



**Viju Master**

# Project 3

**Viju Master** (a film on Jaihind Brass Band)

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**Aditi Kulkarni**

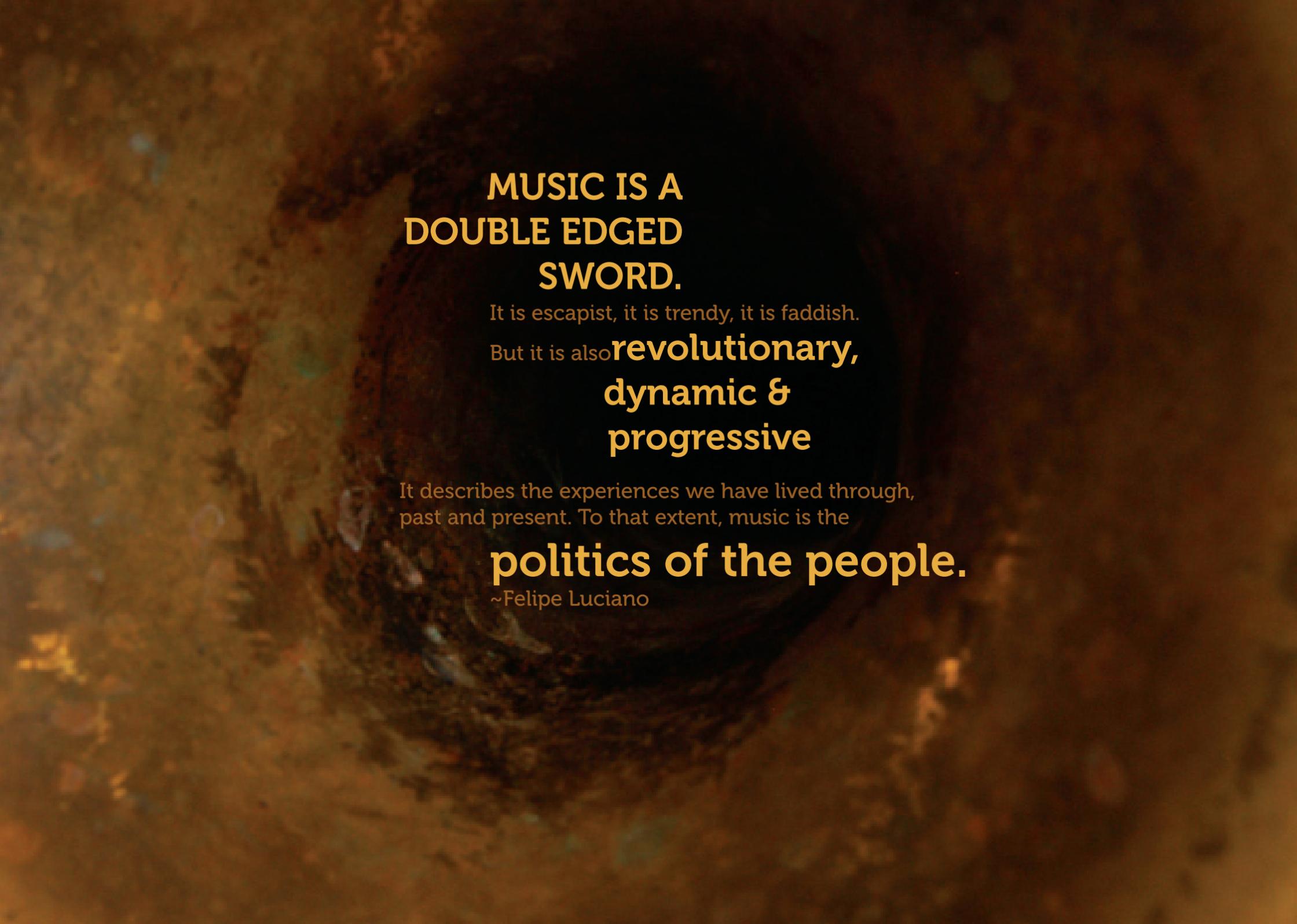
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Visual Communication

Industrial Design Centre

Indian Institute of Technology, Bombay

2010



**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




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.

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

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

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

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.



VAS  
BASAI  
BACAIM  
BASSEIN

**Vasai**

The image shows the interior of a ruined stone church. The architecture features thick stone walls, large arches, and a prominent circular window (oculus) in the upper part of the wall. The floor is made of large, dark stone tiles. Sunlight streams in from the right, casting long shadows and highlighting the textures of the stone. The overall atmosphere is one of historical decay and architectural grandeur.

**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**



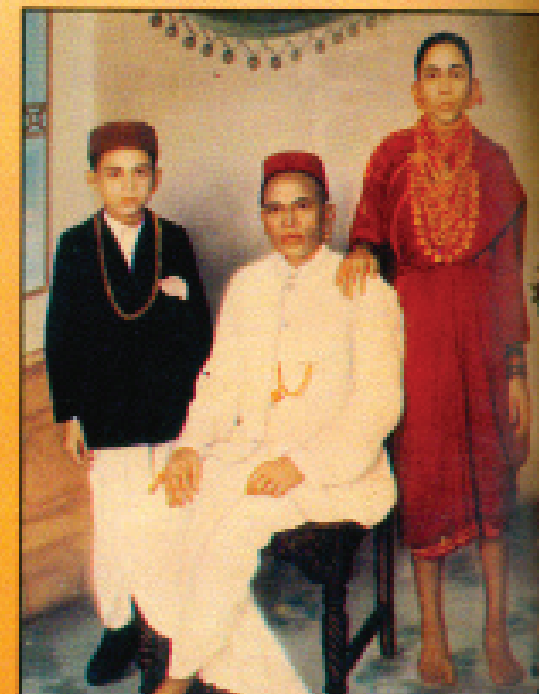
The image shows a man sitting on a traditional wooden swing (waada) in a traditional wooden house (waada). The house has pink walls and a stone base. The swing is made of wood and is suspended by ropes. The man is wearing a white t-shirt and dark shorts. The house has a green door and a window with a green frame. A calendar is hanging on the wall. The text 'Last few surviving waadas' is overlaid on the image, with 'traditional wooden houses' in smaller text below it.

# Last few surviving *waadas*

traditional wooden houses



# The *Samvedi* Christians



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



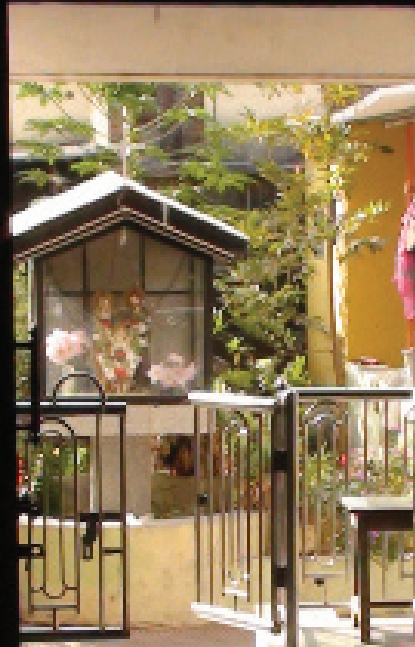
# Brass

## bands of Vasai





# Jaihind Brass Band

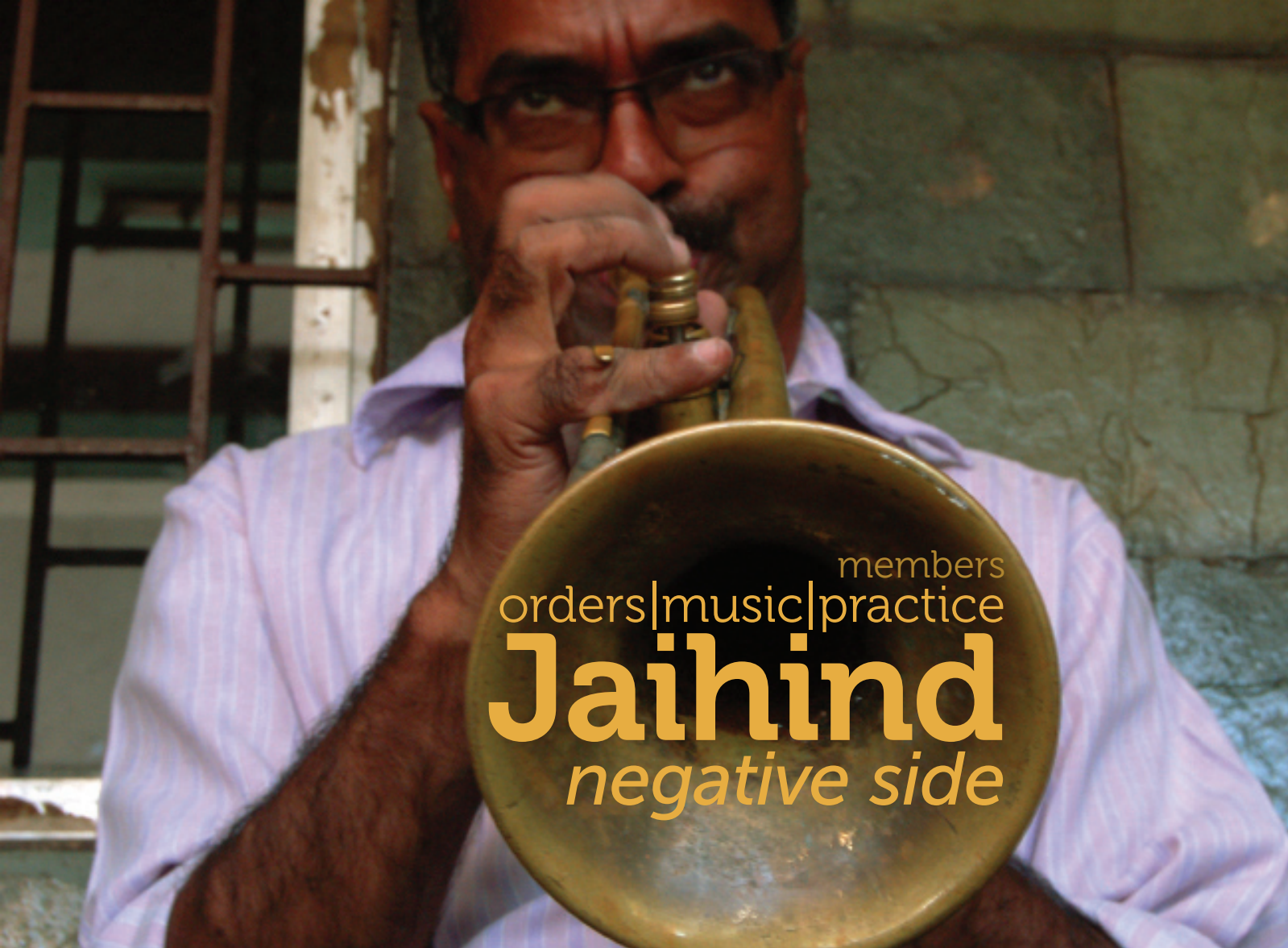


# The D'Montes

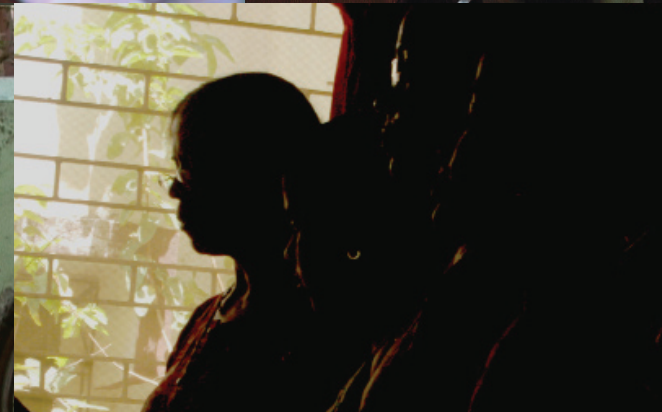
Aditi Kulkarni ???!!!!  
That makes you a Brahman !!!!!!!

Band *Mohotsav*





members  
orders|music|practice  
**Jaihind**  
*negative side*



# Summing up: Jaihind Brass Band (story in chunks)

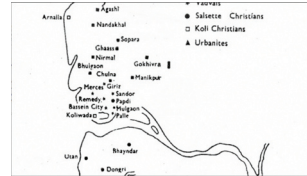
## Chunk 1 Introduction



Title



The study of East Indian Folk culture



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



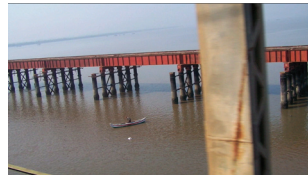
on the western railway line.



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



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 ..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.

## 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.

## Chunk 6 Living with D'Montes



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 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



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



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.

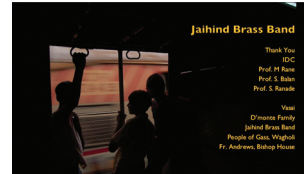
## Chunk 9 Conclusion



D'Montes, future  
anxieties.



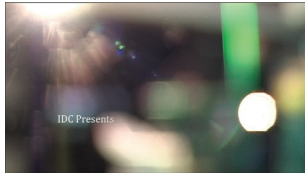
But currently future  
anxieties are set aside,  
this time winners plan  
to enthrall again.



End titles roll

-----  
Story ends here. -----

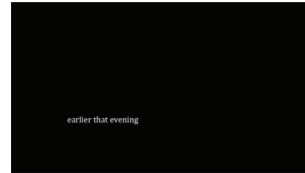
# Rough edit The Beginning1



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.

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.

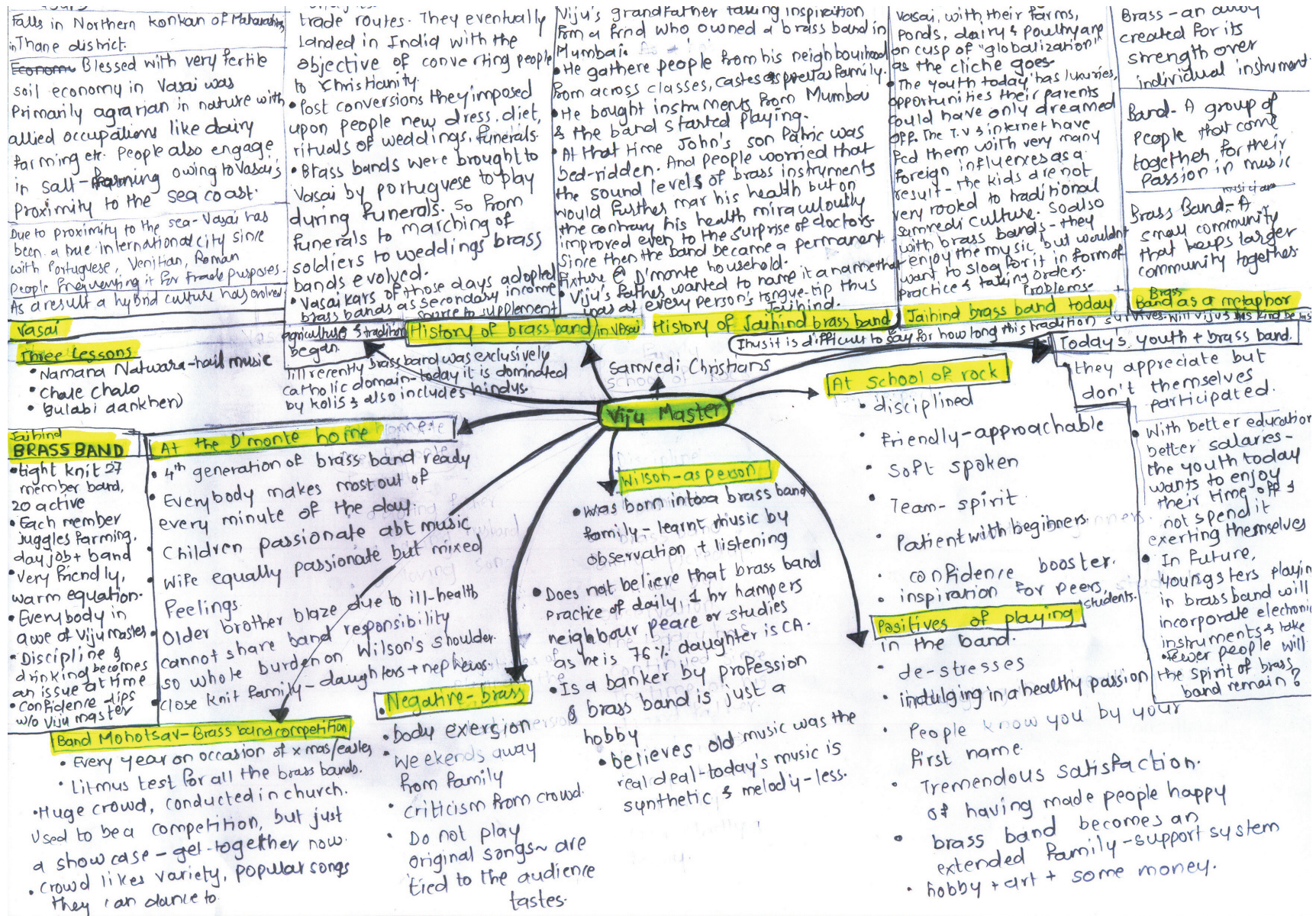
(Shown next page onwards)

## Learning

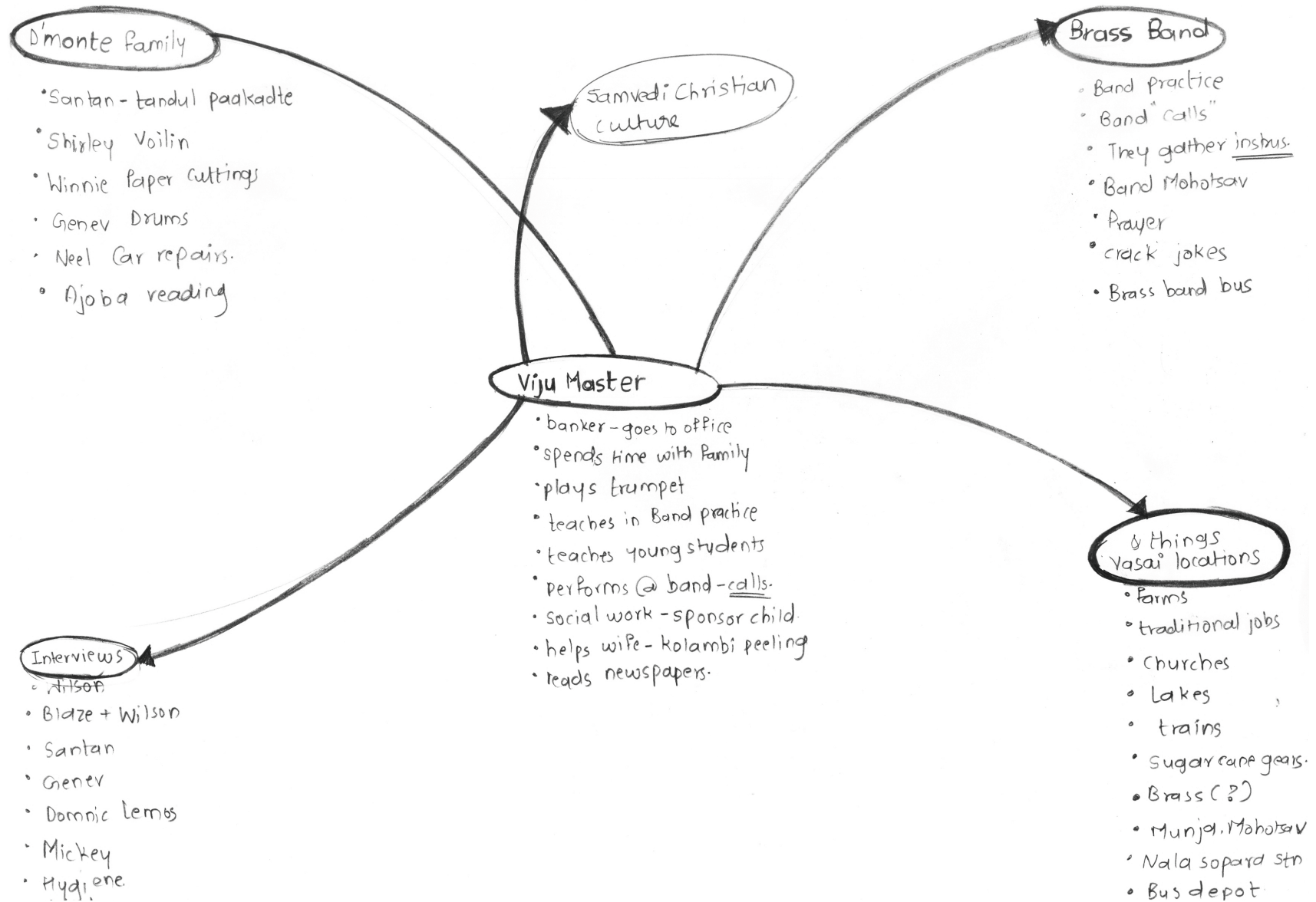
- Planning and discipline
- Putting an effort into organising workflow
- Reading all manuals thoroughly and completing one whole cycle of workflow whether with equipment or software
- Keeping quiet, letting others speak
- Seeing and listening as opposed to looking and hearing
- Respecting time, outlooks, 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.



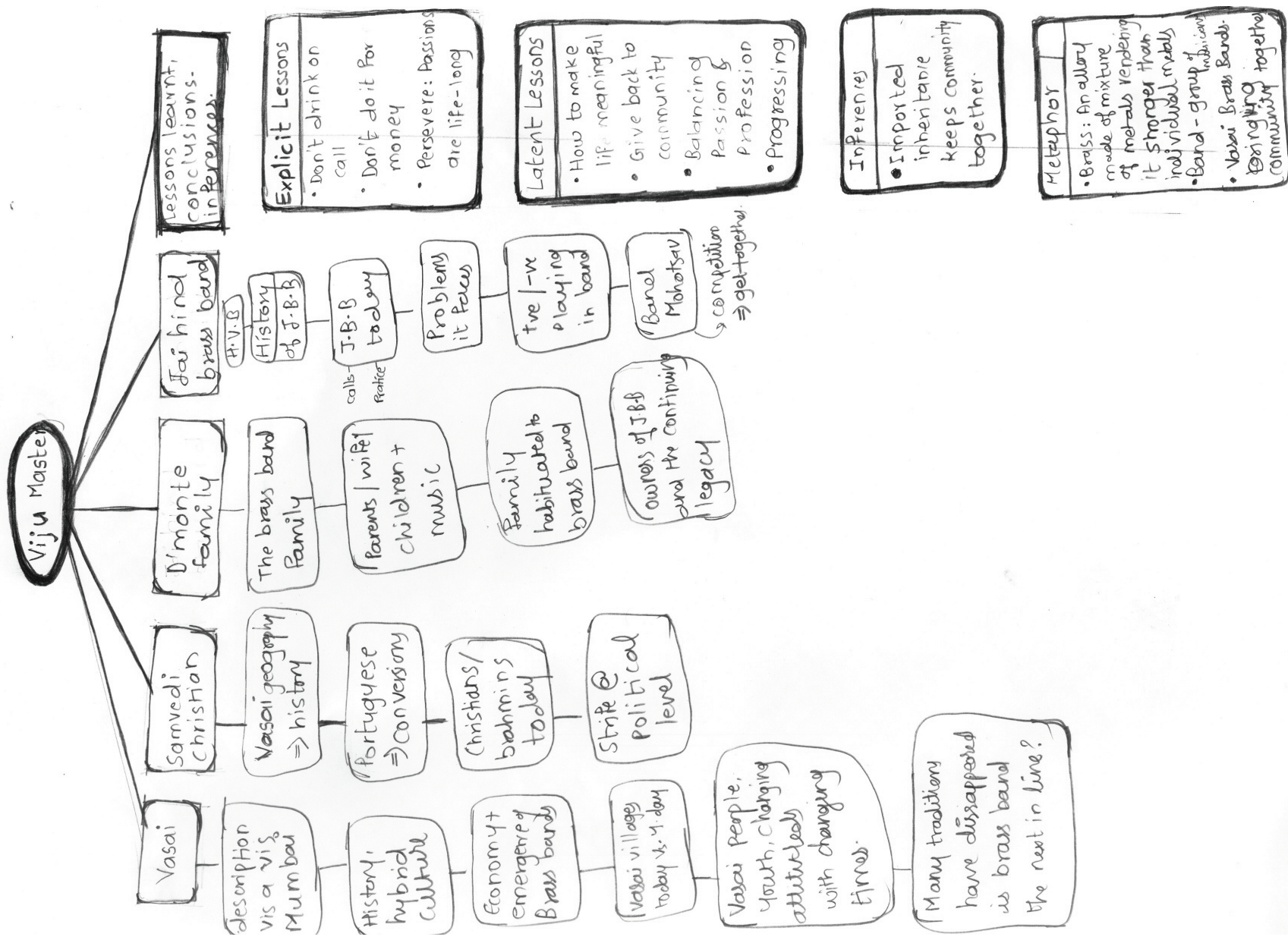
# Final(ly) Film



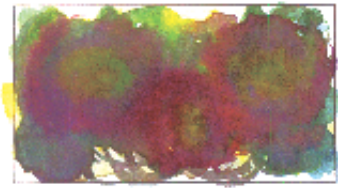
Information relevant to the film in chunks



Included people and places



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.



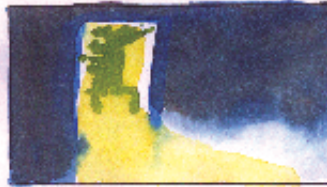
Mickey, a band member discusses how he found his purpose, playing in the band



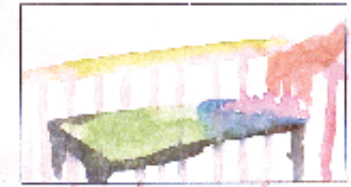
Practice sessions of Jaihind Brass Band.



Calls or Supari of Jaihind Brass Band.



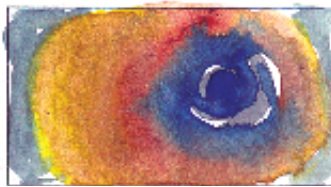
the owners of Jaihind Brass Band, the D'Monte family. Living with them etc.



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



## 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.



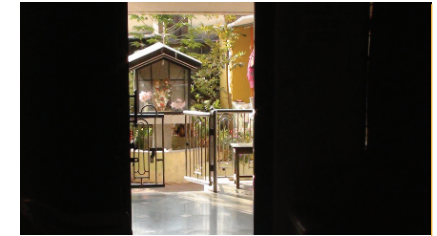
#### Narration

What prompts this people to play music?? Its 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 n health at times. Families get frustrated that we spend so much time apart etc.



#### 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.



#### 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.

Chunks

Jaihind Band today

Positive/negative of Band

Brass band functioning

Living with D'Monte Family



## Narration

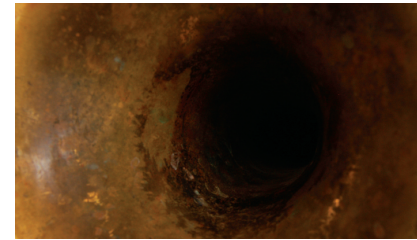
But when other motifs of Samvedi culture like the traditional houses, the food habits etc have disappeared will the bras bands be the next ones to bite the dust?

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



## 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?



## 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!

Chunks

Brass band anxieties

Brass Band culture politics

The ending

### Websites

<http://www.east-indians.net/>  
<http://www.east-indians.com/>  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East\\_Indians\\_\(ethnic\\_group\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/East_Indians_(ethnic_group))  
<http://www.vasai.com/>  
<http://www.vasaikar.org/>  
<http://wikimapia.org/>

### Books

The East Indians by Dr. Elsie W. Baptista  
Samvedi Christi Samaj,  
Samvedi Bolibhasha Loksahitya and Madhachya Ghagri by Father Francis Correia

### People & Places

Dhabre Family, Wagholi  
Mascarenhas Family, Wagholi  
Prakash Naik, Wagholi  
Gonsalves Family, Umrale  
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

### Thanks

Prof. Mandar Rane (for asking million questions)  
Prof. Sudesh Balan (lots of chats & fundae about films and filmmaking)  
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Shilpa (for *un*conditional love & fundae)  
Rakesh, Venkat (for fundae)  
Somnath Pal (for sharing his documentary collection)  
iitb LAN  
aai + baba