



Shadaj Music Festival

Celebrating 10-year anniversary



Saturday, April 5, 2025

10 am - 10 pm

Scottish Rite Masonic Museum, Lexington, MA

www.shadaj.org



VISION

Shadaj, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, aspires to preserve and nurture a rich classical music heritage that has drawn together people of diverse traditions over centuries.

Our mission is to cultivate, nurture and promote Indian Classical Music in its most authentic form through intimate concerts, music appreciation sessions, open mic sessions and community outreach events as a platform for cultural integration and community outreach. We believe that Cultural exchange through music is a great way to build our community and serve the next generation.

ACTIVITIES

- **Baithak Style Music Concerts:** In an intimate Baithak setting, the artist and the audience experience the music together, and the performance can reach great heights, an experience often lost in large halls. Shadaj events feature some of the world's most revered and celebrated Indian classical virtuosos.
- **Music appreciation sessions, lecture-demonstrations, and dialogue with the artist:** These sessions provide the audience a unique opportunity to learn about the intricacies of music in an interactive session with the artist.
- **Open Mic Sessions:** This is Shadaj platform for the talented local musicians and advanced students of music to showcase their creative side. This is a great eco system for emerging musicians to gain performance experience while building an active community of students and listeners.
- **Community outreach and Cultural Integration through music:** Shadaj actively engages with diverse communities by hosting outreach events that promote the inclusivity of Indian Classical Music. Through collaborations with organizations such as Berklee School of Music, Handel and Haydn Society, Lexington Community Education, Lexington Public Schools, Lexington Symphony and MIT's MITHAS, we strive to integrate cultural exchange into the fabric of our local communities.
- **Music school:** Shadaj offers students a unique opportunity to study Indian Classical Music with both local teachers and visiting master musicians from India.

www.shadaj.org





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MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR

KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

April 2025

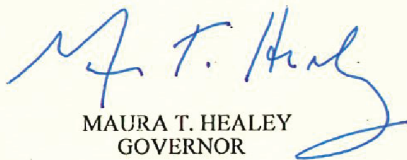
Dear Friends:

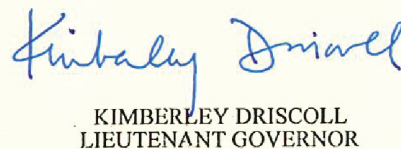
On behalf of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, Lieutenant Governor Driscoll and I would like to welcome you to the "Shadaj Music Festival."

Shadaj has committed itself to the cultivation, nurturing, and promotion of authentic Indian classical music throughout the Greater Boston area and has organized over 200 events featuring the world's most celebrated musicians over the last decade. Today, we are celebrating the organization's 10-year anniversary and are honored to be hosting the "Shadaj Music Festival" here in Massachusetts. The day will include music and performances by Indian classical music artists, and we hope this event will promote a cultural exchange through music between audiences of diverse backgrounds. We thank all attendees for their participation.

Lieutenant Governor Driscoll and I are thrilled to be supporting the "Shadaj Music Festival" and we extend our best wishes to all in attendance today.

Sincerely,


MAURA T. HEALEY
GOVERNOR


KIMBERLEY DRISCOLL
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

Shadaj Music Festival

Saturday, April 5, 2025,

Program Schedule

10 AM - 11 AM Registration

Concert 1

11 AM - 1 PM **Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar** (Vocal)
Sanjay Deshpande (tabla), Abhishek Shinkar (Harmonium)

1 PM - 2 PM Lunch break

Concert 2

2 PM - 3:30 PM **Anirudha Aithal** (Vocal)
Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla), Abhishek Shinkar (Harmonium)

3:30 PM - 4 PM Tea break

Concert 3

4 PM - 6 PM **Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan** (Sitar)
Shahir Khan (Sitar), Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla)

6 PM - 7:30 PM Dinner break

Concert 4

7:30 PM - 9:30 PM **Vidushi Kaushiki Chakraborty** (Vocal)
Rishith Desikan (Vocal), Murad Ali Khan (Sarangi)
Ojas Adhiya (Tabla), Jyotirmoy Banerjee (Harmonium)



President's Message

It is a privilege to welcome you all to Shadaj's 10th Anniversary Music Festival. As we gather to celebrate this milestone, I am filled with pride, gratitude, and excitement for the journey that brought us here and the path ahead.

We stand on the shoulders of those who came before us. Boston has a rich history of organizations that have nurtured Indian classical music, and we deeply appreciate their contributions, which paved the way for Shadaj.

Ten years ago, Shadaj was born from a shared dream — to preserve and promote the rich traditions of South Asian classical music, ensuring they continue to inspire and resonate with audiences across generations. What began as a humble initiative has grown into a vibrant cultural institution, thanks to the unwavering support of our artists, audiences, patrons and volunteers.

Over the years, Shadaj has hosted over 100 events, including chamber concerts, community outreach programs, music appreciation sessions, lecture demonstrations, and the popular Shadaj Open Mic, a platform for local artists and students. Shadaj today has become a space where artists aspire to perform, find recognition, audiences discover inspiration, and traditions thrive.

We have consistently worked to connect with diverse audiences beyond the South Asian diaspora, making Indian classical music accessible and relevant to all. A notable example is our partnership with the Lexington Public School System, where we introduced Indian classical music to students as part of their performing arts program—a proud step toward fostering global appreciation for this art form.

Shadaj has also embraced innovation during challenging times. During the pandemic, we pioneered ticketed, live-streamed concerts, ensuring artists continued to have a stage and audiences a source of inspiration. This initiative provided a vital lifeline for many and reaffirmed our commitment to sustaining music and community.

This milestone belongs to each one of you—artists, audiences, volunteers and donors—who have supported us every step of the way. It is a celebration of a community united by a shared love for music, a commitment to cultural sustainability, and a vision for the future.

Thank you for being part of this incredible journey. Here's to many more harmonious years ahead. Let the music begin!

Rajesh Godbole
President
Shadaj

Shadaj Baithak Series 2025

Saturday, May 3

Tejendra Narayan Majumdar (Sarod), Tanmoy Bose (Tabla)

Friday, May 16

Ravi Chary (Sitar), Kunal Gunjal (Santoor), Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)

Sunday, June 15

Pandit Ajoy Chakraborty (Vocal), Gourab Chatterjee (Harmonium),
Soumen Sarkar (Tabla), Meher Paralikar (Vocal)

Saturday, September 13

Siddharth Belamannu (Vocal), Roopak Kallurkar (Tabla), Prasad Kamat (Harmonium)

Saturday, October 4

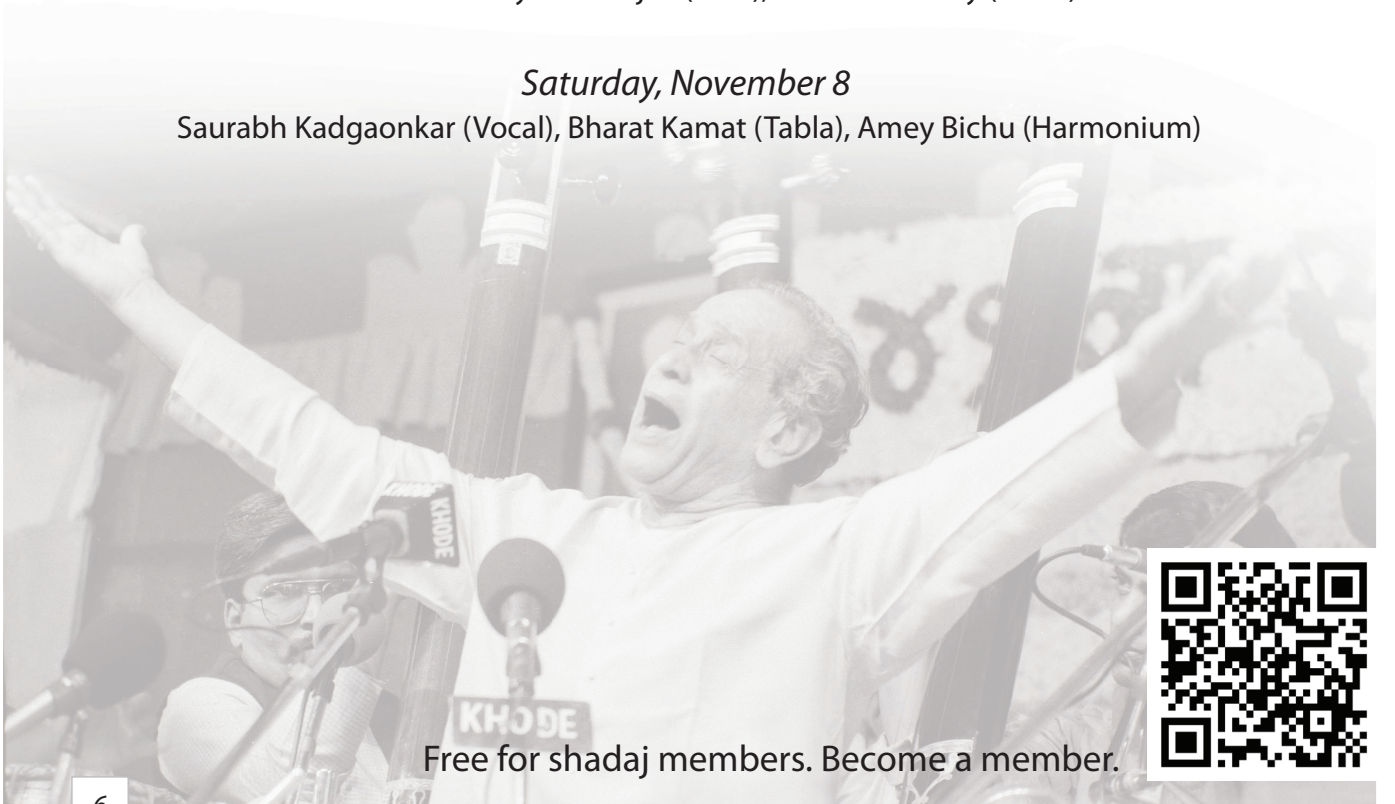
Niladri Kumar (Sitar), Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)

Saturday, October 25

Pandit Budhaditya Mukerjee (Sitar), Soumen Nandy (Tabla)

Saturday, November 8

Saurabh Kadgaonkar (Vocal), Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Amey Bichu (Harmonium)



Free for shadaj members. Become a member.

Artist Profiles

Sanjeev Abhyankar

Sanjeev Abhyankar, a Hindustani classical vocalist with a soft and soothing voice, stands as one of the foremost exponents of the Mewati Gharana. His musical journey began with initial training under the guidance of his mother, Shobha Abhyankar, and Gangadhar Pimpalkhare. At the age of 11, he made his first stage appearance, earning the moniker "Wonder Boy" for his extraordinary talent. Upon hearing Sanjeev's music, Pandit Jasraj proclaimed him to be the third reincarnation of a great singer, recognizing the depth and soulfulness of his artistry. From 1984 to 1994, Sanjeev had the privilege of studying under the legendary Pandit Jasraj, embracing the traditional Guru-Shishya parampara.

This formative period honed his skills and deepened his connection to the rich heritage of Indian classical music. Sanjeev is not only celebrated for his classical renditions but also for his performances of Marathi abhangs and bhajans, bringing spiritual and devotional themes to life through his evocative voice. His artistic contributions have been recognized with numerous awards, underscoring his impact on the music community.



Sanjay Deshpande

Sanjay Deshpande's journey with the tabla began under the guidance of Pandit Sabade, and he later refined his skills through intensive training with Ustad Allarakha and Pandit Suresh Talwalkar. Today, he continues to expand his musical knowledge by studying with Shri Yogesh Samsi and Shri Vivek Joshi. Deshpande serves as a respected Guru at Lalit Kala Kendra, Savitribai Phule Pune University, where he imparts his deep understanding of tabla to the next generation.

*In addition to his classical pursuits, Deshpande's musical versatility shines through his acclaimed fusion album *Wind from Ayuta* (2002), a collaboration with Korean musicians that received widespread praise in South Korea. He is also actively involved in the beAmusician project, an online platform aimed at promoting music education across India. Through this initiative, he has created a distinctive tabla course designed to help students grasp complex techniques with ease. Deshpande's dedication to both tradition and innovation continues to inspire audiences and students alike.*



Abhishek Shinkar

An emerging harmonium player, Abhishek Shinkar has established himself as a steady and sensitive accompanist, enhancing the overall concert. He started his early education in Aurangabad, where he received training in both vocal music and harmonium under the tutelage of Shankar Mahajan and Nathrao Neralkar.

Abhishek's passion for the harmonium led him to further his studies with Promod Marathe, and he received invaluable guidance from the renowned tabla maestro Suresh Talwalkar.

Abhishek holds a Master's degree in Harmonium and a Visharad in both vocal music and harmonium.

Over the years, he has accompanied many esteemed artists and performed solo concerts, showcasing his versatility and command over the instrument. His talent and commitment have earned him several awards and scholarships, solidifying his reputation as a promising artist in the eld of Indian classical music.



Anirudha Aithal

Anirudha Aithal, a talented 25-year-old Hindustani vocalist from Bengaluru, is set to be the torchbearer of the rich tradition of Kirana Gharana. Beginning his musical journey at the age of 10, Anirudha trained under the guidance of Smt. Geetha Garud Pritviraj for the first eight years. He continues his studies with Dr. Ashok Huggannavar, honing his craft and deepening his understanding of classical music. He has been trained to achieve technical precision and aesthetic beauty in his music. He has also learned rare Rangageethes (theatre songs), Dasarapadas, vachanas, and tatvapadas from his gurus. Anirudha is a graded performer with All India Radio and has earned numerous scholarships and awards. Anirudha will be performing for Shadaj for the first time. Shadaj is proud and thrilled to feature exceptional artists of the next generation, like him, at this festival.



Yashwant Vaishnav



Anyone who has listened to Yashwant's solo or accompaniment performances will undoubtedly recognize that they are witnessing a prodigious talent. Talent alone does not define a performer, however. Countless hours of rigorous training from a very early age have shaped his tonal quality and clarity. Sharp and precise tone maintained at rapid speed is the distinguishing quality of Yashwant's music. After initial training under his father, he further trained with Dr. Hemant Sachdeva and Pt Mukund Bhale.

Currently, he is receiving tutelage from Yogesh Samsi. While he continues to deliver dazzling solo performances, his tabla accompaniment is equally remarkable. Trained under the guidance of Pandit Ulhas Kashalkar at ITC SRA, he brings a thoughtful approach to accompaniment, recognizing that it demands a fluid and adaptable style. His deep understanding of this dynamic space enhances his ability to support and elevate other musicians on stage seamlessly.

Shahid Parvez

Shahid Parvez Khan, a leading sitar maestro of Etawah Gharana has a distinctive technique and tonal quality that has set him apart. Building on the rich legacy of his ancestors, who pioneered modifications to the sitar to enhance its suitability for the gayaki ang, Shahid Parvez has refined the instrument to create a unique sound and playing style. His innovative adjustments not only enhance the expressive capabilities of the sitar but also distinguish his musical techniques, making his performances truly exceptional. Ustadji's work is characterized by his exploration of new ideas within the bounds of tradition. His commitment to innovation and excellence makes him a significant figure in the world of Indian classical music, inspiring audiences and students alike with his exceptional skill and deep-rooted passion for the sitar.

A recipient of the prestigious Padma Shri award and the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award, Shahid Parvez has been recognized for his contributions to Indian classical music. Beyond his artistry, he is a patient teacher dedicated to nurturing the next generation of musicians. He runs an academy in Arizona, where he has evolved his teaching methods to adapt to changing times while maintaining the integrity of traditional music. As a valued member of the Advisory Board of Shadaj, Ustadji has been our organization's guiding force and mentor since its inception. We are incredibly fortunate to have him perform on the Shadaj stage as we celebrate this milestone anniversary.



Shakir Khan

Shakir Khan is the eighth-generation musician upholding the legacy of the Etawah Gharana, a responsibility he embraces with utmost dedication and reverence. He not only mirrors his father and guru Shahid Parez Khan's extraordinary skill and talent but also carves out his unique identity within the tradition. With years of training under the attentive guidance of his guru from an early age, Shakir Khan has meticulously refined his technique and performance skills. He is also keenly aware of the pressures and demands of the digital age, adeptly navigating the evolving landscape of music.

His innovation and imagination have propelled him onto the international stage, where he has seamlessly integrated his classical expertise into fusion projects, performing with the European jazz ensemble "Taalism" in Germany and the cutting-edge group "Human Evolution" in Spain.

With a charismatic presence and youthful energy, he breathes new life into each performance, captivating audiences with his artistry and passion. Together, the father-son duo create an unforgettable musical experience. Shadaj is honored to showcase the exceptional talent of Shakir Khan at this festival.



Vidushi Kaushiki Chakraborty

Kaushiki Chakraborty is a celebrated vocalist of the Patiala Gharana. Her musical journey began at an early age under the tutelage of her father, Pandit Ajoy Chakraborty. Growing up on the ITC Sangeet Research Academy campus, where her father was a Guru, she was influenced by the diverse musical traditions surrounding her. Kaushiki further honed her skills with rigorous training with various maestros, including the distinguished Jyan Prakash Ghosh and the revered Carnatic vocalist Balmurli Krishna.

The influences of diverse musical genres are evident in Kaushiki's versatility as an artist. She effortlessly captivates audiences with her khayal performances while also enchanting listeners with her renditions of light music. Her nuanced, delicate, and expressive style is particularly well-suited for genres such as thumri, dadra, bhajan, and ghazal, where her emotional depth shines through. Kaushiki's collaborations with esteemed artists from Hindustani and Carnatic traditions have garnered widespread critical acclaim, highlighting her exceptional versatility and artistic depth.

In addition to her classical endeavors, she has joined forces with various musicians to create captivating light music compositions, showcasing her ability to blend different genres seamlessly. Kaushiki Chakraborty and her ensemble 'Sakhi' is the first all-women classical music band ever. This groundbreaking project serves as a powerful celebration of womanhood, empowering female artists and redefining the landscape of classical performance. Equipped with extraordinary skill set, her concerts are flawlessly executed. She must be applauded for bringing romanticism to Indian Classical Music and broadening its appeal. Beyond perfecting her craft, she has thoughtfully curated her public persona. Kaushiki embodies the perfect blend of beauty, intellect, tradition, and innovation. Her brand stands as a beacon of excellence, inspiring the new generation to embrace the richness of their cultural heritage.



Rishith Desikan

Rishith Desikan, the son of renowned artists Kaushiki Chakraborty and Parthasarathi Desikan, is set to take the stage at Shadaj for his debut concert. This performance marks an exciting new chapter in his artistic journey. Rishith Desikan has frequently shared the stage with his mother.

At just 12 years old, Rishith is poised to make a significant impact in the realm of Indian classical music. For his parents, Kaushiki and Parthasarathi, this is undoubtedly a moment of immense pride. Kaushiki's patient guidance, along with her love and care in nurturing him both as a child and an artist, is a beautiful journey that has brought Kaushiki and Rithish to Shadaj's stage. Shadaj is honored to be a part of this inspiring path.





Murad Ali Khan

Hailing from the illustrious Moradabad Gharana, Murad Ali Khan represents an extraordinary lineage spanning six generations of sarangi masters. This remarkable pedigree meant an early and intense immersion in music, with Murad Ali undergoing rigorous training under the close guidance of his grandfather Ustad Siddique Ahmad Khan and father Ustad Ghulam Sabir Khan. This preparation set him on a path to becoming the leading sarangi player of his generation. Murad Ali's talent blossomed early, and he gave his first solo performance at the age of 10. Since then, he has become not only a celebrated soloist but also the most sought-after sarangi accompanist. He has accompanied some of the most esteemed artists on prestigious stages worldwide. A Grade A artist with All India Radio, he has garnered numerous accolades and recognitions throughout his career.

Ojas Adhiya

"I was born to play tabla", says Ojas Adhiya whose musical journey began at a very young age. His remarkable talent quickly caught the attention of Bollywood legends Kalyanji-Anandji. With their guidance, he was honored to train under Shri Mridangraj Ji. Today, he is celebrated as one of the most sought-after tabla accompanists, admired for his playful stage presence and measured balance of exuberance and restraint.

Beyond his role as an accompanist, Ojas's musical explorations span many genres, including Carnatic music, light music, and jazz. Notably, he has performed with the legendary band Shakti, showcasing his versatility and adaptability. He has also collaborated with other young artists to explore Indian Classical music as a contemporary experience and help promote its appeal among the youth.

Throughout his career, Ojas has received numerous accolades, and he continues to accompany world-renowned artists on stages across the globe.



Jyotirmoy Banerjee

A young and budding talent in the world of music, Jyotirmoy Banerjee began initial training of music from his parents. He then joined the prestigious Shrutinandan Academy of Music, where he expanded his skills under the tutelage of various esteemed teachers. He is now fortunate to be under the guidance of the renowned Ajoy Chakraborty, who continues to shape his musical abilities and artistic expression. His early years were dedicated to vocal training, laying a strong foundation of music. Though his primary focus was on vocal training, Jyotirmoy soon developed a keen interest in multiple instruments, with the harmonium becoming his favorite.

Jyotirmoy holds a master's degree in music from the University of Calcutta, further cementing his academic and practical mastery of the art form. Jyotirmoy has traveled extensively across India and abroad, performing with several prominent artists. His journey has now brought him to the Shadaj stage, where the Boston audience will have the opportunity to experience his accompaniment for the first time.

Taanpura : Ashwini Paranjape, Ria Dey, Chaitanya Bhawe

From Baithaks to Auditoriums : Celebrating the Magic of Shadaj

Dr Nitin Joshi

When I moved to Boston, I felt a palpable void—a thirst for the cultural richness I had left behind in India. And then, I discovered Shadaj. What began as an encounter with a music organization soon turned into an enduring relationship with an oasis of art and culture. Shadaj is more than just a promoter of Indian classical music; it is a sanctuary where music breathes, lives, and unites hearts.

The concerts they curate carry a certain magic. There's a sense of care, a deliberate thoughtfulness in every performance. Whether it's a spellbinding recital by Kaushiki Chakraborty in a packed auditorium or an intimate baithak with Shubhada Paradkar, Vikas Kashalkar or Yashwant Vaishnav in a room full of quiet, attentive listeners, each moment feels handcrafted for the audience. These are not just concerts—they are experiences, each one unique yet tied together by the same thread of excellence. I still remember sitting barely a few feet away from Raghunandan Panshikar, his soulful Bhoop weaving a serene and meditative tapestry, enveloping the room in its nocturnal beauty. There was Ashwini Bhide's lyrical beauty in Rageshri, her voice painting emotions with a palette only she could wield. And Rajan-Sajan Mishra's Puriya—a quiet storm that enveloped the room. These moments felt alive, brimming with energy that stayed with me long after the final notes faded away.

Shadaj's magic lies in its ability to intertwine the grandeur of auditorium performances with the soulful intimacy of baithaks. While a concert in a large hall, like Kaushiki Chakraborty's and Rahul Sharma's, immerses the audience in the sheer power and scale of the music, a baithak creates an entirely different magic. Sitting close to the artist, you feel the nuances, the micro-expressions, and the unfiltered emotions that make Indian classical music so profound. These baithaks, reminiscent of traditional mehfil, bridge the gap between the artist and the audience, fostering a shared experience that feels both personal and transformative. I vividly recall a recent baithak by Apoorva Gokhale and Pallavi Joshi, where she performed Shree and Jogkauns. As she brought the audience to the sam, a collective harmony emerged, as if artist and listeners were breathing as one. The proximity to the artist allows the audience to offer daad on

great phrases—a simple "waah" or "kya baat hai" that connects the room in a celebration of artistry. Such moments highlight the importance of baithaks—they are not just performances; they are spaces where music transcends boundaries and brings everyone into a singular, unified rhythm. Shadaj's thoughtful balance of these formats ensures that every listener finds something to resonate with, whether they are drawn to the grandeur or the intimacy.

Shadaj's dedication to nurturing talent goes beyond showcasing established maestros; it extends to fostering promising young musicians. Their ability to identify and support rising stars like Anirudh Aithal is truly commendable. Concerts featuring such talents not only highlight the immense potential of these artists but also provide audiences with a glimpse into the future torchbearers of Indian classical music. By offering platforms that celebrate both vocal and instrumental traditions, Shadaj ensures a comprehensive and enriching representation of the classical heritage.

But Shadaj is not just about the music; it is about the people. It creates a space where music lovers connect, bond, and build a community. For someone new to Boston, this was more than a relief—it was a lifeline. Being surrounded by others who share the same passion for Indian classical music made this unfamiliar city feel like home. Conversations after concerts turned into friendships, and people I could riyaz with, and Shadaj became a thread weaving us together.

It is also about how it nurtures not just audiences but artists. For local amateur musicians, Shadaj offers a stage—a place to perform, to grow, and to share their talent. Open mic sessions, mentorship opportunities, and even the chance to accompany visiting maestros—these are gifts Shadaj gives generously. Imagine the inspiration of sharing a platform with stalwarts, of learning directly from those who have spent a lifetime mastering their craft. It's a dream for any aspiring artist. Then there are the music appreciation sessions—not mere lectures or lessons but rare windows into the soul of Indian classical music. These sessions provide an unparalleled opportunity to delve into the intricacies of gharanas and the

artistry of stalwarts. Sitting face-to-face with a master, listening to them unravel the depths of a raga or explain the subtle interplay of a taal, feels both intimate and profoundly enriching. For me, these sessions have transformed the way I engage with the music, deepening my appreciation and turning each listening experience into something immersive and transformative.

Gratitude is the word that comes to mind as I think about my journey with Shadaj. Gratitude for the music that has filled my life with beauty. Gratitude for the community it has fostered. Gratitude for the moments of transcendence that have made me feel more alive. And above all, gratitude to the incredible team behind Shadaj, whose dedication, vision, and tireless efforts have made this journey possible. Shadaj's ten years in Boston are not just a milestone—they are a celebration of art, of resilience, and of the timeless spirit of Indian classical music.

As I look back, I feel lucky to have been a part of it. Shadaj has given me more than music; it has given me a sense of belonging, a deepened passion, and memories that I will cherish forever. As they celebrate the ten-year milestone, I find myself dreaming of what lies ahead—of more concerts, more moments of magic, and more lives touched by their work. Here's to Shadaj—to ten years of excellence and to many more decades of enriching our world with music.

Dr. Nitin Joshi is an Assistant Professor at Brigham and Women's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, as well as a passionate student of Indian classical music.



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From Baithaks to Auditoriums: Celebrating the Magic of Shadaj

Craig Hall

When one thinks of Lexington, MA and music, the sound of Colonial style fife and drum is easily and immediately remembered along with images of revolutionary history and the annual April reenactment on the Battle Green. For modern listeners, Lexington luminaries including jazz musician Alan Dawson, singer/songwriter Amanda Palmer, and the Lexington Symphony might also come to mind. However over the last ten years, and in ever widening circles those Lexington musical associations have expanded to include the masterful classical music of India – represented by instruments including sitar, tabla, bansuri, and mridangam, and master musicians like Kaushiki Chakraborty, Pandit Rajan-Sajan Misra, and Ustad Shahid Parvez among others. These maestros and instruments are now frequently heard and celebrated in Lexington thanks to the passion, dedication and hard work of Rajesh Godbole and his world-class, Lexington based, grassroots organization, Shadaj.

Upon first consideration the "birthplace of American Liberty" might seem to be a surprising location to hear the best of India's musicians in concert, but there is actually a long history of the music of India in America. And while Emerson and Thoreau were reading the philosophers of India long before recorded music was widely available, many native New Englanders were first introduced to the tonality of the music of India through the Rock and Roll of the 1960s. The Rolling Stones, the Beatles and the use of Indian instruments on songs like "Paint it Black" and "Norwegian Wood" awakened a whole new musical experience to listeners in the west. While that introduction was brief and contained within the limits of rock song settings, the tone of the Indian instruments used was arresting and unforgettable. The sound of the sitar acted as a doorway to a new, yet somehow familiar feeling of encountering a large, warm, vital and welcoming soundscape of mystery and depth.

Many can credit John Lennon and George Harrison for an introduction to the music of India, and perhaps some misrepresentation regarding the mysticism attached to it. And many stopped making cultural and consciousness connections with those hit songs and records. For curious others, Lennon's interests led to an exploration of

Transcendental Meditation, yoga, and mindfulness; and Harrison was the doorway to his eventual sitar teacher, Ravi Shankar. Shankar did a great service to the West on his The Sounds of India album by starting the record with a concise explanation of the structure of the music. He ends his audio tutorial by saying, "The Western listener will appreciate and enjoy our music more if he listens with an open and relaxed mind, without expecting to hear harmony, counterpoint, or other elements prominent in Western music. Neither should our music be thought of as akin to Jazz - despite the improvisation and exciting rhythms present in both kinds of music."

And while Shankar encouraged differentiation with jazz, the genre's jazz musicians were paying close attention and incorporating eastern approaches in jazz sound aesthetics. From John and Alice Coltrane, to Don Cherry and Pharoah Sanders to many, many others, India's musical understanding was a portal to a new pallet of musical expression. Perhaps no western musician did a better job than virtuoso guitarist John McLaughlin who created an East-West fusion of musical and technical mastery with his Mahavishnu Orchestra. McLaughlin collaborated with musicians including the late percussion master Zakir Hussain, L. Shankar, and T. H. "Vikku" Vinayakram with their Shakti band, tours, and recordings.

My personal story with India and its wide range of influence on my life continues and is lengthy, lovely and multifaceted...and perhaps best left for a different article, but all of it put me in a perfect place of preparation to saying yes to collaboration with Rajesh Godbole 10 years ago. As a long-standing and self-supporting program of the Lexington Public Schools, Lexington Community Education curates and creates life-long learning opportunities for people of all ages. In addition to our classes for adults and children, LCE hosts musical concerts almost every term. We have had a wide range of representation in musical genres featured, with outstanding performances by many of today's best musicians, but many of the most memorable and magical have been our co-supporting experience with Shadaj. We have helped fill the seats in sold out Shadaj concerts at Cary Hall, Follen Church, and the Scottish Rite Museum

auditorium on many occasions. Attending a Shadaj concert with maestros including Ustad Shahid Parvev and Kaushiki Chakraborty is the equivalent of attending a concert featuring western music masters on the level of a Pablo Casals, John Coltrane, Mitsuko Uchida, or Ella Fitzgerald, all right here in Lexington, MA.

And while he tends to stay behind the scenes and let the music take the center stage it would be wrong to not highlight the reason for the existence and success of Shadaj. The vision, inspiration and motivation for ten-years of world class music here in Lexington is embodied in the mind, heart, hands and feet of Lexington resident, Rajesh Godbole. The classical music of India is his passion. I have never met someone as knowledgeable about Indian Classical music, or so well respected. Music needs musicians; musicians need listeners; listeners need venues; and venues need promoters and patrons. It is his hard work and heart-work that has made Lexington a new center space and destination place for the greatest Indian musicians.

Beyond our concert collaboration, LCE (along with our larger Lexington Public School family) and Shadaj are embarking on a new branch of musical education and are working to introduce instruments of India to students in the Lexington Public Schools. It's an exciting program that hopes to help pass the baton of appreciation and participation to future generations.

One of LCE's favorite non-musical guest speakers was the late

great poet Robert Bly who came to Lexington twice to give poetry readings for our program. On one such occasion he read with sitarist David Whetstone to accompany his Kabir, Ghalib and Mirabai poetic versions. At one point in the reading Bly encouraged us to attentively listen to the sitar player and to hear in the music a message from a loved one, or a therapist, or a god. He said that he loved the instrumental music of the sitar most of all because the music carried nothing but the truth.

Mystical, mathematical, intricate, virtuosic, emotive, transformative, complex, colorful, educational – any and all descriptors used to describe the listener's experience of Indian Classical music are true. Being a believer in the educational and community connecting power of music, and as a beneficiary of the music of India for most of my life, I am proud of Lexington Community Education's ten year history of supporting the work of Shadaj. Congratulations to Shadaj on ten years! And congratulations to Lexington, MA for once again becoming a revolutionary town, blending traditions and cultivating a strong and intelligent community through the appreciation of the very best in Indian classical music.

Craig Hall
Director of Lexington Community Education



Ustad Shahid Parvez Khan

Interview by - Kunal Gunjal

Q. Can you tell us about your musical lineage, how you started learning, and your journey?

A. My lineage begins with Sarojan Singh, Turab Khan, Ustad Sahebdad Khan, Ustad Imdad Khan, Ustad Enayet Khan, Ustad Vilayat Khan, Ustad Wahid Khan, my father Ustad Aziz Khan Sahib, and then myself. I am a seventh-generation musician. My musical training began at the age of three with vocal music in Raag Bhairav. My grandfather taught me the bandish “Allahi Allah” and instructed my father to continue my taleem—the gharana’s tradition—along with vocal training from my uncle, Hafeez Khan Sahib, in Raag Bhairavi in Jhaptaal.

Around the age of four, I received a small sitar, and my father began teaching me sargams. Simultaneously, he arranged for tabla lessons with Anjaya in Mumbai. My uncle also continued to teach me sitar and vocal music. That’s how my journey began.

Q. When and where was your first public performance? Any special memories?

A. My first concert was in Mumbai when I was seven. I wasn’t worried about the performance or the audience. My only concern was my father’s reaction, as he was never easily pleased with my playing. I spent the entire time concentrating on him, observing his reactions. I played Yaman.

Q. Was your father happy?

A. I don’t remember seeing him smile. He was...okay.

Q. Did you learn any other instruments before the sitar?

A. I started with the sitar, then began learning tabla, and later tried other instruments on my own. I used to play a little harmonium. I also tried guitar and banjo. I played these because, after my father passed away in 1974, when I took over his teaching position, there were very few sitar students. Most students were learning vocal music, harmonium, banjo, guitar, and tabla.

Q. Which artists have inspired you most?

A. There are many great masters, but I’ll mention three: Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan Saab, Ustad Amir Khan Saab, and Ustad Vilayat Khan Saab.

Q. You began performing when stalwarts like Ustad Vilayat Khan Saab, Ustad Rais Khan Saab, Pandit Nikhil Banerjee, and Pandit Ravi Shankar dominated the sitar world. How did you develop your unique style? Besides gayaki ang, your approach to raga development incorporates intricate layakari ang and the use of chhand (meter).

A. I didn’t consciously try to create a style. I learned from my father, listened to other masters, and played what I felt I should. I don’t claim it as “my style,” but that’s how it evolved. I felt there wasn’t much emphasis on layakari (rhythmic intricacies) in my gharana. So, I learned rhythmic patterns from various masters and tabla players, including Munnu Khan Saab, and also studied some South Indian rhythmic systems. This developed my style and distinguished it from others. Vilayat Khan Saab’s style was different, as was Ravi Shankar ji’s. I focus more on rhythm than Vilayat Khan Saab, who emphasized gayaki ang (vocal style). I considered how combining these approaches. I prioritized the music itself, then the gharana, then the raga, and other elements. I never aimed to produce complicated layakari or a different concept of raga development.

Q. What is your process for planning a raga presentation? Is it purely spontaneous, or do you sometimes pre-plan an approach?

A. A raga can be performed many times by an artist. The beauty lies in the artist’s creativity and the nature of the music itself. A raga can be presented in different shades. It’s inherent in the music, but you have to learn how to bring it out. I never pre-plan my concerts. Most of it is spontaneous, though some elements can be planned. Good music has two components: grammar or logic, and emotions and imagination. You need a balance of both. Even planned elements should sound spontaneous. That’s the art of presenting them.

Q. You admire legendary Hindi film singers and composers and sometimes play their songs privately. At a concert in Mishra Pilu, you seemed to allude to phrases from “MohePanghat Pe Nandalal.” Have you considered composing for films?

A. I did consider it. I received an offer, but the timing wasn't right. So, I didn't pursue it. I wasn't inspired by any specific song, but by the music itself. “MohePanghat Pe” is rooted in classical music. I enjoy and listen to old Bollywood music, but my inspiration comes from music in general, not specifically from Bollywood, light music, or classical music.

Q. Does your music-making process change when performing in an intimate baithak versus a large festival?

A. The music itself doesn't change. What's affected is the artist's mood, the vibrations, the environment, the size of the audience. We respond to the audience's energy. Small baithaks are more intimate and facilitate a closer connection with the audience. They have a different feeling. But sometimes we experience the same connection with larger audiences. So, inspiration and energy are not limited to smaller settings.

Q. Do you make changes to your presentation depending on your tabla accompanist? What are your expectations of a tabla player?

A. Yes, definitely. It happens automatically most of the time, and sometimes I make conscious adjustments. I have many expectations, which are difficult to fulfill. First, their playing should be musical. Second, it should complement my music and connect with me. It shouldn't sound like we're playing separate things. A good tabla player makes both the main artist and the audience happy, which is very difficult. Sometimes, if the audience is very happy, the artist isn't. If the artist is happy because the tabla player is accompanying well and not disturbing the performance, the audience might not be satisfied. Balancing both is the challenge.

Q. Have you ever considered being part of a world music project or fusion music?

A. I'm not against any kind of music. My only requirement is that I can fulfill my own musical needs. My requirement is simple: it has to be musical, and I should be able to showcase my talent.

Q. What advice do you have for young musicians pursuing Indian classical music?

A. First, listen to and learn from the old masters. Second, don't compromise tradition to please the audience. Be patient, learn diligently, and develop your talent within the framework of your tradition.

Q. What do you look for in a student before accepting them as a shagird (disciple)?

A. Firm determination, dedication, and hard work.

Kunal Gunjal

(Kunal Gunjal is a leading Santoor Player of his generation)



Mahotsav Sangeet – A Curious Enquiry!

Dr. Pushkar Lele

As I sat on the carpeted floor in the midst of a tightly packed crowd to listen to a friend sing at a mega-music festival in Pune on a winter evening, I suddenly heard a buzzing sound coming from somewhere behind me. The musician in me could detect the slight increase in this buzzing, non-musical frequency as a UFO approached us. It did not remain 'unidentified' for long. As it came closer to us, it could clearly be identified as a drone, moving like a highly intelligent vehicle with a focused mind of its own. It hovered above us for a while and then proceeded towards the stage, right in front of the performing artists, looking at them eye-to-eye from close quarters. As this hovering machine stared at them unsparingly and unapologetically, this in-your-face intrusion made the artists on stage a bit uncomfortable. The drone camera captured 'wonderful' shots of the performing artists that were immediately fed to the live transmission of the proceedings of the festival on giant LED screens at the venue.

The drone then 'moved on' to capture the vast ocean of audience members who had come in thousands, to listen to their favorite artistes. They squatted on the floor in a barricaded area or sat on chairs/sofas of different grades and sizes. Many came with their own seating spreads, water bottles, woolens and even some snacks! Each seating space was fiercely guarded. Trespassers were not welcome and reprimanded in special Puneri caustic language! Videographers who had perched themselves on wooden mini-machaans kept talking to their fellow mates on other camera positions. This conversation, which ideally should be done almost as a whisper, could be heard clearly by the unfortunate audience members close to them. Not all these conversations were about their work! Photographers (amateurs and professional), electronic media cameras and print media photographers kept jostling in front of the stage in pursuit of the 'perfect shot'. The audience members of-course had their own phones to add to this. With the firm

belief that recording the on-goings was their birth-right, a constant flurry of photographs and videos were taken by the 'rasiks'. Recording it was not enough for many. It was important to relay to the whole world then and there through status updates, display pictures, posts, stories complete with appropriate emoticons, stickers, hashtags, that they were 'listening' to X artist in Y festival. Were they really 'listening' ?!

The performing artists made sure that they thanked the organisers for inviting them to do 'sangeet seva/sangeet yagya/sangeet pooja' and praised the audience tactfully before they started their presentation. Instruments were re-tuned, sound checks hurriedly done and Gods/Gurus invoked. The audience mass had spread as far as their eyes could see under the blinding stage lights. They tried their best to 'look inwards', focus on invoking the raag, note by note and get into a state of deep concentration. But it was hard to come by...the many distractions around them pulled them in directions they had not desired or bargained for. After roars of clapping at the more 'eventful' or 'exciting' musical passages, the artists concluded their recital to make way for the next artist, waiting in line. They were escorted back-stage by stern looking muscular bouncers (an entity one would never have imagined to be associated with the ongoings of a classical music program!).

For the past several decades, musicians, music lovers and concert organisers have worked towards the promotion and propagation of Hindustani classical music. With changes in patronage, the 'darbari' mehfiles moved into the infamous kothas and later to the households of cultured patrons, who had sufficient resources to host musicians of repute. These intimate and by-invitation-only recitals were open to a small group of cultural elites and knowledgeable music lovers. As classical music became more 'popular', the music making

moved to bigger public venues like community halls, marriage halls, proscenium theatre auditoriums or large open-air theatres. The access to classical music became easier and more democratic. Thanks to the efforts of Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and his disciples as well as several other musician-educators following him, who started their own schools of music imparting a systematic and graded education in classical (art) music, that a growing body of initiated listeners slowly developed. AIR, Doordarshan, music departments in universities/colleges, music clubs and music 'conferences' all helped take this 'arty' music to the more 'common' masses. In the last few years, the thrust has been on increasing the 'quantity' and 'number' of listeners. This race has led to an ever-increasing trend in organizing mega festivals, 'events' and mahotsavs for bigger if not better audiences, who may or may not be musically literate. Today

in some of the culturally active cities of India like Pune, Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Ahmedabad etc., it is not uncommon for audiences to be flooded with options of various mega music festivals organised on open grounds/stadiums/heritage venues or specially built venues. These annual festivals are attended by thousands of music enthusiasts and boast of a line-up of top-rated artists. Some of these are organised by the Central or State governments and many by private trusts/entities. Many of these 'mahotsavs' are seen luring those on the edges or fringes of classical music with a multi-sensory 'experience' of visually stunning film-set styled stage backdrops, attractive lighting, aesthetic stage décor, popular musicians, food stalls, book stalls and other such merchandise. Entry is usually free or has fairly affordable ticket rates. From its lavish royal/regal settings to the austerity of music sammelans to these grandiose well-polished and packaged festivals, the humble Hindustani music has seen many ups and downs. Aren't all these changes good for the Hindustani classical music world? While we have surely succeeded in the quantitative game, there is a long way to go for increasing the level or quality of listenership. The young new-age musicians tend to welcome these changes while the older traditional purists scoff at it.

But no musician to my knowledge has ever refused an invitation to perform at these mammoth gatherings!

Is Hindustani classical music by its very nature, meant to be consumed by gigantic indiscriminating mobs or is better appreciated by a discerning few? Have we gone to the other extreme of democratizing classical music? Have these extra-musical factors affected the very nature, content and processes of classical music? How have artists adapted to this changing environment driven by numbers, scale, media-driven narratives and corporate patronage? Are we slowly losing the very essence and flavour of Hindustani music by our ambition to reach a greater number of 'viewers', if not listeners? Finally, are we really doing a service or disservice to the overall ecosystem of Hindustani music? These and many more uncomfortable questions are being raised today and rightly so.

One of the most glaring changes is the sheer physical distance between the artists on stage and the audience. Classical music is a dialogue between the performers who intentionally strive to create an artistic/aesthetic piece and in turn hope and expect for an encouraging appreciation by the audience. This is best achieved in an intimate setting where the artist and listeners are in close proximity...where the 'waah waah' and 'kya baat hai' can be heard and seen by the artists. A festival setting robs an artist of this earthy, natural and organic response, replacing it only by impersonal loud clapping. Naturally an artist over a period of time begins to strategize for maximum and frequent applause, deploying arsenals like fast taan-s, sargam patterns, tihai-s, tonal or rhythmic gimmickry, stage theatrics, volume power play and other such 'exciting' tactics. Can we blame the musicians entirely? Maybe, maybe not. Do all musicians resort to such tactics? Maybe not. But one cannot deny the natural impulse of an artist to want to appeal to this large mass which has an average or least common denominator musical IQ.

Raag sangeet, in any of the forms of Dhrupad, Khayal, Thumri or Tappa thrives on nuanced movements of swar-s and

List of artists at Shadaj Baithak

19th June 2015	Arti Ankalikar-Tikekar (Vocal)	Music Appreciation Session
20th June 2015	Arti Ankalikar-Tikekar (Vocal)	Amit Kavthekar (Tabla), Ramchandra Joshi (Harmonium)
19th September 2015	Bhuvanesh Komkali (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Vyasmurti Katti (Harmonium)
8th April 2016	Anand Bhate (Vocal)	Prasad Padhye (Tabla), Aditya Oke (Harmonium)
16th April 2016	Ustad Shahid Parvez (Sitar)	Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)
7th May 2016	Arshad Ali Khan (Vocal)	Harshad Kanetkar (Tabla), Uday Kulkarni (Harmonium)
27th August 2016	Jayateerth Mevundi (Vocal)	Anil Khare (Tabla), Narendra Nayak (Harmonium)
24th September 2016	Raghunandan Panshikar (Vocal)	Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Niranjan Lele (Harmonium)
5th November 2016	Prathamesh Laghate & Amit Kavthekar (Tabla),	Sarika Deshpande (Harmonium), Rucha Londhe (Compere)
26th March 2017	Ronu Majumdar (Flute)	Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)
28th April 2017	Manjusha Patil (Vocal)	Rajesh Pai (Tabla), Ramchandra Joshi (Harmonium)
13th May 2017	Ram Deshpande (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Ajay Joglekar (Harmonium)
8th September 2017	Jayateerth Mevundi (Vocal)	Keshav Joshi (Tabla), Narendra Nayak (Harmonium)
21th October 2017	Shubhada Paradkar (Vocal)	
19th November 2017	Shambhavi Dandekar (Kathak) - Shakir Khan (Sitar)	Harshad Kanetkar (Tabla)
14th April 2018	Pandit Rajan Misra - Pandit Sajan Misra (Vocal)	Shantilal Shah (Tabla) Sumit Mishra (Harmonium)
4th May 2018	Sanjeev Abhyankar (Vocal)	Ajinkya Joshi (Tabla), Tanmay Deochake (Harmonium)
19th May 2018	Shruti Sadolikar Katkar (Vocal)	Rajesh Pai (Tabla), Ramchandra Joshi (Harmonium)
3rd June 2018	Shounak Abhisheki (Vocal)	Harshad Kanetkar (Tabla), Uday Kulkarni (Harmonium)
29th September 2018	Manjiri Asanare Kelkar (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Suyog Kundalkar (Harmonium)
27th October 2018	Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla)	Suhail Yusuf Khan (Sarangi)
27th October 2018	Sweekar Katti (Sitar)	Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla)
27th October 2018	Arushi Mudgal (Odissi)	
13th April 2019	Omkar Dadarkar (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Milind Kulkarni (Harmonium)
26th April 2019	Ashwini Bhide Deshpande (Vocal)	Ramdas Palsule (Tabla), Siddhesh Bicholkar (Harmonium)
17th May 2019	Anand Bhate (Vocal)	Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Sudhir Nayak (Harmonium)
14th June 2019	Pravin Godkhindi - Shadaj Godkhindi (Flute)	Kiran Godkhindi (Tabla)
27th September 2019	Shubhendra Rao (Sitar) - Saskia De Haas (Cello)	Aditya Kalyanpur (Tabla)
9th November 2019	Arti Kundalkar (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Suyog Kundalkar (Harmonium)
8th August 2020	Pandit Vekatesh Kumar (Vocal)	Keshav Joshi (Tabla), Narendra Nayak (Harmonium)
8th August 2020	Ankush Nayak (Sitar)	Shreedutt Prabhu (Tabla)
12th September 2020	Jayateerth Mevundi (Vocal)	Gururaj Hegde Adukul (Tabla), Narendra Nayak (Harmonium)
19th September 2020	Rafique Khan (Sitar)	Gururaj Hegde (Tabla)
7th November 2020	Kaushiki Chakraborty (Vocal)	Debjit Patitundi (Tabla), Sarwar Hussein (Sarangi), Gaurab Chatterjee (Harmonium)
5th December 2020	Abhishek Borkar (Sarod)	Satyajit Talwalkar (Tabla)





2nd January 2021	Raghunandan Panshikar (Vocal)	Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Suyog Kundalkar (Harmonium)
27th February 2021	Bhuvanesh Komkali (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Abhishek Shinkar (Harmonium)
20th March 2021	Pandit Venkatesh Kumar (Vocal)	Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Narendra Nayak (Harmonium)
24th April 2021	Ramakant Gaikwad (Vocal)	Pandurang Pawar (Tabla), Sudhanshu Gharpure (Harmonium)
25th July 2021	Shounak Abhisheki (Vocal)	Mangesh Mule (Tabla), Tanmay Deochake (Harmonium)
22nd August 2021	Yadnesh Raikar (Sitar)	Ramdas Palsule (Tabla)
30th October 2021	Apoorva Gokhale - Pallavi Joshi (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Liladhar Chakradev (Harmonium)
29th January 2022	Anand Bhate (Vocal)	Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Suyog Kundalkar (Harmonium)
2nd April 2022	Suhail Yusuf Khan (Sarangi)	Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)
14th May 2022	Ustad Shahid Parvez (Sitar)	Aditya Kalyanpur (Tabla)
17th September 2022	Bhuvanesh Komkali (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Abhishek Shinkar (Harmonium)
25th September 2022	Rakesh Chourasiya (Flute)	Purbayan Chatterjee (Sitar) Ojas Adhiya (Tabla)
22nd October 2022	Priya Purushothaman (Vocal)	Tejas Tope (Tabla), Rohan Prabhudesai (Harmonium)
23rd April 2023	Kaivalyakumar Gurav (Vocal)	
30th April 2023	Kaushiki Chakraborty (Vocal)	Sandip Ghosh (Tabla), Murad Ali Khan (Sarangi), Tanmay Deochake (Harmonium)
13th May 2023	Rakesh Chourasiya (Flute)	Nitin Mitta (Tabla)
10th June 2023	Apoorva Gokhale - Pallavi Joshi (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Chinmay Kolhatkar (Harmonium)
26th August 2023	Shaswati Mandal (Vocal)	Pranav Gurav (Tabla), Dnyaneshwar Sonawane (Harmonium)
26th August 2023	Dhananjay Hegde (Vocal)	Pranav Gurav (Tabla), Dnyaneshwar Sonawane (Harmonium)
16th September 2023	Rahul Sharma (Santoor)	Aditya Kalyanpur (Tabla)
8th October 2023	Rahul Deshpande and Priyanka Barve	
28th October 2023	Raghunandan Panshikar (Vocal)	Bharat Kamat (Tabla), Amey Bichu (Harmonium)
16th March 2024	Indrani Mukherjee (Vocal)	Apurba Mukherjee (Tabla), Anirban Chakraborty (Harmonium)
27th April 2024	Omkar Dadarkar (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Siddhesh Bicholkar (Harmonium)
12th May 2024	Sajan Misra - Swaransh Misra (Vocal)	Ashis Sengupta (Tabla), Vinay Mishra (Harmonium)
8th June 2024	Ambi Subramaniam (Violin) - Pravin Godkhindi (Flute)	Soumiya Narayanan (Ghatam), Akshay Anantapadmanabham (Mridangam), Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)
3rd August 2024	Yadnesh Raikar (Sitar)	Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)
4th August 2024	Vikas Kashalkar (Vocal)	Yogesh Karale (Tabla), Pravin Kaslikar (Harmonium)
14th September 2024	Bhagyes Marathe (Vocal)	Pranav Gurav (Tabla), Amey Bichu (Harmonium)
4th October 2024	Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla)	Kaavya Valeti (Harmonium)
5th October 2024	Manas Kumar (Violin) - S Akash (Flute)	Amit Kavthekar (Tabla)
5th October 2024	Abhishek Borkar (Sarod)	Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla)
6th October 2024	Aniruddh Aithal (Vocal)	Yashwant Vaishnav (Tabla), Varun Kelkar (Harmonium), Yogesh Karale (Tabla)
26th October 2024	Ram Deshpande (Vocal)	Sanjay Deshpande (Tabla), Abhishek Shinkar (Harmonium)

laya-taal. But even subtler and delicate than this is the usage of definite swar-sthanas/shruti-s/shade(s) of a note that are specific to a particular raag. Hindustani classical vocalists and melodic instrumentalists have for centuries exulted the usage and power of this microtonality as one of the most unique and distinguishing features of Hindustani music. The same is true of Carnatic music. I have memories of several such occasions during small intimate concerts when my Guruji Pt. Vijay Sardeshmukh ji would hit the precise swar-sthana in a raag, giving the entire audience goosebumps. Some of the most memorable and mesmerizing music that I have heard from several stalwart musicians is in such small mehfls. Equally fascinating is to observe the gentle exchange of musical ideas happening between the 'main' and 'accompanying' artists. A gentle nod or smile of acknowledgement to appreciate a suggested direction for improvisation by the harmonium/sarangi/tabla artists, the dynamic range from the super soft to the aggressively loud, the suggestive but restrained musical abhinaya in the enunciation of words, the intricate laykaari/taalkaari in vocal/rhythmic instrumental solos...all such subtler dynamics can be observed and savored only in a smaller intimate setting. The general informality of smaller concerts, the post and mid-concert possibility of close interaction with the performing artists, the friendly banter amongst connoisseurs, the heated debates over the technicalities of a performance and the simple dignified settings are enveloped in a warm embrace by the true sadhaks of music. One would get to hear rare raag-s/bandish-s/forms in these small mehfls, which would go on leisurely without the pressure of time constraints. Musicians would at times pull out unheard compositions from their secret repertoire. One left the venue with a feeling of contentment and the impact or rather hangover of such content-laden concerts stayed for weeks if not months or years. This dignified sublime personal experience is rare to come by in today's mega festival where musical fireworks and dazzling displays of 'tayyari' are used to 'impress' the large

masses. This piquant music is instantly gratifying but the 'impact' of it is rarely of a lasting nature. The overall formality and pretentiousness of mega festivals attracts 'consumers' of music than seekers. Here 'mahotsavi' artists rule the roost as against 'baithaki' gayak/vadaks!

The introverted nature of Hindustani music and musicians needs laser-focused concentration, a conducive relaxed atmosphere with minimal distractions and an acoustic space that acts as natural feedback. Large festivals in large spaces need large amplification, multiple speakers and a complex sound design, which does not always work for the performing artist (or even the audience). The modern craze for 'clear', 'clean' and 'crisp' sound tends to make our 'acoustic' well rounded music sound too sharp and shrill. Open spaces are not too conducive for our temperature sensitive instruments either. Musicians now increasingly rely on electronic tanpuras than the acoustic ones. This mechanical robotic drone sets an artificial canvas for the musician. The overall pace of phraseology which was quite leisurely a few years ago now seems a bit hurried. A tendency to project a loud volume, unnecessary and musically unjustified accompaniment by an assortment of instrumentalists/vocal support and such paraphernalia, jugalbandis of all kinds, safe and formulaic musical content, curtailment in duration of individual raag presentations and rounding off with popular frenzy-inducing high-pitched bhajans are some of the other unsavory fall-outs of the pressure on artists to 'entertain' and 'engage' a vast audience. Since these festivals are mostly sponsored by big corporates, the curation is not based entirely on musical or merit-based considerations. Artists who are 'saleable' or 'commercially viable' are preferred. As a result, the same few artists are found performing in multiple festivals. Quid-pro-quo and 'exchange-offers' have become an accepted norm in the curation. Video and print ads of sponsors on flexes, standees and giant LED screens appear garish in an ecosystem that thrives on subtlety. But subtlety (musical and otherwise) does not work on a mass scale and is

usually one of the greatest casualties. Mass audiences come for such festivals for a variety of reason. For some, the music assumes centrality and everything else is a by-product or bonus. For many festival-goes it is the other

way round! Many go 'to be seen and spotted' specially if you have VIP sofa seats, as a 'prestigious/fashionable or cultured thing to do', to sample the food outlets, browse through music related books, calendars and other merchandise, to 'see' young artists perform and if time permits, listen to some music! Does classical music really need such transient migratory audiences? Organizers justify the scale saying that if only a small percentage of this mass takes to classical music, that is an achievement in itself. The real initiated knowledgeable kansen-s have slowly started avoiding these festivals. They prefer to go to intimate home concerts or smaller festivals that happen all through the year, where musicians get enough time to present, the quality of music is superior and the distractions almost non-existent. These connoisseurs listen to music with devotion, dedincnuance,

intricacy and depth. Their engagement is organic, deep, critical and meaningful.

While there are pros and cons to each format and each of these can peacefully co-exist, what kind of listener one wants to be is a personal choice. As festivals continue to grow in number and scale, there seems to be an increasing trend, at least in cities like Pune-Mumbai, to go back to limited capacity full-length concerts where the sanctity and microtonality of Hindustani music can be savored.

Dr. Pushkar Lele

The writer is a Hindustani classical vocalist, academic and researcher based in Pune. He conducts an online certificate course in Music appreciation, certified by Centre for Performing Arts (Savitribai Phule Pune University) through the Department of Performing Arts, Modern College of Arts, Science and Commerce, Shivajinagar, Pune where he works as the Head.



Access Shadaj Baithak concerts on YouTube here



Pandit Sanjeev Abhyankar

Interview by Rajesh Godbole

Q. You shot to fame as a child prodigy. Did you have any realization of the grammar or complexity of what you were singing at that time?

A. I started learning Khyal from the age of eight. My mother started teaching me how to develop a Khyal at the age of eleven with morning and evening practice sessions. The evening session would be with the tabla accompaniment. As I am a child prodigy, I had a clear understanding of the grammar and complexity of what I was singing, even at that time. Most of the things I rendered as a child were well rehearsed but with a very clear understanding of what I was doing. It was a rehearsed rendition with a lot of spontaneity. I started giving a limited number of concerts as a child. My parents accepted the concerts with the intention that I would practice regularly. It gave me a target to work towards.

Q. Tell us about some of your early performances in front of giants like Bhimsen Ji, Hirabai Badodekar Ji, P. L. Deshpande ji and others.

A. The legendary Smt Hirabai Badodekar ji arranged my performance at her house, during Ganapati Utsav, back to back three years 1982-83-84. The stalwarts like Pandit Bhimsen Joshi ji, Pt. Vasant Rao Deshpande ji, Smt Gandubai Hangal ji, Smt Jyotsna Bhole ji and the great P. L. Deshpande ji all heard me perform at different occasions. I was very young to understand the greatness of these people sitting in front of me, in the audience. The only thing I knew was to sing to my potential which I always did. There was no pressure as such on me. They praised my singing whole heartedly and guided my parents in taking a crucial decision. That was to make me a full time professional vocalist with main focus on Khyal singing, which is a creative art form with no boundaries.

Q. Tell us about your formative years before you became Pandit Jasraj ji's disciple.

A. In 1983, when Guruji (Pt. Jasraj Ji) accepted me as a student, I was only in 9th Standard in school. Till I finished my 10th standard, my routine was same as any other school going child. The main difference was that I would practice for one hour in the morning and one hour in the late evening since 7th grade. Apart from this, I used to play a lot on the playground, in the evening, before my evening music practice session. On the ground, we would be engaged in general sports. Later on, badminton caught my fancy and for over twenty years, whenever I had time and whenever I was in Pune, I would play badminton. I was very good in studies as well, but never a book worm. My grasping was exceptional. Before going to Pandit Jasraj ji, I learnt for six years under the guidance of Pt. Pimpalkhare ji from the Gwalior – Kirana gharana. I received taalim for close to forty Ragas from him.

Q. Can you tell us about your "taalim" with Pandit Jasraj ji? What was the nature of the talim like?

A. After I finished my 10th standard, I started travelling with Guruji all over India for his concerts. I would give vocal support to him continuously for ten long years. I must have accompanied him for over three hundred live concerts in life. That was the greatest learning experience. He used to be out of Mumbai most of the times. So, being with him was the only way one could gain the knowledge from him, thoroughly. In addition to this, he used to take two workshops of two to four weeks in a year. During these workshops, we would have two learning sessions per day. That was the era with no mobiles. So, there were no distractions and, the workshops became very enlightening and enriching. Whenever Guruji was in Mumbai, I would stay at his place and, he would teach me whenever he felt like. The rest of the time, I would practice whatever he had taught. During every summer, he would be in the United States. During that time, I would be in Pune, at my home, practicing three times a day. I would practice for about four and a half hours daily - morning two and a half hours, afternoon one hour and late evening one hour. The evening practice would be with tabla accompaniment.

Q. What would be your advice to students of music? What, how and how much should they practice?

A. How much one should practice is highly subjective. One should practice only till the voice is not strained. One should be utterly focused, with full concentration. The duration will differ according to the phase one is in and, the temperament one has. There is no fixed rule for all. Ultimately, what matters is the result. One should keep the brain alert and the ears open. That is most important.

Q. You became well known in the classical circuit as a prime disciple of Jasraj ji with gayaki much like his. Over the years you have evolved as an artist and have created a distinct style of your own. How was that journey?

A. Everyone follows his or her Guru's gayaki in the formative years. That is how one is trained to sing. Later, one is expected to carve out his own niche. The same happened with me. But, the main difference was that I was always in the lime light. First, as a child prodigy and later, as the prime disciple of Guruji. I was always under the scanner and, there were tremendous expectations from me. When I realised this, I consciously made efforts to create my distinct style without changing the essence of the Gayaki I had learnt and, which was very dear to me. Guru ji's gayaki suited my temperament. The change I made was in the design. It had to be completely independent with a very different concert repertoire than my Guruji. I composed many bandishes and devotional songs and, placed them in the forefront in my concerts. I decide to not use any nostalgia and goodwill generated by my Guruji, his compositions and style. I wanted everyone to see me as "Sanjeev Abhyankar" It was a journey full of patience and perseverance.

Q. A good artist often incorporates various musical influences to shape their own style. What other artists, besides Jasraj ji, have inspired you? Have you consciously imbibed certain aspects of their music into your style?

A. After ten years of continuous travel with Guruji, I stopped travelling with him post my marriage in 1995. I accompanied him on stage for vocal support only in Pune after that. After I stopped travelling with him, I listened to all the past and present stalwarts from all the Gharanas, both vocalists and instrumentalists. I did not follow anyone in particular. I just fed the data to my brain (as is done in Machine Learning). Later with time, my inherent talent must have worked to create a distinct style.

Q. In what ways does one's personality shape their music?

A. In every aspect it shapes. First and foremost is the aesthetics part. Aesthetics is very subjective. How aesthetically one lives in the world will shape up the approach towards his art. The one, who is casual as a person, will be casual as an artist. One who is highly critical as a person will be highly critical about his art as well. One who is a perfectionist in approach in life will try to be a perfectionist in the art as well.

Q. What are your views on raag "ras"? Do you find that certain raags are closer to your personality than others? How does your treatment change based on the nature of the raag?

A. Every Raag is suitable for multiple Rasas. While choosing or composing a bandish for use in a particular Raag, I make sure that the words used evoke the feeling, which is suitable for the Rasas, which the particular Raag is suitable for. I feel, the Rasas which are closer to my personality are Bhakti rasa, Karun rasa, Shringaar ras, Shanta rasa, Adbhut ras, and Anand ras.

I understand the emotion (Bhav) of a particular Raag and also of the chosen rasa. My treatment of the Raag and the rasa on that particular time automatically merges as per the requirement. And I am able to give full justice to it. It is like "Para Kaaya Pravesh", that is the soul being able to enter another body and, assume the characteristics of the same, for a while.

Q. You have done playback singing also. Is the voice production technique different for playback singing compared to "raag" singing?

A. Yes. The voice production is different in all forms of light singing, compared to the Khyal singing. The Khyal singing needs a lot of "Theharav" (Holding of notes) and also, a different type of voice movement, with comparatively lesser emphasis on the use of words. In light form of music, the movement of the voice happens with continuous use of words. The "Theharav" is short and one needs to be in tune while uttering each and every word. This requires a different mindset and habit. The short "Theharav" is also not easy. Both need different types of concentration. Both are difficult to master.

Q. What makes music "asardar"? What more is required than good voice, command over technique and intellect?

A. "Asar" or the impact one leaves is a combination of good voice, command over technique, intellect, concentration, the stability of the mind, belief in one's own craft and discipline. If one has all of these, some "Asar" will surely be there.

Q. How is a "baithak" performance different from a "festival" performance?

A. This is very difficult to explain. Every performance setting brings a different presentation challenge. What I need, as a performer, is excellent sound system and eye contact with the listeners. If I have these, then it doesn't matter, if the format is a Baithak or "Festival" performance. But, the probability of getting good eye contact is more in the Baithak format. Plus one gets instant gratification in the Baithak format, just by studying and understanding the facial expressions of the audience.

Q. In what way does up-close audience interaction influence, if at all, your music making?

A. I wish to take the listeners with me in my musical flight of fancy. If I can see that happening, I am then inspired to give the maximum that I have. If I cannot see anything, I would still be giving my maximum, but it might not be my best.

Q. What is your process of planning a raag presentation prior to a concert? e.g Every time you sing Bageshri, there is a certain novelty, newness about it. Is it purely organic or do you pre-plan a particular approach to render a raag on a day? such as ... today I want to highlight a certain phrase or a certain pattern or swar sangati etc...

A. My presentation is purely organic. I can, at the most, pre-plan which raag I would present, on a certain day. But most of the times, changes do happen, at the last moment. I just go by the instinct, after reaching the stage. But, if the first raag, which I had decided, in advance, changes, then the rest will also change. Plus, I don't know which one will make an impact or which one will click on that day. Therefore, most of my presentation is purely spontaneous.

Q. How important is it to be able to visualize the music?

A. Very important. Visualization uplifts the performance and, brings life to my presentation. That is what takes me to another world as I sing and, may be, that is what takes the audiences to another world as well.

Q. Is voice culture ("aawajacha lagaw") and "Gayaki" interdependent?

A. The voice culture is the most important element of the Gayaki. It is the most important tool with which one is going to paint a picture called "Gayaki".

Q. To what extent rendering of a raag is governed by the Bandish you choose?

A. The bandish drives the presentation to a great extent. Therefore, I choose the appropriate bandishes, according to the way I wish to present the Raag.

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Rāga Samaya: A New Approach

Dr. Keshavchaitanya Kunte

Indian tradition considers the concept of 'time' eternal and cyclical, recurring in nature. Since time is eternal, it is impossible to measure it accurately, but humans have been calculating it according to their own needs and convenience. That is why many methods of time measurement exist in various cultures.

In Indian culture, since Vedic times, the cycle of day and night (ahornisha), week (saptāha), fortnight (pakṣa), month (māsa), year (varṣa), era (yuga), etc. have been measured. Day or ahan is considered the period of sunlight and night (nishā) is the period of moonlight. When these two units of 12 hours are combined, this 24-hour day-night period is called 'ahorātri'. In between ahorātri, two sandhikāla (the time when daylight and darkness come together) are considered. The ahorātri period is divided into three prahara each. With this, a total of eight prahara, i.e. 'aṣṭauprahara', are counted, namely four prahara of the day and four prahara of the night.

Many divisions of the period of day and night were made in ancient times. They have been mentioned since the Vedic period - sūryodaya (the time when darkness disappears after the sun rises and light appears), saṅgava (the time when cows are taken to graze), sunrise and sangva together were considered 'prātaḥ kāla'. The time divisions such as mādhyandina (the time when the sun is overhead in the afternoon), aparānha (the time before sunset, in the late afternoon), sāyamkāla or sandhyākāla (the time when the cattle taken for grazing are brought back in the evening, as their hooves kick up dust, hence this is also called 'godhulī samaya'), astaṅyana (the time of sunset), niśā or śarvarī (the time when the moon rises and the night begins), utara rātri (midnight), apisharvara (the time between night and dawn), uṣaḥ kāla (the time when the light red sunrays break out) and svasara (the time when the birds wake up, the time when the cows are first milked).

Music and Time Relationship in India -

Vedic music had instructions to sing specific hymns at specific times and in particular ways. Although Bharata Muni's Nāṭya Sāstra recorded instructions to sing specific dhruvā (theatrical songs) to indicate the direction of day and night in particular situations in the drama, there is mention of a direct connection between jāti or grāma-rāga with time. Looking at the history of Indian music, it is clear that the rāga and ṛtu (season) connotation was established even before the rāga-samaya connection. The relationship between specific rāgas and seasons has been mentioned in many Sanskrit musicological texts. The rāga-ṛtu connotation was first mentioned in 'Abhinava Bhārati', a commentary on Nāṭya Sāstra by Abhinava Gupta. Abhinav Gupta (11th century), the most important commentator on Nāṭya Sāstra, referred to the statement of Kāshyapa, the great sage, and mentioned the relationship between rāgas and seasons – "One shall sing Preṅkholita and Mālavapañcama during the spring season. Then from grīṣma ṛtu, i.e. summer, it is appropriate to present Takka rāga, Gauḍa Kakubha, Bhinnaṣaḍja, Kauśikī, Bhinnapañcama in subsequent seasons."

The text Bharatabhāṣya (11th century) by Nānyadeva, a king of Mithilā also links grāmarāga with the seasons and, for the first time, specific gīti (style of rendering a song) are mentioned for specific prahara of the day. Nānyadeva prescribes śuddha and bhinna gīti in the first yāma or prahara, gauḍī gīti in the afternoon, vesarā gīti in the late afternoon and sādharmaṇa gīti in all the praharas. It is noteworthy that not only the rāga but also the gīti are linked to samaya.

Although there are differences of opinion in medieval Sanskrit texts on music regarding the rāga and ṛtu cakra (seasonal cycle), the generally accepted rāga- ṛtu connotation is as follows -

vasanta ṛtu - phālguna to caitra i.e. February to April	grīṣma ṛtu - vaiśākha to jyestha April to June	varsā ṛtu - āṣāḍha to śrāvaṇa June to August	sharada ṛtu - bhādrapada to aśvina August to October	hemanta ṛtu - kārtika to mārgaśīrṣa October to December	shishira ṛtu - pauṣa to māgha December to February
Hindola	Dīpaka	Megha	Bhairava	Mālakaunsa	Shrī

Even in modern times, the rāgas Basant and Bahar are considered to be related to the spring season, and the types of Megh and Malhar to the rain season, but in the case of seasons other than spring and rain, the rāga-ṛtu connotation is not observed. Today, there is no practical following to the connection of specific rāgas with the seasons other than spring and rainy seasons in Hindustani music.

The book *Saṅgīta Cūḍāmaṇī* (circa 1140 CE), composed by Jagadekamalla or Pratāpa Simha (1134-1145), son of the Cālukya king Someśvar II of Kalyāṇī, has mentioned 27 rāgas and their timings. From the name of the book *Saṅgīta Samaya Sāra* (circa 1250 CE) written by the Jain monk Pārśvadeva, it seems that the text must be dealing with rāga-samaya relationship; but no such connotation is mentioned in this text. However, in the *Saṅgīta Ratnākara* (circa 1320 CE), the author Niḥśaṅka Sāṅgadeva, while describing the rāgas, clearly mentioned the timing of the rāgas in the following manner: ‘geyo ahanhaḥ prathama yāme’, ‘madhyama ahnogeyo’, and also mentioned the relationship of rāgas with the seasons. No other scholar before Jagadekamalla and Sāṅgadeva had mentioned the rāga-samaya connotation so clearly. So, Jagadekamalla and Sāṅgadeva are considered to be the first exponents of the rāga-samaya theory. However, no logical reason for this relationship is mentioned in either of their texts – perhaps they must have mentioned it because they might have observed that contemporary musicians follow such a connotation. It is speculated that the root cause of the rāga-samaya relationship may have been the indication of presenting a specific music composition at a specific time in religious worship. Over time, this religious worship connection may have been abandoned and transformed into only presenting a specific music composition at a specific time.

Later, the rāga-samaya reference was mentioned in the book *Saṅgīta Dāmodara* (15th century), written by Acarya Subhaṅkara of Bengal. The rāga-samaya, rāga-ṛtu relationship is recorded in the *Rāgādhyāya* of *Saṅgīta Darpaṇa* (c. 1625 CE), composed by Dāmodara. In the book *Rāgatarāṅgiṇī* (circa 1675 CE) by Locana Paṇḍita, while describing each rāga, its time and specific poetic meters are attributed for the song forms. Although many such medieval texts mention the relationship between rāga and time, there is no uniformity in them, and no precise reason is given for this relationship. Some music historians think that the relationship between rāga, time and season may have become stronger due to the practice of performing music in aṣṭayāma (eight prayer services) in several spiritual traditions in various regions of India from the 15th-16th centuries, mainly in the Vaishnava traditions (*Puṣṭimārgī Havelī Saṅgīta*, *Sopāna Saṅgīta* in Kerala, temple music in Odisha, *Saṅkīrtana Saṅgīta* in Manipur, Assamese *Sattriya Saṅgīta*, as well as the Sikh *Gurbāni Kīrtan*).

In modern times, Pandit V. N. Bhatkhande, in his book ‘*Hindustāni Saṅgīta Paddhati*’, formulated the rāga-samaya theory with a methodical perspective. This theory was precise and well-planned, and it strengthened and established the rāga-samaya cycle in the modern era. Pt. Bhatkhande arranged the scheme of rāga-samaya according to the ten thāṭa-s that he described, and it was in accordance with the vādi-samvādi svara in the rāga. In the twilight rāga, Re and Dha are flat (komala), they become śuddha in the next prahara. Then he arranged the rāga-s with komala Ga, Ni in sequence and the thāṭa having more vikṛta svara-s in the next prahara-s. In the morning rāga-s śuddha Ma is dominant, while evening rāga-s tīvra Ma is dominant. Therefore, Madhyama svara is considered ‘adhvadarśaka svara’ (the time indicating note). If the vādi svara is in the pūrvāṅga, the rāga is considered ‘pūrvāṅga vādi rāga’ or ‘pūrva rāga’, and if the vādi svara is in uttarāṅga, it is considered ‘uttarāṅga vādi rāga’ or ‘uttara rāga’. Pandit Bhatkhande prescribed the order in which pūrva rāga is to be performed from the morning to midday and from the beginning of the night to midnight, while uttara rāga is to be performed from midday to the last hour of the day and from midnight to dawn. With this, one can identify the prahara or time of the rāga just with the vādi svara. Of course, if the vādi svara is śaḍja, madhyama or pañcama, they cannot be identified as pūrva rāga or uttara rāga; therefore, he also indicated that such rāga-s will be performed in a specific prahara according to their pūrvāṅga pradhāna or uttarāṅga pradhāna nature.

It should be noted here that rāga does not have a fixed clock time, but can be performed at any time within a few hours of a prahar. Hence, the rāga-samaya connotation was not rigid, but was somewhat flexible, as propounded by Pandit Bhatkhande.

Rāga-Samaya Cycle

First prahara of the day: 6 AM to 9 AM (or 7 AM to 10 AM) – Bhairava, types of Bhairava (Ahir Bhairava, Shivamat Bhairava, Nat Bhairava), Ramkali, Gunakri, Bibhas, Jogiya, Kalingada, Basantmukhārī, Bairagi, etc.

Second prahara of the day: 9 AM to 12 PM (or 10 AM to 1 PM) – Bilawal and its types (Alhaiya, Shukla, Kukubh, Devgiri, Yamani, Sukhiya, Lachchhasakh Bilawal, etc.), Deshkar, Gaudsarang, Hindol, Subah Ki Malavi, Asavari, Jaunpuri, Devgandhar, Desi, Todi and Todi types (Gujari, Bhupal, Bilaskhani, Lachari, etc.), Bhairavi, Khat, Salagvarālī, etc.

Third prahara of the day: 12 PM to 3 PM (or 1 to 4 PM) – Sarang and types (Vrindavani, Madhamad, Samant, Śuddha, Badhans, Lankadahan, etc.), Suha, Sugharai, Suhasugharai, Sakh types (Ram, Lachha, Bhava, Devsakh), Dhanashree, Hanskinkini, Dhani, Bhim, Palasi, Bhimpalasi, Gavati, Patdeep, Madhuvanti, Multani, etc.

Fourth prahara of the day: 3 to 6 PM (or 4 to 7 PM) - Marwa, Shri, Purvi, Pūrva, Puriyadhanashri, Gauri, Lalitagauri, Maligaura, Pūrva, Jaita, Jaitashri, Malshri, Sham Ki Malavi, Barari, Vihang, Triveni, Pūrva Kalyan, Sanjh Ki Hindol or Sanjha, etc.

First prahara of the night: 6 to 9 PM (or 7 to 10 PM) - Kalyan (Yaman), Kalyan types and Kalyan ang rāgas, Bhoop, Śuddhakalyan, Shyamkalyan, Kedar, Kamod, Hamir, Hansdhwani, Chhayanat and types of Nata, Bihag and Bihag Ang rāgas, Shankara, Durga, Aarbhi, Pratapvarali, Khamaj, Desh, Tilakkamod, Bihari, Tilang, Narayani, Kalavati,

Second prahara of the night: 9 PM to 12 AM (or 10 to 1 AM) – Jaijaywanti, Gara, Kafi, Sindhura, Bageshree, Audave Bageshree, Rageshree, Khambavati, Hindoli or Bhinna Shadja, Malgunji, Abhogi, Gorakh, Bahar types (Basant Bahar, Hindol Bahar, etc.), Malakans and types of (Chandrakans, Sampurna Malakans, Daraskans, Jogkans, Madhukans, etc.),

Third prahara of the night: 12 to 3 AM (or 1 to 4 AM) – Darbari Kanada and types (Naiki Kanada, Kafi Kanada, Raisa Kanada, Shahana Kanada, Adana, etc.), Megh, Miyan Malhar and types of Malhar (Gaud Malhar, Sur Malhar, Jayant Malhar, etc.),

Fourth prahara of the night: 3 to 6 AM (or 4 to 7 AM) – Basant, Paraj, Puriya, Sohni, Lalit, Pancham, Bhankhar, Bhatiyar.

Counterparts to the rāgas of day and night

Some rāgas of day and night have similar svara structure, similar internal tempo (calana), are of the same nature and sound like a reflection of each other. Such rāga-s are considered counter-melodies. For example,

Bihag (night rāga) – Gaudasarang (day rāga – also known as ‘Din Ka Bihag’),

Todi (morning) – Multani (late afternoon)

Deshkar (morning) – Bhupali (night)

Hindol (morning) – Sanjha (evening)

Bilawal thāṭa Gunakali (morning) – Rata Ki Gunakali (night)

Sarang (afternoon) – Megh (midnight)

Many such examples can be mentioned. Due to such similarity, some rāgas are sung both during midnight and afternoon, e.g. Suha, Sugharai.

Rāgas not bound to specific time

Some rāgas are not considered to be bound to a specific time and musicians are allowed to perform them as per wish. Especially the rāgas which evolved from folk tunes are considered as suitable to be sung at any time. For example, Khamaj, Kafi, Mand, Pilu, Gara, Pahadi, etc. Ragini Bhairavi is traditionally a morning rāga, but it is an

all-time rāga today – the reason might be its omnipresence in folk music to religious music and art music. Many rāgas such as Kirwani, Charukeshi, etc. were borrowed from the Carnatic music stream. Since there is no rāga-time connotation in Carnatic music, these rāgas are not time-bound and musicians take liberty in performing them at wish.

On what basis can the relationship between time and rāga be established?

1. The state of the svaras (śuddha & vikṛta) and the condition of light-darkness in nature - There is a transition from darkness to light from dawn to dusk, and from light to darkness during dusk to dawn. Many scholars believe that this transition of light and darkness is reflected in the transition from rāgas containing komal svaras to rāgas of tīvra svaras, and again from rāgas of tīvra svaras back to rāgas with komal svaras. It is believed that Rāga Saṅgīta has a strong relationship with nature. In fact, artists such as Pandit Kumar Gandharva firmly believed that nature itself is reflected in the music and thus, this thought relates the komal-tīvra state of the svaras in rāgas to the light-darkness conditions in day and night.

2. The relation of time and pūrva-uttarāṅga pradhānatā and calana - From both twilight periods, the journey of rāgas in the next prahara is from pūrvāṅga pradhānatā to uttarāṅga pradhānatā and from rāgas of slow calana (internal tempo of the melodic design of the rāga) to rāgas with dynamic calana. The relationship of the time cycle is thus sequentially linked to the rāga cycle.

3. Psychosomatic relationship of svaras in rāgas - The psychosomatic state of a person in the sleep, wakefulness and active states are linked to the composition of komal-tīvra svaras and pūrvāṅga-uttarāṅga pradhānatā of the rāgas. In the morning, the mind and body of a person are not fully active when they wake up from sleep - the rāgas of bhairav thāṭa are arranged as an indication of this state, while as the day progresses and the mind, intellect, and body of a person become active, the svaras in the rāgas also become tīvra and the rāgas of dynamic calana are used. In the afternoon, when there is again some lethargy, the movement towards komal svaras and slow tempo is directed. In the evening, the mind is usually a little grave and the rāgas of Marva and Purvi thāṭa reflect the unsteady state of mind at that time. When the day breaks, the mind becomes joyous again, then the rāgas of Kalyan thāṭa are preferred. As we move from evening to night and then from midnight to dusk, the rāgas of Kalyan- Bilawal- Khamaj- Kafi- Asawari- Bhairavi- Purvi- Marva thāṭa show the mental and physical changes in sequence.

4. Cultural implanting and auditory conditioning – The above-mentioned three statements justify the rāga-samaya relation on the basis of rāga grammar. Apart from this, there is a strong cultural connotation for rāga-samaya relation, especially in Hindustani music. This relation can be said to have more cultural basis than musicological reasoning. The impetus for the performance of a rāga in a particular time segment and also listening to a rāga at a particular time has been culturally embedded for many centuries, many generations especially in the northern parts of India. This also becomes the fourth and most important reason for rāga-samaya relation. Even if one discards the musicological reasoning, it is not easy to wipe out this auditory conditioning that is culturally implanted in the social memory; and that's why rāga-samaya relation is prevalent in Hindustani music.

On what basis is rāga-samaya relation unacceptable in modern times?

This conventional notion of rāga-samaya cakṛa has been questioned in the last few decades. Static arts or visual arts like literature, painting and sculpture, as well as performing arts like dance and drama, are not considered to be enjoyable at a specific time (i.e. there are no rules that a play should be watched at night or a poem should be read in the morning). So, art scholars have raised the question of why should such rules be followed in the case of rāga music. The following reasons are given for disagreement on rāga-samaya connotation in the contemporary Hindustani art music scenario –

1. The relationship between time and rāga, the scheme of komal-tīvra svaras with the light-dark state has become blurred today. Basically, the relationship between nature and music is falling apart because music performances are seldom held in natural conditions, but music is performed in majority at artificial, air-conditioned spaces. In such a situation, the impact of natural events such as sunrise, sunset or rains on the physical or emotional state of the artists and the audience is not direct or not so strong. So, experts think that there is no need to link it with the music being performed, as this does not have such an effect.

2. Rāga-time is considered only in performances and concerts. However, this relationship is not followed at all while teaching, practicing rāgas, or recording the rāga music. Rāgas are not learned and taught at that particular time according to the rules of a time cycle – and by doing so, there is no deficiency in the performance, understanding, and enjoyment of rāgas. On the other hand, the effectiveness of the rāga is still maintained. Even while recording rāgas or listening to them, the relationship of time is not kept in mind – no matter at what time the recording of a rāga is recorded or listened to, there is no hindrance in the effectiveness of the rāgas. Therefore, the relationship between rāga and time is completely relative, and it does not need to be followed.

3. Rāga-time connotation is followed only in concerts, and that too is becoming less common today – because nowadays concerts are mainly held in the evening. Concerts are rarely held at night, at midnight and in the morning or afternoon. So, since the same set of rāgas is being performed, artists are also using rāga-time connotation loosely, bending it and even breaking it on occasion.

4. There is no rāga-time connotation in the Carnatic music system. There is no obligation to perform rāgas at a specific time. Although the book 'svaramela kalānidhī' (rāmāmātya, 16th century) mentions rāga-time relation, there is no trace of Carnatic musicians following rāga-samaya since the 18th-19th century. There, the artist is allowed to present rāgas at any time according to wish or choice. Rāga-time connotation is not in the Carnatic system, which means that this relationship is not natural or theoretically proven, but is only a cultural perception. The artists and listeners of Hindustani music have been conditioned by this relationship for centuries, and they find it convenient to associate a particular rāga with a particular time – but this relationship is purely cultural, not temporal. That is why some musicians do not feel the need to maintain this relationship in today's changing cultural environment.

There is no solid scientific reason behind the relationship between rāga and time, but rather this regulation is only culturally derived, and therefore, thinkers are of the opinion that this culturally derived relationship is inappropriate in today's changing environment. A few artists like Dr. Prabha Atre have rejected the rāga-time in principle. Of course, today, although rāga-time is not followed in learning and teaching rāgas, recording rāgas and listening to such recordings, but since the strong cultural conditioning of years cannot be easily erased and rejected, this connotation is still followed in concerts, albeit with a slight relaxation. In today's times, the restriction of rāga-samaya is completely a part of personal choice - if an artist wants to follow rāga-samaya, he/she shall follow it; and those who do not feel the need to follow it have no problem freeing themselves from this connotation. Pt. Jitendra Abhisheki has stated his opinion in an interview, which seems correct - "The relationship between rāga-samaya is completely psychological. The sole purpose of a rāga is to evoke in the listener the mood of a particular time when he/she hears it. No matter at what time the artist performs the rāga, the artist should have the power to make the listener feel a particular time, and for that, the listener should be equally sensitive!"

Dr. Keshavchaitanya Kunte
A prominent musician & musicologist

Shadaj Open Mic Events

13-Nov-22	Chaitanya Bhave (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), Sagar Tayade (Harmonium)
13-Nov-22	Swati Panda (Vocal), Harshad Tole (Tabla), Sagar Tayade (Harmonium)
11-Dec-22	Amey Bansod (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
11-Dec-22	Sameer Bildikar (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
29-Jan-23	Nitin Joshi (Vocal), Kavya Veleti (Harmonium), Naikaj Pandya (Tabla)
29-Jan-23	Sonali Dandekar Tambe (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
26-Feb-24	Reeshabh Purohit (Vocal), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium), Pranav Ghatraju (Tabla)
26-Feb-24	Jawwad Noor (Sitar), Pranav Ghatraju (Tabla)
26-Mar-23	Pranav Ghatraju (Tabla Solo), Kavya Valiveti (Harmonium)
26-Mar-23	Sanchari Bhattacharya (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
05-Nov-23	Murky Clouds (Hindustani - Carnatic Fusion) - Vikaasa Ramdas - Electric Mandolin, HIRAK MODI - Harmonium, Yogesh Karale - Tabla, Sarah Riley - Piano
05-Nov-23	Ashwini Paranjape Ranade (Vocal), Harshal Tole (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
05-Nov-23	Kaavya Valiveti (Harmonium Solo), Naikaj Pandya (Tabla)
03-Dec-23	Vaishnavi Kondapalli (Vocal), Pranav Ghatraju (Tabla), Varun Kelkar (Harmonium)
03-Dec-23	Naikaj Pandya (Tabla Solo)
03-Dec-23	Ashwini Purohit (Vocal), Naikaj Pandya (Tabla), Varun Kelkar (Harmonium)
21-Jan-24	Igor Iwanek (Harmonium Solo), Vedant Lele (Tabla)
21-Jan-24	Ria Dey (Vocal), Harshal Tole (Tabla), Varun Kelkar (Harmonium)
21-Jan-24	Nitin Pandit (Santoor), Rajesh Pai (Tabla)
24-Feb-24	Sudha Subbaraman (Vocal), Yash Naik (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
24-Feb-24	Ameya Rao (Vocal), Pranav Ghatraju (Tabla), Kaavya Valeti (Harmonium)
24-Feb-24	Sameer Bidlikar (Vocal), Naikaj Pandya (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
23-Mar-24	Yogesh Karale (Tabla Solo)
23-Mar-24	Anjali Dhodapkar (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
23-Mar-24	Achyut Joshi (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)
21-Jul-24	Thematic Program - Anjali Kalele Dhodapkar (Vocal), Sameer Bildikar (Vocal), Chaitanya Bhave (Vocal), Dr Ashwini Purohit (Vocal), Sonali Tambe (Vocal)Yogesh Karale (Tabla), Varun Kelkar (Harmonium), Ashwini Paranjpe Ranade (Compering)
21-Nov-24	Nitya Shikarpur (Vocal), Yogesh Karale (Tabla), Vedant Diwanji (Harmonium)
21-Nov-24	Pat Lamdin (Sarod), Yogesh Karale (Tabla)
21-Nov-24	Savita Supanekar (Violin), Yogesh Karale (Tabla)
08-Dec-24	Vedang Diwanji - Harmonium solo, Yogesh Karale (Tabla)
08-Dec-24	Madhavi Marathe (Vocal), Sarita Deshpande (Harmonium), Yogesh Karale (Tabla)
08-Dec-24	Nitin Joshi (Vocal), Naikaj Pandya (Tabla), HIRAK MODI (Harmonium)

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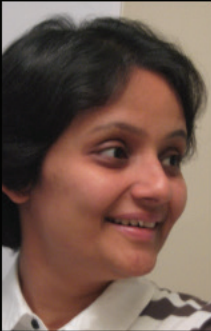
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