

Important personalities of Indian Music & Dance

Pandit Ravi Shankar

Pandit Ravi Shankar was born on 7 April, 1920, in Varanasi, India. He played the sitar, a melodious stringed instrument popular in India. He was also a composer and greatly responsible for stimulating Western appreciation of Indian music globally. Ravi Shankar spent most of his youth studying music and dance and touring extensively in India and Europe with his brother Uday Shankar's dance troupe. At the age of 18 Ravi Shankar gave up dancing, and for the next seven years he studied the sitar under noted musician Ustad Allauddin Khan. He served All India Radio as music director from 1948 to 1956. Simultaneously he began a series of European and American tours.



In the course of his long career, Ravi Shankar became one of the world's best-known exponent of Hindustani (north Indian) classical music, performing with India's most-distinguished percussionists and making dozens of successful recordings. Ravi Shankar composed film scores for the Indian director Satyajit Ray. Beginning in the 1960s, his concert performances with American violinist Yehudi Menuhin and his association with George Harrison, lead guitarist of the then wildly popular British musical group, the Beatles, helped bring Indian music to the attention of the West. Among the diverse musicians influenced by Ravi Shankar's compositional style were the jazz saxophonist John Coltrane and composer Philip Glass, with whom Shankar collaborated on the album *Passages* (1990). Indeed, what is remarkable about Ravi Shankar's accomplishments is his expert participation in traditional Indian music and in Indian-influenced Western music.

He was awarded the highest civilian award of India, the Bharat Ratna. During his lifetime he won Grammy Awards for his album *West Meets East* (1966) with Menuhin; for *The Concert for Bangladesh* (1971) with Harrison and for *Full Circle* (2001), a live recording of a performance at Carnegie Hall. Two months after his death, Ravi Shankar won a fourth Grammy Award for an intimate collection of ragas titled *The Living Room Sessions Part 1*. He wrote two autobiographies, published 30 years apart --*My Life, My Music* (1969) and *Raga Mala* (1999). He passed away in 11 December, 2012 at San Diego, California, U.S.

Bhimsen Joshi (Hindustani Classical Vocalist)

A legendary Hindustani classical vocalist who has not just earned true fans but has also won over critics. Born on 4th February, 1922, in Karnataka, Pandit Bhimsen Joshi is a descendant of the Kirana gharana, a school of Hindustani classical music. Bhimsen Joshi was so attracted towards music since a very young age that he left home in search of a guru at age of 11. Under the tutelage of Savai Gandharva he learnt many ragas and perfected his tone, pitch. His sheer determination and hard work can be felt while listening to the intensity and passion he brings in his songs. His first public performance was at the age of 19.



Bhimsen Joshi has perfected the khayal interpretations, bhajans in Hindi and Marathi. This versatile singer has also recorded Kannada Dasa Krithis in Dasavani, which are usually sung by Carnatic musicians. His sheer grit and determination earned him his first Platinum Disc in 1986. He has also been presented the Padma Shree in 1972, the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 1976, the Padma Bhushan in 1985 and Bharat Ratna in 2008.

His most memorable contribution that is remembered till date is the national integration song "Mile Sur Mera Tumhara". He has collaborated with many other renowned musicians like Hariprasad Chaurasiya, Pandit Ravi Shankar and Dr. Balamuralikrishna and has many albums to his credit. He is a living legend who continues to weave magic with his unique voice even today.

M.S Subbulakshmi (Carnatic Classical Vocalist)

M.S Subbulakshmi is a name that is synonymous with the world of Carnatic music. This flawless singer whose voice had a divine power is the first singer in India to be presented with the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award. She was born on 16 September, 1916, in Madurai, Tamil Nadu, into a family that had a musical background. Her full name was *Madurai Shanmukhavadivu Subbulakshmi* and she was fondly known as M.S or



M.S.S. Her mother tongue was Kannada. She was introduced to Carnatic music at a very early age and released her first album at the mere age of ten. Subbulakshmi received training in classical Carnatic music under the famous Semmangudi

Srinivasa Iyer and then learnt Hindustani classical music under Pundit Narayan Rao Vyas. Her first public performance was at Kumbakonam during Mahamaham festival and later she went to the Madras Music Academy. She sang in several languages like Kannada, Tamil, Malayalam, Telugu, Hindi, Sanskrit, Bengali, Gujarati.

Subbulakshmi also did a stint as an actress and one of the most memorable films was Bhakta Meera (1945). The versatile singer sang all the famous Meera bhajans in her melodious voice which are enjoyed by people even today. Her other films include Sevasadanam, Savitri and Meera (Tamil). She attained much acclaim and success in films but they did not appeal to her after some time. She quit films and continued to give public performances and concerts. In the year 1936, she met Sadasivam who was a freedom fighter. They got married after four years in 1940. Sadasivam already had children from his previous marriage and did not have any further children with M.S who treated his children as her own and showered them with love and affection. She was affectionately called "Amu Paati" by the children -- Radha, Viji and Thangam (Sadasivam's orphaned niece adopted by M.S).

Subbulakshmi has performed in London (Royal Albert Hall), New York (Carnegie Hall), Canada, Far East, Moscow to name some places and these performances are regarded among her best. Even people who did not even understand the language praised and complimented her for the divine manifestations. Personalities like Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru and many others were very fond of her music. Some of her most famous works include Suprabhatam (Early Morning Hymns), Bhajagovindam (composed by Adi Shankaracharya praising Lord Krishna), Kurai Onrum Illai (composed by Rajagopalachari), Vishnu Sahasranamam (1000 names of Lord Vishnu), Hanuman Chalisa (Prayers to Lord Hanuman). Another moving composition is "Vaishnava Janato" that could move many to tears. Subbulakshmi's rendition, her devotion, tone, pitch, perfect pronunciation are inimitable and flawless. This great soul passed away on 11 December, 2004, in Chennai at the age of 88. The rich legacy of music that she gave us will live forever.

Dr. Balamuralikrishna (Carnatic Musician)

One of the famous names associated with classical Carnatic music is that of Dr. Balamuralikrishna. This legendary Padma Bhushan awardee is an able composer, singer, poet and instrumentalist. He was born on the 6th of October, 1930 in Sankaraguptam in Andhra Pradesh. He was named Murali Krishnan by his father. The prefix Bala was given by a Hari Katha performer Musunuri Satyanarayana and thereafter he came to be known as Balamuralikrishna.



As a young boy of five, Balamuralikrishna had started to give musical concerts. His brilliant voice gained him instant fame and recognition. He was touted as a child prodigy who perfected almost every song and every tune. His father Pattabiramayya was a very popular musician who perfected the flute, veena and violin and his mother Suryakantamma was an expert veena player. Balamuralikrishna perfected violin, viola, khanjira, veena and mrudangam. In India, he is the only musician who has won National Awards for classical music, music direction as well as film playback singing. Dr. Balamurali Krishnan has contributed richly to the world of Carnatic music, with over 400 compositions in different music scales that are widely accepted by music lovers and critics alike. He has also created many new ragas Like mahati, sumukham, trisakthi, sarvashri, omkari, janasamodini, manorama, rohini, vallabhi, lavangi, pratimadhyamavathi, sushama. He established the "Academy of Performing Arts and Research" in Switzerland and for extensive research in the field of music therapy, he also established the MBK Trust to develop art and culture and spread knowledge in music . "Vipanchee", a dance and music school is a part of this trust and is managed by his trustee Kalaimamani Saraswati.

Ustad Bismillah Khan

Ustad Bismillah Khan, considered a gem of India, was a recipient of all the top four civilian awards -- Padma Shri, Padma Bhushan, Padma Vibhushan and Bharat Ratna. Born on 21st March, 1916 in Dumraon, Bihar, he was the second son of Paigambar Khan and Mitthan. His family had a musical background and his ancestors were musicians in the court of the princely states of Bhojpur. Bismillah Khan was named Qamaruddin but when his grandfather Rasool Baksh Khan saw him as a baby he uttered



the word "Bismillah" and hence he came to be known as Bismillah Khan. His father used to be a shehnai player in the court of Maharaja Keshav Prasad Singh of Dumraon. His teacher and mentor was his uncle Ali Baksh 'Vilayatu', a renowned shehnai player. Bismillah Khan religiously practiced the shehnai, attaining perfection in a very short time. He fully takes the credit for making the shehnai one of the most famous classical music instruments. His concert at the All India Music Conference (1937) in Calcutta brought shehnai into the limelight and was hugely appreciated by music lovers.

Bismillah Khan kept the legacy of classical music alive with his recitals and believed that music will survive even if the world perishes. He spread the message of brotherhood through his music. Bismillah Khan had the rare honour of playing his shehnai on the eve of India's Independence in the year 1947. He performed at the Red Fort in Delhi and since that year he continued the tradition of playing on the

15th of August, right after the Prime Minister's speech. Bismillah Khan played in many countries like Afghanistan, USA, Canada, Bangladesh, Europe, Iran, Iraq, West Africa, Japan and Hong Kong. Despite the fame that he achieved, Bismillah Khan always remained where his roots were. He never accumulated wealth and other materialistic possessions and lived in humble surroundings in the holy city of Benares. Such was his love for the city that he declined an offer for permanent visa for settling in the U.S. On the 21st of August, 2006, at the age of 90, Bismillah Khan breathed his last due to a cardiac arrest. His shehnai was buried with him in his grave.

Ustad Zakir Hussain (Tabla Maestro)

A very popular tabla maestro, Ustad Zakir Hussain is the son of the renowned tabla player Ustad Allah Rakha. He was born on 9th March, 1951. He went to St. Michael's High School in Mahim and did his graduation from St. Xavier's Mumbai. This child prodigy started touring as an artist by the time he was twelve and gained much recognition and fame. Zakir Hussain has had the opportunity to perform with many talented musicians not just in India but also all over the world. He became a



famous international phenomenon. He has composed for many English movies like *Apocalypse Now*, *In Custody*, *Little Buddha*, *The Mystic Masseur*, *Heat and Dust*, etc. Zakir Hussain also acted in a brilliant documentary named "The Speaking Hand: Zakir Hussain and the Art of the Indian Drum" that was released in the year 2003. He also composed, performed and provided his valuable advice for *Vanaprastham*, which was screened at the prestigious Cannes film festival.

Zakir Hussain has performed with many artists and has created brilliant works of fusion. His partnership with the famous band The Beatles deserves a special mention. He also recorded with the American psychedelic band called "Shanti" in the year 1971. In 1975, he worked with John McLaughlin in the band "Shakti". This band had John McLaughlin, Zakir Hussain, L. Shankar, T.H. "Vikku" Vinayakram and R. Raghavan. It was disbanded in the late seventies but the band was reunited a few years later by the name of "Remember Shakti" with some new members. The new band has released many albums like *Saturday Night in Bombay*, *The Believer* and *38th Montreux Jazz Festival*. Zakir Hussain also released his first solo album "Making Music" in the year 1987, which was proclaimed to be one of the most inspired East-West fusion albums ever. He was awarded the Padma Shri in the year 1988. Zakir Hussain has also received the National Heritage Fellowship (1999) which is the most prestigious honour for a master in traditional arts in the U.S. He was also awarded the Grammy for the album "Planet Drum" which was produced and created

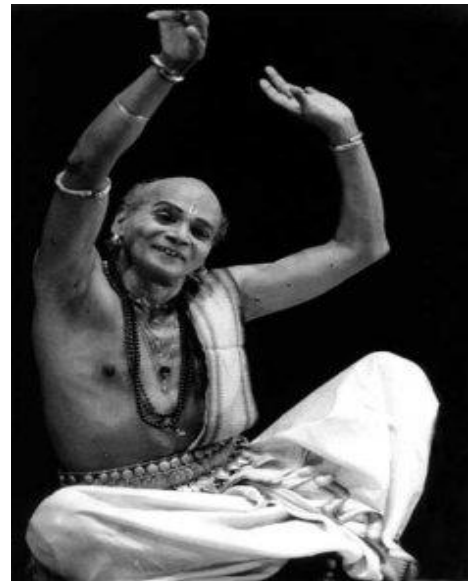
by Zakir Hussain and Mickey Hart. He has performed in almost 150 concerts annually all over the world. A true legend, his music shall continue to enthrall us for many more years to come.

Guru Kelucharan Mahapatra (Odissi Dancer)

Kelucharan Mohapatra was born on 8 January, 1926, Raghurajpur, Odisha India. He was an accomplished dancer who led a 20th-century revival of *odissi*, a centuries-old style of dance associated with the temples of Odisha and one of the principal forms of Indian classical dance in present times.

He was born to a family of artists who painted *patachitras* (religious folk paintings on thinly woven cloth). He trained and performed as a traditional dancer and drummer, studying in his youth with masters of *odissi*. In 1953 he began teaching *odissi* at a conservatory in Cuttack. Excelling in both

technique and expression Kelubabu sought to expand the style's traditional repertoire, making innovative use of forms from ancient texts and sculptures in his choreography. Thus he soon came to be regarded as a master of Indian classical dance, and his performances popularized *odissi* both in India and around the world. Kelucharan Mohapatra received a number of awards from the Indian government for his cultural and artistic achievements, including the prestigious Padma Vibhushan in 2000. He died in April 7, 2004 at Bhubaneshwar.

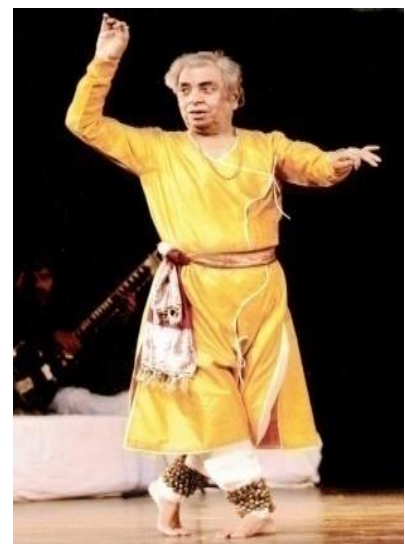


Birju Maharaj (Kathak Dancer)

Birju Maharaj, or Brijmohan Nath Mishra Maharaj was born in 4 February, 1937. This Indian dancer is a master of the *kathak* form and a leading exponent of the Kalka-Bindadin *gharana* (community of musicians sharing a distinctive musical style) of Lucknow.

Birju Maharaj was born into a well-known traditional *kathak* dancer's family. He began performing as a child alongside his father, Acchan Maharaj. After the death of his father, when Birju was nine years old, he began training with his uncles, the well-known dance masters Shambhu Maharaj and Lacchu Maharaj. He became a dance teacher at the age of 13, and by the time he was 28 his mastery of the dance form had won him the coveted Sangeet Natak Akademi Award.

Known for his perfect rhythm and expressive *abhinaya* Birju Maharaj developed a style that blends elements



belonging to both his uncles as well as those belonging to his father. He claimed to have inherited the precision of footwork and the play of the face and neck from his father, and the stylized fluidity of movement from his uncles. In addition to delineating episodes from the Radha-Krishna legend, Birju Maharaj innovatively used the dance form to express himself on various non-mythological and social issues. He was especially known as a brilliant choreographer, and he helped popularize dance-dramas.

He is also an accomplished singer of *thumri* and *dadra* and also proficient in playing the pakhawaj, naal, tabla, violin, flute. He has composed music, choreographed and sung for Hindi movies like *Shatranj ke Khilari* (1977; *The Chess Players*), directed by Satyajit Ray and Devdas. Birju Maharaj toured extensively and gave many performances and lecture demonstrations all over the world. He was the recipient of the Padma Vibhushan (1986).

Yamini Krishnamurthy

Yamini Krishnamurthy is a dancer of the *bharatanatyam* style of classical dance and has been an influential force in India's dance world for decades. She was born on 20 December, 1940, in Madanapalle, Andhra Pradesh. She began her training in *bharatanatyam*, a graceful dance that incorporates geometric movements and rhythmic foot patterns, as a child at Rukmini Devi Arundale's Kalakshetra, a leading school for the dance form. After mastering the basic skills, she went on to study under renowned dancers such as Kanchipuram Ellappa Pillai and Thanjavur Kittappa Pillai. After her debut in 1957 in Chennai, Krishnamurthy quickly became a rising star in India's dance scene. She is also well versed in *kuchipudi*, a quicker and more spontaneous dance, *odissi* which she learnt from Pankaj Charan Das and Kelucharan Mohapatra. In addition to dance, she was trained in Karnatak vocal music and the veena. Despite her diverse interests, her focus was on *bharatanatyam* and *kuchipudi*, earning recognition and popularizing the dance forms both at home and abroad. In 1990 she opened her own dance studio, Yamini School of Dance, in Delhi.



A multifaceted artist, Krishnamurthy received many awards for her work, including the Padma Shri (1968), the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1977), and the Padma Bhushan (2001). The title of Asthana Nartaki ("Resident Dancer") was bestowed upon her by the Tirumala Tirupathi Devasthanam temple. She published an autobiography (with Renuka Khandekar), *A Passion for Dance*, in 1995.

Sonal Mansingh,

This talented and knowledgeable dancer was born on 30 April, 1944 in Mumbai. Sonal Mansingh's initial lessons in dance were in *Manipuri and Bharatanatyam*. She began her professional dance career in the early 1960s. In 1965 she started training under *odissi* guru Kelucharan Mohapatra in Cuttack. She did not limit her interests, exploring various elements of culture and dance forms such as *chhau* and *kuchipudi*. She also underwent extensive training in *abhinaya* (gesture expression). Sonal Mansingh was trained in Hindustani and Carnatic classical vocal music. She is proficient in the Sanskrit and German languages.



In 1977 she founded the Centre for Indian Classical Dances in Delhi. Her choreography was often rooted in Indian mythology, though she also explored contemporary topics such as women's issues and environmentalism. Sonal Mansingh has been invited to teach and perform internationally and has travelled extensively both in India and abroad. Apart from being a dancer, she is also a teacher, researcher, choreographer, and social activist. For her work, Mansingh has been the recipient of many awards, including the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award (1987) and the Padma Bhushan (1992) and Padma Vibhushan (2003), two of India's highest civilian honours.

Lata Mangeshkar

Lata Mangeshkar is one of the best singers of the Hindi film industry. She is listed in the Guinness Book of World Records as the most recorded artist in the world. It is estimated that she has around 40,000 solo, duet and chorus backed songs in 20 different languages.

Lata Mangeshkar was born on 28th September, 1929 in Indore. Her father Dinanath Mangeshkar was a renowned classical singer. Lata was introduced to music at a very young age. The life history of Lata Mangeshkar is truly fascinating. She was very young when her father passed away, thus making the



family dependant on Lata. To take care of her family's financial situation, Lata acted in as many as 8 films from 1942 to 1948. She debuted as playback singer in a Marathi film named Kiti Hasaal (1942). Unfortunately the song was edited out. Her first Hindi playback was for the film Aap ke Sewa Main (1947) but she did not get noticed. At that time, the film industry was ruled by female singers who had heavier and huskier voices .But Ghulam Haider saw the potential in her and gave her a chance to sing in the film Majboor. The song Dil Mera Toda finally got her noticed and it was touted as her breakthrough song. In 1949, she had four major hits from the films Barsaat, Andaaz, Dulari and Mahal. The song "Aayega Aanevala" from Mahal was a huge hit and Lata secured a firm position in the industry. She had a high pitched voice which was very melodious. By the late fifties the younger sister of Lata Mangeshkar Asha Bhonsle also came into the scene and they both became reputed as the unbeatable voices of the industry. Lata rose to fame rapidly and left her indelible mark in the industry. She has sung with famous singers like Mohammed Rafi, Kishore Kumar, Mukesh, etc. She has perfected almost every genre of music. Her success and determination made her one of the most powerful women in the industry. She understood the requirement of each song and sang flawlessly.

Lata Mangeshkar has been honoured with innumerable awards but the one that truly deserves a special mention is that she is the only second singer in the non-classical category (after M.S Subbulakshmi) in India to have received the highest civilian award, Bharat Ratna. She has received three national awards and eight Filmfare awards after which she stopped accepting awards in order to promote new talent. Truly a living legend, Lata Mangeshkar has a talent that is second to none.

Begum Akhtar

Begum Akhtar was born on 7th October, 1914, in Faizabad town of Uttar Pradesh. Her name was Akhtaribai Faizabadi though she was much popular as Begum Akhtar. Her family belonged to the upper class of the society and was not even inclined towards music. She showed interest in music at a very young age and was sent to train under the great sarangi player, Ustad Imdad Khan. Later, she learnt classical music from great exponents of this field like Mohammad Khan, Abdul Waheed Khan and Ustad Jhande Khan Saheb. She was proficient in her rendition of ghazal, thumri, dadra.

At the tender age of fifteen she gave her first public performance. People were moved by her voice and



she gained instant recognition. Her ghazals impressed the famous poetess of India, Sarojini Naidu and was appreciated at a concert that was organized for helping victims of Bihar earthquake. Her first recording was done by the Megaphone Record

Company and later they released many gramophone records. In the 1930's, Begum Akhtar also acted in a few Hindi films which include Aameena (1934), Mumtaz Begum (1934), Jawaani Ka Nasha (1935), Naseeb Ka Chakkar (1935). In all these films, she sang all her songs herself.

Begum Akhtar moved back to Lucknow after a while where the renowned director Mehboob Khan approached her for a film titled "Roti". The music was composed by the famous composer Anil Biswas and the music took the industry by storm. Begum Akhtar married barrister Ishtiaq Ahmed Abbasi in the year 1945. Due to family restrictions, Begum Akhtar could not sing for almost five years. She fell ill and her only medicine was music. In the year 1949, she returned to record at the Lucknow Radio station and sang three ghazals and a dadra. She felt so satisfied and happy that she wept with joy. She then continued to give public performances and sing in concerts till she passed away.

Begum Akhtar was persuaded by Madan Mohan, a famous music director to sing in two movies "Daana Paani" (1953) and "Ehsaan" (1954). The songs "Aye Ishq Mujhe Aur to Kuch Yaad" and "Hamein Dil Mein Basa Bhi Lo" were admired by many. Her last movie stint was that of a classical singer in Satyajit Ray's film "Jalsa Ghar". Begum Akhtar was a refined ghazal singer and was called as Mallika-e-Ghazal or the Queen of Ghazals. Her style of singing was inimitable. Most compositions were self created and based on Indian ragas. Begum Akhtar's last performance was in a concert in Ahmedabad. Feeling that her voice was not upto the mark, Begum Akhtar raised her pitch which put stress on her and her health deteriorated. The situation became critical and she had to be rushed to the hospital. Begum Akhtar breathed her last on 30th October 1974, leaving many fans disappointed and heart broken.

Asha Bhosle

With versatility as her middle name, Asha Bhosle continues to rule the hearts with her singing as she used to during her prime. This talented singer is adept in many styles of rendition like peppy film songs, ghazals, romantic and serious forms with amazing levels of energy and style. Be it the romantic "Oh Mere Sona Re" or the sensuous "Aaiye Meherban" or the peppy "Kambakth Ishq", Asha Bhosle can add life to any song.



Asha Bhosle was born on 8th September, 1933 in a Marathi family. Her father was the renowned singer and actor Dinanath Mangeshkar. He trained her in classical music at a very young age. Though she had her brush with acting as a child artist, it was quite natural for her to choose playback singing like her elder sister Lata

Mangeshkar. Her father's death in 1942 led the family to move from Pune to Bombay and settle there. Asha got the chance to sing in a Marathi film when she was ten years old. Her initial years saw a lot of struggle since her elder sister Lata was in much demand and unfair comparisons rose every now and then. It took a lot of perseverance from Asha to make it to the top. Her hard work and efforts paid off when she was given her first big break with the movie C.I.D (1956). Under the patronage of O.P. Nayyar she got more offers and began singing extraordinarily. She tasted huge success with the movie Naya Daur (1957). With O. P. Nayyar, Asha churned out hits like Aaiye Meherban, Deewana Hua Badal, Isharon Isharon Mein, Aao Huzur Tumko, Ude Jab Jab Zulfein Teri "Chain Se" etc. Other hits are Piya Tu Ab To Aaja (Caravan), "Dum Maro Dum" , "Chura Liya Hai Tumne , Yeh Mera Dil (Don) etc.

Asha was noticed by other music directors like S.D Burman after the phenomenal success of these songs and she and S.D Burman created many hit soundtracks for movies like Kaala Pani, Kaala Bazaar, Insaan Jaag Utha, Lajwanti, Sujata and Teen Deviyan. Most famous of these songs were Asha Bhosle's duets with Mohammed Rafi and Kishore Kumar. After the mid 60's Asha collaborated with R.D Burman and reached the peak of her career. The movie "Teesri Manzil" released in 1966 shot her to fame and she won popular acclaim. The duo of Asha and R.D Burman produced extraordinary songs. Their marriage was also a success.

Asha Bhosle's rendition of beautiful ghazals for the movie Umrao Jaan won her huge appreciation. She also has a number of pop albums to her credit and has acquired international popularity with artists like Boy George, Black Eyed Peas and cricketer Brett Lee. She has many awards including eight Filmfare awards and two National Awards apart from numerous other accolades.

Kishore Kumar

Born as Abhas Kumar Ganguly on 4th August, 1929, this great singer known as Kishore Kumar and affectionately called Kishore Da, was one of those very few singers who took risks and experimented with different styles of music. Considered to be a legend in the Hindi film world, this versatile persona has excelled as a playback singer, actor, composer, lyricist, director, producer and script writer. The songs of Kishore Kumar have an extraordinary blend of romance, emotions, naughtiness and melancholy.



Kishore Kumar was born in a small place known as Khandwa located in the state of Madhya Pradesh. He was born in a typical Bengali family and was the youngest among his siblings. He had two elder brothers (Ashok Kumar and Anoop Kumar) and a sister (Sati Devi). His father Kunjilal Ganguly was a lawyer by profession and

his mother Gauri Devi was from a well-to-do family. When his eldest brother Ashok Kumar became an actor, Kishore Kumar was still quite young. Later on, his second brother also ventured into movies to become an actor.

Kishore Kumar started to show interest in music and often mimicked the great K.L. Saigal. Though he did not have any formal training in music, he decided to pursue it and followed his brothers to Mumbai. It was his dream to become a famous playback singer and be counted among legends. He would often go to the studios and ask producers if he could sing on the movie's soundtrack. Initially he could not develop a style of his own but nevertheless he perfectly imitated K.L. Saigal. Once, the great composer S.D Burman had come to meet Ashok Kumar when he heard Kishore singing. He encouraged the young lad to continue refining his voice but at the same time, develop a style of his own.

Kishore kept this advice in mind and went on to develop his own signature style. He perfected yodeling, a unique style he heard amongst the Austrian music collections of his brother Anoop. In the Hindi film industry, his yodeling turned out to be widely popular and became a trademark of Kishore Kumar. The ability to transform his voice according to not just the scene but also the actor is something that was truly incredible of Kishore Kumar. Some films that deserve a special mention are *Hum Kisi Se Kum Nahin*, *Kinara*, *Dream Girl*, *Anurodh*, *Sharabi*, *Mr. Natwarlal*, *Gol Maal*, *Dostana*, *Manzil*, *Padosan*, *Shalimar*, *Khatta Meetha*, *Kasme Vaade*, *Ghar*, *Don*, *Muqaddar Ka Sikandar*, *Chalti Ka Naam Gaadi*, *Dilli Ka Thug*, etc.

When his popularity began to diminish during the mid 80's, he retired and wanted to return to Khandwa, his native place. Unfortunately, it was not meant to be. On 13 October, 1987, co-incidentally the birthday of his elder brother Ashok Kumar, Kishore suffered a heart attack and breathed his last. His untimely and unexpected death shocked the entire nation. Kishore Kumar's eldest son Amit Kumar also ventured into the world of music.

Manna Dey

Manna Dey is undoubtedly one of the best singers of India. This versatile singer has sung numerous songs and shared the limelight with some legends like Mohammed Rafi, Talat Mehmood, Mukesh, Kishore Kumar, etc. His father's name was Purna Chandra Dey and his mother was Mahamaya Dey. Since childhood, Manna De showed a penchant towards music and was encouraged and inspired by his uncle Krishna Chandra Dey, who was a renowned music teacher. Manna Dey was sent to Scottish Church Collegiate School and later on to the Scottish Church College to complete his schooling and pre-university education. He completed his graduation from Vidyasagar College. Manna De always



showed an inclination towards sports and excelled in events like boxing and wrestling. He was a delightful person to be with and his contemporaries swear that he was one of the most sociable people in the studio, playing pranks and joking around with everybody. It is a rare trait in musicians.

Manna De showed his singing talent in early days of school He started to receive proper training in music from his uncle Krishna Chandra Dey and also from Ustad Dabir Khan. Manna De stood first for three consecutive years in three different groups of inter-college singing competitions. After his education, Manna De worked as an assistant music director under his uncle and then under S.D. Burman in the year 1942. After assisting many music directors, he started to work independently but never stopped taking regular training in classical music and his teachers were Ustad Aman Ali Khan and Ustad Abdul Rahman Khan.

Manna Dey's career as a playback singer started with the movie *Tamanna* in the year 1943. His uncle, Krishna Chandra Dey composed the musical score and he paired up with the well-known Suraiya. Manna Dey soon became a household name. In the year 1950, he got his second film named "Mashaal" in which he sang a solo track named "Upar Gagan Vishal", composed by S.D. Burman which was another hit. In the year 1952, he lent his voice for the film "Amar Bhupali", which was being produced in two languages simultaneously. He sang in both Bengali and Marathi and established himself as one of the best Bengali playback singer. Mohammed Rafi once commented that though people listen to his songs, he himself hears only Manna Dey's songs. This was perhaps one of the best accolades a singer could receive from another talented singer.

Manna Dey teamed up with great singers like Bhimsen Joshi for the legendary song known as "Ketaki Gulab Juhi". With Kishore Kumar he sang a completely different genre of songs like "Yeh Dosti" (Sholay) and "Ek Chatur Naar" (Padosan). Both these songs were immensely liked and appreciated by one and all. Manna Dey infused the melody of classical music in the frame of pop music. In the Bengali film industry, he worked with noted musicians like the legendary Hemant Kumar. He established himself in mainstream Bengali music after his legendary duet song with Lata Mangeshkar known as "Ke Prothom Kachhe Esechi". He is counted among the legends of playback singing. Manna Dey has also given stage performances throughout the world, mesmerizing his audience and people who attended his concerts. He has received the Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan from the Government of India. After having spent more than 50 years in Bombay, Manna Dey lived in Bangalore till his demise.