

The Role of Modern Technology in Music Presentation

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In this modern period of time, we come across various new techniques in music presentation or in the field of music art. These are seen in Presentation, Melody, Rhythm, Tonality, Harmony etc. In the 20th century not all changes in music were an evolution as this modern music technology is connected to both artistic and technological creativity. Musicians are constantly struggling to devise new forms of expression through music and physically creating new devices in this form of art.

The advancing technologies, globalization, musical geniuses across the world is collaborating and creating new music that transcends all defined genres. As a result of a host of scientific advancements beginning from Industrialization in the 18th century, to the IT revolution, to the advancements of trade routes and increasing overseas travel, a new sensibility of sharing ideas, thoughts and creating combinations of arts emerged. In today's world, the musical boundaries are blurring like never before and what seems to be emerging is a fusion of different kinds of music, like classical-rock fusion performed by the bands 'Indian Ocean', 'Mrigya' and 'Advaita' etc.

The list of fusion musicians is huge and it's growing by the day. New kind of musical instruments have even taken form in the process. Young musicians have especially taken fancy to it and find the space of experimentation that fusion gives to an artist quite appealing. The Khan brothers Amaan and Ayaan Ali Khan says: "Fusion is interesting and fun. It's like buffet that offers a lot and thus the weight of expectation is reduced. No one judges your music. But it's not an easy job either". The huge change in this form was done by the great maestro Pt. Ravi Shankar in Indian Classical music. Pt. Ravi Shankar first tour was made to the west in 1956. Among his historical performances are his masterpieces Raga Jog, from Three Ragas (1961), the Raga Rageshri, on improvisations (1962) and the Ragas and the Talas (1964), containing the Raga Jogiya & the Raga Madhukauns. Improvisation (1962) a collaboration with flutists Paul Horn & Bud Shank, was the first meeting of Jazz and Raga. Shankar pioneered the "east - west" fusion with West Meets East (1967) , a terrible collaboration with British Violinist Yehudi Menuhin containing

both Raga and a sonata. Shankar soon repudiated his 'pop' period and returned to classical music.

Electronic Intervention

In music the availability of the technology to record and reproduce sound is present from the beginning of the 20th century and also it revolutionized the way music was produced and heard in India. This led to the development of a virtual audience that could listen to music without leaving home. Access to such technology, music soon reached the masses, effecting on the variety of music that was produced throughout the century. Later, the other means of transmission like Radio and Television broadcast, and motion pictures followed, and as a result, the palette of music is available to the audience today which has grown immensely rich in its stream, offering a wide range of styles to choose from. In the last few decades this has received a further boost with the advent of electronic gadgets, especially digital technology. The aspects of performance, preservation and transmission or spreading of music have new meaning in the world of digital technology, which offers yet another possibility that was hitherto unheard of - the ability to create a virtual space in which music can be heard, exchanged, learned and taught. Music technology such as music affects using computers or any other software, which is used by the musicians to help making good music. Although the term is now most commonly used in reference to modern electronic Tanpura, Sitar, Guitar, Piano, etc. may also be said to be early examples of music technology. Contemporary classical music sometimes uses computer - generated sounds, either pre - recorded in conjunction with classical acoustic instruments such as Swar Mandal, electronic Tanpura, etc.

Microphone Technology is yet another technique which is in the business of reproducing sound in Pure, natural and uncolored way. "Close microphone" is a term associated with studio recording, where all instruments are recorded (on separate tracks) with microphones that are positioned close to instruments so as to capture the 'direct' sound and tonal characteristics of the instrument or vocal chords.

Analog technologies are commonly used in radio, TV, and tape recorders. Previously, the only radio and TV in India were the government owned "Akashvani", known as "All India radio" and "Dooradarshan" (TV). The government has a sustained interest in promoting traditional Indian music. One of the efforts has been performed on occasional broadcasts of educational programs on Indian music. "National Programs" plays significant role. In this program the performances are given by India's top artists who are aired all over the country. What makes this so important is that it introduces a fundamental change in the way

that how musical information is transferred. Previously the only process for the transmission of music is given from the guru to his/her disciple. This is a vertical flow of information known as "Taleem". The use of the electronic media creates a vertical as well as horizontal flow of information which cuts across traditional lines.

Electronic Instruments

Shruti Generation - Shruti is the drone which is used in Indian music. This was normally provided by a stringed instrument (tanpura) or a small hand pumped reed instrument (Sur peti) . However, for over twenty years, electronic sur-petis have been in use by many students. They have recently been refined to the present day "Electronic Tanpura". In southern India the electronic "Surpeti" or "Shruti Box" has become essential for any music student. It is even used in performances. Although it does not have the same level of popularity in the north, its use is rising fast.

Theka Generation- This is roughly comparable to the function of a Western drum machine. There are several approaches. The most widespread is a dedicated device called a "Tal Mala". These devices of Indian design are manufactured and give a sound which is comparable to tabla (an Indian drum).

Although India has a tremendous respect for tradition, this respect has never hindered the acceptance of new technologies as India is already making significant use of electronics in the process of music education. Therefore it is highly unlikely that the traditional guru-shishya system will disappear, but it should continue with the new tools of the 21st century.

Importance of Internet

In music industry the artists can market and promote their products. It is claimed that the internet has changed the way music is valued, and also, that it may have a direct effect on the quality of the music produced, as perceived by both artists and consumers alike. The impact of internet on artists has been significant for their promotion or advertising. In the pre - internet days, artists were very dependent on the music press and the radio; they were not practically featured as they receive only local recognition where they somehow manage to visit and perform on stage.

The internet, as a medium without geographical constraints and as an extremely powerful advertising tool, enabled them to potentially reach a wider audience by using it as a mean to gain the exposure they lacked by the "Traditional" media. Today, virtually every recording artist has their own homepage or a "myspace" page, where they can provide information on themselves; sell their products directly and offer free samples of their music. Many musicians merge

different music genres and come up with a new form of music. Some of the music projects on YouTube are: Coke Studio (Pakistan & India) version, Tehalka Music Project, Jalsa by Anu Kapoor and as we have discussed earlier the most prominent change in Indian classical music was occurred by Pt. Ravi Shankar.

Today artists have the opportunity to manage their exposure and promotion themselves, without needing backing a record company or other people's promotional efforts. This was practically impossible in the pre - internet years; any artist who was not signed to a (however small) record company was condemned to record and perform in relative anonymity, hardly standing a chance for recognition or acclaim. In stark contrast, today's artist have the means to stand alone, if they want to: they can distribute their products through their own website; communicate with people directly and conduct alliances with other artist - for example; by exchanging links or advertising other artist's products.

The newer interactive way via internet has grown makes it possible to publish audio, video and mini - clips to explain better what we are trying to teach. This cannot be considered 'damaging' the culture but instead should be looked upon as 'enhancing' it. It would be more damaging to keep this hidden from view and in the hands of a few. We would be adding to an offence of the art form if we didn't adopt such new means and hence newer methods of teaching. Sharing audios or videos have an advantage like the power of repetition. It simply needs to be replayed again and again until the point is understood.

Importance of Audience

During the past 100 years performing arts has also evolved. Correspondingly, the audience profile also has evolved. Other changes have also occurred such as explosive growth of business, communication, media, technology as well as drastic socio - economic and cultural changes etc. have influenced the audience profile. Challenges from movies, radio and television, events, theatre, etc. have continued to thrive in the 20th century. Perhaps this is so because of the 'live' nature of performing art in the seminars or events in which performers / artists are the presence of the audience. This creates a circular flow of energy, as performer affects audience and vice-versa.

In this article; I'll regard the term 'audience' with a wider connotation as 'users' in various situations including, not only the audience in 'live' programs but the virtual audience like those over electronic and print media as well (radio, T.V. , internet, published, printed audio and video material).

Audiences of Indian music have yet a very important role, in the sense that they are expected to participate actively in the performance with the gestures

communicating their positive responses. A knowledgeable audience knows how and when to appreciate, while the performer is expected to be receptive to the audience reaction and be inspired and rise up to the expectations of the audience. As we can observe that in the old times, the audiences were very keen listeners and fond of Indian Classical music. For several hours they can listen to it very patiently; including 'bada-chota khayal' . But now - a- days, the audience doesn't have that patience left, they don't have enough time to acknowledge the beauty of Indian art music. Everyone wants a short description in short period of time.

It is definitely a two-way communication, where the performer and the audience share the symbiotic and mutually beneficial relationship. It is therefore obvious that the audience for Indian art music has to be only initiated but also knowledgeable enough to inspire the performer by communicating their approval at appropriate junctures. The changes (diversification) have resulted from the above mentioned factors and manifests in terms of taste, preference, expectation and response.

Several attempts are being made to cultivate well - informed audiences for Indian art music: Lecture - demonstrations and workshops aimed at children and youth explaining the basic of art music. In this direction SPICMACAY - society for promotion of Indian classical music among youth is doing great service. In these sessions eminent maestros participate without charging any fees and inspire the young audience.

With a host of technological aids the challenge in front of a musician is to use them wisely and not get complacent or on the other hand overwhelmed as to how to go about using the available technologies. After all musicianship is an organic element and can only be aided with technology and not completely substituted by it. Wise and successful musicians of today are a blend of a strong basic foundation and practice routines enhanced by technology.