that enhanced musical facility can assist in the language learning process (for example see Wong et al. 2007).

Given such correlations, it would seem logical to examine ways in which the musicological employment of various models drawn from the neighbouring field of linguistics can enrich our own analytical approaches. This cross-fertilization has something of a precedent in studies of ethnomusicology: heralding such approaches were Nettl (1958) and Nattiez (1973); and more recent interdisciplinary works such as *Language and Music as Cognitive Systems* (ed. Rebuschat et al. 2011) demonstrate a significant development in the complementary study of these two fundamental processes of human interaction.

In his thesis on *sāraṅgī* style, Magriel (2001) borrowed the linguistic term 'idiolect' to distinguish between the individually characteristic musical style of one particular *sāraṅgī* musician and another. In comparing an individual's unique speech patterns to the 'signature' of an individual musician's sound production, Magriel defines a musician's idiolect as follows:

> This signature involves tone production, dynamics, interplay of sound and silence and his characteristic way of approaching notes – of navigating inter-tonal space.
>
> Magriel 2001: 214

In addition to the four idiolectical signifiers isolated above, we shall also consider a fifth element: rhythm. This aspect of musical style is discussed by Magriel, but as a separate, distinct category; here, rhythm will be regarded as an integral facet of idiolect, being a fundamental component of both an individual's

speech patterns, and their musical utterances. Two musicians learning a given style of music from the same sources will, of course, learn a similar repertoire of techniques. However, by examining distinctions between the minutiae of the musicians' performances, with particular regards to the five idiolectical categories distinguished here, we can develop a formal methodology for describing the unique voice of each performer, by identifying particular 'habitual' techniques, or delineating certain nuances in the performance of established melodic structures.

To extend this metaphor with language, we will also investigate the possibility that certain phrases could be described as belonging to a local musical 'dialect'. For example, when the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs play *kamāichā* or *sāraṅgī*, they frequently employ melodic ornaments that do not appear to be '*rāg*-specific' (I put this term in quotes, since it is clear at least that their conception of *rāga* is not identical to the classical conception – and the contextual highlighting of such key differences is an important component of this study). These ornamental flourishes are fast, technically challenging to produce, and seem to be part of a body of internalised stock phrases that are themselves highly characteristic of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār instrumental music. Distinguishing the application of such phrases within the context of performance is essential, so that we may distinguish what may "belong" to a specific *rāg*, and what is a more universally applicable musical device.

The importance of using formulaic banks of memorised musical material in the performance of North Indian classical music is well documented (see, for example, Lipiczsky 1985 and Slawek 1998); and a recent analytical study of the semi-classical genre *ṭhumrī* by Zadeh (2013) draws on linguistic works by Mackenzie (2000) and Wray (2002/2008) to account for the ubiquitous presence of characteristic formulas in *ṭhumrī* performances, which she argues are basic building blocks of the style that function in a similar way to language models, and which have social as well as musical significance. She also notes that these formulas occur at different levels of the genre, in a similar way to the notions of idiolect and dialect described above:

> At the broadest possible level, a particular pattern might be used commonly by a

> large number of *ṭhumrī* singers and might be considered 'in the language' of *ṭhumrī*. Another pattern might be shared primarily by singers of a particular *gharānā*, or by singers who specialise in a particular *aṅg* (branch) of *ṭhumrī* style. Yet another pattern might characterise the style of one individual, or of a prominent teacher and his or her pupils.
>
> Zadeh 2013: 67

These formulas, or strategies for performance, could in themselves be viewed as surface-level schemas – a point noted by Zadeh herself (ibid: 39) – and Zadeh's process of categorisation for the identified *ṭhumrī* formulas on a sliding scale, with "exact repetition of chunks of musical material" at one end and "the recurring use of abstract, generational musical strategies" at the other, is in some ways analogous to Powers' continuum between 'tune' and 'mode'. Moreover, we shall see that the music performance systems of the Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs employ some remarkably similar strategies to those found in *ṭhumrī*.

In borrowing from these selected linguistic methodologies, and applying them to musicological analysis, new perspectives can be cast upon musical and socially contextual data. Such cross-fertilization of linguistic and musicological methodologies will also undoubtedly shed further light on the elusive relationship between music and language.

3.5. Summary

In this chapter, we have explored some of the different ways in which musical knowledge can constitute itself; and we have situated knowledge of *rāga* as our main focal point for the analysis of Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār music performance. An interdisciplinary approach to music analysis is advocated – one that necessarily draws from diverse academic disciplines, given the specific complexities of the musical tradition in question as well as the multi-faceted phenomenon of musical knowledge itself as a conceptual category. Whilst cognitive schema theory connects all of the approaches employed here to some extent, no one method is all-encompassing; however, through a unity of diverse approaches, coupled with the transparent and experimental application of these methods, the data can be interrogated in many interesting and illuminating ways.

When approaching the study of music from such wide-ranging standpoints, categorization is an important research tool for compartmentalising ideas and introducing methodologies from other disciplines in an easily apprehensible fashion – just as it is an essential (if sometimes elusive) cognitive component of the musical knowledge-building process. As Zbikowsky points out:

> Our ability to categorize things is a cognitive process so basic and so pervasive that it can easily escape our notice.
>
> Zbikowsky 2002:12

The methodology presented alludes directly to the complex nature of networks that both form and inform our own musical understanding. Being grounded in a fundamentally ethnomusicological approach, this study seeks to situate the music tradition of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs within its own indigenous context, and to present the data as neutrally as possible, and in the form that the musicians themselves have presented it. From the analytical perspective of cognitive schema theory, we can also consider this musical knowledge as a form of process-based, psychological human construct that is used to mediate the ways in which the musicians organise and present their own unique modes of musical expression during the course of performance.

The application of cognitively framed approaches to music analysis enables us to get closer to understanding not only the musical structures themselves, and how they are constituted, but also the nature of the relationship between music and other communicative systems. At the heart of such investigations lies a drive to further elucitade the function of music within the realm of human interaction: specifically, how music bridges the gap between internal realities and external realities, or what Michael Moffatt calls the "real self" and the "social self" (see D'Andrade 1995: 131-132). This approach echoes a call made by Strauss and Quinn in their landmark work of psychological anthropology entitled *A Cognitive Theory of Cultural Meaning*:

> It is time to heed those who argue that culture is *both* public and private, both in the world and in people's minds.
>
> Strauss & Quinn 1999: 256

We have already seen that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs occupy a very interesting, if somewhat paradoxical, place within the fabric of South Asian music: they are lowly folk musicians, and yet they possess elite musical knowledge; they come from the most humble origins, and yet they have in some cases become international music stars; they are Muslims, and yet they often play for Hindu patrons. It is perhaps surprising that, given the richness of subject matter which a study of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music would seem to offer, they have until now escaped any detailed musicological analysis. The reasons for this are manifold; but we can speculate that one clear reason may lie embedded in a core ethnomusicological text. Concluding a response to peer reviews of his seminal treatise *The Anthropology of Music* (1964), Merriam states:

> In sum, it is recognized that ethnomusicology is compounded of two parts, the ethnological and the musicological. It is held that the ethnological, behavioural problems of music have not received balanced consideration with the musicological problems, and an attempt is made to redress this imbalance.
>
> Merriam 1966: 217

Merriam's point was excellently made, and some of us have taken heed. However, in the case of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, the pendulum would appear to have swung in the opposite direction: there have been no shortage of relevant ethnographic studies to draw from (including some excellent works), as we have seen; but there is a complete dearth of musicological analysis on the subject – that is to say, analysis that deals explicitly with an understanding of the sound object itself. One of the primary goals of the present work is to redress this imbalance.

CHAPTER FOUR

Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār Music Repertoires

4.1. Introduction

Having presented, in the previous chapter, a detailed frame of reference for our analysis of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* knowledge, we will now seek to identify the place and function of this knowledge within performance practice, by returning to the musical activities of our subjects. We have already established that this specialised form of musical knowledge is made manifest primarily during the course of music performance; but, in order to situate Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* performance within the context of their musical output as a whole, we must first take an overview of the existing repertoire.

After conducting a brief summary the wide-ranging repertoires of our musicians, we will then consider the various ways in which this material is acquired, developed, and subsequently transmitted from one generation to the next, taking particular note of any relative significance (or lack thereof) concerning classical concepts such as *rāga* and *tāla*. Audio and video examples will be used to illustrate these findings; and we shall conclude the chapter by looking at two specific case studies – one drawn from each community – that evidence a clear and direct influence of classical musical knowledge systems in the contemporary musical lineages of both the Laṅgās and the Māṅgaṇiyārs.

In order to provide as current a view of performance practice as possible, the data presented in this chapter has been drawn primarily from four contemporary sources: Barucha 2003; Neuman et al. 2006; Rajasthan-specific data from the 'Growing Into Music' project (the filming for which took place between 2009 and 2011); and information gathered during the course of my own fieldwork in Western Rajasthan, which was conducted during three successive trips that took place between February 2013 and March 2014.

4.2. Repertoires

4.2.1. Ceremonial and life cycle songs

One of the main contexts for music making in Rajasthan, and elsewhere, is as a constituent part of socially significant life cycle ceremonies. In their hereditary, caste-based role as professional musicians, both Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have traditionally been expected to sing and perform at the important life events of their patrons' families, as well as for ceremonial and life cycle rituals within their own local communities.

As we have already seen, the extent to which such patron/client obligations are now enforced is increasingly variable from community to community; and there are some cases where the patronage system seems to have been abandoned entirely, due to patrons moving out of the locality or otherwise socially distancing themselves from the traditional modes of *jajmān*/*kāmin* relationships (Khatri: pers. comm.). However, many patrons still value the *jajmāni* system, benefitting from the social prestige that such arrangements can still afford them, and taking pride in the fact that they are able to contribute to the support and maintenance of their local communities. Likewise, many musicians and their families – particularly in rural areas – continue to share in the mutually beneficial communal aspects of the system.

Life cycle ceremonies in Rajasthan can be broadly divided into three categories: *jamam* ('birth'); *paran* ('marriage'); and *maran* ('death'). We shall leave aside the sombre matter of *maran*, since music performance is generally abstained from in both Hindu and Muslim communities throughout Western Rajasthan during the immediate period following the death of a family or community member – although there is anecdotal evidence to suggest that some form liturgical repertoire is performed by the *Lohār*, or blacksmith caste members, for high caste Hindu families in the Jaisalmer region (Mahecha: pers. comm.). The Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are invariably called upon to perform specifically for *maṅgal* – joyous and auspicious – occasions, such as birthdays, religious celebrations, ritual feasts, and marriage ceremonies.

There are particular rituals attached to each birth and marriage event; and certain song groups can be specifically associated with each ritual category, as we shall outline below. However, it is important to point out that the professional folk musicians are generally not expected to participate in any domestic rituals that take place within their patrons' homes (Neuman et al. 2006: 53). Besides the fact that there are separate repertories of songs traditionally sung by women from the wedding families in such circumstances (which we shall not cover here, since we are concerned only with the material employed by the male professional Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians), we can also note that there is a general social embargo on the low caste musicians entering the house of the patron.

Janam ('birth')

Although specific conventions may vary in detail from community to community, there is a general practice of having Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians visit to sing for the patron's family on sequential occasions: firstly, before a child is born (around the sixth month of pregnancy); then, soon after the child is born (usually within two weeks of the birth); for the *mundan* – the first ritual hair cutting, or tonsure (typically performed on the child's first or third birthday); and on subsequent birthdays throughout the individual's life. This practice cements societal bonding between patron and musician at the most essential familial level, since the newborn child will one day become a *jajmān* for the musician's own children.

In terms of birth song content, context and type, Neuman et al (2006: 54) state:

> The songs sung at this time are similar in content: either welcoming the child into the world or praising the mother. The most common genre of songs in this context is the *halariya* sung by the musicians at the home of the patron.

Examples of *hālariya* (or *pālaria*, as the Laṅgā musicians sometimes call these typically joyful songs) have come to be performed by the musicians outside the context of childbirth, and can be found on many extant commercial recordings. For example, on the 1988 CD 'Vocal music of Rajasthan', a track entitled 'Haalario' is performed by a Māṅgaṇiyār ensemble featuring Bundu, Gazi and Anwar Khan; and on the 1996 CD 'Songs of the Distant Sands' we find a song

entitled ‘Dhan Dhan Halaria Ri Me’, which is classified in the liner notes as “a childbirth song” and is performed by a mixed group of Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, including senior musicians Kadar Khan Laṅgā and Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār. A rough translation of the lyrics for this song is supplied in the liner notes, and gives a clear idea of the kind of lyrical content that is commonly employed in *hālariya* compositions:

> "Blessed is the mother who has given birth to a new life of a child. Joyous moment has arrived, let us call musicians with their Dhol to sing auspicious songs, call the carpenter for making the cradle, tailor for sewing new clothes, cobbler for shoes, goldsmith for ornaments..."

The lyrics above reveal a number of important features: firstly, we can see that the musicians are considered to be necessary participants in an intimate and fundamentally significant family event. This notion can be extended to the general function of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs within the patronage system, insofar as their songs, their presence – even their very instruments – are considered to be auspicious for the patrons and their families. The musicians are also situated within a complex network of caste-based professions – carpenters, tailors, cobblers, goldsmiths, and soforth – all of whom are necessary for the correct ritual and practical tasks to be performed following the birth of a child into a high caste family. Thus the traditional social order is both emphasised, and reinforced, through the performance of such songs; and the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are the heralds of this social order.

The other interesting thing to note, regarding this particular recording, is that in the CD liner notes the song in question is ascribed a certain *rāga* (Sameri) and *tāla* (*tīntar*). This matter requires further investigation – particularly given the fact that Sameri (itself not a *rāga* known to the North Indian classical system by name) is a melody type that some Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians are thought to associate with death, rather than with the happy occasion of marriage (Chaudhuri: pers. comm.). It must also be considered that, for the purposes of such commercial recordings, certain aspects of repertoire may have been taken out of context – or even altered – to suit the demands of those responsible for producing and releasing the recordings.

But it seems clear, at least, that the senior musicians involved in this particular recording were both willing and able to apply some kind of pseudo-classical theoretical construct to describe the musical framework of this song – and there are numerous examples of this. We can also surmise that the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians involved in the recording were able to reach an agreement on the structural nature of this framework; and then could perform the song together accordingly, with successful results. Therefore, we can postulate that some form of shared theoretical conception is present, even at the most essential level of repertoire.

Paran ('marriage')

Weddings in Rajasthan are complex social affairs, often being drawn out over a number of weeks; and there are specific songs connected with virtually every aspect of wedding ritual – from the sewing of the bride's dress, to the moment of *moklava*, when she finally moves in with her husband and his family. Again, the professional musicians are not involved in all parts of the patrons' wedding ceremonies; but the association of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs with auspiciousness gives the patron an added incentive for asking them to attend and perform. The reciprocal nature of this bond is particularly emphasised on such occasions, since the *jajmān* must also provide his musicians with a gift (*neg*) whenever a marriage occurs – even if the musician is not able to attend, and even when marriages take place within the musicians' own families (Neuman 2006: 57).

We can distinguish certain categories of wedding songs that are performed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs – either as an accompaniment to specific ritual events, or for general occasional entertainment during the course of the wedding celebrations. Figure 4.1 (adapted from Neuman et al. 2006: 142-143) details the various names and contexts of these song types for both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoires, with evidence of *rāga* usage within each genre added in the final column.

Figure 4.1: Categories of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār wedding songs

Song Genre	**Occasion**	**Community**	***Rāg* Usage**
Banna/Banni	Bride/Groom songs	Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār	Variable
Padwa	Dawn song	Māṅgaṇiyār	UNKNOWN
Toranio	Groom arrives	Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār	Kamāijī
Gali/Pali	Jokes/riddles	Māṅgaṇiyār	Variable
Vidai/Bidai	Bride leaves home	Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār	UNKNOWN
Mamero	Family gifts given	Māṅgaṇiyār	UNKNOWN
Solu	?	Māṅgaṇiyār	UNKNOWN
Khama	Processional	Māṅgaṇiyār	UNKNOWN
Haldī	Turmeric applied	Laṅgā/Māṅgaṇiyār	Variable
Chanvari	Wedding canopy	Māṅgaṇiyār	UNKNOWN
Madkar	Departure of guests	Māṅgaṇiyār	Variable (Sūb?)

With the exception of *rāg* Kamāijī being explicitly related to *Toranio* songs (an issue that we will come to subsequently), Figure 4.1 shows that much is still to be learnt regarding the applicability of *rāg* formats within the important sub-genre of wedding songs. It is also evident that certain categories of wedding song have, to date, only been identified within the Māṅgaṇiyār repertoire. However, no detailed fieldwork has yet been conducted on the subject of Laṅgā wedding songs; and it is conceivable that more correlations may emerge during the course of a currently ongoing project to catalogue the entire extant repertoire of Laṅgā songs, which is taking place under the aegis of the Rupayan Sansthan (Kuldeep Kothari: pers. comm.). But it does seem likely from this evidence that *rāg* structures do not usually play a significant explicit role in the performance of these calendrical and life cycle songs.

Nevertheless, the few existing correlations between Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoire here are significant – most especially in the category of *Toranio* songs, which are sung when the bridegroom approaches the wedding venue at the home of the bride's family. In Hindu culture, a *toran* is a decorative door hanging – considered to represent wealth and a happy marriage – which is placed above the

entrance of the home for sanctity, and to attract good luck. In Rajasthan, marriage *torans* are typically made from wood, and often carry a carving of the auspicious *mor*, or peacock – a symbol of love, a state symbol, and currently the national emblem of India. The *Toranio* songs continue to be sung as the wedding procession passes under the archway; and the groom (usually mounted on horseback) touches his sword to the *toran* above the entrance, symbolically asserting both his territory and his virility.

The significance of there being a shared tradition of singing *Toranio* songs is twofold: firstly, the fact that Laṅgā musicians also follow this practice would seem to add weight to the hypothesis that the Sindhi Sipāhī were once themselves Bhati Rājputs, since the use of *torans* in marriage ceremonies is a traditionally Hindu custom (Neuman et al. 2006: 221); secondly, *Toranio* songs have not become staple additions to the concert or recording repertoires of either community, suggesting that this link between the repertoires predates the interventions of Komal Kothari, which began in the 1950s. And, if the Sindhi Sipāhī were indeed once Bhati Rājputs, then it also conceivable that the Laṅgā musicians, as their hereditary retainers, may once have hailed from the same section of society as the Māṅgaṇiyārs.

However, we do find that some of these wedding songs have been incorporated into performance contexts that take place outside of their traditional setting, as evidenced by the many commercial CD releases featuring Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār bride and bridegroom songs. Certain wedding songs seem to have become staple features of the musicians' stage performance repertoire, such as the Laṅgā bridegroom song 'Kesaria' – the lyrics of which act as an explicit form of instruction, once again helping to codify and reinforce socially correct Hindu modes of behaviour during the highly ritualised marriage process:

> "Please tell the bridegroom to stop for sometime on his horse. Let him make good relation with the Brahmin who may select auspicious day for marriage. Let him stop at the goldsmiths for ornaments, bracelets, and at the perfumers for some nice scent…"
>
> MY3094: CD sleevenotes

We can tentatively conclude that, whilst designations of *rāga* may be applied to the melodic structures of some wedding songs, the extent to which this is the case (and how consistently such designations are applied across both communities) is not yet clear. Certainly such terminology has never been made consistently relevant to the musical structure of all wedding songs by the musicians themselves; and this would seem to suggest that there is at least some partiality in the way that classical music theory and terminology has been applied within – and to – the song repertoires of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. In short, not all Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār songs need be performed "in" a particular *rāg*, either implicitly or explicitly.

4.2.2. Local folksongs

For Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, the raw material for aspects of traditional repertoire that exist beyond the confines of what is required for life cycle events has been drawn primarily from a vast reservoir of regional folksongs – some of which are common to diverse communities across Western Rajasthan, or even have connections to the neighbouring regions of Gujarat, Punjab, and the Sindh. These songs can be grouped together in lyrical themes, covering a wide range of natural and social phenomena that can be imagined and experienced in the regional environment. There are songs concerning the seasons, and their associated festivals; songs relating to various flora and fauna; and songs relating to popular anthropomorphic objects and socially symbolic individuals, such as the cheeky diamond seller, the *Maṇihāro* (who is really Krishna in disguise), or the beauty and grace of the ladies carrying life-giving water from the well.

The Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs also commonly perform a number of overtly religious songs, known collectively as *bhajans*, which can invoke both Hindu and Sufi ideologies. Moreover, many folksong lyrics evidence multiple layers of metaphorical meaning, giving rise to a degree of open-endedness in their lyrical interpretation: this allows for the songs to be enjoyed at different levels of abstraction, ranging from the experience of simple human pleasures to supreme union with the divine. Certain songs contain elements of moral or social instruction; and others may glorify the historical actions of various rulers and saints. Neuman et al. (2006: 230) note that these heroic songs "are constantly

evolving with new texts and melodies", suggesting that there is a certain flexibility and adaptability inherent within the wide-ranging folksong repertoire.



Plate 4.1: Young girls dressed as local folk heroes Mūmal and Mahendra. Jaisalmer, 23rd February 2013

Romance is a recurrent lyrical theme in folksongs from Rajasthan; and the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are particularly adept in rendering ballads detailing the events of various love stories that have become famous across the region. The generic titles of these romantic song categories are often grouped under the names of the invariably star-crossed protagonists, such as 'Dhola-Mārū'; 'Nāgji-Nāgwanti'; and the famous 'Mūmal-Mahendra' ballads that are still especially popular in the region of Jaisalmer (see Plate 4.1), where that particular love story is said to have its historical basis. We shall look closer at the details of this romantic tale in Chapter Seven, since there is a connection between the Sindhi folksong 'Bālochan' and one of the more popular ballads extolling the beauties of the fair maiden Mūmal.

Figure 4.2 is an attempt to categorise the diverse body of folksong that is employed by the Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs. The song data has been extracted from fieldwork, archival and studio recording contexts; and the aim is once again to highlight areas in which the two repertoires cross; where they are distinct from one another; and to show incidences where the usage of *rāg* frameworks have been indicated.

Figure 4.2: Categories of Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār folksongs

Song Category	**Examples**	**Community**	**Use of *Rāg***
Devotional	Mira/Kabir/Surdas *bhajans*; *Olakh*	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Birbhās; Kalyān; Āsā; Jōg; etc.
Animals	*Soriyo*(‘boar’); *Kariyo* (‘camel’)	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Sameri; Māru; etc.
Objects	*Jhultā Mādaliya* (‘hanging amulet’); *Antario* (‘perfume’)	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Bhairvī; Kamāijī; etc.
Temporal	*Prabhati* (dawn song)	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Prabhati; etc.
Seasonal	*Luṇāgar* (rain song); *siyalo* (winter songs)	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Soraṭh; variable
Festive	*lor/phag* (songs for Holi)	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Variable
Occupational	*Maṇihāro* (‘jewel merchant’); *Longodar* (‘clove seller’)	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Bhairvī; Sūb; etc.
Heroic Ballads	‘*Ḍhola-Māru*’; ‘*Mūmal*’	Laṅgā/Māṅganiyār	Māru; Rāṇo; etc.

Figure 4.2 shows that, whilst there is a highly variable incidence of *rāg* usage across both communities within the overarching genre of folksongs, nevertheless recorded examples citing explicit use of *rāg* terminology can be found in most categories. Moreover, in the sub-genre of heroic and romantic ballads, certain *rāgs* emerge as being explicitly connected with certain stories: for example, *rāg*

Rāṇo is typically associated with the story of Mūmal and Mahendra, and *rāg* Māru with songs of the 'Ḍhola-Māru' legend. The popular camel song 'Kariyo' (also known as 'Kariyā') is, in fact, set in *rāg* Māru because it describes a part of the story, where the eponymous hero is riding on his faithful camel to meet his lover. However, interestingly, the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās perform this song in *rāg* Bhairvī, indicating perhaps that this song has been incorporated into the 'Ḍhola-Māru' legend from a general pool of pre-existing desert folksong material.

Bhajans would appear to be set in any number of *rāgs*, or none at all – as one might expect, given the width of the sub-category itself – whereas conversely there is less evidence for *rāg* usage in the genre of festive songs. Again, more research of both the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoires needs to be done in order to establish this; but we may speculate that ritual, festival and life cycle songs are generally more likely to be pre-composed pieces, and are therefore less likely to be ascribed to a particular melodic framework. Seasonal songs also appear to be variable in their ascribed *rāg* applicability; although there is one interesting case of a song called 'Barsālo', which belongs to the popular sub-genre of *Chomāso*, or 'rain songs', being consistently associated with *rāg* Malhār. 'Barsālo' is also sometimes referred to as being a 'Mallari' – itself a term that has long been applied to a popular South Indian *rāgam*.

Perhaps most importantly, the picture emerges of a huge reservoir of regional folksongs that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are all able to draw from. In fact, these songs belong to everyone within the Thar Desert region. Amateur and professional folk singers and musicians, women and children singing at home, labourers singing work songs in the fields, the driver of the *tuk-tuk*: everybody understands and recognises the content and context of these songs, to some extent; and the whole community participates in their survival and promulgation, for the very practical reasons of enjoyment, experience, and feelings of interconnection – both with their own sense of identity, with each other, and with their external environment. However, specialised knowledge regarding the applicability of *rāg* formats to a certain selection of these communal folksongs is one of the primary markers that sets both the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs apart as professional musicians of the highest order.

4.2.3. General approaches to performance

The general categorisation that senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians apply to the performance of a given folksong can be broadly divided into two categories, known colloquially by the musicians as *baḍā gānā* ('big songs') and *choṭā gānā* ('little songs'). Neuman et al. refer to these broad categories using the Hindi translations *moṭā gīt* and *choṭā gīt*, adding that these designations "are only used by professional musicians." (2006: 144) Most importantly, it must be understood that these terms allude to both the perceived compositional sophistication that the rendition of a particular song may allow, and the level of musical knowledge that is required to perform the piece.

These terms are to some extent self-explanatory, being used predominantly by senior musicians to distinguish the lighter, simpler (and generally shorter) songs of the repertoire from pieces that are composed of more substantial and specialised musical content – the *baḍā gānā*. One gets the sense from talking to senior musicians that the 'little songs' are better suited for lighter occasions and less knowledgeable or demanding audiences, even sometimes being considered more suitable for children and developing musicians to play; whereas performance of the 'big songs' is seen to require a high level of musical competency and a certain seriousness of intent, both on the part of the musician and the listener.

Performing a *choṭā gānā* requires no specialised musical knowledge, other than an understanding of the basic song structure (which is often repetitive); and these songs can be performed in virtually any appropriate context. As such, they are often the first songs that a young Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musician will learn. The *choṭā gānā* are typically simple in terms of melodic and rhythmic structure, short in duration, and may have a particularly catchy chorus or refrain. Younger, less experienced musicians will frequently perform the easily learnt *choṭā gānā* for fun at home, and for making easy money when performing as itinerant entertainers, most commonly in the working contexts of singing and playing for tourists at hotels and restaurants, or busking at historical sites in the major towns and cities. From this perspective, *choṭā gānā* can be considered either as an end-

goal in themselves, or as a stepping-stone towards learning the more complex pieces.

An instance of a young Māṅgaṇiyār musician performing a *choṭā gānā* is shown in example **V 4.1**, where the talented vocalist Moti Khan sings a song called 'Sōrjiyo', accompanied by community leader Akbar Khan on *dholak*. The structure of the song is simple, consisting of two simple melodic lines (**A** and **B**) that are sung in a repeating, alternating pattern, with a variation (**C**) being inserted as a transitional third section before the whole figure is reprised, thus: **||:AABBAABBC:||AABBAABB**. There is no unmetred introduction to the performance, nor is there any exposition – or implication – of *rāga*.

Knowledge of *rāga* is, however, an essential component in the rendition of 'big songs', with its overt application to a performance structure being one of the primary compositional factors that distinguishes *baḍā gānā* from *chhotā gānā*. As such, the songs that we are concerned with for the purposes of analysis in the present work are typically rendered in the *baḍā gānā* format, when *rāg* knowledge is most explicitly made evident. In addition to this added layer of melodic complexity, Kothari (in Barucha 2003: 334) has also observed that the use of certain rhythmic stresses in conjunction with a lyrical refrain (a device which he says the musicians refer to as *mukhaṛā*) is a specific feature of Māṅgaṇiyār *baḍā gānā* performances:

> It is the words and phrases of the refrain or first line… that dictate the rhythmic accompaniment by creating a certain pattern of stresses. Though not all songs sung by the Manganiyars have this *mukhaṛā* feature, all their *moṭa gīt* [big song] compositions do.

Whilst we shall take note of any such rhythmic devices in our subsequent analyses, one further essential constituent part of *baḍā gānā* song performance is the inclusion of poetic couplets – referred to by the musicians as *duhā* – that are usually delivered during the unmetered introductory section of the song performance, but which may also provide structure for the song lyrics. Besides representing an important element in both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge systems, the *duhā* compositions will sometimes refer explicitly to a particular *rāg*. We will examine some examples of this during the course of the

analyses presented in Chapters Five and Seven; but at this stage, a general explanation of the term, and its usage by the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, is appropriate.

4.2.4. *Duhā* and *subrāj*

We shall finally present an overview of two significant lexical components in the functioning of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoires. Although neither practices are unique to our folk musicians – a number of other local castes, such as the Charans, the Bhil and the Wazīr, also keep *subrāj* genealogies for their patrons, and many popular Rajasthani songs, poems and ballads (including the Pābūjī epic) are rendered in *duhā* verse – both have become synonymous with Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār professional activities; and '*duhā*' has even been advanced as the label for a quasi-classical structural component of musical performance. For this reason, the subject of *duhā* receives particular attention here.

Duhā

There has been some confusion regarding the use of the term *duhā* in relation to Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical practice. Generally speaking, the Marwari term '*duhā*' (Hindi: *dohā*) refers to a North Indian poetic construct of two lines, or couplets, which can be developed into a verse format by presenting the couplets in series. A *duhā* couplet can encapsulate a complete philosophical idea, or metaphorical concept (Khatri: pers. comm.), in much the same way as a Japanese *haiku* may be considered as a total work; or, many *duhās* may be placed in series, for the purposes of creating a narrative. However, Neuman et al. (2006: 144) state that *duhā* "is also that introductory part of the song which is non-metred and is in some ways akin to the *ālāp* in the classical music tradition".

Whilst it is true that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs will often sing *duhā* couplets during the introductory section of a *baḍā gānā* song performance (which is also where the *rāga* structure will first be made manifest), the musicians that I worked with always associated *duhā* more specifically with the poetic form. They did not seem to view *duhā* as being conceptually equivalent to (or inseparable from) the

unmetered musical section of a performance. Thus, for example, when I asked Muse Khan Laṅgā to give me examples of *duhā*, he recited and wrote down lyrical verse couplets for me.

It is important to note that the *duhā* couplet structure can be employed not only for the presentation of lyrical material during the unmetered introductory section of a performance, but also as the metrical framework for song lyrics – indeed, *duhās* may be present in both sections (see, for example, the cross-community analysis of 'Bālochan' song performances presented in Chapter Seven). This implies that the term '*duhā*' cannot easily be made equivalent to the classical term '*ālāp*', which always signifies a characteristically unmetered performance mode.

In many cases, the initial rendition of a *duhā* composition (that is to say, made distinct from any *duhās* that may be presented in the subsequent song performance) will be juxtaposed with a quasi-metrical instrumental section – even though this metrically framed, intermediate sub-section typically occurs within the framework of the unmetered introduction – and our subsequent analyses will give clear examples of this. However, when referring specifically to the unmetered introductory section of a *baḍā gānā* performance, where *rāg* structure is first and foremost made evident, the musicians will only use the name of the given *rāg*. Indeed, they would not usually even reference this, unless prompted to do so; but, as we shall see, an association is made implicit within the music performance itself.

The lyrical subject matter of a particular *duhā* may relate either to the aesthetic or musical context of the *rāg*, as noted above; or to the subject matter of the upcoming song; or to both. Moreover, in terms of melodic content and structure, we will see that the *rāg* presented by the musicians in the unmetered prelude section is alluded to within the context of both the quasi-metrical *duhā* section, and the subsequent metered song performance, with varying degrees of specificity.

It is important to note that the inclusion of *duhās* in the unmetered introductory section of a *baḍā gānā* performance is not obligatory. More than one *duhā* may

be presented; or none at all, if the performance is instrumental, or if the featured vocalist decides to omit *duhās* during the introductory stage. All of these interrelated factors are flexible and variable, depending in all instances upon the performers, and how they choose to adapt, or react, to a given context for performance. The classical term '*ālāp*' was never used by any of the musicians that I worked with, in any context: so we will follow the musicians' most consistently expressed convention here, of referring to the unmetered introductory sections by their *rāg* designation; the sung or recited lyrical couplets as *duhā*; and the song section by its given title, being a *gānā*.

To give an instance of this idealised three-stage macrostructure for *baḍā gānā* song performance, let us consider an example provided by Muse Khan Laṅgā on a busy morning at his Jodhpur family home (see **V 4.2**). In this solo exposition, the musician presents a very clear overall performance structure, with the instrumental form of *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār being first made manifest in a short, unmetered introductory section. This is followed by the quasi-metrical vocal presentation of three *duhā* couplets – at least two of which explicitly mention the name of *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār – and the delivery of which is accompanied with certain Sindhi *sāraṅgī* melodies, using predominantly *rāg*-specific pitches and melodic motifs. This preamble eventually leads to a consistently metrical performance of the Sindhi folksong 'Kanuro' – the rendering of which also employs hierarchies of pitch and *rāg*-specific melodic motifs, as well as a lyrical verse structure that is composed of *duhā* couplets.

As noted above, we shall subsequently examine similarly structured performances during the detailed cross-community analysis presented Chapter Seven; but for the moment, let us note that the concise explanation Muse Khan gave to describe his own performance in this instance was: "*rāg* Gauḍ Malhār, Gauḍ Malhār kā *duhā*, aur *gānā* 'Kanuro'". This translates simply as "*rāg* Gauḍ Malhār, Gauḍ Malhār *duhā* couplets, and the song 'Kanuro'", and would seem to indicate a very clear and ordered conception, on the part of the musician, as to how this particular kind of performance suite should be structured.

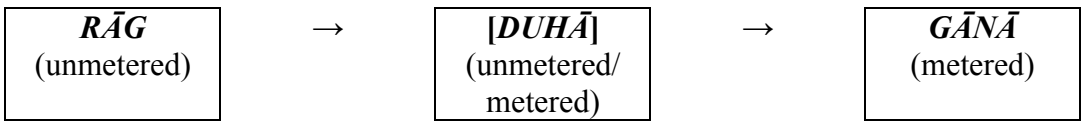
During my work with him, Muse Khan typically described his *baḍā gānā* renditions using these terms; and, in this regard, it is notable that senior Laṅgā

and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians will always refer to the incidence of a particular '*rāg*' that is utilised during the course of performance, rather than to the abstract theoretical concept of '*rāga*'. This subtle, but nonetheless striking use of a specifically performance-related form of classical terminology would again seem to indicate a more implicit, operational underlying approach to music theory – even though such concepts are sometimes (though perhaps rarely) advanced within the more explicit, representational context of pedagogy.

There were occasional instances where Muse Khan would play a *baḍā gānā* song for me, but without presenting any *duhā* couplets in the unmetered introductory section; however, even when performing this truncated form of rendition – of the 'Bālochan' suite, for example (which I asked him to play many times) – he never performed the song without first establishing *rāg* Soraṭh as both a melodic entity in itself, and as a general basis for the subsequent melodic structure. This methodology was consistent with Muse Khan's general approach to the performance of all *baḍā gānā*.

Using these examples, we can establish a broad working model (Figure 4.3) for the conceptual macrostructure of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *baḍā gānā* performance, to be tested against other performances across the communities:

Figure 4.3: Model for *baḍā gānā* performance macrostructure



As this hypothetical model implies, the bracketed *duhā* section may or may not be included in the performance of a *baḍā gānā*, just as the metrical status of this intermediate section is typically variable; but the presence of an unmetered, introductory *rāg*-like structure at the beginning of the rendition is an essential component in the overall development of the *baḍā gānā* performance macrostructure – as is the eventual performance of a particular song. However,

the relationships between the three distinct phases of performance require more detailed investigation: for example, to what degree is the melodic content of the *gānā* section contingent on the material presented in the previous sections? Does the musician have a particular song, or even a particular *rāg*, in mind, when he first begins his extemporisation? We shall examine these issues presently.

Subrāj

The practice of memorising and periodically reciting genealogies for one's patrons, known generally as *subrāj*, is a key component in the traditional function of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs as professional caste members in Rajasthan. The term '*subrāj*', or '*śubhrāj*', actually refers to a specific kind of poetic recitation, belonging to the Rajput-style genealogies that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs keep and recite for their *jajmāns*. However, there are many kinds of family records – both oral and written – that are kept by other Rajasthani lower castes such as the *Bhāṭs* (who function primarily as puppeteers), and the Bhil, who are also *Pābū* priests and folk musicians (see Neuman et al. 2006: 190). The one thing that all of these part-time genealogists have in common is that they receive recompense from their patrons for the socially important task of preserving and orally proclaiming family records.

Video extracts **V 4.3** and **V 4.4** show extracts of *subrāj* being performed by senior musicians Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Muse Khan Laṅgā, respectively. In **V 4.3**, Akbar Khan, who is the de facto head of the Māṅgaṇiyār community in Rajasthan, recites a short section of the *subrāj* that he and his family keep for the Jaisalmer royal line – who have, in turn, been the patrons of Akbar's family for at least seven generations. Akbar informed me that he recites this particular *subrāj* whenever he goes to the royal household (which, by various accounts, he does almost every day); and that each time he recites even a small fragment of the *subrāj* for his *jajmāns*, the royal family members who are present must give him some recompense. The footage for this example was shot in Akbar's own extensive home in Jaisalmer, which was provided for his family by the Jaisalmer royals many years before.

In **V 4.4**, Muse Khan Laṅgā demonstrates this situation in action, within the context of reciting a short *subrāj* for two of his Sindhi Sipāhī patrons, filmed in their home village of Baḍnava. The Laṅgā practice of reciting Rajput-style genealogies for their patrons would seem to support the view put forward by Neuman et al. (2006: 221) that the Sindhi Sipāhī were originally high caste Rajputs: however, it is evident that some Sindhi Sipāhī employ another caste, called *Wazīr*, for the keeping of their genealogies (ibid. 229); and the precise origins of the Sindhi Sipāhī and their relationship with the Laṅgā musicians are by no means clear.

In this particular example, we see Muse Khan approaching the home of his *jajmāns*, then sitting with them on the porch outside the front door and reciting a short passage of *subrāj*; whereupon the patrons give him some 10-rupee notes. The fact that Muse Khan was able to orchestrate this situation for my benefit – literally cajoling the *jajmāns* into taking part in what was effectively a staged scene – demonstrates that the relationship between the Laṅgās and their patrons can indeed be on a much more equal footing than in many traditional *jajmān*/*kāmin* bonds.

There were many other occasions where I witnessed Muse Khan interacting with Sindhi Sipāhī *jajmāns* in Baḍnava; and the general dynamic was always more akin to old friends resuming an acquaintance, rather than dominant figures talking down to a subordinate. I was particularly surprised to discover that, when Muse Khan had procured the services of a driver to take us for my first visit to Baḍnava, the man (who was clearly subordinate to Muse) was in fact from a *jajmān* family himself. However, it should also be noted that Muse Khan is a particularly senior member of the Sāraṅgīya Laṅgā community, and he is considered to be the foremost Sindhi *sāraṅgī* player of his generation, like his father before him: as such, he is accorded a great deal of respect from Laṅgās, Māṅgaṇiyārs and patrons alike.

Yet another surprise came when Muse Khan revealed to me, in the latter stages of fieldwork, that he keeps written records of the *subrāj* for his *jajmāns*, along with the words to numerous *duhā*, *bhajans*, and *bandiśes*. We will see more evidence of repertoire-specific literacy in the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār

communities presently; and, with regards to the Māṅgaṇiyār recitation of *subrāj*, it is significant that the seniormost expert on the subject in Hamīra village – Kadar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār – also keeps a voluminous written record of the ever-growing genealogical accounts of the Hamīra Māṅgaṇiyārs' various Rajput patrons (Magriel: pers. comm.). The important point here is that these accounts are old; and their living keepers are old. This suggests not only that senior figures in both Laṅgā and Mangnaiyar communities depend upon a certain degree of literacy to maintain some of the core aspects of their tradition, but also that this phenomenon is not a recent development.

The keeping of written records for these oral genealogies may prove to be even more significant, if the *jajmān/kāmin* system becomes further undermined. Indeed, such a process of change seems likely; and there are some suggestions that the practice of keeping *subrāj* is already becoming less relevant to many of the younger musicians, even at the most senior levels of the community. Muse Khan's fifth son, Asin (who is considered to be the finest Sindhi *sāraṅgī* player of his generation, and with whom we will become further acquainted presently) confided in me that neither he nor eldest brother Samsu had learned the *subrāj* yet, since they had been concentrating on developing their more lucrative (and perhaps more creative and socially liberating) careers as concert artists. Indeed, Asin no longer even considers himself as a resident of Baḍnava village, where his patrons are still based – although he did add that he would "learn from the book" when the time came. Regardless of how the tradition of *subrāj* fares in coming years, these textual representations are invaluable historical documents, as well as being priceless receptacles of community heritage.

Although there is no specific influence of classical music knowledge in the recitation of *subrāj*, this fundamentally poetic practice ties the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in very firmly with the development, rise, and subsequent dominance of the various controlling tribes of Western Rajasthan – in particular, the Bhati and Rathor Rajputs for the Māṅgaṇiyārs, and the Sindhi Sipāhī (who, as we have already noted, may well have once been Rajputs themselves) for the Laṅgās. This positions our folk musicians within a complex historical and contemporary network of high caste social interactions – of which they are an

integral part, and to which they are still very much a party. Not only has the control of this sensitive, prestigious, and fundamentally personal genealogical knowledge given them access to the kinds of social circumstances that may have also provided opportunities for the acquisition of classical music knowledge, as discussed in the historical context presented in Chapter Two; but it has also put them in a position of some social influence.

4.3. Methods of teaching and learning

During the course of my fieldwork with the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, it often seemed that explicitly stating the names of a certain song, or an aspect of performance – indeed, the very act of applying labels for any features of musical structure or repertoire – was not accorded any particular importance by the musicians themselves. Certainly they did not attach the same significance as I did (necessarily, as an outsider looking in from a research perspective) to the process of understanding and categorizing their repertoire by using identifiable, articulated markers. Sometimes when, following a performance, I inquired after the name of a particular song or *rāg*, the musicians would smile tolerantly and give me the name; at other times, they would openly laugh at me for placing weight on such a matter.

The most important thing for the Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musician to be able to do, seemingly, is to internalize a piece of music, and to become fully aware of its appropriate function, so that he can perform it to maximum effect at the optimal moment. The diverse genres of life cycle songs, which must be rendered in various specific contexts, are a good example of this: the musicians do not usually have to discuss with each other which song must be performed for a given occasion – they understand the context implicitly, through shared knowledge and experience. It is through the enactment, and re-enactment of performing these songs in the appropriate contexts that the repertoire has been traditionally learnt, understood and experienced, by both the practitioners and their audience.

However, there are certain identifiable processes of both implicit and explicit socio-musical interaction, which both generate and sustain an ample store of

musical knowledge that can subsequently be applied by the skillful performers at the appropriate moment. Reservoirs of predominantly context-sensitive musical material are built up in the mind of the musician, during a lifetime of exposure to (and both direct and indirect experience of) the professional and recreational musical activities of the community as a whole. We shall now go on to examine the mechanics of such interactions, which hold the key to understanding the subtle modes of musical knowledge transmission within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities.

4.3.1. Musical enculturation via oral and hereditary transmission

As we have already intimated, the fundamental means by which music is transmitted, from generation to generation, within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music families is through a lifelong experience of total immersion within the tradition. This cumulative and communal process is firmly rooted in the home, where music making is a constant companion to everyday life. Children are born into a musically rich environment; and they begin to acquire aspects of repertoire and performance skills from both parents and extended family members – even before they are physically able to sing a song or pick up an instrument.

Nicolas Magriel's 2013 documentary film, 'Māṅgaṇiyār Childhood', explores the means by which Māṅgaṇiyār children living in the Jaisalmer region acquire traditional musical knowledge and skills. Concentrating on families based in the villages of Hamīra and Bīsu, the film presents an intimate view of the vibrant musical environment that Māṅgaṇiyār children grow into, evidencing the freedom with which the youngsters are permitted to explore their musical facilities – and charting the rapid creative advancements that this rarefied context seems to nurture in them, with some degree of consistency. In his subsequent consideration of the process of learning by osmosis, Magriel notes:

> Unlike in the learning of Indian classical music, there are few specific markers of progress. Children learn music much as they learn language. No one applauds the learning of repertoire or the perfection of technique—these are seen as natural functions of growing up.
>
> 'Growing Into Music: Manganiyar Childhood' (2013) DVD liner notes

Allied with these natural processes of acquisition via osmosis, we can also identify some explicit instances of specialised musical knowledge and repertoire being passed on from generation to generation within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār families. Whilst the onus is very much on the younger musicians to demonstrate both willingness and aptitude in developing fundamental musical skills, there comes a time when more specific tutelage from senior musicians is required; and I observed many instances where such guidance was actively provided. However, the contexts for these more direct modes of musical knowledge transmission are often communal, and seemingly incidental, as opposed to occurring within the context of a formal music lesson; and there is a certain informality underpinning the whole process of knowledge acquisition.

We shall now examine some specific instances of oral hereditary transmission of musical knowledge, taken from two distinct fieldwork contexts. The first two examples (video extracts **V 4.5** and **V 4.6**) have been extracted from a series of lessons given by Firoze Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, which took place in both his Jaisalmer home and in the family village of Hamīra, during October and November 2011. Although the ostensible purpose of these sessions was for Firoze to provide me with a basic general education in Māṅgaṇiyār music making, he also took advantage of the music sessions to give some direct tutelage to his own sons, Latif and Hanif. Firoze is a highly skilled *dholak*player; and he is becoming increasingly respected for his sweet and powerfully expressive singing voice. Interestingly, his oldest son Latif showed considerable promise as a percussionist from an early age, and he has since excelled on the *dholak*; whereas younger son Hanif is developing into a fine vocalist.

In the first extract (**V 4.5**), filmed in Firoze's urban Jaisalmer home, we see Firoze correcting a specific aspect of Latif's *dholak*technique using a pseudo-classical *bōl* recitation, in order to elucidate the finer points of an elaborate polyrhythmic device. This particular kind of rhythmic cadence would instantly be recognised by any classical musician as being a form of *tihāi*; and Firoze explicitly referred to it as such. The transmission of such a specialised rhythmic technique – one that is normally associated with classical music knowledge, and which is referred to using an adapted form of classical terminology – is in itself

compelling; but the important point here is that this episode shows an explicit instance of oral hereditary transmission that is mediated by the senior musician. It is not an instance of musical knowledge acquisition by osmosis: there is a direct intervention on the part of the father/teacher, and the pupil/son makes a clear effort to implement the teaching.

The second extract (**V 4.6**) was filmed in Hamīra village, and shows Firoze leading his son Hanif in the singing of an unmetered *rāg* exposition. Here, we see a situation that would be instantly recognizable to most students of North Indian classical vocal music, where the 'pupil' takes his turn to follow the 'master' in the correct rendition of a given *rāga*. We can also observe an instance (at 30s) where Firoze stops to correct a specific detail of intonation, thereby demonstrating once again that this is a direct pedagogical intervention on his part: he is elucidating the nuances of what he perceives as correct performance practice to his sons.

Since his father, Sakar Khan, was neither a *dholak*player by trade, nor one to exhibit such an overtly classicized approach to pedagogy, it is quite conceivable that Firoze has developed this style of teaching himself – perhaps as a response to professional experiences with classical musicians such as Vishwa Mohan Bhatt, or influenced by his own experiences as a younger musician attending community 'Desert Camp' workshops organised by Komal Kothari (see below); but the significant factor here is that he has adopted such a method at all. Whether the material and techniques come via direct transmission from a classical musician, or through careful observation and imitation of both formal classical music structures and formal approaches to music pedagogy, we can see a clear, observable instance of classical concepts and methodologies being actively incorporated into the folk music system, and adapted for purpose.

Our next two examples come from the urban home of Muse Khan Laṅgā, which is located in the Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony in Jodhpur. I received many lessons from Muse Khan during the course of fieldwork, and I routinely witnessed specific instances where both he, and sometimes his wife, actively involved themselves in the transmission of the Laṅgā repertoire to myself, their many children, and to other Laṅgā musicians who would call in to visit the family from

time to time. It became clear that Muse was in some demand within the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā community as both teacher and performer; and some Laṅgā musicians would come to his home specifically to play with him, for him, and even to take lessons from him.

Once such instance is detailed in video extract **V 4.7**, where I arrived at Muse's home to find that he was already in the process of giving a music lesson to a young Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musician called Idu Khan – a nephew visiting from the home village of Baḍnava. As soon as I arrived, Muse had me join in with the lesson; and, as the clip shows, the young musician (like myself) was at a relatively early stage of development in his Sindhi *sāraṅgī* playing career. More importantly, it is also evident that Muse Khan is actively overseeing the pedagogical process, orchestrating the *riyaz* session and offering critical insights into technical elements of performance. Towards the end of the clip, Idu and Muse Khan list some of Muse's other Laṅgā pupils.

Throughout my training with Muse Khan, he was always careful to correct me when I was playing a certain passage of music contrary to the way that he had shown me; and he never failed to congratulate me when I made progress. Often he would begin by playing a new section of a given piece very slowly, again and again, until I had built up specific speed and competence for him to decide that it was time to begin learning the next section (although this process of acceleration in learning new phrases was always rapid, and often several stages quicker than was confortable for me). There were other instances, later in my training, where Muse would set me to practice a particular piece with one or more of his sons, and then he would leave to go shopping, or to pray at the local *masjīd*: upon his return, he was always quick to pick up on things that we were doing incorrectly, from both technical and structural standpoints. This would seem to indicate that such pedagogical strategies were also in place when I was not present, and were not merely instigated for my benefit.

These diverse, cross-community examples evidence various incidences of active intervention in, and shaping of, the transmission of musical knowledge on the part of senior musicians and knowledgeable community members. For the most part, it was not my impression that such episodes were staged solely for my

benefit. Rather, I got the sense that these more explicitly structured modes of familial music transmission were an integral part of a dynamic, developing hereditary pedagogical process – one that clearly recognised the advantages of pushing the young learning musicians, and was also quick to appropriate new, sometimes noticeably 'classicised', forms of music pedagogy and performance.

4.3.2. Education and development

Following post-Independence political developments that have gradually improved conditions for poor communities in rural India, allied more specifically with the interventions of Komal Kothari since the early 1950s and the subsequent general upturn in the fortunes of senior musicians from both the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, there has been a marked improvement in the levels of general education and living standards for at least some of the musicians' families. Firoze Khan noted to me that his family had become major contributors to one of the secondary schools in Jaisalmer town, where they have been able to send many of their children, using money earned from the national and international success of Sakar Khan and his sons Ghevar, Firoze, Khete and Dara.

General literacy rates in Rajasthan have also been rising rapidly, and many of the young generation of both Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are able to read and write in both Hindi and English, to a basic standard. This advancement is particularly evident in what we may refer to as the third generation – that is to say, the grandchildren of the so-called "Golden Generation" of Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, Bundu Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, Kadar Khan Laṅgā and Karim Khan Laṅgā, who were among the first Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians to achieve widespread recognition on the national and international concert platform. Thus it is, for example, that Sakar Khan's teenage grandsons Rafiq, Latif and Hanif (who have all been schooled formally in Jaisalmer) evidence a relatively high level of literacy and English language competence for their community.

Beyond this general development in access to formal education, there have also been a series of music-specific initiatives that are intended to help the communities foster and maintain their traditional music-making skills, which are now recognised as valuable cultural assets of Rajasthan. Again, the primary

instigator of these initiatives was Komal Kothari, who founded for example the first folk musicians' 'Desert Camp' in 1985. A more detailed overview of the camps is presented in Magriel's 2013 film 'Growing Into Music: Manganiyar Childhood', which also features footage from a recent Desert Camp event; but the main purpose of these workshop-style events has been to bring experienced musicians from both communities together in a more communal setting, where they can exchange musical ideas, and where younger musicians can also sit down with their seniors and work on specific aspects of technique or repertoire in a more formal pedagogical setting. It is notable that many of the musicians who attended the first camp as youngsters have gone on to become successful international musicians, such as Ghevar, Firoze and Anwar Khan.

It is undeniable that the experience of the Desert Camp environment has greatly influenced the attitudes of this generation of musicians – not only considering what they have been able to experience and imbibe at these community-wide events, but also with regard to their own attitudes concerning the maintenance and transmission of community-based musical knowledge. Firoze and Anwar Khan in particular now both evidence what could be called their own 'teaching style', and both are active proponents of this kind of workshop approach, which often departs from the traditional model of passing on the music tradition solely within the confines of ones own immediate community. Regardless of any value judgements that might be made concerning the effect that such initiatives may have on the musical practices of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, the musicians themselves are embracing these initiatives; and, in terms of using such techniques as strategies to enable the survival, evolution and continuation of their music tradition, they may well be wise to do so.

One of the contradictions evident in this process is that, whilst one of Komal Kothari's own primary drive for setting up the Desert Camps was that the musicians would continue to maintain, develop and protect their own genre and styles of performance practice, it has also brought them into contact with contemporary mainstream approaches to music pedagogy. In the classical tradition, let us not forget, it was until recently considered optimal for music pupils to learn exclusively within hereditary traditions, normally from one main

guru (and many *gharānās* still emphasise this approach – although seldom exclusively in actual contemporary practice); but now it is commonplace for classical students to learn from many teachers, in workshop and academic settings, and within regional, national and international contexts. The underlying strategy would appear to be preparing future musicians for a wider and more diverse marketplace, where the concert or recording artist is seen as perhaps a more valuable and sustainable commodity than the local hereditary folk musician.

Ironically, it was their position as humble desert folk musicians that first made the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs so commercially successful in the first place. This creates a tension between presenting them as the exotic 'other', whilst at the same time explicitly promoting them as the exponents of a classicised form of musical knowledge. Further issues arise in this respect with regards to the complex and long-standing interrelationship between the classical system and the folk system of musical knowledge, which we have already seen function rather more as overlapping categories than distinct entities. Kothari himself clearly recognised that the implicit connections between Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge and the classical system lent them credibility and made them more marketable; but we have already noted that he frequently cautioned them to keep their tradition distinct from classical genres, as illustrated in the following quote from Barucha (2003:239):

> At one level, the music of the Langas and the Manganiyars can be viewed as an embryonic form of classical music. But the question then arises: Why did it remain at this stage? I have constantly reminded the folk musicians that they should in no way attempt to imitate classical or semi-classical styles.

There is a certain contradiction inherent in this approach. Firstly, if the initial statement is true, then the final statement may offer a reason why this is the case: the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs would appear to have been kept in their place by a fundamentally restrictive and arch-conservative system, imposed from above, that seeks to compartmentalise society into a series of stratified hierarchical layers – namely, the caste system, which we have already noted that Kothari advocated.

Viewed from an alternate perspective, it may be that the only reason there is any resemblance between the North Indian classical music system and the musical tradition of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs is because they have a history of imitating classical or semi-classical styles; and certainly this kind of approach is much evident in the contemporary activities of some musicians, as we shall see in the following section. Moreover, there is evidence to suggest that Kothari himself may have at times actively – although perhaps unwittingly – encouraged this process of classicisation, by facilitating meetings and concert appearances with prominent classical musicians, and even sometimes getting the folk musicians to match their skills against classical artists – for example, see his role in shaping the trajectory of a concert performance using concepts of *tāla* with the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, when appearing on a shared billing before famed *tablā* virtuoso Zakir Hussain and eminent classical sitarist Nikhil Banerjee (ibid: 246-247).

However, such interventions are only possible with the co-operation of willing, and highly skilled, musical practitioners. Ultimately, of course, it is the musicians who have the final say in what they will play or not play, and the manner in which they will play it. During my own time in the field, I always had the impression that my presence in the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities was seen as both a blessing, and as an opportunity. We must therefore conclude that, whilst educators, researchers, developers and promoters may impose their own often well-meaning and laudable strategies upon the 'little', local folk tradition, similarly the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs most certainly have their own agendas. This dynamic process can be seen as a continuation of the reciprocal relationship between patron and client – reconfigured for the modern context, but still affording a good deal of negotiation in order for both parties to benefit.

4.4. Examples of classical influence in contemporary practice

We have already observed that both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians can evidence a variable degree of classical influence, in both their playing styles and in their verbal expressions of musical knowledge. It is also evident that the overt expression of these classicised concepts seems to become amplified – both

implicitly and explicitly – at what the musicians themselves view as the more prestigious levels of their repertoire. We have noted that the use of certain classical music structures and devices, along with their attendant terminologies (and in particular concepts of '*rāga*' and '*tāla*') is current, in some form, in the seniormost sections of both communities. Moreover, it is apparent that to some extent these conceptual frameworks are shared between both communities; and their practice seems embedded within the bones of the repertoire.

We shall now look at two specific incidences of overt classical influence on Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical style that were observed and documented during fieldwork. The first example represents a strand of overt classical influence situated at the core of Māṅgaṇiyār society – demonstrated by Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, the seniormost member of the community in Rajasthan and an influential figure in the rising fortunes of some of the finest Māṅgaṇiyār musicians. The second example, featuring young Sindhi *sāraṅgī* virtuoso Asin Khan Laṅgā, illustrates the significant impact of classical approaches to *rāg* development on a Laṅgā musician's developing musical style, further demonstrating that North Indian classical music continues to be a major source of influence for both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians.

4.4.1. Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār

Our first example is drawn from a series of music lessons that took place in the Jaisalmer townhouse of Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, during the final phase of fieldwork in February 2014. Knowing that Akbar was a figure of some influence within the Māṅgaṇiyār community, and that he had previously worked with Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy, I had been keen to make contact with him in the field. I was first introduced to Akbar in the desert settlement of Khorāl (which lies some fifty kilometres to the south of Jaisalmer) by leading Māṅgaṇiyār vocalist and current president-elect of the community Anwar Khan, with whom I was travelling at the time. Upon our first meeting, I was instantly struck by the manner in which Anwar displayed deference towards Akbar, as illustrated in Plate 4.2.



Plate 4.2: Akbar Khan (left) and Anwar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār. Khorāl village, 21st October 2013

The gesture shown here will be familiar to students in the classical Hindu tradition, whereby one shows deference for the *guru* by touching his feet. When, some months later, I eventually had the opportunity to sit with Akbar Khan and receive tutelage at his hereditary family home in Jaisalmer, I was again struck by the emphasis he placed upon transmitting musical knowledge that seemed, in some way or other, to have been drawn directly from the classical tradition.

The impression of a classical influence on the music tradition of his household was evident even before I entered Akbar's house, which is situated opposite a Hindu temple in the tranquil Kaluki Hatta suburb of Jaisalmer (see Plate 4.3). The legible parts of the freshly hand-painted inscription above the front entrance to his home read: "*Ālam Khānā* [centered]; *Darbārī saṛta* [?] *prola* [?] [left]; *Bhāṇḍ ki Jaisalmēr* [right]". The use of the term '*Bhāṇḍ*' here is in accord with his younger son Imamddin's assertion that his ancestors were once 'jesters' in the court at Jaisalmer (pers. comm.) – a matter that was introduced during the Historical Context presented in Chapter Two.



Plate 4.3: Entrance to Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's family home with inscription above. Jaisalmer, 22nd February 2014

It is equally significant that, during my lessons with him, Akbar subsequently referred to himself as being the *darbārī kalākar* (literally the "court artist"), and to his family music style as "Alam Khan *gharānā*" – although it was never made

clear who Alam Khan actually was, other than that he was a classical *sāraṅgī* player (Akbar Khan: pers. comm.). Akbar also revealed that, when he was young, many of the now-legendary senior musicians of the Māṅgaṇiyār community – including *kamāichā* maestros Sakar Khan and Hakim Khan, and the late, great vocalist Bhungar Khan – had come to learn music at Akbar's family home during their formative years; and this statement was later confirmed by Hakim Khan (pers. comm.). Moreover, Akbar told me that, during this formative period in their musical development, they had all received some form of tuition in classical music.

Admitting to 77 years of age as of February 2014, Akbar is himself contemporary with the seniormost musicians in the current Māṅgaṇiyār community, and was beginning to learn the skills of his family trade in the late 1940s and early 1950s, around the time of Independence. He claims that, during this time, all of the young, up-and-coming Māṅgaṇiyār performers received music tutelage at his home from one Raduman Harso – a Brahmin from Jaisalmer who practiced what Akbar called "Ras Gaīt *śāstrīya sangīṭ* style". This pedagogical arrangement, it seems, was facilitated by the patronage of the Jaisalmer royal family; and Akbar made it clear to me that the promising young Māṅgaṇiyār musicians were permitted to benefit from this specialised training only by virtue of their potential, and via family connections with Akbar's own lineage.

In this regard, it is notable that such intimate – and expedient – familial relationships are still maintained: Sakar Khan's second son, Firoze, is married to Akbar's daughter; and Hakim Khan's daughter is married to Akbar's second son, Imamddin. We can also note that Sakar's own ancestors are thought to have migrated to Hamīra village, from either Khuri or neighbouring Dhaneli, at the bidding of a member of the Jaisalmer royal family (Neuman et al. 2006: 181): so there is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that a strong link between the two families may go back even further than the previous two generations.

During the course of my sessions with Akbar, it became clear that he had adopted, and expounded, a particularly classicised approach to music knowledge transmission. He described classical knowledge as being the "foundation" of all

music systems, with *lōk sangīṭ* and other local forms such as *ghazal* and Sufi *bhajans* developing from it; and he insisted that I learn his conception of classical music, before he would teach me any folk forms, so that my musical "house" would be strong. Without a strong foundation, he told me, the house would fall.

During all of the sessions that I sat with him, Akbar never taught me anything other than his own rather basic take on North Indian classical music – although he also claimed to be proficient in teaching "*bhakti sangīṭ*" (local devotional *bhajans*) and "Sindhi *gāyakī*" (Sindhi songs), along with having inherited the stock body of Māṅgaṇiyār folksong repertoire. Akbar's lessons were also the only ones that I received from any of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār folk musicians that would begin with the practice of singing and playing basic ascending and descending scales, using classical *sargam* and *ākār* syllables to annunciate the notes, repetitively: an instance of this is shown on **V 4.8**. In the same clip, we also see that Akbar takes the time to correct one of his grandsons (who was being a little over-zealous), demonstrating the correct use of *sargam* for the scale of *rāg* Bhairav.

Akbar would usually have at least some of his children and grandchildren participate in the sessions, which may suggest that this explicitly classicised approach to teaching was a consistent feature within his household, and had not merely been staged for my benefit. It is notable that *rāg* Bhairav is commonly taught to classical students in their first year of tutelage with a *guru*, since it is both a fundamental 'big' *rāga*, and one that is fairly straightforward to learn in terms of what pitches and melodic movements are permitted, and which are not. Interestingly, despite maintaining its place as a cornerstone entity in the Hindustani classical music system since at least the Mughal period, *rāg* Bhairav uses non-diatonic intervals.

In our sessions together, Akbar was particularly keen to focus on teaching me what he saw as the cornerstone *rāg* of his tradition: *rāg* Bhairav. As noted above, he shied away from my many requests to learn *lōk sangīt*, always repeating that it was more important first to learn *śāstrīya sangīṭ* as "the foundation". These approaches would seem to confirm that he had indeed received at least some

direct form of basic tutelage from a classical musician at some point in his formative years; and it was also clear that Akbar wished to prioritize this kind of fundamentally classical approach to teaching when imparting musical knowledge to subsequent generations of his own family – or at least, to present the explicit appearance of such an approach.

Besides evidencing some skill as a *dholak*player, Akbar claimed to possess a broad range of *rāg* knowledge; and he was keen to demonstrate this fact to me verbally, even if he did not usually follow through with the explicit details of *rāg* structure that I requested. An example of this was when he told me that he knew six different versions of both *rāg* Bhairvī and *rāg* Māṇḍ, which originated from several different regions – Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Delhi, Mumbai, Punjab, Gujarat and Sindh – and which all possessed their own "different *gāyakī* (‘style’) and rhythm": however, none of these regional variants were ever forthcoming in performance, so it was impossible to test the veracity of this claim. Still, it is certainly plausible that the local music systems would develop their own regional variants of certain popular melody forms. This process is abundantly evident in the local languages, as evidenced by the ubiquitous incidences of regional variation in the Marwari dialect that are to be found across the large and relatively sparsely populated area of the Thar Desert.

On one occasion, Akbar provided me with a list of all of the *rāgas* that he “knew”, citing the broadly appropriate time of day that each one should be performed. Although it is impossible to verify from the fieldwork data the degree to which Akbar actually knew how to perform these *rāgas* (since he never sang anything other than *rāg* Bhairav), here again there are clear and specific echoes of knowledge drawn explicitly from the classical system. It is particularly notable that the *rāgas* detailed by Akbar are, for the most part, ascribed the same temporal designations as they are given in North Indian classical music; and the extra-musical association is significant. However, Akbar’s list includes some classical *rāga* designations that are otherwise not evident in recordings or studies of Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār music performance: therefore, it is likely that the data listed below represents a more ‘representational’ form of musical knowledge, that has variable bearing on actual performance practice. The names of these

rāgas, under the headings of the three broad temporal associations that Akbar attributed to them, are detailed in Figure 4.4, below.

Figure 4.4: Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's list of *rāgas* (supplied 24th February 2014)

Morning *Rāgas* (8-11am)	**Afternoon *Rāgas* (1-5pm)**	**Evening *Rāgas* (7-11pm)**
Bhairav	Hamīr	Kalyān
Babār [Bibhās?]	Malhār	Shyām Kalyān
Mīyāñ kī Toḍī	Sūb	Mārū
Lalīt	Jōg	Deś
Pārvatī [Prabhātī?]	Multānī	Mālkauns
Bhairvī	Māṇḍ	Kedār
	Khamāj	Kaushīk Dhoni
	Pahāḍī	Malhār
	Bhairvī	Soraṭh
	Basant Bahār	Rāṇō

To conclude this section, we shall look at the influence of classical music theory upon a new generation of Laṅgā musician – one who is maintaining an inherited practice of drawing from the 'Great Tradition', but who is also employing more contemporary methods of musical knowledge acquisition to gain this information.

4.4.2. Asin Khan Laṅgā

We now turn our attention to Asin Khan Laṅgā, the fifth son of Sindhi *sāraṅgī* virtuoso Muse Khan Laṅgā, and one of the leading stars in the new generation of Laṅgā musicians. Born in 1985, Asin showed a precocious talent for the *sāraṅgī* from an early age; and he soon demonstrated a fierce desire to develop his instrumental skills on this challenging instrument by getting up early each morning, before anybody else in his house was awake, and putting in what his

oldest brother, Sindhi *sāraṅgī* maestro Samsu Khan Laṅgā, referred to as "double *riyāz*".

As a result of his innate talent and rapidly developing musical skills, Asin was put forward by Komal Kothari to play for classical *sāraṅgī* virtuoso Ram Narayan, during an arranged visit of promising Sāraṅgīya Laṅgā youngsters to the Rupayan Sansthan in 2002. Ram Narayan was particularly impressed by the skills of the young Asin; and he requested that Kothari arrange for a Sindhi *sāraṅgī* to be given to the boy. The experience had a profound impact on Asin, spurring him on to greater level of practice and fostering a strong desire to expand his own understanding of classical musical structures – in particular, knowledge of classical *rāgas*.

From my first meeting with Asin, in February 2013, I quickly realised that he possessed a deeper understanding of North Indian classical *rāga* structures than perhaps any of the other folk musicians that I had encountered. This first became evident when he performed an unaccompanied instrumental rendition of *rāg* Mālkauns – a pentatonic *rāga*, omitting the fifth degree of the scale, which is not commonly performed by either Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musicians. More unusual was the way in which Asin approached the informal performance: there was something akin to the gradual exploration of the *rāg* movements, from the lower register, through the middle, to the highest extremes of range that Asin's Sindhi *sāraṅgī* was capable of; and then there was the final, gradual return to the tonic, or 'Sa'.

It later became evident that Asin had begun collecting audio CD recordings of the Rajasthan-born classical *sāraṅgī* masters Ram Narayan and Sultan Khan. The stylistic influence of these players is clear to see in Asin's own Sindhi *sāraṅgī* playing, which exhibits a lyrical vibrato style that is in some ways akin to Ram Narayan's approach, along with a conspicuous use of *mīṇḍ* – the ornamental classical technique of gliding seamlessly between one note and another, and a strong marker of Sultan Khan's powerful *sāraṅgī* style. Whilst some form of vibrato in the fretting hand is relatively common among both *kamāichā* and Sindhi *sāraṅgī* players, and slides do occur between certain notes at certain times, the consistent employment of *mīṇḍ* is not a typical feature of either Laṅgā or

Māṅgaṇiyār music performance; so this facet in particular sets Asin's playing apart from the majority of his contemporaries.

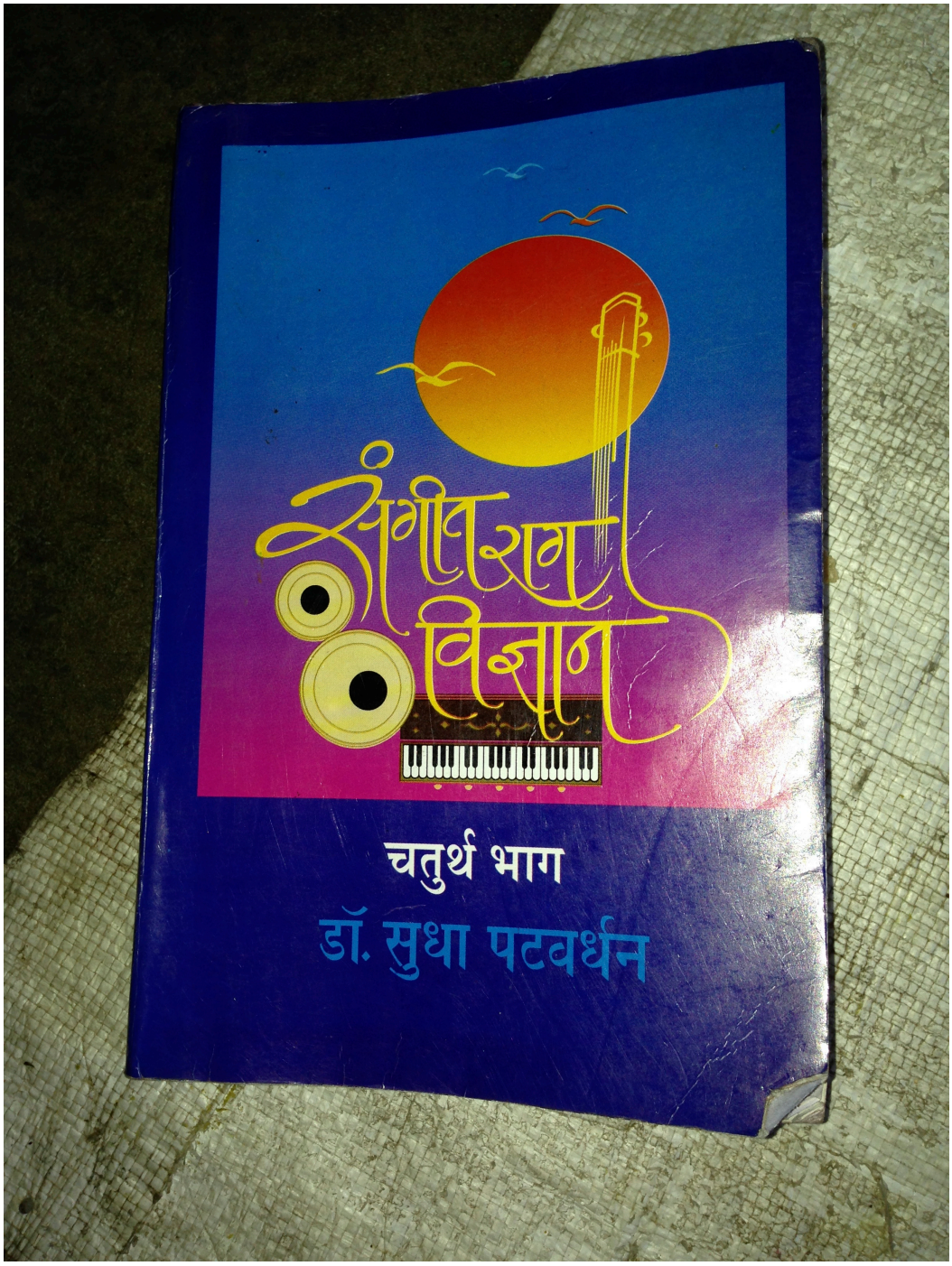


Plate 4.4: Asin Khan Laṅgā's well-thumbed copy of 'Sangīt Rāg Vidñyān, Volume Four'. Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 11th November 2013

Besides the emergent influence of these classical recordings on Asin's playing style and general conception of musical knowledge, I also learnt during my second visit to Jodhpur, in November 2014, that he had been learning *rāga* structures from a classical reference book, called 'Sangīt Rāg Vidñyān' (2012 – the meaning of the title translates roughly as "The Music of *Rāg* Made Clear"). Asin's copy is actually the fourth volume in a series by the Pune-based Hindustani classical music singer and teacher Sudha Patwardhan (see Plate 4.4).

That Asin was able to find this book in Jodhpur is perhaps not so remarkable, given the city's rich music heritage and the fact that Sudha Patwardhan herself received her early musical education at Vanasthalī Vidyāpīṭ University – an institution located some 72km south of Jaipur, in the Tonk district of Rajasthan (http://wpedia.goo.ne.jp/enwiki/Wikipedia_talk:Articles_for_creation/Sudha_Patwardhan). What is remarkable is that Asin chose to seek out such a book at all, and that he continues to derive so much practical use from it. Here we find the clear example of a young, talented and literate Laṅgā musician who is making a conscious, concerted effort to absorb contemporary classical music knowledge into his own conception of musical style, using the predominantly representational means at his disposal to acquire this knowledge. And, revealingly, Asin makes a clear distinction between those *rāgas* that he has learnt from the classical tradition, and those *rāgs* that are what he calls "Laṅgā *rāgs*".

4.5. Summary

Through our overview of Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār musical repertoires in this chapter, we have taken note of a rich and diverse range of musical knowledge. Within these bodies of knowledge, we have also highlighted a number of incidences of correspondence between the two communities, as well as pointing out certain aspects of performance that are evidently unique to each group. We have then considered the various ways in which this core musical knowledge is transmitted from generation to generation – primarily through hereditary male lineages that have, in some cases at least, remained unbroken for at least seven generations. Moreover, we have seen preliminary evidence to suggest that the

role of women is often central to the processes of knowledge transmission in this otherwise overtly male-oriented performance tradition.

In our subsequent examination of separate examples drawn from both communities, we have observed that senior musicians do sometimes take an active role in providing direct transmission of repertoire-based skills to developing musicians. As well as discussing evidence for an early incidence of classical tuition at the house of Akbar Khan, we have seen that the influence of North Indian classical music on the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge system is in fact an ongoing dynamic process, whereby both young and older musicians from senior families have clearly made – and, in some notable cases, continue to make – both direct and indirect attempts to imbibe and incorporate *rāga*-like structures from the North Indian classical system into their own musical style. However, it is also evident that the process of appropriating these classical music models often involves considerable modification of the source material; and the role of such models in general performance practice is less clear.

We will now seek to understand more precisely the structural melodic mechanisms that are embedded within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical performance, and how they relate to classical *rāga* structures, through an analysis of music performances and informal teaching sessions that took place during the period of fieldwork.

CHAPTER FIVE

Analysis of an Operational *Rāg* System:

Muse Khan Laṅgā

5.1. Introduction to the analysis

During the course of our overview, in Chapter Four, of the constituent elements of musical repertoire that Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians commonly employ, we have seen evidence indicating that senior musicians from both communities appear to share a common usage – in name at least – of certain *rāgs*. And, in the Historical Context outlined in Chapter One, we have also speculated that the possible structural roots of a shared conceptual framework for *rāg* performance may be traced to both the North Indian classical music system that was practiced in the Mughal courts of Rajasthan, as well as to the subsequent related development of the Sindh-based *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

But it is also possible that the common usage of such *rāg* designations by both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians could merely be an example of musical labels being shared between the two communities – labels that have been appropriated from the prestigious "Great" tradition, or elsewhere, but which are applied to otherwise unrelated structural melodic frameworks. It may also be that these frameworks bear little or no relation to the North Indian classical *rāgas* that they reference in title; and it is conceivable that the "*rāgs*" that the musicians are playing bear more resemblance to variations on common fixed melodies, rather than representing a system for modal improvisation. This would situate their *rāg* knowledge system closer to the 'tune' extreme of Powers' *rāga* continuum model than the 'scale' extreme.

Therefore, in order to make a case for the existence of a modal system of shared, cross-community *rāg* knowledge, it is first necessary to demonstrate that there exists a cognitive complex of flexible melodic structures that can be distinguished from each other by senior musicians from both communities, and

also by knowledgeable listeners. The potential basis of such a system was revealed to me, implicitly and explicitly, during the course of my many fieldwork sessions with Muse Khan Laṅgā – a widely respected musician in both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār circles, and one of the foremost Sindhi *sāraṅgī* players of his generation.

In this chapter, we will identify and examine in detail the core melodic structures applied within Muse Khan's system of *rāgs*, whilst also considering how this highly codified musical knowledge is transmitted from one individual to another. In the latter sections of the chapter, various analytical techniques will be experimentally applied to transcribed instances of the *rāg* frameworks that Muse Khan taught me, in order to investigate ways in which the system may be internalised by the musicians, and then passed on from generation to generation with little or no recourse to written materials. But firstly, we shall introduce Muse Khan Laṅgā and his family, situating them within both the contemporary cultural and geographical landscape of the Western Rajasthani Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, and within the context of this study.

5.2. Muse Khan Laṅgā

The idea of learning Sindhi *sāraṅgī* with Muse Khan was first suggested to me by Nicolas Magriel, who had encountered this exceptionally skilled musician during the course of his own fieldwork on the subject of enculturation in North Indian music communities, for the AHRC-funded Beyond Text project 'Growing Into Music'.



Plate 5.1: Muse Khan Laṅgā with three Sindhi *sāraṅgīs*. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 1st December 2013.

My first exposure to Muse Khan's musical performance style took place in his small urban dwelling – a two-room concrete block box-house in the Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony. The experience was an unexpectedly affecting one, the impact of which was made all the more dramatic by an electrical failure that caused a blackout in his home on that particular evening. The following extract from my fieldwork journal, which was made immediately after this first encounter with Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musicians, describes the largely disembodied sonic event:

> The effect here was that most of Muse's spellbinding performance took place either in total darkness, or by the illuminated half-light of Samsu's mobile phone, or by the flickering of a hastily kindled match… I am somewhat at a loss for words to describe this experience; but 'magical' is one term that seems to fit pretty well. It felt as if I was deep in the ocean, relaxed beyond comprehension, totally at home… It almost seems incidental to point out that Muse played his first piece in what he called *rāg* Soraṭh (with a seven beat rhythmic cycle); and this was followed by an instrumental piece in *rāg* Sameri, in a six beat *tāl*… He performed alone, accompanying himself with soulful, sung lyrics. By the time the lights came back on and Muse had finished taking us on his mystical musical journey, I had already been in his house for nearly three hours.

This extract illustrates not only the profound effect that this initial direct experience of Laṅgā music had upon me; but also, that there was explicit mention of specified *rāg* content, by the musicians themselves, from the very start of my working with them. Conversely, it is notable that I had to ascertain the possible divisions of each rhythmic cycle in the metered song sections for myself, since neither Muse Khan nor his sons ever explicitly identified any fixed or flexible rhythmic structures by name (this continued to be the case during my entire fieldwork period with the Laṅgās); but the names of *rāgs* were always supplied, even when the names of the songs were not. It is worth pointing out that I never explicitly mentioned the subject of *rāga* during this first meeting – nor did I mention a specific interest in any music research matters during this preliminary stage of contact: my intention was only to form relationships, and I presented myself transparently as an open-minded visitor, performer and student, who wanted to learn whatever the musicians would teach me.

Perhaps as a result of my visibly moved reaction to his performance, Muse Khan did not hesitate to invite me back to learn his Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā music – not from his sons, as had previously been suggested earlier that evening, but directly from him. During the course of our many subsequent music sessions, I became aware that Muse Khan utilised an entire complex of *rāg* structures, which were firmly categorised into a distinctive conceptual system, and which formed the core melodic basis of his musical style. Later in this chapter, we will examine the precise nature of this system of *rāgs*, how these melodic configurations are distinguished from each other, and how they are made manifest in performance; but firstly, let us introduce ourselves to Muse Khan Laṅgā and his family.

5.2.1. Family background and musical career

Whilst it has been hard to ascertain the precise age of Muse Khan, it seems certain that he is roughly contemporary with Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (c.1936-2013), if not a little younger: this would place his most likely birth date at some point during the ten years before Independence. Growing up as part of the core Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā community, in the remote desert village of Baḍnava, Muse Khan was born into a family of hereditary male *sāraṅgī* players, learning his trade from his father and uncles. At the time of his youth, there were no easy transport links between villages; and Muse described to me the way in which he would have to sometimes walk all day from Baḍnava to a neighbouring community to play for a particular *jajmān*, and then walk back through the night after his work was done. By his own account, Muse Khan has always been a solo performer, using his voice and his *sāraṅgī* to create an entire soundscape; and I only once saw him accompanied by a *dholak*player, when he was sitting with the musicians of his own generation in the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā home village of Baḍnava.

Recounting a line of direct transmission through five generations of Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musicians to himself – he representing the sixth known generation, in living family memory – Muse Khan continues the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā tradition of passing on hereditary musical knowledge and skills to his sons (see Plate 5.2), who mark the seventh generation. All six sons are musically proficient; and all play Sindhi *sāraṅgī* to varying levels, except fourth son Hasan. He is a gifted

singer, who also evidences some skill with the harmonium – itself an increasingly popular instrument of choice for vocal accompaniment among the up-and-coming generations of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians.



Plate 5.2: Muse Khan Laṅgā and his six sons. Composite image constructed from various photographs taken on different occasions during fieldwork.

Second son Kasam is acknowledged to be the strongest vocalist within the immediate family (although all six sons can accompany themselves vocally to some degree, after both their father's style of performance and in common with the majority of professional Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians); but, like second son Sikander, Kasam acknowledges that his *sāraṅgī* playing is limited. Eldest son Samsu and fifth son Asin, who perform together regularly on concert billings as a duo, demonstrate the most developed skill levels as both performers and *sāraṅgī* players; with youngest son Habib also developing rapidly as an all-round musician.

Besides having a growing number of grandchildren from the families of his eldest four sons, Muse Khan also has four daughters: they are shown with him, alongside one of his grandsons (the eldest son of fourth son Kasam), his wife, and Asin Khan in Plate 5.3. Although I was never formally introduced to any of the female members of the family, all save the eldest daughter (who is married with a young child, and who lives with her Laṅgā husband in Baḍnava village) were living, and taking care of daily domestic tasks, in Muse Khan's urban Jodhpur home during the time of my visits there. As the family gradually became accustomed to my presence, it became clear that the women were not only in charge of all daily affairs, but that they were also directly involved in both the keeping and the transmission of the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musical heritage.

As is the general custom in both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, none of the female members of Muse Khan's family are performing musicians; but I noted that all of them regularly sang in the home– sometimes even for me, as is shown in **V 5.1** – and it became evident not only that they held their own repertoire of songs, but also that they understood a great deal about the professional Laṅgā repertoire. This is not to be wondered at, since everyone in the home is exposed to a daily stream of music.

It became commonplace for the girls to hum along with our practice; and there were even occasions in the later stages of my tutelage when Muse Khan's wife (who was invariably present at the sessions which took place in her own home, and who monitored my development carefully) voluntarily took an active role in the learning process. To give an example of this, **V 5.2** shows an instance where

she intervenes directly in the pedagogical process, in an attempt to convey the nuances of meaning contained in the lyrics of the 'Bālochan' song, which I had become increasingly interested in.



Plate 5.3: Muse Khan Laṅgā with one of his grandsons (left), his wife (third from left), four daughters (right of center) and fifth son Asin Khan (center). Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 7th December 2013

Neuman et al. have noted that a significant portion of the Laṅgā repertoire is derived from women's songs (2006: 230), and the active role of women in the generation, maintenance and transmission of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge systems is significant: **V 5.2** gives a clear example to support this. There were many other instances where Muse Khan's wife would seem to direct Muse Khan in the selection of material that he would teach to me on a given occasion; and it was also evident that Muse Khan would sometimes consult with his wife over a particular choice of song, or in the correct rendition of certain lyrics. However, although the older girls would occasionally tap out a rhythm on their knees – or even occasionally on *dholak*, if one was to hand – in order to accompany their singing, I never witnessed the female members of the

family playing, or even touching, any one of the many Sindhi *sāraṅgīs* that were in the house.

5.2.2. Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā communities in Jodhpur and Baḍnava

According to the census data presented in Neuman et al (2006: 220), the main concentration of Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musicians in Western Rajasthan are to be found in the village of Baḍnava. Neuman et al also note that Baḍnava is unique in that over half of the total known Laṅgā population in Western Rajasthan live there (ibid.). Communities of both Surnāiā and Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās can be found in Baḍnava – although the village has been divided into two separate enclaves, with the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās living in the lower part of the village and the Surnāiā Laṅgās living up on top of the hill. Despite this segregation, both groups are Sunni Muslims; and both are patronised by Sindhi Sipāhī landowners, who also dwell in Baḍnava and in neighbouring rural communities.

Interestingly, although the Laṅgā musicians do not play for the Rathor Rajput families that are currently living in Baḍnava (Kadar Khan Laṅgā, pers. comm.), there is evidence to suggest a possible earlier connection between the two communities, in the form of a stone *mūrti* shrine depicting a Rajput ruler on a horse. I had also observed such a shrine in the Māṅgaṇiyār village of Hamīra, which is still inhabited by both Bhati and Rathor Rājput families (see Plates 5.4 and 5.5); and the positioning of both shrines appeared significant to me.

Although *mūrti* are commonplace in many villages across Western Rajasthan, it is notable that the style of these particular shrines is very similar in both the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār villages in question, and that – in both cases – the stones are located immediately behind the musicians' houses. Additionally, I was told by the Laṅgā families dwelling near to the *murti* in Baḍnava that this particular stone was still viewed, and used, as a ritually significant object by the Laṅgā community living there – although the precise details of this ritual function were not made evident. Besides presenting a striking similarity in the ritual landscape of the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās of Baḍnava and the Hamīra Māṅgaṇiyārs, this evidence could lend further credence to the hypothesis put forward by Gahlot and Dhar (1989: 254-255), and discussed in the Historical Context presented in Chapter

Two of the present work, that the Sindhi Sipāhī were indeed once Hindu Rājputs, and were subsequently converted to Islam, either voluntarily or by force.





Plates 5.4 and 5.5: Rajput shrines in the Laṅgā village of Baḍnava (top) and the Māṅganiyār village of Hamīra (bottom)

Despite the fact that Baḍnava remains at the heart of the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā community in Western Rajasthan, a more recently established urban Laṅgā colony in the city of Jodhpur has become a popular second home for several extended Laṅgā families. The majority of these families came from Baḍnava in the 1980s, and still keep homes in the main village. Muse Khan's family is included in this number: thus it was that, during the course of fieldwork, I received lessons and made recordings in both the Jodhpur Laṅgā colony and in Baḍnava village. However, it became clear from an early stage in my fieldwork that both Muse and Asin Khan had come to prefer the amenities and performance opportunities associated with the urban environment of Jodhpur, and spent the majority of their time living with Muse's wife and daughters in their small home at Baldev Nagar, beneath the hilltop gardens of Masuria. As a result of this circumstance, it was there that the bulk of our sessions took place, during the second and third phases of fieldwork.

5.2.3. Transmission: music lessons with Museji

Once a Sindhi *sāraṅgī* from Baḍnava had been procured for my use, a regular routine quickly became established for my daily trips to learn with Muse Khan in his Jodhpur residence. My early enthusiasm to purchase a "*pakkā*" instrument (not to mention the relatively high price that I paid for it, following some tough negotiations) seemed to be a key factor in providing my new teacher with a significant degree of motivation to undertake the task of teaching me: indeed, Muse Khan told me excitedly that he had never before given a Sindhi *sāraṅgī* to anyone outside of his family, having inherited his own venerable instrument from his grandfather. The instrument sold to me had actually been intended to replace a damaged *sāraṅgī* normally used by Muse's eldest son, Samsu; but both Samsu and Muse were more than happy to part with this decent, but recently made, Baḍnava model, for such a premium. With this money, they could commission a new *sāraṅgī*, have the damaged one repaired, and still have plenty of rupees to spare.

My early lessons with Muse Khan soon took on a similar framework: I would arrive (usually by bicycle) at roughly 10am; rugs would be laid, and we would sit down on the floor in the main room of his dwelling and begin to practice

immediately, whilst chai was being made. Three or four hours of solid practice would follow – consisting chiefly of my trying desperately to keep up with what Muse was playing, and during which time few, if any, words were spoken – following which a late lunch of *bājrā roṭi* (pearl millet flat bread) and *dāl* (cooked lentil stew) would be taken at around 2pm. After lunch, some discussion might then occur with Muse, his wife, and his sons (if any of them were present), and there might also be some more music – usually with me observing at this stage; then finally, I would bid farewell until the next day, and cycle back down the Chopasni Road into the bustling centre of Jodhpur, as the hot afternoon sun was beginning to set.

During these formative sessions, the musical material that we worked on was often repetitive. For example, I spent my first five lessons with Muse Khan playing the same melody, 'Jala', again and again, until my arms and fingers were sore. He told me that this particular song was commonly taught to beginners within the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā community; and he always preceded our repetitive playing of the piece with an unmetered melodic exposition that I tried to follow, which he referred to as "*rāg* Toḍī". It was immediately clear to me that the melodic material presented in the unmetered exposition was related in some way to the melodic content of the subsequent 'Jalo' song presentation; but it was also evident that there were certain regularly occurring inconsistencies between the melodic frameworks of these two basic performance elements that were not always easy to identify.

As the sessions continued, and my playing developed, Muse gradually expanded the scope of our practice to include other songs from the Laṅgā repertoire, and other *rāgs*. The speed of this process was enhanced by my ability to internalise the melodies of the typically straightforward songs with relative ease, assisted by regular evening reviews of the recordings I had made during the day and extra *riyāz* sessions in my digs. I knew that this task was an important component of the learning process, since I had already become mindful of the fact that a particular premium is placed upon song knowledge within both Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār communities.

However, I still struggled with the often extremely subtle variations between one *rāg* format and another. As a consequence, I found it hard to render the short, unmetered introductory sections with any conviction. Thus it was something of an unexpected breakthrough in my learning process that, during the course of our lesson on 18th November 2013 (towards the end of the second phase of fieldwork), Muse Khan suddenly revealed to me a very concise exposition of the nine core *rāg* structures that he used routinely as the melodic basis for his performance style. Besides giving me the necessary framework within which to distinguish one *rāg* for another, the very existence of such a system answered many of my research questions.

Another similarly impromptu *rāg* tutorial occurred during the third phase of fieldwork, at which time Asin Khan Laṅgā was also present. Asin's involvement on that particular occasion facilitated an even greater understanding of these *rāg* structures, since he was able to aid in both the translation and explanation of some of the more complex musical ideas that his father was expounding – expressed in a soft, husky style of spoken Marwari that was often hard for me to understand. In particular, this second session revealed some of the ways in which certain *rāgs* are inter-related, thus elucidating how melodic frameworks that were superficially very similar – both in terms of tonal content and melodic movement – could be distinguished from one another in performance.

We shall now examine Muse Khan's system of *rāgs*, as conveyed to me on these two specific occasions, using fieldwork notes and audio/visual footage that was taken at the time as our primary data for analysis. It should be noted that the *rāgs* shown to me on these occasions did not present an exhaustive list: from the recordings made during the entire fieldwork process, I have identified at least five other *rāgs* that Muse Khan uses regularly in musical performance, but which were never included directly in my lessons. However, the melodic frameworks presented below are certainly fundamental to the Laṅgā music system, as taught to me by Muse Khan. Moreover, all of these *rāgs* are used – in some form or other – within Māṅgaṇiyār music performance.

5.3. Muse Khan's core *rāg* system

5.3.1. Overview of the melodic frameworks

On the first occasion in question, which took place midway through a lesson in Jodhpur on the morning of 18th November 2013, Muse Khan performed a series of concise renditions of nine core *rāgs* that were, by that time, all regular features of our practice sessions (video example **V 5.3** shows the series in its entirety). Descriptive transcriptions of each one of these *rāg* frameworks are given below in Examples 5.1 to 5.9, presented in the same chronological order in which they were delivered during the session. Audio files extracted from the video footage (**A 5.1** – **A 5.9**) are also provided on the CD-ROM to accompany each exercise.

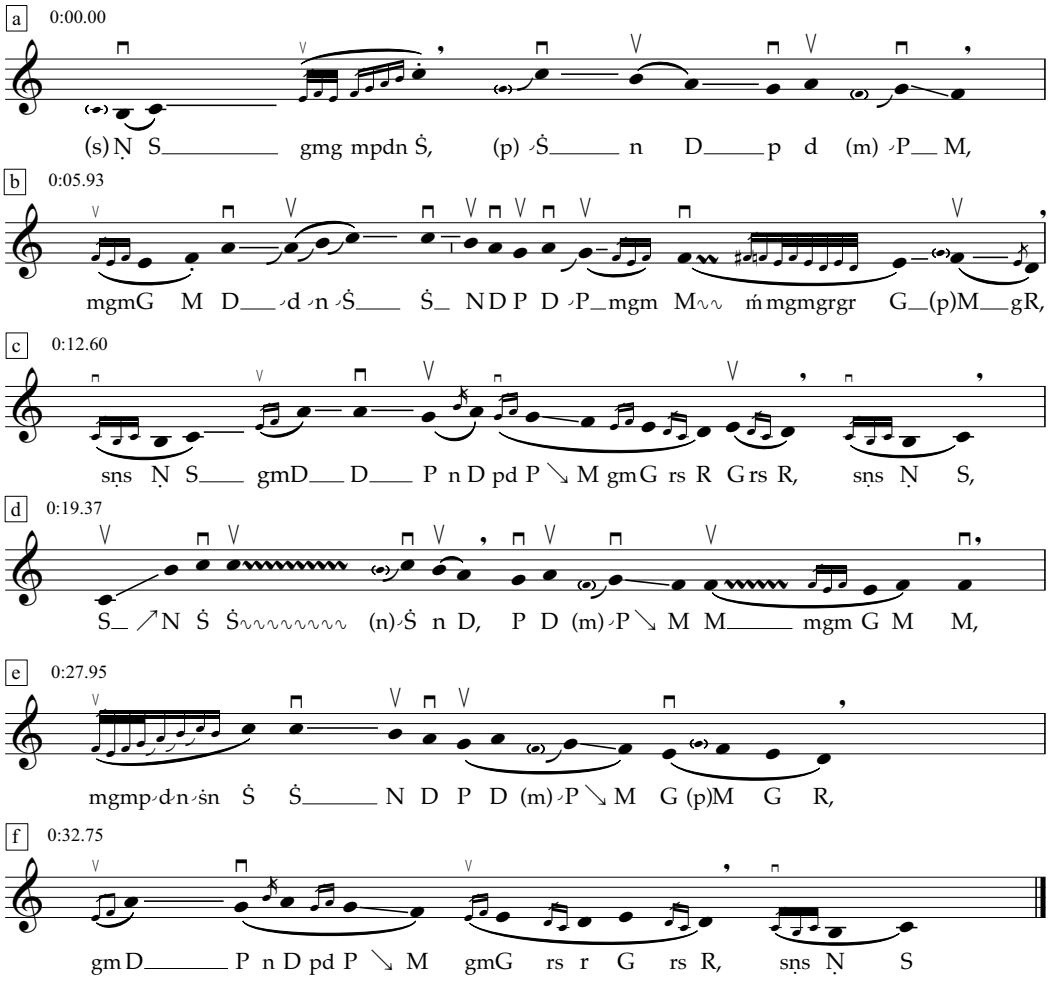
In the following examples, the transcribed musical performances have been represented in both adapted Western staff notation and a modified version of Indian *sargam*, in order to render the transcriptions as generally accessible as possible (for a full explanation of the symbols used, see the Key to the Transcriptions on page 8). However, it is important to reiterate that neither the Laṅgās nor the Māṅgaṇiyārs use any overt forms of written or oral notation, and so the transcriptions do not represent models for performance that the musicians themselves would recognise. Rather, they are descriptive representations that attempt to elucidate the rhythmic and melodic phrasing used by Muse Khan to render the *rāgs* in question, abstracted for the purposes of analysis. As a general reading of the implicit data encoded within Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music performances – and in view of the particular analytical focus for these transcriptions – the music is presented as a chromatic system; but we will keep in mind the possibility that this generalised perspective may obscure fine details of variation in scale degree.

Each example has been divided into time-coded sub-sections that attempt to convey the ascending and descending units of phrasing as articulated by Muse Khan during his presentation: this articulation takes the form of the artist leaving small gaps between individual phrases or phrase groups. As we shall see, the division of each *rāg* into such phrase units is a highly relevant component in both the expression and understanding of the melodic structures, possibly also playing

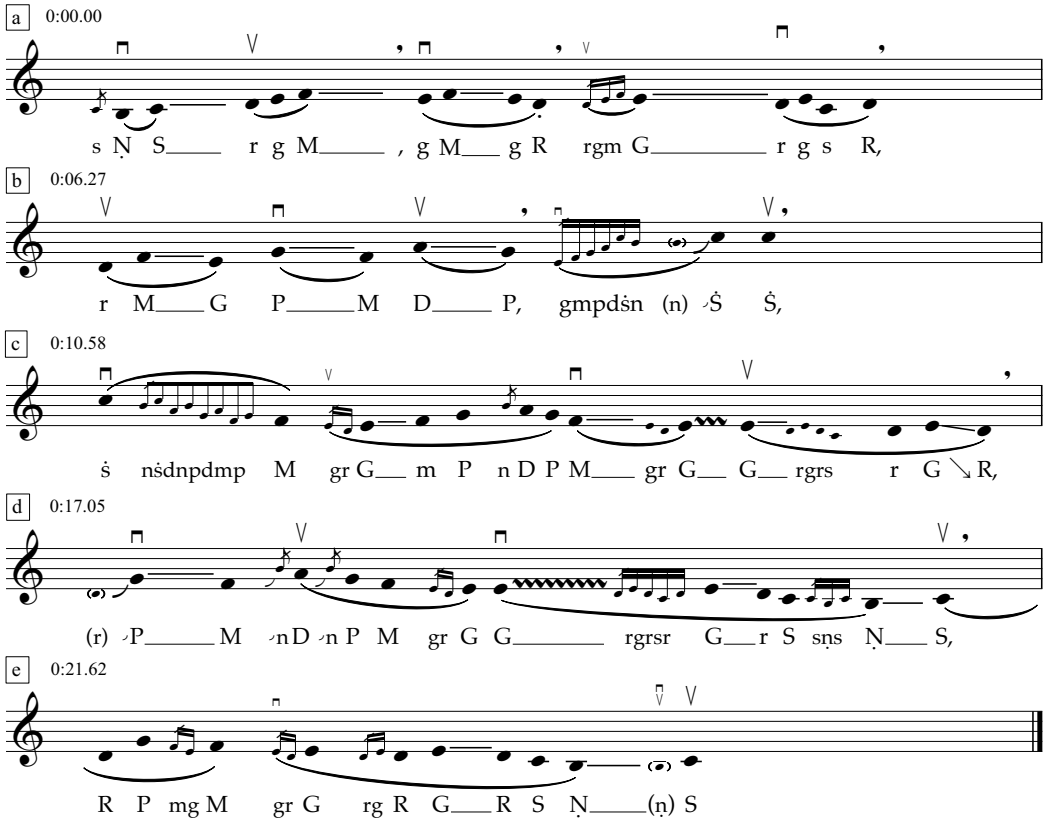
a key role in their internalisation. It is also evident that certain phrases appear to have clear rhythmic patterns inherent within their structure; and we shall examine the possibility that the particular rhythmic nuances of a given phrase, or set of phrases, may be no less significant in the correct rendering of a Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā *rāg* than the appropriate pitch designations.

Due to the instability of the instrument, and an absence of any fixed, consistent source that the musicians use as a tuning reference, the actual tuned pitch of the tonic (or 'Sa') on Muse Khan's *sāraṅgī* fluctuates widely in practice. According to my fieldwork recordings, this tonic can range in pitch between a very flat F sharp and a very sharp A flat, to use Western classical music terms. For example, on the two occasions detailed below, the normative value of the tonic on 18th November 2013 was around 385 Hz – roughly six Hz below a G4 concert pitch (i.e. G above Middle C); whereas on 17th March 2014, the equivalent normative value measured 365 Hz – eight cents below a concert F♯4, and roughly half a tone lower than on the occasion filmed some four months before.

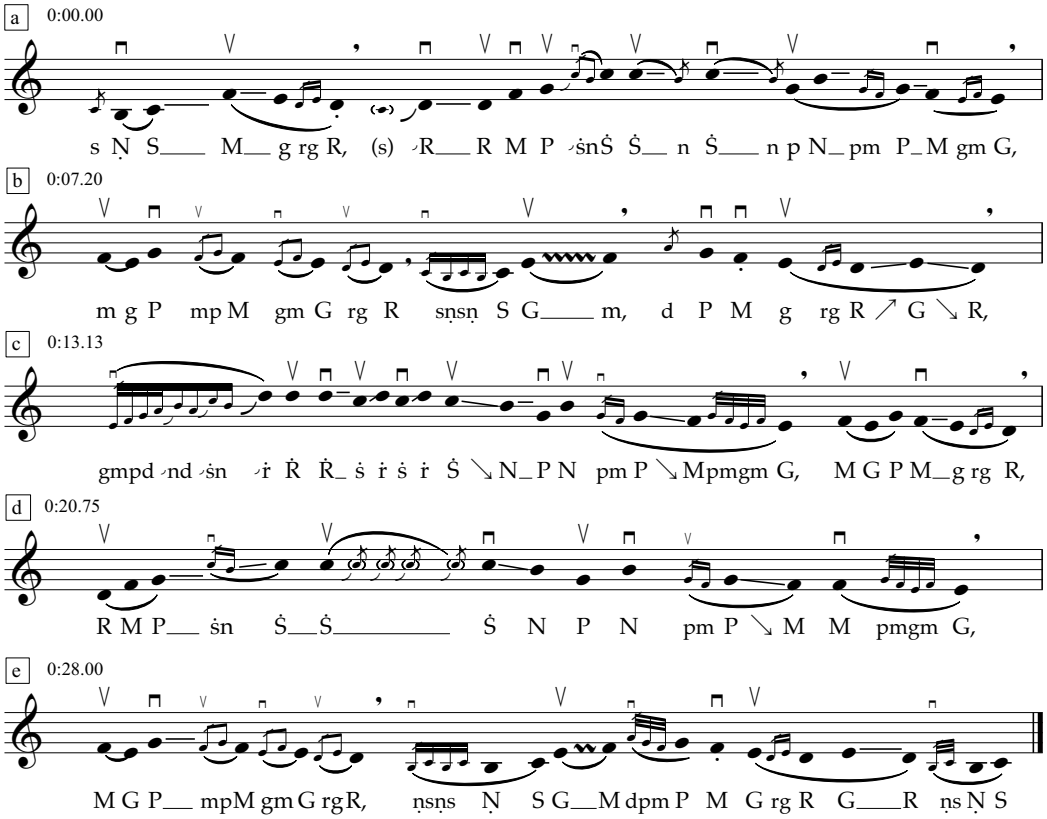
Example 5.1: *Rāg* Pārvatī (**A 5.1**)



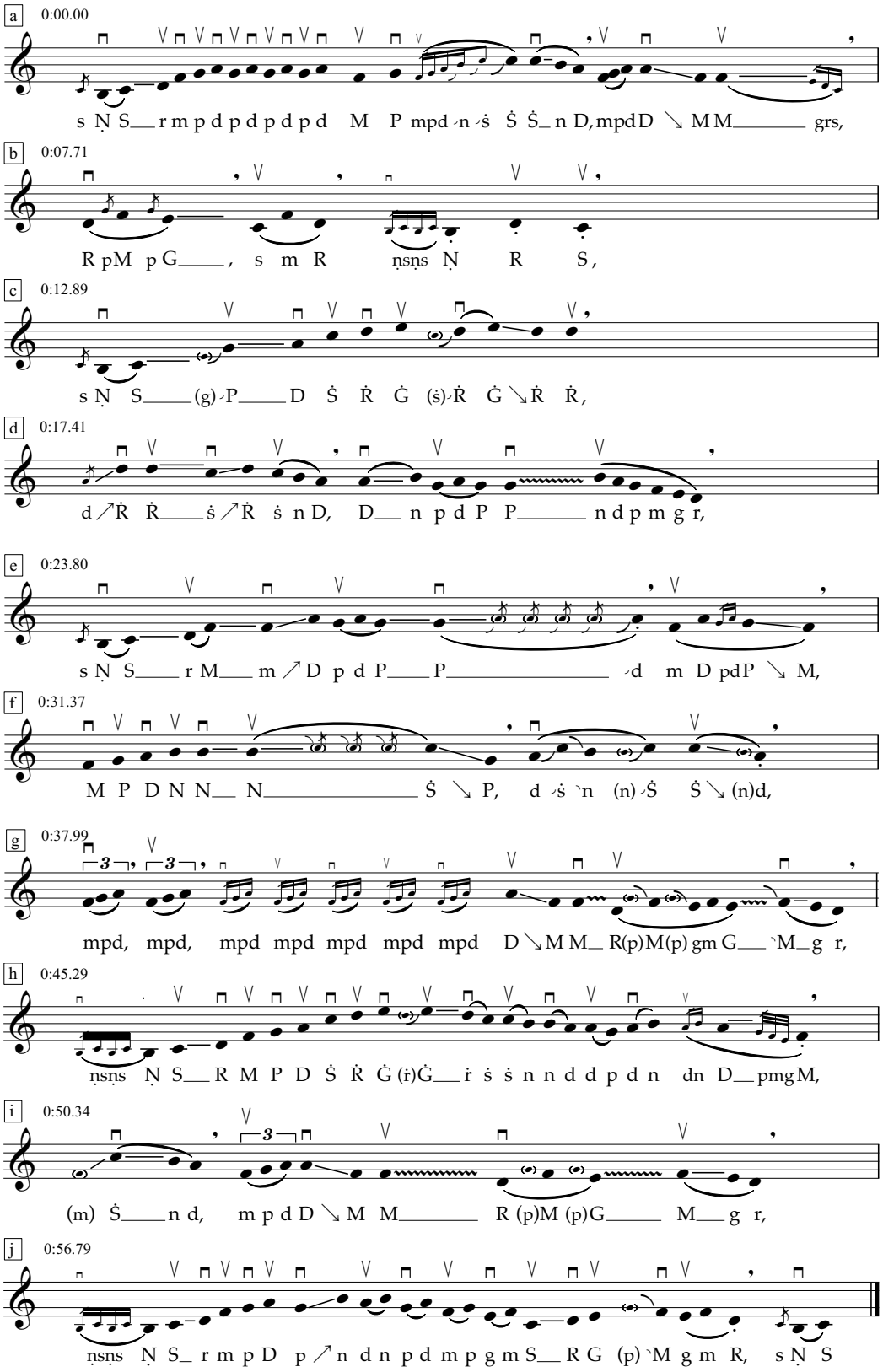
Example 5.2: *Rāg* Toḍī (**A 5.2**)



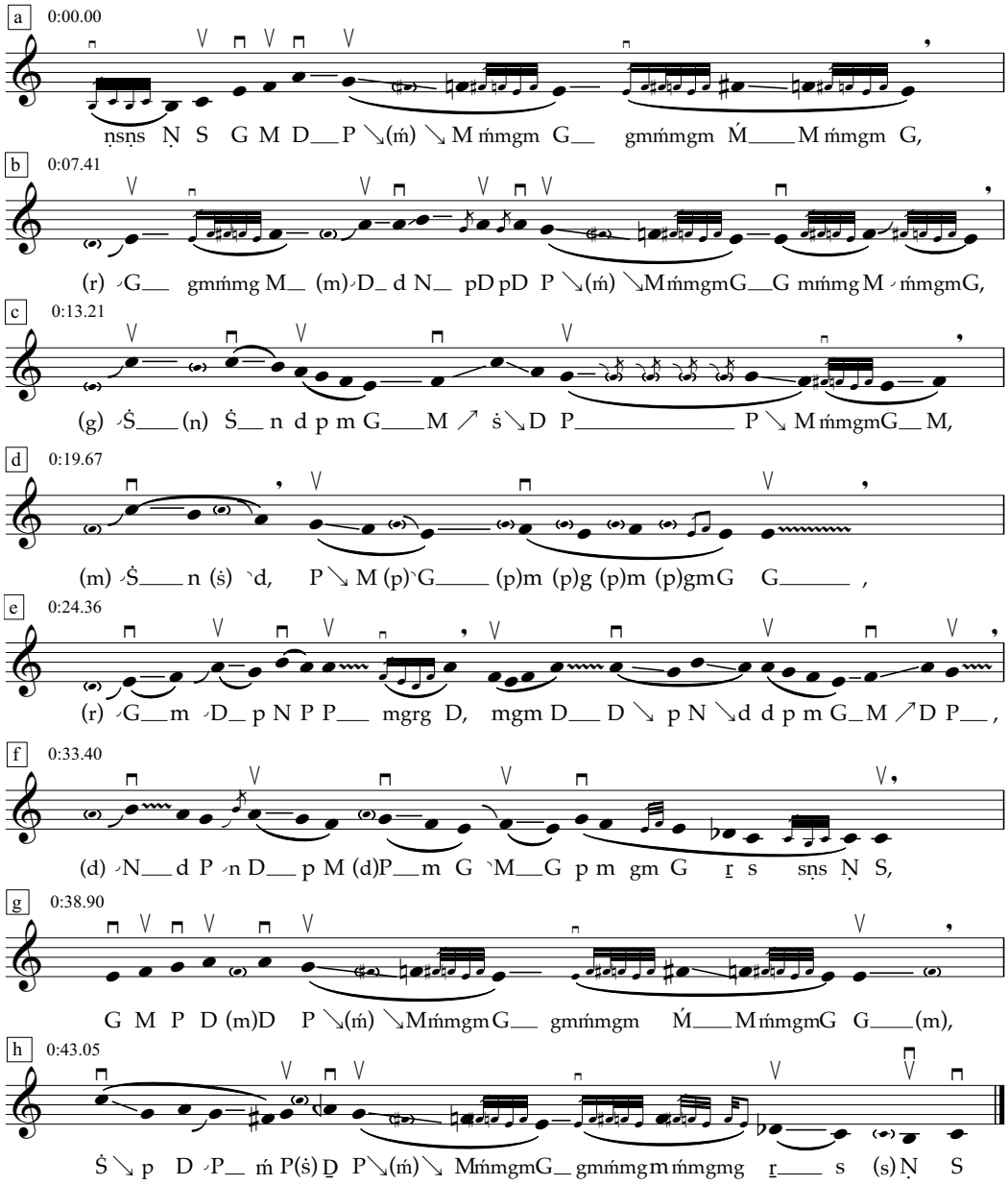
Example 5.3: *Rāg* Gauḍ Malhār (**A 5.3**)



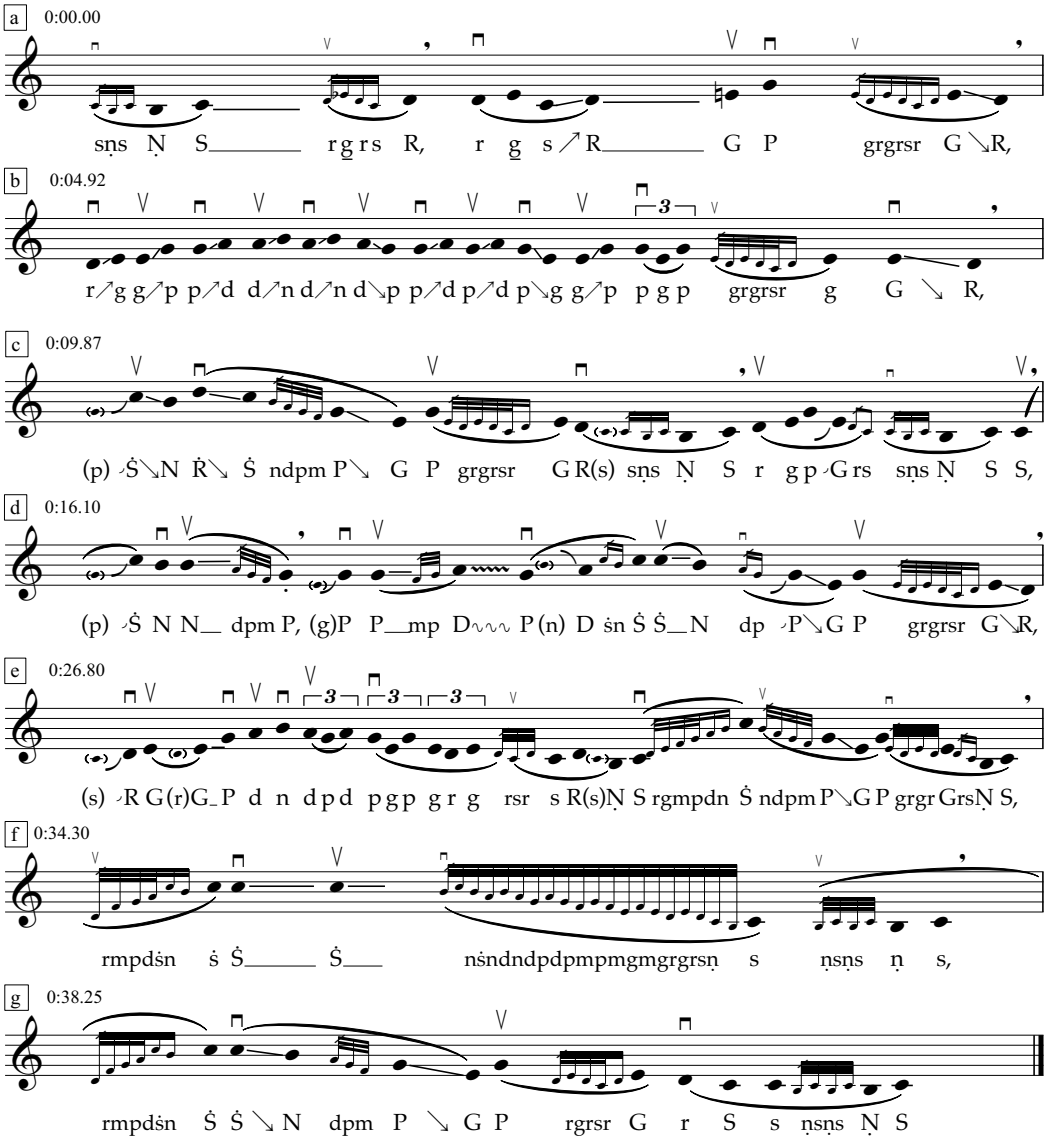
Example 5.4: *Rāg* Sameri (**A 5.4**)



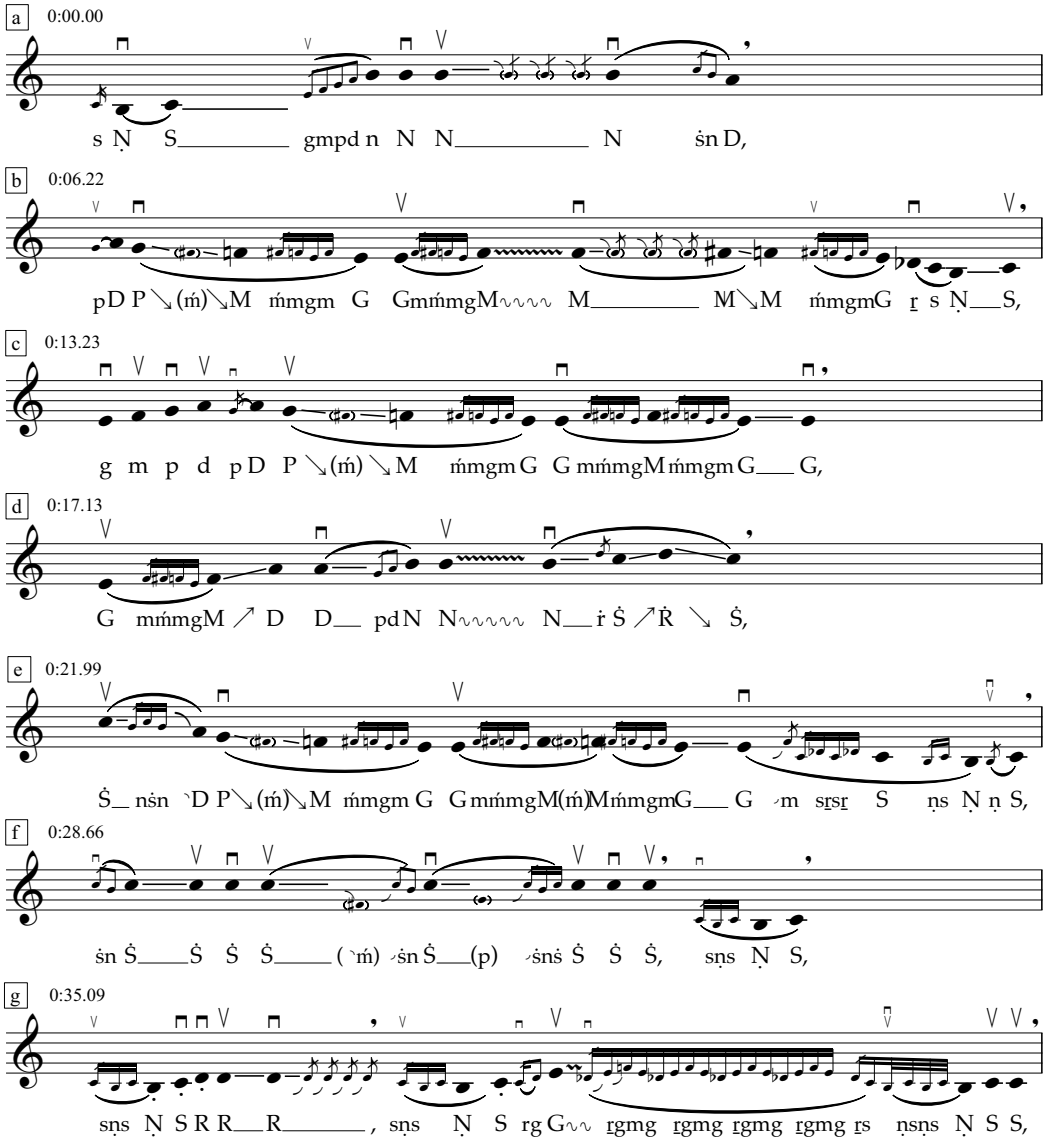
Example 5.5: *Rāg* Sūb (**A 5.5**)

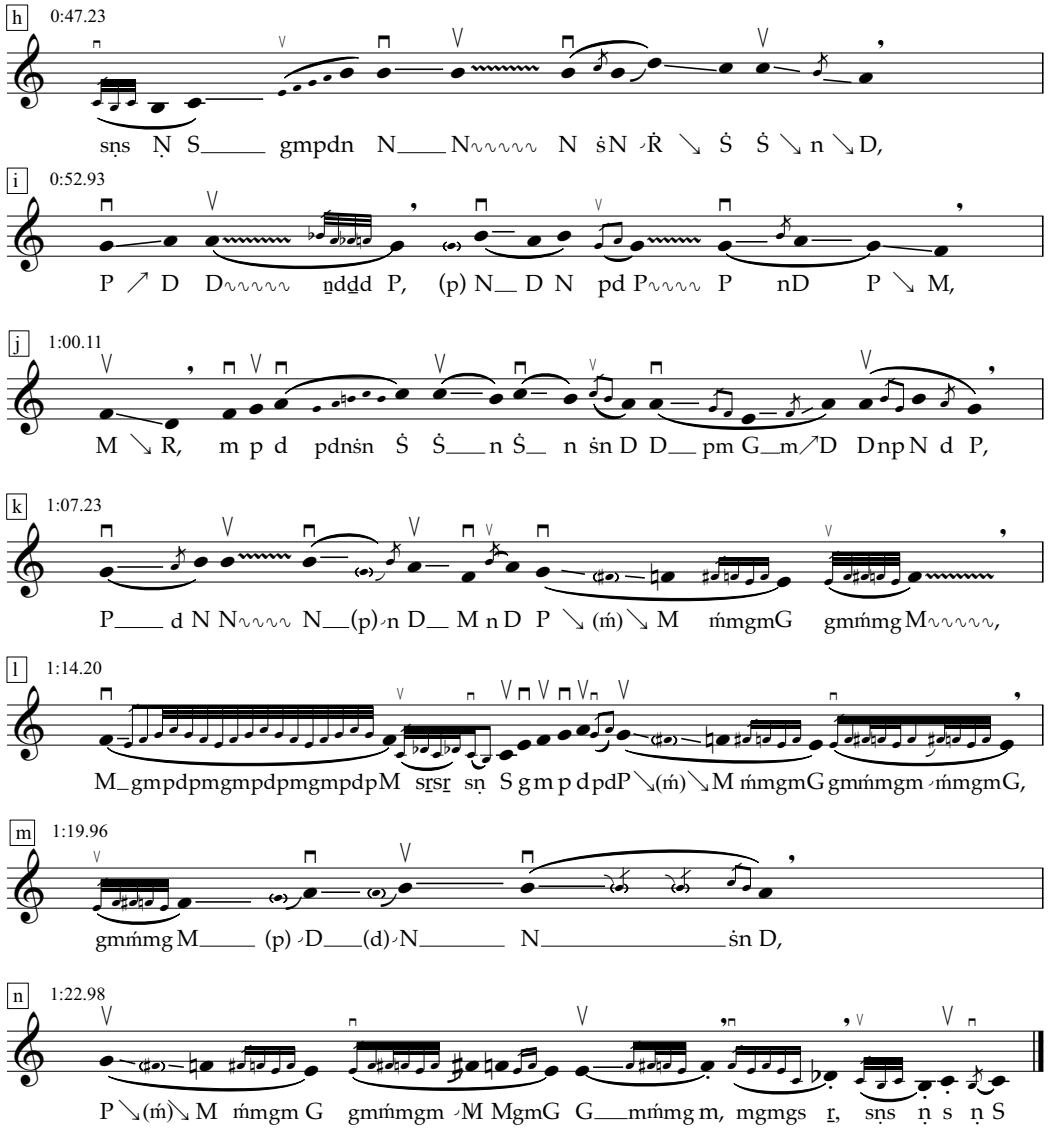


Example 5.6: *Rāg* Kalyān (**A 5.6**)

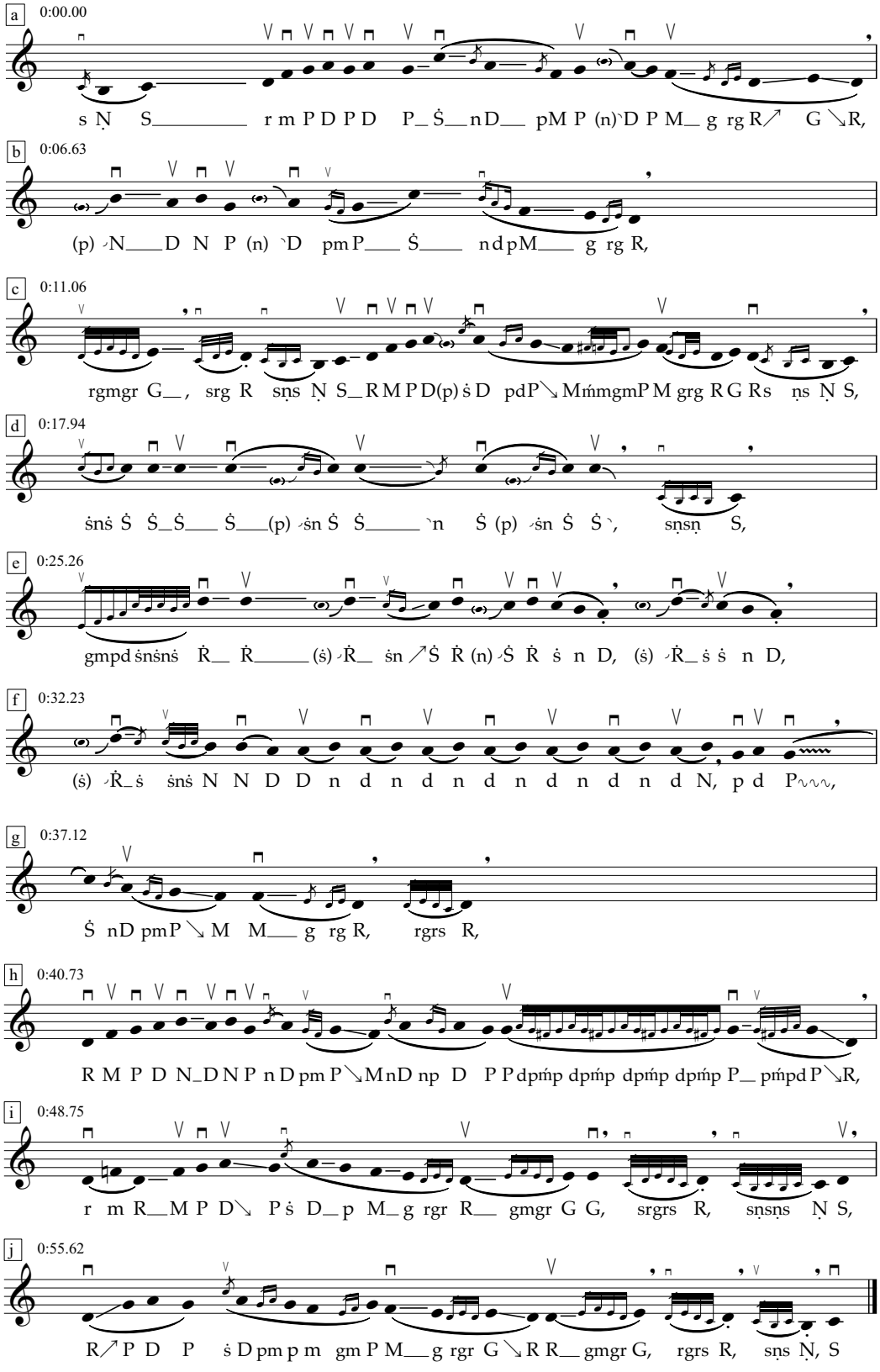


Example 5.7: *Rāg* Mārū (**A 5.7**)

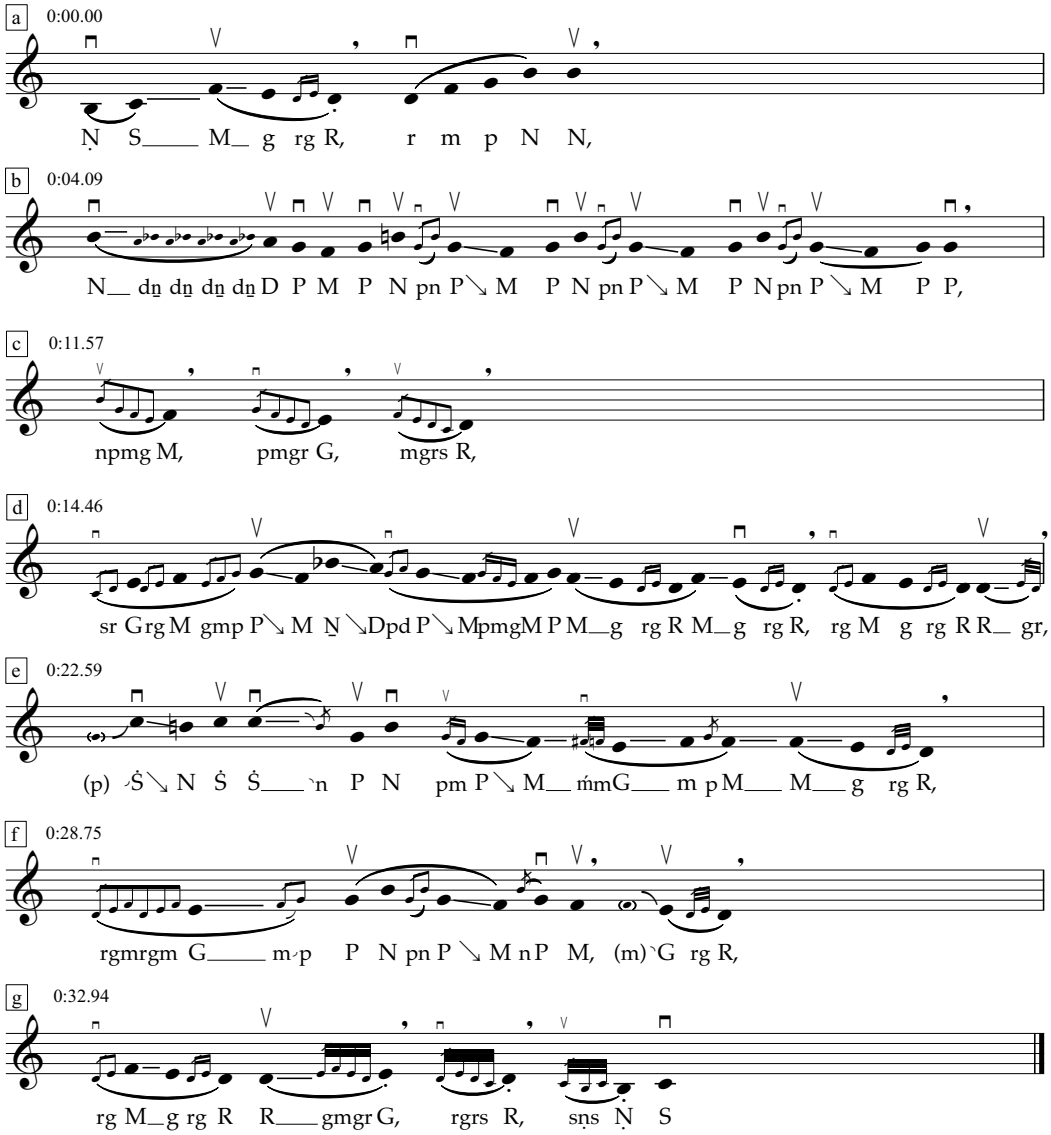



h 0:47.23
sṇs Ṇ S gmpdn N N N ṡN ˏṘ ↘ Ṡ Ṡ ↘ n ↘ D,
i 0:52.93
P ↗ D D ṉdḏd P, (p) N D N pd P P nD P ↘ M,
j 1:00.11
M ↘ R, m p d pdnṡn Ṡ Ṡ n Ṡ n ṡn D D pm G m↗D Dnp N d P,
k 1:07.23
P d N N N (p) ˏn D M n D P ↘ (ḿ) ↘ M ḿmgmG gmḿmg M,
l 1:14.20
M gmpdpmgmpdpmgmpdpM sṟsṟ sṇ S g m p d pdP ↘ (ḿ) ↘ M ḿmgmG gmḿmgm ˏḿmgmG,
m 1:19.96
gmḿmg M (p) ˏD (d) ˏN N ṡn D,
n 1:22.98
P ↘ (ḿ) ↘ M ḿmgm G gmḿmgm ˏM MgmG G mḿmg m, mgmgs ṟ, sṇs ṇ s ṇ S

Example 5.8: *Rāg* Kāfī (**A 5.8**)

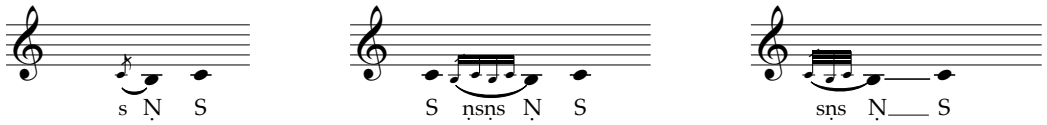


Example 5.9: *Rāg* Soraṭh (**A 5.9**)



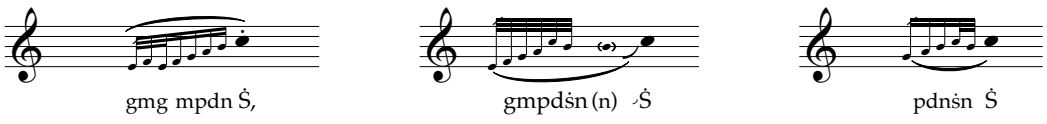
Some preliminary observations on Examples 5.1 – 5.9

The first general point that we can note about Muse Khan's delivery of these core *rāg* structures is that each example is begun and ended with the establishment (or re-establishment) of the tonic, or 'Sa' – invariably in some form of conjunction with the natural seventh degree of the scale ('Ni') from the octave below, which acts in this context as the leading-note:



Whilst the diverse selection of examples shown above are not exact carbon copies of each other, it is notable that Muse Khan always uses the natural seventh degree of the scale as the leading-note anticipating resolution on the tonic – even when this tone does not feature overtly in the *rāg* itself (for example, in his renditions of *rāg* Toḍī or *rāg* Pārvatī). The fixed tonal material in this particular melodic feature indicates that it is not *rāg*-specific, providing a contrast to what is otherwise the markedly consistent practice of emphasising, and inevitably returning to, the pre-eminent tonic, such as one would typically find in North Indian classical music performance practice. There is also perhaps an element here of Muse Khan using this device as a means of "bookending" the various examples, thus clearly delineating the performance of one *rāg* framework from another.

Another consistently occurring feature throughout these examples, that also does not appear to be *rāg*-specific, is the employment of extremely fast ascending runs – typically beginning in the region around the natural third and fifth degrees of the scale ('Ga' to 'Pa') and culminating in an alightment on the high tonic (upper 'Sa'):



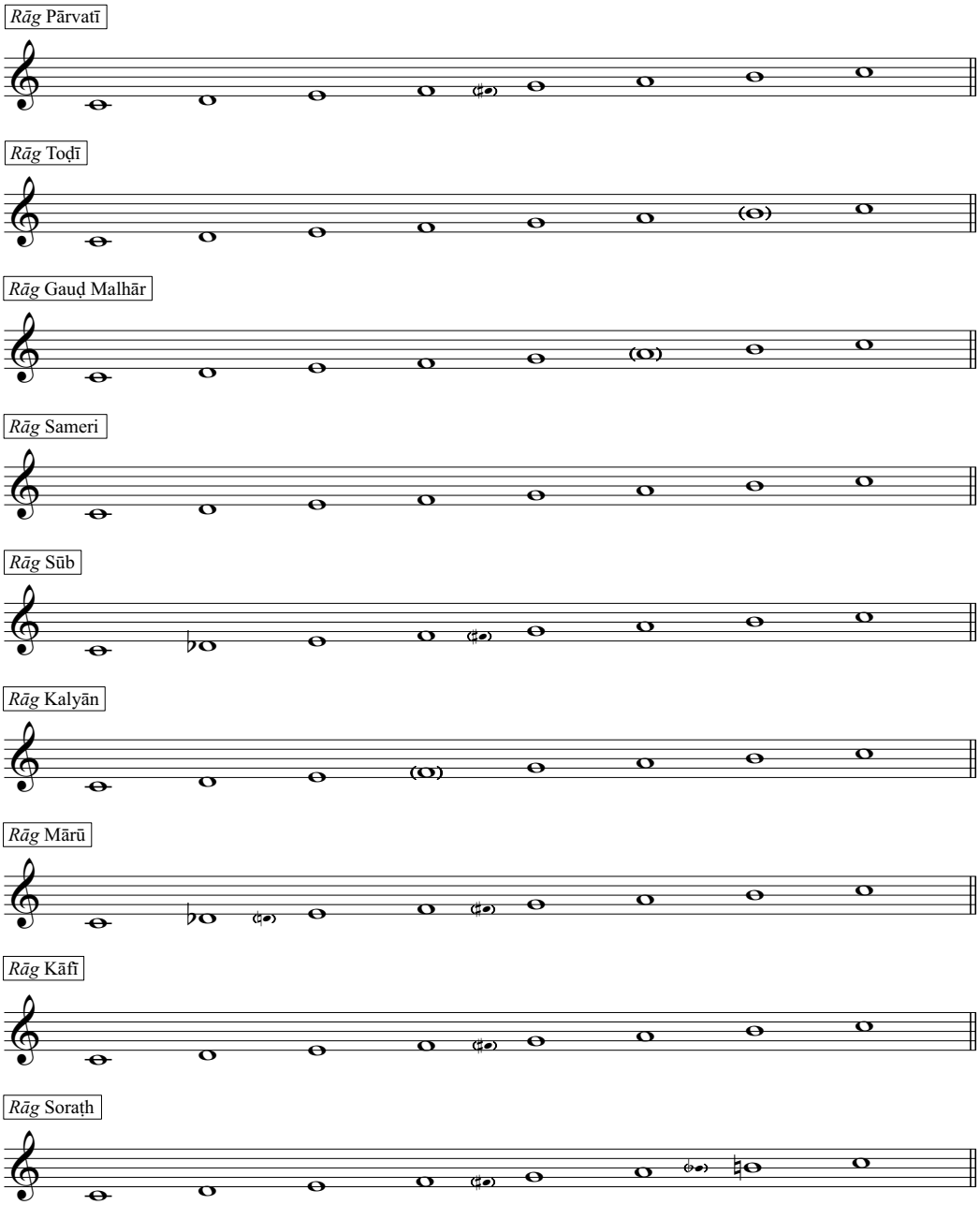
Variations of these ascending flourishes do, in fact, occur regularly throughout the course of Muse Khan's Sindhi *sāraṅgī* performances, regardless of melodic context; and such flourishes could be said to belong to his own specific "bag of tricks": that is to say, a collection of extremely technical melodic and rhythmic performance devices that are both a hallmark of the musician's own personal style, and also an overt expression of his or her own mastery. Both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār senior musicians consistently employ such devices in general music practice; and this may be one possible reason why it has sometimes been hard for even highly acculturated outsiders to distinguish one *rāg* from another. The analysis of such devices would represent a substantial study in itself; however, since they are neither *rāg*-specific nor specific to any one section of a *baḍa gāna* performance, they have limited relevance to the current investigation. Where a clear relevance to the melodic structure is demonstrated here – or when such flourishes are conspicuously absent – we shall take note of this.

The main pedagogical function of each *rāg* framework is to detail – through its performance – specific, crucial factors of tonal content, scalar movement, weighting of notes and phrase shaping that, when combined together, can enable both the senior musician and the knowledgeable listener to distinguish one *rāg* from another successfully. Before taking a more in-depth look at the salient features of melodic movement and possible hierarchies of pitch, we will first use the data supplied in the above examples to deduce theoretical underlying scale types and ascent/descent patterns for the *rāg* frameworks.

5.3.2. Scale types and ascent/descent patterns

From the examples transcribed above, we can deduce a number of essential structural *rāg* features. Figure 5.1 shows an extraction of the tonal content utilised in the performance of each *rāg* (with weak/exchange pitches shown in parentheses).

Figure 5.1: Tonal content by *rāg*



Commentary: Figure 5.1

When examining the tonal content of these melodic frameworks, it is immediately evident that all of the examples utilise a heptatonic pitch set, allowing for exchange tones and some rare inconsistencies in pitch during the course of performance. Four of the nine core *rāg* structures – Toḍī, Gauḍ Malhār, Sameri and Kalyān – correspond closely in scale type to Bhātkhaṇḍe's North Indian classical Bilāval *ṭhāṭ* (equivalent to the Western major scale); three hint at the distinct flavour of Kalyān *ṭhāṭ* (major scale with a sharpened fourth degree), being *rāg* Pārvatī, *rāg* Kāfī and *rāg* Soraṭh; whilst *rāgs* Sūb and Mārū both correspond significantly to the Mārvā *ṭhāṭ* (major scale with a flattened second degree and a sharpened fourth degree).

However, even at this most essential scalar level of content, some significant differences emerge between the Laṅgā system and Bhātkhaṇḍe's classical system of *ṭhāṭs*: for example, the Laṅgā *rāg* Kalyān does not use the sharpened fourth degree of the scale, thereby excluding itself from the classical Kalyān *ṭhāṭ*; and the Laṅgā *rāg* Kāfī is similarly incompatible with its nominally corresponding *ṭhāṭ*, since it completely lacks the flattened third and seventh degrees of the scale. Conversely, the close affinity between *rāg* Mārū and Bhātkhaṇḍe's classical scale type of the same name raises some interesting questions.

Seven of the nine scale types expounded here fit comfortably into what Widdess (2014: 145) has identified as "the 'South Asian Diatonic' system" – that is to say, they utilise intervals between each tone and semitone that are no broader than diatonic. However, two of the *rāgs* – Sūb and Mārū – consistently employ a non-diatonic interval of three semitones in the lower tetrachord; and they are not the only *rāgs* in the Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār music systems to do so (Bhairav and 'Sindhi' Bhairvī being two particularly prevalent examples).

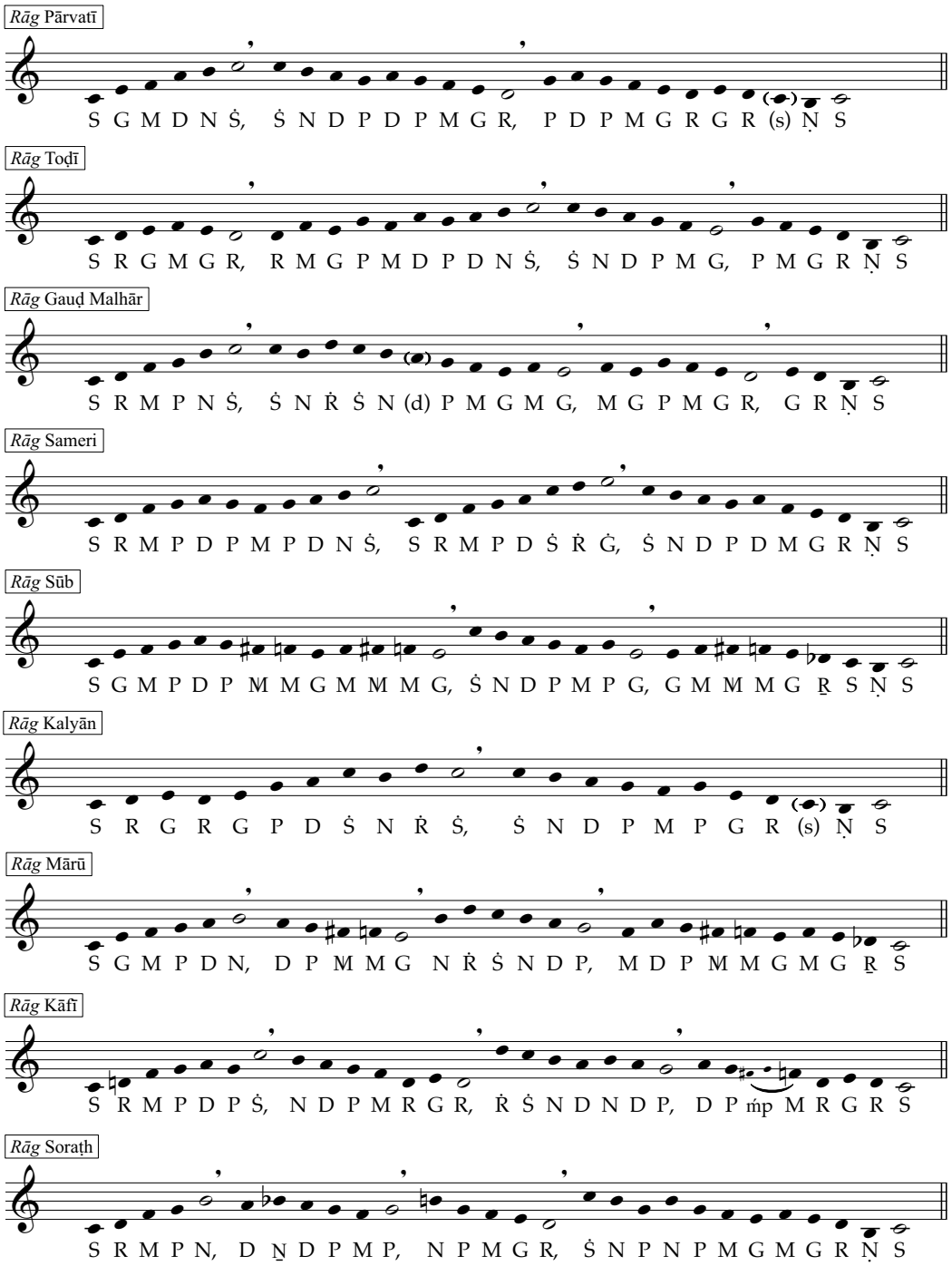
We can speculate that the use of non-diatonic scale types is related, either directly or indirectly, to the Islamic influence that is evident in South Asian scale systems from the sixteenth century onwards (ibid: 146); and it is particularly intriguing to note that the early classical forms of *rāg* Mārū also become evident, in both music literature and *rāgamāla* paintings, at this time (Bor 1999: 114). For

the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, this *rāg* is still intimately connected in performance practice with the Rajasthani legend of Dhola-Mārū, just as it was in the 16th Century:

> In *ragamala* paintings from Mewar and Sirohi, Maru portrays the famous love story of Dhola and Maru, who, against strong opposition, find each other with the aid of a camel.
>
> Ibid: 175

One final point to note regarding the scale types extrapolated above is that, whilst they do allow for a grouping of the Laṅgā *rāgs* at the most basic level of tonal content, the commonalities highlighted across these groupings means that scale type alone is not sufficient to provide identification for any one *rāg*. Therefore, it is necessary to identify more detailed factors of melodic shape and movement, in order to determine precisely how one melodic framework can be differentiated from another. To continue this process of amplification, Figure 5.2 details the various ascending and descending scalar movements that are implied in the melodic outlines for each *rāg*, abstracted from the examples above.

Figure 5.2: Ascent and descent by *rāg*

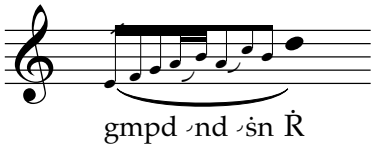


Commentary: Figure 5.2

At this level of melodic extraction, more distinctive features begin to emerge that enable us to distinguish one *rāg* from another, even when their scale types match. But there are also two striking points of convergence: all of the melodic frameworks employ oblique *vakra* (literally "crooked") movements; and eight of

the nine *rāgs* utilise fewer pitches in ascent (*āroha*) than in descent (*avroha*). The exception to this rule is *rāg* Toḍī, which uses an oblique heptatonic (*sampūrṇ*) pitch set in both ascent and descent; but seven of the remaining eight *rāgs* utilise a pentatonic (*auḍav*) pitch set in ascent, and *rāg* Mārū employs a hexatonic (*ṣāḍav*) ascent. Such approaches to scalar ascent and descent are also commonplace in both North and South Indian *rāgas*, as attested to by the existence of extensive terminology to describe them; and the tendency to employ fewer pitches in ascent than in descent is a particularly prevalent feature in the structure of *rāgas* of North Indian classical music.

The variation of pitches in ascent would in themselves appear to go some way towards distinguishing these nine *rāg* structures from each other: although both Pārvatī and Sameri omit the natural third degree (*śuddh* Ga), and the omission of both natural third and sixth (*śuddh* Dha) degrees is common to both *rāgs* Gauḍ Malhār and Soraṭh, the remaining five *rāgs* all exhibit variations in ascent that are not shared by the others. However, using the pitch content of ascending melodic phrases as a means of identifying these structures is further complicated in practice by the frequent use of rapid ascending runs as described in the commentary on Examples 5.1 – 5.9, above: these figures can often contain pitches that are not *rāg*-specific, as shown below in a rapid ascending phrase extracted from the example featuring *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār (5.3c), which contains – exceptionally, for this particular performance of the *rāg* – both natural third and sixth degrees:



Despite such anomalies, it is evident from the examples supplied by Muse Khan that there exists – in his conception at least – a very clear set of rules for determining the selection of pitches that are applicable to a particular Laṅgā melodic structure, and the diverse configurations in which those pitches should be correctly rendered during performance. On closer examination, even finer details also emerge from the *rāg* structures, concerning certain hierarchies of

pitch, and the importance of performing the correct melodic movements within any given *rāg*; and in the following section we will see how Muse Khan subsequently demonstrated his own conceptual methodology for distinguishing the more closely related melodic frameworks from one another, by paying particular attention to these details.

5.3.3. Hierarchies of pitch and distinguishing factors of *rāg* movement

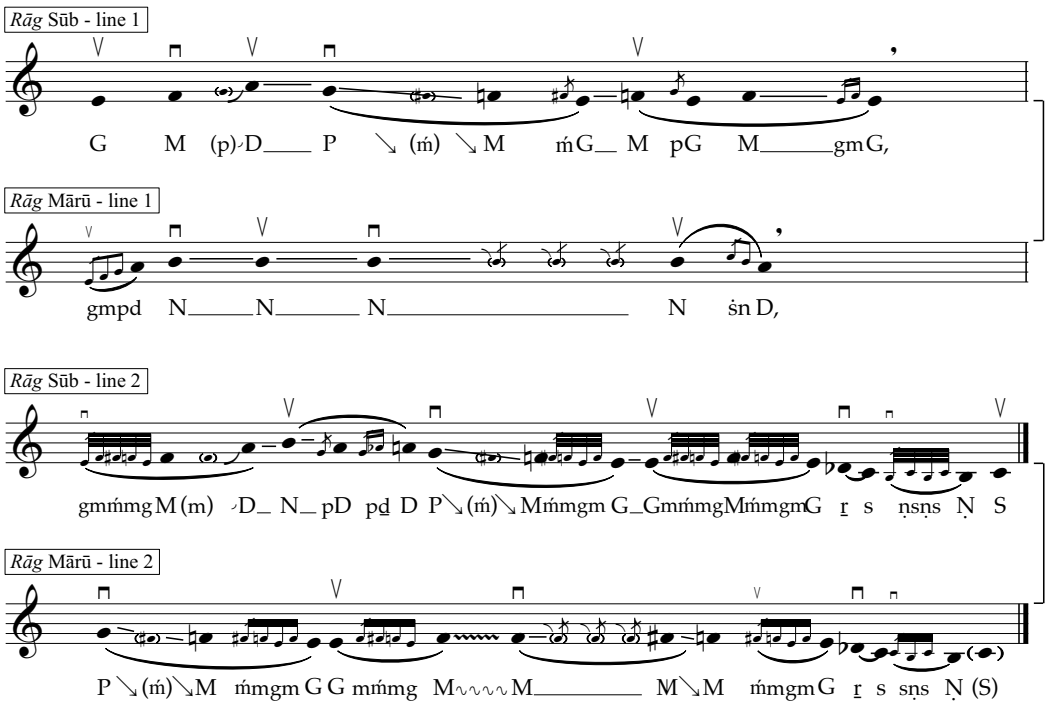
Information gathered from the second session in question (which took place in Muse Khan's house at the Jodhpur Laṅgā colony on 17th March 2014) reiterated some of the core melodic structures, whilst also expanding upon – and making more explicit – certain significant factors of melodic phrasing and content that serve to articulate the distinctions between one *rāg* structure and another. The following Examples 5.10 to 5.13, along with their attendant video examples (**V 5.4 – V 5.8**), serve to illustrate these particularly significant distinguishing factors between what Muse Khan presented as four closely related pairs of *rāgs*, all drawn from his core system.

Of the nine core *rāgs* that Muse had detailed previously, *rāg* Kalyān was the only conspicuous omission from this pairing system. The other eight *rāgs* were paired as follows: Sūb with Mārū; Kāfī with Toḍī; Gauḍ Malhār with Soraṭh; and Pārvatī with Sameri. In each case, the choice of pairing was clearly designed to illustrate subtle differences between the two *rāgs* in question, showcasing phrase content that could easily be mistaken as belonging to either *rāg*. Here, it seemed evident that Muse Khan was keen to demonstrate certain ambiguities in these melodic frameworks that could easily be overlooked by even a relatively experienced listener, who did not fully understand the nuances of musical detail.

In the following examples, transcriptions for the distinguishing phrases of the paired *rāgs* are presented in series with each other, for ease of direct comparison. Muse Khan's frequent re-iterations of the tonic have been omitted from these transcriptions, since they are not *rāg*-specific and seem to function chiefly as punctuation points between each example: this is discussed above. Where relevant, automatic line graph transcriptions of key phrases – created using the Tony music analysis software – are shown together with the staff notation

systems, so as to provide an instantly apprehensible visualisation of the melodic contours and to better illustrate duration, rhythmic aspects of phrasing, precise pitch intervals, and the variation thereof. In these line graph representations, time is shown in seconds on the x-axis, and frequency is shown in Hertz on the y-axis. A facsimile of a piano keyboard is also shown on the y-axis (with the Middle C key marked in blue), along with designations that have been added to indicate the relative pitch in *sargam*.

Example 5.10: Distinguishing *rāg* Sūb from *rāg* Mārū (**V 5.4**)



Commentary: Example 5.10

In the first example of this section, Muse Khan juxtaposes ascending and descending phrases from *rāg* Mārū and *rāg* Sūb – two structures that we have already noted exhibit the same scale type, and identical pitch content in both ascending and descending patterns. We can hypothesise that these commonalities are a significant factor in the pairing of these two *rāgs* together; and it seems likely that the implicit pedagogical purpose of juxtaposing the following examples is to clarify issues of potential confusion between such closely related melodic forms.

The most obvious distinguishing feature between the two *rāgs* is made clear in a comparison of the first line of each example: although both *rāgs* omit the natural second degree of the scale (*śuddh* 'Re') in ascent, the initial ascending movement stops at the emphasised natural sixth (*śuddh* 'Dha') in *rāg* Sub, before returning to the natural third (*śuddh* 'Ga'), which is also given weight throughout the *rāg*; whereas in *rāg* Mārū, Muse Khan immediately ascends to the natural seventh (*śuddh* 'Ni') and sustains this note for a prolonged period – touching on the octave (high 'Sa') before descending only as far as the natural sixth.

Hence, a clear hierarchy of pitches begins to emerge, with the natural sixth being a strong note in *rāg* Sūb, and the natural seventh being heavily emphasised in *rāg* Mārū. Moreover, both of these important pitches are given their own distinctive special treatment: the natural sixth in *rāg* Sūb is preceded by a slide from below (this is repeated in the second phrase of the example); and the natural seventh in *rāg* Mārū is decorated with delicate ornamental touches of the octave pitch. Figure 5.3 offers an assessment of the implicit pitch hierarchies exhibited in these two examples.

Figure 5.3: Overview of the pitch hierarchies implicit in *rāg* Sūb and *rāg* Mārū

Scale degree	***Rāg* Sūb**	***Rāg* Mārū**
Tonic (S)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 2nd (R̲)	WEAK	WEAK
Natural 3rd (G)	SIGNIFICANT	NEUTRAL
Natural 4th (M)	NEUTRAL	SIGNIFICANT
Sharp 4th (M̲)	NEUTRAL	SIGNIFICANT
Fifth (P)	SIGNIFICANT	NEUTRAL
Natural 6th (D)	STRONG	WEAK
Natural 7th (N)	WEAK	STRONG

The emphasis on the natural sixth in *rāg* Sūb is reinforced in the opening ascent of the second phrase; and the natural seventh is touched upon at the peak of the ascent for the first and only time during the example, demonstrating that this

pitch is permissible in the *rāg*, but only weakly so. The use of the fifth degree ('Pa') is reiterated as an axis point for the link between movements in the upper and lower tetrachords; and finally a characteristically languid, sliding movement leads down, via a rapidly delivered crooked course, to an eventual resolution on the tonic.

The second phrase of the *rāg* Mārū example consists of a remarkably similar movement to the one that concludes the *rāg* Sūb example, and demonstrates another important reason why these two *rāgs* have been paired together by the senior musician. Figure 5.4 (parts 'a' and 'b') compares the two movements in detail, using pitch representations generated by the Tony music analysis software.

To the ears of the unwary listener, this final, oblique descending figure could easily be attributed to either *rāg*; but closer examination reveals a clear difference between the executions of this key phrase. It is clear from the line graph representations in Figure 5.4 that, whilst both *rāgs* share the slow slide down from the fifth to the fourth (always followed by a rapidly executed ornament that leads to the third, in both cases), the treatment of both the third and fourth degrees of the scale is markedly different in the two examples: in *rāg* Sūb's descent, the natural third is once again emphasised, and the sharp fourth acts as a passing note that is given very little weight; however, the sharp fourth in the descent of *rāg* Mārū is reiterated in a further slide, following the strong emphasis on the natural fourth – which is decorated with both vibrato and three clear touches (accomplished with a flick to the main playing string with the ring finger of the left hand) that again emphasise the sharp fourth.

These features reinforce the hierarchy of pitches postulated in Figure 5.3, and add a further layer of detail to the complexity in performance of the Laṅgā *rāg* frameworks: we see the consistent use of the kind of sophisticated ornamental devices that are commonly heard in both vocal and instrumental North Indian classical music performance, such as the slow slide (*mīṇḍ*); the light, inflected "flick", or grace note (*kaṇ*); rapid ornamental figures (*mūrkī*); and the use of vibrato (*āndolan*). Moreover, it appears that certain specific pitches are deliberately treated with these ornaments, in order to highlight their relative

significance within the overall melodic structure, thereby clearly distinguishing one *rāg* from another that has the same tonal content.

Figure 5.4a: Automatic line graph representation of descending phrase in *rāg* Sūb

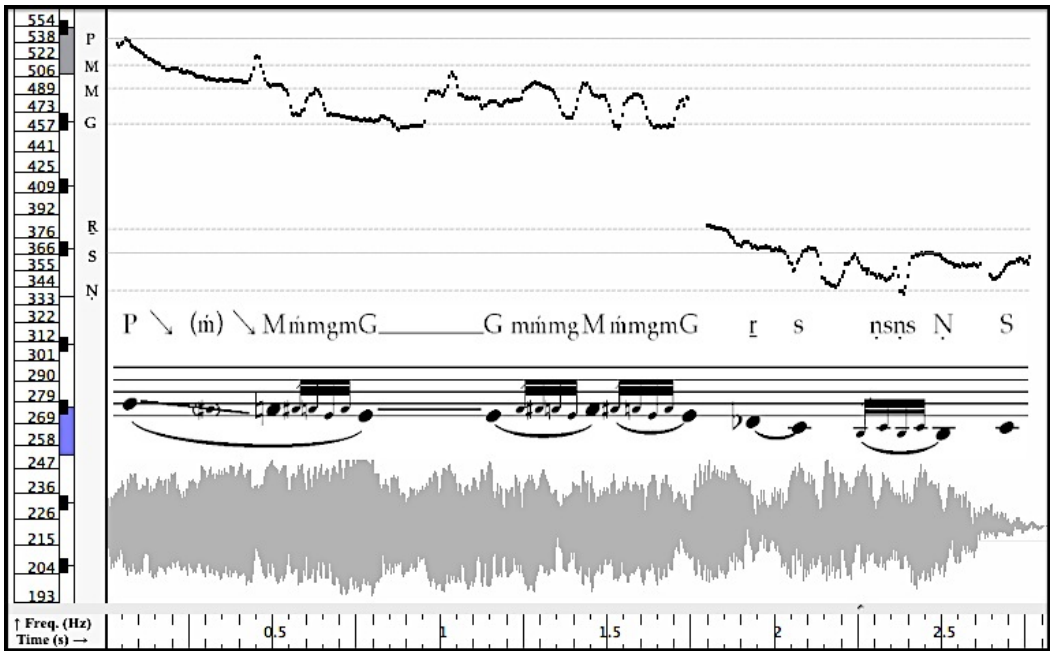
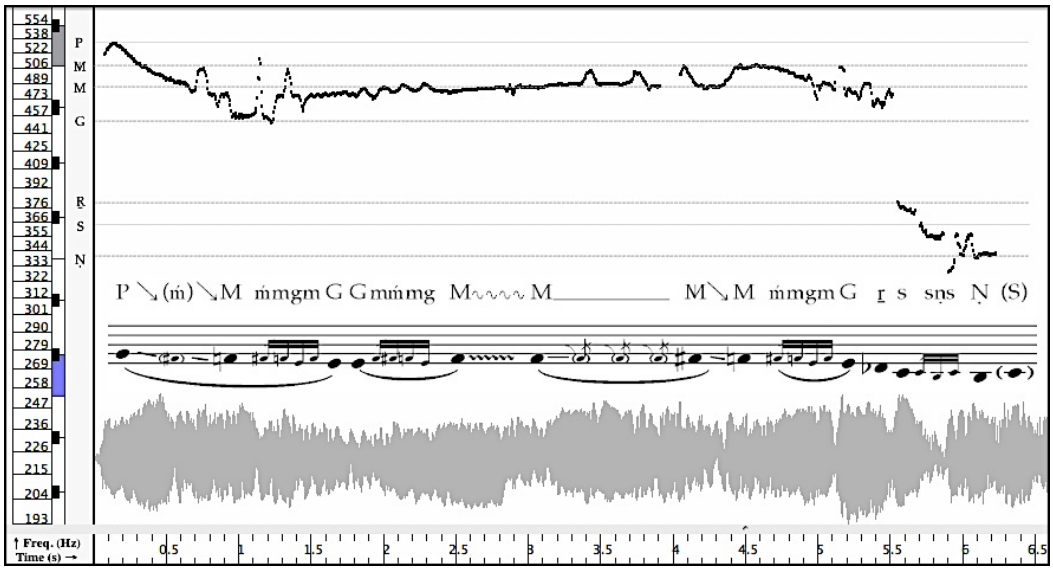


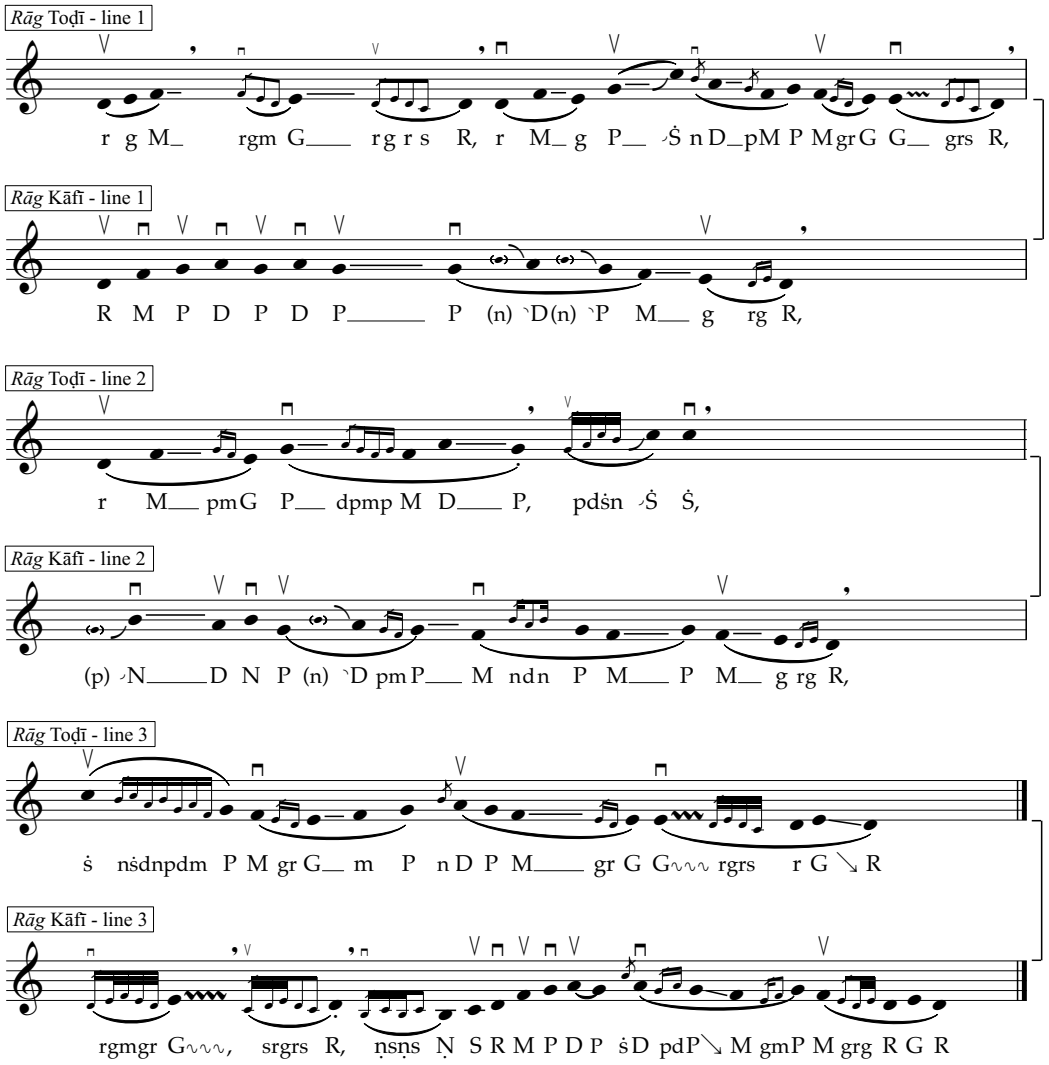
Figure 5.4b: Automatic line graph representation of descending phrase in *rāg* Mārū



To further highlight the ongoing influence of North Indian classical music theory and structure on the music system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, **V 5.5** shows Asin Khan Laṅgā using *sargam* designations verbally, in order to illustrate the

varying treatments of ‘Ni’ in these two *rāgs*. Thus, he demonstrates not only his own understanding of the subtle (yet significant) differences in *rāg* phrasing demonstrated by his father, but also his basic familiarity with a fundamental aspect of classical music terminology which enables him to articulate these details explicitly. However, it is equally notable that Muse Khan never used *sargam* designations when teaching me: indeed, with the notable exception of Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, classical *sargam* was, in my experience, not a vocabulary used by senior musicians in either Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār communities.

Example 5.11: Distinguishing *rāg* Toḍī from *rāg* Kāfī (**V 5.6**)



Commentary: Example 5.11

Once again, Muse Khan compares two *rāg* structures that utilize the same basic tonal material, but which vary from each other in key areas of phrasing. As both Muse and Asin Khan were at pains to demonstrate, the Laṅgā conceptual frameworks for *rāgs* Toḍī and Kāfī differ with regard to their approaches to *śuddh* 'Re' – an important note in both *rāgs*, but one which is approached very differently within each context. The significance of the second scale degree is emphasised here, in the fact that each one of the three phrase examples in both *rāgs* either begins or ends with 'Re'; and this commonality of emphasis is one of the features that can potentially lead to confusion between the two *rāgs*.

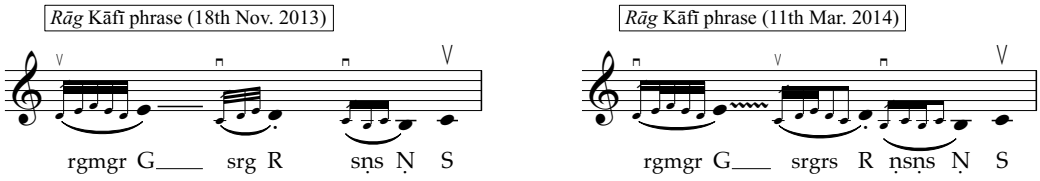
Surprisingly, it is what happens above the second degree of the scale that emerges as being definitive. In particular, the main ascending path from 'Re' differs crucially in *rāg* Kāfī, skipping the 'Ga', heading straight up to 'Dha', and then back down to rest on 'Pa': this characteristic ascent is repeated almost verbatim in phrases 1 and 3. In *rāg* Toḍī, the *vakra* ascent also skips the 'Ga'; but then, reaching 'Ma', the movement typically settles back on 'Ga', before either returning to 'Re' (as in the opening of phrase 1), or skipping 'Ma' and moving up to 'Pa' (demonstrated in the second section of phrase 1, and also in the beginning of the main ascent to high 'Sa' demonstrated in phrase 2). Moreover, the 'Ga' in *rāg* Toḍī is given particular emphasis, being held with vibrato in both phrases 1 and 3; whereas in *rāg* Kāfī, 'Ga' is treated as a weak passing note, and is generally used rather sparingly.

Besides these key differences, the two *rāgs* share a number of other similarities – most notably, the use of 'Pa' as a pivotal note; the relative lack of emphasis on either high or low 'Sa', except as a conclusion point; and both 'Dha' and 'Ma' functioning as emphasised pivot points between movements above and below. Once again, a clear hierarchy of pitches emerges (see Figure 5.5); and, in this respect, it is the treatment of 'Ga' that emerges as the clearest factor of differentiation between the two *rāgs*.

Figure 5.5: Overview of the pitch hierarchies implicit in *rāg* Toḍī and *rāg* Kāfī

Scale degree	***Rāg* Toḍī**	***Rāg* Kāfī**
Tonic (S)	WEAK	WEAK
Natural 2nd (R)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 3rd (G)	SIGNIFICANT	WEAK
Natural 4th (M)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Fifth (P)	NEUTRAL	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 6th (D)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Natural 7th (N)	WEAK	NEUTRAL

However, we can also see a certain rigidity becoming evident in some of the phrase patterns that Muse Khan uses, suggesting that at least some of these *rāg* phrases may function more as fixed compositional elements, as opposed to schematic tonal frameworks that are varied from performance to performance. This is particularly noticeable in the opening descending run of phrase 3 in *rāg* Kāfī, where Muse repeats almost precisely the same phrase pattern that he had performed just a few months earlier, during our first core *rāg* session:



In the context of showcasing core *rāg* structures, the downward movement from 'Ga', through 'Re' to low 'Ni' – skipping the 'Sa' in descent, and then returning back up to the tonal centre from the major seventh in typical fashion – is made clear in a manner that would seem to reflect a classical approach to *rāg* development; but the striking similarity of the ornaments applied to each note in both instances is conspicuous. It may be that this particular descending pattern in *rāg* Kāfī is less *rāg*-like, in the classical sense, than other phrase units, perhaps suggesting that the phrase originates from a more fixed, pre-composed melodic structure. Certainly there is little in the two renditions of this phrase to suggest any significant degree of melodic extemporization on the part of the musician (in the way that one might expect from a *khyāl* performance, for example).

Even more conspicuous is Muse Khan's rendering of the descending movement from the beginning of phrase 3 in *rāg* Toḍī, which – as can be seen from Figure 5.6 ('a' and 'b'), which features a comparative pitch contour extraction using Sonic Visualizer's MATCH Vamp plug-in – is virtually identical to his delivery of the same movement during the November 2013 session.

Figure 5.6a: Comparison of descending phrase contours in *rāg* Toḍī (transcription)

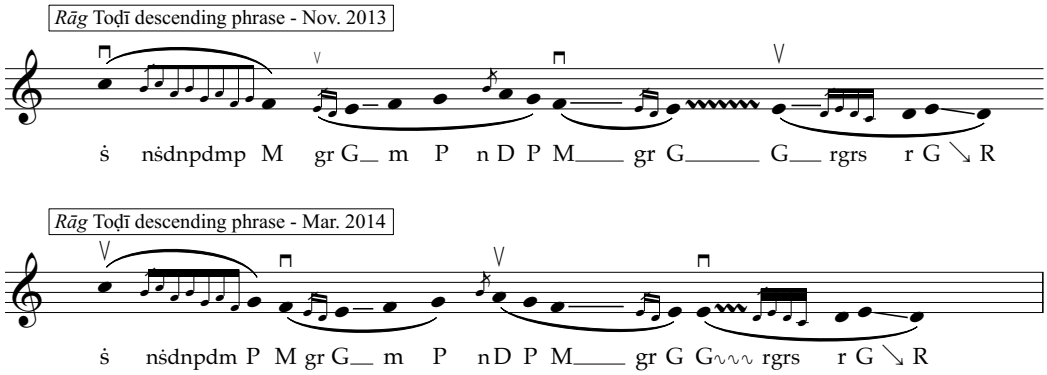
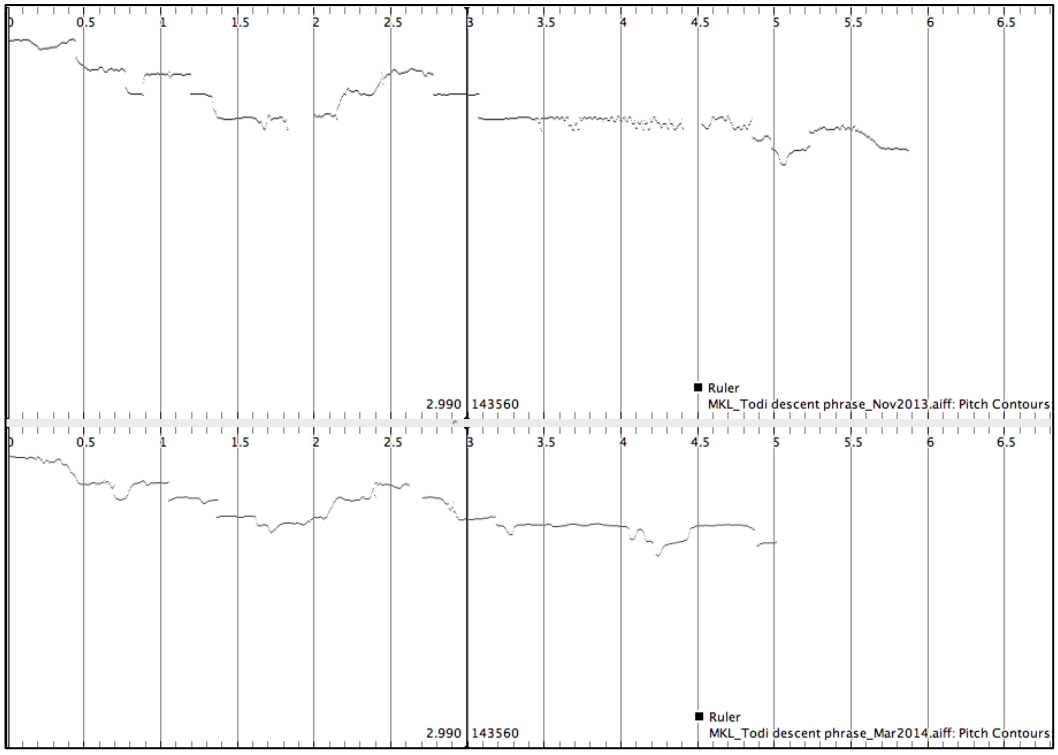
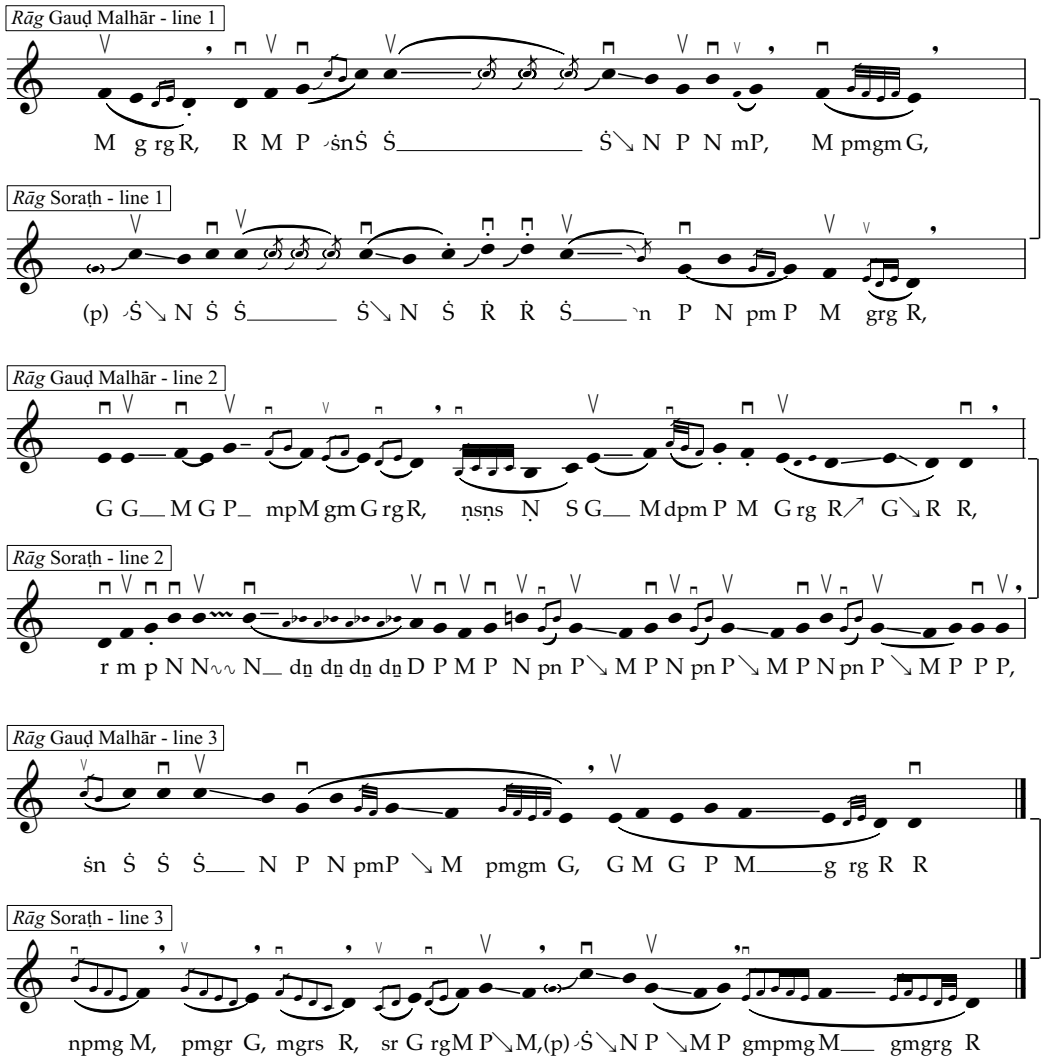


Figure 5.6b: Comparison of descending phrase contours in *rāg* Toḍī (SV/MATCH)



As both the transcription and the pitch contour show, the only significant variation between these two renditions is that the material in the later version is delivered more rapidly. This raises the question of the degree to which these *rāg* structures can be considered as frameworks for improvisation; and we shall investigate this matter further in section 5.4, below.

Example 5.12: Distinguishing *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār from *rāg* Soraṭh (**V 5.7**)



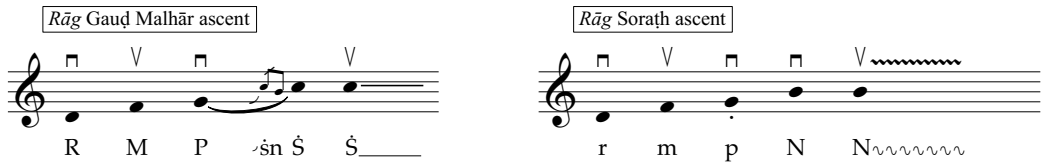
Of the four examples of *rāg* pairings given by Muse Khan on this occasion, it is notable that this performance was by far the longest in duration, running at just over 2 minutes 30 seconds; and the main reason for this was that Muse chose to play extended variations in *rāg* Soraṭh. Although it may have been that he was becoming immersed in the experience of transmitting the musical knowledge (or, simply, that he was enjoying to play), it is equally possible that *rāg* Soraṭh may

lend itself more to this kind of extemporisation than other less 'flexible' *rāgs* in the Laṅgā music system. We shall investigate this issue in more detail during the course of Chapter Seven, by examining other performances of *rāg* Soraṭh; but, for the purposes of this transcription, the representation has been truncated to focus on main points of convergence and difference with *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār, in terms of melodic phrasing.

Commentary: Example 5.12

Despite having both tonal content and certain characteristic phrases in common, these two *rāgs* are clearly differentiated from each other in a number of important ways. Nonetheless, Muse Khan was keen to illustrate the commonalities; and this is particularly evident in line 1 of both examples. Here, we can note that the opening, descending phrase unit of Gauḍ Malhār ('MgrgR') is performed almost identically to the closing phrase unit of line 1 in *rāg* Soraṭh – although it is also evident that the 'Ga' is given slightly more weight in the Gauḍ Malhār opening phrase. This small detail reflects, in a most subtle manner, one key difference between the two *rāgs*.

Both *rāgs* also showcase an early emphasis on the upper 'Sa', which (in both instances) is further highlighted by a flicking action with the left hand from the region of the major seventh, below: this is a characteristic feature of Muse Khan's playing, and a wider feature of Sindhi sāraṅgī technique in general. However, another distinction between the two *rāgs* is also made in the subsequent movement up to high 'Re' in Soraṭh. Whilst the second degree of the scale is accorded some importance within Gauḍ Malhār, it is not given this particular emphasis in the upper octave. Hence, whilst the 'Ga' is given particular weight in *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār, the 'Re' is revealed as the stronger note in *rāg* Soraṭh. Additionally, the ascent to high 'Sa' is much more direct in the *rāg* Soraṭh example; and, although both *rāgs* typically omit 'Ga' and 'Dha' in ascent, the opening phrase of line 2 makes it clear that this kind of stepwise approach to ascent in *rāg* Soraṭh invariably ends at 'Ni':



Even more striking differences are revealed in the second lines. Whilst the 'Ga' continues to be emphasised in Gauḍ Malhār, through the use of vibrato and also as the pivot point of a characteristic slide pattern ('R↗G↘R'), *rāg* Soraṭh quickly moves into the upper tetrachord to showcase a distinctive emphasis on the seventh degree. Here, the minor seventh is used delicately – rather like a strong spice, to season a dish – in combination with the major seventh and sixth degrees of the scale, in a manner that is wholly peculiar to *rāg* Soraṭh; and, since there is no flattened seventh in Gauḍ Malhār, the distinction between the two *rāgs* is clear.

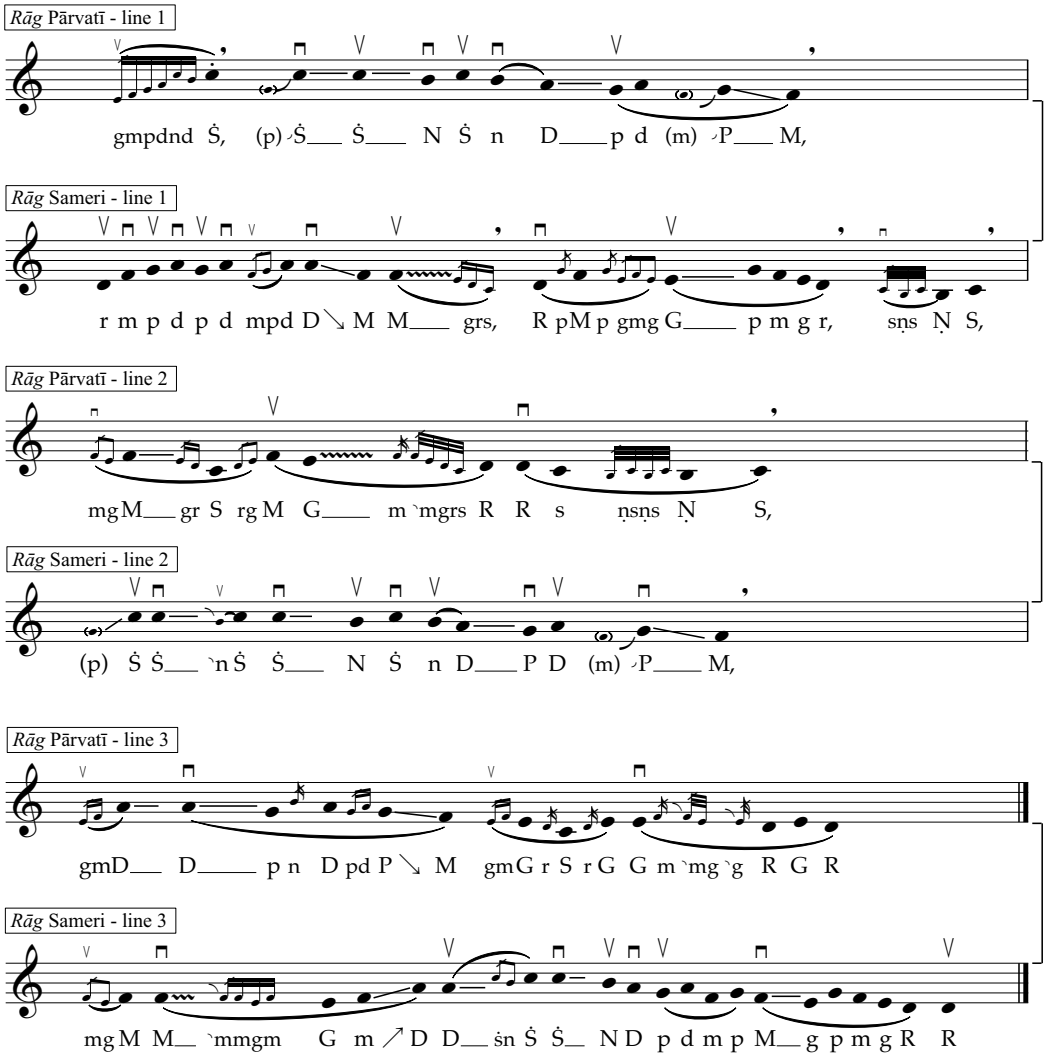
This one movement alone can, in fact, distinguish *rāg* Soraṭh from any other *rāg* that Muse Khan plays; but the use of *komal* 'Ni' is sometimes so light that it can be hard to detect without extremely attentive listening. Therefore, in the pitch hierarchies shown in Figure 5.7, the flattened seventh for *rāg* Soraṭh is listed as a "significant" note, even though it is used sparsely during performance of the *rāg*.

Figure 5.7: Overview of the pitch hierarchies implicit in *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār and *rāg* Soraṭh

Scale degree	***Rāg* Gauḍ Malhār**	***Rāg* Soraṭh**
Tonic (S)	SIGNIFICANT	STRONG
Natural 2nd (R)	NEUTRAL	STRONG
Natural 3rd (G)	STRONG	NEUTRAL
Natural 4th (M)	SIGNIFICANT	NEUTRAL
Fifth (P)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Natural 6th (D)	WEAK	NEUTRAL
Flat 7th (N)	-	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 7th (N)	NEUTRAL	SIGNIFICANT

Before moving on to his final pairing, Muse Khan also took the trouble to highlight a further subtle, yet particularly significant difference between these two *rāgs*, occurring in the lower tetrachord. This distinction concerns the otherwise markedly similar movements between 'Pa' and 'Ma': whilst it is evident that both *rāgs* skip 'Ga' and 'Dha' in ascent, it is not so clear that all downward movements from 'Ma' invariably continue on downwards in Gauḍ Malhār, without returning back up to the fifth; whereas, in Soraṭh, it is permissible to come down to 'Ma' and then to return up to 'Pa' in a more *vakra*-type movement, before completing the descent to the tonic. As can be seen in the closing moments of **V 5.7**, Muse Khan repeated this distinction a number of times, making it clear that the return up to 'Pa' from 'Ma' in descent was not permissible in *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār.

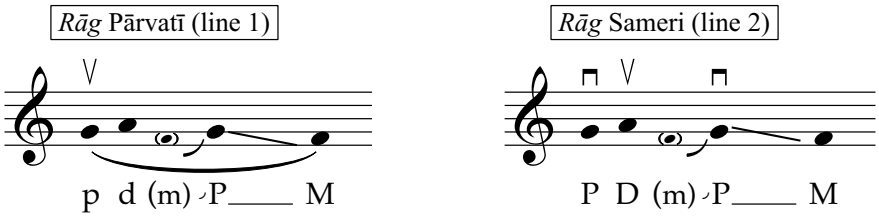
Example 5.13: Distinguishing *rāg* Pārvatī from *rāg* Sameri (**V 5.8**)



Commentary: Example 5.13

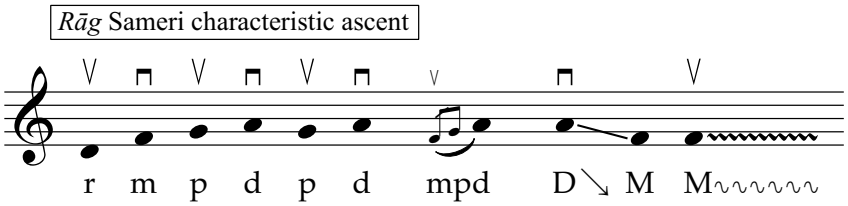
In this final case, the renditions for both *rāgs* were markedly different from their counterpart versions delivered by Muse Khan in the first core *rāg* session; nonetheless, the tonal material and the relative emphases on notes and phrase movements are broadly the same. Hence, we can postulate that Muse Khan's approach to performing within these particular melodic frameworks may again represent a more classicised approach to *rāg* development. Certainly, both Pārvatī and Sameri have classical *rāga* incarnations (which, unlike *rāg* Soraṭh, are still performed by some contemporary classical musicians); but the melodic movements that are demonstrated in both *rāgs* here differ from their classical counterparts in fundamental ways.

In terms of distinguishing one *rāg* from the other within the Laṅgā system, this pairing represents the most challenging of the four examples, since there are many commonalities between the two *rāgs* and only very subtle distinctions. Both Pārvatī and Sameri emphasise the 'Dha' repeatedly; both feature the high 'Sa' as a strong note; and both *rāgs* feature a characteristic slide between 'Pa' and 'Ma' that is typically preceded by 'Pa' and 'Dha, as shown below in two closely matched phrases:



The respective descending patterns illustrated in lines 1 of the *rāg* Pārvatī example and 2 of the *rāg* Sameri example are, in fact, almost identical with each other; but the opening upward movement in line 1 of *rāg* Pārvatī hints at one key difference, starting as it does from 'Ga'. Line 1 of the *rāg* Sameri example shows a clear distinction here, in that this *rāg* normally skips 'Ga' in ascent. This is by far the most notable difference between the two *rāgs*, and it is the easiest way to tell them apart – particularly in the case of identifying *rāg* Sameri, where the

ascent skipping ‘Ga’ is typically preceded by an alternation between ‘Pa’ and ‘Dha’, followed by a slow slide from ‘Dha’ to ‘Ma’:



Differences in the relative weighting of scale degrees between the two *rāgs* are much more subtle. The third degree of the scale is marginally weaker in *rāg* Sameri, with the fourth degree, ‘Ma’, receiving more significant prolongation and vibrato emphasis (as shown here in lines 1 and 3). Conversely, although ‘Ma’ does also receive some attention in Pārvatī, here it is the ‘Ga’ that receives the vibrato emphasis (line 2) and emerges as the more featured scale degree. There is ample room for confusion, though, with both *rāgs* evidencing similar movements in both the upper and lower tetrachords. The closeness between these two *rāgs* is summarised in the analysis of pitch hierarchies presented in Figure 5.8.

Figure 5.8: Overview of the pitch hierarchies implicit in *rāg* Pārvatī and *rāg* Sameri

Scale degree	***Rāg* Pārvatī**	***Rāg* Sameri**
Tonic (S)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 2nd (R)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Natural 3rd (G)	STRONG	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 4th (M)	SIGNIFICANT	STRONG
Fifth (P)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Natural 6th (D)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 7th (N)	WEAK	WEAK

One other potential point of distinction between Muse Khan’s conception of these two *rāgs* is indicated by his performance of *rāg* Sameri during the first core

rāg session, in November 2013: during this exposition, Muse extemporised into the upper octave, reaching a high 'Ga' and placing much stronger emphasis on the high 'Re' (see Example 5.4, above – sections c, d and h). However, in that particular rendition, Muse also emphasises all the main degrees of the scale, to varying degrees – even the natural 7th, which occurs only very weakly in the example presented here; so we may contend that it did not represent an orthodox exposition of the *rāg*.

The ambiguity of this instance demonstrates that it is necessary to look at a wider spread of performances, in order to ascertain what precisely constitutes the melodic framework, as well as the consistency with which these processes are applied in practice: this is the task of the following section, which focuses on *rāg* Sameri. Nonetheless, the examples analysed thus far provide ample evidence to confirm that – for Muse Khan Laṅgā, at least – there are very definite sets of unwritten, conceptual rules that govern the correct rendering of any *rāg* that he performs.

5.4. Practical application of the system in performance: *rāg* Sameri

Although I was able to record many instances of Muse Khan performing various *rāgs* during the course of our sessions – both whilst teaching me, and as a preamble to him performing a certain song for my benefit – the events analysed above represent the only two occasions when *rāg* structure was specifically dealt with in isolation from the formal conceptual performance framework of '*rāg*→[*duhā*]→*gana*'. However, the abstracted melodic frameworks obtained from the analyses presented above can now be referenced against other recorded performances, to give some idea of the consistency with which these core structures are applied during Muse Khan's general performance practice.

In the following analyses, introductory sections extracted from a selection of song performances by Muse Khan will be compared to, and contrasted with, their relevant models. The model selected for analysis in this section – *rāg* Sameri – has been chosen for its straightforwardness and unambiguity of melodic material, in addition to there being a sufficient quantity of unaccompanied samples present in the fieldwork data for isolated melodic analysis. In this regard, it is worth

noting that Muse Khan spent considerable time in demonstrating, and also getting me to play, this particular *rāg* during our lesson time – especially in the early stages of my tutelage. This suggests that *rāg* Sameri is considered to be both a fundamental, and relatively accessible, melodic framework within the Laṅgā music system.

Since the primary goal of this analysis is to examine the melodic data in isolation from both vocal and metrical content, full examples featuring *duhā* recitation and *gana* song sections are not featured here. Although vocal *duhā* sections can occur within the context of unmetered introductory performance (and seem to be, in some cases at least, directly related to *rāg* exposition), we shall examine those issues separately in Chapter Seven, where we will also consider the extent to which *rāg* structures may be made evident during song performance.

5.4.1. Comparing *rāg* Sameri models

In our first analysis, we shall examine instances of how *rāg* structure is made evident during the performance of a typical, short unmetered introductory section for *rāg* Sameri. This *rāg* presents us with an instance where there is already some evidence of extemporisation between the 'Model' versions; and we will also explore these points of divergence between these two core examples, which have already been touched upon above. In addition to our existing transcriptions of the core models – which are used here primarily as points of reference – the three performance extracts transcribed in the following examples (and featured sequentially on **V 5.9**) are as follows:

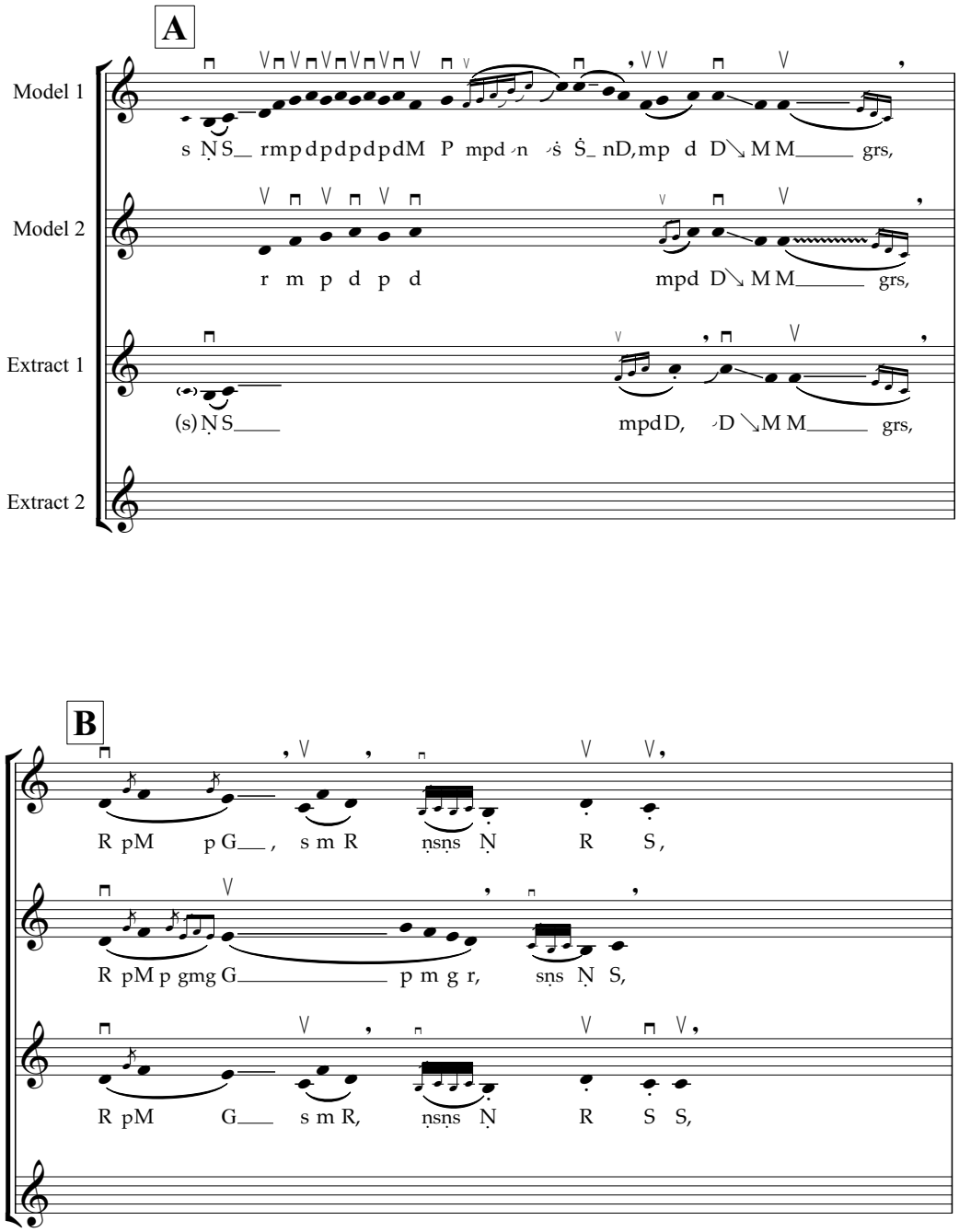
Extract 1: Introduction from 'Jasmā Odenī' song performance, 18th November 2013 (00:32)

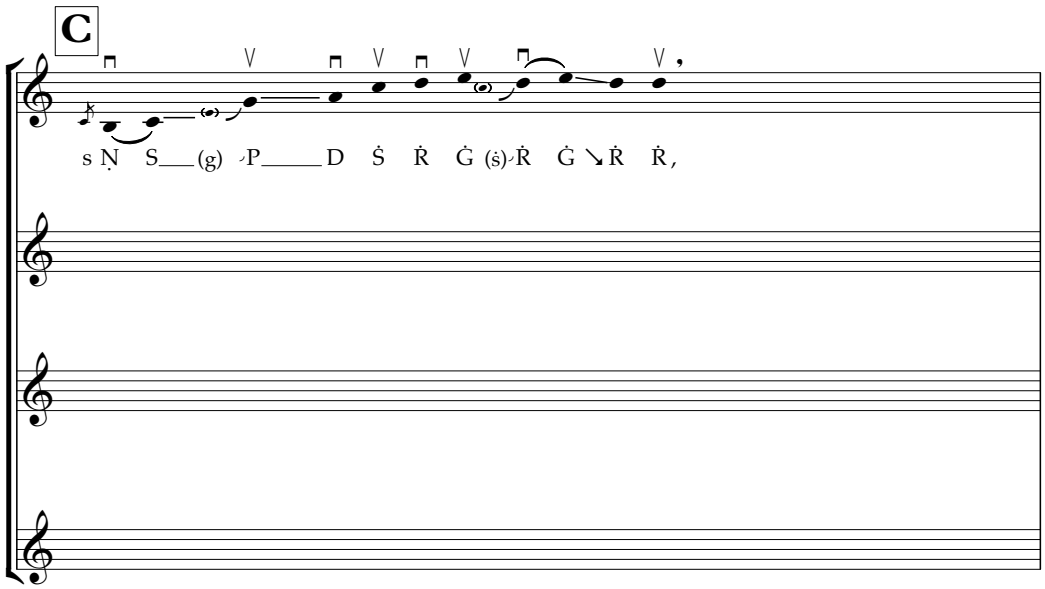
Extract 2: Introduction from 'Jilālo Bilālo' song performance, 12th November 2013 (00:43)

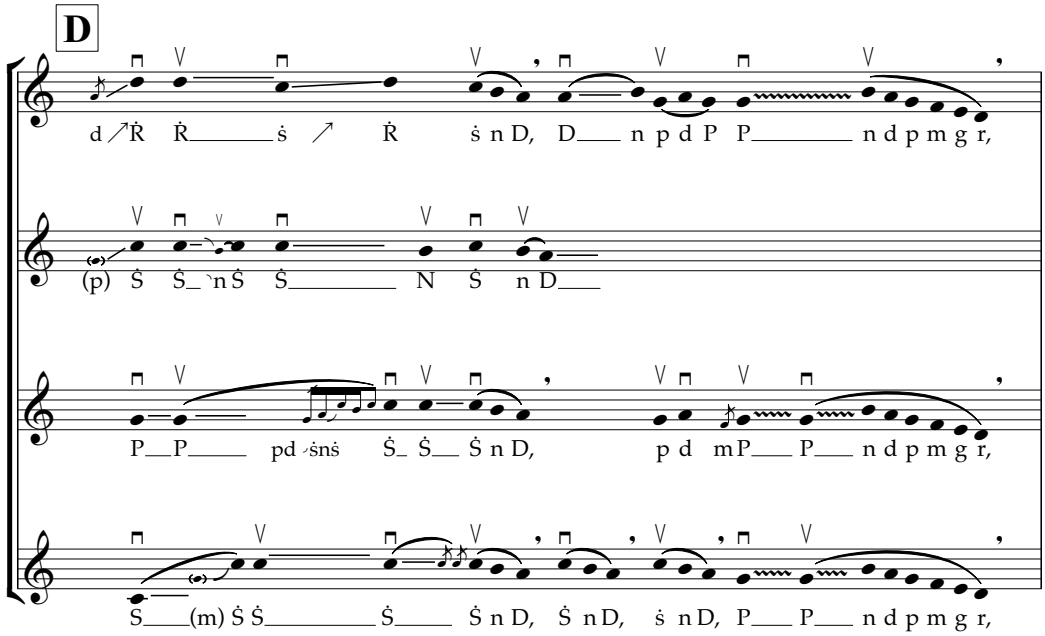
Extract 3: Introduction from 'Jasodā' song performance, 15th November 2013 (03:03)

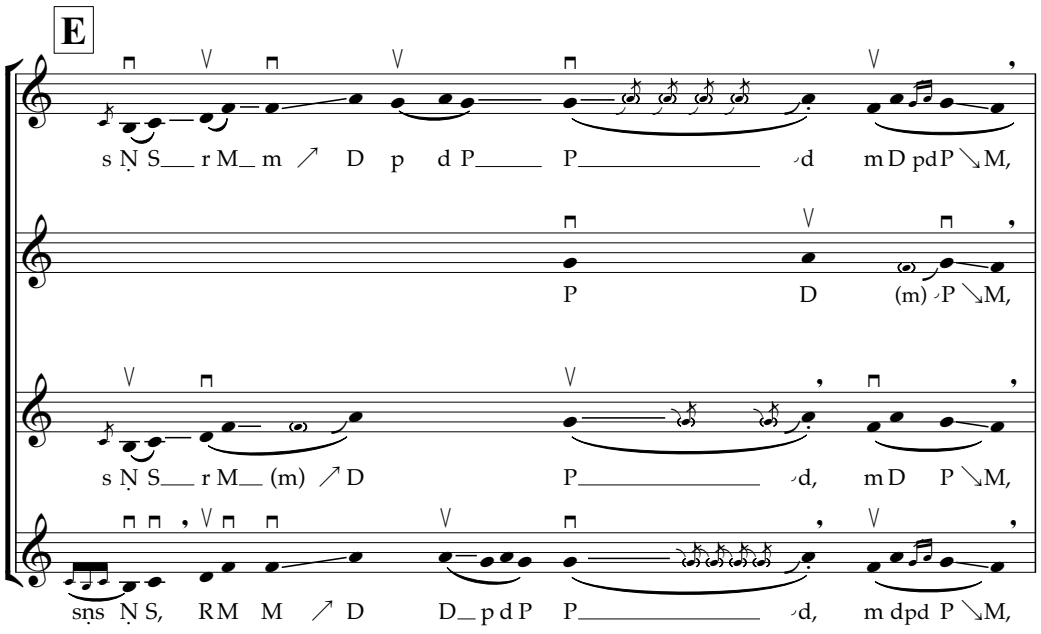
Extract 3 represents a particularly protracted introductory performance in *rāg* Sameri, and is dealt with in the subsequent section 5.4.2 below. Our first example compares the shorter Extracts 1 and 2 in series with the two core renditions of *rāg* Sameri supplied on 18th November 2013 and 17th March 2014, as transcribed and analysed in the above Examples 5.4 and 5.13, respectively: here, the core renditions are labelled as 'Model 1' and 'Model 2'. The first model represents the longest and most complete version, so the other three versions are arranged to correspond with it; and, since all four versions are broadly similar in duration (between 33 and 57 seconds), they can be represented in series for purposes of direct comparison.

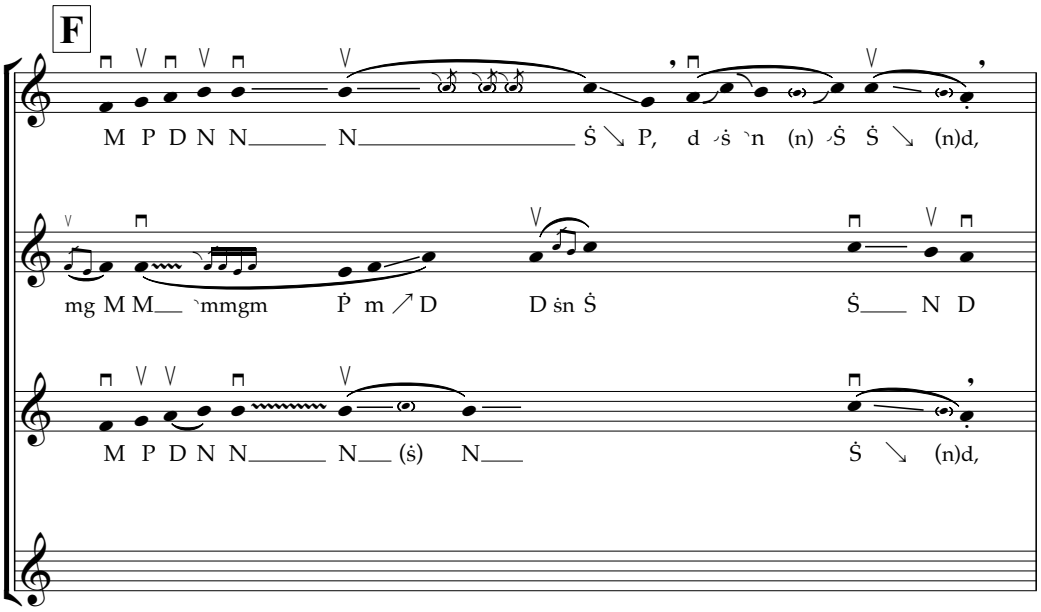
Example 5.14: Comparison of unmetered introductory performances in *rāg* Sameri (**V 5.9**)

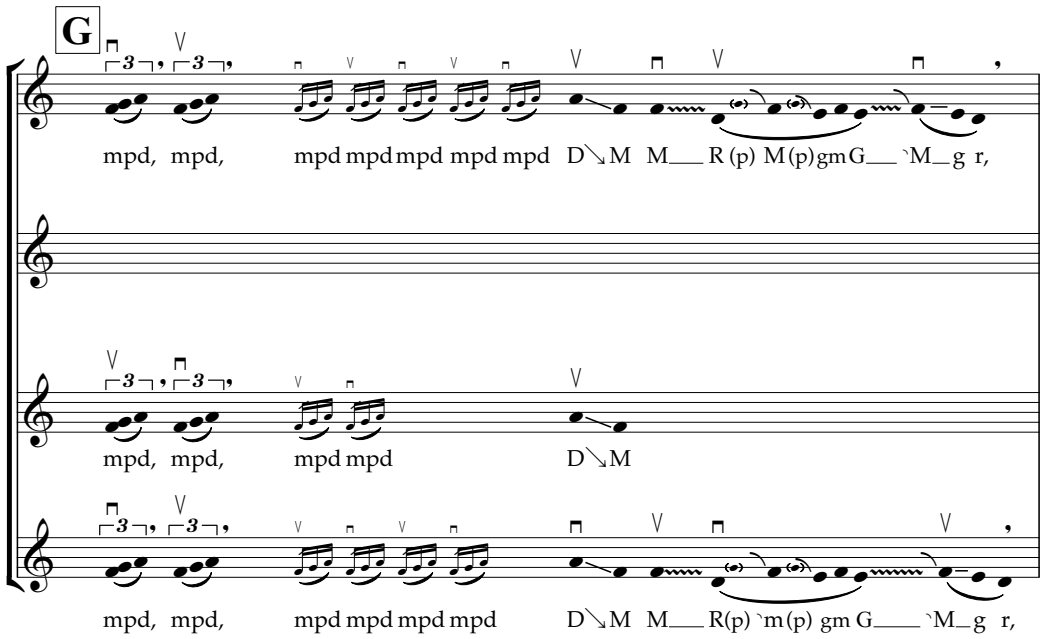


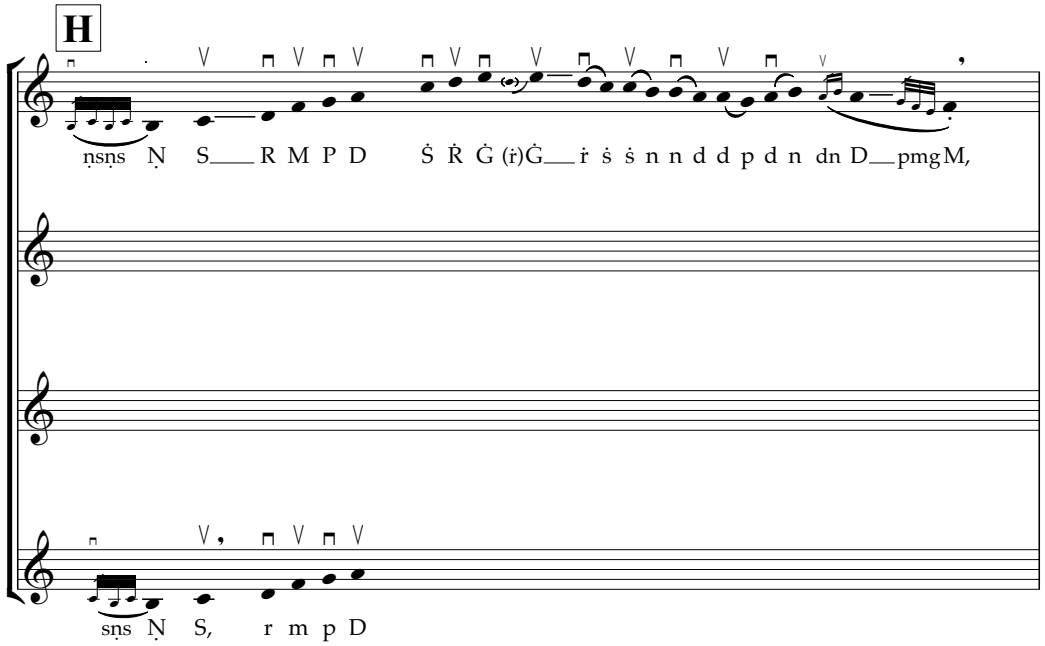

C
s Ṇ S (g) P D Ṡ Ṙ Ġ (ṡ) Ṙ Ġ ↘ Ṙ Ṙ,

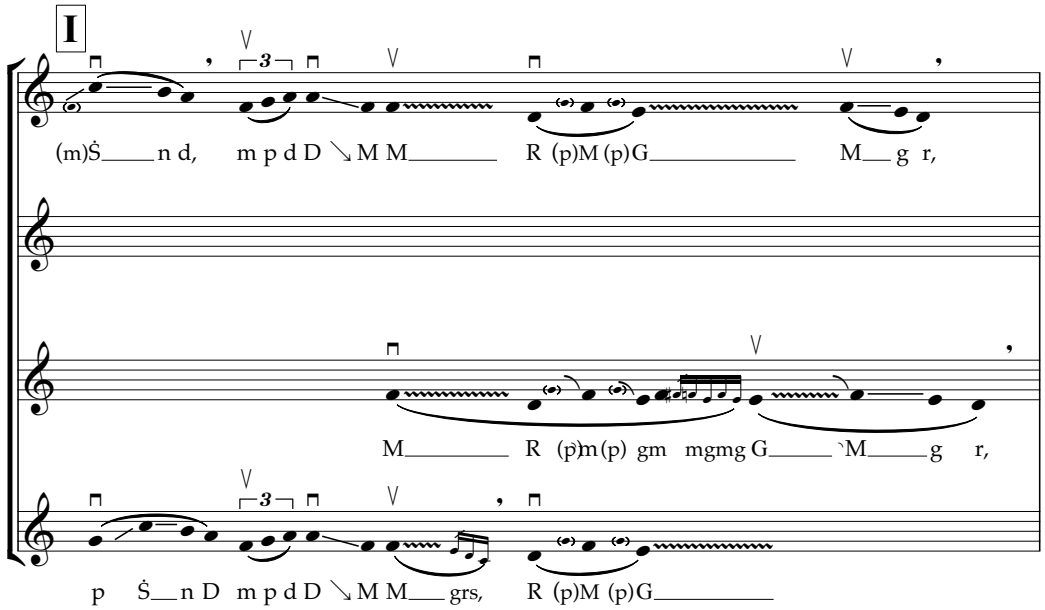

D
d ↗ Ṙ Ṙ ṡ ↗ Ṙ ṡ n D, D n p d P P n d p m g r,
(p) Ṡ Ṡ n Ṡ Ṡ N Ṡ n D
P P pd šnṡ Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ n D, p d m P P n d p m g r,
S (m) Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ n D, Ṡ n D, ṡ n D, P P n d p m g r,

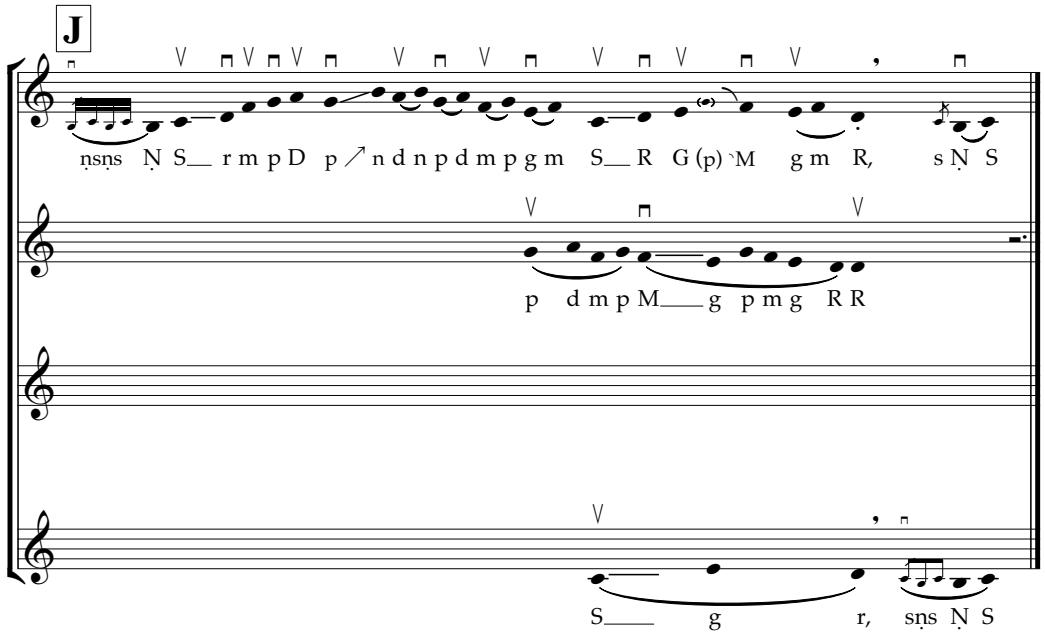

E
s Ṇ S__ r M_ m ↗ D p d P____ P_____ ˏd m D pd P ↘ M,
P D (m) ˏP ↘ M,
s Ṇ S__ r M__ (m) ↗ D P_____ ˏd, m D P ↘ M,
sṇs Ṇ S, R M M ↗ D D_ p d P P_____ ˏd, m dpd P ↘ M,


F
M P D N N_____ N_____ Ṡ ↘ P, d ˏṡ ˋn (n) ˏṠ Ṡ ↘ (n)d,
mg M M__ ˋmmgm Ṗ m ↗ D D ṡn Ṡ Ṡ___ N D
M P D N N_____ N__ (ṡ) N___ Ṡ ↘ (n)d,


G
mpd, mpd, mpd mpd mpd mpd mpd D↘M M___ R (p) M(p)gmG___ `M_g r,
mpd, mpd, mpd mpd D↘M
mpd, mpd, mpd mpd mpd mpd D↘M M___ R(p) `m(p) gm G____ `M_g r,


H
ṇsṇs Ṇ S___ R M P D Ṡ Ṙ Ġ (ṙ)Ġ___ ṙ ṡ ṡ n n d d p d n dn D__pmgM,
sṇs Ṇ S, r m p D


I
(m)Ṡ n d, m p d D ↘ M M R (p)M (p)G M g r,
M R (p)m(p) gm mgmg G `M g r,
p Ṡ n D m p d D ↘ M M grs, R (p)M (p)G


J
ṇsṇs Ṇ S r m p D p ↗ n d n p d m p g m S R G (p) `M g m R, s Ṇ S
p d m p M g p m g R R
S g r, sṇs Ṇ S

Commentary: Example 5.14

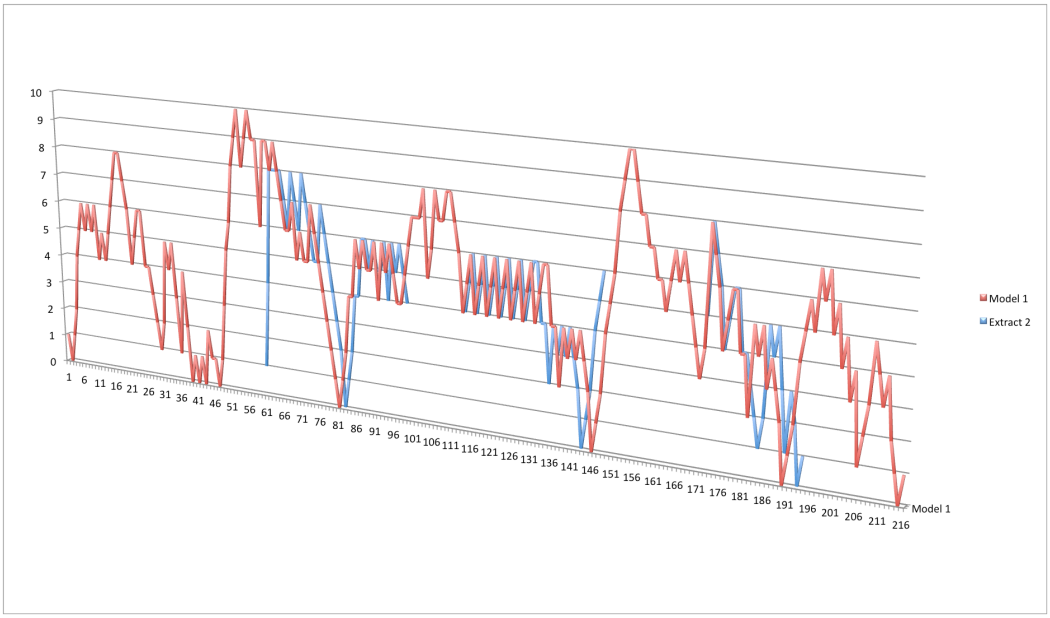
One of the most striking features of this example has already been alluded to, and is to some extent self-evident in its representation: namely, that transcriptions of these four distinct versions of *rāg* Sameri (which were all performed during different sessions, and on different occasions sometimes weeks or even months apart) can be aligned – rather precisely – in series with each other. Despite the renditions being of slightly differing lengths, nonetheless the three shorter versions can be broken up into phrase units that correspond significantly to the 'Model 1' version in terms of melodic content, rhythmic phrasing, and linear movement through time. Essentially, the other three expositions represent abbreviated versions of Model 1.

The correspondence between Model 1 and 'Extract 2' (lines 1 and 4, respectively, of each system) is particularly striking, even though the shorter 'Extract 2' does not begin to fit into the overall schema until system D. A contributing factor to this is that the actual recording of Extract 2 began unfortunately late: on that particular session, we had stopped for lunch and I had switched off the camera, when Muse Khan suddenly picked up his instrument and began to play this version of *rāg* Sameri, followed by a vocal rendition of the popular Laṅgā song 'Jilālo Bilālo'. By the time I had managed to switch the camera back on, I had already missed the first few phrases of his exposition. It is quite possible that, had I recorded Extract 2 right from the beginning of the performance, it would have borne an even more striking resemblance to the Model 1 version.

Figure 5.9 demonstrates the closeness in melodic contour between these two renditions by plotting the Model 1 pitch data (red line) against the Example 2 pitch data (blue line). Here, the individual pitches have been mapped onto the graph using an adapted version of the Parsons Code: each pitch within the *rāg* is assigned a numerical y-axis value, from 0 (low 'Ni' – the lowest note played in these examples) to 10 (high 'Ga' – the highest note). These pitch values are plotted sequentially along the x-axis, as they occur in time during each example. Therefore, the resultant line graph does not give any "real" data in terms of absolute pitch, note duration or time elapsed, as is the case in the Tony automatic line transcriptions: however, the Tony examples cannot easily be represented in

series at this stage of the software's development; and nuances of melodic contour are obscured when viewing larger sections of melody. In this instance, the goal is simply to plot the essential fluctuations of the overall melodic contour for both examples, and to juxtapose them.

Figure 5.9: Line graph plotting melodic contours of Extract 2 against Model 1 (Excel)



As Figure 5.9 confirms, despite a significant variation in overall duration between these two renditions, their corresponding melodic contours mirror themselves extremely closely. There are two exceptions to this: Extract 2 omits the ascent to, and emphasis on, 'Ni', as demonstrated by Model 1 and Extract 1 in system F; and Extract 2 also foregoes any ventures into the upper octave, as shown by Model 1 in systems C and H (and here, where the red line ventures up to its highest points – hence the gaps in the blue line for Extract 2 at these points). But, in this regard, we can also note that the ascent to high 'Ga' is not mirrored in any of the other versions, either; and so this particular movement represents something of an anomaly here. Additionally, the emphasis on 'Ni' in system F is also omitted by Model 2 – which, in itself, is the briefest and most concise rendition, drawn from the second set of core examples that were used primarily as a means of illustrating only the most important specific features and differences between pairings of *rāgs*.

Another notable feature highlighted by Figure 5.9 is the particular focus, in both versions, on the regions between 'Ga' and 'Dha' (numerically, between 3 and 6 on the y-axis of the graph): this strengthens the case put forward in Figure 5.8 for 'Ma' being the "strong" note of the *rāg*, with 'Ga' acting as its "significant" counterpart and 'Pa' functioning as a more or less "neutral" pivot point. Similarly, the characteristic melodic ascent and descent patterns for *rāg* Sameri that were identified in section 5.3 are performed here in a near-identical fashion, demonstrating that Muse Khan has a very fixed conception of how the *rāg* movements must be played. This is particularly evident, for example, in system G, where the only differential between the two renditions is the number of repetitions of the rapid 'mpg' ornament.

Taking into account these striking similarities in phrase detail, we must again confront the possibility that Muse Khan's conception of *rāg* Sameri as a model for performance may not, in a modern classical sense, be very *rāg*-like: there is little evidence of *rāg* extemporisation, such as one might expect in a performance of *dhrupad* or *khyāl*; and the overall melodic contours presented in Figure 5.9 show nothing of the gradual melodic development that occurs in the *ālāp* development of a typical North Indian classical *rāga* performance. Rather, the expansion and contraction in both examples is condensed into each system, or 'paragraph' of music. A picture emerges of pre-composed phrase units, which – when fitted together in the correct sequential order – generate the *rāg* as a fixed melodic entity that is decorated in performance with a number of ornamental devices that are not always *rāg*-specific.

We can also note that there is conspicuous repetition of phrase material in all of the performances featured in Example 5.14a: for example, the characteristic oblique Sameri phrase 'R(p)M(p)G' is performed almost identically in the first three renditions, as can be seen in the opening phrases of system B; and this same phrase is used again at the conclusion of system I, in Model 1 as well as in both 'Extracts'. It appears, therefore, that a certain degree of phrase recycling – even duplication – is permissible during the course of Muse Khan's *rāg* renditions. And, if the minimal requirement needed to "show" the *rāg* is only a 30-second performance, consisting of six essential ascent-descent patterns (Model 2), then a

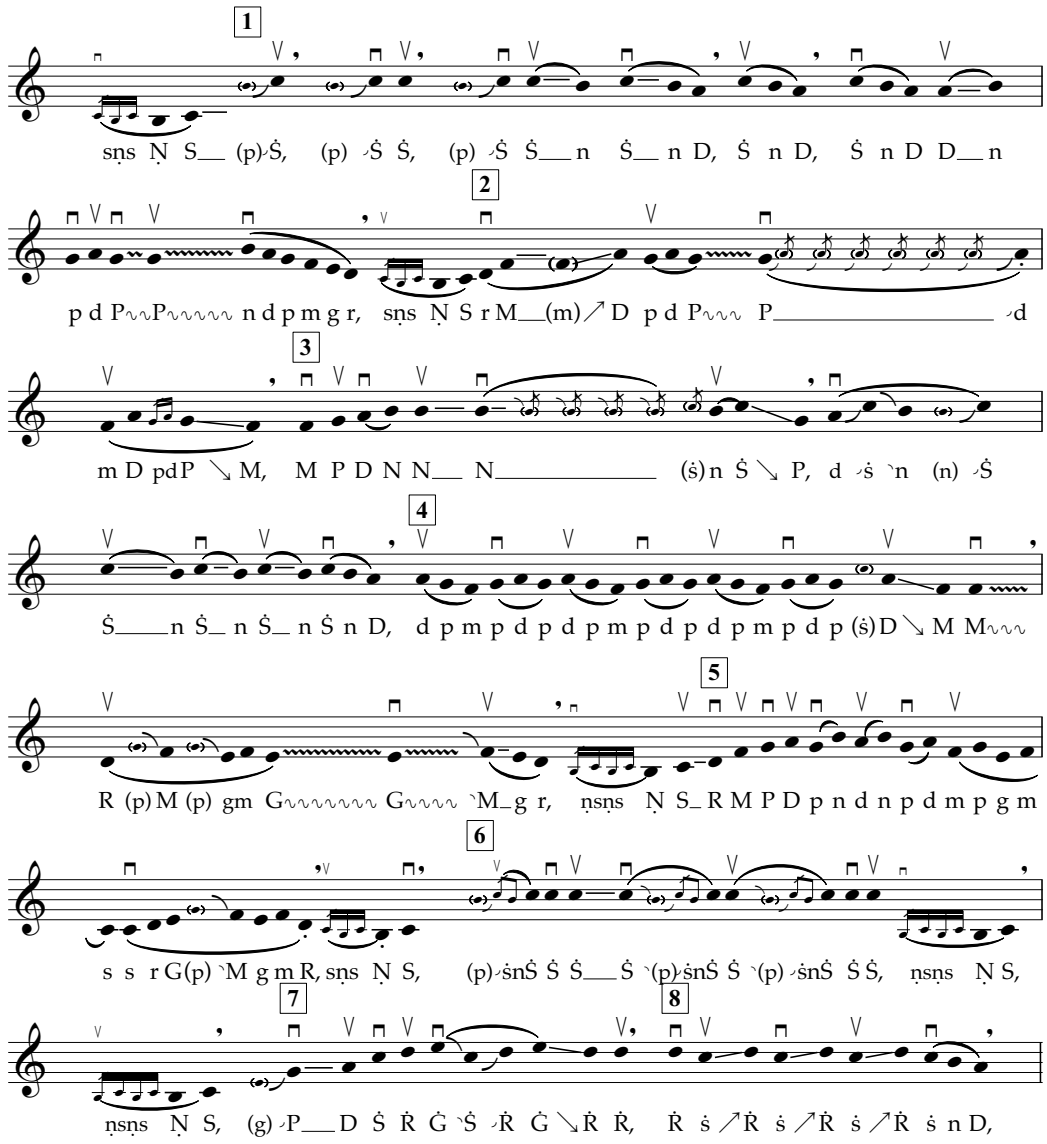
further question arises as to what degree improvisation takes place within the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār genre of *rāg* performance. This issue is investigated in our next example, which gives us the opportunity to analyse a longer exposition in *rāg* Sameri.

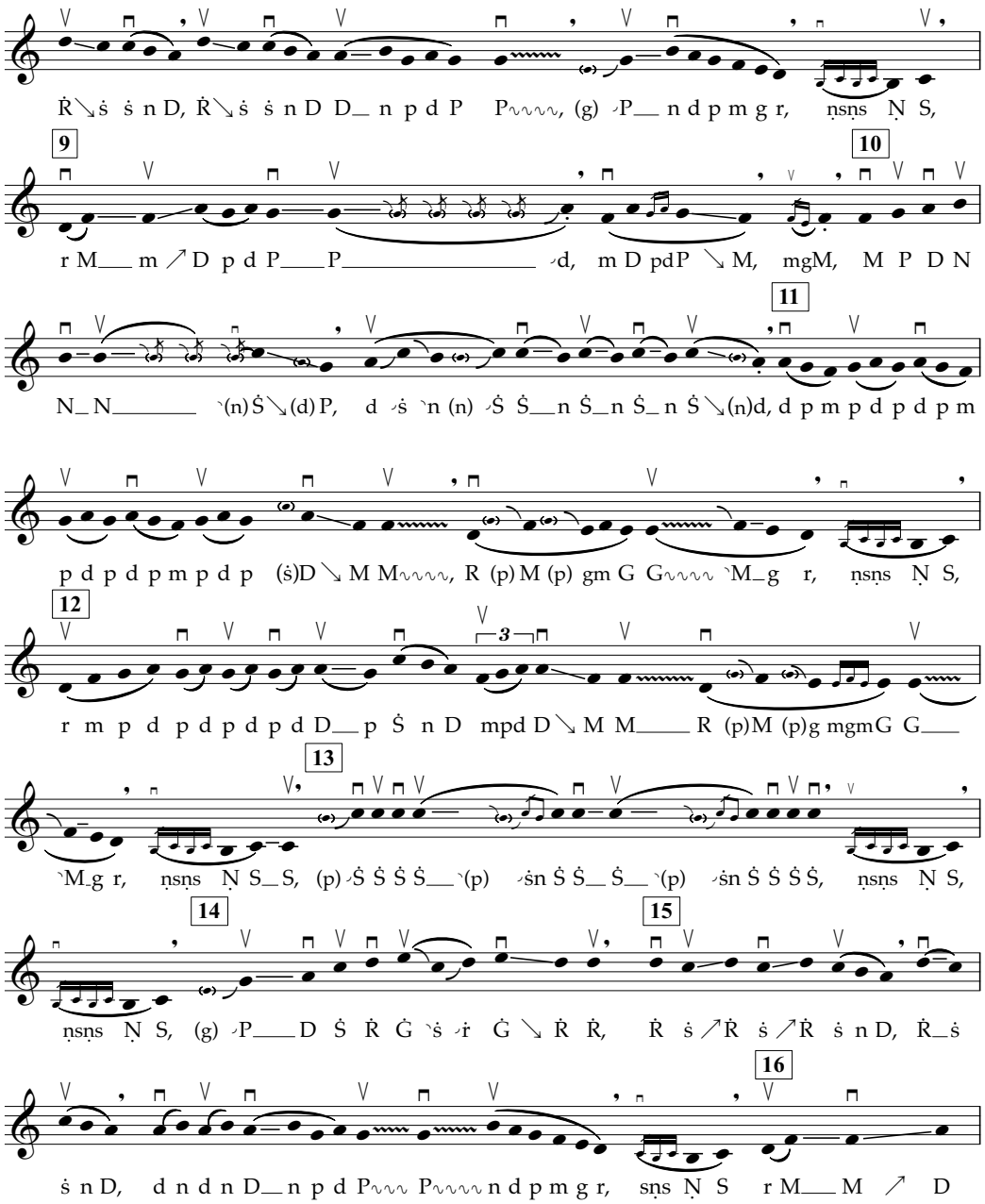
5.4.2. Analysis of an introductory performance in *rāg* Sameri

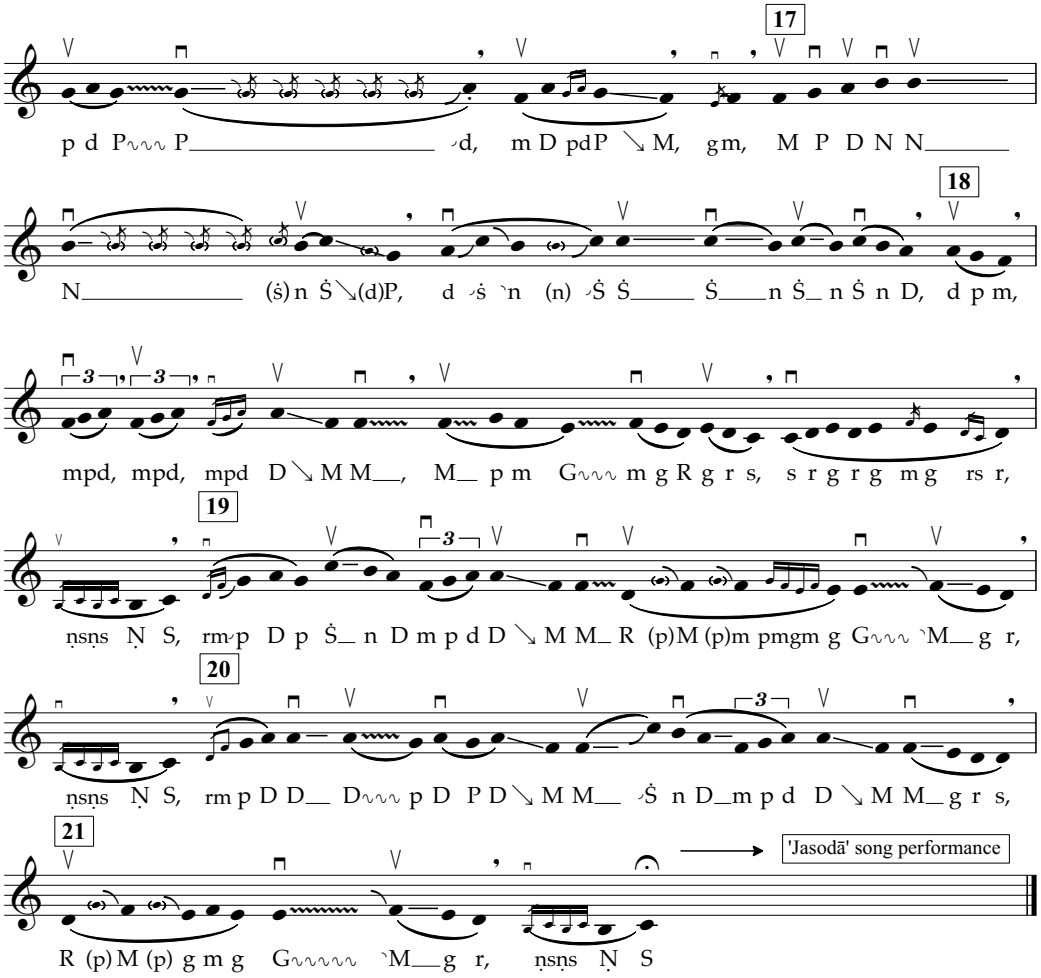
Whilst it is not exceptional for more lengthy introductory performances to take place within the context of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār instrumental performance, we should note that it is equally common – if not more so – for such introductory sections to be brief, with many recorded instances being less than one minute long. Context is key, and the musicians will read the performance situation and adapt accordingly. In this instance, Muse Khan extemporised freely in *rāg* Sameri for just over 3 minutes before engaging in any kind of firmly established metre; this represented a particularly long introduction for him to play (at least, within the context of our fieldwork sessions).

Example 5.15 details a full transcription of Extract 3 (as featured on **V 5.9**), being the aforementioned unmetered exposition of *rāg* Sameri that was performed by Muse Khan prior to his instrumental rendition of a song melody called 'Jasodā'. As an aside, in this particular instance we can note that Muse Khan proceeded to perform the song (not featured here) immediately after concluding the *rāg* performance, thereby omitting the '*duhā'* section of the '*rāg*→[*duhā*]→*gana*' macro performance model. For the purposes of this analysis, the transcription of the *rāg* performance is divided into phrase units: each phrase unit is numbered sequentially, with each number referencing a time code on the audio extract of this performance (**A 5.10**). A full list of the numbered and time coded phrase units is included in the commentary that follows the transcription (see Figure 5.11).

Example 5.15: Extended introductory performance in *rāg* Sameri (**A 5.10** / **V 5.9**)




Ṙ↘ṡ ṡ n D, Ṙ↘ṡ ṡ n D D_ n p d P P∿∿∿, (g) ˊP__ n d p m g r, ṇsṇs Ṇ S,
9
10
r M___ m ↗ D p d P____P_____ ˊd, m D pdP ↘ M, mgM, M P D N
11
N_ N_____ ˋ(n)Ṡ↘(d)P, d ˊṡ ˋn (n) ˊṠ Ṡ__n Ṡ_n Ṡ_ n Ṡ↘(n)d, d p m p d p d p m
p d p d p m p d p (ṡ)D↘ M M∿∿∿, R (p)M (p) gm G G∿∿∿ ˋM_g r, ṇsṇs Ṇ S,
12
3
r m p d p d p d p d D__ p Ṡ n D mpd D↘ M M_____ R (p)M (p)g mgmG G___
13
ˋM_g r, ṇsṇs Ṇ S_S, (p) ˊṠ Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ__ˋ(p) ˊṡn Ṡ Ṡ__ Ṡ__ˋ(p) ˊṡn Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ, ṇsṇs Ṇ S,
14
15
ṇsṇs Ṇ S, (g) ˊP____D Ṡ Ṙ Ġ ˋṡ ˊṙ Ġ ↘ Ṙ Ṙ, Ṙ ṡ↗Ṙ ṡ↗Ṙ ṡ n D, Ṙ_ṡ
16
ṡ n D, d n d n D__ n p d P∿∿∿ P∿∿∿ n d p m g r, sṇs Ṇ S r M___ M ↗ D

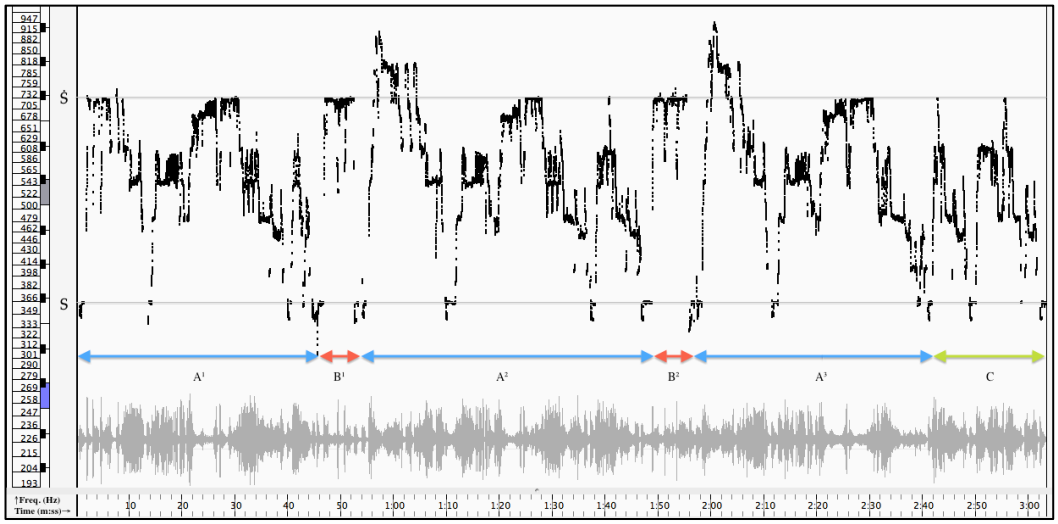


Commentary: Example 5.15

The first general point to note about this example is that, once again, there is no gradual exposition of *rāg* structure such as one might typically find in a performance of *dhrupad* or *khyāl*: the upper tonic is achieved in the first phrase, and is returned to a number of times during the course of the performance. Additionally, the central tonic functions as both start and endpoint of the exposition, and is frequently reiterated as an intermittent punctuation mark between many of the phrase units, recurring a total of 15 times (see Figure 5.10 for an overview of the melodic contour, with tonic, octave and section markers added). This approach is consistent with all of the other musical examples supplied by Muse Khan that have been analysed thus far, and can therefore be taken as a 'normative' method of structuring *rāg*-based performances for this particular musician.

Figure 5.10: Overview of melodic contour in ‘Jasodā’ song introduction (Tony)

[Key: ‘S’ and ‘Ṡ’ lines = points of convergence with tonic and octave, respectively; coloured arrows = visual section markers (indicating macrostructure $A^1B^1A^2B^2A^3C$)]



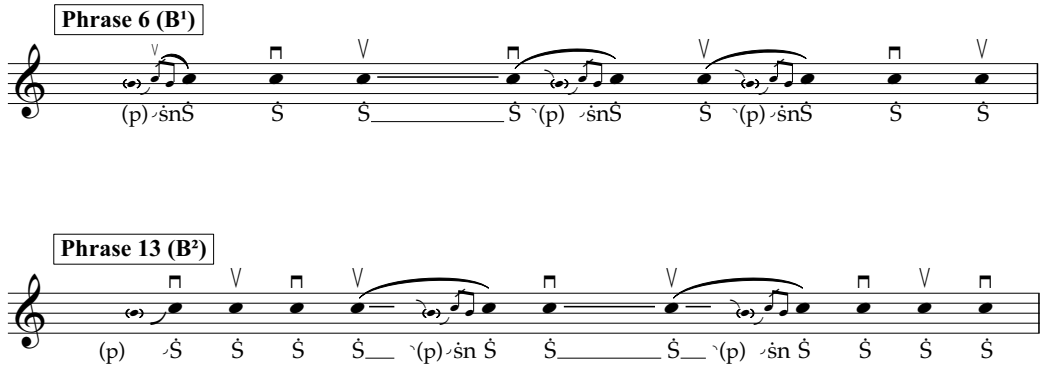
In terms of staying within the confines of the *rāg*’s melodic structure, as outlined by his own ‘model’ versions that we have already analysed, Muse Khan demonstrates a high level of consistency here. With the exception of a rather flat natural 7th ornament at the beginning of phrase 6 (at which point he was somewhat distracted by a conversation that occurs off-camera, as can be seen on V 5.9 from about 37 seconds into the clip), Muse Khan keeps strictly to the prescribed pitch content for *rāg* Sameri (equivalent to the Western major diatonic scale); and, more significantly, each one of the 21 phrases in this performance accords to some degree with corresponding phrases from the model examples – indeed, the bulk of this performance is composed of analogous phrase units that occur in the primary core structure given for *rāg* Sameri, which we have referred to as ‘Model 1’. Figure 5.11 details these correlations, with reference to the numbered and color-coded system designations detailed in Example 5.14a.

Figure 5.11: Phrase correlations between instrumental 'Jasodā' song introduction and 'Model 1' for *rāg* Sameri

PHRASE NO.	**TIME CODE** (from **A 5.11**)	**ANALOGUE (Model 1)**	**CORRESPONDENCE**
1	0:01.82	System D	Variable
2	0:14.12	System E	Significant
3	0:20.83	System F	Significant
4	0:31.13	System G	Variable
5	0:40.59	System J	Significant
6	0:46.69	No Analogue	Nil
7	0:55.20	System C	Significant
8	0:58.87	System D	Variable
9	1:11.66	System E	Significant
10	1:19.52	System F	Significant
11	1:28.49	System G	Variable
12	1:38.10	System J	Variable
13	1:48.82	No Analogue	Nil
14	1:58.25	System C	Significant
15	2:02.23	System D	Variable
16	2:12.60	System E	Significant
17	2:20.31	System F	Significant
18	2:31.35	System G	Variable
19	2:41.79	Systems H & I	Variable
20	2:50.01	System A	Variable
21	2:59.21	Systems A & J	Variable

The data from Figures 5.10 and 5.11 reveals a repetitive and highly formulaic macrostructure at work within this extended introductory *rāg* example. As highlighted by the section markers in Figure 5.10, phrases 1 to 18 consist, essentially, of three repetitions of a similar set of phrase materials – the vast majority of which are reproduced with either significant similarity to, or minor variability with, core Sameri phrases presented in the Model 1 example. In Figure 5.10, these related phrase sets are designated sequentially as 'A¹', 'A²' and 'A³' and marked out with blue arrows.

Two notable exceptions to this are phrases 6 and 13, marked in Figure 5.10 with red section arrows and designated as 'B¹' and 'B²':



These two short, near-identical passages both feature reiterations of the high 'Sa', and could be seen to function in this context as section, or "paragraph", markers within the macrostructure of the performance, since they mark the passage from one section of phrases to the next. The general frequency of occurrence for this particular 'high Sa' device in Muse Khan's *sāraṅgī* playing is sufficiently high to hypothesise that it, too, is not *rāg*-specific.

Despite there being a high level of significant correlation between many of the phrases that occur in this performance and the Model 1 example, we can identify certain points of ornamental variation from the Model 1 phrases within each section: for example, the opening phrase (**1**), which exhibits a close similarity with the system D section of Example 5.14, also begins with an immediate ascent to, and emphasis on, high 'Sa'. Although this may appear out of character when compared to Model 1, it is consistent within the overall framework of the

performance, as developed by the musician, when viewed in context with the subsequent B^1 and B^2 phrases.

Additionally, whilst this particular device has no direct analogue within the Model 1 example, we can point out that the emphasis on the upper tonic is evident in the system D phrases from all of the other three performances represented in Example 5.14. Moreover, following the rapid ascent to high 'Sa' in the first phrase of this performance, the subsequent descending phrase pattern – 'ṡnD, D-n pdP-, ndpmgr' – is performed almost identically to its system D counterpart in Model 1; but then, the same descending phrase model is slightly expanded, with minor variation, in the subsequent repetitions of the system D variant performed in this example (phrases **8** and **15**), as illustrated in Figure 5.12 ('a' and 'b'). This process of gradual expansion with minor variations can also be seen to occur on a larger structural scale during the performance, with each successive 'A' section evidencing a similar process.

Figure 5.12a: Three variants of system D descending phrase (transcription)

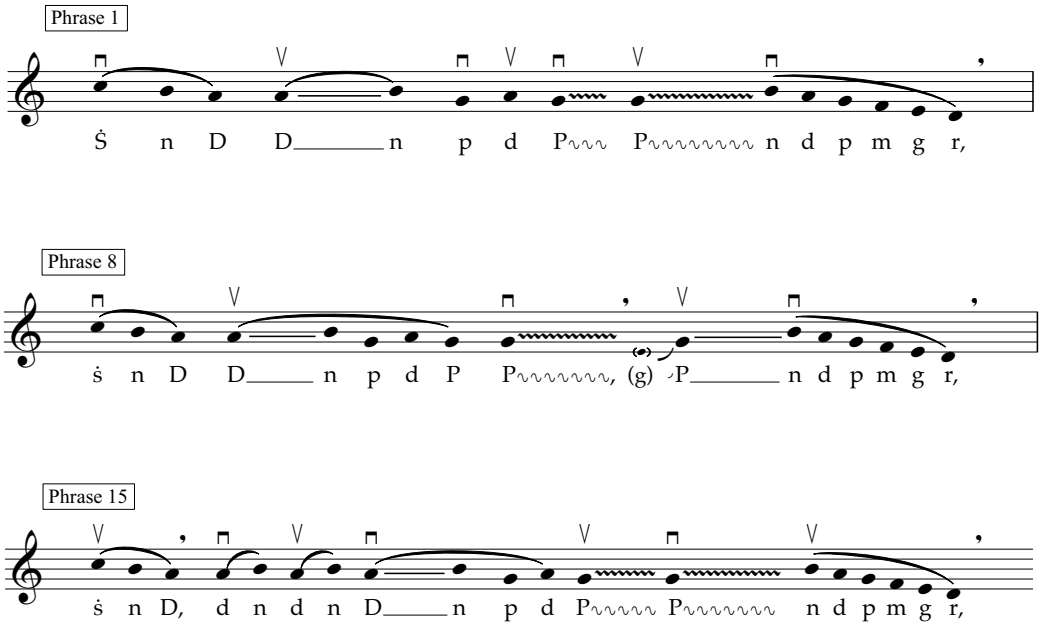
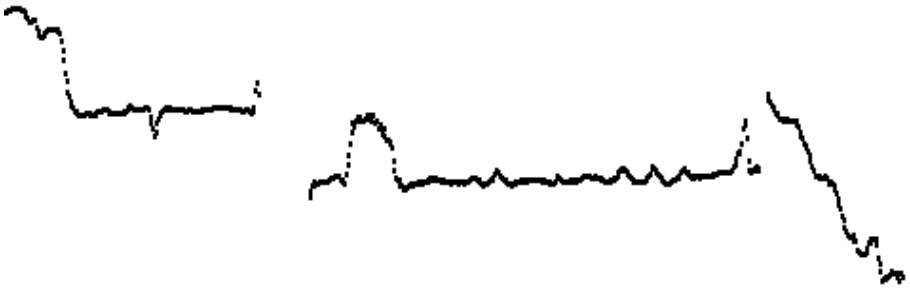
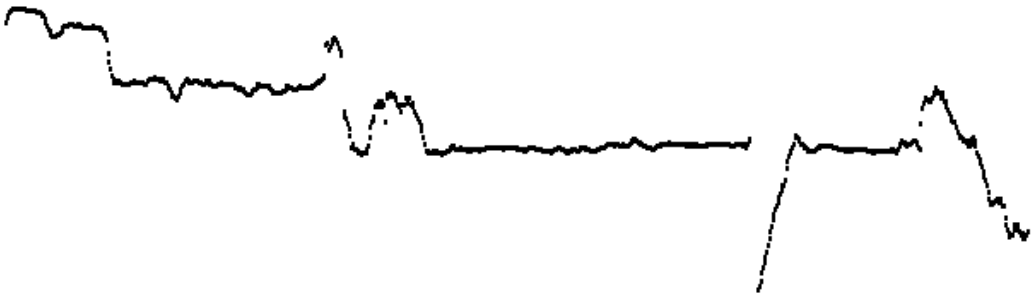


Figure 5.12b: Three variants of system D descending phrase (Tony)

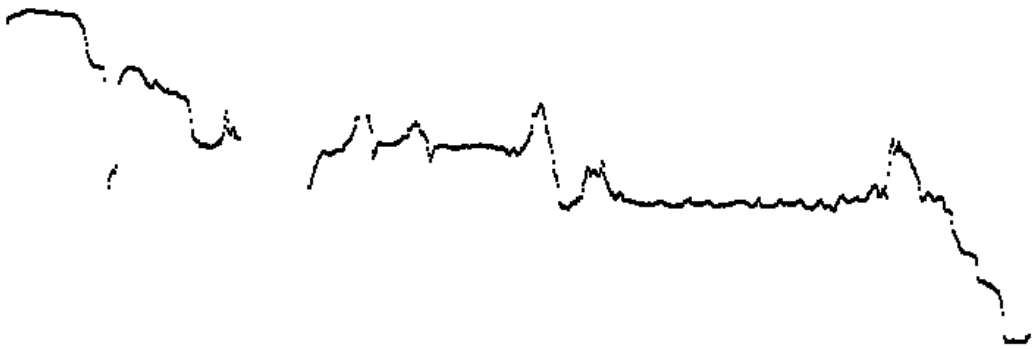
Phrase **1** (duration: 3.9s)



Phrase **8** (duration: 5.5s)



Phrase **15** (duration: 5.8s)



We can observe that phrase **8** demonstrates a slightly expanded ornamentation of the 'core' phrase **1** Sameri descent pattern, with one extra 'Pa' squeezed in and a sliding flourish from the region of 'Ga' up to the third occurrence of 'Pa' (which precedes the stepwise descent to 'Re'). Phrase **15** adds yet another minor ornamental variation, with the bowing pattern being completely reversed and an

extra couple of ‘d/n’ movements being inserted before the held ‘Dha’; and each descent is slightly more prolonged in duration than the previous one. Although these differences are subtle, they contribute to an overall complexity in the fine details of the performance that is only made evident through extremely close listening.

Whilst the three repetitions of the system G variant (phrases **4**, **11** and **18**) are also broadly analogous with each other, in phrases **4** and **11** there is a notable departure from the rapid, characteristic ‘mpd’ triplet figure performed repeatedly in the system G phrase of Model 1. In the phrases performed here, Muse Khan instead chooses to play the repeated phrase unit ‘dpm pdp’ three times, before commencing the characteristic Sameri slide from ‘Dha’ to ‘Ma’. However, on the final occurrence – phrase **18** – Muse Khan plays a game: he begins the now-established novel phrase unit with ‘dpm’, pauses, and then unexpectedly returns to a triple execution of the ‘mpd’ figure from Model 1. Moreover, having performed the characteristic movement from ‘Dha’ to ‘Ma’, he ends phrase **18** with a languid and ornamented variation on the standard oblique descent to the tonic. This sparks a much more embellished conclusion to the unmetered section of the performance (designated in green as section ‘C’ in the Figures above), marked by the introduction of material drawn from the only hithertofore unexploited ‘Model 1’ systems: H, I and A.

Notwithstanding the conspicuous recurrence of triplet figures at both micro- and macro-levels of structure in this performance, it is also notable that although the three main subsections A^1, A^2 and A^3 bear significant structural similarities, they are not exact carbon copies of each other. Whilst the third and final subsection is unique for the reasons highlighted above, the middle section can also be distinguished from the first in two respects: firstly, it opens with the rapid ascent to high ‘Ga’, with the subsequent emphasis on high ‘Re’ as modelled in system C of Model 1 (a movement that is completely absent from the first section); and secondly, the middle section concludes with a variant of system J, whereas the conclusion of the first section mirrors the Model 1 performance of system J extremely closely. Indeed, the first section is the least “original”, in terms of deviating from the model; and the increase in phrase variants as the performance

progresses would seem to evidence an increased tendency towards improvisation during the course of the *rāg* extemporisation – or, at least, a higher degree of ornamentation.

5.5. Summary

From the examples we have looked at in this chapter, a clear picture emerges of a complex melodic system that Muse Khan is intimately familiar with, and which he routinely employs during the course of performance. The *rāg* structures that he has internalised over many years of practice and performance demonstrate sophisticated aspects of scale type, melodic movement, pitch hierarchy and rhythmic phrase patterning, as well as the specialised treatment of certain strong or significant tones. Furthermore, the examples we have analysed show that Muse Khan possesses a clear conceptual framework for both demonstrating and transmitting the precise details of musical information encapsulated in this Laṅgā *rāg* system – even to an outsider with little prior experience of the musical material, such as myself.

Nonetheless, the relationship between this complex local folk system of musical knowledge and the *rāga* system of North Indian classical music is further complicated by the evidence suggesting that Muse Khan's *rāg* performances are not so much spontaneous, improvised developments of a canonised melodic framework. Rather, it seems that the individual phrase units, that are combined to shape and define the *rāg* structures, bear all the hallmarks of being fixed, pre-composed material – internalised by memory through a lifetime of exposure, and most likely having just as firm a basis in rhythmic delivery as in melodic contour. Given that the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians are nurtured in an hereditary system of oral transmission, where musical knowledge and skills are passed on directly from one generation to the next, with little or no recourse to written and recorded technologies, this is perhaps unsurprising. However, it seems equally clear that at least some of this "*rāg* knowledge" is derived from classical models, indicating once again that this particular hereditary system may not be as closed as it first appears.

With regards to the apparently healthy state of hereditary music transmission within Muse Khan's family, the presence of Asin Khan at the second core *rāg* session held a significance beyond merely his providing some translation: Asin's own understanding of the subtle differentials between the Laṅgā *rāg* structures (which were always in accord with those of his father), presents a living instantiation of this conceptual methodology being successfully passed on, orally, via direct hereditary transmission, to the next generation of musician. Indeed, since Muse Khan himself states that he learnt this musical knowledge from his father, grandfather and uncles – and since his style is both recognised and respected by senior *jajmāns* and other Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musicians such as Kadar Khan and Noor Mohammed, who are not only able to understand the nuances of the *rāg* system but who are also conversant in it themselves – it is reasonable to conclude that the conceptual system detailed above is a core component of his families' musical knowledge base: a key element of their "family style".

Other senior musicians in both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities have also attested to the fundamental importance of their hereditary musical lineage: for example, Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār always maintained that his music was "family music"; and so it is that each one of these hereditary professional families of musicians have developed their own unique approaches to expressing what appear to be predominantly locally based song repertoires, that became tailored over time to a very specific local audience – their patrons. Moreover, since both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities keep close marriage ties (and this is particularly true of the Laṅgās), these family styles form a network that reflects the musical lineage of the entire community. Hence, Muse Khan's style represents a core component of the Laṅgā hereditary musical knowledge base.

Our attention now turns to the wider community, so that we may gain some insight into the degree with which this knowledge is shared between the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. As a starting point for the investigation, we can cite a number of incidences where skilled musicians are able to agree on mutually compatible melodic frameworks. This is particularly evident in the many contemporary concert performance contexts – regional, national and international – that have involved artists from both communities: one recent instance, that was witnessed

during fieldwork, is shown in Plate 5.6, on an occasion where Asin Khan Laṅgā was invited to accompany an ensemble of senior Māṅgaṇiyār musicians at the Sarkhej Roza Sufi festival in Gujarat. I was also fortunate enough to be invited, to record and film the performance; and I was surprised by the close nature of the relationship between Asin and the Māṅgaṇiyārs, both on and offstage.



Plate 5.6: Asin Khan Laṅgā (second from right) accompanying senior Māṅgaṇiyār ensemble at 'Sarkhej Roza' Sufi Festival. Ahmedabad, Gujarat. 22nd November 2013

But to what extent can we say that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs share a common conception of *rāg* knowledge? And is this sharing of the stage a recent phenomenon, dating only from the times of Komal Kothari's interventions and the subsequent wave of concert billings? Using the core Laṅgā melodic framework identified here as our reference point, we will now begin to explore this question by comparing key elements of Muse Khan's system to the *rāg* structures utilised in performance by some of the most senior and widely respected contemporary Māṅgaṇiyār musicians.

CHAPTER SIX

Rāga in Māṅgaṇiyār Instrumental Music

5.1. Overview

Having established a detailed picture of one senior Laṅgā musician's approach to the formulisation and implementation of *rāg*-based melodic material, we will now seek to identify the presence of similar models in current usage within the Māṅgaṇiyār community. This study is more generalised than the previous one, and this is in part out of necessity: due to Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's untimely passing in August 2013, I was only able to benefit directly from his prodigious musical knowledge and unique pedagogical approach on two occasions. As a result of this unfortunate circumstance, my fieldwork with the Māṅgaṇiyārs took on a very different shape from that which I had intended (see the Methodologies section in Chapter One, and below).

Nonetheless, the wider spread of data that was subsequently gathered across the Māṅgaṇiyār community in Western Rajasthan now provides us with an opportunity to begin widening the scope of our analysis, whilst at the same time gaining some detailed insights into the individual playing styles exhibited by some of the most experienced and renowned Māṅgaṇiyār musicians currently active.

The one notable omission from the musical material presented in this chapter is, of course, the artist who would have most likely been its sole subject, had my fieldwork with the Māṅgaṇiyārs continued on the course that originally set this whole study in motion. Nonetheless, Sakar Khan's life and music are accorded some due attention here, since we cannot underestimate the impact of his remarkable career upon contemporary music practice for members of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities. We will also consider the significance and place of his most beloved instrument, the *kamāichā*, within the Māṅgaṇiyār musical genre – being an instrument unique to the Māṅgaṇiyārs, and itself both a marker

of status within the community and a primary tool for the transmission of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* knowledge.

In order to gain a more general sense of *rāg* usage within the community as a whole, the musical styles of three senior Māṅgaṇiyār musicians are analysed: Hakim Khan, Chanan Khan, and Sakar Khan's own eldest son Ghevar Khan. These three leading artists of the community performed all of the musical material that is presented for analysis in this chapter, during spontaneous fieldwork sessions that were recorded wholly independently of each other. On each occasion, I had no idea that the musicians involved would even be present at the times when I visited the relevant locations; so there was a somewhat serendipitous (and random) nature to the data accumulation. However, it is quite possible that the musicians had been forewarned of my specific interest in *rāg* knowledge, since my first port of call upon arriving in India was the ARCE in Gurgaon, where I had first met Shubha Chaudhuri and spoken with her at length regarding the main focus of my research.

Despite what appeared to me as an unexpected turn of events, these three sessions give a striking overview of the ways in which *rāg* frameworks are utilised in Māṅgaṇiyār music practice when viewed in series, whilst also providing contemporary insights into each musician's unique approach to the use of *rāg* structures as an organising model for performance. I was both honoured and fortunate to find that, even though the sessions were completely unplanned, each musician was extremely accommodating of my interest in their own particular approaches to the subject matter; and I am certain that their generosity, in this respect, was founded in no small part upon the understanding that I had originally been invited to learn *kamāichā* with Sakarji, but that this extremely rich avenue of Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge had sadly, and suddenly, become unavailable.

The fact that all of these highly respected artists are themselves *kamāichāwallas* further highlights the importance of the instrument within the community. Although the body of data is far from exhaustive, nonetheless it presents an interesting cross-section of contemporary *kamāichā* style as expounded by three senior Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, which in turn naturally facilitates a comparison of

their approaches. This comparative approach forms the content of Section 6.4, wherein extracted instrumental performances of a specific *rāga* (in this case, *rāg* Bhairvī), provided independently by all three artists, are analysed in series. The analysis seeks to identify examples of both correlations and inconsistent features in contemporary *rāg* usage, at the most senior musical levels of the Māṅgaṇiyār community, whilst at the same time taking account of the relationship between 'Māṅgaṇiyār' *rāg* Bhairvī and its classical counterpart.

Providing background to this subsequent comparative analysis, Section 6.3 focusses on another unexpected, and highly informative music session with Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār – himself contemporary with Sakar Khan, and a leading senior artist in his own right, who has been accorded a high standing within the community for many years. During this session, which took place in the Jaisalmer home of Māṅgaṇiyār community leader Akbar Khan, Hakimji presented a succession of particularly clear *rāg* examples, all delivered in a concise manner and within relatively concentrated timeframes.

Seven of the examples from this session are transcribed and analysed here, using the same methodology that we have already applied to Muse Khan Laṅgā's core *rāga* system in the previous chapter. In addition to providing a background context of musical knowledge for the *rāg* Bhairvī performances that are analysed in the subsequent section, the goal here is to both document Hakim Khan's approach to the use of *rāga* as a conceptual framework for music performance, and also to examine the possibility of an analogue for the Laṅgā *rāg* system being present within the Māṅgaṇiyār musical community. But first, we will take an overview of Hakimji's chosen instrument, the *kamāichā*, as we consider the musical impact of perhaps its greatest exponent in living memory: the late Sakar Khan.

6.2. Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār



Plate 6.1: Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār with *kamāichā*. Firoze Khan's house, Kalākar Colony, Jaisalmer. 1st March 2013 [Photographer: Michel le Bastard]

6.2.1. Family background and musical career

Up until his untimely passing in August 2013, Sakar Khan (Plate 6.1) was the leading artist of the Māṅgaṇiyār community, being renowned for his sweet and gentle nature, his soulful, rustic singing voice, and above all his musical expertise on the bowed lute *kamāichā*. Raised in a poor Māṅgaṇiyār family in the village of Hamīra, he went on to enjoy an exceptionally successful regional, national and international musical career, whilst always remaining true to his inherited family style of music. Pandey has this to say on the importance of Sakar Khan's role in popularising the *kamāichā* and Māṅgaṇiyār music, both within Rajasthan and beyond:

> Traditionally an accompanying instrument used by the Manganiyars for their songs, Sakar turned [the *kamāichā*] into an instrument for solo performances. His art has taken him across the world... Sakar's expertise in playing the kamaycha is recognised throughout the desert region… Sakar is a revered artist not just for his unsurpassable talent but [also] for his serene personality.
>
> (Pandey 1999: 89)

This account is typical in praising Sakar's prodigious musical talent and humble, magnetic charisma. However, an implication is also made that, before Sakar Khan, the *kamāichā* was used solely as an instrument for vocal accompaniment – never for instrumental performance. Such a view is not explicitly expressed in any other source that I have found; and, given the long history of instrumental performance on bowed lutes in the region, coupled with the ubiquitous employment of *kamāichā*-specific melodies across the Māṅgaṇiyār community by other members of his own generation, it seems unlikely that Sakar Khan would have been the sole innovator of this approach to *kamāichā* performance.

Nevertheless, it is clear that Sakar Khan was a central figure during the rise in popularity of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, as both recording artists and concert performers – a position which gave him the unparalleled opportunity to develop and showcase his musicianship in a much more focussed context. All sources would seem to agree that Sakar Khan subsequently developed into one of "the most accomplished kamaicha players and performers among the Manganiyar." (Neuman et al. 2006: 130)

In addition to his prodigious skills with the *kamāichā*, it is well known that Sakar was also "a vocalist with a very distinctive, indeed immediately recognizable, vocal timbre." (Ibid.) What is less discussed, but abundantly evident in the body of extant recordings and in the accounts of his family and *jajmāns*, is the profound depth of Sakar's musical knowledge: he knew countless folksongs by heart, and was equally able to perform competently and articulately in a wide range of *rāgs* and other regionally specific melodic frameworks such as *kāfī* and *lehrā*.

By the end of his life, such was the extent of Sakar's fame that, following his passing, obituaries were published in national mainstream media outlets such as the Indian Express, the Mumbai Mirror, The Hindu – and even in some foreign newspapers, including British broadsheet The Independent. In his home village of Hamīra, many observances and vigils were held in his honour following his passing (one of which I had the honour to attend, on an unusually sombre gathering for Divali); and musicians, patrons and community members alike continue to gather in Hamīra and honour his life during the August of each year. Interestingly, Sakar had himself already "celebrated" his own death in 2004, through the Māṅgaṇiyār ritual of a *dham* festival feast that was, on this particular occasion, at least partially pre-emptive:

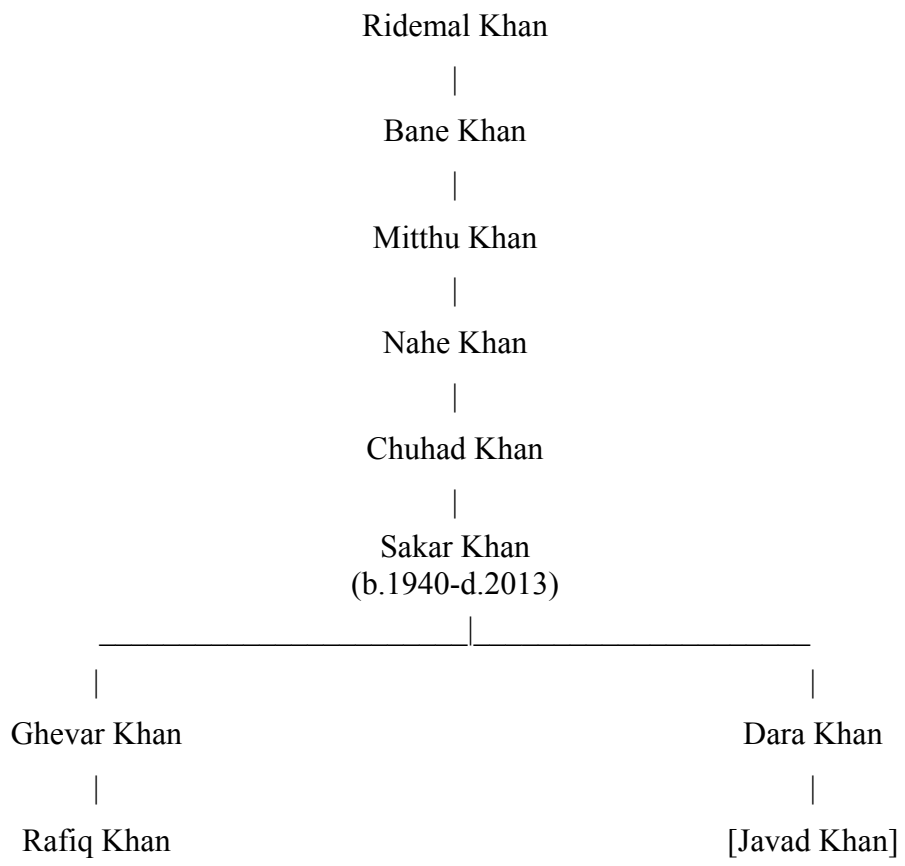
> A dham was held by his family for four generations [of people] and included him and his wife, both of whom are alive [at the time of writing]. At such a time, the focus is on the ritual feasting; other mourning-related rituals do not take place.
>
> Neuman et al. 2006: 59

Further illustrating the musical importance of Sakar's family to their particular locale, we find two differing versions of an oral narrative that both name the original Māṅgaṇiyār settler in Hamīra as one Mitthu Khan, grandfather of Sakar Khan. (Ibid: 181) However, from the orally kept family lineage of *kamāichā* players conveyed to me during fieldwork by Sakar's two elder sons, Ghevar and Firoze Khan (Figure 6.1), it would seem that Mitthu Khan – being a renowned vocalist as well as a respected *kamāichāwalla* in his time, according to family legend – was in fact Sakar's great-grandfather: this would suggest that Hamīra

was settled by Sakar's ancestors from Jaisalmer in the mid- to late-19th Century. The same data also names 18-year-old Rafiq Khan (being the eldest living male to take up the instrument) as the eighth member, in living memory, of an unbroken patrilineal line of hereditary professional *kamāichā* musicians.

Although precise dates for the lifespans of ancestral family members are almost certainly impossible to establish, the long-standing significance of Sakar's family within the Māṅgaṇiyār community – along with the general importance accorded to hereditary male lineage – is made clear; and it is equally evident that Sakar's own spectacular career as a performing musician was built upon a firm foundation of inherited family musical style.

Figure 6.1: Family lineage of hereditary male *kamāichā* players in Sakar Khan's family (information supplied by Ghevar and Firoze Khan, 8th November 2013)



Sakar himself was always keen to point out that his music was “family music” (pers. comm.): it was this unique cache of musical knowledge that he had acquired primarily from his father and grandfather, and which he subsequently passed on to his sons and grandsons, that formed the bedrock of his career. Despite new opportunities and changing performance contexts, for the most part it is this same core hereditary repertoire that his sons now perform, and are in the process of transmitting to their own sons. And it seems that, although successive generations of hereditary musicians will naturally add their own stylistic innovations to the orally transmitted family style, the inherent structure of the core system can remain surprisingly unchanged.

One of the main components of Sakar Khan’s inherited family style (and undoubtedly a key factor in his being one of the select few Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians to be consistently championed by Komal Kothari from the 1970s onwards) is a particular emphasis being placed upon knowledge of *rāga*. The evidence for this substantial body of specialised musical knowledge is attested to in the many recordings that feature Sakar’s majestic performance style, and also in the music that his four sons – all of whom have become successful professional musicians in their own right – now play.

Moreover, two of the four (eldest son Ghevar and youngest son Dara) have inherited the important family tradition of playing the *kamāichā*, whilst Sakar’s second and third sons, Firoze and Khete, have both gravitated towards percussion instruments (*dholak*and *khaḍtāl*, respectively). Sakar’s younger brother Pempa specialises in aerophonic instruments (most notably the *murli* – see Plate 6.2); and, since all – including the more experienced younger musicians – are capable of singing and playing the appropriate *dhol*accompanying rhythms, this family is able to provide the full complement of a traditional Māṅgaṇiyār ensemble.



Plate 6.2: Pempa Khan Māṅgaṇiyār playing the *murli* gourd pipe (Ghevar Khan left). Pempa Khan's house, Hamīra. 6th November 2013

6.2.2. The significance of the *kamāichā*

The *kamāichā* is a bowed lute unique in the world to the Māṅgaṇiyārs; and yet it was, up until recently, conspicuously absent from many important surveys of Indian musical instruments – for example, see Krishnaswami (1965), which fails to mention either *kamāichā* or Sindhi *sāraṅgī*, even though descriptions are included of other Rajasthani bowed folk instruments such as the bowed lute

rāvanhatthā, which is traditionally used by the Bhopā (Rajasthani priest-singers) to accompany their singing of the epic ballad *Pābujī*. No detailed organological study of Sindhi *sāraṅgī* or *kamāichā* has yet been published, in Indian or non-Indian academic works. Such works are not directly relevant to the current thesis; and, although the gap in knowledge is considered to be significant, they will have to be reserved for future study. Here, we shall take a more general overview of the *kamāichā*, and its role in Māṅgaṇiyār music making.

To avoid confusion, it is important in the first instance to distinguish the Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* from another similarly named instrument – the Persian *kemanche*:

> The term is… not found elsewhere but note should be made of its similarity to the otherwise quite different bowed spike fiddle of northern Iran and other areas, the kemanche. Given Jaisalmer's adjacency to Sindh and proximity to Baluchistan, it is possible that the term originated in Iran.
>
> (Neuman et al. 2006: 127)

We may take some issue here with the phrase "quite different", since there are notable common features between the two instruments: both are hemispherical bowed viols, typically played in a sitting position with a transverse bowing action; both traditionally use three main playing strings; both feature large resonating chambers, typically made from wood and covered with animal skin (often goat, in both cases); and both often feature ornate carvings and inlays. A Persian influence on the musical, religious and literary culture of the Sindh region – and more generally across South Asia – cannot be denied, though it may have been obscured somewhat since the advent of British rule (in this regard see, for example, a newspaper article on a lecture given in Karachi in 2014 by historian Francis Robinson, where Robinson maintains that there was "a constant exchange between Iran and South Asia for thousands of years": http://tribune.com.pk/story/694071/an-inextricable-history-how-persia-influenced-south-asia/. Accessed August 2016).

A link to neighbouring regions in the construction of the contemporary Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* is given credence by anecdotal evidence from Komal

Kothari, supplied by Widdess (pers. comm.) that some Māṅgaṇiyārs living in Western Rajasthan have claimed that their *kamāichās* are made for them "somewhere across the border"; and as we have already noted in Chapter One, there is evidence of a substantial contemporary Māṅgaṇiyār community in the Sindh region of Pakistan, where it is possible that some instruments may still be made. However, it is also certain that there are at least four producers of traditional *kamāichā* to be found in the district of Jaisalmer. According to senior Māṅgaṇiyār musician Misri Khan (pers. comm.), there are *kamāichā* makers currently residing in the towns of Barmer and Jaisalmer, as well as in the villages of Kanoi and Hamīra.



Plate 6.3: Carpenter and *kamāichā* maker Sardar Khan with newly made (unfinished) instrument. Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra. 16th October 2013

One of these luthiers – Sardar Khan, a member of the *Sutār* ("carpenter") caste – is shown in Plate 6.3, with a recently manufactured Hamīra *kamāichā*. This particular instrument was already in a playable state when I saw it, on this occasion in October 2013; but Sardar Khan considered it to be unfinished, since the inlay details had yet to be fitted into the fretboard. It was evident that the Hamīra *kamāichāwallas* held a great respect for Sardar's workmanship; and his

fine carving of the large tuning pegs, called *mornī* (Plate 6.4), is testament to the fact that skilled *kamāichā* makers are to be found in Western Rajasthan. The variety of hardwood that is commonly used for *mornī* on contemporary *kamāichās* is called *rohīṛā* (Sindhi: '*harōṛā*'), taken from the eponymous tree that is thought to be particular to the Jaisalmer region (Chanan Khan: pers. comm.) – although *rohīṛā* trees can in fact be found, albeit less commonly, in the Sindh and Balochistan desert regions of southern Pakistan, as well as in neighbouring areas of Western Rajasthan (Tawari 2007).



Plate 6.4: *Kamāichā* tuning pegs (*mornī*) carved by Sardar Khan. Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra. 16th October 2013

The *kamāichā* can be said to share certain general similarities with the Sindhi *sāraṅgī*: both are normally carved from regional hardwoods – according to Neuman the wood used for *kamāichā* construction is "typically mango and sometimes *sheesham*" (2006: 127); both use locally sourced animal skin – usually *bakrā* ('goat') or, more exceptionally, *hiren* ('deer') – as a membrane; both have three main gut playing strings, along with a variable number of metal sympathetic strings that may be tuned individually to highlight certain salient scalar pitches within a particular melodic context; both are bowed with a large,

wooden, weighted horsehair bow; and, uniquely, both are fretted with the cuticle of the fingers. However, there are marked differences between the two instrument species, both in terms of construction and playing technique.

One obvious variation in the design of the *kamāichā* is that it has a large hemispherical body, giving it a much deeper and naturally resonant sound quality in comparison to the Sindhi *sāraṅgī*. The *kamāichā* is also a somewhat larger and heavier instrument, with the greater length from bridge to nut resulting in a markedly lower pitch range: a comparison of pitch ranges for the tonic, from the music examples featured in this chapter, suggests that *kamāichās* are typically tuned as much as a full octave below the normal range of the Sindhi *sāraṅgī*.

The potential of an octave differential in tuning between the two instruments has resulted in the useful by-product of enabling *kamāichās* and Sindhi *sāraṅgī* to be played together in an ensemble – a fact that has, for example, enabled Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā musicians such as Asin Khan to accompany Māṅgaṇiyār groups in concert. This facility also enabled me to use the Sindhi *sāraṅgī* as a tool for performance-based research with musicians from both communities, thereby obviating the need to carry two separate instruments along with other fieldwork equipment.

Nonetheless, for both Māṅgaṇiyār musicians and their patrons, the *kamāichā* is more than just a musical instrument. One of the most significant aspects of the *kamāichā* is that it is viewed as being an inherently auspicious object, generating a sound that has the power to bestow blessings upon its recipients. The seriousness with which both musicians and patrons treat this unique and increasingly rare instrument is, at least in part, a by-product of this extra-musical association of the *kamāichā* with auspiciousness; and, as a result, *kamāichā* players and their families have tended to be accorded a particularly high status within Māṅgaṇiyār society.

Some musicians express an overtly spiritual dimension to playing the *kamāichā*: Ghevar Khan (pers. comm.) stated that, before taking up the instrument, one first has to be "still inside". The deep, resonant quality of sustained sound production that transfers directly to the body as the instrument is played, combined with the heightened sensitivity of using one's cuticles to stop the strings, creates a

tangible physical connection with the instrument; and – as with all types of *sāraṅgī* – the sonic experience is particularly rich for the musician, due to this physical contact and his proximity to the sound source. It is little wonder that experienced musicians can often appear to be lost in another world, during intimate *kamāichā* performances.

However, like the *sāraṅgī*, the *kamāichā* is a relatively low-level sound producer that struggles to compete with the other more naturally loud instruments in a typical Māṅgaṇiyār ensemble (voice and percussion). Learning the *kamāichā* is extremely challenging, since it takes many years to develop the necessary precision of intonation and clarity of tone that is required of an expert professional. Navatar (in Garland 2000: 641) has suggested that the *kamāichā* may be losing popularity among young Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, who are increasingly tending to favour learning the harmonium – a much less complicated instrument to master, particularly for the purposes of vocal accompaniment, and (ostensibly at least) an easier instrument both to obtain and to maintain. It is also possible that the harmonium carries associations with modernisation, and perhaps even with social prestige, which the younger generation are keen to exhibit; but the choice of harmonium over *kamāichā* is a divisive issue within the community itself, with the older indigenous instrument according its player far more respect.

Despite some valiant attempts by the Rupayan Sansthan to encourage young Māṅgaṇiyārs to take up the *kamāichā* (see, for example, Barucha 2003: 290-291, which describes Kothari's drive to supply a swath of newly made instruments to young members of the community, for no charge), the problem of encouraging the next generation of *kamāichā* musicians remains. During the course of my own fieldwork within the Māṅgaṇiyār community, I was disappointed to find that only one musician under the age of twenty – Rafiq Khan, the eldest son of Ghevar Khan and grandson of Sakar Khan – evidenced any real skill on the instrument. But the sound of the *kamāichā* still has the power to hold both young and old spellbound, when the instrument is held in the hands of an experienced master; and, as we will now see, such highly skilled senior musicians are still to be found across the Māṅgaṇiyār community in Western Rajasthan.

6.3. Overview of a Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* system: Hakim Khan



Plate 6.5: Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār with *kamāichā*. Akbar Khan's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 20th February 2014.

6.3.1. Background: a chance encounter with Hakimji

It was my immense good fortune to meet with the venerable *kamāichā* virtuoso Hakim Khan at the very end of my final fieldwork trip to the Jaisalmer and Barmer regions, where I had been working exclusively with the Māṅgaṇiyār community for some time. The encounter was not pre-arranged: it just so happened that Hakim was visiting community leader Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār at his Jaisalmer home, on the occasion of my own second visit there. I later discovered that Hakim was, in fact, a regular visitor to Akbar's house – not least because his daughter is married to Akbar's second son, Imamddin – and, unknowingly, I had already visited Hakim's home village of Harwa a few months before; but he had been away at the time, and so it was that our paths had not crossed until this late point in the fieldwork process.

Because the session in question had originally been arranged as a continuation of my lessons with Akbar (during which Hakim had suddenly appeared, unexpectedly) I was first presented with the daunting task of demonstrating some of the skills that I had acquired, at Hakim's immediate request. By this point in the fieldwork process, I was already in possession a Sindhi *sāraṅgī* obtained from Muse Khan, which had become my main instrument of choice for learning music with both the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs; so, before even being formally introduced to Hakim, I dutifully played him a few spontaneous phrases so that he could "hear my voice", and then I accompanied Akbar in playing and singing the *ākar*-style scales in Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairav that had, up to that point, formed the core of our practice together.

Hakim seemed satisfied enough with what I played; and then, with a gentle and almost imperceptible insistence, he produced his *kamāichā* out of an old cloth bag and took total control of the session. It was particularly interesting to note that even though Akbar was the seniormost community member present – and despite the fact that we were in his house – nonetheless he deferred completely to Hakim, who was very clearly the superior musician. There were even instances where Akbar would begin to accompany Hakim on *dholak*, and Hakim would indicate with a word or a gesture that Akbar's accompaniment was either not

required at that time, or not rhythmically correct: an example of this is shown in **V 6.1**.

After asking a little about my Sindhi *sāraṅgī* and my lessons with Muse Khan Laṅgā (whom he referred to as "*merā dōsť*" – "my friend"), Hakim performed a number of different *rāgs* and songs, with a style and grace that immediately conveyed to me the profound depth of his musicality. In the few short hours that we spent together – and regardless of the fact that he had never met me before – Hakim showed great generosity in sharing a wealth of musical information with me. Even though his performances were neither overtly instructional, nor seemingly part of an established pedagogical routine, Hakim was keen to offer his services as my future *kamāichā* teacher; and, in one sense, the session could be seen to have taken the form of Hakim showcasing his range of musical knowledge and instrumental skills for me. Whether he had already been made aware of my interest in *rāga* from a third party, I do not know; but, during the course of the session, I was provided with sufficient data to establish the existence of an implicit system of *rāg* knowledge embedded within Hakim's musical style.

6.3.2. Analysis: a selection of seven *rāgs* from Hakim Khan

During the course of the entire session, Hakim delivered eight distinct, explicitly identified examples of *rāg* usage. Seven of these *rāg* presentations comprise the basis for the analysis presented in this section, with the eighth – Hakim's rendition of *rāg* Bhairvī – being reserved for comparative analysis in Section 6.4. As with the Bhairvī example, Hakim usually followed each *rāg* exposition with an instrumental rendition of a song composition, for which Akbar Khan would, if required, provide some basic rhythmic accompaniment on *dholak*. In order to maintain (for the moment at least) a more specific focus on the unmetered section of performance, where *rāg* structures are made most explicitly evident, these compositions have been excluded from the present analysis. However, the comparative analysis of three performances in *rāg* Bhairvī presented in the following Section 6.4 examines full instrumental renditions, so that we can begin to contextualise *rāg* extemporisation and assess the extent to which any *rāg*-like

melodic models presented in the unmetered introductory sections may be adhered to during the course of a subsequent song performance.

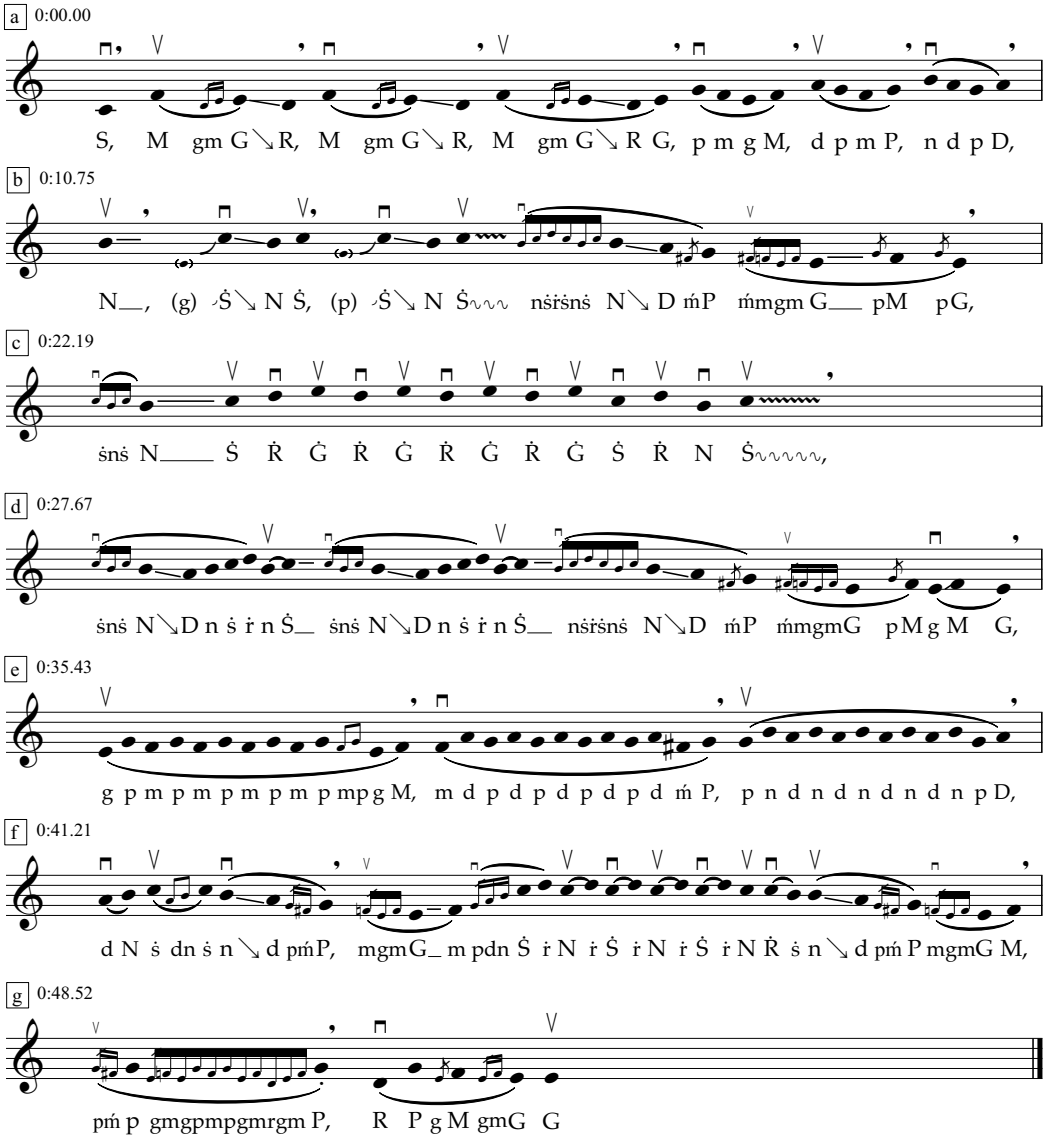
The seven *rāg* examples from Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār transcribed below in Examples 6.1 to 6.7 (audio examples **A 6.1** to **A 6.7**) are presented here in the same chronological order in which they were delivered on the occasion in question. I made no requests to Hakim as to which *rāgs* he should play, so the choice of material was wholly his own. Since this *rāg* series was delivered more as an impromptu selection of illustrative performance examples, as opposed to the systematic framework that Muse Khan Laṅgā used for pedagogical purposes, each example is commented upon individually following its transcription. In particular, we will be looking for any points of convergence with – or notable divergences from – the core *rāg* system of Muse Khan Laṅgā, as represented in the previous chapter.

Whilst Hakim made no explicit mention of there being any particular significance to the overall running order of the *rāgs*, in the somewhat disjointed session (which was interrupted many times by Akbar's children, grandchildren, and by Akbar himself), there was at least one factor to suggest an element of selective choice in the order of play. Before Hakim played a note, Akbar suggested that he should perform *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār for me; however, Hakim brushed this request gently aside and began his series of performances with a rendition of *rāg* Kamāijī. As can be seen at the beginning of video example **V 6.2**, Akbar incorrectly identifies the newly-begun melody format as being *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār – following which I am heard, off-camera, to identify the *rāg* (also incorrectly) as Soraṭh, due to a passing similarity in the initial ascending phrase.

With remarkable tolerance, Hakim corrects us both, and continues his brief but lyrical rendition of *rāg* Kamāijī: but the significance of his choice of opening *rāg* may well lie in the fact that Māṅgaṇiyār musicians regard *rāg* Kamāijī as an auspicious melody to begin an event with (Anwar Khan, Firoze Khan, pers. comms. and see Page 8 of sleeve notes for CD 'Master Musicians from the Archives: Sakar Khan'). In this regard, it is also notable that Muse Khan Laṅgā chose to perform a rendition of *rāg* Kamāijī, followed by the melodically related wedding song 'Toranio', as the inaugural piece for the occasion of our first

pedagogical session, on 11th November 2013. This highlights an instance of musicians from both communities attributing the same particular extra-musical characteristic to a specific, named melodic form, giving further grounds to suspect a common source for Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge.

Example 6.1 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Kamāijī (**A 6.1**)



Commentary: Example 6.1

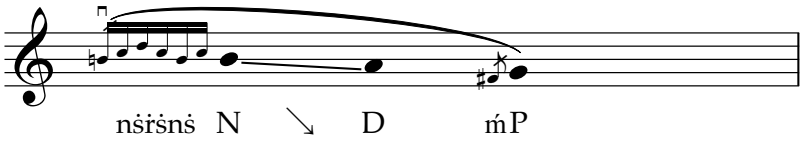
Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār opens his performance with a *rāg* which, in addition to behoving an auspicious beginning, has already been connected with a potentially related melodic counterpart the North Indian classical music system. Kothari (2003: 333) writes:

> Khamāychi… also known as Khamaji, is the Khamāj of classical music. It is sung by the Māṅgaṇiyārs when they lead a wedding procession or welcome guests.

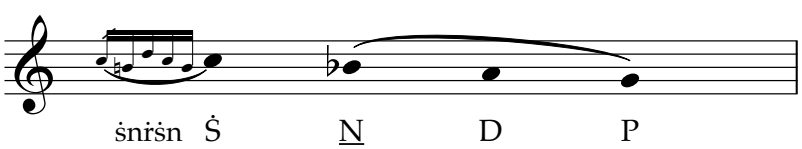
The Māṅgaṇiyār association of *rāg* Kamāijī with wedding music matches with Muse Khan Laṅgā's pairing of the *rāg* with the song 'Toranio', which is also a processional wedding piece (see Chapter Four, Figure 4.1). This similarity in contextual function adds further weight to the argument that the Sindhi Sipahi were once Rajputs, since the *toran* is explicitly related to Hindu Rajput wedding customs (ibid) and there would be no need for any Laṅgā musician to perform such a song unless it was for the marriage ceremony of a patron. So here we have a clear incidence where both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians hold an identical conception of *rāg* usage, in terms of performance context.

With regards to the melodic content of the *rāg* itself, there are certainly some striking similarities between Hakim Khan's performance and the typical framework of classical *rāga* Khamāj. This is evident when comparing his rendition to the melodic outline for Khamāj presented in 'The Raga Guide' by eminent classical *sarōd* player Buddhadev DasGupta (1999: 101), which features a similar emphasis on the natural third, along with the analogous ascent to upper 'Ga' that Hakim performs in phrase 'c'. The important descending movement between the upper tonic and seventh is also mirrored in both versions; however, this movement also highlights Hakim Khan's main point of divergence from the classical model, in that he always performs a natural seventh in descent:

Rāg Kamāijī descent - Hakim Khan Māngaṇiyār

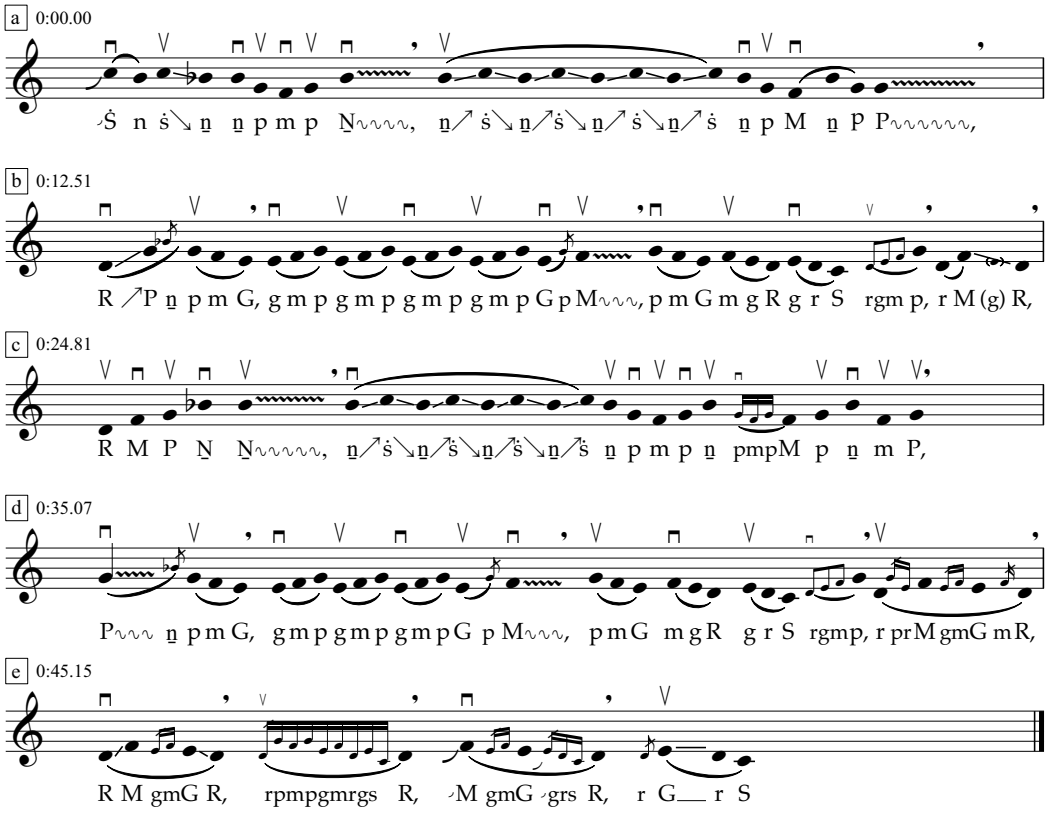


Rāg Khamāj descent - Buddhadev DasGupta



Despite this clear violation of the accepted classical rules for *rāga* Khamāj, the above phrases showcase a remarkable level of congruence between the two versions – even at the most detailed level of ornamentation.

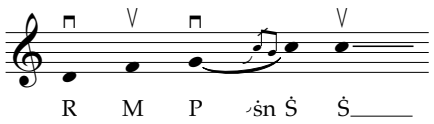
Example 6.2 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Gauḍ Malhār (**A 6.2**)



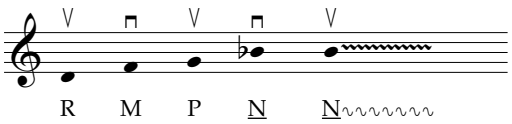
Commentary: Example 6.2

For his second choice of *rāg*, Hakim Khan delivers a performance of Gauḍ Malhār, which was also the third *rāg* to be delivered in Muse Khan Laṅgā's core series. The prioritising of this *rāg* would seem to indicate that *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār is an important melodic format in both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical circles. Again, we find some notable incidences of convergence between the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions presented by these two senior musicians; however, there is also one highly conspicuous difference, in that Hakim Khan treats the seventh degree of the scale as flattened (*komal*). An example of this can be seen in the typical ascent phrase:

Rāg Gauḍ Malhār ascent - Muse Khan Langā

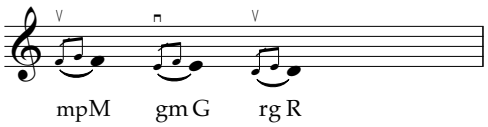


Rāg Gauḍ Malhār ascent - Hakim Khan Māngaṇiyār

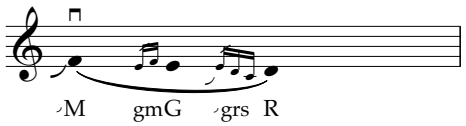


Notwithstanding this major discrepancy in pitch selection for the seventh degree of the scale, the two versions offer some marked similarities in their interpretations of the *rāg*. The high 'Sa' is emphasised in both renditions, as is the natural 'Ma'; natural 'Ga' is also a strong note; and 'Re' is frequently used as an endpoint for phrases. In terms of movement, both renditions typically skip 'Ga' and 'Dha' in ascent, as can be seen in the example above – indeed, the sixth degree of the scale is only used as a passing note for rapid ornaments in Muse Khan's version, and in Hakim Khan's rendition it is completely absent. Additionally, both renditions showcase the importance of the descending phrase movement 'MGR' in the lower tetrachord, using various rapid ornaments revolving around each degree of the descending scale for added colour:

Rāg Gauḍ Malhār descent - Muse Khan Langā

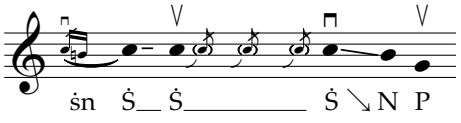


Rāg Gauḍ Malhār descent - Hakim Khan Māngaṇiyār

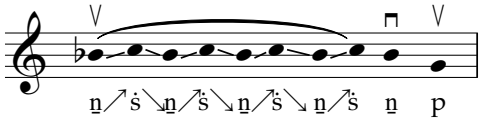


However, in addition to the use of a flattened seventh in Hakim Khan's rendition of *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār, which sets his version quite clearly apart from the Laṅgā version, there are a number of other stylistic differences that can be highlighted. For example, whilst both musicians emphasise the high 'Sa' following a somewhat analogous melodic trajectory, they do so using very different playing techniques:

Emphasis on high 'Sa' - Muse Khan Langā



Emphasis on high 'Sa' - Hakim Khan Māngaṇiyār



As we can see above, Hakim Khan performs a slow, repeated slide between the flat seventh and the upper tonic, preceding this same movement on two occasions

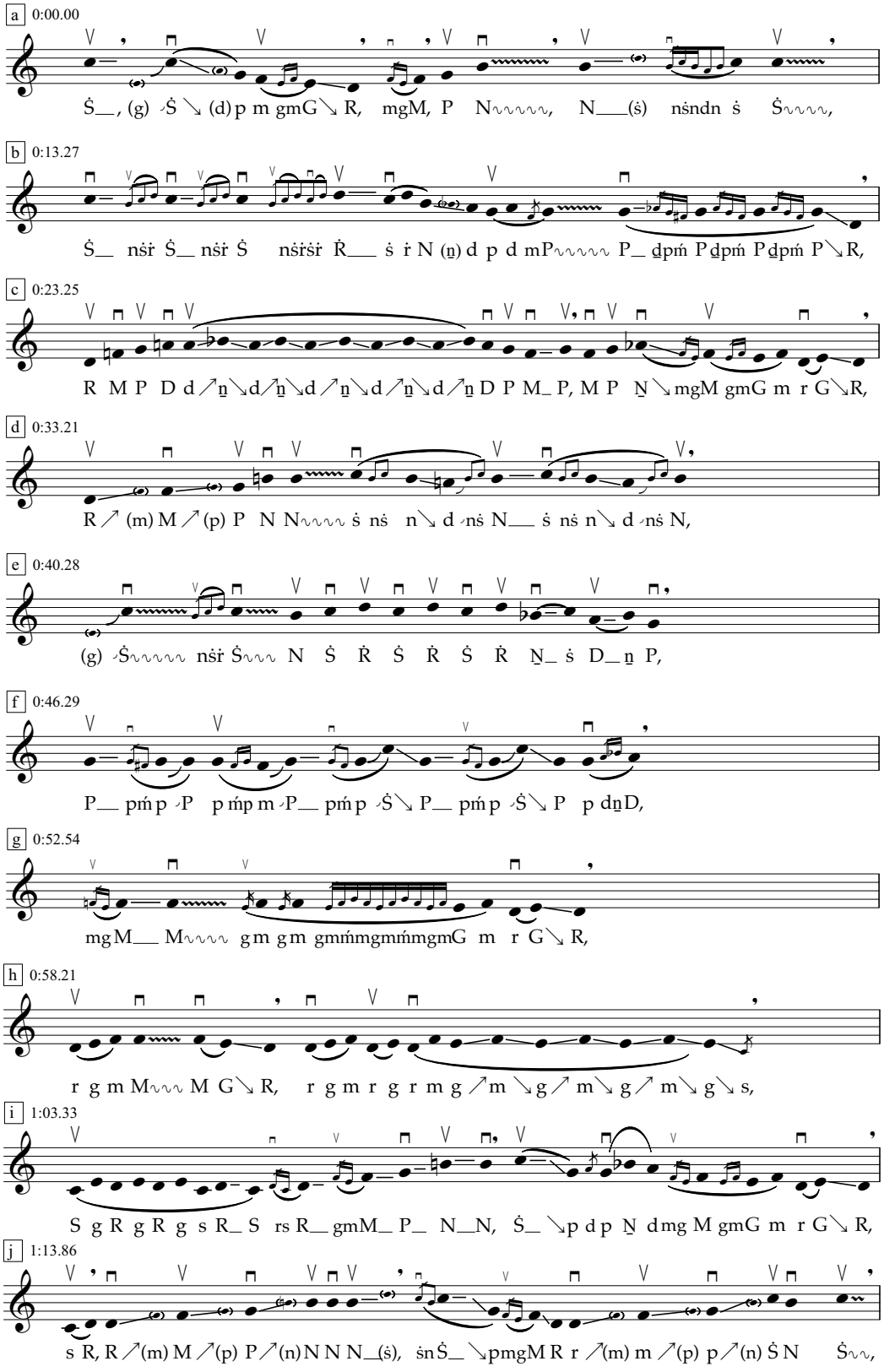
(lines ‘a’ and ‘c’) with a strong emphasis on the flat ‘Ni’. This repeated slide between two notes is, in fact, a technique that recurs frequently in Hakim Khan’s performances, seemingly regardless of *rāg* context: hence, we may consider this to be a stylistic trait, rather than always being a specific indicator of particular melodic movements.

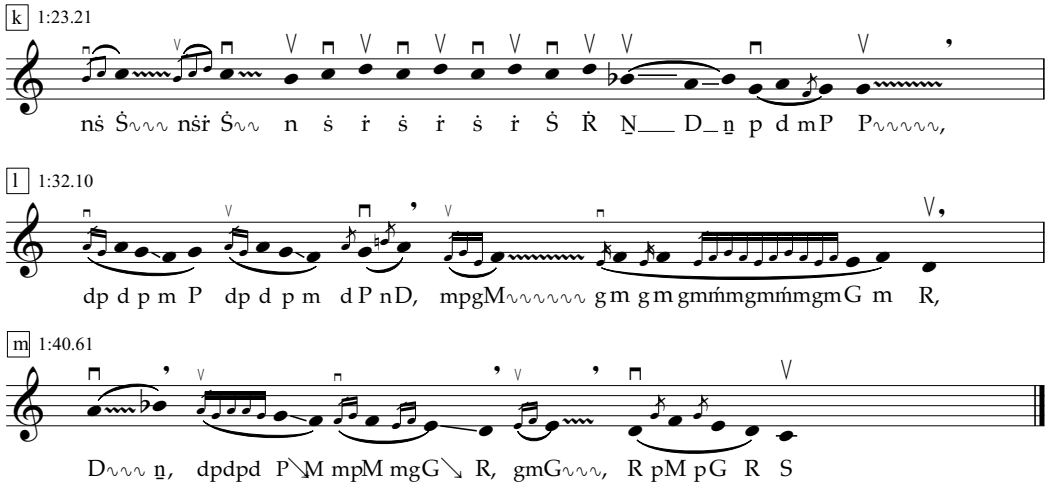
In Muse Khan’s renditions of Gauḍ Malhār, the relationship between the seventh and the upper tonic is also indicated by his own characteristic technique – a flicking of the left-hand finger on the playing string as the upper tonic is bowed, creating the effect of a series of grace notes coming from below. Moreover, his slides occur much less frequently in the downward movement from upper tonic to the natural seventh (which is, in itself, never treated as a particularly strong note in his versions of Gauḍ Malhār). Rather, the more characteristic movement in Gauḍ Malhār for Muse Khan is the slow descending *mīṇḍ* between fifth and fourth; but this movement does not feature at all in Hakim Khan’s rendition.

Despite these notable variations in performance – some of which are most likely not *rāg*-specific, since they also occur in other melodic contexts for both artists – there is nonetheless some significant common ground between the two renditions of *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār. One other general similarity to note is that both Muse Khan and Hakim Khan include a good deal of repetition in their respective renditions (in Hakim Khan’s performance of Gauḍ Malhār, for example, lines ‘c’ and ‘d’ are, to a large extent, a repetition of the material performed in the first two lines).

However, the use of repetitive themes emerges as a more general property of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* performance, as we shall see later in this chapter, and cannot be seen as a specific indicator of *rāg* presentation. In this particular instance, the clear differences – both in pitch selection and melodic phrasing – between these two renditions of Gauḍ Malhār are such that one cannot say that the interpretations are based on identical melodic material. Nonetheless, there are enough commonalities to suggest that the musicians in question are using the various different styles and techniques at their disposal – be they inherited, innovated, or acquired from other sources – to offer contrasting interpretations of a related melodic framework.

Example 6.3 – Hakim Khan Māṅganiyār: *Rāg* Sindhi Soraṭh (**A 6.3**)



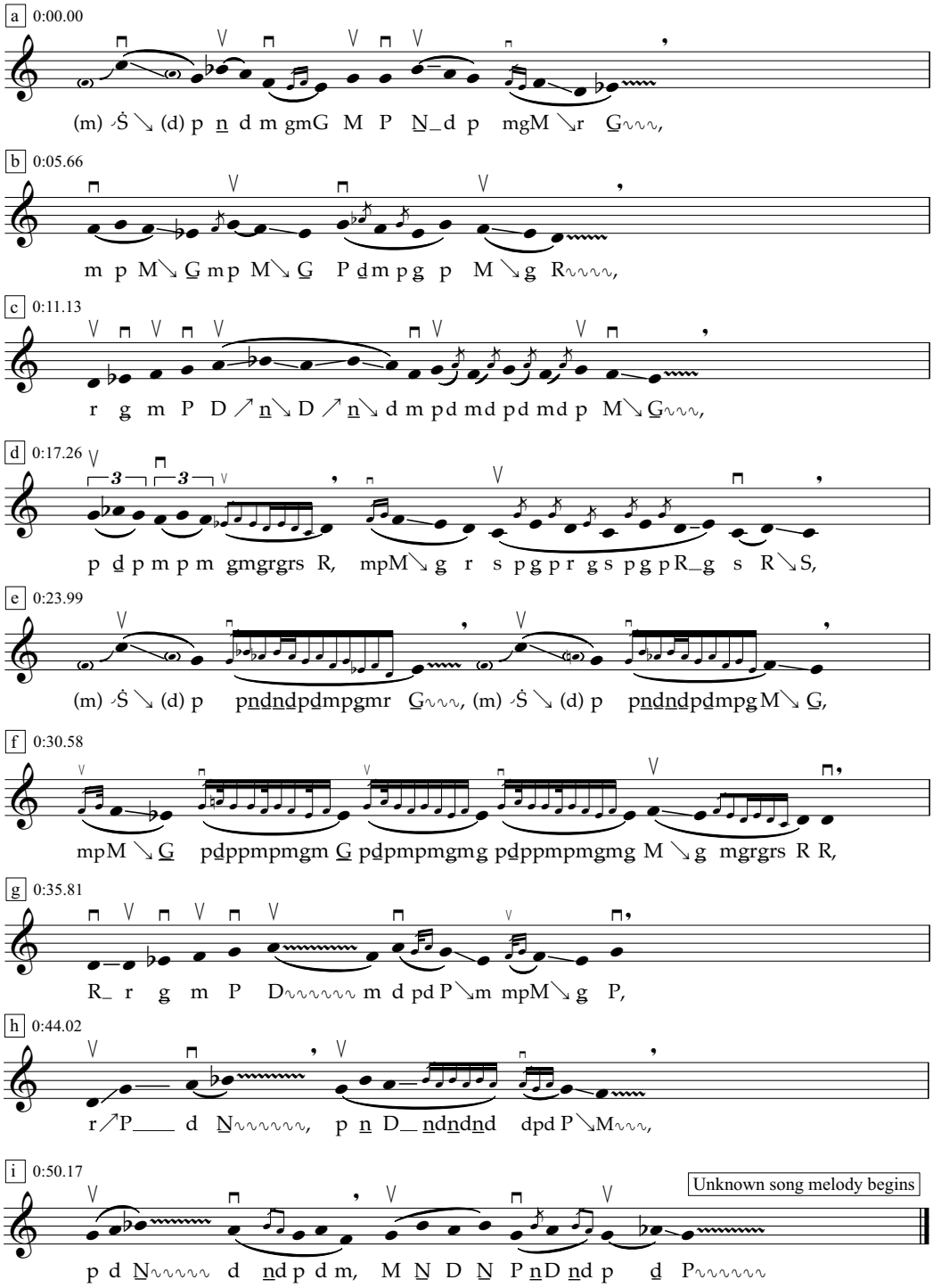


Commentary: Example 6.3

Here we have a variant on the theme of *rāg* Soraṭh, belonging to a subset of regional melodic forms whose origins are linked – in title at least – to the Sindh area of modern-day Pakistan. Although Muse Khan Laṅgā did not perform a *rāg* labelled specifically as being "Sindhi Soraṭh" during our sessions together (and there are clear differences between this melody type and the more typically performed *rāg* Soraṭh, which we shall speculate on briefly below), both he and other Laṅgā musicians routinely perform *rāgs* that are given this same particular regional categorisation – most notably *rāg* Sindhi Bhairvī, which is a popular melodic format of choice for both Surnāīā and Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās, as well as for some Māṅgaṇiyār musicians.

A thorough examination of these "Sindhi" melodic variants would constitute a serious study in itself; and, since *rāg* Soraṭh, in both its Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār manifestations, is examined in some detail during the following chapter, we shall not concern ourselves with a detailed analysis of this particular performance here. However, it is notable that whilst the pitch content used is broadly the same as in *rāg* Soraṭh – both *rāgs* use a predominantly major scale, with both major and minor degrees of the seventh included in the characteristic ascent that skips the 'Ga' and 'Dha', as in *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār – here Hakim Khan includes a strong emphasis on 'Ma', and a sharpened fourth in the lower tetrachord (lines 'g' and 'l') that is typically absent from other Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār interpretations of *rāg* Soraṭh.

Example 6.4 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Tilaṅg (**A 6.4**)



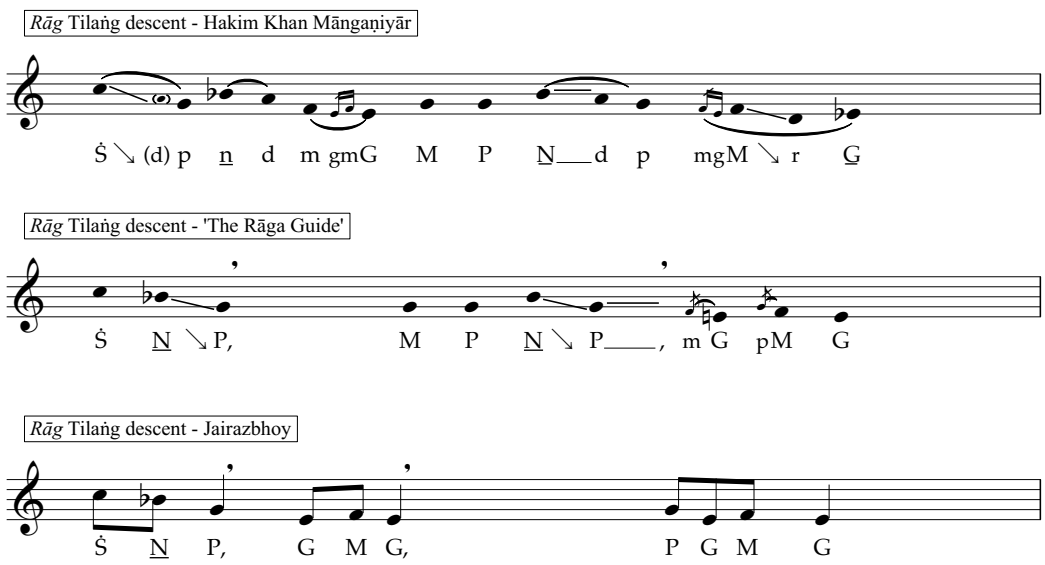
Commentary: Example 6.4

Although there are no known published recordings of *rāg* Tilaṅg being performed by either Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, here we find another melody type that has an analogue in the North Indian classical tradition, as well

as being another *rāg* that was performed for me on two occasions by Muse Khan. As well as still being commonly performed by classical musicians in the singing of *ṭhumrī* and *ghazals*, *rāg* Tilaṅg is also a core *rāga* in the Sikh tradition, and has enjoyed popularity throughout the Punjab region (Bor et al. 1999: 162): thus we could speculate upon a number of possible avenues by which this particular *rāg* may have come to find a place in Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's repertoire.

However, there are few elements in Hakim's rendition that bear any significant resemblance to the commonly accepted melodic outline for classical *rāga* Tilaṅg. One of the most conspicuous differences lies in Hakim Khan's frequent use of both *komal* and *śuddh* 'Dha' (both of which are usually omitted in classical performances, lest the performance be confused with *rāga* Khamāj); and the characteristic descending slide from a heavily weighted *śuddh* 'Ga' to 'Sa', that marks the return to the tonic in a typical classical rendition, is also absent from Hakim's version. Nor does Hakim exploit the lower tetrachord of the upper octave at all, as is common in classical renditions of *rāga* Tilaṅg – although he (and other Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians) do touch upon high 'Re' and 'Ga' in other performances, when they see fit to do so.

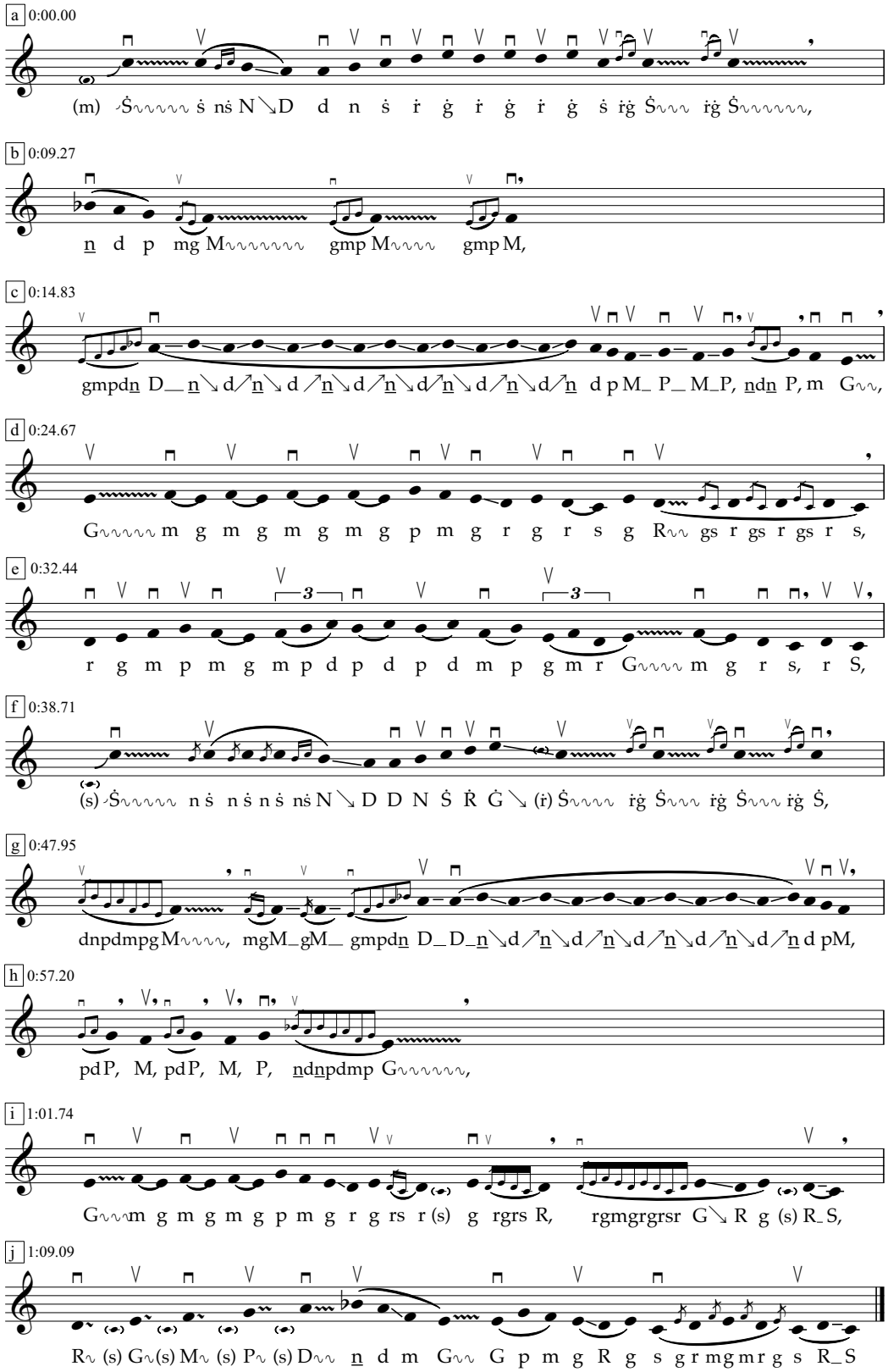
The only movement rendered here that resembles its classical counterpart to any significant degree occurs in the opening descending passage ('a'), which echoes the characteristic descent of *rāga* Tilaṅg as defined by Bhātkhaṇḍe (for example see Jairazbhoy 1995: 144), and outlined in *The Raga Guide* (1999: 162):



The correspondences in downward movement highlighted here are enough to suppose that either Hakim Khan, or one of his teachers, may have had contact with some form of the classical *rāga* Tilaṅg at some point in their learning process; and it is interesting to note that Hakim concludes his opening descent with *śuddh* 'Ga', which is the correct pitch for the classical *rāga*. But, equally, there is clear evidence of significant divergence from the classical model – not the least of which is the terminal point of Hakim's descent to alight on *komal* 'Ga' (the flattened third), a pattern which he goes on to employ throughout his subsequent rendition of *rāg* Tilaṅg.

Since at least one 17th century source (Ahobala 1665, cited in Bor et al. 1999:162) would seem to indicate that the present scalar form of classical *rāga* Tilaṅg has remained more or less unchanged for the last 350 years, we cannot say in this particular instance that Hakim Khan is performing an earlier manifestation of the classical Tilaṅg model. Instead, the evidence may point to the adoption of a canonical melodic framework, either through direct tuition or indirect acquisition, that has (possibly over time) been adapted to the folk musicians' needs and given a noticeably different treatment from its original classical counterpart.

Example 6.5 – Hakim Khan Māṅganiyār: *Rāg* Saswī (**A 6.5**)



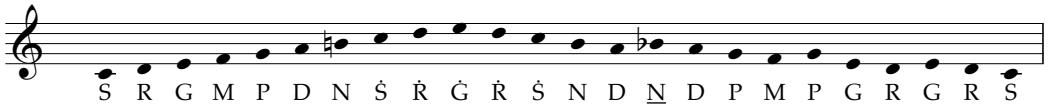
Commentary: Example 6.5

Having no obvious classical analogue in name, *rāg* Saswī – also transliterated variously as 'Sassuī' and 'Sasvi' – once again evokes the *sūr* system of Shah Abdul Latīf. The name of Saswī represents one of the Seven Queens of Sindhi folklore (see section 2.4.3 of Chapter 2); and the legend of her tragic relationship with Mir Punnhun is known and recounted widely throughout the Sindh and the western borders of Rajasthan. Interestingly, Punnhun is said to have descended from the Hōth, a fabled tribe thought to have hailed from the Balochi region of modern day Pakistan (Baloch 1976); so here we see further evidence of an association between the musical repertoire of the Māṅgaṇiyārs, and the folkloric culture of the Sindh and Balochistan – a source of influence that the Laṅgās also share.

Despite the importance of Saswī as a regional folk legend, this was the only occasion that I recorded either a Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musician performing a melody that was identified as *rāg* Saswī: therefore it is impossible to say at this time the extent to which the melody still survives in current practice, and in what other forms it may be made manifest.

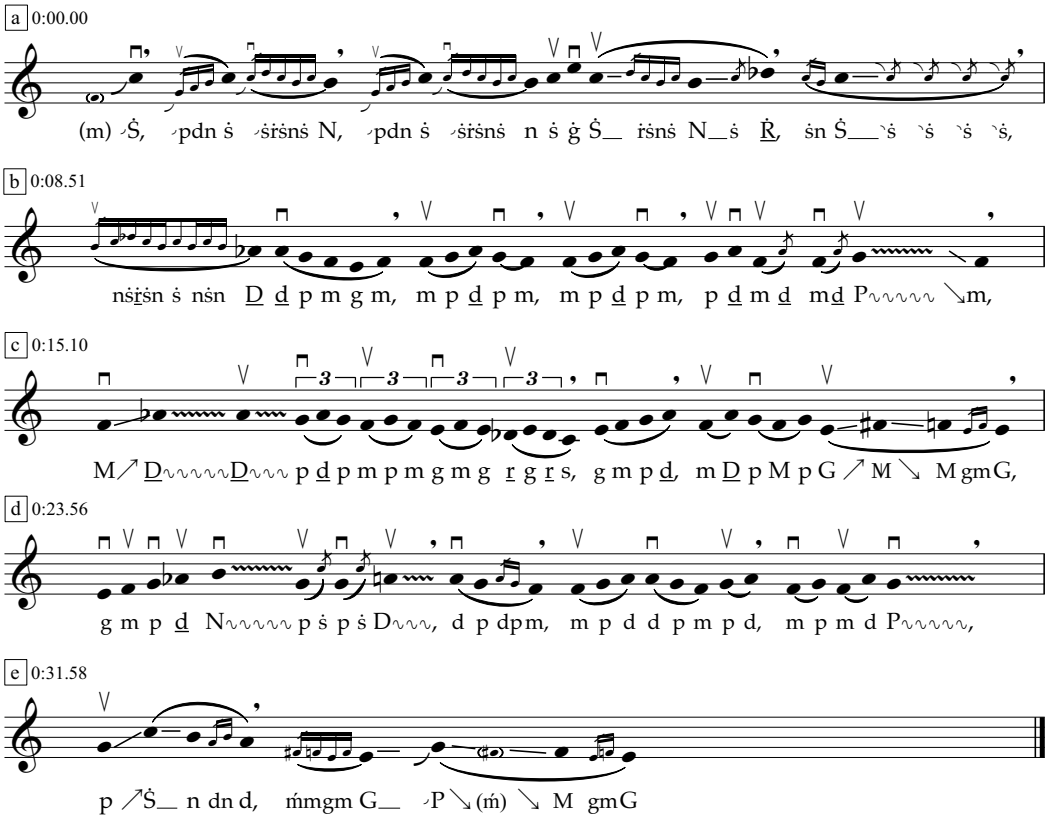
Nonetheless, we can tentatively say that, in terms of pitch content, Hakim Khan's version suggests an underlying major scale framework with the option of either a natural or flattened seventh, as in *rāg* Soraṭh. Unlike Soraṭh, however, it would appear that a more stepwise scalar ascent is permitted, with *vakra* movements occurring in descent between 'Ma' and 'Pa', as well as between 'Re' and a heavily emphasised 'Ga'. From the above rendition, an ascent/descent pattern for *rāg* Saswī can be hypothesised thus:

Figure 6.2: Hypothetical ascent/descent pattern for *rāg* Saswī



In order to test this framework, more recorded examples of *rāg* Saswī would clearly be needed; but there is sufficient data from this single performance to suggest a *rāg*-like structure, since there is a clear ascent/descent pattern, a hierarchy of pitches defined by variable emphasis on each scale degree, specific ornamentation for particular notes, and an underlying extra-musical association.

Example 6.6 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Sūb (**A 6.6**)



Commentary: Example 6.6

Continuing with a melodic format that has no obvious analogue either in the classical system or in the Risālo of Shāh Abdul Latīf – but which nonetheless seems to be more commonly performed outside of traditional contexts by contemporary Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians than either *rāg* Saswī or *rāg* Tilaṅg – Hakim Khan provides us with an interesting (albeit brief) rendition in *rāg* Sūb. This *rāg* is also notable for being another staple melodic format in Muse Khan's core system; and the two senior musicians' approaches to this important *rāg* make for an interesting comparison, revealing a number of

significant similarities. Figure 6.3 compares the pitch hierarchies implicit in Hakim Khan's rendition of *rāg* Sūb with those extracted from Muse Khan's performances, and analysed in the previous chapter (see Chapter 5, Example 5.5 and Figure 5.4).

Figure 6.3: Comparison of pitch hierarchies in *rāg* Sūb

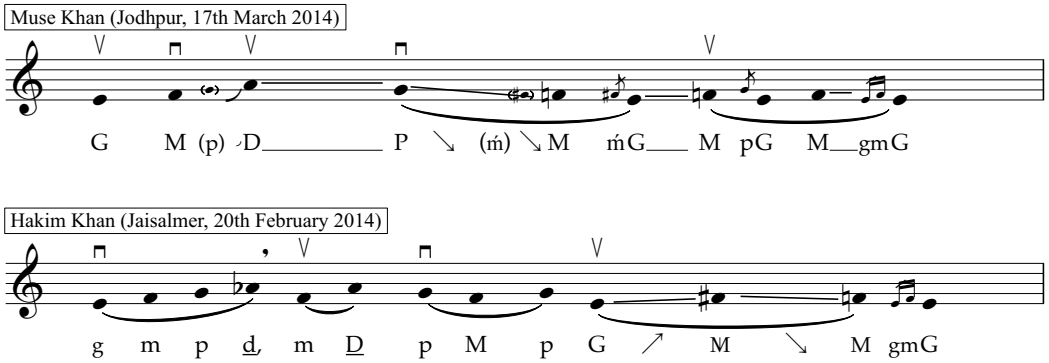
Scale degree	**Muse Khan** **Laṅgā**	**Hakim Khan** **Māṅgaṇiyār**
Tonic (M)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 2nd (R)	WEAK	WEAK
Natural 3rd (G)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 4th (M)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Sharp 4th (M)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Fifth (P)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Flat 6th (D)	-	STRONG
Natural 6th (D)	STRONG	NEUTRAL
Natural 7th (N)	WEAK	NEUTRAL

As Figure 6.3 shows, there is a significant level of correspondence between these two interpretations of *rāg* Sūb, both in the selection of scale degrees and in the relative weighting attached to each pitch. The one notable exception to this is Hakim Khan's use of both *śuddh* and *komal* 'Dha' – of which he seems to favour the flattened degree as the more important note of the two – but, despite this anomaly, the 'Dha' (in both of its manifestations) is still given a similarly strong treatment by both artists. And, in both cases, the 'Dha' typically functions as the "ceiling" for ascending movements, as can be seen particularly clearly in lines 'b' and 'c' of Hakim Khan's rendition above.

Indeed, Hakim's ascent to *komal* 'Dha' in the second half of line 'c', and the subsequent *vakra* descent to *śuddh* 'Ga', provides a striking analogue with the opening line of Muse Khan's exposition distinguishing *rāg* Sūb from *rāg* Mārū (Chapter 5, Example 5.10). Moreover, both artists go on to highlight what is

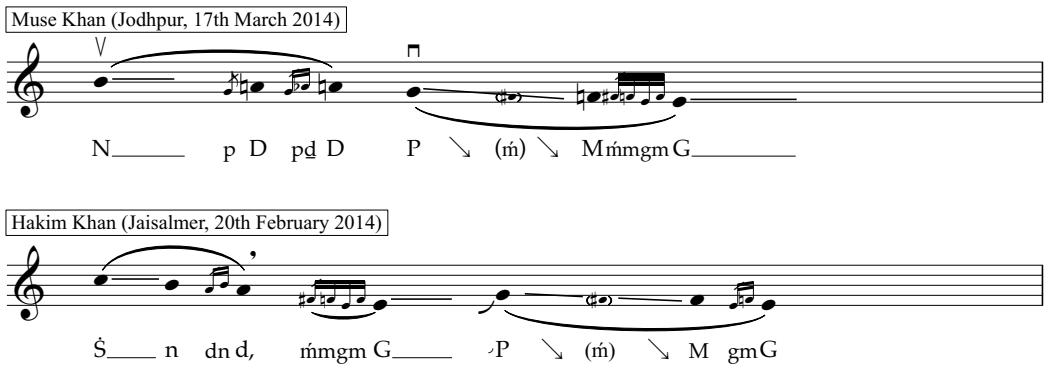
perhaps the most characteristic movement of *rāg* Sūb – a slow slide from ‘Pa’ to *śuddh* ‘Ma’, passing through *tīvra* ‘Ma’, before ending with a flourish on ‘Ga’ – in a remarkably similar way. These analogous phrases are highlighted below, in Figures 6.4 and 6.5.

Figure 6.4: Comparison of ascent/descent patterns in *rāg* Sūb



As Figure 6.4 shows, the scalar ascent is mirrored in both examples, starting from ‘Ga’ and ending at ‘Dha’ – although the sixth degree in Hakim Khan’s rendition is flattened, as we have already observed. The subsequent descents do not match each other precisely, although there is a general concurrence in the overall downward trajectory; and the selection of melodic material is essentially the same.

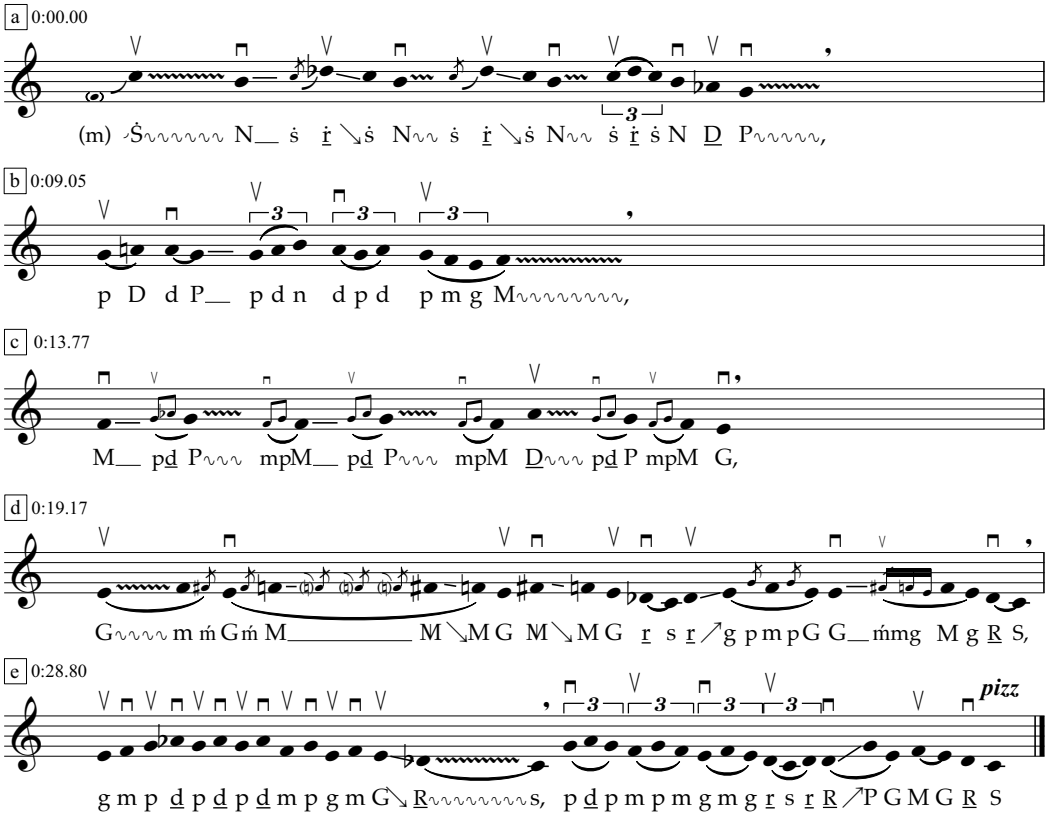
Figure 6.5: Comparison of characteristic phrase renditions in *rāg* Sūb



Here again, we can see that the phrases mirror each other to a significant degree, with Hakim Khan even electing in this case to use the *śuddh* ‘Dha’ in descent. Even more noteworthy is the concluding characteristic sliding movement from ‘Pa’ to ‘Ma’, finishing on ‘Ga’ – a key phrase unit in *rāg* Sūb, and one that both

musicians deliver in an almost identical fashion. Additionally, both musicians perform the rapid ornament ‘ṁmgmG’ in a remarkably similar fashion (although Hakim chooses to position this idiomatic phrase unit before the characteristic slide).

Example 6.7 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Jōg (**A 6.7**)



Commentary: Example 6.7

To conclude his exposition, Hakim Khan performs a short melody in *rāg* Jōg, which is a staple melodic format in Māṅgaṇiyār music performances (although this particular *rāg* seems to be less commonly performed by Laṅgā musicians, and it was not one of the core *rāgs* taught to me by Muse Khan). We shall not perform a detailed analysis of this *rāg* here, other than to note that Hakim employs the same basic tonal material for *rāg* Jōg as he uses in *rāg* Sūb; and even some of the movements performed are, to all intents and purposes, identical for both *rāgs* – for example, the descending triplets at the end of line ‘e’ in this example are also employed in line ‘c’ of Hakim’s *rāg* Sūb example. The key difference would seem to be in the treatment of *tīvra* and *śuddh* ‘Ma’, both of

which are heavily emphasised in Hakim's performance of *rāg* Jōg. Nonetheless, the similarities give further evidence to suggest a certain degree of "recycling" in the artist's selection of musical material, that is not necessarily *rāg*-specific.

6.4. *Rāg* development in *kamāichā* performance

6.4.1. Introduction to the study

Up to this point in our research we have, for the most part, considered the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* models only in isolated, abstracted melodic forms – either presented as such by the musicians for the express purposes of illustration, or as fragments extracted from longer performances by the musicologist, and taken out of context for analysis. In order to begin the process of re-contextualising these abstracted models, we will now conduct a comparative study of three complete instrumental performances, in which the conceptual melodic framework for performance was identified by each of the musicians as "*rāg* Bhairvī". In addition to providing us with a deeper understanding of the ways in which different Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* players may conceive of, and subsequently develop, a particular melodic framework during the course of an instrumental performance, this study also acts as a precursor to the holistic, cross-community analysis presented in Chapter Seven, wherein the place and function of Laṅgā and Manganiyar *rāg* knowledge is considered in its most typical context: that of a *baḍa gānā* song performance.

In the following sections, the three individual performances of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī are first transcribed separately (sections 6.4.2 – 6.4.4). Following each transcription, there is a brief general commentary detailing the overall structural format of each rendition; then, a comparative analysis of salient melodic features, drawn from all three examples, forms the content of the subsequent section 6.4.5.

In addition to the attendant audio files, video examples are also supplied for each rendition (**V 6.3** to **V 6.5**), with the chief purpose of providing visual affirmation of certain technical approaches and stylistic nuances. It should be noted that these video examples greatly informed the transcription work – particularly with respect to identifying the correct bowing movements that are employed in each

performance. Unlike the previous transcribed examples in this thesis, which represent illustrative examples or performance extracts, the more complete transcriptions below are divided into alphabetized macro-sections (**A**, **B**, **C** etc.), whilst the individual phrases within each section are numbered sequentially (e.g. **1**, **2**, **3** etc.) so as to facilitate the comparative process.

The first Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī performance to be analysed is that of Hakim Khan, which took place during the unplanned occasion documented in section 6.3 above, in the final stages of fieldwork. Both of the subsequent performances selected for this analysis occurred during the earlier, middle phase of fieldwork; and, remarkably, even though their locations were separated by some 130 kilometres of Rajasthani desert wilderness, these two particularly concentrated (and similarly spontaneous) sessions occurred on two consecutive days.

6.4.2. Contextualising the sessions: more unexpected meetings

When I hired a battered old motorbike to ride down to Bisu village on the morning of 7th November 2013, my primary mission was to deliver a copy of the 2013 'Growing Into Music: Manganiyar Childhood' DVD to the musicians there, as a favour to the film's creator, my *sāraṅgī* teacher Nicolas Magriel. The villagers were not, to my knowledge, expecting me on that particular day (or at all, since I had had no prior contact with them); and I had no idea who, if anybody, would be there when I arrived. Nor did I actually know precisely where the village was. I had no GPS system and no map, as the locally available tourist maps detailed only the main towns and cities in the region, and at the time Bisu had not yet even been identified on Google satellite images. All I had to go on were the vaguest of directions from Laxmi Narayan Khatri, who had told me: "Go straight [pointing vaguely to the south], down towards Barmer, for about one hundred kilometres – and then turn left before Sheo."

Considering these factors, it was something of a miracle that I found Bisu village at all; but the most astounding thing of all was that, upon my eventual arrival, the first person that I spoke to happened to be Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* virtuoso Chanan Khan (Plate 6.5). The following extract from my fieldwork journal describes this fateful meeting:

> Eventually reaching the village of Bisu… I immediately clocked two turbaned gentlemen sitting down by the side of the road. In an incredible turn of good fortune and timing, it transpired that one of them was none other than Chanan Khan! I could not believe my luck. It was as if he was sitting there, just waiting for me to arrive. What was even more unbelievable was that his first words to me – literally the first thing that he said – was: "Shall we go and play some *kamāichā*?" I wasn't about to refuse an offer like that.

For the next two hours, Chanan's family fed me *roṭi* and *dāl*, whilst I was treated to a raw masterclass in *kamāichā* virtuosity. Chanan played a number of compositions in a number of *rāgs*, with the name of each *rāg* (and song, where applicable) dutifully supplied following each performance at my request. Again, it would be possible to extract a working model for Chanan's knowledge of *rāga* from this one session alone. His *rāg* Bhairvī exposition, followed by a beautiful

lehrā performance with improvisations based on the local song ‘Salāh Sohāg’, is transcribed in section 6.4.4.



Plate 6.5: Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār with *kamāichā*. Chanan Khan’s house, Bisu village. 7th November 2013.

On the previous day, I had borne witness to an uncannily similar masterclass from Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (Plate 6.7) in his home village of Hamīra. This session was also spontaneous, since up to that point in time I had actually been travelling to Hamīra on a daily basis for *dholak*and singing lessons with Ghevar's brother, Firoze. This was because Ghevar had either been kept absent from the village with other professional and familial responsibilities, or was abstaining from playing *kamāichā* when in Hamīra out of respect for his recently departed father, Sakar Khan. Since Sakar's youngest son Dara had left for performing and recording work in the United States shortly after my arrival, there were no senior *kamāichā* players in Hamīra for me to learn from. Despite this unforeseen turn of events, Firoze had very kindly allowed for me to participate in, and film, his daily music sessions with the young Māṅgaṇiyārs in the family; and this formative experience provided me with valuable basic tuition in the Māṅgaṇiyār ensemble instruments and song repertoire.

I had noted that the loss of Sakar bore particularly heavily on both Ghevar and Sakar's elder brother, Pempa, and so I had not pursued either of them for lessons or recording sessions when I was in Hamīra at that time. However, after some weeks had passed and the second phase of my Māṅgaṇiyār fieldwork was drawing to a close, Ghevar took me aside and devoted an entire day to playing and singing for me. He allowed me practice upon his extremely fine *kamāichā*, and he insisted on giving me a guided tour of the village, which was both enjoyable and informative. This session occurred shortly after a solemnly spent Divali for the Hamīra Māṅgaṇiyārs, when we gathered outside Sakarji's house with various other community members and *jajmāns*, and remembered the great man. I felt very honoured to be invited to this particular event, and I observed how there was a palpable sense of relaxation that followed in the wake of the grieving that took place on that day. It was not until after Divali that Ghevar felt able to take up his *kamāichā* again in his home, and to play for me.

As with both Chanan's and Hakim's sessions, one could abstract some working form of structural melodic model from this one session alone with Ghevar, during which he played a number of *rāgs* favoured by his father – including Āsā,

Rāṇō, Toḍī, Kamāijī, and *rāg* Soraṭh – as well as providing the heartfelt and inspired rendition of *rāg* Bhairvī (**V 6.5**) that is transcribed in section 6.4.5 below.



Plate 6.7: Ghevar Khan Māṅganiyār with *kamāichā*. Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra village. 6th November 2013.

6.4.3. *Rāg* Bhairvī and *lehrā* with improvisations: Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār

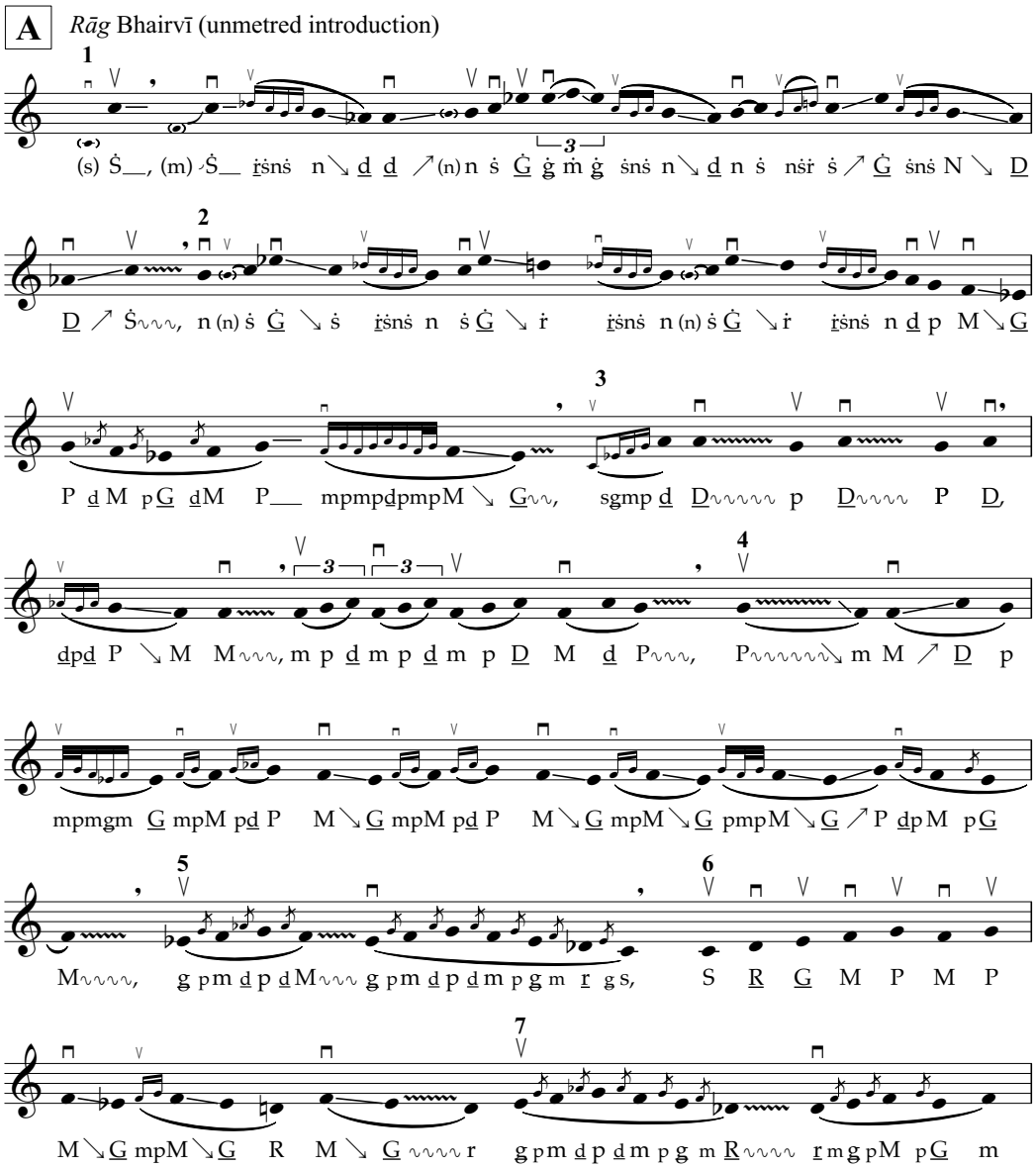
Date of recording session: 20th February 2014

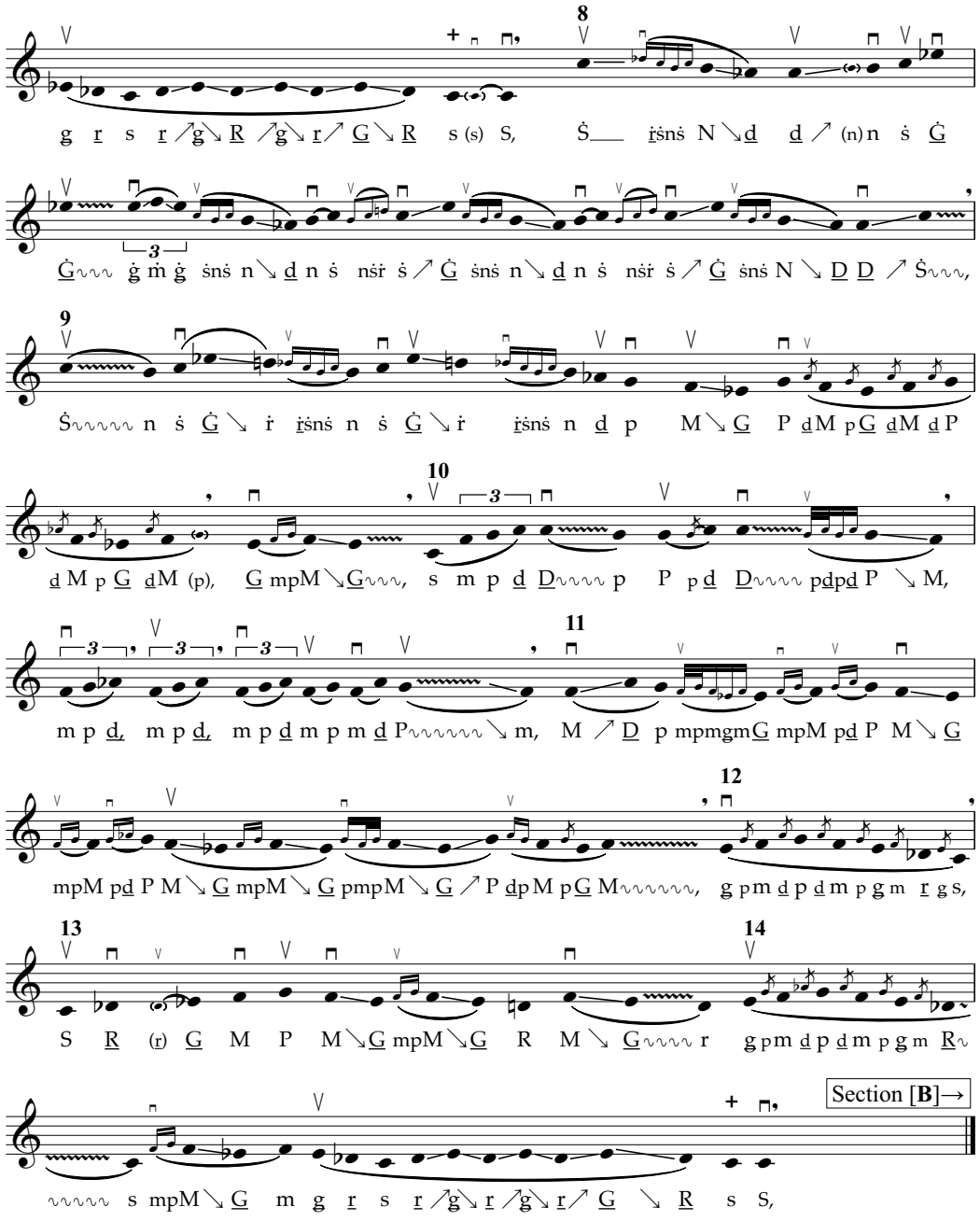
Location: Akbar Khan's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer

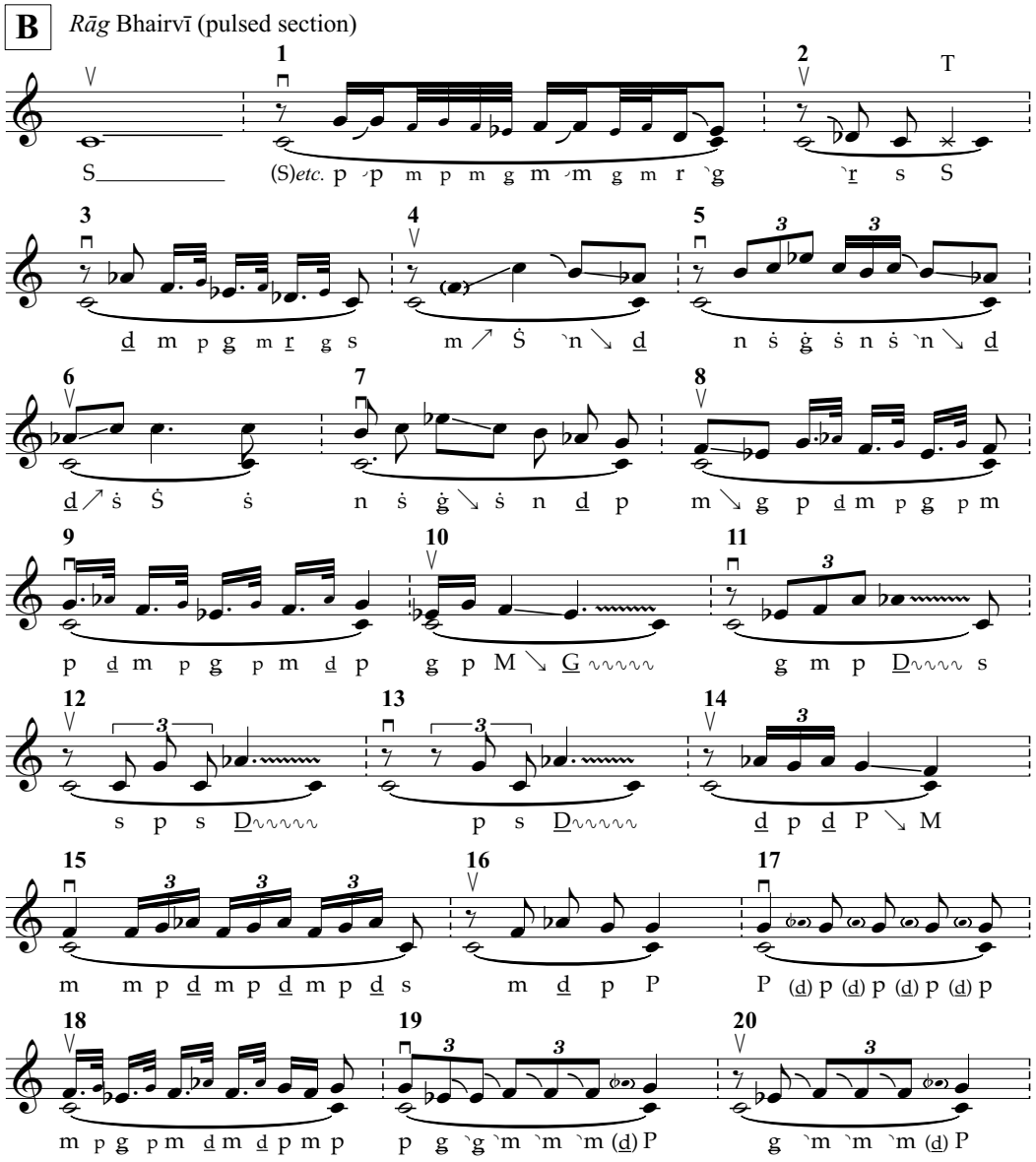
Accompanying musician: Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (*dholak*)

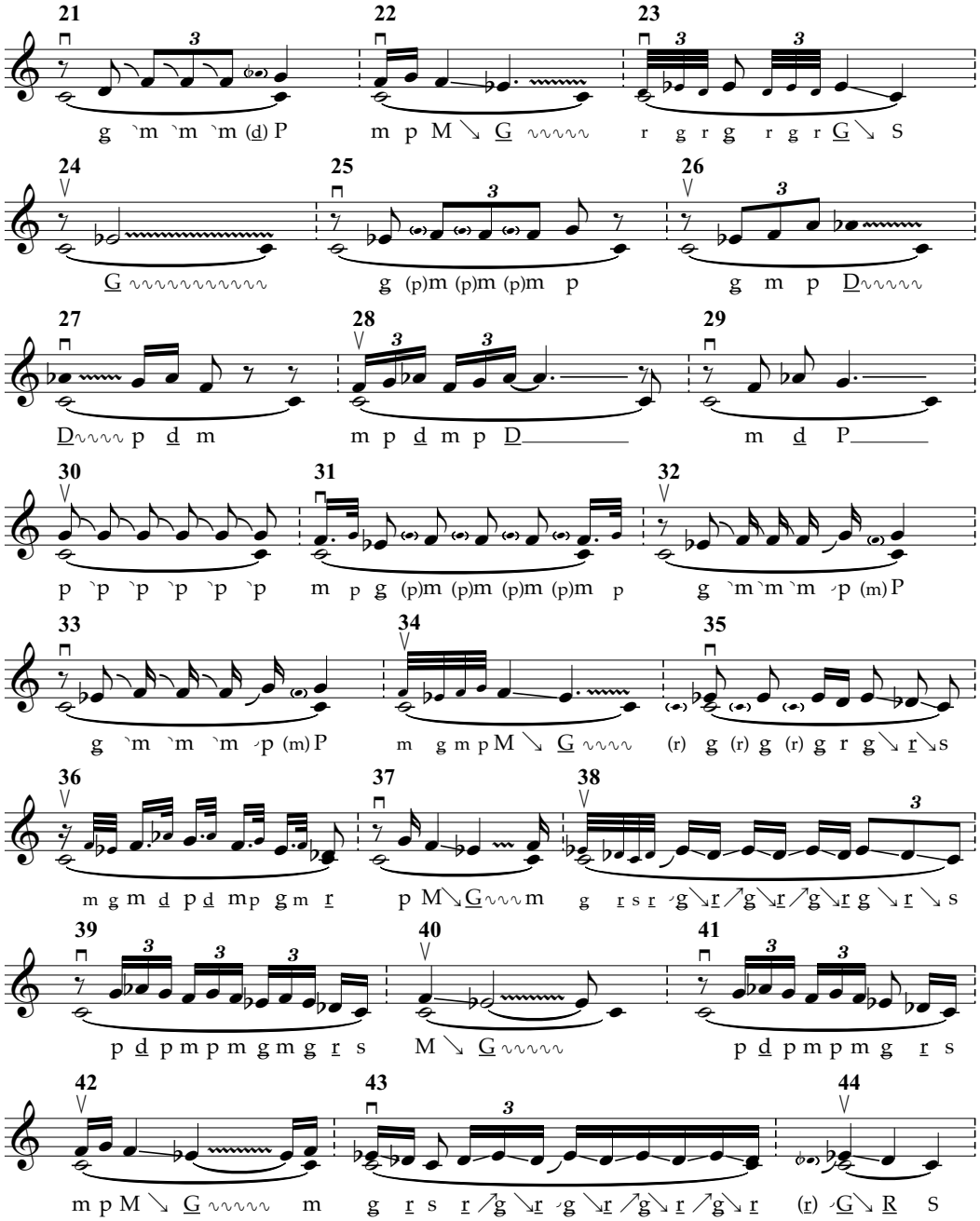
Pitch of *kamāichā* tonic before transposition: A♭ below middle C [209 – 211 Hz]

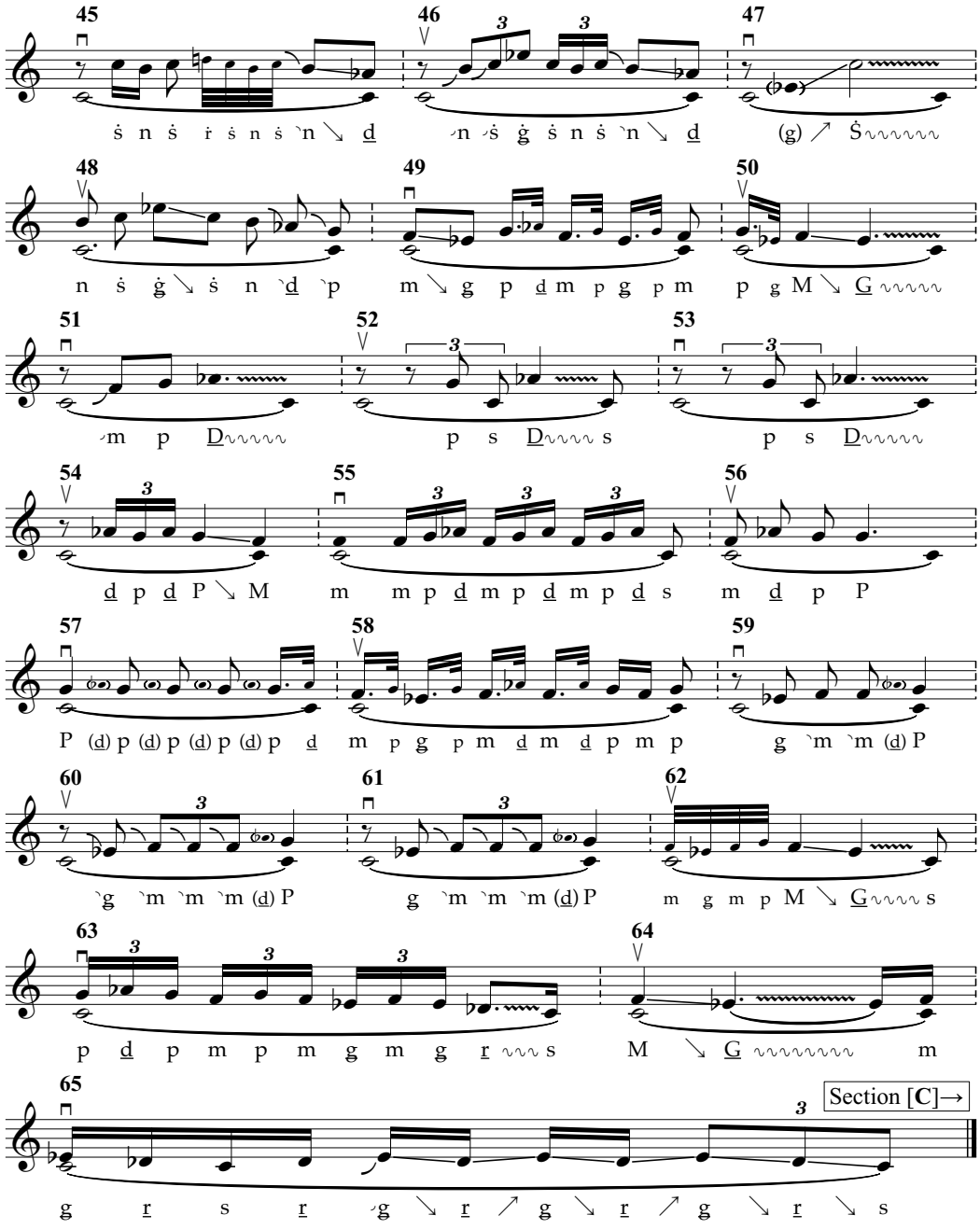
Example 6.8 (**A 6.8/V 6.3**)

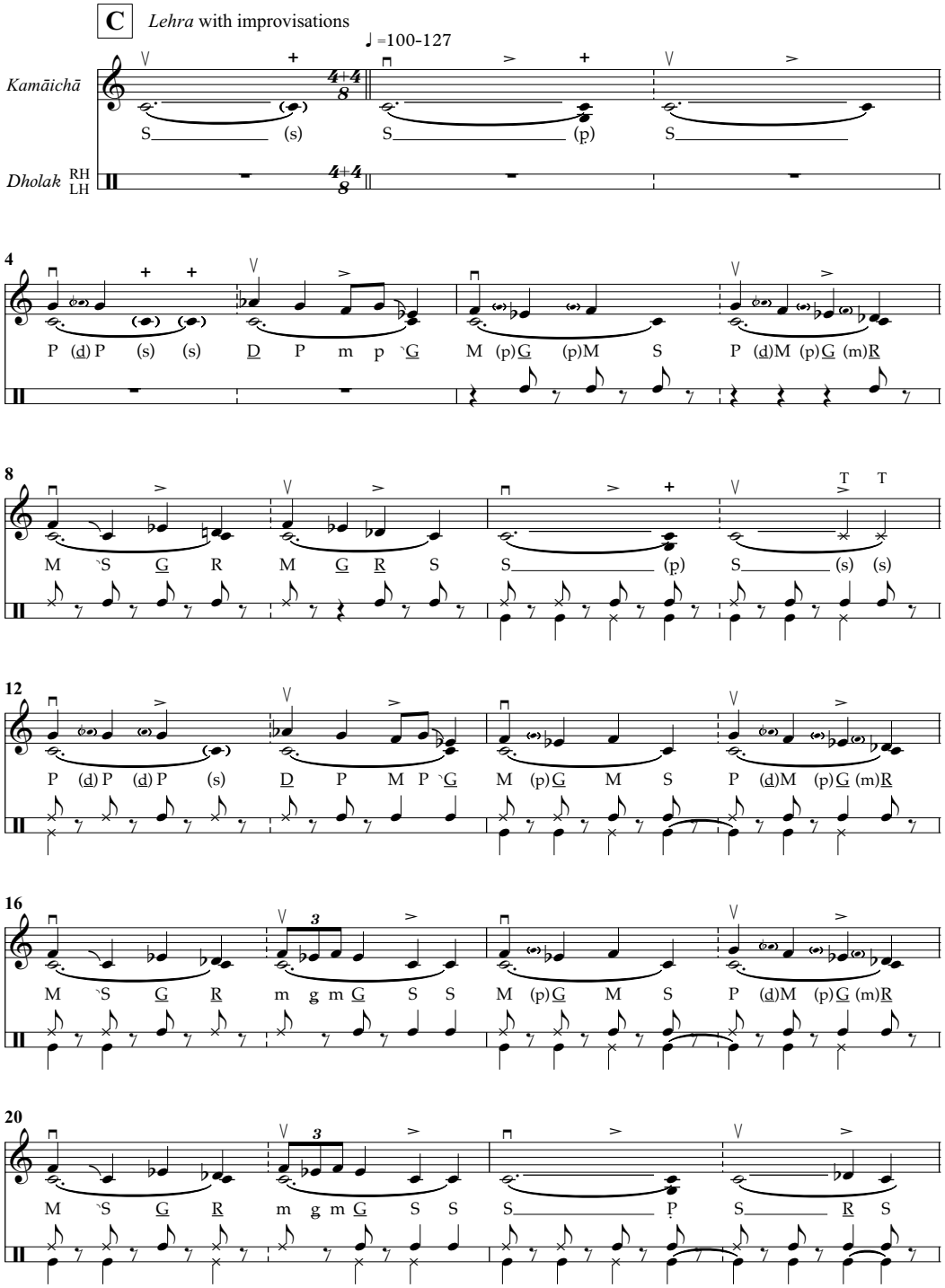


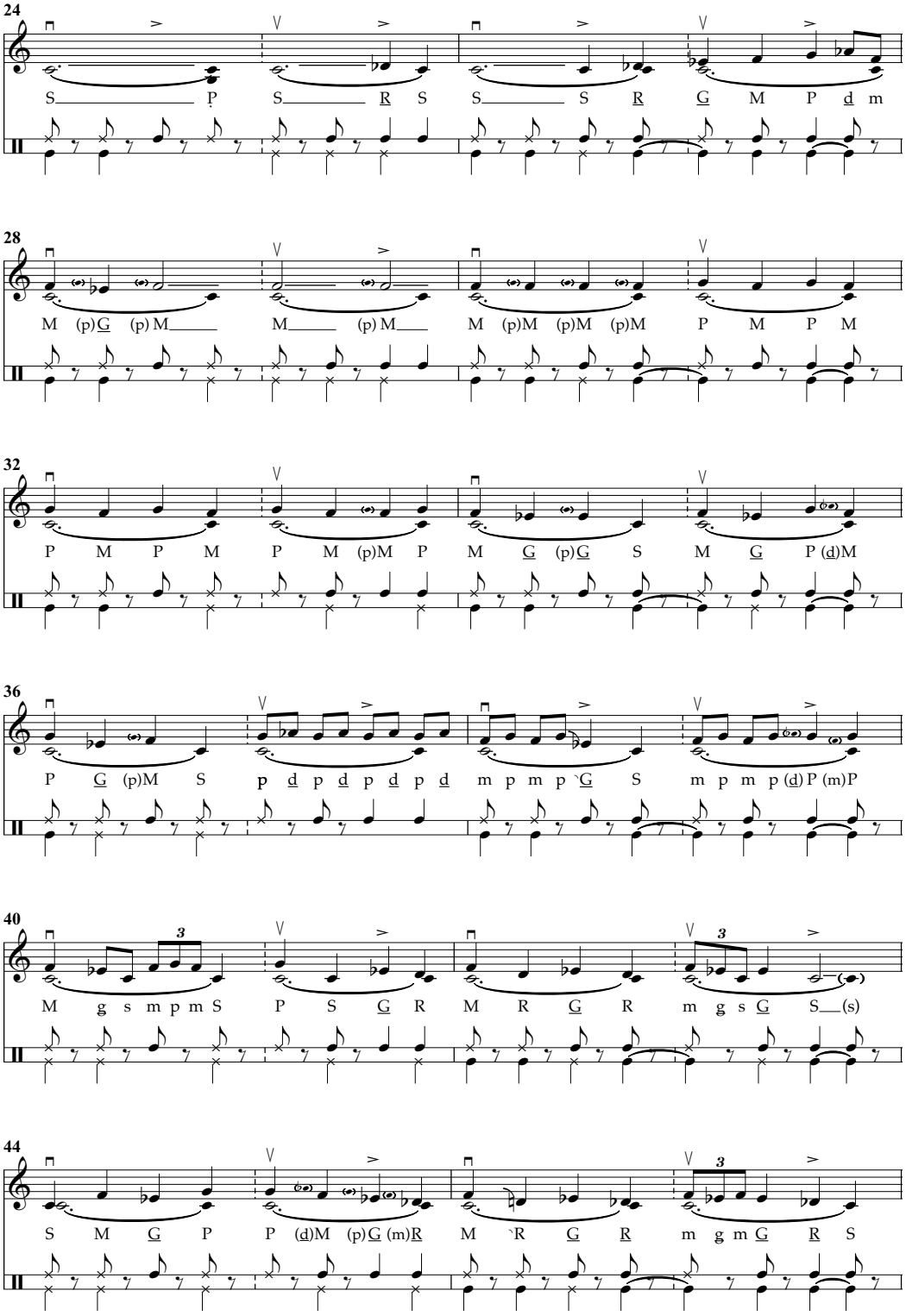

8
g r s r ↗g↘ R ↗g↘ r↗ G ↘ R s (s) S, Ṡ___ ṙṡnṡ N ↘d d ↗ (n)n ṡ Ġ
Ġ ġ ṁ ġ ṡnṡ n ↘ d n ṡ nṡṙ ṡ ↗ Ġ ṡnṡ n ↘ d n ṡ nṡṙ ṡ ↗ Ġ ṡnṡ N ↘ D D ↗ Ṡ,
9
Ṡ n ṡ Ġ ↘ ṙ ṙṡnṡ n ṡ Ġ ↘ ṙ ṙṡnṡ n d p M ↘ G P dM pG dM d P
10
d M p G dM (p), G mpM ↘G, s m p d D p P p d D pdpd P ↘ M,
11
m p d, m p d, m p d m p m d P ↘ m, M ↗ D p mpmgmG mpM pd P M ↘ G
12
mpM pd P M ↘ G mpM ↘ G pmpM ↘ G ↗ P dpM pG M, g pm d p d m p g m r g s,
13
S R (r) G M P M ↘G mpM ↘G R M ↘ G r g pm d p d m p g m R
14
, g mpM ↘ G m g r s r ↗g↘ r ↗g↘ r↗ G ↘ R s S,
Section [B]→

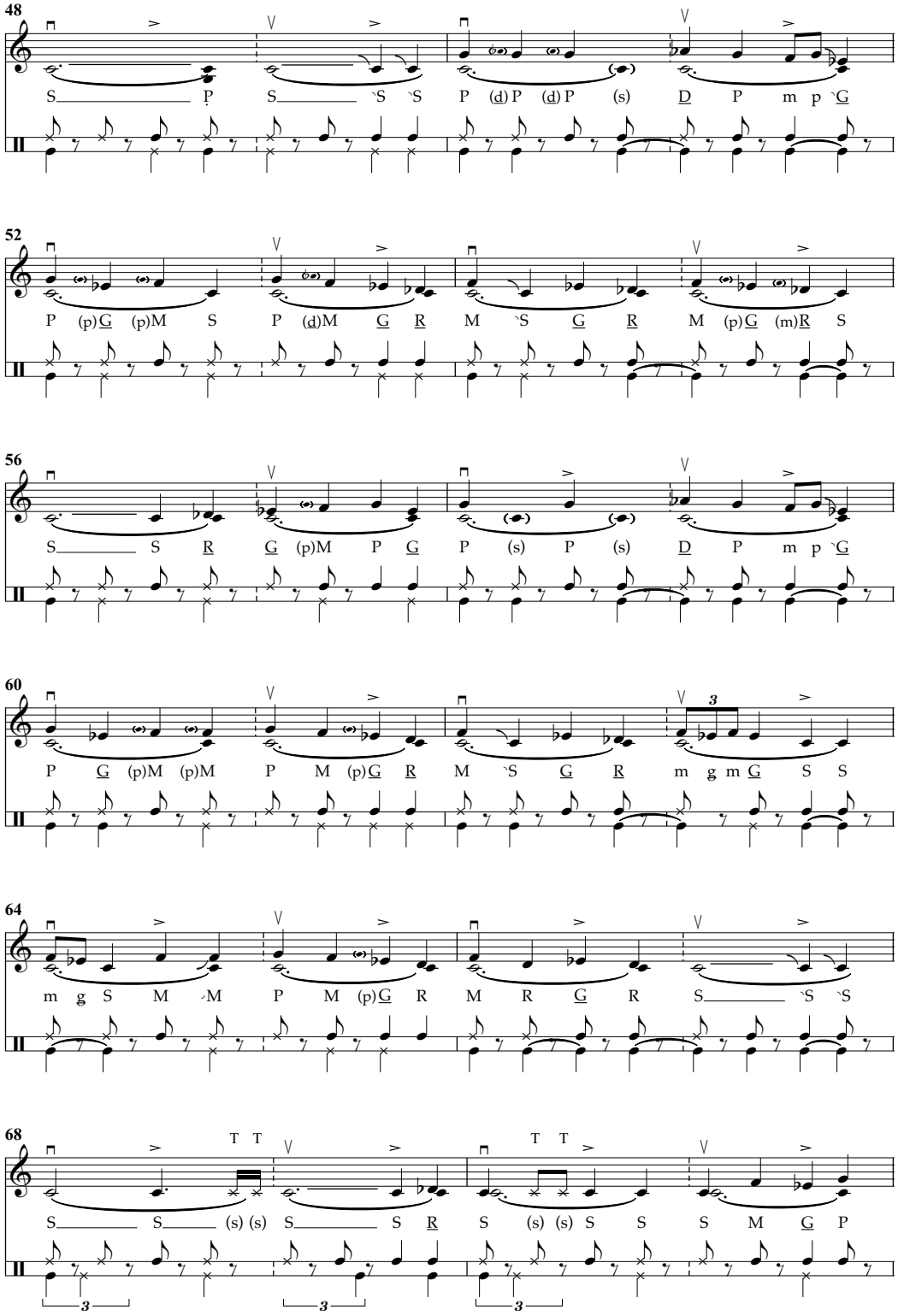

B
Rāg Bhairvī (pulsed section)
1
2
T
S
(S)etc. p ˊp m p m g m ˊm g m r ˋg
ˋr s S
3
4
5
d m p g m r g s
m ↗ Ṡ ˋn ↘ d
n ṡ ġ ṡ n ṡ ˋn ↘ d
6
7
8
d ↗ ṡ Ṡ ṡ
n ṡ ġ ↘ ṡ n d p
m ↘ g p d m p g p m
9
10
11
p d m p g p m d p
g p M ↘ G
g m p D s
12
13
14
s p s D
p s D
d p d P ↘ M
15
16
17
m m p d m p d m p d s
m d p P
P (d) p (d) p (d) p (d) p
18
19
20
m p g p m d m d p m p
p g ˋg ˋm ˋm ˋm (d) P
g ˋm ˋm ˋm (d) P

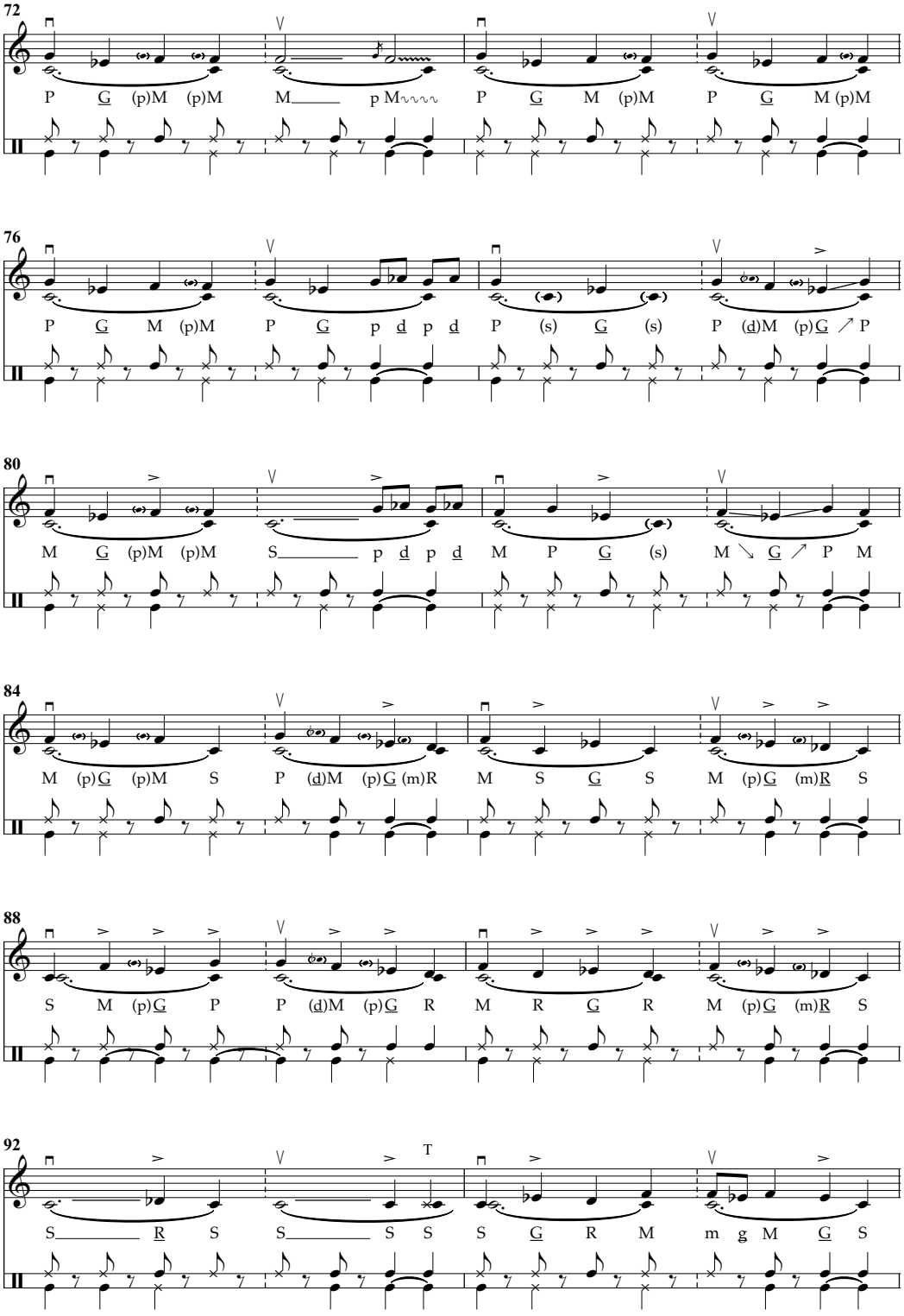

21
g `m `m `m (d) P
22
m p M ↘ G ∿∿∿∿
23
r g r g r g r G ↘ S
24
G ∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿∿
25
g (p)m (p)m (p)m p
26
g m p D ∿∿∿∿
27
D ∿∿∿∿ p d m
28
m p d m p D
29
m d P
30
p `p `p `p `p `p
31
m p g (p)m (p)m (p)m (p)m p
32
g `m `m `m ´p (m) P
33
g `m `m `m ´p (m) P
34
m g m p M ↘ G ∿∿∿∿
35
(r) g (r) g (r) g r g ↘ r ↘ s
36
m g m d p d m p g m r
37
p M ↘ G ∿∿∿ m
38
g r s r ´g ↘ r ↗ g ↘ r ↗ g ↘ r g ↘ r ↘ s
39
p d p m p m g m g r s
40
M ↘ G ∿∿∿∿
41
p d p m p m g r s
42
m p M ↘ G ∿∿∿∿ m
43
g r s r ↗ g ↘ r ´g ↘ r ↗ g ↘ r ↗ g ↘ r
44
(r) ´G ↘ R S

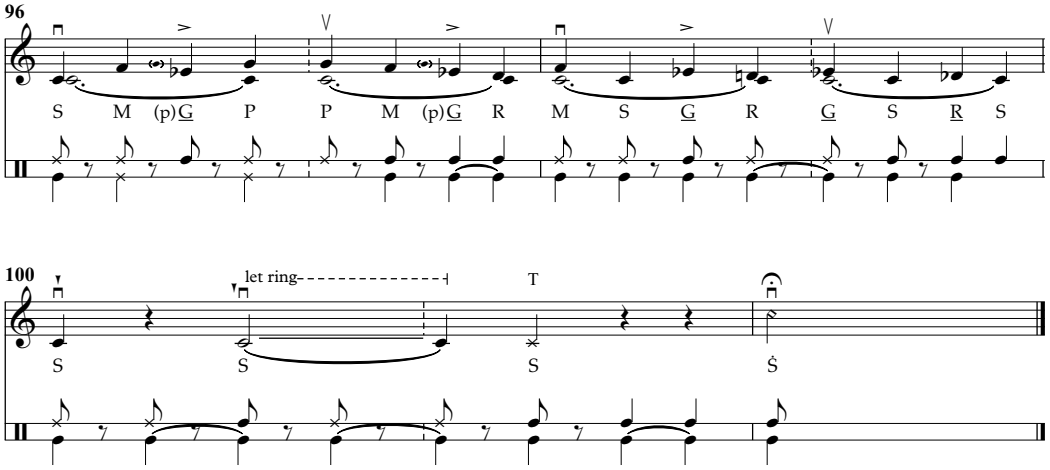

45
ṡ n ṡ ṙ ṡ n ṡ `n ↘ d
46
3
3
ˏn ˏṡ ġ ṡ n ṡ `n ↘ d
47
(g) ↗ Ṡ∿∿∿∿
48
n ṡ ġ ↘ ṡ n `d `p
49
m ↘ g p d m p g p m
50
p g M ↘ G ∿∿∿∿
51
ˏm p D∿∿∿∿
52
3
p s D∿∿∿ s
53
3
p s D∿∿∿∿
54
3
d p d P ↘ M
55
3
3
3
m m p d m p d m p d s
56
m d p P
57
P (d) p (d) p (d) p (d) p d
58
m p g p m d m d p m p
59
g `m `m (d) P
60
3
`g `m `m `m (d) P
61
3
g `m `m `m (d) P
62
m g m p M ↘ G∿∿∿ s
63
3
3
3
p d p m p m g m g r ∿∿ s
64
M ↘ G ∿∿∿∿∿ m
65
3
g r s r ˏg ↘ r ↗ g ↘ r ↗ g ↘ r ↘ s
Section [C]→


C
Lehra with improvisations
♩=100-127
Kamāichā
Dholak RH LH
4+4/8
S (s) S (p) S
4
P (d) P (s) (s) D P m p `G M (p)G (p)M S P (d)M (p)G (m)R
8
M `S G R M G R S S (p) S (s) (s)
T T
12
P (d) P (d) P (s) D P M P `G M (p)G M S P (d)M (p)G (m)R
16
3
M `S G R m g m G S S M (p)G M S P (d)M (p)G (m)R
20
3
M `S G R m g m G S S S P S R S


24
S P S R S S S R G M P d m
28
M (p)G (p) M M (p) M M (p)M (p)M (p)M P M P M
32
P M P M P M (p)M P M G (p)G S M G P (d)M
36
P G (p)M S p d p d p d p d m p m p G S m p m p (d) P (m)P
40
3
M g s m p m S P S G R M R G R 3 m g s G S (s)
44
S M G P P (d)M (p)G (m)R M R G R m g m G R S


48
S P S `S `S P (d) P (d) P (s) D P m p `G
52
P (p) G (p) M S P (d) M G R M `S G R M (p) G (m) R S
56
S S R G (p) M P G P (s) P (s) D P m p `G
60
P G (p) M (p) M P M (p) G R M `S G R m g m G S S
64
m g S M `M P M (p) G R M R G R S `S `S
68
T T T T
S S (s) (s) S S R S (s) (s) S S S M G P

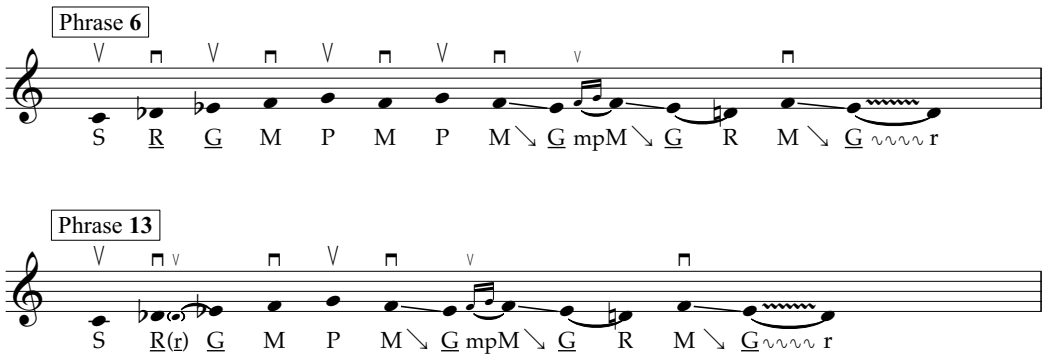

72
P G (p)M (p)M M p M P G M (p)M P G M (p)M
76
P G M (p)M P G p d p d P (s) G (s) P (d)M (p)G P
80
M G (p)M (p)M S p d p d M P G (s) M G P M
84
M (p)G (p)M S P (d)M (p)G (m)R M S G S M (p)G (m)R S
88
S M (p)G P P (d)M (p)G R M R G R M (p)G (m)R S
92
T
S R S S S S G R M m g M G S



General Commentary: Example 6.8

Hakim Khan begins the performance with an unmetered section (**A**) that outlines his conception of *rāg* Bhairvī. This opening passage indicates a relatively clear hierarchy of pitches, as well as featuring certain idiomatic phrases and the specialised treatment of particular notes that we will recognise from the previous *rāg* examples supplied by both Hakim and Muse Khan Laṅgā. The section also features considerable repetition of material: phrases **8** to **14** are, essentially, a repeated version of phrases **1** to **7**, albeit with minor variants (an example of this is given below, in Figure 6.6). As we have already seen, this kind of phrase duplication – with minor changes in ornamentation – is a common strategy in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* extemporisation.

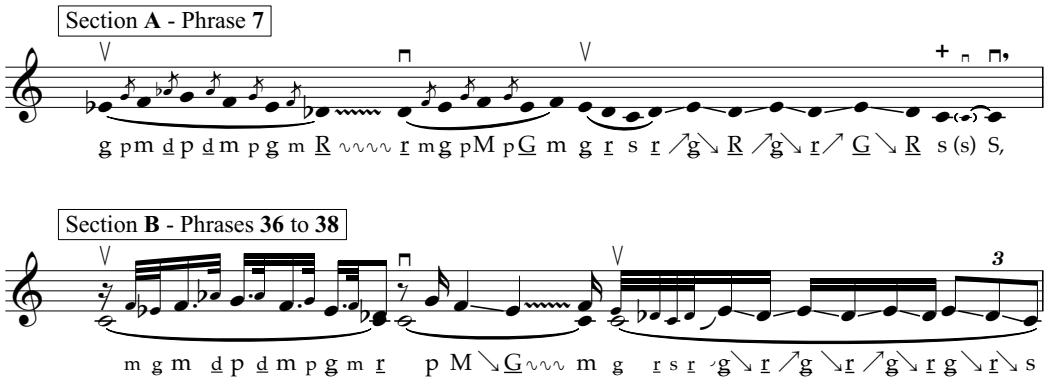
Figure 6.6: Repetition in phrases **6** and **13** of Hakim Khan's *rāg* Bhairvī



Section **B**, which leads on from the unmetered introduction, comprises what appear to be improvisations based on the *rāg* Bhairvī melodic material, rendered in an irregular metrical format. Unlike in the opening section, where there is no definite underlying rhythmic structure, here there is a clear pulse that is re-iterated through the consistent use of long, alternating bow strokes.

All three versions of *rāg* Bhairvī examined here include this pulsed intermediate section. However, it is notable that Hakim Khan chose to deliver a sequence of phrases that reinforced his conception of the distinct melodic characteristics for *rāg* Bhairvī, as set out by the musician in the opening section **A**. Figure 6.7 highlights an instance of this process, wherein the material presented in phrases **7** and **14** of section **A** is re-presented in the quasi-metrical format of section **B**, through phrases **36** to **38**.

Figure 6.7: Re-presentation of analogous melodic material in sections **A** and **B**



The final section **C** opens with a short, fixed instrumental form that is used as a starting point for various melodic and rhythmic improvisations: Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians refer to this kind of composition as *lehrā*; and we will consider their use of this term in the comparative analysis below. Here, the *lehrā* material is developed into instrumental variations set in and around a song composition that the musician identifies as 'Juna'. Whilst it is not made explicitly clear where the improvisation ends and the song melody begins, it is notable that this final phase of the performance also features the essential melodic material of *rāg* Bhairvī, in the same form that has already been established during the previous two sections.

6.4.4. *Rāg* Bhairvī and *lehrā* with improvisations: Chanan Khan Māṅganiyār

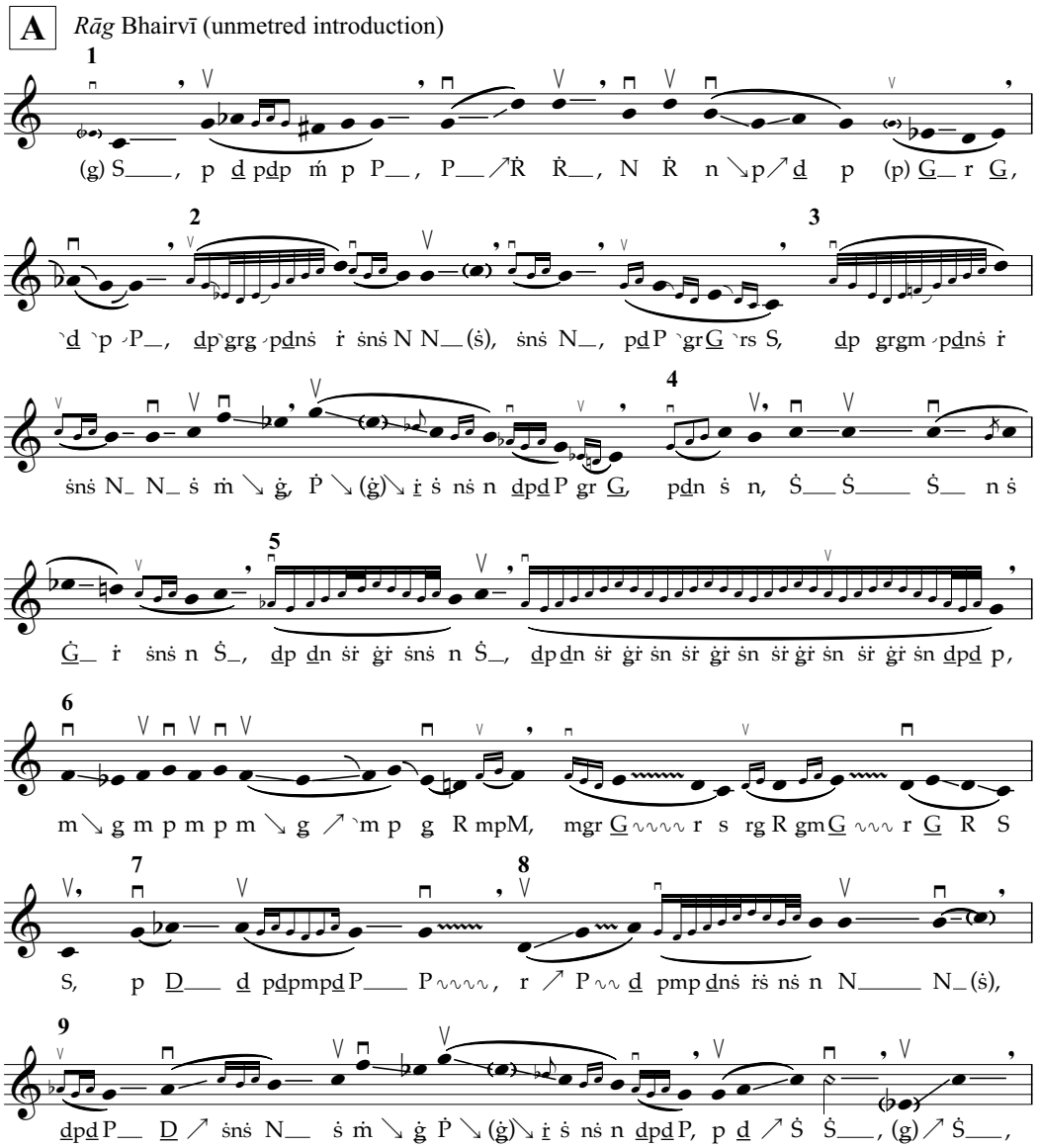
Date of recording session: 6th November 2013

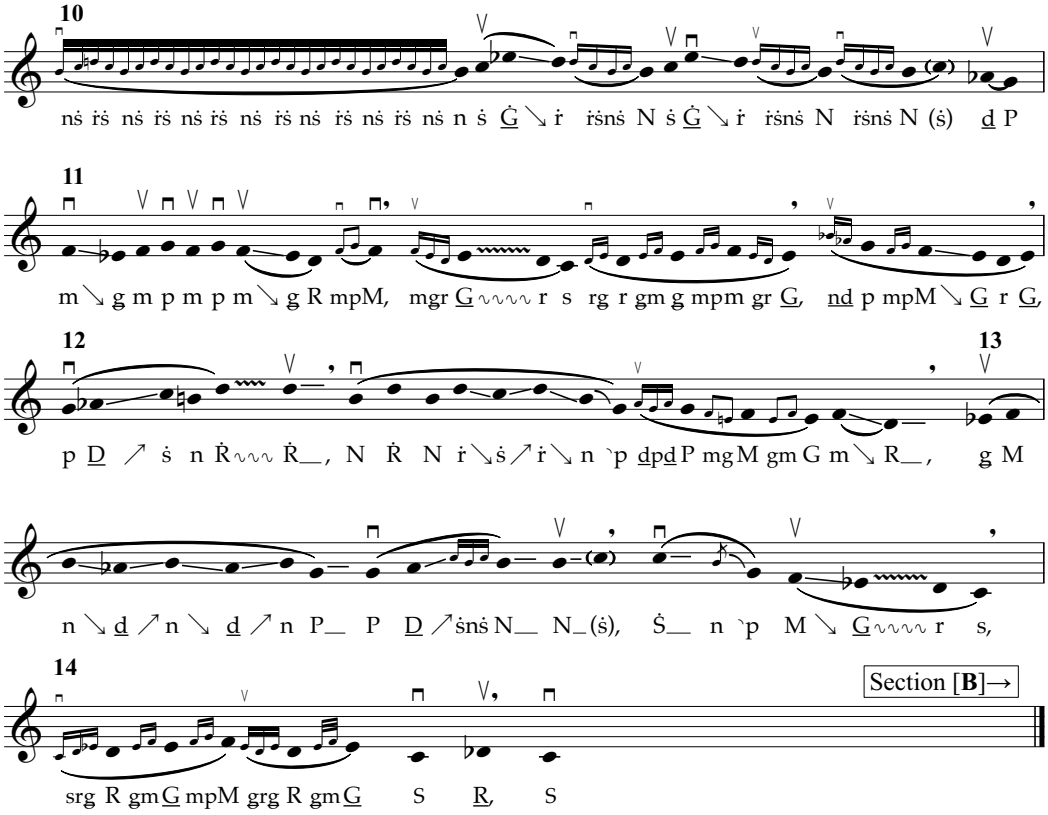
Location: Chanan Khan's house, Bisu village

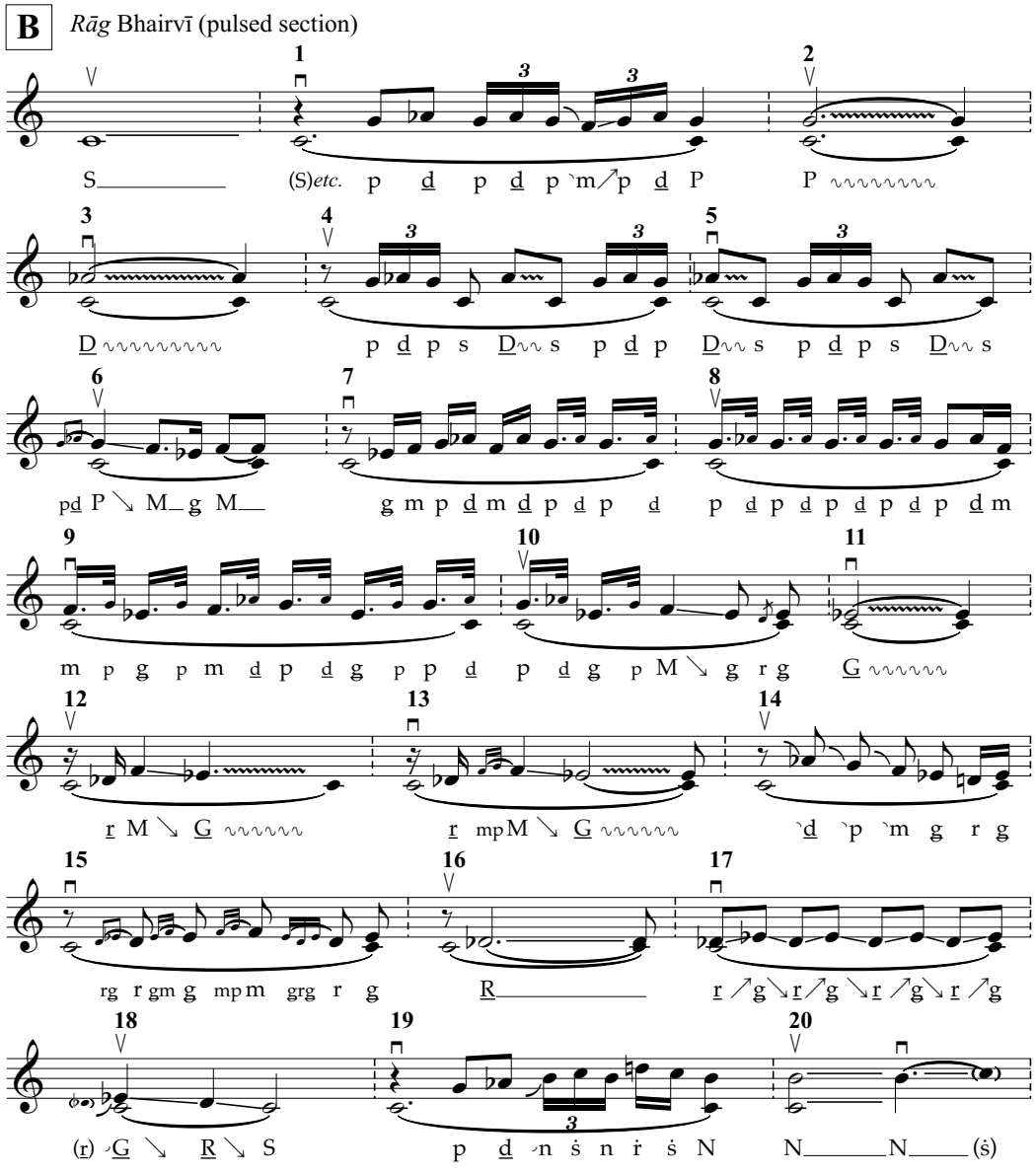
Accompanying musician: unknown Māṅganiyār (*dholak*)

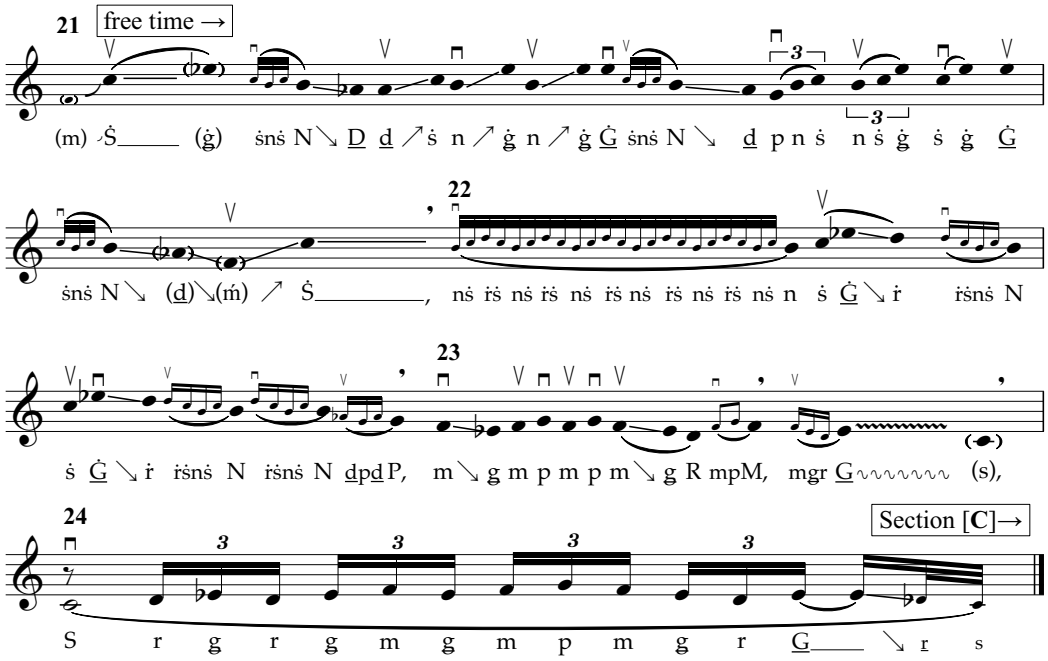
Pitch of *kamāichā* tonic before transposition: A♭ below middle C [215 – 217 Hz]

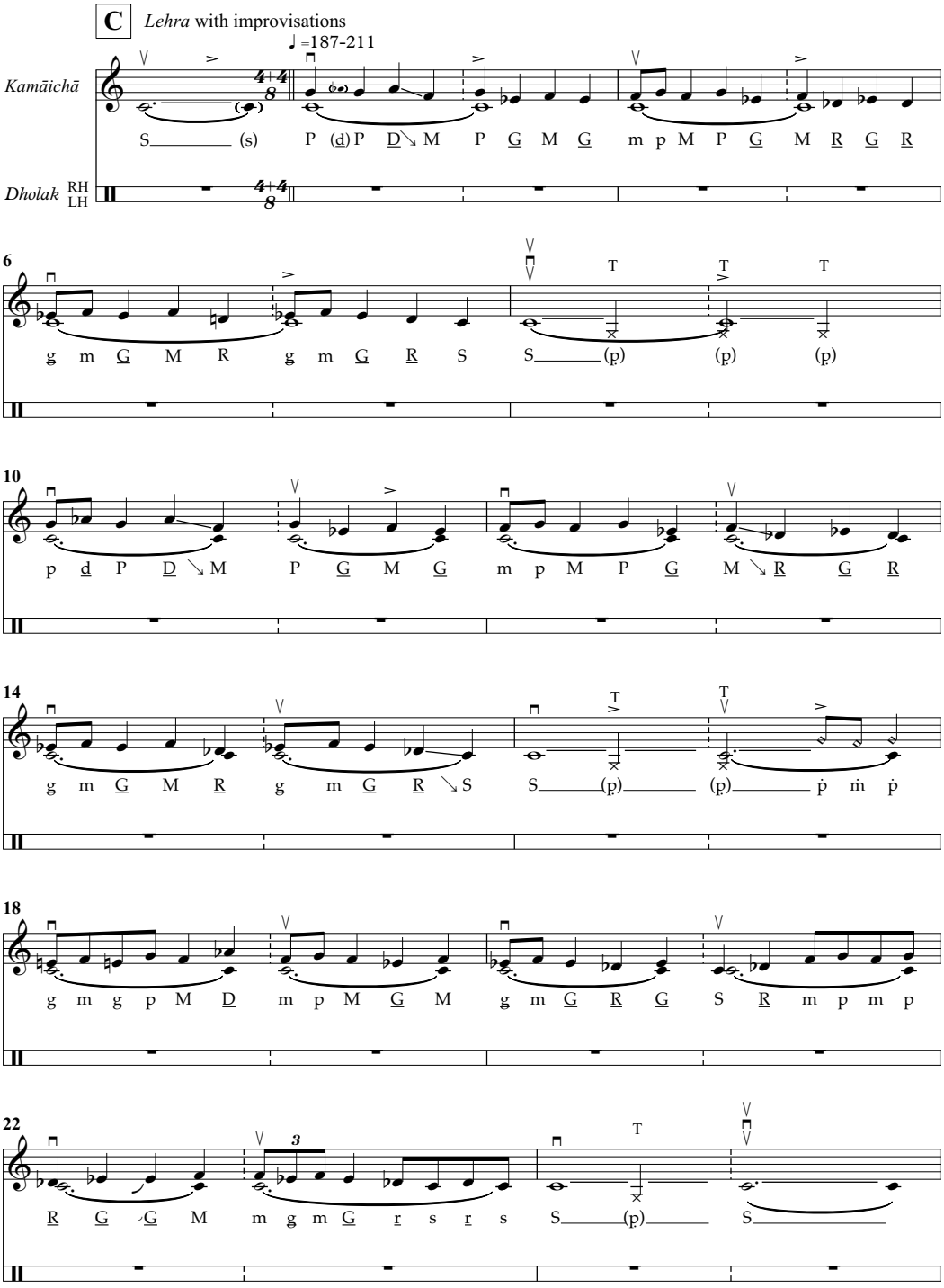
Example 6.9 (**A 6.9/V 6.4**)

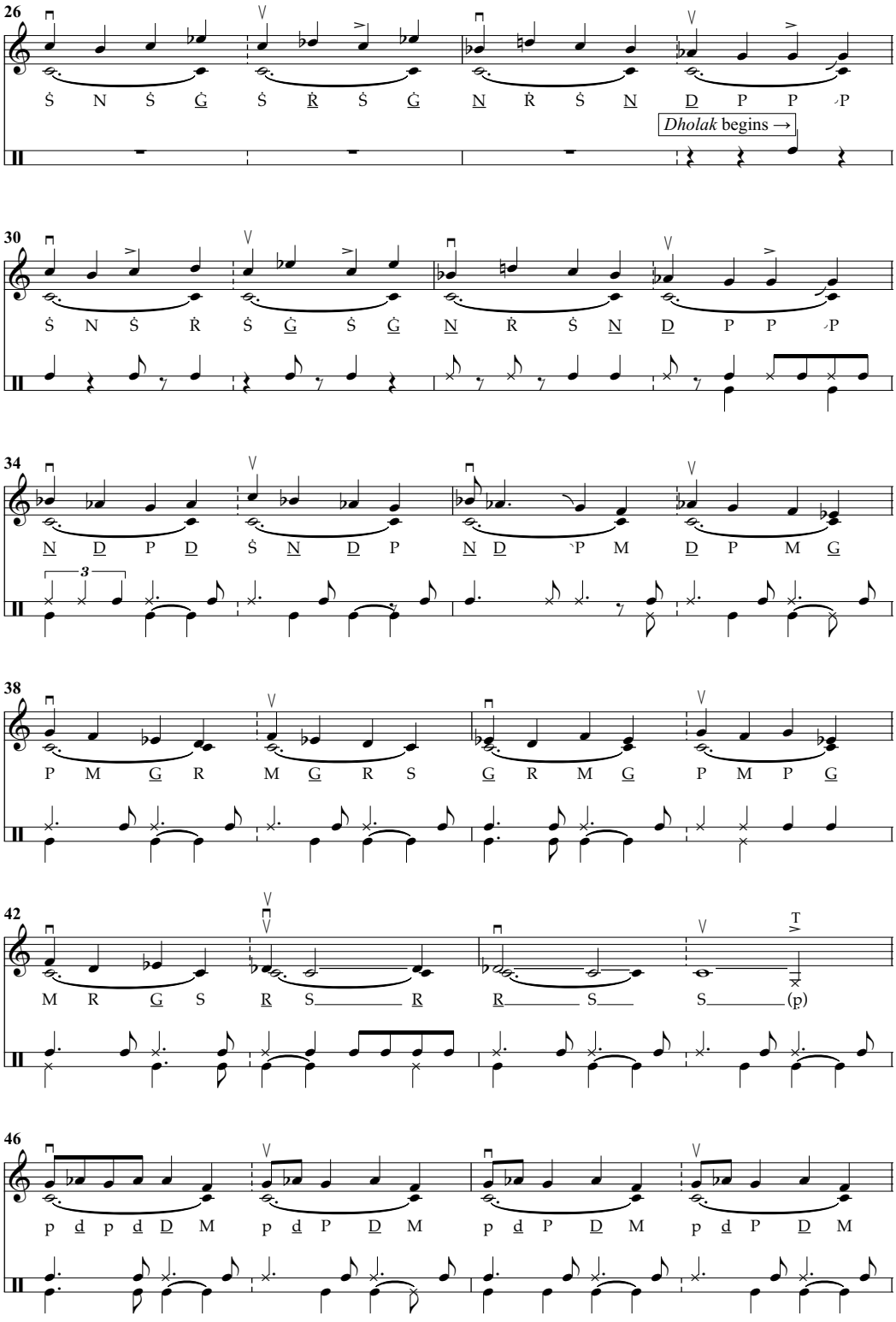


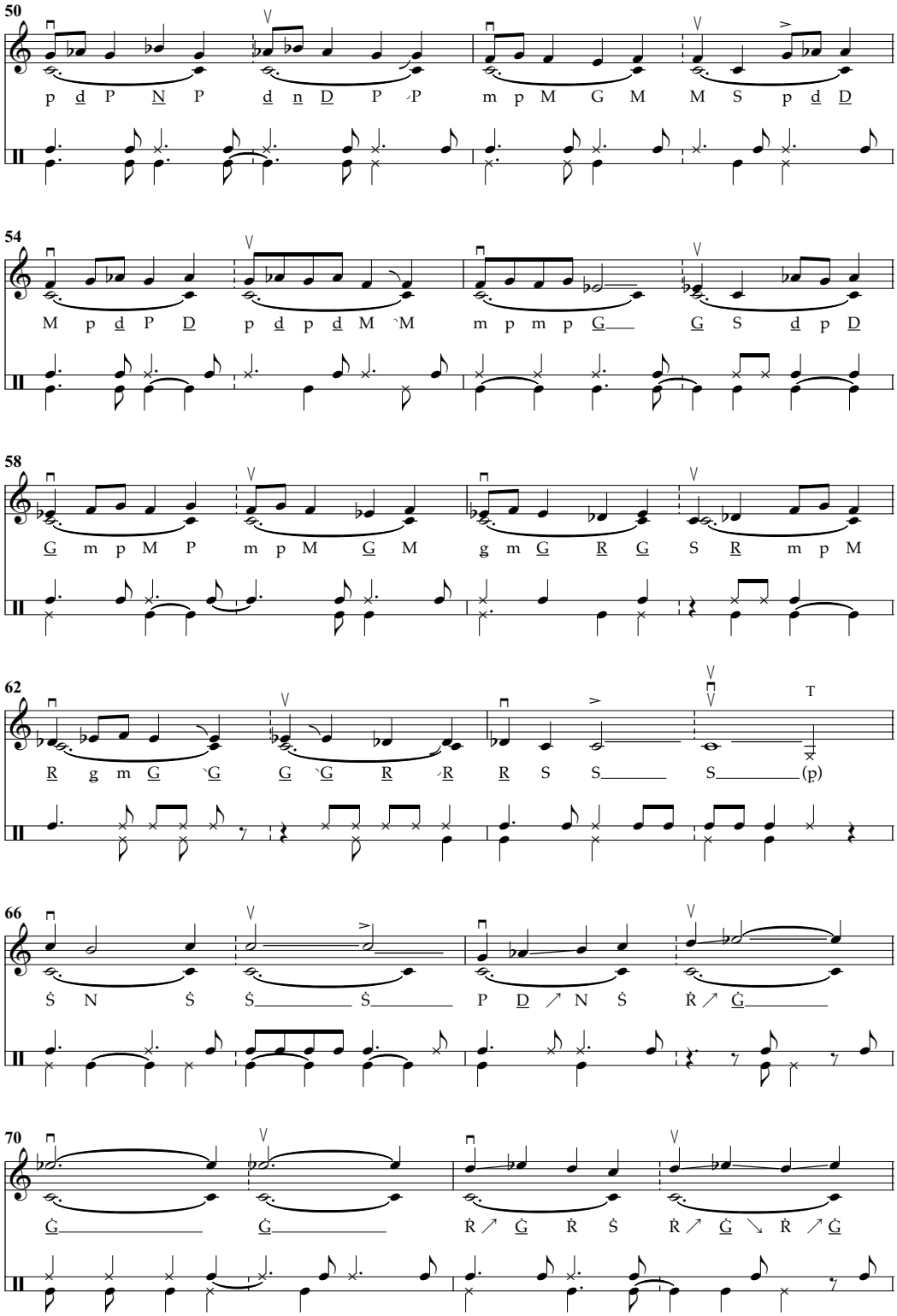

10
nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ n ṡ Ġ ↘ ṙ ṙṡnṡ N ṡ Ġ ↘ ṙ ṙṡnṡ N ṙṡnṡ N (ṡ) d P
11
m ↘ g m p m p m ↘ g R mpM, mgr G ∿∿∿ r s rg r gm g mpm gr G, nd p mpM ↘ G r G,
12
13
p D ↗ ṡ n Ṙ∿∿ Ṙ__, N Ṙ N ṙ ↘ ṡ ↗ ṙ ↘ n `p dpd P mg M gm G m ↘ R__, g M
n ↘ d ↗ n ↘ d ↗ n P__ P D ↗ ṡnṡ N__ N_(ṡ), Ṡ__ n `p M ↘ G ∿∿∿ r s,
14
Section [B]→
srg R gm G mpM grg R gm G S R, S

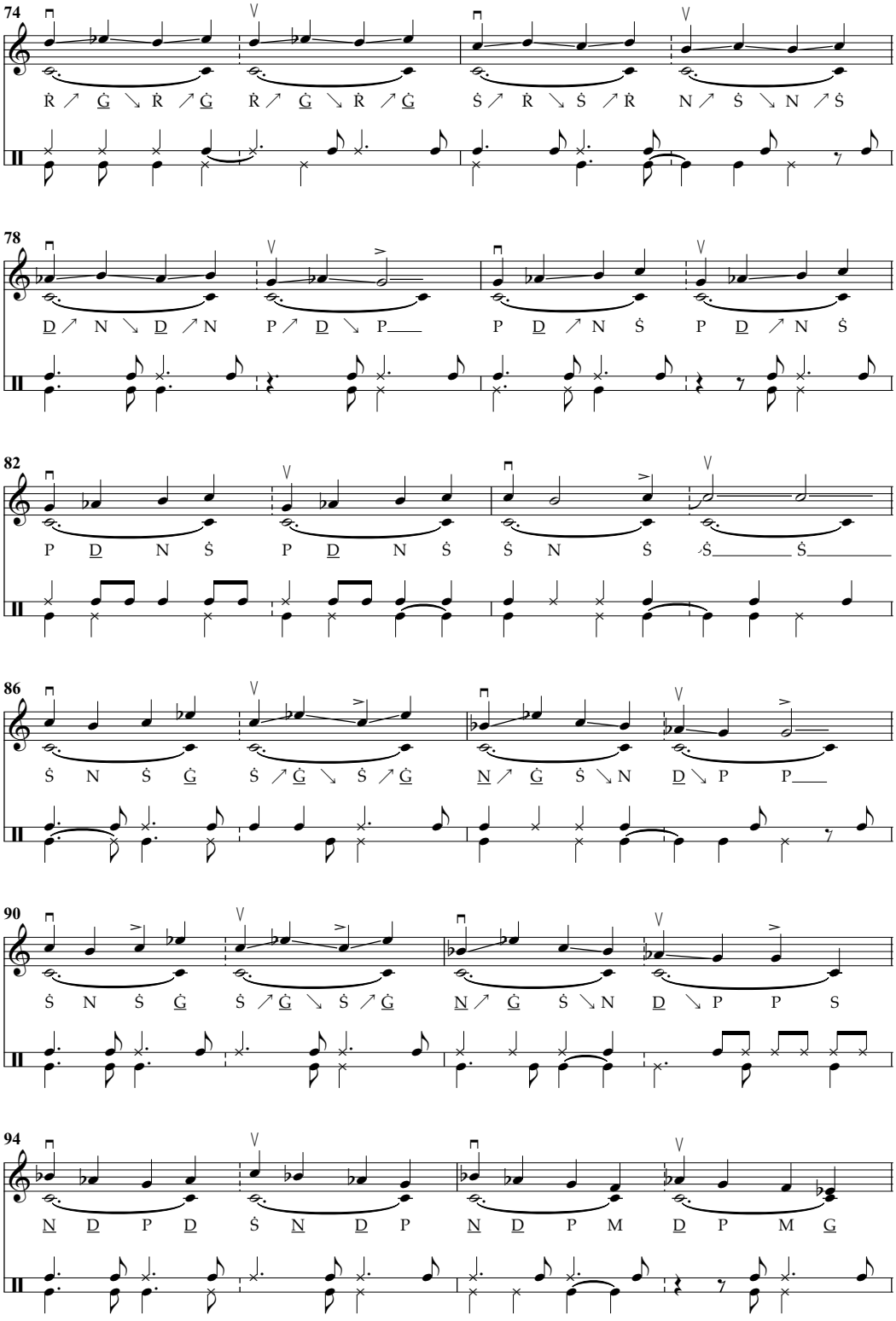

B
Rāg Bhairvī (pulsed section)
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
S
(S)etc. p d p d p m p d P
P
D
p d p s D s p d p D s p d p s D s
pd P M g M
g m p d m d p d p d
p d p d p d p d p d m
m p g p m d p d g p p d p d g p M g r g
G
r M G
r mpM G
d p m g r g
rg r gm g mpm grg r g
R
r g r g r g r g
(r) G R S
p d n ṡ n ṙ ṡ N
N N (ṡ)

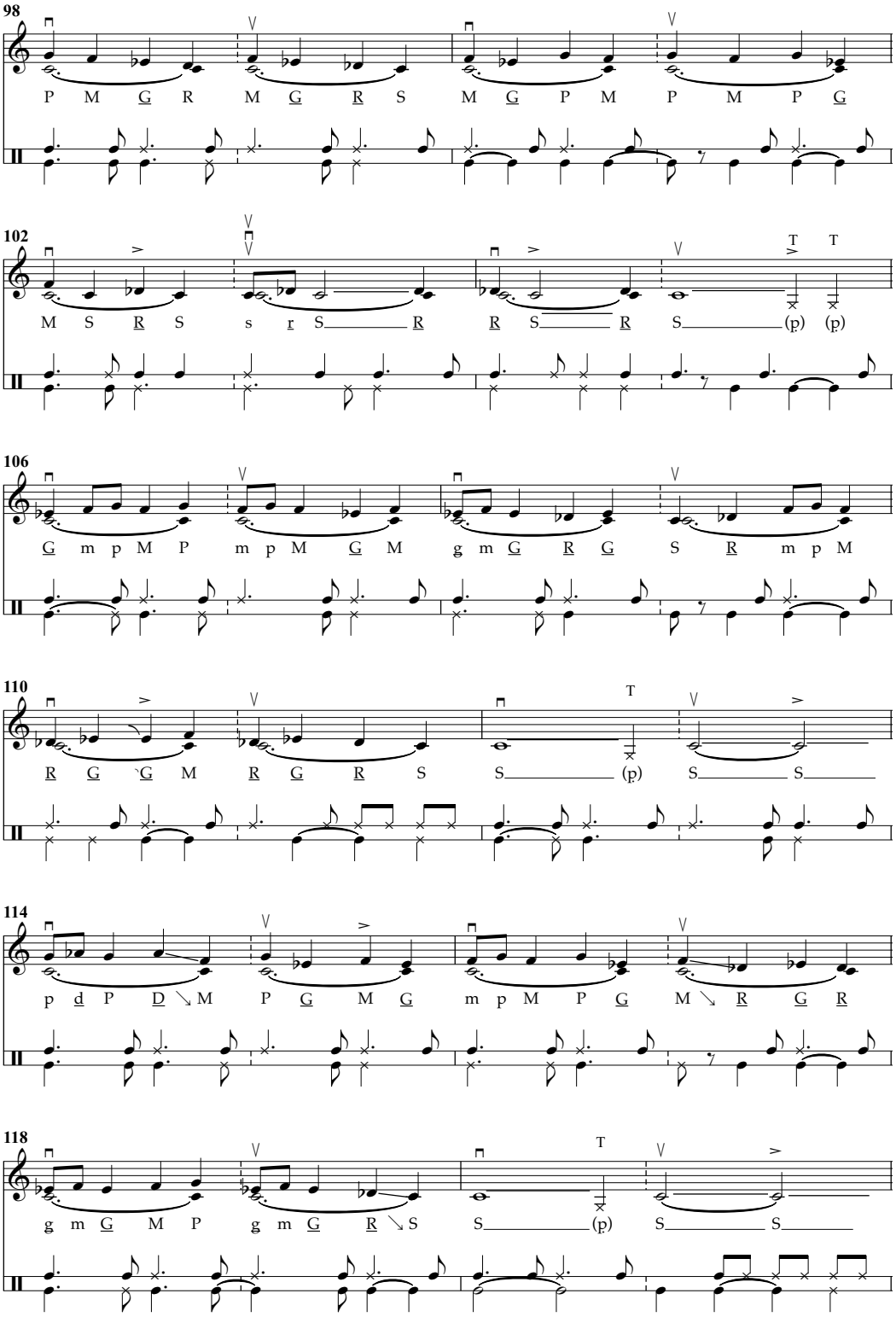

21
free time →
(m) ˊṠ_____ (ġ) śnś N↘ D d ↗ś n ↗ ġ n ↗ ġ Ġ śnś N ↘ d p n ś n ś ġ ś ġ Ġ
22
śnś N↘ (d)↘(ḿ) ↗ Ṡ_____, nś ŕś nś ŕś nś ŕś nś ŕś nś ŕś nś n ś Ġ↘ ŕ ŕśnś N
23
ś Ġ↘ ŕ ŕśnś N ŕśnś N dpd P, m↘ g m p m p m↘ g R mpM, mgr G∿∿∿∿∿∿ (s),
24
Section [C]→
S r g r g m g m p m g r G____ ↘ r s

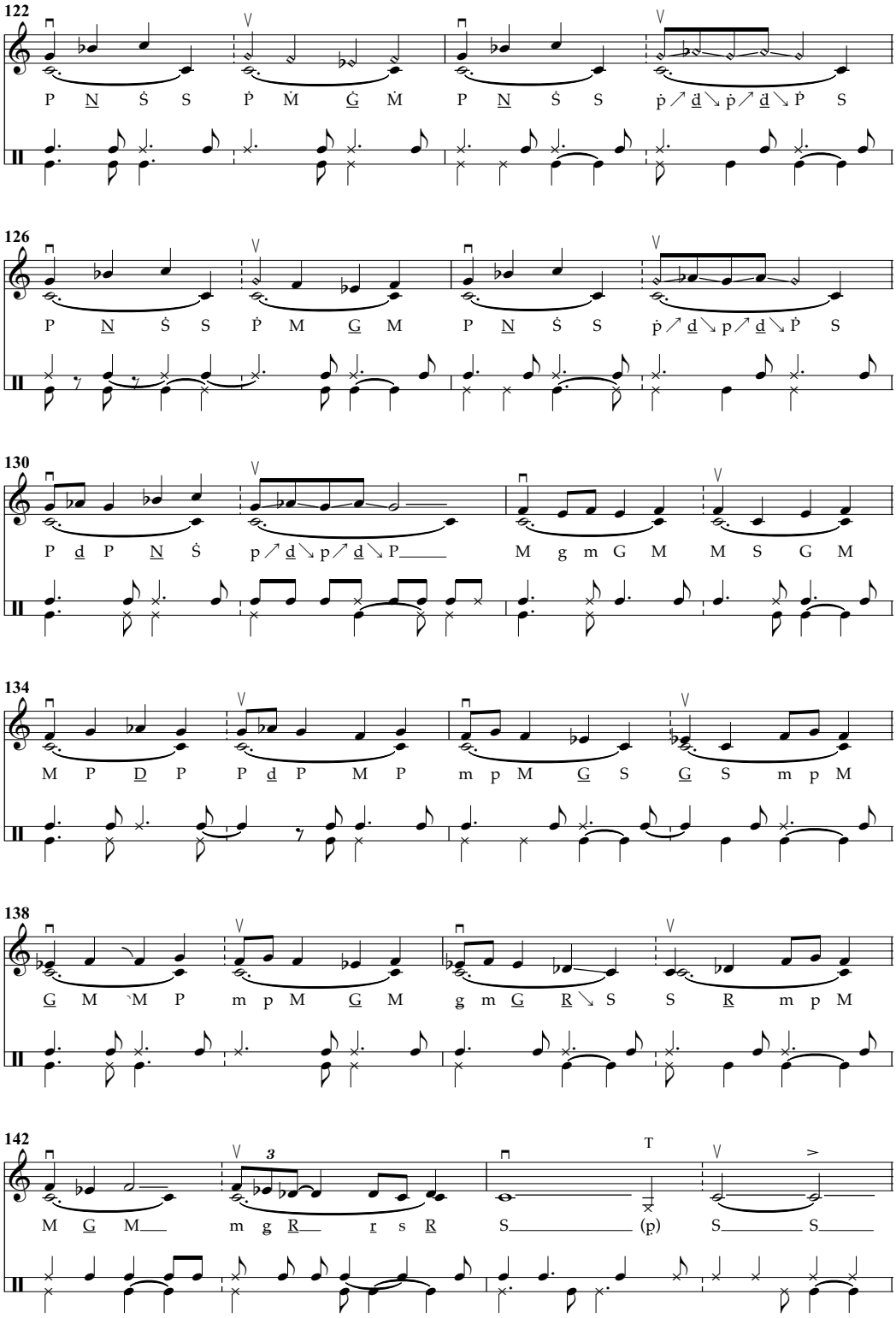

C
Lehra with improvisations
♩ =187-211
Kamāichā
Dholak RH LH
S (s) P (d) P D ↘ M P G M G m p M P G M R G R
6
g m G M R g m G R S S (p) (p) (p)
10
p d P D ↘ M P G M G m p M P G M ↘ R G R
14
g m G M R g m G R ↘ S S (p) (p) ṗ ṁ ṗ
18
g m g p M D m p M G M g m G R G S R m p m p
22
R G G M m g m G r s r s S (p) S

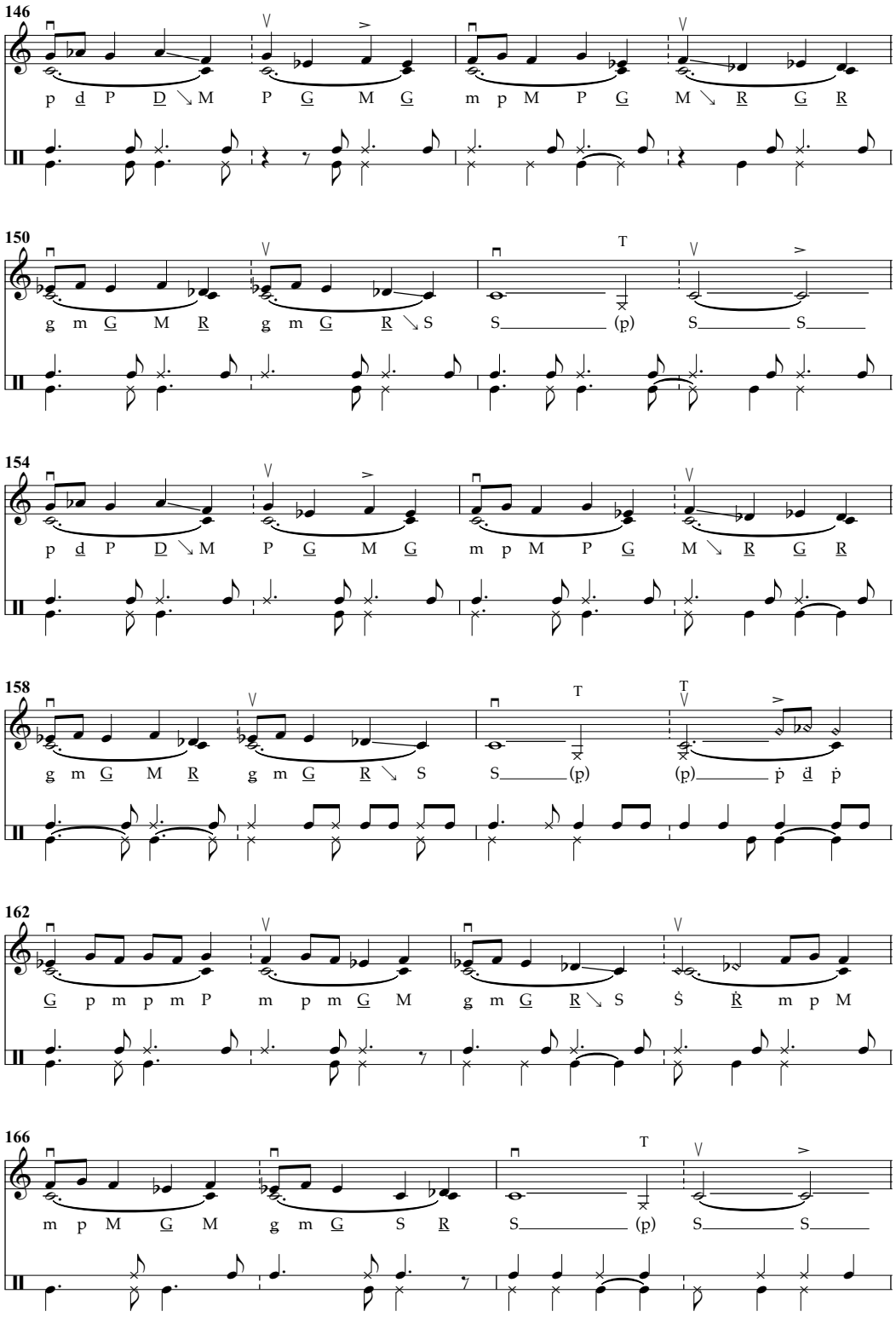

26
Ṡ N Ṡ G Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ġ N Ṙ Ṡ N D P P P
Dholak begins →
30
Ṡ N Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ġ Ṡ Ġ N Ṙ Ṡ N D P P P
34
N D P D Ṡ N D P N D P M D P M G
3
38
P M G R M G R S G R M G P M P G
42
M R G S R S R R S S (p)
T
46
p d p d D M p d P D M p d P D M p d P D M

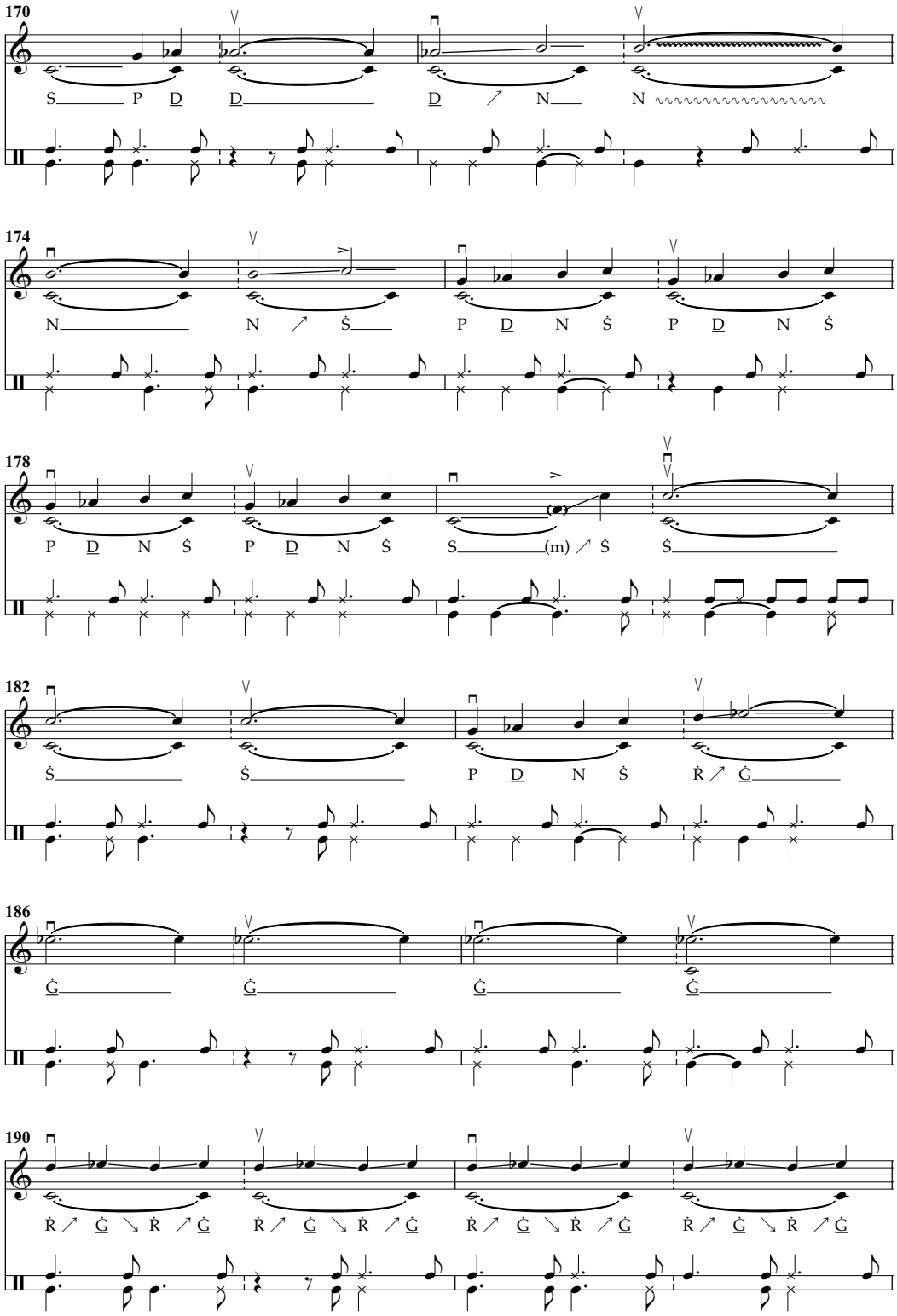

50
p d P N P d n D P P m p M G M M S p d D
54
M p d P D p d p d M M m p m p G G S d p D
58
G m p M P m p M G M g m G R G S R m p M
62
R g m G G G G R R R S S S (p)
T
66
Ṡ N Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ P D N Ṡ Ṙ Ġ
70
Ġ Ġ Ṙ Ġ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ Ġ Ṙ Ġ

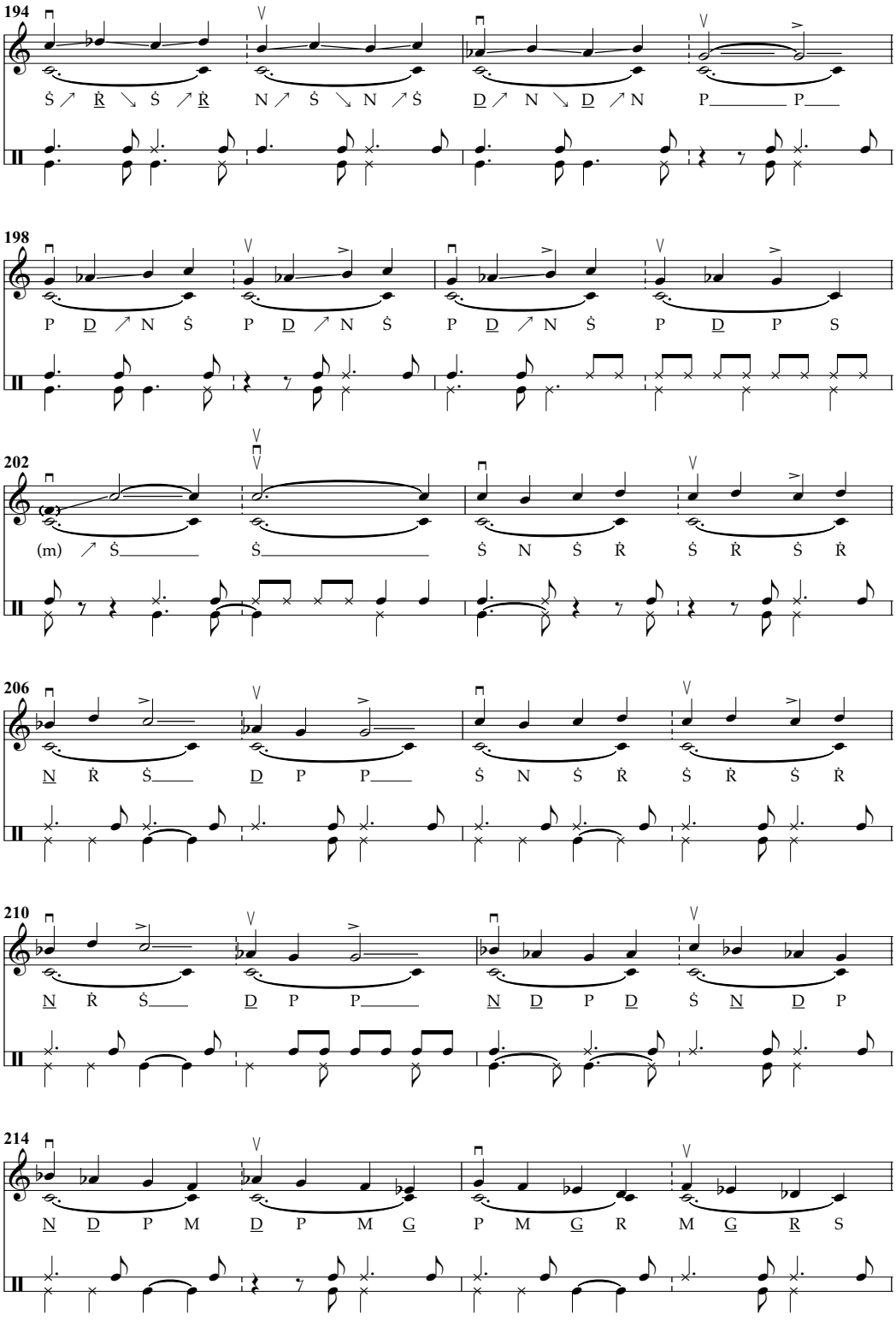

74
Ṙ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṙ ↗ Ġ Ṙ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṙ ↗ Ġ Ṡ ↗ Ṙ ↘ Ṡ ↗ Ṙ N ↗ Ṡ ↘ N ↗ Ṡ
78
D ↗ N ↘ D ↗ N P ↗ D ↘ P P D ↗ N Ṡ P D ↗ N Ṡ
82
P D N Ṡ P D N Ṡ Ṡ N Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ
86
Ṡ N Ṡ Ġ Ṡ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṡ ↗ Ġ N ↗ Ġ Ṡ ↘ N D ↘ P P
90
Ṡ N Ṡ Ġ Ṡ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṡ ↗ Ġ N ↗ Ġ Ṡ ↘ N D ↘ P P S
94
N D P D Ṡ N D P N D P M D P M G

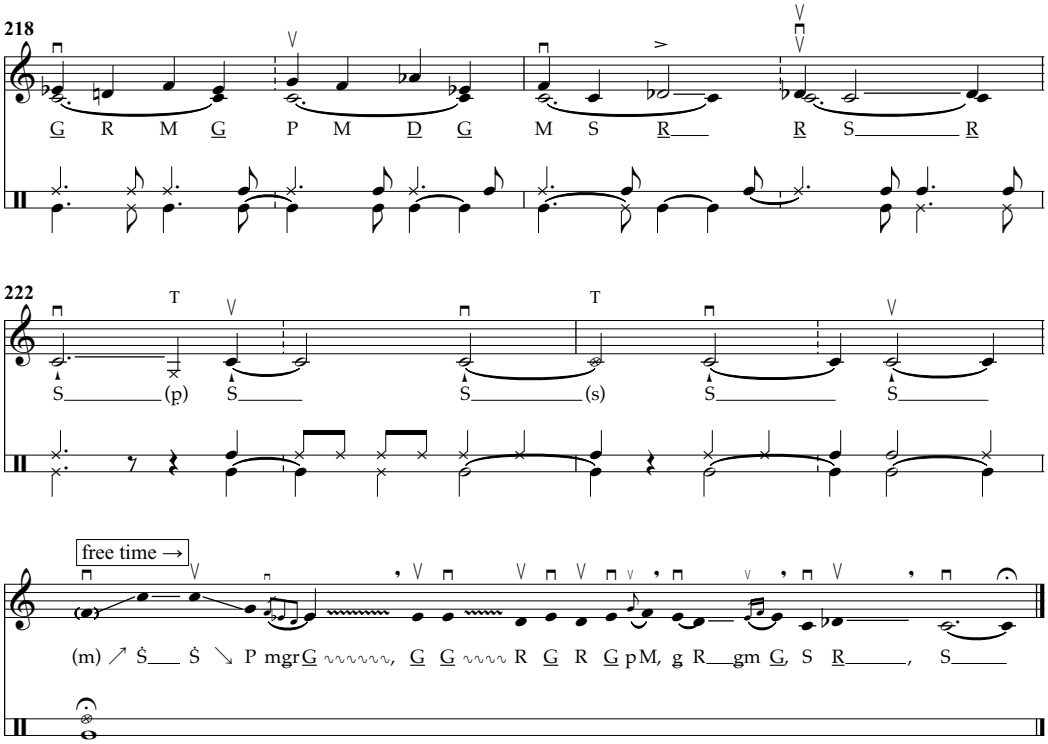

98
P M G R M G R S M G P M P M P G
102
M S R S s r S R R S R S (p) (p)
106
G m p M P m p M G M g m G R G S R m p M
110
R G G M R G R S S (p) S S
114
p d P D M P G M G m p M P G M R G R
118
g m G M P g m G R S S (p) S S


122
P N Ṡ S Ṗ Ṁ Ġ Ṁ P N Ṡ S ṗ ↗ d̲ ↘ ṗ ↗ d̲ ↘ Ṗ S
126
P N Ṡ S Ṗ M G M P N Ṡ S ṗ ↗ d̲ ↘ p ↗ d̲ ↘ Ṗ S
130
P d̲ P N Ṡ p ↗ d̲ ↘ p ↗ d̲ ↘ P M g m G M M S G M
134
M P D̲ P P d̲ P M P m p M G̲ S G̲ S m p M
138
G̲ M M P m p M G̲ M g m G̲ R̲ ↘ S S R̲ m p M
142
3
T
M G̲ M m g R̲ r s R̲ S (p) S S


146
p d P D ↘ M P G M G m p M P G M ↘ R G R
150
g m G M R g m G R ↘ S S (p) S S
154
p d P D ↘ M P G M G m p M P G M ↘ R G R
158
g m G M R g m G R ↘ S S (p) (p) ṗ d̲ ṗ
162
G p m p m P m p m G M g m G R ↘ S Ṡ Ṙ m p M
166
m p M G M g m G S R S (p) S S

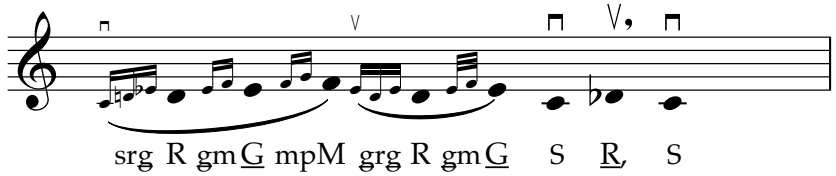

170
S P D D D ↗ N N
174
N N ↗ Ṡ P D N Ṡ P D N Ṡ
178
P D N Ṡ P D N Ṡ S (m) ↗ Ṡ Ṡ
182
Ṡ Ṡ P D N Ṡ Ṙ ↗ Ġ
186
Ġ Ġ Ġ Ġ
190
Ṙ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṙ ↗ Ġ Ṙ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṙ ↗ Ġ Ṙ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṙ ↗ Ġ Ṙ ↗ Ġ ↘ Ṙ ↗ Ġ


194
Ṡ ↗ Ṙ ↘ Ṡ ↗ Ṙ N ↗ Ṡ ↘ N ↗ Ṡ D ↗ N ↘ D ↗ N P P
198
P D ↗ N Ṡ P D ↗ N Ṡ P D ↗ N Ṡ P D P S
202
(m) ↗ Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ N Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ
206
N Ṙ Ṡ D P P Ṡ N Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ
210
N Ṙ Ṡ D P P N D P D Ṡ N D P
214
N D P M D P M G P M G R M G Ṙ S



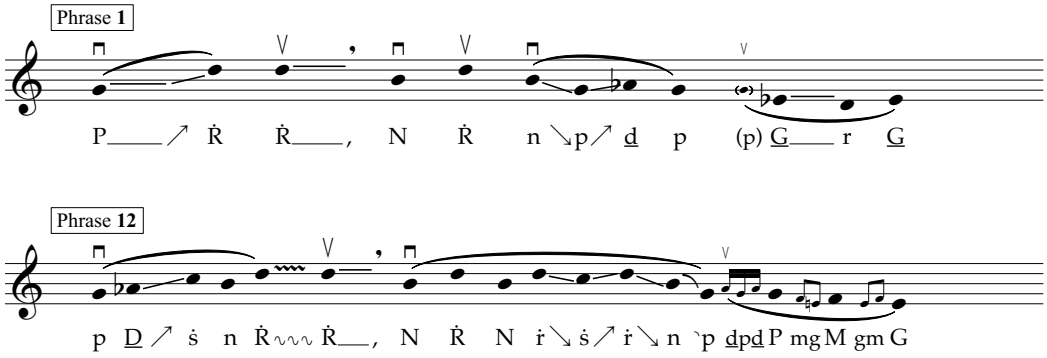
General Commentary: Example 6.9

Chanan Khan also begins his performance with an unmetered section (**A**), outlining a conceptual framework for *rāg* Bhairvī that is similar in many respects to the model presented by Hakim Khan, as we shall see. However, whilst the hierarchy of pitches and idiomatic phrases are made generally clear during the course of Chanan's opening section, there are some anomalies. Most noticeably, the sharp fourth in the opening phrase does not occur elsewhere during the course of the entire performance, and it is also completely absent from Hakim Khan's rendition. Additionally, Chanan withholds his inclusion of the flat second (Re) until the very end of section **A**, in phrase **14**:



With regards to the overall phrase patterning of section **A,** we can again note a certain degree of repetition. However, in this case the incidences of repetition are not entirely straightforward, and there is considerable variation in the ornamentation of certain recurring phrases. For example, phrase **1** features an ascent from 'Pa' to high 'Re', before making a *vakra* descent to *komal* 'Ga'. Phrase **12** subsequently echoes this ascent/descent movement; but here, the delivery of this characteristic movement is quite different, as Figure 6.8 shows. Most conspicuously, Chanan ends his descent on *śuddh* 'Ga' which again does not feature elsewhere in his rendition of *rāg* Bhairvī.

Figure 6.8: Variation in related phrases **1** and **12** of Chanan Khan's *rāg* Bhairvī



It is possible that Chanan's inclusion of the sharpened fourth and natural third in his *rāg* presentation is accidental. But it is equally conceivable that he deliberately chooses to juxtapose these seemingly "misfit" pitches into an otherwise fixed modal structure – just as he delays the inclusion of the flattened second until the penultimate note of his introduction, in what appears to be a premeditated strategy that is utilised (very effectively) for dramatic effect.

Following Hakim Khan's performance model, Chanan goes on to perform a *rāg*-based improvisation in Section **B**, which is delivered in the same clearly pulsed, quasi-metrical format. There are some interesting incidences of shared material between the two **B** sections, which we shall examine in the comparative analysis below; and, like Hakim Khan, Chanan uses this intermediate section to further assert the established melodic characteristics of *rāg* Bhairvī. However, Chanan

concludes the section with a return to the unmetered format of section **A**, where he repeats a condensed version of the essential Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī material.

Once again following the same overall structural process outlined in Hakim Khan's rendition, Chanan Khan begins the *dholak*-accompanied metrical section **C** with a *lehrā* composition, which is used as a springboard for some extremely fast and virtuosic improvisations. Chanan also introduces a bowing technique that is absent from Hakim Khan's performance, and which involves a rapid flick of the wrist at the beginning of the up- or down-bow to create a very characteristic accent at the beginning of certain phrases (typically emphasising a return to the tonic). Marked on the transcriptions with a triple bowing symbol, we shall see that this technique also features in the playing of Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Muse Khan Laṅgā, as well as other senior musicians within both communities. It is, however, not a part of the general repertoire of any other known bowing tradition in North India; and the sharing of these extremely specialised instrumental techniques between the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs would seem to further indicate a shared musical heritage.

When asked, after this performance, if there was any song content involved in the rendition of the *lehrā*, Chanan mentioned a composition that he called 'Salāh Sohāg': however, in the absence of any recordings of this particular song, it is again not possible to establish where the improvisations end and the song melody begins. Nevertheless, we shall see that there is considerable correspondence between the materials presented in all three *lehrā* "improvisations" – despite the fact that Chanan's and Ghevar's *lehrā* performances are delivered at a significantly faster rate than the Bhairvī *lehrā* performed by Hakim and Akbar Khan.

6.4.5. *Rāg* Bhairvī, *lehrā* and 'Ayo' song: Ghevar Khan Māṅganiyār

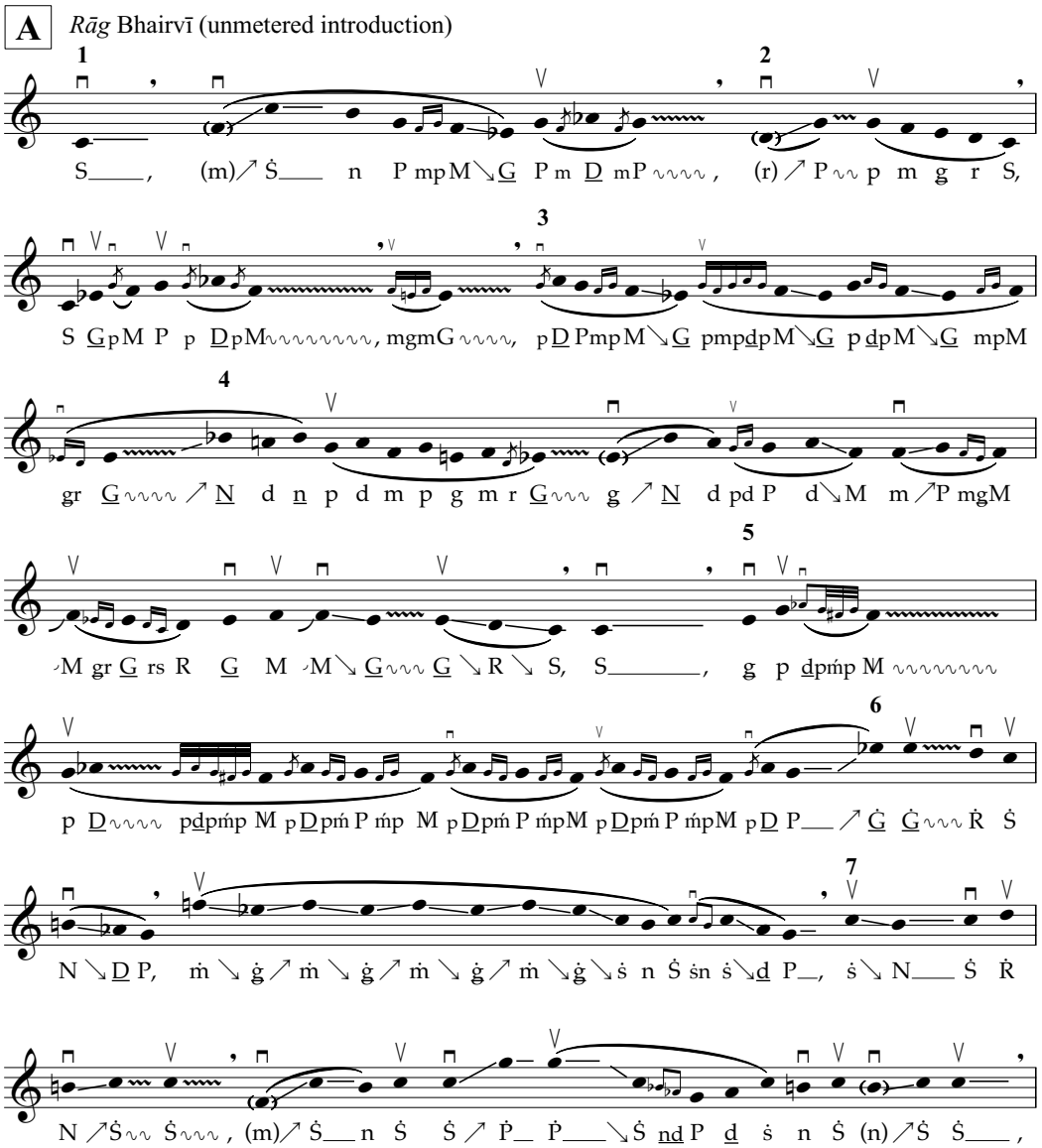
Date of recording session: 7th November 2013

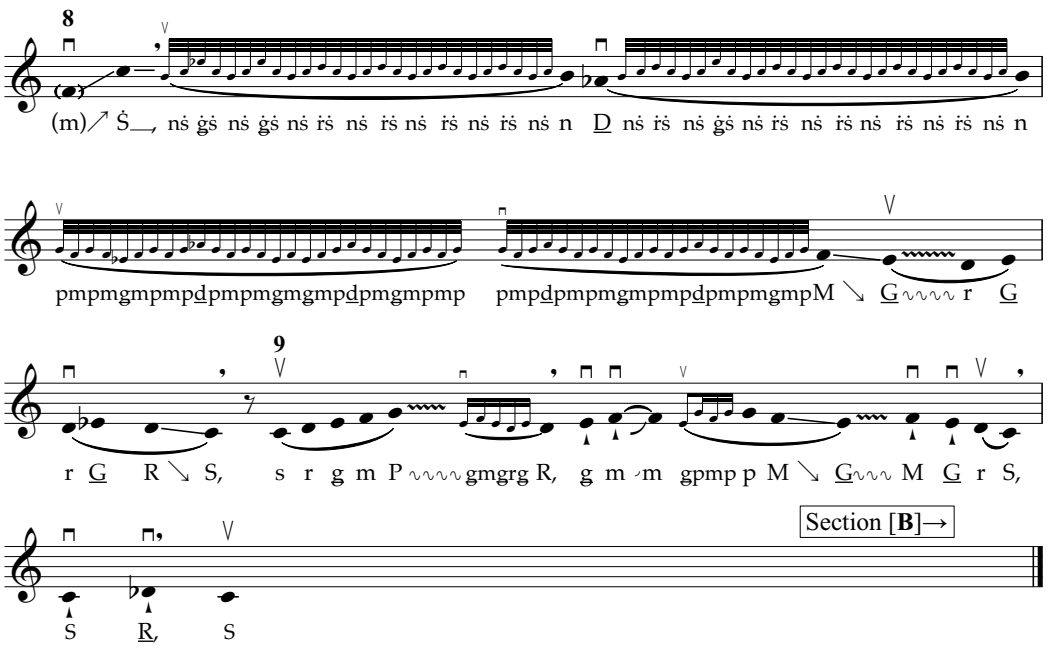
Location: Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra village

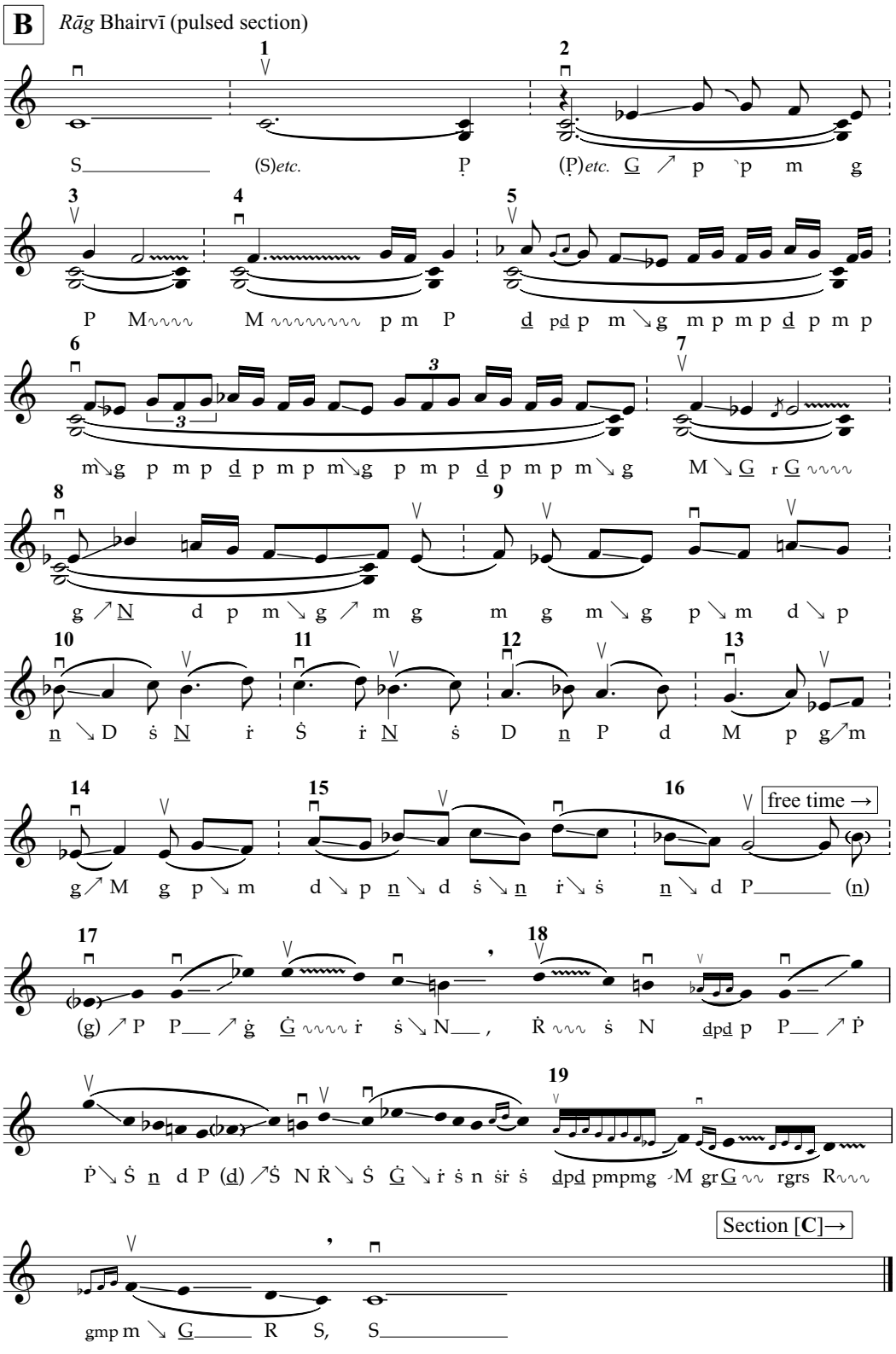
Accompanying musician: n/a

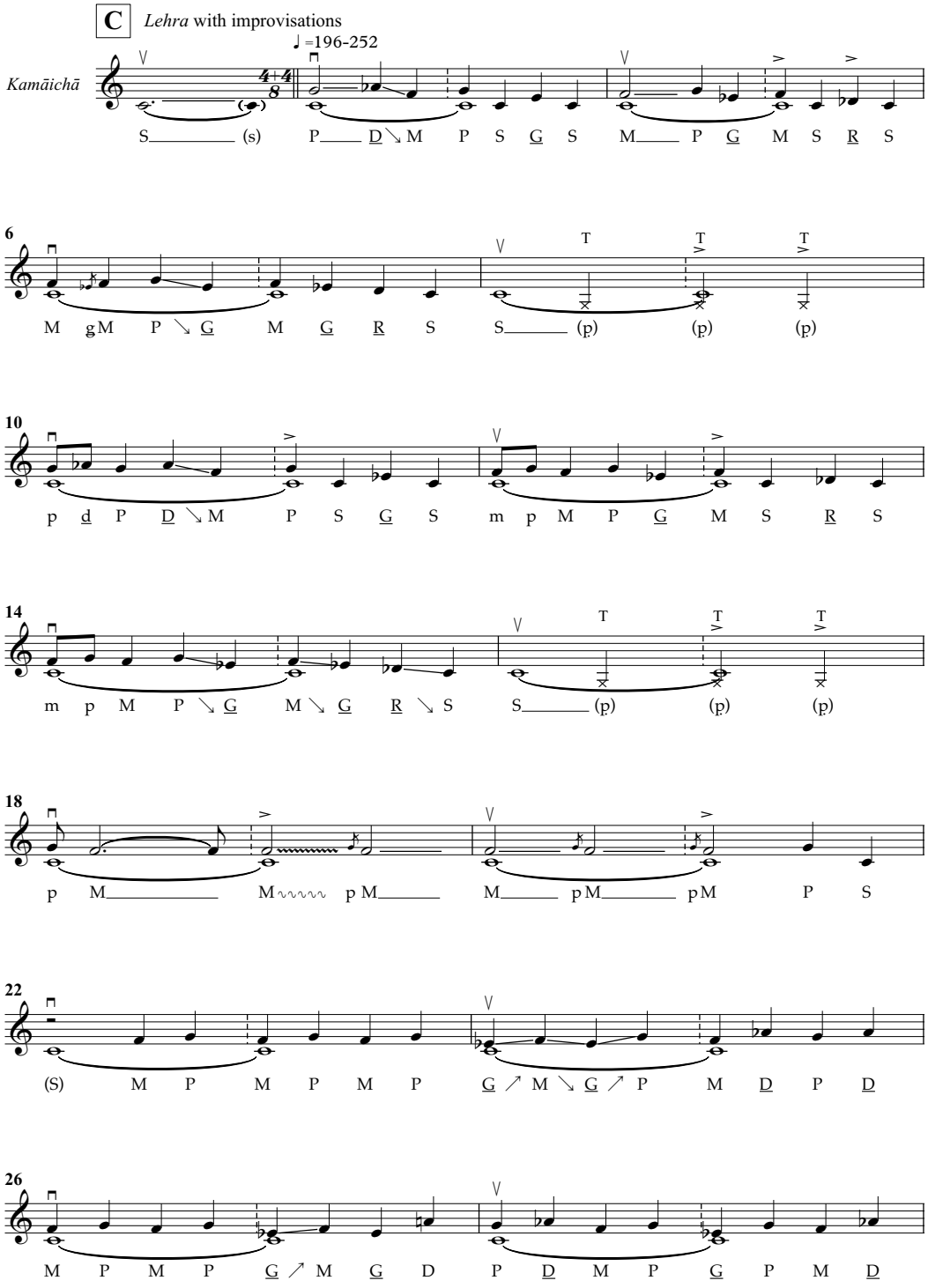
Pitch of *kamāichā* tonic before transposition: A♭ below middle C [208 – 210 Hz]

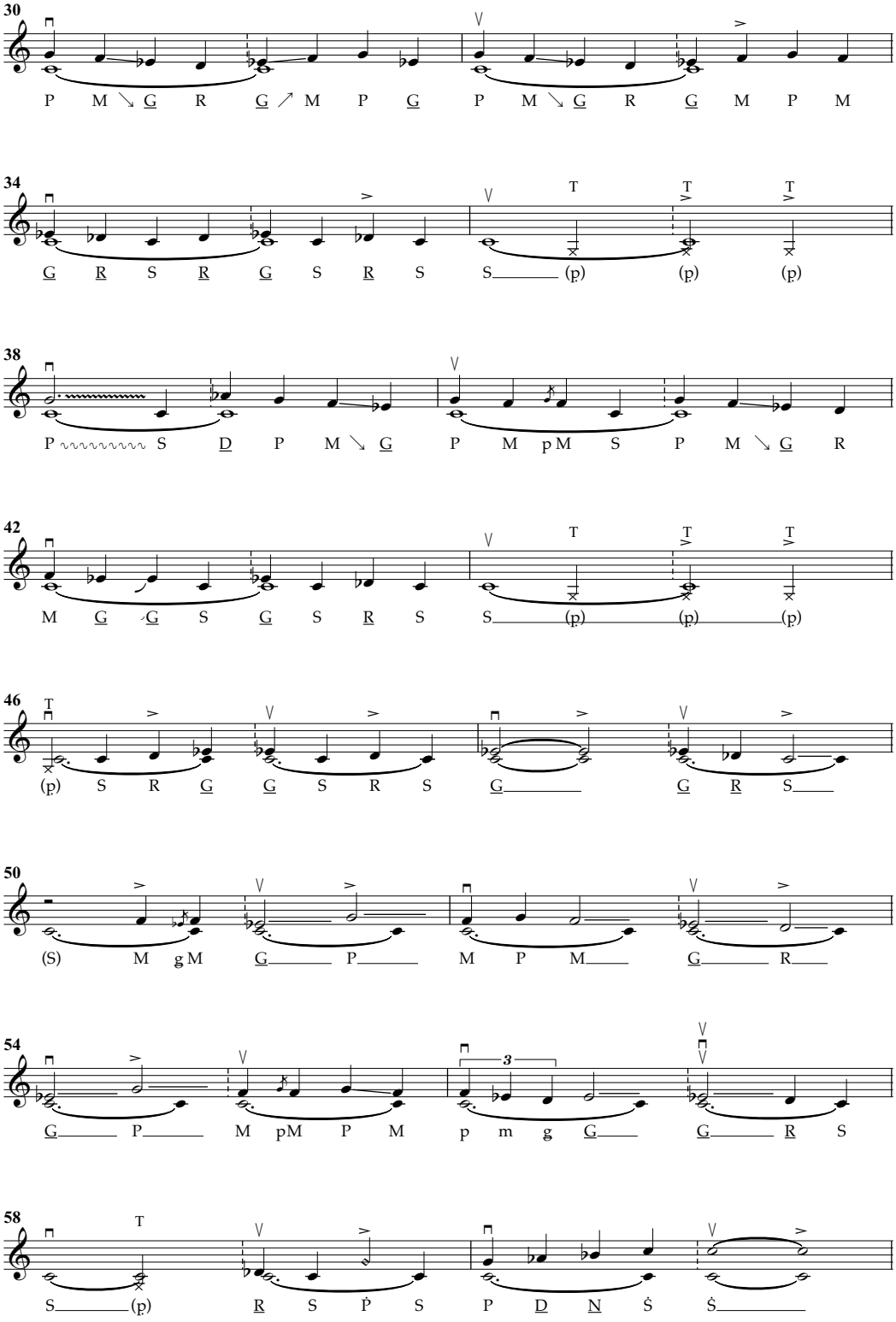
Example 6.10 (**A 6.10/V 6.5**)

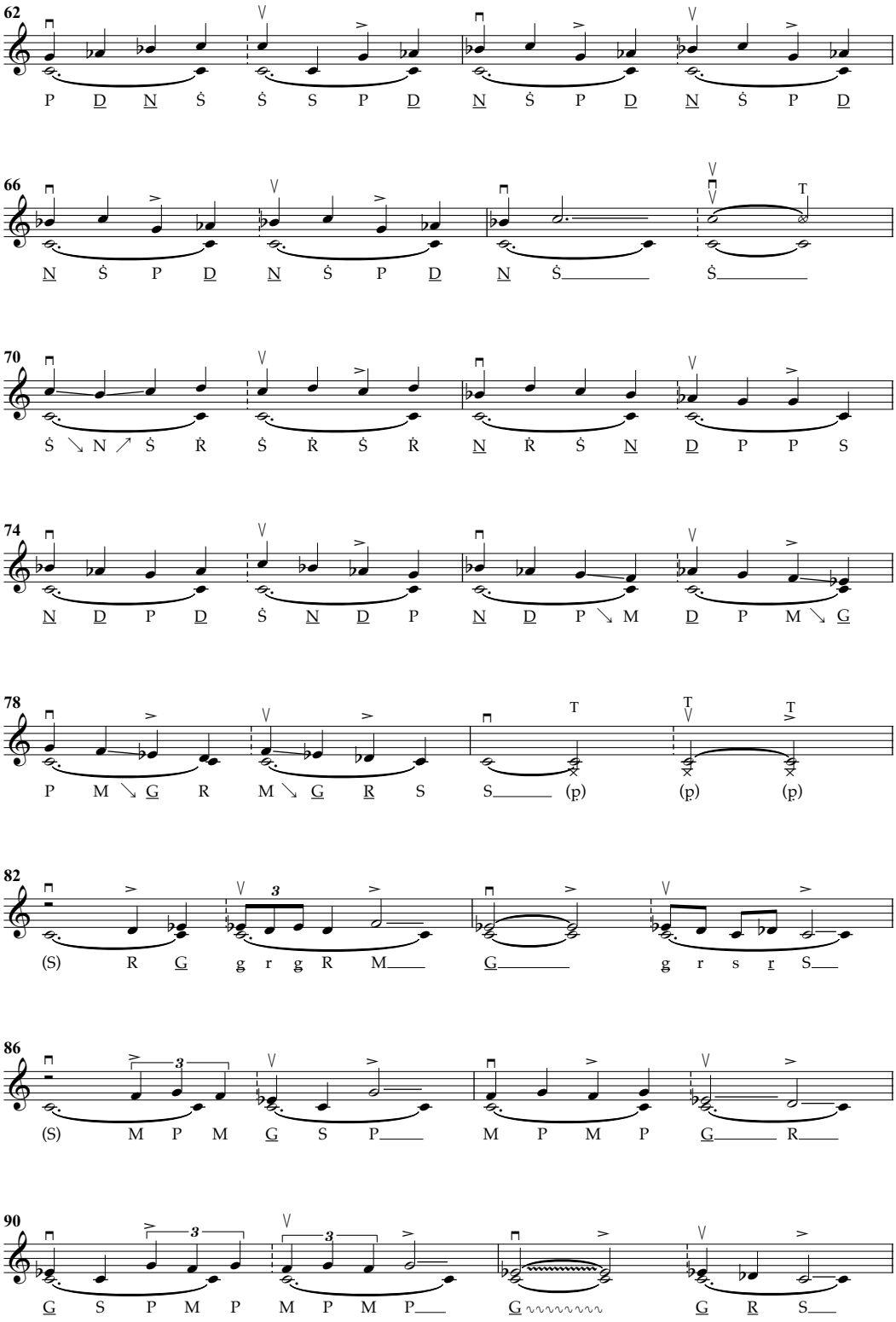


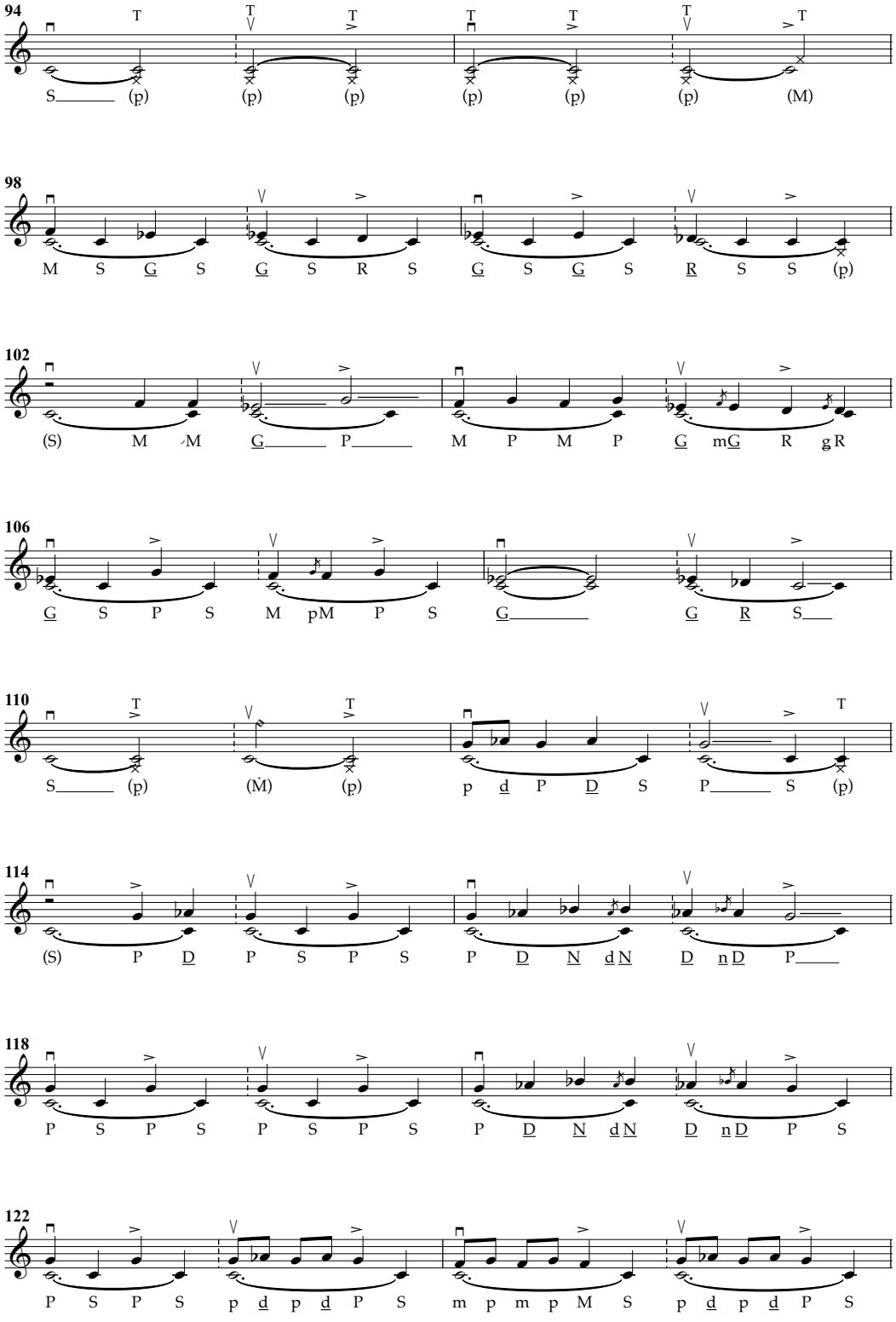

8
(m)↗ Ṡ__, nṡ ġṡ nṡ ġṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ n D nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ġṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ n
pmpmgmpmpdpmpmgmgmpdpmgmpmp pmpdpmpmgmpmpdpmpmgmpM ↘ G∿∿∿ r G
9
r G R ↘ S, s r g m P∿∿∿gmgrg R, g m m gpmp p M ↘ G∿∿ M G r S,
Section [B]→
S R, S

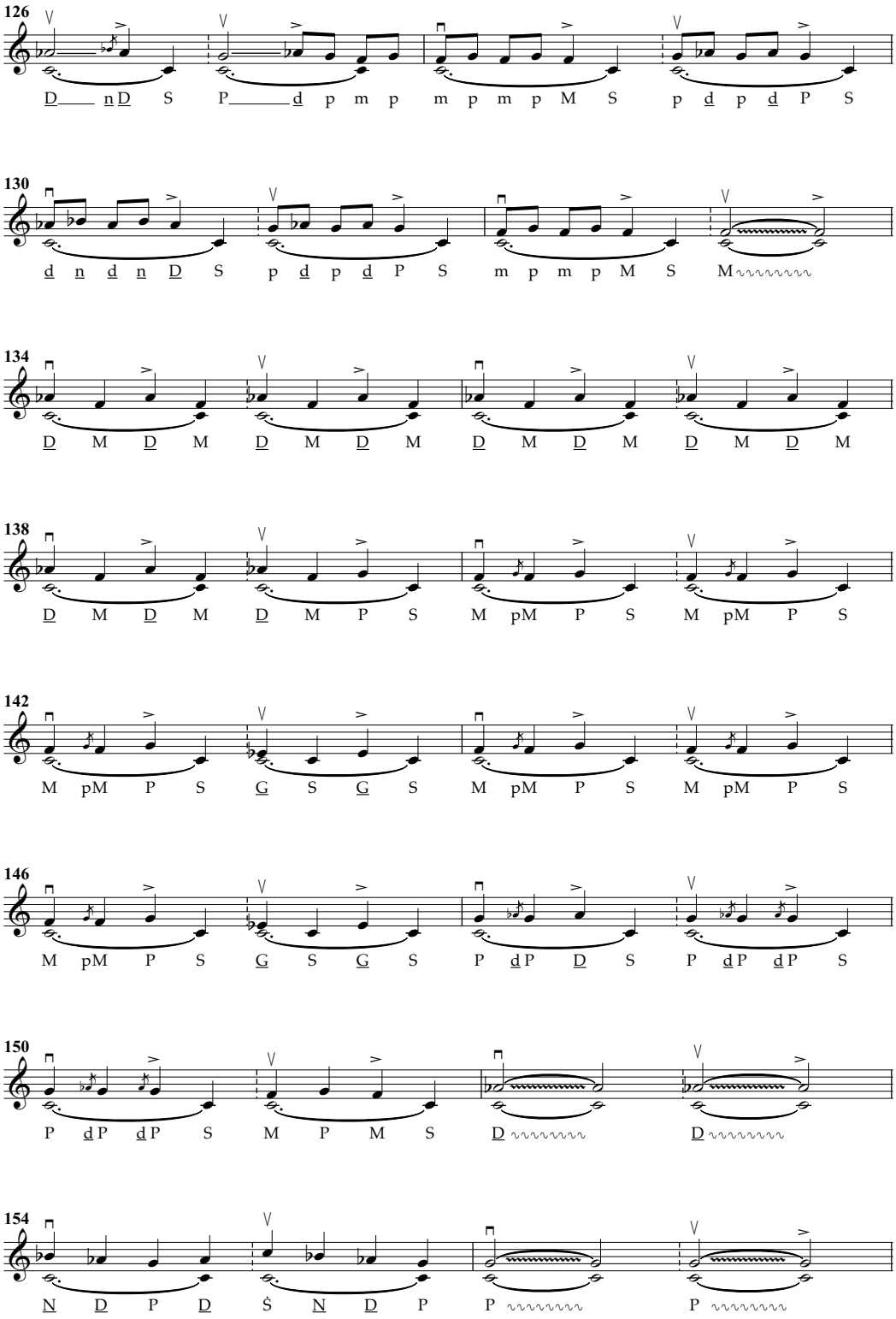

B
Rāg Bhairvī (pulsed section)
1
2
S (S)etc. Ṗ (Ṗ)etc. G ↗ p ˋp m g
3
4
5
P M M p m P d pd p m ↘g m p m p d p m p
6
3
7
m↘g p m p d p m p m↘g p m p d p m p m↘g M ↘ G r G
8
9
g ↗N d p m ↘ g ↗ m g m g m ↘ g p ↘ m d ↘ p
10
11
12
13
n ↘D ṡ N ṙ Ṡ ṙ N ṡ D n P d M p g↗m
14
15
16
free time →
g↗M g p ↘ m d ↘ p n ↘ d ṡ ↘n ṙ↘ ṡ n ↘ d P (n)
17
18
(g) ↗P P ↗ ġ Ġ ṙ ṡ ↘N , Ṙ ṡ N dpd p P ↗ Ṗ
19
Ṗ↘ Ṡ n d P (d) ↗Ṡ N Ṙ↘ Ṡ Ġ ↘ṙ ṡ n ṡṙ ṡ dpd pmpmg M gr G rgrs R
Section [C]→
gmp m ↘ G R S, S

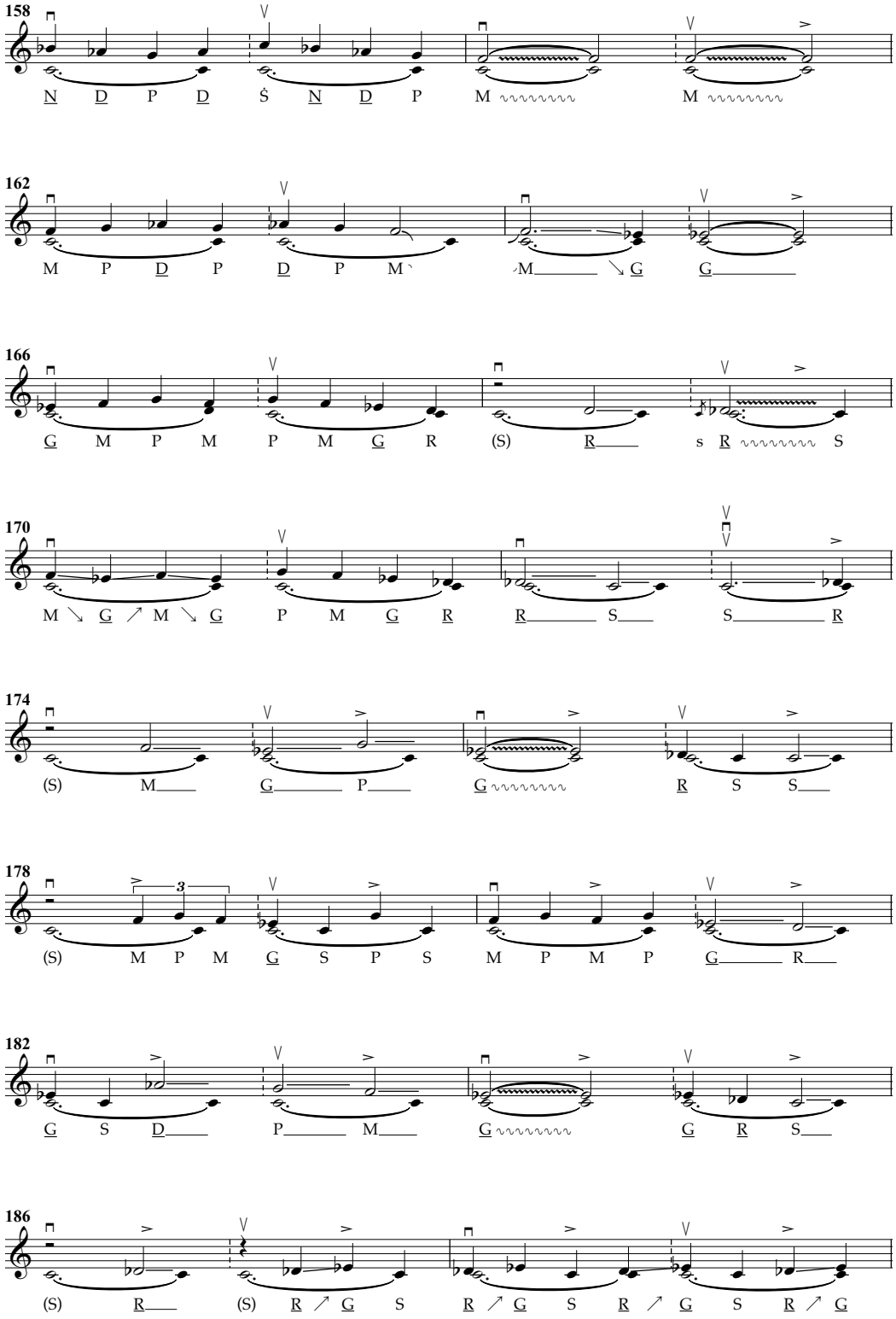

C
Lehra with improvisations
♩=196-252
Kamāichā
S (s) P D M P S G S M P G M S R S
6
M gM P G M G R S S (p) (p) (p)
10
p d P D M P S G S m p M P G M S R S
14
m p M P G M G R S S (p) (p) (p)
18
p M M p M M p M p M P S
22
(S) M P M P M P G M G P M D P D
26
M P M P G M G D P D M P G P M D

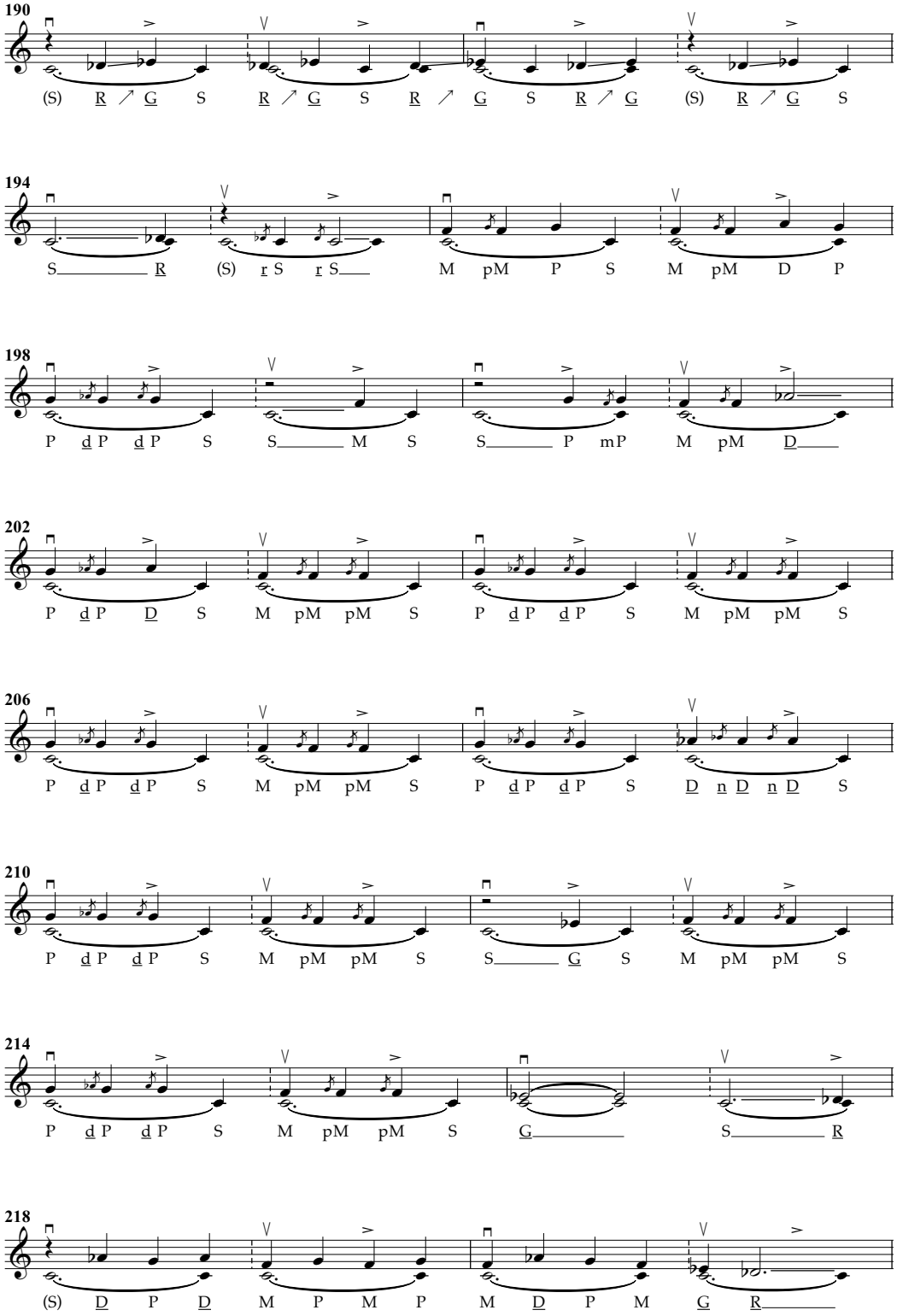

30
P M ↘ G R G ↗ M P G P M ↘ G R G M P M
34
G R S R G S R S S (p) (p) (p)
38
P S D P M ↘ G P M p M S P M ↘ G R
42
M G G S G S R S S (p) (p) (p)
46
(p) S R G G S R S G G R S
50
(S) M g M G P M P M G R
54
G P M pM P M p m g G G R S
58
S (p) R S Ṗ S P D N Ṡ Ṡ

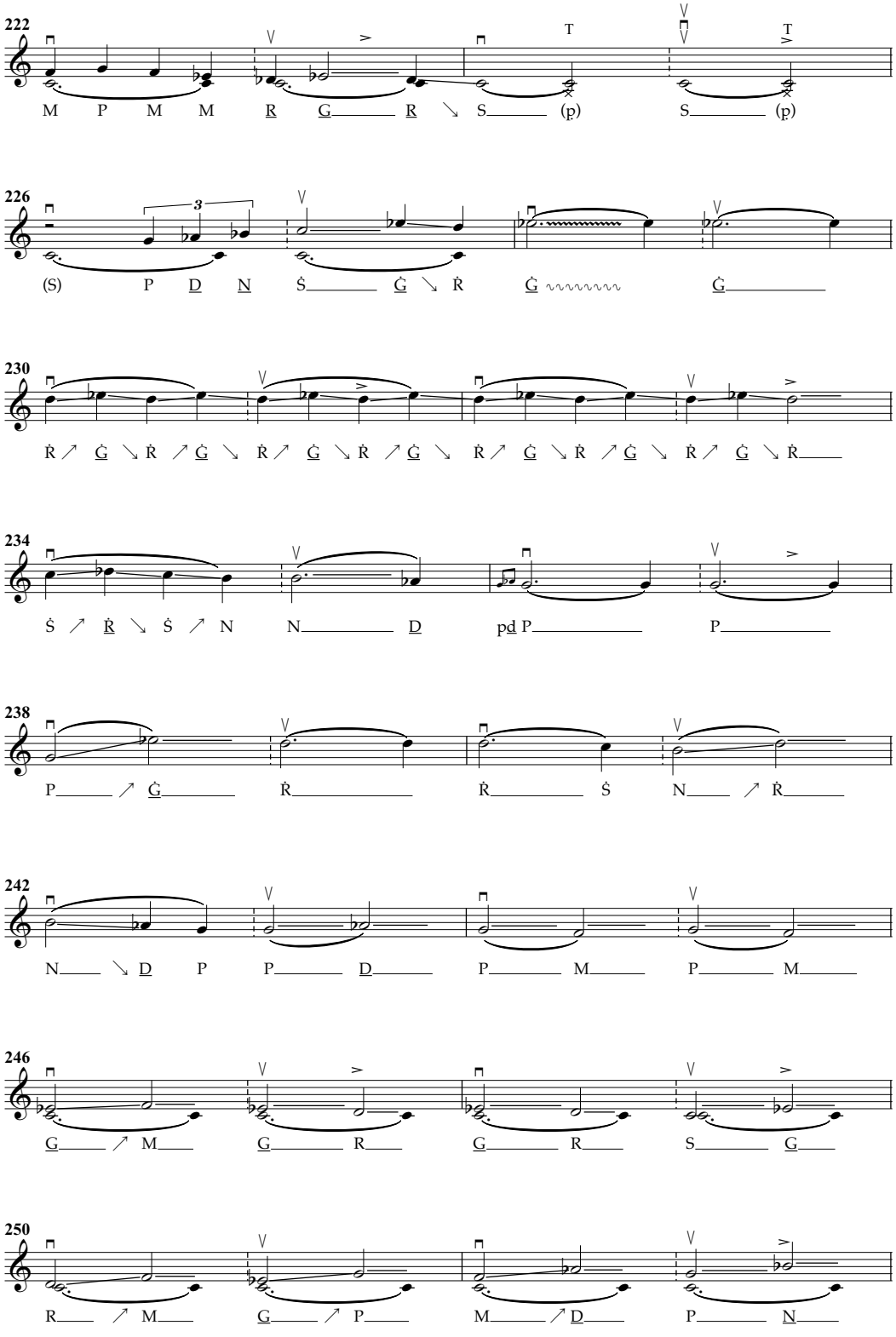

62
P D N Ṡ Ṡ S P D N Ṡ P D N Ṡ P D
66
N Ṡ P D N Ṡ P D N Ṡ Ṡ T
70
Ṡ ↘ N ↗ Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ Ṡ Ṙ N Ṙ Ṡ N D P P S
74
N D P D Ṡ N D P N D P ↘ M D P M ↘ G
78
P M ↘ G R M ↘ G R S S (p) (p) (p) T T T
82
(S) R G g r g R M G g r s r S
86
(S) M P M G S P M P M P G R
90
G S P M P M P M P G G R S

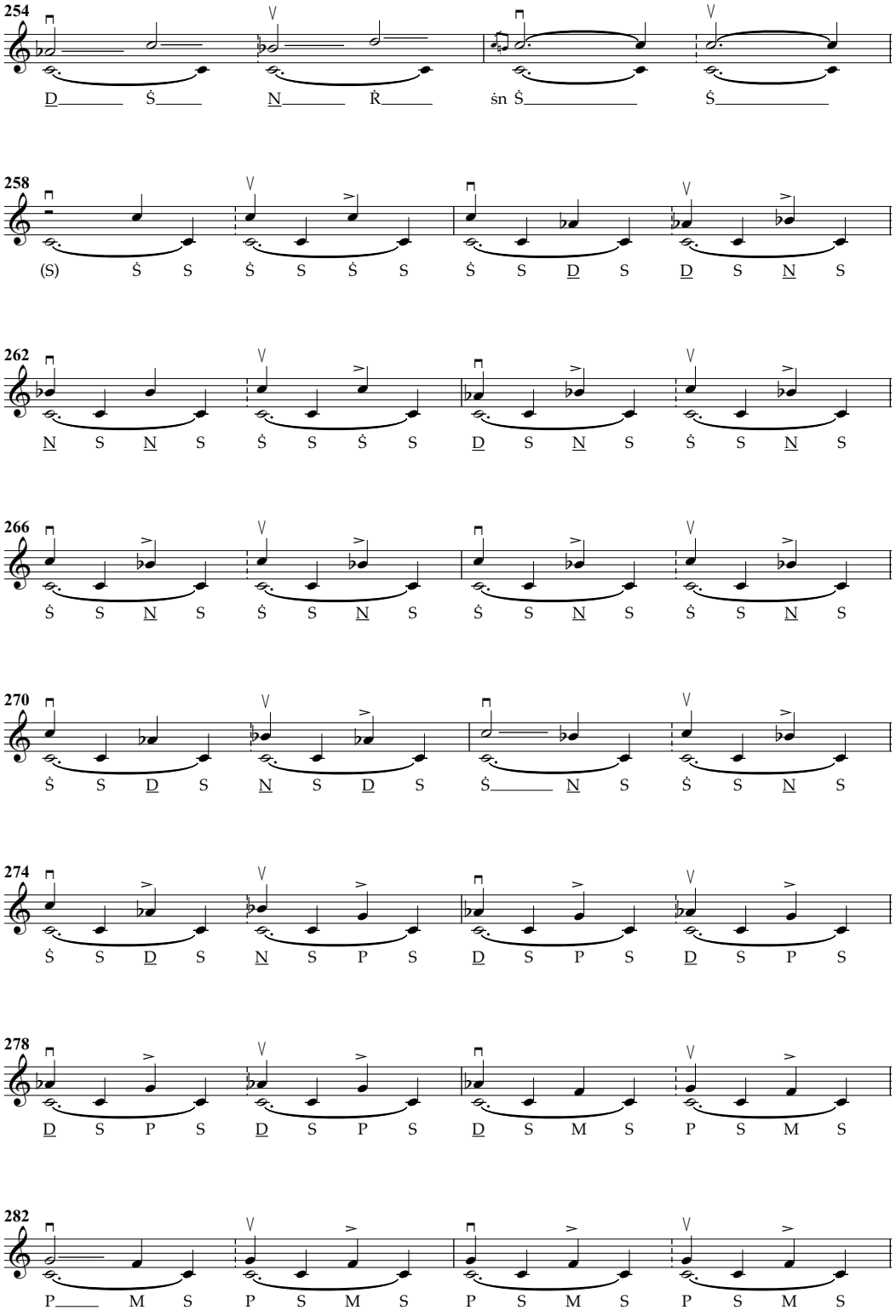

94
S (p) (p) (p) (p) (p) (p) (M)
98
M S G S G S R S G S G S R S S (p)
102
(S) M M G P M P M P G mG R gR
106
G S P S M pM P S G G R S
110
S (p) (M) (p) p d P D S P S (p)
114
(S) P D P S P S P D N dN D nD P
118
P S P S P S P S P D N dN D nD P S
122
P S P S p d p d P S m p m p M S p d p d P S

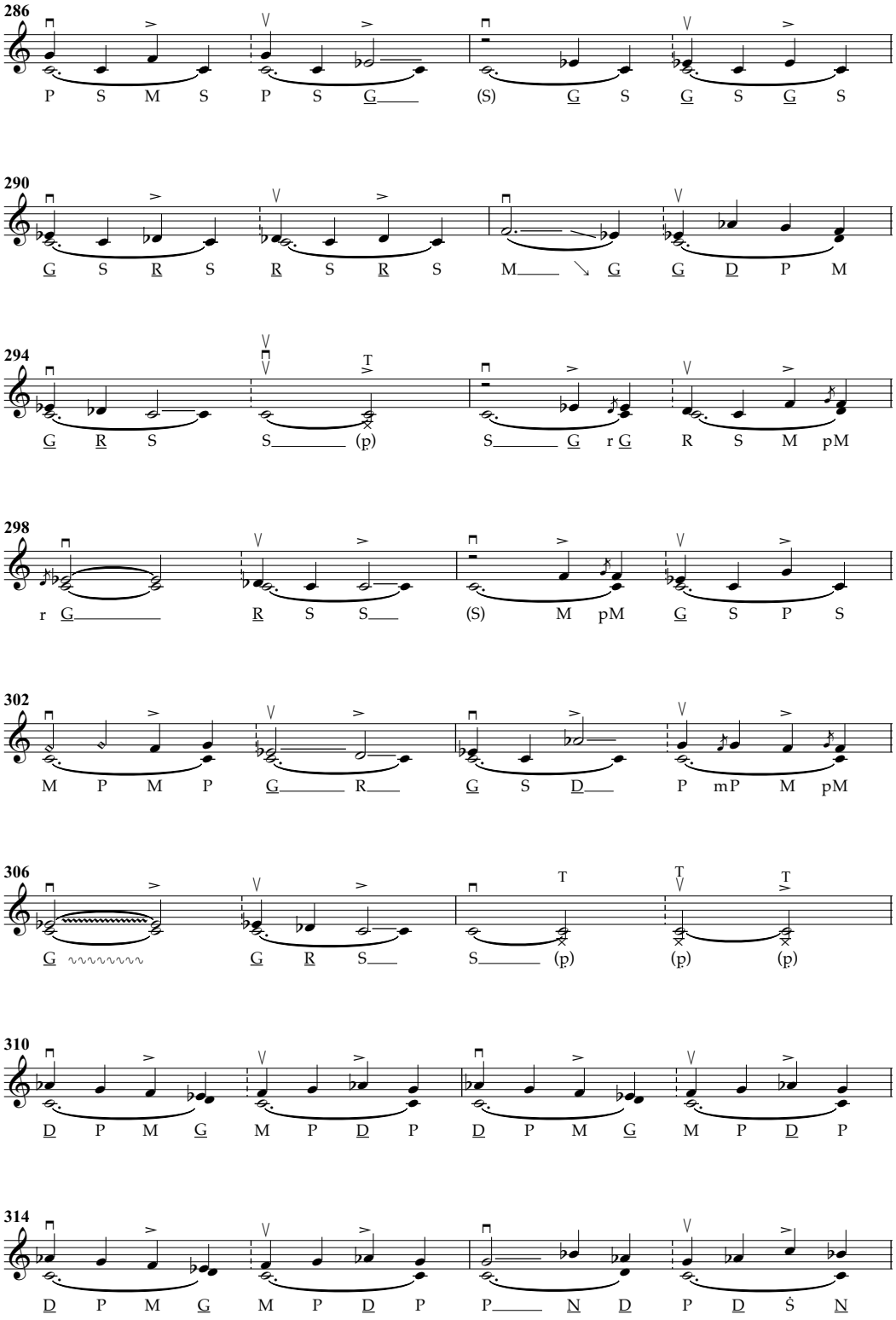

126
D nD S P d p m p m p m p M S p d p d P S
130
d n d n D S p d p d P S m p m p M S M
134
D M D M D M D M D M D M D M D M
138
D M D M D M P S M pM P S M pM P S
142
M pM P S G S G S M pM P S M pM P S
146
M pM P S G S G S P dP D S P dP dP S
150
P dP dP S M P M S D D
154
N D P D Ṡ N D P P P

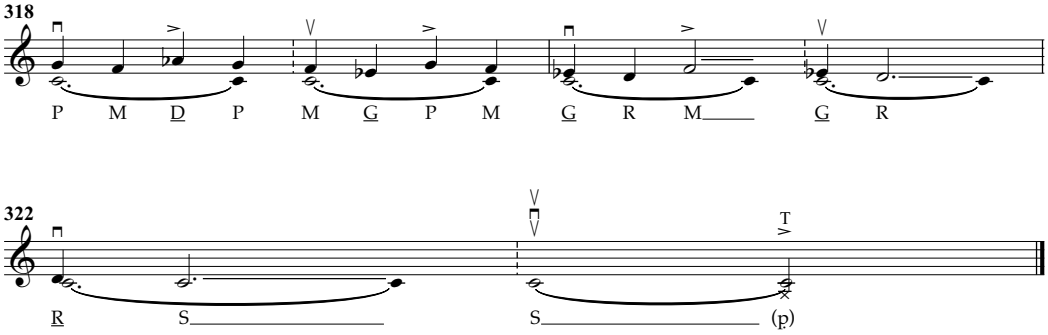

158
N D P D Ṡ N D P M M
162
M P D P D P M M G G
166
G M P M P M G R (S) R s R S
170
M G M G P M G R R S S R
174
(S) M G P G R S S
178
3
(S) M P M G S P S M P M P G R
182
G S D P M G G R S
186
(S) R (S) R G S R G S R G S R G


190
(S) R ↗ G S R ↗ G S R ↗ G S R ↗ G (S) R ↗ G S
194
S R (S) r S r S M pM P S M pM D P
198
P d P d P S S M S S P mP M pM D
202
P d P D S M pM pM S P d P d P S M pM pM S
206
P d P d P S M pM pM S P d P d P S D n D n D S
210
P d P d P S M pM pM S S G S M pM pM S
214
P d P d P S M pM pM S G S R
218
(S) D P D M P M P M D P M G R

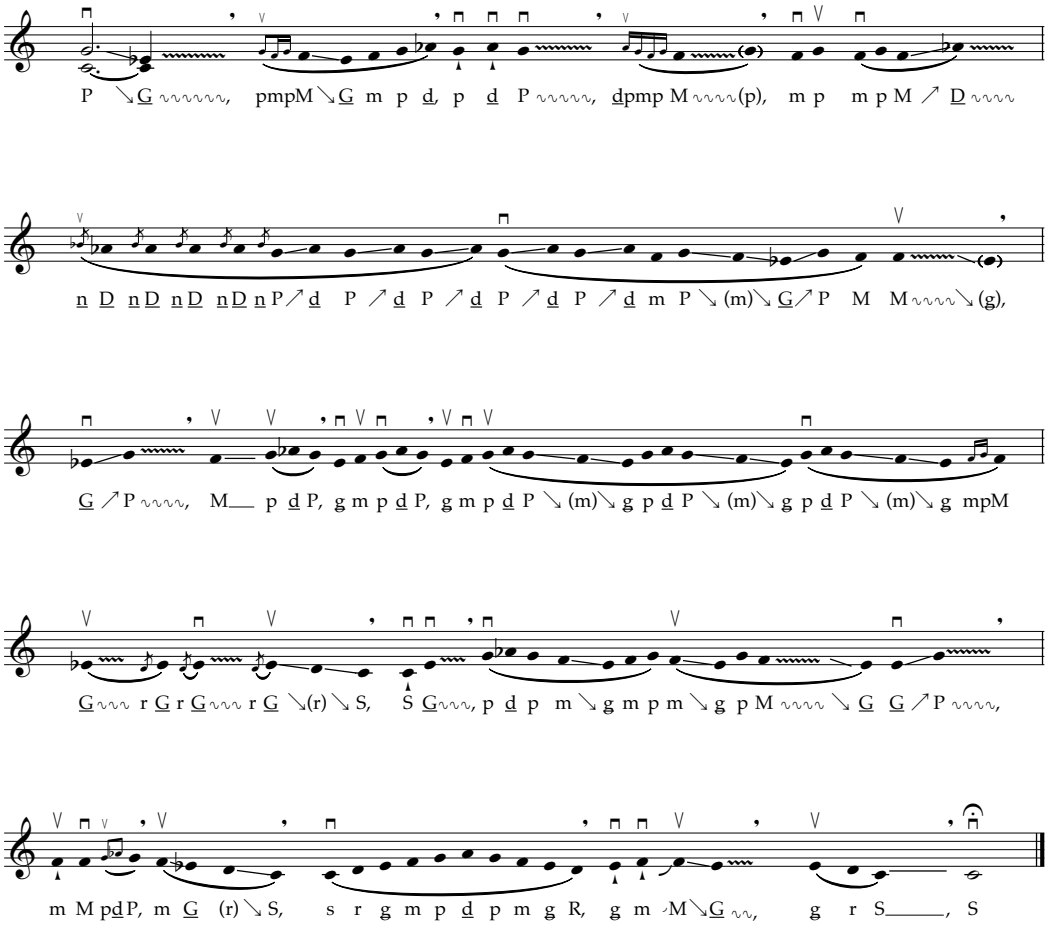

222
M P M M R G R ↘ S (p) S (p)
226
(S) P D N Ṡ Ġ ↘ Ṙ Ġ Ġ
230
Ṙ↗ Ġ ↘Ṙ ↗Ġ ↘ Ṙ↗ Ġ ↘Ṙ ↗Ġ ↘ Ṙ↗ Ġ ↘Ṙ ↗Ġ ↘ Ṙ↗ Ġ ↘Ṙ
234
Ṡ ↗ Ṙ ↘ Ṡ ↗ N N D pd P P
238
P ↗ Ġ Ṙ Ṙ Ṡ N ↗ Ṙ
242
N ↘ D P P D P M P M
246
G ↗ M G R G R S G
250
R ↗ M G ↗ P M ↗ D P N


254
D Ś N Ṙ śn Ś Ś
258
(S) Ś S Ś S Ś S Ś S D S D S N S
262
N S N S Ś S Ś S D S N S Ś S N S
266
Ś S N S Ś S N S Ś S N S Ś S N S
270
Ś S D S N S D S Ś N S Ś S N S
274
Ś S D S N S P S D S P S D S P S
278
D S P S D S P S D S M S P S M S
282
P M S P S M S P S M S P S M S


286
P S M S P S G (S) G S G S G S
290
G S R S R S R S M ↘ G G D P M
294
G R S S (p) S G r G R S M pM
298
r G R S S (S) M pM G S P S
302
M P M P G R G S D P mP M pM
306
G G R S S (p) (p) (p)
310
D P M G M P D P D P M G M P D P
314
D P M G M P D P P N D P D Ś N



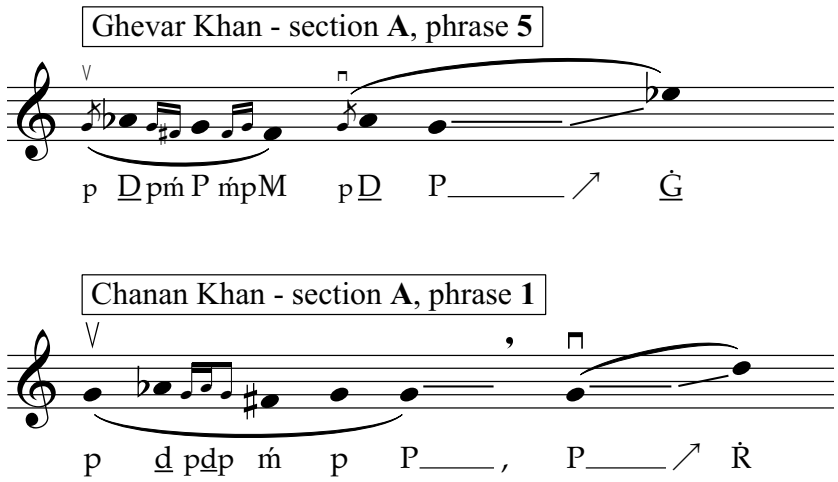
D 'Ayo' song melody (free time)



General Commentary: Example 6.10

Our final instrumental performance in *rāg* Bhairvī, delivered by Ghevar Khan in an unaccompanied rendition, commences with the same unmetered section format that we have seen in the previous verses. In common with Chanan Khan's opening section, there are some pitch anomalies that are not present in Hakim Khan's more concise Bhairvī exposition. Interestingly, Ghevar Khan includes the same anomalous sharp fourth that we have also noted as a feature of Chanan Khan's section **A** performance, as highlighted below in Figure 6.9. In both instances, the *tīvra* 'Ma' functions as a pivot point that heralds a rapid, sliding ascent into the upper register.

Figure 6.9: Anomalous sharpened fourth occurring in *rāg* Bhairvī ascent



Although this particular ascending movement is absent from Hakim Khan's rendition (which, contrary to the other two renditions, begins with an exploration of the upper register and then descends), we can speculate that – for some Māṅgaṇiyār performers at least – this particular phrase movement may be a fixed attribute of any rendering of *rāg* Bhairvī. Since the *tīvra* 'Ma' does not occur elsewhere during any of the three performances analysed here, it is clearly not a pitch that is typically associated with the Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī modal structure. Its presence here raises a number of questions.

We may consider that the *tīvra* 'Ma' has been introduced erroneously; or, it may be that this particular movement is part of a more generic set of phrases that are not *rāg*-specific. However, it is unlikely that such an accidental (or incidental) inclusion would occur in the separate performances of two experienced musicians, within such a strikingly similar melodic context. A more likely possibility is that the isolated use of a sharp fourth, at this early juncture of the extemporisation, represents a specific aspect of the inherent *rāg* structure – one that has been internalised as a compositional feature. This would point to the conceptual framework for *rāg* Bhairvī functioning less as a model for improvised extemporisation, and more as a fixed composition with ornamental embellishments added by each performer.

In section **B**, Ghevar chooses to deliver a relatively brief, pulsed section in comparison to the previous two performances, before following Chanan's approach in reverting to a non-metrical structure to conclude his formal *rāg* presentation. It is notable that the sustained, underlying drone in this section comprises a dyad, produced by simultaneously bowing all three main playing strings. Both the middle string (which doubles the main playing string in being tuned to the tonic) and the lower string (tuned a fifth below) are played openly in unison – thus generating the drone – whilst the melody line is fretted by the left hand on the top string. Whether the production of this particular effect is facilitated by a flatter bridge design on Ghevar Khan's *kamāichā* is uncertain; but certainly, in both Chanan's and Hakim's **B** sections, only the open middle string 'Sa' is sounded beneath the melody line.

Having performed a comparatively brief introductory *rāg* section, Ghevar devotes the lion's share of his performance to a blistering set of variations on the Bhairvī *lehrā* theme in section **C**. Despite being the only unaccompanied performance (or perhaps as a result of being unaccompanied), this section is by far the fastest of all three, commencing at 196 bpm – already 9 bpm ahead of Chanan Khan's formidable ending speed – and accelerating to a dizzying peak measurement of 252 bpm across the concluding measures.

Although there was no explicit mention of song content being embedded within the *lehrā* improvisations, Ghevar did name the concluding melody (labelled here

as section **D**) as being "a women's song – 'Ayo'". This extracted fragment of song melody functions as a kind of slow 'outro' in tempo rubato, and can perhaps be related structurally to the unmetered phrases that Chanan Khan performs at the conclusion of his performance (although, alternatively, another song rendition could have been developed from this point, if the artist had chosen to extend his performance). The inclusion of an unmetred concluding section bears echoes of a more classicised approach to performance structure; and we shall now consider how these three performances compare to the classical *rāg* Bhairvī, and to each other.

6.4.6. Comparing three presentations of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī

To begin our comparative analysis, we shall first take an overview of the renditions, to see how these three versions of *rāg* Bhairvī compare in terms of general performance conditions and macro-structure. This data is presented below, in Figure 6.10, after which follows a commentary on the results. Subsequently, each section of performance is examined separately, to identify and comment upon the more specific aspects of correspondence and difference that have already been hinted at. At each stage of analysis, we shall also consider how the Māṅgaṇiyār renditions of Bhairvī relate to instrumental North Indian classical music performance, both in terms of general structural approach and specific *rāg* content.

Figure 6.10: Overview of general data in Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī performances

	Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	**Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**
Tuning of tonic (Hz)	209 – 211	215 – 217	208 – 210
Length of full performance	05:41	05:02	05:12
Section **A** duration (mm:ss)	01:55	01:36	1:10
Section **B** duration (mm:ss)	02:03	00:57	0:38
Section **C** duration (mm:ss)	01:43	02:29	02:47
Section **D** duration (mm:ss)	N/A	N/A	0:37
Song melody named	‘Juna’	‘Salāh Sohāg’	‘Ayo’
Rāg structure identified	Bhairvī	Bhairvī	Bhairvī
Accompanying instrument/s	*dholak*	*dholak*	N/A

Commentary on Figure 6.10

In terms of tuning frequency, all three musicians have tuned their *kamāichās* in the region of a concert A flat below middle C (207.65 Hz). Chanan Khan's instrument is tuned a little higher – somewhere between an A flat and an A – and this may have been due to there being an absence of an equal-tempered instrument at this particular session in Bisu. Conversely, there was a harmonium present at each of the other two locations, which allowed for a stable tuning reference; but none of the Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār musicians that I worked with evidenced any great concern over tuning to consistent frequencies.

Each complete performance is between five and six minutes long; and all three artists adhere to the same basic overall performance structure, which can be summarised thus:

A. *RĀG* (Unmetered)	→	**B. *RĀG*** (Unmetered/metered)	→	**C. *LEHRĀ*** (Metered)

This approach is notably similar in structure to the model hypothesised for *baḍā gānā* performance in Chapter 4 (see Figure 4.3), wherein an unmetered introductory section, explicitly related to *rāg* knowledge, is developed into an irregularly metred mid-section that becomes the vehicle for spoken or sung *dūhā* poetry. These first two sections set the mood for the third '*gānā*', or song, section – although the extent to which song melodies are utilized in the *lehrā* improvisations of these three particular performances is unclear. Certainly Ghevar Khan concludes his performance with a very clear extract from a known song melody (section **D**); and this also hints at the trajectory of a *baḍā gānā* song performance, as we shall see in the following chapter.

Besides Ghevar's inclusion of an explicit song melody extract at the end of his performance, the only other notable anomaly in terms of performance conditions is that Ghevar Khan delivers his section **C** *lehrā* without *dholak*accompaniment.

This was more of a quirk of circumstance than a deliberate performance strategy, since Ghevar had in fact been accompanied on *dholak*by his nephew, Hanif, for the earlier part of the session (the instrument is still visible in shot, to Ghevar's right, in video example **V6.5**); and he was later joined by his brother Firoze for the concluding performance of *rāg* Soraṭh and 'Bālochan', which forms a component of the analysis presented in Chapter Seven. Nonetheless, his rendition demonstrates that senior Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* players are perfectly capable of sustaining a fully formed solo performance, just as their Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā counterparts are; and this fundamentally practical approach to all-round musicianship fosters a great strength in the senior musicians' performance levels.

But now, we shall compare and contrast these three performances of *rāg* Bhairvī section-by-section.

Figure 6.11: Comparison of *rāg* Bhairvī pitch hierarchies in **A** sections

Scale degree	**Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**
Tonic (S)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 2nd (R)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 2nd (R)	WEAK	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 3rd (G)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 3rd (G)	-	V. WEAK	V. WEAK
Natural 4th (M)	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG
Sharp 4th (M̈)	-	V. WEAK	WEAK
Fifth (P)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 6th (D)	STRONG	STRONG	NEUTRAL
Natural 6th (D)	-	-	V. WEAK
Flat 7th (N)	-	-	WEAK
Natural 7th (N)	WEAK	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL

Examining the relative weighting of pitches in each of the section **A** presentations, Figure 6.11 shows that there is a marked degree of correspondence between the three versions. In particular, all three artists attach primary importance to the flattened third and natural fourth degrees, which feature consistently together as a sliding descent one of the most idiomatic Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī movements (see Figure 6.12). The flattened second degree – *komal* 'Re' – has also been attributed "significant" status here, even though it occurs only in the closing phrases of both Ghevar and Chanan Khan's performances: this is because the note is introduced in such a climactic way, by both musicians, that we can be certain of its indispensible place as part of the conceptually authentic *rāg* presentation.

Throughout Hakim Khan's section **A** performance, the *komal* 'Re' is featured more consistently; however, he too uses it initially as more of an ornamental feature, and his inclusion of the *śuddh* 'Re' in his approach to the concluding descent is echoed very closely in the performances of the other two younger musicians, as Figure 6.13 demonstrates.

Figure 6.12: Idiomatic Bhairvī descending movement 'M↘G' in lower tetrachord

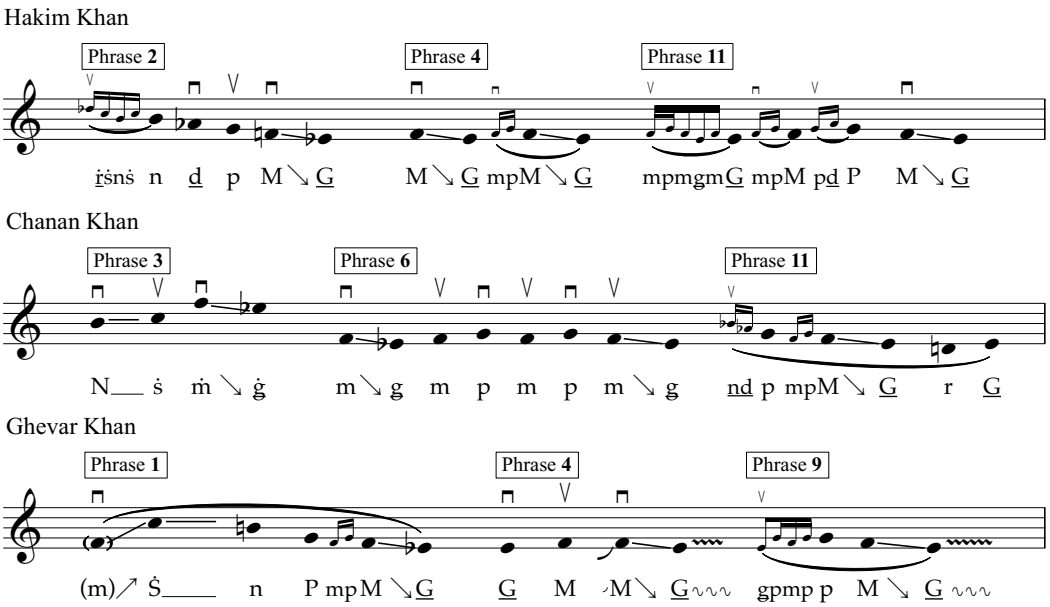
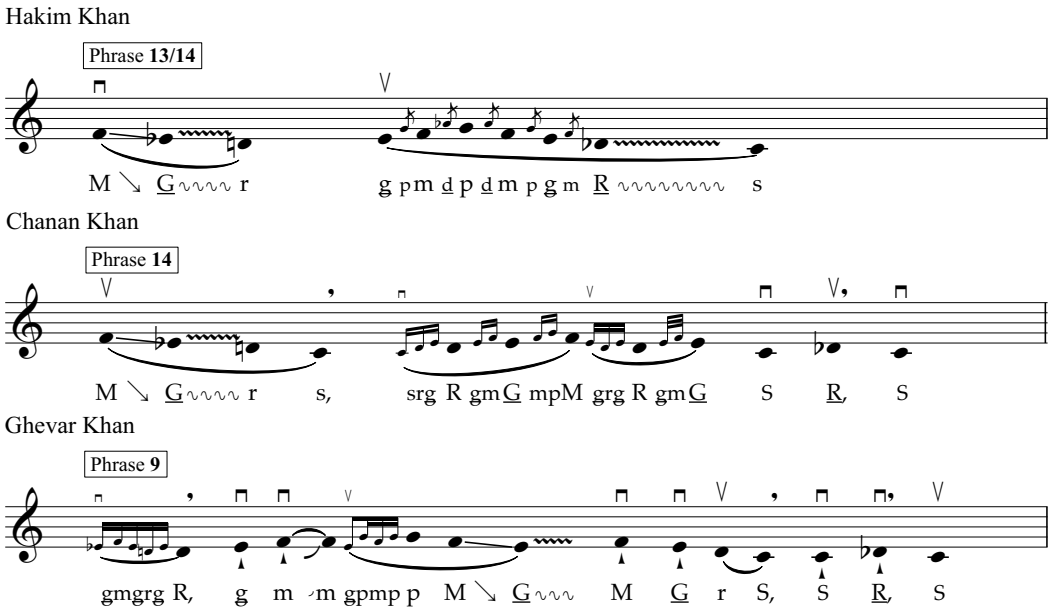
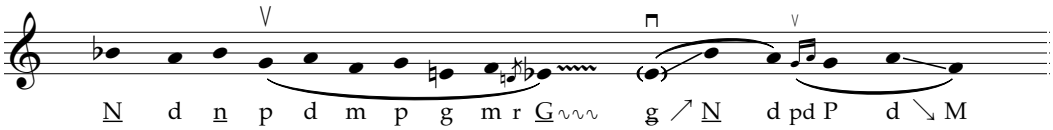


Figure 6.13: Bhairvī phrase featuring *śuddh* and *komal* 'Re'



One striking feature highlighted in Figure 6.11 is the inclusion of weak or very weak (i.e. occurring only once) "misfit" pitches, which cannot easily be fitted into any fixed conception of a scale-based modal structure. We have already discussed such an incidence involving the sharpened fourth; and it is notable that both Chanan Khan's performance also includes an isolated natural third, in phrases **2** and **12** respectively. Moreover, phrase **4** of Ghevar Khan's rendition emerges as being particularly anomalous, featuring not only a natural third, but also a flattened seventh and a natural 6th – pitches that are completely absent from the other two performances:



There is perhaps a limit to how much one can read into the occurrence of these inconsistent melodic features; and, even if the musician were willing and able to articulate his reasons for their inclusion after the fact, we would not necessarily receive a straightforward answer. However, when relating such apparent inconsistencies to the contemporary light-classical performance of *rāg* Bhairvī, *The Rāga Guide* (1999: 34) offers an illuminating insight:

> In Bhairvi both natural and flat Re are normally used. In *thumri* performances sharp Ma, natural Dha and natural Ni may occasionally be used as well. In this case musicians refer to the raga as Sindhi or Mishra ["mixed"] Bhairavi… It is generally believed that there is considerable flexibility in the performance rules for Bhairavi, and it is left to the imagination and skill of the artist to create patterns that are aesthetically pleasing.

It is evident from the data presented in Figure 6.11 that Hakim Khan's *rāg* exposition does not include any such features. The pitch content from his rendition fits neatly into a fixed scalar structure – essentially, the harmonic minor scale with an added flat 2nd (1, ♭2, 2, ♭3, 4, 5, ♭6, 7, 8) – and, despite the "flexible" pitches highlighted above, the other two renditions generally follow this convention. Therefore we can speculate that Hakim Khan's version may represent a more orthodox conceptual framework for *rāg* Bhairvī (as one might expect from the seniormost musician), whereas both Chanan and Ghevar Khan have asserted their right to take certain liberties with the form. In this respect, their approach is perhaps more in tune with contemporary light-classical music practice.

Still, the introductory renditions of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī presented here all differ from classical *rāga* Bhairvī in one key respect: the flat seventh degree is entirely absent from both Hakim's and Chanan's renditions, and features only very weakly in Ghevar Khan's performance. In the orthodox classical structure, the seventh degree is predominantly flat, and this would appear to have been the case since at least the seventeenth century (as 'The Raga Guide' suggests). This may point to the *rāg* being adopted from *ṭhumrī* or *dādra*, where the use of pitches is generally more flexible; or, the innovation may have taken place closer to home – perhaps, we may suggest, in learning the 'Sindhi Bhairvīn' melodies attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf.

During the course of his second section (**B**) performance, we have already noted that Hakim Khan maintains his conservative, fixed approach to both pitch content and pitch hierarchy. However, Figure 6.14 shows that, whilst Ghevar Khan continues to divert from Hakim Khan's more orthodox model in certain significant respects, the pitch content and hierarchies implicit in Chanan Khan's performance during section **B** undergo a subtle change, conforming exactly to the

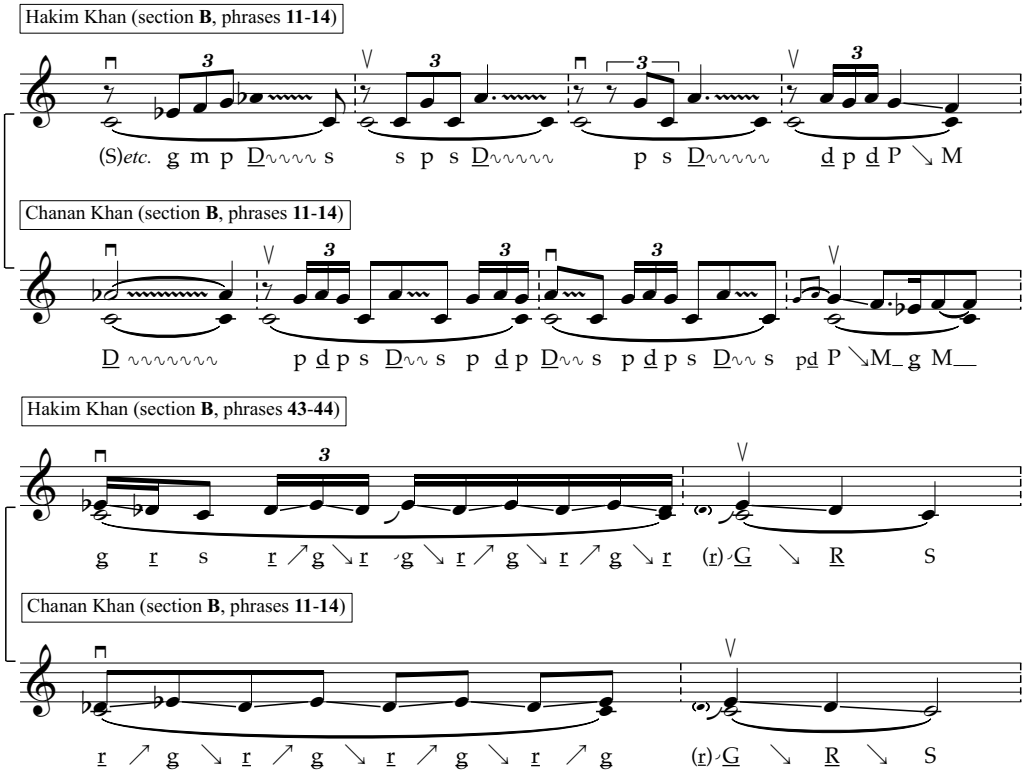
melodic characteristics outlined by Hakim Khan. In both of their section **B** performances, no "misfit" accessory pitches (such as the natural third, natural sixth or flat seventh) are included at all; and both musicians showcase the significant flat second pitch that is particularly characteristic of *rāg* Bhairvi – and yet which is entirely absent from Ghevar Khan's section **B** performance.

Figure 6.14: Comparison of *rāg* Bhairvī pitch hierarchies in **B** sections

Scale degree	**Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**
Tonic (S)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 2nd (R)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	-
Natural 2nd (R)	WEAK	WEAK	NEUTRAL
Flat 3rd (G)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 3rd (G)	-	-	V. WEAK
Natural 4th (M)	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG
Sharp 4th (M)	-	-	-
Fifth (P)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 6th (D)	STRONG	STRONG	NEUTRAL
Natural 6th (D)	-	-	WEAK
Flat 7th (N)	-	-	NEUTRAL
Natural 7th (N)	WEAK	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL

The implication here is that Chanan Khan has "reined in" the melodic content of his performance somewhat, returning to a more conservative model that bears striking resemblance to the rendition advanced by Hakim Khan. In fact, closer inspection reveals there are a number of key phrases that appear to be shared more or less directly between these two section (**B**) performances, as Figure 6.15 demonstrates.

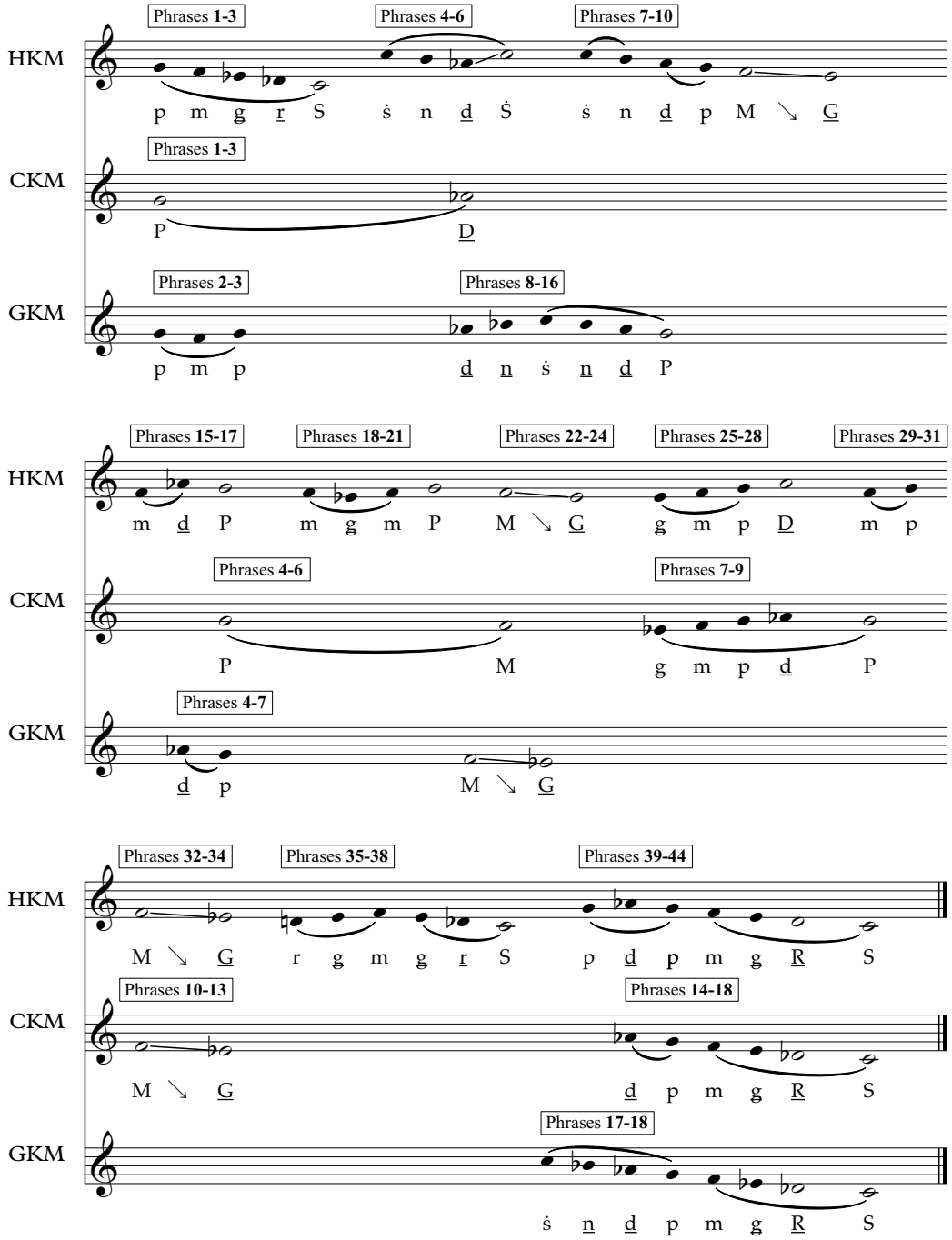
Figure 6.15: Parallel phrasing in **B** section – Hakim Khan and Chanan Khan



Both of the phrase examples highlighted in Figure 6.15 show the artists placing an emphasis on key movements in the *rāg*: above, the strong reiteration of *komal* 'Dha' that precedes a descent through 'Pa' to the important fourth degree; and below, making a feature of the relationship between the significant *komal* degrees 'Ga' and 'Re', through the use of repeated *mīṇḍ* to connect the notes – an archetypal phrase that typically occurs before a return to the tonic.

These renderings are so close as to suggest a common source for the phrase material; and, since Hakim Khan hails from Harwa village and Chanan is based in Bisu – a mere 20-odd kilometres apart, as the *bāj* flies – it is even possible that Chanan learnt this melody from Hakim. The similarity in the rendering of these phrases also may suggest a more fixed approach to performance composition, rather than a modal extemporisation.

Figure 6.16: Reductive paradigm for section **B** melodies



Each bowed phrase within each pulsed **B** section can be reduced to a conceptually significant pitch, or coupling of pitches, using a comparative, reductive process. Figure 6.16, above, details this process for all three performances, with the reduced melodic contours from Chanan (CKM) and Ghevar (GKM) Khan's performances being mapped onto Hakim (HKM) Khan's scalar framework. Note that, in Hakim's considerably longer section **B** rendition,

the entire melodic pattern is repeated almost verbatim from phrase **45** to the end (phrase **65**): hence, the repeat is not included here.

Figure 6.16 reveals a basic set of ascent-descent pitch contours that all three versions adhere to, with the only variation being that Ghevar Khan substitutes the natural 7th for a flat 7th. As we have noted, his section B performance is the shortest of the three; and it continues his trend of encapsulating a more "freestyle" approach to the *rāg* Bhairvī extemporisation. Nevertheless, he includes the same basic phrase patterning, along with the recurrent Māṅgaṇiyār Bhairvī descent phrases 'M↘G' and the concluding 'mgR-S'. All of these features – the use of set patterns for ascending and descending melodic movements, the emphasis on significant pitches, the special treatment of particular notes and phrases – are clearly key to understanding the Māṅgaṇiyār conception of *rāg* Bhairvī.

One other important point to note here is that the introduction of a pulse at this particular stage of the performance (which is exhibited in all three of the section **B** renditions) is somewhat analogous to the *joḍ* process of classical *rāga* development, which also follows on from an unmetered *ālāp* exposition. Therefore, we can say at this stage that these Māṅgaṇiyār instrumental performances bear significant similarities – along with some equally notable differences – to the renditions of *rāga* Bhairvī that would typically occur in North Indian classical music. We shall now examine the extent to which these *rāga*-like features are borne out during the course of the metered *lehrā* performances.

Before interrogating the section **C** data, we must first consider: what is a *lehrā*? Or, more specifically, what does this term mean to the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs? On these three separate occasions, each one of the musicians used the term to describe an unspecified facet of their performance. However, perhaps in part due to the term *lehrā* having a somewhat ambiguous connotation with the classical term of similar nomenclature, there has also been some confusion in the existing literature as to what aspect (or aspects) of performance the term indicates. In defining the musicians' use of this term, Neuman et al. (2006: 110) take their lead from an article by Qureshi (in Khuhro ed. 1981: 240):

> One of the terms that Qureshi specifically ties to instrumental music is *lehro* which she defines as short sequential patterns. Although she does not mention it, it is obvious that this is the same as *lehrā* which is the term for the repeated melody that sarangi players perform when accompanying tabla solos or Kathak dance performances in the Hindustani classical system.

One issue with equating the folk *lehro* term with the classical term *lehrā* is that the Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār instrumentalists here are not accompanying anyone during the above performances – on the contrary, they are the featured soloists – and yet, they all choose to identify some part, or parts, of their performance as *lehrā*. Therefore, we must examine very closely the musicians' use of the term, and how it may relate to the structuring of a music performance.

My first practical encounter with this term came from sitting with Sakar Khan, during the second – and final, as it turned out – lesson that I was lucky enough to have with him. On this occasion, which took place early during the first phase of fieldwork, on 1st March 2013, I had my first chance to play a *kamāichā* (and a very fine one at that, since it was the maestro's own instrument). Since I had no camera or recording devices with me at the time, the session went uncaptured; but the following extract from my fieldwork journal describes the moment where Sakarji showed me how to play a basic *lehro* form:

> [This evening] I was given a one-to-one listening session with Sakarji. To my complete surprise, he even let me have a go on his *kamāichā*… After my feeble attempt to play the instrument, Sakarji showed me a simple piece that was almost like a string of exercises, but that clearly was also a song – at least in part. He called it "*lehro*". I hypothesise that this is one of the pieces that a young *kamāichā* player learns first, since it gives one a really good workout for the left hand fingers in all three positions, and there are some rhythmic intricacies with the bowing; but it has an overall feeling of jollity and lightness, and at its basic level it is not an overtly technical piece.

The impression described above is, to a certain extent, captured by Qureshi's general summary of *lehrā* being "short sequential patterns"; and, during my subsequent learning experiences with other Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār musicians, I encountered a wide variety of such instrumental patterns that were melodically

simplistic in essence (although invariably tied to a *rāg* format), but which seemed to have some kind of compositional element to them.

It is noticeable that, in the instance described above, Sakar Khan uses the same pronunciation '*lehro*' that Qureshi is cited as using, in the quote from Neuman et al. However, all three musicians performing the renditions of *rāg* Bhairvī analysed here used the term '*lehrā*'. A likely explanation for this is to be found in Baloch's 1966 work on "Musical Instruments of the Lower Indus Valley of Sind", where he describes some of the local repertoire for the bowed lute *surando*:

> *Lahra* (sing. *Lahro*), constituting the main pattern of music specific to Surando, are of different varieties… The *Lahra* music is played mainly in two tunes, *Sindhi Bhairvin* and *Kohyari* (lit. 'the tune of the mountains'), the latter being originally an indigenous melody of the western hilly region, which was subsequently developed under the institution of Shah Abdul Latif's *Raga*.
>
> Baloch 1966: 48

Besides its helpful disambiguation of the singular and plural forms of *lehro*/*lehrā* (or, as it is rendered here, '*lahro*/*lahrā'*, which is perhaps a more Sindhi, and less Hindi, form of pronunciation), the information presented here raises many interesting questions. Firstly, there is the possibility of there being a number of different *lehrā* compositions; secondly, there is the explicit connection of *lehrā* performance with the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf – and even more specifically with "Sindhi Bhairvīn"; and thirdly, there is the general equation of *lehrā* forms with the musical repertoire of the *surando*, another Persian-derived bowed lute closely related to the Sindhi *sāraṅgī*. Indeed, in the same work (1966: 49), Baloch names of one of the most renowned *surando* performers of the modern era as being "the late Ali Muhammad Langho of Dureji (north-east of Karachi), whom the writer heard in Karachi in 1951."

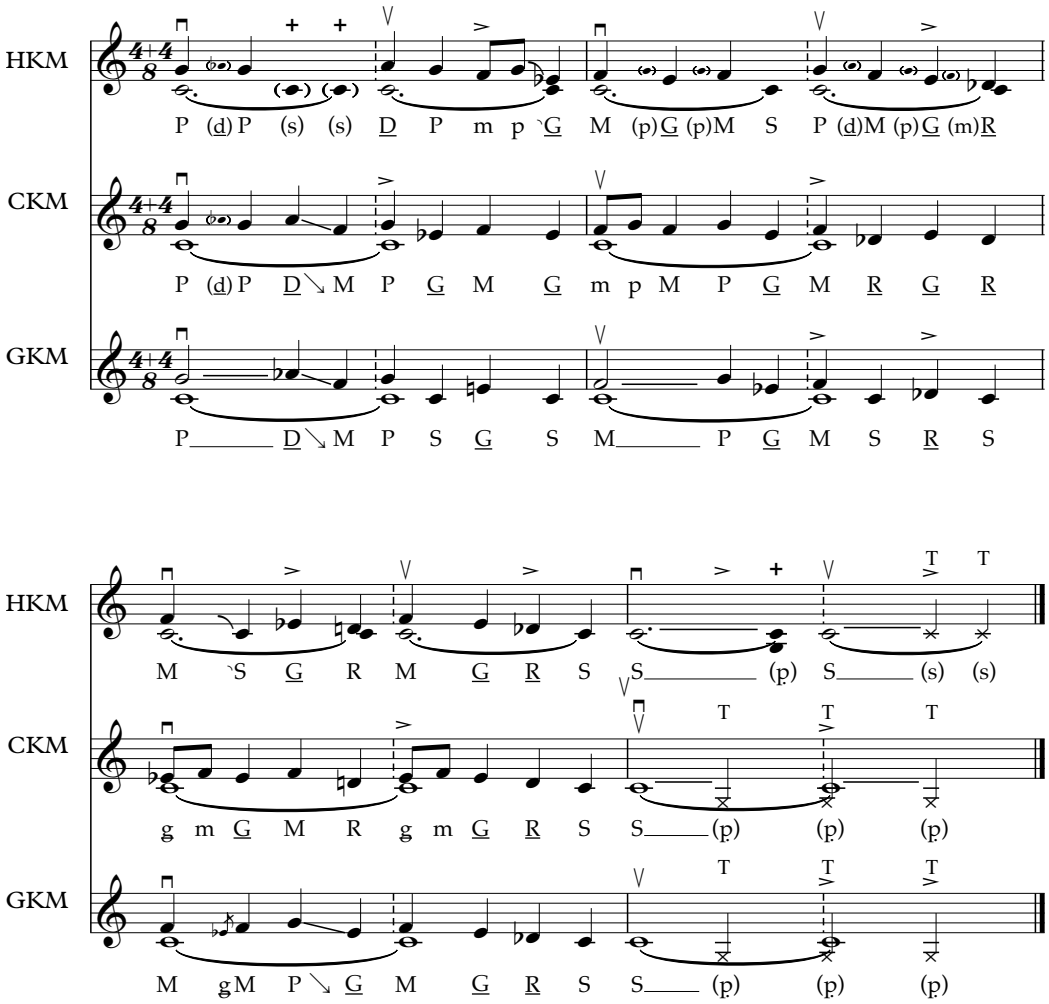
We can assume that the term 'Langho' must be equated with 'Laṅgā' – particularly given the fact that the *surando* is also known in Western Rajasthan as the *sarinda*, where, according to Neuman et al (2006: 125) it "is played exclusively by the Surnaia Langa". This suggests an intimate relationship between the *lahrā* music of the Sindh and Baloch regions, and the repertoire of Laṅgā musicians in Western Rajasthan; and, since the Māṅganiyārs also have a

strong community presence in Sindh (they are even mentioned, under the name 'Manganhar', as being one of the categories of "country minstrel" in Baloch's 'Musical Instruments of the Lower Valley of Sind' (1966: 5)), it seems highly probable that they, too, would have adopted at least some of the *lahrā* music forms from this region.

In the Bhairvī examples analysed here, the musicians' use of the plural form '*lehrā*' may well indicate the presence of more than one compositional form. As was my experience with Muse Khan Laṅgā, when put in the position of applying labels to *rāg*-based performances – which was always after the fact, and usually only after the information was requested – the Māṅgaṇiyār musicians will typically say: "*rāg* so-and-so, *dūhā* (or *lehrā*, if the performance is instrumental) *aur gānā* so-and-so." Therefore, one might suppose that the *lehrā* section of an instrumental performance would be section **B**, taking the place of the *dūhā* poetic delivery. However, as we shall see in the following chapter, *dūhā* couplets are also accompanied by instrumental music; but whether these intermediate instrumental sections can be called *lehrā* is yet to be established.

Returning to the present analysis, we can certainly identify at least one specific *lehro* form embedded within each of the three section **C** performances of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī (see Figure 6.17, below). Evidently, the musicians here are all performing not only the same selection of melodic material, but also the same thematic composition – albeit with some minor variations in performance; and it is evident that some of the distinctive melodic characteristics of *rāg* Bhairvī that we have identified from the earlier phases of the renditions – such as the descent to the natural 2nd that halts, before returning up to the 4th and finally coming back down stepwise, this time via the flat 2nd, to the tonic – are an in-built part of this particular *lehro* composition.

Figure 6.17: Bhairvī *lehro* melodic form occurring in performance



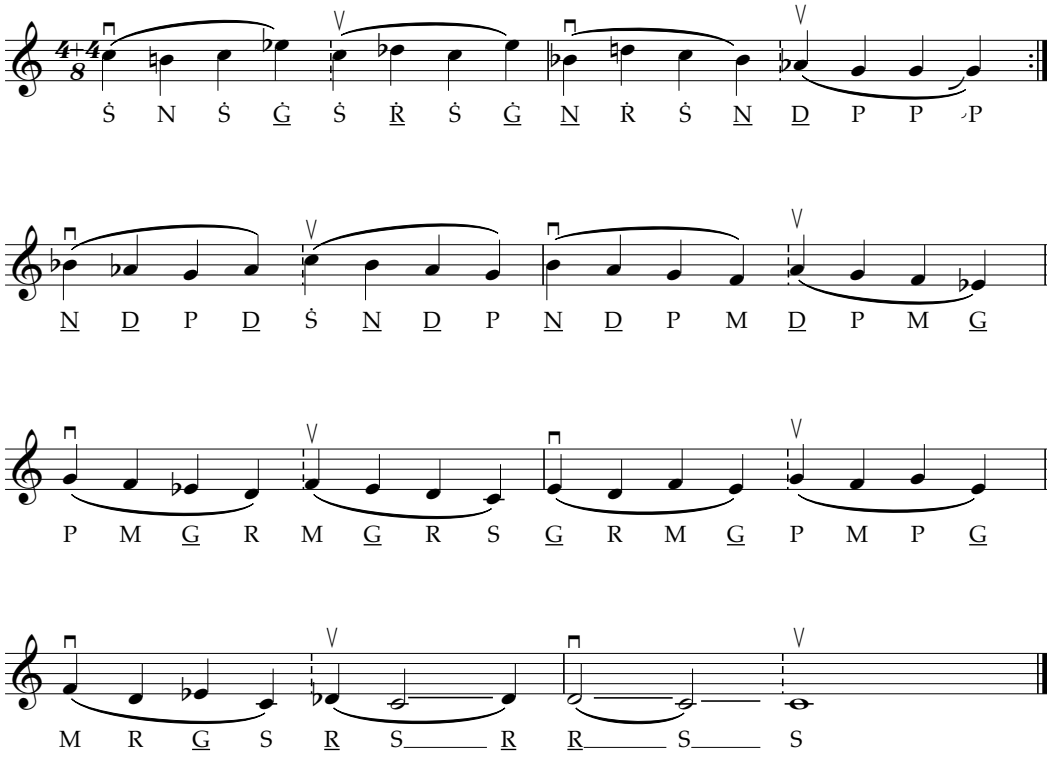
In each case, the *lehro* form first occurs at the very beginning of the metered section, and establishes the additive 4+4 metrical structure that is subsequently taken up by the *dholak*accompanists in Hakim and Chanan Khan's renditions: note that Kothari (2003: 333) identifies this 8-beat pattern as *kalvāṛā*, which he equates to the classical *tāl* known as *keherwa* or *kaharvā* (although note also that none of the musicians explicitly mention any concepts of *tāl*).

Even though Ghevar Khan is not accompanied on this occasion, nevertheless his performance in section C is remarkably similar, in terms of rhythmic style and structure, to the other two performances; and the three renditions of the Bhairvī *lehro* are so similar that we must view it as a fixed model – albeit one that is used as a springboard for the subsequent melodic extemporisations. Moreover, the

same *lehro* returns to feature during the course of each performance: in Hakim Khan's version, the same *lehro* theme returns at bar **50**; in Chanan Khan's rendition, the theme is reintroduced at bar **114** and again at bar **146**; in Ghevar Khan's performance, the *lehro* melody recurs first at bar **38**.

However, there are also a number of other recurrent melodic themes in Ghevar Khan's performance, and one of these finds an overt analogue within Chanan Khan's rendition: this theme, which begins with a focus around the upper tonic and then descends to a conclusion on the tonic, is highlighted in Figure 6.18. Although this thematic form is not present within Hakim Khan's rendition – which is significantly shorter than the other two section **C** performances, and which again consists of two large-scale repetitions of what is essentially the same melodic material – it is conceivable that it forms an additional component of the first thematic form, that we have already identified as the main Bhairvī *lehro* form that is consistent across all three performances.

Figure 6.18: Secondary thematic form embedded within *rāg* Bhairvī performances



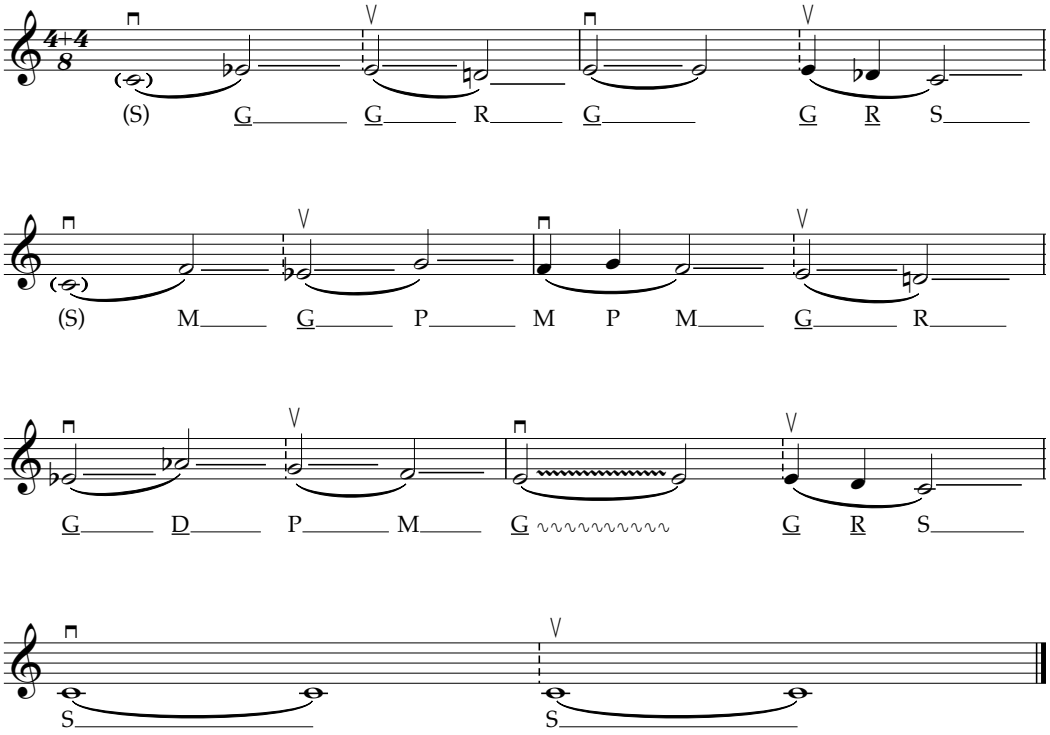
If we juxtapose both themes shown in Figures 6.17 and 6.18, the symmetrical picture emerges of a complete *lehro* melody for Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī: the first theme starts from 'Pa' and explores the lower tetrachord material before descending to the tonic; and the second heads straight up to the upper tonic (where this melodic zenith is emphasised with a repeated motif) before the movement gradually meanders back down through *rāg*-specific melodic material to 'Sa'.

Both of these *lehro* elements are, in fact, presented in series at the beginning of Chanan Khan's performance, adding strength to the hypothesis that they might be two components of the same composition. This kind of compositional structure is remarkably similar to the *sthāyī* and *antarā* sections of a North Indian classical song performance; and, whilst Hakim Khan's section **C** performance focuses mainly on lower tetrachord material (never reaching higher than *komal* 'Dha'), both Chanan and Ghevar Khan's improvisatory trajectories follow a much more classicised direction, taking them up to the high 'Sa' as their respective performances accelerate and intensify.

For Chanan, the octave emphasis begins at bar **175** and lasts until bar **204**, when he returns to the secondary thematic form before concluding his performance with a *tīhāī* and a short *rāg* extemporisation in free time – an archetypal conclusion to any classical performance – and Ghevar Khan reaches the upper 'Sa' at a similarly latter phase of the extemporisation (bar **227**) before performing a lengthy series of rapid and virtuosic improvisations.

However, before returning to a descending *vakra* variant on the secondary *lehro* theme as the precursor to concluding his performance, Ghevar also includes yet another compositional fragment (abstracted in Figure 6.19) that has also featured earlier in his section **C** rendition. The first occurrence of this tertiary theme takes place between bars **46** and **58**, and it is re-introduced during the final stages of the performance from bars **296** to **309**.

Figure 6.19: Tertiary thematic form embedded within *rāg* Bhairvī performance



This particular thematic element – which is somewhat reminiscent of a *jhālā*-type melody, especially when performed with the attendant left- and right-hand percussive techniques, as it is here – may well be an extracted excerpt from another song melody. But it would certainly appear to be pre-composed; and, even as an unidentified compositional element, its repeated inclusion here points again towards a much less classical approach to instrumental *rāg* exposition during metered sections of performance, where one would typically find one particular theme stated at the beginning of the section and then the musician would proceed to extemporise around a set of *tāns*, or improvisational exercises based upon internalised *rāga*-specific scalar movements.

Here, we find at least two (and, in Ghevar's case, certainly three) clear thematic compositional elements that are juxtaposed within each two- to three-minute metered performance, connected by a series of improvisations that are themselves often based upon common recurring themes. An example of this is shown in the upper octave extemporisations performed by both Ghevar and Chanan – bars **226-257** and bars **184-203**, respectively – where both musicians

follow the same path: once the high ‘Sa’ has been reached, a direct ascent occurs from the fifth to the upper minor third; repeated, rapid sliding movements occur between the upper second and minor third degrees; the melodic contour gradually works its way back down to the fifth, before returning directly up to the high ‘Sa’ again.

If either one of these performances were apprehended in isolation, many of the melodic movements might well appear to be “improvisatory”; and certainly each musician demonstrates his own distinctive stylistic traits in the rendering of each movement, thus making the renditions very much his own. However, when the renditions are examined in series with each other, much of the melodic material in both performances reveals itself to be reconstructed from a common source of pre-composed themes and phrase units, which have been internalised by both musicians. The extent, and general rapidity, of the ornamentation that is employed during the course of instrumental performance does much to disguise this process.

One final point to note about all three of the above section **C** performances for Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī is that they are all remarkably conservative, in terms of conforming to the common melodic model for *rāg* Bhairvī that has been established by each musician during the earlier phases of performance. There is the odd misplaced pitch (for example in bar 190 of Ghevar Khan’s rendition, where he plays *śuddh* ‘Dha’); but these are few and far between, and they do appear to be anomalous errors rather than deliberate violation of the established melodic structure.

Moreover, during the course of this final phase of performance, the artists arrive at a higher degree of unanimity, across the three versions, as to how the *rāg* Bhairvī model should manifest itself as a strictly bound melodic entity. To illustrate this point, we shall take an overview of the pitch content in each rendition of section **C** (see Figure 6.20), in order to ascertain the degree to which *rāg*-specific pitches are adhered to at this phase of the performance.

Figure 6.20: Comparison of pitch content in Bhairvī section **C** renditions

Scale degree	**Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**	**Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār**
Tonic (S)	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG
Flat 2nd (R)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 2nd (R)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 3rd (G)	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT	SIGNIFICANT
Natural 3rd (G)	-	-	-
Natural 4th (M)	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG
Fifth (P)	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Flat 6th (D)	STRONG	STRONG	STRONG
Natural 6th (D)	-	-	-
Flat 7th (N)	-	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL
Natural 7th (N)	-	NEUTRAL	NEUTRAL

As Figure 6.20 shows – and as one might expect, given the similarities that we have already identified between much of the melodic material – the artists have arrived at a firm consensus for the *rāg* Bhairvī pitch content (notwithstanding the fact that Hakim Khan does not venture beyond *komal* 'Dha', as we have already observed). The *tīvra* 'Ma' and *śuddh* 'Dha' are nowhere to be seen; and the remaining hierarchy of pitches is very much in tune with the classical *rāg* Bhairvī.

With the general approaches to this phase of performance being much less improvisatory than they might first appear, we can observe a tendency in the overall arc of each performance to greater levels of organisation – both melodically, and in terms of the trajectory from free rhythm (section **A**), to an irregular pulse (section **B**), to finally arriving at a fixed metre in section **C**. This progressive trend towards a more formal expression of musical organization and unanimity during the course of performance has powerful echoes in the social sphere, as we will speculate in our final chapter.

When considering the overall melodic content in these three performances, there appears to be relatively little material that is not fixed. Instead, what emerges is a series of pre-composed elements that are placed in a particular order to fulfil the conceptual macrostructure, at both melodic and metrical levels. Ironically, although the final sections are more organised at the level of *rāg* specifity, they are considerably less predictable in terms of the ways in which thematic *lehrā* forms may be introduced, divided into component parts, juxtaposed, and then re-introduced at unexpected (perhaps even unpremeditated) moments. A complex grammar becomes evident – one that requires the musician to demonstrate a number of different conceptual skills at different stages of the performance. For the acculturated listener, a wealth of unspoken, but nonetheless highly articulate information is presented, the various elements of which allude to very specific particular contexts and bodies of cultural knowledge.

Finally, we can say that our three instrumental performances of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī exhibit clear evidence of an intimately shared community musical knowledge system which, whilst it is undoubtedly the product of interactions with the orthodox North Indian classical system, is nonetheless equally reliant on local and regional melodic forms for its realisation in performance. In particular, musical influences from the Sindh and Balochistan regions of modern-day Pakistan once again loom large in the background of this stunningly rich, virtuosic and varied musical genre – as does the Sufi *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

6.5. Summary

From the analyses presented in this chapter, a clear picture emerges of what we might call a unified Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* system: that is to say, we have identified melodic frameworks that are commonly structured, and applied similarly in performance, by three senior musicians from three different geographic locales within the Māṅgaṇiyār community at large. Similarly, we can see that each musician employs variants of certain techniques that are specific to the *kamāichā*, and which have shaped the manner in which certain phrases and motifs are delivered. However, their unique approaches to both *kamāichā* technique and *rāg*

performance are also made evident, demonstrating that there are elements of invention, freedom, and personal choice that are all integral to each performer's musical style.

In terms of melodic structure and approaches to performance, a number of clear points of influence from the North Indian classical *rāga* system are evident here: the employment of modally specific material; the use of forms echoing structural concepts such as *sthāyī*, *antarā*, *joḍ*, *jhālā*, and soforth; and the overall structuring of the performance trajectory itself. At the same time, we have also noted a significant degree of repetition of material during all phases of performance, alongside the recurrent use of fixed models ('prototypes') and more plastic themes ('schemas') that hint at a communal Māṅgaṇiyār musical grammar. The high incidence of pre-composed, fixed material also suggests that Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī may be more commonly found closer to the 'tune' end of Powers' modal continuum for *rāga*: this issue will be investigated further in Chapter Seven, where we will compare different *rāg* performances from both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār sources.

However, we have also uncovered the significant presence of *lehrā* – fixed melodies that appear to become utilised as thematic elements within the composition of each performance – and we have connected this melodic form with folk traditions of instrumental performance that are still prevalent in the Sindh and Baloch regions of Eastern Pakistan. Moreover, the use of *lehrā* would appear provide another link between Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār approaches to performance practice; and we will explore this matter further in Chapter Seven.

When comparing these examples of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* knowledge to the system extracted from Muse Khan Laṅgā's body of musical knowledge in Chapter Five, a number of common conceptual features emerge. It is equally evident that a very similar approach to instrumental performance has been adopted within the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā tradition – although Muse Khan Laṅgā's style of playing is generally more reliant on virtuosic left-hand techniques, whereas all three of the Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* players demonstrate an emphasis on complex rhythmic bowing techniques.

Nevertheless, there are some striking similarities to be found in the content and structuring of the performances here. For example, of all the *rāgs* performed on these three particular occasions by the Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, only one – Jōg – was never performed by Muse Khan Laṅgā during my time working with him. Three of the nine *rāgas* presented in Muse Khan's system were also performed during the course of Hakim Khan' introductory session for me; and both the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār core structures of each of these three *rāgas* – Gauḍ Malhār, Sūb, and Soraṭh – appear to be closely related. This evidence suggests that there may be, in part at least, some form of shared system of structural musical knowledge between the two communities. We will now investigate this correlation further, through a cross-community analysis of *rāg* Soraṭh.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Rāg Application in Song Performance

7.1. Introduction to the analysis

During the previous two chapters, we have identified a detailed complex of melodic frameworks that are embedded within the musical knowledge system of senior performers from both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, which the musicians themselves refer to as '*rāgs*'. We have also noted that certain correlations emerge between corresponding melodic frameworks, as they are realised in performance by senior musicians across both communities, suggesting that there may be some kind of common basis for this *rāg* system.

However, the practical extent to which the system is shared between the two communities has not, thus far, been made clear. Nor have we yet examined how these melodic frameworks are applied during the course of a typical vocal performance; and it is still uncertain whether the folk musicians' use of the term '*rāg*' is necessarily indicative of some form of direct, structural relation to the more formalised *rāga* frameworks that are found in North Indian classical music. In order to confront these questions, we need to examine specific manifestations of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* frameworks in one of their most typically occurring contexts – that of *baḍa gānā* performance. To this end, we shall now analyse another melodic format that is commonly found in contemporary practice within the repertoires of both communities, but which has only an historical record of usage in the Hindustani classical music system: *rāg* Soraṭh.

This particular *rāg* has been chosen for a number of reasons. Firstly, there are diverse recorded examples of *rāg* Soraṭh (from both past and present fieldwork) to draw from, providing a varied sample for analysis. Moreover, *rāg* Soraṭh has, to all intents and purposes, vanished from common practice in contemporary North Indian classical music circles, with there being no known extant classical recordings featuring *rāga* Soraṭh to be found. This would seem to suggest that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs acquired knowledge of the *rāga* at an earlier point

in history – certainly prior to Independence in 1947, and most likely before the recording of music performances became prevalent in India. Given this evidence, we can deduce that the folk musicians have maintained their knowledge of *rāg* Soraṭh, through hereditary transmission and performance practice, more or less independently of recent trends in the classical music system. This gives the analysis an interesting diachronic dimension.

Additionally, being a melodic format that is still favoured by senior musicians from both communities, the various renditions of *rāg* Soraṭh provide us with an opportunity to examine the ways in which different Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār performers interpret a conceptual melodic framework that is given the same nominal designation by both groups of musicians. In summary, a detailed analysis of this particular melodic framework can offer us insights into a possible instance of shared cross-community knowledge being embedded in contemporary performance practice, as well as providing us with an opportunity to further examine a clear instance of historical interaction between the classical and local music traditions.

Our initial approach to the analysis will be governed by the methodology used in the previous chapters: that is to say, we shall examine transcriptions of various renditions of *rāg* Soraṭh, and attempt to reduce the melodic content into schematic patterns that the musicians might conceptually employ, when negotiating their way through a performance that utilises this particular *rāg*. The evidence of such patterns (or lack thereof) will inform us regarding the extent to which a diverse set of senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians conceive of the *rāg* structure as being a necessary framework for the successful performance of *baḍā gāna* material; moreover, the shape of *rāg* Soraṭh, as it is realised by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs through music performance, will become textualised via the analytical process, thus allowing us to examine the relationship of this folk *rāg* to the melodic framework of the now-obsolete classical *rāga* Soraṭh.

When considering any potential dynamic relationship between the ‘Great’ and ‘Little’ traditions in question, a further significant issue must now be considered. During the course of analysing the various melodic frameworks in Chapters Five and Six, we have seen that that some of the melodic frameworks in the Laṅgā

and Māṅgaṇiyār musical corpus, despite being referred to as '*rāgs*' by the musicians themselves, may in fact be less *rāga*-like (in the generally accepted classical sense of the term) than others. This point was noted by Kothari (in Barucha 2003: 333), who offered a prototype division of Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* types into those that are related to their classical counterparts (some more closely than others), and those that bear no obvious relation to the classical system, either by name or in terms of melodic structure:

> Some rāga names – Kalyan, Jog, Paraf, Sindhi Bhairvi, Bilawal, Toḍī, Salang (Sarang) – resemble those of certain classical rāgas. However, with the exception of Sindhi Bhairvi, these rāgas do not have the same characteristics as the classical rāgas. Some rāgas of regional origin (Sorath, Des, Māru, Pahāḍi) are shared by both traditions… Finally, there are rāga names (Suhab, Sāmeri, Birvās, Mānjh, Khamāychi) which are not found in the classical tradition at all.

With regards to Kothari's assessment of "Sindhi Bhairvi" (which we can take here to refer to the *rāg* which some of the folk musicians simply call "Bhairvī"), our analysis in the previous chapter would seem to confirm his hypothesis that the Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Bhairvī exhibits many of the same melodic characteristics as classical *rāg* Bhairvī – albeit with the important proviso that the *rāg* structure is not developed gradually, as is the case with *vistār* in classical performances.

Conversely, whilst Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār processes of *rāg* extemporisation appear to be less based on improvisation, and more on the ornamentation of fixed skeletal melodies that have been internalised through primarily oral methods of hereditary transmission, the performances themselves demonstrate significant evidence of a "classicised" macro-structure. Therefore the problem is not only whether the *rāgs* share the same name – or even the same melodic characteristics – as their classical counterparts; but also how the identified *rāg* structures function within the context of a given music performance. These "performance characteristics" are particularly important in the case of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, since their music system has no apparent text-based source of authority.

Kothari names *rāg* Soraṭh as belonging to a group of regional melodic forms that are (or more accurately, in the case of *rāg* Soraṭh, used to be) shared by both the

classical and folk tradition; but he adds that such locally derived forms are "rāgas that play a minor role in classical music" (ibid). Certainly there would appear to be no role at all for *rāga* Soraṭh in the modern classical repertoire – although there are two other contemporary *rāgas* that bear a striking resemblance to the *rāg* Soraṭh that is still performed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, as we shall see. But, before examining the structural properties and performance characteristics of this rich melodic form, let us investigate the historical background of *rāg* Soraṭh.

7.2. *Rāg* Soraṭh – an overview

7.2.1. History and classical usage

The name 'Soraṭh' is most likely derived from the present-day region of Saurashtra, which is located on the Kathiawar Peninsula, along the Arabian Sea coast of the modern state of Gujarat. 'Soraṭh' is the Prakrit word for the eponymous geographical region, meaning literally 'good country'; and the term was used for many years to refer specifically to the southern and westernmost area of Saurashtra, during a period (875 – 1473 CE) when this area was thought to have been ruled by the Chudasama Rajputs (see the historical discussion of traditional society in the Kathiawar region in Tambs-Lyche 1997). Subsequently, the region came under the dominion of the Mughals, who are believed to have forcibly converted the Chudasama rulers to Islam, establishing local rule from the princely state of Junagaṛh ('Old Fort'). This situation continued until 1822, when those princely states in the region of Gujarat became British protectorates.

Although there are no references to the term 'Soraṭh' being the designation of a particular *rāga* in the *Saṅgītaratnākara*, there is mention of two melodic formats called 'Saurashtri'. One could speculate that it was during the latter period of Chudasama rule that the codification of local Saurashtrian melody forms into the framework of a Hindustani classical *rāga* called 'Soraṭh' first began. However, the naming of *rāgas* by place cannot be easily equated with melodic formats being derived from that same region, and it would be very difficult to determine any historical basis for this kind of speculation. Indeed, there may be other (perhaps more arbitrary) explanations that we can never be fully aware of; and

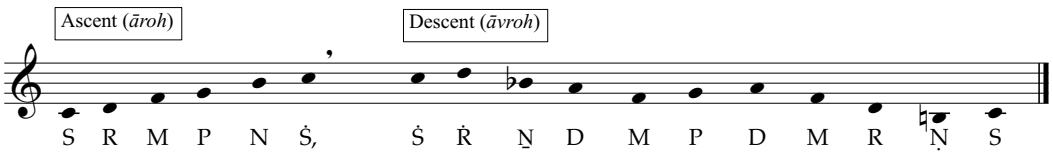
there are many cases of *rāg* melodies changing either name, or form, or both, during the various stages of evolution in North Indian classical music – indeed, this process is ongoing. Therefore, whilst we can say that the name 'Soraṭh' was probably derived from the region of Saurashtra, we cannot say the same of any extant melodic format that happens to bear this name, with any degree of certainty.

The earliest explicit mention of '*rāga* Soraṭh' occurs in a late 16th century Sanskrit *Rāgmāla* text attributed to Kshemakarna (see Berkemer and Rothermund eds. 2001: 155-162), wherein Soraṭh is listed as the first *rāgini* ('wife-*rāga*') of *rāga* Megh. Thus it is evident that, by the time of the rule of Akbar, a melodic framework known as 'Soraṭh' had developed to the point of becoming firmly established as one of the main thirty-six *rāgas* in the medieval North Indian classical music system. Around the same time, Soraṭh also appears as the ninth *rāga* to take its place in the hymn lists of the *Ādi Granṭh*, which was the first rendition of the core Sikh religious text the *Gurū Granṭh Sahib*, composed initially by Guru Arjun and completed in its earliest form by 1604 (Kushwant 1991). We can infer from this data that *rāga* Soraṭh was a core melodic structure, in use within mainstream North Indian formal music systems, from at least this period.

We can be equally certain that *rāg* Soraṭh remained a fixture in the repertoire of at least some classical musicians up until the early twentieth century, since it features in Volume Five (331-326) of Bhātkhaṇḍe's seminal treatise *Hindustānī Sangīt Kramik Pustak-Mālikā*. First published in 1920 as a series of textbooks, the six volumes of *Kramik Pustak-Mālikā* feature detailed descriptions of the *rāgas* that were prevalent within the genre of Hindustani classical music at the time of writing. These descriptions comprise *rāga*-related literary references, drawn from both contemporary and historical musical texts – including the *Nāṭyaśāstra* and *Sangīta-Ratnākara*, both of which Bhātkhaṇḍe had studied in some depth – juxtaposed with melodic information describing the structural composition of each specific *rāga*, along with notations of musical compositions that were in common performance practice at the time of Bhātkhaṇḍe's active musical research (dating roughly from the late 1880s, until his death in 1936).

In his entry on *rāg* Soraṭh, (which he spells as 'Soraṭ') Bhātkhaṇḍe notes that this *rāga* belongs to Khamaj *ṭhāṭ*, according to his own system for the classification of *rāgas* in North Indian classical music by scale type. He goes on to describe the various salient melodic movements that apply to the *rāga*, including an outline of the correct ascending and descending (*āroh-āvroh*) pitches to be used – these contours are shown in Example 7.1, below, using a combination of *sargam* and staff notation.

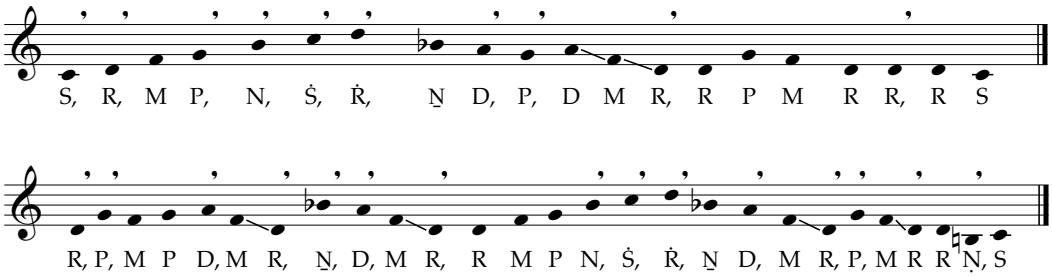
Example 7.1: Bhātkhaṇḍe's *āroh-āvroh* pitch contours for *rāg* Soraṭh



The first important point to note is that classical *rāg* Soraṭh – at the time of Bhātkhaṇḍe's writing, at least – was conceived of as being pentatonic in a direct ascent (skipping the third and sixth degrees of the scale), and heptatonic in an oblique descent, with the third degree of the scale being omitted from the *rāga* completely. Additionally, both flat and natural 7th degrees were employed during the course of the descending scale, with the fifth degree acting as an important axis-point for oblique movements. Besides the flattened (*komal*) 7th used in the upper tetrachord during descending movements, all of the pitches are indicated as being *śuddh*, or 'natural'.

Bhātkhaṇḍe also supplies the reader with a melodic map, or *calan* (literally 'how to go', or 'procedure') that delineates, in a concise form, how the various movements within the *rāga* should be navigated during the course of a performance. Example 7.2, below, expresses Bhātkhaṇḍe's *calan* in *rāg* Soraṭh using staff notation: in the original text, all of the musical information is presented using his own seminal system of *sargam*. This particular *calan* offers two possible ways to negotiate the correct pitches, via a series of stepwise ascent-descent phrase movements.

Example 7.2: Bhātkhaṇḍe's *calan* for *rāg* Soraṭh



A number of distinctive melodic features of classical *rāga* Soraṭh emerge from this. The second, fourth and fifth degrees of the scale feature as the most frequently used notes – in particular the second degree 'Re', which occurs at both the beginning and end of a number of phrase units, and acts as the upper point of alightment. The descending, sliding movement from 'Ma' to 'Re' is repeated five times throughout the *calan*, emphasising its importance; and the stepwise ascent 'Re Ma Pa Ni' is also used as the main path of ascent in both approaches. Although both degrees of 'Ni' are only used sparingly, they provide characteristic colour to the ascending and descending movements, as does the light use of 'Dha' exclusively in descent. However, there is no 'Ga' (either natural or flattened) in Bhātkhaṇḍe's Soraṭh, which is a key factor in differentiating this *rāga* from *rāga* Deś, as we will see. These pitch hierarchies are also reflected in Figure 7.1, which shows the number of times each scale degree occurs within the *calan*.

Figure 7.1: Pitch occurrence in Bhātkhaṇḍe's *calan* for *rāg* Soraṭh

Scale Degree	**No. of Occurrences**
Ṡ/Ṡ	5
Ṙ/Ṙ	15
M	9
P	7
D	5
N	3
Ṉ	3

Bhātkhaṇḍe's detailed melodic framework for classical *rāga* Soraṭh presents the last known textual formulation of the *rāga*, whilst it was still a commonly recognised and performed classical entity. We shall return to this model later in the chapter, where it will be utilised as an analytical reference point for comparison with the *rāg* Soraṭh melodic structures that are expressed in performance by the Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs. If their knowledge of the *rāg* is related in any way to its classical counterpart, then we would expect to find some significant points of concurrence with Bhātkhaṇḍe's early 20th century formulation of *rāga* Soraṭh.

Taking into account the ten attendant song compositions notated by Bhātkhaṇḍe in his entry on Soraṭh, it seems likely that this *rāga* was still very much a part of the repertoire, for some prominent North Indian performers at least, up until around 100 years ago. Two early gramophone recordings featuring *rāga* Soraṭh – both dating from the early part of the 20th Century – are currently to be found online, in the Archive of Indian Music (accessed November 2015): one is a rendition of the still-popular *bhajan* 'Jhini Jhini Bini Chadariya', performed by a singer called Master Bhagvandas; and the second is a recording made by the renowned performer and pioneer recording artist Gauhar Jaan, of another well-known *bhajan* entitled 'Piya Bin Nahin Awat Chain'. This second recording can be dated with some accuracy to between November 1915 and January 1916 (see Kinnear 1994: 125), during which time Jaan made at least one other recording featuring *rāga* Soraṭh (ibid).

Another early recording of 'Piya Bin Nahin Awat Chain' was made by the famous North Indian classical singer Abdul Karim Khan, from a session dating to between 1925 and 1926 – only ten years after the Gauhar Jaan version in *rāga* Soraṭh was recorded (an online version of the Abdul Karim Khan recording is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l5Gje0EyBO4 – accessed November 2015); but, interestingly, Abdul Karim Khan's version of the *bhajan* is said to be "in" *rāg* Jhinjhoti. This suggests the possibility that melodically related *rāgas* such as Jhinjhoti (which, like *rāg* Soraṭh, also belongs to Bhātkhaṇḍe's Khamaj *ṭhāṭ*) were already becoming preferable performance options to *rāga* Soraṭh. From this evidence, we can speculate that *rāga* Soraṭh

fell out of common usage in mainstream North Indian classical music during the middle period of the twentieth century; and, with the exception of a recording by Pandit Jasraj (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_5STnr2SXX8&t=644s), there are no known contemporary recordings by senior classical artists featuring this *rāga* by name.

However, a number of hymns composed in classical *rāga* Soraṭh for the Gurū Granṭh Sahib continue to be performed on a regular basis within the Sikh religious tradition; and – most significantly, in the context of the present study – the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs have maintained a tradition of performing a number of songs that are said, by the musicians themselves, to be "in" *rāg* Soraṭh. How the folk musicians came to utilize this *rāga* as a melodic framework for performance is less certain. Neuman et al. (2006: 108) put forward the following argument:

> It is hard to imagine Raga Sorath, identical in both its Rajasthani and Hindustani structure and with a name that identifies its origins in neighbouring Saurasthra [sic], to have been simply adopted by Rajasthani musicians listening to classical musicians. More likely, classical musicians heard songs in this melodic structure and created Raga Sorath as a consequence.

Whilst we may concede a possible localised origin for at least some of the melodic information that eventually coalesced into the classical form of *rāga* Soraṭh, there is no way to prove such an assertion. Moreover, regardless of the origins of the classical *rāga*, it seems certain that the 'Rajasthani' version of the Soraṭh melodic format has undergone a process of classicization – even if only to the extent that it is designated as a '*rāg*'. But, if the *rāga* is proven to be "identical in both its Rajasthani and Hindustani structure" (a matter which we shall investigate), then this would seem to imply some form of direct link between the two styles. As we have seen, it is quite plausible that classical knowledge of *rāga* Soraṭh may have come into the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoire via some form of direct transmission from the classical system. But we must also investigate an alternative possibility: namely, that *rāg* Soraṭh was introduced into the repertoire indirectly, via the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

7.2.2. Shāh Abdul Latīf and the legend of Queen Soraṭh

The romantic legend of Queen Soraṭh and Rai Diyach is enduringly popular throughout Western Rajasthan and the surrounding regions. Since the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are themselves musical promulgators of this particular story – and since the legend is intimately connected with the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf, outlined in the historical context presented in Chapter Two – a brief overview of this tragic story is appropriate here.

The legend of Soraṭh tells of a beautiful queen from the Junagarh region of Gujarat, who sacrificed her life for the love of her husband, Rai Diyach (also known variously as Raja Dhaj, and Ror Kumar). It is said that Rai Diyach was so pleased by the songs of a certain wandering minstrel, that he offered the bard anything he desired. The bard requested Rai Diyach's head; and the legendary king, being so generous and true to his sovereign word, acceded to the bard's outrageous request, having himself beheaded. Since Queen Soraṭh could not bear the pain of separation from her beloved husband, she took her own life, so that she could join him in the next world.

Beyond the regional prevalence – and enduring popularity – of many stories featuring such extreme acts of honour, valour and sacrifice, the matter of legendary figure Rai Diyach being considered synonymous with the name of Ror Kumar may hold particular significance for Sindhi Rajputs, since Ror Kumar has been put forward in some sources as the historical founder of the influential Ror dynasty, which ruled a large surrounding region from what is now the town of Sukkur, in the Sindh region of Pakistan, from the 5th Century BCE (see, for example, Singh 1987 and Ramdas 2000). However, making a solid historical connection between the proposed historical rule of Ror Kumar and the legend of Queen Soraṭh is less straightforward: for example, Sorath's legendary home in the original hill fort at Junagarh – a building that still stands, called Uperkot – is thought to have been built by Chandragupta, founder of the Mauryan dynasty, in 319 BCE (Amarji 1882), some 200 years after the proposed rule of Ror Kumar, and well over 800km distant from the seat of his rule in Sukkur.

It seems likely that the threads of these two disparate historical narratives were woven together into the legend of Soraṭh and Rai Diyach at a later date – possibly at some point during the period of Chudasama Rajput rule in the Saurashtran region of Gujarat (7th/9th Century CE to 1470), given that the Rajput association has become so prominent with the tale. Indeed, it is this very association that gives the story of Queen Soraṭh an enduring relevance for contemporary Rajput families living in Western Rajasthan – and, by extension, for their musicians. It is even possible that the influential character of the mysterious wandering minstrel in this story may imbue the legend with a particularly potent meaning for professional musicians under the employ of Rajputs, perhaps going some way to explaining the continued popularity of this story among the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs.

For Shāh Abdul Latīf, the legend of Soraṭh undoubtedly provided an ideal poetic vehicle for his philosophical ideas. It became an integral part of his *Risālo*, with Soraṭh herself being personified as one of his 'Seven Queens of Sindhi Folklore' (see the Historical Context in Chapter Two). In his seminal work on the life and poetry of Shāh Abdul Latīf, H.T. Sorley offers his own assessment of the possible origins of the Soraṭh legend (1940: 261-262) – he adds weight to the argument suggesting a Gujarati origin for the legend, whilst also emphasising the pre-Islamic, regional roots of all of the stories featured in the *Risālo*:

> The story of Sōrath and King Diach, which appears as the Sur Sōrath in the Risālo, is one that comes from Cutch or Kāthiawār and must go back to the twelfth century A.D. at least. In Shāh Abdul Latīf's version the king has become a Sultan but this does not necessarily mean anything in itself. The story is plainly a Hindu tale in all essentials and not originally one that is placed in Sind.

Despite conceding the likely Hindu origins of the original folk tales, Sorley points out that Shāh Abdul Latīf uses the raw literary materials of these widely-known local legends to convey hidden mystical ideas, in a manner that is commonly associated with the more esoteric Sufi branches of Islamic expression; in this respect, he was certainly influenced by the work of Jalāluddīn Rūmī (see, for example, Sorley 1940: 174 and Jotwani 1975: 23). Moreover, in Shāh Abdul Latīf's setting of the Soraṭh legend – and, more generally, in his conception of the *Risālo* as a work to be sung – the phenomenon of music is advanced as a

primary medium for generating such mystical experiences. For example, when the wandering minstrel performs for Rai Diyach, the relationship between the bard and the king takes on a transformative aspect, symbolising the "mysterious unity of the soul with God" (ibid: 271), as emphasised in Sorley's own unashamedly literary (as opposed to literal) translation of the following verse from *Sūr* Soraṭh (ibid):

> 'Man is my secret: I am his.
>
> Here lies the key to mysteries.
>
> This phrase the singer took to sing
>
> The song he sang before the King:
>
> And when he sang, where there were two,
>
> The pair to single One-ness grew.'

When viewed from this philosophical perspective, it is perhaps more understandable that, for Shāh Abdul Latīf, the conceptual boundaries between poetry and music became somewhat indistinct. Sorley also recognised this, pointing out that the verses of the *Risālo* "were originally composed to be recited, intoned, or sung to a musical accompaniment." (Ibid: 217) Hence, in the context of the *Risālo*, the category of '*sūr*' came to represent both a given thematic chapter of verse, and the particular melody type associated with its performance. In summarising the fundamentally moral extra-musical associations evoked in performances of *sūr* Soraṭh, Baloch (1966: 75) presents us with a picture that must resonate with all Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians:

> Sur Sorath depicts sacrifice for art, regard for one's word of honour and charitable attitude towards the artist. The climax of this story [is viewed as] being the offer of one's life in the appreciation of [the] art of music, as the hero of the story Rai Diach did.

Our investigation thus far suggests that the folk performer's conception of a certain *rāg* can go beyond considering it as a purely musical format. *Rāgs* may be intimately bound up with the legends and stories that are associated with them;

and this integral connection between poetry and music is made particularly clear through the musicians' knowledge of, and performance of, poetic couplets – known as *duhās* – that are specific to certain *rāgs*. Indeed, even though Sorley may not have realised it (there is no mention of *duhās* in his 1940 work on Shāh Abdul Latīf), the extract from *Sūr* Soraṭh above retains, even in translation, the cardinal poetic couplet form of the *duhā*. Jotwani draws our attention to Shāh Abdul Latīf's own ubiquitous use of this regionally widespread literary device (1975: 5):

> Shāh Abdul Latīf, contrary to the views held by almost all Sindhi scholars till 1953, used in his *baits* [verses] varied forms of Dōhā – the Dōhā, an elegant, urban poetic form, with which many languages of north India are quite familiar.

Of more immediate relevance to the present analysis is the fact that the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians still maintain a tradition of rendering *rāg*-specific *duhās* during the course of musical performance. But is there a connection between the poetic couplets that are sung by the musicians, and the *sūrs* of Shāh Abdul Latif? We shall investigate this matter further in section 7.2.5, by examining the textual content of a series of Soraṭh-related *duhās*, supplied by Muse Khan Laṅgā during fieldwork. But first, we shall consider the presentation of *rāg* Soraṭh as a purely melodic entity, within the context of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music performance.

7.2.3. *Rāg* Soraṭh in contemporary Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music

Extant recordings and ethnographic evidence can be used in combination with new fieldwork data to demonstrate that *rāg* Soraṭh is still a staple melodic format in the repertoires of many senior musicians from both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities. It is notable that performances featuring this particular *rāg* have been captured in field recordings stretching from Kothari's sessions in 1972, right through to my own most recent visit in 2014, suggesting that *rāg* Soraṭh has long been popular among the musicians themselves; and its consistent presence in performances also lends credence to our hypothesis that the *rāg* has long been part of a pre-existing core repertoire. To give a longitudinal overview of this usage, Figure 7.2 details a non-exhaustive selection of known recordings, that feature various senior musicians from across all three communities, giving

diverse renditions of *rāg* Soraṭh – both within the context of informal instrumental expositions, and when presenting various songs in more formally structured performance frameworks.

Figure 7.2: Selected recorded examples of senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians performing renditions featuring *rāg* Soraṭh

Lead Musician	**Song Title**	**Source**
Alladin Khan Laṅgā	'Papīyā Pīyarē' (1972)	ARCE (Kothari)
Anwar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	'Gaṅgājal Ghoḍo' (1990)	ARCE (Neuman)
Asin Khan Laṅgā	'Khimuro' (2013)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Bhungar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	'Luṇāgar' (1990)	ARCE (Neuman)
Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	Instrumental (2013)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Firoze Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	'Bālochan' (2013)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Gazi Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	'Ūndo Ūndo Gajē' (1990)	ARCE (Neuman)
Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	Instrumental (2013)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Hakam Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	'Jāgīrdār' (1994)	Fieldwork (Widdess)
Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	Instrumental (2014)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Hayat Mohammad Laṅgā	Unknown Song (1994)	Fieldwork (Widdess)
Karim Khan Laṅgā	'Bālochan' (1984)	ARCE (Flora)
Meharuddin Khan Laṅgā	'Kalhābi' (1994)	Fieldwork (Widdess)
Muse Khan Laṅgā	'Bālochan' (2014)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Muse Khan Laṅgā	'Jasmā Odani' (2013)	Fieldwork (Davies)
Naik Mohammad Laṅgā	'Khimuro' (1994)	Fieldwork (Widdess)
Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	'Bālochan' (1990)	ARCE (Neuman)

As Figure 7.2 shows, renditions featuring *rāg* Soraṭh are performed widely across both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, in a variety of song contexts; and we can also note that the song 'Bālochan' is a prevalent – and popular – setting for this particular melodic format. Moreover, it is evident that versions of the 'Bālochan' song have been recorded not only in the Māṅgaṇiyār community (Neuman and Davies), but also within both the Surnāīa Laṅgā (Flora) and Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā (Davies) communities. This wide distribution of recordings that feature what appears to be the same song, being performed consistently in the

same *rāg*, provides us with an ideal opportunity to examine the further issue of potentially shared musical knowledge.

Before considering the application of *rāg* Soraṭh within the context of *baḍa gānā* song performance, we will first make a preliminary comparison of core formulations for this *rāg* that we have already encountered from two senior musicians: Muse Khan Laṅgā (Chapter Five) and Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (Chapter Six). Since we have already established that there is no basis for a contemporary classical influence (and no known source of recordings that the musicians could have worked from to learn the *rāga* remotely), any resemblance of these recently recorded musical forms to Bhātkhaṇḍe's description of *rāga* Soraṭh would seem to point very strongly towards an earlier classical intervention, that somehow impacted upon the repertoire of both communities.

However, there is another possibility: given the fact that *sūr* Soraṭh is an integral part of Shāh Abdul Latīf's *Risalo*, it is quite plausible that musicians from both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities acquired knowledge of this melody form in the Sindh, via the process of becoming versed in *sūr* music. If this were the case, it would have been possible for the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs to incorporate a melodic model that was labelled as 'Soraṭh' without necessarily having any direct tutelage in this particular *rāga* from Hindustani classical musicians.

In order to confront this question, it is therefore necessary to compare the contemporary Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār performance frameworks for *rāg* Soraṭh with each other; with Bhātkhaṇḍe's model for classical *rāga* Soraṭh; and with Shāh Abdul Latīf's formulation of *sūr* Soraṭh. For this final model, we shall utilize the ascent-descent pattern outlined by Baloch in the following passage, which he derived from the performances of folk musicians in the Sindh (1966: 72):

> Sur Sorath is a popularly known form of classical music and resembles the classical Raga Des. The *Gandhar* note is dropped from the ascending [sic] scale of Raga Des to obtain the form of Sorath. Its ascending scale is SA RE MA PA NI SA and the descending scale is SA NI DHA PA MA RE SA.

Although Baloch does not specify flat, sharp or natural degrees of the scale, it is clear from his descriptions of this and other *sūrs* that he expects the reader to be versed in the relevant classical theory: hence, when he equates the melodic form to *rāga* Deś, minus 'Ga' in both ascent and descent, we can infer that all pitches should be *śuddh* – with the exception of 'Ni' in descent, which becomes *komal* in classical Deś and which therefore should also be flattened in the descent of *sūr* Soraṭh.

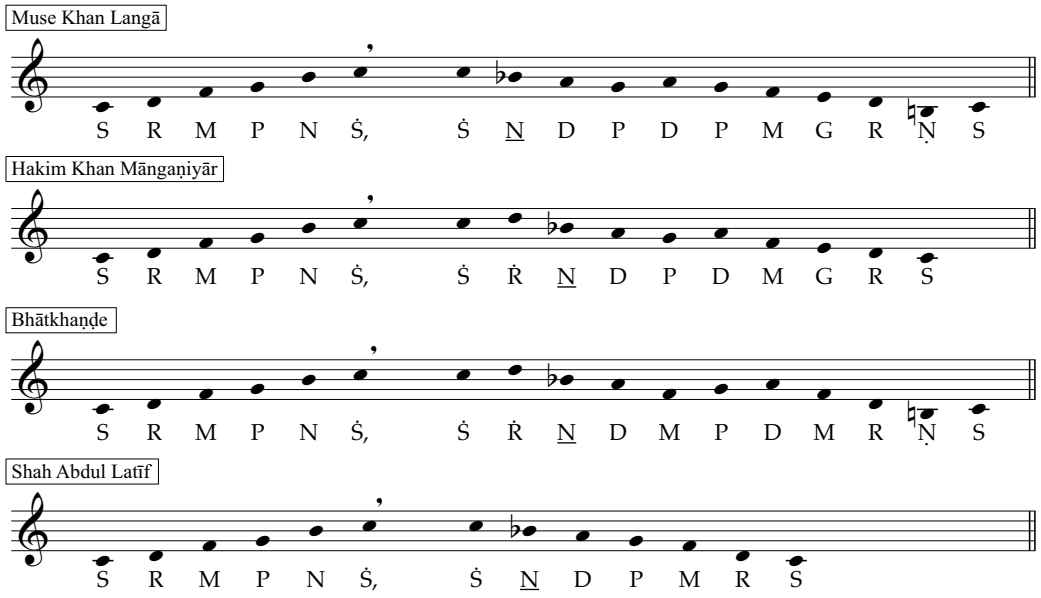
The equation of *rāga* Deś with *sūr* Soraṭh is itself of some note, since the concept of a *deśī* melody being contrasted with the *mārga* forms of the ancient canonical music system is an integral question to the hypothesis presented in this study: indeed, we are about to perform just such a comparison! Certainly Deś and Soraṭh are close to each other in form: Bor et al (1999: 60) assert that, in the case of "traditional Rajasthani music rāga Sorath is hardly distinguishable from Desh"; and even Baloch adds that "singers in the Sind region usually sing the Raga Des and call it Sorath." (1966: 72) However, the model provided by Baloch above does give us a clear distinction, in the form of the dropped 'Ga' in descent; and in this respect, there is a clear echo of the classical framework put forward by Bhātkhaṇḍe. It is also important to note here that some Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians utilize a separate melodic framework that they identify as *rāg* Deś, thereby implying that they, too, make some form of distinction between the two forms; but whether such a distinction is made manifest in performance remains to be seen.

Armed with these diverse models, we can now judge how they may, or may not, relate to the structures of *rāg* Soraṭh that form the melodic frameworks for the performance of *baḍa gānā* music within the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār tradition. But first, as a precursor to this larger cross-community study, we shall consider how the conceptual Soraṭh systems put forward by Bhātkhaṇḍe and Shāh Abdul Latīf relate to the diverse melodies for *rāg* Soraṭh that we have already identified, abstracted from their most typical performance contexts, in the contemporary *rāg* knowledge systems of two senior musicians: Muse Khan Laṅgā and Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār.

7.2.4. Comparing two presentations of *rāg* Soraṭh

Although Muse Khan Laṅgā and Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār presented a largely non-identical range of *rāgs* during the fieldwork recordings conducted for this study, it is notable that both chose to perform a rendition of *rāg* Soraṭh during their introductory sessions for me. This suggests that the *rāg* is an important component of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoires, and one which senior musicians are quick to showcase. Furthermore, both artists made a point of noting the similarity of this *rāg*, in terms of melodic content, with *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār – which, along with *rāg* Sūb, was the only other melodic format that both musicians included in their essential core presentations. But it is also notable that Hakim Khan called his version "Sindhi Soraṭh", possibly suggesting that this form is distinct from its classical counterpart. Figure 7.3 compares the abstracted ascent and descent patterns for these two distinct Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār formulations of *rāg* Soraṭh, and places them in series with both the *sūr* model provided by Baloch and Bhātkhaṇḍe's classical *rāga* Soraṭh.

Figure 7.3: Preliminary comparison of Soraṭh ascent-descent patterns



We have already noted that Shāh Abdul Latīf was heavily influenced by the Hindustani classical *rāga* forms that were prevalent at the time he is thought to have composed the *Risālo*, during the first half of the 17th century; and we also

know that Soraṭh was a prominent classical *rāga* at this time. In the absence of further source material to elucidate the precise melodic movements of *sūr* Soraṭh, this highly reduced model does not give us much detail; however, it is revealing that Shah Abdul Latīf utilized an ascent-descent model that bears significant resemblance to the classical *rāga* Soraṭh encountered by Bhātkhaṇḍe some 150 years later. This suggests consistency – not only in Shah Abdul Latīf's approach to openly borrowing the classical *rāga* models for his own system, but also in the classical form of *rāga* Soraṭh, during the intervening period of the late middle ages.

As Figure 7.3 shows, all four models for Soraṭh agree on the ascent pattern, which is a direct run up to the high 'Sa' through all natural pitches, omitting the 'Ga' and 'Dha'. In descent, we find some points of accord, and also some variation: whilst all four sources seem to agree on the matter of the seventh being flattened in descent, only Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār follows the classical approach advocated by Bhātkhaṇḍe in beginning his descent with a *vakrā* movement up to the high 'Re', and then directly down to *komal* 'Ni'. Conversely, it is Muse Khan Laṅgā who includes the classical *vakrā* movement from 'Re' to low 'Ni', which becomes natural before the ascent back up to the middle 'Sa', whereas Hakim Khan does not perform this movement in his "Sindhi Soraṭh" rendition.

Another point of variation can be found in the region around 'Pa', which both Muse Khan and Hakim Khan seem to view as a temporary resting spot, and an axis point in the descent trajectory; but only Hakim Khan skips the 'Pa' in descent from 'Dha' to 'Ma', as advocated in Bhātkhaṇḍe's model for *rāga* Soraṭh. Even more conspicuous is both folk musicians' use of *śuddh* 'Ga' in descent, which is both "out of *rāga*" and "out of *sūr*". In this respect, the musicians might well appear to be confusing Soraṭh with *rāga* Deś, as suggested by Baloch and Bor – although we should also note that both include *vakrā* movements in their descent, which is not characteristic of the classical melodic model for Deś as put forward in *The Raga Guide* (1999: 60).

In view of the fact that Hakim Khan explicitly referred to his rendition as "*rāg* Sindhi Soraṭh" (as opposed to simply "*rāg* Soraṭh"), we must consider the

possibility that the musicians here are not playing exactly the same melodic framework. The very distinction may imply that, for Hakim Khan, this particular version of the Soraṭh model is divergent from the classical model in some respect; and such knowledge would itself imply a greater familiarity with the classical system, along with an ability to distinguish it from Sindh-derived variants. However, given that "Sindhi Soraṭh" recordings are extremely rare (I have found none), and that Hakim Khan only performed this particular version of Soraṭh and no other, more fieldwork would need to be conducted in order to obtain a satisfactory answer to the issue of "Sindhi Soraṭh" *rāg* variants.

From our preliminary comparison of the models available, it is clear that all of these frameworks for Soraṭh have a common melodic basis; but it is equally clear that, whilst both Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Muse Khan Laṅgā appear to be following broadly the same rules for applying this melodic framework, there are some variations between their two performances. Additionally, there is a notable departure from the standard model that, curiously, they both choose to follow, with their inclusion of 'Ga' in descent. Therefore, whilst we can concede that there is a common source for both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Soraṭh – being the classical form, either directly from classical musicians or indirectly via the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf – we must also attempt to account for the variations occurring in performance.

In order to do this, a wider sample of performances is required. Moreover, it is essential to look at vocal models, since we have already observed through our study of Māṅgaṇiyār Sindhi Bhairvī performances that the essential *rāg* pitch content and melodic movements are more consistently represented in song compositions, which are by nature less flexible than the unmetered introductory *rāg* expositions. There is also one Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār vocal model – the sung recitation of *duhā* poetry – that can sometimes evidence associations with particular *rāg* designations; and so we shall continue our study with an examination of *duhā* couplets that make explicit mention of 'Soraṭh'.

7.2.5. Soraṭh *duhās*

We have already noted that senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians perform a number of *duhās* that appear to be specific to certain *rāgs*; however, it remains to be seen whether this specificity pertains to connections that can be drawn from the name of the *rāg* itself – such as when the *rāg* name references a legendary figure, or a geographical region or location – or whether these *duhās* communicate information regarding the musical structures or aesthetic associations of the *rāgs* themselves. Indeed, the musicians' performance of *duhā* couplets has caused some confusion among scholars – most notably, in an influential characterisation of the folk musicians' concept of *duhā* being in some way analogous to the classical concept of *alāp*:

> Most songs begin with a couplet commonly pronounced as *duha* in Rajasthan (a term found throughout North India), which is also that introductory part of the song which is non-metered and is in some ways akin to the *alap* in the classical musical tradition.
>
> Neuman et al. 2006: 144

The equation of *duhā* with *ālāp* is certainly understandable, since *duhās* are indeed typically rendered during the course of the unmetered introductory section of a song performance (see the section on *duhā* in Chapter Four of the present work for a more detailed discussion of this matter); and the fact that some *duhās* performed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are clearly related to specific *rāgs* – in name at least – does suggest the possible existence of a deeper connection between the *duhā* lyrics and the *rāg* musical structure. But the musicians with whom I worked never explicitly labelled the instrumental introductory sections as "*duhā*": these sections were always designated as "*rāg*", whilst the term "*duhā*" was always used to refer specifically to the poetic couplets, and not to the accompanying music.

Nevertheless, it may well be that the musicians themselves view the *duhā* couplets as being inextricably bound up with the melodic form at those moments of performance, thus finding it unnecessary to make a categorical distinction between the two. This perspective matches rather well with Shāh Abdul Latīf's

more philosophically motivated, all-encompassing use of the term '*sūr*', as identified above. However, we cannot assume this; and, from an analytical standpoint, it is useful to distinguish between the poetic verse format – *duhā* – and the structural melodic format – which, at this stage, we will call *rāg* – so that we can understand more precisely how these two frameworks interact within the context of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical performance.

In reference to those particular *duhās* that are considered, in some way, to be *rāg*-specific, Neuman et al. (2006: 355) cite five examples of "Rajasthan Rāga *Duhas*", drawn from a previous paper on Rajasthani folk music by Rajurkar (in Handoo ed. 1983: 207-210). In each case, one or two examples of a *duhā* poetic couplet are given (in what appears to be Romanised Hindi) for each of the five *rāgas* cited – Sūb, Gauḍ Malhār, Soraṭh, Mārū, and Kamāijī – along with a brief set of musical phrases. These phrases, notated in a basic form of *sargam*, are seemingly intended to encapsulate the core melodic movements of each '*rāga duhā*', representing a simplified melodic map, or *calan*. Additionally, a short commentary is appended to each entry, with the aim of alluding to any possible structural melodic associations with the corresponding Hindustani classical *rāgas*. Unfortunately, the only comment applied to the *rāg* Soraṭh *duhā* melody is that it is "different from the classical Raga Sorath" (ibid) – a perspective that is at odds with an earlier assertion from the same volume (quoted above) that *rāg* Soraṭh is "identical in both its Rajasthani and Hindustani structure" (ibid: 108).

Having already broached the subject of differing interpretations regarding the melodic structure of *rāg* Soraṭh in our preliminary analysis above, we will return to the question of how *rāg* melodies interact with *duhā* recitation presently; but now, let us investigate a specific example of the contextual relationship between *rāg* and *duhā* in Laṅgā music performance, by turning our attention to a selection of Soraṭh-related couplets that were presented to me by Muse Khan Laṅgā, on a single occasion during the last phase of our fieldwork sessions together. One of these *duhā* couplets appears to be a version of the same one that is reproduced in *Bards, Ballads and Boundaries* that is discussed above: so we shall attempt to shed some light upon its lexical meaning.

The following fieldwork journal extract, from 7th March 2014, describes the process of notating these *duhās* with Muse and Asin Khan Laṅgā. By this stage in the fieldwork process, I had already sat for many lessons with Museji, and so a sufficient level of trust had built up that I felt I could ask certain questions at certain points during our lessons, to elicit more specific data. Prior to this point, I had heard Muse Khan sing many *duhās* during the course of his performance demonstrations for me; but, in this case I had initially requested that his son, Asin, supply me with some *rāg*-related *duhā* couplets abstracted from their performance context, so that I could better understand the structure and the meaning of the words. During the course of this exchange, both Muse and Asin Khan Laṅgā demonstrated a previously unseen (and unexpected) degree of literacy:

> The session started with my taking advantage of Asin's temporary presence to ask for some Soraṭh duhās… He gave me the Devanagari script for three duhā couplets, which I transliterated into Roman script… then Asin had to go for his train to Delhi [for a performance]. Fortunately for me, Museji continued to pour out Soraṭh duhās at a rate that made it hard for me to keep up with writing them down… [he] abandoned writing them out rather quickly (which was a shame – he has great handwriting), and so I don't have the script for these.

Plate 7.1a, overleaf, shows three Soraṭh *duhā* couplets that were first supplied from the hand of Asin Khan, with my transliterations added; and Plate 7.1b details my transliterations of the same three *duhās* as dictated by Muse Khan, with an additional three *duhās*. It is notable that Muse Khan corrected the second line of the third *duhā* from the version supplied by Asin: the misplaced line is instead inserted into the second half of the fourth *duhā* couplet, in what we must assume is the complete and authoritative version. With respect to the transliteration, there are many cases where I have modified and refined my own rather scruffy on-the-spot attempts, by listening back to the audio recording made on that occasion (audio example **A 6.1**).

As the fieldwork journal notes, Muse Khan only wrote out the first line of the first Soraṭh *duhā*, under the title "*Rāg Soraṭh*" (rendered in Devanagari script), preferring to dictate; however, on the following day he wrote down a complete series of four *duhā* couplets for *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār, also reproduced here in Plate

7.1c. This confirms that both Muse and Asin Khan Laṅgā do indeed possess a sufficient degree of literacy to enable the recording of these poetic couplets on paper; and we must consider the likelihood that Muse Khan has kept written records of *duhās*, song lyrics, genealogies – perhaps even musical information – over the years.

Plate 7.1a: Soraṭh *duhā* couplets written out by Asin Khan Laṅgā. Notated at Muse Khan Laṅgā's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony, Jodhpur. 7th March 2014

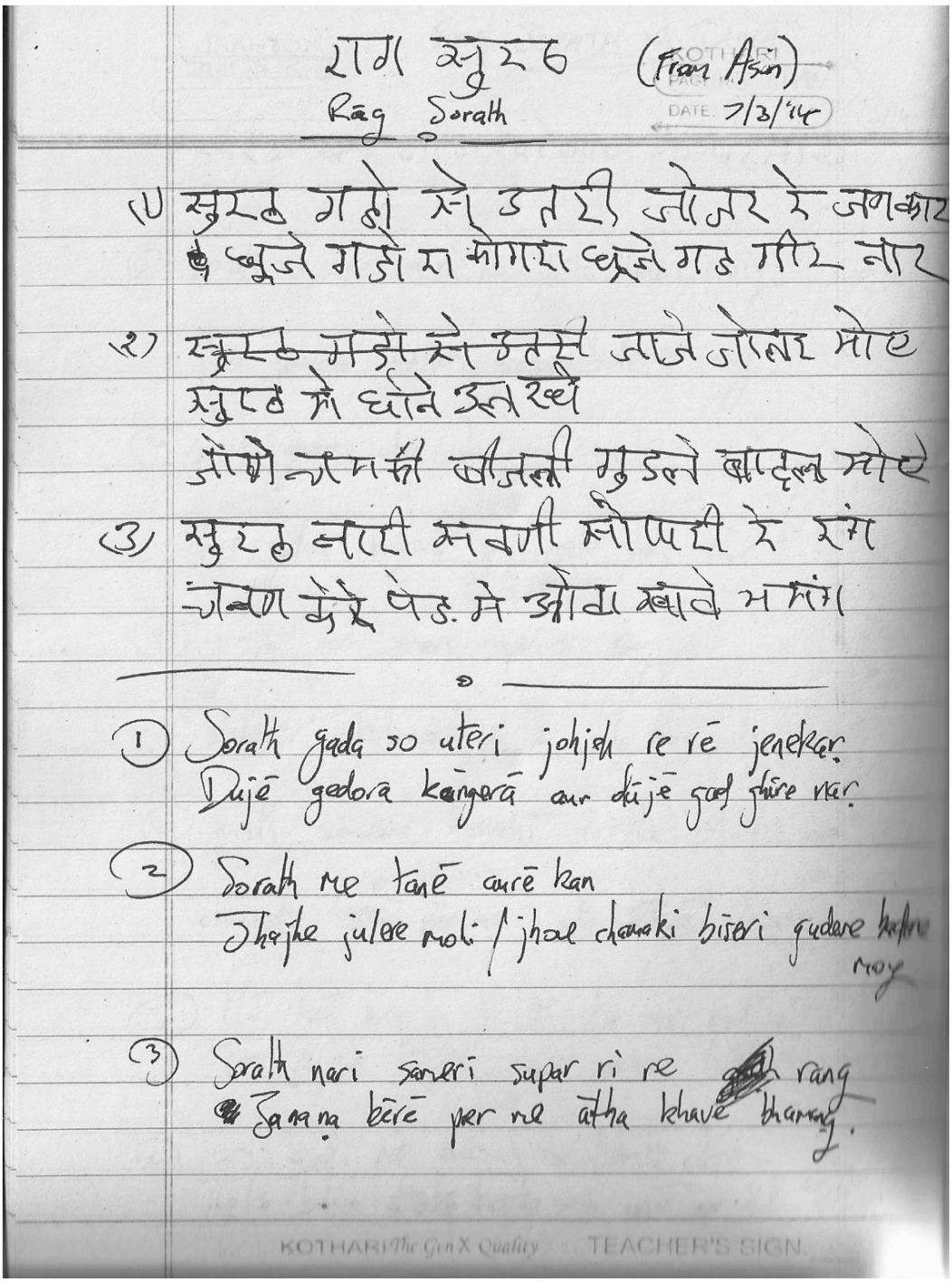


Plate 7.1b: Soraṭh *duhā* couplets dictated by Muse Khan Laṅgā. Notated at Muse Khan Laṅgā's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony, Jodhpur. 7th March 2014

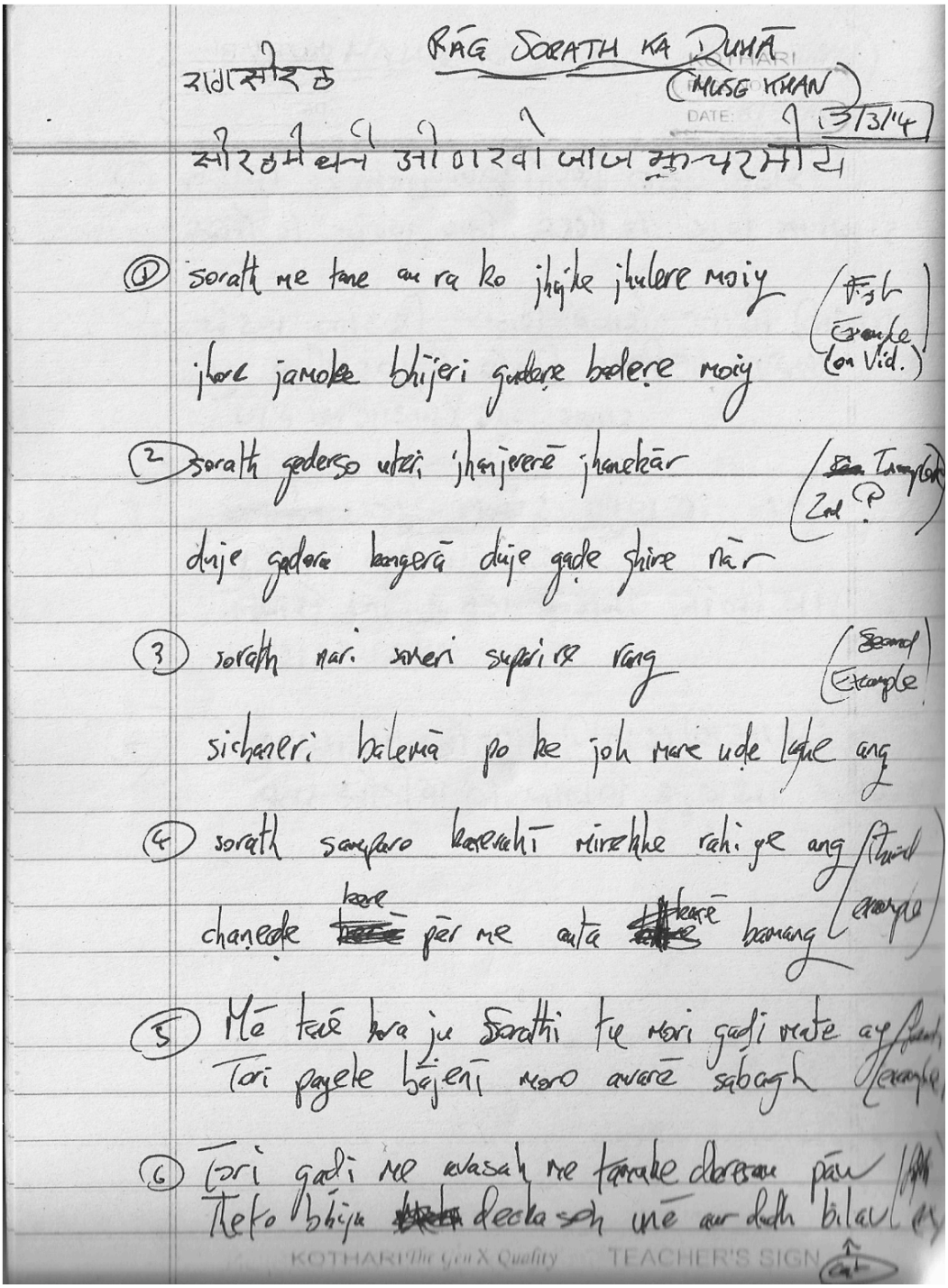
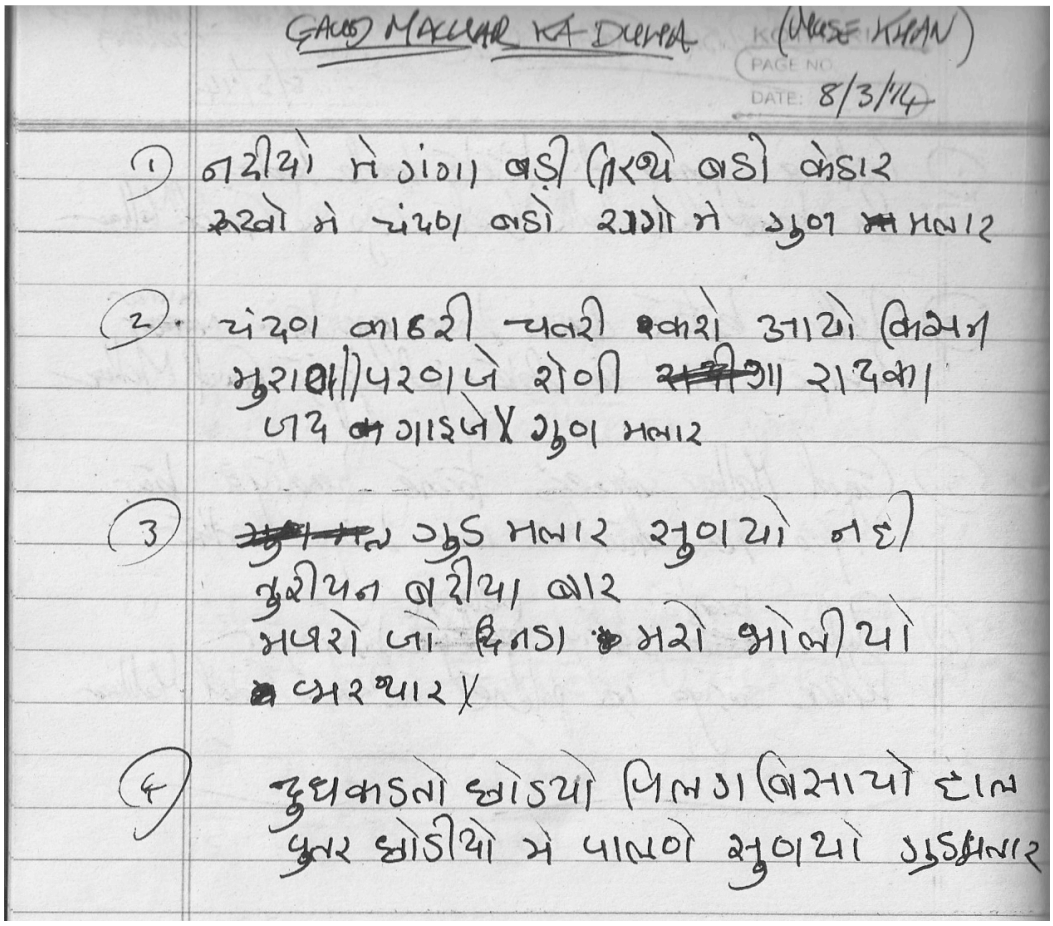


Plate 7.1c: Gauḍ Malhār *duhā* couplets written out by Muse Khan Laṅgā. Notated at Muse Khan Laṅgā's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony, Jodhpur. 8th March 2014



Whilst the thorough examination of these Gauḍ Malhār *duhās* will have to wait for a future study, we can note that Gauḍ Malhār is referred to in the second line of the first couplet as "*baḍo rāgo me Gauḍ Malhār*"; moreover, the *rāg* is explicitly named within each subsequent couplet, normally at the end (although this identification occurs at the beginning of the first line in the third couplet). This hints at a direct connection between the *rāg* as a melodic and/or aesthetic entity, and the *duhās* being used in this case to describe its characteristics.

Returning to the subject matter of the Soraṭh *duhas*, Figure 7.4 shows the refined transliterations for four of the six *duhā* couplets dictated by Muse Khan, alongside a rough translation of each *duhā* into English. I am indebted to Badri Singh Mahecha for his invaluable assistance in the challenging task of translating these lines.

Figure 7.4: Transliterations of four *rāg* Soraṭh *duhā* couplets provided by Muse Khan Laṅgā (Sindhi/Jaisalmeri Marwari, with English translation)

1.	**Soraṭh gaḍo so uterī jojer re jhaṇakār**	When Soraṭh shakes the tinkling bells on her anklet,
	Dhūje gaḍo rā khogerā, dhūjes gaḍo gīrnār	That sound shakes even the palace walls, even the Gīrnār mountains
2.	**Soraṭh me dhane aura kho jājhe jholere māhī**	When Soraṭh is amongst a group of girls,
	Joṇe jamo kī bījelī gūḍeṛe bādere māhī	She shines like a thunderbolt amongst the grey clouds
3.	**Soraṭh nārī sameṇi supārī re raṅg**	When the breeze caresses Soraṭh's intoxicating body
	Sichane ri balemā po ke jo mari uḍe laghe aṅg	The whole mountain becomes aromatic with pleasant fragrances
4.	**Soraṭh sareparo karerahī mirekhe rahī ye aṅg**	YET TO BE TRANSLATED
	Chaṇeḍe kere peṛ me auṭhā khāvē bhamaṅg	
5.	**Me tane baḍaju Soraṭhi tu mori gaḍi mat āv**	That divine music I hear coming from the bells on your anklet, Soraṭh
	Torī pāyal bajaṇī moro avarē sabhāv	Because of that sound, I will stop you from coming into my fort
6.	**Torī gaḍi me avasā me tamakē dhereso pav**	YET TO BE TRANSLATED
	Theto bhījā dekha soh inē aur dūdh bilav	

Despite some ommissions in the complex translation of this oral poetry, it is clear from the first *duhā* couplet onwards that the poetic content here alludes to Soraṭh the legendary beauty, as opposed to the melodic format *rāg* Soraṭh. The first

duhā couplet also references the mountains of Gīrnār, which are located in the modern-day Junagarh district of Gujarat: this places our Soraṭh *duhā* narratives firmly within the context of the popular legend of the eponymous beauty (as described above in section 7.2.2), and both subject matter and poetic structure hint at a possible further connection with the *Risālo* of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

The poetry is revealed as being particularly rich, in terms of the consistency and quality of literary devices employed here. We find a more or less clear metrical structure; numerous cases of alliteration; a complex rhyming scheme; repetition; onomatopoeia; and the use of similes, along with a vivid array of metaphorical imagery. For example, the overpowering sonic effect that emanates from the 'tinkling' (*jhanekār*) of her ankle bells is a recurrent theme. Anklets are traditionally an important marker of female social status in Rajasthan; and, in fact, this particular motif is common in both Rajasthani and Hindi romantic songs. Here, the Hindi word for anklet – '*pāyal*' (in *duhā* 5) – and, more frequently, the equivalent Marwari term '*gaḍi*', are both used in what is a typical admixture of local and regional vocabularies. Whilst the fusion of Sindhi, Hindi and local Marwari dialects makes for a considerable challenge in translation, there is certainly something for everyone to understand: Rājput patrons, Sindhi *jajmāns*, and local village folk.

In an article discussing the compositions that have been attributed to Shāh Abdul Latīf (originally published by the Bhitshah Cultural Centre and reproduced in Yusuf ed. 1988: 73-77), Tirathdas Hotchand gives a description of the various *duhā* forms that feature in the *Risālo*:

> Sindhi prosody does not depend on accent but is exactly like the classical prosody of Greece and Rome based on the quantity of syllables, long or short. In duha, rhyme is used universally… Each line of Duha contains 24 *matras* or instants or pulse-beats, divided up again in two feet according to the recognised plan. A matra denotes a length of time occupied in the utterance of a short vowel. The Duhas have many forms. There is a *Soratha* Duha which is an inverted duha in which the second half of each line changes place with the first half… Shah Latif has taken a lot of liberty with the standard forms of duhas.
>
> Ibid. 73-74

Hotchand goes on to state that *duhā* "is the most appropriate form when the verses composed are intended to be sung", since "in duha there is both rhyme and rhythm." (Ibid) All of these characteristics are evident in the *duhā* couplets provided by Muse Khan; and we must conclude that this poetry is at the very least based upon the story material found in Shāh Abdul Latīf's *sūr* Soraṭh. Indeed, further study of the original Arabic text of the *Risālo* may reveal that these and other Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *duhās* have been taken directly from it.

7.3. 'Bālochan'

So far, we have seen that *rāg*-specific melodic content, when used as a framework for the instrumental performance of Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār music, can be made explicit during each section of a given rendition; and we have noted that the *rāg* structure may become progressively more evident within the confines of the metered *lehrā* sections, where ornamentations also become less dense. Can the same be said for vocal music? With regards to *duhā* performance, it is clear that the *rāg* may be alluded to lyrically, on an aesthetic, extra-musical level; but to what extent (if at all) is *rāg* content is made manifest during the musical rendering that underpins the *duhā* recitation, and within the structure of the subsequent *baḍa gānā* song itself?

In order to examine these issues, we will analyse a selection of performances of the traditional desert folksong 'Bālochan', which still figures in the repertoires of senior musicians from both communities. This particular song is typically performed following an unmetered rendition of *rāg* Soraṭh: so we will have the opportunity to examine both the various ways in which the musicians conceive of *rāg* Soraṭh as a melodic framework for performance, and also the ways in which this melodic framework is – or is not – made manifest during the course of a vocal performance.

7.3.1. Song background

Although it is impossible to tell exactly how old the 'Bālochan' song is, since it has been passed down through a predominantly oral tradition, we can certainly say that it is considered to be an 'old song' (*purānā gānā*) by members of both

Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities. Additionally, knowledgeable musicians universally refer to ‘Bālochan’ as being a *baḍa gānā* (‘big song’); and these more seasoned performers seem to favour this piece for its musical depth and lyrical artistry. This reflects a love of poetry, as well as the more general popularity of romantic ballads in Rajasthan. It is also notable that, according to the musicians themselves, only the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs perform this song. There are countless popular regional folk ballads, many of which are performed by a wide range of musicians in Rajasthan; but ‘Bālochan’ does not appear to be one of them. As such, this song can be seen to represent a particularly specialised branch of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical repertoire.

Contextually, the song ‘Bālochan’ also occupies a rather liminal place within the repertoire, since it is not tied to any specific calendrical or life cycle ritual. When the song is performed, it is usually for the pure entertainment of *jajmāns*, or even just for the musicians themselves – notwithstanding renditions given at the request of academic researchers such as myself, of course (although, in this case, it is my impression that the researcher effectively functions as a surrogate *jajmān*).

The song has not yet become part of the international concert or local tourist entertainment repertoire; and one could say that it is considered to be a piece for connoisseurs of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music. This may be one of the reasons that none of the young musicians I encountered knew how to play the song – not even serious up-and-coming performers such as Asin Khan Laṅgā (although he did express a concern to me that this represented a significant gap in his own musical knowledge). Generally speaking, however, it was my impression that the next generation of musicians did not seem overly concerned with learning this song, even though they did recognise ‘Bālochan’ as a part of the core repertoire.

Interestingly, members of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities acknowledge the fact that respected musicians belonging to the other groups also perform the song. But both communities claim ownership: the senior Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās told me that ‘Bālochan’ is an “old Laṅgā community song” (Muse and Kadar Khan: pers. comm.); whilst the Māṅgaṇiyārs say that it is “an old Māṅgaṇiyār favourite” (Ghevar and Firoze Khan: pers. comm. and also see

ARCE sleevenotes from *Master Musicians: Sakar Khan* CD). Moreover, the musicians from both groups who played the song for me were quick to point out that their version is quite different from the version played by the other community. The awareness of a discrimination that is made between distinct Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions must be contrasted with any embedded structural similarities that may present themselves; and we shall take a closer look at the nature of this dynamic by analysing the melodic approaches to four different renditions of 'Bālochan'. But first, let us examine the words of the song.

7.3.2. Lyrical comparison of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions

Both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions are largely the same, in terms of lyrical content: the poetry is rendered in a style of romantic verse called *nākh-shīsh varnan* (literally, 'ankle-to-forehead description'), in which the glowing attributes of the desert maiden Bālochan are extolled using metaphors that compare her fine features to various aspects of nature. The verse form is strophic, with a maximum of six verses (though sometimes one or more verses may be omitted) typically featuring in both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions. The two versions used for lyrical comparison here are from performances given by senior musicians Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Muse Khan Laṅgā, since they represent two pre-eminent renditions of the song – one taken from each community – in its most complete lyrical form.

Although I never had an opportunity to hear Sakar Khan performing 'Bālochan' myself, I knew from both Shubha Chaudhuri and his surviving family members that the song was a particular favourite of his, both to sing and to play. Certainly his version represents, lyrically speaking, one of the most complete Māṅgaṇiyār renditions of the song that has been recorded: the 'Bālochan' sung for me by Firoze and Ghevar Khan in 2013 was lyrically identical to their father's version in every respect, except that the final verse was missing. Therefore, Sakarji's more complete lyrical rendition is used here. The Romanised Marwari transliteration in Figure 7.2, below, has been taken from the booklet of a 2014 CD release featuring Sakar Khan's 1991 recorded version of 'Bālochan' (reproduced with kind permission from the ARCE); and these lyrics have, in turn,

been edited and translated into English by the author, with assistance from Firoze Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Laxmi Narayan Khatri.

Figure 7.5: Māṅgaṇiyār lyrical rendition of ‘Bālochan’ song (Sakar Khan)

1.	**Shishaṛlo Bālochan re, sarup narela jyā**	The noble forehead of Bālochan is full, like a ripe coconut
	Kesaṛlā Bālochan rā, baśing nāg jyo, he nāg jyo (Rāj mhorā Rāj)	The beautiful tresses of Bālochan are coiled, like a Black Cobra (my Rajah)
2.	**Nākaṛlo re Bālochan ro, khānṛiyeri dhar jyo (the jug jīyo)**	The exquisite nose of Bālochan is sharp, like the point of a sword
	Ākhaṛlā re Bālochan rā, pyālā mad bhare (mhorā Rāj)	The heavenly eyes of Bālochan are like cups full of wine
3.	**Dōtaṛla re Bālochan rā, dāṛamyerā bīj jyo (the jug jīyo)**	The teeth of Bālochan glisten like pomegranate seeds
	Hōthaṛlā Bālochan rā, kalamri līk jiyo (mhorā Rāj)	The lips of Bālochan are full, as if painted by an artist
4.	**Hāthaṛlā re Bālochan rā, kevaliyerī ḍāl jyo (the jug jīyo)**	The arms of Bālochan are slender, like branches of a banana tree
	Hōthe re āṇgal ke Bālochan re, mūṇgo ke phal jyo (mhorā Rāj)	The delicate fingers of Bālochan are shaped like pods of *mūng dāl*
5.	**Petaṛaḷo Bālochan rā, pīpaliyēse pōn**	The hips of Bālochan are curvaceous, like Pipāl tree leaves
	Hīyaṛalo Bālochan ro, sachīyerī ḍhal	The heart of Bālochan is strong, like the centre of a shield
6.	**Mhorā gaḍho koṭo rā rājvī, mhora madachhakiyā ḍholā**	All of our forts have these princesses, we are intoxicated
	Eḍi re Bālochan ghar ghoraṛī ghoraṛī, Rāj mhorā Rāj	Those like Bālochan are found throughout the dunes, O my Rajah

Lyrics for the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā version of ‘Bālochan’ are shown in Figure 7.6, and were supplied in Marwari by Muse Khan Laṅgā during the course of a lesson at his home in Jodhpur, on 6th March 2014. The author derived his translation of these lyrics from the various explanations offered by Muse Khan, his wife, and his son Asin.

Figure 7.6: Laṅgā lyrical rendition of ‘Bālochan’ song (Muse Khan)

1.	**Kya Bālochan ra, surungā bēs**	The one called Bālochan wears the prettiest dress
	Kyē elōnē māru nō bhōla khō	Those who are present should listen to this
2.	**Shisharlo Bālochan ro, sarup narele**	The noble forehead of Bālochan is smooth, like a ripe coconut
	Bhīṇ Basingē kalē nāg jīyo	The beautiful tresses of Bālochan are coiled like a Black Cobra
3.	**Nākarlo Bālochan ro, sua kerī chōnch**	The exquisite nose of Bālochan is sharp like an eagle’s beak
	Ākharla Bālochan ri, piyālā mad bhareya	The heavenly eyes of Bālochan are like cups full of wine
4.	**Danṭarla Bālochan ra, ḍaramyēra bīj**	The teeth of Bālochan glisten like pomegranate seeds
	Bhīṇ Basingē kalē nāg jīyo	The beautiful tresses of Bālochan are coiled like a Black Cobra
5.	**Pētarlo Bālochan ro, pīpaliyēro pōn**	The hips of Bālochan are curved like leaves from the Pipāl tree
	Hiverelo Bālochan ro, sāchē ḍhāliyō	The heart of Bālochan is soft, like a warm bed
6.	**Eḍi Bālochan ri, sōparī re gāṭ**	The ankles of Bālochan, like *pān* they intoxicate me,
	Pinḍi Bālochan e ri, chapala kerī ṭhāḷ	The legs of Bālochan are long, like stems of a banana tree

Lyrical analysis

When comparing these two lyrical renditions of the 'Bālochan' song, it is immediately clear that the general narrative is broadly the same in both versions, consisting primarily of metaphorical '*nākh-shish vārnan*' praise for the eponymous desert beauty. The general tone of the subject matter appears to be secular; however, in the context of a potential influence from Sufi-inspired concepts, we cannot preclude the likelihood that these lyrics may be interpreted on a more spiritual level, echoing the all-encompassing devotional love one can experience through an ecstatic union with the divine. Muse Khan alluded to this idea many times during our sessions together, often pointing to the sky when discussing lyrics that involved any kind of overtly romantic or erotic context.

Both renditions include a similar lyrical macrostructure, comprising six verse couplets that are made distinct from each other by the rhythmic and melodic framework of the song performance. However, the first verse in the Laṅgā version is unique, and functions as an entreaty to the audience:

1.	**Kya Bālochan ra, surungā bēs**	The one called Bālochan wears the prettiest dress
	Kyē elōnē māru nō bhōla khō	Those who are present should listen to this

Although this introductory verse is not present in the Māṅgaṇiyār version, Sakar Khan does in fact address his (conceptually royal) audience at the end of every verse, using sung variations of the poetic salutation '*Rāj mhorā Rāj*'; and the final verse of his rendition is aimed at his sovereign Rajput patrons, extolling the benefits of a very macho, militaristic identification with – and dominance over – the bounteous desert region of the Thar, with all of its treasures:

6.	**Mhorā gaḍho koṭo rā rājvī, mhora madachhakiyā ḍholā**	All of our forts have these princesses, we are intoxicated
	Eḍi re Bālochan ghar ghoraṛī ghoraṛī, Rāj mhorā Rāj	Those like Bālochan are found throughout the dunes, O my Rajah

A further examination of lyrical content reveals that the Māṅgaṇiyār rendition employs a number of military metaphors that are not present in the Laṅgā version – for example, as can be seen when comparing the superficially similar fifth verses:

Laṅgā verse 5

Pētaṛalo Bālochan ro, pīpaliyēro pōn	The hips of Bālochan are curved like leaves from the Pipāl tree
Hiveṛelo Bālochan ro, sāchē ḍhāliyō	The heart of Bālochan is soft, like a warm bed

Māṅgaṇiyār verse 5

Petaṛaḷo Bālochan rā, pīpaliyēse pōn	The hips of Bālochan are curvaceous, like Pipāl tree leaves
Hīyaṛalo Bālochan ro, sachīyerī ḍhal	The heart of Bālochan is strong, like the centre of a shield

It is evident here that the first lines of both versions are, to all intents and purposes, identical in both grammatical composition and meaning – notwithstanding some subtle differences in grammar and pronunciation that relate to certain regional or community-based dialectical variations of Marwari, such as in the suffix word used for 'leaf': Muse Khan Laṅgā uses '*-iyēro*', whilst Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār uses the less retroflex '*-iyēse*'. We can note that the symbolism employed here is typically rich in its double-meaning: whilst the Pīpal tree is held to be particularly sacred in Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism, with the locations of many old Pīpals being venerated as sacred sites throughout Western Rajasthan (see Plates 7.2 and 7.3) and elsewhere in South Asia, the leaves of the Pīpal tree are curved in a fashion that does indeed echo an idealized, erotically charged representation of the female form (see Plate 7.4).



Plates 7.2 and 7.3: Pīpal trees venerated as sacred sites in Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. 2013



Plate 7.4: Leaves of the Pīpal tree. Sonar Killa, Jaisalmer. 19th February 2014

In the second line of verse five, we can again note some minor grammatical divergences between the two renditions – for example, the Marwari word for 'heart' is rendered '*hīveṛelo*' by Muse Khan, and '*hīyaṛalo*' by Sakar Khan. However, here there is also a marked difference in meaning: Muse Khan compares Bālochan's heart to "a soft, warm bed" ('*sāchē ḍhāliyō*'), whereas Sakar Khan maintains that her heart is "strong, like the centre [or 'boss'] of a shield" ('*sachīyerī ḍhal*'). It is easy to see how these two remarkably similar-sounding Marwari phrases could be shaped to fit either meaning; but the performers' choices of which reading to emphasise would seem to indicate a continued focus on symbols of military strength and prowess in the Māṅgaṇiyār interpretation of the song, contrasted with a more consistent use of metaphorical erotic imagery throughout the Laṅgā version.

A similar discrepancy occurs between verse two of Sakar Khan's performance, and the otherwise analogous verse three rendered by Muse Khan: in the second lines of these verses, both versions compare Bālochan's eyes to '*pyālā mad bhare*', "cups full of wine" (another beautifully crafted metaphor, referencing both their visual appearance and the allegorical effect of intoxication); however, contrastingly, her nose is likened to "the point of a sword" ('*khānṛiyeri dhar*') in the Māṅgaṇiyār version, as opposed to the Laṅgā version's aquiline comparison to "the point of an eagle's beak" ('*sua kerī chōnch*'). Here, the grammatically distinct phrases are not so easy to confuse with each other; and the fact that a rhyming scheme is maintained between '*sua kerī*' and '*khānṛiyeri*' suggests a conscious choice, on the part of one bardic community or the other, to modify a pre-existing lyric.

Whilst it is impossible to conclude from this evidence which rendition might represent an original version, the emphasis on military metaphors is made very clear in the Māṅgaṇiyār rendition, whilst such language is entirely absent from the Laṅgā version. It is possible that this approach may represent a conscious choice – or even a need – on the part of the Māṅgaṇiyār musicians, to cater to the martial lifestyles and tastes of their Rajput overlords. Such a need would not be required of the Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās, who are on more level terms with their Sindhi Sipāhī *jajmāns* (themselves being mostly farmers in latter days, and therefore

having become perhaps less oriented towards warlike imagery). Equally, there may be a conscious aesthetic choice on the part of the Laṅgā musicians to emphasise the more romantic interpretation.

Whatever the reasons for its existence may be, this discrepancy is noteworthy, since it highlights a clear difference in aesthetic approach to the respective lyrical material presented by the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities. However, the numerous points of poetic convergence between the two versions, in both verse structure and lyrical content, are equally striking; and there can be little doubt that the renditions of 'Bālochan' supplied by Muse Khan Laṅgā and Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār do indeed represent two subtly differing versions of the same song. Are these trends also reflected in the musical structure? And how does the structural presentation of the song interact with the presentation of *rāg* Soraṭh? We shall now examine some various ways in which *rāg* Soraṭh is presented within the framework of a 'Bālochan' song performance, by analysing three recordings drawn from across the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities.

7.4. Analysis of *rāg* Soraṭh usage in 'Bālochan' song performances

Taking the aforementioned presentations of *rāg* Soraṭh and the 'Bālochan' song as being typical of the *baḍā gānā* performance model, we will now consider the ways in which the *rāg* in question is made manifest by the musicians, during the course of such performances. In addition to the recorded vocal versions introduced above, rendered by Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār (1990) and Muse Khan Laṅgā (2014), an ARCE recording of *rāg* Soraṭh and 'Bālochan' being performed instrumentally, by Karim Khan Laṅgā (1984), will also be analysed here. We shall consider these three recordings – all made by highly respected and influential senior musicians, across a period of almost thirty years – as being representative contemporary versions of the song for their respective communities.

Given the commonalities in general approaches to performance that we have already identified in Chapters Five and Six of the present work (and taking into account the lyrical similarity between the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions of 'Bālochan', as identified above), our analysis here will begin with the larger

picture. By first taking an overview of all three renditions, we will gain a preliminary insight into any similarities with regards to *baḍā gānā* performance macrostructure. From this point, we can then focus in on each section of performance, to ascertain whether the previously identified use of phrase units and pre-composed themes, as the main building blocks of performance, is also a model that is applied across all three communities, in vocal and instrumental music.

The analytical approach will be broadly similar to that of the previous chapters, using transcribed models to abstract relevant performance data. However, unlike in the previous chapter (where each rendition is discussed briefly in a general commentary that follows its complete transcription), in this case we shall apply a cross-community analysis for each successive section of performance. Hence, section 7.4.1 details the comparative overview of performance macrostructure; and sections 7.4.2 to 7.4.4 compare and contrast the *rāg* and *gānā* sections of the respective performances in series, using transcription and analysis to highlight structural similarities and differences existing at the various levels of performance.

7.4.1. Comparative overview of *baḍā gānā* performance macrostructure

In order to contextualise the examples to be analysed, there follows a brief summary of the recording details for each performance:

Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā rendition: Muse Khan (**MKL**)

Date of recording session: 5th March 2014

Recorded by: Morgan Davies

Accompanying musicians: N/A

Pitch of *sāraṅgī* tonic before transposition: F♯ above middle C [366 – 367 Hz]

Māṅgaṇiyār rendition: Sakar Khan (**SKM**)

Date of recording session: 1990

Recorded by: Daniel Neuman

Accompanying musicians: Ramzan Khan (*ḍholak*)

Pitch of *kamāichā* tonic before transposition: G below middle C [200 – 202 Hz]

Sūrnāīa Laṅgā rendition: Karim Khan (**KKL**)

Date of recording session: 24th October 1986

Recorded by: Reis Flora

Accompanying musicians: Latif Khan and Allaudin Khan (*murli*); Ajim Khan (*sarinda*); Rana Khan (*ḍholak*)

Pitch of *murli* tonic before transposition: B♭ above middle C [474 – 477 Hz]

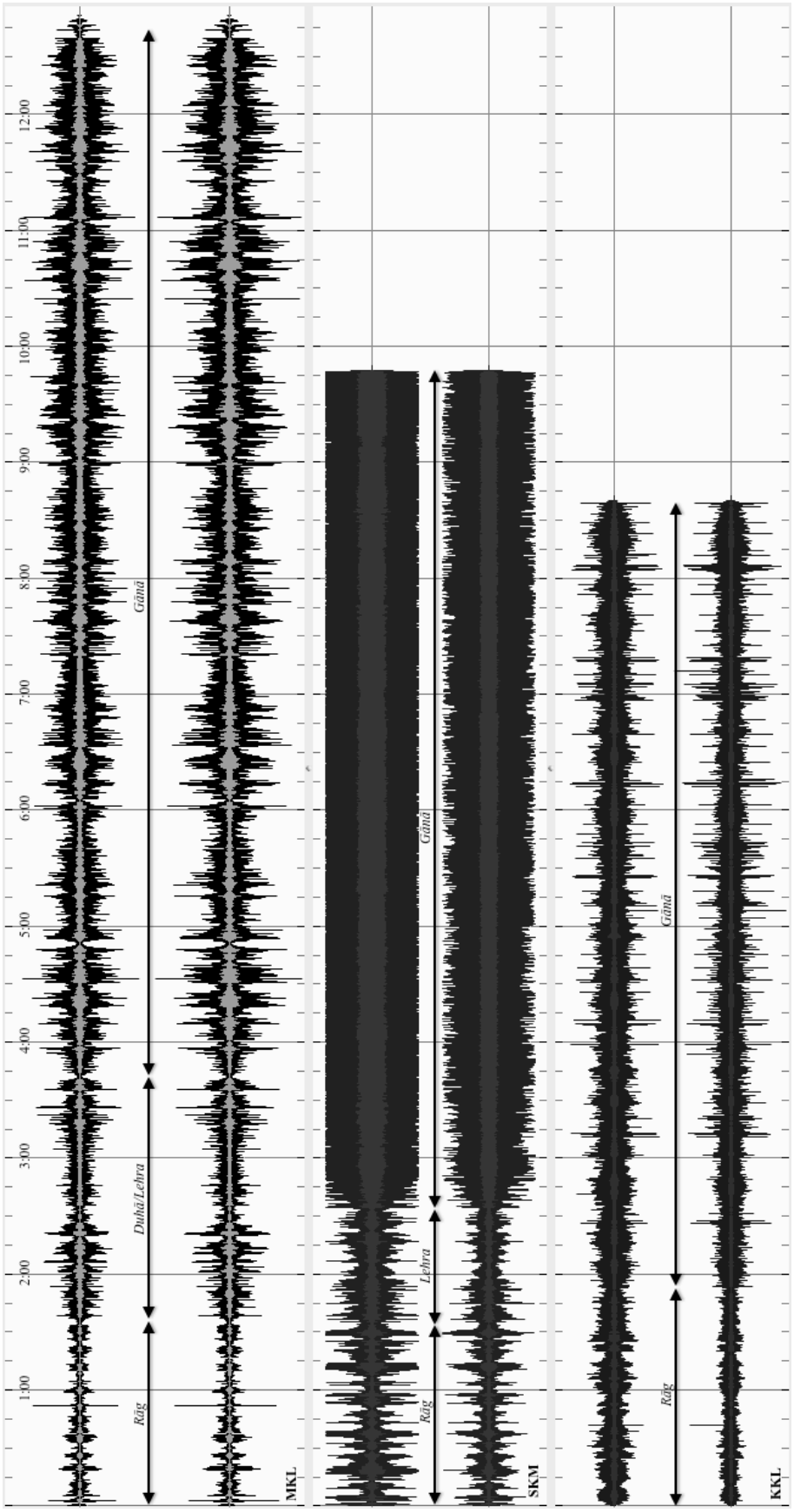


Figure 7.7: Overview of macrostructure in 'Bālochan' song recordings (Sonic Visualizer)

Figure 7.7 shows the waveforms of all three recordings in series, with double-headed arrows marking the sub-sections of each performance. Muse Khan Laṅgā's version (shown in its entirety in video example **V 7.1**) is placed at the top, and is revealed to be both the longest and the most complete, in terms of conforming to the hypothesised *baḍa gānā* model. This is not to be wondered at, since the model was itself first abstracted from Muse Khan's own performance style: however, Sakar Khan also includes a shorter, quasi-metrical *lehrā* section. Although there is no *duhā* vocal recitation in his version here, there are many other recorded examples of Sakar Khan singing *duhā* couplets within this kind of context; and an example of his son, Firoze, singing a Soraṭh *duhā* before performing the 'Bālochan' song is shown in video example **V 7.2**.

Karim Khan Laṅgā's version is the briefest, having no intermediate *duhā*/*lehrā* section at all: because of this, and due to time and space constraints, the *duhā*/*lehrā* sections are not analysed below. The section duration data is summarised in Figure 7.8, with times given in the format 'mm:ss'.

Figure 7.8: Durations of 'Bālochan' performances and sub-sections

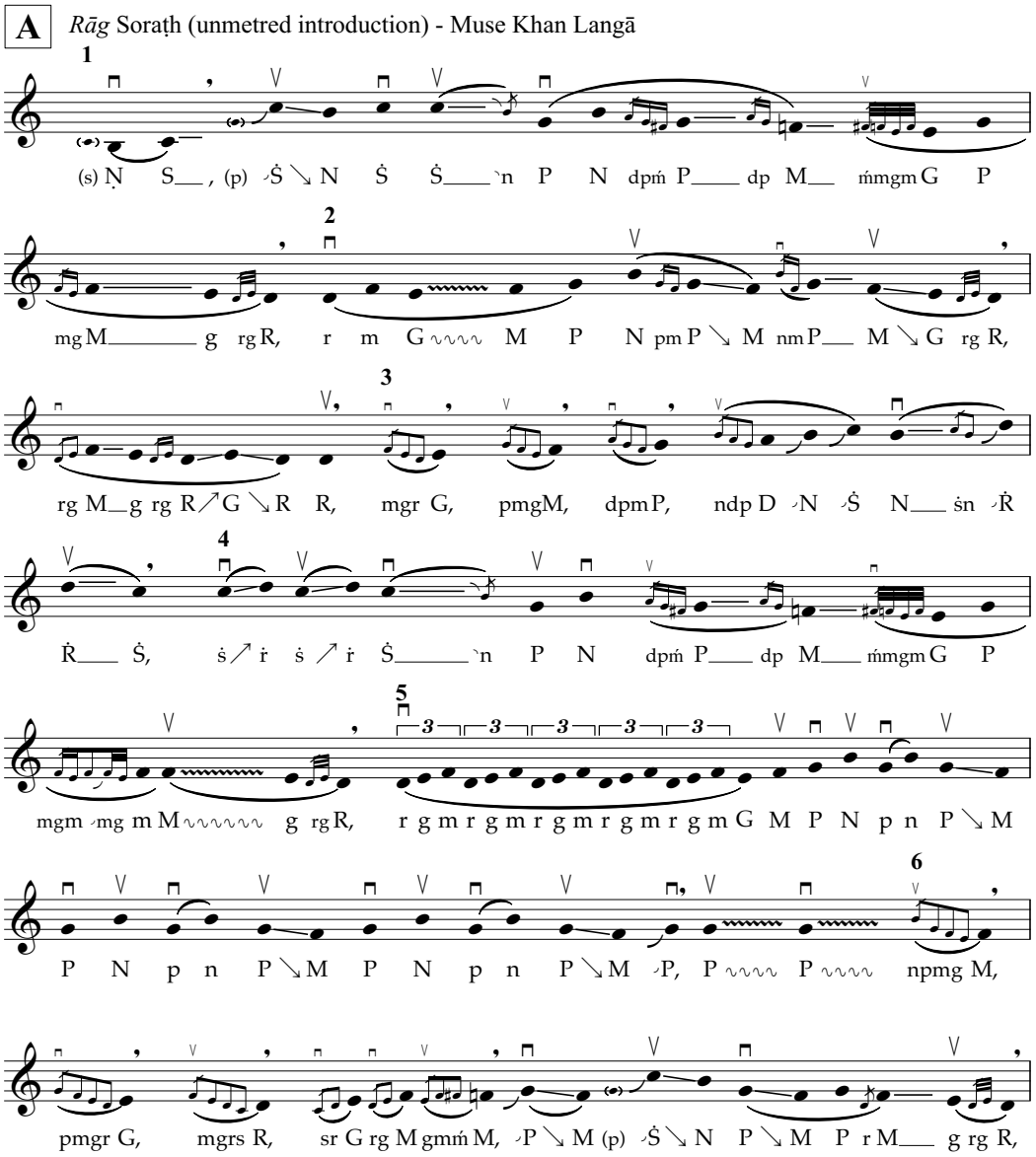
Artist	**Performance Duration**	***Rāg* Section Duration**	***Duhā*/*Lehrā* Duration**	***Gānā* Duration**
Muse Khan Laṅgā	12:54	01:42	02:07	09:05
Sakar Khan Manganiyar	09:52	01:37	01:00	07:15
Karim Khan Laṅgā	08:44	01:50	N/A	06:54

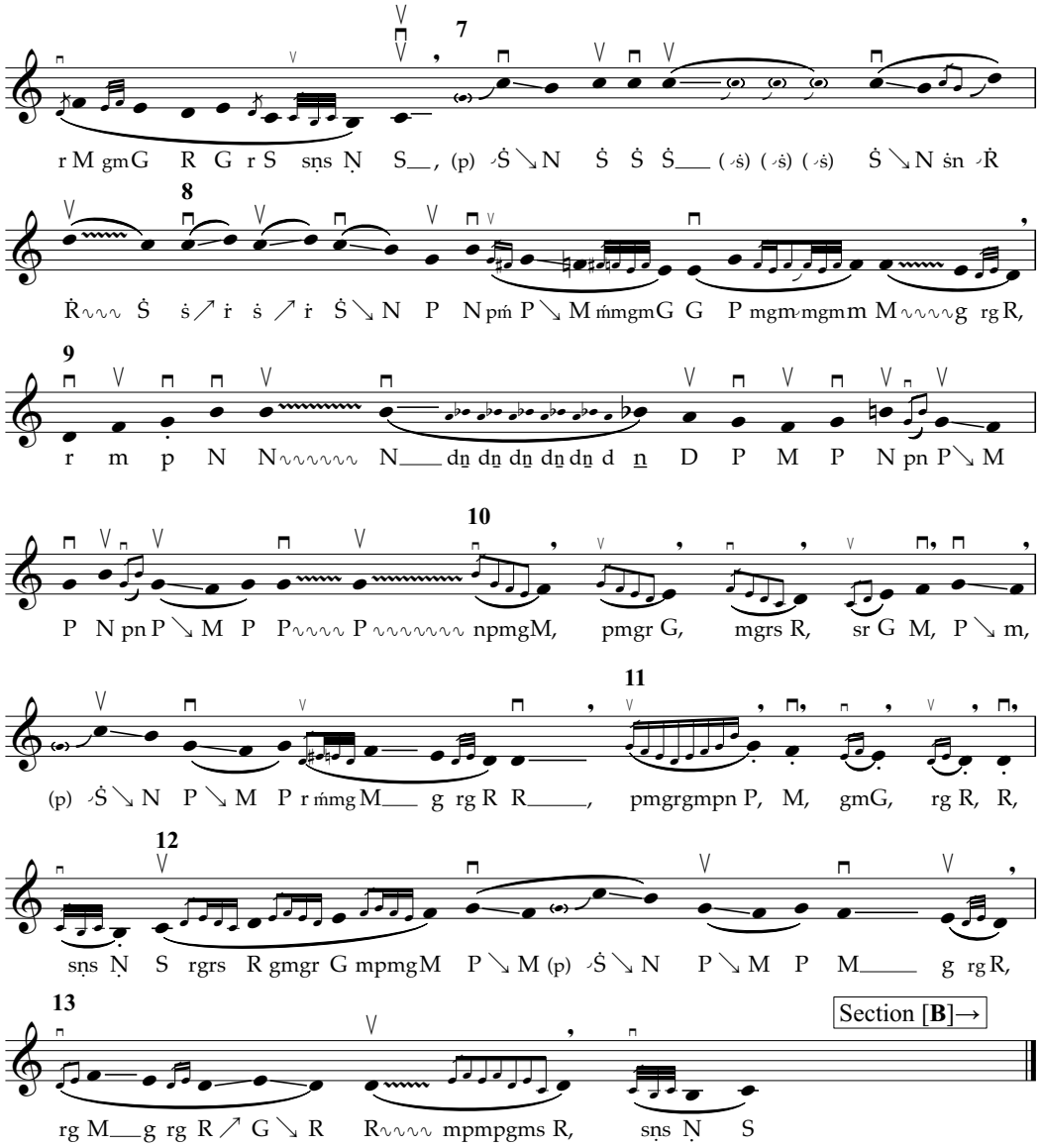
Perhaps the most notable feature of this macro-performance data is the similarity in durations for the *rāg* renditions. We shall now see whether this correlation is also borne out in the melodic content of these unmetered introductory sections.

7.4.2. Comparative analysis of introductory *rāg* sections

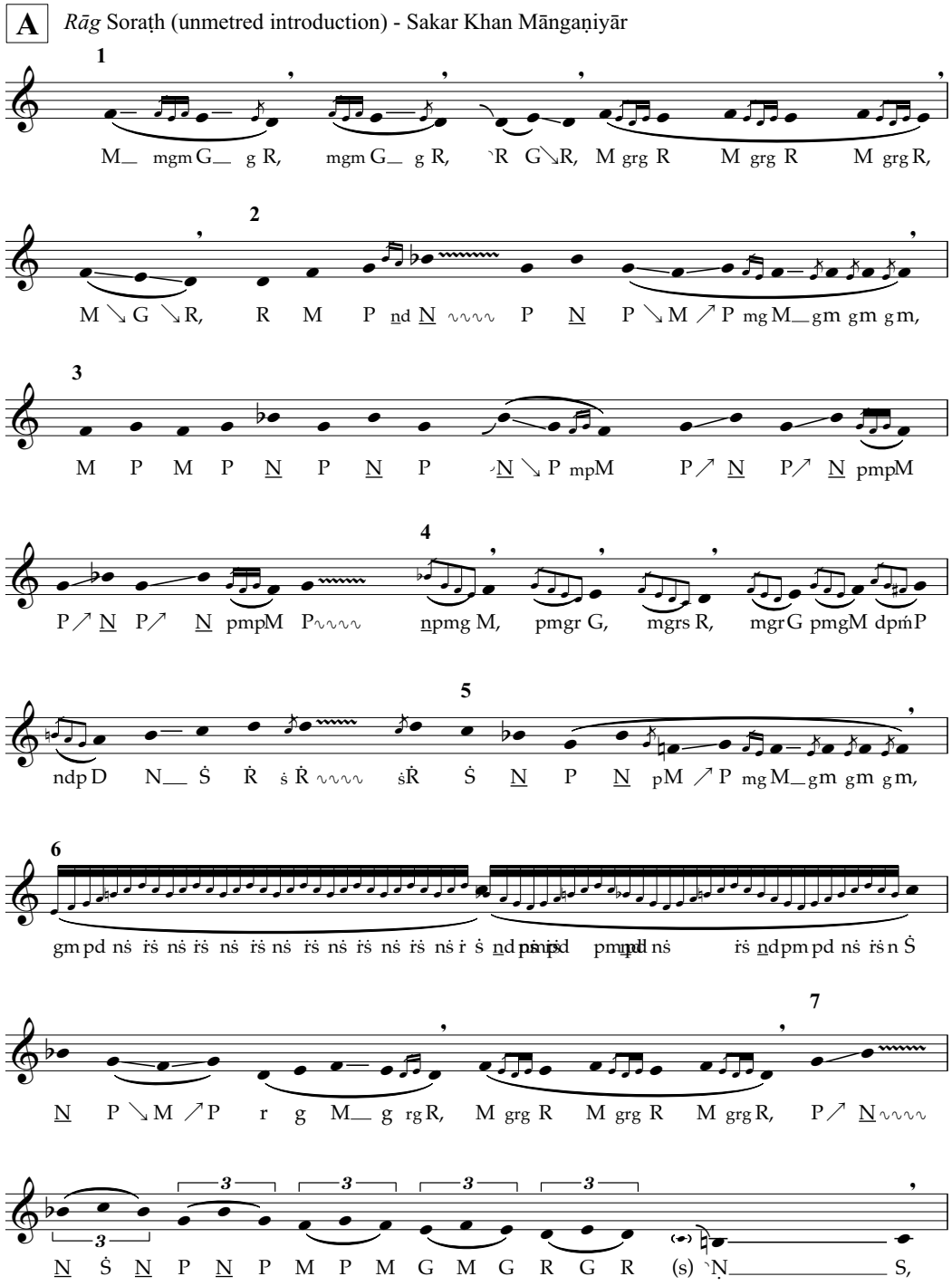
In order to understand each *rāg* performance in its own right, they are first fully transcribed, with each one designated as section '**A**'. Since there was no visual reference for Sakar Khan's or Karim Khan's renditions, the more detailed articulation marks (e.g. bow strokes or fingering) have been omitted from those transcriptions.

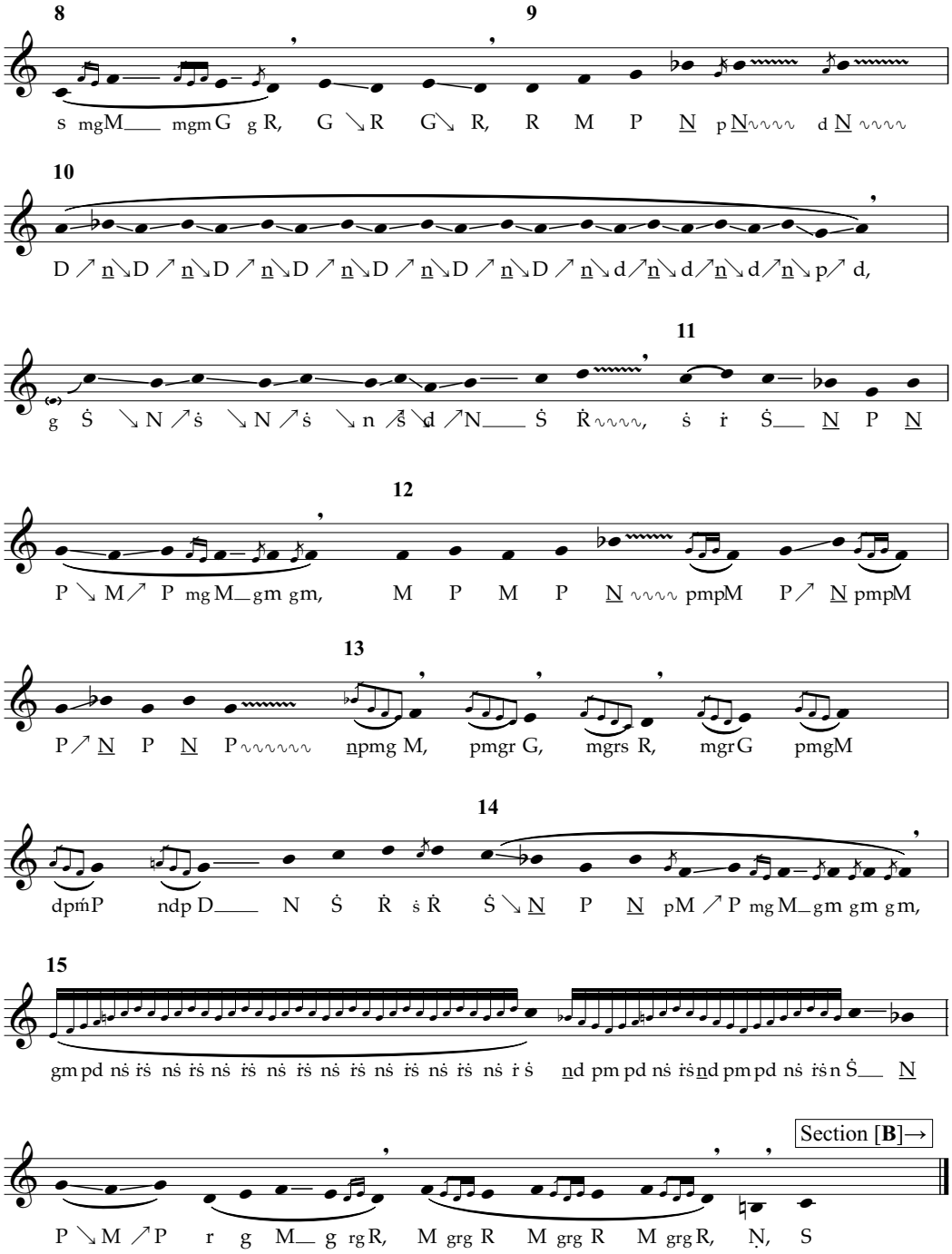
Example 7.3: Muse Khan Laṅgā's *rāg* Soraṭh ('Bālochan' section **A**)



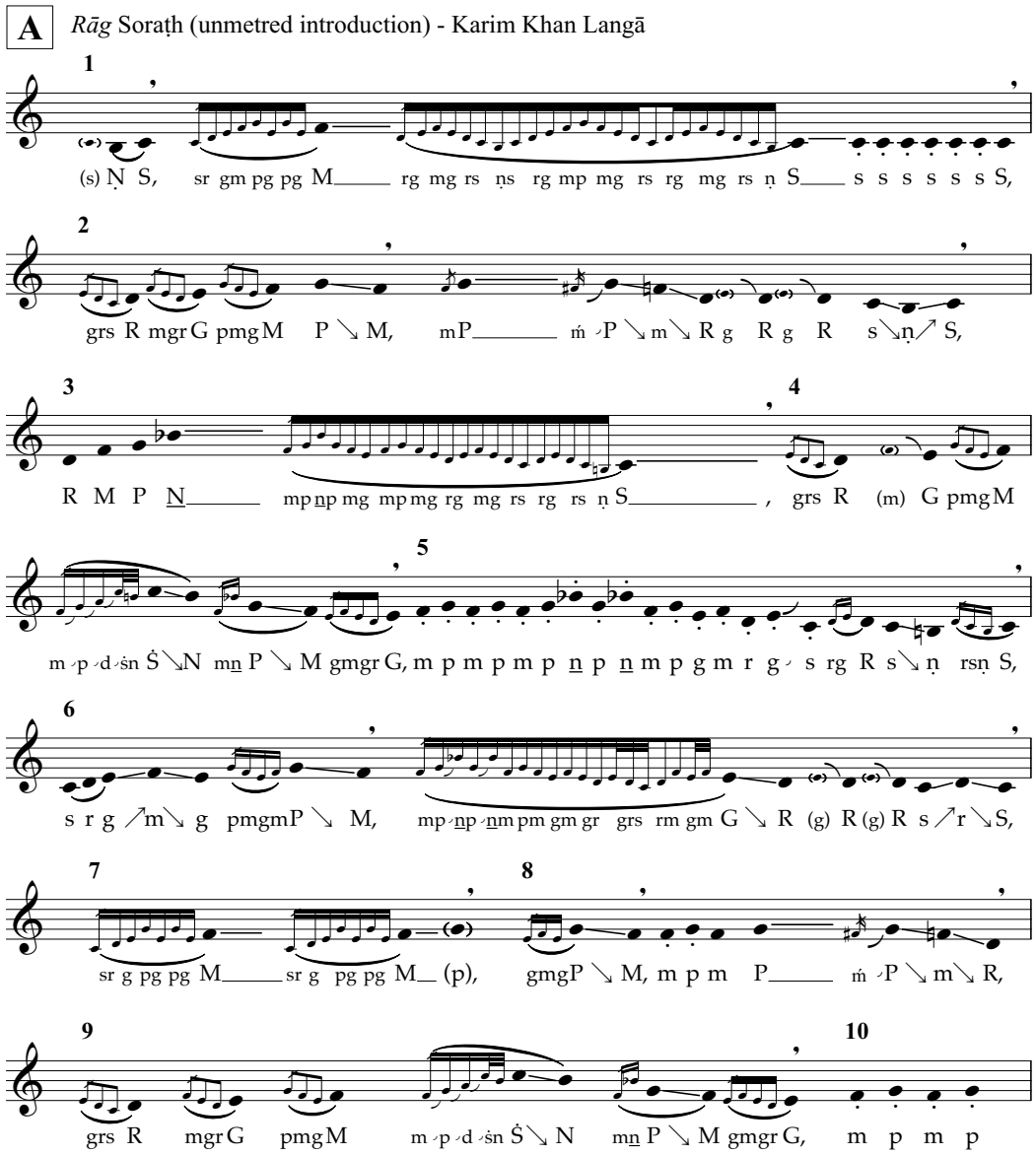

7
r M gmG R G r S sṇs Ṇ S__, (p) ˏṠ↘N Ṡ Ṡ Ṡ___ (ˏṡ) (ˏṡ) (ˏṡ) Ṡ↘N ṡn ˏṘ
8
Ṙ∿∿∿ Ṡ ṡ↗ṙ ṡ ↗ṙ Ṡ↘N P N pṁ P↘M ṁmgmG G P mgmˏmgmm M∿∿∿g rg R,
9
r m p N N∿∿∿∿∿ N___ dṉ dṉ dṉ dṉ dṉ d n̲ D P M P N pn P↘M
10
P N pn P↘M P P∿∿∿ P ∿∿∿∿∿ npmgM, pmgr G, mgrs R, sr G M, P↘m,
11
(p) ˏṠ↘N P↘M P r ṁmg M___ g rg R R_____, pmgrgmpn P, M, gmG, rg R, R,
12
sṇs Ṇ S rgrs R gmgr G mpmg M P↘M (p) ˏṠ↘N P↘M P M_____ g rg R,
13
Section [B]→
rg M___g rg R↗G↘R R∿∿∿ mpmpgms R, sṇs Ṇ S

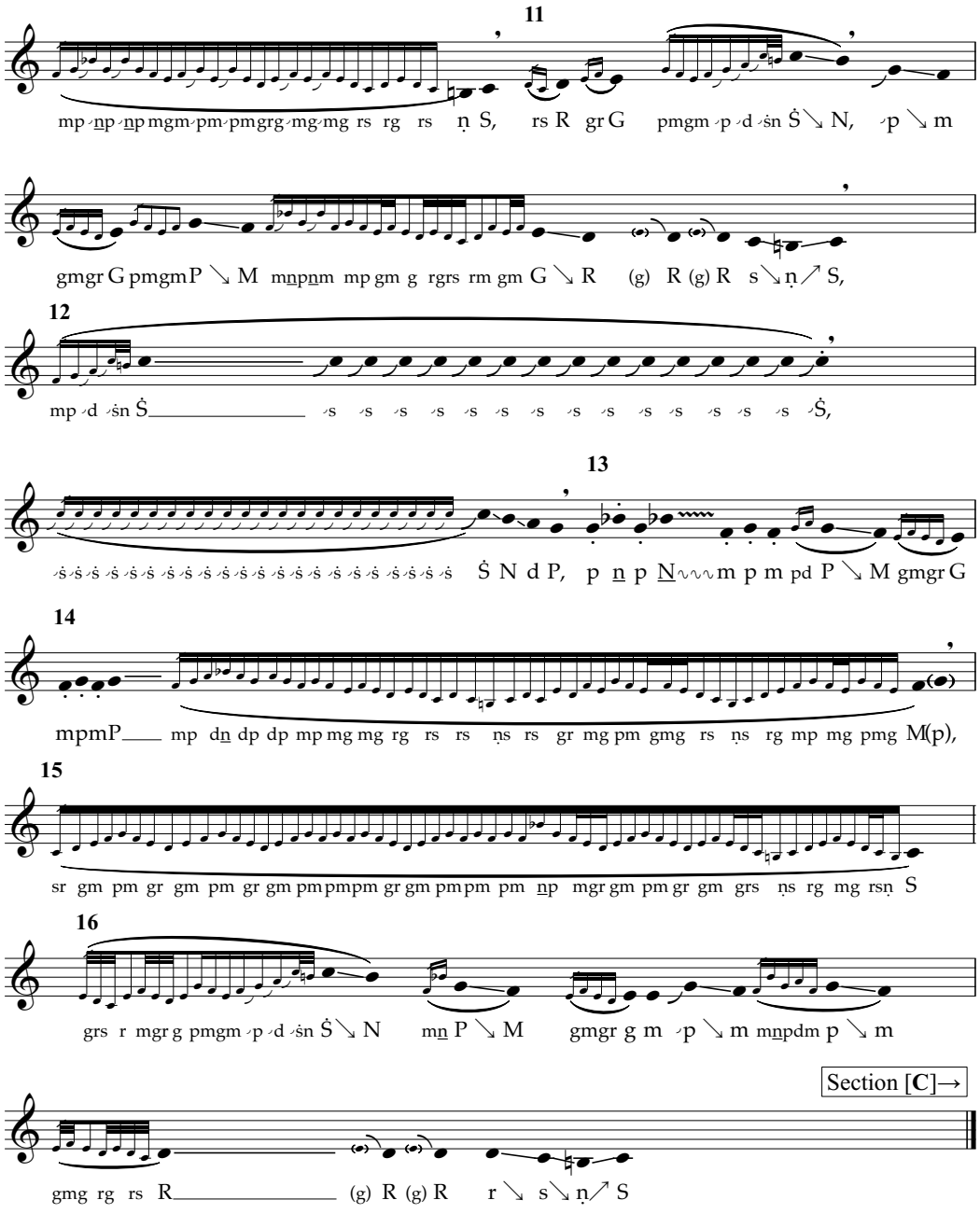
Example 7.4: Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's *rāg* Soraṭh ('Bālochan' section **A**)




8
9
s mgM___ mgm G g R, G ↘ R G↘ R, R M P N p N d N
10
D ↗ n↘D ↗ n↘D ↗ n↘D ↗ n↘D ↗ n↘D ↗ n↘D ↗ n↘d ↗ n↘d ↗ n↘d ↗ n↘p ↗ d,
11
g Ṡ ↘ N ↗ ṡ ↘ N ↗ ṡ ↘ n ↗ ṡ ↘ d ↗ N___ Ṡ Ṙ, ṡ ṙ Ṡ___ N P N
12
P ↘ M ↗ P mg M_gm gm, M P M P N pmpM P ↗ N pmpM
13
P ↗ N P N P npmg M, pmgr G, mgrs R, mgrG pmgM
14
dpḿP ndp D___ N Ṡ Ṙ ṡ Ṙ Ṡ ↘ N P N pM ↗ P mg M_gm gm g m,
15
gm pd nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙṡ nṡ ṙ ṡ nd pm pd nṡ ṙṡ nd pm pd nṡ ṙṡ n Ṡ___ N
Section [B]→
P ↘ M ↗ P r g M__ g rg R, M grg R M grg R M grg R, Ṇ, S

Example 7.5: Karim Khan Laṅgā's *rāg* Soraṭh ('Bālochan' section **A**)




11
mp ˎn̲p ˎn̲p mgm ˎpm ˎpmgrg ˎmg ˎmg rs rg rs ṇ S, rs R gr G pmgm ˎp ˎd ˎṡn Ṡ ↘ N, ˎp ↘ m
gmgr G pmgm P ↘ M mn̲pn̲m mp gm g rgrs rm gm G ↘ R (g) R (g) R s ↘ ṇ ↗ S,
12
mp ˎd ˎṡn Ṡ ˎs ˎs ˎs

Commentary: Examples 7.3 – 7.5

Each one of our three musicians opens their 'Bālochan' performance with concise, recognisable and yet virtuosic instrumental renditions of *rāg* Soraṭh. They showcase a range of characteristic skills on their chosen instruments; and, despite the very different technical challenges presented by the Sindhi *sāraṅgī*, *kamāichā* and *murlī*, all make a point of featuring some extremely rapid ornamentation sections that remain more or less 'in *rāg*': we have seen that such phrases are a hallmark of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār instrumental practice in general.

Regarding overall *rāg* delivery, all three performers adhere to the now-familiar format of delivering the entire *rāg* melody format twice, with the first section being used to establish the basic melodic framework and the second section typically featuring more heavily ornamented sections. In Muse Khan's rendition, the repetition begins at phrase **7**; Sakar Khan repeats from phrase **8**; and Karim Khan from phrase **7**. In each case, the repetition begins at roughly the mid-point of the unmetered introduction, in what emerges as a community-wide strategy for *rāg* presentation.

A similar correspondence is found in melodic phrasing: all three musicians employ the same basic pitch content; all emphasise the same important notes and movements (such as the characteristic juxtaposition of flat and natural 7th, and the strong emphasis on the natural 2nd, or 'Re'); and all include the same essential selection of archetypal Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Soraṭh ascent/descent patterns (albeit with minor variations, and not always in the same order), as shown in Figure 7.9. The rhythmic and melodic similarity with which these phrase units are delivered – especially given such diverse instrumental contexts, and across such a span of time – means that these phrases must belong to the same fixed melodic format that each one of the musicians has learnt by rote within their own respective family tradition.

Figure 7.9: Corresponding Laṅgā and Māṅganiyār *rāg* Soraṭh ascent/descent phrases

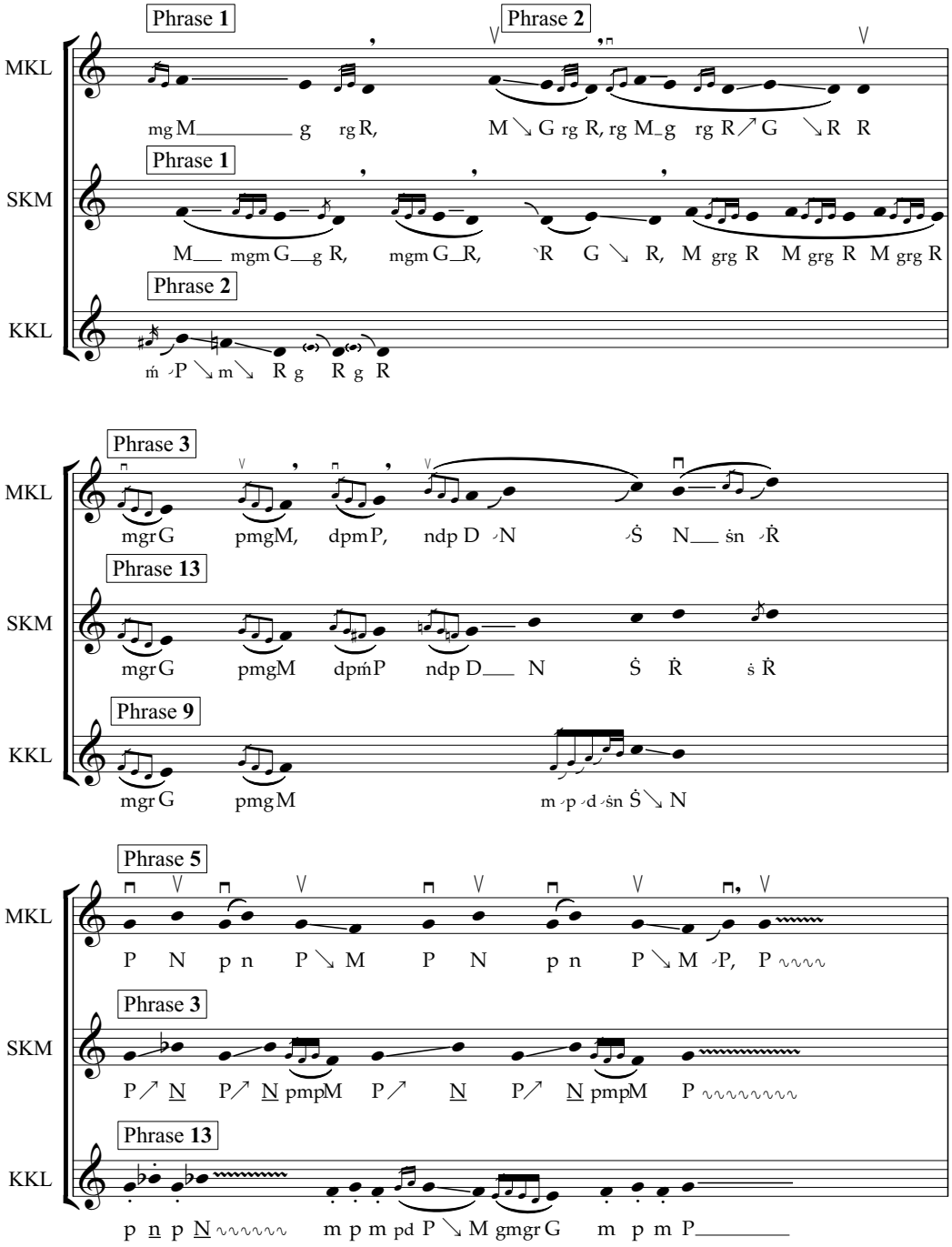
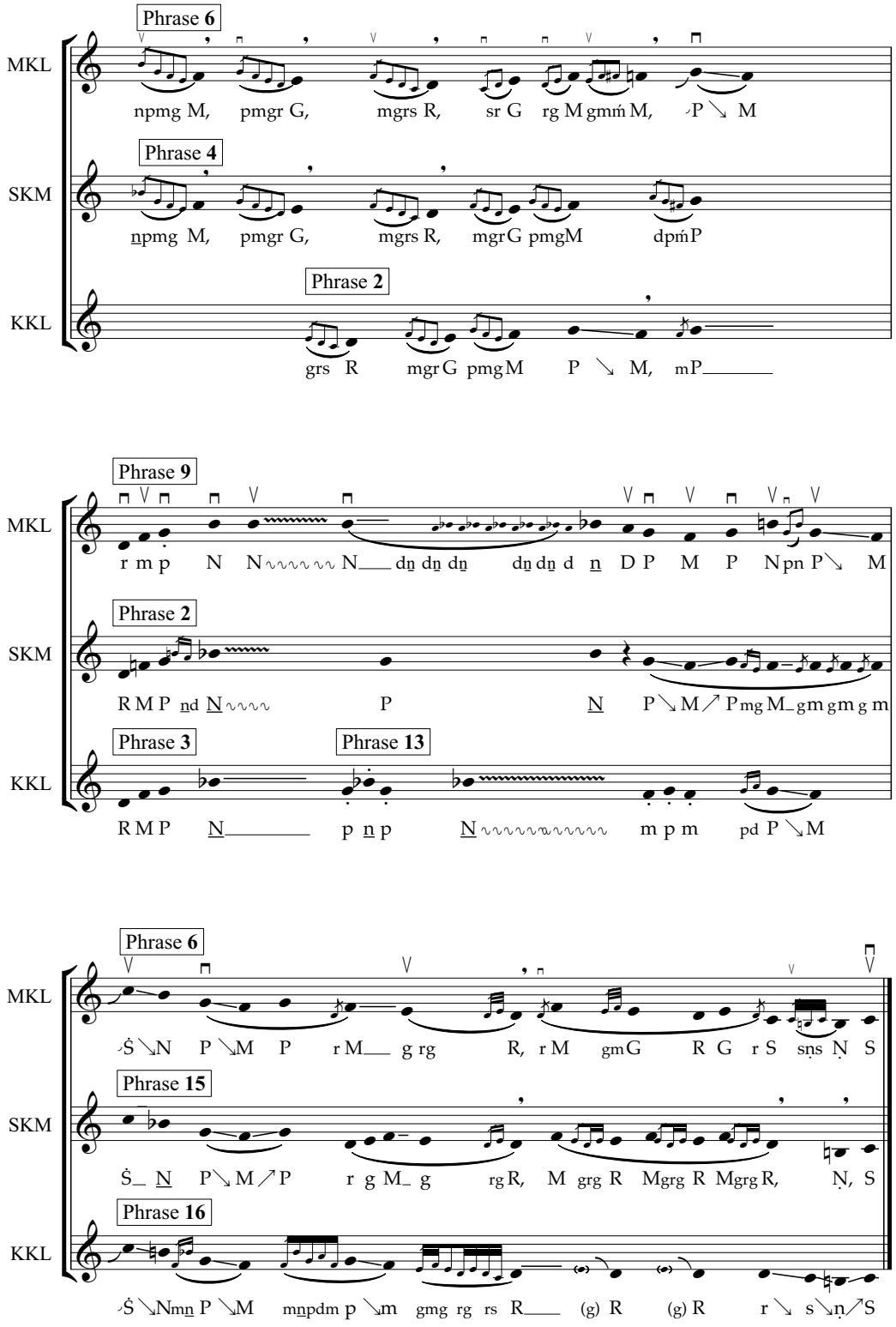


Figure 7.9: (cont'd.)



Despite the overwhelming number of correspondences in *rāg* presentation, some small details of variation can be detected. Perhaps most notably, Muse Khan's version features extremely light use of the *komal* 'Ni', or flattened seventh: he uses it sparingly, like a powerful spice that requires only a pinch in order for it to have the desired effect, and it only appears fleetingly in the descent of phrase **9** of his rendition. Sakar Khan uses the *komal* 'Ni' in both ascent and descent (although more commonly the latter); whereas Karim Khan employs the *komal* 'Ni' judiciously, in what we may say is the most classically orthodox manner – that is, always in the descending phrases of the upper tetrachord.

The only other notable differences occur in styles of ornamentation, which are more personalised and instrument-specific: however, even in this respect a similar approach can be discerned, where the challenge is to play as fast as possible, whilst still remaining within the confines of the melodic structure. In this respect, Karim Khan's version is again the most orthodox – although he, too, is prepared to sacrifice *rāg* specificity for sheer speed and flair, sometimes making straight stepwise ascents that include the natural 3rd (as in the opening phrase of his rendition). Regardless of these minor variations in performance, the overall melodic presentation of *rāg* Soraṭh is remarkably similar across all three versions.

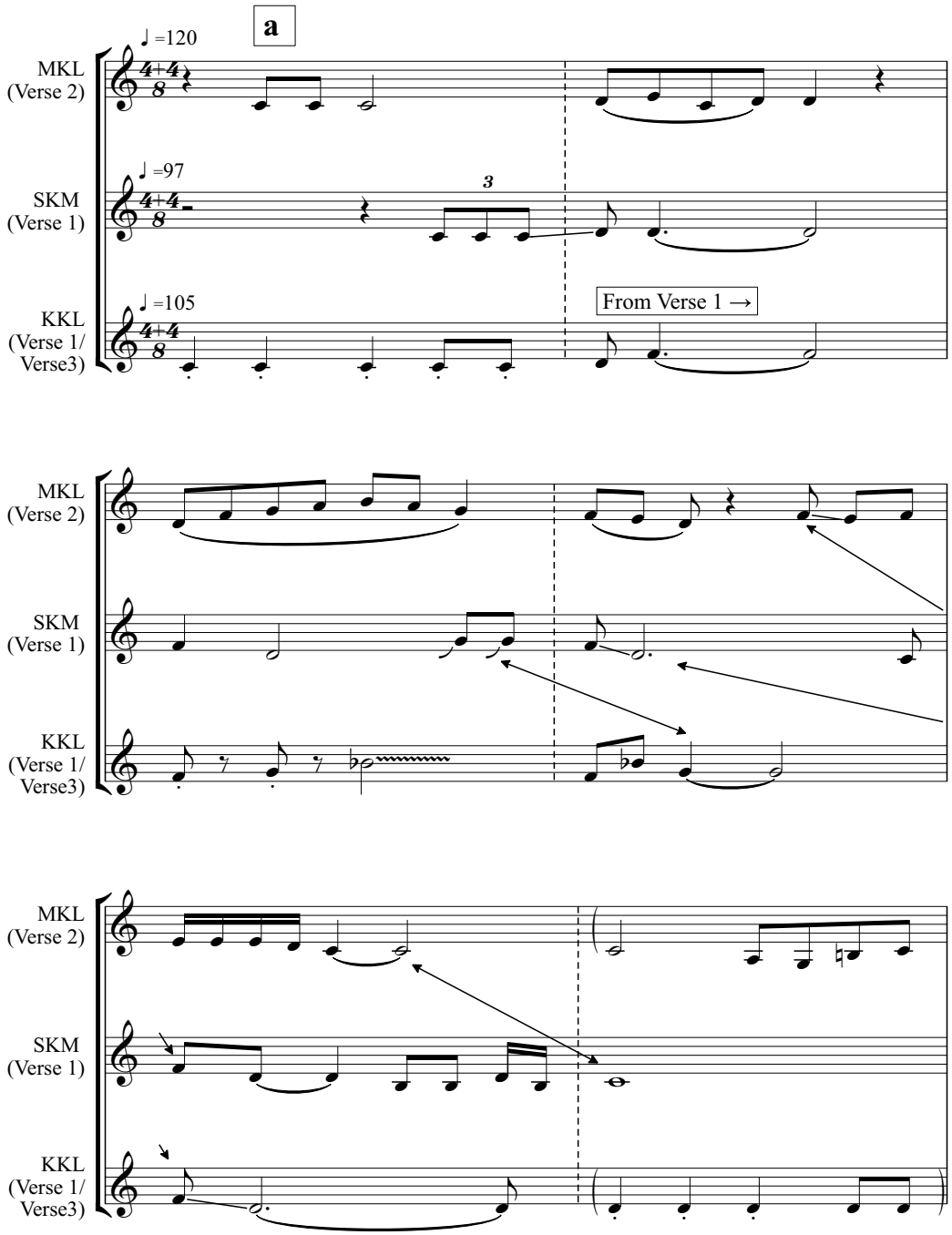
7.4.3. Cross-community analysis of ‘Bālochan’ song performances

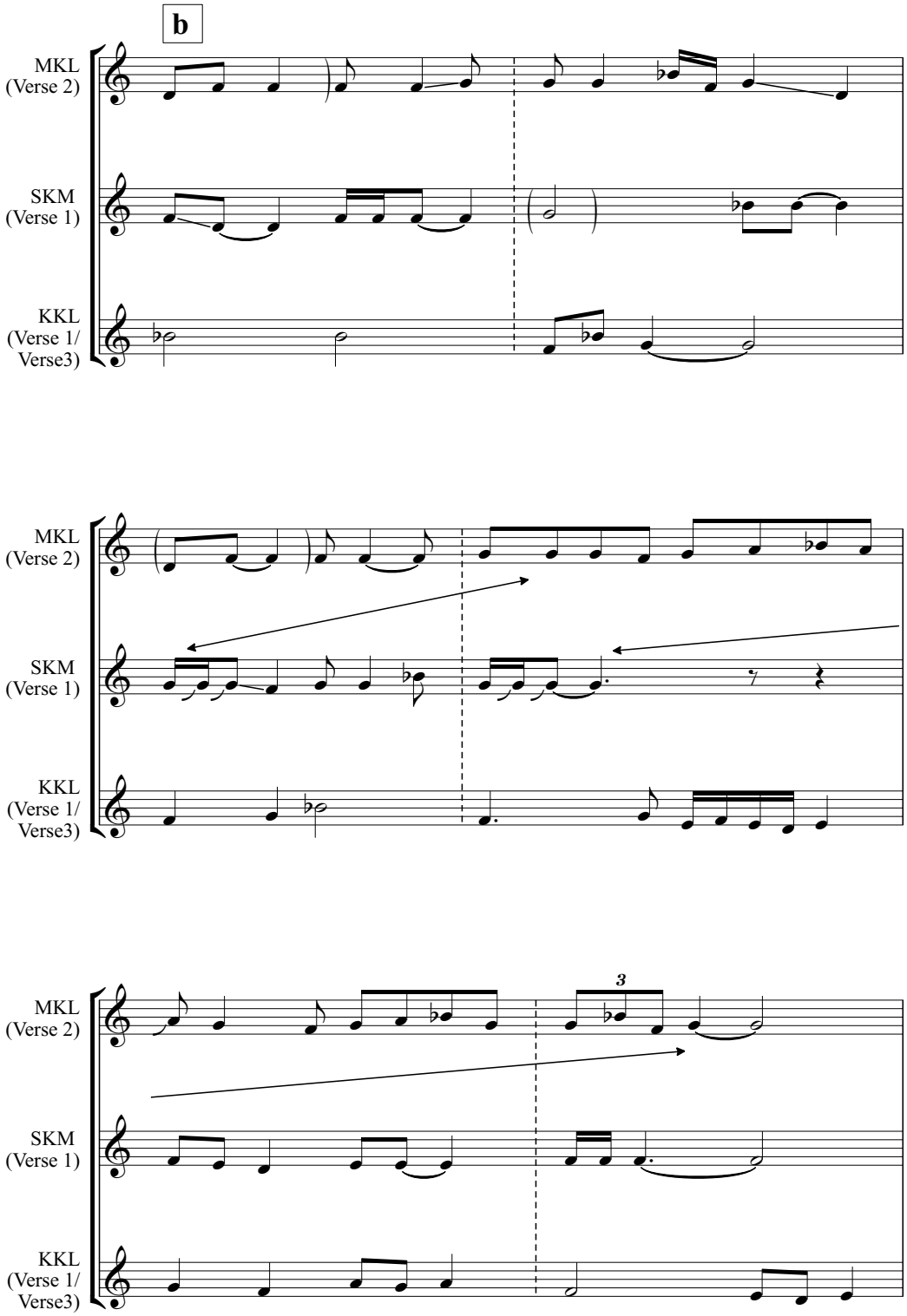
For our final analysis, we shall examine the basic structure of the song sections for each performance. Rather than transcribing each song rendition in its entirety, we shall take the essential verse model from each version, and then attempt to arrange them in series with each other. The chief purpose here is twofold: firstly, to ascertain the extent to which the established framework for *rāg* Soraṭh is adhered to during the course of song performance; and secondly, to investigate whether these three distinct performances of ‘Bālochan’ are derived from the same essential song melody.

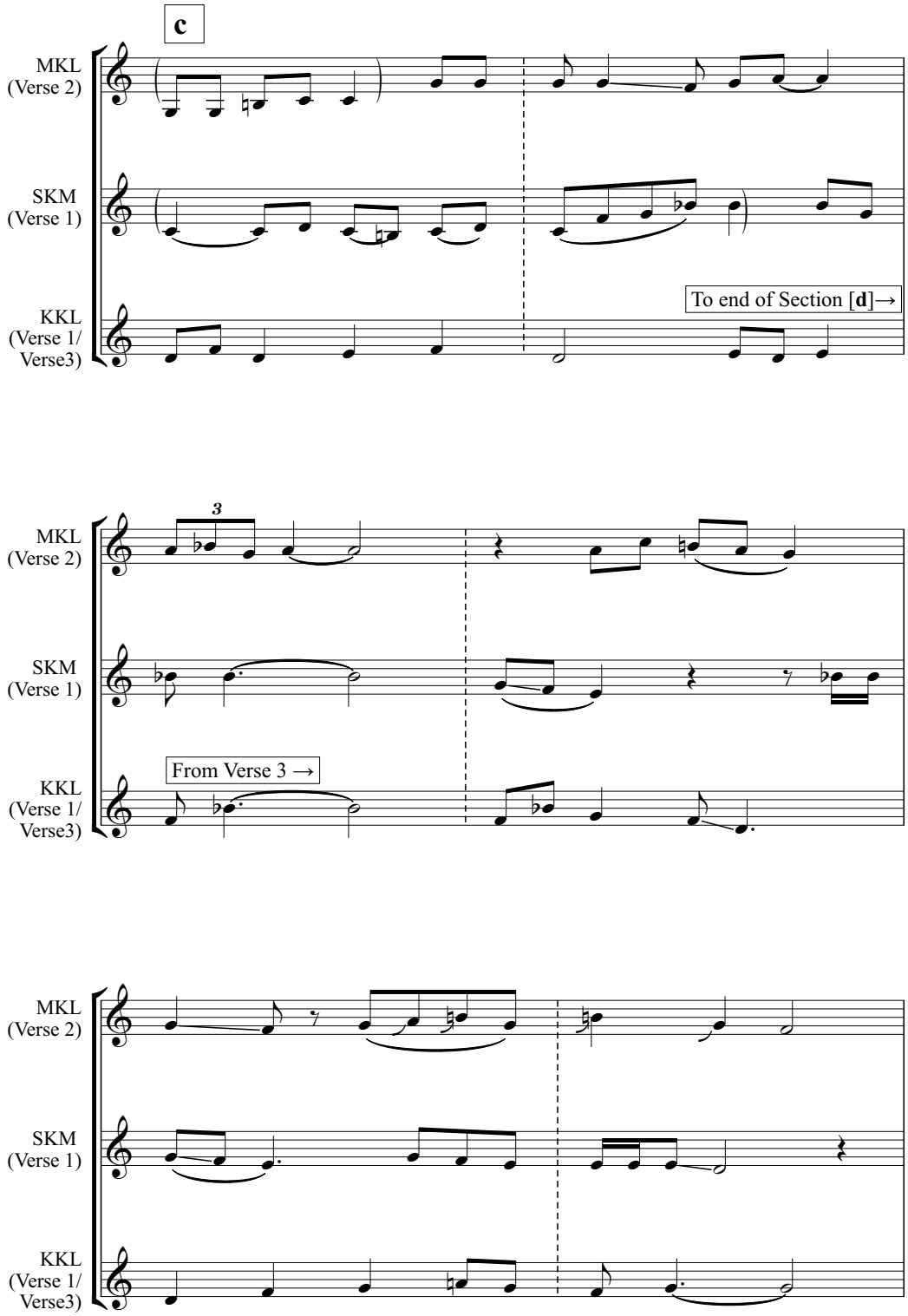
We can immediately identify some performance factors that are common to both versions. The time signature in all three versions is the same additive 4+4 metrical structure that we have already seen in the *rāg* Bhairvī examples from the previous chapter, which Kothari has identified as *kalvāṛā*; and throughout both performances, there is the same gradual accelerando. The Sakar Khan rendition starts off at a relatively stately 97 bpm, and has reached 166 bpm by the end of the performance; whilst the Muse Khan version comes straight in at 120 bpm, and peaks at a sprightly 188 bpm in the final few bars. Karim Khan starts off somewhere in the middle of these two versions at 105 bpm, and he keeps the tightest reign on his performance, finishing at a relatively stately 124 bpm.

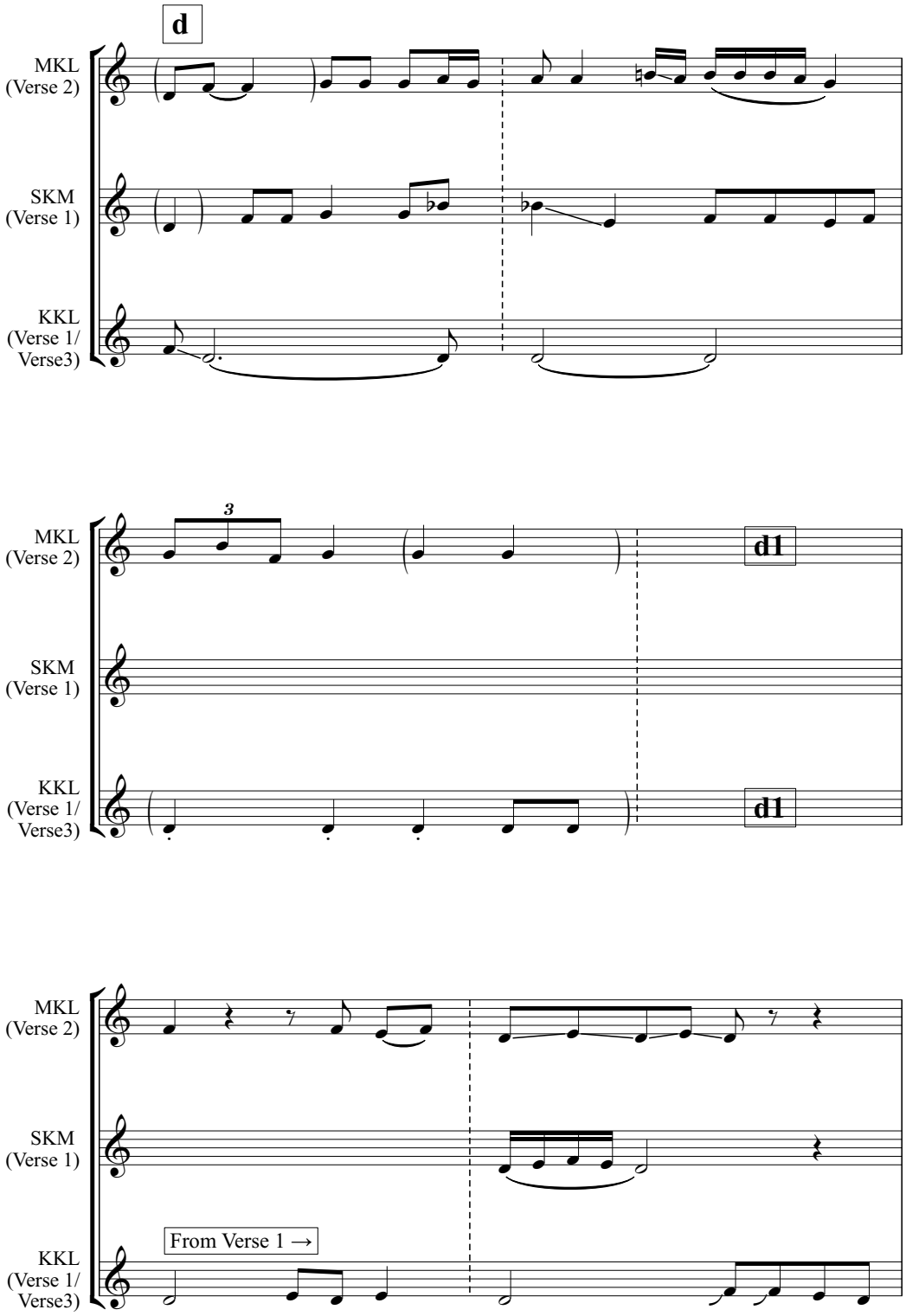
The song form in each case is strophic, with the six repeating verses that we have already described for the two vocal versions being separated by either long, sustained notes (particularly in the Surnāiā Laṅgā version), or short instrumental interludes, which we may or may not be able to call *lehrās* – but this matter requires further study, and we shall not be dealing with these interlude sections here. Rather, we shall focus on an assessment of the essential melodic structure in all three ‘Bālochan’ song versions, as shown in Figure 7.10. The approach to transcription here is more prescriptive, focusing on the essential melodic movements of each version rather than on precise ornamental detail. In the two vocal versions, the main vocal lines have been transcribed, with the occasional background phrases from both Sindhi *sāraṅgī* and *kamāichā* featured in brackets.

Figure 7.10: Prescriptive comparison of ‘Bālochan’ verse models




b
MKL
(Verse 2)
SKM
(Verse 1)
KKL
(Verse 1/
Verse3)
MKL
(Verse 2)
SKM
(Verse 1)
KKL
(Verse 1/
Verse3)
3
MKL
(Verse 2)
SKM
(Verse 1)
KKL
(Verse 1/
Verse3)


c
MKL
(Verse 2)
SKM
(Verse 1)
KKL
(Verse 1/
Verse3)
To end of Section [d]→
3
From Verse 3 →


d
MKL
(Verse 2)
SKM
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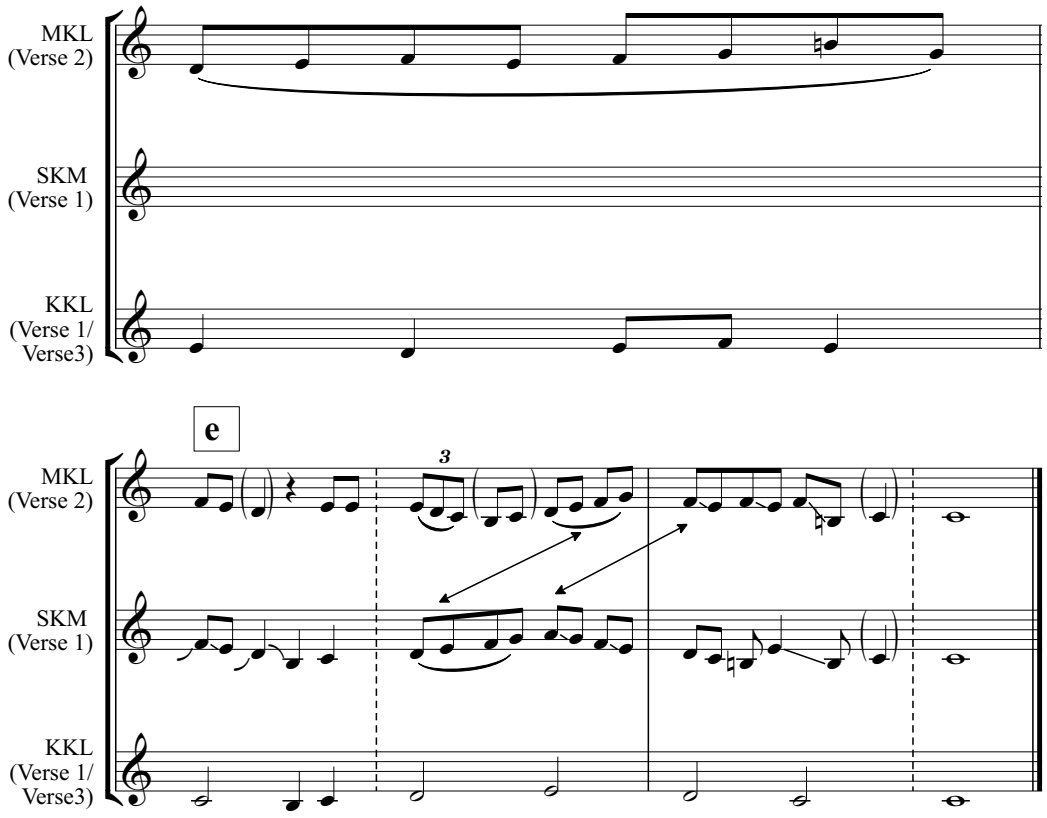
KKL
(Verse 1/
Verse3)
3
d1
d1
From Verse 1 →



Commentary: Figure 7.10

As Figure 7.10 shows, each verse can be divided into five distinct sections, which have been labelled **a**, **b**, **c**, **d** and **e**. These divisions accord not only with the melodic processes of development during the verses, but also with the lyrical frameworks in the vocal versions. Melodically, sections **a** and **b** explore the lower register, with section **a** focussing primarily around the tonic and the 2nd degree of the scale (touching briefly on the 5th), whilst section **b** goes on to explore melodic movements around 'Pa'. Sections **c** and **d** explore the higher reaches of the register, whilst the concluding section **e** brings the melody line back to the tonic. There is also a section present in both Laṅgā versions of the song that does not occur in the Māṅgaṇiyār version (labelled here as section **d1**), which we shall examine presently.

The first thing to note is that, despite some asymmetry in the arrangement of certain phrases (illustrated here by double-headed arrows), all three versions are clearly renditions of the same melody. Moreover, the 'Bālochan' song reveals

itself as having been composed in the same melodic format that has already been established for Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Soraṭh; and all three musicians remain within this framework throughout their respective song performances, within the bounds of what they have established during the earlier sections of performance.

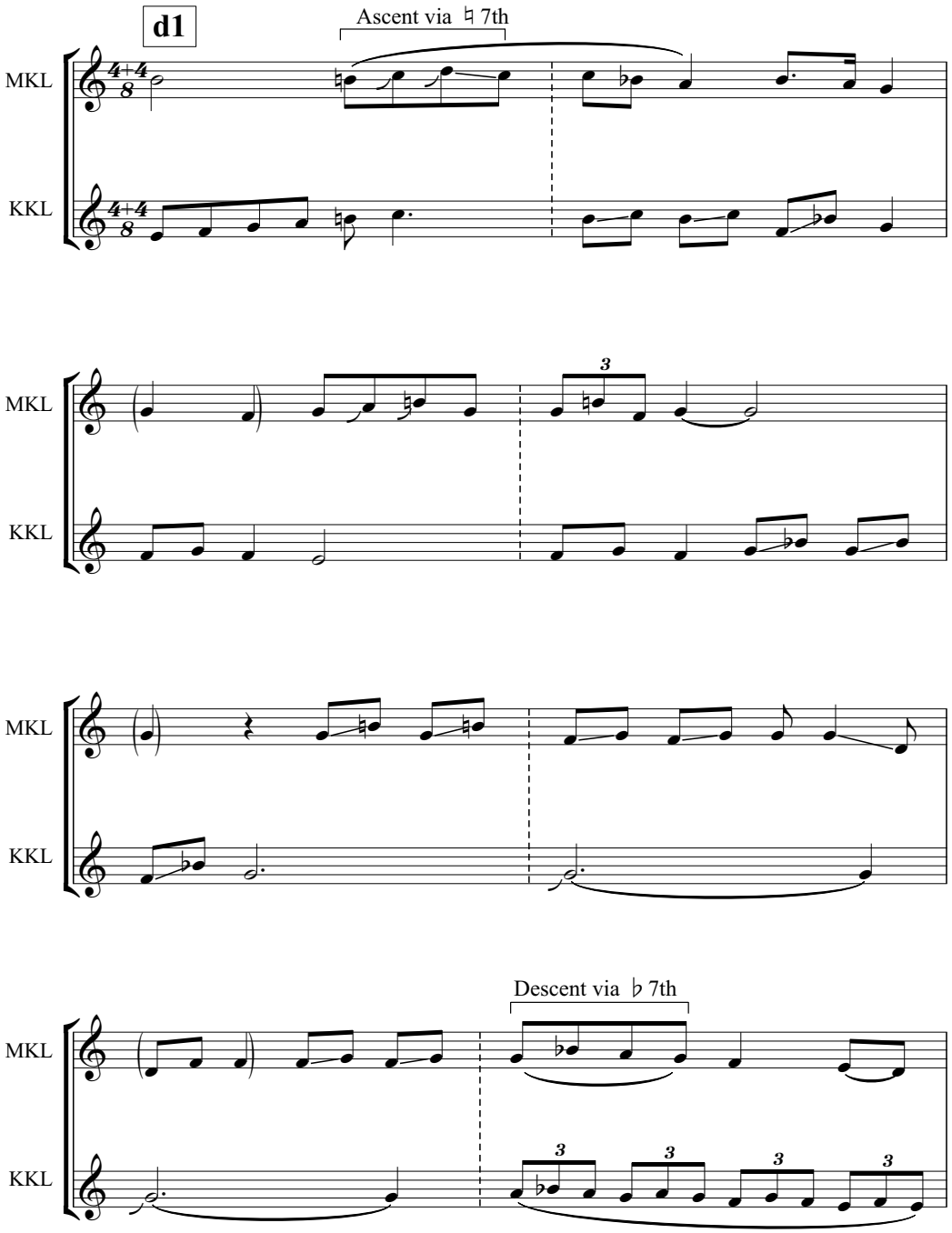
In addition to the occasional asymmetry in phrase positioning, we do find some minor points of divergence between the three versions. For example, in section **d**, we see some contrasting treatments of the 7th degree – Sakar Khan uses the *komal* 'Ni' here, and neither he nor Karim Khan ever reach beyond it; whereas Muse Khan passes up through the *śuddh* 'Ni' and even goes beyond the upper tonic to the high 'Re' in the following section; but this kind of ascent is, in fact, a favourite strategy of Muse Khan's, and it is also in keeping with the *rāg* Soraṭh melodic structure.

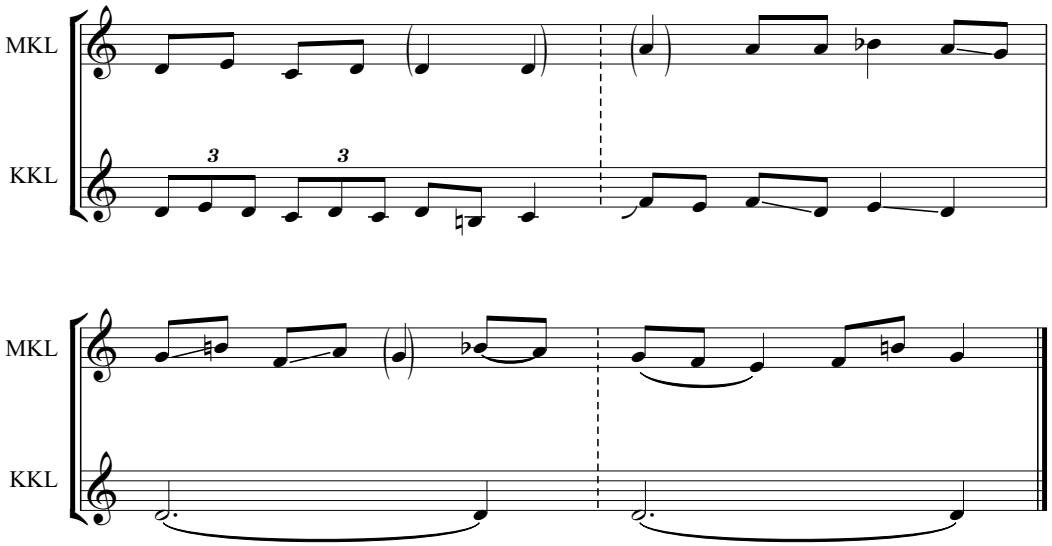
Karim Khan's instrumental version of 'Bālochan' emerges at once as both the most essential – i.e. the most reduced – in terms of melody, yet also the hardest to reference against the other two; but this is most likely because it has been adopted for a purely instrumental model, and therefore it may come as no surprise that some of the phrases appear in a different order to that which is found in the vocal renditions. Still, there are many fascinating points of convergence between his version and the Māṅgaṇiyār rendition performed by Sakar Khan, such as the near-identical phrasing at the end of section **b** (which, curiously, is not replicated by Muse Khan).

However, the addition of the Laṅgā-specific section **d1** (see Figure 7.11) is particularly revealing – not only in that it is not present in the Māṅgaṇiyār version, but also because it can be found in both the Surnāiā and Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā versions of 'Bālochan' – albeit with some minor variations, such as Karim Khan emphasising the 'Re' at the end and Muse Khan the 'Ga', which he has generally treated more heavily than either of the other two musicians. The sub-section **d1** has no explicit function in the rendering of the lyrics, and appears to serve chiefly as a means of showcasing the contrasting treatment of the 7th degree of the scale in *rāg* Sorath: as Figure 7.11 shows, the initial ascent is via the *śuddh* 'Ni', with *komal* 'Ni' being used in the descending movement. This is a cardinal feature of Bhātkhaṇḍe's classical *rāga* Soraṭh, and one that both Laṅgā and

Māṅgaṇiyār musicians take great pains to establish. However, it is interesting that section **d1** is not present in the Māṅgaṇiyār version, and this may point to the Laṅgā version being the older of the two, since it would appear to be complete.

Figure 7.11: Laṅgā-specific section **d1**





Finally, we can observe again that, whilst the overall melodic arc is not strictly correspondent with the *sthāyī* and *antarā* sections that delineate many North Indian classical song compositions, it does bear a close resemblance. The melodic content of all three renditions is essentially the same as the classical model; and certain key melodic movements are common to both formats (such as the skipping of 'Ga' in ascent, and the treatment of *komal* and *śuddh* 'Ni'). Hierarchies of pitch also correspond: the 2nd and 7th degrees of the scale are given particular importance; and the 5th functions as a common alighting and pivot point, whereas the natural 3rd and 6th degrees are used sparingly. So, in this case, the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār conception of *rāg* Soraṭh can be said to be very much in accord with the pre-20th Century classical framework for *rāga* Soraṭh.

7.5. Summary

During this final analytical chapter, we have looked in detail at a Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* format that bears extremely close resemblance to its classical counterpart. In Section 7.1, we also found an explicit extramusical association of *rāg* Soraṭh with the legendary Queen Soraṭh of Saurashtra, whose tale is still told across the Thar Desert region in songs such as 'Bālochan'. Moreover, we found once again that this legend – and this melodic format – is inextricably linked to the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf, who used the popular story as a vehicle for

his own philosophical Sufi ideology, and then presumably set it to the then-current melodic framework of the same name.

Taking the already-established close correlations between the versions of *rāg* Soraṭh supplied by Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Muse Khan Laṅgā in Section 7.2, we subsequently found that a store of *duhā* poetic couplets have been specifically set to the Soraṭh legend and melodic framework – although, in this case at least, the *duhās* are more descriptive of the legend than the *rāg* – and the possibility was raised that these *duhās* may have been taken directly from the *Risālo* of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

Section 7.3 outlined the background of the song 'Bālochan' as being a favourite for senior musicians from both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities, and one that was in all known cases set in the *rāg* Soraṭh melodic framework. Moreover, lyrical versions from both Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities were found to be closely related, with some interesting minor discrepancies that pointed towards the changing requirements of the song – perhaps with a view to who it was being performed for, be it Rajput warrior overlords or Sindhi Sipāhī farmer-landowners.

Our subsequent analysis of three senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār versions of 'Bālochan' in Section 7.4 demonstrates that the melodic framework of *rāg* Soraṭh is common to both communities, whilst at the same time bearing striking resemblances to the *calan* – the 'way to go', or melodic outline – of classical *rāga* Soraṭh presented by Bhātkhaṇḍe at the beginning of the 20th Century. Moreover, the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* Soraṭh model has been shown to be applicable to diverse song formats, and yet still remains clearly identifiable by its characteristic structural features at all stages of both instrumental and vocal performance.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Conclusion

8.1. General summary

Over the course of this thesis, we have sought to elucidate the place and function of a highly specialised form of musical knowledge – knowledge of *rāga* – within the folk performance repertoires of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. In order to position this localised body of knowledge within the wider context of South Asian music, the examination of pertinent ethnographic and socio-historical perspectives has been an essential component of the study; but it has also been necessary to adopt a more analytical approach to the music performance data, so that we might uncover the secrets of these predominantly operational melodic forms that the musicians themselves refer to as '*rāgs*'.

Much of the pre-existing information regarding this particular area of study has left more questions than answers; and we have identified a number of contradictions in the source material, as well as some conspicuous gaps in our own knowledge of the subject matter that still require further elucidation. One of the overarching reasons for this general state of confusion is undoubtedly that the musical knowledge of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs is, perhaps inherently, elusive. The historical record is at best scant and conflicting, with regard to both communities; the musicians themselves have offered varying accounts of *rāg* usage, with these testimonies often having the sense of being somewhat partial – even misleading, either deliberately or otherwise; and the complex musical frameworks are surprisingly hard to unpick, given how easy it is for even an unacculturated listener to appreciate the visceral performances themselves. This situation has been further problematized with the division of both communities between India and Pakistan from 1947 onwards; and it seems certain that the resultant political climate has done much to colour the accounts of both musicians and researchers, just as it has transformed the lives of the communities in question.

Because of the complexities involved in confronting these wide-ranging and deep-seated issues, we have considered the lives of our musicians from a number of different perspectives. Broadly speaking, the thesis can be divided into two halves: the first half – Chapters One to Four – deals with general contextual information, whilst Chapters Five to Seven concern themselves primarily with the analysis of musical recordings. The aim of this approach has been to strike a balance between analytical and ethnographic methodologies, producing a piece of work that acknowledges the importance of both approaches to any well-rounded musicology.

Naturally, there are some overlapping features, such as the introduction of *sūr* categories in the Historical Context of Chapter Two (which becomes a recurrent feature of some significance during the analytical process), or the more ethnographically oriented information that can be found embedded within the later chapters; but these features only serve to underscore our contention that the music object itself can no more be removed from its social context, than the social context can be fully appreciated without an understanding of any attendant musical behaviour.

8.2. Confrontation of the main hypothesis

In the Abstract and first chapter of this work, we characterised the relationship between the *margā* ('Great') hegemonic concept of North Indian *rāgā* and the *deśī* ('Little', or 'Local') form of *rāg* knowledge held by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs as being both complex and unclear, requiring further elucidation. The question was posed: what precisely <u>is</u> the nature of this relationship? Having used a combination of historical review, ethnographic enquiry and various music analysis methodologies, we are now in some position to answer this question.

During Chapter Two, the ethnographic work of Komal Kothari was introduced as being the cornerstone of extant knowledge regarding the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, outside of their own communities; and the steady stream of academic researchers that have followed his path into this area of study since the 1950s – of which I am but one – are all indebted to the groundwork that he laid for us. No-one has yet been able to match his profound, intimate and wide-

ranging understanding of the cultural practices of the communities in question, which he viewed in complete context with their local environment, alongside the many other vibrant folk traditions (both musical and otherwise) that are still to be found in Western Rajasthan.

With regards to the detailed specifics of musical knowledge, the picture was perhaps less clear. However, Kothari's characterisation of the folk musicians' approaches to *rāg* performance as being "similar to that of beginning students of classical music" (in Barucha 2003: 333) has proved influential; and the prevalent view (as outlined in Neuman et al 2006: 105-108) has become that this apparently remedial form of '*deśī*' *rāg* knowledge was most likely developed from historical interactions between the folk musicians and classical performers, most probably in the late medieval courts of Jaisalmer and Jodhpur.

The Historical Context presented in the latter part of Chapter Two used various sources to investigate this matter further, and found that there were indeed a number of intriguing contexts within which the folk musicians could have conceivably come into contact with classical *rāga* knowledge, via the avenues of Mughal court patronage. Moreover, we discovered evidence to suggest that the Laṅgā tribe may have originated from Rajput lineages in the Punjab, strengthening the view that the two communities might be historically connected in some way. Additionally, we found that at least some of the prominent Māṅgaṇiyār families were revealed to have originally belonged to the *Bhāṇḍ*, or 'Jester', caste, subsiding under the patronage of the medieval Jaisalmer Rajput rulers, and thus being perfectly positioned to 'pick up' on some of the classical music concepts and practices that were most certainly on hand in the courts at that time.

But here we also uncovered a number of correspondences between the *rāg* repertoires of both Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, and the *sūr* system of Sindhi Sufi poet and mystic Shāh Abdul Latīf. This brought into sharp focus the absent – even invisible – half of both communities, dwelling "somewhere across the border". Despite the apparent estrangement, the Pakistani Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs emerged as being inextricably bound to their not-so-distant cousins in Western Rajasthan, through unbreakable family ties and long-held links of

patronage. A new hypothesis emerged, suggesting that the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians may have adopted their primary body of *ṛāg* knowledge indirectly via the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf, and that these *sūr* melodies (which were themselves undoubtedly greatly influenced by North Indian classical *rāga* models) were also the vehicles for transmission of a substantial body of sung oral poetry that conveyed Sufi-inspired philosophical concepts.

Having established Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* performance as being a primarily operational form of musical knowledge – one that could best be understood by examining the performances themselves, rather than from seeking verbally articulated models – Chapter Three laid out the analytical framework for the study, drawing primarily from the fields of musicology, ethnomusicology and the cognitive sciences. The pan-South Asian concept of *rāga* was presented a multi-faceted phenomenon, encompassing extra-musical and culture-specific ideologies as well as certain codified melodic features; and Powers' notion of *rāg* knowledge being variously positioned on a continuum between 'tune' and 'mode' was adopted as a means of judging the extent to which the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians utilised *rāg* structures as frameworks for melodic extemporisation.

Chapter Four sought to contextualise *rāg* usage in the performance repertoires of both communities, highlighting the fact that *rāg* knowledge represents a highly specialised and prestigious form of musical knowledge in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār circles, generally being the preserve of senior musicians and an explicit marker of community status. We also saw that, following the interventions of Komal Kothari, the possession of this performance-based knowledge system significantly boosted the otherwise lowly living conditions of the musicians and their families, as the direct result of successful recording sessions and lucrative concert performances that continue to take place in national and international contexts. The *baḍā gānā*, or 'big songs' of the repertoire were identified as the primary vehicles for *rāg* performance, during which the sung/spoken performance of poetic *duhā* couplets was also shown to be a key feature.

When examining the modes of transmission for these lyrical bodies of information, we uncovered evidence to suggest that literate technologies were

being used, and that in some cases this approach was most likely not recent. Additionally, we noted two examples – one drawn from each community, one senior and one junior – that demonstrated a certain degree of representational, verbal understanding of classical *rāga* knowledge; but it was also evident that these representational forms were sometimes unsubstantiated, and not always necessarily indicative of general performance practice. Nonetheless, a case was made for the continued influence of classical *rāga* theory on the contemporary performance practices of certain Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians.

During the course of the subsequent analyses, presented in Chapters Five to Seven, a clear picture emerged of a predominantly fixed approach to *rāg* presentation in senior Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music performance, whereby the core phrase units for each *rāg* are reproduced almost verbatim during each performance, with the addition of minor ornamental variations at the surface level. It also became clear that these repetitively presented and often densely ornamented *rāg* melodies – for we can now call them by that name – are, with varying degrees of specificity, shared between the two communities, with only two apparent exceptions: *rāg* Jōg is not known to be performed by the Laṅgās; and, more curiously, *rāg* Māṇḍ does not appear to be performed by the Māṅgaṇiyārs. It may be that, through further investigation, performed examples of these *rāgs* can be found in both communities; but regardless of these anomalies, it seems clear that the substantial body of *rāg* knowledge is shared between both communities.

Certainly we cannot rule out the possibility of isolated incidences of classical *rāga* influence, or even direct intervention by classical musicians – indeed, there is compelling anecdotal evidence to suggest that such interventions did take place within the Māṅgaṇiyār community at least; and we have seen some cases where this process is known to be ongoing. But given the overall congruence in underlying *rāg* material present within both repertoires, allied with a markedly similar approach to *rāg* presentation that positions these melodic frameworks very much towards the ‘tune’ end of Powers’ continuum, we must look to a less diffused historical source. And, given the fundamental connection of both communities with the desert culture of the Sindh region of modern day Pakistan,

and their shared religious and philosophical belief systems, it seems likely that this source is the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf.

From an overall structural perspective, the '*rāg→duhā*/*lehrā→gānā'* model for Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *baḍā gānā* performance was revealed to be broadly analogous to the '*ālāp→jōḍ*/*jhālā→bandiś*' framework that is utilised in a typical North Indian *khyāl* performance, particularly with regards to metrical progression – but with important differences occurring within the melodic delivery of each section. The explicit introductory '*rāg*' component is not generally utilised as a model for extemporisation in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār performance (although we have noted that some contemporary musicians, such as Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār and Asin Khan Laṅgā, appear to be developing this approach); and there is little in the way of the gradual melodic expansion, or *vistār*, that would feature in a typical rendition of a classical *ālāp*. Moreover, *rāg* 'rules' are sometimes broken during these initial unmetered sections, implying that the notion of a fixed melodic framework is perhaps not so crucially air-tight as one would find in more orthodox classical music contexts.

Likewise, the *lehrā* melodies that are performed in the intermediate *duhā* sections bear some resemblance to the *jōḍ* section of an instrumental classical performance, with their formulaic expanding and contracting melodic lines, their underlying rhythmic textures, and with a metrical pulse being gradually introduced; but again, the instrumental *lehrā* melodies are revealed to be much more like fixed compositional elements, as opposed to melodic developments; and they can recur in the latter context of a song performance as recycled fragments of material that can give the appearance of being improvised, but are in fact pre-composed. As for the *duhā* compositions themselves, they would appear to belong wholly to a more poetic, ballad-based approach to music performance – and one that takes no small measure of influence from other local oral poetry performance genres, such as the Charan and Bhopā traditions, as well as from both Hindu and Sufi Muslim ideologies.

At the final level of song performance – the 'song' itself – these locally attuned lyrical themes continue to dominate the *baḍā gānā* genre, with Sufi metaphorical imagery seemingly ever-present beneath the surface. Once again, the overall

metrical progression is consistent with that of a classical performance, comprising a regularly metered song section that tends towards acceleration and concludes with a *tihāī*; and there is some evidence to suggest that certain *baḍā gānā* also follow the dualistic classical melodic format of *sthāyī* and *antarā*, in the broad sense of the first half of the song establishing the lower tetrachord of the melodic material, and the second half reaching the upper tonic and delineating the appropriate descent. Here, we also find another commonality between the local and hegemonic systems, in that *rāg*-based melodic material – once established in the unmetered introduction – is then held to during the entire course of the subsequent performance. If anything, the melodic framework of the *rāg* is adhered to more strictly in the progressive sections of a *baḍā gānā* performance; and we shall come back to this matter in section 8.4 below.

But there is little evidence, in either Laṅgā or Māṅgaṇiyār song performance, of the wide variety of *tāns* – rapid scalar improvisations – that one finds in the latter stages of North Indian classical song performance. Rather, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs prefer to use heavily ornamented phrase units that appear to be drawn from a significant reservoir of *lehrā*-like melodic material, which can be segmented and re-positioned within the context of any given song performance – or even occasionally used as leaping-off points for more improvisatory (and typically brief) trajectories. The body of *lehrā* material can perhaps be seen as a system of skeletal melodies, from which a musician or vocalist can draw as he sees fit; and they do not appear to be *rāg*-specific. However, in this regard there is much work still to be done.

The ubiquitous employment of a variety of melodic and rhythmic ornaments reveals itself to be one of the main markers of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical style, and in this respect their approach to music performance is perhaps more akin to that of the light-classical genre *ṭhumrī*. The consistent use of phrase units as building blocks for performance is also somewhat analogous to the formulaic processes of "chunking" identified by Zadeh in her 2013 work 'Analysing *Ṭhumrī*'; and we can speculate that this kind of approach may have even been influenced directly by *ṭhumrī* performers themselves, who were also known to be present at the Mughal courts, and who may well have found more opportunities

to mingle with our traditionally low-caste folk musicians than the more elite classical performers of the day.

Nonetheless, the system that is employed by the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs in the rendering of *rāg* frameworks through performance does not appear to have been codified by the practitioners themselves in any written or recorded form that we are currently aware of. Indeed, the *Risālo* melodies of Shāh Abdul Latīf were also passed on in this way, and do not survive in any known notated forms; and this distinguishes the Laṅgās' and Māṅgaṇiyārs' approach markedly from the aforementioned classical systems, which draw much of their prestige and knowledge from canonical models. Their musical knowledge is situated within its own unique network of what appears to be a shared, orally maintained local tradition. Knowledge of *rāga* in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music practice reveals itself to be a conceptually fluid and constantly evolving entity. Orally transmitted hereditary information, interacting with a variety of contemporary influences, serve to develop the musicians' approaches to – and expression of – a repertoire that is at once ever-changing, and yet surprisingly static at its core. For these reasons, Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge can only be understood through study of the music itself, as it is made manifest during reconstituted acts of performance.

8.3. Possible links between the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities

Having established that the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs share a significant body of highly specialised musical knowledge, we must now address the issue of how this may have come to be the case. Beyond the remarkable commonalities in both their music systems, their religious beliefs, the structuring of their communities, and their professional functioning as both hereditary bardic performers and genealogists, it seems evident that Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians have shared – and, in some cases, continue to share – certain specific instrumental techniques and particular approaches to performance that are otherwise uncommon outside of their communities. For example, besides the specialised *rāg* extemporisations that we have highlighted in this work, there are a number of rhythmic bowing techniques that both Māṅgaṇiyār *kamāichā* players and Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās

employ, but which are not commonly found in other North Indian traditions. Therefore, we must consider the possibility that they may have once been part of the same indigenous group.

Before entering the field, I had noted that these two communities were invariably grouped together in ethnographies, recordings, and even in a number of concert performance contexts. It seemed natural to suspect a deeper historical connection between the two communities, as both their cultural practices and the musical repertoire itself seemed to suggest. My own initial – and uninformed – feeling regarding this issue was that the Laṅgās would be the more likely candidates for the original community, since the term 'Māṅgaṇiyār' seemed too casual, too generalised and too derogatory to have been applied to any one specific indigenous group for any length of time. Upon first arriving in India, and speaking at length with Shubha Chaudhuri in the ARCE, I was intrigued to learn that she and Dan Neuman had also discussed the same possibility, but instead considered it more likely that the Laṅgās were an offshoot of the Māṅgaṇiyārs, given the evidence to suggest a Rajput origin to both communities.

Shubha Chaudhuri also told me that there had been an issue between Nazir Ali Jairazbhoy and Komal Kothari regarding what Jairazbhoy saw as an explicit attempt to de-emphasise the Muslim influence in the Langa and Manganiyar music traditions. Subsequently learning of the connection between the *rāg* system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, and the *sūr* system of Shāh Abdul Latīf, I became puzzled as to why there has been no mention of the *sūr* system in any of the Kothari-driven literature, despite the fact that books concerning Shāh Abdul Latīf and the *Risālo* can be found in both the ARCE and in Kothari's own library at the Rupayan (which is where I first came across the literature). I began to think it more and more likely that the Māṅgaṇiyārs had indeed once been Laṅgās, and that they had perhaps conformed to a Hindu Rajput mode of patronage as a matter of political expedience. Furthermore, it seemed possible that both Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs had become latterly involved in a nation-building exercise that sought to promote them as "the exotic desert performers" who nonetheless had grounded their humble *deśī* Muslim music system in the dominant mainstream Hindu ideology.

Whilst we have seen a good body of evidence to suggest that the Laṅgās may well have been Rajputs once upon a time – implying that they were originally Hindus, and therefore more culturally akin to our contemporary Māṅgaṇiyārs – it is equally conceivable that the contemporary Laṅgās are more distantly related to the indigenous Sindhi *Lora*, or *Loree* communities. These performers are thought to have migrated into Persia as court musicians during the 5th Century CE, and have been put forward as the likely ancestors of the European gypsy flamenco tradition:

> The members of these heterogeneous Sindhi communities constituting the Proto-Gypsy stock eventually became the ancestors of the Gypsies whose appearance in European lands is recorded during the 11th Century and onwards… These early migrating Sindhi stocks had, among them, a large element of the more adventurous Lora or Lorees, who were iron smiths and musicians as they are today.
>
> Baloch, A. 'Sindhi Melodies In Spain' (in Yusuf Ed. 1988: 29)

Certainly there appears to be a strong underlying connection between Sindhi musico-cultural systems and the musical traditions of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. The Sindh region has long been a contested area between local Muslim communities and the generally more prosperous Hindu ruling classes; and, at the same time as huge numbers of Muslims were escaping across the Thar Desert into the newly-formed nation of Pakistan in 1947, many Sindhi Hindus were forced to migrate into Rajasthan, the Punjab, and elsewhere (see Ahmad 2004 for an overview of this situation).

Nonetheless, there are still many unanswered questions regarding this issue. The historical evidence is scant and far from conclusive; and it seems equally certain that both groups have sought to become completely separate, by virtue of their strict endogamy and general social ostracization from each other. Having spent some time with both communities, it is clear to me that they now consider themselves to be very distinct from each other, despite the numerous commonalities and points of convergence that can be pointed to. Any ancestral connection between the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs would have to be deeply rooted in the history of the region; but such a connection is certainly possible. Indeed,

the underlying correlations that we have identified through this new examination of the musical evidence – particularly with regards to knowledge of *rāg* melodies – would seem to add further strength to the notion of a deeply rooted link between both communities.

8.4. Music systems as emblems of social dynamics

Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* structures can be viewed as emergent properties of flexible schematic formulae that have been cognitively constructed and categorized within the hereditary musical knowledge systems of the musicians, and then are expressed through the medium of musical performance. At this conceptual level, these embedded internal schematic processes can also be seen to mirror external processes of social interaction and change, revealing much about both the local tradition in question, and the hegemonic system that it is apparently set against.

We have shown that, in the process of establishing such a system, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs borrowed heavily from North Indian concepts of *rāga*, either directly or indirectly (and most probably through both avenues). However, it is equally evident that their knowledge system has drawn, and continues to draw, from other musical influences – both local and otherwise – just as the hegemonic classical system has done for many years. Moreover, the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs are themselves extremely skilled and charismatic performers, capable of taking almost any rhythm or theme that they hear, or any object that is present, and creating a fresh and exciting sonic interpretation of the situation that literally speaks volumes of their seemingly innate sense of creative freedom – which is in fact fostered from an early age, as we have seen.

Therefore, the musical knowledge of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs is at once conceptual and expressive, at once drawing from other influences and establishing its own identity through evolving acts of performance. This dynamic/reciprocal system is evocative of the ‘top-down’ versus ‘bottom-up’ approaches to perception that were introduced in Chapter Three, having been drawn from the fields of cognitive psychology and neuroscience. In the case of the musical activities of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs, both approaches would

appear to be significant, since the musicians employ higher cognitive processes that draw from diverse sources in order to frame their elaborate conception of *rāg* knowledge, and yet they are equally clearly responding to high levels of sensory input when they reconstitute and re-express their music systems through the medium of live performance.

At a social level, the musical knowledge system of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs could also be seen to both symbolise and exemplify this dynamic/reciprocal process in a number of ways. Firstly, the *jajmān*/*kāmin* relationship is in itself representative of this kind of symbiotic exchange of knowledge - a knowledge that is the property of the community, is both public and personal, is both local and regional, and which is carried, transmitted and transferred through the enactment and reception of musical performance.

Secondly, the processes of exchange between the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical knowledge system and the North Indian classical music system exhibit these same properties of fluid symbiosis (and also become emblematic of the asymmetry that is imprinted into these sonic knowledge exchange structures). Both of the above processes evidence the mutual exchange of musical knowledge as a necessary and fundamental part of the survival, promulgation, and enrichment of the host systems, at both local and regional levels. In this sense, music can be seen to act as both cultural barometer and cultural mediator, carrying with it implicit representations of social dynamics. Both established hierarchies and new social/compositional models are exposed through the musical structure itself.

From this perspective, the folk musicians' employment of classical *rāga* models could be viewed as a strategy to gain acceptance into the mainstream Hindu culture system. Certainly the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār communities in Western Rajasthan would appear to have benefitted from this symbiosis; and there is evidence to suggest that some contemporary musicians (Asin Khan Laṅgā and the sons of Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār, notably) are gravitating further towards the contemporary classical scene. However, there is also a deeply embedded strategy at the very core of both Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār repertoires that speaks of a much more marginal Sufi Muslim tradition.

8.5. Directions for future research

This study has attempted to draw attention to the richness, uniqueness, and depth of musical knowledge embedded within the local traditional performance practices of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. Nonetheless, there are still many areas that require further elucidation. Whilst we have covered a range of musical activity across both communities, our focus has been chiefly on *rāg*-specific material; and, although the review is far from exhaustive, it is hoped that the resultant *rāg* models will serve some practical use in the identification of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār *rāg* performances. To this end, the abstracted pitch hierarchies posited in Chapters Five to Seven have been compiled in Appendix I, giving an easily apprehensible table of data against which to check other renditions that have either been incorrectly identified, or are as yet unidentified.

For example, the 'Master Musicians From The Archives: Sakar Khan' CD (ARCE 2013) concludes with a sublime performance of the song 'Maṇihāro', which the liner notes state is "in rag Sorath": however, a cursory listening reveals that the minor scale employed in the melodic context throughout this rendition is incompatible with the other models of *rāg* Soraṭh that have been supplied by the musicians (including Sakar Khan); and closer inspection of the pitch hierarchies and melodic phrase units employed in the unmetered introductory section reveals that the *rāg* in question must be 'Sindhi' Bhairvī.

Ideally, all of the available pre-existing recordings of Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music would be tested against these models, both to refine (or refute) the frameworks, and also to further elucidate the extent to which such models are applied across the broader song repertoires in both communities. A number of *rāgs* are not covered in the study, despite being known frameworks for performance, and it would be useful to include them in any comprehensive study: these are *rāgs* Āsā, Bibhās, Bihāgḍa, Dhānī, Jōg, Kohiyāri, Mālkauns, Malhāri, Pahari, Paraj, Rāṇō and Salang – although this list seems to be ever-expanding, and may not be exhaustive.

Other areas of the repertoire have been similarly overlooked in terms of musicological analysis, and warrant further study. Detailed documentation and

analysis of the repertoire of women's songs is a priority in this respect – although such a study may prove to be logistically difficult, due to the sensitivity of the area in question. The vast reservoir of *lehrā* material that has been touched upon here would be similarly complicated to unpick; but such a study could undoubtedly be performed with the co-operation of skilled senior musicians, and deserves to be prioritized.

Another possible area of research lies in the overlapping fields of music and language, which has only been briefly touched upon in this work. The musical knowledge of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs is inextricably bound up with the lexical systems of *duhā* and *subrāj*, and both share important metrical features that warrant further comparison. Moreover, we have seen evidence to suggest that some *duhā* couplets may contain *rāg*-specific information; and there is much scope for further translation and analysis of *duhā* lyrics, and their relation to melodic and metrical levels of performance. Such research would contribute to two key questions in the music and language debate: to what extent can music be considered a subset of language; and, conversely, to what degree can we say that music exhibits features that are extra-linguistic?

Finally, the present work highlights the fundamental significance of the Sindh region of Pakistan to the cultural, musical and spiritual heritage of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs. Both communities have, like so many of their neighbouring rural peoples, been divided by the enforcement of the International Border that runs through their native desert homelands; and this social schism has had profound implications for the socio-cultural systems in question. In order to gain a more complete understanding of the Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār shared musical knowledge system, fieldwork is urgently required on the Pakistani side of the border, where it is estimated that as many as half of both communities still live. Again, such work may prove logistically difficult in the current political climate; but, at the very least, the absence of this research, and the resultant partiality in the existing ethnographic data, must be acknowledged.

Despite the analyses presented within this work being necessarily fragmentary in themselves (given the unavoidably detached perspective of the 'outsider', the limitations of time spent in the field, and the vastness of the repertoire in

question) the process nevertheless reveals a highly sophisticated and complex music system that is at once fixed, and yet is also highly adaptable to processes of social change. As we move closer towards a textual formulation of a Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musical theory, it is crucial to recognise that such a text will never capture the manifold nuances and idiosyncrasies that are made manifest in the unashamedly dramatic live musical performances of the musicians themselves. Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music lives and breathes thorough performance, and to apprehend a Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār music performance is not an abstract analytical experience; the experience is total, visceral, interactive.

In this predominantly oral tradition, it is through the generation and experience of these visceral performances that the musical knowledge of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs is made manifest in its purest and most immediate form, being both embodied and cognitively constructed at the moment of inception. This conceptual system of organised sound is capable of speaking for itself through the medium of music performance, without necessarily referring to itself lexically or grammatically, and without the need for an irreducible canonical text – nor is its existence dependent upon this, or any other, overt external processes of technical analysis. Hence, we can say that the performances of the Laṅgās and Māṅgaṇiyārs truly represent a self-evident instantiation of musical knowledge.

APPENDIX I:

PITCH HIERARCHIES FOR SELECTED LAṄGĀ AND MĀṄGAṆIYĀR *RĀGS*

Rāg → **Pitch** ↓	Bhairvī	Gauḍ Malhār	Kāfī	Mārū	Pārvatī	Sameri	Sūb	Soraṭh	Toḍī
Tonic (S)	STR.	SIG.	WEAK	NEUT.	SIG.	SIG.	NEUT.	STR.	WEAK
Flat 2nd (R)	SIG.	-	-	WEAK	-	-	WEAK	-	-
Nat. 2nd (R)	NEUT.	NEUT.	SIG.	-	NEUT.	NEUT.	-	STR.	SIG.
Flat 3rd (G)	SIG.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nat. 3rd (G)	-	STR.	WEAK	NEUT.	STR.	SIG.	SIG.	NEUT.	SIG.
Nat. 4th (M)	STR.	SIG.	NEUT.	SIG.	SIG.	STR.	NEUT.	NEUT.	NEUT.
Sh. 4th (›)	-	-	-	SIG.	-	-	NEUT.	-	-
Fifth (P)	NEUT.	NEUT.	SIG.	NEUT.	NEUT.	NEUT.	SIG.	NEUT.	NEUT.
Flat 6th (D)	STR.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Nat. 6th (D)	-	WEAK	NEUT.	WEAK	SIG.	STR.	STR.	NEUT.	NEUT.
Flat 7th (N)	NEUT.	-		-	-	-	-	SIG.	-
Nat. 7th (N)	NEUT.	NEUT.	NEUT.	STR.	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK	SIG.	WEAK

APPENDIX II:

COMPARISON OF *RĀG* USAGE – HAKIM KHAN MĀṄGAṆIYĀR AND MUSE KHAN LAṄGĀ

The data for Muse Khan Laṅgā's *rāg* usage is taken exclusively from fieldwork data recorded by the author. Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's *rāg* usage is taken from a combination of fieldwork recordings and data extracted from a table 'Lists of Rajasthani Ragas According To Various Authors' (in Neuman et al. 2006: 96-97).

Musician → ***Rāg*** **↓**	Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār	Muse Khan Laṅgā
Bhairvī	✓	✓
Bihāg	✓	-
Birbhās	✓	-
Deś	-	✓
Gauḍ Malhār	✓	✓
Jōg	✓	-
Kāfī		✓
Kalyān	✓	✓
Kamāijī	✓	✓
Māṇḍ	-	✓
Mārū	-	✓
Pārvatī (Pārbatī)	✓	✓
Rāṇō	✓	✓
Salang/Sarang	✓	✓
Sameri	-	✓
Saswī	✓	✓
Sindhi Bhairvī	✓	✓
Soraṭh	✓	✓
Sūb	✓	✓
Tilaṅg	✓	✓
Toḍī	✓	✓

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GLOSSARY OF MARWARI TERMS

āk – deciduous evergreen tree, also known as 'Shiva Tree'

āndh – horse's testicles; derogatory term

antario - perfume

baīt – verse of *duhā* poetry

bāj – eagle

bal – horsehair (used for *gāj*)

belhi - friend

berju – bow rosin (Māṅgaṇiyār term)

bakrā – goat

bakrā ātra – goat gut (used for main playing strings on Sindhi *sāraṅgī* and *kamāichā*)

banna/banni – bride/groom

Bhānḍ - medieval court jester

Bhāṭ - puppeteer caste

Bhil – Pābū priest and folk musician caste

Bhopā/Bhopī – husband/wife priest singers, most notably performing *Pābūjī* epic

bichu – desert scorpion

bilchu – bow rosin (Laṅgā term)

bili – cat; Laṅgā slang term for *chabī*

Bishnoi – Hindu dairy farmer tribe

bolā – idiot

buhguhluh – crazy person

chabī – tuning handle for Sindhi *sāraṅgī* and *kamāichā*

chanvari – wedding canopy

Chamunda Māta – Rajasthani goddess, guardian deity of Jodhpur

Chippa – Muslim block printing caste

Chomāso – songs for the rainy season

deśī – Hindu canonical concept of the 'Little' or local tradition

Devasi – sheep/goatherd caste

ḍhāḍ – hourglass-shaped tension drum played by Sikh balladeers

Ḍhāḍhī – literally 'players of the *ḍhāḍ*': Sikh musician group

dhol– large frame drum

dholak– double-headed barrel drum

Ḍholi – literally 'players of the *dhol*': Hindu ritual musician caste

dhuri – woven rug made of cotton, coconut fibre and camel wool

dhūldh – warm desert wind

Dhūrjī – tailor caste

duhā – South Asian poetic form consisting primarily of rhyming couplets

Dūm – beggar person; derogatory term

ferta – turban (Hindi equivalent 'safa')

gāj – musical bow for Sindhi *sāraṅgī* and *kamāichā*

gālī - jokes

gānā – song

ghorali lakri – wooden bridge for *kamāichā*, typically made of *śīśam*

girshī – wood used for making *gāj*

Goro/Gora – derogatory slang term for a pale-skinned foreigner

gūr – hawk; term occasionally used by Māṅgaṇiyār musicians to refer to the first beat of a rhythmic cycle, aka *muddā* (roughly equivalent to the classical term *sam*)

hālariya/ pālaria – birth songs

haldī - turmeric

hiren – blackbuck antelope

jajmān – patron in traditional Hindu caste system

janam – literally 'birth'; term applied to birthright ceremonies in Rajasthan

jāṅgal – (from Sanskrit, meaning 'rough and arid terrain') term used colloquially to refer to the Thar Desert scrubland

jhultā – amulet

juti – traditional leather shoes

kalvāṛā – 8-beat *tāl* commonly employed in Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār song performance

kamāichā – hemispherical bowed lute unique to the Māṅgaṇiyārs

kāmin – service provider in traditional Hindu caste system

Kām Denugai – Rajasthani goddess

kariyo – camel

kāl – instrument skin, membrane (typically of *bakhrā* or occasionally *hiren*)

Kesaī – butcher caste

khūb – good, great (equivalent to Hindi 'acchā')

lehro/*lehrā* – thematic compositional elements derived primarily from *surando* instrumental music

loh – bronze; used to describe bronze sympathetic playing strings

lōh – hot summer air

Lohār – blacksmith caste

longi – shawl, scarf

Longodar – clove seller

majak – joke; joking

Malī – gardener caste

maṅgal – auspicious; auspiciousness

Maṇihāro – jewel merchant

maran - literally 'death'; term applied to funerary ceremonies in Rajasthan

mārga – Hindu canonical concept of the 'Great' classical tradition

masjīd – mosque

Mātajī – Rajasthani goddess, guardian deity of Jaisalmer; respectful term for 'mother'

mātra – one complete rhythmic cycle in Hindustani classical music

maum – black gluey tree resin used for tuning of aerophonic instruments

Meghwāl – 'untouchable' caste

mengār - expensive

Mirāsī – somewhat derogatory Hindu term used to refer to low caste hereditary Muslim musicians

Mochi – shoemaker caste

moklava – final stage of a traditional Hindu marriage ritual, when the bride formally moves in with the groom

mohr – wedding crown

mor – peacock; state symbol of Rajasthan and national emblem of India

mornā – small tuning pegs for main strings of a Sindhi *sāraṅgī* or *kamāichā*

mornī – large tuning pegs for main strings of a Sindhi *sāraṅgī* or *kamāichā*

mūch - moustache

muddā – see *gūr*

mundan – ritual first hair cutting, or tonsure, in traditional Hindu culture

murlī – gourd pipes

Nāī – barber caste

neg – literally, 'gift'; payment in kind made by a *jajmān* to his musicians when a marriage occurs in either family

olē olē – literally ‘slowly slowly’: ubiquitous philosophical concept (Hindi equivalent ‘dhire dhire’)

Pābujī – historical Rajput prince and folk deity of Rajasthan

pali – riddles

paran – literally ‘marriage’; term applied to wedding ceremonies in Rajasthan

parḍa – leather strap used for carrying Sindhi *sāraṅgī* and *kamāichā*

pital – steel; used to describe playing/sympathetic strings

Pyaledār sāraṅgī – similar in construction and appearance to the Sindhi *sāraṅgī*, but distinguished in the manner of tuning and playing. Typically used by Māṅganiyār *sāraṅgī* players and some *Ḍholi* musicians

rāg – Hindustani classical music concept of melodic organisation, adopted by Laṅgās and Māṅganiyārs; a given melodic framework that embodies these concepts

Rangrij – pigment making caste

rāvanhatthā – bowed viol played by *Bhopā*

rohīṛā – deciduous hardwood tree found in the Thar Desert region, typically used in the manufacture of instrument tuning pegs (Sindhi: ‘*harōṛā*’)

sant – Hindu religious figure of great significance; ‘saint’

satī – traditional practice of widow immolation, now outlawed

Sindhi *sāraṅgī* – bowed lute variant of the classical *sāraṅgī* played by Sāraṅgīyā Laṅgās

sarinda – see *surando*

satārā - double end-blown flute

śīśam – evergreen rosewood tree, sometimes used in instrument body manufacture

siyalo – songs associated with the winter season

soriyo– wild boar

subrāj/śubrāj – poetic recitation of genealogies

sūr –the notes of a musical scale; a specific set of poetry relating to a given theme in Shāh Abdul Latīf's *Risālo*

surando – high-pitched bowed lute played by Sindh and Baloch folk musicians; equivalent to the *sarinda*, played by Surnāiā Laṅgā in Western Rajasthan

Sutār – carpenter caste

talab – desert rainwater

talāq – ritualised process of formally severing ties with ones patrons

thānd – cool desert wind

tīntar – 16-beat *tāla* commonly performed by Laṅgā and Māṅgaṇiyār musicians

todhā – green parakeet

topī - hat

toran – auspicious decorative Hindu door hanging that symbolises wealth, good luck and a happy marriage

toranio – songs associated with the ritual hanging of the *toran*

tuk-tuk – onomatopoeic word used to designate the ubiquitous auto-rickshaw

Wazīr – caste of genealogists employed exclusively by some Sindhi Sipāhī

LIST OF AUDIO AND VIDEO EXAMPLES

NOTE: Durations are marked in brackets, in the format ‘mm:ss’

AUDIO EXAMPLES

A 5.1 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Pārvatī (00:38)

A 5.2 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Toḍī (00:25)

A 5.3 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Gauḍ Malhār (00:37)

A 5.4 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Sameri (01:04)

A 5.5 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Sūb (00:50)

A 5.6 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Kalyān (00:45)

A 5.7 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Mārū (01:31)

A 5.8 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Kāfī (01:05)

A 5.9 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: *Rāg* Soraṭh (00:40)

A 5.10 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: Introduction from ‘Jasodā’ song performance (03:03)

A 6.1 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Kamāijī (00:54)

A 6.2 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Gauḍ Malhār (00:50)

A 6.3 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Sindhi Soraṭh (01:47)

A 6.4 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Tilaṅg (01:22)

A 6.5 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Saswī (01:17)

A 6.6 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Sūb (00:37)

A 6.7 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Jōg (00:39)

A 6.8 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Bhairvī and *lehrā* with improvisations (05:41)

A 6.9 – Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Bhairvī and *lehrā* with improvisations (05:02)

A 6.10 – Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār: *Rāg* Bhairvī, *lehrā* with improvisations and 'Ayo' song melody (05:12)

A 7.1 – Muse Khan Laṅgā dictates six *duhā* couplets for *rāg* Soraṭh. Muse Khan Laṅgā's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony, Jodhpur. 7th March 2014

A 7.2 – Karim Khan Laṅgā plays *Rāg* Soraṭh, Soraṭh *duhā* and 'Bālochan' song. *Master Musicians: Karim Khan* ARCE CD (2013). Recorded in 1986 by Reis Flora. Used with kind permission from the ARCE.

A 7.3 – Sakar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār plays *Rāg* Soraṭh, Soraṭh *duhā* and 'Bālochan' song. *Master Musicians: Sakar Khan* ARCE CD (2013). Recorded in 1990 by Daniel Neuman. Used with kind permission from the ARCE.

VIDEO EXAMPLES

V 2.1 – Asin Khan Laṅgā using the term '*sūr*' to articulate subtle phrase variation between *rāg* Sūb and *rāg* Mārū. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 13th November 2013 (01:03)

V 4.1 – Example of a *choṭā gānā*: 'Sōrjiyo', performed by Moti Khan Māṅgaṇiyār. Akbar Khan's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 24th February 2014 (00:44)

V 4.2 – Example of a *baḍā gānā*: 'Kanuro' in *rāg* Gauḍ Malhār with Gauḍ Malhār *duhā*, performed by Muse Khan Laṅgā. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 8th March 2014 (7:10)

V 4.3 – Example of *subrāj* for Jaisalmer royal family, recited by Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār. Akbar Khan's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 22nd February 2014 (00:31)

V 4.4 – Example of *subrāj* for Sindhi Sipāhī *Jajmāns*, recited by Muse Khan Laṅgā. Samsu Khan Laṅgā's house, Baḍnava village, Barmer. 15th March 2014 (01:38)

V 4.5 – Firoze Khan Māṅgaṇiyār correcting his son Latif's *dholak* technique. Firoze Khan's house, Kalākar Colony, Jaisalmer. 27th October 2013 (02:35)

V 4.6 – Firoze Khan Māṅgaṇiyār leading his son Hanif in an unmetered *rāg* exposition. Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra village, Jaisalmer. 29th October 2013 (01:23)

V 4.7 – Muse Khan Laṅgā giving tutelage to his nephew, Idu Khan, in the Laṅgā song 'Jalā'. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony, Chopasni Road, Jodhpur. 7th December 2013 (02:03)

V 4.8 – Singing *sargam* and *ākar* ascending and descending scales during a lesson with Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār. Akbar Khan's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 22nd February 2014 (00:47)

V 5.1 – Laṅgā girls singing 'Kesariya' song (extract). Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 12th November 2013 (01:02)

V 5.2 – Muse Khan Laṅgā's wife taking an active role in the pedagogical process. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā colony, Chopasni Road, Jodhpur. 5th March 2014 (00:44)

V 5.3 – Muse Khan Laṅgā performing a series of nine core Laṅgā *rāgs*. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 18th November 2013 (07:58)

V 5.4 – Muse Khan Laṅgā demonstrating subtle phrase variation between *rāg* Sūb and *rāg* Mārū. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 17th March 2014 (00:32)

V 5.5 – Asin Khan Laṅgā using *sargam* to articulate subtle phrase variation between *rāg* Sūb and *rāg* Mārū. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 17th March 2014 (00:40)

V 5.6 – Muse Khan Laṅgā demonstrating subtle phrase variation between *rāg* Kāfī and *rāg* Toḍī. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 17th March 2014 (00:56)

V 5.7 – Muse Khan Laṅgā demonstrating subtle phrase variation between *rāg* Gaud Malhār and *rāg* Soraṭh. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 17th March 2014 (02:32)

V 5.8 – Muse Khan Laṅgā demonstrating subtle phrase variation between *rāg* Pārvatī and *rāg* Sameri. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 17th March 2014 (00:57)

V 5.9 – Muse Khan Laṅgā: Introductory performance examples in *Rāg* Sameri. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. Composite film constructed from various video recordings taken during fieldwork (04:35)

V 6.1 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār establishing correct rhythm for 'Mūmal' song. Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 20th February 2014 (00:32)

V 6.2 – A selection of seven *rāgas* from Hakim Khan [composite edit]. Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 20th February 2014 (07:30)

V 6.3 – Hakim Khan Māṅgaṇiyār plays *rāg* Bhairvī and *lehrā* with improvisations. Akbar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār's house, Kaluki Hatta, Jaisalmer. 20th February 2014 (05:51)

V 6.4 – Chanan Khan Māṅgaṇiyār plays *rāg* Bhairvī and *lehrā* with improvisations. Chanan Khan's house, Bisu village. 7th November 2013 (05:12)

V 6.5 – Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār plays *rāg* Bhairvī, *lehrā* with improvisations and 'Ayo' song melody. Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra village. 6th November 2013 (05:16)

V 7.1 – Muse Khan Laṅgā plays *Rāg* Soraṭh, Soraṭh *duhā* and 'Bālochan' song. Muse Khan's house, Baldev Nagar Laṅgā Colony, Jodhpur. 5th March 2014.

V 7.2 – Firoze and Ghevar Khan Māṅgaṇiyār play *rāg* Soraṭh, Soraṭh *duhā* and 'Bālochan' song. Ghevar Khan's house, Hamīra village, Jaisalmer. 6th November 2013.