

EVERY tuesday

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Economusic

Aditya Vyas

We have heard about techno-music but very few illumined minds understand what economusic is. It is a travesty that in many issues of Every Tuesday we have been picturing the downsides of financial lopsidedness of various art forms and lamenting about consequences that people in these vocations have to encounter.

We have been saying these things for almost every Indian art form conceivable and more so for music but in this issue we analyse a very different perspective about the commercialisation of music, especially Indian classical music and also shed some light on the popery of commercialisation that has been enmeshed with the ethnic culture post-globalisation.

The term globalisation itself is a very vague and broad term and often misunderstood by even educated people. The ramifications of globalisation are not merely confined to the opening of malls and the supermarkets or a new McDonalds around the corner; it is much more in terms of the culture that these malls bring along with them. The standardisation of music has begun in those terms and we lay our emphasis on that. The vision of gharanas was anyway lost somewhere in late 50's onwards and maybe that happened due to transcending musicians who had the ability to take music to newer zeniths. The major difference between that turbulence and this change is - that was the outcome of research and innovation for arts' sake and now it is to cater to the gallery, to make music "commercially viable" rather than making it culturally viable. To cater to the audience music videos have to be shot with exotic locales and other exotic appendages. In a way the very so-called protagonists of classical music are defeating the whole idea of classicism.

It is left for the individual to decide which is better. In the farce called globalisation do we have the tenacity and integrity to keep our standards high? Do we have the uncompromising nature that would ultimately lead us to truth? Or will our ancient culture give way to the norms of economics? These questions need serious thinking on the part of our discerning rasikas who behold the future of music.



From left to right: Shashi Vyas, Mr. Basant Talreja, Pt. Ram Narayan, late Pt. C.R Vyas, Govind Nihalani and M.F Husain

When music means business

It is important to preserve our cultural identity under the road-roller of market forces and globalisation, says **Dr. Uday Nirgudkar**

India is passing through the most exciting time in its recent history. Technology is shrinking the world's borders and India has embraced it quite easily. We are producing the second largest number of engineers and soon we will have the highest number of Netizens. We are attracting foreign direct investment like never before and it is not only the Mittals and Tatas who are on the list of the rich and famous. The world's interest in the country is growing; now India is a subject that Harvard students learn. The India Phenomenon, with its emerging youthful population, has great significance in a graying, developed world. The strong presence of the middle-class here has made the case for Indian consumers stronger, and the cascading effect of globalisation is revolutionising Indian lifestyles. It's not just the economy that has changed, the whole mindset is changing and it's the most welcome phenomenon in recent times.

The issue that emerges, however, is - how are we to preserve and nurture our cultural identity under

the road-roller of globalisation? It is important to focus on how we will address changes in fields like music, art and culture.

India is blessed with a rich cultural heritage that very few civilisations can challenge; you need artists to give birth to the culture and nurture it. The odyssey of Indian classical music, the most ancient form of our civilisation, has its roots in our temples and today, it is knocking on the government's doors for support. The survival of the art today depends on support, both from the government and multinational companies. There is no point in crying over this state of affairs; it is a reflection of changing times.

In the good old days, Indian classical music was played in an open theatre, under a banyan tree; today, it is being played in air-conditioned environs, with the most modern acoustics to support the experience. The art then was patronised by kings and emperors, only to be replaced by modern-day politicians and MNCs.

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Let's not forget this country was invaded hundreds of times by invaders from across the world. They destroyed our temples, kingdoms and spared no one. They tried to uproot everything, but what they could not do was destroy Indian classical music. Invaders were lost in the passage of time; what was not lost was the odyssey of Indian classical music, which saw cross-influences with the invaders' art, and changed over time. Again, after several years, our classical music is witnessing a boom in foreign lands, of the kind one has never seen before. The 'Made in India' mark in the classical music market is making waves internationally.

Music is the spiritual expression of mankind and more so for Indians, but it is also a business, and business has to be done like a business. The technology, flow of funds and globalisation has an impact on our classical music industry, or, for that matter, any art form.

This is quite natural; marketing and 'customerisation' plays a significant role in other industries and will certainly impact classical music too. Just as there are brands in other industries, so do they exist in the music industry. Every industry evolves with a structure, so does the music industry. There are performers, there are event managers, audio companies, distributors, and retailers, to name just a few. There is the domestic and global market, as in the case of any good Indian product.

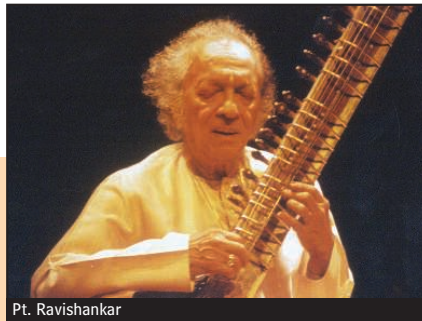
The global market is further classified into the developed and developing country markets. Most superstars perform more on the international circuit than in India. Concerts have been played for generations and the tradition of listening is also spread across them. There are set traditions, and penalties for breaking them. Yet, despite the influence of the *gharanas*, innovations do get rewarded. As in other industries, established brands

industry remains the same. The customer is supreme. The domestic market is also subdivided into categories like the class one and class two markets. Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Kolkatta form the class one market, while Pune, Jalandhar, Nashik, Ahmedabad, Indore and Benaras form the class two markets. The class three market consists of Agra, Baroda, Jodhpur, Trichy, and Coimbatore. That's what the pan-India picture looks like. This picture is based purely on the market potential and not on the quality of connoisseurs; the real connoisseurs are everywhere. In fact, where there is a Saccha Sur, there is a connoisseur. Each city has its own flavour; for instance, Delhi audiences prefer to get passes rather than buying tickets, so do people in Benaras.

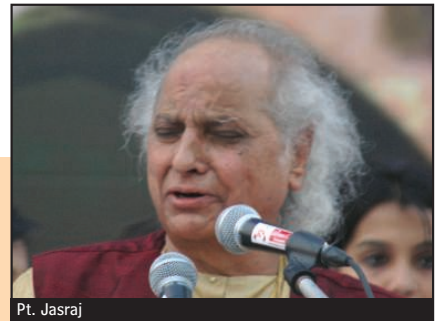
Indian classical music has been changing with time. Though it has stuck to its traditions, it has also chosen newer paths, and there are plenty of examples to demonstrate



Pt. Hariprasad Chaurasia



Pt. Ravishankar



Pt. Jasraj

road-roller their way and newcomers face the threat of early extinction. The classical music industry has a past of several hundred years, a turbulent present and an uncertain future. Yesterday's connoisseur is not there today and today's will not remain tomorrow; its fate depends upon a constant called change.

There are annual events in this market. Among them are the Gunidas Sammelan in Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkatta; Sawai Gandharva in Pune; the Hirabai Badodekar and Suresh Babu Mane memorial music festival; the Ram Marathe classical music festival at Thane; the Indian Music group festival, followed by the Banganga festival hosted against the ancient backdrop. There are also the Homage to Abbaji, a *mabakumbhamela* of percussion instruments, Tulapur festival, Ganesh Cultural Academy's music festival, Pandit Omakrnath Thakur and Harvallabhdas festivals, which enrich the annual treat. Others include the Elephanta and Hampi festivals; the Saptak Samaroha at Ahmedabad, Shankarlal Chaturlal Samaroha in Delhi, Babu Moshai's ultimate joy, Doverlanes festival, the Swaraprabha and Rajasthan music festival. There are approximately 90 such dots that add colour to the rangoli of Indian classical music. In addition, there are some sundry supplements, but they lack the glitter and glamour these annual events have.

The domestic market is on an all-India basis. It is not as organised as other industries, but more like a cottage industry. Nevertheless, the rule that governs the

this. Pt. Kumar Gandharvaji got the Jaipur Gharana style in the *bandish*, *Ab To Aao Rajan*, structured in the *Nand raga*. Pt. C. R. Vyas innovated the *bandish* in Bilaskhani Todi. Creativity was at its peak in the 1940s to 1980s. It is also there today; only time will prove how eternal it will remain.

There is one thing we need to understand; the customer-listener base of Indian classical music is limited. It is for the 'class' and not for the 'mass' audiences. To be a learned listener, one needs to do a great deal of hard work; mere deep pockets will not make you a connoisseur.

This limited customer base makes it more imperative for Indian classical music to get sponsors. The list of sponsors remains the same, but the approach differs when they sponsor run-of-the-mill activities such as daily soaps on television, as compared to classical music concerts. A TV serial sponsor may interfere in the development of the story, cast, settings, death of the character or the famous *puarjanma*. I have yet to see a sponsor compelling the Panditiji to sing a particular Raga or Bandish. This is what you get when you preserve the art, its purity, its character and serenity.

So gone are the days where you, as a connoisseur, would be subjected to a sweaty atmosphere, mosquitoes and broken chairs. Just as the ragas have transformed with time, so has the environment in which they are presented. The stage was, therefore, set to welcome event management companies and

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hundreds of them have mushroomed. Naturally, only a few could survive as only those who could understand the nuances of classical music could make their mark. These include Banyan Tree, Hridayesh Art, Nirgudkar Foundation, Art & Artistes, Pancham Nishad, Maharashtra Lalit Kalanidhi and Indian Music Group. Each one has mastered its own style and is known for particular characteristics. They treated classical music concerts like products.

Pandit Ravishankarji brought in the much-needed stage craftsmanship - mouths full of chewed *paan* and its stains on white clothes; late arrivals, and other unprofessional behaviour that artistes were known for became a thing of the past thanks to Panditji. He brought a

approximately Rs. 125-140 crores. Of course, the money one makes from sale of CDs and endorsements is extra and hence not included in this. Can we run this industry without the solid backing of sponsors? No way. We have a very limited list of sponsors here - Videocon, Tatas, Godrej, Standard Chartered Bank, and Bank of Baroda, to name a few. An artist who used to be available for Rs 15,000 four years ago, now claims Rs 5 lakh per performance. Production costs are zooming, and the market size is growing very slowly. Hats off to those who manage to do annual events without sponsors - Alwa's Virasat at Mudabidri, and Tulapur festival are exceptions and hence deserve special mention.

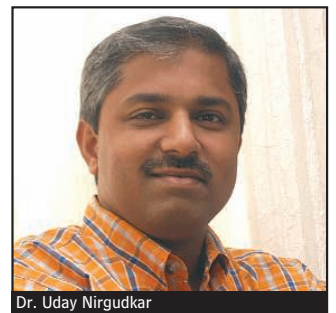
Let's all be clear, the artist

are worth? If we are going to ask 'Who next...?', then the sin is with the last generation and not with gen-next.

Every generation comes with its own music. Needless to say the older generation may not appreciate it, as it breaks their rules. What needs to be seen is the originality, innovation quality and truthfulness. The world is the market now. London, Bristol, Manchester, Edinburgh, Frankfurt, Paris, Zurich are the centres in Europe where a group of connoisseurs for Indian classical music has developed considerably. There is a good demand for Indian classical music in LA, Big Apple, Bay Area, NJ in USA. Arab Emirates want more concerts. Australia and South Africa are patronising Indian music. Not just NRIs but "*firangis*" are equally pouring in hordes for

concerts. We need to nurture them. The listener- customer is smart, well informed and can make out what is original and what is fake.

Let's not take our listener-customer for granted. That would be a fatal mistake. So salute those who gave this great music, and make a "*farmaish*" to the younger generation, "*Kutch naya sunao*".... Rest all leave it to the listener-customer God.

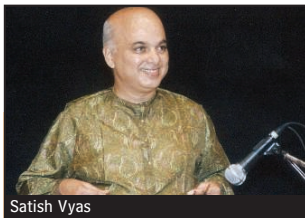


Dr. Uday Nirgudkar

*The God knows....
Bhookha petse gata bai.....
Zuta galese gata bai.....
Sacbha dilse gata bai...*

Salute to the great tradition of Indian classical music. It's immortal, it's eternal.

To be continued....



Satish Vyas



U. Shrinivas



Ustad Zakir Hussain

sort of professionalism, way back, and this changed the way programmes were presented. Discipline came in, right from the announcement to the presentation. Most importantly, he brought instrument players to the centre stage. The instrumental concerts that take place today is the gift of Pandit Ravishankarji to the classical music industry. Things changed rapidly. Now, packaging became more important than the content itself, and this led to *jugalbandis*, fusion (and confusion!) shows, concerts around a single raga, one season, one festival and so on...

In the olden times it was much simpler, the song was sung by the singer and audience used to listen to it. That's it. There was someone who gave, and someone who received. The core of this exchange remains the same, but what has changed is the form in which this transfer takes place. Like in any other industry, content, even good content, has to be presented, and packaged.

Indian classical music will never have a mass base. Six metros have a market size of, say, Rs. 10-12 crores per year - about 20 cities which give you an annual business of couple of crores each. The rest of the country is

would survive only if the art survives. For one's whole life, one does shows for money and as one turns sixty...one needs to be ornamented with the Padma award, a flat in 10% quota and other things. What hypocrisy! Look around and you will find umpteen such cases. If we do music shows without charging a penny for spreading the art form, then it's a real service; the rest is business, like any other profession or job for a salary. That's it. Let's not treat ourselves and expect to be treated differently for our gift of God. We have made a business of it.

Bhimsenji, Jasraji, Kishoritai, Hariji, Shivji, Zakirji, Malinitai, Sajan-Rajanji have their own audience and hence capability to make the show full, wherever or whenever the show may be. The second rank players are not secondary in talent. Ashwini Bhide, Ronu Muzumdar, Shahidbhai, Satish Vyas, Aarti Ankalikar are just a few examples knocking on the door. The new breed of artistes are extremely talented. Jayirth, Rimpa Siva, Sanjeev Abhyankar, Niladri have the ability to take the audience by surprise. Who is going to pat their backs? Who is going to sponsor their shows so that the people would know what they



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