



FIELDNOTES

Fieldworker(s) [(Initials) Name]: (MH) Maggie Holtzberg, (DF) David Filipov, Boston Globe

Accession Numbers:

MH-09-14-FN

Fieldnotes

MH-09-14-D

Audio recordings

MH-09-14-D

Photographic documentation

- - -M

Additional materials

Initial Contact: _____ Contact Date: 11/8/2009

Related Accession Numbers: _____

Individual/Group/Event: Apprenticeship in North Indian tabla playing

Address: _____

City: South Attleboro, MA Zip: 01960 County: Plymouth

Phone: Daytime: _____ Evening: _____

E-mail: _____ Website: _____

Contact person: _____

Title: _____

Location of Interview: Chris Pereji's basement studio in his home

Street Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____ County: _____

Special Needs (including translation): _____

Traditions documented on visit (traditional art/skills, occupational experience, ethnic or religious community): _____

Traditions noted for follow-up: Chris teaching Nisha Purushotham

Other Possible Contacts: _____

Summary Description: (next page)

Summary: MH-09-14-FN Christopher Pereji and Nisha Purushotham Apprenticeship in North Indian tabla drumming

Maggie arrived at Chris Pereji's home in South Attleboro a bit early. He came to his front door and invited me in. Upon entering the living room I immediately detected the cooking smell of curry. There were several pairs of shoes by the door. It was an unseasonably warm day, and I had worn flip flops. Chris was in sandals. As in many Indian homes, the music studio was located in a finished basement. I noticed a piano upstairs in the living room with a hymn book illustrated with an image of Jesus Christ.

Chris invited me to follow him downstairs. The large room had powder blue walls and served a dual function – music and exercise studio. At one end of the room, several tablas were seated on cloth rings and arranged on a raised platform, covered in a printed textile. The other end of the room also had a raised platform with some sound equipment and a guitar. In speaking with Chris I learned that there were approximately 150 Indian families in the area, which is comprised of Providence, Attleboro, and Pawtucket. The state line seemed of little significance in defining the local Indian community. Chris is from Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh, South India. He came to the states 15 years ago, first settling in Providence. Nisha's paternal grandfather is also from Hyderabad.

I explained that David Filipov was on his way, but would be here soon. Nisha, Chris's apprentice was getting ready for her lesson. He sent her to get a table to put some refreshments on – barfi sweets, mango juice, and bottled water.

They began their session with Chris explaining how the tabla is tuned. Then they began their lesson – working on a 16-bar cycle, the framework on which to experiment with rhythmic variations. “Your cycle is not being counted; it is being felt. Playing should become an emotional and physical reaction, not a mental exercise.”

I heard the doorbell ring and went up to let David in. The lesson went on for a good hour before they broke off for conversation and questions from us. This second part of the afternoon went almost an hour.