

REVIVING THE ESSENCE OF TAPPA GAYAKI: MALINI RAJURKAR

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Abstract

Tappa gayaki form comes under the semi-classical genre of Indian classical music. This style of music was originated from the folk songs of cameleers of the Punjab region. Tappa originated in the Punjab region that's why most of the Tappa are in Punjabi and Sindh language. Tappa is a playful form of gayaki that is sung in a fast tempo i.e drut laya. Miya Ghulam Nabi Shah (Shori Miya), the son of khayal vocalist Ghulam Rasool adapted tappa gayaki. He composed many tappa under the pen name "Shori Miya". Nathan Peer Baksh who was the founder of Gwalior Gharana promoted Tappa Gayaki and added this art form to the repertoire. Malini Rajurkar who was an eminent artist of Gwalior Gharana, learned many forms of gayaki under the guidance of her guru Pt. Govind Rao Rajurkar who had been a noted disciple of the veteran artist Rajabhaiya Poonchwale of the Gwalior Gharana. She also learned this form from Prabhakar Chinchore Ji who was a distinguished artist of this vocal art form. Malini Rajurkar added tappa gayaki frequently in her performances which made the audience recognise this semi-classical genre and they also appreciated her performances. This research paper involves the qualitative research methodology in which historical and case study methods have been employed. The study aims to explore the evolution of Tappa and how Vidushi Malini Rajurkar the "Queen of Tappa" played an important role in reviving the soul of Tappa gayaki.

Keywords: Semi classical, Tappa, Gwalior Gharana, Malini Rajurkar

INTRODUCTION

Indian classical music has been divided into two sub-genres, one is Hindustani shastriya sangeet which is popular in the Northern part of India and the Southern part Carnatic music is practiced. Hindustani shastriya sangeet has different forms of gayaki. It mainly started during the era of Prabandh Gayaki which has its evidence of it in Matang's Brihadeshi. The written compositions in modern Hindustani and Carnatic music systems are indeed similar to the arrangements of ancient times. Dhrupad another form of gayaki has its origin from the astapadi gaan of prabandh gayaki. Dhamaar has stated that it also emerges from the dhrupad gayaki ang tradition of Hindustani classical music. Khayal is a modern innovation which has its roots in dhrupad. As the name defined Khayal this form gayaki is basically about expressing the internal and external thoughts of an individual systematically. These are the classical forms of gayaki which are rigid and one has to take special training to sing these forms of gayaki. In the Semi-classical genre, different forms of gayaki are Thumri, Tappa, Cheti, Bhajan, Cheta etc.

Tappa is a folk-derived semi-classical genre, inspired by the melodies of the cameleers of Punjab and the NWFP (North West Frontier Province) bordering Afghanistan. Unlike the Thumri, it achieved acceptance among the Khayal lineages.

The refinement of this folk melody into a stylized genre was accomplished by Gulam Nabi, who composed numerous Tappa, under the pen name "Shori Miya". Gulam Nabi's father Gulam Rasool, was an eminent Khayal vocalist in the court of Nawab Asafuddaula (1775-97) of Awadh. Gulam Nabi was trained in Khayal, but his voice was not suitable for it. So, he traveled extensively in Punjab, learned the Tappa music, and mastered it enough to achieve the distinction at the Awadh court, upon his return.

Tappa shares the same path as Thumri. Its roots are in the courtesan districts of Lucknow and Banaras, where it acquired a significant following in Bengal and Eastern India. Though, in the present scenario, the performances of the Tappa music are none too frequent, this genre appears to have withstood the densities of Khayal conquered environment better than the Thumri.

THE TAPPA ERA/ THE TAPPA WAVE

Gulam Nabi (Shori Miya), trained several vocalists in the art of Tappa music. His father, who too followed this new and lively genre, also taught this art to his students. As a result, The Tappa moved from its native, Lucknow to Banaras, Gwalior, and Calcutta, to become a part of the courtesan districts and Khayal platform.

Within the Khayal lineage, Tappa was the one which was accepted by Gwalior, in its initial times. Nathan Peer Baksh, who was the founder of Gwalior Gharana, responded to Tappa enthusiastically. Gwalior Gharana's vocalists have preserved the Tappa music and treasured it as a means of developing brilliant vocal agility. During the early 20th century, the vocalists of Gwalior Gharana worked with the musicologist, Pandit Vishnu Narayana Bhatkhande, to document the Tappa music, as to contribute to the genre and also preserve for its survival. Other gharana of Khayal music did not accept the Tappa as ardently as the Gwalior gharana.

Tappa has started to infiltrate into Khayal vocalism, of which glimpses of its influence can be seen in the music of Fayyaz Khan and Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan. During the 20th century, over 100 Tappa songs were recorded and were published on 78 rpm discs.

IMPORTANT STYLISTIC ELEMENTS

- The identifying feature of Tappa is its playful way of singing and being rhythmically clever.
- Tappa is often compared to as if it's a ride on the back of a camel.
- A Tappa may be regarded as an impish rendition of Chhota Khayal, but substantially more puckish than a Bandish Thumri.
- Tappa is composed mainly in "Thumri ragas" such as Bhairavi, Khamaj, Desh, Kafi, Jhinjhoti, pilu, and Barwa.
- They are generally set to variants of 16 beats Tritaal.
- A few Tappa are sung in medium tempo so that the melodic and rhythmic playfulness of the genre is effectively communicated.
- The lyrics are mostly in Punjabi or Sindhi language.

EVANESCING OF TAPPA

In the second quarter of the 20th century, several vocalists of Gwalior Gharana drifted towards the Agra gharana of Music, in an attempt to reinvent their stylistic legacy. This resulted in the Gwalior-Agra confluence, which marked the gradual disappearance of the Tappa from the Gwalior Repertoire. Traditional Gwalior style has been widely marginalized after the departure of Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pt. Omkar Nath Thakur.

In the Independence era, where Khayal gharanas gained dominance in the past, primarily Kirana and Jaipur Atrauli ignored the Tappa music in favor of either Thumris or Bhajans. Bengal, once an important epicenter of Tappa music, is yet to yield vocalists with a serious interest in this genre.

Khayal dais by the vocalists from Maharashtra has caused this role to be handed over to Bhajans (devotional songs) and Naatya sangeet (Raga based music from regional theatre). One of the minor keys of this phenomenon is that, maybe the Tappa songs are mainly written in Punjabi, Sindhi, or Pushto, languages which can be comprehended by fewer people than Brij language, which is used in the Thumri and the Khayal style of singing. Despite its limitations, various features of the Tappa suggest a better chance for its survival than that of the Thumri because of its playful way of singing. The Khayal, which is a leading mainstream genre, cannot intrude in Tappa's territory as easily as in Thumri, nor can the poetry-dominant genre like the Ghazal, which on the other hand compete for its aesthetic space. The revival of this genre, therefore depends more on

the interests and the acceptance by the musicians and the contemporary audience. One of the musicians who played a vital role in bringing back the spirit of Tappa was Vidushi Malini Rajurkar.

EARLY LIFE AND TRAINING

Vidushi Malini Rajurkar the nightingale of Gwalior Gharana was born on 7 Jan 1941, in Ajmer Rajasthan. When the musical environment is available at home, it does its magic and so does Malini ji. Her mother had a good ear, she used to play the harmonium herself and also used to sing Tripathi, Panchapadi, etc. Malini ji Father was very reserved and not so supportive of Music, but Malini ji mother and uncle suggested her father allow Malini Ji to learn music. She started her singing education from her siblings. Malini ji's parents and Uncle were obsessed with the theatrical music sociology got the musical environment. Even in school, when she was at the age of four, there was a subject singing in which she learned Chhota Khayal. The two brothers used to sing for Entertainment at home, one used to sing and the other one played Tabla and this aura repeats every day in the evening, as only the sound of the song comes, and because of this, they were no taught vowels like Sargam by anyone else, all of the three used to play harmonium naturally. Malini Ji does Riaz while playing harmonium for passion, and also for singing exams. Although all three siblings were not technically educated, they knew Ragas like Bhup, Bageshwari, bilawal, and Mand. Malini Ji's dream is to become a mathematician and professor. After completing her studies, she worked for 2 to 3 years as a service clerk in Mavitri, a higher secondary School in Ajmer, she also used to teach mathematics and singing. During school time they had to prepare for the theatre choir, at that time, Raja Bhaiya Poonch Wale. The renowned artist of Gwalior Gharana appointed his disciple Pandit Govind Rao Rajurkar as the principal of Ajmer's choir. Malini ji learned from Pandit Govinda Rao Rajurkar for a total of six years. She also got the scholarship from Rajasthan Sangeet Natak Academy, Jodhpur but Malini ji only accepted the scholarship in one situation if her education would continue with him i.e Pandit Govinda Rao Rajurkar. Malini Rajurkar got married to Vasant Rao Rajurkar, nephew of Pandit Govind Rao Rajurkar on 7 July 1964, and they have two daughters Sangeeta and Nivedita.

Malini ji singing carrier: Malini Rajurkar's first concert was held in Ajmer 1964 at Ganeshotsav which was held at 9 PM, and it went on till 5 AM Malini Rajurkar said that it was her school education because of which she got the scholarship and continued to sing or maybe job after school, marriage, etc. After getting married to Pandit Vasant Rao Rajurkar, they moved to Hyderabad. She wants to complete her degree i.e MSc in mathematics. On the reception day at Malini ji's house, she was going to sing and Madhav Rao Potdar of Shiva radio came and appreciated her singing. In 1966, Malini Ji performed at Sawai Gandharv Mahotsav, the very renowned artist of Kirana Gharana Gangubai Hangal giving her silk sari to Malini Ji during her first concert in Dharwad. She also recorded only one song of drama in her whole career. While recording the song drama, she kept Hira Bai Barodekar audio tape in front of her and gave a three-minute audio tape, many artists like Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, Dinkar Kayakini, CR Vyas, etc Have encouraged Vidhushi Malini Rajurkar for her singing.

Malini Ji's mother was very fond of music, she had a good knowledge of classical music which resulted in her showing her the right path to her daughter. Malini Ji's mother has all those features that a person should have, for example, tolerance, honesty, simplicity, etc. All these traits are inherited by Malini Ji. Her mother's motto was very clear. She used to say whatever you do, do it neatly, it should be precise without any loopholes. She also used to say that although you sing less, perfection should be there.

In the meantime, when Malini Ji's, father retired, a situation arose that the choir had to be closed down due to financial difficulties. At that time, her brother, Arun insisted she continue her singing education. Usha, her elder sister gave her very first Tambura with her tuition fee money. Malini ji used to do her Riyaz for 18 hours a day, she used to fix Tambura all the time, and then when she got time, she just did her Riyaz. After getting

married, she kept doing riyaz for 6 to 7 hours after reaching Hyderabad. Malini Ji gave her first radio program on 16th Jan 1967, she was influenced by many big artists like Ustaad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan, K.G Ginde, Jitendra Abhisheki, Kumar Gandharva, Kishori Amonkar, etc. Malini ji, most and best concerts have been held in Pune, Rambhau Once said that she was the only singer who has performed nine concerts in Kolhapur in one year. She was accompanied by many talented artists in the early days, Dawood Khan, Sahib of Hyderabad used to play Tabla and Amba Prasad played Harmonium, an artist who accompanied Malini ji are: Bajirao Sanavane, Nana Mulle, Mukund Khan, Suresh Achrekar, Kiran Deshpande, Dahu Khan, Suhas Shakhi, Gulwadi Mukund etc. Harmonium accompanists: Appa Sahay Jalgaonkar, Latif Khou, Vasantbai Mhapsekar, Surendra Bharti, etc. but for the last 18-19 years Subhash Kamath and Dr Aravind Thatte accompanied Malini ji on tabla and harmonium. reference.

MALINI'S WORDS ON TAPPA GAYAKI

Tappa gayaki according to Malini ji is characterised by its playful and improvisational nature after using melodious variation. Tappa is a modern semiclassical genre of folk and is very similar to Thumri. Tappa gayaki primarily focuses on short short taan, and alankarik taan which are in Drut laya and are in creative phrases.

Gwalior Gharana was the only one who adopted the Tappa gayaki form very enthusiastically (warmly) as compared to other Gharana. Malini Rajurkar trained under the guidance of Pandit Govind Rao Rajurkar, who was the disciple of Raja Bhaiya Punch Wale. As a result, Malini ji also learned the Tappa gayaki form. Malini ji learned Drupad, Dhamar, khayal, Tappa, and Thumri during her discipleship period. guruji taught advanced and complex things in gayaki to Malini Ji, and when Malini Ji sang those advanced things in the concerts, she didn't get that recognition and people didn't understand it, people also wanted to sing with Malini Ji, Then she decided to change her review of singing part differently. Malini Ji also learned Tappa gayaki from Ustaad Chichore Saheb, who was a legendary Tappa gayak. He was known for his ability to blend traditional techniques with a playful, humorous style, making his performances engaging and enjoyable. His contribution helped popularise Tappa among a broader audience. Malini Ji, while learning Tappa used to memorise one line of Tappa for around six months. She deliberately listens to the recording of Khamaj, kaafi, and bhairavi of Carnatic music style to add some of their gayaki style into her phrases. Maji used to say, to sing Tappa. The throat should be free. It should be seen that the revolution of the phrases should be continuous and when double valves occur in the wall's face, it is mandatory to think about which wall and he should be given in which rhythm. Malini G used to sing Tappa in Thumri Ang Malini Ji, just blend Thumri Ang in Her Tappa gayaki form. Some of the famous tappa of Malini ji are :

लालवाला जोबन	भैरवी
नज़र दी बहार	भैरवी
हो मियाँ जाने वाले	काफ़ी

Malini Rajurkar has received several awards throughout her career in Indian classical music.

Awards received by Malini Rajurkar:

1. Honoured on 1 Jan 1999 by the Marathi World Council
2. Sangeet Natak Academy Award 2001
3. Maharashtra Rajya Gaurav Award
4. Gaan Saraswati Award
5. Jasraj Gaurav Award

CONCLUSION

He originated from the cameleers of the Punjab region, sung only by the local People of the Punjab region as a song of enjoyment while riding camels to become a semiclassical genre of Indian classical music. Tappa gayaki has come a long way and the only credit that makes it a separate place in the field of the semiclassical genre goes to only be Gulam Nabi Shori (shori miya). Being the son of Ghulam Rasool, the prominent khayal vocalist of Gwalior Gharana and also a contemporary of great musicians Sadarang and Adarang, Shori Miya has enough knowledge of Dhrupad and Khayal. He was influenced by the folk music of Punjab after he reached there. Shori Miya added his own unique singing style in Tappa gayaki form for eg: zamzama taan, short-short taan, not using Sapat taan , singing taan in drut laya etc to make Tappa a unique form of gayaki.

Gwalior Gharana one of the oldest Gharana in Indian classical music not only accepted the Tappa gayaki form but also led this style of gayaki to a vast level i.e after this development of Tappa gayaki got started in the area of Bengal, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Maharashtra, etc. Malini Rajurkar notable artist of Gwalior Ghrana not only makes the audience surprised, impressed, and speechless with her Tappa gayaki but also influences people especially the students of Vocal music to learn Tappa gayaki and perform it. Malini Rajurkar plays a vital role in bringing back the era of Tappa gayaki that was once on the verge of ending.

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