

Chapter-5

I. Pandit Baren Majumdar (1919-2001)

(Interview of the Artist, on 6th August 2000, at 5 pm)

Pandit Barin Majumdar was born in a Zamindar family at Radhanagar of Parbna District in 1919. He took training in classical music from Vishma Dev at Kolkata and then from Pandit Raghunandan Goswami at his house.

Later he went to Lucknow. There, he took direct lessons from Ustad Hamid Hossain Khan, Ustad Khurshid Ali Khan, Pandit Chinmoy Lahiri. Later he became a spiritual disciple of Ustad Faiyaz Khan Saheb. Barin Majumdar gains his vicinity through Pandit Dhruvataraj Joshi.

Without completing his education at Maurice college of Lucknow he returned to his motherland in 1947. He joined the 'Bulbul Lalitkala Academy' as principal in 1957. Later in 1963, he became the founder principal of the 'College of Music' the unique music college of Bangladesh.

For the expansion of music, he arranged 'Nikhil Pakistan Sangeet Sammelan' in 1969 and 'Ustad Alauddin Khan Sangeet Sammelan' at Bangabandhu Stadium in 1972. In the decades of eighty, he brought Pandit VG Yog, the violin wizard of Bangladesh and Pandit Yashraj for his newly established 'Monihar Sangeet Academy.'

He published three editions of extraordinary music magazines named 'Sursaptak'. His wife Ila Majumdar has written a book titled 'Srutite Smritite Barin Majumdar' which contains complete information about his life, works and struggle. He was awarded 'Janakantha Padak' in 1919 and 'Ekushey Padak' in 2001. Among his students Ila Majumdar, Satindra Halder, Krishnakanta Acharya, Babu Rahman, Dharmadarshi Barua, Jaqub Ali Khan, Madan Mahon Das are his competent disciples. He passed away on 3rd October of 2001.

His contribution and achievement

Name	:	Shri Barin Majumdar
Father	:-	Late Nishendranath Majumdar
Mother	:	Monimala Majumdar
Place of Birth	:	Radhanagar, Pabna
Date of Birth	:	15 th February, 1919

Educational Qualifications:

- Primary music education starts in the family environment.
- Training from Vishva Dev Chattopadhyaya in 1936.
- Direct admission to B. Mus (3rd Year) in Maurice College of Lucknow and was taught by principal Pandit Srikrishna Ratan Janakar Professor J.N Natu, Ustad Hamid Hossain.
- Trained individually by Ustad Khursheed Ali Khan, Late Chinmoy Lahiri, Aftab-A-Myusiki, Ustad Faiaz Khan.

Works and Achievements:

- 1981- edited and published an extraordinary magazine 'Sursaptak on theory, information and history of Raga music
- 1983-reception by Rajshahi Barendra Academy. Honored with Ekushey Padak
- 1985- reception by Bangladesh Theatre at Mohila Samity Milonayaton
- 1986- establishment of Monihar Sangeet Academy (14th March). Inaugurated by Pandit Yashraj.
- 1987-reception by 'Kamal Gandhar Shilpi Ghoshti'

- 1988- inauguration of three-day 'Sangeet Shikhsadan Karmashala' at Vishya Sahitya Kendra.
- 1989- 70th birthday celebration by 'Surer Alo Sangeet Academy'
- 1990 – Achieved 'Sidhu Bhai' prize by 'chnayanat'
- 1991 – reception by Bangladesh Shilpokala Academy. His last public programme.
- 1993 – reception by 'Uchonga Sangeet Forum' at their 4th anniversary.
- 1994 – reception by artists and cultural artists of Bangladesh at Shilpakala Academy.
- 1995 – 75th birthday anniversary celebrated. Reception and the citation -'Shilpi Shreshtha Kalakar' – given by 'Bangladesh Betar Television Shilpi Sangsad' at Osmani Memorial Auditorium (26th May).
- 1997 – reception by 'Shelpi Britto'
- 1998 – awarded 'Janakantha Gunjan Puraskar' and monthly scholarship.
- Breathed his last on October 3.
- 2002 – awarded 'Swadhinata Padak' (Posthumously) by the People's Republic of Bangladesh.



Figure – 10: The Name Of The Tree is Bhairav and Fruits are Ragas From Bhairav Thata.
 Source: Created by Pandit Barin Majumdar.



Pandit Barin Majumdar of Rangeela Gharana.



Researcher Nusrat Mumtaz with Pandit Barin Majumdar and Ila Majumdar

II. Editor: Swarnamov Chakaravarty Madan Gopal Das

(Interview of the Artist, on 18th August 2000, at 8pm)

Madan Gopal Das is a prominent performer and teacher of tabla in Bangladesh. He hails from the city of Dhaka and was brought up in Dhaka while it used to be a major center of classical music of the subcontinent. He was born on 13/07/1940 in a middle class family. His father Bijoy Chandra Das was a civil servant. He had a major interest in rhythm instrument in his childhood. He started learning tabla while he was a student of Secondary School Certificate. At first he received tutelage in tabla under Pundit Bhagirat Chandra Das, a renowned Tabla Nawaz of Dhaka, when he was fifteen years old. He learnt tabla under this Guru for four years. Following that, he undertook training under the famous Ustad Sakhawat Hossain Khan of Farakkabad Gharana where he learnt tabla under him till 1971. By then Madan Gopal Das had become a prominent performer of tabla (classical) in the cultural arena of Bangladesh. Some of his worth remembering accompaniment are with renowned Ustad Imrad Hossain Khan, Angur Bala Devi, Shidweshwar Mukherjee and many other prominent performers of classical music of the subcontinent. Lastly he received his tutelage in tabla under renowned Bangladeshi Tabla Nawaz and vocal performer Pundit Mithun Dey who was a disciple of the celebrated tabla Nawaz of the India Ustad Keramotullah Khan of Farakkabad Gharana. He learnt under him for three years. Madan Gopal Das has been teaching in a number of music institutions viz. Chhayana, Nazrul Academy etc. over the years. Apart from being a famous tabla player, Madan Gopal Das did government job from where he retired not very long ago.

Ustads of Madan Gopal Das:

- 1 Pundit Bhagirat Chandra Das (Bangladesh)
- 2 Ustad Sakhawat Hossain Khan (Disciple of Ustad Masid Khan, Farakkabad Gharana)

3. Pundit Mithun Dey (Bangladeshi, Disciple of Ustad Keramotullah Khan of Farakkabad Gharana).

Statement Of Madan Gopal Das

Madan Gopal Das says that the prevailing forms and styles of classical music in Bangladesh have come from the treasury of North Indian Classical Music. He saw in his time a lot of performers and Ustads of North Indian Classical Music coming from India and Pakistan performing and teaching here. During his time he saw many Bangladeshis going to India learning under Indian Ustads and coming back home or settling there. But the inception of this process was before his time. And this continues happening even today. Madan Gopal Das learnt tabla from the Ustads and Pundits of Bangladesh who had learnt from the Indian Ustads and performers. And these could be applicable to vocal classical music and tabla and all other instrumental music also.

Madan Gopal Das advocates that there is a major change in the phenomenon of classical music in Bangladesh compared to the past. During his early days, there was a trend of learning classical music directly under Ustads. This means there was tradition of Guru-Shishya relationship. Now a day this tradition does not prevail at large. There are number of institutions but students do not show keen interest to learn and are not aware of the concept of Guru-Shishya relationship. They are preoccupied with a lot of other things that are barriers to their learning. And even these institutions are not well organized and supported by regulatory bodies. So gradually the tradition of classical music is deteriorating and concepts of Gharana, Guru-Shishya relationship are getting nowhere.



Renowned Table Player Madan Gopal of Dhaka Gharana

III. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury

(Interview of the Artist on 14th July 2000, at 10 am

Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury was born in 1952 on 13th January in Dhaka. He hails from Khainkut village at Shivpur Thana of Narshindi District. His father late Abdush Sobhan Chowdhury was a doctor by profession. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury started his music life at the age of seven. At first he took his music lessons from Ustad Ayatollah. Ustad Ayatollah was a resident of Manikganj and a disciple of Ustad Mehedi Hussein Khasru. Ustad Mehedi Hussein Khasru was a resident of the erstwhile Tripura, presently called Comilla District. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury is blessed with a gifted voice. Though he was not brought up in a musical environment in his family, he cherished great love for music and his destiny took him towards the world of music. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury took in pure classical music from Ustad Ayatollah Khan. Apart from learning pure classical music, Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury put his efforts to a form of light classical music called Ghazal and Nazrul Sangeet with his gifted melodious voice. His days passed with quiet a bit of monotony. Suddenly, he came across a rare occasion that turned his life to a new dimension. The living legendary Pakistani Ustad Fateh Ali Khan of Patiala Gharana who has been graced with the title "Tan Captaan" came to Bangladesh for a musical tour. In course of time he got acquainted with Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury and was enchanted by the melodious voice of that juvenile artist. And Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury also considered the possibility of being the disciple of the eligible Guru (mentor). Ustad Fateh Ali Khan accepted Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury as his disciple and took him along to Pakistan while he was only 16 or 17 in 1965. The elder brother of Ustad Fateh Ali Khan is the legendary and famous performer of classical music and Ghazal of this subcontinent Ustad Amanat Ali Khan. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury had the great opportunity to have the discipleship and company of these two great souls for twenty-seven years. Ustad Niaz

Mohammed Chowdhury learnt the pure forms of classical music such as Khayal, Thumri, Dadra, Kajri, Dhrupad etc.; but he did not stop at these. His mind and heart had always cherished the vibration of the melodious Geet and Ghazals of the legendary Ghazal king Ustad Amanat Ali Khan, Ustad Mehedi Hassan, Beghum Akhtar, etc. He out of his own performing ability and powerful voice mastered all these numbers and techniques to improvise. Gradually he emerged as a performer of semi classical and light classical forms such as Ghazal, Nazrul Sangeet (Bengali) while maintaining the practice of pure classical forms. During his learning period under Ustad Fateh Ali Khan, he kept in touch with both his motherland Bangladesh and Pakistan. By then he had completed his Bachelor degree in Arts from Dhaka College in 1971. As a performer of classical music and especially as a performer of Ghazal, he performed in India, Pakistan, USA, UK and many other countries of the world and earned great fame. Apart from this, this versatile performer has achieved success by performing Raga based Bengali songs, songs of Nazrul Islam, and modern Bengali songs and thus attained fame not only in Bangladesh but also among the Bengali community of India. The State Authority of the Maryland Province of USA has conferred him the Lifetime Honorary Citizenship for his immense contribution to art and culture of Maryland State. The Fellows of the Art and Music Department of University of California at Los Angeles arranged special seminar on his music where he give a performance. In most of the prestigious functions and occasions of classical music and Ghazal, he received a cordial invitation as an honored artist of the subcontinent. He has received many state and international awards several times. In the field of classical music he work towards mantaining the style of performing and characteristics of his Guru Ustad Fateh Ali Khan. Ustad Fateh Ali Khan is one of the respected representatives of the celebrated Patiala Gharana. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury maintains the features and styles of Patiala Gharana with sheer conviction in his performance. Even after that he tries to portray his own

personality through imaginative improvisation in his style, which results in an outstanding performance. To summarise end, about Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury, one could state that he is a first class performer of classical music and Ghazal not only in Bangladesh but also on the international arena. In the blurred sky of music of Bangladesh Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury is like an illuminated star.

The Gurus of Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury are mentioned underneath:

1. Ustad Ayatullah (Disciple of Ustad Mehedi Hussein Khasru)
2. Ustad Fateh Ali Khan (Patiala Gharana)
3. Ustad Amanat Ali Khan (Patiala Gharana)

Statement Of Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury

Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury presents retrospective view while describing the present situation of classical music in the context of Bangladesh. In this regard he primarily blames the term "Generation Gap" for the penurious situation of classical music in Bangladesh. He advocates that classical music has not yet been a popular discipline in the culture at field of Bangladesh. And he states that in the field of classical music there have not been satisfactory numbers of quality performers to draw attention of the general public and create huge audience as such. What Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury really meant by "Generation Gap" was not transparent. He did not further his explanation on that. He diverted his concentration towards some other matter and emphasized on some other issue which he called "Base". In this regard he said that in Bangladesh there is no tradition of building up a musical dynasty i.e. the "Base" of music of Bangladesh is weak. If the base foundation is not strong the branches will consequently be fragile. In India and Pakistan i.e. in the context of the greater subcontinent we see that hundreds of years ago a man being trained in classical music develops a distinguished style and the descendants of that generation continue that performing style of their ancestor.

Let's say one person of that generation was a vocal performer and his descendants do not have the vocal skill to master his art. But to carry on their musical dynasty they would acquire their father's knowledge, skill and style by being instrumental performers and bestow the knowledge to their next generations. If the family does not have any descendant they transform that knowledge to their favourite disciples. In this way a musical dynasty i.e. a Gharana is made through transforming music from generation to generation. In such a case one sees that the "Base" is so strong that the branches are assured of a new "Base" for their next generation in course of time. In Bangladesh there is no tradition of building up a Gharana. Even so there is no tradition of the *Guru-Shisya Parampara* i.e. mentor-disciple tradition. This means there does not exist the traditional relationship of mentor and disciple. Here the mentors of music can not transform their knowledge and skills to their disciples because of the lack of this relationship. Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury primarily blames the socio-economic condition of Bangladesh for this vacuum. Besides he considers the lack of good education and patronage as the cause for the distressed condition of classical music in Bangladesh. In retrospect we see in the past, kings, landlords and wealthy people used to give shelter and patronize the great performers. As a result the performers could avail of the great opportunities to perform. And these wealthy persons had a good taste of classical music. So the performers used to get financial support and they were also engaged in building up capable disciples. In such favorable circumstances they could afford the growth of musical intellect and create new Ragas. In present times though this phenomenon is not unchanged, the mainstream has yet not been lost. We see huge and diverse audience and presence of patronization there. But in Bangladesh the audience is very much limited. And most of them do not have basic education, let alone musical knowledge. Besides, government and wealthy people do not patronize the Ustads. So out of compulsion Ustads take on some wealthy disciples and perform within a limited scope. These titular disciples do not know how to embrace music as the austere practice

of life. As a result the Gurus cannot hand over their knowledge to such disciples. He also stressed another issue. The performers of Indian Gharanas master the style of their ancestors without deviating and perform accordingly. And they depict their own personality in that rigid framework. They would hardly deviate from their rigid fixed performing style. As there is barely the tradition of building up Gharana, the Ustads of Bangladesh learnt classical music from Indian and Pakistani Ustads of renowned Gharanas. After that they blended their own imagination and improvisation with the learnt style from Gharana; because they did not have any hereditary responsibility to preserve the Gharana. And in most of the cases the newly formed style does not have any strong characteristics and in extreme ceases leads to sheer deformation of the style. And their disciples do not learn any style of performance from their Guru. As such a correct and strong style of performance gets deformed gradually and loses its characteristics. These factors are leading responsible for classical music in Bangladesh toward nowhere.

Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury said that the prevailing forms of classical music in Bangladesh resemble the North Indian forms. In the past, the Ustads who brought classical music to the culture of Bangladesh learnt classical music from the representative performers of different Gharanas of the Indian subcontinent and put them in vogue in Bangladesh. Besides, since ancient time, the erstwhile East Bengal i.e. presently called Bangladesh, India and Pakistan have been cherishing a cultural integrity. As a result many Ustads of North Indian Classical Music came to East Bengal and performed here. In this way North Indian Classical Music spread over different place from time-to-time in Bangladesh. And to talk about the prevailing style of classical music in Bangladesh, performers project the styles of the performers of different Gharanas as their ideals. They deviate while rendering the original styles; be it deliberate or because of incapacity. But their ideal style belongs to the performers of Gharanas of North Indian Classical Music. So today's classical music in Bangladesh is

nothing but North Indian Classical Music. The pure classical forms performed by Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury are stated below

1. Khayal, 2. Thumri, 3. Dadra, 4. Sadra, 5. Kajri and 6. Dhrupad.

All the forms mentioned above and performed by Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury are of North Indian Classical Music. He learnt these forms both from local and Pakistani Ustads. He is imparting training of the same to many Bangladeshi learners. He composes various types of songs based on the North Indian Ragas. Apart from pure classical forms he also performs the semi and light classical forms of which most are based on North Indian Ragas and Raginis. Some of those forms are mentioned below:

1. Ghazal, 2. Raga based Bengali songs, 3. Geet, 4. Songs of Nazrul Islam, 5. Modern Bengali Songs and 6. Qawali.



Ustad Niaz Mohammad Chowdhury of Patiala Gharana.



Researcher with Ustad Niaz Mohammed Chowdhury.

IV. Ustad Babu Rahman

(Interview of the Artist. on 26th June, at 7 pm)

Ustad Babu Rahman has multidimensional musical attributes in his life. Altogether he is a master, performer, researcher and historian of classical music, a musicologist, a music journalist and column writer, an initiator to institutionalize the education of music and to sum up in one word a worshipper of music. He is famous in the cultural field under the pseudonym as Babu Rahman. He takes music in his life with utmost dedication. Babu Rahman has been involving himself in the practice of classical music. Presently he works for Jahangirnagar University School and College, Savar, Dhaka, as a Junior Lecturer in the Department of Music. He was born at Srinagar Thana in Khamarbari Bikrampur District on 2nd October in 1954. His father Mohammed Ansar Ali is a Civil Servant and mother Jahanara Beghum is a housewife. His father hails from Krishnapur village of Manikganj District of Bangladesh, a place dominated by fundamentalists. In his boyhood Babu Rahman was inspired by watching acting in an opera of his maternal uncle Mr. Ali Akbar. That folk drama had major musical scores. He took admission in Dhaka Motizhil Government Primary School and started his educational life. After that he was put in Srinagar Bibondi Primary School in Munshiganj District where he completed his grade one. In the following year he switched to a local school called Rushdi High School at Bikrampur. After that he came back to Manikganj from his maternal uncle's place. There he completed his grade five in Bahir Tek Primary High School. During that time he got fascinated at the musical scores of Kirton Rom Jatra (Opera) and the open-air opera held in his locality. He used to participate in amateur open-air opera and drama. He acted in a mythological drama "Krishnoshudama" (1966) and in social drama "Gaaer Bodhu" (1968). The director of "Krishnoshudama" was the late Abinash Chokroborti who was the leading performer and teacher of classical music of Manikganj District. In 1967 he performed modern Bengali song for the Silver Jubilee celebration of local Ghabashpur Labonno Probha High

School. At that time he encountered classical music for the first time in his life. He developed a rapport with the family of folk artist the late Usman Khan (1922-1989), Shahjahan Master and the family of Gobindo Goshwami. All of them used to have music-related gathering. He started moving around to learn classical music without proper direction. At that time the country was awaiting independence. He was very active and directly participated in the Mass Revolt/Movement of 1969 and War of Independence in 1971. After the country became independent in 1971, he did his Higher Secondary in 1972. Soon he moved to Dhaka and had his tutelage in classical music under Ustad Aminul Islam (late) at Bangla Shongskriti Academy situated at Green Road in Dhaka. Having attained a first division in Higher Secondary, he got admitted into Dhaka College of Music in 1972. There he received training in vocal classical music under Ustad Akhter Sadmani who is a disciple of the celebrated performer of the subcontinent Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (Patiala Gharana) and Bobby Daniel of Kirana Gharana. Bobby Daniel was the disciple of legendary performer of classical music of the India Ustad Amir Khan (1912-1974) (Kirana and Indore Gharana). Ustad Babu Rahman did his Music (Higher Secondary in Music) from College of Music with a second class in 1973. Along with classical music he received training in Nazrul Sangeet under Sheikh Lutfur Rahman (1923-1994). Simultaneously he participated in a training workshop of classical music conducted by Dhaka Radio Center under the instruction of famous Ustad Gul Mohammed Khan (1876-1979) of Agra Gharana. Ustad Gul Mohammed Khan was the first artist of classical music of the Dhaka Radio (1939). He hailed from Darbhanga District of Bihar Province. He came to Dhaka for a musical tour in the British regime and never returned home. While pursuing B Mus. (1973-1975) Ustad Babu Rahman learnt vocal music under Pundit Barin Majumdar (1919-2000). Founder and Principal of College of Music (1963). Ustad Babu Rahman's music career took a turn after his association with Pundit Barin Majumdar and his wife and disciple Mrs. Ila Majumdar. Pundit Barin Majumdar was a descendent of the Landlord

family of Radhanagar of Pabna District in Bangladesh. Pundit Barin Majumdar primarily learnt classical music (vocal) under Pundit Raghunandan Goshwami and later on joined Lucknow Morris College for further studies. There he learnt vocal music under the tutelage of Pundit Ratanjankar (disciple of Pundit Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande), Professor J. N. Nantu and Professor Ajodhya Prasad. Ustad Barin Majumdar had the opportunity to take special training in vocal music under the renowned Aftab-e-Mowsiki Faiyaz Khan (1886-1950), Pundit Dhruvotara Joshi (1916-1993) and senior class fellow Pundit Chinmoy Lahiri (1976-1984). In 1947 he came back to Dhaka and undertook extensive practice. He was the principal of Bulbul Academy of Fine Arts of Dhaka in the late fifties and later on founded the College of Music (1964). While pursuing B.Mus, Ustad Babu Rahman got scholarship for studying abroad and so he quit the College of Music. During his days in the College of Music, Ustad Babu Rahman had the opportunity to get in touch with Sharad Bani Mathur (Sarod), Ustad Bahadur Khan (Sarod), Rajnarayan Mishra (Sarangi), Nanku Maharaj (Tabla-Lucknow), Maya Chatterji (Kathak Nritya) etc. on the occasion of Ustad Alaaddin Khan Music Conference held in December 1972. Besides he was associated with the Professor of College of Music Ustad Khadem Hossain Khan (Sitar), Ustad Meer Kashem Khan (Sitar), Ustad Hemayet Hossain (violin) and Ustad Mohammed Hossain Khan (Tabla and vocal). Ustad Babu Rahman felt that it was a great experience listening to the performance of Angurbala and Dipal Nag of Agra Gharana and to be associated with them. The performance of Abha Alam (1946-1974) a disciple of famous Pakistani musician Rowshan Ara and famous musician of Bangladesh Pundit Mithun De (1917-1987) left a major influence on his musical intellect. In 1975 he went to India to pursue his Bachelor in Music under Visva Bharati at Shantiniketon under the scholarship of ICCR (India Bangladesh Cultural Contract). There he started learning vocal music under Pundit Vidyadhar Venkotesan Wazhlowar of Gwalior Gharana. With special permission, he pursued both Degree Program (2 years) and Diploma (4 years) in music Under

the Degree Program he learnt “Khayal” under Shudhish Benarji who was a favorite disciple of Pundit Chinmoy Lahirhi (1916-1984). Besides, he learnt “Dhrupad and Dhamar” under Pundit Nimaiczhd Boral (1929-1993) of the famous Dagor Gharana. In 1977 he passed Part-I Final Examination having obtained the highest score with a first class. During this time he got in touch with Nirmol Kumar Nondi (Esraj) of Vishnupur Gharana, Pundit Mallikarjun Mansur(1910-1992) of Alladia Khan Gharana, Drupad performer Nepal Rajkumar T L Rana, and Pundit Nikhil Benarji (1931-1986). He received training in Thumri and Bhajan under the guest lecturer Gyanprokash Gosh for a short period, of time. In Part-II he learnt classical music (Khayal) under Mohon Singh Khangura who is a disciple of Pundit D T Joshi and also under Pundit Alok Chatterji who is a disciple of Usharonjon Mukherji (1920-1992), a disciple of legendary Ustad Amir Khan (Kirana Gharana). In the final examination he found that the syllabus of Diploma Program had an extensive emphasis on Ragas and Raginis compared to the Degree Program and so he opted out of the Diploma course. His fields of interest were not only practical music but also the history of music and theoretical subjects of music. He passed Part-II of Diploma having obtained distinction marks in all the subjects other than the elective subject Ravindra Sangeet with a first class. Back home he arranged music conference along with his senior colleague Ustad Kamrujjaman Moni (Tabla) He established “Shastri Sangeet Parishad” for the promotion and propagation of classical music out of his own inspiration on 24 January in 1981. Young and promising performers were given opportunity to perform in that premise Shahadat Hossain Khan (Saroj), Shomir Kumar Dash (Sitar), Shuman Chowdhury (vocal), Rubina Ahmed Mili (vocal), Manjusri Chowdhury (vocal), Yaqub Ali Khan (vocal) have all performed there. All of them are now renowned artists of their own merit. Ustad Babu Rahman with the cooperation of his friends and colleagues the same field established “Sangeet Bhawan” with a vision to institutionalize the methodical education of music. Ustad Babu Rahman was the Founder General Secretary of that institution. This institution still functions

with pride. His efforts to ensure the development and progress of classical music include performing, researching and preserving the ignored and neglected history of music, the life history of the musicians and conducting seminars both within the country and abroad. He is under the process of writing "The History of Music in Bangladesh" (1947-2000). Besides he is continuing with the preparation of building up "Sangeet Charitabidhan". He has authored and published more than fifty of articles on music. And two of his works on Nazrul Sangeet are a waiting publication. Ustad Babu Rahman is the Assistant Editor of Mashik Sargam, the only music journal of Bangladesh. In each of the edition of "Mashik Sargam" his research works are published.

- The Ustads of Ustad Babu Rahman:

- Bangladesh: (1972-75)

1. Late Ustad Aminul Islam (Sangeet Bisharad, vocal, Lucknow)
2. Ustad Akhtar Sadmani {disciple of Ustad Bade Ghulam Ali Khan (Patiala), Bobby Daniel (Kirana)}
3. Late Pundit Barin Majumdar (Disciple of Pundit Ratanjankar, Sangeet Bisharad, Rangila Gharana)
4. Late Ustad Gul Mohammed Khan (Agra Gharana)

- India (1975-1979):

1. Pundit Vidyadhar Bhenkotes Wazhlowar (Gwalior Gharana)
2. Late Pundit Nimai Chad Borhal (Dagar Gharana)
3. Pundit Shudhish Benarji (disciple of Chimmoy Lahirhi)
4. Pundit Ashesh Benarji (Vishnupur Gharana, Sitar)
5. Pundit Mohan Singh Khangura (disciple of D T Joshi)
6. Pundit Alope Chatterji (Kirana Gharana)

Statement Of Ustad Babu Rahman

Ustad Babu Rahman says classical music was a property of the landlords and hardly reached people. But Pundit Vishnu Narayan Bhaskhande established the phenomenon of classical music as a property of general people. And Ustad Babu Rahman considers himself a student belonging to this school of thought. Ustad Babu Rahman has dedicated his life for the cause of development of classical music. He has performed in almost all the districts of Bangladesh, conducted and participated in many seminars and conferences of classical music both in the country and abroad. But he does not think that classical music would ever be a property of every house in the country. And he believes that the tradition of Gharana of classical music will gradually fade away in course of time. In this context, he thinks that people are now able to avail opportunities to listen to the music of each Gharanas of classical music with the advent and development of electronic media. Added to that he thinks at learners and performers should accept all the good characteristics of every Gharana. However, the practice and audiences of classical music are more advanced compared to the past. The sale of cassettes, and CDs has enhanced these days. Besides, the publication of books on classical music, collection of performances and study of classical music is increasing day by day. A monthly music magazine like "Sargam" has been running for last five years. To speak about Gharana, Ustad Babu Rahman says, Pundit Barin Majumdar of Rangila Gharana has taught him Chhota Khayal in Raga Bhairav mentioned underneath.

(a) Sthaa:

Dhana dhana murata Krishna murari

sulachhana giridhari

sadhi sundara laagay aati payari

Antara:

Baansi dhara mana mohana suhavay

bali bali jaau moray mana bhavay

saabraang gyan vichary

Along with Sadaraang he has given the Bandish created by Manarang, Premarang and Haarang. Ustad Akhter Sadmani (Patiala and Kirana Gharana) taught Ustad Babu Rahman the Bandish denoted beneath. The style and feature he acquired from this Ustad of Patiala Gharana includes concise and small *Harqat, Barqi, Mudki, Khatka, Gitkari* and etc.

(a) Sthai:

Kabidha mana samazhauri

mohay kachhuna suhavay

kaam kaaj kar taanik na bhaowayri

Antara:

Jaabse pee parades sidharay

reina katata na more Gino Gino Tara

kaisay dhira ba dhaauri

Ustad Gul Mohammed who came from the Bihar Province of India and of Agra Gharana taught Ustad Babu Rahman a different Bandish in Raga Bhairav that included a *Sapa Taan* in its inner context. His rendering of Aalap was with a dimension of Dhrupad Aang. The Bandish was like—

(b) Sthai:

Ayso jatan batari sane

be gad mile pita sang jay

Antara:

Jaabse gaye patia nehi bheji

kwan satana bilmaye

Regarding the same Raga Bhairav Ustad Babu Rahman was taught a different Bandish when he was under the tutelage of Pundit Vidyadhar Bhenkatesh Wazhlower of Gwalior Gharana That is stated below.

(c) Sthairi:

Jaago mohana payarae
 saavri surata moray mano bhavay
 sundara laal haamare
 Antara
 Praata saamay utthi bhanu dayo bhoyo
 gaali baal saba bhupata tharay
 darashana ke sabo bhukhay payase
 utthio nanda kishore

All these are famous Bandishes of the North Indian classical Music. These Bandishes are taught here by the Ustads both local and Indians. Ustad Babu Rahman says the styles of the different renowned Gharanas of classical music are still in vogue these days, but compared to past these have declined. The media has made everything available within the range of common man. All styles are now available in a music store and capable performers can master their needs. Ustad Babu Rahman says he has learnt the North Indian Classical Music both under local and Indian Ustads and as well as in the Academy. And he is teaching the same musical phenomenon for years in this country. The practiced and prevailing styles and forms of classical music in Bangladesh are of course the North Indian ones and these are the bases of our musical culture, he adds. Ustad Babu Rahman thinks that music has come out from the grasp of the dynastic heritage to the academic base and experts of different Gharanas are teaching students in different academic years. One student can grasp all the good features of each Gharana in different academic year and consequently he or she has a blend of styles and features of a number of Gharanas. However, in case of private or family based training, the rendered and learnt *Gayaki* would remain obviously with the original one. The Ustads of the early days in Bangladesh who learnt classical music under the Indian Ustads of renowned Gharanas are growing fewer day by day and as such the tradition of Ustads of Gharanas is gradually fading away.



Ustad Babu Rahman and Harmonium Player Ustad Yakub Ali Khan



Pandit Dhruvotara Joshi With His Student Mr Imam (Bardhaman), Smt. Shuvra Guha (Kolkata) & Babu Rahman



Ustad Babu Rahman and Ustad Bismillah Khan



Ustad Rashid Khan (Vocalist),
Ustad Babu Rahman and
Pandit Joyti (Tabla (Harmonium Player))

V. Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui
(Interview of the Artist. On 9th, November 2000)

Abdul Bari Siddiqui hails from Netrokona District of Bangladesh. He was born in 1962 on 15th November in the same place. He got his first music lessons at the age of six from his family members. He started learning vocal music from his mother Jahurunnesa who had a strong fascination for music. They are three brothers and one sister and he is the youngest among all. His two elder brothers had a little experience in playing flute and he used to observe that and tried to follow them through playing flute. He started taking lessons for flute from his brothers but could not master the actual and formal methodology of playing flute from those lessons. His maternal grandfather was an amateur Sarod player. Thus, even though had not taken to music in a formal and professional way, it could be said that they were real lovers of music.

Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui started taking formal training of music at the age of twelve. He started taking training in vocal music from a number of teachers. After trying a few teachers, he finally accepted Gopal Datt as his teacher to learn classical music through vocal performance. But his mind was searching for his unfulfilled desire that had cherished for years together. And that was playing flute. But he could not get a good teacher to facilitate his dreams. With his own efforts he tried to demonstrate the Ragas that he learnt through vocal performance from his teacher and he was not been far from success in that case. In 1980 he graduated in Islamic History. In the same year he took the discipleship of Ustad Aminur Rahman who was a pilot by profession and a disciple and friend of the legendary Indian musician Pundit Pannalal Ghosh. Ustad Bari Siddiqui stayed ten long years in Aminur Rahman's house for attaining his goal. That house was a meeting place of many famous and capable artists. Bari Siddiqui had the opportunity to learn many things and he followed their advice. After the death of Pundit Pannalal Ghosh, Ustad Bari Siddiqui started taking lessons from Pundit V J Karnad who is a disciple of Pundit Pannalal Ghosh. Pundit V J Karnad was a

resident of Mumbai, city of India and presently living at Pune in India. He is still alive and is eighty years old. But he doesn't play flute now owing to his old age. Ustad Bari Siddiqui used to go to his place, stay for about fifteen days with him and took his lessons from him. His career in music basically started in 1981 while he was under the discipleship of Ustad Aminur Rahman. Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui's life in learning music was founded on the traditional dynasty of mentor-disciple relationship.

Though he mastered vocal performance in classical music he earned popularity as a classical flute player in Bangladesh. In 1984 he was enlisted as a radio artist (solo classical performer) in Radio Bangladesh. And in 1985 he got enlisted as a television artist (solo classical performer). He is a top graded solo classical performer on both radio and television. He had the great opportunity of performing in the World Flute Conference held in Geneva in Switzerland in 1999 from 9th to 20th November. He takes great interest in music direction and blends classical music in his creative style. He composes folk music and infuses classical blending which depicts his creative ability in music. Above all he counts flute playing as his passion and profession and projects his goal to be a successful flute player in the entire world. And he has been demonstrating and proving his success for years together.

Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui is a disciple of Seni Gharana like his Guru Aminur Rahman and Guru's Guru Pundit Pannalal Ghosh who were also the disciple representative of Seni Gharana. He received his training in music adhering all styles and features of Seni Gharana and still follows and maintains the major characteristics of the said Gharana. But in the context of performance he loves to blend his own creativity, imagination, novelty and a whole new personality with his acquired knowledge from Seni Gharana resulting in a new style of his own. This goes against the doctrine of Gharana. But according to his opinion, a learner of music must undergo the training under the Ustads of Gharana and while he or she has received major lessons from a Gharana, he or she should express his own personality and

style and yet maintain the major features of his own Gharana in performances. This needs to be highlighted as he confesses that being a disciple of Seni Gharana Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui he is not an ideal representative of Seni Gharana. He likes to abstract his creative imagination in his style and finds they're no questions of moral integrity.

Statement of Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui

Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui advocates that now days the practice of classical music in Bangladesh is being addressed in quite a pure manner though the development is not satisfactory as is required. Nevertheless there are number of reasons for classical music to lag behind. The foremost and major reason is the poor rate of literacy. And knowledge of pure classical music demands education no matter however academic or self taught it is Classical music is a tough discipline and is not objected to layman. For this reason most of our people do not go through any effort to listen to classical music. In Bangladesh, concerts of classical music are addressed very less and poorly as there are demand of that knows every bound. Bangladesh Television shows only two programs of classical music in the entire month and the stipulated time for that is only half an hour. And even after that four to five performers are put in one show and the allotted time for one performer rests with five to six minutes. In this regard Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui's comment is remarkable, "In our country I know no artist who could render the establishment of the personality of a Raga out of five to six minutes' performance."

However, our radio stations broadcast more programs of classical music compared to television. Nonetheless, the allotted time for programs is not satisfactory. Here the allotted time is fifteen to thirty minutes. It's very unfortunate and painful for a Ustad of classical music to demonstrate a Raga only for fifteen to thirty minutes whereas it demands one or even two hours to establish a complete personality and fulfill the required facets to

accomplish the classical forms. As a result many capable performers mentally withdraw while performing in radio and television. And the authority of television and radio goes for those enlisted performers who agree with their allotted time. Obviously those are poorer in quality of performance compared to those who decline to perform. As a whole the quality of programme of classical music is deteriorating day by day. The greater and crucial impact gets attributed on the audience. In general classical program is not everybody's favorite show. And added to that, if the rendered quality is poor, people find it even more unattractive to watch. Besides, the remuneration given to an artist on television and radio is so meager that no performer would be able to survive only working for them. It's also one of the reasons for the deteriorating situation of classical music. Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui, though pessimistic in his view with our classical music sometimes smiles with an optimistic glow in his face. People are getting aware day by day. There is a growing aesthetic audience for classical music now-a-days. Many institutional approaches are being addressed today. And he added that someday people will surely contemplate what they are about to lose. Ustad Abdul Bari Siddiqui says that our practiced classical music includes nothing but the same forms and styles of North Indian Classical Music. In past times many people of the erstwhile East Bengal went to India and Pakistan and learnt classical music from there. Many performers of the subcontinent came here and performed. And that people who still go to India and Pakistan and learn the North Indian forms and styles of classical music. So the trend is the same from the very beginning till now. The styles might have a changed if not deformed, as there are a very few instances of building up a Gharana of classical music and tradition of Guru-Shishwa (mentor-disciple) relationship which is in Bangladesh. But the forms of classical music of Bangladesh are same as North Indian Classical Music



Abdul Bari Siddiqi