

## **Contribution of SAROD on World Music**

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The word Senia is believed to be derived from Seni which is linked with the name of Mia Tansen who is said to be one of the finest and esteemed musicians of his time in medieval India. As he was one amongst the Navaratna or the nine gems of the Mughal Emperor Akbar's court and a permanent court musician. Being an renowned musician of that era Tansen is believed to have composed many Ragas like Darbari Kanada, Miyan Ki Malhar, Miyan Ki Todi, etc (his beloved son Miya Bilas Khan is believed to have created the well known Raga in his father's memory, named after him – Vilaskhani Todi which is another version of the traditional Todi) are very popular in nature amongst music lovers, listeners and learners throughout India and outside. These ragas are practiced and performed by musicians even today. It is also connoted that Tansen in his lifetime invented a number of instruments like the Sur-Bahar, the Senia Rabab, after Amir Khusroo; Tansen is considered to be the single most important personality in the history of Hindustani Classical Music. It was Tansen after whom many Ragas as mentioned above is named after him and also was the creator of many new Ragas apart from the traditional Ragas, may it be vaocal- kheyal, dhrupad or instrumental music. Henceforth the famous Seni gharana or style of Hindustani classical is coined after the name of Miya Tansen, by his disciple and successors which further spilt into branches of the original or main Seni Gharana.

Miya Tansen's family from his daughter's side is believed to be the flag bearers of the Senia Gharana of Rabab which later on split up into two different Gharanas, one named after Shajahanpur – a situated near Lucknow- then Awadh but today it is located in the state of U.P i.e Uttar Pradesh, and the other named after the famous Bangash family of Ghulam Bandegi Khan Bangash whose direct descendants are the renowned sarod Maestros Ut.Amajad Ali Khan and sons, (according to their narration) who are still carrying through the flag of their family lineage and rich heritage of Sarod.

However the Senia Shajahanpur and Senia Bangash Gharana are believed to be rooted from the same origin as the Bangash tribesmen of Afghanistan got settled in the areas of Rewa in Madhya Pradesh (at present) while some of them moved to Shajahanpur a place near Lucknow (Awadh- then) present day Uttar Pradesh, hence it is not wrongful to connote that both the Gharanas i.e the Senia Bangash and Shajahanpur Gharana has the same roots of origin.

Though the other Senia Gharana i.e the Senia-Maihar also has a Sania connection and originated from almost the same region of present day Madhya Pradesh named after Rampur(district)- Maihar, but there are certain basic and predominant differences between the other two Gharanas of Senia and the Senia- (AMaihar Gharana, so these very identical features makes the Maihar Gharana different from the other Gharanas of Sarod.

However the first Bangash tribesmen got settled in the regions of Central India, modern day in parts of U.P and M.P, these tribesmen were mostly horse traders in profession who had deep passion in music and brought with them Persian style of music along with them the Afghani Rabab, however it is popularly believed that Tansen himself played a typical type of Rabab which was quite different from the Afghani Rabab, hence it's name is coined after him as Tanseni Rabab or the Seni Rabab, however derivation of sarod which occurred from the Rabab might not have much resemblance with that of the Tanseni or Seni Rabab, as many scholars opine, but the actual facts regarding the transformation of Sarod are still unknown to us which provides us with further opportunity or scope of research regarding this.

However the Afghani rabab is considered to be the ancestor of the Sarod and Sarod its descendants according to most of the scholars, (however some opine that Sarod was actually a transformation of Narada Veena and is of Indian origin) and the Senia Bangash family had a greater extent of contribution towards the transformation of Sarod and as the times passed by the Sarod gradually gained its new design as the shape, size, fingerboard, strings and also the playing pattern changed, in many ways the Sarod became a completely new instrument today.

Members of Ghulam Bandeghi Khan Bangash family were deeply associated with music both Afghani and Persian music, but later on they got deeply influenced by the Indian form of music and the Ragas, it is believed that Ghulam Bndeghi Khan Bangash was deeply moved by the music of Ut. Zafar Khan a direct

disciple of Miya Tansen, especially Rabab. Zafar Khan also played the Seni Rabab or the Tanseni Rabab as it was termed after Miya Tansen. Henceforth Ghulam Bandeghi and his son Hayder Khan and the grandson of Ghulam Bandeghi Khan Bangash i.e Ghulam Ali Khan (some scholars also opine that Ghulam Ali himself was the son of Ghulam Bandeghi Khan Bangash) were the key role players of the reformation of Rabab in the early days of medieval era which later on lead to the fabrication of an entirely new instrument which we know as Sarod today. Hence this esteemed must be proclaimed as founder of the oldest Sarod Gharana i.e Senia Bangash Gharana which later gave oxygen to two of the other Gharanas of Saod.

The Rabab which was used by Tansen or the Seni Rabab was larger in size than that of the actual Afghan rabab as Tansen followed the style of Beenkar Dhrupad in both vocal and instrumental music. Hence Ghulam Bandeghi Khan and his family were able to further experiment on the Medieval rabab, which gave them a scope to create something new with the admixture of the older instrument and newer one. As the Rabab was originally a folk instrument used mostly for accompanying with vocal music back in Afghanistan, but after coming to the Indian Subcontinent and getting in touch with Indian Rags (especially influenced by Miya Tansen) Ghulam Bandeghi and his family was deeply influenced by the music which in turn lead to the infusion of Afghani style with that of the Indian style of Rabab playing which further lead to the creation of a totally new style of Rabab playing art and later on the Sarod craft.

On the other hand, other members of Tansen's family, referred to as the Seni Gharana, specialized in the Dhrupad style of singing and playing the Veen or Veena, which is a very prominent instrument amongst the stringed instrument, from which they took the name of 'Veenkar'. There is a popular story that Zafar Khan heard Nirmal Shah Veenkar playing his Veen/Veena at a musical gathering in Varanasi and was very much impressed and moved by the instrument's (Veena) ability to sustain the notes which could play both long notes or Meends (slides) and Gamaks (repetitive slides). Zafar Khan then made some modifications to the old Tanseni Rabab which was played by miya tansen himself and other members of the Tansen family. Khan replaced the skin covered drum of the Rabab with a wood covered drum, which is quite similar to the Sur-Bahar (also very similar to the Sitar), the alabaster fingerboard or fret was changed with a metallic one, and the silk/cotton strings were replaced with metallic ones.

Meanwhile, the Bangash family who were the disciples of Zafar Khan watched their ustad(guru) making changes to the Tanseni Rabab and started experimenting with the original Afghan Rabab which they had been playing, thereafter one of the successors of the Bangash tribesmen that is Ghulam Ali Khan, further experimented on the instrument by replacing the wooden fingerboard/fret of the Afghan Rabab with metal, and the cotton/silk strings with the metal ones, thus initiating the development, which would later earn him the credit as the father of the modern-day Sarod. The shape of the rabab was also being changed as the instrument was gradually transforming from the Afghan or

Seni Rabab to Sarod, as its original square shape was now being changed into a round bowl like shape of the drums, this structural feature of the indstrument however had much more resemblance with the Sur Sringar or the Sardiya Veena which was much more Indian in nature rather than the its Afghan origin.

Since this Gharana evolved primarily from the Rabab, the playing style initially developed with the heavy right handed strumming of the strings. Later on, with the influence of other instruments such as the Veena and Sur Shringar, as well as vocal music, the Gharana included the use of the 'Meend' (long slides from one note to another) and 'Gamak' (the variation of the pitch of a note or the sliding movement between two or more notes, somewhat similar to a trill).

However, the uniqueness of this Gharana still lay in execution of Bol-Taans or phrases emulating patterns of various percussion Pt. Buddhadev Dasgupta demonstrates how an original composition in the Raga Desh meant to be played on the Sur-Shringar or Veena was modified for the Sarod by early Sarod players and then restored back to its original form with the advent of Meend and Gamak on the instrument.

The influence of Sur-Bahar and Sitar as well as vocal classical music on this Gharana led to the creation of Ekhar Taans, where each note is played alternatively by upward Da or downward Ra strokes. Ekhar Taans allow the artist the ability to play a rapid sequence of notes, similar to that of a Sitar or a vocalist. Another notable feature of this Sarod Gharana is the Larant. The Larant is normally played either at the end of the Alaap, Jod section or at the end of the Gatkari section, prior to the Jhaala. In a Larant, the chikari strokes of the Jhaala are replaced by Da-Ra-Di-Ri strokes of the tonic (or the Sa). The Larant is a unique movement where the Rababiya style of Sarod playing is probably best demonstrated. Using this technique, the artist can combine the melody of the Alaap with a rhythmic, fast-paced movement, to paint a more complete picture of the Raga.

Pt. Buddhadev Dasgupta of the Shahjahanpur Gharanas has demonstrated many of these skills in his musical renditions throughout his lifetime.

The Shahjahanpur Gharana of Sarod which is believed to be the roots of origin of Sarod is believed to be the legacy of the Bangash tribes of Afghanistan, who came to India for the sake of trade, they brought with them a melodious string instrument named Rabab which was the earliest form or the ancestor of Sarod.

The chieftain of this tribe Ghulam Bandegi Khan Bangash is believed to have settled in Rewa region of Rajasthan. Later on his son and nephews who were cousins Ghulam Ali Khan Bangash, Enayet Ali Khan and Niyamatullah Khan were the founders of this Gharana.

But the Bangash family however was introduced with the Indian traditional music by Zafar Khan who is believed to be the descendent of Tansen and was an eminent player of the Tanseni Rabab. The Tanseni Rabab was in many ways different from the Afghan Rabab which was played by the Bangash Family, both in terms of shape size and playing style.

However the Bangash students of Zafar Khan was constantly going through a process of changing the pattern of their Rabab following the footsteps of their Ustad. This later on brought them the credit of creating the modern day Sarod as the entire structure of Rabab went through a change which later evolved as Sarod, the wooden fingerboard was changed to metal, the cotton strings were replaced with the metallic strings the sound drum of the instrument was now bigger so that notes could sustain for more longer time than before, hence the basic elements of Classical music like 'ghamak' and 'meend' could be easily played now on this instrument. However some also opined that Sarod also has its roots somewhat from the Narada Veena and Sur Rabab.

Many Sarod exponents also composed many ragas of their own from taking references like

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