

## PT. DINKAR KAIKINI: A MULTI-FACETED MUSICIAN

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### Abstract

Indian Classical Music is represented worldwide through the Raga Sangeet by different musicians/artists. These artists carry a distinguished style of singing or playing (Instruments) which is called 'gharana' in Indian Classical music. These gharanas have produced many great musicians who contributed to the propagation of Indian classical music worldwide and took it to greater heights. While some of these musicians resorted to singing only, many of them were equally proficient in composing and added to the already rich repertoire of Ragas and compositions of Indian classical Music. Ustad Faiyaz Khan, Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan, Pt. Jagannath Bua Purohit, Pt. Gajanana Joshi were musicians of such caliber. They all carried their own musical philosophy. In modern times, we have some well-respected and established musicians who too worked for the incessant propagation of Indian Classical music through their multi-faceted efforts. Pt. Dinkar Kaikini was one of such modern greats. He was the pioneer of the Agra tradition who dedicatedly worked for the betterment of Indian Classical Music all over the world. This article aims to bring out the multi-faceted efforts of Pt. Dinkar Kaikini and to throw light on his invaluable contribution to Indian Classical Music as a true pioneer.

**Keywords:** Indian Classical Music, Musician, Gharana, Raga Sangeet, Pt. Dinkar Kaikini

## INTRODUCTION

Agra gharana is one of the major representative traditions of Hindustani Classical Music. Born out of Nauhar Bani, it is the one with a vast inventory of ragas, bandishes, great singers, and composers. Layakrities-rhythmic phrases, Diversity in Talas, consolidated swarakritis-melodic phrases, vast literary variety in bandishes, emotive expression as well as the number of jod-ragas, Mishra ragas, and newly created ragas are testimony to the creative ability of the exponents of Agra Gharana. Stalwarts of Agra Gharana such as Ustad Faiyaz Khan (Prem Piya), Ustad Khadim Hussain Khan, Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan (Pran Piya), Pt. Jagannath Bua Purohit (Gunidas) were not only great singers but they equally flourished in composing as well. These stalwarts were multi-faceted musicians who along with their disciples served Indian classical music to a great extent.

Pt. Dinkar Kaikini was one of the prominent figures and a stalwart of Agra Gharana. He was a celebrated musician, a performer as well as a prolific composer. Born in Bombay on 2<sup>nd</sup> October 1927,<sup>[1]</sup> he grew up listening to his mother's *bhajans*. His father Dattatreya Kaikini took care of the musical interest of his child and supported him heartedly to pursue music as a career. In 1934, Pt. Dinkar Kaikini attended a concert that proved to be a boon for his musical life and took him on the path where we see him today. The concert had performances of Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan, Ustad Alladiya Khan, and Ustad Faiyaz Khan.<sup>[2]</sup> Seven-year-old Dinkar was completely rapt in the musical atmosphere created by Ustad Faiyaz Khan. From that very day, his thrust to learn the style of Ustad Faiyaz Khan's singing emerged and he

went through a long journey to accomplish the level of mastery in that particular style of singing. He was a perfectionist in his approach and accepted no compromise in the quality of music. He performed all over India as well as internationally in the countries like USA, France, and Singapore and popularized the terminology and characteristic Raga singing of Indian classical music to a great extent.

## MUSIC EDUCATION

Pt. Dinkar Kaikini began his music studies with Karekatte Nagesh Rao at eight years of age.<sup>[3]</sup> For higher education in music, he went to Maris College of Music, Lucknow where Pt. S.N. Ratanjankar took responsibility as his tutor who himself was the disciple of Ustad Faiyaz Khan and Pt. Vishnu Narayana Bhatkhande. While studying at Maris College, Pt. Dinkar Kaikini also learned from Pt. S.C.R. Bhatt in great amount. Although Dinkar Ji never learned directly from Ustad Faiyaz Khan, his singing style was heavily influenced by him. He also learned from Pt. Omkarnath Thakur for some time<sup>[4]</sup>, but he mainly represented Agra style in his singing. The prominent features of his singing style were:

- Nom tom alap
- Impeccable command of rhythm and melody
- Emotional expression with technical expertise
- Use of Sargam in the elaboration of Raga
- Clear and precise intonation; Dynamics

## AS A COMPOSER

Apart from being a vocalist, Pt. Dinkar Kaikini was a brilliant composer. His compositions were new but were modeled into the traditional style of Agra compositions. He composed more than 150 compositions under the pen name “Dinrang”<sup>[5]</sup> in different genres, such as Khayal, Dhrupad, Dhamar, Tarana, Tappa, Thumri, Bhajan, Bhajan Numa Tarana, Patriotic songs, songs for kids, etc. He also invented several new ragas such as Gagan Vihang, Bayati, Bhoopavali, Gunranjini, Salagbhairvi etc. His compositions have the elements such as Creativity, Diversity, and Innovation. Creativity and diversity in terms of literature, theme/subject of the compositions, ragas, and talas used. Lyric came naturally to him and he penned them the same way to merge them later with musical notes. He used to compose either when some incident had affected him greatly, or a major event had taken place. For example, after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, he composed the following bandish in raga Gaud Malhar in Jhumra taal:

स्थाई: स्वतंत्र भयो है देश हमारो  
कष्ट किये सब फ़ल पायो ।

अंतरा: मोहनको तत्व धरे लोगवा सब  
अहिंसा परम धरम मुखी गाये।<sup>[6]</sup>

His following creation in Raga Bhairav describes the event when the man stepped on Moon for the first time. This composition is set to Jhap Taal.

स्थाई: आयो है जीत के मानव चंद्रलोक  
चकित भयो विश्व ब्रह्मांड सारो |  
अंतरा: धन-धन पृथ्वी जन  
जिन राच्यो है यान  
और धन नील शशि रज लायो है।<sup>[7]</sup>

The following compositions showcase the diversity in his compositions in terms of different genres, in literature and in talas used:

*Dhamar in Raag Bhupali, Set to Dhamar Tala:*

स्थाई: लाल तुम कैसे खिलारी, रीत न जानी  
ब्रिज की हंसत नर-नारी |  
अंतरा: अखन गुलाल रंग कानन में डार दियो,  
बरजोरी भर पिचकारी |

*Dhrupad in Raga Puriya Dhanashree, set to Chautaal:*

स्थाई: हररंग मुनि चतुर एक  
नाम तिहारो अनुपम  
रच्यो शास्त्र अगणित कृति  
गूजे नित अपरंपार |  
अंतरा: तू ही विष्णु सुर नरेश  
तू ही अवतार भरत के  
दियो प्रमाण कर उत्थान  
काज संगीत को अपार |

He composed a Vilambit Khayal on the 100<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Faiyaz Khan. He dedicated this Khayal to Faiyaz Khan and Haji Sujan Khan, the pioneer of Agra Gharana. This composition is in Raag Bageshree, set to Vilambit Ektal:

**Sthai:** Haji Sujan, Gunan ke Gunvanta,  
Deepak Jyot liye hai Khitab, Suran ke Mahanta

**Antara:** Jagmag tero naam parakasa,  
diyo aaftab suran ke daata.. [8]

He also composed a following Varnam in Carnatic style in Raga Kalyani (Yaman), set to Aadi Tala:

‘Tiru Venkatesha Kalyankarak Mahasiddheshwara’

Generally, Tappa Songs are composed in Punjabi language, but Pt. Dinkar Kaikini composed a tappa glorifying Lord Krishna. This composition is in Raag Kafi, set to Tappanuma Punjabi Taal:

‘Madho Mukund Murari, Kunj Vihari jana mana haari,  
akhil jagat ke tum hitakaari’

He had remarkable command over poetry and various dialects of Hindi, that he used in his compositions. His long stay in Lucknow greatly helped him to acquire mastery of dialects such as Awadhi, Khadiboli, Brajbhasha, etc. His fluency in these dialects has enabled him to express his poetic ideas in a lyrical and musically effective way. His compositions are easy to understand and are authentic in every manner. They have the perfect balance of rhythm, melody, and emotion.

## AS A PROMOTER OF MUSIC

Pt. Dinkar Kaikini was a promoter of Indian classical music in the true sense. He worked as a deputy chief producer of All India Radio, Delhi from 1954-1971. Initially, he started as a composer but gradually made his way up to the position of deputy chief producer. He worked for 17 years in Akashvani, promoting music continuously through his creativity and dedication. He contributed to popularizing Indian classical music through the National Program as well as through a morning program of his own conception which was ‘Vandana’. [9] He conducted auditions and participated in policy-making and other official departments. Due to his contribution to the betterment of artists and music in Akashvani for so many years, he can also be called the “Musicians’ Musician” [10] He delivered seminars and lecture demonstrations all over the world to create awareness regarding Indian classical music. Lecture demonstrations in the USA, Berlin, Yugoslavia, etc. are some prominent examples.

## AS A TEACHER

Pt. Dinkar Kaikini was a knowledgeable and respected teacher. He remained in the position of principal at Bhartiya Vidya Bhawan, Bombay for 16 years and did wonders for the progress of the institution. Even when he himself was studying at Maris Music College, he got the opportunity to teach in the absence of the teacher. It was all due to his extraordinary ability to grasp knowledge. At the age of 60, he retired and devoted himself to performing, composing, and music teaching only. He trained numerous students including Arti Ankalikar, Arti Upadhyaya (Daughter), Nishad Bakre, Priya Purushotharaman, Udit Narayan, etc.

## CONCLUSION

Pt. Dinkar Kaikini was a visionary who continuously worked for the propagation and betterment of Indian Music. He did it through his performances, and lecture demonstrations all over the world. He is highly respected for his knowledge and for the perspective he carried throughout his life regarding music. His compositions are a valuable source for understanding his musical philosophy. They have the perfect blend of melody, rhythm, and emotion. Pt. Dinkar Kaikini devoted his whole life to serving Indian Music and was regarded with some prestigious awards such as the Sangeet Natak Academy Award, Sangeet Ratna, Tansen Samman, ITC award, etc. for his invaluable contribution to music.

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