

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.

Mahesh Dattani's GAUHAR

Director: Lillette Dubey



Playwright: Mahesh Dattani

Director: Lillette Dubey

Group: The Primetime Theatre Co., Mumbai

Language: English & Hindustani

Duration: 2 hrs

The Play & Director's Note

This is a fascinating story of one of the classical superstars of her time and a fiery, feisty, independent minded woman of her generation, who was the first to sing on a wax record, and whose personal life was as mesmerising as her professional one. The play also offers an exciting glimpse of that period... Allahabad, Benares, Lucknow and Kolkata at the turn of the 20th century, both from the historical, political and cultural point of view! The play will have some live singing, though it

is essentially a drama. It's an important, powerful and moving story of a person who was a pioneer of the Thumri Tradition in Indian Classical Music and the play is a revelation for the younger generation, who know little about those times or about this great musician. Her story has all the ingredients for a very exciting and dramatic script, which will appeal not just to music lovers, but to lay audiences as well.

The Director

Lillette Dubey is a renowned Indian film and theatre actor and a theatre director. She has been Artistic Director of her own Theatre Company. The Primetime Theatre Company, for over 28 years and her theatrical work, which has travelled the globe, has been much acclaimed nationally and internationally, both in the sphere of actor and Director. Over a span of nearly 40 years, she has played the lead in over 60 theatre productions ranging from Shakespeare, Greek Tragedy, Brecht, Musical Comedies, Farce, Contemporary Drama, Absurd Theatre, to Contemporary Drama, including Ibsen, Tennessee Williams, Arthur Miller, Pinter, Dario Fo, Edward Albee and a gamut of famous Indian playwrights, from Vijay Tendulkar, Partap Sharma, Mahesh Dattani, Girish Karnad, Mahesh Elkunchwar to name just a few.

Most of the plays she has produced and directed, platform outstanding Indian playwrights, and many have won Best Play of the Year awards, and many have received Best Director and Actor awards at National Festivals. Ms. Dubey herself has won several Best Actress awards for her plays and films, including for *Adhe Adhure* (META 2013), *Pankh* (Jagran Film Festival 2010), *Driving Miss Palmen* (Dutch TV 2007), *Bow Barracks Forever* (Madrid international Film Festival) and others.

Several of the Company's productions, directed by Ms. Dubey, have traveled widely across India and abroad, with a few having played for long runs at the Bloomsbury Theatre & Watermans in London, at the Tribeca in New York, at the

Portland International Performance Festival in the U.S, as well as in Chicago, San Francisco, Houston, Dallas, Washington DC, Stamford, Raleigh (North Carolina), Los Angeles, Boston and New York.

The Playwright

Mahesh Dattani is a playwright, stage director, and filmmaker. In 1998 he won the Sahitya Akademi award for his published plays. His plays are taught in several universities across the country and internationally as well. The International Herald Tribune hailed him as “one of India’s best and most serious contemporary playwrights”. He lives in Mumbai.

The Group

The Primetime Theatre Company was set up in March 1991 with the twin objectives of providing a platform for original Indian writing in English and travelling with its work across India and abroad to showcase indigenous work in different cultures and milieus, and also explore performances in different spaces and venues. The company has tried to showcase its work to the largest possible audience at prestigious International and National Festivals to Educational Institutions of all kinds, from Supper Theatre to some of the best performance venues in the world, from large open air auditoria to pocket sized black box theatres from factories to gardens.

Cast & Credits

On Stage: Rajeshwari Sachdev, Zila Khan, Denzil Smith, Danny Sura, Rajeev Siddhartha, Gillian Pinto & Parinaz Jal

Set & Light Designer: Salim Akhtar

Costume Designer: Pia Benegal

Kathak: Uma Dogra

Playwright: Mahesh Dattani

Producer & Director: Lillette Dubey

Music in Healing Discourses on Music -6 Prateeksha Sharma



Music appeals to the emotional side of the human nature. Music stirs, births, expresses, fires, harnesses, channelizes and tempers emotions. Music precedes the development of language as a form of expression. That is because music is present in nature even before the human is born as an individual or a species. In his bid to emulate the sounds of nature man becomes musical. And yet in amputating himself from this connection with nature, in the process of socialization and civilization the human loses touch with the lyre within, coming to a point of dis-ease or an absence of ease.

Man has instinctively known forever about the healing aspects of music. Speaking about this knowledge in context of Indian music, Alain Daniélou the late Director of the International

Institute for Comparative Music Studies and Documentation, Berlin, opines that "a general Sanskrit theory of music, termed *Gāndharva Veda*, was elaborated at a very early date." He continues saying that it seems that the *Gāndharva Veda* studied every use of musical sound, not only in different musical forms and systems but also in physics, medicine and magic. Music makes the human 'whole'- in harmony and in balance. Don Campbell says that bringing a body in to balance requires observing the orchestra in it's entirety, it's current condition and past experience, it's inherent strengths, it's potential for improvement. And the real genius of healing lies in teaching the body, mind, and heart to discover and play their own music-not something that has been dictated by social norms. If one is to examine healing in terms of emotion, then the process of healing involves the transformation of one kind of emotion into another. The *Natyashastra* of Bharata mentions about nine primary emotions or *rasa*-s. *Rasa* is the Permanent Mood when it is revealed through enjoyment[i]. The nine[1]accepted *Rasa*-s are: the Erotic (*Sringara*), the Comic (*Hasya*), the Pathetic (*karuna*), the Furious (*Raudra*), the Heroic (*Vira*), the Fearful (*Bhayanaka*), the Odious (*Bibhatsa*), the Marvellous (*Adbhuta*) and the Tranquil (*Santa*). The catalytic process of music is aimed at transforming the dominant emotion into another emotion or reducing the severity of the emotional experience, incase the dominant emotion is a disease producing condition or itself an offshoot of the disease. For example sadness at one extreme becomes depression, which can in an extreme case also lead to a suicidal tendency. Music used appropriately with this emotion can aid in an expression that may not be spontaneously available to the individual due to disease related pathology.

It has been noticed that during conditions of illness, it is human tendency to revert to prayer, because of the impact faith has on the psyche, and the immune system. The greater is the patient's faith that they will get well and the more they

silently pray, the lesser is their expectation from medical cures alone and also greater is the likelihood of them becoming well due to their own willpower. The reason is twofold: first, prayer takes the mind of the patient away from the disease and negative thoughts. Secondly, it gives a positive affirmation to the body's own immune system to fight the disease. Music unobtrusively becomes a catalyst in this process.

If one is to use music for therapeutic purposes, it is crucial to understand two principles: Entrainment and Isoprinciple. Entrainment is simply the principle from physics that tells us that our biorhythms tend to synchronize with the rhythm, tempo, or pulse of the music. We instinctively choose slow music when we want to calm down and faster music when we want to energize ourselves. The isoprinciple states that in order to change a person's mood with music, one must first begin with music that reflects the state he/she is in to start with. If one is feeling depressed one cannot simply put on "happy" music to change the mood. It must be done slowly and carefully.

When we mention the term music therapy we need to remember that in therapy, music is specifically used to achieve non-musical goals. Music can both be used as an alternative, stand-alone therapy as well as a complementary therapy in addition to traditional medical procedures.

There are four levels of music therapy practice:

- Auxiliary level: All functional uses of music for non-therapeutic but related purposes;
- Augmented level: Music therapy used to enhance the efforts of other treatment modalities
- Intensive level: Induces significant changes in the client's current situation
- Primary level: Singular role in meeting the main

therapeutic needs of the client.

Music therapy is an interpersonal process in which the therapist uses music and all its facets- physical, emotional, mental, social, aesthetic and spiritual- to help clients to improve or maintain help. The music used in therapy maybe specially created by the therapist or client or it maybe drawn from the existing literature in various styles and periods.[iii]

Music and Ritual Discourses on Music -5 by Prateeksha Sharma



Ritual is an innate part of the human life. Ritual whether in the form of an invocation, a sacrifice, a fast or a penance, a holy dip in a river, ringing the bells, a prayer or an *aarti* they all contribute to disciplining the mind to focus. Every spiritual and religious tradition uses music to help in focussing. Prayer brings the mind to a point of concentration, and in a one-pointed thought about the object of prayer. The object maybe the form of a diety or a formless entity, musical sounds help in making the mind still and gathering the

thoughts from all the various directions the mind is usually scattered in. Therefore, spiritual music has its own special parametres and singers. When we go into a house of worship the sound of the music playing instantly snaps the chord from the noise of the world and introverts the senses.

In India, with its unique tradition of community singing in *bhajans*, *satsangs* and *sankirtan* music is the predominant element that unifies the consciousness of the participants. Even if people are unable to sing, for not knowing the language or the lyrics, they usually join in the community act with something as simple as clapping. Such community activities, which are a part of the life of a householder, especially in certain communities or the post-retirement phase of life, are a prescription to stall the modern day affliction of alienation among the elderly; which often leads to mental, physical and spiritual decay. This kind of community musico-religious programmes are also a mechanism for those who are involved to remain active, busy and involved in a meaningful social exchange- by not being solely dependent on their families at all times. The greater is the social and physical involvement of an individual the less likely is the person to fall prey to degenerative diseases.

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**Music Education Discourses on
Music -4 By: Prateeksha**

Sharma



Republic Day Parade- A School Band

There are two aspects of music education- music in education and music as education. Training in music from an early age for the purpose of disciplining the mind and making a career out of some aspect of music constitutes music education. When a child begins to train in music in a systematic manner a number of changes occur in the personality of the child- from disciplining to becoming methodical, refinement of senses, time management (as the child also is involved with academic pursuits due to that age). It is a boost to the self-confidence of the individual as his/her musical ability sets them apart from their peers and the artiste is a source of attraction for everyone around. Since music tends to be a performing art, the necessary exposure to the stage automatically makes the child confident and able to deal with issues related to shyness, introversion, and fear of public speaking. After the training phase, the next phase of the musician is to contribute to the social fabric in the same capacity- a role which maybe performed as a teacher, an entertainer, a healer, in the industry or attached to a spiritual organisation.

Music in education is a somewhat different application of music, in which music is utilised to improve the educational output of students. The main impact of music here is felt due to its ability to let students involve themselves in group musical experiences, which allow an expression of emotion in a medium other than speech. These experiences could be ranging from singing, playing musical instruments together, writing lyrics and setting them to music to making musical plays and productions and so forth. A competitive, performance oriented production with such activities has been seen to bring about both behavioural and academic improvements in healthy school going children as well as those suffering from mental handicaps, hearing handicaps and various other neurological and/or developmental disabilities. Such musical experiences not only foster socialisation, but also bring about group cohesiveness, enhancement of interpersonal skills, learning due to imitative behaviour and more adapted socially cooperative mannerisms.

TO BE CONTINUED.....

Chakras and Sound Discourses on Music -3 By: Prateeksha Sharma



In addition to our visible, gross body we also have the subtle body in the form of an energy field around it. The physical body contains the most dense and therefore visible energy.

This energy continues forming layers of energy fields around the body which are not usually visible to the naked eye. This magnetic field energy that surrounds the body is called "aura". The aura is created by the energy of the *chakras*- the psychic, whirling energy processing centres of the body. According to yogic theory, there are approximately 72,000 *nadis*, astral nerve tubes, the most important of which is the *sushumna*, the astral body counterpart to the spinal cord. On either side of it are two *nadis* known as *ida* and *pingala*, which correspond to the left and right sympathetic cords in the physical body[i]. There are six points in the body where these three *nadis* intersect and these points also correspond in location to the major nerve ganglia (cervical plexus, solar plexus, sacral plexus and so forth) located along the spine in the physical body. In healthy people, the *chakras* are vibrant and spin with vigour, while in those who are not well the chakra petals are dull and spin sluggishly, says the American Hindu priest Thomas Ashley-Farrand[ii]. Interestingly, these *chakras* respond to the sound of Sanskrit, a fact which was noticed by ancient Indian mystics with "second sight", the ability to see clearly in the subtle realm. These outcomes were carefully written down and can be found in the *Vedas*, the *Upanishads* and the *Yoga Sutras of Patanjali*. It took time before the sages arrived at the mechanism behind the impact of Sanskrit on the *chakras*. And they concluded that the total number of petals or spokes composing those six *chakras* is fifty. Similarly, the Sanskrit alphabet consists of fifty letters, with each one corresponding to a particular petal of a *chakra*. When a *mantra* built from the language is chanted, our *chakras* vibrate in tune with the Sanskrit sounds because Sanskrit is ... "an energy-based language first and a meaning-based language second". Not all the words of the Sanskrit *mantras* have meanings. It is the energy coming from the subtle body that provides the key to the effectiveness of the *mantra* chanting. Each *chakra* has a corresponding *Bija mantra* or sound vibration. Irrespective of who chants the *mantra*, at the sound

of the *Bija mantra*, the *chakras* spin with greater energy and vigour, giving corresponding strength to the body. It is also said that the *chakras* correspond to the musical scale with each *chakra* representing one *swara* of the octave.

Human society uses music in various ways. Some of it is used in education for those who become musicians or those who endeavour to develop a fine aesthetic appreciation of life, in particular the arts, around them. It is utilized in religious ceremonies and rituals, as a means of entertainment and in imparting health to the body. Each of these applications of music is explained briefly.