

When the curtains rise... Understanding
Goa's vibrant Konkani theatre

André Rafael Fernandes, Ph.D.

When the curtains rise... Understanding Goa's vibrant Konkani theatre
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Front cover illustration depicts a handbill for the 1904 performance of *Batcara*. List of characters confirms the early participation of women in the tiatr, at a time when this was not prevalent in other Indian theatre forms. Also on front cover, a handbill of *Batcara*, staged in 1915 for the Women's War Relief Fund in World War I days. Back cover shows a partial facsimile of a book by *Pai Tiatrist* João Agostinho Fernandes.

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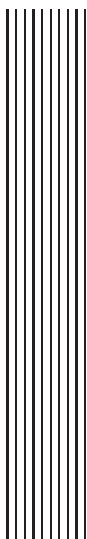
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*Dedicated to tiatrists down the ages...
the pioneers who struggled to develop the art,
the veterans who persisted in keeping it alive,
the contemporary who persevere enthusiastically.*



Foreword

THE TIATR ACADEMY OF GOA is pleased to publish this book, *When the curtains rise... Understanding Goa's vibrant Konkani theatre*, written by Dr. André Rafael Fernandes. In fact, this was the thesis written by Dr. Fernandes for his doctorate. For the TAG, it is a matter of pride that Dr. Fernandes obtained his Ph.D. on a subject – the Goan tiatr – which is the most popular dramatic form of Goa.

The Goan tiatr has progressed in all aspects during the last 118 years. Year after year, its popularity too has reached greater heights. Yet, upto now, there has been no authentic documentation on the tiatr. This vacuum is being filled with the publication of this book.

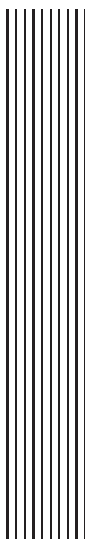
Dr. Fernandes goes deep into the roots of the origin of the tiatr. He analyses the tiatr, its song and its music and he makes a sincere attempt to depict it in an authentic manner. While doing this, he also attempts to widen the vision of the reader by providing additional information about the drama of that time enacted in some

of the other languages in Goa and Bombay. While dealing with the *Kantaram*, the songs that form an essential part of the tiatr, he also enlightens the reader with details of numerous Konkani folk songs and folk music.

When the curtains rise... is definitely an important work of documentation on the tiatr, its song and its music. The TAG thanks Dr. André Rafael Fernandes for his superb presentation of the history of the tiatr and hopes that this book will go a long way in preserving the authentic history of the Goan tiatr.

Tomazinho Cardozo
President
Tiatr Academy of Goa, Panjim,

March 29, 2010



A debt of gratitude

WITH A PROFOUND SENSE of gratitude, I acknowledge my indebtedness to Professor A. K. Joshi, former Head of the Department of English, Goa University. It was under his guidance that the thesis that went into this book was begun and completed. Without his scholarly supervision and perceptive criticism the work would surely not have gained in intensity.

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I also thank Prof. A. V. Afonso, Dean, Faculty of Languages.

To all my colleagues in the Department of English — Dr. Sri-pad Bhat, Dr. Kiran Budkuley, Dr. Anita Vashishta and Dr. Nina Caldeira — a genuine thank you for their support. I am grateful to the late Doutora Selma de Vieira Velho for her encouragement and assistance in documenting and translating original sources in Portuguese.

My gratitude goes to all the Goa University library staff for

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I am indebted to writer-publisher Frederick Noronha of Goa 1556. Though the Ph.D. examiners had recommended early publication of the thesis, I was unable to start the task for a long time. Frederick's persistence and editorial prowess were indispensable in ensuring this publication in Goa itself. Without the help and enthusiasm of Tomazinho Cardozo, and the Tiatr Academy of Goa - formed after the thesis was completed - as well as Premanand Lotlikar and the Dalgado Konkani Academy, this publication would have not seen the light of day so quickly and with the minimum amount of hassles; my thanks are due to all those associated with these organisations and who made this publication possible. I must also record my gratitude to Prof. Paulo Melo e Castro, (Professor of Portuguese, University of Leeds) for his close reading and pointing out several corrections of Portuguese and French words.

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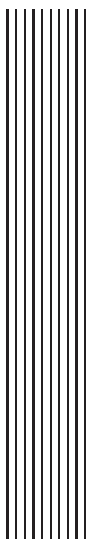
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I thank all others who have helped me in some way or the other, and seek their understanding for not being able to mention each one by name.

Above all, this work was made possible by God's grace and strength, and particularly His faithfulness and comforting spirit in the toughest of times.

*André Rafael Fernandes,
Panjim, Goa*



Behind the curtains

DOWN THE DECADES, hundreds of tiatrists have kept audiences enthralled for thousands of performances in Goa, Bombay (Mumbai) and elsewhere. Just one figure that gives you a hint of how popular this form of the Konkani stage is: on any given weekend during the theatrical season, at least ten shows are held in various parts of Goa.

In spite of the general apathy of official and government bodies and the onslaught of cable television and alternative forms of entertainment, the tiatr has so far managed to hold its ground as the premier form of staged entertainment for Konkani speakers. But there is no space for complacency. Issues, problems and challenges in contemporary tiatr are discussed in this book.

Khells moved from ground-level to the stage. Antonio Piedade Moraes innovated the path-breaking transformation of the ground-based *khells* to stage performances of *khell-tiatr*. Then came the evolution of the non-stop drama. Put together, all this has meant that the tiatr has been enthused with new life and dynamism.

With the gradual decline, however, of the tiatr production in Bombay or Mumbai — the long-time home of a large section of the Goan diaspora — and corresponding spurt in formation of Goan troupes, theatrical activities have seen a resurgence.

Tiatrs incidentally entertain not just local audiences, but in recent times also perform for the benefit of Goan emigrants elsewhere in India, the Middle East, London and Toronto. When expat communities based in Karachi met in Goa recently (December 2009), they made a plea to send across some interesting tiatr to that part of the subcontinent, the sometimes-tense relations between India and Pakistan notwithstanding. Claiming a population of 20,000 Goans mostly in Karachi, they said a good tiatr could draw audiences of upto five or six thousand strong.

Developments in communication technologies, such as the Internet, permit the Goan diaspora to be aware of contemporary artistes and performances. Considering all its inherent strengths, the tiatr has an assured future as a medium of entertainment, education and social transformation.

* * *

THIS BOOK, BASED ON my Ph.D. thesis, traces the development of this popular Konkani drama form called the tiatr from its various origins. For some time now, the general impression has been that this dramatic form began in 1892 in Bombay. But, as you will read in the pages that follow, this text traces the tiatr's genesis to the traditional *zagors* and *khells*, which in turn evolved over several centuries from other ancient performances.

When the curtains rise... digs out available references from the earliest Portuguese plays in Goa. It tracks developments in music and song — both Indian and Western — and studies their integral functions in the tiatr.

It takes a close look at variations in the spelling of the term '*tiatr*' but retains the original spellings to maintain historical context, even though this may appear confusing at times. The etymology of tiatr provides an explanation for these variants. The study points to the diverse aspects such as genres, thematic concerns, phases of growth, structure, use of language, roles of actors,

roles for women, set designing, lighting, innovations, stage management, publicity, censorship, limitations and audience participation, among other themes.

In this work, we give due credit and highlight the contribution of João Agostinho Fernandes, rightly regarded as *Pai Tiatríst* (a title bestowed on him, which could be interpreted to mean the 'Father of the Tiatr') for his pioneering role in this genre of a still-vibrant Konkani stage. Several of his major plays are analysed and their impact assessed.

João Agostinho comes across as not just an excellent groundbreaking playwright, but also a forceful votary of social reform. One can notice the innovative documentation of João Agostinho's manuscripts, handbills, brochures, news clippings, reviews and related items in his collection. He is, obviously, a role model for tiatrísts of all times.

While justice cannot be done to all the generations of tiatrísts in just a single book, an attempt is made to briefly analyse the published plays of nine other playwrights. These are: Aleixinho de Candolim, A. R. Souza Ferrão, Kid Boxer, J. P. Souzalin, C. Alvares, Rennie J. Colaço, John Claro Fernandes, Prem Kumar and M. Boyer. Towards the end of this book, there is a list of tiatríst personalities (tiatrísts, musicians, stage managers, set designers and others involved in the production of tiatr).



1 Origin of the tiatr

EASTER SUNDAY, April 17, 1892 is generally regarded as the date on which the first documented performance of a modern tiatr was staged. *Italian Bhurgo*, the first teatro, as this form of Konkani stage-based entertainment was then called, was enacted on that day in Bombay, at the New Alfred Theatre¹, which existed where the present Police Commissioner's Head Office is located.

This play was composed by Lucasinho Ribeiro. Ribeiro had landed in Bombay from Goa in search of employment. He was proficient in English², knew music and could play the violin. He was a good composer and singer.³ Hence he could understand and appreciate operas being performed by an Italian opera company whose tour coincided with his arrival in Bombay.

Impressed by the presentation, he attempted to obtain a job as a stagehand with the troupe. His desire was fulfilled through the recommendation of a prominent Goan. He travelled with this Italian opera company to Poona, Madras, Simla and Calcutta. When the troupe proceeded to Burma, Ribeiro parted company and re-

turned to Bombay, but not forgetting one of their operettas.

While leaving this job, he purchased the velvet costumes of the opera company in the hope that he might eventually be able to utilise them in his own venture.

He composed *Italian Bhurgo* (*The Italian Boy*) on the basis of the Italian operetta and staged it as a teatro with the assistance of Caitaninho Fernandes, Agostinho Mascarenhas, João Agostinho Fernandes and another unidentified person.

This performance, however, was not the fruition of just a random creative impulse of Lucasinho's. The development of theatre in Konkani must be traced back to several centuries, and its development as a language still earlier. Historical evidence indicates the evolution of the language in the Konkani region between the eighth and the tenth century.⁴



Lucasinho Ribeiro

Tiatr's antecedents, religious drama

Goa has had traditions — imported and native — of festivities associated with religious celebrations. Such festivities included the staging of plays of a spiritual, moral or secular nature.

Just as Mystery and Miracle plays or Morality plays, Passion plays and Biblical or Lenten enactments were performed in Europe, they were also performed in Goa. As emigrants or missionaries generally carry some facets of their culture with them, the Portuguese colonists and religious also brought along their own cultural, spiritual and catechetical practices. The earliest documented evidence of a performance comes from the early sixteenth century.⁵

References are found to the staging of many tragedies, comedies and tragi-comedies on religious themes by the church in Goa. There were performances of Passion plays and dialogues on religious themes.

The correspondence of the Jesuits in Goa with their superiors in Rome and Lisbon contains brief accounts of such performances. The language used in the performances was Latin. The purpose of the staging was to demonstrate the achievement of the native seminarians to the civil and ecclesiastical authorities, to propagate faith and to provide wholesome diversion.

It may be mentioned here that following the installation of Asia's first printing press in Goa⁶ in September 1556, the first book published in October 1556 was *Conclusionnes Philosophicas*.⁷ This was a compilation of the dissertations by seminarians. The previous year, a significant event had taken place in the form of the staging of a play — *Auto de Filodemo* — authored by Luís de Camões.⁸

Luís de Camões, in Portugal and India

Luís de Camões left Portugal for India in 1553. Besides being renowned for *The Lusíads* (1572, trans. 1655), considered as Portugal's national epic, Camões's fame rests also on his substantial number of posthumously published shorter poems: odes and sonnets, elegies, and canzoni.

In addition, he also wrote three plays, *Auto de Enfatriões*, *Auto de El-Rei Seleuco* and *Auto de Filodemo*. Two of these plays — *Auto de Enfatriões* and *Auto de Filodemo* — were published for the first time in a book titled as follows:⁹

PRIMEIRA PARTE DOS AUTOS E COMÉDIAS

PORTUGUESAS

feitas por António Prestes, por Luís de Camões & por outros Autores Portugueses, cujos nomes vão no principios de suas obras. Agora novamente juntas e emendadas nesta primeira impressãõ por Áfonso Lopes, moço da Capella de sua Majestade à sua custa.

It must be noted that *Auto de El-Rei Seleuco* was unknown or forgotten, and Manuel de Faria e Sousa was ignorant of its existence when he published his *I Vida del Poeta* in 1639. It was only in 1645 that the play was re-discovered among the manuscripts of the Count of Penaguião. It was published in 1645 in the printing press of Paulo Craesbeck, with all the necessary permissions.¹⁰

Auto de Filodemo: An insertion in the manuscript of Luís Franco, a contemporary of Camões, states “*Comédia feita por L. de Camões — representada na India a Fr^o de Barreto*”. Francisco Barreto was invested as the Governor of Goa in 1555. So it is presumed that this was the date of its first presentation on the stage.

It is a novelistic play — and has the sentimental romance background — which is no novelty, since it was a practice in the Iberian Peninsula to turn eclogues into theatrical episodes (Encina). Gil Vicente had transformed the *Romance Of Amadis De Gaula and Dom Duardos* (Portuguese high chivalry romances) into well-balanced theatrical episodes without removing their hallmark of chivalric romances.

At such a time, theatrical representation was a sufficiently elastic literary scene to enable everything and anything to be inserted in it. Whatever the faults of technicalities or shortcomings, the audience’s imagination would fill in the gaps, since there was no possibility of time gaps for the changes required in the alteration of space of action.¹¹

Whenever such situations occurred, as for instance in the very argument of the play *Auto de Filodemo*, the narrative takes over the argument with picturesque language, and humour which was often sharp and biting.

Hence there are two aspects — the “palaciano” and the “campesino” — each with a pair of “namorados” in unequal social condition:

- In the palace of Lusidardo, Filodemo is his servant and in love with his lord’s daughter;
- In the pastoral scene and fields, Venadoro, also a son of a high-born aristocrat has suddenly fallen in passionate love with a shepherdess, Florimena.

It is obvious that in the society of those times such passionate entanglement would get the complacent acceptance of the writers

and the public. This happens also in the case where the servant Filodemo and shepherdess Florimena revealed their high birth through their lofty ideas and language – which were considered the telltale signs of undeniable noble inheritance.

While the pair of “namorados” in the palace had their confidants, these were absent in the pastoral background. Filodemo confided in his friend Duriano and Dionisia in her maidservant Solina. The young couple in love express themselves in subtlety and sublimation of language of Petrarchan love because society imposed a self-conflict and a large distance between them.

Duriano presents a different philosophy — that of a youth free of external impositions and full of good humour, who laughs at Platonisms, which he exposes as hypocrisy and lies. On her side, Solina exhibits a womanly cunning undeterred by any scruples; her only yardstick was the appearance and reputation of honesty.

Religious drama, in early times

Besides these dramas in Latin and Portuguese, religious plays in vernacular languages were staged on festive occasions such as Christmas, Easter and Corpus Christi. Passion plays were enacted during Lent.

A play, in vernacular, performed in 1586 on the feast of St. Paul’s conversion (January 25) at the College of St Paul in the City of Goa seems particularly noteworthy because of its connection with the form of the medieval spectacle and pageant plays of Europe.

The play described as a “short and gay dialogue on conversion to Christianity”¹² was performed to celebrate the baptism of native neophytes. The plot was very simple.

It opens with the appearance of the City of Goa, accompanied by the neighbouring islands of Chorão, Divar, Salcete and Bardez. God complains of the scanty zeal shown in matters of conversion. To this, the devout Lady Conversion, who enters next, responds by reassuring Goa that there would take place new conversions. She then disputes with various pagans and the devil himself, refuting their arguments. As a result of this, the “pagans” discard their turbans, cut off their topknots and partake of the food of the Christians amidst general rejoicing.

The season of Lent is particularly noted for religious plays. The performances involved live actors and dialogue. However, when the government passed on the burden of the church expenses to the local communities, beginning in the seventeenth century, the staging of such performances seems to have suffered a decline. The “Stations of the Cross” continue to be enacted even to this day, just as they were enacted centuries ago.

Curiously enough, one finds a reference to a miracle play performed by live actors in the same tradition, but not in Goa. Portuguese monks staged this at an old Portuguese mission established at Aurangabad during the post-Bahamani period. Meadows Taylor writes of how he was moved by the performance that he saw in 1825 at Aurangabad.

A miracle play of the life of our Lord was performed there by them, beginning with the scene of Birth, and ending with the Crucifixion. Although, no doubt it could not bear comparison with Ammergau [Oberammergau, Germany] yet it was curious and strange. Portuguese monks chanted the story in their own tongue, interspersed with bad Hindostanee, but the effect was very impressive; and the last scene, a real man hanging to the cross, was the signal for wailing and groaning from the spectators, who looked on with awe and wonder.¹³

Secular drama for the rest of the year

While the religious enactments may have been generally staged during the major liturgical seasons of Advent, Lent and Easter, performances of a secular nature were held during the rest of the year.

Evidently, there existed in Goa a history of theatrical performances in European languages — mainly Portuguese, but also in French and Spanish — from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century. Most of these performances would have been generally restricted, being written, staged and acted by the elite.

The earliest reference one can find in this period is to Fr. Francisco do Rego (1635-1686). Besides his famous *Tratado Apologético*

Contra Várias Calúnias Contra a Sua Nação Brâmane, he also left *Comédias Varias*, which too remained unpublished, according to Barbosa Machado (*Biblioteca Lusitana*, Vol 4, 1741-59).

He was followed by Mateus Lacerda in the late 17th century or early 18th century who wrote poetry in the mother tongue (Konkani), Portuguese and Castillian, and also several comedies.¹⁴ The manuscripts were lost and it is not known if the plays were staged.

In 1751, a French play, *La Tragédie de Porus* by Corneille and a Portuguese play *Adolonymo em Sydonia* were performed during the week-long celebration ordered by the Viceroy in connection with the coronation of Dom José I as the king of Portugal.

In one of the earliest available issues of the Portuguese-language weekly *O Ultramar* (July 18, 1861) we find a notice for a teatro being performed by a “band of curious young men... at the house of Padre Mestre Pacheco in the hall where at one time classes of Latin were held...”¹⁵

An example of the early teatro in Portuguese written by a Goan and performed in Goa is the play *Os Dois Irmãos Doidos e As Duas Meninas Vizinhas* (*The Two Mad Brothers and the Two Neighbouring Girls*), by Inácio Custódio Coelho in 1866 and staged at the Teatro Harmonia, which was by that time set up in Margao.

Coelho was followed by Luis Napaleão de Ataíde (1909), author of *A Mulher do Artista* (*The Wife of the Artist*), *O Filho do Mestre Jorge* (*The Son of Master George*), *A Viúva do Comandante* (*The Widow of the Commander*) and *Nobreza de Alma* (*Nobility of the Soul*), all published in 1901, and by António José dos Mártires Sousa, author of *Viva O Tio Regedor* (*Long Live Uncle Village Superintendent/Supervisor*).

Other examples of Portuguese language teatro written by a Goan and performed in Goa, can be found in the work of Joaquim Filipe Neri Soares Rebelo (1873-1922) whose *Obras Completas* in three volumes were published by his son in Mozambique in 1973.¹⁶ Volume 1 contains *O Rei-Milhão*, a comedy drama in two acts (performed at Margao 1900), *O Peixote*, comic monologue (performed at Verna 1895, and Margao 1904), *Efeitos da Pinga*, comedy in one act (performed at Nova Goa 1906), *O Senhor Serapião*, comic sketch (performed at Margao in 1908), *Tempestade em Copo de Água*, comedy in one act (performed at Margao in 1908), *Os Dois Namora-*

dos, comedy in one act (performed at Margao in 1909), and *Mogarem*, a historical drama in four acts (performed at Margao in 1910 and at Coimbra in 1912).

The performances of Portuguese language teatro appear to be more urban-based and bourgeois-centred. Incidentally, the early performances of Konkani tiatr were styled as teatro and the first troupe, which performed *Italian Bhurgo* in Bombay in 1892, called itself the Goa Portuguese Dramatic Company.

Indigenous traditions: Goa's folk performances

There were also other indigenous traditions that must be taken into account. Among these indigenous performances were *zagor*, and *khell* or *phell* or *fell* (the *ll* is pronounced as a retroflex).

Zagor comes from the word *jagar*, a Hindu performance genre in Goa. The word *jagar* is in turn derived from Sankrit and refers to a vigil or wakefulness or nightlong performance. *Jagran* and *zagrann* are the Konkani words for 'a vigil'. The name highlights the purpose of the participants to stay awake for a full night in order to honour and worship a particular local pantheon of ancestors, gods, saints and spirits.¹⁷

The *zagor* combines religious ritual with the performance of dance, song and theatre.

Among the more strictly speaking religious activities, the most important one is the singing of the *naman*, i.e. hymns of homage. Collectively sung by a group of men known as the *manddkari*, i.e. the 'dignitaries' of the village or those who are on the *mandd* committee, these hymns individually invoke all ancestors, gods, saints and spirits who are related with the village in a ritually relevant manner requesting them to grant their benevolence and protection for a full year ahead.

The festivals open between 10 p.m. and midnight and close at daybreak. Sumptuously costumed men and boys perform, on a sort of stage, a series of ten to fifty plots, which are known as *soungam*, which literally means 'characters'. The plots are enacted through dance, song and theatrical acting and stage a great variety of themes and figures.

Next to mythical and semi-divine characters such as 'kings' and 'queens', 'ascetics', 'heroes' and 'demons' — whose names and stories often allude to well known episodes in famous epics such as the Mahabharata and Ramayana — come characters of various social groups.

Members of caste or occupational groups such as 'untouchables', 'bakers', 'barbers' 'gardeners', 'washermen' and 'students' can be seen in interaction with officials and authorities like the 'village headman', the 'town crier', the 'tax collector', the 'village brahman', 'policemen' and 'soldiers'.

The often ironic and ridiculed representation of these figures continues when characters representing gender or kinship positions are staged. Hence, the portrayal of precarious situations, appropriate behaviour, and relations with erotic overtones prevails also in the dialogues between 'wives' and 'husbands', 'parents' and 'daughters', 'uncles' and 'nephews'. Especially appreciated by the audiences, these themes sometimes allude to real persons and events of the society and imply 'critical comments on local, national and occasionally even global politics'. This gave rise to the elements of criticism and crudity in the *zagors*.

Some of the characters can be classified as 'strangers'. Examples of these are Khan Saib, the 'Muslim merchant'; *Firanghi*, the 'foreigner' who has become synonymous for the historical European; *Kapro*, *Khapri* or *Hapshi*, the 'African' who formerly came to India as a slave; *Paklo*, the historical 'Portuguese' who for some embodied a sort of equivalent of any White men, and in some festivals a hippie, the representative of the international backpacker tourists who started frequenting Goa's beaches since the 1960's and who in the *jagar* or *zagor* play usually are depicted rather scantily dressed and with a somewhat strange, drug-influenced behaviour.

Amongst the Hindus, there are two distinct kinds of *jagar* performances: Perni *jagar* is a ritual performance of the Perni community in temples¹⁸ and the Gavda *jagar* is performed by members of the aboriginal Gavda tribe for the entertainment of the village. To some extent, this is similar to the Egungun and Gelede societies among the Yorubas in Nigeria.¹⁹

Zagors were performed at the time of certain village feasts and church festivals, sponsored by the village community as a whole.

The expenses for these performances were contributed to by common village funds. The audience and the performers of *zagor* were co-celebrants and not patrons and beneficiaries. The people would gather at an open place. A fire was made at the centre of the area. The audience would sit around, keeping free the space required for acting.

Though *zagors* were also performed in Salcete²⁰, they were more popular in the Christian villages of Siolim, Calangute and Candolim in the Bardez sub-district. They were very similar to the Gavda *jagar* of the Hindus and consist of a series of appearances of caricatured stereotyped characters from village life as well as characters from the world of fantasy.

There is no theme or story but each character represents its essence through song and dance – sometime there is rudimentary and ribald exchange between two characters. Acting in *zagors* was mostly extempore. The actors had liberty in their actions and speech including open criticism of others. Criticised person could also, through his performance, give a befitting reply to the critic.

Vulgarity used to play an important role in the *zagors*. Even references to extra-marital affairs or village gossip could figure in the *zagor*. Sometimes the dialogues would comprise of a slinging match. There were no rehearsals, no script, no direction but the *zagor* did entertain the people at that time.²¹

The musical accompaniment consisted of the indigenous *ghumot*, a quasi-semicircular earthen vessel, the front covered with monitor lizard skin, the bottom an open tube. Another instrument used was the *madlem*, a cylindrical earthenware vessel.

Christians less frequently perform *zagors* now. However, one remnant is the *zagor* at Siolim performed on the first Monday after Christmas. (Incidentally, while the *zagor* is a land-based performance the *Sangodd* can be regarded as its aquatic counterpart.)²²

The *zagor* has been recognised as the earliest form of Konkani drama in Goa, staged by the indigenous Gavda community.²³ Some of the other folk performances in Goa are the *Chapai*, *Dhalo*, *Dashaotari*, *Dioli Nach*, *Fugdio*, *Gavankani*, *Goff*, *Ghodemodni*, *Banvad*, *Lagan Geet*, *Lavni*, *Kalshi Fugddi*, *Romtamel*, *Tonyamel*, *Veerabhadra*, *Gudulyan Geet*, et cetera. In fact, a perspective view shows common features in the *zagors* and the folk performances of Goa

with many other such cultural practices including Gondhallis and Moche Madkars in Maharashtra and even the *jatra* in Bengal.

Zagors in Bombay with the migrants

When the first Goan migrants settled in Bombay in the early nineteenth century, they also performed *zagors* as a part of their cultural life. The Goan emigrant population in Bombay provided the participants as well as the audience for such cultural activities.

Those who were not provided with living quarters at the workplace usually resided in the “room” or village club (*coodd* or *coor*). Separate clubs were set up for ladies. In some clubs there was even a provision for a family room, which could be booked for about a week at a time. Seamen and those going abroad for employment, found this arrangement very convenient as they did not have to be separated from female members of their family who came to receive them on their return from abroad or see them off.²⁴

There were about five hundred such Goan clubs.²⁵ Many of the Goan clubs were situated in the Marine Lines-Dhobitalao area. There were also some in the Mazagaon area. A club was like ‘a home away from the village’. It provided a convenient social support system for the migrant workers and also helped to keep up ties with fellow villagers.

Life in the club also kept alive the local Goan traditions such as evening prayers (the Angelus, the Rosary and the Litany), Goan cuisine and celebrations of feasts followed by entertainment in the form of dances or theatrical performances. The clubs fulfilled the responsibility of functioning like the *mand* in Goa. The organisation and expenses for the ritual performances such as *zagor* were the responsibility of a unique Goan village institution called the *mand*.

Mand is the name for an open place in the village, which through traditional usage has become sanctified. It is the area used for the inaugural worship, which precedes ritual performances such as *zagor* and *Mussallam Phell* amongst the Christians, and Shigmo and Dhalo (variation of Dhavalgit) amongst the Hindus.

Mand (v.) means to arrange. *Mand* (n.) also refers to the ‘table’ (*mez*) or committee responsible for undertaking public duties and

functions or raising funds for common celebrations as above. In Bombay, the emigrants entrusted the club with the functions and responsibilities of the village *mand*. Such emigrants became the participants as well as the audience for the various cultural enactments. Sometimes they invited their employers and well wishers.

Although in Goa the Gavda community staged *zagors* primarily for its own members, in Bombay *zagors* were enacted initially by persons who worked as domestic servants, cooks and butlers.

Zagors were usually staged at Alfred Theatre, Bombay Skating Ring, Gaiety Theatre (the present Capitol Cinema), Novelty Theatre, Opera House and Victoria Theatre. The entire Goan expatriate community did not favour the *zagor*. In fact, because of the destructive criticism and vulgarities, decent people refrained from attending *zagors*.

Gossip, illicit affairs of neighbours, rumours, and washing dirty linen in public formed the content of some *zagors*. Thus there has been a general impression that *zagors* were an unrefined form of entertainment. But all *zagors* were not crude. While some were in bad taste others were very good and entertaining.

Even Dadabhai Nowrojee, the then Member of Parliament, attended a *zagor* show in December 1893 at the Victoria Theatre, Bombay. This theatre was electrified for the first time and specially illuminated for the occasion.²⁶ The hall was packed to capacity for this performance.

Tiatr's precedents

Before proceeding to examine the theatre for educated Goans in Bombay, it is useful to survey the developments in theatre halls and Parsi theatre. The infrastructure that was set up by the Bombay mercantile class also facilitated the entertainment scenario for Goans.

Theatre in Bombay, since 1776

The Theatre on the Green, also known as the Bombay Amateur Theatre, opened in 1776 and served as the principal stage for amateur theatricals and professional touring companies until its closure in 1835.²⁷

Wealthy merchants – particularly Parsis, Baniyas and Bohras – were among the first Indians to evince an interest in theatre, and they were well situated to observe the fondness of the British for the stage, being so close to the Bombay Green. Four hundred and fifty-five of Bombay’s leading citizens submitted a petition to the Governor, Sir James Carnac, in 1840, requesting the construction of a new theatre.²⁸

The names of Jagannath Shankarseth and Framji Cowasji, prominent merchant princes, headed the list of backers for the project. After a campaign carried out in the pages of *The Bombay Gazette* and in meetings in the Town Hall, the government agreed to underwrite the project. But the new theatre remained an unrealised dream until Shankarseth donated a building site on Grant Road. Along with a generous contribution by Jamshedji Jejeebhoy, the shortfall was met; and in 1846 the Grant Road Theatre opened. It was the fruition of these collective energies.

Thus began a new epoch in the urban life of Bombay and its public culture.

Initially it was Bombay’s merchants who pressed for theatre as an enhancement of civil society, a source of ‘good humour’ and ‘desirable tone of feeling’. Enlarging upon their commercial interests, they sought a physical site for cultural transactions, a ‘place of public amusement’, as befitting the rising profile of the city and their own place within it.

Yet once the theatre was built, performers, audiences, and patrons from diverse groups sought to establish their claims to it as a public good. The playhouse opened under English management, and the first plays performed there were in English. Before long however, the Grant Road Theatre was recognised as an ideal locus for Indian theatrical performances.

Beginning in 1853, a group of professional players from Sangli, in what is today Maharashtra, staged dramas in the new theatre based on the Hindu epics. Parsi dramatic clubs similarly chose this site for their fledgling efforts, and for the next three decades, theatre activity flourished in theatres at Grant Road in Bombay.

Beginning with the Grant Road Theatre, theatrical entertainments were relocated within particular zones of the city. As Bombay developed from a colonial port into a major industrial centre, the city’s theatre houses in their specific urban locations became

indices of emerging social and cultural formations. The mercantile class or *shetias* played an important role as cultural agents in the burgeoning metropolis, playing the role of a group critical to both the growth of the city and its theatre.

It was on Grant Road, at the growing edge of the Native Town and far from the European quarter, that the first theatre was built. Known variously as the Theatre Royal, the Badshahi Natyashala, the Shankarseth Natyashala, or simply the Play House (*Pila Haus*), the Grant Road Theatre was the sole building on the street at the time of its opening.

The shift of the theatre to this part of the city suited the Indian theatre-going public, whose numbers were on the rise. Grant Road was shortly populated by a number of other theatre houses including the Elphinstone, the Victoria Theatre, the Hindi Natyashala, the Grand Theatre, the Ripon and others.

This district, separate from the better neighbourhoods of South Bombay, suited theatre managers' intent on attracting a larger, more heterogeneous audience. Proximity to Khetwadi, Mazagaon and Girgaum ensured that the Hindu middle class would have ready access, just as the location of Market, Umarkhadi and Mandvi nearby invited Muslims. As textile mills mushroomed in Tardeo adjoining Grant Road to the west, workers availed of the chance to amuse themselves after long hours of work.

Eager to plant themselves firmly in this part of the city, Parsi company owners opened two large theatres near the Victoria Terminus. The first was the Gaiety Theatre built in 1879 by C.S. Nazir, a leading Parsi actor-manager. Designed by an architect named Campbell, its stage dimensions were seventy by forty feet, with a curtain height of twenty-two feet.

The Governor, Sir Richard Temple, took responsibility for supervising the crafting of the painted drop scene. The image chosen was one to reinforce civic pride: "a fine view of Back Bay with the new public buildings – of which the High Courts, the Clock Tower, and the Secretariat are the most prominent — from Malabar Point".

The Novelty Theatre, constructed by the Victoria Company's owners Baliwala and Moghul in 1887, was even larger, with a stage size of ninety feet by sixty-five feet. It seated fourteen hun-

dred people and featured a drop scene by the German painter Maurice Freyberger.

The Novelty was torn down and the Excelsior Theatre erected on the same spot in 1909. The extravagant fittings of these new theatres generated rivalry on Grant Road, where the old theatre houses were given a quick refurbishing. The foremost location of the Gaiety and Novelty renewed elite interest in the productions of the Parsi, Gujarati and Marathi theatres, as well as attracting English and European performers on their global tours.

The two halls were used for early cinematic exhibitions as well. Louis and August Lumière sent one of their emissaries, Maurice Sestier, to screen the *cinématographe* in Bombay in 1896. The first movies were shown on July 7, 1896 at 7 p.m. at Watson's Hotel (now known as the Army and Navy Building, opposite the Prince of Wales Museum). After the initial shows at Watson's Hotel, The Lumière Brothers Cinématographe was moved to the Novelty in the same year.

While expanding their commercial and civic activity, the *shetias* also participated as spectators at the English-language theatre. They were most likely drawn to the cultural capital of theatre in a context wherein sociability and mutual hospitality reinforced economic collaboration.

Leading *shetias* may have been invited to the English theatre in return for hosting their colleagues at entertainments such as 'nautch' parties. By 1821 they had begun attending the Bombay Theatre on the Green, and in 1830 they played a major role in its renovation.

Shetia support for the Grant Road Theatre showed the nexus between civic leadership and theatre as an object of cultural philanthropy, marking the mercantile class for their status and taste. Simultaneously it laid the foundation for much broader class participation in the years to come. Whereas the Parsi theatre companies were largely financed by *shetias*, who bought and sold shares in them and stood to gain or lose sizeable amounts of money, the Parsi theatre depended heavily on the emerging middle class of Bombay for its audience and corpus of dramas.

Members of the middle class were distinguished more by their educational histories and public roles than by their sources of income. The middle class attempted to free itself from material want

and the symbolic tyranny of wealth by finding respectable alternatives outside the pursuit of commerce.

The early Gujarati playwrights of the Parsi theatre and many of the pioneer performers were men who made their living in journalism, law, medicine and other professions. One of the first Parsi groups to appear on the Grant Road stage, the Elphinstone Club, was founded at Elphinstone College and comprised students and ex-students from that prestigious college.

K. N. Kabra, an eminent journalist who edited the Gujarati newspaper *Rast Gofdar*, established the Victoria Theatrical Company. Dadabhai Sohrabji Patel, one of the first Master of Arts graduates from the University of Bombay, succeeded him as manager. The growth of a middle-class audience was aided and abetted by Bombay's assorted English and Gujarati newspapers, which displayed paid advertisements, commented avidly on performances, and created a continuous furore of debate and sensation around the fledgling theatre.

As the Parsi theatre entered the phase of professionalisation in the 1870s, more of the actors were drawn from Bombay's lower classes, and class differentiation among the audience also appears to have increased. Kavasji Khatau, C. S. Nazir, Jehangir Khambatta and other actors are known to have lived in the narrow lanes of Dhobitalao, a poor district centrally located in the city. Sixty-eight percent of its households consisted of only one room.

Accounts of Parsi prosperity in the nineteenth century obscure the fact that Bombay's Parsi community also comprised large numbers of poor people. Many of the poor descended from Parsi artisans and farmers who arrived in the city after the decline of Surat and the famines that afflicted Gujarat between 1780 and 1840. Lower-class groups eked out a living as domestic servants, petty clerks, mechanics, waiters and carpenters. There was even a band of poor Parsi *thugs* active in the Bazaar Gate area of Bombay in the 1850s. A genteel brand of poverty also characterised families whose traditional occupation had been the priesthood. Offspring of some of these families, e.g. Dadabhai Naoroji, K.N. Kabra, and M.N. Dhalla, with scholarships or other support, were able to work their way into the middle class.

The prices for admission to the Grant Road Theatre ranged from an upper ticket of Rs. 2.50 or Rs. 3 for a box, to a place

in the pit for one rupee or less. It is therefore unlikely that the indigent were able to attend shows in the Parsi theatre, at least in mid-nineteenth century.

The companies however depended on working-class Parsis and other communities for all the labour and services that were necessary to sustain their productions. As the base of support for Parsi theatre broadened, ticket prices declined and audiences shifted downwards in class composition.

Patrons and dignitaries, including British officials, would still fill the boxes and promenade at society events such as benefit nights. Middle-class viewers came to include more Hindus, Muslims and non-Parsi spectators, an outcome in part of the Grant Road location but also related to the companies' attempts to diversify the thematic content of their dramas and present perennials such as stories from the epics and *Puranas*, Muslim historicals and romances, and social dramas aimed at the middle class.

A bipartite structure of presentation, consisting of a serious drama or social comedy, followed by a farce or other variety acts, also strengthened the diversified class basis among the audience. The serious play would be announced for a fixed time, usually early in the evening, for example 8 p.m. However, in keeping with traditional theatrical performances which ran through the night, the main drama would be followed by farces and skits whose performance time was not fixed and which can be assumed to have catered to an audience whose daily routines were less influenced by the European temporalities of work and leisure. The farces, in other words, probably attracted a lowbrow audience, and admission rates seem to have been reduced for the late show.

Family shows, that is special performances for women only or women properly chaperoned, were also a feature of Parsi theatre's popularity and growing respectability among the middle class. Certain companies made it a point to cater to female spectators and even their dependent children, as for example the Natak Ut-tejak Mandali which set up crèches outside the playhouse where children were tended by their *ayahs*.

Although separate sections were reserved for women during mixed performances, the presence of women of easy virtue within these areas was a source of comment in the press. When actresses began to appear on stage, a furore once more erupted. Certain

companies such as the New Alfred upheld a ban on women performers, whereas the Victoria led the way in employing women, a move considered a sign of progress by certain reformers and a rank concession to commercialism by others.

The kind of atmosphere generated by this mixed audience within the theatre can be judged from contemporary newspaper reports. Notices published in newspapers, as well as handbills posted about the town, were the main method of informing the public of upcoming theatre events.

Journalists, who often were in the employment of one company or another, acted as opinion-makers and leaders, urging the public to greater attendance and castigating performers for their shortcomings. They also commented upon behavioural norms and acted as a tribunal in cases of dispute.

Despite the spatial regulation the proscenium theatre introduced, audiences were exuberant and fulsome in their praise or blame of theatrical performances. A favourable reception was demonstrated by loud applause, shouting, and demands that a song or dance be repeated "once more". Multiple curtain calls and showering of artists with cash gifts or *inam* were also common. Hurling of chappals, rotten fruit, empty liquor bottles and shouts of "shame, shame", indicated disfavour. Some of these features were also reflected in Konkani tiatr.

Goans in Bombay, English and Portuguese plays

Educated Goans had been staging English and Portuguese plays in Bombay. Members of the Instituto Luso-Indiano generally performed these once or twice a year at Gaiety Theatre, Bori Bunder or Cawasji Hall, Dhobitalao. S. G. De Souza *Karachivalla* and John Lazarus were among the prominent producers of drama in English or plays translated into Konkani. Around the same time when *Italian Bhurgo* was performed, a Portuguese comedy in three acts titled *Doutor à Força de Pau* was staged in Bombay. It was a translation, by a Goan, J. S. Diogenese Noronha, of Molière's "*Le médecin malgré lui*".

Lucasinho studied the situation and took the middle path. His attempts brought back respectability to Konkani entertainment in Bombay. In fact, handbills for João Agostinho Fernandes's later

dramas credited both of them with bringing about the end of *zagors* in Bombay.

Folk art forms of Christians in Goa

Zagor, Khell, Mussallam Phell, Mell

Zagors continue to be performed in Goa, more by the Hindus than by the Christians. The most prominent Christian *zagor* is the one organised at Siolim. The other place, which keeps up the tradition, is Calangute where the *zagor* is held during Easter. The joyous celebration of Easter provides the impetus for the resumption of the theatrical season after the abstinence practised during the preceding Lenten season. *Zagors* undoubtedly prevailed on the Konkani entertainment scenario in Bombay and were quite definitely replaced by *tiatr*. But one must not forget the role of the other indigenous form of theatrical entertainment – the *Khell* or *Phell* or *Fell*, *Mell* and the adapted version of *Contradança*.

Khell is a Sanskrit word, which means game, sport or play. In other areas of coastal Konkan, *Khell* and *Khelle* are names used for ritual dances performed by various village communities at the time of the Hindu festivals such as Holi. Amongst the Goan villagers the Catholics perform various kinds of *Khells* mostly at the time of the pre-Lenten Carnival. There are some that are performed at Easter and during the Christmas season. The most elaborate of these is the *Mussallam Phell* or *Mussallam Khel* (Pestle Dance) performed in the villages of Cotta, Chandor and Cavorim in Salcete sub-district on the second and third days of the Carnival.

The *Mussallam Phell* is a group dance performed by male dancers. The costumes are those of the pre-Portuguese Hindu inhabitants. The dancers carry stout jangling sticks (pestles or *mussalls*) with which they hit the ground in unison. Starting at the main village chapel, the dancers go from house to house accompanied by a male dressed as a bear that is “caught” ritually the day before the dance, and four torchbearers.

They dance in front of the houses of the *gaonkars* (members of the traditional village community) only, consecrating the house and the family. Many of these houses have been closed, some

have decayed as their owners live abroad, but the dancers perform there all the same.

At the end of the dance a woman dressed as a Mahar woman sweeps the spot and sprinkles water over it. The villagers of the area where this dance is performed stand on the site of an ancient (probably Mauryan) capital of Goa known as Chandrapur and the tradition, which this dance represents, is certainly of considerable antiquity.

Just as the *Mussallam Khell* is localised in Cotta and Cavorim, the *Mell* is unique in being limited to the Assolna and Velim area in Salcete. After invocatory prayers at the structure of the common Holy Cross, the participants dance to the accompaniment of a drum. This cultural practice actually serves to arrange a 'meeting' of the villagers (*mell* as a verb means "to meet"). Their relationships are maintained through their coming together from several villages.

The Carnival plays: sketches of village life

There were, however, other kinds of *Khells* performed during the Carnival, again in the villages of the Salcete area. Till some thirty years ago, these *Khells* were performed commonly in villages such as Colva, Benaulim, Chinchinim. Varca, Nesai (São José de Areal) and Raia.

Performers were amateurs and their fare consisted of satirical and humorous skits and sketches on village life as well as dramatisations of folk tale and traditional mythological stories. The musical accompaniment consisted of two drums, one of which was bass, and a trumpet or a clarinet. Males impersonated women characters.

There was a great deal of obscenity and vulgarity in the social sketches. Since these villages were home to a number of married women who were temporarily separated from their husbands who worked on ships or in British India and Africa, cuckolding, extra-marital affairs and other local gossip figured largely in these sketches.

Prominent villagers invited the performers to perform at their houses on payment of a few rupees, ranging from fifteen to fifty. The *Khell* lasted from one to two hours and was divided into four

partes (parts, episodes). The social sketches were the *Bhatkar parte* (showing the tussle between the landlord and the tenant); *Tarvotti Parte* (showing the fortunes and misfortunes of the sailors); and *Konknyacho Parte* (which poked fun at the ways of the Hindu Goans or *Konknos*); *Devcharacho Parte* and *Raksasa Parte* based on traditional myths, folk tales showed the exploits of demons and giants of yore. (One of the celebrated *Khell* performers was *Hada* (bearded) Miguel of Varca, who re-enacted the fighting of the Second World War with a troupe of thirty people.)

Khells were generally performed by roving troupes. A lot of improvisation went into the presentation of the *Khell*. Material props for the play were those that could be easily carried by the performers. Items of furniture would be borrowed from the patrons or sponsors where the performance was being held. In an open air staging the director would loudly announce the scene location and blow a whistle to indicate scene changes. Various elements of *khell* indicate that they were among the earliest experimental plays in Goa. Some features of *Khells* such as the use of stock characters and masks, permit a comparison with the *Commedia Dell'Arte* which flourished in Italy in the middle of the sixteenth century and spread to the rest of Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Over the decades, *Khells* have undergone much transformation. During the Portuguese rule, when censorship was in effect, the first show had to be performed at the residence or compound of the '*Regedor*' (the equivalent to a village supervisor) for approval. Whereas earlier they used to be performed in the courtyard of a landlord or a wealthy sponsor, the troupes were subsequently invited to perform elsewhere such as compounds of bars and restaurants and even public places such as beaches. Now the troupes travel in motor vehicles and carry all their requirements including posters, costumes, furniture, band, sound systems and even the platforms, props and curtains to set up a stage. The themes now deal with contemporary society and environment.

Contra dança was similar to *Khell*, where the improvised material satirised the pomposity, and cupidity of the landlords. It eschewed the vulgarity and ribaldry of the *Khells*. *Contra dança* performers were accompanied by one or two violinists. There were no percussion or wind instruments to accompany. The big land-

lords invited them to perform in their mansions and the prelude to the performance consisted of their ceremonial procession permitted only through the great halls. The landlords laughed at their own foibles, but a certain decorum was always maintained by the performers, which was lacking in a more boisterous public performance of the *Khells*.

The *Zagors* and *Carnival Khells* (with the notable exception of the *Mussallam Phell* and *Mell* which are community performances), and *ContraDança* performances can be looked upon as precursors of modern Konkani theatre.

Notes and references

¹ João Agostinho Fernandes, “*Theatrancho Bhangaracho Jubileo*”, Ave Maria, November 25, 1943. Newspaper clipping found pasted in his register of manuscripts, now in the possession of the Goa Konkani Akademi. Translation mine.

² Tomazinho Cardozo, “‘Tiatr’ A unique form of Goan dramatic art”, *Tiatr ani Tiatrist*, ed. Fausto V. Da Costa (Bombay: The Goan Review Publication, 1994) 99.

³ John Claro, “Lucasinho, Man who fathered Tiatr”, ‘Panorama’ *Sunday Navhind Times*, December 12, 1993, I.

⁴ José Pereira, *Literary Konkani: A Brief History*, (Panaji: Goa Konkani Akademi, 1992).

⁵ Mário Martins S. J., ‘Teatro Sagrado nas Cristandades da Índia Portuguesa Séc XVI’, *Didaskalia*, Revista da Faculdade de Teologia de Lisboa, Fas 1, Vol 5, 1975, 176, as in Kale.

⁶ <http://www.imultimedia.pt/museuvirtpress/ing/hist/1500/1500.html>

⁷ <http://www.goacom.com/culture/history/time.html>

⁸ Camões or Camoëns, Luís (Vaz) de (1524?–80), one of the greatest Portuguese poets, whose principal work, *The Lusiads* (1572; trans. 1655), is considered Portugal’s national epic. His life was one of high adventure. He was apparently educated at the University of Coimbra. Subsequently, he became a tutor at the court of John III, from which he was banished in 1546 because of a love affair with one of the queen’s ladies-in-waiting, Caterina de Ataíde; she was presumably the inspiration of his love poetry. Virtually an exile, Camões pursued a military career and in 1547 lost an eye in battle in Morocco. In 1550 he returned to Lisbon, was imprisoned after a street brawl, and, upon being pardoned in 1553, sailed for India. It is thought that he may already have begun work on *The Lusiads*; at any rate, the central theme of the poem is the discovery of the sea route to India by the Portuguese explorer Vasco da Gama. After fighting in India, Camões was posted to Macao, but in 1558 was accused of extortion and ordered back to India. Surviving shipwreck, he made his way home to Lisbon via Mozambique in 1570, with the manuscript of his epic intact. Two years later it was published. Despite a small royal pension and the beginnings of world fame, Camões’s last years were spent in obscurity, and he died in poverty in Lisbon on June 10, 1580. *The Lusiads*, written in ten cantos in ottava rima, was patterned after both the *Aeneid*, the Latin epic of

Vergil, and *Orlando furioso* by the Italian poet Ludovico Ariosto. Woven into the story of Vasco da Gama's voyage are lively narrative and prophetic references to other events in Portuguese history, as well as certain Christian and humanist concepts. Although the work extols the achievements of the sons of Lusus – that is, the Lusians, or Portuguese – it also reflects the poet's bitterness about the punitive aspects of Portuguese colonialism. The same vein of pessimism pervades many of his lyrics and his few surviving letters. Camões's fame rests also on his substantial number of posthumously published shorter poems: odes and sonnets, elegies, and canzoni. In addition, he also wrote three plays, two of which were based on classical models. The main theme of his verse is the conflict between passionate, sensual love and the Neo-platonic ideal of spiritual love. It is noted for its formal perfection and simplicity, expressive of deep sentiment. (*Simon and Schuster New Millennium Encyclopedia*, 1999).

⁹ Hernani Cidade, *Luís de Camões: Os Autos e o Teatro do seu tempo, as Cartas e seu Conteúdo Biográfico*, (Lisboa: Livraria Bertrand, 1956) 76. In Chapter 3 "O Teatro de Camões", Section I 'Os Autos', under a) General considerations, the author attempts to reproduce the title in running print. However, a few changes have crept in which I have corrected. 'Afonso' has been changed to 'Álvaro' and 'licença' has been omitted. The transcription appears as: *Primeira parte dos autos e comédias portuguesas feitas por António Prestes, por Luís de Camões e outros autores portugueses, cujos nomes vão no princípio de suas obras. Agora novamente juntas e emendadas nesta primeira impressão por Álvaro Lopes, moço da Capela de Sua Majestade e à sua custa. Impressas com privilégio real por Andrés Lobato, impressor de livros. Ano de 1587.* The other authors whose works were included in this volume were Jorge Pinto and Jerónimo Ribeiro.

¹⁰ Hernani Cidade, 76.

¹¹ Hernani Cidade, 101.

¹² Mário Martins S. J. 188-189.

¹³ Meadows Taylor, "*The Story of My Life*". (London: 1882) 28-29 as in Kale.

¹⁴ Cited in Vimla Devi and Manuel de Seabra, "*Literatura Indo-Portuguesa*", Lisboa, 231, as in Kale.

¹⁵ O Ultramar, Anno 3, No 120, Quinta Feira, 18 de Julho de 1861.

¹⁶ Joaquim Filipe Neri Soares Rebelo, "*Obras completas*", Vols I – III (Mozambique: 1973).

¹⁷ Alexander Henn, "Creative Imitation: Play, Ritual and Mimesis" in K. P. Koepping: *Games of Gods and Man*, Muenster 2001: LIT. Pre-publication handout during a seminar at the Goa University on March 5, 2001.

¹⁸ See V. S. Mitragotri, *Socio-Cultural History of Goa from the Bhojas to the Vijaynagara*, Panaji: Institute Menezes Braganza, 1999) 92.

¹⁹ See Ulli Beier, "Yoruba Theatre", *Introduction to African Literature* (London: Longmans, 1967).

²⁰ Interview with Luciano Dias of Raia, whose father was involved in organising *zagors* in Arlem, Raia.

²¹ Tomazinho Cardozo in Da Costa, *Tiatrist*, 100.

²² Micael Martins (?), Unpublished essay found among his papers deposited with the Goa Konkani Akademi.

²³ John Claro, "The Origin of Konkani Teatro," in Da Costa, *Tiatrist*, 85.

²⁴ From a conversation with John Claro at his office in Margao in Feb. 1999.

²⁵ Flaviano Dias, in Da Costa, *Tiatrhist*, 97.

²⁶ John Claro, "The Origin of Konkani Teatro," in Da Costa, *Tiatrhist*, 85.

²⁷ Kathryn Hansen, "Parsi Theatre and the City: Locations, Patrons and Audiences", *Sarai Reader 2002: The Cities of Everyday Life: The City as Spectacle and Performance*, Online Posting, 40-49.

²⁸ Hansen, 40: "The Humble Memorial of the undersigned Inhabitants of Bombay and others – Sheweth That your Memorialists are of opinion that the General public feeling in Bombay is Favourable to the erection of a Theatre for the purpose of Dramatic entertainment. There being no place of public amusement in the Island and that such a measure would promote good humour and tend to induce a desirable tone of feeling in Society at large, Your Memorialists regret deeply that the former Bombay Theatre which was identified with so many pleasant recollections should have been destroyed, and fallen a sacrifice to debt and want of efficient patronage".



2 Legacy of music, song

SHAKESPEARE'S classic quote "If music be the food of love, play on..."¹, could aptly be applied to Goans with some pun on the main words. Music, cuisine and sports are supposedly the three loves of most Goans. While such a statement may not be true in its entirety, for generations many Goans have either excelled, or had a love for, at least one of these three activities.

Music has always fascinated and enriched the Goan cultural scene. The tiatr has been one of the beneficiaries as well as a major contributor to the musical scenario involving Goans in their homeland and in their exile. Given the importance of music and song in Goan cultural life and in tiatr in particular, it is expedient to trace the evolution of music and song in this context.

Goa has a fairly long history of association with music – both Indian and Western. While these two labels might give the impression of their being distinct categories, one must remember that the peculiarities of the Goan historical encounters have also produced a blending or 'fusion' of the Oriental and the Occidental in many

areas, including music.

Given the fact that music and songs play a very important role in Goan theatre, it would be pertinent to briefly trace their evolution and impact on Goan culture. While the details of the chronological developments may best be left to musicologists,² and lie beyond the scope of this book, it would suffice to point out the major factors and influences leading to the popularity of music among Goans and the contributions of tiatrists in particular.

Music is as old as language. Many ancient peoples – including the Egyptians, Chinese, the Babylonians and the peoples of India – used music in court and religious ceremonies. The first written music dates from about 2500 B.C.³ Musical instruments like the seven-keyed flute and the *veena* have been found among the artefacts of the Harappa and Mohenjo-daro excavations. According to the *Samaveda*, both vocal and instrumental music formed part of sacrificial worship.⁴

Indian classical music: Hindustani, Karnatak

Classical music in India belongs to either of the two main, traditional styles. One is Hindustani music, which developed in northern India and is much influenced by forms from Persia, Arabia, and central Asia. The other is Karnatak music, which developed as part of the Dravidian culture of southern India.

Hindustani music developed as a distinct tradition after the 1200's, following the first Muslim settlements in India. It resulted from the influence of Iranian and Arab music upon India's traditional music. In Hindustani music, there is a greater emphasis upon instrumental music than in Karnatak music. There is a larger range of musical instruments. Hindustani music often has a romantic and relaxed quality. Vocal music in such styles as *dhrupad*, *khayal* or *ghazal* use religious texts or love poems.

Karnatak music is the music of southern India. It is rooted in ancient Hindu traditions and was relatively unaffected by the Muslim influences that partly shaped the music of northern India after the 1100's. Vocal music is much more prominent in Karnatak music than it is in Hindustani music. The melodies of instrumental compositions are vocal in character and even use the type of

musical decorations that singers would be expected to perform. Karnatak musical compositions follow a classical pattern.

Successive migrations brought these developments, particularly of Hindustani music, into Goa. By the time the Portuguese arrived, Indian music was flourishing in various temples and at village festivals in Goa.⁵

Musical instruments: from the *ghumot* on

Musical instruments can be grouped in five major classes – stringed, wind, percussion, keyboard and electronic instruments. Among these, the percussion instruments are regarded as having the earliest origin.

In Goa, the *ghumot* is regarded as an instrument that is unique to Konkani music and reflects the ingenuity of covering the mouth of an earthen pot to transform it into a musical instrument. Native instruments continued to be played along with European ones. (However, by a decree dated April 14, 1736 the *ghumot* was banned in churches, and other Indian instruments such as the flute were prohibited at weddings.⁶) But the *ghumot* continued as an essential element of many folk dances of Goa and has been incorporated into ‘fusion’ music.⁷

In the early phase when the Portuguese held celebrations in Goa, entertainment was provided by contemporary popular music. A report of 1513 – just three years after the conquest – tells us that the Portuguese Governor, presumably Francisco de Almeida, was accustomed to dine while being entertained, in the courtyard of his palace, by the sound of trumpets and kettledrums. One of the trumpets, of great length, emitted a loud and warlike sound that was heard above the other instruments. In the same courtyard, professional women dancers played their instruments, and sang and danced through the festivities.⁸

Native music suffered setbacks particularly when the converts were discouraged from developing their talents in indigenous music, purportedly to protect them from the inherited cultural influences. The Third Provincial Council of Goa, held in 1585, decreed that women were not to learn to dance, play or sing the *deqhanins*

or other festive dances and courtly songs of native origin. The alternative was to provide opportunities to learn Western music.

Western music in Goa: from the 16th century

Among the first to learn Western music were those enrolled in the educational institutions such as the Seminário de Santa Fé, later the Colégio de S. Paulo (1541). Besides the regular curriculum, the students were also taught singing, instrumental music and dancing⁹.

The person credited with transplanting the Latin musical culture in Goa was a Dutch Jesuit Gaspar Barzeu (1515-1553). He introduced processions such as the Flagellants¹⁰, the Devotas¹¹ and the Festival of Flowers.¹² He encouraged the sung mass and chants accompanied by the organ. He also instituted the post of the choir master (*mestre capela*). Drama and music were combined in the enactments of the *Santos Passos* (Sacred Passion) of Christ. Some of these enactments continue to-date.

New instruments, textures, forms, genres

The novelties of Western music fascinated local learners and gave them an impetus to excel. They now encountered new musical instruments, new musical textures, new forms of vocal music and new musical genres.¹³

New musical instruments included:

- Percussion: drums, cymbals, triangles and tambourines;
- String: citterns, clavichord, dulcimer, harp, harpsichord, lute, vihuela (large guitar), viola and later the violin and the piano.
- Wind: flute, shawm (early oboe), trumpet and the versatile and powerful organ.

New musical texture included harmony – the combination of simultaneous notes to form chords (as opposed to melody, the basis of traditional Indian music). Harmony took two forms, polyphony and homophony.

Choral singing was the new form of vocal music, sung by an organised band of singers, the chorus or choir. A choir may have

all the members singing in unison or it may have different members allotted various parts of the melody. Dramas were performed accompanied by the chorus – as during a Latin tragedy in the Colégio de S. Paulo in Velha Goa in 1558.

The new genres of music were of three kinds: relatively unadorned such as litanies and psalms; more ornate like cantigas, villancicos and cantatas; and elaborate such as the motets, oratorios, operas and masses.

- The litany was a prayer of praise or petitions recited by a leader or choir with responsorial chants by the faithful or another choir.
- For the Psalms the music was subservient to clarity of the text during recitation.
- The cantiga was a short lyric poem composed in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Spanish or Portuguese and influenced by the Provençal troubadours.
- The villancico was a Spanish song having a refrain alternating with a stanza, sung with or without accompaniment.
- The cantata was a non-dramatic narrative in verse which could be religious or secular. It was set to limited accompaniment. Though initially meant for an individual voice, it later became a choral piece.
- The motet was originally a French creation of the thirteenth century which had undergone changes through Flemish composers in the fifteenth century. It became the basis for Portuguese vocal music in the sixteenth century and was by now sung in churches without any accompaniment. The biblical or liturgical text in Latin was usually sung by four to six voices. By the eighteenth century it had given way to the Opera.
- The Oratorio was a semi-dramatic composition for solo and chorus, with recitation and singing parts accompanied by an orchestra. It began with a religious character and was later transformed into the secular. The Oratorio exceeded the Motet's capacities by presenting through verse and music a biblical story.
- The Opera was the culmination of these vocal forms. The Opera had been developed in Italy in the sixteenth century.

It was a dramatic and elaborate composition, had recitation and arias (sung melodies) for solo and choral singing to the accompaniment of a full orchestra. It was mainly secular in nature, replete with dramatic action and scenery.

All these features became increasingly complex and grew in magnificence to the extent of becoming spectacular. Their performance was not limited to Europe. With increasing colonisation, the overseas demand for entertainment provided scope for performances in the various colonies.

Though Goa was largely influenced by the music in Portugal, English and Italian troupes were regularly touring Indian cities. It was in one of these Italian opera troupes that Lucasinho Ribeiro, the founder of Konkani tiatr found employment and experience that enabled him to stage the first modern Konkani drama in 1892 in Bombay.

Secular music, varied influences

Secular music was certainly influenced by the different stages and forms of church music.

Goan Christians who had encountered the new sacred music began experimenting with, and transforming, secular music. Many of the traditional families of songs had allowed for improvisations to suit the occasions.

Childhood songs, lullabies (*palnnam*), children's songs, story songs, occupational songs, nuptial chants, dirges, *Ovi*, *vers*, and *zoti* all lent themselves to modifications and ornamentation. By the nineteenth century, several songs and dance songs had evolved such as the *Dekhni*, the *Dulpod*, the *Contradança* and the *Mando*.

The Dekhni, a blend

The *Dekhni* is a Goan folk dance that blends Western music with Indian dance traditions.

It displays elements of the classical Indian dances such as Kathak, Bharatnatyam, and Kuchipudi and is a visual treat. Though most scholars agree that the dance developed in the nineteenth century, opinions differ regarding its origins. Some maintain that

the dance was being performed by women preceding the ceremonial *palkhi* procession.

Others ascribe its formation as a means of circumventing the Portuguese discouragement of native cultural practices. Another opinion is that the dance evolved as a form of entertainment to Portuguese officials by blending Indian dance tradition with Western music.

Female dancers wear the traditional nine-yard saree and flowers in their hair. Jewellery, nose ring and leg-jingles are a must to give the Indian look. Men may accompany according to the nature of the theme. Their presence would be necessary if the song involved a boatman, fishermen, toddy tapper or if they were addressing women through the song. In a public performance the men usually wear vests with a loincloth and hold the tools signifying their profession. The musical accompaniment is provided by a guitar, a violin and a '*ghumot*'.

Both Christians and Hindus perform the dance. If the *Dekhni* is performed by Christians all the participants must be dressed as described above. One of the well-known and best-loved *Dekhnis* is '*Hanv Saiba Poltodd Vetam*'.

***Ovi*, origins among the earliest folk music**

There is a need to study the *Ovi* in some detail as its origins are among the earliest in folk music. The *Ovi* has been found in Marathi as far back as 1129 in Chintamani.¹⁴

Ovis or *Ovvios* or *Ouvios* or even *Hovios* are verses that are easy to compose, easy to utter. Like *Abhangs*, they were also easy to sing. The *Ovi* could contain any narrated thought.¹⁵ It could be formed by stringing together several thoughts just as a garland could be 'woven' from '*ounllam*' or '*onvllam*' flowers.

An *Ovi* line usually consisted of eight syllables, but these could be varied according to need. Simple examples of *Ovis* are:

Kitem go sungtta kongreta,
Ujeant ghatlear tambddem zata;
(Prawn, why are you curling?
Cast into fire, reddening)

or

Chaniechea pora (go) tuka tin patt
*Ravnnan Sitak voilam, dakhoi vatt.*¹⁶
(Three-striped young squirrel, pray
Ravan has taken Sita, show the way)

The *Ovi* was part of the rich tradition of oral literature and was used for a variety of purposes including narration of stories from the Puranas, devotional hymns, historical narrations, social and family themes. Though well developed in written expressions in Marathi, it has also been widely and consistently used in Konkani.

The *Ovi* form was standard in hymns, dirges and nuptial chants in Konkani and was also employed for a host of purposes such as to express gratitude for favours, to counter insults, to convey personal sorrow and as a weapon of mockery. Among Christians the *Ovi* is also referred to as *Vers* or *Zoti* and *Versos* in Portuguese. The *Ovi* along with the *Dulpod* fostered the evolution of the Mando.

Dulpod, each line sung twice

Like the *Ovi*, the *Dulpod* could be expanded with the addition of more lines all sung to the same repetitive tune.

One such example is a *Dulpod* medley subtitled '*Dulpod* that never ends, and can be continued'.¹⁷ It narrates the characteristic features of various localities or reputed crops such as chillies from Aldona, lady-fingers from Santo Estevam, bananas from Moira, sweet potatoes of Taleigão and so on.

However, some versicles such as those praising young boys and girls could be adapted by inserting the name of the singers' own village.

An essential characteristic of the *Dulpod* is that each line is sung twice. Some of the well-known *Dulpods* are '*Undra mhojea mama*', '*Kanvollea kiteak roddtai daran*', '*Moddgonvam Toveaguer*', and '*Sintidan paim ghal re Jaki*'.

The rhythm of a *Dulpod* is faster than a Mando particularly when the sequence is used to conclude the Mando.

Mando: singing and dancing

There are varying explanations given for the origin of the word Mando. Some think it originates from the root word *mand* – a place set apart for the performance of religious and socio-cultural activities of the community. Here people would gather, dance and sing on festive occasions.

Since the Mando involves singing and dancing after coming together at the *mand*, the name could have been accordingly given to the performance. Mando could also be derived from the Konkani verb *manddunk* which means to arrange, place in order or pile up, set up (a trap), set lyrics to music, start or intone a song.

A related word is *manddop*. If we take into account the fact that the Mando could be a wedding chant, where the bride would convey her feelings through song and dance along with her friends, we could attribute the origin of the word to this event. Still others are of the opinion that the title is derived from the command in Portuguese *manda cantar ou dançar*: to order to start singing or dancing (in the hall or at the gathering).

Influences on the Mando

Two dances of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Minuet and the Contradance, influenced the formation of the dance features of the Mando. Dances of the nineteenth century such as the Waltz, the Polka and the Mazurka which were developed before the Mando were also introduced into Goa but had very little influence on its formation.

The Minuet is a slow stately dance in triple time with complex movements. It is of French origin and was fashionable in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Contredanse or Contradance is a dance in which the partners stand in two lines facing each other. Contredanse or Contradance is also the music written for such a dance, in 2-4 or 6-8 time. It originated from the English Country Dance, which has two forms: the circle where men and women alternate, and the double file where they face each other.

Both the dances were imported to Goa and therefore influenced the Mando's movements. While dancing the Mando, the men's attire comprises of formal Western dress while the women

wear the *Toddop-bazu*, which preserves the basic features of the traditional Indian dress but was imported from Malacca and Macau. The women hold East Asian fans and have decorative oriental hairpins. The accompanying instruments are the violin, the guitar or banjo and the *ghumot*.

Origins of the Mando contested

There has been some debate about the origins of the Mando. Some writers argue that it has come from Portugal.

Nita Lupi, the Brazilian poetess, wrote "There is no doubt whatsoever, that not only the whole poetic inspiration of the Mando, but even a great deal of its musical style is of Portuguese origin".¹⁸

Lupi's conclusions were drawn from parallels between the Mando and the earliest traditions of Portuguese literature, incorporated in the *Cancioneiros* ("Song Books").

These were a collection of Portuguese poems compiled from about 1180 to 1400. The main parallels between the *Cancioneiros* songs and the Mando were: both arose out of a folkloric tradition, both are meant to be sung, and both developed in a musical environment dominated by the Gregorian chant. They both have two main themes, love and satire.

According to A.B. Bragança Pereira, "*Os Portugueses introduziram, em nossa Índia o Mandó provavelmente de origem africana*"¹⁹. (The Portuguese introduced to our India, the Mando which is probably of African origin.) But this view does not have many supporters.

Mando, ovi, dulpod

Some kind of dance known as the Fado existed in Brazil around 1760 and was popular there around 1800. It seems to have reached Portugal around 1822.

But the present Fado song is thought to have been created around 1840, that is about the same time as the Mando was produced in Goa. Now scholars accept that the Mando evolved from the *ovi* and was also influenced by the *dulpod*.

A quatrain, the early form of the Mando

Like the *ovi*, the early form of the Mando was a quatrain. Later, a chorus was added to the quatrain, perhaps through the influence of the Fado.

It was definitely in existence in 1846 when it was spoken of by Filipe Neri Xavier (1804-1875), one of the earliest Goan scholars from Loutolim. According to Frederico de Melo (1834-1888) of Raia, in its earliest form it was danced by one couple.

The earliest dance performance of which there is a record is an occasion when António Sérgio de Sousa, Governor of Goa (1877-1878), witnessed a Mando danced to the singing of two of Goa's greatest composers, Paulo Milagres Silva (1855-1931) and Arnaldo de Menezes (1863-1917).²⁰

The Mando has four basic themes: *utrike* or the lover's yearning for union; *vilap* or lament, desolation out of despair for the union, or from any other personal grief; *ekvott*, the union attained; and *khobro* or *fobro*, a narrative of domestic, local or political events.

Accordingly the four types of Mando are of Yearning, Lament, Union and Narration. Some of the best loved Mandos are '*Tambdde Roza tuje pole*', '*Istimosanv Rozachem*', '*Cecilia Mhojem Naum*', '*Adeus korchea Vellar*'.

The dance songs have sometimes been projected as the entertainment of the elite and the landed gentry in their stately homes and drawing halls. But *mandos*, *dulpods* and *deknnis* have not remained as the exclusive cultural properties of the elite. They have been assimilated by the larger society. They are usually sung on festive occasions such as weddings and get-togethers.

Annual *mando* competitions have helped to foster the growth of these as popular forms of vocal entertainment. The Mando Festival was started by Clube Nacional in 1965. The Konkani Bhasha Mandal was associated with its organisation two years. The Goa Cultural and Social Centre took upon itself the responsibility in 1974 and has been organising the Mando Festival since then. Other institutions, colleges or church organisations have also started conducting Mando contests recently.

Music schools, well promoted

The Portuguese may have neglected higher education in Goa, but the parochial schools first established in 1545 put into place a solid system of musical training.

As early as 1665, a Goan choir performed an oratorio by Giacomo Carissimi in seven voices at the Basilica of Bom Jesu. The recital caused such a sensation, it led the Carmelite musician Guiseppe di Santa Maria to declare, "I feel I am in Rome."

With the establishment of the "escola de música" in the various parishes, Western musical training received a firm and widespread base in Goa. In 1831 schools teaching singing were elevated to the rank of parochial schools. They produced many proficient musicians. In Salcete there were 121 musicians in 1847. There were 89 such schools in 1886. In the same year a musical press Tipografia Rangel, was set up in Bastora near Mapusa, which facilitated the printing of the musical notations.

Over the centuries the parish schools have nurtured and fostered talent leading to successful musical careers for the pupils wherever they migrated.

The first significant numbers of Goan migrants came to Bombay in 1822, liberal partisans fleeing political persecution in the Portuguese colony for the safety of British India. More followed in 1835 after a rebellion by mixed-race mestizos deposed Goa's first native-born governor general, Bernardo Peres da Silva. The mestizos launched a two-year reign of terror, forcing da Silva's supporters into exile.

As the century progressed, Goan emigration to Bombay swelled. The Portuguese hadn't been especially attentive to developing industries, so the pressure on cultivable land was intense. Adding to this, many Goans chafed under the oppression of the *bhatkars*, as the feudal landlords were known.

By the 1920s, many Goan men were being employed as seamen by such British lines as BL, P&O, Anchor and Clan. They used Bombay as a base between their voyages. Other Goans found work as domestic helpers in British households and social institutions.

The early Goan fortune-seekers were almost all male: the arduous overland journey from Goa to Bombay, which took between

ten and fifteen days, discouraged women. But the opening of the rail line between territories in April 1881 changed that.

In British India, and Bombay

Their musical inclination came in handy when Goans sought work in British India. Goans soon established themselves as the musicians of the era, staffing the orchestras established by British administrators and by Indian maharajahs seeking to appear sophisticated.

In Bombay, Goan musicians took over both ends of the music business. In 1888, *The Times of India* mentions a Goan ensemble playing in the Bombay Philharmonic Orchestra in the Town Hall. Other Goan groups are said to have displaced the Muslim street bands that played at the weddings of the common folk and other festive occasions.

Salvador Pinto, who played coronet in the Volunteer Corps, is thought to have formed the first proper street band, writes Bombay local historian Dr Teresa Albuquerque.²¹ She says that the demand for Goan musicians was so great, one ingenious man named Francisco Menezes trawled through the clubs to find unemployed men to march in the processions, instructing them to inflate their cheeks without blowing a note. Dhobitalao's Goans were prominent not only as musicians but also in the city's musical instrument trade.

L. M. Furtado opened his store in Jer Mahal, in the 1920s, importing pianos and violins that had been tropicalised to keep them from warping in the Bombay swelter. Marques and Company was nearby.

A majority of the tiatrists and musicians of the last century owe their success to the training received in the parochial music schools. Lucasinho Ribeiro knew music and could play the violin. He was also a good composer and singer.

João Agostinho Fernandes had songs recorded by His Masters Voice in 1908.²² His daughter Sofia accompanied him for the vocals. Other prominent musicians and singers include Anthony Toolu, Dioguinho De Mello, Mínguel Rod, Remmie Colaço, C. Alvares, M. Boyer, Antonette, Mohana, Ophelia, Alfred and Rita

Rose, Lorna, Frank Fernand, M. Alphonso, Chris Perry, Babush and Josinho.

Among the Konkani singers from Mangalore are Henry D'Souza as also Wilfy Rebimbus (who died in 2010) and his family members.

Soundscapes for silent films

Goan musicians also conjured up soundscapes for the silent films. In the era of the silent movies, theatres hired orchestras to provide live music during the screening. Many Goan Christian musicians played the music below the screen to compliment the action in the film as well as camouflage or drown the harsh sounds of the early projectors.

Domnic Pereira, T. B. Zuzuarte and Sebastian T. Fernandes are among these. It is known that Sebastian learnt the violin at the parish school of Anjuna and played in the orchestra at Capitol Cinema under Domnic Pereira. Maestro Fernando Francisco Simplicio Afonso was selected in 1927 to play in a string orchestra for the Maharaja of Malarocota in Punjab. Fernando also had a stint of two years playing for silent films in Ambala.²³

Bombay's Watson's Hotel had been host to India's first cinema screening on July 7, 1896, a show that advertised itself as "living photographic pictures in life-sized reproductions by Messrs Lumière Brothers". By New Year's day in 1900, the Tivoli Theatre was screening twenty-five pictures, with music by a string band.

A portrait photographer named Harishchandra Sakharam Bhatavdekar became the first Indian to import a motion-picture camera from London; he shot a wrestling match between two well-known musclemen in 1897. Other locally shot films followed, including Alibaba, Hariraj and Buddha by a Bengali named Hiralal Sen.

A creative flashback projects the tantalising image of Bombay audiences drinking in black-and-white scenes from Indian folktales as a Goan string quartet trots out phrases from Mozart and snatches of mandos, varying the tempo to match the action on screen. Goans have stayed in the picture ever since.

Seizing Jazz

When Jazz swung into the subcontinent, Goans seized it as the song of their souls.

“Jazz gave us freedom of expression,” explains Frank Fernand, who played in the Teddy Weatherford band at the Taj. “You play Jazz the way you feel, morning you play differently, evening you play differently.”²⁴

New tunes came to India as sheet music, but that sometimes wasn't much help even to accomplished readers: Jazz contained such unconventional instructions as glissando, mute and attack. “But when we heard the records, we knew how to play the notes,” Frank says. For a Goan Jazzman, the greatest accolade was to be told that he “played like a negro”.

Until the 1980s, India had no pop music save for Hindi film songs. Millions memorised and hummed the compositions of C. Ramachandra, Shankar and Jaikishan, Laxmikant and Pyrelal and S. D. Burman, whose names rolled by in large letters at the beginning of the movies. But the Sound of India actually was created by Goan musicians, men whose names flickered by in small type under the designation “arranger”.

It is clear that the Hindi film classics which resound across the subcontinent and in Indian homes around the world wouldn't have been made without Goans. Their dominance of the Hindi film world is partly a function of the structural differences between Indian and Western music.

Indian classical music is melodic. The ragas that form the basis of Indian music are unilinear, each instrument or vocalist exploring an independent line. To move an audience, film scores must be performed by orchestras, with massed instruments playing in harmony. Only Goans, with their training in Western music, knew how to produce what was required.

Frank Fernand was among the first Goans in Bollywood and assisted such worthies as Anil Biswas, Hemant Kumar and Kishore Kumar. As he describes it, the men who composed the scores for Hindi films couldn't write music and had no idea of the potential of the orchestras they employed.

They would come to the studio and sing a melody to their Goan amanuensis, or pick out the line on a harmonium. The Goan

assistant would write it out on sheet paper, then add parts for the banks of strings, the horn sections, the piano and the percussion. But the assistant wasn't merely taking dictation: It was his job to craft the introductions and bridges between verse and chorus.

Drawing from their bicultural heritage and their experience in the Jazz bands, the Goans gave Bollywood music its promiscuous charm, slipping in slivers of Dixieland stomp, Portuguese fados, Ellingtonesque doodles, cha cha cha, Mozart and Bach themes.

Then they would rehearse the orchestras, which were staffed almost entirely by Goans. After all, hardly anyone else knew how to play these Western instruments.

To Frank Fernand, the music directors were mere subcontractors, men whose main job was liaising with the financiers. "We arrangers did all the real work. They'd show off to the directors and producers and try to show that they were indispensable. But to be a music director, salesmanship was more important than musicianship."

Chic Chocolate spent his mornings assisting C. Ramachandra, who is popularly credited with having introduced swing into Bollywood.

Among the most reputed arrangers in Bollywood was the venerable Sebastian D'Souza, who did his best-known work with the duo of Shankar and Jaikishan between 1952 and 1975. His arrangements were so brilliant, composers would take snatches of his background scores and work them into entire tunes.

Sebastian had a brush with the film world in pre-Partition Lahore, where he led a band at Stiffle's Hotel. His earliest arrangements were for Lollywood composers Shyam Sundar and Mohammed Ali. After 1947, Sebastian made his way to Bombay, but found that there was a glut of bandleaders in the hotels. He called on his Bollywood contacts and made his way to the film recording studios, where he got a break with O. P. Nayyar.

The first tune he arranged was *Pritam aan milo*, which was sung by C. H. Atma in 1955. He devised a system of notation that incorporated the microtones that characterised Indian melodies. Sebastian was highly regarded by his musicians for his ever-generous nature. He often lent musicians money to buy better instruments or tide over a crisis. His contemporaries also remember him for the patience he showed even less-than-dexterous musicians.

Some of the past and present musicians who contributed towards music in films and orchestras are: Manuel Afonso, Mauro Afonso, Chic Chocolate, Dattaram, Micky Correia, Hanibal Crasto, Emiliano Da Cruz, Sebastian D'Souza, Rosario D'Souza, Manuel D'Souza, N Datta, Leon DeSouza, Tony Dias, Frank Fernand, Remo Fernandes, Reginald Fernandes, Xavier Fernandes, George Luis Fernandes, Leslie Godinho, Johnny Gomes, Joe Gomes, Anthony Gomes, Anthony Gonsalves, Rock Gonsalves, Braz Gonsalves, John Gonsalves, Mike Machado, Hridaynath Mangueskar, Micael Martins, Manohar Mashelkar, Anto Menezes, Bosco Monserrate, Blasco Monserrate, Ronnie Monserrate, Rex Monserrate, Joe Monserrate, Peter Monserrate, Shridhar Parsekar, Joe Pereira, Chris Perry, Joe Perry, Paul Perry, Toni Pinto, Cyril Sequeira, Prof. Antonio Sequeira, Johnny Baptist Silveira, Tony Vaz. Many of these musicians also provided the music for tiatrs.

Hence, when tiatrs began to be staged in Bombay they had the full benefit of the legacy of Goan music. Many of those who took up acting and singing had already learnt the essentials of music in Goa before seeking better opportunities in Bombay.

The reputation of band masters who provided music at the cinema theatres, parties and dances helped to attract audiences to the dramas as they could be assured of good music throughout the play.

Handbills for the tiatrs always displayed the name of the music composer or band master. By the mid-twentieth century, some critics mistakenly highlighted the music and singing rather than the merits of the dramas. But there is no doubt that music was an essential and integral feature of tiatrs.

Notes and references

¹ William Shakespeare, *Twelfth Night*. Act I Scene 2.

² Among these would be: Mira Mascarenhas, *Impact of the West on Goan Music*, 189-204. Some of the other studies indicated by her are: José Pereira and Micael Martins, *A Sheaf of Deknnis*, (Bombay 1967); L. Barreto, 'The Mando', *Herald Magazine*, Goa, 11-1-1987; V. Raghavan, 'History of Indian Music,' in *Indian Music: A Perspective*, ed. G.K.M. Harihar, Delhi, 1980; M.R. Gautam, *The Musical Heritage of India*, New Delhi, 1980; B. Swarup, *Theory of Indian Music*, Agra 1933; Lourdino Barreto, *Aesthetic Indian Music as a Bridge between Christian and Indian Religious Music*, MSS Rome 1967; Lucio Rodrigues, 'The Euro-Indian Music of Goa', *Sunday*

Navhind Times, Goa 12 March 1972; M. C. Rodrigues, 'Folk Songs of Goa', Goa Today, Goa: August 1977, XII, 1; L. Barreto, 'Goa And Passion Music', *The Navhind Times*, Goa 26 March 1972; José Pereira, 'Song of Goa', *Boletim do Instituto Menezes Bragança*, No.128, Bastora, Goa 1981; A. Mascarenhas, *Folclore de Goa: Dulpodam*, Lisbon 1960. G. K. Hariharan, *Royal Patronage to Indian Music*, Delhi 1984. See also José Pereira and Micael Martins, *Song of Goa: Mandos of Yearning* (New Delhi, Aryan Books International, 2000).

³ *World Book Multimedia Encyclopedia*, International Standard English edition, 1999.

⁴ V. Raghavan, 'History of Indian Music,' in *Indian Music: A Perspective*, ed. G.K.M. Harihar, Delhi, 1980, 1.

⁵ José Pereira and Micael Martins, *Song of Goa*. Konkani Song came into being around the 10th century. The Chalukya king Vikramaditya's son Someshvara III (r.1126-1138), was culturally outstanding, master of all the arts and the first recorded collector of Indian (including Konkani) folk songs in his monumental encyclopedia, *The Wishing Jewel of Desirable Objectives (Abhilasitarthacintamani)*. José Pereira in *Literary Konkani: A brief history* (Panaji: Goa Konkani Akademi, 1992) finds one of the earliest records in Konkani in the 'inscriptions at the foot of the colossal monolith of Bahubali at Shravanbelgola, (9).

⁶ Pereira and Martins, *Song*, 21.

⁷ The *ghumot* has even been eulogised in song by Alfred Rose and used fascinatingly by Remo Fernandes and percussionist Bondo.

⁸ Pereira and Martins, *Song*, 20.

⁹ Thekkedath, as in Mira Mascarenhas, 192.

¹⁰ The Flagellants, religious fanatics of 13th century Europe proclaimed the imminence of the wrath of God against corruption and, as a religious rite, practiced public self-inflicted scourgings. The sect arose in Perugia, in central Italy in 1259-60 and is said to have numbered 10,000. The members would run through the streets of a town lashing themselves about the shoulders and calling upon bystanders to repent and join them in self-castigation. Manfred, king of Naples and Sicily (1232?-66), alarmed at the numbers of the flagellants and the possibility that they might be incited to riot in a country torn by political struggles, attempted to suppress them. The suppression failed to halt the movement, however, for groups of disciples were already scattered throughout Europe. At first the flagellants were noted for their piety, but as time went by, many disreputable people joined the sect. They attacked the Jews in many towns in Germany and the Netherlands, and the church combined with the secular authorities in attempts to prevent their furious outbursts. The outbreak of the Black Death, which raged throughout Europe from 1347 to 1349, encouraged an intensified revival of the movement, the flagellants being convinced that the millennium was at hand. They travelled in organized bands, bound by vows to abstain from all physical pleasures and to endure tortures and whippings for 33 days, in memory of the 33 years of the life of Christ. In 1349, Pope Clement VI declared them to be heretical and strove to suppress them. A revival of the movement in several German states early in the 14th century led to persecutions of the flagellants that eventually culminated in the absolute condemnation of the sect by the Council of Constance (1414-18). In more recent times too, flagellant sects occasionally have sprung up. A band appeared in Lisbon in 1820; and in Colorado and New Mexico a sect of Christian Indians, the Hermanos

Penitentes, continued the practice of scourging until the end of the 19th century. (*Simon and Schuster New Millennium Encyclopedia*, 1999).

¹¹ The devotas were nocturnal chants, announced by marchers with wooden clappers, for the souls in Purgatory.

¹² The Festival of Flowers commemorates the birth of The Virgin Mary, Mother of Jesus. It is celebrated on September 8. During the nine-day period of preparation and on the feast day, children dressed as angels empty baskets of flowers at the feet of her statue. The practise continues to date in many churches.

¹³ Pereira and Martins, *Song*, 21.

¹⁴ Bharatiya Sanskrutikosh, ed. Madhushastri Joshi, Bharatiya Sanskrutikosh Mandal, Pune 1962, 785.

¹⁵ Discussions with Prof. Somnath Komarpant, Head, Department of Marathi, Goa University.

¹⁶ The first *ovi* to the characteristic feature of a prawn which tends to curve and turn red when roasted. The second *ovi* refers to the legend of the three-striped squirrel offering to help rescue Sita after her kidnapping by Ravanna.

¹⁷ C. M. Estibeiro, compiler, 'Dulpod I' in *A Garland of Mando, Dulpods & Dekhni*, Panjim: 1997, 1998, 2004.

¹⁸ Nita Lupi, *Música e Alma da Índia Portuguesa*, 1956, tr. The Music and Spirit of Portuguese India, Lisboa, Editorial Império, 1960, in Scholberg.

¹⁹ Henry Scholberg, "Goan Folklore" *Mare Liberum*, Numero 9, Julho 1995, Review of History of the Seas, Proceedings of the seventh International Seminar on Indo-Portuguese History, published by Comissão Nacional para as Comemorações Portugueses, quotes Bragança Pereira, Vol. II, p.25: "The Portuguese introduced into India the Mando, probably of African origin".

²⁰ Pereira and Martins, *Song*, 47.

²¹ Naresh Fernandes quoting Dr. Teresa Albuquerque in "Love and longing in Mumbai's Jazz Age" <<http://www.mansworldindia.com/>>

²² A note in a handbill for *Batkara de Panzari* printed at Hind Printing Works, Bombay 4 reads: "The musical portion of this play is the work of the late Mr. Zeferino De Cruz of Siolim, band master of the now extinct Bombay Volunteer Rifles. A few songs of this play have been recorded by H.M.V. in 1908." Some recent publications mention 1910 as the year of the first recording by João Agostinho.

²³ Willy Goes, "For 100-year-old violinist Maestro Fernando, music runs in family", Panjim: *Herald*, Tuesday, March 2, 2004,2.

²⁴ Following quotations are from Naresh Fernandes.



3 Teatro, Theatro, Tiatro, Tiatr

Khells and Zagors in Bombay

TEAATRO,¹ both in Portuguese and Italian, means theatre and can also be used for drama although *drama* and *dramma* are the two specific words in the respective languages. The term teatro has been in use in Goa ever since dramatic performances were held in Goa with the advent of the Portuguese.

While the initial religious plays including Passion Plays in the early sixteenth century were in Latin as well as in vernacular languages², there were also theatrical performances in other European languages – Portuguese, Spanish and French – from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century.

Two of the stalwarts who pioneered modern drama in the native Konkani language were born in the third quarter of the nineteenth century. Constâncio Lucasinho Caridade Ribeiro³ was born on January 18, 1863 at Sokol Vaddo, Assagão (near Mapusa in North Goa). João Agostinho Fernandes was born on December

14, 1871 at Borda, Margão, (South Goa).

Both Lucasinho Ribeiro and João Agostinho Fernandes would have been familiar with the *zagors* and *khells* in Goa as well as the songs vocalized on various occasions. They were also aware of the Goans' attitude towards *zagors* being performed in Bombay and the need for alternative forms of entertainment for the expatriate community. It is reported that *khells* were also being performed in Bombay up to the late nineteenth century. The troupes would go from one Goan club to another on foot, accompanied by a drummer and a trumpeter. But such itinerant rounds were seen as rather amusing by onlookers and locals who did not know the background of this cultural activity and therefore *khells* declined in popularity and the performances suffered.⁴

In Bombay, *zagors* were being performed in localities like Bori Bunder, Grant Road, Dadar and Mahim. As in Goa, the *zagors* in Bombay too had become occasions for gossiping and washing dirty linen in public.

If any girl or woman in the locality was having an affair with a man, it would be highlighted at the *zagors*. Sailors' wives were often the subject matter of such gossip. Neighbourhood quarrels would find re-enactment on the *zagor* stage. Many of the dialogues would contain sexual innuendos.

Most educated persons were disgusted with the vulgarity in *zagors*. *Zagors* continued to be performed till the *teatros* appeared on stage in Konkani and gained popular support. It is no wonder that Ribeiro and Fernandes were eulogised for being the pioneers of the Konkani tiatr that led to the decline and elimination of *zagors* in Bombay.⁵

The beginnings of Konkani tiatr

Given Lucasinho's background of having worked for the Italian opera company, it is also not surprising to find that the first tiatr, which he decided to stage, had elements borrowed from the Italian operatic form and he even titled the drama *Italian Bhurgo*.

Since it was at his initiative that the path-breaking drama in Konkani was being staged, his companions accepted his leadership and the fact that he was the most experienced among them in

matters concerning stagecraft. When attempts were made to pinpoint the pioneers in Konkani theatre some writers credited João Agostinho Fernandes as the founder of modern Konkani drama.⁶

João Agostinho has been rightly regarded as “Pai Tiatríst” (the Father of the Konkani tiatr). However, João Agostinho himself had set the record straight, with reference to the pioneer, by writing in the *Ave Maria* newspaper on November 25, 1943, in connection with the Golden Jubilee celebrations of Konkani Theatre. The article is highly significant in tracing the history and development of tiatr (and therefore is being translated here, in its entirety for the first time). Under the title *Theatrancho Bhangaracho Jubileo* (The Golden Jubilee of Theatr) he wrote⁷:

As I have come forward to celebrate the golden jubilee of the Theatr, I find it necessary to convey to contemporary theatrists and to all other Goans some history regarding the Goan pioneer of Konkani Theatr and one who deserves the prominent position of honour in this endeavour.

This fact has not been known to anyone else till today and, therefore, I am happy to disclose it to you in brief, before I die. Some of the elderly gentlemen who were my contemporaries would know that, in Bombay, before Konkani theatr came to be staged, there were *zagors* and because of these *zagors* others would laugh at Goans. Goans were performing other plays but these were in English and Portuguese. The members of the Instituto Luso-Indiano performed them once or twice a year, at Gaiety Theatre (Capitol Cinema) and at Cawasji Hall, Dhobi Talao. Their dramas provided the entertainment for Goans at that time, around 1890.

The performances of an Italian opera company in Bombay coincided with the late Mr. Lucasinho Rebeiro’s arrival in the metropolis. He liked the staging of the Italian opera and was so fascinated by it that he contemplated the possibility of obtaining employment with the troupe to operate and maintain the stage curtains. With the aid of a fellow Goan’s recommendation,

Lucasinho secured the job and accepted it even though the wages were considerably low.

With this troupe he toured Poona, Madras, Simla and Calcutta. When the troupe was proceeding to Burma, Lucasinho resigned his employment and returned to Bombay, keeping in mind one of their operettas. In Bombay he befriended the late Caitaninho Fernandes (from Taleigão) and the duo started their search for actors to stage the play. But they found it very difficult to get young men to act in it, as the youngsters thought that the drama would be akin to *zagor*. Hence this was a major setback to Mr. Rebeiro and he gave up hopes of staging the theatr.

Mr. Caitaninho, who was employed at the *Bombay Gazette*, happened to meet me one day and spoke about the teatr. I went along with him, on a Sunday, to meet Mr. Rebeiro at Picket Road. Subsequent to our acquaintance with each other, every evening after my office duties, I would visit Mr. Rebeiro and pass time in the company of the duo. One day, the three of us, thought of searching for youngsters by visiting the clubs and thus we met two persons. One of them, Mr. Agostinho Mascarenhas, is still (alive) in Goa. Nine boys were required to stage the Opera, and so taking up two or three roles each, we started rehearsing every evening in order to put up the theatr. Thus, having seen our readiness, Mr. Rebeiro laid the foundation of Konkani theatr with five actors, near the Rodond Bungalow, Picket Road in February 1892. And in April of the same year, his first Konkani opera, *Italian Bhurgo*, was performed at the New Alfred Theatre, which existed where the Police Commissioner's Head Office is now located. People were amazed on seeing this new theatr, particularly the opera, and by listening to the other songs and by seeing the velvet costumes, which Mr. Rebeiro had purchased second hand from the Company.

The foundation was strengthened and later Mr. Ribeiro presented *Alladin*, *Ali Baba* and *Carlos Magno*,

all performed under the banner of the Goa Portuguese Dramatic Company. Jealousy crept in and, on the advice of others, Mr. Ribeiro left us and formed another company called Ribeiro and D’Cruz Opera Co. Several (dramatic) clubs were founded which survived for a few years and then became defunct. Among these were: Lusitan, Dona Amélia, Dom Carlos, Douglas Comic Opera, Karachiwalla’s Delectable Company, Goan Union, Lazarus Comic Opera, and Goa Nacional. All these clubs disappeared one after the other, with the exception of one which is still existing amongst us, that is Mr. Rocha’s Club: Union Jack.⁸ In these fifty years I have written twenty-seven dramas. Out of these, I have staged sixteen and eleven are yet to be performed. Out of these twenty-seven dramas, only four are translations and all the rest are my creations.

The late Lucasinho Rebeiro without any doubt deserves the premier honourable position. I bow my head at the grave of Mr. Ribeiro, who was my maestro in the field of theatre and I still tread the path he has shown by presenting plays of moral and educative values to my brethren.⁹ – JOAO AUGUSTINHO FERNANDES

Though Lucasinho may not have received much of a salary by working for the Italian opera troupe, the experience paid him rich dividends in securing him the pioneer’s position in the history of modern Konkani drama. Even after a centenary of performances, the general structure of today’s tiatrs still retains some of the elements of the opera with which Lucasinho initiated the process.

Behind the name: etymology of tiatr

The Goan dramatists who began writing plays in Bombay initially called them operas. As seen above many of the dramatic troupes were named as opera companies or opera troupes. And indeed they were because they generally produced musical plays.

The trend that Lucasinho had started, of having plays with integrated songs, continues even today. When humour played a major role in the composition the plays were called musical comedies. In fact João Agostinho extensively used the word *comed* along with 'Drama'. His very first original creation, *The Belle of Cavel* was a musical comedy. The publicity for these early plays was done in English.

When *Batcara (Part I)* was premiered on November 22, 1904, the original handbill for its publicity was printed entirely in English. Hence the word *Theatro* came into use, based on the English word 'theatre'. The final 'o' would keep the word closer to the Portuguese word *teatro*, with which many Goans were already familiar.

Consequently, when João Agostinho printed *Batcara Part I* in 1909 he referred to the play as a *Theatro* (Title page, Introduction). For the staging of *Batcara Part II* in 1911, the play was advertised in English as a musical comedy. Subsequently the word *Theatro* became a regular feature.

The first major change towards Konkani phonetics by dropping the final 'o' occurred in March 1932 when *Bebdo* was publicised as a *Theatr* to be performed in Vasco da Gama. The same handbill also contains the word 'Theatre' in English.

The Belle of Cavel too was advertised as a *theatr*, in May 1932 at Margao. The change seems to have been short-lived as about two years later *theatro* was back in vogue for *Vauraddi* in Margao.

The next exceptional modification appeared in the *Goa Mail* newspaper (in June 1937) when a review of João Agostinho's drama, *Comed ani Farsam, Volume I*, referred to his *teatr*.

The next deviation from *theatr* was *thiatr* in a handbill for *Kunbi Jakki* on November 21, 1941. From then on, the option of choosing any of these terms, namely *theatr*, *theatro*, *teatr*, *teatro*, *thiatr* or *tiatr* seems to have been open to Konkani playwrights and critics. *Tiatr* is more in keeping with Konkani phonetics ('i' as /i:/). In contemporary usage, *tiatro* and *tiatr* are increasingly preferred.¹⁰

Etymology of the 'tiatr': different names in usage	
1909	Theatro, theatrachi (<i>Batcara I</i> , 1909).
1915	Theatro, Comed, Musical comedy (<i>Batcara II</i> , 1916)

1927	Theatro-Opera Cansaulim, Goa.
1932	Theatr, Margao comedy, teatro.
1932	Theatr <i>Bebdo</i> Vasco, Goa. English word theatre in same handbill.
1934	Theatro <i>Vauraddi</i> Margao
1937	Article in <i>Goa Mail</i> , Bombay
1940	Theatr <i>Vauraddi</i>
1941	Thiatr <i>Kunbi Jakki</i> . Handbill
1941	<i>Theatr ani Muzg</i> . Bombay
1943	Theatr Golden Jubilee.
1943	Teatr, theatr (<i>Bebdo</i> , February 13) Margao
1945	Thiatr, Theatr. Margao
1945	Theatr
1949	Theatr (Anthony Mendes, <i>Dog Talliar Noure</i>)
1953	Teatro in a song from the play <i>Kunbi Jakki</i>
1955	Theatr (Jacinto Vaz, <i>Maim ani Sun</i>)
1958	Teatr (Anthony Mendes, <i>Voniencho Jurament</i>)
1958	Theatr (Aristides, <i>Doiea</i>)
1959	Tiatr, Theatr (Saby Fernandes, <i>Batkar ani Mundkar</i>)
1960	Teatro, <i>Goan Tribune</i> newspaper, Bombay
1964	Tiatr (Alfred Rose, <i>Yench Tem Karann</i>)
1972	Teatro
1975	Theatr (Remie Colaso, <i>Don Kallzam</i>)
1976	Tiatr (Wilson Mazarello, <i>Tiatrist</i>)
1983	Tiatr (Paul Romy, <i>Zaumchem Aslem, Zalem</i>)

Composition

Structures of the early tiatrs, and later

The earliest tiatrs, such as those of João Agostinho and his contemporaries, comprised of acts (*ank*) and scenes (*dekhave*). During this era the structure was not rigid.

The normal drama consisted of two acts with an interval between them. João Agostinho's *The Belle of Cavel* has two acts with a total of eight scenes. However, a play could be extended to four Acts with several scenes.

For example, his *Kunbi Jakki* has four acts with a total of fifteen scenes while Prem Kumar's *Vavraddi* totals seventeen scenes in four acts. As a general rule most tiatrs consist of seven scenes or *porde* (literally meaning, curtains). This has become the norm over the last five decades but flexibility still provides for a range from four to seven *porde*.

As seen in the earlier chapter, music is an inalienable component of Goan culture. A distinct feature of tiatr is the inclusion of songs and sideshows between the scenes.

Songs integral to the drama – those that narrate or continue the plot – have been a feature of many theatres, from the Greek to Shakespearean to American and Indian. These integral songs in the tiatrs are known as *Cant(s)/ Canto(s)*, (originating from the Portuguese verb *cantar*, to sing).

The songs usually consist of one verse and a chorus but some playwrights have made exceptions and written longer *cants*. However, in the Konkani tiatrs, songs that are unrelated to the play are featured at the front of the stage while the sets, scenery, costumes or make-up are being changed behind the main curtain. Such songs are termed Cantaram or Kantaram.

The number may vary from two, three or more songs between each scene and thus add up to a range of fourteen to twenty-one or more. These were called *klaun* (solo), duet, trio, and quartet. In Bombay, the opening songs were compulsorily in Konkani as well as English. The tiatrs of yesteryears would contain several songs in English but this is not the case in contemporary Goan tiatrs.

Themes of the lyrics may vary widely – comic, sober, narration of events or anecdotes, criticism of ministers and government policies, social reformation et cetera. Sometimes audiences and critics have given more importance to the songs and comedy rather than the plot or theme of the play, and this has resulted in giving a wrong impression of tiatrs, just as people sometimes talk disparagingly about Hindi films because of the fantastic song sequences.

Sideshows or comic interludes are also a common characteristic of tiatrs. As a matter of fact, comedians as actors or singers were, and still are, a major attraction in tiatrs. A.R. Souza Ferrão, Anthony Mendes, Kid Boxer, Minguel Rod, Jacinto Vaz and M. Boyer were some of the greatest comedians. Among later members of this group are Succurine Fizardo, Querobina, C. D'Silva,

Prince Jacob, Humberto Fernandes, John D'Silva, Comedian Dominic, Ben Evangelisto, et cetera.

Scripts over time

João Agostinho, the 'Father of the Konkani tiatr', led by his example of preserving manuscripts and publishing his plays and associated musical notations. Additionally, he published an album of songs along with the music. Sebastiao Gabriel D'Souza published his dramas *Kustoba*, *Faust 1* and *Faust 2*. He also printed *Comik Cantaranche Album* and *Cantarache Chear Album*.

Not too many have followed in their footsteps.

Only in the last quarter of the twentieth century, Tomazinho Cardozo, Fr. Planton Faria, the late Fr. Freddy J. Da Costa and Cezar D'Mello have published most of their tiatrs. In fact one of the greatest challenges a researcher or student of tiatr faces is the lack of proper documentation.

Senior artistes report that some of the tiatrs were narrated by the composer or director to the actors and they would fill in additional parts of the dialogues as they rehearsed. As in experimental theatre the freedom of innovation and adjustments permitted the more creative actors to make positive contributions towards the dramas. But if the text was not transcribed, the expertise was lost. In many cases, this researcher was informed about the loss of precious manuscripts through lack of proper storage or destruction by termites or silverfish.¹¹

During the Portuguese era in Goa, and the British regulations in Bombay, the script had to be submitted to the censor for his approval. Even the performances were monitored in both locations by representatives of the censor. In Goa, handbills were required to carry a translation in Portuguese of whatever was being stated in the text and a remark '*Visada pela Censura*' was printed on the leaflet after it was approved.

Trying to classify tiatrs

Various criteria can be used to classify tiatrs. The major criteria are themes, genres and types or media of presentation.

Thematic: Tiatrs can be broadly classified into three categories according to their themes – social, religious and political.

Most of the tiatrs (over ninety percent in the last one hundred years) are social dramas dealing with the family and society. The themes explore relationships and problems within the family or families. Conflicts and situations that affect the community as a whole take precedence in this category since tiatrs have been used as a very effective means of social reform. Some of the issues explored here are dowry, caste and class discrimination, dignity of labour, harmful addictions, anti-social behaviour, superstitions, et cetera. *Divorce* by Aristides Dias was the first tiatr that completed 100 performances, on October 5, 1980.

Religious plays are staged mainly in the Lenten season. Most of these are written by the clergy and based on the life of Jesus, lives of the saints, Biblical stories or Christian or human values. Writers included in this category are Fr. Dominic Alvares s.f.x. (Society of Francis Xavier, Pilar, Goa), Fr. Freddy J. Da Costa, Fr. Ivo Conceicao De Souza, Fr. José Antonio Da Costa, Fr. Lucas Rodrigues s.f.x., Fr. Matthew Fernandes s.f.x., Fr. Nevell Gracias, Fr. Planton Faria, Fr. Peter Cardozo s.f.x., and Fr. Ubaldo Fernandes s.f.x.

Among lay persons¹² J.P. Souzalin (José Pascoal Fernandes, 1903-1970) has been highly acclaimed as the writer and director of religious plays. Some of his plays were: *Sat Dukhi*, *Sad Aimorecho*, *Nimanneo Chear Vostu*, *Patkanchem Dar*, *Dev Bapachi Dhuvo*, *Essua ani Jacob*, *Jesus ani Judas*, *Padre Agnel*, *Panch Mister Horkache*, *Bhagivont Joséchi Khorvont* and *Sam Anton*. In what seemed to be a world record at that time, his *Sam Francis Xavier* was staged at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi at 10 a.m., 3.30 p.m., and 9.00 p.m. on the same day, November 25, 1969, and all three shows were 'houseful'. João Agostinho Fernandes and Ligório Fernandes have also produced religious plays.

The earliest attempt, at writing a political tiatr based on Goan history, was made by João Agostinho Fernandes when he composed *Revolt De Sattari* (or *Ranneanchem Traisaum*) in April 1897 and staged it in Bombay. Political dramas could not be staged in Goa during the Portuguese rule and any undesirable reference to the colonisers resulted in harassment of the artiste.¹³ Hence, political plays are a recent phenomena, only after Goa's Libera-

tion in 1961. Nelson Afonso's *Nationalist* was the first of the post-Liberation political dramas. In recent times, Tomazinho Cardozo and Mike Mehta have been active in writing political tiatrs.

Genres: On a very broad scale, tiatrs can again be classified under the genres of comedy, tragedy, and tragi-comedy. As a matter of fact, most tiatrs are either comedies or tragi-comedies. Even in comedies some element of the melodramatic is likely to exist. Since the tiatrs are the most popular form of theatrical entertainment in Konkani, the comic element is essential for any commercial success.

Types or media of presentation: No doubt most dramas would be regarded as tiatrs if they are performed on the stage. But there is a need to recognise that there are also performances of tiatrs off the stage.

Traditional *khells* or *khell-tiatrs* continue to be performed on the ground in many villages in South Goa during the Carnival. Another popular medium is the radio and some tiatrs have been telecast as tele-plays. Cezar D'Mello is of the opinion that, "In comparison to the local TV, radio has been promoting tiatrs by broadcasting the same on AIR for the past several years".¹⁴ Before economic development could be widespread, people looked forward to listening to the plays being broadcast on the radio.

Language: Though Konkani is the language for the tiatrs there can be variations according to the choice of the Bardez (North Goa) or Salcete (South Goa) dialect. Generally, the Bardez variety was preferred. But in recent times, South Goa has much more theatrical activity and the language preference is undergoing changes. Other languages such as Portuguese, French, Hindi, Marathi and English have also been integrated into the scripts.

Formal language is used for most of the drama, but a colloquial variant is employed for comic effect. When the Salcete Konkani was used in tiatrs in North Goa, it gave rise to laughter because of the quaintness of the phonetic expression.

Presentation

Artistes in various areas

Konkani tiatr has fostered the talent of hundreds of artistes in various areas of the dramatic art – as playwrights, actors, singers, directors, stage managers and musicians. In former times the writer was also the director and protagonist of the play. But over the decades, a division of responsibilities has been taking place although the change is at a much slower pace than hoped for by critics and well-wishers.

A list of the many artistes would be unwieldy here and is therefore given later in the book. However, mention must be made of the actresses and unusual actors.

Women on the Konkani stage

The Konkani theatre has the pride of being among the earliest to have actresses on the stage, about twenty-seven years before they could appear in Marathi, Gujarati and Bengali plays.¹⁵ Mrs. Regina Fernandes, the wife of João Agostinho Fernandes, became the first actress on the Konkani stage, when she performed in *Batcara (Part I)* on Tuesday, November 22, 1904 at the Gaiety Theatre, Bombay for the inauguration of the Goan Union Dramatic Club.¹⁶ Miss Carmelina Fernandes joined her on stage in this same tiatr.¹⁷

For the premier of *Batcara Part II* on May 23, 1911 five actresses took to the stage. They were: Miss A. Mascarenhas, Miss Sophia Fernandes, Mrs. (Luiza Maria?) Fernandes, Miss Ernestina Morena, and Miss A(nne) Fernandes.

After Regina's death in 1908, João Agostinho brought on stage his second wife Luiza Maria to act in the re-enactment of *Batcara* on December 7, 1915. His daughter from the first marriage, Sophia, acted as Cecília and Miss Rogaciana Fernandes acted the role of Sundori.¹⁸ Annie acted again in *Albert Gonsalves (The Drunkard/Bebdo)* on October 8, 1925 in Bombay and sang two songs in English during the staging of *Geraldina* on 6 January 1927 at Cansaulim, Goa. Mrs. Helena Dias acted as the drunkard's wife when *Bebdo* was performed at Vasco Da Gama, Goa on March 26, 1932.

For the next two years, several actresses continued to adorn the tiatr stage. They were: Miss Ida in Jack Mulal's *Paichem Ghor Bhorlam Ghirestcaien* staged at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi on June 16, 1932; Miss Ermelinda, a famous dancer acted along with Miss Adela Mendonca and Mrs. Artimisia Almeida in Lusitania Dramatic Company's *Alma Vetat Sorgar*; Miss Etelvina Menezes, Miss Carlota D'Souza and Ms. Herieta Cardozo in Mr. A. Fonseca's *Angelin Bomboinchi Puzadkarn* put up at Royal Opera House on May 20, 1934.

Mr. A. J. Rocha brought Miss Georgina Souza to the stage in 1931 and 1934. His wife Mrs. Ermelinda acted in Konkani tiatrs as well as Hindi films. Mr. Dioguinho De Mello, another veteran of the Konkani stage, encouraged his own sister Ms. Ismenia to take up acting. As usual, João Agostinho continued to encourage women to act in his dramas.

Inspite of all these efforts, there was a gradual decline in the number of ladies coming forward to take up the histrionic art. Therefore male actors had to take up female roles and some of them perfected the art with such aplomb that it was difficult to imagine they were not women.

Some of those who excelled in such roles over the decades were A. R. Souza Ferrão, Andrew Fernandes, Champion Peter, Effie Fernandes, Aristides Dias, Jackson, Luciano Dias, Manuel Rod, D.S. de Salcete, Romaldo, Luis Rod, H. Briton, Master Vaz, Minguel Rod, J. R. Fernandes (*Fithna*), Miss Marekin, Nelson Afonso, Rennie Colaço, Star of Arossim, Vincent de Saligao, Miss Ida Demiterio, Miss Julie, and Christopher Leitao.

C(elestino) Alvares is credited with renewing the trend of ladies participation on the Konkani stage. He encouraged the maximum number of girls who succeeded in earning a reputation for themselves as actresses.

The trailblazer was Miss Mohana (Cabral) with her debut in *Cortub Avoichem* in 1948. Other actresses whom he introduced on the Konkani stage were Shalini Mardolkar, Filomena Braz, Carmen Rose, Cecília Machado, Antonette Mendes, Ophelia Cabral, Jessie Dias and Betty Fernandes.

Thanks to the pioneers who brought respectability to ladies on the Konkani stage there is no dearth of actresses now. Some of the present day actresses are Felcy, Antonette de Calangute, Rosy Al-

vares, Sally Almeida, Roshan de Benaullim, Chitra Afonso, Annie Quadros, Aplonia, Irene Vaz, Dolla Mascarenhas, et cetera.

Hindus and a Muslim on the tiatr stage

The tiatr is generally regarded as a stage activity of Christians. However, such an opinion has not deterred others from involvement in this stagecraft.

One of the multi-faceted persons who was dear to the Goans is Krishna Laxman Moyo (b. 1919). He was born in Bicholim, North Goa. In the era when the *kantar* was sung mainly by Christians, Moyo was the first Hindu to sing and record Konkani *kantars*. His *kantaram*, '*Kombekar João*', '*Naka Vochonk Kashinat*', '*Krishna Mojem Nanv*' and '*Mogan Uloi*' were very popular.

He was also the first Hindu to stage tiatrs, and that too with an all-Hindu cast. His tiatrs *Kombekar João* and *Don Bailancho Ghov* were very popular.

Among the better known stars of yesteryears, Kamat de Asolna and Shalini Mardolkar are very prominent. Anil Deolkar alias Anil Kumar, Premanand Lotlikar, Premanand Sangodkar, Ratnakar Govekar and Rupesh Joglekar are some of the others who have earned a name for themselves in tiatrs.

This section would be incomplete without mentioning Sheikh Amir who is the only known Muslim involved in tiatrs. With a flair for original comedy and mimicry, he imitates the established Konkani singers and comedians, drawing encores whenever he performs in a tiatr whether in Goa, Bombay, Bangalore, Delhi or Dubai.

Few full-timers

Inspite of their commitment, engagement and professional approach to the tiatr, very few artistes have been able to make it a full time profession because of the seasonal nature of the activity. Hence most tiatrists have been forced to fall back on some other occupation to sustain themselves.

The only known full time professional tiatrists were C. Alvares and M. Boyer. Jacinto Vaz became a full time tiatrlist when he relo-

cated to Goa after losing his job at the mint in Bombay. Among the contemporary non-stop tiatrists Prince Jacob and Roseferns are full time professionals on the Konkani stage.

A unique method of publicity

To attract its audience, the tiatr banks on a unique time-tested method of publicity. A few days before the performance, a vehicle – usually a car, jeep, a pick-up or autorickshaw is equipped with a public address system and billboards attached to its front and rear ends or sides.

Popular Konkani songs are played — earlier from vinyl discs and now from audio cassettes or compact discs — through the loudspeakers as the vehicle does the rounds of the towns or villages surrounding the venue. As it travels, handbills giving details of the tiatr are strewn for the curious and the interested to grab or grasp. Between pauses in the music or songs, announcements regarding the tiatr are made for all to hear. The vehicle is halted for some time at junctions and public meeting places for clearer and elaborate announcements. The process is repeated a day or two before the scheduled date.

In villages in particular, such a method still remains the most effective and enticing mode of publicising the drama as the popular songs heard from the roving vehicles attract most children. Grown-ups too will cock a ear to catch the announcement. (The same method is now being followed for publicity of other events or during elections!)

Other methods and media of publicity continue to be used. The oldest, particularly in Bombay, is of distributing the handbills after Sunday services at the local churches. Some handbills or posters are pasted or displayed at prominent spots, shops, and outside the hall or theatre.

Large posters – approximately three feet by four feet, sometimes larger — are always displayed at the venue. Advertisements are issued in the local newspapers and magazines. Sometimes local newspapers oblige by printing a ‘press note’, a preview or a review. Publicity slides may also be projected in cinema halls. Cable television has been resorted to for some years now, partic-

ularly in Salcete, to show recorded dramas and create an interest in the plays. The latest medium is the Internet, where some playwrights have already put up websites or use the services of other providers or forums such as the Goa-World.com website at www.goa-world.com

Performances and venues

When modern Konkani tiatr was founded in Bombay, it had the advantage of having access to standard theatres, auditoriums or halls. Over forty venues have been identified in Bombay. In Goa, with the exception of major towns, such infrastructure was not available for a considerable period of time.

The following locations had permanent platforms or stages with an enclosure to function as roofless theatres in various parts of Goa: Rajendra Prasad Football Stadium, Margao; Campal Grounds and Neugi Nagar, Panjim; (Srirang) Narvekar Natya Mandap, Mapusa; Hanuman Theatre, Ponda; Natraj Theatre and Damodar Theatre, Vasco.

Teatro Harmonia was available in Margao in the 1860s.

Some of the other halls which were constructed later and in which tiatrs were held in towns were: Vidhya Bhavan, Gomant Vidya Niketan and Metropole Cinema in Margao; Cine Teatro Nacional, Kala Academy's Old Hall, the New Open Air Theatre and its Dinanath Mangeshkar Air-conditioned Hall, Panjim; Hanuman Theatre, Mapusa; and the Mormugao Port Trust Hall, Vasco da Gama.

In the villages, most shows were held by erecting a stage in an open space or field and enclosing some area with barricades for ticketed seats. Such an arrangement still continues when tiatrs are held on the occasion of small village feasts. Community halls in church buildings are also suitable venues.

Indoor dramas could be staged at any time. The standard timings for such shows are 10 a.m., 3.00 p.m. or 3.30 p.m., 6.30 p.m. and 9.30 p.m. Outdoor shows are generally after sunset and usually after 9.30 p.m.

On average, a tiatr lasts between two hours and a half to three hours. During peak season, on holidays and Sundays, upto three

shows of the same play may be staged on the same day in three different locations. No wonder, more than three thousand tiatrs are held every year.

Prior to electrification, kerosene based Petromaxes or filament lamps were used for stage and arena lighting. The stage manager was responsible for the physical arrangements on the stage. He would of course have to earlier co-ordinate with the contractor and the parties letting on hire the stage settings, light and sound equipment, make-up artistes and prompters.

There are usually some essential sceneries that are a must for tiatrs. These are the road, the garden, house interior and a jungle or frightful backdrop. (Directors such as Prem Kumar and J.P. Souzalin excelled in having elaborate sets and scenery. Prem Kumar would transport the full truckload of such props whenever he visited Goa to perform his plays.)

The contractor sees to all the arrangements of selling tickets, publicity and financial aspects so that he can earn some profit from the performance after paying the director or producer a lump sum.

From a study of the various characteristics of tiatr it is seen that there has been a lot of development in techniques of script writing and presentation as a greater number of educated youth are taking up the art. Much work needs to be done in the area of criticism and documentation.

Today, the tiatr enjoys the patronage of audiences not just in Goa and Mumbai but it is also performed in Poona, Mangalore, Bangalore, and Delhi. Troupes also visit Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai and even London.

Notes and references

¹In order to maintain the historical aspect of the terms, and to be faithful to the original usage, the spellings have been retained as they appear in the source. This does not in any way constitute an inconsistency as these variations have been accepted in the Konkani drama fraternity.

² Mário Martins S.J., 'Teatro Sagrado nas Crisandades da India Portuguesa Sec XVI', *Didaskalia*, Revista do Faculdade de Teologia de Lisboa, Fas 1, Vol 5, 1975, 176 as in Kale 33.

³ Lucasinho's surname has been spelt in both ways: Rebeiro and Ribeiro.

⁴ Conversation with John Claro who garnered the information from a very elderly Goan in Bombay.

⁵ A four-page handbill in English and Konkani for *Kunbi Jaki* 'Thiatr' on Friday, November 21, 1941, at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi under the auspices of Instituto Luso-Indiano, takes pride in the obliteration of *zagors* through presentation of 'Thiatrs': "*Zalim 49 Vorsam. Amim vavurle ani azun porian vavurtanv Konkani stage bore mannsugueche ani xicounneche ritir addunc, dacoun bore ani xicounneche thiatr, ani conn mhunncho nam ani add guele munn locac fottoun boltech moriad naslele thiatr dacoun. Punn ek mat borem anim kelem, te zaggor je zatale 1892 vorsã passun, Bori Bunder, Grant Road, Dadar, Mahim ani Goeam legun te nattac kele amcheam thiatram vorvim. Hem dadosponn amcam*". An article by Sanches Da Sousa in *The Goa Mail* dated February 28, 1953 comments on the disgusting nature to which the *zagors* had been reduced and praises the pioneering role of João Agostinho to nurture and develop the Konkani stage.

⁶ Carmo Azevedo, "The Genesis Of Tiatr", *Goa Today*, Volume 29. February 7, 1995, 35.

⁷ João Agostinho Fernandes, "Theatrancho Bhangaracho Jubileo", *Ave Maria*, November 25, 1943. (Newspaper clipping found pasted in his register of manuscripts, now in the possession of the Goa Konkani Akademi.) (Translation mine.) Inconsistencies in spelling Rebeiro/Ribeiro have been retained as in the original article in Konkani.

⁸ Some of the other dramatic clubs were: Goan Amateurs Dramatic Club, Jolly Boys Amateurs Co., Star Affonseca Dramatic Company, The Mazagon Opera Co., Goan United Dramatic Association, Dom Manuel Braganza Dramatic Co, The Leading Amateurs Dramatic Club of Margao, Bombay Portuguese Association, Grand Original Artistes, Goan Capital Theatrical Co., The Portuguese Heroes Co., and The Stars of Bombay. All these groups or clubs mushroomed and vanished, but the only group which survived for a considerable period of time, even upto 1942, was Union Jack Dramatic Company led by Saib A.J. Rocha.

⁹ It might be a printer's devil but it is a rare instance where João Agostinho's name has been printed at the end of the article as João Agostinho Fernandes. The middle name attempt is closer to his baptismal name Agostinho.

¹⁰ The addenda to Chapter 4 provides several examples including the use of 'drama'.

¹¹ Lucasinho Ribeiro supposedly kept his manuscripts in a wooden chest. It has not been located as yet. Felício Cardoso, Antonio Piedade Moraes, C. D'Silva are some of the tiatrists whose manuscripts have been

destroyed. M. Boyer reported that his manuscripts are left in a large wooden chest in the Bombay Club where he stayed in his younger days. The manuscripts had not been retrieved at the time of writing.

¹² Da Costa, *Tiatrist* 23, Mazarello 35.

¹³ Robin Vaz reportedly suffered at the hands of Agente Monteiro, a Portuguese police officer, for remarks having political overtones.

¹⁴ Cezar D'Mello, "Radio promotes tiatr more than TV", Interview with Anthony Fernandes, Herald Nov. 18, 2003: 2.

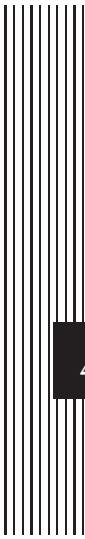
¹⁵ John Claro mentions that "this fact has been confirmed by eminent personalities of Marathi stage such as Mr. Satish Arlekar and Ratnakar Matkari.... It seems that Mrs. Kamlabai Gokhale came first on the Marathi stage" only around 1934. John Claro, "When Women first came onto Konkani stage. . . , issue of *Tiatr ani Tiatrist*, ed. Fausto V. Da Costa, (Bombay: *The Goan Review* Publication, 1994) 95.

¹⁶ Hand bill for *Batcara*.

¹⁷ Miss Carmelina Fernandes was the sister of Regina Fernandes. Regina appeared on stage first and had a bigger role as Rosa Maria, the landlady; Carmelina played the role of Cecília Miranda, fiancée of the landlord's only son Casmiro.

¹⁸ João Agostinho Fernandes, *Drama, Comed anim Farsam*, Volume I, (Bombay: Ave Maria P 1937) 1.

¹⁹ Andrew Greno Viegas, *Ghumotgaz: Souvenir of the Second All India Konkani Sangeet Sammelan*, (Panaji, February 7-8, 2004) n.p.



4 *Pai Tiatr*

JOÃO Agostinho¹ was born on December 14, 1871 at Margão in Goa and baptised a week later. His mother was Maria Francisca, from Macau, and his father was Conçeição Fernandes, a mariner. There had earlier been some misconception about his date of birth, which was confused with the date of his baptism on December 21, 1871.²

He completed his primary education in Portuguese, and attended classes at the seminary of Rachol but later left and went to Bombay. He completed his matriculation at St. Xavier's School in Dhobitalao and worked as a chemist for Phillips and Company for many years³.

After gaining considerable experience, he collaborated with a Parsi and started a business of importing pharmaceutical drugs from France.

The drug store was named Shorabji Hormusji and Company and located at Crawford Market, opposite the Jama Masjid.

João Agostinho's knowledge of French probably helped him

in his business correspondence. But he was allegedly deceived by his partner and, therefore, left him and joined another company known as Sequeira and Sons.

When the British Government of colonial India banned the import of drugs from France, João Agostinho and his associate had to close down their business.

His first wife Regina Fernandes became the first actress on the Konkani stage, when she performed in *Batcara*⁴ on November 22, 1904 at the Gaiety Theatre in Bombay.

Born in Raia, Goa on November 16, 1880, she married João Agostinho on August 22, 1892 at St. Francis Xavier Church, Dabul, Bombay.

She passed away on December 20, 1908, after having been ill for twelve days. She left behind two

sons, Michael and Manuel, and two daughters, Sophia and Annie.

João Agostinho later married Luiza Maria Colaço (born September 29, 1892), a 17 year-old girl from Seraulim, on March 3, 1909. He had four children by his second wife, Anthony (Antonelio), Rosy, Tereza and Eugene. Luiza Maria also acted in many of his plays, as did his children and grand-daughters. Histrionic talents ran in the family.

João Agostinho was a pioneer in many ways. He was the first to cut a disc in Konkani when he recorded songs with His Master's Voice in 1908. His daughter Sophia accompanied him in recording the songs.

He was foresighted in seeing the need for publishing his plays. Accordingly, *Batcara I* was printed in 1909. Earlier, he had made available in print an album of sixteen songs with their musical notations⁵. *Batcara II* was published on June 13, 1916.⁶

In January 1937, three of his plays appeared in a single volume: *Battkara*, *Ven(eravel) Padr José Vaz*, and *Dotichem Kestaum*.⁷



João Agostinho

By this time he had already planned the printing of several other 'theatr'⁸: Volume Two: *Battcara Part II, Bebddo, Belle of Cavel, Pandurang Kusmonnkar*; Volume Three: *Geraldina, Rukmibai, Ranneanchem Traisaum, Paichi Dusri Bail*; Volume Four: *Vauraddi, Kunbi Jaki, Cazar Matarponnar*; Volume Five: *Mozo Khapri Chakor, Professor Leitau, Bomboicho Telegrafist*; Translated: *Dongui Voiz (Molière), and Teg Zann Tubbokar (Alexander Dumas)*.



Regina

Kunbi Jaki, one of his most celebrated plays, was also printed by him.⁹ He must have been aware of his path breaking effort by portraying the indigenous people's lifestyle and capabilities.

Perhaps learning from his experience of finding that at least three of his plays had been lost or stolen¹⁰, on September 11, 1941, he sought copyright protection for this play.

A reply from John Sargent, Esquire, M.A., C.I.E., Joint Secretary to the Government of India, Department of Education, Health and Lands, New Delhi, informed him on September 25 that year that there was "no system of registration of copyright in British India" but that "This right accrues automatically under the provisions of the Indian Copyright Act, 1914."¹¹

Kunbi Jaki has now been included in the *Tiatrancho Jhelo* published by the Goa Konkani Akademi.¹² The style of a Hindu character we see in today's tiatr, including the accent while speaking, is the legacy of João Agostinho's *Pandurong Kusmonnkar*. This form was inherited from him by Souza Ferrão and others.

João Agostinho was the first person to bring Kunbi dances and songs onto the stage with original rhythm. His song "*Sintidan paim ghal re, Jaki....*" from *Kunbi Jaki* was a hit and became very popular with the common masses, because of its live beat (Claro, Spotlight).

Two weeks after India attained independence, João Agostinho

Fernandes passed away at the Goculdas Tejpal Hospital, Bombay on Friday, August 29, 1947. As a tribute to this great *Pai Teatrist* (the Father of the Konkani Tiatr), the Goa Konkani Akademi organises an annual Tiatr Manuscript Writing Competition. The Government of Goa has honoured him by naming the auditorium at the Ravindra Bhavan, Margão, as the Pai Tiatrist João Agostinho Fernandes Auditorium.

Without personal benefit

João Agostinho was extremely generous. He hardly derived personal financial benefit from his plays. According to his son, Anthony, João Agostinho ensured that the artistes were remunerated adequately but did not worry if he himself did not get a share of the earnings.¹³

Many of his plays were performed for the benefit of social or charitable causes. As early as November 22, 1904 *Batcara* was staged for the inauguration of the Goan Union Dramatic Club. It was re-enacted on December 7, 1915 in aid of the Women's War Relief Fund of the Goan Ladies Circle. The proceeds of *Bebdo*, staged at Gaiety Theatre on October 8, 1925, went to founding of a scholarship in St. Sebastian Goan High School, Dabul.

On January 21, 1927, *Geraldina* was staged at Harmonia Hall, Borda in aid of Lepers Home, Macazana. *The Belle of Cavel vo Sundor Cheddum Cavelchem* was staged at Margao on May 15, 1932 for the benefit of the "Vauraddeanche Ekvottachea Fundac", also known as the Workers Unity Fund or Sociedade dos Operarios de Goa.¹⁴

On September 27, 1938, this play was staged at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, Bombay, in aid of the Instituto Luso-Indiano. *Vauraddi* was staged on April 9, 1940 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, in aid of Society of Nossa Senhora de Piedade at Dabul. Likewise, *Batcara* was performed at Princess Theatre on November 5, 1940 in aid of Bombay War Gifts Fund under the patronage of Sir Homi Mody, KBE and the auspices of Instituto Luso-Indiano.

When a cyclone caused misery in Goa and devastated places such as Arossim, Cansaulim, Majorda, Colva, Betalbatim and

Carmona, the Goa Flood Relief Fund Committee staged his play *Leopold and Carolin* or *Vauraddi* on Sunday, February 16, 1941 at the St Xavier's College Hall in Bombay, to collect funds to 'help the homeless, poor people'.

The handbill invited 'Goans and sympathisers' to 'support the worthy cause by purchasing a ticket and at the same price enjoy a delightful entertainment for three solid hours'. It also appealed to them to help the 'humanitarian cause' by contributing to the Goa Flood Relief Fund.

Bebdo was performed at Mapusa, Goa on May 2, 1943 in aid of the Oxel church. Almost a decade after the death of João Agostinho, his ardent disciple A. R. Souza Ferrão directed this play in aid of the Goan Social Welfare League on January 25, 1957.

Honesty and humility

There is no doubt that João Agostinho regarded personal integrity very highly. Though he was called *Pai Tiatrist* during his lifetime, his son Anthony recalls that João Agostinho never liked the term of honour nor did he take pride in it.

It might have been meant also as a term of endearment as he was one of the few senior-most tiatrists and had a paternal bearing. The title of *Pai Theatríst* was formally conferred on him posthumously by J. P. Souzalin at the function on Friday, January 25, 1957, when his play *Bebdo* was presented by the Goan Social Welfare League at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, Bombay.

However, as early as May 15, 1932, João Agostinho had affirmed that he was the founder, together with Lucasinho Ribeiro, of Konkani theatre. In the handbill printed to advertise *The Belle of Cavel vo Sundor Cheddum Cavelchem* at Margao, he states "... Author Sr. João¹⁵ Agostinho Fernandes famad poilo concanim Dramatist anim actor anim fundador concanim Theatrancho, somplelia Sr. Lucasinho Rebeiro-chea sangatac." Again in an advertisement for *Kunbi Jakki* to be staged on November 21, 1941, he wrote, "Sr. João Agostinacho(,) companer somplelea Lucas Rebeiracho je dogui vavurun bunhad marli "Conkanim Theatrachi", Bomboi 1892 vorsà...."¹⁶

But no one seems to have paid attention to his disclosures. Finally, when he came forward to celebrate the 'Golden Jubilee of

Konkani Theatro', he emphasised that Lucasinho Rebeiro was to be rightly regarded as the founder of Konkani tiatr.

Joao Agostinachi Nazuc Comed.

"U N I A U M G O A N"

Coutic Comed Cantaranchi 3 Actan, *Mearson*
Assat Scenam, *eche Kerkha*
Zattim Bhiton Mistur Cazaram,
Bramon Charadi Suddir Munastanam.
Reform Zinclslea Konkneam Moddem,
~~Tanin~~ Cadlam Zatinchem Chambdem;
Conunch Aiconam Bhottachem Magnem,
Porfi Zattinchi, Ximoum Podta Faideachi.
Prachit Sonaulechea Sadhuanchem,
Pandarpur Devac Vetat Magonc Bogsonem;
Conversaum Casian ani Maurice Bhatecaranchem,
Uniaum Goanachem Tancher Bensaum Podlem, etc., etc.

* * * * *

Hi Comed ditelet Novea Vorsant, ugdas dhorat.

Bramon Suddirchi porfi Zattiche
Cholli quita part Cheldeachi
Reform Zinklelea Konkneam Moddem
Zatinchem Chambdem Tanin Cadlam
Bhalloak ane Lanekha Cortuk nam Mandlam
Prachit Sonaulechea Sadhuanchem
Pandarpur Vetat Devac Magonc Bogsonem
Conversaum Casian ani Maurice Bhatecaranchem
Uniaum Goanachem Tancher Bensaum Podlem
etc etc
Hi Comed ditelet Novea Vorsant, ugdas dhorat.
Conversaum Casian ani Maurice Bhatecaranchem

From the pen of Pai Tiatrist.

In a lengthy article published in the *Ave Maria* newspaper dated November 25, 1943, he provided the background to the stag-

ing of the first play and asserted that Lucasinho Rebeiro deserved that position of honour in Konkani drama.¹⁷

A good artiste

João Agostinho himself proved to be a good artiste. Initially, he took comic roles and became very popular. He was known as *Comic Fernandes*.

But afterwards, he took to character acting. He himself wrote and directed his plays. He believed in perfection and hence he insisted on thorough rehearsals,¹⁸ which helped him to produce qualitative tiatrs.

Influence of languages

The impact of early studies in Portuguese influenced João Agostinho's writing of Konkani and often gave a lyrical or poetic flavour due to the changes of syntax forced onto the native language. Use of a large number of Portuguese words absorbed into Konkani also gives the plays the quaintness of historicity. Of course, when there were revisions after a considerable period of time, João Agostinho made changes in the vocabulary to update it to contemporary usage.

As he was very proficient in French, he could put it to good use particularly in the early romantic comedy such as *The Belle of Cavel*. Besides Portuguese and French, he also employed Hindustani and Latin in his dramas whenever situations warranted their use as in *The Belle of Cavel* and *Kunbi Jaki* respectively.

His mastery of English is also reflected in his plays, songs and handbills advertising the tiatrs. In fact, for *Rukmibhai* – or *Broken Promise* or *The Broken Heart* – composed at Margao in June 1926, all the stage directions have been given in English.

Actors, adding value to the stage

João Agostinho brought the best histrionic talent of the Konkani speaking community onto the stage. Performances were greatly

enhanced by the participation of certain actors who were renowned and highly appreciated by the audience.

These included Souza Ferrão, Minguel Rod, Anthony Mendes, Jacinto Vaz, Kid Boxer, A.M.B. Rose, Alfred Rose, Anthony *Tooloo*, Dioginho De Melo, J.P. Souzalin, C. Alvares, Anthony De Sa, J. R. *Fithna* Fernandes, *Saib* Rocha, Helen Dias, S. G. DeSouza *Karachiwalla* and many more.

A model for tiatrists

João Agostinho was aware of the need to have his plays rooted in his own people and culture. Though he collaborated with Lucasinho in staging translations and adaptations in the early phase, he set out to explore the social problems and situations of Goa and Goans from the very beginning of his own efforts as a playwright when he composed *The Belle of Cavel* in 1893.

Many years later, in 1911, to reinforce his opinion, he pointed out that Western authors had written about their local culture and manners. He pointed to Molière, Congreve, Hartley, Dickens, Cervantes, Dekocks, and Schiller as examples of such authors.¹⁹

João Agostinho was meticulous in maintaining his manuscripts and other material. From the various articles, handbills and clippings he has preserved, it has been possible to trace the history and development of Konkani tiatr. João Agostinho was also a great lover of music. Though not an expert musician, he hummed the tunes for the respective songs and they were then set to notation by the bandmaster.

João Agostinho was a cultured, well-read man, as is evident from the vast array of references found in his dramas. He toiled to bring respectability to the Konkani stage. He was a great thinker and creative writer, who worked tirelessly to put Konkani tiatr on a high level. He kept revising his plays even twice or thrice to improve or adapt them to changing times.

His plays

In a career spanning over five decades – 1892-1947 – João Agostinho scripted a total of 30 plays. Twenty-six of these were his original

creations and only four were translated from other sources. The plays²⁰ were:

- *Belle of Cavel*, Bombay: 1893.
- *Revolt De Sattari* or *Ranneanchem Traisaum*, Bombay: April 1897.
- *Cazar Matarponnar*, (One-Act Farce), Bombay: April 13, 1897; revised on April 12, 1942 and April 3, 1943.
- *Bebdo*, Bombay: 1898/August 29, 1901; revised in Margao: September 1, 1942.
- *Batcara – Part I*, 1904, (Bombay: L. M. Furtado and Sons, 1909; revised on July 15, 1932 and reprinted in *João Agostinho Fernandes-ache Drama, Comed ani Farsam: Battkara, Veneravel Padr José Vaz and Dotichem Kestaum*, Volume I. Bombay: Ave Maria P. 1937).
- *Batcara – Part II*, 1905 (Bombay: Victoria P. Works, 1916).
- *Dhotichem Kestaum*, 1908 (?) performed at Gaiety Theatre, Bori Bunder, on Thursday, July 16, 1908. Printed in Volume I.
- *Pandurang Kusmonncar*, June 4, 1910; rewritten in Bombay: July 17, 1941.
- *Nid Naslolo Bomboicho Telegraphist*. Farce. Bombay: April 8, 1913.
- *Professor Leitao*. One-act farce. Bombay: May 1, 1914.
- *Geraldina*, Bombay: April 14, 1925.
- *Rukmibai*, Margao: June 1926.
- *Noureamcho Bazar*. One-act farce. Performed in Margao on August 21, 1927.
- *Dhongui Voiz*. One-act farce, translated from Molière, performed in Margao in 1931.
- *American Minstrels/Khapreachem Band*, composed before 1909 as *Hispano-American War Minstrels* and revised at Margao: September 23, 1931.
- *Josefina* or *Paichi Dusri Bail*, Margao: August 10, 1932.
- *Vauraddi* or *Leopold ani Carolina*, Margao: March 13, 1933.
- *Kunbi Jaki*, Margao: August 12, 1934.
- *Veneravel Padre José Vaz*, Margao: March 16, 1936. Printed in Volume I.
- *Mozo Khapri Chakor*. One-act farce. Rewritten in Bombay: March 5, 1939.

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- *Deu Naslolo Communist*, Bombay: January 7, 1940.
 - *Goan Ponch, Part I*. One-act farce. Bombay: January 31, 1941.
 - *Kunbi Jaki Part II*, Bombay: September 3, 1941; revised at Margao: March 27, 1945.
 - *Hirmigild* or *Modian Ratcho Deuchar*. Play in Three Acts. Margao: November 9, 1942.
 - *Tandulanchem Kestaum*, Margao: July 14 to 16, 1944. (Revised (?) March 12, 1945.)
 - *Goan Ponch Part II*. A farcical sketch in two Acts. Margao: July 3, 1945.
 - *Sociedade de Rom Tom*. No copy available, supposedly stolen. It has been mentioned on the title page of *Batcara* and therefore its composition must have been before January 1, 1909 when the latter play was published.
 - *Teg Bondukkar*. Translated from Dumas, no full copy.
 - *Mothes Tiu*. Translated, no copy.
 - *Henry VIII*. Translated, no copy.

Analysis of his major dramas

Let us look at some of João Agostinho's plays: *The Belle of Cavel*, *Bebdo*, *Batcara* in two parts, *Vauraddi* or *Leopold ani Carolina*, and *Kunbi Jaki*, also in two parts. These compositions have been selected for analysis as they are considered to be his most successful and major dramas.

Details of João Agostinho's personal life are very sketchy, even from his own family members,²¹ but his works can be seen as a very important reflection of his life and principles.

A written text does not fully convey the atmosphere of a live theatrical performance. This is all the more true for Konkani tiatr. Songs and comedy contribute and greatly enhance the presentation and consequently determine audience reaction and appreciation. However, in spite of these limitations, such a study contributes towards knowledge and understanding of the themes handled in the play which are applicable for a specific society and humanity as a whole. As John Russell Brown in his Introduction to *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre* writes

“...Theatre has its full life only in moments of performance before an audience. This means that all surviving evidence is fragmentary and much of it misleading; a dramatic text is only the bare bones of a play in performance; an empty building gives no sense of a crowded audience; a photograph may represent a posed group and can never reproduce presence, timing, breath – all the vivid impressions actually received in a theatre. But there is an abundance of clues, waiting to be pieced together so that the illusions, pleasures, and innovations of the past can be suggested for a reader and a history of theatre attempted.”²²

What John Brown observed about plays in general, is equally true about tiatr which is a live drama on the Konkani stage.

The Belle of Cavel

The Belle of Cavel has been one of João Agostinho’s most successful plays. It was composed in 1893 and staged first in 1895. There were at least ten more performances stretching from 1909 to 1943, for which records are available. Earlier titles for this play seem to be *Charni Road Bagh* and *Eoc Goencar B.A. Exam Passar* (upto 1927). Handbills from 1932 onwards keep to the popular title above.

Major themes: The main theme of *The Belle of Cavel* is the development of lasting friendships between educated youth without consideration of parental permission or social distinctions. Such a possibility is hinted at, at the very outset. In the opening chorus. Deudita and Amaral are heard singing:

“Zaito zananim utor dilam angasori
Pai maiche khoxi bhairi”²³.

(Many have given their word here
Against the wishes of their parents.)

There is conflict between tradition and modernity in the drama. The play is set during the period when educated girls were gaining self-confidence to determine their own future in life, particularly in deciding their marriage partners. Such a trend militated

against traditional society's insistence on a parental say in such matters. Caste and class were thought to be important criteria by traditionalists.

João Agostinho was painfully aware that the distinctions sought to be made on the basis of caste and class were totally incompatible with the Christian faith. This consciousness finds a voice through Amaral.

*"...Coslem thond amim gheun bountat Christaum mun?
Kitem munonam zait amcam Hindu anim Mussolman him
castam polloun amche Christavam modem?"²⁴*

(What face do we have to go around as Christians?
What must not Hindus and Muslims be saying about
us when they see these castes among us Christians?)

It is not in isolation that João Agostinho brings up the issue of human differences and indifferences. There is a direct bearing of these attitudes in the play. The parents of Amaral and Deudita come into conflict precisely because they believe in such undesirable criteria for marriage.

The conflict is not limited to verbal arguments but leads to physical violence between the fathers. The need to get rid of caste and class prejudices is therefore one of the important themes in the play.

The third major theme is the empowerment of women, especially through education. However, there is a note of caution to say that the behaviour of such girls should not be frivolous but responsible.²⁵

Minor themes: The exodus of girls from Goa to Bombay – and the consequent socio-cultural problems – forms one of the minor themes in the play. The emigration of girls supposedly created a shortage of brides in Goa. Effects of urbanisation on these girls is also seen as detrimental to family values.

The need for unity among Goans by keeping aside all differences is pointed out in the play. There is also emphasis on family values, particularly the need for a couple to be together, rather than have the husband away as a sailor.

The themes discussed above were relevant for Goan society that was being affected substantially through migrations to Bombay and the impact of education for girls. Values of the cosmopolitan city or lack of values conflicted with traditional society.

Characters: Deudita as the Belle of Cavel is the most forceful character in the play. She takes the initiative to start the correspondence with Amaral. As an educated girl, she shocks her conservative friend Helena by talking of 'love' before marriage.²⁶

When a crisis surfaces after her father Gregorio discovers that she is the recipient of a love-letter, she turns the tables on his anger by asserting that he had not bothered to get her married while all other girls of her age had already been settled.

When finally hauled up before the police court to settle the complaint registered by her father, she boldly defends herself as a major who left home on her own volition and would faithfully accompany Amaral as she had committed herself to him through their pre-nuptial engagement.

Apart from these characters the play features Professor Dom Berthold Mustard X.Y.Z., (Broken Heart), who provides most of the humour in this comedy. His numerous interpolations and intrusions create a laugh riot.

Even in the midst of serious discussions one has to admire the wit imbued in his character by João Agostinho. Be it for the *Bhojawalla*, Gregorio or even the Judge, he has a ready smart aleck comment. When he delivers Amaral's letter to Deudita's father he sets in complications in the plot. Though considered to be a mad professor, his intelligence also shows that he is a facile genius with knowledge of diverse fields including French, Latin and Drama²⁷.

Presentation-performance: The performance deals with the romantic interludes of Amaral and Deudita. João and Hellena play minor supporting roles. When a conflict between the fathers of the prospective bridal couple takes place, the issue is sorted out by the police court. Deudita's right to decide for herself is upheld by the judge and therefore the paternal objection to her marriage to Amaral is over-ruled. The judge also castigates Gregorio for believing in caste and class distinctions.

The sub-plot in the play concerns the marriage proposal between Silvestre, a sailor who wishes to marry Esperans, as they both hail from the same village. But she prefers Marcelino rather

than a sailor, as she roots for the togetherness of a family. Put to the test, she really cannot decide between the two and Berthold walks off with her as his bride! Berthold links the two plots through his interactions with all the characters.

Act 1 Scene 3 provides a counterfoil to the two plots. While one part deals with a humorous portrayal of a tailor taking measurements, the other section contrasts the modern and traditional attitudes towards marriage.

The urbanised Gabriel proposes a match between his daughter Cicila and his own nephew João. Gabriel feels it unnecessary for his nephew to seek the mother's approval. But João would prefer to have maternal permission, as she is Gabriel's sister. This scene also brings up the topic of the Goan Union, and the crisis caused by the exodus of girls from Goa.

In keeping with the cosmopolitan nature of Bombay, João Agostinho employs several languages in the play — Konkani, English, French, Portuguese, Latin and Hindustani. The Bhojawalla uses rhymes effectively to sell his eatables and enhances the lyrical quality of Hindustani.

The locale of the garden is significant. The garden is a neutral space without any distinctions of caste, creed, colour or any other factors that may prejudice people. Besides the freshness of the garden, the sea breeze enhances the ambience, thus making it very conducive to forge pleasant relationships for those who wish to. Berthold insists that it is not an arena for disputes but only for the amorous.

Techniques used: The dramatic technique of the aside is used extensively in the drama particularly for comic effect by Berthold.²⁸

He also employs monologues when he finds himself in a tricky situation. Dramatic irony and contrast are also involved. Amaral attempts to speak to João in a foreign language to impress the girls, but Deudita and Hellen feel disdain for those who speak other languages at the cost of their mother tongue. A contrast in attitudes towards sufferers is shown when Deudita laughs but Hellena feels pity for the loss incurred by the Bhojawalla through Berthold's antics.

As a skilful playwright, João Agostinho usually introduces an idea through one of the characters. The fulfilment or development of this notion or action is then brought about later on, sometimes

through other characters. So there is much less scope for anything happening suddenly or by coincidence. Amaral conveys to Deudita, through the letter, his embraces and kisses, but never gets to fulfil his wishes, whereas Esperans recollects the novelty of Silvestre's kisses.

Assessment and critic's comments: *The Belle of Cavel* is a romantic comedy of a high standard. Written in Bombay in 1893, it was João Agostinho's first play.²⁹ The theme of romance and brashness of youth is understandable as he was composing the play when he was just twenty-two years young. But the maturity he displays as a playwright is surprising for a debut script.³⁰ The language used is witty and smart.³¹

Critics were quite effusive in their appreciation of the play. Even after four decades, its composition charmed reviewers and audiences. A critic wrote in 1938³²:

The play... was a perfect success from every point of view. Though the theme is serious enough, the manner of its dramatization is comic. There was just that touch of exaggeration in the language and the scenes of the play that made it ludicrous enough to draw roars of laughter at every step, from a thoroughly appreciative audience.

Adulation was also voiced five years later:³³

The veteran Goan dramatist and producer João Agostinho Fernandes... staged one of his most successful and popular earlier comedies... As is customary at Konkanim plays, the house was sold out days in advance and there was a packed audience with hundreds clamouring for admission outside.

The Belle of Cavel is a lively romantic comedy crammed with laughs and the sallies of the cast depicting typical characters had the house convulsed in fits of uproarious laughter from beginning to end. The scene is laid in the Charni Road Gardens, famous resort of the city's *hoi polloi* and trysting place of lovers and romantic couples for countless generations.

The acting was remarkably good (...).

The Belle of Cavel is no doubt remarkable as João Agostinho's first play. Perhaps as a reaction to the progressive ideas expressed in this play, Thomas Villa Nova Da Silva of Cansaulim, Goa wrote a conservative play in 1936. Here the girl's freedom of choice in marrying one whom she likes, without getting paternal approval, is shown with disastrous consequences, resulting in her being reduced to poverty and widowhood.

Bebdo (The Drunkard)

*Composition and revision of the play: Bebdo*³⁴ is the only play where João Agostinho has made an alteration in the date of composition. The year 1898 has been struck through and August 29, 1901 written underneath.

The original script was used for performances at least upto 1925. After Act 2 Scene 5, another scene has been interpolated as 5a. The additional characters here are the president, secretary and members of the Piedade Society who run the asilo – a home for the aged and helpless. However, their names have not been added to the *dramatis personae* at the beginning of the text.

For a show in Vasco da Gama on March 26, 1932, Act 2 Scene 2, the scene of the marriage proposal — involving Piedade, Condorcet, Reginald and Ditosá — was dropped. A revision was done in Margao on September 1, 1942 by adding two more scenes to the original to make it "more impressive and thrilling".³⁵ The new characters were Nadkarni as a judge and Godinho as an Advocate. Mahomed Cassim was changed to Mirza Ali as the Naik (or bailiff).³⁶

Act 2 Scene 1 is a completely new scene introduced in the second version where the policeman catches hold of Albert for having hit his wife in public. Gertrude pleads for his release but the policeman declines. Towards the end, when he is given a chance to say a few words to his wife before being hauled to the police station, Albert turns around and attempts to attack Gertrude but is held back by the policeman. Other minor changes were done to provide for inflation or changing times.³⁷

Title: João Agostinho has retained the title *Bebdo* for all purposes. If the publicity was done in English, he added *The Drunkard* as an alternative title. However, while printing the synopsis of the play, the name 'Albert Gonsalves' would be prominently displayed as the drunkard.

Characterisation: João Agostinho draws up complex characters. There is good and bad in everyone. Albert has consciousness of values but is so addicted to vice that he cannot resist the temptations and therefore tells multiple lies to escape from home and meet his companions addicted to gambling and alcohol.

Albert knows what is good and desirable for him and his family. But the struggle with his vices takes the upper hand and draws him and his family towards a disastrous fate. In this, Albert is like Marmeladov in Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Paul in Act 1 Scene 3 does not feel comfortable with Pascoal's suggestion that they should make Albert drunk and polish off his fifty rupees. However, the opinion of the other gamblers, that in a game of chance there can be no compassion, prevails.

Even Rustomji, the barman, is aware of the evils and misery brought about by liquor (Act 1 Scene 3). But his business interests take precedence over morals and fellow feelings. He even passes stinging criticism of Christians who are addicted to liquor and gambling and thus bring about misery on their families. His comments on such behaviour of Goans would be of a lasting impression on the Goan audiences.

Albert has a false sense of pride and believes that his friends respect him, and that Gertrude is respected because she is his wife. He credits his ability to serve liquor as the cause for such friendliness by others towards him. He also boasts that his job can enable him to earn much more than educated professionals.

Gertrude is quick to point out these false illusions of Albert. In a prophetic vein, she envisions the friends' desertion when they find that the bottle has run out of liquor. Her intuition surfaces again when she suspects the news Gabriel supposedly has for Albert. If it was good news, why the need to keep it hushed and convey it only in the corner and through low voices?

Gertrude also foresees the travails that are likely to be faced by the family of a drunken breadwinner – the starvation and sorry state to which the wife and children will be reduced to. However,

she retains her unconditional and forgiving love and devotion for Albert in spite of his notorious behaviour towards her. Gertrude is a representative wife and mother.

Like Faustus pleading for 'one drop' of Christ's blood to redeem him, Albert pleads for one drop of liquor while the corpse of his starved son lies in front of him:

"Ek-kuch tem-bo mu-je ji-ber gal sar-ko add."

Thematic concerns and social aspects: In *Bebdo*, João Agostinho was dealing with a problem that had plagued many Goan families, some to an extreme extent. Drunkenness and its resultant delinquency had led to families being reduced to destitution. In the play João Agostinho convincingly showed that addiction to alcohol leads to violent behaviour and self-destruction, besides reducing the family to penury and homelessness. He is emphatic that the spirit of celebrations does not come through bottled spirits.

The playwright also manages to point out social injustices. The poor who are educated are not given publicity nor opportunities by the 'haves' or the rich. There is widespread discrimination against the poor in Goa. They are not given the jobs they deserve, whereas even unfit rich are given posts. In contrast, Bombay is seen as the place where there are opportunities for all. In these times, prominent advocates, doctors, professors do not know God and make fun of religion. Some educated youth have become too proud and forgotten the dignity of labour.

The conclusion of the play reinforces the Parable of the Prodigal Son. But here the end is tragic, though with a desire for repentance.

Language: The language in the play provides for vivid imagery that would create a lasting impression on the audience. Gertrude says "*bebdo zaun gara etai, lokot, lokot, arkam galun....*" (Act 1 Scene 2). Such language would be highly appreciated by the audience for its imagery and technical terminology of the 'arch' or 'curved moves'. The usual expression to describe a drunken swagger is '*rosto mejit*' ('measuring the road').

Valent's utterance "*mai babri dukam pin aplem pot borta*" (Mother is surviving by drinking her own tears) would provoke any sensible spectator to realize the extent of her suffering and poverty.

Humour: The humour in this play is kept to a minimum, given the sombre nature of the play. However, the songs in between the scenes would provide comic relief.

Dramatic devices – Contrast: Like most addicts, the drinking companions of Albert boast that they are not addicted to liquor and that they do not fall on the roads through drunkenness (Act 1 Scene 1). However, this same lot is then found grovelling outside the liquor shop after they have been ejected by the bar-owner in their drunken stupor (Act 1 Scene 3).

Dramatic irony: Albert's comment about the boy (Valente) searching for his father and claiming him to be the father show the extent to which he has sunk in not being able to recognize even his own son. (Act 2 Scene 2)

In contrast to the exhortation given by Albert's friends at his birthday celebration (Act 1 Scene 1) that they should always be faithful and reach out to each other in times of need, these very same friends desert him when he pleads with them to arrange funds for his bail.

Appraisal of the staged play: According to a note in the script, João Agostinho received reports that many drunkards had given up alcohol after seeing this play. When a commemorative function was held in his honour on January 25, 1957 *Bebdo* was chosen to be staged on the occasion.

Any other special features: It is reported that the Marathi play *Ekach Pyala* by Ram Ganesh Gadkari was inspired by João Agostinho's *Bebdo*.³⁸

Batcara (The Landlord)

Before taking up the analysis of *Batcara* (The Landlord), it is pertinent to point out that João Agostinho's composition of this drama was influenced by an experience which was similar to Joseph Conrad's. *Heart of Darkness* encapsulates Conrad's visit to the Congo in 1890. He never fully recovered from the effects of that encounter.

For him it was a "... distasteful knowledge of the vilest scramble for loot that ever disfigured the history of human conscience..." (Najder, 140). Within nine years, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* encapsulated the extent of evil he had observed in the Congo. Conrad

was subtle yet severe in his indictment of colonisation and the loss of human values.

João Agostinho's experiences of 1896 resulted in *Batcara* eight years later. He chose it as the first of his plays to be printed. It was published on New Year's day in 1909. In his preface João Agostinho addresses the readers:

I have been thinking for a long time of writing a *theatro* on *Batcara*....

In January 1896, many of our brethren returned to Goa because of the Bubonic Plague (in Bombay). This was a terrible year in Bombay for its inhabitants, more so because of the government regulations in force. I too decided to leave for Goa, resigned from my employment and travelled by ship. This was my fourth trip to Goa and one that had been undertaken after a considerable gap of time.

I spent ten months in Goa. During this period, I travelled to several of the villages considered as the domains of big Goan property owners. These areas were Margão, Curtorim, Raia, Loutolim, Verna, Navelim, and Chinchinim.

I feel ashamed and horrified to find that the above villages, which claim to be the best among civilized areas and boast of dedication to major saints of the church, are actually wallowing in the mire of castes.

Their catechism is: "I for myself and my caste, God for others and people in general." With such an attitude I wondered how they would ever feel love for others.

There can never be Goan unity nor Christian charity as long as the caste doctrine prevails.... Are we really living a life in keeping with the principles prescribed by Jesus? (*Batcara, Autorachim Don Ultram, ii*).

Conrad leaves it to the readers to arrive at a judgement of 'the horror' in the *Heart of Darkness*. João Agostinho is more positive and hopeful that man's attitudes towards fellow men can change for the better. *Batcara Part I* and *Batcara Part II* keep alive João Agostinho's hopes for that transformation of society.

Batcara Part I was premiered at the Gaiety Theatre on November 22, 1904 for the inauguration of the Goan Union Dramatic Club. Interestingly, two repeat performances were staged in aid of War Funds. On December 7, 1915 the drama was staged at the Empire Theatre. During the Second World War, the play raised contributions by its performance at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi on Guy Fawkes Day, November 5, 1940. The play was also performed in aid of St. Tereza's High School, Little Flower (of Jesus) School, Instituto Luso-Indiano, among others.

Batcara Part II also had a chequered history. It was scripted in 1905 but could not be staged due to several difficulties. Even after an announcement — during the staging of *Bebdo* — was made in Poona in 1908 that the play was forthcoming, it did not come under the stage lights.

Ultimately, on May 23, 1911 the Goan Amateurs Dramatic Club performed it at the Gaiety Theatre in Bombay. As was permissible during that era, the playwright offered his justification for *Batcara Part II*:

It is indisputable that we are all children of one God, issues of only one stock, governed by the same Providential law, members of humanity, living by that, learning by that, and progressing by that. We are, then, all brothers, bound to a common duty; love and co-operation, and we cannot allow any part of that duty to be violated without ourselves feeling again the hurt of such violation.... (*Batcara Part II*, handbill, April 11, 1911).

Though they are two separate plays, they can be analysed in conjunction with each other as they can be considered to form a continuum.

Themes: As the alternative titles (*The Curse of Caste* or *Maldição Zatichem*) of *Batcara*, suggest, the evils of the caste system form the main theme of the dramas.

Most of the landlords in Goa exploited their tenants treating them as bonded labourers. They went to the extent of threatening and physically abusing the labourers. This theme assumes significance because it is linked to the principles of Christianity. Equality and respect for all men is an essential tenet of Christianity.

João Agostinho found this principle being flouted with impunity by the landed gentry. But he did not rest by just pointing out the evil. João Agostinho proceeds in the play to show that men can change their attitudes. Hence, in *Batcara* Part I, he juxtaposes the evils of the caste system in Goa with the formation of the Goan Union in Bombay, where castes are irrelevant. The social reforms which are begun in the cosmopolitan Bombay have their ramifications on the social structures in Goan villages.

In *Batcara Part II*, committed reformers such as the renewed Casian and his son Casmiro, the property owners of Panzarim, bring reforms to Goa. Besides showing inter-caste marriages, the plays show that the reforms encompass the transformation of Hindu society in Goa. Young educated Hindus take up the matter of breaking taboos of wearing shoes and Western dress. Much against the opposition of conservatives, they crusade for the remarriage of *bodkis*, the shaven-headed widows (Scene 9).³⁹

Characters: Undoubtedly, Casian and Casmiro occupy centre-stage in the *Batcara* plays. Casian asserts his high caste lineage and inheritance of vast properties. He firmly believes in keeping a distance from other people. His habit of whiling away time in his rocking chair is not conducive to health or wealth and has resulted in the growth of a pot-belly.

Casian's hypocrisy is exposed when he preaches to João about Christian faith but is found wanting in its practice. Casmiro, on the other hand, believes in earning one's living rather than relying on ancestral estates, which are deteriorating through neglect. His desire to migrate to Bombay is not seen as a welcome move by his parents as he is their only son. His determination to build his own future makes them relent and permit him to seek his fortune as he has knowledge of English, which would serve him well in the city.

Casmiro's experiences in Bombay lead him to trust others. He loses his job when the bank goes bankrupt, but is allowed to stay on at his lodgings by the proprietor, Fonseca, as the latter believes in Christian charity. When he sees the good social work being done by the Goan Union, irrespective of caste, he decides to enrol as a member.

Casian's trip to Bombay to visit his son makes him realise that there are richer persons than the Goan landlords. Casmiro testifies to the father that restricting himself to the caste group only improv-

erished him. He could survive only with the help of other friends who were not so well off themselves, but contributed to help him in his times of need.⁴⁰

Casiano, who had clung to his prejudices realises that positive social reforms are brought about when people put aside their differences and work in unity. Hence, he too decides to enrol in the Goan Union.

In *Batcara Part II*, Casian is a transformed landlord: he is more sensitive to the needs of the underprivileged, ensures payment of fair wages to the workers, believes in the dignity of labour, is now open to the concept of mixed marriages and is conscious that he will soon have to give an account of his life to the Creator. He strives to bring about social reform through enlarging the membership of the Goan Union.

Among the minor characters, João represents the voice of the labourers. Though illiterate, he is wise. He expresses awareness of the injustice meted out to them by the landlords and feels that education would have greatly helped the progress of his community.⁴¹

Many of the other characters either support the divisions of society or oppose social distinctions. But with changing times orthodox attitudes are forced to be set aside or transformed as exemplified by Maurico's acquiescence of his daughter Esmeralda's mixed marriage to Ernesto and Bhat's advice to his child Sundori to adjust to her husband Pudlick's reformist fervour.

Presentation and Dramatic Techniques: The main plot deals with the exposition of casteism and the need for social reform.

There are several strands of conflict: Casian's pride and laziness are disliked by his son, Casmiro's socializing and wish to work in Bombay are out of favour with his parents, the labourers resent the exploitation they are compelled to suffer, social reformers clash with conservatives. Since the conflicts are mainly attitudinal rather than physical their resolution comes through transformation. Those like Mauriço and Sundori who oppose social change are compelled to change and others like the Bhats resolve their conflict by withdrawing into religious practices.

There are no sub-plots but only some anecdotal scenes to convey certain aspects of local culture or the author's viewpoint. João attempts to supplement his income by posing as a soothsayer.

Casian unmasks the bluff, but the landlord's preaching also exposes his own duplicity.

Casmiro's wife Cecília resents domestic chores and boasts of her huge dowry⁴² – a factor that seems to imply she should not be subject to anybody's commands. The resultant tension is reduced by Casmiro's plea for patience till the property documents are signed in their favour.

The drunken Englishman Johnson's antics in Fonseca's restaurant and the resultant quarrel provide one of the few comic encounters in the play.

The use of asides in these plays is employed for slight comic effect or for comments to be hidden from other characters. The overall use of this device is much less than in other comedies.

Contrast is used quite extensively to show the reversal or transformation of attitudes. The idea that Bombay could be an unsuitable city is offset by the real Bombay that impresses Casmiro very positively.

Assessment: The social transformation envisioned in the *Batcara* plays makes them significant in João Agostinho's *oeuvre*. The dramatic form here is used as a medium for fostering social change.

Like Alan Paton in *Cry, The Beloved Country*, João Agostinho shows that, irrespective of various differences, all people can live in harmony. Beyond mere peaceful co-existence, we can actually strive to help others and change society for the better, beginning with a personal metanoia or profound transformation. João Agostinho felt these plays to be important enough to merit priority in printing.⁴³

Language: The diglottic (bilingual) songs and statements of Casian show João Agostinho's mastery of blending Portuguese and Konkani for dramatic effect. Even more interesting is Fonseca Puzadcar's song in Indian English (like Nissim Ezekiel's "Very Indian Poem in Indian English") and merits attention:

foss colass
Truly saffar very much lass
Englishman drinkin wine glass
Making gadbad and lat fass

*I treating all very nicely
And my packet getting empty
When I askin my money
They collin me raskol and walkin awayee*

In the history of the Konkani tiatr, *Batcara* is important as the play in which ladies first acted on the Konkani stage on November 22, 1904. Mrs Regina Fernandes, wife of João Agostinho, takes the honour as the first lady of Konkani tiatr. Carmelina Fernandes and N. Gomes were the other two female characters in this play.

This revolutionary step preceded Marathi and Bengali theatre by almost thirty years.

Vauraddi (The Labourer)

Vauraddi (The Labourer) was composed in Margao, Goa in March 1933. Evidence in the manuscripts indicates that it was revised at least twice. This social melodrama was performed thrice to generate funds for charitable purposes.⁴⁴

João Agostinho tried out several titles for this drama. In his first manuscript the titles were *Carolina* or *Vauraddi Cheddum* or *Leopold ani Carolina* or *Mogak nam dolle* (Register 3).

When the play was performed in Margao, *Mog Curdo* (Love is Blind) replaced *Mogak nam Dolle* (Love Has No Eyes). *The Dignity of Labour* or *Vaurachem Vhoddpon* and *Zuaricho Vauraddi* appear as the titles in 1940. The following year, *Leopold ani Carolina* provides the romantic aspect while *Vauraddi* as an alternative stresses the role of the labourer.

Themes: *Vauraddi* develops several related themes. The primary theme is the dignity of labour among the rich as well as the poor. Leopold believes in working for a living rather than depending on the productivity of other's labour.

He is quite sure that no labour is below one's dignity when the work is done to earn one's living and, therefore, is willing to take up even manual labour although he is a landowner. The problem of agricultural areas being left fallow is also highlighted in *Vauraddi*. However, it offered a solution by encouraging even the educated to take up manual agricultural labour.⁴⁵ For Fillip, the labourer, hard work is not an option but a means of survival.

The second important theme is that of love, irrespective of social differences such as economic class or occupation. Leopold falls in love with and pursues Carolina even though he knows her financial status is poor. He admires her personality and virtues.

Several minor themes find expression in the melodrama. Among these are: equality of all humans, praise for the poor, importance of education, and faith in God.

In opposition to his mother's pride as a woman of high society, Leopold insists that God has created all humans as equals. Circumstances and opportunities may make them rich or poor. To support his argument, he quotes the instances of commoners such as Ford, Carnegie and Rockefeller who became famous millionaires or Salazar, Mussolini, Hitler, Chamberlain who became great statesmen. He therefore asserted that it was wrong on his mother's part to treat class differences as an impediment for marriage.

The poor are praised for their honesty, hard work and generosity. As was done in *Batcara* by Casmiro, Dr. Minguel reinforces the notion that it is only the poor who will help in times of trouble. In spite of her insulting words, Carolina takes good care of her mother-in-law Anjela, whereas her relatives do not bother but stay away during her contagious illness.

As in other plays, education as the medium for the progress of backward people is emphasised in *Vauraddi*. The play also confirms that succeeding generations may advance greatly if they have the opportunities.

Lorres's father was a toddy-tapper but the sons could not cope with the strain of climbing coconut trees. So they chose their own professions. His brother had now become a major trader in shoes and leather goods in Africa. One of his sons became a doctor in Europe and the other was studying engineering in Bombay. Lorres's own son had become a fitter in Kalyan. By the end of the play, Lorres becomes the proud owner of a *patmar* (sailing boat) and even has money to gift to Leopold.

Faith in God is a very strong element in most tiatrs. This play upholds trust in God as the divine provider and caretaker. Carolina emphasises faith in God combined with man's action to cooperate with his providence. The locale of the drama also encourages intercession and thanksgiving to Blessed Joseph Vaz –

a saintly Goan priest.⁴⁶ Damião, from the neighbouring village Neura, is a landlord who comes to requisition Phillip's services. His role reinforces the need for faith in God.

The reference to Bolsheviks also gives an indication that João Agostinho was aware of the communist ideology. (He would elaborate on this theme in 1940 but he struggled to find a suitable title as revealed by the 17 various captions he attempted for the later drama: "*Deu Naslele Communist*" or "*Godless Communists*" or "*Communist Vaitt Munis*" or "*Comunistancho Birancul Xevot*" or "*Tragic End of Communists*".⁴⁷)

Dignity of labour is the main theme of *Vauraddi*.

Characterisation: This drama contains only seven main characters – Leopold, Carolina, Lorres, Phillip, Anjela, Damião and Doctor Minguel. Two other characters, Lorres's wife Mari Anjel and his assistant Santan are heard as off-stage voices. Damião and Doctor Minguel have minor roles (like guest appearances in Hindi films). So, the five main characters have their personalities well developed.

Leopold is the rich young man willing to forsake all for the sake of love. He finds educated girls of his own class a liability, obsessed with fashions, indecent dances, films and romances. He falls, head over heels, in love with Carolina. In spite of her attempts to discourage him, he persists in trying to win her affection as he does not subscribe to prejudices of class distinctions but believes all are God's creations. Given a challenge by his mother, Anjela, between staying in the ancestral mansion or leaving it to stay with Carolina in her thatched hut, he opts for the latter as he will not renounce his wife.

He affirms the dignity of all labour that is undertaken to earn one's living and, when shunted out of his house, Leopold is willing to toil in the fields. Leopold functions as the voice of the playwright when he analyses the reasons for economic backwardness in Goa: if labourer's children had been given some representation in the civic bodies, our villages and towns would have seen a lot of economic improvement, he believes. The upper classes in authority have done only politicking and they have not fostered any development (Act 1 Scene 3). He admires simplicity, honesty and other virtues found in the poor such as Carolina.

Carolina is the simple rural girl with strong faith in God. At

various moments in the play, such as during a storm and when the church bell tolls eight at night, she is seen praying instantly. Her care and concern for her father are demonstrated by her readiness to pawn a necklace to get money for their survival. Aware of her status, she avoids contact with Leopold and therefore dissuades him from developing any friendship with herself. Though she later responds to his overtures of love, she foresees rejection by his mother.

After accepting Leopold's proposal of marriage, Carolina looks forward to Leopold's visit to her house but does not want it to be a late night call. She is not selfish to demand his time and attention, but advises him to return home as his mother might worry about him when it gets late in the evening.

According to Leopold, Carolina has several qualities, which he highlights in the presence of his mother, much to the latter's discomfort: she is humble, of a pure heart, is not jealous, has love for neighbours, is wise though illiterate, chaste, and is fortified by love of God.

Carolina's father, Phillip, believes in working hard for a living. His concern for his daughter's future is demonstrated when he declines pawning the gold chain as that is her only ornament, bought with the little that he and his daughter could save.

He will not tolerate any 'Romeo' coming and tempting his daughter at night and therefore is seen vehemently attacking the stranger, Leopold, who pays such an unannounced visit to his house. When informed by Leopold about his proposal to marry her, Phillip too foresees that Anjela is bound to mistreat Carolina and make her life miserable.

Anjela hopes to increase her wealth through dowry from her prospective daughter-in-law. She thinks her son is hard-hearted for not accepting her proposals for his marriage. She exposes her true nature, pride and haughtiness by looking down upon labourers as 'low' and rebukes Leopold for socialising with them (Act I Scene 3). In keeping with the typical image of a proud landlady, she is enraged when he talks about educating the poor and calls him demented when he makes any reference to their own ancestors who at one time were themselves labourers.

Her character as a haughty landlady is well portrayed as she goes to the extent of driving out Leopold and Carolina and at-

tempts to evict Phillip from his hut, and thus render them homeless. Carolina is the only one to nurse Anjela during a contagious illness and restores her to health. But she stubbornly continues her hostile attitude towards the daughter-in-law till the end.

Lorres is the jolly-good-boatman whose canoe provides the setting for the young lovers to pledge their commitment to each other, while he acts as the witnesses. He is initially hostile to Leopold's attempts to woo Carolina, as he thinks this is another rich dandy out to seduce a poor girl. But when he realises the genuineness of Leopold's intentions, his generous and jovial nature surfaces to go out of his way to help the young couple fulfil their union.

Language: The language used in the drama sustains the interest of the audience or readers. Among several proverbs, one that stands out comments on people's tendency for gossip: 'If they sight an earthworm, they say that they have seen an elephant.'

There are tit for tat arguments in the play. An example:

ANJELA:... I do not want your wife in my house. She was barefooted....

LEOPOLD. Mother, tell me if anyone has been born into this world wearing socks and shoes, including yourself! We come naked and when we go we shall not be taking away money or gold. We shall go as we came.

Most of the songs have beautiful lyrics and convey emotions very well. Punning on Barboz and Barrabas, Lorres claims that his great grandfather was given the surname as he could speak 12 languages.

Dramatic devices and presentation: Rather than bringing in additional characters, João Agostinho skilfully uses offstage voices in this play. Asides are used very proficiently by Lorres and Leopold in the carnival scene at Anjela's house. Anjela's asides disclose her fascination for Durmira (Carolina) as a prospective daughter-in-law. A rare one is assigned to Phillip when he says '*Oslo zanvuim meulear colsaum galun bounchem podtolem.*' (If one gets a son-in-law of this kind, one will have to wear trousers !)

Symbolism is resorted to in this drama. A mid-river storm foreshadows the stress and strain their love is also likely to face. Durmira is the name given to Carolina during the carnival masque. The explanation proffered is that she was born with eyes closed. She is the victim who closes her eyes forever.

Disguise is employed effectively during the carnival scene, just as it is actually employed in real life during this festivity in Goa.

The device of using the ring as a sign of identity may have been used in dramas before, but it certainly fits in very naturally in this drama as a form of an engagement ring and as evidence later on.

The plot has been developed skilfully by the playwright and it keeps the audience eagerly awaiting the next move, which is unpredictable. The suspense is palpable even in the reading of the text.

The Carnival scene at Anjela's house is deftly handled by João Agostinho. There are moments of tension, uncertainty and verbal traps from which only language skills provide a way out. Like the garden that provides a neutral space shorn of any prejudices and indicators of caste in *The Belle of Cavel*, the Carnival masquerade in *Vauraddi* facilitates Leopold's plans. Anjela is unable to identify the persons behind the masks, but is enamoured by Durmira's (Carolina's) beauty and thinks she would be a good match for her son. Her complicity in the 'affair' becomes irrefutable when she is persuaded to place her ring on Carolina's finger as a pledge of her commitment to marry her son to the chosen bride.

Assessment: In *Vauraddi*, João Agostinho keeps aside any reference to caste and focuses on economic class distinctions. Commenting on the reasons for increasing agricultural lands lying fallow, he recommends the upholding of the dignity of labour to arrest such degradation.

In *Batcara*, the suffering labourers were the indigenous Kunbis. With *Vauraddi*, João Agostinho takes up the cause of labourers whose toils are so crucial to human survival, yet they are most often looked down upon by many. João Agostinho makes a point when he portrays, very forcefully, that manual labour is good for health, irrespective of one's economic status.

The element of romance between a rich young man and a poor girl may have formed the theme of countless stories. However, João Agostinho's deft handling of this situation in a realistic man-

ner lends credence to the drama. But this play does not end in the usual 'they lived happily ever after' denouement. Through the tragic finale of the good Carolina's death, João Agostinho raises the perennial question as in Job: Why should the good person suffer?

Kunbi Jakki

Kunbi Jakki was composed at Margao, in August 1934. It became one of João Agostinho's best-known and most successful plays. It was performed at least thrice during his lifetime and once in 1954 after his death. The play was also adapted and produced for All India Radio, Bombay on May 11, 1953, by his son Anthony.

João Agostinho published the drama and applied in 1941 for protection of the copyright.⁴⁸

Themes: The subject matter of *Kunbi Jakki* was not new to João Agostinho. As a matter of fact, he had been conscious of the condition of the indigenous Kunbis and had given expression to these sentiments thirty years earlier in the *Batcara* plays. In *Kunbi Jakki*, he focuses attention again on the plight of the Kunbis and highlights their exploitation by landlords, their sufferings, joys, hopes, their ingenuity and their resilience.

With *Kunbi Jakki*, João Agostinho proves that the marginalized members of society, when given education and opportunities, are as capable as anyone else. Further, the oppressed who may be given some education can actually survive and outsmart the oppressors. Education would also enable them to be in the forefront of transforming their own societies.

One other theme that stands out in this drama is faith in God, fidelity to the Christian doctrine and the use of consecrated articles that strengthen belief in the Almighty to ward off all evil forces. The sacred scapular is shown as particularly effective and is an object that frightens the devil.

The older Kunbis such as Costaum and Inas are shown as resigned to their fate. Lacking formal education, they are not in a position to fight against the injustices being perpetrated against them. Costaum spends a good part of a working day in the local administrative office, hoping to get a document checked. The official, Roque, has no qualms in spending his time smoking

cigarettes but will not oblige Costaum because (in his bureaucratic parlance) 'it is not yet time'.

Even if the Kunbis are educated and qualified for jobs they are not given the opportunities. When Inas comes to the office with his son Jakki, another aspect of the discrimination the Kunbis face is highlighted. Jakki has passed the 'Segundo Grau' (middle school level) and won a prize for it. His father's financial limitations prevent him from pursuing higher studies. Though the Secretary is impressed with his academic achievements and proficiency, he will not offer him a job as he feels that, if Kunbis are given office jobs, his own kind would be rendered unemployed. Roque's susceptibility to corruption is displayed when he accepts the gifts that a trader offers him for appointing his ignoramus nephew to the clerical post.

The plot then moves on to show how Jakki, being an eligible bachelor, receives and accepts a marriage proposal, but is compelled to take up manual labour and then has a visitation from Arius where he accepts the deal with its consequential risks.

Jakki is also presented as the modern Kunbi who can change some of the traditions and is unopposed as he is respected for his education. Though the men support him in these efforts, the Kunbi women tend to be conservative in their opinions and behaviour.

Bostean insists on getting a good bride-price for her daughter whereas Costaum is willing to allow concessions as he would be proud to have a son-in-law who can speak Portuguese, the landlord's language. Some other aspects shown in the play include Kunbi humour, the addiction to liquor, capability for manual labour, the marriage festivities *et cetera*.

In the meanwhile, Arius is shown pampering Jakki with wealth but is disillusioned with Puddu's resistance in accepting his suggestions to compromise on matters of faith. She has neither been peaceful nor happy in the bungalow as eerie sounds and disturbances have made her fretful (Act III Scene 2).

The playwright skilfully plots events leading to the climax of the drama. Roque, facing a tough time after losing his job, approaches Jakki for a loan, while Costaum takes digs at him (Act III Scene 1). Jakki's takes a pledge signed in Roque's blood. When Arius turns up to demand repayment of the loans, he is shocked

to find that Roque's name appears on a substituted document instead of Jakki's. The bits of the original document that he retrieves from outside Jakki's house contain his signature in animal's blood. Jakki discloses how he managed to turn the tables on both of them. At the final moment, Arius coerces Roque to stab Jakki. Puddu prays for divine intervention as Jakki bares his chest. On seeing the scapular, Roque hesitates. Puddu too displays her scapular. At the sight of the sacred scapulars, Arius and Roque flee from the scene. Such an effect reinforces the faith that was instilled into Puddu by the priest when he blessed and enrolled her as a member of the spiritual confraternity.

Characters: The major characters in this drama are Jakki, and Costaum. Arius and Roque play minor roles as do the women Bostean, Consaum and Puddu. Jakki, the son of Inas and Consaum, is the protagonist of the play. He is a young educated Kunbi. Even if he is unjustly denied white collar employment (Act 1, Scene 1), he remains unfazed as he believes in the dignity of manual labour to sustain himself and his family. Having received a proposal for the hand of Puddu in marriage, he is enamoured by her beauty and so is willing to toil or take challenges in order to marry her. He risks accepting the loan extended by Arius under the severe condition of the couple becoming his vassals if he defaults payment. The theme seems Faustian, but how Jaki out-smarts Arius and Roque carries the play from its rising action to the conclusion.⁴⁹

Costaum provides most of the humour in the play. His asides when dealing with the educated, and retorts to his own kind, provide hilarity throughout the play. Though illiterate, he puns on Portuguese words that sound humorous or can be made so in Konkani. For example, he picks up the phrase '*Sim Senhor*' (Yes Sir) (Act 1, Scene1), and uses it appropriately at the end of his replies or wisecracks. His compact description of the secondary school to his wife Bostean is witty: "(...) the school has long-bearded, bald-headed,... pot-bellied teachers (...)"(Act 1, Scene 3). Costaum takes pride in his educated son-in-law and holds him up as a model of the educated successful Kunbi.

Arius is a devil in human form. He tempts Jakki with the offer of immediate monetary aid for his wedding and unlimited wealth thereafter. His condition for default of repayment is that the cou-

ple will have to enslave themselves to him physically and spiritually. Arius tries to dissuade Jakki from celebrating his nuptials in the church and wearing religious articles such as the scapular. He even tempts Puddu with a diamond necklace to replace the sacred scapular. Besides having a role in the dramatic elements of the play, Arius also mentions anti-Christian 'isms' such as Materialism, Spiritualism, Rationalism, Egoism, Atheism, Pantheism, Fetism, Bolshevism, Socialism, Communism, Casteism and the source of his own name Arianism.

Roque, the Secretary of the Rom Tom Society, represents the elitist and casteist persons in society who have no qualms in troubling the poor and marginalized people. He is also portrayed as unjust and corrupt, refusing employment to the deserving but succumbing to bribery.

Puddu, Jaki's wife, though illiterate, has firm faith in God. She will not compromise on spiritual values and holds out against the temptations of Arius. In arguments with the demon it is she who defeats the devil.

Language and Critic's Comments: *Kunbi Jakki* is remarkable for the use of authentic Kunbi Konkani. João Agostinho revised the drama at least through three manuscripts in order to perfect the Kunbi colloquial expressions and idioms. Some examples showing the general and Kunbi usage are: *lokacho – nocacho; Purtuguez – Puttuje; Segundo grau – chegun goraum; Contradans – Condans; and Foxtrot – Ostra*. Some of the Kunbi lyrics from the play have become classics, so much so, that they are thought of as traditional songs. He paved the way for tiatrists such as A. R. Souza Ferrão and Robin Vaz to incorporate Kunbi folksongs into Konkani dramas.

There is no doubt that *Kunbi Jakki* is one of João Agostinho's masterpieces. He skilfully weaves a plot blending the Kunbi rustic milieu, their travails, moments of joy, ingenuity, peculiar speech and above all staunch faith. The drama, whether seen or read, leaves a lasting impression about both the play and the playwright's artistry.

It is no wonder that the play drew packed houses and rave reviews, as exemplified by one of the extracts:

The beautiful play *Kunbi Jakki* (...) was eagerly awaited by those who were fortunate in having booked their

tickets much in advance as even a couple of days before the date no tickets could be available. The house was packed to its utmost capacity and hundreds rued very much for not having secured their tickets early. (...) The play so well written by that veteran Mr. João Agostinho Fernandes was perfectly enacted by a brilliant cast among whom were the inimitable Souza Ferão, the Goan ace comedian and a popular stage figure.

Mr. João Agostinho Fernandes has really made a very close presentation of the life of kunbis and the moral behind his play should provide food for thought.⁵⁰

Kunbi Jakki and his Celebrated Cause

The sequel *Kunbi Jakki and his Celebrated Cause* or *Kunbi Jakki Part II* was scripted seven years later,⁵¹ in 1941, unlike *Batcara Part II* which followed *Batcara Part I* within only a year. Just as *Batcara II* remained pending for six years, *Jakki II* also was not staged until after it was revised in Goa in March 1945. At this juncture the last three scenes were translated into Portuguese⁵² with a few interspersed words in Konkani. The only recorded performance took place in Margao on May 14, 1946.

The overall effect of the sequel is that it is not as impressive as its predecessor. Therefore its analysis has been separated from *Kunbi Jakki* and compacted in this study.

Jakki II continues many strands of the themes from its precursor. The exploitation of the Kunbis by the landlords through their foremen is again highlighted. Arius continues his evil ways, albeit in new avatars as Iris Brandaum and later as an advocate (Sirvodkar). Roque is his agent and vassal.

Jakki's grown-up educated son, Caetano, is now an advocate and occasionally converses with his parents in Portuguese. His reputation draws people of all backgrounds to him for defending their causes. *Jakki II* does not hide the truth that the senior Kunbis are addicted to liquor. In fact Costaum is shown to be more animated after he has downed a few pegs of country liquor. His sense of humour and biting sarcasm do not desert him. His drunkenness does lead to verbal duels with his wife.

The major conflict involves Jakki's dispute with Arius. Knowing that Jakki covets a specific plot of a rice field, Arius bids for the lease by proxy through Roque. By signing a legal document, the field is then sublet by Roque to Jakki at a higher rate on the condition that he would pay the amount due, seven days before the date of harvesting the crop. The crop is destroyed by pests. When Roque demands the payment Jakki refuses and is served a legal notice. Just as the father had outsmarted Arius it is now the son's turn. Roque dies before the court hearing. There are doubts about Arius's identity as the claimant, since his name does not feature in the agreement. Caetano successfully defends the case with the simple argument that as the conditions of the agreement were not fulfilled since 'there was no harvest', Jakki was not liable for any payment. In a sleight of dramatic technique João Agostinho provides for Arius's quiet, unnoticed disappearance through a trapdoor followed by sound effects of bursting fireworks. That leaves the court and the audience wondering about Arius's nature as a demon.

Though the court arguments are couched in legal terms and oratory, the rather simplistic conclusion weakens the over-all impact of the play.

In keeping with his generous nature, by means of a post-script to this play, João Agostinho writes, "The three final scenes of *Kunbi Jakki* (Second Part) can be enacted without the Author's permission – in all the Portuguese colonies wherever there are handfuls of Goans, in Africa, Angola, Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, Beira, also in Nairobi, Daresalam, and Mombasa and Goa".

The first part of *Kunbi Jakki* is dramatically more engrossing as it has some elements of surprise. The novelty of showing a full length play on Kunbis for the first time was also a factor for generation of interest among audiences. With the use of genuine Kunbi language and catchy tunes based on native rhythms the plays had all the elements to be of interest to Goans.

João Agostinho Fernandes' other plays

Among the other plays of João Agostinho, *Dotichem Kestaum* was considered by him to be important enough to be included in the

first volume of his printed plays. The play introduces the concept that education can help remove the problem of dowry.

It asserts that girls who are educated should marry without a dowry, on the basis that the money which might have been given as dowry was more profitably spent for her education. While money runs out (as happens in this play), education is shown as a permanent asset for the girl and her future household. Also an educated mother leads to educated children, thus benefiting society as a whole.

Padre José Vaz is a religious play about the life of a saintly Goan priest who toiled for people along the Kanara coast and later became the 'Apostle of Ceylon' (Sri Lanka).

Hirmigild or *The Midnight Devil* is a vivid adaptation on the stage of the crime of stolen property and its retribution. This play was based on incidents that occurred somewhere in South Goa in 1887. The moral is fairly straightforward – that crime does not pay. On the other hand, theft brings disaster upon the trespasser, if repentance and retribution are not carried out.

Pandurang Kusmonncar has a similar vein of warning against human weaknesses. It castigates greed in humans, particularly when the avaricious try to exploit religious sentiments. In his farces, João Agostinho displays his skills at exposing the foibles of various characters and providing enjoyable comedy at their cost.

It becomes evident beyond any doubt, that João Agostinho's primary objective as a tiatrist was to bring about transformations in society through elimination of its various evils such as caste and class prejudices, drunkenness, dowry, et cetera. On the other hand, he also tried to propagate the values of 'a shared humanity', uphold the dignity of labour and lay great emphasis on spiritual and moral values.

He was not only an entertainer but also a great social reformer, rightly deserving the title of *Pai Tiatrist*.

Notes and references

¹ Agostinho was his middle name according to the entry in the Baptism Register of the year 1871, Number 112 in the Church of the Holy Spirit, Margao. However, he himself always spelt it with 'o' rather than 'u' and therefore the spelling has been Agostinho. Depending on the availability

of the diacritical marks such as ~ (tilde) and , (cedilla) on typewriters and the knowledge of computer typists to insert them, Portuguese names may appear with or without these signs as in João or Conceição.

² A portrait sketched by his son Tony, a qualified artist, using pencils only, is put up in the living room of his home in Margao. João Agostinho's date of birth is given as December 21, 1871. The 'In Memoriam' card printed on the occasion of the Month's Mind Mass offered by the family also has this Baptism date as his date of birth. I had pointed out the error but it remained unchanged for quite some time. Consequently, when this portrait was used as a model for a life-size painting placed at the entrance to the Pai Tiatrist Auditorium in Margao's Ravindra Bhavan, the error was repeated. It was corrected just before his birthday memorial celebrations on December 14, 2009.

³ When he published *Batcara Part II* on June 13, 1916, he was working at Messrs Phillips and Company. He offered to provide the musical portion of the play at a nominal fee. The contact address was of this company.

⁴ Permissible variations in spelling have been retained as found in the original sources. Please see note 20 below. The later spellings were *Batkara* and *Battkara*.

⁵ Album of 16 songs with their musical notations, available at L. M. Furtado and Son, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay. Songs listed in the album mentioned in *Batcara Part I*. *Batcar*; *Mhataro Randgo*; *Sonar Xeti*; *Goencheo Zati*; *Kunbi ami Goenche*; *Mog Mirmireancho*; *Gupit Mog*; *Fonseca Puzadcar*; *Bamon*, *Chardo*, *Sudir*, *Kunbi*; *Bhott*; *Doti*; *Zulum Batcarancho*.

⁶ *Batcara II*. Comed, A Musical Comedy in 2 Acts. Dedicated to Mr. Leandro Mascarenhas, founder member of the Goan Union who died on December 26, 1909. Printed and published by Roldao Noronha at the "Victoria Printing Works," Girgaum Road, No. 4/8, Dukerwadi, Bombay.

⁷ João Agostinho Fernandes, Volume I: *Drama, Comed ani Farsam: Batkara, Ven. Padr José Vaz, & Dotichem Kestaum*. Bombay: Ave Maria P. 1937

⁸ The information about his plans to publish the subsequent volumes under the series "Fernandes's Theatrical Works" was printed on the last page (156) of Volume I.

⁹ Advertisement clipping found pasted in Register 7 page 48: "*Kunbi Jakki* – A brilliant Konkani comedy in Kunbi language together with songs, written by Mr. J. A. Fernandes, Dramatist and Playwright is now available to the Goan Public. This play scored a great success when staged both in Bombay and in Goa because of its fine poetic language and the moral that it bears. The exhilarating comedy should enlighten the despondent hearts; and the peculiarity of the Kunbi language itself should provoke splitting laughter, and be a source of lilted entertain-

ment. Copies can be had from: Messrs. B. X. Furtado and L. M. Furtado, Dhobi Talao and *Goa Mail*, Thakurdwar, Bombay." Price six annas each. The year of publication seems to have been 1941. The drama was completed by João Agostinho at Margao on August 12, 1934.

¹⁰ João Agostinho found that three of his plays were missing: *Henry VIII* – lost; *Khapreachem Band* and *Sociedade de Rom Tom* – stolen. I have managed to locate *Khapreachem Band* in Register number 2 but there is no copy or evidence of another play: *Mothes Tiu*.

¹¹ See photocopy of this letter. The text of the letter is reproduced elsewhere in this book.

¹² Felício Cardoso, ed., *Tiatrancho Jhelo II*, Panjim: Goa Konkani Akademi, 1998.

¹³ Gathered from personal conversations with Anthony Bab.

¹⁴ Handbill for *The Belle of Cavel vo Sundor Cheddum Cavelchem*, File 16.5.

¹⁵ In this handbill diacritical marks were not used at all, so the 'a' in João is printed without the tilde. File 16.5.

¹⁶ Advertisement for *Kunbi Jakki*.

¹⁷ Translation provided in Chapter 3.

¹⁸ Letter by João Agostinho dated 24/7/39, in the *Goa Mail* dated 30/7/39, clarifying S. G. De Souza *Karachiwalla's* contribution in *Battkara* on November 22, 1904. He clarified that *Karachiwalla* was not given a role in the play as he was not regular in attending rehearsals. On the inaugural day, *Karachiwalla* was permitted by João Agostinho to sing a comic song.

¹⁹ Author's appeal before staging *Batcara Part II*. "Zosse Moliere, Congreve, Hartley, Dickens, Cervantes, Dekocks, Schiller ani sabar dusre dramatist ani novelist dakoi hi aplea gaunchi rit ani dekh teach zinsan aumvem eujilam dakounc istil amchea gaunchi hea Batcarache comedint." (Just as Moliere, Congreve, Hartley, Dickens, Cervantes, Dekocks, Schiller and several other dramatists and novelists display their own country's culture and manners, so too I have thought of portraying ours in this comedy, *Batcara*, (The Landlord). Translation mine.

²⁰ João Agostinho had more difficulty in deciding the titles than in writing some of the plays. Therefore, it is important to note that alternative titles (*Vauraddi* or *Leopold ani Carolin*) or variations in spelling (*Jaki*, *Jakki*) may be found particularly when referring to the original documents, manuscripts or handbills. Hence, in spite of the diversity the original spellings have been retained to reflect authenticity. Sometimes the change has been determined through evolution of phonology from Portuguese to Konkani as *Batcara* (1904) to *Battkara* (1937).

²¹ On several occasions I have visited and spoken to his surviving son Anthony (Tonybab) and family members to garner insights regarding his life and work.

²² John Russell Brown, *The Oxford Illustrated History of Theatre*, (Oxford, 1995; Oxford and New York: OUP, 1997), 1.

²³ *Belle of Cavel*, "Opening Chorus". Translation mine.

²⁴ *Belle*, Act 1, Scene 1.

²⁵ "*Him xinklelim chedvam muntat tim vodle deuchar – anim coslio chitti tim cheddeanc boroitat*" (*Belle* 1.1). ('These educated girls are big devils – and what kind of letters they write to boys' would serve to say that this kind of girls' behaviour is undesirable in society.) As if to counter this charge of frivolous behaviour in real life, almost fifty years later, the performance of *The Belle of Cavel* on Tuesday, October 26, 1943 was in honour of Miss Clara Mendonca B.A., B.T., J.P., film critic of the *Evening News of India* and vice-president of the Film Journalists Association. She was felicitated for being the first Goan lady to be elevated to the high office of Honorary Presidency Magistrate for the town and island of Bombay. According to a report, "When the curtain went up, Mr. Fernandes read a brief address to Miss Mendonca eulogising her brilliant academic and professional career, which, he declared, had brought great honour to her community. She was the first Goan lady, he pointed out, to be a professional journalist and had achieved a status in the profession which could be described as unique. She was appointed a Justice of the Peace last year (1942) and this year (1943) she was elevated to the rank and responsibility of an Honorary Presidency Magistrate being the first Goan lady to be raised to that office. That she had achieved all these honours at such a youthful age was ample indication of her talent, character and versatility and the community had reason to be proud of her..." "Music, Art and Drama", *Catholic India*, December 1943, 17.

²⁶ It is interesting to note that João Agostinho employs the word 'love' from English rather than the Konkani 'mog' (Act 1, Scene 1), as the need is to portray a Western lifestyle rather than the conservative Goan attitude.

²⁷ He corrects Amaral's French (Act 1, Scene 2), uses Latin phrases (Act 1, Scene 4, Act 2, Scene 4) and refers to Portia dispensing justice (Act 2, Scene 3).

²⁸ Amaral: *Omnia Vincit Amor*. Berthold (*cuxin*): *Tumchi bori lagonam khobor*. (Act 1, Scene 4).

²⁹ There is no doubt that *The Belle of Cavel* was João Agostinho's first play. An entry in the register indicates that the drama was composed in Bombay in 1893. It is to be noted that this date has not been struck through by João Agostinho, as he has done elsewhere as in *Bebdo*. This would imply that João Agostinho made his own attempts at writing plays

within a year of having founded the modern Konkani tiatr along with Lucasinho Ribeiro in April 1892. And judging from the standard of the play, it is obvious that he performed a commendable feat. Analysis of the text also supports the early date of composition as there is no reference to the pestilence of the plague which affected Bombay two years later. However, there are two other dates mentioned in the handbills that need to be referred to. The handbill for the August 1927 staging at Margao mentions May 1896 as the time of the events in the play, but does not refer to the Plague in Bombay at all. This date seems to be given more out of oversight than any other reason. It may also be pointed out that this is the first handbill, which has been preserved concerning this play. Again the title used here, *Eoc Goencar B. A. Exam Passar*, was adapted to the Goan context. The play was next staged in 1932 under the title *The Belle of Cavel*. The handbill states that this drama is based on scenes seen by the author in the Charni Road Gardens, Bombay in May 1895. Subsequent publicity keeps to the locale although the time becomes insignificant.

³⁰ It is not completely clear from the manuscript whether he had already revised it before transcribing the text in the first register. João Agostinho has of course very sincerely recorded one revision after this textual copy. The revised version eliminates João's meeting with Cecília before her father Gabriel re-enters the shop in Act II Scene 2. An interlude of an elderly couple, Anton (aged 72) and Anna (65 years old) and their later encounter with Berthold in the garden, has been deleted from the revised version. Their conversation makes a reference to the Piedade Society, which would care for the widow after the death of a contributor. A subsequent scene involving the same couple has also been omitted from the revised version. Here the couple learn, through the services of a palmist, that they would be blessed with a child within the next two years. The astrologer also foretells that they would have a long life and also win the Goa lottery. Of course, the astrologer discloses through an aside, that he has to exaggerate in order to make his customers happy and earn a substantial fee. Anton clarifies that he has no faith in lotteries. A conversation between Vincent and Britto, carried out entirely in chaste English also comes under the editor's scissors. The discussion is socio-political regarding the nomination of a Goan doctor as an Acting Consul and the moves by a few disgruntled elements to scuttle his appointment.

³¹ He modifies and rhymes Konkani to suit Hindi in such phrases as '*amku naim soringa thor am tumara sir fodinga.*' His interpolations during others' conversations are humorous at every phrase, as in '*Batchelor of Arts, Maiden of hearts, dogaimchim zaleam broken hearts.*'

³² *The Goa Mail*, October 16, 1938, 9.

³³ *The Belle of Cavel*, "Concanim play in honour of Miss Clare Men-

donca. *The Goa Times*, 30 October 1943, 9.

³⁴ Sources of the text: Register 1: revised. Fair copy: Register 6

³⁵ A note is given at the end of the second version of the play in Register number 2.

³⁶ Perhaps the communal disturbances in Bombay influenced his decision to replace the name of the prophet. But to give representation to all communities he retained the character as a Muslim. Handbill for Saturday February 13, 1943, at Margao.

³⁷ The amount needed to be shown at the start of the gambling session is increased from Rs 20 in version 1 to Rs 50 in version 2, the entry level is changed from two annas to two rupees. Three labelled barrels 'Bewda', 'Rum', 'Marsala' reduced to two marked as "BEWDA" and "MARSALA". *Tems ani Gazette; Kesari Times; Deshbandhu ani Maharatta*. Amount earned by Rustomji raised from 1.5 lakhs to 2.5 lakhs, 3+1 bungalows reduced to 2+1. (Act 1, Scene 3). Before Albert returns with the fifty rupees to start a new session, the gamblers settle their accounts. This is omitted from version 2. Version 1 Act 1 Scene 4 ends with Valente coming in between Albert and Gertrude. At the end of Act 2, Scene 3, death scene, Albert grabs and removes Gertrude's earrings and bangles and runs off. The act has been anticipated in version 2. At the end of Act 1, Scene 4, after Valente blocks his attempt to hit Gertrude, Albert grabs Gertrude's chain and runs off. At the close of Act 2, Scene 3 his attempt to hit Gertrude is again blocked by Valente and he exits like a lunatic.

³⁸ Conversation with Prof. Somnath Komarpant, HOD, Marathi, Goa University.

³⁹ *Batcara Part II* does not have the traditional division into acts and scenes, but has a total of nine scenes and includes 18 songs.

⁴⁰ Like Ma Joad in Steinbeck's *Grapes of Wrath*, Casmiro is convinced that if one ever needs aid, it will be the poor who will help out.

⁴¹ João Agostinho takes up the cause of the Kunbis more elaborately in the *Kunbi Jaki* plays.

⁴² The dowry issue is dealt with by João Agostinho in *Dotichem Kestaum* (1908).

⁴³ *Batcara* composed/staged in 1904 was the first of his plays to be printed in 1909. By this time he had already composed eight other plays. Though not performed as often as *The Belle of Cavel* and *Bebdo*, he opted to revise the play in 1932 and reprinted it in 1937. *Batcara Part II* was printed in 1916.

⁴⁴ *Vauraddi* was performed on January 14 (1934?) at Sunshine Building, Margao, under the auspices of Socios da Sociedade dos Operarios. On April 9, 1940 it was presented at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi in aid of Society of Our Lady of Piety, Dabul to help the beggars. The third

recorded staging on February 16, 1941 at St. Xavier's College Hall, Bombay was to raise funds for Goa Flood Relief.

⁴⁵ This theme is given elaborate treatment in João Agostinho's next play *Kunbi Jakki*.

⁴⁶ As seen in the list of plays, a full length drama was written, enacted and published by João Agostinho, based on the life of Fr. José Vaz, a saintly priest.

⁴⁷ Dramatis Personae page towards the end of Register 2. The play was written in Bombay and has been dated 7-1-40.

⁴⁸ As mentioned earlier this play has been reprinted by the Goa Konkani Academy.

⁴⁹ João Agostinho takes up the theme of ill-gotten wealth in *Hirmigild, Modiani Ratcho Deuchar*, a drama composed a year later in November 1942.

⁵⁰ "Thrilling Konkani Drama Staged in Bombay KUNNBI JAKI". Performed on November 21, 1941. Review (From a correspondent) published in The GEM, 840, n.d. Cutting found among João Agostinho's registers.

⁵¹ The original is found in Manuscript Register number 5, a revised copy in Register number 9 and a certified revised copy in Register number 10. Though the manuscript in Register number 5 mentions that this play is a sequel to *Kunbi Jakki* and takes place '28 years after', this period is modified to 24 years in the final version. However in Act I Scene 1, Arius mentions that he has maintained Roque for 27 years.

⁵² The dialogues in Portuguese were translated from Konkani by Prof. D. D'Silva.

Addenda: Index of *Pai Tiatrist's* collection

Observations about João Agostinho Fernandes's collection of works including an annotated index of his manuscripts, registers and contents. The first digit refers to the Manuscript Register and the decimal digit is an index number allotted by the author of this book. In order to facilitate location of the references and items, I have also included the page numbers of the play or register.

Five registers were numbered by João Agostinho himself and when the manuscripts were being handed over to the Goa Konkani Academy, his son Anthony affixed his own numbers to the registers.

These numbers differed slightly from the ones assigned by his father to the first five registers. I have rearranged the numbers to make them faithful to João Agostinho's and also keeping the chronology in mind.

Either a brief description of the artifact or its highlights/extracts are reproduced here as it is the first index of the material in João Agostinho Fernandes's collection of works.

Register 1

1.1 *Leopold ani Carolina* or "*Vauraddi*": A magnificent social melodiana in three acts. Handbill for Sunday, February 16, 1941, (6.30 p.m.), at St. Xavier's College Hall, Bombay. In aid of the Goa Flood Relief Fund. Comic songs in English and Konkani by Goan expert singers.

1.2 Fernandes's Theatrical Works – Complete 30 plays. A list drawn up by João Agostinho himself, dated 1944. Lists 30 plays. (Omits *Goan Ponch II* and includes *Sociedade de Rom Tom* twice).

1.3 "*Vauraddi*". Handbill for Tuesday, April 9, 1940, at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi. In aid of Dabul Beggars Aid Society. Anthony D'Sa, Asst. Director; João Baptist Fernandes, Director Swing Syncopators Band.

1.4 *Batcara*. Fragment of a long handbill (matches with December 7, 1915). Dramatis Personae and 19 songs listed. Ladies in the cast: Mrs. Luiza Maria Fernandes, Miss Sophia Fernandes, Miss Rogaciana Fernandes. Victoria Band.

1.5 Newspaper clipping of Regina's death. *Obituario* in Portuguese, Bombay newspaper, n.d.

1.6 Konkani newspaper clipping of Regina's death, n.d.

1.7 *Batcara Dusri Part*. Advance information handbill in Konkani, dated April 11, 1911. Includes Author's Note. John Lazarus, Manager, The Goan Amateurs Dramatic Club.

1.8 Newspaper clipping of Regina's death. In Portuguese, Bombay newspaper, n.d.

1.9 English newspaper clipping of Regina's death, n.d.

1.10 *Batcara Part II* (A Musical Comedy). Advance information handbill in English. Author's appeal to viewers. . . . "It is indisputable that we are all children of one God, issues of one only stock, governed by the same Providential law, members of humanity, living by that, learning by that, and progressing by that. We are, then, all brothers, bound to a common duty; love and co-operation, and we cannot allow any part of that duty to be violated without ourselves feeling again the hurt of such violation. . . ."

1.11 *Kunbi Jaki*. Advertisement in Konkani for November 21, 1941 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwaddi. The text mentions "*Sr. João Agostinacho(,) companer somplelea Lucas(inho) Rebeiracho(,) je dogui vavurun bunhad marli "Conkanim Theatrachi", Bomboi 1892 vorsa. He tanche bore corne vorovim zaggor nattac zale, Bomboi, Dadar ani Mahim.*" Cast indicated.

1.12 Konkani newspaper clipping of Regina's death, n.d.

1.13 *Batcara I*. Text (printed copy). Remark: "Cancelled. See revised manuscript". Pocket-sized first edition copy of 1909, with an introduction by the author. Back cover has an announcement for an album of 16 songs with their musical notations, available at L. M. Furtado and Son, Kalbadevi Road, Bombay.

1.14 *Batcara II*. Text (printed copy). Dated June 13, 1916. Comed/A Musical Comedy in 2 Acts. Dedicated to Mr. Leandro Mascarenhas, founder member of the Goan Union who died on 26 December 1909. Printed and Published by Roldao Noronha at the Victoria Printing Works, Girgaum Road, No. 4/8, Dukerwadi, Bombay.

1.15 *Batcara* (Second Part) Two-page handbill in English and Konkani for Tuesday, May 23, 1911, Gaiety Theatre. Goan Amateurs Dramatic Club. Under the patronage of H.E. Visconde de Wrem, Consul General of Portugal in British India.

Additional farce *My Negro Servant*.

1.16 *Batcara* (Second Part). Characters, fragment of handbill as in 1.15.

1.17 *Pandurang Kusmonkar*. A Sensational Drama in II Acts (A Comedy Drama in II Acts). Characters page overwritten with the remark "Cancelled, See Revised Copy". Cast indicated. Composition Dated 4-6-1910. Text, pages 1-31.

1.18 *Albert Gonsalves/The Drunkard (Bebdo)*. Handbill for Thursday, October 8, 1925. Presented by Goan Amateurs Dramatic Society at Gaiety Theatre. In honour of Joseph Baptista, the Lord Mayor of Bombay. "Half of the profits will be handed over to the Goan Parish School Dabul, to founding a scholarship."

A special English farce entitled "*Ajax*" defying somebody else's mother-in-law, has been arranged in which Messrs. S. X. Vaz, Tolu, Luis Borges, Gib and others will take part. (Authorship not indicated.)

Comic songs in English and Konkani.

The full handbill is in English including the list of characters and the cast. Miss Anne Fernandes acted as Gertrude (the drunkard's wife).

1.19 *Bebdo*, Drama II *Actanim*. Composed: Bombay 1898 August 29, 1901. The Dramatis Personae page indicates cast and gives a list of performances at various places from 1901 to 1925.

1. 21 November 1901 at Gaiety Theatre by Goa National Dramatic Club Bombay.

2. Thursday, July 18, 1907 at Gaiety Theatre.

3. (23-?)1908 at the New Parsee Theatre, Poona by Dom Carlos Dramatic Unity Club.

4. (?) Nairobi Institute.

5. 1924 Margao.

6. 1924 Raia.

7. 1924 Cansaulim.

8. 1925 Gaiety Theatre.

9. 1926 Panjim, in the presence of the *Governador Geral* and other dignitaries.

In Bombay the drama was in honour of Dr. Viegas, Sir Balchandra Krishna and Mr. Joseph Baptista, all the three were '*President da Camara Municipal*'.

Remark across the page: This play has been revised. See Revised copy.

1.20 *Bebdo*. Text including *cants* (songs) beginning on page 33 of the register, has pages separately numbered as 1-44.

1.21 *THEATR Zin Bebdeachi (Bebdo)*. Newspaper review in Konkani of the performance at Geity (printing error, should be Gaiety), Bori Bunder, n.d.

1.22 *Drunkard (Bebdo)*. Newspaper review in English of the Dom Carlos Dramatic Unity Club trip to Poona to perform this play at the New Parsee Theatre, Poona on Thursday, 23-*- 1908.

1.23 *The Drunkard. (Bebdo)*. Newspaper clipping of the play on Thursday, July 18, 1907, at the Gaiety Theatre. "Owing to the unavoidable absence of Sir Balchandra Krishna, who was urgently telegraphed for, on the previous day by the Dewan Sahib of Palanpur, on a professional visit there, the chair was occupied by Dr. A. G. Viegas The house was brought down by Mr. J. A. Fernandes with his fars entitled *Marriage at Old Age (Cazar Mattarponnar)*.

1.24 *The Drunkard/Albert Gonsalves/Bebdo*. Advance announcement handbill in English and Konkani. Performed in honour of Joseph Baptista Esq. LCE, B.A., LL.B, M.L.C, the Lord Mayor of Bombay, by the Goan Amateurs Dramatic Society. "The Portuguese civil and military Officers who have witnessed the play in Margao, Goa have declared that 'It was the finest Moral piece they have ever seen.'" Albert Gonsalves has been selected at special request and Mr. Fernandes is appearing with it after 17 years of inactive stage life. He will be assisted by his daughter and a first class combination of the following best known Goan Amateurs and Comedians."

(The drama was staged on Thursday, October 8, 1925).

1.25 *The Belle of Cavell*. Handbill in Konkani for '*Aiz Sanje*', '*Hoje à Noite*', 15 May 1932. Comed! Teatro! Comed! By Jolly Brothers Dramatic Club of Margao for the benefit of the "Vauraddeanche Ekvottachea Fundac" (Workers Unity Fund)/(Sociedade dos Operarios de Goa), at Sunshine Building, on the occasion of the Feast of the Holy Spirit.

1.26 *Belle of Cavell*. Konkani handbill fragment: Theatrachi Somzonni and Dramatis Personae. This fragment mentions May 1895 as the time

of the bubonic plague in Bombay. It is the lower portion of the advance information handbill for May 15, 1932, attached in the file number 16.5. See 1.25 above and 16.5 for details.

1.27 (*The Belle of Cavel*). (The printed part of the title has been cut from the handbill. The title given in another related handbill is *Eoc Goencar B. A. Exam Passar*. See 1.34.) Performed on the occasion of St. Joaquim (Borda) Feast. Drama staged at Clube Harmonia on Sunday, August 21, 1927. Konkani. Mentions May 1896 as the time of the events in the play, but does not refer to the Plague in Bombay at all. '*Dhor eka sena patlian gazoitelet comic cantaram jinsamvar.*'

1.28 *The Belle of Cavel*. Title and characters page. The handbill at 1.27 has been pasted over the handwritten list of Dramatis Personae on the register. Performances listed here:

- Skating Rink, Bombay, 1895.
- Empire Theatre, Bombay, 1909.
- Africa, 1919.
- Agacaim, Goa, May 1927.
- Harmonia, Margao, Goa, August 1927.
- Sunshine Bldg., Margao, Goa, May 15, 1932.

(There were at least three more performances in Bombay, one prior to 1927, then in 1938 and 1943).

The place and date of composition is given as Bombay, 1893. (The handbill for the August 1927 staging mentions May 1896 as the time of the events in the play, but does not refer to the Plague in Bombay at all. However, the 1932 handbill states that this drama is based on scenes seen by the author in the Charni Road Gardens, Bombay in May 1895).

1.29 *The Belle of Cavel*. Text. Register pages 75-115 or separate for the play 1-39. Remark at the top of the opening scene: "This play has been revised". Across the page: "See Revised Copy". Remarks regarding revision are given at the end of this text on pages 114-115. Entry of characters has been underlined with a blue colour pencil and other directions are marked in red.

1.30 *Dottichem Kestaum* – Text of the Prologue (Song). The next few pages have been cut out from the register.

1.31 *Geraldina*. Handbill in Portuguese and Konkani. January 6, 1927, Feast of the Three Kings (Epiphany). Staged by the 'Associação Dramática Marganense' at Cansaulim, near the railway station.

Theatro - Opera - Theatro. 26 Songs in English and Konkani.

Muzo Khapri Chakor Farce (15 minutes) as additional entertainment + 8 more songs including 2 in English by his daughter Mlle. Anne Fernandes
Subtitles:

Sonsarachi Ostor, vo (or) Zuz Padri ani Lucifera Bitor ek Christamvachea Atmea Pasot.

Banda Nacional.

1.32 *Geraldina (Deunchar Bail)*. Religioz Drama. . . . III Actanim. Title page and Dramatis Personae along with the roles allotted to the actors.

Composed: Bombay 14-4-1925.

Text ii+1-47 or 125-175 or 176-206 (cancelled page numbers).

1.33 *Cazar Matarponnar*. Fars I Actan Dramatis Personae (five) listed.

Tempo 20 minut.

Dated Bombay April 18, 1897.

The full page has been cancelled and there is no text here.

1.34 (*The Belle of Cavel*) *Eoc Goencar B.A. Exam Passar. Comed II Actanim*

Handbill for the 'Hoje à Noite', 'Aiz Sanje' (Tonight) Show at the Clube Harmonia, Borda, Margao; Mentions "*Festache Banketic*" implying it was on the occasion of a feast: August 21, 1927?. Many of the actors are the same as 1.27 above. (Similarities: Clube Harmonia, feast, names of actors in the same order in both; in 1.27 the title part has been cut from the top). The handbill also mentions that three shows were held in Bombay and one in Africa (which was in 1919).

Additional entertainment was in the form of a new farce *Noureancho Bazar*. The presentation of the dramas was by A.B.C Club. The cast of the farce is detailed in this handbill.

1.35 *Noureancho Bazar*. Farce. Text. pp. 176-191 or 1- 16.

1.36 *Professor Leitao*. Farce in I Act. Tempo 40 minut. Bombai, 10 Mai 1914.

Text. 1-16 pages (192-208 or 309-325 old numbers).

1.37 *Batcara*. Original advertisement for the first performance at the Gaiety Theatre for the inauguration of the Goan Union Dramatic Club on Tuesday, November 22, 1904. Mentions the "first appearance of our actresses and the introduction of a variety of other items on our stage such as never been attempted before by any other Dramatic Clubs in our Community. The play is got up in excellent and humorous style, the musical portion being admirably executed by our well-known Band master Mr. Zeferino de Cruz." The cast included Mrs. (Regina) Fernandes as Roza Maria Luiza Vaz (wife of *Batcara de Panzari*) and Miss Fernandes as Cecília Miranda (Ernestina), Casmir's fiancée. The lower part of the advertisement is cut.

1.38 *Batcara or The Curse of Caste. Maldição Zatichem*. Handbill for Tuesday, December 7, 1915 at Empire Theatre, Bori Bunder.

Cast indicated. Mrs. Luiza Maria Fernandes as Roza Mari Vaz, *Batcan*; and Miss Sophia Fernandes as Cecília Miranda and Miss Rogaciana Fernandes as Sundori. The drama was staged in aid of the Women's War and

Relief Fund (Goan Ladies Circle), under the 'Distinguished Patronage of H.E. Sr. Alfredo Casanova, Consul-General for Portugal in British India.

EMPIRE THEATRE
Bori Bunder.

BATCARA

OR
THE CURSE OF CASTE. A Musical Comedy,
in 3 Acts
in Konkani.

By Mr. J. A. Fernandes.

IN AID OF THE
Women's War & Relief Fund
(GOAN LADIES' CIRCLE)

On Tuesday, the 7th December, 1915.

Under the Distinguished Patronage of
H. E. SR. ALFREDO CASANOVA,
Consul-General for Portugal in British-India.

A HIGH CLASS KONKANI PLAY.

COME & SEE.—It will repay your money. All Konkani-Speaking People are cordially invited for the treat and specially the members of the Aryan Brotherhood who recently held their **Campaign against Castes** in this City.

Castes are a menace to our Social Progress and Unity, and every educated Indian must try to exterminate them while he lives.

Don't let Goan Patriotism Sink in the Mire.

WAKE UP! UNITE!!

And share the burden of this terrible war by subscribing your quota towards mitigating the sufferings of the wounded soldiers of the King-Emperor.

By your procuring a Ticket you will augment the War Fund of Goan Ladies' Circle.

Dramatis Personnae.

Casia, o Rodrigues ...	... <i>Bateara de Panzari</i> ...	Mr. J. A. Fernandes.
Rosa Jari Vaz ...	... <i>Bateara</i> ...	Mrs. Luiza Maria Fernandes.
Casimiro Rodrigues ...	... <i>Their only son and heir</i> ...	Mr. Aug. Mosenrenhas.
Cecilia Miranda ...	... <i>His fiancée</i> ...	Miss Sophia Fernandes.
Joko Pinto ...	... <i>Kanhi</i> ...	Mr. Antonio Gomes.
Antonio Abreu ...	... <i>Kanhi</i> ...	Mr. O. M. Pinto.
Manuel Gomes ...	... <i>Lobanço</i> ...	Mr. ...

Handbill from 1915.

1.39 *Batcara I*. Lower part of the above handbill for Tuesday, December 7, 1915. Gives a list of 19 songs including two in English: 'We are Goan Dandies', and 'I am Messman foss Colass'.

1.40 *Heraldo* newspaper article dated September 13 "*Album Concanim Comic Cantarancho*" (handwritten copy.)

1.41 Comic song: "*Kitem poilem eilem Pill vo Tantem*".

1.42 *Belle of Cavel*. Bilingual handbill in English and Konkani for Tuesday April 19, 1938, at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, under the auspices of Instituto Luso-Indiano. Cast indicated. The Konkani page of the handbill has the title *Cavelchi Sundori vo Belle of Cavel*. It mentions the prominent roles by Anthony Too-loo, Dioguinho D'Mello, A. R. Souza Ferrão, J. R. Fernandes Fithna. The opening chorus of the play has been printed in the handbill. A post script indicates that Fernandes's plays Vol. I will be available in the Theatre Hall.

1.43 *Dotichem Kestaum*. Dom Carlos Dramatic Unity Limited (*Primeira Instituição d'este genero da Colonia Goana na India Inglesa*), will stage the Dowry Question at the Gaiety Theatre, Bori Bunder, on Thursday, July 16, 1908. Four-page handbill in English and Konkani. Contains an elaborate comment on dowry.

1.44 Newspaper clipping on 'Anti-Dowry Bill in Sind referred to Committee'. Karachi February 14. Associated Press Report. Year not available on the clipping.

1.45 *Batkara I*. Typed duet for Atmaram and Sundori (pasted on back inner page).

1.46 *Batkara I*. Opening chorus. (pasted on back inner page).

1.47 *Batkara de Panzari*. Handbill in English for Tuesday, November 5, 1940, at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, in aid of the War Gifts Fund under the patronage of Sir Homi Mody, K.B.E. and under the auspices of Instituto Luso-Indiano. Organised by the Bombay Catholic War Gifts Sub-Committee. Cast members and roles indicated. The Konkani section mentions that Vol. I of his three plays would be available for sale in the hall and half of the proceeds would be donated to the War Fund.

"The musical portion of this play is the work of the late Mr. Zeferino De Cruz of Siolim, Band Master of the now extinct Bombay Volunteer Rifles."

This handbill contains significant evidence that "A few songs of this play have been recorded by H.M.V. in 1908."

1.48 *Panzaricho Batkar*. Handbill in Konkani for Tuesday, November 5, 1940. Bombay Catholic War Gifts Sub-Committee.

The change in the spelling from *Batcara* to *Batkara* is noteworthy as a transition to Konkani Phonetics from the influence of Portuguese pronunciation. There are also differences in the contents of the above two

handbills. Musical Director: M. Alphonso; Stage and Scenery Manager: Fithna Fernandes.

Register 2

2.1 Newspaper photo of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi in a three-piece suit, captioned "What a Change! Gandhiji as he was while practising as a barrister in South Africa," n.d.

2.2 *Fernandes-ache Theatro*. List of 22 plays.

2.3 Newspaper cutting: *Heraldo* news item in Portuguese (April 1937) on *Drama, Comed and Farsam* of João Agostinho Fernandes Vol. I *Battkara, Ven. Padre José Vaz and Dotichem Kestaum*. Bombay 1937.

2.4 *Vauraddeancho Ixtt* news item in Konkani (April 1937) on 'Theatrichem Pustoc' (referring to João Agostinho's Volume I, *Battkara, Ven. Padr José Vaz and Dotichem Kestaum*.)

2.5 *Veneravel Padre José Vaz. Herald* (June 1937) newspaper review of the staging of the play in Margao.

2.6 *Veneravel Padre José Vaz. Goa Mail* news item in Konkani (June 1937) concerning the staging in Margao.

2.7 *Veneravel Padre José Vaz. Anglo* (June 1937) news item in English about the staging in Margao.

2.8 *Veneravel Padre José Vaz. Ave Maria* news item in Konkani, dated May 30 (1937), regarding the performance in Margao.

2.9 *Goa Mail*. June 1937. Review of *Drama, Comed ani Farsam*. "(...) *Zor tor to Inglezam vo Francezam modem zolmolo taca Bernard Shaw vo Moliere-a sarko lekhtele aslet, ani amche modem zannem tache coutic ani soim-bacheam xrungaranche teatr declale vo declat taca osso lekhtat....*"

2.10 *Veneravel Padre José Vaz*. Review in Portuguese, n.d.

2.11 *Batcara or The Curse of Caste: Maldição Zatichem*. Bilingual handbill in English and Konkani for December 7, 1915. staged in aid of the Women's War and Relief Fund, (Goan Ladies Circle). Same as 1.38 and 1.39.

2.12 *The Satary Revolt or The Goa Mutiny*. Handbill for Monday, December 17, 1899 by the Goa National Dramatic Club at the Tivoli.

2.13 *The Satary Revolt. Ranneanchem Traisaum/Ranneanchem Revolt*, and *Dada Rannes* were the alternative titles for the play. According to a note by the author the play was first performed at the Gaiety Theatre in 1898. Written in Bombay in April 1897.

2.14 *Ranneanchem Traisaum (The Satary Revolt)*. Text. 1-34 48 - 81 or 254-287. In this register there are three sets of page nubers. Page numbers 48 to 98 have strikethrough lines.

2.15 *Restless Bombay Signaller* or *A Sleepless Signaller* or *Nid Naslolo Telegraphist (Bomboicho)*. Fars 2 Partini. Contains Dramatis Personae page. Six characters.

Temp 45 minut.

Dated at Ville Parle 8^o April 1913.

2.16 *Nid Naslolo Telegraphist Bomboicho*. Remark at the beginning of the text. "See Revision". Text. Pages 1-16 or 82 – 98 or 288-204.

2.17 *Rukmibhai* or *Cyrl ani Rukmibhai* or *The Broken Promise* or *The Broken Heart*. Comed Drama. A musical drama in 2 Acts (revised to three acts). Scenes laid in Bombay and Amritsar. Costumes: Hindu and European. (A Drama of real life.)

Composed at Margao, Goa, June 1926.

Text. Pages 1-40 or 99-138 or 234-273 or 305-345. All stage directions have been given in English.

2.18 *Battkara de Panzarim*. *Ave Maria* newspaper report titled 'Zuzachea Fundac Goencarancho Theatr' dated 10 November 1940, page 553, pasted at 306a.

2.19 *Hoje à Noite! Aiz Ratri! Divirtiment Program*. Handbill in Portuguese and Konkani. Presentation by A.B.C. Club, Banda National. Venue: Temple (Diulant) behind police station. Occasion: Feast 1931. *Emigrantimcho Ulass*. *Zantun part Cantarachi sogle actor chedde ani Sr. Fernandesachim burguim ani natram*.

Scene from *Batcara*. *Kilimanjaro Matomba: Africachem Cantar ani Nach* (Song and Dance).

Plus *Dongui Voiz* (Molière's *Le Médecin Malgré Lui*). Cast indicated.

2.20 *Dongui Voiz vo Addecho Voiz*. (*Le Medecin Malgre lui* by Moliere). Text. 19 pages (old pages 139-157 or 346-364). (Performed in 1931. See 2.19 above)

2.21 *Emigrantimcho Ulass*. (A long song.) Text of the song page 158 or 365.

2.22 *American Minstrels vo American Khapreachem (Band) Minstrel*. (Incidents of the Hispano American Great War.) Text. 9 pages (old 366-373). Plan of stage setting given on page 7 (372). Composed: Margao 23-9-1931.

2.23 *The Goa Mail* dated February 28, 1953. "*Konkani Stage*" ani *Teatrist'*. Newspaper article in Konkani by Sanches Da Sousa. Comments on the disgusting nature to which the *zagors* had been reduced and the pioneering role played by João Agostinho to nurture and develop the Konkani stage.

2.24 "The Chicken or the Egg". Song in English.

2.25 "Park yourself close to me". Song in English.

2.26 Comic song in Konkani: *Roza*.

2.27 Comic song in Konkani: *Marian*.

2.28 *Cazar Matarponnar*. Fars. Text. 13 pages (old 373-386). Remark: "Revised". Godla (Composed): Bombaim, April 13, 1897.

Register 3

3.1 *Leopold ani Caroline vo Vauraddi*. Social Melo-drama III Actanim. Handbill for 'This evening at 6 o'clock', 'Aiz sanje sou vaztam', February 16, 1941, at St. Xavier's Bombay, in aid of Goa Flood Relief Fund.

3.2 *Josefina (Paichi Dusri Bail)*. Comed II Actanim. Duration 2½ hrs. Composed at Margao 10/8/1932. Text. Pages 1-33 (both sides of the page) or 434-466.

3.3 *Carolina/Vauraddi Cheddum vo Leopold ani Carolina vo Mogak nam Dolle*.

Godla ani Boroila (Composed and written) in Margao, 13-3-33.

Manuscript marked as: "Cancelled. Revised. See New Book".

Text. Pages 1-38 or 467-504.

3.4 *The Three Musketeers. Teg Zann Bondukkar*. Poili Part. Dramatis Personae. Text. 13 pages, n.d.

3.5 Photo for *Vauraddi* (with oar).

3.6 *Kunnbi Jakki*. Dramatis Personae only. Composed at Margao, 12-8-34. Remark: "Cancelled, See Revised manuscript". The following pages have been cut from the register.

3.7 *Batkara*. Handbill for Tuesday, November 5, 1940. Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, in aid of the War Gifts Fund.

3.8 *Carolina Vauradi Chedum vo Mog Curdo*. Handbill in Konkani and Portuguese for Sunday, 14 January (n.d) at Sunshine Building, Margao, under the auspices of Socios da Sociedade dos Operarios. Contains synopsis in Portuguese. In aid of new farmers: '*Teatracho fund voitolo xet-camais-ponacho dondo suru corpac. . .*' Year not specified, but is advertised as a 'Novo Theatro' for the New Year (1934? since the drama was written on March 13, 1933). Comic songs by Sr. A. R. Souza Ferrão, *ancho famad cantorist*. Band Central, Director: Sr. Agostinho Carvalho.

Register 4

4.1 Cover page of Volume I, João Agostinho Fernandes: Drama, Comed ani Farsam: *Battkara, Veneravel Padr José Vaz, and Dotichem Kestaum*. Bombay 1937.

4.2 *Leopold ani Caroline vo Vauraddi*. Handbill for the 'this evening' 'aiz sanje' show. (February 16, 1941) see 1.1.

4.3 *Kunbi Jaki* Text. Pages 1-35. *Godla ani Buroila*, Margao 12-8-34. The dramatis personae page indicates cast. This text shows transformations in words to bring them closer to Kunbi pronunciation.

4.4 *The Dignity of Labour/Zuaricho Vauraddi*. Text. Pages 1-36. Dated 13-3-33, Margao. The text shows many signs of revision.

4.5 *The Belle of Cavel/Cavelchi Sundori*. Handbill in English and Konkani for Tuesday, September 27, 1938, at Princess Theatre, Bombay in aid of The Instituto Luso-Indiano. The handbill contains an apologia: "This unique Comedy should have been performed in April last, but for the Curfew Order, promulgated on account of the Communal trouble in the city then. Our regret to our disappointed patrons, although the responsibility is directly ascribable to a conspiracy of circumstances."

There is also a significant appeal to understand the compulsive factors regarding the participation of a bereaved cast member: "Mr. A. R. Souza-Ferrão, one of our prominent members has recently lost his mother in death. May her soul rest in peace. But we are glad to announce that we have succeeded in convincing him of the impossibility of finding a substitute for him at so short a notice. Our appeal to his relatives in particular and others in general to appreciate our difficulty and responsibility and to treat his presence among us as a sheer inevitability." Such an appeal would be necessary in view of the traditional period of mourning for at least six months to a year, during which period a person would avoid participation in pleasant social occasions.

4.6 Letter by João Agostinho dated July 24, 1939, in the *Goa Mail* dated July 30, 1939, clarifying S. G. De Souza *Karachiwalla's* role being restricted to a comic song in *Battkara* on November 22, 1904. He clarified that *Karachiwalla* was not given a role in the play as he was not regular in attending rehearsals. On the inaugural day, *Karachiwalla* was permitted by João Agostinho to sing a comic song.

Register 5

5.1 *Kunbi Jaki*. "Thiatr". Four-page handbill in English and Konkani for Friday, November 21, 1941, at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi under the auspices of Instituto Luso-Indiano. Takes pride in the obliteration of *zagors* through presentation of 'thiatrs':

"Zalim 49 Vorsam. Amim vavurle ani azun porian vavurtanv Conkani stage bore mannsugueche ani xicounneche ritir addunc, dacoun bore ani xicounneche thiatr, ani conn mhunncho nam ami add guile munn locac fottoun boltech moriad naslele thiatr dacoun. Punn ek mat borem amim kelem, te zaggor je zatale 1892 vorsa passun, Bori Bunder, Grant Road, Dadar, Mahim ani Goeam legun te nattac kele amcheam thiatram vorvim. Hem dadosponn amcam."

Handbill indicates the cast and also gives a glossary of Kunbi words.
5.2 *Folk Songs and Dances of Goa*. Colour photos from the *Illustrated Weekly* magazine.

5.3 *Pandoorang Kusmonkar*. Revised version. Comedy drama. Time three hours. The earlier title *Parodecho Bhott Mamm* has been cancelled. Rewritten at Bombay on 17-7-1941. Text. 36 pages.

5.4 *Tandulanchem Kestaum/Goan Trio/Batkar-Xettcar-Posorkar* was drafted on the even pages. But it has been cancelled with the remark "See Revised Copy". The composition was begun on July 14, 1944 and completed on July 16, 1944.

5.5 *Kunbi Jakki and his celebrated case (cause)/Kunbi Jaki Part II*. (An amusing comedy in three Acts or A Humorous sketch in III acts. (28 years after)... various drafts for the title. 'An amusing comedy in Three Acts'. Text. 36 pages with the remark "See Revised Copy" and cancellations across the first seven pages. Principal parts and secondary parts have been indicated with names of actors playing the respective roles. Bombay 3-9-1941.

5.6 "Since the foundation of the Koncanim stage in 1892. Thirty (30) Complete Plays. Fernandes's Teatrical Works." List of the plays from 1892 to 1946. Symbols have been used to indicate whether the plays were staged or not. The markings though are not fully correct as more plays were staged than indicated here.

5.7 *Kunbi Jaki*. Bilingual handbill in English and Konkani for September 17, 1943 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi. (Third time.) 'A Brilliant Serio-Comedy in IV Acts.'

5.8 *Leopold ani Carolina vo Agxicho Tario*. Konkani Newspaper cutting with printed photo. Advertisement for May 11, 1945 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi.

The reverse side of this paper has an advertisement for C. Alvares's *Conn To Mali* to be staged on Sunday, April 22, 1945 at D.C. Mission Hall, Poona. There is also a portion of another advertisement "Boys Dramatic Company" *ditat Theatr 12ver Maiache 1945, G.I.P. Institute Library Hallant, Kalyan*.

Register 6

6.1 *Pandurang Kusmoncar*. (Tragi-Comedy II Actan.) Preview in Konkani newspaper. n.d.

6.2 *The Dignity of Labour/Vauraddi/Vaurachem Vhoddponn*. Handbill in English and Konkani for Tuesday April 9, 1940. In aid of the Society of Our Lady of Piety, Dabul. Band Director John Baptista Fernandes.

6.3 *Bebdo*. Handbill in Konkani and Portuguese. Saturday, February 13, 1943 at Sri Damodar Vidiabhuvan, Comba, Margao. Band; Alex and his Jolly Brothers. Post-Script: *Visada pela Censura*.

6.4 *Muzo Khapri Chakor*. (*Fars*) Time: One hour ten minutes. *Novean sudraila*: (Revised and rewritten): Bombay 5-3-1939. Dramatis Personae page indicates cast of five characters. Text. 18 pages.

6.5 *Restless Bombay Telegraphist*. Dramatis Personae. Scen: Bomboi-Girgaum and Marine Lines. Temp 45 minut. Composed at Ville Parle, 2 April 1913. Revised on 18/8/1941.

6.6 *Suseg Naslolo Bomboicho Telegrafist*. Text. 1-15.

6.7 *Kunbi Jakki*. Handbill for Friday November 21, 1941 at Princess, Bhangwadi. Same as 5.1.

6.8 *Cauz Celebre Kunbi Jakki Part Dusri*. Serio Comed III Actan. (28 vorsam uprant.) Dramatis Personae. Composed: Bombay 3-9-1941. Text. Pages 1-23 out of 37 have been cancelled. Pages 24-30 are missing.

6.9 *Cazar Mattarponnar*. (Revised) Fars ek Actan. Teomp 1 ½ horam vo 2 horam. Revised on 12-4-1942 and 3-4-1943. Text. 20 pages (on the even side of *Kunbi Jaki*).

6.10 *Times Weekly* newspaper, March 26, 1972, p. 6. "The Plays not the Thing". Article on the Konkani Teatro by Shishir Ray-Chaudhuri.

6.11 *Goan Ponch*. Advertisement in *The Goa Times* on December 2, 1944 p.4, for December 8, 1944 at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi. The play had four major comedians in the cast: Souza Ferrão, Anthony Mendes, Jacinto Vaz and Miguel Rod, besides A. Too-loo, Miss Julie, Tony and others.

6.12 *Goan Ponch: Sumanancho Jornal*. (Social, Partial, Moral, Inimical. A farsical sketch).

Zolmolo 1939 Mello 1940.

Dramatis Personae page indicates cast. *Teomp 2 horam*. The lower portion reflects some information from the handbill above: ... *5 ozar bounddi – Porgotnar Dr. Almozão Gomes. Fundar kelo 1902 – Nattac Zalo 1903. Facanddi Comed II actan*. Text. 21 pages. Composed Bombay 31/1/1941.

6.13 *Bebdo* February 13, 1943, Margao. Same as 6.3.

6.14 *Bebdo* (Revised). "A Striking Forceful Musical Drama in III Acts" or "A Great Moral Drama". "Thrilling and heart-rending scenes, A Life-Sketch of a Drunkard". The characters page indicates some cast members and the dates of performances:

- 1901: Goa National Dramatic Company.
- July 18, 1907 Don Carlos Dramatic Unity.
- Poona.
- Nairobi Club.

- Gaiety in aid of Bombay Temperance Society, Pres. Sir Balchandra Krishna.
- Gaiety, in aid of St. Ann's Temperance Society. Pres. Dr Acacio Gabriel Viegas.
- 1924 Margao.
- 1924 Sante Modd, Raia.
- 1924 Cansaulim.
- Panjim (1926 according to 1.19).
- 1916 (actually October 8, 1925) in honour of Joseph Baptista, Mayor of Bombay.

"*Hea teatrachea vorvim thodde bhov bebdeanim 'Batli' sorli – hem maca collit kelam.*"

6.15 *Bebdo* Text. (Revised) 34 pages. Remark at the end of the text: "Revised by adding two more scenes to the Original copy to make it more impressive and thrilling." Margao September 1, 1942.

6.16 *Bebdo* handbill in Konkani for the 9 p.m. show on Friday, January 25, 1957, at Princess Theatre Bhangwaddi, Bombay 2. Directed by A.R. Souza Ferrão.

6.17 *Bebdo/The Drunkard. 'Aiz Ratri', 'To-Night'* Handbill for Saturday March 26, 1932, at the Patronguer near the Hindu Temple at Vasco-Da-Gama. Theatre Presented by the Marganense Dramatic Club as entertainment for the Easter Festival.

Mentions that the play was staged more than fifteen times. It was last performed in Panjim under the patronage of the late H.E. Massano de Amorim, Governor General. Souza Ferrão Brothers, Minguel Dias, Balduino Araujo etc. Aably assisted by Mrs. Helena Dias, a Goan star actress whose songs are recorded by His Master's Voice.

6.18 *Dhottichem Kestaum*. Songs only.

6.19 *Revolt de Satary*. Songs only.

6.20 *Hirmigild. The Midnight Devil. Modiani Raticho Deunchar*. A terror-striking drama in 3 acts. An awe-inspiring drama in III acts. *Bhirancull drama III actan*. Note: This incident occurred in 1887 somewhere in Goa. *Ho agtecar disti podlolo 1887 vorsa*. "This play cost me only 4 days to complete and it is the only play that took me little time to complete." Composed in Margao, November 9, 1942. Dramatis Personae page, no text found here.

6.21 *Bebdo*. Brochure for the 9 p.m. show on Friday, January 25, 1957, at Princess Theatre Bhangwaddi, Bombay 2. Directed by A. R. Souza Ferrão. Handbill indicates the Cast of Characters, the programme of eight *podthe* (scenes) and 12 songs, Text of a song on the Goan Social Welfare League composed and sung by Anthony D'Sa and the addresses of the Leagues' Head office and branches.

6.22 *Kunbi Jakki*. Newspaper review of the performance on October 5 (year not available) at Princess Theatre, Bhangwaddi. In aid of Instituto Luso-Indiano under the presidentship of Dr Alban D'Souza. The Portuguese Consul and the Vice-Consul witnessed the drama. Actors included Souza Ferrão, I. Lopes, Tony Fernandes, John Lazarus and Anthony *Too-loo* sang comic songs.

6.23 Fernandes's Theatrical Works. List of 28 plays. (*Goan Ponch II* and *Tandulanchem Kestaum* are not included.)

6.24 *Padre José Vaz*. (Revised) Act *Poilo*. 2 scenes only.

6.25 *Goa Floods*. Text of the song.

6.26 *Goenche Vauraddi*. Printed text of the song. Dated *Bomboi*, 25-7-1939.

6.27 *Vauraddi vo Vaurachem Vhoddpon*. *Dramatis Personae*. *Godla Margão* 13-3-1933.

6.28 *Vauraddi*. Text pages 1-41. At the end of the text the post script has *Margão – Bombay* 13-3-33.

6.29 *Leopold ani Caroline vo Vauraddi*. Handbill for 'This Evening at 6 o'clock' vo 'aiz sanje sou vaztam' at St. Xavier's College Hall, in aid of the Goa Flood Relief Fund. Opening Chorus printed on the handbill. Band Director: D'Cruz; Stage Manager: Fithna Fernandes.

6.30 *Vauraddi (Vaurachem Vhoddpon) Lok-Lokit Theatr.* "The Dignity of Labour" or *Vauraddi*. A soul stirring and thrilling melo-drama in 3 acts. Handbill in Konkani and English for Tuesday April 9, 1940 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwaddi, in aid of the Society of Our Lady of Piety, Dabul (A Goan charitable institution for the destitute and helpless.)

6.31 *Communist Vait Munis vo Comunistancho Birancul Xevot vo Tragic End of Communists*. Comedy drama in 3 acts. Cast (*dramatis personae*). Time three hours. Composed in Bombay 7-1-1940. (There is only the cast page here, no text.)

6.32 *Kunbi Jakki*. Two Newspaper clippings of advertisements in Konkani for Friday, November 21, 1941 at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwaddi under the auspices of the Instituto Luso-Indiano. The reverse of one clipping mentions the office of *The Goa Mail* in an advertisement.

Fernandes's Theatrical Works

FERNANDESACHE

THEATR XHAPUNCHE ASSAT TE HE:

Volume Dusro	Volume Tisro
BATTARA Comed (II Part)	Geraldina Drama
Bebdo, Dram	Rukmibai Drama
Bele of Cavel Comed	Ranneanchem-Traisaum..Dram
Pandurong Kusmonncar. Comed-Drama	Faichi dusri bail Comeo
Volume Chouto	Volume Panchvo
Vauraddi Comed-Drama	Mozo khapri chakor Fars
Kunmbi Jaki Serio Comed.	Professor Leitauam Fars
Cazar / Matarponnar Fars	Bomboicho Telegrafist ... Fars

UTRAILEAT

DONGUI VOIZ....(Moliere) Comed.

TEG ZANN TUBBOKAR..... (Alexandre Dumas) Drama

Printed by A. V. D'CRUZ, at the
Ave Maria Press, New Sonapur, Bombay
and Published by Joao Agostinho
Fernandes, 508, Chira Bazar, Bombay 2

6.33 Letter regarding copyright.

No.F.6-21/41-E.

Government of India.

Department of Education, Health and Lands.

New Delhi, the 25th September 1941.

From: John Sargent, Esquire,
M.A., C.I.E.,
Joint Secretary

to the Government of India,

To
J.A.Fernandes, Esquire,
508, Sidhwa Building, Top Flat,
Chira Bazar, Bombay 2

Registration of copyright in a publication entitled "*Kunbi Jakki*".

Sir,

With reference to your letter dated the 11th September 1941, I am directed to say that there is no system of registration of copyright in British India. This right accrues automatically under the provisions of the Indian Copyright Act, 1914.

The two copies of your publication entitled "*Kunbi Jakki*" forwarded with your letter under reply have been retained.

I have the honour to be, Sir,
Your most obedient servant,
(Signed)
for Joint Secretary.
P.R.S.

Register 7

7.1 *Belle of Cavel*. "*Times of India*" newspaper photo. Dated November 11, 1943.

7.2 *Hirmigild*, *Evening News* newspaper, dated December 2, 1943, article regarding the golden jubilee of tiatr.

7.3 *Belle of Cavel*. Review in the *Evening News of India* newspaper, dated November 15, 1943.

7.4 Newspaper (Konkani) clipping. A. J. Rocha, Union Jack Dramatic Co. thanks João Agostinho for having taken the initiative to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Konkani Theatr...

7.5 Newspaper article (Konkani) *Goa Times* regarding Golden Jubilee of Konkani theatr. 11 December 1943.

7.6 Original article by João Agostinho Fernandes concerning the origin of Konkani theatr. Article published in the *Ave Maria* newspaper issue dated November 25, 1943.

7.7 *Hermigild* photo from a handbill.

7.8 *Kunbi Jakki* Konkani newspaper advert for Friday, November 21, 1941, at Princess Theatre, Bhangwaddi.

7.9 *Batkara de Panzari*. Handbill in English and Konkani for November 5, 1940.

7.10 *Pe José Vaz*. Introduction to the publication dated January 1, 1937.

7.11 *Batcara*. Pages 47 and 48 of the printed tiatr booklet of 1937.

7.12 *Kunbi Jakki*. Brochure for the performance on 7 February 1954 in aid of Archbishop's Charities Fund. Gives the full programme, Songs and Cast.

7.13 "*Kunbi Jacki*". All India Radio Programme Summary for 11 May 1953, 2045 hrs.-2115 hrs. Programme in Konkani. "*Kunbi Jacki*": Play written by late João Agostinho Fernandes: Radio adaptation and production by Tony Fernandes. The title seems to be anglicised for the Bombay audience.

7.14 *Kunbi Jakki*. Text. 1- 49. *Godla ani Buroila* Margao 12-8-1934.

7.15 *Kunbi Jakki* – "A brilliant Konkani comedy in Kunbi language together with songs, written by Mr. J. A. Fernandes, Dramatist and Playwright is now available to the Goan Public. This play scored a great success when staged both in Bombay and in Goa because of its fine poetic language and the moral that it bears. The exhilarating comedy should enlighten the despondent hearts; and the peculiarity of the Kunbi language itself should provoke splitting laughter, and be a source of lilting entertainment. Copies can be had from: Messrs. B. X. Furtado and L. M. Furtado, Dhobi Talao and *Goa Mail*, Thakurdwar, Bombay. Price six annas each." (Advertisement clipping from a newspaper pasted on page 48.) n.d.

7.16 *Kunbi Jakki*. "Theatr ani Muzg", *Ave Maria* newspaper article dated November 30, 1941, with comments on the play.

7.17 *Kunbi Jakki*. *The Goa Mail* newspaper, November 29, 1941, review of the performance on 21 November. Dr S R Mulgaumkar, F.R.C.S presided and Dr Alban D'Souza thanked him for his gracious presence. Cavalier A.P.J Fernandes, Acting Consul General for Portugal in Bombay, also witnessed the drama.

7.18 *Kunbi Jakki*. "*Evening News, Times of India*" newspaper preview information, news.

7.19 *Kunbi Jakki*. Review of the performance on November 21, 1941, in *The Gem* p.840.

7.20 *Kunbi Jakki*. Handbill in English and Konkani, for October 5 (the anniversary of the Portuguese Republic). Staged under the patronage His Excellency, the Consul General for Portugal, in aid of the Instituto Luso-Indiano. Handbill includes a glossary of Kunbi terms.

7.21 *Hermigild: The Midnight Devil*. Review in *The Goa Mail* Newspaper, January 1, 1944.

7.22 *Hermigild*. Text. 1-33. Dated Margao 9-11-1942.

- 7.23 Photo story of Bishop Kiwanuka's return to Uganda.
- 7.24 *The Belle of Cavel*. Concanim play in honour of Miss Clare Mendonca. Review in English in *The Goa Times* newspaper dated October 30, 1943, p9.
- 7.25 "*Cavelchi Sundori*" (Charni Road Baguint). (The Belle of Cavel.) Tribute to Miss Clara Mendonça B.A., B.T., J.P. honorary Presidency Magistrate. Handbill in Konkani for Tuesday, October 26, 1943 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi.
- 7.26 *The Belle of Cavel*. Text. 1-49.
- 7.27 "*Cavelchi Sundori*" (Charni Road, Baguint) *The Belle of Cavel*. Another copy of the handbill as in 7.24.
- 7.28 *The Belle of Cavel*. Review in English in *The Goa Mail* newspaper dated October 16, 1938. The drama was staged on September 27, 1938.
- 7.29 "*Belle of Cavel*". Review in Konkani newspaper dated October 1, 1938.
- 7.30 *The Belle of Cavel*. First page of the programme brochure for September 27, 1938. (See 11.3).
- 7.31 *Hermigild: The Midnight Devil*. Review in "*The Goa Mail*" Newspaper, January 1, 1944.
- 7.32 *The Belle of Cavel*. Article in *Catholic India*, December 1943, with photos, p. 16-17.

Register 8

8.1 Communist various titles:

- *Camillo the Communist*
- *Camillo Communist ani Tachi Vait Dekk (vo Moral)*
- *Communist and their false Doctrine*
- *(Devilish Communists)*
- *(Communist Tragedy)*
- *Communist Camillo (His Conversion)*
- *Camillo Noted Communist*
- *Godless Communists (And their Fatal Doctrine)*
- *Elvira Communist Cheddum*
- *Devak Volkonasle Communist Vaitt ani Ghatki*
- *Communist Camillo*
- *Communistanchi Tragedy*
- *Communist Camil ani Elvira*
- *Tragedy of Godless Communists*
- *Godless Communists*
- *Communist Ideology ends in Tragedy*
- *Repentant Communist*

8.2 Communist title page. Tragedy III *actanim* or Drama II *actanim*. Bombay 7-1-1940. Text. 1-47 (entire register). João Agostinho seems to have had no problems in writing the play but the title demanded a lot of attention and many trials and revisions.

Register 9

9.1 *Kunbi Jakicho Julgament. Kunbi Jaki Dusri Part*. Opera. Handbill for May 14 (1946) at Chitramandir, Damodar Temple, Margao.

9.2 *Kunbi Jakki II* play dedicated to Dr. Joseph Alban D'Souza, B.A., L.M., and S.J.P., Mayor of Bombay, 1945.

9.3 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Stage setting diagram for court scene.

9.4 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Text. Pages 1-34, (Songs 28-34). Note: There is a considerable difference in the language, particularly in the syntax used, between this copy and the text in Register 10.

9.5 *Pandurang Kusmonnkar*. Text. Handwritten by three different writers 31 pages (not numbered).

9.6 *Julgament de Kunbi Jakki*. Act III, scenes ix, x, xi. Dialogues in Portuguese, (interspersed with Konkani), translated from Konkani by Prof. D. D'Silva. Note: "The three final scenes of *Kunbi Jakki* (Second Part) can be enacted without the Authors permission – in all the Portuguese colonies wherever there are handful of Goans, in Africa, Angola, Lourenço Marques, Mozambique, Beira, also in Nairobi, Darsalam, and Mombasa and Goa".

9.7 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Music notation sheets for the songs of the play.

9.8 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Draft of a handbill. Includes a write-up by João Agostinho praising the *Kunbi* culture – songs and dances.

9.9 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Handbill in Portuguese and Konkani for 10 p.m. on May 14, 1946 at the Shri Chitra Mandir, Comba, Margao. Contains an Important footnote: "*Visada pela Censura*".

9.10 *Kunbi Jakki II* draft of a handbill pasted on the back cover of the register.

Register 10

10.1 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Handbill in Konkani and Portuguese announcing the forthcoming staging in Margao.

10.2 *Kunbi Jakki II*. Text. 1-41 revised copy with *cants* (songs) included. Written in Bombay, September 3, 1941. Revised at Margao March 27, 1945.

Register 11

11.1 *Belle of Cavel*. Handbill in English and Konkani for April 19, 1938 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwaddi.

11.2 *Belle of Cavel*. Text. 1-38 with *cants*. Includes a song in English on page 21a.

11.3 *Belle of Cavel*. Twelve-page programme brochure for September 27. Includes titles of the songs and the respective singers.

11.4 Song by A.R. Souza Ferrão.

11.5 *Belle of Cavel*. Handbill for April 19, 1938.

Register 12

12.1 *The Goa Mail* newspaper article dated September 13, 1947. Obituary of João Agostinho Fernandes. Died on Friday, August 29, 1947 at Goculdas Tejpal Hospital, Bombay.

12.2 *Goan Ponch II*. Text. 1-26. Time 2 hours. Composed at Margao July 3, 1945.

Register 13

13.1 *Tandulanchem Kestaum/Famad Goencho Trio/Batcar-Xettcar-Posorkar*. Drama II *Actan*. *Dramatis Personae*. Text. Handwritten by Tonybab. Margao March 12, 1945.

13.2 *Tandulanchem Kestaum*. A fragment numbered page 16 has a variation in the ending of the play. This fragment has been signed by João Agostinho and dated Margao July 16, 1944.

Register 14

14.1 *Geraldina* a striking religious drama in 2 acts. Dated Bombay, April 14, 1925. Text. 1-47 (full register). The *Dramatis Personae* indicates names of actors. The play incorporates 27 songs.

14.2 *Eoc Goenkar B.A. Exam Passar*. 'Theatro' Draft of advertisement.

Register 15

15.1 *Vauraddi*, melodrama in 3 acts. Handbill in English and Konkani for April 9, 1940. Princess, Bhangwadi. Text, in the full register, copied by Anthony Bab.

Number 16 file: 15 miscellaneous items

16.1 The First Goan Actress. Sra. Regina Fernandes. Printed photo with a short description in Konkani describing her pioneering appearance on the Konkani stage. The page is taken from a printed book.

16.2 *Kunbi Jakki*. *Goa Times* newspaper report of the staging on Friday at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi, in aid of Instituto Luso Indiano. Dr. and Mrs. S. R. Mulgaonkar and Dr. Alban D'Souza were the guests.

16.3 *Bebdo*. *Soth Uloi* newspaper report on February 2, 1957 to honour 'Pai Theatrist' João Agostinho Fernandes, and the staging of the play.

16.4 *Bebdo*. *Indian Express* newspaper report on the staging and the function.

16.5 *The Belle of Cavel vo Sundor Cheddum Cavelchem* (Bombay). Costa's 'Sunshine' Building, Margao, on May 15, 1932 (Feast of the Holy Spirit). *Comed! Theatr! Comed!* Discloses that Lucasinho Rebeiro was his companion in founding Konkani teatro.

16.6 *Batcara*. Galley proof of a review (that would appear on Saturday May 29 – pencilled remark on the side; year not indicated, could be 1909 as the play was first published on January 1, 1909.)

16.7 The full list of the works of João Agostinho Fernandes, with dates of the first performance of some of them.

16.8 Handbill of the show of *Kunbi Jaki* held in Margao on May 14. (Year not mentioned).

16.9 Handbill of the show of *Belle of Cavel* held on April 19, 1938 at the Princess Theatre, Kalbadevi, Bombay.

16.10 A personal letter received by João Agostinho, praising his tiatr *Batcara*.

16.11 A general write-up on Konkani tiatr with special mention of João Agostinho Fernandes by Cecília D'Souza, appearing in the *Times of India* dated March 25, 1958.

16.12 A handbill of the show of *Vauraddi* held at Princess Theatre (Bhangwadi), Bombay on April 9, 1940.

16.13 A general write-up on the Konkani tiatr with special mention of João Agostinho by Lambert Mascarenhas, appearing in *Goa Tribune*, dated January 10, 1960.

16.14 A write-up on João Agostinho Fernandes, appearing in *Soth Uloi* dated January 12, 1957.

16.15 A specimen of the musical notes of the tiatr *Geraldina*.

Plays of João Agostinho Fernandes

Acquired by the Goa Konkani Akademi, from his son Anthony (Tonybab)

Fernandes. This listing is as located in the registers. Register numbers have been re-arranged by the author (RF) after analysis, to make them faithful to João Agostinho's numbers and dates of composition.

Register No. 1 (jaf)

1. *Batcara – Part I*. Printed booklet pasted in the register, 1904.
2. *Batcara – Part II*. Printed booklet pasted in the register, 1905.
3. *Pandurang Kusmonncar* – Play in 2 Acts. (Remark: 'See revised copy.') 1910.
4. *Belle of Cavel* – Play in 2 Acts. (Remark: 'See revised copy') 1893.
5. *Bebdo* – Play in 2 Acts (This play has been revised: 'See revised copy') 1898/ 29 August 1901.
6. *Geraldina* – Play in 3 Acts, 1925.
7. *Noureamcho Bazar* – One-act farce. Performed on August 21, 1927.
8. *Professor Leitao*. One-act farce. 1914.

Register No. 2 (jaf)

9. *Revolt De Sattari* – Play in 2 Acts. 1897.
10. *Rukmibai* – Play in 2 Acts. 1926.
11. *Dongui Voiz* – One-act Farce. (Translated from Moliere.)
12. *American Minstrels vo American Khapreachem (Band) Minstrel*. 23-9-1931.
13. *Cazar Matarponnar* – One-act farce. 1897, revised in 1942 and 1943

Register No. 3 (jaf)

14. *Joséfina* – Play in 2 Acts. 1932.
15. *Vauraddi*. (Cancelled, revised, see new book.) 1933.
16. *The Three Musketeers (Teg Zan Bondukkar)*. Poili Part. 3 scenes only.

Register No. 4 (jaf)

17. *Kunbi Jaki* 12-8-1934.
Vauraddi or *Leopold and Carolina* (Shows signs of changes, revision.)

Register No. 5 (jaf)

18. *Kunbi Jaki Part II* (Prompting copy, with the remark: 'Cancelled, See revised copy'.) 1941.

Pandurang Kusmonkar. (Revised version rewritten on July 17, 1941 at Bombay.)

Tandulanchem Kestaum (on even pages). Cancelled. See revised copy.

Register No. 6

19. *Muzo Khapri Chakor* – One-act farce. Revised and rewritten. March 5, 1939.

20. *Restless Bombay Telegraphist*. One-act farce. (Revised copy.)

Cazar Matarponnar. One-act farce. Revised copy, 12-4-1942 and 3-4-1943.

Kunbi Jaki II. Play in 3 Acts. Mutilated, pages crossed, missing. (Remark: 'See next book'.)

21. *Goan Ponch* – One-act farce, Part I. 1941.

22. *Padre José Vaz* (Act I only)

Bebdo (Revised and extended). Fair copy

Vauraddi or Leopold and Carolina – Play in 3 Acts. Fair copy

Register No. 7

Kunbi Jaki. (Fair copy)

23. *Hirmigild* – Play in 3 Acts. 1942.

Belle of Cavel – (Fair copy)

Register No. 8

24. *Communist* – Play in 3 Acts

Register No. 9

Kunbi Jaki Part II Play in 3 Acts. Including three final scenes in Portuguese.

Pandoorang Kusmonkar

Register No. 10

Kunbi Jaki Part II Fair copy

Register No. 11

Belle of Cavel. (Prompting copy)

Register No. 12

25. *Goan Ponch* – Part II – play in 2 Acts.

Register No. 13.

26. *Tandulanchem Kestaum* – Play in 2 Acts. 1945.

Register No. 14

Geraldina. (Prompter's copy.) 1925.

Register No. 15

Vauraddi or *Leopold-Carolina* – (Prompting Copy)

No. 16. File with miscellaneous material.

A list of the fifteen items is provided in the file. The text of the following plays is not found in the collection:

27. *Sociedade de Rom Tom* (no copy, stolen).
28. *Mothes Tiu* (translated) no copy.
29. *Henry VIII* (translated) no copy (lost).
30. *Dhotichem Kestaum*, 1908. (No copy here. The play was published in Vol. I on January 1, 1937.) Songs copied in Register 6.

Plays arranged

The arrangement below is as per the year of composition and source location or status. (Note: ** Indicates fair copy. # Indicates that reference material was used to determine chronology.)

Title, register number(s) and remarks found in the registers.

1. *Belle of Cavel* – Play in 2 Acts, Bombay: 1893. 1 revised; 7 **; 11 prompting
2. *Revolt De Sattari* – Play in 2 Acts, Bombay: April 1897. 2**
3. *Cazar Matarponnar* – One-act farce, Bombay: April 13, 1897; revised April 12, 1942 and April 3, 1943. 2 revised; 6 **
4. *Bebdo* – Play in 2 Acts, Bombay: 1898/August 29, 1901; revised Margao September 1, 1942. 1 revised; 6 **
5. *Batcara* – Part I, 1904. (Printed 1909, booklet pasted in the register.) Revised July 15, 1932 and reprinted in Volume I, 1937. 1 revised.
6. *Batcara* – Part II, 1905. (Printed 1916, booklet pasted in the register.) #. 1 ** #

7. *Dhotichem Kestaum*, 1908(?) performed at Gaiety Theatre, Bori Bunder, on Thursday, July 16, 1908. # Printed in Vol. I, 1937 along with *Batckara* and *Ven. Padr José Vaz*. (No copy here.) The songs are in R6. Six songs only. #

8. *Pandurang Kusmonncar* – Play in 2 Acts, June 4, 1910; rewritten Bombay: July 17, 1941. 1 revised; 5 **; 9 prompting.

9. *Nid Naslolo Bomboicho Telegraphist*, farce, Bombay: April 8, 1913. 2 revised; 6 **

10. *Professor Leitao*. One-act farce, Bombay: May 1, 1914. 1 **

11. *Geraldina* – Bombay: April 14, 1925. 1 **; 14 prompting

12. *Rukmibai* – Play in 2 Acts, Margao: June 1926. 2 **

13. *Noureamcho Bazar* – One-act farce. Performed in Margao August 21, 1927. #. 1 ** #

14. *Dhongui Voiz* – One-act farce, translated from Moliere, performed in Margao in 1931.#.2** #

15. *American Minstrels/Khapreachem Band*, Margao: September 23, 1931. 2**

16. *Joséfina* – Play in 2 Acts, Margao: 10 August 1932. 3 **

17. *Vauraddi* or *Leopold ani Carolina*, Margao: March 13, 1933. 3 revised; 4 altered; 6 **

18. *Kunbi Jaki*, Margao: August 12, 1934. 4 altered; 7 **

19. *Padre José Vaz*, Margao: March 16, 1936. 6 fragment

20. *Mozo Khapri Chakor* – One-act farce, Rewritten Bombay: March 5, 1939. 6 **

21. *Deu Naslolo Communist*, Bombay: January 7, 1940. 8 **

22. *Goan Ponch*, Part I, One-act farce, Bombay: January 31, 1941. 6 **

23. *Kunbi Jaki* Part II, Bombay: September 3, 1941; revised at Margao March 27, 1945. 5 cancelled; 6 revised; 9+Portuguese 3 scenes**; 10 **

24. *Hirmigild*, Play in 3 Acts, Margao: November 9, 1942. 7 **

25. *Tandulanchem Kestaum*, Play in 2 Acts, Margao, July 14 to 16, 1944. Revised (?) 12 March 1945. 5 cancelled; 13 **

26. *Goan Ponch Part II*, a farcical sketch in 2 Acts, Margao: July 3, 1945. 12**

27. *Sociedade de Rom Tom* (no copy), composed before 1909, as it is mentioned on the title page of *Batcara I*. # Stolen from him.

28. *Teg Bondukkar* (translation from Dumas). No full copy, n.d. 3 (fragment)

29. *Mothes Tiu* (translated), no copy, n.d. No copy.

30. *Henry VIII* (translated) no copy, n.d. Lost.



5 Other tiatrists

THE KONKANI tiatr fraternity has a very large membership. Hundreds of persons have been involved in the tiatr in different capacities — as writers, directors, singers, comedians, musicians, prompters, stage managers, contractors and in several allied jobs. The inter-dependence is undeniable; but of all the personnel the composer is undoubtedly of primary importance. A good script is the essential ingredient for a successful drama.

As seen earlier, not all dramas were written down fully. As rehearsals and performances progressed, adjustments and changes were made in the script. Comedians would add their impromptu bits on the stage. But every little correction or interpolation would not necessarily be jotted down.

The drama was normally staged for one season or two — after Easter and after the Monsoon, the season which sees heavy rains lash Goa and disrupts normal life between June to September.

In many cases the scripts were then forgotten. Very few tiatrists found it necessary to publish their plays. Perhaps rightly

so, because the Konkani readership of yesteryears was fed more on romances — novels — and newspapers for its reading habits. Tiatrs were for audio-visual enjoyment. With the proliferation of entertainment available through the electronic media, the reading habit has further deteriorated now.

Consequently, even though thousands of tiatrs have been produced over the last century, only a few are available in print.

Realising this awkward situation, attempts were made during the centenary celebrations to have some representative plays printed. As a result of these efforts, the Goa Konkani Akademi has published ten tiatrs in two volumes till date.

The first volume covered the works of later tiatrists, as their scripts were more accessible and the writers were still alive when the collection was being compiled.¹

The authors had a say in determining which of their plays could be published in this collection. The second volume contained plays of the first generation of tiatrists.²

Here the factors that came into consideration were the reputation of the plays chosen by the editor and the availability of the scripts. A third volume was also planned to project the skills of the non-stop tiatrists, but this compilation has not yet seen the light of day.

The tiatrs printed in the first volume are: *Kedna Udetolo To Dis* (When Will That Day Dawn?) by C. Alvares; Remie Colaço's *Atancho Temp* (Present Times); *23 Vorsam* (23 Years) by John Claro Fernandes; *Vavraddi* (Worker) by Prem Kumar (Peter D'Costa), and M. Boyer's *Ekuch Rosto* (Only One Way).

From among the first generation tiatrists the following have been represented: *Kunnbi Jaki* (Jaki the Indigenous/Native) by João Agostinho Fernandes;³ *Amchea Xeatachi Pavnni* (The Auction of Our Fields) by Aleixinho de Candolim; J.P. Souzalin's *Saibin-nincheo Sat Dukhi* (Our Lady's Seven Sorrows); *Gouio Put* (Idiotic Son) by A.R. Souza Ferrão; and Kid Boxer's *Somzonment Chuk Zali* (Misunderstanding).

This chapter attempts to locate the artistes in the phases of the development of Konkani drama and briefly evaluates their contribution to the tiatr.

Phases of the tiatr

Any attempt to classify the eras of tiatr development must take into consideration several criteria. In the case of Konkani tiatr, this job is made difficult because there have not been many attempts to categorise these phases.

There does, however, exist some consensus among tiatr exponents that the best era of Konkani drama was during the active lifetime of the great scriptwriters and comedians. This period could be located roughly from the mid-1930s to the mid-1970s.

Within this period too, there is one great historical event, the Liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule in December 1961 which marks a turning point for many aspects of Goan history and culture. Liberation also meant freedom from the shackles of censorship that was in force for much of the Portuguese regime in the 20th century. It was not altogether lifted though, as many of the Portuguese laws still continued in Goa. But there was a feeling of freedom that gave wing to artistic creativity.

One of the indicators of this freedom was the possibility of staging political tiatrs, a category that was unthinkable during colonial occupation. In Chapter 3 we have already dealt with the rise of political tiatrs. But to be fair enough to the media of the pre-Liberation era, it must be pointed out that newspapers in Portuguese and Konkani did carry reviews and articles concerning tiatrs.

Pedro Correia Afonso, Naguesh Karmali and Sanches De Sousa were among the writers and critics who contributed to *A Vida e Vauraddeancho Ixtt*. Colonial Goa's Portuguese-run radio station Emissora de Goa broadcast an unprecedented special programme lasting almost two hours as a tribute to Minguel Rod when he passed away on October 4, 1955. (Da Costa, *Tiatrist*, 16).

The Middle Eastern oil boom came in the last part of this phase. With the meteoric rise of the economy in the Gulf region, Goans found a new source of employment – one that would also have its impact by way of socio-cultural changes in Goa.

Emigration to Bombay, the rest of British India, and the colonies in Africa, had provided employment in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Now the boom in Gulf job opportunities, particularly for unskilled labour, provided a channel of income whose

end-effect in Goa would do much to obliterate class distinctions that existed for several centuries. Many who had been economically poor, now had the financial power to purchase properties, build stately houses, own television sets — as a status symbol at that time — have a telephone or wear Rayban sunglasses.

Meanwhile, the situation in Bombay too had changed for Goans. Goans no longer looked to Bombay as the land of opportunity. Housing had become difficult. Many of the traditional clubs (*kudds*) had closed down due to degraded buildings or because the construction industry had bought them off. The film music industry, which had been a stronghold of Goans, had fallen into crisis. Goans had started relocating back to Goa or moving to the suburbs of Bombay or emigrating abroad to the United States, Canada and Britain.

The changes in Bombay and Goa resulted in the gradual decrease in the number of tiatrists available in Bombay and a rise in their activities in Goa. And with the entry of the Middle East factor, there was now a prospect and a demand for entertaining Goans in the Gulf region. The tiatr fraternity did not miss this opportunity. Many of the tiatrists started touring the Gulf and performing musical shows and tiatrs. A glance at the *curriculum vitae* of several tiatrists indicates their visits to the Gulf States of Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai and the other regions of the United Arab Emirates.

Having considered all these factors we can attempt to attach broad labels to the phases. Some of the artistes who have worked for more than fifty years may have their work spread over two or more phases. The phases would be:

- The Early Phase from 1892 to 1930s.
- The Golden Phase:
 - The first part from the 1930s to 1961 (Liberation of Goa).
 - The second part from 1961 to the 1970s.
- The Contemporary and the Non-Stop Tiatr phase.

The Early Phase from 1892 to 1930s

Dramatists of this phase are the pioneers and the immediate beneficiaries. These names have been listed here as most of them have

not been included in other sources.⁴

These artistes are Lucasinho Ribeiro, João Agostinho Fernandes, Caitaninho Fernandes, and Agostinho Mascarenhas as the pioneers. Some of the early ladies on stage were Mrs. Regina Fernandes, Ms. Carmelina Fernandes, Mrs. N. Gomes, Mrs. Luiza Maria Fernandes, Miss Sophia Fernandes and Miss Anne Fernandes. (See also Chapter 3.)

Among the gentlemen we find Policarpo Mendonça, N. M. Fernandes, A. J. F. Dias, St. Ann de Souza, Minguel D'Souza, D. Fernandes, E. B. Vaz, S. X. Vaz, F. X. Pereira, S. Fernandes, J. M. Nunes Pinto, A. Diniz, Roque Rodrigues, F. D'Souza, Joaquim Pereira, J. L. Rodrigues, Pascoal Fernandes, Venancio Fernandes, J. A. Baptista, Rosario Pereira, L. C. Afonso, Sebastiao Gabriel de Souza (*Karachiwalla*), Anthony Toloo, John Lazaro D'Souza, João Luis Carvalho, *Affonceka* (Assiss João Avelino Afonso), Dennis Simoes, J. Aquila, A. J. Rocha (*Saib Rocha*) and many more.

From among the above artistes we have seen the importance of Lucasinho Ribeiro and João Agostinho Fernandes as the founders of the Konkani stage. *Karachiwalla* translated Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, *As You Like It*, *Winter's Tale* and *Hamlet* into Konkani and presented them in Bombay. He also composed *Carlos Magno ani Bara Par Fransache*, *Kusttoba*, *Roldao Xinvachea Pottant*. He published three plays and two collections of songs.

John Lazaro produced *Romeo and Juliet*. His *Godd Vikh* had thirty parts and the entire play had to be performed over a stretch of three days. *Saib Rocha* (1895-1972) wrote more than sixty plays. Some of his reputed plays were *Romeo and Juliet*, *Dubavi Ghorcarn*, *Noketr Italia Xarachem*, *Gupit Cazar*, *Mog ani Krim*, *Calsad Nouro*, *Ghor Zanvoim*, *Son of Jerusalem*, *Ankvarancho Sounsar*, et cetera (Da Costa, *Tiatrist*, 24).

The Golden Phase from the 1930s to the 1970s

Some of the tiatrists who rose to fame during this era were: Rogaciano D'Souza, Jack Aquila, Ernesto Rebelo, *Saib Rocha*, John Battlu, J.P. Souzalin, J.R. Fernandes (*Fithna*), Dioginho D'Melo, Luis Borges, A.R. Souza Ferrão, Aleixinho de Candolim, John F. Costa Bir, *Champion* Alvares, Kid Boxer, Young Menezes, Minguel Rod,

S. T. Miranda, A. M. B. Rose, Master Vaz, Freddy Barboza, Vincent de Saligao, et cetera.

By the 1950s, there came on stage another generation of tiatrists such as C. Alvares, Remie Colaço, Prem Kumar, M. Boyer and John Claro Fernandes. These tiatrists were instrumental in maintaining the high standards that the founders expected of them.

Among the ladies, Carlota D'Souza and Ermelinda Rocha were later joined by Miss Mohana, Shalini, Filomena Braz, Carmen Rose, Cecília Machado, Antoneta Mendes, Ophelia Cabral, Jessie Dias and Betty Fernandes.

With the exception of João Agostinho, all the other artistes mentioned in the two volumes of *Tiatrancho Jhelo* began their work during the golden phase and their plays are briefly dealt with here.

J. P. Souzalin

J. P. Souzalin was the senior most among these. Souzalin was born at Calvim, Aldona, Goa on March 22, 1904 and his real name was José Pascoal Fernandes. He received his primary education in Portuguese at the local school. He was interested in drama from his childhood and used to organise children's plays.

In Bombay he joined *Saib Rocha's* Union Jack Dramatic Company and played the role of 'Romeo' successfully. In another play, he acted as 'Souzalin' and came to be known by the character's name.

Souzalin composed over forty plays. He was likened to Hollywood's great director Cecil B. De Mille for his directorial abilities. It was considered to be a matter of prestige to stage dramas at the Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi.

One indication of his reputation is that he presented three performances of the same tiatr, *Sam Francis Xavier*, in a single working day, November 25, 1969, at this theatre.

His *Hem Asa Tem* was staged at the same theatre 27 times. As seen in Chapter 3, he had a flair for writing religious dramas. Some of his other plays are: *Dream of Lisbon*, *Hem Asa Tem*, *Dadlo Vhodd vo Ostor*, *Paichi Chuk vo Mainchi*, *Oxench Kelear Sudhrot Goem*, *Sezarnik ho go Dodlacho*, *Khotti Songot*, *Filomenachem Sapon*,

Conde de Monte Cruzo, Aum to Mapxenkar, Xeutteak Polloun Justis, Deko Xett Uska Aurot, Tiklem Cheddum, et cetera.

J. P. Souzalin's *Saibinnincheo Sat Dukhi* printed in the *Tiatrancho Jhelo* is a religious drama based on the sufferings of the Virgin Mary. It is remarkable for the quality of its language that is lyrical, mystical, and metaphorical. In a rare blending of the biblical, historical and personalised fictional events, Souzalin takes the audience on a compelling dramatic experience.

It is reported that Souzalin was among the finest of set designers, one of the few Konkani playwrights who also attended the Marathi, Gujarati, Parsi and other plays and improved his own stagecraft. Souzalin passed away on July 18, 1970.

A. R. Souza Ferrão

August Remédios Souza Ferrão was called 'Man of a Thousand Faces' for his versatility as a tiatrist. He was born on June 1, 1909 at Ambora, Salcete, in Goa. His interest in dramatics developed from his childhood. He learnt music and was able to play the violin.

His first role was as a princess, Diana, in Basílio Furtado's *Nad-dponn Amigachem* staged at Harmonia Theatre in Margao. Gathering a group of children, he then started presenting plays in a house. Bedsheets were used as curtains and benches to erect the stage. To pay for the musicians and the lamps, a tray would be passed around for a collection.

Though his father was himself producing plays, he did not favour the son's involvement in theatre. But Souza Ferrão persisted, even if he got a beating for his indulgence in dramas.

Souza Ferrão's first major stage performance was in João Agostinho's play *Geraldina* staged twice in Goa in 1927. He was then sent to join musical bands twice but did not stay long in such service and landed in Bombay. As he was already known to João Agostinho, Souza Ferrão started acting in his tiatrs and soon received offers from other directors such as *Saib Rocha*, J.P.Souzalin, Ernest Rebello, John Lazarus, *et cetera*.

He formed the Jolly Brothers Dramatic Club and performed many shows in aid of churches, schools and hospitals. Souza Ferrão was a great comedian, singer and painter. He also acted in

six Konkani films. Though not a prolific writer, his prowess lay in his ability to take up diverse roles such as a hero, a Hindu, a Goan tribal Kunbi, an Arab, an old man and even as a flirtatious young girl. The plays he composed were *Almam Sorgar Vetat*, *Patch-Patch*, *Kazari Okol*, *Ghatkeponn*, *Zotkaxi*, *Santan Baudi*, *Visvasghat*, and *Gouio Put*.

Gouio Put (Idiotic Son) is a comedy that builds its humour on the skilful use of language and events. It presents the themes of marriage, smartness of cooks, greed and retribution. The moral lesson in the play hinges on interpretation of ambiguous phrases in the Konkani language.

Souza Ferrão died in Bombay in 1978.

Aleixinho de Candolim

Aleixinho de Candolim was born on July 9, 1913 at Candolim, Bardez in Goa and baptised as João Baptista Aleixinho Fernandes. He started composing and singing Konkani songs in village concerts when he was sixteen years old. By the time he was 22, he had written his first play *Putanchi Duddvanchi Ass ani Avoichem Disgras*. It was staged at Candolim on August 15, 1935, on the occasion of a feast. His reputation as a composer and singer brought him invitations to participate in tiatrs all over Goa.

In 1939, Aleixinho went to Bombay in search of a job. He was soon requested to sing in tiatrs. He featured in *German Pinto's* tiatr on November 11, 1939 and *Cruz Jazzwalla's* on 6 January 1940. J. P. Souzalin booked him for *Bhott Ailo Pomburpechea Festak* staged on February 5, 1940.

Aleixinho vocalised two new songs, "Ostori" and "Goenchea Alfani aile Bab", which were well appreciated. But because he could not get a suitable job in Bombay, Aleixinho returned to Goa. He continued writing tiatrs and would visit Bombay with his troupe twice a year to perform them.

His significant contribution to the tiatrs in Bombay is in giving them a wider geographical performance area. Before his visits to perform in Bombay, most tiatrs were limited to being staged in or around the Dhobitalao locality. Aleixinho took them further away to Dadar, Mahim and Parel and even Poona (Mazarello, 39).

In all, Aleixinho composed 27 tiatrs. Three of these, *To Bavtto Dhormancho*, *Ram Ram Bhaoji* and *Sousarant Konn Konnancho* were widely acclaimed and ran to houseful shows.

Most of his dramas dealt with social themes and he tried to uphold morals through his plays. *Amchea Xetachi Pavnni* was the last of his tiatrs to be performed in Bombay. Aleixinho is remembered for the perfectionism he infused into his roles and his voice is still heard through some of the songs on His Master's Voice gramophone records.

He passed away in Goa on July 16, 1963.

Amchea Xetachi Pavnni (The Auction of Our Field) is, surprisingly, a violent tragedy, rare in the realm of Konkani tiatrs. But, the form is suitable for the themes that the playwright attempts to explore. The atmosphere of growing conflicts and impending consequences are constructed in this play from the initial action itself.

The theme of landlord-versus-tenant was not new to Konkani literature, as it had been dealt with in dramas and novels before.⁵ It was a burning issue for society, particularly when feudalistic landlords and their sons exploited the illiterate tenants. As portrayed in the play, they could get petty thieves jailed, attempt to molest daughters of poor tenants, arrogantly proclaim their powers as landlords, exert their authority as presidents of the local comunidade – the land holding body – and exercise their powers as the *regidores*, a quasi judicial officer's post.⁶ They could prevent poor children from schooling.

In a significant reflection of communal harmony of the times the role of a supervisor is allotted to a Hindu, and he is portrayed as a benevolent character who helps the poor tenants. The landlord could go to the extent of kicking tenants — a very inhuman action.

All the exploitative and harsh actions of the landlords only serve to fuel resistance among the tenants. Later deeds of the proprietors propel the tenants' desire for revenge. A wand, which property owners carried as a sign of authority, and sometimes to beat tenants with, is reversed in its role and used to hit the landlord on the head.

The scale of physical violence is surprising for a Konkani tiatr. Correspondingly, the issues raised are forcefully posed for reflec-

tion. In contrast to the corrupt nature of the rich and powerful, the play also juxtaposes the filial affection of the poor children.

The foreman represents those who hold on to values even at the cost of personal loss. While a reader or viewer may not acquiesce with revenge, the final bloodshed compels one to reflect on the futility of oppressive institutions and systems in society. This play is part of a theatre of protest and seems to foresee the Brazilian director Augusto Boal's (1931-2009) *Theatre of the Oppressed*.

Kid Boxer

Caetano Manuel Pereira was the baptismal name of *Kid Boxer* who was born on February 17, 1917 at Siolim, Goa. His childhood naughtiness earned him the nickname 'Boxer' which was adapted to the stage name of *Kid Boxer*.

He was a member of the famous Kid-Young-Rod trio. The second member was Young Menezes, a jet-speed singer, who once sang a self-composed song of 500 words without pausing to renew his breath. Minguel Rod, one of the greatest Konkani tiatrists, completed the triumvirate.

This triad was a force to reckon with in singing at tiatrs, as Kid was highly skilled at fashioning sarcastic songs loaded with proverbs. He was also an exponent at preparing instant retorts at singing debates opposite Aleixinho de Candolim.

Kid Boxer's first tiatr was *Ostori* but *Kidachem Sopon* became the most popular of his dramas. Some of the other tiatrs by Kid Boxer were: *Editor Ponch de Bombaim*, *Ankvar ani Kazari*, *Zata tem Boreak*, *Bhoinn*, *Militar*, *Zulum*, *Amchim Natalam*, *Goa*, *Bankruttan Bankrutt*, *Fuddar*, *Mhozo Oprad*, *Adeus vo Nimnni Bhatt*.

Somzonment Chuk Zali explores the human psyche and the tendency of prejudice that leads to terrible misunderstandings. The drama also displays his quirky ability to combine the serious with the humorous without being melodramatic.

C. Alvares

Celestino Santana Francisco Alvares, born on August 1, 1924, was up on the stage by the age of seven years. He sang a comic song in

a tiatr staged by his father Caetano. His cousin *Champion* (Sebastiao) Alvares penned the lyrics for the youngster.

When C. Alvares reached Bombay in search of a livelihood, *Champion* Alvares introduced the teenager in his drama *Bhattkar Goencho ani Cuzner Bombaimcho* in 1942. The five songs vocalised by C. Alvares were composed by *Champion*. His singing mesmerised the audience and continued to do so throughout his life. He started writing lyrics for his own songs: solos, duos, duets, trios, quartets, quintets and even sextets (John Gomes, *Tribute*, 17).

In keeping with the trend at that time, C. Alvares composed all the 25 side-show songs along with *cantos* for his maiden play *Atam Zanvuim Tuzo Hanv*. This tiatr was staged in 1944 when he was barely twenty years old.

In a career spanning sixty years, Alvares composed 104 tiatrs and was working on the next when the final curtain came down on his life on February 27, 1999. He could compose a full drama in a single day (Naik, "Pasha", 3).

Some of his most successful tiatrs were: *Nirdducaí, Nouro Foslo Saguadi Diun, Tor Ho Tiatrist?, Zaum Babddo Sudhorlo, Atancheo Suno, Ankoar vo Kazari, Bailanchi Rit, Jurament, Conn Guneaukari, Manvoddechem Sutt, Cortub Avoichem, Ghorcarn Maim, Mosteponn, Bail de Tarvotti, Bicari Nosai, Conn To Mali? Kednam Udetolo To Dis, Goencho Mog, Dr. Simon, Patki Nhoi Ghatki, Xezari Combo, et cetera*.

He performed not only in Bombay and Goa but also in the Middle East, East Africa and England. Many of his dramas focussed on upholding social values and highlighted the role of mothers.

Kednam Udetolo To Dis? (When Will That day Dawn?) advocates respect for the poor, the handicapped and the marginalized. It espouses breaking down of caste and class barriers concerning marriage. Like João Agostinho, Alvares projects the abilities of the marginalised to achieve fame and proficiency when given the opportunity of education.

In his very first drama, Alvares highlighted a song titled "Tiatristank Movali Kiteak Mhunttat?" (Why are tiatristis labelled as miscreants?) As seen earlier some dramas featured debates through songs, and these normally involved stinging criticism of the opponent. Sometimes the audience would react violently to such denigration and even hurl footwear at the stage to show their

disapproval. Alvares sought to project the image of the tiatrist as a gentleman.

According to his nephew, Fr. Dominic Alvares, this aim was one of Alvares's lifelong obsessions.⁷ He was therefore a gentleman himself in all ways: he was a non-smoker and a teetotaler in real life, in contrast with some other tiatrists who were addicted to liquor. He was a sartorial perfectionist and his on and off stage vestments were impeccably tailored (Gomes, *Tribute*, 19).

Having encouraged ladies to resume acting on the Konkani stage, Alvares's duets with several of these actresses became legendary. Specially for them, he scripted an all-ladies show *Khuimcho Sacrament*. His support put an end to the prevailing social taboo, which prevented women from becoming professional tiatrists and gave them respectability. Thanks to him, today's teenage actresses can take to the Konkani stage without diffidence.

Alvares's involvement with Konkani performances was not limited to the stage. His participation was felt indispensable in four Konkani films produced over a fifteen-year period from 1963.⁸ Like Hindi matinee idol Dev Anand, C. Alvares had retained his youthful looks even after turning a septuagenarian (Naik, "Pasha" 3). To sum up, it can be categorically stated that C. Alvares fully deserved the sobriquets of being titled "Ace Writer, Ace Director, Evergreen Hero and King of Duets".⁹

Remmie Colaço

Born on September 19, 1925, Remédios Januário Colaço learnt musical notations and started playing the violin at the parish school in Sanvordem. When he went to continue his studies in Bombay at the age of 15, he made his debut on the Konkani stage while still a student at St. Joseph's English School, Wadala.

The Jolly Boys of Sewree cast him in a leading female role in *Baguintlem Ful*. In their next venture *Sotachem Zoit*, Remmie's singing was observed and praised by professional tiatrists like Souza Ferrão, Dioginho de Mello, Kid Boxer and others who were taking part in the drama staged at St. Xavier's School Hall, Dhobitalao.

Subsequently, he first acted on the professional stage in Edward Almeida's *Maim*. Within a month C. Alvares had him

booked for *Tor Ho Tiatr*? staged in 1944 at Princess Theatre, Bhangwadi. This was Remie's acid test as the very structure of this theatre overawed newcomers.¹⁰

Remie initially sang opening solos in English with the translation into Konkani. He has performed in more than a thousand tiatrs and sung over six hundred of his own songs. His song "Ankuar Moriechem Dukh" (Suffering of the Virgin Mary) has been an all-time classic in Konkani. Besides performing in Goa and Bombay, he has staged shows in Karnataka and Gujarat. He has also toured Nairobi, Moshi, Dar-es-Salam, Tanga, Nakuru, and Mombasa in Africa as well as Bahrain, Kuwait, Dubai, Qatar, Muscat and Abu Dhabi in the Persian Gulf.

Satvo Sacrament was Remie's first tiatr, staged on April 15, 1955 at Princess Theatre and much appreciated by the audience. Some of his other popular tiatrs are: *Bhauponnancha Kaido*, *Chouto Mandament*, *Sukh Tarvotteachem*, *Mhuzo Kunhead*, *Zolmancho Gaum*, *Ghorachem Sukh*, *Atam Konn Sukhi*, *Ostorecho Mog*, *Don Kallzam* and *Atancho Teomp*.

Atancho Teomp has as its themes the abuse of drugs by Goan college youth and its disastrous consequences in adulthood and marriage. The play acts as a warning to youth to beware of addictions that could play havoc with their bodies and even result in adversely affecting their reproductive health. Remie tackles social problems in most of his dramas and songs. His emphasis is on relationships within the family and their effects on larger society

Prem Kumar

Prem Kumar is the screen name of Pedro Xavier da Costa who hails from Chandor, Goa. His birth date is September 8, 1929. He became interested in tiatr when he had just entered his teens. He directed his first play *Mhuzo Put* after seeking the advice of Anthony D'Sa who had encouraged other youngsters to take to the Konkani stage.

For some time, Prem Kumar acted in Hindi films such as *Unchi Haveli*, *Mera Salam*, *Bandish*, *Shaukeen*, *Hum Bhi Insan Hai*, *Sakhi*, *Bahadur* and *Hamara Haj* before reverting to tiatrs. He has earned a reputation for bringing in many innovations in Konkani drama such as the jackknife stage, revolving stage, half-sliding stage, *et*

cetera. (A jackknife stage is a type of wagon that is attached to the floor or a wall at one corner and pivots on and off stage – similar to the action of a jack knife.)

He has also shown on stage scenes such as a rice field, ploughing, a railway setting, an aeroplane, a waterfall and so on. Drawing from his experience in Hindi films, he tried to enrich the standard of Konkani tiatrs through added technical brilliance in stage setting and light effects.

Prem Kumar has composed over 54 tiatrs. At least three of his dramas have crossed the century mark: *Dukh* was staged 126 times, *Kakut* had 100 plus shows and *Peleachi Vostuchi Axea Korum Naie* notched up 135 performances.

Jivit ek Sopon recorded twenty five performances in twelve days. *Pisso* was his one-man show. Some of other reputed tiatrs were: *Vauraddi*, *Govai*, *Kaido*, *Rinn*, *Koidi*, *Rogtac Tanello*, *Khoto Poiso*, *Connanc Mhunnom Maim*, *Rekad*, *Tufan*, *Abdul Narayan D'Souza*, *Jawan*, *Fulam ani Kantte*, *Angounn*, *Fottkiro*, *No Vacancy*, *Ghatki Voni*, *Ixttaghot*, *Vantte*, *Maria Magdalena*, *Gorib*, *Mortikar*, *Upkar Naslolo*, *Vadiu*, *Amchi Bhas*, *Ugddas*, *Dhorji*, *Ordhi Bakri*, *Noxib*, *Abru*, *et cetera*.

Prem Kumar has been a versatile actor enacting such varied roles as a poor father, a landlord, a farmer, a lunatic or even a beggar. His compositions display his mastery of the Konkani language. He has also produced a Konkani film *Boglantt*, in which he played the main role.

In *Vauraddi*, Prem Kumar espouses the cause of farmers and shows their inalienable links with the land and environment. Even the proud and obstinate landlord is compelled to admit that vile tricks cannot prevail to break the bonds between a farmer, his occupation and his family when they are in a harmonious relationship with nature and with each other.

He also projects the dignity of manual labour in this play, and shows that even the educated have much to benefit by taking up agriculture as an occupation.

M. Boyer

Manuel Santan Aguiar born on October 11, 1930 in Ponda, Goa is popularly known as M. Boyer. He has made a significant impact

on the Konkani stage for over half a century. He composed and sang his first song at the age of 15 and it was well appreciated.

M. Boyer wrote and presented his first play *Rinkari* at the age of eighteen. He has written over 25 plays, participated in more than five thousand performances, and sung over a thousand songs. He has performed in major Indian cities, London, East Africa and in the Gulf countries. He has been a comedian par excellence and a reputed singer capable of vocalising serious as well as comic songs.

His dramas have been entertaining, educative and inspiring to people, always emphasizing the message of morality, peace and harmony. Some of his tiatrs are *Bekar Empregad*, *Posko Irmaum*, *Boot Polish*, *Cazari Put Sezari*, *Bavro Parabens*, *Private Wedding*, *Amchem Pordesponn*, *Atam Konn Ghatki*, *Tiklem Cheddum*, *Bessano*, *Cazarache Ratri*, *Chintnam Zalim Sopnam*, *Sounsar Sudorlo*, *Bhurgim Ani Bhangar*, *Adim Tem Atam Hem*, *Ghor Dukhi Gaum Sukhi*, *Mog-Kazar-Divors* and *Ekuch Rosto*.

In keeping with his themes, *Ekuch Rosto* (Only One Way) advocates communal harmony and pleads for a greater degree of understanding and tolerance in human relationships. The play emphasises the peaceful coexistence of people irrespective of their social and religious differences. The drama asserts that such differences should not be made barriers even for marriage. Boyer projects the capabilities of the poorer sections of society to bring about development if they are given the opportunities and the encouragement along with the resources.

John Claro

John Claro Fernandes is a tiatr writer rather than an actor or singer. Born on December 5, 1930 at Cotombi, Quepem in Goa, he had no association with tiatr until he was fifteen and saw a performance of Minguel Rod's *Duddvancho Fors*.

Unlike most other tiatrists who took to the stage quite early in life, Claro wrote his first play *Camil Bottler* when he was twenty-two and had it produced in Bombay on December 25, 1953 under the direction of A.R. Souza Ferrão. *Rinnkari Zanvoim* followed a year later and Claro was compelled to act for the sole occasion in his life, when the main actor failed to turn up for the show.

Over a span of 40 years, Claro has composed fifteen tiatrs. His other works are: *Nirmiloli Sun*, *Gupit Karann*, *Ghorabeachi Durdoxia*, *Mogachem Tufan*, *Portuguez Kolvont*, *23 Vorsam*, *Konkani Advogad*, *Inglez Madam*, *Tambddi Mati*, *Rostadak Ostad*, *Vinglli Nachpinn*, *Civil Kazar* and *American Dollar*.

Portuguez Kolvont (1979) notched up a century within a single season and eventually crossed a tally of 235 performances. However, Claro regards *23 Vorsam* (1981) as his best script.¹¹ This play is technically well conceived and keeps up the audience — or reader — involvement and interest through suspense generated in the plot. Though the attitudes of the feudal system are still found in the older males, the younger generation is projected as progressive and liberal, free from the shackles of caste and class distinctions. Claro also takes up the issue of euthanasia in this play.

However, the skill with which he handles the task by sustaining suspense throughout the drama, does not allow for easy guesswork. Ultimately, he shows the triumph of human nature of loving and caring, particularly for the severely disadvantaged individuals in society.

The contemporary and the non-stop tiatr phase

The tiatr activity that picked up after the Liberation of Goa gathered momentum and became widespread, giving opportunity to many young enthusiasts. Depending on their age some of the tiatrists mentioned below began their work soon after Goa's Liberation. So it should not be misconstrued that they are to be classified only in this phase. As almost all of them are still alive and very active, they have been included in the contemporary period.

Among these are: Tomazinho Cardozo, Irene Cardozo, Wilson Mazarello, Sharon Mazarello, Premanand Sangodkar, Brazinho Soares, Cezar De Mello, Caitan Pereira, Alvito Araujo, Alfred Fernandes, Michael Gracias, Albert Cabral, Rosy Alvares, William de Curtorim, Sylvester Vaz *et cetera*, who have made a mark in this period.

The post-Liberation period also saw the spurt in *khell-tiatrs* which later became non-stop tiatrs.

Some of the tiatrists who are more prominent in this variety of tiatr are: Antonio Piedade Moraes, Patrick Dourado, Socorro Fernandes, C. De Silva, Premanand Lotlikar, Ligório Fernandes, Pascoal Rodrigues, Christopher Leitao, José Rod, Jack Ferry, John De Silva, Menino de Bandar, Roseferns, Prince Jacob, Humberto Fernandes, Felipe Almeida, Lawry and Jenny, Vitorin Pereira, Mario Menezes, Ben Evangelisto, Comedian Dominic, Comedian Agostinho, Comedian 64 (Christo), *et cetera*.

A better understanding of their contribution can be attained in Chapter 6, which discusses problems and challenges in the contemporary tiatr situation.

Notes and references

¹ The first volume titled *Tiatrancho Jhelo* and edited by Felício Cardoso was published by the Goa Konkani Akademi in 1996.

² *Tiatrancho Jhelo II* was also edited by Felício Cardoso. It was published by the Goa Konkani Akademi in 1998.

³ João Agostinho himself wrote the title as *Kunbi Jakki* in his final manuscript. The variations in spelling are within acceptable norms.

⁴ Some of these names have been sourced from the original handbill (1904) and printed copies (1909, 1937) of *Batcara Part I*, and from *Dotichem Kestaum* (staged in 1908 and printed in 1937).

⁵ A newspaper review of *Batcara Part I* (printed in 1909) reproduced on page 60 of *Batcara Part II* (printed in June 1916) refers to a novel which described the life of a landlord in Bardez, while the plot of João Agostinho's play had no similarity whatsoever with that of the novel.

⁶ Since the *regidor* had the backing of the Portuguese local government, his word was an order and one could not defy it without grave peril or penal consequences. It was the arrogant behaviour of such an official that compelled Minguel Rod to leave Goa and escape to Bombay. The rest of course is history, because Minguel Rod rose to become one of the greatest and finest composers on the Konkani stage.

⁷ Gathered from personal conversations with Fr. Dominic, nephew of C. Alvares and also a tiatrist.

⁸ John Claro opines that after the failure of the first Konkani film, subsequent producers and directors found that tiatrists had to be included in the cast if the films were to succeed. C. Alvares was an obvious and right choice for the box-office.

⁹ Ophelia de Souza paid her tributes to him after his death by combining all these titles (see compilation of tributes by Alistair Miranda and Romeo Mendes in “Grief Gushes out”, *Goa Today*, April 1999: 22).

¹⁰ In a personal interview on July 7, 2000, Rennie disclosed to me that performing at the Princess Theatre for the first time was indeed a challenge. The architecture of the auditorium made a debutant feel like a dwarf facing a giant. After he got through such an unnerving experience, his confidence as a tiatrist was boosted.

¹¹ Gathered from conversations with the author during the “Symposium/Workshop on Script of Tiatr” held on July 22, 2001 at the Kala Academy, Panjim, Goa.



6 Challenges today

THE DISCUSSION on the standard of Konkani tiatr was initiated by João Agostinho Fernandes. One evening, a year before his death,¹ while sitting on the railings at Esplanade Grounds in Bombay and 'while talking of the *teatro*, he lamented with tears over the deteriorating conditions of Konkani *teatro*'.²

Surprisingly, he made this observation when the Konkani tiatr was actually blossoming and had some of the greatest comedians and scriptwriters active at that time. According to John Claro, this observation was made by the founding father of tiatr because he found a very small number of tiatrists compromising on the quality of their dramas. João Agostinho had toiled for over five decades to give respectability and a high standard to the tiatr and it was disheartening to see even an iota of degradation in an art so dear to him and the Konkani-speaking community.

The latter half of the twentieth century has seen the tiatr achieve success in terms of popularity through its all-round development, but questions have also been raised about its standard

and tenacity to survive.

Competition from other forms of entertainment

According to John Russell Brown “theatre has strong and well-financed rivals in television, film, popular music, and spectator sports, which provide more easily exploitable forms of entertainment”. While this statement is true in a general sense, some of the Konkani tiatrists have outsmarted rival forms of amusement and used them for their own popularity and benefit.

Several tiatrs have been video-filmed and are being shown through cable television networks, particularly in South Goa. Such a medium keeps fans in touch with their favourite tiatrists and encourages them to see the live shows. As seen earlier, participation by tiatrists became indispensable for Konkani films if these celluloid productions were to be successful. Films without tiatrists fared badly compared to those with a major cast of dramatists. Tiatrs in Bombay had such a high standard that the famous film producer of yesteryears, V. Shantaram, ‘thought of filming some shots of Konkani tiatr using film camera in 1948’.³ The music scenario has been the exclusive domain of tiatrists. In all tiatrs, songs have been an essential element. At times, the singers have been the major attractions at dramas.

The very sight of Minguel Rod sitting in the ticket booth at a drama in Santa-Cruz set off a frenzy among the buyers and the tickets were sold out within a few minutes. In fact, some of the singers such as M. Boyer and Alfred Rose have been such crowd-pullers that they have had to sing at two or more dramas within a few hours. Such a singer would sing two or three songs in the initial period at the first venue and then travel to the next immediately by car or motorcycle. They also commanded very high fees for their performances.

The combination of Lorna Cordeiro’s voice with Chris Perry’s music has resulted in Konkani songs that are considered to be classics that will be appreciated for many generations to come. According to the era and the medium available all major tiatrists have recorded songs on vinyl discs of prominent record labels such as His Master’s Voice, Columbia and Polydor; produced au-

dio cassettes, and with the availability of digital recording they have been producing compact discs. Video recordings of songs have also been produced and are being telecast by Goa Doordarshan.

Many older recordings are now being transformed into compact disc format or remixed and re-recorded. In the case of spectator sports, the Konkani Non-Stop Theatrishanchi Sounstha has been organising inter-troupe football contests and these too have attracted attention just as celebrity appearances draw crowds at matches and events. But such an exercise has been a rather unusual activity of the tiatrists.

All the above arguments may seem to give a rosy picture about Konkani tiatrists. But it is not the complete story. There is no doubt that tiatrists enjoy a reputation among Konkani speakers in Goa, Bombay and elsewhere. However, it must be remembered that, besides the above named, the various alternative forms of entertainment such as cable television, the Internet and Western music, to name a few, are all competing for the market share in the recreation sector. And given the simple economic situation of limited means having to choose from unlimited forms of entertainment, the tiatrs are facing challenges in retaining audiences.

Rates of tickets

According to Mario Menezes, a successful tiatrist, so far the dramas had managed to attract audiences. But there is already a perceptible fall in attendance at shows.

One of the reasons for this fall is the hike in the rate of tickets over the years. Prices have risen from thirty or forty rupees to fifty or sixty rupees per ticket. The rate is now seventy rupees. When we take into consideration the fact that a tiatr is generally regarded as an entertainment outing for the whole family, or even an extended family, the overall cost does make a dent in the budget.

Decline in village tiatrs, children's theatre

Once upon a time, many villages in Goa would have a tiatr staged on the occasion of the local chapel or church feast, just as *zagors* were held as part of the festivities by the ancestors. These tiatrs were generally composed by local artistes and most of the cast members would be from the same countryside. Surrounding villages would be the catchments for musicians and the audience.

Local youth would pool in their efforts and involve themselves in rehearsals for several days before the tiatr was to be staged. Young budding artistes mingled with seniors and gained valuable tips and encouragement. Some of the holidaying villagers too – from Bombay or those on shore leave from the ships – would pitch in their efforts and resources. At times, a few professional artistes would be roped in to enthral the audience with songs or comedy.

There was a feeling of identification with such an activity and the villagers would look forward to the performance – either free if sponsored by a benefactor or with nominal ticketing. In recent years such theatrical activity has declined considerably. In fact, it would be true to say that it has almost disappeared. Professional troupes are now being invited to perform on the occasion of the local festivity. Worse still, villages are foregoing staging of dramas if the nearest town has a good auditorium and is easily accessible. The major reason seems to be the lack of enthusiasm in local youngsters.

Nicefero Almeida has staged as many as twenty-three tiatrs in his native village Cuncolim. According to him, "The reason for the decline could not necessarily be financial. It could also be that local youth are no longer interested in this traditional art".⁴

Hope has not died altogether. Prominent producer and director of the non-stop drama, Roseferns, also says, "The village tiatr once acted as a platform for many budding and talented artists. This is sadly missing now. This definitely has affected to a large extent the commercial tiatr" (*Herald*, May 6, 2003, p. 5).

We have seen from the preceding chapter that many tiatrists began their interest in the art as children and enacted plays using simple bedsheets as curtains or props. Such activities are not commonly seen anymore, as children are caught up with studies and have television — cartoons, and games — for entertainment.

Some institutions that are making efforts at training artistes offer opportunities for grown-ups.

Training and performance opportunities

The school is the earliest institution where opportunities are available for taking to the stage. Many schools do encourage participation of children in the co-curricular and cultural activities. But there is no overt emphasis on training children to be tiatrists as such. However, it is found that school children can perform Konkani plays remarkably well particularly in the rural areas.

The Kala Academy at Panjim has a School of Drama, affiliated to the National School of Drama, New Delhi. But admission is for those who have passed higher secondary school. Because not many Konkani plays have been attempted by the school, there is an impression that it is not geared towards training for the tiatr.

Michael Gracias is among the few alumni involved in tiatrs. In Fatorda, Margao the "Theatre, Art and Cultural Training Institute" has been started by Sharon and Wilson Mazarello. This institute has produced several tiatrs on social themes for Government agencies.⁵ It was hoped that the formation of the Konkani Sangeet and Natak Academy in 2003 would give some attention to the long-neglected children's theatre, or Bal Natya. But it still has a long way to go.

Annual tiatr competitions begun by the Kala Academy in May 1974 have provided avenues for new artistes. Innovations in diverse areas such as presentation, stage setting, light effects, background music could now be tried out. Many of these amateurs have been absorbed into professional troupes. In fact a good performance in singing or acting at these contests assures the artistes of better prospects in professional theatre.

When the Kala Academy celebrated the silver jubilee, or the 25th anniversary, of the tiatr competitions in November 2000, 25 artistes were felicitated on the occasion. Among these were: Tomazinho Cardozo, Agnelo Dias, Cezar D'Mello, Minguelino Rego, Caetano Pereira, Digambar Singbal, Irene Cardozo, Brazinho Soares, Annie D'Costa, Sandeep Kalangutkar, Manohar Bhon-

sle, Kamlakant Chari, Maria Cardozo, Michael Gracias, Shyam Kalangutkar, Rupesh Jogle and others.

Some of the theatrical troupes whose work was appreciated by the Akademy were: Kala Mogi, Candolim; Plafar Dramatic Association, Colva; Cezar Dramatic Troupe, Panjim; Lis Goa Dramatic Troupe, Merces; Centro Social Anjo Custodio, Cuchorem; Kala Niketan, Utorda; Machi Mogi, Santa Cruz.

All the preceding information proves that amateur tiatrists have been able to form sustained troupes to stage tiatrs. But none of the prize winning plays have been commercial successes nor have the troupes persisted in staging them at other venues.

Crisis in tiatrs

There seems to be no doubt now that the tiatr which boasted of completing a century just over a decade back is now facing much crisis.⁶ The reasons are many and varied.

Some of these have been mentioned in the previous chapter, such as the demographic changes that affected Goans in Bombay and the rise of theatrical activity in Goa after Liberation. Tiatrists themselves have also been analysing the lacunae and challenges. The developments in television technology have affected many aspects of life and culture, so their effects cannot be limited to tiatrs.⁷

In spite of the entry of educated writers, there has not been a visible rise in the quality of tiatr scripts encompassing both the plot and the *cantos*. Dependence on prompters and the lack of rehearsals have resulted in poor quality of tiatrs. It has often been difficult to get reputed artistes together to prepare a drama for staging.

Other reasons that have contributed to the decline include: lack of novelty, attraction towards the English language and neglect of Konkani, high cost of production, availability of recorded songs and lack of unity among tiatrists. And combined with all such factors is the fact that the non-stop variant of drama has overcome the drawbacks of tiatrs and made rapid progress in satisfying audiences.

Lack of support from the Government: Proponents from both camps agree on one issue: That the State government has done

very little to promote Konkani tiatrs and music. Some of the official bodies in charge of cultural activities spend lakhs of rupees on filmstars and singers from Bollywood to grace festivals.⁸ But they cringe when it comes to encouraging Konkani artistes.

Goa's nightingale, Lorna, did not mince words when she emphatically stated "the government has not done anything for Konkani music".⁹ Artistes such as Anil Kumar, Sharon and Wilson (Wilmix) Mazarello were unanimous in stating that Konkani tiatr must receive active support from the government.¹⁰

Rise of Non-Stop Dramas: The traditional *khells* had been transformed into *khell-tiatrs* by Antonio Piedade Moraes by raising them from the ground to the stage, replete with curtains, in March 1956. Earlier, the same costumes — consisting of top hat, sleeping suit and zinc swords swinging at the waist — were worn for the entire play. Moraes insisted on changes in costumes to suit the roles or the characters.

He split the performance into *porde* or scenes. Being a musician, he introduced a proper drum set and a musical interlude between the scenes. By skilfully eliminating the time-gaps between the changes of scenes he brought in the term 'Non-Stop' *khell-tiatr* in December 1962 when his troupe toured Bombay. However, there used to be two plays being staged, one each before and after the recess. In 1971, Rosario Rodrigues staged a single full length three-hour play of two parts, *Meenakshi Surya*, and christened it the 'non-stop drama'.

The 1980s and after have seen a spurt in the number of non-stop dramas being staged in and outside Goa. The tiatr had evolved to the state where the writer's responsibility was only for the script and the *cantos*. The sideshows, songs and other interludes could be composed by the concerned performing artistes who were not necessarily members of the cast for that play.

Non-stop tiatrs are generally performed by troupes and this facilitates co-ordination and rehearsals. Thus they have got rid of prompting. In the non-stop tiatr, the writer is responsible for the entire script including the songs and comic interludes or side shows performed by the troupe members who are an integral part of the cast for the play. The non-stop tiatr also eliminated the songs that were not related to the play. However, because of the importance of these related songs and in order to encourage fresh

talent, as well as to cater to the demands of the audience, it was foreseen at the time of writing the thesis, that they just might have to incorporate such *kantaram*. The prediction has come true as now Non- Stop tiatrs have started incorporating *kantaram* in the dramas.

The non-stop tiatrs were severely criticised and blamed for lowering the standards of Konkani theatre. Their dialogues were allegedly raucous, delivered in an unnatural, singsong style. They were accused of giving no moral to the audience and that the spectators left without much to reflect on, except the jokes and antics of the comedian. Many of these criticisms are not valid any more as there have been substantial improvements in their presentations.

A major factor that made the difference was the cost of production. Non-stop dramas could be produced at a quarter of the cost of a tiatr. The refinements brought in by the artistes have vastly improved the non-stop tiatrs or dramas. For many members of the public, there is little to distinguish between the tiatr and the non-stop tiatr. All the essential elements of drama such as a good plot, emotive acting, great language, songs, music, *et cetera* are found in both. Another prediction of the thesis that "In time all such Konkani dramas will just be called *tiatr*" has also been fulfilled as tiatrists have stopped using the nomenclature 'non-stop' and the dramas are now being advertised as tiatr.

Post scriptum: *The Tiatr Academy of Goa was inaugurated on February 16, 2009. With its formation there is now renewed vigour and hope that many of the issues concerning the tiatr and tiatrists will be addressed. The Academy has already formulated several schemes to document and promote the tiatr.*

Notes and references

¹ João Agostinho died in Bombay on August 29, 1947.

² John Claro, "João Agostinho – The Versatile Folkorist", *Tiatr ani Tiatríst* (Bombay: The Goan Review Publication, 1994) 93-94.

³ Andrew Greno Viegas, "For the love of Konkani", Editorial, *Konkan Entertainment: Fifty years of Konkani Cinema*, 2000:3.

⁴ "Once a part of summer festivities, village Tiatr now on the decline in Salcete", *Herald*, May 6, 2003, 5.

⁵ Feedback from a questionnaire sent to tiatrists in June 2000.

⁶ See "Tiatrachi Mohini Denvpak Karann Kitem", *The Goan Review*, Jan.-Feb. 2000: 6-11. See also Tomazinho Cardozo, *Herald*, December 19, 2002, 4.

⁷ Fausto Da Costa, "Konknni Tiatr – Adim ani Atam", *Vauraddeancho Ixtt*, October 5 and 12, 2002: 24-25.

⁸ At the Carnival 2004 in Margao, the provision for tiatrs was less than two thousand rupees. However, the same municipal council had earmarked several lakhs of rupees for a singer from Bombay. The actual amount was not disclosed.

⁹ Stated in an interview with Rupesh Samant in "Panorama", *The Navhind Times*, May 4, 2003: 2.

¹⁰ Feedback from the questionnaire sent to tiatrists in June 2000.

7

On to a revolution

WHEN JOÃO AGOSTINHO encouraged the dejected Lucasinho Ribeiro to proceed with the plans for the staging of the first Konkani opera, *Italian Bhurgo*, he was conscious of the objective they had to achieve. The best way to do away with the undesirable *zagors* was by providing a decent alternative form of entertainment for the Konkani-speaking community in Bombay.

They faced many hurdles initially, finding it difficult to get the required number of actors; but their persistence created a revolution that changed the entertainment scenario for Goans in Bombay. The success of the pioneering venture boosted their confidence and they could proceed to perform several other operettas and adaptations of plays.

The existence of the infrastructure in Bombay also aided their efforts. Spacious comfortable theaters and opera halls were available. The Goan emigrants in the music industry in Bombay assured a steady supply of musicians. And, of course, in keeping with their nature of enjoying entertainment, Goans responded en-

thusiastically to patronise the fledgling Konkani theatre in Bombay.

Lucasinho Ribeiro did not hesitate to bring the novelty of the theatrical experience to Goa. And so the first *teatro* was staged by him in his native village of Assagão on New Year's Day, 1894. Thereafter he continued performing in Bombay and staged more *teatros* in Assagão on his subsequent visits to Goa.

While some of the playwrights continued adapting Western plays, João Agostinho realised that the best contribution he could make was in dealing with issues that affected the lives of Goans in Bombay and Goa. Thus, very early in his career he set out to feature themes linked to Goans and, by extension, to society in general: the value and impact of education particularly on girls, the freedom to choose one's life partner in opposition to arranged marriages, drunkenness and its consequent effects on the individual and the family, the evils of the caste and class systems and their ramifications, the evil of dowry and the dignity of manual labour.

In his plays, he also dealt with themes such as the need to change attitudes towards the poor and the marginalized, and give them the opportunities that help in their development as well as bring prosperity to the nation, and such issues. In brief, the tiatrs were all about human values and their importance in society.

While the moral emphasis formed the core of the tiatrs, the presentation was made attractive and entertaining through humour. No doubt the greatest attractions in many tiatrs have been the comedians. But beyond their antics, the tiatrs were sustained by good scripts, skilful use of language and developments in technical aspects.

Though a conscious effort was made to obliterate the *zagors* in Bombay — the *khells* having been phased out through lack of patronage — in Goa both these folk forms continued their run. The indigenous theatrical forms were closely linked with the life of the people and their cultural festivities.

Though the *zagors* had been vulgarised, the *khells* retained the moral codes which they had absorbed through the Morality Plays¹

¹Morality play is a term that theatre historians use to describe a genre of Medieval and early Tudor theatrical entertainments. In their own time, these plays

and Portuguese *Actos* enacted in Goa. There was, of course, the established theatre in Portuguese but it remained the exclusive privilege of the educated elite. Folksongs too had been appropriated by the upper class and transformed into song and dance for the aristocrats. But the *zagors*, *khells* and other folk performances continued their existence with the support and participation of the people until these forms were also affected by changes in society.

The Liberation of Goa from Portuguese rule in 1961, the decline of tiatrs in Bombay, the employment opportunities in the Middle East, the change in emigration patterns of Goans have all affected Konkani drama.

Present day Mumbai has to depend on visiting troupes from Goa for performances of tiatrs. Apart from visiting Mumbai, the troupes are also in demand to perform at other Indian cities having Konkani speakers. Hence the troupes have been performing in Mangalore, Bangalore, Poona, Ahmedabad, Nagpur, Delhi, et cetera. There is also an increasing demand for tiatrs in the Middle East. In fact, Konkani speakers in places such as Kuwait and Dubai have started organising their own tiatrs and one act plays in Konkani. Still further away, London is fast becoming another centre for Konkani tiatrs. Goans from Karachi, visiting Goa in 2009, requested that some good Konkani tiatrs be staged in their city.

The Internet-based alternative media and online cyber magazines report the enthusiasm generated at such cultural activities, which help them to retain the link with the mother tongue and the ancestral homeland. Feasts, corresponding to the village church feasts in Goa, are being celebrated there too.

We have to reckon too with the role of the Church and its attitudes towards tiatrs. Whereas religious plays have been performed through the centuries as aids to catechesis or the spiritual edification of the faithful, the Church had largely shirked away from involvement in secular theatre. However, with the winds of

were known as "interludes," a broader term given to dramas with or without a moral theme. Morality plays are a type of allegory in which the protagonist is met by personifications of various moral attributes who try to prompt him to choose a godly life over one of evil. The plays were most popular in Europe during the 15th and 16th century. Having grown out of the religiously based mystery plays of the Middle Ages, they represented a shift towards a more secular base for European theatre.

change and the new spirit that blew through the Catholic Church as a result of the Second Vatican Council in the 1960s, there has been a significant change in the Church's stance. An increasing number of priests are involving themselves in both music and Konkani theatre. Fr Planton Faria, Fr Nevell Gracias, Fr Peter Cardozo, Fr Dominic Alvares have been prominent among them. [See list of tiatr personalities].

In the present day academic atmosphere of debates on colonization, and extensive post-colonial discourses, it is relevant to discuss briefly the attitudes of tiatrists towards the Portuguese colonisers.

Criticism of the Portuguese has been largely absent in tiatrs. One of the reasons was the functioning of the censorship in Goa as well as in Bombay. But this was not the major reason. Under the Portuguese rule life was fairly comfortable. Basic necessities were assured, law and sanitation were strictly enforced, and minimum educational opportunities were available. However, there was no political freedom. Therefore, the view that life was comfortable may be highly debatable as there were many issues of social injustice. But these defects were inherited more from the local culture rather than imposed by the colonisers.

Of course one cannot ignore the fact that at certain times in history there was social turmoil because of religious zeal or intolerance. However, taking a very comprehensive view the Goans were *susegad* (a term translated to sometimes mean "relaxed"). In fact, some social evils such as the hindrances to remarriage of widows were frowned upon by the Portuguese. Further, still, rather than straining themselves to fight for political rights, the tiatrists realised that social reforms were more urgent, just as Gandhi had emphasised. Hence they highlighted the crucial themes concerning attitudes and relationships between different sections of society.

The fervour of seeking liberation from the colonisers gathered momentum only after India obtained its independence in 1947. There had been a few rebellions and uprisings in Goa. But only a small number out of these were for gaining political independence of the territory.

With the demand for liberation growing in the late 1940s, the Portuguese here realised that it was only a matter of time for them

to quit — though the Salazar regime in Portugal thought differently. With Liberation in 1961, there then came other changes whose effects are now being discussed in contemporary tiatrs.

Contemporary tiatrs are loaded with themes relating to dirty politics; corruption among ministers, the bureaucracy and local officials; and environmental degradation. Tiatrs must be admired for keeping up with social changes and foregrounding the pitfalls even before the problems can rise to alarming levels. Abuse of narcotic drugs, divorce, AIDS and its consequences have been dealt with at their very initial stages. While evils are castigated, good is promoted such as the need for communal harmony, democratic values and the protection of the environment.

Networking through the various media is raising awareness levels among Konkani speakers to a new high. The Press and the internet are being widely used for this purpose. A few years back, there was very little information available about the tiatr on the Net. Now several news items, reviews and photographs are being posted by those who have the interest, the access and the resources. Konkani music too is available over the internet. The idea of the global community of specific interests is truly being fulfilled and tiatrs are gaining from the use of this technology.

Questions will be raised time and again about the standard and future of the tiatr. The dramatic form, may take a few knocks, adjust and adapt to changes and innovations but at heart it will remain as the tiatr. Audiences, particularly from rural areas, have remained faithful to Konkani theatre as it fulfils the twin objectives of entertainment and moral edification. The dramatic form is appreciated as an integral element of Konkani culture. The tiatr has an assured future because it is essentially in Konkani, a language dear to the hearts of its speakers.



8 List of tiatr personalities

Stage names are included first, followed by the real-names (in brackets, where applicable). In some cases, a small description of the artiste is also included. The artiste may also be featured under both the stage name and real name. This list also includes names of musicians, stage-managers, set designers and others involved in the production of the tiatr.

- A. J. Fernandes
- A. M. Pacheco
- A. Vaz (Anthony Vaz)
- A.M.B. Rose (Ambrose Carlisto Piedade Fernandes was an illustrious character-actor of yore. Was unofficially re-named by the Karachi Jesuits as 'AMB Rose', the name he opted to use on stage.)
- A.R. Souza Ferrão (August Remedios Souza Ferrão)
- Abdonio Rodrigues
- Adelin
- Adriano PM D'Costa

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- Affonceka (Assis João Avelino Affonso)
 - Ageema Fernandes
 - Agnelo D'Silva
 - Agnelo de Borim (Vandana Productions)
 - Agnelo Dias
 - Agnelo Gonsalves
 - Agnelo L Fernandes
 - Agnes D'Silva
 - Agostinho Carvalho
 - Agostinho D'Costa
 - Agostinho Mascarenhas
 - Agostinho Temudo
 - Aiti Pinto
 - Alber Sequeira
 - Albert Cabral
 - Albert Fernandes
 - Albino F Laureço
 - Aleixinho de Candolim (Aleixinho Fernandes, composed and sang about the woes of the poor and ill-fated)
 - Alex de Sanvordem
 - Alexinho de Maxem
 - Alfonso Braganza (Bond)
 - Alfred Dias
 - Alfred Rose (Rosario Alfred Fernandes)
 - Alvito Araujo
 - Alvito Lawrence
 - Alwyn Gomes
 - AM Pacheco
 - Ana Dolly Miranda
 - Anceto Lourencio
 - Ancetto Pereira
 - Andrew D'Souza
 - Andrew Fernandes
 - Angela Moraes
 - Anicette Lawrence
 - Anil Kumar
 - Anil Pednekar

BATCARA

AT THE

GAIETY

THEATRE,

A MUSICAL COMEDY IN 2 ACTS,
(Original Composition of the undersigned).

Will be staged for the Inauguration of the
GOAN UNION DRAMATIC CLUB,
On Tuesday, 22nd November, 1904.

First appearance of our Actresses and the introduction of a variety of other items on our stage such as never been attempted before by any other Dramatic Clubs in our Community.

The play is got up in excellent and humorous style, the musical portion being admirably executed by our well known Band master, Mr. Zeferino de Cruz.

WORTHY OF SUPPORT.

COME AND JUDGE YOURSELVES.

A TREAT FOR THE LITERATE AND THE ILLITERATE.

Best Histrionic talent of the Community on the Stage.

COME AND SEE ! COME AND SEE !!

TO AVOID CRUSH, DO SECURE YOUR TICKETS AS EARLY AS POSSIBLE.

CHARACTER.

Casiano Rodrigues	... Batcara de Panzaris	... ..	Mr. J. A. Fernandes.
Roza Maria Luiza Vaz	... His Wife	... ..	Mrs. Fernandes.
Casimiro Rodrigues	... Their only son and heir	... ..	Mr. A. Mascarenhas.
Cecilia Miranda	... Casmir's Fiancée	... ..	Miss Fernandes.
João Pinto	... Sorcerer	... ..	Mr. Policarp Mendonça.
Anton Abrão	... Manducar	... ..	L. Ribeiro.
Manel Gama	... " "	... ..	N. M. Fernandes.
Shiva Morgancar	... Goldsmith	... ..	Mr. A. J. F. Dias.
Joe Vaz	... " "	... ..	Mr. St. Anna de Souza.
Joaquim Nunes	... Goan Dandies	... ..	M. de Souza.
John Moniz	... " "	... ..	Mr. de Souza.
Mariano Fonseca	... Boarding house-keeper	... ..	Mr. S. X. Vaz.
Johnson Scotland	... Habitual drunkard	... ..	J. M. Nunes Pinto.
Ernesto Lobato	... Barrister	... ..	Mr. E. B. Vaz.
Carlos Cotta	... Engineer	... ..	F. X. Pereira.
David Boniface	... Newspaper Editor	A. Diniz.
Franklin Gonsalves	... Unionists	A. Dias.
Octaviano Andrade	... " "	S. Fernandes.

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- Anju Fernandes
 - Anne Fernandes (starred in *Albert Gonsalves vo Drunkard*, 1925, by João Agostinho Fernandes)
 - Annie Quadros
 - Anthony (part of the Conception-Nelson-Anthony trio).
 - Anthony Alvares
 - Anthony Cabral
 - Anthony Damaciano Diniz
 - Anthony David Alphonso
 - Anthony de Sa
 - Anthony De Souza
 - Anthony Domnic D'Souza
 - Anthony Fernandes
 - Anthony Martin Fernandes
 - Anthony Mendes
 - Anthony Rodrigues
 - Anthony San Fernandes
 - Anthony William Fernandes
 - Anthony, of the Wilmix trio
 - Antonete and Romeo Mendes
 - Antonetta Pereira
 - Antonette De Calangute
 - Antonette Mendes
 - Antonio Francisco de Gauravaddo
 - Antonio Inacio Joan D'Souza
 - Antonio Morais
 - Antonio Piedade Moraes
 - Antonio Pires De Menezes (Babit)
 - Antonio Rosari Part (Tony Park)
 - Antonio Xavier Francisco D'Costa
 - Antush D'Silva
 - Aristides Dias
 - Assumta Rezina Fernandes (Assumption)
 - Augustine Rebello
 - Augusto De Panchwadi
 - Avelino Piedade Correira (Ali)
 - Bab Peter
 - Bab Tony (Anthony D'Souza)
 - Bab Tony (Anthony Fernandes, son of *Pai Tiatrist*)
 - Babloo

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- Babush Fernandes
 - Ben Evangelisto Fernandes
 - Benny de Aldona
 - Benny J Rebello
 - Bernard de Parra
 - Bernard Fernandes
 - Betinho Pacheco
 - Betty Ferns
 - Betty Naz/Betty Naaz/Betty Naz Fernandes
 - Bom Jezu
 - Bonaventura D’Pietro
 - Bonifacio Dias
 - Bonny Pereira
 - C. Alvares (Celestino Santano Francisco Alvares). Known as the Ace Director and *Patxai Konkani Duettancho*.
 - C. D’Silva (Caetano D’Silva)
 - Caetan Pereira
 - Caetaninho Fernandes
 - Caitano Pereira
 - Cajdon D’Souza (Caitaninho D’Souza)
 - Cajetan J Pinto
 - Cajetan Pereira
 - Cajetan Pinto
 - Cajetan Tavares
 - Cajie D’Costa
 - Capucina Alvares
 - Carmelina Fernandes
 - Carmen Rose
 - Carmo Rod
 - Carmo Velerian Mascarenhas
 - Catus Furtado
 - Cesar DeMello
 - Champion Alvares (Sebastiao Alvares)
 - Chicken (Francis Carneiro)
 - Chitra Alphonso e Shirvaiker
 - Christides Dias
 - Christopher Leitao
 - Christopher Vincy Menezes
 - Clara
 - Clara Dias

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- Clemmie Pereira
 - Comedian – Domnick Coelho
 - Comedian 64 (Christopher)
 - Comedian Agostinho
 - Conceisao Salvador Fernandes
 - Conception (of the Trio)
 - Conny Fernandes
 - Conny M
 - Coutinho (from Candolim, was known as Miss Julie).
 - Crista Fernandes
 - Cruz Godinho
 - Cruz Jazzwala (Baptista Cruz Noronha)
 - Cruz Soares
 - Cypriano (Star of Oxel)
 - Cyriaco Dias
 - Cyril Almeida
 - Cyril Andrade
 - Damiao D’Costa
 - David D’Costa
 - Derik Mendes (Mendes Bros.)
 - Diego Barretto
 - Diogo Cardoz de Khobravado
 - Domingos Santano Rodrigues
 - Donald Colaço
 - Dummulo de Gauravaddo
 - Earnest Rebello
 - Edwin Anthony D’Costa
 - Effie (Fernandes)
 - Emmy Fernandes (Colva)
 - Enclidas de Elly
 - Evangelisto DA Fernandes
 - Ex-Sailor (P. D’Mello)
 - Fatima Assumpta Santana Bringel
 - Fatima D’Souza Devulkar
 - Felcy Fernandes
 - Felicido Octavian Colaco
 - Felicio Cardozo
 - Felix Mendes (Mendes Bros.)
 - Filipe Almeida
 - Filipe Dias

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- Flora Mendes
 - Fr Conceição D'Silva
 - Fr Dominic Alvares s.f.x.
 - Fr Freddy J. DaCosta
 - Fr Gil Gonsalves
 - Fr Ivo Conceição De Souza
 - Fr José Antonio DaCosta
 - Fr Kyriel D'Souza s.f.x.
 - Fr Lucas Rodrigues s.f.x.
 - Fr Matthew Fernandes s.f.x.
 - Fr Nevel L S Gracias (Vellekar Nirmiti)
 - Fr Peter Cardozo s.f.x.
 - Fr Planton Faria
 - Fr Rui Comelo
 - Fr Ubaldo Fernandes s.f.x.
 - Francis de Parra (Enacted female roles beautifully in Konkani dramas – one of the finest composers and singers)
 - Francis de Verna (Francis Fernandes)
 - Francisco Cardozo (F Cardozo)
 - Frank Sinatra Trinande
 - Freddy Barboza/Charles Fredrick Barboza
 - Gabriel Francis D'Souza
 - Gabru Gomes
 - Gemma
 - Genevieve
 - George Almeida
 - George Menezes
 - Godwin Alphonso
 - Greg Fernandes
 - H. Briton (Herminizildo Camilo)
 - Henry D'Souza
 - Hortencio Pereira
 - Humberto Fernandes, The Comedy Supremo
 - Ida D'Costa
 - Irene Cardoso e Vaz
 - Irene Cardozo
 - Ivo Furtado
 - J B Rod
 - J.P. Souzalin (José Pascoal Fernandes, master of Goan epic drama – famed for religious dramas)

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- Jacinto B Fernandes
 - Jacinto Gracias
 - Jacinto Vaz (famed comedian)
 - Jack Souza Ferrao
 - Jacob Carmo M L Fernandes
 - Jaju Fernandes
 - James de Elly
 - James Vaz
 - Jane Rebello
 - Janet Nunes e Almeida
 - Jeffrey Paschal D'Souza
 - Jenny Travasso
 - Jephisis Hitler (José Francisco Leitao)
 - Jerry Braganza
 - Jerry Rodrigues
 - Jessica Gomes e Vaz
 - Jessie Dias (Maria Conceição Jessie Cardozo e Dias, tragedienne)
 - Jesus Antao
 - Joana Fernandes
 - João Agostinho Fernandes (credited as the father of modern Konkani tiatr – *Pai Tiatr*ist)
 - Joaquim Aguiar
 - Joaquim Caetano Coutinho
 - Joaquim D'Costa
 - Joaquim Peregrino Faleiro
 - Joe Menny Furtado
 - Joe Rose
 - Joe Rose (Joseph Mathias D'Souza)
 - John Claro (John Claro Fernandes)
 - John D'Silva
 - John De Silva
 - John Dias (Candolim)
 - John Fernandes
 - John Fernandes (Johnny – F)
 - John Gomes (*Kokkoy*)
 - John Rocha
 - John Trindade
 - John Vaz
 - Johnny Pereira

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- Johny Mentriss Fernandes
 - Jose Dias
 - Jose Fernandes
 - Jose Joaquim Fernandes
 - Jose M Mascarenhas
 - José Rod (See his webpage at <http://www.goa-world.com/goa/jose-rod/>)
 - Jose Socorro Fernandes
 - Joseph Anthony Goes
 - Josephine Dias
 - Jr Lois
 - Jr. Rod (Julio Rod)
 - Julie Rod
 - Junifer Rod
 - Justiano Fernandes
 - Kamat de Assolna (Ramakant Camotin)
 - Kamlakant Chari
 - Kamlakar N Naik
 - Karachiwala (Sebastiao Gabriel D'Souza)
 - Kathleen Dias
 - Kennedy Fernandes
 - Kenneth Zuzarete
 - Kid Boxer (Caetano Manuel Pereira, Goa's Charlie Chaplin)
 - *Kokkoy* (John Gomes)
 - Lancia D'Silva
 - Lauerent Pereira
 - Lawrence de Tiracol
 - Lawry Travasso
 - Leena de Anjuna
 - Lenoy Gomendes
 - Livia D'Silva
 - Lonie Lourdes Fernandes
 - Lorna Cordeiro
 - Lucas Fernandes
 - Lucasinho Ribeiro (regarded as initiator of modern tiatr)
 - Luciano Dias
 - Luciano Fernandes
 - Ludan Dias
 - Luis Bachchaan
 - Luis Dias

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- Luis Rebello
 - Luiza Maria Colaço Fernandes (second wife of João Agostinho Fernandes)
 - M. Boyer (Manuel Santana Aguiar)
 - Maggie Fernandes
 - Mandel Fernandes
 - Manuel Luis Mascarenhas
 - Marcelino de Betim
 - Marcus Vaz
 - Maria Lourdes Fernandes
 - Marian Rodrigues
 - Mariano Dias
 - Mariano Fernandes
 - Mariano J Rodrigues
 - Marina Pereira
 - Mario de Colva
 - Mario de Navelim
 - Mario Fernandes
 - Mario Menezes
 - Mario Pereira (Mario de Vasco)
 - Mario S Fernandes
 - Mary Vaz
 - Master Fernandes (Pascoal Fernandes)
 - Master Ignatius de Mapusa
 - Master Vaz (José Lawrence Vaz)
 - Mathew Araujo
 - Maxy Pereira
 - Meena Leitao
 - Mendes Brothers
 - Menini Dias
 - Menino Almeida
 - Menino de Bandar
 - Menino Fernandes
 - Menino Mario
 - Metro Alphonso C Caresta
 - Michael Diniz
 - Michael Martins
 - Michael Rod
 - Mike Mehta (Transfiguração de Jesu Cristo Rodrigues)
 - Mil-Mel-Nel (Trio)

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- Milagres Fernandes
 - Milagres Gonsalves
 - Mingu Fernandes
 - Minguel D'silva (Michael)
 - Minguel Rod (Minguel Rodrigues)
 - Minguel Rodrigues (musician)
 - Minino Mario D'Silva
 - Mirro Fernandes
 - Miss Carlota (Carlota D'Souza)
 - Miss Carmen Rose (Carmen Rose D'Souza)
 - Miss Ida (in Jack Mulal's *Paichem Ghor Borlam Girestcaien*, June 16, 1932)
 - Miss Ida (José Mendes)
 - Miss Julie (Joaquim Caetano Coutinho)
 - Miss Lorna (Lorna Cordeiro)
 - Miss Mohana
 - Miss Mona
 - Molly Lobo
 - Mosses Gonsalves
 - Mr Josinho D'Souza
 - Mrs Luiza Fernandes
 - Nelson Afonso (of the Trio)
 - Nelson Collaco
 - Nephie Rodrigues
 - Netty Carneiro
 - Norman Fernandes
 - Oldrin Sequeira
 - Oliveira Neves
 - Ophelia Cabral
 - Ophelia Cabral E D'Souza
 - Ophelia D'Souza
 - Ophelia de Souza
 - Osvy Viegas
 - P. Nazareth (Peter Anthony Nazareth)
 - Pascoal Francisco Aniceto Laurencó
 - Pascoal Rodngues
 - Pascoal Santo Antonio D'Costa
 - Patrick Dourado (Patrocino Dourado)
 - Patrick Fernandes
 - Paul Rommy (Romald D'Souza)

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- Paul Romy
 - Pedro Filipe Fernandes
 - Pedro Godinho
 - Pedro Menino D'Costa (Peter de Colva)
 - Peter D'Costa
 - Peter D'Silva
 - Peter D'Souza
 - Peter de Benaolim
 - Peter De Costa
 - Peter Gomes de Umtavaddo. Penned 20 plays and composed as many as 500 songs.
 - Peter Lobo
 - Peter V Fernandes
 - Philip Braz Fernandes
 - Philip de Orlim
 - Philip De Sanvordem (*Muzg*)
 - Philip Pereira
 - Phillip Pereira
 - Philomena Crasto
 - Philomena D'Souza
 - Philu de Aldona
 - Piedoor (Pietr) Siqueiro
 - Pitu Joaquim R Vaz
 - Pitush D'Costa
 - Platilda Dias
 - Prem Kumar (Pedro Xavier da Costa)
 - Premanand Lotlikar
 - Premanand Sangodkar
 - Prince Jacob. Real name: Minguel Jacob Carmo Luis Fernandes.
 - Querobina Carvalho
 - R. D'Taleigao (Rosario D'Souza)
 - Rafael A Cardozo
 - Rafael Noel
 - Rajeev Naique
 - Rama (L.C. D'Braganza)
 - Ratnakar L Goveker
 - Regina Fernandes (first lady on Konkani stage, in *Batcara*, 1904, wife of João Agostinho Fernandes)
 - Reginald Fernandes

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- Remedious Goes
 - Remie Colaço
 - Richard Colaco
 - Rico Rod (Ricardo Vincent Rodrigues)
 - Rita Rose
 - Robertina Assuciana D'Costa
 - Robin Vaz (veteran folk artiste)
 - Roglo Naik
 - Roland Fernandes
 - Romaldo D'Souza
 - Romeo Mendes
 - Rommy Pinheiro
 - Ronald Mendonca
 - Roque Dias
 - Rosario Pereira
 - Rosario Rodrigues
 - Rosary Ferns
 - Roseferns – The King Of Centuries (Antonio Rosario Fernandes)
 - Roshan Fernandes
 - Rosy Alvares
 - Rosy Corte
 - Ruby
 - Rupesh Jogle
 - S Caetano Fernandes
 - S Lemos
 - S. G. DeSouza Karachiwalla
 - Sabina Fernandes
 - Sally Mascarenhas
 - Salu de Loutolim
 - Salvador Afons
 - Salvador Fernandes
 - Samuel Carvalho
 - Sandeep Ambe
 - Santana Pegado
 - Satayvan Tukaram Tari
 - Sazora
 - Sebastian (S.B. Radio)
 - Seby Coutinho
 - Seby D'Souza

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- Seby Fernandes
 - Seby Pinto
 - Senno Perry
 - Severin de Sirlim (Severin Rodrigues)
 - Shalini Mardolkar
 - Sharon Mazarello
 - Sheikh Amir
 - Shirang P Narvekar
 - Shrutika D Naik
 - Socorina Fernandes
 - Sophia Fernandes
 - Souza Boy
 - Souza Ferrão (A R Souza Ferrão)
 - Souza Guiao (known for his mellifluous yodelling)
 - Star of Arossim (Alegre Antao)
 - Steve Rodrigues
 - Succor Colaco
 - Succorine Fizado
 - Sylvester Vaz
 - Tatum D'Souza
 - Telles Moraes
 - Theo Alvares
 - Thomas Anthony Alphonso
 - Thomas Coogan (João Thomas Fernandes)
 - Thomas Simoes
 - Titta Pretto/John Gabriel Pereira
 - Tomazinho Cardozo (Lamberto Thomas Cardozo)
 - Tony Cabral
 - Tony Call
 - Tony Carr
 - Tony Dias
 - Tony King (Tony Alvares)
 - Tony Martins
 - Ulhas Tari
 - Valanka
 - Valente Mascarenhas (Carmo Valente Mascarenhas)
 - Vasanti Gonsalves
 - Velitor (Bobet) Fernandes
 - Victor de Calangute
 - Victor Fernandes

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- Victor Rodrigues
 - Vikas Kandolkar
 - Vincent de Saligao (Vincent Vaz)
 - Vincent Domingo Jeromino Fernandes
 - Vincent Vaz
 - Vincy Quadros
 - Vitorino Arauzo
 - Wilfy Rebimbus
 - William de Curtorim (famed for his political compositions)
 - William Fernandes
 - Wilma Santana Pacheco
 - Wilmix (Wilson Vincente Constantino Mazarello)
 - Wilmix Trio (Wilson, Michael, Xavier)
 - Xavier Fernandes
 - Xavier Gomes
 - Xavier Mascarenhas
 - Xavier Mendes (Mendes Bros.)
 - Xavier Pires
 - Young Chico (Chico Brinjel)
 - Young Mendes (José Mendes)
 - Young Menezes (famous from the 1950s for Konkani Rap music, or jet speed singing.)
 - Zeferino de Cruz



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