

My Musical Journey

SHIBOPRIYA CHATTERJEE

Music gives Soul to the Universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination, and life to everything –Plato

Music is the universal language of mankind - H.W. Longfellow

Music is the Food of Love ... Play on - W. Shakespeare

Music is my First Love..... – Greetings from Shibopriya –

Please accept my respectful Pranam to You and Your Family.

The father figure and prodigious music composer and vocalist Nagendrnath Shatri, was the famous Puratani and Tappa composer, singer of Ranaghat Gharana. He was popularly known as "Nagen Kathak" and was a doyen in his own un-imitable style of music during beginning of few decades of last century. He used to be invited during that era of time by many Kings and Zamindars in India for various music conferences, as a dignified musician at par with various Ustads of Rampur gharana, Varanasi gharana, Lukhnow gharana, Bishnupur gharana and so on in those golden days of classical music.



His Biography was well narrated during that time's Bangali Encyclopedia, Bishwakoshi. My Grandfather and Guru Pragyanachrya Shibkumar Chattopadhyay, Sangeet Shastri was Grandson of Sri Nagendronath Shastri. I generally address my guru as Dada. Dada's initial music training started from very childhood from Nagendronath Shatriji. Of course his mother Sulata Devi was also a great music teacher and trained him in parallel during that time.

My classical music training started from Dada at the age of 4 in Ranaghat. Particularly for the purpose of musical training at Nagendrosangeet Mahavidyalay, a great musical institution in Eastern part of West Bengal covering Nadia, 24 Paraganas and Mushidabad regions, I was taken away from my parents, to live in my MAMABARI, since babyhood for couple of years.

Though due to job change of my Father, we had to shift to Allahabad when I was 2 years old but under the advice of different great musicians like Pandit Manilal Nag, Pandit Sankar Ghosh (who used to stay at our house in Allahabad during annual music conferences at Prayag Sangeet Samiti, Allahabad), I was forced to go back to Ranaghat again (at the age of 4) to have original training of classical music from Dada, "One of the greatest music teacher and musicologist of the country" as per them. I will also make special mention of my paternal Grandfather late Nirod Baran Banerjee, who was also an excellent singer and expert in playing various musical instruments like Sarod, Esraj, Sitar and Tabla. However I was not fortunate to see him as he departed this mortal world at a very young age.

In 20th century from 40s to 90s Pandit Shibkumar (my Dada) was regular participant in Akashvani, Dooradarshan, Taansen Sangeet Sanmelan, Sadarang Sangeet Sanmelan and many other musical conferences all over the country. He was also the examiner in post graduate courses (M.Mus) in Music, in Allahabad University, Agra University, Chandigarh University etc. He was also convener for West Bengal for Prayag Sangeet Samitee in Allahabad. Dada was also deeply associated as Music Teacher/ Examiner and Adviser since inception with "Sourav" the musical institution of Pandit Gyan Prakash Ghosh, till he expired.

Every year in Nagendra Sangeet Mahavidyalay there happened to be great music conference where eminent and famous musicians used to come and perform, from all over the country. I was told by my grandma, Mamuni, that I would be cuddled and blessed by great souls like, Bhiswadev Chatterjee, Siddheswar Mukherjee, Jatileswar Mukherjee, Gyan Prakash Ghosh, Meera Banerjee, Malabika Kanan, Nikhil Banerjee and many others (as I laid playing in my swing in the green room). It was my good fortune that I got ashirwad from all possible famous musicians of the country, at that time. In those days, musicians were not only performed in conference, but also many of them used to come 2/3 days in advance, and stayed with us in "Ganer Mahal", a few of Dada's ground floor rooms were kept specially prepared for them for comfortable stay, otherwise these rooms were used for music classes.

Going little back I wish to state that since my birth I am fortunate to collect blessings from great musical personalities. I was born in the hands of Dr. Anjali Mukhopadhyay a famous Nazulgeeti singer and Gynecologist (she was my Grand Aunt, my Dada's third sister) At the age of 5-8 months I was blessed by my father's great friend- Sumon Uncle, who used to come at our Sonarpur residence. While I was lying in my crib. Suman Uncle used to sing number of songs with great pleasure in front of me and blessed me. He would address me as Noyontara. Sumon Uncle is the legendary singer of our generation now known as Kabir Sumon, 42 years back he was Sumon Chattopadhyay. At the age of 8, I was fortunate to perform and get blessed by Pandit BheemSen Joshi who visited and stayed in our house in Kolkata. In the preceding years my father took a job in MNC Siemens, Mumbai. There my mother started a music and dance school where I could concentrate on Music, as well as my Dada used to come 4 times a year in Mumbai to give me special training. At the age of 10

I was selected as a solo child khayal singer in Mumbai Doordarshan and performed Rag Desh for 20 mins, which was well appreciated by Mumbai Dooradarshan Music Board and local musicians. This was my first national presentation. Afterwards I performed at various functions and competitions in various places in the country and abroad but very few in Kolkata. My musical journey was virtually stopped for nearly 20 years after the sad demise of my Dada in mid 90s and also due to my higher education and job responsibilities.

Recently I was inspired and charged, to convey my tribute to my great Teacher and Guru. Dada has given all his lyrics and compositions which can be compared to a galore of precious treasury for me. It is my humble endeavour to select few of his songs and composition and also a few from his elder sister Smt. Sandhya Bandhyopadhyay's collection who was also a renowned musical talent in Lucknow. These Songs are my tribute and deep gratitude to my Guru, Pandit Shikumar Chattopadhyay Sangeet Shastri.

I offer this Shradhanjali CDs to you and your family as a token of love and regards. If you like it, it will be a great blessings to me and motivate me to cultivate further to initiate more such records of great compositions of my guru.

Again I repeat, Music is my first love and I wish to live with music every time and all the time. Before we listen the songs, let us pray and chant ..

**Sing the song of celestial love, O singer!
May the divine fountain of eternal grace and joy enter your soul.
May Brahma, (the Divine One),
Pluck the strings of your inner soul with His celestial fingers,
And feel His own presence within.
Bless us with a divine voice
That we may tune the harp-strings of our life
To sing songs of Love to you.
(Rig Veda)**

Bless me and be blessed by Almighty.



Shibopriya Chatterjee
Sangeetpravakar (Classical Vocal)
Sangeetpravakar (Classical Dance)
Prayag Sangieet Samity, Allahabad
Light and Semi Classical Vocalist,
Chorograher
and Musicologist.

শিবপ্রিয়া চট্টোপাধ্যায়,
স্নাতক, ভাবসংগীত ও রাগপ্রধান,
স্নাতক, শাস্ত্রীয় নৃত্য,
নৃত্য পরিচালিকা
প্রয়াগ সংগীত সমিতি, এলাহাবাদ
সঙ্গীত সাধিকা ও গায়িকা

Neelachal Abasan, Chitra - A/4, 98 Rajdanga Gold Park,
Rashbihari Connector, Kolkata - 700 107, India

