

bajakhana

MICHAEL KINNEAR'S WEBSITE INTO EARLY SOUND RECORDINGS

BROADCAST IN INDIA, English Manufactured Indian Record Labels

बाजाखाना



BROADCAST IN INDIA
English Manufactured Indian Record Labels

By Michael Kinnear, Revised and Updated
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The

Musical Products, Limited, Madras

Proprietor:

The Musical Products, Ltd., 167 Mount Road, Madras (1933-1940)

The Musical Products, Ltd., 16 Rampart Row, Bombay (1934-1940)

The Musical Products, Ltd., 43 Bentinck Street, Calcutta (1935-1940)

The Musical Products, Ltd., China Bazar Road, Madras (1940-1944)

Manufacturer:

The Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co., Ltd., Tonbridge

The history of the BROADCAST label and its proprietors in Great Britain has been related by the late Frank Andrews in Hillandale News, Number 129 (December 1982), pages 126 – 131, and Number 130 (February 1983), pages 148-150, under the title of “Broadcast – The Story of a Record.”

An aspect of the BROADCAST record label's output not mentioned in those articles concerns the production of an Indian repertoire on the label for the Indian and Asian market. Although manufactured in England between 1934 and 1937, these Indian recordings were produced and distributed by a separate and independent company formed late in 1933, called The Musical Products Ltd., whose headquarters were at Madras, in South India.

Some years before The Musical Products Ltd was established in late 1933, the English repertoire of the BROADCAST record label was placed on the market in India by the Indian branch of the British publishing company MacMillan and Company Limited whose head office in India was at Delhi with branches at Bombay, Calcutta and Madras.

The Broadcast record label was imported into India from July 1928 by MacMillan and Company Limited's Calcutta branch through an agency agreement with the Vocalion (Foreign) Limited until early 1932 when that company was wound up by the Vocalion Gramophone Company Ltd. This in turn was acquired by the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company Limited in March 1932. who continued the agency arrangement with MacMillan & Co., Ltd. for India.

The Madras branch office of MacMillan & Co., Ltd., at 6. Patullo Road, Madras, under the management of H.C.Stagg resumed the distribution in India of the English repertoires of BROADCAST, ECLIPSE, IMPERIAL and REX records by the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Company Limited, from about the middle of 1932.

In about December 1933, The Musical Products Ltd., Madras, was established at 167 Mount Road, Madras and at 16 Rampart Row, Bombay, by Jesinglal Kisharlal Mehta and Kirtilal Manilal Mehta as partners with an Authorized Capital of 50.000 rupees at 167 Mount Road. Madras. It seems that the capital was not to be paid into the company until mid 1934, at which time the company may be deemed to have commenced its operations officially.

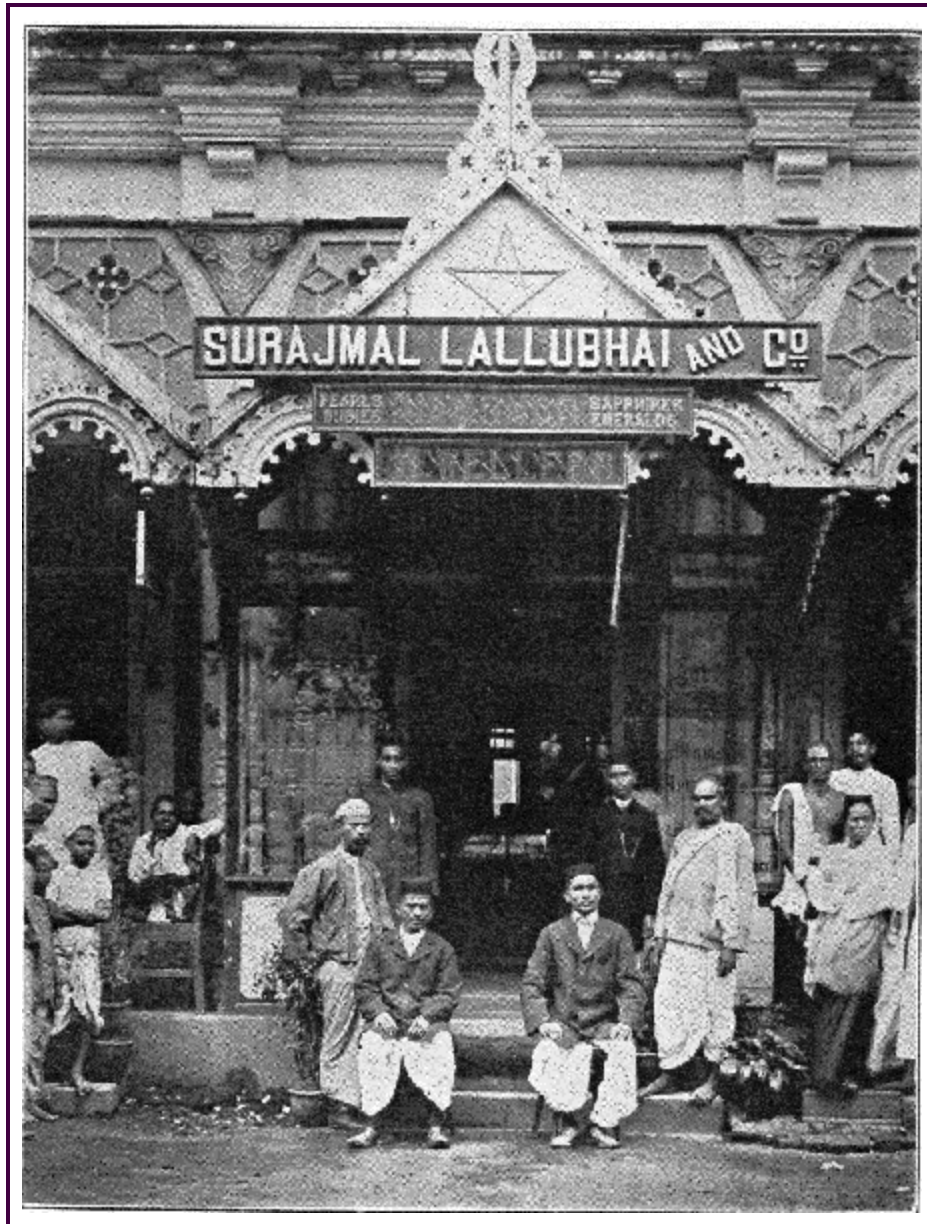
Jesinglal Kisharlal Mehta and Kirtilal Mehta were members of a very prominent family of diamond merchants and partners in the family business that had been established in 1895 in Bombay, as diamond trading both costume and industrial diamonds by their forebears in the name of Surajmal Lallubhai & Company.





Surajmal Lallubhai is widely considered to be one of the pioneers of the diamond business in India

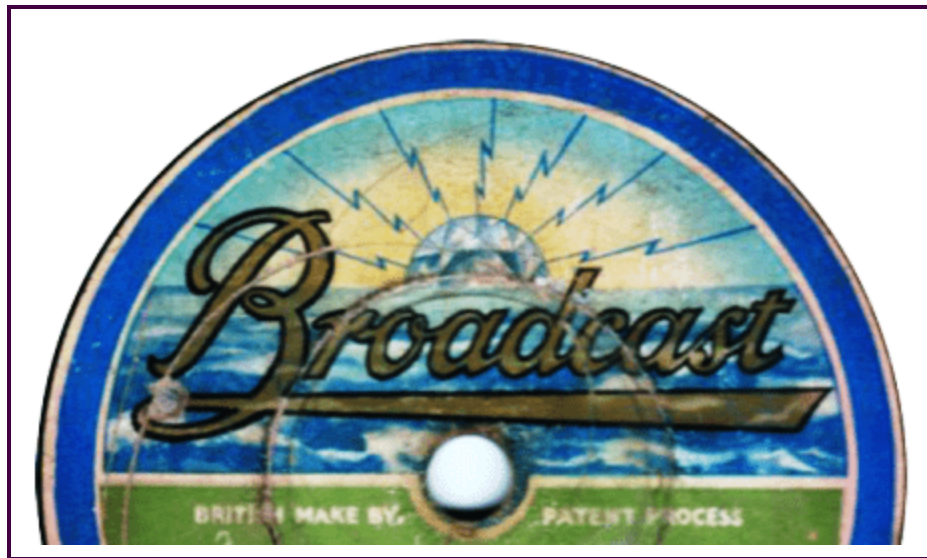




The Premises of Surajmal Lallubhai and Co., Mogul Street, Bombay

Over the past three decades the business had grown into one of the foremost diamond and precious stone merchants in India with its head office in Bombay, a branch in Madras and an office in Antwerp, Belgium. The firm was among the world's leading suppliers of industrial diamonds including of course diamond tips for cutting heads and lathes as used in the recording industry which might explain how they came to be involved in such an apparently unrelated field, while Jesinglal Kisharlal Mehta himself was known as a patron of Indian Classical music.





The “Diamond” in the centre of the upper half of the circle of the BROADCAST Record Label

Between 1932 and 1934 several small Indian recording companies had sprung up including Hindusthan Musical Products & Varieties Syndicate, Ltd; The Megaphone Company; and the Senola Musical Products Company, all of Calcutta: The Ruby Record Company, Bombay and Saraswathi Stores, Madras to name the most important, along with a couple of dozen smaller regional concerns who all had their own labels, and whose products were usually both recorded and manufactured by The Gramophone Company, Limited, at their Dum Dum factory, under a scheme known as ‘ Private Recorders.’ which attempted to keep all record manufacturers in India under the one company’s umbrella.

Those that were not prepared to join the Gramophone Company, Ltd.’s scheme of providing pressings of records had to find alternative means of having their recordings manufactured. The only other disc record factory then operating in India was the Viel- o-phone Company, Limited. The plant was owned and operated by Valabhdas Runchordas of Bombay who had been manufacturing records there since 1914. By the early 1930’s, however the plant was somewhat antiquated and only capable of producing pressings of rather poor quality.

The Musical Products Ltd., Madras was established as producers and distributors of gramophone records through an agency agreement with Meloto Company, Ltd., who were responsible for the export side of the Crystalate Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co., Ltd. A Mr. Binstead has been referred to as the person sent out to India to supervise the sessions for Broadcast there.

The company’s head office was at 167 Mount Road, Madras, with a branch office in Bombay and recording rooms in Bombay, Calcutta and Colombo, Ceylon. Other distributors had sole rights for Broadcast records in India outside of Madras, Bombay, Calcutta and Colombo.



NEW RECORDS for JULY, 1935.

THE BEST OF THE LATEST DIALOGUE RECORDS.
S. V. SUBBIAH BHAGAVATHAR & M. S. VIJAYAL.

ST. 2099	{ Annamunnamale —Kovalan Kadhal Konden —Bakavali Srimathi K. KOCHAMMAL, Malabar	
R. 4040	{ Nondhuvandennindru- Parts 1 & 2. —Ragamalka	
SUBBIAH NAIDU (Gubbi Thea're), Bangalore,		
B. 2103	{ Endhuventhu Bannipey —Khamboji Devi Jagan Mathe —Sarang	

Northern India —Nadhaswaram, Sitar & Band Records.
 VOCAL GEMS by :—BAI KESAR BAI, JADDAN BAI,
 KASHI BAI, KRISHNA BAI, VASANT DAMODAR,
 TENDULKER, Etc.

:: THE ABOVE ARE WORTH YOUR HEARING ::

WELCOME SET TO EVERY INDIAN HOME LAKSHMI KRIPA AND SARASWATI VIJAYAM. ST. 2100 and ST. 2101.	PUT AN END TO CRUELTY TO ANIMALS HEAR THE RECORDS B. 2117 and B. 2118.
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THE MUSICAL PRODUCTS LTD.,

MADRAS, BOMBAY, CALCUTTA COLOMBO.

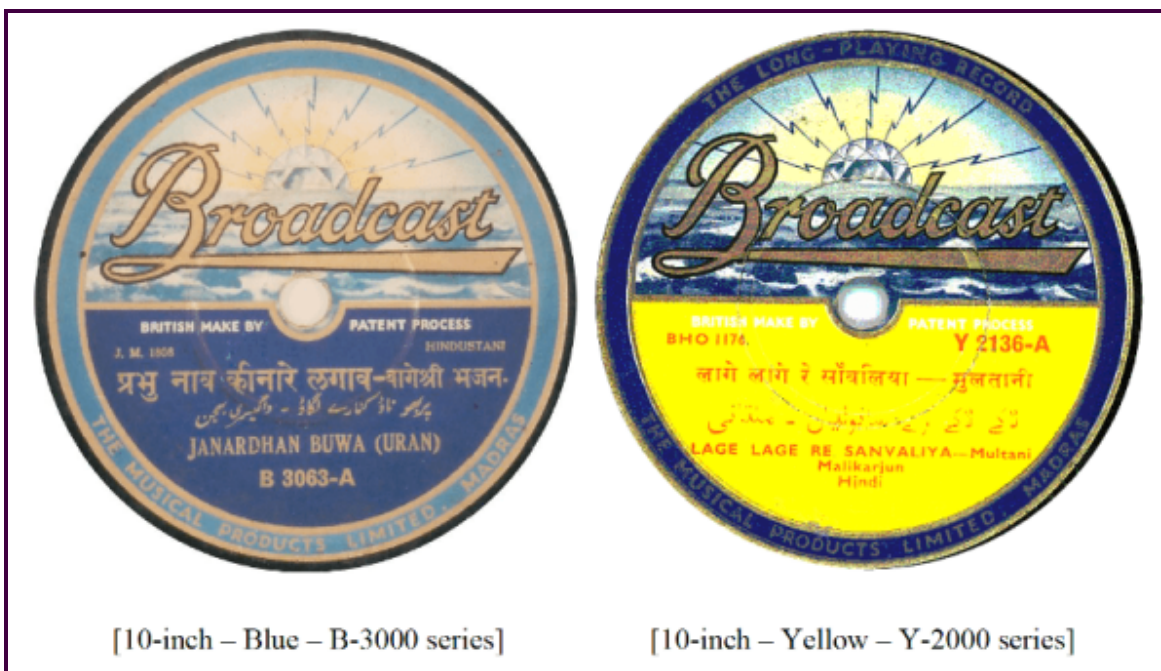
In accordance with the locations of the three recording studios, the matrix series for the Indian BROADCAST records had the prefixes 'HO' (Madras), 'BHO' (Bombay) and 'CHO' (Calcutta) with a numerical system beginning at 1. Some 12" matrices were indicated by the conversion of the letter O to T, so that the three matrices would become 'HT,' 'BHT' and 'CHT.'" There may also have been some other similar codes as yet undiscovered.

Four numerical blocks were utilized by the company for Indian BROADCAST records – 2000, 2500, 3000 and 4000, with the retail prices for each of these blocks being indicated by a complicated and confusing set of prefix letters that described the colours of the labels, and thus their price category. (These categories were revised in 1936, and were somewhat simplified in much the same way as the Gramophone Co. in England had rationalized their previously complicated system of label colours – and prices – a little over a decade earlier).

The table below shows these categories, along with their relevant prices. It will be seen that like the English Broadcast company The Musical Products Ltd. manufactured quite a variety of different sizes:

BROADCAST RECORD CATEGORIES and PRICES



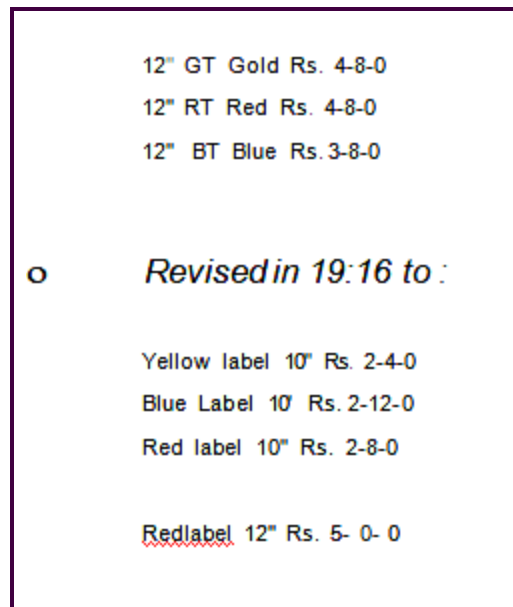


[10-inch – Blue – B-3000 series]

[10-inch – Yellow – Y-2000 series]

8" GE Gold Rs. 1-12-0
 8" RE Red Rs. 1-8-0
 8" BE Blue Rs. 1-4-0
 9" RN Red Rs. 2-0-0
 9" BN Blue Rs. 1-8-0
 10" G Gold Rs. 4-0-0
 10" R Red Rs. 3-8-0
 10" B Blue Rs. 2-4-0
 10" Y Yellow Rs. 1-12-0
 10" Baby - 1934 Rs. 1-4-0
 10" GR Gold, red stamp Rs. 3-0-0
 10" BG Blue, green Rs. 2-8-0
 10" RG Red, green Rs. 2-12-0
 10" GB Green, blue Rs. 2-4-0
 10" O Orange Rs. 1-12-0





The Musical Products Ltd. quickly assembled a very impressive first of recording artists including several renowned classical vocalists and instrumentalists who had already achieved a certain amount of fame as 'Gramophone' artists, through their earlier efforts on His Masters Voice. Among these was Pearsa Sahib, who had made cylinder and disc recordings as far back as 1904. Recordings of this artist appear on just about every label with an Indian repertoire that one can find up to the 1930's, but by the time he sang for BROADCAST, his high pitched voice was but a shadow of its former glory.





Peara Sahib, Broadcast Recording Artist

Some of the other artists signed up for the BROADCAST label can be seen in the advertisement reproduced below, which dates from December 1934. They included Miss Kesarbai Kerkar, Miss Siddheswari Devi, Miss Jaddan Bai, Miss Krishnabai, Master Krishna, Ustad Bundu Khan, Subbulahmania Pillai. (Some were making their very first recordings – all were later to achieve great fame and fortune with the Gramophone Co. (India) Ltd.). The very wealthy parent company was able to offer large fees for BROADCAST recordings, without which many of these artists would not have been captured.



हिंदी नुकतेच प्रसिद्ध झाले आहेत



रेकॉर्ड्स

स्वाधीन दिनेत्या मुनिस्थान कलाकारांनी आपल्या गापनाचा कमाल केल्या आहे !

<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; width: 80px; margin: 0 auto;"> <p>उर्दू हिंदी गुजराती मराठी पारधी भाषे</p> </div>	<p>डॉ. शक्तिमान लखंडे बसन्त कवच अच्युत बसन्त मेदी रत्ना बसन्त कृष्णा डि. बालगमसिंह बसन्त रामोदर पुष्पोजन बसन्त रामोदर बसुमती</p>	<p>मिस् कुमाराबाई मिस् कमलेश्वरी मिस् शमुल मिस् बसन्तजीवन मिस् मन्दिताबाई मिस् सुलक्षणा रामाजी कुमाराबाई</p>
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आजपर्यंत ज्या रेकॉर्ड्स् ऐकण्याची आपण वाट पाहत होतां, तेच हे रेकॉर्ड्स् आहेत
इतर रेकॉर्ड्स्साठी आमचे रेकॉर्ड्स् शीडपट बेल वाजत राहतात

— इंडीयन रेकॉर्ड्स् —

घी म्युझिकल प्रॉडक्ट्स् लिमिटेड

१५ रायपट्ट-रो, मुंबई
१६७, पार्सेल रोड, बंगलोर

Broadcast Label, Advertisement of Artists, December 1934



**Some of Broadcast Renowned
Artistes**

Look out for every Subsequent
Releases

Mrs. Lalita Venkatram	Prof. Gangadhar Mande
Bai Kesarbai	Prabalbad Gana
Balabai Kale	Bashir Quawal
Miss Shivarni Ghose	Noor Mahomod Band
Bai Sidheshwaribai	Narayan Quawal
Miss Kashi Bai	Manohardas G. Maneik
Miss Shankarabai	G. C. Joshi
Miss Maneikbai	Nathu Buwa Amrotikar
Miss Sherat Jahan	Suleman Nathu
Bai Jaddanbai	Champaklal Thakkar
Miss Manoramadevi	Peara Sahib
Alakh Nandu	Dattaram Parvatkar
Rajuli Shakuntala Bai	Chhota Ram Das
Himatlal P. Sharma	Imitation Acharulu
Abdul Majjid	Sunil Kumar Bose

& many others

Apply for Dealership to:—

Musical Products

16, Rampart Row. BOMBAY.	* 107, Mount Road, MADRAS.
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Additionally, the company tried very hard to persuade Khan Sahib Abdul Karim Khan, one of India's most famous vocalists to make recordings with them, but he stubbornly refused, remaining loyal to ODEON even though he had not recorded since 1905. Had The Musical Products Ltd. succeeded in signing Khan Sahib Abdul Karim Khan it would have been the equivalent in India of a rival to The Gramophone & Typewriter in Milan signing Enrico Caruso!

Between 1934 and 1936, The Musical Products Ltd. made considerable inroads into what had previously been almost exclusively The Gramophone Co. (India)'s preserve. In common with one other firm however they were still having their discs manufactured abroad – the only other Indian recording company in this position was T. S. Ramchunder & Bros., whose RAMAGRAPH records were being manufactured by Carl Lindstrom A. G., in Berlin.



In 1934 Duleria A. Pandya established The National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co.Ltd., with a disc record factory in Bombay . Apart from its own 'YOUNG INDIA' label this company also offered custom pressing services: a dramatic increase in the number of new record labels not surprisingly followed soon thereafter.

By early 1937 there were around one hundred different labels of which all but BROADCAST and RAMAGRAPH were being made by either The Gramophone Co. at its Dum Dum factory or the new National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co. in Bombay.

During 1936 the Authorised Capital of The Musical Products Ltd. was increased to 100,000 rupees. Jesinglal Mehta as Managing Director had also become proficient enough to make his own recordings for the company which were given their own matrix code of 'JM'. Although a vast amount of money had been put into the recording and distribution of BROADCAST in India – the company's matrix stocks totaled by then some 2,000 titles – sales were on the whole. dismal. Surajmal Lalubhai & Co., the parent company finally decided there was no point in throwing good money after bad especially in view of the burgeoning competition and took steps to wind down The Musical Products Ltd.

Although the Head Office of the company had remained officially at Madras, Jesinglal Mehta was more or less permanently stationed at Bombay where the BROADCAST records were achieving their highest sales and so from 1936 the distribution of BROADCAST records in South India was passed to General Products Co. of Madras. who also represented several other minor labels.

To compound The Musical Products Ltd.'s problems still further, in March 1937 the Decca Gramophone Co. Ltd. took over the goodwill, plant and other assets of the Crystalate Manufacturing Company Ltd. who had been providing the BROADCAST pressings. The last known catalogue of Indian BROADCAST releases is for February 1937, even though titles continued to be released and advertised up to mid – 1937.





Broadcast Advertisement, Indian Express, 17 July, 1935

By July 1937 Jesinglal Mehta had severed his connection with The Musical Products Ltd., and set up a separate record company under the name of The Diamond Record Company in Bombay. He proceeded to introduce the 'LOTUS' label, whose pressings were manufactured by The National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co., Ltd., also of Bombay. The design of the LOTUS label bears a striking resemblance to the BROADCAST label, except that the "diamond" in the centre of the upper half of the circle was replaced by a lotus flower and the legend "British Make by Patent Process" which had appeared on the Broadcast label had been rather amusingly changed to "Indian Make by Electrical Process."

Even though the wheels may have come off the wagon for The Musical Products Co., Ltd. as far as their recording program was concerned, the company still retained a large amount of stock which had to be cleared to recoup some of the original investment. Hence the company's branches in Madras. Bombay. Calcutta and Colombo became simply retail outlets to dispose of the BROADCAST stockpiles.

While this was going on the Decca Co. had appointed S. H. Haskill (Eastern) Ltd. of Bombay as their representative in India for Brunswick records, which were being manufactured by The Gramophone Co., at Dum Dum.

After less than a dozen issues Jesinglal Mehta abandoned his Diamond Record Co. and his association with the National Gramophone Record Manufacturing Co., Ltd. who had been pressing the LOTUS discs for him, and launched The 'Jay Bharat'

Record Company in October 1938, from the same premises to promote “his latest flame,” Miss Sushila Tembe, a light classical vocalist whom he later married.

The recordings for this new label were recorded and manufactured by The Gramophone Co., Ltd. at Dum Dum and although there were less than two dozen releases in all on Jay Bharat, Jesinglal Mehta had finally struck a vein of commercial ‘hits.’ Most of these were selling strongly.

The retail selling of Indian BROADCAST records continued through the branches of The Musical Products Ltd., and surprisingly appeared to have achieved greater sales between 1938 and 1940. This upturn in interest in BROADCAST was mainly brought about by playing many of the company’s records on the Indian Broadcasting Company’s radio stations located in Bombay, Calcutta and Madras. The playing of records over the air had also been a major factor in the promotion of ODEON and COLUMBIA recordings from the mid – 1930’s and no doubt set the pattern in India for what has become a very common practice for promoting record sales.

Of the fate of the 2000-plus matrices of BROADCAST recordings, little is known. By 1940 the Madras office had been relocated to a different address in the city and the Bombay office was vacated. The recordings studios there were occupied until 1943, but by 1944 The Musical Products Ltd. had closed all its offices and ceased business.

The Musical Products Ltd. – and Jesinglal Mehta in particular, will best be remembered for revitalizing the ‘historical’ prospects of Indian classical artists, both in concert and on record. Through the enthusiasm and dedication of the company directors (as well as those of other companies of course) the artistry of many Indian classical performers has been preserved on record which might not otherwise have survived at all.

Acknowledgement to Late Frank Andrews and to Jim Hayes for assistance with regard to the history of Broadcast.

MICHAEL KINNEAR



The coloured record label illustrations in this article are from:
The 78 r.p.m. Record Labels of India
by Michael Kinnear

