

THOR SANGITKAR by Prof. B. R. Deodhar, Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal, Bombay, 1973, Rs. 12.00 (*In Marathi*).

Prof. B. R. Deodhar's name is familiar to most lovers of music. They know him as a discerning artist, a serious musician, as the guru of Kumar Gandharva, as an alert student of Western music and a pioneer in the study of Voice Culture. They are also acquainted with his various writings on music and, in particular, with his biography of Pandit Vishnu Digambar. The book under review is a unique work from the pen of such a well-known figure in the world of music as Prof. Deodhar.

In this book Prof. Deodhar has given us an account of twenty-one great musicians who have played an important role in our music in the course of the last few decades. He describes their trials and the hurdles they had to overcome before they reached a position of pre-eminence in their fields. Prof. Deodhar has also analysed in detail the exact nature of their specific achievement. This kind of study is rare in Marathi and possibly even in other Indian languages. In English we have a number of books dealing with the lives and achievements of composers. Such works offer the reader relevant information about the life and the contribution of musicians and composers.

Those intimately connected with Indian musical traditions have for long cherished the hope of being able to see similar works in our own languages and so we are deeply grateful to Prof. Deodhar for rendering this valuable service to the cause of Indian music. The work is in the tradition of that excellent book on Karnatic musicians by Prof. Samba Murthy. Those of us who are more closely linked with Hindustani music warmly welcome Prof. Deodhar's pioneering book in our own area of interest.

*Thor Sangitkar* illuminates the social and cultural background of the artistic life of the last century. It describes the tradition informing a particular musician's style, the special features of his mode of presentation, the thought process underlying it and other details of his performance. The work is thus a kind of source book. There is no theoretical generalisation as such. But Prof. Deodhar supplies the reader with a fund of information and this serves as a convenient starting point for those who want to draw certain theoretical conclusions from his descriptive account and analysis:

Most students of music have felt for a long time the need for serious critical works in music. The lacuna in this sphere has been filled by Prof. Deodhar's book. This entire series of articles served as a most valuable aid to me personally in the course of my preparations for my own book *Gharandaz Gayaki* (the English translation of the work is entitled *Indian Musical Tradition*). In the same way, Prof. Ashok Ranade could fall back on the material in this book when he wrote his *Sangitache Soundaryashastra*.

Prof. Deodhar has provided us with brief biographical data about nineteen great artists:

1. Pandit Balkrishnabuwa Ichalkaranjekar.
2. Khan Saheb Alladiya Khan.
3. Pandit V. N. Bhatkhande.
4. Khan Saheb Murad Khan.
5. Pandit Bhaskarbuwa Bakhle.
6. Khan Saheb Allauddin Khan.
7. Pandit Ramkrishnabuwa Vaze.
8. Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar.
9. Khan Saheb Abdul Karim Khan.
10. Pandit Vamanbuwa Chaphekar.
11. Khan Saheb Bundu Khan.
12. Khan Saheb Rajab Ali Khan.
13. Khan Saheb Fayaz Khan.
14. Khan Saheb Sinda Khan.
15. Surashri Kesarbai Kerkar.
16. Pandit Bholanath Bhatt.
17. Khan Saheb Bade Gulam Ali Khan.
18. Pandit Vishnupant Chhatre.
19. Pandit Khaprumama Parvatkar.

There are two other articles, one on Giovanni Scrinzy and the other on Faridsaheb Sitarmaker. The article on Dr. Scrinzy is based on close acquaintance with this musician and on what Prof. Deodhar himself imbibed of western music from him. The article is very useful as a guide to the study of western music.

The life span of each of these individuals is a drama in itself. There are germs of dramatic tension in many episodes in their lives. In most cases Prof. Deodhar has had personal contact with these musicians and

interviewed them at length about their lives. Much of the data regarding them is, therefore, accurate and reliable. Besides, since Prof. Deodhar is himself a musician of note he could frame the right kind of questions and elicit satisfactory responses for them. Without getting involved to any unnecessary extent, he could remain engrossed in the artistic dimensions of their comment and achievement.

The book bears testimony to Prof. Deodhar's own strong desire to understand the artistic merit of each of these musicians. And it also projects aspects of Prof. Deodhar's own personality as a serious musician and a remarkable individual.

With the single exception of Surashri Kesarbai Kerkar all the musicians dealt with in the book are no longer in our midst today. The work is a document recording an epoch in our musical history. There have been many developments in the sphere of music and one is naturally anxious to know what this serious scholar of yesteryear's music has to say of today's musical patterns. But Prof. Deodhar does not satisfy our interest on this score. One would have also welcomed an introduction by him, analysing the contents of this book in the right perspective. But once again he has chosen to remain silent in this respect.

The book is, on the whole, a very important aid to the study of the recent history of Hindustani music, and the tribute paid to the author and his labours by Shri P. L. Deshpande in his Preface is really well-deserved.

—VAMANRAO DESHPANDE

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