



# Swaranjali Music School

## स्वरांजली संगीत शाला

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## Visharad Poorna Theory

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## Theory: Written Exam Paper # 1:

### Chapter 5: Biographies:

### Introduction to Performance Styles of Famous Vocalists and Instrumentalists

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#### 1. Gaan Saraswatee Shreematee Kishori Amonkar

(April 10, 1932 - April 3, 2017)

World famous Sitar player Bhaaratratna Pandit Ravishankar ji said this about Shreematee Kishoree Amonkar: “Kishoree’s singing originates from her throat as well as from her soul”.

Only one true artist can praise another true artist this way.

Indeed Kishori ji was fortunate that she was born in a renowned artist’s home, she received music training from her mother Shreematee Mogubai Kurdikar, and she was considered a leading disciple of Ustaaad Alladiyaa Khan from Jaypur gharaanaa. However, she also created her own unique style and became an extremely popular singer of her generation. That is how she received heart felt praise from a top artists that she “Sings from her soul”.

Gaan Sarasvati Kishori ji’s concerts were always very entertaining and successful due to the rigorous systematic training she received from her capable mother and teacher, Shreematee Mogubai Kurdikar. In her earlier days, Kishori ji started her career by singing a song in a movie called ‘Geet gaayaa pattharon me’. The song was very sweet because of her divine voice and became very popular. But her mother and teacher strictly removed her from movie business to bring her focus back to classical music. Mother knew the true potential of her genius daughter. She knew Kishoriji will create her own unique place and become immensely popular in whatever music form she chooses. Mogubai ji instructed her daughter, Kishori ji to stay in classical music field. Hence we know Kishori ji as Padmavibhushan (Honorable title bestowed by Government of India) and a leading vocalist from Jaipur gharaanaa.

Kishori ji’s voice was a divine gift. However, her mother also enhanced the voice by training it in Jayapur gharaanaa style and taught her to sing aalaap in specific tempo in ‘aakaar’. Singing all aalaap in aakaar

is rather challenging and Mogubai courageously explained the secrets of aakaar aalaapi to Kishori ji and made sure Kishori ji fully understood it and learnt to sing it in Jayapur gharaanaa style.

Jayapur gaayaki (singing style) does not have too many changes in tempo. Khyaal tempo remains the same from beginning to end. Everything including Jayapur gharaanaa's special aalaap, bol aalaap, bol taan, layakaaree is performed in same tempo or laya. Kishori ji always remembered the tricks of Jayapur gharaanaa that her mother taught her. With dedication, deep thinking and practice Kishori ji enhanced her singing. Her madhya shadja and taar shadja are both equally powerful. She carefully studied ascending, descending notes, weightage, meend etc. When she presents different semi-classical genres of compositions, like Chaiti, Kajari, Thumri; the tone and timber of her voice gives a special flavor to the songs. She is considered to be a primarily a classical singer, however, the semi-classical compositions acquire a unique shine when she performs them.

Her specialty was to make her full performance very entertaining from beginning till end. She tuned all taanpuraas herself before each concert and listened to them for some time, which created the atmosphere. She took the stage as the audience welcomed her with applause. After greeting the audience she would check the microphones she would start with a strong tuneful shadja. Her students would sit behind her and assist her if there was some little problem with her throat. She had a high pitch voice and usually sang above black five swar (A sharp). After squaring with Tabla swar etc. she used to start khyaal mukhadaa, usually in vilambit teentaal, and sing full sthaayee with great enjoyment. She used to sing raag Bhoopaalee, Raag Miyaan Malhaar and Raag Tilak Kaamod quite often. Audience used to be spell bound. She had fully incorporated her mother's training into her singing. Old knowledgeable audience members, who had listened to her mother sing raag Saavaneer Kalyaan, used to be very impressed when Kishori ji sang the same raag. They used to remember that Kishori ji accompanied her mother when she performed the raag. Shreematee Padmaa Talwalkar, Shreematee Meeraa Pansheekar and Shree Raghunandan Pansheekar used to accompany Kishori ji on stage.

Her favorite raagaas from Jayapur gharaanaa's special raag were: Nand, Basantee Kedaar, Khem Kalyaan, Saavaneer, Kaafee Kaanadaa, Raaysaa Kaanadaa, Bihaagadaa, Pat Bihaag, Dhuliyaa Malhaar, Bahaaduree Todee. Her khyaal from raag Tilak Kaamod was very entertaining. She presented simple raag like Yaman, Bheempalaasee, Bhoopaalee with great preparation. She presented semi classical compositions like Kajaree, Daadraa with full focus and mesmerized the audience. Her singing used to have evidence of tenacious preparation. Audience realized ultimate spiritual experience through her devotional songs. She used to perform Jayapur gharaanaa's skewed and odd taans with same ease and skill as the semi-classical emotional compositions. She took the Jayapur gharaanaa to a new height.

Padmavibhushan Kishori Amonkar ji was born on April 10, 1932 and passed away on April 3, 2017.

## 2. Bhaaratratna Pandit Bheemsen Joshi

(4 February, 1922 – 24 January 2011)

Pandit Bheemsen Joshi is a prominent artist from Kiraanaa gharaanaa. He was born on February 4, 1922; in Karnaatak state in a small village called Gadag. He started singing in public concerts from age nineteen. However, he had to go through many hardships in his childhood to learn music. As a child, he heard a 78 RPM record disk in a local music shop. It was of Ustaad Abdul Kareem Khaan. Bheemsen ji was captivated by the voice and started searching for it and reached Jalandar town in state of Panjab. He was assisting, playing taanpuraa on stage behind famous singers. He met Pandit Vinaayakrao Patwardhan in one such concert and expressed his desire to properly learn music. When Vinaayakrao Patwardhan heard about Bheemsen's journey, heard him singing and heard about his dedication to Ustaad Abdul Kareem Khaan, he advised him to go home and start learning from a teacher near his home called Savaai Gandharva (Pandit Raambhau Kundagolkar) in a town called Kundagol. Bheemsen came home to the parents' delight and then the parents took him to Kundagol to learn music from Savaai Gandharva. There were several difficulties on the way, but in the end, Bheemsen ji emerged as a leading student of his Guru.

Training in Guru Savaai Gandharva's home was very tedious and full hard work. Kundagol village always had draught conditions. Student Bheemsen had to get up at 4 AM and fetch 50 – 60 buckets of water. For a full year teacher did not teach him anything. He would just listen to a student called Gangibai Hangal when she learnt her lessons and practiced. After one year his training started and continued for 5-6 years. He learnt Kiraanaa gharaanaa's specialties. He also incorporated other gharaanaa's facets later. His Guru trained him long and hard in Mandra saptak swar and focused on raag Mulataanee, Todi, Bhairav and Puriyaa. He also learnt some other aspects of performance. His Guru Savaai Gandharva used to record and publish three minute disks of 78 RPM as was common in those days. Bheemsen ji saw how his Guru would practice to bring all aspects and full essence of a raag into a three minute recording. He benefitted from staying with the Guru and see his preparations for various performances. Choosing particular swar clusters to fit into a performance of a given time duration to achieve maximum effect is a very sophisticated skill. Bheemsen ji got to observe his Guru and learn this valuable skill from him first hand. When his Guruji was invited to perform in a concert, Bheemsen ji used to accompany him on a train carrying two taanpuraas himself. In the long journey he would listen to each word and swar from his Guru and learn to sing from it. Many times he would learn compositions by sitting behind his Guru in a concert, playing taanpuraa. His senior Guru Bhagini (fellow student of same Guru) Shreematee Gangubai Hangal said " Bheemsen was a brilliant student and he could learn and sing anybody's composition by hearing it only once."

Eventually Bheemsen started singing in public concerts. Honoring Guru's wishes, he performed his first concert in a home of a prosperous gentleman called Baaburao Deshmukh in a city of Nagpur in 1948. He sang a khyal 'Yeri maai piyaa' in raag Shuddha Kalyaan. People remembered it for a long time. Even after becoming a famous singer, Bheemsen ji kept faith with the teachings of his Guru. He worked in Lakhnow radio station, listened to several different artists and practiced singing various styles. One famous musician and music admirer, P. L. Deshpande said Bheemsen ji was democratic in his embracing of various styles of music. He did not just present what he learnt from his Guru. That is just parroting. Bheemsen ji's specialty was to incorporate other artists' good performance styles into his performances. His powerful aakaar was similar to Kesarbai Kerkar's from Jayapur gharaanaa. He learnt few compositions like 'Jamuna kinaare meraa gaaon' from Kolkata's senior singer A. Kanan.

Bheemsen ji's favorite raag were: Todi, Mulataanee, Shuddha Kalyaan, Miyaan Malhaar, Darbaaree Kaanadaa, Puriyaa Kalyaan etc. One reason for his popularity was that he was found accessible to ordinary

people. He often sang devotional or semiclassical songs in regional languages like Marathi and Kannada. He was equally skilled and entertaining in singing heavy khyaal and lighter bhajan, thumri. He used to say I cook using all gharaanaa's recipes. His aalaapee was serious followed by torrent of taan. He used to present all gharaanaa's compositions with equal skill.

He honored his Guru by hosting a massive three day music festival "Savaai Gandharva Sangeet Mahotsav" in the city of Pune every year in December on his death anniversary. He used to assist all artists presenting vocal, instrumental and dances in this festival. He used to even tune the taanpuraas, make sure everyone was comfortable.

His devotion to music had the same intensity from the time when he was a penniless student to when he was a world famous most sought after artist. His main students are: Maadhav Gudi, Shreekaant Deshpande, Aanand Bhaate, and his son Shreenivaas Joshi. When Bheemsen ji passed away, famous Santoor artist Pandit Shivakumaar Sharma called him this century's as well as next century's unexcelled artist. Pandit Jasraaj ji said 'He will be like the brightest star in the sky'. Dr. Prabhaa Atre ji said 'He is not just a Bharat Ratna (Jewel of India) but a Wishva Ratna (Jewel of the world). Panditaa Kishoree Amonkar said: 'I have not seen any other classical music singer who dedicated himself more to music'.

He received many awards. 1964: 'Gaayanaachaarya' by Akhil Bharatiya Gandharva Mahavidyalaya Mandal', 1972: 'Sangeet Ratna' by Raghavendra Swaamee Peeth, 1972: 'Padmashree' by Government of India, 1989: 'Padma Bhooshan' by Government of India, 2008: 'Bharat Ratna' by Government of India. Gulbarga, Karnatak, Tilak Mahaaraashtra and Pune universities honored him with 'D. Lit.' degrees. He also received many more awards like 'Miyaan Taansen', 'Mahaaraashtra bhooshan', 'Deenaanaath award'.

Bheemsen ji's one quote is memorable:

" I have only one wish. I wish to be born as a singer again and get an opportunity to learn to sing from my Guru 'Raambhau Kundagolkar' (Savaai Gandharva). I do not want to experience my Guru's death anniversary. I wish he would be present here with me in person."

### 3. Pandit Ravishankar

(April 7, 1920 – December 12, 2012)

Pandit Ravishankar was born on 7<sup>th</sup> April, 1920 in Vaaraanasee city. His father was Pandit Shaamaashankar Chhtopaadhyay. Pandit Ravishankar became cultural ambassador of India to the world. Sitaar used to really sing in his hands.

His father was a professor of Philosophy as well as a Sanskrit language 'Pandit' (scholar). His older brother, Udayshankar, was an accomplished and famous dancer. Household had a general atmosphere of Music (Dance, Instruments and Singing). Ravishankar was in close proximity of music and literature and learnt to conduct detailed studies of many topics related to music. He joined a dance troupe of Udayshankar jiat the age of ten and became a skilled dancer. He toured many countries with the dance troupe. Dances were accompanied by many live instruments like flute, Shahanai, Belaa and Saarangee. His fondness for the instruments started to grow. Ustaad Allauddin Khan joined the troupe when Ravishankar was only 15 years old and expressed a wish to Ravishankar's mother that he would like to have Ravishankar as his student and promised that he will treat Ravishankar like a son. Mother agreed and Ravishankar started receiving formal training from Ustaad Allauddin Khan.

Baba Ustaad Allauddin Khan started his training with vocal music followed by preliminary Sitaar. He wanted Ravishankar to devote himself to Sitaar since he thought only after full focus and diligence one can acquire proper acumen to play an instrument properly. Ravishankar ji started studying Sitaar in 1935 and by 1938 he left the dance troupe and went to his Guru, Baba Ustaad Allauddin Khan in a town of Maihar. He rigourously studied and practiced Sitaar playing for ten years. In 1941 Ravi Shankar ji married his Guru's daughter 'Annapoornaa' who was herself a leading 'Sur Bahaar' artist. (Sur Bahaar is a string instrument).

Ravi Shankar ji was a brilliant artist. He composed music for dance dramas, he was a successful orchestra conductor, a music director for 'Discovery of India' series by I.N.T. and a prominent artist on 'All India Radio. Before Ravi Shankar ji started performing full concerts with Sitaar, there was general opinion that Sitaar is not a appropriate instrument for performing a serious concert style music. However, this opinion was proved wrong with Ustaad Allauddin Khan's strong training and Ravi Shankar ji's genius and talent. He demonstrated that even a simple raag can be presented in a very entertaining manner with full performance of aalaap, Jod, Jhaalaa and slow and fast tempos.

Ravi Shankar ji had an amazing mastery over all taal. He used to play with supreme ease using any taal as if it was Teentaal. He confidently and seriously played many a raag compositions like Dhrupad, aalaap, jod, jhaalaa or gat. Aalaap and gat produce proper form of raag. Ustaad Allauddin Khan's playing style was a combination of Veena and Sur Bahaar instrument styles. pioneered and incorporated various vocal and instrument styles in his performances. Ustaad Allauddin Khan's teacher Ustaad Vajeer Khan (descendant of Taansen) said: "Ustaad Allauddin Khan's name will be remembered as long as there are the sun and moon in the sky". Ravi Shankar ji received prolonged training from such capable Guru. Ravi Shankar ji performed his first concert in Kolkata town in Minerva theatre. Kisan Maharaaj from Banaaras accompanied him on Tablaa.

Pandit Ravi Shankar composed several popular raag: Rasiyaa, Durgeshwari, Ahirlalit, Kousi Todi, Paraneshwari, Tilakshyaam. He performed and honored many raag from Karnatak classical music style (South Indian classical music), which became popular worldwide through his presentations (Examples: South Indian raag: Charukeshi, Kirwaanee, Vaachaspati, Janasammohini, Hemaavatee, Malayamaarutam etc.). He utilized South Indian taal style (percussion) to make North Indian classical music richer.

When he performed with Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, he used his special studies about tuning instruments. His rendition of duet style with Sarod artist is a shining example for all instrumentalists. After 1949 Pandit Ravishankar became a music director in International scene on All India Radio. Many of his compositions for groups of instrumentals are very famous and entertaining. He is also a successful music director for several movies: Anuraadhaa, Meeraa, Pather Paanchaali, Apoor Sansaar. In 1954 he went to Soviet Union as a member of Indian Cultural Group. After that he started performing in several countries. He performed with world famous Violin player Yehudi Menuhin and David Oistrakh in Unesco Music Festival in Paris. He established 'Kinnar School of Music' in Mumbai in 1963.

He received honors and titles like Padma Bhooshan (1967), Padma Vibhooshan (1981) and ultimately Bharat Ratna (1999) from Government of India. He received doctorate degrees from Khairaagadh University and Ravindra Vidyaalaya in India and Harvard university in USA. A documentary called 'Raag' was published in New York, which is based on his life. He produced 'Raagmaalaa' concerto with Legendary maestro Zubin Mehta. He served as a member of Rajya Sabha (Upper chamber of parliament of India). He sincerely worked to promote Indian Classical Music in the world. His composition 'Ghanashyam', which shows ill effects of drugs, became a historic piece in British art world. Because of his contribution to music field, he received an award 'Spirit of Freedom'.

Following his Guru Saintly Music Scholar Ustad Allaiddin khan, Pandit Ravishankar also created a capable group of his own students: Umashankar Mishra, Shameem Ahamad Khan, Kartik Kumar, Jayaa Vishvaas, Gopal Krishna, Deepak Choudhary, Shashimohan Bhatta, Vishvamohan Bhatta, and his own daughter Anushka. He wrote several books: 'My Music', 'My Life', 'Raagmaalaa' (English), 'Raag-Anuraag' (Bengali).

Pandit Ravishankar was born in a rich cultural environment, received music training from a very capable teacher, Ustad Allaiddin khan, and became a great Sitar player. He was a charming living legend and kept performing and teaching music until his last days on earth. He established a music school in USA. He passed away on December 12, 2012.

## 4. Pandit Shivakumaar ji Sharmaa

(Born January 13, 1938 )

Credit for bringing a folk instrument 'Santoor' into prestigious classical music field is given to Pandit Shivakumar Sharmaa. His father and teacher, Umadatta ji Sharmaa was a prominent student of a famous music scholar from Banaaras, Pandit Bade Raamdaas ji. Pandit Shivakumaar ji's mother, Shreemati Kesardevi ji was a popular folk singer in Jammu district. Umaadatta ji had his own music school in Jammu. He was inspired by close contact with Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. He was also a royal singer in the court of King Haridev of Kashmir. He often performed on Jammu airwaves.

In this music rich atmosphere, Shiva Kumar ji was introduced to music at the age of five. At this tender age, he was receiving training in Singing, Harmonium, Violin, Sarod and Tablaa. He received first prize for Tablaa in an International Youth Music Festival. He later accompanied several prominent musicians on Tablaa (Pandit Ravi Shankar ji, Vidushi Girija devi, Pandit Jasraaj ji, Vidushi Siddheshvari ji).

Around 1950, his father gave him a folk instrument, 'Santoor' and asked him to see what he can do with it. Till then, Santoor was only used as a folk instrument and as an accompaniment for Sufi music. Santoor had 25 bridges. Shivakumar ji increased the bridges to 29, reduced the strings to three per bridge. Hence the number of strings became 87 instead of 100. He used steel strings instead of brass to improve tonal quality. He shifted Mandra saptak swar strings to left side, giving them more space. He adjusted the strings and space such that swar from all three octaves were available for performance. Santoor's specialty is creating swar by striking strings with wooden mallet. Shiva Kumaar ji achieved pleasant sounding swar from Santoor by adjusting gauges of strings. After all experiments and alterations, Santoor became an instrument for classical music performances.

He also played Santoor in many sound tracks of film music, which made the instrument more popular. Famous film music directors like Naushad ji, Madan Mohan ji and S. D. Barman ji used his skills on Santoor for their compositions. In 1967 he participated in a light music composition called 'Call of the Valley', where he performed with Hari Prasad Chaurasia (Flute) and Brij Bhushan Kabra (Guitar). 'Call of the Valley' is uniquely popular. After 1980, Shiva Kumar Sharmaa ji collaborated with Hari Prasad Chaurasia ji (Flute) and published many compositions with assumed name 'Shiva-Hari'. 'Shiva Hari' pair composed music for movies like 'Silsilaa'. Famous music director Hrudaynaath Maneshkar used his Santoor skills in a song 'Chaandane Shimpeet jaa'.

He kept the classical and light music performances completely discreet. He performed in many classical concerts in India and abroad. He received awards 'Padmashree' (1991), 'Padmavibhooshan' (2001), and D.Lit. from Jammu University, among others.

His favorite raag are romantic raag like Pahaadi, Baageshree, Jhijnhoti, Chaarukeshee etc. He also plays south Indian raag like Vaachaspati and Chaarukeshee with great skill. He has recorded and published many concerts. Now a days, his son Rahul Sharmaa also plays with him with equal skill.

Pandit Shiva Kumaar ji is a very modest, soft spoken, gentle artist. His students include many artists: Ratanlal Tikku, Sateesh Vyaas, Harjindarpaal Sinha, Kiran Paal Sinha, Nandu Mule, Dhananjay Daithankar, Dileep Kaale.