



Viju Master

Project 3

Viju Master (a film on Jaihind Brass Band)

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the degree of Master of Design by

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Approval sheet

This Project Report titled 'Viju Master (a film on Jaihind Brass Band)' by Aditi Kulkarni is approved for the degree of Master of Design.

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Declaration

I declare that this written submission represents my ideas in my own words and where others' ideas or words have been included, I have adequately cited and referenced the original sources. I also declare that I have adhered to all principles of academic honesty and integrity and have not misrepresented or fabricated or falsified any idea/data/fact/source in my submission. I understand that any violation of the above will be cause for disciplinary action by the Institute and can also evoke penal action from the sources which have thus not been properly cited or from whom proper permission has not been taken when needed.

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Date: 31/05/10



MUSIC IS A DOUBLE EDGED SWORD.

It is escapist, it is trendy, it is faddish.

But it is also **revolutionary,
dynamic &
progressive**

It describes the experiences we have lived through,
past and present. To that extent, music is the

politics of the people.

~Felipe Luciano

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hopes to open up the world of a brass band owner to everyone and draw one into the culture, traditions, beliefs and aspirations of the Samvedi community to which the musicians belong.

This film
is about individuals
who are musicians by
passion and bankers,
engineers, teachers
etc by profession.

The brass band, though an "imported" inheritance from Portuguese has helped retain culture, kept the local community together, provided entertainment, livelihoods etc. to the people of Vasai.

Jaihind Brass Band plays at weddings, communions etc in Vasai area. My personal journey of getting to know them unfolds through this film.

is really about balancing passion & profession, making life meaningful, giving back to community and about individuals, pushing towards progress and taking everyone along.

Capers of a camerawalli



Vasai is located in Northern Konkan region of Maharashtra and lies in Thane district, approximately 51 km. away from Mumbai.

Historically speaking, several kingdoms have ruled over Vasai region each one adding their own flavour to what already existed. Creating a culture mosaic; be it the languages, music, food, rituals and costume. Thus a hybrid folklore has evolved. Vasai has demonstrated religious harmony throughout it's history. Having been under Portuguese rule for a long period, Vasai has significant Portuguese cultural influence.

The East Indian by Dr. Elsie Baptista and wikipedia

VAS
BASAI
BACAIM
BASSEIN

Vasai

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Aditi K P3 | Viju Master (Short film on Jahind Brass Band)

Mother

of all modern churches

this **primitive church**

from the **Vasai Fort.**

Alongside **Nirmal Church**

outside | inside.







Occupations



They even make their **vegetables with fish**

A photograph of a man sitting on a wooden swing in a traditional wooden house. The man is wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts, and is barefoot. The swing is made of wood and is suspended by ropes from a wooden frame. The house has a pinkish wall and a green door. The roof is made of wood and has a decorative edge. The floor is made of stone. The overall scene is a traditional wooden house.

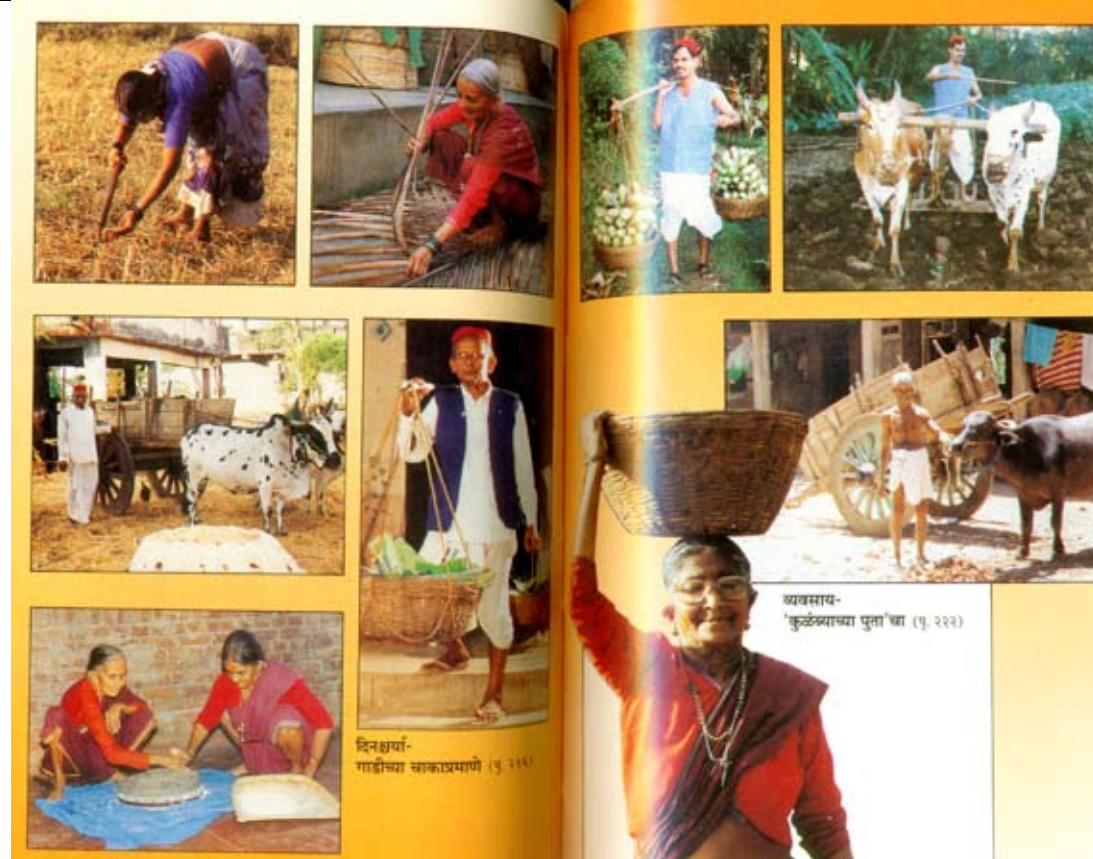
Last few surviving *waadas*

traditional wooden houses



The Samvedi Christians constitute a distinct cultural group in the East Indian community. They are spread over the northern half of Bassein and live together with their Hindu counterparts in large villages in close proximity to the river Vaitarna. The Samvedis are one of the sectarian divisions of the Brahmin group, evidently migrated to Sopara between 700 BC to 300 BC, from Orissa. There is no difference between Samvedi Christians and their Hindu caste fellows except that since their conversion the Portuguese have introduced certain changes in dress and diet which have divided them into two groups. Samvedi Christian women wear Red saree while the Brahmin women wear all colours except Red. Households can be identified to be of a particular religion based on the religious symbols located at the house threshold.

From the book The East Indians by Dr. Elsie Baptista

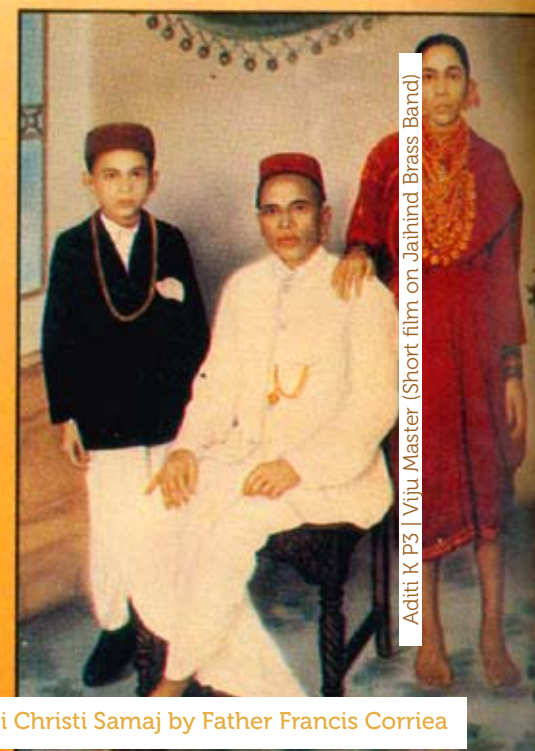


images referenced from the book Samvedi Christi Samaj by Father Francis Corriea

The *Samvedi* Christians



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Aditi K P3 | Viju Master (Short film on Jahind Brass Band)

Images referenced from the book Samvedi Christi Samaj by Father Francis Corriea



Brass bands of Vasai

Initially there was little education in Vasai and adjoining areas. And most of the rural populace was engaged in traditional occupations like agriculture, dairy farming etc. Also in the pre-television days there was little entertainment. Thus people of Vasai adopted the brass band music from Portuguese in order to entertain themselves and provide a secondary income source to agriculture. Brass bands at weddings, communions and even in moments of grief such as funerals became a permanent fixture of the Christian community then onwards. Brass bands were initially owned only by Samvedi Christians, later on even Kolis and Hindus formed their own companies. The first two band companies were based out of Nandakhali region of Vasai, then rest followed.





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Jaihind Brass Band, was formed by John D'Monte of Gass, Nalasopara, in the year 1939. John was inspired by his friend, the owner of a brass band from Pydhonie called Bombay Native Brass Band. From John D'Monte the reigns of the band passed to his son Patrick D' Monte and today they lie with Patrick's sons Blaze and Wilson D' Monte. The next generation that is Blaze's elder son Genev too has joined the band and plays percussion.

The story of this band is fascinating because it is a story of individuals who during day time are bank managers, railway engineers, clerks, students but come Saturday-Sunday they become the very popular and well-respected Vasai wedding band. They too belong to the Samvedi Christian community.

The brass band is 27 member strong. Each member dabbles in almost three jobs, the day job, the traditional family job



Jaihind Brass Band

whether farming or dairy and of course the band on the weekends. The youngest band member currently is Blaze's son Genev at 17 years; while the oldest member belongs to the second generation of brass band- Jockey D'Monte is Blaze and Wilson's uncle and a farmer-vegetable vendor by profession, he is 70. Musically the band comprises blowing and percussions. There are no string instruments in a brass band.

Jaihind's instruments include trumpets, clarinets, saxophones, euphoniums, drums, Roto, Dhol, Thap Dhol etc.



Band *Mohotsav*

Band Mohotsav or the Band Festival hosted by a Church on the occasion of Easter or Christmas is a showcase of brass band music in Vasai region. Mostly film songs, local community songs and devotional songs are played. This used to be a competition once but is a get-together these days.

Some 7 to 8 brass bands from Vasai are invited to participate in this and on the day of the event the order of performance is decided based on chits drawn. This event sees an audience of 4000 plus from people in Vasai and outside. It is the fifteen minutes of fame for the usually sidelined brass band members and they practice a lot for putting up the best show. Even though the Church hosts it is more a cultural event than a religious one I was told.

The D'Montes

Aditi Kulkarni
That makes you a Brahman

For me gathering information from books and other external sources would help only up to a point. The real wealth of information lay with the brass band members and their families themselves. How was I going to tap into that? I asked them if I could live with them and they were very generous in accommodating me in their beautiful country house. Thus I went and stayed with the D'Monte family for the duration of the shoot. Living with them, breaking bread with them, helping them with the household chores if required basically making myself a part of their family was the way forward for me I realised. But it also put me in a surreal zone where they were under my constant scanner and I was under theirs.

Living at the D'Monte household I got to see their lifestyle first hand and what hit me from day one was their endless energy. I spent more time with the younger D'Monte brother that is Wilson's family. They began their day at times at 4 in the morning. At 5:30 am Wilson visited the church for an early morning mass, followed by leaving for work around 7:30 am, he is a banker. He would then return around 8:30 PM. But often he returned at 9 and used to begin practice with band members who would have gathered by then on the porch. The practice would go on till 10:00 p.m. and by the time the band members wrapped up, chatted for

a while and retired it would be around 10:45 PM. So after taking a bath, at 11:00 p.m., he would settle down for dinner. He would then catch up with his wife over dinner. Office, household, daughters, their school and job respectively were amongst the various topics discussed. At around 12 after dinner and some chores he would peacefully catch up on the days news at leisure. Only to begin the day at 4:30 next morning. He did so day in and day out but never seemed to be stressed about anything. When I asked him about his time management, he said it's not difficult taking time out for something you loved.


Wilson lives on the ground floor of their country bungalow with his wife Santan and daughters Shirley and Winnie. While his elder brother Blaze lives on the first floor with his wife Maggie and sons Genev and Neil. Genev, Blaze's older son is the central to the percussions of the brass band. He plays the Roto, a 4 piece drums set. Blaze plays the trumpet and so does Wilson. While their father, Patrick, used to play the clarinet when he was with the band. It was Blaze who was heading the band being the older child, but due to his illness and poor health Wilson now manages it, teaches the students, new entrants etc.



The band is largely commissioned for weddings, engagement ceremonies, communions, rarely for birthdays. In the event of death of a young person of marriageable age from the community the band plays songs of mourning. They do this voluntarily and charge no money for it. This is done out of solidarity and goodwill.

The band plays largely according to the taste of clients and what they demand. They take requests from the crowd too, if they feel prepared with the song. But personally they like playing old songs and classical music. Which they believe was composed using sounds of real instruments as opposed to music of the present which is synthetic they believe. They largely play community's wedding music called the East Indian wedding songs.

members
orders|music|practice
Jaihind
negative side

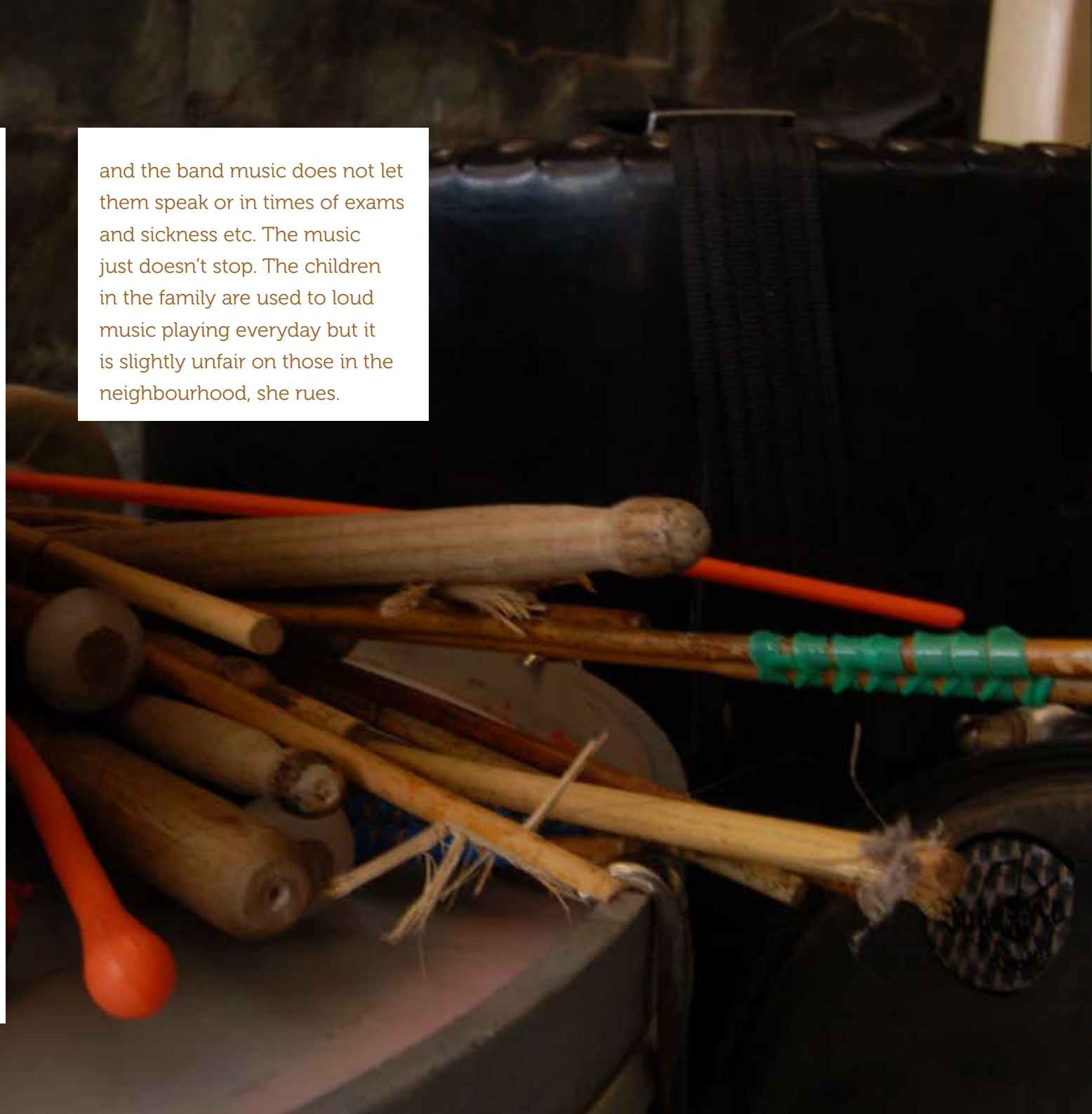


Wilson believes talent and skill are fine but practice is imperative. They play music by hearing and intuitively deciding what notes there are. They then break the song into smaller chunks and practice each chunk till it is learnt by heart. Then they play the entire song and practice that by heart as well. Though they have learnt the musical notations and write a song in notations they cannot read notations and play simultaneously. Thus they follow the method of rote learning. And once learnt they never forget the songs. As they keep practising older tunes while imbibing newer ones. "What if someone suddenly requests for some song?? We should know it otherwise the client is unhappy" Wilson commented. Thus they follow a disciplined practice session everyday for an hour. Not more, not less. Wilson feels this duration is ideal for time spent on hobby.

Members of the brass band come from various backgrounds, communities, socioeconomic strata etc. But once they become a cohesive musical unit all the differences are forgotten. Band has members from both religions Samvedi Christians and Samvedi Hindus. There is a not-so-obvious bitterness between the two communities if not on the face- beneath it. There prevails a sense of mistrust and a strong sentiment of "us and them". But as far as band members were concerned I never experienced this emotion of othering.

This is just the positive side of the band. But there is negative side to having a brass band in the vicinity too. And we don't have to go too far. Wilson's wife tells us how annoying it can get when they have guests over in the house

and the band music does not let them speak or in times of exams and sickness etc. The music just doesn't stop. The children in the family are used to loud music playing everyday but it is slightly unfair on those in the neighbourhood, she rues.





oral histories and
anecdotes from
**baba
& jiji**

The grandparents in the D'Monte household were like most grandparents. Full of old stories and wistful nostalgia. The grandma Rosey or Jiji, filled me in on lullabies while Grandpa Patrick or Baba told me various stories about how Christianity evolved in the region, how the brass band was formed when he was still a bedridden child. He believes music healed him and he changed from a bed ridden, sick child to a healthy boy who played the Clarinet right, from day one.

What next?

Once I was soaked in the brass band stories, I had to scout for locations, confident interviewees and daily rituals symbolising the lives of brass band members. Would people who happily shared stories on pronto, be equally natural and comfortable on the camera? How should I best portray the nuances of each

person? How should I get them to divulge information that is both personal and insightful? They have practically laid their lives bare in front of me- so what conflicts are appropriate to be shown and what aren't? Ethically speaking is it alright if I shoot/record without informing the people, should they get self-conscious in front of the camera? There were various questions in my head. I tried reading up a bit on the documentary film making, it's ethics etc.

The prospect of handling a video camera was new to me. And I shot on both the formats- DV and AVCHD. I realised there was indeed a difference between how the two cameras responded to light, amongst other things.

Gathering oral histories of a place by talking to very many people is something I really enjoyed. But how do I make it into a coherent account that was to become my film was the question of the hour. It was time to decide the objectives of the film. Why am I making this film and what should it convey at minimum. There were three kinds of objectives

Content and message

Visual and sound

Content and message

Since I was full of so many stories, my guide suggested I write a short precis and decide what the objectives of the film are. Here is the precis- *This is a story of Jaihind brass band from Vasai Taluka. It has traveled down from father to son for three generations. The brass band is an important aspect of the Samvedi Community to which the owners of the band, Blaze and Wilson D'Monte belong. This brass band recruits music enthusiasts from Vasai area. Those interested are*

Objective of the film

taught for free by Wilson and have the option of joining the brass band if they so feel.

The D'Monte brothers and the other members of the band come from various professions- farming, banking, fitness, hotel industry and insist that though it pays brass band is just a hobby. The brass band members, their family- in fact everybody in the neighbourhood is extremely passionate about their music however there is a downside to it. The loud volume of the music, the constant repetition of tunes till they are perfected are a disturbance specially in times of exams and sickness.

Brass bands play on many occasions- weddings, communions even funerals. They spread joy at times and at times they soothe the grieving heart. But on all occasions they bring people together whether in celebration or solidarity, it is indeed the cornerstone of Samvedi folk culture and community living.

But today the interest in brass bands is dwindling. With the youth in high paying

jobs spending time away from home; sparing time for music has become a difficulty. Also prestige issues have cropped up. Brass bands took root in this society primarily as a source for secondary income to agriculture and for entertainment. But both needs being satiated by other sources today not many are willing to slog it out on weekends.

Does that mean this tradition like other traditions from Samvedi culture are on a brink of extinction? It is not just a tradition but central to keeping this multi religious community together. Plus what happens to people who depend upon brass bands for their bread and butter?

Visual and sound

How can I show without saying? How do I avoid the obvious and bring out insights and the essence of my subject? How do I establish the context in which the brass band is rooted? Were some of the questions I faced.

I decided long shots for establishing villages, mid and close shots for establishing the people and shaky footage, chaotic footage etc to indicate the order in disorder prior to beginning of a music performance. Visuals in tandem to sound were critical for my film as it is a movie about musicians. How can I get sounds of instruments to evoke a certain feeling?

After that I took a break from footage and the place for a while as my view of it all had become too myopic. Post that I concluded that my film was about brass band at the face of it but inherently it was about-

Balancing profession and passion

Living every moment to fullest

Giving back to the community

Pushing oneself towards growth every moment and taking everybody else along

Knowing and being proud of ones roots



Concepts

Once the premise of the film was roughly defined, though the script was still evolving incrementally I had begun shooting. I shot for one week in the first stretch and then went to the village on subsequent weekends to shoot for whatever remained. Based on what I saw happening at the location of shoot I came up with some concepts.

Forever song

Patrick was a child tied to his bed for most of his childhood. The doctors had given up hope. And amidst all this grief, Patrick's father John did the unthinkable. He brought home brass band instruments. His friends in Bombay owned brass bands and John could not wait to start one himself. He had got the instruments but how to play them? He found a Goan brass band master in Vasai and requested to learn from him. The Goan was very happy and agreed. The next plan was to get people to join in. John, an educated man believed in equality and asked people from neighbourhood no matter their caste or class to join in. He urged those from his family to join in too. Soon John had formed a band company and given it his family name. The Mot band company was formed in 1936. Patrick lay in his bed all day and heard the music play. He saw the Goan, tutor

his father and other members of the band. Then miraculously he began showing improvement in health and nobody knows how. Even the doctors were shocked. Then one day Patrick left his bed and stood next to his father to see more, hear more. It was not too long until John asked Patrick to play the Clarinet, having given him the necessary instructions. And Patrick played the lower Sa, the relatively difficult note at the first go. Ever since the brass band has kept not only the family together, but it has brought livelihoods and entertainment to many. Thus it has been the corner stone of lives of some people in the Gass Village. Years passed by and Patrick had two sons- Blaze and Wilson. They too were initiated into brass band music at an early age. And even when they got jobs, they continued playing in the brass band. It was also a time of great upheaval. As more and more joint families were splitting up. If the family had four sons, each wanted

an independent house to stay in with their wives and children. This behaviour has been spawned by their white collared jobs and the new found prosperity- a luxury which their uneducated parents toiling hard in the fields did not have. But for the D'Monte brothers, this thought was out of question. It was the brass band that had kept them together. The band was bringing into it's fold a growing audience. And religion, region, social status, economic status was forgotten, the moment the brass band began playing.

Indeed its a forever song, keeping families together and flourishing. And helping pass on the wisdom of unity and culture from one generation to the next. But are brass bands on verge of extinction?

Crumbs (bread/culture)

I met Wilson and his friends at a Samvedi Christian wedding in Vasai. Wilson and his brother Blaze D'Monte

along with their crew comprise the Jaihind Brass Band. They belong to the Samvedi Christian community of Vasai. Samvedi is a sectarian division of Brahmins found in Northern Konkan region of Maharashtra. They were converted to Christianity somewhere around mid 14th century when Portuguese came to the Konkan, Maharashtra not for ruling over Indians but to spread Christianity. The Portuguese mass converted various native Hindus to Christianity by throwing bread into the wells. Once people consumed this water made 'impure' by throwing bread in it they were considered converted to the Christian faith. With this conversion came in new dress, diet, a new ideology and a sense of rift between the Hindus and Christians which prevails till date.

But amidst all of it Portuguese brought the tradition of brass bands to Vasai. Portuguese would have brass bands play at the funerals. At

that time the natives were by and large poor with no sources to entertainment. The brass band immediately caught fancy of the locals. Not only did it entertain them, since the brass bands could play at weddings, communions, various functions even funerals- they began making money out of it. This dual identity of the brass bands- that is source of entertainment and secondary income meant that they became a permanent fixture of the Samvedi Christian community.

Wilson's grandfather started the brass band in 1938, that Wilson and his elder brother manage today. Since then it has been passed down from father to son for three generations.

The brass band has always been a passion of the D'Monte family. Today the brass band is 27 member strong and uses instruments like clarinets, trumpets, saxophones, euphoniums, percussions etc. The band can be hired at fixed rates. The members

are compensated according to their skills and experience. But still Wilson maintains that the band is just a hobby not a profession. Each member juggles the brass band with a day job and a traditional job. Now Blaze's elder son Genev too has joined the band and some day the reigns will pass to him. But will they really?

Today the interest in brass bands is dwindling as the younger generation secures white collared jobs and becomes prosperous tapping away at computers. They have a luxury of not toiling away in the fields unlike their parents. Also this new found prosperity has brought in the notion that their old culture is passe while everything western is modern hence 'cool'. Hence nobody wants to play in a band anymore out of distorted mind sets.

Samvedi community had a rich history of costumes, food habits and houses unique to their culture but all of it is dead now. Will Brass bands follow

the suit? Today brass bands are at crossroads as rest of Samvedi culture is on brink of extinction.

It all began with the "bread". Strangely enough the rich and the beautiful in Vasai's hybrid culture has been consumed today by cliches like globalization and notions like western lifestyles are a benchmark of prosperity. What is left today, entities like Jaihind brass bands and others are merely crumbs of what once was.

Brass

Brass (n) an alloy of copper and zinc made for giving greater strength or resistance

Brass Band (n) a group of people playing brass wind instruments and percussion. First one strengthens the objects and the next one strengthens communities. Above principle unfolds through story of Jaihind Brass band of Vasai.

Concert

Every year either Christmas or Easter in

Vasai is marked with a Brass Band Mohotsav as a means of mass celebrations. This event is attended by everyone from Vasai and beyond. Brass bands are always treated secondary, just for adding the necessary zing to a celebration or a festive occasion. Say for a wedding, the bride and groom take centre stage and the brass band plays in the background adding cheer to the event.

But on the day of Brass Band Mohotsav, the stage belongs entirely to the brass bands themselves. An enthusiastic crowd of thousands gathers to see the bands in action from areas in and around Vasai to give gives their own informal verdict in the end. For a brass band this festival signifies it's fifteen minutes of fame as well as an acid test telling them where they stand with respect to others. But most importantly this Mohotsav encourages the musicians and the audience to forget the boundaries of caste, creed, religion, region and become one.



Having learnt what I did about the place, the brass band, their context etc I needed to consolidate all the data into an audio-visual form just to get a hint of what the movie might look like. And thus the first sum-up came into being. It used the following narration:

The study of East Indian Folk culture brought me to the suburb of Vasai, 51 km. North of Mumbai on the western railway line. And as my Andheri local chugged on the landscape outside the train window transformed from traffic clogged streets to mangroves via the Vasai creek stretching all the way to the horizon.

I was headed to a Vasai village called Wagholi to witness a Samvedi Christian wedding. Samvedi Christians are an ethnic group based in and around Vasai villages, they were converted to Christianity during the Portuguese rule.

The word Samvedi means knowers of Samveda. Their Language is a mixture of Marathi, Konkani, Gujarati and Portuguese words. These along with converts from several other Hindu communities like sonars, sutars, pachkalshis etc form the east Indian community of Vasai. At the wedding the vows were exchanged, followed by firecrackers and the wedding band. I used to think the wedding band was optional but my misconception was cleared by manager himself "no wedding will go without a band".

That got me wondering about the East Indian Bands and the role they played in the East Indian Society. Also my study so far revealed that East Indian culture is on fast decline with traditional houses, food habits and costume already almost extinct save a few elders in the community. So

how is a wedding band faring in such trying times? Mysteries unfolded as I lived with the Jaihind brass band and curiosity not withstanding decided to make a movie about them. Jaihind brass band interview: Band is a 27 member strong family bound by their love for music. Each band member juggles a traditional job, the day job and the brass band on weekends all are unanimous about their choice of music- old music. New songs just don't make the cut.

The owners and managers of Jaihind Brass Band, the D'Monte brothers invited me to their place. Living with the D'Montes was a window into the Samvedi Christian culture. Though the conversion from Samvedi Brahman to Christian happened eons ago and on the surface things between them and their Brahmin neighbours seem fine

Summing up

one notices a mistrust and a bitter aftertaste. I was treated to huge dose of stories about Jaihind brass band and how it evolved across three generations.

In the daily activities at D'Monte household, whether it was the breakfast at 4:30 am in the morning cleaning prawns on a Sunday afternoon, time stolen for flute and violin practice after a 19 hour long day at college and work and the late evening band practice the music kept flowing. It never stopped, Not even during exams nor during the heart operation of Wilson's younger daughter Winnie.

Quite a rosy picture of close knit D'Monte family and the extended brass band family! So should we say that all is well? Not quite! Blaze the older of two brothers has not been keeping well and cannot attend Brass Band performances anymore. Wilson is awaiting a promotion and a job transfer. The older D'Monte son, Genev is looking to join the

Merchant Navy soon and will be gone And the younger one will take time before he is ready for the Brass band responsibility.

As in life so in music, the challenges continue. Rapidly disappearing East Indian Culture worries the D'Montes. But currently future anxieties set aside to practice for the impending Band Mohotsav. Jaihind Brass Band, the three time winners plan to enthrall audiences once again. (Story-board next page)

Summing up: Jaihind Brass Band (story in chunks)

Chunk 1 Introduction

30



Title



The study of East Indian Folk culture



Brought me to the suburb of vasai, 51 km. North of Mumbai



on the western railway line.



and as my Andheri local chugged on



The landscape outside the train window transformed from traffic clogged streets to mangroves



via the Vasai creek



into the farms and salt pans



Stretching all the way to the horizon.

Chunk 2 Samvedi Christians



I was headed to a Vasai village called Wagholi to witness a Samvedi Christian wedding



Samvedi Christians are an ethnic group



based in villages in and around Vasai



they were converted to Christianity during the Portuguese rule.



Jevhan Portuguese tikde ale, tikde killa ahe Vasai la ..rajya karna sathi nhavte ale.... mhanun amhi covert jhalo



The word Samvedi means knowers of Samveda



Their Language is a mixture of Marathi, Konkani, Gujarati and



Portuguese words.



These along with converts from several other Hindu communities like sonars, sutars



Pachkalshis etc form the east Indian community of Vasai

Chunk 3 Brass band introduction

32



At the wedding the vows were exchanged, followed by firecrackers and



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no wedding will go without a band



That got me wondering about the East Indian Bands and the role they played in the East Indian Society.

Chunk 4 Decline of Samvedi culture



Also my study so far revealed that East Indian culture is on fast decline with traditional houses,



Food habits



and costume already almost extinct



save a few elders in the community.



So how is a wedding band faring in such trying times? Mysteries unfolded as I lived with the Jaihind brass band...

Chunk 5 Jaihind Brass band introduced



Jai Hind brass band interview was started by my grandfather in 1938...wedding songs, especially of Vasai



village, east Indian songs. The band practice can be quite annoying



Band is a 27 member strong family bound by their love for music. Each band member juggles



a traditional job, the day job and



the brass band on weekends. All are unanimous about their choice of music- old music. New songs just don't make the cut.

33

Chunk 6 Living with D'Montes



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the D'Montes was a window into the Samvedi Christian culture. Though the conversion from Samvedi Brahman to



Christian took place eons ago and on the surface things between them and their Brahmin neighbours seem fine one notices



a mistrust and a bitter aftertaste. (Samvedi Brahman gram panchayat, sanskriti, pravrutti, debate.)



I was treated to huge dose of stories about Jaihind brass band and how it evolved across three generations.

Chunk 7 Living with D'Montes

34



In the daily activities at D'Monte household, whether it was the breakfast at 4:30 am in the morning



cleaning prawns on a Sunday afternoon



time stolen for flute and violin practice after a 19 hour long day at college and work



and the late evening band practice the music kept flowing. It never stopped, Not even during exams nor during the heart



operation of Wilson's younger daughter. Quite a Rosey picture of close knit D'Monte family and the brass band family.

Chunk 8 The conflict



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The older D'Monte son, Genev is looking to join the Merchant Navy soon and will be gone



And the younger one will take time before he is ready for the Brass band responsibility.



As in life so in music, the challenges continue. Rapidly disappearing East Indian Culture worries the D'Montes.

Chunk 9 Conclusion



D'Montes, future
anxieties.



But currently future anxieties are set aside, this time winners plan to enthrall again.



End titles roll

Story ends here.

Rough edit The Beginning1

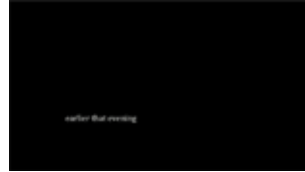
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Opening with lights, musical instruments, camera etc being adjusted. Sounds of music instrument and crowd shouting song requests



It is a music concert indeed and by now the music has peaked, on the stage the band members are themselves jumping up and down, tapping their feet etc



some hours earlier



light is being fixed at an outdoor venue, crowd murmuring. Anticipation of an event like an open air concert etc.



A band of city youngsters is seen performing with relatively old, disciplined, rigid members of police band. A contrast is seen

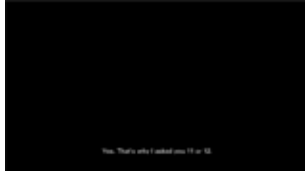


As the police band wraps up, I hear them chatting about some brass band festival in the their village at Nalasopara, I decide to find out for self.



Introduction of Vasai, Nalasopara, it's history and history of brass bands in Vasai.

Rough edit The Beginning2



Black screen, but someone talking- 2011 is out of question when in fact we don't have dates for 2012 December either, it's impossible



A woman asks her daughter to fetch her father, lots of crowd, chaos, a marriage is taking place, a girl gets ready to be married



The same girl on the road, walking in an procession of crowd and the brass band. Camera cuts to brass bands and shows them passing by



Brass band passes from either side of camera and people are cheering for the girl getting married.



Title appears on the screen called "Brass."



Cut to same brass band members no more in their uniforms, practicing with the instruments and a voice over talks about how the band started.



Two brother, one saying that brass band was inherited from their grandfather by their father, now its them- after their father retired.

Shooting

Since everything about the characters, right from their costumes, jewelry, houses, habits interested me and since I had with me an HD based camera at disposal I began shooting practically everything that caught my fancy. HDR100Xe, though not a part of the professional models is light and compact to be carried around anywhere, less intimidating than say a 3CCD and hence definitely was the ideal choice for my kind of process. But eventually I also ended up using the 3CCD, Sony XV2000E camera model. As a result of this I had lots and lots of footage, sometimes unnecessary as well. After talking to the faculty I became a bit more careful with this.

Since the story was about the life of these brass band members, it was their daily life and doings I set out to capture on the tape. Still with no script half way through my project I decided to cover the D'Monte household, the routine, I went and gathered footage of farming,

band practices in the late evenings, village scenes etc

A lot of my footage was shot intuitively in close-ups and mid shots, so I had to purposely incorporate some long, establishing shots of the place, like the village, the farm, the Church area, railway station etc. I found the view from Adi Shankaracharya temple terrace and from atop the Nirmal church very useful. I also shot interviews with couple of band members by visiting their homes.

A couple of grabs from the footage I shot, alongside.

Shooting & Afterthought



Afterthought

While shooting & Transferring footage

- While shooting transfer footage daily, keep check on the lighting condition changing through the day that will affect footage.
- While transferring, it helps immensely to log one's footage in an appropriate manner. Saves lot of time and heartburn in future.
- It pays immensely to study in advance about various formats, footage import-export settings, transcoding, codecs etc. Life becomes simpler.
- Taking another person while shooting is a great help.
- Internalize the camera controls by reading the manual.
- Different cameras respond to different lighting situations in a different ways. It is imperative to know the camera thoroughly before beginning the shoot. More so, it is extremely logical to complete one cycle of shooting, editing, exporting the movie and burning the DVD or

whatever is applicable in terms of a complete workflow.

- While shooting interviews, it is extremely helpful to have an external mike or a collar mike which could be connected to the camera. This will keep unwanted ambient noises at bay.
- If possible one could also carry a voice recorder, thus even if the camera and as a result the mike in some cases moves- the sound recording won't suffer.
- If one is opting to shoot according to a script, then it is useful to break it down completely into locations, characters, situations etc.
- Once this process is done, it is useful to stick to the shooting script religiously although there might be surprises which might push one to change the course, but still if most of it goes as pre-planned, it helps.
- Be sensitive to other people's feelings while shooting, not many people like a camera thrust in their faces, prior discussion of one's

shoot plans, what all will be seen by the camera etc might help comfort the subject.

- The footage when shaky by design can create wonders, but out of accident, might be ineffective.
- Understanding the concept of 18% grey will help for correct exposure.

While editing

- Succinct representation and not essentially an authentic account of one's journey as a film maker is required for truth in cinema.
- Structure is required, to pass on.
- Information But structure is certainty and thus boring.
- How to create uncertainty amidst structure?
- What is the film trying to say, is it coming through?
- What sort of ordering of content, will give rise to what sort of meaning?
- What is being seen and what is being heard affects each other.
- Sometimes, the visual and the spoken word point at each other or

same thing and create unwanted redundancy.

- Filmic reality is different than life's reality, time and space need not be linear in films.
- Imagine how the film would be in your mind's eye before you start shooting/ editing.

Why did I make this film?

I just happened to be in the place where my film is located for a previous documentation project. What I saw and heard interested me a lot. Vasai is a place which is part rural and part suburban. The diversity in terms of people, occupations, caste, communities etc is what makes it special and so does the history of the place.

Since childhood the word Vasai has been synonymous with fresh vegetables and milk for me. Although I had been hearing about the place it was just a part of some distant reality for me. I had never been to Vasai before. Finally when I took up a mini research project there and saw where all the vegetables were coming from and how

they are grown etc I was touched by the fact that such greenery, farms, ponds and lakes lie so close to a concrete jungle that Mumbai has become.

When I was introduced to the Samvedi culture, the interest grew all the more as here was a community with their Hindu inner selves wrapped into their Portuguese outer selves. It was surreal to see a legacy from before 450 years still alive and evolving. Add to it their wedding and a bunch of 9 to 5-ers who moonlight as musicians. I was convinced that here are the stories I want to tell about how these people live and negotiate their own identities in times of cultural crisis of sorts where ones roots are not very valued.

The warmth of the people of Vasai and the intact-to-an-extent village culture was trying to find an outlet of some sort in form of a book or a film or an installation.

I decided on a film because I had chosen the story of musicians from

amongst the many Vasai stories that I could tell. Audio-visual medium was chosen to give as true a peek into the lives of these people from what I had been able to gather.

Plus I was very bent on satiating the ethnographer in me for my final project at IDC. The choice of film as a medium was boon and a bane. Boon because people seemed willing to open up their good side in front of the camera, they were very proud of old Vasai traditions which are about to die and encouraged me to take a lot of pictures and video saying I might not see them in couple of years- the houses, the village living etc. At the same time, when it came to depicting their emotional selves, people resented the camera. But having a camera gave me a certain power and a license to gate crash into people's lives. None of them seemed to mind.

Also I wanted to see if I could show and tell rather than point and speak.

Truth be told, even at the final stage where the film was being cut- the script was ever so fluid. I was still willing to make changes, footage willing of course. Working on the ideas from all the four concepts. I just let the film evolve on its own. Naive as it may seem, it was yet another part of my learning. But I made use of mind-maps and block diagram to get myself going.

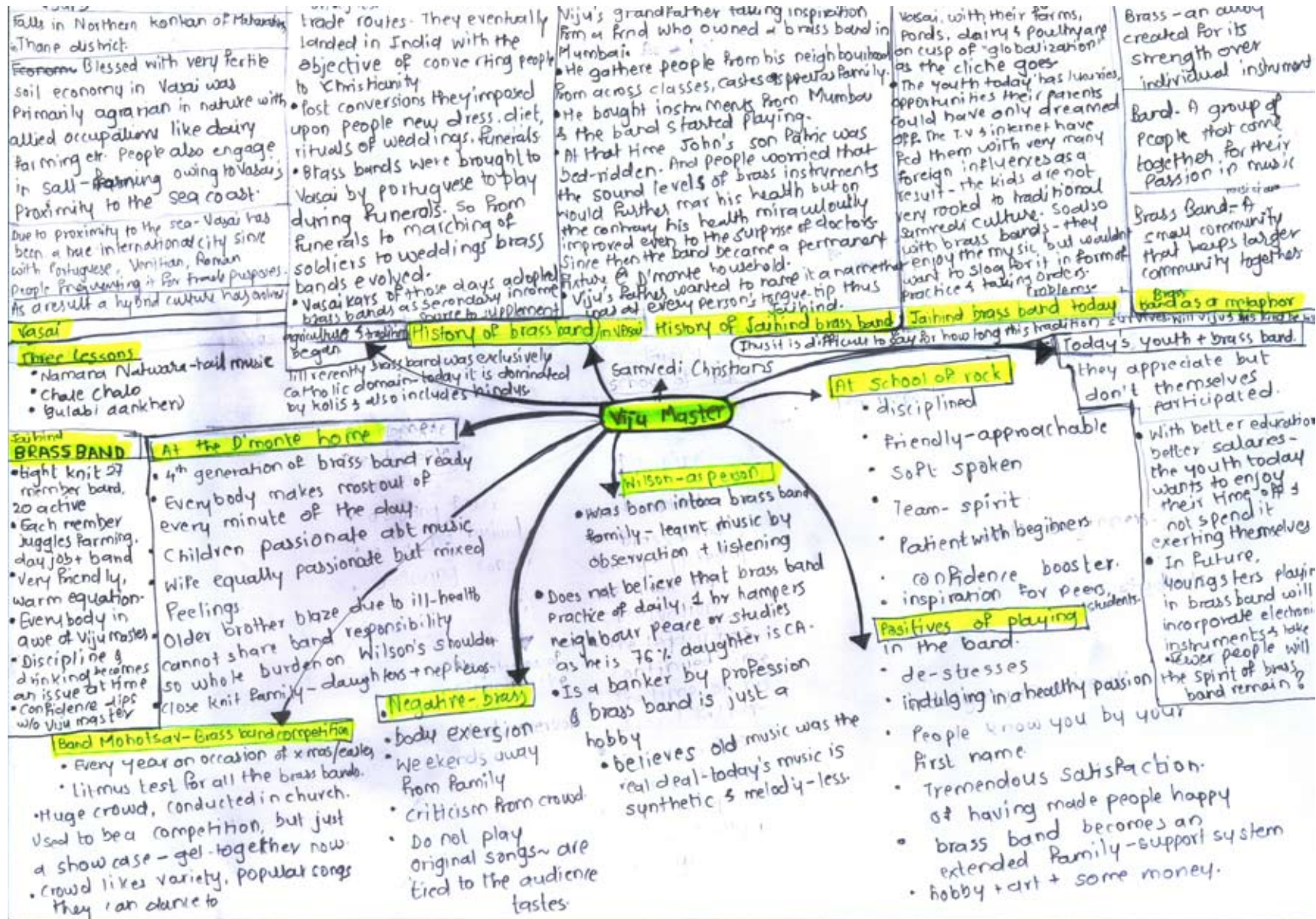
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Learning

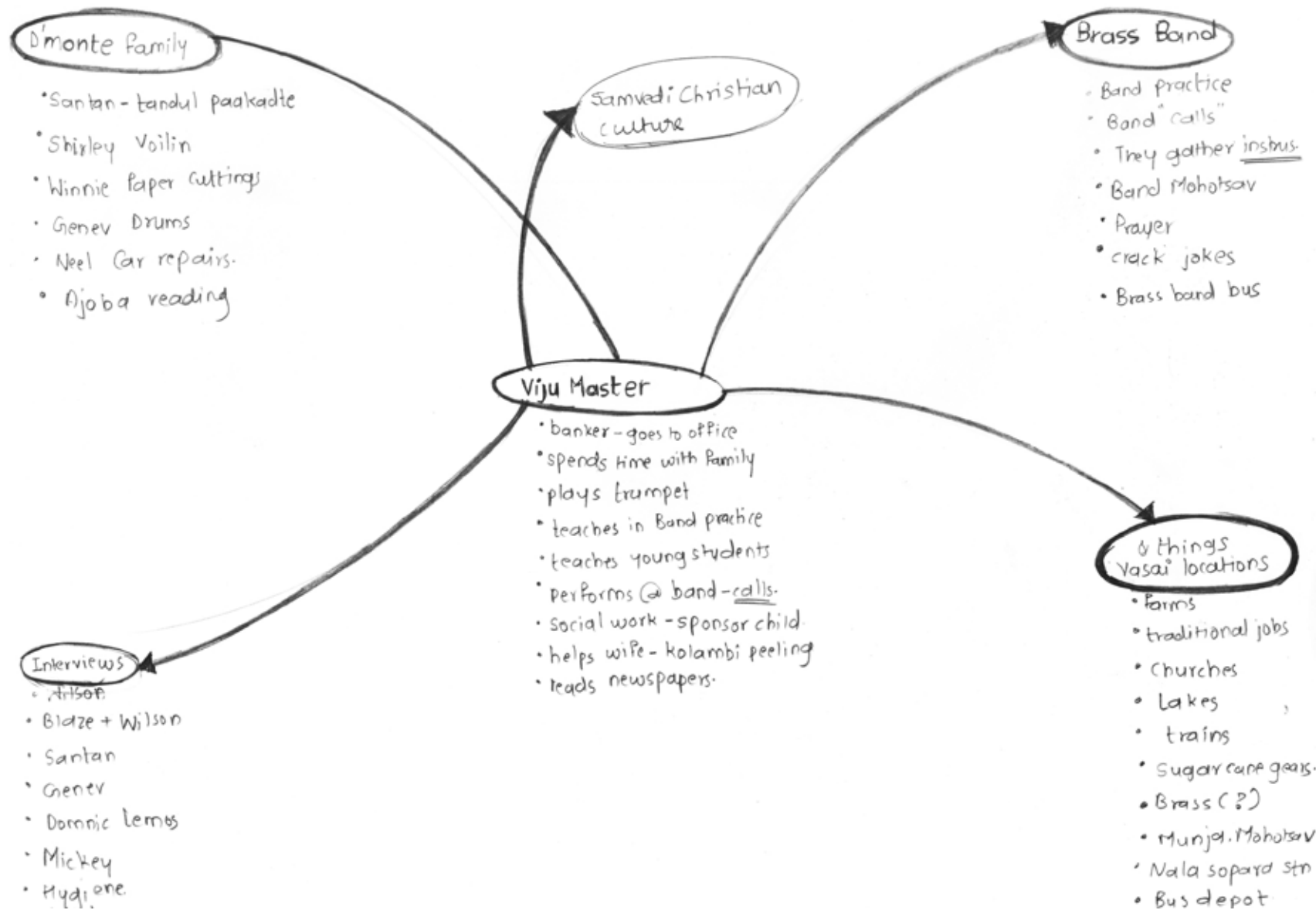
- Planning and discipline
- Putting an effort into organising workflow
- Reading all manuals thoroughly and completing one whole cycle of workflow whether with equipment or software
- Keeping quiet, letting others speak
- Seeing and listening as opposed to looking and hearing
- Respecting time, outlooks, idiosyncrasies of those around
- About Samvedi culture and the notion of "caste" in India, specially rural India
- Every culture has it's own codes which one needs to respect.

Final(ly) Film



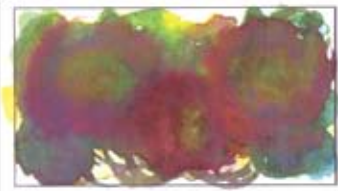


Information relevant to the film in chunks





Storyline block diagram



Introduction colour streaks



Opening with a huge mob dancing, followed by title of the movie.



Introduction of Vasai, by showing glimpses of Vasai geography, bird eye view.



Introduction of Vasai's hybrid culture and how Christianity emerged.



Re-visiting the Band Mohotsav. as one of the three parallel tracks in story



History of the brass bands of Vasai revealed by discussing occupations in vasai



About Viju Master, how he got his nick name, who he is, his values and music



About Viju master's brass band Jaihind Brass Band, the members, their practice etc



Jaihind Brass Band members and family discusses Viju Master and his qualities.



Viju master discusses about his life, his band, how he manages his time etc.



Mickey, a band member discusses how he found his purpose, playing in the band



Practice sessions of Jaihind Brass Band.



Calls or Supari of Jaihind Brass Band.



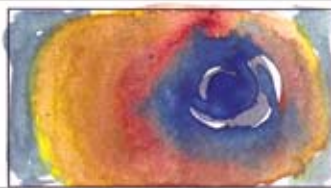
the owners of Jaihind Brass Band, the D'Monte family. Living with them etc.



Conversations about Vasai, it's culture, politics and changing lifestyle.



Jaihind Brass Band owners, the D'Monte brothers being interviewed together.



A quote by Felipe Luciano that reflects my thoughts and purpose of making the movie



The words- "brass band" dissected as brass + band + brass, conclusion. End titles.

Story chunks

This shows the poster frame for each chunk. Since I re-scripted after shooting, before editing, I found this useful.

FinalSCRIPT: Viju Master

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Aditi K P3 | Viju Master (Short film on Jaihind Brass Band)



Narration

"Come with an open mind and don't get the camera"
Yes! I was given the warning!
Big Deal! I am not scared of crowds....But this- is unreal!
A massive rave; at a Vasai village?? Who would have thought?

For once it was impossible to tell a Hindu, a Muslim and a Christian apart. He was right again...He?? Who??



Title

Viju Master



Interview

Baba: I don't think I taught him, really- he has it inborn!!
Domnic: Now I have realised, Viju master is the one who is more strict.

Genev: Actually Viju kaka began taking me with him, and that's how I learnt

Narration

Will the real Viju Master, please stand up???



Narration

Viju Master and the handful few like him are products of twisted, serendipitous History and geography combinations!

Vasai

A suburb 51 km North of Mumbai on western railway...

Chunks

Movie introduction

Movie Title

Viju Master introduction

Vasai introduction



Narration

Portuguese set foot in India in mid 14th century with the objective of converting people to Christianity. Bread, considered contaminating was thrown into the wells and the Hindus seen drinking from these wells were pronounced "polluted" and thus became Christians. Viju Master belongs to the community of Samvedi Brahmins, similarly converted and came to be known as Samvedi Christians.

Chunks

Portuguese introduction



Narration

Christmas or Easter each year in Vasai villages is marked by collective performances of local brass bands. And the delirious crowd that you saw earlier on was no rave but villagers dancing to brass band music at Band Mohotsav or festival of Brass Bands.

Band Mohotsav introduction



Narration

Brass Band culture is a relic from the Portuguese times. Initially brass bands would play at Portuguese funerals. In the days of Portuguese invasion, Vasai was an agrarian community. Brass band tradition was adopted by locals as a supplementary source to agriculture and as a form on entertainment in pre-TV-radio days. Since those days brass bands have evolved from a profession to a hobby.

Brass Band History



Narration

Back at the Band Mohotsav it was the turn of Jaihind Brass Band to perform. Founded by John D'monte in 1939 Jaihind Brass band was the third brass band to start in Vasai region in a village called Gass. Where it is headquartered at the house of Wilson D'Monte, John's Grandson. Wilson D'Monte is none other than the loved and respected Viju Master.

Jaihind Brass Band history



Narration

Jaihind Brass Band comprises 27 members each juggling a family occupation, a day job and the brass band on the weekends. Most members are from Gass village while a few others are from the neighbouring Wagholi village. These people come from various professional backgrounds, farming, banking, fitness training, education, hospitality etc. and meet up daily for practice between 9 to 10 p.m.

Chunks

Jaihind Band today



Narration

What prompts this people to play music??
It's a de-stressing mechanism. It is just a hobby although I get some money out of it I would still say it's just a hobby. But not all is rock and roll. There are the downsides too to being a rockstar. Takes a toll on health at times. Families get frustrated that we spend so much time apart etc.

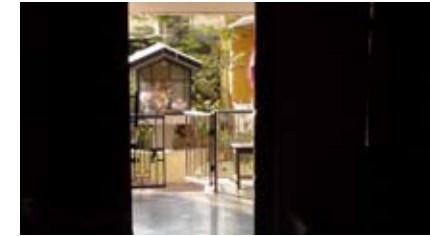
Positive/negative of Band



Narration

When brass band gets commissioned for a ceremony it is called accepting a Supari or a call. And once a call or a supari is accepted, it is a matter of prestige and responsibility on part of every band member to turn up on time, well groomed and to give his very best performance in tandem with others.

Brass band functioning



Narration

Living with the D'Monte's was a crash course on Vasai culture the brass bands and everything inbetween. Everybody managed an occupation and a passion, squeezing every minute of the day to it's last drop. The house was filled with music and constant activity. With the doors forever open, the guests, neighbours, children and clients jostled in and out. But there was always more room in the D'Monte house and D'Monte hearts.

Living with D'Monte Family



Narration

But when other motifs of Samvedi culture like the traditional houses, the food habits etc have disappeared will the bras bands be the next ones to bite the dust?

Wilson feels that although with evolution like incorporating of electronic instruments etc the brass brand may revive itself to survive. But only so long as people indulge in traditional weddings and ceremonies etc.

Brass band anxieties



Narration

Brass bands should not be viewed outside of their cultural and political in context in Vasai. If one digs deep, they don't merely provide entertainment but keep the multi lingual, multi-religious, volatile community of Vasai together. In that sense, they are the cornerstone of Vasai's culture today. But for how long? And then what happens to people like Viju Master?

Brass Band culture politics



Narration

Brass= An alloy created by mixing metals together because it is stronger than the each metal individually.

Brass Band= A group of musicians that play using brass instruments and percussions and keep the larger community together.

Viju Master= A brass band musician who worked his way up and took everybody along!

The ending

Concluding note about the film:

Research by way of visiting various places in Vasai, talking to people from all walks of life, attending Sunday masses and witnessing a wedding etc apart from reading books gave way to a certain point of view, a few opinions on the cultural shift in Vasai as well as fascination for the brass band phenomenon.

Thus more than a biopic, I would call my short film a culture-pic.

I was looking at the culture shift in Vasai and mapping those facts onto the daily lives of Jaihind Brass Band members. Thus I have attempted three parallel tracks- history & culture, the Brass Band and the D'Monte family.

The most challenging part was letting go of the linear time in real life and acclimatizing to the temporal space in reel-life.

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People & Places

Dhabre Family, Wagholi
 Mascarenhas Family, Wagholi
 Prakash Naik, Wagholi
 Gonsalves Family, Umrале
 Jeevan Darshan, Giriz
 Father Andrews, Bishop House, Vasai
 Nirmal Church Care-takers
 Adi Shankaracharya Math Priest
 Sridutta Raut, Vasai Kille Mohim
 Jaihind Brass Band, Gass
 D'Monte Family, Gass

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