

RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY
VOCAL MUSIC DEPARTMENT

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Gharanas of Hindustani Music

2. Gwalior Gharana

The tradition of Dhrupad-Singing in Gwalior was introduced under the patronage of Raja Mansingh Tomar. By the co-operation of all the music maestros of the Gwalior-court, an ever-lasting formation of dhrupad style was established.

The tradition of Kheyal singing in Gwalior is very old. According to the researchers, in the last quarter of 17th century, Ghulam Rasool, a Qawwali-singer, introduced Kheyal singing in Gwalior. His son Ghulam Nabi was the disciple of Bahadur Sen, grandson of Charju Khan, the famous music-maestro of Seni gharana. Ghulam Nabi first popularised kheyal-singing in this gharana. But , the identity, actually, was established by Shakkar Khan and Makkhan Khan, the two nephews of Ghulam Nabi. Undoubtedly these two brothers were expert singers.

Kader Baksh, the elder son of Makkhan Khan was a very good vocalist but he did not stay long. The sons of Kader Baksh

- Haddu Khan and Hassu Khan started singing at very early age and they song kheyal in Dhrupad-style. Due to highly competent performance, their popularity became unparallel. Makkhan Khan had another grandson, Nathu Khan (son of Peer Baksh); he was also a distinguished singer. These three brothers had received their primary music-lesson from their father and uncle ; later from Bade Mohammed Khan, the elder son of Shakkar Khan. The extraordinary style of singing of these three brothers created immeasurable fame in the Indian Kheyal singing.

Bade Mohammed Khan was very powerful Kheyal-singer. He was famous for his various patterns of Tana-Sargam. The descendants of Haddu Khan were chhote Mohammed Khan(son), Rahimat Khan(son), Bnade Ali Khan(sin-in-law,Indore), Inayat Hossen Khan(son-in-law,Rumpur), Mehdi Hossen Khan(grandson ,through the nephew Gule Imam Khan), Sahabdab Khan(father of Imdad Khan), Vishnupanth Chhatre etc; descendent of Hassu Khan was Gule Imam Khan (son) etc; descendent of Nathu Khan was Nisar Hossen Khan (Adopted son).

Haddu Khan had some Marathi disciples, viz. Basudev Bua Joshi, Ramkrishnadev Bua Joshi etc. One of his Marathi disciple Balkrishna Bua Ichalkaranjkar introduced Gwalior style in Maharashtra.

Some disciples had received their musical training from both Haddu Khan as well as Hassu Khan. Shankar rao Pandit had received musical training not only from these aforementioned brothers, but from Nathu Khan also. His son Krishnarao Shankar Pandit was a competent performer of Kheyal, Tappa and Tarana.

Besides them, other disciples of this gharana are – Thakur Jaidev Singh, Baburao Joshi, Sumati Mutatkar, Mogubai Kurdikar, Nagendranath Bhattacharjee, Rajabhaiya Poochchwale, Vishnudigambar Paluskar, Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande etc.

Musical Characteristics :-

Gwalior is the birth place of Dhrupad. So, it is quite natural, that , all the classical musical traditions of Gwalior bears a great influence of Dhrupad style. The Kheyal style in Gwalior is sung with Dhrupad style aalap. The rag vistar is also performed with dhrupad like swar structure and alamkaras like meer, gamak etc.

The kheyal style of this gharana are full of gamakdar straight note Tanas, Rhythmic boltanas, meer based sargams and various alamkaras.

Open voice is the chief characteristics of this gharana. In the narration of ragas correctness and simplicity are strictly maintained in this gharana.

Veena playing in this gharana is full of dhrupad style and solemnity.

3. Kirana Gharana

As a founder of Kirana Gharana, the name of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan deserves first preference; because, firstly, the birth-place of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan is Kirana, a village at Uttarpradesh; secondly, Ustad Abdul Karim had introduced a totally new and unprecedented style of Kheyal-singing. After him, this gharana is running with huge acceptancy, created by the descendants and disciples of Ustadji.

On the other hand, Veenkar Bande Ali Khan is also considered as founder of Kirana gharana. Bande Ali Khan was direct disciple of Behram Khan of Dagar gharana. Later he received training from Nirmal Shah of Seni gharana. As a result, a Dhrupad style-baaj was established in his veena-playing. Besides this, there is no similarity between his veena-playing and Abdul Karim's Kheyal-Singing. Even, there is no relation established between him and Kirana village. Bande Ali Khan had spent his life in Indore. This is because, it will be better to say, that, Bande Ali Khan is a founder of Veenkar gharana of Indore.

Abdul Karim had received his musical training from his father Kale Khan and uncle Nanhe Khan. This Kale Khan is not the uncle of Bare Ghulam Ali Khan of Patiala gharana. Later on, Abdul Karim received training from Rahimat Khan, son of Haddu Khan of Gwalior. At the age of sixteen years, Abdul Karim took decision that classical music may becomes his profession and he achieved an employment at Junagarh- court. After spending a few years there, he went to Baroda court. After Baroda, he went to Miraj ,Pune, Belgaon etc. one by one, and established several schools and colleges there to teach music of various types. To extend the gharana-music, he not only performed himself, but encourageed his disciples to perform also. Besides there, he taught classical music both personally as well as institutioually. Thus, the fame of kirana gharana spreaded in all directions and earned unparallel reputation by his own effort.

The direct disciples of Abdul Karim Khan are Abdul waheed Khan(nephew), Kesharbai Kerkar, Sawai Gandharva, Roushenara Begam, Sureshbabu Mane (son), Hirabai Barodekar (daughter), Saraswatibai Rane (daughter) etc.

Besides performances, Abdul Karim had much enthusiasm to gather disciples. He was influenced by Karnatic music and as a result, a lot of musical ornamentations from karnatic music, he used to apply on his own performances. This

uniqueness of this gharana established a permanent seat in Indian Classical Music.

Abdul Karim had introduced a new type of Thumari–Gayan in this Gharana. Kirana-Thumri consist of devotional appeal instead of erotic sentiments.

The list of the renowned singers, who are in the disciple-line of Ustad Abdul Karim Khan are Prabha Atre, Basabraj Rajguru, Maink Verma, Gangubai Hungel, Firoz Dastur, Bhimsen Joshi etc.

But, a few numbers of disciples of Bande Ali Khan of Indore, settled themselves as the member of Kirana gharana and they are – Shahmir Khan (Esroj), Bhaiyasaheb Ganapatrao, Rajab Ali Khan, Zohorabai Agrawali; disciple of Shahmir khan is Amir Khan(son), disciple of Bhaiyasaheb is Gauharjan Bai, Girijashankar Chakraborty, Bade Moti Bai ; disciple of Amir Khan- Uaharanjan Mukherjee , Krishna Dasgupta, A. kanan, Shrikant Bakre etc.

Musical Characteristics

The style of singing of this gharana is full of elegance; melodies and passionate notal applications; sophistications etc. This gharana has a tendency to create a concentrated flavour in music.

Very fine and pointed alamkaras are applied in the Gayaki. This gharana tends to skilful and perfect melodious gayaki. Graceful charming style of singing makes the singers of this gharana popular.

In Raga-Vistara, both ascents and descents are performed with the help of a typical alamkara, named 'barhat', of notes, one by one. The singers employ many fragments of notes-bonding which may be comparable to the ancient Khanda-meru system.

Kirana gharana does never indulge gamakdar and vigorous singing or any type of layakari.

Thumris of this gharana have a different look. They do not belong to erotic sentiments. They reflect only devotional essence and pleasant melancholy.

4) Vishnupur Gharana

Vishnupur gharana is the one and only Sangeet gharana of Bengal. This gharana was started and popularised by Gadadhar Chakraborty, a music-lover of Vishnupur in the last quarter of 18th century. Raghunath Singh II, the king of Vishnupur invited Bahadur Khan, a renowned music-maestro of seni gharana to Vishnupur. Bahadur Khan used to sing Dhrupad and play veena, Rabab and Sursringar. He remained at Vishnupur as a guest-court-singer and gave musical training to

Gadadhar Chakraborty, a royal employee, in Dhrupad-gayan, veera –vadan as well as sursringer-vadan also. Thus in later days, Dhrupad, veera and sursringer were practiced side by side in this gharana. Not only that, this gharana later included khayal singing, sitar and esraj playing also.

Gadadhar Chakraborty had trained Ramshankar Bhattacharjee, one of his disciple and through Ranshankar this gharana had extended all over the bengal. The direct disciple of Ramshankar Bhattacharjee are Anantalal Banerjee ,Kshetramohan Goswami, Ramshankar Bhattacharjee, Jadunath Bhattacharjee etc. Being popularised through the disciples and descendants of Ramshankar Bhattacharjee only, a number of eritiques opine that Ramshankar Bhattacharjee is the actual founder of this gharana. Ramshankar Bhattacharjee was the pioneer of composing many Dhrupad in Bengali.

Ramshankar Bhattacharjee himself stayed at Vishnupur, but his descendants and disciples migrated to various places, viz, his son, Ramkesav Bhattacharjee first went to coochbehar-court and then, he joined Satubabu's court at kolkata; Kshetramohan Goswami joined the court of Jatindramohan Thakur and then the court of Sourindramohan Thakur. These disciples created a musical-identity of Vishnupur gharana in kolkata and the disciple-line, made by them helped to popularise the Vishnupur gharana.

Anantalal Banerjee stayed at Vishnupur. He had four sons- Ramprasanna Banerjee, Gopeswar Banerjee, Surendranath Banerjee and Ramkrishna Banerjee. Besides them, he had a number of disciples, viz, Radhikaprasad Goswami, Ramkumar Banerjee (son of paternal-uncle) etc. Rameshchandra Banerjee, the elder son of Gopeswar Banerjee was a famous singer. Satyakinkar Banerjee, grandson of Ramkumar Banerjee was also a popular singer. Both of them used to sing Dhrupad and Kheyal both.

The other music-maestros of this gharana are Krishnadhan Banerjee (disciple of Kshetramohan Goswami), Gokulchandra Nag, Ashesh Banerjee (disciple of Ramprasanna Banerjee), Amiyaranjan Banerjee and Niharranjan Banerjee(both are the sons as well as disciple of Satyakinkar Banerjee) helped to extend this gharana.

A lots of other music-maestors, who are in the disciple-line are – Manilal Nag, Lalitmohan Mukherjee, Nagandranath Bhattacharjee, Kadre baksh (Murshidabad), Girijashankar Chakraborty, Jnanendraprasad Goswami, Swami Prajnananandaji Maharaj (Disciple of Gopeswar Banerjee) etc.

Musical characterisites

Vishnupur is basically a Dhrupad-based gharana. This gharana does not allow excessive use of gamak and layakaris. Svaras are applied in a straight and simple manner. An

invigorated gayaki is employed. Various types of alamkaras are applied as much as they are required. Excessive alamkaras are not applied in the songs of this gharana.

Open voice with full of solemnity is the chief characteristic of this gharana. In the Kheyals of this gharana, raga-vistara is created with the help of Dhrupad-style. Alamkara-based tana and sargam; powerful notes application and straight-note-based tanas, from one octave to another are the important features of Kheyals of this gharana.

The Baaj of Veena and surringer are full of dhrupad-style. Like vocal form of music, instrumental forms of this gharana have the same ornamentation by applying various types of alamkaras. Straight notes-based tanas are applied also in instrumental forms.

Besides these, a special characteristic feature of this gharana is the different and amazing figures of raga application, viz, Shuddha dhaivat in Puravi and Vasanta; Ramkeli without Teevra Madhyam; Komal Nishad in Behag and Bhairav are used as touch-notes in descent-movement.

5) Dagar Gharana

In the first half of 18th century, a music lover named Gopaldas, from Dagarpur village in Uttarpradesh, adopted Islam due to

some social issues and took the name Imam Khan. His son Beheram Khan was also a music lover since childhood. There is no documental evidence of musical training of Gopaldas but he was the musical teacher of his son Beheram.

Probably Gopaldas used to sing religious songs. As a result an overall softness had been reflected in the songs of Beheram Khan. Beheram was well versed in sanskrit language also. He composed many Dhrupad songs full of devotion and melody.

After completion of his musical training , Beheram Khan went to Delhi and then to Jaipur, where he settled parmanently. He used to follow the traditional Dagari singing style of Dagarpur village which he inherited from his father.

Beheram Khan was basically a Dhrupad singer. He had an extra ordinary expertness in Kheyal singing as well as veena playing also. In the list of his descendants , renowned persons are – Sadat Khan (son), Akber Khan(son), Muhammad Jaan(son of his elder brother Hayder Khan), Zakiruddin Khan and Allabande Khan(both are sons of Muhammad Jaan), Bande Ali Khan(Indore), Ali Baksh Khan and Fateh Ali Khan(punjab) etc.

Beheram Khan is the original founder of this gharana. Because when he was at Jaipur, he established the musical line of his family tradition by unifying all the family members there. His younger son Akber Khan remained unmarried. Riazuddin Khan, his only grandson had no issues. Thus the lineage of

Beheram Khan ended there. So the musical tradition continued with the family of Muhammad Jaan.

Beheram Khan had established and extended this gharana in Jaipur. But Zakiruddin Khan, the elder son of Muhammad Jaan, established himself at Udaipur Court. And Allabande Khan, the younger son joined the Alwar court. Thus the centre of dagar gharana shifted from Jaipur to Udaipur and Alwar. Since then this singers of gharana confined themselves to Dhrupad singing and veena playing.

Zakiruddin Khan had only one son Jiyauddin Khan. And he had four sons – Mahiuddin Khan, Fariuddin Khan, Shaifuddin Khan and Jalaluddin Khan. Allabande Khan also had four sons – Nasiruddin Khan, Rahimuddin Khan, Imamuddin Khan and Hoosenuddin Khan. All these brothers popularised the fame of Dagar gharana through their successive generations and followers.

Some of the famous singers of this gharana are – M.R. Goutam, Devsankar Dwivedi, Nemaichand Boral, Vijay Kichlu, Ravi Kichlu etc.

Musical characteristics :-

This gharana supports simple and delightful application of swaras and rhythms for easy acceptance. Meer, gamak and other alamkars are applied in a deserving manner. Open voice

and tonal beauty are the chief characteristics of this gharana. By tradition all the mastros of this gharana practiced both Dhrupad singing and veena playing simultaneously. Beheram Khan was also an expert veena player.

Various types of laykaris of both simple and compound nature are applied in Dhrupad singing. This is the special characteristics of this gharana. Pleasant and facinating tehai-s increase the beauty of the singing style. Duet singing of dhrupad is first introduced in this gharana.