

Music and Dance Culture in the City of Vadodara in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

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Abstract

Review Article

The arts of dance and music are of great importance to the culture of India. Classical Indian dances and music are among the most graceful and beautiful in the world. The Maharaja Sayajirao Gaekwad as a head of state led to making Baroda a city representative of art, which is at once indigenous and modern. Expert artists from across the Indian Subcontinent were invited to perform as well as to extend the knowledge of music to the people of Vadodara. Artists were often encouraged with awards and rewards for their performances on various occasions. Maharaja Sayajirao wanted to disseminate the tradition as well as ear for music among the people of Vadodara, so he decided to employ more artists in the court. Hence, many young and old, professional and novices were appointed. So this paper covered all the aspect of music and dance which evolved under vision of the Maharaja Sayajirao.

Keyword: Culture- Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. Vadodara- Cultural capital of Gujarat State and a princely State of Gaekwad. Tansen- He was a prominent figure of Hindustani classical music so today the ultimate title given to any stalwart of music based on his name. Prant- Taluka or division. Thumri- is a style of music with text that is romantic or devotional in nature. Khyal or Khayal - is the genre of Hindustani classical singing in the India. Its name comes from an Urdu word, borrowed from Arabic/Persian, meaning "imagination".

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INTRODUCTION

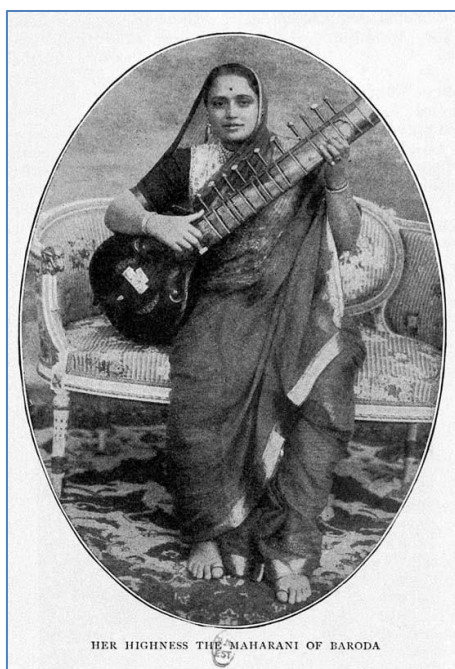
Vadodara the capital city of erstwhile princely state of Baroda in the western region of Gujarat had a remarkable past. Its very name evolved from the Banyan trees called as 'Vad' in Gujarati, the language spoken there. Over the period of time under the Gaekwad rulers, the city expanded in terms of population, art and culture. The attempt was made by the state to integrate a cultural synthesis in all the divisions or prant of the state. However, each division of the state was situated in a peculiar environ, which was marginally different from the other. On the one hand was Kadi division, which was located in the northern part of Gujarat, which had peculiar socio-cultural characteristic, and on the other hand was Amreli division which was a part of peninsular Gujarat. Navsari division was located in Southern Gujarat, which again had a different socio-cultural built. Baroda or Vadodara, as it was called was located at the centre and was the capital city of the state. The city of Baroda or Vadodara is generally known as the cultural Capital of Gujarat even today. Baroda has a long tradition of

various art forms. Maharaja Sayajirao, a great educationalist, a thinker, social reformer and a great connoisseur, attached great importance to art education. He was also a patron of Indian Classical Music and the state as such sponsored many dancers [1].



¹ Dr. Maitree, V. (2011). *Heritage And Public History: Princely State Of Baroda*, 28th – 30th December 2011, Sitamau, M.P, p12

Maharaja Sayajirao III hence was a visionary and was the chief architect of his State. Maharaja had commissioned construction of various temples, palaces, museums, gardens, programme halls and forts etc. The palaces that were constructed by him incorporated diverse styles, murals, sculptures, gardens, and museums etc. For instance, Laxmi Vilas Palace is a marvelous structure with varied styles of India as well as of foreign. Maharaja Fatehsingh Museum is elegantly constructed embellished with excellent pieces of paintings and sculptures. Other places are Nazarbagh Palace, Makarpura Palace, Pratap Vilas Palace at Lalbagh, M.S. University (main Arts Faculty building), Kala Bhavan and others parade the spectacular architectures. In Kirti Mandir extraordinary murals are displayed. Same way Tamekarwadi is celebrated for its wall paintings. Nyay Mandir also exhibits various design and style of architecture. Baroda Museum and Picture Gallery is the foremost centre of art. It houses a large collection of numerous art objects from around the world. Apart from these, he had also given his patronage to holding of exhibitions and promoting various art forms across the country for popularizing art [2].



- 2 Mehta R N, Vadodara Ek Adhyayan, Baroda, 1987, p. 122-125.
3. [https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dcbooks/9475509.0001.01/--new-woman-international-representations-in-photography?](https://quod.lib.umich.edu/d/dcbooks/9475509.0001.01/--new-woman-international-representations-in-photography?g=dculture;trgt=pb_74;view=fulltext;xc=1)
4. Baroda State Archives(BSA), Huzur Political Office(HPO), Section no. 65, Daftar 112, File no. 13, p. 10, paragraph no. 3, Memo.

Besides architecture the state under the aegis of Maharaja Sayajirao and his Maharanis ³ also in patronised music and dance. Expert artists from across the Indian Subcontinent were invited to perform as well as to extend the knowledge of music to the people of Vadodara. Besides these Drama companies and theatre groups were also invited to perform and entertain the people of the Vadodara. Sayajirao-III also sponsored the art exhibitions throughout his tenure as the Maharaja. For instance, he is known to have donated two hundred rupees annually from the year 1926 onwards to the Exhibition of the Bombay Art Society [4]. This exhibition was held for the displaying of artworks of many known as well unknown artists. Besides this Maharaja also encouraged the Baroda art works to be displayed and hence encouraged the artists [5].

1. Music

So far as music was concerned the princely states played a central role in nourishing musical tradition. Musicians who acquired an appointment at the royal courts usually received a monthly stipend and often were granted lands for the upkeep of their daily lifestyle. The job entailed performance at the courts when the occasion demanded it and to train the royal members if they wanted to learn. Besides getting land as a payment, the artists were often encouraged with awards and rewards for their performances on various occasions. They were also given titles such as “Tansen”,

Which was the ultimate title given to any stalwart of music? For instance, Hussainuddin Khan Saheb was given this title by the Raja of Alwar. Other titles were given were “Jewel of Knowledge” and “Possessed of Emotional Intensity,” which were awarded by two different rajas to Fayyaz Khan, a famous musician [6].

Baroda state already had a tradition of patronizing music. In 1820 Maharaja Sayajirao II, had established a tradition of appointing artists in the service of court after he ascended to the throne. The letters written by the state to the artists reveal that two kalawantini, two pakhavaji, dafvajitravala, and several other singers were appointed in the court.[7] Maharaja Ganpatrao Gaekwad continued the tradition of his father and is known it have patronized artists with various talents such as, sarodwala satariya, sarangiwala, dashaavtari, Jester, karnataki dramatists and others.[8] However, it was under Sayajirao-III that concerted efforts were made by the state, to educate its people about music.

Marhum Khan belonged to the famous Kirana Gharana, was the first person taken in the service of Sayajirao Gaekwad. Although he was not a noted musician he is known to have introduced Thumari and Khyal of his Gharana in Baroda.[9] Ustad Faiyaz Khan

joined as the court artist and he was from Agra gharana.[10] He was at Mysore and there he received medal in 1911. And during same year he arrived in Baroda on Sayajirao's birthday. Sayajirao was immensely impressed with the singing of Faiyaz Khan and thereafter appointed him as the court singer.



Ustad Faiyaz Khan [11] had played a very important role in promoting and developing music tradition in Baroda. He was awarded 'Gyan Ratna' by the Maharaja for his excellence in music. Later his fame spread over to the rest of the country. In 1927, Ustad Faiyaz Khan and another artist from Jaipur Ustad Jamaluddin were invited at the opening ceremony of the Indian Broadcasting Company. They were both employed at the Baroda court and Maharaja had sent these artists to the opening ceremony at the request of Viceroy of India, who wanted to inaugurate the opening of the station on Saturday 23rd July, 1927.

There were other artists that were sent with Faiyaz Khan such as one sarangiwala, one tabalchi and one tamborawala were sent [12].

Maharaja Sayajirao wanted to disseminate the tradition as well as ear for music among the people of Vadodara, so he decided to employ more artists in the court. Hence, many young and old, professional and novices were appointed. They belonged to different gharanas. For instance Ustad Nisar Hussain Khan was one of the last gharanedar ustads of Hindustani classical music and was a son of Fida Hussain Khan. He was considered as a child prodigy as he had gave his first recital at a young age of eleven. Nisar Hussain Khan [13] was sponsored by the Maharaja and his father was also alongside appointed as court musician. This enabled him to train his son into a proficient artist. Later Nisar Hussain Khan was appointed as a court musician when he turned [18]. He remained on this post for almost thirty years. He was a very well-known broadcaster and concert-artiste. Another talented artist that made his way to Vadodara was Ustad Ata Hussain Khan. Ustad Ata Hussain Khan was known for his rich compositions in Hindustani Classical music and was disciple of Ustad Faiyaz Khan. Later he was appointed as a music teacher in Music College in the city of Vadodara. Some of his outstanding disciples are

Sharafat Hussain Khan, Maujud Hussain Khan, Sohan Singh, Rama Rao Nayak, Hamid Hussain Khan, Rajnikant Desai and Shafi Ahmed Khan.



Since, the Maharaja was very keen on establishing a classical music tradition in Vadodara; he wanted that there should be a training school established. With that aim in mind he commissioned a music school to be instituted. Professor Maula Bux [14] was commissioned to be its first Principal. People of Baroda responded very enthusiastically, and in the first year, 70 students enrolled. The training in music was provided free by the Maharaja; in fact number of scholarships was given to the deserving candidates.

Akhil Bhartiya Sangeet Parishad was held on 25th and 26th March 1916. Numerous artists were invited such as, Kallan Khan and Alihussain Khan from Jaipur, Imdad Khan from Indore, Zakruddin Khan, Alvarna Musharaf Khan from Udhaipur, Maulal Bax Fezmohammed, and Faiyaz Hussain.

5. BSA, HPO, Section no. 65, Daftar 112, File no. 14, p. 16, paragraph no. 1, Memo.

6. The Dagar Gharana (With Special Reference to Ustad Nasir Aminuddin Dagar) A Case Study of Performing Artists, p- 166; Banerjee, Kshitishchandra, and Nonigopal Banerjee 1962 Sangit Sarshika, Vol. I. Calcutta: Gautam Press, 248

7. Janmdivas Mahotsav Mandal Vododara, Shree Sayajigauravgranth, Baroda, 1933, Gujarati, p 464

8 Ibid, p 464

9. Shah, P., Trivedi, M., Bhatt, M. (1989). Vadodara gaikal ane aaj, Baroda, 1989, Gujarati, 52, paragraph 2

10. Laxminarayan, Hamare Sangeet Ratna, Hindi, Faiyyaz Kha

11.

https://www.indianetzone.com/47/history_agra_gharana.htm

12. Baroda State Archives, Huzur Political Office, Section 115, Daftar No. 147, File No. 3, P 1, Paragraph 1 and P 9 Paragraph 2 and 3, Letter No. 12037

13.

<https://www.itcsra.org/TributeMaestro.aspx?Tributeid=17>



Dewan V P Madhavrao and others were also present. A grand musical concert was arranged for the viceregal visit to Baroda [15]



Dance

Besides music, Maharaja Sayajirao also patronized various dance forms in Baroda state. It was customary in the Indian monarchies to send dance troupe during a royal wedding. Also, quiet often it was seen that the dancing troupe were part of the dowry of the bride as it was regarded as prestigious. In such turn of events, a dance troop graced the city of Vadodara when Maharaja Sayajirao got married to the Maharani Laxmi Bai (Chimanabai I) of Tanjore in 1880. Maharani Chimanabai who herself was proficient in Bharatanatyam and Carnatic music [16] brought along with her a troupe of dancers. The dancers were patronised by the royal family and in turn they promoted the culture of dance in Vadodara [17].

The Vadodara city later became the hub of all possible cultural activities and others dancers from Tanjore followed soon. These included Nattuvanar Appaswamy and his wife Kantimati [18]. Both were dancers. The Tanjorkar family settled in Baroda and was in the service of Maharaja Sayajirao. Their son Guru Shri Kubernath gained training in the Hindustani

Classical Music, with the celebrated Ustad Faiyazkhan of Baroda. He was scheduled as “Nattuvanar” in Baroda state [19]. The dancers not only gave performances in the court but also taught dance in Baroda. During the Viceroy’s visit to Baroda in 1926 various dance performances were also given. In the Drawing room a dance was performed for selective European audiences and they thoroughly enjoyed it [20]. The artists also taught Bharatanatyam to other court dancers [21].

They Practiced every day at the Indumati palace. One room was allotted to them for rehearsal. Along with the nattuvanars they practiced for long hours to present new programs at the Darbar Hall. They performed mostly in the Motibaugh and Nazarbaugh palaces [22]. The unusual lifestyle of the dance performers were accepted by the common people. Apparently the court dancers or temple dancers never married but had children with each other out of wedlock [23]. It was believed that they Ratnamala informed that they used to perform pure dance, a means of devoting God and not for receiving accolades from Maharaja. She claimed that they were Devdasis and dance to serve the Gods. Though this did not mean that they refused salaries but continued to flourish under the patronage of Maharaja Sayajirao-III [24].

14.

<https://twitter.com/Themsubaroda/status/1126815886550151168/photo/1>

15. Panemanglor, K. (1927). The Viceregal Visit to Baroda 1926, Baroda, 1927, 67

16. Janmdivas, M. V. (1933). Shree Sayajigauravgranth, Baroda, Gujarati, 464.

17. Khokar, A. M. (2003). Attendance the dance annual of India, 39.

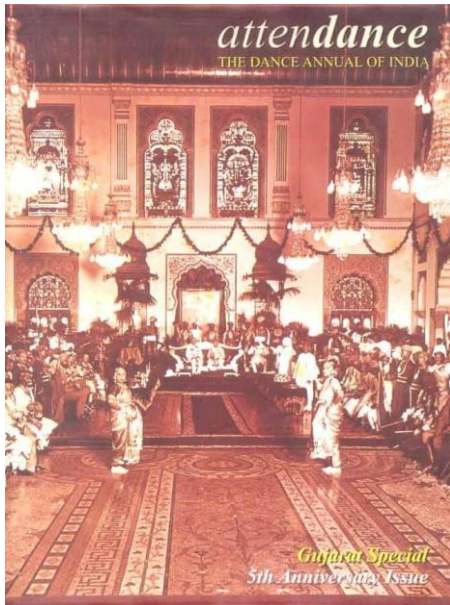
18. <https://sangeethas.wordpress.com/2014/11/29/a-sense-of-family-tracing-my-gurus-family-tradition-of-tanjavur/>

19. Khokar, A. M. (2003). Attendance the dance annual of India, 24

20. Panemanglor, K. (1926). The Viceregal Visit to Baroda 1926, Baroda, 1927, 68.

21.

<http://cinemanrityagharana.blogspot.com/2012/09/the-devadasi-video-mystery-solved.html>



Besides Bharatnatyam Kathak was also patronised by the state. Kathak dancers included Gaurabala, Chamoo and Sharda. Gaurabala came from Mumbai and during 1930-1940 she performed in the royal court. Mirabai and Haridhan were singers. They too performed along with the dancers [25]. In 1926,

Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja Gaekwad of Baroda patronized the Denishawn Dance Company which gave over one hundred concerts in India [26]. In 1950, the Department of Dance was established. Bharatanatyam and Kathak continue to be taught to the present day in the department, both in practical and theory. The dance department uniquely combined the traditional practice of 'guru-shishya parampara', i.e. the art-dance teaching.

CONCLUSION

From the above study it is amply clear that Indian music and dance traditions of India were promoted and revived while introducing the native people to the western fine arts forms. The Maharaja's encouragement through his efforts took the Indian music and dance to its zenith in the Baroda city. He gave extensive patronage to the Indian artists to make Baroda the cultural capital of Gujarat. He brought artists from disparate places of India, who come Baroda with their artistry, with their own style and with their culture. That has helped in cultivating a taste of music and dance among the literate and non-literate people alike. Baroda's population is heterogeneous—who have migrated and settled in Baroda from different parts of India. They have all contributed to the much appreciated. Distinct, cosmopolitan and vibrant culture of Baroda --"Sanskari Nagari". Today also families of dancers and musicians reside in Baroda and their endeavour in expanding the horizon of music and dance in an on-going process.

22. Khokar Ashish Mohan, Attendance the dance annual of India, 2003, 39.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 40.

25. Singh Kumar Shiv Raj, Mantra-Sachiv, Report of the Rajyarohan of H.H.Maharaja Pratapsinh Gaekwad, Baroda, 1941,101.

26. Ruth St. Denis, India's Dance Renaissance: Uttara Asha Coorlawala, Dance Chronicle, 15(2), 1992. 123-152