

# **Guru Purnima Celebration at Sanskar Bharati, Delhi – A Sacred Confluence of Art, Devotion, and Tradition**



On the auspicious day of 10th July 2025, the Guru Purnima Celebration held at the Kala Sankul premises of Sanskar Bharati, New Delhi, transformed into a vibrant cultural

expression of India's eternal guru-shishya tradition – not just in words, but through the language of dance, music, and soul.

The program began with Nataraja worship and Guru Vandana, infusing the atmosphere with a rare spiritual luminosity. The sacred invocation was not merely a ritual—it became a journey of surrender, discipline, and artistic elevation.

To confine Nataraja merely as the “Lord of Dance” would be to overlook His cosmic magnificence. This deeper essence came alive in the words of Chief Guest, Sh. Murari Sharan Shukla, who eloquently remarked that Nataraja is not a symbol bound to art alone, but the embodiment of motion and universal consciousness itself. His reflection echoed through the hearts of the audience:

“The posture of Nataraja resonates with the movement of the cosmos—it is the rhythmic expression of Shiva's creative power.”

Though Sh. Shukla's address came at the culmination of the event, its philosophical resonance permeated every segment of the evening.

The musical trio that followed offered a melodic glimpse into the richness of Indian ragas. Yagyata Gaba's performance reflected youthful innocence intertwined with musical maturity. Then came Urja Akshara, who rendered a composition in Raga Desh, evoking the musical aroma of the monsoon. Finally, the ensemble presentation by disciples of Sneha Mukherjee – Manya Narang, Ruhi Jaiswal, Lavanya Sinha, and Siddh Jaiswal – stood as a living testimony to the bond between guru and disciple.

Their collective performance glowed not only with technical finesse but with grace, harmony, and discipline. It was an offering, filled with sweetness and reverence, a melody wrapped in devotion.

The sequence of dance performances that followed created a visual symphony for the soul. Nandini's Kathak recital, a tribute to her guru Smt. Shruti Sinha, was a dance of devotion – an artistic pranam. Through the rhythm, expression, and precision of Kathak, she sculpted an unspoken homage to her teacher. The event was anchored gracefully by Garima Rani, whose poised compering added charm to the proceedings.

This celebration was far more than an annual ritual – it emerged as a sacred yajna, where each disciple offered their art in heartfelt tribute to their guru. Every act on stage was not just a performance, but a living sentiment – of respect, surrender, and the continuation of a timeless legacy.

This Guru Purnima will be remembered not only for its artistic brilliance, but because it upheld a profound truth:

That the Guru is the light of life, and Art is the language of that light.

Sanskar Bharati must be lauded for keeping this flame alive – not just on stage, but in the spirit of every participant. In honoring the guru, they honored the very soul of Indian cultural heritage.

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**Three Days of Percussion  
Magic: Kala Chaitanya's  
Tabla-Dholak Workshop in**

# Priyadarshini Vihar

New Delhi, Priyadarshini Vihar –From May 27th to 29th, **Kala Chaitanya Society** organized a grand three-day Tabla and Dholak workshop at the *Priyadarshini Vihar Club*. The workshop was conducted by **Dr. Shrikant Shukla**, an awardee of the Uttar Pradesh Sangeet Natak Akademi and a distinguished expert in Tabla and Dholak. Art enthusiasts from Delhi-NCR and nearby regions participated with great enthusiasm.

The workshop was completely free of cost and open to individuals of all age groups. Participants received intensive training in the fundamentals of Tabla and Dholak, including basic techniques, understanding of rhythmic cycles (taals), hand coordination, and practical aspects of rhythm and tempo.

**Sh. Vishavdeep**, the President of Kala Chaitanya Society and an internationally acclaimed Kathak artist, shared that the objective of this workshop was not only to impart training but also to preserve and pass on vanishing art forms to future generations. He remarked, "Just as ancient languages like Prakrit and Pali faded away due to lack of preservation, many art forms are also nearing extinction. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that cultural conservation does not remain confined to words, but is practiced at a grassroots level".

The Society's Secretary, **Sh. Pradeep Kumar Pathak**, emphasized that the initiative aimed to connect people from all walks of life with music. He believes that engagement with the arts positively influences one's mindset, sensitivity, and social behavior.

The workshop commenced with a ceremonial welcome by **Sh. Ashok Tiwari, Secretary of Sanskar Bharati** – Kala Sankul, who felicitated **Dr. Shrikant Shukla** with a traditional angavastram. The event was graced by several esteemed

personalities, including senior Kathak guru **Sh. Subhash Chandra**, renowned theatre artist and Head of the Theatre Department at Modern School, Delhi, **Sh. Raj Upadhyay**, Secretary of Priyadarshini Vihar Club, **Smt. Shikha Sobti**, and Head of Dance at Mata Gujri School, **Smt. Ruchika Bagga**.

Over the course of three days, the workshop fostered an atmosphere of inspiration and deep emotional engagement. Participants described the experience as invaluable and expressed a keen desire for more such initiatives in the future.

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**Sanskar Bharti Kala Sankul  
Once Again became the Witness  
of a Mesmerizing Journey of  
Art, Devotion, and Dialogue**



The monthly symposium began with a heartfelt tribute to the innocent civilians martyred in the recent terrorist attack in Pahalgam. All present members observed two minutes of silence, expressing their emotions in an unspeakable way. The entire atmosphere seemed to be immersed in a silent prayer.

On the auspicious occasion of the lighting of the lamp, all distinguished guests performed the lamp lighting ceremony, illuminating the stage.

Following this, a melodious stream of music began. The soulful singing by Mr. Vijay Rawal and Mr. Veer Mani Trivedi touched the hearts of everyone present. Their mastery of voice filled the atmosphere with unseen compassion and hope.

The main attraction of the symposium was the analytical discussion on the theatrical presentation '**Arey Gadbadī Ho Gayī**', inspired by the Sanskrit play '**Bhagavadjukkam**' by Bodhayan, directed by Raj Upadhyay, and performed by Navras Group.

In this discussion, the depth of the story, authenticity of the acting, the liveliness of the stage arrangement, and the artistic features of the entire presentation were examined in detail. Critics appreciated the dedication and effort of the Navras Group artists, stating that the presentation not only entertained but also sparked deep contemplation.

The Navras Group artists were deeply moved after hearing such a heartfelt and in-depth review of their performance. They expressed that such analytical discussions inspired them to further deepen their theatrical practice. They also expressed their gratitude to Sanskar Bharti for providing such a valuable platform.

To elevate the dignity of the event, the presence of several distinguished guests was noteworthy. Dr. Prashant Upadhyay, Delhi Province Minister, Senior NSD theater artist Mr. Pradeep Mohanty, Mrs. Shashi Prabha Tiwari, educationist Dr. Ruchika,

and Mr. Manish Jha honored the event with their esteemed presence.

The success of the program was greatly aided by the contributions of Delhi Province's stage art coordinator Mr. Raj Upadhyay, senior theater artist Shyam Kumar, Shraboni Saha, Garima Rani, Vishwadeep, Sneha Mukherjee, Raman Kumar, Saurav Tripathi, Pradeep Pathak, Mrityunjay, Brijesh, Shivam, Sushank, and Sakshi.

The event was skillfully and warmly conducted by Bharti Dag, and Mrs. Shruti Sinha concluded the art-filled evening with a heartfelt vote of thanks.

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## Cultural Extravaganza Marks Hindu New Year at Kala Sankul



New Delhi, March 30, 2025- The central office of Sanskar Bharati, 'Kala Sankul,' witnessed a grand celebration on the auspicious occasion of the Hindu New Year with its Monthly Art

Symposium. The event showcased an exquisite array of Indian cultural performances, leaving the audience spellbound.

The program commenced with the ceremonial lighting of the lamp, followed by a mesmerizing Kathak performance by the Alaknanda Cultural Group, which highlighted the grandeur of the Indian classical dance tradition. Subsequently, Kuleshwar Thakur and his group captivated the audience with an enthralling Chhau dance performance, characterized by its unique style and expressive gestures.



Renowned Odissi dancer Kavita Dwivedi, addressing the gathering, emphasized that the Indian New Year is not just a date but a significant representation of cultural identity, natural lifestyle, and deep-rooted traditions.

Vijay Kumar, North Zone Organization Minister of Sanskar Bharati, elaborated on the scientific significance of the Indian New Year, highlighting seasonal transitions, the commencement of new academic sessions, financial year changes, and the overall transformation in nature. He also underscored

India's pioneering role in developing an artistic system of timekeeping, which has influenced the world. Additionally, he detailed the importance of the Indian calendar, lunar dates, and festivals.

The event saw an impressive turnout of artists, culture enthusiasts, and distinguished guests. Among the notable attendees were senior playwright J.P. Singh, theater artist Rohit Tripathi, Chandrakanta Tripathi, dancer Ritu Shree, art critic Shashi Prabha Tiwari, NSD Secretary Pradeep Mohanty, and Kathak dancer Raksha Singh DeWitt, along with several other prominent figures.

Promoting environmental conservation, Mr. Joginder distributed flower seeds and Tulsi saplings, urging attendees to plant them as a symbolic gesture for the New Year and contribute to ecological preservation.

The success of the program was attributed to the collective efforts of Delhi Province Stage Art Coordinator Raj Upadhyay, senior theater artists Shyam Kumar, Shraboni Saha, Garima, Sneha Mukherjee, Raman Kumar, Vishwadeep, Pradeep Pathak, Mrityunjay, Brijesh, Shivam, Sushank, Nandini, Kathak dancer Sakshi Sharma, Priyanka, and Sakshi. The event was expertly hosted by Bharti Dag, while symposium coordinator Shruti Sinha delivered the vote of thanks.

Sanskar Bharati's 'Kala Sankul' continues to host such events regularly, ensuring the preservation and promotion of Indian art, culture, and traditions.

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# Celebrating Art and Culture: Highlights from the Monthly Art Symposium at 'Kala Sankul'



The monthly art symposium organized by Sanskar Bharati at its central office, 'Kala Sankul,' on Sunday, December 29, 2024, was a resounding success. This cultural gathering celebrated the diverse aspects of Indian art and culture, making it a perfect blend of education.

The symposium's highlight was the keynote address by the esteemed art critic and cultural activist, Shri Arvind Ojha Ji. His insightful discourse on "*Indian Artistic Traditions and Contemporary Art Trends*" captivated the audience. Shri Ojha eloquently explained how all art forms are interconnected and serve as powerful carriers of knowledge. He emphasized that art enhances the quality of life, restores balance during times of disruption, and brings a sense of purpose and justification to human existence. He also pointed out that

conveying knowledge through art has always been an effective method of reaching society. Shri Ojha's remark that beauty and morality have always been closely aligned in our traditions struck a deep chord with the attendees.

Adding to the charm of the event were mesmerizing stage performances. Yajyata Gaba Ji's group delivered a soul-stirring sitar recital, while Niharika Safaya and her troupe presented a vibrant dance ballet. Both performances were met with overwhelming appreciation from the assembled art connoisseurs, leaving an indelible impression.

The event attracted several prominent artists, art teachers, and a large number of art enthusiasts from across Delhi-NCR. The program was seamlessly hosted by Garima Rani, and a heartfelt vote of thanks was delivered by Vishwadeep, acknowledging the efforts of all contributors.

The success of the event was made possible by the collective efforts of numerous dedicated individuals, including Raj Upadhyay, Shyam Kumar, Pradeep Pathak, Raman Kumar, Anchal Kumari, Tarushi, Anjali Kumari, Sakshi Sharma, Saurabh Kumar, Harshit Kumar, Raman Kumar, Brajesh Vishwakarma, and Satyam Kumar. Special recognition was given to the 'Kala Sankul' management team, led by Digvijay Pandey, Mrityunjay Kumar, and Sushank, for their impeccable organization and coordination.

This symposium was not only a celebration of artistic excellence but also an inspiration for artists and cultural enthusiasts alike. By fostering greater awareness and appreciation for the arts, the event reinforced the enduring relevance of India's artistic heritage in contemporary times.

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# Divine Evening of Music and Dance at 'Shakti Mahapith' Kamakshya'



The time was just evening, the place was the courtyard of *Shakti Mahapith Kamakshya*, and the air was filled with the *Shabda Brahma* created by Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick and his team. Pandit Mallick ji, a Padmashree awardee for his contribution to the Darbhanga Gharana of Dhrupad, orchestrated the musical tapestry. The architect of that great moment was Sangeet Natak Akademi, which initiated a festival of Music and Dance titled '*Shakti*', set to resonate across all the *Shaktipiths* of India. This was the inaugural event of this series.

Listening to Dhrupad by Mallick Ji live is a rare artistic experience, and Sangeet Natak Akademi receives heartfelt

gratitude from the audience for curating such a program in Guwahati. Dhrupad, a genre of Indian classical music, is practiced by a select few artists, and public recitals are comparably infrequent. Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick, renowned in this field, is one of the prime representatives of the Darbhanga Gharana. In this concert, he was accompanied by Dr. Samit Kumar Mallick on vocal and Mr. Rishi Shankar Upadhyay on Pakhwaj.



Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick

In this concert, Pandit Mallick performed Aalap and Chautal in Raag Yaman and a Durga Vandana 'Jaya Mangala Sarba Mangal Kar Nihari'. His baritone voice, infused with the ritualistic sensitivity of prayer, transcended the earthly realm, captivating the audience. The melodious utilization of Gauhar Vani and Khandar Vani was evident in his singing. Alongside his gorgeous vocal delivery, the harmonious blend of detailed Aalap, Meed, Gamak, intricate rhythmic patterns, clear pronunciation of Bandish's verses, and other layakari, made his recital an extraordinary auditory experience. His rendition of Durga Vandana paid homage to the *Shaktipith*, his

voice echoing the strength and aesthetic beauty akin to a philosophical interpretation of a forceful waterfall on a hill, retaining its melodious appeal even after it falls on the ground. Pandit Ram Kumar Mallick's performance elevated the recital into a spiritual pilgrimage through resonant melodies.



Another significant performance was *Suknanni Ozapali* (a traditional religious song from Assam with rhythmic body movements resembling dance) and *Deodhani Nritya* by Drona Bhuyan and his ensemble. Drona Bhuyan, a leading artist of *Ozapali* and *Deodhani*, was honoured with the Padmashree by Govt of India. The presentation comprised *Ozapali*, involving singing, and *Deodhani Dance*, with Bhuyan playing the lead role in both performances as a singer and drum player in the dance. The team's performance paid tribute to Shakti through song and dance, resonating with the energetic beats of traditional drums, dynamic movements with war-fighting props, and spirited choreography, crafting a soul-stirring reverence to the Devipeeth, the eternal Shakti.



Two other performances in the evening included the Kathak Dance by Dr. Ruchi Khare and her team and Garva Dance by the Sanskar Group of Bhabnagar.

In closing, as an enthusiast of music and dance, I fervently urge Sangeet Natak Akademi to arrange another enchanting concert featuring Rudra Veena in this sacred Shaktipith.

Photo **UTAPL DATTA**

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?ref=search&v=795010365395664>

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## **Shiva-Shakti: Divine love and**

# power personified on stage



**Ria Gupta** delivering the Bharatanatyam recital titled 'Shiva-Shakti'.

*Shiva, in Hindu philosophy, the dynamic interaction between the feminine and male energy in the cosmos is symbolized by the profound idea of Shakti. It represents the coming together of Shakti, the divine feminine energy that animates the entire creation, and Shiva, the cosmic awareness. The manifestation, maintenance, and disintegration of the universe depend on this union. Shiva Shakti encompasses a multitude of Shakti aspects or expressions, each with distinct attributes. The divine couple Shiva-Shakti, viewed from a metaphysical perspective, represents two fundamental aspects of the One: the feminine principle, which stands for Its Energy, the Force that acts in the manifested world and life itself, and the masculine principle, which represents the enduring aspect of God. Here is where Shakti is.*

It was a personification of divine power on stage as Ria Gupta, disciple of Guru Smt Sindhu Mishra, presented a Bharatanatyam recital titled 'Shiva-Shakti – The Cosmic Union'.



**Guru Sindhu Mishra** explaining the concepts of the Dance

The recital, organised by the cultural society Aayam at Delhi's LTG Auditorium, mesmerised the audience with its harmonious blend of tradition and innovation, technique and artistry.

Ria presented a compelling exploration of Shiva and Parvati, the cosmic pair representing the opposing forces of destruction and creation that form the eternal cycle of the universe. Equally compelling were the creative choreography, unusual choice of poetic texts, and juxtaposition of Carnatic and Hindustani styles of music.

Conceived and choreographed by Guru Smt Sindhu Mishra, the presentation described aspects of Shiva and Parvati through little known verses from the Ramcharitmanas. Ria's talent and training were on full display as she portrayed the contrasting deities with layered precision and emotion.

In her first solo recital, Ria proved herself as an accomplished Bharatanatyam dancer. Her passion and dedication were evident as she created an ambience of divine love and power through her nuanced abhinaya and intricate jatis.

The evening unfolded with a Ganesh Kriti, 'Ananda Narthana Ganapatim Bhaavaye'. Marked by vivacity and depth, the piece described the divine bliss emanating from Ganesha's dance, which accompanies the captivating music of the gandharvas playing the lute, mridangam and veena. The choreography was an energetic blend of rhythmic and expressive movements, executed with ease by Ria.

*Growing up, Parvati—the daughter of Himavan and Mainavati—heard stories about Lord Shiva. In addition to her curiosity about who this Shiva was, Parvati also harbored dreams of marrying him as she had begun to adore him. According to folk lore Parvati did penance for thousands of years to please Lord Shiva and woo him. Finally the Lord was pleased and married Devi Parvati!*

This aspect of the epic tale was enumerated by a Pada Varnam, created especially for this presentation. The poetry, from Baal Kand of Tulsidas' Ramcharitmanas, describes the episode where Parvati is encouraged by Narad Muni to undergo penance

in the forest to prove her love to Shiva and become his consort. Seeing this, Shiva sends the Saptarishi to test Parvati's devotion. Ria explored the narrative with intense expressions and sophisticated rhythmic patterns. Set to Ragam Shahana and Talam Adi, the composition was composed and sung by Shri Nitin Sharma.

The following piece was a Keerthanam – the well known 'Natanam Adinar'. In a vibrant rendition, Ria portrayed the joyful dance of Lord Shiva in the golden halls of Chidambaram, which was so powerful that all eight directions trembled, the head of Adishesha swayed, and drops of Ganga's water scattered all around from his matted hair. Set to Ragam Vasantha, the Shri Gopalakrishna Bharatiyar composition was sung by Shri G Elangovan.

The Padam was another unusual excerpt from Ramcharitmanas. In this, Ria explored an episode from Shiva and Parvati's wedding celebrations, where the people of Himachal, upon seeing Shiva's wedding procession, were shocked to see a terrifying band of ghosts, demons, spirits. Maena, the mother, attempted to convince Parvati into abandoning the wedding, to the extent that she was ready to give up her life for it!

*The tale of Parvati imparts to us the significance of metamorphosis. She endured great penance in order to gain Lord Shiva's favor because of her undying devotion and love. Her path of introspection and personal development highlights the capacity for transformation that exists in all of us. It motivates us to welcome change*



**Ria Gupta**

The evening concluded with a scintillating Hindolam Thillana, composed by Shri Dandayudhapani Pillai and sung by Shri G

Elangovan. The charanam was an invocation to Shiva, the lord of dance, the one whose auspicious feet are cherished by his devotees. It was a fitting end to a powerful performance, which elevated the audience with its richness and depth.

The distinguished orchestra included Shri G Elangovan on Carnatic vocals and flute, Shri Nitin Sharma on Hindustani vocals, Shri Sachin Sharma on the tabla and Dr Ramamurthy Kesavan on the mridangam. Nattuvangam was by Guru Smt Sindhu Mishra.

Ria's mastery of Bharatanatyam techniques as well as nuanced understanding of literature were evident throughout her performance. In her first solo stage appearance, she succeeded in making an impact, with her dedication and dynamism apparent. She presents yet another young artiste flowering under the tutelage of Guru Smt. Mishra.



File Photo of **Guru Sindhu Mishra** as a young Bharatanatyam Danseuse

Guru Smt Mishra distinguished herself as a performer in the

classical milieu under the guidance of eminent Gurus Shri KN Dakshinamoorthy, Shri KJ Govindarajan and Smt Kamalini Dutt. She emerged as a choreographer with a unique and compelling style, and played a vital role in conceiving, organizing and choreographing high-profile events and festivals across the country. The recipient of awards and fellowships from the central and state governments, she is also the founder of the cultural society Aayam.

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I am a big fan of filmmaker Sriram Raghavan and after Andha Dhun the expectations were high. His recent film Merry Christmas did not fail to amuse me. It was a rapturous experience to see his film in theatre. Witty dialogs, on screen flirting, old world charm of Bombay (not Mumbai as he wrote in title roll) and a Hitchcockian drama in a Victorian set up is all I needed for a thorough entertainment. However, there is more to it if you see details and feel the film. The screenplay is doubtlessly taut with twists and turns every 15 minutes; there is God in details. The visuals of Victorian Gothic and Art Deco buildings of Mumbai added a splendour. Particularly for people who like Mumbai, this movie is a treat

because Bombay seeps into it as a character. With an overtone of Christmas, the choice of cityscape cannot be better than Bombay in whole of India.

I never knew Katrina Kaif has so much left in her in terms of acting and histrionics. In Bollywood and regional films of India an actress is outdated after few years being in her peak. She is generally shown and seen as a Diva and an item number. Most of the actresses are out of business before they hit mid-life. So, in that kind of background Katrina has made a comeback and what a comeback it is!! Her charm added to her free willy nature of the character and surprisingly her histrionics later on exhibited the violence and cruelty in that character. Vijay Setupathy made "Non-Acting" his acting style. His witty one liners, awkward dance and subtle expressions made my day. His method acting made it a superb watching experience. And I must mention Sanjay Kapoor, who, in a brief role, was hilarious.

The movie is a dark comedy, a Noir film where two lonely souls with chequered past and shades of grey cross paths on a Christmas night and gets locked forever. You may love or hate the ending but last 15 minutes was extraordinary. And now comes the role of Western Classical Music in creating and maintaining the mood of this film.

I have observed earlier in Andhadhun how beautifully Sriram Raghavan used Beethoven's Symphony no.5 to show the jarring visuals and rapturous moments. Similarly, the background music in "Merry Christmas" was heavily influenced by Western Classical Music. For example, during the gunshot the crescendo of Grieg's Peer Gynt Suite no 1, "In the hall of the Mountain King" superbly helped to muffle the crime. If you hear this classical music piece you will relate how the slow tempo initially is growing to a thundering crescendo eventually within few minutes. For your reference I am pasting the Youtube link below. If you see the film you can relate to what I mean.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4nMUR8Rt2AI>

Similarly, to add class, Maria was playing Habanera from Carmen by Bizet. Listen to the video. Ronnie was constantly saying "Oh she is a classy woman." In India, due to a colonial hangover, anything Western means sophistication and it implies that to enjoy western classical music, Opera particularly one needs good education and sophistication, which is treasured by many. So the Habanera from Carmen is a great choice to exemplify class.

And in the end Vivaldi's Winter played for almost 10 minutes to the perfection. Starting with the Pizzicato which exemplified the sprinkling of doubt in the police officer's mind, it moves on to a rise in tempo and tone, where swiftly the hidden things expose fast climaxed with the exchange of ring between two souls with tormented past. There is anxiety, hope, romance, despair, magic realism and baffle in that last 5 minutes superbly portrayed by Vivaldi's Winter. Nowhere in Bollywood I expected Vivaldi's Winter to personify the swift changes of human behaviour amidst the movie characters. Sriram Raghavan deserves a special mention for this intelligent use of western classical music to evoke and maintain feelings in a film.

Earlier I have observed use of Western Classical Music pieces in a Satyajit Ray movie or Shyam Benegal movie. For example, Gluck's Melodie from Orpheus and Euridicce was used in "Jana Aranya" by Ray and he also borrowed Mozart's Symphony no 25 in Feluda theme in "Joy baba Felunath" or Mozart Symphony "Jupiter" and Requiem mass in songs of "Hirak Rajar Desh e". Kamaleswar Mukherjee used Beethoven Symphony 5 first movement in his "Meghe dhaka tara". Shyam Benegal films like Kalyug, Trikal or Mammo used music of Beethoven and Mozart. However, in Bollywood use of Western classical music motifs are few and far. In a refreshing take, Sriram Raghavan has used Vivaldi, Grieg and Bizet in "Merry Christmas" to reflect and set the mood.

Overall, the movie "Merry Christmas" brings a point that "Content is King" in an industry flooded with Jawaans, Pathaans and Animal. Merry Christmas is a thoroughly entertaining movie where you have to sit on the edge not to miss the details. Particularly the edgy ending was something a movie goer will remember for a long, long time. In fact, Merry Christmas opens a new year of pure filmmaking and story telling in Bollywood

\_\_\_\_\_Biswa Prasun Chatterji.

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**Star Fades, Brilliance Shines  
On**



The departure of Ustad Rashid Khan leaves a void in the realm of Indian classical music, casting a shadow of sorrow and emptiness that will endure for a considerable time. Rashid Khan, synonymous with the ethereal world of 'Anya Ek Bhuban,' crafted by his resonant and masculine voice, embarked on an enchanting musical journey, seamlessly navigating from one note to another—a phenomenon known in the musical lexicon.

The mere mention of Rashid Khan conjures up a nostalgic image. Thirty-two years ago, on a chilly January evening, I left Tollyganj's studio and found solace on a roadside tea shop

bench, accompanied by cinematographer Kamal Nayak and film director Arun Guhathakurta. At the other end of the bench, a young man joined us. Kamal Nayak inquired, 'Have you heard of Rashid Khan?' Back then, he wasn't yet 'Ustad Rashid Khan,' but his fame was burgeoning. Though I had encountered his name in Desh magazine's music reviews, I did not get an opportunity to experience his highly lauded singing. We struck up a conversation, and over a cup of tea, we acquainted ourselves. Politeness adorned his demeanour, and after a brief encounter, we each resumed our places. Later, I discovered that he studied music at the Music Research Academy, residing with the renowned Ustad Nisar Hussain Khan across the street.

Months after our meeting, Rashid Khan's vocal performance in an audio cassette, featuring Raag Bageshri and Desh, hit the shelves. In response to our encounter, I purchased the cassette—a delightful experience. His voice, youthful, humble, and enchanting, resonated with a subtle echo of Pandit Bhimsen Joshi's energy, Ustad Aamir Khan's solemnity, and Ustad Nisar Khan's Tarana's rapid pace. Yet, amidst these influences, Rashid Khan's voice possessed a distinct identity, brimming with new energy.

In a concise span, Rashid Khan left an indelible mark on the music industry—successive gramophone records, and live concerts domestically and internationally—thrusting him into the limelight among his generation's talented musicians. Pandit Bhimsen Joshi heralded him as the future of Indian classical music. His desire to break free from the traditional 'Gharana' constraints set him on a journey to explore the expansive world of music, incorporating Sufi influences. He ventured into creating new melodies, even lending his voice to classical songs in films, such as 'Kahe Ujari Mori Nind' and 'Tore Bina Mohe Chen Nahi.'

Rashid Khan's enthusiasm extended beyond film songs; he collaborated with popular Bengali singer Nachiketa to experimentally sing Rabindra Sangeet. Their rendition, based

on Raags, with interludes featuring Ustad's 'bandis,' showcased a unique approach, distinct from previous interpretations by Pandit Ajay Chakraborty and Swagatalakshmi Dasgupta. Among his notable achievements was his Krishna Bhajan for Times Music. He often performed in duets with Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, including Bhajans. These bhajans not only reflected the influence of Joshi but also showcased the positive effects of that association.

Recognized by the government with the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan awards, Rashid Khan achieved success, and honours, and, tragically, departed at a relatively young age—a reality difficult to accept.

Having witnessed several live performances, I regret not having had the chance to meet him except once at the Kolkata airport. A brief interaction revealed his affability, especially upon noticing 'Aakashbani' on my visiting card. Classical musicians, it seemed, felt a closer connection when reminded of Aakashbani.

Rashid Khan, initially disinterested in music as a child, imparted his musical knowledge to his son Armaan from a young age. Armaan, emerging as a talented singer and accomplished guitarist, undoubtedly carries the influence of his father.

***As the stars extinguish, their brilliance magnifies in the darkness.***