

Pandit Anant Manohar Joshi: His Gayaki and Legacy in Khyal Vocalism

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Abstract

Khyal vocalism in North Indian classical music or Hindustani music, has immense stylistic diversity represented through different *gharanas*. The musical style or *gayaki* of practitioners in every *gharana* has always been reinterpreted across generations. This paper examines the contributions of Gwalior *gharana khyal* vocalist Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi and his role in sustaining an aesthetically cogent style represented by some of the most successful vocalists in the 21st century. The introductory section gives a brief description about his rigorous musical training and inspirations that shaped his *gayaki*. The following section provides a detailed analysis of his music through an objective methodology based on specific parameters. The concluding section describes his musical legacy represented by practitioners who have provided fresh interpretations, and thereby helped in sustaining his vocalism.

Keywords

Gwalior *Gharana*, *Khyal*, Hindustani Music, Music analysis, Anant Manohar Joshi, *Gayaki*

Introduction

North Indian classical music (Hindustani music) has a rich history of *khyal* practitioners who have been authentic representatives of their *gharana*, and, have also developed a musical style that carries the stamp of their individual expression. Many ensured the perpetuation of their musical legacy, and were engaged in multiple roles of music-making as a performer, guru, composer, and author. Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi of the Gwalior *gharana* was one such musician who performed these multiple roles with aplomb and left behind a formidable legacy that has shaped the aesthetics of *khyal* in contemporary times. While faithfully adhering to the *gayaki* of his *gharana*, Joshi's music represented a unique interpretation of his *talim* (musical training). Born on 8th March 1881 in Kinhai, a village in the erstwhile princely state of Aundh, Satara district of Maharashtra, he belonged to a family steeped in music. His father Manohar bua, gifted with a marvelously charming voice and an inborn aptitude for music, was apparently a favourite in the Aundh court because of his sweet renderings of devotional music (Ranade, 1998, p.104). Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi, with an inclination towards music since a young age,

trained for several years under the able guidance of Pt. Balkrishnabua Icchalkaranjkar in Miraj, Maharashtra. He received support from the Aundh princely state during the period of his music tutelage. Icchalkaranjkar is known to have propagated and established the Gwalior *gharana gayaki* in Maharashtra upon his return from Gwalior in late 19th century. Anant Manohar's *gurubandhus*/co-disciples were Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar and Pt. Gundubua Ingle, and their *talim* sessions were spread across thrice a day. They received instructions in the *guru-shishya* tradition and learnt *bandishes* and *alap-tana* patterns (improvisational techniques) in different *ragas*, and acquired command over *talas* like *jhoomra*, *tilwada* and *adachoutala*. Apart from *khyal*, Pt. Anant Manohar also learnt other genres such as *tappa* and *tarana*.¹ After his training in 1896, he embarked on a concert tour along with Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, during the course of which, he performed successfully in Baroda, Indore, Ujjain, Mathura, Gwalior, Delhi, Amritsar, Lahore and Jullandhar. Later, with stints in Bombay for a few years, he eventually settled as a court musician in the Aundh state. He was profoundly inspired by the music of Ustad Rehmat Khan, scion of the Gwalior *gharana* and son of Ustad Haddu Khan, one of the founders of the *gharana*. He had the opportunity to travel and provide vocal accompaniment to Ustad Rehmat Khan for a period of four years and recounts the impact of this association in his own words. During this period he is understood to have gained expertise in a more refined presentation that eventually enriched his *gayaki*. In his autobiographical article, Pt. Anant Manohar states that "I was already adept in the formal architecture of many ragas but during my sojourns with Ustad Rehmat Khan, I was able to acquire a greater understanding on the subtleties of his *alaps* (unmetered and metered improvisation), new *tana* (virtuosic runs) patterns and his ability to dexterously arrive at the *sam* keeping the surprise element intact" (Joshi, 1995, p.33). Post independence, he began broadcasting regularly through the All India Radio. In 1955, he was honoured by the Central Sangeet Natak Akademy. He expired at the age of 86.² The following section gives an overview of Pt. Anant Manohar's musical style, based on a detailed analysis of his recorded music.

Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi's *gayaki*

A considerable archive of Joshi's music exists with the national broadcaster All India Radio. Some of the recordings that are available in the public domain include Miyan Malhar (*sumara naama ko mana hi ke mana mein*, a self-composed *drut khyal* in *teentala*), Malgunji (*raina kari daraavata jaage re*, *drut khyal* in *teentala*), Alhaiya Bilawal (*peevana laago maa*, *drut khyal* in *teentala*), Chayanat (*karata ho*, *vilambit khyal* in *tilwada* and *yeri maalaniyaa gunde laavori*, *drut khyal* in *teentala*), and Gaudmalhar (*kahe ho*, *vilambit khyal* in *tilwada* and *balama bahar aayi re*, *drut khyal* in *teentala*). Based on specific parameters such as voice production or *swar*

lagaav, treatment of the *bandish*, and improvisational techniques used to develop a composition (treatment of *alap*, *bol-alap*, *behelawa*, *bolbant*, *bol-tana* and varieties of *tana*), an objective analysis has been carried out with respect to the salient features of the Gwalior *gharana khyal gayaki*.³ Some observations based on this analysis are given below.

Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi adopted an open throated and natural voice production and laid equal emphasis on the melodious articulation of the raga phrases. He was deeply influenced by the vocalization of Ustad Rehmat Khan's *gayaki* (as mentioned earlier), which lent an element of continuity and fluidity. The wide vocal range of two octaves and a high-pitched voice (D #) was commensurate with the basic features of voice projection as prescribed for the Gwalior idiom. Introductory *alaap* before singing a *bandish*, performs the function of creating the right mood for the rendition of a *raga* by delving on certain key phrases of the *raga*, and is an essential feature of the Gwalior *gayaki*. Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi rendered a *raga-vaachak alap* before the *bandish*. This implies that the *alap* highlights the main phrases of the *raga* in the ascent and the descent. While singing *drut khyals*, the *alap* was very brief but commensurate with the melodic nature of the *raga*. Joshi also resorted to *nom-tom alap* articulating through syllables such as *ri, da, na, tom*. The Gwalior *gharana gayaki* pays due attention to the faithful rendition of the *bandish*. Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi used the *bandish* to establish the overall tempo of the presentation. Hence he usually sang the *sthayi* twice, the first time to establish the tempo of the *khyal* and the second time to re-affirm and re-establish the *bandish* form. Often slight embellishments are also introduced when the *sthayi* is sung for the second time. The *antara* is usually sung once after the *sthayi* improvisation or even towards the end of the rendering. All practitioners of the Gwalior *gharana gayaki* have a tendency to sing primarily in medium tempo or slow-medium tempo. Joshi's focus was on delivering a specific and complete idea in every *avartan* (rhythmic cycle) of the *tala*. The tempo of his *vilambit khyals* at 45-56 beats per minute tends to be slightly higher than the accepted norms for *madhya laya khyals*. His preferred *talas* were *tilwada* (mostly), *jhoomra* and *ektala* while *drut khyals* are set to *teentala*. The Gwalior *gharana gayaki* focuses on rendering *alap* in accordance to the *bandish* structure. Expanding upon this element, Pt. Anant Manohar emphasized on building up a *raga* through a basic melodic idea, which was expanded further (*upaj anga vistaar*). One striking feature of his *gayaki* was to follow the principle of *khane-puri*, with the *avartan* divided into segments and each segment concentrating on a specific region of the melodic canvas. As a result, each *alap* acquired a definite design. *Mukhada* of the *bandish* seamlessly blended with the *sam*, which contributes to the fluidity of his rendition. His voice quality was such that it was conducive to the lower and middle registers hence *alap* was prominent in the

mandra and *madhya saptak* relative to upper registers. *Sapaat* and *avarohi tanas* are a speciality of the Gwalior *gharana khyal* renditions. Joshi rendered *sapaat tanas* with a sequential descent even in *ragas* with *vakra* (non-linear) *chalan* such as Gaudmalhar and Chayanat. *Matthi tanas* (slow paced *gamak laden tanas*), *avarohi tanas* and *chut tanas* are dominant in his renditions. *Upaj anga* is evident in his *tanas* along with adhering to a design defined by the principle of *khane-puri*. Pt. Anant Manohar learnt *dhrupad* and also *tarana* and *tappa*, but performed *khyal* predominantly.

Teaching, Dissemination and Legacy

Joshi lived and worked in Bombay for close to fifteen years and established a music school in 1907 naming it Shri Guru Samarth Gayan Vadan Vidyalaya. He attained considerable success as a teacher and as his school grew in reputation, it started attracting talented students. His disciples included Pt. S.N. Ratanjankar, who first learnt the Gwalior *gayaki* and later trained in the Agra *gayaki*. Chaugule, Godbole and Gokhale were his other disciples who contributed to the music education in the municipal schools in the early days. Like many of his contemporaries in the Gwalior *gharana* who also authored books on music, Pt. Anant Manohar published three volumes of *Sangeet Pravesha* and *Harmonium deligher*. Towards the latter part of his life when he eventually settled down in Aundh, Maharashtra, he had taken to an ascetic way of life accepting the discipleship of Shivanand Swami. His son and disciple Pt. Gajananbua Joshi, was born in 1911 in Mumbai. Trained in the Gwalior *gharana gayaki* by his father, Gajananbua also learnt from Ustad Vilayat Hussain Khan of the Agra *gharana* and Ustad Bhurji Khan of the Jaipur-Atrauli *gharana*. He could thus fuse different elements and nuances that he assimilated from the practitioners of Gwalior, Agra and Jaipur-Atrauli *gharanas*, and was dexterous and methodical in presenting *khyals* with the distinct stamp of each of the three *gharanas*. He was also adept at playing the violin and was instrumental in establishing the violin as a concert instrument in Hindustani music. His lasting contribution remains as an unparalleled guru who evolved a specific teaching methodology that could ensure a vocalism which is marked by systematic and phrase-based unfolding and expansion of the raga through the *bandish*, a consciousness of *laya* and sub-beats, and creating a new melodic design in every *avartan*. Many of his disciples have carved their niche as concert performers, composers and have also contributed in the domain of ethnomusicology. Amongst his disciples, veteran musicians Vidushi Jayashree Patnekar (amongst his senior most disciples), Vidushi Padma Talwalkar, Vidushi Shubhada Paradkar, Dr. Ashok Da Ranade and Pt. Arun Kashalkar, to name a few, have evolved their own individual expression and vocalism. His grand-daughters Smt. Apoorva Gokhale and Smt. Pallavi Joshi represent the fifth generation of very fine musicians

of this lineage. Pt. Gajananbua's disciple Pt. Ulhas Kashalkar, is one of the finest exponents of *khyal* in Hindustani music today, with a vocalism steeped in tradition and modern in interpretation. He is one of the most sought after gurus, having been associated with the ITC Sangeet Research Academy for more than two decades, and is considered to be one of the most important and exemplary torchbearers of this legacy. '*Malaniya goonde laavori*', a compilation of notated compositions of Pt. Gajananbua Joshi and his father Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi was published in 2008. Aundh Sangeet Mahotsav, an annual music festival initiated by Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi in memory of his spiritual guru, and continued by his son Gajananbua and his lineage of disciples is, now in its 85th year. It is a unique twenty-four hour classical music festival, held in Aundh, Maharashtra and attended by the local population as well as drawing audiences from all over the country. It has featured some of the most celebrated Hindustani musicians and continues to inspire musicians and connoisseurs alike.

In conclusion, this paper reiterates the notion of re-interpretation of one's musical learning, which subsequently results in diversity of styles even amongst the disciples of the same *guru*. Pt. Anant Manohar Joshi's musical legacy has sustained for five generations spanning more than hundred years. Represented by serious practitioners who have made valuable contributions as a performer, teacher and propagator, the vocalism of this legacy has continued to evolve and remain relevant in the modern Hindustani music world.

Notes

¹ An autobiographical article by Anant Manohar Joshi and later edited by his grand-daughter Sucheta Bidkar was published in a periodical named Rudravani. See Rudravani (May-June 1995), p. 33

² For more biographical details and a wonderful musical analysis, see Ranade (2011, pp. 103-118).

³ For a detailed reading of specific audio samples and understanding of this methodology to study the style of a music practitioner, see Ramachandran (2013, pp. 92-107).

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