

SUNIL

The Mother's Musician



Clifford Gibson

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Introduction

In the fall of 1971 I received a letter from Sunil Bhattacharya. I had written to the Sri Aurobindo Ashram asking about music played by the Mother of the Ashram. Sunil answered with details of the Mother's music and briefly introduced himself and his music: "I am myself a composer. I am assisted by a group of musicians of the Ashram for my orchestral reproductions. My style of music is entirely a development, an expression of the deep impression that the Mother's improvisations had created in me."

After I sent a reel-to-reel tape with return postage for my first taste of Sunil's music, *The Hour of God* arrived in my mailbox and opened doors onto a new world of beauty and inspiration. Like many who cherished his music I asked about sharing his music with others and Sunil replied: "Regarding the question of permitting people to copy from the tape I sent you, I leave the matter entirely to your discretion. I do not want my music to be commercialized, at least just now. So please exercise a little bit of caution and allow only those people to copy who want the music only for their personal enjoyment."

Attempts were made over the years to persuade Sunil to allow his music to be made available to a wider audience, but he always refused, saying that he felt publicity would invade the private space he needed to express, "all I felt, all I heard within me." Writing to a friend one year after completing that season's compositions he said, "The insane relish of work is gone, the allegretto agitato of strings have died down but I can however hear muffled base chords resounding like heavy footfalls of strangers along the corridors of my mind. Yet deep within me there is a still pool which sends back the image of a light that is burning somewhere." He took care to guard the quiet space where that light burned.

In 2002 I heard of a book project on Sunil that had been started and abandoned and I contacted Victor Jauhar who had helped record Sunil's music from early on. Victor had

worked with Mirajyoti Sobel on the suspended Sunil book project and put me in contact with her. I was delighted to have the opportunity to look through the archived materials and enquired about being allowed to take up work on the project. I looked forward to once again spending time with Sunil while reading through his correspondence and hoped to make it possible for others to come into contact with the person they have known through his music.

I received permission from Manoj Das Gupta, Managing Trustee of the Ashram, and Minnie Ganguli, Sunil's sister, to look through the 16 large boxes of correspondence containing many dozens of folders and some thousands of letters and other documents and photos lovingly preserved over the years.

Selecting from this material I have tried as much as possible to let Sunil tell his story through his own words, through his correspondence with many friends and admirers of his music over a period of several decades from the early 1960s until his passing in 1998. We are fortunate that Chhobi Ganguli, his sister-in-law and faithful secretary, scrupulously saved almost all of Sunil's correspondence over the years and it is from this cache of correspondence that the bulk of letters and quotations contained in this book have been chosen. Also included is the Mother's correspondence with Sunil regarding his music as well as comments she made about his music in other places.

In addition to the correspondence is a truncated autobiography of Sunil which details his early childhood in the small town of Krishnagar in West Bengal and his life in Calcutta where his family moved before Sunil reached school-age and where he learned to play the sitar from his cousin who had studied with two famous sitar players of the time. Sunil's own account ends while he is still quite young and does not mention studying at Xavier's College in Calcutta where he received a degree in chemistry.

Sunil picks up his story from his first visit to Pondicherry in 1942 and from this point his words are taken from his correspondence. Complementing the letters written by and to Sunil

are interviews with several people who knew Sunil intimately and accounts written of Sunil's life by residents of Sri Aurobindo Ashram.



Sunil taking Blessings from the Mother



Sunil with the Mother in Sports ground

SUNIL

AS for me, mine has been all along a very simple yoga, modest in goal and in scope. As such I feel almost like an outsider whenever questions under discussion touch the yoga of the Supramental. That is why when such discussions take place, I choose to remain quiet. I know my limitations. Even after 35 years of stay here in this Ashram I am still a novice, treading the ancient path, reaching out at the old, old Truth that was, is, and that will always be. As a matter of fact, I am still negotiating the sharp contours of a yoga which Sri Aurobindo took pains to elaborate in those few pages of his *Bases of Yoga*. For me there is only one attraction. Could I, one day, make an entire and utter self-giving to Her a reality in my life, claiming nothing, asking nothing, desiring nothing? The goal recedes and it still remains a dream to me.

The first person account of Sunil's boyhood contained in the next several pages was apparently told to his sister-in-law Chhobi. It is not clear if it was narrated to her in English which she then noted down as best she could or told in their native Bengali and then translated into English, but the English in this account does not have the same expressive style of English which Sunil used in his correspondence and speech. Nevertheless it has been left as it was handed down to us as an authentic account of Sunil's early life.

I was born in Krishnagar, a small, beautiful town, 60 miles north of Calcutta, in 1920. In Krishnagar we lived in many rented houses. The last house we lived in was on the High Street quite near the river Khorai. This house in the High Street was a big sprawling one. There were many, many rooms, downstairs as well as upstairs. Our kitchen and pantry were separated from the main building. We had to cross a long courtyard to go to the kitchen where we had our meals. Our house was a two-minute walk to the river Khorai, a beautiful river, with a beautiful

riverside road which stretched on either side for miles.

There was an event which was very important for the town. It was called Rashlila. This was a day of jubilation for the whole town. Krishnagar is one of the chief places where Vaishnavism is dominant, the other two places being Nabadwip and Shantipur. The Maharaja of Krishnagar was a great devotee of Krishna. The Rash is supposed to be a night of full moon when Krishna danced with Radha. This day is celebrated in great pomp and splendor in Krishnagar. In the early morning you wake up with the sound of beautiful chants by the sadhus, walking down the street and chanting, "Krishna Keshava, Krishna Keshava, Krishna Keshava pahi mam." This song used to create in us the dawn of a sacred day.

*

I have a feeling that my father was very happy in Krishnagar where he had many friends and well-wishers. His daily routine was to go out with his cycle. He had to go quite a few miles to get to his dispensary at Ghurni. He was a doctor. Then he had to come back to Krishnagar where he had another dispensary. He would come home at about 1 o'clock in the afternoon. Then he would take his bath and have his lunch and rest for a while. At about 3 o'clock, he would go to his dispensary in Krishnagar and would come back at about 8 o'clock in the evening. Then many of his friends would come and chat and enjoy themselves. Often my father and his friends hired a boat for an afternoon journey on the river Khorai. They would take a harmonium and sing all the way down the Khorai, enjoying themselves on the journey. My father would always take me with him. It was a great pleasure for me. At times he would borrow a car and go to the countryside. I always accompanied him on these journeys.

We lived there till the beginning of 1927. As I was born the 3rd of November 1920, I lived in Krishnagar for only six years.

My days in Calcutta

A day came when we heard that my father had decided to move to Calcutta. Everything was being packed and we all were very excited. At last the day of the departure came. We four children, Panu, myself, Minnie and Lakkhi were put in one cab with a sewing machine between the two seats. The cab started moving and all four of us went on thumping on the board of the machine and shouting in a chorus "Kolkata, Kolkata." At that time I did not have any regret in leaving such a beautiful place and above all my birthplace. I did not realize that I would never see Krishnagar again.

It is curious that I do not remember reaching the railway station, nor boarding the train, nor arriving at Sealdah Station in Calcutta. I remembered a big house when I came out of the taxi. The elders were busy bringing down our luggage. I stood for a few moments confused, then I climbed the four steps and entered our drawing room where I saw my grandfather lying on a cot. He got up in haste and said, "Oh, you all have arrived." I said, "Yes."

We had no electricity in the house for about two years. Then the landlady decided to put in electricity. For days the electricians were making lines, switches, etc. We children were all very excited. At last the electricians finished their job on the day we heard that the house would be connected with the mains line. The whole day nobody came to connect the line. In the afternoon we went to the park to play and in the evening when we returned home we asked my mother, "Is there electricity in our house?" My mother said, "Just put on the switch and see." Just near us there was a switch, we switched it on and the whole inner veranda had a bright electric light. We all clapped our hands and jumped, then we ran upstairs and switched on the lights of every room one by one. Now we had lights on in all the rooms and we danced in glee.

My Jathamasai's [father's brother] children used to live in Benaras. After the puja holidays when we were coming back from our village, often our cousins would accompany us up

to Naihati and then get off the train and wait for the Benaras Express. Amongst them the eldest son of Jathamasai, Hazuda, used to learn classical Indian music from a vocalist of Benaras. His youngest brother Punneda used to learn sitar from an ustad of Benaras called Mustag Ali. Eventually, Punneda came to Calcutta and lived with us and took sitar lessons from Enayat Khan, a famous sitarist.

I was an obstinate and stubborn boy. I recognized my father as the head of the family, who could scold me, and nobody else. Sometimes my mother was very annoyed with me. But she could never catch me as I used to run faster than her. One day we were playing hide and seek and by accident, my leg touched Baromamima, my aunt, when she came to visit us from Dakshinpara. There were my mother and Baromashima sitting there. They asked me to touch her feet as a mark of respect. I reacted and said “no”, it was just an accident.

Minnie, his older sister, agreed that Sunil was stubborn:

“He was very obliging, he was very sweet, but he was very obstinate also. He never said no, but you will know...” and she adds, “He was very strong, he was very strong. And very regular habits...And how many hours he used to spend in this room... [his music studio] morning and afternoon.”

For about two years I remained a free boy. My father never asked me to go to school. He himself gave me lessons in mathematics when he used to rest in the afternoon. My father was a very good teacher and he never scolded me.

My father used to ask me if I wanted to be a doctor and my reply was in the affirmative. He decided to make me a doctor, so he started giving me anatomy lessons from a Bengali book. At the age of nine I knew quite a bit of anatomy. Later on he gave me a book of medicine in English. After receiving this book, I started treating patients. My patients were mainly from the ghetto, drivers and servants. Soon I became quite well known

and the poor people always called me when they could not afford to go to a proper doctor. I used to tell my father about the patients I treated and told him about the medicine I gave them. My father always approved the medicine that I gave to them. I would listen with rapt attention when my father talked to people about diseases and their treatments.

My mother used to teach me Bengali when she cooked in the evening. My eldest cousin Mimal Prasad whom we used to call Barda, was supposed to give English lessons to us in the afternoon at one o'clock. But he himself knew very little English. So our progress in English did not go beyond a page of the first book of English—'I met a lame man...'. He used to say, "Go up and study well, I will come up and ask your old lessons." Our study was on the second floor. He would be talking to my father on the first floor, just below the room where we used to study. We were far from studying. One of us would lie down with his ear glued to the floor. As soon as he heard that the talk had stopped we knew Barda was coming. Barda would come up very quietly so that he could take us unawares. But we were reading our lessons loudly. He waited for some time outside the room, then entered. He would say, "Good, I am glad that you are not wasting your time. Tomorrow, I will ask questions on your old lessons. Today you can go and play."

*

It is not that my mother had no affection for me. She loved me in her own way. She wanted me to be a quiet boy and good in my studies. She did not like me to play with my friends on the road all the time. She used to scold me, but this had no effect on me. One day she became so angry that she complained to my father as soon as he came back from the dispensary, tired. I still remember my father standing and listening to the complaint and her request for my father to give me some punishment. I stood by my father and continued to look at his face. When he came in he looked tired, but now he looked even more tired. He said nothing. He climbed the stairs and I followed him. When

he reached his room upstairs he started putting his things on his table and drawers. Then without looking at me he spoke very softly as if in whisper “Bulo, if you go on doing things like that I will be obliged to send you back to our village.” These few words touched my heart much more than any punishment. From that day I stopped going out of the house after one o’clock. My father’s tired look rather than his words created this change in me.

When I was eight years old, my mother told me that it was time for me to get admitted to school. This idea pleased me. All the children in the house went to school, so I thought it would be a privilege for me to go too. So I asked my mother who would take me to school and get me admitted. My mother said, you go with Panu (my cousin) and sit by his side for a few days and see for yourself how to behave in school. I went with Panu the very next day and sat by his side. For two days the teacher said nothing. On the third day the teacher asked Panu who I was and if I wanted to get admitted to the school. Panu said yes. Then the teacher said, “Take him to a lower class.” We came out of the class and walked along the corridor, passing several classes and there I saw a class where a student was saying loudly “one-two” and the whole class said, “twelve,” and so forth. This boy seemed to be leading the whole class. I entered the class and asked the teacher if I could join his class. He gladly asked me to come in and sit down. I liked the face of the boy who was leading the class; he liked me too and asked me to sit by his side. Later on I came to know the name of the boy was Suhrid. We two became very close friends and remained so for years and years. After Suhrid sat down the teacher called another boy to come to the blackboard and asked him to write one crore three thousand and forty. The boy couldn’t. Then the teacher turned to me and asked if I could write the number. This was very elementary for me as I had learnt all this with my father. I went to the board and wrote 1000.3040. the teacher was very pleased. I was ahead of the class in arithmetic, but I preferred to remain in this class as I became very friendly with Suhrid.

During our vacations when I had no school I was with my father as long as he stayed in the house. Occasionally I would accompany him to his dispensary in the morning. Eventually, I became a member of a football club, known as Friends Union Club. I was on their B team. They arranged very few matches for the B team, whereas the A team played many more matches, so we decided to form a separate club which would be known as Friends Athletic Club.

Later, once in the Ashram, Sunil would again find himself on a football team. Ranganath, a former student of Sunil's at the Ashram school says:

“Everything he took up, you know, he excelled at it. He was the captain of the football team in the Ashram. He was a great dasher. He used to play center forward for the Ashram. Mother used to encourage us sometimes to go out and play with the outside teams and she never wanted us to lose. And once they went to Cuddalore and the Ashram boys won the match one nil. One nil is a pretty good score, it's not bad. So, Mother, when she heard they had won by one said, ‘That's all? You only won by one goal?’ So then, laughingly he told her that was a pretty good match and that we had beaten the other team quite convincingly.”

My grandfather had 18 children, but only five sons and two daughters survived. The eldest son of my grandfather was Ramdas and the eldest son of Ramdas was Hazu. My father and Hazu were great friends. My father told me that Hazu was quite a gifted person; he could sing classical songs which he learnt in Benaras from the ustads. He could play the sitar and also paint and did an oil painting of my father which hung in his room in Simulia.

My uncle, my father's younger brother, used to come for a visit to Dakshineswar about once every two years. He stayed in Dakshineswar for about a fortnight and he would come with

some of our relatives. My father knew the trustees of the temple. He arranged their stay in Mathurbabu's house. The ground floor of this house was quite dark, but there were many rooms. In Mathurbabu's time perhaps these rooms were used as Katchari or offices. But the top floor was beautiful, with spacious rooms and a big terrace, a small portion of which had a roof on top.

When my uncle used to come, my father would visit them every other day and I always accompanied my father on these visits. We would take a bus or a tram from Maulali and get off when the bus or the tram arrived at Rajabajar and then walk a short distance to reach the temple.

At Mathurbabu's house my father would change his clothes, put on a dhoti ready to take a dip in the Ganges. We would have our bath, change our clothes and then go to Sri Ramakrishna's room, where we stayed for some time. There in a corner of the room, Sri Ramakrishna's wooden sandals were kept where we would bow down and make pranams. Then a priest would take us to the temple of Mother Kali. He would open the door of the temple and close the door behind us. We sat down in front of the idol and my father meditated while I gazed at the image of Kali which was quite different from the other images of Kali that I had seen. Here the image of Kali was more loveable. Later on, my father explained to me that this was the Bhavatarini aspect of the Mother Kali, Bhavatarini, who comes down to earth to help humans in their sorrow. My father meditated there for about fifteen minutes and then he got up and I followed him. We left the temple and went to Mathurbabu's house where my aunt served us our lunch at about 2:00 in the afternoon.

After that my father would sit for sometime with our relatives. Usually I would come down and roam in the garden. I would stand for some time near the Panchabati tree and look at the cement structure around the base of the tree. I would imagine Sri Ramakrishna sitting there with the disciples sitting on the ground. Then I would look forward along the path towards the Bel tree, under which he realized the highest tantric consciousness. Once I looked at the tree and I saw a sannyasi

who was looking intently at me. This scared me and hurriedly I went towards the temple where there were people all around.

Decades later in a letter to a friend who had recently visited Dakshineswar Sunil wrote:

*I am very happy to know that you were there in that hallowed place where lived a hundred years ago that miraculous man [Sri Ramakrishna] who "took the kingdom of heaven by storm."
(Sri Aurobindo)*

The photographs revive in me memories which never really faded. To roam about in that sacred shrine was a joy and an adventure for a boy of twelve. Somehow the majesty of the Mother in that temple, the utter simplicity of Sri Ramakrishna's room, the hush and silence around the Panchavati all found their place in a secret recess of my heart where images are stored everlastingly.

*

As I grew up I became more and more aware of my father's loneliness in our family home at Calcutta. He was a very strictly traditional Brahmin. He would not take anything before he performed his Puja in the morning. In his Puja room he had a Narayana Shila, a Shivalinga and a picture of the Mother Kali. This room was so situated that if you closed the door it was completely cut off from the rest of the house. If you happened to pass by this room when the door was closed you would not suspect that there was a small room there. After my Upanayana, my father took me to his Puja room and gave me a book of mantras and underlined the places which I had to recite during my Sandhya Puja. He urged me to be a good Brahmin. He asked me not to take anything before my morning Puja, not even a glass of water, or after sundown before performing my Sandhya Puja.

My mother became an admirer of Sri Aurobindo just after my birth and ultimately she became a disciple and no longer

wanted to have conjugal relations with my father. My father could not accept Sri Aurobindo as his guru as Sri Aurobindo was not a Brahmin and on top of that, the Mother of the Ashram was a European. So my mother had a separate place for the worship of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. In her bedroom on a table she kept the photos of Sri Aurobindo and the Mother. As long as my father was alive I could not look at these photos as they were alien in my father's normal life.

Before leaving Calcutta for Pondicherry Sunil attended Xavier's College and graduated with honors in Chemistry. While at the university he played chess competitively and Ranganath says:

At school, he used to tell us a story of how once he won the intercollegiate chess championship. He said that he was there playing chess, it was the finals, and he suddenly saw that his position was not very strong, but he also remembered that the position was very close to one ending that he had read about in the papers. So then he applied the knowledge of what he had seen in that and he kept on sacrificing pieces. And all his supporters there were getting more and more nervous and saying 'what is he doing?' He sacrificed his rook, his knight and everything. His opponent was very glad he was falling to pieces. Finally with only one rook, even the queen, he sacrificed his queen also. But finally with just one rook and one small pawn, he checkmated the fellow and he won the competition. Whatever he did he always did well.

Pondicherry

Nolini's son Ranju has said of the arrival of Sunil and his family in Pondicherry:

In 1942 six persons known to the Calcutta Centre visited the Ashram for April Darshan. The party consisted of

Indumukhi Bhattacharya (Sunil's mother), Pratibha Datta (Putidi, Satyajit Ray's aunt), Sunil, Anil (Sunil's brother), Pranab and Ranju. The Mother told Sri Aurobindo 'Six special souls have come to the Ashram.'

The first contact with the Ashram was through Indubala Chatterjee, Sunil's aunt, who was then staying at Nabadwip with her two sons, Bimal Prasad and Debi Prasad. It was about 1922. This Centre kept contact through correspondence with the Ashram at Pondicherry. Soon Indubala sold her property and shifted to Krishnagar. Here the Centre became more prominent and was visited by Sarojini Debi and Barindra Kumar Ghosh (Sri Aurobindo's sister and brother).

As the need arose for the children's higher education they came over to Calcutta, 25A Bakul Bagan Row. Here the main person was Indubala's younger sister, Indumukhi Debi (Sunil's mother). The whole establishment was sustained by her nephew Ardhendu Sekhar Bhattacharjee (Bishey) who was an employee in Bengal Immunity. Ardhendu gave more than half of his income to the Ashram at Pondicherry.

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From this point on Sunil's words are taken directly from his correspondence. The major portion of the entries were originally written in English. Some have been translated from French, some from Portuguese which Sunil learned in order to correspond with friends in Brazil, and a few from Bengali. Here Sunil writes to a friend about his first experiences of Pondicherry:

My first visit to the Ashram was in April 1942. The heat was unbearable. I was put up in a room with a big window facing the south and at night the wind used to blow from the east. We heard the rustle pass by while we lay on our beds perspiring and sleepless. After 15 days we went back to Calcutta. It was hotter, but it was dry heat and in the evenings there was a cool

breeze and I had a nice room. After two months something happened and I had to return to Pondy. I passed a whole year here. It was not so disagreeable as I had a nice room. Slowly over the years I got used to this town and climate. At last I became a Pondicherrian. I can't think of going anywhere else now.

At the time Sunil first settled in the Ashram he had not yet decided that he would spend the rest of his life there. He had the idea of entering the Indian Civil Service which was British at the time. He wrote to the Mother:

There is one more bad news I received yesterday. Doctor Indrasen told me that the Government in Delhi has notified that there will be no more competitive examination; in the future jobs will be given by nomination. I will take classes by correspondence from a college in Bombay and I have already given Rs. 350/- for that. As you can see, Mother, this affects my program. What to do now? I send you my thousand pranams to Your Feet,

Your loving child, Sunil

The Mother writes back:

Continue studying and we shall see later.

I think it preferable for you to come every day to pranam as before and I shall see to it that you do not go away depressed.

With my blessings
Mother

Before taking up his work as a composer, Sunil was one of the first teachers at the Ashram school. He had come to the Ashram with his mother and sister as their chaperone. In 1945 his elder brother was due to return from military service at which point Sunil's role as chaperone would no longer be required. The question arose in

his mind as to whether he should remain there at the Ashram. He wrote to the Mother and put the question to her:

To
*The Lotus Feet of
 my dearest sweet Mother,*

*The return of my brother has given rise to a serious question about my stay here. Indumukhi and the rest were awaiting his arrival to get it solved forthwith. Here he is at last; the choice is imposed: here or elsewhere? My brother, personally, does not want me to leave the ashram, but he is ready to help me if **Mother decides** [Sunil's emphasis] that it is better for me to start the life outside.*

Judging from the past and the present, taking all the dark and bright moments into account, I can tell you, Mother, that my life has never been so brimful and glorious. I grasp this opportunity to voice my will to stay and live near you.

But the future, and with it the last word, is yours. In spite of the pain I feel to part from all those which I have learned to regard as my own, I will welcome with reverence whatever you choose to decide.

I offer myself and all my pranams to your and Sri Aurobindo's holy Feet.

*Grant me your love and blessings
 Your loving Child
 Sunil*

4-9-45

My dear child,

I never thought for a moment that you could leave the ashram, and I am glad to hear from you that this conviction of mine is in keeping with your own feeling.

Moreover you must not forget that your services are required in the school — you cannot leave your students in the middle of their studies.

So the question is settled and you need not think of it any

more.

With my love and blessings,
Mère

When Sunil began as a teacher in the Ashram school he was also learning French and trying to do some of his teaching in French, but at that time was mostly using English. At one point there was a misunderstanding between teachers at the school and Sunil wrote to the Mother to clear up the dispute:

To

the dearest feet of my Mother,

Today, just after the terrace darshan, Mrityunjoy called me to show me a French book of physics. He told me, in passing, that Sumitra asked him for an English book of chemistry which was deposited with him by Bir Singh. He thought it proper to show you the book, and accordingly he took it to you. He told me that you were surprised to find that such an advanced book is being followed in my class, and that it would be better if I would stop giving lessons on chemistry unless I can give them according to the French system.

The above is underlined by the Mother who wrote in the upper and left margin the following:

All this is absolutely false — I never told such a thing. Moreover he never told me that it was the book you are using in your class. I was under the impression that Sumitra had asked for the book without connection with your class.

Sunil continues:

No doubt I became upset when I heard this, but I did not tell him anything. At last I thought it best to clear myself to you.

The first thing is that I am not following the book that

was showed to you. At present, I am following neither English nor French method; I am giving them lessons as it comes to me. But be it clear, Mother, that I hope to teach them only the rudimentary principles of chemistry, things which do not call for a sound knowledge of mathematics. You understand perfectly how much I know French, Mother, and at this stage if I venture to give them lessons in French, I fear the outcome will be nonsensical. Mrityunjoy gave me a suggestion, that I should give lessons in English but following a French text book. That is the very thing I am trying for in the case of algebra. But I find that not only do the French books have the French wordings but they have the French way of exposition. A certain number of things is completely new to me. I have got to study them before I can hope to give lessons thus. I told you that I am now studying all of them and I am afraid that it will take time. Meanwhile, if you want, I can stop giving lessons in chemistry. If I become hurt, it will only show my attachment for the work and not the true spirit that you want in all of us.

The lessons in geometry alone are in French and according to the French method. But the progress is slow and I cannot help it because I myself am also following the same course as they do. In group B and group A I do things in the English way. So you can see, Mother, that now I can at best teach mathematics and not science in the French way.

The Mother answers:

I repeat that I never spoke of the “French way”. I said that it would be better for Sumitra to get a simple French book to prepare herself for the future lessons in French. I did not make a single remark on your class [the Mother’s emphasis] neither to approve nor to criticize. Your lessons were quite out of the question and I cannot imagine how Mrityunjoy could understand the things he told you... I ask you to continue your lessons just as you have been giving them, because I find them

quite good and useful.

With my love and blessings,
Mère

Sunil continues:

*I hope that I have made myself clear to you and hope to
get your direct guidance as what to do now.*

Grant me your love

and blessings, Mother

Thousands of pranams to your lotus feet,

remaining at your feet,

your loving child — Sunil

Ranganath says:

In the beginning he began with botany. He was a lover of flowers and plants...and that stayed with him even until the end.

I can tell you how he gave his classes. He was very, very popular with the students because he used to make the classes extremely interesting. He used to come in and say, 'Do you like plants?' and all that and when there was no response he would say, 'I can assure you that by the time you finish my classes you will be a lover of plants.'

And he used to make us do a lot of practical work. He used to give us a text of how to classify flowers and plants and he used to say, 'Go out — you are going to take up this flower, you are going to take up this flower and you are going to find out the family of that one.' So, he used to really make us do practical work. Open the flower, cut it. And he had a microscope in those days; he was one of the few who had a microscope. He used to make us look, see the stamens and all. It used to be very, very interesting.

So, he used to make us do things like that and towards the end, when we were ready to pass out of the school before

the higher course he used to teach us higher mathematics. And he himself used to learn higher mathematics from the finest brain they used to have here — Dr. Venkatraman. He used to come from Madras. He was a scholar in Sanskrit and mathematics. He used to learn from him and then he used to come and teach us and he used to make his classes so interesting. For instance, what he used to do to infuse interest in the class, he used to make the students... he would ask questions and if someone didn't answer the question or forgot the answer, or answered partially, he would pass it on to the next student and the next student and the next student to one who would answer, he would make them all change seats.

So what he used to do is, the class used to get arranged automatically in order of capacity. Not that it was a negative thing. He never made it sound negative or did anything negative to put down the others. He was not like that. But it used to get arranged.

There were several features of his character which were so striking to the students. He was extremely strict. The way he used to give his class was very businesslike and absolutely no nonsense, no diversions, no side talk, nothing like that. It was absolutely to the point, precise, clear. At the same time he was very understanding and he was extremely punctual. Everything that he did was right down to the last minute if not second. And he used to come into class like that, he used to come always prepared. He always had a little piece of paper in his hand and he knew what he was going to do. He was so methodical and so precise in all his movements and everything that he did.

Students had a certain awe, a bit of fear, I think. Yeah, because, you know, he used to inspire us, the way he used to talk. He wouldn't tolerate any nonsense and nobody would dare to do any nonsense in class like talking or not paying attention or anything like that. So, you know, he was certainly one of the most popular teachers in the school. But at the same time there was a little fear and awe of him

also. So, strict in that sense, that he would evoke the respect from the students. That's how he was.

*

To Binu, a former student of his living in England, Sunil writes what he felt were important attributes of human character and comments on changes in his current teaching situation:

When I was told I had a letter I was surprised because I do not usually receive letters, but even then I hardly expected such a pleasant surprise. I got your letter on the morning of the 3rd, so you see your birthday greetings reached me just in time. I wonder whether it was coincidence or calculation — perhaps both.

I am truly touched by the sentiments you have expressed in your letter. They are worthy of you. You do not need to do anything remarkable in your studies. I was always and I am proud of you. From my childhood, I had only secondary attractions for accomplishments, academic or otherwise, and what fascinated me were those fine traits in human character that make the world beautiful and worth living. Nobility of human character always overwhelmed me, as it did on this 3rd morning and for those few wonderful moments I will remain indebted to you.

I usually receive your news from your father and I have gone through some of your letters to Pavitra and am very glad that you are settled in a congenial atmosphere. Now that you are amongst such great mathematicians of a great country I only hope that you imbibe and bring back with you the spirit of dedicated life of these masters.

We are now enjoying our holidays here. Pavitra has consented to a change of syllabus of the higher course and has asked me to make a new one. I have completed it; if in the next meeting this one is approved, I will send you a copy of the new syllabus. Dr. Venkataraman often enquires about you. I am

sure he will be glad to hear from you. So when you have time write a letter to him thanking him for his kind help. He has been appointed to the advising committee at New Delhi for devising ways and means to raise the standard of education in India, so at present he is busy reading lots of French books on mathematics!

By the time this letter reaches you, you must be freezing. The discipline of your place is very alluring. From time to time you should write to me and let me know how you are carrying on.

Sunil

When he wrote to the dancer Rolf in 1973, Sunil had been composing music for almost three decades, yet he maintained that his principle preoccupation in the Ashram had been teaching:

21.5.73

I was professor of Mathematics in our Centre of Education for about twenty years. I retired in the year 1963, and have since no definite work to do.

Further, Sunil wrote to a longtime friend about the period when he retired from teaching:

In the middle of last September I had a nervous breakdown. So I discontinued my classes in the hope that I would recommence the classes from the next session. Then on my birthday The Mother saw me and immediately afterwards she asked Pavitra not to give me any classes next year. She also asked me to take complete rest. I am much better now and after three months of complete inactivity I felt I could not very well continue like this, that I should have something on my mind and so from January I started working in Le Faucheur Gardens experimenting on plants and trying to produce bigger and better varieties of fruits.

Prabhakar in his *Among the Not so Great* elaborates:

All the years of teaching and composing told on Sunilda. But, what really was the last straw was a mathematical problem. Its solution eluded many a mathematician. He too was wrestling with the problem. He had a feeling he was close to pinning it down — but it kept wriggling itself out, teasing his mind to near breaking point, his nerves tensed. The Mother then intervened. She told him to stop all mental activity — no maths, no chess even. She, as part of the cure, told him to come to pick up balls when she played tennis. She also told him to relax, go sit under a big tree. She said that a tree emanates a great deal of energy and it would help him recover. He used to, for a short period, go out for long walks to one of the Ashram gardens. Start was after lunch — 2 or 2.30 p.m. (Why he chose this unearthly hot time is beyond me.) He, along with Gauridi and her sister, carried some tea and some eats, sat in some shady spot, had the tea and returned home with the dusk (godhuli) — an enchanting time in any Indian countryside. These short trysts with nature soothed his mind and nerves.

Sunil also wrote to his former student Binu about giving up his teaching:

Binu,

My reply to your letter is long overdue. I could not do it earlier because of my preoccupation with the musics I had to make for the 1st of December and then for the 1st of January. Before I speak of anything else allow me to congratulate you on your performance in the final exam last year — I was really very, very proud of you. You must be working very hard now for your M.Sc final. When will the final exam be held?

I do not take any classes now — Manoj is taking the higher course mathematics classes — and from the account I get from

the students I think he is doing it quite satisfactorily. Bhudatt has come back from Trombay [India's first nuclear reactor] and today he is going to take me to Gorimedu Medical College to show me how he can operate a cobalt plant — I will take the opportunity to expose some of my seeds to its radiation of varying intensities. If I am lucky I might get a mutant or two.

In your last letter you mentioned a certain difference of opinion with your parents — and I felt also from the tone of your letter that your mind is not as free and as happy as you were before. You have not told me about the cause of this friction but I might volunteer to add that to get the better of one's loved ones in a quarrel is not always a victory. However, you are writing to the Mother and I expect you are getting the best of advice possible under the circumstances.

Sunil

In an interview for this book Manoj, Managing Trustee of Sri Aurobindo Ashram, spoke of Sunil's early music and of a moment when the music changed to what is known now as Sunil's music:

Then there was a key piece where he had to compose the music for Temptations of Buddha, Buddha who goes into meditation. And the Maras, the hostile forces that come to, you know, to allure him, in that piece Sunilda composed some music which is quite other than the usual rhythmic Indian music.

Kanak says of this piece of music that Debu, who played the Buddha in the play, told the Mother that he didn't like the music that accompanied the part. Kanak says that the Mother told this to Sunil and Sunil called Kanak and Sunil played the piano and asked Kanak to improvise with him on his electric guitar. Kanak says they played "quite a few times" and that Sunil liked the accompaniment.

Gambelon, Sunil's long-time friend and indispensable helper

writes about this piece:

At this moment Sunil's music was more rhythmic and less internalized, although the measures which end the Temptation of Buddha (suggesting the return of the calm and the peace if not the illumination of Buddha) presage already what will follow.

The dancer Shobha mentions this new type of music emerging in Sunil's music a year earlier in the 1954 school anniversary program Devotion and Aspiration, as mentioned later in the text.

Manoj continues:

And Sunilda told me that, 'This is how Mother slowly showed me the path of the music.' And he once told me that composing this music for the dances, he was slowly getting disgusted. The same type of music, you know, a sort of inner revolt. 'No more of this music.'

Steve who worked in Sunil's recording studio confirms this:

He told me that too. He said that he used to cringe when he saw Anu walking into his house, not because he didn't like her, but because it meant he was going to have to compose a dance.

Sunil says of this fatigue when composing for the dance programs:

I came to Pondicherry in 1942 and I did my first composition in 1945. The Mother heard this composition, and She liked it. Thus started my life as a musician and a composer. I composed musics principally for Indian ballets in the years that followed, but somewhere around the early fifties I felt that I could draw something more with my musics than

just figures in a ballet. Indeed, in one instance, I remember the Mother asking me after a dance recital whether I did the music for the dance!

Shobha, who choreographed and danced for the Ashram programs said about Sunil's compositions for the dance programs and of the change which took place in his music at this time:

My first musical contact with Sunilda was in 1954. The Mother had asked me to present a short dance for the 1st of December, the school Anniversary program, on two themes: Devotion and Aspiration. She told me that She would ask Sunilda to compose Music for my dance.

The first part — Devotion — was composed in the traditional Indian style. Manoj and Debu played on the sitar, Sunilda's elder brother Anilda and perhaps Harit, Pranab-da's younger brother played the sarod. Runu played the flute and Sunilda the harmonium. Though the composition was traditional, it had Sunilda's touch.

The second part — Aspiration — was very special. It was a totally new composition, a new type of music which I had never heard before. It has long penetrating notes played by Kanakda on the electric guitar. It sort of completely hypnotized me. I was then only 20. Never had I experienced this balmy effect of music on my body. It was just magnificent!

In those days the 1st December program used to take place in the Playground. The Mother would return to the Playground after playing tennis and sometimes She watched the rehearsals of the school anniversary programs. On the rehearsal day the music began. I started dancing before the Mother. Somewhere, in the middle of the Aspiration music, I experienced a special feeling which I cannot forget. As Sunilda's music went higher and higher my body too like a feather soared in the air. The stage wings, the roof of the stage — everything disappeared. I was floating like a feather

with the music. The dance was over. The Mother told me whatever She had to say about my dance, then, with a brisk movement She caught my right hand and started walking straight towards Sunilda who was standing on the other end of the stage. The Mother stood in front of Sunilda and gave him a very significant look. Then She asked, 'Where have you got this music from?' Sunilda did not answer. He looked at the Mother silently. Both of us did pranam to the Mother. I have a strong feeling that this Aspiration music was Sunilda's first entry to the world of what Mother calls 'the Music of the New Age'.

Manoj continues about Sunil's early music:

Sunil had had a very good grounding in Indian classical music. In fact his family had a background in Indian music. His elder brother, Jhumur's father Anil, used to play on the sarod. And Sunilda was a very good sitarist, an excellent sitarist. [Manoj also said that Sunil taught a sitar class and that he had studied sitar with Sunil.] He gave up the sitar because, unfortunately, after just a few years, he had an accident where he broke his wrist and he could no longer play it. And he used to play such a wonderful sitar. From there he switched to playing the harmonium. And then he went on to the organ.

Until Sunil took over composing the New Year Music the Mother used to give a message and play music for the New Year on her organ. In November 1958 she had an experience which she describes as descending into a dark crevasse and upon reaching the bottom being "cast up forthwith into a formless, limitless vast." The Mother formulated this experience in the 1959 New Year message and her New Year Music for 1959 was composed on this theme. She was not satisfied with her playing for this music and asked Sunil to orchestrate her attempt and after She had heard the result the Mother wrote to Sunil:

I had a vision and I tried to play that in music — but did not succeed. When I heard this music, I had the same experience. This is perfect.

Mother

Sunil in a comment to a friend later wrote,

Orchestration of the Mother's New Year Music in 1959 was a great event in my life.

At about the same time, She asked Sunil to orchestrate music for a piece She had played called "Aspiration of the body for the Divine." As he was working on this music he wrote to the Mother:

To the lotus feet of my Mother,

I finished yesterday the recording of the orchestral version of your music "Aspiration of the body for the Divine, Part IV." Now I want you to hear it any day, morning or afternoon, the sooner the better.

I am not completely satisfied with the recording, but I am very eager to hear your criticism; if you approve of the main structure of the music, I can revise the whole music again and do a second recording. The original music lasts 22 minutes, the orchestral version 18 minutes. I give here a list of the instruments and the musicians who played them.

*I offer myself and all my pranam
to your lotus feet
your child.*

Organ	Sunil, Manoj (in places)
Guitar and guitar-violin	Kanak
Harp	Manoj, Kittu
Tuning fork	Manoj, Sunil
Saxophone	Bairam
Violin	Amiya
Cello	Sunil

Piano

Jhumur

Sunil's work on the orchestration of Mother's 1959 New Year's music went on at about the same time. He continued submitting versions of his work until the Mother finally approved it.

We have recorded a major portion of this music and only 6 or 7 minutes of music are yet to be done. There are a few faults and a few mistakes which I can correct in a re-recording, but I think it better that you hear it first and tell me whether I am working in the right direction after all. This is just a trial recording done for your approval only. As I wrote to you before, my original idea was to have the organ music played directly from the tape recorder, but later on while working I was tempted to repeat a few times again and again. As this could not be done this way, I have played the organ music. I have introduced a few introductory chords leading to the first chord played before the speech. (This chord I have taken directly from the original record.) I have kept the speech because this will explain the idea underlying the music; only I have taken the liberty of playing a line of music during the speech. If you do not approve of this music, I will take it away in the re-recording. (In this recording this music has become inadvertently a little too loud which I will of course correct in the next recording). In the second part of the music, one of the difficulties was of passage from one instrument to the other, I had to introduce one line of music which is not in the original recording.

So, let me know when you will have time to hear this music and then I can see Biswanath and make necessary arrangements, the sooner the better. Incidentally, when you hear the music insist upon the volume, I like such powerful music played with a little volume.

The brother of Jayantilal has offered to present us with a violin cello — should I accept it? He only wants me to go to Madras to select the instrument. Please let me know your

decision.

There is no record of a written answer from the Mother to Sunil about the issue of this cello, but in another letter to her Sunil writes:

To
*the lotus-feet of
 my dearest Mother,*

Dyuman says he is willing to help me buy a cello and a xylophone. These instruments are, at present, available in Madras. Would you permit me to go to Madras and see whether these instruments will be useful for our orchestra?

*Loving pronams
 your child
 Sunil*

This time the Mother answers:

It is better not to spend more money just now.
 My love and blessings,
 Mother

Sunil continues with details of his work on the 1959 New Year Music:

I have made the changes you wanted me to do last time you heard the music. In the first part, I have kept to the bare octaves and at the end of the first part I have prolonged the last note with a cello and a drum and finished with a thud. I have given half a beat of silence between the 1st and the 2nd parts. In the 3rd and 4th parts we have played two light themes of the music. The 5th part is directly recorded from your organ music; we have only superimposed our accompaniment on the record.

I am however not satisfied with the recording, to tell you

frankly rather disappointed, especially with the 2nd and the 3rd parts.

I found out the defects only late last night when they played the music through the low speaker.

In the 2nd part, the guitar has made a very disturbing scratchy noise. The 3rd part is played rather too slow and I would like it to be played on a better piano than ours. So please permit me to use the piano of the music hall and please ask me to re-record these two parts after you have heard the music. Then I can arrange with Biswanath and re-record these two and any other parts that you want to be changed tonight and tomorrow.

Additional comments on 1959 New Year Music and then on orchestration of 'The aspiration of the body for the Divine':

I have finished revising this year's music. The following are the corrections I have done:

The announcing chords before your speech are redone to make them more suggestive of an abyss.

In the 1st part, I have introduced a bass saxophone to bring up the volume level and make the music more powerful. But at the same time, I have arranged the microphone in such a way that nobody can notice that a new instrument has been used.

You told me that the 2nd part was rather long, so I have cut out some of the repetition, and I have introduced some new counterpoints.

In the 3rd part, I have introduced a new instrument playing a new counterpoint, and have made the organ louder.

4th part: I have introduced new instruments and made the organ louder.

5th part: Instead of starting abruptly, the music will fade in.

Yesterday evening, I heard the whole music; I think that all the parts have visibly improved, only I am not so sure about

the 2nd part. You will judge it when you hear.

I started the orchestration of the music "The aspiration of the body for the Divine, (part IV)." I got the beginning of it also recorded but as it was completely unsatisfactory I asked them to rub it off. The music is beautiful but only if I had a good violinist to play it. Biswanath is at present busy with the 1st December programs, so I will try to make another recording of this music after the 2nd December.

In the meanwhile, if you have time, any morning or any afternoon, I can ask Biswanath to arrange for a recital of only this year's music (1959).

Sunil's elder sister Minnie says of Sunil's earliest music:

For quite some time every month Sunil used to have to compose fifteen minutes, not longer than that and we used to all go there in the playground and Mother would come in and we had to play.

Minnie also added about Sunil's compositions at that time:

He was composing music for dance, because that was Mother's wish. Every year we used to have a yearly program. And how many dances... the music is all lost because we didn't have any space to do it [there were not enough recording tapes to save the music at this time]. What did we have? That harmonium I used to play. Sunil used to play. And my big brother. Then suddenly he would have some idea and he would run downstairs and he would snatch a pot from my mother's kitchen and my mother would be shouting, 'What are you doing?' and he said, 'I'm taking it.' And then a piece of wood. He would come and ask Manoj, 'Go and bang it like that from that distance.' Through the mike it sounded so different. All these ideas.

Steve commented on Sunil's experimental techniques including

the use of a stylus-controlled synthesizer called the stylophone:

He used a lot of alternate instrument creativity in the 60s. He used tea cups filled with different amounts of water for xylophone or chimes-like sounds. There was the piano that they had removed the back of and used as a harp. He also did pitch-shifting with the tape deck. They recorded at half-speed and then played it back at double speed or vice versa, so the sound was shifted up or down by an octave. The effect was not the same as if they had just played at a higher octave. Also the guitar was used in an original way as a violin. That remained a basic element of the music throughout.

He used the stylophone occasionally right up until the 80s. The projector room had modified the stylophone to have two styluses. You put the second stylus on the next note you were going to play and when you lifted the other stylus off the first note, it went smoothly to the second note. It was mostly Manoj who played the stylophone. Sunil used it to reinforce the melody. You can hear the stylophone very clearly in Book 1 of Savitri. Everything there is acoustic — harmonium, humming voices and even the guitar was routed through the speaker. Especially in the Savitri and Aswapathy themes you can hear it leading the melody, it rides above everything else.

Manoj comments further on this period:

Those days in the early 50s, you see, the first December program, he used to always compose the music for the dance. The dance teacher Anu used to compose various stories from Ramayana, Mahabharata for dancers or singers and all sorts of young girls. And Sunilda used to compose the music. We would have the rehearsal in the month of November in his house in the morning. The music that he

used to compose was mostly taken from the music of Tamil Bhairon or the earlier Indian music that he had learned. I mean, it was nothing so much original music, except probably here and there.

I think the first, one of the first breaks that came, he had to compose a music. It was on the Mother from the Rig Veda, Devi Sukta. Sunilda recounted to me an interesting experience. He said he was thinking of this music and one day he was taking his bath and after the bath, as he was coming out right on the doorstep the whole thing came down. And as an answer from the earth, an aspiration of the light. He said, 'I could not move, I was stuck there.' Such an experience. And Minniedi has sung that part of the Mother. And just three or four of us, we were singing the OM as the aspiration of the earth and that organ music which he had composed, he asked me to play on the organ. He used to play only the harmonium at that time.

Steve relates another version of this experience:

As I heard it, it happened in the room that later became the studio. He actually passed out and maybe was out for awhile, and he wrote to the Mother about it and she told him that this is what had happened, i.e. something had come down. He used to lock himself in the room so that nobody would disturb him from the front door, but one of the side doors was always open a crack just because of that...he or Chhobi feared that he'd be in there passed out and nobody would be able to get in.

Sunil himself refers to another such experience in a letter to the Mother:

Mother, "Pranama." Today, while I was standing near the Samadhi, while waiting for going to Sri Aurobindo's room,

I suddenly felt something whirling around inside my head which moved with so much speed that I felt tired and my senses began to disappear (which I felt). I could not even see the people but to some extent and identifying them by touch, I managed to come to the room adjacent to the Ashram Library. I asked the man remaining there to give me some water.

When I prayed to you, then I gradually could see everything and felt good. I cannot understand the cause of this happening.

*Your child,
Sunil*

The Mother answers:

It is the answer from above I put on you and, most probably, the experience that you had is the result of it. The influx was probably a bit too strong for the ‘adhar’ [the physical vessel, the body]— but by staying quiet and by enlarging your consciousness and your receptivity, you will certainly experience the salutary results of this experience.

*With my blessings,
Mother*

Satprem wrote a short note to Sunil after he had heard the music Devi Sukta:

1963

*Sunil,
I just listened to Devi Sukta. It is very beautiful, very moving. I want to thank you.*

Could you compose many pieces like that for the joy of all? Sri Aurobindo said that the true poetry, the poetic mantra, should survive “... the descent of the gods into life” — but the music even more! A ‘mantric music’ if I dare to say, I have felt a bit of that in listening to you. It’s like that that I understand and I love your music.

... Again, thank you,
Satprem

In 1964 Sunil composed *The Hour of God* for the December dance performance at the Ashram. Mother wrote to Sunil of this piece:

27.11.64

Sunil, my dear child,

I just heard what you prepared for December 1st. It is very beautiful.

You are a great musician and I would like to have the opportunity to hear your compositions more often.

With my love and blessings,

Mother

Jean Finney who was living in the Ashram, regarding *The Hour Of God* wrote:

Sunil, once again tonight the miracle of your music struck me, that miracle (like the constant miracle of our lives!) we begin to take for granted, until power and joy and rapture and delight sweep like fires, like singing fires of love, through us, and we are drawn in ecstasy to Her Feet. I had to write you once again and thank you for being, and for doing what you were sent to do. And I feel a very deep and very simple prayer within me, that this voice of the inmost heart which you have translated into music shall lead us all into a full and perfect fulfillment of what burns to break forth from within us, of what yearns to be born in splendor from our struggling and imperfect human hearts.

Your music is a constant, deep, unceasing prayer, Sunil, and there is no higher art and so we are grateful for you bringing us gifts of faith and courage, luminous with the glow and wonder of Her Light, and once again we walk renewed, having been enfolded in infinities of silver fire.

Love, Jean

The following year Mother commented again on Sunil's music for *The Hour of God* as recorded in the Agenda:

24 March 1965

There is a rather curious development. For some time now, but more and more precisely, when I hear something, when someone reads something to me or I listen to some music or am told of some event, immediately something vibrates: the origin of the activity or the level on which it's taking place or the origin of the inspiration is automatically translated as a vibration in one of the centers. And then, depending on the quality of the vibration, it's something constructive or negative; and when at some point it makes contact, however slightly, with a domain of Truth, there is... (How can I explain?) like a spark of a vibration of Ananda. And the thought is absolutely silent, still, nothing — nothing (Mother opens her hands upward in a gesture of complete offering). But this perception is growing increasingly precise. And that's how I know: I know the source of the inspiration, where the action is located and the quality of the thing.

What precision! Oh, an infinitesimal precision, in the details.

For instance, the first time I felt this in a clear way was when I heard Sunil's music on *The Hour of God*; that was the first time, and at the time I didn't know it was something completely organized, a sort of organization of experience.

*

In the passage below the Mother begins by talking with Satprem about Sunil's *Hour of God* music and then goes on to say that she is not satisfied with the music she has played for the 1965 New Year

Music and felt she was no longer able to express the inspiration she received and had decided to ask Sunil to compose the music for 1965. This is the first year Sunil composed the New Year Music on his own and he would continue to do so every New Year until his passing in 1998.

From the Agenda on the theme "The Hour of God":

28 November 1964

It begins with something he calls "aspiration" — oh, it's beautiful!... I have rarely heard something with so pure and so beautiful an inspiration. All of a sudden, a "sound" comes, which is exactly the sound you hear up above. And it isn't too mixed (the fault I find with all classical music is all the accompaniment which is there to give more "substance", but which spoils the purity of the inspiration: to me it's padding), well, with Sunil, the padding isn't there. He doesn't claim to be making music, of course, and the padding isn't there, so it's truly beautiful.

I have decided not to play this year for January 1st. Even last year, I very much hesitated to play because I was absolutely conscious of the inadequacy — the poorness and inadequacy — of the physical instrument; but there was a sort of reasonable wisdom which knew how a refusal to play would be interpreted (by the disciples), so I played — without satisfaction, and it wasn't worth much. But the music I heard yesterday was so much THAT, so much what I would like to play, that I said to myself, "Well, now it would unreasonable to want to keep in a personal manifestation something that has a much better means of expression [Sunil]." So I have decided to say "No" for January 1st. But I will see if Sunil couldn't prepare something on the theme of next year's message, something that would be recorded and played for everyone, in an anonymous way — no need to say, "It's by this or that person," it's music, that's all. You know that they are printing two calendars, one here and one in Calcutta. In the Calcutta calendar, I look happy and I greet with folded hands: so I wrote underneath, *Salut à Toi, Vérité* [Salute

to you, O Truth]. In English (they are a bit slow, you know!), they wanted something more “explicit” so I wrote, Salute to the advent of the Truth. I am going to give the subject to Sunil: “Make some music on this.”

Victor writes in his notes for the 1965 New Year Music:

On the 8th of December 1964, the Mother called Sunil to be present at the Mother’s Music room (2nd floor of the main Ashram building) along with Satprem and Sujata. Sunil had no idea why the Mother wanted to see him. When the Mother came and sat on Her chair, She wanted Sunil to play something on Her organ. The idea was that She would sit on Her chair, and call down the music which Sunil should receive and transcribe into sound. Sunil absolutely refused to sit on Her stool and play on Her organ. He said it was unthinkable for him to sit on Her stool and use the pedal which the Mother used.

This conversation took place in the music room.

7 December 1964

... (To Sunil) Here is the thing: I like your music, and as for me, I no longer play! — I don’t have the time. I never have an opportunity, I haven’t played for the last twelve months; except when Sujata comes, then I run a finger over the keys. So it’s quite impossible for me to play on January 1st, but I thought we could perhaps arrange something.... Today, I’ll read you the message for the 1st (it isn’t a “message”). I’ll read it to you and then we’ll try to do something with it.

Do you know this instrument (the organ?) Can you play it?... There are pedals, mon petit, enough to make your head swim! I can’t play that! (laughter). So Sujata will play the pedals, and I’ll play the keys!

If something comes, you can use it and do me some music for the 1st. And then, instead of recording here, we’ll record

your affair for everybody!

Sunil: What you are going to play now I'll keep.

No! I'm not playing — I'll just pretend to! With that you will do something. You understand?

Maybe nothing at all will come! I can't say. This morning... This morning, I don't know, did you think of your visit here? Yes?... I heard magnificent music — magnificent! But it was music... it took at least four hands to play it, or several instruments. If that came...

... So this is the theme [*Salute to the advent of the Truth*].

We'll see now if we find something. This morning, it was magnificent.... But even if that were there, I wouldn't be able to play it: it would take almost an entire orchestra! And moreover, it's no longer there. It lasted ten or fifteen minutes... I don't even remember what it was — it's gone.

We'll try, we'll see.

Mother's description to Sunil on what she would like expressed in the 1965 New Year Music:

7 December 1964

Didn't you hear some music this morning?

What you have just played was very lovely.

It's nothing! Anyway, you'll do something with it.

What this morning's music expressed was a sort of ascent of aspiration, like a conquest, and then it suddenly climaxed in a dazzling flash of light — an explosion. An explosion of light. And the explosion of light **CASCADED** over the world. It was very fine (!)

I still see it, but I can no longer hear it.

But that's how it will be: first the salute, "Salute to You, O Light." You understand, the Light is there, like this: it announces

itself. And we salute it. Then the whole aspiration rises in conquest of this Light through successive ascents; that is, one sound rises, climbs, and establishes itself; then another climbs and establishes itself. And then, when we have come before the Light, it makes a sort of explosion, like a bomb exploding, an explosion of light. And afterwards, it falls back onto the world — with sparkles.

And then, I would like at the end the great calm of the Truth.

That will need something very vast and very calm — very vast. Very simple. A few very simple great notes.

Voilà.

Organ notes would be fine.

The organ is fine for aspiration.

The explosion of light?... I don't know which instrument.

And for aspiration, a few human voices, too.

But don't try to imitate what I've just played: it's worthless! You will do something as I said, first the salute — we're happy to see You, you understand: Salute to You, O Light! Salute to You, O Truth!...

You play the ascent in stages, accompanied by and finishing off with a gust of aspiration: a soaring, a great soaring. Then, we touch the Light, it makes an explosion. We touch the Truth, we touch the Light.... That will have to be very beautiful. Then, that Light falls back onto the world in a rain, and it's joyous, light, very graceful (gesture like a waterfall). And then the world becomes blissful under the Truth — very calm and blissful.

And the Mother's comments after She'd listened to Sunil's 1965 New Year Music:

29.12.64

Sunil, this is genius !

It is magnificent, with a true and deep emotion.

It has made me very happy.

With my blessings.

Mother

Later as recorded in the Agenda Mother said about Sunil's 1965 New Year Music:

6 January 1965

When I heard his music for the first time, something suddenly opened up and I was right in the middle of the place I know, from which true Harmony comes — suddenly.

Sunil wrote in his brief autobiographic note for Rolf's Ananda article on Sunil:

Later on, from 1965 I was entrusted to compose and orchestrate the New Year Musics which have become a part of our Ashram life.

Another note from Satprem after hearing the 1965 New Year Music:

30.11.64

Sunil, I was too far withdrawn and moved yesterday evening to speak to you. Mère told me: "Suddenly, the sound comes, which is just the sound that one hears above." It's that. There is nothing more to say, it enters suddenly, clear, clear, so pure, and everything is full. The music has no other meaning, it is the music of the future. I have written a lot of words, but I have never caught this sound — I would like to write like you do music. Who knows, maybe one day we will do something together.

Sometime ago Mother had given me a very short musical notation of Wanda Landowska that she had found very beautiful, do you know it? It is a notation of a Polish Tzigane. There is also there something very pure. I send it to you in case you have not heard it (I have recorded it repeatedly several times). You will

give me back the tape because I don't have another one.

... Thank you Sunil, your music makes life more real.
Satprem

In 1965 when the Mother asked Sunil to compose music for the upcoming December 1st dance program she said:

13.06.65

Sunil, my dear child,

I would be very happy if you composed the music for the 1st of December, Anu's dance-drama. Because, you alone can do it the way it should be done.

The Mother sent Sunil a small card with her symbol on the right and the following message on the left in her hand:

Your music is, according to me, the music of the future and it opens the way to the new world.

Blessings.

Mother

In his correspondence with the Mother about his progress on this Shakti music she had asked him to compose, Sunil wrote:

These pieces of music which you asked me to do for the 1st of December are supposed to represent Mahashakti, Mahasaraswati, Mahalakshmi, Mahakali, and Savitri (your reading), arranged in this order. Naturally whom could I express in my music but you in your different moods and moments that I have had the good fortune to witness during my 22 years of stay over here. Sometimes I strayed into infinity which left me on clouds, sometimes dark and lonely sweeping down in flashes of lightning into the clods of darkness below. I thought I saw your face lovely, snow white, aloof, staring into infinity. Sometimes something, sometimes a splash of rainbow colours treading softly on the greenness of my heart,

and sometimes as my mother, lover and companion. But now that the music is ready, I wonder whether anything like that has been expressed in it. As for me when I hear it I find in it nothing but an echo of my deep love and admiration for you. I do not send Maheshwari, because it is so badly played that it makes me sick to hear it. I will revise it.

Mahasaraswati humming tune yours.

Maheshwari to be revised.

Kali bits joined for you.

Another letter on the same music:

Sweet Mother,

Two repetitions of your tune could be given when Mahalakshmi appears on the stage on 1st December only if you permit. Otherwise I will have to get the tune sung by somebody else. But personally I am very eager to use this music so that others may have a genuine touch of Mahalakshmi when they hear it. Pranams.

Your loving child,

Sunil

P.S. I have heard a lot about Indian Shrutis; this is the first time I hear it being used to procure strange effects. Unfortunately the day you sang this, there were many crows on the Service tree. But that cannot be helped. This piece will be put at the end of the scene of Mahalakshmi. The accompanying music is not final — if you approve I will revise it.

After She heard it the Mother wrote:

I heard the music —

It is wonderful !

music itself, pure

and high and

strong — It is delightful,

and leaves you waiting and

wanting to hear more ...

For the whole thing,
I leave you quite free
to do as you think best.
 With love and blessings,
 Mother

Again the Mother writes:

My child,
 Yesterday, at a quarter past twelve and (again) today, at the same time, I have heard your music with deep emotion and I can tell you that I have never heard anything more beautiful, in music, of aspiration and spiritual invocation.

 With my blessings
 Mother

Sunil, not having at first received this reply, wrote:

Sweet Mother,
 About ten days ago I sent You my music for December 1st and a letter via Pranab. It seems You have not yet listened to the music and I wonder if You ever read my letter. This time, I strongly wanted You to listen to the music as, when I was composing it, I had the experience of a strong and ardent love for You. It is precisely for that reason that I wanted to know if I managed to tell You what I felt inside me.... I hope, Sweet Mother, that You will listen to my music as soon as possible. I am now preparing Your music for January 1st.
 I offer my Pronams at your lotus feet
 Sunil

The Mother answered:

If you sent the music for December 1st only once, I heard it

with a deep emotion as something exceptionally beautiful and I wrote you at once out of this emotion. Didn't you receive my answer? I think I gave it to Pranab for you but, in fact, I am not sure.

If this answer got lost, I want to tell you again here that this music opens the doors of the future and reproduces in an admirable way the musical vibrations coming from the higher worlds.

In my note, I was telling you that I was waiting with impatience to hear from you what you are preparing for January 1st.

With my blessings
Mother

Then after hearing the recording of the finished "Shakti" piece:

8.12.65

Sunil, my dear child,

I have just heard what you have recorded. It is beautiful, very beautiful. It is the first time that I have heard music expressing true power, the power of Mahakali, the power of the Mahashakti. It is formidable and, at the same time, so deeply sweet...

And specially, while listening to it, I had the impression of a door opening onto a still more beautiful future realization !...

With all my love and blessings
Mother

Rijuta wrote, when she heard Sunil's "Shakti" music:

30.11.65

Dear Sunil,

I resisted writing for a moment, but am spilling over with a grateful gladness for this latest wealth of music you've given us — Sunil, I was horrified to learn that you had been reluctant to produce this last score... how can you dare to

limit your composition when it is so important an agent in Mother's Work, present and future?!

For myself, I know that the effect of Her Force and its result has very often been multiplied many degrees because your music has opened me to a wide receptivity instead of a narrow slot, or else shot me off into intense aspiration when I was caught in a lifeless doldrum — not to mention the sheer joy in itself that surges up apart from sadhana-benefits and which returns again and again all during the year when I play this Magic stuff. The thrill is always there — always fresh and new and powerful!

*With most fervent appreciation,
Rijuta*

Sunil writes to the Mother about difficulties with recording:

Satprem came to see me, he told me that You have spoken with Biswanath and that Biswanath has spontaneously expressed his desire to collaborate and help me in the recording of my music. I will see Biswanath and I will speak with him. But Niranjana came the day before yesterday to tell me that he has decided to do all of the recording by himself in spite of his health, and yesterday he has worked well all morning and even far into the night. Victor also came to work. I prefer to have my music recorded by Niranjana and if he doesn't come, by Victor. It means by someone who likes my music. Biswanath is not free, he can only come at night, and most of the work is done by one or more people who don't like my music, who don't have the patience, and moreover are not sympathetic towards me. But Biswanath can help us a lot, repair machines, lend us small things that we always need, give advice on the manipulation of machines, etc. I'm going to see Biswanath and arrange everything now that You have spoken with him. I hope that, with Your blessings, everything will be all right.

*I offer my thousand pranams to Your lotus Feet,
Your loving child Sunil*

The Mother answers:

It is all right like that.

As long as the work is done and well done that's all that is needed.

Blessings

Mother

Niranjan, who had his own tape recorder, joined Sunil to help with the recording. Things did not always run smoothly after this, however, as hinted at by Sunil in the following letters to the Mother:

Finally, I would like to speak a few words about Niranjan. He is an excellent worker but unfortunately he and Huta are not exactly friends. During the recording this time I felt that he was not working in a very willing manner — I would be grateful to you if you give him a little encouragement and make him understand that in doing this work he is obliging neither me nor Huta but he is serving you.

Some of Huta's recordings of your reading are of poor quality. There is a lot of electrical noise in them. We have tried to eliminate them but in one or two they remain — nothing can be done about them.

The Mother answers:

Niranjan can set his mind at rest. He works only for the Divine, if such is his inner attitude.

With my blessings, Mother

Then not satisfied with the sound quality of the recording, Sunil writes to the Mother again:

In doing the revision of my music yesterday we have

given by mistake a bit too much artificial reverberation to your readings — passages 14, 21, 22. The echo became clearly audible. When I realized the defect it was too late in the night to do something. It is a pity that You will have to listen to this copy with this defect. But I will correct it tomorrow — and these three readings will be exactly as the others.

I have not said to Niranjan what you have written about him because I am not sure of his reaction when he knows that I have written something to you concerning him without telling him.

I hope, Petite Mère, that you will find my music good.
Sunil

Sunil again on his recording assistant:

You know that Niranjan is not well. He told me that because of his health, he would not be able to come to record the Savitri music. We must have someone to help him, I mean someone who would work under his direction. He will come everyday, but he cannot concentrate for a long period. He told me that Victor and Nirmal who work in the section of Biswanath know quite well the work and they have friendly relations with him, if one of them agrees to assist him he can undertake the work, what do you think of that? There is a lot of music to do now. I have to give the music of 2nd December towards the middle of October — and the Savitri music in the middle of November. Then there is the music of the 1st of January; I would prefer to have Victor as I know him well and he comes now every day to me. I have given him a piece of music to play on the harp. If You decide it should be Victor, this proposal has to come from You. Or, do You have different ideas?

*I'm waiting for Your decision.
With my thousand pranams
At Your lotus Feet
your loving child*

Sunil

The Mother answers:

It's good, I am sure Victor will do the work well, if he comes to record your music.

The choice is good and I approve of it.

Blessings

Mother

More on Niranjan and his tape recorder:

Sweet Mother,

Yesterday afternoon, I saw Niranjan. I told him that I shall give him back his tape recorder (Ferrograph) at 10:00 this morning. Usually, he lends me this instrument for about 15 days as we need three tape recorders to combine the recitations with the music pieces. But, when I was back home, I heard that Udar went to see Bratati and, it seems, he said it was better to get Your permission before giving back the machine.

I am waiting for Your guidance,

At Your lotus feet, I am Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answers:

Keep the tape recorder; you do not need to give it back. If Niranjan asks for it, tell him I told you to keep it.

Blessings,

Mother

Sunil continues to have problems finding someone to help with recording his music. He writes to the Mother:

23 December 1968

Sweet Mother,

Tomorrow morning, Tuesday 24th, we shall come at about 9:30 with the instruments. Can You tell Champaklal to open the door so that we can arrange everything before You arrive? The music will last more or less 1 hour and 10 minutes.

Suresh Hindocha, the son of Laljibhai, is part of our team of musicians; he played, this time, a part on the piano. He is, at the same time, an electronic engineer. He knows his work very well. He started to repair our instruments; he has built a small instrument which is very useful for us and he has agreed to do whatever is necessary to maintain our tape recorders in good condition and to give direction to Victor because his electronic knowledge is worse than mine. May I, Mother, invite him to come with us tomorrow?

The Mother answers in the margins of Sunil's letter:

Yes, he should be invited.

Sunil continues:

About this repair of machines, I wanted to tell You something. Up to now, it was Niranjan who was in charge of the sales of my music and he was providing tapes and paying for the repair expenses. Now, it's Biswanath's team who looks after the sales of my music. But when they repair our instruments, they expect me to pay the expenses (we often need spare parts). I did it this time but, naturally, I have no money and I won't be able to go on paying. Victor proposes to undertake this work: to copy and sell the music. But, this would be again a problem! There are only two choices:

- 1. either Victor undertakes this work,*
- 2. or Biswanath takes only half of the money he makes with the music and gives You or the ashram bank the other half so that Victor can use it when necessary.*

These problems are a burden on me these days — now

that I have put them before You, I feel completely relieved. Perhaps there are other solutions which escape me and that You will find. The more I live and the more I see, the more I realize that it was not by chance that I am here to bother You with my problems.

I have a lot of things to tell You, even things I would not be able to formulate in words. I will tell You, tomorrow, in my music.

*My pranams at Your lotus Feet
Your loving child*

The Mother's answer, again in the margins of Sunil's note:

Don't worry, everything will fall into place.
These details are easily solved.
Mère

Manoj comments:

From that day he knew that Mother is looking after him and he stopped completely the whole idea of selling the music in order to be able to buy tapes and other things. And he never... although there were many people, temptations 'These will sell in Europe, America,' and you know he could earn money for Mother, and all that. But Sunil was absolutely firm on that: No commercial.

Sunil writes to the Mother regarding his relationship to Her and to his music:

It's curious, Mother, that each time that you told me that You love my music I had tears in my eyes. Each time that I tell You that I love You Mother, I have tears in my eyes. One would say they are tears of joy or gratitude. I don't believe it. I could not understand it for a long time. But now I see why, I feel even though very vaguely that there is a whole world that I

was not conscious of before, a very beautiful world, formed by memories of You and me. And each time that You look in my eyes, each time that You smile at me I find again this world, a bit of my Mother that I had lost and that I had searched for through the ages. Far, far in the depths of my heart I become conscious of a powerful emotion which moves, which grows together to complain, one could say, to You. Are these feelings a play of emotion and have no reality behind? Or do You think that my feelings are at the end tired and all these emotions are only a subconscious translation of a desire to look for a nest of security and repose? Tell me, petite Mère, was I very near You before my birth, or in a past life? Would You answer to this question? You see that it was not by curiosity only that I have asked a question in my earlier letter. I think that I have started to see things that I did not see before. Or do you think that it is only my tenderness for You that gives me this sense of intimacy for you?

Tomorrow around 9:30 we will come with the machine — do you want to tell like the last time Champaklal to open the door for us? The music has become a bit long this time, one hour and a quarter. Nearly all the work of recording, arranging, was done by Victor. Niranjan has helped him at the beginning.

The Mother's reply:

It is possible that, in a previous life, you have been my physical child. But this is not what gives you this deep emotion. It is your soul which inspires your music. It is with your soul that I connect you when I speak of your music and that connects you with your soul and also with me who is always in the center of your being.

It is the intensity of that consciousness which makes you cry of emotion, these are psychic tears which melt the obstacles and the difficulties in the being.

Mother

For inspiration for Sunil's 1966 New Year Music the Mother played on her organ and Sunil used that music as inspiration for his own composition, including part of the Mother's music in his recording. When the Mother heard the completed music she wrote to Sunil:

30.12.65

Sunil, my dear child,

It was with impatience that I was waiting to listen to your music and I am so happy to have heard it today. Your interpretation of the melody played in front of you is really as it should be; this is exactly what I wanted to say.

Enclosed is a photo Niranjana is sending you to which I attach my blessings and all my tenderness.

Mother

30.12.65

I heard it. Nothing to change. It is wonderful. I am delighted!

Blessings.

Mother

Unfortunately, Sunil was unhappy with the quality of the recording of this New Year Music, feeling it had too much distortion and not enough bass and consequently asked that recordings of this piece not be given out to people who asked for his music.

As Sunil's music progressed the Mother commented how Sunil's music opens onto the region of universal harmony, as recorded in the Agenda:

25 June 1966

Oh, not just once, but very often, while listening to his music [Sunil's], a door is immediately opened onto the region of universal harmony, where you hear the origin of sounds, and

with an extraordinary emotion and intensity, something that pulls you out of yourself (gesture of abrupt wrenching). It's the first time I've had this while listening to music — I myself have it when I am all alone. But I never had it while listening to music. It's always something much closer to the earth. Here, it's something very high, but very universal, and with tremendous power: a creative power. Well, his music opens the door.

Now, some people have heard his music, and in Russia, France and the U.S.A. as well, they have asked for permission to copy it and spread it around. And the strange thing is that those people don't know one another, but they have all had the same impression: tomorrow's music. So to those who have asked I've answered, "Have some patience, in two years we'll give you a musical monument." It's much better to begin with a major work, because it immediately gives the position, otherwise you might think it's passing little inspirations — not that: something that strikes you on the head and makes you bow before it.

I read out the lines (in English, naturally), and with that he does the music. And the words are probably mixed in with the music, as he always does. But then, my reading is simply the clearest possible pronunciation, with the full understanding of what's being said, and WITHOUT A SINGLE INTONATION. I think I have succeeded, because at a week's interval (I don't read every day), the timbre of the voice is always the same.

In a letter where the Mother first asks Sunil to compose music to accompany Huta's paintings for Savitri She writes:

10.02.66

Sunil, my dear child,

We need a music to accompany and frame my readings of passages from Savitri illustrated in "Meditations on Savitri."

You alone can do this music the way it should be done.

Would you be interested in this work? It would make me very happy.

If you agree to do this big work which will certainly take

two years to complete, Huta would like to show you right now all her finished paintings.

And as the recording proceeds, my reading would be given to you, book by book, so that you can use it as a basis for your composition. If need be, you could use some of my recorded musics that you could orchestrate, as you did before for others.

Tell me whether you like this idea — and I could call you one morning that we may talk about it.

I will need your answer before February 14th.

With my blessings,

Mother

Sunil's response:

As for my decision, all you propose to me I agree with. The idea is excellent, but what frightens me is I am not sure of my ability. But I have total trust in You and I know if you give me a work you also give me the grace which alone can succeed.

The Mother's answer:

11.02.66

Sunil, my dear child,

Those who are really capable are always modest.

Come February 15th at 11 a.m.

Huta will be here and you will meet each other.

With all my love and blessings, Mother

When Sunil was working on Book I, Canto 2 of his Savitri music and was preparing to begin work on his New Year music, the Mother was still playing a theme for the music on the organ:

Sweet Mother,

The day after tomorrow, I will come to see You with my tape recorder and I will have the pleasure to record myself Your music. Rijuta loves very much my music. A few days ago,

she came to see me with Michael and they both gave me this present [the tape recorder]. It is a very small instrument but it records well.

[Mother:]

That's good.

[Sunil:]

On November 3rd, it is my birthday. Sujata told me that You will see me that very day after Your "interview" with Satprem.

[Mother:]

Yes

[Sunil:]

That day, too, You will play a few pieces on the organ.

On November 18th, I will come with Niranjan and his machine and You will listen to what I did for the 2nd Canto of Savitri. Victor also must come with us as he works with so much enthusiasm that it is quite obvious he would love to accompany us. Please, allow me to do so.

[Mother:]

You can bring Victor

[Sunil:]

If You think it's good to ask Biswanath to come with us, I could invite him on Your behalf. He, too, helped us a lot by lending mikes and repairing machines.

[Mother:]

I have already invited Biswanath for the 18th but it is good that you invite him also.

[Sunil:]

And, finally, I have a question for You: I have often a feeling these days that it is You who made me a musician.

[Mother:]

Perhaps

[Sunil:]

Is it true? If it is true, was it predestined?

[Mother:]

Most certainly

[Sunil:]

*I offer all my pranams to Your lotus Feet,
Your loving child Sunil*

[Mother:]

Blessings, Mother

Sunil wrote in a letter to a friend several years later, in 1973, about the Mother asking him to compose the music and of his progress to date:

In 1966, the Mother asked me to write musics for Her Savitri recitations. I have done about nine hours of Savitri music and yet I have not reached the half-way mark as yet.

While he was working on Book One of Savitri Sunil wrote to the Mother about Vedic hymns he used in the music. In one note he writes:

It is an invocation to Usha the Goddess of Dawn. Her veil of darkness slips off and she appears resplendent in her light and by her Light she guides all the movements of Truth and opens the gates of new worlds: Mother of gods — source of all Light and Power — the Word — and Wisdoms.

A column of rays, on wings of gold — like birds — like a current of water rises to heavens following the dark path. They come back and by their light they push the earth upwards. Lightning conquers earth and the Fire conquers the heavens.

And again regarding another hymn:

In my yesterday's letter to you I forgot to mention that in today's music — 2nd canto Book I of Savitri I have given two hymns. One is in the 12th recitation — a hymn to Agni — fire of aspiration. The 2nd one is right at the end — it is the same hymn I used at the end of the 1st canto — presented in a little different way. This hymn I propose to repeat very often in this music in Savitri. The essence is that something or someone following the dark path rises to heaven and brings down Light on this earth. Lightning conquers earth — and fire conquers heaven.

I have arranged that Victor make a tape for me (only) of your remarks light as well as serious, before and after the music. I forgot to ask your permission. If you do not approve of it please tell me when you come there [and] I will ask him not to do it. Satprem usually passes such views to me and I enjoy them enormously.

[These recorded comments by the Mother on Sunil's music are reproduced in an appendix at the end of this book, though most are also included within this text.]

Steve, who later worked on the recordings of Sunil's music said of the hymns which Sunil described above:

“Sunil did talk about wanting to use that hymn more. He didn't really talk about the passage at length, but did say what it meant and why he was using it.... I am pretty sure that in the released Savitri it is only used twice, once at the

end of Bk 1, C 1, and once in some later canto either end of BK 2 or BK 3. I was there when we recorded the 2nd one, and he wasn't very happy with the result at all, and that was the last time he tried. Sunil later wasn't happy even with the first recording because by later standards of the music it was terribly distorted. I tried to clean it up once using the big Sonic system in Madras, but it wasn't doing any real good, so I gave up."

Towards the end of 1966 Sunil wrote to a friend:

I am sorry I am a little late in replying to your letter which I received a few days ago. I was very, very busy these few days — literally working around the clock to give the last finishing touches to my recordings of the music of 2nd canto Book I of Savitri. The Mother has heard it now — and She has liked it enormously. In fact, the Mother has always loved my music and without her encouragement I could not possibly have done much. [In fact the Mother said about Sunil's music at this time, in talks with Satprem recorded in the Agenda: "In Sunil's music, there are two or three of those associations of sounds that are evocative associations, and in his music it's the splendour of the future creation, oh, it comes like a dazzling sun."]

I have now a breather for a few days only. I have to start working again because I have to make the music for the 1st of January which the Mother will hear sometime in the last week of December. Then again the Mother wants to hear the 3rd Canto of Savitri on the 2nd or 3rd of May 1967. This will continue till February 1968. By then I will be finishing Book I of Savitri. It is then that the Mother will release these works to the general public here. So you can easily see that it is just impossible for me to do any other musics before 1968 February.

I am glad that your visit to Europe and the United States has been fruitful to you and fervently hope that your work as

well as that of your friend's may be useful to the miserable millions of this world. Poverty and disease breed misery and suffering unless one is awake within. Once upon a time poverty did not breed depravity, at least in India. The beggars took the name of the Lord and the householders considered them as the Lord's representatives. Even great saints like Sri Chaitanya lived on alms alone. But times have changed To tell you frankly I would prefer to think less of the miseries than of the good things that surround us. A heart like yours or that of your friend's which has been "touched by His Love" has become a perfect shrine and wields a greater power on me than anything else. I wish I could write a music on that alone!

Our tape recorders over here have two speeds. Please get the music recorded at either of these speeds — 3 3/4 ips and 7 1/2 ips. I feel embarrassed to have caused too much of trouble to you. Please don't forget to write "used tape: of no commercial value" on the packet containing the tape. Thanking you and looking forward to hear the "Passion".

Please mention also the speed of your tape recorder so that Niranjana can record my music at the proper speed for you.

I am yours

Affectionately Sunil

And at the same time to a former student:

I received your letter conveying your birthday greetings and the plug that you sent through Biswanathda. I wanted to thank you for both but these few days I was extremely busy, literally working round the clock to give the last finishing touches to my recordings of the music on the 2nd canto of Savitri. The Mother has now heard it and She liked it enormously. But there is hardly any time to congratulate myself because I must prepare the music for the 1st of January and the Mother will hear it sometime in the last week of December.

In spite of all this you have always been in my mind. It

is good to have seen you after a long, long time. And how you have changed. I do not refer to a change in your surface habits or a change due to a development of your intellectual or aesthetic faculties — these are changes which are come by slowly but surely by a mental and physical adjustment to a novel way of life. All the boys who go abroad, they bring back something from the atmosphere they lived in and loved. The change I mean goes deeper than that — that comes from an exchange, an awakening of something deeper inside from an increasing awareness of emotions which were secret and buried in one's self, that such a change can only come from a dawning, so to say, of that beauty which can only be felt in the innermost recess of our heart. The touch of the magic wand of one's own inner being — your eyes betray all this and to all. Your family loved to see you moving closer and closer to the Mother and whatever She stands for. I read the letter you wrote to Pavitra — and I hope now you are properly and truly rehabilitated — both mentally and physically. Do write to me whenever you have time.

Thanking you again for your letter as well as the plug and wishing you a happy new year,

A very happy new year — Sunil

In 1966 Sunil wrote and recorded in his own voice an introduction to his music for the Indian Academy of Music in New Delhi. He made a series of entries in his notebooks of some early drafts of what became this recording, including:

Nearly two decades ago, when for the first time I heard our Mother here improvising on Her organ I knew that, to hearts which are open, orchestral music can be used to communicate spiritual states or spiritual realizations.

If I disregard tradition, it is not that I have none, but ... and verily for that reason it defies any rigid form or structure.

Her smile of appreciation has always meant more to me than any other form of success.

*

If this music is not narrowed down to a conventional worship of tradition it is because I seek thro[ugh] it a truth by whose light I find my right place. It is because in the [illegible] of my existence in the Divine I forget what is old in me. [Sunil's emphasis]

My music is my labour and my aspiration for the Divine. What I try to convey are the voices of my illumination.

I have disregarded tradition if it came on the way of my expression.

*

I have not allowed my mind to be obsessed. The methods I employ will be clear from the instance.

*

We stand at the head of a new age when orchestral music will be increasingly used to describe inner spiritual experiences. My music is my labour and my aspiration for the Divine, and what I try to convey through it are the voices of my inner experience. If I disregard tradition it is not because I have none but because I seek through it a truth and power which will bring within me intensities of a delight for it defies any rigid formulation. My grateful thoughts are always with Her who has been my guide, guru, mentor and mother. It's Her light alone that I seek to express in my musics [illegible] my fire. I could have done nothing.

If this music brings you comfort and sustains your aspiration I have achieved that for which She has placed Her trust in me.

*

Nearly two decades ago, when for the first time I heard our Mother here improvising on Her organ I knew that, to hearts which are open, orchestral music can be used to communicate

spiritual states or spiritual realizations.

If I disregard tradition, it is not that I have none, but ... and verily for that reason it defies any rigid form or structure.

Her smile of appreciation has always meant more to me than any other form of success.

*

Over twenty years ago I heard for the 1st time the Mother of our Ashram improvising on her organ. In the beginning the music sounded strange to me. It was neither Indian nor Western — or shall I say that it sounded both Indian as well as European to my ears. The theme she was playing came very near to what we know as Bhairon, the whole closely knit structure sailing peacefully on waves of expanding melodies.

Then suddenly it started, notes came surging up in battalions, piled up one on top of another, deep, insistent, coming as if from a long way down and welling up uncontrollably. The colour that she painted with Her melody started shining, then burning and finally it burst into an illumination that made the music an experience.

Thus She revealed to me the secret of a magic world of music where harmonies blend to make melodies richer, wider, deeper and infinitely more powerful.

I have tried to take my music from her.

*

One day it was Her light that sparked my heart, it is her light that has sustained its glow, it's her light that I seek to express in my music. If this music brings you some comfort, some delight I have achieved that for which She has placed her trust in me.

*

The final version that Sunil read out for the recording:

HOW MUSIC WAS REVEALED TO ME

Some twenty years ago I heard for the first time the Mother of our Ashram improvising on an organ. In the beginning the music sounded strange to me. It was neither Indian nor Western, or shall I say that it sounded both Indian as well as Western to my ears? The theme she was playing came very near to what we know as “Bhairon”, the whole closely knit musical structure expanding melodiously. Then suddenly it started: notes came surging up in battalions, piled one on top of another, deep, insistent, coming as if from a long way down and welling up inevitably: the magnificent body of sound formed and gathered volume till it burst into an illumination that made the music an experience.

Thus She revealed to me the secret of a magic world of music where harmonies meet and blend to make melodies richer, wider, deeper and infinitely more powerful... I have tried to take my music from Her.

My music is my labour and my aspiration for the Divine and what I try to convey through it are the voices of my inner experience.

My grateful thoughts are with Her, who has been my Guide, Guru, Mentor and Mother. One day it was Her Light that sparked my heart, it is Her Light that has sustained its glow, it is Her Light that I seek through my music. If this music brings some comfort, some delight or some message to someone, I have achieved that for which She has placed Her trust in me.

Sunil sent the recording to the Mother along with a letter asking for her approval:

Sweet Mother,

These gentlemen at the Akadémie want me to say a few words to introduce my music at the beginning of the recording. Pranab told me that You approve of this idea, it is why I did it. The subject of my speech is such that I cannot send it without Your approval. That is why I send You the tape via Pranab.

You must, Sweet Mother, listen to it today — it will take only 3 minutes. The tape will be sent only if You approve. I will also give the text to Pranab as, not being used to this kind of work, I did not read properly and some words are perhaps not well pronounced.

I offer all my “pranams” at Your Lotus Feet, Your loving child, Sunil

The Mother responded:

I heard and I approve.

I listened to the whole tape and that gave me a very good moment.

There were flights in the world of pure harmony and it was deeply moving.

With my blessings

Mother

The Mother writes to Sunil on the availability of musical instruments:

2.9.66

Sunil, my dear child,

The two violins Anusuya was using are with me. Would they be useful to you? In which case, I would be very happy to give them to you as I know you would take care of them. If you want them, just come and pick them up. I entrust them to Champaklal.

With my blessings

Mère

Later Sunil wrote to the Mother on these violins:

There is someone who wishes to learn to play violin. Harit also wanted a violin for this young man. I told him that I could give a violin if he had Your permission. This morning he

came back to tell me that he got Your permission. I have three violins you entrusted to my care. Two were Anusuya's and You asked me to keep them very carefully. The third one was not so good and I gave it to this man. But this violin is not in good condition and they were not very happy. So, do you want me to give them one of Anusuya's?

*I sent You my thousand pranams
At Your lotus Feet
Your loving
Child — Sunil*

The Mother's answer:

Let him learn to play very well, then you can give him one of Anusuya's.

I will see when I have one hour and a quarter free and I will let you know.

Blessings
Mother

More on the use of the violins. Sunil writes to the Mother:

Kirit Joshi came to see me with Mr. Voehu Veherle. Kirit told me that you are expecting from me a report giving my opinion on his ability as a violinist. I have seen him now two times. The first time he told me that he has no violin here with him and that he has not played on the violin for more than a year and a half. I have lent him one of the violins that You gave me and he has taken it with him to practise. Yesterday he came back and he played. In my opinion, he knows more or less the technique of playing and he is able to conduct lessons for beginners. But he is not really a musician, but he is serious and if You decide that he will play the violin he says he is ready to work seriously. He told me also that his wife can also play the flute and she plays the harp well.

You also want to know if I'm really interested in having

Your harmonium. This instrument that You have used for years is for me an object of veneration — and I am ready to exchange it with the harmonium that I have now. But it may be that Padma would like to keep it with her. If this is the case, I will say nothing. In fact, all that You decide will be final for me.

Sunil

Later Sunil agrees to accept this harmonium in a letter to the person in possession of the instrument at that time:

I suppose you know that I wrote to the Mother when Padma was here. She seemed to have told the Mother something about the Mother's old harmonium which she was using when she was here before. Anyway, André came to see me and told me that the Mother wants to know if I am interested in that harmonium. I wrote to the Mother saying that I would be very glad to have it but Padma might be using it and in case she wanted to keep it I would very much leave it alone. In reply Mother told me then that you no longer wanted to keep it with you, and yesterday André asked me to talk with you and if you are willing to make arrangements to shift the harmonium to my place in case you want to.

Sunil

Sunil writes to the Mother about another offer of an instrument:

Sweet Mother,

...About the electric guitar You wanted to give us, I spoke with Françoise and she brought a catalogue from Paris. According to this catalogue, an Electric Guitar EKO model 700/4/V with vibrato and a sound amplifier would suit us perfectly. I hope, Sweet Mother, that You will listen to my music as soon as possible. I am now preparing Your music for January 1st.

I offer my Pranams at your lotus feet, Sunil

Electric guitar EKO 700/4/V model with a suitable amplifier at Coesnon's.

The Mother wrote in the margin of Sunil's letter:

I will see with André if he can possibly bring the guitar when he comes.

Mother

At this time Sunil was still helping with music for the Ashram dance programs. Svetlana, who was preparing a dance program for the Ashram had asked Sunil for some music for her dance. Apparently growing nervous as the date for her performance approached she wrote:

Sunil,

I am a little worried. Perhaps there has been a slight misunderstanding. As far as I can remember you had first given me the date of the end of August (after one of your recordings of Savitri)—and later, I affectionately received your message, saying that it would not be before the 10th of October. I am happy to hear that you have already planned everything for the recording of that tape.

But — didn't you promise me, as I had suggested — three short original pieces for Perseus? At least this is what I had understood and written.

If it is not possible, could you please be so kind as to let me assist to soon make a choice of the pieces?

I thank you in advance for everything — and look forward to artistic collaboration.

Very friendly yours, Svetlana

And:

10.10.66

My dear Sunil, I am afraid I cannot wait any longer to take a decision for the music. I know how busy you are with Savitri — and I quite understand your postponing Perseus — but, now we are starting the technical rehearsals on the 17th. So, if you cannot give me this music I have to make some other arrangement. Please let me know urgently your decision, so that I can start my work as soon as possible — thank you —
Very friendly yours Svetlana

Sunil replies, perhaps somewhat frustrated:

Your letter did not make much sense to me. I am at a loss to remember any occasion when I promised to give you the music earlier. Once through Bratati (Millie) I sent you words to the effect that I would try to give you the music towards the middle of October. So this question of postponing the music of Perseus continuously does not arise. And in fact I clearly asked Niranjana to bring his machine on the 11th of October so that I could hand over the music to you on the 15th or near about. I wrote to the Mother also telling Her something to this effect. However, as I promised, I will try to finish it and arrange that the tape be given to you before the 15 or 16 date mentioned in your letter. But of course the musics will be chosen from old pieces of the Mother's and of mine. This was agreed to and also advised by the Mother. I beg to be excused for the tone of this letter which is more or less a reflection of yours. I am sure that I became aware of it only on my rereading of the letter. Assuring you of my friendliness and with best regards.

Sunil

Svetlana writes back:

15.10.66

*My dear Sunil,
 Thank you for your kind note and even before I listen to the music, thank you for your diligence in the work. I*

am contacting Arun and shall listen to the music as soon as possible. I am sure it will be what 'is needed' — I shall write to you again anyway after having heard it. Thank you again — Yours, Svetlana

After the problems had been worked out Sunil writes:

I have handed over the tape with the recorded musics to Arun Kumar (Biswanath's department) this morning. Please contact him and fix up a time when you can listen to the musics. I give you the full right to delete any piece of music or a portion of any music or replace any music with a more suitable one of your choice as in fact you, being the director, have the option to use your discretion in everything. Arun Kumar will surely help you in doing whatever alterations you have in mind. I will be glad if these musics prove useful to you.

P.S. the musics are recorded serially in the order you wanted. I send you the catalogue of the musics so that you can check them easily.

Svetlana writes:

17.10.66

My dear Sunil —

I have listened to the music already twice, with joy: it is very good indeed, and very well chosen. The different themes are what was needed — and they will considerably help to create the atmosphere. I thank you. The only piece to which something might be added is the very last one at the end of Perseus's speech. I think it would be good to have a more triumphant and open end. What would you say about joining this piece with one of Mother's organ? If you agree, I can ask Her. But could you suggest any one in particular? Waiting for your answer. I send you my best thoughts. Svetlana

[This letter is accompanied by detailed scene notes for the play with comments on the desired music for each.]

Sunil answers:

The very last piece of the tape is an organ music of the Mother. That piece was played by the Mother herself on her own organ, our instruments were only superimposed later on. But as you have noticed rightly, that music does not express triumph, it expresses victory and in the Mother's own words, "It brings the seed of a new world." From the description of the stage given by you, from the fact that all the actors were on the stage concentrating and for the effect that you wanted, that is, a music coming from far gripping the audience progressively, I thought that that was the music you needed. If you want the music of triumph you have to replace it or add something else in the end. You might add just a line of music, for example, the last few chords that I composed for last year's "Shakti". I do not know whether the Mother will be able to help you because she does not remember what she plays. But if you meet Niranjana he will be able to help you, he told me that he knows a music of the Mother which he thinks is just the piece you need.

I am glad that you found most of the pieces useful.

Thanking you,

Sunil

The Mother writes again of a musical instrument which has become available:

1.10.66

Sunil, my dear child,

I just received a guitar. It is not the one you ordered but it's a guitar and I hope it will be useful to you.

I do not send it to you for safety reasons; could you come and pick it up? Champaklal will give it to you with the user's guide.

I am expecting to see you in November for your birthday.
 With my blessings
 Mother

Sunil writes back:

The guitar that you have sent me is a Spanish guitar. It is a good instrument, but unfortunately, there is nobody in my group of musicians who knows how to play this instrument. I have asked Rene (M. Mainier) to come to see me. If he plays well, then I can use this instrument for Savitri music, waiting for one of us to use this guitar. Everything which comes from You is useful — on the 8th December, 1964 You wanted to give me a good harmonica with a button. I told you that I was not playing this instrument myself and I don't know anybody who plays it. You gave it afterwards to Pranab. And this year some days ago I have seen Norman and I have found that he was playing it admirably. I wanted to use this instrument and I spoke with Pranab. He lent me his instrument for a month and a half and now Norman has played two pieces of music in the second canto of Savitri with this instrument.

That's why I have confidence that this guitar will be very useful.

[Kanak ended up playing on this guitar later on when his old guitar wouldn't play anymore. He played it like a steel (Hawaiian) guitar. The Spanish guitar had frets but it had a high neck so Kanak was able to keep the strings off the frets when he bowed the guitar.]

Satprem has invited Sunil to accompany him for his birthday visit to the Mother and Sunil writes to the Mother:

How generous is Satprem! Because of him I will come to listen to Your music the day of his birthday. I'm very, very happy and grateful.

Sunil

In fall of 1966 one of Sunil's helpers, whom he always referred to as the "boys" even later in their adult lives, wrote a note for Sunil to pass on to the Mother because he didn't feel he was fully employed only with the recording work for Sunil's music. Sunil writes to the Mother:

December 12, 1966

Sweet Mother,

Tomorrow, Victor will come to see You — it's his birthday. He asked me to send You this letter before he comes to see You. Here is what he told me of his problem. The work to record my music will come to him only periodically. There will always be a two or three months interval during which he will have nothing to do. What will he do during all this time? And he wants to be busy only with music, especially in the art of music composition. "The Mother sent me to you," he told me, "so that you show me the way to become a true musician," and he asked me at once to show him the way.

[The Mother had sent a note to Sunil about this a few months earlier:

4.9.66

Sunil,

Victor likes music very much and wants to become a musician.

Would you help him and show him the way?

Blessings

Mother]

I answered that if I have become a musician, it is because I loved You and I listened to the music of the Mother; as a preparation, he can take all Your recorded organ music and try to copy the passages he loves. Later on, he could try to orchestrate these musics. What do You think of that suggestion?

The Mother answers:

12.12.66

That's good. He can try this method.

Sunil continues, asking when the Mother can hear the 1967 New Year Music:

Yesterday Satprem gave me Your message for January 1st and what You said about it. But You read only in English. And when You were reciting the message in French before the mike, Satprem said "Hum" twice and that is clearly audible. Am I going to use this recording or are You going to redo it?

The Mother's answer:

I can repeat the message in English and in French, but who will do the recording?

Sunil continues:

Please, sweet Mother, fix a date between December 26th and 31st to listen to the January 1st music. We shall come with the machine to play the music before You.

*I send You my thousand pranams,
at Your lotus Feet
your loving child,
Sunil*

The Mother answers:

Come on Monday, December 26th at 10:30 a.m.

Some people have to come before but as soon as they leave, you will come in.

With my blessings, Mother

When Sunil had finished work on the 1967 New Year Music he wrote to the Mother:

Sweet Mother,

As already agreed, we shall come tomorrow around 10:30 with the machines to play before You the January 1st music. It would be better, if You don't mind, to put the machines around in advance, let's say at 9:15 when You are not there yet, and put the machines on one side of Your room. What do You think of that idea? Victor and Niranjana will come with me. Do You wish me to invite Biswanath to come with us?

The music will last about 20 minutes. It is based on what You played on October 30th and November 3rd this year and November 3rd last year. I hope You will like what You hear, Sweet Mother.

Victor worked well. He started also to copy one of Your organ music pieces I had with me and which I lent him.

I send pranams to Your

Lotus Feet,

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answered:

I am sorry, but before you come for the music, I have some other people to see and it is only when I am finished with them that you can come to arrange your instruments; probably a bit before 10:30.

See you tomorrow, Blessings

Mère

When Mother had heard the 1967 New Year Music she said:

This is the first time I heard a music which came from above, without passing through mind.

The question of translating some of Savitri into French to use in Sunil's music first came up in a letter to the Mother:

I'm often asked to play Savitri music for visitors. Few people like to listen to a complete canto. It's why I have made a selection of passages of canto four which lasts about forty minutes. Some days ago Mrs. Ribopierre came to my house with her son Denis to listen to this music. I have given them the text of the typed passages. Mrs. Ribopierre simultaneously translated some of the passages to her son in French. I liked this translation and I got the idea to prepare selections with the text in French. Mrs. Ribopierre has translated all these passages in French which we have sent to You. Here are two questions which I am asking You: 1) Do you think that with some corrections that You would do that these translations would be passable? 2) Would you be able to read these passages in French in front of a microphone?

If You say "no" to the 2nd question, the answer to the 1st question does not interest me anymore.

Sunil

Manoj talks about the early days of Sunil's orchestra:

When he started the organ, I don't think he had any formal teaching of the western fingering of the piano and all that. It was all his own. Earlier for the orchestra we had got a group of young boys. Debu was a very talented sitarist and he was senior to me. But he and myself, we played the sitar. His brother Hareet used to play the sarod. Anilda the elder brother of Sunilda used to play the sarod. We had a group of sitar and sarod and there was one boy, Runu, he used to play on the flute. He was a very talented player on the flute. But he was very particular about Indian music and his taste was limited to Indian classical music; anything beyond he could not accept.

Another thing, also, Sunilda wanted, when he composed

the music he didn't want to have too many rehearsals. He didn't have probably the patience or I don't know. So that's why finally he stopped with a small group. The real person, the real pillar in Sunilda's music from the beginning was Kanak. He used to play the guitar. He was a very talented musician and he was very quiet. Sunilda would just give a hint and Kanak knew what he wanted. I have a feeling that making people rehearse something over and over would have something too rigid about it. It wouldn't suit him and it wouldn't suit his music.

Shobha echoes Manoj's comments about Sunil's reluctance to spend a lot of time rehearsing:

Let me say a few words about his music in which I participated. When the Mother asked Sunilda to compose the New Year or Savitri music, Sunilda used to call us to sing in his recordings. Sometimes it used to be only Sanskrit chanting, sometimes humming. Sunilda's chanting or humming melodies were really wonderful.

One problem with Sunilda's recording I found was that he didn't spend much time on rehearsals. He used to call us, teach the hymn or humming, get it rehearsed right there a few times and record. I found it sometimes difficult, especially when these harmonizations were there. Sometimes, when I listen now to Sunilda's music, I find my middle note very indistinct, almost inaudible. With a little more rehearsal, this could have surely been avoided. Manoj and Minnedi's notes have come out well, but my note is not clear in some recordings. Once, during such a recording, I requested Sunilda to record it once again, but he said the overall effect had come out well. It was not necessary to re-record. In some recordings where three notes or two notes were well balanced it sounds rich and beautiful like the 1972 New Year Music. The atmosphere which prevailed in Sunilda's studio when we recorded his music was simply

unforgettable.

Steve, Sunil's recording technician, had this to say about Sunil's reluctance to rehearse:

He had no problem playing the music over and over again with Kanak, and Klosterman too, until they learned it. He didn't like to record multiple takes, but didn't mind playing quite a few times with them and I think he made changes as he played. But whenever singers came, or actually anyone that wasn't part of his regular group, he would not want to either rehearse much or take more than one or two takes. One of the reasons was he thought the 'feeling' would go and it would become mechanical. But that doesn't explain why he didn't find the same when he played with Kanak and Klosterman and Patrick (in the years when Patrick actually played with him).

There is no song I can remember in the years I was there for the recordings, where he would spend more than one session on it. Sunil's sessions were rarely more than two hours, maximum two-and-a-half in the 70s and early 80s (less later). In that time he'd have the singers in, teach them the melody he wanted them to follow and record it.

When Sunil was teaching them the songs he played and sang or hummed very softly with the singers standing around the organ. When it was just Minnie and Tarit, he didn't have to spend much more than a half hour or so teaching them. Usually the words (Sanskrit) were given to them about a day before so they could become familiar. But not the music. The songs were always recorded separately even before we had multitrack. Sunil and Kanak played while they were singing but often this wasn't used or was kept very low and the music you finally hear behind the song was recorded later on another track. We rarely recorded more than a few minutes of music in a session whether it was the song or some other part of the music.

Manoj continues:

As I told you, he was very sensitive, so I think the behaviour of some of the boys hurt him and he stopped completely working with the recording section. Sunil wanted it some way and there was no technical... they didn't understand what Sunil wanted. So then he just stopped asking them to record. Just at that time one gentleman named Niranjana came and he used to record the music. And at that time we had just simply this tape recorder and overlapping...

Sunil writes to the Mother about lending an instrument he uses for his music:

Sweet Mother,

A few days ago, Francine who is from Montreal, Canada, came to see me. She plays guitar and she asked me if I could lend her the Spanish guitar You gave me. I lent her the guitar.

This morning, a German gentleman, Hans, came to visit me with a young boy and he wants me to give him the guitar. Then I told him that I do not have the guitar with me, that I gave it to Francine. But Mr. Hans insists that I ask Francine to give back the guitar and to give it to him so that he can teach the young boy. He told me he would write to you. What do You want me to do?

*I send You my thousand pranams to Your lotus Feet,
At Your Feet, Your loving child Sunil*

The Mother answers:

For the safety of the music instruments, not to lend them at all would be safer.

But, to be more easy-going, you could ask the candidate to play in front of you the required instrument and if he shows

some qualities or at least some promise, you can lend it for a fixed time.

Blessings,
Mother

In 1966 as he worked on the early Savitri music Sunil wrote to the Mother about the probability of his being able to meet Her original two-year estimate for the completion of the music:

The final revision of the recordings will be completed today. I will come with Niranjan tomorrow the 7th at about 9:30 AM with the machine so that we can keep the machine ready before you come. Would it be possible for you to arrange so that we could be permitted to enter the small room at that time and keep everything ready? The music of only the 1st canto is ready — and it is 57 minutes, fifty seven minutes long! Will you hear the entire music tomorrow? On an average each reading lasts 40 secs — reading together with music lasts 2 1/2 minutes — at this rate the total length of music for 500 slides would be 21 hours! [In fact by the end of Book X, canto 4 in 1997, the total would be about 33 hours]. I wonder, Mother, if I could compose so much music in just one-and-a-half years time. During the last 20 years I have composed only about 10 to 12 hours of music and most of it is rubbish.

I like doing Savitri and I would like to continue slowly and finish it in about four to five years time. For Huta, as she insists on showing her 500 slides on 29th February 1968... But of course I could use old music of mine as well as yours if I am helpless, keeping shorter the readings. Best thing would be of course to show only the Book I in 1968 February.

When he had nearly finished the Savitri music for Book I, Canto three in May 1967 Sunil wrote:

Sweet Mother,

Last time I saw You, You told me that You would like to

listen to the 3rd Canto of the Savitri music either on May 3rd or May 5th. We are now busy recording this music. Have You decided on the date? I would like to know a little bit in advance.

*I send You my pranams, at Your lotus Feet
your loving child, Sunil*

The Mother answers:

I have just seen my book for the month of May. Everything is taken. My first free day is Thursday 18th — and I wrote your name at once so that nobody else comes to take it.

Like that, you have a lot of time to get ready.

I will see you on Thursday, May 18th, at 10:00 a.m.

Blessings

Mère

In the early days when people wanted to receive copies of Sunil's music, it was only available on large reel-to-reel tapes and these tapes had to be sent to Sunil along with International Postage coupons which Sunil used to buy postage in Pondicherry to return the tape to the sender. Here is a typical note from Sunil to someone who wants his music. The music referred to is Devi Sukta:

I have given your letter with postal coupons to Mr. Niranjan who takes care here of the recording and distribution of my musical work. I am sure that he will send you, as soon as possible, all the useful recordings. Most of my musics are on reel-to-reel tapes and generally are available to those who want to have them. I have nothing to do with this work; I compose the music, but the music belongs to the Ashram. The tapes are extremely expensive in India. A tape which would cost about 20 Rupees in France costs more than 100 Rupees here. This is why I would advise you to send a tape, preferably with some recorded music with a label saying that the tapes are second-hand to avoid difficulties at customs.

The music that you have liked is a hymn whose words were taken out of Rig Veda. The music lasts about 10 minutes, the words are in Sanskrit — it's about the Universal Mother who announces and reveals Herself to an earth which aspires.

And, finally, allow me, sir, to express my thanks for your letter.

With respects, Sunil

Rijuta again writes about what she calls Sunil's "Maheshwari" music, referring to the 1965 Shakti dance drama music:

2.4.67

Dear-to-us-Sunil,

A half-dozen times I've resisted the temptation to make this suggestion, but now I give in — Sunil, really it is a shame that Mother has not been able to listen to your 'Maheshwari' music — just because a few bits and pieces could be improved here and there is no reason to deprive Mother of enjoying this truly lovely composition! Can't you salvage it by incorporating it somewhere in Savitri? Sit down today and listen to it again and find a way to use it, letting Mother enjoy it!

Cheers — R

To Sunil on his birthday:

3 November 1967!

Oh Sunil, how good it is to participate in your fête today, not so much with Birthday Wishes but rather with an intense Invocation your progress is going to be reverberating so strongly in the rest of us!

Bonne Fête, indeed

Rijuta

After hearing Sunil's 1968 New Year Music the Mother said to Satprem:

28 December 1968

... It creates an atmosphere.

Usually I play some music for him, and he composes from it, but this time I didn't play, so he took some old pieces of mine; with that he makes contact and composes.

An American musician has come here, and I sent him to Sunil (he is a pianist). He said he'd heard some of Sunil's music there, in America, and at first people are a bit bewildered, but that when they have heard it several times, they become quite enthusiastic.

As for me, I find it creates an atmosphere: it BRINGS DOWN an atmosphere.

And the human voice is quite lovely, well mingled.

Rijuta on the 1968 New Year Music:

28.12.67

"(Red-letter day)" [in red ink — ed.]

O Sunil — if it's true that Response comes in direct proportion to the Call, then 1968 is surely a year of towering fulfilment! The poignancy of the yearning in this music has truly torn me into ribbons...

Rijuta

In 1967 Sunil wrote to the Mother about his ongoing work on Savitri Book I, Canto four:

I will finish today the first part of the fourth canto (Book I) from Savitri. The music is about one hour, ten minutes long. You can ask me to come with the instrument as soon as it is possible to fix a day for the music. There are forty-nine recitations in canto 4. I have prepared the music this time for the first twenty-five recitations. There are still twenty-four recitations in canto four and thirty recitations in canto five to complete the first book.

You have asked me to finish the first book before the 1st of

February, 1968. Until now it has taken me three or four months to complete about twenty recitations — so I will need again eight months to finish the first book. I have, then, to finish the fourth canto before December. The month of December is for the music of January 1st.

One month and a half will remain (January and a bit of February) to finish canto five.

To work on this music of Savitri was really an experience for me. I only regret that my capacity as a musician did not allow me to express in correct musical phrases all I felt, all I heard within me. I constantly felt Your Grace within me and around me and deep down in me I discovered something which keeps growing, which is my love for you.

Now that Niranjana has left his work, we face some difficulties regarding the recording of the music. I will tell you later.

*My pranams at Your Lotus Feet,
Your loving child, Sunil*

When he was ready to play Savitri Book I, Canto 3 and 4 for the Mother and Niranjana had apparently returned to the work, Sunil wrote:

17.5.67

Sweet Mother,

Tomorrow will be the 18th. I will come to see You at 10:00. Victor and Niranjana will come with me. And if it does not disturb You, we would prefer to arrive early, say at 9:30 or around quarter to ten to put the instruments around.

The music will last one hour.

I send You my thousand pranams

At Your lotus Feet

your loving child

Sunil

The Mother writes in the margin:

You can come at a quarter to ten so that everything is ready when I come.

Blessings
Mother

In December Sunil was finishing up the 1968 New Year Music and wrote:

7.12.67

I will start the recording of the January 1st music in a few days. I'm sure that the music will be ready before the 22nd of December. It will be about twenty minutes long. I tell You now because it will be easier for You to fix a day in advance between the 22nd and 31st of December. I think it would suit us perfectly if You could give us half-an-hour of one of Your mornings....

You wrote me that it will be tomorrow, the 28th of December that you will be able to listen to the January 1st music, but You did not indicate the time. Is it at 10 o'clock? Which means, can we enter Your room and arrange the instruments before You arrive? In any case, I'll come tomorrow with the instruments — Victor and Suresh Hindocha will come with me.

Nothing worked well this time. The machines were against me. The day before yesterday I saw You in a dream...and yesterday we could do something, first because someone has lent me a machine, then because Arun Kumar has allowed us to work during the night after 9:00 o'clock and also in the projection room and with their instruments. Suresh has worked all day yesterday and Victor and Jules (who works with Nirwaneli) have worked till 1:30 AM. I am strongly grateful to these young people for their enthusiasm.

You told me the other day that You don't have the power of engineering, but since the moment when You touched the big tape recorder till now, it has worked very, very well. It's for this reason that I could start again all the music one more time. I

had to work, but now I'm happy.

Here is the prayer to you, Petite Mère, that You listen to this January 1st music when we play it in the Ashram. Do You want me to ask Biswanath to place a speaker near the door of Your room?

*I send You my thousand Pranams at Your lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother answers:

Thursday 28th will do.
Blessings
Mère

Sunil writes about a problem with one of his recording engineers:

Tomorrow it is the 8th of February. We will come about 20 to 10:00 with the instruments to play the music for the last 24 recitations of canto 4, Book I of Savitri. The music is about one hour, ten minutes long. Would You like to tell Champaklal so that he allows us to enter the small room so that we could arrange everything before You arrive?

I will come with Suresh. I don't know if Victor will come with us tomorrow. He is angry. He has a very inflated head now. He cannot stand the presence of Suresh. I have scolded him for that. Later on he wanted to experiment — the result was not good at all. I have asked him to work as usual. He didn't like that. He was angry and he is still now angry. He is not coming to my house, and it is possible that he will not come tomorrow with us.

But Suresh will arrange everything. I do not worry about that. Suresh will set up everything for us.

*I send You my thousand pranams
at your lotus Feet
Your loving child, Sunil*

The Mother answered:

As a matter of fact, Victor wrote me that he no longer wished to work with you. I did not understand why and I did not answer. Now it is clear. So, it is clear and it does not matter. Come with Suresh.

Tomorrow, there is an unavoidable visit at 11:30. So, I will ask you and Suresh to take away your things when the music is finished.

With my blessings
Mother

In 1968 Sunil wrote to his friend and benefactor, Gambelon:

Till now the post were not telling me anything and the post office of the Ashram.... It's Kumar who brought me your letter. And here I am fully in the work of deciphering your letter. Apart from one very small word — I have succeeded in reading it completely. I am really happy that your stay in Beirut was so agreeable.

On the 8th of February everything went well in front of the Mother. She told me that the music of each Savitri canto is better than the one before and this time She told me that really it is magnificent and that She has found places where the music was very near perfection. This shows that I'm progressing... There was a surprise for me. The Mother entered the room saying, "Sunil, there is a convert. The German dancer who danced yesterday evening to your music is transformed by your music." She had invited a German dancer to listen to this Savitri with us and he and Udar were with us while the Mother listened to the music. The one who has seen this dance told me that this man is really gifted. He was gone immediately after, but he came back, he came to me yesterday. He is going to dance to some passages of Savitri on the 28th of February.

So, my dear friend, here is the news which interests me at

the moment. I have a lot to do now. Victor is not anymore with me — it seems that he has written to Mother that he does not want to work anymore with me. The Mother has told me that She has not answered him because She had not understood what happened. She understood after I explained the cause. At least Suresh is here to help me.

We think a lot of you. You were here more than a brother to me.

Sunil

Later that year, Sunil writes to Gambelon astonished that one person could say of his Savitri music that it lacked emotion!:

At last a quiet is settling down around me — a grey comforting shadow but — within me the stillness is yet to come. The insane relish of work is gone, the allegretto agitato of strings have died down but I can however hear muffled base chords resounding like heavy footfalls of strangers along the corridors of my mind. Yet deep within me there is a still pool which sends back the image of a light that is burning somewhere.

You knew my dear friend that my Savitri was a failure as far as public appreciation was concerned, compliments were few and far between and even then ... above me. A gentleman came to congratulate me on my Savitri — He said what he liked in my music is the total absence of emotion. Oh God! What a compliment! Is that how the people feel about my music? If these musics fail to stir their senses, do not move something within them, and bring even an infinitesimal fraction of what I felt when I wrote them? Emotion if it grows to the Divine, does it look like intellect and abstraction? Yet there are men who search God and Light and they do not know Love when they see it or, in other words, do you realize the Divine without love? What I fail to understand is that my Savitri when it is most inspired is also the most emotional of my musics I have ever written. “Mortality bears ill the Eternal’s Truth.” [Savitri,

Book I, Canto 1]

So I ponder lying on my armchair and reviewing in endless procession the events of my recent past.

At any rate now I am fair and fresh — waiting and counting my days before the bell for that next bout of composition rings. By the way, in my last letter to you I told you of the German dancer Rolf Gelewski. He danced with some selected passages of Savitri (4th canto). It was superb.

I expect you are all right. Often in the evenings I figure you stacking with your tape recorder beautiful masterpieces that come over the radio. A moment aglow with “the touch of infinity”. I am sure you must be missing something, the beating of the saucepan or does she, your mother, continue it even now? And what about these delectable dishes you call desserts, do you still continue to produce them? Here in Pondicherry the firework of the weather is about to begin soon. The summer is just around the corner. Scattered clouds are just drifting by. It is raining somewhere in the eastern plateau. Masons are working in our house—our ladies are exhilarated—and I am just waiting and listening... your Helmut Walcha is truly a great soloist.

Rolf gives his own account of that first encounter with Sunil's music:

“In 1968 I visited for the first time the Sri Aurobindo Ashram to present there a recital of creative dancing. It so happened that during a rehearsal at the theatre a member of the Ashram community came in and brought a tape with ‘The Mother's Music’ asking me to dance it during the show. The music was not familiar to me and at first, it sounded strange to me, but I did as requested and opening myself and giving myself to it, I performed it on that same night. Later on I learned that ‘The Mother's Music’ was the music composed by an Indian, who was a resident of the Ashram — Sunil. And, a significant coincidence, I was asked by the

Mother to listen together with her to new compositions of Sunil on the following morning (Music for the poem Savitri from Sri Aurobindo) and it was there, in the Mother's room, that Sunil and I met for the first time."

During a later visit to the Ashram Rolf performed for the Mother again and Sunil wrote about setting up equipment for the music for this session:

8.1.70

Sweet Mother,

Rolf wrote me that You have allowed me to come with him tomorrow to put the amplifier, the loudspeakers, etc.

As he is dancing before You, and as a result very near the plugs in Your room, I don't think it is safe to plug the tape recorder and the amplifier in the plugs in Your room. I suggest that we install the tape recorder and the amplifier in the little room for interviews and we put the loudspeaker in Your room with an extension cable long enough. What do You think of that idea?

Could Victor and Suresh come with me?

I send You my thousand pranams at Your Feet

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answered:

I do not think this is possible as there would be three rooms to cross. But if you have only one tape recorder, you can put it in the room itself.

Blessings

In February of 1968 the Mother sent Sunil a schedule for the showing of Huta's paintings for Savitri along with Sunil's music:

February 1968

Savitri music and slides

Wednesday	21	
Friday	23	(meditation 22)
Saturday	24	
Monday	26	(meditation 25)
Tuesday	27	

The Mother

Later Sunil wrote about continuing to compose music in conjunction with Huta's Savitri paintings:

Sweet Mother,

I send you a letter I just received from Huta. She explains very well what she wants to say but, unfortunately, I cannot draw any conclusion from it.

Do you wish me to discontinue the composition of this Savitri music?

I am waiting for your guidance.

I offer You all my pranams at Your Lotus Feet.

Your loving child, Sunil

The Mother answered:

The Savitri music is a business between you and me and does not depend on anybody else.

Continue without anxiety and everything will be all right.

With my blessings,

Mother

Huta decided, after all, to use the Mother's music rather than Sunil's to accompany her paintings and again Sunil wrote to the Mother:

*Petite Mère, Huta has told me that she does not use any more my music on Savitri with her slides. Once, you wrote to tell me that my music on Savitri is something between you and me. Does it mean that you still encourage me to continue this music, slides or no slides ? Would it not produce confusion if there are two sets of music on Savitri ? Your decision is vitally important for me. I expect you will help me to arrive at the right inner attitude. Awaiting your reply and sending you my loving pranams, Your loving child,
Sunil*

The Mother answered:

Huta wanted to publish something and I gave her permission. But your music is essential for Savitri and, of course, it must be used. Come tomorrow at 3 p.m. and we both shall sort things out together.

Love and blessings, Mother

Gambelon wrote to Sunil telling his feelings about uncoupling his work on the Savitri music from Huta's paintings:

It does not seem to me important that you don't compose anymore music for the Huta's paintings slides. This wedding of three (text, music, painting) will be replaced by a wedding of two, they are the best. I don't believe that the disadvantage will be for you. In all the classical music, and in the modern music I know nearly nothing which comes directly from the psychic, how Huta cannot realize it.....

*Yours sincerely
Gambelon*

Sunil, when his music was played in the playground, used to stand and listen to at least part of it. On one occasion he wrote to his friend Gambelon:

They are playing again my Savitri and showing the slides in the playground, and this time people are hearing it with a quietness and had these boys in the projector room played the music with a little more care we could have built up an atmosphere in them. These boys not only play the tapes badly, they have damaged one of my original tapes (2nd Canto). Today and tomorrow they will be playing the 4th Canto—and I have been obliged to make copies from the original and supply them with these.

Again to Gambelon:

The book on “magneto phone” that you sent me I have read it completely twice. I know now in broad outline the principles of a tape recorder — but the trouble is my knowledge of valves, their functions, condensers and the functioning of an amplifier is very poor. So if you get a similar book (for laymen) which explains the functioning of an amplifier please send it to me. Remember that mathematics is no terror for me.

Later Gambelon sends the book and Sunil writes:

Thanks very much for the book. The getup of the book has quite a professional look, and if I can somehow manage to go through the book I expect I will have quite a good grasp of the mechanics of a tape recorder.

When Gambelon offered to pay for improvements in Sunil's music room Sunil wrote:

M. André Morisset came to see me one day and he said that the Mother wants me to find out the costs of fixing the two doors, a fan etc... and give them to him so that he can send it back to you. He said Gambelon wants to pay for them, and Mother has said to let it be done. I asked Abhay Singh to come, he came and he said that he will give the estimate

directly to André. I have asked Dutta to give an estimate for the fixing of a fan. My sisters and sister-in-law are busy with the other things. You will know the price in course of time. My advice to you is not to spend so much money on useless things. If we have managed all these years without the doors we can manage it another ten years of my life. If the musics are really good they can be re-recorded under better conditions by better people. But doors or no doors, I am deeply grateful to you for your affection for me and for my work. Noble gestures have a magic of their own — they are eyes that weave into a treasure of honey in the works of God and bring a breath of God here on our shore of mire.

Sunil

Sunil thanks Gambelon for a gift of money and comments on the studio repair estimates:

Twenty dollars is a great deal of money and a great deal of responsibility. As soon as I get it changed into rupees I will put the money in the almirah to be spent for useful purposes. Gradually things are accumulating around me which constantly remind me of your affection for me and of your interest for my work. I am deeply grateful to you for all this.

By the way, I came to know that M. Morrisset has sent you the estimates — and that all of these estimates together will come to a nice total. I feel that these alleviations are not necessary at all just now — so I advise you to just keep quiet.

Not willing to give up on the idea of making improvements to Sunil's studio, Gambelon sends payment, and Sunil writes:

Yesterday I received your letter along with M. Morrisset's letter to you and a copy of your answer to him. To me the estimates quoted therein seem to be simply frivolous. You should have listened to my advice to you and postponed the whole affair. To spend so much money just to make the room

a little more comfortable is senseless. All through my life I have learnt to suit myself to difficult conditions. They affect me very little. But now that you have sent the money I will see that the work is properly done. I have noted all the points to be considered about the arrangement of lights that you have explained in your letter. M. Morisset has not told me anything as yet. Perhaps your letter is still with the Mother. Let me tell you my friend I am really very grateful to you for all this, above all for your concern about me and my work. You are becoming more and more involved in my work. When Niranjana gave up, I felt helpless and alone. I did not have the knowledge and the means to maintain the tape recorders. Here I am doing it fine. The credit is entirely yours.

Sunil

Paris in the spring of 1968 saw student protests and confrontations with police which spread to a general strike in France involving almost a quarter of the population and bringing the country to a near standstill. The government of President Charles de Gaulle was in peril and for a brief time he fled to a French military base in Germany. Returning to France, he called an election and threatened to declare a state of emergency. De Gaulle's party won the election and from that point the crisis began to subside. Sunil writes:

The letter within the envelope was written by me on the 23rd of May but I did not post it because just before posting I learned that all communication with Paris is suspended. Planes leaving India were not touching the Paris airport at all. So I thought it safer not to post the letter at that time because it might easily go astray and get lost. Today I am posting both of these letters with the hope that they will reach you safely.

We are all very anxious for you. It is true that you are quite removed from the centre of agitation i.e. Paris and living as you do within the Mother's protection nothing untoward can happen to you, but from the accounts we get from the

press it is clear that the agitation has spread everywhere and there has to be some annoying repercussion at Blois — some inconveniences you had to go through because the times were not normal. I pray and hope that everything is now running smoothly for you.

Before I used to like de Gaulle but the way he has handled the situation till now has filled me with admiration for him. I wish we had one like him in India. But really why did it happen? And three francs an hour! Is it not ridiculous to be offered more than thousand rupees per month — an average worker here would earn that money in one and a half years!

Anyway, sit down immediately and write everything about you to me.

Sunil

Sunil writes to the Mother about an offer from Gambelon to buy a harmonium for him:

Sweet Mother,

Gambelon is willing to send me a good harmonium. He asked me to get an import license to avoid tax from the customs. Jayantilal went to see the government officers and, according to him, the only way to do it is that Gambelon sends this harmonium to our Education Center. Do You want us to do it like that?

Up to now, I have not resumed music seriously. I am going to start again.

Before going to Delhi, Victor came to see me. He told me he would start again his recording work when he comes back.

I send You my thousand pranams At Your Lotus Feet —

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answers:

Good

Blessings

Mère

Sunil tells Gambelon that the Mother agrees to the idea of importing Gambelon's harmonium in the name of the Ashram Centre of Education:

I have received your parcel of adhesive tapes, leader tapes, clips, etc. The parcel was lying there in the post-office for a few days because they forgot to inform me about it. Now that I have got them I am wondering why the customs people did not claim any duty from me. There are enough leader tapes to last through my lifetime.

I read the copy of your letter to the Mother. I do not know as yet what she thinks about all the proposals. As far as the harmonium is concerned I wrote to her and got her green signal to go ahead with the proposed, namely that the import license be issued in the name of the Centre of Education and it is then that I sent to you the letter drafted by Jayantilal to be signed and sent back to the Director of our Centre of Education. You must have received the letter by now.

The model 7415 of the Lindholm harmonium is perfectly suitable for my purpose, however in these respects you are a better judge than I am. So I depend upon you. But do nothing now — you have to wait till the import license is issued.

The picture of the chateau on Loire that you visit very often is exceedingly fine — one feels that your ancient kings knew how to live properly. By the way to which favourite of Louis XV did you allude? Was it Madame Duberry? Or Pompadour?

The picture I am sending you is the photograph of a fresco on the wall of a very small room in a temple at Pannamalai — about 40 miles from here. The temple is situated on a small hill in a picturesque surrounding. The name is Talgiriswar Temple — not very much known to people around here. The lady is Durga (or Parvati as she is called when she is thought of as a consort to Shiva) — she is watching Shiva dance. Shiva

is not seen in the photograph.

Sunil

When Gambelon wanted to play some of Sunil's music to the French modern classical composer Olivier Messiaen Sunil explained why he thought his 1965 New Year Music would be a better choice than the 1968 New Year Music and the relationship between an inward-turning nature and receptivity to what is expressed in his music:

I see that you have not understood me exactly when I wrote to you that it is better to play the New year's Music 1965 to M. Olivier Messiaen, as it is better orchestrated. I did not mean that the 1965 music is any deeper or even better than 1968. What I wanted to say is that it will be easier for him to tune himself to the source of my inspiration when the music itself is more successfully orchestrated, more so because he will be hearing this type of music for the first time. For you personally this question naturally does not arise. You are one of us, simpatico, a dedicated one. In other words your curiousness looks inwards and so you do not have to strain to find Her touches in my music even in passages which will fail to have any effect on others. This much I know my dear Gambelon, from my own experience, that the more the power, the more the inspiration, the fewer is the number of people who will respond to it. People in general, and musicians specially, have more respect for virtuosity and complicated movements even when the music degenerates into a mentalised, mathematical but otherwise highly successful presentation. I do not deny that there is beauty in it. In fact the beauty of the Mahalakshmi's presence is there everywhere, "in the blue of the sky, or in the green of the leaves," in the form of a pentagonal dodecahedron or in the conjunction of a circle tangent to three given circles.

I am glad that M. Morisset rang you up from Paris and as far as I remember he told me that he will send the tape to you by post. Please listen to the music of 1965 and let me know of your appreciation before we decide which of the musics you

will play finally. I am sending herewith a typed copy of a tape recorded conversation with the Mother where she explains to me what this music is supposed to express. Listen also to the original electronic organ music of the Mother, played on 28 October 1965 and tell me how you like it.

I have passed on the card you sent to Jayantilal. He smiled but did not make any comments. He said that practically no ship from Madras comes to Pondicherry. Ships, carrying fertilizers only, come to Pondicherry port from foreign countries, and these ships accept no other merchandise. The difficulty of customs could be solved very easily if only they accepted that the harmonium is an educational instrument which they are not doing just now. Our education centre has written to the government at New Delhi to direct the customs authorities to do so. We are just waiting for the answer.

The repairs of the room upstairs are progressing slowly. Abhay Singh has constructed the doors and a rack — but he is yet to transform two shelves of the rack into a cupboard. The carpet and the curtains have not come as yet. Here we like to live in peace and leisure and if some things are to be done we take our time to do it.

Sunil

Again to Gambelon:

On the 3rd, I went to see the Mother. She was as usual beautiful and gracious, and bountiful. What She gave me is more than I can deserve. She also told me that this time She will not play for the New Year Music and it is I who should find for myself and get something done. She will hear the music when it is ready. She also asked me if my room has been arranged — and when I said “yes” She told me “Do you know it is Gambelon who has paid for it?”

Now that the room is more or less completed I must say that it will be very very comfortable to work there in future.

Sunil

When the studio renovations were completed:

Gambelon,

The studio room upstairs is now complete. With the new doors, a carpet, and curtains, fan, lights, additional plug points, the room has a different look altogether. When the doors are closed a considerable portion of the sounds, crows' noise, etc. are cut off. And it is really comfortable. I am thankful to you for this and I only wish you were here to see the room.

I have practically completed the composition of the New Year Music and I hope to start the recording soon.

I have received the mini-fan you have sent me. There is something wrong in it — it does not work. I have given it to be repaired to our electric department. They said there is something wrong with the coil in it. They are looking into it.

Sunil

The next letter to Gambelon:

Days and weeks pass and then recede. I have even lost count of them. Daily, morning, I go to the garden cycling — just potter about a little — drink a cup of coffee they give me and come back home. I have done very few compositions since February and even then they do not satisfy me. I have laid them aside and perhaps they will never see the light of the day. I am still waiting for a new lamp that will light my way into the future. What do you think?

After a long silence your letter was very very welcome to me. I got a real pleasure going through your letter — your comments on the origin and growth of anarchy in Paris were very interesting. In yesterday's paper I found that the Gaullists are returning to the assembly in great strength. This only shows what I expected that the general public will tolerate no nonsense from our leftist comrades. I hope the election on next

Sunday will only confirm this. By the way, what do you mean exactly by “consumer society” (société de consommation)?

Sunil

Sunil compares his days in Pondicherry with his friend Gambelon's days in Poitou:

I received your letter along with a picture card of a beautiful Poitou cottage and an equally attractive canal on a backdrop of bush verdure. The most interesting fact about Poitou is the absence of any road, I mean in this particular region of Poitou. The only sounds that you are likely to hear are birds rustling through the leaves and twigs, rain pattering on your window pane, birds chirping and lowing of herds of cattle mixed occasionally with human voices and at night I imagine you hear soft piano sounds through the lighted windows — maybe somebody is playing Chopin. Delightful! And then you have your small white boat safely tucked and tied in a small cove somewhere near the house. No question of cycling through a mad rush of traffic when you want to go to your garden. What about mosquitoes? I am sure there are not any in those temperate regions. At least there shouldn't be any. The more I think about these regions the more I realize how much we changed the environment in which we live.

Now that I have your program I can easily compare it with mine. At about 12:30 A.M. Blois time I get up usually and then I read or compose till 2:30 A.M. Blois time is actually when you are snoring peacefully and I am up and about busy with this or that and then at 11:30 Pondy time I see you leisurely leave your bed and start your day's chores while here I play a little harmonium, take my food, read your ‘magnetophone’ and perhaps sleep a little; go out, come home again and try to compose a little and still you are on your two feet and doing your work and at five minutes to five Pondy time, your mother comes to the kitchen and you start taking your lunch. At that time I also get up from my harmonium and get ready for the

afternoon tea. The period of the day in which we are both awake and active is between 6:30 A.M. to 6 P.M Blois time. The rest of the time one of us is sleeping. The only period when both of us are sleeping is between 10 P.M. to midnight Blois time (supposing that you go to bed at ten in the evening).

Sunil

Again to Gambelon:

I have learnt with relief that De Gaulle has come back to power with a sound majority and I expect he will now take firm steps and will cut everybody to his proper size.

Here everything is going on as usual. Now at times a slate coloured alt stratus cloud forms a continuous ceiling and stratocumulus clouds float 8000 ft over us threatening some rains. But the rains are yet to come. Around Pondy there is considerable activity now among the farmers. They are transplanting paddy into submerged rice fields. The water used comes from the wells. Unless it rains within the next few days in the Madras State, the outlook of a good harvest will be poor especially in the Tanjore district where they depend entirely on the water from the Madras dam and on the rains.

Here in the Ashram we the human seedlings are struggling how to grow — to grow into the likeness of our dreams. Within me I feel a quiet and silence again after a long time — a love for something or someone I can never figure out — the music, is it in the air? I don't know.

Thanks again dear friend for all you have done for me.

Love and best regards

Sunil

Then a long entry with Sunil explaining what he has understood is the nature of a consumer society:

For a long time I did not receive any letter from you. In fact as far as I recollect the answers to my last two letters never

came and I do not know even now whether you have received a small packet containing some envelopes.

But in any case I have received a tape which was passed on to me by Gauri. Even as I thank you for the tape I admit that I have not as yet listened to all the musics that are recorded therein, but only a portion of the 1st track.

I think I have now got the gist of what you call a consumer's society. In fact the way I see it, this form of society is the logical outcome of the drive towards modernization of industrial complexes and of increasing output and more so when the industrial capacity is concentrated in the hands of private interests, a set of industrial magnates. The aim is to produce more and more gadgets sufficiently cheap to be within the reach of the buyer's capacity, to make more profit from increased number of sales than from a few buyers. To put more and more money in the pockets of the workers and to surround them more and more with items of ease and luxury and to encourage them to spend whatever they earn. The ideal worker earns a lot but spends it all. The ideal producer tries to make very little profit in individual items, but makes up more than sufficiently on bulk in an expanding market. The philosophy behind this movement is that man lives for himself alone and money can do him no good when he is dead and buried 3 ft under the soil, so make hay while the sun shines.

The glitter of such a form of society is irresistible for people all over the world who had been denied this luxury through generations. And today an affluent society is a consumer's society that all the underdeveloped nations are trying to emulate. But the trouble arises when one tries to equate this affluence with consideration, happiness with possessions. Necessities are more often of vital origin than physical, and happiness is not something that we receive from without; it is not even a state of mind which is maintained, as if a balance of a continuous feeling of want and its satisfactions. Happiness comes from within and is something positive which grows within you and lives within you.

Then some of the happiest men in the world are also the poorest. There happened to live near Krisnanaju in Nepal, a Brahmin. He had a profound knowledge of Vedas but he was one of the poorest. The Maharaja of Krisnanaju came to hear about him and he invited him to come to the court. When he presented himself in the court the Maharaja told him that he, the Maharaja, has made up his mind to settle some properties on him, the Brahmin, so that the latter could live in comparable ease. The Brahmin was really confused. He said, "But Maharaja I am very happy — and in fact I have no wants — I live under a tamarind tree, my wife can always get some rice from here and there and then there is the tamarind tree which gives me leaves and fruits all the year." He refused the gift and went away from the court because he thought it would be more bother looking after the properties.

My grandfather was a man who had extensive properties and when he died he left a debt of three million rupees. And yet he used to move about with wooden sandals and a dhoti — a chaddar to cover the upper part of his body on occasions. He was a devout Brahmin and had no vices. His only weakness was to make gifts of things to people in the village and around the village.

The ideal is to have things and yet not to possess them — to know that things belong as much to you as you can get service out of them and look constantly within, which is the source of all durable happiness. Such a form of society is envisaged in the declaration of the Mother during the inauguration of Auroville, a dynamic form of society that is inspired and ruled from within — at once rich and creative, and yet with "a heart of silence in the hands of joy." But, my dear friend, it is very, very difficult to get the better of ignorance — and our natures are so utterly fallen that we can give to others only pain. We are more often as not guided by our own warped laws and we turn against anything that goes contrary to our own possessiveness.

Your days at Blois, I presume, must be gliding through rain

and sunshine — more rain than sunshine according to your information. Autumn is coming — the days of apple tarts are going to be over soon. It is pleasant to imagine those lovely trees of Poitou turning first yellow, then brown and quite often scarlet. In the evening twilight the smoke coming out of the chimneys of those pretty cottages will weave patterns near and tempt you with a glowing, warm hearth.

May She give you Light and more Light, may She give you faith and more faith and may Her Love grow in you till you can reach out to the skies. In the meantime, I thank you because you have been gentle to me and kind and loving. I send my best regards to you and to your mother.

Sunil

To Gambelon regarding the Durga Puja day and Sunil's music Durga:

As I sit down to write this letter to you I look at my watch — it shows 5:35 and the date is 1st of October. So there you are, this time the letter is now duly dated. You know, Gambelon, I must confess most of the time I do not know my dates because the dates do not serve any useful purpose in my life, unless of course if there is something special in a particular date. In Bengali there is an adage that “a merchant of ginger does not know much of the ship” (ginger is produced in the country and is not imported).

Today is a special day in Bengal. You know our Mother Durga, the rider of the lion, she usually comes to visit us in Bengal once a year, leaving her snowy heights, the abode of her spouse the great Shiva. She stays just three days and the date of her departure for her home is what we call Vijaya. Literally the word “Vijaya” means victory. But in Bengal the word is pronounced in a different way and it has a different connotation — it always means the sorrow of parting from a loved one. I heard that today they are going to play my music “Durga” in the playground. They used to play it long ago on a

Durga Puja day but during the last 5 years or so they have not played it. It started right when the Mother used to come to the playground, but afterwards they did not play it for the last five years or so. Anyway, permit me to send my Vijaya greetings to you and to your mother and pray that “Her will be made the master of your fate.”

I have received your letter dated the 22nd Sept and the beautiful cards for which I thank you. The castle is really beautiful and as you have pointed out it seems to be literally stepping out of a book of fairy tales. I could not show the cards to Jayantilal because he is now on a tour to Bombay, Delhi, Calcutta etc. on some affairs connected with the press. Also I could not ask him about the shops because he is not here. When he comes back I will do both. Before leaving he drafted a letter for the university centre to send to the Finance department of the government on the question of exoneration of customs duty on the harmonium.

Abhay Singh sent Dhanwanti to me to enquire if anything else in the studio is to be done. She said Abhay Singh has received a letter from you. I told her that with the shelf they are doing now completed nothing else seems to be worth doing just now.

Recently I heard again one of the tapes you sent me — the Gregorian chants, a chorus written by Francon, cor meum, and an organ music of Bach. They are all beautiful, especially the last one. I understood that this music was written in the last few days of his life. The music has purity, majesty and loveliness of a great soul. I am really grateful to you for these beautiful tapes.

I have received the 20 dollars you sent this time but I think you misunderstood me when I wrote to you that I have spent some money from the previous 20 dollars. I have yet quite a lot of money with me from the previous 20 dollars. But anyway I am touched by your affection for me, and I thank you my dear friend.

My sister asked me to ask you why she has not heard from

you for a long time.

Sunil

A progress report on the harmonium importation and a comment on the wayward Victor:

“With the suddenness of Divine events” your letter and your gift parcels arrived one after the other. I received the letter in the morning, the cycle pump the same evening and the book next morning. I have not verified as yet but I am sure I must have grown an inch taller in the eyes of the people working in our post office. I thank you for the gifts and am really touched by the solicitude that prompted you to write such a nice letter to me. It is good to have a friend who is kind and understanding. The comments of the sisters and the Mother superior are very interesting, and they brought assurance to me.

About the harmonium, I have set the machinery in motion. Experts are now busy with the problem. I will let you know about it as soon as I get an answer. I have communicated your suggestions about the room upstairs (Studio) to my sister. I am sending you 50 envelopes by air mail and another 100 by sea-mail. I will need, not just now, one tape and a splicing tape (ruban adhésif), but there is no hurry about them. Please let me know if you want anything else from here.

Victor is now at Delhi. He has gone there for a change. Before leaving for Delhi, he came to see me. He was repentant. I am rather hopeful that he may help us in recording when he comes back from Delhi.

Sunil

Later, when Victor had returned:

Gambelon,

Victor has come back from his holiday tour of Delhi and other places. He went and saw the Mother. He told her that he would like to continue his work of recording with me. The

Mother asked him to come right back to me; She assured him that he would be welcome and She paid a compliment to me in saying that I am not a person to hold anything against anybody. She offered to write a letter to me which Victor thought was not necessary. So, Victor is back, and another worry is off my mind.

Sunil

More on the machinations for getting the harmonium to India from France:

Gambelon,

When I wrote to you last time that the affair of the harmonium is in the hands of the experts what I meant is that people like Jayantilal, Udar, Kireet Joshi, D.V. Joshi, Andre Morisset are devising to find ways and means for acquiring an import license, bypassing the customs. So far, from the bulletins they have issued from time to time, I have a feeling that the outlook is not too bright. If something hopeful turns up I will let you know later.

Here is something. Recently I needed about twenty rupees for the repair charge of our tape recorders. I felt very bad when I had to ask my sister for it. Udar wanted to give me a good loudspeaker and he had reminded me at least 6 times to give him particulars about it so that he can get it from Madras. I offered excuses but I know I cannot accept any gift from him. But here am I not only accepting gifts from you with equanimity but asking you to send me gifts. Could it be explained? I guess it could be done. There is another curious thing which puzzles me — it is that you never write anything about yourself in your letters. Could you explain that?

My sister asked me to thank you on her behalf for the designs that you sent her. She is very busy and very excited because they have an order from Christian Dior of Paris.

Sunil

Gambelon, in a letter to a friend who was willing to help procure equipment for Sunil, suggests that a proved, reliable tape recorder might be preferable to a later model machine which might be difficult to maintain in India:

Le Mans 28 October 1972

to Monsieur Pierre Etevenon, AV International France

For the tape recorder, it is clear that the section of the Ashram which takes care of that risks always not being able to follow the rapid evolution of techniques. Because of this, when considering the choice of a machine, we take a risk with a machine too advanced or not sufficiently tried out to find ourselves in front of a breakdown that no one can repair; it's my obsession. As in fact our aim is not the technique but to serve the expression of the Divine in this music and we have to adjust. Even if the machine is not the best, the essential is that it has all the chances to exist. India is far in space and time.
[copy for Sunil]

Gambelon

Micheline responds:

For the Revox ORF19/38 I persist in thinking that this equipment is the most adequate for Sunil's work and that its novelty is a quality more than a defect. As for the eventual breakdowns, it is modular and so far easier to test and eventually repair than the previous ones. The Ashram department will be the first to want to buy another one, the Dolby system being for amateurs of "high fidelity"? while the ORF19/38 is for the real professional (I use at the laboratory a tape recorder Slumberger 7 pistes, MF, de 40 000F). We will speak about it when you receive the documentation.

Sincerely yours

Micheline

In the end it was the tape recorder preferred by Gambelon that they bought for Sunil. Steve says it is a pity that Sunil was not able to get the professional machine suggested by Micheline at this time because the difference in recording quality between the two machines was substantial.

On the final efforts to get the harmonium shipped:

Gambelon,

Yesterday I received your letter of the 12th instant for which I thank you. I have nothing but admiration for the amount of work you have done within the space of a single day. I must say that you are modest when you say that here in France things go a little faster! Here in this sleepy little town of ours it is customary to receive a letter, the one you received, which calls for a spurt of activity and then to do about it nothing for a day or two. You may read the letter from time to time and gather the inner strength so much needed to quiet the agitation that you will reasonably feel in anticipation of the unpleasant hours or even days ahead. Nobody will blame you for reposing a couple of days to strengthen the nerves before you undertake a work like this. So, sure, when Jayantilal told me to send an S.O.S to you and ask you to dispatch the culprit harmonium by the 9th of December, I was practically certain that you would send me a letter back scolding me stating that if it took us more than 6 months to get a permission for import, we should also give you a reasonable amount of time to dispatch. That is why I told right at the beginning that I have nothing but admiration for the amount of work you have done in a single day.

Jayantilal is the only person who is dégoûrdi, as you have aptly put it. Without him even this much work on this side of the sea would not have been done. Yesterday you told me that revalidation (prolongation) of the license may not easily be done from here at Pondicherry, one should be at the capital to get things done. But you have time till the 31st of December (he enquired about the period of grace from the local customs),

so if there is a ship which leaves Germany before that date you can get the tropicalization done and send the harmonium by that ship. Anyway the ship must leave the port with the harmonium on or before the 31st of December.

Regarding the papers, he said we have nothing to send you, but on the contrary, you should, or the company should, send us all relevant papers (he called it "bill of lading"). In those papers the license number must be mentioned. I send you again the license number.

He also told me to ask you whether you could get an invoice from the Paris agent stating that the price of the harmonium is 1500 francs. That would help us greatly. Please remember to tell these people that there should not be any price tag on the harmonium or on the package. The latter should be addressed to the Registrar, International Centre of Education, Sri Aurobindo Ashram Pondy (you may even omit the word "Registrar").

Sunil

When the harmonium finally arrived Sunil wrote to the Mother:

Sweet Mother,

The harmonium Gambelon sent arrived yesterday morning. The packing was not well done, that is why I would need to get it repaired in two places. The breakage is not serious.

I would really like to take this harmonium upstairs to Your room and show it to You but it's a pity it can't be used now. Gambelon gave me this harmonium but You have to give me the inspiration so that I can use it for Your work.

I send You my thousand pranams

at Your Lotus Feet

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answered:

Get the harmonium repaired.
 I am sure that you
 will make good use of it.
 With my blessings
 La Mère

As it turns out this harmonium actually received relatively little use. Sunil was not happy with its tone compared with other harmoniums he had used and in the end it was eaten up by termites and Sunil felt guilty after all the trouble Gambelon had gone to in order to give the instrument for Sunil's use.

Sunil continued to see the Mother on his birthday, November 3rd and She used to play something on Her organ which Sunil recorded and used for his inspiration for the New Year Music. Here he writes to Her about his 1968 birthday:

31.10.68

Sweet Mother,

My birthday falls on Sunday, the 3rd of November. I do not know if you see people, now, on their birthdays — if you do, I will be delighted if you permit me to come and see you on that day.

For months I feel within me a presence, I do not have to concentrate. I just look within and it is there. I have not been able to decide till now if it is really you or is it my love for you? Anyway, this is a precious possession and I am happy to carry it always within me. My prayer on my birthday is that you make it last forever and forever.

Have you decided anything about the New Year Music?

I offer my love and my pranams

at your lotus Feet

your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answers:

Come on the 3rd at 10:00
 in the morning
 Blessings
 Mère

After he had begun recording the 1969 New Year Music Sunil wrote for permission to play the music for the Mother:

17.12.68

Sweet Mother,

You told me that You will listen to the January 1st music one morning. I just started the recording of the music and it will be ready in about ten days. So, I tell You right now, it will be easy for You to fix a date preferably before December 27th. The music will last between 15 and 20 minutes.

*I send You my thousand pranams at your Lotus feet,
 Your loving child
 Sunil*

The Mother answers:

Come on Saturday 28th
 at 10:00 in the morning.
 Satprem will be there and will certainly
 be happy to listen.
 Blessings
 Mère

To Sunil from an Indian correspondent who had heard Sunil's music at a dance recital of Rolf Gelewski:

19.2.69

We recently had a performance of modern dance by Mr. Rolf Gelewski. In this, he used two or four compositions entitled "Silence and Sounds from Afar (Intensifications)" and "New

Songs". The atmosphere that it created was very elevating. I found the music very beautiful indeed.

Amarjit Singh

Sunil's replies:

26.2.69

Dear Dr. Singh,

I am very happy to receive your letter and your kind appreciation of my music for which I thank you.

The music which Mr. Rolf Gelewski took with him for his dances were selected from musics on Savitri, the great epic written by our Master and guru, Sri Aurobindo. These musics are played in the background when slides of paintings illustrating some selected passages from Savitri are projected on the screen. As such, all these musics incorporate also the lines from Savitri read by the Mother of our Ashram. Mr. R. Gelewski for the convenience of his performance erased the recitations in his dance "Silence and Sounds from Afar (Intensifications)."

I can get these musics with the recitations recorded for you and, I am sure, you will like them better with the words included, as what has been attempted, was to convey through the music the deeper feelings of the passages read. As for the "New Songs", (they are also from Savitri) I can get them recorded for you in the same form and in the same sequence in which you heard them. If there is enough tape I can also send you some more passages from Savitri.

Finally, let me assure you, dear Dr. Singh, that the pleasure in making these recordings available to you is entirely mine.

Sunil

When Sunil had recorded the Savitri music for Dr. Singh, he wrote back repeating that Rolf Gelewski had erased the spoken lines of *Savitri* from the recording purely for the convenience of his dance and stresses again the importance of the lines themselves:

Dear Dr. Singh,

I have recorded on your tape some musics of mine including the one Mr. Rolf Gelewski used for the last dance in his performances and which he called "New Songs". He suggested also, that I send you some more of my compositions.

The music which Mr. Gelewski took with him for his dances were chosen from musics on Savitri, the great epic written by our master and Guru Sri Aurobindo. These musics are played as a background when slides of paintings illustrating some passages from Savitri are projected on the screen. As such all these musics incorporate also the recitations of the passages at the end of each of the musics. The recitation of these passages are done by the Mother of our ashram. Mr. Gelewski erased the recitations for the convenience of his performance. On the 2nd track of your tape I have recorded some related passages from Savitri. I also send you a cyclostylus copy of the passages read. These lines from Savitri are such that their beauty may be understood and appreciated even when one is not familiar with the main work from which they are taken. I may point out, however, to you that the word "He" in these passages represents the aspiring soul and "She" represents the Divine Grace, the descending Light.

I am glad that the tape reached you safely.

Here is an attempt to answer your questions to the best of my capacity.

1) The voice you heard in "The Hour of God" and Savitri is, indeed, Mother's; the live recordings were done by Bishwanath and Huta respectively, and a copy of these recordings was given to me for my use in my recordings. The Mother heard the final recordings with music and approved of them in my presence.

Finally let me assure you that the pleasure of making these recordings available to you is entirely mine.

Sunil

Dr. Singh replies:

8.6.69

I received the tape on which you kindly got the music recorded on return from abroad. I have listened to this elevating music, and I am indeed most grateful to you for having recorded it for me. I congratulate you on the beautiful compositions. I hope it may be possible for us to meet some time in the North or the South.

Amarjit Singh

Sunil answers:

I am glad to receive your letter of appreciation for which I thank you. These musical compositions, which I recorded for you, along with many others that I have written in the last ten or twelve years have been, for me, a labour of love, a way of seeking a Light that I have vaguely felt within me and around me. I am indeed happy that this music has, after all, some message for you. I reciprocate fully your feeling that it should be possible for us to meet somewhere sometime. The Divine willing, things may so arrange that we may see more of each other, and I assure you, Dr. Singh, the pleasure will be mine. I send you my best regards. Thanking you, again, for your kind letter.

Sunil

In the spring of 1969 Sunil was working on music for the 5th Canto of Savitri, Book I with recitations of the verses read in French by the Mother:

19.4.69

Sweet Mother,

So, tomorrow, at 2:45 p.m., You will hear the selection You just made of Savitri with the recitations in French. Victor and I shall be there at around 2:30 p.m. and You just send a note when You are ready.

I send You my thousand pranams to Your Lotus Feet,

*at Your Feet
Your loving child, Sunil*

The Mother's answer:

Very good
Blessings
Mère

In fall of 1969 Sunil's music for the 5th Canto of Savitri Book I was ready and Sunil wrote:

Sweet Mother,

The music for the 5th Canto of Savitri is ready. We have prepared the two copies simultaneously, one with Your recitation in English, the other with Your recitation in French. This canto has 20 recitations — that is why the music has become a little too long — nearly 1 hour 8 minutes. As it is the same music which is behind these words in English and in French, perhaps You won't like to listen to the same music twice. If one of them should be chosen, I would prefer the music with the French words, it's the best one. If You wish, I could even shorten the piece by taking only selected passages. Anyway, You only need to fix a date now and we shall come with our machines to play before You.

The Mother's answer:

Sunil,
Saturday
4 October at 9:45
1 hour 1/4

Sunil writes back:

October 2, 1969

Sweet Mother,

Then, we shall come the day after tomorrow, Saturday, October 4th, at about a quarter to ten, for You to listen to the 5th Canto of the Savitri music. I shall be with Victor who records the music and Suresh Hindocha who looks after the maintenance of the instruments.

I decided to play the music with the recitation in French unless You prefer the other one.

*I send You my thousand pronams
at Your lotus Feet
Your loving child,
Sunil*

The Mother's answer:

It is Good
Blessings
Mère

That same fall of 1969 for the first time the Mother did not play on Her organ to help Sunil with his New Year Music. Sunil wrote:

28.10.69

Sweet Mother,

Monday, November 3rd, it's my birthday. I would like to come and see You on that day.

Did You decide anything for the New Year Music?

Is it true that You do not intend at all to play something on Your organ — even a very little piece for me? Some little thing I could breathe and imitate in the coming year?

*I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet,
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother answers:

It has been nearly a year that I have not played and really I don't know whether I shall be able to do it. You can come on your birthday at 9:45 and we shall see.

To Gambelon in the fall of 1969 on music, French culture, and the Mother's health:

Your tape has come. This time you did not announce your intention of dispatching a tape to me, so, naturally, I was a little surprised, but of course delighted. I am happier still now that I have read the list of the recorded musics. I like Marie Landowska and also somehow I am fond of court musics. In my early childhood Alexander Dumas was my favourite author — and I was long in love with most of his heroes and heroines. I was quite familiar with the royal habitations — I felt I knew them so well that I could take you around in Versailles or bring you out of a fountain spout of Fontainebleau. Louvre? Yes I know even the back hidden staircase which used to lead into Princess Marguerite's rooms and through which she used to let in the King of Navarre, her husband, without her mother Catherine de Medici becoming any wiser. Whenever I have read the history of France I have unconsciously sided with Her kings and Her nobility. They were gay and pleasureloving people in the court but they had strength within due to their faith in their king and in their nobility. If a few of them had sinned the whole lot of them have paid for the sins. But the fact remains that apart from the multitudinous chateaus, they have left a very bright legacy of a culture and of a way of life to the proletariat of a free and democratic France.

I thank you, my dear friend, and I assure you I will have immense pleasure in listening to these musics. But something surprised me. Why did you record at the grande vitesse? And you did not tell me whether I could erase and use the tape after listening.

Here, the Mother is not still all right. She has not started

her normal programmes as yet. The 3rd of November is my birthday and she usually plays organ on that day to give to me some substance for the New Year Music but I doubt if she will be able to.

Sunil

Among instruments that were offered to Sunil or actually came his way were a small type of harp which Sunil here refers to as a suramandal, but in a later note as a santoor:

28.11.69

Sweet Mother,

The small harp, Suramandal, of which a better quality is sold in New Delhi, would cost Rs. 330/- taxes etc. included. It would take them about twenty days to manufacture such an instrument. Do You wish me to send a final order?

The Mother writes in the margin:

Good

Sunil continues:

My friend, Mr. Gambelon, is suffering from varicose veins and he would like to consult Dr. Sanyal. But I suppose that Dr. Sanyal does not see people without Your authorization. Can I take him to see Dr. Sanyal?

I send You my thousand pranams

at Your Lotus Feet

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother:

Yes

Blessings
Mother

When Gambelon wanted to visit Tiruvannamallai where the famous Annamalaiyar Temple is located, Sunil wrote to Mother for permission to accompany him:

Mr. Gambelon will go to visit the Tiruvannamallai temples tomorrow. He agrees to my coming with him. He will start at 7:30 a.m. and will be back around 5 or 5:30 p.m.

*Do You wish me to go with him?
I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

Yes, you can go
with my blessings
Mother

8.12.69

Sweet Mother,

In about a week, perhaps, I shall start the recording of the New Year Music. But I don't have as yet the message for the New Year. You must read the message in front of a mike. Satprem or Françoise can do it.

The music will last around 20 minutes. You can fix a date after December 26th to hear it.

*I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother answers:

I will be able to hear
the music on Friday 26th

at 9:45.
 Blessings
 Mother

15.12.69

*Sweet Mother,
 I will then come on December 26th, at 9:45, to let You
 hear the music for New Year.
 But I still did not get Your message. I will need it soon.
 Does the recording of Your voice present a problem? Do You
 want me to send a small note to Satprem? Or Françoise?
 I send You my thousand pranams
 at Your Lotus Feet
 Your loving
 child Sunil*

The Mother's response:

Send a note to Satprem who is coming next Wednesday. He will bring the text in French and in English.

Blessings
 Mother

Again from Sunil about the small harp:

25.12.69

*Sweet Mother,
 I will come, then, tomorrow with Victor and Suresh for
 You to hear January 1st music. This time, I gave a very small
 chant from the Rig-Veda, of which I send You Sri Aurobindo's
 translation. The melody for this chant is taken from a musical
 phrase You played on October 30th, 1965.
 It seems You won't have to pay for the santoor (small harp)
 I ordered in New Delhi. The father of Karunamayur (a lady
 who works in the New Delhi Ashram with Surendra Jauhar),
 a Mr. Krishnachandra, is willing to pay for this instrument.*

He, too, is a musician and he is very happy to be able to offer You a musical instrument. If You would give him a card with Your blessings, I could send it to him.

*I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother writes:

Here is a card for him
blessings
Mother

As Manoj says, there were many attempts to persuade Sunil to allow his music to be commercialized and at different times he gave it some thought. Here is his answer to one friend who had tried to convince him of the merits of publishing his music:

Since we had our talk when you were here last month regarding the publicity of my music I have been giving some thoughts on the subject. The more I am thinking about it the more diffident I become. I believe and lately I feel within me a fear of any publicity at all. Nights I think I would write to the Mother about it, next morning I have changed my mind. My feeling on the subject is that this music of mine belongs to the Mother, to me and to you all who labour and aspire for a destiny of Divine fulfilment in life and it is we only who will share the joy of a close community of life with a music of our own — Making the music public is a way of utilizing this music for purposes other than for what it was conceived. I am perfectly aware of the argument that he gives to convince me. Otherwise there are times when I would prefer to move on my feelings than on my logic to guide my actions. So let us forget all about the project of publicizing my music.

Apart from the question of selling Sunil's music was the issue of allowing people outside the ashram to copy the music and the question of copyright protection. Sunil wrote to the Mother in French:

I send You a letter I just received from the Duncans, "Crescent Moon", USA. You will read this letter and take decisions on the following points :

Can we entrust them the right to copy Savitri from their tape in order to give it to the people who will ask for it?

The Mother answers in the margin:

Yes

Should it be appropriate that they stick a label on these tapes with the mention: "All rights reserved"?

The Mother:

Yes

Can we ask those who would like a copy to send me a tape by mail? At least, those who are well-off?

The Mother:

Yes

*This, because there is always a problem with the tapes.
I am waiting for Your decisions.
I send You my pranams to Your Lotus Feet,
At Your Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother:

Blessings
Mère

The Mother again suggests someone to work with Sunil in his music:

Sunil,
I send you Yatanti, she is a musician and really loves music. It seems to me she could be a good asset for your orchestra.
Would you like to try?
Blessings
Mother

We have no record whether Sunil was able to accommodate Yatanti in his orchestra as he was already his own organ player, but later the Mother writes again about Yatanti and her playing on the organ:

21.1.70

Sunil, my dear child,
Yatanti would like to play on my organ which is with you now and this seems all right to me. Would it be possible for her to come and play when that does not disturb anybody?
She will bring you this letter, and I hope it will be all right with you.
Blessings

Sunil's answer:

22.1.70

*Sweet Mother,
So, it is agreed that Yatanti will come every day at my place between 5 and 6:30 p.m. to play on Your organ. It won't disturb anybody.
I send You my thousand pranams*

*at Your Lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother's reply:

Very good
My love and my blessings

Sunil asks whether he should go to Madras to see about some new musical instruments which are being offered:

8.3.70

Sweet Mother,

From what Jayantilal told me, there is a man in Madras who has invented four different music instruments and he is ready to offer them to an institution such as ours (one of them has piano keys and the sound of a veena).

Here are two questions about that :

i) Shall we accept them?

ii) As this person insists that I come to Madras so that he can explain me how to use them, do You want me to go with Jayantilal next time he goes to Madras? I don't consider this trip proposal with pleasure.

Tomorrow morning, as already arranged, one person I know, Mr. George Blomeyer will come to see You and, as You wrote me "come with him, etc.," I shall come with him.

I send You my thousand pranams at

Your Feet of Lotus

Your loving child

Sunil

On the back of the letter Mother wrote:

You don't need to go to Madras if you don't want to.
I shall see you tomorrow morning as agreed.

with my blessings

Gambelon was always concerned with the quality of the recordings of Sunil's music, feeling that enough care was not being taken to record the music faithfully.

Le Mans, 13.1.1970

Dear friend

I have well received your letter of 4.1, and the first January music as well as Gauri's letter.

If you allow me I will tell you three things about this first January recording.

1) The voice of the Mother is a catastrophe and breaks my soul. Is she better now?

2) The inspiration of your music is very beautiful, always more aspiring, more psychic. This organ serves very well this inspiration.

3) The recording is very bad, it is infinitely regrettable. I think that preliminary trials should have been done, and if Victor cannot overcome the difficulties of recording, (organ), I will suggest him to write to ORTF. They will certainly answer and will advise him usefully (he has now good relations there).

If I understand well, this recording has been done by microphone. As far as I am concerned I have done some very well in taking directly from the tape recorder socket which exists generally on all the organs. Of course you wanted to add other instruments and this complicates matters; but I am certain that it is possible to overcome the difficulties which appear.

Strange also what Gauri told me concerning your difficulties with your singers. Obstacles seem always rise at the coming of our ideal. God knows if I have felt the 'hostile' forces; it is a reality in Sri Aurobindo's yoga.

In thanking you I send you my best greetings

Gambelon

The question of the Mother reading the French translation of *Savitri* for Sunil's music came up and Sunil wrote:

17.7.70

Sweet Mother,

I have just finished the composition for the first two cantos of Savitri Book II. Soon we shall start the recording of the music. I wonder if You would like to go on with the translation in French of these passages. There are only 16 passages in all and You can do it slowly and quietly without worrying about the time. The music with the French recitations was always a success and I would really like to have Your recitations in French. If You agree, I will give the texts in English to Françoise.

*I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother answered:

I agree. I will do it
with pleasure
blessings

Regarding the same music, but with the English recitations from *Savitri*:

29.9.70

Sweet Mother,

The music for the first two cantos of Savitri Book II is ready with Your recitations in English. It is not urgent, but it goes without saying that it would be a great joy for me if You could hear it one of these days. You are absolutely free to choose any day, say by the end of October or even in November if You prefer. The music lasts one hour.

*I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The answer, although not in the Mother's handwriting:

Mother has said:
October 9th at 10:00

Shortly thereafter Sunil wrote vis-à-vis his birthday:

27.10.70

*Sweet Mother,
Thursday, November 3rd is my birthday. I would like to
come and see You on that very day, if possible.*

*I want, also, to know Your decision for the New Year
Music.*

*I send You my thousand pranams
at Your Lotus Feet
Your loving child
Sunil*

The Mother's answer:

9 Am

In November a short note to Sunil:

Friday, November 27th

Sunil,

Today itself at 3:30, I shall be happy to hear the new version
and...

It is Jhumur's fête

My blessings

The following year Gambelon once more remarked on the sound of the Mother's voice on the recording of Her prayer for Sunil's New Year Music:

21.1.71

It is not that Mother's voice is disagreeable, but it suggests an alarming state of health. A very strong impression for the disciples....

Gambelon

Gambelon was concerned that Sunil's music not fall into the wrong hands and be misused for commercial gain:

Le Mans 9.2.71

I am sure that one day some religions (which are actually in such a crisis) will see the spiritual interest of your music and will use it for their profit; this has always happened in the past. One can always reserve the rights of production and use (composer rights) but I believe that after a certain time (50 years) the work falls into the public domain. The surest way would be not to give copies to Radios and as little as possible to individuals. However in spite of all precautions it will be difficult to avoid the pirating of this music. I would be very upset to see it used for advertisement and commercial uses (specially because of the soothing aspect that it seems to have when seen from the outside). Do you know for example that in the banks they play a music called 'ambient' to relax the clientele, some employers relying on some medical research do the same in their bureau or factories? Some people use music in agriculture, for example to stimulate the rumination of cows, etc, etc.

I am happy that Mother is better now.

[Ed. note: During my 1972-73 visit to the Ashram, Sunil laughingly told me a story about Victor complaining that one man in France was playing Sunil's music in his dairy barn to his cows. Victor was upset

about this because he thought it was an inappropriate use of Sunil's music. Sunil (laughing) said he wasn't bothered.]

I don't know if I have to tell you more things about Edith Piaf. The source for this artist was the vital, inferior, very passionate, very tormented with sometimes a poor vain brightness. The source of your inspiration is the psychic, devotion, the sense of sacredness. Edith Piaf sang the world of darkness, passions, disappointment; it was the voice of a fallen angel. You transmit something of the Divine bliss or at the least of an ardent call towards those things. For the good of all is it advisable that you look towards these tormented shadows. The wedding of the light and shadow are not without doubt for tomorrow.....

I can add that I am satisfied by your good nature, your modesty, your scrupulous honesty and the services that you accept to do for me....

I have completely forgotten to tell you that I have received the new copy from the New Year Music 1.1.71. It is very good and I thank you

*Sincerely,
Gambelon*

Sunil felt that the recitations from *Savitri* by the Mother were an integral part of the music he composed for it. He allowed the German Dancer Rolf Gelewski to use his music without the Mother's recitations, but only reluctantly. And in letters to people who asked for his music after hearing this music at one of Rolf's recitals, Sunil almost invariably made plain his feelings about keeping the Mother's recitations and the music as an integral whole. He expressed this feeling to Rolf when granting permission to use his music:

Day before yesterday evening at 8:30 P.M. Amrita, the manager of our Ashram passed away. He was ailing from some time now. He joined the Ashram in 1919 and when he died he

was 75 years old. Thus we have lost one of our old guard.

I am glad that some Indians at Poona liked my music. My experience here is just the contrary. Very few Indians appreciate my music and in general the Europeans like it unless they are musicians too.

If by dropping the Mother's words in Savitri you have been able to compose a more successful dance (I do not mean a more popular dance) I have nothing to say but, to tell you frankly, I am rather disappointed and if I were you I would not rest until I could create a suitable dance form to be able to dance with Her words. Anyway, I would add at the end that after all you are the boss as the Americans would say it. Anyway, I am sure, you too must be feeling it in that way only.

I hope this letter will find you in excellent health. I send you my love and best regards,

Sunil

Gambelon comments again on Edith Piaf:

Le Mans, 10 march 1971

Dear friend,

Yes what justifies Existence is the Delight, but what I told you concerning Edith Piaf (Piaf is slang for bird), has nothing to do with morality, which does not interest me at all, it interests me only in those and for those in whom I don't see the inner law or possibility of this law. I think only of vibrations in a certain sense opposite, hostile, which carry her interpretation, the vibrations are contagious, especially if there is in the being something still attached to it. The vibrations in your music carry the relations between the psychic and the Divine, it's at the opposite end of the spectrum. However as you wanted I will put you in contact with this artist.

Yours sincerely

Gambelon

Gambelon writes of the universal aspiration which he feels Sunil's

music represents:

Le Mans, 26 march 1971

See the big problem of tomorrow is essentially that of a world becoming so small (because of technology) that for all the big spiritual movements to live together harmoniously will require a lot of tolerance and also an effort towards the essential of what each of these believes. In the past this problem did not exist as there was no communication (books translated, radio, television, planes, etc). Each religion, each civilization could ignore the other, it was protected by its isolation. Now it's completely different. The Mother and Sri Aurobindo have made the first move in calling God 'the Divine' and in envisaging impersonal words, methods, more than rituals. Mother envisaged squarely a humanity without religions, founded exclusively on the spiritual experience. I would not be surprised if we are going in fact in this direction, the decomposition which manifests itself in the Christian religions here, the spiritual need which exists in many people and youth in particular, all this seems an indication in this direction. In this view your music should be a very positive contribution, as detached from any religious conformity and even of any preconceived musical style, it tends to provoke the experience of the Divine in beings who hear it. It's the moment to tell you that I am persuaded that you must get completely free from the influence or idea of Huta's painting. I wish ardently that you realize without hindrance all that you have deep in yourself. Savitri's texts are surely a marvellous support, but don't forget the Vedas towards which you are deeply attracted. I believe this divorce wanted by Huta is a good thing.

Let your music blend with the Ineffable so well suggested by texts from Sri Aurobindo and the Ancients.

Gambelon

And:

Le Mans 3.5.71

Surely anything can be well done, but the source from which the inspiration comes is for me the essential thing. The musical science without the contact, it's not much.

Gambelon

Manoj speaks of the source of Sunil's inspiration:

Mother says that Sunil is open to the world of true music. From the very source from where Mother used to get the inspiration, get the music. Sunil had the access. You see, once I had a very touching experience. You know Mother had hummed Mahalakshmi's theme and she had given Sunil to compose the music. For two years he tried something or other. And then he realized that nothing can go. And so one day I just got into that music room and I saw that Sunil was all alone in front of the organ listening to the Mother's voice. And there Sunil was just sitting in a meditative mood and if I'm not mistaken I saw tears slowly trickling down... And quietly I removed myself. I could see that it was a depth of spiritual experience through music.

[Ed. note: Sunil used to say that the music that he played alone when nobody was listening was his real music. In a letter he sent to me in 1994 he wrote, "I have at last found myself playing on my organ truly as I like. I enjoy playing when there are no obligations, no pressure to do something."]

Minnie says of the music Sunil played when he was alone in his studio:

It was not always very, very loud. Sometimes suddenly it would, it was like a symphony, it would just burst open. You see, it was a daily affair. We didn't always have time to sit and listen to the music all the time. ... It was fantastic. We didn't realize...

Ranganath adds:

He used to go into the house there, I used to see him. And really it was fascinating to see him, to watch him practise his music. One day while having dinner together he was saying that now he had entered a phase where he was very much interested in harmonies and chords and he said, 'That's what I'm interested in now,' and his face lighted up like that.

Here Gambelon plays down the importance of the quality of the recording compared with the inspiration in the music:

Le Mans 15.4.71

No need to send me ameliorated versions, I do appreciate your music for the essential which is in it, when I identify myself with it. I don't think of the recording quality.

Gambelon

Gambelon compares his nature and Sunil's:

May 1971

Le Mans

I am very interested by the end of your letter from the 6.5, because the problems of the vital transformation and consequently of the life interest me more than anything. Your way to approach things is full of common sense and simplicity. I like it a lot. You are more conscious than I thought. No doubt things do not present themselves in you so acutely as in me, and you have surely a routine of inner life calmer and surely happier. There was in my nature a tendency towards an absolute in all. I have known anguishes, distresses, extremes, shadows, but also extraordinary moments of joy, even beatitude, divine love. It seems that one has to touch the

bottom of human abysses to know the divine ecstasies. You say that everything presented and arranged itself as if by chance. It's all the contrary for me. I was waiting for Sri Aurobindo's knowledge since the age of 10, 11 years old and when I did meet him, after reaching 20 years, I knew with certitude that there was all I was waiting for, all that I needed. And on the level of knowledge Sri Aurobindo has fulfilled me and has not brought the least disappointment. But the knowledge is one thing and the transformation of the vital nature another.

I don't know what will happen of Victor, his trip is a short 'palliative'. I think you should form another assistant, two are better than one, this to face whatever happens....

Yesterday I heard your recording of Savitri Book II, 2. It's beautiful as always. Minnie sang a bit, I am happy about it. I like a lot the atmosphere of Minnie's voice, there is in her, as in you and your mother I suppose, an intense devotional movement very communicative. One day it would be good to do a recording of Minnie's best songs; these passages from the Vedas are very beautiful....

*Sincerely yours,
Gambelon*

Gambelon expresses again his appreciation of Minnie's singing and the wish that Sunil could record her voice with some accompaniment:

"I see very well a recording of the most beautiful devotional songs from Minnie. If there was the original of her voice without accompaniment this would allow the possibility to remake some of them. On the recording these songs could be either separated by pauses of silence, or be very discreetly linked by an appropriate music of your composition. There is in Minnie's voice an incontestable power of spiritual suggestion. I wish that you would make her sing again on other Rig-Veda hymns, perhaps also you could use the electric guitar and the pedal to accompany her. It could be very favourable (but it has

to be only the appropriate thing).....

I wish that you could one day suggest in music metaphysical experiences. In your non-devotional music there are two musical flashes which have struck me: the passage of 'Buddha's illumination', which ends 'the temptation of Buddha' and the one that I will call Krishna playing the flute. Both are suggestive of metaphysical experience. Minnie, the guitar and the pedal would suggest the Rig-Veda depth very well.

Gambelon

In the spring of 1971 a war between the then East Pakistan and the State of Pakistan broke out. The war began when army units of the State of Pakistan launched an operation against Bengali civilians. India later intervened on East Pakistan's side in what came to be known as the Bangladesh Liberation War. Gambelon advises Sunil to concentrate on his work and not worry about the political situation in Bengal:

Le Mans , 5 June 1971

Am happy that you are doing again Savitri, don't let yourself be influenced by what is happening in Bengal, your reason to live is this music and your aspiration. Politics belongs to the politicians, the sufferings are alas for the people.

Gambelon

In addition to sending reel tapes, parts, and a harmonium for Sunil to use, Gambelon also sent tape recorders and when Sunil wrote to him about problems with one machine Gambelon answered taking Sunil to task:

Le Mans, 30 June 1971

This morning there was a letter from Telefunken. I will make immediately the payment of 30 DM asked by Switzerland. I think you could have the cord in two to three weeks. The next time, don't wait until the last moment to tell what you need to work — remember that governing is anticipation, you are

responsible for your section. It is up to you to see before the necessities are felt.

Gambelon

Gambelon comments on the impact of Sunil's music:

Le Mans, 10.9.71

Our time is one of humanity's spiritual synthesis. Religions, orthodoxies, dogmas, exclusiveness and prohibition are as many obstacles to human unity and spiritual harmony. Your modest work goes in the direction of this universal spirituality — beyond religions; you may not be aware of it, but it does not matter, it is a fact.

Sincerely,

Gambelon

PS - Those who aspire to the Divine can come closer to themselves in your music of aspiration.

Gambelon on Gauri, Sunil's wife:

Le Mans 26.10.71

Gauri's letter from the 23.10 arrives just now....Gauri is enthusiastic about your new music, it's not a wife that you have there, it's an adorer. How many men here would envy you.

Gambelon

And:

Le Mans 2 November 1971

The incidents of this cassette recorder are very annoying. On top of Victor's abruptness, there is for sure the very bad climate of Pondy for these machines. I believe that it should always be ventilated while functioning. These machines are conceived for cold climates. The booklet made by Revox is written in English

also, I believe. Arun should very easily understand the cause of these disturbances and repair it, except if of course a new piece is needed. If this is the case we will get another one, for free if the machine is still under warranty. I don't think that writing to Revox would be of any help, they will surely answer you to carefully study the explanatory booklet.

Besides I think that by precaution it would be good to make at once a copy of any definitive recording to avoid a problem as the one you just had.

I wish that in the future you attain a satisfactory sound recording; of course the inspiration is far the most important, but the question of the recording can be mastered now. One should follow an indispensable discipline; in some of her very beautiful songs Minnie moves in front of the mike and then the sound goes away, covers up, gets closer. These things have to be absolutely avoided. Of course if material is missing, we would buy it, but savoir-faire and discipline are specially missing.

As I have no relations here and my mother cannot communicate, I quietly listen to radio; it's strange what we hear as 'modern' music. Generally one searches to create new sonorities, rhythms, but nothing ever which is coming from the heart, only mental elucubrations, tiring, heavy; it's the opposite of your music; with you everything comes from the heart and it's perfect like that.

*Sincerely yours,
Gambelon*

Gambelon comments on the Mother's approval of Sunil's music:

Le Mans 10.11.71

Am happy that Mother has been satisfied with your work. Later when you have the cassettes you could copy what you have reserved for me. Then it's easier for me to listen to your music, as I can easily transport the cassette recorder (in the kitchen for example where I often am to do the work).

Gambelon

Gambelon is pleased with the improved quality of the recording of Sunil's music and feels the inspiration too has reached new heights:

Le Mans 16 November 1971

For the music of your recording I have been very surprised. First it is from a more beautiful inspiration than ever, rich with completely new sounds with so many things that I will have to listen to it several times to assimilate. The recording and the technical realization are the best that you have ever done; very good sound quality, voices, linings, superimpositions etc. This organ serves perfectly your music, but there are so many things that I cannot say all that I think. We will come back to it. I am happy that Mother approved, but how could she not? It is a music from a world of light and truth.

Your two meetings with Mother are very interesting as always. I am sure that this music answers better even what she wants spiritually than her own music. I don't know if one can say that this music is the work of a genius, I think we should say that it is the work of a medium from the supramental world. What we have called geniuses were often people who had a higher inspiration than the average consciousness, but it was not coming from the supramental plane, but from the actual consciousness. I admit that there exist exceptional sound inventions. Anyway, don't have either an inferiority complex or a superiority complex. For you, you must stay and move always more in the intimacy of divine and luminous things that the Divine has allowed you for the good of everybody.

Gambelon

Sunil comments to Gambelon about the 1972 Centenary Year music:

It is rather interesting to watch how the landscape also changes with the seasons. Once upon a time this used to

stimulate within me an eagerness to build relationships which were fundamentally physical and scientific in nature. But these days even though these thoughts are there in me like distant noises, I feel like seeing across them something different, something more suggestive. This may seem strange but I feel increasingly more and more that every season has a presence. Cool dry draughts from the north and liquid gold days together they come hand in hand here. For me, these are lazy days. There are seasons here when the sunlight beats us about, but at this time of the year it glows. This is the time of the year when I like to think of fields, houses in the fields and of barns and of cows: This is the time when I would like to see a halo of happiness around each of the persons I know with Pleasure.

This being the Centenary year I wanted very much to shape a music which would be like a laugh and happier air which we could breathe in with joy and love. But this hope has failed. Somewhere in the middle of the music started the same haunting feeling of a quivering desire within me, the same yearning, the same hunger for a love that I have reached for through lives and lives. So the music remains the same as ever — a little aspiration, a little light.

Sunil

When the Mother heard this music she said to Sunil:

“It’s magnificent music. Magnificent.” After a little while, She said : “I thank you” — after a while, She again said : “I thank you” — again She said: “I thank you”. This, “I thank you,” She repeated nine times.

An appreciation of Stockhausen’s music by Satprem and comments on Sunil’s 1972 New Year Music:

4.2.72

Dear Sunil,

You are certainly better qualified than me to give your opinion on Stockhausen's music. I am curious to know what you think about it.

For me, I have listened to this music, or this sound, rather, and I have felt the enormous mental effort to burst his mechanism — we feel easily, we see nearly all the parts of the mental clock which bursts and scatters through space. But it is still the mental which plays as if all is destruction and enjoys itself never more than when it pretends to negate itself. He is too preoccupied with himself and too preoccupied to break his own limitations to really arrive at the unlimited — there is not at all some limitlessness in it. There is only limitation which would like to pull back till the end of space. And finally it is still the human ego which insulates itself, which blows itself up till it bursts it belly without ever being really able to explode, because the explosion does not happen through contortion, but through the forgetting and offering of oneself. Stockhausen makes me think in terms of music of what the first cubists were doing in painting when they wanted to make the visual mental mechanism burst and succeeded only in putting aside pieces of torture and dismembered faces — a grimace was left. The sound of Stockhausen looks like a formidable spiritual grimace and we hear wandering around far away the steps of Frankenstein, rather than the cascade of divine laughter among 'the illuminated continent of violet peace, and a country without sorrow under the purple sun.' [“Illumined continents of violet peace, Oceans and rivers of the mirth of God And griefless countries under purple suns.” Savitri Book II, Canto 3] There is for sure, from time to time, refreshing silence, probably the silence of Brahman, but even the Brahman has a hiccup.

Finally, it matters little from where the music of Stockhausen comes; what is important is that he thinks that it comes from Sri Aurobindo. Sri Aurobindo puts up very well with everybody impartially and he knows how to insert his humour everywhere — who knows, maybe he will finish by

actually putting the Illimitable in Stockhausen's head if he is a bit sincere. As always, there is too much head and not enough heart.

Let me take this occasion to tell you that your music of the first of January was really sublime and divine — there, yes, one melts, one disappears in the illimitable. Thank you.

Satprem

Sunil passes on Satprem's and his own comments on Stockhausen to another friend:

13.2.72

My dear Pierre,

I received your letter and the catalogue which you sent for me in care of Gilbert. I also received the tape on which you recorded the music "Illimite" by Stockhausen. I heard this music as soon as I received the tape, but I was waiting to have the comments of Satprem before writing to you — hence this delay, for which I hope you will excuse me. I am enclosing herewith the letter I received from Satprem and I add that I felt exactly the same sentiments when I heard this music for the first time. Satprem has asked me to tell you that he does not want this letter to be made public. You can show it, if you want, to your very close friends, but in any case it should not reach the hands of persons who are likely to bring this letter or the contents of this letter to the notice of Stockhausen. He should not be hurt unnecessarily. Please also tell Klara and Dominique (they had the occasion to read the letter in my room) about these reservations of Satprem. The important thing is that Stockhausen thinks of Sri Aurobindo and respects him, and we should not do anything to interfere with whatever is going on within him at the moment.

I am extremely grateful to you for your preoccupation with the recording system in my room in spite of your heavy work elsewhere. I think we should not buy anything in a hurry. Michael's amplifier is also a 4 channel mixer with separate

volume and tone controls. I am using this amplifier now. So we can wait. We will talk over all these things when you come here in August.

I forgot to return the tape with Stockhausen's music to Dominique. I will give it to you when I see you here in August.

How is Micheline? Please give my warm regards to her.

Sending you my affection

Sunil

A dancer in San Francisco asks permission to use his music. As usual, Sunil expresses his reluctance to see his music used in a commercial way:

29.2.72

Dear Mr. Bhattacharya,

I am a choreographer, dancer, and teacher at the University of Colorado. Presently, I am choreographing a dance which I will take to San Francisco, California where I am to be a guest artist for the Xoregos Dance Company. I have been improvising to your music for several weeks now and I find it inspiring to move to. It is my hope that you will grant me your permission to use a 12-minute section of the tape for my new work. Also, a film-maker is making a documentary film on my experience in San Francisco and would like to include rehearsals of my dance. This would mean that your music would be part of the film.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Spanier

Sunil answers:

Dear Miss Spanier,

You have my permission to use my New Year Music 1972 for your recitals. I have given a similar permission to

Rolf Gelewski, a dancer and choreographer in the university at Bahia, Brazil. If this film that is intended to be taken of your dance is simply a documentary and an educational one at that, I don't see any reason why I should withhold my permission. I would only like to be assured that this music is not commercialized which I hate to do just at the moment. Could you possibly give me a more detailed information about the purpose and the scope of this film?

*Yours Sincerely,
Sunil*

The question of selling Sunil's music again arose, this time to cover costs of a tape recorder a friend in Switzerland agreed to buy for Sunil. Sunil at first approved, but later had second thoughts:

12.4.72

Dear Sunil,

As to the payment, I suggest the following if you agree. I can reproduce with your consent 10 cassettes of your music, selling them for the price of the recorder N2205. Then, we shall wait for someone to take it to Pondicherry.

Looking forward to hear from you in this regard. I remain,

*Sincerely yours,
Marcel Thévoz*

Sunil answers:

Dear Marcel,

I received your very kind letter and the pamphlets on two Philips cassette tape recorders for which I thank you. Yes, I asked Kanta Desai if she could get me one like hers from Switzerland. She told me she could as she had friends over there. But I did not think it was you she had in mind.

The problem of paying was worrying me a little, and your suggestion of an alternative way of payment is very welcome

to me if it is at all feasible. Are you sure that you could recover the money you pay for the tape recorder by selling 10 or 20 cassettes? If you are certain, then only I would request you to get one of these tape recorders particularly the model N2205 (which is meant for the tropics) for me. You may send it to me whenever it is convenient for you to do so.

I am extremely grateful to you for your taking so much trouble for me.

Hoping to see you soon again and sending you my warm regards.

*Sincerely yours,
Sunil*

But Sunil writes again expressing a change of heart:

My dear Marcel,

When I told you to go ahead and sell the cassettes I was almost certain that I would be receiving a letter from you soon telling me something like this: "Sorry, Sunil, your cassettes have no buyers. The people are so much accustomed to getting your musics free of charge that etc. etc." So, I got a surprise when I knew from your last letter that some cassettes have been sold and it is quite curious that instead of being happy, I felt a pain. I am sure now that this is not exactly what I should do. If you have already the money needed to buy this tape recorder, it is all right. If not, then please stop selling these cassettes. The tape recorder will come if and when needed. I hope you will not misunderstand me. You can always give my musics free to whomsoever you want. But please don't sell them. It is quite possible that a similar tape recorder will be given to me by a friend of mine in France.

Again I beg of you to excuse me for this sudden change of mind, and hope that it will not inconvenience you too much. I thank you for all that you have done for me. Sending you my warm regards,

Sunil

Seyril Schochen then living in Auroville wrote of the music for the Centenary year, the 1972 New Year Music:

Dear Sunil,

The Beauty and transporting grandeur of the New year's 1972 music as it was heard in the depths of the Matrimandir foundation site remains with us—

We are so grateful that you are here 'to hear' and 'to manifest' sweet music.

Seyril

A friend writes from Bombay on the 1972 New Year Music:

15.4.72

My dear Sunilda,

Ever since I returned from the Ashram last, I had been feeling a little guilty in having got your music and Mother's recitations from Savitri tape recorded by you.

To make amends in my own humble way, I am enclosing herewith my cheque for Rs. 101 made out in the name of the Mother. I shall feel grateful if you could offer it to the Mother on my behalf.

The music — especially the New Year's Music is wonderful and takes one into far off realms, which I may not describe at the moment. The music is simply enchanting and envelopes one's whole being.

I am so grateful for the trouble you have taken for me to buy the tape and to have taped the music for me.

Please remember me to Minniedi as well as Milliedi.

With loving regards

I am,

Yours aff.

Madhukar

Sunil's answer:

My dear Madhukar,

I thank you for your kind letter. I sent your cheque to the Mother and she has given a blessings packet for you which please find enclosed.

This sense of guilt you spoke of in your letter has no valid basis. I gave you the musics with affection and happiness. You should also accept them in confidence. These musics belong to people like you who want to spend some time alone with Her and commune with Her depths. In accepting them you oblige me and help me to grow.

*I send you my warm regards. Thanking you again,
Yours Sunil*

Later, Sunil asked Madhukar, who was a lawyer in Bombay, for advice on how to defend his in-laws when the house leased by the Ashram in which they had been living for many years was sold and Sunil's in-laws faced eviction:

6.5.74

My dear Madhukar,

Please do me a favour of giving your expert opinion on this problem which, I believe, is in your domain. The house adjacent to ours here in Pondy, belongs to one Padmini Chettiar, a quite rich and influential woman here and has been rented to the Ashram for the last 32 years, if not more. The Mother allotted the house to my in-laws and they are living there for the last 31 years. The Mother offered to buy this house several times in the past but Padmini would not sell it. The circumstances are now changed, and the properties ceiling act will soon be coming to Pondy and Padmini is selling off her properties. My mother-in-law wanted to buy this house and she sent such a proposal to Padmini. Padmini, too, showed her willingness and quoted a price, but then suddenly, she played a trick. She donated this house to a French society of which the French consul here is a member in the governing body. She

wants the Society to open a school or a clinic in memory of her deceased father. This French society, which is a private body has accepted this gift and is going to turn it into a school.

Padmini has notified the Ashram authorities to vacate the premises. Our trustees are not very willing to part with this house. My mother-in-law, also, has grown so much used to living in this house that it would be very painful for her to leave it. Champaklal, too, said that this house should and must come to the Ashram. The Mother wanted to have it so much, and with this house coming to us the whole block would belong to the Ashram. An advocate in Pondy was consulted, but he does not give much hope. What to you think of our legal situation? Is there anything we can do to keep this house? For your information, the Rent Control Act has come to Pondy. Naturally in this situation I thought of you and I am sure you will be able to give the proper advice on this matter.

Hoping to hear from you soon, and sending you much love,

Yours, Sunil

Again to Madhukar:

6.6.74

My dear Madhukar,

I was very happy to receive your long awaited reply. I, of course, knew that something had happened and the letter did not reach your hands. Thanks very much for your willingness to help us out of this trouble.

For the last few days I have been trying to gather all the information that you need. I have asked many persons to get me a copy of the Rent Control Act in Pondy. Till now I have not had any success, only I was told that it is the same Rent Control Act which is in force in Madras. It came to Pondy about 3 years ago. Anyway, I am still hopeful and I will send it to you as soon as I get hold of a genuine copy. I hear that the proprietor Padmini Chettiar donated this house to a French

society in Pondy and this society has given this house to the French college. Does this introduce additional complications? Counouma is receiving a number of letters from various French patriotic societies in Pondy urging him to vacate the house immediately even before July when the college reopens. The only silver lining I see is the fact that the Mother was very keen to acquire this house for the Ashram. Champaklal told me that he has complete trust in Her, and there is not room for vacillation or worry.

Recently the Ashram received one communication from Padmini stating that she has donated the house to this society and asked us to vacate the house. Afterwards two reminders came from the society itself.

Just now I learnt that the Rent Control Act is out of print and I will only be able to get it after three or four days. I will send it to you as soon as I receive it.

Thanking you again for your kind help and sending you my love,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil writes to a friend in the U.S. who he feels is taking an unnecessarily pessimistic view of what it means to do yoga:

March 27, 1972

My dear Cliff,

From your letter what I could gather is that all was empty within you except the lone difficulty. This is all wrong. Yoga is not simply the mastery of one's self, a life of rigid self-discipline and a continuous fight against one's weaknesses. Yoga is a new enlightenment, a new life in the Divine. There is a help within your reach, you should call for it; there is a power around you, be open to it and turn it into your own strength. It is only in happy harmonious happiness that you can grow richer every day. For a change, I would advise you not to accord too much importance to your difficulties, to look beyond these bodiless walls and call for joy from diviner heights. Consider yourself

as the Mother's spoilt child and aspire for Her sweetness, Her delight, and Her love.

It has always been a pleasure to receive letters from you, and I assure you that it will be my privilege to be of any service to you in future.

*Sending you my warm regards,
Yours, Sunil Bhattacharya*

Again on taking a more positive approach to life and yoga:

May 20, 1972

My dear Cliff,

I received your letter a few days ago, but I am sorry that I could not manage to send you a reply earlier than this. I am very happy to receive the coloured photograph that you have sent with your letter. But it was not very much of a surprise to me as your face seemed to fit very neatly into the image that I had formed of you in my mind. I am glad to see Lucille. Please say hello to her and tell her something nice on my behalf. Does she know me? Quite obviously, I have no comments to make on your relationship with her. Friendship and comradeship are all permissible in yoga if they remain subordinate to one absorbing passion, namely the realization of the Divine.

Each one of us has erred in some way or other. The essence of living in happiness is to look forward and forget the past, and to grow within into the beautiful and felicitous Presence of the Mother, which alone can give a purpose and meaning to our life. Try not to bear your own cross, leave it to Her to do the needful.

Here are a few lines from the Rig Veda which I had used in my "New Year Music — 1970." You may like it.

"State upon state is born, covering upon covering has become conscious and aware, in the lap of the mother he sees.

Awaking to an entire knowledge they have called and guard a sleepless strength, they have entered the strong fortified city."

*Sending my love to you,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil writes of pushing to complete the Savitri Music during the summer darshan crush of visitors and guests:

August 28, 1972

My dear Cliff,

I am sorry that I have not been able to reply to your letter earlier. There was a considerable rush of visitors in the Ashram and that meant added work for me as tapes came pouring in for copies of my musics. There were friends who came for visits and so on. Besides that, I was also busy composing the new Savitri music that I am doing, i.e., Savitri Book II canto V. It is not yet ready. It will take some more time.

I have not done any new music after the New Year 1972. Just at present I am composing Savitri music. We will be recording it, I suppose, in September-October. Savitri always takes more time and energy.

I trust that this letter will reach you in health and happiness, the golden key to all our progress.

*Sending you my loving regards,
Yours, Sunil*

In the next letter Sunil disavows any claim to superior status as a yogi and suggests looking to the one source of help available to all:

10.10.72

My dear Cliff,

I am not sure of my ability to offer you any advices. It appears from your letter that you have an illusion of seeing a yogi of an advanced sort in me who could solve your problems with bursts of illuminations. No, Sir, I am very sorry to disillusion you, but this should be in the records that I have never aspired to any such powers. We are all in the

same boat and we have, all of us, the same privilege to look up to something which would make our lives more meaningful. Maybe I am a little more experienced than you are because I am older; that's all.

One thing I have realized in my 30 years of stay here in this Ashram is that mental answers to the questions in our minds are not very relevant to our life of spiritual progress. If you have a really important question, put it to your inner self or to the image of whatever you conceive as your Divine. The answer will be given to you in the proper time, in a very, very intelligible form, and help, too, if you are in need of it. Without the intervention of this Grace our sadhana cannot make a step forward. Words which can help you must be spoken to your innermost being. Peace is not just a state of mind, it is a force, an emanation from the Divine. We can have it if we call for it and are open to receive it.

I write my musics when I compose them, though we do not follow them very strictly while recording. I am glad that you play on the recorder. Creativity is a great help under any circumstances. In sadhana, it is always encouraged here by the Mother.

I sincerely hope that you receive the guidance you are looking for from within you.

Sending you my love and warm regards,

Yours, Sunil

Gambelon writes again about protecting Sunil's music:

Le Mans 5 September 1972

If one is interested in your music with a selfish motive it's a bad thing and can only be harmful. This music has been wanted by the Divine particularly for helping those who have the psychic contact and need it. This music is for them and them only. For the others it will be materially useful, a relaxing and aesthetic listening. If someone who doesn't have the contact and just sees something interesting gets hold of it,

I fear that the Divine will dry the source. Remember that you are an instrument of transmission and nothing more. All rests on the purity of your contact and your relation to the Divine. On the practical level what does, 'a complete authority for your music', mean? Does this mean that only they will be entitled to copy and of course sell your music? But then they should provide you all that you need: machines, reel tapes, etc.

I think that it would be better, if necessary, to add an assistant, another person to do the copies if there is too much work.

Why don't you raise these questions to Mother and let her know what you want in these matters? It seems to me that it is the moment.

Gambelon

After the Mother gave Sunil a carpet for his recording room Sunil wrote:

2.10.72

Mother,

Feeling as I do the plenitude of your presence all the time all around me, this beautiful carpet has brought close to me your sweetness and love.

I remain, as always, your ever grateful child.

Sunil

Mother's answer:

Love and
blessings

Gambelon writes about the acoustics of the studio:

Le Mans 23 October 1972

If I understand well the studio is 'deaf'; maybe one cannot reconcile the resonance that you wish and the conditions

necessary for a good recording? What is necessary for you are the recording qualities, as you don't give concerts in this room.

Gambelon

Steve says about the acoustics:

The studio had bad acoustics from the beginning. Before I got there Chamanlal had tried to do something but I think it was unsuccessful and went out with the remodelling after the termite attack destroyed the false ceiling he had put in. There were several resonances that would actually rattle all the doors.

As mentioned earlier Gambelon had his ideas about when the first strains of what became 'Sunil's music' appeared. Here he writes to a fellow correspondent about that turning point in Sunil's music from traditional rhythmic Indian music:

Le Mans 28 October 1972

*To Monsieur Pierre Etevenon, AV International
France*

I am giving to Andre a selection of various devotional songs which are not generally from Sunil, but sung by Mika, Tinkeri, Vasanti and Minnie (Sunil's sister). I point out to you the very beautiful mantra of SA: OM ANANDAMAYI; there is also on this tape some music from Sunil including the interesting TEMPTATION OF BUDDHA and what I call the flute of Krishna. At this moment Sunil's music was more rhythmic and less internalized, although the measures which end the Temptation of Buddha (suggesting the return of the calm and the peace, if not the illumination of Buddha) presage already what will follow... I remind you that these recordings cannot be copied without the Ashram's permission.

Gambelon

Sunil wrote to the Mother about music he was asked to provide for the inauguration of the Matrimandir in Auroville.

Sweet Mother,

Gene came to see me. He told me that You want the music we play during the Auroville ceremony to be mine and he also told me that You want it to be a special music You heard. Is it the last Savitri (last part of the 4th Canto) that You heard the other day?

Can You tell me exactly what You want?

I send You my thousand pranams

at Your Lotus Feet

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother answered at the bottom of Sunil's note:

I said — as clearly as possible — the January 1st music with my message.

Sunil writes to the Mother regarding his upcoming birthday:

31.10.72

Sweet Mother,

Here is Rs 100/- from Gambelon, his offering to You.

Next Friday, November 3rd, is my fête. I would really like to come and see You on that very day.

I have just finished this morning the music for Savitri Book II, Canto V. The music lasts about one hour. I would be very happy if You could listen to it one of these days. We can play it over two days or we can play a selection lasting 35 to 40 minutes. I am waiting for Your decision.

I send You my pranams

to Your Feet

Your loving child

Sunil

The Mother wrote with Her felt pen at the bottom of the page:

3.11.72

10 a.m.

Sunil writes to Gambelon about what the Guru means to the Indian mind in response to a question from Gambelon on the meaning of worshipping the Guru's feet:

You have asked a very curious question as to why in India they direct their devotion to the feet of their gurus. This question surprises us because this sort of devotion has become a way of life with us and we have never even thought of analyzing it. Such questions are difficult to answer. As I look back to my boyhood or even childhood I find that I have been taught not by books but by people around me to consider my feet as the most inferior part of my body — (is it because it is the nethermost part when you stand? Or is it because it is farthest from the centre of our consciousness which is the heart or the head?). So much so that in passing if you happen to touch an elderly person of your family with your foot you have to take his or her feet in pranam. Books are considered to be the domain of the Mahasaraswati, so if you happen to touch the books with your foot you have to touch the book on your head in pranam.

Kicking somebody is a worse form of insult than hitting him with your fist. At the end of Durga Puja the priest sprinkles us with holy water (they say water of peace). Your feet have to be covered with your Dhoti. The holy water is not meant to fall on your feet.

Thus as we grow up here we learn to consider our feet as the most inferior part of our body. Granting that this idea is deeply rooted in us I am sure you will understand easily the motivation behind the practice of worshipping the Feet of your Master rather than any other part of His body. When you say

I am at the Feet of my master you express your devotion and utter humility. But as you will easily perceive, this movement or attitude is essentially religious in origin for a sadhak and when his inner horizon begins to glow and fire starts breaking out in the deeps of his being he feels growing within him an overpowering emotion or love for his guru if the guru has become to him a symbol of the consciousness he calls Divine, a grace descending and bringing with it the heavens within us. In those moments nothing else matters. I have not met Nirodbaran. When I meet him I will make it a point to put your questions to him. I, too, am interested to know what he has got to say about it.

Towards the end of 1972 a serious equipment problem came up. The electric organ Sunil used to compose the 1972 New Year Music belonged to a woman who had been staying in the Ashram but was planning to leave. She wanted her organ back and wrote to Sunil:

Sunil

Perhaps by now, or within the next week or so, you will have completed the New Year Music on the organ.

When you have completed your work, I would sincerely appreciate it if you would return the instrument when convenient to you.

Many thanks, and I trust you have as usual been able to accomplish a beautiful work.

P.S. I shall call and see you sometime and hope to listen to some of the Savitri taped music. Will let you know before coming!

Doreen

And:

20.12.72

Dear Sunil,

I am extremely sorry to hear of your wife's illness and trust she will soon be well.

I understand everything and am sad with you that you have been unable to complete your programme, especially as the New Year Music is so important.

Put out of mind all thoughts about returning the organ now. I insist that you keep it until your work is done. Even if you keep it till February and after it will be perfectly all right. The most important thing is for the work to be done.

Sunil, I will be so happy if one day I can come and spend about 30 minutes at your studio just to listen to some of the Savitri music. But I will make a proper arrangement with you before coming and at a time which will be mutually convenient.

Again I am extremely sorry to hear about your wife's illness.

With kindest regards,

Very sincerely,

Doreen

Regarding his wife's illness, Sunil wrote to his friend in Bombay:

21.12.72

My dear Dr. Mahimtura,

Excuse for this delay in answering to your letter.

My wife was discharged from the Madras hospital on the 7th December, and on the same evening she was admitted to the JIPMER hospital at Pondy. She will be going back to her place on the 31st of this month. She is progressing quite satisfactorily.

Your visit to the Madras hospital made me happy, and your letter is a welcome token of your affection. I have no words to thank you enough.

I understand that Mr. Shah is here, but I have not yet seen him. I don't know if it will be possible for me to do the New Year Music in such a short time. Thanking you again and

*sending you my love,
Yours, Sunil*

Gambelon wrote in regard to the difficulty Sunil was having at this time:

Le Mans 21 December 1972

If you don't have enough time to compose your music, why not use a part of your last Savitri adding Mother's message? But I believe the Force is there. Even if you don't have the time to make your people sing, it's perhaps very good only with the organ.

Gambelon

Sunil had apparently mentioned to Gambelon the frequent electrical power failures in Pondicherry. Gambelon writes back:

Chartres

21/2/73

It's very annoying this lack of electricity, as electricity is indispensable for the development of a country; maybe more dams and more coal power stations would be needed. (India has a lot of coal I think.)

Gambelon

In this letter to the dancer Rolf, Sunil mentions the state of the Mother's health in the fall of 1973:

My dear Rolf,

The short account that you have written about me and my work is succinct and accurate. This, more or less, gives the map of the course that was chalked out for me to follow. It is strange that when you look back on your life, everything seems to have been prearranged elsewhere, joys and sorrows, thoughts and impulses, movements inner and outer, they only take shape and name as you live and grow!

I will be now busy with the New Year Music. There will be no message this year, as the physical condition of the Mother has not shown much sign of improvement. According to Satprem she is more in the subtle physical plane trying to build a bridge between Her subtle body and the New Consciousness. This work is of vital importance and will assure the transformation of Her body and as well as of others.

Hoping to hear again from you soon, and sending you my love,

Yours, Sunil

The owner of the organ Sunil used for his music did eventually retrieve her instrument and subsequently sold it to another Ashramite and for a while Sunil was without the use of an organ. Steve, Sunil's engineer, said of this time:

Fortunately, at some point before the 1974 New Year Music, Andre Viozat who lived in Auroville gave Sunil an electric organ that he had made himself from a kit. Actually Sunil knew that this was coming, but nobody knew how long he'd take to finish it. I suppose he hurried up when Sunil told him that he was without an instrument.

Two letters from Sunil mentioning this new instrument:

June 25, 1973

My dear Cliff,

I may get the organ tomorrow if nothing unexpected happens in the meantime. I went to see the instrument about a week ago — it sounded really good. So, if the organ comes tomorrow I will start composing from day after tomorrow. It will take me about two months to compose this SAVITRI music. Your inner experiences are very interesting and very satisfactory. You are doing fine. Sending you a lot of love,

Yours,

Sunil

And:

July 31, 1973

My dear Cliff,

Chhobi told me that my last letter to you never reached your hands. I don't see any reason why it did not, unless the plane which was carrying it had been hijacked. One other reason it could be your frequent change of address. Are you still living with your violinist friend?

It was pretty hot here this month of July. Yesterday it rained and last night everybody in Pondy slept very peacefully and comfortably after a long time. This morning, too, it is very pleasant. Steve got his motorbike painted and it looks good now, almost slick. Marty was in the nursing home, she could not get over her last sickness completely. Once your liver gets sluggish, it is very difficult to make it run in full gear so soon.

I am still struggling with my next Savitri music, almost painfully. The new organ is good but I miss my old one. How are you? We think of you very often — there is something in you which has never left the Ashram. Aspire always, and keep this love that you have living in your heart and I am sure everything that is necessary will be done for you.

I believe that this letter will get through, and reach your hands. I send you my love and my very best wishes,

Yours,

Sunil

On Sunil's efforts to finish this Savitri music and his views on a yoga which emphasizes a single-minded love for the Divine:

9 October 1973

My dear Cliff,

Steve told me that you have sent by airmail the eggnog and honey for the Mother. The air-freight is simply staggering. Anyway, when they come they will be useful for the Mother.

I have been and am pretty busy with the Savitri music which will be recorded soon. I will have another month's hard time before everything is over. Then, I should have a little rest before I take up the New Year Music. Am I lazy?

I do not find any inherent contradiction between the lines you have quoted and my views on "Sadhana". There is nothing frivolous in a life where one tries to find contact with the One through love. One is necessarily in earnest about it if the love is genuine. When you love Her you would love also whatever is dear to Her and execute Her Will. You can have one point, one orientation in your life by abolishing all other points, or simply by loving the One point with such a passion that no other point has any meaning for you. "All life is Yoga" and so the paths of yoga are necessarily infinite. Each one has to find his own by his own effort. I only pray that you find your own and soon. "Leave all your formations behind you and take refuge in me alone." Thus spoke Krishna to Arjuna. Follow His advice.

*Sending you my love,
Yours, Sunil*

Regarding the new tape recorder to be purchased, Gambelon wrote:

Chartres 7.4.73

TAPE RECORDER: For the Revox I note that you have chosen the 1332. For the Uher I don't know anymore the use of these small wheels in rubber, the salesman told me but I can never remember. I am sure that the boy who repairs the tape recorders will see what it is — and you also certainly if you open it up. So keep these rubbers.

MONEY ASHRAM: I deplore that it is always question of money in this Ashram, this will create bad habits in those who should be liberated from the slavery of money.

Gambelon

Again on the topic of protecting Sunil's music Gambelon writes to Roger Anger, architect of Auroville:

Chartres 5.6.1973

For Sunil's music which is a powerful medium for putting one in a psychic state, all the difficulty is and will be more and more to make it available for those who have the spiritual need without letting it fall into the hands of the hostile forces, the powers of religious ignorance or simply the business cupidity, and the consistency of technical progress will make the control of this music more and more difficult if not impossible. Moreover the Ashram has such a need for this music that one can wonder if it is wise to let it go out. Divine things are a special grace. Like rare plants they wither and die outside their atmosphere.

Gambelon

Sunil mentions his music played for the Matrimandir inauguration and provides a brief description of his New Year musics, the Hour of God, and Savitri Book II, Canto four:

28.9.73

My dear Carlos,

I received your letter and your money order for which I thank you.

Your tape has been bought and the recording is almost completed. It will be mailed to you in a day or two. I have given you some New Year Musics.

As this name signifies, these musics are played on the 1st of January in the Ashram with the Mother's message for the year. I have given you "The Hour of God". This was composed for a sort of ballet staged here in Ashram by the Ashram artists. The lines are written by Sri Aurobindo and read by the Mother. The text will be supplied to you with the tape, the words of the hymns in the piece are from the Vedas. I give

you also the music which was played during the inauguration of the Matrimandir (Temple of the Mother) in Auroville. I have given you, also, a canto of Savitri, the one I composed last year in November. Here Aswapathy, who represents in Sri Aurobindo's Savitri the aspiration of humanity, ventures into the kingdom of little life (the lower vital world from which all of us draw our life energy) and discovers its godhead. You need not have read Savitri to appreciate the beauty of the passages used in this music. The text will be supplied to you with the tape.

I will be happy if you are able to draw something from these musics of mine. I will also be obliged to you if you do not allow anybody to recopy these musics from your tape without my permission.

Hoping to meet you again, and sending you my warm regards,

Yours,

Sunil

To a friend in Belgium:

12.10.73

Colet,

Your last question concerned me directly and happily it's not causing much problem. I give you these musics without charge, but with this trust that they will not be copied without my written authorization. This is necessary to avoid their use for commercial aim which would be very unpleasant for me.

I send you my warm feelings,

Sunil

Sunil describes what his birthday darshan with the Mother meant to him. This year, because of her physical condition, he was not able to see Her on his birthday and She was to pass away later that month:

Pondicherry - 3.11.73

My dear Cliff,

It is so nice of you to have sent so many things for me; the card is beautiful, your music cassette has some wonderful musics in it and your good wishes and your appreciation of my music is, to say the least, heartening. For us, here, the birthday was always a very special day, the day when She used to come close to us as a physical mother comes to her child. On this day you were very special to Her, you were not in a crowd trying to get Her touch or Her Darshan, She gave Herself exclusively to you and you were happy to find how much your welfare meant to Her. So, this year there will be an emptiness around me on my birthday at least physically. But Her Presence is there always within me and there She is exclusively mine.

I have finished the new Savitri music. It is not bad. Do you have a cassette recorder now? I could send you a cassette with this music if you had one.

When is your birthday? Don't forget to tell me that in your next letter.

We think of you very often here, and wonder if you would be here for a visit sometime next year.

Sending you my love.

Yours,

Sunil

Sunil in a letter to a correspondent in Spain explains who his music is meant for:

Dear Madame,

I thank you for your letter.

These musics are not for sale and are, usually, given to persons who want to use them for meditation. It is needless to say that these musics are not for copying or for use in commercial programmes. We collect no recording charges but you have to bear the cost of cassette and the postal expenses. The price of a good C-60 cassette varies from Rs 20 to Rs 25

according to quality, that of a C-90 from Rs 25 to Rs 35, that of a C-120 from Rs 35 to Rs 40. I can send you some musics of mine in a few cassettes if you remit the requisite amount of money by International Postal Money order.

*Thanking you
Yours Sunil*

Sunil also writes to New Caledonia about the Mother's condition that fall:

Dear Michel,

Maybe Hubert has told you about the actual physical condition of the Mother. According to Satprem She's now active in the subtle physical world searching to build a bridge between the physical subtle world and the new Consciousness. The success of Her work will facilitate the transformation of her body. But, in any case, I will not have the message to incorporate in the music of 1974. It's a pity!

Sunil

After the Mother had left her body Sunil wrote to his friend Gambelon:

November 17, 1973

My dear Gambelon,

What was least expected happened. The Mother left her body on the 17th evening at 7:25 pm. The blessing packet I send for you was given to me earlier in the day.

I am too perplexed now to think clearly. I will write to you again later on.

*Sending you my love
Yours Sunil*

A few days later:

22.11.73

Gambelon my dear friend,

So it is all over now. The Mother's body has been laid to rest in another chamber inside Sri Aurobindo's Samadhi. Sri Aurobindo lies in the lower vault, the Mother in the upper. All the ceremony was performed in a very organized way — it started at 8 A.M. on the 20th and by nine o'clock everything was over.

I have already written to you that the Mother passed away at 7:25 in the evening on the 17th. We knew it only in the early morning, i.e. 4:00 o'clock in the morning of the 18th. They kept the news secret till then. When I went to the Ashram at about 4:15, She was already brought down on Her bed and kept in the meditation hall near Amrita's room. The volunteers were already standing everywhere directing the crowd that slowly grew. They had been informed earlier, these volunteers. All this orderliness in the face of such a calamity came as a rude shock to me, I never expected to have Her last look in this way. The news of Her passing away was broadcast at 6.30 a.m. through Pondy radio and later on through Delhi radio. The Ashram was thrown open to the public and people, streams of people went past having Her last darshan. All this continued day and night until the evening of the 19th, when the doctors decided that She should be interred on the 20th morning. This could not be delayed further. So it was accordingly at 8 a.m. on the 20th morning. The Pondy government declared a holiday on the 20th and all shops were closed as a mark of respect for Her. Lots of people from all over India and some even from abroad came to have Her last Darshan.

I hear now that She had very low blood pressure in the last few days. Dr. Sanyal examined Her on the 16th and asked Coumoude not to move the Mother much, as Her blood pressure had fallen down too much. On the 17th evening, Pranab came down at 6.30. The Mother suddenly became restless and asked Coumoude to lift Her up. Coumoude raised Her head a little, kept it in that position for a little while and then put it back on the pillow. And then the Mother started

to cough — Coumoude told the Mother that she would prepare a little glucose water. Then Coumoude heard a noise from Her throat, she looked at Her, and then ran and asked someone to call Pranab and the doctor. When Dr. Sanyal came he did not find any pulse. He tried to stimulate respiration artificially. No success. They knew then that She was no more here with us in Her physical body. They preferred to keep this news to themselves. Counouma saw all this unusual activity in the Mother's room and came to inform Vasudha. Vasudha immediately went up and found what had happened. Vasudha insisted that Nolini be informed immediately. So, Nolini was informed at midnight.

This event is momentous in my life as well as in others' — may She continue to hold us in Her hands and choose for us our paths.

Love, Sunil

Gambelon wrote back:

Chartres 3.12.73

Dear friend,

Thanks for your letter from the 22.11 and for the information that it contains. All this leaves me perplexed...very perplexed, one does not know what to think...it's a strange way out. I am surprised that nobody was there in Mother's apartment and that She is dead alone and perhaps unconscious, maybe without having prepared the follow up....What will happen now? If I have understood well, while Pavitra was alive all the properties of the Mother and Sri Aurobindo were held in a Trust; who will be the present owner, who are the people who constitute that Trust? What are their intentions for the future? Who will nominate the new members of the Trust? I hope that those who will be stripped from their properties won't have to regret it and will not be in need.

I understand well that this disappearance could shake you.

I think you must still do the 1st January music, it is the best and the least you can do for Her, to help her continue her work... In January it would be good to go with Gauri to Calcutta at your brother-in-law's home, for a month, say. What do you think about that? If you agree, I will pay for the cost of the trip. Let's see with Gauri and tell me what you want.

Has someone taken slides of Mother in the last months, and also on her deathbed? Could you have these slides sent to me? I will pay you.

Gambelon

In January 1974 Sunil received a letter from Bombay about the Mother's passing:

17.1.74

Dear Sunilda,

I am truly grateful to you for your 1972-74 New Year Music tapes, which I received today only. I do not know how to thank you or show my gratefulness to you.

Nowadays life seems so desolate and meaningless. There is no immediate hope of coming to settle in Pondicherry.

If you have any work for me please let me know.

Thanking you

Yours sincerely, Jatin Mahimtura

Sunil answered:

22.1.74

My dear Mahimtura,

I see that you are still feeling the enormity of Her physical loss. I, too, I am more or less in the same boat, a feeling of emptiness clings to me, but this is understandable. So many years and such physical nearness is difficult to forget! But, even in the darkest hours, I never had a crisis in confidence in Her. I knew it always and I believe it even now that She

has done what was best for us and for Her mission. She is here to execute His Will, the will of the Supreme — and She has accomplished whatever was sanctioned from above. She will be here in this atmosphere fashioning in Her own way that which has to emerge.

As for us, the only help that we can render to Her work is to keep on having a complete trust in Her. Distrusts or doubt in any form will be a hindrance to Her. Find in your love the sign of Her eternal Presence.

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

Mahimtura replies:

1.2.74

Dear Sunilda,

I am grateful to you for your very kind and encouraging letter.

I may say that I also do not have any crisis of confidence but a sense of disbelief.

All along I was under the impression that the Mother will not leave her body till transformation of Her body is complete and then there will never be a question of Death.

I do not know how I gathered that impression. If anybody spoke to me about the Mother's passing I would refuse to listen or react strongly against such a suggestion.

I can only say for myself that the Mother knows what is the best for us and Her. What is the use of judging a thing about which I do not know anything?

I intend to come to Pondicherry on 22nd April. If you have any work, Please write.

*Yours gratefully
Jatin Mahimtura*

To a friend in Brazil Sunil wrote on the Mother's passing:

My dear Solange,

You are all so kind to me. I don't have words to thank you enough. I will be delighted to have the book you intend to send for me and it would surely help me to make some sense of the musical jargon that I hear all around me.

By now, you must have heard that the Mother is no more with us. She left Her body on the 17th of November at 7:25 p.m. The initial movements of emptiness have passed and slowly we have woken up to Her secret presence within us, to Her with Her undying Powers, to Her who never can really cease.

Rolf is here. We see each other much. He will go back to Brazil on the 20th of December, I believe.

*I thank you again and send you my warm regards,
Sunil*

Later:

14.12.73

My dear Solange,

The book on the numbers and their role in music that you sent for me has arrived. This parcel took more time to reach Pondy than is usual. It must have been held up somewhere on the way due to the unsettled conditions in the middle-east. It is really comforting to feel so much of affection so many thousands of miles away. I am grateful to you for this. Please let me know if I can do anything for you. I will, of course, go through this book with care as soon as I am a little more free. Just now I am more or less completely absorbed in the New Year Music that is going to be recorded soon.

You must have learnt by now that the Mother passed away on the 17th of November. But I have never ceased to feel Her ever smiling presence all around me, especially when I am doing music. Rolf got a telegram on the 22nd of November, I believe. He is here now and will be leaving for Brazil on the 21st of December.

*Thanking you again for the book and sending you my
warm regards,
Yours Sunil*

After he had read the book on numbers and their role in music sent to him by Solange Sunil wrote:

To: Solange de Marbaix
May 1974

It was nice to have heard from you after a long time. In the meantime, of course, I have gone through your book on numbers. Much of what was there I had come across earlier when Mathematics was my profession, but still, I enjoyed the author's presentation which underlines certain aspects in various fields that awaken thoughts, and suggests realities behind many mysterious coincidences. Books like this always deepen our queries about nature. The chapter on the musical scale was very interesting for me. It is actually the principle of the Pythagorean scale and the principle of "beats" that we utilize for the tuning of our piano and the electronic organ. I have been doing it for ages, but I never thought of figuring it out in terms of mathematical realities. I, also, understood what they really mean by "Tempered scale". In India the scale that is used and has always been used is a Pythagorean scale, but we never talk of a dièse of a note; we deal only with bemols. All the musical instruments in India are with frets which are easily movable, and the professional musicians move the frets to have the right bemol for the right Raga. Thus the terms such as "bemol" "very bemol" exist in Sanskrit as well as in other Indian languages. The question of a tempered scale never arose because we never had instruments with keyboards and never used more than 3 octaves. I do not believe that Pythagoras invented this scale, he only supplied the mathematical picture. It is the men who sang who, so to say, gave birth to this scale. You have just to sing Do Re Mi Fa Sol La Si Do and you feel that it is something which lives and

fulfills itself by its own inherent right. This never took shape by combining mathematical notions. This has always existed behind our consciousness, we just slowly awoke to its presence and then it took birth and it entered into our lives. When I said “jargon” I never had in my mind a sequence of notes that lives and grows, but the pretensions of a mathematician that seek to measure it with dead symbols.

I learnt French when I came over here in Pondy in 1942. I know the language fairly well and, as a matter of fact, I used to teach Mathematics and Botany in our Education Centre in the French language. I can understand French and can speak at times quite well, but, still, I prefer to write in English whenever I can. But you are welcome to write to me in French hereafter.

*Sending you much love,
Yours, Sunil*

Then from Dr. Singh both about the Mother's passing and on permission to use Sunil's music:

1.12.73

It was saddening to read in the newspapers about the passing away of the Holy Mother. Through a remarkable coincidence I was playing the tape that you had kindly sent me just the same evening that the Holy Mother expired. It must have been quite a saddening experience at the Pondicherry Ashram. However, the life and influence of such sages continues to show the way even after their bodily existence has come to an end.

We are preparing a programmed slide projection sequence in which there is a portion which deals with religious tradition and the new synthesis. In introducing this section, I was thinking of using about one minute from the passage which you had recorded for me of your 1965 New Year Music. This programme is proposed to be used in our CEERI pavilion in the Electronics Union exhibition. I shall be thankful if I have

your kind approval for using your music.

I cherish the memory of the morning that I spent with you last February listening to your music. I shall plan to send you another tape if it could be recorded with the new year message of 1973 and some of the other pieces that you played for me.

Amarjit Singh

Sunil's response to Dr. Singh:

I thank you for your kind letter.

Our loss is, indeed, great. But she is not the one who could be shut in the heavens. She is very much here, and even now, she loves to live our lives, one with us. May she continue to hold us in her hands, and choose for us our paths! If hearing this tape of yours on the same evening that she left her body is a coincidence, it must be a remarkable coincidence full of deeper meaning for all of us.

Surely, I will not have any objection if you play a part of my New Year Music 1965 for the exhibition. I have written and orchestrated many more musics, and I will be happy to make another tape for you.

I thank you again for your letter, and hope to meet you more often when you come over to Madras.

Sending you my warm regards,

Sunil

From west Bengal another lover of Sunil's music on the Mother's passing:

Kalyani, the 20th November, 1973

My dear Sunil Babu,

I am not writing this letter to you out of grief. For it is pointless to grieve for the Eternal Divine. I also know that the light which shone over the Ashram for more than half a century, will continue to shine always. Therefore I do not grieve as I don't feel that She has gone from us or that She can

ever go.

However I have one prayer, I feel that as one of her powerful instruments you have been playing a very important role in disseminating her Light through your divinely inspired music. I can only pray that the source which inspired you in the past, will continue to inspire you always and that through your divine music, we shall all feel the presence of the Mother.

With love for all,

Yours sincerely,

J. Bose (Jyoti Babu)

Sunil answers:

29.11.73

My dear Jyoti babu,

She was weary of Her body and She left it. But She is not the one who can be shut in the heavens. She is very much here. Her breath still loves to play on our beings and give a meaning to our frail hopes, She, still, loves to be here with us and live our lives, one with us. The initial gloom of emptiness that came within us has fallen and dissolved in the radiance of Her Love. May this Fire that She kindled in us continue to remain imperishable!

With love,

Sunil babu

To Rijuta who has moved back to the U.S. after the Mother's passing:

Dear Rijuta,

Only when a letter comes from you I feel with a little quivering in my heart that you are no longer living in that corner near Golconde. Remembering your face brings me back the beautiful images of our Ashram days in the forties, the fifties, the sixties, a magic presence that now dwells in our memory.

The contours of those days in lines and colours have not faded nor have they lost their substance. Something lived with us and in us continues to live and grow. It was a design painted by Their hands. Around a Light your life has moved through expanding years. May you remain always turned towards Their Luminescence, may you receive all that is fair and beautiful.

Sunil

Sunil is still dealing with this issue of the commercialization of his music. A letter from Carlo in Switzerland:

23.12.73

Dear Sunil,

I did not reply to your kind letter last summer because there was nothing in particular left to say. In any case I was glad to hear that the motor arrived and your Revox is working.

Now there is a matter which is beginning to come up more and more often. It is that people hear your music and ask whether there is not a recording of it that they could get. I am speaking of an LP phonograph record. Perhaps this question has come to you from other directions, perhaps from many. Perhaps even something is already being done somewhere. It would be a question of putting together a tape of 70-80 minutes length with some of the pieces of music you find most suitable and of sufficiently good sound quality. This we could offer to some record production firm. The biggest around here is 'Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft'. They bring out all Stockhausen's things (probably at a loss because his listening public is surely very small. He is only a big name). I have had only indirect contact with Stockhausen but would not hesitate to get in touch with him directly for assistance with his record firm. He after all claims to be a disciple of Sri Aurobindo, and loudly so.

I take the opportunity of saying that I do not have a single direct tape of your music. What I have has been copied from

other people's tapes, and that is a loss of quality. If ever you get a chance to make a good quality set of tapes for me, it would be nice. Just now there is a lady staying at Reg's named Erika Spina. She is returning here in mid-January and offered to bring back with her any items I might need. Perhaps you do not have any rolls of empty tapes that you could use, but if so I could replace them for you later when somebody goes eastward from here.

With best wishes

Yours sincerely, Carlo

Sunil replies:

7.1.74

My dear Carlo,

I thank you for your letter.

I have a BASF double-play 2400 ft tape which I will not be using in the immediate future and which I can easily send to you with some recordings of mine. You may replace it to me later on when someone comes from Zurich. For economical reasons I will send you now recordings at the smaller speed i.e. 9.5 cms. As this is a double play tape, the quality should be pretty good for your hearing.

The Revox machine that I received last year from Lausanne came with a dead motor. The motor that you very kindly procured for me came in excellent condition and is still working well. This particular model is a much improved one, and decidedly it is a pleasure to work with it when everything goes well. For sometime now, there are other mechanical defects which are annoying us such as break adjustment etc. The technical experts here have not been able to repair these defects to my satisfaction till now. But, we learn to live here with all these annoyances.

I have received many suggestions or even offers to bring out records of these musics of mine. I have never viewed the idea with pleasure. Records would mean a lot of publicity

which, again, would create an atmosphere inimical to the values I cherish so much in my life. The Mother, too, was not very much in favour of this idea. She always said that the time has not come. But, things are changed now, and I am not too sure about what I should do. The same day I received your letter, I received another offer from Los Angeles. But, somehow I feel that if anything is to be done in that direction it should be through you. Do you think that there would be a market for these musics in Europe? Do you think that by bringing out these records I could help the Ashram and Auroville to any appreciable extent? I understand that it is not easy to come to any certain conclusion in all these matters, but I feel that I can depend on your judgment. In the meanwhile, I will be extremely happy if you keep all these exchanges of views between us scrupulously personal and private.

Thanking you, Carlo, again for your letter and wishing you a very happy and luminous New Year.

Yours, Sunil

Carlo continues with his proposal in the following two letters:

11.1.74

My dear Sunil,

I have your letter of January 7th and am starting the process by writing to Stockhausen. Any number of LP's of his have come out and he may be presumed to have all the pertinent knowledge and experience. I am asking for his help if he feels it to be of help to himself also.

I am putting forward the following suggestions as my own idea and initiative: an LP produced in accordance with all the rules of the profession but with no commercial motive or propaganda, to be distributed quietly with as much of the work as possible being done by devotees as a sacrifice to the Mother's Work. He could observe, advise, establish contacts etc. I am putting it in such a way that there is hope that you might give

your approval for such a production if all the preparations are met to your satisfaction.

I do not know even if he will reply, but you might all the same on your side start thinking about which music you might select or whether you might want to make a new music for such a production, whether in Mono or Stereo, what kind of design for the album cover (perhaps by an Ashram artist), what kind of explanatory text if any, whether your name is to be mentioned or not etc. etc. I shall keep you informed of developments. You will remain free at any time to withdraw sanction or back out completely with no explanation necessary.

*It is very kind of you to be making a tape for me which could be sent with Erika Spina (probably at Reg's) or Michel for whom I am trying to get a plane reservation in early February, unless you have other people going. The replacement tape I might be able to send with Georges Gambelon who may come through Zurich on his way to Pondy in mid-February. You might let me know if anything should be given to him for your Revox. I shall not speak anything to him or anyone else about the LP.**

Wishing you also a most prosperous new year

Yours, Carlo

**except, let us say, as a stray thought sometimes coming to my mind*

PS I do believe that the time has come if the work is done in the right consciousness, that there is a growing number of appreciative persons in Europe and America and that it would mean substantial help for the Ashram and Auroville.

Carlo writes again:

26.1.74

My dear Sunil,

Erika Spina has brought back the tape for which loads of thanks. I shall replace it for you via Georges Gambelon who is

due to arrive at the Ashram on February 16 and will come by here before he leaves.

Stockhausen did reply without delay but he cannot be of much help to us since his is an entirely different situation. He never had to bring out any record on his own although he has about 50 LP's in circulation. It was the record companies that came to him. He seems to like publicity and never to miss an opportunity on the covers of his record albums to write a descriptive text of his own music praising it and pointing to its high degree of spirituality. Now he has gotten involved with some group in the United States who have produced a 2000 page manuscript allegedly written by extraterrestrial beings who come down on Earth and assume human bodies to work unrecognized for the world's salvation. Whether he ranks Sri Aurobindo above or below these beings of his I do not know. Anyway he has given me some addresses in Germany of the people who produce his records and with whom I could get in touch mentioning his famous name. But these people are managers of record companies which is just what we wanted to avoid. I therefore took no further steps in their direction.

Instead I got in touch with what I am told is Switzerland's only record-producing factory which is not far from me. Very roughly speaking, the financial situation is as follows if we work with them:

Cost of production including labels in the center and white paper jacket	<u>for 1000</u> Sfr. 5.10	<u>2000</u> 4.60	<u>3000 records</u> 4.- each
Cost of the outer covers			
Printed in 4 colors	2.-	1.-	below 1.-
Cost of protective cartons for Mailing by post (holding up to 2 records)	-.60	-.60	-.60
Foreign postage	2.-	2.-	2.-

<i>Total</i>	9.70	8.20	7.60
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The retail price for such records is normally fixed between Fr. 17.- and 23.- (1 Franc being about \$0.20 at present). Fr. 3.40 per \$. Record stores may get anything up to 40% discount on these retail prices.

Only 22-25 minutes of music is advisable for one side. It should if possible be tape recorded at speed 38 cm. The factory first produces 4 or so sample records which we have to listen to and check for quality, surface noise, etc. and for which the ok has to be given before the edition is put out.

That is the situation of the present. You can think all this over and compare it with your other possibilities. A normal record co. would, I suppose, pay royalties of not more than 10%. We could end up with anything between 25 and 60% depending on the size of the edition and whether a record is sold directly to the person or passes through a record shop.

With best wishes, Carlo

Sunil answers:

7.1.74

My dear Carlo,

The results of your enquiry are exactly as I expected them to be. It is quite clear that the time of bringing out discs of this music has not yet come. When the time is opportune, She will give a sign and help will be given to you when you least expect it. Anyway, I am very grateful to you for the trouble you have taken on yourself, and I thank you very much. I think you will have to wait now and if She wills it, these gramophone companies will approach you and give you terms. In the meantime, I am happy and feel relieved. I have a horror for publicity, for records and for big money.

I must tell you again, Carlo, that I feel grateful to you for

the interest you have taken in me and my work. I thank you again, and send you my very warm regards.

Yours, Sunil

Carlo persists in his attempts to find a way for Sunil's music to be published:

2.3.74

My dear Sunil,

I appreciate your relief but my investigation would not be complete without my taking into consideration the possibility of cassettes for these present a less complicated picture than records. As few as 200 can be made at a time, and they would cost Sfr. 5.40 apiece to produce including the printing of labels such as the enclosed. Whether we should make the experiment is your decision. You would have to send us a good tape, mono or stereo, speed 19 or 38 cm/sec. The maximum time for each side of one cassette is 29 minutes (i.e. 58 minutes altogether per cassette). It is preferable for both sides to have more or less the same length in order to avoid an empty length of tape at the end of either side. You would also have to send us your design for the four colour label as per enclosed sample, with colour slides and contents of the tape for sides A and B. In case you have an descriptive text it can be printed on the reverse side of the label. The contents would also be marked in small letters directly on the cassette itself.

I presume that such cassettes could be offered by us for sale without any other propaganda than putting them on our book lists at a price of around Fr. 15.-. They would have to be supplied to record shops at about 10.-, but orders from such shops are likely to be rare.

It is a relatively simple experiment if you care to try it.

I am sorry that I sent you only a replacement 'long-playing' tape instead of 'double-play' via Mr. Gambelon. Unfortunately the wrong type of tape had been sent to me in spite of my having asked for the other. I shall, as the occasion

arises, send more tape to make up for the missing length.

Yours sincerely, Carlo

The rate just now is about FR. 3.10 to one Dollar.

Sunil's response:

11.3.74

My dear Carlo,

I am afraid I will have to disappoint you.

There was a moment when I vacillated, but that moment is gone; I have seen signs since then which only confirm my conviction that as far as my music is concerned nothing should be changed. We should continue exactly as we are doing now, or as we have done in the past when She was here to guide me physically. Any change in that would have grave consequences for myself and for my music. It is not for me to worry about people who would like to have copies of these musics, they will know how to get them when they really need them. This music should have no financial implications if it could be avoided, such was Her wish, I have Her letter. However, if some day we are obliged to do something of this nature I will ask for your help. In the meantime I am really sorry for making you work uselessly on this project.

The long-play tape that you sent for me through M. Gambelon is good enough and you need not calculate and compensate me on the additional length. I should like to have with you a more friendly relation than that. So please forget about the tape.

I send you my very warm regards.

Yours, Sunil

Carlo accepts Sunil's reluctance to have his music published and then comments on what he feels is perhaps an overprotective attitude towards his music by Sunil's good friend Gambelon:

10.4.74

My dear Sunil,

Of course you do not disappoint me by being so reticent to make records or cassettes. Still, perhaps I should write briefly to clarify another point brought up by Georges Gambelon after his return, although I do not know to what extent his ideas reflect your own. He expressed the fear that your music might be commercialized and thought that not only should it not be sold but also that I should set up a text in several languages to be printed and put in with every copy you make for people, stating that recopying is not permitted. I replied to him that the result of such a measure might be that serious people with serious friends would obey the instructions thus keeping their friends from getting the music while superficial people would go on recopying all the same for other superficial people. Those deserving the music would be prevented from getting it while those not deserving would get it all the same.

Even now we are at a stage where your tapes have been freely recopied all over and any number of people have them whether they deserve them or not. I can give you a typical example of a lady I talked to the other day who obviously had practically no contact and merely said that somewhere she had heard some of this wonderful music at a person's place who had a two-hour long tape, but of poor quality because of its having been copied from another tape which was also a copy. She did not want to get a copy from this poor copy, so she is asking me whether I could help her get a copy of better quality.... When I asked her what music she was speaking of she said she did not know what the music was but it sounded marvellous and that the Mother talked in-between.

This will give you a picture of how little she knows and of the kind of people who are getting your music, so there is really no way of preventing anyone from getting it. I really did not know what to say to her, but I suppose if such a person came by the Ashram she would be able to get a copy from you without any difficulty, so there would be no difference if we

let her have a tape here to make a copy from (which may get damaged in the process since we do not know these people). Or perhaps it does make a difference since there is a difference between people sufficiently interested to visit the Ashram and those who perhaps never even heard of the Ashram but heard the music at a friend's place. Still even for these people copies are being made from other copies that were copied from other copies.

That is where the situation stands. I thought I would just tell you although perhaps you are already aware of it.

Yours sincerely, Carlo

Sunil responds, spelling out in a little more detail how he feels about keeping his music to a small circle of people with a certain interest:

21.4.74

My dear Carlo,

It is indeed refreshing to hear you talk. You see things always a little more clearly and suggest solutions which are, at once, simple and pragmatic. The situation as it obtains today in and around Zurich has been described by you with wit and humour. To be candid, I must say that I know what you mean, and I should confess that there is a part in me which appreciates the logic behind your words. But, for some reason or other, I have a feeling that any wide publicity or any sort of shop-keeping would be injurious to my life and my work. I have a conviction that this music could be effective only within a restricted circle of people who are given to our ideal of life. I have tried to reach for the roots of this feeling and failed, but, nevertheless, it is insistent and very strong and it is this part within me which refuses to be convinced and withholds its consent. Everything would have been so simple if the Mother were around and would assure me with Her sure knowledge and unfailing vision. But that is not to be. I know that She is there to help me, and direct me and if this be Her Will I will

receive signs from Her and circumstances will take such shapes that I will recognize in them Her Presence and Her guidance. Until then I prefer to wait.

However, let me tell you Carlo that I really feel grateful to friends like you who have shown interest in me and in my work, and these are not mere words!

Thanking you for your very nice letter and sending you much love,

Yours, Sunil

Gambelon writes again with questions on the Ashram situation and also Sunil's future in the Ashram:

Chartres 13.12.73

Dear friend

The day before yesterday I received your letter.....

I don't know also how the Trust will manage to face the financial problems. Did I send you the article from the 20.11 giving the composition of the Trust? Who are Bhattacharya and Dumont ? Do you know?

You have not really answered to my question. I would have liked you to say that even with Mother gone it is here that you wanted to go on living not only for material reasons, but out of your inner motivation. Anyway I wish strongly that you would stay in Pondy, as I believe that only there your inner and musical experience (which is the consequence of it) will best continue. If then a bridge has to be crossed, I will help you if I am there. In the meantime as it is Champaklal who receives the money that you give, and as I fully trust this man, I will continue like before and you will send these 100 rupees like you were doing.

Concerning Ravi Shankar, I think that he is in fashion in the opinion of some youths. I don't know if it is by exoticness in taste or if he is understood? Anyway this music interests because it is new and different from the modern western music — which is so often bewildering, so mental, tiring, heavy etc.

Even Stockhausen which we hear so much seems to me so indigestible.

Gambelon

Another letter from Gambelon expressing his relief on hearing that Sunil intends to remain in the Ashram:

Chartres 19.12.73

Dear friend

This morning I have received your letter from the 9.12.73 posted on 12.12 as Gauri's letter posted on 14.12.

I have difficulty to accept what you tell me about the end of Mother, I think that a yogi must leave consciously and not in an 'accident', it is good to leave the body calmly and peacefully in consciousness (as Sri Aurobindo did). What is important is that the Mother's presence stayed in the Ashram atmosphere, it allows every hope.

I note your intention to stay at the Ashram. I think, to speak frankly, that it would be a mistake to go and live either in Auroville or in the Centre of Delhi (even worse). I feel that your work must continue in the proximity of the Samadhi, there the Force will enter more easily in you and you will be able more easily to do Her will (for the good of everybody). I understand that Auroville has tried to 'annex' you, but it is surely better for you to stay where you are. Concerning the trip to Calcutta, I believe that it could be replaced by a stay in Madras, as Gauri wants to go there in January to see her doctor. Take, then, a private car, and have one or two hotel rooms booked by Amiyo. I suppose that Chhobi will come also? I will give you the money for all of that. Tell me how much you want. I think you should stay several days and if possible (apart from seeing the doctors) visit the beautiful museum with its famous bronzes and the Adyar estate. It is worth it.

Concerning the recording of your music with the recitation of Patrice, I will hear it with interest, but I will tell you this:

such a recitation should have been done by someone who has realized something and who could let a bit of the spiritual pass through his voice. It is an occult fact that the Force or the psychic can pass through a voice. I don't know who speaking French well could have done that. I had thought to do a voice testing with Mrs. Pitoeff (Varvara's sister), maybe Varvara's also. These women have excellent diction and could perhaps have what I was mentioning. However we will see for Patrice; but generally I distrust all that actually comes from the AV Paris people (they don't have the inner discrimination and in this sphere, pushed by a blind activism, they always make me worry; something like the entry of an elephant in a porcelain shop).

I want to come back on that point.

If the reading of Mother is so important it is not because of the diction, nor her voice; her diction reflects the fashion of a disastrous epoch for the arts. The Mother recalls the declaiming way of Sarah Bernard or Mounet Sully, who were the masters in declamation at that time and which seems now much too bombastic, completely artificial. But if Mother's voice still has so much interest, it is only because she carries vibrations from a consciousness; of one who has seen, who has lived and realized states and spiritual experiences — and because of that has a power of communication.

Yet I have told you that Minnie had in a certain way a power of psychic communication through her song. These things are from the same realm; the purely mental consciousness cannot grasp it, but you can.

*Sincerely yours,
Gambelon*

Another letter from Gambelon on Sunil's continuing to live in the Ashram:

Chartres 11.1.74

Dear friend,

I am convinced also that you should stay in Pondy for the rest of your life. The means will surely come.

I believe indeed that the occult action of the Mother could have increased as her physical activity diminished. I think that it is the phenomenon which had already happened with SA and which made a pole of attraction of the Samadhi. I will look into that; I think that Satprem's opinions are exact, he has a very large inner discrimination.

If the Lord of things maintains his Force, I think that the work undertaken by SA and the Mother could continue. The Mother has been an incarnation of the Lord's Shakti.

In Paris I have bought for you the Revox cleaning set, I am going to see about the friction roller and two other pieces ordered from Uehr.

It is possible that the voice of Svetlana Pitoeff is not suitable for spirituals texts — it would have to be tried before we could know it. For Patrice's recitation, as I have told you, I find it beautiful, neat, cold like a Carrara marble. I had a talk with this boy. He told me that you have given them the permission to copy the music that they want from you (maybe a mistake), that Mr. Morisset told them that they could copy Sunil's music, but not Mother's (we wonder why). Patrice told me also about having spoken with you about the possibility of creating a fund for helping your work. Patrice is now travelling around France and Switzerland for the diffusion of SA's message. Is it really useful?

Gambelon

Sunil writes to a friend, ending his letter with a re-phrasing of Krishna's advice to Arjuna, "Take refuge in me alone", which he passes on to a friend in a later letter:

7.1.74

My dear Jean-Pierre,

Please excuse my replying to you in English. It simplifies matters for me.

It is clear from what you write to me that you are living your life intensely, and I must say that you are doing it very well. I pray that She may live in you and sustain you in your labours.

It is not easy to grow into one's larger self — a wish in the heart is the beginning, a ceaseless effort — the price. Fulfilment should not be a demand and, in any case, it cannot be hurried, neither would be desirable for obvious reasons. On the contrary you should love this life of pilgrimage, and remember that if there is a lesser and a greater shrine, the lesser is not necessarily the less loveable. There is One within you labouring to be born — try to be happy even in your impatience. Your secret sense is growing, and every sound you hear from within is the sign and the preparation for a larger life. The One you seek is very much there, but the eyes that see are slowly taking shape within you. Meanwhile, take refuge in Her, resign yourself to Her Will, and be happy.

*Sending you my love and my very best wishes,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil composed the New Year Music for 1974 after the Mother's passing and when he'd heard it Gambelon wrote back:

Chartres 21.1.1974

Dear friend,

You received only my letter from 28.12? It does not go fast. This morning I just received your letter from 14.1 at the same time as the cassette of your music from 1.1.74 and yesterday F. Chan brought me a beautiful cup in copper and some sandals. I thank you for all of that, and also Gauri and Chhobi, but don't trouble yourself in making me these presents. Thank you again.

Your music for 1.1 seems to me peculiar; there are in it very beautiful things, but I don't find that this music is for the New Year; it does not seem very optimistic. I find it is the music of a grieving soul; it is rather the Requiem of the Mother. It seems

appropriate for allowing the consciousness to leave the body (it's the deep reason of mortuary rituals here. No one sees it like that, but it's true). It is very beautiful; the recitation of the Prayer is very good, there is more in it than in the cold and beautiful recitation from Patrice. In the end the essential thing of your music is to create a psychic atmosphere.....

Gambelon

Gambelon followed up on the 1974 New Year Music comments with:

Chartres 26.1.1974

Dear friend,

I receive this morning your letter of 22.1.

You have now the letter in which I spoke about your last music, which, as I have said, seems to me very beautiful, but reflects the actual state of your soul, still traumatized by the death of Mother. This does not take away anything; quite the contrary.

Avoid sending me parcels through AV. Anyway, one should give travellers only what is really indispensable as it is not nothing to carry objects for such a long journey. And, anyway, you know that I don't need presents.

Gambelon

The following month Cliff writes of the 1974 New Year Music:

February 28, 1974

Dear Sunil,

I began to write to you about my own feelings about the New Year's music but gave up trying to express them. I can say, though, that there is a moment, when high notes seem to leap out from within and reach out, piercing, calling, which seem to come from my own soul and to be it's own reaching out and searching through the darkness for the One it loves.

Yours, Cliff

Sunil responds:

Pondicherry - 18 March 1974

My dear Cliff,

I thank you for your appreciation of my 1974 New Year's Music. The major part of this music was written on the three days immediately after the passing away of the Mother, and composing this gave me much more than a creative pleasure. I am happy to know that much of what I felt, you could also feel as your own.

In spite of sands shifting, doors of possibilities are opening, and slowly but surely you are drawing near to your god.

Sending you much love,

Yours, Sunil

[Sunil writes more on his feelings regarding the composition of his 1974 New Year Music in a letter written to Dominique and Klara on March 16, 1976 which appears later in this book.]

A friend in the U.S. had taken a photo of Sunil during a visit to the Ashram and she writes:

30/1/74

Sunil,

I should have insisted you smile—but this makes you the 'serious musician'.

I did very much enjoy meeting you and I'm most grateful for the tapes, always.

I may play them for a class next month in San Francisco, after I dub them here (not to spread around, but in case any accident happens to originals).

Rhoda

Sunil replies comically:

15.2.74

Thanks for the photograph and for your very nice letter. The man in your photograph does not look like a serious musician; my impression is that he is a man who is very dissatisfied with everything including his music. You may, if you choose, call him a dissatisfied musician. You should have asked him to smile and above all, to open his eyes before he faced the lenses of your camera. Anyway, I will be very happy to keep this photograph with me. It will always remind me of your kindness. Thanking you again and sending you my warm regards,

Yours Sunil

A woman in France wrote to Sunil a rambling letter about the suffering in life, etc.. Sunil replied, expressing little sympathy for the views expressed in her letter:

Pondicherry — 18 February 1974

Dear Agnes,

For obvious reasons my answer to your letter should be in English, and I am sure it will be no problem for you to make sense of what I want to communicate. I do not intend to throw any light on the questions raised by you — this is not within my competence. If I tried I could, at the most, dissect your questions, analyze them, and try to trace their roots which reach far into the deepest folds of our human nature. For me it would be a disagreeable experience.

You don't have to tell me that there is falsehood, and ignorance, and pain and suffering, and hate and violence in this world, not only in Chili, and Vietnam and Pakistan, but everywhere in more or less disguised form. It has happened and could happen here in PONDY again — and why not even in my own room! The seeds of obscurity and evil are being scattered into the winds at every moment. What can you expect from a world where you would rather make everything your own, and leave nothing free? This little "I" within me, within you, and equally within others, likes best when it can feed on

others' pain and it has no bounds to its ambition, it wants to swallow the whole world. But, then, is it that you want to say that because there is pain, and suffering, and perversion and darkness, there cannot be any bliss, any delight, any luminosity in the world?

I wonder — at least, it is not for me to wallow in my mud — from my childhood I knew what I really was and yet always I tried to reach for what I could become. I have always felt the One whom I call Divine very close to me. He had come to me in my dreams both waking and in my sleep. He is my friend and my love and I have unshakable trust in Him. He is much more real to me than you are (I do not even remember your face, have only your letter). However, I am miles away from the experience of the One as Absolute or Infinite. If I had, the contraries that you have cited in your letter would cease to be contraries any more to me. They would just be the faces of the same and the unique Reality. Long ago, when I was just a young boy I was on the verge of an experience of an infinite calm and it is curious that just when it mattered most I felt within me an unreasonable fear of self-destruction. I did neither like the experience nor the fear. This helped me discover my limitations. Infinite existence is not my meat, perhaps it is yours, who can say!

The questions you have raised are vital and have been discussed by Sri Aurobindo in his various works; if I were a reading type, I could give you the names of the books and the pages. As it is, I only vaguely remember that I have read them discussed in some works of his. If you are really interested, please take the trouble to go through his works. With care, I am sure you will be amply repaid in one form or another. As you have realized by now that my path does not exactly cross yours, I can be of very little service to you in your difficulties. We speak different languages.

Hoping that this letter will find you in excellent health and happiness,

Yours, Sunil Bhattacharya

To Agnes above Sunil says that his path and hers do “not exactly cross”, but in the letter below to a visitor from the Theosophical Society his response is quite different. Mr. Coats from the Theosophical Society writes:

28th February 1974

Sri Sunil Bhattacharya

Dear brother,

It was very good of you to spare time to receive us and let us hear some of the interesting music you have created during your stay in the Ashram in Pondicherry and I would like to take the opportunity of thanking you on behalf of the group of us who came from Adyar for an interesting half-hour with you.

It was a source of great interest to us to realize what a lot of different activities were being conducted within the whole Ashram complex.

With many thanks again,

Yours Sincerely,

John Coats

President

P.S. I should be grateful for your kindly accepting a copy of the book AT THE FEET OF THE MASTER, sent separately in memory of our visit.

Sunil's answer:

8.3.74

Dear Brother,

It was a very agreeable surprise for me to receive your letter and this little gem of a book. You are indeed very kind, and I thank you for both.

I always look back with pleasure to the half-hour in which I had your company and I am glad to know that you reciprocate

my sentiments. I knew when I saw you that we tread the same path. May your Spirit shine out wide, blank and pure.

Thanking you again for your wonderful kindness.

Yours, Sunil

In a letter to a correspondent in the U.S. Sunil provides a brief explanation of his Savitri music which was at first, but not later, composed to accompany Huta's paintings:

22.2.74

Dear Mr. Maliszewski,

I received your most gracious letter for which I thank you.

Originally, the need for some music with the Mother's readings was felt during the projection of the slides of paintings "Meditations on Savitri". That was the reason why the Mother asked me to write these musics on Savitri. Later on, when these musics were played during the actual projections, it was found that they were a little too long and as such inconvenient to be used for slide shows. And so, the practice of associating these musics with the paintings was discontinued. However, the Mother always encouraged me to continue writing these musics as She thought they were very useful. But, the first thing I did on receiving this freedom, was to drop some passages from my music in order to keep the listening time of a canto within reasonable limits. And so was lost the exact correspondence between my music and the paintings by Huta. A list of Savitri musics which I have already done is given below with their timings.

Yours, Sunil

A response by Sunil to a correspondent in Bombay who wanted to receive all the Savitri music Sunil had composed up to that point and in stereo. This became more of a problem later when there was more of Sunil's music recorded and more people began to ask for all of it. Eventually Victor and others doing the cassette copying

had to limit requests to one or two cassettes at a time.

3.3.74

Dear Mr. Bengali,

I am in receipt of your letter dated 29th January for which I thank you.

Our original recordings are only monaural and as such stereo recordings cannot be supplied. Also, I am afraid that it will not be possible for me to attend to your wish immediately as, at this time of the year, our commitments are usually heavy and it will be quite some time before we will be in a position to take up your work. I note also that you are particular about the cassettes to be used for these recordings. I would suggest, in that case, that you buy yourself some C-90 cassettes in Bombay and send them to us only two at a time. Ultimately that would be the quickest way to have the entire Savitri in your collection.

*Thanking you and sending you my best regards,
Yours, Sunil*

The complications involved in providing Sunil's music for people who wanted to hear it are illustrated in the letter below:

8.3.74

Dear Mrs. Feiring,

I thank you for your letter,

I will be most happy to make these recordings for you, but here is a word of caution regarding your suggestion of sending 2 tapes to me by post. In India, tapes are banned items and are dutiable. You may send them to me only as a gift parcel and the price should not exceed Rs 40 (1 dollar is equivalent to Rs 8, so you can send 2 cassettes to me without any difficulty and only one big tape at a time. If you send 2 big tapes in one parcel, this will be seized by the customs and you will have to pay a very heavy duty. So, in that case, I will not accept the parcel and it will have to go back to you and in such cases of

non-acceptance the parcels are sent back by surface-mail. So, if you are sending cassettes, you can post them two at a time, but for tapes you should be prudent and send them one at a time. The value declared should be less than forty rupees.

Looking forward to hear from you again and sending you my warm regards,

Yours, Sunil

In 1974 Sunil gives permission for his music to be used in France for a television show on Auroville:

8.4.74

My dear Dominique,

Thanks for your beautiful photograph and for your very charming letter which filled me with happiness. You and Klara, both of you, have always been so kind to me! I have no words to thank you enough.

I have written to Jean-Yves and have given him a written authorization to use my 1974 New Year Music for the television show on Auroville. As for the photograph of the Mother on the balcony that you took on the 21st February, 1973 I have told you before and I repeat it again that it is a beautiful picture full of Her Light and Force. That's my feeling of it. The question whether this picture could be shown on the television is a fairly simple one for me. The Mother came out on the balcony and chose to show Herself like this to thousands of people collected on the streets and She knew perfectly well what She was doing. I have and will always have complete trust in Her and if I say that this photograph could not be shown to some people in France, I feel, in a way, I sit in judgment on Her actions. The same question arose regarding her music. My view has always been that the deterioration of its physical qualities had nothing to do with the force and power that She always knew how to put in Her readings. This answer I gave to Klara orally, but since then I have had a beautiful dream and I feel free to send you this written reply. My advice to you and to those

who are organizing this programme is to call for Her Grace and I am sure She will know how to use it for her own secret purpose.

You must be very happy now to see Klara again. I send to both of you my love and affection.

Yours Sunil

A letter from a group in Montreal asking for permission to sell Sunil's music:

22.3.74

Montreal 22 Mars 74

Dear Sunil,

There seems to be a growing interest in your music. We think that it would be a good thing to be able to re-record the tapes and provide them in our bookstore for people who are interested. Monetarily speaking there are two possibilities: either to charge and take profit only for the tape and not the music or else the charge for the music as well.

We would like to know what you think of this and whether you can give us your permission to re-record.

Fraternally, Jocelyne

If it is possible we would like to have recordings of all your works.

Sunil's answer:

1.4.74

Dear Jocelyne,

To know that there is a growing interest in my music is heartening — this knowledge makes me feel a little less lonely in the path She has chosen for me. There is a meaning to whatever She has done through us, and I am certain that her hands will know how to use them according to Her secret intentions. A day may come when I will have Her consent, and we will do just as you suggest, but that day has not as

yet come. At the moment there is something within me which recoils from the idea of enlarged audiences and I will prefer giving copies of these musics only to our friends, only to persons who accept our ideals, our way of life. If anyone is very keen to have copies you may advise him or her to write to me directly. I have a lot of confidence in Robert, and if he feels that someone really needs this music and could be trusted, he can make such copies for this person. Only, I will be grateful to him if he communicates to me the names and addresses of these persons, because I keep such a record. But, in any case, I do not approve of your keeping recorded cassettes or tapes in the library. The time for that has not come.

*I thank you for your letter, Jocelyne, and send you my warm regards,
Yours Sunil*

Sunil writes again about his use of Devi Sukta in his music:

Pondicherry - April 22, 1974

My dear Cliff,

Devi Sukta is a hymn from the Rig-Veda, the hymn of the Supreme Goddess or the Universal Mother. I did it in April 1963. The Mother liked it very much. I used a part of this song at the end of "the Hour of God". I am sorry that I forgot to tell you that it is no problem for me to play my cassette-tape recorder through my amplifier. I have all the necessary connections. In fact when I intend to hear any cassette nicely, I always hear it through my amplifier. I, surely, will look forward to hear this sonata in G minor.

It is good to know that you are enjoying a beautiful spring. Here in Pondy we are preparing ourselves for the worst of our seasons, the summer. It is already pretty hot though not unbearable. The mercury is slowly rising even as we are preparing ourselves to celebrate the 54th anniversary of the Mother's final arrival in Pondy. Soon will come the May day and almost simultaneously will come to an end this beautiful

cool breeze from the sea. And then, there will be some unpleasant days for us until the rains come, and this could be only sometime in June. Well, we should all bear our crosses.

I hope this letter reaches you in health and happiness. Chhobi sends you her warm regards.

Sending you much love, Sunil

Comments by Sunil on the subject of Bach, Beethoven, Debussy, Schumann, and Schubert:

My dear Yambila,

Your card, letter and finally the tape arrived on time for which I thank you with deep debt of gratitude. I know that this acknowledgment is long overdue and I fervently hope that you will kindly excuse me for the delay in writing to you, for which the pressure of work and my indolence are entirely to blame. My sister also asked me to thank you on behalf of her for the very pretty card that you were kind enough to send her.

I have heard the musics you have sent and I enjoyed them enormously. Bach solemn and inspiring, Beethoven wonderful, Debussy treasure — store of original idea, Schumann beautiful.

There is nothing to say about Bach's Requiem — it is a masterpiece of musical production, solemn, inspiring and of unsurpassable beauty. But at times I have a strange feeling that he is a little aloof in a curious way, as if he is not exactly in tune with our ordinary human emotions, poised on his Himalayan whitenesses he gives us a picture of the heights and the depths of his musical stature — his tunes haunting with nostalgic memories, and a language which we have half-forgotten, and we find ourselves in a sort of pleasant reverie. This piece does not move me so profoundly as does Beethoven — you can at once feel that here is one who has been through the mill, through the burning bush of conflicting desires, one who has felt in his bosom the mounting and swelling aspirations for something that always eluded, and yet plodded

the same weary way we do and has tried to tell his story with an emotion whose sheer intensity is unrivalled. Portions of his violin concerto in D Major are the most moving creations in the world of music.

The two short pieces of Beethoven in the tape are wonderful. They are so spontaneous and natural that you have a feeling that they existed just like that even before Beethoven found them out.

Debussy is a treasure-house of original ideas which I would like to hear more before I can make up my mind about him. I very much liked Schumann. You have sent nothing of Schubert. I have heard very little of his works — and I admire him enormously.

You should have announced the name of the musics and of the composer in the mike. That would have simplified our job of finding out the relevant names.

I thank you again for the trouble you have taken and I am very grateful to you for sending all this treasure to me and I hope that this letter will find you in the best of health,

With love and kind regards

At the Feet of the Mother

Sunil

To Gambelon who sent tapes of recorded music:

We received your parcels. Minnie had to pay this time a duty (Rs. 23) on her parcel but they did not charge any duty on mine. The fan came in quite good condition. The extension cord, connection cord and the fan they will all be very useful. I must thank you for them. The music on the tape this time is very interesting. The chantings of 400 A.D. to 600 A.D. and even 1100 A.D. are very stirring and there is something curious — there is one melodic line which turns up frequently in all of them which is absolutely identical with a melodic line which is used very often in Kirtans of Bengal. I am listening with great interest.

Sunil

Another parcel from Gambelon with recorded music for Sunil to listen to:

Yesterday I received your letter intimating me that you are going to post a recorded tape and I had better watch its arrival. I will surely enjoy listening to the musics that you have recorded in the tape. In fact, these days I am listening quite a lot. I borrowed two tapes from your "magnethèque", heard them, then yesterday I returned them and brought two more tapes which I intend to hear attentively. I heard Chopin's "Études". They are constructed with rare skill, but did not give me real pleasure. Grieg's Concerto (?) was good. But then there was Mozart; there you have the grand Mogul of the musicians. He is superb in whatever he does. He can weave patterns with just two notes and yet come out of it with an immortal melody. Wagner's "Twilight of the Gods" impresses more by its dramatic climaxes than by the richness of its melodies. None of the melodies he developed in that piece can stand on its two legs. So, I will be looking forward to the arrival of your tape.

Sunil

Sunil comments on what his music and his coming to know the Mother have meant to him:

Georgette,

It is always a pleasure to receive letters if they bring to me the gladness of a sincere and aspiring heart and more so if the heart in question belongs to my friend and sister. Georgette your letter intruded into my heavily packed day and for a long time I did nothing but think of your letter and of your kindness. Could I possibly thank you enough? I wonder. These are moments when a little may mean a world of things to others. I am grateful to you not simply because you have been able to arrange that a brother of yours may listen to "the

greatest music ever written”, but because of the trouble you had to undergo to get it done. The music will bring with it a deeper assurance there is something more, of a universal brotherhood of us all who aspire to be the seed of her love.

However, the tapes are yet to come and when they do I will communicate the news to you again.

My days are passing smooth as a stream, tranquil and peaceful in this quiet and beautiful haven of ours. I keep to my little world of music and I pass through my moments of them all, exaltation or discomfort, depending on the quality of nuggets that I have turned out. Looking at these days now which have followed my undertaking of this music of Savitri I have a growing feeling that I and my music are no longer strangers, and I discover that, after all, I and my music have much in common. Is it not wonderful to know oneself in one's own music?

My greatest joy in this life has been my success in discovering Her, who is my true Mother, as well as my attempts to express in my music my deepest feelings for Her. I pray to Her, that She may lead you into the happiness of a life consumed in Light and Truth.

Let me repeat my deepest appreciation for all you have done for me.

Sunil

The never-ending effort to keep Sunil's machines in working order continues:

Pondicherry - 20.5.74

My dear Cliff,

I have received your letter and 2 cassettes. One of these cassettes is recorded, and contains some Bach musics and Cassals chorales. I am looking forward to hear them at my leisure and enjoy. The other cassette is brand new and empty. I have recorded Savitri Book II, canto V on it and will be sending it back to you shortly. I will put New Year 1959 and

Shakti on the next cassette that comes from you. One C-90 will be perfect. Do not buy C-120 cassettes, they are always a source of trouble if the machine you use is not new and in perfect order. You never said if I could keep these cassettes you are sending with musics on them. Please do it in your next letter without any hesitation.

Will you please do me a favour and get some informations for me either from a local dealer of Sony tape recorders or from the company if you can manage to get its address? I need an oscillator coil for a Sony tape recorder Tc - 500A. The model is rather old and the spare parts may not be available easily. In that case a similar oscillator coil of a later model will also do. Please find out if this could be purchased and what would be the approximate price of the part. I give you below the details of this coil. I will be very grateful to you if you could do this for me. I tried to get this part in Europe but without any success.

This year the climate seems to have changed here. There has been some hot days but the mercury chose to remain always under 100°F and now, already, we are having brief spells of rain. The meteorological experts in Bombay and in Madras are also assuring us that the monsoon is just around the corner and is likely to reach the southeastern coasts of India in the last week of May. Last night it rained and today it is just nice. Steve is also very happy and does not seem to mind this heat too much. Steve told me that there is a strike over there at Boston and the taxis are off the road and you are having a sort of vacation. We are having a big strike here in the railways and the prices of all the commodities have gone up, especially in Pondy.

Chhobi sends you her best wishes. She has not done much cooking lately, but she does a lot of work in my department.

Hoping to hear from you soon, and sending you much love,

Yours, Sunil

P.T.O.

[on reverse side:]

Oscillator coil for Sony tape recorder

Model TC - 500A

The oscillator coil primary is for push-pull using 12BH7A valve.

There are two secondary windings.

When the part for the cassette recorder had been found Sunil wrote:

Pondicherry - 10.6.74

My dear Cliff,

I am very happy to know that you have been able to buy me this Sony coil. Did you get it at a local dealer's or did you have to write to the Company? Before I wrote to you, I asked a friend of mine in Germany to get me this coil. He was told there that the model is extremely old and they no longer manufacture spare parts for this tape recorder. I hope now that your packet comes easily through the Customs at Madras. Thanks for the coil and for the cassettes.

Sending you much love,

Yours, Sunil

A letter from a Bengali friend living in France with another proposal to publish Sunil's music:

11.6.74/France

Dear Sunilda and Gauridi,

Bonjour,

I am sure with the Mother's Grace you are keeping well. The day I left for Paris from Kanakda I heard that Gauridi and Amiyoda had gone to Madras for some treatment. I hope everything is done according to the programme — and all are O.K. I hope you have learnt all about me from Purna.

Anyway when I came to Paris, had two things in my mind

— 1) my house: 2) Sannaysin — Robert Laffont. Well I had no idea whatsoever for your music — of which I had spoken once to the Mother. Then came the experience as I wrote to Purna on many occasions. For me it was a reminder of my aspiration or you may say my commitment to the Mother. I am very much detached from publicity or huge circulation — so I didn't think of publishing your musics, the first thing which came to me, 'How to protect the music?' We protected Sannaysin by printing in book form, but for the music we don't have any means. So the idea came to call Igor and he gave me the idea to deposit your music in the Society of Authors of music. I found it very logical and discussed it with Etevenon along with Igor. Everyone agreed and I called André-da for his advice. He then told me to contact Carole who took the responsibility to do something regarding your music. Then I met her and she too agreed with our plan. Up till now there was no idea of record — and whenever it came up in the discussion I discouraged the idea.

Then a day came when a big publisher of music 'EDITION MAROUANI' called me in his office to listen to your music — I always play your last 1974 New Year Music, because for me it carries all the atmosphere of the Mother's presence and Her message too. He was just charmed. I had also the occasion to play your music (always 1974) to M. and Mme Robert Laffont. I had nothing to explain them. They were all carried away by the psychic touch of your music. When M. Marouani desired to do a disk with your music — I told him the decision lay with the author, who does not consider himself as the author of the music, but an instrument of the Divine Mother. He understood. Any case I have asked Purna to send me a good quality tape (not mini-cassette) if possible of your music of 1974 and another one (any one which you will consider will be good) about 25 or 39m....

Whenever I hear your music here I have an experience. It is this — a line of Prières et Meditations comes to me 'Comme l'homme n'a pas voulu du repas que j'avais préparé avec tant

d'amour et de soin, alors j'ai invité le Dieu a le prendre.' (le 3 Sept 1919). For me She has once more given a chance to mankind for this repas, this time in various ways: 'Auroville', 'your music', and so many other ways — and I feel that slowly mankind is turning the table — so I felt it is our duty to keep the 'repas' clean and at the same time open our doors. I tell you once again I had no intention to do whatsoever for your music in Paris. It is the Force of the Mother who has pushed me into this situation. We are all subject to this Grace. So here we are. I feel very much your love which you so kindly sent through Purna. My regards to all of you. See you soon. Etevenons send their regards too. If you want to contact me, you may give the note to Purna, she will send it to me. Aurevoir.

With deep regards, yours, Barun

Pondicherry — 25.6.74

My dear Barun,

I received you letter which Purna came and delivered to me personally. I am very happy to note that you have recovered fully from your recent operation and are moving about freely in Paris.

The informations you have given me in this letter could be interesting, and I have already written to my friend Gambelon to look into them a little more closely. Considering the part he played in my life as a musician, it is proper that he should participate in any decision which touches on the subject of my music. I have complete trust in him, and I know he will do whatever is best for me and for my music. I have had some conversations with the Mother, and I have, also, some of Her letters written to me, and I was always surprised to note that She was not very inclined to assign any money-earning role to my music. She had other ideas on the subject. If this music has to accomplish a certain work of Her choice, it has within itself the protection it needs. Within me I have no worry, neither any hesitation. There are things which nobody can steal. Can you steal my love for Her? The world would be a much more

congenial place if it could be done a little more frequently. However, I have written to Gambelon, he will come in contact with Pierre and find out for himself all the implications, and the best thing will be done. But, of course, no records.

*I send you my love,
Yours, Sunil*

Carlo got wind of Barun's proposal and wrote to Sunil:

4.7.74

My dear Sunil,

A recent long telephone conversation with Mr. Gambelon has revealed to me that you asked him to do what he can regarding an attempt by Barun Tagore to have your music placed with a large record company. If this should come about, you risk ending up like Satprem in a far off hut with a guard posted to keep away a steady stream of superficial admirers, or like the mountain-top yogi mentioned by Sri Aurobindo who threw stones at anyone trying to climb up to his cave.

Barun's bosom-friend Poorna is in Geneva just now and a friend who hopes to see her soon will try to relay the message that you do not want to have any record made under the present circumstances.

*With kind regards
Yours sincerely, Carlo*

I trust you have also yourself stated your position plainly to Barun.

Of course, Sunil has already answered Barun and says so, and answers Carlo's brand of humor with his own:

15.7.74

My dear Carlo,

I thank you for your letter dated July 4.

You have said only a quarter of what is likely to happen in

my life if ever a record of my music earns a place on the counter of your consumer's market. These reasons of yours should indeed, have a bearing on any decision we take on the subject of commercial exploitation of these musics. But the story does not end there. We have within us queer little creatures in our makeup which normally make themselves scarce and somehow escape detection. They bide their time, and come out when they have a chance. The picture of the moment that you have tried to draw in your letter is exactly the situation where they thrive most and make themselves felt by their bustling movements. I don't wish that this chance be given to them. I do not like noise, neither without, nor within. I am happiest when I am left to myself. Anyway, thanks very much for the interest you have shown in me and your willingness to help me solve my problems. I have of course, written to Barun Tagore and told him what I think of his suggestion. I never got any reply.

*Thanking you again and sending you my warm regards.
Yours, Sunil*

Carlo writes what he understands of Barun's project and tells Sunil that his music is actually being sold without his permission by another party:

15.7.74

My dear Sunil,

Referring to my last letter, it seems that Gambelon's report was false: Barun has not found a recording company interested in your music, they were only talking of trying to find one. They are now fully informed about your position in this matter and will no doubt abandon their idea. However — and this is a definite fact — your own music-maker associate Michel Klosterman is now copying Savitri music cassettes for people which he sells to them at DM 20.- (Rs. 58.-) apiece. (The blank cassette costs DM 3.50, making a whopper profit of Rs. 50 per cassette). This is precisely what Marcel Thévoz

had thought of doing in Geneva 2 years ago (though perhaps not at such a high price) with the intention of transferring all the profit to you. He had not carried out his intention because you had not approved. Perhaps you know Michel well enough to drive home your opinion to him personally. His address is Elisabethweg 34, 8033 Planegg, Germany. Apparently he wants to be back at the Ashram for August Darshan day.

*With kind regards,
Sincerely, Carlo*

Sunil is saddened by this news, as the person involved is a friend of his who had played in his music and provided considerable material help, and writes to Carlo:

24.7.74

My dear Carlo,

Your postcard of the July 15th brought an item of news which filled me with sorrow. The trouble with Michel is that the work he has undertaken to do is rather expensive and demands a lot of funds. However, if Michel had to sell a few cassettes to get some assistance he should have had the courtesy to inform me personally. I would not have approved of it, but I would have tolerated it. I have a lot of affection for him and I am also indebted to him for the expensive electronic equipment he has kept at my place here for my use. Nevertheless, if this sale of cassettes continues, I will be obliged to speak to Michel when he comes back to Pondy. Meanwhile, I must thank you for keeping me in touch with things which normally I would not have known.

The information you got from Barun and Purna is wrong. Barun went and played a tape of my music to the director of a recording company and the director was willing to bring out a record of the music. A copy of Barun's letter to me is with Gambelon and the facts could be easily verified.

*Thanking you again and sending you my warm regards,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil is asked to compose a piece of music for a dance-drama in Auroville.

11.4.74

Dear Sunil,

You may recall the dance-drama mentioned to you some while back, THE IMMORTAL FIRE, based on Sri Aurobindo's translation of KATHA UPANISHAD, with some text drawn from Savitri. It is to be presented on August 15th as an offering at the Bharat Nivas, House of India, in Auroville.

In view of this, dear Sunil, we are asking your help with THE IMMORTAL FIRE. If you have no time for a new musical work for it, do you feel a young composer in the Ashram — Johannes of Sweden has been suggested — could arrange a score selected from your other works? (As you compiled the 'Matrimandir music'?)

So I will come to you Saturday morning (about 11 a.m., for your advice and help on THE IMMORTAL FIRE... probably to be the first cultural presentation to be offered in the House of India...

in Their Light and Love, Truth, Seyril

Sunil writes that he is unable to compose music other than the New Year Music and Savitri Music:

I have received your letter and your cassette. Your prayer has touched deeply my heart. Actually, my Savitri and New Year Music give me quite a big work. I will not be able to do other music without being overwhelmed by a work which would tire me and would diminish my abilities to give my best to the task which She has entrusted me with. For this reason, I stress my regret that I cannot accept to do the music that you propose.

I thank you infinitely for the beautiful passage that you have read and recorded for me. I send you my friendly and

brotherly feeling.
Sunil

Sunil then writes to Rolf in Brazil about his inability to compose special music for this Matrimandir program:

21.5.74

Sometime ago Seyril came and suggested that I do the score for drama "the Eternal Fire". I told her that nothing interests me these days excepting the Savitri and the New Year Musics. But I had no objections if my old musics were utilized for this purpose. After some time she came back and told me that you have accepted to come over here and you would do the choreography. I was a little surprised. I could not figure out how you could leave your Casa and come here, spend months training the dancers and then go on giving performances at various places in America. I, of course, kept quiet and did not express my surprise to Seyril. And then, after some time a girl, Elmire, came with a letter of introduction from Udar and told me that it is she who will be doing the choreography of "the Eternal Fire" and would I play some musics of mine so that she could have and make selections to suit her ideas? I asked Victor to play some musics. She told me that she was satisfied and she would come back again to make the final recordings. And there the matters stand. I thought, naturally, that you have changed your opinion or perhaps the Auroville authorities thought that it would be too expensive to bring you here from Bahia. Anyway, if you want my feeling about the whole situation, I have no hesitation to say that what has happened is for the best. I know that your dance has a role to play in Her scheme of things and when the time comes you will have a feeling of it and She would give a sign which would be unmistakable.

I took things fairly easy during the last four months. I have started to play a little on the organ now, and will be soon busy with my next Savitri.

Rolf then writes that he has had a change of heart and will not be coming to India from Brazil to do the dance and Sunil replies:

3.7.74

The decision you have taken regarding your visit to Pondy and your acceptance of the responsibilities of Syril's dance project is in perfect accord with my feelings on the subject. You have taken your counsel from your within which is, indeed, in Her keeping. The dark clouds which all of us have passed through in the recent past have also in them a message for us. It is good, for a while, to gather oneself within and to see and hear that which alone will ultimately shape the future.

Sunil

A correspondent writes for permission to use Sunil's music for a film project in British Columbia:

6 May 1974

Dear Sunilda,

It is my joy to be working hard on a new short film, a very beautiful film — part of Mother's work (as everything is) and through most of it, your music would add a power which of course it would otherwise not have.

There are special sections — particularly in the 1959 and 1972 New Year's Music, which would be perfect music for this film. The film deals with a new science called 'Vivaxis'. It is the study and use of magnetic energies. My request is for your permission to use this music. The film is for educational purposes throughout the world. I am producing it for the Magnetic Research Society of Chemainus, British Columbia, Canada.

If there is any reason for which it would be better not to use the music, please do not hesitate to tell me so.

We have heard that you and Rolf may possibly collaborate on a production called 'The Eternal Fire' for August

presentation. Surely wish it would be possible to be present with you for that, but right now, it looks impossible.

In Mother's Light and Love, Robert

Sunil answers:

20.5.74

My dear Robert,

I felt extremely happy to hear from you again after a long time. It is not that I lost track of you completely. I always made it a point to enquire from our mutual friends and acquaintances your whereabouts and your health. But, naturally, that is not enough, it feels altogether quite different when the words come directly from you. So, many thanks for dropping these few lines to me.

There was a talk of Rolf's coming here and my doing the score of the dance drama "Eternal Fire". But, as far as I can gather, Rolf is not coming and a lady from Montreal is doing the choreography. She is now selecting passages from my old musics and will be using them as a background. Doing a new music for this piece is out of the question for me. I have no interest in it and Savitri and the New Year Music are enough to keep me busy throughout the year.

As for your using the 1959 and the 1972 New Year Musics for your film, I must say that I am not sure. Do you think that these musics will be suitable for a film which wants to study a scientific subject — in an objective way? Of course, I don't know how you intend to go about it, but on the face of it I don't see any relation between the two. It could be that you have other ideas. Anyway, if you feel convinced that it would help you to use these musics as a background to this film, you may do it. You have my permission.

*Wishing you all the best and sending you much love,
Yours, Sunil*

As summer is drawing to an end Sunil is still working on his Savitri

music, Book II, Cantos 9, 10 and 11, but finds the work is going slower than it otherwise would have because of his having to attend to visiting friends:

Pondicherry - 30.8.74

My dear Cliff,

The book you sent for me [Dear Theo] arrived a few days ago. As Chhobi was very eager to go through it, she took it at once and is now reading it. She likes it very much. Thanks very much for thinking so much about me.

I am, at present, having some visiting friends over here and they are claiming quite a bit of my free time. I cannot give as much of my attention to Savitri as I would have done if they were not here. So things are moving rather slowly. I hope to be more free from the 1st of September and, then, I should hurry up and make the final arrangements before I undertake the recordings.

How was your birthday? I and Chhobi sent you a card, did it reach you in time? There were a lot of visitors here, both from various parts of India as well as from abroad, during the last Darshan on the 15 of August. All Ashram departments sold an appreciable amount of goods. This is welcome news for us considering the financial difficulties thorough which the Ashram was passing during the last few months.

Hoping that this letter reaches you in excellent health and happiness, and sending you much love,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil continues to work constantly to keep his recording equipment operating. Here he writes to the manufacturers of one of his tape recorders:

To: Allgemein Elektricitats-Gesellschaft /18.9.74

Dear Sirs,

I use a semi-professional Telefunken tape recorder, Studiogert Magnetophon M-24. This has given me excellent

service during the last 15 years or so. The quality of playback has recently deteriorated and I am now advised to change the play-back head. I would like to purchase one from you if it is available for sale. In case this head is no longer available as the model is rather old, may I know if the playback head of a more recent model could be used on this tape recorder? In either case, kindly let me know the price. I would appreciate greatly if you could possibly send a copy of your answer to a friend of mine, Mr. Carlo Schueller, at the address given below. As it is impossible to send money from India, I intend to make the purchase through this friend of mine.

Thanking you in anticipation and sending you my best regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sunil Bhattacharya

Telefunken writes back asking the exact make of Sunil's tape recorder. In his next letter Sunil furnishes the information and Telefunken writes back saying they don't have this head anymore, but will check to see if another head can be used with Sunil's recorder. Sunil thanks them, and that's the end of this line of correspondence.

Carlo Schueller later writes, however:

25.9.74

I just spoke to the Telefunken people in Zurich. The news is bad. They have no spare parts of the M-24 left in stock and say that they are no longer being made. They do not think Hanover would have them either. Let us hope that they are wrong.

To another correspondent in the Netherlands Sunil writes about his musical notation:

26.10.74

Dear Mr. Bokhorst,

I thank you for your very kind letter.

I write my musics in a notation which has been developed by me. It could be understood only by me or by some of the musicians who have been very closely associated with me in my work. I do not know the western notation; as such it is scarcely feasible for me to supply you with a written score of my musics which would be intelligible to you. But I would gladly send you musics on tapes or on cassettes. We do not take any recording charges, but you have to pay the cost of the tapes and the postal freights. I can give you a more precise idea about the costs involved only when I know if you like to have these musics on cassettes or on reel tapes.

Thanking you again and sending you my very warm regards,

Yours, Sunil

Steve says about Sunil's notation:

Sunil's music is not in western musical notation, and there is no formal Indian notation. He used a combination of Bengali characters and math symbols (at least one anyway... the integral for chords). I guess a musician who also knows Bengali could, while reading the notation and listening to the music, figure out the system. But as far as I know, Patrick is the only one around now, who can (or could...maybe he's forgotten) actually make out what it was.

As Sunil's birthday came and went the Savitri work went on:

Pondicherry - 11.11.74

My dear Cliff,

It is wonderful that you took so much trouble and showed me so much kindness. It is comforting to know that even across distant borders there is someone who thinks of me with affection. Thanks very much for the birthday card. Your

cloves were thrice welcome. Somehow I got wind of its coming. During the last few days my mind moved round my box of cloves more often than usual.

I could not enjoy my birthday very much, as the toils with my Savitri are still continuing. Steve bought for me a few mats and baked a very tasty cake for me. Chhobi bought for me a beautiful rug. My room is now very comfortable, and I feel myself “as snug as a bug in a rug”.

During the last fortnight or so we are having pretty cool weather. The monsoon set in and we had a little rain for a couple of days. Then all of a sudden the clouds disappeared and the days were bright and cool. This is quite unusual at this time of the year. This sort of weather is good for vegetables like cabbages and cauliflowers but if the rains do not reappear we will be having difficulties with the water supply during summer in and around Pondicherry.

How is everything with you? It looks as if you are not in the mood of settling down in one place. It is becoming difficult for us to keep track of you with your ever changing addresses.

I would be happy if you wrote to me more often. I will send a cassette to you with the new Savitri as soon as it is ready.

*Thanking you again and sending you much love,
Yours, Sunil*

In this letter Sunil mentions his progress in composing his *Savitri* music as of 1975:

Pondicherry — 4.1.75

Dear Sir,

The Savitri that I can give on tapes or cassettes are readings by the Mother of passages from this epic with suitable musical arrangements. This work had been undertaken at the instance of the Mother in 1966 and is still in progress. However, the total work done till now is about 10 hours in length. These are available on tapes or cassettes. Savitri recitations without music are not given from my department. A C-90 cassette

with one or two cantos of Savitri would cost Rs. 40, including, of course, the price of the cassette and postal charges.

*Thanking you, sir, and sending you my best regards,
Yours, Sunil Bhattacharya*

A letter from Michel and Anik in France on their feelings of friendship after having met Sunil only once:

8.1.75

Very dear friend,

Allow me to give you this title, even though we have seen each other only once and now more than a year has passed. But this simple contact has been sufficient to create links and once we eliminate the mental...

In our occidental world in full mutation, the man moves and evolves according to the plan. For this reason your music can be a big contribution and help to the evolution of man here.

With friendship, Michel

[from Anik]

I'm sure, Sunil, that we will meet again. Where? That's not a problem. We think often of you and consider as a great advantage the fact to have met you.

With friendship, Anik

Sunil answers:

23.1.75

Dear friends,

I present to both of you and to all those who are dear to you my best wishes for this year.

I have seen several times in this life, and this is a heavenly gift, that deep feelings go beyond time and space. The brevity of our contact does not diminish the link which binds us. I

thank you a lot to have thought of me and I will be very happy to hear from you from time to time when you will have the possibility to write to me.

May Her Light shine on your way and make your task easy and useful.

Sunil

To Rolf telling him he may feel free to use Sunil's music as he sees fit:

1.2.75

Thanks very much for your letter and the beautiful card. Indeed, there is much that I would like to know about you from time to time; but it is not a necessity. The relation such as the one we have between us will hold on as it reaches beyond ourselves and our activities. However, I am always glad to receive news from you.

It is all right about your using musics from Savitri for your purpose — I told you and I repeat it again, that you are free to use these musics to suit your needs.

Sunil

Rolf writes of the 1975 New Year Music and Savitri Book II, Cantos 9-11:

14.2.75

Mother is in the New Year Music, but not yet a Presence entirely freed from the past, rather still covered by the powerful flood of the many years lived under her direct protection and presence and guidance and love. Her new being, her new Acting and Loving and Helping are, as I feel it, much more simple, less bound to personal feeling and relationship, a profound Impersonality penetrating persons and things, the world, moving all, imperceptibly doing the quiet work of transformation, of elevation, of harmonization. She is now independent of personal readiness, her aim is no longer — it

seems — the individual (one here and another there) but the Whole, the world, the manifestation, and now She is equally in the lowest as in the highest — She is wherever something exists, wherever the Divine created something out of Himself.

Rolf

In his answer to Rolf, Sunil explains that it is still very much the personal Divine Mother he has known all his years in the Ashram who is the object of his love and whom he tries to express in his music:

1.4.75

The few lines of your appreciation of my recent musics gave me much pleasure. It is good to know that you share the same experiences as I usually have when I work on these musics. You are again right when you point out that this Mother in my musics is a very personal mother, the Mother that was, the One whose presence within me was all that ever mattered to me in my life. There are certain experiences which can last a lifetime, and it is a vain exercise of mind if we try to switch over to others when the time is not just ripe. It has been given to me to seek Her Love and Her Compassion. My orbit lies there, and I am happy to live within the limits She chose to confer on me. It will be no good for me if I try to feel Her in the infinite details of our infinite universe. That is not simply my path. I need a little ego for my work. Could a doll of salt take a plunge in the sea and seek to explore it with impunity? I wonder; at least, I am sure, there wouldn't be any more the Sunil that you have known, neither would you hear him any longer singing his songs. When I was a kid, I was on the verge of an experience and I drew myself back because I became mortally afraid of losing myself completely. But, then that is another story.

Sunil

While Sunil was busy composing and recording his music,

corresponding with people asking for his music and dealing with keeping in spare parts for his machines, the studio itself was attacked by termites and both the room itself and the harmonium which Gambelon had sent to him were damaged. Sunil mentions this attack in a letter to a correspondent in India:

4.3.75

My dear Arka,

This letter of yours of the 10th made me happy.

There was an attack of white ants (termites) in my studio upstairs. We are obliged to pull down the false ceiling and fix a new one with glass-wool, etc. This work which was undertaken sometime ago is yet to be finished satisfactorily. As such, I have not been able to start my work with the next installment of Savitri. I have started feeling a little impatient.

Hoping to see you soon, my dear Arka, and thanking you for what you are doing for me. I send you my love and my affection.

Yours Sunil

Gambelon comments again on Sunil's stern visage in photographs:

11.4.75 / Chartres

Dear friend,

I have got the photos and have sent some to Pondy. With regards to the ones which interested you I enclose them with my letter. You will see that the ones which were taken in the sunlight are successful, the others not. I had very expressly told Kanak who did not take this into account. It's a pity. How stubborn you are in your family. Happily, your mother and your mother-in-law who were photographed in the sun were done successfully. Minnie and Millie came out very well. There is always a certain majesty in the face of Gauri (taken with a flash, as I wanted done with your mother-in-law). There are also photos at Nandanam, which are not bad, although you seem always to pose for posterity, or to have lost all your family

— *my god, smile. I will send this later on.*
In friendship, Gambelon

Sunil has written to Amarjit Singh for advice on dealing with his termite problem as well as information on getting recording heads for his tape recorders reconditioned. Dr. Singh answers:

16.5.75

Respected Sunil Da,

Here are the addresses required by you: —

1. For Re-conditioning of the Tape recorders Magnetic heads:

*M/S. Calcutta Industrial Corporation
 20 Strand road
 Calcutta-1*

2. Protection against white ants

a. Spray TERME SEAL ... Bottle is approx Rs 60/-.

b. There is a cheaper method also which we are using at our Jammu Radio Station. Please make a thick paste of DDT Powder and with the brush paint the surface where you fear the attack of white ants.

3. For Tape recorders Endless Belts

a. Associated Engineering Stores, 20, Netaji Subhas Road, Post Box No:- 2801. Calcutta 70001.

b. Ailga Rubber Works

Industrial Product Division, Mahalla Ustad, Jammu 180001, 43 Dhanji Street, Mote Mohal—Bombay-3.

Firms at (a) and (b) shall provide you the rubber Belts provided you give them the exact specifications i.e. length of the Belt, its thickness and width but the firm listed at (c) will provide you Cotton Belts only of any specification.

*I hope you won't mind the delay in writing to you.
 All of my colleagues send you their regards.*

Amarjit Singh

Sunil thanks Dr. Singh:

25.5.75

My dear Amarjit,

I did not much expect you to take so much trouble for me. So, your letter was received with joy and gratefulness. These informations are certainly important for me and I will make use of them in the near future. In the first place, I am going to write to these companies to make the first contact and know more about the way they receive orders, the prices etc. I have one or two heads which could be reconditioned. I need also a belt.

I asked the pest control people here to give us an anti-termite treatment to my studio. They charged Rs 250, but there may be recurrences of the problem within the next few years. Now that the possibility of this recurrence is in our minds, we will certainly be on the watch and in case of slightest doubt we will take proper steps.

I thank you again, dear Amarjit, and I send you and to your colleagues my affectionate thoughts,

Yours Sunil

More on the termite attack:

Pondicherry - 29 July 1975

My dear Cliff,

My studio upstairs was in a rotten condition due to an attack of termites. The entire false ceiling has to be redone. As I had not enough money, I had to wait until the help came. Now, the repair work is over and I have started my work with the next installment of Savitri. There has been some delay but, naturally, it could not be helped. I will send you a cassette with this music when the recordings are over, which could be only in November.

May this year be another moving forward for you, and may Her increasing presence within you bring to you the joy of fulfilment.

*Wishing you many happy returns of the day and sending you my love,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil makes a brief reference on the nature of his compositions to a friend in Brazil:

2.8.75

My dear Wanda,

Thalysia brought to me many beautiful things and one of them was your letter so full of warmth and friendliness! There was also your gift which my department will certainly use with gratitude. Your cassettes are being attended to and Thalysia will take them with her when she goes back to Sao Paulo.

I am happy to know that you find in my musics something meaningful to you. I write my musics as I pray. It is a matter of an inner satisfaction to me to know that what I do can bring help to someone somewhere. I am sorry that I am unable to communicate my feelings to you in the language you speak. I certainly hope to improve my Portuguese when I have a little more time to spare. However, I expect you will be able to bear with me until then.

*I thank you for your letter, for your gift and for your kindness. Sending you my warm regards,
Yours, Sunil*

In the letter to Rolf below Sunil makes reference to troubling developments which had been taking place in Auroville. After the Mother left her body in 1973, Auroville became the scene of conflict between the residents of Auroville and the Sri Aurobindo Society, which the Mother had made the legal custodian of Auroville lands and properties when it was founded in 1968. In Auroville, there were

differences between those who favoured a moderate approach and were willing to negotiate with the Sri Aurobindo Society and those who wanted a complete break. Eventually the Auroville Residents Association and the Sri Aurobindo Society went to court. The final result, in 1982, was an Act of Parliament by which the government of India officially took over management of Auroville though the day-to-day management of the community remained in the hands of Auroville residents:

23.7.75

I received your letter from Frankfurt, and that letter brought to me much happiness. It is good to know that your tour in Europe produced some positive results and created possibilities for a further return during the next winter. In the meantime you must have a lot of things to keep you occupied in Brazil. Now that your life has been linked to Her Love your success has acquired a collective importance for all of us, so I remain always eager to know how you are doing.

After about four and a half months of complete indolence, I have started playing a little on my organ. I do not intend to start composing for Savitri right at the moment. That can certainly wait until I feel myself more intimately conscious of my fugitive sense of music. There has been, always, a critical moment when something within clicked and things started rolling. I will have to wait for that.

Meanwhile I hear of ominous things happening in Auroville. Very disquieting is the wrestle that is going on for power. Stagnation and discontent and even revolt. This is the moment for prayer and for reaffirmation of our faith, of our sense of belonging. What She wills, we will be!

With love Sunil

To Rolf on the ongoing adjustment to life in the Ashram after the Mother had left her body:

9.8.75

I am very happy to hear from you after a long time.

The relation between us is such that occasional exchanges of news, though welcome, are by no means indispensable. I deeply feel your presence and the compelling urge that guides your path.

People, here, are adjusting themselves slowly and falteringly to the newness of our present Ashram life accepting with resignation the absence of a physical Presence which dominated our lives for more than half a century. Surprising though, and almost simultaneously values are undergoing changes at a pace which is almost a steady slow crawl. However, the fragrance of Her nearness is overwhelmingly strong. I have to be told not to believe that she is on her chair in that lovely room upstairs. Do you remember the day you first saw the Mother? You were on your knees and she smiling at you and the twisted glasses of the eastern window threw light on both of you and made the silhouette of a Mother and her child. I find it significant that this memory remains still vivid in me even though both of us have left a number of years and a number of experiences behind us.

Sunil

Once the repairs to his studio had been completed Sunil had to wait for the arrival of his German guitarist to resume recording of his music. In this letter he also writes of the constant need to re-supply machine parts and of friendship:

Pondicherry — 6.10.75

My dear Cliff,

A few days ago I received your letter from Matagiri and then arrived this packet containing belts for my tape recorder and another short letter from you. Thanks very much for writing to me and for the belts which will be very useful for us here. These are needed for a tape recorder which Rijuta has given to me. It has a very sleek appearance but the mechanism is rather old fashioned. It has 3 motors yet a belt is needed for

the main capstan drive. This main belt, which you have sent, is a rather curious looking object and, unlike other belts that are usually seen, it is broad and made of a material which appears to be rather delicate and I wonder how long it will last in our climate here in Pondy. However, we will give it a try and if this works the machine could be used for copying tapes.

Ties of love and friendship, of affection and attachment may be irrelevant to a life of spiritual seeking but they are certainly not superfluous; happiness and pain of such experiences leave deep residues in our being and help us to grow and widen our consciousness. That is why the spiritual growth is a time-consuming affair. One thing always helps us and carries us through all our difficulties, it is our sense of humour. I am aware that with the bright twinkle that you have in your eyes you must be possessing a good measure of it. You will certainly appreciate this god-given gift in the long run.

I have not yet started my Savitri recordings; I have to wait for Michel Klosterman who is now in Munich. He will reach Pondy on the 11th of this month and our recordings will start from the 12th. He plays electric guitar and base guitar in my musics. He is very useful to me.

I hope to hear from you soon. Chhobi sends you her love and best wishes. Sending you my love and affection,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil responds to a letter expressing appreciation for his music and, as always, expresses thanks for the help given:

29.11.75

Dear Mr. Dreisbach,

I am very happy to know that the tapes we sent have reached your hands safely. Thanks very much for writing to me. It gives me an inner satisfaction to know that the experiences I lived through when I did these musics are pertinent and have a role to play, however minor it is, in Her scheme of things. I

thank you, also, for the cheque. This money will certainly be useful for us, but I am very deeply touched by the kindness and the goodwill which prompted you to make this contribution voluntarily.

I have finished just a few day ago a new sequence of Savitri musics and I am sending you a cassette with them. This is a gift to you from me and a token of my friendship and gratitude. I will be glad if you accept it.

It will certainly be a pleasure to meet you here in Pondy if ever your wish to visit the Ashram materializes. Thanking you again, Mr. Dreisbach, and sending you my warm regards,

Yours, Sunil

Here Sunil makes another rare exception, in addition to those he made for Rolf, to insisting that the Mother's recitations be included in copies of his music in the case of a friend living in New Caledonia:

My dear Michel,

There is a cord that ties the two of us. Such cords of sympathy and of love are always a conscious power and I like to read in them a meaning, the meaning that She has chosen to conceal in them. I, too, feel that it is time for you to free yourself from your obligations and pass a few days here near Her rooms where She lived and laboured near the Samadhi where She chose to leave Her mortal remains, breathe the air where Her fire burns still and Her fragrance never dies. It will give me great joy to receive you and Johanna here in my little room, and such moments of physical nearness will endure in our memories.

I am glad that you liked the Savitri musics. I, too, was happy when I did them. I have mailed a copy of the music without words a few days ago. It should be already in your hands.

I do not feel embarrassed when I receive help from you. But you should not overdo it. Take a good look at your financial

position because you have to save money so that you can make this trip to Pondy.

Tell something nice to Johanna on my behalf and give her my love.

*I send you my love and my brotherly affection,
Yours, Sunil*

More on commitments between people:

12th December 1975

My dear Cliff,

I had an extra cassette with me, and I meant to send it to you with the new Savitri music. It would give me some pleasure to send it as a gift. This cassette is manufactured in France and the quality is really good. I took a lot of pains to do a good recording, as the new music does not record well on cassettes as the tones I have used have a lot of bass. I was going to mail the cassette when your cassettes and your letter arrived. I will keep the cassette you sent for yourself, and I can send it back with the New Year Music. The other one I accept with gratitude. Thanks also for the cheque.

A few days ago, I posted a letter to you. Did you receive it? From much that you write to me I am satisfied that the relationship between us has stood well the wear and tear of time, and circumstances. There are commitments between human beings which run deep and have neither the look of ordinary ties of friendship nor their character and obligations. It is possible that you think less of me but that is immaterial; "That" which binds us "no water can dissolve nor fire burn". From the beginning you were as a brother to me, and that you remain.

I will certainly look forward to see you again here in the Ashram. As a matter of fact, you never left it completely.

Chhobi remembers you with love and sends you her greetings for Christmas.

I send my love to you.

Yours, Sunil

The issue of Sunil's music being sold in Germany without his permission is not one Carlo is willing to let go and he writes to Sunil:

16.2.75

My dear Sunil,

I enclose a circular letter sent out by Michel's mother a few days ago. It offers 90-minute cassettes containing your New Year's music 1973 plus Savitri Book II Canto 5 at DM 20.- the cassette material costs about DM 4.-. There would thus be a profit of about DM 16.- per cassette or Rs. 50.- for every 90 minutes copied. The profit is about the same as what we are forced to take for the MOTHER-cassettes when we sell the set at the concession rate of Rs. 125.-. (Rs. 80-profit for 130 minutes). I hope you are receiving this money for the Ashram provided you have at all given permission for these copies to be produced on a sales-and-profit basis.

With kind regards

Yours sincerely, Carlo

PS Michel is slated to fly to Europe leaving Bombay on March 6. You would have to get in touch with him soon if there is anything to say to him.

Many thanks for your most recent letter which just arrived. Uschi is replying and we enclose her letter.

I shall be able to get the price information of Sony TC95 only after 10 days (motor).

Sunil writes to Carlo that he has confronted Michel about selling Sunil's music:

3.3.75

My dear Carlo,

I received your letter as well as the circular letter which is

being sent out from the Munich centre. I thank you for both.

Michel Klosterman is leaving for Bombay tomorrow the 3rd of March. I showed him the circular letter yesterday and told him that I was very much pained to learn that all this is being done without my knowledge. I asked him to find out matters for himself when he arrives in Munich and see that these musics of mine are made available to people only at cost price without any recording charges. It appeared to me that he, also, did not have any knowledge of the affair. He told me that his mother may not be responsible, there are many more people now who are looking after this organization. He told me that he will write to me when he reaches Munich.

*Thanking you very much and sending to you and to Miss Uschi much love,
Yours Sunil*

Carlo is considering producing tapes of the Mother's readings from Savitri and asks about the possibility of Sunil providing copies of these readings:

10.3.75

My dear Sunil,

In case I ever decide to bring out the Mother's reading of Savitri on cassettes in the same way I brought out her reading of The Mother, do you have many tapes of Her reading Savitri and are you in a position to supply me with a good copy? If you have reason to prefer not to enter upon this subject, simply ignore my question.

I can now tell you the price of a replacement motor for Sony TC 95. It is Swiss Fr. 38.-, one Dollar being approximately Fr. 2.50. that makes roughly fifteen Dollars.

Affectionately, Carlo

Sunil writes about the tape recorder parts and about Carlo's query regarding the recitations of Savitri in the Mother's voice.

21.3.75

My dear Carlo,

I received your letter of 10.3. Many thanks for the information regarding the price of the motor of TC 95. I wanted to buy one now but I have to postpone it temporarily for very compelling reasons.

Walter, the bearer of this letter, takes with him the 6 cassettes of Miss Uschi as well as two parts of my Revox A77. These two boards or cards with electrical circuits are to be given to the Revox company and two new identical cards to be purchased from them. Gambelon has agreed to pay the sum needed for this transaction, and I depend upon you to do the annoying work. I have written to you a few days ago giving you all the details about it. If this letter has not yet arrived, please keep these parts with you until you receive it. I am extremely sorry to trouble you again and again, but I don't see how I can avoid it.

The Mother's recitations from Savitri were originally recorded by Huta. She also acquired a sort of a right on these recordings. It was arranged by the Mother that I would have access to these tapes only for the purpose of making copies for my musics. I do not have these original tapes. I was expressly forbidden to give such recordings to anyone, but I was, however, given permission to make the same recordings with my musics available to anyone. Even Vishwanath could not get a copy of these recordings from Huta. I can only wish you good luck.

Thanking you and sending you my affectionate thoughts.

Yours Sunil

Huta had, much earlier, sent a note to Sunil regarding these recordings of the Mother's readings from Savitri, warning Sunil that she, Huta, holds the copyright and that Sunil is not to sell his music:

Dear Sunilda,

The music of Savitri is not to be sold according to the

Mother's wish. Also the passages from Savitri which the Mother recited and that which I had recorded must not be sold. For I hold all the copyrights.

Huta

24 February

Sunil thanks Carlo for his help and comments on Huta's attitude regarding her possession of the Mother's readings of Savitri as well as some humorous remarks on his own character:

9.4.75

My dear Carlo,

Your letter dated 26th march is in my hands. You have, indeed, broken your own record of efficiency and promptness by collecting all those Revox informations for me in such a trifle amount of time! You don't let grass grow under your feet. The more I see you the more I feel the necessity of overhauling my nature, ridding myself of my indolences, making myself active and, above all, competent. But, I am afraid, I am given too much to my vices, and also, it is rather late to try so many troublesome changes in my life. So, the only thing I choose to do, without uprooting to any undue extent my daily routines, is to give myself to a contemplative admiration of a really competent person.

Huta is an excellent person and very sweet; she will go out of her way just to oblige you. She is very competent and knows very well how to manage her own affairs. She is a good painter and a good cook. I have had many rare moments of pleasure tasting the biscuits baked by her, but she is apt to react vehemently if she senses interference in matters pertaining to her own interests. These Savitri recitations are just a case to the point. However, one can always hope and things are sure to change.

These "Entretiens" tapes are a real treasure. A lot of care should be taken to preserve them for posterity. Are you serious about bringing them out in form of cassettes? Do you want to

*tempt your luck once again so soon?
 Anyway, I send you my heartiest thanks, and much love,
 Yours Sunil*

Carlo comments on Gambelon's help and writes that Michel has said he will stop selling Sunil's music for profit:

11.4.75

My dear Sunil,

That funny fellow Gambelon came by and paid me for your two Revox stamped circuit cards which are now with me awaiting some person or gnome to take them to Pondy. I also extracted from him the Fr. 38 required to pay for your replacement Sony motor. You were saying that you have compelling reasons for postponing this purchase. Are these reasons now removed? If so let me know and mention once again the Sony model number because I might have to show your letter to the Sony people here to prove that the request is from India. If not, the money can go back to Gambelon.

Michel writes from Munich that he had made a wrong move which he has corrected and that he will not take any money for your music except his actual expense for postage etc.

I also saw Walter and got the cassettes you had copied for Uschi. She thanks you for them.

Affectionately, Carlo

Carlo asks again about making copies of Sunil's music for limited sale:

14.6.75

My dear Sunil,

Thanks for your last letter. I do hope that Rudolf Kellner has by this time safely brought you the Sony motor as well as the two Revox cards. As yet there is no news from the other friend who was to send what is needed to purchase another

card.

At this time we are once again being faced with the old problem of whether or not to make a Sunil music cassette. You will see from the enclosed leaflet that an Auroville exhibition is going on at Bern. Your music is often played there as background music. Perhaps nearly 2,000 people have come to see it by this time (in the first 3 weeks) and of these 89 have asked if they could have copies of the music and left their names and addresses. One is not sure how many requests there will be by the time the exhibition ends, but it may well reach 150 or so.

Now how to satisfy them? Can Uschi be asked to spend 150 hours and wear down two machines in making copies to be given at cost price of Fr. 4. — (plus mailing expense, packing etc) when a professional cassette firm can be hired to do an edition of 200 copies which will take them hardly more than 2 hours and come to hardly more than Fr. 5.- apiece? Think it over. You may decide to give us a special permission for an edition to satisfy the accumulated requests on condition that it is offered for cost price. Or you may decide simply to keep silent and let us act in the way looking best to us. The quality of the professional recording is better than anything we ourselves can do with home equipment. There would also be nice clean printed labels.

Yours sincerely, Carlo

Just received your letter confirming receipt of the motor etc.

Sunil, again, expresses his unease at publishing his music for the public:

25.6.75

My dear Carlo,

I have received your letter of the 14th June a few days ago. I did not send you a reply immediately as I wanted to sleep on the problem. The more I slept, the more acute became my

uneasiness, the less I liked the intrusion of these 80 unwanted persons in my life and in my affairs. Do you really think that these 80 persons who visited the Auroville exhibition really need my music? And the need is so pressing that it must be satisfied right now even at the cost of transforming my cozy little room into a neon-lit sales counter? Please do not think that I am exaggerating and using rhetoric to serve my purpose. To be frank I have no purpose either this way or the other. I have only feelings, and I am, in a certain way, aware within me that my usefulness as Her musician will continue as long as I choose to live within the four walls of these feelings. So, I hesitate. I will certainly be very glad if Uschi can do these copies for some persons among these eighty who really belong to our crowd. I will consider her as my associate in Zurich. For the rest, you may just tell them that they could write to me and get the necessary particulars. I am sure very few will then survive the test.

I know you will get what you want ultimately. I would not even grudge that, because you are a marvellous person. Meanwhile, I just want a little more time.

Thanking you my dear Carlo and sending you much love.

Yours, Sunil

To Carlo again:

11.7.75

My dear Carlo,

I received your letter of July 1 and a post-card without any date.

It is good that you have now received money from Knut and you have with you at present a total amount which is just short of the price of the board which I wanted to have. In the meantime, we are feeling here other needs which appear to be more urgent. We need belts for my cassette recorders. I believe I can use some of your money to buy these belts for the

present and wait until the money situation improves enabling you to make the purchase of the Revox board. So, could you possibly buy the following items for me and send them through Thalysia who should be arriving at Zurich one of these days?

i) A set of belts for Sony TC95

ii) one belt for ITT Stereo cassette recorder

In case you have already bought the board please keep it and give it to Thalysia. I think Gambelon could be requested to pay you the amount you have so kindly put at my disposal. We would then explore other possibilities to get these belts for us.

I will be very grateful to Uschi if she consents to do these recordings for me in Zurich. Admitting that Uschi's productions would consume more time, and their quality would be relatively inferior, I continue to claim, however, that the people who would receive these cassettes will have something which the Revox cassettes would not have. These cassettes could not be purchased in your shop. They could only be received from you or Uschi. They are not ready-made. They will be made to order, and it is strange that this knowledge brings some satisfaction to my mysterious self. And I know that you understand my foibles more than I do myself.

Thanking you, Carlo, for the help that you always so kindly extend to me and sending you my affectionate thoughts.

Yours Sunil

Carlo agrees to Sunil's request to keep the copying of Sunil's music on a small scale and updates Sunil on the parts needed for his tape recorders:

17.7.75

My dear Sunil,

Just got your letter. I agree with your views about recording. If ever Uschi drowns in work, let her protest and we can see if an industrial production of cassettes for your music can extricate her from the floods. But that is not yet. So far the

work is small.

The Sony belts I can get because I know the number is TC95. The ITT has about 15 different models with different belts for each. So you must let me know what model it is.

I shall get your Revox card and give it to Thalysia who I suppose will get in touch with me upon passing through Zurich.

With affectionate thoughts, Carlo

I would not protest, not even if there are hundreds who want your music.

my warm regards

Uschi

Sunil thanks Carlo for understanding his desire to keep the distribution of his music to a small number of people who would appreciate it:

28.7.75

My dear Carlo,

I am glad that you consent to put up with my ideas and my inhibitions, at least, for the time being. I try to look into the future, but nothing I see makes much sense to me. I prefer to live in the present, it brings me happiness.

Sending you my affectionate thoughts.

Yours Sunil

To Carlo, thanking him again for his ongoing help, and commenting on the unrest in Auroville:

29.5.75

My dear Carlo,

Your letter of the 17th and then your postcard of the 21st reached my hands almost simultaneously. It is, indeed, gratifying for me to know that you persist in finding occult power in places where none exists. The only thing I have is a

faith which includes a complete trust in your will and capacity to arrange for me my affairs. My debt to you is going up in leaps and bounds. It is extremely nice of you to make a gift of this motor to me. Knut is, perhaps, taking a little time to settle down. He will certainly write to you when he goes to Munich to join his atomic research work.

Politics is about power, and such powers as these are, have their own separate god-heads. There is nothing inherently wrong in politics; it is what you make of it that is evil or good. Like all games politicking, also, has its charms. I know certain things are happening in Auroville, and living as I do in close proximity I had the smell of it for quite some time. I was not interested in the game that they were playing, neither in the loss nor in the gain of one party or the other, for I know that left to themselves these people can neither help nor hinder the working out of a Supreme Will which has chosen to enter into the scheme of things here. Thanks anyway for sending me the Photostat copies of the Mother's writings. She has not left room for doubt in either of these writings.*

How is Miss Uschi? Please convey my warm regards to her. Thanking you, dear Carlo, and sending you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours Sunil

** These simmerings, however, could be the portent of a graver and more significant change to come in the pattern of life and thinking in and about Auroville.*

Carlo announces his marriage to Uschi:

26.7.75

My dear Sunil,

Here I am sending you the Revox card and the two motor belts and one counter belt for the Sony with Thalysia. Your remaining debt for these items is now FR. 28 and Uschi has just declared that she will take care of this sum on your behalf. So again your account is cleared automatically the moment a

debit balance appears. It is the magic of your occult powers. The aforementioned lady by the way has now developed the suicidal foolhardiness of deciding to enter into wedlock with me. I shall thus soon be guilty of the crime of robbing her of her name and imposing upon her my own wretched cognomen. Aside from that things go on pretty much as before.

Affectionately, Carlo

Sunil congratulates Carlo and Uschi in separate letters on their marriage:

2.8.75

My dear Uschi,

Please accept my congratulations. May this new turn lead you to richer harmonies in your lives! I knew you through Carlo, but I know Carlo better today through you.

My love, and very best wishes are with you.

Affectionately yours Sunil

2.8.75

My dear Carlo,

Thalysia gave me the good news, and I rejoice. I feel much gladness within me to know that you will be united to Uschi in marriage. Both of you have grown very dear to me, and I wish both of you long life and happiness. May this day greaten your lives, may you fulfill each other and help each other to move closer and closer to the one goal which we all cherish!

Sending you my love and my very best wishes,

Yours Sunil

Sunil comments again on Carlo's marriage and says he does not claim occult powers, but he does have certain intuitive feelings and in the case of Carlo and Uschi, a good one:

4.8.75

My dear Carlo,

The way you announce your wedding is, to say the least, curious if not breathtaking, but very typical of you in the best of your tradition. However, your attempt to make use of your casualness as a mask to hide your feelings has miserably failed. My long snooping nose could smell happiness galore in your heart even from a distance of 5 hours of longitude. In spite of that, I suppose, I must congratulate you, not for the play-acting, but for taking once for all a very correct decision. Uschi is one of the best and I have much affection for her.

Posing in any form, occult or otherwise, does not agree very well with me. I am not cut out for that line. But I have an intuitive feeling, and my feeling tells me that this wedding will bring you luck, happiness and fulfilment.

I am glad to know that Uschi has settled my accounts with you. Please convey to her my love and gratitude. Thalysia gave me the parts mentioned in your letter. I really needed them.

Thanking you, my dear Carlo, and sending my love to you,

affectionately yours Sunil

Wry comments from Sunil on his own character:

24.9.75

My dear Carlo,

The great President Roosevelt was fond of telling a joke in his lighter moments. He used to say that a successful politician must have some virtues of an elephant, namely:

- i) a thick hide*
- ii) a long memory*
- iii) a long snooping nose*

In moments when my inner candles burn and I look at myself with a surveyor's eye I feel that I can measure up to the last two specifications to a certain extent, but as far as the first quality is concerned I am a complete washout. God has provided me with a thin hide. Short of a miracle this will remain immutable, however I try. Nevertheless, with the same

eyes of wisdom when I look around me I find many congenial souls who could right now slip into my shoes without any real discomfort. All of us together form a compact group who are received in the society with expressions of welcome and we are dubbed with epithets such as "Jolly good fellow" and "Grand old man" etc., etc. Many of us can use our shortcomings to our advantage and succeed in various spheres of life. A handful amongst us are harmless. I am one of them. I wouldn't hurt a fly. I often ask myself if I weren't a Tibetan monk in my last life. If I can smell what is cooking in Zurich, or in New York, or in Sao Paulo, it is only a game to me, a simple exercise of my faculties. Nothing to take notice of. However, for sometime now I felt a little worried as I found you unusually quiet. But then, this letter of yours appeared written in your unique and inimitable style, and I breathed a sigh of relief! Thanks for the letter as well as the I.T.T. belt.

The people here who know say that this is the right belt. So, I keep it. Thalysia will give you some money. Please use this money to pay for the belt. The excess of the money will remain with your for any urgent and unpredictable requirements that may cause us concern in future. Please be a little diplomatic when you write to me about this money. Our very efficient customs authorities are looking for culprits. They will be only too happy to ferret out any irregularities that they are supposed to dislike. You may say only that the donations received from your friends sum up to, and please do not mention anything about this money to anybody.

Please remember me to Uschi and give her my love.

With much love to you,

Yours affectionately Sunil

A comment on the Ashram having been "not made by man" when Sunil first arrived there:

11.10.75

My dear Carlo,

Your letter arrived, and also, the separate book-post, tucked within which I found the diagram as well as the variable resistance. Thanks to the excellent workmanship of, I believe, Uschi, these things were all in perfect condition.

I am very grateful to both of you for doing so many things for me with so much good will. Your kindness, Carlo, is like one of those quantities which are not mathematically measurable and it never wanes even when there is a Sunil around with his incessant demands. People like you, big of heart (pachydermous?) and with great willing shoulders ready to bear other people's burdens make this world warm, friendly, and habitable for us poor non-pachydermous old-nosers.

Well, I suppose you are right about your comments on the advantages and the disadvantages of preserving a thin hide. However, I was lucky to have lived the major part of my life in a place where prowlers, biters and stingers were very much discouraged and they could never exercise their abilities with license.

The Ashram as I saw it when I came here was not made by man; it held a power beyond the strength of the humans, it had a light that never wore away. People with all sorts of hides lived here merrily together. For this, much of what you said about thin hides never posed a problem in my life. Things have changed. Have they really? I wonder.

Did you like the photographs that we bought for you?

With much love to you and to Uschi.

Yours Sunil

Sunil comments on Rolf's erstwhile project to travel from Brazil to Auroville to work on the dance-drama project:

12.1.75

My dear Solange,

Surely, Rolf is doing a very good work in Brazil, and that is why I did not want him to come here to Auroville to take charge of the dance group there for the production of a dance-

drama. He had to pass a few difficult years in Brazil, and I am very happy to know that things are changing and he can now look forward to better days ahead. Even as blasts smite us something or other happens in our lives which overcomes our fear and doubt. When all things look black and one has a feeling of being forsaken, swift is the action of this Grace that brings us out of the woods. Nobody is alone, nobody is forsaken. What matters is to hold on to one's faith.

I read half of this book on Egypt that you very kindly sent for me. But, for the last five months or so, I have not read anything. They were five very busy months for me. I am sure I will resume my studies soon. I liked very much this book on Egypt. The more I read about these extraordinary people, the more I have a feeling that I was once one of them, knew them closely and lived as one with them. It is strange but true.

*Sending you my warm regards,
Yours, Sunil*

Again to Solange confiding his mystification as to why he was chosen to do the New Year and the Savitri music:

30.4.75

My dear Solange,

I like always the way your letter appears. There is no rumour of its coming, it just says "hello" and steps in for a chat when the shadows lengthen; and I seem to say "All is well, eh? You look the same as ever!" Living the sort of life I do is rather a warm and tiring work. After a while I have a feeling of being all trussed up and time seems to roll up and down carelessly with my path. Letters like yours are welcome events just like lunch breaks when we sit in a comfortable corner and amuse ourselves in looking into the background of our memories where distance lends its magic and vision melts away into hours which tempt our fancies.

I don't have a child, and even if I had one, I am not sure if he would be a musician. You may think that I am not in my

senses if I tell you that I have still to learn why I have been chosen to do such a work as music by the Mother.

Yours, Sunil

Sunil explains to Solange that if he feels difficulty in this work the Mother has given him, it is She who gives him the strength to continue:

17.10.75

My dear Solange,

I am rather busy now with the recordings of "Savitri". Things are not moving as fast as I expected. This work was confided to me by the Mother herself, and I have faith that She will give me the strength to carry the work to completion despite all resistances.

I hope you are in excellent health and as busy as ever with all your activities.

Yours, Sunil

A letter to Brazil:

7.1.76

My dear Thalysia,

This bond of sweetness which you feel, even now, with your life in the Ashram, the remembrance that appears to fill and continues to envelop your world even in Brazil, was wrought here in the space of a silent moment which She chose to make eternal in your life. In yearnings such as these, even gloom is a luxury, and shadows grow hues. Learn to live in the refuge that Her hands have made for you. It was an act of Her Grace, and precious to you beyond all measure and is also a door for you and when the moment comes, another golden moment, She will lead you deeper and farther into the ecstasies of Her world.

You become free from disappointments only when you are free within, free from bonds, master of your life. But that is

a long road and we are all just pilgrims on that road. Even though the end is nowhere in sight, we have to be patient and remember always that these deceptions are just marks through which Her eyes look at you and such experiences as they are, they have been designed by Her to bring Her work in you to completion in Her own unique way. Try to remain untouched, and unmoved and look on your struggles with impartial eyes and pray and then hope for the best.

*Sending you much love,
Yours Sunil*

Thalysia responds:

3 February 1976

When I listened to your music for the first time, I felt something painful inside me, an indefinable pain, very close to me, as if it would tell me of things already known but forgotten, that would suddenly come to the surface as a radiating and splendid light.

It is like that that I have experienced your letter of 7/1, so beautiful, so pure; the artist, who composes Savitri, has become the poet who translated into words the beauty from other planes and has put within the stumbling pilgrim's reach the charms of a higher world.

Thalysia

At the beginning of 1976 Sunil was beginning a period of rest after finishing Savitri and the New Year Music. He writes a little more than two years after the Mother's passing to his friends Dominique and Klara:

13.1.76

My dear Dominique, My dear Klara,

It has been your fate, and ours, to have felt this brief nearness to That which wove our lives in many-coloured hopes and then to have left all on a sudden everything behind us and

travel yard by yard groping, searching, and waiting on a half-visible ground. The Light that used to shine on our lives has only made the darkness darker. However, despite the darkness, despite the struggle there is a hope in the air and there is a feeling of newnesses waiting just beyond our gaze. The call is insistent and an occasional moment of fragrance convinces us that we are on the right road. You, too, are on the right path, Klara, and I am glad to have you as a fellow-pilgrim in the same caravan. Shed all your worries. I am sure the joys that you have lived will ring echoes throughout the entire length of your living days.

Tell Dominique that I think of her only too frequently. Her tape is ready and lying here with me. I expect Patricia will collect it from here when she goes back to Paris. Please, also, thank her for the gift of a tape to me. This tape which she has given to me is excellent in quality and will be very useful for me in my work.

My days of labour are over. The yearly instalment of Savitri and then the New Year Music are ready and I have now a few months of leisure. My health is excellent, and I feel more and more deeply how much I owe to Them. The only fulfilment that I desire is to belong to Them — totally.

Hoping to hear from you soon. I am sending you much love, Yours Sunil

Sunil has to write to his friend Dick Batstone again to ask a favour regarding parts and a manual for his machines:

13.2.76

My dear Dick,

I am sorry to have to bother you again. I certainly will appreciate very much if you could kindly procure for me:

- i) one Service Manual*
- ii) 4 cartridge fuses 630 MA (20mm) for a Philips cassette recorder module — N2225/16.*

I have been told that the Combined Electronic Services

Ltd. at the address given below can supply these two items for us. If the book is light please send these things by airmail, if not, then by sea mail. Please let me know the amount you spend for me, and I will ask Carlo Schueller of Zurich to send you the amount by a cheque.

Naturally I feel a little embarrassed, but, you are the only person in England whom I can ask to do something for me. I will be happy if you tell me if I can do something for you from here.

*Thanking you and sending you my warm regards,
Yours Sunil*

Address: Combined Electronic Services Ltd., 604 Pendley Way, Wadon — Croydon

Dick Bastone writes telling Sunil that, with all he gives, Sunil need not feel embarrassed to ask for help:

5.4.76/London

Dear Sunil,

Here are the parts and booklet that you needed. Sorry it's taken a long time again — but do let me know if you have any more wants.

Don't feel embarrassed! You have given us a great deal. One day I may send you an empty tape or cassette and maybe you could return it with some of your music on it?

Best wishes, Dick

In March Sunil writes to Dominique and Klara again of the period when the Mother left Her body, now more than two years past, and of the New Year Music 1974 which he wrote in the few days immediately after Her passing and of people's reaction to it:

16.3.76

My dear Dominique, My dear Klara,

When the Mother left her body, and I did my New Year

Music 1974, many here raised their eyebrows. I saw that they were critical about the vacancy I felt within me, of the uncertainty of living upon the margins, of the feeling of my smallness in face of the disaster, of an unquiet search in me for Her, for Truth, and Self and Light.... All that I wanted to say in that music was that I loved Her, that She would be no more with me in the same way as She used to be, but somehow She was shining through a searching, the same face, the same light and whether or no I would still love Her and I would find Her. They said to me that the music was too personal! They said that the emphasis in this music on the significance of this physical event was painful and did not bring any help. They said that She was very much present here within us and around us and the work goes on. This complacency overtook us with its inescapable fatality. The light that was veiled remained veiled, the voice that was faint remained faint, small emotions continued to create bits of refuge and of despair, they measure themselves with meaningless successes and chaos moved in slowly and inevitably.

A loss has to be felt before it can be made good. Minimizing the magnitude of our loss only misleads. The way I see it, this sorrow has a role to play in our heart and we should cherish it until we have learnt the secrets of Her designs. As for me my dear Dominique, and I suppose Klara knows it, that my life goes on in a cycle which remains if not independent of the life in the Ashram, but sort of oblivious of it. I do certainly have news of what happens here, but as I can do nothing about it I concentrate more upon my progress. A few sincere friends from Auroville came to me. They were puzzled and did not know what to do.

I had nothing to tell them except to ask them to remain true to themselves and to the Mother. The stories that you are hearing in Europe, however, seem to be exaggerated and inflated at wrong points. Things were bad but not as bad as you feel they were. My using the past tense does not indicate that we are out of the woods. Difficulties still stare us in the

face; they are all our doing, consequences of our ignorance and our desires. Yet Truth is here and Her luminous thought grows clearer and brighter every day a little more, and there is hope in the air to survive and become.

Satprem had privileges which few amongst us had. His service to Her and to Sri Aurobindo's mission on the earth is real and exemplary. His is the face of a child free, happy and intense in communion with his mother. I have the greatest respect for him, and I am sure all of us are happy to have him here with us. The stories that are being circulated are, I am afraid, a little out of proportion.

Satprem held that the "Bulletin" had served its purpose and he had the feeling that its publication could now be discontinued; the Trustees of the Ashram were not convinced and they felt it their duty to continue its publication. It was only a difference of opinion and naturally under the present circumstances, the Trustees' opinion prevailed. Some strong letters were exchanged, but, finally, all became quiet and I perceive now no ill-feelings anywhere. Satprem, Counouma, Dyuman, Madanlal, Shyamsundar, Navajat, Mona, are all our brothers and they keep in their heart the same ideal, the same goal of our lives. Until and unless they start hewing at the branch on which they sit, their unique refuge, everything should be safe and sound. When I say "refuge" what I have in mind is the awareness of Her Will at work in and around our lives here, there and elsewhere. And I am certain that, under all circumstances, Her will shall prevail. Grief at Her loss does serve no useful purpose, but a yearning has its own magic, it can render into gold the ties that bind you to your beloved. Such ties become the motive force behind all spiritual growth. In that consciousness each step becomes an act of love, each joy becomes a magic of love and each suffering becomes the birth of a greater love.

Do not worry about Satprem. He is our brother and he is a wise man. He chose the Divine, and, surely, the Divine will choose for him his path. Have faith in Her and trust that Her

Will will know how to execute what She wants.

These confidences should remain between us, you, Klara and myself. There is no reason why they should go farther than that.

*I send to you and to Klara my fondest thoughts.
With much love, Sunil*

Dick writes again about the recurring matter of publishing Sunil's music:

21.4.76

Dear Sunil,

Something has come up which perhaps you may be interested in. You may reject the whole idea outright — but I said I would put it to you.

One of our Auroville supporters in London, Malcolm Richards, works for a gramophone recording company called Lyntone Recordings Ltd. He asked me why we could not make a long-playing record of Ashram or Auroville music, and sell it over here and send the profits to Auroville. He has found out that manufacture would cost around £500 and that if all the batch were sold it would bring in around £2000, which is £1500 to the good.

Malcolm has been very impressed by the New Year Music you have written, and the music for the founding of the Matrimandir and for August 15th 1972 etc. If these were put on an L.P. it would perhaps be best to leave out the introductory messages by the Mother, as these are not for the general public — but the music he has found very uplifting and he is sure many young people in the West would appreciate it and buy it if it were obtainable. It would be better, for instance, than the recording of Karan Singh reading Sri Aurobindo's works, as music is a more universal language.

What do you think? Please be frank — say if you would want a percentage of profit for yourself, to buy new equipment, or if music from Pondi should remain hard to get, so as to weed

out all but the persistent few who are intended to get it...

Anyway, if you think it worth going further with the idea, I can find out the exact playing time needed for both sides of a disc, etc., and let you know more. We don't have £500 at present — but that is a problem which would come later!

I hope by now you have received the spares and booklet which I sent you by airmail around the beginning of the month.

*May we be open,
yours sincerely, Dick Batstone*

Sunil writes back with his predictable answer to the proposal:

3.5.76

My dear Dick,

The chance of my giving consent to your friend's proposal will remain always remote even if the financial implications are found to be tempting for me, for my friends and for my associates. Doing this would introduce one more bond, one more power which is irrelevant to what I am given to do and the consequences may well recoil into my life and, above all, into my work. The one and only correspondence I had with the Mother on this subject supports my view.

However, your kindness, Dick, and your goodwill are gifts which are very much appreciated. Thanking you and sending you much love,

Yours Sunil

During this period Sunil writes to Cliff who has just visited Guatemala:

25.5.76

My dear Cliff,

I like the look of this "Giant Jaguar Temple". Circumscribed by an everchanging luxuriance of tropical greenness, forsaken and impassive it has lived through centuries of time. It is

amazing how fast such an abandoned temple sheds its living splendour, its marks of fear and care and acquires an other-worldliness, a privacy, a silence and an irrevocable inwardness. It looks really old, old and beautiful. Visiting this place must have been a wholesome experience for you.

I am sure you visited many other interesting places in Guatemala and did you meet the people whose ancestors built this temple? Are they still to be seen on the streets of a city, or in the fields of the countryside? There are two persons living here in the Ashram, a brother and a sister, they are Guatemalans. They speak Spanish. You must have picked up a few words of Spanish during your stay in Guatemala.

Thanks very much for the coffee you sent from there. It smelt really good. Did you have the occasion to visit some coffee plantations? I believe these plantations are situated on the slopes of the mountains.

Steve, Chhobi and I, we think of you very often. Chhobi sends you her love.

*With warmth and love,
Yours, Sunil*

A letter to France on surrender to the Divine Will:

5.11.75

My dear Dominique, My dear Klara,

Your letters, after a long silence, brought me much pleasure and a feeling of quiet wholesome affection. I am grateful to you for the gift, a token of your kindness.

There is a Will. It is Her will which no power can hinder or alter. It works its way out through crusts of opposing possibilities, devising mysterious designs to arrive at Her own solutions. The murk and the mud that you speak of were always there, the reek of it will not outlast its usefulness. To worry about it is to give it more life. It is wiser to leave oneself in the hands of Her who knows how to grow even there the seedlings of Her choice. In Her comprehensive scheme of things

we have been given only very minor roles to play, and that role you have caught in your usual intuitive way and you have explained it as the only reality left to you, namely, to remain true to Her consciousness, to remain committed to Her and to Her alone. And that is Dominique, and that is Klara and it is that which has drawn all three of us together in a close inner communion.

I would certainly appreciate if I hear from you from time to time. It is not necessary, but it does good to all of us in a curious way.

Hoping that this letter reaches you in excellent health and happiness and sending you much love,

Yours Sunil

Sunil writes in a similar vein to his friend in New Caledonia:

Dear Michel,

Being as you are from a country as beautiful as New Caledonia, your letters brought always a bit of its charm, a bit of the regular balance of the life in the middle of coral lagoons under a splendid sky scattered with crystal stars and the immensity of the ocean which surrounds you. This time I have been disappointed. It's with a painful feeling that I have received your last news. However, I cannot say that it has been a complete surprise for me. For some time I felt a malaise and though vaguely I realized that not everything was going well for you and finally I got some news. But such news! Thank you nevertheless for your kind words.

Everywhere in the world, the egoistic powers have their own gods and they strive to transform in their own image even those who chose for their aim the purity of the Eternal vision. It is a symptom of a universal sickness which invades all the levels of human society. Faced with the enormity of difficulties your resistance is a remarkable fact, and a true act of faith and courage. The results, of course, as the Upanishads say, are in the hands of the Supreme and we must know how to accept

His decision with joy and a total surrender; here is the key of the mystery of men who refuse to carry a cross in this world.

For two years we have not seen you here, and, of course it would be an opportune moment for you to spend some days in Pondicherry. It is cool here now. We have been lucky with rain and the nights are agreeable. The Ashram atmosphere is saturated with Her Presence which will heal you fast from these health problems. I just finished composing the new Savitri and soon this music will be recorded. October will be for me a difficult month full of work.

*See you soon, dear Michel
Sunil*

Sunil writes to the dancer Rolf about his work on Savitri during 1976 and as in the previous year, the need to wait for Michael Klosterman and his guitar:

26.7.76

I have started my work with Savitri again. This time it will be Book III. The number of passages chosen and read by the Mother is such that I plan to finish this Book this year. Next year I could start then Book IV. The recordings will be done only in October when Michel Klosterman will come to Pondy. I need him for his guitar.

Sunil

In the summer of 1976 Sunil responds to a friend who had invited him to travel to France for a visit: [I had once suggested Sunil visit the United States and Sunil answered with a laugh, “Can you imagine Sunil walking down the street in pants with money in his pocket?”]

28.8.76

My dear Raymond,

You have, indeed, a beautiful home. To live there must be a very gladdening experience for you and for Christiane. Both

of you look very happy and relaxed in these photographs. Your working table is just at the place where I thought it would be. The garden is cozy and bright. I certainly like the place.

Your affection overwhelms me and I must say that I have been lucky to have found good friends in the most unlikely of places and this unceasing good will has always shined on my life. Thanks very much for your invitation, but I am one who has grown very strong roots here and just at the present moment of my life I have within me a reluctance to leave this place even for a short while. On my last birthday a friend of mine presented me a tiny porcelain dog. She wanted to give it a meaning and a symbol. I wonder if it would not have been more apt if she gave me a porcelain cat!

My sister-in-law Chhobi likes to collect recipes. The recipe I asked Christiane to send is for her collection. Any typically rustic recipe will do. It may contain meat.

Thanking you again, Raymond, and sending much love to you and to Christiane,

Yours Sunil

From Dr. Mahimtura regarding Sunil's health:

30.8.76

Dear Sunilda,

Please excuse me for the delay in answering to your letter. My brother has not yet given me his reply. I will write to you as soon as my brother gives me his opinion.

I feel happy that you feel better. If you have any trouble you can take Tab Entobea 2 tab three times a day for 10 days. I am sorry to learn that depression has not left you completely.

Sunilda if 'seasoned' yogis like you have this trouble what about a 'novice' like me?

To tell the truth it is hellish staying in Bombay. Not that life here is particularly hard. On the contrary ordinary life is quite easy. But the atmosphere is absolutely unfavourable for spiritual life.

Sunilda, I will like to have Savitri music of this year please!

Thanking you

Yours sincerely, Jatin Mahimutra

PS If you require anything or if there is anything I can do here, please write without hesitation.

Sunil answers:

17.11.76

My dear Doctor,

Your letter came a few days ago, and it gave me much pleasure to read the few lines which you managed to write to me in between your interminable preoccupations with your work and patients. I am sorry that the Savitri music this year could not be recorded. My health deteriorated and the drugs I took worsened the situation. I became very restless and depressed, until I decided to give up worrying about my infections. Things are better now, but I did not want to go through the strains of Savitri recordings in October. So, these recordings of Book III have been postponed to sometime next year. I will certainly do the New Year Music in December.

How are you? Hoping to see you again soon and sending you much love,

Yours Sunil

Sunil writes to Gambelon about his health and his hopes of being able to complete the 1976 New Year Music:

19.9.76

Gambelon, my dear friend,

My health continued to worsen and fortunately I found at last a doctor here (Doctor Surya) in the Ashram who could make the correct diagnosis. He says that during the treatment of my dysentery and the sinus trouble, powerful sulfur drugs

were used with highly depressant anti-dysentery drugs, which affected my liver and also the nervous system. He's treating me now and already I feel a little better. But still, a complete cure is not to be expected so soon. I hope and pray that I recover my health before November so that I may be able to do the New Year Music in good health. The Savitri composition was almost complete. The recording can be done later on.

Sunil writes to Michel Klosterman, the guitarist, suggesting that he postpone his visit to the Ashram since Sunil would not be able to record his music for Savitri Book III that fall:

7.9.76

My dear Michel,

I have been keeping indifferent health during the last few months. Now I am feeling a little better, but still not out of the woods. I feel I will not be able to go through the Savitri recordings in October. It will be too much of a strain on me. So, I have decided to postpone the recordings to a later date, such as the end of January or so. I thought that in that case you might also prefer to postpone your visit here to a later date, say, sometime in the end of November or the beginning December?

I will record the New Year Music in December.

Hoping you are all right and sending you my love,

Yours Sunil

To his friend in New Caledonia:

24.9.76

My dear Michel,

I have been keeping very bad health since last few months and I am now, though better, extremely tired. I will not be able to do the Savitri recordings in October as is usually my habit. I am taking complete rest, and I hope to be all right before December when I will have to do the New Year Music. Savitri

recordings would be done later on in 1977 when I will be more fit to undergo the strain.

Thanks for writing to me. Please convey my regards to your wife Johanna. I send you much, much love,

Yours Sunil

Again to Gambelon:

4.10.76

Gambelon, my dear friend,

With me the nervous system was always a source of worry. Even in 1951, I had serious troubles with it. The Mother told me that I have a subtle adhara which cannot always bear the descent of the forces that She wanted to realize through me. Poor me! However, I am on the way to recovery, though the experience was really painful.

Huta is Huta. Even before I wrote her to lend the original, I knew and told Victor that I feel she would not lend this tape to me anymore. She gave me a copy of all the Savitri passages recorded on a very poor quality tape done on a bad Indian machine right at the beginning. They are very bad copies. I have to depend now on these copies only. Fortunately, a lady lent us a very beautiful amplifier and Victor and Steve have managed to correct the tone and have got now a very beautiful copy of the Mother's reading on an LPR 35 tape. When Her help is there nothing is impossible.

I send you much love,

Yours Sunil

Very late in his recording career Sunil was finally able to get a good quality recording of the Mother's readings. Around the late 1980s Huta asked Sunil to make copies of the readings on cassettes for her. Victor managed to also make copies for Sunil to keep and use in his music.

Gambelon writes back:

10.10.76 / Chartres

Dear friend,

I deplore the smallnesses of Huta. Apparently she has not understood the value — not of your person — but of your work. Really a pity. Strange that the people are always so limited in this Ashram.

Your nervous person is your weak point from birth. We all have genetic inheritance and with its consequences in the physical and we cannot do anything about it. We have to accommodate ourselves to it.

In friendship, Gambelon

Sunil mentions his health and postponing the recording of the Savitri music in a letter to his friend in Brazil:

8.10.76

My dear Thalysia,

Your letter of the 2nd of September arrived and brought me such news that gave me a measure of things that you are doing and things which She saw that you did. Try to live like that, pure, within Her light. She will take care of you and give a meaning to your life.

The things which happened here in the ashram and Auroville had a very depressing effect on me. Perhaps I see a little more light but I do miss a lot of things which someone within me craves to realize. I was also keeping extremely bad health during the last four months or so. It started with an intestinal infection, then it was sinus trouble and fever. The different doctors I consulted all gave me very strong drugs which affected my liver and my nervous system. Finally I have found a doctor who is wise and is taking good care of me. I had composed the Savitri musics of this year, but I will not be able to get them recorded in October as is usual. Perhaps I will do the recordings early next year. I will, of course, do the New Year Music. I look forward to seeing you soon here.

*Sending much love to you,
Yours, Sunil*

Uschi writes at this time:

28.10.76

My dear Sunil,

We have not heard from you for quite some time. Through different people I now come to learn that you had some troubles with your health. I feel a bit grieved to hear this bad news but I am also sure that you are much better now. Have you already finished the new Savitri Music?

Words can never explain what I feel and get while listening to Sunil music. It allows me to dive into something indescribable. Because I have taken a liking to this wonder-musician it would bring me some relief to get a confirmation of your recovery.

Love, yours Uschi

Affectionate thoughts from Carlo too.

Sunil answers:

9.11.76

My dear Uschi,

Your very kind letter gladdened my heart. Last few months were difficult ones for me as far as my health was concerned. I did the composition of the music for the Book III of Savitri, but I do not feel that I can go through the strain of recording these musics just now. I have postponed it to sometime next year. I will certainly be doing the music of the New Year 1977. I feel much better now, but still have inconveniences.

Believe me that your letter, you affection and your concern brought much happiness to me. Please remember me to Carlo and tell him that he is very often in my thoughts.

I send to you and to Carlo much love and a lot of affectionate greetings.

Yours Sunil

To a friend in France:

5.11.76

My dear Gérard,

After you left Pondy, my health deteriorated very fast and I was really very sick. The dysentery continued along with the sinus trouble and a little fever. The doctors gave me a lot of strong drugs. Finally I went to a doctor in the Ashram who told me that the drugs, often strong and depressing, have affected my liver and it is possible that my incapacity to digest food was due to the failure of my affected liver. He suggested that I stop taking all medicines for dysentery or sinus trouble. The liver would take care of itself slowly. I am doing just that and I am feeling now much better though I can't say that I am yet completely myself again. He prescribed a medicine which I take before sleeping, which he advised me to reduce and give up slowly.

I will certainly not hesitate to ask you for any help if the need arises. The little things that you offered to buy for us are not at all important. You may forget about them.

I have started worrying a little on the New Year Music. I have yet to get myself in. I know That alone can cure me of my illness. I pray for Her help.

*Write to us soon again,
Sending you much love,
Yours Sunil*

Again to Gérard:

My dear Gérard,

All these tests are painful, however these sufferings, also, awaken in us the desire for infinite freedom, a reaching out for something which is beyond all contradictions. May Her Grace bring in you the harmony, the true puissant harmony, that

transcends all such complexities in our lives.

My health is improving. I have more or less started composing the New Year Music 1977. Another year!

It was raining heavily here for sometime. It still does now from time to time. The days are very often cloudy. Chhobi is doing fine and she thinks of you very often.

Waiting to hear more from you and sending you our love and our affection,

Yours Sunil

Later that year, to an American friend, Sunil wrote about events in Auroville:

24.11.76

My dear Sandy,

The atmosphere in Auroville seems to have cleared up a little. There is some happiness, a little more security, but my impressions are gathered from a few of my friends who come and see me from time to time.

I send you much love,

Yours, Sunil

Carlo writes expressing concern for Sunil's health and passes on some news about Michel in Germany:

18.11.76

My dear Sunil,

Just a few words to wish you well in the difficulties through which I am told you had to pass. I hope that everything will be okay in record time.

There is not much to say from here but perhaps I should bring you up to date on what has happened to our friend Michel Klosterman. Ambition appears to be taking him down to rock bottom. I have seen many things, but this is the first time I encounter somebody falsely quoting the Mother as he does in capitals on the enclosed sheet. I wrote to him as soon

as I saw it, calling his attention to the falsehood. He has not replied.

Affectionately, Carlo

Many thanks for your sweet letter.

All my love, Yours Uschi

Sunil answers:

9.12.76

My dear Carlo,

The other day I met Madanlal on the road and he asked me if I have had any news of you. I said I had received a very nice letter from Uschi but nothing directly from Carlo. The next day there was this letter from you. It was, indeed, very welcome. Thanks for giving me information about Miraprit which reached my ears already through other sources. I don't know what to think of Michel Klosterman! I understand that some decisions regarding the Society and Auroville have been taken at New Delhi, but here we still don't know much about them. I hope they will be given out pretty soon.

My health is improving, and I am busy now with the New Year Musics. I hope this letter reaches you in excellent health, and happiness. Sending you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours Sunil

Another letter to Gérard:

19.12.76

My dear Gérard,

Your letter of the 5th December reached my hands even as Rolf brought to me so many things you bought for us, the crystals for dehydrating, the rubber bands, the two shampoos. Yesterday a French couple came and left at my place a big sack full of the dehydrating packets that you spoke of in your letter. Buying all these things for us at this time must have cost you

a lot in money and energy. I feel naturally embarrassed but very grateful to you. Chhobi sends you, also, her gratitude and thanks. Please thank also Micheline for her never failing kindness in doing things for me.

At the moment I am extremely busy with the New Year Music. The composition is complete but the musicians are coming and we all play together and continuous corrections are going on. The recordings will start soon, perhaps from tomorrow or perhaps day after. The intestinal trouble has become more or less chronic now and I have to take extreme care regarding my diet. A doctor here told me that due to over-drugging the liver is damaged. It takes much time for the liver to recuperate. The amebiosis has settled down and he advised me to give up all medicines for treating either the amebiosis or the sinusitis. However, I feel I am much better now. All these troubles have values which we often ignore and I hope I come out of it a little more conscious, with a little more freedom in my heart, and joy and love.

It rained quite heavily here this year. Even now it rains from time to time. It is quite cool now and I guess that January will be cooler still and a very fine month. In Madras they had a record amount of rainfall. In one day there was 46 centimeters of rainfall. The damages in the city and its neighborhoods are extensive. Quite a few people lost their lives due to house collapse, etc....

We had a fine day on the 17th of November and it felt good to go to the Mother's room early in the morning on that day.

Chhobi thinks of you pretty often and I too. Please receive our love and affectionate thoughts. Waiting to hear from you soon again,

Yours Sunil

In 1977 Sunil's health has improved:

9.1.77

My dear Dominique,

Your letter, which was extremely well-written, affected me strangely. There was something deep in it and quiet and something old which was also at once fresh and young. There was an aloofness in it where calm is born. And there was, also, much much love and affection for me which gladdened my heart.

If 1976 was an alien year to us, I feel we have left behind much of the struggle and pain and anguish behind us. Here we are now, and another New Year has come and with it the hope to survive and to carry on our work. I guess this year will not prove as unreasonable as the one we lived through. We pray that we be given a little of Her Grace that we may learn the necessity of taking our steps from within and let there be sweetness in plenty, Her sweetness, and love, Her love. That only can achieve the end which is nearest and dearest to our hearts.

I had some problems of health. I can't say that I have completely recovered, but it is much better now. I went through recording of the New Year Music without feeling the strains unduly. Rolf is here and will be leaving soon for Europe. He will be spending a few days in Paris. He has consented to take some tapes I will send for the Association. The 1977 New Year Music will be there. You may hear it at the Association room, as Rolf will be in Paris on the 16th of June.

I send you, dear Dominique, much love and pray that this New Year brings you peace and happiness.

Yours Sunil

Uschi writes from Switzerland about people selling Sunil's music:

12.1.77

My dear Sunil,

Many thanks for your very nice letter. I will be very much delighted to hear your New Year Music and will send you a tape or cassette as soon as possible for you to record it for us.

In my last letter I forgot to mention that you also still have money from Thalysia (Fr. 136). Together with the 100 frs from me your account here is now Sfr 236.

A few days ago I came to know that the Auroville Centre in Geneva is selling your music for quite an expensive price (Sfr 25. — that's about Rs 75.-). An unrecorded cassette costs sfr 4.50 — 90 minutes and sfr 3.50 — 60 minutes. So they make a profit of more than 20 Swiss francs per cassette (more than Rs 60.-).

I don't know whether they asked you for permission to deal like that or not. In case you would like to write them I give you the address:

*Miss Joana Bastian
Auroville International
CH—1249 Choulex
Switzerland*

She is using Marcel Thevoz's address. Probably he doesn't know of anything.

If you prefer I could of course also get in touch with Joana, since I know her.

My dear Sunil, both of us are sending our love and wish you all the very best for the New Year.

*Affectionately
Yours, Uschi*

Sunil writes back on this issue of his music being sold in the way described in Uschi's letter:

21.1.77

My dear Uschi,

Thanks for your letter. In spite of the expenses that you are obliged to make so frequently for my needs, the money that you are holding for me does not seem to decrease. On the contrary it is increasing. Two hundred and thirty-six francs is a large

sum; is it by a slip of memory that you forgot to deduct the price of the pinch roller and the belts from the hundred francs that you said you wished to give me? However, all these lapses and many other little things that you care to do for me with so much of affection make me feel indebted to you and surely it would gladden my heart to be of some service to you. There is no use sending a cassette or a tape for the New Year Music. I have already posted a tape to you with this music which must have passed your letter in the air. This tape should be in your hands even as I am writing this letter to you.

I met Joana once or twice when she was here. She was then the secretary of Marcel Thevoz. As far as I remember, a few years ago, this proposal of selling my music through the Auroville center at Geneva came from Marcel Thevoz, which I promptly rejected at the time. I only allowed them to make copies of my musics on a non-profit basis. Joana has not asked me for any authorization since then and I did not give any. Jo (daughter of Padma who lives now in Geneva) was here and she will leave for Geneva tomorrow. I have asked her to contact Joana immediately on her arrival at Geneva and tell her that Sunil does not approve of what is being done through the Auroville center there and selling of cassettes in this way should be discontinued. I will be happy if you, too, write a letter to her telling her how I feel about this subject and copies of my musics should be given to people without any profit. As far as I know Joana is a nice girl and she will certainly not do anything which I do not approve of.

Finally, let me thank you again, my dear Uschi, for everything you are doing for me. How is Carlo? Tell him, that now and then, even at very odd moments my thoughts are with him and give him my warm and affectionate greetings.

*To you, I send my very best wishes and my love,
Yours Sunil*

Shortly after this letter another request for parts for Sunil's tape recorder:

28.1.77

My dear Uschi,

When I wrote to you my previous letter, thanking you for all your kind help etc. etc., I never suspected that I would have to ask you so soon for another favour. My Revox is in trouble, and we need a part whose details are given below. Kindly do buy this part for me and send it through someone when it is convenient for you to do so. Please deduct the amount from the money you intended to spend for me.

I hope you are alright, and so is Carlo. My health is slowly improving but I am not yet my old self again. You, too, are very often in my thoughts, and I and Thalysia, who is here now, very often talk of you. I thank you again and again and send my loving and affectionate thoughts to you and to Carlo.

Yours, Sunil

Sunil writes to a correspondent in Brazil commenting on the usefulness of accepting a guru in order to make progress on a spiritual path:

14.2.77

Dear Adolfo,

It is sufficient to have Sri Aurobindo's books to satisfy your mental enquiries, but if you really desire to follow His path, the path of the Spirit, with something more than our common aspirations, a guru is essential. Accept Sri Aurobindo as your guru, or the Mother and you will receive all the help and guidance necessary for your inner growth. Mental quests are futile if there is not an inner quivering in our seeking. Questions can bring near to us the model which could translate to us the Reality, the Truth, only if there is in us an awareness which transcends our enquiring mind. All religions gather moss as they linger, however, at their source there is a truth, a spark, the reason why they survive through centuries of travail. They have answers to our questions which may not

satisfy our thinking mind, but to the believers they transmit a radiance of vision that silences the chaos of their queries and reveals the Truth in a unique and inexpressible way.

I am happy, dear Adolfo, that you wrote to me and will be glad if you can resume your meetings with Thalysia and the others who have chosen to do Sri Aurobindo's yoga at Sao Paulo. Thanking you and sending you my warm regards,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil mentions the length of the Book III Savitri music and the effort it took to do it:

28.2.78

My dear Cliff,

I received your 2 cassettes. They are being done and as soon as they are ready, I will mail them back to you. You will need both the cassettes, as the Savitri Book III is rather long. There are 17 recitations in it. Anyway, I do not need a cassette now. Thanks, also, for the cheque.

I will be happy if you can make this trip to Pondy sometime during the next fall. The days are getting warmer now after a very brief spell of cool and pleasant month. I have not much to do now; but I, really, did put in some hard work during the last 5 months or so. There was a lot of crowd here during the darshan of 21st February. It was a problem to receive these visitors and arrange for their boarding and lodging when their number touched the figure of 10,000 or so. However, most of them are all gone now. Within the next few days, it will be normal again.

My health is pretty good now. I have problems but they do not overwhelm me.

I send much love,

Yours, Sunil

In a letter to France Sunil includes a brief description of his approach to yoga:

21.3.78

It is true that it is not for me to praise the merits or blame the result of actions which are taken under the compulsion of an inner sanction. Moreover, actions prompted by true faith need have no concern. Only my affection for you clouded my mind, and I thought you were needlessly getting yourself entangled into the disappointments of others. If you are convinced that what you have done was the proper thing to do, your action will certainly bring you joy and another little step nearer to your goal. True faith never misleads.

As for me, mine has been all along a very simple yoga, modest in goal and in scope. As such I feel almost like an outsider whenever questions under discussion touch the yoga of the Supramental. That is why when such discussions take place, I choose to remain quiet. I know my limitations. Even after 35 years of stay here in this Ashram I am still a novice, treading the ancient path reaching out at the old, old Truth that was, is, and that will always be. As a matter of fact, I am still negotiating the sharp contours of a yoga which Sri Aurobindo took pains to elaborate in those few pages of his "Bases of Yoga". For me there is only one attraction. Could I, one day, make an entire and utter self-giving to Her a reality in my life, claiming nothing, asking nothing, desiring nothing? The goal recedes and it still remains a dream to me.

Regarding Satprem, it is hard to know what to say without being liable to be misunderstood in some way or other. However, I do have an opinion, but, I am afraid, it must be a biased and a superficial one, based upon fragments of stories heard here and there. But I am convinced that expression of such opinions serve no useful purpose, they only add to the confusion. You may not believe, but I have seen on several occasions, in my life, that where protests fail, a sincere prayer to the Divine works. It calls down a grace, an iridescence of love, and harmony, and an incomparable healing touch. Let us all do that. Let us all be convinced that whatever had happened

in the past could happen only with Her will and Her sanction. Not to believe in it is to belittle Her. At least that is the way I look at it and the conviction has the support and the consent of my inner faith, the only light that still burns within me. She was my Sovereign and She was the Sovereign of all of us.

I wanted to see you so much now! Chhobi too. She does not have an acute problem just now of falling hairs. But sometime ago she lost quite some.

You are always in our thoughts and I do hope to see you sometime soon. May She help you to recover quickly from this disease and may I be permitted to meet a gay and cheerful Gérard here in my little room! Chhobi joins me in sending much love to you, Yours Sunil

Sunil writes about receiving a new electric organ from Germany:

5.8.78

My dear Cliff,

This letter should have been mailed a few days earlier. Somehow it got delayed; for this I plead guilty of negligence. However, there is one extenuating factor, I was not keeping very good health. This is the time for a change of seasons here and it has become customary for me to get my usual sinus trouble and stomach infections.

I have received a new organ, a present from a group of friends who live in Munich. This is a rather expensive machine and a bit complicated for me. I have kept myself busy now trying to become acquainted with its various possibilities and, in particular, to discover tones which really speak to me and correspond to my inner vibrations. I only hope that I can do it soon enough to be able to use the organ with confidence in my next recordings in October.

I know that this letter will reach your hands much after your important day, but, I am sure you will be very much, in my thoughts on that day and my affection and my love will accompany you wherever you are. For you, my dear Cliff, a

year will end, and the new one that comes will not fail to be a part of the process that will lead you to your inner fulfilment. Chhobi sends you her greetings.

*With much love,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil writes his impressions of Led Zeppelin's song *Stairway to Heaven* which had been sent to him:

22.8.78

My dear Cliff,

Thanks for your letter and the cassette.

Here is my impression about the song "Stairway to Heaven". When I listened to the song I saw no candles, no incense, nor men praying, nonetheless, the prayers grew near. The finale of the song is very ably dramatized, and is appealing, a flamboyant fabric woven with rich many-hued feelings that combine and recombine and create the atmosphere of a strange call. I found in it much that is of the East. The universe, they say, expands, but our world seems to keep on shrinking. A happy sign indeed!

I know that travelling is rather expensive these days, and it will cost you a fortune to make a trip from Boston to Pondy. If it is just to see me, then it is not worth the trouble. You can certainly use the money for a better purpose. You can always write to me, and whether you write or not, you are always in my thoughts.

I have received a new organ and am composing the first 3 cantos of the fourth Book of Savitri on it. The recordings will be done only in October.

*Did you receive my earlier letter? and the scarf?
I send much love to you and to your special friend,
Yours, Sunil*

In November after his own birthday Sunil wrote:

7.11.78

My dear Cliff,

This year, on my birthday, I was not exactly myself. Somewhere, inside, I was aloof. The following morning your letter came and with it came, also, an air of friendliness fresh and pure. For a brief moment I was in your company and I loved the experience. Recordings of my Savitri musics are over. But, the work of editing and arranging the musics with the Mother's words will have to wait until January, as I would like to get busy with the New Year Music almost immediately. So it is my regret that I will not be able to send you the new Savitri just now. You will get the New Year Music before you have my Savitri. As it takes about 20 days of work to edit and to arrange the musics suitably with the Mother's words, I can only send you the Savitri at the end of January. The money you have sent is much more than I will need for postages. You did this, I take it, in order to help me and send to me a token of your affection. For all this and more please accept my grateful thanks.

*Sending you my brotherly affection, and love,
Yours, Sunil*

*P.S. Your cassette and the cloves for me arrived.
Thanks very much.*

In February of 1979 Sunil's friend Carlo had written with news both of the passing away of his mother and the birth of his new son. He also comments on the behavior of 'M.K.' as he is referred to by Sunil and Sunil writes back:

29.2.79

Dear Carlo,

This young thing, tiny, helpless, this Stefan Thorsten Sunil is a little gift which comes to you from Her, she of whom Uschi is but an image, a play of Her forces. However, it is a matter of

mystery to me that you had to witness the passing away of a dear one whom you knew so well and loved so deeply and then to prepare yourself so soon to welcome someone who starts his life anew and who cries out to you for help. To a person such as you are, nothing happens without her willing consent, or to a certain extent, a hidden design. Such experiences do strike deep roots into our being. I am glad to know that even at ninety your mother retained all her faculties unimpaired, and, a woman of unquenchable spirit, she remained the principal figure in the household of the Schuellers in Zollikon. I am sure that even during the last few aching months when she suffered, in the twilight of her existence, she was never alone. She lived with her faith and her god.

I am sure, also, that this experience of fatherhood will do you good and you should welcome it with pleasure. Somehow I do not like to look at the face of a Carlo surprised and overtaken by events of his life. I hope Uschi is doing fine. I always feel a very deep affection for her. I have mailed a tape to her with my latest. Please convey to her my love and my very best wishes.

It is good to know about the various activities of M.K. The more I hear about him, the more I marvel at the incongruities of human nature. He borrows money and then he does not pay back his debt. Yet, when he came to know that my organ was out of order he bought an electric organ for 12,000 D.M. and sent to me as air cargo. He sent to me also 4,000 rupees to share the expenses I will have to incur for duty, transport, etc. at this end. All this really puzzles me.

As for the idea of bringing out a Portuguese version of the Savitri music, I believe I have to confess that I am really the culprit. This idea came to me long ago. I wanted to do it in French. It did not materialize. I proposed it to Thalysia, and as she is more enterprising, one canto was translated by her, and I liked a man's voice in Sao Paulo whose reading was recorded on a cassette. I wanted to do this not because I wanted my music to be heard by people who did not understand English,

but somehow, I felt this would bring there a little or something of the beautiful lines that I love so much. But, now, I find that there are many, including my co-workers Steve, Victor, etc, who are looking askance at such activities of mine. And, more, that you, too, have joined the gang. I have started to take a serious view of the whole subject. I am inclined just now to do one canto only, and then wait and see what comes out of it after all. I will send you a cassette when it is done.

Your letter, my dear Carlo, deeply touched me. I do have a great regard for your views. They are always welcome. I do not have the least inclination to act against Her own intentions. May She guide my steps!

*I send much love to you, to Uschi, and to the little Carlo.
Sunil*

Later when the organ Michel had sent developed problems Sunil wrote for help:

My dear Michel,

I received the photographs and the tiny message of love that you and Christa sent to me some time ago. The photographs were very good, as usual, and your message, though short, was extremely expressive and touched me deeply. I do not know how to thank you enough.

Now I will tell you something which I am sure you won't like. The organ (Maharani, of course) has developed some defects. You know that this organ has two oscillators. One gives the nine different voices (Violin, flute, oboe, etc...) through a monophonic synthesizer. The other oscillator gives the polyphonic (piano, string, etc.) as well as the flute sounds, and also the various tonal qualities of the lower manual and the pedal. The polyphonic section is working perfectly well and there is no trouble. The monophonic section is not working well. The two lowest octaves are playing alright, but the 3rd octave has stopped giving any sound. If you depress any note of the 3rd octave it gives a note of the 1st or 2nd octave. When

you change and press other notes of the 3rd octave, it is the same base note which is constantly heard. This note is very often the last note you have touched in the 1st or the 2nd octave when you were playing. The 4th octave occasionally is all right, but often it fails. The defect is of the same nature. The Mono oscillator is working, as we can play the 1st two octaves of the upper manual. The Mono synthesizer section is also not faulty, as the tones are changing when you touch the sensors, as scheduled. The only fault is that the 3rd octave as well as the 4th do not produce the notes. With the Poly section, as well as with the flute bars, all the notes of the 3rd and 4th octave are playing as normal. Arun is trying very hard and studying thoroughly the entire circuit of the organ but as they have no experience of repairing electric organs, I think it will help them considerably if an expert from the company can give some suggestions. You can tell them that the men who are trying to repair the organ are very good electronic engineers, but a little help will facilitate very much their locating the faulty components.

I hope I have made the defect sufficiently clear to you and it would not bother you too much to write to the company and get the help which is very much needed. Do they have a 'Service Manual'?

*Hoping to hear from you soon, and sending you my love,
Yours Sunil*

The story of people asking to publish Sunil's music continues into 1979 in this letter from the U.S.:

25.3.79

Dear Sunil,

About 8 or 9 months ago you sent to me a couple of tape recordings of music from the Ashram based on excerpts from Savitri.

It is with great pleasure that I have listened to those recordings during this period.

Many persons have commented to me that they would also like to have recordings of this very special music. Using my own somewhat sophisticated recording equipment I have shared the music with a few close friends.

It has recently occurred to me that the Ashram music would be greatly appreciated by many people involved in the New consciousness movement here in the Americas.

I write for music companies and new consciousness periodicals. If you would be interested in distributing the music I could easily set up a small mail order business here.

I could send you enough tapes for you to be able to record all of the available music from the Ashram. After I received the music I could record it and distribute it here. When all of my postage and handling costs were taken care of I could arrange to send to you an agreed upon percentage of whatever monies are left over.

Please share with me you feelings about this idea and write me any suggestions you might have.

Peace, James Abromaitis

Sunil's answer:

17.4.79

Mr. Abromaitis,

I thank you for your very kind letter.

I am glad that you enjoyed hearing some of my compositions which I sent to you a few months ago. I am, also, happy to know that you gave copies of these musics to a few close friends of yours, those of them who really found these musics desirable and wanted to keep these musics with them. However, the distribution of my musics at random and for a price does not appeal to me. For me, these musics are an offering and I grow by them.

At the moment I receive, and I gather and I am conscious of Her energies at work within me. I share my experiences with a handful of people who are moving with me and are

near to me. The question of distribution is always invariably associated with the question of acquisition of things which are superfluous in my life, at best, for the time being. And so, I have always declined to consider any offer to make my musics available to a larger public.

However, I am very grateful to you for your kind appreciation and I send you my warm regards.

Yours, Sunil

Another proposal from the U.S. to publish Sunil's music:

18.5.79

Dear Sunil,

Here at the East-West Center, where I work with Jyotipriya and Robert Dane, we are hoping to prepare a series of cassette tapes of Savitri for sale. We are in the process of making arrangements with the Ashram — the copyright department has already indicated that they have no objection to our recording Mother's and Sri Aurobindo's works.

We are wondering if we can include some of your music to accompany the reading. Jyotipriya suggested using it at the beginning and end of each tape.

If this is agreeable with you, we can send a copy of the first tape that we will be presenting from Book I.

With kind regards, and gratitude for your inspiring, uplifting music....

Sincerely in Mother, Patti Frick

Sunil's response:

Dear Patti,

Your proposal scares me. Something within me becomes shut and will not give its consent. I would have rejected it outright, but as the idea was proposed by Jyotipriya, I took a little time to consider it. But the feeling persists, and I will not like to put my musics on cassettes for sale. During the last

few months, I received some suggestions to make my musics available to a larger public. To such suggestions, I always react in a negative way, convinced that this would be perilous for me and for my work. I believe that the time for such projects has not come, I am not yet ready for them. For the time being my music is for a few of us, my friends. I like to continue just like that. I am sure you will understand and appreciate the reason of my inability to collaborate. However, I feel that even without my music, your cassettes will be well received by the public.

I am sorry to disappoint you, but I wish you success and send all of my loving regards.

Yours Sunil

An exchange with India Television Centre which first formally announces the telecast of a program using Sunil's music, then asks permission to use Sunil's music in another program, receives permission but, in the end, does not use it:

From: Govt. of India Television Centre 4.10.79

*The Aurobindo Ashram Trust
Copy Right Section
Aurobindo Ashram
Pondicherry 6005002*

Dear Sir,

A programme of ballet (Aspiration) based on the 1979 New Year Music of Sunil Bhattacharya was telecast from Doordarshan Kendra, Ahmedabad. Excerpts from the New Year Music was taken and the choreography was done by Dr. Mrinalini Sarabhai. The above programme was telecast on 29.9.1979 on the day the relics of Shree Aurobindo were installed at Nadiad and Arerea.

Copies of the above tape have also been sent to other stations for telecast purpose.

It is also proposed to use the New Year Music of 1972 for the background music when a programme on Shree Aurobindo is being telecast from this station.

This is for your information please.

Thanking you,

Yours faithfully,

(S. Parthasarathy)

Station Engineer”

And:

From: A.S. Tatari, Govt. of India Television Centre

2.12.80

Dear Sh. Bhattacharya,

I regret that due to unavoidable circumstances I could not get in touch with you again. As regards the use of your music, I would like to state that we are interested in using only a brief portion of your music as a background effect for a programme dedicated to Martin Luther King. Unlike other programmes which have been choreographed with your music, this programme had already been filmed and most of the sound track consists of human voices reciting poetry. It is only to enhance the effect that we are interested in using only a portion of your music.

We may also consider buying full pieces of your compositions for our library if you could kindly furnish us more details of your music as also your permission to use an excerpt of your New Year Music as requested above.

With regards,

Yours sincerely

(A.S. Tatari)

Director

Sunil's response:

Dear Mr. Tatari,

During the last two months I was so much taken up, first, with my New Year Music 81 and then with my new Savitri music, that I neglected all my correspondences. So, I feel rather embarrassed to reply to you after a lapse of nearly two months. I wanted to give you my consent to your proposal of using certain portions from my New Year Music 1980 in your documentary film on Dr. Martin Luther King. I do not know if this undue delay has made my consent irrelevant. I give my musics free to those who want to use them for meditation. However, I am reluctant to do so whenever these musics are used for other purposes such as films, telecasts, dances, etc. I make an exception in this case for you, but, still, it rather puzzles me why you do not want to pay an honorarium for the musics you use in your films, especially when you are handling the government money.

I do not intend to sell my musics to your library.

I have been rather frank with you about my feeling on the subject, but, I do assure you that I give you my consent with warmth and friendliness.

Sending you my warm regards. Sunil

Mr. Tatari writes back:

20.2.81

Dear Shri Bhattacharya,

Thank you for your letter and the permission to use excerpts from your music for our film on Dr. Martin Luther King, even though we cannot use your music now as we have already made our film. In the absence of your permission we were compelled to make an alternate arrangement.

With regards,

Yours sincerely (A.S. Tatari)

Sunil writes of the passing of his mother-in-law and something of his early life in the ashram and of the difference between expressing

feelings through music rather than through words:

9.10.79

My dear Uschi,

My mother-in-law passed away on the stroke of the midnight of the 29th September. She was in a deep coma during the last 20 to 25 days of her life and when the end came she just slowly faded out. She was 88 years old and we were not taken by surprise, but, still when it really happened we all felt a deep pain in our hearts. She was as a mother to me and we, all, came together here in 1942 and I had always a very close relation with her and her children. When she was in a semi-conscious state she said she was going to see the Mother; she also said once "What bliss!" I am sure the Mother was here to receive her. May she have peace and fulfilment!

I am relieved to know that you could understand my feelings regarding the 17th November in the right way. Usually I do not speak about those things because I may be very easily misunderstood. Since 1973 in several of my musics, especially the New Year Music 1974, I have tried to express my feelings. It is curious that there are things which could be expressed in music with much more sincerity than through words. And then you are not likely to be misunderstood. That is a great relief. I am glad to know that you reciprocate my feelings.

I am composing the Savitri musics, but there are some roots inside which have snapped. It will take a few days, I suppose, to become my old self again.

When I came to the Ashram I was a 22-year-old young man. I had a degree in chemistry. I was not a mathematician, though I had a love for the subject. The Mother made me a professor, and then a professor of mathematics because She thought I would be useful to Her in that capacity. However, the Mother also insisted that I compose musics. So, you see, I would be neither the one, nor the other without Her help. If I tried to tell you the whole story in detail, it would become a sort of autobiography which would, of course, tax your

patience a great deal. Some day when you are here I might tell you all this.

When is your new house going to be ready? Thomas and Myriam have come back. Thomas liked your little Sunil very much. He said that for a child of his age Sunil is a very quiet person.

At the present moment I do not need anything from Zurich. I need the money here, and I was just wondering if it would come. So this letter of yours with your offer to send me a cheque took my by surprise. So if you can give me some money with gladness in your heart, I will accept it with much love and gratitude.

How is Carlo? Please tell him something nice on my behalf. He is always in my thoughts.

Sending much love to you and to Sunil,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil writes how his mother's suffering occupied his mind as he composed the 1980 New Year Music:

4.1.80

My Dear Uschi,

I received your letter a few days ago. I was waiting for it and it gave me joy to receive news from you, news of your own self, news of Carlo, and that of your little child with so lovely eyes. I was right then very busy with my New Year Music and I could not answer to your letter as promptly as I should have done. Now the music has been completed and it has been played at six o'clock in the morning of the 1st day of January in the Ashram and then again, in the playground at the meditation of the 3rd of January. In general, the people liked it. I only wonder what She would have thought about it! However, I will send you a copy of it as soon as possible.

In the meanwhile, I send you my greetings and my affectionate thoughts. I do not talk much, so you may remain sure that I would not talk of the money to anyone. This money

will be of much use to me. Things are very costly now and I have to spend much to get little that my mother needs. My mother's progress is rather slow. She does not speak and in moments when she becomes a little too conscious, she becomes extremely depressed and she is in tears. On few occasions, she, even, sobbed loudly. It is difficult to be near her when she is like that. When I did this music, half of my physical mind was with her and with the other half I prayed to Her to guide me, to give me the inspiration, and I wrote what She chose to give to me.

Tell Carlo something nice on my behalf. To Sunil give my love. I pray that this year bring you much gladness and fulfilment. Tell Carlo that I wish him all the best and he is always in my mind.

Thanking you again and sending you my affectionate thoughts,

Sunil

Sunil again on the passing away of his mother-in-law, the illness of his mother, and being unable to complete the Savitri Book V music:

20.2.80

My dear Cliff,

I received your letter wishing me a happy birthday, and then, again, a beautiful card with New Year greetings, and I feel guilty that I failed to answer them promptly. This last year was a very disquieting year for me. First, my mother-in-law, who was as a mother to me died, after a long illness, on the 29th of September. On the 14th of October my mother was found unconscious in the bathroom. She has had a cerebral hemorrhage and she is still now, in bed, in a semi-conscious condition. I could not do my Savitri music. But, I managed to do the New Year Music 1980. I am sending you back the cassette with this new music.

How are you doing? Are you employed in some work?

From your letter I feel that you have, at last, found the girl who will be your bride. Tell me when are you going to marry her. Japan, as I hear from everybody, is a wonderful country with a very wonderful people. I am sure you like the place.

Steve is alright. He is doing the work in my department and he, now, knows much about the recording techniques as well as the machines he handles. I am very much satisfied with his work.

After a short spell of cool days, the mercury is going up again. We will soon have very hot days.

Write to me and give me all news about you. Chhobi sends you her love.

*My love to you,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil writes of the passing of his mother:

3.12.81

My dear Roxanne,

My mother passed away on the 28th of April, and since then nothing worked out well for me, even my physical health. As such, I have not been able to do my Savitri this year. I am working on the New Year Music 82 and I can send you only this new music unless you want me to send you some old ones. You have sent me a cheque of 20 dollars which is rather too much for one music. I would prefer that you send me 10 dollars and I will destroy this cheque. I would have returned the cheque to you but, then, the foreign postal rates have increased and the cost of sending a closed envelope is almost prohibitive for me. The cheque you sent to me bears the no. 265 and is dated 9 November 1981. You can advise your bank not to honour this cheque if it is presented at all.

I hope you are in good health. Sending you my warm regards,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil, having reached what he considers to be the old age of 63, writes about ‘turning westward’:

3. 6. 83

My dear Cliff,

Even though I seldom, write to you, you are very often in my thoughts. With you, I have felt a close kinship that does not disappear with time.

There should be a meaning in whatever we do. But, it is difficult to read it. I am now sixty-three, and I have turned westwards. When I look back on the long trail behind me, these are the little things, trivial moments that stand out. They are the ones which prepared me for major changes in my life. For one thing, I feel I was never in the driver’s seat. Once you express your desire to belong to the Divine, the Divine takes care of your path and your experiences. Your decision to live in Japan should have a meaning which only the future can reveal.

I am, still, addicted to cloves. I chew them with pleasure. However they should not be indispensable.

Do write to me from time to time. It is always a pleasure to get a few words from you.

*I send you my loving thoughts,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil explains his phrase, “I have turned westwards”:

22. 7. 83

My dear Cliff,

When I used the word “westward” I did not mean that I have any intention to move out of Pondicherry. I used the word in a figurative way. I am, now, an old man of sixty-three, and my life is definitely tilting towards the inevitable horizon. However, inside me, I am still young. I feel myself more at home with young people. Even if the zest of my boyhood days, the gladness of my youth are receding, I do not feel empty

of joy or of happiness. I admire young people like you who face with courage the harshnesses of our human life, and, yet are looking for some other values which they cherish in their heart.

This letter is written to convey to you my warm affection and my very best wishes for your birthday. Chhobi sends you her warm greetings. In a separate packet I send you a scarf, a token of my affection.

I thank you for the cloves. I listened to the cassette. There are some sounds I like.

*Sending you my love and my greetings,
Yours, Sunil*

A friend from the Nagpur Sri Aurobindo center in India writes of the help his music provides:

16.11.83

*Ranjan Sengupta
Representative of
Sri Aurobindo Center
Nagpur*

Revered Sunilda,

It was my great pleasure to meet you in person, when I came to collect the three cassettes on Savitri Music yesterday morning. We at the Nagpur Centre are extremely grateful to you for the kindness and affection you have shown to us by providing us taped music and mantras whenever we have demanded.

At Nagpur we play the cassettes of your music during the meditation hours. Our love and appreciation of your supreme creation cannot be expressed in mere words.

Like in our previous visits to the Ashram, this time also we are leaving behind a blank C-90 TDK cassette at your disposal with the request to kindly get your New Year 1982-83 music taped in it. Our representative will collect the same sometime

in Feb 1984.

*With Pranams and many many thanks
Sincerely Yours, Ranjan*

Sunil's friend in New Caledonia writes about the effect of Sunil's music on him:

20.11.83

Dear Sunil,

Your music is so integrated in my existence that I wonder how I could have lived before without it. Blessed be the day when I heard it for the first time. It was on a French television program here in November in 1969 if I remember well. It was on Pondicherry and especially on the Ashram. There were some seconds on the Darshan, an interview of Pavitra and another one of Sri Mai (Miss Pitoeff) and a sequence too brief of the Samadhi with in the background a passage from Savitri Book I, canto 4b. In the commentary it was said that the music was composed by a 'disciple of the Master'. It was so intense for me, it was such a discovery that I can say without laughing that I never recovered. This passage heard so briefly stayed neatly in my memory and many months after I recognized it in the reel tapes that you were beginning to send me. It was a women's choir, sublime. On my first trip to Pondicherry, I asked Hubert who was the composer of this music. It's from him that I learned about your existence and he offered to present me to you. During this first stay, I was going each morning at eight o'clock in front of the door of the school to listen from far away to your music with which started the student day. It was in 1970.

That's the story of my discovery of Sunil. I thank the Divine for it and also for the affection that you give me and for your generosity towards me which allows me to possess this inestimable treasure which is your music. I am not the only one to feel deeply what you put in your music.

My son Phillip, 27 years old, is also one of your admirers.

All this to tell you that you bring a precious help in our sadhana, help that you don't measure, maybe, the amplitude of, but for which we express our deep and affectionate gratitude.

In February I went to Nepal. I dreamed for a long time to go to the Himalaya. On the way I stayed some days in Calcutta, with the only aim to go to Dakshineswar. I have always had a big tenderness for Sri Ramakrishna. It's he who, through Dan Gospel, Maker and Romain Rolland has made me discover the vastness of spirituality in India and has led me to Sri Aurobindo and Mother. So it was for me a pilgrimage to the source. So, Johanna and I have seen the temple of Kali and the goddess object of such an intense worship from Sri Ramakrishna. We have seen the room where he had lived and in front of it have made a fervent meditation. We went into the shadows of the Panchavati where he was going to meditate, I have seen the ghats where Totapuri saw him for the first time and offered to teach him the Advaita Vedanta. It was a journey of souvenirs which I associated you with because I remember that you told me about having often meditated at Dakshineswar, brought by your father when you were a child. There also I thought of you.

I have not yet spoken about the New Year Music 1983 and the Savitri Music Book V whose beginning is a splendour. I told sometime ago to this young musician whom I referred to earlier that your music awakes in me a deep nostalgia. It puts us in contact with something in us from very far, like a lost country, the homeland of our soul that we have to find again. It's even sometimes painful in the depths of our breasts.

*With love under the eyes of Sweet Mother and Sri Aurobindo,
Michel*

Sunil answers:

1983

My dear Michel,

The beautiful things that you said about my music touched me as they came from a very affectionate heart. Such affection that we have for each other does not wither with time. I feel guilty that I did not write to you when I received those two tapes from Calcutta. I did not suspect that it was you who mailed them.

I am very happy to know that you were there in that hallowed place where lived a hundred years ago that miraculous man who “took the kingdom of heaven by storm”. (Sri Aurobindo)

The photographs remind in me memories which never really faded. To roam about in that sacred shrine was a joy and an adventure for a boy of twelve. Somehow the majesty of the Mother in that temple, the utter simplicity of Sri Ramakrishna’s room, the hush and silence around the Panchavati all found their place in a secret recess of my heart where images are stored everlastingly.

I am now busy with the New Year Music 84. In January will be done the final work of the next Savitri, Book V, canto III. I will send you these tapes in February.

By the time this letter reaches your hand, the festive season will have arrived and a quite unknown New Year. I send to you and to Johanna my greetings and my love.

*Wishing, both of you, a very happy New Year,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil writes again of the inadequacy of words:

6. 1. 84

My dear Cliff,

The memory of those few days, when you were here, has become distant and dim with time. I have a vague remembrance of a conversation that we did have in my room, but the substance of it has slipped off my mind. What I remember, still, is your face with two shining eyes, the candour with which you spoke to me about yourself, and the courage with which you

wanted to cherish your lonely freedom. However, what I spoke to you is not so important, as I have perceived that I very rarely succeed in expressing precisely what I want to convey. What is more important is the impression that these words create in the listener, the residual effect that lives; what I gather from your letter is what you understood and that remains, more or less, my view of things even though ten long years have passed with ten long, hot and very hot summers of Pondy.

The marvellous dawn can break only when one becomes a perfect vessel of Her spirit's force. The Life that begins after is in Her hands. "Radha's prayer" by Sri Aurobindo is also my prayer.

I am glad that you are getting married. Do not ask me why. Frankly, I do not know it. Akiko is a nice girl. You will have a home and I am satisfied that you can live a life without losing vision.

This New Year Music kept me so much occupied that I could not reply to your letter earlier.

Sending to you and to Akiko my greetings and my best wishes for a happy New Year.

Yours, Sunil

In September 1984 Sunil writes to the German guitarist Michel telling of difficulties he was having with the music for Savitri Book VI, Canto 1 which, in fact, was not recorded until the following year:

September 1984

Dear Michel,

Again another September draws near and, as usual, it finds me very unprepared for the next Savitri music. I have an intention to start the recordings before the 3rd week of September. Only with a large measure of Grace I can do it.

I thank you for your very kind and affectionate letter. You were a brother to me all these years right from the seventies. Your collaboration became almost like a habit to me. When

you are not there by my side, the place, curiously, looks empty. I listened to your Urvashi, and for me, it was a pleasure. The book you sent to me was extremely well done. As a matter of fact you are always so scrupulous about the quality of the things you do, that they never fail to be good. May you fulfill yourself in all that you do for Her!

*My love and affection to you,
Yours, Sunil*

A correspondent in Brittany writes of Sunil's music:

1984

Dear Sunil,

I allow myself to write to you to get new cassettes of your music (the music of the next species). We are still very outside of this music. We need some intermediary (the cassette recorder here, a new habit) to listen and understand.

I feel something like as if this music were coming from worlds to be created. Soon we will vibrate fully to the marvellous music, because it is not exterior to us. It is one of the numerous manifestations of the Divine beauty... Maybe it's simply the music and the dance of the body's cells, or revolutions of the planets? In any case, it acts on the body.

This music is very beautiful in itself, for us to plug in its vibration so that the body vibrates also as the manifestation of the Divine. The Love is there, in the music, soon we will see that It is everywhere. If only we would be receptive.

Sincerely yours, thank you, S. Tervinou

In this undated letter, possibly written in 1986, Sunil describes trying to compose music faithful to Sri Aurobindo's Savitri as an almost impossible task:

Dear Carola,

At last I finished my Savitri music just one day before the Darshan. I played a selection of passages during the evening

meditation on the 21st of February. During the last two months I was too much stuck, too much glued to this music: a last attempt to make it a little more faithful to the words, which, of course, is almost an impossible task.

I will appreciate very much, Carola, if you would purchase the "Service manual" preferably in English for the J.V.C copier that you bought for me. The model no. of the machine is KD-W55 Stereo Double cassette Deck with ANRS (Dolby System).

This machine is giving me invaluable service. I thank you for this useful gift.

Sunil

Sunil has a pause after finishing his Savitri music but must soon begin work on the 1986 New Year music:

5. 11. 85

Dear Cliff,

I received the threader and the cassette quite sometime ago. I listened to the song "Ohayo". I received your letter but I was so much engrossed in my music, that I could not manage to sit down and write a few lines to thank you for the gifts, and, particularly, for the letter which touched me. Something within you has deepened, widened and yet you have remained the same. My affection for you is not something which formed with time. I knew of it since the moment I saw you. I don't know, even, from where it came. Your affection for me is something I value as a priceless gift. It is nice to look back upon these few days that you were with us here. We will meet each other again soon.

I have finished this year's Savitri on the 30th of October. I have to think about the New Year's music now. I feel a little fatigued.

How are you? Do write to me from time to time.

The weather here is just good. Occasionally there is rain, and it is just cool. I would prefer the days to be cooler than this.

We cannot expect more than that.

*Chhobi thanks you for the threader and the plastic box,
and sends you her love.*

Sending much love to you,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil writes of his inner life to a friend in India:

December 1985

D.N. Das,

You have a searching mind — you have within you a natural capacity to make a deep and global analysis. I have seen your image in your letter and your experience has deeply moved me. I couldn't reply in time due firstly to the fact I was very much occupied with my music; secondly I didn't find it very easy to reply. Then I even thought that you would get the answer yourself. You have both inspiration and capacity.

The area where my life has been moving is of a totally different type. The desire to attain the nearness of that truth for which we are here, I have not yet received in any form until now. "Verily — raso vai sah — it is no other than the delight behind existence." (Sri Aurobindo) I have heard the call of that delight — that is to say, I am totally in delight but I haven't been able to acquire Him. I have seen only the picture, the picture hasn't yet become alive.

Of course, I have faith and I am capable of praying too. I pray to the Mother that all that is bright and pure is established within you.

You too will see many miracles deep within when you aspire to become close to Him. You will have peace.

Both you and Anjali, accept my affectionate blessings.

Sunil

Sunil writes of the inner life:

Dear Carola,

Your letter to Françoise is ably written. You succeed in writing such a letter very well. I am no good when I have to communicate with people who tread a very different path. "He" is there in everything, but for a bhakta, everything belongs to Him. He has an eye and He looks at His timelessness yet. This insignificant person called Sunil is not forgotten. The One dwells in his heart. "He" survives beyond this universe, "He" has skies which I have never seen, but "He" draws near to me with a lover's face.

I have started playing again and I read very often the passages from Savitri which I intend to do this year.

My eyes are giving me trouble. Can you send me one or two bottles of the eye lotion that you sent for me?

*Thanking you, and sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil refers, as he often did, to his old age even though he is only in his mid-sixties at this time and, in fact, had begun to talk of himself in that way even in his fifties:

8. 6. 86

My dear Cliff,

You must have given up hope of getting an answer to your letter to me which I received a few months ago; the delay is, to say the least, inordinate. These days with growing indolence of an ageing man I accept these handicaps with resignation. However, it is curious that all the time I was very deeply aware of you, and it is this that finally succeeded in making something in me move. The photograph that you sent to me was very well taken. I liked you again, your wife and your home. Your wife has a gentle face, and a steady nature. The two of you together should make a wholesome family.

Steve told me the other day that he has not heard from you since a long time. How is your school going on? I did not have occasion to say "ohayo" to anyone since you left Pondy. The song that you sent to me, "Ohaiyo", was nice.

The month of May was pretty hot here this year, or is it that I am getting more sensitive to heat?

I have started playing again and I read occasionally the passages of Savitri that I intend to do this year.

How swiftly days pass! Only the other day you were here. When we look back, time seems to shrink. You over there in Japan, and I, here in Pondy, we have lived another year of our life engrossed with the urgencies of the cares of our lives. We may meet, again, if you can make the journey to Pondy again. I will wish then "Ohayo Cliff", welcome to Pondy!

Meanwhile I send you my love. Chhobi remembers you and she, too, sends you her affectionate thoughts.

Yours, Sunil

Sunil had to deal with all sorts of difficulties simply getting his music to people at no charge. Here he has to deal with Customs to defend himself from the charge of illegal importation of foreign currency:

From: Asst. Collector of Customs, Madras

FORM OF SHOW CAUSE MEMO FOR OFFENCES INVOLVING THE IMPORT OF CURRENCY BY POST

Memorandum No S5352 186 PAD Dated 17.7.86

Sub.: Import of Foreign parcel/packet

Local No 456994/86

Sender's Name and address: from W. Germany

The above noted packet which has been addressed to you on examination been found to contain the following Indian/ Foreign currency: –

1. Foreign currency of 10 DM concealed in a cover with an Audio Cassette.

10 X 1 DM CL0586450M

Sunil's defense:

To: Asst. Collector of Customs
26.7.86

Dear Sir,

I received only today your memorandum No. S5352/186PAD dated 17.2.86.

I am an Ashramite and a musician. I give my musics free of charge to all who want them. The person who has sent this audio cassette is unknown to me and I received no communication from him. He must be wanting some music of mine recorded on this cassette and he has enclosed the mailing charges. When someone wants my musics, he is supposed to send me the cassettes and pay the postal charges. When they write to me I, always, ask them to send the money either by postal orders or drafts. This man, perhaps unknowingly, has infringed our laws, and you are free to confiscate his cassette and his money or return them to the sender.

I hope I have made my position clear, and I will be glad if my above explanation is accepted by you.

Thanking you, Sir, in anticipation,

Yours,

Sunil Bhattacharya

The case was resolved when Customs wrote back:

As the currency has been imported in contravention of Section 13 of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act 1973, I confiscate the foreign currency absolutely under section 111 (d) of Customs Act 1962 and release the cassettes.

M.P. Meena, Asst. Collector of Customs (P.A.D.)

Sunil writes of the passing days:

My dear Gérard,

It seems ages since I wrote to you last. However, it appeared to me that all along, all the time you were living near me and I knew you as I saw you. Days are passing here, days when one aspires, days when one hopes and are sweet and fair, soon to be followed by days which are inert, days which are vague and ambiguous.

Since August 86 I was keeping an indifferent health, but now I am feeling much better and I said to myself that I must write to you. I received your letters and I feel guilty that I failed to write to you and communicate to you my affection and friendship. With all the worries of recording my musics it somehow never really happened.

Sunil

Carola writes at the start of 1987:

4.1.87

Dearest Sunil,

I have gotten a marvellous experience while listening to your 1972 New Year Music. Suddenly there was a flight of small blue flowers with light of an extraordinary purity in the background. It was first little blue flowers and later beautiful blue butterflies. All was transparent light and of an extraordinary beauty.

I think you told me to attach myself to only one thing, it is that. My Guru becomes the only important thing. This helped me a lot. I have abandoned all tentative attempts to suppress this, to correct that for reaching the aim which you have placed in front of me. And this has given certain coherence to my path, a strength bigger in one unique direction.

With true love, Carola

Rijuta writes:

26.1.87

Dear Sunil,

The 1987 New Year Music has come.

How lucky you are, Sunil, to be able to bring into this scarred, ugly, aching planet this redemptive Action!

You give us the means to savour now the Real, the True, the Beautiful.

In happiest appreciation,

Rijuta

Sunil responds:

1987

Dear Rijuta,

A letter from you always takes me by surprise and it is, always, with a quivering in my heart I realize that you are no longer there in that corner near Golconde. Remembering your face brings me back the beautiful images of our Ashram days in the forties, fifties, sixties... as if like a presence they owed in our memory. The contours of those days in lines and colour have not faded nor have they lost their substance. Something was there which lived with us, grew in us, continues to remain and even appears to expand. I believe it is indelible because it was a design painted by Their hands. Around a Light your life has always moved.

May this Light continue to sustain all that is pure and fair in you!

I have mailed to you two cassettes with Savitri Bk VI C2, BK VII C1 & 2. The rest of the cassettes will be mailed to you later on as soon as possible.

Thank you for your solicitude which comes from an intimacy grown over the years. I am in fairly good health now. The work that She gave to me has become for me a cross to bear and carry on. I pray to Her to give me the strength to do that with a happy heart.

Sending my affectionate thoughts to you,

Yours Sunil

Rijuta responds, perhaps misunderstanding Sunil's meaning of "for me a cross to bear" in his letter to her. He had written earlier in a letter to his New Caledonian friend, "here is the key of the mystery of men who refuse to carry a cross in this world," perhaps indicating that this cross is the portion of the work that each of us agrees to carry on for the Divine:

6.5.87

Dear Sunil,

One line at the end of your letter — which I read before the music came — had me howling 'Oh No!' loudly enough to shake the beams of your studio and set me worrying about what the music would be. Needless worry. There are those passages in this BK 7 music that, as always, arouse in the listener those poignant yearnings that are simultaneously and magically provided with the Force that satisfies those longings before the notes fade. Since your music both stirs and fulfils us in this way, you, while composing must have yourself felt all this, so how in heaven's name, can you dare to write that this great opportunity 'She has given you has become a cross for you to bear!'... You must be referring to the recording process or other material difficulties — but do put things in perspective!

The Divine's nightingale contributes her surpassingly lovely part, and I hope all eye problems and infection are past history.

I'm convinced that each one who maintains the inner contact with Mother is given the place and conditions that best foster self-giving.

With love, Rijuta

In 1987 Sunil writes of a professional eight-track recorder which will soon arrive in his studio:

12.7.87

Dear Cliff,

Another last minute letter for you asking you to do a favour. The camera of Kanak needs a part, a small one, the description of which is given below. Will this be available in Japan? If it is, do buy it for him and bring it along with you when you come. He will pay.

I hope everything is working out well at your end and am expecting to meet you soon. The import license and, also, the tax exemption certificate have finally come. The eight-channel Otari tape recorder is now permitted to come. Steve is arranging things over there in America. I believe that this machine can be used for recordings this year.

If this camera part is not available in Japan, please let me know. I will then ask Steve to get it.

Sending you lots of love,

Yours, Sunil

Rijuta writes again her thanks for Sunil's music, but with some reservations for part of the Book VII, Canto 3 music:

24.3.88

Dear Sunil and Patrick,

Your cassette has come, Patrick, and I happily count on your kind offer to send me all future music. You take for granted 'future creations', Patrick, but for me, there is a sense of wonder every time a new composition emerges — Sunil, how do you manage to keep on distilling these heavenly strains that continuously work on the development of our being!?

Yet my delight and applause is only for side two. Side one I found to be a thicket of sound effects — sound effects uncannily suggestive of the harrowing scenes of the poem, but to get at the few nuggets of real music on that side, the prolonged punishment of the sound effects don't warrant repeated listening. I will stick to side two only.

The Mother's lavish Grace in providing for all, all one's needs here on every level — especially the need to grow — has

to be lived to be believed.

*With a happy heart, and wishing you the same,
Rijuta*

Sunil writes of his enduring friendship for Eugene ‘Mickey’ Finn though he had met him only once sixteen years earlier:

1.7.88

Dear Mr. Finn,

Between the two of us, I feel, there is a secret bond, a growing sense of friendship and brotherhood that steals across the wear and tear of time. Sixteen years ago we met, but, still this meeting does not seem to be very distant; it lives. I am glad that you wrote to me and am happy that you, still, like my musics. I am deeply thankful to you for many things, including the gift of six good quality cassettes. They will be useful for me.

I am composing again. Soon I will start recordings of musics for my Savitri, Book VII, Canto 4. Then, of course, another New Year. I hope you are keeping in good health. May She bless you and protect you!

Sending you my affectionate thoughts, Yours Sunil

Sunil responds to a note from revered long-time Ashramite Nolini who has referred to Sunil as “the Mother’s musician”:

Nolini-da,

You have done proper to write “the Mother’s musician.” I really needed to hear this. As the days are passing, both my enthusiasm and interest are diminishing.

Last life I did some good work and therefore became capable of receiving love from elders like you. This will give a lot of joy to this worthless person.

Yours, Sunil

Mr. Finn writes:

July 31, 88

Dear Sunil,

Thank you for your most gracious letter. It is good to know that you received the tapes intact. From time to time I'll send you more.

Just a short comment on the tapes you sent. Whenever they are played and to whoever they are played they bring them the Presence or the sound body of the Divine 'Mother' into the atmosphere and into the heart of all those present.

As for the friendship, it will always be to me a grace of the Divine. I am deeply grateful. For sixteen years I have been going to sleep listening to your music and waking up the first thing I do is to put one of your tapes on. So you and your music have become very much a part of me.

Thank you again for everything.

'Their' Victory

Love, Eugene (Mickey) Finn

To a friend in France:

29.2.88

My dear Guy,

We have crossed eighty-seven years of this century and now in this year of 1988, which was very distant in my boyhood, I feel happy to send you my greetings and the feeling of a deep affection. Forty-six years have passed since I came here. The sea, the sky, the soil and the climate remain unchanged though very seldom the climate has exceeded its norms. The cool days of our winter are behind us, and we are on the threshold of sunlit days and an unceasing circuit of hot, hot days. And still I have work to do. Out of nine musics for Savitri this year, only six have been recorded. Three more remain to be done. I do not like the music of these pieces which I wrote in October last year. I am rewriting them; as for that matter, I have to rewrite them and change them substantially. Next week, perhaps, I

will start recording. Another month of recording before I can say that this work is done. I will then send you two cassettes, one with 88 music and the other with Savitri B7 C3.

Sunil

Sunil says that the composition of Savitri music at this time has become for him “a long trail”:

28.4.88

Dear Cliff,

Ages ago your letter came. I could have and should have replied; I just needed to act promptly. I am ashamed to tell you that I did not make a move. All the time, however, loomed on the horizon of my mind your face, the feeling of a gentle memory of a tenderness, a kindness which is, indeed, precious to me. The music of Savitri has become for me a long trail, a long stretch of time when worries invade in dire league. This is a music in which I seek myself as well as Sri Aurobindo's Savitri. Not an easy task always. The work which started in August 87 came to an end on the 21st of April 88. The first half of it will be played during the meditation in the playground on the 24th of April. The second half of it will be played on the following Thursday.

I am glad to know that you like the 1988 N.Y. music. The English prayer was read by Manoj. He read well. The lines were taken from the Mother's prayer dated 8th November 1914.

I have got a card from the Geographical Magazine informing me that I will be a happy recipient of their issues for a period of one year — it is a gift from Mr. Cliff Gibson. So far I have not received any copy. I think that it will take a little more time. I should not be impatient. I am happy to receive this gift from you, a warmth which spoke to my heart.

Just now my best recorder is giving trouble. I am sure Steve will be able to fix it. I will send you then a copy of my new Savitri.

How is Akiko? Give her my love. I hope that you two will enjoy your visit to the U.S. this summer. Would you be able to come here in December?

The cheque you sent lay on my desk for a month or so. I gave it to my Bank. Usually it takes quite some time before it is credited to my account. But 30 dollars is quite a big sum, and it can take care of many, many parcels for a long time to come.

It was quite hot here, but we are having now some rains, here and there, in the south, and days are cooler than is customary in this month of April. Chhobi sends to you and Akiko her love. I send you my affectionate thoughts.

Sunil

P.S. Can you send 2 refills for the Pilot pen you gave me by post?

Sunil's comment on his Savitri becoming "a long trail" provokes a similar response to Rijuta's when she wrote, aghast at Sunil's comments about his music being 'a cross to bear' in an earlier letter. Cliff writes:

May 22, 1988

Dear Sunil,

When I hear you speak of your difficulties composing the Savitri music, I am reminded of some words from a letter you wrote to me a pretty long time ago — 'This is all wrong. Yoga is not simply the mastery of one's self, a life of rigid self-discipline and a continuous fight against one's weaknesses.... There is a help within your reach, you should call for it, there is a power around you, be open to it and turn it into your own strength. It is only in a happy harmonious happiness that you can grow richer every day. For a change, I would advise you not to accord too much importance to your difficulties, to look beyond these bodiless walls and call for joy from diviner heights. Consider yourself as the Mother's spoilt child and

aspire for Her sweetness, Her delight, and Her love.’ This is good advice, don’t you think?

Do you really worry when you are composing this music? Why? About what people will think? You say, ‘This is a music in which I seek myself as well as Sri Aurobindo’s Savitri.’ It seems to me that should give you a feeling of satisfaction and purpose. You don’t come close to the ideal of perfection you perceive somewhere in the Infinite? Has the Infinite so far come close to His own Ideal?

The idea of suffering and struggle in the creation of your music seems alien to me. I’m sure you thank Them for the life and the opportunity you have been given. Can’t you just make your effort, give your thanks for the result and note that the far-off unrealizable ideal is always there for you to strive for in the next year’s music?

I love your music. I’m sure you know there are many people who do. They love it for the element of the Divine which has managed to come down to us through it. I thank you and I thank the Divine for it. I will thank you too, if I read when you are composing your next music, ‘This music has caused me moments of struggle and effort, but in the end I realize there is nothing I would rather be doing and being a part of the Divine’s expression here on Earth has given me some small measure of satisfaction.’

*Love to you and Chhobi,
Cliff*

Worried that his previous letter to Sunil might have sounded like a lecture, Cliff writes an apology:

July 23, 1988

Dear Sunil,

I hope you didn’t mind my last letter too much. I was afraid it sounded a bit like lecturing. If you didn’t like my ideas about the creative process, I’d appreciate your writing and letting me know your own views.

Cliff

Sunil responds:

25.8.88

Dear Cliff,

You are mistaken in your surmise. The letter that you wrote to me was excellent. When words correspond intimately with a living faith, they transmit vibrations of an experience. When I read your letter I never felt that someone was lecturing to me. I found in these lines an echo of what I have felt all along in my life, particularly in my creative life. The tiredness that I feel comes from an indolence that is inherent within me and, also, from a sense of my inadequacy whenever I approach something as big as SAVITRI. Add to this, also, the fact that I have been creating musics for the last 43 years of my life. There is something called musical fatigue. However, I suppose I have to pursue that which alone gives a meaning to my life. It is curious that when She was physically with us, I was less concerned with my failures. But I have become increasingly critical about my compositions now that She is not there to tell me "Well done, Sunil."

Your birthday, this year, brings an interesting day 8.8.88, which has been celebrated here in the Ashram. People were allowed to go to the Mother's room upstairs. Cards were distributed. My thoughts were very much with you on that day.

The empty refill that I had is with you somewhere in your baggage. You took it with you last year when you left. Thanks for the Geographical Magazine. It has started coming and I have quite a few issues with me now. I find it very interesting and informative. Sitting here in my chair I enjoy so much of beauty beyond my reach.

The month of December is a tiring month for me. Each year I have to live through it, but I do not look forward to it with pleasure. You may not bring the video. That will make

things worse for me. I will be happy to see you just like that without a video machine in your hand.

I wish you, Cliff, many happy returns of your birthday, and I send you much, much love. Chhobi sends you her greetings and her love.

Yours, Sunil

To Sunil's New Caledonian friend:

1988

Dear, dear Michel,

I am still struggling to finish my new Savitri Book 7 C 4. I suppose it will take another 8 to 10 days before it is ready. Of late, the ageing Sunil has become a little leisurely in his activities and he tires easily. The New Year's Music is different, there is a date before which it has to be made ready. I take it easy when I do my Savitri.

I have received all your letters, and for the sentiments you expressed I thank you. When words come from you, it has a different value. I know you are never just polite. Please forgive me for my delay in answering your letter. At sixty-eight one can be excused for being lazy.

April is gone. The sun is no longer gentle. It spits fire and we sweat. We look forward to the days when the sky will be overcast and the rain streaks the window panes.

Sunil

Rijuta on Sunil's 1989 New Year Music:

3.2.89

Oh, Sunil, your deluxe Maxell cassette has come just one day after I posted a letter to you lamenting the absence of the New Year's music.

You remember those Upanishad lines about the spiritual quest climbing from peak to ever-higher and higher peaks — so, too, your music mounts from great to ever-greater Power

as a vehicle that transports the listener to deeper recesses of delight, of sweetness, of yearning...

To be sure, the increased instrumental fullness of this latest release does enhance, yet the real Glory of this 1989 N.Y. music still belongs to the Origin of your Inspiration — the inspiring source you draw on gives you access to a Future-worldly revelation and we get carried along in its wake!

Hours before hearing the tape, we may have murmured, with a sort of matter-of-fact sincerity, the same prayer invoked in your music, but suddenly, in the grip of the musical setting you have provided, we fling ourselves with a passion into that same invocation but charged with a joyful puissance that guarantees fulfilment!

'Be born again and connect today with tomorrow's world' is the compelling thrust of your message in this 1989 musical experience — O, Sunil, how to thank you?!

With love, Rijuta

To Gambelon:

Dear Gambelon,

I am glad to know that basically there is nothing wrong with your stomach. I note also with happiness that you have gained 2 kilos. I am sure that Her Grace will continue to protect you. Only what strikes as dubious to me is your living in a community where the average age is 80. But, it is quite possible that you will have some occupation. Soon you will know your neighbours and start taking care of them.

We read a lot about the bicentenary celebration of your Revolution which is being done on a grand scale. I am sure you saw this in your television. Mrs. Thatcher's comments on the importance of the French Revolution shows a lack of comprehension of the slow emergence of democratic rights of people. She was only petulant when she spoke in the T.V. interviews.

How are you? Do write to me when you can. Beatrice [the

opera singer who sang in Sunil's music] *is supposed to come in August.*

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

Sunil to his friend Gérard:

1989

Dear Gérard,

It is curious that all of us are different in some way or other but those who have heard Her call in their heart remain the same, one in the multitude, captive in Her eternal home.

I understand the difficulties that you have to face when you have to interpret thoughts which come from a coarser mold of view with which you rarely agree. May she help you to overcome your frustrations! I am enclosing two blessings packets from the Mother's room, one for you, one for Gabriel.

Chhobi sends you love. I send you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil mentions again his disinclination to distribute his music to a general audience, at least while he is still here on earth:

Dear Christa,

I am sorry that I took such a long time to acknowledge your letter and your bank draft. Thank you for everything. I am glad to know that you are doing well. In doing your work you have become wise and the vision grows within. Anyone who remembers Her is accepted by Her and is a protected child. Her shield will protect you.

I am busy now with the composition of my next Savitri music. We will soon start recording of some of these musics now. If they are not finished before November, I will have to take them up again in January after the New Year Music is over. I will send you a cassette when the N.Y. Music is done.

I am not very interested in the diffusion of my musics to a larger public. That can always be done even in my absence. But, of course, you can give free of charge copies of these musics to anyone who really needs them.

I am always glad to receive news of you. So, whenever you feel like writing to me, do write.

*I send you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

Sunil writes again of his feeling inadequate when facing the task of composing music for Savitri:

August 1989

Dear Mr. Finn,

Already it is the end of August, and time for me to do new musics again. When I read the new passages that I have to do, I find myself so inadequate!

Whenever I read your letter I feel that you are happy, and live in secure felicity of your faith. May She protect you! Thanking you again,

Yours Sunil

Mr. Finn responds to Sunil's "inadequate" comment:

September 24, 1989

Dear Sunil,

Thank you for your warm and most welcome letter. Cliff came to my house with his lovely wife the day after I wrote the last letter to you. He did not have the tape with him but returned a month later with it. It was well worth waiting for. It is so beautiful. Your own technology seems to have improved. It seems that you must have more sophisticated equipment. As for your feeling inadequate, what human could feel adequate to express 'Them'. But of all the musicians, The Power chose you, so you must be the most adequate and the reaction to your music bears that out.

*Much love and gratitude.
Their Victory is For All.
Eugene D. Finn*

To Gérard who has offered to buy an expensive piece of equipment for Sunil's studio:

19.12.89

I think you saw Steve who used to work in my department. He did not know much of electronics at that time but now he has become an expert and has taken charge of the recording section of my studio. He has built an enormous number of gadgets. Patrick is another American who works with me and is a good musician and has brought quite a few synthesizers. Steve has built digital reverberator and mixers, etc. He thinks that the cost of this machine you propose is prohibitive and yet it will not serve the purpose of preserving the musics from the ravages of time. The suggestion has been made and I will soon know what She thinks about it. If this has Her approval things will move and each peg will find its proper hole.

This year the days are cool even now. It is pleasant and I am composing musics for my next Savitri, Book Seven, Canto five.

Sunil

Sunil writes about recording problems and also makes one of his infrequent requests for cloves, which he used to like to chew. Although cloves were grown in India, at this time Sunil said all the good ones were for export:

18th July 1990

Dear Cliff,

Steve is not here. He had to leave in a hurry when the news of his mother's demise came. He left Pondy on the 18th of June. I had to stop recordings of Savitri. He will be here on the 26th of July. I received a letter from him today confirming his

date of arrival. We can recommence our recordings from the 28th, I suppose. The Italian singer Beatrice is here. She wants to sing with my music.

I have booked your room, a double bed room, in the Parc Guest House, and I have booked an Ashram car to go to the airport in Madras on the 12th of August at 11:30 A.M. Kindly confirm; if there is any change let me know immediately.

Somehow I have a strange feeling whenever you tell me your plan to leave Japan and go to settle in the U.S. I have my reservations, but I do not see the reason.

8.8.90 is a special day for you and let me send you my very best wishes. May Her Light shine on your path!

You can bring cloves. I do not have many now and occasionally I find pleasure in chewing them.

Chhobi sends to you and to Akiko her love,

My love to you and to Akiko,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil writes to Gambelon when recording is interrupted as a result of both Steve, who does the recording, and Patrick, who plays in Sunil's music, being away in the US:

July 1990

Dear Gambelon,

It is always a pleasure to receive a word from you. It sustains the feeling of closeness that abides unhampered by anything that happens in our lives.

We started the Savitri recordings in the month of May and continued working till the middle of June. I did eight of the eleven recitations to be done this year, when news came that Steve's mother has expired. He had to go. He will come only at the end of July. Patrick is also gone to U.S. He is expected to be here on the 7th of August. Beatrice is coming in the middle of July and she will be available till the 10th or 11th of August. I have kept a piece or two of musics where I can use her voice.

On the 18th of June my elder brother passed away. He

was ailing and at the end he had kidney infection. He did not respond to the antibiotics. He suffered but the end was quick and peaceful.

*How are you doing?
Send you my love,
Yours Sunil*

Sunil writes again when Patrick and Steve have returned to the Ashram:

September 1990

My dear Gambelon,

Patrick and Steve are both back now. I played all the pieces of my Savitri and they are on tape now. Kanak also played with me. Patrick is now recording his accompaniment and it will take him another few days to finish his music. When Beatrice was here, she sang with one of my musics. They are all recorded. We may start now mixing the channels. Steve has brought a new gadget which he says will simplify the process of mixing. It is a computerized mixer. I have yet to see what it does.

This year we had rains during July and August. The weather was very fine and we had very cool and pleasant days. Now that the rain has stopped, days are getting hotter. As I have nothing to do now, I play the organ trying to find my direction for the N.Y. Music. Soon it will stop and I will have the unpleasant work of mixing channels and editing them for the Mother's words.

How are you keeping? Have you been to the south of France? If you buy any chocolate for me you know my taste. Do not give these 8 o'clock chocolates. I do not like them.

*When do you intend to come here in Pondy?
I send you much love and affection,
Yours Sunil*

To Carola:

1990

Dear Carola,

Your letter to François is a continuous flow with sudden revealing phrases. Your quotes from Sri Aurobindo always took me by surprise; reading and re-reading them is always a gain of joy for me. The feeling of apathy and irritation is gone; they were only on the surface, deep within the fire burnt. Your vision of this strange creature is curious. The clue to its meaning will certainly be given to you in time.

Steve and Patrick are back here. Patrick is recording his accompaniment to my musics of Savitri. He will take another week or so to complete his work. Then, I suppose, I will try to mix these eleven musics. I will be happy if this Savitri can be completed by the end of September or the first week of October.

When you come in October, I will certainly find time to see you in the mornings. With the money donated Steve and Patrick have bought a number of gadgets. I have yet to see to what extent they help in our editing works.

Hoping to see you soon and sending you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours, Sunil

Sunil writes to Gambelon about problems that interrupted the mix of the Savitri music in the studio:

12.10.90

Dear Gambelon,

I am still busy with my Savitri music. We made a mixing with the new gadgets (carpentry work for 16 days) and just when I thought that the vexing problem of mixing was over, Steve discovered that he had made a wrong connection which has spoilt the quality of the sounds. We had to start again. Today I finished the mixing work again. We could start editing and putting the Mother's words from tomorrow, but Steve is

sick, and he needs a rest for a day or two. So, one thing after another is happening to delay the completion of my work.

I don't mind having chocolate with almond. But, I liked most the crottes de chocolat that you gave me once long ago.

I am glad that you are coming in December.

Sending you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours Sunil

The recording problem mentioned in the letter above was a major one. The mixing of the tracks for the Savitri music was nearly completed when the recording error was discovered and had to be started again from the beginning. Sunil took it in his stride. As Victor commented in an interview for this book, Sunil was willing to begin again when something needed to be redone:

One thing was, he was always ready to start from scratch, everything again. He never said, 'Oh, I have worked out all this and if it doesn't work out...,' but then he did his own work. We were not in that part, you know, when he used to close the door and work. And it was only when he was ready that he recorded. Even until the last minute you would see he is taking a pen and changing something, taking a pen and changing something else. So, these type of things he did till the end. As soon as he found that this would be better, that would be better, meticulously he worked at it. And it was a very, very hard work. I didn't realize it when it was being done. I used to, probably, blame him. And one day he did get a little annoyed; I don't know what was the situation and he said, 'What do you think, it is so easy?'

In 1991 Sunil's friend Carola passed away and François writes of the day:

18.2.91

Hello Sunil,

Helga who found Carola dead on Tuesday 12, February

in the morning coming to Carola told us that in the 25 years that she worked with Carola, Carola had never once closed the shutters to her door and windows. When Helga saw the shutters closed on arriving she found this exceptional, very strange and wonders still why Carola did close the shutters that day.

François

Sunil responds:

February 1991

Dear friend,

The day of her passing I have seen in you the François that I love and who is always very dear to me. This bond of affection becomes more important now that Carola is not here anymore with us. These are moments of sorrow, of deep pain and also mysterious moments where one faces unknown profundity. From far I see you, François, a heart full of love and sadness in Geneva. I see with your eyes the face of Carola for the last time, in Mainz you are there in the cemetery where our coquette will rest forever. On the 30th of January when she left Pondy her Guru knew that she had only a dozen days to live.

Towards the end of her stay here, in Pondy, Carola had a remarkable vision. She saw the Samadhi surge from the sea. The Samadhi installed itself at a certain height and shone like a thousand stars. At the same time Carola received something solid in her. She did not know what she had received. She told me that she needed the solitude of Fermat to understand it well. Maybe she realized that in the solitude of her room in Geneva. I am certain that she was not alone at the moment when she found what she had searched for during all her life.

Carola was convinced that it is the Ashram in Pondicherry which will continue to be the seat of Sri Aurobindo and that it is here that we will see the full unfolding of Their yoga. I suppose that she is already here participating in Their work.

To end, I send you my love and I affirm that you are very near to me. Transmit my affectionate thoughts to Jeann-Yvonne.

P.S. I received this morning, the second letter. I am intrigued by this story of closed shutters. If Ruth allows it, you keep with you this correspondence and you will give it to me next year when you come here. Did Carola pay for the air conditioner that she bought for my studio? Maybe Kake will speak about it to you.

Sunil

More on the passing of Carola:

4.3.91

Dear François,

Very casually she just walked out of our lives. The face that was so familiar to us can only be seen now with our deepened inner eyes. The presence that was hers can now only be perceived as a warmth and a whisper. The One that she carried in her bosom, the One in whom she lived constantly became a single identity, the cherished goal of her life.

She had a mother's affection for you. She was always concerned about your progress in sadhana, about your well-being, your happiness. She often told me, "I and François, we travel along parallel paths. It is good to love someone with whom I can talk and compare notes." It looks as if for ages you were together and I understand what it is to lose such a friend and then, so suddenly. A deep void in your life is inevitable. In moments like this when the pain is overpowering, deep within there is always a stir, an unfolding of layers of our emotional being, seeking, searching powerfully for a light which is not as fragile as a candle. This magic light is always within your reach, you have to turn to Her who is the secret queen and guardian of your life. This is the one and only one way which can bring you the healing warmth. Love Her deeply, intensely and She will take care of you.

I send you my love

*and affection,
Yours Sunil*

Again to François:

10.11.91

Dear François,

You sent for me a beautiful card and a message in which I recognized your affection. I received it with joy and gratitude. On my birthday I missed, this year, Carola's physical presence. It still surprises me why it happened the way it did. About her debts, I acted as much as it was possible for me to do. If it did not succeed there must be a reason. I can do nothing but pray.

She used to supply me with artificial tear drops (Larmes artificielles). This medicine has helped me very much. If you can bring a few bottles when you come I will be much obliged to you. You can, also, bring a few blank cassettes, a few C60 a few C-90. My master cassettes are getting spoilt.

Sunil

A friend writes about a radio program in the US which he thinks might air Sunil's music. Sunil's reply can only be imagined, since we don't have a copy of his letter, but his feelings are made clear in the entry which follows this letter:

23.3.91

My dear Sunil-da,

I have just written to "Hearts of Space" in California where public radio stations' broadcasts of 'space-music' originate. I have proposed that I could record a couple or more of your compositions for these to broadcast. I have Savitri, Bk 6, C.1, in mind, especially. This 'Hearts of Space' music is broadcast throughout the U.S.A. every Saturday evening from 10 p.m. to 11 p.m., in their respective time zones, by public radio diffusion stations.

If you have anything to say about my writing to them, please do let me know. In any case, I shall be keeping you posted of whether developments occur.

I would like to thank you once again for the music that has been my oxygen for over 20 years.

Please accept my love and regards.

Yours, as ever, Arvind

Steve says Stephen Hill, the producer of Hearts of Space had actually played some of Sunil's New Year music on his radio program in the early 1970s:

He played some New Year Music...I don't know which or how many times as he never gave me any feedback after that. He said he could not play the Savitri music to a general audience because of the Mother's voice. He was in fact interested in distributing the music, but after listening to quite a bit of it, he said the numbers would be small. He said it would be for those who want 'the real thing'.

Mr. Hill had written a letter to Sunil after meeting someone from the Ashram who told him that the music he had heard was being composed by Sunil. He introduced himself in his letter as the producer of a radio show which made Sunil nervous because of his aversion to publicizing his music. Sunil hesitated to write back for some time and in the end ended up not answering him, but gave the letter to Steve who visited Stephen Hill in San Francisco in the early 80s.

Sunil tells Gambelon about his disappointment that his singer Beatrice is not coming:

1.7.91

My dear Gambelon,

I checked up my tapes. If you have not purchased new

tapes for me, then please do not buy them this year. What I have is enough for my musics.

Beatrice was expected to come here in the middle of July, but she has cancelled her visit. I do not know the reasons. I feel a little disappointed.

How are you doing? Please give my regards to Me. Tardily.

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

A request from the U.S. to use Sunil's music:

23.7.91

Dear Sunil,

We brought slides (of flowers) to show—it was a set we had shown in the playground (and in Auroville) with a running commentary prepared by Carlos weaving the significances, Mother and Sri Aurobindo's writings together. In the background we used your music of New Year 1972. When we showed it to the AUM group and elsewhere we were encouraged to make a video so that more people could see and learn.

We started to plan the audio in New York with the help of a disciple. It became evident that to have suitable background music it was necessary to remove the Mother's reading in English and French as well as loop the part at the end. It was edited very well.

However, I immediately felt I must let you know and even dreamt of you and this question.

Would you allow this to be done? We should begin the work early in September — after the tour and before we return.

What do you feel? Before making any decision I would like your frank opinion and advice.

People here say it would be very useful (for those turned or opening to the Mother and Sri Aurobindo). Or maybe you would like it to be a simple 'educational' project with no idea

of profit financially speaking. (Here everything is valued! i.e. evaluated in dollars!)

Richard Pearson

Sunil's response:

17.8.91

It is good that you have asked for my opinion regarding the 72 New Year Music being used for the video tape. I am sorry to tell you that I do not like the idea. The music was made for a different purpose. It should be heard with eyes closed. The idea of commercializing is repugnant to me.

Sunil

Sunil writes to Gambelon about making replacement tapes for Sunil's Master tapes:

20.8.91

My dear Gambelon,

I came to receive one big tape. The small one was not brought to me. Someone came and left the tape in our working room. So, I do not know who brought it.

The old musics should be recopied. However, the present workers I have, they are not so keen to work. When Steve comes I will propose to him this work. But he will be busy with the new equipments (for recording, computers, etc.) and he will be free only after January or the middle of February when this year's Savitri will be completed. I have enough tapes to start the work. You need not buy any more tapes. If you want to give me cassettes you can do so, because my master cassettes are getting old and the mechanism inside is failing.

How are you? My health is all right now. I am composing the new Savitri and when Steve comes in September I will start recording.

Sending my affectionate thoughts to you,

Yours, Sunil

To Sunil's friend Gérard in France on several topics, but perhaps most poignantly Mother's reaction to the last Sunil composition She heard:

1991

Dear Gérard,

When you used to come and I used to receive you in my small room there was a palm sapling just outside the eastern door. It was, then, about 5 feet high. Now it has grown taller than our building. The crowns of leaves at the top glisten and change their hues with the changing sunlight.

The long trunk, still upright, measures by its internodes all these years, very significant in my life. All these hours have gone by and we two have lived our lives wrapped up in ourselves and in our work. But, still, the tenderness that I felt for you remains as warm as ever. Here we have enjoyed the few months of coolness and now we are preparing ourselves for the approaching dog days, hot and humid. This is also the time when the 'Service' trees blossom — a riot of gold-yellow on a canvas of emerald green leaves. Absorbed in their happy ways they live and they toss their flowers on the courtyard or even on the roads. A mild fragrance when I pass by makes me nostalgic.

I had a beautiful "Service" tree next to my bed in our house here. I was learning French and I took some flowers from this tree, gave them to the Mother and told her 'ce sont les fleurs de notre jardin'. I got stuck in the middle and fumbled. She helped me to finish the phrase. This is, also, the time when I start taking more seriously my compositions for the next Savitri. That will be Book 7, Canto 6 & 7, the end of Book 7. This is a long way from Book 2, Canto 5 which was the last one She heard. She was very tired then, and She just said one word, "wonderful".

The present political situation here in India is appalling. But the hope is irrepressible; everyone wants to have a happy

home. Let us watch and see what happens after the polls.

Now tell me something about you. How is everything after your thesis was accepted and published. How is Gabriel? Do you have any news of Daniel? What do you intend to do during the holidays? Do you still continue the course of rock climbing in Fontainebleau? What about Corsica?

I think the climate in Paris is very refreshing. Chhobi sends you her love. I, too.

Affectionately yours, Sunil

To his guitarist Michel in Germany:

August 1991

Dear Michel,

I was very happy to read your letter after a long time. It is nice to know that you are doing well and the new developments in Europe have created more possibilities for your work. I did a few recordings of the new Savitri during the last fifteen days or so. Steve does the recordings. He has gone now to the U.S. to see his father and when he is back in September we will resume further recordings of Book VII Canto 6 & 7.

There were days when you lived very close to me and to my work; and I consider that your presence here all those years, near me was significant. With change of years things are no more as they were before. We are both working along parallel paths to reach the same end. But the affinity between us survives. Very often you are in my thoughts.

May Her Light continue to shine on your path!

Sending you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours Sunil

Again to Michel:

November 1991

Dear Michel,

I thank you for your letter which revived many nostalgic

memories and made me happy. I thank you for sending me the book. It is very well done. I know you can do these works very well.

I am, at present, composing the New Year Music 1992. It is almost ready and very soon we will start the recordings. I have, already, recorded the Savitri musics. The one picture which remains will be recorded in January, and, also, the editing work.

I will be, certainly, very happy to see you if you come here for a visit.

May the Mother help you in the work you are doing for Her!

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

And:

Dear Michel,

Rich and happy were those days when we used to work together. Your letters, so close and gentle, brought back to me the memories of those hours. I have always considered my musicians as one of my family and I am grateful to them that their fervor has given a glow to my music for which I feel always grateful to them. I am glad to hear that your work is also progressing steadily and gathering a momentum which in future will help you to move faster. The place you have chosen is very beautiful and the constructions you do add to its charm. May you receive from Her all the help that you need!

Victor had persevered with me for many, many long years. I would be personally happy if he still worked in our department. But as he has now other interests, his family and his research projects in the Physical education department, he just slipped out and is now beyond my reach. When he worked, the matter of recording tapes was in his hands. Now I see him on rare occasions. You may write directly to Victor if he could make copies for you on your tapes. I do not know where these

tapes are sitting. He will certainly know.

It has not rained much in Pondy. We are looking for a good shower but the empty clouds drift over us.

Thanking you again, dear Michel, and sending much love,

Yours Sunil

From New Caledonia:

12.12.91

Very dear Sunil,

I would like to add an expression of my gratitude for the gift that you poured on us through the sovereign harmony of your music. We can never say enough the immense help that this music brings to those who walk the path traced by Sri Aurobindo and Mother. It is so true for me that I could not imagine my sadhana without it.

Your music is like a breath of the soul, a key which forces the door of the psychic being, the language of the heart which initiates us into a vertigo of Love. There is in your music a vibration of eternity, a perception of divine infinities which translates itself in us by the poignant nostalgia of the Vast and a feeling of a lost paradise to reconquer and of the house of the soul. Like the Vedic seers, you are a seer, Sunil, a rishi, a magician of the Word and your work is a Veda in which a 4,000-year-old hymn opens in us the door of the Ineffable and opens the royal way to Immortality.

What I expressed here of my admiration seems to me at the same time weak and pompous. But it is my heart which dictates it and it is sincere even if it's not perfect.

I would also like to tell you all the joy I had seeing you again last January. After so many years it was the occasion for me of a strong emotion. I know as a fact that to have met you and known you in my present existence is a privilege and a Grace of the Divine Mother and I measure how important this is on the way to Realization.

Very dear Sunil, I express to you again all my admiration, my deep gratitude and my love. Under the Gaze and the Protection of Douce Mère, Michel

Sunil, in a letter to his Boston friend, makes a humorous reference to problems with Customs:

February 1992

Dear Mr. Finn,

I am surprised that you did not receive the year's music which I mailed to you a long time ago. It was a registered post.

I received the packet of tapes alright, but there were 9 cassettes. The Customs official who opened it may have taken one and had the generosity to let the rest of the tapes pass without imposing any duty. Thank you very much Mr. Finn for continuing to help me all the time.

I am working now and hope to finish the Savitri Book Seven Canto 6 & 7 by the end of this month. I will send you both the musics.

I send to you and your friends my very best wishes for a New Year. May Her Grace continue to abide with you.

Affectionately, Yours Sunil

Sunil thanks Gambelon for his untiring support:

16.6.92

Dear Gambelon,

At this end everything is all right, but at your end there is something wrong, the letters addressed to you sit on desks of some disinterested old people. My letter should have reached your hands at least some 20 days ago. I sent a list of spare parts which we need for our Revox machines. As such, I advised you not to buy 2 cassettophones for me. I will easily manage the recordings when one which François has already bought arrives. Thank you for your untiring enthusiasm to help me

in my work. Indeed the Mother sent you to support the work that She entrusted to be done through me.

I have not heard anything from Beatrice. Someone told me that she is married now and I doubt whether she will come here for a visit. Steve is going to U.S. on the 27th of this month and he will be back on the 24th of July. If I am ready we can do some recordings in August. A few days ago I wrote to François and I was prudent. I sent to him a complete list of spare parts we will need. I asked him not to buy the second recorder as we will need money for the spare parts of Revox. And, also, I believe one recorder will be enough. The sudden income of money has given Steve some extravagant ideas.

I am in good health and am working with the composition of my next Savitri. It is rather hot now here but we have grown used to it. I would like you to come once a year to visit the Ashram.

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

Mrinalini Sarabhai, a famous dancer in Gujarat, wrote to Sunil asking him to compose, though perhaps she meant 'record on tapes', music for Savitri for her to use in her dance:

29.6.92

Dear Sri Sunilda Bhattacharya,

I was so happy to meet Shri Parthasarathy again especially as I have been requested to do a piece for the next year's centenary of Sri Aurobindo's stay in Baroda. Instead of doing the whole of Savitri which we had attempted once, Sri Parthasarathy suggested the triple soul-forces in Canto four where we can have four main women dancers.

It would be most appropriate and gratifying if you could compose the music for it.

The first is the Mother of the seven sorrows, 'O Savitri I am thy secret soul. To share the suffering of the world I came.' The second is 'armed with a trident and thunderbolt who

topples down the thrones of tyrant kings whose ear is leaned to the cry of the oppressed She is Durga, Lakshmi, and Kali.' The third is 'the Mother in clear and crystal light, Love, Madonna of Light' — and Savitri herself.

Could you please let me know if this is possible and whether you will require a spool or tapes or anything else to be sent from here?

*With deep regards,
Sincerely, Mrinalini Sarabhai*

Sunil's answer to Mrinalini stressed, as he had to others, that he would like the Mother's reading of Savitri to be used together with the music:

10.7.92

Dear Mrinalini,

The passage you have chosen are all from Savitri, Book seven, canto four. I have already made musics for these passages and many more. I am sending you a cassette with these musics and a cyclostyled text of the passages read by the Mother. I will be happy if you could make a dance with the words read by Her. When you make a final selection write to me giving precise details I will get the musics recorded on a reel tape and send it to you. My recording technician is now abroad and he is likely to come back after a fortnight or so.

Just now I am very busy with my next Savitri musics, Book eight, canto three. I will get a part of it recorded in August-September.

Waiting to hear from you again, and sending you my affectionate thoughts,

*Yours,
Sunilda
Sunil Bhattacharya*

Mrinalini writes back somewhat unsure about using the Mother's recitations:

5.8.92

Respected Sunilda,

The music is as always beautiful. I am not sure about Her voice. Anyway, let me hear it many times and let it evolve within me.

Then we can decide on the recording.

My affectionate greetings —

Mrinalini

Gambelon writes about hearing of the passing of Nirod who at this time was still very much alive:

Dear Sunil,

Recently I have learned about the death of Nirod and Dyuman; the ancient disciples disappear little by little. The consolation is that your music will remain to help those who in the future will be concerned with this path.... Make us beautiful music for the soul.

Gambelon

Sunil answers:

1992

Dear Gambelon,

After a very long time it was nice to receive a letter from you. Indeed, I received news of you from François's letters, but I missed something which comes to me from your brief and precise style with which you have been associated for long, long years gone by. I thank you for all you do to encourage me in my work.

You are misinformed. Dyuman passed away. However, Nirod is all right. He had his prostate operated. He had some problems after the surgery, but he is active again. He wrote to me that he has a lot of work to do. He has his Guru's blessings and protection.

I have to do seven passages of music for Savitri. I could complete only three of them. I will handle the four others in January-February. Just now I am composing the New Year Music 93. I have a glimpse, but it will take a while to set it in form of musical ideas.

It has not still rained much. The Pondy monsoon from the east has not yet arrived. But it is not too warm now.

I hope you will come for a brief visit in the winter here. It is too cold for you to stay in Paris in January.

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

In December Sunil writes again:

December 1992

My dear Gambelon,

Your letter is always welcome as it brings to me an affection that has endured for many, many long years. It is true that at times I miss your presence here. I am sorry to hear that you have still problems with your prostate gland. It is the bane of old age.

I have not, still, finished my N.Y. Music. Perhaps it will take another four or five days to make it ready. Do you know that I am 72 years old now? Quite a handful if you remember that there are at least 365 days in a year.

I received from Beatrice three cards from different places. The last one is from Milano. In it there is also her husband's signature. A friend of hers told me that she will certainly come this year in July.

My Savitri music is incomplete. I will take up this work in January.

This year there was a good rainfall in Pondy. I believe we have received more than our quota i.e. more than 100 centimeters of rainfall in a year.

One rainy morning you were walking down the road with your dog and you said to me 'Rien n'arrête un parisien.'

[Nothing stops a Parisian.] That is exactly like Gambelon. You have outlasted many people who thought that Gambelon's health is fragile because he has only one lung. I always told you that you will walk for many, many days before your destiny overtakes you.

*Wishing you good health and happy days,
Yours Sunil*

From François in Paris:

22.11.92

Dear Sunil,

And then we owe you these. For so much beauty and so much love given in this way what we give is less than nothing....

François

Sunil answers:

Dear François, Dear Jamie,

I would never address Her as 'Douce Mère' which was customary those days. I always said 'Mère' and when I wrote to Her I would address Her as 'Petite Mère.'

So, I felt happy when you wrote to me as 'petits amis'. You are, indeed, so. You are young and very close and dear to me.

With much love, Sunil

Cliff has moved back to the Catskill Mountain area of New York in the US:

December 1992

Dear Cliff,

It is comforting, even, to read the description of the landscape which surrounds your house. To be able to live in such a place is a pleasure. You should not allow the magic to disappear after you have lived there for sometime. We

should remain sensible always to the miracles of a marvellous nature. I use to spend my vacations in my village. There were orchards and orchards round our house. The huge vibration they created in me, even now, circles round and round me. Years have gone by, still, the memory of those peaceful days are fresh or, I may even say, that it has expanded in my mind. Over there in peace, I am sure that it will be easier for you to concentrate upon your writing with a little more purpose. You do have a knack in writing short stories.

I received all the things you sent to me, your cassettes, the cheque, cloves. The last gift which you sent to me is the pen with refills. It arrived just in time when I needed it most. I am, indeed, very grateful to you for your thoughtfulness.

Here the S-W monsoon was not very gracious to Pondy, the rainfall was meager. However, the N-E monsoon has brought us rains. It is much cooler now. But, still, my New Year Music has not taken a clear shape. I have to hurry otherwise Steve will become impatient.

How is Akiko? Give her my love. I thank you again, and send you my affection which brings you always close to my heart.

*Chhobi sends her love and greetings to Akiko and you,
Yours, Sunil*

Sunil writes to Gérard, thanking him for his help and talks of the many changes in the Ashram and of himself turning 72:

1992

My dear Gérard,

Long ago I received your letter and soon after that I received the money you sent for me. It is so nice of you to remember and take so much trouble to send this financial help to me year after year. This money I received was a great help to me which I perceived eventually. In the Ashram there were two important deaths recently. Champaklal passed away. He was in Gujarat. A few days ago Dyuman passed away. He was

the managing trustee of the Ashram. Now they need to fill the vacancy, which is not pressing. They can wait one year to chose another trustee.

I have been working with my composition work for the new Savitri music "The Death in the Forest." Maybe in another fortnight or so I will start recording of a few musics for the Savitri. However, these days I take it easy.

I understand the difficulties you face in continuing your research in a world where values are warped. May Her Grace abide with you and accord the help you need.

Where did you go to pass your vacation? The mountains? We did not have much rain this year in Pondy. The days are pretty hot. We will feel happy if we get some good showers in October-November.

So many years have passed by and I have not seen you. But, both of us are moving towards something that we aspire and love. May Her calm be yours!

This November I will be 72. Will it be a significant year for me?

I send you two blessings packets from the Mother's room, one for you and one for Gabriel.

*I send you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

Sunil writes about the ongoing recording work for Savitri and repeats his thanks for the help Gambelon has provided over the years:

Dear Gambelon,

Here things are moving very slowly with my Savitri music. The live recordings are over but the mixing of eight different channels of accompaniments is a very demanding job. If it is well done the music becomes rich. The computer's help is indispensable for this sort of work. I think it will take another 15 days or so to complete the work. Steve says that he is in contact with all digital developments. This method of

premixing the recordings is still in an experimental stage. He prefers to wait and see. In July or August he will go to U.S. and then he can gather more information on the subject.

I think buying another recorder this year is not needed. We have spare parts now and the Technic recorder can still give us service for a long time. If it fails we have still three recorders. We may need some spare parts for Revox. We have four Revox machines now, and an adequate supply of spare parts will help us maintain them in good shape.

I never asked Carola to help me financially. She did because she felt an inner need to do so. I accepted because I felt that she felt happy to be of some assistance to me. When I need money I just communicate it to the Mother, and if She wills the money comes to me. In 1968 when I was badly in need of so many things it was a miracle that you came and the amount of help that you have given me for such an extensive period of time is an experience, a joy for me which I never forget. I have no words to thank you enough.

How are you now? I am busy and in good health.

I send you my affectionate thoughts,

Yours Sunil

Sunil writes about the difficulty of working with the lines from Savitri Book 9, Canto 1:

11.3.94

Dear Cliff,

That I did not write to you for a long time is not so important; what is important is that I always wanted to write to you. Your last letter was very nice. The pictures of you sitting alone in a warm room when the outside temperature was hovering around 0° C appealed to me. I was, alas, very happy to hear that you are not sitting idly and have been able to achieve much during the last year. I wish you pass this exam well. I think Akiko is again back. Two is always better than a solitary life unless you are looking for a Nirguna Brahman.

I am busy with Savitri. I wanted to start recording much earlier but Patrick was sick. He had jaundice. He is much better now. We are now busy with the 4th picture. The readings are so difficult that I am obliged to spend much more time on each music.

Is it possible for you to send refills for the Parker pen you gave me? You said that it will be easy for you to find it as it is the same size as your pen. I and Chhobi send you love. How is Akiko? Give her our love,

Yours, Sunil

When he finishes with the Savitri music, Sunil writes:

June 7, 1994

Dear Cliff,

Your refill came just in time. Two days after I received it, the old one did not write anymore. This letter I am writing with your new refill. If you send me one more, then I would prefer to have the black ink. On the 5th of June, evening, I finished the new Savitri. It will take a few days' time to start recording it on to cassettes. I will send you one, of course. There were a lot of difficulties this year; the machines did occasionally trouble, and Patrick was sick. Today is the 7th and I have at last found myself playing on my organ truly as I like. I enjoy playing when there are no obligations, no pressure to do something. It is very hot here now, but it is nothing if it is compared with what the people in Rajasthan, Delhi, etc. are going through. In Rajasthan the temp. is as high as 50°C!

Even on such hot days when I wake up in the morning I feel a strange gladness in my heart. Perhaps when you are old the morning always bring tidings that bring joy to your heart.

How did you fare in your exams? How is Akiko?

I am always happy to receive letters from you. Do write to me when you can. I send to you and Akiko my love, and Chhobi, too.

Affectionately yours, Sunil

Sunil describes the meaning that the Savitri music has for him at this stage of his life:

1994

Dear François,

I feel I have not written you since a long time. I have, also, a feeling that you are expecting one. These days I have become lazy when it comes to writing letters. Curious thing is that I am always in contact with you. When you send me a card, a letter or some more material things I always thank you but I know that that is not enough. I have to acknowledge in writing.

Hot days now, and I have already started thinking, listening to the tones which lie behind the beautiful words of next year's Savitri. I am grateful to the Mother that She gave me this work which has become now the prop and the pivot of my living days. Thank you for the money that you sent to me. Gauri is still in the nursing home and steadily improving.

Just now when I write these words I feel a strange quietness around me; within it I send you much, much love.

Yours Sunil

Sunil on the 1995 New Year Music and on the fact that Chhobi had stopped typing Sunil's letters for him:

December 17, 1994

Dear Cliff,

You have a mind which observes, puts together things, interprets them and perceives the right conclusion. You are the only person who noticed that I do not send typewritten letters any more and what is surprising is that you have known that for some reason or other Chhobi cannot use her typewriter. As a matter of fact she lost her vision and could read only one inch long letters. But, however, by Her grace she has made

rapid strides and she can now type fairly well. But, as yet I do not ask her to type my letters.

I received so many things from you and so many interesting letters that I feel rather embarrassed that I did not write to you a single letter. I apologize, and also, I must tell that I knew you will understand my feelings because you are so close to me.

I am now doing the recording of the New Year Music and am rather busy. However, I feel less tension this year and somehow I do not, exactly, care what comes out of my efforts.

It is our winter now. The days are pleasant and it feels quite comfortable at night when I go to bed. I know, soon, this will come to its end. The Pondy summers will start. We had plenty of rain this year. We may have some more in the coming days. I will write to you a longer letter after I finish the music.

*I send my love to you, and to Akiko,
Yours Sunil*

At the end of December Sunil's friend Carlo passed away. Sunil writes to Carlo's wife Uschi:

December 1994

Dear Uschi,

An extremely shocking news — this sudden demise of our dear Carlo. I loved him. He was a man, subtle, extremely intelligent, and mighty fond of jokes. He was a working disciple of Sri Aurobindo. I understand your pain.

He was very close to me and I shared with him many delightful moments, moments that I always cherish and remember.

Both you and Carlo did so much for me!

Please believe that I am one with you when you and his dear ones mourn for him.

Do accept my humble condolence.

May Their Presence protect him!

With much love,

*Sending you my affectionate thoughts,
Yours Sunil*

P.S. when you come please bring 2 small bottles of an eye drop called 'Larmes artificielles'. It has helped me very much. Thanks in anticipation.

Sunil's health problems had grown to include dizziness and occasional falls:

October 29, 1995

Dear Sunil,

The birthday card you sent and postcard with a picture of 'Vital Attachment For The Divine' mean a lot to me, thank you. At the bottom of the card you wrote, 'May you remain, always, turned to Her Love,' and this touched me and has become a sort of mantra to me.

I was very happy to see Steve here. He told me you have had some problems with feeling dizzy and that you had actually fallen down a couple of times. I was very sorry to hear this. Are you feeling any better now? You know that my thoughts and my prayers are always with you.

You must know that there is nothing more precious to me than a letter from Sunil Bhattacharya, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, Pondicherry 605002 INDIA, so don't hesitate to write and I'll also try to do a better job of keeping in touch.

*Give our love to Chhobi,
Cliff*

Victor said of this time:

Human type of difficulties he took very well in his stride. I mean, rarely he spoke... when things were not working out he would just shut and then go. And then the next day he'd start fresh again. And you never had this sense of time is running out, never. I mean with him it was so

easy. He used to go through time as if there was a lot of time still and yet he finished everything perfectly in the right place. That is, mainly Savitri, I would say. He finished Book ten, canto four and then he fell ill and here, you see, I think people, like... they don't work. He was bedridden at the most four months or six months, like that and then he left. It's not that he became an old man and all that. He was always young until he couldn't work. His limbs were not working, his hands were not working. Everything, there was difficulty. You could see he was playing with great difficulty, but he never expressed that. Never. But somewhere I felt, also, that he was having problems. We used to help him up to his room upstairs. So the routine had set in."

Sunil mentions working on what would be his last completed Savitri music. After this he also composed and recorded the 1998 New Year music which is the last piece of the New Year music we have from him:

1997

Dear François,

Your letter along with the "étiquette gourmande" arrived. I did not expect them to come so soon. Kake, also, gave me the money that you left in his care. How can I thank you enough? I am also glad to know that you have sent a packet to Nirod with cheese and other little things which I am sure he will appreciate very much. It will be a surprise for him because I have told nothing to him, unless, of course, you have written to him directly. I am glad to know that you find Nirod's book on the Mother useful. I am, also, glad that Jeanne-Yvonne liked the present I sent for her.

I have still not started my recordings of Savitri. Still stalling. Something or other happens and we have a postponement. Tomorrow Friday we have decided to start. Let us see if we can do it. However, this delay has given me some fresh ideas.

Sunil

After he had begun working on the Savitri music:

8.8.97

Dear Cliff,

Please accept greetings for your happy birthday from me, as well as, Chhobi.

I hope you and Akiko are happy and doing well. I think in another few days my Savitri program will be over, at least for this year. Savitri Book X canto 4 Pic 1 to Pic 10.

Yours Sunil

Sunil had been ill with various complaints over the past several years. Manoj says he suggested Sunil see a doctor but that Sunil “had a sort of distain for doctors”. On what was to be his last birthday a physically ailing Sunil visited Sri Aurobindo’s room and then the Mother’s. Victor Jauhar accompanied him and wrote a moving account of this last darshan:

Monday, the 3rd of November 1997, Sunil-da’s Last Birthday

The body was failing him; but his usual peaceful expression and quiet will to ever move forward, throughout veiled with a psychic glow the gravity of his physical condition.

As in the previous years, he was specially invited to visit Sri Aurobindo’s and the Mother’s room (around 9:00 a.m.), and I was fortunate to accompany him. I drove him by car to the rear gate of the Ashram that was specially opened for him. With my help he laboured up the stairs; Nirod-da and Kumud were both waiting for him. Emotional, loving and still gasping to get back his breath, he caressed Nirod-da’s face with both his hands and exclaimed, “You are my one and only elder brother!” Nirod-da was probably taken somewhat by surprise but seemed moved. Beyond the corridor we met Manoj who wished him happy birthday.

Most affectionately Sunil-da caressed his face and jovially remarked, "Oh! Here is our trustee... the boy is intelligent!" Then on we proceeded, and Nirod-da opened the door to Sri Aurobindo's room.

With reverence and hands clasped he stood facing Sri Aurobindo's majestic couch, while I firmly held his arm with both hands. At times I heard him whimpering softly, but he gathered himself. Then just before leaving, in spite of his painful, injured back, with great will and effort he bowed down and touched his forehead to the ground.

The steep stairs up to Mother's room were a greater ordeal; it was an obvious strain on his heart but he had to make it, and he did. He stepped into Her room with deep and laboured breathing, and Kumud immediately pulled up a stool for him. He was tired and gladly accepted to sit. Then he looked around for a few moments and finally broke down in tears. It pained my heart to see him thus, for never had I seen him broken before nor remotely ever disturbed. While I gently caressed his back, Nirod-da asked him what happened. Looking towards the Mother's reclining bed he said, "So many things, I remember." Kumud showed her concern and asked him which flower he would like to have, and then herself suggested: "Sunil-da, here is Divine Love, take Divine Love." With a brushing movement of his hand he said, "No, no, I don't need all that! I neither want Divine Love nor do I want any love; I have seen much of love." Then he looked at the tray of flowers and himself picked up Divine Grace.

On returning downstairs, the door facing the Samadhi was flung wide open for him and he had a last longing look at the Samadhi. Nirod-da went and brought him a flower.

Back home he was loving, yet brief with his well-wishers waiting for him, then went right up to compose. He placed the Divine Grace flower on the organ, sank into his chair, and thanked me; ...and I took his leave.

That day, I was left with the feeling that it had been his

last pilgrimage, and somewhere he probably knew that.

Dated : 2nd of July 1998

Victor Jauhar

Towards the end of 1997 during the recording of the 1998 New Year Music he became seriously ill with a high fever and weakness and entered the Ashram nursing home. There they discovered an underlying heart problem and gave him diuretics for resulting edema. He was able to return home by year's end and continued working on his music. He entered the nursing home again shortly before the April darshan and stayed for only a few days, but returned again after the darshan and passed away a few days later on April 30, 1998.

Chhobi would make a last entry in the truncated autobiography she had been helping Sunil with and which had only reached the point when Sunil was still a boy and not yet been to the Ashram:

Sunil, the unique Divine composer cum musician sacrificed his body on Thursday the 30th April 1998 at 1 p.m.

Cliff writes to Chhobi:

23.7.98

Dear Chhobi,

I know Sunil's passing was a terrible loss for you as it was for me and I'm sure, also, that you, like me, count yourself among the blessed to have known him.

My thoughts are always with you,

Cliff

Chhobi answers:

10.8.98

Dear Cliff,

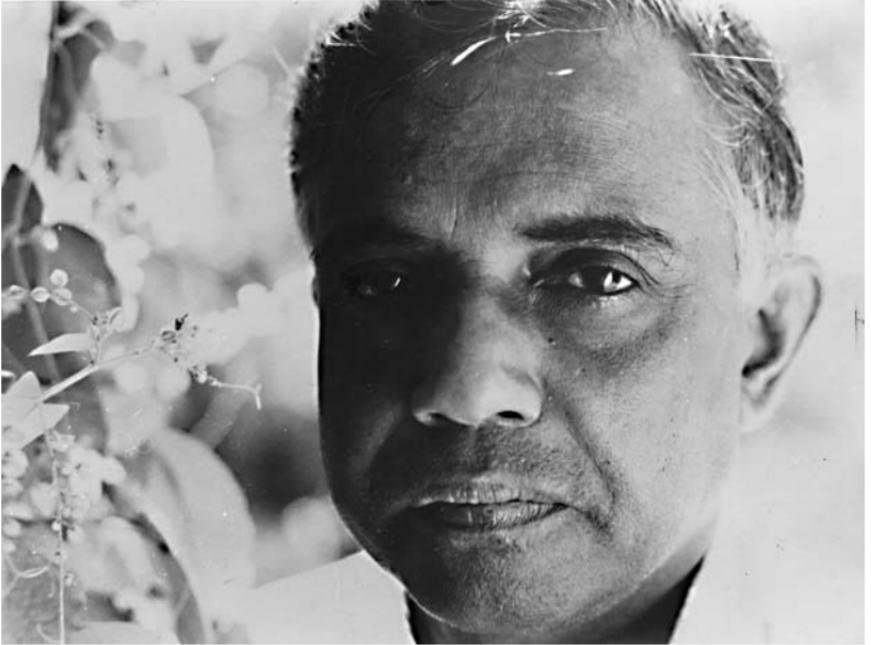
Thank you for your letter, Sunil's photo and for all that you are doing for me.

Cliff, Sunil was a great soul and no doubt we are blessed to have known him. But all the same, I never expected his end to be so soon.

Chhobi

Sunil's family says he was fond of these lines of Rabindranath Tagore:

*On the day of my departure
May I not fail to utter
These my words of gratitude:
All I've seen,
All received,
Are beyond compare!*



Sunil

Photo: Michel Montecrossa, Mirapuri, Italy.
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