

Annual Report (August 2019-April, 2020)

Music Archive and Listening Room (MALR) and Baithak Society

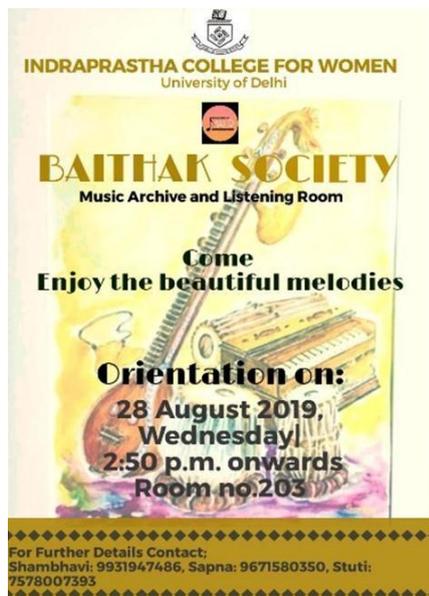
The year 2019-2020 has been extremely enriching for MALR with a host of events ranging from a number of informal listening sessions, feature films and documentary screenings, to a certificate course on appreciation of Hindustani Music. The MALR particularly focused this year on cultivating a deeper sense of understanding of Hindustani music in all the members of society by organizing extensive discussions with the students of music from Faculty of Music, University of Delhi. In order to achieve this we organized listening sessions on both vocal and instrumental aspects of Hindustani Music. These sessions were then complemented by a Music Appreciation Course in which renowned experts from the field of Hindustani Music were invited to give extensive lecture demonstrations on various themes. The detailed account of all the events is given below.

Orientation of Baithak Society, (Music Archive and Listening Room)

Date: 28 August, 2019

Time: 2:50 PM

Venue: Music Archive and Listening Room (Room No. 203)



The Orientation of the Baithak Society, Indraprastha College for Women, University of Delhi was organized on 28 August, 2019 in the Music Listening and Archive Room by the office bearers under the guidance of the society advisor, Dr. Shruti Dubey. The orientation was attended by around 30 students from 1st and 2nd years. The students were acquainted with a brief history of the society and its various activities (archiving, listening and movie sessions, music appreciation course) through a Power Point Presentation. The existing members also shared their experiences of being a part of the society. The presentation was followed by an interactive session in which queries of the new members were answered.

Informal Listening Session

Lecture-Demonstration cum guided listening session: Vasundhara Raturi

Title: Different genres of Indian Music

Date: 7th September, 2019

Time: 2:30 PM

Venue: MALR (Room No. 203)



The first event for the new members of Baithak Society was a lecture-demonstration cum guided listening session by Vasundhara Raturi, a student of MA Music in the University of Delhi, an alumna of Indraprastha College for Women and a former member of Baithak Society. She spoke about the different genres of Indian Music ranging from classical forms of *dhrupad* and *khayal* to semi-classical forms of *thumri*, *dadra*, *ghazal* and *qawwali*. To demonstrate these different forms, she played the recordings of stalwarts like Ustad Sayiduddin Dagar, Vidushi Prabha Atre and Vidushi Ashwini Bhide Deshpande, to Ustad Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, Ustad Rashid Khan and Ustad Mehendi Hasan and Ustad Ghulam Ali. Vasundhara also sang a *bandish* in raga Yaman to explain concepts like *khatka*, *murki*, *alaap*, and *taan*. Around 25 students from departments of Geography, History, Computer Science, English, Hindi, and B.Com attended the session. The members of Baithak Society found the session extremely insightful, informative and relaxing at the same time.

Movie Screening and Discussion

“*Katyar Kaljat Ghusali*”- Movie Screening and Discussion

Date- 15th and 22nd September, 2019

Venue- MALR (Room No.203)

Time- 2:30 pm



The second event of Baithak Society was the screening of Marathi film “*Katyar Kaljat Ghusali*” directed by Subodh Bhawe based on a play by the same name in two parts on two consecutive Saturdays. Set during the British Raj in a princely state, the movie deals with fundamental questions pertaining to Hindustani music such as the definition of an artist, the role of patronage by kings, the ethical dilemmas posed when the “ego” of the artists becomes bigger than the art form itself, the role of *gharanas* and their specific forms of *gayaki*, and the transition from *dhrupad* to *khayal*. The movie screening was followed by a discussion moderated by the society advisor, Dr. Shruti Dubey, in which the meanings and significance of the various terms used in the film that were borrowed from Hindustani music such as *gharanas*, *gayaki*, patronage, Miraj, dhrupad and khayal were elaborated in great detail. Students critically evaluated the film by questioning some of the stereotypical portrayals of women and minority communities. The definition of a true artist and the question of survival of artists and art forms were also reflected upon. The session was attended by around 20 students from various departments.

Informal Listening Session on Tabla

Lecture Demonstration and Listening Session: Harsh Tyagi

Date: 28 September, 2019

Time: 2:30 PM

Venue: MALR Room No 203



As a part of a series geared towards helping students without any background in Hindustani Music to develop an understanding of the various instruments used in it, the Baithak Society of the MALR has started a novel initiative of inviting students of Music Faculty from University of Delhi to give lecture demonstrations and conduct listening sessions for the members of Baithak Society. The first lecture was conducted on *Tabla* by Harsh Tyagi, a Masters student of University of Delhi and a disciple of Pt. Vinod Lele, a maestro from Banaras Gharana. In an extremely enriching lecture Harsh started from the various myths and stories about the origin of *tabla*. Acquainting the students with the precursors of *tabla* such as Mridangam, Pakhavaj, and Jodi by showing the pictures of the same, Harsh described the various parts of *tabla* such as *siyahi*, *daggi*, *dahina* and *bayan*. He then played the basic *bols* of *tabla* described in Natya Shastra and the prominent rhythm cycles or *taals* including *Dadra*, *Keherva*, *Rupak*, *Teentaal* and *Ektaal*. In the end he performed a solo in which he was accompanied by Vasundhara Raturi, a former member of Baithak Society and a classmate of Harsh, on the harmonium. The session was followed by questions from the students and the faculty present in the session on the differences between Mridangam and Pakhavaj.

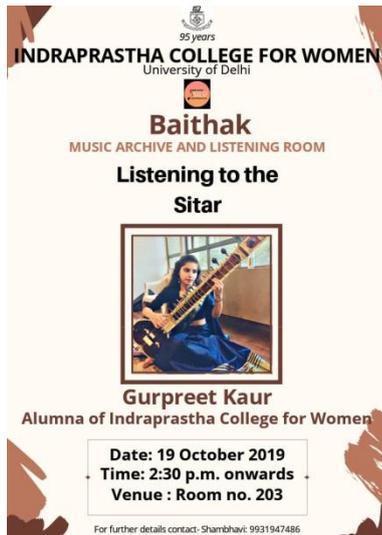
Listening to the Sitar

Lecture Demonstration and Listening Session: Gurpreet Kaur

Date: 19 October, 2019

Time: 2:30 PM

Venue: MALR Room No 203



The second instrument in the lecture demonstration series was Sitar. Gurpreet Kaur, who is pursuing a Masters degree on Sitar from the Faculty of Music, Delhi University gave an enriching lecture demonstration on different aspects of Sitar. Gurpreet began by explaining the different parts of the body of Sitar such as *tumba*, *table*, *jawari*, *tarak*, *baaj*, *jode*, *chitkari* and the functions performed by them. She then introduced the different gharanas of Sitar such as *Maihar*, *Vilayatkhani*, *Imdadkhani* and elaborated on the stylistic differences among them. In order to familiarize Baithak students with the stalwarts of Sitar, she played the recordings of Pt. Ravishankar, Ustad Shahid Parvez, Ustad Allauddin Khan and Pt. Nikhil Banerjee. She ended the session by playing *maseedkhani* (slow beat rendition) and *razakhani* (fast beat rendition) *gat* (composition of Sitar) in raga *Bhimpalasi*. She was accompanied on tabla by Harsh. Around 20 students from different departments attended the session. The students really appreciated the session and felt that it had succeeded in invoking their interest in the hitherto less understood instrument.

Listening Session

Lecture-Demonstration cum guided listening session: Vasundhara Raturi

Title: Different Angs to Perform a Raga

Date: 2nd November, 2019

Time: 2:30 PM

Venue: MALR (Room No. 203), Indraprastha College for Women

The activities of Baithak Society for this semester completed a full circle with the final listening session of the semester again being conducted by Vasundhara Raturi, on different *angs* to perform a *raga*. Vasundhara Raturi spoke about the concepts of *raga*, *thaat* and *ang*, and the significance of *angs* in identifying and creating new *ragas*. She further explained these concepts through performance of ragas like *Bhairav*, *Kalyan*, etc. The audience comprising of around 15 people from across departments found the session extremely interesting and useful. One of the big achievements of this semester was in the task of developing a culture of having conversations about Hindustani music between the students of Music Faculty, University of Delhi and those studying other disciplines in Indraprastha College for Women. All the above listening sessions served to create a background for the Music Appreciation Course that was held from 21-29 January, 2020 by eminent resource persons who gave enriching lecture-demonstrations on different aspects of Hindustani music.

Music Appreciation Course January, 2020

The image is a composite of two parts. On the left is a poster for the '2nd MALR Certificate Course' titled 'Introduction to Hindustani Classical Music'. The poster lists five sessions with their dates, topics, and resource persons:

- 21 January 2020: Gharana Parampara in Indian Classical Music by Sarita Yajurvedi
- 22 January 2020: Sentoor in Indian Classical Music by Bipul Kumar Roy
- 23 January 2020: Ghazal in Hindustani Music by Vaibhavi Chopra
- 28 January 2020: Surood Rani: The Iconic Sagar of Sharan Rani by Vaibhavi Chopra
- 29 January 2020: Sitar: Tradition and Innovation by Siwera Kuchhal

 The poster also includes the venue (AV Lecture Theatre), date (21 January - 29 January 2020), and time (3 p.m. onwards). It mentions that sessions are open to all, registration is mandatory, and provides contact information for Baithak Society. On the right is a group photograph of approximately 30 people, including students and faculty members, posing in front of a building with large arched windows.

The MALR conducted a Music Appreciation Course consisting of five sessions spread over two weeks to introduce college students with the nuances of listening and appreciating Hindustani music. The course was conducted by eminent resource persons comprising of the faculty of music in the various colleges and the main department of University of Delhi, renowned artists and archivists of Hindustani music. 26 students and 10 faculty members enrolled for the certificate course.

Day 1: Dr. Sarita Yajurvedi, (Lecture-demonstration)

Date: 21 January, 2020

Title: Gharana Parampara in Indian Classical Music

Venue: AV Lecture Theatre

Time: 3-4.30 PM



The course started on a delightful note with Dr. Sarita Yajurvedi, Bharti College, University of Delhi who hails from the Rampur Seheswan Gharana and has been the disciple of Vidushi Smt. Sulochana Brihaspati. In addition to talking about the Gharana parampara as was the original mandate of the session Sarita ji also explained the basic concepts of Hindustani Music. To give a background understanding of Hindustani music to the participants she divided her lecture demonstration in two parts. The first part consisted of the Basic Concepts in Hindustani Music in which she elaborated on various concepts such as *swar*, *raga*, *varna*, *aaroh*, *avroh*, *thaat*. She introduced us to the different styles of classifying the ragas ranging from Pt. Venkat Mukhi's, Pt Bhatkhande and Pt. Vishnu Digambar Paluskar. The second part of her lecture was about the different *gharanas* of Hindustani music. She elaborated on the specific histories and characteristics of Gwalior, Kirana, Agra, Indore and Rampur Seheswan Gharana.

Day 2: Dr. Bipul Kumar Ray

Date: 22 January, 2020

Title: Santoor in Indian Classical Music

Venue: AV Lecture Theatre

Time: 3-4.30 PM



On the second day of the course we went on to understand the nuances of Santoor, a beautiful instrument from Kashmir under the able guidance of Dr. Bipul Kumar Ray, Bharti College, University of Delhi. Dr. Ray has been a disciple of the great Santoor exponent Pt. Bhajan Sopori. Dr. Ray provided a detailed history of Santoor and described the various parts of instrument and their respective functions. He elaborated on the different parts of a Santoor performance, *alaap*, *jod*, and *jhala*. Dr. Ray played a soothing rendition in Raga Bhimpalasi and made the audience sing the *pakad* of the raga along with him. He closed the session with a discussion on the importance of music in doing therapy by sharing his experiences of practicing music therapy for the past few years.

Day 3: Dr. Radhika Chopra

Date: 23 January, 2020

Title: Adab-e-Ghazal

Venue: AV Lecture Theatre

Time: 3-4.30 PM



Dr. Radhika Chopra, a renowned Ghazal singer in Delhi started her interaction with the participants by telling the difference between a *ghazal*, *nazm*, and *geet*. She highlighted the importance of learning Urdu in order to understand, sing or write ghazals. She lamented about the lost heritage of Urdu as a language that the masses understood with ease at one point in history and urged young students to take it up with zest. After the discussion on Urdu she sang a few popular ghazals of Faiz, Farida Khanum and Ustad Mehendi Hasan.

Day 4: Radhika Backliwal Narain

Date: 28 January, 2020

Title: Sarod Rani: The Iconic Saga of Sharan Rani

Venue: Conference Room

Time: 3-4.30 PM



The session started with the screening of the documentary on the life of Smt. Sharan Rani made by her daughter and disciple, Radhika Backliwal Narain. The documentary gave us a glimpse of the life of the legendary Sarod player, Smt. Sharan Rani, who broke a number of glass ceilings in her lifetime. Not only was she among the first women players of Sarod, considered to be a *mardana* (masculine) instrument in India, but she also played an important part in collecting rare instruments from all over India and donating it to the National Museum. She had been an archivist and authored books on Sarod. We were fortunate to have Radhika Backliwal Narain with us who shared a number of anecdotes about the life of her mother, as a disciple of Ustad Alauddin Khan from Maihar Gharana and the challenges in becoming an independent woman musician. The session threw important insights on gender and Hindustani music as well.

Day 5: Dr. Suneera Kasliwal

Date: 29 January, 2020

Title: Sitar: Tradition and Innovation

Venue: AV Lecture Theatre

Time: 3-4.30 PM



The last session was by Dr. Suneera Kasliwal, Department of Music, Faculty of Music and Fine Arts, University of Delhi and a disciple of Pt. Uma Shankar Mishra of Maihar Gharana. She had divided her presentation in two parts. In the first part she used a power point presentation to explain the evolution of Sitar as a modern instrument. She talked about the various parts of the instrument and their functions. She also elaborated on the prominent gharans in Sitar. She told us about the different components of a Sitar rendition. The second part of her presentation was a performance of Sitar in which she played raga Patdeep for us.

The course ended with the distribution of certificates to all the participants by the Principal. We, at Baithak hope that this would go a long way in demystifying Hindustani Music and invoking the interest of young people in listening and appreciating it.