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An Analytical Study of <i>Bhajan Gayaki</i> concerning Vidushi Kishori Amonkar's Interpretation of 'Bhajan'	
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Abstract

Bhajan is a Devotional genre of music in India, which is found to be sung in different ways. People who sing different genres of songs in India are often found to sing Bhajans. Bhajan is not confined to a particular way to interpret but is found to be interpreted in multiple ways by different artists. This article will discuss on the Bhajan interpretation by Vidushi Kishori Amonkar's Bhajan Gayaki (singing style) in a very simple way to figure out whether there is any similar idea existing in her Bhajan interpretations. The Bhajans are collected while collecting data for my 'Doctoral Thesis' paper. All the interpretations are taken from studio recordings. No public performance has been chosen for analysis in this paper.

Keywords: Bhajan, Devotional Music, Kishori Amonkar, Hindu Music, Spiritual Music

Introduction:

Bhajan is a devotional genre in Hindu music in India which aims to evoke devotion. Bhajan originated from temples at the time of the Bhakti movement. The bhajan performed in front of the deity as a ritual in the temple is not meant to show off the performer's perfection or musical efficiency. There is no hard and fast rule for the analysis of these devotional bhajans regarding their uniqueness rather singers from different genres interpret every devotional song in their unique way. The elaboration of the compositions happens mostly in multiple ways. The basis of the 'Bhajan' presentation is its repetitive pattern the presentation, the use of the chorus, concluding with the chanting of the Lord's name, and the setting compositions in such a way that devotees can join the entire performance. [Naskar, 2009]

Vidushi Kishori Amonkar is a legendary Indian classical music artist, and her 'Khayal' renditions are unique in the world of music. She has been also found to sing Bhajans. In one of her interviews, (13 minutes onwards in the interview) (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E7-RYko673Q>)(1) she expressed her fondness for Bhajans. This article aims to do a simple analytical study of her Bhajan interpretations. Only studio recordings have been chosen as Data. These data were collected while the collection of data for my Doctoral thesis. An attempt has been made to choose an equal amount and category of Bhajans from each of her 'Bhajan' albums for the case study and analysis for this paper. This paper aims to focus on the way of interpretation of 'Bhajan' concerning Vidushi

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Kishori Amonkar's Bhajan interpretation. The features will be observed and compared to conclude.

Methodology:

I will analyze the interpretation and then interpret its features to get the answers. All the data are collected from YouTube and only the recordings will be taken from her different albums. All the 'Bhajans' will be analyzed in the same parameters and they will be compared to conclude. The data analysis procedure is mentioned as 'Sequential order' and after each song, the 'data interpretation is done separately for making the comparison and hitting the result.

The Swaras will be indicated in the following way. The shudhdha swaras like Shadaj , Rishabh , Gandhar, Madhyam, Pancham, Dhaivat, and Nishad will be represented by S, R, G, M, P, D, N, and Komal Rishabh , Komal Gandhar, Tivra Madhyam, Komal Dhaivat, Komal Nishad will be represented by r, g, m, d, n. The upper octave notes will be represented by '' i.e Upper octave Shadaj by 'S'' and the lower Octave note will be represented by '1' like N1 D1 P1 etc.

Data Analysis and interpretation:

Source: Album Humaro Pranam

Lyrics: Mharo Pranaam Baanke Bihari jee

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u4reR-6Ta2A> (2)

Sequential analysis:

The song starts with the first line without Taal. Then the Taal starts and the first line is repeated thrice, then there are three cycle gaps, the next line is sung twice, and then the next line is sung once. The very next line is again sung twice, the next twice and the first line is repeated fully. Similarly, all the next stanzas are sung. After each stanza, the first line is fully repeated, and then half of the line once again. Each stanza has been sung in the same tune. Every two lines are composed as a stanza. The song is composed in Yaman Kalyan. Each repetition has been improvised maintaining the raga. Murki and Taan have been used in improvisations. In the last stanza, 'Yaha Chabi Dekhya' has been stretched as a brief vistar using the phrase 'N'D`N`RGmP RGRS'. The length of the vistar is of 5 seconds (3:03 minutes to 3:09 minutes). The vistar gets blended with the next line. The interpretation ends with a Thai on the first line.

Analysis of the song: There are Bol –Aalap, repetition of lines, and Raga form found throughout the presentation. There is a very short Aakar Vistar in the end. The vistar connects the lines maintaining the Raga. The song's Tempo is 120 BPM approx., set in Taal Kaharwa.

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Sawan de Rahyan Jora Re

Source: Album Humaro Pranam

Lyrics: Sawan De rahya Jora Re

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9O4YE9IdLJw> (3)

Sequential order: The song starts with music. Then the first two lines are sung one by one and the whole set is sung twice, followed by the first line. Then the next line is sung once, followed by the next line with repetition. These two lines are sung twice. Then the first line of the first stanza is sung once with taan ang. After that, the next two lines are sung one after another and the total stanza has been sung twice, followed by the very first line of the first stanza. After that the first line of the last stanza is sung twice, the second line once followed by the first line. Here the last stanza has been sung in a different tune and the approach is unique. Every repetition is improvised with raga. Sitar has been used significantly throughout the music part. The first stanza is repeated after singing each stanza. The song ends with the interpretation of the first word 'Saawana'.

This song is composed in raga Mishra Maanj Khamaj and set in 240 BPM tempo approximately in Kaharwa taal.

Interpretation of the analysis: Lots of repetition of the lines is found, Raga form is found in Mishra style, and Taan Ang has been found.

Chal Wahi Des

Source: Album Humaro Pranam.

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxOc6-wi0aU> (4)

Sequential order: The first line is sung in two different tunes hence the first line is divided into two different parts. Then there is an interlude. The next line is sung twice, followed by a repetition of the next line. The first line is again repeated with a connecting word 'Pritam' and then the word 'Vahides' has been repeated twice. After that, there is an interlude. After that, the next stanza is sung. The first line of the first stanza is sung once. Then there is a brief vistar on that. The used lyrics are '*Kaho to Motiyana Maang Bharwa kaho chit kaaho kes*' with the notes SGPGPnP S`, Snr`S`.2:20 TO2:31 minutes, with a length of 11 seconds, and blends with the next line. Then the next line is sung once, followed by the very first line. The lines have been sung in the same order as sung previously. After that, there is an interlude to music followed by the last stanza. The first line is sung once, the next line once then the first stanza has been repeated in the same order. Again, the first stanza gets repeated and the first line 'Chala Des Vahi' has been repeated thrice. Then the song ends with a repetition of the word 'Chala'.

Ghat Ghat mein Panchi bolta:

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Source: Album Sadhana

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FDtKurjDAuU> (5)

Sequential order: The song starts with 'aaochar aalap'. RM, MP, SRMPDMMR. Then the first line has been repeated three times then only the 'bolta' part has been repeated thrice. Then again, the first line first part twice, the full line once has been sung followed by a bol vistar. The used bols are 'Panchi Bolta , Panchi Boltaa , Bolta , Bolta' with the phrases MG, MGPDMRS, M RM, PDPM, and GDPM . The next line is then repeated thrice followed by the four times repetition of the first line. All the vistras blended with the compositional tune.

Interpretation of the analysis: There is a repetitive pattern in this composition. The word 'Bolta' has been repeated in various ways like improvisation, and Bol vistar. Vistar has been done maintaining the Raga with the Bols.

5. Jao Nirmoheeya

Source: Album 'Prabhujee Mai Araj Karun'

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2LWrO5xyYuY> (6)

Sequential order:

The song starts with Bol aalap with Jao nirmoheeya. The song starts with the track, sitar, and santoor. The vocal part starts with the part 'Jaane Thari Preet' twice repeated. Then the full line is repeated twice. The last part has been repeated each time as a compositional structure. Again, the first line is repeated once again followed by the interlude music. Then the second stanza starts with the repetition of the first line two times; then the second line is repeated once followed by the next line two times. Again, the first stanza gets repeated in the same manner. Then the two stanzas are repeated in the same manner. Then the first stanza gets repeated once and 'Nirmoheeya' is uttered once and the song ends.

This song is composed in Mishra Hemant. Set in Kaharwa with 240 BPM approximately.

Interpretation of the son analysis: The Raga is maintained in this interpretation. Repetitions are found throughout the interpretation. 'Jaane Thari Preet' part has been repeated and has been emphasized a number of times. The way interpretation ends with a specific way (with one word).

Mai kaise Aaungi

Source: Album 'Sadhana'

Link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsYwdZd_4Bc (7)

Sequential order: The song is composed in Mishra Bhairabi. The song starts with aaochar aalap based on raga. The used phrases are Srn1n1S, SgrSn1d1n1Sn1rS, SgMdPndMgPndnd, and SrgdmdNdPmgrS. Then the song starts with 6 times repetitions of the first line,

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followed by Music, again there is a phrase aaungi and then the full line 6 times again repeated. After that, there is a brief music and the bol Kaise has only been uttered followed by the full line twice. Then the line is repeated again with an extra word 'Saanwariya' followed by a small Bol- vistar. The used phrases are 'Mai Kaise Aaungi Saanwariya, Saanwariya, Saanwariya,' with the sargam phrases of the main tune, then SrgMgrg, mgmPm dgmSrgn1S, followed by the next line 'Thari vikat Nagariya'. Then it's followed by the interlude music and then again, a brief Bol vistar is sung. The used phrases are 'Saanwariya, Thari vikat Nagariya, Thari, Vikat Nagariya'. The used sargam phrases are gmPmg, Pd, dMgn1grS, SgPdnd, mdmg rgrS, and N1SgmdmgrgrS. Then the phrase gmPndPmgrgrS is sung. Then next stanza is sung. The first line has been repeated thrice, followed by a small bol 'O Saawariya' nnPd ndMg, then the next line starts followed by a small aakar vistar of 08 seconds with the notes SgPdndMrgrS. The first line is sung twice and the next line is sung once. Then there is a short aakar aalap with 9:14-9:34 minutes that is of 20 seconds, dPdP PdPd PMg, SgdPrgrS followed by the first line of the next stanza twice. Again, there is a short aakar Vistar with some bols like 'begam pur mein soyee jan jawe'. PdS`r`g`r`nD, dS`r`g` r`ndgMPndMrr rgrS. SgpDS`nd, PdndMrgrS. The second line is repeated for six times, followed by the last line. The last stanza also carries a lot of repetition and aakar vistar and bol vistar but briefly maintaining the Raga. Then the line 'Thari bikat Nagariya' has been sung like vistar with the phrase gPdS`S`dMgrgrS. Then the first stanza is repeated and ends with the 'Tihai' of the first line. Almost each line has been extended in this interpretation with vistar maintaining the Raga.

The interpretation of this analysis: Raga is thoroughly maintained throughout the interpretation. Bol vistar are done briefly maintaining the Raga and with the help of the lyrics. Usage of lyrics is very maintained. These bols are always sung in the manner of supporting the tunes of associated lines. The usage of Tihai has been found in this interpretation. Aakar vistar are also found in this interpretation. 'Thari Vikat Nagariya' this phrase has been highlighted a number of times.

Hye Mero Mann Mohana

Source: Album Krishna Bhajans'

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kv91orvN5Lg> (8)

Sequential order: This interpretation starts without taal (alap form), next line is sung twice with taal. Next, there are six cycles of music. The first line which is of the next stanza is sung in Raga Maaj Khamaj. Then there is an aakar vistar. The vistar starts at 2:14 minutes and the vistar ends at 2:36 seconds. The used notes are GPNS, GMnDPM, P, GRS. Then in Raga Pahari SRMPnD, PM, Then the next line is sung twice, the second line twice, Then the first stanza of the first line is sung thrice. Then there is a gap of six cycles of second interlude. The first line is sung in Pahari twice. Then there is an Aakar vistar from 4:16 minutes to 4:33 minutes using the notes 'DnS`M`R`S`nD, MDnS`nDMG, GMS`DMGS`nDR`S`'. The

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phrases have been used in Maaj Khamaj and it comes back to Pahari again. The first line is sung once, the second line twice, the first line of the first stanza is written twice and a half followed by the next interlude. The first line has been sung twice followed by the next aakar vistar from 6:27 minutes to 6:45 minutes. The used notes are MGR, RGMRS, DMGR, RP, S`DP M. The second line is sung twice. There is a gap of two cycles between the two cycles. Again, the first line is sung two and a half times. All the vistras are blending with compositional tunes throughout the song.

The interpretation of this analysis: Two Ragas have been blended in this composition. Bol, Vistras and Aakar Vistras have been done briefly keeping support to the associated lines' tunes. Aalap has also been used at the very beginning. Both Ragas maintains their own spaces.

8.Mai Birahini

Source: Album 'Krishna Bhajan'

Link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ny0gNtFRSkI> (9)

This song is composed in Mishra Bairabi and set in Taal Kaharwa, 240 BPM approximately.

Sequential order: The song starts with track. Then there is an aakar vistar from 2:20 minutes to 2:45 minutes. The used notes are Mdnr`S`n, g`r`g`m`g`S`nd, dS`R`G`S`nd, dMgr,M . Then next line 'Ek Birahini aisi Dekhi' starts from 'MgrM'. Then there is a gap of four cycles from 4:38 minutes to 05:02 minutes with the used notes Mdr`n`s`,S`M`g`r`n, d`n`S`nd, PdS`ndPM, ndPM, The first line is sung twice, the third line once, the full line twice, then four cycles music. Then the second line is sung twice, the third line twice, then the second and third lines are sung once. Then there is an aakar vistar. The next line is sung twice, the next once, and then the whole set is sung.

Antara: The first line is sung twice, then there is a 4-cycle gap of music, then repetition of the first line, followed by an aakar vistar using the Raga notes have been presented. The next line is sung twice, the second line once. The next two lines have been sung one by one. Again, the first line is sung twice. The second line is sung thrice followed by the repetition of the first line. This is the way this interpretation reaches its conclusion. All the vistras are always blending to the next line's tune.

The interpretation of the analysis: This interpretation is also very much maintained Raga wise. Bol and Aakar vistras are found here briefly with a lot of repetition of lines. Each vistar has synchronization with the associated lines.

Result: Just like the existing ideas about 'Bhajan' presentation, these interpretations have been done in various ways. The starting, ending, elaboration, tunes, and tempos are different. No extra projection is found for Taal. Tabla has only been used for accompanying the song.

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According to the interpretation, it is found that collected songs carry different features. Every Composition is Raga-based and Raga flow has been maintained up to the maximum extent based on the compositional structure (in each case study where it's 'Shudhdha' or Mishra). Vistars are found to be a prominent feature of most of the interpretations. Vistars are brief, connected to the compositional tune and the wordings are prominent. Repetition of lines has also been a dominating feature of these interpretations. 'Aalap' and 'Tihai' are also used in some interpretations. So 'Khayal' songs have been used in a very fine way. Some words have been utilized in a unique way based on the composition. (Hypothesis test: The influence of Indian Classical Music is found in a very clear way in each of the selected Bhajan presentations.)

Conclusion: There is a balance between the simplicity of 'Bhajan' like 'the selecting of the regular Taal and Tempo, various ways of presentation, repetition of lines and 'the application of the Indian Classical Music and its elements' in Vidushi Kishori Amonkar's Bhajan presentation. The influence of Indian Classical Music is prominent in the selected Bhajan interpretations. Vistars (Aakar and Bol Vistars) have been done in a very measured (brief) way keeping a synchronization of the compositional tune and the wordings intact.

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