Appreciating Hindustani Music Dr. Lakshmi Sreeram Prof. Srijan Deshpande Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Indian Institute of Technology, Madras

Lecture - 35 Gharanas of Khayal - Twentieth Century Masters

Hello and welcome. They say that traditions that thrive over generations do so not only because they have strong old roots, but equally because they change over time. Today we are going to look at a few examples of how the Gayakis of the various Gharanas that we sampled in the last lecture, retained their flavours in the long twentieth century and also ways in which they changed.

Let us begin with the Gwalior gharana. You will recall from the previous lecture, from Krishna Rao Shankar Panditji's recording that the older Gwalior singers revelled in the exuberance of the freedom the Khayal genre gave them and they created their gayaki by using the ashtangas, those tools of improvisation that they used by using them creatively right.

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This is the gayaki that was inherited by the great music reformer Pandit Vishnu Digambar Paluskar, but Paluskarji's vision went beyond acquiring fame as a vocalist. He was one of the most important figures in the history of Hindustani music because he took

this music to the masses through his Gandharva Mahavidyalaya and its massive network of music schools that spanned the Indian subcontinent.

Now, as part of this effort, this massive effort Paluskarji created a syllabus and a methodology to teach raag sangeet that incorporated his ideals of discipline, restraint and purity. You can see this discipline in the music of his son Pandit D. V. Paluskar.

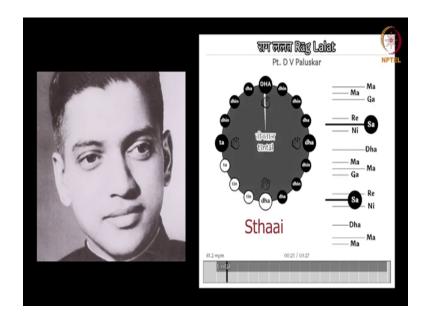
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The unpredictability of the Gwalior gayaki is replaced here by a beautiful approach in which sequence and orderliness become increasingly important. So, as you listen to Pandit D. V. Paluskar sing this Khayal in raag Lalat, notice how unlike Krishna Rao Shankar Panditji, he presents the ashtangas in the largely pre-decided sequence - sthaai anantara followed by akaar alap, bola lap, bol bant, bol tan, tan.

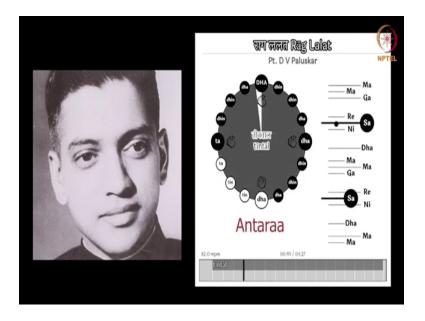
Even if you cannot identify each of these anga's, I am sure you will enjoy the grand beauty, a well-ordered disciplined performance creates. You also notice his tuneful precise vocalization and his clear pronunciation, here is Pandit D. V. Paluskar singing raag Lalat.

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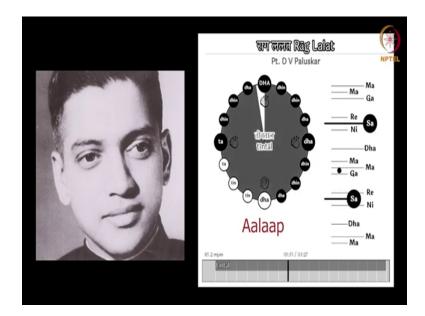


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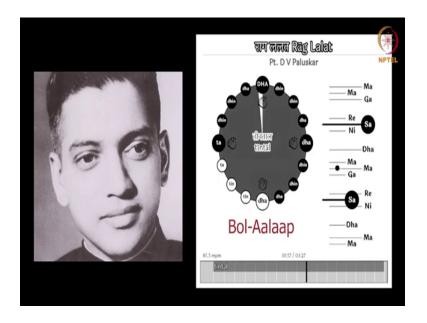
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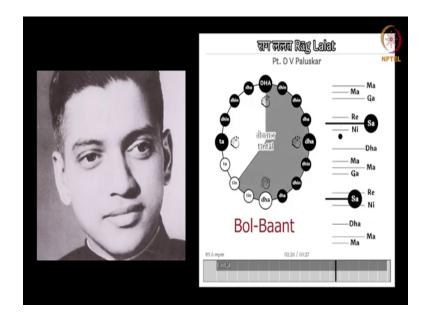


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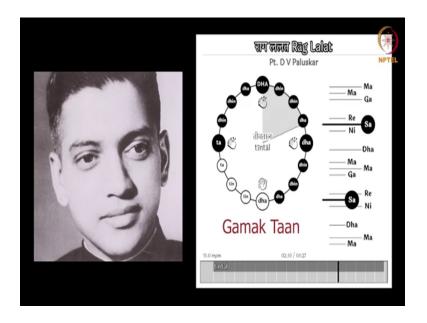


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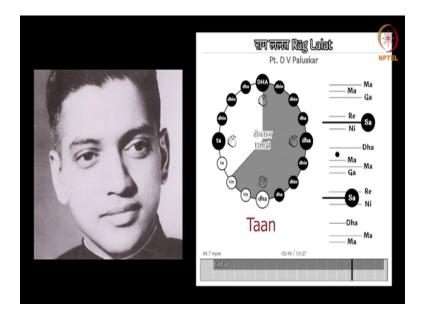
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[Music]. What joy there is in orderliness, in discipline and in precision, D. V. Paluskar is full of this kind of joy. Let us move on now though, because the twentieth century also saw the rise of a musician who although trained in the same Gwalior lineage, latched onto the freedom inherent in the Gwalior idiom, added various other Gharana and non-gharana influences to it and created a new music; this was Pandit Kumar Gandharva.

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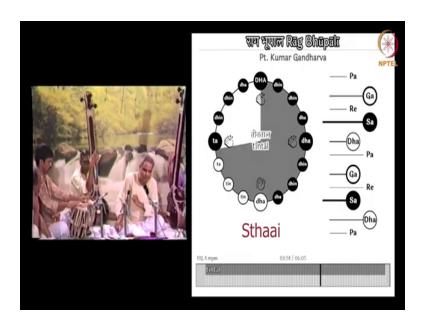
Kumarji's musical world was vast, he was known for his incredible tunefulness, his moving expressive power, this huge repertoire. But, for our purposes let us just focus on

one of the most important things he did with his Khayal gayaki, as you will notice in this short clip of him singing raag Bhoop, Kumarji organized his Khayal performance not by progressing in a standardized sequence, but by putting the bandish he was singing in the centre of things.

So, as he sings this bandish - Mora jhaanjh mandilara bhajele, notice how he finds so many possibilities in just the outline of the bandish, possibilities of expression of emotion of playfulness, melodic structure, rhythm work, wordplay.

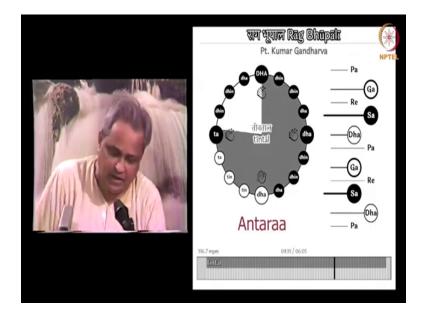
Kumarji allows his performance to be guided by the seed possibilities inherent in the bandish and equally by his moods, his own intuitions, by his spontaneous responses to the musical situation he finds himself in, rather than by a conventional format of presentation or by the grammar of raag and taal, that is not what leads his music.

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Here then is Pandit Kumar Gandharva singing 'Mora Jhaanjh Mandilara' in raag Bhoop. [Music].

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[Music]. Let us move on to the Agra Gharana now. The music of this Gharana was perhaps at the peak of its popularity in the mid twentieth century and the Faiyyaz Khan idiom of expressive, lilting rhythmic singing, in a voice laden with emotion and charisma was kept alive by the likes of Pandit Babanrao Haldankar.

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An important musician and scholar who studied for many years in the Agra tradition and thoroughly internalized its idiom. In this recording of raag Shyam Kalyan, you will of course, notice the Agra characteristic of giving a lot of prominence to bol work, playing

with the words and syllables of the composition to create new rhythmic and emotion laden phrases. But, another important characteristic of the great Agra singers was their ability to instantly create a clear, unambiguous image of the raag in just the first few moments of the singing, they were able to maintain that image throughout.

Even if you are not familiar with the structure of raag Shyam Kalyan, as you listen to this recording you will notice I am sure a clear image of the raag emerging from Babanrao's treatment of it. Additionally, Babanrao was true to his Agra tradition, he was an absolute master of rhythm, an absolute master and as a small sample of his skill with rhythm do notice as you listen to this recording the tihais he sings towards the end of this clip.

A tihai is simply a phrase that is repeated three times so, that its last syllable coincides perfectly with the sum. Sounds simple enough, but you have to remember that Babanrao composes these wonderful tihai spontaneously, as he goes along. We will point the highs out for you in the visual so, keep an eye on it.

And, as you listen to them, notice how skillfully Babanrao is able to execute his rhythm play while also keeping the lilt and the emotion of the bandish alive. Here is Pandit Babanrao Srikrishna Haldankar singing raag Shyam Kalyan [Music].

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[Music].

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[Music].

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Was not that wonderful? So, that then in a quick crude nutshell is the Agra aesthetic, clear raag structure, maintaining the lilt of the bandish, exciting rhythm work and evocative rich word-play. But, it always amazes me to see how in comparison, the Jaipur Gharana manages to move and inspire listeners through a completely different approach.

Now, we have already sampled the complex austerity, if you remember from the last lecture that Kesarbai Kerkar creates in her music, the music taught to her by the great Ustad Alladiya Khan.

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And, in the twentieth century though the most prominent inheritor of this style was Gaanasaraswati Kishori Amonkar. But Kishoritai as she was popularly known brought a different flavour to her Jaipur Gayaki. She brought to this austere, almost ascetic style, a refreshing emotionalism that one great renown. Let us listen to a short edited piece of Kishoritai singing raag Savani-Kalyan.

Do notice in this clip the characteristic Jaipur gayaki we have discussed already, most of the improvisation, the raag development in is in aakaar, the aa vowel. There is a clear, logical design to the melodies she improvises and there is a growing complexity in her patterns. Also notice that Kishoritai never changes the point in the rhythm cycle from which she picks up the mukhada - Deho Deho, the words of the bandish.

The point from which she picks it up remains the same. This is a feature typical of the Jaipur discipline, if you listen to singers from other gharanas, you will notice that they play with the mukhada. So, they might shift the point at which it starts or they might even modify its melody, but Jaipur singers rarely do this and this is one way in which they maintain discipline and austerity in their music.

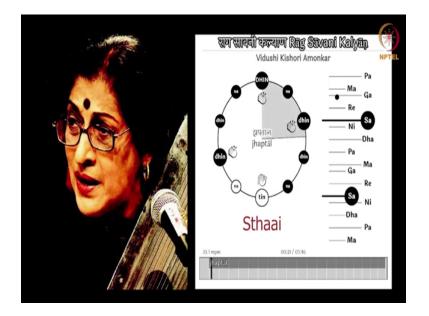
But, as you listen to this clip, you will surely notice how Kishoritai softens this austerity by bringing a beautiful emotionalism into it. You will also hear Kishoritai indulge in some word play in this clip, which is another departure she makes from strict Jaipur discipline.

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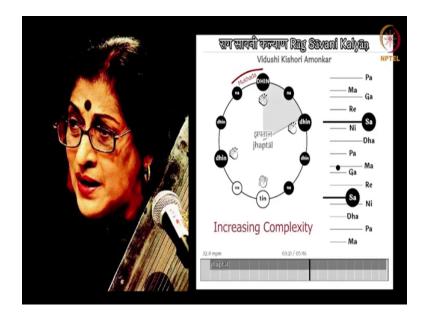
Although, she inherited this word play from her mother Gaana Tapasvini Mogu Bai Kurdikar, who pioneered this ang within Jaipur Gayaki. Also, the raag Kishoritai sings here is Savani Kalyan which is a combination of two raags; Savani and Kalyan. These jod ragas are another typical feature of the Jaipur repertoire. So, let us listen now to Kishoritai's disciplined, but emotional version of it in this short clip. Here she is singing raag Savani Kalyan [Music].

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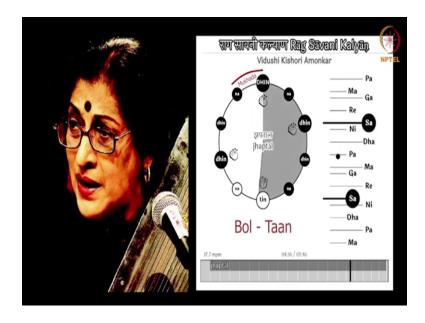


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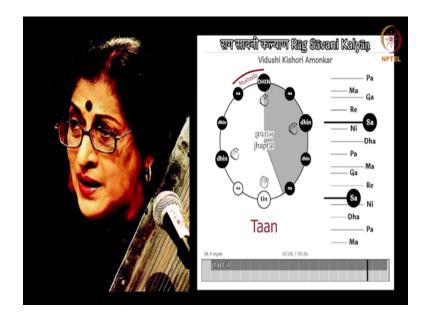


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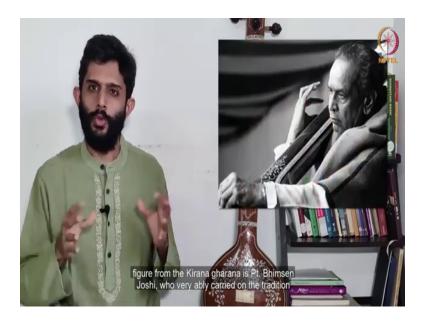


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[Music]. That was so beautiful, was not it? Let us move on now to the Kirana Gharana. Perhaps the most famous twentieth century figure from the Kirana gharana is Pandit Bhimsen Joshi, who very ably carried on the tradition of Ustad Abdul Kareem Khan Saheb that we sampled before.

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And, I encourage you to listen to the many many recordings of Bhimsenji that are available freely online and do listen for similarities with Abdul Kareem Khansaheb's idiom.

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But, what I would like to play for you right now, today is another interpretation of the Kirana Gharana's legacy represented by the great Ustad Amir Khan, Ustad Amir Khan of his own Indore Gharana.

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Now, Ustad Abdul Kareem Khansaheb's brother Ustad Abdul Wahid Khan, Abdul Wahid Khansaheb was a great influence on Amir Khansaheb's gayaki. He focused, Abdul Wahid Khansaheb focused on a kind of melodic complexity that was very different from the Jaipur complexity, that we have been looking at.

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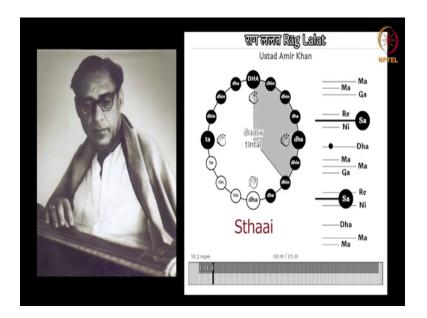


What you will hear in Amir Khansaheb's gayaki is the incredible skill of making difficult, unexpected, quick jumps between notes to create patterns that challenge the boundaries of the raag and delight with their suddenness and their brilliance. This technique of jumping between notes is a technique called Merkhand in which Amir Khansaheb received extensive training.

You notice it when he starts singing his sargams and as he explores the connections, the relationships between the notes of the raag. Also notice in his superfast taans towards the end of this clip, the wonderful designs he creates - one can only marvel at the rich complexity they contain and at the skill with which they are executed. It is not easy to sing patterns as complex as this spontaneously.

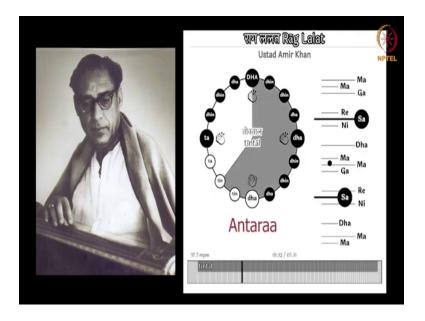
But, before Amir Khan gets into this complex work, he enthrals you with the slow, laid back, subtle beauty of his kahen, his particular expression of this raag. Here then is Amir Khansaheb singing the bandish Jogiya More Ghar Aaye in raag Lalat [Music].

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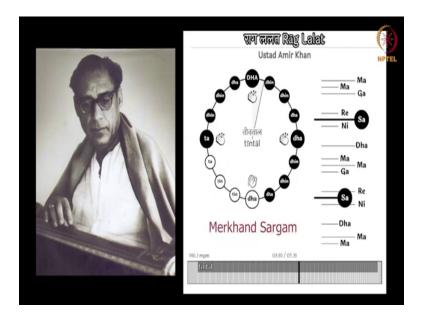
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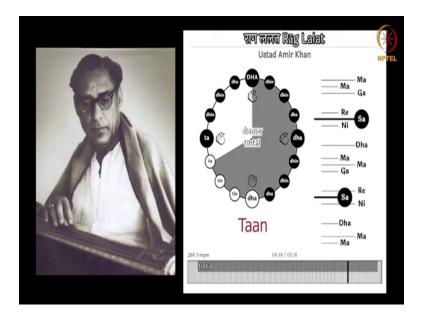
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[Music].

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[Music]. Was not that beautiful? So, the idea in these two lectures has been to give you a quick aerial survey of sorts of Gharana music and of how the various gharanas contrast themselves from each other in voice production, in approach to improvisation, in attitude, in cultural context. We have only covered four major gharanas. There are other gharanas. There is the Patiala gharana, the Mewati gharana, the Rampur - Seheswan

gharana, the Bhindibazar gharana and many others which are very important in their own right.

But, the idea here was not to give you a complete survey of all the gharanas of the entire landscape, but to allow you to appreciate the contrasts within the gharanas. And, hopefully you have an idea now of what a gharana is, what a gharanas gayaki is and why various gharanas exist and how they populate the landscape of Khayal and make it so rich. I really encourage you if this interests you to go online, to log on to YouTube and to listen to the vast amount of gharana music that is available there for you to listen to.

And as you do, do try to form your own opinions based on the information we have tried to give you here about the various gharanas, about their approaches. Do see if you can correlate the music that you hear with everything that we have talked about. In our next session, we have a very special guest, we have the acclaimed vocalist, performer, musicologist, scholar Pandit Satyasheel Deshpande.

And, who has spent many many years studying the music of the various gharanas with the gharana masters and their disciples in their lineages. Satyasheelji will in this next lecture help us get into even more nuanced details of the gayaki of the various gharanas through various demonstrations and his unique style of explaining the music of the gharanas. So, I will see you in the next lecture.

Thank you.