

# THE RECORD NEWS

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## Feature Article: Odeon in India

# **‘The Record News’ - Annual magazine of**

## **‘Society of Indian Record Collectors’ [SIRC]**

{Established: 1990}

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## From the Editor

I am pleased to present our annual issue – The Record News (TRN-2010) to all the members, wellwishers and friends of ‘Society of Indian Record Collectors’ [SIRC]. In addition to Mumbai and Pune, record collectors at small and remote places such as Amravati and Nanded are doing very well and they do meet once in a month to listen to old music from gramophone discs. Solapur unit has been broadcasting radio programs from local radio station for last several years. Public reading library in Solapur has now provided for storage and listening room for the old discs. This model could be used nationwide for the preservation of old discs for posterity. Hope the records will be in better care in the public domain.

With the advent of technology, it has become simpler to store large amount of data in compact size media like CD’s, MP3 discs and now high density hard drives. As a result, there is a danger of an existence of the shellac and vinyl records. SIRC members therefore have the responsibility to store and preserve the original disc records for posterity. Recent love for vinyls is a good sign.

Lindstrom Project, Germany has invited me and Sunny Mathew to write extensive articles for their research magazine. I have included the draft copies of our articles on ‘Odeon’ in India. Final versions will appear in their publication planned for 2011. Record collectors and music lovers shall find these useful.

- Suresh Chandvankar
- Editor

From The Editor	03
SIRC News from Mumbai and chapters	04
Odeon label discs in India – Suresh Chandvankar	05
Carl Lindstrom A.G. in south India – Sunny Mathew	27
Gauhar Jan, Month of July and Mumbai – Suresh Chandvankar	59
MUSIC OF THE INDO-CARIBBEAN : A request for input from collectors	61
List of SIRC Members	62
Contents of the back issues of ‘The Record News’	66

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**Front page picture: ‘Odeon label discs’.**

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# SIRC NEWS FROM MUMBAI

During the period of this report, Mumbai unit of SIRC has presented the listening sessions by invitations from the following organizations:

- 1] Cultural wing of Ashay Film Club, Pune
- 2] Y. B. Chavan Pratishthan, Mumbai
- 3] Bhavan's Cultural Center, Andheri
- 4] Karnata Sangh, Matunga
- 5] Suburban Music Circle, Santacruz and Borivli
- 6] Mani Bhavan, Mumbai
- 7] Deodhar's School of Indian Music

Topics of the listening sessions held: Abdul Kareem Khan, Shri.G.M.Londhe, Bhimsen Joshi, Gangubai Hangal, Gauhar Jan of Calcutta, Gajanan Watve, G. N. Joshi, Bal Gandharva, Manik Verma, Music Directors: Datta Davjekar, Salil Chodhury and Sudheer Phadke, Mallikarjun Mansoor, C. Ramchandra.

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# Odeon label discs in India

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**By - Suresh Chandvankar**

In my article, 'Lindström labels in India', (vol.2), I had mentioned that "Carl Lindström and 'Carl Lindström G.m.b.H' company names are associated with the 'Odeon' label records, not only in India but worldwide. These discs posed a real threat and a competition to the records produced by the British Gramophone Company and American Victor Company. The company survived through the world wars I and II and flourished even during the period of great depression of 1929 in America. 'Odeon label discs in India' is a vast subject and needs to be covered separately. I intend to take up that issue in this article.

Mr. Michael Kinnear from Australia has written a comprehensive article on the history of the ODEON RECORD and later ODEON labeled discs that were recorded and placed on the market in India between 1908 and 1940, under the title 'ODEON IN INDIA', in the International Talking Machine Review No. 77, Spring 1990, pages 2260 to 2270. That article is useful for in depth look at the marketing of the earlier ODEON RECORD labeled discs, and the later issues of the 1930's which were labeled simply as 'ODEON' label. That article traces the long and complicated activities of the 'ODEON' record label and the companies that represented it in India.

Within that article, Kinnear has also made reference to other articles written by Frank Andrews and published in the same journal under the titles, "A further look at The International Zonophone Company" along with 'Sterling' (a catalogue compiled by Sydney H. Carter, A History by Frank Andrews) and "A Fonotipia Fragmenta". These series of articles provide what is at present in English, the most comprehensive examination of the beginnings, activities, and corporate structure of the 'Odeon' record label.

Present article covers the important points of recognizing and identifying the various series, matrix system, and sizes of the releases on the 'Odeon' label. This information will be useful to historians, researchers and disc record collectors.

There are In fact 'TWO' separate and distinctive types of 'Odeon' labeled disc records, the first being marketed in India between 1908 up to 1914. These are known by their proper label name as 'ODEON RECORD' and were manufactured in the unusual sizes of 7½ inch (19cm), whereas most other record companies of the time were marketing 7" (17cm) or 8" (21cm) size discs in the smaller size, and the 10¾ inch (27cm) size as compared to the 10" (25cm) size of most other companies. Apart from the 7½ inch and 10¾ inch sizes the ODEON RECORD was also marketed in 12" (30cm) and the large, but rare 13 ¾ inch (35cm) size.

The later ODEON record label usually depicting the 'Odeon dome', and for the South Indian repertoire, with two elephants, was used in India and other areas between 1928 and 1938. The company controlling the label in Europe was essentially the same corporate structure that had produced and marketed the much earlier ODEON RECORD, but the representation and control of the later label in India was governed by very different business concerns.

The earlier ODEON RECORD was manufactured either in Germany at the Weissensee factory in Berlin, owned by Carl Lindström, A.G., or in England at the disc record pressing factory at Tonbridge, Kent, south of London, owned by The Crystalate Manufacturing Co., Ltd. The later ODEON discs were manufactured at the 'Odeon-werke' in Berlin between 1929 and 1934, but by 1934 the matrix stocks had been transferred to The Gramophone Co., Ltd., factory at Dum Dum. Thus, it is possible to find some titles issued on the later ODEON releases as both German and Indian pressings. It is interesting to learn about the styles and life spans of these two labels from two distinct 'era'.

## **THE ODEON RECORD**

The first releases of the Indian repertoire of ODEON RECORD in India appeared in March 1908 as the result of a recording expedition to India by the recording expert of the International Talking Machine Co., m.b.H., who controlled the 'Odeon' label. This recording expedition for 'Odeon' had begun at Calcutta in late 1906, and during the early months of 1907 moved on to take recordings in Benares,

Lucknow, Cawnpore, Delhi, Amritsar and Lahore before being concluded at Bombay. Following the recordings taken in India, the 'Odeon' recording team moved onto Siam, Singapore, Hong Kong and China where more recordings were taken.

### **Matrix Series**

The matrix system utilized by the International Talking Machine Co., m.b.H., for India is identified by the alphabet letter 'K' which had a further prefix of one, two or three 'x' letters which defined the size of the matrix as follows:

K	for 7 ½ inch (19cm) discs
xK	for 10 ¾ inch (27cm) discs
xxK	for 12 inch (30cm) discs
xxxK	for 13 ¾ inch (35cm) discs

Each country or recording centre had its own series of identifying letters, and it is presumed that in most instances, the actual numbering of the matrices was begun at 1. Certainly as far as India is concerned, that was the method of numbering the matrices. The identity of the recording experts who took the recordings of the first 'Odeon' expedition has not been verified, but it is likely to have been John Daniel Smoot who had already taken a considerable number of recordings for the company in Egypt, Syria and Turkey, and would have thus had some knowledge of Oriental musical styles.

The first recording expedition of late 1906 into early 1907 across India, produced some 7000 matrices. It seems that there may have been a further continuation of this recording expedition in 1908 by the same or possibly other recording experts of 'Odeon' based in South East Asia, as known matrix numbers seem to indicate three separate divisions in Bengali repertoire at least. Either as a separate or continued recording tour of India during 1908, approximately 800 more matrices were produced, beginning at Calcutta. It appears to have been confined to northern India only as no recordings were taken at Madras or other southern Indian places.

It is known that the recording expert responsible for the next 'Odeon' recording expedition of 1910 was named Mr. Nagle, and that he was

still engaged in taking recordings in the Dutch East Indies during 1911, but there is no means of defining his particular recordings – from the matrix numbers – from those of other recording experts. Mr. Nagle is believed to have also been responsible for the recordings taken during late 1911 and early 1912 in India, by which time the number of matrices in the Indian repertoire had reached over 2,600. The Indian recordings taken in early 1912 were in fact the last to be taken by the International Talking Machine Co., m.b.H.

### **Markings on ODEON RECORD discs**

As described above, the ODEON RECORD was manufactured either in Germany or in England. Apart from the matrix and catalogue numbers which are etched and incised into the disc face near the groove run off track, the early releases in the Indian repertoire have no markings to identify their place of manufacture, but the wording – PRESSED ABROAD – printed below the ‘Odeon dome’ on the top half of the label. The next pressings still retain the wording – PRESSED ABROAD – but also have the stamping of ‘Pressed in Germany’ and most often – MADE FOR FONOTIPIA COMPANIES – indicating that the label was in fact under the ownership and control of Fonotipia, Ltd. The next variation to appear on the discs pressed for the Indian market is that the wording – PRESSED ABROAD – is replaced by the wording - PRESSED IN GERMANY – printed on the label together with a stamping of the same words near the disc run off groove.

Record collectors who have some early ODEON RECORD discs will notice that some pressings have a – blank track – about half-way through the disc. This device or “recognition line” as it was termed, had been incorporated into the pressings in an attempt to foil the possibility of the company’s records being “pirated”. This “recognition line” was used exclusively with ODEON RECORD, FONOTIPIA and JUMBO RECORD discs and had been introduced in 1908.

### **Record and Catalogue numbers**

From its beginning in mid-1903 at Berlin, the International Talking Machine Co., m.b.H., had developed a numerical system of identifying the repertoires of each country or label configuration by



the first digit of the catalogue number of which the first 10,000 appear to have been reserved to the 7 ½ inch (19cm) discs. Apart from the ODEON RECORD labeled discs, the company also controlled the FONOTIPIA label, and it is believed to have included the Egyptian BAIDA RECORD and possibly the ORFEON RECORD of Blumenthal Record and Talking Machine Co., Ltd., of Berlin, Cairo and Istambul, in its numerical system.

The system of numbering 'Odeon' releases is quite complicated and not yet fully known. However, it is known that it had already been expanded to over 101,000 by 1910. Following series are known to have been used for FONOTIPIA and / or ODEON RECORD releases: 30,000 (Netherlands), 31,000 (used), 32,000 (British), 33,000 (French), and so on until we reach the 90,000 block of numbers which includes the Asian and Indian blocks, and a couple of FONOTIPIA blocks as follows:

ODEON RECORD	90, 000	(Far East and Dutch East Indies)	
ODEON RECORD	91, 000	(Malay States and China)	
FONOTIPIA	92, 000	-	
ODEON RECORD	94, 000	India	Red label
ODEON RECORD	95, 000	India	Brown label
ODEON RECORD	96, 000	India	Koran Series
and so on to			
ODEON RECORD	100, 000	Siam	Navy label

Whenever a block of numbers had been completely filled up to \*\*999, a new block was opened up for the particular repertoire, but not necessarily the next following block which may already have been in use for some other repertoire or label.

From the known matrix and catalogue numbers of the 10 ¾ inch (30cm) discs in the 94, 000 (Red label), 95, 000 (Brown label), and 96, 000 (Koran series), it seems that all three Indian series were opened up simultaneously, and later, back filled as new titles were issued.

The 94, 000 series appears to have been held for releases in the Bengali language, while the 95, 000 series was first utilized for Hindustani titles and later for the Gujrati and Marathi repertoires and

instrumental recordings. The exact use of the 96, 000 series is not yet fully known. Only recordings of recitations from the Koran have been found in this block, suggesting that the series was being utilized for a complete set of recitations from the Koran.

The original 'Odeon' record label had the words ODEON (Dome) RECORD, beneath the name of International Talking Machine Co., m.b.H., woven around a scroll which was later registered as a trade mark by the company in 1913, together with the several patent numbers on each side of the spindle hole, and with the number prefixed by – No. In time, the No. was replaced by an X- prefix.

Although the familiar 'Odeon dome' label with the words ODEON RECORD, was often replaced by some other illustration such as a sphinx and pyramid for Egypt, there have been no ODEON RECORD discs found with a particular special design for India. The 'new design' label on a plain background and with the word ODEON directly beneath the 'dome' is believed to have been first utilized in about 1918, and may be seen on some of the 95, 000 series in the Indian repertoire. These labels have a matt finish as distinct from a glossy finish. The glossy type of label with the word ODEON beneath the dome is believed to have been brought into production in about 1924. The introduction of the 'new design' label with a glossy finish presents a particular problem of dating pressings of 'Odeon' discs in that there had not been any new recordings taken of Indian repertoire since 1912, and the last advertised releases were made in late 1913 with a final catalogue printed in 1914, by which time the single face-numbering system had been supplemented by a double-face number.

Thus No. 95006 coupled with 95108 was catalogued as order number 1. To add to the confusion, advertisements appeared in several Indian newspapers with both the single-face numbers and a double-face 'order number', intermingled with BEKA GRAND RECORD double-face 'order number', by virtue of the fact that the Talking Machine and Indian Record Co., marketed both the BEKA RECORD and ODEON RECORD in India, and used a sub-title as "The Beka, Odeon and Jumbo Record Agency".

It is known that Vallabhdas Runchordas, who operated both The Viel-o-phone Co., Ltd., and The Talking Machine and Indian Record Co.,



12 inch size discs, which are quite rare and may not have been recorded or issued in any large quantities.

An interesting sidelight to the repertoire of songs and instrumentals that were issued on the ODEON RECORD label is that The Gramophone Co., in India would often bring out their own recordings of the same artist with the same coupling of songs on their cheaply priced ZONOPHONE RECORD, hoping to draw some sales away from their competitors. Mr. Muradali appears not to have minded who recorded his songs and must have been somewhat amused (and no doubt richer) to know that he had recorded the same songs for GRAMOPHONE CONCERT RECORD, BEKA GRAND RECORD, RAM-A-GRAH DISC RECORD as well as ODEON RECORD, and possibly other labels as well.

Although there appears to have been over 1000 double-sided ODEON RECORD discs placed on the market in India, the complete details of about two-thirds of this number are at present still to be verified before a proper assessment of the ODEON RECORD catalogue can be made.

The next major development with the 'ODEON' label in India occurs in late 1928 with the re-entry of Carl Lindström, A.G., to the Indian market. At the time the 'Odeon' label was revamped in India, the corporate control of the label had been acquired by the Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd., and through its holding company Columbia (International) Ltd., administered the company's activities in several countries.

It is interesting to note however, that although BEKA RECORD had not been marketed in India for several years, it had continued a strong presence in other areas of Asia, and was far better known in those areas than the ODEON label.

### **The ODEON Record**

In mid 1930 a new style ODEON record was introduced to the Indian market with a new repertoire of 'electric' recordings which had been taken in Bombay during the later months of 1929. The resurfacing of the OEDON record label in India was but a part of a whole

restructuring of the image and representation of the label in several Asian areas, from India to China. The new 'electric' series for all of the Asian countries involved in this restructuring were pressed at 'Odeon-werke' Berlin. The restructuring of the company's interests in Asia also meant the appointment of new agencies in most areas, and India was no exception to this procedure.

### **The 245, 000 series**

The releases on the 'new' Odeon label introduced not only the 'electrical' recordings to the label for India but also a new catalogue numbering system which employed a double-face number prefixed with an A-, and numerical series of 245, 000 (Blue label discs) and 245, 000 (Red label discs).

The A- prefix series had first been introduced in 1912 when the block numbering series of some countries or label designations had become exhausted, and it is an indicator of the slowness of the company's marketing interests in India to note that the A-245,000 series was not utilized until 1929.

### **The 'Ke' Matrix Series**

With the 'electric' recordings taken in Bombay during 1929 a new matrix series was adopted with a 'Ke-' prefix beginning at number -1. The recording 'engineer' in charge in India was Siegfried Franz who was but one of several recording engineers that had been sent out to Asia to take 'electric' recordings for a revitalization of the 'Odeon' catalogue. As far as can be determined the Ke- matrix series only reached some 500 recordings before there was yet another change in the corporate interests of 'Odeon' internationally. At present, it is not known for certain if recordings were taken at places apart from Bombay which had been chosen for the head office of the 'Odeon' concern in India, with Mr. Jhanke being the director in charge.

### **Markings on the ODEON Record**

Record collectors having any products recorded and manufactured by Carl Lindström, A.G., Berlin, will notice a small - £ - inscribed into the disc surface near the disc run off groove. The - £ - symbol is actually

the ornamental letter – L – which stands for Lindström, and relates to the ‘electric’ recording system that Carl Lindström, A.G., had adapted and modified from the Western Electric recording system for the new ‘electric’ method of recording.

Another small marking to be found on the record surface near the disc run off is a tiny letter, indicating the initial of the recording engineer in charge. Recordings in the Ke- matrix series of ‘electric’ ODEON records between 1929 and 1930 have a letter which appears to be ‘Sh’ and is believed to be the initial of Mr. Scholziger.

Some musicians who took part in these recordings sessions have mentioned that Siegfried Franz was the recording engineer, but his ‘initial marking’ has been observed and verified as an ‘-F’, thus until the true identity of the ‘initial markings’ are proven, we will not be absolutely sure to whom the ‘Sh’ recordings should be attributed.

Bai Sunderabai of Poona and Hirabai Barodekar were amongst the first artists to be recorded in the Ke- matrix series, and the popularity of these artists ensured that the ODEON label would be well received by the record buying public, even though the actual pressings were still being ‘Made in Germany’.

The matrix numbers from about Ke-300 upward have the ‘initial marking’ of ‘Bn’ which has been verified as the marking of Max Birkhahn, the son of another famous recording ‘expert’ Otto Birkhahn, who had been taking recordings since the early 1900’s.

The two catalogue series introduced for the new ‘electric’ recordings were: A-245, 000 (Blue label discs) and the cheaper priced A-245, 800 (Red label discs). Between 1930 and 1934, 128 releases were made on the Blue label and 57 issues on the Red label. By early 1934 the Odeon label had become but one of the many record labels that had been grouped together by the merger of The Gramophone Co., Ltd., and Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd., into the formation of Electrical and Musical Industries, Ltd., (E.M.I. Ltd.,) which was incorporated on 20<sup>th</sup> April 1931.

Although the ODEON label had been but one of the labels under the control of Columbia Graphophone Co., between October 1925 and

April 1931, the merger of the 'Gramophone' and 'Columbia' companies also meant that the 'Odeon' company was now under the same corporate control within E.M.I., Ltd. Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd., had set up its own interests in India in 1931 with head office at 29 Waterloo Street, Calcutta, and had also been engaged in taking recordings in the major cities of India with the intent of issuing its own catalogue and repertoire.

Thus by early 1932, there were three major record labels, HIS MASTER'S VOICE (The Gramophone Co., Ltd.) ODEON (Carl Lindström, A.G.) and COLUMBIA (Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd.) all actively taking recordings of Indian repertoire, and within a year of this activity, placing product on the market of disc records in India as though they were three separate and distinctive companies, but were in fact together in the corporate sense.

In April 1932, the Hanseatic Trading Company, Ltd., announced that ODEON products would soon be available again through new wholesale agents, and in February 1933, S. Rose and Co., Ltd., sole distributors of the Columbia label announced that the new Columbia recordings were about to be placed on the market.

During 1934, the shells and galvanoes of the 'Ke' matrix series that had been utilized to manufacture the discs in the A-245, 000 series were transferred from Berlin to Dum Dum, Calcutta and those releases which were still achieving some sales were repressed at The Gramophone Co., Ltd.,'s factory at Dum Dum. Stocks of releases that had not sold well were also sent to India, thus it is possible to find some discs in either German or Indian pressings and other releases only as German pressings. There are a couple of variations between the German and Indian pressings of the same catalogue number as the two different pressings of A245001 reveal. Record collectors who have a copy of this disc might like to take a closer look and see which pressing they have.

A245001			BAI SUNDRABAI
£Sh a	Ke	3	Wo Hamse Chup Hai – GHAZAL {URDU}
£Sh b	Ke	18	Akeli Mat Jaiyo Radha – BHAIRVI {HINDI}
			* German Pressing

A245001			BAI SUNDRABAI
£Sh a	Ke	5	Kaun Tarahase Tum – HORI KAFI {URDU}
£Sh b	Ke	18	Akeli Mat Jaiyo Radha – BHAIRVI {HINDI}
			* Indian Pressing
			Reissued as - Columbia VE 5060 [C. 1943]

The German pressings of the A245, 000 ODEON discs have a glossy blue label and the details of the recordings 'hand' written, and the wording 'Made in Germany' printed in English, and 'German Banavat' in Devnagri script, while the Indian re-pressings have a matt blue label with type script, and – on some pressings only – the wording at the bottom of the label 'Made in India'. In a third pressing of some of the discs in A245, 000 series, some titles were re-released on COLUMBIA in the violet colored VE-5000 series during 1942 and 1943. Many releases that continued to sell were retained in the catalogue up to 1937, by which time the representation of the ODEON label in India had been reorganized as a consequence of the merger of the 'Gramophone' and 'Columbia' companies.

### **The 'new' ODEON label in India**

Under the new structure, the ODEON label in India was to be represented by new wholesale agents who were also to be primarily responsible for the organization and results of recording sessions held under their auspices. The German engineers were to actually supervise the recordings, but apart from that aspect, the success or failure of product released was to be the concern of the wholesale agent. The new agents were as follows:

- a. RUBY RECORD COMPANY      Bombay      for Western India
- b. SARASWATI STORES              Madras      for Southern India
- c. TAYLOR's GRAMOPHONE SALON      Calcutta      for Eastern India
- d. THE TAS-O-PHONE COMPANY      Madurai      for TAS-O-Phone label

Each of these agents organized the recording sessions in their region and made the decision as to which recordings were to be released and how frequently.



## **The 'new' matrix series**

RUBY RECORD COMPANY, Bombay - Prefix S = 10 inch  
RS = 12 inch

The Gramophone Co., Ltd., Bombay - Suffix 1[] = 10 inch

SARASWATI STORES, Madras - Prefix MD = 10 inch  
AM = 12 inch

TAS-O-PHONE Co., Madurai - Prefix ME = 10 inch

TAYLOR'S GRAMOPHONE SALON, Calcutta [no separate series]

Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd. Calcutta – Prefix CEI = 10 inch  
CEIX = 12 inch

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### **Notes:**

1. Matrix numbers 545 to 720 + have the prefix: Wax – S = 10 inch
2. 'Takes' are noted by a suffix letter..... -1, or -2 etc.
3. From about matrix number 2400 – for the BOMBAY S-(10 inch) series, the recordings for the ODEON ledger were taken by The Gramophone Co., Ltd.

## **Recording Engineers 'initial markings'**

-F indicates SIEGFRIED FRANZ H\_ indicates HEINRICH LAMPE  
Bn indicates MAX BIRKHAHN Sh indicates SCHOLZIGER

The same recording engineers would usually travel on to Burma, Siam, Malay States, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies, and although each country and its agents had their own separate matrix identification letters, the 'initial markings' of these recording engineers are also to be found in these areas.

Some of the matrix prefixes for Asian recordings are: ZB for Burma, ZS for Siam, ZM for the Malay States, and Jab or ZJ for Java in the Dutch East Indies. Apart from ODEON there were a number of other record labels that utilized 'Odeon' matrix stocks in Asia, and nearly all

of the discs for these labels were manufactured by The Gramophone Co., Ltd., at Dum Dum near Calcutta.

The recordings taken in the 'Odeon' matrix series by The Gramophone Co., Ltd., were recorded at Universal Building, Sir Phirozshah Mehta Road, Fort, Bombay, and at The Gramophone Co., Ltd.'s recording studio at Dum Dum, for Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd. The 'Gramophone' matrix numbers will also have a coded prefix of letters to identify the recording engineer, while the 'Columbia' matrix numbers have numerical block numbers which provide the identity of the recording engineer.

Between 1932 and 1938 the ODEON record label developed a reputation of outstanding merit artistically, producing recordings of superb quality, and might have been considered to be the paramount record label then on the market in India, especially in Western India (through Ruby Record Company) and Southern India (through Saraswati Stores) despite the number of other competitors that had emerged onto the record market in India during those years, particularly with the rise of the BROADCAST label (through The Musical Products, Ltd., Madras), The Megaphone Company, and Hindusthan Musical Products, Ltd., both based in Calcutta.

Although The Gramophone Co., Ltd., held a virtual monopoly in the field of disc record pressing in India, that monopoly was somewhat challenged in the mid-1930's by the establishment of The National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co., Ltd., at Wadala, on the northern side of Bombay. The 'National' company with its label YOUNG INDIA had recorded several of the artists that had been recorded for the ODEON label, and sometimes mimicked the ODEON releases, such was the competition in the sound recording industry in India at that time.

The record buying public had never been offered such an extensive variety of product to select from as it was being offered in the middle of late 1930's. The Gramophone Co., Ltd., apart from pressing discs for its own corporate labels, including HIS MASTER'S VOICE, THE TWIN, COLUMBIA and ODEON, was also pressing discs for some forty other record companies in India, apart from its contracts for pressing in Asian territories.

Ten years earlier the ODEON label had only to compete with HIS MASTER'S VOICE and THE TWIN label in India, but it now faced a market place of some fifty new record labels being marketed in India, and although the ODEON label would have survived the frantic onslaught of competitive product, the outbreak of war in Europe quickly changed the whole perspective of the matters, as the ODEON label, despite being actually owned by British interests, was still being managed in India by German personnel who were deemed to be on the side of the enemy.

The Hanseatic Trading Company of 24 Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay under the direction of Mr. Jhanke, the manager of 'Odeon' interests in India, appears to have suddenly left town in 1938, with the control of the ODEON label passing to the direct control of Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd., who in turn diminished the role of the Ruby Record Company to that of simple distributors of ODEON and COLUMBIA products.

Although both the Ruby Record Company in Bombay and Saraswati Stores in Madras continued to market and advertise ODEON releases up until 1941, the number of releases had become very small indeed, and with the ODEON label being under 'Columbia' control in India, preference was being given to the releases on the COLUMBIA label which also included recordings that had been intended for release on the ODEON label.

Since mid 1940, the ODEON releases had been issued jointly with COLUMBIA and REGAL releases, and by May 1942, the ODEON label had been dropped altogether. In June 1942, several releases that had formerly been issued on the ODEON label were now re-issued on the COLUMBIA label in their own reissue series. For the 10 inch discs the COLUMBIA violet coloured VE-5000 and the COLUMBIA green coloured GE-17500 series were used for re-releases of ODEON products, and the COLUMBIA plum coloured BEX- series was utilized for 12 inch re-releases. A similar procedure was initiated for South Indian ODEON labeled discs, but it appears that the original ODEON catalogue numbers were retained for some series. When the ODEON label was abandoned in 1942, those

matrices that had not been utilized were used for releases on the COLUMBIA and REGAL labels.

The events described above bring the activity of the ODEON record label in India to a close, at least as far as releases of 78 r. p. m. discs are concerned, even though many releases that had originally appeared as ODEON labeled discs were still being manufactured as COLUMBIA discs up to about 1970. It is useful to document the styles and extent to which each series was developed or taken, hopefully providing information as to the first and last 'known' issue in each series.

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## **ODEON RECORD**

### **INDIAN SERIES**

(1906 – 1913) in use up to C.1926, still being marketed in 1931.

94000 to 94999	ODEON – 10 ¾ inch – Red Label
95000 to 95999	ODEON – 10 ¾ inch – Brown Label
96000 to 96999	ODEON – 10 ¾ inch – Koran Series
2000 to ....	ODEON – {?} – size not verified

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## **ODEON**

(1929 – 1931) in use up to C.1933, still being marketed in 1938.

A245000 to 245128	ODEON – 10 inch Blue	(West India)
A245800 to 245857	ODEON – 10 inch Red	(West India)

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## **ODEON**

(1934 – 1937) in use up to C.1941, still being marketed in 1942.

TS-1 to TS 34	(Old Style)	TAS-O-PHONE 10 inch Blue
TS-35 to TS 84	(New Style)	TAS-O-PHONE 10 inch Green

(South India)

SA 100 to SA 107 (Tower) ODEON - 10 inch Blue (East India)  
 SA 250 to SA 257 (Tower) ODEON - 10 inch Blue (East India)

- Some releases in the SA-100 and SA-250 series are:  
 “NEW THEATERS RECORD”

A 100 to A 131 (Elephants) ODEON - 10 inch Maroon (South India)  
 BA 400 to BA 411 ( “ ) ODEON - 10 inch Blue (South India)  
 CA 500 to A 599 ( “ ) ODEON - 10 inch Blue (South India)  
 CA 600 to A 1470 ( “ ) ODEON - 10 inch Blue (South India)  
 ES 1 to ES 6 ( “ ) ODEON – 12 inch Maroon (South India)  
 KM 1 to KM ? ( “ ) ODEON – 12 inch Maroon (South India)  
 N. J. S. 101 (Special) ODEON – 10 inch Silver (Jubilee)

SB 2000 to SB 2406 (Tower) ODEON - 10 inch Red (West India)  
 SA 3000 to SA 3088 (Tower) ODEON - 10 inch Blue (West India)  
 SS 4000 to SS 4020 (Tower) ODEON - 12 inch Blue (West India)  
 SR 5000 to SR 5009 (Tower) ODEON - 12 inch Red (West India)  
 SB 6000 to SB 6008 (Tower) ODEON - 12 inch Blue (West India)  
 SB 2108 [Prabhat] (Tower) ODEON – 10 inch Red (Special)

SL 1 to SL 32 (Tower) ODEON – 10 inch Red (North India)

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### **Columbia Reissue Series**

VE 1	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Violet (Burma)
VE 2000	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Violet (Burma)
VE 2500	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Violet (East India)
VE 5000	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Violet (West India)
VE 5100	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Violet (East India)
BEX 1	Up	COLUMBIA – 12 inch Brown (South India)
BEX 100	Up	COLUMBIA – 12 inch Brown (Hindi)
BEX 200	Up	COLUMBIA – 12 inch Brown (Burma)
BEX 250	Up	COLUMBIA – 12 inch Brown (West India)
GE 5000	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Green (West India)
GE 17500	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Green (West India)
GE 100	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Green (South India)
GE 500	Up	COLUMBIA – 10 inch Green (South India)

GEX 1	Up	COLUMBIA – 12 inch Green (South India)
GEX 500	Up	COLUMBIA – 12 inch Green (South India)

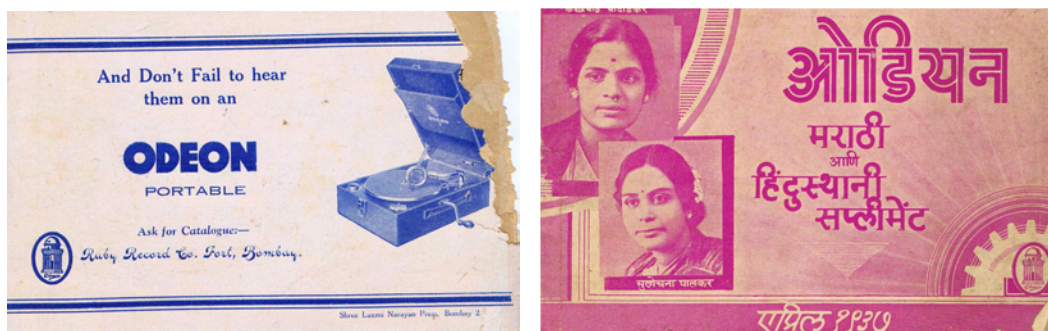
Note: Besides these series there were also other series utilized for re-releases of other labels, such as JIEN-O-PHONE RECORD, THE JAY BHARAT RECORD, and other labels absorbed into the COLUMBIA series.

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The information and summary of ODEON RECORD and ODEON labeled records given above, suggests that over 9,000 plus matrices were taken in India, and thus there may have been about 4,500 or more discs issued in the Indian repertoire. A rough estimate shows that about 1000 discs still survive and are in the custody of private and institutional collections. It is desirable to list them and make digital copies available for posterity.

## Bibliography

- 1] 'Odeon in India' – an article by Michael Kinnear, International Talking Machine Review No. 77, Spring 1990, pages 2260-2270.
  - 2] Reading Indian Record Labels – Part Four – ODEON RECORD and ODEON, by Michael Kinnear, 'The Record News', - vol.4, October 1991, pages 16-32. Journal of Society of Indian record collectors, Ed. Suresh Chandvankar.
  - 3] 'The 78 rpm Record Labels of India', ISBN 0 9577355 4 5, Kinnear Michael, 2003.
- =====



## Block Numbering System of Odeon Record and Odeon

ODEON RECORD [International Talking Machine Co.m.b.H. Berlin] Carl Lindström, A.G. Berlin				
<b>7½-inch</b> [Without prefix]	<b>[19-cm]</b>	<b>ODEON RECORD</b> None recorded for India	<b>[Made in Germany]</b>	
<b>10¾-inch</b>	<b>[27-cm]</b>	<b>ODEON RECORD</b>	<b>{Red} [Made in Germany]</b>	
X-90000	- series	Singapore	Chinese	[Recorded 1908-12]
X-91000	- series	Dutch East Indies		
X-92000	- series	[Fonotipia]	Italian	[Recorded 1906-09]
X-94000	- series**	India	Bengali	[Recorded 1908-12]
X-95000	- series**	India	Hindustani	[Recorded 1908-12]
X-96000	- series**	India	[Koran]	[Recorded 1908-12]
** Originally issued as "Odeon Record" [Lindström] 1908-1914 Selections pressed as "Odeon" [Lindström] 1929-1930				
X-97000	- series	[Fonotipia]	French	[Recorded 1908-11]
X-99000	- series	[Odeon Record]	German	[Recorded 1908-11]
X-100000	- series	[Odeon Record]	Burmese	[Recorded 1908-12]
X-101500	- series	[Odeon Record]	Siamese	[Recorded 1908-12]
<b>10-inch</b>	<b>[25-cm]</b>	<b>ODEON RECORD</b>	<b>{Blue}[Made in Germany]</b>	
2000	- series	India	Hindustani	[Recorded 1910-12]
<b>12-inch</b>	<b>[30-cm]</b>	<b>ODEON RECORD</b>	<b>[Made in Germany]</b>	
XX-		None recorded for India		
<b>13¾-inch</b>	<b>[35-cm]</b>	<b>ODEON RECORD</b>	<b>[Made in Germany]</b>	
XXX-		None recorded for India		

**ODEON**  
**Carl Lindström, A.G. Berlin**  
**[The Cosmos Engineering Co., India, Ltd., Bombay]**  
**[C. E. Woods-Scawen, Madras]**

10-inch	Odeon	{Blue}	[Made in Germany]
A245000-245128*	Western India	Hindi, Marathi	{Blue} [Lindström] 1930
A245800-245857*	Western India	Hindi, Marathi	{Red} [Lindström] 1930
A243000 –series	Southern India	Tamil, Telugu	{Plum} [Lindström] 1930
A248000-248049	West African		{Blue} [Lindström] 1930
A248500-248552	West African	Hausa, Ibani	{Violet}[Lindström] 1930

10-inch	Odeon		[Made in India]
A245000-245128*	Western India	[Reissues]	{Blue} 1934
A245800-245857*	Western India	[Reissues]	{Red} 1934
A243000 –series	Southern India	[Reissues]	{Plum} 1934

**Saraswathi Stores, Madras**

A-101-131*	Southern India	Tamil, Sanskrit	{Blue}	09/1932
BA-401-411*		Tamil, Telugu	{Blue}	12/1932
CA-501-1470*		Tamil, Telugu	{Blue}	12/1932
M.S.J.-101*	[Silver Jubilee]	(Special)	{Silver}	5/1935

**Ruby Record Co., Bombay**

SL-1-32*	Northern India	Hindustani, Punjabi	{Blue}	1934
SA-3000-3088*	Western India	Hindustani, Marathi	{Blue}	08/1934
SB-2001-2406*		Hindi, Marathi, Gujrathi	{Red}	09/1934
SB-6000-6008*		Koweity (Persian)	{Red}	1936

**M. L. Shaw, Ltd., Calcutta**

SA101-106*	Eastern India	Hindi Film	{Blue}	1940
SA-251-257*		Bengali Film	{Blue}	1940

**The Tas-O-Phone Co., Madurai**

10-inch	TAS-O-PHONE	{Green}
TS-1-34	[Tas-o-phone] Tamil, etc.[Old style label]	[Lindström] 1932
TS-1-85*	[Tas-o-phone] Tamil, Telugu, Instrumental	1934

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 Pressed at Berlin [Lindström] 1932

Pressed at Dum Dum 1934



**ODEON**  
**Saraswathi Stores, Madras**

**12-inch                      Odeon                      {Blue}                      [Made in India]**

ES-1 - ES-6\*                      Southern India                      Tamil, Telugu etc.                      December 1932

**Ruby Record Co., Bombay**

**12-inch                      Odeon                      {Blue, Red}                      [Made in India]**

SS-4000-4020\*                      Western India                      Hindustani, Marathi, etc.                      August 1934  
SR-5000-5009                      Western India                      Marathi, Instrumental, etc.                      1934

**ODEON**  
**[The United Africa, Co., Ltd., London]**

A248033-248049\*                      West African                      {Blue}                      1934  
A248520-248552\*                      West African                      Hausa, Ibani                      {Violet}                      1934

**[H. Polliack & Co., Johannesburg]**

WE-4                      -WE-172\*                      East African  
EO-250                      -EO-315\*                      East African  
EO-2001                      -EO-2028\*                      East African

\* - The highest known number in a particular series.

Note: East and West African 'Odeon' recordings pressed in India for agencies.

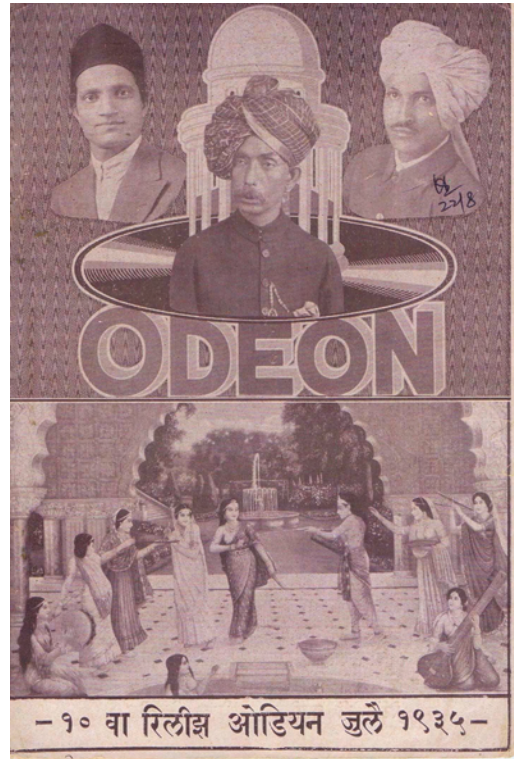
**Odeon – transfers to Columbia and Regal**

<b>Odeon</b>	<b>{Series}</b>	<b>Columbia</b>	<b>Regal</b>
A245000	Hindustani, Marathi	VE-5000	RL-2000***
SA-3000	Hindustani, Marathi	VE-5000	RL-2000***
SB-2000	Hindustani, Marathi, Gujrati	GE-17500	RL-2000
SS-4000	Hindustani, Marathi, Canarese	BEX-251	[12-inch]
SR-5000	Hindustani, Marathi	GEX-500	[12-inch]
A-101	Tamil, Telugu	A-101	
BA-401	Tamil, Telugu	BA-401	
CA-501	Tamil, Telugu	CA-501	
SA-101	Hindi	VE-5101	
SA-251	Bengali	VE-5101	
	[South Indian unissued recordings]	GE-6001***	

\*\*\* includes transferred and previously unissued 'Odeon' recordings.



Odeon record labels of early period on extreme left and extreme right.



Odeon Catalogues – October 1934 (left) and July 1935 (right)

# CARL LINDSTRÖM A.G. IN SOUTH INDIA

By – Sunny Mathew

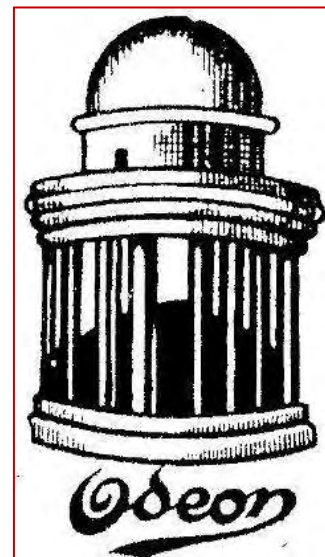


## INTRODUCTION

India was introduced to recorded music in 1899. The Gramophone Company, London, recorded the voice of an Indian for the first time on gramophone record in 1899. In 1902 some 17 phonograph cylinder recordings were made in Berlin of Parse students living in Berlin, and of members of a troupe of Malabar entertainers performing in Gujarati, Malabar (Malayalam?) and Tamil. They were all members of a Carl Hagenbeck ethnographic show. [Dr. Rainer E. Lotz, Germany – from a personal communication]. The first recording in India was by F.W. Gaisberg in 1902 at Calcutta. Between 1902 and 1908, F.W. Gaisberg made nearly 5000 recordings from various locations in India, for the Gramophone Company. Lured by the scope of the gramophone and record market in India almost all the gramophone companies worldwide started their operations in India. By 1910, nearly 75 record companies had entered the arena; but they had to face many hurdles in their path. Only a few succeeded in this. Carl Lindström and companies associated with it had emerged as one of the major player in this field and Odeon, one of its labels for the records became a house-hold name in India, by the 1930's.

## Carl Lindström A.G. & associated companies in India

The operation of Carl Lindström A.G. in India has three stages. First stage is the period from 1906 to the beginning of the First World War. The second stage is between First World War and 1934, when the operations were directly controlled by the company. The third stage is the period up to the Second World War, when activities were through the Agents in India. In the first stage, India was taken as a single unit; but in the next two stages, operations were region based. Hence, the history of Carl Lindström A.G. and its "ODEON RECORD" label released in the first stage was common to the whole of India. Later on the picture of the famous Dome was introduced on the Label and two elephants were added for South Indian repertoire.



## **ODEON RECORDS**

The operations of Odeon in South India and India as a whole can be considered to have been launched in 1906 by the establishment of the 'Talking Machine Company of India' at 51, Bentick Street, Calcutta, by Edwin Heinrich Christensen, to market Odeon products of the International Talking Machine G.m.b.H. 22-23, Lehder-Strass, Berlin, Weissensee, Germany.

The ODEON RECORD was manufactured either in Germany at the Weissensee factory in Berlin, owned by Carl Lindström A.G. or in England at the factory at Ton bridge, Kent, London, owned by the Crystalate Manufacturing Co. Ltd., till 1914. Between 1928 and 1934, Odeon discs were manufactured at the "Odeon=werke in Berlin. From 1934 onwards, pressings were made at Dum Dum, Calcutta, India. Indian recordings were issued in the matrix series, k (7 1/2 inch size discs), xk (10 3/4 inch), xxk (12 inch) and xxxk (13 inch).

The first recording expedition for Odeon in India was during 1906-07. The recording Engineer in this recording tour was John Daniel Smoot. Over seven hundred recordings made in this expedition included some South Indian recordings. In the second recording tour of 1908, no South Indian recordings were taken. During the period from 1910 to 1912, Mr. Nagle, made three recording expeditions all over India and the total number of recordings of Odeon rose to 2,600. These were the last recordings made by the International Talking Machine Co. G.m.b. H. in India.

Most of the recordings made were either in English or Classical music, appealing only to the elite class. Gramophones and records were affordable only to the land lords and foreigners staying in India. The marketing of the Odeon and other associated labels in India under the management of Talking Machine Co. of India from 1906 to 1912 was prosperous. The hostilities which led to the Second World War from 1914 to 1919 ended the first stage of operations of Odeon and labels associated with Carl Lindström A.G. in India and it took nearly 15 years to restart. Between 1914 and 1927, only Gramophone Co. Ltd., was active in India. Columbia Graphophone Co. acquired the controlling interest in Carl Lindström A.G. in October, 1925. Carl Lindström's labels like, Odeon, Beka, etc had been active in India.

### **Companies in India having business interests with Carl Lindström A.G. (up to 1927)**

#### **1.Vallabhdas Runchordas & Co. Vallabhdas Lakhmidas & Co. Bombay**

Vallabhdas Runchordas & Co., Bombay, was established in 1902. They had agencies of The National Phonograph Co. New York, Columbia Phonograph Co.

London and Pathé Frères of Paris. Name of the company was changed to Vallabhdas Lakhmidas & Co. in 1905. In 1905, they arranged the recording for Beka Record G.m.b.H. Berlin, in India. Recordings were made by Heinrich Bumb and Max Hadert at Bombay and Calcutta. Records were pressed in Berlin and released in India in April 1906.

Vallabhdas Lakhmidas & Co. (Elphinstone circle, Fort, Bombay), had been the agents for Jumbo and Beka records from 1906. These labels came to the fold of Carl Lindström A.G. in 1910. In the same year, Vallabhdas Lakmidas & Co. was appointed sole Agents for Talking Machine Co. They marketed gramophones and records under the name of the Talking Machine and Indian Record Co. with offices in 15 Elphinstone Circle Bombay, 3 Bentick Street, Calcutta, Chandni Chowk Delhi, Isuba Maistry Street Madras, and 19 Phyre Street Rangoon. In 1908, they released the Phon-o-Phone records.

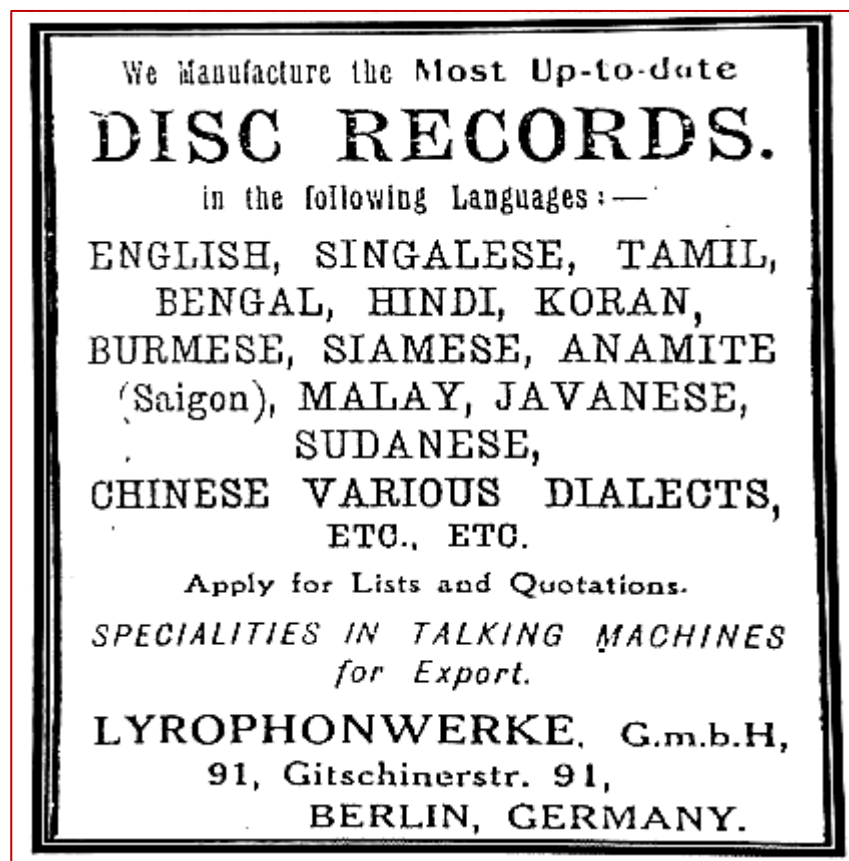


In October 1910, they were appointed as the sole agents for 'ODEON' and 'JUMBO' label records for India, Ceylon and Burma. The recording tour for Odeon Records organized in 1912 was under this agency. These included a considerable number of South Indian recordings. Further, recordings could not



be made in India by German companies consequent to the out-break of second World War. India being a part of the British Empire, no trade with Germany was allowed. Since major part of the activities of Vallabhdas Lakhmidas & Co. was with Germany, they were badly affected by these restrictions. In 1915, Lakhmidas broke-up from the partnership and the company name was reverted back to Vallabhdas Runchordas & Co. They continued the sale of Odeon records up to 1927, but the list included only the recordings made up to 1912.

Vallabhdas Runchordas, was also associated with Viel-o-phone and phon-o-phone records. During the middle of 1940,s the establishments of Vallabhdas Runchordas were sold off and the sale proceeds were given to charity.(source-Michael Kinnear-2003)



## 2. T. S. Ramchunder & Bros. Bombay

T. S. Ramchunder & Bros. were the distributors of Ram-A-Phone Disc Records (1907) and Ramagraph Disc Records (1908) produced by Lyrophon=werke G.m.b.H., Hanover, Linden, Germany. In 1913, Lyrophon= werke G.m.b.H. was absorbed into the Carl Lindström conglomerate. Like Vallabhdas Runchordas & Co, T. S. Ramchunder & Bros. had also been supplied with gramophone records by Carl Lindström A.G., Berlin. With Columbia Graphophone company Ltd. acquiring control of Carl Lindström A.G. in 1926, this transaction came to halt.

However, recordings made by T. S. Ramchunder & Bros, were pressed at Lyrophon = werke.

### 3. The Wellington Cycle Co.


“Singer” records were issued by this company with the assistance of Beka company. This label was added to Carl Lindström consequent to merger / acquisition in 1913.

### 4. The James Manufacturing Co.

They were issuing “James Opera Record” with the assistance from Beka company and got absorbed in the fold of Carl Lindström in 1913.

### 5. Universal Talking Machine Co. Ltd. London

Universal Talking Machine Co. Ltd. London, were the promoters of “Elephone Records”. Aldridge, Salmon & Co. were the distributors in India and they had offices at 7 Sardar’s Mansion, Bombay and 26 Cubbon Road, Bangalore. South Indian recordings were released on Elephone label during 1908-1909. Lyrophon=werke. G.m.b.H. Berlin, had been associated with Universal Talking Machine Co. Ltd. since 1913. Lyrophon=werke advertised that they had many Indian recordings. Michael Kinnear opines that these Indian records may relate to “Elephone Record”.



**A “Record” Demand**  
FOR  
**Elephone Double-sided**  
10 ins. Records at Rs. 3-4 each.  
AND  
Universal Talking Machines, from Rs. 30 to  
Rs. 250.  
By Cash or Hire Purchase System. Write for  
Catalogues.  
**ALDRIDGE, SALMON & CO., LTD.,**  
26, CUBBON ROAD, BANGALORE.  
Branches: Madras, Secunderabad, Mysore, Trichinopoly, Coimbatore, etc.  
HEAD OFFICE: LONDON.

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Advertisement of Elephone Gramophones and Elephone double side records



**ELEPHONE RECORD – (single side record)  
Tamil song by Miss. Rajamani Srirangam (Rec. No. 1081)**

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**The Second phase in the activities of Carl Lindström  
in India (1924-1933)**

During the First World War, the operations of companies having connections with Germany were stopped in India. Only after a gap of five years, after the end of the war, Odeon re-started its operations in India. Many companies had been wound-up in the stock market crash of 1929. However, in the same year, Carl Lindström A.G., re-entered the Indian market with records pressed in Germany. South Indian recordings on the labels like Odeon and Parlophon pertaining to this period have been found. "Made in Germany" is printed in all the languages of South India on both sides of the "Odeon Dome", on these Odeon records labels. In 1930, South Indian recordings, pressed at the company's factory at Wandsworth, South London, were issued on Columbia label records.





**This record has words, “Made in Germany” printed in seven languages.**

### **Columbia Grahophone Co. & Carl Lindström A.G.**

In 1926, Columbia Graphophone Co. London acquired control over Carl Lindström A.G. Because of this, the ‘Moving coil system of sound recording’ (introduced by Western Electric and used by Columbia Graphophone Co.,) became accessible to Carl Lindström A.G. In 1930, Columbia Graphophone Co. appointed P. Orr & Sons Ltd. as their Indian agents and their operations in South India begun in 1931 from their branch at 162 Mount Road, Madras.



**Printing block used by P. Orr & Sons**

Distribution was done from 'Orr's Columbia House'. P. Orr was the agent for Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. London since 1929 till the merger of companies to form EMI Ltd, London and later from 1931 to 1941. Managers of 'Saraswathi Stores' were the agents from 1939 to 1970. From 1939 to 1941, P. Orr and sons were the sole agents. During 1932 and 1933, the recording experts of Columbia Gramophone and Odeon were trained in each other's recording systems at Dum Dum, so that the recordings taken would be compatible between the labels.

## **The Music Boom in South India**

By the middle of the 1920's, there was a boom in the music industry in South India. This was a unique phenomenon in South India closely related to many local factors affecting the Sub-continent. Many local and foreign companies were lured into the field of gramophone records due to this new interest in recorded music. Being a sub-continent with many divisions on the basis of language and culture, a general pattern of recording and distribution of records was not practical in India, and particularly in South India. Many companies faced these hurdles successfully. Odeon was one among them.



**Picture above:-Gramophone records being sold like Hot Buns  
(illustration in the Odeon Catalogue – January 1933 of Saraswathi  
Stores)**

The sound media of gramophone took up the live-performance genres of Drama, Dance music and Folk music. The boom originated in Tamil speaking Madras and gradually spread to the whole of South India. Till the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Carnatic music, a system of devotional music which developed in the Vijayanagar empire in the medieval period, spread to the whole of South India. By the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Tanjore became the centre of Carnatic music. The extension of the colonial rule of Britain from Calcutta to Madras and the annexing of almost the whole of south India disposed the composers, musicians and scholars from Tanjore and there was a grouping of musicians at Madras. By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Madras became the centre of music, education and administrative capital of South India. Many upper and middle class Tamil and Telugu high caste communities (Brahmins, Mudaliars etc.) settled in Madras and got acquainted

with recorded music - mainly classical music (Carnatic music) confined to the courts of kings. Carnatic music discs were cut across Tamil, Telugu, Kannada (Canarese), and Malayalam speaking South India. The new interest in carnatic music shown by the upper and middle class professionals in the cities was of great potential to the record manufacturing companies.

### **The restraints faced by record companies in South India**

The Indian subcontinent is divided into many regions due to the diverse languages spoken. As such, record companies had to make recordings with the consideration of language spoken in each locality. Only, classical music had a general acceptance, since they somewhat crossed the language barrier. Hindusthani in Northern India and Tamil in Southern India were the dominant languages. In the first quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, gramophones and record music were accessible only to the elite class due to the high prices of the machines and records.



**Mr. Sreenivasa Murthy, Seethaphone, Bangalore, with one of the gramophones produced by his father - Mr. Seetharama Shetty.**

**[This gramophone resembles Gramophone company's model no. 113 in looks and performance, but the price was only half.(Photo by the Author)]**

Till the first quarter of last century, drama, dance and music were confined to the palaces of rulers and big landlords. They organized music for the temple festivals. They also patronized classical music. But this was done during the festival season only. However, the gramophone music had the benefit of providing music round the year and on demand. The cost of the imported

machines were the biggest restraint to the middle class to get access to recorded music. The entry of many local and foreign companies in the recorded music field resulted in competition resulting in reduction of prices of machines and records. Many local companies imported the motor and other parts from Switzerland, Germany, Britain and Japan and assembled gramophones and marketed in their own brand names. The prices of these gramophones were very low as compared to imported gramophones. From 1924 onwards, 'Seethaphone Co. Banglore', was assembling and marketing many models of gramophones using parts procured from various companies. Seethaphone could sell gramophones at rates below 50% of the rates of fully imported gramophones. The availability of gramophone at low rates paved the way to a music boom in South India, by bringing the middle class people to the category of gramophone listeners. Gramophone machines and the records of interest became a necessity of a middle class family.

### **Gramophone Companies get acceptance**

Gramophone records caught the attention of the listeners in their ability to make music available in the living room without much expense. Devadasis were the traditional class who practiced singing and dancing in Hindu temples. They had passed down the music expertise including classical, Carnatic, devotional, dance and folk songs. In the early catalogues of record companies, Devadasis were the first and most important artists in South India.

Devadasis had a bad reputation as being generally assumed to be sexually available and respectable middle class families had an aversion to them. Gramophone records gave them the opportunity to listen to the songs of Devadasis without their presence in person. The re-appearance of the Odeon label in South India was during the period when the mind setting of the middle-class with ample purchase power had turned their keen attention to gramophone music. The emergence of the musical dramas and their wide acceptance in the first quarter of 20<sup>th</sup> century was a boost to the record manufacturers,

### **Boost to Gramophone record industry from Dramas and Films**

Dramas in South India were musical and drama songs were a mixture of classical, folk, comical and devotional songs. Sad songs were a speciality of the South Indian dramas. Early South Indian films of the 1930's and 1940's were replicas of dramas. More than two hours of these 3 hour dramas and films were set apart for songs. From 1930's majority of the recordings made were from drama and films. Drama sets, which were abridged versions of dramas giving preference to songs were recorded and sold in metal boxes. Drama sets had minimum of 3 records and many sets had 10 records.





**A record sleeve of a Tamil drama 'Bhama Vijayam' from Saraswathi Stores**

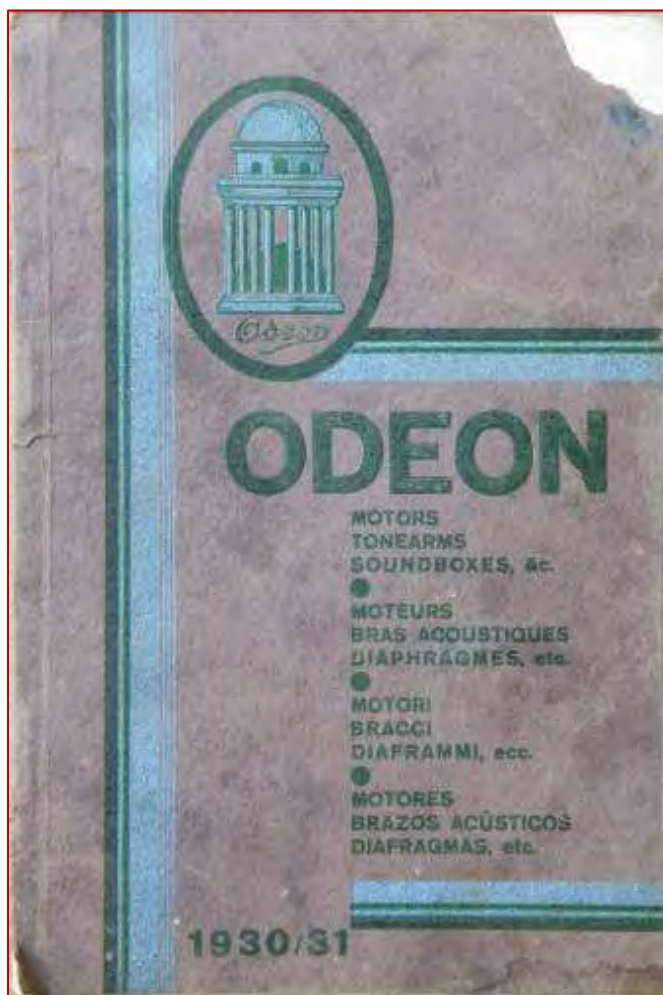
## **South India companies associated with Carl Lindström A.G. during second phase (1924-1932)**

In South India, only one company viz. Seethaphone Company, Avenue road, Bangalore is found to be associated with Carl Lindström A.G. during this period.

### **Seethaphone Company and Hindusthan Musical Mart, Bangalore.**

Seethaphone Company, Avenue road, Bangalore was established in 1924 by Mr. D. N. Seetharama Setty and his brother, Mr. D. N. Krishnaiha Shetty. They were distributors of gramophones and records and undertook servicing of gramophones. Their sales outlet named 'Hindusthan Musical Mart', was also at Avenue road, Bangalore. In the initial stages only, Krishnaiha Shetty, moved out of Seethaphone Company and started a store dealing with gramophones and records in his Name.

## Catalogues of Odeon and Parlophone spares collected from Seethaphone, Bangalore







*In the above Calender of Hindusthan Musical Mart, (Seethaphone), Banglore, of 1933, Mr. Jawahrlal Nehru, Leader of the "Freedom Movement" lead by the Congress Party, for Independence from the Colonial rule of Great Britain , is shown as riding a horse with a flag/ banner showing the Charka symbol of Congress Party and the name of the proprietor of the company-Mr. Sitharama shetty. The picture of the Odeon record shown is 243000 series German made.(photo-author)*



**Left - label of Seethaphone record (no record available)**

**Right - Victrophone record.**

**Both the labels belong to Seethaphone company.**

Seethaphone Company marketed 'Victrophone gramophones' produced by the Modern Musical House, Chindadripet, Madras, in which they had an interest. Later, a factory was established in Bangalore and produced 'Seethaphone' gramophones, using parts imported from Britain, Germany, Switzerland and Japan. They were instrumental in making gramophones popular by making them available to the middle class people at very low prices. This started the competition among gramophone producers and distributors, reducing the price of gramophones and boosting the sale of records.

In 1927, D. N. Seetharama Shetty started production of gramophone records with the labels-'Victrophone' and 'Seethaphone'. No copies of Seethaphone records have been found. Recording was in a rented building near Avenue Road, Bangalore with the help of experts provided by C. E. Woods=Scawen. Record pressing was done in Britain with the help of Columbia. By 1935, the production of Victrophone records was stopped and Seethaphone became the special agents for the newly formed 'National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. Ltd. Bombay' (record labels - Young India & National), till it's winding up in about 1957.

In 1932, The Refined Music house started the Tas-O-Phone records from Madurai and Seethaphone Co. were the distributors. Seethaphone was also the distributor of 'Parlophon' and 'Odeon' records, gramophones, needle etc. Recently while searching the old godowns of Seethaphone company, three South Indian records of 'Parlophon' label were found. As seen from the labels,



the catalogue numbers of both South Indian Odeon and usual Parlophon are given. Matrix number also belong to the Odeon series [(matrix nos. Mad 603, Mad 605, Mad 1323 and Mad 1349. Catalogue nos. CA 560 / B.95009 (I/II) and CA 645 / B.95043 (I/II)]. The third one has the matrix nos. 72033 & 72034 with the catalogue no. B. 32802 (I/II). Considering the association they had with Carl Lindström A.G., and their issuing of own label of records, it can be assumed that Seethaphone company had issued these records.



*above:- two unusual types of Parlophon records collected from the warehouse of Seethaphone company (author's personal collection)*

*The unusual records; 1-mat. no.72033/72034; cat.no.B.32802-sung by Master K.V.Vijayakandan(Tamil) –Parlophon/ Germany (Cat. No. 32000 is considered as a European series-mainly British and no other Indian record in this series has been found so far)*  
 2-mat,no.-Mad 603/605; cat.no.CA.560/B.95009-sung by V.Abhayabbal (Tamil) –Parlophon/ Germany  
 3-mat,no.-Mad 1323/1349; cat.no.CA.645/B.95043-sung by Dr.T.S.Sivaramakrishna iyer (Tamil)-Parlophon/ Germany

## Dinkson & Co. Bangalore

Dinkson & Co. Bangalore, Mysore State was established by Mr. D.N.Krishnaiah Shetty, younger brother of D.N. Seetharama Shetty in 1929. He inherited the sole agency of Columbia when he opted out of Seethaphone Co. to form his own company. Even though Seethaphone and Dinkson & Co. were Agents for two brands of a single company after the merger of Lindström and Columbia in 1926, they were competing like two brands of two different companies. The level of the competition is evident from the note on the record sleeve announcing highly discounted sale @ Re.1/- only for 3 records and 3 boxes of needles costing Rs. 9/-. Dinkson & Co. may have been associated with the issue of “**Columbia**

Special South Indian Recording" pressed in England and released in GE.,VE..and LBE.. series.

**Rs. 9/- given away for Re. 1 - only.**  
**GRAND LUCKY OPPORTUNITY!**

Three New Records Band, Orchestra, Vocal, costing Rs. 6/12/- Plus Three British, German Needle boxes, of Ex Loud. Loud & Soft valued Rs. 2/4/- total Rs. 9/- is given for Re. 1/- only & the records are of our selection and without demonstration. This is given, due to the change of our old address, D. N. Krishniah Setty, to **DINKSON & Co.**, and this is for a short time only

*above:-The peak of competition among sellers in the 1930's (record sleeve of D.N.Krishniah Setty / DINKSON & CO. Banglore)*

AWARDED GOLD MEDALS ESTD. 1924

**HINDUSTAN MUSICAL MART**  
 ODEON ELECTRIC RECORDS & GRAMAPHONES  
 SOLE DISTRIBUTORS FOR MYSORE STATE,  
 AVENUE ROAD, BANGALORE CITY.

**ODEON HOUSE**  
 Sole Agents in Mysore State for the following :-  
 Hutchins, Victrolas, Songsters, Vulcan Garrard Golden-Tone and Maxitones  
 Manufacturers of Seethaphones fitted with the world's best Garrard motors, Leather record carrying cases and record-cleaning pads.  
 Large Stockists of Gramophone Accessories.

ONCE HEAR IT & ENJOY.

PARTICULARS.	Rs.	As.	Pg.
Received one old Gramophone name .....			
.....for repairs			
Spring Fittings .....			
Overhauling .....			
Sound Box Repairs .....			
Labour .....			
<b>Total Rs ....</b>			

Date \_\_\_\_\_  
 Due Date \_\_\_\_\_

N. B.—If goods are not taken delivery on the due date, godown charges at Rs. 2 per day will be charged for the same afterwards.

*A sheet from the bill book of Seethaphone company from-C.1930.  
 M.K.Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru holding 'India' with the 'Odeon' emblem.*



## Brochures



## German gramophones and accessories



**Seethaphone Co. Bangalore**



**Record sleeve made by Seethaphone company (Hindustan Musical Mart).**

## **The Third Stage in the activities of Odeon / Carl Lindström**

The Global merger of 1931 to form the Electrical Music Industries (EMI) brought the Columbia, Electrola, Gramco (HMV), Odeon, Pathe, Parlophon and several other companies under one umbrella at Hayes, Middlesex, England. But, this merger was not followed by the distributors and there was the usual competition between them. The distribution system of Odeon was subsequently revised in India by appointing co-exploiting agencies. As such, recording, production and distribution of Odeon products in South India, became the responsibility of the agents under the control of Carl Lindström A.G., itself a conglomerate of companies owned by Columbia Graphophone Co. London, which in turn was part of Electric Music Industries (EMI), London.

## **Co-exploiting agencies**

The increased volume of sale in gramophones consequent to the competitions and reduction of prices was reflected in the sales of gramophone records. The boom in the sale of Gramophone music attracted many foreign record companies to Madras and other South Indian cities. They gave exclusive distribution rights to local business firms and these firms had to arrange for recording and distribution. The local companies supplied capital and music expertise and helped international record companies having not much knowledge about the music of South India to make music records acceptable to the South Indian market. There was a rush from 1930 to 1935 wherein many international companies found local partners in South Indian cities like Madras, Madurai and Bangalore and established recording studios. The presence of Odeon in South India became



prominent after the taking up of it's activities in South India by Saraswathi Stores, Madras.

## **The Refined Music House, Madurai**

### **TAS-O-PHONE**

The Refined Music House, was established by Mr. Thankappan at College Road, Madurai. A new label –Tas-O-Phone , was introduced. Tas-O-Phone was distributed by Seethaphone Co. Bangalore. This was under the co-exploiting agreement with C. E. Woods=Scaven, 7-2<sup>nd</sup> lane, Beach, Madras, as the agents for Carl Lindström A.G. The first batch of records were pressed in Germany at 'Odeon=werke', Berlin, up to 1932. In this release, catalogue nos. from TS.1 to TS.34 were included. These were blue label discs.

In the same year, sole agency for Odeon records was given to the Saraswathi Stores, Madras, and no further recordings were made. The agreement of Refined Music House with Carl Lindström was not renewed and Seethaphone, the distributors of Tas-o-phone had terminated their bussiness arrangement with Carl Lindström and had become the sole agents for "Young India". In 1934, pressing of the Indian Odeon records were transferred to India and further pressings were done by the Gramophone Co. Ltd. Dum Dum, Calcutta.





### **Gramophone Goddess – Lakshmi : Hindu Goddess of wealth and wisdom distributing Tas-O-Phone records (Advt. in The Hindu, 21 July,1934)**

Further pressing of 'Tas-O-Phone' label discs was done at Dum Dum. These Indian pressings were green in color. The "TS" series had reached 85 titles when production stopped in 1938. Out of total recordings made in the ME- matrix series from ME-100 to ME-400, only 170 titles were released by the Refined Music House. Mr. Thankappan turned his attention to films and started 'Thankam' theatre.

### **Saraswathi Stores, Madras**

In 1932, A. V. Meiyappan, M. Subramaniam and K. S. Narayanan formed the "Saraswathi Stores", at 2/159, Mount Road, Madras. Mr. P. Varadachari, Manager, was a jack of all arts especially music and helped much in the growth of Saraswathi Stores. Mr. A. V. Meiyappan son of Avichi Chettiar was born in 1907. Through Werner Jahnke of Hanseatic Trading Company, Bombay and Colombo, and C. E. Woods=Scawen, Madras, the Saraswathi Stores received the distributorship of 'Odeon' products in South India.



**A.V. Meiyappan**

The first issue of “Odeon” product under the control of Saraswathi Stores, began with the Maroon color discs [10 inch A-101 series] in October 1932, followed by the maroon 12 inch ES-1 series, then the light blue 10- inch BA-401 series and the dark blue Ca-501 series. The A-101 series was concluded at A-111, and the BA-series completed at BA-413, while the 12- inch ES - series concluded at ES-6. Except for the CA-501 series, the other series were dropped by July 1933, leaving only the CA- series for additional releases. (Michael Kinnear-2003).

South Indian recordings for Carl Lindstrom had the “£” symbol and the matrix number Mad- till 1932 when Saraswathi Stores was assigned the distribution. Most of the Mad- series matrices were pressed in Germany. The matrix series was changed to MD- for the releases by Saraswathi Stores. Even the re-issues of Mad- series were changed to MD- series. The German made Mad- series were released with, in the catalogue number series-A243000 and the re-issues were in the catalogue number series CA-There are also some “Parlophon” records included in the Mad-matrix number series.(eg;Mad-603,605,1323 &1349) which had CA-catalogue number in addition to the B.95000 series numbers. All except some film songs in the end of 1930’s in the Mad- and MD matrix series have “£” marking in the run off groove portion of the records.





Before the beginning of the World War II, in May 1939, 'Saraswathi Stores' had renewed the distribution contract with Carl Lindström A.G. However, the Columbia Graphophone Company (that controlled the Odeon in India) wanted to close down the Odeon label to promote 'Columbia' label. The complexities of the contracts governing the use of these labels, led Saraswathi Stores to get agency of 'Columbia' as their distributors. This occurred in October 1939. Eventually, in November 1941, the matter was resolved with the transfer of all "Odeon" recordings to the "Columbia" label (but retaining their original letter and numerical series). from January 1942. [Michael Kinnear-2003]



**“Odeon” re-issues on Columbia label**

## **Progress of Odeon under the co-exploiting agency of Saraswathi Stores**

Saraswathi Stores was provided with a new style of the Odeon Label. The change was the addition of two elephants on either side of the “Odeon Dome”. A new Matrix number series of MD- and Catalogue number series A-, BA-, and CA- for 10 inch records and ES- for 12 inch records were introduced.

Recordings made till the 1930 included classical music, imitations of birds singing, running train, etc. and instrumental music. During the first year of operations itself, Saraswathi Stores started a new category of music – ‘Comical portrayal of the songs of the working class’. The Milk Maid, Gypsy, Shepherds, Dhobis, Rikshawman etc. were parodied in those folk songs. (‘Paamarapadalkal’ - songs of the unlettered). P. S. Sivabhagam’s, Washer man’s song (Vannaan Vanthaane) and milk maid song (Mathichiyathile) – [record no. CA.530], recorded

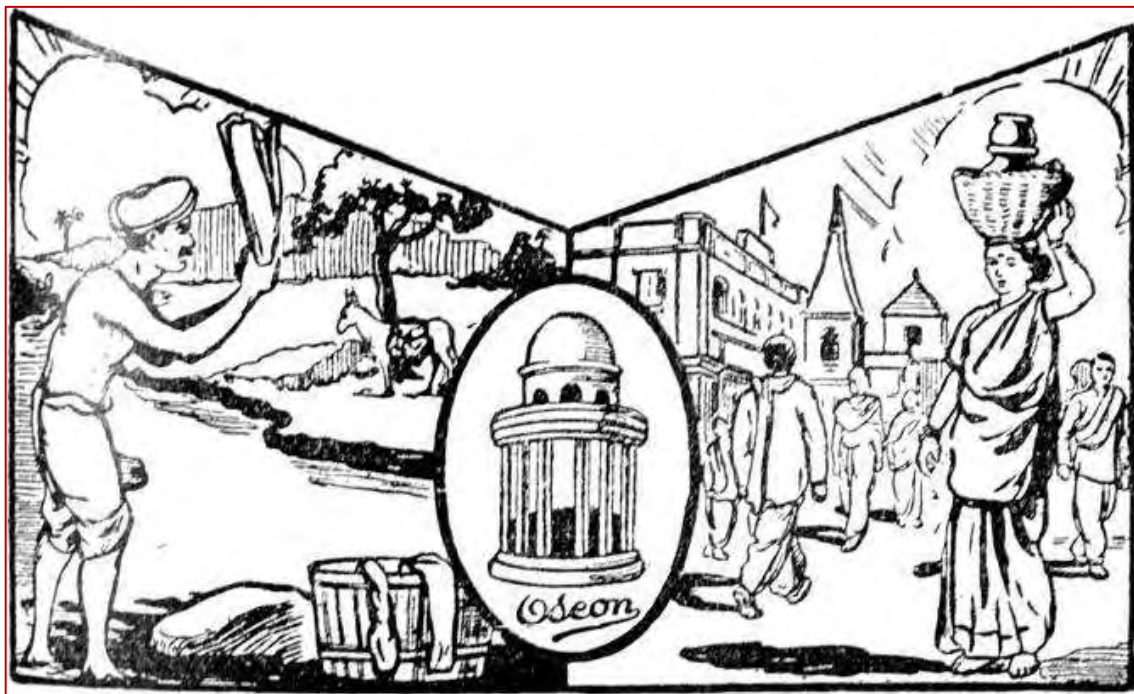


huge sales. These comical songs appealed to the masses. Tamil gramophone record market was flooded with humorous folk songs produced by various record companies.

The innovations of Prof. P. Sambamoorthy - a re-mix of Carnatic music using western style was introduced by Saraswathi Stores in 1932. On the gramophone records, Prof. P. Sambamoorthy's new style orchestra was credited as "Saraswathi Stores Orchestra". This new type of music was accepted by the masses and helped much in the popularization of Odeon Records. Nadaswaram (instrumental) recordings by T. N. Rajaratnam Pillai had great acceptance. (Records -CA-720, CA-790, CA-920, CA-1148, CA-917, CA\_919 etc.)

### **Some popular gramophone plates by P.S. Sivabhagam**

- 1 CA-530 - MD-891 - Vannan vanthane / MD-888 – mathichiyathile – (Tamil)
- 2 CA-572 - MD-887 - Kudaimuramkattuvam / MD-890 - raji udan padickai – (Tamil)
- 3 CA-631 - MD-1274 - Athanukku vanna yogam / MD-1567 - karil sellivome – (Tamil)



**An Illustration from Saraswathi Stores Catalogue, January, 1934  
(P. S. Sivabhagam's, "Vannan Vanthane" and "Mathichiyathile")**

In 1933, Saraswathi Stores established its own dramatic company for the production of "Drama Record Sets" of abbreviated drama performed in the studios. A three to five hour drama is abbreviated and performed by their own

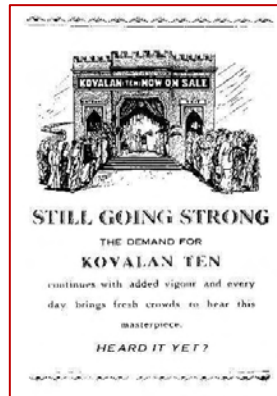
dramatic companies. The popular Indian Epic- “Ramayana” adapted for drama set by T. G. Raghavachari with songs written by the great Tamil Scholar and poet - Arunachala Kavirayar and “Original Sanskrit Poems”, were released on Odeon by Saraswathi Stores, and recorded in three to ten records. Saraswathi Stores released it's first drama set, “Kovalan” in May 1934. [record nos.CA-721 to CA-730].

## Popular Drama sets from Saraswathi Stores Dramatic Party TAMIL

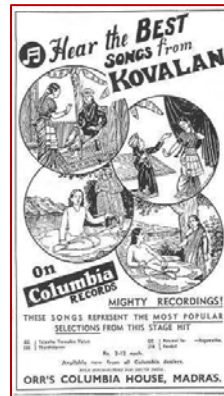
- |                           |                                  |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1-Kovalan-                | Cat. Nos. CA-721 to CA-730       |
| 2-Manmada vijayam –       | Cat. Nos. CA-735 to CA-          |
| 3-Thooku Thooki           | - Cat. Nos. CA-741 to CA-745     |
| 4- Bhama vijayam          | - Cat. Nos. CA-771 to CA-774     |
| 5- Nandanar               | - Cat. Nos. CA-791 to CA- 795    |
| 6- Alli Arjuna            | - Cat. Nos. CA-851 to CA-857     |
| 7- Gulebakavali           | - Cat. Nos...CA-901 to CA-905    |
| 8- Sreekrishna leela      | - Cat. Nos. CA- 1051 to CA- 1056 |
| 9- Bharatha Ramados-      | Cat. Nos. CA-1081 to CA-         |
| 10-Prahlada               | - Cat. Nos. CA-895 to            |
| 11-Sampoorna Harichandra- | Cat. Nos. CA- 1041 to CA-1050    |
| 12-Sampoorna Ramayana     | - Cat. Nos. CA- 1071 to Ca- 1080 |
| 13-Rukmini Kalyanam       | - Cat. Nos. CA- 1061 to CA-      |
| 14-Katta bommu            | - Cat. Nos. CA- 1036 to CA-      |

## CANARESE (KANNADA)

- |                    |                               |
|--------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1- Ramdas          | - Cat. Nos. CA-845 to CA- 850 |
| 2- Lanka dahanam   | - Cat. Nos. CA-765 to CA-     |
| 3- Rajasooya yaga  | - Cat. Nos. CA-872 to CA-     |
| 4- Seetha Kalyanam | - Cat. Nos. CA-911 to CA- 915 |
| 5- Ramavali        | - Cat. Nos. CA-781 to CA-     |



**KOVALAN-ODEON RECORD**



**KOVALAN COLUMBIA RECORD**

From late 1920's, recording companies entered into the contracts with the recording artists. Recording contracts made obscure artists famous and artists were advertised as "Gramophone Fame". Many artists names had the name of the company pre-fixed, e.g. 'Odeon T. S. Krishna Iyengar (Vocalist)'.

## POPULAR SINGERS OF ODEON

Sl.No.	Name of Singer	Cat. Nos.			
		Tamil	Telugu	Canarese	Sanskrit
1	B.S. Raja Iyengar	CA-835 CA-1165	A-243017 A-243025 A-243060 A-243083	CA-531 CA-547 CA-715 CA-787 CA-887 A-243030 A-243084	CA-1050
2	T. Ramanuja Iyengar,	A-109	A-106 A-114 A-120 A-122 A-124		
3	K. Aswathamma	CA-652 CA-1160	CA-603 CA-663	CA-711 CA-779 CA-1059	
4	Udupi Lakshmi bai		CA-565 CA-817 CA-991	CA-511 CA-542 CA-593	



**Picture post cards of  
K. Aswathamma  
(Singer & Actress)**



South Indian films of 1930's and 40's were the adaptations of the musical drama. During 1931, Imperial Films, Bombay, produced the first three Indian Talkies- "Aalam Aara" in Hindusthani, "Kalidas" in Tamil and "Bhakta Prahlada" in Telugu, all were musicals. Kalidas, the first Tamil film contained songs in Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani. Producers had the confidence that the charm of the music will overcome the linguistic barriers. The recording on gramophone records (plates) were a stepping stone to cinema and many famous cinema artists had entered this field after getting lot of publicity through gramophone records. Kotamangalam Seenu (V. S. Sreenivasan - 1933), N. S. Krishnan (1932), K. Ashwathamma (1933), M. Saradambal (1933) etc. had recorded for Odeon before becoming cinema artists.



**Record sleeve displaying the scenes and picture of artist**

### **A - M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar**

- 1-Thiru neelakandar (Tamil film) CA-1245, CA- 1246, CA- 1247, CA-1275, CA-1276, CA-1375
- 2-Ashok kumar (Tamil film) CA-1431, CA-1432, CA-1434, GE-6245 (Columbia)
- 3-Abikapathi (Tamil Film) CA-1270
- 4-Chinthamoni (Tamil Film) CA-1126
- 5- Naveena sarangadhara (Tamil Film) CA- 1159

### **B - M.S. Subhalakshmi**

Tamil film - "Seva Sadan", records-CA-1155, CA-1156, CA-1285, CA-1305, CA-1306

In addition to the drama sets, comics and satirical folk songs (Paamara paadalkal - ordinary man's songs) and new style classical songs, Saraswathi Stores produced many records of light music, by many famous singers in Tamil, Telugu



and Kannada (Canarese). Classical Carnatic compositions rendered by Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, one of the all time greats, were recorded only on Odeon. These records had much popularity and were sold in thousands. The records of Mr. B. S. Raja Iyengar, V. Sundaramma, S. R. Ramani Bai, Uduppi Lakshmibai, P. S. Sivabhagam, K. Aswathamma, T. N. Rajaratnam Pillai, M. S. Subhalakshmi, and M. K. Thyagaraja Bhagavathar were very popular. Most of the early Tamil film songs sung by M. S. Subhalakshmi and M. K. Thyagarajabhagavathar, were released on Odeon label.

The birth of the Talkies increased the popularity of Odeon. Songs of most of the talkies in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada (Canarese) were released on Odeon. The hostilities that originated on the onset of the World War II was affecting the activities of Odeon. Recordings for Odeon had stopped and the attention of A. V. Meiyappan, proprietor of Saraswathi Stores, was shifted to film production.



**ODEON SLEEVE OF EARLY 1930**

## END OF AN ERA

In 1934, Nazi party (the then ruling party of Germany) decided to “Aryanise” Odeon. Many non-Aryan listings were deleted and record production activities in Germany for non-Aryan countries were stopped. In 1936, Director of Odeon, Mr. Guttmann was replaced by Dr. Kepler, a Nazi party nominee. During the period of second world war, German wing of EMI was cut off.

At the peak of its popularity, Odeon label was suddenly affected by the out-break of World War II in 1939. Although, Odeon was owned by a British company, it was managed in India by German personnel, who were deemed to be on the side of the enemy. The Hanseatic Trading company, 24 Rampart Row, Fort, Bombay, under the direction from Mr. Jhanke (the Manager of Odeon interests in India) suddenly left in 1938. Then the control of Odeon label was passed on to

Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd. Columbia discontinued the co-exploiting agencies and Saraswathi stores became simply the distributors of Odeon and Columbia. The Odeon label was later withdrawn and further releases of Odeon matrices were released on Columbia label, retaining the catalogue series. A cut was made over the marking of symbol “£”, indicating Carl Lindström, punched on the run-off groove portion. Last releases on Odeon label had the usual Carl Lindström marking “£” omitted.

From February 1942, the “Columbia” GE-6000 series became the main series for releases by Saraswathi Stores, which commenced with recordings from sessions that had been scheduled for ‘Odeon’ - but taken over by Columbia Graphophone Co., Ltd. The same series also included several recordings taken for ‘Odeon’ - which had not been issued at the time of the changeover. The GE-6000 series concluded at GE-6991 in January 1952.

In 1943, Columbia Graphophone Co. Ltd., took over the distribution of it's products in India, but retained Saraswathi Stores as their ‘Sole Distributor’ in South India, through to the end of 78-rpm production in 1970, and to the microgroove era. (Michael Kinnear, 2003)



Odeon label LPreCORDS for South India

## **A-Direct**

1-10 inch A-243000 series 'Odeon Dome label' made in Berlin in 1930

## **B-Saraswathi Stores**

(Odeon Dome with elephants on either side in the Indian pressings)

2-10 inch A-101 to A-131 (maroon)

3-10 inch BA-401 to BA-411 (blue)

4-10 inch CA-501 to 1470 (includes re-issues of A-243000 series)blue

5-12 inch ES-1 to ES-129 (maroon)

## **C-Tas-o-phone Madurai**

6-TS-1 to TS-85 (TS-1-34 blue made in Berlin and TS-1-85 green made in India)

## **D-Parlophon**

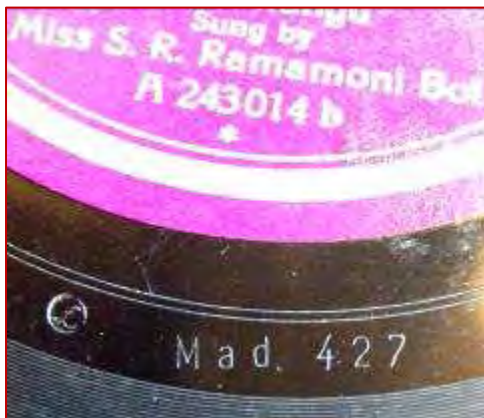
7-B-95000 and B-32800 series made in Berlin

## **E-Odeon transfers to Columbia and Regal labels (CA-series and GE-6000 series)**

## **F-Microgroove Records (45 rpm and 33 rpm)**

These Odeon Dome label records were issued by EMI during the 1960's to the 1980's

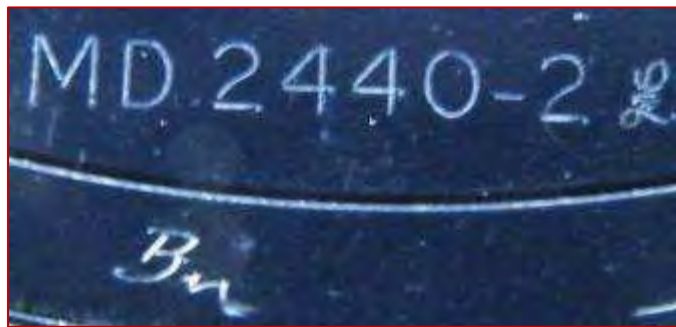
## **Markings on the Carl Lindstrom AG records (Odeon, Tas-O-Phone, Parlophon, Columbia)**



**MARKINGS**









1- “£”- short for Lindström; it relates to the electric recording system that Carl Lindström A.G. had adapted and modified from Western Electric Recording System. This marking was omitted on the start of the World War II. This marking is seen on the run off groove portion of Odeon, Tas-O-Phone, Parlophon and some Columbia records in the CA-series. In the records released after the starting of second World War, a cut mark is seen across £ marking.

2- “Sh”-In the run-off groove portion of recordings made during 1929-30, a handmade mark resembling ‘Sh’ is seen. This is the initials of Mr. Scholziger, the recording Engineer.

3-“Bn”- In matrix numbers from Ke-300 onwards, the marking of Bn, the initials of ‘Max Birkhahn’, son of ‘Otto Birkhahn’, the famous recording engineer of early 1900’s are seen.

4-“F”- is the marking indicating the recordings made by Seigfried Franz (not in S. Indian recordings)

5-“H”- is the marking indicating the recordings made by Heinrich Lampe.(not in S. Indian)

6-“Mad”-prefix to matrix number - recordings made at Madras, prior to Saraswathi Stores recordings. (Odeon, Tas-O-Phone and Parlophon labels)

7-“MD” - prefix to matrix number - recordings made at Madras, by Saraswathi Stores. (Odeon Dome with two elephants) In the re-issues of Odeon by Saraswathi Stores, Mad prefix of original matrix number is retained on the run-off groove portion and the same number with “MD” prefix is printed on the label.

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## HEYWA RECORD



This South Indian record (Tamil) made in Berlin, may be of interest to researchers and collectors. This is a double side record. Since no company other than Carl Lindström and associated companies of Germany are known to have any activity in South India, during

the acoustic period. As such, it is assumed that this record has some connection with Carl Lindröm or any other company associated with it.

## Sources:

1. Michael Kinnear: The 78 r. p. m. Record Labels of India (2003)
2. Stephen Putnam Hughes: "Music in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction" (The Journal of Asian Studies. Vol.66, No.1 (February 2007).
3. Stephen Putnam Hughes: "The Music Boom in Tamil South India. (Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television. Vol. 22, No.4 - (2002)
4. Authors personal collection of gramophone records, literature and articles related to gramophone record industry.

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## About the author:



b. 1954. Employed as a Senior Manager with Kerala Forest Development Corporation.

Consumes large volumes of books and writes too e.g. - a family history book and some articles. Collects junk and fills the house to the great discomfort to the family members.

**This includes** - vintage and classic cars, sewing machines unseen by people of even the last century, shabby looking gramophones with falling sides, peeling off varnish and rusty horns (quite a menace in the house - nearly 90 of them). **Tape recorders** - jumbosize,usual type and lilliput model, wire recorder. **Gramophone records** - 78s & microgroove, from Berliners 7 inch 78 rpm record to 33 rpm stereo, forgotten music of South India (pre-independence period), old musical dramas, comedies, classical music,etc. Symphonies from the west in 12 inch 78 rpm records, collection of various record labels [around 15000 items]

## **Gauhar Jan, Month of July and Mumbai**

[Rahegi yaad mujhko, Bambai vaalon ki mehmani]

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### **July 2010.**

A month to remember 'Kalkatte wali Gauhar Jan', a famous 'tawaif' (courtesan) and the first gramophone celebrity of last century. After about a century, she is again 'talk of the town' because of the latest English book, 'My Name is Gauhar Jan' by Vikram Sampath. [Rupa publications, New Delhi]. The book has been released ceremonially in major cities in India and has now entered into the second impression in just three months. On this occasion, in July, two listening sessions were organized in Mumbai, one at Bhavan's cultural center, Andheri and the other at NCPA complex, Nariman Point, in South Mumbai. Large crowd of senior citizens was drawn by her recorded music. Every song that was played finished with a slogan: 'My Name is Gauhar Jan'. While listening to these rather noisy recordings, my mind began to wander in the past

### **July 1907.**

'Gauhar Jan of Calcutta' had become quite famous through her gramophone records and had also appeared on picture postcards. She used to visit Bombay mainly for two reasons. She had a lover 'Amrut Keshav Nayak', a famous actor of Gujrathi stage in Bhangwadi Girgaon, and her passion towards horses and race course. In the season, both would spend day at Mahalaxmi race course. In the evenings, she would often perform for common citizens (Aam admi) at 'Capitol' theater opposite Boribunder (V.T.) station. The concert would be packed since the tickets were affordable. She would entertain the audience with her songs and dance. Located nearby was the famous and a century old 'Town Hall' (Asiatic Library) where elites of the town or 'Khas' citizens would meet. In July 1907, Gauhar Jan was invited for a concert in this hall. She gave an excellent performance for the august audience including great personalities like Phirozeshah Mehta, Seth Gokuldas and Seth Ratansi. She sang a 'Najma' (urdu poem) in which she coined the names of these persons in the audience. She also included the blessings sought for King Edward to live to eternity (kayamat). The song was appreciated by everyone and became popular. After five years, 'The Gramophone Company' decided to record it for a commercial release. So, in 1912, a 78 rpm disc was cut with a special label containing the picture of a recording angel. [Record No. P 365. Dhun Kalyan. Sung by Gauhar Jan, at the Town Hall, Bombay in July 1907.] This record was a collector's item for quite some time. Recently it has been found. The song contains eight stanzas and describes the importance of 'Mumbai' city in the life of Gauhar Jan. She expresses her gratitude towards the town and patrons of Mumbai. At the end after her usual announcement, she says, 'Yeh Kammal ka gana hai. Phirozeshah Mehtaki tarifmen'. [This is an amazing song. In praise of Feroz Shah Mehta]

Soon after this concert, Amrut Keshav Nayak passed away suddenly on July 18<sup>th</sup> 1907. Today, road behind Khadi Bhandar on P.M. (Phirozeshah Mehta) road is named after him. Gauhar has left behind over 200 songs on three minute shellac discs. The 'Town Hall' building has completed over two hundred years and going strong. 'Capitol' theater building is surrounded by drug addicts and waiting for its reincarnation.

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### Dhun Kalyan Quawali (P.365)

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Chalo guljar aalam me havaye fajla rahmani  
Phala phoola khada har kaam ise rakhna nakhla bostani...1

Hai to yeh jahanmen aab hath gar dastyon bhi man  
Garja hindu musalman sab ke sab hai khanda peshani...2

Jaiye majlis hun jinke sadra sarbhi dor ka aisa  
Vah bark andaz Gokul Das jee Iqbal ho bani...3

Rahe abad ya rab bambai tu aur bambai wale  
Kahan main ek musafir aur kahan yeh kadra sultani...4

Mujhe ijat jo bakshi aur jo hai kadra kee meri  
Rahegi yaad mujhko bambai walon ki mehmani...5

Jahanke school ke malik Ratansi sethji sahab  
Karen bachhonki khidmat aur Karen unki nighbani...6

Khudaya Shah Edward ko tu rakh jinda kayamat tak  
Rahe kayam hukumat aur hove fajla rabbani.....7

Duva par sar jhuka kar khatma karta hun kalam apna  
Rahen sab meherban unpar ho sab par fajla ehsani.....8

My Name is Gauhar Jan, Yeh Kammal ka gana hai  
Phirozeshah Mehta ki tarifmen

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# MUSIC OF THE INDO-CARIBBEAN

## A request for input from collectors

We are beginning out a discographic study of the music Indian diasporic communities of the Caribbean. For the purposes of this project we are defining Indo-Caribbean music as all traditionally-rooted genres practiced by the descendants of Indian immigrants to the British West Indies colonies. Most of the artists are or were citizens of Trinidad, Guyana, Suriname, Guadeloupe, and others places like e.g. Barbados? Belize? Jamaica?

As such we are interested in learning about records pressed both in the Caribbean (almost exclusively done in Trinidad) and outside it (USA, Holland, India, etc.) At the moment we are limiting our study to LPs and 45s since the HMV and other early 78s are well-attested, and cassettes, while culturally important, constitute something outside our current interests.

We are interested in compiling, first, a list of record labels who have released LPs and 45s in this region since the Second World War. In fact, the local labels in the British West Indies appear to be very few, and their catalogue numbers difficult to interpret. Therefore, we also envision a complete discography of the releases.

This is easier said than done, for while the early sides recorded for Decca and RCA's Bluebird are relatively well attested, most records pressed in Trinidad were done so privately, and as such have left very little trace of themselves. Do you have any Indo-Caribbean LPs or 45s in your collection? Would you be willing to assist us by sending us the artist's name, album name (or tracks names if a 45), record label (if any), instruments used, catalogue or matrix numbers (if any), and perhaps a photograph? Any supplementary information about the artists, shops in which you acquired the records, or memories of performances would be appreciated.

We would encourage any member of the SIRC or other collector of LPs and 45s of music made by Indo-Caribbean artists to contact us via email at <[aramjan@gmail.com](mailto:aramjan@gmail.com)>. We also encourage you to add your collection to the database of [discogs.com](http://discogs.com).

A. Yardumian  
Philadelphia, PA, USA

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## Contents of the back issues

### Volume 1 - January 1991

Reading Indian record labels: part 1 – Gramophone and Zonophone records (Michael Kinnear)  
Surshree Smt. Kesarbai Kerkar – a discography (Suresh Chandvankar)

### Volume 2 - April 1991

A short introduction to discography (Bill Dean Myatt)  
Reading Indian record labels: part 2 – Nicole records (Michael Kinnear)  
Surshree Smt. Kesarbai kerkar – a discography (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of late Pandit Kumar Gandharva (K. R. Tembe)

### Volume 3 - July 1991

Peculiar records (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Records of old Marathi bhavgeete (A. G. Thakurdesai)  
Reading Indian record labels: part 3 – Beka records (Michael Kinnear)  
Canned concerts (R. C. Mehta)

### Volume 4 - October 1991

Records of our national songs (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Records of the music composers from oblivion (S. Jayraman)  
Records of classical music from films songs (Prabhakar Datar)  
Reading Indian record labels: part 4 – Odeon records (Michael Kinnear)  
First annual report of SIRC activities

### Volume 5 - January 1992

Jugalbandi on records (K. R. Tembe)  
Records of raga Marwa and raga Shree(V. R. Joshi)  
Records of film songs of Madan Mohan (Pradeep Acharya)  
Khayal and thumri gayaki of Late Gauhar Jan of Calcutta (S. R. Mehta)  
The first Indian disc record manufacturers (Michael Kinnear)  
Preserving the musical past of India through old gramophone records (Suresh Chandvankar)

### Volume 6 – April 1992

Reading Indian record labels: part 5 – Pathe and Pathephone records (Michael Kinnear)  
Records of desh bhaktee songs (S. Jayraman)

Records of old Marathi bhavgeete (S. Sukhtankar)  
Records of classical music and popular songs, Marathi songs (Prabhakar Datar)

### Volume 7 – July 1992

Tribute to Late Pt. Kumar Gandharva through old gramophone records (K. R. Tembe)  
Records of Late Master Deenenath Mangeshkar (Prabhakar Jathar and Ram Page)  
Records of Hindi film songs composed by O. P. Naiyyar (Jayant Raleraskar)  
Mera Naam Jankibai of Allahabad (S. R. Mehta)  
W. S. Burke – The first disc record artist of India (Michael Kinnear)  
'English' Indian gramophone numbers (Frank Andrews and Michael Kinnear)  
A review of audio cassette: 'Swaranjali'-a homage to the maestro-Pt. Kumar gandharva (Suresh Chandvankar)

### Volume 8 – October 1992

Rare records of Asha Bhosle's Marathi songs (Sharad Dalvi)  
Rare Hindi film songs by Lata Mangeshkar on video (Prakash Joshi)  
Records of Late singer Mukesh (P. T. Shastri)  
Records of Bal Gandharva – Ek smaran (Prabhakar Datar)  
Biographical note on Late Mr. K. L. Saigal (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Late Mr. K. L. Saigal (Michael Kinnear)  
Second annual report on SIRC activities (Suresh Chandvankar)

### Volume 9 – January 1993

Mojuddin Khan – a biography and discography (S. R. Mehta)  
Glenn Miller army air force band and his records (E. F. Pollic)  
Discography of Late Miss Gauhar Jan of Calcutta (Michael Kinnear)

### Volume 10 – April 1993

Hindi film songs composed by C. Ramchandra on video (Prakash Joshi)  
Records of old Marathi bhavgeete (Prabhakar Datar)  
Records of unforgettable songs of forgotten composers (Prakash Kamat)  
The Record Collector – Mallapa Aankalgi, Solapur (Jayant Raleraskar)  
Biographical note on Bal Gandharva (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Bal Gandharva (Michael Kinnear)  
Stamps on records (Adam Miller)

### Volume 11 – July 1993

Gaani galyatali gaani manatali (Moreshwar Patwardhan)

Records of multifaceted Pt. Ravi Shankar (K. R. tembe)  
Records of Hindi film songs composed by N. Dutta (Pradeep Acharya)  
Surshree Smt. Kesarbai Kerkar (S. R. Mehta)  
Discography of Surshree Smt. Kesarbai Kerkar (Michael Kinnear)

### Volume 12 – October 1993

Ustad Faiyazkhan – A living legend in his lifetime (S. R. Mehta)  
Music recording in digital format (Mr. Sunil Dutta)  
The Record collector – Mr. Philip Yampolsky, USA  
Third annual report on SIR activities (Suresh Chandvankar)

### Volume 13 – January 1994

Galaxy of musicians (Prakash Joshi)  
'Shakuntal to Kulvadhu' – record details (Prabhakar Datar)  
Discography of Mojuddin Khan (Michael Kinnear)  
Collector's items, book reviews and announcements

### Volume 14 – April 1994

Discography of Jankibai of Allahabad (Michael Kinnear)

### Volume 15 – July 1994

Records of Mr. Sudheer Phadke (K. R. Tembe)  
Records of the program 'Gaani galyatali gaani manatali' (Moreshwar Patwardhan and Prabhakar Datar)  
Records of Datta Davjekar (Prabhakar Datar)  
Life, gayaki and records of Abdul Karim Khan (S. R. Mehta)  
Collector's items (Suresh Chandvankar)  
An appeal for the information on 'National Gramophone Company' (Michael Kinnear)  
Letters to the Editor

### Volume 16 – October 1994

Reading Indian record labels – Part 7 – 'Singer record' and 'James opera record' (Michael Kinnear)  
In the matter of Mahomed Hussain Naginawale (Michael Kinnear)  
Lecture notes on Pt. Omkarnath Thakur (S. R. Mehta)  
Fourth annual report on SIRC activities

## Volume 17 – January 1995

Great thumri exponent 'Siddheshwari Devi' – lecture notes (S. R. Mehta)  
The romance of recording-India - Articles I-III (F. W. Gaisberg)  
Notes on the articles I-III – The romance of recordings (Michael Kinnear)

## Volume 18 – April 1995

Life, gayaki and records of Bade Gulam Ali Khan (S. R. Mehta)  
Life of Late Mr. V. B. alias Bapurao Pendharkar (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Late Mr. V. B. alias Bapurao Pendharkar (Michael Kinnear)  
Letters to the Editor  
Collector's items (S. K. Chaterjee)

## Volume 19 – July 1995

Rare record of Late Mr. Morarji Desai  
Notes on Pandit Ram Narayan (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Ustad Allaaddin Khan (Michael Kinnear)  
Lecture notes on Vilayat Hussain Khan (S. R. Mehta)  
Records of Vilayat Hussain Khan (S. R. Mehta)  
Letters to the Editor

## Volume 20 – October 1995

Reading Indian record labels-'Ramagraph'  
The history of 'Ram-A-Phone' and 'Ramagraph' records (Michael Kinnear)  
The Ram-phone catalogue: September 1907 (Michael Kinnear)  
Bal Gandharva revisited (Michael Kinnear)  
The record collector – Mr. Bill Dean Myatt, UK  
Report on SIRC activities – 1994-95

## Volume 21 – January 1996

Note on Ramkrishnaboa Vaze (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Ramkrishnaboa Vaze (Michael Kinnear)  
SIRC News from Mumbai, Pune, Goa, Nanded, and Solapur

## Volume 22 – April 1996

Notes on Mehboobjan of Solapur (Jayant Raleraskar)  
Discography of Miss Mehboobjan of Solapur (Michael Kinnear)  
Letters to the Editor  
SIRC news from Mumbai and Pune

## Volume 23 – July 1996

CD review: Inayat Khan R. Pathan – ‘The complete recordings of 1909’

Cassette review: Natya geet ganga – ‘Shakuntal to Kulvadhu’ - 1880-1942

SIRC news from Mumbai, Solapur, and Tuljapur (Suresh Chandvankar)

The record collector – Andre Brunel, Paris, France

## Volume 24 – October 1996

Biographical note on Mr. J. L. Ranade (Suresh Chandvankar)

Discography of Mr. J. L. Ranade (J. L. Ranade and Michael Kinnear)

SIRC news from Solapur, Goa, Nanded, and Tuljapur

Report of SIRC activities 1995-96

## Volume 25 & 26 – January/April 1997

The uncrowned king of the legendary Bengali songs: Mr. Krishna Chandra Dey -

Blind Singer (S. K. Chatterjee)

Discography of Mr. Krishna Chandra Dey - Blind Singer

(S. K. Chatterjee and Michael Kinnear)

The record collector – S. K. Chatterjee, Calcutta

## Volume 27 & 28 – July/October 1997

Discography of Dr. Rabindranath Tagore (S. K. Chatterjee and Michael Kinnear)

Vande Mataram song on gramophone records (Suresh Chandvankar)

The record collector – Mr. K. R. Tembe, Dombivli, Mumbai

Report of SIRC activities 1996-97

## Volume 29 & 30 – January/April 1998

Gandharva Hero – Late Mr. G. M. Londhe (A. G. Londhe)

Discography of Mr. G. M. Londhe (Michael Kinnear)

Was Jazz recorded in India? (John Payne)

Discography of Ustad Faiyaz Khan (Michael Kinnear)

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## Annual Issues

### TRN-1999

SIRC news from Pune, Solapur, Nanded, Tuljapur and Baroda

Bai Sundarabai Jadhav of Poona (Suresh Chandvankar)

Discography of Bai Sundarabai of Poona (Michael Kinnear)

Vande Mataram revisited (S. K. Chatterjee)

The pre-commercial era of wax cylinder recordings in India (Amitabha Ghosh)  
Annual report on SIRC, Mumbai activities

## TRN-2000

SIRC news from Pune, Solapur, Nanded, Tuljapur and Baroda  
Vande Mataram – Breath of Indian Patriotism (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Vande Mataram – National Anthem, National song or a cultural song?  
(Suresh Chandvankar)  
Vande Mataram Re-re-visited: List of gramophone records  
(Suresh Chandvankar and Sushanta Kumar Chatterjee)  
Notes on the talk of Dr. Ashok Ranade on 'Vande Mataram' (Suresh  
Chandvankar)  
Ustad Rahimat Khan Huddu Khan – Life and Discography (Michael Kinnear)  
The gramophone and the Theatre Music (Narendra Kamal Shrimali)  
Centenary of Indian gramophone records (Suresh Chandvankar)

## TRN - 2001

SIRC news from Pune, Solapur, Nanded, Tuljapur and Baroda  
Prof. M. N. Chatterjee: Life and discography (Sushanta Kumar Chatterjee)  
Zohrabai Agrewali, a literature survey (V. V. Navelkar & Suresh Chandvankar)  
Zohrabai Agrewali – recordings for the 'Gramophone' and discography  
(Michael S. Kinnear)  
Report of the ARSC-IASA 2001 London conference (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Bismillah Khan's 78-rpm records (Michael Kinnear)  
Shahanai Nawaz (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Lifesketch of Moghubai Kurdikar (1904-2001) - (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Discography of Moghubai Kurdikar – 78-rpm records (Michael Kinnear)  
Discography of Ravi Shankar – 78-rpm records (Michael Kinnear)  
Discography of Ali Akbar Khan – 78-rpm records (Michael Kinnear)

## TRN - 2002

Edison's Phonograph Patent Declaration for India (Mr. Stephan Puille)  
Songs from records (Shibashis Bandopadhyay)  
My name is Gauhar Jan (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Rambhau Quawal – life and records (Sudheer Peshwe)

## TRN - 2003

The Rotating Discs (Suresh Chandvankar)  
K. L. Saigal Birth Centenary Special (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Book review: 'An encyclopaedia of 78 rpm record labels of India'  
(Suresh Chandvankar)



## TRN - 2004

Broadcast label story (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Broadcast record catalogues and the transcripts (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Living music from the past: Kesarbai Kerkar: CD release  
Kesarbai Kerkar-one of my heroines (Ashok Ranade)

## TRN - 2005

Young Iran records (Amir Mansoor)  
A silver disc of Asha Bhosle  
Catalogue of the 'Dadaphone Talking Machine Company'  
Life and records of Prof. Narayanrao Vyas (Suresh Chandvankar)  
A queen of melody: Kumari Uma Bose-life and records (S. K. Chaterjee)  
Life and records of Heerabai Barodekar (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Clarinet Nawaz Master Ebrahim – life and records  
Book review: Sangeet ratna Abdul Karim Khan-a bio-discography  
(Suresh Chandvankar)  
Books on records

## TRN - 2006

Gramophone celebrities – parts 1-20 - (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Ustad Amir Khan - (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Sachin Dev Burman (1906-1975) - (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Late Smt. Saraswatibai Rane - (Suresh Chandvankar)

## TRN - 2007

Gramophone celebrities – parts 1-40 - (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Home recording disc – A. R. Qureshi  
Western style popular music recorded in India – Ross Laird  
Was jazz recorded in India? – John A. Payne  
The Teheran records – Amir Mansoor  
Tumsa nahi dekha na suna – tribute to O. P. Nayyar - (Suresh Chandvankar)  
Book review – Raga-n-Josh - (Suresh Chandvankar)

## TRN – 2008

Gramophone celebrities – parts 41-50  
Life and records of Mr. G. N. Joshi  
Life and records of Kamla Jharia  
Life and records of Angurbala  
Life and records of Indubala  
Discography of Juthika Roy

## Discography of Akhtaribai Fayzabadi

TRN – 2009

Gangubai Hangal – Suresh Chandvankar

Manna Dey – Suresh Chandvankar

Yeh Jindagi Usiki Hai – Dhananjay Nanivdekar

Lindstrom labels in India – Suresh Chandvankar

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**\*\* All the back issues are now available in pdf format on two DVD's.**

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