PREFACE

Sitar is a prominent instrument in North Indian Classical Music. Practically, its performance is well established - but the documentation is mostly ignored. So, very little written information is available on the pre-20th century history of these instruments. Information of early players and their music is hidden in the oral histories of professional family exponents and in 19th century books - which are largely inaccessible to students. Some of the 20th century writers including some foreigners have done a very good job on sitar instrument. Their books have been very good guidelines for my job. But there are certain areas, which according to me have still not been touched, and more research works can be done on these.

My present work is an overview of the history of the sitar instrument, formation and reformation of the gat styles and different baaj. The history includes the ancestors of the sitar, the development of sitar since the 18th century and the physical development of the instrument. Formation and reformation of the gat style gives the description of 6 types of gat patterns with available details. Information of six major sitar gharanas along with other less popular traditions of North, East and Western India are also added in the third part. Apart from pure classical music sitar has its reach in orchestration and modern fusion music also. Finally the contributions of two maestros Ustad Vilayat Khan and Pt. Ravi Shankar have also been added. They are the pioneers of the two styles created by them, changing the existing styles and replace the old pattern by introducing two new trends. My intension is to provide overall information on sitar - its importance and utilization in Indian Classical music.

To carry on this work I have interviewed many great personae who have squeezed time from their very busy schedules. I have tried to accumulate their points of view and added their opinions in different chapters. Also I have visited archives, museums and libraries of Mumbai, Pune, Kolkata and Delhi. I have experienced reading various rare books and manuscripts and also found variety of sitar instruments in different archives. Having said this, I have to add that a lot of material may have escaped my search, as I could not reach many libraries and archives. I also regret not being able to meet and interview many other maestros of this wonderful and versatile instrument.

Yet if this thesis becomes a source of authentic document on sitar music, then, my effort will have been fruitful.