

Amir Khusrau and the Indo-Muslim Identity in the Art Music Practices of Pakistan

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Introduction

This project's initial objective was to document Amir Khusrau's living music heritage in Pakistan in the form of a video documentary. However, the researcher realized that that is not enough. What is more important than a mere documentation is to see how Khusrau and his influence helped in the nurturing of a specific music repertoire (which may or may not have been his innovation) and how this promoted an Indo-Muslim cultural identity among Pakistani musicians and their audience.

A study of Khusrau as a music legend is a vast multi-disciplinary quest, probably difficult to fully cover even in this research. But one could at least indicate the directions one needs to take to ascertain Khusrau's worth in music.

Conceptual and Theoretical Framework

Many practicing musicians in South Asia believe that Amir Khusrau, a 13th century poet, contributed tremendously to the development of their music by synergizing Indian and Central Asian styles, by 'inventing' several new *ragas* (modes), genres (such as the *khayal*, *qawwali* and *tarana*), instruments (such as the *sitar* and *tabla*), and by composing many songs. Interesting anecdotes illustrating his musical genius and 'inventions' are circulated, some of them rather improbable. For instance, it was said that he invented the *tablas* (a pair of small drums) by slicing a *pakhawaj* (barrel drum) into two halves! This corpus of myths and the name of Khusrau itself evoke great respect and devotion among practicing musicians; Khusrau is treated like he were their saint-*guru*. Many of them will not utter his name without touching their earlobe (a gesture of begging pardon for doing better than the *guru*).

For centuries these claims remained unquestioned and even entered many published historical sources without being verified, thus making them more credible. However, 20th century scholars (Waheed Mirza, et al) pointed out that there is no evidence in the writings of Khusrau himself or his contemporaries about any of these 'inventions.' Khusrau does express his passion and knowledge of music and describes in detail the cultural and musical scenario of his time, but he said nothing about his own musical inventions. Does it mean that the musicians' claims about his contributions are part of a myth that developed over centuries? The musicians get upset with the scholars' revelation, since discrediting Khusrau's 'inventions' would mean snatching away not only their patron-saint but also their livelihood. They cannot part with a large chunk of repertoire attributed to him.

It is difficult to agree or disagree with any one of these viewpoints, especially since we lack data on why and how Khusrau became a patron-saint of musicians and why they still need his name. What would be more meaningful is a holistic analysis of Khusrau's music heritage based on his authentic writings, evidence from fellow writers and contemporaries, data from later historians, and information culled from oral sources. Another interesting point is how art music has been reinterpreted to fit into the discourse of Pakistani nationalism and the role Khusrau's name plays in the creation of new cultural identities. If this study needs to be relevant to today's Pakistan, it cannot remain only historical. The survival of Khusrau's music depends on the survival of art music in Pakistan.

Amir Khusrau

Amir Khusrau Dehlavi, born in 1253 of Turk-Indian parentage, was a prolific poet and chronicler in Persian. Employed in the courts of as many as seven rulers of the Delhi Sultanate, he composed many volumes of Persian poetry and prose that contain some of the finest verse produced in South Asia, besides a wealth of information for historians. Due to his famed association with Delhi's Sufi Saint Nizamuddin Aulia (d.1325), millions of ordinary people across South Asia admire him as a saint, a musician, and a folk poet. Moreover, they attribute a large repertoire of lively poetic expressions and musical "inventions" to him. In fact, his Persian poetry also spread to and is still read and sung in the larger Persianate world, including Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan.

At the time Khusrau was born, both India and Central Asia were witnessing much political and cultural tumult. The Mongol armies were destroying much of Central Asia, culminating in the sacking of Baghdad and the end of Abbasid rule (1258) just a couple of years after Khusrau was born. India, whose western frontier the invading Mongols could not penetrate, was considered a safe haven, attracting a large number of people fleeing from Central Asia. The Delhi Sultanate, north India's first Muslim kingdom, had already been established in 1206 by the Turkish successors of Sultan Muhammad of Ghur. From Central Asia also came sages, poets, and artists, making a long-term impact on Indian society and culture. The mystics such as those of the *Chishti* order permeated the rural fabric of India, preaching the message of Islam in local dialects and cultural forms.

Khusrau's father, a Turk soldier, migrated from Transoxiana to settle in Delhi and married the daughter of an Indian officer. Khusrau received his education in a *maktab* (school) and showed extraordinary talent in Persian poetry very early. After the death of his father, he was brought up by his maternal grandfather, whose position in the court helped Khusrau start a career in the court as well. His jobs ranged from being a soldier, chronicler, advisor, to poet whose *ghazals* were evening entertainment at the court. Persian poetry steeped in Indian soil had begun to develop its own characteristic idioms, and Khusrau was one of the first to have contributed to the emerging Indian school of Persian poetics called the *Sabk-e Hindi*. His *mathnavis* (long poems describing events) and *ghazals* (short love poems) are considered among the best in the Persianate world, comparable to the works of masters like Nizami, Sa'di, and Jami. Khusrau brought a new *ghazal* to the court of Jalaluddin Feroz Khalji everyday and was rewarded handsomely (Bharani, 1983). The kings knew that his *mathnavis* would make them immortal, and they certainly did.

While travelling with the kings on military campaigns or other assignments, Khusrau kept returning to the hospice of Hazrat Nizamuddin Aulia in Delhi, an important Sufi of the *Chishtiyyah* order that was established in Ajmer, Rajasthan, by Moinuddin Chishti (d.1233). Nizamuddin had a large following among the masses of Delhi, something the contemporary kings were quite envious of. Khusrau, despite being a courtier, was Nizamuddin's favourite companion and disciple. He not only composed and recited ghazals for his spiritual master, but also received the latter's guidance in the refinement of his poetic skills, especially in his rendering of the passion of romance (Ahmed, 1976)¹. Contemporary accounts and Sufi hagiographies contain endless anecdotes about their affectionate relationship, which helped in the making of their combined legend that still attracts thousands of devotees at their twin mausoleum in Delhi, where professional singers of qawwali (Sufi songs) still recite Khusrau's poetry.

Art Music of South Asia

The art music practice of South Asia, commonly known as "Indian classical music," has ancient roots, but its performance is mostly limited to royal courts, concert halls or private venues. Ancient Sanskrit texts provide details on the theory of music, although not much on how it may have been performed then. Today it is practiced under two broad streams, namely, *Carnatic* (south Indian) and *Hindustani* (north Indian), which differ in the interpretation of *ragas* and song compositions. It is commonly believed that this demarcation began around 1200 when north India's music was affected by Perso-Arabic influences, whereas the more 'original' Indian music remained in the south of India. This theory, however, is still being debated.

The focus of this study, in relation to Pakistan and Amir Khusrau, is the Hindustani style. Some of its leading genres are the *dhrupad* (religious or meditative), *khayal* (secular, more lyrical song), *tarana* (short, fast-paced, syllabic), *thumri* (light, romantic song), and *bhajan* (devotional) in vocal or instrumental forms. Some of the leading instruments performed solo are the *sitar* (long-necked lute), *sarod* (short-necked lute), *veena* (heavy lute), *sarangi* (bowing instrument), bamboo flute, violin, and so on. Other instruments such as the *tabla* (set of two small drums), *pakhawaj* (barrel drum), *tanpura* (drone), and harmonium provide accompaniment to most performances. A typical recital of Indian art music follows a certain *raga* (notes played in ascending and descending order), a *tala* (time measure), a *bandish* (composition). Most importantly, it includes improvisation which gives the artist room for creativity to render a mood.

The practitioners of the Hindustani style are spread throughout a wide region--from Bengal in the east to Afghanistan in the west, from Kashmir in the north to Deccan in the south, but they are mostly in isolated pockets rather than in a geographically pervasive manner due to specific class patronage available to them. Mughal patronage helped art music reach its zenith through its talented court musicians such as Mian Tansen, Sadarang and others. Under royal patronage in different cities, many families of practicing artists developed their own peculiar styles, which came to be known as *banis* (styles) or *gharanas* (schools) of music. Although the term *gharana* was used only around the late 19th century, some of the major music lineages of north India that developed in the last 200 years or so are known by names such as *Gwalior*, *Agra*, *Patiala*, *Rampur-Sahaswan*, *Kirana*, *Senia*, *Dilli*, and *Jaipur-Atrauli*, among

others. Each *gharana* is famous for its characteristic style, genres, and the names of at least a few stalwart performers of the last century. Since their origins are associated with the royal courts where their ancestors were conferred honorary titles and rewards, a sense of pride in the lineage is common amongst the members of a *gharana*.

Interestingly, majority of *gharana* musicians in north India until the mid-19th century were Muslim (Malik, 1985), albeit with syncretic identities. The education and training in these families has traditionally been given orally in a direct *guru-shishya* (teacher-student) relationship, the discourse often comprising of a certain pride in the Muslim contribution to Indian music.² There were hardly any textbooks, written guidelines, or notation systems available in art music until Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande (b.1860) pioneered a systematic documentation of existing music compositions by using a notation system. Bhatkhande, who represents the 19th century's emerging trend of Hindu reforms and nationalism, acknowledged that the *ragas* of music are no longer in the shape prescribed in ancient Sanskrit treatises and have mostly been inherited via the Muslim *gharana* musicians (Bhatkhande, 1957). However he complained that the Muslim musicians are not only ignorant of the *granthas* (Sanskrit treatise) on music, they also did not record the changes done to music during the Muslim rule.

Vishnu Digambar Paluskar (b.1872), a contemporary of Bhatkhande even more dedicated to reviving the 'glorious' Hindu past, started India's first music university, the Gandharva Maha Vidyalaya (GMV) in Lahore in 1901, an exclusivist institution with hardly any non-Hindu students (Bahkle, 2005). The efforts of Paluskar and Bhatkhande resulted in many more discerning listeners of art music all over South Asia, as many institutions sprung up to promote this art form. However, art music also became part of the new discourse of national pride and Hindu identity.

Music Traditions in the Pakistan Region Before 1947

Current Pakistan is divided into four provinces based on their distinct cultures and languages: Punjab, Sindh, Baluchistan, and North West Frontier Province (NWFP). Each of them is rich in centuries-old practices of popular, folk and mystic/devotional music. Since art music thrives mostly due to elite patronage, what were its centres in Pakistan before 1947? Baluchistan, although largest in landmass which is mostly desert, is the least populated province, with Quetta being its only urban center. Many folk songs and ballads of the Baluch, Pathan and Brahui tribes are sung here accompanied by instruments such as the *dhamboora* (long lute) and *narh* (flute). But there has been almost no aristocratic patronage to art music in Baluchistan.

The Pashto speaking areas of NWFP have their own Pathan or *pakhtun* dances, poetry and storytelling practices. As Khyber Pass has been the route of passage between Central Asia and India since ancient times, the continuity of South Asian art music in as far as Kabul could not be possible without its presence in Peshawar. The local lute, *rubab*, is not only a folk instrument of the Pathans, it is also used to play the art music *ragas*. Today, while the powerful religio-political institutions continue to ban music and other cultural activities, one cannot ignore some of the literature on music and dance published from Peshawar (Musarrat, n.d.). In fact, there is a thriving business generated by the popular *pakhtun* music.

Sindh boasts of South Asia's richest culture of Sufi poetry and music composed by medieval saint-poets such as Shah Abdul Karim, Sachal Sarmast, Abdul Lateef Bhittai, and others including those revered by Hindus. Many of the folk musical forms such as *kafis* and *vayis*, although sung accompanied by local folk instruments, are based on *ragas*. In fact, the saint Bahauddin Zakariya (d.1262) of Multan (in Punjab, but close to Sindh) is said to have invented the *raga multani* which was performed all over South Asia. Practitioners and connoisseurs of art music, including those performing Amir Khusrau's repertoire, can also be found in other Sindhi towns such as Hyderabad and Mirpur Khas, although they now look up to Karachi for better patronage. Being a port city, Karachi has always been a trade and industrial center, with no princely patronage available for art music. Patronage usually came from the local Hindu business community which moved to India in 1947.

Punjab, with Lahore as its cultural hub, has certainly been a major center of aristocratic patronage for art music. Lahore (and the rest of modern Pakistan) was an important part of the Mughal Empire. Mughal rulers such as Akbar and Jahangir built grand monuments in Lahore. Poetry, miniature painting, music, and culinary arts also flourished under the Mughals. The newly emergent sect of Sikhs in Punjab defeated the Mughals in 1764 and began their rule in the region. Sikh rule saw its own impact on the area with many shrines dedicated to the Sikh *gurus* and with the continuity of music patronage. Pre-partition Punjab had many *gharanas* of art music, the *Patiala*, *Talwandi*, *Kapurthala*, *Shamchaurasi* and others, which were patronized by local rulers. While the Patiala is famous for *thumri* (light romantic song), there existed a Punjab *gharana* of *tabla* (percussion), its world famous exponent being Allah Rakkha Khan (d. 2002 in Mumbai). Old Lahore used to host numerous *baithaks* (soirees) of art music where most major artists of South Asia may have performed. The appreciation of art music was not simply restricted to the elite class. Ordinary Lahorites had a fairly good sense of *sur* and *tala* (Malik, 1998) and are known to hoot an artist off the stage if they found him/her to be a bit faulty. Lahore was the center of Pakistani cinema and also had strong links with Mumbai's early cinema industry.

Partition and Migration

Pakistan was created on 14 August 1947 as a result of a sectarian Partition of India, ending almost two centuries of British sovereignty over South Asia. Besides the active roles played by the British and certain Hindu leaders in the creation of Pakistan, its most vocal supporter was M.A. Jinnah (d.1948) who propounded the 'two-nation theory' which asserted that Hindus and Muslims are two distinct communities that cannot coexist and hence need two different nation-states. Unfortunately, the Partition led to widespread violence and death on both sides. An estimated 10 to 15 million people crossed the border from both sides. Almost seven million Muslim migrants from India moved to Pakistan, coming from many provinces including Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Rajasthan, Punjab, Gujarat and Maharashtra, bringing their local dialects, culture, and of course, art music practices which included those from established *gharanas* of north India. Some of the celebrated artists who came to Pakistan were Sardar Khan Dilliwaley, Ashiq Ali Khan, Akhtar Husain Khan, Bundu Khan, Iqbal Bano, Raushanara Begum, and the duo of Salamat-Nazakat Ali. Although some artists who came to Lahore were from the nearby towns of Amritsar, Jalandhar and Patiala, others

musicians from Bombay, Bhopal and Lucknow also shifted to Karachi, Multan and Rawalpindi.

The personal memoirs of a rich migrant, Lutfullah Khan (1997), provide details of how the migrant musicians and enthusiasts struggled to create favourable conditions for music in Karachi. The initial years saw a large number of elite Karachi women learning vocal music from the recently migrated *sarangi* artists such as Hamid Husain, Umrao Bundu Khan and others. Lutfullah, who was born in 1916 in Madras (south India), and shifted to Karachi after having lived in Hyderabad (Andhra) and Mumbai, has been recording and collecting art music for the last 70 years and boasts of over 2500 items of music in his archive. He naturally recorded or heard some of the earliest artists that had migrated from India, such as Abdul Aziz Khan, his brother Habib Ali Khan (who played *batta-been*, a string instrument), sitar players Sharif Khan Poonchwalay, Fateh Ali Khan, and tabla players Qadar Bakhsh Pakhawaji. Among the Hindus migrating to India were many musicians including Pandit Janardhan (head of GMV), Surindar Kaur, Amar Nath, Shyam Sunder (Malik, 1998), apart from many music patrons such as Harcharan Singh who supported many *dhrupad* artists. Lahore's GMV was closed down after the Hindus left. According to Raza Kazim, a music archivist and scholar in Lahore, the popular sentiments of the newly created Pakistan were too euphoric that the large scale opportunities for looting evacuee property left little concern for the past cultural heritage.

Institutional Patronage to Art Music in Pakistan

The first patron that the musicians looked up to after the creation of Pakistan was the state-owned radio that aired art music recitals. Z.A. Bukhari, who had strong links with the art musicians of South Asia, shifted from Mumbai's radio station to head the new Karachi Radio and exploited his position fully to promote the newly migrated talent (Khan, 1997). But a more vibrant center for the growth of art music was certainly the Lahore station of Radio Pakistan that nurtured some of South Asia's best music talent. However, the post-1947 initial sustenance was short-lived. Soon after Bukhari's death, many musicians could not find their bearings. The efforts to distinguish the kind of music that should be allowed in Pakistan took its toll on the *dhrupad*, *dhamar* and *thumri* (considered of Hindu origin) while the *khayal*, *tarana*, *qawwali*, and *ghazal* were given attention (being ascribed to Amir Khusrau). Many instrumentalists shifted to orchestras or brass bands, causing instruments such as the *veena*, *pakhawaj*, *sarod* and *sarangi* to all but disappear from Pakistan.

Arifa Syeda, a teacher at the National College of Arts (NCA) in Lahore, says that after 1971 there was further decline in the interest in art music. Fearing a bleak future, many musicians decided not to teach music to their children or to turn them towards the *ghazal* or pop music. All Pakistan Music Conference, a private initiative by Hayat Ahmed Khan, steadfastly continued its monthly music concert in Lahore, besides establishing a large archive of recordings made during these years. Government institutions such as the Music Research Cell in Lahore Radio, the Pakistan National Council of the Arts, and the Lok Virsa in Islamabad were established to promote music. Despite these efforts, there was little change in the deteriorating condition of the artists.

The establishment of General Ziaul Haq's military regime in the late 1970s brought about state-sponsored policies curbing art music and other art forms, forcing most 'liberal' and cultural activities either to go underground or completely shut down. The practicing musicians were especially hard-hit. Since ghazals, devotional songs, and qawwalis were allowed to thrive, the only positive change, according to Sarwat Ali, a Lahore columnist who also teaches at NCA, was that many art musicians started using the technique of *khayal* and *thumri* in ghazal singing. Thus a new *ang* (style) of ghazal singing peculiar to Pakistan evolved and its foremost exponent was Mehdi Hasan. Even qawwali singers like Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan started using art music techniques such as *sargam* (phrase of repeated notes) and *alap* (introductory chant).

The late 1990s, however, saw a revival in the interest in art music and a somewhat unbiased rediscovery of the traditions. Many new institutions, a lot of them private, started to promote art music. The present government of General Pervez Musharraf seems to be encouraging towards 'liberal' activities such as music, arts and culture. Two new institutions, the Musicology department at NCA in Lahore and the National Academy of Performing Arts in Karachi, have started to train new talent in art music. However, the lack of good teachers who can provide a comprehensive training in music still remains a major problem in Pakistan.

Crisis of Identity: The Role of Music in an Islamic State

A crucial challenge and goal for the new nation of Pakistan and the idea behind the Partition was the creation of its national identity, one that is different from that of Hindu India. Many successive governments, military rulers, and intellectuals since 1947 tried to define Pakistani cultural identity on principles ranging from Islamic *shari'at* to indigenous culture and language, but remained largely unsuccessful. In the process, however, South Asia's history textbooks were rewritten to justify Pakistan, and cultural forms such as art, music, sculpture, dance, cinema, and even family and social rituals were questioned, not only for their possible Hindu origins, but also whether or not they are valid in Islam. Till today, hundreds of books, periodicals, and television discussions continue to debate the question of Pakistani identity. Pakistanis also published, in the last 60 years, hundreds of books debating the legitimacy of music in Islam (Khan, 1997). While some books, written by religious clerics, make an argument against the use of music for its sensuousness (Albani, 2005), others are more liberal and sympathetic to music (Phulwarvi, 1997). While some use of music in popular religious devotion at shrines, in public gatherings or on television is spared by the anti-music lobby, such expressions are found un-Islamic by many *Wahhabis* (puritan Muslims).

In the midst of these debates, the art music repertoire that was allowed to survive faced its next challenge, that is, 'its re-interpretation in an Islamic Pakistan,' in other words, a clean-up of its Hindu nuances. According to Sarwat Ali, some people decided to strike off song compositions and music terminologies that contained the names of Hindu deities; in fact, some artists sang those compositions with altered names. Badruzzaman, a well-known vocalist from Lahore, says he himself took part in such a campaign in the 1970s, but realized later how ridiculous it was. There are many more examples of such redefinition of music, which Sarwat calls *mauseeqi ka qibla durust karna* (a fine-tuning of music with political motives). But today, with the revival of art music, the syncretic attitudes are returning to Pakistan.

Aahang-e Khusrau: Amir Khusrau's Music Repertoire in Pakistan

Khusrau's living music heritage in Pakistan can be seen in three broad areas: (1) Hindi/Urdu popular songs and riddles, (2) qawwali and Sufi music, and (3) art music genres.

Hindi/Urdu popular songs and riddles

Many Hindi or Urdu popular songs sung by women on occasions such as weddings, spring or the rainy season as well as the small couplets and riddles used by girls or family members for entertainment are ascribed to Khusrau. These popular verses are playful and ticklish rather than mystical or profound. It should be noted that since the Urdu/Hindi language is not native to the region of Pakistan (despite Urdu being christened the national language) and was used mostly by the emigrants from India (with the exception of Lahore's elite, who appreciate fine Urdu and Persian literature). Khusrau's Hindi verse was also not prevalent in the region's cultural vocabulary before 1947, barring a few wedding songs in Punjab. However, this Hindi repertoire has later been appropriated in various ways to project Pakistan's cultural identity.

Many professional women singers such as Kajjan Begum who migrated to Pakistan from Lucknow brought with them a number of Hindi songs and poetic expressions that are ascribed to Khusrau. Kajjan's rendition of Khusrau's *banra* (song to tease the bride-groom), *babul* (sung to the bride departing from her father's home), and *sawan* (dialogue between a married daughter and mother about the rainy season) could arguably be the last authentic versions of such repertoire in South Asia (Kajjan Begum, cd audio, n.d.). Her daughter Mehnaz continues to sing some of these songs. The songs are commonly heard in Karachi weddings and among Urdu-speaking families (Interview). Some audio cassettes available in the market also feature these songs in the voices of Ishrat Jahan, Bilqees Khanum, Shamim Bano, and Najam Ara, among others³. In the 1980s, Pakistan Television (PTV) did a series of anchored music shows called *Sur Bahar* which featured not only qawwalis by well known Pakistani artists but also some of Amir Khusrau's classical, semi-classical and folk songs.⁴ PTV and other channels have regular shows on the theme of Khusrau. On the eve of Pakistan's Independence Day, this researcher saw a TV show that glorified Khusrau's music with patriotic sentiments!⁵ In addition, stage-shows featuring Khusrau's popular music and folklore in a dance-drama rendition with over-dressed actors are often organized in Karachi.

Qawwalis or Sufi songs

Qawwalis or Sufi songs existed in Pakistan even before 1947, they are often sung in Punjabi, Sindhi, and Saraiki shrines. In fact, more important to note is the continuity of the Sufi orders such as the *Chishtiyyah* which encouraged the use of *sama* (Sufi listening to music) and qawwali across South Asia⁶. Since most devotees visiting the local Sufi shrines in Punjab speak Punjabi, the qawwalis performed here are also mostly in Punjabi; hence Khusrau's compositions were seldom heard here. However, the more exclusive Sufi soirees did incorporate the Persian and Hindi poetry of Khusrau⁷. The 1947 migration brought many Urdu-speaking qawwals to Pakistan whose major repertoire consisted of Khusrau's songs. The post-1947 promotion of this art form and its newly-migrated exponents in Pakistan led to the nurturing of world class artists such as Bahauddin-Qutbuddin, Aziz Mian, Ghulam Farid

Sabri, and Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan who brought the qawwali from the shrines to the concert stage.

With the passing away of the qawwali giants, its 20th century golden age in Pakistan may be over, but Khusrau's repertoire and devotion continues. Karachi's Abida Perveen, primarily trained in the Sufi music of Sindh, performs Khusrau's qawwali compositions in a solo vocal rendering, often blending Sindhi, Saraiki, and Punjabi couplets within Khusrau's Hindi/Urdu songs. She is regularly invited to India especially for an extravagant festival of Sufi music called *Jahan-e Khusrau* held annually in Delhi⁸. Sher Ali and Mehr Ali of Faisalabad echo almost all South Asian qawwals by saying that Khusrau has given them plenty of *ehsanat* (favours or indebtedness), not only in terms of his contributions to music but also in the blessings and inspiration he gave to artists. Many Sufi lineages in Pakistan are a blend of various orders such as the *Chishtiyya*, *Qadriyya*, and *Naqshbandiyya*. One of the well known Sufis of Lahore, Ghulam Qutbuddin Faridi of the *Aliya-Chishtiyya-Nizamia* order, regularly listens to Khusrau's *qaul*, *rung*, and Persian ghazals in the voice of Sher and Mehr Ali.

Art music genres

Classical or art musicians of almost all *gharanas*, whether indigenous or emigrants from India, invoke Amir Khusrau's contribution and devotion. A term coined to describe Khusrau's art music genres in Pakistan is *Aahang-e Khusrau*⁹ (the voice or repertoire of Khusrau), which includes song types such as the *qaul*, *qalbana*, *tarana*, *chhota khayal*, and the Persian ghazals, many of these in a grey area between *khayal* and qawwali. Musicians also ascribe to Khusrau some vocal techniques that are common among these genres, techniques such as the *bol-bant* (to divide the lyrics into short rhythmic phrases), *takrar* (rhythmic dialogue), *sam par mukhda pakadna* (to arrive at the first word of the song on the first beat of the time-cycle after an improvisation) and so on. The late Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan would often pause in his stage performances to explain that the techniques he was using were invented by Amir Khusrau.

Some of the prominent artists who practice these genres in Pakistan belong to the family of Munshi Raziuddin, a qawwal who migrated from Delhi in 1947. Munshi's sons Fareed Ayaz and Abu Muhammad are today quite sought-after qawwals in Karachi. However, their senior cousin, Naseeruddin Sami, was trained in art music by Munshi, and is today one of the important living exponents of the *Aahang-e Khusrau*. Sami strongly believes in Khusrau's contributions to music, but thinks that there is more to it than simply a list of *ragas* and instruments. He believes that Khusrau's true contribution which has been ignored is his stress on the *Ilm-ul Alhan* (a science of voices) which is today called the "voice culture," which is required to enhance a Sufi's ecstasy, according to him. No doubt, Sami's training and practice have given him a strong and earthy voice that has made him an acclaimed vocalist of Pakistan.

Munshi, Sami and their extended family try to trace their roots directly from Amir Khusrau via names such as Saamat qawwal, Hasan Sawant, Behlol, Bula Kalawant, Tanras Khan, Achpal Khan (Interview with Sami) and so on, all of which are incorporated in a lineage called the *Qawwal bachche* (children). It is commonly believed that the *Qawwal bachche gharana* was established by Amir Khusrau himself through his pupil Saamat qawwal. But

according to recent research, the name *Qawwal bachche* can be traced only to two 19th century vocalists, Shakkar Khan and Makkhan Khan, who probably migrated from Lucknow to Gwalior (Khayal Gharanas, 2004). Their descendents, Nathan Pir Baksh, Haddu and Hassu Khan (d. 1859), finally established the Gwalior *khayal gayeki*, which included a lot of Khusrau repertoire or style, permeating from Gwalior to almost all *khayal* gharanas of north India and Pakistan.

The devotion to and pride in Amir Khusrau is more intensified today in the family of Munshi Raziuddin, probably due to their direct link with the shrine of Nizamuddin in Delhi. They have an emotional bonding with Khusrau, says Sarwat Ali, “almost imagining that their patron-saint is watching while they perform”. No other music personality of the past (Tansen, Sadarang, etc.) evokes such fervour as Khusrau does. Theirs is also a rare *gharana* of South Asia in that it has retained its flexibility between performing art music and qawwali. It is quite remarkable that Munshi, a qawwal, managed to produce a full-fledged *khayal* singer (Sami) who can be counted among South Asia’s top vocalists. According to Sami, his *ustad* rendered qawwali is as refined and sophisticated as you would expect from *khayal* or art music.

While studying the living practices of Khusrau in music, one cannot ignore the debates about whether or not Khusrau really ‘invented’ what has been attributed to him. In fact, some of the most substantial doubts about the veracity of these claims have been raised by one musicologist, Rasheed Malik (2000), who has systematically tried to prove, since 1975, that none of the claims about Khusrau’s music inventions can be verified by internal or external historical evidences. However, most practicing musicians and some Pakistani writers I met during this research find Malik a bit of a hardliner who ignores the oral sources of history and needs to know only the “practical side of music”(Ghulam Khan, 2004). But apart from such emotional response from some musicians, Malik’s findings on Khusrau are also likely to influence the formulation of Pakistan’s Indo-Muslim cultural identity and pride. However, this impact may not necessarily be a negative one. With a revival of interest in art music, one hopes for a more comprehensive understanding of Amir Khusrau, including a reinterpretation of old beliefs and prejudices by the younger generation of Pakistan.

Conclusion

Since the Partition of 1947 resulted from the idea that Hindus and Muslims have two distinct cultures that cannot coexist, the national identity of the newly created Pakistan had to be perceived as different from India. In the process, many cultural and art forms such as South Asian art music had to be either abolished or restructured to fit into the Islamic paradigm, thus affecting the livelihood of many professional musicians especially those who had migrated from India during the Partition. The process of redefinition and legitimization of art music in Pakistan went through many ups and downs due to perpetual political instability. However, among the factors that possibly gave it credibility were the names of Muslim cultural icons such as Amir Khusrau, whose enormous production of poetry and music helped in the projection of Muslim pride in their contribution to South Asian art music.

However, while some music styles such as the qawwali and ghazal received better state support for a long time, other art music genres such as the *khayal*, *dhrupad* and *thumri* were

neglected due to their syncretic, or sometimes sensuous, qualities. But today, as Pakistan is witnessing a revival of interest in art music, liberal attitudes are emerging, at least among the urban elite which does not shy away from acknowledging its pre-1947 syncretic past. The revivalism is also giving professional artists more pupils and more concerts. Amir Khusrau continues to be respected and interpreted in various ways to supplement the popular as well as elite cultural identity of Pakistanis.

Endnotes

¹ Includes many short biographies of Khusrau by authors including Shibli Nomani, Saeed Marharvi etc.

² Refer to this researcher's forthcoming 12 minutes video documentary *Khusrau in Pakistan*, wherein the Pakistani musicians talk about Muslim pride.

³ Various Artists, *Banno Hamari Anmol* (CD), Audiorec (no date/place), 19 songs including *chhap tilak sab* and *kahay ko byahi bides...*

⁴ Various Artists, *Chhap Tilak Sab Chheen Lee, Sur Bahar by Ameer Khusroo*, n.d., n.p.

⁵ See *Khusrau in Pakistan* for clips of PTV show recorded in Islamabad, 13 August 2005

⁶ A detailed study of qawwali is Regula B. Qureshi, *Sufi Music of India and Pakistan: Sound, Context and Meaning in Qawwali*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1995

⁷ See *Khusrau in Pakistan* for a private soiree of Ghulam Qutbuddin Faridi in Lahore.

⁸ *Abida Sings Amir Khusrau*, Mumbai, Times Music, 2002

⁹ A series of audio CDs called *Aahang-e Khusrau* contain samples art music by prominent Pakistani artists (not all compositions are Khusrau's) no date/place of origin.

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