

# *Kashmiri Artistes*



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# *Kashmiri Artistes*

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## **1 Pandit Bhajan Sopori**



**Santoor maestro, Pandit Bhajan Sopori**

**Santoor** maestro, **Pandit Bhajan Sopori** comes from a family of musicians of "Sofiana Gharana" of Kashmir and Santoor is what he inherited from his predecessors. He got his initial training from his grand father, Pt. S. C. Sopori and later from his father Pt. S.N. Sopori. He gave his first public performance at the age of ten in the conference organised by Prayag Sangeet Samiti and Univ. of Allahabad. Ever since he has been performing with great distinction in various festivals and conferences in the country and abroad. Shri Bhajan Sopori had formal academic training in both sitar and santoor upto masters level besides having obtained masters degree in English Literature. He also studied Western Classical music at the Washington University, U.S.A.

Pandit Bhajan Sopori holds a very prestigious place among the musicians of India. He has performed for leading cultural association, Radio Sangeet Sammelans and other National Programmes of Padio and Doordarshan and has received many awards of merit for his musical excellence. He has also performed in England, Germany, U.S.A., Egypt, Yugoslavia, Bulgana, Syria, Belgium, Norway, etc. and has taught music at the Washington university, St. Louis and the University of Oslo (Norway).

With his devotion and dedication to Santoor, Pandit Sopori has advanced his technique of playing where he skillfully brings about a synthesis of the various phrases of vocal and instrumental music. The structural novelty of his instrument accentuates his stylistic uniqueness, which is conventional and yet creative and progressive. His presentation is lyrical and asthetic.

Shri Bhajan Sopori is also a music director of repute having produced several musical productions and has composed music for songs in various Indian languages. He has also composed music for operas, Telefilms, serials and documentaries.

Shri Sopori has also playing records and a number of cassettes of Santoor recitals and compositions to his credit.

*Website Address:* <http://iKashmir.org/Music/BhajanSopori/index.html>

## 2 *Arti Tiku Kaul*



**Arti (Tiku) Kaul**

**Arti Tiku Kaul** born and brought up in Srinagar started her singing career at the age of 6 as a radio entertainer and soon became a popular TV entertainer as well. Arti received her MA in Classical Music from Punjab and Allahabad Universities. She has taught music in College of Music and Fine Arts at University of Kashmir. Arti has made few Kashmiri audiotapes which have become quite popular with Kashmiri community.

Arti has been encouraged all through her musical career by her family, especially by her sister Shana Mattoo, who has been force behind her. Arti has been trained and groomed as a accomplished singer by her Guru Shri T. K. Jalali.



**Arti (Tiku) Kaul performing in U.S.**

Arti has performed in major Indian cities and has represented the Government of India in West Indies, Venezuela, and North America in cultural and social exchange programs. In 1993, Arti moved to USA and taught music in Boston area. Since last 2 years Arti and her family are based in Calcutta where her husband is looking after the business ventures of a major US company.

*Website Address:* <http://iKashmir.org/Music/ArtiTiku/index.html>

### **3 Nirja Pandit**

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**Nirja Pandit**

*Website Address:* <http://iKashmir.org/Music/NirjaPandit/index.html>



## 4 Kailash Mehra Sadhu



**Kailash Mehra Sadhu**

### *Music from the Distant Valleys*

**R. C. Ganjoo**

**Sunday Mail, New Delhi, October 1, 1994**

**Known** as *Malika-e-Ghazal*, **Kailash Mehra's** is a household name among Kashmiri families in India or abroad. Born in Dogra, Naini Tal, in 1956, she received her education in Srinagar.

She earned fame singing Kashmiri ghazals and songs and her recordings in Kashmiri, Urdu, Gujarati, Sanskrit, Punjabi, Hindi, Persian, Bhaderwahi, Pahari and in Kannad languages have been appreciated by millions.

She did her post graduation in music from Panjab University, Chandigarh, earning another master's degree in vocal music from Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad, in 1975. In 1979 she was appointed a lecturer in music at the Women's College in Anantnag.

God has gifted her with a good voice. Her teacher, Swarup Nath Sapru, noted her talents when she was in Std. III, studying in Devki Arya Puri Pathshala, Srinagar. Shamboo Nath Sopori, her guru, gave her basic training in music and later his son, Bhajan Sopori, guided her in Kashmiri light music.

She passed her radio audition in Kashmiri and Urdu as a student. Her songs in Kashmiri became famous.

Kailash participated in music competitions organised by the state cultural academy. Her stage performances were organised in Patna, Lucknow, Calcutta, Madras, Trivandrum, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi. She sung in Kanad language on stage and her voice was liked by the audiences.

She took part in the fourth Festival of Music organised by the Kashmiri Overseas Association of Britain in 1985. She also sung for the film *Aarnimall*.

She was given the title, *Malika-e-Ghazal* in 1993 by the Jammu Vikas Sanstha. The Sadiq memorial Committee awarded her the Mehboob Awami Funkara in 1981 and she was chosen the best singer by the Sri Bhat Smarak Samiti in 1980.

Kailash married Vijay Kumar Sadhu, a district fire officer in 1980. It was love at first sight and she has high regard for her mother-in-law who fully supports her musical inclinations.

"I did not face much difficulty in adjusting to a Kashmiri family as I was brought up in that environment." According to her, language plays a vital role in cementing relations. "My husband speaks Dogri very well and talks to my mother, Maya devi, in Dogri only. I picked up Kashmiri language very fast," she said.

Her four sisters and two brothers are also gifted. Her mother was a good singer but never performed on stage or radio. Her father, Dani Ram Mehra, died when Kailash was in Std. V.

Kailash was unable to expose her talents because there was no scope to do so in Jammu and Kashmir. Asked what she desired in her younger days when she had earned a name for herself, she said: "I wanted to make a mark so that people remember me after my death."

People have recorded her songs on their own as she has not released any cassette of her Kashmiri songs.

After migrating from Kashmir valley in 1990, she felt lost for two years. "But I was delighted when I used to listen to my songs being played by people and talking about me in Jammu." She migrated to jammu, leaving behind her property.

"The migration has affected the literary field. Artistes have not yet come out of their shock." At present she teaches at Jammu's MAM College for migrant students.

She said the present generation will be inclined towards the scientific era rather than music. "Music was not being taken seriously," she said, adding, "I have yet to spot a student who could learn music with dedication."

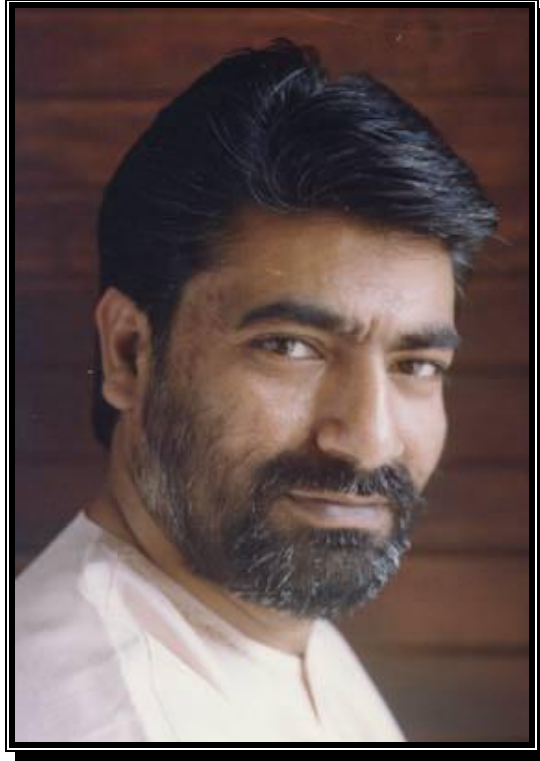
Mostly singing Bhajan Sopori's compositions, she has equal regard for Nasarullah, Mohammed Ashraf, Krishan Langoo, and A. K. Jalali, big names in music composition. Her favourite Kashmiri singer is Shameema Dev, wife of the Union Tourism Minister Ghulam Nabi Azad. Among the national singers, jagjit Singh is her favourite. The list of poets who influenced her include Rasool Mir, Rahim Sahib, Shamas Faqir, Dinanath Nadim and Motilal Saqi.

After her marriage she added her husband's name Sadhu. "I was recognised as Kailash Mehra but my husband's role is equally important in developing my personality and image after marriage. That is why I put Sadhu after my name."

Kailash is blessed with two sons. "I don't suppose they would do much in this field. Because artistes in this profession live and die with name and fame, but no money."

*Website Address:* <http://iKashmir.org/Music/KailashMehra/index.html>

## 5 Vijay Malla



**Vijay Malla**

**Vijay Malla** inherited singing from his mother who possessed a very sweet and melodious voice. He used to sing old movie songs at age five. He won a number of prizes and always stood first in cultural programs sponsored by schools, colleges, All India Radio (A.I.R.) and TV Station (Doordarshan Kendra) at Srinagar, Kashmir, India. He learnt classical vocal music from Prem Sangeet Niketan, Kashmir at age 10.

Vijay Malla's talent was appreciated by Ustad Rahat Ali Khan who would teach him some ghazals on his visit to Kashmir. He also learnt classical vocal under the guidance of Pt. Brijkrishen Shair. His ghazal training was given to him by a famous Ghazal singer of Kashmir, Pt. Vishnupuran Dhar.

Vijay Malla started singing very frequently on Radio and Television - his songs became instant hits that are popular even after 25 years. He has performed in almost whole of India, as he has been honored by the academic institute of music and fine arts to be the playback singer of various musical operas in Hyderabad, Mysore, Madras, Bangalore, Trivandrum, Kanyakumari and Delhi. He has been frequently booked by various A.I.R. and Doordarshan Kendras as an active Ghazal singer in sham-e-ghazal. He has sung many items on stages with reputed Ghazal singers such as Anwar, Peenaz Masani, Manhar, Anup Jalota, Pankaj Udhas, Ahmad Hussain, Mohd. Hussain, Ravinder Jain, to name a few. He has also staged many items in Kalyanji-Anandji's and Ravinder Jain's Nights in Bombay. He was signed as artiste of Music India Ltd (MIL) - a Polydoor Gramophone Company, and has participated in *Khazana* 87 and 88. MIL has also launched his cassette titled *Justaju* (Search) which has received good commendation.

Website Address: <http://iKashmir.org/Music/VijayMalla/index.html>

## **6 S. K. Bhan**

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Poet and Humorist



**S. K. Bhan**

*Courtesy: Sh. Uteesh Dhar*

Website Address: <http://iKashmir.org/Music/SKBhan/index.html>

## *7 Rajinder Kachroo*

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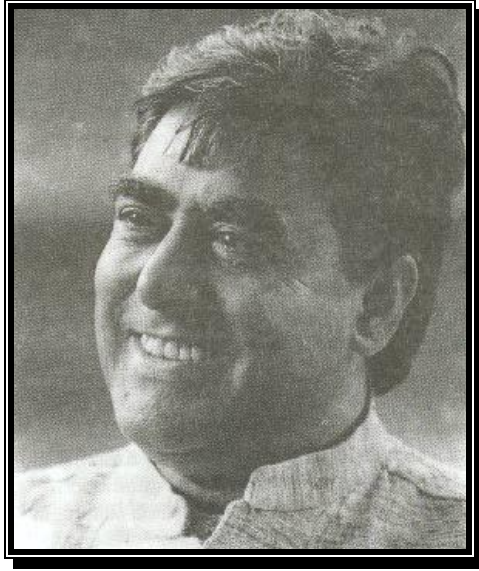


**Rajinder Kachroo**  
*Courtesy: Koshur Samachar*

*Website Address:* <http://iKashmir.org/Music/RKachroo/index.html>

## **8 Pt. Krishen Langoo**

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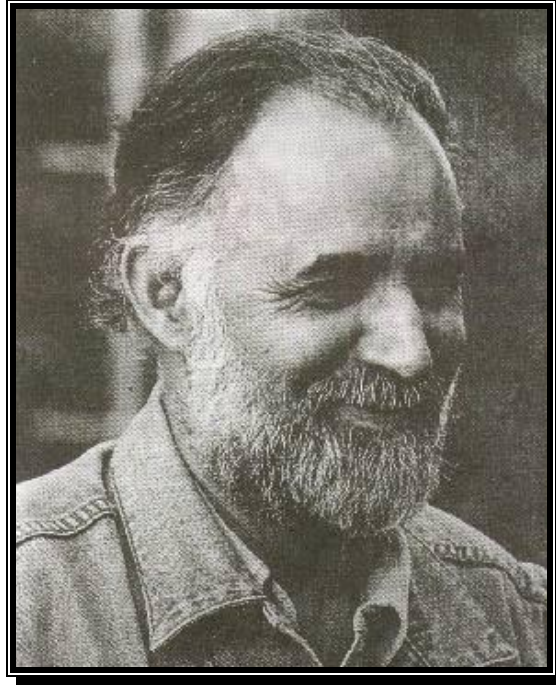


**Pt. Krishen Langoo**

**Born** in Badiyar Bala, Srinagar, Shri Krishen Langoo, son of Late Pandit Tika Lal Langoo is a well known music director from Kashmir. Trained in the folk/traditional music of Kashmir, Shri Langoo has performed widely within the state and outside in many prestigious festivals. As one of the senior musicians of Kashmir, he commands respect and admiration throughout the region. He has been rendering music to Bhand Pather, the traditional theatre of Kashmir for several decades. He has presented folk music performances in the Festival of Asian Arts in Hongkong, Tashkent, Almata and Guyana. He has several audio- cassettes of folk music of Kashmir to his credit. Further he has composed music for the tele-serials like Gul Gulshan Gulfam, Mashaal, Parteet etc. which also fetched him several awards including Uptron award for the best music director of the tele-serial, Gul Gulshan Gulfam for the year 1990-1991 and Rapa award for best title song.

*Website Address:* <http://ikashmir.org/Artistes/KLangoo.html>

## 9 M. K. Raina



**M. K. Raina**

**M. K. Raina** graduated from National School of Drama in 1970 with Best actor award. Since 1972 he has been freelance theatre worker and film person, working all over India in many languages and with many traditional forms.

His association with the rural and urban theatre across the country has developed into a unique style, where both forms blend together and yet are rich with contemporary meaning and significance.

As an actor, he has worked in more than a hundred plays. He has directed several memorable productions like Kabira Khada Bazar Mein, Karmawali, Lower Depths, Pari Kukh, Kabhi Na Chooden Khet and The Mother; Andha Yug, which he directed was performed in Berlin and the Festival of India in the USSR. He also produced Jasma Odan at Hawaii University in 1986. Shri Raina has conducted many theatre workshops and acted and directed in a number of feature films including 27 down, Satah Se Uttha Aadmi, Ek Ruka Hua Faisla, Tamas, Titli, Genesis, Tarang, Ankur Mayna Kabutar etc.

He has been making documentary films for many years. His latest documentary Sacred Dances at Hemis Festival has been made for Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts.

He has been honoured with the Sanskriti Samman in 1980, the Sahitya Kala parishad Award in 1981, Best Director of the year by West Bengal Government 1982, the Best Director's award of Punjabi Akademi, Delhi in 1987.

Shri M.K. Raina received the Sangeet Natak Akademi award in 1995 and the Swarna Padak from Govt. of Jammu & Kashmir in 1996 for his contribution to Indian Theatre.

Besides being a practicing actor/director in theatre and media, he is known also as a cultural activist.

Website Address: <http://ikashmir.org/Artistes/MKRaina.html>

## *The Bhand Pather of Kashmir*

**M. K. Raina**

(A dramatic form based on mythological stories incorporating contemporary social satire within its practical theme).

**While** I was doing a workshop with some *Bhands* in Kashmir I met Ama Kak, an elderly man, a master at his art. In the evenings he would take me up a hillside and we would sit there watching the lush green valley slowly clothe itself in darkness. He would play his *swarnai*, unfolding one *mukam* after another. The surroundings echoed with the sound of his music in its intricate patterns. Often he would stop and say, "who wants these things now. It will all soon die out and no one will ever know that we the *Bhands* had such a rich and developed *phun*, heritage."

The village of Akingam in the Anantnag district of Kashmir, 45 kilometers from Srinagar is the home of a community of *Bhands*, the traditional performers of the valley. Spread over a number of villages at the foothills of an endless mountain range, these people move from place to place with their extensive repertoire. A short distance up one of the smaller hills in this area sits a famous temple dedicated to the goddess Shiva Bhagvati. Once a year, in honour of this goddess, the *Bhands* who are Muslims, perform a special ritualistic dance known as the *chhok* done with great devotion and faith. During this time the temple is enveloped in an atmosphere charged with a sense of timelessness, a cosmic reality. An extremely superstitious people, the *Bhands* perform this particular *chhok* at this temple and nowhere else. However, other shows are presented elsewhere, at Muslim shrines as well as at Sufi centres.

The secular outlook of *Bhands* is reflected in their dynamic folk form that has incorporated many elements from the classical Sanskrit theatre as well as from other traditional folk forms of India. But over the years many aspects have been lost and others have undergone dramatic changes.

The plays of the *Bhands* are called *pathar*, a word that seems to have derived from *patra*, dramatic character. *Bhand* comes from the *bhaana*, a satirical and realistic drama, generally a monologue that is mentioned in Bharata's *Natya Shastra*. The *Bhand Pather* though is not a monologue but a social drama incorporating mythological legends and contemporary social satire. Born Hindus, the *Bhands* converted to Islam and remain very secular in their outlook. An extremely simple, witty and practical people. The *Bhand Pather* unfortunately does not sustain them economically and they have been driven to other professions primarily weaving the basket work of the kangris, wolloen blankets and carpets.

Post tenth century onwards has been a time when there were foreign invasions in the valley, the social fibre was disturbed and the Kashmiri became a slave in his own land where he had to face and live with alien cultures, religious and socio-political systems. This cross exchange also came through in the folk tradition of the state. The injustice that the people suffered was expressed in the plays albeit as absurd or humorous be it the king in *Darza Pather* or the royal soldiers in Shikargah, who speak in Persian to the poor and illiterate Kashmiri and expect him to understand a foreign tongue and whip him for not replying. Or the English couple in *Angrez Pather* who speak a hilarious version of the language to a resthouse guard while out on a hunt. In the *Gosain Pather* which is about Shiva and the Saivites of Kashmir, large puppets with masks are used to project the sense of oppression through the characters of the king or the witch. In all the plays, the local character is the protagonist, victorious in the end.

The tradition and form is handed down through the generations from father to son. The *Bhand* has to train himself to be a skillful actor, dancer, acrobat and musician. The leader of the troupe is called the *magun*, a word taken from *maha guni*, a man of varied talent. He teaches his people the art and





Masks used in *Bhand Pather*

expertise of their inheritance. Today the training is virtually non-existent. A danger signal of the impending doom on this form of entertainment. The finest performers all belong to the older generation.

Acting, dance and music are an integral part of the form as a whole. In pure tradition, the performances begin in the evening with a ritualistic dance, also called a *chhok* but different from the one done at the Shiva Bhagvati temple. With the onset of night the play unfolds gradually and ends in the early hours of the morning with the *magun* doing a *duay kher*, a prayer or blessing.

The *Bhands* dance to the tune of a specified *mukam* and the orchestra includes the *swarnai*, *dhol*, *nagara* and the *thalij*. The *swarnai* is larger in size than the *shehnai* with a strong and metallic sound that has arresting impact in the open air arena. This instrument attracts audiences from the vicinity. A very special wind instrument, it is made in three parts: the *nai* or wooden pipe made by special carpenters, the *barg*, a reed of a particular grass found locally and a copper disc the diameter of the pipe into which the *barg* is fitted. Before the *swarnai* player adopts his newly made instrument a ritual offering is made in *dargah*. The composition played is called a *mukam* and each *Bhand Pather* has its own. The music follows a set pattern, the *salaam*, *thurau*, *dubitch*, *nau patti* and the *salgah*. There is a highly developed system of music based on the classical mould of the *sufiyana kalaam* with intricate and codified patterns.

The man who plays the *dhol* is the central figure in the orchestra. Many *taals* in various combinations are played on this drum but unfortunately today very few remain. The *nagara* is an accompaniment to the *dhol* and the rhythm doubles in intensity as the play proceeds. More than one *nagara* is used in the performance to emphasize the sound of the instrument. The *thalij* is a metal cymbal a little larger than those used in other musical forms. To this music are added Kashmiri folk songs, sung throughout the play.

The two properties that are a must for every *pathar* are a whip and a short bamboo stick. The *koodar*, or long whip is crafted from the dry stem of the *bhanga* plant and looks like a thick rope which is forked at its

tip. When used it emanates a sound similar to a gunshot. During the performance a character can be whipped a hundred times without being hurt because this property does not have the impact associated with a whip, it just looks



**Scenes from Bhaand pather**

deadly. It is used to transform all the elements that represent oppression into strong dramatic images. In sharp contrast the bans are used by the jester or *maskhara*. These are split bamboo sticks that make a sharp sound. In his pantomime, the *maskhara* uses the bans emerges as the total opposite of the oppressors whip.

The *kaper chadar* or sheet of cloth is used as a curtain. Some of the actors make their entrance from behind this *chadar*. The same cloth is often used as a canopy for the king when he holds court in some other scene. The use of the *kaper chadar* is reminiscent of the *yavanika* described in the *Natya Shastra* and which is also used in Kathakali and Yakshagana.

The *Maskharas* are one of the most important characters in the *Bhand Pather*. They lampoon the king and the upper classes by exposing their corruption. The jester is the constant factor in the performance, the link of the various episodes. The elements of humour, be it *hazal* (mockery), *mazaak* (jokes), *tasan* (sarcasm) or even finding fault with the other characters is the forte of the *maskhara*. They do very

accurate caricatures of society using a great deal of pantomime. Finally, the *maskhara* emerges as the rebel, the character who does not cow down to the oppressor. The message that comes across through the performance the message of the political and social scene, makes the *Bhand Pather* a very relevant and contemporary traditional folk form - a political and social review.

Performances take place in the open air and there are no clearly defined acting areas. The actors can move about climb the roof of a house or even a tree if they so choose. In the *Watal Pather* a satirical play about the profession of sweepers who in Kashmir are not considered untouchables, a wedding procession that is part of the action comes through the village drawing crowds along with it and ends up at the point where another episode of the performance has already begun. This simultaneous action is an interesting aspect and is done in other *patheras* well. Another example is a king may be seen holding court at one point and farmers are ploughing the field at another. These instant juxtapositions give another very subtle and sensitive dimension to this form.

The predominant language used is Kashmiri but there is also a use of Gujjari, Punjabi, Dogri, Persain and sometimes even English, Non- Kashmiri words are used to accentuate the humorous and absurd situations to create dramatic effects and totally incongruous expressions.

The style of acting swings from the purely realistic to the highly exaggerated. The pantomime achieves an abstract, graphic quality making it a strong element in the fabric of the *Bhand Pather*. A good example is from the *Arim Pather* or the vegetable gardeners' *pathar* rarely done today, where the *maskhara* as the gardener carries a teeshaped wooden contraption on which is tied a rope and an earthen pot. He mimes putting the pot into an imaginary well and draws the water to water his vegetables. Later the same pot becomes the well and he talks to a ghost that lives within it. Eventually, frustrated that the owner of the garden will not permit him to marry his daughter he breaks the pot and runs away.

The narrative of this form moves fairly rapidly from episode to episode with no elements of suspense. It is epic in its quality and the audience knows the action well. They know what is to come but do not know how the event will happen. Though the story line revolves around old stories of kings and their times the message projected is loaded with contemporary statements. All the performances end with the recitation of the *duay kher*, praying for the betterment of the land and people protecting them from disease and death. Very auspicious, the *duay kher* is spoken by the *magun* and repeated by the audience.

The *Bhands* are found in almost all of the districts of Kashmir and performances are a regular feature of life there. Some of the *pathers* have died, other are becoming rare, the form takes on new elements and continues to survive but alas precariously. The music has changed and unfortunately the traditional *mukams*, *ragas* are not played as much.

The *Bhands* in their day to day living reflect their firm belief, in the faith of a unique fusion of Kashmiri Shaivism and Sufi traditions of the valley.

## 10 Padamshree Pushkar Bhan



Padamshree Pushkar Bhan

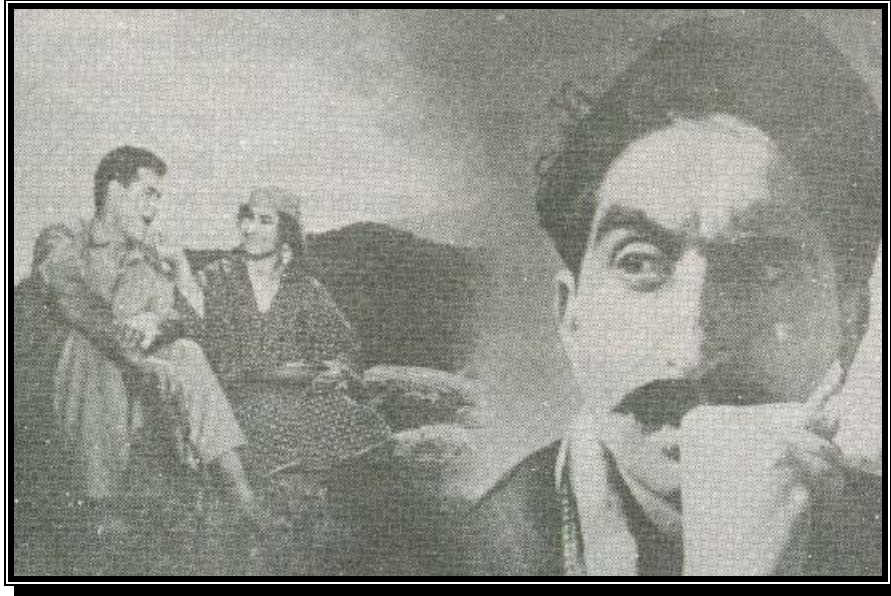
### *Padamshree Pushkar Bhan: The Luminary Humorist*

**Written by:** Chaman Lal Sapru for **Koshur Samachar**

**Translated by:** Lalita Pandit

It would be hard to find a person of Kashmiri origin who is not familiar with the name of Pushkar Bhan. For Kashmiris in Kashmir, and all around the world, the genres of Humor-Laughter-Entertainment and Pushkar Bhan's name have become synonymous. For 3 consecutive years, the Srinagar Station of Akashvani broadcasted his *Asun te Gindun* (Laughter And Play) and *Poshe Goindi* (Bouquets of Flowers). Akashvani also broadcasted his socially conscious family show, *Niza Saheb* for 9 years. Added to these were the 11 years of the most popular show *Zoon Dab* (The Moon Oriole), broadcasted daily at 11:00 a.m. for 6 days a week for 8 years. This Serial became known throughout the world as the Most Outstanding Serial. It addressed, and resolved in its own terms, many social and economic issues of the time. In 1974, Pushkar Bhan was awarded the coveted Padamshree Prize for his script writing of all episodes of *Zoon Dab* and for playing the role of the main character, *Mama*.

Endowed with a charismatic personality, Pushkar Bhan was born in Srinagar in 1926. Right from his childhood, he demonstrated interest in becoming a playwright and an actor. After receiving his Bachelor's degree in 1947, the year of India's independence from British rule, Pushkar Bhan became associated with the Cultural Forum of the National Cultural Front, and, in this capacity, acquired unprecedented acclaim under the leadership of Dinanath Nadim, the foremost luminary of new cultural awareness in Kashmir. Pushkar's plays, *Lalkar* (in Urdu) and his *Ya Tan Ya Tadakh* received captive public attention. His acting roles in Nadim's *Bombur Yamburzol*, also in *Shahid Sherwani* and *Yeh Kashmir Hai*, and many others, won high praise from audiences everywhere. In 1956, a special performance of *Bomber Yamburzol* was staged in Srinagar's Needoz Hotel when the special guest was none other than the then Prime Minister of Russia, Krushchov. So mesmerizing was Pushkar's unparalleled playing of the lead role of *Harud* (Sharat), that Krushchov stepped onto the stage to offer his personal greetings to Pushkar Bhan.



**In the Kashmiri movie *Myanzirath (Mehindirath)***

Due to financial difficulties in 1949, Pushkar decided to move to Mumbai where he found a petty job at Modern Mills Limited. In spite of a daily work schedule, he did not stay away from his first love, acting. He earned a living and linked himself up with the Indian People's Theater Association (I.P.T.A). After a day's job at the Mills, he would work at the IPTA. In two months he was elected representative of the Urdu section of this multi-lingual Institution. Unfortunately, in 1953 some domestic troubles back home in Kashmir forced him to return to Srinagar, and leave Mumbai.

Once back in Srinagar, he was hired by the Akashvani Station of Kashmir, Srinagar, at daily wages, with a remuneration of Rs.2:50 per day. He reacted to this set back as if it was a gift, or a challenge, rather than a curse. Having reached this point, Pushkar never looked back. Instead, he continually moved forward and by 1985 he was promoted to the position of Senior Producer. Due to his outstanding achievements and successes, he was appointed as Producer Emeritus in 1988-1991.

In addition to the Padamshree award in 1974, Pushkar won other notable awards, Sahitya Akademy Award in 1976, NEETA (I.C.C.E) in 1985. Jammu and Kashmir State's Academy of Art and Literature honored Pushkar Bhan with awards for his plays *Chapath* (Thapad or The Slap), *Nev Nosh* (Nai Bahu or The New Daughter-in-Law), and *Bhavya Purvabhyas* (The Grand Rehearsal). In addition, he has had the distinction of winning the Sadiq Memorial Award for Best Actor and Best Playwright.

Pushkar Bhan's distinctive and undying fame rests on the lead roles he played in *Myanzirath* and *Shayire-Azam* Mahjoor. In the second of these two major films, Pushkar had the distinction of working with famous Indian actors like Balraj Sahni and Parikshit Sahni. The film based on the life of the Kashmiri poet, Mahjoor, won the President of India's Gold Medal for its excellence.

After his retirement from government jobs, and acting, Pushkar took up writing as a dedicated pursuit rather than a post retirement hobby. His writings have continuously appeared in various journals such as *Inklab* (The Revolution), *Aieena* (The Mirror), both published in Mumbai, as well as *Sheeraza* and *Kongposh*, published in Jammu and Kashmir.

Pushkar Bhan's contributions to the genres of Satire and Humor in Kashmiri Prose Literature are immense. Not only did he originate and develop these genres in Kashmiri Language (Oral and Written), he elevated these genres to the standards of universal excellence.

His work, *Machama*, which won a Literary Award from the Sahitya Akademy, has been the source of 73 plays broadcasted from the Akashvani Radio's Srinagar Channel. In this highly popular Series, the main character role of *Machama* was played by Pushkar Bhan himself.



**In the film *Shayir-e-Mahjoor***

Another important work, *Sanya Bacha* (Our Children), won an award by NEETA. This work makes a significant contribution to knowledge about how Radio Broadcast Programs can aid in the education, entertainment, and learning of children.

*Dalal*, published by Cultural Academy Srinagar, *Kashmir-Zarai Tarakki Ke Nai Rang*, published by the Publication Division of the Indian Government, *Vakhtuk Alav* (The Call of The Times), published by the Ministry of Education, Government of India, are other notable works authored by Pushkar Bhan.



**With Hindi Movie actor/director Raj Kapoor**

When the first Television Broadcasting Channel was established in Srinagar, Pushkar Bhan gained immense popularity among viewers for his Laughter-Satire series, *Doctor Zero*. His play, *Inklab*, received high acclaim when it was televised by the Patna Channel.

Subsequent to his departure from Srinagar (Kashmir), Pushkar Bhan lives now with his son in Patna (Bihar). In his exile, he has already written more than 30 episodes of *Rangan Hyendi Rang* (The Color of Many Colors), televised by the Srinagar Channel as a Serial Drama.

**May Baba Amarnath grant good health to this most cherished treasure of Kashmir, Pushkar Bhan. May he live well and for an eternity give us the inspiration (to live and to work).**