CHAPTER FOURTEEN

SONGS

The song combines in itself poetry and music, the two sister arts. The composer himself is primarily a poet and his business is to evoke the sentiment according to the aesthetic requirements. The term composition, of course, bears a wider connotation in Indian music. Composition implies the harmonious blending of the poetic composition, melodic type and tala pattern. We will in this chapter discuss only the poetic embellishments of the Assamese songs and their power to evoke the aesthetic relish in the audience. And more particularly, we will limit our discussions to the rasas and bhāvas inherent in the songs.

II.

We have discussed in the first chapter of the present work the details of the ancient Assamese songs like the Bangīt, Baragīt and the Dehviāgar gīt etc. Ancient Assam was very rich in songs and music. But things deteriorated in the nineteenth century. The exploits of the Burmese invasion
and the evils of the internal rebellions made the cultural life of the country weak and moribund. The degeneration of the cultural life naturally reflected on the music in general and songs in particular. During this period no song was created except the song on Badan Barphukan and even the culture of the old songs came to the minimum. The later half of the nineteenth century, therefore, saw the growth of some artificial songs made in the blind imitation of Bengali songs. These songs hardly betray any powerful emotional feeling and spontaneity of appeal. A blind imitation of Bengali life and culture proved to be the vogue of the day and hence the imitation of Bengali songs (and even translation of those songs) was not regarded an evil. People had no respect for the indigenous songs and music. Things worsened so much that by the seventies of the last century people used to get delight only in singing Bengali songs. The Bengali Khemṭās reigned the whole country; even the man on the street passed by with a Bengali Khemṭā in his lips. And there was a wrong belief amongst the people, that the Assamese language was unfit for making beautiful songs. But things began to change by the eighties of the same century. It was Satyanath Bora who lashed the first attack on the Bengali songs by publishing an Assamese book of songs.
Gitāvalī. In the prefatory note of the book the poet admitted that he had written those songs with a desire to revive the Assamese songs, and at the same time to make Assamese songs free from the clutch of the Bengalis. Though Satyanath tried to re-introduce a series of Assamese songs, still his very songs could not avoid the influence of Bengali songs in rhythm and structure. Only the language changed but most of the qualities of the Bengali songs remained. In order to popularise the songs, Satyanath had often tinged them with humour. The addition of humour brought good results. Two of his songs received the widest popularity and there were none by that time, who could not repeat at least two lines from these songs. We like to quote these two songs in full-text. The first song is a list of edible items for a greedy pot-bellied man. The song is simple and has a playful innocence to attract the listeners.

Aji majāche peṭuā peṭ bhari khā
Peṭ bhari, peṭ bhari, peṭ bhari khā
Ou thekera tengā
Rahar ki dāl
Ālu bhajā khāva majā, pakā kharichā.
The other song is a deep lamentation of a bachelor, wherein he says that he is tired of the bachelor's life and wants a girl. The bachelor has toured the seven districts only to find that a girl costs "half of a hundred rupees". In spite of his pretty requests the girls' father did not come down. Now, the only course for the bachelor is to curse the ignoble fathers.

Hay mir kapal khan,
Ball bhaat kem-an kham,
Ajik legi biya nahal mor,
Sat paragan phullo ghuri,
Apit lage arhei kuri,
Nede dhalli kabau kallai
Kenke marah mar.
Namre kiya bapak gila
Bar-ei thaichi api gilla,
Rahakkei taka napli 6
Karbb ne-de ghar.

This particular song has another distinction also; it is built on the Kamrupi dialect. For non-Kamrupi people, the dialect had an appeal of its own. Apart from his humorous songs Satyanath Bora wrote on popular themes of love, nature
devotion and patriotism. Srngara, Santa and hasya were his favourite sentiments. Most of his songs were sung on the Behag, Bahar, Bhairavi, Pilu and Lum jhit ragas. Satyanath's efforts got an easy response. The new pattern of Assamese songs captured the imagination of the people. Singers of the contemporary time found it easier to draw public appreciation with the Assamese songs. The popularity of Satyanath's songs inspired a few other writers too experiment with Assamese songs. Bhakatram Dutta Chowdhury, Benudhar Rajkhowa, Durga Prasad Dutta, Lakhiram Bora and a few others took to writing Assamese songs. Bhakatram published his Pranay Gan (Love Songs) in 1903; Benudhar Rajkhowa published his Bahi (The Flute) in 1906 and Durlabh Chandra Das published his Durlabh Prem Sangit (Love Songs by Durlabh) in 1909. The above song writers wrote chiefly on love, devotion, nature and patriotism. The devotion to God and retirement at his feet were matters of common interest. The influence of classical Vaisnavite poets on these songs is vividly clear. The stereo type epithets of Patita pavana, Prabhu narayana, Dina dayal, Karunamay, Radhika raajjan, Vipad vaara and the like are employed to God in these songs. The love-songs exhibit a sense of tragic disappointment (Vipralambha srngaara) but occasionally a longing for union...
of the Purvaraga type also finds place in them. But the patriotic songs do not seem to have succeeded in drawing much attention. The backing of these composers to Satyanath Borah's efforts resulted in a wide popularity of Assamese songs. Assamese songs got a secure soil to thrive on and with the sincere efforts of the people like Lakhriram Barua and Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla, they could attain a high degree of excellency and perfection.

III. Lakhriram Barua and Assamese Songs:

The name of Lakhriram Barua had become a myth in the field of Assamese music. It was he who had shaped and fashioned the Assamese songs and put Assamese music in its proper locus. Lakhriram was born at North-Gauhati in the year 1865. From his very childhood he had a special aptitude for music and for this special interest he had to suffer tortures from his brothers in his adolescent years. After a long strenuous struggle Lakhriram became capable of finding himself at the top of glory in his late thirties. Later his musical genius not only brought fame for him but also turned him into an inspiring model for his junior contemporaries. Lakhriram became an institution by himself. Lakhriram's distinction lies in the fact that he compiled an anthology of Assamese songs available upto his time; and brought out a book
on the practice of music. With the latter book (a pioneer work) Lakhiram set the standard of music with due discussion on melody, rhythm and harmony. The book became too useful for the new composers and the singers as well. *Saṅgīt Kos (The anthology of Songs) and Saṅgīt Sādhana (The Practice of Music) were warmly received in all quarters. Moreover, the young composers were much inspired to see the popularity of their songs included by Lakhiram Barua in his anthology. Lakhiram Barua was himself a very good composer. He composed not less than three hundred songs and as he was a good singer by himself he could set the tune of those songs. Lakhiram's songs are concerned with devotion, love, natural beauty and patriotic items. He has delineated the sentiments of Srṅgara and Santa with beauty, grace and equipoise. Lakhiram wrote also a few songs of elegiac sentiment. The poet had offered his elegiac tributes by a song to the late col. Sibram Bora, who happened to be the first medical graduate of the state. The poet's deep feelings combined with the simplicity of expression.

Asam gaurav maṇi Śiva Borā kalai gaḷā
Kṣanajanmā rūpe thāki kṣantekalai pohālā.
Susabhya sudūr phuri
Yatane āni vicāri,
The publication of Sangit-Kosa has marked a great achievement in the sphere of Assamese music. Lakhiram Barua in compiling the anthology grouped the songs under different headings like songs of Devotion, songs of Love, Songs of Humour, Songs of sorrow and the like. Moreover, the rasas for the respective songs are also clearly mentioned. This thematic classification and the indication of the rasa made the work all the more useful for the singers. Lakhiram in his anthology collected the precious writings of all the composers of his time and over and above that added a section containing old Assamese songs like the Biya-nams and the Bargits. The song-writers included in the anthology were: Satyanath Bora, Benudhar Rajkhowa, Bhakatram Dutta Chowdhury, Chandradhar Barua, Radhanath Phukan, Kanaklal Barua, Hemchandra Gosvami, Durgaprasad Dutta, Lakhiram Bora, Lakhiram Barua, Padmanath Barua, Devendranath Barua, Rajani Kanta Bardploi, Durganath Changkakati, Amolikagiri Raychowdhury, Krishna Prasad Agarwalla, Gopal Krishna Dey, Padmadhar Chaliha, Lakheswar Sarma, Ramesvar Barua, Kirtinath
Bardoloi, Haresvar Barua, Gaurisekhar Barua and a few others. The paucity of space, however, does not permit us to discuss all the poets in detail. We, therefore, like to limit our discussions to a major few. One thing might be added here that these Assamese songs (collected in the Saṅgit Koṣa) helped much the theatrical movement in Assam. The rise of the theatre-groups and stages demanded a large number of songs for their dramas. The songs and dances by the boys (the so-called Chokra-nāc and the Chokrā-git) became essential part of every drama. Saṅgit Koṣa nicely met this demand and in reciprocation the Assamese stages made these songs widely popular.

Of the Saṅgit Koṣa poets, Radhanath Phukan (the philosopher and scholar) gained a high degree of popularity for his patriotic songs. His 'Kiyano pāharā Asamiya herā cirakāl tumī āchilā svādhin' (Oh the Assamese people, why should you forget that you were ever independent) shook the soul of the Assamese people. With the progress of the liberation movement in the country the song gained wider popularity. Chandradhar Barua's songs (mostly of love) were highly admired in the stages. Satyanath's humorous songs delighted the people in all occasions and in all places. The nature songs of Durgeswar Sarma, Lakhyeswar Sarma, Bisnuprasad Dowera, Manick Chandra Hazarika and Lakhsmikanta Misra
Bhagavati were able to draw attention of all music lovers. The devotional songs of Sangit Kosa received the due patronage and these songs had the proud privilege of being often sung in the social gatherings. The then orthodox society did not encourage the public singing of love-songs. The love songs thus had a restricted use; but in spite of the restrictions, the songs gained wider appreciation. With the progress of time and closer contact with Western ideals, involving a more liberal attitude to love, the love songs surpassed the other varieties in the degree of popularity.

IV. Ambikagiri's Approach:

Ambikagiri was a rare genius. A patriot to the back bone he combined the qualities of a poet, a musician, a dramatist, a forceful writer in prose, a mystic, a journalist, and above all, of a political leader. He was a good-singer since his adolescence. Ambikagiri learnt a lot of music from his mother. He made a novel experiment in Assamese songs. The poet musician knew that the ragas of the ancient Assamese songs like of the Bargits could be well-employed in the modern songs too. He analysed the Assamese ragas and found their All-India affiliation. Employing the ragas of ancient Assamese songs he enhanced the melodious appeal of the modern songs. As a song-writer Ambikagiri's chief strain is
patriotism. A patriot out and out he saw nothing but the nation's proud heritage and aspirations for a better future. His songs nicely reflect this sentiment.

Uṭhā uṭhā sabe Asam santān,
Āji Asamar goā joy-gān ****
Sunak sakale Āji jagatar
Jay Asamar Jayadhvani tān.
Vidhi suprasanna īmān dinat
Jvale uṣāravi pūb ākāsāt,
Dugun valere uṭhā uṭhā save
Bādhā bighini nakaribā kān.
Nelāgene lāj Asamiyā herā
Sonar Asam enedare erā,
Smari pūrva smṛti ārṇya sakalar
Mikhuṭere rākhā Jananir man. 12

=Rise, rise, O thee sons of Assam,
This-day you all sing glories of Assam
Let the whole world hear,
The triumph song of Assam.
The God has favoured her,
The morning sun is peeping through the eastern sky;
With double courage and endeavour,
Rise ye all, rise!
Pay no heed to the obstacles.
Are you not ashamed O, Assamese!
That you have left your golden Assam
dry and barren,
Bring, bring back the sweet memories
of your ancestors
And restore your mother's pride.

Ambikagiri was a nationalist and he participated in all the movements for independence fought in the early part of this century. Songs are the easiest means of communication and hence a large number of patriotic songs were written in this period, where the spirit of national struggle was nicely woven.

V. Padmadhar Chaliha's contribution:

Padmadhar Chaliha was a poet of no mean order. He further accentuated the spirit of patriotism by his Svarāj Saṅgit and Phulani lyrics. He made novel experiments by tuning the modern songs in the line of tokari gits, Bangits and Bihugits. Chaliha's praise of his mother-land is sobre and he is all agog in devotion to her. The Phulani lyrics showed some praise of nature. Dr. S.K. Bhuyan commended the
Phulani songs highly. The sense of devotion too was predominant in him. Chaliha's songs were popular. The lines like Hāhe phulani, hāhe dharani (the flower garden smiles, the earth too smiles) echo in the lips of the singers of the old generation, even now.

VI. Mitradev Mahanta:

Born and brought up in the traditional Vaisnavite culture, Mitradev Mahanta showed a rare genius in the field of music. With his fine craftsmanship he introduced a sonorous liquidity in the songs. He had further softened the language of Assamese songs and patternised it in such a beautiful form that for a half century or so, Mitradev Mahanta's Gramophone records were the monopoly in the market. He wrote of patriotism, devotion, love and language and a few verse-de-societes of extremely humorous type. The Sāhitya Sabhā anthem: 'Cira cenehi mor bhāṣā janani' is unique in words and music. The poetic imageries contained in it work quickly to stir our imaginations. In his sonorous song Asam Asam Sonar Asam the magic of the words compel everybody to bow in love and reverence to the motherland, Assam. The words of the song appear to indulge in a dancing themselves, as it were.
O' mor Sadārī āi
Tor mān svānī nāi
Tor mān lāvānī nāi
Dīle phehujāli pūvālī vēliye
Sonālī kapālī toke pindhāi.
Tor seujī āchale āchale
nācānī phulāre mēl,
Bīrīnā birikhe diche dahi bāṭī
luite bāchiche ūel;
Tor jīyāriye gāi,
Kāsēte gāgāri lai,
Ābelī velikā nāmāre surere
bhūlāy bovātī nāi,
Rāndhānī vēliye āśā pālī pālī
Sūnī yāy rai, rai. ***

The force and felicity of the above stanza are easily discernible. His devotional songs carried the stamps of influence of the great religious personalities right from Śrī Śaṅkarācāryya to Śrī Śaṅkaradeva. A philosophic ardour and a strong sense of sublimation at His feet combine in his devotional lyrics. And in the verse-de-sociates he cuts jokes humourously at the idiosyncracies of the people around him. The use of the peculiar idiomatic language marks these
humourous lines. Mitradev Mahanta was socially conscious: he wrote songs on the evils of opium, the necessity of compulsory education and so on. A singer of repute, Mitradev Mahanta set the tunes to his songs which immensely helped the technical side of Assamese music in general and the Assamese songs in particular.

VII. Umesh Chandra Chaudhari:

Pratidhvani (The Echo), Devadhvani (The Divine Sound) and the Mandakini (The Celestial River) are the three books of songs composed by Umesh Chandra Chaudhuri. There is a divine spiritual fragrance in most of his songs. A note of submission to the Almighty and a spirit of renunciation mark his devotional lyrics. His other songs speak of love, nature and patriotism. Dr. B.K. Barua has appreciated highly the clarity of thought and the energy of expression and the smooth movement of his songs. His songs are rich in imagery and rhetorical beauty.

VIII. Kamalananda Bhattacharyya:

'Bilat tirevirai padumar pāhi aie, pātāt tire virāi pāni', (The lotus petals glitter in the lake and the water sparkles on the lotus leaf) — this very song of Kamalananda
Bhattacharyya once echoed and re-echoed throughout the Brahmaputra valley. This is warranted by the fact that Ganesh Gagoi’s celebrated love poem Pāpāri begins with the first line of this very song. What is implied is that Gagoi’s beloved Kiran used to charm the poet with the singing of the song, 'bilat tirevirāi' etc. A graceful lyricality of subtle word power and a passionate feeling heighten the aesthetic appeal of his poems. The poet has described with uncommon sincerity the different facets of Assam’s beauty. Mother Assam has obtained the poet’s reverence, love and praise for her past glory. The poet was gaolied for his participation in Indian independence movement and during his detention in the Silchar jail he wrote a few patriotic songs. These songs are occasionally coloured with his personal experience of jail-life. The song 'tai bhāṅgīb ḍāṅgīb ṣil' (you must break the stones) reflects the poet’s painful experience of breaking boulders at the Silchar jail. We can well estimate what inhuman torture the freedom fighters had to undergo in the jails of British-India. Kamalananda’s love-songs were built on sensuous emotions. The only book of songs we have from him is the Bāuli (The Dishevelled, 1928). Bāuli had an ideal for his junior contemporaries and attempts of close imitation from him is also not rare.
IX. Jyotiprasad Agarwalla:

Assamese songs earned maturity with Jyotiprasad. He made innovations both in form and content of the Assamese songs. Jyotiprasad was an ardent worshipper of Assamese culture. He knew well the central spirit of Assamese music, and as such he made bold attempts at combining the tune of the Assamese folk-songs with the tunes of the western music for making a new type of Assamese songs. This experiment was so successful, that the great poets of his age like the late Laksminath Bezbarua, Hem Chandra Goswami and Jatin Duara personally complemented young Jyoti Prasad and encouraged him in the making of newer melodies. Jyoti prasad used the tunes of the Bihugit, Bangit, Biya-nam, Tokari git and the like abundantly in his songs. The new melodies immediately caught the imagination of all people. The songs like: 'Gache gache pâti dile phulare sarâi râm râm'; 'More jîvanare sakâ kṛṣṇa bajào ki sure venu' with the moving eloquence of a singularly new tone became the saga of the day. Following Jyoti prasad's example, other composers too, found it convenient to tune their songs in the folk tunes which were long neglected. And in respect of the content of the songs, Jyotiprasad made a definite revolution. Jyotiprasad's time coincided with the time of
national struggle for independence. Himself a first-rate freedom fighter Jyotiprasad by his fiery songs inspired a strong sense of sacrifice in the hearts of the young generation. His maddening and inspiring songs like Visvavijayī nava jovān (The world-conquering youth), 'Luitar pārare āmi dekā lara maribale bhay nāi' (We the youths from the banks of the Luit etc.); 'Sāju havare ha'l dekā lara, sāju havare ha'l' (It is time to get ready, 0 youths) embodying a clarion call to the youths echoed and re-echoed throughout the country. "For their moving eloquence, exalted ideas, apt imageries, and delicate melodies, Jyoti Prasad's songs are matchless" says Dr. B.K. Barua. We quote below his song 'Luitar pārare āmi dekā lara' in full to illustrate the poet's genuine craftsmanship and rapt emotional appeal.

Luitar pārare āmi dekā lara maribalai bhay nāi;
Mukutimedhar mahān mejir nejāl phiringati cāi
Purohito yadi thitāte ātari trāsate murchā yaḥ,
Āmi āgbārhi dingi pāti pāti
tejere valisāl yāme volāi.
Tāhāni Lāchite eri thai yovāre parā jananāi tor,
Jyotiprasad wrote numerous songs but sadly no anthology of his songs has yet come out. Now-a-days his songs with their distinctive melody, are taken to form a separate school of music and pass by the name Jyoti-Saṅgit. Like the Rabindra Saṅgit Jyoti Saṅgit is sung in specific tunes, originally used by the composer himself. Jyotiprasad had a high hope about Assamese music. After a thorough critical investigations he came to the conclusion that the Assamese music is the third oldest school of Indian music (the other two being Karnāṭakī and Hindustānī). The Mīrs and Gamaks of the Assamese songs differ from those of Indian music. The Assamese rhythmic sequence too differs from the All-India standard. Moreover, the Mongoloid and the local influence gave Assamese music a distinctively different shape. Jyotiprasad knew well that music in its most modern sense has become both a fine art and a scholarly discipline. A sincere worker in the field of the fine art of music, Jyoti
prasad was not blind to the scholarly discipline that was
demanded of it.

X. Darpanath Sharma:

Indramālati (1959) and Karavī (1951) are the two
collections of the songs of Darpanath Sharma. Darpanath
excelled in writing love-songs. His Seidina nīralār madhu
jyotsnat (In that solitary moon-lit night) became a sen­sational hit. In this song the unsparing fear of a lover
over the apprehended death of his beloved is sugg­ested. In
another much popular song Hao yadi capā ful tumi havā pāt
(If I am a Jasmine, you are the leaves) the poet has crea­ted an atmosphere of natural loveliness. The romantic dis­cipline of a love-song is nicely maintained here.

Hāo yadi capāful, tumi habā pāt
Dakhin malayā vale, kabā kathā kāne kāne

dhali pari gat.

= If I am a jasmine, you are the leaves
When the southern breeze blows,
you will whisper at my ears,
Leaning against my person.

Classical Indian and Persian anecdotes form the background
of his songs. He has borrowed allusions from the Meghadutam
in the song, 'Priya virahar nayanar nire vedanare din lekhi' (Counting the days of beloved's separation with tearful eyes). Likewise his song, 'Tumi mor jivanar manovitanat epahi kusum mānas vanat' (You are a dear flower in my mind's garden rooted in the life's avenue) refers to the Lāylā-Majnu love story of ancient Persia. This song received wide popularity for its high image making and expert musicality. Most of Darpa Sharma's songs are romantic in nature and they speak of love in general, love in separation and love in union. These songs, as natural for love-songs, run on the 'Bhairavī rāgas'. Other popular rāgas with him are the Hindola (trītaḷ), Miyāki tōdi (trītaḷ) and Guṇakeli (trītaḷ). Darpa Sarma made a careful handling of similes. The image-making is nice, like the Japanese Hukku poems his images print the desired picture with distinctness, clarity and loveliness.

(i) Kata jonākar meghar ārat
    Tarār dipāli lukāi.

(ii) Indramalatī phule rāsi rāsi
    jagat kavitamay.

He worked on a beautiful diction of soft words often homely and natural. Another important contribution of Darpa Sarma to Assamese music is that he opened a school for music at Jorhat and under his able guidance a number of good composers and singers came out in time.
XI. Purusottam Das:

Through the avenues of All India Radio, Purusottam Das has emerged as a master artist. He has composed a large number of songs and has inserted the tunes to them. A past master in the art of blending different tunes to a lovely balance, Purusottam Das has opened a new vista of Assamese songs. He writes on love, patriotism, national glory, devotion, national development and allied themes. Purusottam Das has a rare gift of description and image making. He employs a lovely diction. We quote below a few examples from his songs to testify his power of description.

(a) Vijulīre bāhī bāje
meghare mṛdaṅga,
Ākāsare rabhāthalit
jīvanare rāṅga.

(b) Dūre dūre śarāli
ure jāke jāke
Phuṭphuṭiyā bagā frock
Śevalīre gāte.

(c) Āghonare pakā dhāne rīngiyāi māte.

In his songs the different aspects of Assam's problems and progress are discussed. In the song, Bhāratar bukute Āmar
Asami dhuniya (Our Assam is the loveliest of all, in India) the poet warmly records the progress of the state in the post-independent period. The Umtru Hydel Project, the Oil refineries, the big and small industrial plants have brought a veritable industrial and economic renaissance to the state and the song gives a very lively picture of them all. Such songs of national progress arouse the hope in the mind of the people. Banar jiyari kande mājratī ai and Eni mora Kāmrūpa dhām are the two of his most famous songs. His beautiful lyric, Jonbāir desate sājim gherekhani speaks of the man's desire to make habitation in the moon-land. We quote below his most famous patriotic song: Ure naba bhāratagaurava patakā (The glorious flag of new India flutters).

The song relayed from the AIR, Calcutta on 15th August 1947, speaks of freedom's fresh air and a promise for the future. A classical grandeur enhances the beauty of the poem.

Ure naba bhāratagaurava patakā,
Sāmya maitri pathe āg bārhe janatā;
Rini rini sūni kār sumadhur āhvān,
Mukta vatahe gāy vijayar jay-gān.
Rudra rūpe jāge supta mānavatā
Kārār prachīre yache mukutir vārata
Parādhīn jīvanar ātare klāntī,
But by far the most outstanding personality in Assamese music is Bhupen Hazarika (Dr. Bhupendra Kumar Hazarika, M.A., Ph. D., ). Bhupen Hazarika is a genius: he is a composer of songs, a maker of tunes, a singer, a writer of stories, a maker of films, an able editor of magazines, a scholar and for some time has been an educationist and also a member of the Legislative Assembly. In his early teens he had the privilege of coming into contact with Jyoti Prasad Agarwalla and Bishnu Prasad Rabha, the two greatest masters of modern Assamese music. Bhupen Hazarika developed a strong sense of music from that time. The gift of his voice has easily made him popular. Finishing a successful educational career, Bhupen Hazarika joined the Gauhati University as a Lecturer in Education. Later he went to the U.S.A. and obtained there his Ph. D. degree on the merits of a study on the role of music in education. His stay in the U.S.A. made him immense good. He had the chance of coming in contact with...
some eminent American Composers including Paul Robeson. Returning from the U.S.A. he left his university service to join the film industry in Calcutta. For the last fifteen years HazariKa has worked hard for the Indian movie and the Indian music in different capacities. He has directed the music of not less than 30 Indian films of various languages with credit. A vastly travelled man HazariKa had become able to charm his listeners not only in his own country but also in countries like the U.S.A., U.S.S.R. and the G.D.R.

A close follower of the Marxian dialectics, Bhupen HazariKa introduced progressive ideas into his songs. It was he who had bestowed realism into Assamese songs. Prior to him, the common man had very little representation in the Assamese songs. Bhupen HazariKa gave a place of honour in his songs even to the ordinary fisherman, the railway worker, the stone-breakers and the palanquin bearers. Their hard toil and ever neglected life have been nicely depicted by HazariKa. The very words of his songs lead us to the life and actuality of the circumstances where the down-troddens live. 'Jag, jag jag, jag rel cale mor rel cale,' or 'Parahi pvāte tuluñā nāote rañman māchalai gal' lead us immediately to the midst of the ordinary folk, in whose hearts, amidst all sorrows, the eternal radiance of humanity dazzle. The tea garden labourers and the much neglected tribal milieu
of the far-distant hills of the Arunachal have secured due representation in Hazarika's songs. Through his songs, he has tried to evoke a spirit of national integration which is the call of the day. His vision of humanity is wide. He perceives an unity of all men. In the hours of the country's need like that of the Chinese aggression (or Pak-invasion or the Bangla desh war) Hazarika had tried to evoke the sentiment of the people. The songs written for the movies also indicate his fine craftsmanship and nice delineation of aesthetic sentiments. We may cite for instance the lyrics composed by himself, for his own films: Brā Bātar Sur, Lāti-gaṭi, Sakuntalā and Cikmik Vijulī. The different sentiments related to personal love, national integration, development of the tribal-folk, world fraternity and so on, are nicely depicted in his songs. In a Lāti-gaṭi lyric, the poet has told directly the Philosophy of his songs.

The Sky had given me the vision,
The storm its irresistible strength,
The thunder its loud open voice
And the power of reasoning;
Now, with the voice of thunder,
Strength of the storm.
I shall sing to thrill even the horizon,
In the society of the devils, too,
I shall sing of humanity
With noble strains of my heart.

This promise of the poet to change the devilish humanity to a plain humanity has made the poet bold and entertaining. In the technical side of the songs, too, Bhupen Hazarika has made successful experiments by making a harmonious blending of the tunes of the old Assamese songs, and of the folk songs with the modern ones. *Jilikaba Luitare pār, Āgali vāhare Lāhāri Gaganā* are the two collected works of Bhupen Hazarika's lyrics.

XIII.

Tafazzul Ali, Navakanta Barua, Keshav Mahanta and Nirmal Prabha Bardaloi are a few of the major song writers who are currently engaged in composing songs of merit. We give below a list of the distinguished song writers of the period under review, whose total contributions, in our opinion, deserve to be studied in an independent research project. (The names of the anthologies of songs of the respective writers, if any, are given within brackets).

1. Padmanath Gohain Barua
2. Somnath Patangia
3. Dimbesvar Neog (Saphurā)
4. Prafulla Chandra Barua
5. Khagendranath Das
6. Kamala Prasad Agarwalla
10. Brajen Barua  11. Rudra Barua (Kalam pariya Git)  
15. Parvati Prasad Barua  16. Atul Hazarika (Jayatu Janani)  
17. Bisnu Prasad Rabha  18. Anandiram Das  
19. Ananda Barua  20. Siva Bhattacharyya (Hiyar Kahinoor)  
21. Malin Bora (Renu, Surar Kavita)  22. Kamal Choudhury (Gitavali)  
23. Dhan Chandra Das (Sri Rag)  24. Phani Talukdar  
27. Alimunnissa Piyar (Sur Mijar)  28. Padma Barkataki (Sapon dekho mai)  
29. Lakhshyira Das (Sura Setu, Pratham)  
30. Lila Gagoi  31. Jayanta Barua (Rupali Nadi)  32. Hiren Bhattacharjee (Sonali Sako)  
33. Mukul Barua  34. Pramod Bardaloi  35. Jagat Chetia  
36. Mahesh Goswami (Amay)  
40. Bhagagiri Rai Chowdhury  41. Nurul Haque  42. Nihar Bhattacharjee (Surar Madhuri)  
43. Karunadhar Barua (Malancha)  
44. Malini Bala Devi (Alakananda, Jagrihi)  45. Malavika Goswami (Jagrihi)  

XIV. Agencies for display:  
The gramophone records, the stage, the Cinema and the A.I.R. are the avenues through which these songs were published. The local theatrical groups formed in the different
parts of the country were the oldest agency to popularise the songs of the period. The second phase began only with the beginning of the recording of the Assamese songs under the auspices of the H.M.V. and Columbia companies. The third phase began with the Assamese films. Assamese film-songs are the most popular songs of the present time. The establishment of the A.I.R. station at Gauhati (and lately at Dibrugarh) brought the fourth phase of the development of modern Assamese songs. The A.I.R. has given impetus to a large number of composers and singers.

XV. The lips that voiced:

The success of a song, however poetic it might be, depends upon the fine representation of the singers. We list below a few of the reputed singers whose melodious performances made the Assamese songs what they are now. They are: Lakhiram Barua, Prafulla Chandra Barua, Padmadhar Chaliha, Ambikagiri Raychowdhury, Jyotiprasad Agarwalla, Muktinath Bardaloi, Parvati Prasad Barua, Gopal Chandra Sarma, Purusottam Das, Birendranath Phukan, Rudra Barua, Biren Dutta, Bhupen Hazarika, Jayanta Hazarika, Dilip Sarma Sudaksina Sarma, Mukul Barua, Gunada Das, Dipali Barthakur, Deben Sarma, Khagen Mahanta, Tariquddin Ahmed, Nikunj Jalata Mahanta, Anima Bhattacharjee, Runumi Bhattacharjee, Jyotish
SONGS

Bhattacharyya, Ivy Barua, Jnanada Kakati, Sibaprasad Bhattacharyya, Brajen Barua, Ramen Barua, Sevali Devi, Hemen Hazarika, Pratima Barua, Jitu-Tapan and a few others. The cause of Assamese song was better served by the non-Assamese singers of repute like the celebrated Lata Mangeshkar, Asha Bhosle, Md. Rafi, Shyamal Mitra and Mantoo Ghose. Their participation in the forum of Assamese music has in itself given a new tone to the climate of Music in Assam and lent prestige to the Assamese movies in particular.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. There is a vital link between the rasa and the rāga. Rasa is the source of the Rāgas (Raḥjayati iti rāgaḥ). Without a proper delineation of Rasa the Rāgas might not have perfection. Moreover, the poetic content of a song has serious control over the emotion relevant to a certain Rāga.

2. Mañchalekha, p 172
3. Ibid.,
4. Ibid.,
6. Ibid., pp. 159-60
7. Vide, Saṅgīt Koṣa, the section on devotional songs.
8. For the life and activities of Lakhiram Barua, See,
   Sur deular Pūjārī by Kāncaṅ Barua, Sibsagar, 1967
9. Saṅgīt Koṣa, pp. 70-71
10. Jātiya Saṅgīt, p 8
11. See his prefatory notes to Jayadratha Vadha, Barpeta, 1951
12. Saṅgīt Koṣa pp. 263-64
13. Gitisatadal, pp. 11-12
14. Ibid., pp. 91-92
15. Ibid., p 22
16. Ibid., p 20
17. History of Assamese Literature, p 136
18. Baulī, p 28
19. Ibid., p 48
20. See his prefatory notes to Sonit Kūvarī.
21. History of Assamese Literature, p 138
22. Jātiya Saṅgīt, p 47
23. Jyotirdhārā, pp. 115-17
24. Ibid.,
25. Karavi, p 9
26. Ibid., p 13
27. Ibid.,
28. Ibid., p 18
29. Karabi, p 26
30. Indramalati, p 19
31. Ibid., p 32
32. Latighati, (movie brochure) p 16

Just before the coming of Dr. Bhupen Hazarika there was a stagnation in Assamese music. Hazarika did with this stagnation and induced a brilliant revival. Siding himself by the suffering humanity, he boldly condemned the profiteers, black-marketeers and the food-adulterers. He can nicely react to the things and situations around him and with a poignant accent he often exposes the foes of humanity. His desire for justice is sincere and through his songs he prompts us to a searching compassion for all humble folk, and all victims of their own weaknesses or of the brutality of the strong.